



Delhi Policy Group

Advancing India's Rise as a Leading Power



India's Proximity Archives December 6, 2023



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Delhi Policy Group

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

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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, China, and Central Asia of strategic relevance to India, compiled from open-source media. The research team includes Angana Guha Roy, Ph.D., Shreyas Deshmukh, Sanket Joshi, Anshita Shukla and Jayantika Rao T.V, Research Associates. Your comments and feedback can be addressed to Sanket Joshi at sanket@dpg.org.in.

Cover Image:

South Asia - Prime Minister Narendra Modi held a meeting with the Maldivian President Dr. Mohamed Muizzu on December 1, 2023. Source: X/@MEAIndia

Southeast Asia - President of Vietnam Vo Van Thuong with Member of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee and Foreign Minister Wang Yi in Hanoi on December 1, 2023. Source: Embassy of the People's Republic of China in India/Official Website

West Asia - Prime Minister Narendra Modi with UAE's President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan and UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres at COP 28 UAE, December 1, 2023. Source: MEAphotogallery/flickr

Central Asia - SCO Council of National Coordinators in Beijing on December 1, 2023. Source: The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation

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South Asia

by

Shreyas Deshmukh

Prime Minister Narendra Modi [met Maldivian President Dr. Mohamed Muizzu](#) on the side lines of the COP-28 Summit in the UAE on December 1. They reviewed bilateral relations between the two countries and discussed ways to further deepen the partnership. They also agreed to establish a core group to address the challenges associated with ongoing India-funded development projects in the Maldives. After returning to the Maldives, President Muizzu, in a press briefing, [claimed](#) that India has agreed to withdraw military personnel stationed on the islands to work on humanitarian operations.

The Taliban government announced on December 1 that China had formally accepted its [ambassador to Beijing](#). Hong Lei, the director-general of the protocol department of the Chinese Foreign Ministry, accepted the copy of credentials from the newly appointed ambassador, Asadullah Bilal Karimi, and called Karimi's arrival an "important step in further strengthening and expanding the positive relations" between Beijing and Kabul. Meanwhile, Shir Mohammad Abbas Stanekzai, the Taliban deputy foreign minister, said that the [Afghanistan embassy in New Delhi](#) would reopen soon.

Pakistan continues to [deport](#) illegal Afghan immigrants. Until December 3, over [450,000 migrants](#) have returned to Afghanistan. The US Assistant Secretary of State for the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration Julieta Valls Noyes [visited Islamabad](#) from December 4-7 to discuss "shared efforts to protect vulnerable individuals and accelerate safe, efficient relocation and resettlement of Afghan refugees in the US immigration pipeline."

Other Developments

[Saudi Government extends USD 3bn deposit for another year: State Bank of Pakistan](#)

[Amid rising tension in Middle East: Pakistan deploys its ship in Gulf of Aden](#)

[7 Killed in attack on clerics in Afghanistan's Herat](#)

[Lieutenant General Vikum Liyange, Commander of the Sri Lanka Army, is on a visit to India from December 3-7.](#)

[Nepal urges Russia not to recruit its citizens into the Army; says six killed](#)

Southeast Asia

by

Anshita Shukla

The Philippines' Defence Minister, Gilberto Teodoro, and his French counterpart, Sebastien Lecornu, signed a letter of [intent to boost bilateral defence cooperation](#) in Manila on December 2. The letter includes possible negotiations on a status of visiting forces agreement, to allow soldiers from each country into the other's territory. Mr Lecornu stated that the two countries 'are working on an agenda of strengthening their presence in the Indo-Pacific'.

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi concluded a [two-day visit to Hanoi](#) on December 2. During his visit, he co-hosted the 15th session of the Vietnam-China Bilateral Cooperation Steering Committee with Communist Party General Secretary Nguyen Phu Trong and President Vo Van Thuong. Wang Yi stated that "the two sides should deepen cooperation in trade, connectivity, and key minerals, and jointly build a mutually beneficial, stable, and unimpeded production and supply chain system". The two sides have agreed to boost trade ties and promote railway connections.

