



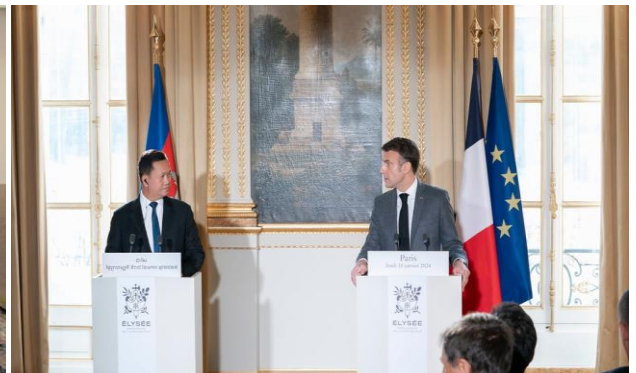
# Delhi Policy Group

Advancing India's Rise as a Leading Power



## India's Proximity Archives

### January 24, 2024



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Delhi Policy Group  
Core 5A, 1st Floor, India Habitat Centre, Lodhi Road, New Delhi- 110003  
[www.delhipolicygroup.org](http://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](mailto:sanket@dpg.org.in).

### Cover Image:

**South Asia** - Pakistan Foreign Secretary Muhammad Qazi and Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Sun Weidong, held the Fourth Meeting of the CPEC Joint Working Group in Islamabad on January 21, 2024.

Source: [X/@ForeignOfficePk](#)

**Southeast Asia**- Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia, Hun Manet, with French President Emmanuel Macron in Paris on January 20, 2024. Source: [Office of Cambodian PM/Official X Account](#)

**West Asia** - USS Dwight D. Eisenhower conducts flight operations in response to increased Houthi attacks on commercial vessels in the Red Sea, January 22, 2024. Source: [US Central Command Official Website](#)

**China** - Chinese Commerce Minister Wang Wentao has come out in defence of a continuing "Made in China" strategy, and against efforts to move supply chains out of the country. Source: [South China Morning Post](#)

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## South Asia

by

Shreyas Deshmukh

On January 16, 2024, Iran carried out an attack inside Pakistan's territory, targeting the base of the terrorist group Jaish al Adel. Iran defended its actions as self-defence, claiming that the terrorists were planning to infiltrate and conduct an attack inside its territory. According to [Pakistan's official statement](#), two children were killed in this attack, and the country recalled its Ambassador from Iran as well as placed entry restrictions on the Iranian Ambassador. Pakistan also carried out missile and drone [strikes inside Iranian territory](#) on January 18, allegedly against Baluch separatists. Iran stated that nine non-Iranian civilians lost their lives in these attacks. After the consultations between foreign ministers of both countries, the situation de-escalated on January 19. Ambassadors of both countries may return to their [respective posts](#) by January 26.

China's Vice Foreign Minister Sun Weidong visited Pakistan from January 20-22. During the visit, he held meetings with Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar, Chief of the Army Staff Gen Asim Munir, Foreign Minister Jalil Abbas Jilani, and others, and co-chaired the Fourth Meeting of the [CPEC Joint Working Group](#) with Foreign Secretary of Pakistan Muhammad Qazi.

Pakistan and Dubai on January 18, signed [two inter-governmental framework agreements](#) worth over USD 3 billion on cooperation in railways, economic zones, and infrastructure projects. The dedicated Freight Corridor is planned to run from Karachi Port to the Pipri Marshalling Yard, approximately 45 km away. Pakistan is also eyeing on FDI from other countries. According to the media reports, Pakistan is negotiating to [receive an investment](#) of up to USD 1 billion in its railway sector, with Russia and the United Arab Emirates. The country is also set to establish a [mining fund](#) worth USD 1 billion in collaboration with Kuwait.

### Other Developments

[‘Moscow-bound chartered flight from India’ crashes in Afghanistan; not an Indian aircraft, clarifies Centre](#)

[Nepal officially requests Russian official to stop recruiting Nepalis into Russian army](#)

## Southeast Asia

by

Anshita Shukla

Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia, Hun Manet, commenced [his first official two-day visit to Paris](#) on January 18, 2024. During his visit, Prime Minister Hun Manet met with President Emmanuel Macron, President of the Senate Gérard Archer, and the President of the National Assembly Yaël Braun-Pivet. The two sides have signed a USD 235 million aid agreement for drinking water and energy infrastructure development, as well as vocational training.

