

THE
NEWS ANALYTICS
HERALD

November 2025 | Vol 1 | Issue 5 ₹ 450/-

KINGDOM'S BET
ON PAKISTAN

IN FOCUS

ISRAEL'S GAZA GAMBLE
RISKS GLOBAL ISOLATION

BIG STORY

SAUDI-PAK DEFENCE PACT: OPTICS
OF POWER, REALITY OF LIMITS

HI-TECH

ELECTRONIC WARFARE:
THE INVISIBLE BATTLEFIELD

THE POWER PANEL



NADIA HALLAK

Senior journalist from Beirut, Lebanon. She has extensively worked in the Arab region. News Analytics Arab Correspondent.



AMBASSADOR DEEPAK VOHRA, IFS (R)

Former Ambassador to Armenia, Sudan and Poland. He was also a special Advisor to the Government of South Sudan.



RICARDO MARTINS

Senior journalist from Curitiba, Brazil. Specialising in Latin American politics and international relations. News Analytics Latin America Correspondent.



AMBASSADOR SRIKUMAR MENON, IFS (R)

Former Indian Ambassador to South Sudan, Angola, Sao Tome & Principe.



M A HOSSAIN

Senior Journalist, Dhaka, Bangladesh. Covers South Asia & ASEAN Region, for News Analytics.



AIR MARSHAL ANIL KHOSLA (R)

Former Vice Chief, Indian Air Force Researcher & Analyst Distinguished Fellow - USI & CAPS.



LT GEN AV SHIVANE (R)

Former DG Mechanised Forces, Indian Army. TEDx Speaker, Strategic Defence Consultant, Analyst & Corporate Mentor.

|| FOREWORD



AN ALLIANCE OR A GAMBLE?

Deepening defence partnership of Saudi Arabia with Pakistan, as reflected in the recently signed Strategic Mutual Defence Agreement, marks a structural turning point in Gulf–South Asia geopolitics. Riyadh is now moving beyond its traditional role as financier and energy patron and asserting itself as a security stakeholder by extending its strategic perimeter into the contested space of South Asia.

This recalibration is neither symbolic nor transient for both countries. For Islamabad, Saudi capital and military cooperation represent an essential hedge against economic fragility and diplomatic isolation. For Riyadh, the calculus is more complex and seems aimed at cultivating a reliable, Sunni-majority military partner capable of balancing the influence of Iran in the region, projecting Riyadh across the Arabian Sea, and reinforcing its leadership within the Islamic world’s defence architecture.

Yet one needs to be mindful of inherent risks. Pakistan’s internal volatility and its transactional foreign policy record place it in the category of fragile investment. Should this alignment deepen further, it could amplify regional insecurities, complicating India’s strategic engagement with the Gulf and carving new fault lines into the evolving security geometry of Asia.

Riyadh’s wager, therefore, extends well beyond bilateral optics. It is a test of how Gulf power projection, Chinese inroads, and Indo-Pacific balancing will interact within an increasingly multipolar order.

This edition of The News Analytics Herald examines this unfolding convergence of ambition, dependency, and strategic opportunism, which is no doubt a high-stakes experiment that may well redefine the contours of Asian power politics in the decade ahead.

Ambassador Sushil Kumar Singhal, IFS (R)
(Former Ambassador to Angola. He has served
in Tanzania, Belgium, Bangladesh and Hungary)

|| 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.

|| PUBLISHER

Sandhya Srivastava

 editor@newsanalytics.in

|| OUR EDITORIAL BOARD

Air Marshal Anil Khosla (Retd)
Former Vice Chief of the Indian Air Force

 airmshlanilkhosla@newsanalytics.in

Lt Gen Raj Shukla (Retd)
Former Army Commander, Indian Army

 rajshukla@newsanalytics.in

Shri Anil Joshi
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 technocrat@newsanalytics.in

Ambassador Srikumar Menon, IFS (Retd)
Former Indian Ambassador to South Sudan,
Angola, Sao Tome & Principe.

 srikumarmenon@newsanalytics.in

Vice Admiral Makarand Aravind Hampiholi (Retd)
Former Commander-in-Chief of the Training
Command of the Indian Navy

 mahampiholi@newsanalytics.in

|| WHAT WE ARE

Title – The News Analytics Herald.

(Certified by Press Registrar General of India. PRGI Regn No: UPENG/25/A1463)

Publication Frequency – Monthly.

Year of Commencement – 2025.

Subjects – Multidisciplinary Subjects. Focus on Diplomacy, Defence & Military Technology.

Language – English.

Format – Print.

EDITOR'S NOTE



KINGDOM'S BET ON PAKISTAN

Saudi Arabia's recent defence embrace of Pakistan is not just a bilateral agreement; it is a geopolitical signal. By deepening Islamabad's reliance on Riyadh's military and financial support, the Kingdom has taken a calculated gamble that will reverberate across South Asia. The move raises critical questions for India, compelling us to re-examine our strategic posture in a region already in flux.

For New Delhi, this development cannot be dismissed as routine defence diplomacy. Pakistan's pursuit of external patrons has historically shaped its posture towards India. With Saudi Arabia stepping forward, Islamabad gains not only resources but also renewed confidence, altering the psychological balance of the neighbourhood. While the durability of this partnership remains to be tested, its announcement alone reshapes perceptions of power in the Gulf-South Asia context.

From India's standpoint, this is both a challenge and an opportunity. The challenge lies in anticipating how a Pakistan buoyed by Gulf backing may recalibrate its stance towards India, particularly in defence and regional influence. The opportunity, however, lies in deepening our own ties with Riyadh; economic, technological, and security, ensuring that India remains a partner the Kingdom cannot afford to overlook.

As we reflect on this important shifting landscape in the current edition of The News Analytics Herald, it becomes evident that conventional alignments are being redrawn. India must not only watch but also act diplomatically, strategically, and economically to ensure that this gamble by the Kingdom does not narrow our strategic space but instead motivates us to strengthen our own hand in the evolving Asian balance.

Jai Hind!

Sandhya Srivastava
Editor-in-Chief &
Publisher

THE
NEWS ANALYTICS
HERALD

PRGI Regn No: UPENG/25/A1463
ISSN 3107-782X

Vol I * Issue 5* November 2025

Editor in Chief

Sandhya Srivastava

Editorial Board

Ambassador Srikumar Menon, IFS(R)

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Legal Advisor

Adv Deepak Verma

Web Partner

Abhi Technosoft

Edited & Published By

Sandhya Srivastava on behalf of

Geostrat Media Ventures

Published At

0, Vatika Enclave

Mahanagar, Izzat Nagar, Bareilly

Uttar Pradesh – 243122

+91-9557597977

Printed At

New Delhi

Printed By

Viba Press Pvt Ltd

C-66/3, Okhla Industrial Area, Ph-2

New Delhi – 110020

+91- 98100 49515

Email: reachus@newsanalytics.in

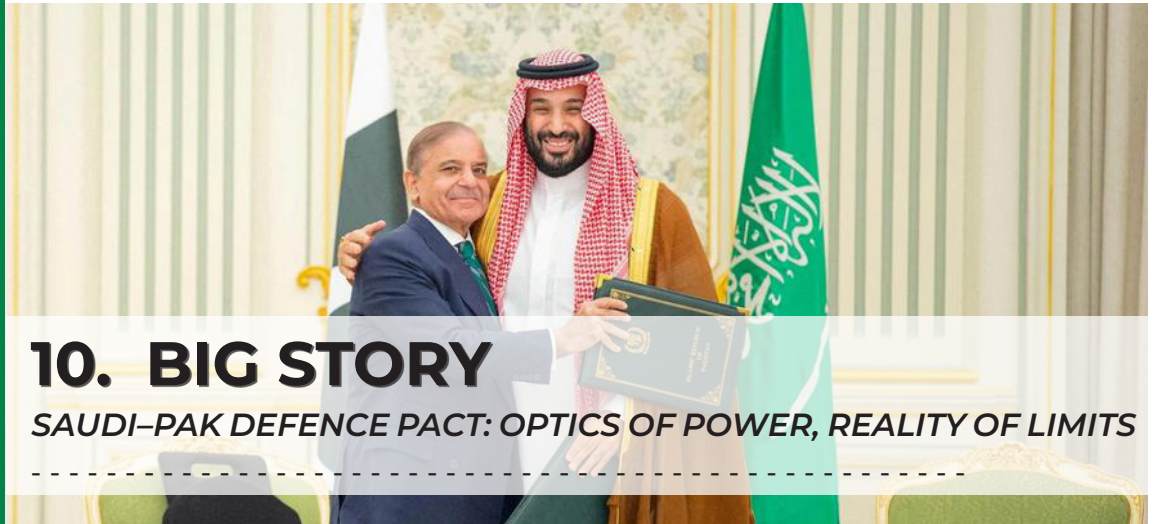
Website: www.newsanalytics.in

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ISRAEL'S GAZA GAMBLE RISKS GLOBAL ISOLATION

IN FOCUS

Since the outbreak of the latest round of conflict in the Gaza Strip, Israel has found itself facing one of the most complex political and military dilemmas in its modern history. While the Israeli government seeks to redraw the rules of engagement with Hamas and other Palestinian resistance factions by imposing a new framework that combines strict military control with limited humanitarian aid, the international scene is rapidly moving toward widespread condemnation, and pressure on Tel Aviv is mounting from all directions. This contradiction between attempts to impose a new reality and Israel's declining international standing raises a central question: Is Israel risking isolating itself from the international community through its new Gaza strategy?



NADIA HALLAK | BEIRUT, LEBANON
ARAB CORRESPONDENT, NEWS ANALYTICS

Since its occupation of the Gaza Strip in 1967, and later its unilateral withdrawal in 2005, Israel has treated the territory more as a “security dilemma” than as a political or humanitarian issue. The ongoing blockade, enforced since 2007, reinforced this perspective, as Tel Aviv sought to curtail the influence of Palestinian factions by tightening restrictions on border crossings and the movement of goods and people.

With every round of escalation, Israel has faced growing international pressure to ease the blockade and allow greater humanitarian access. During successive wars—in 2008, 2012, 2014, and 2021—Israel’s isolation deepened in international forums, despite traditional backing from the United States and some European states. With the latest round of violence, however, the balance appears to be shifting more starkly.



ISRAEL'S GAZA STRATEGY

In response to mounting criticism, Israeli leadership announced a “new approach” based on three main pillars:

Field military control: Expanding ground and air operations to reduce the capacity of Palestinian factions to launch rocket attacks or conduct cross-border operations.

Limited relief: Allowing humanitarian aid into Gaza through specific crossings under full Israeli supervision is an attempt



to ease international pressure without enabling Palestinians to rebuild what has been destroyed.

Restricted political management: Rejecting any comprehensive political settlement or serious negotiations, opting instead for a crisis-management approach that keeps Israel the stronger party in the equation.

