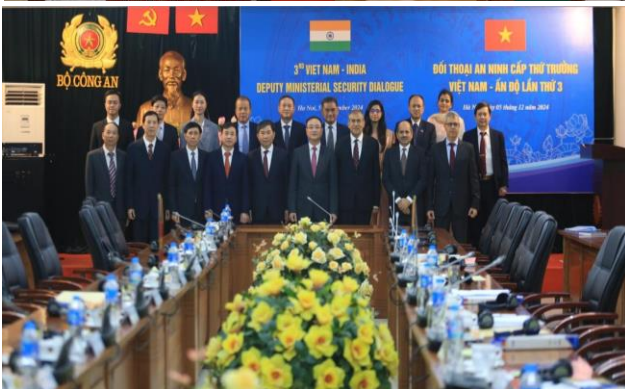




# Delhi Policy Group

Advancing India's Rise as a Leading Power

## India's Proximity Archives December 11, 2024



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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, 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. and Divya Rai, 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:** *The King of Bhutan, Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck, visited India on December 5-6, 2024. Source: [X/@narendramodi](#)*

**West Asia:** *India's External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar co-chaired the 4<sup>th</sup> India-Bahrain High Joint Commission meeting alongside Bahrain's FM Dr. Abdullatif bin Rashid Al Zayani in Manama on December 9, 2024. Source: [Official X Handle/Dr. S. Jaishankar](#)*

**Southeast Asia:** *Deputy NSA Mr. Pavan Kapoor co-chaired Third India-Vietnam Security Dialogue with Dy. Min. of Public Security Lt. Gen. Pham The Tung on December 5, 2024 in Ha Noi. Source: [X/@AmbKapoor](#)*

**Indian Ocean Region:** *INS Tushil, the latest multi-role stealth-guided missile frigate, commissioned into the Indian Navy on December 9, 2024. Source: [X/@SpokespersonMoD](#)*

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## South Asia

by

Shreyas Deshmukh

India's Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri, [visited Dhaka](#) on December 9, meeting the Chief Adviser of the Interim Government of Bangladesh Dr Muhammad Yunus and the Foreign Affairs Adviser Touhid Hossain. He also held Foreign Office Consultations with the Foreign Secretary of Bangladesh Mohammad Jashim Uddin. The Foreign Office Consultations included discussions on political and security affairs and border management. Furthermore, both sides committed to strengthening cooperation and consultations to promote regional integration, especially through BIMSTEC.

The King of Bhutan, Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck, visited India on December 5-6. During the visit he met Prime Minister Narendra Modi and External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar. PM Modi conveyed [India's commitment](#) to strengthening 'exemplary partnership' with Bhutan while discussing bilateral cooperation in the areas, including clean energy, trade and investment, space and technology and 'Gelephu Mindfulness City' initiative. Meanwhile, [the first Bhutan-India meeting](#) on HICDP or the Small Development Projects (SDP) was held on December 4. These projects aim at enhancing accessibility, creating economic opportunities, improving livelihoods, and strengthening food security.

During his [official visit to China](#) on December 4, Nepal's Prime Minister, KP Sharma Oli, signed frame work for Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) cooperation. The framework will be valid for three years and will get another three-year extension unless terminated by either side. Agreement paves the way for negotiations on the ten projects that Nepal had proposed to China.

### Other Developments

[Afghan women banned from pursuing medical education](#)

[China becomes Pakistan's largest creditor with USD29bn loans](#)

## Southeast Asia

by

Jayantika Rao T.V

On December 5, the [third India-Viet Nam Security Dialogue](#) was co-chaired by Mr. Pavan Kapoor, India's Deputy National Security Adviser and Lt. Gen. Pham The Tung, Vietnam's Deputy Minister of Public Security, in Hanoi, Vietnam. The dialogue facilitated an exchange of views on global and regional security issues, as well as the discussions on strengthening cooperation in areas like countering terrorism, combating organised crime and sharing of information between law enforcement agencies.

On [December 10](#), Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr dismissed the suggestion of to send warships to the West Philippine Sea in a bid to assert Manila's maritime presence as China continues to encroach on the country's exclusive economic zone. "We will never be part of an escalation in the West Philippine Sea," Marcos told reporters, however, he also added that the country will continue supporting fishermen. The Philippines will not deploy its own navy warships in the area to prevent provocation and escalation, [Marcos said](#). Furthermore, he clarified that "We don't need Navy warships. All we are doing is resupplying our fishermen, protecting our territorial rights."

