



# Delhi Policy Group

Advancing India's Rise as a Leading Power



## INDIA'S PROXIMITY ARCHIVES

May 6, 2026

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**Delhi Policy Group**

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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 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, 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](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. Sri Lanka and Maldives signed multiple MoUs during the visit of President Muizzu to Colombo on April 4, 2026. Source: [The President's Office Republic of Maldives](#)
2. Indonesian Minister of Defense Sjafrie Sjamsoeddin received Japanese Minister of Defense H.E. Koizumi Shinjiro at the 2026 Indonesia-Japan Defense Ministers' Meeting in Jakarta on Monday, May 4, 2026. Source: [Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Indonesia](#)
3. Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov meeting the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, in Astana on April 30, 2026. Source: [X/@mfa\\_russia](#)

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## Watch Points

◇ <i>US expands defence assistance to Pakistan.</i>
◇ <i>Japanese Defence Minister Shinjiro Koizumi concludes Southeast Asia tour.</i>
◇ <i>Iran launches drone strike on the UAE's Fujairah Petroleum Industries Zone.</i>
◇ <i>Within twenty-four hours of its launch, President Donald Trump suspends Project Freedom.</i>
◇ <i>Indian Navy commissions INS Mahendragiri, the sixth ship of the Nilgiri class.</i>

## South Asia

by

Shreyas Deshmukh

The United States Air Force has awarded a contract valued at USD 488 million to Northrop Grumman Systems Corp. to provide extensive engineering and technical support for [F-16 Fighting Falcon radar systems](#) of Pakistan and other countries. The official award notice, issued on April 28, states that the firm-fixed-price, indefinite-delivery, indefinite-quantity contract will facilitate support for the APG-66 and APG-68 radar systems of F-16 fighter aircraft. The project is slated for execution in Linthicum Heights, Maryland, with operations anticipated to conclude by March 31, 2036. This military contract follows a separate US notification in December 2025 when the Defence Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA) informed Congress of a proposed USD 686 million package to upgrade and support Pakistan's F-16 fleet.

*The United States' continued involvement in sustaining Pakistan's F-16 fleet is evident through the new long-term support contract and the previously announced upgrade package, indicating a re-strengthening ties between the US and the Pakistan's military establishment.*

Maldivian President Mohammad Muizzu visited Sri Lanka from May 3-6, during which he held a bilateral meeting with President Anura Kumara Dissanayake. At an official dinner hosted by President Dissanayake, President Muizzu emphasized the necessity for Sri Lanka and the Maldives to cooperate in maintaining the Indian Ocean as a [secure, stable, and opportunity--filled area](#) for all surrounding nations. Agreements were signed by both countries on [various fronts](#), including the prevention of violent extremism, and collaborative academic efforts in the defence and health sectors.

*Amidst the backdrop of the US-Iran conflict and the evolving geopolitical landscape in the Indian Ocean, regional nations are confronting a multitude of challenges. The Maldivian President's visit to Sri Lanka is significant, suggesting a potential for a new shared regional approach to tackle these challenges.*

### Other Developments

[Nepal sends diplomatic notes to India, China over Lipulekh route](#)

[Bangladesh seeks LDC graduation deferment at UN hearing](#)

[Chinese firms win Tk 945cr deals to drill 3 gas, oil wells in Bangladesh](#)

[India-Sri Lanka land bridge: time for wavering over: Indian envoy](#)

## Southeast Asia

by

Jayantika Rao T.V.

On [May 4](#), Indonesia and Japan signed a landmark Defense Cooperation Arrangement (DCA) to advance bilateral security, maritime safety, and defence industrial development, opening up the prospects of Indonesian purchasing Japanese military equipment. The agreement was signed by Indonesian Defense Minister Sjafrie Sjamsoeddin and his Japanese counterpart Koizumi Shinjiro in Jakarta, with both hailing it as a milestone in bilateral relations. Speaking to reporters, Sjafrie and Koizumi described the first Indonesia-Japan defence ministerial meeting of the year as an important step toward deepening long-standing bilateral ties, underscoring their shared commitment to closer coordination between the two countries' defence establishments. At the same time, [Koizumi said](#) that "Amid an increasingly complex and tense international situation, including developments in Iran, deepening defence cooperation between Japan and Indonesia, both maritime nations that share fundamental values, will make a significant contribution to peace and stability, (also) for the region as a whole."

