



# Delhi Policy Group

Advancing India's Rise as a Leading Power



## INDIA'S PROXIMITY ARCHIVES

April 1, 2026

### *Authors*

#### **South Asia:**

Shreyas Deshmukh

#### **Southeast Asia & Central**

#### **Asia:**

Jayantika Rao T.V.

#### **West Asia:**

Sanket Joshi

#### **Indian Ocean Region:**

Divya Rai

**Volume IV, Issue 13**



**Delhi Policy Group**

Core 5A, 1st Floor, India Habitat Centre, Lodhi Road, New Delhi- 110003

[www.delhipolicygroup.org](http://www.delhipolicygroup.org)



# Delhi Policy Group

Advancing India's Rise as a Leading Power

## India's Proximity Archives

Vol. IV, Issue 13

April 1, 2026

### 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 an independently funded 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, 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](mailto:sanket@dpg.org.in).

*The views expressed in this publication are those of the authors and should not be attributed to the Delhi Policy Group as an Institution.*

### Cover Images:

1. Balendra Shah was sworn in as Nepal's Prime Minister on March 29, 2026. Source: [DD News](#)
2. Quadrilateral Consultation meeting of Foreign Ministers of Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Türkiye, and Egypt on the US-Iran War was held in Islamabad on March 29, 2026. Source: [X/ @ForeignOfficePk](#)
3. U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio addressed the nation on the ongoing war with Iran on March 31, 2026. Source: [Official X Handle/The White House](#)

© 2026 by the Delhi Policy Group

#### Delhi Policy Group

Core 5A, 1st Floor,  
India Habitat Centre,  
Lodhi Road, New Delhi- 110003.  
[www.delhipolicygroup.org](http://www.delhipolicygroup.org)

# India's Proximity Archives

Vol. IV, Issue 13

April 1, 2026

## Contents

### South Asia

Shreyas Deshmukh..... 1

### Southeast Asia

Jayantika Rao T.V..... 3

### West Asia

Sanket Joshi..... 5

### Central Asia

Jayantika Rao T.V..... 6

### Indian Ocean Region

Divya Rai..... 7

### Watch Points

◇ <i>Nepal's new leadership faces economic, political, and governance challenges.</i>
◇ <i>Pakistan's strategic play in the Iran-US conflict.</i>
◇ <i>The U.S.' military strikes on Iran's nuclear facilities at Isfahan.</i>

## South Asia

by

Shreyas Deshmukh

Pakistan has stepped up its mediation efforts for the US-Iran conflict. The second meeting of the Quadrilateral Consultation group, comprising the Foreign Ministers of Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Türkiye, and Egypt, took place in Islamabad on March 29th. The [press release](#) stated that discussions were held regarding possible strategies to cease hostilities in the US-Iran war. According to the release, both the US and Iran have indicated their trust in Pakistan's ability to mediate the discussions. During his trip to Beijing on March 31, Pakistan's Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Ishaq Dar, met with China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi to discuss the ongoing situation in the Gulf. The meeting concluded with the release of a joint "[Five-Point Initiative](#)," which advocates an immediate halt to hostilities, the prompt commencement of peace talks, the safeguarding of non-military sites, the security of shipping routes, and adherence to the UN Charter.

*Pakistan considers regional stability in the Gulf a strategic necessity, as it relies on the area for energy and economic security. Pakistan cannot afford to pick a side in this conflict, but if the war continues, it may be forced to do so.*

The Rastriya Swatantra Party (RSP) on March 26 selected Balendra Shah as its parliamentary party leader, which eventually led to his appointment as Prime Minister. His [swearing-in ceremony](#) was held on March 29 along with 15 cabinet ministers. The new government's initial Cabinet meeting resolved to [promptly enact](#) the findings from the high-level commission's report, which examined events associated with the Gen Z movement on September 8-9, 2025. This decision resulted in the arrest of former Prime Minister and CPN-UML Chairman KP Sharma Oli, along with former Home Minister Ramesh Lekhak, who are accused of suppressing the Gen Z protest. Home Minister Sudan Gurung stated that everyone is subject to the law and explained that the arrests of former Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli and former Home Minister Ramesh Lekhak are [not politically motivated](#) but rather the commencement of legal proceedings. Additionally, three former prime ministers and two former ministers are under [investigation](#) for alleged money laundering offenses. The government unveiled a [100-point work plan](#) for effective governance after the Cabinet meeting.

*The newly elected Nepali government faces significant challenges in securing economic stability, combating corruption, and prosecuting political figures accused of corruption and favouritism.*

## **Other Developments**

[Clashes Resume in Zabul Province as Pakistan–Afghanistan Ceasefire Ends](#)

[Sri Lankan President expresses gratitude towards India for support in sending fuel to amid West Asia crisis](#)

[India, Mauritius, Pakistan: Bangladesh Foreign Minister to embark on 3-nation tour in April](#)

## Southeast Asia

by

Jayantika Rao T.V.

