



Delhi Policy Group

Advancing India's Rise as a Leading Power

INDIA'S PROXIMITY ARCHIVES

February 4, 2026

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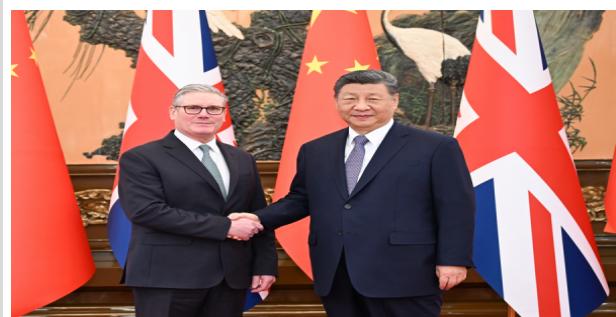
East Asia:

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Indian Ocean Region

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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: Bangladesh and China have signed an agreement to produce unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) in Bangladesh, on January 27, 2026. Source: [ISPR Bangladesh](#)

East Asia: UK Prime Minister, Keir Starmer with President of People's Republic of China, Xi Jinping in Beijing, on January 29, 2026. Source: [Ministry of Foreign Affairs, People's Republic of China](#)

West Asia: Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince and Prime Minister Mohammed bin Salman met Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan in Riyadh on February 3, 2026. Source: [Official X Handle/Saudi Foreign Ministry](#)

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Watch Points

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◊ *Nuclear dialogue and rising tensions between the U.S. and Iran*

◊ *Broad reset in Saudi Arabia-Türkiye Relations*

South Asia

by

Shreyas Deshmukh

On January 31 and February 1, freedom fighters from the Baluchistan Liberation Army (BLA) conducted [coordinated attacks](#) across Baluchistan. Provincial Chief Minister Sarfraz Bugti reported that these attacks resulted in the deaths of 31 civilians and 17 security service personnel. In retaliation, security forces declared they had neutralised at least 145 attackers. The Baluchistan administration has enacted a month-long imposition of Section 144, forbidding public gatherings, processions, and sit-ins of five or more individuals province-wide. Mohsin Naqvi, Pakistan's Interior Minister, has [accused India](#) of responsibility for the Baluchistan attacks. In response India's [Ministry of External Affairs](#) categorically rejected the allegation and said that it is "nothing but its (Pakistan's) usual tactics to deflect attention from its own internal failings."

The Pakistani government's governance failures and repressive tactics are worsening the insurgency in Baluchistan, which could jeopardise regional stability.

Bangladesh Air Force and China Electronics Technology Group Corporation (CETC) International have [entered an agreement](#) on January 27th to establish the production of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) within Bangladesh. The pact was finalised through a government-to-government (G2G) arrangement between the nations. Under the contract, Bangladesh will establish [UAV production](#) and assembly facilities and receive relevant technologies. The Bangladesh military's media wing stated that initially, the Bangladesh Air Force will gain the ability to manufacture and assemble different Medium Altitude Low Endurance (MALE) and Vertical Take-Off and Landing (VTOL) UAVs. This initiative will facilitate the Bangladesh Air Force's domestic production of unmanned aerial vehicles. On February 3rd, [Bangladesh and Japan](#) entered into an agreement regarding the transfer of defence equipment and technology. The Agreement creates a legal framework for the governments of Japan and Bangladesh concerning the management of defence equipment and technology exchanged between them.

Bangladesh has historically relied on China for the procurement of defence equipment; the interim government, under the leadership of Professor Muhammad Yunus, has expedited the finalisation of defence agreements with China.



Other Developments

[Pakistan, Libya to deepen defence ties](#)

[Pakistan, China launch e-mining platform, sign several MoUs](#)

[India gifts second tranche of election assistance to Nepal](#)

[India Sends 2.5 Tons of Cancer Medication to Afghanistan](#)

Southeast Asia

by

Jayantika Rao T.V.

