



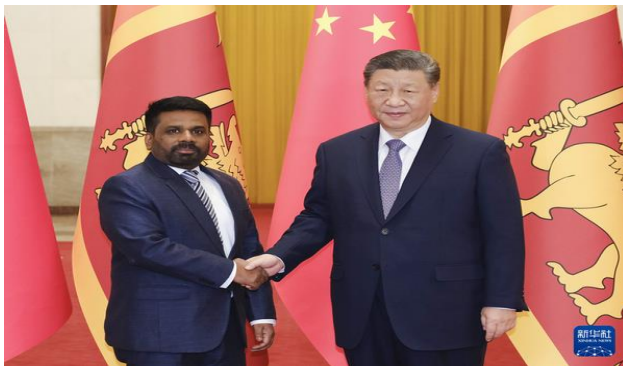
Delhi Policy Group

Advancing India's Rise as a Leading Power



India's Proximity Archives

January 22, 2025



Volume III, Issue 4 | January 22, 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: On January 15, 2025, President Xi Jinping held talks with President of Sri Lanka Anura Kumara Disanayake, in Beijing. Source: [Ministry of Foreign Affairs of PRC](#)

East Asia: On January 21, 2025, the Quad Foreign Ministers' Meeting took place after the inauguration of the new U.S. administration in Washington D.C. Source: [X/@DrSJaishankar](#)

West Asia: Russian President Vladimir Putin met Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian in Moscow on January 17, 2025. Source: [Website/President of Russia](#)

Indian Ocean Region: INS Mumbai arrived in Jakarta, Indonesia, to participate in the multinational naval exercise La Perouse 2025. Source: [X/@indiannavy](#)

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South Asia

by

Shreyas Deshmukh

A state [visit to China](#) was undertaken by Sri Lankan President Anura Kumara Disanayake from January 14 to 17. President Disanayake held talks with President Xi Jinping and met with Li Qiang, Premier of the State Council, and Zhao Leji, Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, during his visit. The [Joint Statement](#) indicates that both nations engaged in discussions to enhance Belt and Road collaboration, encompassing the Colombo Port City and Hambantota Port integrated development initiatives.

Agreements on economic and technological progress, and the integration of China's Belt and Road Initiative with Sri Lanka's 2030 digital economy strategy, comprised [fifteen cooperation documents](#) signed by both countries. The specifics of the agreements remained undisclosed during the signing ceremony. The two sides also agreed to work toward the early conclusion of a comprehensive free trade agreement. The Central Bank of Sri Lanka and the People's Bank of China have extended their bilateral [currency swap](#) arrangement for a further three-year term. An [agreement](#) was reached between President Disanayake and representatives of Chinese corporations, resulting in a [USD 3.7 billion](#) foreign direct investment commitment from Sinopec to Sri Lanka.

A [meeting](#) took place on January 14th in Pakistan between Lieutenant General S M Kamr-ul-Hassan, Principal Staff Officer of Bangladesh's Armed Forces Division, and General Syed Asim Munir, Pakistan Army Chief. In a statement, Pakistan's military indicated that Hassan and Munir jointly advocated for their countries' resistance to external influence and pledged to investigate opportunities for partnership, encompassing exchange programs and joint training exercises. In [recent years](#), Lieutenant General Hassan, the second-in-command, represents the first instance of a high-ranking Bangladeshi general travelling to Islamabad.

On January 17th, Imran Khan, former Prime Minister of Pakistan and chairman of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), received a fourteen-year prison [sentence for corruption](#) and abuse of power related to the Al-Qadir University Project Trust. His wife, Bushra Bibi, was concurrently sentenced to seven years. PTI asserted that the land was donated to the trust to establish a spiritual education center, and was not utilized for Khan's private benefit. After his conviction,

Imran Khan said that he would "neither make any deal nor seek any relief." This marks the [fourth major case](#) in which the former prime minister has been convicted.

Other Developments

[US Ambassador to India Eric Garcetti has said both India and the US want to see democracy and elections in Bangladesh as soon as possible](#)

[India to supply grant for Sri Lanka police vehicles](#)

[Pakistan secures first longer-term World Bank country partnership](#)

[IMF lowers Pakistan's GDP growth estimate to 3pc](#)

[Beijing extends loan repayment period, considers Dhaka's request for interest rate cut](#)

Southeast Asia

by

Jayantika Rao T.V

Vietnamese Prime Minister Phạm Minh Chính [held a bilateral meeting](#) with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky in Davos on January 21. The two leaders affirmed that they treasure the traditional friendship, partnership and comprehensive cooperation. PM Chính emphasised Vietnam's balanced, objective, and consistent stance on the Russia-Ukraine conflict, stating that all disputes should be resolved through peaceful means, in accordance with the fundamental principles of international law and the United Nations Charter, including supporting the mediation efforts of the international community in seeking a long-term peaceful solution to the conflict with the participation of all relevant parties.

