

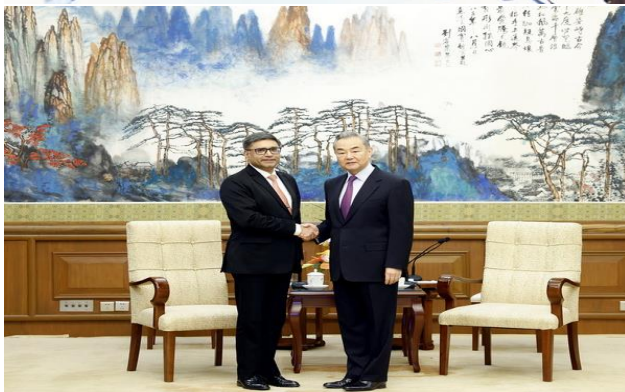


Delhi Policy Group

Advancing India's Rise as a Leading Power

India's Proximity Archives

January 29, 2025



Volume III, Issue 5 | January 29, 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 Images:

South Asia: Iran's Foreign Minister Seyed Abbas Araghchi held meeting with Amir Khan Muttaqi, the Taliban's Foreign Minister in Kabul on January 26. Source: [IEA MOFA](#)

Southeast Asia: Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto and India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi held a meeting, in New Delhi on January 25, 2024. Source: [X/@MEAIndia](#)

East Asia: Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi held talks with the visiting India's Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri in Beijing. Source: [X/@Xu Feihong](#)

West Asia: UAE's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed and India's External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar met in Abu Dhabi on January 28, 2024. Source: [Emirates News Agency-WAM](#)

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South Asia

by

Shreyas Deshmukh

A [delegation](#) from Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), headed by Major General Shahid Amir Afsar, Director General of Analysis and former Pakistani Defense Attaché in Beijing, visited Bangladesh from January 21-24. This visit followed a prior visit to Rawalpindi by Lieutenant General S M Kamr-ul-Hassan, Principal Staff Officer of Bangladesh's Armed Forces Division. The two visits represent a sudden advancement in military-to-military relations between Dhaka and Islamabad. In response to [heightened military interactions](#) between Bangladesh and Pakistan and the presence of ISI officials in Dhaka, India reacted on January 24 saying that it would implement necessary actions to uphold its national security.

On January 26, Iranian Foreign Minister Seyed Abbas Araghchi [travelled to Kabul](#) where he held bilateral meeting with the Taliban's Foreign Minister, Amir Khan Muttaqi. The meeting addressed economic cooperation, the status of Afghan migrants in Iran, border matters, and water rights. Concluding his trip, Araghchi remarked on Iran's long-standing sensitivity to Afghanistan's affairs, emphasizing the need for effective management of their shared future.

A request for [arrest warrants](#) against two senior Taliban officials, namely Supreme Leader Haibatullah Akhundzada and Chief Justice Abdul Hakim Haqqani, was submitted to the ICC by Prosecutor Karim Khan on January 23. The accused stand charged with crimes against humanity, specifically gender-based persecution, as defined by the Rome Statute. This statute obligates signatory states to prosecute those responsible for such international crimes. The ICC has, for the first time, issued arrest warrant applications in relation to Afghanistan. The Taliban's Ministry of Foreign Affairs rejected the warrants, characterizing them as lacking legal foundation, deceitful, and politically driven.

On January 25th, Mahfuj Alam, an advisor to Bangladesh's interim government, addressed a rally, declaring that the Awami League would be barred from [participating](#) in the upcoming elections. Alam, a key figure in the mass uprising that ousted Hasina's government and led to her exile on August 5th of the preceding year, asserted that only the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), led by Khaleda Zia, Jamaat-e-Islami, and other pro-Bangladesh organizations would maintain their [political involvement](#) within the nation.

Other Developments

[U.S. may put bounty on Taliban leaders over hostages, Rubio says](#)

[2 Americans Held in Afghanistan Are Freed in Prisoner Swap](#)

[Chinese national killed in Afghanistan, ISIS claims responsibility](#)

[Nepal, India agree to build two power lines, upgrade three](#)

Southeast Asia

by

Jayantika Rao T.V

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto [held wide-ranging talks](#) on cooperation in sectors such as defence manufacturing and maritime safety, seeking to further strengthen the comprehensive strategic partnership between the two countries, on January 25. Prabowo, who is on his first state visit to India at the invitation of Modi, was also the Chief Guest for the country's Republic Day celebrations on January 26. Amid international concerns over China's aggressive posturing in the Indo-Pacific, Modi stated that both leaders are committed to maintaining peace, security, prosperity and rules-based order in this entire region. Following this, Prabowo also added that the two sides had "very intensive, very frank discussion" on many key sectors of common interests in which they would like to accelerate the level of their cooperation. He said enhancing economic cooperation is "very important," and has directed his team to cut bureaucracy and over-regulation to put India and Indonesia's common interests at centre stage.

