



# Delhi Policy Group

Advancing India's Rise as a Leading Power



## India's Proximity Archives

### January 25, 2023



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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, Southeast Asia, West Asia and China of strategic relevance to India, compiled from open-source media. The research team includes Angana Guha Roy, Ph.D., Shreyas Deshmukh, Sanket Joshi and Anshita Shukla, Research Associates. Your comments and feedback can be addressed to Sanket Joshi at [sanket@dpg.org.in](mailto:sanket@dpg.org.in).

### Cover Image:

**South Asia:** *Indian External Affairs Minister Dr. S Jaishankar with Maldivian President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih at the ground-breaking ceremony of Hanimaadhoo International Airport Development Project, Maldives, on January 18, 2023. Source: [Twitter/@DrSJaishankar](#)*

**Southeast Asia:** *The 4th Air Staff Talks between the Indonesian Air Force (TNI AU) led by AVM Minggit Tribowo, Danseskoau, and the Indian Air Force (IAF) led by AVM RK Obheroi, at Bandung on 19 Jan 2023. Source: [Indian Embassy in Indonesia Official Twitter](#)*

**West Asia:** *President of Egypt Abdel Fattah El-Sisi arrives in New Delhi on January 24, 2023. Source: [Twitter/@MEAIndia](#)*

**China:** *Bangladesh's Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen with Chinese Ambassador to Bangladesh Yao Wen on January 23. Source: [Dhaka Tribune](#)*

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## South Asia

by

Shreyas Deshmukh

India's External Affairs Minister Dr. S Jaishankar [visited](#) the Maldives and Sri Lanka from January 18-20. At the Joint [Press Conference](#) with his Maldivian counterpart on January 18, Dr. Jaishankar said both the countries "together have a responsibility for peace and security in the region." While inaugurating large-scale multiple [development projects](#) funded by India, [he said](#), "Indian development cooperation approach emphasised on transparency, full participation, ownership of the host country, and competitive pricing." Meanwhile, the Maldives has [decided to support](#) India's candidature to a non-permanent seat of the UNSC for the term 2028-2029, the election for which is scheduled to be held during the eighty-first session of the UNGA in June 2027.

Following the meeting with President Ranil Wickremasinghe on January 20, Dr. Jaishankar reaffirmed [India's support](#) for Sri Lanka's debt restructuring programme. Earlier on January 16, India handed over its [letter of support](#) to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for financing and debt restructuring of Sri Lanka. Dr. Jaishankar also [discussed issues](#) related to the full implementation of the 13th amendment, early conduct of provincial elections and requested President Wickremasinghe to pay special attention to the requirements of the Indian-origin Tamil community.

The construction of the Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant in Bangladesh [suffered a setback](#) as the Russian ship carrying equipment could not unload due to the US sanctions and headed back to Russia. On January 22, Bangladesh Foreign Minister [AK Abdul Momen said](#), "Russia knowingly sent the US-sanctioned ship carrying equipment..., something that is surprising and unexpected."

A high-level [UN delegation](#) led by the Deputy Secretary-General visited Afghanistan from January 16-19. In a meeting with the Taliban authorities, they asked the Taliban to [reverse course](#) on recent decrees limiting women's and girls' rights. UN delegation [has warned](#) that isolating women will also isolate Afghanistan. Earlier, the [delegation visited](#) Turkey, Qatar, and Pakistan to discuss the situation in Afghanistan.

## Other Developments

[Taliban authorities in Afghanistan have arrested five men, including two Chinese nationals, for allegedly trying to smuggle an estimated 1,000 metric tons of lithium-bearing rocks out of the country.](#)

[A massive breakdown in the national grid on January 23 triggered the worst electricity outage across Pakistan.](#)

[Days after Bhutan and China held talks on the boundary dispute, India's Foreign Secretary Vinay Mohan Kwatra visited Bhutan on January 18.](#)

## Southeast Asia

by

Anshita Shukla

In an address to the Ambassadors of ASEAN countries on January 20, [Coordinating Economic Minister Airlangga Hartarto](#) stated Indonesia's focus as the chair of ASEAN will be on generating economic growth in the region to speed up recovery in the wake of Covid-19. He remarked that the country will aid regional recovery through "improved connectivity and competitiveness as well as by building resilience in financial services and food security". Following this announcement, the Indonesian Ministry of Trade launched [four flagship events](#) for Indonesia's ASEAN Chairmanship in 2023 - the New ASEAN Tariff Finder, the launch of the Digital Economy Framework Agreement (DEFA) negotiations, a ceremony of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) full implementation, and ASEAN Online Sale Day (AOSD).

The [4th Air Staff Talks](#) between the Indonesian Air Force (TNI AU) and the Indian Air Force (IAF) were organised at Bandung on January 19. [AVM Minggit Tribowo](#), Head of the Indonesian Air Force Delegation revealed that the "two air forces agreed to promote partnership in the defence sector based on the principles of equality, mutual benefit and high respect for each other".

Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos in his address at the [World Economic Forum](#) (WEF) in Davos, Switzerland remarked that the tension in the South China Sea "keeps him up at night", adding that "if something goes wrong here, we are going to suffer". On January 20, Manila [hosted a high-level security dialogue with the United States](#) where the two countries agreed to speed up the completion of projects that allow US forces to store equipment at select Philippine military bases and to convene a maritime dialogue in Washington. Additionally, the two sides agreed to reinstate the "[2-plus-2 meetings](#)" of their top officials in mid-2023 after a seven-year halt allowing their governments to "plan ahead for and ensure more coordinated responses to potential flashpoints".

