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YEAR
ANNIVERSARY
CELEBRATION

NEW ARMS RACE

IN FOCUS

CHINA EXPLODES
NON-NUCLEAR
HYDROGEN BOMB

BIG STORY

GLOBAL CONFLICTS
BREWING A NEW ARMS
RACE

SPACE-TECH

NASA & ISRO TEAM
UP TO LAUNCH NISAR

TNJ'S POWER PANEL



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Expert on international relations from Nairobi, Kenya. Covers Africa for News Analytics.



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Former Western Army Commander and State Information Commissioner. He was Maharaja Ranjit Singh Chair Prof in PU and is an Hony Prof currently in PU & CU.



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|| FOREWORD



RACE FOR MILITARY DOMINANCE

In an increasingly fractured world, the spectre of a new arms race looms large. From Europe to the Indo-Pacific, nations are recalibrating their defence postures in response to shifting geopolitical realities and emerging threats. The return of high-intensity conflict, exemplified by the Russia-Ukraine war and the conflicts in Gaza, has shattered long-standing assumptions about the nature of modern warfare. Recent Indian operations against Pakistan also witnessed the rapid employment of some top-of-the-line armament for quick and precise results. At the same time, tensions in the Taiwan Strait and the South China Sea are accelerating militarisation in the Asia-Pacific region, with China aggressively pursuing next-generation weapon platforms, hypersonic missiles, artificial intelligence-enabled systems, and space-based capabilities.

This issue of The News Analytics Journal delves deep into the resurgence of global military competition. At its core lies the undeniable fact that the world is entering a dangerous era—one where deterrence is once again built not on diplomacy alone, but on hard power, technological supremacy, and strategic alliances. China's expanding arsenal and opaque military-industrial strategy have triggered alarm across capitals from Washington to Tokyo and New Delhi. Western powers, in turn, are doubling down on defence innovation and rearmament, seeking both to counter Chinese assertiveness and to deter further adventurism from revisionist states.

The new arms race is not just about quantity—it is about speed, autonomy, reach, and disruption. This edition explores how nations are adapting to this volatile security landscape, the risks of miscalculation, and the urgent need for arms control frameworks in the age of AI and cyber warfare.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Manoj Naravane', followed by a horizontal line.

General (Dr) Manoj Mukund Naravane (Retd),
PVSM, AVSM, SM, VSM, PhD
Former Chief of Army Staff

A photograph showing two business professionals in a meeting. One person is holding a tablet, and the other is pointing at the screen with a white pen. There are papers and a notebook on a wooden table in the foreground.

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EDITOR'S NOTE



THE MILESTONE

Welcome to this special edition of The News Analytics Journal, as we complete a year full of geopolitical upheavals, global conflicts and a horrendous terror attack on India, News Analytics has remained at the forefront of bringing you the ring-side information and an unbiased assessment of the developments. Our

esteemed author's panel, each being a specialist in his domain, has been spearheading the analysis of the events with wider global implications.

The News Analytics Journal's global pool of correspondents has immensely contributed to the publication's sincere effort to bring an in-depth assessment of global issues and especially those that matter to India. We also extend our sincere gratitude to Honourable Ambassadors and High Commissioners for sharing their wise perspective with The News Analytics Journal on key aspects of bilateral relations.

The year has also brought in major milestones for the publication, where it undertook collaborations with various educational institutions, enabling the news journal to be accessed by a large number of trainees and faculty. News Analytics now reaches to more than 55,000 readers every month, The News Analytics Journal ranks on top on Google search for the brand name, it crossed more than 1,30,000 visitors every month and has the strong social media presence with monthly views having crossed 3,00,000.

The milestones that have been achieved is a reflection of trust of our esteemed readers who have chosen and reposed their faith on the news journal. It continues to grow steadily and that gives us immense hope and confidence. The entire team of News Analytics extends its heartfelt gratitude to one and all who have supported us in this intellectual journey.

Jai Hind!

Sandhya Srivastava
Editor in Chief &
Business Director

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CHINA EXPLODES NON-NUCLEAR HYDROGEN BOMB

IN FOCUS

China's test of a Non-Nuclear Hydrogen Bomb (NNHB) on April 20, 2025, marks a significant shift in global deterrence dynamics. Using magnesium hydride, this high-energy weapon delivers massive destruction without nuclear fallout. It challenges traditional arms control frameworks and signals China's push for advanced, non-nuclear strategic capabilities. This development warrants urgent international attention given its dual-use nature and potential for deployment in regional flashpoints like Taiwan or Tibet.



BRIG (DR.) VIVEK VERMA (RETD)
FOR NEWS ANALYTICS

NON-NUCLEAR HYDROGEN BOMB

The dastardly carnage of Pahalgam perpetrated by the Pakistan-sponsored terrorists on 22 April 2025 has consumed the Indians and the Indian state, on the need to retaliate. The analysts have been busy analysing India's successful conduct of Operation Sindoor targeting the terrorists' location inside Pakistan and its successful handling of the escalation matrix. However, amidst the din, the security planners have failed to

analyse an important technological demonstration by China on 20 April 2025 – the testing of an NNHB.

The 705 Research Institute of China State Shipbuilding Corporation (CSSC), a key player in underwater weapon systems, carried out this test using magnesium hydride, which is a high-density hydrogen carrier that can store up



to 7.6% hydrogen by weight. It was originally developed to bring the gas to off-grid areas, where it could power hydrogen fuel cells for clean electricity and heat.

Magnesium hydride is a versatile compound that has multiple applications across energy, defence and space and the aerospace industries. Hence, a pilot project for producing



150 tons of magnesium hydride per year was initiated by the Dalian Institute of Chemical Physics (DICP) of the Chinese Academy of Sciences under Professors CHEN Ping and CAO Hujun. DICP is collaborating with the Yulin Innovation Institute of Clean Energy and Dalian Funde Jinyu Clean Energy Co., Ltd.

On 10 January 2025, it completed its first trial run, yielding qualified products from a single feedstock input. The project aims to fulfil China's quest to find alternative clean energy resources for high-energy batteries while simultaneously exploring its military applications for creating thermobaric and incendiary weapons, rocket propellants, and thermal energy storage capabilities on spacecraft, as it can absorb and release heat efficiently, thereby making it useful for temperature regulation in spacecraft. The 20 April 2025 test of the NNHB triggers the possibility of capability development in the non-nuclear deterrence arena.

OVERVIEW OF NNHB

A NNHB is an explosive device that uses magnesium hydride for a sustained, powerful, non-nuclear explosion, unlike nuclear fusion or fission devices. The ability of magnesium hydride as a solid-state hydrogen storage material capable of generating immense energy enables the creation of a sustained fireball. Triggered conventionally, magnesium hydride fractures into microparticles, releasing hydrogen that ignites with air in a self-sustaining loop, forming a fireball lasting 15 times longer than TNT and generating temperatures exceeding 1000°C.

Unlike nuclear bombs, this device does not produce radioactive

fallout. It is capable of melting aluminium alloys and allows precise targeting and large-area saturation strike with intense heat. This bomb adds to the non-nuclear deterrence arsenal and adds to the complex range of the escalation matrix. However, manufacturing magnesium hydride is both complex and dangerous, as the material is highly reactive and even brief exposure to air can cause fatal explosions. Production is currently limited to just "a few grams per day" due to the extreme conditions required.

The NNHB creates a sustained fireball using magnesium hydride, capable of high-temperature devastation without radiation, enhancing China's arsenal for precision and saturation strikes.

WHAT ARE ITS POTENTIAL APPLICATIONS?

Few analysts refer to it as a Chinese weapon designed to be employed in a Taiwan contingency scenario, aiming to take out Taiwan's maze of tunnels and underground storage using precision targeting and area saturation. However, its application in a Tibetan contingency cannot be ruled out, as multimodal delivery means are available. A two-kilogram NNHB, which has been tested, can be precisely delivered using drones, missiles, fighter jets, or bombers. It can be integrated into submarine-launched missile systems for underwater warfare and can create challenges for Freedom of Navigation Operations (FONOPS) in the South China and East China Seas.



The challenges of adapting it to ground-based systems, such as artillery and Rocket Launchers, remain due to metallurgical constraints in the current systems. However, developing systems as a replacement for Tactical Nuclear Weapons (TNW) cannot be ruled out.

NEW DETERRENCE DYNAMICS

The evolution of non-nuclear strategic weapons is reshaping global military dynamics. Nations are increasingly investing in advanced conventional weapons that can achieve strategic effects without crossing the nuclear threshold. The US tested

its Mother of All Bombs (MoAB), officially known as the GBU-43/B Massive Ordnance Air Blast Bomb, in Afghanistan's Nangarhar Province against ISIS-K (Islamic State – Khorasan Province) tunnel systems on 13 April 2017. MoAB, weighing 9800 kilograms and having 11 times the power of TNT and the ability to saturate an area of 1.6 kilometres, was dropped by Lockheed Martin C-130 aircraft.



The Russians designed the Father of All Bombs (FoAB), officially known as the Aviation Thermobaric Bomb of Increased Power (ATBIP), which weighs around 7,100 kilograms, with the temperature at the blast centre almost two times the MoAB. Tested in 2007, there is no confirmation about the employment of FoAB in the ongoing Russo-Ukrainian conflict. The analysis of payload and impact assessment of NNHB reveals that it is a game-changer and paves the way for development of multi-modal delivery means.

These non-nuclear arsenals, packed with precision and lethality, lower the threshold of employment as they allow operational freedom of action. No presidential approvals are required for firing the MoAB. Similarly, there are no UN

conventions that ban the use of these systems. These nations justify their possession as a means of deterrence and technology demonstration in high-energy warfare. These bombs allow nations to achieve strategic destruction without violating nuclear arms treaties. The development of hypersonic and directed energy weapons is intended to maintain strategic equilibrium. However, the miniaturisation of arsenals may result in the development of artillery and rocket systems. The employment of these NNHB in tactical battlefield scenarios is likely to create strategic instability.

NEED FOR THE UN TO STEP IN

UN Arms Control Agreements that focus on nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons do not explicitly ban thermobaric bombs. The use of such highly lethal thermobaric weapons in urban warfare grossly violates humanitarian principles. While MoAB, FoAB, and NNHB are not banned, their use in civilian areas or indiscriminate attacks could violate international humanitarian law. The concern regarding NNHB is far more as its usage in the energy sector can be used as an alibi for mass production. Hence, the United Nations Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW), which regulates weapons causing excessive suffering or indiscriminate destruction, must wake up to this new reality.

(Brig (Dr) Vivek Verma (Retd) is a Senior Research Fellow at the Centre for Emerging Technologies for Atma Nirbhar Bharat (CETANB) at USI of India and an author of book, "Non-Contact Warfare: An Appraisal of China's Military Capabilities". A former Deputy Director with Indian Army Think Tank, CLAWS, he has been writing on emerging technology and its future impact. The views expressed are of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of The News Analytics Journal.)

With multimodal delivery systems and potential battlefield use, NNHBs could destabilise existing deterrence structures, bypass arms treaties, and escalate tactical conflicts without nuclear thresholds.

MAJOR HIGHLIGHTS

- NNHB gives China strong non-nuclear deterrence, reshaping strategy without violating treaties.
- Magnesium hydride in NNHBs produces intense heat, causing lasting damage without radiation.
- Its clean energy appeal complicates oversight, easing mass production via civilian programs.
- NNHBs are deployable by drones, missiles, submarines, or jets, enhancing strategic flexibility.
- Current UN arms treaties exclude NNHBs, prompting concerns over unchecked proliferation.



GET THE GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

News Analytics is a platform to identify and analyse challenges surrounding global developments having a clear impact on geostrategic interests of India.

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GLOBAL CONFLICTS BREWING

BIG STORY

The evolving global order is being shaped by an intensifying arms race, marked by protracted conflicts and strategic rivalries. From Ukraine to Gaza, military-industrial complexes are thriving on persistent instability. India, amid regional threats, has made notable strides in defence exports and self-reliance. As nations race to modernise, the spotlight shifts to emerging technologies, partnerships, and indigenous innovation to achieve sustainable security and strategic autonomy.



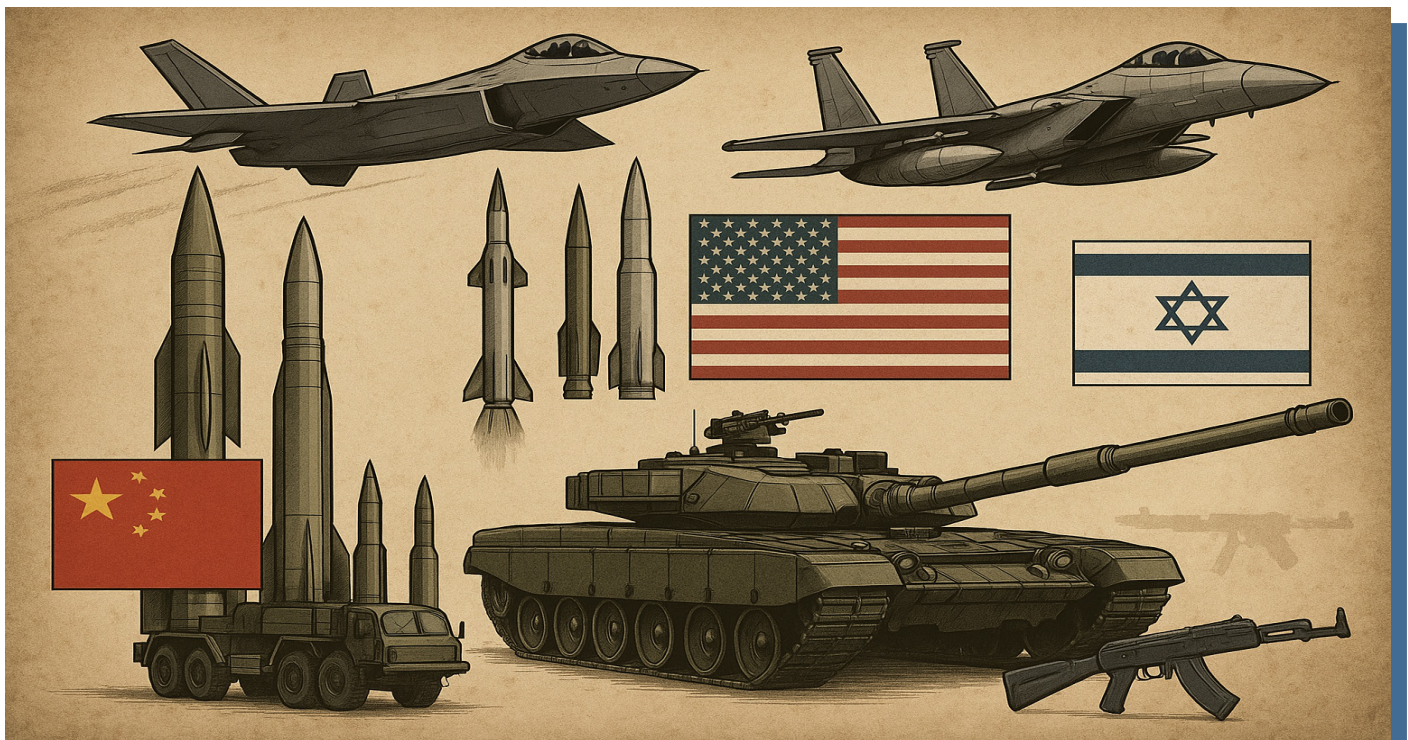
LT GEN KJ SINGH (RETD)
FOR NEWS ANALYTICS

The world is increasingly witnessing festering and long-drawn conflicts like the Ukraine-Russia war, in its third year and Israel’s Gaza offensive, now in its nineteenth month. Even where conflicts are currently capped, like in Syria, Armenia-Azerbaijan, they are accompanied by uneasy calm and preparation for the next round. In most conflicts, while there are no victors or vanquished but the biggest gainer or the real winner is the Military Industrial Complex (MIC). These conflicts, even if short and paused, like Operation “Sindoor” / “Bunyan Al-Marsoos” have been characterised by the employment of high-tech weaponry like drones, missiles,

loitering munitions, air-defence (AD) shields and surveillance systems.

GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

Globally respected think-tank, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) in its annual 2025 report, flagged a significant increase in military expenditure, reaching US\$ \$2.718 trillion in 2024, approximating to 9.4% increase from the previous year. In effect, it is the largest year-on-year rise since the end of geo-political rivalry, during the Cold War in 1991. The list is topped by



A NEW ARMS RACE

five nations – United States, China, Russia, Germany, and India. These top five spenders accounted for nearly 60% of global military expenditure. USA was right on top with a



37% share, China was next with 12%, and these two alone spent nearly half of the total expenditure.

Translated in GDP metric, expenditure accounted for nearly 2.5% of global GDP. Analysing regional templates, expenditure increased in all regions and most notably in Europe and the Middle East. Turkey emerged as a significant arms exporter with its advancement in niche disruptive technologies like Bayraktar-TB2 drones. South Korea has become another important manufacturer in land, air and marine systems.

A very large part of the outlay was on exports and imports, which remained the same over the last two comparative five-year cycles between 2015-2019 and 2024. However, it registered an increase of 18%, in comparison to the 2005-2009 five-year cycle. Ukraine emerged as the largest importer due to the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war; India followed as the second.

Conflicts are not only boosting the order books of armament industries but are also providing real-life combat conditions. It has also catalysed the adoption of commercial off-the-shelf (COTS) technologies like the Starlink satellite terminals. As a parallel development, a large number of backyard start-ups have sprung up in Ukraine and Europe to develop low-tech and cost-effective drones/quad-copters. Indiscriminate destructions has created an urgent requirement to replenish war reserves before the next round, adding to order books.

increase in expenditure over the previous year, 2023, largely driven by the Chinese threat. Notwithstanding these rankings, India managed to reduce its import expenditure by 9.3%, powered by the sustained push for Atmanirbharata (self-reliance). India has also made rapid progress in exports, in past ten years, defence exports have gone up from ₹ 686 crores in 2013-14 to ₹ 21,083 crores in 2023-24 and ₹ 23,622 crores (approximately US \$2.8 billion), in 2024-25, registering 35% increase from 2022-23. There has been a 31-fold increase in exports over ten years from 2013-14.

Initially, the product mix was limited to artillery munitions, bullet-proof jackets, a few interceptor crafts and Dornier transport aircraft. There was a significant increase in exports due to the Azerbaijan-Armenia conflict and the Russia-Ukraine War. India has added 155 mm artillery guns, Akash SAM systems and Brahmos super-sonic cruise missiles to its export list. The biggest order was \$375 million for three Brahmos Coastal Defence batteries from the Philippines. It is also learnt that Vietnam and Indonesia have expressed interest in acquiring missile systems. It is also heartening that 60% of exports are now from the private sector and 40% from public sector enterprises. As many as 100 companies are involved in exports to 90-odd countries.



India is targeting ₹50,000 crores (US\$ 5.9 billion) defence exports by 2029-30. Significant steps are TATA's partnership with Airbus for manufacturing C-295 transportation aircraft, and government's decision to allow the private sector in Advanced Medium Combat Aircraft (AMCA) project.

SIPRI's 2025 report highlights the highest-ever global military spending at \$2.718 trillion, with India among the top five global spenders and the second-largest importer.

INDIA-STATUS CHECK

India was ranked as the fifth largest spender and second in imports. In the year-on-year comparison, there was a 1.6%

CHINESE SHADOW

China has emerged as the trend-setter in reducing its imports, most significantly. Starting with largely Soviet origin equipment,

it has used a multi-lateral path of cloning, adaptive cloning and independent development to become not only largely self-reliant but also a major exporter, especially to developing nations. Chinese equipment is in service in India's neighbourhood to include Pakistan, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Nepal and the Maldives. This gives PLA presence through life-cycle

Developing dual-use disruptive technologies like Starlink can redress technology asymmetry as evidenced in the Ukrainian conflict. Technology transfers preclude core and critical source codes. Hence, in Transfer of Technology, it is largely 'produce to design', at best, passing of 'know-how' but most rarely 'know-why'. There are unconfirmed reports of France refusing to share source codes of Rafael aircraft, thereby limiting integration with indigenous weapons/munitions. Reverse engineering is abundantly used, notably by China and Iran to clone crude versions of advanced weapons. The most important rule is that there are no free lunches.



India's defence export surge, backed by Atmanirbhara, reflects a strategic shift with 100 companies exporting to 90 nations, wherein private sector accounting for 60% share.

support, repairs and training. In Pakistan China's NORINCO has set up Heavy Industries Taxilla for licensed production of Haider (VT-4) and joint production of platforms like Al-Khalid and Al-Zarar tanks. Similarly, Pakistan Aeronautical Complex Kamra boasts of the joint production of JF-17 variants. Integration displayed by Pakistan with Chinese systems in the recent Operation Sindoor, particularly the use of PL-15 missiles, needs to be taken note of.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

As per the US Congressional report drawing on reputed sources like SIPRI, India is the largest importer of armaments in value terms, accounting for approximately 10% of global imports, from 2008 to 2023, in a 15-year cycle. Russian origin equipment accounts for 62%, declining from 76%. Other top suppliers are- France (11%), USA (10%) and Israel (7%). India's biggest challenge, as flagged by the Air Chief in the recent CII Conclave, is the inability of DRDO and DPSUs to realise planned deadlines, Tejas and MBT Arjuna being striking examples.

OPERATION SINDOOR

India fielded a complex mix of French, Russian, Israeli and American aircraft, AD systems, drones, munitions, along with indigenous platforms and systems. Credit goes to our defence experts for effectively integrating indigenous systems like Integrated Air Command and Control System (IACCS) and Akash-Teer. Systems such as BrahMos, Akash missiles, SkyStriker drones, Netra AWACS, and CUAS performed impressively. India also upgraded legacy AD systems like L-70 and ZU-23 with optoelectronics. Meanwhile, Pakistan deployed a mix of Chinese, US, and Turkish equipment.

Failure of the Kaveri program for aero-engines translated to reliance on US F-404/414. Supply of F-404 was delayed, slowing down the Tejas program. Even Apache attack-helicopter delivery is pending. Similarly, a delay in the supply of Ukrainian marine gas-turbines has caused significant delays in the induction of naval platforms. In case of power-packs for tanks, German MTU failed to supply 800HP engines for Zorawar, forcing the switch to American 760HP Cummins.

FUNDAMENTAL RULES

Self-reliance is a long-term, tedious process. It can be aided by genuine technology partnerships, coupled with achieving the technology threshold in critical areas. An incremental and collaborative approach is the way forward. Brahmos, a joint project with Russia, is currently only 76% indigenous and likely to reach 85%; hence, sometimes, it is smart to be the lead integrator and not focus on 100% indigenous content. In certain niche areas, disruptive weapons like Bayraktar drones have given Turkey significant leverage. We need to emulate this approach.



Even the Shakti engine for helicopters is a collaborative effort with Safran. A national engine mission/challenge is long overdue.



India deploys the largest fleet of T-90 tanks, even larger than Russia. We also have the largest operational inventory of C-17-Globe-Master and P8I-Poseidon aircraft outside the USA. The sheer size of Indian inventories provides an opportunity, as no major arms producer wants to be left out in this lucrative market. It is also the most appropriate global/ regional hub for Maintenance, Repairs, Overhaul and warehousing.

USSR: Indian experience with the Soviet Union has been mixed. Equipment is robust and relatively economical, but notch below the cutting-edge. Russia has been benign in its early years, accepting rupees and even commodity payment. They have also leased strategic platforms like Chakra submarines, enabling the Arihant series. Notwithstanding the foregoing, many ToTs have really meant licensed production, with even annual capping on numbers and spare parts supply has been unreliable.

US: It follows to government route, under Foreign Military Sales (FMS). American equipment is cutting-edge, with reliable support, but expensive. Only limited trials are allowed; offsets are difficult and possible only in peripherals. Source codes are not shared, obviating customisation and have strict End User restrictions. The USA also has the Countering American

Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA). India managed a rare waiver for S-400 AD systems from Russia.

WAY FORWARD

It is time to realistically review the 42 Squadron target and bolster air power with drones and surveillance, transitioning to a manned-unmanned mix. Integration of diverse equipment and upgradation of legacy platforms are key challenges. Government has rolled out ambitious programs like- Catalysing Opportunities for Military Partnership, Accelerated Commerce and Technology (COMPACT) and Transforming Relationships Utilising Strategic Technology (TRUST). Our challenge is to side-step the traps like the F-35 offer and seek avenues for indigenous capability building and Smart Atamnirbharata through meaningful technology transfers.

(Lt Gen KJ Singh (R), Former Western Army Commander and State Information Commissioner. He was Maharaja Ranjit Singh Chair Prof in PU & is Hony Prof currently in PU & CU. Regular columnist & commentator on National Security. The views expressed are of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of The News Analytics Journal.)

MAJOR HIGHLIGHTS

- Global defence budgets rose 9.4% in 2024 amid growing global conflicts.
- India, still top arms importer, saw exports surge 31-fold to ₹23,622 crores.
- China's self-reliance, defence exports push India to boost indigenous capabilities, strategic autonomy.
- India integrated diverse weapons, but engine development and platform induction face delays.
- India should pursue selective indigenisation, smart partnerships, and defence ecosystem reforms strategically.

Thank You For Your



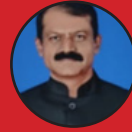
General (Dr.) Manoj Mukund Naravane (Retd)
PVSM, AVSM, SM, VSM, PhD
Former Chief Of Army Staff

Congratulations to The News Analytics Journal on its first anniversary, a remarkable achievement in the world of modern journalism. In just a year, it's become a trusted source of information—thanks to its team's vision and depth. We celebrate this milestone and future impactful storytelling.



Air Marshal Anil Khosla (Retd)
Former Vice Chief, Indian Air Force
Researcher & Analyst, Distinguished Fellow - USI & CAPS.

Heartfelt congratulations to The News Analytics Journal on an incredible year of publication, a great milestone in its journey of insightful journalism. TNI has emerged as a trusted platform for incisive analysis on defence, aerospace, strategic affairs, and national security. In a world marked by rapid geopolitical shifts and complex security challenges, the journal has consistently delivered well-researched, forward-looking content that adds immense value to policymakers, professionals, and informed citizens alike. Best Wishes.



Vice Admiral Makarand Aravind Hampiholi (Retd)
Retired Commander-In-Chief of the Training Command of The Indian Navy

Congratulations to team News Analytics for their journey in the past year, which saw the monthly editions and the lucid articles therein a much-awaited event by its expanding base of readers. The range and depth of topics covered by erudite authors is both educative and thought-provoking. My Best Wishes!



Ambassador Anil Wadhwa
Former Secretary (East), Ministry of External Affairs and Ambassador to Italy, Holland, Oman, and Poland

I am happy to note that New Analytics has completed one year of its publication. I have seen the journal diversify into thematic editions and now includes valued and knowledge-centered interviews with eminent personalities. The visual quality has added to the appeal of the journal for all those who have been privileged to read it. I wish News Analytics continued success.



Dr. Amit Dua,
Associate Professor
Birla Institute of Technology and Science, Pilani

Every edition in The News Analytics Journal brings a greater depth & understanding to me. The professionalism with which every content is presented has encouraged me beyond doubt. I am sure readers have found great value as well. Wishing the entire team more success.



Amitabh Mukherjee
MD & CEO, Monamit Technology Solutions Pvt Ltd

Heartiest congratulations on completing a successful year! Each edition impressed with timely, insightful content. Your dedication and research have truly impacted and inspired professionals across industries. We at Monamit Technology are honoured to be part of your journey and look forward to many more years of valuable collaboration.



Lt Gen A B Shivane (Retd)
Former DG Mechanised Forces, Indian Army

Congratulations on a Milestone of Excellence!

It is an honour to be associated with The News Analytics Journal as it completes one year of incisive and credible journalism. In an era of speed and sensationalisation, the journal stands for clarity and depth, shaping discourse with integrity. Congrats and best wishes to all!



Ambassador Jeitendra Tripathi,
IFS (Retd)
Former Ambassador to Zimbabwe

At the outset, let me admit that initially I was a little sceptical whether the journal would sustain in the seamless sea of publications claiming leadership in the realm of international relations. But I am happy that it proved my doubts completely unfounded. It not only held its ground, but kept on growing and has now found a firm rooting and identity of its own in the melee of publications. The unbiased analysis it publishes makes the journal stand tall in the storm of challenges of outreach, financial crunch, and advertisement. I wish all the best and long to seeing it emerge as one of the top-rated journals in its field.

