

# THE NEWS ANALYTICS JOURNAL



# IAF: THE FIRST RESPONDERS

**IN FOCUS**

CHINA'S MULTIDIMENSIONAL  
APPROACH TO AFRICA

**COVER STORY**

INDIAN AIR FORCE  
FLIGHT PATH @ 92

**TIME PIECE**

EXPLODING PAGERS & TARGETED  
ASSASSINATIONS

# TNJ's Power Panel



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# || Foreword



## IAF: FROM HUMBLE BEGINNINGS TO SOARING HEIGHTS

The Indian Air Force (IAF) Day commemorates its historic formation on 8th October 1932. The history of IAF is a captivating tale of unwavering commitment, groundbreaking innovation, and the ascent of a formidable air power. The IAF is one of the most modern and powerful air forces in the world with a wide range of aircraft and a strong array of armaments.

The IAF crest represents the pride, courage, and identity of the IAF and the motto is “Touch The Sky with Glory” which aptly reflects IAF’s dedication to achieving excellence and reaching new heights in the realm of aviation. IAF has made significant contributions to the country’s sovereignty. Its humble beginnings saw a fleet of only four Westland Wapiti biplanes and a handful of brave pilots taking to the skies.

Post-independence, IAF shed its auxiliary status and emerged as a sovereign force which marked the beginning of an era of rapid expansion and modernization. The development of the LCA Tejas is a milestone in its quest for self-reliance. The IAF faced its first major test during the 1962 Indo-China war where the pilots displayed extraordinary courage and tactical skill, effectively deterring further Chinese advances. The 1965 and 1971 wars cemented the Air Force’s reputation as a potent offensive force capable of safeguarding the nation’s borders.

The IAF has embraced diverse roles beyond battlefields by contributing significantly to humanitarian and disaster relief operations illustrating its commitment to serving the people. October 8th serves as a solemn day to honor the sacrifices of all gallant air warriors who have given supreme sacrifice in the line of duty. This current edition of The News Analytics Journal celebrates the achievements and contributions of our heroes which also serves as a source of inspiration for the people. It symbolises national strength bringing people together in a common spirit of patriotism. The nation deeply appreciates the IAF’s vital role in fostering a sense of security and shared purpose.

Our Salute to the All the Air Warriors.

Jai Hind!

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Ashok Sangappa Alur". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal line extending from the end.

Prof. Dr. Ashok Sangappa Alur,  
Vice Chancellor, Kodagu University,  
Government of Karnataka



# THE NEWS ANALYTICS JOURNAL



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# Editor's Note



## THE INDOMITABLE SPIRIT

*On this special occasion of Indian Air Force Day, we celebrate not only the legacy of one of the world's most formidable air forces but*

*also the indomitable spirit of courage, sacrifice, and dedication that defines the Indian Air Force (IAF). For decades, the men and women of the IAF have soared through the skies, safeguarding the sovereignty and integrity of our nation and playing a pivotal role in defence and peacekeeping missions alike.*

*Indian Air Force Day on 8th October is a reminder of the IAF's commitment to excellence and its significant contributions to the nation's security and pride. From the early years of its formation in 1932 to its present stature as a modern, technologically advanced force, the IAF has evolved in every aspect—strategically, tactically, and technologically. This day also pays homage to the air warriors who have laid down their lives in the line of duty, as well as those who continue to serve with unwavering loyalty and patriotism.*

*This edition of The News Analytics Journal is dedicated to the valiant air warriors of the IAF, offering a glimpse into their dedication and professionalism. The Journal takes an insight into everyday challenges that our air warriors live through, in keeping our skies safe. The edition also delves into the nuances of global upheaval analysed through the Journal's global authors.*

*It is with immense pride and gratitude that we salute the Indian Air Force—today and always. May the sky be no limits for our brave air warriors.*

*Jai Hind!*



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# CHINA'S MULTIDIMENSIONAL APPROACH TO AFRICA

## IN FOCUS

*Over the years, China has increased its interest in Africa, focusing on enhancing the development needs of Africa by building and consolidating its presence through infrastructure, trade, and political alignment with Africa. Hence, this blooming partnership brings mixed feelings to the continent, thus succumbing to more questionings and “what ifs” on China’s motives and, in return, long-term implications on the continent’s future.*



**BY JUSTUS NAM,  
EXPERT ON AFRICA AND AN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS  
SPECIALIST, NAIROBI, KENYA  
FOR TNJ**

China’s engagement with Africa is expected to grow stronger in the coming years. During the FOCAC summit in Beijing in early September, Chinese President Xi Jinping made a substantial pledge of USD 51 billion in loans, investments, and aid to African nations over the next three years, signaling a significant boost in diplomatic relations. This close interaction between China and Africa is not a new phenomenon. Since the 1950s, Chinese foreign ministers have regularly visited African nations during their first annual international trips. Nevertheless, Xi’s recent financial and diplomatic commitments will

likely stir concerns among the United States and other Western powers, which have long been engaged in a geopolitical rivalry with China for global dominance.

Furthermore, these pledges may rekindle apprehensions regarding China’s so-called “debt-trap diplomacy”—a controversial notion suggesting that China deliberately pushes countries into debt, leveraging defaults to gain control over critical assets. This view has gained enough traction that South African President Cyril Ramaphosa felt compelled to refute it at the summit. Although the



idea of Chinese debt traps, particularly the case of Sri Lanka’s Hambantota Port (leased to a Chinese firm in 2017), has been debunked by many, the narrative persists. As China continues to deepen its ties with Africa, examining what it aims to achieve through this growing relationship is essential.

Both strategic and economic objectives drive China’s engagement in Africa. Strategically, it aims to secure support from African nations

in international forums like the United Nations, gain access to vital resources, and promote the global use of its renminbi currency. These objectives align with China's ambition to become a key player in an increasingly multipolar world order. The establishment of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) in 2018 has further bolstered these opportunities, facilitating the development of cross-border value chains across African nations. China imports many natural resources from Africa, many of which are strategically important, such as those used in battery production. In return, China exports various manufactured goods, including machinery, vehicles, and industrial equipment, to African markets.

## CHINA'S EXPANDING INFLUENCE

China, currently the fifth-largest foreign investor in Africa, has seen rapid growth in its investments. Unlike many Western companies focusing primarily on resource extraction and financial services, Chinese firms have also directed significant investments toward the construction and manufacturing sectors. Chinese enterprises are particularly dominant in Africa's construction industry, often taking on large-scale infrastructure projects financed by Chinese loans. In 2019, Chinese contractors were responsible for about 60% of the total value of construction work across the continent.

However, some Chinese-funded infrastructure projects have faced criticism for not contributing significantly to economic growth in Africa. In certain instances, these projects have added to African countries' debt burdens. For example, expensive expressways connecting Nairobi and Kampala to their international airports primarily serve urban elites and international travelers, yet they have yet to boost the broader economy significantly.

Recognizing these challenges, China has

adjusted its approach to infrastructure financing. In 2021, Xi introduced the idea of "small and beautiful" projects—smaller, more focused investments that better meet the specific needs of partner countries. This concept was reiterated at the most recent summit, emphasizing a shift toward more targeted projects that respond to local demands. This responsiveness to African leaders' needs differentiates China's approach from Western nations.

China is in contrast to Western powers which often attach conditions to their aid, such as demands for social or economic reforms. This stance has helped bolster China's diplomatic influence in the region. A clear sign

of this effort is part of a broader strategy to reduce the dominance of the US dollar, which gives the United States significant control over international financial transactions. Since the late 2000s, China's central bank has signed currency swap agreements with African nations like Morocco, Egypt, Nigeria, and South Africa, facilitating trade in the renminbi. Additionally, China aims to promote the renminbi through official lending institutions like the China Development Bank and the New Development Bank.

Like Western nations, China is pursuing various political and economic interests in Africa. However, unlike the West,



of this influence is the diminishing number of African countries maintaining diplomatic ties with Taiwan, a region China considers part of its territory. Only Eswatini maintains diplomatic relations with Taiwan, while others host Taiwanese representative offices.

Another key goal for China in Africa is to expand the use of its currency, the

renminbi, which has often neglected Africa, China does not need "debt-trap diplomacy" to extend its influence. China can effectively strengthen its position in Africa by offering more favorable partnerships and aligning with African leaders' priorities. This approach benefits China and holds the potential for mutual growth and development, fostering a sense of optimism about the relationship.

***Beijing has enhanced its diplomatic influence by investing in key sectors, the renminbi currency, and offering a noninterference policy, which has been a benevolent alternative to strict conditions imposed by Western powers.***



## DEBT-TRAP DIPLOMACY

China's involvement in Africa's debt sustainability presents a highly intricate scenario. Data from the Boston University Global Development Policy Center indicates that between 2000 and 2022, Chinese loans to African governments and regional institutions amounted to approximately \$170 billion. However, China is not Africa's dominant creditor; it accounts for just 12% of Africa's total public and private debt. While "debt-trap diplomacy" remains a heated topic, some aspects of China's lending practices warrant closer scrutiny. A 2022 Aid Data study revealed that nearly half of the loans provided by China to sub-Saharan Africa are not reflected in sovereign debt records, making it challenging to assess accurate debt levels. Despite concerns over opacity and transparency in these agreements, China is unlikely to grant large-scale debt relief or forgiveness. Instead, Beijing typically opts to write off small, interest-free loans.

In the past, African nations' uncoordinated and poorly structured interactions during the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) meetings have left the continent in a reactive posture, unable to drive the agenda. To counter this, African governments are now working to craft a unified approach toward China, ensuring harmonized positions ahead of the next FOCAC summit. Moving forward, African countries will likely place less emphasis on aid and instead focus on trade facilitation, pushing for more excellent value addition to their products.

## STRATEGIC & ECONOMIC DRIVERS

Some observers suggest that India's engagement with Africa mirrors that of China, but this characterization overlooks the distinct nature of India's approach. Unlike China, India's actions in Africa are not shaped by third-party influences. The Indian model holds specific advantages in sectors like information technology, human resource development, agriculture, and pharmaceuticals. Still, how African leaders have negotiated with China under the FOCAC framework can provide India with valuable insights for its engagement in Africa.

Conclave and India Africa Defence Ministers' meetings have been occurring regularly, holding the next IAFS (IAFS-IV) is critical for sustaining momentum, especially after the African Union's inclusion in the G-20 during India's presidency.

Furthermore, an India-AU Track 1.5 Dialogue could be established to discuss issues of shared interest in consultation with Africa's eight officially recognized regional economic communities (RECs). Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, home to the African Union Commission, would be an ideal host for the IAFS-IV. At the same time, New Delhi could benefit from an AU regional office to strengthen ongoing dialogue.

Second, India has the potential to significantly contribute to integrating African economies into global value chains and supporting the continent's industrialization. Indian businesses should focus on making higher-value investments in agriculture, manufacturing, and pharmaceuticals. India can help generate employment and supply local markets by setting up manufacturing hubs in African countries. African Indian firms could also invest in sectors such as farm mechanization, food processing, irrigation, and cold storage infrastructure to reduce food wastage while promoting "Triple A" (affordable, appropriate, and adaptable) technologies.

## BOOSTING INDIA'S CONNECTIVITY IN AFRICA

The third takeaway involves boosting Indian private sector involvement and exploring creative financing models. Although India's lines of credit are a well-established



First, India should prioritize consistency in its outreach to Africa. The last India-Africa Forum Summit (IAFS) took place in 2015. Although platforms like the CII-EXIM Bank

mechanism for financing African projects, there is growing reluctance among African nations to take on new loans in the post-COVID environment.



Public-private partnerships (PPPs) and blended finance solutions are increasingly viewed as viable alternatives. India's strategic and commercial interests in Africa should be coupled with support from the Indian government to offer low-cost credit to Indian banks and entrepreneurs. This would enable Indian companies to conduct feasibility studies and develop detailed project reports, ultimately leading to bankable projects. Initiatives like the EXIM Bank's Trade Assistance Programme could also foster trust and deepen financial ties between India and Africa.

Lastly, India's digital innovations—particularly its digital infrastructure, including biometrics, mobile connectivity, and Jan Dhan technology—could enhance digital and physical connectivity with Africa. For instance, India's Unified Payment Interface (UPI) and RuPay services are already operational in Mauritius, and countries like Kenya, Namibia, Ghana, and Mozambique have expressed interest in adopting the UPI platform. To further strengthen Indian-African banking

ties and minimize foreign exchange risks, India should consider replacing dollar-based lines of credit with rupee-based ones. This shift would save African countries billions in exchange rate costs, making currency-neutral transactions beneficial for both sides.

Increasingly, African nations are taking control of their strategic direction, with citizens demanding greater accountability from their leaders to ensure their economies move up the value chain. They are reshaping the narrative around Africa, positioning the continent as a prime destination for investment. Observing how African leaders interact with China during FOCAC can provide India with essential insights for enhancing its partnerships across the African continent.

*(Justus Nam is an expert on Africa. He is an international relations specialist from Nairobi, Kenya. The views expressed are of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of **The News Analytics Journal**.)*



# INDIAN AIR FORCE

## COVER STORY

*The IAF is marking its 92nd Raising Day on 8th October 2024. Since its modest formation in 1932, it has transformed itself into one of the most advanced Air Force in the world. Decades have passed, as it protected Indian airspace and carried on humanitarian missions. It unequivocally qualifies as a symbol of national pride and the very cornerstone of India's defense strategy.*



**AIR MARSHAL ANIL KHOSLA (RETD)**  
FOR TNJ

The Indian Air Force (IAF) is gearing up to mark its anniversary in Chennai on 08 Oct 24. The celebrations will begin with a grand parade at Air Force Station Tambaram, followed by a breathtaking air show over Marina Beach. The show will feature some of the IAF's most advanced fighter jets, including the newly acquired Rafale, versatile SU-30, and indigenous Tejas. The event will also showcase thrilling performances by the Suryakiran aerobatic team, the Sarang helicopter display team, and the Akash Ganga skydiving team. This event is a celebration of the IAF's history and technological advancements and a testament to its

significant role in protecting Indian airspace. The IAF, founded on October 8, 1932, has grown into the world's fourth-largest and most advanced air force, known for its combat capabilities and contributions to nation-building, disaster relief, and international peacekeeping missions.

### OUTSTANDING ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The Indian Air Force started its journey on 08 Oct 1932, during the British Era. The first operational squadron took flight on April 1, 1933, comprised six RAF-trained officers, 19 Hawaii Sepoys (air soldiers), and a modest fleet of four



# FLIGHT PATH @ 92

Westland Wapiti aircraft. Recognizing its outstanding professionalism and accomplishments during World War II, the organization was granted the “Royal” prefix in March 1945, thus adopting the name Royal Indian Air Force (RIAF). In January 1950, the “Royal” prefix was dropped, and the Indian Air Force proudly became the formidable force we know today.

