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# THE NEWS ANALYTICS HERALD



## A NEW REALIGNMENT?

**INSIGHT**

THE ALASKA SUMMIT  
RESHAPES POWER DYNAMICS

**BIG STORY**

GLOBAL ORDER AT THE  
CROSSROADS

**DIPLOMACY**

BRICS AND BEYOND: INDIA'S BALANCING  
ACT FOR STRATEGIC AUTONOMY

# THE POWER PANEL



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# || FOREWORD



## THE GLOBAL CHURN

I was born in 1951 when the Cold War was heating up, the United Nations was enjoying global appeal, Europe was reconstructing with American largesse after the devastation of the Second World War, and partying as though there would be no tomorrow. Trying its best to turn the period of decolonisation to its advantage.

I saw the rise of China that was used by the West to accelerate the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, followed by America's insufferable arrogance as the world's sole hyperpower, even as Russia begged to join Europe and NATO.

Fast forward to 2025, everything that I saw and observed in the 52 years that I have been practicing diplomacy has been upended by one egomaniac (or perhaps megalomaniac) at the head of the most powerful and richest nation in the world.

Shri Donald Trump chases his dream of making America Great Again, riding roughshod over all who do not genuflect before him. He has outsourced foreign policy to his business buddies; the official establishment is irrelevant. He has weaponised everything: trade, aid, education, even friendship (ever heard of his latest buddy, the Mad Mullah Munir, a "friend" to be used as a weapon against China).

Shri Trump is unaware of Robert Merton's Law of Unintended Consequences. Every leader in Bharat, Russia, China is meeting their counterparts in the other two, even though the trust factor among them is fragile. His actions are facilitating the emergence of a business-oriented triad even as the anti-China Quad is gasping for breath.

But America has done it again!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Deepak Vohra'. The signature is fluid and cursive.

Ambassador Deepak Vohra IFS (R),  
Former Ambassador to Armenia, Sudan and Poland.  
He was also a special Advisor to the Government of South Sudan.

# || ABOUT US

The News Analytics Herald is a premier national news magazine dedicated to analysing global developments that shape India's geostrategic landscape. From shifting currents in international relations and geoeconomics to emerging security challenges and transformative military technologies, we provide sharp, contextual insights into the issues that matter most. Guided by a commitment to factual depth and clarity, our analyses offer fresh perspectives on complex debates authored by an esteemed panel of global scholars, diplomats, armed forces veterans, international correspondents, and leading academics. Covering critical domains of diplomacy, defence, and military technology, the magazine brings a distinctly global and scholarly perspective to complex events. Each article is crafted to engage decision-makers, industry leaders, and globally aware readers alike.

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# PUBLISHER'S NOTE



## A NEW REALIGNMENT?

*In an increasingly polarised world, trade is no longer just a matter of economics; it has become a tool of strategic assertion. The recent imposition of punitive trade tariffs by the United States on key economies such as India, Brazil, and China marks a significant departure from*

*multilateral norms and signals a new phase of global realignment.*

*While cloaked in rhetoric about market fairness and domestic protectionism, these tariffs appear more aligned with geopolitical manoeuvring, targeting nations perceived to be circumventing or resisting Western sanctions on Russia. In doing so, Washington risks conflating economic policy with political coercion, setting a precedent that undermines the very global trade architecture it once championed.*

*For India and Brazil, sovereign democracies with complex economic ties, the move raises questions about strategic autonomy and the cost of engaging in a multipolar world. China, already in a protracted trade and tech standoff with the U.S., views these actions as further proof of containment strategies.*

*As the Global South becomes more assertive and regional blocs gain prominence, the world is witnessing not just a shifting balance of power but a restructuring of trust, alliances, and trade flows. This new realignment is not dictated by ideology, but by resilience, diversification, and a recalibration of national interest.*

*This month's issue of The News Analytics Herald explores the contours of this realignment, its drivers, consequences, and the emerging fault lines. In a world where pressure has replaced partnership, the future of global cooperation hangs in the balance.*

Jai Hind!

**Sandhya Srivastava**  
Editor in Chief &  
Business Director

THE  
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S

T

Z

E

T

Z

O

C

## 06. IN FOCUS

*FROM FREE TRADE TO FORTRESS ECONOMIES*

---



## 10. BIG STORY

*GLOBAL ORDER AT THE CROSSROADS*

---



## 13. IN CONVERSATION

*H.E. Reuven Azar, Honourable Ambassador of Israel to India*

---



## 16. INSIGHT

*THE ALASKA SUMMIT RESHAPES POWER DYNAMICS*

---

## 20. BATTLEGROUND

*AFRICA'S STRATEGIC CRISIS ZONE: SAHEL, COUPS & PRIVATE ARMIES*

---



## 24. GLOBAL INFLUENCER OF THE MONTH

*ANWAR IBRAHIM: ASEAN'S GLOBAL INFLUENCER AND PEACEMAKER*

---



## 26. DIPLOMACY

*BRICS AND BEYOND: INDIA'S BALANCING ACT FOR STRATEGIC AUTONOMY*

---

## 30. NEIGHBOURHOOD

*BATTLING HEADWINDS, INDIA FACES REGIONAL CROSSCURRENTS*

---

## 34. IN THE SPOTLIGHT

---



## 36. TIMEPIECE

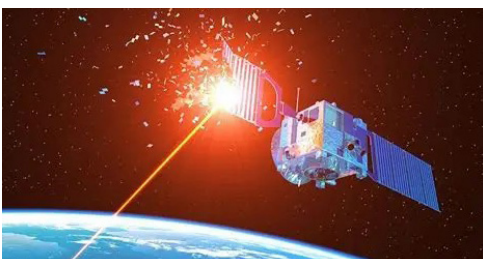
*THAILAND AND CAMBODIA: WHEN HISTORY TURNS INTO A BATTLEFIELD*

---

## 40. WAR STRATEGY

*CARRIER OR CHAOS: SECURING THE WEST PHILIPPINE SEA*

---



## 46. DEEP TECH

*DIRECTED ENERGY WEAPONS & LASER DEFENCE SYSTEMS*

---

# FROM FREE TRADE TO FORTRESS ECONOMIES

## IN FOCUS

*Nationalism often drives protectionist policies, creating trade barriers and undermining comparative advantage. Retaliation through tariffs can escalate into trade wars, as seen in the 2018 US-China conflict under "America First." Such disputes disrupt supply chains, raise costs, and create global uncertainty, hurting all involved economies and even third-party nations, ultimately slowing growth and reducing consumer demand.*



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

Nationalism can be broadly defined as the ideological belief in the primacy and superiority of one's own nation above others. While it can promote national unity, cultural identity, and sovereignty, it especially in its more aggressive or protectionist forms can severely disrupt international relations, particularly in the arena of global trade. The world, in the current era of the information superhighway, is increasingly interconnected. Any incident taking place in any part of the world can have ripple effects on all nations, however geographically distant from the theatre of action, albeit in varying degrees. No nation can remain isolated from others. As modern economies depend on complex cross-border supply chains and global markets, the resurgence of nationalist sentiments poses significant gains or risks to international trade. While the rise of nationalism during the pre-World

War period helped the little fragmented countries unite for their better future, like the case of Germany and Italy, the contemporary world is seeing the adverse effects of nationalism on international trade, which focuses on protectionist policies, trade wars, disruptions to global supply chains, regulatory barriers, reduced cooperation, and broader economic uncertainty.

### NATIONALISM IN ECONOMIC CONTEXT

In economic terms, nationalism often translates into economic nationalism or protectionism. These policies aim to restrict imports, enabling domestic industries to find sustainable domestic markets, and limit foreign investment to protect the national economy. Though these policies are often adopted with good intentions to shield local businesses from foreign competition and encourage self-reliance or safeguard jobs,

they tend to undermine the fundamental principles of free trade and globalisation. If a nation adopts these measures, it should also be prepared to face the repercussions and similar reactionary measures from other affected states. Economic nationalism can operate in several ways:

- Imposing tariffs and quotas on imports.
- Renegotiating or withdrawing from trade agreements.
- Promoting "buy domestic" campaigns.
- Restricting foreign direct investment (FDI).
- Subsidising national industries at the expense of foreign competitors.



Such measures may provide short-term gains, but when taken to the extreme, they often result in long-term economic inefficiencies and strained international relationships.



cooperation. Even now, it is evident that the MAGA doctrine propounded by President Trump suffers from the basic flaw of developing America at the cost of defying other countries without assessing its counter-effect on the economy of the USA itself.

### INCREASED BUREAUCRATIC BARRIERS

Nationalism often leads to regulatory divergence, where countries impose their own national standards, laws, and certification requirements instead of aligning with international norms. These divergences create non-tariff barriers that complicate trade. They also make trade negotiations between countries extremely difficult. For example, the Brexit decision, driven largely by nationalist and sovereignty concerns, led the United Kingdom to leave the European Union’s single market. As a result, UK businesses now face additional customs checks, border delays, and regulatory hurdles when trading with the EU.

### PROTECTIONIST POLICIES

One of the most immediate and visible effects of nationalism on international trade is the implementation of protectionist policies. These policies create artificial trade barriers, leading to a breakdown in the principles of comparative advantage. Countries often retaliate against protectionist policies with their own tariffs and trade restrictions, escalating into full-fledged trade wars. A prime example is the US-China trade war that began in 2018, spurred by the Trump administration’s nationalist “America First” agenda. Both imposed tariffs on hundreds of billions of dollars’ worth of goods from each other, disrupting supply chains, increasing costs for consumers and producers, and leading to global economic uncertainty.

This has had a chilling effect on trade volumes, investment, and business sentiment. Another pertinent example is that of the policies of the current US administration, which has defied WTO norms and imposed high tariffs and penalties on Russia, China, Brazil, and now India too. China and Russia have also announced retaliatory measures against the USA, while some other countries are contemplating following suit. Such regulatory fragmentation discourages cross-border commerce, increases compliance costs, and particularly hurts small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), which lack the resources to navigate complex international bureaucracies. For example, the recent announcement of President Trump to raise tariffs on India’s exports to the USA from 25% to 50% w.e.f. 27th August will hit the Indian MSME sector the most.

*Nationalism fuels regulatory divergence, creating non-tariff trade barriers. Brexit exemplifies this, forcing UK businesses into customs delays, border checks, and complex compliance when trading with the EU.*

### DISRUPTING GLOBAL SUPPLY CHAINS

Modern industries are dependent on complex global supply chains where raw materials, components, and services are sourced from multiple countries. Nationalist policies that restrict trade or prioritise domestic sourcing can cause serious disruptions to these supply chains. For example, policies aimed at reshoring manufacturing (bringing production back home) may sound appealing in nationalist discourse, but they often increase production costs, reduce efficiency, and limit innovation due to the narrower pool of resources and expertise.



During the COVID-19 pandemic, several countries turned inward, focusing on domestic production of critical goods like medical equipment and vaccines. While this was understandable from a public health perspective, it also highlighted how nationalism in times of crisis can lead to hoarding, export bans, and breakdowns in international

## UNDERMINING MULTILATERAL INSTITUTIONS

A nationalist turn in foreign policy often depicts a trust deficit or even outright hostility toward multilateral institutions like the World Trade Organization (WTO), IMF, World Bank, or various trade blocs (e.g., NAFTA, EU, ASEAN). Nationalist leaders may view these institutions as infringements on sovereignty or as biased in favour of certain powers. Undermining these institutions weakens the rules-based international order that facilitates predictable, fair, and efficient trade. Without a common framework for resolving disputes, enforcing agreements, and maintaining transparency, trade becomes more fragmented, politicised, and prone to conflict.



For instance, the Trump administration's decision to block appointments to the WTO's appellate body effectively paralysed the organization's dispute resolution mechanism, causing delays and uncertainty in the global trading system.

## REDUCED COOPERATION

Nationalism restricts global cooperation, particularly in addressing transnational issues like climate change, pandemics, or digital governance. These challenges require coordinated international responses, but nationalist governments often prioritise short-term national interests over long-term global solutions.

This has trade implications as well. For example, addressing climate change requires harmonized environmental regulations, carbon pricing mechanisms, and green technology transfers. Nationalist governments may resist these efforts, preferring to shield their fossil fuel industries or avoid international obligations, thus obstructing the development of green trade and sustainable commerce. Similarly, in the digital economy, data protectionism and nationalist digital policies can lead to "splinternets" where data does not flow freely, limiting the global trade in services and information.

While nationalism may yield short-term political gains, its economic consequences can be deeply damaging in the long term. For example, India's license-permit-quota system during the 1970s and 1980s, rooted in nationalist and protectionist ideals, led to decades of economic stagnation until liberalisation in 1991 revived the economy through trade and globalisation. Similarly, nationalist regimes that isolate themselves economically—such as North Korea or Venezuela—face chronic shortages, poor infrastructure, and widespread poverty due to their limited engagement with the global economy.

## DIPLOMATIC STRAIN

Finally, economic nationalism can erode trust between nations. When countries prioritise self-interest and adopt hostile trade measures, diplomatic ties suffer. Trade is not just an economic activity but also a diplomatic tool that fosters interdependence and peace. For instance, the deterioration of US-China trade relations has spilled over into other areas like cybersecurity, defence, and technology. This geopolitical tension has contributed to the fragmentation of global alliances and the creation of rival trade blocs, such as RCEP (Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership) vs. CPTPP (Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership). As global trust diminishes, so does the willingness to collaborate, negotiate, and share the benefits of economic integration.

While nationalism can promote pride, identity, and resilience, its impact on international trade is overwhelmingly negative when it becomes excessive or protectionist. In an era where economic growth, innovation, and prosperity are increasingly dependent on global cooperation, closing borders and restricting trade run counter to long-term national interests. The adverse effects of nationalism on international trade are myriad, from trade wars and supply chain disruptions



***Economic nationalism breeds mistrust, turns trade into geopolitical conflict, fractures alliances, fuels rival blocs, and erodes the spirit of global cooperation and shared prosperity.***



is trust built between countries, which paves the way for openness and cooperation, not where walls are built, tariffs imposed, and suspicion reigns. National interests are best served not by isolation, but by thoughtful engagement in the global economy.

