

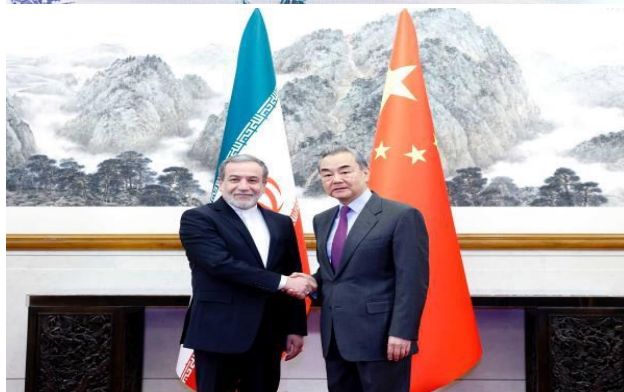


Delhi Policy Group

Advancing India's Rise as a Leading Power

India's Proximity Archives

January 1, 2025



Volume III, Issue 1 | January 1, 2025

Delhi Policy Group
Core 5A, 1st Floor, India Habitat Centre, Lodhi Road, New Delhi- 110003
www.delhipolicygroup.org



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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: Prime Minister of Pakistan Shehbaz Sharif launched "National Economic Transformation Plan 2024-2029" in Islamabad on December 31, 2024. Source: [PID Pakistan](#)

East Asia: China's first Type 076 new-generation amphibious assault ship, the Sichuan, was launched in Shanghai. Source: [China Military](#)

West Asia: Wang Yi, the Director of China's Central Commission for Foreign Affairs, and Seyed Abbas Araghchi, Iran's Foreign Minister met in Beijing on December 28, 2024. Source: [Official X Handle/Seyed Abbas Araghchi](#)

Central Asia: Kyrgyzstan's President Sadyr Japarov, the Chairman of the National Development and Reform Commission of the People's Republic of China, Zheng Shanjie, and Uzbekistan's Deputy Prime Minister Jamshid Khodjayev participated in a ceremony to mark the start of construction on the China-Kyrgyzstan-Uzbekistan railway on December 27, 2024. Source: [FB/Kyrgyz Presidential Administration](#)

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Contents

South Asia

Shreyas Deshmukh 1

Southeast Asia

Jayantika Rao T.V 2

East Asia

Divya Rai..... 3

West Asia

Sanket Joshi..... 5

Central Asia

Jayantika Rao T.V. 6

Indian Ocean Region

Divya Rai..... 7

South Asia

by

Shreyas Deshmukh

Days after Pakistani air raids, on December 28, the Taliban reported attacks on various sites in Pakistan. The Taliban Defense Ministry's statement didn't specify Pakistani targets but claimed the [strikes occurred](#) beyond their unilaterally defined border, rejecting the Durand Line's international status. Pakistani media reports that clashes left one soldier dead, eleven injured, and [eight Taliban fighters](#) killed. As negotiations to [de-escalate tensions](#) continue between Pakistan and the Taliban, Pakistan issued a warning: [lethal attacks](#) on Pakistani security forces will trigger retaliatory bombing of insurgents within Afghanistan.

Pakistan's Prime Minister, Shehbaz Sharif, launched the "[Uraan Pakistan](#)" economic plan on December 31st. This five-year initiative aims to reform the country's economy. This plan rests on three key pillars: stimulating private investment to create more jobs, raise incomes, and lower the cost of living through increased economic competitiveness. Earlier administrations launched similar initiatives, yet political uncertainty hampered their implementation.

Bangladesh's interim government announced plans for a July [uprising proclamation](#), one day after rejecting a similar proposal from the Anti-Discrimination Students Movement—the movement that ousted Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina four months prior. Press Secretary Shafiqul Alam announced on December 30 that the declaration would reflect the opinions of all participants, including students, political parties, and stakeholders such as the Anti-Discrimination Students Movement, which played a key role in the August 5th overthrow of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's Awami League government.

Other Developments

[Taliban ban windows to prevent women's 'exposure'](#)

[2024 was 'deadliest year' for Pakistan's security forces](#)

Southeast Asia

by

Jayantika Rao T.V

On [December 30](#), Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. signed the 2025 budget into law, saying a planned 10 per cent increase in government spending to a record 6.33 trillion pesos (\$109.2 billion) would support economic growth and reduce poverty. Budget minister Amenah Pangandaman revealed in a press briefing that [35 billion pesos](#) were earmarked for the military's modernisation programme, lower than the [50 billion pesos](#) the government proposed originally.

China and Singapore [upgraded their 15-year-old free trade deal](#) to further open up their markets to investors and services suppliers on both sides, and expand cooperation in telecom services. The China-Singapore Free Trade Agreement's (CSFTA) Further Upgrade Protocol, which entered into force on December 31, 2024, includes a recently updated edition of a "negative list" of Chinese industries in which foreigners are not allowed to invest. Singapore's Ministry of Trade and Industry (MTI) said the upgraded CSFTA, with the new and shorter negative list, will enable Singapore businesses greater access to China's services sectors.