The [Eighth Meeting of the China-Philippines Bilateral Consultation Mechanism on the South China Sea \(BCM\)](#) was convened in Shanghai on January 17, 2024. The meeting was co-chaired by Assistant Foreign Minister Nong Rong of China and the Undersecretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs of the Philippines Maria Theresa P. Lazaro. The two sides have agreed to [improve maritime communication](#) and to properly manage conflicts and differences through friendly talks concerning issues around the South China Sea. The Foreign Ministry of China emphasised that the disputes in the South China Sea are “not the whole story of bilateral relations” with the Philippines.

Philippines' President Marcos Jr. reiterated the country's commitment to the [one-China policy](#) and stated that the country does not endorse the independence of Taiwan, in his speech on January 23. This comes after China strongly rebuked the Philippines President for congratulating Taiwan's election winner. China's Foreign Ministry stated that Marcos should “read more books to properly understand the ins and outs of the Taiwan issue”. The Philippines Defence Minister retaliated by criticising the Chinese official for “low and gutter-level talk”.

### Other Developments

[Philippines' Marcos says won't help ICC probe into Duterte drug war](#)

[Philippines says armed forces to ensure 'unimpeded and peaceful' exploration in South China Sea](#)

[Myanmar military officers held by junta after surrendering town to opponents](#)

## East Asia

by

Jayantika Rao T.V.

On January 19, North Korea conducted a test of its [underwater nuclear weapons system](#) to protest against the joint military drills by South Korea, the United States, and Japan on January 17. The test of the 'Haeil-5-23' system, which is a nuclear-capable underwater attack drone system was conducted in the water off its east coast. The Ministry's unnamed spokesman accused the United States, South Korea and Japan of "getting frantic with military exercises", warning of "catastrophic consequences".

[Russian President Vladimir Putin](#) expressed his willingness to visit Pyongyang soon when he met with North Korean Foreign Minister Choe Son Hui in Russia last week, North Korea's state news agency KCNA reported on January 22. It would be the Russian leader's first trip to North Korea in more than two decades. On January 22, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said that Russia hoped a Putin visit to North Korea, at Kim's invitation, would take place "in the foreseeable future", but he said no date had yet been agreed.

[Taiwan's Defence Ministry](#) said six Chinese balloons flew over the island and through the airspace, while Chinese warplanes and navy ships were also detected nearby. The [Ministry stated](#) all six balloons flew over the strait's sensitive median line on January 21, however, only one crossed over into Taiwan, at its southern tip. While it remains unclear whether the balloons had an explicit military function, the dispatching of the balloons is considered as China's 'grey area tactics' to harass Taiwan.

### Other Developments

[Kishida Vows To Reshape LDP By Moving Away From Faction System](#)

[Business Delegation Starts 4-Day Visit To Beijing](#)

[North Korea Says It Tested A Nuclear-Capable Underwater Drone In Response To Rivals' Naval Drills](#)

## West Asia

by

Sanket Joshi

On January 17, the US designated Ansarallah (Houthis) as a [Specially Designated Global Terrorist group](#) in response to continued Houthi attacks against international maritime vessels in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden. The US and its allies also conducted strikes on eight [Houthi targets in Yemen](#). On the other hand, on January 20, militants backed by Iran launched missile attacks against the [US military's al-Asad airbase in Iraq](#). In response, the US conducted airstrikes targeting Iran-backed [Kataib Hezbollah](#) and other militant groups in Iraq.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu reiterated his determination to not allow a full-fledged, militarised [Palestinian state](#) as President Biden reiterated his call for a two-state solution. Prime Minister Netanyahu asserted that he will not compromise on Israeli security control over all territory west of the Jordan River. Meanwhile, UN Secretary-General, Antonio Guterres, warned that Israel's refusal to create a Palestinian state would prolong the conflict, which has become a [major threat to global peace and security](#).

The volume of Russian crude exported to China grew by 24 percent in 2023, surpassing Saudi Arabia as [China's top crude supplier](#). Meanwhile, with the conflict in West Asia showing no sign of abating, [crude oil prices](#) hover around USD 80 per barrel.

A special forces military exercise entitled 'Cyclone' will be conducted in Egypt from January 22 to February 1, 2024, as part of the deepening of the [India-Egypt Strategic Partnership](#). The two sides aim to familiarise themselves with each other's operating procedures for special operations in desert and semi-desert terrain under Chapter VII of the UN Charter.

