



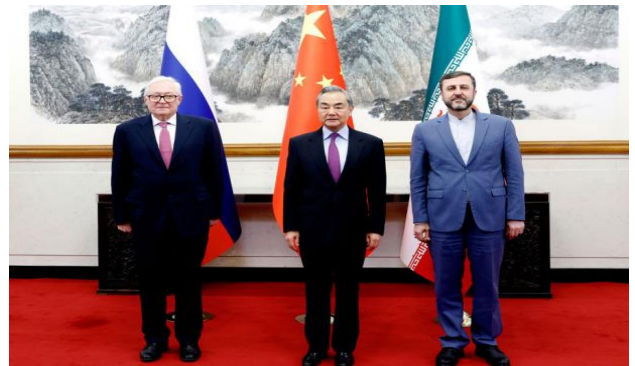
Delhi Policy Group

Advancing India's Rise as a Leading Power



India's Proximity Archives

March 19, 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:

South Asia: US Director of National Intelligence Tulsi Gabbard met India's Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on March 17, 2025, in New Delhi. Source: [X/@rajnathsingh](#)

East Asia: Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi with Foreign Representatives of Russia and Iran in Beijing meeting on the Iran Nuclear Issue held on March 14, 2025. Source: [Ministry of Foreign Affairs, The People's Republic of China](#)

West Asia: The US conducted airstrikes on Houthi targets in Yemen on March 15, 2025. Source: [Official X Handle/US Central Command](#)

Indian Ocean Region: INS Ranvir, a guided-missile destroyer of the Indian Navy, and BNS Abu Ubaidah, a frigate from the Bangladesh Navy [concluded](#) the Naval Exercise Bongosagar 2025 and Coordinated Patrol (CORPAT) in the Bay of Bengal. Source: [PIB](#)

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South Asia

by

Shreyas Deshmukh

After the March 11th attack on the Jaffar Express train in Balochistan, Pakistan's Parliamentary Committee on National Security (PCNS) [convened](#) on March 18th. The committee underscored the critical need for immediate implementation of counterterrorism frameworks, including the National Action Plan (NAP) and the Azm-i-Istehkam military operation, to effectively mitigate terrorism. In addressing the rise of terrorism, Pakistan's Chief of Army Staff, General Asim Munir, highlighted systemic governance deficiencies and proposed the transformation of Pakistan into a more secure and controlled entity. The Pakistan Army [accused India](#) and Afghanistan for the Jaffar Express attack. In response to these accusations, Indian and [Afghan](#) authorities [countered that](#) Pakistan should focus on its own problems rather than deflecting blame.

On the margins of the Raisina Dialogue, a [bilateral discussion](#) was held in New Delhi on March 18 between Nepal's Foreign Minister, Arzu Rana Deuba, and India's External Affairs Minister, Dr. S. Jaishankar. The discussions encompassed a review of recent high-level diplomatic exchanges, collaborative efforts in trade and transit, and advancements in hydropower development between both nations. In the course of the discussions, Minister Deuba confirmed Nepal's commitment to enhancing its bilateral ties with India, underscoring the nation's readiness to engage in cooperative ventures of shared interest.

Intelligence sharing and expanding cooperation in the US-India strategic partnership were the focus of meetings between US Director of National Intelligence [Tulsi Gabbard](#) and India's National Security Advisor Ajit Doval during Gabbard's March 16-18 trip to India. Gabbard also participated in the India-hosted intelligence chiefs' meeting, led by Doval. Closed-door discussions addressed counterterrorism strategies, transnational criminal activity, and global security challenges such as the war in Ukraine and conflicts within the Middle East. Ms. Gabbard also held a meeting with Prime Minister Modi and Defence Minister Rajnath Singh. In a [television interview](#) conducted during her visit, Gabbard voiced apprehension about the persecution and killing of Hindus and other minorities in Bangladesh. She further noted the Trump administration's resolve to address Islamist terrorism worldwide. The interim administration of Bangladesh repudiated these remarks.

Other Developments

[INS Ranvir participates in exercise Bongosagar 25 and Indian Navy - Bangladesh Navy Corpat](#)

[Maldives seeks aid amid severe debt crisis, \\$1 billion payment due in 2026](#)

[UN chief affirms solidarity with Bangladesh amid political transition](#)

[Sri Lanka records first annual growth since crisis](#)

Southeast Asia

by

Jayantika Rao T.V

The second phase of the [31st edition of Exercise Cope Tiger](#) is being held at Korat Air Base and Chandy Range, Thailand, from March 17-28, 2025. The trilateral exercise between the Republic of Singapore Air Force (RSAF), the Royal Thai Air Force (RTAF) and the United States Air Force (USAF) is being conducted in two phases. The first phase was a Command Post Exercise, held at the Multinational Operations and Exercise Centre in Changi Naval Base, Singapore, from December 17-19, 2024. The exercise allows participating countries to execute air defence, strike and UAV operations to enhance combat readiness and operational capabilities.