To date, the Indian Air Force has engaged in four conflicts with Pakistan, including the 1947-1948, 1965, and 1971 Bangladesh War, and the 1999 Kargil War. In 1961, it played a crucial role in supporting the integration of Goa into the Indian Union. During the 1962 conflict, the IAF provided vital air support. In 1984, the IAF was pivotal in capturing the Siachen Glacier and evicting intruders from the Kargil area in 1999.

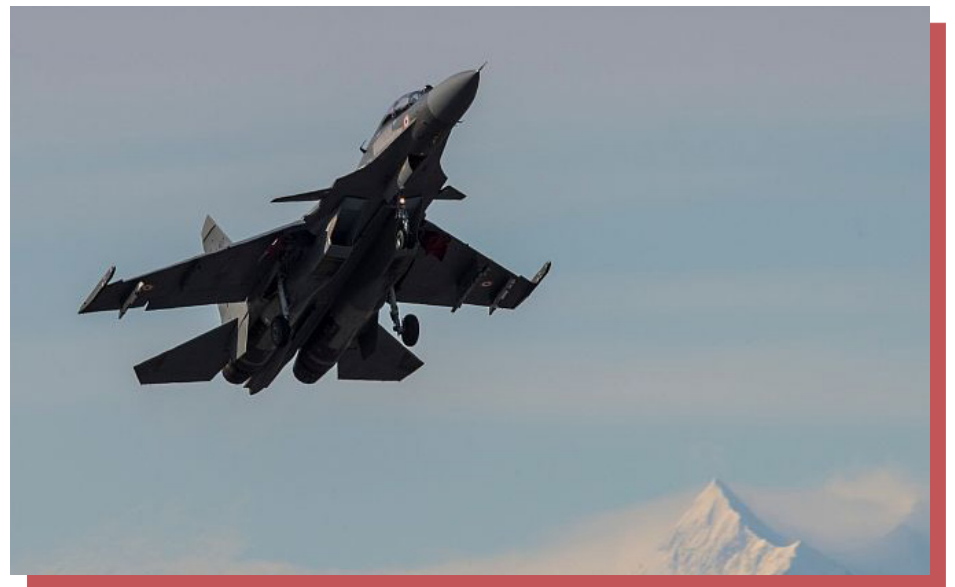
The IAF was initially formed to meet the British Empire’s tactical air power application requirements, and it remained tactical for a considerable time after Independence. However, it was only in 1971 that the IAF carried out strategic effect-based operations with parallel air campaigns. In the first decade of this century, the IAF inducted airborne early warning and aerial refueling capability, leading to increased strategic reach and conventional deterrence. This marked the beginning of the IAF’s transformation from a tactical air power to a strategic one, positioning it as a multi-spectrum air force ready to meet future challenges.

Over the decades, the IAF’s doctrine has been shaped by its war experiences, technological advancements, and shifts in global military thought. The Indian Air Force has transformed from a support-oriented tactical force to a strategic power capable of several

offensive, defensive, and deterrent roles. The evolution of its doctrine has kept pace with changes in global warfare, focusing on precision, network-centric operations, and the use of air and space power as critical enablers of national security. The IAF is preparing for future challenges by enhancing its space, cyber, and electronic warfare capabilities.

## FLYING FOR THE NATION

The Indian Air Force (IAF) is not just a defender of the nation’s skies. It is a multifaceted force that significantly contributes to India’s nation-building. Its roles in national security, economic development, humanitarian efforts, and technological advancements are crucial components of this process.



The IAF’s primary responsibility is to protect India’s airspace and national sovereignty. By ensuring air superiority, conducting surveillance, and being ready for combat, the IAF safeguards India’s territorial integrity against external threats. The IAF, a vital component of India’s defense forces triad, provides strategic deterrence

through its advanced combat capabilities, thus maintaining regional stability and security. The IAF’s unwavering commitment to safeguarding national sovereignty instills a deep sense of security and confidence in the citizens.

The IAF’s critical role in disaster management, closely coordinating with the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) and National Disaster Relief Force (NDRF), instills security and protection. The IAF is instrumental in responding to disasters due to floods, earthquakes, forest fires, cyclones, tsunamis, etc. It conducts rescue and relief operations, airlifting food, medical supplies, and personnel to affected areas. Its C-17 Globe Master III and C-130J Super Hercules transport aircraft and a fleet of helicopters are

indispensable in airlifting relief materials and evacuating people from disaster-stricken regions. During the Uttarakhand floods in 2013, the IAF executed one of its most extensive disaster relief operations, rescuing thousands of stranded people in challenging terrain and providing crucial medical aid and supplies.



The IAF's professionalism, discipline, and achievements in war and peace symbolize national pride and unity. Its displays and public air shows inspire patriotism and unity among citizens. The IAF recruits personnel from all regions and communities of India, promoting national integration. The force's inclusive nature helps foster a sense of belonging and unity among diverse sections of Indian society, making everyone feel a part of the IAF's mission.

The IAF participates in international military exercises, enhancing India's defense ties and fostering strategic partnerships. These collaborations enhance the IAF's operational readiness and contribute globally to India's diplomatic relations. The IAF has extended its disaster relief operations to neighboring and friendly nations, contributing to India's image as a responsible global player. During the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, the IAF significantly provided relief to countries like Sri Lanka, Indonesia, and the Maldives. The IAF has supported United Nations peacekeeping missions, transporting troops, equipment, and supplies to conflict zones, contributing to international peace and stability.

the IAF as a formidable force. The IAF, a technology-intensive service, is dedicated to continuous technology induction and modernization. Its modernization efforts are centered on replacing or upgrading aging systems, incorporating next-generation technology, and acquiring new platforms, weapons, and systems.

The IAF has recently inducted Rafale jets equipped with advanced avionics, radar systems, and weapons capabilities. These multirole fighters significantly

The IAF is also expanding its strategic airlift, mid-air refueling, and combat support operations capabilities with aircraft like the C-17 Globemaster III, C-130, IL-76/78, AWACS, and AEW&C aircraft to support rapid deployment and extended operations. Its air combat capability has been boosted with the induction of Apache and heavy-lift Chinook helicopters. The IAF also includes Indigenous rotary-wing platforms like the Light Combat Helicopter (LCH) and Light Utility Helicopter (LUH).



*IAF's functions include defending Indian skies, disaster relief, medical evacuations, national unification in displaying jet bravado, and building global partnerships with friendly nations.*

## EVOLVING TRAJECTORY

The Indian Air Force's future trajectory is shaped by its need to address evolving regional threats, adapt to technological advancements, and align with India's broader strategic goals. As the IAF prepares for future warfare, its unwavering commitment to enhancing its capabilities in terms of air power instills a strong sense of reassurance in India's military strength. This, coupled with its emphasis on force projection and joint operations with other military branches, positions

enhance the IAF's air combat capabilities. The Indigenous Tejas Mk1 and upcoming Tejas Mk2 aircraft are integral to the IAF's modernization plans. The Mk2 variant, with enhanced combat range and payload, is expected to replace older aircraft like the MiG-29 and Mirage 2000. India is also developing an indigenous Advanced Medium Combat Aircraft (AMCA), a fifth-generation stealth fighter with advanced avionics, stealth capabilities, and the ability to perform air superiority and strike roles.

The IAF has significantly invested in advanced air defense systems to counter emerging threats. The induction of the S-400 air defense system from Russia has substantially enhanced the IAF's ability to defend against aerial threats. This robust defense system provides a layered, multi-target air defense capability, ensuring the audience of India's secure airspace. The IAF's Integrated Air Command and Control System (IACCS) further reinforces this security by providing a networked envi-

ronment that integrates air defense sensors, weapons, and command and control systems, enabling faster decision-making and real-time coordination.

The IAF's doctrine has expanded from air power to aerospace power, incorporating space and cyber warfare as components of future warfare. The IAF is focused on enhancing its role in space, particularly in leveraging space-based intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) capabilities. Recognizing the importance of cyber warfare in modern conflicts, the IAF is strengthening its cyber defense capabilities. Establishing the Defense Space Agency (DSA) and Defense Cyber Agency (DCA) reflects this shift toward multi-domain operations, where cyber and electronic warfare will be crucial in achieving air dominance.

The IAF is expanding its Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS) capabilities to include various roles. The IAF is acquiring armed drones, including the MQ-9B SeaGuardian from the U.S., and supporting the development of indigenous armed drones. These will be used for surveillance, strike missions, and networked operations. The IAF is investing in swarm drone technology for future warfare. These drones, which can operate in large numbers to overwhelm enemy defenses, will be a critical asset in high-tech conflicts. The IAF is also exploring autonomous systems that can operate in contested environments, reducing the risk to human pilots and increasing operational flexibility.

The IAF focuses on network-centric capabilities, where multiple platforms (aircraft, UAVs, ground systems) are interconnected through secure communication networks. This allows the IAF to share real-time information and make quick, data-driven decisions during operations.



the Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) Tejas, Light Combat Helicopter (LCH), and air defense systems are a testament to this.

From its humble beginnings as a small auxiliary force in 1932, the Indian Air Force has grown into a highly professional, modern force. The IAF's journey from the beginning to its current position as a symbol of national pride is a testament to its remarkable achievements. From defending the nation during conflicts to providing vital support, the IAF remains integral to India's security and strength. It has played decisive roles in India's wars and peacekeeping missions. The IAF, through its evolution, has

***The IAF focuses on network-centric capabilities, long-range precision strikes, and Indigenous development, which boosts India's self-reliance at the regional and global defense levels.***

## SELF RELIANCE

The IAF has been a critical driver in India's push toward defense indigenization and self-reliance. The IAF's initiative and support for indigenization have reduced dependence on foreign suppliers, enhanced defense capabilities, and boosted the domestic industry. It has played an essential role in creating an aerospace ecosystem in India and has been operating indigenously built and licensed production aircraft and systems.

It has been instrumental in developing Indigenous aircraft, radars, and missile systems in collaboration with Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) and the Defense Research and Development Organization (DRDO). Platforms like

remained a cornerstone of India's defense strategy, continually adapting to meet modern challenges. IAF's chosen trajectory aims to secure air dominance, increase self-reliance, and emerge as a critical player in regional and global defense scenarios, ensuring that it remains a formidable force in conventional and unconventional warfare.

*(Air Marshal Anil Khosla (R), Former Vice Chief, Indian Air Force Researcher & Analyst Distinguished Fellow - USI & CAPS. The views expressed are of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of **The News Analytics Journal**.)*

# IN CONVERSATION



The News Analytics Journal (TNJ) editor, Ms Sandhya Srivastava interacted exclusively with H.E. Jagannath Sami, Honourable High Commissioner of the Republic of Fiji to the Republic of India, on the significance and expectations from the recent state visit of the Honourable President of India Smt. Droupadi Murmu to Fiji.

**TNJ:** Fiji and India share a deep historical and cultural connection that goes back more than a century. Almost a third of the Fijian population traced their roots to India how has this heritage shaped the current diplomatic and economic relations between the two nations?

**H.E. Jagannath Sami:** Fiji's connection with India is indeed historical and has forever grown stronger with time due to deep cultural and religious ties. India had recognised the presence of Indians taken to Fiji by the British Government under the 'Indentured System' from 1879 until 2016 to work in the Sugar Plantations. Well before Fiji's Independence, India had a commissioner since 1948 to look after the interests of Indians in Fiji. It was later upgraded to High Commission after Fiji's Independence in 1970. Hence, India's interest in Fiji is natural and obligatory. Girmitya Indians in Fiji looked upon India as the "Mother Land."



**H.E. Jagannath Sami**  
Honourable High Commissioner  
of the Republic of Fiji to the  
Republic of India.

**TNJ:** India has placed a special emphasis on the Forum for India and the Pacific Islands Cooperation (FIPIC) and identifies Fiji as an important partner in it. How does Fiji look at this forum?

**H.E. Jagannath Sami:** Fiji is the hub of the Pacific. Perhaps, one of the most developed countries in the South Pacific. It has a connectivity infrastructure. Fiji has provided leadership to the PIC and champions its common causes in PIC and Internationally. Hence, India and PIC countries recognise Fiji's strategic and proven leadership.

Fiji sees FIPIC as a significant platform for engaging apart from the other bilateral means. FIPIC provides an opportunity for Pacific Island countries to have an effective engagement with India and vice-versa. It was at the FIPIC when the Honourable Prime Minister of India Shri Narendra Modi made significant announcements for the Pacific including Fiji which included: setting up dialysis units, providing Sea ambulances, setting up 24x7 emergency helpline and establishing a super-specialty cardiology hospital in Fiji.

**TNJ:** The Indian President was conferred upon 'Order of Fiji' by the President of Fiji during this visit. Can you elaborate on the significance of this recognition?

**H.E. Jagannath Sami:** This year, the Head of State Ratu Wiliame Katonivere presented the Companion of the Order Fiji to India's President Droupadi Murmu. The medal honours President Murmu for various services to the people of India and development in Fiji. The Companion of the Order Fiji is an eminent achievement and merit of the highest degree in service to humanity at large.

Last year, the “Order of Fiji” was bestowed on PM Modi in recognition of his contribution to world peace and mankind. India’s philosophy “Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam,” the world is a family, is universal and well received by PIC. India’s role in the Pacific to uplift the lives of the people of PICs is recognised as a genuine effort. PM Modi’s announcement to build a regional 100-bed Super Speciality hospital in Fiji for the Pacific Island countries and provide equipment and human resources for its operation.

**TNJ: What steps are being taken to enhance trade between Fiji and India, and are there any emerging investment opportunities that Indian businesses should explore in Fiji?**

**H.E. Jagannath Sami:** Trade between India and Fiji has significant disparity. India exports to Fiji around US\$100m whilst Fiji exports only US\$500,000. Fiji is too small and cannot compete with India in Scale. However, there is huge potential for Indian entrepreneurs to invest in Fiji’s agriculture, fisheries, forestry, information technology, health, sugar, defence, education, culture and small and medium enterprises.