This strategy, which presents itself as a middle ground between military hardline policies and humanitarian considerations, was swiftly met with scepticism and sharp criticism from various international actors.

The ceasefire includes exchanging 20 Israeli hostages for 2,000 Palestinian prisoners, with U.S.-backed international monitors ensuring compliance, including arrangements for deceased captives' remains.

NEW CEASEFIRE AGREEMENT

On October 10, 2025, a ceasefire agreement between Israel and Hamas entered into force, following US-led mediation with the support of Egyptian and Qatari officials. The agreement represents a significant, though fragile, step toward halting the intense fighting that has claimed over 65,500 Palestinian lives, most of them civilians.

The ceasefire calls for an immediate cessation of hostilities and a structured withdrawal of Israeli forces from key areas of Gaza. Humanitarian aid is permitted to flow through

designated crossings under international supervision, with an initial provision of 400 trucks daily carrying food, fuel, and medical supplies, gradually increasing to meet growing civilian needs.

A central component of the agreement is the exchange of prisoners and hostages: Hamas will release 20 Israeli hostages in return for approximately 2,000 Palestinian prisoners, including high-security detainees, along with arrangements for the return of deceased captives' remains. An international monitoring body, including US representatives, will oversee the implementation of all clauses.

Despite these mechanisms, challenges remain. Ensuring compliance, preventing renewed hostilities, and maintaining functional humanitarian corridors are major concerns. Domestic political pressures in both Israel and Gaza could further impact the sustainability of the ceasefire. While the agreement provides immediate relief and symbolic progress, long-term stability depends on continued commitment, reconstruction efforts, and diplomatic engagement from all parties.

RISING INTERNATIONAL CRITICISM

The United Nations calls for independent investigations into Gaza violations have grown louder in UN forums. A UN commission of inquiry concluded that Israel committed “acts of genocide” against Palestinians through killings and measures that threaten the physical survival of the group. While U.S. vetoes in the Security Council have prevented binding resolutions, the overall balance within the UN points to Israel's growing isolation.



The so-called Global South, spanning Africa, Asia, and Latin America, has taken a tougher stance, accusing Israel of embodying Western “double standards”: demanding human rights from these states while overlooking Israel's violations. This reflects deeper shifts in the international order, with Global South nations positioning themselves as an alternative voice to Western dominance, intensifying Israel's isolation.

The U.S. supports Israel but faces domestic pressure; EU ties aid to humanitarian law, while Russia and China criticise Israel, champion Palestine, and deepen Tel Aviv's isolation.

The United States continues to back Israel militarily and politically, but faces strong pressure at home from Congress, public opinion, universities, and media circles. Within the European Union, opinions differ, yet more countries are linking cooperation with Israel to respect for international humanitarian law. Meanwhile, Russia and China have seized the moment to criticise Israel and its Western allies, presenting



themselves as champions of the Palestinian cause and further isolating Tel Aviv globally.

Even some Arab states that normalised ties with Israel have found themselves in a bind, facing strong domestic backlash that compels them to reconsider or at least scale back cooperation with Tel Aviv for the time being.

POTENTIAL REPERCUSSIONS

Israel risks losing symbolic support from some of its Western partners, while its self-image as a “democracy” erodes rapidly. Continued policies could see Israel barred from certain conferences and international platforms.

Despite its military superiority, Israel may face political restrictions limiting future large-scale operations, especially if U.S. and European military aid becomes conditional on compliance with human rights standards.

Israel also risks economic boycotts and divestment campaigns, particularly from Western universities and academic institutions. A UN report revealed that Israel has destroyed or severely damaged over 191,263 buildings in Gaza, fueling accusations of systematic destruction of civilian infrastructure.

Internally, the situation is fueling divisions: right-wing factions push for uncompromising security measures, while other political currents warn of the long-term consequences of losing international legitimacy on Israel's security and economy.

ISRAEL'S GLOBAL IMAGE

Images of destruction and civilian casualties in Gaza spread instantly across social media, undermining Israel's official narrative of “fighting terrorism.” According to ACLED, 15 out of every 16 Palestinians killed since March 2025 were civilians, making Israel's narrative far less convincing to global audiences.

Popular movements worldwide are intensifying pressure on Israel. The BDS campaign is gaining ground across campuses and corporations, while huge demonstrations in Western capitals are forcing governments into difficult political positions. The Palestinian cause is increasingly being linked with wider struggles for justice and equality, giving it renewed global visibility and resonance.



Images of Gaza's civilian devastation erode Israel's terrorism narrative, as BDS campaigns and global protests intensify, linking the Palestinian cause with broader justice and equality movements worldwide.

At the same time, legal and economic risks are mounting. UN reports cite over 65,500 Palestinian deaths, fuelling calls for war crimes investigations at the International Criminal Court. Israel's high-tech sector, once hailed as a “new Silicon Valley,” now faces academic boycotts, divestments, and declining global partnerships. This sharpens Israel's central dilemma: continue prioritising security through military dominance, risking deeper isolation, or make political concessions to regain international legitimacy.

FUTURE SCENARIOS

If Israel continues with its current policy, it risks deeper isolation, criticism, and reduced backing from traditional allies. A tactical retreat could involve limited humanitarian



simply the result of another Gaza war, but the cumulative outcome of policies rooted in force and rejection of political solutions. With over 65,500 Palestinians killed, most of them civilians, Israel may soon find itself confronting a new reality where military superiority is no longer enough to offset the loss of international legitimacy.



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

concessions or indirect talks to ease international pressure, but without real change. The least likely path is a strategic shift, where Israel accepts a comprehensive political process and restructures its Gaza policy, something that requires major internal political transformation.

Ultimately, Israel appears to be betting that its military strength and U.S. support will allow it to weather the international storm. Yet realities on the ground suggest the world is changing and what was tolerated two decades ago is no longer acceptable. Free media, grassroots movements, international institutions, and global economic dynamics are all reshaping the landscape. Israel’s growing isolation is not

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Israel’s new Gaza strategy combines military control, limited aid, and restricted negotiations.
- U.S.-brokered ceasefire halts fighting but raises doubts about sustainability and compliance.
- UN and Global South intensify criticism, accusing Israel of genocide and double standards.
- International boycotts, protests, and legal actions increase Israel’s diplomatic and economic isolation.
- Israel faces a dilemma: sustain military dominance or seek legitimacy through political compromise.



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SAUDI-PAK DEFENCE PACT: OPTICS

BIG STORY

Riyadh's embrace of Islamabad through a defence pact is being hailed in Pakistan as a triumph, yet it may prove a hollow shield. For India, the move underscores the dangers of Gulf power projection into South Asia. Will Saudi Arabia truly risk its crown jewels for Pakistan, or is this merely a diplomatic mirage?



NEWS ANALYTICS EDITORIAL DESK

On 17 September 2025, a smiling photo op of Pakistani PM Shehbaz Sharif and Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia was flashed from Al Yamamah Palace in Riyadh to the world. The glee on Sharif's face was unmistakable. During this visit, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia agreed to a mutual defence treaty termed the Strategic Mutual Defence Agreement. It was one of the most prized achievements that he held in his hand in his entire political career. A security assurance from the Saudis was almost a dream-come-true moment for Pakistan, rattled with economic misery and bloated with security dogma.

As per the information available, the treaty binds both signatories into a mutual security assurance, going as far as committing them to treat "an act of aggression against one as an act against both". Significantly, the understanding seems to have been borrowed from NATO's Article 5 of the collective security

guarantee. How strongly it gels in this context remains to be seen. Nevertheless, the immediate attention was drawn to Delhi and Tel Aviv, suggestively two neighbours in relatively hostile relations with the protagonists Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, respectively.

A Saudi guarantee thrilled Pakistan, but in Delhi and Tel Aviv, the move was watched warily, raising questions of intent and balance.

DELHI AND TEL AVIV

While Delhi tried to be seen as not much impressed with the development, commenting, "it had the information and the deal has now only been formalised," Tel Aviv was more upfront, terming it as having nothing to do with the deal, as



OF POWER, REALITY OF LIMITS

Israel and Saudi Arabia have never fought a war. So the question is, who was this security arrangement directed against or conversely, which party gets the better part of the bargain?

It hardly took any time before the Pakistani defence minister came bragging on TV that they had a security guarantee against India from the Saudis. He thundered that the Saudis would fully commit to protecting Pakistan in case of hostilities with India! Interestingly, there was a studied silence from Riyadh. The Pakistani state was drawing true parallels with



someone drowning mid-sea, getting ecstatic with a floating straw. Dawn, one of Pakistan's leading newspapers, commented on it as a 'diplomatic and geopolitical victory'.

MIXED SAUDI SIGNALS

However, amidst the celebratory notes being exchanged in the Pakistani media, a dampener was issued by the Saudi Shura's chief that "the treaty is not against any country". Importantly, this statement was made by Dr Abdullah ibn Muhammad Al ash-Sheikh, Speaker of the Consultative Assembly or Majlis ash-Shura, during his visit to Islamabad. It was a counter-narrative to Mr Khawaja Asif's hawkish interpretation earlier and was clearly seen as an attempt to de-link it from the India-Pakistan calculus.

It was certainly important, coming from a man of his stature. In Saudi Arabia, the Majlis ash-Shura plays a key advisory role to the King for national functioning, and its chief is considered to have the ear of the highest authority in the land. He was also seen to be carrying a direct message from the Kingdom to contextualise the new defence treaty and not let it harm relations with another nation.

DOHA STRIKE SHOCK

The outbreak of Gaza hostilities has subsumed many regional actors, creating multi-dimensional sub-conflicts as an uncontrolled extension from the Palestinian shore. The Middle East has been a paradox in a way: while the region has been blessed with an abundance of global bio-resources, its ideological differences have extracted a tremendous cost.

The Gaza conflict, now in its third year, has seen Israel confronting Hezbollah in Lebanon, Houthis in Yemen, and established regimes in Syria and Iran. The region has been sitting on the edge of implosion, witnessing massive missile and aerial assaults on Iran and its retaliation on Israel. The US, for the first time since 1988, directly confronted Iran by bombing its suspected nuclear sites on 22 June 2025, drawing sharp retaliation from Iran, which attacked a US base in Qatar.

However, the direct Israeli attack on Doha on 9 September 2025 made the strategic calculation flip upside down. Qatar, a country that has been known to play an active mediation role during regional conflicts and has successfully maintained strong working relations with almost all regional capitals, was considered a neutral and safe ally by many. It hosted the largest US base in the region with some of the most advanced military hardware stationed 365 days a year. This made a direct attack almost a no-go; the myth was shattered



by Israel when it announced a selective strike in a Doha neighbourhood targeting Hamas negotiators.