After completing his state visit to India, President Prabowo Subianto continued his journey to Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia [on January 26](#). On [January 27](#), President Prabowo met with Prime Minister of Malaysia, Anwar Ibrahim where they agreed to strengthen strategic cooperation in various fields, including the economy, energy, and defence. In addition, the two leaders also discussed cooperation in the fields of trade and investment, including the management of the palm oil industry, which is a major commodity for both countries. Cooperation in the defense sector was also a major agenda item in the meeting. During this visit, Prabowo received the [Darjah Relatives of Johor Highly Respected First Rank \(DK I Johor\) award](#) which was handed over directly by Yang di-Pertuan Agong XVII Sultan Ibrahim.

On [January 22](#), Japan and Laos elevated relations to a "comprehensive strategic partnership." Japanese Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba met with Laotian counterpart Sonexay Siphandone in Tokyo, where they said vice-ministerial-level dialogues in both foreign affairs and defense would be established. When Ishiba visited Laos for the ASEAN Summit in 2024, both sides indicated that bilateral ties would be deepened in 2025 to mark the 70th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations. Japan aims to be a potential alternative to China. Japan will cooperate on multiple fronts to contribute to Laos' fiscal

stabilization and autonomous quality economic growth, Ishiba said, according to a joint statement released after the meeting.

Other Developments

[Thaksin, Prawit in new war of words](#)

[Rubio, on first day, warns China with Asian partners](#)

[Indonesia's Prabowo faces policy reality check despite 80% approval rate](#)

[Singapore Central Bank Eases Policy for First Time in Nearly Five Years, Flags Risks Abroad](#)

East Asia

by

Divya Rai

On January 27, Vice Foreign Minister Sun Weidong of China [met](#) Indian Foreign Secretary Shri Vikram Misri in Beijing. This meeting was part of the Foreign Secretary-Vice Minister mechanism aimed at enhancing China-India relations following the leaders' discussions in Kazan. The two sides reached several common understandings to promote cooperation, including India's support for China's leadership in the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) and active participation in related activities. They agreed to strengthen strategic communication through various bilateral and multilateral platforms, commemorate the 75th anniversary of diplomatic relations in 2025 with media and cultural exchanges, and resume direct flights between the two countries to facilitate personnel exchanges. Additionally, they discussed the resumption of the Kailash Mansarovar Yatra, and more "people-to-people exchanges, including media and think-tank interactions, as well as resumption of direct air services between the two countries".

DeepSeek, a relatively obscure Chinese startup, has made a significant impact on the global tech landscape with the [launch](#) of its artificial intelligence model, DeepSeek-R1. This model reportedly rivals those developed by major players like Google and OpenAI, utilising fewer and less advanced computer chips than its competitors. DeepSeek's emergence comes at a time when the global AI landscape is heavily dominated by U.S. firms. In what many are calling a "[Sputnik moment](#)", the Chinese startup DeepSeek has emerged as a formidable competitor in the high-stakes AI arms race, seemingly leapfrogging established giants like OpenAI, Google, and Meta.

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un [inspected](#) a nuclear material production facility and the Nuclear Weapons Institute, emphasising the need to enhance the country's nuclear capabilities. This visit, reported by state media on January 29, 2025, comes as North Korea seeks to increase pressure on the United States following the inauguration of President Donald Trump. Kim called for "epochal successes" in producing weapons-grade nuclear materials and strengthening North Korea's nuclear shield. He stated that 2025 is a crucial year for bolstering the country's nuclear forces amid perceived threats from hostile nations, particularly referencing the U.S. and its military exercises with South Korea.

Other Developments

[Another plane catches fire at South Korean airport, a month after deadly crash](#)

[Taiwan opposition approves NT\\$207.6 billion budget cuts, raising national security concerns](#)

West Asia

by

Sanket Joshi

President Trump stated on January 25 that the US would like to [“just clean out” Gaza](#) and urged Jordan and Egypt to accept more Palestinian refugees. While Trump claimed that the relocation of Palestinians from Gaza may be temporary or long-term, analysts expressed concern about “ethnic cleansing” in the region. Jordan and Egypt [rejected President Trump’s proposal](#) warning that it risks expanding the conflict between Israel and Palestine. Meanwhile, Hamas released [four female Israeli soldiers](#) and 200 Palestinians were released from Israeli prisons in the second exchange since the ceasefire between the two sides.

On January 23, President Trump spoke with Saudi Arabia’s Crown Prince and [Prime Minister Mohammed bin Salman](#), marking his first call with a foreign leader since returning to the White House. The two leaders discussed ways to deepen their strategic partnership to promote peace, security, and stability in West Asia and combat terrorism. Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman has committed to [enhancing trade and investment with the US](#) over the next four years to USD 600 billion and potentially even more.

Following continued Houthi attacks on US forces in West Asia, President Trump issued an executive order on January 22 re-designating Ansar Allah (Houthis) as a [‘Foreign Terrorist Organisation’ \(FTO\)](#). The US intends to eliminate Houthis’ capabilities to attack US personnel, partners, and maritime shipping in the Red Sea.

