



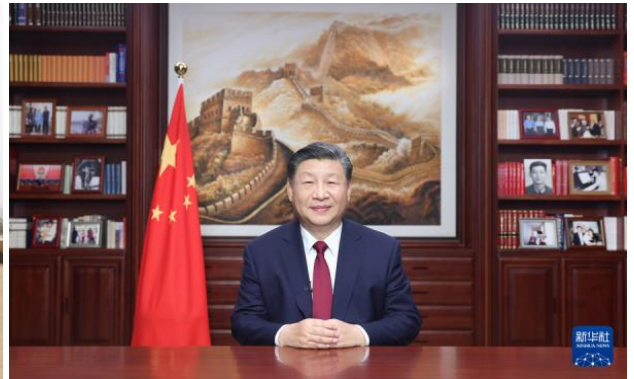
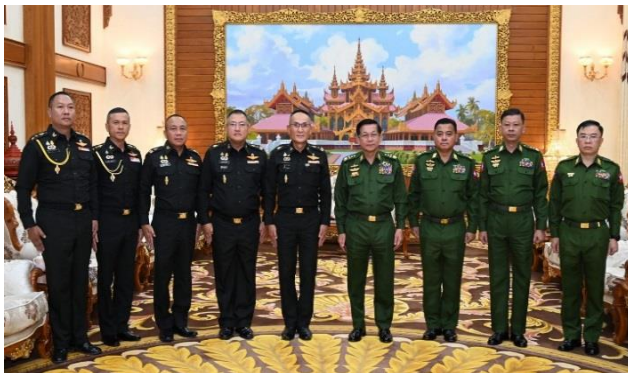
Delhi Policy Group

Advancing India's Rise as a Leading Power



India's Proximity Archives

January 3, 2024



Volume II, Issue 1 | January 3, 2024

Delhi Policy Group

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www.delhipolicygroup.org



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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:

Southeast Asia - Lt-Gen Jakkapong Janpengpen, Director of Joint Operations of the Royal Thai Armed Forces, with Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, Chairman of the State Administration Council and Commander-in-Chief of the Defence Service of Myanmar in Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar on December 27, 2023. (Source: [The Global New Light of Myanmar](#))

East Asia - Kim Jong Un chairs the ninth Plenary Meeting of the 8th Central Committee of the Workers' Party of Korea on December 27, 2023. (Source: [KCNA](#))

West Asia - India-UAE Joint Military Exercise 'Desert Cyclone' commenced in Rajasthan on January 2, 2024. Source: [Official X Handle/Indian Army](#)

China - On New Year's Eve, Chinese President Xi Jinping delivered his 2024 New Year message via China Media Group and the Internet. Source: [Ministry of Foreign Affairs, China](#)

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South Asia

by

Shreyas Deshmukh

On December 29, 2023, the UNSC adopted a resolution calling for the [appointment of a Special Envoy](#) for Afghanistan and stressed the critical importance of the continued presence of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA). The resolution was adopted after 13 members of the Security Council [voted in favour](#), while Russia and China abstained. Meanwhile, the regional countries increased their engagement with the Taliban-ruled Afghanistan. Kazakhstan removed the Taliban from the list of [prohibited organizations](#) on December 29. Azerbaijan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs has officially revealed its plans to [reopen its embassy](#) in Afghanistan in 2024. The Ministry of Transport of Uzbekistan announced the [cancellation of restrictions](#) imposed on the country's transit vehicles in Afghanistan.

The annual [security report](#) issued by the Centre for Research and Security Studies (CRSS) noted that in 2023, Pakistan witnessed 1,524 violence-related fatalities and 1,463 injuries from 789 terror attacks and counter-terror operations, including nearly 1,000 fatalities among civilians and security forces personnel. Overall fatalities, including those of outlaws, mark a record six-year high, exceeding the 2018 level and highest since 2017. Moreover, the country saw a surge in violence for the third consecutive year with an uptick recorded each year beginning from 2021. On January 2, six barbers were killed in an incident of [ethnic violence](#) in the North Waziristan tribal district of Pakistan.

Pakistan conducted a successful flight test of the [Fatah-II weapon system](#) on December 27, 2023. The weapon system is equipped with avionics and a navigation system. The weapon system is capable of engaging targets with high precision up to the range of 400 kilometres. Earlier in October 2023 Pakistan conducted the training launch of the Ghauri Weapon System and Ababeel Weapon System.

