



Delhi Policy Group

Advancing India's Rise as a Leading Power

India's Proximity Archives

March 12, 2025



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Delhi Policy Group
Core 5A, 1st Floor, India Habitat Centre, Lodhi Road, New Delhi- 110003
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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, Divya Rai and Arshiya Chaturvedi, Research Associates. Your comments and feedback can be addressed to Sanket Joshi at sanket@dpg.org.in.

Cover Images:

East Asia: Chinese Foreign Minister and the member of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee, Wang Yi at press conference on March 7, 2025 of the Third Session of the 14th National People's Congress at the Media Centre
Source: [Ministry of Foreign Affairs, The People's Republic of China](#)

West Asia: Saudi Arabia hosted US-Ukraine talks in Jeddah on March 11, 2025.
Source: [Official X Handle/Saudi Press Agency English](#)

Central Asia: India's External Affairs Minister, Dr S. Jaishankar met the Foreign Minister of Armenia, Ararat Mirzoyan, in New Delhi, on March 10. Source: [X/@DrSJaishankar](#)

Indian Ocean Region: The 2025 Edition of the Indian Navy's capstone Theatre Level Operational Exercise (TROPEX) was conducted over a period of three months from January to March 2025. Source: [PIB](#)

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South Asia

by

Shreyas Deshmukh

Over 400 passengers, including many security personnel, were taken hostage when [terrorists attacked the](#) Jaffar Express in Balochistan on March 11. A military operation to rescue hostages was launched by Pakistani security forces in the Dhadar region of the Bolan Pass. In a gun battle near the Mashkaf Tunnel, almost a dozen people—security personnel and sixteen terrorists—were killed by the morning of March 12. Responsibility for the attack was claimed by the Baloch Liberation Army (BLA). On March 12, Pakistan Railways instituted a temporary suspension [of all service between](#) Punjab, Sindh and Balochistan. This is the first time terrorists have hijacked an entire train, taking all the passengers hostage.

A Pakistan [government circular](#), dated March 7, mandated the departure of all documented Afghan migrants from the country by March 31, with deportation as a consequence of non-compliance. The directive followed a day after the Afghan Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation urged Pakistan to decelerate the expulsion of Afghan citizens. Pakistan initiated the Illegal Foreigners Repatriation Program in October 2023. This impacts approximately 900,000 documented Afghan economic migrants currently residing in Pakistan. A UNHCR report from March 7th reveals an exodus of more than 842,000 Afghans from Pakistan since the initiation of the expulsion initiative, with over 40,000 being forcibly deported.

On March 9th, former Nepalese King Gyanendra Shah [returned to Kathmandu](#) following a trip to western Nepal. Thousands of supporters of the monarchy, including leaders and party workers from the Rastriya Prajatantra Party, assembled outside the airport, voicing their support for the return of the monarchy. In light of former King Gyanendra Shah's increased public engagements and the growing political activity of his supporters, Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli has formally [challenged the former monarch](#) to stand for election. Former Prime Minister and Chairperson of the CPN-UML Pushpa Kamal Dahal said that the royalist-circulated rumours concerning the reinstatement of the monarchy to be impossible.

Other Developments

[Banned Islamist group Hizb ut-Tahrir holds first public rally in Bangladesh since 2009](#)

[Sri Lanka signs \\$2.5 billion debt deal with Japan](#)

[Maldives discussing with China installation of devices for research in Maldivian waters](#)

Southeast Asia

by

Jayantika Rao T.V

Philippine police have [arrested former President Rodrigo Duterte](#) after the International Criminal Court (ICC) issued a warrant accusing him of crimes against humanity over his deadly “war on drugs”, on March 11, 2025. According to the Philippine government, he was taken into custody at Manila’s main airport after returning from a trip to Hong Kong. Duterte’s lawyer and former presidential spokesperson, Salvador Panelo, said the arrest was “unlawful” as the Philippines withdrew from the ICC in 2019. However, the ICC had earlier clarified that it had jurisdiction in the Philippines over alleged crimes committed before the country withdrew as a member. [A three-judge panel wrote](#) that based on the evidence presented by the court’s prosecutor, the killings ordered by Duterte as mayor of Davao and later as president were “both widespread and systematic.” The panel also found Duterte individually responsible for crimes against humanity of murder.

On [March 10](#), Indonesia and Vietnam agreed to upgrade ties to a comprehensive strategic partnership as the Southeast Asian allies’ leaders met in Jakarta to mark 70 years of diplomatic relations. The decision was made during the talks between Vietnamese Communist Party General Secretary To Lam and Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto in Jakarta when discussing avenues to boost economic and defence cooperation. Both sides also committed to strengthening defence and security cooperation, including intelligence sharing, search and rescue efforts and experience-sharing in combating transnational crimes, particularly online fraud networks, human trafficking, forced labour and terrorism threats. They also agreed to expand economic cooperation, remove trade barriers and facilitate business activities, particularly in the export and import of agricultural and aquatic products, with the goal of soon reaching US\$18 billion in bilateral trade turnover.