India’s External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar visited the United Arab Emirates from January 27-29. During the visit, he met UAE’s President Shiekh Mohamed Bin Zayed, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed, and Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi Sheikh Khaled bin Mohamed. The two sides discussed continued [progress in their comprehensive strategic partnership](#) and ways to add new momentum to the India-UAE relationship. Further, EAM Dr. S. Jaishankar addressed the inaugural Raisina Middle East forum in Abu Dhabi on January 28 and discussed the [significant growth in India-Middle East relations](#) over the past decade driven by trade, connectivity, and people-to-people linkages.

Other Developments

[Foreign Minister of Saudi Arabia Meets with New Syrian Administration Leader in Damascus](#)

[Iran needs to strike nuclear understanding with Trump, IAEA chief says](#)

Central Asia

by

Jayantika Rao T.V.

On [January 25](#), Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy said, "Ukraine stands ready to transit natural gas from Azerbaijan to Europe and a contract could be inked quickly if an agreement can be reached". After meeting Moldovan President Maia Sandu to discuss a gas supply crisis in Ukraine's neighbour, Zelenskiy told reporters that "We can use our infrastructure" to transit the Azerbaijani gas, ""We can sign a contract quickly if there is political will." Zelenskiy also stated that he met Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev in Davos, with gas supplies one of the topics the two leaders discussed.

On [January 28](#), President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev called for accelerating the construction of Kazakhstan's first nuclear power plant (NPP) and creating a broader nuclear cluster to address growing energy shortages and support the country's progress. He instructed the government and Samruk Kazyna Sovereign Wealth Fund to develop long-term plans for the nuclear industry's advancement and determine the most suitable locations for constructing future NPPs while adopting modern, safe technologies.

On [January 28](#), Mullah Abdul Latif Mansoor, Afghanistan's Acting Minister of Water and Energy, convened a meeting with Hoja Ovezov, the Turkmen Ambassador to Kabul, and Murad Artikov, Head of the TAP International Project Department. The discussions, held at the Ministry of Energy and Water, underscored the commitment to enhance bilateral cooperation between Afghanistan and Turkmenistan. During the meeting, Minister Mansoor expressed appreciation for the longstanding positive ties between the two countries and emphasized the importance of further developing and expanding collaborative efforts. He highlighted the progress of the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan 500kV power transmission line project, which is pivotal for the TAP initiative. He stressed the urgency of commencing the practical work on the TAP project, assuring that Afghanistan is well-prepared for its implementation. He called for immediate coordinated and technical meetings to initiate the project's groundwork.

Other Developments

[Kyrgyz president: Border dispute with Tajikistan nearing resolution](#)

[Turkmenistan Expanding Military to Support Its Increased International Activity](#)

[Kazakhstan's CICA Chairmanship Recognized by UN for Advancing Regional Cooperation](#)

[Tokayev Prioritizes Economic Diversification, Infrastructure Transition in Country's Development](#)

Indian Ocean Region

by

Divya Rai

Admiral Muhammad Ali, Chief of Staff of the Indonesian Navy, [was welcomed](#) by Admiral Dinesh K Tripathi, Chief of Naval Staff of India, in New Delhi on January 27. This visit is part of a high-level delegation accompanying Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto, who was the Chief Guest at the Republic Day Parade 2025. The two naval leaders discussed critical areas such as joint initiatives, operational collaboration to address shared maritime challenges, and capacity building through enhanced training and information sharing. To strengthen bilateral cooperation in defence technology and strategy, Admiral Ali visited key maritime establishments like the Information Fusion Centre (IFC-IOR), Weapons and Electronics Systems Engineering Establishment (WESEE) and BrahMos Aerospace Private Limited (BAPL).

On January 28, 2025, five Indian fishermen sustained injuries, when the Sri Lankan Navy [opened fire](#) while attempting to apprehend a group of fishermen near Delft Island in the Palk Strait. The incident involved 13 Indian fishermen, who were reportedly fishing in an area where they had [permission](#) to operate until January 28. Following the incident, India lodged a "strong protest" with Sri Lanka by summoning the acting high commissioner in New Delhi and raising the matter with Sri Lanka's foreign ministry in Colombo. However, the Sri Lankan Navy [claimed](#) that the firing was accidental and occurred during a non-compliance boarding operation when the fishermen allegedly attempted to evade arrest.

The Indian Navy's INS Sarvekshak has [successfully completed](#) the final phase of a hydrographic survey in Mauritius, covering an extensive area of over 25,000 square nautical miles. The formal handover of the survey results occurred on January 23, 2025, during a ceremony onboard the vessel, where High Commissioner of India to Mauritius, Anurag Srivastava, presented the fair sheet and newly prepared nautical charts to H.E. Mr. Dharambeer Gokhool, the President of Mauritius. The new nautical charts will assist in coastal development planning and will enable Mauritius to develop its maritime infrastructure and resource management.

Other Developments

[Indian Naval Ship \(INS\) Tushil conducted a Maritime Partnership Exercise \(MPX\) with the Namibian Naval Ship Brukkaros](#)

[Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Ltd \(MDL\) and ThyssenKrupp Marine Systems \(TKMS\) have been confirmed as the only bidders meeting the eligibility criteria for India's ₹70,000 crore P75\(I\) submarine project](#)



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