

## **South Asia Daily Briefing – January 12, 2026**

Pakistan faces a surge in militancy as a targeted bomb attack in Tank district killed seven police officers, highlighting persistent security challenges along the northwestern frontier.

In India, ISRO's Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle suffered a critical setback when a rocket carrying 16 payloads veered off course, undermining the agency's otherwise strong launch record.

Across the border, a Nepalese Armed Police constable was found murdered near Bahraich, India, signaling cross-border criminal or insurgent risks.

Sri Lanka hosted Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi, who pledged support for cyclone reconstruction and deepened economic ties, reflecting Colombo's careful balancing between Beijing and New Delhi.

Bhutan gains regional energy leverage as Coal India opens e-auction participation to neighbouring buyers, potentially enhancing industrial access and cross-border trade.

Meanwhile, Iran grapples with nationwide protests that have claimed over 500 lives and 10,600 arrests, challenging Tehran's stability and heightening regional geopolitical tensions.

### **Here are 'Top Five' news stories in South Asia Today:**

#### **Pakistan**

##### **Seven Pakistani police officers killed in targeted bomb attack**

**Description:** Seven Pakistani police officers were killed in a targeted bomb blast on their armoured vehicle on Monday, police in the northwestern Tank district said, as Islamabad contends with a rising wave of militancy.

Link: <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/seven-pakistani-police-officers-killed-targeted-bomb-attack-2026-01-12/>

#### **India**

##### **Indian rocket launch loses control after liftoff in fresh blow to ISRO**

**Description:** An Indian rocket carrying 16 loads of equipment and experiments including an earth surveillance satellite went off track after liftoff on Monday in a fresh setback to the workhorse launch vehicle of the Indian Space Research Organisation.

**It was a second disappointment for the Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle in about eight months, denting its reputation for reliability, with a more than 90% success rate over about 60 past missions.**

**Link:** <https://www.reuters.com/science/indian-rocket-launch-loses-control-after-liftoff-fresh-blow-isro-2026-01-12/>

## **Nepal NP**

**Title:** *Murdered Nepal cop's body found dumped across India border*

**Description (80 words):** A Nepalese Armed Police Force constable, on leave from his duties in Kathmandu, was found murdered and his body dumped in a forest near the India-Nepal border in Uttar Pradesh's Bahraich district. Initial investigations indicate foul play, with multiple injuries suggesting violent death.

**Link:** <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/lucknow/murdered-nepal-cops-body-found-dumped-in-bahraich/articleshow/126470908.cms>

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## **LK Sri Lanka LK**

**Title:** *Chinese foreign minister meets Sri Lanka's foreign minister in Colombo*

**Description (80 words):** Chinese Foreign Minister **Wang Yi** visited Sri Lanka today, holding talks with Sri Lankan Foreign Minister **Vijitha Herath** aimed at strengthening bilateral cooperation on trade, investment, tourism, and post-cyclone reconstruction. China assured its support for rebuilding infrastructure destroyed by Cyclone Ditwah and discussed expanded economic collaboration, following recent Indian assistance pledges. The visit reflects Colombo's strategic balancing between Beijing and New Delhi amid economic recovery efforts and geopolitical competition in South Asia.

**Link:** <https://economynext.com/chinese-fm-meets-sri-lanka-counterpart-in-his-short-visit-257101/>

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## **BH Bhutan BH**

**Title:** *Regional trade collaboration expands with neighbouring countries' economic steps (Context from regional Reuters coverage)*

**Description (80 words):** **Coal India** has opened e-auction participation to neighbouring buyers including from Nepal, Bangladesh, and Bhutan, lowering trade barriers and offering cost-competitive access to Indian coal markets. While not a Bhutan-exclusive report, the development directly impacts Bhutan's energy and industry sectors by broadening supply

options and regional commercial integration. This initiative is part of broader South Asian economic cooperation trends aiming to enhance cross-border trade flows amid shifting energy and industrial demand dynamics.

**Link:** <https://www.reuters.com/world/india/coal-india-rises-after-allowing-buyers-some-neighbouring-countries-bid-auctions-2026-01-02/>

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## **IR Iran IR**

**Title:** *Deaths from Iran protests reach more than 500, rights group says*

**Description (80 words):** Ongoing nationwide protests in Iran have resulted in over 500 deaths and more than 10,600 arrests, according to a rights group, amid an internet blackout and government crackdown. The unrest began over economic hardship and inflation but has expanded into broad anti-regime demonstrations. Iran's leadership blames external actors, while Washington has signaled possible intervention options. The protests mark one of the most significant challenges to Tehran's stability and have regional geopolitical implications, including canceled diplomatic visits.

**Link:** <https://www.reuters.com/business/media-telecom/confronting-protests-iran-vows-strike-back-if-us-attacks-2026-01-11/>