Love & Wishes



M. A. Hossain
Senior Journalist from
Dhaka, Bangladesh.

Over the past year, The News Analytics Journal has emerged as a vibrant and compelling platform for informed discourse that sets it apart in today's crowded media landscape. Each edition reflects the team's commitment to excellence, attracting top analysts and enhancing the journal's reputation as a trusted source for informed readers. Congratulations!



Ricardo Martins
Senior Journalist from
Curitiba, Brazil

Congratulations to The News Analytics Journal on completing one year of outstanding publication. The dedication to delivering insightful and engaging content has enriched readers like me. It has been an honour to contribute to and witness its impact on the community. Thank you for providing a forum that informs, inspires, and connects us all.



Nadia Hallak
Senior Journalist from
Beirut, Lebanon

I extend my heartfelt congratulations to The News Analytics Journal on its first anniversary. You have succeeded in delivering refined analytical content that keeps pace with events and enriches readers with objective insights. We are proud to have contributed and look forward to more achievements and excellence in the coming years.



Lt Gen Raj Shukla (Retd)
Former Army Commander
and currently Member of
UPSC.

In a short period, The News Analytics Journal has emerged as a formidable platform on matters of strategic-military and geopolitics.

Best wishes.



Ambassador Srikumar Menon, IFS (Retd)
Former Ambassador to
South Sudan, Angola, São
Tomé & Príncipe

Heartly congratulations to The News Analytics Journal team. It's been a fulfilling year of sharing great insights and in-depth coverage of global developments. Your editorial team and elite team of contributors have seamlessly blended journalistic excellence and domain expertise to consistently deliver high-quality content that resonates with readers. Here's to many more milestones ahead!



Ambassador Sushil Kumar Singhal, IFS (Retd)
Former Ambassador to
Angola

I am very proud to learn that The News Analytics Journal has successfully completed its first year of publication. It's been a pleasure to be part of its journey. In a short time, it has filled a vital gap in policy analysis with timely, insightful content, earning recognition and impacting strategic thinking among policymakers.



Maj Gen S K Sharma,
SM**, VSM
CEO & MD Indo Russian
Rifles Pvt Ltd

Heartiest congratulations to The News Analytics Journal on completing an impactful first year of publication. The journal is now a trusted voice on defence, aerospace, and security in a changing global environment.

Under the dynamic leadership of its Editor-in-Chief the journal has set high standards for analytical depth and editorial integrity. Wishing the entire team continued success.



Zakaria El Ghoul, Ph.D
Geopolitical Expert, Legal
Scholar and Historian, Lebanon

The News Analytics Journal marks its first anniversary—a significant milestone in its journey of delivering sharp, timely, and thought-provoking editions each month. Over the past year, it has successfully created a platform that blends insightful analysis with unwavering journalistic integrity, offering readers a refreshing take on current events. Here's to many more years of impactful storytelling.

GLOBAL INFLUENCER

KEIR STARMER — STEERING UK

NEWS ANALYTICS | Special Coverage

UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer has emerged as a pivotal figure on the global stage, navigating complex domestic challenges and international dynamics. His leadership is marked by a commitment to restoring economic stability, redefining foreign policy post-Brexit, and strengthening strategic partnerships, notably with India. Starmer's recent actions reflect a pragmatic approach to governance, balancing fiscal responsibility with social welfare and advocating for a more engaged and cooperative United Kingdom in global affairs.

POLICY REVERSALS & MIGRATION REFORMS

Domestically, Starmer's government has faced scrutiny over its initial decision to cut winter fuel payments for pensioners, a move aimed at addressing public finance deficits inherited from the previous administration. The policy, which limited the £200–£300 payments to only the poorest retirees, sparked significant backlash and was cited as a factor in Labour's poor performance in recent local elections. In response to mounting criticism and electoral setbacks, including a narrow defeat in the Runcorn and Helsby by-election, Starmer signalled a potential reversal of the policy, indicating plans to expand eligibility for the payments in the upcoming fiscal event.

Additionally, Starmer's proposed migration reforms have stirred debate. The plans aim to create a "selective" and "fair" system to reduce net migration, including measures such as banning the recruitment of overseas care workers and raising visa qualifications to a degree level. Critics argue that these reforms could lead to increased legal complexity and economic strain, potentially affecting settled status eligibility for long-stay visa holders and their families.



STRENGTHENING UK-INDIA RELATIONS

On the international front, Starmer has prioritised deepening ties with India, recognising the strategic importance of the bilateral relationship. Following his meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the G20 Summit in Rio de Janeiro, Starmer announced the relaunch of stalled talks for a free trade agreement (FTA) with India, aiming to support jobs and prosperity in the UK. On 6 May, India and the UK, the world's fourth and sixth largest economies reached a long-awaited deal, under negotiation since 2022. Prime Ministers Keir Starmer and Narendra Modi agreed it would enhance the UK-India strategic partnership.

The discussions included enhancing people-to-people exchanges and advancing the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership between India and the UK. Furthermore, the UK-India Technology Security Initiative (TSI) was launched to enhance collaboration in key technological fields, including semiconductors, telecommunications, artificial intelligence, and quantum computing, aiming to reduce reliance on China and strengthen supply chain resilience.

FOREIGN POLICY REALIGNMENT

Keir Starmer has begun shaping a new foreign policy doctrine that distances the UK from aggressive economic entanglement with China while cautiously repositioning its stance in the Middle East. In early May 2025, Starmer's

OF THE MONTH

THROUGH A TRANSFORMATIVE ERA

government signalled a shift by reviewing Chinese investments in British strategic sectors, especially in telecommunications and AI-based surveillance infrastructure, citing concerns over data sovereignty and national security. Simultaneously, the UK under Starmer has taken a more humanitarian and diplomatic approach to the Gaza conflict, calling for an immediate ceasefire and increased aid to the region.

This marked a departure from previous ambiguous UK positions, aligning more with broader EU sentiments and boosting Britain's moral credibility in international forums. Foreign Secretary David Lammy emphasised a “values-driven” diplomacy, framing the UK as a principled, yet pragmatic, global actor — a tone that resonates strongly with Starmer's vision of rebuilding Britain's soft power on the world stage.

RE-ENGAGING WITH THE EUROPEAN UNION

Starmer's tenure has also seen efforts to recalibrate the UK's relationship with the European Union. On 19 May 2025, he hosted a summit with EU leaders at Lancaster House, resulting in a new EU–UK deal encompassing a defence and security pact, a fisheries agreement, an agrifood agreement, carbon border taxes, and border security measures. The defence and security pact allows UK arms manufacturers to bid for work under the EU's new £150 billion security action for Europe (Safe) defence fund, signalling a move towards closer alignment with European standards to stimulate growth and cooperation.

Despite officially exiting the EU, Britain remains heavily influenced by EU regulations due to its geographic and economic ties, with 46% of its trade conducted with the bloc. Starmer's approach reflects an understanding of the need for ongoing negotiation and collaboration with the EU to ensure economic stability and address shared challenges.

GREEN INVESTMENT PUSH

In a bid to re-establish the UK as a climate leadership hub, Keir Starmer launched an ambitious international green investment strategy in late April 2025. His government announced a £12 billion “Green Partnerships Fund” aimed at co-financing renewable energy projects in the Global South, particularly across sub-Saharan Africa and Southeast Asia.

This move was timed strategically ahead of the upcoming G7 summit, where Starmer is expected to champion a collective Western response to climate financing gaps left by previous administrations. Domestically, he's proposed fast-tracking offshore wind licensing and unveiled a public-private green tech accelerator in Liverpool, aimed at attracting foreign innovation capital. Internationally, his push for a new “Climate Trade Corridor” with Canada and the EU has garnered support, positioning the UK as a linchpin between North American energy tech and European climate policy. These developments reflect Starmer's broader attempt to intertwine climate action with economic diplomacy, elevating his status as not just a national leader but a global influencer of environmental governance.

GLOBAL DIPLOMACY

Prime Minister Keir Starmer's leadership in April and May 2025 demonstrates a commitment to pragmatic governance, balancing domestic policy adjustments with proactive international engagement. His efforts to address internal fiscal challenges, coupled with initiatives to strengthen strategic partnerships with India and re-engage with the European Union, position the UK as a more cooperative and globally engaged nation. As Starmer continues to navigate complex political landscapes, his actions underscore the importance of adaptability and collaboration in addressing both national and international priorities.

NATO'S 2025 SUMMIT AND ITS RELEVANCE IN A MULTILATERAL WORLD

DIPLOMACY

As the NATO summit approaches in June 2025, the relevance of NATO stands at a critical juncture. With multiple global conflicts, a retreating United States, and shifting geopolitical alliances, NATO faces internal fractures and external threats. Its survival now depends on strategic reforms, increased defence commitments by European members, and redefined priorities in a multipolar world shaped by regional blocs, nationalism, and emerging non-Western powers.



**AMBASSADOR JEITENDRA TRIPATHI, IFS (RETD)
FOR NEWS ANALYTICS**

The 2025 NATO summit is scheduled for June 24-25 in the Hague, the Netherlands. This meet is going to be a defining one which will decide the future trajectory of the organisation as it is taking place amid the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war, Israel's conflicts with Palestine and

Lebanon, rising tensions in the South China Sea, and emerging flashpoints like Azerbaijan-Armenia and India-Pakistan. The USA has almost washed its hands not only from the Ukraine war but has also effectively distanced itself from leading the organisation of which it was one of the founder.

five years after the inception of NATO, the USA expanded its influence by creating SEATO in 1954 and helping the UK to create CENTO in 1955. This was responded to by the Soviet Union by establishing the Warsaw Pact in 1954. This was the era of the zenith of the Cold War.

Lebanon, rising tensions in the South China Sea, and emerging flashpoints like Azerbaijan-Armenia and India-Pakistan. The USA has almost washed its hands not only from the Ukraine war but has also effectively distanced itself from leading the organisation of which it was one of the founder.

THE COLD WAR LEGACY

To examine NATO's relevance, we must see how it was formed and its journey so far. After World War II, twelve members of allied forces formed the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) on April, 1949, in Washington, D.C. They were Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, the United Kingdom and the United States. The United States, having emerged almost unscathed from the war, took natural lead of the organisation whose primary objective was to ensure the collective security of the allies against the forces allied to the Soviet Union.

Containment of the growing communist influence in Europe under the Soviet leadership was its Raison d'être. Barely

The graphic is a vertical composition. On the left, the NATO logo (a white compass rose on a blue background) is positioned above the text 'NATO' in white serif font on a black background, which is further above 'OTAN' in white serif font on a black background. On the right, the text 'The Hague La Haye' is written in a bold, dark blue sans-serif font. Below this, the dates '24-25 VI 2025' and the word 'Summit | Sommet' are displayed in a smaller, dark blue sans-serif font. The background of the right side features overlapping circles in shades of blue and orange.

Ironically, the charter of each of the three organisations talked highly about its commitment to uphold the principles mentioned in the UN Charter, but the real purpose was to contain the opposing philosophy from spreading further. Though in view of the changed political situation in many countries in Asia, the SEATO and CENTO were disbanded



in 1977 and 1979, respectively, NATO thrived. At the time of the disintegration of the Soviet Union, NATO membership had gone up to 16. The Warsaw Pact was also formally dissolved in 1991.

NATO's post-Cold War expansion triggered tensions with Russia, culminating in the ongoing Ukraine war, which has exposed limitations in alliance unity and deterrence.

POST-COLD WAR EXPANSION

Now, with no more threat against NATO, the most logical step should have been to dissolve it. But unfortunately, it did not happen! Despite the clear assurances given by the then US Secretary of State James Baker to Russian President Boris Yeltsin, NATO was not only allowed to exist, but it kept on expanding eastwards! Baker famously told Yeltsin, "NATO will not be allowed to expand eastwards even by an inch," but later backtracked. Not only that, the then Secretary General of NATO, Manfred Wörner, also assured in a speech in 1990 that "the fact that we are ready not to place NATO army outside the German territory, the Soviet Union a firm security guarantee," an assurance that proved hollow in the coming years!

Logically, NATO became irrelevant the day the Warsaw Treaty breathed its last, but it kept on expanding towards the east and by February 2022, it landed almost on the doorsteps of Russia in the form of a possible membership of Ukraine to a now 30-strong organisation. Naturally, a miffed off Russia objected to Ukraine's entry into NATO and the latter's refusal to abide by the Minsk Protocol and the

Nice understanding. This resulted in the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, which is still on.

ERODING US LEADERSHIP

Once considered to be invincible, chinks in NATO's strength became visible during the war against Russia. As Ukraine was yet not a member of NATO, the provisions of Article 5 of the NATO charter could not allow its members to rush with all their might to Ukraine's rescue. Short of landing the feet of their armed forces on the Ukrainian territory, all that the NATO forces could do was support Ukraine with arms and ammunition, impose sanctions against Russia and gather support in the UN and other regional institutions, but nothing worked.

Even the USA, having accounted for the biggest war assistance to Ukraine, started feeling the pinch, and the new incumbent in the White House, Donald Trump, clarified that the priorities of his country lay somewhere else and not in Ukraine. This was a shock for the European members of NATO. It came as a wake-up alarm for NATO when speaking in the Munich, Pete Hegseth told directly to the NATO delegates that "the stark strategic realities prevent the USA from being primarily focused on the security of Europe as the US faces consequential threats to our homeland, so we must and we are focusing on security of our borders." In other words, he told Europe to manage its security affairs without any support from the USA, the biggest economic and defence power in NATO, driving the latter's agenda so far.



EMERGING REGIONAL ALTERNATIVES

NATO thus needs a transformation to meet the challenges arising from the USA's reluctance. Three factors are driving this much-needed transformation. Firstly, the geopolitical shift from the unipolarity that resulted from the Cold War I. Many developing and underdeveloped nations are now reluctant to be dragged into Cold War II as they find the small regional groupings more productive. The rise of BRICS, BIMSTEC, ASEAN, etc. is an example of such groups. Secondly, the rise of sovereigntist strategies in many nations, including the USA (America First), has resulted in the loss of interest in the concessional economic policies towards other nations. Thirdly, the recent rise of right-wing nationalism in Europe has indicated that, by and large, the European population



assured NATO in unequivocal terms, “We got the message, you can count on us... We will strive to make Germany, both its military and its infrastructure, the backbone of conventional defence in Europe”. France, too, has promised to increase its defence spending from the current figures of Euro 34 billion (2.48% of GDP) to Euro 67.8 billion by 2029.