On January 21, Vietnamese Prime Minister Phạm Minh Chính [delivered a keynote speech](#) at the seminar on the future of global trade and development in the smart era, in Davos. Held within the framework of the 55th World Economic Forum (WEF), the seminar was designed exclusively for Vietnam by the WEF, serving as a platform to shape the agenda for the 16th session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD16) to be hosted by Vietnam later this year. PM Chính called for a people-centred inclusive and global approach and urged countries to jointly fight protectionism and boost multilateral trade for development. In his view, it is necessary to fully embrace the "smart era", focusing on geopolitical and security, economic, environmental and social dimensions. He highlighted Vietnam's commitment to preparing its resources for the new era with an approach rooted in thinking and vision, with motivation stemming from innovation, and with strength derived from the people and businesses.

On [January 19](#), the foreign ministers of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) called on the [warring sides](#) in Myanmar to stop the fighting and told its representative to allow unhindered humanitarian access. "Malaysia wants to know what Myanmar has in mind," Mohamad Hasan told a news conference after a ministerial retreat on the island of Langkawi. Hasan said Myanmar – represented by a low-level official from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs after its military leaders were barred from formal ASEAN meetings – briefed the gathering about plans for a general election this year. But the bloc wants Myanmar's government to ensure peace before any polls are held, he said. "We said the election has to be inclusive. The election cannot be in

isolation, it has to involve all stakeholders," he said. "We told them the election is not our priority. Our priority is to stop the violence."

Other Developments

[Indonesia fines Google \\$12.4 million for unfair business practices](#)

[Malaysia and EU resume FTA talks following Anwar's Brussels visit](#)

[Singapore's electoral boundaries committee formed, kicking off countdown to GE2025](#)

East Asia

by

Divya Rai

Post the inauguration of the new US administration, on January 21, Japanese Foreign Minister Iwaya Takeshi, Indian External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar, Australian Foreign Minister Penny Wong, and new US Secretary of State Marco Rubio [participated](#) in the Japan-Australia-India-U.S. (Quad) Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Washington D.C. The Quad ministers issued a joint statement reaffirming their commitment to a "Free and Open Indo-Pacific" (FOIP) and discussed strategic issues concerning the region. Additionally, the ministers agreed to enhance cooperation on regional maritime, economic, and technology security and planned to hold regular foreign ministers' meetings in preparation for an upcoming leaders' summit hosted by India.

During Foreign Minister Iwaya Takeshi's visit to Washington D.C. for the Presidential Inauguration Ceremony, he engaged in significant bilateral talks with Indian, Australian and U.S. counterparts. On January 19, 2025, he [met with](#) Indian External Affairs Minister Dr. Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, where they agreed to designate the period from April 2025 to March 2026 as "Japan India Science Technology and Innovation Exchange Year" (STIY25). This designation commemorates the 40th anniversary of their agreement on cooperation in science and technology, aiming to enhance collaboration in these fields. Following this meeting, on January 21, Iwaya [held discussions](#) with U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio, marking their first official encounter. Both ministers agreed to work collaboratively to elevate the Japan-U.S. Alliance to new heights, focusing on achieving a free and open Indo-Pacific.

President Donald Trump [announced](#) that his administration is considering a 10% tariff on Chinese imports, set to take effect on February 1. This decision is based on concerns regarding China's role in supplying fentanyl to Mexico and Canada, which has contributed to a significant rise in overdose deaths in the U.S. Trump highlighted this issue during a press conference at the White House, where he stated, "We're talking about a tariff of 10 percent on China based on the fact that they're sending fentanyl to Mexico and Canada". In addition to the proposed tariff on China, Trump mentioned that he is also contemplating approximately 25% tariffs on imports from Mexico and Canada due to their perceived failure to adequately address illegal immigration and drug trafficking.

Other Developments

[Sri Lanka signed an agreement with China's Sinopec Corporation to fast-track the construction of a \\$3.7 billion oil refinery in Hambantota](#)

[South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol defended his martial law decree at the Constitutional Court hearing](#)

[Taiwan activates backup communications after undersea cables to Matsu Islands disconnected](#)

West Asia

by

Sanket Joshi

Hamas exchanged three Israeli hostages held in Gaza for Palestinian prisoners in the wake of the [ceasefire agreement between Israel and Hamas](#), which came into effect on January 19. As part of the ceasefire agreement, Hamas will release 33 hostages over a period of six weeks, while Israel will release some 90 Palestinian prisoners. However, US President Donald Trump stressed that he was ["not confident" if the ceasefire in Gaza would last](#), as there was significant pressure on Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to resume hostilities as some Israeli leaders believe the truce was a capitulation to Hamas. On January 21, President Trump revoked an executive order that had placed sanctions on [Israeli settlers for violence against Palestinians](#) in the West Bank.

Qatar's Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani, who played a key role in mediating a ceasefire between Israel and Hamas, expressed hope that the Palestinian Authority (PA) would [return to govern post-war Gaza](#). Meanwhile, in his remarks at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Saudi Arabia's Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan played down the [risk of an Israel-Iran war](#) due to President Trump's return to the White House.