On [March 18](#), Secretary of Foreign Affairs of the Philippines Enrique A Manalo said that the Association of Southeast Nations (ASEAN) has a duty to serve its own people and ensure the region's development. Speaking at Firstpost's IdeasPod as part of the annual Raisina Dialogue organised by ORF in partnership with the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA). Manalo said, "India is definitely a very valuable partner. India's Indo-Pacific strategy, which is now, gaining much greater shape and the participation of India in our region, practically coincides with our view of ensuring a free and open Indo-Pacific".

Singapore has [redrawn its electoral boundaries](#), expanding the number of parliamentary seats and realigning wards that were previously hotly contested, as the country inches closer to a critical general election. The changes were announced in a new electoral boundaries report, meant to take into account shifts in voter population, completing yet another step in the lead-up to a general election that must be held by November. Prime Minister [Lawrence Wong](#) will be seeking a mandate for his leadership for the first time since he was selected by the ruling People's Action Party (PAP) in 2022 to take over from Lee Hsien Loong, son of founding prime minister [Lee Kuan Yew](#).

Other Developments

[Philippine Senate launches probe of Duterte's ICC arrest](#)

[Guterres calls aid cuts 'a crime' during Rohingya refugee tour](#)

[U.S., Vietnam companies sign deals on energy and minerals: report](#)

[Canada-Philippines defense accord to boost Free and Open Indo-Pacific](#)

East Asia

by

Arshiya Chaturvedi

The Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi met with Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Ryabkov Sergey Alexeevich and Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister Kazem Gharibabadi in Beijing on March 14, where he proposed [five points on the Iranian nuclear issue](#). Emphasising the need for peaceful political and diplomatic solutions as opposed to force and sanctions, Wang Yi urged for a balanced approach to nuclear non-proliferation and Iran's right to peaceful nuclear energy under the NPT. He reaffirmed the JCPOA as the foundation for negotiations, calling the US to return to talks. China further opposed UNSC intervention, warned against the snapback mechanism, and advocated for a step-by-step, reciprocal approach based on mutual respect.

Amid rising tensions in the Indo-Pacific, Taiwan's Ministry of National Defence reported that [26 PLA aircraft sorties were detected](#) on Monday, March 17, with 20 crossing the median line of the Taiwan Strait and entering Taiwan's northern, central, southwestern, and eastern air defence zones. The incursions were part of air-sea joint training exercises involving PLA-N vessels, prompting Taiwan's forces to upturn monitoring and retaliatory responses accordingly. Taiwan also reported PLA aircraft and naval vessel movements on Sunday. China has even ramped up cognitive warfare against Taiwan by establishing a dedicated misinformation unit, as reported by Taipei Times. PLA Eastern Theatre Command head Lin Xiangyang reiterated China's stance on Taiwan, stating that its military remains on high alert and ready to fight against any moves toward independence, marking the 20th anniversary of the Anti-Secession Law.

Director-General for International Security Youn Jong Kwon met with Benedikta von Seherr-Thoss, Managing Director for Peace, Security, and Defence at the EEAS, to discuss [expanding ROK-EU security cooperation](#). Building on the 2023 summit agreement and the 2024 ROK-EU Security and Defence Partnership document, both sides agreed to hold an ROK-EU Security and Defence Dialogue in Seoul in the first half of the current year, entailing discussion on defence industry collaboration, security assessments, hybrid threats, and critical infrastructure development. They also deliberated on key issues such as disarmament, cybersecurity, and maritime security and also agreed to hold a Cyber Policy Consultation in the time ahead. The meeting further underscored the increasing correlation of the Indo-Pacific-Europe

security landscape, reaffirming the need for deeper ROK-EU security cooperation as 2025 marks the 15th anniversary of their strategic partnership.

Other Developments

[G7 drops 'one China' reassurances, Beijing calls it 'harming sovereignty'](#)

[The US designated South Korea a 'sensitive' country amid talk of nuclear weapons](#)

[13th Tokyo Dialogue of "Central Asia plus Japan, on "Geographical Outlook for Central Asia"](#)

[The Donald Trump administration is considering travel restrictions on 43 countries with North Korea, Russia and Pakistan on the list: Report](#)

[Ambassador for Climate Change Chung Keeyong, South Korea meets Director-General for Global Issues of Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs](#)

West Asia

by

Sanket Joshi

After nearly two months of relative calm since the ceasefire with Hamas, Israel [resumed airstrikes on Gaza on March 18](#), reportedly killing more than 400 people. The US supported Israeli airstrikes, asserting that President Trump had made it clear to Hamas that they must [release the remaining hostages immediately](#) or face severe consequences. Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu informed that he had ordered the strikes in Gaza following Hamas' rejection of proposals for [extending the ceasefire](#) and urged Gazans to evacuate. Meanwhile, the US conducted a series of attacks on Iranian-backed Houthi targets in Yemen (Hodeidah port city) on March 15 as the Houthis continued their attacks on US ships and other nations, disrupting legal commerce for all seafaring nations.