On [December 5](#), the US embassy in Hanoi said that the United States will provide US \$12.5 million to Vietnam to enhance its maritime law enforcement capabilities and combat illegal fishing. The assistance package includes support for Vietnamese maritime law enforcement agencies, the donation of small boats and the development of training facilities.

### Other Developments

[Setting the story straight on Malaysia's foreign policy](#)

[Active diplomacy of Indonesia's new president carries its own risks](#)

[India strongly pushing for review of Asean-India trade pact, says Jaishankar](#)

[Thailand, Indonesia Raise Concerns At WTO On India's Quality Control Delay](#)

## East Asia

by

Divya Rai

South Korea's former defense minister, Kim Yong-hyun, [has been arrested](#) on insurrection charges following President Yoon Suk Yeol's brief declaration of martial law. A formal arrest warrant was issued late on December 10, 2024. The charges against him include "engaging in critical duties during an insurrection" and "abuse of authority to obstruct the exercise of rights". The unprecedented martial law declaration, which lasted only six hours, involved deploying military forces to the National Assembly to prevent lawmakers from voting against it. Mr Kim was contrite on Dec 10, saying that "all responsibility for this situation lies solely with me". He "deeply apologised" to the South Korean people [and said that his subordinates](#) were "merely following my orders and fulfilling their assigned duties".

On December 11, 2024, Taiwan's Defense Ministry [reported a notable increase](#) in Chinese military activity around the island, detecting 53 military aircraft and 19 naval vessels, prompting Taiwan to heighten its state of alert. This surge follows Taiwanese President Lai Ching-te's recent diplomatic tour of the Pacific, which included stops in Hawaii and Guam, and is seen as a response from China to assert its claims over Taiwan. In light of these developments, Taiwan has raised its military alert level and established an emergency response centre to monitor the situation closely.

The U.S.-Taiwan Initiative on 21st Century Trade has officially [come into effect](#) on December 10, 2024. This marks a significant advancement in the economic relationship between the two nations. The agreement was signed on June 1, 2023, by representatives from the American Institute in Taiwan and the Taipei Economic and Cultural Representative Office in the United States. This initiative was launched to enhance economic ties and counteract increasing pressures from China, particularly after Taiwan was excluded from the U.S.-led Indo-Pacific Economic Framework established in 2022.

### Other Developments

[Japan and Finland to boost security cooperation](#)

[China arrests its former agriculture minister and party secretary Tang Renjian for corruption](#)

[Japan, the United States and the Philippines will hold their first trilateral maritime consultation in Tokyo](#)



## West Asia

by

Sanket Joshi

The Sunni Islamist group [Hayat Tahrir al-Sham \(HTS\) backed by Turkey](#) seized Syria's capital Damascus on December 8, ending six decades of Assad family rule. Former Syrian President [Bashar al-Assad has fled to Russia](#) where he has been granted humanitarian asylum. Abu Muhammad al-Jolani, leader of the HTS, described the overthrow of the Assad regime as a "[victory for the Islamic nation](#)" and vowed to liberate those the Syrian government had imprisoned. Analysts noted that the collapse of the Assad regime is a [blow to Iran's "axis of resistance" against Israel](#) and the US. Meanwhile, the Israeli Air Force struck [military targets and airbases across Syria](#), dismantling the remaining capabilities of the Assad regime.

In light of the developments in Syria, the US reaffirmed its commitment to a fair, inclusive, and [non-sectarian Syrian political transition](#) that meets international standards of transparency and accountability, in line with UN Security Council Resolution 2254. Turkey, Saudi Arabia, UAE, Jordan, and Qatar expressed satisfaction with the [positive developments in Syria](#) and called for concerted efforts to preserve the unity and cohesion of the Syrian people. India also urged all parties to work towards preserving Syria's unity, sovereignty, and territorial integrity, emphasising the importance of an [inclusive Syrian-led political process](#) that respects the interests and aspirations of the society.

India's External Affairs Minister, [Dr. S. Jaishankar visited Qatar and Bahrain](#) from December 6-9. In Doha, EAM Dr. S. Jaishankar met with Qatari Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani to discuss ways to strengthen bilateral ties. While, during his visit to Manama, EAM co-chaired 4<sup>th</sup> meeting of India-Bahrain High Joint Commission (HJC) with his Bahraini counterpart Dr. Abdullatif bin Rashid Al Zayani. During the meeting, the two sides discussed bilateral cooperation in areas including trade, investments, healthcare, energy, security, tourism, as well as new areas such as space, education, fintech, and technology.