*The visit and deal with Jakarta signals a deeper transformation in Tokyo's security posture and its emerging role as a provider of military capability in the Indo-Pacific.*

On [May 5](#), Japanese Defense Minister Koizumi Shinjiro and Philippine Defense Secretary Gilberto Teodoro agreed to establish a bilateral working group to advance the transfer of Japanese Maritime Self-Defense Force (MSDF) equipment, including Abukuma-class destroyer escorts and aircraft. Koizumi stated that the initiative forms part of a broader framework to deepen defense equipment and technology cooperation. The [confirmation](#) that Tokyo and Manila are moving toward the transfer of used MSDF destroyer escorts – Japan's first potential deal involving a major naval platform in decades – follows Tokyo's recent easing of military export rules, which now permit the transfer of lethal weapons. Both ministers [voiced concern over China's intensifying coercive actions](#) in disputed waters. In a joint statement, Koizumi and Teodoro reaffirmed their opposition to unilateral attempts to alter the status quo by force or coercion in the East China Sea and South China Sea, underscoring their shared alarm over China's activities in these contested maritime areas. Koizumi also met with President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. to discuss expanding defense ties between Japan and the Philippines, both treaty allies of the United States.

*If realised, the deal could become Japan's first export of lethal military equipment under its revised framework – an outcome with significant implications not only for Japan's defense industry but also for regional security dynamics.*

### Other Developments

[ASEAN leaders under pressure to address economic fallout of Iran conflict](#)

[Thailand's embrace of Myanmar's generals redraws ASEAN's moral map](#)

[Thai cabinet approves plans to borrow \\$12bn to ease Iran war fallout](#)

## West Asia

by

Sanket Joshi

On May 5, U.S. President Donald J. Trump claimed that “great progress” had been made toward a final agreement with Iran and that the U.S. is [pausing ‘Operation Freedom’ for a short time](#). However, Trump maintained that the U.S. would continue the blockade of Iranian ports. Meanwhile, as Tehran and Washington exchanged peace proposals through Pakistan, Iranian drone attacks struck the UAE's [Fujairah Petroleum Industries Zone](#) on May 4, injuring three Indian nationals. [India condemned the attack on Fujairah](#) and called for the immediate cessation of hostilities and the targeting of civilian infrastructure.

*The Fujairah port serves as the terminal for the Abu Dhabi Crude Oil Pipeline (Habshan-Fujairah), a critical alternative export route for the UAE that bypasses the Strait of Hormuz. Iran's drone attack was aimed at disrupting oil supplies from the Fujairah port.*

Amidst continuing Chinese imports of Iranian oil, U.S. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent accused [Beijing of funding Iran's terrorism](#) in the Middle East and around the world. Despite these accusations, he urged China to help the U.S. in efforts to reopen the Strait of Hormuz.

*Even as the U.S. tightens its grip on Iran-China oil trade, China is defying American sanctions in a show of resistance ahead of President Trump's visit to Beijing.*

On May 5, the [UN Security Council began talks](#) on the text of a U.S.-drafted resolution with Gulf nations, which, if approved, could lead to sanctions against Iran and potentially authorise the use of force if Tehran continues attacks on commercial ships. In light of this, Secretary Rubio urged Russia and China not to repeat their vetoes opposing the Hormuz resolution.

*In April 2026, China and Russia vetoed a draft UNSC resolution on shipping in the Strait of Hormuz, as they viewed it as biased against Iran. It remains to be seen what positions Beijing and Moscow adopt on a revised version of the Hormuz resolution.*

### Other Developments

[Secretary Rubio says US has achieved objectives of Iran operation](#)

[Rubio says Israel-Lebanon peace deal is achievable but Hezbollah is a problem](#)

## Central Asia

by

Jayantika Rao T.V.

On [April 30](#), Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov was received in Astana by President of the Republic of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Tokayev. Both sides commended the steady advancement of Russian-Kazakh relations as a comprehensive strategic partnership and alliance highlighting robust trade, investment, and economic cooperation, close coordination within Eurasian integration frameworks, and alignment on key regional and international issues. They reaffirmed their commitment to deepening cooperation across all areas, including sustained dialogue at the highest levels. Lavrov also held talks with Kazakhstan's Minister of Foreign Affairs Ermek Kosherbayev. The foreign ministers discussed a broad range of issues related to expanding Russian-Kazakh cooperation across the political, trade and economic, cultural and humanitarian, and educational spheres, among others. They also reviewed progress in implementing key agreements reached by the leaders of the two countries.