The Middle East was not anticipating any such possibility to be strategically realistic, even though there were chances of tactical gains. The presence of US base in a country has long been considered strong insurance by the host against

Saudi leaders quickly clarified: the treaty was not against any country, tempering Islamabad's triumphal claims with diplomatic caution.

being attacked by adversaries. The precedent is immeasurable at present, especially when there are suggestions that the US had prior information and still green-lighted the Israeli operation. The fact is, Qatar was attacked. In a global geostrategic calculation, this is a poorly analysed operation that has tremendous pitfalls, while the suggested gains remain minuscule. Analysts will tell that the implied US complicity in not giving a heads-up to Qatar was a gross breach of trust.



This is a geopolitical blunder and adds to the long list of such brazen acts from the current administration. The US has already lost much of its trust capital owing to its tariff overreach; this loss of trust in a strategic dimension is unprecedented. The Israeli strike in the Qatari capital has ripple effects in the region. Long-time US allies like Saudi Arabia, in the region and beyond are deeply worried over this development and have questioned the US commitment towards their own security. Responding to this goof-up, the US initially tried downplaying the act, but a strong undercurrent ultimately forced it to draw an ‘apology’ from the Israeli PM.

TREATY IN PERSPECTIVE

The developments have caused a sense of unease in the Middle East, instigating a reassessment of security dynamics and the balance of power. The timing of this new defence treaty is suspected to be a fallout of the same. The defence treaty between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia has been discussed and shaped over the last few years. Both parties have hedged their strategic interests: while Saudi Arabia gets a Muslim nuclear power on its side, Pakistan gets a strong regional ally with a

dollar bank! Understandably, the greenbacks make everyone delighted in Pakistan. But two obvious issues stand out for scrutiny – firstly, will Saudi Arabia play an ‘active role’ for Pakistan in an India–Pakistan conflict scenario, as Pakistan is trumpeting; secondly, will Pakistan offer its nuclear assets if Saudi Arabia feels threatened?

Let’s analyse each of these two most pertinent issues. As far as Saudi Arabia’s role in a subcontinent scenario is concerned, the treaty restricts support to Pakistan only in case it is subjected to an ‘act of aggression’; it is not an automated response in a conflict scenario involving Pakistan with anyone, including, say, India. In case Pakistan fails to convince the Kingdom that it has been subjected to ‘an act of aggression’, it will have to continue to fight a solo war.

Now, think of this treaty as existing during the pre-1999 period. General Musharraf wouldn’t have dared to initiate the Kargil War, sending Northern Light Infantry soldiers to icy heights to grab Indian territory and making Pakistan ‘commit the act of aggression’. In a way, this treaty binds Pakistan in knots now; the freewheeling Rawalpindi Headquarters would need to convince the Kingdom before undertaking fanciful operations in the future.



The Saudi–Pakistani treaty looks powerful on paper, but military realities make it optics more than substance — money, not missiles, will define this bargain.

Now comes the second part of Pakistan’s support to Saudi Arabia during the conflict. Will Pakistan move its forces to fight alongside Saudi troops? The answer is highly debatable, not because of willingness but because of sheer operational impracticality. Pakistan needs its military to deploy on the Northern and Eastern borders with Afghanistan and India. The Western theatre situation in Baluchistan isn’t good either. The operational intensity can be increased at any time by its adversaries on the borders and LoC, completely tying up its forces or at least making large-scale deployment towards a foreign territory absolutely out of the question.



The treaty appears more of an exercise in creating optics while practically delivering nothing. Surely, Pakistan can hope to get itself bankrolled at the time of crisis, but then its history is filled with sell-outs to foreign powers. Pakistan has always been on sale to the highest bidder. This time, it is not the Chinese or the Americans, but the Kingdom that has pitched in with a higher call!



Saudi Arabia isn't even a neighbour of Pakistan; it is separated by more than 2,500 km. Considering a hypothetical scenario, say Saudi Arabia's hostilities with Tel Aviv. Pakistan doesn't even have a weapon to reach that far. Israel stands more than 3,000 km from Pakistan, and Pakistan's longest-range missile, Shaheen III, has a claimed range of only 2,750 km. In short, a basic military assessment tells us Pakistan can neither commit troops nor send a missile to help its new ally, and for sure, the Kingdom is unlikely to turn to Pakistan for dollars to finance its future wars!

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- *Saudi–Pakistani defence pact projected as historic, yet its actual strategic substance remains deeply questionable.*
- *Islamabad celebrates the “security guarantee,” while Riyadh issues cautious clarifications to de-link India–Pakistan tensions.*
- *India and Israel watch closely, wary of Gulf power projection altering South Asia’s fragile balance.*
- *Israeli strike on Doha shakes trust, forcing reassessment of regional security dynamics and American reliability.*
- *Treaty largely optics-driven, offering Pakistan prestige but unlikely to deliver credible, practical military support.*

Happy Reading Journey

Covering critical domains of diplomacy, defence, and military technology, the magazine brings a distinctly global and scholarly perspective to complex events.

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GLOBAL INFLUENCER

SHEIKH MOHAMMED BIN ABDULRAHMAN BIN JASSIM

NEWS ANALYTICS | SPECIAL COVERAGE

Profile

Qatar's Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani has become a pivotal Gulf leader, known for resilience and quiet diplomacy. His steady response to Israel's 2025 strike on Doha reinforced Qatar's credibility as a mediator in the Gaza conflict. A champion of LNG diplomacy, he has secured Doha's role as a top energy supplier to Asia, including India. With over 800,000 Indians in Qatar, his leadership shapes both strategic and human ties with New Delhi.



“Energy, mediation, resilience — Qatar’s quiet strength.”

The Gulf is a region of shifting alliances, where crises often erupt with little warning. In this turbulent setting, Qatar’s Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani, has emerged as a leader of quiet but decisive influence. At just 45 years old, he has already shaped his country’s global standing through diplomacy, mediation, and energy strategy. For India, his leadership is especially important at a time when Saudi Arabia’s growing defence embrace of Pakistan raises fresh regional questions.

RESILIENCE THROUGH ADVERSITY

Sheikh Mohammed first gained international recognition during the 2017 Gulf blockade. Qatar’s neighbours, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Bahrain, and Egypt, severed ties, cutting Doha off from supplies and trade. Rather than yield, he worked to diversify Qatar’s partners, turned to Turkey and Iran for support, and relied on Qatar’s hosting of the largest U.S. air base in the Middle East. By the time the blockade ended in 2021, Doha was more resilient and globally connected than before, and Sheikh Mohammed was seen as the architect of its survival.

In September 2025, Qatar faced an even more dramatic test. Israel launched an airstrike in Doha, claiming Hamas leaders were present in a residential complex. The attack killed civilians and a Qatari officer, shocking the Arab world and directly violating Gulf sovereignty.

Sheikh Mohammed responded swiftly. He called an emergency Arab–Islamic summit in Doha, rallied international condemnation at the United Nations, and secured an apology from Israel through U.S. mediation. Most crucially,

OF THE MONTH

BIN JABER AL THANI, PM OF THE STATE OF QATAR

he did not allow Qatar's mediator role in the Gaza conflict to collapse. Instead, his measured response enhanced Doha's credibility as a small state that could turn a crisis into diplomatic leverage.

THE MEDIATOR'S EDGE

Mediation has long been Sheikh Mohammed's hallmark. Under his watch, Qatar hosted the U.S.–Taliban talks that shaped Afghanistan's future and have served as an intermediary between Washington, Tehran, Hamas, and Israel. Critics argue that this exposes Doha to risk, but in a divided region, Qatar's open channels make it indispensable.

This ability to act as a bridge is precisely what elevates Sheikh Mohammed. In a world of entrenched rivalries, he has positioned his nation as a voice of moderation and dialogue.

Beyond diplomacy, Qatar's influence rests on its massive liquefied natural gas (LNG) reserves. Sheikh Mohammed has expanded long-term partnerships with Asia, including India, China, Japan, and South Korea. For India, Qatar supplies nearly 40% of LNG imports—a cornerstone of energy security.

This interdependence makes Doha a critical partner. At a time when global energy markets are unstable, Sheikh Mohammed's LNG diplomacy anchors India's stability and gives Qatar a reliable foothold in Asia.

WHY HE MATTERS NOW?

Sheikh Mohammed's leadership offers India an alternative Gulf anchor, amidst Saudi Arabia's new alignment with Pakistan, one that is less tied to military alliances and more focused on mediation, energy, and balanced partnerships. By maintaining independence from Riyadh's path, Qatar provides India room to manoeuvre. Sheikh Mohammed's emphasis on dialogue aligns well with India's strategic autonomy, offering partnership without entanglement.

By naming him Global Influencer of the Month, we highlight more than his recent achievements—we recognise his consistent ability to make Qatar relevant far beyond its borders. At a time when Saudi Arabia's choices alter South Asia's balance, Sheikh Mohammed demonstrates that even small states, with astute leadership, can command global influence.



- *“Sheikh Mohammed turned a strike on Doha into a moment of global credibility.”*
- *“Qatar under his leadership supplies nearly 40% of India's LNG needs.”*
- *“In a volatile Gulf, his quiet diplomacy carries the weight of resilience.”*

PAKISTAN'S GEOPOLITICAL WINDFALL: BLESSINGS OR MIRAGE?

INSIGHT

Pakistan's recent diplomatic drive, led by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, highlights a desperate push to counter economic fragility and political isolation. From courting Washington with rare earth deals and Trump's Nobel nomination to reaffirming ties with Beijing, Riyadh, and Kuala Lumpur, Islamabad seeks to diversify partnerships. Yet, deep debt, domestic instability, and military dominance continue to overshadow its fragile international rehabilitation.