NATO’s complete failure in the Russia-Ukraine war has compelled the organisation to review and redefine its priorities, objectives and role in Europe. Though it has been able to delay Russia’s conclusive victory in the war, NATO has not been able to secure membership for Ukraine, a key issue in the war. However, instead of Ukraine, NATO has been able to include Sweden and Finland, two other neighbours of Russia. But the cost at which this inclusion has been achieved is highly disproportionate to the expenditure incurred so far.

doesn’t care about others when it comes to their national interest.

One big challenge that NATO faces is that of adequate funding. Even before the USA indicated its reluctance with NATO, the organisation’s Secretary General Mark Rutte testily warned the members on 13th January this year, “Raise defence budget or start learning Russian”. The budget of NATO for the year 2025 is \$ 1.47 trillion. In 2024, it was \$ 1.85 trillion out of which the USA alone had given \$967 billion, i.e. 3.4% of its GDP. Except for six countries, viz. Poland, Estonia, the USA, Latvia, Greece and Lithuania, other members had paid less than 2.5% of their respective GDP. While the UK plans to achieve the suggested goal of 2.5% of the GDP on defence spending by only 2027, Italy strives to achieve this during the current year. Canada is lagging far behind, as it is yet to reach the threshold of 2%. This is in sharp contrast with Russia spending \$ 149 billion (7.1% of GDP) and China spending \$ 314 billion.

The restructuring of NATO, prompted by Trump’s intention to leave the supreme command of NATO forces, is on the cards. NATO will, therefore, have to regroup itself in view of its defence supplies too. So far, NATO has used to outsource from the USA the manned and unmanned surveillance and reconnaissance aircraft and equipment, which NATO will have to scurry to produce. Secondly, the possible exit of the USA from the organisation will heavily imbalance the nuclear deterrent power of Europe. The few nukes possessed by France and the U.K. are far outnumbered by Russia, which reportedly has more than 6,000 nuclear warheads.

Given the foregoing facts, it is yet to be seen whether NATO, on the sickbed since Trump made his priorities clear, will recuperate and survive or find a place in the pages of history books. The forthcoming NATO meeting this month may be able to give some answers.

The U.S. shift towards isolationism, growing right-wing nationalism, and underfunding among European allies signal an urgent need for NATO’s strategic, structural and leadership redefinition.

REFORM OR REDUNDANCY?

However, all hope is not lost as the new German leadership has shown a robust resolve to come to the rescue of Europe. Speaking at a function in Brussels on 28th April to commemorate the 70th anniversary of German entry into NATO, the German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier

(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.)

MAJOR HIGHLIGHTS

- *NATO, formed in 1949, faces relevance questions in today’s multipolar world.*
- *NATO’s eastward expansion broke promises, triggered the Ukraine war, and exposed strategic, diplomatic flaws.*
- *The U.S. reduces NATO’s role, urging Europe toward defence and security independence.*
- *BRICS and ASEAN rise as alternatives, challenging NATO’s global multilateral dominance directly.*
- *The upcoming 2025 summit may decide NATO’s reform or slide into irrelevance.*

MOSCOW'S GEOPOLITICAL REPOSITIONING AMIDST THE UKRAINE WAR

INSIGHT

Despite the ongoing war in Ukraine and the subsequent wave of international sanctions and Western isolation, Moscow has not backed down from its strategic ambitions on the global stage. On the contrary, Russia is actively repositioning itself as a key player in the emerging global order through a series of diplomatic, economic, and military manoeuvres that reflect a surprising degree of resilience. But can Moscow succeed in reshaping its geopolitical role? And how is it managing to navigate these complex challenges while remaining under Western pressure?



NADIA HALLAK, BEIRUT, LEBANON
ARAB CORRESPONDENT, NEWS ANALYTICS

Since the outbreak of war in February 2022, Russia has been subjected to unprecedented Western sanctions targeting its energy, financial, technology, and transport sectors, as well as asset freezes and travel bans on key elites. In addition, Russia has faced mounting hostility in international forums.

Instead of retreating, however, the Russian leadership has framed these challenges as an opportunity to redefine its

international relationships, away from Western hegemony. Today, Moscow's vision is not merely about responding to sanctions, but about building a new, multipolar world order. This vision aligns with other powers such as China, Iran, Brazil, and several Middle Eastern nations increasingly adopting foreign policies independent of the West. In this context, Russia sees to lead an "anti hegemony" coalition in a rapidly transforming global landscape.



ASIA AS A STRATEGIC ALTERNATIVE

One of Moscow's key strategies in repositioning itself has been its pivot to the East, particularly toward China and Central Asia. The Russia-China relationship is at an all-time high, with trade between the two reaching record levels, especially in the fields of energy and technology. The use of the Yuan and Ruble in bilateral trade has increased significantly, signalling an attempt to bypass the dollar's dominance.



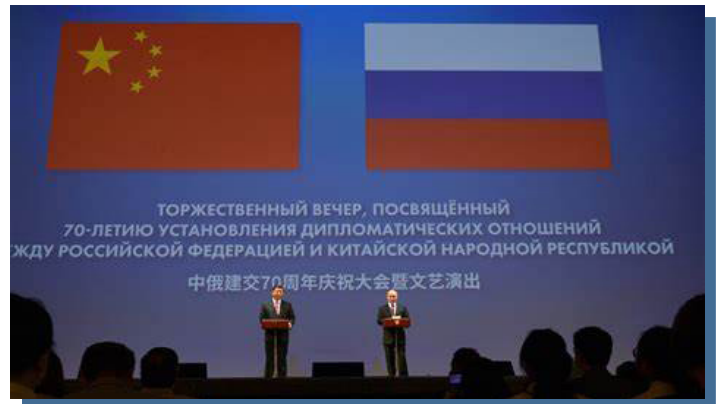
Although underlying tensions persist, their shared interest in weakening Western influence makes the partnership pragmatic. Joint long-term projects in artificial intelligence, nuclear energy, and infrastructure reflect deepening ties.

Meanwhile, Central Asian nations such as Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan have played a pivotal role in supporting Moscow through security and trade cooperation, particularly within the framework of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), which has become a platform for Russian-Chinese alignment with regional players. Russia recognizes that its regional security passes through these states, and thus works to deepen ties with them as its first line of defence against Western encroachment.

In Africa, Russia's rise is increasingly visible through the security footprint of private military contractors such as Wagner Group, which has played a central role in Mali, the Central African Republic, Sudan, and Niger. Exploiting natural resources and security vacuums, Russia seeks to expand its geopolitical presence while circumventing Western pressure, often positioning itself as an alternative to declining French influence.

In 2023, Moscow hosted the “Russia–Africa Summit” in St. Petersburg, where dozens of African leaders gathered to establish new partnerships in grain supply, nuclear energy, and military assistance. The summit was a bold declaration of Russia’s intention to establish a comprehensive presence across Africa.

This push is also evident in growing arms exports to the continent, with Russian weapons appealing to governments seeking deals without Western political conditions. While accused of using Wagner as a tool of influence, Moscow presents these actors as allies in counterterrorism efforts.



FOR SURVIVAL OR INFLUENCE?

Beyond its military and diplomatic efforts, Russia leverages energy as a strategic tool to reassert its place on the global

Despite sanctions and global pressure, Russia is strengthening ties with China, Central Asia, and the Global South to reclaim influence and challenge Western-led global structures.

THE GLOBAL SOUTH

In the Middle East, Russia has remained a key player despite its engagement in Ukraine. It continues to play a dominant role in Syria, maintaining a permanent military presence at the Hmeimim airbase and the naval facility in Tartus. In Libya, it preserves open channels with all parties, offering it significant leverage in North Africa.

Russia also maintains a delicate balance in its relations with both Iran and Israel, navigating a complex network of interests involving Iran’s nuclear program, security in southern Syria, and interactions with Hezbollah and Turkey. This diplomatic balancing act grants Moscow considerable influence in a region marked by fluid alliances.

stage. Through its coordination with Saudi Arabia and other OPEC+ members, Russia continues to wield substantial influence over global oil markets. As exports to Europe decline, trade with China, India, and Southeast Asia has surged.

Moscow increasingly relies on domestic refining and indirect exports to circumvent Western-imposed price caps. It is also expanding its gas infrastructure eastward, including the Power of Siberia 2 pipeline, which will connect Russian gas to China via Mongolia.

Thus, energy is no longer just a revenue source, it is a geopolitical instrument being used to realign international relations to serve Russian interests.

THE SOFT POWER

In addition to its hard power tools, Russia uses soft power to reshape its global image. Media outlets like RT and Sputnik broadcast in multiple languages to deliver Russia's narrative to audiences across Africa, Asia, and Latin America.



Moscow also invests in education and cultural exchange programs, offering scholarships and academic cooperation with Russian universities. Through religious and cultural initiatives, it seeks to reinforce its presence in areas it considers historically within its sphere of influence.

In the digital arena, Russia continues cyber operations aimed at influencing public opinion and political discourse, particularly during elections and major crises. According to Western reports, Moscow treats cyberspace as a battlefield deserving constant investment and strategic focus.

By leveraging energy, arms, media, and alternative institutions like BRICS, Russia is actively promoting a multipolar world while enduring major economic and political consequences.

MOSCOW AND ALTERNATIVE INSTITUTIONS

Russia, backed by China and many Global South capitals, is pushing to reshape a global order free of Western dominance. This is evident in its support for the BRICS bloc, which has recently expanded to include countries like Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Iran. Moscow also promotes the use of local currencies in trade and has launched an alternative to the SWIFT payment system, known as SPFS.

Russia appeals to smaller and developing nations with rhetoric around “international justice” and “reforming global governance”—a message that resonates with countries marginalized by current institutions. Moscow capitalizes on this momentum to deepen its political and economic alliances.

Simultaneously, it promotes alternative institutional frameworks. It supports the BRICS New Development Bank, encourages wider adoption of the Yuan and Ruble in trade, and calls for a restructured UN Security Council that reflects new global balances.

Russia's ambition goes beyond survival—it aims to forge a new balance of power alongside China and emerging regional powers such as India and Turkey. While ambitious, this vision reflects Moscow's deep reading of international shifts and its belief that the post-Ukraine world will not return to the status quo.

RUSSIA IS BACK?

Russia's geopolitical repositioning amid the war is not accidental—it stems from a multi-dimensional strategy that leverages alliances, resources, and information warfare, but also comes with significant economic and military costs. Moscow is navigating a diplomatic minefield, but so far, it has managed to maintain its influence in the evolving global equation.

As international power structures continue to shift, the ultimate question remains: Can Russia successfully realise its vision of a multipolar world? Or will the price of confrontation

undermine its long-term capacity? The answer depends on the unfolding events, but one thing is certain: Moscow is not out of the game. In fact, it's back—rewriting the rules.

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

MAJOR HIGHLIGHTS

- *Russia is focusing on the East, especially toward China and Central Asia.*
- *The Global South is central to Moscow's new foreign policy.*
- *Russia wields energy powerfully, using OPEC+, pipelines, and currencies to evade sanctions.*
- *Russia boosts soft power via media, education, and cyber tools to influence narratives.*
- *Moscow supports BRICS+, local currencies, and alternatives to challenge Western-dominated global governance.*

THANK YOU

News Analytics expresses its deep gratitude to the Honourable Ambassadors, Honourable High Commissioners and senior Members of Parliament for offering us their valuable insight into important developing geopolitical dynamics and global challenges. We are truly honoured and privileged to have interacted with each one of you during the past year.



H.E. Mateja Vodeb Ghosh, Ambassador of the Republic of Slovenia to India.

Interview carried in the June 2024 edition.



H.E. Ms. Ina Hagniningtyas Krisnamurthi, Ambassador of the Republic of Indonesia to India.

Interview carried in the August 2024 edition.



H.E. Mr. Askar Beshimov, Ambassador of the Kyrgyz Republic to India.

Interview carried in the September 2024 edition.



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

Interview carried in the October 2024 edition.



**Mr. Ashraf Rifi
Member of Parliament,
Lebanon.**

Interview carried in the February 2025 edition.



H.E. Mariano Agustín Caucino, Ambassador of the Argentine Republic to India.

Interview carried in the May 2025 edition

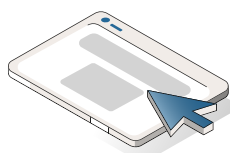
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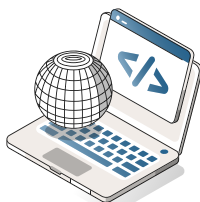
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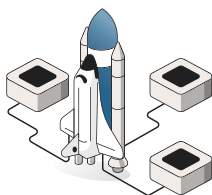
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G-7: NOT EVEN FIGHTING IRRELEVANCE

COUNTERVIEW

Once a powerhouse forum for shaping global economic and security policy, the G7 now seems to operate in a vacuum of declining relevance. Formed during the Cold War to address oil shocks and economic crises, it now grapples with fragmented internal priorities and the exclusion of emerging powers. As it meets from 13-15 June 2025, in Canada, it would be staring at shifts in global influence toward the G20 and BRICS, the G7 appears increasingly outdated, trapped in its elitist legacy and symbolic diplomacy.



AMBASSADOR (DR.) DEEPAK VOHRA, IFS (RETD)
FOR NEWS ANALYTICS

The Group of Seven of the world's seven largest so-called "advanced" economies, which dominate global trade and the international financial system, should be a forum to coordinate global policy. It meets annually to discuss issues such as global economic governance, international security, and energy policy. While its small and relatively homogenous membership promotes collective decision-making, it often lacks follow-through and excludes important global powers.

Unlike the United Nations or the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the G7 is not a formal institution with a charter and a secretariat.

At present, we see a "fly-in, fly-out" nature of the G7, with no focus on practical cooperation but on ideological alignment with much "haggling over detailed, but often anodyne, communiqués". The G7 has been distracted by Ukraine



when it should have been responding to China's growing ambitions. There are reportedly divisions within the group over how to respond to China, as some European countries are leery of jeopardizing commercial ties with the world's second-largest economy.



