



Delhi Policy Group

Advancing India's Rise as a Leading Power

INDIA'S PROXIMITY ARCHIVES

December 3, 2025

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South Asia:

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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: Minister of Foreign Affairs Hakan Fidan met with Abbas Araghchi, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Iran, in Tehran. Source: [Ministry of Foreign Affairs – Iran](#)

Central Asia: The leaders of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) met in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, on November 27, 2025. Source: [President of the Republic of Belarus](#)

Indian Ocean Region: Taragiri, the fourth ship of Nilgiri Class (Project 17A) and the third built by Mazagon Dock Shipbuilding Ltd (MDL), was delivered to the Indian Navy on November 28, 2025, at MDL, Mumbai. Source: [X/@indiannavy](#)

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Watch Points

◇ Iran to hold regional meeting to address tensions between Afghanistan and Pakistan
◇ Malaysia explores a new MOU with China post the trade agreement with US
◇ North Korea accelerates military modernisation amid regional tensions

South Asia

by

Shreyas Deshmukh

On November 30, an unannounced discussion was held in Riyadh between a high-level delegation from the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan and Pakistan, [mediated](#) by Saudi Arabia. This visit follows three rounds of discussions between the Afghan and Pakistani delegations, which took place in Doha and Istanbul under the mediation of Turkey and Qatar. No official declarations have been issued by Afghan, Pakistani, or Saudi authorities regarding the visit or the specifics of the consultations. Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan, anticipated to head a delegation to Islamabad to assist in mitigating tensions between Afghanistan and Pakistan, made [a visit to Tehran](#) on November 30. A regional summit will be held in December, according to Iran's foreign minister, to resolve the current issues between Afghanistan and Pakistan. In the meantime, the [Security Council](#) may contemplate a resolution on this conflict, as suggested by a UN report.

The countries that share borders with Afghanistan and Pakistan are reinforcing their borders to mitigate the conflict's spillover effect. The interest in mediation displayed by West Asian states implies a desire to be more active in the resolution of regional conflicts, as well as compete for political influence in the region.

Five Chinese mine workers were killed and five others were injured in [two cross-border attacks](#) in Tajikistan launched from Afghanistan in the past week. According to the Tajik president's office, these events underscore increasing threats along the mountainous border with Afghanistan. Incidents of this nature targeting Chinese nationals in Tajikistan have also been reported in the past. Tajikistan's delegation [visited Kabul](#) in November, marking the first such visit since the Taliban's takeover. They convened with Taliban Chief Minister Mohammad Hassan Akhund and their intelligence head, Abdulhaq Wasiq. On November 27, the Taliban-appointed governor of Badakhshan travelled to Tajikistan for discussions regarding [border security](#).

Tajikistan, along with other CSTO member nations, is attempting to establish a security perimeter along the border region of the Central Asian republic with Afghanistan. The ongoing instability is attributed to the historical tensions between the Tajik government and the Taliban, compounded by the actions of drug and arms traffickers near the Afghanistan-Tajikistan border. A rising Chinese presence in this region makes them an easy target of terrorist organisations and criminal gangs.

Other Developments

[120 Political Parties Apply for Nepal's March 5 House of Representatives Election](#)

[Nepal and India to launch joint drive against encroachment at no-man's land](#)

[Bangladesh Conducts Missile Launches in Bay Of Bengal as part of Sea Exercise](#)

[Former Bangladesh PM Khaleda Zia remains in critical condition at Dhaka hospital](#)

[Cyclone Ditwah left behind trail of destruction in Sri Lanka; India provides humanitarian aid to island nation](#)

[India-Maldives joint military exercise begins in Thiruvananthapuram](#)

Southeast Asia

by

Jayantika Rao T.V.