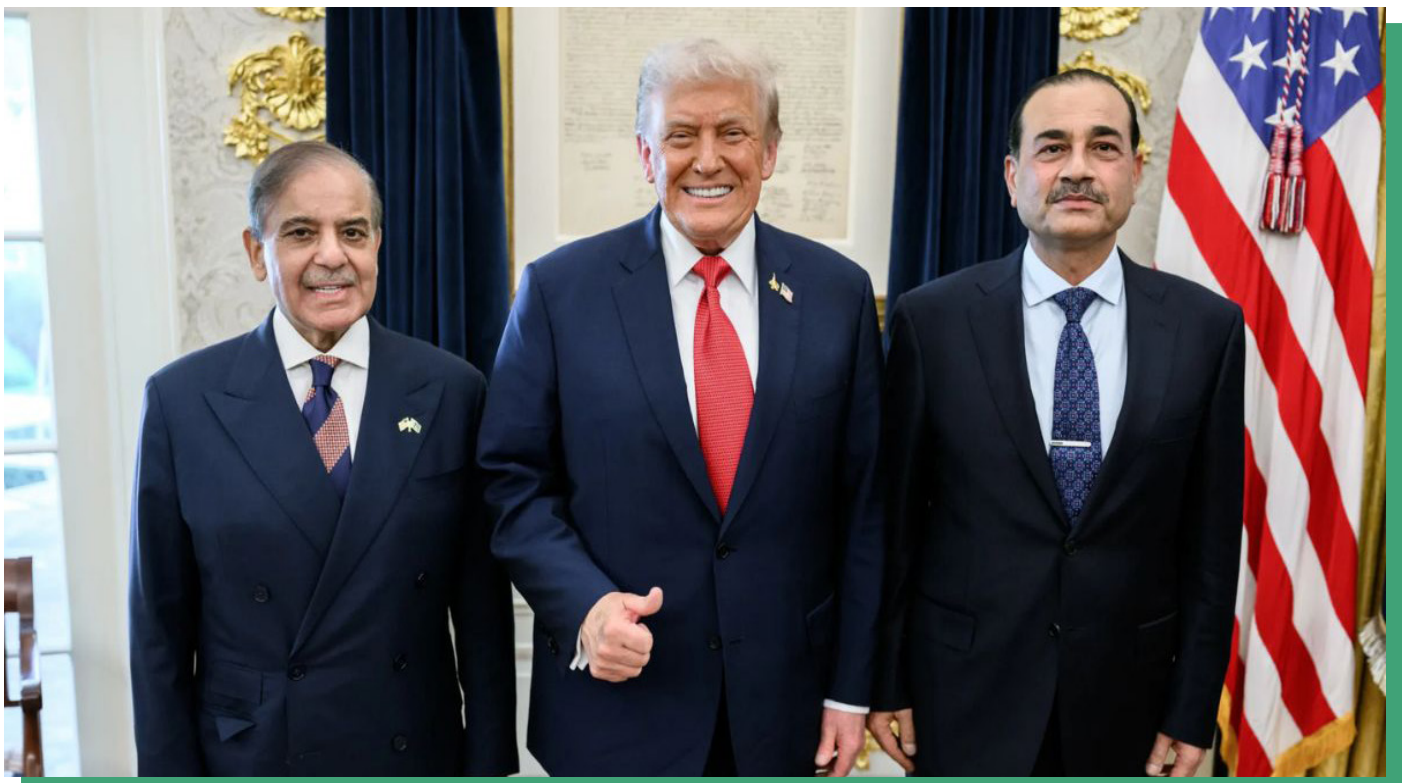
**AMBASSADOR SRIKUMAR MENON, IFS (R)
FOR NEWS ANALYTICS**

Pakistan's recent international outreach, led by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, reflects a strategic push to reshape its global standing amid economic fragility and geopolitical isolation. Sharif has undertaken 10 foreign trips in the past 18 months. His visits in 2025 to the US, China, Saudi Arabia and Malaysia underscore this concerted effort to diversify partnerships, secure economic lifelines, and counter perceptions of over-reliance on China.

Pakistan, by virtue of its geographical and strategic location

bordering India, China, Afghanistan, and Iran, with proximity to the Persian Gulf and Central Asia, has for years been a geopolitical test ground and battleground where great powers vie for influence.

For decades, China has leveraged Pakistan as a strategic ally to limit India's regional influence. For the same reasons, the US and the West have treated Pakistan as a 'non-NATO ally', a status that briefly eroded after 2018—but now appears restored in the Trump 2.0 era.



THE NEW US-PAK BONHOMIE

Following a meeting between US President Trump and Pakistan's Army Chief Asim Munir in June, the Pakistan Government formally nominated Trump for the 2026 Nobel Peace Prize, for what it described as 'Trump's direct role in securing a ceasefire and de-escalating the May 2025 India-Pakistan conflict'.



The subsequent Sharif-Munir visit to the US in September was more about optics rather than substance. Their awkward meeting with President Trump in the White House was highlighted by the media publishing images of Munir presenting a briefcase containing rare earth minerals (REMs) to Trump, with a visibly flustered and embarrassed Sharif standing aside and witnessing the act. This "superficial and farcical theatre"—as some analysts chose to describe it, was something that also drew ridicule and scepticism from international and Pakistan's own domestic media.

For the record, the visit garnered a \$500 million deal with the American company—US Strategic Metals (USSM)—for exploration and exports of rare earths and minerals. A quid pro quo of sorts—a just reward for pushing Trump's Nobel nomination. From the US perspective, this strategic engagement with Pakistan, driven by economic considerations, is also a double-edged sword—used as a hedge against India and China.

This latest US-Pak alignment is a subtle nudge to tilt the balance in South Asia. It may well mean India reassessing the limits of its role and expectations from the Quad. With Trump pushing ahead with punitive tariffs against India and flaunting the newfound bonhomie with Pakistan, this could also be seen as an attempt to contain India's drive to seek self-sufficiency in mineral resources.

On the other hand, recent US media reports have pointed to the Trump family firm's lucrative crypto ties to Pakistan—raising questions about transparency and the ethical aspects of recent business deals, as well as issues of 'conflict of interests'. Most of the allegations, though unproven, point to a linkage between the lucrative business ties and President Trump's pro-Pakistan indulgence of late.

The \$62 billion CPEC, part of China's Belt and Road, advances infrastructure but faces distrust, with critics viewing it as a burden on Pakistan as China's client state.

THE "PAK-CHINA" AXIS

Pakistan and China relations have often been termed an "all-weather strategic cooperative partnership". The two have maintained steady diplomatic, economic, and military ties for the past several decades.

PM Sharif's China Visit in Aug-Sep this year, as part of his participation in the Tianjin SCO Summit, did reinforce this steadfast partnership, yielding Chinese commitments amounting to \$8.5 billion in deals, including FDI pledges from technology companies like Alibaba and Huawei. China is currently Pakistan's largest trading partner, with bilateral trade touching \$27 billion. However, what is significant is that China is also Pakistan's largest creditor, holding about 30 per cent of Pakistan's \$130 billion external debt.

The \$62 billion China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), which is part of China's Belt and Road Initiative, drives infrastructure, energy, and connectivity projects. The mega project faces significant public distrust, scepticism and



resentment in Pakistan. Some have asserted that the CPEC is a burden imposed on Pakistan as China's "client state".

ENGAGEMENT WITH SAUDI ARABIA

Over the years, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia have shared a strong "brotherly" alliance based on Islamic solidarity, economic ties, and defence cooperation. Besides being Pakistan's top oil supplier, Saudi Arabia is the top provider of aid and loans, with bilateral trade crossing \$5 billion covering energy, mining, military jets, hardware and arms.

PM Sharif's visit to Riyadh in September resulted in the signing of the "Strategic Mutual Defence Agreement"—that treats aggression against one as an attack on both. This will provide significant security leverage for both countries. The partnership would also help Pakistan to secure its economic lifelines to navigate its debt problems.

PM Sharif's recent visit to Malaysia in October was aimed at boosting Pakistan's agriculture and technology sectors, besides diversifying trade and securing Malaysia's commitment to FDI in fintech and e-commerce. In terms of perception, the visit appears to have minimised, to some extent, Pakistan's diplomatic isolation vis-à-vis the OIC, while also opening access to the ASEAN market.



BLUSTER VS REALITY

The Pakistani establishment and state media have gone to town claiming victory and bragging rights after this recent flurry of diplomatic outreach and visits by the Prime Minister and Army Chief.

For decades, Pakistan has lurched through crises, relying on external powers for survival, with perceived influence stemming from strategic utility to others, not intrinsic economic or military strength.

Notwithstanding some of the positives that have emerged from these visits, there are the ground realities to contend with—the deep cracks beneath the surface, especially the country's inherent structural weaknesses.

Benefiting from IMF bailout support, the Pakistani economy is currently operating under a 37-month programme of \$7 billion Extended Fund Facility (EFF)—approved last year in September 2024. This is to support the country's structural reforms for resolving the balance-of-payments issues.

Despite this IMF prop, Pakistan's economy and global standing continue to remain precarious and unstable—given the continuing unrest and turmoil in its domestic politics, enhanced security threats, and its frequent inclusion in the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) grey list—amid concerns about its financial governance (rather mis-governance) and support for terror groups. While the contrast between rhetoric and reality in Pakistan is visible to followers of geopolitics, the current instability is also compounded by continuing militant activities within Pakistan—especially in regions like Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

These destabilising factors are a direct consequence of Pakistan's long history of state-sponsored terrorism, allowing the creation of an entrenched terror ecosystem within its territory, resulting in both direct financial costs and international scrutiny. Defence Minister Khawaja Asif publicly admitted in April 2025 that Pakistan has been supporting terrorist groups for the past 30 years—a fact that India had been flagging to the world all these years. The FATF—which has a process of periodic scrutiny—would no doubt take cognisance of this belated admission coming from a senior government functionary.

Also, one cannot ignore the fact that Pakistan has a \$130 billion debt. Its efforts to offset the growing debt through reliance on external deals have not met with any major success so far. The Pakistani economy is ranked 34th in terms of 'fragility' and 108th in 'ease of doing business'.

For decades, Pakistan has been hurtling from one crisis to the other. Driven by the dire need to survive, successive governments and regimes have unsuccessfully tried to find a developmental framework to arrest the slide. Pakistan has



actively wooed big powers to maximise short-term benefits. India has always viewed Pakistan's fleeting and temporary geopolitical influences as heavily dependent on its alignment with the United States, China, and, to some extent, Middle Eastern nations, rather than its own economic or military strength. Analysts have pointed out that Pakistan's perceived rehabilitation in recent months stems from its "utility in others' strategies", and not "its own intrinsic power".

INTERNATIONAL PERCEPTION

The view from India is that Pakistan lacks the economic depth, political stability, or home-grown technological strength to

wield power independently. The flurry of recent visits undertaken by PM Sharif, therefore, must be seen more as 'symbolism' than of any real value in bringing about a turnaround in Pakistan's troubled economy and fortunes.

2024, that "India desires peaceful relations with Pakistan, but that such ties must be free from terrorism"—a clear reaffirmation of India's longstanding policy that "terror and talks cannot go together".

Dr Farzana Shaikh observed Pakistan's credibility suffers from a disconnect between elected authorities and military dominance, stressing that genuine international trust requires the military stepping back from power.



A few years ago, Dr Farzana Shaikh, a Senior South Asia Fellow at Chatham House in London, captured the essence of Pakistan's dilemma, stating that "Pakistan's image is compromised by a disconnect between the stated position of the elected authorities and the reality of the way power is exercised... and in order to start to address the lack of credibility in the eyes of the international community, the military needs to take a step back".

However, the last word must belong to India's External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar, who stated in December

Only time will show whether Pakistan takes the hint and decides to play ball on these terms to achieve its desire to find a respectable place on the global stage among the comity of nations. Let's hope, for the sake of lasting peace in South Asia, that this soon becomes a reality.