Other Developments

[More than 150 platoons of Border Guard Bangladesh \(BGB\) have been deployed in Dhaka to maintain law and order ahead of the January 7 polls.](#)

[India, South Korea explore joint projects in Sri Lanka, Bangladesh](#)

[Sri Lanka notifies India that it will not permit any Chinese research ship to operate within exclusive economic zone or dock at its ports for a year](#)

Southeast Asia

by

Anshita Shukla

Lt. Gen. Jakkapong Janpengpen, Director of Joint Operations of the Royal Thai Armed Forces, [led a delegation to Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar](#) on December 27, 2023. The delegation held a meeting with Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, Chairman of the State Administration Council and Commander-in-Chief of the Defence Service of Myanmar. The two sides discussed cooperation in ensuring peace and stability on the border, the rule of law, narcotic drug eradication, and eradication of online gambling and online scams. A key focus of the discussion was on the 'promotion of cooperation in humanitarian measures and aid and exchange of information', as reported by the Global New Light of Myanmar.

Myanmar Senior Gen. Min Aung Hlaing co-chaired the [Lancang-Mekong Cooperation Leaders meeting](#), along with Chinese Premier Li Qiang on December 25. In the virtual conference, the six leaders adopted the Naypyitaw Declaration for the six members to tackle common challenges together. They discussed cooperation in infrastructure, agriculture, and supply chains. The six participating countries exchanged views on China's cross-border Belt and Road Initiative, climate change and cybercrime response, according to summaries of the meeting.

Other Developments

[China asks citizens to leave Myanmar border district, citing security](#)

[Indonesia navy drives away boat carrying Rohingya](#)

[High-impact 'drop bombs' retaking the sky from Myanmar junta](#)

East Asia

by

Anshita Shukla

North Korea's leader, Kim Jong Un, convened the [ninth Plenary Meeting of the 8th Central Committee of the Workers' Party of Korea](#) on December 27, 2023. In the meeting, the leader announced the policy directions for the coming year. He ordered the country's military, the munitions industry, and the nuclear weapons sector to accelerate war preparations to counter "unprecedented confrontational moves by the United States". He added that Pyongyang would expand strategic cooperation with "anti-imperialist independent" countries.

South Korea conducted a [defence drill](#) that simulated an attack by North Korea on Seoul on December 27, 2023. The drill involved more than a thousand South Korean military, police, and emergency personnel. It simulated attacks on a major water supply facility, telephone network stations, and an underground communications and power-cable corridor. On December 26, the South Korean government-imposed sanctions on eight North Koreans linked to nuclear and missile programmes.

On January 2, Taiwan's Defence Ministry reported that [three Chinese balloons flew across Taiwan](#), making it the first time it has reported them crossing the island. It was reported that three flew 105 nautical miles (194km), 160 nautical miles and 159 nautical miles, respectively, to the southwest of Ching Chuan Kang, home to an important Taiwan air force base. It was unclear whether the latest balloons were for weather or other purposes.

Other Developments

[Japan lifts operational ban on world's biggest nuclear plant](#)

[North Korea to launch new satellites, build drones as it warns war inevitable](#)

West Asia

by

Sanket Joshi

Hamas' deputy leader, [Saleh al-Aroui, was killed](#) in a drone strike allegedly carried out by Israel, in Lebanon's capital Beirut on January 2. Considering this, Hamas has reportedly frozen talks related to a second deal to release the remaining Israeli hostages held in Gaza. Meanwhile, in response to the continued attacks on commercial ships by the Houthi rebels, the [US sank three Houthi boats](#) in the Red Sea. Washington informed the Houthis that it did not wish to see a wider conflict in the region and called upon them to stop attacking commercial vessels.

The first [India-UAE Joint Military Exercise](#) 'DESERT CYCLONE' commenced in Rajasthan on January 2, deepening the strategic partnership between the two countries. The exercise will "enhance cooperation and interoperability between the two sides, especially in sub-conventional operations, such as fighting in built-up areas (FIBUA) in desert/semi-desert terrain in accordance with Chapter VII of the UN Charter on Peace Keeping Operations".