### Other Developments

[External Affairs Minister, Dr. S. Jaishankar delivered an address at the Manama Dialogue](#)

[The Assad regime ruled Syria for 50 years. Here's how it fell in less than two weeks](#)

## Central Asia

by

Jayantika Rao T.V.

On [December 4](#), Central Asian neighbours Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan announced a border demarcation deal on the last contested frontier in the region, potentially ending decades of territorial disputes. The deal, reached by Bishkek and Dushanbe's powerful secret service chiefs, comes almost two years after an intense and bloody border conflict killed around 100 people in September 2022. Managing expectations, the Head of National Security of Kyrgyzstan, [Kamchybek Tashiev said](#) that the next steps will include the drawing up of final documents, followed by the ratification of the agreement in both countries' parliaments and presidential signatures. He said this could take "a few months".

On [December 5](#), Kazakhstan, China's Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR), and the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region have agreed to establish a joint mechanism for [trilateral](#) cooperation. The agreement was reached during a meeting in Urumqi, Xinjiang, attended by Kazakhstan's Vice Prime Minister Serik Jumangarin, XUAR Party Committee Secretary Ma Xingrui, and Hong Kong's Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development Algernon Yau. At the meeting, Ma Xingrui underscored Xinjiang's strategic role as a bridge connecting Kazakhstan with Hong Kong and the broader Belt and Road Initiative. Highlighting Kazakhstan as a critical transport hub linking Europe and Asia, and Hong Kong as a global trade and logistics center, Ma proposed developing a framework for collaboration. The suggested mechanism would focus on boosting investment and strengthening cooperation in key sectors, including finance, energy, agriculture, logistics, and cultural exchanges such as education, healthcare, tourism, and scientific research.

On [December 4](#), Uzbekistan and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) have agreed on a comprehensive roadmap to expand cooperation in peaceful nuclear development. The meeting outlined several key priorities for Uzbekistan-IAEA cooperation, including 'Enhancing the capacity and competence of national agencies', 'Preparing high-skilled personnel for nuclear-related fields' and 'Developing nuclear energy, agriculture, water use, healthcare, and ecological programs under the IAEA's guidance'. As a result of the meeting, Uzbekistan and the IAEA agreed to adopt a joint roadmap to strengthen multidimensional cooperation in peaceful nuclear development.



## Other Developments

[President Putin received Speakers of Parliaments of CSTO countries](#)

[China to Transport Lithium-Ion Batteries Along TITR via Kazakhstan](#)

[Kazakhstan welcomes its first A400M airlifter in Almaty](#)

[Territorial claims against Azerbaijan in Armenian constitution 'major obstacle' to peace: Deputy FM](#)



## Indian Ocean Region

by

Divya Rai

On December 9, 2024, INS Tushil, a multi-role stealth guided missile frigate, was [officially commissioned](#) by India's Defence Minister Shri Rajnath Singh into the Indian Navy at the Yantar Shipyard in Kaliningrad, Russia. This frigate is designed for blue water operations across the spectrum of naval warfare in all four dimensions air, surface, underwater and electromagnetic. INS Tushil is an upgraded Krivak III class frigates of the Project 1135.6 of which, six are already in service. She is the first of the two upgraded additional follow-on ships, the contract for which was signed in October 2016.

On December 9, 2024, the Indian Coast Guard (ICG) and the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) [held their](#) second bilateral meeting at ICG headquarters in New Delhi. This meeting was part of an ongoing cooperation framework established under a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed in August 2023. The discussions focused on enhancing collaboration in key areas such as Maritime Search and Rescue (SAR), Maritime Law Enforcement, Marine Pollution Response, and Capacity Building.

Exercise SANGAM-'24, a joint training operation between the Indian Navy's MARCOS (Marine Commandos) and the U.S. Navy SEALs, [concluded](#) on December 9, 2024 in Goa. The training modules included Maritime Interdiction Operations, Direct Action Missions, and Special Heliborne Operations, emphasizing readiness for combined operations in diverse environments. Exercise SANGAM has been a cornerstone of defense cooperation since 1994, reflecting the growing military and diplomatic ties between India and the United States.

### Other Developments

[UNODC and IFC-IOR Tabletop Exercise on "Collaborative Maritime Security & Safety in the Indian Ocean Region"](#)



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