RISE OF ALTERNATIVES

People are increasingly questioning the group's relevance due to internal divisions and the rise of alternative, more representative institutions such as the G20. That G-7 still exists suggests a certain frozen mindset from the 1960s, that 7 rich nations can determine the fate of the other 200.

In addition to its internal divisions, external dynamics have chipped away at the G7's global influence. The G7, in its current shape, no longer has a reason to exist. Of late, the prestige and influence of the Group of Twenty (G 21), from nineteen of the world's largest countries and the African Union, EU, has surpassed that of the G7. G-20 member states represent about 80% of global GDP and three-fifths of the world's population. Developing economies have made huge gains, in a world economy increasingly reliant on growth in less wealthy nations.

Emerging powers, including Brazil, China, India, Mexico, and South Africa, whose absence from the G7 was often noted, all belong to the G20. Then there is BRICS, which is admitting new members, while the G7 is a closed club.

None of today's high-level summitry occurs in the United Nations (UN), an indication that the UN is past its shelf life. In 2025, Ukraine and its devastation continue to be the flavour of the year, as is Israel and Gaza.

The India-Pakistan flareup sparked by a horrendous terror attack in Kashmir briefly grabbed international headlines. America is the G7 big boy, and President Donald Trump's made farcical claims about having prevented World War III by bullying both India and Pakistan to back off or face trade sanctions. Pakistan and its fathering of international terror were conveniently forgotten.

In mid-May 2025, Trump flew to Saudi Arabia, his first

overseas trip in his second term, and, with the Saudi Crown Prince watching, hugged Syria's self-appointed terrorist President, transforming the fellow with a USD 10 mn bounty on his head into Trump's newest "handsome" favourite. He also went to the UAE and Qatar, and signed billion-dollar defence deals with them. He told Iran that he loved them, after threatening not too long ago to annihilate them.

Trump even decided to do a deal with America's arch-enemy, China, with its aggressiveness in protecting what it believes are its core interests, even when they overlap with other countries' fundamental interests. Where does this leave America's faithful sidekick, Europe, four of whose members are also in the G7? In international headlines, G7 is all but forgotten, as is the EU.

The G7 struggles to maintain unity, often distracted by crises like Ukraine. Its ideological posturing lacks the practical impact seen in larger, more inclusive forums.

G7 VS. GLOBAL SOUTH

India, as the accepted voice of the South, wants the world to retain its focus on vital global issues that predate and will postdate the present crises.

So, what is happening? Where does the G-7 fit into the global churn? It does not. It is an anachronism, a relic of the Cold War, a dinosaur of arrogance, whose expiry date has arrived. The United States, France, Italy, Japan, the UK, and West Germany formed the Group of Six in 1975 to provide a venue for non-communist powers to address pressing economic concerns, which included the oil shock, inflation and a recession sparked by the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) oil embargo.



Canada begged and was allowed to join the following year, and Cold War politics invariably entered the group's agenda. Its aggregate GDP then represented three-quarters of the world's, it's now less than a third.

Russia was invited in 1991 (it joined later before being kicked out), India and China were guests in 2003 when the China romance was in full swing. On China, the G7 is harsh, and keeps expressing serious concern about the situation in the East and South China seas and opposing any unilateral attempts to change the status quo by force or coercion. It tries to roil Beijing by talking of human rights in Tibet, Xinjiang, and Hong Kong. China scoffs and laughs.



In 2014, Russia was suspended and China was excluded, but India remained on the guest list. Since its global economic clout has declined, the G7 is a grouping in search of a cause. It has imposed coordinated sanctions on Russia in response to its war in Ukraine, including a cap on the price of Russian oil and launched a major global infrastructure program to counter China's Belt and Road Initiative. Net result = minus zero.

The G7's future has been challenged by continued tensions with Russia and, increasingly, China, as well as by internal disagreements over trade and climate policies. Donald Trump, during his first term, wanted to expand the G7 by including India, South Korea, and Australia. Then he lost interest.

INDIA'S VIEW OF THE G7

It borders on disinterest. The 'seven jokers' will meet next month, enjoy great meals, talk shop, issue anodyne statements on peace and dialogue, and then go home, secure in the fantasy that they have saved the world. Indian PM, Mr. Narendra Modi is skipping the June 2025 G-7 Summit in Canada - a clear indication that attending it brings no benefit, skipping it causes no loss. Donald Trump, has been seen to prefer bilateral "deals" to plurilateral arrangements. What if America decides to quit the G7, as its maverick President might well do, and the United Nations and NATO? They will all die. Despite all the predictions about its imminent demise, America remains the world's numero uno nation with unmatched economic, military, and knowledge power. Good bye G-7, rest in turmoil.



*(Ambassador Deepak Vohra, IFS (Retd), is a former Ambassador to Armenia, Sudan, and Poland. He was also a special Advisor to the Government of South Sudan. The views expressed are of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of **The News Analytics Journal**.)*

Donald Trump's erratic diplomacy and preference for bilateral deals have undercut multilateral cooperation, even within the G7. His second term brings further unpredictability and questions the G7's purpose.

MAJOR HIGHLIGHTS

- *G7, a Cold War relic, now holds under one-third of global GDP.*
- *Emerging powers and G20 reshape global order, ensuring broader, more effective representation.*
- *Divisions over China and Russia have fractured G7 unity, exposing alliance vulnerabilities.*
- *India and Global South see G7 as elitist, outdated, offering little incentive.*
- *Trump's unilateral actions and erratic diplomacy strain alliances, jeopardizing G7's long-term unity.*



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PRETORIA REJECTS MUSK'S 'WHITE GENOCIDE' CLAIMS

TIMEPIECE

Elon Musk stirred global controversy by amplifying the debunked “white genocide” myth in South Africa, drawing condemnation from President Cyril Ramaphosa and other officials. Musk, born in apartheid-era Pretoria, echoed far-right rhetoric on his platform X, sparking concerns about digital disinformation, foreign influence and racial narrative manipulation. This episode has reignited debates on narrative sovereignty, misinformation, and the role of global tech elites in shaping post-colonial discourse.



JUSTUS NAM, NAIROBI, KENYA
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In early April 2025, a digital provocation by Elon Musk reignited controversy over South Africa’s post-apartheid socio-political landscape. The billionaire entrepreneur and owner of X (formerly Twitter), who was born in South Africa, publicly echoed far-right rhetoric by endorsing the discredited notion of a “white genocide” occurring in his country of birth.

Musk’s remarks, prompted by a video of a political rally

led by the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF), drew swift condemnation from the South African government, with President Cyril Ramaphosa dismissing the claims as a “completely false narrative.” This episode highlights three major dynamics at play: the contested narrative of race and crime in South Africa, the role of global platforms and elite influence in distorting post-colonial realities, and how states like South Africa might more effectively respond to digital disinformation.



THE DANGEROUS MYTH OF “WHITE GENOCIDE”

The "white genocide" narrative is neither new nor novel. It has circulated for decades in far-right ecosystems across the United States, Australia, and parts of Europe, alleging a systemic campaign of violence against white South Africans, particularly farmers. Despite its persistence, it has been thoroughly debunked by both South African institutions and independent researchers.



Data from the South African Police Service (SAPS), Stats SA, and organisations like Africa Check confirm that farm killings, while a serious issue, constitute a small fraction of overall violent crime and are not racially targeted. Rather, South Africa's crime landscape is primarily shaped by deep-seated socio-economic inequalities, a legacy of apartheid that continues to affect all demographic groups. Yet it is precisely in the space between fear and fact that sensationalist narratives thrive.

GLOBAL MISINFORMATION ECOSYSTEM

Musk's amplification of this myth via X, a platform now reaching over 180 million users, lends legitimacy to a baseless claim. His intervention mirrored similar alarmist commentaries by figures such as Tucker Carlson and Steve Bannon, who have used the South African case to promote broader "Great Replacement" conspiracies. These theories, which have inspired violent acts in the United States and elsewhere, misrepresent South Africa while inciting real-world harm.

While Musk's background, growing up in apartheid-era Pretoria, gives his comments a certain biographical intrigue, it also underscores their disconnection from contemporary realities. His outsider status, combined with anecdotal narratives common in some South African expatriate circles, fuels a tendency to generalise isolated incidents into sweeping civilizational critiques.

Critics, including South African author Sizwe Mpofu-Walsh, have highlighted how such interventions distort national dialogue and perpetuate stereotypes. The South African government's response was unequivocal. Former Minister of International Relations, Naledi Pandor, condemned Musk's remarks as reckless and inflammatory, accusing him of stoking racial divisions from afar.

Pretoria has long been sensitive to external attempts to instrumentalise its domestic challenges for ideological or geopolitical ends. The timing of Musk's comments, coinciding with the expulsion of South Africa's ambassador to the United States, Ebrahim Rasool, in March 2025, reinforced a climate of heightened diplomatic strain.

RACE AND NARRATIVE SOVEREIGNTY

At the heart of this episode lies a deeper struggle over narrative sovereignty. For many South Africans, Musk's intervention resurrected colonial-era habits of foreign elites pronouncing upon African realities with little regard for nuance or local agency.

A clearer historical parallel might be drawn to the Cold War-era propaganda about decolonised African states, where Western media often painted newly independent nations as chaotic and incapable of self-rule. Musk's modern iteration of this narrative, delivered through digital media, reflects a persistent asymmetry in global information power.

Reactions among white South Africans were not monolithic. While some resonated with Musk's critique out of personal fear or political disillusionment, others recognised the danger of framing security concerns within a racially charged, conspiratorial lens.

The land reform debate adds complexity to this landscape. While the African National Congress (ANC) has long championed land redistribution to address historical injustices, the pace and process have been slow and heavily



Elon Musk's remarks on "white genocide" echoed far-right conspiracies, drawing backlash from South Africa for distorting realities and worsening international diplomatic tensions.

bureaucratic. Rhetoric such as "expropriation without compensation" has alarmed some communities, yet actual policy remains far less radical than critics allege.

This disconnect between political discourse and institutional action creates fertile ground for misinformation. Musk's platform, X, plays a central role in this dynamic. Since acquiring it, Musk has promoted an absolutist vision of free speech, dismantling many of its moderation mechanisms.



This has created a permissive environment for misinformation, hate speech, and ideological extremism. His amplification of the "white genocide" myth without evidence illustrates how platforms can be weaponised to distort national narratives.

What is ultimately at stake is not simply a correction of factual errors, but the right of post-colonial states to define their realities. South Africa's rejection of Musk's claims is not a denial of the country's profound challenges—rural crime, corruption, unemployment, and racial inequality remain pressing—but a refusal to let those challenges be reframed through ideological hysteria.

Effective responses must centre on inclusive dialogue, empirical analysis, and institutional reform. To counter digital disinformation, South Africa and other similarly positioned states could invest in robust public diplomacy strategies, promote media literacy campaigns, and collaborate with civil society to fact-check and counter harmful narratives in real time. Regional coordination through platforms such as the African Union could also amplify these efforts, offering a collective voice against distortive portrayals.

This controversy must also be situated within the wider context of international political economy and global digital culture. The weaponisation of domestic crises in Global South nations has increasingly become a feature of Western populist movements, which often depict post-colonial states as cautionary tales.

These narratives serve ideological functions: justifying restrictive immigration policies, fuelling racialised anxieties, and reinforcing Western civilisational exceptionalism. Musk's intervention, while ostensibly spontaneous, thus fits into a broader epistemological framework that privileges external, often racialised, constructions of order and disorder.

The asymmetry in communicative power between global tech elites and national governments exacerbates this imbalance. Where state actors are bound by diplomacy and institutional accountability, figures like Musk operate in the amorphous arena of platform capitalism, where influence is vast, regulation is minimal, and accountability is elusive.

THE GLOBAL DIGITAL ARENA

This new form of digital neo-imperialism allows Global North elites to shape perceptions of Global South realities with disproportionate impact. The fact that Musk's comments received more global attention than the official rebuttals by South African authorities underscores this point. The resurgence of the "white genocide" trope also reflects shifting global racial imaginaries. Amid rising awareness of structural racism and historical injustice, some reactionary voices now portray white populations, particularly minorities in non-Western contexts, as victims of reverse discrimination. This rhetorical inversion seeks to delegitimise anti-racist and redistributive efforts by framing them as threats. South Africa's complex transition from apartheid to democratic pluralism is thus reduced to a caricature of racial retribution.

There are regional implications too. As a member of BRICS and a leading voice within the African Union, South Africa plays a significant role in shaping alternative models of governance and reconciliation. If its domestic narrative is continually undermined by unverified claims, it risks damaging its international legitimacy and reinforcing colonial tropes of African disorder.

The role of diasporic identity also warrants reflection. Musk's position as a South African expatriate illustrates how diasporic perspectives, especially those shaped



Musk's comments spotlight unequal narrative power, reviving colonial tropes and enabling misinformation that undermines South Africa's right to self-representation in a digital age.



by privilege, can romanticise the past and misinterpret the present. Such perspectives gain outsized influence when voiced from platforms of global power, risking what some have termed a "nostalgia of the privileged."

POLICY & THE SOFT POWER

South Africa's response to this episode must be twofold. First, it should invest in independent journalism, civic education, and strategic communications to assert control over its narrative. Second, it must recalibrate its global engagement to confront distortive influences with transparency, data, and moral clarity. Soft power today is not only exercised through diplomacy but also through the contestation of meaning in digital spaces. The controversy catalysed by Musk's remarks ultimately reveals that the post-apartheid

project remains vulnerable to both internal contradictions and external misrepresentations. While inequality, political malaise, and historical legacies continue to challenge the nation, its path forward must be defined by South Africans themselves.

The integrity of this process cannot be left hostage to ideologues or billionaires seeking cultural leverage. The task ahead is not only to build a more just and inclusive society, but also to defend the frameworks through which that society understands and narrates itself.

(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.)

MAJOR HIGHLIGHTS

- "White Genocide" is a debunked far-right myth; data disproves racially targeted attacks.
- Musk spreads misinformation on X, showing tech elites' reckless global influence today.
- South Africa defends narrative sovereignty, rejecting Musk's claims to shape its identity.
- Digital neo-imperialism misrepresents Global South, echoing colonial portrayals by external influencers.
- South Africa should boost media literacy, support journalism, and strengthen regional narrative resilience.