On [December 26](#), China's Foreign Ministry urged the Philippines to return to "peaceful development", saying Manila's decision to deploy a US medium-range missile system in military exercises would only bring the risks of an arms race in the region. The US Typhon system, which can be equipped with cruise missiles capable of striking Chinese targets, was brought in for joint exercises earlier this year. "By cooperating with the United States in the introduction of Typhon, the Philippine side has surrendered its own security and national defence to others and introduced the risk of geopolitical confrontation and an arms race in the region, posing a substantial threat to regional peace and security," said Mao Ning, a spokesperson at China's foreign ministry.

Other Developments

[Indonesia, India plan state-backed funds eyeing Temasek success](#)

[From BrahMos Missiles to Fighter Jets, How Vietnam and Philippines are Arming Themselves Against China](#)

[Singapore's Foreign Minister calls Manmohan Singh "eminent statesman", signs condolence book at Indian High Commission](#)

East Asia

by

Divya Rai

China has [launched its first Type 076 amphibious assault ship](#), named Sichuan (51), at the Hudong-Zhonghua shipyard in Shanghai. The ship boasts a full-load displacement of over 40,000 tons, with some estimates suggesting it could reach 50,000 tons, making it one of the largest amphibious assault ships globally. The Sichuan features a dual-island superstructure and a full-length flight deck, enhancing its operational capabilities compared to previous models like the Type 075. It is equipped with an Electromagnetic Aircraft Launch System (EMALS), allowing it to launch fixed-wing aircraft, and includes a well deck for launching landing crafts. The Sichuan is now in the fitting-out phase and is expected to undergo testing and sea trials before officially joining the People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) fleet by 2027.

Japan's [cabinet approved](#) 8.7 trillion yen (approximately \$55.13 billion), marking a 9.4% increase from the previous year. This budget is part of Japan's ongoing Defense Buildup Program, initiated in 2022, which aims to enhance the country's military capabilities over a five-year period. Defence Minister Gen. Nakatani [emphasised](#) that Japan is facing its most complex national security challenges since World War II, underscoring the urgency of strengthening defence capabilities. Notably, the budget earmarks 123.8 billion yen (around \$784 million) for a new defence communication satellite to replace the ageing Kिरameki-2 satellite, which is set to be decommissioned in 2030. Japan's fiscal year begins on April 1, and the proposed budget is part of a broader national budget of 115.54 trillion yen (about \$732 billion), which requires approval from Japan's National Diet.

South Korean court [has issued an arrest warrant](#) for suspended President Yoon Suk Yeol following his attempt to impose martial law on December 3. This unprecedented move marks the first time a sitting president in South Korea has faced such a warrant. Yoon is under investigation for allegations of insurrection and abuse of power after he ignored three summonses for questioning by investigators. Yoon's whereabouts are currently unknown, and he is prohibited from leaving the country. The political landscape in South Korea has been tumultuous since Yoon's martial law declaration. Yoon was impeached by the National Assembly on December 14, suspending his presidential powers while the Constitutional Court reviews the case.

Other Developments

[North Korea decided to launch "toughest" strategy against U.S. in year-end party meeting](#)

[Plane crash in South Korea claimed 179 lives in one of the nation's deadliest aviation disasters.](#)

[China sanctions seven U.S. firms in response to military support for Taiwan](#)

West Asia

by

Sanket Joshi

Wang Yi, the Director of China's Central Commission for Foreign Affairs, and Seyed Abbas Araghchi, Iran's Foreign Minister met in Beijing on December 28. The two leaders agreed to accelerate the implementation of [China-Iran comprehensive cooperation plan](#) and deepen cooperation in the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) and BRICS to advance the interests of the Global South. Director Wang Yi reaffirmed Beijing's support for the 'Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action' (JCPOA) concerning Iran's nuclear programme and opposed Western sanctions. FM Araghchi expressed Tehran's support for the one-China principle, as well as China's position on Xinjiang, Tibet, and human rights.

During an interview with Saudi Arabia's state media on December 29, Syria's de facto leader Ahmed al-Sharaa stated that [drafting a new constitution could take three years](#) while holding elections could take up to four years. He ruled out any plans for Syria's partition, stressing that the [Kurdish people were a vital component](#) of the country's national identity and that the US-supported Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) would be integrated into the national armed forces. As part of the discussion, al-Sharaa highlighted Saudi Arabia's crucial role in Syria's future, urged Iran to reconsider its regional policies and interventions, called on the US to lift sanctions, and highlighted strategic interests in relations with Russia.