**TNJ: Fiji is a popular tourist destination. How are both countries promoting tourism and cultural exchanges to strengthen people-to-people ties?**

**H.E. Jagannath Sami:** Yes, Fiji has been making strong efforts to address challenges such as direct air connectivity, cost of fares and marketing Fiji to Indian Tourists. To do so, Fiji has established a Fiji Tourism Office in Mumbai to promote Fiji as a tourist destination. Fiji recently has successfully negotiated with an Indian Airline to codeshare with its national carrier, Fiji Airways. Hopefully, we may see this eventuating in more flights between Fiji to Syd/Mel/HK/Sig to Chennai/ Mumbai/ Delhi. This would certainly overcome some hurdles and encourage more Indian tourists to Fiji. Indeed, Fiji still must engage in some aggressive marketing in India to sell Fiji as a pristine location in the South Pacific.



**TNJ: India has been offering scholarships and training programs to Fijian students and professionals. How has this exchange contributed to capacity building in Fiji, and what future initiatives are planned?**

**H.E. Jagannath Sami:** Fiji like all nations is a victim of brain drain, accelerated post covid. India’s assistance has to some extent eased some shortages, but Fiji still needs a lot of skilled people to fill the vacuum. India has been very generous in providing scholarships for capacity building and human resource development programmes under its “Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation-ITEC.” There were scholarships under the ICCR scheme and last year’s announcement of the Sagar Amrut at the last FIPIC. India has also signed MOUs with Fiji in the following areas:- Cooperation in Youth Development.

**TNJ: With India emerging as a global leader in IT and digital transformation, how is Fiji benefiting from Indian expertise in technology and innovation?**

**H.E. Jagannath Sami:** Fiji needs support from India in the IT and digital transformation sector. There are continuing bilateral discussions between Fiji and India. In 2021 Government of India established a Centre of Excellence in Information Technology (CEIT) with Fiji. Fiji has also requested for support from India to assist in developing a National ID like the Adhar Card. A pilot test on the ground is pending, awaiting Fiji's approval.

Establishment of Mahatma Gandhi Centre of Excellence in IT: In 2021 Government of India established a Centre of Excellence in IT at Fiji National University. The project has been implemented by the Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC) under an MoU signed between the Governments of India and Fiji. Fiji is also exploring to undertake other IT projects through India's assistance.



**TNJ:** Given that both Fiji and India are vulnerable to climate change, how are the two countries working together to tackle environmental challenges and promote sustainable development?

**H.E. Jagannath Sami:** India and Fiji are working together to tackle environmental challenges and promote sustainable development in a number of ways, including:

- **Sustainable Coastal and Ocean Research Institute (SCORI)**

The Government of India is establishing SCORI at the University of South Pacific in Fiji to promote research and cooperation on ocean sciences and climate change adaptation.

- **International Solar Alliance (ISA)**

Fiji has been a founding member of ISA which is an initiative undertaken by the Government of India and France on climate action. As part of this initiative, solar projects have been implemented and capacity-building programmes have been developed.

- **Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI)**

Fiji has been a founding member of CDRI which is an initiative undertaken by the Government of India climate action. There have been high-level meetings, disaster-related projects being taken as well as capacity building trainings and technical assistance provided.

On 19 February 2014, during the visit by PM Narendra Modi, an MOU was signed “Extending the Line of Credit for Establishing Co-generation Plant in Fiji.”

On 06 February 2023, during the visit by the Minister of External Affairs, Dr S. Jaishankar to Fiji, the Project- Solarisation of State Residences at State House was launched.

India has signed an MOU with Fiji for Cooperation in the field of Renewable Energy.

**TNJ: How do Fiji and India collaborate on defence and security matters, particularly in areas such as maritime security, peacekeeping, and disaster management?**

**H.E. Jagannath Sami:** Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for strengthening defence and security ties including in defence production and military training was signed on 28-30 May 2017. Since then the members of the disciplinary forces from Fiji have been undergoing capacity building training under the ITEC programme in India.

**TNJ: Looking ahead, what is your vision for the future of the Fiji-India relationship, and what areas do you believe hold the most promise for deepening cooperation?**

**H.E. Jagannath Sami:** The India-Fiji bilateral relationship is built upon a shared history of support and diplomatic cooperation. It has matured into a robust partnership with thriving economic ties and multifaceted collaborations. As both nations continue to explore opportunities for further cooperation, the relationship is poised for a promising future. This partnership not only contributes to bilateral growth but also plays a crucial role in promoting regional and international stability.

Fiji and India's relationship now extends beyond cultural and religious ties, focusing significantly on trade, development, and international cooperation.

There are a lot of synergies, a lot of exchanges and cooperation that we can have in the area of health, education, renewable energy. Relating to health, India is building a 100-bed super-specialty hospital which will be good for Fiji as well as for the Pacific.

India has huge capacity and ability, experience and technology to assist Fiji in developing agriculture and MSME's promoting training, capacity building and capability development to achieve sustainable economic growth. India's cooperation extends to infrastructure projects and climate resilience initiatives, supporting Fiji's sustainable development goals.



Fiji's President Ratu Wiliame Maivalili Katonivere awarded President Droupadi Murmu the Companion of the Order of Fiji



# EXPLODING PAGERS & TARGETED ASSASSINATIONS

## TIMEPIECE

*The latest events in the Middle East have kept Israel's cleverly subtle approach to the ongoing war with Hezbollah under a magnificent microscopic view. Targeted assassinations and an involved booby-trapped ruse of pagers crippled Hezbollah's communication system by knocking at the heart of its leadership. It has been defined more by the brutal aspect of Israel-Iran's proxy war and Israeli tactical genius as violence grows in the area.*



**LT GEN RAJ SHULKA (RETD)  
FOR TNJ**

In terms of the death and destruction caused, events in Lebanon over the last few days are regrettable. Given the reality, even the centrality of targeted assassinations in the ongoing standoff between Israel and Iran (proxies included), however, what Israel has pulled off is close to incredible – the beeper-bomb operation is imaginative, audacious, and surgical, all at once. Israeli statecraft's agility, sheer wiles, guile, and resolve have once again come to the fore. The devil must be given its due.

Israel has for long known that the most dangerous piece

in the proxy apparatus set up by Iran was not the Hamas, not even the Houthis, but the Hezbollah. Targeting the Hezbollah leadership and its rank and file has been Israel's foremost strategic priority. After the Hamas attacks of 07 Oct 23, Israel's Defense Minister, Yoav Gallant, was of the view that Hezbollah needed to be dealt with even before the Hamas. Still, his advice did not resonate with the wider Cabinet. Since Oct 23, Hezbollah has targeted Israeli settlements

in Northern Israel with relentless ferocity, leading to the displacement of more than 70,000 Israelis.

### EXPLICIT SIGNALING

In August 2024, Hezbollah missile strikes targeted Gilot near Tel Aviv (housing Israel's cutting-edge cyber warfare intelligence Unit 8200) as also the missile defense hub in Ein Shemer, which operates the Iron Dome, David Sling, and Arrow missiles. Other reports suggest that the targeting grew so precise and rigorous that moving Netanyahu and their family to an underground bunker complex in



Jerusalem was contemplated. As if to close the ring of fire, on July 24, a Houthi Samad-3 drone traveled 2,600 kilometers and penetrated Israel's multi-tiered air defense system, killing one person and wounding a dozen in Tel Aviv. Two months later, the Houthis struck Tel Aviv again, this time with a ballistic missile that traveled 2,040 km in just under twelve minutes. The signaling to Israel was explicit – agree to a ceasefire in Gaza to relieve pressure on Hamas, or else face the wrath of the Hezbollah-Houthi combine.

Hezbollah to migrate to pagers where an elaborate ruse lay in wait – of manufactured pagers that the Hezbollah was lured into buying by Israeli front companies.

Even before Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah decided to expand pager usage, Israel had set up a shell company (BAC Consulting reportedly, based in Hungary) that posed as an international pager producer working in concert with a Taiwanese company, Gold Apollo. BAC did take on ordinary clients, for

denounced the use of cell phones. The pager transition was upscaled significantly after May 2024, with thousands distributed among Hezbollah officers and their allies. Israeli intelligence welcomed the move with anticipated glee – for the pagers were “buttons” that could be pushed when the time seemed ripe.

## BLOODY TRAP

When the targeting of the apex Hezbollah leadership by the Israelis began by accessing their mobile locations, Nasrallah issued a diktat,

*Invincible Israel had begun to look vulnerable. A punitive retaliation had to be coming. For which Israel was not unprepared, just that the Hamas too consumed it.*



“bury the mobile, put it in an iron box, and lock it.” Not only did Mr. Nasrallah ban cell phones from meetings of Hezbollah operatives, but he also ordered an end to transmitting operational and logistic details over cell phones. He was also confident he had a safe alternative—pagers and walkie-talkies. In reality, he was walking into a bloody trap: With the transition to pagers, not only the apex leadership but also the middle-level cadres and more comprehensive rank and file were at risk.

Hezbollah pagers began beeping just after 3:30 pm in Lebanon on 17 September, alerting operatives to a message from their leadership in a chorus of chimes and buzzes. But it wasn't the militants' leaders. The pages had been sent by their sworn enemy, and soon, there were explosions, pain, and panic in streets, shops, and homes across Beirut and other parts of Lebanon. The blasts sent grown men flying off motorcycles and slamming into walls; people out shopping fell to the ground, writhing in agony, smoke snaking from their pockets. Something similar happened with walkie-talkies and other electronic devices in the following days. At least 37 deaths and more than 3500 wounded have been reported, many of whom have been maimed.

The Hezbollah has for long been in the crosshairs of Unit 8200, Mossad, and the IDF. They have spent years mapping out the communication supply chain of Hezbollah, even infiltrating it through front companies. The instant plan seems to have rested on two pillars: targeting the apex IRGC and Hezbollah leadership by accessing their mobile locations (Faud Shukr on 30 July was a prize strike and hurt the Hezbollah the most), forcing the

which it produced a range of pagers. But the precious client was Hezbollah, for whom the pagers were to be especially boobytrapped with explosives – the pager shipments en route to Israel were intercepted, and possibly one of the two batteries in the pagers was replaced with powerful, miniaturized explosives, duly concealed. The pagers began shipping to Lebanon in early 2022 in small numbers, but production was quickly ramped up after Nasrallah

*The situation in the Middle East has escalated as Hezbollah is facing severe setbacks as their communications devices stand out as tools of destruction. Israel has targeted more than 150 Hezbollah strong points, crippling rocket launchers, and infrastructure within two days.*



For Hezbollah, the wave of explosions is an eerie reminder that their communication devices are now instruments of death. With the Hezbollah command & control so severely degraded, their capacity to fight will also be severely afflicted. On this assumption and as if to complete the rout, the Israelis have followed up with a flurry of airstrikes targeting more than 150 Hezbollah rocket launchers, related infrastructure, and ammunition depots. The elite Israeli 98th Division, previously tasked to enter Gaza, has also now been deployed to Northern Israel.

## ON THE EDGE

The message to Nasrallah from Israel is clear: quiet down; missile coercion will not make us yield to a ceasefire in Gaza; also allow displaced Israeli residents to return to their homes in Northern Israel; else the consequences will be severe. Retaliation by Iran & its proxies will surely follow. Israel's apex leadership may also be at risk with the recent unearthing of a foiled Iranian assassination plot targeting PM Netanyahu. One learns that autonomous Houthi boats

laden with explosives are stalking American aircraft carriers in the Red Sea. The fight in the Middle East is entering a particularly bloody phase, with non-contact kinetics reaching a new high.

In an unrelated development, American intermediate-range missiles are being deployed in Germany: Moscow and the leadership in the Kremlin will now be within a two-minute striking time. The world is on an edge, even on a powder keg. The realm of technological possibilities, too, seems to be trending towards infinity. India, amid a lucky peace dividend, may take note and act with greater vigor on the challenges associated with intelligence and national security. Make the most of the warnings, so we are not wanted if and when push comes to shove.

*(Lt Gen Raj Shukla (Retd), former Army Commander and currently a Member of UPSC. The views expressed are of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of **The News Analytics Journal**.)*

# IAF RESPONDS TO COLLUSIVE THREATS

## SPECIAL FEATURE

*The Galwan conflict made Pakistan elated initially, it believed that the IAF would struggle with a "Two Front Threat." Its think tanks highlighted the Pakistan Air Force's (PAF) 'superior' AEW&C and EW/ELINT capabilities, citing their 'effective' performance during the Balakot operations, and praised the 'success' of PAF's post-Balakot "Swift Retort" operation.*

**BY TNJ EDITORIAL DESK**

Indian Air Force has a glorious history and serious responsibility towards national security. The history of Independent India is replete with gallant contributions from the brave air warriors who have not only risen to the call of duty but many a time have gone beyond that. This rich tradition of the nation before self has motivated every air warrior when he dons the uniform and inspires the nation at

Operation Vijay (Kargil) and the wars India fought with its belligerent neighbours.

It also played a key role as part of the UN contingent deployed in Sierra Leon where it's Mi-8 and Chetak helicopters provided cover and fire support for UNAMSIL forces under attack by the Revolutionary United Front fighters. Operation



Khukri has gone into IAF annals in golden letters when it played a pivotal role in the rescue of UN troops. Then in 1961 in Congo, IAF's Canberras attacked and destroyed rebel aircrafts near the town of Kolwez, completely removing the aerial threat to UN operations.

The IAF's resolute responses at the time of national crisis during the wars India fought have been a saga of gallant operations executed by air warriors defying many odds. The 1971 war saw the initiation of air aggression by the enemy, the Kargil offered IAF limitations on air manoeuvre near LoC and Balakot operations demanded stealth and speed. It reflects a multispectral response and action capability of IAF, where all operations are executed with fine precision and operational success as per the mandated brief.

large. Since the beginning, the IAF has played a varied role within and outside of national borders. Some of the marquee operations that IAF has undertaken have been during Operation Cactus (Maldives), Operation Poomalai (Sri Lanka),

The IAF is considered the world's fourth-largest Air Force leading the table well ahead of some of the most modern Air Forces in the World. Recently, the IAF responded to a piracy attempt near the Somalian waters rescuing the



international merchant vessel MV Ruen where it flew its C-17 aircraft for almost 10 hours mission. Add on the response during national calamities from time to time, IAF thus shoulders such a variety of roles which itself is very rare among its global peers. It would be apt to say, the IAF not only appears omnipresent but also leads as *The First Responder*.

## STRATEGIC POSITIONING

In May 2020 gallant troops of 16 BIHAR led by Colonel B. Santhosh Babu, Commanding Officer beat back nefarious Chinese incursions in Galwan. The bloody standoff resulted in the martyrdom of 20 Indian soldiers including the Battalion Commander who led from

entire LAC. This repositioning was designed to quickly augment the operational preparedness to address an emergent threat. It resulted in the readjustment of IAF's resources that hitherto were either acting as reserve assets or in some cases deployed with a focus on the Western theatre. The decision though taken in the larger national interest did end up creating two fundamental challenges for the IAF. Firstly, how much

watched by the adversaries across both the Western and Northern Theatres which only added to the dilemma. It was no secret to anyone, least of it to the IAF, that both China and Pakistan are colluding to put pressure and hype the threat forcing commitment of resources by the IAF where it may not be warranted.