*The visit illustrates Russia's deliberate strategy of reinforcing its partnership with Kazakhstan by signaling continuity and depth in bilateral ties, highlighting both economic cooperation and alignment through Eurasian integration structures.*

On May 4, the Armenian capital Yerevan hosts the [8<sup>th</sup> European Political Community summit](#) under the motto "Building the future: unity and stability in Europe". Among those attending were French President Emmanuel Macron, NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, European Council President António Costa, and prime ministers including Donald Tusk, Keir Starmer, and Petteri Orpo. Leaders from neighbouring countries also took with Azerbaijani President [Ilham Aliyev](#) joining the summit online. Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan said in his address that peace has been achieved between Armenia and Azerbaijan. He added that the two countries are now working closely to strengthen it and make it more institutional. He stressed that, for the first time, Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev is taking part in an event held in Armenia, albeit via video link, and expressed hope of visiting Azerbaijan himself in 2028 to attend the 12th European Political Community summit. However, the Summit also revealed deep geopolitical fault lines in the region with no Central Asian leaders attending.

*The summit signaled a regional shift - Armenia welcomed Europe's leaders while remaining within Moscow-led blocs like the CIS and Eurasian Economic Union. For Central Asian states pursuing multi-vector policies, it showed how a post-Soviet country can broaden its diplomacy without breaking from Russia.*

### Other Developments

[Kazakhstan Maintains Lead in Trade with China Across Central Asia](#)

[Belousov's Bishkek Warning: Russia Uses SCO Meeting to Target Outside Influence in Central Asia](#)

## Indian Ocean Region

by

Divya Rai

Mahendragiri, the sixth ship of the Nilgiri class Project 17A and the fourth built at Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited MDL, was [delivered](#) to the Indian Navy on 30 April 2026 in Mumbai. Designed by the Warship Design Bureau and overseen by the Warship Overseeing Team Mumbai, the Project 17A frigates are advanced multi-mission platforms that represent a major leap in stealth, firepower, automation, survivability, and indigenous combat capability. Mahendragiri is equipped with an advanced weapon and sensor suite, CODAG propulsion, Controllable Pitch Propellers, and an Integrated Platform Management System, enabling anti-surface, anti-air, and anti-submarine warfare operations. With 75% indigenous content, the project has engaged over 200 MSMEs at MDL and generated employment for around 4,000 people directly and more than 10,000 indirectly, underscoring the Indian Navy's enduring focus on Aatmanirbharta in ship design and shipbuilding.

*The commissioning marked another significant milestone in the Indian Navy's pursuit of self-reliance in warship design and construction.*

U.S. President Donald Trump [launched](#) a new operation on May 4, a U.S. Navy operation to escort stranded merchant ships out of the Persian Gulf through the Strait of Hormuz. Project Freedom aims to assist neutral commercial ships trapped due to Iran's blockade, using U.S. destroyers, aircraft, and unmanned platforms. Iran responded to Project Freedom with renewed hostility. Interestingly, President Trump [announced](#) on May 5 – just one day after the operation began – that he is pausing Project Freedom, citing progress toward “a complete and final agreement” with Iran. Trump wrote on Truth Social that the operation “will be paused for a short period of time to see whether or not the Agreement can be finalized and signed”.

*Within 24 hours Project Freedom was paused – that's not an operational timeline; that's a pressure move. Trump used it to demonstrate willingness to escalate, then immediately offered to pull back in exchange for diplomatic progress. The pause suggests the operation was always meant as leverage, not a sustained military campaign.*

### Other Developments

[Royal Netherlands Navy Ship HNLMS De Ruyter arrived at Kochi](#)

[INS Sunayna arrived in Myanmar during Adm. Dinesh K. Tripathi \(CNS\) visit to the country](#)

[Admiral Dinesh K Tripathi, Chief of the Naval Staff, concluded his \*\*four-day\*\* official visit to Myanmar](#)



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