*(Ambassador Jeitendra Tripathi, IFS (R.), 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 Herald.)*

to institutional decay and reduced global cooperation. It, therefore, becomes imperative for policymakers to strike a careful balance between protecting legitimate national interests and preserving the open, rules-based international trading system that has lifted billions out of poverty and created unprecedented global wealth.

As history has witnessed, prosperity flourishes where there



**MAJOR HIGHLIGHTS**

- *Nationalism can unite nations but often disrupts global trade and cooperation.*
- *Protectionist policies trigger retaliation, trade wars, and global supply chain disruptions.*
- *Regulatory divergence raises trade barriers, hurting SMEs and increasing compliance costs.*
- *Undermining multilateral institutions weakens fair, rules-based global trade frameworks.*
- *Excessive nationalism risks economic stagnation, isolation, and erosion of international trust.*



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# GLOBAL ORDER AT

## BIG STORY

*What once seemed improbable is now reality: Washington's tariff strike has shattered diplomatic niceties, cornering India and ending prospects of negotiation. This watershed moment redefines bilateral ties, eroding trust irreparably while reshaping global geopolitics. Experts worldwide call Trump's India tariffs a strategic and economic blunder, warning of inflation, fractured alliances, and long-term damage to America's own economic health.*

### NEWS ANALYTICS EDITORIAL DESK

On 30th July, President Donald Trump made his intention clear to 'punish' India for not agreeing with his T&C on trade agreements, and impose a 25% tariff with the threat of even more stringent measures, including further raising the tariff to 50%. Since the announcement of the trade tariff on India, there has been much speculation about its ramifications across the business and geopolitics. This arguably came as a rude shock to many in both countries and global watchers at large. The most common perception across the board was- 'it can't be true', which gave way to - 'is it?'

Yes, the threat being dished out to Indian trade negotiators day in and day out was finally executed! The people in the know must be aware that it was coming, and needless to say, would have planned the next course of action. What was really startling in the whole development was the American 'song and dance' made of this event and the 'No Comments' response that India gave. It couldn't have been more contrasting

than this, and it indicates a level of anticipation and maturity in Indian power corridors. India went about its business with an infectious calm, reading the impact and executing what matters. No chest thumping from public platforms about trade retaliation, and counter-tariff measures being signed off. This demeanour of India was quite unexpected for many. Why has India not cried wolf? Instead, it's middle-level ministers who were seen offering passing comments on the tariffs not being 'fair'.

### THE TRADE TARIFF

Effective from 1st August, an additional 25% tariff has been imposed on all Indian imports, while negotiations are still officially in process. Many have been wondering about India's trade relations with the US and what exactly has gone wrong to warrant such a measure in the first place. For records, the US remains India's largest trading partner with annual trade between them exceeding \$131 billion in FY 2024-25. The



# THE CROSSROADS

trade spectrum between the two countries has witnessed substantial widening since 2000, when India started implementing open market provisions.

The trade as a component impacting tariff decision was thus a minor cause of this southward trend in mutual relations. What became apparent rather shortly was the growing geopolitical impatience of President Trump, who believed India was not receptive to his diktats. The tariff announcement was tagged with a reason as *“a result of the US administration's response to India's substantial imports of Russian energy and military assets”*. This is indeed the most important part and in fact the only cause of this ‘unexpected’ tariff move.



There's no maths; the US tariff on India is a plain and simple financial punitive action for India's engagement with Russia. Surprising, as it is, few people in the US really believe raising tariffs would force India to stop dealing with Moscow. Many would struggle to find a simpler theory than this for such a profoundly complex issue. But that's not the end, there's more to follow. President Trump was seen making efforts to ensure he should be able to rub some insult and blend insinuation while mentioning India in his subsequent actions and statements. A really bygone era method of diplomatic signalling.

***After tariffs, Washington orchestrated theatrics: Pakistan's 'Failed Marshal' issued nuclear threats, Trump mocked India as a "dead economy," despite its global economic rise.***

## IT'S NOT ECONOMICS

The fortnight that followed the tariff announcement was packed with pre-decided sample actions, all meant to convey the ‘dire consequences’. So there was a hurried call to the Pakistani Army Chief with a promise of providing an

opportunity to spill some venom against India, a staple task routinely practised by vintage America and mastered by Pakistani Generals. A call from Washington was hard to ignore for the commoners. So people saw the ‘Failed Marshal’ threaten India using his self-perceived strongest currency of nuclear weapons, from the protected environs of DC. That perhaps was maximum; Washington could have asked him in return for an all-paid trip. President Trump was heard calling India a ‘dead economy’. The last we had seen reports of India moving to the World's 5th largest economy and fastest growing major economy in the World. That's not so bad for any ‘dead economy’ anyway.

The contours of trade negotiations as shaped by the US insistence to gain access to the Indian Dairy and Agriculture sector, and imposing penalties on the import of Russian energy, present an almost no-deal scenario for India. India has probably understood the non-flexible approach of US negotiators and has indicated its position in unambiguous terms, which is also seen as the reason behind the likely no-show of US negotiators in Delhi for the next round of talks. The hard-nosed geopolitics that the US is trying to play, camouflaging it under trade negotiations, is unmistakably clear to India.

A clear pattern observed over the last few months has the US weaponising its trade to gain geopolitical dividends. Such an approach has worked for the US in the past, but a lot has



changed in the last two decades. The US remains the most powerful, but isn't the global pivot anymore. The multilateral approach has gained strong currency; the Ukraine war has altered the global supply chain more than the COVID pandemic. The US is growing, no doubt, but others have accelerated. Global South, backed by Russia, India and China, has shown

## ***President Trump's weaponised tariffs look to have backfired, sparking global disgust and accelerating India-Russia-China orientation, signalling a powerful realignment and reshaping the world order.***

strong resonance of intent. BRICS+, a non-Western grouping, though not a security arrangement, has surprisingly disconcerted the US so much that the grouping had better take itself more seriously.

A wider environment scan sheds more light on the broad picture. President Trump's initial days in the White House have targeted South Africa, reaching a stage of expelling its Ambassador from the country, blaming him of "race-baiting". The next was Brazil, the US made objectionable statements on the internal polity of the country. Now comes India, is it too much of a coincidence that all form part of BRICS, which recently professed to actively contribute towards a multipolar world order and suggested an alternative to the Dollar trade? Not to miss President Trump's threat of putting a 100% tariff on BRICS countries.



### **FUNDAMENTAL SHIFT**

What was an anticipation with a strong possibility of an unlikely execution is now a reality. The threat has been carried out; words not minced, no diplomatic nicety was felt necessary. India, while trying hard to find a middle path of broader acceptability, was hardly left with any option. The stubborn approach the US has undertaken has ensured an end to any

negotiated solution to the current stalemate. This is going to prove another watershed moment in the history of the bilateral relationship, and its impact is likely to spill over the entire geopolitical landscape.

India will be adapting to this transition and it's not going to be quick and fast, but a gradual shift in priorities followed by more substantial actions in times ahead. How the whole argument of trade tariffs monetarily benefiting America remains to be assessed, but the loss of trust is certainly irreparable. There are domain experts on economics, global trade, security and diplomacy across the World, including within the US, who have termed President Trump's India tariff a complete disaster, both economically and geopolitically. Some have even questioned the intellectual reasoning behind the entire tariff policy as President Trump's naïve solution of blaming the world for its own current account deficit, or simply put, overspending by the US. Some have even projected that the ramifications of it will be highly detrimental to the US economic health in the long run. Just as to confirm the anticipated fears on 22nd August, the US Fed Chief cautioned about the likely rise in inflation, forcing it to cut interest rates.

Maths of the tariffs apart, the geopolitical fallout, though, remains much more serious in nature. President Trump's plan to weaponise the tariff and impose US supremacy has surely not gone as per the White House script. Brazilian President Mr. Lula responded to President Trump's offer to call him anytime after imposing a 50% tariff by saying he would rather call PM Modi than call President Trump. The statement was a strong reflection of disgust at the conduct of the US of late. Since the imposition of Mr. Trump's tariff, global watchers have been keenly following India's move. Though India has kept decibel levels low, choosing its actions to speak for themselves, the multiple high-level engagements between the big three India, Russia, and China are an indication that we are probably witnessing a new global realignment in the making. President Trump can surely take full credit for his contribution to accelerating the new global order. Whether it actually benefits the US or not, that's an entirely another question!

### **MAJOR HIGHLIGHTS**

- *Trump imposed 25% tariffs on India, threatening escalation to 50%, citing Russia ties.*
- *India reacted calmly, avoiding retaliation, showing maturity amid Washington's provocative theatrics.*
- *Pakistan's generals and Trump's "dead economy" remark added insult, amplifying tensions.*
- *Tariffs reflect the US weaponising trade for geopolitical leverage, targeting BRICS nations.*
- *Fallout signals global realignment: India, Russia, and China strengthening orientation, eroding U.S. dominance.*

# IN CONVERSATION



**H.E. Reuven Azar,  
Honourable Ambassador of Israel to India**



**Sandhya Srivastava**  
Editor in Chief

*In an exclusive interaction with His Excellency Reuven Azar, Honourable Ambassador of Israel to India, Ms. Sandhya Srivastava, Editor-in-Chief of The News Analytics Herald, explores major issues in bilateral relations, strengthening ties, addressing regional challenges, and fostering global partnerships amidst an increasingly complex geopolitical environment. Excerpts from the conversation.*

**Q: India and Israel share a historical and strong strategic partnership built on trust and mutual respect. How do you see this partnership evolving in the next decade?**

The relations between India and Israel stand at a historic crossroad, characterised by a significant shift in global power and the rising threat of extremism & hybrid threats. These circumstances create a much more unstable and competitive environment. We must bank on the deep trust we have gained, on our shared democratic values, and on a shared vision of innovation to tackle these challenges.

In the coming decade, India and Israel will forge an even stronger strategic-tech alliance - co-developing next-generation defence technologies, nurturing vibrant

start-up ecosystems, and advancing cutting-edge solutions in agriculture and water management. Together, we will address shared global challenges, including climate change, in order to achieve joint self-reliance, joint resilience and inclusive, sustainable growth.

Most importantly, people-to-people connections through education, culture, and tourism will remain at the heart of our relationship. India and Israel are not just partners; we are co-architects of a better, secure, and innovative future.

**Q: Both nations have deep defence ties, with major Israeli Defence majors like IAI and IWI having collaborations in technology and joint development with their Indian partners. What new areas of defence cooperation are currently being explored?**

India and Israel share a trusted, strategic defence partnership that has only grown stronger over the years. Our cooperation goes far beyond a buyer-seller relationship; it is increasingly about joint production and R&D. Companies like IAI, Rafael, and Elbit are working closely with Indian counterparts under the spirit of 'Make in India' to provide solutions that serve the security needs of both nations.

Looking ahead, we are exploring new areas of collaboration in advanced air defence systems, drones and counter-drone technologies, artificial intelligence-driven defence solutions, space-based surveillance, autonomous devices and cyber security. Another emerging area is dual use technologies, where Israeli start-ups complement India's vast talent pool in innovation.

The idea is to develop cutting-edge systems together, in India, not only for our mutual security but also for civilian purposes and for export to third countries. This reflects the trust, transparency, and long-term vision that guide India-Israel defence relations.

**Q: Bilateral trade in 2024-25 has been around \$4 billion, a decline from the previous year, primarily due to the regional security situation and trade route disruptions. How are Israel and India working to restore the trade volume and further diversify trade beyond defence and agriculture?**

While bilateral trade in 2024-25 saw some decline due to regional security challenges and disruptions in trade routes, both Israel and India remain committed to strengthening our economic partnership. Beyond defence and agriculture, we are actively exploring opportunities in high-tech sectors such as water technology, artificial intelligence, and digital innovation.

Throughout the year, we had initiatives such as joint start-up programs, innovation hubs, and business delegations aimed to create new avenues for trade and investment. At the same time, both governments are working to streamline logistics and enhance connectivity to ensure smoother trade flows. Our focus is on building a resilient, diversified partnership that reflects the full potential of our bilateral relationship.

**Q: Israel is a global leader in innovation, agritech, and AI, while India is a digital powerhouse. What joint initiatives are being planned in high-tech and emerging technologies?**

Israel and India share a natural synergy when it comes to innovation. Israel's expertise in agritech, AI, cyber technologies, and start-up culture complements India's strength as a global digital hub with a vast talent pool. Building on this, we are planning joint initiatives in areas like precision agriculture, water and energy technologies, AI-driven solutions, cybersecurity, and smart city projects.

One key focus is the Israel-India Innovation Bridge, which facilitates collaborations between start-ups, research institutions, and government agencies in both countries. We are also expanding programs for joint R&D in emerging technologies, ensuring that innovations developed together can benefit not only our nations but also have a global impact.

**Q: In recent weeks, there have been global trade disruptions owing to perceived trade imbalances, directly impacting major economies like India. Does Israel view this as temporary turbulence or a shift with lasting geopolitical consequences?**

Israel sees the recent disruptions in global trade as largely stemming from regional uncertainties. Conflicts and tensions in key areas, including attacks on shipping routes by groups such as the Houthis, have directly impacted trade flows and created temporary bottlenecks for major economies like India.

These developments highlight the importance of strengthening cooperation, diversifying supply chains, and investing in resilient trade and logistics networks. For Israel and India, it reinforces our commitment to working together to ensure stable and secure trade links, even amid regional challenges.

**Q: West Asia faces ongoing instability, while Asia is witnessing shifting power dynamics. How can India and Israel work together to promote regional peace and stability?**

India and Israel share a commitment to regional peace, stability, and security. In West Asia, facing ongoing instability and an Asia witnessing shifting power dynamics, our cooperation goes beyond defence and technology; it is also about dialogue, intelligence sharing, and building resilient security frameworks.

Together, we can work on counter-terrorism, cybersecurity, maritime security, and humanitarian assistance, while

promoting economic and technological partnerships that create stability through growth. By strengthening bilateral ties and supporting multilateral initiatives, India and Israel aim to contribute to a more secure and stable regional environment.