Danny Danon, Israel's Ambassador to the United Nations, issued a final warning to Yemen's Houthi militants on December 30, calling on them to [stop missile attacks against Israeli cities](#). He warned the Houthi leaders that they risked the same fate as Hamas, Hezbollah, and former Syrian President Bashar al-Assad. Despite the Israeli Ambassador's remarks, the Houthis continued their missile attacks promising to strike Israel in solidarity with the Palestinians in Gaza.

Other Developments

[2025 is set to be 'important' Nuclear year, Iran's veiled message to Donald Trump](#)

[Iran's President Pezeshkian to visit Moscow January 17, RIA reports, citing Iranian envoy to Russia](#)

[Ben Gvir says he prayed on Temple Mount, PM Netanyahu quickly claims status quo hasn't changed](#)

Central Asia

by

Jayantika Rao T.V.

On [December 27](#), Kyrgyzstan's President Sadyr Japarov, the Chairman of the National Development and Reform Commission of the People's Republic of China, Zheng Shanjie, and Uzbekistan's Deputy Prime Minister Jamshid Khodjayev participated in a ceremony to mark the start of construction on the China-Kyrgyzstan-Uzbekistan railway. The event occurred in the village of Tosh-Kutchu in Kyrgyzstan's Jalal-Abad region, where they [laid](#) the first stone for this significant regional transportation project. Speaking at the ceremony, President Japarov highlighted the importance of the China-Kyrgyzstan-Uzbekistan railway as more than just a transportation route, describing it as a critical strategic bridge linking the East and West.

On [December 29](#), Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev claimed that the recent crash of a passenger plane in Kazakhstan, which claimed the lives of 38 people, was caused by ground fire from Russian territory. President Aliyev also expressed deep regret over the incident and criticised what he described as efforts by "some circles" in Russia to suppress the truth by sowing false narratives about the causes of the crash. The Azerbaijani President's remarks came a day after [Vladimir Putin apologised for the crash](#), calling it a "tragic incident" which took place in Russia's airspace where its air defences were activated in response to Ukrainian drones.

On [December 31](#), Iran and Turkmenistan signed a new gas supply agreement covering 50% of the fuel needs for Iranian power plants. The ministry also outlined alternative plans to address Iranian gas shortages and confirmed preparations for the summer season. Iranian Ministry Spokesperson Ahmed Musa said the ministry is maintaining and rehabilitating power stations to prepare for the summer while addressing distribution bottlenecks and increasing grid capacity. "This will improve flexibility in load management between provinces through expanded transmission lines and new substations," he added.

Other Developments

[Tajikistan and Pakistan discuss counter-terrorism cooperation](#)

[China-Kyrgyzstan-Uzbekistan railway set to enhance regional connectivity](#)

[How the Azerbaijan Airlines Crash Could Shake Relations with Russia](#)

[Dushanbe satisfied with cooperation with Russia, Moscow to increase number of Russian teachers in Tajikistan Schools: Key points from Rahmon and Putin's talks](#)

Indian Ocean Region

by

Divya Rai

INS Tushil, the Indian Navy's latest multi-role stealth-guided missile frigate, [arrived at](#) Casablanca, Morocco, on December 27, as part of efforts to enhance bilateral relations and naval cooperation between India and Morocco. INS Tushil's visit include engaging with the Royal Moroccan Navy through functional-level discussions and professional exchanges. Following the port call, both navies conducted a Passage Exercise (PASSEX) at sea to improve interoperability and share best practices. This visit follows previous visits by three other Indian Navy ships—INS Tabar, INS Tarkash, and INS Sumedha.

INS Sarvekshak, the Indian Navy's hydrographic survey ship, arrived at Port Louis, Mauritius, on December 26, [to undertake a Joint Hydrographic Survey](#). Upon arrival, the ship was warmly welcomed by Shri Anurag Srivastava, High Commissioner of India to Mauritius, Captain C.G. Binoop, Commandant of the Mauritius National Coastguard, and other military and civil dignitaries. The visit reflects a shared commitment to regional development and deeper bilateral cooperation in line with India's SAGAR (Security And Growth for All in the Region) initiative.

The Indonesian Naval Ship KRI Sultan Iskandar Muda-367 [completed its formal visit](#) to Sri Lanka, departing from the Port of Colombo on December 30. The ship had arrived on December 28, where it was received with customary naval honours by the Sri Lanka Navy. During its stay, the Commanding Officer, Commander Anugerah Annurullah, met with key Sri Lankan naval officials, including Rear Admiral Chinthaka Kumarasinghe, Commander Western Naval Area, and Rear Admiral Buddhika Liyanagamage, Director General Operations.

Other Developments

[Chinese People's Liberation Army Navy hospital ship Peace Ark concluded its formal visit to Sri Lanka on December 28, 2024, after arriving on December 21](#)

[Quad Foreign Ministers Commemorated the 20th Anniversary of Quad Cooperation](#)

[MoD Signs Contracts Worth ₹2,867 Crore to Enhance Indian Navy's Submarine Capabilities with AIP and Torpedo Integration.](#)



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