Pakistan for instance is the one that

*The joint production of the JF-17 and the acquisition of J-10C fighters from China highlights PAF's confidence in Chinese systems. More such efforts, post-Galwan, reflect an inclination towards collaboration between China and Pakistan's military forces.*



the front. The incident forever altered the response mechanism of the Indian Armed Forces in a conflict scenario. The hitherto dormant sector turned into a conflict flashpoint almost overnight.

The IAF had to rush in its assets strategically positioning them for any worsening scenario. Being the main stakeholder for securing national airspace it had to quickly ensure detailed mapping of air activities with commensurate resources along the

to reallocate for the Northern Front? Secondly, where to move these assets from?

## OPERATION 'SWIFT RETORT'

The steps taken by the IAF in the immediate aftermath of Galwan would have surely been among the most difficult of all. It was never in favour of boosting one theatre of operation at the cost of another. It knew it was being

initially felt elated with the developments. It factored the commitments of the IAF in the new theatre of operations and concluded that the 'Two Front Threat' would be overwhelming for the IAF to manage simultaneously. Some of the discussions evident from its Think Tanks tried to underscore the 'superior' quality of the Pakistan Air Force (PAF) in terms of more number of advanced AEW&Cs and EW/ELINT aircraft as compared to IAF. The performance of the same was 'evidently effective', it argued, during the Balakot operations. The PAF believes it successfully interfered with IAF to prevent any subsequent transgression and that its operation 'Swift Retort' codenamed for PAF operation post-Balakot allowed it to test itself against IAF Air Defence.

What appeared interesting in the analysis is the confidence shown in Chinese systems. Such as the joint production of JF-17 Thunder. It recently procured 36 J-10C "Vigorous Dragon" multi-role fighters from China of which 20 have been delivered. The aircraft has allowed the integration of high-end Chinese weapons and sensor suites including PL-10 HOBS missile, PL-15 BVR missile, Infrared Search and Track (IRST) and Active Electronically Scanned Array

(AESA) radar. If anything these acquisitions post-Galwan have clearly demonstrated the collusiveness between China and Pakistan to enhance interoperability and jointness between the two forces.

China does have an impressive array of modern aircrafts led by fifth-generation J-20 stealth fighters along with the J-16 and J-10C. China's elaborate Anti Access/ Area Denial (A2/AD) strategy incorporates a wide array of ground and air assets primarily integrating the short-range HQ-11, medium-range HQ-9B, HQ-16FE and 170 Km long-range interception HQ-22 SAM systems. In 2023 it successfully tested its BMD Dong Neng-3 (DN-3) and is said to be deploying the same. It has procured and deployed the Russian S-300 and S-400 air defence systems. All were aimed at constraining the space for manoeuvre for the hostile air force and forcing them to operate farther from its strategic locations.

worked since then keeping the 'Two Front Threat' in all its operational plans. It is clearly visible in the procurement of 36 Rafale fighter aircraft, French HAMMER air-to-surface missiles and high-altitude UAVs. IAF pressed its modern assets from C-17, C-130J, and Chinooks for strategic airlifts. It operationalised numerous forward airfields and Advance Landing Grounds (ALGs) along the LAC. Since Galwan IAF has been maintaining its fleet in the "operational ready format", implying aircraft are fully fuelled and loaded at all times to respond within minutes of any emergent situation. It has further augmented the air response mechanism with coordinated Combat Air Patrol (CAP) wherein the fighters remain airborne for quick response.

While IAF undoubtedly has reoriented itself towards the possibility of the 'Two Front Threat' it would be very immature to conclude that it has 'lost sight' of the Western Front. The

*The IAF has adapted to the "Two Front Threat," but its focus on the Western Front remains intact. Pakistan's claim that its ELINT capabilities deterred further IAF ingressions after the Balakot strike is flawed, as these systems existed prior to the strike but failed to prevent it.*



China in its 14th five-year plan for 2021-25 has undertaken to vastly improve upon infrastructure in its restive Tibet region with an aim to invest approximately USD 30 billion in infrastructure projects there. Apart from 12 existing airports in Tibet and South Xinjian China has undertaken the construction of 30 new airports in and around this region. This wave of infrastructure development, China feels is necessary to deter any Indian plans for the counteroffensive.

## QUICK RESPONSE

At times steep challenges and sheer odds work out well, it offers a clear orientation of the gaps and new requirements. IAF was quick to assess and anticipate the new reality and has

challenging assessments made by India's Western adversary in a PAF Vs IAF scenario have many holes in the foundational logic despite PAF's certain modern capabilities. Arguing that PAF's modern ELINT deterred IAF from ingressions post the Balakot strike was like beating own argument. The fact is Pakistan didn't acquire those capabilities post Balakot strike those still existed, yet they were caught napping as Indian fighters made their way through not only executing successful mission almost uncontested. Transgression into Pakistani airspace on subsequent days was never part of the operational plan. As far as the reality of PAF's modern fighters J-17 and J-10C are concerned, it's mediocre at best. Even China knows that, as it doesn't use J-17 in its own fleet, while China could sell J-10s only to Pakistan!

On the Chinese design of rapid development in Tibet, it is assumed that it wants to avoid a detrimental 'Two Front Conflict' of its own, coupled with the serious challenge it faces in its Eastern Theatre. The IAF knows its mandate and role too well to design its strategy for safeguarding India's interests. As it is said actions speak louder, the IAF's reorientation strategy has proved effective in stabilising the situation along LAC. The qualitative gaps still exist and must be on top of the agenda of all stakeholders of national security. However, it's reasonable to say that the collusiveness of China and Pakistan has been given a befitting response and has only acted to push the IAF into fast-paced action. This augurs very well for the force which carries the pride of its professionalism on its sleeves!

# GLOBAL INFLUENCER

## OLAF SCHOLZ :

TNJ | Special Coverage

Olaf Scholz, Germany's ninth Chancellor, took office on December 8, 2021, following Angela Merkel's remarkable 16-year leadership. As a veteran politician from the Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD), Scholz has become a prominent figure in German politics due to his practical approach, composed nature, and strong dedication to social democratic values. His ascent to Germany's highest office signals a shift in the political scene, with Scholz striving to maintain stability while pursuing much-needed reforms in a rapidly changing Europe and world.

### SHAPING OF VIEWS

Born on June 14, 1958, in Osnabrück, Lower Saxony, Scholz was raised in Hamburg, a city that would become central to his political career. Coming from a solid middle-class family—his parents worked in the textile industry—Scholz frequently credits his upbringing for shaping his views on labour rights and social justice, core tenets that have influenced his political journey.

He studied law at the University of Hamburg and went on to practice as a labour law attorney. This early experience in defending trade unions and resolving labour disputes reinforced his belief in economic fairness and worker protection, themes that would remain central to his career.

Scholz's political career began in the late 1970s when he joined the SPD's youth wing, the Jusos, which leaned to the left of the main party. His involvement coincided with a period of strong leftist movements in Germany, inspiring his advocacy for a more equitable distribution of wealth and resources—issues he would continue to champion throughout his political life.

By 1998, Scholz had secured a seat in the Bundestag (German Parliament), representing Hamburg-Altona.



In the early 2000s, his career gained momentum when he was appointed General Secretary of the SPD. His calm and deliberate style of communication during this time earned him the nickname "Scholzomat" from the media, owing to his mechanical delivery. Yet, this stoic demeanor later became an asset, especially during periods of crisis.

### A CRITICAL PHASE

Scholz's tenure as the Mayor of Hamburg (2011-2018) was a defining chapter in his political career, showcasing his leadership skills. As Germany's second-largest city and a major economic center, Hamburg required dynamic leadership. Scholz prioritized modernizing infrastructure, expanding public transportation, and tackling the city's housing crisis. Under his leadership, Hamburg saw the construction of thousands of new housing units, setting an example for other cities grappling with housing shortages.

His time as mayor, however, was not without challenges. The 2017 G20 Summit in Hamburg brought violent protests, testing Scholz's leadership. Critics argued that

# OF THE MONTH

## GERMANY'S PRAGMATIC LEADER

Scholz had failed to adequately prepare for the disruptions, but despite the criticism, he took responsibility and defended the importance of hosting major international events, which showcased his ability to handle political adversity.

### THE 2021 ELECTION

The 2021 federal election marked a turning point for Scholz and the SPD. Initially, the party trailed behind the conservative CDU/CSU bloc and the Greens. However, as the campaign progressed, Scholz's composed and pragmatic demeanor resonated with voters who sought stability in the post-Merkel era. He positioned himself as the natural successor to Merkel, offering continuity while advocating for essential reforms in climate policy, social justice, and digitalization.

The SPD's unexpected victory, with 25.7% of the vote, enabled Scholz to form a coalition government with the Greens and the Free Democratic Party (FDP). Dubbed the "traffic light coalition" due to the parties' colors, the alliance committed to tackling climate change, modernizing infrastructure, and ensuring long-term economic growth.

### CHANCELLOR SCHOLZ

Since assuming office, Scholz has navigated several major challenges, both at home and abroad. One of the most pressing has been managing Germany's response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022. Scholz has played a crucial role in the European Union's collective response, balancing Germany's economic reliance on Russian energy with the necessity of supporting Ukraine and standing firm against Russian aggression. Under Scholz's leadership, Germany made the unprecedented decision to suspend the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline project and take steps to reduce its dependence on Russian energy—a significant shift in German foreign policy. Scholz also presided over a substantial increase in Germany's defense budget, signaling a new, more assertive stance on military security.

On the domestic front, Scholz has focused on climate policy, digital transformation, and social equality. His administration is committed to achieving carbon neutrality by 2045, a goal that will require transitioning to renewable energy and overhauling traditional industries. However, these ambitions must be carefully balanced with economic concerns, including job security in sectors that will face disruption.

### LEADERSHIP STYLE

Olaf Scholz is often characterized as a pragmatic, detail-oriented leader, qualities that have been invaluable in complex negotiations and managing crises. His reserved, methodical style contrasts with the more charismatic leaders seen in other countries, yet it appeals to many Germans who value stability and reliability in their leaders.

Though Scholz may not capture the public's attention in the same way as some of his predecessors, his ability to deliver tangible results has earned him widespread respect. He is seen as a leader who allows his actions to speak louder than his words, which has been both a strength and a challenge in building broad public enthusiasm.

### STEERING GERMANY

As Chancellor, Olaf Scholz faces the enormous task of steering Germany through a period of significant change. Whether dealing with the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, addressing the conflict in Ukraine, or leading efforts to combat climate change, his leadership will be crucial to Germany's future.

Scholz's tenure as Chancellor reflects a blend of continuity and reform. His dedication to social justice, economic stability, and international cooperation positions him as a steady hand in turbulent times. His pragmatic approach and ability to manage complex issues suggest that his leadership will play a key role in shaping Germany's path forward, both domestically and on the global stage. As he plans to visit New Delhi it will be watched very closely for his farsighted vision.



# SCO & INDIA'S CHALLENGES IN A SHIFTING GLOBAL ORDER

## INVESTIGATING

*Observers have mixed views on India's gains from SCO membership. Many believe India has effectively highlighted terrorism on another multilateral platform. India's involvement in SCO has worked to reduce China's overt support for Pakistan-backed terrorism, while also fostering military exercises, intelligence sharing, and counter-terrorism efforts.*



**AMBASSADOR JEITENDRA TRIPATHI, IFS (RETD)  
FOR TNJ**

Finally, as was speculated, India has disclosed that Prime Minister Modi will not travel to Pakistan for the upcoming SCO Heads of the Government summit on 15th-16th October. The Minister of External Affairs Dr. S. Jaishankar will represent the prime minister in the summit as he had done at the Astana Summit of the Heads of States in July. This has initiated a debate among political pundits about whether India is losing interest in the organisation.

The SCO (Shanghai Cooperation Organisation), conceived

in the dying decade of the last century, is a successor of the grouping 'Shanghai Five' comprising China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan. Established in 2001, SCO soon expanded with the inclusion of Uzbekistan (2001), India and Pakistan (2017), Iran (2023) and Belarus (2024). Besides these ten members who collectively account for about 80% of the landmass of Eurasia, 40% of the world's population and 32% of the global GDP (PPP-based).

There are two observer states- Afghanistan and Mongolia



and an assorted combination of fourteen “Dialogue partners” with different hues and colours -Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Cambodia, Egypt, Kuwait, the Maldives, Myanmar, Nepal, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka, Türkiye and the UAE. Also, Turkmenistan (which has declared its neutrality), UNO, ASEAN and CIS are the guest invitees.

## INCREASED INTEREST

The applications of Bangladesh and Algeria for observer status have been pending since 2011 and 2023 respectively. Syria (2015), Israel (2016), Iraq (2019) and Lao Peoples’ Republic (2024) have applied for the dialogue partner status. While Israel’s application will understandably not be considered in the wake of its ongoing war with Hamas and Hezbollah, no decision on Bangladesh’s application for 13 years is beyond comprehension. However, going by the composition of members, observers, and dialogue partners, it seems that SCO has generated interest from a wider spectrum of countries. SCO’s stated objectives, as declared in its charter, cover a wide range of issues to include.

- To strengthen relations among the member states
- To promote cooperation in political, economic and trade affairs, science & technology, cultural & educational sphere, energy, transport, tourism, and environmental protection
- Safeguard regional peace, security, and stability
- Create demand for equitable international political and economic order.

held in New Delhi in 2023, defence minister Rajnath Singh called for, in a veiled attack on both China and Pakistan, a robust regional cooperation framework respecting the territorial integrity and sovereignty which was obviously not liked by China, a country in illegal possession of Indian territory not only in Ladakh and Arunachal but also in Baltistan in POK.



Similarly, in his address delivered by Dr Jaishankar at the SCO Heads of State Summit on July 2 in Astana, PM Modi called for assigning “priority to combatting terrorism and isolating and exposing the countries which harbour terrorists”. Earlier in 2018, P.M. Modi summed up the broader objectives of SCO as “SECURE” (Security for all, Economic development

***India consistently raises terrorism, particularly state-sponsored, unsettling Pakistan, while emphasising sovereignty and territorial integrity, challenging China. At the 2023 SCO meeting, Rajnath Singh urged cooperation, indirectly criticising both nations.***

To achieve these goals, SCO has four organs which are the annual summit of the heads of state, the annual summit of the heads of governments, a permanent secretariat in Beijing and RATS (Regional Anti-Terrorist System). Besides this, there are some institutional mechanisms like the meetings at the level of foreign, defence and commerce ministers and the security advisors of the member states. Working groups for specific issues are also formed as and when needed. How has India’s performance been so far at the SCO in general? India has always tried to raise the issues of terrorism, especially state-sponsored terrorism to the discomfiture of Pakistan and respect of sovereignty and territorial integrity to the consternation of China with whom we have border issues. During the last meeting of the SCO defence ministers

for all, C-connectivity in the region, U-uniting the people, Respect for sovereignty and integrity, E- environment protection).