On December 1, the Philippines announced its plan to [establish a coast guard station](#) in Thitu island in the South China Sea. The station would be equipped with "advanced systems" to monitor Chinese vessels asserting Beijing's claims in the waters. National security adviser Eduardo Ano of the Philippines stated that this would be a "game changer" as the collection of real-time data would have "an impact on the behaviour" of rival claimants.

The Philippine Coast Guard reported the presence of [more than 135 Chinese vessels near the Whitsun Reef](#) in the South China Sea on December 3. The Coast Guard characterised the activity as "alarming" and "illegal". "No response was made to the radio challenges issued by the PCG (Philippine Coast Guard) to the CMM vessels", as reported by Manila's coastguard.

Other Developments

[Philippines deploys vessels to monitor 'illegal' presence of Chinese boats in South China Sea](#)

[Vietnam, EU set investment plan for G7-backed energy transition](#)

East Asia

by

Anshita Shukla

The United States, in coordination with Australia, Japan and South Korea, imposed [fresh sanctions on North Korea](#) on November 30. The sanctions targeted Kimsuky, a cyber espionage group, accusing it of gathering intelligence to support North Korea's strategic and nuclear ambitions. Through these sanctions, the US and its partners aim at targeting “these key nodes in the DPRK’s illicit revenue generation and weapons proliferation”, according to an official statement.

South Korea successfully [launched its first military spy satellite](#) on December 2. The satellite, launched by a SpaceX rocket launch, successfully reached orbit and established communication with ground control. This comes soon after the North launched its first military eye in the sky in November. South Korea now has its first domestically built spy satellite to monitor nuclear-armed North Korea.

On November 30, [Taiwan reported Chinese warplanes](#) and warships around the island. Taiwan’s defence ministry detected J-10 and J-16 fighters as well as ship-borne helicopters operating off central Taiwan carrying out “joint combat readiness patrols”. Eleven of these aircraft crossed the Taiwan Strait’s median line.

Other Developments

[Think of Hong Kong when you vote, Taiwan president says](#)

[Taiwan vote must be free from ‘outside interference’, senior US diplomat says](#)

West Asia

by

Sanket Joshi

On December 1, Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed the [United Nations Climate Change Conference](#) (COP 28) in Dubai, UAE. He reiterated India's commitment to sustainable development, as embodied in the philosophy, "One Earth, One Family, One Future". India and the UAE co-hosted a high-level event on the global ["Green Credits Initiative"](#), to promote the issuance of Green Credits for plantations on waste/degraded lands and river catchments, thereby regenerating natural ecosystems. Prime Minister Modi announced India's proposal to host the [COP-33 Summit in India](#) in 2028.

After a week-long truce with Hamas collapsed on December 1, Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) [resumed military operations in Gaza](#). Benjamin Netanyahu, Israel's Prime Minister, reiterated [Tel Aviv's goals for the war](#), including the return of the hostages, the defeat of Hamas, and ensuring that Gaza does not pose a threat to Israel in the future. US Secretary of State, Antony Blinken, during his meeting with Prime Minister Netanyahu in Jerusalem on November 30, reaffirmed Washington's [steadfast support for Israel's right to defend](#) itself against terrorist violence in accordance with international humanitarian law. Secretary Blinken also urged Israel to hold [settler extremists](#) accountable for violence against Palestinians in the West Bank.

Amidst the heightened tensions in the Middle East, a US warship shot down three [Houthi drones targeting commercial vessels](#) in the Red Sea on December 3. Meanwhile, Iran and Russia signed a joint statement to counter the adverse effects of coercive measures by the West, particularly the [sanctions imposed by the US](#).

Other Developments

[Position Paper of the People's Republic of China on Resolving the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict](#)

[Kremlin announces President Putin's Middle East trip](#)

[US announces visa bans after warning Israel over West Bank violence](#)

[Prime Minister Modi's meeting with the President of the United Arab Emirates](#)

[Prime Minister Modi's meeting with the President of the State of Israel](#)

China

by

Angana Guha Roy

India and China held the [28th Meeting of the Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination on India-China Border Affairs \(WMCC\)](#) on November 30. They agreed on the need to maintain peace and tranquillity along the border areas, and to ensure a stable situation on ground. Further, the two sides discussed proposals to achieve complete disengagement in Eastern Ladakh and agreed to hold the next round of Senior Military Commanders' Meeting at the earliest.