### Other Developments

[U.S., UK, and Australia Target Additional Hamas Financial Networks and Facilitators of Virtual Currency Transfers](#)

[EU's top diplomat accuses Israel of funding Hamas](#)

[EU foreign policy chief says Israel failed to engage with Brussels peace summit](#)

## China

by

Angana Guha Roy

The Maldives announced that it has allowed a Chinese research vessel, whose activities in the Indian Ocean had previously raised red flags, to dock at Malé port, but that the vessel will not conduct research in Maldivian waters. [Xiang Yang Hong 03](#), which left southern China's Sanya port earlier this month is scheduled to arrive in Malé within a couple weeks. The activities of Chinese research vessels in the Indo-Pacific have garnered scrutiny over the past few years, as they are thought to serve both scientific and military purposes. The Maldivian foreign ministry said that China had made a request for clearances for Xiang Yang Hong 03 at Malé for "rotation of personnel and replenishment". It added that the vessel would "not be conducting any research while in [Maldivian] waters".

French [President Emmanuel Macron](#) called for a de-escalation of tension between China and the United States at the World Economic Forum in Davos. He also underlined the European Union needs to reduce its dependence on major powers and avoid escalating geopolitical tensions. "Our strategy vis-à-vis China in this context is not a decoupling strategy, but a de-risking strategy," he said, referring to moves aimed at restructuring global supply chains that are now often centred in China.

Amid Calls from American academics to renew [US-China Science Deal](#), a top government official negotiating the pact has said that seminal US-China science deal depends on both sides agreeing on new stronger terms to address Washington's national security concerns. According to Jason Donovan, director of science and technology cooperation at the US State Department, Washington's posture going into the talks was to bolster the US-China Science and Technology Cooperation Agreement "to have it be more robust, to have the guardrails be more firm and clearer".

[China's Commerce Minister, Wang Wentao has said](#) his office would press on to promote its "Made in China" strategy amid growing efforts from foreign investors to diversify their portfolios, but it would not shy away from protecting against "unreasonable sanctions and suppression". "The difficulties and challenges facing China's foreign trade development cannot be ignored, but favourable conditions are stronger than the unfavourable factors," said Wang in an interview with People's Daily.



## Other Developments

[Bangladesh seeks careful balance between China and India](#)

[Nepal to auction China-made planes amid heavy losses](#)

['China may have concluded India is now tilting to the U.S.'](#)

## Central Asia

by

Jayantika Rao T.V.

The European Parliament [adopted a report](#) entitled 'EU Strategy on Central Asia' on January 17. The [comprehensive document](#) strongly emphasises regional cooperation, sustainable development, and human rights as the cornerstones of the EU's approach to the strategically significant region. The report prepared by the Committee on Foreign Affairs (AFET) notes the region has seen a substantial impact from adverse geopolitical factors, including the Taliban takeover in Afghanistan and the Russia-Ukraine conflict, and therefore, the EU needs to update its strategy published in 2019.

Principal Deputy Spokesperson of the US Department of State, [Vedant Patel said](#) during January 22's press briefing that the US is interested in conducting talks on the normalisation of relations between Azerbaijan and Armenia. Vedant Patel's statement was a response to a reporter's question whether US Secretary of State Antony Blinken's invitation to the foreign ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan to Washington in December 2023 was still valid. However, Patel noted that he has no scheduling update regarding this meeting.

Prime Minister of Armenia Nikol Pashinyan said that his country [needed a new constitution](#) to entrench its 'democratic aspirations'. Russia's Interfax news agency quoted Pashinyan as telling a meeting at the country's justice ministry "We must have a Constitution that will make the Republic of Armenia more competitive and more viable in the new geopolitical and regional conditions".

On January 16, Kazakhstan chaired the latest [meeting of the SCO National Coordinators Council](#) via videoconference. The participants considered the draft initiative 'On Global Unity for a Just World and Harmony' as well as some current issues on the agenda. Following the meeting, a protocol was signed.

## Other Developments

[Kazakhstan: Ex-President's Nephew, Former Top Security Official, To Go On Trial](#)

[Uzbekistan: President Lambasts Failure To Achieve Export Boom](#)

[Powerful Earthquake Strikes Along China-Kyrgyzstan Border](#)

[Russia's Putin Rejects Proposal By Armenia's Pashinyan For Private Conversation?](#)

[PACE Wants To Limit Azerbaijan Delegation's Powers Because Of Country Violating Organization's Principles](#)

[French Senate Calls For Sanctions Against Azerbaijan in its Resolution](#)



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