On [December 1](#), the Philippines announced it would defer awarding part of a US\$ 3.9 billion plan to build a 32 km bridge across Manila Bay after opposition to the potential involvement of Chinese firms, citing national security concerns. Currently, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) is reviewing proposals to ensure compliance with environmental and governance standards. The China Harbour Engineering Company submitted the [most competitive bids](#) of 4.87 billion peso (US\$81.7 million) offer for the 7.25 billion peso (US\$124 million) land approach project. However, the Public Works Secretary Vince Dizon, Defence Secretary Gilberto Teodoro Jnr, the Philippine Interisland Shipping Association and other maritime industry stakeholders urged rejection of the bid, warning that awarding the project to a Chinese state-owned firm posed risks of sabotage, intelligence gathering, and integrity issues. China Harbour, a subsidiary of China Communications Construction Company, has faced scrutiny with it being sanctioned by the US in 2020 for destructive dredging in the South China Sea and alleged corruption, predatory financing, and environmental abuses.

The Philippines' decision highlights a broader regional trend in Southeast Asia where states are becoming increasingly wary of Chinese infrastructure projects, weighing economic gains against long-term sovereignty and security risks.

Malaysia is seeking to pacify China by [exploring a new memorandum of understanding \(MOU\)](#) that the latter proposed in the wake of a controversial trade treaty Malaysia signed with the United States. Just days after Beijing raised “grave concerns” over Kuala Lumpur’s agreement with Washington, Malaysia’s Investment, Trade and Industry Minister Tengku Zafrul Aziz said on December 2 that the proposed deal with China would cover “strategic sectors” between the two trading partners. But the conundrum lies in how this could be reconciled with the demands of the earlier deal with Washington, signed during President Donald Trump’s visit to Malaysia, which requires the Southeast Asian nation to align with the US on sensitive national security. On November 28, Beijing made public that it had expressed unease about the US-Malaysia Agreement on Reciprocal Trade (ART) during a November 25 bilateral meeting. China’s rebuke following the trade deal, calling on Malaysia to “fully consider and properly handle this matter in the light of its long-term national interests”, comes on the heels of a similar meeting it had with Cambodian officials on November 18. Chinese trade envoy Li Chenggang had also urged Phnom Penh to ensure “any agreement should not affect global trade development and regional cooperation and must not harm China’s interests”.

China’s main concern with the US–Southeast Asia trade deal is that clauses requiring alignment with Washington on national security issues threaten its export market access and limit access to foreign technologies vital for chipmaking and AI. Malaysia, meanwhile, faces mounting pressure from both China and the US, with Prime Minister Anwar’s administration criticised at home for a deal perceived

as compromising national sovereignty, leaving Kuala Lumpur caught between safeguarding economic ties and managing domestic political backlash.

Other Developments

[Mahathir lodges police report against Malaysia PM Anwar over US trade deal](#)

[How deforestation turbocharged Indonesia's deadly floods](#)

[Death toll from Indonesia floods and landslides passes 700](#)

[Hunt for missing flight MH370 to resume this month, Malaysia says](#)

East Asia

by

Arshiya Chaturvedi

At the event celebrating the 80th anniversary of the North Korean Air Force on November 30, Kim Jong Un, the North Korean leader, [proclaimed that the country's air force will be upgraded with "new strategic military assets"](#). Kim also emphasised the national air force's potential role in establishing nuclear deterrence and in countering espionage activities or potential military provocations by adversaries. Visual accounts from the event show the North Korean leader observing the unmanned aircraft, the First Person View (FPV) drone, mobile missile launchers and other things. North Korea is already undertaking mass production of the displayed short-range FPV drone.

This call for upgrading and diversification of the deterrence toolkit is intended to bolster North Korea's strategic capabilities, particularly in the context of evolving regional rivalries and technological transformations.

China and Japan's discord over the Japanese PM's remarks last month on potential armed intervention in a Taiwan contingency has escalated beyond their bilateral diplomatic space. There has been a spree of cancellations of several Japanese music events, [with one performance by singer Maki Otsuki being halted midway on November 28](#). The Chinese Commerce Ministry spokesperson previously stated in a press conference that 'Prime Minister Takaichi's erroneous remarks concerning Taiwan have [undermined the political foundation of China-Japan relations and seriously damaged bilateral economic and trade exchanges](#).' China has even [voiced its rebuke to the remarks at the UN Security Council](#).

Japan's recent clearer and assertive stance on Taiwan has triggered a multi-dimensional Chinese response encompassing diplomatic, economic, cultural and military signalling, while also hardening the broader regional security postures.