Russian President Vladimir Putin met Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian in Moscow on January 17, continuing the deepening trend of Russia-Iran strategic partnership. The two sides signed a ['Treaty on Comprehensive Strategic Partnership'](#) expanding cooperation in political, security, trade, and humanitarian issues. The meeting focused on several important topics, including opposing Western sanctions and expanding economic cooperation by using national currencies in settlements, strengthening trade relations between Iran and the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), expanding cooperation in the transport sector, specifically the North-South transport corridor, and strengthening strategic coordination at the United Nations, the BRICS, and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO).

Other Developments

[What do we know about the Israel-Hamas ceasefire deal in Gaza?](#)

[Iran unveils new underground naval base in Persian Gulf amid tension with US, Israel](#)

Central Asia

by

Jayantika Rao T.V.

[Marco Rubio's confirmation as US Secretary of State on January 21](#), has raised hopes among Central Asian leaders – particularly after his recent comments regarding the Jackson-Vanik policy. An amendment to the Jackson-Vanik policy could translate into concrete action to repeal this outdated policy, which continues to hinder mutual trade. The repeal of the Jackson-Vanik amendment for Kazakhstan would be a symbolic and practical step toward deepening U.S. engagement with Central Asia. As Kazakhstan continues its economic reforms and seeks to expand ties with Western partners, Rubio's commitment to addressing this "[absurd relic](#)" of the past could pave the way for more robust trade relations and a stronger regional partnership. He further warned that continued use of such measures could push nations like Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan closer to Russia's sphere of influence.

On [January 16](#), the CSTO Secretariat hosted the first meeting of the CSTO Permanent Council of the coming year. The Chairmanship of the CSTO Permanent Council was handed over to Mirlan Turgunbekov, Permanent and Plenipotentiary Representative of the Kyrgyz Republic to the CSTO. During the meeting, the Organization's action plan for 2025 was discussed. On the initiative of the new Chairperson, Mr. Mirlan Turgunbekov, the Permanent Council formulated the motto of its activities in 2025: 80 Years of the Great Victory!

On January 14, as US President Joe Biden's administration's last activity, Armenia and the United States signed a Strategic Partnership Charter in Washington, D.C. The document was [signed](#) by Armenia's Foreign Minister Ararat Mirzoyan and US Secretary of State Antony Blinken. The section that has caught a lot of attention is the agreement opens the door for future military cooperation between the U.S. and Armenia. At first glance, [Armenia's strategy appears pragmatic](#). Caught between two geopolitical giants, Yerevan is seeking to diversify its alliances to reduce overreliance on Moscow. This diversification aligns with the growing frustration within Armenian society over Russia's perceived failures, particularly its inability to protect Armenian interests during the conflict with Azerbaijan over Karabakh.

Other Developments

[Kazakhstan's Nuclear Power Move and Implications for the West](#)

[Fossil-Fuel Rich UAE Drives Central Asia's Green Energy Transition](#)

[First Kilometers of TAPI Gas Pipeline Completed in Afghanistan](#)

Indian Ocean Region

by

Divya Rai

On January 15, 2025, the Indian Navy's indigenous guided missile destroyer INS Mumbai arrived in Jakarta, Indonesia, to participate in the [multinational naval exercise](#) La Perouse 2025. This exercise is significant as it involves navies from France, Indonesia, India, Australia, the United States, the United Kingdom, Malaysia, Singapore, and Canada. Scheduled from January 17 to 24, La Perouse aims to enhance maritime situational awareness and tactical interoperability among the participating nations through advanced-level exercises across all three domains of maritime warfare.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi [commissioned three significant naval combatants](#)—INS Surat, INS Nilgiri, and INS Vaghsheer—at the Naval Dockyard in Mumbai on January 15, 2025. This tri-commissioning is notable as it is the first time a destroyer, a frigate, and a submarine have been commissioned simultaneously. All three vessels are indigenously designed and built, reflecting India's commitment to self-reliance in defence under the Aatmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan initiative. INS Nilgiri is the lead ship of the Project 17A stealth frigate class, featuring advanced stealth technology and versatile operational capabilities. INS Surat is the fourth vessel of the Project 15B stealth destroyer class, incorporating enhanced design and capabilities. INS Vaghsheer is the sixth submarine of the Scorpene-class Project 75, designed for various roles with advanced stealth and air-independent propulsion.

India and France agreed to enhance their [cooperation in maritime security](#) during the 7th India-France Maritime Cooperation Dialogue held in New Delhi. Both countries agreed to strengthen existing mechanisms for cooperation in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR). They committed to enhancing the framework for information exchange between the Information Fusion Centre-Indian Ocean Region in Gurugram, India, and the Regional Coordination Operations Centre in Seychelles, as well as the Regional Maritime Information Fusion Centre in Madagascar. This initiative aims to facilitate coordinated surveillance efforts to counter maritime security threats in the region.

Other Developments

[Indian Navy's ship INS Tushil conducted a Maritime Partnership Exercise \(MPX\) with the Nigerian Navy ships Sokoto and DB Abuja](#)

[Sri Lankan President Anura Kumara Dissanayake concluded a four-day state visit to China](#)

[Recent satellite images have revealed a nearly complete airstrip on Yemen's Abd al-Kuri Island, likely constructed by the UAE](#)



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