*(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**.)*

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- *Pakistan courts renewed US ties through rare earths deal and Trump's Nobel Peace nomination.*
- *China remains Pakistan's anchor, but CPEC debt, corruption, and public resentment fuel growing distrust.*
- *Saudi defence pact strengthens strategic security cooperation while providing critical financial lifelines and economic aid.*
- *Malaysia outreach boosts agriculture, fintech, and e-commerce, opening ASEAN markets and easing diplomatic isolation.*
- *Deep debt, militancy, and weak reforms undermine Pakistan's fragile global rehabilitation and credibility.*

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HAS CONVENTIONAL WAR SURVIVED UKRAINE?

BATTLEGROUND

The Ukraine war has redefined 21st-century warfare, exposing the vulnerabilities of tanks, artillery, and conventional doctrines in the face of drones, cyber disruption, and information warfare. For India, the lessons are urgent: agility, jointness, and resilience matter more than sheer mass. To remain secure in a volatile neighbourhood, India must modernise, innovate, and adapt at speed.



LT GEN A B SHIVANE (R)
FOR NEWS ANALYTICS

The war in Ukraine has altered the perspective of conventional conflict in the 21st century. What was once taken for granted about mass, armour, and firepower has been unsettled by the speed of technological disruption. Armoured columns that for decades symbolised battlefield dominance have been hunted by drones costing a fraction of their price. Logistics depots thought to be safely tucked in the rear have been struck with precision. Command and communication networks have been paralysed by electronic warfare and cyber intrusions. The message is blunt. The

character of war is shifting more quickly than doctrine or institutions are willing to admit.

Geography leaves no margin with battlespace geometry redefined. Unlike powers that can rely on oceans or alliances, India must contend with a harsh neighbourhood and adversaries who adapt with speed. They cooperate when convenient and challenge New Delhi from contested borders to the information space. For India, the Ukraine war is not an academic case study but a stark warning.



COLLAPSE OF OLD ASSUMPTIONS

Russia began the war with an offensive that looked familiar: massed armour, heavy artillery, and the expectation that numbers would bulldoze Ukrainian resistance. Within weeks, the approach was in tatters. Tanks that rolled forward without integrated air defence were destroyed by drones. Convoys stretched across long highways turned into easy targets for precision fires directed by live intelligence. Static defensive positions were exposed under relentless surveillance. The failure was not just of the platforms. It was the collapse of a doctrine that assumed firepower and mass could overwhelm a determined defender.



Ukraine's forces were outgunned but adapted quickly. They turned commercial drones into weapons, used open-source intelligence, and improvised command networks to offset Russian advantages. Civilian innovation fed military agility. The effect was disproportionate to their resources. The lesson for others is clear: agility and speed matter more than bulk. Size without the ability to innovate is a liability.

Cognitive warfare has become central, shaping public opinion, morale, and legitimacy as operational factors. For India, weaknesses seen in Kargil and Galwan highlight the urgent need for resilience.

TECHNOLOGY AS EQUALISER

No single system has shaped the war in Ukraine as profoundly as drones. Small quadcopters costing a few hundred dollars have provided targeting data and dropped improvised munitions with devastating effect. Medium-altitude drones have carried out deep strikes. Loitering munitions, swarms both imported and indigenously adapted, have become a critical feature of Ukraine's war machine, with C-UAS systems essential for defence.

AI now enables autonomous precision targeting and decentralised control, enhancing the kill web. It also highlights the need for layered air defence capable of countering both advanced aircraft and drones.

Western doctrines after the Gulf War emphasised precision

as the dominant principle of warfare. The assumption was that guided munitions would replace the need for volume. Ukraine has shown that this is a false dichotomy. Precision is essential but not sufficient. Mass remains decisive, and the future lies in their combination.

The emerging model is "precise mass", where large numbers of drones, rockets, and loitering munitions provide saturation, while precision strikes are reserved for high-value targets. This blending of accuracy with volume is cost-efficient and operationally effective. China's kill web approach, which integrates sensors and shooters across domains into a seamless targeting network, reflects this evolution.

The electromagnetic spectrum has re-emerged as a contested domain. Russia's use of jamming and spoofing has disrupted Ukrainian drone operations and communications, while Ukraine has responded by adapting frequencies and dispersing networks.

Cyber operations have become the backbone of kinetic attacks, targeting communication networks, power grids, energy assets and war-making infrastructure, paralysing them before a kinetic strike. This has shown that digital disruption is an integrated aspect of physical destruction.

Cognitive space is the new domain of warfare that controls the global and domestic narratives. This contest for perception



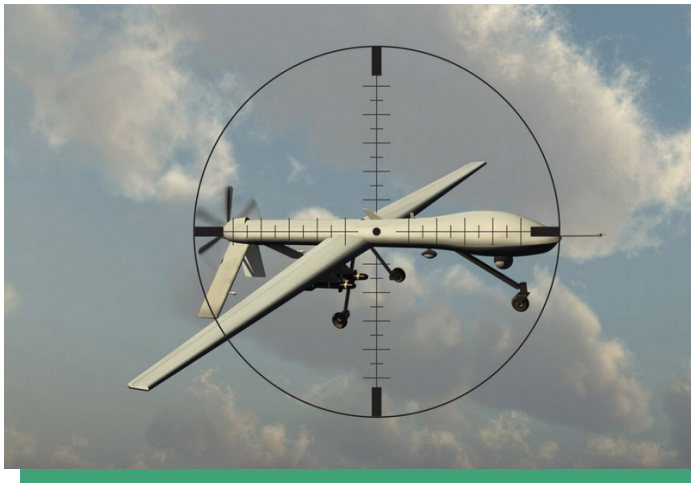
illustrates how public opinion, morale, and legitimacy are now operational factors. For India, this is the weak link, as seen during Kargil, Galwan, and to an extent, Operation Sindoor, and it merits major focus. Wars have transitioned to society, and resilience in the information domain is as critical as the physical battlespace.

DOCTRINAL SHIFTS

Hardware alone will not deliver results. Structures and command arrangements must evolve. Multi-domain operations are no longer a theory. Land, air, sea, cyber, space, and the cognitive domain are all part of the same battlespace. Dominance in one domain means little unless it is connected

to others. Compressing the decision cycle, linking sensors to shooters, and empowering junior commanders to act in real time are decisive.

The Ukraine conflict highlights the fragility of logistics: depots, fuel, and transport routes are prime targets, demanding mobile nodes, hardened convoys, and redundant supply lines for sustained operations.



India has begun some reforms. Integrated Battle Groups, combat restructuring, and discussions on theatre commands are steps forward. Yet progress has been slow. Services still guard their turf. The Ukraine conflict shows that jointness is not optional. India will need to give priority to functional commands for cyber, space, unmanned systems, air defence and information warfare.

The cognitive space deserves equal weight. Narrative control proved decisive for Ukraine. By shaping international opinion, sustaining morale, and exposing Russian failures, it created a strategic advantage. Russia's difficulties grew because it could not dominate the information domain. Countering such campaigns requires institutions, trained personnel, and integration of information warfare into national security planning.

RETURN OF THE REAR

The Ukraine conflict has shown how fragile logistics can be. Supply depots, fuel dumps, and transport corridors once thought safe are now prime targets. Precision strikes and drones have made the rear almost as contested as the front. Sustaining operations demands smaller mobile nodes, hardened convoys, and redundant lines of supply.

For India, this is not new. The Kargil conflict showcased the challenges of operational sustenance at altitude. Roads in Ladakh and Arunachal are restrictive and weather-dependent. Airlift capacity, though enhanced, is still limited. If logistics are struck in such terrain, combat units will stall. The lesson from Ukraine is that logistics is no longer a background

function. It is at the heart of operational effectiveness. Investment in resilient supply networks, forward stockpiling, and border infrastructure is as vital as investment in combat arms.

ATMANIRBHAR IN DEFENCE

Strategic autonomy will remain hollow without indigenous capacity. Equally important is investment in human capital that can operate in cyber and information domains. Strategic autonomy is not just diplomacy. It is the ability to sustain a war without waiting for external suppliers.

India's modernisation must focus on integrating systems rather than accumulating platforms. Networks that connect sensors, shooters, and decision makers across domains should be the priority. Artificial intelligence should be embedded into command and control. Training must reflect multi-domain realities rather than single-service battles.

India needs to develop its own indigenous drone ecosystem through a PPP model with both capacity and autonomous capability. India must invest in small satellite constellations, long-endurance drones, and AI-enabled fusion centres to



provide commanders with persistent awareness. Redundant communication systems are vital to resist cyber and electronic attack.

India's priority should not be the hurried creation of theatre commands but the establishment of functional commands that integrate resources across services for specific operational effects. Strength is not in merging theatres, but in dominating the battlespace, and victory belongs to the nation that fuses its battlespace, not just its forces.

India must urgently adapt, building joint, resilient, and networked forces, investing in indigenous production, strengthening logistics, protecting cognitive space, reforming command structures, and embedding adaptability into military culture.

Cognitive warfare requires institutional attention. India must create dedicated structures to monitor hostile narratives, train specialists in counter-propaganda, and link responses with

diplomatic and media instruments. Public resilience to disinformation should be developed as part of national security.

Logistics must be restructured to survive precision strikes. Underground fuel and ammunition storage, dispersed supply depots, and mobile maintenance teams are essential. Digital logistics networks linked to ISR will allow dynamic rerouting under attack.



Most importantly, India must foster adaptability. Ukraine showed how innovation at the lowest levels often shifted the balance. India's armed forces must encourage initiative, allow experimentation, and reduce bureaucratic rigidity. Professional military education must shed its legacy cloak and encourage thought leadership where creativity and constructive criticism are encouraged, and multi-domain capabilities are integrated. Modern conflict will not reward those who wait for orders but those who seize fleeting opportunities within the commander's intent.

SYMBOLS OF STRENGTH

The war in Ukraine has already redrawn the map of conventional warfare. Heavy platforms, once seen as symbols of strength,

have been exposed as vulnerable. Drones and electronic warfare are now central. Information dominance shapes outcomes as much as firepower. Logistics has returned to the front line of strategy.

For India, these lessons are urgent. Adversaries are studying them and adapting quickly. India must build forces that are joint, networked, and resilient. It must invest in indigenous production and protect the cognitive space as fiercely as its physical borders. Logistics must be treated as a combat function. Command structures must evolve to reflect functional domains. Above all, adaptability must be embedded in military culture.

Wars ahead will not be won by mass alone or technology alone. They will be won by those who integrate kill chains with precision mass. India must learn relevant lessons from the Ukraine battlespace and be future-ready.



(Lt Gen A B Shivane (R), Former DG Mechanised Forces, Indian Army. TEDx Speaker, Strategic Defence Consultant, Analyst & Corporate Mentor. The views expressed are of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of The News Analytics Herald.)