Observers differ on what has India gained so far from the membership of SCO. Most of them feel that India has successfully raised the issue of terrorism on yet another multi-lateral platform like SCO which has a full-fledged organ like RATS to deal with the menace. India’s efforts in SCO have succeeded in reducing the open Chinese support to the cross-border terrorism nurtured and sponsored by Pakistan. India has been participating in the regular military exercises, intelligence sharing and counter-terrorism measures in SCO.



## CONSOLIDATES RELATIONS

Connectivity is another area where India has been taking an active part in the SCO. The development of Chabahar port and rail-road connectivity from Chabahar to Afghanistan and beyond for developing the International North-South Transport Corridor is aimed at boosting our trade with Eurasia, which has thus far been almost negligible in the absence of an economical trade route. Our energy concerns can be addressed to a large extent by the fruition of not only this corridor but also the TAPI (Turkmenistan- Afghanistan- Pakistan-India) Gas-line project envisaged to carry 33 billion cubic meters of natural gas annually.

Besides, the IPA (Iran-Pakistan- India) pipeline, envisaged to carry crude oil from Iran, also may see the daylight in a few years, thus mitigating our dependence on limited sources for oil import. Similarly, the presence of the Indian Air Force in Tajikistan is also indicative of our success in reaching Eurasia in terms of defence cooperation. However, some other analysts, citing that Iran is a new member and Turkmenistan is still a guest of SCO, do not give any credit to India's membership to SCO for the above projects. But we must not forget that bodies like SCO give us the chance to interact with other members (and even non-members) on the sidelines of the scheduled meetings which, in turn, consolidates bilateral relations.

## ATTEMPT TO HIJACK

Nevertheless, India also faces some challenges in SCO. The organisation, once with Russia at its steering wheel, is being dominated by China. Though we have good bilateral relations with all other members except understandably China and Pakistan, China's attempt to hijack the group by means of its debt-trap policy and by dumping the markets of the member countries with cheap but not so durable products makes our job more difficult. Secondly, our active participation in SCO, an organisation viewed by the West as against its interest, also arouses suspicions in the eyes of the Western block about our bonafide.

Moreover, our trade with the CIS members of SCO has not been very satisfactory. According to the Indian Ministry of Commerce and Industry, our total trade with the four CIS members (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan) in 2023-24 has been a paltry sum of US\$ 909.77 million! This needs to be addressed quickly if we want to develop steady relations with these members. Last, but not least, a challenge also lies in our decision-making process when it comes to funding or other types of financial liability for the projects abroad conceived by India.

Inordinate delays may be caused by the lack of coordination among various stakeholders back home and a cobweb of self-contradictory rules results in a loss of interest by the other party paving the way to a wrong perception of India's

***Delays from poor coordination and contradictory rules can create doubts about India's capability, despite improvements. However, unlike SAARC, SCO offers tangible benefits for India.***



capability. True, those rules have been much simplified and decision-making much faster during the last decade or so, yet miles to go before we sleep. But we can safely infer that for India, at least SCO is not a deadweight like SAARC.

*(Ambassador Jeitendra Tripathi, IFS (Retd.), Former Ambassador to Zimbabwe. He has vast experience in Africa, Europe, the Middle East, and Latin America. He was also India's Ambassador to Zimbabwe. The views expressed are of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of The News Analytics Journal.)*

# INTERDEPENDENCE AND ITS DISCONTENTS

## LONG SHOT

*Global interdependence shapes today's world, with its effects influencing economies, politics, and international relations. While integrated economies offer benefits, they also create challenges. Despite economic interdependence between nations like the U.S. and China, rivalry persists. Managing these complex relationships carefully is vital to preventing conflicts and promoting long-term stability.*



**BY DR. BRAD MARTIN, SENIOR POLICY RESEARCHER  
AT RAND CORPORATION, UNITED STATES  
FOR TNJ**

There is little question that the world has grown to a level of economic interdependence where events in any part of the world are likely to have repercussions worldwide. Indeed, the two largest economies in the world – the United States (US) and the People's Republic of China (PRC) – remain extensively connected, even as they also remain geopolitical rivals. The level of interdependence between the US and PRC has decreased slightly, as the linked article indicates. Still, the degree of dependence between the two countries remains at a level where “decoupling” is impractical.

For example, the PRC remains highly dependent on exports to the US and others for revenue; on the other side, it also essentially controls the processing and, in some cases, the production of critical minerals used in effectively every commodity that requires rare earth or copper or nickel or cobalt anywhere in the production process. The potential damage from a trade disruption might be extensive – indeed economically and socially catastrophic – for both sides. I use the US - PRC example as a well-documented relationship but the same kinds of relationships apply today to one degree or another. Nations worldwide are locked in tight and complex connections, and although the interactions may differ from nation to nation, region to region, the facts and challenges of interdependence remain.



## HISTORY'S LESSON

Looking at the US and PRC, it's tempting to think that interdependence has reached a level where armed conflict between these two rivals is beyond irrational and unthinkable. However, history gives us little reason to be confident that peace is inevitable because the degree of connection is strong. Trading partners in fact sometimes do go to war with one another; nations with obvious reasons to avoid war still do so. Indeed, by the logic of interdependence, World War I should never have occurred. This historical perspective, showing that interdependence did not always prevent war in the past and also probably does not assure a peaceful



future, is crucial for understanding and preparing for the complexities of international relations.

swerve from an imminent collision becomes each actor's rational short-term choice. Over many iterations, actors

reached the highest escalation levels. To illustrate how approaches varied,

*When high stakes hinge on a single decision, not cooperating or avoiding an imminent collision becomes the rational short-term choice for each actor.*

## THEORIES OF CONFLICT

Why would nations with incentives to avoid war go to war anyway? Sometimes, wars occur due to misperception and irrationality. In other cases, actors viewed war as at least inevitable and possibly desirable. However, to a degree, the propensity to arrive at conflict, even when seemingly against interests, is inherent in an international system where nations are in conflict and bargain over outcomes. There are many metaphors to describe dispute behavior within the global system.

may conclude that attempting to cooperate will bring negative short-term returns, even at the risk of betrayal. But, when there might not be another turn to consider, actors accept the mutual danger, refusing the option of surrender and believing that the other actor may back down.

## COLD WAR LESSONS

How might this logic apply to the highly interconnected relationship between the US and PRC or other nations? Prisoner's Dilemma and Chicken were

the "massive retaliation" doctrine the US adopted in the early 1950s dictated that the US respond with overwhelming force - use of strategic nuclear weapons - to provocations, great and small.

However, the idea that the US would destroy itself and its enemies over provocation was both dangerous and not credible. National leaders needed options between capitulation and overwhelming force. As a result, theorists developed, and US policymakers implemented options for credible



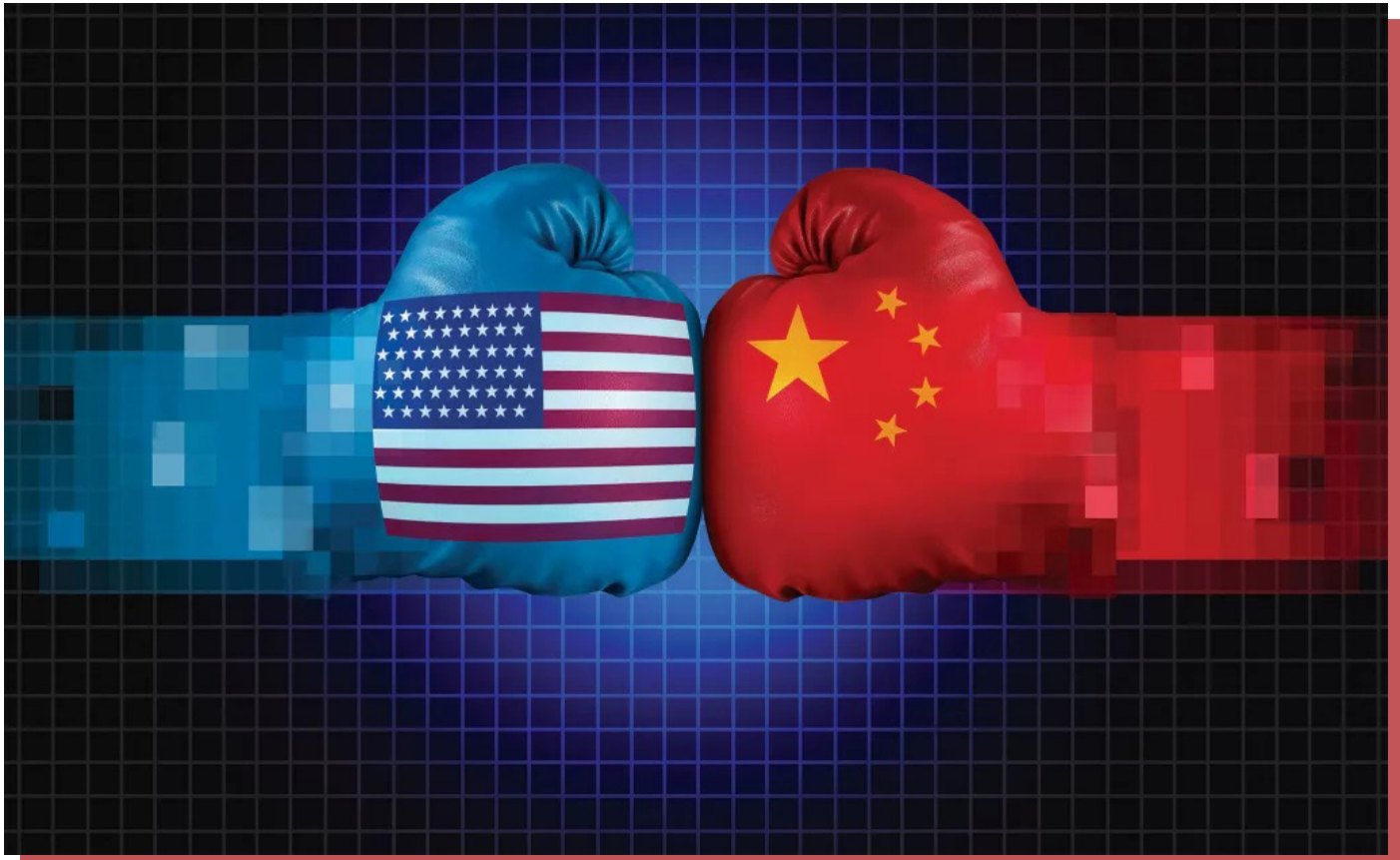
Sometimes, the metaphors have been more formalized as games and models. "Prisoner's Dilemma" and "Chicken" are two examples. A common theme is that although there are reasons for nations to collaborate to avoid terrible outcomes, there are also reasons for each actor to try and force the other to back down.

In cases where much is at stake in a single decision, refusing to cooperate or

developed in the context of the Cold War. The US and USSR possessed opposing world views but possessed the ability to destroy one another physically. Both sides believed that long-term trends were in their favor - neither was willing to yield entirely at any given point - but neither wished to provoke catastrophe. Accordingly, both sides developed mechanisms for advancing interest, testing commitment, and finding ways of de-escalating before the responses

responses with lower nuclear and conventional force levels. This became part of US policy and force structure in the early 1960s. Managed escalation became part of the regular interaction between the two powers, even in cases where the risk of war was high. Mutual assured destruction was understood at the highest levels of escalation, but neither side was confined to only surrendering or responding to provocations with civilization-ending force.

*Despite the incentives to avoid war, states sometimes go to war due to misperception, irrationality, or strategic advantage over others. Prisoner's Dilemma and Chicken theories explain conflict behavior regarding managed escalation over catastrophic retaliation.*



The analogy between the situation in the Cold War and today is not perfect. The PRC is not the Soviet Union, and the US position in the world differs from that of the mid-20th century. Other national rivalries may have even less in common with the Cold War. However, what is familiar with the earlier era is the existence of conflict over ideological and geopolitical goals coupled with the ability of each side to inflict terrible damage on the other.

Unlike the Cold War, the principal vulnerability in many cases is less physical destruction than economic damage. In the case of the US and PRC, some crisis response mechanisms might be military. Still, the national damage incurred will be mainly in commodities denied, revenues curtailed, and supply chains disrupted. However, the same incentives to cause leaders to contemplate accepting the risk of damage would still exist.

## CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Accordingly, rather than assume interdependence has made conflict impossible, potential rivals would be

well-advised to consider the kinds of off-ramps and escalation options that provide a means of responding to provocations between capitulation and catastrophe. In the case of supply chain vulnerability, the first impulse might be to reduce vulnerability by “reshoring” or finding alternative sources and markets. This is possible in a few cases, but interdependent relationships formed over decades and in many cases cannot be readily reversed. Another option may be to accept interdependence as a condition of the international system and work within it to develop conflict resolution methods. This proactive approach, much as the US and Soviet Union came to accept the facts of mutually assured destruction and the need for resolution mechanisms that allowed both sides the ability to find off-ramps, can provide hope for a more peaceful future.

*(Dr. Brad Martin, Senior Policy Researcher at RAND Corporation, Manassas, Virginia, United States. The views expressed are of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of **The News Analytics Journal**.)*

# IN THE SPOTLIGHT

## INDIA DENIES REPORT ON AMMUNITION DIVERSION TO UKRAINE, CALLS IT 'SPECULATIVE'



The Indian government dismissed a report claiming artillery shells sold by Indian arms makers were diverted to Ukraine through European buyers. Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal called the report “speculative and misleading,” emphasizing India’s strong compliance with international export regulations. He reiterated that India follows a strict legal framework, ensuring end-user obligations and certifications are met.

## EU BACKS UKRAINE’S CALL TO USE WESTERN ARMS AGAINST RUSSIA



The European Parliament passed a non-binding resolution urging EU countries to allow Ukraine to use Western weapons to strike military targets inside Russia. Kyiv has requested permission to target Russian air bases involved in attacks on Ukraine. The resolution passed with 425 votes in favor, 131 against, and 63 abstentions, prompting a strong reaction from Moscow.