[Moody's, a rating agency, cut its outlook on China's credit ratings](#), from 'stable' to 'negative', on December 5. The key concerns leading to the change as cited by Moody's are slowing economic growth, local government debt, and the downsizing property sector. In a statement, Moody's said, "the outlook change also reflects the increased risks related to structurally and persistently lower medium-term economic growth and the ongoing downsizing of the property sector."

Ahead of the annual [EU-China summit](#), the President of the European Commission stressed that EU states would prefer negotiations over a trade war. In her statement, she stressed that Europe won't tolerate its soaring trade imbalance with China forever. The President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, Josep Borrell, top EU diplomat, and Charles Michel, the President of the European Council are slated to attend the EU-China summit on December 7.

[Ahead of the EU- China Summit, Foreign Minister Wang Yi](#) in a recent statement stressed that China hopes to boost relations with the European Union with a firm focus on pragmatic cooperation in the face of complex situations and severe challenges. Wang further said that the two sides should view bilateral relations from a strategic perspective and added that China's policy toward Europe remains stable.

Other developments

[New Chinese investment in Bangladesh to increase India-China competition for influence](#)

[Satellite images show China's greed for more land in Bhutan](#)

[COP 28 Summit: India, China refrain from signing pledge to triple world's renewable energy capacity by 2030](#)

Central Asia

by

Jayantika Rao T.V.

Kazakhstan chaired a [meeting of the Council of National Coordinators of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation \(SCO\) member states](#) held in Beijing from November 28 – December 1. The meeting was primarily aimed at advancing priorities for regional cooperation, discussing critical activities of the SCO, exploring ways to improve international cooperation, and addressing issues relating to Kazakhstan's chairmanship. The participants [reviewed Kazakhstan's proposal](#) to fortify and develop the SCO initiatives with practical measures.

Chinese Vice Premier Ding Xuexiang visited Turkmenistan for the [sixth Meeting of the China-Turkmenistan Cooperation Committee](#) on November 29. Noting the importance of Turkmenistan as a partner to China, [Premier Xuexiang said](#) "China-Turkmenistan cooperation is highly complementary and enjoys huge potential and broad prospects". Turkmen President Serdar Berdimuhamedov said, "Turkmenistan firmly supports the China-Central Asia cooperation mechanism and is willing to work with China to jointly promote regional peace, stability, development and prosperity".

Foreign petroleum engineers arrived in Turkmenistan to lay the groundwork to [curb the nation's methane emissions](#) with the potential help from the US government. The experts are working closely with the state-owned oil and gas company officials to study the source of the emissions and potential methods to reduce them. On December 1, [during COP28](#), Turkmenistan said that it would join the Global Methane Pledge, a voluntary agreement by more than 150 nations that have promised to reduce global emissions of the potent greenhouse gas by 30 percent by the end of this decade.

Topographic working groups and working groups for legal issues of the governmental delegations of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan for delimitation and [demarcation of the Kyrgyz-Tajik border](#) held talks from November 29 to December 5. Tajik National Security Committee Chairman [Saimumin Yatimov said](#) that the talks have been successful and critical decisions have been made on the border. The working groups reached an agreement on the delimitation of 24.01 km of the Kyrgyz-Tajik border.

Other Developments

[Central Asian Deputy Foreign Ministers gather in Bishkek](#)

[Azerbaijan, Armenia Resume Border Delimitation Talks](#)

[Armenia Convenes Talks After Russia Bars Its Trucks Amid Diplomatic Spats](#)

[Kazakhstan to Chair Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation Program in 2024](#)

[Kazakhstan, Central Asia Supports UNGA Resolution on Israel's Withdrawal from Syrian Golan Heights](#)



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