Other Development

[Asia's arms race shift: India climbs, China slides on PLA graft charges](#)

[Taiwan detects 9 Chinese aircraft, 8 naval vessels, 2 ships around its territory](#)

[Nvidia, Japan's Fanuc team up for major 'physical AI' leap in robotics](#)

[Japan PM's pledge to 'work, work, work, work, and work' wins catchphrase of year](#)

[U.S. Commerce chief confirms South Korea's 15% tariff rate retroactive to November 1, 2025](#)

[South Korea spent \\$850 million on AI textbooks. The project collapsed in 4 months](#)

[Mann leads Punjab delegation to Japan and South Korea for investor outreach](#)

West Asia

by

Sanket Joshi

On December 2, Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu met with the US President's Envoy for Lebanon, Morgan Ortagus, as border tensions with [Lebanon's Hezbollah mounted](#). Israel cautioned that the Lebanese government is not taking sufficient steps to disarm Hezbollah, which has grown its ranks and replenished missiles and rockets smuggled from Syria. The IDF warned that unless Hezbollah disarms, another round of conflict is inevitable. Meanwhile, on December 2, the UN General Assembly approved a resolution calling on Israel to [withdraw from the Golan Heights](#). Israel rejected the UNGA resolution, asserting that it demonstrated the UN's "detachment from reality". Rather than addressing the crimes perpetrated by the Iranian axis or the dangerous activities of militias in Syria, the resolution calls for Israel to withdraw from the Golan Heights, a strategic defence line crucial for protecting Israeli citizens.

Iran-backed Hezbollah's top leadership has been systematically eliminated by the IDF since Hamas attacked Israel on October 7, 2023. If the Lebanese government fails to disarm Hezbollah by December 31, 2025, the deadline set by the US, the Israeli military could reassess its options and launch a new military intervention in Lebanon.

During his visit to the Middle East on November 30, Leo XIV, the 267th Pope of the Catholic Church, reaffirmed the Vatican's (The Holy See) support for the [establishment of a Palestinian State](#) as a means to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Pope Leo informed us that the Vatican is friends with Israel and seeks to be a mediating voice between Israel and Palestine.

The Pope voiced his support for the establishment of a Palestinian state, but Israel's opposition to this will remain a serious long-term obstacle.

Other Developments

[Unmanned vessel attacked Russian shadow-fleet tanker in Black Sea, Turkey says](#)

[Russia and Saudi Arabia sign deal for visa-free travel](#)

[The US and Syrian forces jointly carried out airstrikes on ISIS weapons storage facilities in southern Syria on November 24 and 27](#)

Central Asia

by

Jayantika Rao T.V.

On [November 27](#), the summit of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) was held in Bishkek. In order to strengthen the analytical capacity of the Organisation, the Collective Security Council decided to establish an Information and Analytical Department within the CSTO Secretariat. The new unit is tasked with comprehensively monitoring and forecasting the situation in the CSTO area of responsibility. One of the outcomes of the session was the adoption of the CSTO Collective Security Council Declaration. The meeting participants also reviewed interaction within the CSTO in 2025 and coordinated plans to improve the system of collective security. As the upcoming chair, [Russian President Vladimir Putin](#) briefed the meeting on the priorities of Russia's CSTO chairmanship in 2026 and unveiled the theme as "Collective Security in a Multipolar World". Armenia chose to boycott the meeting once again.

Amid rising doubts over the CSTO's efficacy, highlighted by Armenia's renewed boycott that exposed internal fractures, the remaining six members sought to project unity by outlining long-term regional goals and introducing new international roadmaps to make the organisation more practical. The establishment of an Information and Analytical Department reflects an effort to build a more sophisticated military-political structure, however, much of the summit ultimately repeated familiar rhetoric from previous gatherings.