Following the completion of the third phase of elections on January 28, Myanmar's State Media announced that the military-backed party, Union and Solidarity Party (USDP) dominated all phases of the vote, [winning an overwhelming majority](#) in the two legislative chambers in the nation. It [secured](#) 232 of the 263 seats up for grabs in the lower house (Pyithu Hluttaw) and 109 of the 157 seats upper chamber (Amyotha Hluttaw). A spokesman for the country's military rulers, Zaw Min Tun, said Myanmar's parliament is now expected to convene to elect a president in March, with a new government set to take over in April. While ASEAN and some Western countries have expressed concern about the credibility of the election, Myanmar's military rulers insist the polls were free and fair, and supported by the public.

While it is evident that the elections served merely as a tool for legitimising continued military rule, Myanmar's deep-seated political turmoil persists and has not diminished the determination of armed resistance movements.

On [February 2](#), Thailand's Foreign Minister, Sihasak Phuangketkeow, affirmed that dialogue channels remain open regarding the Thailand-Cambodia border issue following an incident on January 30, when Cambodian forces allegedly discharged rounds that crossed into Thai territory. He emphasised that the immediate priority is to rebuild mutual trust, with ongoing discussions taking place at the local level. Phuangketkeow also stated that Thailand is cooperating closely with Cambodia to ensure the ceasefire is maintained and to prevent any escalation. However, he cautioned that Thailand would be compelled to uphold its responsibility to protect its sovereignty should any deliberate provocation occur. Speaking earlier on the sidelines of the ASEAN foreign ministers' retreat in Cebu, the Philippines, on January 30, Phuangketkeow noted in an interview with Nikkei Asia that, despite both sides working to maintain the ceasefire, "[It's still fragile](#)".

Thailand's Foreign Minister, Sihasak Phuangketkeow statement underscores the fragility of Thailand-Cambodia border relations highlighting the risk of escalation.

Other Developments

[Thai election frontrunner People's Party faces changing public mood](#)

[Philippine Vice President Sara Duterte faces fresh impeachment complaints](#)

[Secretary-General of ASEAN Meets with Ambassador of India to ASEAN](#)

East Asia

by

Arshiya Chaturvedi

On January 29, [Chinese President Xi Jinping met the visiting UK Prime Minister, Keir Starmer](#), in Beijing. The two leaders concurred on developing a 'long-term and consistent comprehensive strategic partnership' between their countries. President Xi noted that China and the UK, as permanent members of the UN Security Council and major economies, should strengthen dialogue and cooperation to safeguard world peace and stability, as well as promote mutual prosperity. To this end, Xi emphasised that mutual trust is essential and called for the UK to 'foster a fair, just, and non-discriminatory environment for Chinese companies'. President Xi also underlined enhancing people-to-people exchanges and two-way travel, alongside support for multilateralism, just and equitable global governance, and inclusive economic globalisation. The Prime Minister, who was accompanied by a delegation of business and cultural organisations, reiterated the UK's commitment to deepening and expanding bilateral ties through high-level engagement and dialogue, aimed at strengthening cooperation in trade, investment, finance, the environment, and other areas.

Interdependence, long celebrated as a stabilising force built on mutual gains, is increasingly being seen as a strategic vulnerability in today's world order. Countries are actively seeking diversification across nationally strategic sectors to reduce exposure to geopolitical coercion.

On February 2, [Japan's government announced it had successfully recovered rare-earth-rich seabed mud](#) during a trial exploration effort. The mud deposits, retrieved from depths of roughly 6 km near Japan's remote Minamitorii Island, are believed to contain dysprosium and neodymium used in electric-vehicle motor magnets, as well as gadolinium and terbium critical to high-tech applications. The said trial exploration mission began on January 12, when the Japanese scientific drill ship *Chikyu* set sail for the island, located about 1,900 km (1,200 miles) southeast of Tokyo. It is the first such effort to continuously recover rare-earth-bearing seabed mud from these depths to a vessel.