## SUDAN ARMY PUSHES TO RECLAIM CAPITAL



Sudan’s army launched its largest operation yet to regain control of the capital, Khartoum, using artillery and airstrikes amid its 17-month war with the Rapid Support Forces (RSF). The offensive occurred just before army chief General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan addressed the UN. Heavy clashes were reported, with both sides claiming control of key bridges across the Nile.

## IMF APPROVES USD 7 BILLION BAILOUT FOR PAKISTAN



The IMF has approved a \$7 billion bailout for Pakistan to stabilize its economy amid high inflation and low foreign reserves. The first \$1.1 billion tranche will be released within a month. Pakistan’s economy, hit by inflation of 27%, political instability, and natural disasters, is expected to use the funds to boost reserves and support essential services.

## US NAVAL SHIP CHARLES DREW MAKES SECOND VISIT TO INDIA FOR REPAIRS



For the second time in two years, the US Naval ship Charles Drew is undergoing repairs at the Larsen and Toubro shipyard in Kattupalli, near Chennai. The vessel arrived on Wednesday and will remain for several weeks. Charles Drew was the first American ship to receive voyage repairs in India, followed by USNS Matthew Perry and USNS Salvor. These ships perform logistics and support roles, not combat operations. The US Navy signed a five-year Master Shipyard Repair Agreement with L&T last year, highlighting the strengthening US-India partnership.

## HEZBOLLAH CHIEF NASRALLAH KILLED IN ISRAELI AIRSTRIKE



Israel killed Hezbollah leader Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah in a powerful airstrike on Beirut, striking a major blow to the Iran-backed group. The Israeli military confirmed the elimination of Nasrallah at Hezbollah's central command, with Hezbollah acknowledging his death. His loss weakens both Hezbollah and Iran's regional influence.

## MISSILE BARRAGE TARGETS ISRAEL, IDF PREPARES RETALIATION AGAINST IRAN



On Oct 1, Israel's military reported that Iran launched several missiles targeting key commercial and residential areas, with over 200 missiles fired. In response, U.S. President Joe Biden ordered the American military to assist Israel in intercepting the Iranian projectiles and provide defense support.

## GERMANY ARRESTS CHINESE WOMAN OVER ESPIONAGE



A 38-year-old Chinese woman, Yaqi X, has been arrested in Leipzig for allegedly passing information about Leipzig/Halle airport, a key hub for Germany's defense industry, to Chinese intelligence. Working for a logistics company at the airport, she reportedly shared details on flights, passengers, and military cargo with Chinese secret services. Another suspect, Jian G, was arrested earlier this year.



# BREWING CRISIS NEXT DOOR

## NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

*In a dramatic turn of events, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, who was in office for 16 years, quit and left Bangladesh. Mass protests that overthrew Hasina revealed deep discontent within the country. Still, there were concerns over the possible complex involvement of foreign players like the US, China, and Pakistan. This leaves India to question its strategic position as the region gears up to face the consequences of such a development.*



**LT CDR NITIKA RAI (RETD),  
FORMER INDIAN NAVY OFFICER  
FOR TNJ**

For 16 years (Jan 2009-Aug 2024), Bangladesh's embattled prime minister, Sheikh Hasina, the daughter of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the founding father and first president of Bangladesh, fled the country on Aug. 5, 2024, after weeks of protests that resulted in scores of deaths. She was the world's longest-serving female head of government. In June 2024, fresh student protests erupted throughout the country, demanding the reform of quotas in government jobs. The protests were met with brutal crackdowns by law enforcement agencies and paramilitary forces, resulting in the massacre of students. By August, the protests intensified into a full-blown mass uprising against the government, which eventually culminated in the resignation of Hasina and her fleeing to India.

### FOREIGN PLAYERS

Given its strategic importance, Bangladesh has been a focal point for several global powers for the past four decades since its independence from Pakistan. The events of the August 5 coup underscore the instrumental role played by foreign actors. India's External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar's official statement hinted at the involvement of foreign players, suggesting that the protests were orchestrated to dislodge Sheikh Hasina. A closer examination of the events reveals that the judiciary supported the reservations rather than the Hasina government. Today, the judiciary remains intact, but Hasina is out. The way the demonstrations intensified even after the Supreme Court scrapped the quotas and the crucial role played by Jamaat-e-Islami provides substantial grounds to investigate the potential influence of invisible foreign players.

US/Pakistan/China: The key foreign players in the ongoing unrest in Bangladesh are the US, Pakistan, and China. When discussing the role of the US in the anti-Hasina protests, it is essential to note that the US is a significant player in Bangladesh. It is the largest foreign investor, the third-largest trading partner, and the biggest market for Bangladesh's garment industry. Sheikh Hasina's independent foreign policy and growing tilt towards China had become a significant concern for the US.

The US expressed 'disappointment' and 'concern' following Sheikh Hasina's victories in the 2014 and 2018 polls. In 2021, the US sanctioned Dhaka's elite paramilitary force, the Rapid Action Battalion (RAB). In December 2022, the US envoy to Dhaka, Peter Haas, met the families of victims



of forced disappearances, primarily BNP leaders. The Hasina government strongly objected, accusing the US of supporting the BNP and interfering in internal matters. Subsequently, Bangladesh was not invited to democracy summits in March 2023. In April, Hasina categorically stated that the US wanted regime change in Dhaka, aiming to displace a democratically elected government. During Sheikh Hasina's April 2023 trip to Washington DC for the World Bank meeting, no one from the Biden administration met her.

## BLIND SUPPORT

The elections in Bangladesh were conducted amid strong criticism from the US, EU, and other Western entities, which called for a transparent electoral process. The US insisted that the elections be held under the supervision of a caretaker government; however, Sheikh Hasina rejected this proposal. US Ambassador Peter Haas met with the Chief Election Commissioner, demanding free, fair, and inclusive elections that included the Opposition, primarily the BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami. He also met with several civil society members and organisations, advocating for a transparent and inclusive democratic process. The rupture in US-Bangladesh relations was evident in the US State Department's July 22 statement, which called on the Awami League government to uphold the right to peaceful protests. While the US's actions can be seen as interference in Bangladesh's internal affairs, they also reflect a commitment to democratic principles and human rights.

(CENTO) member, Pakistan was a vital pillar of the US West Asia strategy in the 1960s and 70s. The US perceived the Bangladeshi freedom movement and the defeat of Pakistan as a serious affront to its authority. Henry Kissinger and Richard Nixon, in their blind support of Pakistan, ignored the Pakistani Army's brutal genocide of 3 million civilians in Bangladesh, mostly Hindus. Despite its efforts, the US could not prevent the breakup of Pakistan.



Since then, the strategic ties between the US and Pakistan have strengthened. Pakistan has consistently supported radical Islamist and terrorist elements, such as Jamaat-e-Islami, in Bangladesh and its affiliates like Khaleda Zia's Bangladesh National Party (BNP). In 2019, the ISI made significant efforts to bring the BNP/Jamaat back

Lately, the US has been concerned about the expanding presence of China in Bangladesh. During Hasina's tenure, China emerged as a robust development, economic, and connectivity partner with Dhaka. Sheikh Hasina had declined to join the QUAD, tactfully balancing her interests and ties with India and China. Hence, the US' interest in deepening its strategic footprint in Bangladesh makes sense against China's

expanding presence. Additionally, exerting influence over Bangladesh through a favorable regime would give the US leverage to tighten the noose around India, which, under the Modi government, has maintained its independent foreign policy and refused to buckle under US pressure regarding the Ukraine war.

***The US is concerned about China's growing influence in Bangladesh, seeking to expand its own strategic presence and leverage against India's independent foreign policy.***

The tensions between the US and the Hasina family can be traced back to the 1971 War of Liberation and the assassination of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. It is essential to view the US's attitude towards Bangladesh in the context of the 1971 war. A Central Treaty Organization

to power by selecting and funding suitable candidates through Dubai-based hawala networks. Most recently, in the 2024 elections, the Pakistan High Commission's interference was evident when BNP leaders met with Pakistani diplomats before the polls.

In India's current media, think tank, and public discourse on the August 5 coup, many experts point fingers at China while dismissing the possibility of Washington's involvement. It should be noted that some of these arguments come in the context of



ongoing tensions between India and China. Many such experts argue that since India is not yielding to China on border issues and is steadfastly maintaining its stance on Galwan, China might seek to pressure India by installing an anti-India regime in Bangladesh. To a certain extent, this reasoning appears convincing.

However, closer scrutiny raises the question of whether China would dislodge an anti-American government in Bangladesh solely to pressure India, especially when the new pro-Pakistan and pro-American Islamist regime might offer an airbase to the US right in China's backyard. Such a scenario would only be plausible if China and the US collaborated intensely while maintaining the global perception of strategic competition and rivalry. However, this would require more decisive evidence.

India's support for her administration has become a liability as her unpopularity and controversial governance might impact India's regional standing. Western Scrutiny and Potential Backlash: India's backing of Hasina has created friction with Western allies, specifically the US, which has criticized her undemocratic practices. Balancing international relations while supporting a now-unpopular leader poses challenges for India. With Hasina's unpopularity growing, India may face backlash from Bangladeshi citizens who view India as an ally of the ousted leader. The situation could strain India-Bangladesh relations.

## NEXT MOVES

India is taking a cautious approach, closely monitoring the situation in Bangladesh while adopting a "wait-and-watch"

*Tensions arose overall due to the 1971 Liberation War between the US and Bangladesh. Contemporary demands followed, with a threat of China's influence over Bangladesh, Pakistan's interference in the relationship, and the US trying to balance the difference with China while simultaneously managing regional dynamics.*



## IMPLICATIONS FOR INDIA

**Loss of a Trusted Ally:** India has lost a key partner in Sheikh Hasina, who has been instrumental in countering terrorism and strengthening bilateral relations. Hasina's leadership enabled India to work closely with Bangladesh on security matters, a relationship that is now in jeopardy as political dynamics shift. India-Bangladesh bilateral trade reached USD 13 billion in FY 2023–24, making Bangladesh India's largest trade partner in the subcontinent. Duty-free access was provided on most tariff lines under the South Asian Free Trade Area (SAFTA) agreement under Hasina's administration.

strategy. This strategy involves assessing developments and their potential impacts on regional stability. Further, India should engage with various political factions in Bangladesh to foster a more inclusive relationship. India must develop a flexible strategy that accommodates the evolving political landscape in Bangladesh. Engaging with a broader spectrum of Bangladeshi society will be crucial to counteract any negative perceptions of India.

India should bolster its security measures along the border and in areas with significant Bangladeshi expatriate populations to address potential spillover effects and maintain stability. Developing a digital connectivity corridor can enhance trade, technological exchange, and e-commerce. Evaluate the feasibility of an FTA with Bangladesh in light of the new political climate.

India must anticipate that Pakistan and China will seek to exploit the situation in Bangladesh to their advantage. Collaborating with international partners, including the US, UK, and European nations, will be vital to mitigating these risks. India should work with Gulf partners like the UAE and Saudi Arabia to support Bangladesh's economic stabilisation and counter extremist influences. This cooperation can help maintain regional stability and prevent Bangladesh from drifting away from its traditional allies.

*(Lt Cdr Nitika Rai (Retd), former Indian Navy Officer. The views expressed are of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of **The News Analytics Journal**.)*

# BRIDGING BORDERS: IRAN-IRAQ STRATEGIC TALKS

## COUNTERVIEW

*Masoud Pezeshkian's new government policy for Iran suggests that the country should strengthen its position in the international arena by developing solid outside relations with interested parties and countries, especially neighbors. Iran and Iraq share many common interests, but there are some outstanding issues there, too, like the conflict between Iran and the USA and the religious rivalry between Iran's Qom and Najaf in Iraq.*



**NADIA HALLAK, BEIRUT, LEBANON**  
**ARAB CORRESPONDENT, THE NEWS ANALYTICS JOURNAL**

Iranian-Iraqi relations have always been very complex, going through several stages, ranging from tension and war to cooperation and good neighborliness. The two countries fought a devastating war during the era of former Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, which exhausted both of them. As soon as the war stopped, Hussein betrayed his neighbour Kuwait, attempting to annex it, which prompted an international coalition led by the United States to liberate Kuwait.

The U.S. did not stop liberating Kuwait from the Iraqi occupation in 1991 but also invaded Iraq in 2003 and eliminated Saddam Hussein, claiming that he was planning to manufacture weapons of mass destruction. Later, it became clear that these accusations were false, and the fundamental American objective was linked to a U.S. plan to dismantle the legacy of the Soviet Union and eliminate its allied states, starting from Kosovo to Iraq, Libya, Syria, and others. Iran benefited from the removal of its fierce enemy, Saddam Hussein, and intervened in the Iraqi crisis. Today, it has become the most influential country in Iraq.

### ECONOMIC FOCUS

The new Iranian president, Masoud Pezeshkian, has started his journey in foreign relations with a visit to Iraq. So what is the reason and background of this visit? What role does Iran want to play in the region?

Speaking to the News Analytics Journal, Akram Kamal Sraiwi, an expert in military affairs and international law, says, "The Iranian president's visit to Iraq holds importance in several aspects, the most significant being economy, security and political strategy."

On the economic front, Iran is suffering from a severe financial crisis due to U.S. sanctions and the embargo on Iranian oil and companies dealing with Iran. There are frozen funds abroad, including \$11 billion in Iraq, and finding a way to benefit from this money was one of Pezeshkian's primary goals for the visit.



Image Credit- The Times of Israel



It is no secret that Iraqi ports have provided an economic lifeline for Iran through various ways, that have circumvented Western sanctions. Iran has even succeeded in purchasing some American-made spare parts for the helicopters it owns. The Iranian president realises the importance of economic relations with Iraq, especially during the difficult circumstances his country is facing. Iran supplies Iraq with electricity and some goods while also importing various Western goods, such as electronic chips, some of which are used in weapon manufacturing.

conflict and score-settling between Iran, the U.S., and even Israel, which holds considerable influence in the Kurdistan region of Iraq.

However, what worries Iran the most is the increasing activity of some Iranian Kurdish parties in Kurdistan. These groups have formed armed forces and training camps in areas under Kurdish control and have carried out sabotage operations inside Iran. They have become tools in the hands of the U.S. and Israeli Mossad to destabilise Iran. This was a major reason, the Iranian president fo-

visit to Iraq, Srailwi while speaking to The News Analytics Journal, says that President Pezeshkian is seeking to establish good relations with countries in the region and is following an open-door policy, especially with Saudi Arabia. Given the shared interests and influence these two countries have in Iraq, he sees Iraq as a link between Arab countries and the United States.