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- *Ukraine war shows agility and innovation outweigh bulk and outdated doctrines.*
- *Drones, cyber attacks, and electronic warfare dominate modern battlespaces.*
- *Cognitive warfare and narrative control now shape legitimacy and morale.*
- *Logistics is the frontline: rear supply lines are vulnerable to precision strikes.*
- *India must build joint, resilient, and indigenous capabilities across all domains.*



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www.newsanalytics.in
editor@newsanalytics.in

IN THE SPOTLIGHT

ISRAELI STRIKE TARGETS HAMAS IN DOHA



Israel carried out an airstrike in Doha, targeting Hamas officials, including its chief ceasefire negotiator. Hamas confirmed six deaths, among them the son of exiled Gaza leader Khalil al-Hayya, but said its senior leadership, including negotiators, survived. The strike coincided with Israel's warning for Gaza City residents to evacuate ahead of a major offensive to capture what it calls Hamas's last stronghold, where hundreds of thousands face famine conditions. The White House, informed in advance, criticised the action as counterproductive, noting it struck within Qatar—a key U.S. ally and mediator in ongoing ceasefire negotiations.

INDIA REOPENS EMBASSY IN TALIBAN-RULED KABUL



India has announced the upgrade of its limited mission in Kabul into a full embassy, marking its first high-level diplomatic engagement with Afghanistan's Taliban administration since 2021. External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar made the announcement in New Delhi after talks with Afghan Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi. He stressed India's commitment to Afghanistan's sovereignty and stability, and welcomed Kabul's invitation for Indian firms to explore mining opportunities. The move revives India's diplomatic footprint, which was reduced after the U.S. withdrawal and Taliban takeover, and signals New Delhi's intent to balance regional influence with economic and strategic engagement.

INDIA-AUSTRALIA REAFFIRM SHARED INDO-PACIFIC VISION



India and Australia have reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening cooperation with regional partners to preserve a free, open, peaceful, and prosperous Indo-Pacific. In a joint statement, both leaders underscored strong support for freedom of navigation, unimpeded trade, and adherence to international law, particularly the 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea. The focus on the Indo-Pacific follows earlier high-level exchanges, including CDS General Anil Chauhan's March visit to Australia. Alongside fellow Quad members, the U.S. and Japan, India and Australia continue to push for a rules-based order, countering China's growing assertiveness and influence across the region.

EGYPT HOSTS LANDMARK GAZA PEACE SUMMIT



Egypt convened the Sharm el-Sheikh Peace Summit on 13th October, co-chaired by President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi and US President Donald Trump, bringing together leaders from over 30 nations. The summit, attended by Middle Eastern, European, and Asian leaders, aims to end the Gaza conflict and promote lasting regional stability. Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas confirmed his participation to finalise the agreement. Trump, who earlier addressed Israel's Knesset during his regional tour, will conclude his visit in Sharm el-Sheikh to sign the deal. The summit follows Washington's newly announced peace plan and Egypt's ongoing mediation to secure a Gaza ceasefire..

INDIA, RUSSIA CONDUCTS COMBAT DRILLS IN THE DESERT



India and Russia conducted the joint military exercise Indra 2025 in the desert region of Bikaner, Rajasthan, from 6 to 15 October 2025. Around 250 Russian personnel trained alongside Indian troops in counter-terrorism and modern warfare scenarios. The high-intensity drills feature live-fire exercises, close-quarter combat, and simulated hostage-rescue missions under challenging desert conditions. Senior commanders, including Major General Andre Kozlov and Major General Sanjay Chandra Kandpal, attended the inauguration. This year's exercise focuses on eliminating insurgent networks and precision strikes on fortified positions, reinforcing shared doctrines against terrorism and highlighting deepening defence coordination between New Delhi and Moscow.

INDIA JOINS GLOBAL LEAGUE WITH GIFT CITY FX SETTLEMENT



Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on October 7 unveiled the Foreign Currency Settlement System (FCSS) at Gujarat International Finance Tec-City (GIFT City). The new platform allows entities operating within the International Financial Services Centre to settle foreign currency transactions in real or near-real time, replacing the earlier 36–48 hour lag under correspondent banking. This leap positions GIFT City alongside global hubs such as Hong Kong, Tokyo, and Manila, offering world-class infrastructure. The initiative is expected to cut settlement risks, boost liquidity management, enhance operational efficiency, and further GIFT City's rise as a premier international financial centre.

INDIA FLAGS OFF FIRST DIRECT CARGO FLIGHT TO ANTARCTICA



On October 2, a Russian IL-76 cargo aircraft took off on the first-ever direct air cargo mission between India and Antarctica, delivering vital supplies for Indian research stations Bharati and Maitri. Facilitated under the Dronning Maud Land Air Network (DROMLAN), the heavy-duty plane carried 18 tons of scientific instruments, medicines, provisions, and climate-monitoring equipment. The IL-76, usually deployed for military transport, was rerouted via Goa's Manohar International Airport in Mopa before heading south through Cape Town en route to Antarctica. The mission marks a milestone in India's polar research capability and logistical self-reliance.

ASTEROID SKIMS PAST EARTH IN RECORD NEAR-MISS



Astronomers revealed that on October 1, 2025, asteroid 2025 TF passed Earth at a breathtakingly close distance of just 428 kilometres—comparable to the altitude of the International Space Station. The space rock was first detected only hours later by Arizona's Catalina Sky Survey, highlighting how such objects can slip past unnoticed until after they've flown by. While the asteroid posed no threat, the encounter nearly set a record for the closest approach ever observed. The incident underscores the constant challenge of tracking near-Earth objects, a task vital to safeguarding our planet from potential future impacts.

THE 'PLOT' OF WESTERN DEEP STATES

DIPLOMACY

South Asia stands at a crossroads where youthful protests, military manoeuvres, and external manipulation collide. From Colombo to Dhaka and Kathmandu, unrest is no longer spontaneous, it mirrors a strategic pattern shaped by both internal failures and external designs. As democracies falter and militaries rise, the region risks becoming a chessboard for global powers, with students as its most expendable pawns.



M A HOSSAIN | DHAKA, BANGLADESH.
SENIOR JOURNALIST | COVERS SOUTH ASIA & ASEAN REGION
FOR NEWS ANALYTICS

History does not repeat in the same way, yet it often carries a rhythm. What happened in South Asia today? In Sri Lanka, young men and women broke into the presidential palace. In Pakistan, university grounds turned into battlefields. In Bangladesh, the streets overflowed with students mourning their dead. In Nepal, restless youth defied curfews with defiance in their eyes. The grievances differ—corruption in one place, inflation in another, failed governance everywhere. But the sequence is familiar. The choreography does not change. The panorama is clear; young protesters ignite movements, institutions reel under pressure, political systems enter paralysis, and a new force waits in the wings. This is

no accident of history. It is a pattern, and like all patterns, it has an author.

A FAMILIAR HAND

The convenient explanation for these uprisings is domestic failure. South Asia's politicians are corrupt, opportunistic, and frequently incompetent. They betray their electorates with astonishing regularity. But to reduce this wave of unrest to internal dysfunction alone is to miss the forest for the trees. The Western deep state—the shadowy confluence of intelligence services, foreign policy elites, NGOs, and media ecosystems—has been writing this script for decades.



Their preferred weapon is not invasion but persuasion. It is not tanks but hashtags. Call it “soft power,” though there is nothing soft about its consequences. The story follows a script in which a corrupt government remains at the top, a brutal police force rules the streets, and innocent students are caught in the crossfire. Then comes the storm on social media, magnifying every image, every cry. The script is very familiar—first in Libya, then in Syria, and later in Ukraine. Now, the very same template plays out again in Colombo, Islamabad, Dhaka, and Kathmandu.



NEW MILITARY ORDER

Why would Washington, Brussels, or London pour resources into destabilising fragile democracies? The answer is geographic arithmetic. Two giants stand at the centre of Asia’s future, China and India. Both are shifting the weight of global power. Moreover, they anchor the Indo-Pacific sea lanes, the most important trade corridor of this century. The future of world commerce will not be decided in New York or London, but through the ports of Chittagong, Colombo, Karachi, and Hambantota. If these gateways remain under the sway of weak democracies, Beijing and New Delhi will dictate terms. But if they are militarised, Western capitals can reinsert themselves into the equation.

Western-backed militarisation seeks buffers: Sri Lanka as a disciplined hub, Pakistan predictable, Bangladesh countering India-China, and Nepal leveraged strategically—reshaping South Asia’s balance of power.

Here lies the logic. Armies, whatever their internal flaws, are seen as patriotic institutions. They are disciplined, hierarchical, and relatively insulated from the chaos of

electoral politics. They are also easier to communicate with for external actors. One call to a general accomplishes what a hundred conversations with squabbling politicians cannot. It is therefore no surprise that the West prefers military-backed regimes in South Asia—not because generals are Jeffersonian democrats, but because they are reliable interlocutors.

THE PLAYBOOK

The method is brutally efficient. First, corrupt politicians are allowed to discredit themselves. Then, students—idealistic, energetic, and reckless—take to the streets. Inevitably, tragedy strikes. In Bangladesh, it was Abu Sayeed and Mir Mughdho, whose deaths from sniper fire turned a movement viral. In Nepal, it was the students who were shot, not from police lines but from rooftops, bullets piercing heads and necks in precision patterns. Official accounts blamed police, but forensic details suggested military-standard sniper rifles, hardware not in the hands of local constabularies.

Once young martyrs fall, social media amplifies the outrage. The state responds defensively, then clumsily. Institutions fracture, the narrative becomes unstoppable: the government is illegitimate, the leaders are thugs, the police are murderers. Soon, politicians are forced out and a vacuum emerges. In that vacuum, the military steps in—sometimes directly, sometimes through civilian proxies.

Consider Bangladesh. Within days of the August 2024 killings, Muhammad Yunus, a Nobel laureate but hardly a constitutional figure, returned from Paris to head an “interim government.” The Home Ministry was handed to a retired brigadier. When he revealed that the bullets killing protesters were military-grade, he was swiftly reassigned. The pattern could not be clearer: create chaos, insert a pliable regime, and secure Western approval.

THE GEOPOLITICAL STRATEGY

This is not just about regime change for its own sake. It is about building buffers. A military-backed Sri Lanka with Western defence assistance could be transformed into a Singapore of the Indian Ocean—disciplined, trade-friendly, and strategically useful. A Pakistan steered by its generals offers predictability in dealings with Washington. A Bangladesh run under quiet military supervision provides a counterweight to both India’s regional ambitions and China’s Belt and Road investments. Nepal, landlocked yet crucial, becomes a leverage over both New Delhi and Beijing.

To cement this order, Western economic aid will flow generously. Defence packages will include sophisticated technology. International media will applaud “stability.” The youth who once believed they were liberating their nations will be forgotten—or worse, vilified as anarchists. This is how revolutions are hijacked and turned into counter-revolutions.