On [March 30](#), Myanmar junta chief Min Aung Hlaing was elected as a vice president by the lower house, moving closer to becoming the country's civilian leader. Under the system, [three Vice-Presidents](#) are selected, with one later elevated to president through a Parliament-wide vote. Min Aung Hlaing received 247 of the 260 votes, a parliament official said. The upper house elected Nan Ni Ni Aye, a regional MP from Karen state with the military-aligned Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP), as another vice president. A third vice president will be [chosen by the military](#). A decisive vote to determine the next president is expected later this week. Meanwhile, the junta officially announced a reshuffle in military leadership with former spymaster Gen. Ye Win Oo being appointed as commander-in-chief, replacing Min Aung Hlaing.

*Min Aung Hlaing's election signals a carefully managed shift from military command to civilian authority. By securing the vice presidency and delegating the army to loyalist Gen. Ye Win Oo, he ensures continuity of military dominance while positioning himself to claim the presidency under constitutional cover.*

The Philippines' Department of Foreign Affairs said they have begun a "reset" of bilateral talks with China, discussing maritime tensions and potential joint oil and gas exploration. The Philippines and China discussed "practical measures that are consistent with Philippine law and policy to increase confidence in the maritime domain," including "initial exchanges on potential oil and gas cooperation" during back-to-back meetings on [March 27 and 28](#). The Philippines also said the two countries' foreign ministers – the Philippines' Secretary Maria Theresa Lazaro and China's Minister Wang Yi – are expected to meet "within the year." Representatives from the Philippines, led by DFA Undersecretary Leo Herrera-Lim, met with their Chinese counterparts during the 24th Foreign Ministry Consultations (FMC) and the 11th Meeting of the Bilateral Consultation Mechanism (BCM) on the South China Sea. The meeting in Quanzhou is the first FMC since a meeting in Manila back in March 2023 and the first BCM since January 2025 in Xiamen. The DFA said the two countries "made progress" on discussions of "coast guard to coast guard communication, ocean meteorology, and initial exchanges on potential oil and gas cooperation."

*The Philippines' decision to restart bilateral consultations with China reflects a mix of pragmatism and caution in navigating South China Sea disputes amid mounting domestic pressure over energy insecurity. By emphasising "practical measures" such as coast guard communication and preliminary talks on oil and gas cooperation, it allows the government to explore potential economic gains without compromising its legal and policy positions,*

*underscoring a balancing act between safeguarding sovereignty and addressing urgent resource constraints.*

### **Other Developments**

[Soaring Diesel Prices Set Off Transport Strike in Philippines](#)

[Asia stocks jump on optimism Iran war could end soon; STI up 1.9%](#)

[Malaysian court orders former PM Najib to pay \\$1.3bn in 1MDB case: media](#)

[Philippines Convenes ASEAN Defence Senior Officials' Meeting Working Group](#)

## West Asia

by

Sanket Joshi

On March 31, the U.S. and Israel targeted [Iran's nuclear facilities at Isfahan](#) with bunker-buster bombs. The Isfahan nuclear facility is reported to house a large quantity of Iran's 400 kg of Uranium enriched to 60 percent within an underground tunnel network. Meanwhile, President Trump issued a warning to Tehran, stating that the U.S. would [destroy Iran's energy facilities and oil wells](#) should it fail to open the Strait of Hormuz. There are plans on the table for U.S. [ground operations in Iran](#), which would not amount to a full-scale invasion, but could involve thousands of troops and take weeks or months to complete. On the other hand, President Trump also spoke about [winding down the Iran war](#) "very soon", even without a comprehensive agreement.

*The U.S.' contradictory statements on ending the war and Iran's defiance against Washington and Tel Aviv indicate that the Gulf conflict is likely to continue for some time to come.*

Amidst Iran's blockade of the Strait of Hormuz, on March 31, Brent crude [prices touched USD 118 per barrel](#). Considering the sky-high crude prices, President Trump urged countries dependent on oil and gas from the Gulf region (Strait of Hormuz) to deal with Iran on their own, as the U.S. would not be able to assist. He urged countries to buy more gas from the U.S.

*President Trump's statement presents the U.S. as a plentiful source of crude oil and encourages countries to buy more energy from the U.S., diversifying their supplies from the Middle East.*

### Other Developments

[UAE backs military action to reopen the Strait of Hormuz](#)

[Kuwait says Iran drone attack sets airport fuel tanks ablaze, no casualties](#)

[US-Iran mediation: What are each side's demands – and is a deal possible?](#)

[Israel vows to occupy swathes of southern Lebanon to expand buffer zone](#)

[US deploys 3rd aircraft carrier – the USS George HW Bush – to Middle East as Iran war rumbles on](#)

## Central Asia

by

Jayantika Rao T.V.