**Q: Both nations face security threats from terrorism and extremism. How do you see counterterrorism cooperation between India and Israel strengthening in the future?**

India and Israel are intensifying cooperation to address terrorism and extremism in all its forms. Our partnership goes beyond traditional security measures; it includes intelligence sharing, joint training programs, and the co-development of advanced technologies for threat detection and prevention. We are working together on cybersecurity, border protection, unmanned systems, and real-time threat analysis to respond to emerging challenges swiftly and effectively.

This collaboration not only strengthens the security of both nations but also contributes to regional stability, helping protect trade routes, critical infrastructure, and citizens. The trust, shared experiences, and strategic alignment between India and Israel make this partnership a model for how nations can work together to counter complex security threats in an increasingly uncertain world.

**Q: With rising multipolarity and power competition, middle powers are gaining importance. How can India and Israel jointly navigate these global transitions?**

We can leverage our strengths to navigate global transitions more effectively. India is going to become the third largest economy in the world within 2-3 years. It is no longer looking inwards but looking also outwards, with the intent of becoming a production hub for the world. Israel can take part in that process by sourcing some of its services and products in India. More importantly, Israel can provide innovative solutions to increase India's competitive edge in global markets. One example is the car industry. Israeli mobility companies are entering into partnerships with local vehicle producers. One major Indian firm purchased an Israeli electronics factory to upgrade the quality of its products for both its local and international markets.

To make this integration process faster and more efficient, we need to pave the way to our private sector to do

business more smoothly. We are going to sign a Bilateral Investment Treaty in the coming weeks. We are bringing a senior delegation from our financial sector to see how to make sure that transactions between our companies are made faster and cheaper. Israel has provided India a TOR to the Indian side to launch talks on a Bilateral Trade Deal. These are essential tools in order to develop and increase trade and investments.



**Q: From defence to diplomacy, the India-Israel relationship spans multiple domains. In your view, what should be the defining feature of bilateral ties in the next two decades?**

India and Israel will enhance their technological cooperation, starting from more robust academic interactions. During the last few months, presidents of major Israeli universities came to India to partner not just on students and advanced studies exchanges, but also to create collaboration between the entrepreneurship and technology offices in our institutions and those of local universities.

We are promoting collaboration between start-ups through our joint R&D fund, which already spent USD 25 Million in supporting partnerships. In addition, innovation delegations travel to Israel and come to India quite often. In September an Israeli Fintech delegation will visit Gift City in Ahmedabad, Delhi and Mumbai with the aim of creating partnerships in this important field, which is quite advanced in India.

Another vertical will be infrastructure. We are interested in attracting Indian companies to apply for infrastructure tenders in Israel. Dozens of billions of dollars in new

tenders, such as for the construction of a 150 km subterranean metro system in the greater Tel Aviv area are going to be published in the coming months and years. The introduction of Indian companies into our market will ensure competition and better performance of the projects. This has the potential of substantially widening trade and creating permanent representation of Indian companies in Israel.

**Q: Israel continues to face complex security challenges on one hand and global concerns about the regional situation on the other. There have also been reports suggesting some European countries' consideration of recognising Palestine. How does Israel view these developments, and what alternate solution is Israel proposing for their resolution?**

Israel's priority remains the safety and security of its citizens. We are focused in defeating Hamas and bringing back our hostages. Both goals combined are difficult to achieve, and that's why the war has been going on for so long. Israel will continue using both diplomacy and

military pressure until our goals are achieved.

The fact that Hamas takes credit for the intention of some countries to recognize a Palestinian State tells you how counterproductive these declarations are and how they undermine negotiations to end the war.

The Palestinians had a chance to build a state in Gaza after Israel withdrew in 2005. However instead of building their own state, they decided to engage in a war to destroy our state, the State of Israel. That is a major set-back for Palestinian statehood. We have to make sure that we prevent another October 7th. Israel is consulting with the US and other partners in the region how to create a better future for Gaza. We will be very risk averse in order to prevent repetition of past mistakes. Israel is not interested in ruling Gaza, but we will have to maintain overriding security control while the civilian affairs can hopefully be transferred to a more pragmatic local leadership which has the backing of the international community.



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SHINES BRIGHT**

# THE ALASKA SUMMIT RESHAPES POWER DYNAMICS

## INSIGHT

*The Alaska Summit on 15 August, bringing together US President Trump and Russian President Putin, represented Washington's latest effort to directly engage Moscow in negotiations aimed at brokering a peace settlement to the ongoing Russia-Ukraine conflict. The meeting highlighted America's intent to assume a central role in conflict resolution while testing the prospects of meaningful diplomatic engagement.*



**AMBASSADOR SRIKUMAR MENON, IFS(R)**  
FOR NEWS ANALYTICS

Despite President Trump's confident demeanour and grandstanding in the days leading up to the Summit, the talks did not result in any clear breakthrough. Belying expectations, the discussions were seemingly subdued, achieving limited progress on finding ways to end the war in Ukraine. The complexities of the issue, the concerns raised by various stakeholders and extreme positions taken by the warring parties brought into sharp focus the challenges in achieving a lasting peace agreement. Both Putin and Trump have, however, expressed optimism about the potential for progress.

### LEGACY OF THE SUMMIT

Even before the Alaska summit meeting began, it was already turning out to be a win for Putin. The high-profile meeting

with President Trump significantly boosted Putin's credibility. Visuals from the Summit only underscored this fact, as Putin was accorded a ceremonial red-carpet reception, with US military aircraft escorting his jet above the skies of Alaska, followed by a military fly-past - an honour reserved for global statesmen.

The visit effectively ended Putin's long diplomatic isolation, a personal gridlock he had failed to cast off since the Ukraine war began in 2022. A far cry from being a pariah in the Western world to his present status - gaining credibility and a negotiating position to forge, on his own terms, a peace deal to end the war he had started in the first place. The Summit restored Putin's global standing in more ways than one. The



talks started off with what Putin had wanted – with both sides focusing on a peace agreement and then moving on to negotiating a ceasefire - a moral victory of sorts for him.

From the West's standpoint, the summit at least achieved what past diplomatic initiatives could not secure, i.e., to get, what they call, the 'aggressor and initiator' of the conflict to the negotiating table. Like Ukraine, the European alliance, yet again, found itself on the margins, unable to have any major say in the unfolding drama. Pressure continues to mount on Ukraine to consider territorial concessions (to surrender the Donbas region to Russia).



There are reports of Putin having agreed to the proposal of the US and European allies to extend some form of a NATO-type security guarantee to Ukraine, which broadly could be in line with NATO's Article 5. President Trump has, however, made it clear that, in return, Ukraine should be ready to surrender some of its territories to Russia. The European leaders' decision to join Ukraine's President Zelenskyy in Washington, DC, on 18 August, for talks with President Trump, was an attempt to gain some lost ground.

## THE EMERGING WORLD ORDER

*Over recent decades, alliances like QUAD, AUKUS, BRICS, and SCO have shaped the global order, fostering balance, trust, and stability, with BRICS rising as a multipolar power.*

In a fractured and polarised world, any failure to build on the limited positives emanating from these talks in Alaska could result in further hardening of positions and potential shifts in alliances and diplomatic relationships. Though the United States continues to have a unique position in the world order, the reality is that the US no longer has the kind of singular dominance that it had in the 1950s or the 1990s. New emerging political realities have brought into sharp focus the steady decline of the US's global dominance, besides the simultaneous rise of China and Russia.

Post-Alaska, there is a perceptible shift in US-Russia relations, with both countries exploring potential cooperation. Another crucial aspect of the big canvas of geopolitics is the question about NATO's future; the extent of US involvement in Europe; and how the leading lights of Europe – viz. The UK, France, and Germany develop their respective bilateral relations with Russia and China. There was a time when the global order - driven by multilateralism and international trade - was marked by a subtle mix of rivalry and pragmatic cooperation among big powers.

This has resulted in a gradual shift in emphasis, with big powers focusing more on achieving strategic superiority, pursuing their own security interests and securing strategic rare minerals and resources. There is also an interesting alternate perspective on the post-Alaska scene, expounding the thought that this newfound bonhomie could be “part of the grand strategy of Russia and the US” to come together to share the spoils of global resources in the coming years. Yet, notwithstanding the mutual benefits, there are significant challenges and limitations for such close Russia-US cooperation to become a reality, given the lack of trust between the two sides.

## EMERGENCE OF NEW BLOCS

Various international alliances like QUAD, AUKUS, BRICS, SCO, etc. have evolved in the past couple of decades. These Blocs have played crucial roles in shaping the new world order - in maintaining balance of power, strengthening mutual trust and promoting regional stability. BRICS is emerging as a significant force and is set to play a leading role in the emerging multipolar world order characterised by shifting global power dynamics.

BRICS' expanding influence and reach are enhancing its ability to shape global norms and promote a more balanced global order. In an increasingly multipolar world, where



protectionism is reshaping global commerce, the emergence of such blocs signifies a move away from a solely Western-dominated international system while creating alternatives to Western-led institutions.

## INDIA'S OPTIONS

The recent US-instigated trade and tariff measures targeting

India, China, Brazil, etc. must be seen as part of the larger domestic game plan of the Trump administration's "America First" trade strategy. The aim is to balance America's economic interests with geopolitical considerations, while promoting American competitiveness in the global economy and protecting domestic industries and jobs.

Trump's latest move to impose an additional 25 percent tariff on India, citing concerns over India's purchases of Russian oil, is a clear example of his transactional style - completely ignoring and riding roughshod over established principles that nurtured historical, traditional and strategic ties.

Rebutting Western narratives and bias against India, External Affairs Minister Jaishankar has often called out the 'double standards' and hypocritical stance taken by the West in unevenly applying Western principles on international issues like terrorism, the Middle East crisis and the Russia-Ukraine conflict.

***The US and China hold sway over Ukraine and Russia; their leverage, alongside emerging multipolar powers, will crucially shape peace efforts and future geopolitics.***

He has reiterated India's "right to pursue an independent foreign policy, based on national interests, and to drive its own course on the global stage". India has chosen this approach even if it were to diverge from Western preferences. An example of this is India opting to continue importing oil from Russia to safeguard its economy and energy security, despite Western sanctions.

Membership of the BRICS bloc provides emerging economies like India, China, Brazil and South Africa the platform to challenge the dominance of Western powers and promote a more equitable global landscape with a greater voice for the Global South in international decision-making. India will continue with a pragmatic approach - seeking to balance its ties with the US and Russia while deftly managing its relations with China. Both India and China share common concerns emanating from American protectionist policies - something that impacts their national interests.

To lessen the impact of US tariffs, India, on the multilateral level, will focus on strengthening trade and economic

cooperation with its BRICS partner nations - deepening strategic partnerships in areas like trade, energy, and technology. The blocs could consider a unified approach to diversify intra-BRICS trade, explore alternative payment mechanisms and a common trade currency to reduce reliance on the US dollar. India and partner nations would also reach out to new regional markets in Africa, Latin America, and Southeast Asia to blunt the impact of US tariffs.

The US-triggered tariff dispensation provides an opportunity for India to diversify its economy strategically by further boosting its "Atmanirbhar Bharat Make in India" initiative and realise its long-term vision of Viksit Bharat @2047.

Coming back to the war in Ukraine, it is true that the United States still has considerable influence in Ukraine, while China has its share of influence in Russia. It would be interesting to see how the two (the US and China) leverage these to play a decisive role in the process to end the war. The international community wants an end to the stalemate and will encourage all efforts to achieve that objective. As we commence the second quarter of the 21st century and move towards a multi-polar world order, the stage is set for new emerging players to share a more level playing field, with established big power players, with the space and opportunity to exert their own brand of economic and political clout, with multiple centres of power and influence. This trend will define geopolitics in the next decade and beyond.



*(Ambassador Srikumar Menon, IFS (R.), former Ambassador of India to South Sudan, Angola and Sao Tome & Principe. The views expressed are of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of **The News Analytics Herald.**)*

## MAJOR HIGHLIGHTS

- *Alaska Summit: Trump–Putin talks failed to achieve a clear breakthrough.*
- *President Putin regained global credibility, ending diplomatic isolation with red-carpet treatment.*
- *West sidelined Ukraine; Europe sought a stronger role in security and negotiations.*
- *Summit signalled shifts in geopolitics, declining US dominance, rising China and Russia.*
- *India faces US tariffs, balances ties, and leverages BRICS for strategic autonomy.*

# AFRICA'S STRATEGIC CRISIS ZONE: SAHEL, COUPS & PRIVATE ARMIES

## BATTLEGROUND

*Coups in Mali, Niger, and Burkina Faso highlight deep-rooted economic marginalisation and postcolonial struggles. With ECOWAS losing sway, the new Alliance of Sahel States is reshaping regional power. Russia's Wagner Group is expanding its influence, replacing Western forces in combat roles. A digitally connected youth is driving political change, while instability in the Sahel poses risks to resources, migration management, and Africa's economic integration.*



**JUSTUS NAM | NAIROBI, KENYA**  
**EXPERT ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS | COVERS AFRICA**  
**FOR NEWS ANALYTICS**

The Sahel is in a state of conflict, politics, and ideas. Once a peripheral theatre in Africa's postcolonial drama, this semi-arid belt stretching from the Atlantic to the Red Sea has become the frontline of a shifting global order. Since 2020, a cascade of military coups has toppled governments in Mali, Guinea, Burkina Faso, and Niger. Regional institutions like ECOWAS have faltered in their response, exposing fractures in Africa's post-Cold War democratic consensus. Simultaneously, the Russian-linked Wagner Group has entrenched itself as a shadow military force, often welcomed by revolutionary vanguards eager to sever ties with former colonial powers. In the background, an anti-Western groundswell, fuelled by historical grievances, youth disillusionment, and digital propaganda, is redrawing allegiances and upending decades of Western engagement. The current turbulence in the Sahel is best understood through its historical entanglements.

with profound implications for African sovereignty, security, and the geopolitical balance between the West, Russia, and China.