COMMENT OF THE MONTH



Bill Roberts commenting on News Analytics Defence & Diplomacy Forum post

JD Vance: Waltz Role Shifted Due To UN Suitability.

|| Due to, they don't know what they're doing and either does their boss! 🤔 🇺🇸

CURTAIN RAISER

IGF 2025: GLOBAL DIGITAL FUTURE UNDER THE LENS

As the world witnesses the rapidly evolving digital ecosystem, the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) 2025 is set to provide a pivotal platform for dialogue and direction. Hosted by the United Nations, this year's meeting will be held in Norway from June 23 to 27, drawing together stakeholders from across the globe to deliberate on pressing internet governance issues. The forum promises to chart a meaningful course for the world's internet future, from child protection in the digital age to creating inclusive digital policies.

Held annually, the IGF brings together governments, private sector representatives, civil society actors, technical experts, and the academic community to openly discuss the future of the internet. Unlike decision-making bodies, the IGF does not produce binding outcomes. Instead, it fosters critical conversations that shape policies, guidelines, and collaborative efforts at national, regional, and global levels. With digital transformation touching every aspect of life — from governance and commerce to culture and education — the stakes of this dialogue have never been higher.



Image Courtesy norway.no

A TIMELY GATHERING

IGF 2025 arrives at a time when the internet, once heralded as a tool of global empowerment, is under scrutiny for its potential harms. The tension between openness and control, innovation and regulation, and freedom of expression versus misinformation continues to dominate discussions.

The core themes of this year's forum reflect this delicate balance. Chief among them is child protection in digital environments — an issue gaining urgency as children's lives increasingly unfold online. From social media exposure and digital learning platforms to gaming and AI-powered content, the risks to young users have multiplied. At IGF 2025, stakeholders will explore frameworks for safeguarding children's rights online, ensuring digital environments are not only accessible but also safe and empowering for minors.

Also on the agenda are comprehensive digital policies aimed at inclusivity, fairness, and resilience. As the global digital divide persists, the IGF will spotlight policy blueprints that promote universal access to internet infrastructure, enhance digital literacy, and encourage responsible innovation. With many low-income and developing nations struggling to bridge the technology gap, the emphasis will be on collaborative models that include marginalised voices and recognise local challenges.

NORWAY: A SYMBOLIC HOST

Norway, the host nation for IGF 2025, brings its own significance to the forum. Ranked consistently among the most digitally advanced countries, Norway has made noteworthy progress in e-governance, cyber ethics, and public

data access. Its commitment to democratic principles and human rights makes it a fitting venue for a discussion rooted in multistakeholder model.

The event will be hosted in Oslo, a city that exemplifies the intersection of innovation and human-centred governance. Norwegian officials have expressed their hope that the forum will serve as a launchpad for more inclusive internet governance, especially at a time when global cooperation feels increasingly fragile.

MULTISTAKEHOLDER MODEL

One of the IGF's most distinguishing features is its multistakeholder approach. Unlike traditional conferences dominated by governments or corporations, the IGF provides a rare, level-playing field. At IGF 2025, panel discussions, workshops, and town hall-style meetings will involve everyone from tech CEOs and startup founders to NGO leaders and youth activists. The intention is to facilitate mutual learning and co-creation, acknowledging that no single actor owns the internet.

Sessions are expected to focus on data governance, artificial intelligence ethics, cybersecurity, platform accountability, and the evolving regulatory landscape. In the age of digital monopolies and algorithmic opacity, these conversations will likely emphasise the need for transparency, human rights considerations, and public accountability in tech policy.

Notably, the forum will feature a special track on regional voices and indigenous perspectives, ensuring that global policies reflect diverse digital realities. Digital sovereignty, especially in the context of the Global South, will be a focal point — a timely inclusion as geopolitical tensions and digital nationalism rise.

YOUTH ENGAGEMENT AND THE FUTURE OF GOVERNANCE



Image Courtesy LinkedIn

Another highlight of IGF 2025 is the Youth IGF Initiative, a dedicated space for young leaders and digital natives. Recognising that the youth are not just users but also architects of tomorrow's internet, this initiative will allow emerging voices to participate in policymaking simulations, innovation showcases, and mentorship dialogues. With digital issues increasingly intersecting with climate activism, education reform, and social justice, the energy and insights of young participants are expected to add a dynamic edge to the forum.

WHAT LIES AHEAD?

Although the IGF is not a rule-making body, its influence on digital policy frameworks is considerable. Recommendations and insights from past IGF meetings have shaped national cybersecurity strategies, platform governance protocols, and regional cooperation models. The outcomes of IGF 2025 are expected to ripple into upcoming global negotiations, including the Global Digital Compact set to be adopted at the UN Summit of the Future.

The forum also serves as a thermometer for global digital trust. As misinformation, surveillance, and algorithmic bias continue to erode public confidence, IGF 2025 offers a chance to rebuild trust through transparency, inclusiveness, and shared vision.

With five days of packed sessions, expert panels, networking events, and side meetings, the Internet Governance Forum 2025 will be more than a conference — it will be a convergence of ideas, challenges, and ambitions for our interconnected future. In Norway's digital-friendly setting, global stakeholders will come together not only to discuss the digital age but to shape its values, infrastructure, and priorities.

As the countdown to June 23 begins, all eyes are on Oslo, where the next chapter in internet governance will be written, discussed, and, hopefully, co-authored by the world.

INDIA-US TRADE DEAL AND ITS LARGER IMPACT

GEOECONOMICS

The India-US trade deal represents a pivotal step in strengthening one of the world's most significant bilateral partnerships. With trade crossing \$200 billion in 2023, both democracies seek to solidify their economic ties through a structured agreement. While tariff and regulatory challenges persist, the proposed deal carries immense potential—not just economically, but geopolitically—positioning India and the US as key allies in a rapidly evolving global order.



**LT CDR NITIKA RAI (RETD), FORMER INDIAN NAVY OFFICER
SENIOR CONSULTANT ERNST & YOUNG
FOR NEWS ANALYTICS**

India and the United States—two of the world's largest democracies—have witnessed a dynamic evolution in their bilateral relations over the past two decades. Once mired in ideological differences during the Cold War, the two countries have gradually forged a strong strategic partnership based on mutual economic interests, defence cooperation, and shared values. One of the cornerstones of this relationship is trade, which has expanded considerably over the years. However, efforts to finalise a comprehensive trade deal have faced

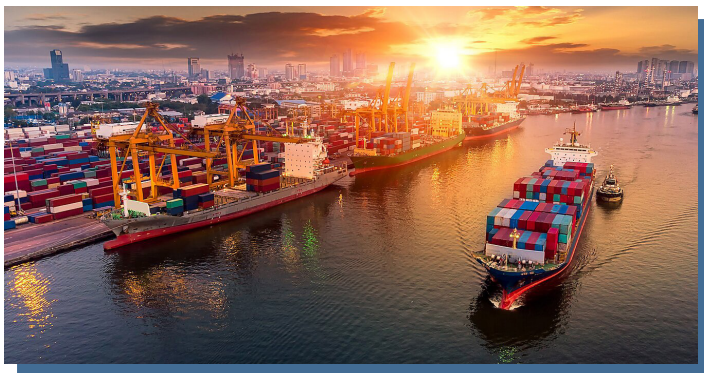
several roadblocks due to tariff disagreements, intellectual property rights concerns, and regulatory barriers. Despite these challenges, progress towards a trade agreement between India and the US is crucial not just for economic reasons but also for its broader geopolitical ramifications.

INDIA-US TRADE RELATIONS

Trade relations between India and the US have grown significantly since the liberalisation of the Indian economy



in 1991. From a modest \$5.6 billion in 1990, bilateral trade reached nearly \$200 billion in 2023, making the US India's largest trading partner. This economic relationship spans goods and services, investments, and technology exchanges. Despite this robust trade volume, the absence of a free trade agreement or even a limited trade pact has long been seen as a gap in bilateral ties. Over the past decade, both countries have engaged in negotiations to resolve key trade disputes and move towards a more structured agreement. The issues have ranged from India's high tariffs on agricultural and tech products to US concerns over market access and data localisation policies. Several attempts to finalise a "mini trade deal" during the Trump and Biden administrations have faltered, but both sides remain committed to deepening economic ties.



STRENGTHENING TIES

The proposed India-U.S. trade deal had garnered significant attention during U.S. Vice President JD Vance's recent visit to India from April 21 to 24, 2025. This visit underscored the deepening bilateral ties between the two nations, with discussions focusing on enhancing trade relations, defence cooperation, energy partnerships, and strategic technological collaborations.

During his visit, Vice President Vance and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi hailed the "significant progress" in negotiations for a mutually beneficial India-U.S. Bilateral Trade Agreement. The agreement aims to address various trade barriers and facilitate smoother exchanges between the two countries. India has proposed eliminating 100% of its tariffs on U.S. goods, including agricultural products like bourbon whiskey, almonds, cranberries, and lentils. In return, the U.S. is expected to reduce tariffs on Indian exports such as steel, aluminium and certain agricultural items. This reciprocal tariff reduction is anticipated to boost bilateral trade, which currently stands at approximately \$191 billion, with a target to reach \$500 billion by 2030.

Energy cooperation emerged as a central theme during Vice President Vance's discussions with Indian leaders. The U.S. expressed interest in ramping up energy exports to India,

emphasising the potential benefits of affordable and reliable energy sources for India's growing industrial needs. The amendment of India's Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage Act was highlighted as a significant step toward enabling U.S. companies to export nuclear reactors to India. Additionally, the U.S. encouraged India to explore its offshore natural gas reserves and critical mineral supplies, with the aim of fostering energy co-production and reducing dependence on unfair competitors.

The defence sector also featured prominently in the discussions between Vice President Vance and Prime Minister Modi. The U.S. offered to sell advanced defence equipment, including Javelin missiles and Stryker Infantry Combat Vehicles (ICVs). These ICVs are known for their speed, mobility, and flexibility, making them well-suited for urban warfare and rapid response scenarios. Furthermore, the two leaders explored avenues for enhanced cooperation in strategic technologies, aiming to bolster India's defence capabilities and technological prowess. This collaboration is seen as a step toward aligning the defence strategies of both nations and ensuring regional stability.

ADDRESSING TRADE BARRIERS

In addition to tariff reductions, both nations are actively working to remove bureaucratic barriers affecting key commodities like apples, shrimp, and alcoholic beverages. Efforts are underway to streamline customs procedures and import-export policies to facilitate smoother bilateral trade. These measures are expected to benefit exporters and importers on both sides, enhancing economic collaboration in the agriculture and seafood sectors.

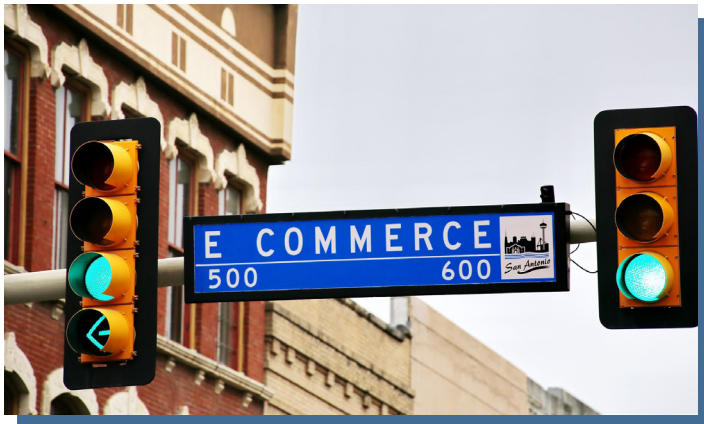
The positive developments in trade negotiations have had a favourable impact on investor sentiment. Following President Trump's comments suggesting India's proposal for a zero-tariff trade deal, Indian equity markets experienced a surge. The optimism is attributed to the anticipated benefits of the trade agreement, including increased foreign investment and enhanced economic growth prospects.



A potential trade deal would address tariffs, digital trade, IPR, and services, fostering economic growth while promoting innovation, investment, and sustainable development.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE TRADE DEAL

Beyond economic benefits, an India–US trade agreement carries significant geopolitical weight. The implications of such a deal would be felt across several domains.



Countering China’s Influence in Asia: A deeper trade partnership between India and the US directly supports the larger Indo-Pacific strategy aimed at balancing China’s rising dominance. As China expands its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and asserts itself aggressively in the South China Sea and along the Line of Actual Control (LAC), the US sees India as a critical counterweight. Strengthening economic ties makes India less dependent on Chinese imports and supply chains, while enhancing the US presence in South Asia.

Moreover, an India–US trade deal would be a powerful signal to other regional powers, encouraging them to reduce economic reliance on China and align more closely with the Indo-Pacific coalition that includes Japan, Australia, and the US (i.e., the Quad).

Reinforcing the Rules-Based International Order: Both India and the US advocate for a rules-based international system, particularly in trade. A bilateral agreement would showcase the ability of democracies to collaborate on complex economic issues while upholding transparency and fairness. This contrasts sharply with China’s state-led economic model and opaque trade practices. By setting high standards in labour rights, environmental regulations, and digital governance, the India–US trade deal could set a precedent for future regional and multilateral agreements.

Strengthening the Quad Alliance: Economic cooperation is a vital pillar of the Quad—a strategic forum comprising India, the US, Japan, and Australia. While the Quad has largely focused on security and vaccine diplomacy, adding a robust economic component, starting with an India–US trade deal, would strengthen the grouping. It could also pave the way for a larger Indo-Pacific economic framework involving multiple Quad and ASEAN nations.

Boosting India’s Global Standing: For India, securing a major trade deal with the world’s largest economy would boost its global profile and economic credibility. It would signal to global investors that India is open for business and capable of entering high-standard trade agreements. This could attract greater FDI, strengthen India’s manufacturing base under “Make in India,” and support ambitions to become a global supply chain hub.

Moreover, as India takes on a larger role in multilateral forums like the G20 and BRICS, a trade deal with the US would give it greater leverage in shaping global economic governance.

Domestic Reforms and Economic Modernisation in India: To meet the standards expected in a trade deal with the US, India may need to undertake key structural reforms, such as improving labour laws, enhancing IPR protection, and easing regulatory bottlenecks. These changes would not only satisfy trade obligations but also improve India’s overall ease of doing business and global competitiveness.

