



Delhi Policy Group

Advancing India's Rise as a Leading Power



India's Proximity Archives January 8, 2025



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Delhi Policy Group
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ABOUT US

Founded in 1994, the Delhi Policy Group (DPG) is among India's oldest think tanks with its primary focus on strategic and international issues of critical national interest. DPG is a non-partisan institution and is independently funded by a non-profit Trust. Over past decades, DPG has established itself in both domestic and international circles and is widely recognised today among the top security think tanks of India and of Asia's major powers.

Since 2016, in keeping with India's increasing global profile, DPG has expanded its focus areas to include India's regional and global role and its policies in the Indo-Pacific. In a realist environment, DPG remains mindful of the need to align India's ambitions with matching strategies and capabilities, from diplomatic initiatives to security policy and military modernisation.

At a time of disruptive change in the global order, DPG aims to deliver research based, relevant, reliable and realist policy perspectives to an actively engaged public, both at home and abroad. DPG is deeply committed to the growth of India's national power and purpose, the security and prosperity of the people of India and India's contributions to the global public good. We remain firmly anchored within these foundational principles which have defined DPG since its inception.

India's Proximity Archives

India's Proximity Archives covers major developments in South Asia, East Asia, Southeast Asia, West Asia, Central Asia and Indian Ocean Region of strategic relevance to India, compiled from open-source media. The research team includes Shreyas Deshmukh, Sanket Joshi, Jayantika Rao T.V, and Divya Rai, Research Associates. Your comments and feedback can be addressed to Sanket Joshi at sanket@dpg.org.in.

Cover Image:

South Asia: *Bilateral talks were held in New Delhi on January 3 between India's External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar and Maldives' Foreign Minister Abdulla Khaleel. Source: [X/@DrSJaishankar](https://twitter.com/DrSJaishankar)*

East Asia: *Acting President Choi Sang-mok met US Secretary of State Antony Blinken in Seoul on January 6, 2025. Source: [X/@sangmok_choi](https://twitter.com/sangmok_choi)*

Southeast Asia: *Prime Minister Lawrence Wong met with Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim at Perdana Putra during the first Malaysia-Singapore Leaders' Retreat on January 7, 2024. Source: [X/@LawrenceWongST](https://twitter.com/LawrenceWongST)*

Indian Ocean Region: *The French Carrier Strike Group, which consists of nuclear-powered aircraft carrier FNS Charles de Gaulle along with its escort vessels, a frigate, a submarine, and supply ships, is visiting Goa from January 3-10, 2025. Source: [X/@WesternNavalCommand](https://twitter.com/WesternNavalCommand)*

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South Asia

by

Shreyas Deshmukh

Maldives Foreign Minister Abdulla Khaleel visited India [from January 2-4](#), during which he held bilateral talks with Indian Minister of External Affairs Dr S Jaishankar. In a statement, Khaleel [acknowledged](#) India's steadfast support in addressing the Maldives' financial challenges, stressing the importance of their collaboration for the country's long-term economic stability. The two nations signed a memorandum of understanding to launch the third phase of the High Impact Community Development Projects (HICDP). On January 7-8, [Maldivian Defence Minister](#) Mohammed Ghassan Maumoon is visiting New Delhi for bilateral talks with his Indian counterpart.

The Taliban and Pakistan continued to clash across different stretches of the Durand Line. On January 3, the clashes erupted in, Alisher district of Khost. Earlier, Pakistani [airstrikes on villages](#) within Paktika province on December 24th caused the deaths of 46 or more people; women and children were among the victims. Following media inquiries on January 6th concerning the airstrikes, India's foreign ministry spokesperson, Shri Randhir Jaiswal, [denounced the attacks](#), asserting that Pakistan has a history of deflecting blame for its internal problems onto its neighbours.

Bangladesh has [withdrawn its judicial officials](#) from participating in training sessions scheduled at India's Judicial Academy. The program, initially planned for February 10-20, was cancelled as per directives issued by the Bangladesh Supreme Court. Fifty judicial officials—Assistant Judges, Senior Assistant Judges, and District and Sessions Judges—were initially approved to attend a program, but it was subsequently cancelled. The initiative was part of a bilateral agreement signed during Sheikh Hasina's 2017 visit to India.