Between 2020 and 2023, West Africa saw a wave of coups dismantle fragile democracies. Mali's President Keita was ousted, followed by a second coup a year later; Guinea's Alpha Condé fell to Colonel Doumbouya; Burkina Faso endured two coups in 2022; and Niger's Bazoum, the West's last Sahel partner, was removed in 2023. Economic decline, youth unemployment, jihadist violence, and resentment toward foreign forces fuelled public support. ECOWAS sanctions and threats failed, prompting Mali, Niger, and Burkina Faso to quit and form the Alliance of Sahel States—signalling a lasting shift toward military-led governance and a break from democratic norms.

### UNPRECEDENTED REVERSAL

During colonial rule, French West Africa was administered not for African development but for extraction and control. Post-independence regimes often remained tethered to Paris through the CFA franc and military cooperation pacts—a neocolonial arrangement emblematic of *Françafrique*, France's system of political and economic control over its former colonies. In the 1970s and 1980s, the IMF and World Bank Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) crippled public investment, leading to the erosion of state legitimacy. Today's coups and unrest are not anomalies. They are flashpoints in a long arc of political and economic disenfranchisement. This is more than a regional crisis—it is a strategic rupture



*Western analysts cite Wagner's rights abuses, yet in parts of the Sahel, it's seen as more assertive than Western forces, framing itself as championing African sovereignty.*



## OPERATIONALLY ASSERTIVE

Into this vacuum stepped Wagner. Though nominally a private military company, Wagner has functioned as an unofficial arm of the Russian state, offering security services in exchange for resource concessions and diplomatic alignment. First active in the Central African Republic and Libya, Wagner made its Sahelian debut after Mali's second coup, replacing French troops and UN peacekeepers. The group has since established a growing footprint, reportedly numbering several thousand operatives across Mali, Sudan, and possibly Burkina Faso. In return, Russia has gained access to lucrative gold mining concessions and strengthened its political clout. In 2023, following the killing of Wagner leader Yevgeny Prigozhin, the group's operations were absorbed into Russia's formal military intelligence framework, but its on-the-ground tactics remain brutal and opaque.

Western analysts continue to highlight Wagner's alleged involvement in human rights violations, including the 2022 Moura massacre in Mali. Nevertheless, in parts of the Sahel, the group is perceived as more operationally assertive than departing Western forces. Media reports have captured a recurring narrative: Wagner engages militants directly, in contrast to Western troops, who were seen as focused primarily on patrols. This perception has reinforced the view that Western interventions were geared more toward containment than resolution. Wagner's deeper threat lies not just in bullets but in narratives—it positions itself as a partner in African sovereignty, contrasting sharply with the paternalistic tone of Western interventions.

France, once the undisputed external power in the region, is in full retreat. Operation Barkhane, its counterterrorism mission launched in 2014, formally ended in 2022 after Mali and Burkina Faso expelled French troops and diplomats. Niger soon followed. French influence, long resented for its

perceived neocolonial posture, collapsed under the weight of public protests and failed security outcomes. The United States has also felt the backlash. In 2024, Niger revoked the status of American troops stationed at Air Base 201 in Agadez, a key drone and surveillance hub. Despite high-level diplomatic overtures, the new government accused the U.S. of failing to respect Niger's sovereignty. Into this void, Russia has stepped in with speed and symbolic flair. Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov has made repeated tours across the Sahel, promising weapons, training, and respect. Moscow has also exploited digital disinformation to amplify anti-French and anti-U.S. sentiment. Social media, particularly TikTok and Facebook, is awash with slick, Russian-funded videos lionising Wagner and mocking Western impotence.

## IRREGULAR MIGRATION

The battle for influence in the Sahel is no longer fought in diplomatic chambers or battlefield outposts—it is being won or lost in the hearts and minds of the youth, who see in Russia a partner, not a master. At first glance, the Sahel's troubles might seem remote, even inevitable. But this would be a dangerous misreading. The region is of immense strategic importance. It is rich in minerals such as gold, uranium, bauxite, phosphate, and oil, and plays a vital role in European energy security. Niger alone supplies nearly a quarter of the European Union's (EU) uranium, while Burkina Faso and Mali are key gold exporters. With a population nearing 150



million, the majority under 25, the region also represents Africa's demographic frontier. Ongoing instability threatens major trade corridors tied to the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), slowing integration and migration governance. More than a security hotspot, the Sahel is fast becoming a litmus test for Africa's political agency and economic resilience.

The Sahel straddles key migration routes to North Africa and Europe, giving its governments leverage over EU states eager to curb irregular migration. It has also become the fastest-growing hub of jihadist violence, with Al-Qaeda- and Islamic State-linked groups exploiting porous borders and grievances, threatening to destabilise coastal West Africa. This turmoil undermines initiatives like AfCFTA and risks forcing African states into Cold War-style alignments. Coups, foreign mercenaries, and ideological battles over

sovereignty versus partnership dominate. Stability requires rebuilding legitimacy, opportunity, and solidarity, with ECOWAS reforming, the AU asserting leadership, and Western powers shifting from military dominance to genuine partnership.



aware. Affordable smartphones and widespread mobile internet access have closed the information gap that once isolated African societies. Today's young Africans consume the same news, trends, and ideas as their peers in Europe, North America, and Asia. Unlike their predecessors, who often operated within externally defined information environments, this generation is shaping its own worldview based on real-time access to global discourse.

The result is a rising cohort that is no longer content to inherit narratives or institutions shaped by external actors. Instead, it is asserting its agency in politics, economics, and cultural production. From civic tech start-ups in East Africa to decentralised activist movements in the Sahel, youth-led initiatives are redefining how power is organised and exercised across the continent. This emerging demographic reality is not a future trend—it is already reshaping Africa's engagement with the rest of the world. For policymakers, analysts, and global institutions, the message is clear: Africa's youth are

*With a median age of 19, Africa's youthful, connected, and politically conscious generation is shaping its own worldview, positioning the continent as central to global futures.*

## INFORMATION ENVIRONMENTS

Africa's future—especially in the Sahel—must be shaped by Africans, not dictated from Paris, Moscow, Beijing, or Washington. Military coups offer no lasting fix, but neither does uncritical adoption of foreign governance models divorced from local realities. The way forward demands African unity, education investment, inclusive growth, and people-centred governance. Africa is not a stage for external ambitions. A demographic shift is underway as Millennials and Gen Z replace post-independence elites, bringing structural—not merely symbolic—change and challenging the outdated view of Africa as a passive conduit between global powers and resources.

With a median age of just 19, Africa is home to the youngest population on the planet. This singular fact challenges the conventional view of the continent as peripheral and instead suggests it is fast becoming central to global futures. Across African cities such as Lagos, Nairobi, Dakar, Addis Ababa, Kinshasa, and Johannesburg, a new generation is growing up digitally connected, politically conscious, and globally

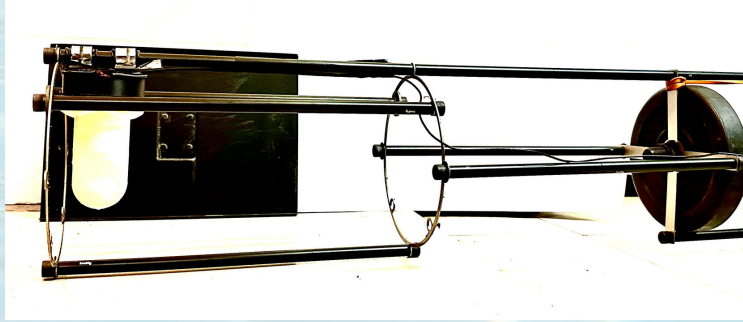


not waiting to be integrated into the global order—they are actively remaking it. The Sahel is not just a crisis zone—it is a mirror. And what it reflects will define Africa's trajectory in the 21st century.

*(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 Herald.)*

## MAJOR HIGHLIGHTS

- *Sahel coups reflect decades of economic disenfranchisement and postcolonial power struggles.*
- *ECOWAS influence wanes as Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso form Alliance of Sahel States.*
- *Russia's Wagner Group gains ground, displacing Western troops with direct combat engagement.*
- *Youth-led, digitally connected generation reshapes African political agency and global engagement.*
- *Sahel instability threatens resources, migration control, and continental economic integration.*



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- Detection and tracking of marine aquatic life, ocean noise measurements



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# GLOBAL INFLUENCER

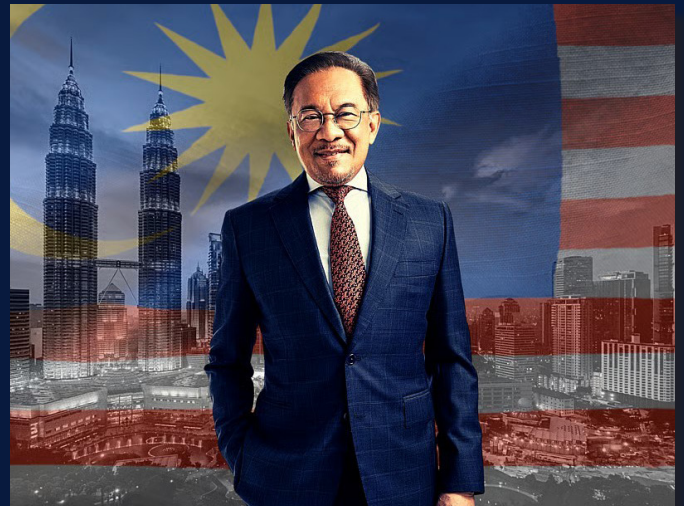
## ANWAR IBRAHIM: ASEAN'S GLOBAL

NEWS ANALYTICS | Special Coverage

Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim has long been recognised as a transformative leader in Southeast Asian politics. Since ascending to the premiership in November 2022 alongside the finance ministry and chairmanship of Pakatan Harapan, Anwar has skilfully combined economic stewardship with visionary diplomacy. But it is his latest success as ASEAN Chair, facilitating a high-stakes ceasefire between Thailand and Cambodia, that truly cements his standing as a global influencer.

### A SWIFT RESPONSE TO AN ESCALATING CRISIS

In late July 2025, violent border clashes between Thailand and Cambodia escalated into the deadliest confrontation in over a decade, leaving dozens dead and hundreds of thousands displaced. As tensions mounted, Anwar swiftly intervened. Drawing on his dual role as Malaysian Prime Minister and ASEAN Chair, he opened Malaysia's official residence in Putrajaya to host both leaders, offering a neutral and trusted platform for dialogue.



What followed was an arresting example of diplomatic leadership: on July 28, Thailand and Cambodia agreed to an “immediate and unconditional ceasefire,” announced personally by Anwar, effective at midnight. This breakthrough moment showcased ASEAN’s convening power and proved that collective regional action remains vital despite criticism of the bloc’s handling of other crises.

### ASEAN AFFIRMED AS A PEACE MODEL

At the Singapore Rajaratnam School of International Studies, analysts heralded the outcome as a “rare diplomatic success” for ASEAN, praising Anwar’s ability to create “political space for de-escalation”. Under his stewardship, the bloc demonstrated that respectful dialogue and negotiation remain its strongest weapons, beyond grand geopolitics or coercive tactics.

Anwar himself framed the ceasefire as “concrete evidence of ASEAN’s diplomatic strength,” crediting consensus-building, negotiation, and humanitarian principles, and calling for shared commitment to regional stability.

The ceasefire negotiations in Malaysia were co-organised by the U.S., with China observing, lending the talks both urgency and legitimacy. U.S. President Donald Trump exerted additional influence by threatening to delay trade agreements and impose tariffs unless peace was achieved, pushing both nations to the negotiation table.

Following the ceasefire, global leaders ranged from Indonesia’s President Prabowo Subianto, who personally congratulated Anwar for leveraging ASEAN’s platform to broker peace, to U.S. and Chinese envoys, all recognising the Malaysian leader’s deft diplomatic handling.

# OF THE MONTH

## INFLUENCER AND PEACEMAKER

Anwar's peace-building work did not end with the ceasefire announcement. By early August, Malaysia continued coordinating subsequent steps, including a General Border Committee meeting in Kuala Lumpur to formalize a permanent ceasefire, rebuild trust, and ensure civilian safety, without requiring a full-scale ASEAN intervention.

He also facilitated preliminary meetings between the defence ministers of both countries to define enforcement protocols for border security. These pragmatic, follow-through measures reflect his deep understanding that true peace depends on structure, trust, and regional cooperation.

### ASEAN DIPLOMACY

Through his handling of this crisis, Anwar Ibrahim emerges as more than a national leader—he embodies the role of a global influencer whose actions reverberate beyond borders. His use of diplomatic channels, willingness to host both major and minor powers, and emphasis on ASEAN's institutional capacity highlight his distinct style: one rooted in moderation, regionalism, and moral clarity.

By balancing ASEAN's collective authority with international buy-in, Anwar offered a model for conflict resolution in a multipolar world. His perseverance with follow-up diplomacy reinforces that peace demands both headlines and hard work.

### THE GLOBAL IMPLICATIONS

- His leadership moment underscores that ASEAN can still deliver under capable stewardship, renewing faith in regionalism and soft power.
- Malaysia, under Anwar, demonstrated its value as a neutral, trusted host capable of bringing longstanding adversaries to the table.
- By securing U.S. and Chinese involvement, without sacrificing ASEAN autonomy, Anwar crafted a rare synergy between regional and global diplomacy.
- Anwar's framing of the ceasefire around humanitarian urgency and regional commitment sets a tonal benchmark for 21st-century leadership.

Anwar Ibrahim's mediation in the Thailand–Cambodia conflict marks more than a regional success; it signals a global shift in diplomacy. At a time when multilateral institutions like the UN and NATO falter beyond their traditional spheres, Anwar's leadership highlights the power of regional solutions with global consequences. By balancing ASEAN autonomy with U.S. and Chinese interests, he positioned Malaysia as a bridge between rival powers. His achievement underscores the rise of Asian-led diplomacy, where cooperative peacebuilding and moral authority often outweigh military or economic leverage in shaping stability within an increasingly multipolar world. Anwar Ibrahim's deft orchestration of the Thailand–Cambodia ceasefire stands out as a testament to quiet strength, resolve, and regional leadership. His role is a watershed moment both for ASEAN and global diplomacy, and paints him as a global influencer whose impact transcends his office. As the conflict fades, his example endures: peace broker, ASEAN champion, and visionary statesman in an era clamouring for both clarity and compromise.