Not to forget that Iraq played an essential role in improving Iranian-Saudi relations, which paved the way for the two countries' agreement under Chinese sponsorship

*This visit of Iranian President Pezeshkian focused more on sanctions and frozen assets, strengthening economic relations, and military positions in preparation for a campaign against Kurdish insurgencies.*



in Beijing in March 2023. This agreement restored diplomatic ties and reduced tensions in the Gulf region.

Srailwi adds: “There is no doubt that Iran aspires to play a major role in the region. It realises that the key to this role lies in strengthening partnerships with regional countries and improving Iran’s relations with Western nations, particularly with the United States, through reaching a new nuclear agreement that ensures Iran’s interests

## SECURITY CONCERNS

On the security front, “Iran has gained significant military influence within Iraq, with several militias aligned with it, most notably the Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF) and Iraqi Hezbollah. Through these organisations, Iran can pressure U.S. bases in the region and has even mobilised some factions to launch drone strikes against Israel”. Iraq has become a battleground for

cused on visiting Kurdistan during his trip to Iraq. He held several meetings and obtained security guarantees. Some leaders of the Iranian Kurdish organisations were removed, and their training camps were dismantled.

## POLITICAL & STRATEGIC AIMS

Regarding the political and strategic aspects of the Iranian president’s

and reassures the U.S., Western countries, Israel, and its Arab neighbors. It is worth noting that Iran has not changed its nuclear doctrine nor altered the 2003 fatwa issued by Iran's Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Khamenei, which prohibits the production of nuclear weapons.

There is no doubt that the global conflict between major powers significantly impacts the relationships between

countries in the Middle East, a region that has long been a focal point of competition among the great powers. Given the current and future projects being drawn up, each party is trying to improve its negotiating position and terms. Iran, a large country with vast natural resources, especially gas, and significant human and technological capabilities, is well-positioned to play a substantial role globally. However, it needs to build a strong network of foreign relations, particularly with neighboring countries, and this seems to be a top priority for the new Iranian president, Pezeshkian”.

based on the concept of "Wilayat al-Faqih" (Guardianship of the Jurist), which cannot be opposed in any matter and every Shiite worldwide must obey its orders. Additionally, the principle of exporting the revolution, which Iran adopted after the success of the Iranian Revolution led by Imam Khomeini, has caused concern among Arab countries as it reignited sectarian tensions and revived old religious disputes that had existed for centuries between Sunnis and Shiites”.

On the other hand, the Najaf religious authority in Iraq has

**Religious competition between Shiite authorities in Iran and Iraq, including the "Wilayat al-Faqih" doctrine, has raised tensions between the two and sectarian conflict.**



always focused on religious education, avoiding political involvement. It also does not recognise the concept of "Wilayat al-Faqih" and believes that it is the original and primary authority for Shiites worldwide.

Sraiwi final comments to The News Analytics Journal on Iran’s strategic goals were, “what the new Iranian president, Masoud Pezeshkian, has proposed, including his insistence on openness and his call for global dialogue to find common ground and build good relationships based on respect for international law and the

## THE RELIGIOUS RIVALRY

As for the success of the Iranian president’s visit in achieving its intended goals, Sraiwi states: “Despite the significant common ground between Iran and Iraq and their overlapping interests, many unresolved issues remain, most notably the Iranian-American conflict over Iraq and the religious rivalry between the Qom and Najaf religious authorities.”

There is no doubt that Iran is pushing for the U.S. withdrawal from Iraq. Some Iraqi militias have recently targeted U.S. bases with drones and missiles, to which the U.S. responded by targeting PMF centers. The U.S. views Iran’s control over Iraq as opening the door for Iran to realise what has been termed the “Shiite Crescent,” extending from Tehran to Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon, posing a significant threat to U.S. interests and its allies in the region, especially Israel.

There are competing interests among Shiite authorities in Iran and Iraq, Sraiwi suggests: “The religious competition is both old and fundamental. The Iranian revolution was

principle of state sovereignty, has sent positive signals regarding what could happen in the future. The most important point raised by Pezeshkian is the abandonment of the principle of exporting the revolution, which is highly significant for Arab countries. This could pave the way for the Iranian president to resolve many issues related to foreign relations, particularly with the Gulf states”.

As the visit culminated with immense interest among international observers, it is felt that Iran has been able to project a fair understanding of the path the new dispensation is willing to take. It remains to be seen how the Iranian approach manifests in the near future.

*(Nadia Hallak, senior correspondent and distinguished journalist from Beirut, Lebanon. She has extensively worked in the Arab region for TNJ. The views expressed by the author and any guest experts do not necessarily reflect the views of The News Analytics Journal.)*

# GLOBAL EVENTS



**JIAE:** Japan International Aerospace Exhibition Oct 16-19. This exhibition is Japan's largest general aerospace exhibition, together with major Japanese and foreign companies, government agencies, embassy officials, and industry players. Companies from a wide range of industries will exhibit, introducing a broad range of areas such as the manufacture, operation, and MRO for aviation, space, and defence technology, as well as new areas such as UAM and decarbonisation. Participants can get a chance to see the state-of-the-art products! **Official site :** <https://www.japanaerospace.jp/en/>

**Future Forces International Exhibition & Forum:** The unique concept of the exhibition is planned from Oct 16-18 in Prague, Czech Republic. Expert panels, annual NATO working group sessions, and other networking events within the FUTURE FORCES FORUM project give all the exhibitors great opportunities to present the latest technologies and solutions, discuss core tasks and principal objectives, as well as business opportunities within national and global security.

**Official site :** <https://www.future-forces.org/?lang=en>



**SAHA Expo:** SAHA EXPO will be held for the fourth time on October 22-26, 2024 at Istanbul Expo Center, Yeşilköy, Istanbul, on a total area of 90 thousand square meters, including 8 exhibition halls, foyers and outdoor areas, with more than 1200 exhibitors, more than 500 official and commercial delegations, 150 thousand visitors, 25 thousand B2B meetings and signing ceremonies to be held during the exhibition. An economic value of around USD 2 billion is targeted. Serving as an international platform to showcase Türkiye's rising defence and aerospace production potential and independent production power, the exhibition presents many high-tech products of strategic importance in the defence, aerospace, maritime and space industries, some of which are being exhibited for the first time. **Official site :** <https://www.sahaexpo.com/homepage>

# AHEAD



**Euronaval:** SEAnnovation will be held at Villepinte, Paris, France from Nov 4-7. Since 2018, the SEAnnovation area has been designed to welcome and promote French and foreign start-ups in a dedicated area run by the exhibition’s organisers. The defence sector is constantly evolving, and technological innovations are added to each new edition of the exhibition. **Official site:** <https://www.euronaval.fr/>

**Indo Defence:** Indo Defence Expo And Forum 2024 will be held in Jakarta from Nov 6-9. Indo Defence Expo & Forum is a biennial tri-service defence technology and sales exhibition as well as a promotional event for international defence and security equipment manufacturers, which has been held since 2004 at JIExpo Kemayoran, Jakarta, Indonesia. Held concurrently with Indo Aerospace Expo & Forum and Indo Marine Expo & Forum, the Expo is considered the largest defence exhibition in Southeast Asia and one of the best expo in the world calendar event. Indo Defence Expo & Forum is designed to offer you the most cost-effective marketing opportunity to gain access to the top military defence officials and decision-makers at only a one-stop location. Showcasing the latest military, aviation, and nautical defence and security technologies, Indo defence is a comprehensive meeting point for key decision-makers, defence authorities and companies from across the world.

**Official site:** <https://www.aadexpo.co.za/>



**SOFEX 2024:** SOFEX Jordan 2024 will be held at Aqaba International Exhibition & Convention Center from Nov 3-5 Located in the Aqaba Airport Street, The AIECC encompasses a total area of 170,000 square meters and includes 8 halls and facilities for various purposes. Each hall covers 2,000 square meters. Services provided include toilets, free Wi-Fi, air conditioning, sound systems, audiovisual equipment (screens for advertisements), and a designated prayer area. Other facilities in this area include B2B and meeting areas, a VIP lounge, and a media corner.

**Official site:** <https://sofexjordan.com/#/>



# CHINA'S RACE FOR ENERGY DOMINANCE

## ECO SYSTEM

*China's White Paper on Energy Transition shows how the nation is racing for energy domination. Published in August, the paper indicates that China is strategically keen on clean energy as it sets ambitious carbon neutrality goals for 2060. The move by China is to change energy consumption, supply chains, and even technology.*



**BY BRIGADIER VIVEK VERMA (RETD)  
FOR TNJ**

On 29 August 2024, the People's Republic of China (PRC) (hereafter referred to as China) released its white paper on "China's Energy Transition". A fortnight down the line, the CEO of the National Initiative for Transforming India (NITI) Aayog (successor organization of Planning Commission), B V R Subrahmanyam, announced that by November 2024, an energy transition roadmap for India will be unveiled.

He said the intended document will outline a pathway for India to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2070. Like China, India started its quest to harness 10000 GW of solar energy and 2000 GW of wind power by publishing a "Report on India's Renewable Electricity Roadmap 2030: Towards Accelerated Renewable Electricity Deployment" in 2015, which was an outcome of the Planning Commission November 2013 Project on India's Renewable Energy Roadmap being guided by a Steering Committee headed by Member of Planning Commission along with the secretaries from key ministries (Power, New and Renewable Energy, Finance and Environment and Forests), Chairpersons of key central agencies (Central Electricity Authority, Power Grid Corporation of India) and Confederation of Indian Industries (CII) as the operating agent for driving the 21st Century Power Partnership. Though India is trying to play a catch-up game in this arena, it is equally important to gauge China's game plan.

### CHINA'S WHITE PAPER

The Chinese White Paper on "China's Energy Transition" is divided into six parts. The first part lays out the Chinese path to energy transition since 2014, which was put in place by Xi



Jinping. The White Paper claims that the new energy security strategy has revolutionized and strengthened consumption, supply, technology, and institutions for China's energy development in the new era. It quotes 2023 data to show how the share of clean energy consumption has reached 26.4 percent of China's total energy use. It also points out the drop in coal consumption by 12.1 percentage points and the increase in clean energy by 58 percent of the total installed power generation capacity of 2,920 gigawatts (GW).

The paper also highlights the contribution of USD 676 Bn made by China towards energy transition by dominating the new energy industry and the global energy supply chain by

engaging with more than 100 countries through the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). It also boasts about China's contributions in addressing the global energy supply issues that eased the global inflation pressures and helped combat climate change and the transition to green development.

Part II of the White Paper reflects on China's promotion of green transformation by controlling the volume and intensity of carbon emissions rather than energy use. It talks about introducing regulations such as the Energy Conservation Law and the Circular Economy Promotion Law, besides releasing 335 national standards covering 44 categories of energy-using products across five major energy-consuming sectors worth USD 71 billion. Since industries and urban areas form the major energy consumers, it has looked at pushing the industries to adopt clean energy industrial and building norms. The transportation sector has also adopted a clean energy policy by making electric vehicles (EVs) and improving the distribution of hydrogen and natural gas fueling stations. It claims to have installed almost 8.6 million charging facilities and over 450 hydrogen fueling stations nationwide by 2023.

***In a White Paper, China claims it would contribute around \$676 billion to the world's energy transformation and concentrates on green transformation, further increase in energy infrastructure, policy on clean energy, and innovation of renewable technologies.***

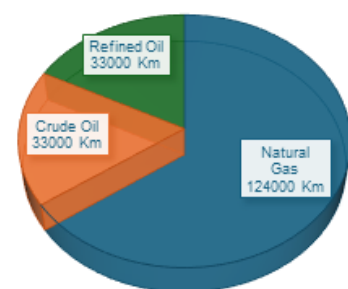
## RAPID EXPANSION

Part III of the White Paper shows how China is fast-pacing the new energy supply systems in coordination with the traditional energy systems. It has given particular emphasis to storing wind-solar-hydro and wind-solar-coal hybrid systems in resource-rich areas. An extensive, unified national pipeline network has been laid to optimize and coordinate oil and gas supply across regions, as per Figure 1. Over the past decade, it has doubled its natural gas storage capacity to cater to strategic and commercial reserves.

The paper also claims that China has improved the regulation capacity of its energy systems, with the energy storage projects having a maximum output power of 31,390 MW and a total energy storage capacity of 66,870 MWh, with an

average storage time of 2.1 hours. The demand-side response has been strengthened by expanding adjustable power load and improving vehicle-to-grid (V2G) technology.

### OIL AND GAS PIPELINE



Part IV of the White Paper illustrates policy measures such as 'energizing innovators' through incentivization schemes and preferential policies for the first product breakthroughs in key technologies to develop new quality productive forces in the energy sector.

China has built complete industrial chains for the R&D, design, and integrated manufacturing of hydropower, wind, and solar PV equipment and claims to have mastered the nuclear power technologies of third-generation pressurized water reactors (PWRs) and fourth-generation high-temperature gas-cooled reactors. Part V of the White Paper covers the measures to modernize energy governance.

## A REFORMED SYSTEM

Some of the issues implemented include the elimination of monopolies of the power grid enterprises, the establishment of a unified national electricity market and transparent energy trading platforms, the development of an extensive energy standardization system that includes the publication of more than 4000 national standards, and 11,000 industrial standards and bolstering electricity safety oversight and regulation

framework to avert risks related to large power grids, power emergency response, dam safety, and cybersecurity.

Part VI of the White Paper is designed to promote Chinese values for the shared future of the global community and tries to gain a moralistic ground by quoting from the report of the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) concerning China's deep dive into global wind power and PV power projects. BRI is the mainstay of this global outreach, used in almost 100 countries.

China has proactively created strategic partnerships on energy transition through six major regional energy cooperation platforms— the China-ASEAN platform, the China-League of Arab States platform, the China-African Union platform, the China-Central and Eastern Europe platform, the China-Central Asia platform, and the APEC Sustainable Energy Center. The paper seems skeptical about the US and the West's decoupling of global supply chains. However, without naming them, it calls for rejecting protectionism and any severing of industrial and supply chains by the "small yard and high fence" approach while, at the same time, it wants developed countries to step in and provide funding, technology, and capacity-building support for renewable energy.



The White Paper aims to see China carbon neutral by 2060. It tries to align the target of achieving essential socialist modernization by expediting the transition to non-fossil fuels as its primary energy source by 2035. By 2050, it aims to become a great modern socialist country with a clean, low-carbon, safe, and efficient energy system.

## WHAT'S THE RUSH?

According to the International Energy Agency (IEA) Report 'Renewables 2023', the world's annual renewable capacity has grown continuously for the past 22 years, 2023 showcasing the fastest growth rate ever.