Impact on Defence and Strategic Cooperation: Though not directly tied to trade, economic agreements often pave the way for deeper defence cooperation. The US is already a major defence partner of India, with increasing joint exercises, arms sales, and technology transfers. A stable economic foundation would reinforce mutual trust and create more avenues for collaboration in high-tech sectors such as aerospace, cybersecurity, and artificial intelligence.

Energy Security and Climate Cooperation: Energy trade is another crucial area where both nations stand to benefit. The US is a key supplier of LNG and crude oil to India, helping it diversify away from Middle Eastern and Russian



sources. A formalised trade agreement could streamline energy trade, reduce costs, and support India’s transition to cleaner fuels. It could also foster cooperation on climate technology, including green hydrogen, solar energy, and electric vehicles.

Geopolitically, the agreement counters China’s influence, strengthens the Quad, and boosts India’s global profile through strategic and economic cooperation with the United States.



CHALLENGES AND ROADBLOCKS

Despite the strategic rationale, several hurdles remain in concluding a comprehensive trade deal. Both countries face domestic pressures from industries wary of foreign competition. Indian farmers and small businesses are especially sensitive to liberalisation. Divergent approaches to digital privacy, pharmaceuticals, and agricultural standards pose significant barriers.

While both countries are aligned on many fronts, India continues to pursue strategic autonomy, including maintaining ties with Russia and avoiding formal military alliances, which occasionally causes friction with US expectations.

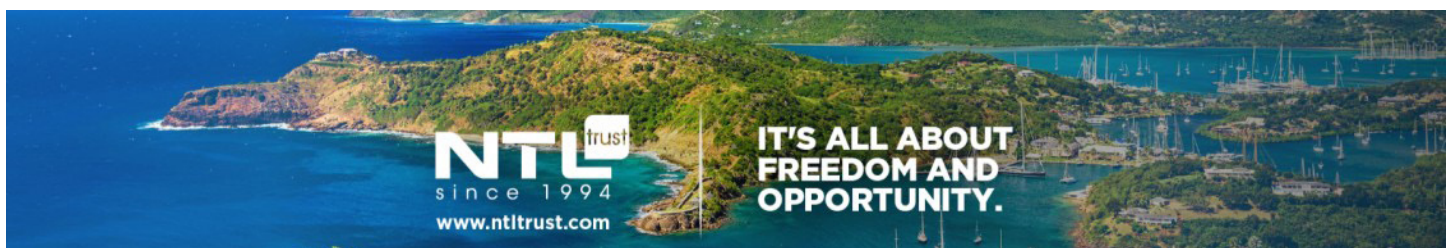
A trade deal between India and the United States is more

than an economic arrangement—it is a strategic imperative in the 21st-century geopolitical landscape. Such an agreement would deepen bilateral ties, enhance economic resilience, and contribute to a more stable Indo-Pacific region. While challenges remain, the long-term benefits in terms of economic modernisation, strategic alignment, and global influence make the pursuit of this trade deal a worthwhile endeavour. As the global order shifts and new alliances emerge, the India–US partnership, anchored by strong trade ties, could well become a defining force in shaping the future of global geopolitics.

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

MAJOR HIGHLIGHTS

- India–US trade nears \$200 billion, establishing the US as India’s top trade partner.
- The deal may cover tariffs, digital rules, IPR, labour, environment, and trade.
- A trade pact boosts Indo-Pacific stability, strengthens the Quad, and counters China’s influence.
- India must reform labour, regulatory, and IPR laws to meet US standards.
- Deal boosts defence, energy, and climate ties, advancing India–US strategic partnership.



NASA & ISRO TEAM UP TO LAUNCH NISAR

SPACE-TECH

The NASA-ISRO Synthetic Aperture Radar (NISAR) mission is a pioneering leap in Earth observation in a world grappling with climate change, natural disasters, and environmental shifts. Slated for launch in June 2025, this dual-frequency radar satellite will deliver high-resolution data on Earth's surface changes. NISAR will revolutionise disaster prediction, resource management, and scientific understanding, ushering in a new era of precision-driven climate and environmental intelligence.



**AIR MARSHAL ANIL KHOSLA (RETD)
FOR NEWS ANALYTICS**

In an era where climate change, natural disasters, and ecological degradation are becoming more pressing global concerns, advanced space-based Earth observation has emerged as a vital tool. The NASA-ISRO Synthetic Aperture Radar (NISAR) mission is a landmark collaboration between the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) and the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO).

NISAR represents the most advanced dual-frequency radar satellite ever developed for civilian use. Once operational, NISAR will monitor Earth's land and ice surfaces with high precision. It will capture surface movements down to fractions of an inch, aiding in studying tectonic shifts, glacier dynamics, forest health, and infrastructure stability. It can transform

how we understand and respond to changes on Earth's surface, ranging from glacial movements to forest biomass, from seismic activity to urban land subsidence.

The latest update on the NASA-ISRO Synthetic Aperture Radar (NISAR) mission indicates that the launch is scheduled for June 2025, a shift from the anticipated March 2025 timeline. This delay, caused by thermal coating issues with the 12-meter radar antenna reflector, was resolved by October 2024. Despite the delay, the mission's objectives and timeline remain intact. Final integration and testing are underway at ISRO's facilities in Bengaluru. The satellite is expected to be transported to the Satish Dhawan Space Centre in the coming weeks to prepare for its launch aboard a GSLV Mark II rocket.



COLLABORATIVE EFFORT

The NISAR mission concept emerged from NASA's 2007 Decadal Survey, which called for advanced SAR data to address gaps in Earth science. Formalised in 2014 with a partnership agreement, the project has progressed through rigorous design, testing, and integration phases. NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL) and ISRO's Space Applications Centre have worked closely to refine the mission's science plan and hardware.



The NISAR mission is designed to provide unprecedented global radar imagery using L-band and S-band synthetic aperture radars. NASA has provided the L-band radar system, high-rate communication subsystem, GPS receivers, and payload data systems. ISRO is contributing the S-band radar, satellite bus, and launch services via the GSLV Mk II from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre. The satellite will be placed in a sun-synchronous polar orbit at about 747 kilometres and revisit the exact location on Earth every 12 days.

The SAR payload will produce radar images with a resolution of 5–10 meters and a swath of 240 kilometres, enabling wide-area monitoring of Earth's surface with high precision. The unique dual-band system of NISAR allows it to penetrate vegetation, ice, and soil more accurately than single-frequency satellites, making it a game-changer in Earth observation. The L-band is particularly effective for tracking subsurface movement and biomass, while the S-band is more sensitive to finer surface features.

The NISAR partnership exemplifies international cooperation in space exploration. NASA's investment, estimated at \$1.118 billion, covers the L-band radar and critical subsystems, while ISRO's contribution, approximately ₹788 crore (\$92 million), includes the S-band radar, spacecraft bus, and launch services. This division of responsibilities optimises costs and expertise, building on NASA's legacy of SAR

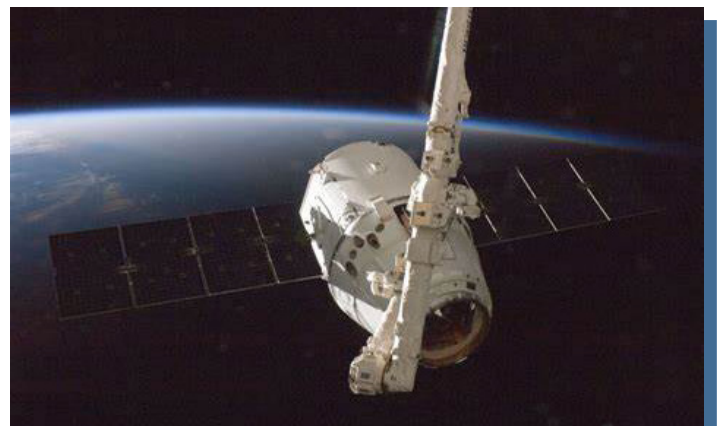
missions (e.g., SEASAT in 1978) and ISRO's advancements in satellite technology (e.g., the Chandrayaan missions).

The collaboration extends beyond hardware. Joint workshops, working groups, and the NISAR Utilisation Programme announced by ISRO in July 2023 engage the global scientific community, fostering data analysis and application development. The mission's open data policy aligns with the principles of transparency and collaboration, setting a precedent for future NASA-ISRO endeavours, including potential Mars exploration missions.

MISSION OBJECTIVES

NISAR's primary goal is to make global measurements of land surface changes, detecting movements as small as a centimeter. By mapping the globe every 12 days, the satellite will generate spatially and temporally consistent data, offering insights into complex Earth processes. Its objectives span three key domains: deformation, ecosystem structure, and ice dynamics. NISAR will monitor seismic zones, volcanic activity, and landslide-prone areas for deformation, providing early warning signs for natural disasters. In ecosystem studies, it will track forest extent, vegetation biomass, and agricultural patterns, aiding sustainable resource management. NISAR will measure glacier flow rates and ice-sheet stability for ice dynamics, contributing to our understanding of climate change and sea level rise.

All NISAR data will be freely available within one to two days of observation or hours for emergencies like natural disasters. This accessibility and NISAR's high-resolution imagery (5-10 meters) will empower scientists, policymakers, and disaster response teams worldwide. The data can enhance infrastructure monitoring, improve agricultural management,



- Representative Image

and inform rapid disaster response, potentially saving lives and property. The open data policy also encourages collaboration and innovation, allowing for further development of new applications and tools to leverage NISAR's capabilities.

The open-access data policy ensures the timely, free availability of NISAR data, fostering international collaboration in environmental monitoring, urban planning, and scientific innovation.

SCIENTIFIC IMPACT

NISAR will be critical in mapping the aftermath and precursors of earthquakes, floods, volcanic eruptions, and landslides. The radar's ability to detect minute ground deformations will help forecast and emergency response, reducing the human and economic cost of such events.

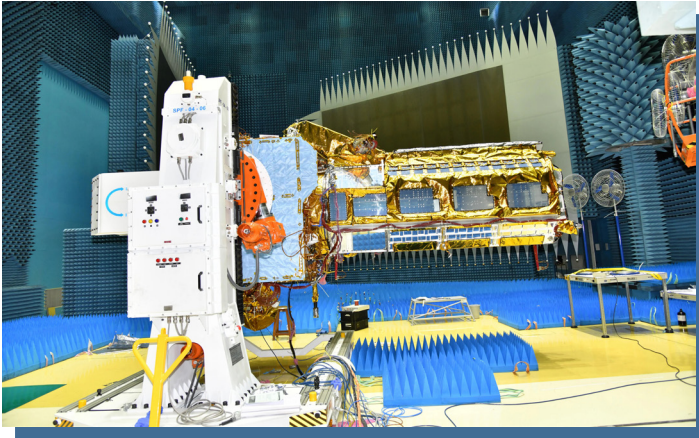


Image Credit: ISRO

The satellite will track ice sheet movement in Antarctica and Greenland, glacial retreat in the Himalayas, and coastal subsidence, all critical indicators of global climate change. NISAR data will also assist in modelling sea level rise and understanding the behaviour of the permafrost regions, which store vast amounts of greenhouse gases.

NISAR's radar can estimate biomass and crop yield, making it invaluable for food security planning and carbon stock assessment. It will monitor deforestation, forest degradation, and land-use changes, helping countries meet international commitments such as those under the Paris Agreement and REDD+ initiatives.

Urban planners and disaster mitigation agencies can use NISAR to monitor growing cities' subsidence, groundwater depletion, and infrastructure stress. Its precise deformation measurements can help predict building collapses, dam failures, and roadbed weaknesses.

Scientists will use NISAR to better understand plate tectonics, fault line dynamics, and volcano formation. The L-band radar, in particular, is ideal for detecting ground movements as small as a few millimetres, critical for early warnings in earthquake-prone regions.

STRATEGIC SIGNIFICANCE

The NISAR mission is a scientific milestone and a strategic symbol of the growing India-US partnership in space technology. It reflects significant technological trust and collaborative capacity-building, especially as China expands its space and Earth observation programs.

For India, the mission provides access to advanced radar imaging technology, enhances its global space diplomacy profile, and contributes to developing disaster management and environmental monitoring capacity. For the U.S., NISAR extends Earth observation to low-latitude and tropical regions, which are difficult to monitor from NASA's polar-focused satellites.

NISAR stands at the intersection of science, diplomacy, and strategic policy. As the world's most advanced Earth-observing radar satellite, it will provide a detailed, dynamic picture of the planet's changing surface. Whether helping farmers optimise irrigation, supporting relief efforts after natural disasters, or aiding climate scientists in tracking global warming, NISAR will become an indispensable part of humanity's Earth-monitoring infrastructure.

By combining ISRO's cost-effective engineering and operational expertise with NASA's deep technological experience, NISAR heralds a new era in Earth observation and exemplifies the international collaboration required to tackle global challenges.

*(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**.)*

NISAR's powerful L- and S-band radars will monitor land deformation, forest biomass, and ice-sheet dynamics—essential for disaster management, climate studies, and ecosystem conservation.

MAJOR HIGHLIGHTS

- *NISAR is the first civilian satellite using L- and S-band radars.*
- *A landmark NASA-ISRO partnership blending Indian efficiency with advanced U.S. radar tech.*
- *Disaster readiness ensures rapid detection, saving lives and minimising economic damage.*
- *Climate change tracker monitors glaciers, forests, and land shifts to understand warming.*
- *Fast, open data access accelerates global research and sustainability policy-making efforts.*

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IN THE SPOTLIGHT

INDIA SWIFTLY EXECUTES OPERATION SINDOOR



In a precise 25-minute operation named Operation Sindoor, the Indian Armed Forces targeted and dismantled nine major terror camps across Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK). Conducted between 1:05 am and 1:30 am on May 7, the mission was in direct retaliation for the deadly Pahalgam terror attack. Camps linked to Lashkar-e-Taiba, Jaish-e-Mohammed, and Hizbul Mujahideen were destroyed using advanced weapons like SCALP missiles and HAMMER bombs. Officials emphasised that the strike was based on credible intelligence, with a strong focus on avoiding civilian casualties. India affirmed its commitment to counterterrorism while maintaining a proportionate and non-escalatory posture.