India faces a volatile threat. A single sniper incident targeting youth protests could ignite nationwide chaos, collapse legitimacy, and destabilise governance through perception rather than policy.

Perhaps the most chilling dimension of this playbook is the use of the sniper. The pattern is too consistent to dismiss. In Libya during the Arab Spring, anonymous gunmen fired from rooftops into crowds, sparking outrage and delegitimising the state. In Dhaka, bodies were returned to families with head wounds inconsistent with police fire. In Kathmandu, students were killed deep within crowds, not at the barricades. NATO-standard rounds, telescopic accuracy, rooftop vantage points—these are not the weapons of riot police. They are the calling cards of hybrid warfare.

The genius, if one dares to call it that, lies in deniability. A sniper's bullet to the head of a teenager is immediately blamed on the regime. Videos flood social media, emotions boil, and governments collapse under the weight of moral outrage. Yet the shooters themselves vanish into the fog, leaving behind only the narrative their sponsors intended.

INDIA'S VULNERABLE MOMENT

For India, the warning could not be more urgent. Already, efforts have been made to provoke mob violence in Ladakh. A different kind of Indian uprising has taken shape. It does not echo the farmers' siege of Delhi in 2020, nor the anti-corruption fervour of Anna Hazare's marches a decade earlier. This one carries the restless energy of a generation that was never expected to march into politics so soon, Generation Z.

A hidden sniper on a rooftop in Delhi, Mumbai, or Kolkata could unleash chaos beyond control. The death of a student, caught on camera, would spread across the world in minutes. Images of bloodied youth would flood social media. The legitimacy of any government could possibly collapse overnight, not because of policy, but because of perception. This is how regime change is attempted without an army, without an invasion, without even sanctions. It is warfare by proxy, where the most expendable soldiers are young men and women on the streets.

ILLUSION OF STRONG NEIGHBOURS

The West will argue that a militarised South Asia resembles stability. A strong Sri Lanka, a disciplined Pakistan, a controlled Bangladesh—why should anyone complain if the result resembles Singapore? But this is a mirage. What it really achieves is the decoupling of India and China from their immediate periphery. Instead of friendly or dependent

neighbours, they will face fortified buffer states aligned with Western interests. The Indo-Pacific will not be shaped by Asian giants, but by external puppeteers.



South Asian democracies must reform urgently, curb corruption, resist military overreach, and challenge manipulated narratives, or remain pawns in a geopolitical chessboard controlled by external powers.

What ties together the streets of Dhaka, the rooftops of Kathmandu, and the protests of Colombo and Karachi is not simply youthful anger. It is a plot, authored abroad, implemented locally, and executed with sniper precision. Students believe they are fighting for freedom. In reality, they are pawns in a larger contest over the Indo-Pacific's future.

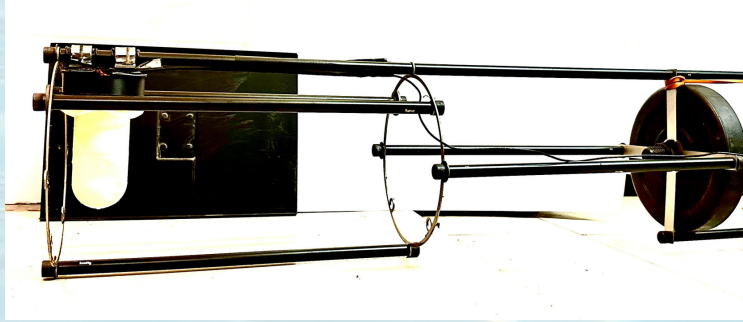
The lesson is harsh but necessary. Democracies in South Asia must reform themselves before others reform them. Politicians must curb their corruption, militaries must resist the lure of easy power, and citizens must learn to question the narratives fed to them. Otherwise, the region will remain a chessboard on which invisible players move their pieces with deadly accuracy.

These are dangerous times. The bullet that kills a student does not just end a life; it rewrites a nation's destiny and unless India and China understand the plot unfolding around them, the destiny being rewritten will not be theirs to control.

*(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**.)*

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- *Youth-led protests across South Asia mirror deeper political failures and foreign manipulation.*
- *Western powers exploit unrest, favouring military regimes for predictable geopolitical leverage.*
- *Sniper attacks and social media outrage drive regime delegitimation and chaos.*
- *India faces vulnerability to manufactured uprisings amid wider Indo-Pacific rivalries.*
- *Militarised "stability" risks reducing South Asia to Western-controlled buffer states.*



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THE GAZA GAMBIT: WHO CARES?

GEOSTRATEGIC

The Gaza crisis remains one of the world's most intractable conflicts, shaped by geopolitics, ideology, and raw power. Behind diplomatic theatre and Trump's "peace plan" lies devastation: shattered infrastructure, mass displacement, and an uncertain future. Israel's military dominance, Hamas's miscalculations, and Western ambivalence converge to leave Palestinians trapped in an endless cycle of suffering and dispossession.



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

I have been there. The Gaza Strip is beautiful, with waves that roll in gently from the Mediterranean. It could be a tourist paradise. Instead, it is the latest example of an international witches' brew that can neither be digested nor discarded. I am not going to pontificate on Palestine, its uncertain past or unknown future. Internet has enough drivel on the region.

Arab residents of the area were thrown out when tiny Israel was created in 1948 as a Western outpost to stabilise a volatile Islamic region. Many wars have been fought, and tiny Israel has grown in size, while some of its Muslim neighbours have contracted. In July 2025, Canada said it would recognise Palestine. "You do that," threatened President Donald Trump, "and there will be no trade deal with you." Nevertheless,

several European leaders have gone ahead.

The three main protagonists in the Gaza gamble are Israel, the United States, and Hamas/Palestinians. Britain, which created the problem, is nowhere in sight. Israel is clear that it will never allow a repeat of what happened in October 2023, the most serious attack on its survival as a nation and as a people. America wants to own Gaza, so that its policeman in the Islamic region, Israel, does not face any serious threats from neighbouring territories.

Gaza could have been a Mediterranean paradise, but decades of wars, expulsions and failed peace have turned beauty into one of history's most tragic fault lines.



TRUMP'S PEACE THEATRE

Hamas, committed to the obliteration of the Jewish state, is trying to put up a brave face to redeem its credibility among Palestinians. In September 2025, Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu met US President Donald Trump at the White House to discuss Gaza, after Trump had met several



Islamic nations on the sidelines of the UNGA in New York. After the talks, President Donald Trump said a deal was “beyond very close” and presented a 20-point peace plan calling for an immediate ceasefire and the release of the few remaining Israeli hostages.

The plan proposed an end to military operations, an immediate release of Israeli hostages by Hamas, and a quick delivery of aid to Gaza. It also said Hamas would have no role in governing Gaza. Trump warned that if it refused to give up control, Hamas would be obliterated. Demonstrations against Hamas were seen in Gaza in April 2025 but quickly subsided.

The Trump plan also included a “board of peace” to oversee implementation, led by Donald Trump himself. In essence, the plan was an excuse for Trump to control Gaza and make money for himself. Netanyahu saw it not as a done deal, but as a non-starter. Hamas, under pressure from its benefactors in Qatar — itself bombed not many days ago by Israel, which wanted to decapitate the remaining Hamas leadership hosted there — accepted the plan. It would reduce part of Gaza to a gated enclave with controversial former British Prime Minister Tony Blair, afflicted by “relevance deficiency syndrome,” as its Governor-General.

If Hamas rejected the plan or failed to follow through, Netanyahu said Israel would “finish the job,” while Trump declared that Netanyahu would have full US backing to “do what he has to do.”

Both Tel Aviv and Washington knew that there was possibly no

Trump's 20-point plan was less about peace, more about control—an excuse to reshape Gaza's fate while projecting American power in West Asia.

hostages left alive. By agreeing to release non-existent persons, Hamas would be blamed for the collapse of the proposal. Within two days, Hamas accepted the plan, did not release any hostages, and Israel resumed pummeling Gaza.

HUMAN COST UNFOLDING

By mid-October 2025, after a two-month ceasefire collapsed in March, Israel was continuing its strikes across the Gaza Strip. On 1 October, Israeli forces intercepted a flotilla of aid boats bound for Gaza. Soon after, Hamas and Israel, with US and Qatari mediators, prepared to meet in Cairo to discuss the fading peace proposal. But for what purpose? Back in February 2025, Trump had declared his intention to clear Gaza of Palestinians and transform it into an international Mediterranean resort. Unspoken was the interest of Trump, the property developer, in the idea. Sitting beside him, Netanyahu smiled broadly. The basic challenge: who would take the evictees? “Jordan and Egypt,” said Trump. “Not at all,” replied the two. “Mad idea,” said Islamic nations.



Palestinians will not be evicted. But none of them wants the Palestinians either.

King Abdullah of Jordan was invited to the White House and pressured to take 2,000 seriously ill Palestinian children, which Trump described as a “beautiful gesture.” So, what is the next chapter in the Gaza gambit? According to the World Bank, Gaza’s economy contracted by over 90% in early 2025 — the largest economic contraction on record. UN agencies compete to make dire forecasts. The WHO says healthcare facilities are unable to function owing to damage or lack of supplies and fuel. Many hospitals have been raided by Israeli forces, who allege they were used by Hamas for military purposes.

The UN Environment Programme says it could take 21 years just to clear debris and explosives. Gaza’s water and sanitation systems are “almost entirely defunct,” with chemicals from destroyed solar panels and munitions contaminating soil and water. More than 50 million tonnes of debris have accumulated.

UNCTAD estimates war damage at USD 18.5 billion — about seven times Gaza’s 2022 GDP — and says it could take 350 years to rebuild the economy to that level. Yet the birth rate has not declined; Palestinians proliferate relentlessly.

Palestinians cannot be erased: their numbers rise, their presence endures, and their struggle remains central to West Asia's shifting balance of power.

SHIFTING REGIONAL BALANCE

Hamas badly miscalculated its horrific attack on 7 October 2023 — underestimating Israel's ferocity and the unwillingness of the international community to enforce a ceasefire. Despite decades of occupation, it had not understood that



relentless violence against enemies of the State of Israel is hardwired into Israel's DNA.

Why launch such a brazen attack? Hamas hoped to force the Palestinian issue back onto the world's agenda after years of drift under the Abraham Accords and signs that even Saudi Arabia was preparing to normalise ties with Israel. The gamble worked — the UN and ICJ re-examined Israel's occupation — but at tremendous cost to Palestinians themselves. The two-state solution is being relegated to oblivion under expanding Israeli settlements. But the Palestinian issue cannot be erased.

There are 7 million Palestinians in the occupied territories, almost equalling the Jewish population of Israel and the

territories. Soon, at current rates, Palestinians will outnumber Jews. They cannot be wished away. With Israel receiving carte blanche not just from the US but from the wider West, what will the Middle East look like?