## Other Developments

[Indonesia boosts South China Sea security ahead of energy project](#)

[Refugees flee to India amid military airstrikes in Myanmar](#)

[Indonesia, RoK look to step up economic cooperation](#)

[Malaysia PM Anwar to make two-day visit to Brunei from January 24-25](#)

[Vietnam's legislature approves President's resignation amid graft crackdown](#)

[Timor-Leste has 'no obstacles' to joining ASEAN: President Ramos-Horta](#)

## West Asia

by

Sanket Joshi

President of Egypt, [Abdel Fattah El-Sisi](#) arrived in India on January 24 for a three-day visit, during which he will hold wide-ranging talks with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, attend India's Republic Day celebrations as Chief Guest, and hold an interaction with the business community. This visit is expected to deepen the ["time-tested" partnership](#) between India and Egypt. A strong contingent of [144 members](#) of the Egyptian armed forces will participate in the Republic Day parade.

India and Oman held a [strategic dialogue](#) in New Delhi on January 17-18, reiterating their determination to maintain "maritime security and safety" in the region. The two sides also emphasised the need for "collective action in combating terrorism". Meanwhile, deepening the [India-UAE partnership](#), Minister of State for External Affairs V. Muraleedharan visited the UAE.

Marking 30 years of diplomatic relations between India and Israel, the two countries inaugurated the ['30<sup>th</sup> Indo-Israel Center of Excellence'](#) in Haryana, dedicated to the cultivation of semi-arid horticultural crops.

Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and the Arab League condemned the [burning of a copy of "The Holy Quran"](#) outside the Turkish Embassy in Sweden. GCC Secretary-General, Dr. Nayaf Falah Mubarak Al-Hajraf warned that such acts would "inflame and provoke Muslims around the world". Condemning the events in Stockholm, Turkey has reportedly [postponed a key meeting with Sweden and Finland](#), intended to hash out differences over their bid to join NATO.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken reiterated that [Iran nuclear deal \(JCPOA\) was no longer a priority](#) for the Biden administration as Tehran had rejected the chance to revive the agreement months ago. As the JCPOA seems unsalvageable, the US and Israel launched a large-scale joint [military exercise "Juniper Oak 23.2"](#) in Israel and the Eastern Mediterranean Sea. Further, the US, European Union, and UK imposed new sanctions on Iran's Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC) for their [violent suppression of women's rights protests](#) in the country.



## Other Developments

[Muslim Brotherhood, Pakistan running disinformation drive to create gulf between India, Arab World: intelligence sources](#)

[Secretary Blinken to visit Israel next week, in second trip by a senior US official this month](#)

[Meeting US national security adviser, PM Netanyahu stresses bid to build Saudi ties](#)

[More sanctions as Iran and EU clash over IRGC 'terror' label](#)

[OPEC chief 'very confident about China's economy](#)

[Chinese FM's "tour to Africa first" shows long-lasting close friendship](#)

## China

by

Angana Guha Roy

Even as China continues experiencing a surge in Covid infections after shifting away from a zero-Covid policy, President Xi Jinping, at the 2023 [Spring Festival gathering](#) on January 20, praised the government's efforts in "optimizing the epidemic prevention and control measures ... to protect people's lives and health to the greatest extent and minimize the impact of the epidemic on economic and social development."

President Xi Jinping held a video conversation with the soldiers stationed along the India-China border in eastern Ladakh and inspected their [combat readiness](#). While addressing the Xinjiang border command, Chinese navy formation, and an air force aviation brigade, President Xi ordered them "to remain alert and be ready for combat."

While addressing the welcome reception of China's new Ambassador to Nepal, Chairman of Nepal's National Assembly Ganesh Prasad Timilsina described China as an important development partner of Nepal and that the two countries have remained "[good neighbours](#)" and "reliable partners".

The Export-Import Bank of China has offered Sri Lanka a [two-year moratorium](#) on its debt and said it would support the country's efforts to secure a \$2.9 billion loan from the International Monetary Fund. State Minister for Finance Shehan Semasinghe called it "positive news". The Chinese response came after India stepped in first to issue the necessary assurances.

The newly appointed Chinese Ambassador to Bangladesh [Yao Wen](#) while commenting on the current state of China-Bangladesh relations stressed on common development, common values, common security, and common responsibilities as goals of their bilateral relations. Earlier during a meeting with Bangladeshi Foreign Minister Abdul Momen on January 23, [Ambassador Yao Wen](#) discussed bilateral and multilateral cooperation of mutual interests, including trade and investment, infrastructure development, connectivity, and South-South cooperation.

Highlighting the influential role played by China in Naypidaw, leaders from both, Myanmar's ruling military and the anti-junta [National Unity Government](#) praised Beijing in their respective Lunar New Year messages. China's UN

delegation earlier prevented meaningful sanctions from being imposed on Myanmar since the military took control in a February 2021 coup.

### **Other Developments**

[US DoD Report Says China Gunning for Its 'National Réjuvénation' Objective with Help of Allies Like Pakistan](#)

[China using cheap loans tactic to reduce India's influence in Indian Ocean Region, say research papers](#)



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