Almost 50 percent (approximately 510 GW) of renewable energy was added in 2023, with China's share in solar PV equivalent being equal to the entire world's contribution in 2022. Its wind additions also grew by 66 percent year-on-year. Three-quarters of renewable capacity additions worldwide are in solar PV alone.

The IEA Report scales down the projected growth in global renewable capacity to 7,300 GW by 2028, which will be 2.5 times its current level by 2030, falling short of the tripling goal. It translates to power generation through Solar PV at 3869 GW, wind power at 1715 GW, hydropower at 1524 GW, and other renewable energy at 27 GW. Solar PV and wind will account for 95 percent of global renewable expansion because of lower generation costs than fossil and non-fossil fuel alternatives.

the yawning capacity gap in renewable electricity generation between China and the rest of the world.

India's pledge to the Paris Summit in 2015 offered to bring 40 percent of its electricity generation capacity from

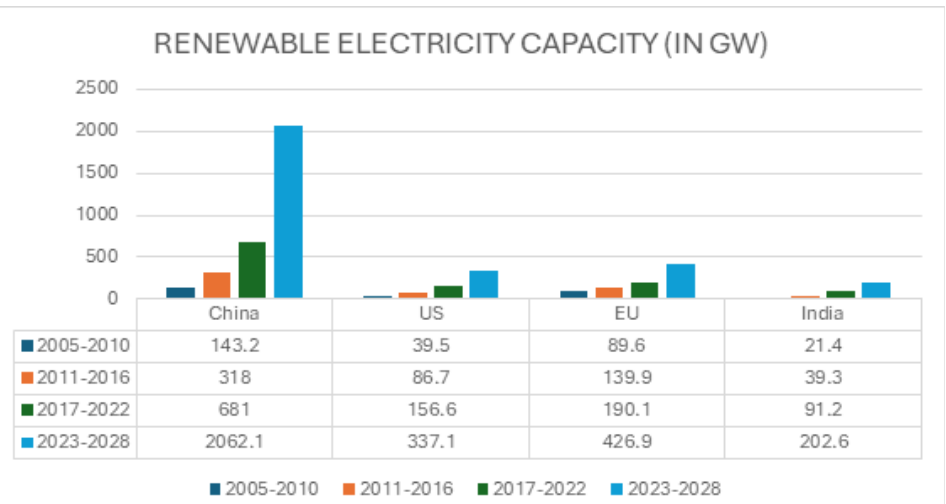


Figure 2: Renewable Electricity Capacity 2005-2028

## GUIDING CONCERN

For China, commonly promoting energy consumption is not only an ideological and principal position but also a large market to manage its own energy needs and slowly capture the energy market worldwide. Energy security is the prime guiding concern for China, as it feels that its path to modernization can only be unlocked if it captures the vast renewable energy market. Hence, China's strategic push to treat renewable energy as a resource of national and strategic importance.

When Prime Minister Narendra Modi talked about the "Surya Putra"/"Sunshine countries" in 2015 and called for the creation of the International Solar Alliance (ISA) and creating its headquarters in Gurugram, Haryana,

non-fossil sources (renewable, large hydro, and nuclear) by 2030. India has made all the right moves to create ISA and mobilize the global South on the need to harness renewable energy resources. However, it has yet to be able to drive the ecosystem to respond to the policy push and meet the targeted projections. NITI Aayog's promise to bring the policy paper on energy transition in November 2024 will have to address the scales of capacity and capability. As Biden says, this is the 'deciding decade'; India has no option but to accelerate and actualize its policy push.

*((Brigadier Vivek Verma (Retd) was the former Deputy Director of Indian Army Think Tank CLAWS, New Delhi and a former Senior Research Fellow at India's oldest Defence Think Tank, USI*

**China focuses on renewable energy because it is key to the global market. In contrast, India promotes solar and non-fossil power by supporting hurdles in chasing policy goals.**

Though the US, the EU, India, and Brazil remain bright spots for onshore wind and solar PV growth, the scales to match Chinese capacity will be far less unless and until collaborative efforts are implemented. Figure 2 illustrates

it was indeed a laudable step by his government. It aimed to install 175 GW of renewable energy, of which 100 GW was to be solar energy by 2022 and a reduction in emission intensity by 35 percent by 2030.

*of India, Delhi. He has also authored the book, 'Non-Contact Warfare: An Appraisal of China's Military Capabilities'. The views expressed are of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of The News Analytics Journal.)*

# LEVERAGING TECH TO COMBAT TERROR FINANCING

## DEEP-TECH

*Establishing a National Blockchain Intelligence Hub and integrating AI-driven analytics can track illicit financial activities in India in real time. In the long term, blockchain for storing intelligence data and smart contract automation would further improve security and counterterrorism efforts, making financial systems more resistant to manipulation.*



**BY DR AMIT DUA, ASSOCIATE PROF, BIRLA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY AND SCIENCE, PILANI & FOUNDER OF YET PVT LTD FOR TNJ**

India's fight against terrorism has been long and multifaceted, but one area that remains incredibly challenging is the financing of these terror networks. Terrorist organisations have become adept at exploiting the loopholes in traditional financial systems, using complex methods like informal banking networks, shell companies and even cryptocurrencies to fund their activities. As these networks grow in sophistication, so must our methods of combating them. Blockchain technology is revolutionary for enhancing transparency, traceability, and coordination in tracking and dismantling terrorist financing.

### CURRENT HURDLES

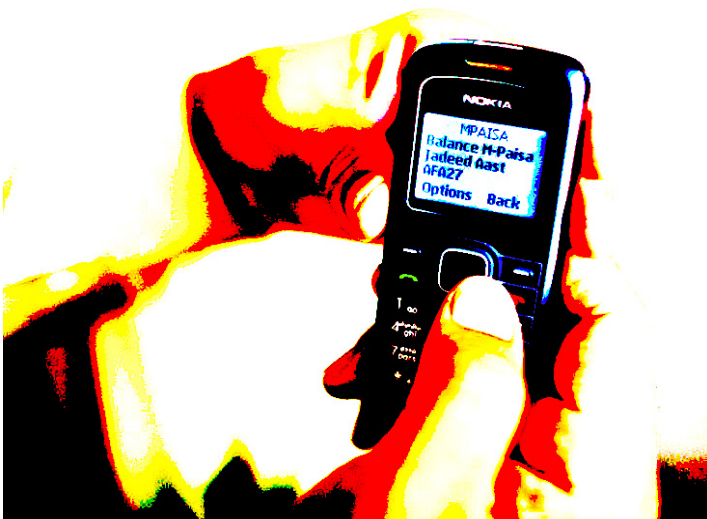
Despite India's efforts to curb terrorism, several significant challenges remain in tracking and halting the flow of funds to these groups. First, cross-border tracking remains ineffective, as terrorists often use informal networks like hawala to move money across borders without leaving a trail in formal banking systems. These shadow banking systems are deeply ingrained in certain regions, making monitoring transactions using traditional financial tools nearly impossible.

Second, intelligence sharing between national and international agencies is still limited. Although various nations and organisations work together to fight terrorism, real-time data exchange is often sluggish or incomplete, allowing terrorists to slip through the cracks before coordinated action can be taken.

Third, opaque financial networks make identifying and tracing funding origins difficult. Terrorists exploit charities, shell companies, and offshore accounts to move money in ways that evade scrutiny, leveraging gaps in global regulatory frameworks. Current systems need more transparency to track these financial flows effectively.

### REVOLUTIONIZING COUNTERTERRORISM

Blockchain technology offers a game-changing solution to these challenges. At its core, blockchain is a decentralised, immutable ledger system that records transactions securely





and transparently. Unlike traditional databases controlled by a single entity, blockchain operates on a peer-to-peer network where every participant has access to a copy of the ledger. This makes it nearly impossible for anyone to tamper with the data without detection, ensuring transparency and security. By incorporating blockchain into counterterrorism efforts, India can significantly improve its ability to trace, disrupt and prevent the financing of terrorism.

## BLOCKCHAIN INTELLIGENCE HUB

One of India's first and most crucial steps is establishing a national blockchain-based intelligence hub integrating key defence, intelligence,

This system could act as a collaborative platform between domestic agencies like the Armed Forces, the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW), the Intelligence Bureau (IB), and international partners. The decentralised nature of blockchain allows for shared access while maintaining strict data security, meaning sensitive intelligence could be shared more efficiently without the risk of breaches or manipulation. In short, the system would act as a highly secure, constantly updated ledger of all suspicious financial activities.

## SECURING DEFENSE PROCUREMENTS

Blockchain can also improve the security and transparency of defence procurement processes. Adversaries

smart contracts—automated, self-executing contracts with the terms directly written into code—that oversee every step of the procurement process. These smart contracts would ensure that funds are only released when predefined conditions are met, preventing manipulation. Each step in the supply chain, from initial bids to the delivery of equipment, would be recorded immutably on the blockchain, creating a permanent, auditable trail of transactions.

This method would prevent infiltration and ensure compliance with procurement regulations and security standards. Collaborating with blockchain technology firms and defence agencies will accelerate the deployment of this system, ensuring that procurement processes are as secure as the technologies themselves.

## ENHANCING FINANCIAL INTELLIGENCE

In addition to improving procurement, India's armed forces should be equipped with AI-driven blockchain analytics to map out and analyse terror financing networks. Blockchain provides a treasure trove of transparent financial data, and when combined with AI, it can become an even more powerful tool. AI can sift through vast amounts of data on the blockchain to identify patterns, anomalies and correlations that human analysts might miss. By detecting these patterns in real-time, AI can flag high-risk transactions or individuals involved in suspicious activities.



and financial agencies. The goal of this hub would be to monitor all financial transactions that could potentially fund terrorism. By leveraging blockchain's transparent and immutable nature, this hub would enable real-time tracking of economic activities, making it much harder for terrorist organisations to hide their funding sources.

seeking to manipulate, sabotage, or gain intelligence on military operations often target defence supply chains. By integrating blockchain into procurement systems, India can ensure that all critical infrastructure and weaponry transactions are transparent, secure, and tamper-proof.

For instance, blockchain can create

This enhanced analytical capability would allow intelligence agencies to take swift action, freezing accounts or alerting international partners before funds can be moved to terrorist organisations. It can also help forecast future risks by identifying trends in illicit financial activities, allowing

***An instant mechanism to track all financial transactions related to terrorism in real time, permitting better coordination between all agencies concerned and a transparent and secure defence procurement process through smart contracts.***

authorities to stay one step ahead of terrorists.

### MID-TERM GOALS

In the medium term, India should focus on expanding its collaboration with global allies by developing joint blockchain-based cybersecurity frameworks. Terrorist financing networks are often global, crossing borders and involving multiple jurisdictions. By working together with international organisations like the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) or through platforms like the G20, India can create a global blockchain-enabled network for monitoring terror financing.

Additionally, blockchain can be deployed to secure communications within the Armed Forces and intelligence agencies. Secure communication is vital in military operations, especially when dealing with high-stakes activities. Blockchain’s decentralised system ensures that even the most sensitive messages are safe from interception or tampering. Using military-grade blockchain systems, confidential communications can be protected with an immutable layer of security, safeguarding mission-critical information from adversaries.

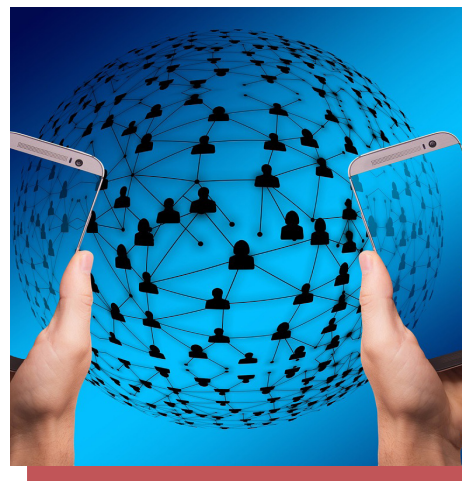
**The Blockchain Intelligence Hub will enable real-time tracking of terror financing and generating intelligence for automated freezing of transactions.**

### LONG-TERM VISION

In the long run, India should develop a fully decentralised intelligence network driven by blockchain. This would involve using blockchain for financial tracking and securely storing and analysing intelligence data. A decentralised intelligence network would significantly reduce the risk of internal data breaches or manipulation, providing a secure data collection and analysis platform.

Blockchain’s ability to create an immutable record of all intelligence data would ensure the integrity of sensitive information, preventing any unauthorised alterations. Furthermore, this decentralised system would be resilient against external cyberattacks, as there would be no single point of failure.

Finally, blockchain’s integration with smart contracts could automatically flag or block suspicious transactions in real-time. These smart contracts, programmed to detect financial activities linked to high-risk regions



or individuals, would act autonomously, freezing funds and alerting authorities when illicit activities are detected. Table 1 summarizes the actions and benefits.

Blockchain technology offers India an unprecedented opportunity to transform its approach to combating terror financing. By implementing blockchain across financial, intelligence and defence systems, India can create a transparent, secure, and tamper-proof infrastructure that makes it far more challenging for terrorist organisations to fund their operations. As this technology continues to evolve, its integration into national security frameworks will become beneficial and essential. Through blockchain, India can ensure that its counterterrorism measures are effective and resilient in the face of future threats.

*(Dr Amit Dua is an Associate Professor at BITS, Pilani and Founder of YET Pvt. Ltd. He is a TEDx speaker and the author of books on Blockchain Technology and Zero-Knowledge Proofs. The views expressed are of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of The News Analytics Journal.)*

Time Frame	Action	Benefits
<b>Immediate (0-6 months)</b>	Establish a National Blockchain Intelligence Hub	Real-time tracking of terror financing, enhanced intelligence sharing between agencies
	Implement AI-driven Blockchain Analytics	Early detection of illicit financial activities, prevention of fund transfers to terror groups
<b>Mid-term (6-12 months)</b>	Integrate Blockchain with Defence Procurement	Tamper-proof procurement processes, transparent and auditable records of defence contracts
	Collaborate on Blockchain-based Global Cybersecurity Framework	Enhanced international cooperation in tracking cross-border terror financing
<b>Long-term (1 year+)</b>	Develop Decentralised Blockchain-driven Intelligence Network	Secure and tamper-proof intelligence data storage, reduction of internal and external risks
	Deploy Smart Contracts to Block Terror Financing Automatically	Automated detection and freezing of suspicious transactions

Table 1: Immediate, Mid-Term, and Long-Term Strategies for Blockchain in Counterterrorism

# GLOBAL SUCCESS

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