On [March 10](#), Philippines Foreign Secretary Enrique Manalo dismissed Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi’s claim that the country’s maritime actions are influenced by external forces, calling it a “distortion” of the real issue. During a brief interview on the sidelines of a bilateral meeting with British Foreign Minister David Lammy, Manalo stated, “In a way, we’re distorting the issue. It’s being cast in the light of a strategic rivalry among the big powers, when actually, the issue is really of Philippine interest. It has no connection to any kind of strategic rivalry among the big powers and we think it should not be viewed that way.” His remarks were in response to Wang Yi’s statement during

a March 7 press conference, in which the Chinese foreign minister suggested that the Philippines' actions in the South China Sea were part of a "screenplay written by external forces."

Other Developments

[Myanmar Junta Chief Announces Election For December Or January](#)

[U.S., EU and Japan increase naval deployments in South China Sea](#)

[Thai government urged to set up 'war room' to tackle US tariffs](#)

East Asia

by

Arshiya Chaturvedi

Chinese Foreign Minister, [Wang Yi in a press conference on March 7, 2025, emphasised China's commitment to maintaining peace and stability in the South China Sea](#) through cooperation and dialogue with ASEAN countries. He highlighted China's initiatives in the region including signing an intergovernmental document on maritime joint development with Indonesia and launch of China-Malaysia bilateral dialogue on the management of maritime issues. Wang stressed the importance of trust and rules for lasting peace and security in the region and called for the effective implementation of the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties (DOC) and the acceleration of negotiations on the Code of Conduct (COC). Noting significant progress in consultation on COC and completion of the third reading of its text, he underscored China's commitment to enhancing communication and cooperation with ASEAN for early conclusion of the COC to ensure the South China Sea remains a region of peace, friendship, and cooperation.

[The FY2024 Domestic Public Opinion Survey on Japan's Diplomacy, conducted between February 3 to 9 with results published on March 7,](#) highlights key areas where the Japanese public believes diplomatic efforts should be prioritised. The study underscores that strengthening economic and security ties with the US remains a dominant concern, reflecting Japan's reliance on the US for its security and economic development. A significant 81.5% of respondents perceived East Asia's security environment as worsening and concurred with the preferred strategies being stronger cooperation with allies, bolstering Japan's defence capabilities, and engaging in diplomatic dialogue. Regarding China, the public strongly supports a firm stance on territorial issues (60.9%), emphasising Japan's concerns over maritime security. The survey further indicates that South Korea remains a key partner of Japan, however, this partnership is shaped by issues including North Korea-related security concerns, bilateral territorial disputes, and historical tensions. Other questions discussed in the survey include the situation in the Middle East, the Ukraine war, Japan's African policy, Japan's UN diplomacy, and Foreign Policy disinformation threats.

[North Korea has unveiled its first nuclear-powered submarine](#), marking a significant advancement in its naval capabilities. State media released images of Kim Jong Un visiting shipyards where the submarine, referred to as a "nuclear-powered strategic guided missile submarine," was showcased. It is

estimated that the vessel is a 6,000 to 7,000-ton-class submarine, capable of carrying around 10 nuclear-capable missiles. Many experts have been suggesting possible Russian assistance in the development of the said vessel in exchange for conventional weapons and troops for Russia's war in Ukraine, arguing North Korea's inability to develop such technology independently. This development comes amid rising tensions with the US and South Korea, with North Korea ramping up military threats and emphasising the modernisation of its naval forces.

Other Developments

[Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi accentuated that a cooperative pas de deux of the dragon and the elephant is the only right choice for China and India](#)

[China heightens military activity around Taiwan](#)

[The 6th Japan-Australia Cyber Policy Dialogue was held in Canberra, Australia where the two countries reaffirmed their commitment to cybersecurity cooperation](#)

[South Korea's impeached President Yoon Suk Yeol released from prison](#)

[South Korean Vice Minister Kim Hong Kyun Holds Working Luncheon with EU Ambassadors to Korea](#)

[North Korea fires missiles as US-South Korea military drills begin](#)

West Asia

by

Sanket Joshi

Syrian security forces and fighters loyal to former President Bashar al-Assad engaged in [major clashes in Latakia](#) province on March 6-7, resulting in the death of more than 1,000 people, including 745 civilians. Syria's interim President Ahmed al-Sharaa informed that his regime had contacted the country's Alawites (Assad's sect) to build bridges of peace; however, some of them chose to incite [sectarian strife and violence](#) that led to the killing of many security forces and some civilians, including Alawites. Meanwhile, on March 10, Kurdish-led and US-supported [Syrian Democratic Forces \(SDF\)](#) which control much of Syria's oil-rich northeast signed an agreement with the Syrian government to join the country's new state institutions.

US President Donald Trump announced on March 7 that he wants to [negotiate a nuclear deal with Iran](#) and he had written to Iran's Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei regarding the issue. On his part, Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian rejected Trump's proposal asserting that Iran will not negotiate with the US while being threatened with "maximum pressure".