# BRICS AND BEYOND: INDIA'S BALANCING ACT FOR STRATEGIC AUTONOMY

## DIPLOMACY

*As India assumes the BRICS presidency next year, experts from New Delhi to São Paulo reveal how the world's largest democracy faces a difficult choice: balance strategic autonomy between East and West, or risk fracturing the Global South's most ambitious challenge to Western dominance. With an \$85 billion trade deficit with China and growing pressure from both Washington and Beijing, India's next moves will determine whether BRICS becomes a genuine multipolar force or collapses under the weight of great power rivalry.*



**RICARDO MARTINS | CURITIBA, BRAZIL**  
**LATIN AMERICA CORRESPONDENT, NEWS ANALYTICS**

Indian geopolitical analyst Musharraf Khan pulls up trade statistics, as the numbers tell a story that encapsulates India's fundamental BRICS dilemma. "India's ballooning trade deficit with China, over \$85 billion in FY2024, raises a harder question: who's really gaining from this platform?" he asks, his reasoning carrying the weight of someone who has watched India's strategic calculations evolve in real time.

This question lies at the heart of India's complex relationship with BRICS, a relationship that has become even more

complicated as the bloc expanded beyond its original five members to include new partners across Latin America, Africa, and Asia, coming under close scrutiny by U.S. President Donald Trump.

From conversations with experts across five continents—ranging from Brazilian sustainability advocates to Russian institutional analysts, from Emirati strategic thinkers to Dutch political observers—a clear picture emerges of India as the critical swing player, whose choices will determine



whether BRICS evolves into a genuine multipolar force or fractures under the weight of its internal contradictions.

## BENEFITS VS ASYMMETRIES

Khan's analysis reveals the sophisticated calculus behind India's BRICS engagement. "BRICS offers India a platform for strategic leverage, but the benefits are offset by deep structural constraints," he explains, presenting data that



shows China's overwhelming dominance within the bloc. The New Development Bank offers alternative financing when "Western capital is drying up," yet the fundamental economic asymmetry with China "casts a long shadow over any vision of equitable South–South cooperation."

From another perspective, strategic studies expert Soumyajit Gupta at the National Defence University presents India's advantages within BRICS with characteristic academic precision. India arrives with "a well-furnished toolkit: diplomatic clout, fintech innovations, and a track record in conflict mediation," he argues. The country's digital achievements, such as UPI's ubiquity, Aadhaar's reach, and the Open Network for Digital Commerce, offer "a blueprint for modernising BRICS' payment architecture" that could benefit the entire bloc.

Yet Gupta acknowledges the elephant in the room: "China accounts for more than half of all intra-BRICS trade, and every member runs a trade deficit with Beijing." This economic reality enables China to "shape BRICS agendas to its advantage, potentially sidelining initiatives that India prioritises." The challenge for India becomes how to leverage its technological and diplomatic assets while preventing Chinese economic dominance from translating into institutional control.

***India's "non-Western, not anti-West" stance keeps ties open, enabling BRICS engagement while preserving vital partnerships with the US, Japan, and Australia through the Quad.***

## THE POST-GALWAN REALITY

India's approach to BRICS cannot be understood without considering the dramatic shift in India–China relations following the 2020 Galwan Valley clashes. Khan describes this transformation with clinical precision: "The post-Galwan shift in India's China policy has been stark, marked by hedging, hard balancing, and a turn to minilateral forums like Quad and I2U2."

This shift fundamentally altered India's BRICS calculus. "Delhi stays in BRICS for two reasons: strategy, and survival," Khan explains. "The grouping allows for diplomatic engagement with China under structured constraints, but it does not resolve the core geopolitical distrust." India's continued participation becomes less about trust-building and more about preventing China from completely dominating Global South narratives.

The sophistication of India's approach lies in what Foreign Minister S. Jaishankar famously describes as being "non-Western, but not anti-West." Khan elaborates: "That identity, non-Western, not anti-West, keeps doors open both ways. But it only works if BRICS stays grounded in outcomes, not ideology." This positioning allows India to simultaneously engage with BRICS while maintaining critical partnerships with the United States, Japan, and Australia through the Quad.



## DEMOCRATIC PRESSURES

Multiple Indian respondents note "cautiously supportive" public sentiment toward deeper BRICS ties, driven by expectations of economic gains and strategic partnerships, particularly with China. Yet this support comes with caveats.

As put by Manu Bhat, "Indians, albeit worried about China, are in favour of BRICS as a way to place ourselves in the geopolitical sphere." The public sees BRICS membership as advancing national interests through increased investment and strengthened strategic partnerships. However, concerns linger about China's dominance and whether tangible benefits will materialise, especially given India's complex relationship

with Pakistan, another BRICS aspirant that India's position within the bloc helps to exclude.

The democratic dimension also influences India's approach to BRICS expansion. Unlike authoritarian members who can make rapid strategic pivots, India must consider domestic opinion, parliamentary debates, and media scrutiny of its international commitments. This democratic accountability creates both constraints and legitimacy that distinguish India's participation, along with some others, from other BRICS members.



## THE INSTITUTIONAL CHALLENGE

Despite economic asymmetries, India brings unique institutional innovations to BRICS that could reshape the bloc's trajectory. Gupta highlights India's "fintech triumphs, UPI's ubiquity and the digital rupee pilot" as offering concrete alternatives to Chinese-dominated payment systems. While China and Russia "champion de-dollarization outright, India can champion a more incremental approach" through digital infrastructure development.

This technological leadership extends beyond payments to governance platforms. India's experience with digital identity systems, e-governance platforms, and digital public goods provides models for other developing nations seeking technological sovereignty. As one expert notes, India's ability to "take UPI, Aadhaar, and ONDC global" represents "a move that's promising, but internal gaps in state capacity and federal coordination limit its scalability."

The challenge lies in converting technological innovation into institutional influence. Gupta warns that "showcasing is easier than scaling," and India must strengthen domestic foundations to globalise its innovations effectively. Success would position India as an alternative to Chinese technological models while offering developing nations options beyond Western platforms.

## REGIONAL COMPLEXITIES

India's BRICS engagement cannot be separated from broader regional dynamics, particularly the Pakistan relationship. Pakistani analyst Khalid Mahmood acknowledges that "India is a founding BRICS member and has significant clout in the group. Ongoing Pakistan-India tensions limit

the possibility of Pakistan joining BRICS shortly."

This dynamic gives India effective veto power over regional expansion, allowing it to shape BRICS' South Asian footprint. Yet it also creates responsibilities: India must balance its strategic interests with BRICS' broader Global South solidarity goals. Too aggressive use of this veto could undermine India's credibility as a leader of developing nations.

The expansion to include countries like Iran adds another layer of complexity. India maintains important economic ties with Iran while navigating U.S. sanctions and regional security concerns. As one analyst notes, Iran's inclusion "brings in geopolitical baggage related to U.S. sanctions, regional proxy conflicts, and its role in the Israel-Palestine crisis" that complicates consensus-building.

BRICS nations do not look favourably on India's close alignment with Israel. This position risks turning public opinion across the Global South against India, where the Palestinian cause is widely seen as one of the most pressing and symbolic anti-colonial struggles of our time.

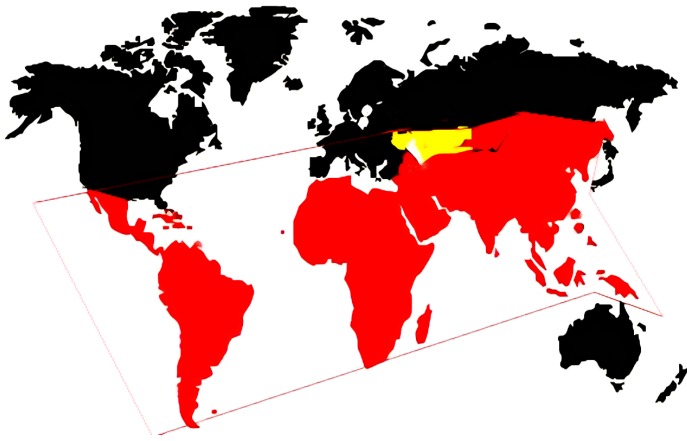
*India's BRICS presidency draws global anticipation and caution, testing its skill in balancing Western ties, Quad commitments, and Global South aspirations while preserving strategic autonomy.*



## INDIA'S PRESIDENTIAL TEST

As India assumes the BRICS presidency next year, experts across the spectrum identify this as a decisive moment for both the country and the bloc. Moroccan analyst Yassine El Bouchikhi frames the stakes starkly: "India, the next chairman of the BRICS, must clearly decide on its strategic position: either to be an important vassal of the West or to build independence with the BRICS and overcome its lack of trust in China and Russia."

This framing, while perhaps overstated, captures the pressure India faces to provide clearer strategic direction. Brazilian sustainability expert Claudya Piazero emphasizes that



multipolarity only works if India and other democratic members can "strengthen multipolarity" by keeping BRICS "open, inclusive, and focused on agenda setting" rather than allowing it to "crystallise into a tightly aligned bloc opposing Western institutions."

Russian expert Andrey Kortunov offers a more pragmatic assessment, noting that India's leadership could help BRICS evolve from "a high-level political club into one of the indispensable building blocks for the emerging world order." Success requires India to balance its domestic priorities with bloc cohesion while managing both Chinese dominance and Western pressure.

## THE GLOBAL STAKES

India's BRICS choices carry implications far beyond bilateral relationships. As the world's largest democracy and fastest-growing major economy, India's strategic direction influences broader patterns of global alignment. Success in balancing BRICS engagement with Western partnerships could provide a model for other middle powers seeking strategic autonomy.

Yet failure risks validating zero-sum approaches that push the world toward renewed bipolarity. Khan concludes with characteristic precision: "If BRICS can remain a platform for issue-based cooperation on tech governance, climate resilience, or health equity, India will continue to play a shaping role. If not, the logic of strategic diversification may push India toward a quieter disengagement."

India's upcoming BRICS presidency is being watched with a mix of expectation and unease, particularly by fellow BRICS members and across the Global South. Its ability to navigate competing pressures from its Western partnerships and Quad commitments to the collective aspirations of the Global South will test its strategic autonomy and balancing act.



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## MAJOR HIGHLIGHTS

- *India faces BRICS challenge, balancing East-West ties while managing China trade deficit.*
- *Experts highlight India's technological, diplomatic, and institutional strengths within BRICS.*
- *Post-Galwan tensions drive India's strategic hedging and cautious engagement with China.*
- *Regional dynamics, including Pakistan and Iran, complicate BRICS expansion and consensus.*
- *India's 2025 BRICS presidency will test its leadership, autonomy, and bloc cohesion.*

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# BATTLING HEADWINDS, INDIA FACES REGIONAL CROSSCURRENTS

## NEIGHBOURHOOD

*India's neighbourhood is a cauldron of volatility, from Taliban-led instability and terror threats in Afghanistan to Nepal's political churn and China's expanding sway. Even Bhutan's tentative outreach to Beijing, coupled with boundary disputes, amplifies strategic anxieties most starkly seen in the post-Doklam crisis that threatens India's vulnerable Siliguri corridor.*



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India, in contemporary times, is slowly and gradually transforming itself from a regional power to a consequential power in the international arena, characterised by conflict and cooperation. The Post-Cold War world, which has seen a transition from a unipolar world order to a multipolar configuration, has reflected an intensified power struggle among the aspirant players. These times are also epitomised by the decline of Western dominance, Russia's assertiveness, China's ever-increasing footprint across the developing world, weakened multilateralism, and globalisation. These times present both opportunities and complexities to India. The country's economic development indicators, skilled manpower, demography, technological outreach, diplomatic postures, and military capabilities have enhanced its global

profile, creating an environment which enabled India to play a proactive role in shaping global norms and voicing the global south. India's economic and strategic relevance has grown manifold.

Yet India has been continuously facing concerns from its neighbourhood in the competitive geopolitical environment. Border and military tensions with China, Pakistan and Bangladesh, political tensions with Nepal and the Maldives, ever-increasing threats from non-state actors, terrorism, political instability, economic problems posing new traditional and non-traditional threats, and constantly testing India's preparedness and regional outreach. These developments are compounded by the weakened space for regional cooperation in South Asia and the constrained India's diplomatic leverage.



## GEOPOLITICAL INFLUX

India's neighbourhood presents an intricate web of challenges. The absence of an inclusive government since the Taliban returned to power in Afghanistan in 2021, the presence of terror groups, and the lack of economic stability pose a direct threat to regional peace. For India, these developments have resulted in a significant setback to its developmental and diplomatic investments in Afghanistan. The strategic



implications include diminished critical depth and heightened fears of radicalisation spilling over into the wider South Asian region.

In Nepal, India contends with persistent political instability, a surge in nationalist sentiment, and increasing Chinese influence through political and economic engagements. Although Bhutan has long remained a steadfast partner, its recent overtures towards establishing diplomatic relations with China and the unresolved boundary issues have introduced a new layer of strategic concern for India, which was visible in the post Doklam crisis, particularly the threatened Siliguri corridor.

Sri Lanka's recent economic collapse laid bare the fragility of India's regional periphery. India's swift economic assistance reinforced its position as a reliable partner. However, China's continuing influence, particularly through loans and infrastructure investments, underscores a sustained challenge to India's long-term engagement strategy in Sri Lanka.

Myanmar's 2021 military coup and subsequent violent conflict between the Army and resisting militant forces have destabilised border regions and disrupted connectivity projects critical to India's Act East Policy. Political turnaround in Bangladesh has destabilised the bilateral relations, giving space for a Pakistan, Bangladesh, and China nexus, making India's position more delicate in the sub-regional equation.

Pakistan continues to pose a traditional security threat. Cross-border terrorism, diplomatic deadlock, and its alignment with China and Turkey, which was visible during Operation Sindoor, have intensified India's security dilemmas. These interconnected developments paint a picture of a region in flux, requiring India to continuously recalibrate its neighbourhood

diplomacy to safeguard its interests, manage emerging crises, and compete with external powers.