Other Developments

[Taliban tests new guided rocket system](#)

[NGOs in Afghanistan face closure for employing women](#)

[UAE agrees to roll over payment of \\$2bn due by Pakistan](#)

[Pakistan begins a two-year term as a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council](#)

Southeast Asia

by

Jayantika Rao T.V

[Indonesia has formally joined BRICS](#) as a full member, further expanding the group of major emerging economies. On January 6, Brazil, which holds the bloc's presidency in 2025, said the member states approved Indonesia's entry by consensus as part of an expansion push. "Indonesia shares with the other members of the group support for the reform of global governance institutions and contributes positively to the deepening of cooperation in the Global South," the Brazilian government said.

On [January 6](#), the Philippines deployed air and sea assets of its [military](#) and coast guard in its exclusive economic zone to monitor China's largest coast guard vessel, calling the ship's presence an act of Chinese "intimidation, coercion and aggression." According to the Philippine coast guard, the 165 m (541 ft) long vessel 5901, referred to by the Philippines as "the monster," was 65 to 70 nautical miles off the coast of the province of Zambales on January 6.

On [January 8](#), Malaysia announced tax incentives to draw investments to the Johor-Singapore Special Economic Zone (JS-SEZ), including a 5 per cent tax rate for companies investing in high-value activities. In a joint statement, the Ministry of Finance and Johor state government said the special 5 per cent tax rate for 15 years is for companies investing in qualifying manufacturing and services activities such as those involving artificial intelligence and quantum computing supply chain, medical devices and aerospace manufacturing.

Other Developments

[Indonesia launches free meal program amid budget constraints](#)

[Philippine VP Sara Duterte Cut From Security Council By Marcos](#)

[First U.S. Carriers in 12 Years Visit Malaysia to Strengthen Bilateral Ties](#)

[Bali Closely Monitors Flights From China, Malaysia Amid HMPV Outbreak](#)

[US VP Harris To Travel To Singapore, Bahrain, Germany Before Leaving Office](#)

East Asia

by

Divya Rai

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken [visited](#) South Korea on January 6, 2025, amid significant political upheaval following President Yoon Suk-yeol's controversial declaration of martial law and subsequent impeachment. During his visit, he met with Foreign Minister Cho Tae-yul and Acting President Choi Sang-mok, reaffirming the United States' "ironclad commitment" to South Korea. Discussions also focused on enhancing trilateral cooperation among South Korea, Japan, and the U.S. This is Blinken's second visit to Seoul following the third Summit for Democracy (S4D) hosted by the Yoon administration last year.

On January 7, 2025, Japan's Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba met with US Secretary of State Antony Blinken in Tokyo. The visit comes after North Korea conducted ballistic missile tests, raising alarms about regional security. Blinken expressed worries about the [deepening ties between](#) Russia and North Korea, especially regarding potential exchanges of military technology that could enhance North Korea's missile programs. Blinken addressed these issues during his earlier meetings in Seoul. During the meeting, Blinken highlighted the significant progress made in the US-Japan alliance, including a recent arms sales approval for \$3.6 billion worth of medium-range missiles and related training.

Taiwanese [officials suspect that](#) the Shunxin-39, a Chinese-owned vessel, is involved in severing an undersea fiber-optic cable near Keelung Harbor. A Taiwan telecom company, Chunghwa Telecom, reported that internet services were minimally affected due to the swift rerouting of communications. This cable, known as the Trans-Pacific Express, connects Taiwan to major regions including South Korea and the U.S. This is not the first time Chinese vessels have been implicated; in February 2023, two Chinese ships were linked to severing cables near Taiwan's Matsu Islands.

Other Developments

[Shandong Port Group banned U.S. -sanctioned tankers from calling into its ports in the eastern Chinese province](#)

[North Korea launched an intermediate-range ballistic missile near Pyongyang](#)

[South Korean authorities extended the arrest warrant of impeached President Yoon Suk Yeol](#)

West Asia

by

Sanket Joshi

Ahmed al-Sharaa, the leader of the new Syrian administration, met with German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock and French Foreign Minister Jean-Noël Barrot on January 3 in Damascus. France and Germany called for a [peaceful, inclusive political transition in Syria](#) that involves all ethnic and religious groups, with equal participation from both men and women. While expressing the EU's support for Syria's transition, the two leaders warned that "Europe will not finance Islamist structures". Meanwhile, Syria's interim Foreign Affairs Minister Asaad Al-Shaibani visited Saudi Arabia, UAE, and Qatar. The Gulf nations reaffirmed their support for all initiatives aimed at [achieving security, stability, and sovereignty for Syria](#). Asaad Al-Shaibani sought Gulf support for Syria's economic recovery and [urged the US to lift sanctions](#).

On January 6, the US lifted sanctions on transactions with the Syrian government for six months in order to facilitate the [flow of humanitarian assistance to Syria](#). It aims to ensure that sanctions do not hinder essential services or the continuity of governance in Syria.