TRUMP PLANS GOLDEN DOME SHIELD



U.S. President Donald Trump has announced a \$175 billion “Golden Dome” missile defence initiative, drawing inspiration from Israel’s renowned Iron Dome system. Unveiled in the Oval Office, the project aims to deploy advanced U.S. weapons—including space-based systems—to counter long-range missile threats. The system is expected to be fully operational by 2029, though experts suggest delays are likely. Modelled on Israel’s multi-tiered defence that intercepted rockets post-Hamas’ 2023 attack, the Golden Dome underscores Trump’s aggressive defence posture and prioritisation of homeland security. The ambitious plan marks the first U.S. move to position weapons in space for missile interception.

EU APPROVES NEW RUSSIA SANCTIONS



On May 20, 2025, the European Union adopted four new sanctions against Russia, intensifying efforts to curb Moscow’s revenue from oil exports. The 17th sanctions package targets over 130 individuals and entities, including Surgutneftegas and four shadow fleet firms operating via the UAE, Turkey, and Hong Kong. The crackdown includes 189 vessels and tighter controls on dual-use items aiding Russia’s military. The EU aims to lower the existing G7 crude price cap of \$60 per barrel. While sanctions on Lukoil’s Dubai arm were dropped, its shipping subsidiary, Eiger Shipping DMCC, was listed. Talks with countries using flag-of-convenience registrations continue.

GOOGLE UNVEILS FUTURE WITH AI



At Google I/O 2025, AI took centre stage as the company launched cutting-edge innovations like Beam for 3D video conferencing, Gemini Live with real-time visual understanding, and AI-driven upgrades to Search, Gmail, and Meet. Beam, developed in partnership with HP, replicates lifelike presence in video calls without headsets. Google also introduced Imagen 4 and Veo 3 for realistic image and video generation. Android XR brings smart wearable capabilities, while “AI Mode” redefines Search with chatbot-like interaction. With Gemini powering

most features, Google signals a bold new phase of immersive, intelligent user experiences. Rollouts begin globally this year.

CHINA UNVEILS DRONE MOTHERSHIP



China has introduced its first drone “mothership,” the Jiu Tian, capable of launching up to 100 UAVs mid-flight. Built by the Aviation Industry Corporation of China, the aircraft boasts a wingspan of 82 feet, a 4,350-mile range, and a 6-ton payload capacity. Designed for versatility, it can perform strike, electronic warfare, and rescue missions. Its modular design allows rapid reconfiguration, and it doubles as a communication relay. However, defence analysts caution that its large, non-stealthy profile makes it highly vulnerable in combat. Jiu Tian’s first test flight is scheduled for late June, marking a new phase in drone warfare.

TRUMP THREATENS ISRAEL WITH ‘ABANDONMENT’



U.S. President Donald Trump has reportedly warned Israel that continued escalation in Gaza could lead to a withdrawal of American support. According to a Washington Post report citing anonymous sources, Trump’s team told Israeli officials that the U.S. would “abandon” them unless military operations in Gaza ceased. The warning follows Trump’s comments during his Gulf visit, where he expressed concern over the humanitarian crisis in Gaza. However, U.S. Ambassador to Israel Mike Huckabee dismissed the report as “nonsense.” Despite official denials, growing friction is evident as Trump urges humanitarian aid and directly negotiates with Hamas, excluding Israel from the process.

CHINA, RUSSIA PLAN LUNAR REACTOR



China and Russia have announced plans to build a nuclear power station on the moon by 2035 as part of the International Lunar Research Station (ILRS). The reactor will provide energy for long-term research and exploration at the Moon’s south pole. Over a dozen countries, including Pakistan and Venezuela, are involved in the ILRS, seen as a direct competitor to NASA’s Artemis program. The project will launch its first module in 2028 via China’s Chang’e-8 mission. With ambitions to lead space exploration, China hopes to tap into the moon’s natural resources and strengthen its global scientific and technological influence.

BANGLADESH SEEKS DIALOGUE



Trade tensions have escalated between India and Bangladesh after India imposed land port restrictions on several Bangladeshi goods, including ready-made garments and food items, affecting \$770 million worth of imports. This move followed Bangladesh’s earlier curbs on Indian yarn and a new transit fee on Indian cargo. In response, Bangladesh’s interim Commerce Adviser, Sheikh Bashiruddin, expressed a willingness to resolve the issues through bilateral discussions. He emphasized the need for competitive, liberal trade and noted that both countries often impose restrictions on trade management. The current measures restrict imports to specific seaports, significantly impacting bilateral trade dynamics.

THE INEVITABLE FUTURE WITH AUGMENTED REALITY

DEEP-TECH

Augmented Reality (AR) is no longer a distant dream—it's an inevitable part of our technological future. As we transition from screens to immersive experiences, AR redefines how we shop, learn, and receive healthcare. By merging digital data with our physical surroundings, AR offers an interactive, sensory-rich interface that enhances decision-making and engagement. As adoption grows, it promises to reshape industries and daily life more profoundly than smartphones once did.



**DR. AMIT DUA, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, BIRLA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY AND SCIENCE, PILANI
FOR NEWS ANALYTICS**

We have seen technology penetrating our lives. In the last 30 years, we have moved from postcards to telephones and smartphones. We moved from using only auditory senses (in telephones) and including visual (in smartphones). Does anyone think the technological innovation will cease? Of course, no. The rate of technological penetration in our lives will continue to increase. With Augmented Reality (AR), we can smell, taste, and even touch.

To understand technically, AR provides a computational and

perceptual interface where the digital information is rendered spatially in the physical environment. To achieve this, AR uses real-time sensor fusion and computer vision algorithms. AR comprises four essential components. These are precise spatial registration, contextual rendering, multimodal input recognition, and adaptive environmental mapping. The system architecture of AR integrates SLAM (Simultaneous Localisation and Mapping) algorithms with accelerometer and gyroscopic data. Such complex algorithms help to maintain geometric synchronisation between virtual



and physical space. What distinguishes AR from any other software developed is the complete system with obstruction handling that manages lighting variations gracefully across sensory and visual output. The complete system creates continuity between digitally added data and physical reality.

What can be expected from our lives with AR? How can it improve e-commerce, healthcare, and education? These are key questions in front of us today. It is important to notice that most of these applications are already in use without an external AR headset.

E-COMMERCE EXPERIENCE

The e-commerce industry experiences a boost through Augmented Reality (AR), enabling shoppers to experience immersive shopping environments that unite virtual and physical retail spaces. The growing demand for personalised online interactions has led consumers to seek AR technology,



which enables them to see products in their actual surroundings before buying. How does this sofa set look in the living room? How does this dress fit me? Do this pair of shoes suit my style? Many exclusive online e-commerce platforms are entering as startups and becoming famous. You can easily guess the advantages. Yes! Improved customer satisfaction, decreased return rates, and strengthened business relationships with customers. It is predicted that the e-commerce platforms that adopt AR will stand out in competitive markets, and those that don't use AR will eventually be wiped out.

Through AR, customers get virtual try-on capabilities, 3D product visualisation, and interactive shopping. The technology enables customers to make better purchasing choices, leading to higher sales. Online stores achieve higher engagement by boosting revenue through advertisements and promotions. If a competitor is providing better customer satisfaction, with low return rates, it sells premium products through personalised product recommendations. The chances of survival for those who don't adopt AR in e-commerce are anyone's guess.

AR is creating immersive shopping experiences that blend physical and digital worlds. According to NielsenIQ, a global consumer intelligence company 56% of consumers feel AR increases confidence in product quality, and 61% prefer retailers offering AR experiences. Companies like Amazon, IKEA, Warby Parker, and ASOS use AR to let customers visualize products before purchasing. AR implementation has its challenges. Technical complexity, cost of development, and cost of designing user experiences can cost any MSME

its life. With GDPR laws and data privacy concerns, the way companies handle AR data is getting more important.

AR revolutionises e-commerce by enabling virtual try-ons and product visualisation, reducing returns and increasing buyer confidence, transforming online shopping into a more engaging experience.

AUGMENTED REALITY IN HEALTHCARE

AR improves patient care while enhancing medical training and simplifying complex surgical operations. Healthcare professionals utilise AR to generate interactive real-time 3D visualisations that assist medical diagnosis and treatment planning. AR enables better anatomical structure visualisation through digital information overlays onto physical environments while providing immersive educational experiences. The implementation of AR technology in medical settings enhances both precision and efficiency while enabling better patient condition understanding, which leads to superior treatment results. The advancement of AR technology will lead to increased healthcare applications, which will create new opportunities to improve patient experiences and enhance clinical workflow efficiency.

Augmented reality is helping doctors in their training, planning, and performing surgeries. It uses 3D modelling and virtual reality to make maps of the body. The training method is known as simulation-based medical education or 3D virtual reality training. Medical students can practice various medical procedures through virtual reality surgical simulation and interactive patient simulation without endangering actual patients. The training enables medical professionals to improve their performance while acquiring skills for robotic-assisted surgery and minimally invasive surgical techniques. This helps doctors find the best way to do a surgery. From angiography to neurosurgery, from orthopaedics to cardio surgery, doctors can practice on a patient beforehand using AR simulations.

To start with, there is a feasibility of automation in repetitive tasks and precision diagnostics (like diabetic retinopathy screening). Medium-term (5-10 years) applications will leverage multimodal data for precision therapeutics. Long-term (>10+ years), AI-AR will enable precision medicine through connected care systems, advanced diagnostics, drug discovery, and empowered healthcare professionals using digital twins to test interventions before applying them to patients.

In healthcare, AR improves surgical precision, enhances medical training, and accelerates diagnostics—paving the way for personalised, efficient, and patient-centric care through immersive technologies.

AR IN EDUCATION

Through AR, digital information gets overlaid onto actual environments to make abstract ideas more graspable for students. Students can study distant planets and historical events, and scientific mechanisms in detail. AR functions as an educational tool that enhances student participation while supporting multiple learning approaches to create an environment that welcomes all students. The implementation of AR in classrooms enables teachers to convert static lessons into interactive learning experiences, which both motivate and inspire students. AR combined with implementation of innovative teaching methods promotes curiosity and understanding.

The technological innovations must be considered within their social and organisational contexts. Like any other technology, AR also needs to address the concerns of students, teachers, and parents. Organisational readiness and the health of students will remain key to integrating AR in education settings.

DEVELOPING AR APPLICATIONS

The growth of AR technology leads to major advancements in development tools and software, which transform the process of building and deploying AR experiences. Developers can use open-source AR tools like ARKit and ARCore to create cool apps. These tools help developers make apps that can see the real world and add digital things to it. They can also use tools like Unity and Unreal Engine to build virtual reality and mixed reality experiences with ease, using mobile augmented reality software development kits and markerless AR tracking systems.

If someone has a previous development experience, it will be worthwhile to begin by selecting an appropriate development platform, like ARKit. It works for those who have an iOS development background, and ARCore for Android ones. One can use Unity across different platforms, and Vuforia is famous for AR implementations. The important part is to focus on understanding spatial computing fundamentals. The 3D coordinate systems, environmental understanding, plane detection, mesh generation, and lighting estimation are important

foundational blocks in AR. One may already know how to communicate with the computer using Python, Java, etc. AR's basic 3D modelling and interface design are unique. As people develop skills, practice using proper mobile performance optimisation techniques. Start with straightforward projects like object placement, spatial measurements, or image recognition. This will help build the desired confidence with AR concepts. While developing, it must be remembered that humans are not trained to work intuitively in three-dimensional space. Therefore, it will be crucial to be consistent and test it frequently on target devices.

WHAT'S NEXT FOR AR

The future is exciting with innovations that were childhood fantasies. Established companies are going to dedicate their efforts to developing innovative AR experiences. Meta is spending enormously, and so are other tech giants. AR is going to integrate with our daily lives through lightweight wearables that complement smartphones. People will no longer use smartphones for everything. Scientifically, the spatial mapping accuracy will increase, the real-time occlusion will become better, and physics-based interactions between virtual and physical objects will widen. Multi-user AR will become standard practice.

AI will increasingly power context-aware AR applications where systems understand environments and users' intent at an unprecedented level. In the future, the development ecosystem is going to mature, and standardised toolchains and frameworks will lower barriers to entry. This will enable faster production of more sophisticated applications across healthcare, education, manufacturing, and entertainment sectors. The next 5 years are going to be exciting on this planet if nuclear war does not finish us.

*(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 multiple books on cutting-edge technologies. The views expressed are of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of **The News Analytics Journal**.)*

MAJOR HIGHLIGHTS

- AR overlays digital content onto the real world using sensors and mapping.
- AR in e-commerce enhances satisfaction through visualization, reducing returns and boosting sales.
- AR enhances simulation training and precision surgery, boosting outcomes and clinical efficiency.
- AR in education simplifies complex topics through engaging, interactive, inclusive, experiential learning.
- AR's future is AI-driven, collaborative, real-time, and powered by wearable interfaces.

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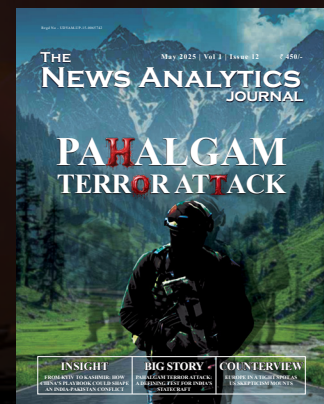
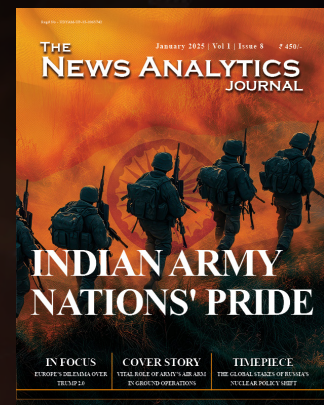
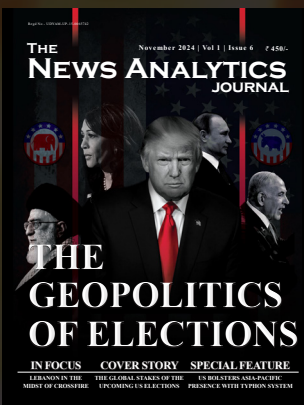
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