*India has shifted from reactive to assertive regional engagement, adopting a balanced 'Neighbourhood First' policy focused on diplomacy, partnerships, and capacity-building amid external interventions and Chinese influence.*

## SHIFTING GLOBAL ORDER

In this era of shifting power dynamics, international instabilities and interests shown by the extra-regional powers, India's neighbourhood is witnessing significant geopolitical flux. Most visible activities are by China, which has put up a significant challenge for India, through the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), both on land and on sea. From 60 billion USD energy, transport, shipping infrastructure investments in Pakistan, to about 12 billion USD airport, port, and energy development projects in Sri Lanka, and road projects in Nepal, to canal development, port and refineries in Bangladesh to its ever growing presence in other neighbouring countries including Maldives, Myanmar and Thailand, China's presence is deepening, often at the cost of India's traditional influence. The military standoff in eastern Ladakh since 2020 underscores the strategic tension between the two Asian giants and signals a long-term challenge to India's northern borders.



India's maritime sphere is becoming increasingly crucial amid rising strategic rivalries, especially in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR), which is central to its trade and security. China's expanding naval footprint via dual-use ports, surveillance capabilities, and bases like Djibouti in northern Africa, close to the Bab-el-Mandab strait and the Gulf of Aden, is close to shipping lines that India banks on for its trade and energy supplies, signalling an intent to reshape regional maritime dynamics. Its growing presence in Gwadar and Hambantota raises concerns over an encirclement strategy aimed at undermining India's traditional maritime influence.

In response, India is strengthening its naval posture, boosting maritime domain awareness, and deepening partnerships, particularly through the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue with the U.S., Japan, and Australia. Though informal, the Quad facilitates coordination on navigation rights, maritime security, and infrastructure development. Smaller island nations, such as the Maldives and Seychelles, have also become strategically significant, prompting India to invest

Simultaneously, India has adapted to the limitations of multilateral mechanisms like SAARC by strengthening regional cooperation through alternative platforms. Forums such as Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal (BBIN) sub-regional cooperation, Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC), and the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) offer opportunities to collaborate on energy, trade, disaster relief, maritime security, and environmental issues. These institutions allow India to sidestep political deadlocks while promoting functional regionalism and inclusive growth. The best example of such successful cooperation can be seen in the electricity trade between the BBIN countries.



in developmental cooperation and capacity-building without appearing overbearing. Simultaneously, global powers are increasingly active in the region, often bypassing India. Without regional coherence, India's global ambitions through forums like G20 or BRICS risk being undercut. Strengthening neighbourhood ties is therefore critical to sustaining India's rise.

In the maritime domain, India has strengthened its ties with strategically important island nations, Sri Lanka, Mauritius, and Seychelles, through joint naval exercises, coastal radar systems, and defence infrastructure. Indian Navy's operations against pirates and hijackers have provided a safety network to the smaller island countries in the Arabian and the Bay of Bengal seas. These moves align with India's broader ambition to act as a "net security provider" in the Indian Ocean Region, reinforcing its image as a responsible power committed to regional stability.

## INDIA'S RESPONSES

India's approach to regional challenges has evolved from cautious reactivity to a more purposeful and assertive engagement. Confronted with a complex strategic environment marked by external interventions, internal instability in neighbouring states, and the increasing penetration of adversaries like China, India has adopted a carefully balanced posture. Central to this shift is the "Neighbourhood First" policy, which prioritises stabilising ties with immediate neighbours through sustained high-level diplomacy, development partnerships, and capacity-building initiatives.

Beyond the immediate neighbourhood, India's engagement with like-minded powers through forums like the Quad underscores its commitment to a free, open, and rules-based Indo-Pacific. However, India has maintained its strategic



***India engages like-minded partners through forums like the Quad, balancing Indo-Pacific commitments with strategic autonomy, while asserting leadership globally via G20, BRICS, and Global South initiatives.***

India's assistance to Sri Lanka during its economic crisis, delivered through credit lines, food, fuel, and medicine, demonstrated not just responsiveness but also strategic depth, countering perceptions of Chinese dominance. In other instances, India's development diplomacy has grown more structured, incorporating training programmes, infrastructure support, and digital connectivity across Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, and the Maldives. These efforts aim to project India as a dependable partner, fostering mutual benefit rather than dependency.

autonomy, ensuring that such alignments do not undermine its independent foreign policy choices. At the global level, India has assumed an increasingly assertive role, using platforms like the G20, BRICS, and the Voice of Global South Summit to champion issues of equity, climate justice, and inclusive growth.

## REGIONAL CREDIBILITY

Still, India's outreach is not without its shortcomings. Bureaucratic delays, limited institutional capacity, and



occasional political spats have at times blunted the impact of its initiatives. Yet, recent trends indicate a growing recognition that India's global aspirations must be underpinned by regional credibility. In this context, India's focus on connectivity, people-centric development, and responsive diplomacy serves both strategic and normative purposes. Going forward, India's regional policy must integrate hard security concerns with soft power engagement. Sustained credibility will depend not only on aid or investments but also on the quality of

partnerships it nurtures. In a volatile and competitive regional order, India's ability to lead through example by demonstrating consistency, responsiveness, and a commitment to shared values will determine its success in both regional and global arenas.



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## MAJOR HIGHLIGHTS

- *India is transitioning from a regional to a consequential global power amid multipolar competition.*
- *Political instability, terrorism, Chinese influence, and strained ties with neighbours complicate India's regional diplomacy.*
- *BRI investments and military assertiveness are eroding India's traditional influence in South Asia and the IOR.*
- *India balances security, diplomacy, and development via Neighbourhood First, Quad, forums.*
- *India must blend hard security with soft power to sustain credibility and global ambitions.*



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# IN THE SPOTLIGHT

## TRUMP-PUTIN ALASKA SUMMIT ENDS WITHOUT UKRAINE PEACE DEAL



President Donald Trump failed on August 15th to secure an agreement from Vladimir Putin to end Russia's war in Ukraine, marking a setback in his most ambitious effort yet to halt the conflict — even after extending a red-carpet welcome to the Russian leader. “There’s no deal until there’s a deal,” Trump said following the talks, after Putin claimed the two had reached an “understanding” on Ukraine and cautioned Europe not to “torpedo the nascent progress”. Trump added that he planned to call Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and European leaders to brief them on the discussions. The meeting underscored Trump’s complicated stance: he has long expressed admiration for Putin and questioned U.S. aid to Ukraine, yet sought to portray himself as a dealmaker capable of brokering peace.

## TRUMP JUSTIFIES TARIFFS ON INDIA FOR RUSSIAN OIL



US President Donald Trump claimed that Russia has lost India as an oil customer after Washington imposed penalties on New Delhi for continuing purchases, but suggested he may hold off on similar secondary tariffs against other nations still buying Russian crude. Trump’s remarks come even as New Delhi has yet to confirm any suspension of imports from Moscow. Last month, the US announced a 25% duty on Indian goods in addition to an existing 25% tariff, with the new measure set to take effect on August 27. Washington has warned that sanctions on Moscow—and secondary sanctions on countries purchasing Russian oil—would follow if no progress is made toward ending the war in Ukraine. India and China remain Russia’s two biggest oil buyers.

## US TRACKING AI CHIP SHIPMENTS TO STOP FLOW TO CHINA



U.S. authorities have secretly embedded location-tracking devices in certain high-risk shipments of advanced chips to monitor potential illegal diversion to China, according to two people with direct knowledge of the previously undisclosed tactic. The measure targets only select shipments already under investigation and is intended to detect AI chips being rerouted to destinations under U.S. export restrictions. The practice highlights the lengths Washington is going to enforce its semiconductor export controls on China, even as the Trump administration moves to ease some restrictions on Beijing’s access to advanced American chip technology.

## TRUMP PUSHES BACK CHINA TARIFF DEADLINE



U.S. President Donald Trump has extended the tariff truce with China by 90 days, delaying steep tariff hikes and averting triple-digit duties on Chinese goods ahead of the crucial holiday shopping season, a White House official said Monday. Trump signed the executive order pushing the deadline to mid-November, shortly after giving a noncommittal response to reporters about maintaining lower rates. On Sunday, he demanded that China quadruple its purchases of

U.S. soybeans, though it remains unclear if Beijing agreed. The extension preserves lower tariffs during the seasonal import surge for Christmas goods such as electronics, clothing, and toys.

## YEARS OF WORK AT 'RISK': SENATOR BLASTS TRUMP'S INDIA TARIFF



Senior U.S. Congressman Gregory Meeks has sharply criticised President Donald Trump for imposing punitive tariffs on India over its purchase of Russian oil. Meeks, a Democrat, said the President's latest "tariff tantrum" threatens to undo more than two decades of efforts to strengthen the U.S.–India partnership. "We have deep strategic, economic, and people-to-people ties. Concerns should be addressed in a mutually respectful way consistent with our democratic values," he said, according to the House committee overseeing foreign policy. His remarks underscore growing political pushback in Washington against Trump's aggressive trade measures toward key allies.

## BEIJING'S RARE EARTH LIMITS HURTS US MILITARY SUPPLY LINES



China's export restrictions on critical minerals are disrupting Western defence manufacturing, forcing suppliers to seek alternative sources and pushing up industry costs. The US media reports that a U.S. drone-parts maker supplying the Army has faced delays of up to two months due to a shortage of rare earth magnets. These magnets, essential for drone motors, missile guidance, jet engines, and satellites, have surged in price—some materials now cost five times more, while samarium for jet engines has been offered at 60 times its usual rate. China, supplying 90% of global rare earths, tightened exports amid rising U.S.–China trade tensions.

## IRAN ESTABLISHES TOP DEFENCE BODY AFTER ISRAELI ASSAULTS



Iran has established a new Supreme National Defence Council following June attacks by Israel and the U.S., state media reported Monday. Formed by the Supreme National Security Council, the body will be led by President Masoud Pezeshkian and tasked with strengthening Iran's defence strategies and armed forces. Members will include the parliament speaker, judiciary chief, military commanders, and key ministries, with defence, intelligence, and foreign affairs expected to join. The move comes after a 12-day air war that killed nearly 1,100 people, including senior military leaders, and targeted nuclear sites. A similar council existed during the Iran–Iraq war of the 1980s.

## MOSCOW TO MAR-A-LAGO, HOW MEDVEDEV'S WORDS STIRRED US



Former Russian President Dmitry Medvedev is at the heart of a heated dispute with U.S. President Donald Trump after making provocative remarks on nuclear weapons and the Ukraine war. Once viewed as a symbol of potential reform, Medvedev rose to Russia's presidency in 2008, succeeding Vladimir Putin, who was then barred from running due to term limits. While Medvedev served as president for four years, Putin assumed the role of prime minister, yet many observers believed he remained the country's true power broker. Medvedev's recent comments have reignited international tensions, highlighting his shift from reformist hope to staunch Kremlin loyalist.

# THAILAND AND CAMBODIA: WHEN HISTORY TURNS INTO A BATTLEFIELD

## TIMEPIECE

*Skirmishes along the Thai-Cambodian border have intensified since stalled May 2025 talks on border demarcation. Competing claims over ancient temple symbols of national identity fuel nationalist tensions. Cambodia sees Prasat Ta Muen Thom as Khmer grandeur; Thailand views it as part of its historic sphere. ICJ rulings, including 2013's Preah Vihear clarification, have failed to ease grievances, which leaders exploit politically.*



**M A HOSSAIN | DHAKA, BANGLADESH.**  
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Border disputes in Southeast Asia rarely stay local. They resurface time and again, not only due to unresolved cartographic legacies but because they are tightly woven with questions of identity, nationalism, and sovereignty. The renewed violence between Thailand and Cambodia, which reignited on July 24, 2025, near the ancient Prasat Ta Muen Thom temple, is proving to be more than just another flare-up. It's a troubling sign that unresolved historical grievances, when coupled with regional fragmentation and international opportunism, can create a dangerous geopolitical tinderbox.

The current escalation began with a landmine explosion in the Dangrek Mountains, injuring several Thai soldiers patrolling an area marked by both countries as a "temporary demarcation line." Thailand swiftly installed barbed wire, prompting a fiery denunciation from Phnom Penh. When a Cambodian forward outpost was struck by artillery, Bangkok claimed it was a misfire. Phnom Penh responded by launching BM-21 rocket attacks on Thai villages. The border clashes have already claimed over 30 lives, a grim figure that underscores the deadly consequences of nationalist brinkmanship. The



conflict also displaced over 138,000 people in Thailand and more than 35,000 in Cambodia.

What makes this round of fighting particularly alarming is the deployment of Thailand's F-16 fighter jets against Cambodian radar installations, an escalation not seen even during the 2011 Preah Vihear clashes. In return, Cambodia allegedly activated Chinese-supplied surface-to-air batteries near Anlong Veng, signalling a dangerous slide toward regional militarisation with potentially global consequences.



## PAST GRIEVANCES, PRESENT DANGERS

This latest confrontation is not an isolated event. Skirmishes along the Thai-Cambodian border have increased since May 2025, when diplomatic talks over border demarcation stalled yet again. Both countries continue to cling to competing narratives about ancient temples as emblems of national identity. For Cambodia, Prasat Ta Muen Thom and similar sites represent the grandeur of the Khmer Empire. For Thailand, they are relics of a cultural sphere once shaped by Thai influence. These symbolic stakes are politically toxic in both capitals.

Efforts to resolve the issue through the International Court of Justice (ICJ) have yielded little progress. Even prior rulings, such as the ICJ's 2013 clarification of the Preah Vihear verdict, have done little to change nationalist attitudes on the ground. Instead, historical grievances are being cynically repurposed into nationalist fuel—tools of manipulation for leaders grappling with fragile mandates.

## THE REGIONAL LANDSCAPE

What distinguishes 2025 from 2011 is the increasingly fragmented state of ASEAN. Internal divisions over Myanmar's civil war, South China Sea disputes, and competing great-power influences have left the bloc adrift. Malaysia, traditionally reticent in such conflicts, has quietly stepped in. It has taken bold measures under ASEAN's Treaty of Amity and Cooperation and Regional Forum to mediate and bring the spiralling conflict to an end. Foreign Minister Mohamad Faizal Ibrahim offered to host backchannel talks between Thai and Cambodian military officials in Putrajaya, citing Malaysia's neutral stance and deepening trade relations with both countries.