According to the US Department of Defence, the military's Central Command (CENTCOM) will continue to [use "overwhelming, lethal force"](#) against the terrorist Houthis, who have shown no interest in stopping attacks against US targets in the Red Sea. President Trump, on his part, warned that [Iran would be held responsible](#) for any attacks carried out by Houthi rebels in Yemen.

On March 17, the European Union hosted its ninth Brussels Conference on "Standing With Syria: Meeting the Needs for a Successful Transition", [mobilising EUR 5.8 billion with international support to assist Syria](#) with its inclusive transition and reconstruction. Among other leaders, the EU's High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Kaja Kallas, and Syria's interim Foreign Minister Assad al-Shaibani attended the event.

Other Developments

[CENTCOM Forces Kill ISIS Chief of Global Operations Who Also Served as ISIS #2](#)

[President Donald J. Trump's Call with President Vladimir Putin](#)

[Putin-Trump phone call: key takeaways](#)

[Oil prices ease after US-Russia agreement on 30-day energy ceasefire](#)

Central Asia

by

Jayantika Rao T.V.

On [March 17](#), President of the Republic of Tajikistan Emomali Rahmon held a meeting with President of Russia, Vladimir Putin. They discussed prospects for expanding bilateral relations of strategic partnership and alliance with a focus on trade, investment, cultural and humanitarian cooperation. They exchanged opinions on key regional issues. Various intergovernmental agreements were signed which included the Strategic Partnership Programme of the two countries' Defence Ministries for 2026–2030, the Agreement between the Ministry of Industry and Trade of Russia and the Ministry of Industry and New Technologies of Tajikistan on cooperation in the industrial sector.

On [March 12](#), US Secretary of State Marco Rubio spoke with Kazakhstan Deputy Prime Minister-Foreign Minister Murat Nurtleu to emphasise the US commitment to Kazakhstan's independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity, and a closer bilateral relationship.

Kazakh President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev chaired a meeting of the country's Security Council on [March 18](#) to review the results of the 2024 implementation of the Action Plan for National Security Risk Management for 2021-2025, which was adopted to implement the National Security Strategy. Tokayev emphasised the importance of assessing the National Security Strategy based on concrete results that benefit society, ensuring that the development of all sectors incorporates considerations for the security of citizens and the state as a whole.

Other Developments

[Kyrgyz Republic and Tajikistan Sign Historic Border Agreement](#)

[Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan to Open Four Trade Corridors](#)

Indian Ocean Region

by

Divya Rai

India and Bangladesh [concluded](#) the Naval Exercise Bongosagar 2025 and Coordinated Patrol (CORPAT) in the Bay of Bengal on March 13. The exercise saw participation from INS Ranvir, a guided-missile destroyer of the Indian Navy, and BNS Abu Ubaidah, a frigate from the Bangladesh Navy. The drills focused on improving joint operational capabilities through surface firing, tactical manoeuvres, underway replenishment, and Visit-Board-Search-Seizure (VBSS) cross-boarding exercises. The exercise provided the opportunity for both navies to develop closer links in tactical planning, coordination and information sharing for undertaking seamless maritime operations.

The Indian Coast Guard's Offshore Patrol Vessel ICGS Saksham [made a port call](#) at Antsiranana, Madagascar, on March 18, 2025. This visit reinforces India-Madagascar maritime cooperation in the Indian Ocean region. During its stay, the crew of ICGS Saksham will engage in joint training sessions with the Madagascar Coast Guard, focusing on marine pollution response (MPR), maritime search and rescue (M-SAR) and maritime law enforcement. ICG personnel will also conduct specialised training on marine MPR, focusing on handling oil spills, chemical spills and marine pollution incidents to enhance Madagascar's preparedness for environmental emergencies.

On March 13, 2025, DIG Shatrujeet Singh, Commanding Officer of Indian Coast Guard Ship Saksham, [paid a courtesy call](#) on Mr. Sylvestre Radegonde, Seychelles' Minister for Foreign Affairs and Tourism, as part of his visit to Indian Ocean countries. Discussions during the meeting focused on enhancing collaboration in maritime security, and India's vital assistance in addressing shared challenges to maintain security and stability in the Indian Ocean Region. He appreciated India for donating the patrol boat 'Boudeuse' on February 25, 2025. DIG Shatrujeet Singh proposed expanding cooperation into pollution control response efforts with the Seychelles Coast Guard. Indian Navy will also participate in Seychelles' National Day Parade this year.

Other Developments

[Indian Navy participated in the 57th Mauritius National Day parade](#)

[Rear Admiral Garin Golding, Chief of the Royal New Zealand Navy \(RNZN\), held bilateral talks with Admiral Dinesh K Tripathi during his official visit to India](#)



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