China has repeatedly leveraged its dominance over rare-earth supply chains by imposing export restrictions. If successful, the exploration would mark a major milestone, opening new avenues to diversify the rare-earth supply chain and diluting China's monopolistic control. However, it would also trigger new geopolitical and governance challenges, particularly over maritime jurisdiction and environmental regulation.



Other Developments

[President Xi Jinping Holds Talks with Uruguayan President Yamandú Orsi](#)

[Signing of the Agreement between the Government of Japan and the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh concerning the Transfer of Defense Equipment and Technology](#)

[How Chinese hackers used Notepad++ to spy on companies doing business in East Asia](#)

[South Korea's tech support to help small farmers in Punjab: CM Bhagwant Mann](#)

West Asia

by

Sanket Joshi

On February 3, amidst the military buildup by the U.S. in the Gulf, Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian announced that his country would be open to [pursuing nuclear dialogue with Washington](#). He called upon the U.S. to seek fair and equitable negotiations, guided by the principles of dignity, prudence, and expediency. To discuss a possible nuclear deal, U.S. President's Special Envoy Steve Witkoff and Iran's Foreign Minister Seyed Abbas Araghchi [are expected to meet on February 6](#) in Istanbul, along with representatives of several Arab and Muslim countries. However, reports indicated that Iran remains sceptical of holding talks in Turkey and has requested [that the dialogue take place in Oman](#).

Prospects for a nuclear deal remain elusive as the U.S. and Israel demand that Iran halt uranium enrichment, curb its ballistic missile program, and end support for proxy groups.

Meanwhile, on February 3, the U.S. military's F-35 fighter jet [shot down Iran's Shahed-139 drone](#) in the Arabian Sea. The U.S. CENTCOM informed that the Iranian drone had "aggressively" approached the USS Abraham Lincoln aircraft carrier and was shot down in self-defence. Following the drone incident, the U.S. military also informed that Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) had harassed a U.S.-flagged and [U.S.-crewed merchant vessel in the Strait of Hormuz](#).

Such incidents illustrate the mutual distrust between the U.S. and Iran, and the risk of military escalation, which complicates the nuclear dialogue.

Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince and Prime Minister Mohammed bin Salman and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan met in Riyadh on February 3. Major issues discussed included [strengthening bilateral ties](#), particularly in renewable energy and the defence industry; Gaza reconstruction; supporting Syria's stability and reconstruction; the situation in Yemen; and developments in East Africa.

Following the 2018 assassination of journalist Jamal Khashoggi by Saudi agents in Istanbul, Turkish President Erdogan's visit to Saudi Arabia marks a broad reset in strained bilateral relations between Ankara and Riyadh.

Other Developments

[India's Deputy NSA Pavan Kapoor in Iran, meets Iranian NSA Ali Larijani](#)

[Talks on Gaza peace plan likely during NSA Ajit Doval's Saudi visit](#)

[Syrian President Al-Sharaa meets Russian President Putin as Moscow seeks to secure military bases in Syria](#)

Central Asia

by

Jayantika Rao T.V.

Following the latest deadly incident along the Tajik-Afghan border, the Russia-led Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) announced on January 30 that it will supply Tajik border troops with advanced weaponry. CSTO Secretary General Taalatbek Masadykov emphasised that the delivery of these arms is a priority task for the organisation, although specific timelines have not yet been disclosed. It has been reported that first CSTO officials are “clarifying and coordinating with the member states the lists of weapons, military equipment and technical means of border protection that will be supplied”. Tajikistan, which shares Central Asia’s longest border with Afghanistan, has faced a steadily deteriorating security situation along this frontier since the Taliban’s return to power in August 2021. Notably, Tajikistan has been the most vocal Central Asian critic of the Taliban’s takeover, further heightening tensions along the border.

The Tajik-Afghan border crisis exposes risks beyond Tajikistan, while doubts over CSTO’s timely arms deliveries and its weak track record raise questions about its ability to secure the region’s difficult frontier.