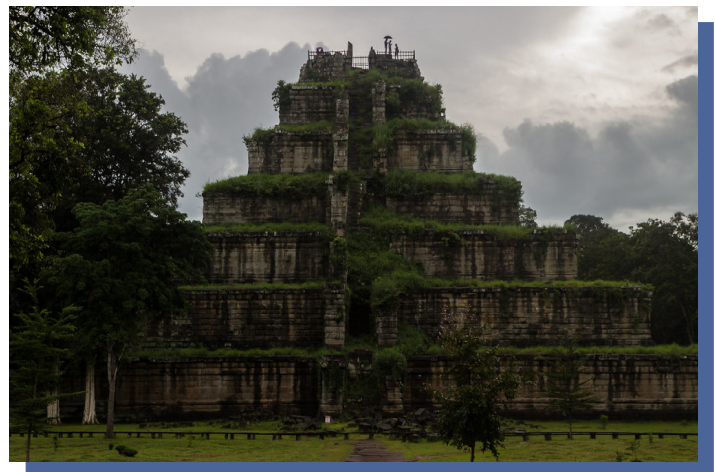
Malaysia officially confirmed the ceasefire between Thailand and Cambodia. Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim announced that the two countries agreed to an immediate and unconditional ceasefire effective from midnight on July 28, 2025, following mediation talks held in Malaysia. Anwar described this agreement as a vital first step toward restoring peace and security between the neighbours. Both Thai and Cambodian leaders met in Putrajaya to negotiate the ceasefire, with representatives from the United States and China also attending. Kuala Lumpur's role underscores a growing realisation that ASEAN's survival may depend on proactive middle-power diplomacy.

*Cambodia's growing defence ties with Beijing, including Ream drills, risk making the Thai-Cambodian dispute a proxy flashpoint, with Washington and Beijing poised to exploit openings.*

## TRUMP'S RETURN AND ITS REGIONAL IMPACTS

Donald Trump played a significant diplomatic role in helping to end the 2025 border clash between Thailand and Cambodia. He personally called both the acting Prime Minister of Thailand, Phumtham Wechayachai, and Cambodia's Prime Minister Hun Manet, urging them to negotiate a ceasefire to stop the escalating conflict. Trump approached his intervention as transactional coercion, leveraging trade threats rather than offering principled diplomacy, warning Thailand and Cambodia that the U.S. would suspend or impose punitive tariffs on goods from both countries if hostilities continued.

Trump publicly announced that, following his calls and ongoing dialogues, the two countries agreed to ceasefire talks and



ultimately reached an "immediate and unconditional" ceasefire agreement. Cambodia expressed strong appreciation for Trump's mediation, while Thailand noted a preference for bilateral talks but acknowledged the U.S.'s crucial role in moving the peace process forward.

The broader Indo-Pacific dynamics are also shaping how this conflict might evolve. The return of Donald Trump to the White House in January 2025 has significantly altered U.S. foreign policy posture in the region. Trump's transactional diplomacy and reduced interest in multilateralism have created a vacuum that others are eager to fill. His administration's pivot toward economic decoupling from China has revived older security arrangements in the region—Thailand's U.S.-backed



Cobra Gold exercises have resumed with greater intensity, and military aid is reportedly under review for expansion.

At the same time, Cambodia's deepening defence ties with Beijing—including recent joint drills near the Ream Naval Base—have turned the Thai-Cambodian dispute into a potential proxy flashpoint. While neither Washington nor Beijing appears eager to intervene directly, both are certainly watching closely, each prepared to extend influence should the opportunity arise.

## WHY THE CONFLICT MATTERS

What began as a localised land dispute now risks becoming a multi-layered crisis with economic, humanitarian, and strategic implications. Cross-border trade between Surin and Oddar Meanchey has collapsed, tourism is in freefall, and border communities now face abrupt economic ruin and insecurity.

The humanitarian toll is rising fast. More than 60 schools in Thailand's Sisaket province have been shuttered, and mobile hospitals have been set up to manage civilian casualties. Aid agencies fear a looming refugee spillover, especially as Myanmar's conflict has already saturated the region's ability to absorb displaced populations.

Meanwhile, both Thailand and Cambodia are increasing military procurement. Thailand recently signed a deal for Israeli-made Hermes 900 drones, while Cambodia is rumored to be acquiring Chinese radar systems. Left unchecked, this arms buildup could ignite a destabilising arms race that Southeast Asia is neither prepared for nor capable of surviving diplomatically.

## ASEAN AT A CROSSROADS

ASEAN is once again on trial not for its intentions, but for its capacity to act. It has institutional frameworks and peacebuilding platforms, but its non-interference principle remains a liability in fast-moving crises. ASEAN may offer a diplomatic stage, but without political courage from Bangkok and Phnom Penh, the curtain will fall on regional credibility.

If Thailand and Cambodia prioritise national pride over regional stability, they risk dragging the entire region into a slow-burning security dilemma. Malaysia's initiative is promising, but unless it gains momentum, it will likely remain a symbolic gesture.

History offers caution and a path to resolution. The 2011 clashes were eventually defused through a mix of legal arbitration and behind-the-scenes diplomacy. Even amid nationalist posturing, leaders on both sides knew when to step back. Today, that same balance of pressure and pragmatism must be rediscovered.

The domestic political stakes are high. Thailand's fragile coalition government, under pressure from ultranationalist voices, has little room to manoeuvre. Cambodia's Prime Minister, Hun Manet, still consolidating power after his father's long rule, is equally wary of appearing weak. Yet, the cost of escalation is far greater than the political risks of compromise.



*The region needs quiet, firm diplomacy, supported by ASEAN, neutral actors, and global powers, avoiding militarisation, while Trump's return increases urgency for independent regional solutions.*

## MODERN NEEDS, ANCIENT FAULT LINES

The border clashes between Thailand and Cambodia are more than a dispute over a temple; they are a test of regional



If both governments fail to rise to this moment, a mere border skirmish could calcify into a strategic fault line that haunts the Indo-Pacific for decades. The temples may be ancient, but the stakes are very much contemporary: peace, stability, and the future of a region that cannot afford another war of pride.



maturity. In an era defined by economic interdependence and geopolitical fluidity, clinging to century-old cartographic grievances is a recipe for instability.

What the region needs is quiet, firm diplomacy, backed not just by ASEAN but by constructive engagement from neutral actors like Malaysia and broader pressure from global powers to prevent further militarisation. Trump's return may embolden defence postures, but it also heightens the urgency for regional solutions free from great-power manipulation.

*(M. A. Hossain, senior correspondent from Bangladesh. He is a seasoned political and defence analyst on international affairs. He covers major developments in South Asia and the ASEAN Region for News Analytics. The views expressed by the author and any guest experts do not necessarily reflect the views of **The News Analytics Herald**.)*

## MAJOR HIGHLIGHTS

- *Skirmishes along Thai-Cambodian border have intensified since May 2025.*
- *Diplomatic talks on border demarcation remain stalled.*
- *Ancient temples symbolise competing national identities for both nations.*
- *ICJ rulings, including 2013 verdict, failed to ease tensions.*
- *Leaders exploit historical grievances to fuel nationalism and retain power.*

### FULL-AIRFRAME PARACHUTE RESCUE SYSTEM: A REVOLUTION IN AVIATION SAFETY:

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4. Reduced Crash Impact – Minimizes ground collision force.



# CARRIER OR CHAOS: SECURING THE WEST PHILIPPINE SEA

## WAR STRATEGY

*At the heart of the South China Sea dispute lies China's sweeping "nine-dash line" claim, overlapping waters of the Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia, and Brunei. International law grants each nation a 200-nautical-mile EEZ, a right upheld by a 2016 Hague ruling in Manila's favor. Yet Beijing rejected the verdict, fortifying contested islands and escalating regional tensions.*



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On August 11, 2025, a dangerous and troubling incident happened near Scarborough Shoal in the West Philippine Sea, showing how tense things have become in the region. A Chinese Coast Guard ship (CCG 3104) hit a Chinese warship (PLA Navy Ship 164) while both were trying to chase the BRP Suluan, a Philippine Coast Guard vessel. The BRP Suluan was on a peaceful mission, bringing fuel and supplies to Filipino fishermen in the Philippines' Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).

The Chinese Coast Guard ship tried to cut in front of the Philippine ship at high speed. But instead of stopping the

The video of the incident was quickly shared online and on the news, causing concern and anger around the world. This wasn't just a mistake—it showed the danger of poor communication, reckless behaviour, and rising tension in the area. It also showed why stronger protection, like aircraft carrier patrols, is now urgently needed in the West Philippine Sea.

Two days later, on August 13, 2025, the United States deployed two warships—the USS Higgins and the USS Cincinnati—to the vicinity of Scarborough Shoal (also referred to as Panatag or Bajo de Masinloc).



### AN AIRCRAFT CARRIER

An aircraft carrier is a huge warship that works like a floating airport. Fighter jets and helicopters can take off and land on it. These ships also have radars, missile defense systems, and space for thousands of crew members. Inside, there are control rooms, workshops, and even hospitals.

Aircraft carriers are important because they help a country:

- Show military strength and discourage threats.
- Protect allies and trade routes.
- Respond to natural disasters or conflicts.
- Train with other countries and keep peace.

BRP Suluan, it miscalculated and crashed into its own navy destroyer. The accident badly damaged the front of the coast guard ship and made it unusable for the time being. Even though they were the ones being chased, the Philippine crew offered medical help and assistance, but the Chinese crew did not respond.

Aircraft carriers usually don't travel alone. They move with other ships like destroyers, submarines, and supply boats. This group is called a carrier strike group, and it works together to defend the carrier and carry out missions. These groups are powerful and flexible, ready to respond to many situations.

*Aircraft carriers project power, deter aggression, and secure sea lanes. They protect allies like the Philippines, ensure global trade flows, and strengthen trust through joint drills and rapid response.*



## WHY IS THE NEED NOW

When an aircraft carrier is present, it sends a clear message: “We are watching, and we are ready.” This discourages countries like China from acting aggressively, because they know they might face a strong response. Aircraft carriers help smaller countries like the Philippines by showing support. They offer protection and quick help during emergencies or when there’s a threat.

Carriers patrol international waters to make sure no one country controls the sea. This helps keep trade and travel open for everyone, which is important for global stability. Carriers often take part in military exercises with allies. These joint drills help improve teamwork, build trust, and prepare everyone for real-life situations like natural disasters or security threats.

The United States has long had a strong presence in the Indo-Pacific region. Its carriers, like the USS Ronald Reagan, USS Carl Vinson, and USS Theodore Roosevelt, often patrol the West Philippine Sea. The U.S. carriers' patrols in the region carry an operational mandate to: Support allies like the Philippines, Japan, and Australia, Defend freedom of navigation and challenge illegal claims, Watch activities in the area and discourage aggression, and Promote peace and international law. The U.S. and the Philippines have a defence deal called the Enhanced Defence Cooperation Agreement (EDCA). This agreement allows U.S. troops to use some Philippine bases and helps with training and military aid.

## THE REASON FOR DISPUTE

This sea is rich in fish and marine life. Many Filipinos and other Southeast Asians depend on fishing for food and income. But Filipino fishermen often report being harassed by foreign ships, especially Chinese ones, even when they are fishing in Philippine waters.

Experts believe there are big deposits of oil and natural gas under the sea. These resources could help the Philippines become more energy-independent. China also wants these resources, which adds to the tension. The sea connects Southeast Asia and the Pacific Ocean. Controlling the sea gives a country military and surveillance power over the whole region. China has been building artificial islands and military bases here, which makes nearby countries nervous and increases the risk of conflict.

The main problem is over territory. China claims almost the entire South China Sea, using what it calls the “nine-dash line.” This claim overlaps with the waters of other countries, including the Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia, and Brunei. But according to international law, each country has the right to control the waters 200 nautical miles from its coast. This area is called the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). In 2016, an international court in The Hague ruled in favour of the Philippines, saying China's claims had no legal basis. But China rejected the ruling and continued building military bases on disputed islands.



*The Chinese ship collision chasing a Philippine vessel is a stark warning, reckless aggression fuels rising risks in the West Philippine Sea. Carriers deter, but aren't enough.*

## HOW CHINA RESPONDS

China sees foreign military ships near its claimed territory as a threat. In response to U.S. carrier patrols, China has also sent its own carriers, like the Liaoning and Shandong, and increased its naval exercises. Chinese coast guard and militia

ships are becoming more aggressive. They often try to block or scare away foreign vessels. Sometimes, these ships come dangerously close to others, increasing the risk of accidents. The August 11 collision shows that even China's own forces are facing problems from their aggressive approach. While China says its actions are defensive, many countries and experts disagree, saying its moves break international law and raise tensions.

- The Philippines should improve its own military so it can defend its waters and people.

The collision between two Chinese ships while chasing a Philippine vessel is a serious warning. It shows how dangerous things have become in the West Philippine Sea. It highlights the risks of poor communication and aggressive actions.

The real path to peace involves smart leadership, strong alliances, and a deep respect for international law. The West Philippine Sea is not just a place of conflict; it is home to fishermen, trade routes, and hope for the future. Keeping it safe and open is a responsibility shared by all.



## SERIOUS WARNING

To make the region safer and more peaceful, several actions would prove extremely valuable:-

- Countries should have regular talks to prevent misunderstandings and avoid conflict.
- Clear rules for how ships behave can stop accidents and reduce tension.
- Work on shared projects like environmental protection, disaster response, and research.

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## MAJOR HIGHLIGHTS

- *Chinese coast guard collides with own warship while chasing a Philippine vessel.*
- *Incident highlights reckless manoeuvres, miscommunication, and rising West Philippine Sea tensions.*
- *U.S. responds by deploying warships to Scarborough Shoal after collision.*
- *Aircraft carriers, crucial for deterrence, sea control, and allied protection.*
- *Dispute centres on China's expansive claims rejected by 2016 Hague ruling.*



### 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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## Comments on News Analytics DnD Forum's post of: Trump's Tariff Deadline.