On March 11, Saudi Arabia hosted talks between the [US and Ukraine in Jeddah](#). During this meeting, the US agreed to resume military aid and intelligence sharing with Ukraine after Kyiv showed willingness to support the US's proposal for a [30-day ceasefire with Russia](#). The US will now take this proposal to Russia seeking to resolve the Ukraine crisis.

Other Developments

[US envoy Witkoff holds talks in Qatar as Israel proposes 60-day Gaza ceasefire extension](#)

[After US move on Iraq-Iran power trade, Baghdad looks to replace Iranian gas](#)

[Russia says it wants united and 'friendly' Syria](#)

Central Asia

by

Jayantika Rao T.V.

India's External Affairs Minister, Dr S. Jaishankar [met](#) the Foreign Minister of Armenia, Ararat Mirzoyan, in New Delhi, on March 10. The Armenian Foreign Minister is on an official visit to India from March 9 to 11 at the invitation of EAM Jaishankar. The two leaders engaged in productive discussions, focusing on a wide range of issues aimed at further strengthening the growing India-Armenia bilateral relationship. Furthermore, India and Armenia signed [two major Memorandums of Understanding](#) between India's Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO) & Armenia's Center of Drug and Medical Technology Expertise (CDMTE) on cooperation in regulating medical products, and between the Sushma Swaraj Institute of Foreign Service and the Diplomatic School of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Armenia.

On [March 11](#), experts from Kazakhstan and India met at Maqsut Narikbayev University to discuss trade relations and the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC). The discussion highlighted the corridor's potential for regional economic growth. Sanzhar Ualikhanov from Kazakhstan's Foreign Ministry emphasized the strength of bilateral relations, stating, "We have established a trusting political dialogue and strong economic ties, elevating our cooperation to a strategic partnership." Ambassador of India to Kazakhstan, T.V. Nagendra Prasad underscored the importance of connectivity, saying, "Kazakhstan is a vital partner for India. Developing transport infrastructure, like the Chabahar Port, is essential for enhancing trade efficiency." He added that continued collaboration in logistics would reinforce Kazakhstan's status as a key transit hub for Indian businesses.

The Third Conference of States Parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), [chaired](#) by Kazakhstan, concluded on March 7 at UN headquarters. The conference reaffirmed the global commitment to nuclear disarmament, with delegates adopting a Political Declaration condemning nuclear threats and emphasizing the severe humanitarian and environmental consequences of nuclear weapons. [One of the key outcomes](#) of the conference was the approval of a proposal by Kazakhstan and Kiribati to establish an International Trust Fund. The initiative aims to assist victims of nuclear weapons use and testing while supporting environmental rehabilitation of contaminated areas.

Other Developments

[How Trump's Trade War on China Affects Central Asia](#)

[CSTO: Armenia's partnership remains vital despite temporary suspension](#)

[One Military Alliance \(CSTO\) Monitors Woes of Another \(NATO\)](#)

[Kazakhstan Calls for Stabilization in Palestine and Syria at OIC Ministerial Meeting](#)

Indian Ocean Region

by

Divya Rai

Indian Naval Ship (INS) Imphal [arrived](#) at Port Louis, Mauritius, on March 10, 2025, marking its maiden visit to participate in the 57th Mauritius National Day celebrations. India's participation will feature a marching contingent, a naval band and a helicopter flypast at the Champs de Mars parade. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi will be the chief guest, underscoring the significance of India-Mauritius relations. During its stay from March 10–14, the ship will engage in joint Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) surveillance and naval exercises with Mauritius Coast Guard ships. The visit aligns with India's tradition of naval participation in Mauritius' national events.

The 2025 edition of the Indian Navy's Theatre Level Operational Readiness Exercise (TROPEX) [was concluded](#) recently. The exercise was conducted over a period of three months from Jan to Mar 25. The exercise construct included an Amphibious Exercise—AMPHEX, a Joint Work Up Phase focused on precise delivery of ordnance on target, Cyber and Electronic Warfare, and a Tactical Phase. TROPEX 25 witnessed the participation of 65-70 Indian Naval ships, 9-10 submarines, and over 80 aircraft of different types. The exercise achieved a very high level of operational synergy in the planning and execution of theatre-level scenarios with the other services. It witnessed extensive participation by the units of the Indian Army, Indian Air Force, and Indian Coast Guard, comprising Sukhoi-30, Jaguar, C-130, Flight Refueller, and AWACS aircraft, over 600 infantry troops, and more than 10 ICG ships.

Other Developments

[Russia is set to hold joint naval exercises, "Security Belt 2025' with China & Iran in the Indian Ocean](#)

[INS Tarkash rendered technical and medical assistance to an Iranian dhow and injured crew off the Somali coast](#)

[Prime Minister Narendra Modi said, "Mauritius is a close maritime neighbour, a key partner in the Indian Ocean, and a gateway to the African Continent", before his two-day state visit to Mauritius](#)

[Indian Navy's First Training Squadron concluded a Passage Exercise \(PASSEX\) with the Royal Thai Navy's HTMS Huahin](#)

[Pakistan Navy Ship \(PNS\) Aslat completed a goodwill visit to Sri Lanka on March 6, 2025](#)



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