On the sidelines of the CSTO summit on [November 27](#), Russian President Vladimir Putin met with President of Tajikistan Emomali Rahmon to discuss the situation at Tajikistan's borders. According to Reuters from sources within the Tajik Security Council, the leaders discussed the [possibility of deploying forces from Moscow](#)'s military base in the Central Asian country to jointly patrol the Tajik-Afghan border. The base is Russia's largest overseas military facility and is located close to the Tajik capital, Dushanbe. Two of the other sources, in Tajikistan's State Committee for National Security, also confirmed the talks with Russia, which, if successful, would see Russia use helicopters to help patrol the 1,344-kilometre (835-mile) border with Afghanistan, which runs through mountainous terrain. The Taliban authorities in Afghanistan have said they will cooperate with Tajikistan on security issues around the border. Until the early 2000s, the Russian base, along with Russian border troops in Tajikistan, was tasked with guarding the Tajik border with Afghanistan. Tajikistan has been independently guarding the frontier since 2005.

Tajikistan's rush to deploy Russian troops reflects both its security vulnerabilities and China's growing leverage in Central Asia, as Beijing's demand for protection of its citizens and businesses – after five workers were killed in a cross-border drone strike from Afghanistan – underscores how Chinese interests now shape regional security dynamics.

Other Developments

[New agreements signal deepening EU–Central Asia economic ties](#)

[CSTO Faces Uncertain Future as Putin Champions Russian Arms](#)

['Central Asia Quartet' offers new America First model abroad: analysts](#)

[U.S. Waiver of Sanctions on Iran's Chabahar Port is Good News for Central Asia](#)

[On December 4–5, Vladimir Putin will make a state visit to India at the invitation of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi](#)

Indian Ocean Region

by

Divya Rai

INS Taragiri, the fourth Nilgiri-class frigate under Project 17A and third built by Mazagon Dock Shipbuilding Ltd (MDL), was [delivered](#) to the Indian Navy on 28 November 2025 at MDL, Mumbai. Taragiri revives the name of a former Leander-class frigate that served from 16 May 1980 to 27 June 2013, offering 33 years of service, while introducing leaps in stealth, firepower, automation, and survivability. Designed by the Warship Design Bureau and overseen by the Warship Overseeing Team (Mumbai), it follows integrated construction for timely delivery and features 75% indigenisation, involving over 200 MSMEs. The weapon suite includes BrahMos supersonic missiles, MF-STAR radar, MRSAM air defence, 76 mm super rapid gun, 30 mm and 12.7 mm close-in weapons, and ASW rockets/torpedoes. It is the fourth P17A delivery in 11 months, with three more (one from MDL and two from GRSE) due by August 2026.

The delivery of INS Taragiri in 11 months halves build times to 81 months, scaling production for seven frigates by August 2026. This pace demonstrates India's maturing warship ecosystem, with four deliveries since December 2024 (Nilgiri first), boosting capacity for future projects and self-reliance.

INS Vikrant [completed](#) its maiden overseas voyage to Colombo, Sri Lanka, from 27 to 29 November 2025, alongside stealth frigate INS Udaygiri for the International Fleet Review (IFR). The event is part of the Sri Lanka Navy's 75th anniversary celebrations and features participation from naval ships, delegations and observers from several countries like Iran, Russia, Malaysia, the Maldives, Pakistan and Bangladesh. This visit marks the maiden overseas deployment of both ships and underscores India's commitment to strengthening regional maritime cooperation. In response to the impact of Cyclonic Storm Ditwah in Sri Lanka during the visit, INS Vikrant and INS Udaygiri [were immediately](#) tasked to provide immediate relief under Operation Sagar Bandhu to aid Sri Lanka.

The maiden participation and short-notice HADR operations to aid Sri Lanka highlight India's role as the First Responder in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) and reflect India's emphasis on promoting peace, stability and security through collaboration and interoperability.

INS Sahyadri, an indigenously built Shivalik-class stealth frigate from the Eastern Naval Command, [conducted](#) a bilateral maritime exercise at sea with the Philippine Navy's frigate BRP Jose Rizal on 26 November 2025, prior to a port call in Manila. Activities included tactical communication drills, navigation manoeuvres, Visit Board Search and Seizure (VBSS) operations, and flying exercises to enhance professional synergy. This followed Sahyadri's participation in multilateral events like MALABAR-2025, AUSINDEX-2025, and JAIMEX-25.

The operational deployment of INS Sahyadri in the Indo-Pacific is a key part of India's strategy to bolster ties with Southeast Asian nations and is in line with its "Act East Policy".

Other Developments

[Navy has its eyes on Chinese activities in Indian Ocean](#)



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