Following the collapse of the Assad regime, [Iran has withdrawn most of its forces](#) from Syria, dealing a major blow to its regional ambitions. The Assad regime was a key component of Iran's "axis of resistance" against the US and Israel. Meanwhile, the outgoing Biden Administration notified the US Congress of a planned [USD 8 billion arms sale to Israel](#) that includes 500-pound warheads, precision-guided munitions, artillery shells, missiles for jets and attack helicopters, bomb fuses, and air-to-air missiles to intercept projectiles.

Other Developments

[Hamas stands by demand for an end to Gaza war under hostage deal, as Trump deadline nears](#)

[Trump's Mideast envoy to visit Qatar, claiming hostage deal on verge of completion](#)

Central Asia

by

Jayantika Rao T.V.

In a wide-ranging interview on January 3, President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev addressed Kazakhstan's foreign policy, reflecting on the dynamics of relations with Russia, China, and the United States. President Tokayev stated that his "primary goal is to strengthen the economic potential, sovereignty, and international standing of our state". He further addressed that he would continue Kazakhstan's multi-vector balanced foreign policy. President Tokayev further reiterated the decline of the international system, describing it as "increasingly degrading" and "marred by mutual accusations among major powers". The United Nations Security Council remains "paralyzed," he noted. He stated that this "unhealthy" situation raises concerns among nations like Kazakhstan as it hinders economic and social progress.

On [January 2](#), aviation experts said that Russian air defense fire was likely responsible for the Azerbaijani plane crash the day before that killed 38 people and left all 29 survivors injured. On [January 6](#), Azerbaijan's President Ilham Aliyev once again blamed Russian officials for the plane crash that killed 38 people on Christmas Day and called for them to be punished. President Aliyev said, "I can say with confidence that the blame for the fact that Azerbaijani citizens died in this disaster lies with the representatives of the Russian Federation".

The [Aktau crash](#) of the Azerbaijan Airlines Embraer 190 aircraft, which killed 38 people on December 25, was a tragic event with significant international repercussions. As investigators sought to determine its cause, Kazakhstan faced an important decision regarding the handling of the [flight recorder](#). Ultimately, the country chose to [transfer the recorder to Brazil](#) on January 6, the manufacturer of the aircraft, rather than to the Interstate aviation Committee (IAC) of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), as Russia had [proposed](#). By taking this decision, Kazakhstan adhered to established industry procedures for aviation safety investigations. Such a step highlights the country's commitment to transparency and global norms.

Other Developments

[Armenia takes control of border with Iran as Russian guards withdraw](#)

[Iranian president to visit Tajikistan in January, informed source confirms](#)

[Could Afghanistan's Qoshtepa Canal Worsen Water Scarcity in Central Asia?](#)

[Tokayev Addresses Talks on Kazakhstan's Parliamentary System Reform and Early Elections](#)

Indian Ocean Region

by

Divya Rai

On January 4, the French Carrier Strike Group, which includes the nuclear-powered aircraft carrier FNS Charles de Gaulle along with its escort vessels, a frigate, a submarine, and supply ships, [arrived in](#) Goa. The group is set to conduct a Passage Exercise (PASSEX) at sea with the Indian Navy's Western Fleet before continuing to participate in Exercise La Perouse in Indonesia and Exercise Pacific Steller in the Pacific Ocean. Additionally, the Charles de Gaulle CSG and Indian Navy ships [will take part in](#) the 42nd annual Varuna bilateral exercise. Meanwhile, the French naval ships FS Forbin and FS Alsace, also part of the Carrier Strike Group, are visiting Kochi to engage in professional interactions with the Southern Naval Command. This visit [is part of their deployment](#) in the Indian Ocean under Mission CLEMENCEAU 25.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh is [set to hold a bilateral meeting](#) with his Maldivian counterpart, Mohammed Ghassan Maumoon, who will be on a three-day visit to India from January 8 to 10, 2025. The two ministers will review the bilateral defence relations, such as training, joint military exercises, defence projects, workshops, and the supply of defence equipment to bolster the capabilities of the Maldives National Defence Forces (MNDF).

Other Development

[Indian Navy provided immediate fuelling assistance to a Malaysian-flagged in the Indian Ocean](#)

[Two Fast Patrol Vessels \(FPVs\) - Amulya and Akshay - for the Indian Coast Guard \(ICG\) were launched in Goa](#)

[Yemen's Houthi group claimed responsibility for targeting the USS Harry S. Truman aircraft carrier in the northern Red Sea](#)



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