On [March 31](#), Deputy Foreign Ministers of CSTO member states convened for face-to-face consultations, focusing on preparations for upcoming statutory meetings in April and May, engagement with third countries and international organisations, and the expansion of public diplomacy. The discussions underscored the CSTO's effort to define its role within the evolving international order, highlighting the need to strengthen its visibility and credibility. Beyond organisational matters, participants [addressed arms control](#), disarmament, and non-proliferation, reflecting the bloc's concern with global security frameworks. Member state delegations also emphasised reinforcing international agreements, enhancing regional security cooperation, and coordinating actions across specialised platforms. The consultations placed particular weight on peaceful conflict resolution and collective security measures, signalling the CSTO's intent to project itself as both a stabilising force and a more authoritative actor in international diplomacy.

*The consultations reveal CSTO's bid to bolster legitimacy and collective security by coupling organisational reforms with arms control dialogue, positioning the bloc as a stabilising actor within an increasingly fragmented international order.*

[During a conference in Uzbekistan](#) on March 30–31, Russia and Uzbekistan highlighted the breadth of their relationship, from trade and industrial projects to transport links and regional planning. The meeting was organised by Uzbekistan's [Institute for Strategic and Regional Studies](#) and Russia's Kremlin-linked policy forum, the [Valdai Discussion Club](#). Participants [included](#) Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Mikhail Galuzin, Uzbek Deputy Foreign Minister Bobur Usmanov, ISRS director Eldor Aripov, Russian Ambassador Alexei Yerkhov, and other Uzbek and Russian officials, analysts, and business representatives. The conference emphasized the growing role of direct regional links. Uzbek officials highlighted more than 200 regional initiatives worth over \$4 billion and identified Tatarstan as a key partner in industry, petrochemicals, engineering, information technology, and education. During the conference, it was reiterated that energy remains a key part of the relationship.

*While the conference did not lead to a major treaty, it showed instead that Uzbekistan is expanding practical cooperation with Russia across trade, industry, energy, and transport while maintaining a broader multi-vector foreign policy.*

### Other Developments

[Repeated Drone Incidents Expose Airspace Risks on Russia–Central Asia Frontier](#)

[Azerbaijan's silent retreat from the Russian frontier: Implications and opportunities](#)

## Indian Ocean Region

by

Divya Rai

The Indian Navy hosted the [IONS Maritime Exercise \(IMEX\) TTX 2026](#) at the Maritime Warfare Centre, Southern Naval Command in Kochi on March 27. The exercise saw participation from Bangladesh, France, Indonesia, Kenya, Maldives, Mauritius, Myanmar, Seychelles, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, and Timor-Leste naval delegates, alongside distinguished officers from IONS member navies, IOS SAGAR international representatives, and the Indian Navy. Its primary objectives focused on enhancing shared understanding of operational approaches and constraints, examining coordination mechanisms such as information sharing and decision-making processes, and refining IONS frameworks – including validation of maritime security guidelines – through practical application.

*As India assumes the IONS chairmanship for the 2026–2028 cycle after a gap of sixteen years, the IONS maritime exercise positions New Delhi as a maritime leader in the IOR amid rising non-traditional threats like piracy and HADR.*

On March 27, 2026, the Defence Acquisition Council (DAC), chaired by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, [granted Acceptance of Necessity \(AoN\)](#) for various proposals worth approximately Rs 2.38 lakh crore. For the Indian Army, approvals included the Air Defence Tracked System for real-time air defence control and reporting; Armoured Piercing Tank Ammunition to enhance anti-tank lethality; High Capacity Radio Relay for reliable communication; Dhanush Gun System to boost artillery range, accuracy, and lethality across terrains; and Runway Independent Aerial Surveillance System for unit-level surveillance. The Indian Air Force received clearances for medium transport aircraft to replace AN-32 and IL-76 fleets for strategic, tactical, and operational airlift needs; the S-400 long-range surface-to-air missile system to counter long-range aerial threats; remotely piloted strike aircraft for offensive counter-air operations, coordinated strikes, and stealth ISR activities; and Su-30 aero-engine overhauls to extend aircraft service life and meet operational demands. The Indian Coast Guard was approved for Heavy Duty Air Cushion Vehicles to enable multipurpose coastal roles, including high-speed patrolling, reconnaissance, search and rescue, and logistics support.

*These DAC approvals represent a robust strategic push to modernise India's armed forces amid regional tensions, prioritising layered air defence, artillery firepower, air mobility, and maritime surveillance while sustaining legacy platforms.*

## Other Developments

[INS Sudarshini arrives At Sète, France, to participate in the prestigious 'Escale à Sète' maritime festival](#)

[MoD & BEL sign Rs 1,950 crore contract for Mountain Radars for IAF](#)

[INS Trikanth concluded her port call at Maputo, Mozambique](#)

[Pakistan Navy Unveils 'Jet LRMP' Sea Sultan Expansion](#)

['Malwan', the second of eight Anti-Submarine Warfare Shallow Water Craft \(ASW SWC\) was delivered to the Indian Navy](#)



**Delhi Policy Group**  
Core 5A, 1st Floor,  
India Habitat Centre, Lodhi Road  
New Delhi - 110003  
India

[www.delhipolicygroup.org](http://www.delhipolicygroup.org)