Saudi Arabia, Egypt, the United Arab Emirates, Iran, and Ethiopia joined the ['BRICS'](#) on January 1, doubling the group's membership to ten. Chinese Foreign Ministry reiterated that BRICS expansion is consistent with the "common aspirations of emerging markets and developing countries, and follows the [global trend toward multipolarity](#)".

After weeks of nationwide protests, Israel's Supreme Court struck down the landmark [Judicial Reform Law](#) on January 1.

Other Developments

[India increases oil imports from Saudi Arabia as Russian purchases fall to 11-month low in December](#)

[Iran rejects US and UK calls to end support for Houthi Red Sea attacks](#)

[Israel didn't alert US before killing Hamas deputy chief, sent update during strike – report](#)

[Exports to Iran fall amid decline in rupee reserves of Middle East](#)

China

by

Angana Guha Roy

[Chinese President Xi Jinping delivered his 2024 New Year message](#) virtually on December 31, 2023. President Xi said the Chinese economy has sustained the momentum of recovery, acknowledging the difficulties the economy has gone through. He added "Having weathered the storm, the Chinese economy is more resilient and dynamic than before". Reiterating his claim made on Mao Zedong's birth anniversary, President Xi stated that China's 'reunification' with Taiwan is inevitable, setting a tone for China's assertive foreign policy roadmap in 2024.

[China has appointed former navy chief Dong Jun](#) as the new Defence Minister following the sacking of his predecessor for unknown reasons. The official removal of Li Shangfu, the former Defence Minister, was announced in October. While Dong will be the public face of the People's Liberation Army (PLA), the critical areas of engagement will be under the purview of the Central Military Commission, led by President Xi Jinping, according to recent reports. An important element of his role will be to engage with the US military to lower the risk of conflict over Taiwan and the South China Sea.

[Sri Lanka has informed India](#) that it will not allow any Chinese research vessel to dock at its ports or operate within its exclusive economic zone (EEZ) for one year. The move comes after Prime Minister Narendra Modi urged President Ranil Wickremesinghe to respect Indian strategic and security concerns. Sri Lanka's decision means that the Chinese research vessel Xiang Yang Hong 3 will not be granted clearance to conduct deepwater exploration in the south Indian Ocean.

Other Developments

[Nepal to destroy 4 million Chinese covid vaccine](#)

[President of Maldives Likely to Travel to China in January, Before a Trip to India](#)

[Beijing strips 3 aerospace-defence executives of political titles as China cracks down on corruption in crucial sector](#)

Central Asia

by

Jayantika Rao T.V.

On January 1, Kazakhstan assumed the rotating [chairmanship of the Collective Security Treaty Organisation \(CSTO\) for 2024](#), as outgoing Belarus vacated the post. Under the country's chairmanship, Kazakh President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev announced that the organisation would focus on security issues, stressing the need for cooperation in fighting against international terrorism and extremism. Additionally, Kazakhstan proposed to intensify the activities of the expert working group on combating terrorism and extremism under the Committee of Secretaries of the CSTO Security Councils.

A decree issued by the President of the Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh Samvel Shahramanyan, which [dissolves the now unrecognised state](#), entered into force on January 1. The document was signed on September 28, nine days after tensions had flared up again in the region. The decree particularly urged the Karabakh population to consider the terms of reintegration in Azerbaijan offered by Baku or stay put if they choose to do so.

Armenia and Azerbaijan, embroiled in a longstanding conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh, continue to face substantial negotiation challenges. Kremlin Spokesperson Dimitry Peskov said Baku and Yerevan are [ready to finalise a peace treaty](#). He stated, "They are opposing sides. They state their full readiness to reach a common document, to finalise the peace talks, to reach a common document, a peace treaty. There is no risk here". Additionally, Azerbaijani officials also claimed they are [close to a peace agreement](#) with the country, waiting for Armenia's response to its comments on the latest draft proposals.

Other Developments

[Russia takes over CIS chairmanship](#)

[Turkmenistan And China To Expand Cooperation In Education](#)

[U.S. has golden opportunity to engage Central Asia's Turkic states: analysts](#)

[Azerbaijan's Incumbent President Ilham Aliyev Registered As Presidential Candidate](#)

[Foreign Ministers Of Uzbekistan And Kyrgyzstan Review Schedule Of Bilateral Events For 2024](#)



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