**Soubh (Dr.) Badr**

**Civil Infrastructure Design, Hydraulics, Hydrology and Groundwater lead Specialist | Dubai, United Arab Emirates**

World living and witnessing Real Ali Baba and 40 thieves

**Robert Graniere**

**Fort Lauderdale | Florida | USA**

Ah ah it seems that we are moving toward a surrender. High quality deals take a long time to negotiate. He in essence, admitted that when he said the US focus has moved away from immediate deals to long term gains. In short, the claim that the threat of tariffs causes countries to flock to seal America First Deals turned out to be bogus.



**Mark Bruhn**

**Columbia Falls | Montana | United States**

A Room Full of Incompetent Governing.



**Stan Campbell**

**Mountain Man / Guitar Picker / Car Enthusiast  
Blairsville, Georgia, United States**

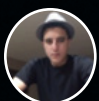
Release The Epstein Files

## Comments on News Analytics DnD Forum's post of: Israel Orders All Intel Troops to Learn Arabic

**Ayman Hatkwa**

**President Northren Group | Professional Services MENA Region  
Fort Worth Metroplex | Dallas | USA**

Great idea to get all these Europeans and Americans pretending to be Semites to learn their regions languages and religions.



**Solomon Drury**

**Refugee Resettlement Specialist  
Greater Phoenix Area | USA**

India should focus on polishing their own image!



# THE NEXT BIG

## 33RD INTERNATIONAL DEFENCE INDUSTRY EXHIBITION MSPO 2025



The International Defence Industry Exhibition (MSPO), one of Europe's most influential defence events, returns in 2025 from 02-05 Sep, bringing together military leaders, global defence companies, and strategic partners. Hosted annually under the Honorary Auspices of the President of Poland, MSPO features cutting-edge military technology, strategic forums, and the renowned Armed Forces Exhibition. Organised with strong support from the Ministry of National Defence and the Polish Armaments Group, the event fosters innovation and collaboration. Highlights include the prestigious DEFENDER awards and key government recognitions. MSPO continues to shape global defence dialogue and multi-million PLN partnerships across the sector.

*Official site:* <https://www.targikielce.pl/en/mspo>

## DEFCROS 2025



In a world where security challenges are rapidly evolving, DEFCROS 2025 emerges as a key platform for innovation, dialogue, and collaboration. It is scheduled to be held from 11-12 September in Croatia. As a leading defence and public safety expo in the region, it brings together government officials, law enforcement, military leaders, private security experts, and industry innovators. Focusing on dual-use and crossover technologies, DEFCROS highlights solutions that bridge military, police, and civilian applications. By connecting manufacturers, developers, and start-ups, the event accelerates the deployment of versatile, future-ready technologies critical to navigating today's complex security environment. Join us in shaping the future of defence and public safety.

*Official site:* <https://defcros.com/>

## ADVANCED AIR MOBILITY ASIA 2025



Get ready for a landmark Asia-focused event at the Advanced Air Mobility Asia Symposium (AAM Asia), taking place from 16–18 September 2025 at Aichi Sky Expo, Aichi Prefecture, Japan. This premier gathering will spotlight the evolving AAM landscape across Asia, offering exclusive insights into cutting-edge test programs in Japan and Korea. Explore the full AAM ecosystem—from infrastructure and air traffic management to maintenance, regulations, and use cases. Join global stakeholders to tackle regional challenges and shape opportunities in the world's fastest-growing aerospace market. Be part of aviation's next leap.

*Official site:* <https://aam-asia.com/>

# THING

## FIRE INDIA 2025



Experience one of India's largest and most established exhibitions dedicated to fire safety, security, disaster management, and prevention. The Fire India Exhibition 2025 brings together leading manufacturers, suppliers, and professionals to showcase the latest innovations in fire protection technology. Discover a wide range of cutting-edge solutions—from fire alarms and extinguishers to advanced firefighting gear. Gain valuable insights through expert-led seminars, workshops, and conferences focused on best practices and emerging trends. Be part of a premier platform driving awareness, preparedness, and innovation in fire safety. Connect, learn, and lead at Fire India.

Official site: <https://fireindia.net/>

## SPACE & MISSILE DEFENSE SYMPOSIUM & EXPO 2025



The 2025 Annual Meetings of the World Bank Group and the International Monetary Fund will take place from Monday, October 13 to Saturday, October 18. Keystones of the Annual Meetings are the Plenary session, the Development Committee and the International Monetary and Financial Committee meetings. Other featured events include regional briefings, press conferences, and fora focused on international development, the global economy, and financial markets.

Official site: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/meetings/splash/annual>

## APEC SUMMIT 2025 SOUTH KOREA



South Korea is scheduled to hold APEC Summit of 2025 from 28-31 October at multiple locations of Gyeongju, Jeju, Incheon and Busan. South Korea selected “Building a Sustainable Tomorrow: Connect, Innovate, Prosper” as the theme and priorities for APEC 2025. It will discuss ways to strengthen the multilateral trading system with the WTO at its core and the economic competitiveness of the Asia-Pacific region through innovation and digitalisation. It will also cover responding to global challenges such as energy issues, climate change, health, food security, and change in demographics.

Official site: <https://www.idga.org/events-counteruas-usa>

# DIRECTED ENERGY WEAPONS & LASER DEFENCE SYSTEMS

## DEEP TECH

*Directed Energy Weapons (DEWs) and Laser Defence Systems use focused energy to damage or disable targets with precision and speed. They offer advantages like instantaneous engagement, reduced ammunition needs, and lower operational costs. Increasingly integrated into modern defence, DEWs are being developed for counter-drone, missile interception, and battlefield support roles worldwide.*

### NEWS ANALYTICS TECHNOLOGY DESK

Directed Energy Weapons (DEWs) represent a transformative leap in military technology. By using concentrated energy—such as high-powered lasers or microwaves—these weapons can destroy or disable targets with remarkable precision. Unlike traditional kinetic weapons, DEWs do not rely on projectiles or explosives. Instead, they use energy to cause physical or functional damage. The speed of light engagement, low cost per shot, and the ability to engage multiple threats make DEWs particularly valuable in modern and future combat scenarios. As of 2025, countries around the world are rapidly developing and deploying these systems for applications ranging from drone and missile defence to space-based operations.

There have been recent advancements in high-energy laser and microwave-based weapons and their deployment for missile defence, drone neutralisation, and space-based applications.

Martin, is a prime example. Installed aboard Arleigh Burke-class destroyers like the USS Preble, HELIOS can engage UAVs (unmanned aerial vehicles), small boats, and



surveillance sensors. With scalable power levels up to 120 kW, HELIOS has proven its effectiveness in sea trials and is a part of the U.S. Navy's broader move towards energy weapons integration.

Other American efforts include the Army's DE M-SHORAD (Directed Energy Maneuver-Short Range Air Defence) program, which aims to equip Stryker vehicles with 50 kW-class lasers for counter-drone and indirect fire threats. The Air Force Research Laboratory has also developed the Self-Protect High Energy Laser Demonstrator (SHIELD), aimed at arming fighter aircraft with defensive laser capabilities.

Israel:

Israel's Iron Beam, developed by Rafael Advanced Defence Systems, is designed to complement the Iron Dome and David's Sling systems. With a power output of around 100 kW, Iron Beam can intercept short-range rockets, mortars, artillery shells, and drones. In 2024, Iron Beam was successfully used in combat to intercept Hezbollah drones, marking the



## HIGH-ENERGY LASER SYSTEMS

United States:

The United States has led the global race in laser weapons, with several operational and prototype systems. The U.S. Navy's HELIOS (High Energy Laser with Integrated Optical-dazzler and Surveillance), developed by Lockheed

first real-world use of a high-energy laser in active warfare. The low cost per engagement (less than \$10 per shot) and operational reliability make Iron Beam a potential game-changer in layered air defence. Its expected full deployment by the end of 2025 will further strengthen Israel's already robust missile defence architecture.



*In April 2025, DRDO tested the 30 kW IDD&IS Mk-II(A) laser, combining six beams to target drones and sensors up to 5 km, showcasing indigenous capability.*

United Kingdom:

The UK's DragonFire laser weapon system, a collaborative project between MBDA, QinetiQ, Leonardo, and the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (DSTL), represents Britain's entry into the DEW arena. Successfully tested in 2024, DragonFire demonstrated high-precision targeting and destructive power at distances of up to 1 km. The system is expected to be installed on Royal Navy vessels by 2027, primarily for ship protection against drones and missiles.

The DragonFire program underscores the UK's commitment to integrating DEWs into naval and ground-based defence systems as part of its Future Combat Air System (FCAS) strategy.

India:

India's Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has made significant strides in laser weapon technology. The IDD&IS Mk-II(A), tested in April 2025, is a 30 kW laser weapon that can engage drones and sensors at ranges up to 5 km. By combining six 5 kW lasers into a single beam, DRDO has demonstrated India's capability to develop indigenous high-energy laser systems.

India's future roadmap includes developing 50–100 kW laser systems for wider deployment, and a 300 kW laser system codenamed "Surya," aimed at intercepting missiles at ranges up to 20 km. These developments are part of a broader strategy to achieve self-reliance in defence technologies and reduce dependence on imported weaponry. DRDO also plans to transfer laser technology to private industries for large-scale production.

India has already deployed 2 kW laser systems at key military locations, and in April 2025, one of these systems successfully intercepted a Chinese-origin UAV near the Line of Control.

## HIGH-POWER MICROWAVE (HPM) WEAPONS

High-Power Microwave (HPM) weapons use electromagnetic pulses to disable or destroy electronic systems. Unlike lasers, which physically burn or cut targets, HPM systems can disrupt multiple threats simultaneously by frying their circuits. These systems are particularly effective against drone swarms and unshielded electronics.

United States:

The U.S. Air Force's Tactical High-power Operational Responder (THOR) is a containerised HPM system that can be deployed quickly and operated by just two personnel. THOR is designed to counter drone swarms and has been successfully tested at military bases.

Leonidas, developed by Epirus Inc., is another cutting-edge



HPM system that emits directed pulses to neutralise drones and ground vehicles. Its compact size and scalability make it suitable for mobile platforms, including ground vehicles and ships. The U.S. Army has started deploying Leonidas prototypes in operational environments.

Advantages of HPM Systems

- Wide-area coverage.
- Ability to engage multiple targets at once.
- Minimal collateral damage.
- Instant response time.

## DEW FOR DRONE NEUTRALISATION

Drones have emerged as one of the most significant threats in modern warfare due to their low cost, mobility, and ability to operate in swarms. DEWs are uniquely suited to counter these threats:

- Laser Systems like HELIOS, Iron Beam, DragonFire, and India's Mk-II(A) can quickly destroy or disable drones by targeting their structural integrity or optical systems.
- Microwave Systems such as THOR and Leonidas can neutralise entire swarms by disrupting their guidance and communication electronics.

Israel has even developed AI-integrated, mobile laser systems capable of autonomous detection and targeting of drones, enhancing real-time defence capabilities

**Power Supply and Cooling:** DEWs require significant amounts of energy and efficient thermal management. Supplying power to high-energy systems, especially on

*India's DRDO plans laser integration into airborne pods and satellites, while the U.S. explores "Golden Dome" weaponised satellites—emerging concepts marking DEW's next frontier.*

## MISSILE DEFENCE AND SPACE-BASED APPLICATIONS

**Missile Interception:** Directed energy weapons are increasingly being integrated into layered missile defence systems:

- Iron Beam is designed to intercept rockets and short-range missiles.
- India's Surya system aims to target fast-moving ballistic threats at long ranges.

High-energy lasers offer a lower-cost and more sustainable alternative to traditional interceptors, which are expensive and limited in number. DEWs can fire repeatedly without running out of ammunition, making them ideal for extended conflicts.

**Space-Based DEW Concepts:** The militarization of space has led to increased interest in space-based DEWs. Potential applications include:

- Disabling enemy satellites.
- Protecting friendly space assets.
- Intercepting intercontinental ballistic missiles during boost phase.

India's DRDO has outlined plans to integrate laser systems into airborne pods and satellite platforms. Similarly, the U.S. has proposed ambitious programs like the "Golden Dome," involving weaponised satellites capable of intercepting threats in space. While these concepts are still in development, they represent the next frontier in DEW applications.

## TECHNICAL CHALLENGES

Despite their potential, DEWs face several technical and operational challenges.

mobile or aerial platforms, remains a critical challenge.

**Atmospheric Interference:** Weather conditions—like rain, fog, and dust—can weaken laser beams and affect accuracy. Overcoming these limitations requires advanced beam control and adaptive optics technologies.

**Miniaturisation and Mobility:** For DEWs to be widely deployed, they must be miniaturised without losing power. Efforts are underway to develop lightweight and mobile systems for use on a variety of platforms.

**Legal and Ethical Issues:** The use of DEWs in warfare raises legal and ethical questions, particularly around the rules of engagement, escalation of conflicts, and their use in space.

## FUTURE OUTLOOK AND GLOBAL IMPACT

The future of DEWs looks promising, with several systems expected to become operational by 2027:

- India's 300 kW Surya system is scheduled for deployment within two years.
- UK's DragonFire will be installed on Royal Navy ships.
- Israel's Iron Beam will see full operational deployment by the end of 2025.
- The U.S. continues to enhance HELIOS, THOR, and Leonidas systems, with plans for space-based laser development.

Directed Energy Weapons (DEWs) are transitioning from concept to reality, rapidly becoming central to national defence. With precision, speed, and low-cost engagement, they neutralise drones, missiles, and electronic threats. Nations like the U.S., Israel, India, and the U.K. invest heavily, signalling DEWs' pivotal role in next-generation warfare.

## MAJOR HIGHLIGHTS

- *U.S., Israel, UK, and India lead in deploying advanced high-energy laser weapons.*
- *Directed Energy Weapons offer rapid, precise, low-cost responses to drones and missiles.*
- *High-Power Microwaves neutralise multiple threats simultaneously by disabling electronics.*
- *Space-based DEWs represent the next frontier in missile defence and asset protection.*
- *Technical hurdles include power supply, cooling, and atmospheric interference mitigation.*

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