On February 2, a meeting took place in Moscow between the Secretary General of the Collective Security Treaty Organization, Talatbek Masadykov, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Sergey Lavrov. A substantive exchange of views was held on issues related to the consolidation and development of the CSTO, as well as on enhancing the effectiveness of the Organization’s activities. The parties discussed key issues concerning the implementation of the priorities of Russia’s CSTO chairmanship in 2026, as outlined by the President of the Russian Federation, Vladimir Putin, during the session of the CSTO Collective Security Council held in Bishkek in November 2025. Particular attention was paid to increasing the role of the Organization in shaping an architecture of equal and indivisible security in Greater Eurasia, as well as to deepening dialogue and practical cooperation with interested states of the region and international organizations.

The meeting highlights Russia’s bid to use its 2026 CSTO chairmanship to strengthen the bloc’s role in Eurasian security and position it as a counterweight to Western frameworks through expanded regional and international engagement.



Other Developments

[Russia's Lavrov says Afghanistan, Central Asia security key for CSTO](#)

[China reshaping Central Asia's Russia-dominated nuclear landscape](#)

[China-Central Asia Trade Hits Record \\$106 Billion in 2025](#)

[Kazakhstan, EU Celebrate 33 Years of Strategic Partnership and Cooperation](#)

Indian Ocean Region

by

Divya Rai

A U.S. Navy F-35C fighter jet from the USS Abraham Lincoln shot down an Iranian Shahed-139 drone in the Arabian Sea on February 2, 2026, approximately 500 miles from Iran's southern coast. [According](#) to U.S. Central Command spokesman Capt. Tim Hawkins, "the unmanned aircraft aggressively approached" the USS Abraham Lincoln aircraft carrier, which was transiting the Arabian Sea about 500 miles from Iran's southern coast". He further added, "the Iranian drone continued to fly toward the ship despite de-escalatory measures taken by US forces operating in international waters," Hawkins said. An F-35C fighter jet from the Lincoln shot down the drone to protect the carrier and its personnel". Iran reported losing contact with the drone during a surveillance mission but has not officially commented further. Hours after the drone encounter, two gunboats operated by Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps approached a U.S.-flagged and U.S.-crewed merchant vessel in the Strait of Hormuz and threatened to board and seize the ship. The two incidents occurred days before US and Iranian officials [are due to meet Friday](#) for diplomatic negotiations meant to avert a military clash.

The shootdown occurred amid the heightened tensions, with reports indicating fears of potential U.S. action against Iran regarding its nuclear and ballistic missile production and domestic crackdowns. Although U.S.-Iran talks are planned, risks of proxy wars or shipping disruptions remain high.

India and Tanzania [held the fourth Joint Defence Cooperation Committee \(JDCC\)](#) meeting in Zanzibar on February 2-3, 2026. The discussions reviewed ongoing ties and identified new areas for collaboration. Both countries reviewed ongoing defence cooperation and discussed a broad range of areas for further collaboration, including military training, service-to-service cooperation, maritime security and defence industry collaboration. The two sides also explored new avenues such as counter-terrorism, peacekeeping training, and capacity building in niche areas including Electronic Warfare (EW), Cyber, and Artificial Intelligence (AI), with a view to further strengthening bilateral defence ties. Cooperation in military medicine was identified as a potential new area of cooperation. In addition, both sides agreed to initiate cooperation between their Air Forces, complementing the existing cooperation between the two Navies and Armies. Defence cooperation between India and Tanzania is guided by a five-year roadmap.



India and Tanzania have maintained close defence cooperation since the October 2003 MoU on Defence Cooperation. This framework has broadened ties in maritime security, capacity building, and emerging fields like cyber and AI, while supporting India's Indian Ocean Region outreach and Tanzania's regional security priorities.

Other Developments

[Israeli and U.S. naval forces held a joint drill in the Red Sea](#)

[Bangladesh, Japan sign defence equipment, technology transfer agreement](#)

[Iran plans to hold joint naval drills with China, Russia in northern Indian Ocean region](#)



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