In the past 18 months, Israel has decimated Gaza, silenced dissent in the West Bank, crushed Hamas and Hezbollah, and bloodied Iran. The Iranian-led Axis of Resistance has been severely set back, while Russian influence in West Asia has ebbed. The landscape now overwhelmingly favours Israel and its principal backer, the US.

Despite such upheavals, the global economic impact of the Gaza war has been limited, beyond Houthi disruptions to shipping in the Bab el-Mandeb and Arabian Sea. India's diplomacy has been nimble — balancing security ties with Israel while strengthening partnerships with the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Egypt, and others, and providing humanitarian aid to Palestinians.

For much of the Global South, the West's contrasting reactions to Ukraine and Gaza mark the requiem of the so-called rules-based order. As Nassim Nicholas Taleb wrote in *The Black Swan* (2007), improbable, high-impact events reshape history. West Asia in the past two years has seen more than one such black swan, each still rippling through the region's fault lines. And the Palestinian residents of Gaza? Who cares? Cannon fodder is always dispensable.

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

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- *Gaza, once a potential paradise, is now a battlefield trapped in an Israel–Hamas–US geopolitical struggle.*
- *Trump's "peace plan" is perceived globally as self-serving political theatre without genuine resolution.*
- *Israel's relentless military operations devastate Gaza, while Palestinians remain silenced, displaced, and politically marginalised.*
- *Humanitarian catastrophe worsens daily: Gaza's economy collapses, healthcare crumbles, and infrastructure nears total destruction.*
- *Demographic reality: Palestinians' growing numbers guarantee the issue cannot be erased, ignored, or sidelined.*

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CURTAIN RAISER

DUBAI AIRSHOW 2025 — CHARTING THE FUTURE OF AEROSPACE

NEWS ANALYTICS | SPECIAL COVERAGE

- **Global Defence Leaders** – Air Chiefs and senior delegations from the U.S., UK, France, Russia, and China, all expected to outline new procurement priorities.
- **Industry Titans** – CEOs from Boeing, Airbus, Lockheed Martin, Dassault, and Gulf-based carriers such as Emirates and Etihad, unveiling next-gen technologies and mega orders.
- **Space & Mobility Innovators** – Leaders in satellite systems, eVTOLs, and drone technologies, highlighting the next era of aerospace.
- **India's Delegation** – Senior officials from the Ministry of Defence and Indian Air Force, alongside HAL, BEL, DRDO, and private aerospace firms, poised to showcase India's Atmanirbhar platforms.

Dubai Airshow 2025 takes flight later this month, bringing the world's aerospace giants, innovators, and strategists together. A stage of cutting-edge technology, billion-dollar deals, and global diplomacy, it's where ambition, aviation, and geopolitics converge—with India watching closely.

AVIATION'S MEGA STAGE

The world of aviation and defence is preparing to converge on Dubai for one of the most significant events on the global aerospace calendar. The Dubai Airshow 2025, to be held from 17 to 21 November at the DWC Airshow site, is set to showcase the future of flight, space, and defence. Under the patronage of His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, the show has steadily grown from a regional gathering to one of the largest international platforms for aerospace innovation and strategic engagement.

This year's edition promises to be the biggest yet, with more than 1,500 exhibitors, over 148,000 professionals, and 200 aircraft expected on display in both static and flying segments. Building on the momentum of the 2023 edition, which recorded over 135,000 visitors, 1,400 exhibitors, 192 aircraft, and orders worth more than \$100 billion, the 2025 show is expanding its scale with additional floor space and new thematic areas. Dubai is positioning itself not just as a showcase hub but as the global meeting ground for ideas, innovation, and commerce in aerospace and defence.



INNOVATION PAVILIONS

The scale of the event is matched by the breadth of its themes. Dedicated pavilions will highlight key growth areas such as space exploration, advanced air mobility, unmanned aerial vehicles, and sustainable aviation technologies. The Space Pavilion is doubling in size, reflecting the growing importance of the space economy and the UAE's own

ambitions in space. The Advanced Air Mobility and eVTOL Pavilion will provide a glimpse into the future of urban transport, with prototypes of flying taxis and new-generation rotorcraft. Alongside the static displays and flying shows, these innovation hubs underline how Dubai Airshow has moved far beyond being a conventional aerospace exhibition—it is now a platform where future-defining technologies are introduced to the world.

No Dubai Airshow is complete without its flying spectacles. Visitors can expect breathtaking formation displays, aerobatic manoeuvres by national teams, cutting-edge drones, and some of the latest commercial and military aircraft making their Middle East debut. Dubai’s “SkyView” experience will add interactive zones where simulators, VR platforms,

and immersive technology allow visitors to experience the thrill of aviation firsthand. These elements underscore Dubai’s ability to blend industry seriousness with public fascination, reinforcing the show’s dual character as both a high-level marketplace and a global crowd-puller.

The importance of the airshow goes far beyond its glamour. Dubai Airshow has become a marketplace where the aerospace industry’s biggest contracts are signed. Airlines, defence ministries, and technology companies often time their orders to coincide with the event, creating headlines that reverberate across global markets. With billions of dollars expected to be committed again this year, the show is an opportunity not only for industry giants but also for smaller firms and start-ups looking for international visibility.



INDIA’S STAKES @ DUBAI 2025

For India, the Dubai Airshow carries special weight. As one of the fastest-growing aviation markets and an emerging aerospace power, India cannot afford to be a passive spectator. New Delhi is working towards a \$5 billion annual defence export target under its Atmanirbhar Bharat initiative, and the airshow provides a crucial platform to promote indigenous systems such as the Tejas fighter, advanced drones, electronic warfare systems, and MRO capabilities. Indian defence PSUs and private firms will look to position themselves not just as sellers but as long-term partners in co-development projects with Middle Eastern, African, and Central Asian buyers.

India’s civil aviation sector also has strong stakes in Dubai. Indian carriers are among the biggest users of Gulf hubs, and the rapid expansion of the Indian middle class has direct implications for aircraft orders, route networks, and maintenance partnerships. The show’s strong focus on sustainable aviation and next-generation propulsion systems is also of interest to India as it balances growth with climate commitments. Start-ups from India working in drones, satellite technologies, and AI-enabled aviation solutions have an opportunity to showcase their innovations before global investors and strategic partners who gather in Dubai precisely to scout for scalable ideas.

STRATEGIC ENGAGEMENT

The diplomatic angle cannot be ignored either. Dubai Airshow attracts senior delegations from the U.S., Europe, Russia, China, and the wider Middle East. For India, participation is not only about technology and trade but also about maintaining visibility in strategic dialogues. As Saudi Arabia deepens its defence ties with Pakistan, Dubai offers India a more neutral stage to assert its presence, cultivate Gulf relationships, and reinforce its role as a credible partner in aerospace and defence. The show thus doubles as an arena for Track-1.5 diplomacy, where military officers, diplomats, and policymakers engage alongside industry leaders.

At a time when supply chain disruptions, geopolitical tensions, and technological competition are reshaping the global aerospace industry, India must be seen as both a contributor and a stakeholder. Dubai’s location at the crossroads of Europe, Asia, and Africa makes it the perfect launchpad for India to expand its outreach. Whether in securing maintenance contracts with Gulf carriers, presenting itself as a reliable defence partner, or building joint ventures in space and satellite technologies, India has much to gain from a strong presence.

THE RUSSIAN REAL AGENDA FOR EUROPE

WAR STRATEGY

For months now, Europe has been buzzing with reports of suspicious drones, cyber incursions, and shadowy “ghost fleets” of Russian oil tankers evading sanctions. In Brussels, Berlin and Copenhagen, politicians frame these incidents as hybrid warfare, while Moscow either denies involvement or smirks in silence. Yet beneath the headlines lies a deeper question: is Europe truly grasping Russia’s strategy, or is it trapped in its own narrative of fear, propaganda and Russophobia?



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

Russia’s fingerprints have long been associated with cyberattacks across Europe. According to the EU’s cybersecurity agency ENISA and NATO’s own reporting, recent years have seen multiple high-impact attacks on critical infrastructure, hospitals in Germany and France, energy grids in Poland, and government networks in the Baltics.

In 2023, the Russian-affiliated group Killnet launched DDoS attacks on airports and parliaments, while in 2024, a ransomware wave targeted Danish and Swedish logistics firms, disrupting European supply chains. A DDoS attack,

or distributed denial-of-service, is a malicious attempt to disrupt the normal traffic of a targeted server, service or network by overwhelming the target or its surrounding infrastructure with a flood of internet traffic.

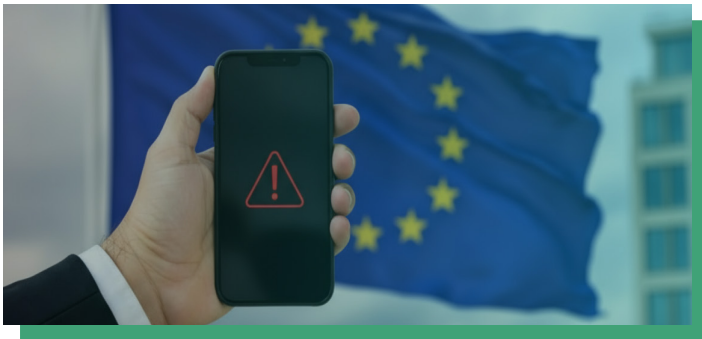
Utilities and critical infrastructure remain the primary target. Water systems in France, railway signalling in Germany, and even satellite links used by Ukraine but hosted on European servers have been disrupted. These attacks are rarely sophisticated on a technical level but devastating in their timing and scale, sowing doubt in public services and political decision-making.



DRONES IN THE SKY

In parallel, drone incursions have unnerved Europe. Drones were spotted or intercepted over Polish farmland, Romanian oil refineries, airports in Denmark, Germany and Belgium, and even Norwegian offshore platforms. Yet confirmation that Russia is behind all these incidents is still lacking.

Most never carried explosives; they were cheap, commercially modified devices, often “unclaimed” by any actor. Yet the



European Commission now treats them as hostile probes, with Ursula von der Leyen pushing for a €1.5 billion “drone wall” along the eastern flank.

NATO’s military committee in Riga recently declared that “every threat to NATO’s air, land and sea space will be dealt with a resolute response,” but according to the European Council on Foreign Relations (ECFR), no real action has been taken because of doubts about whether Trump would back them.

Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen went further, telling the Financial Times that Europe is already in a “hybrid war.” Her choice of words matters: in Copenhagen, where EU leaders gathered under heavy security, the drone narrative dominated, overshadowing even Ukraine’s EU accession and frozen Russian assets.

Trump’s Greenland ambitions expose NATO’s fragility, highlighting U.S. unpredictability. Russia exploits hybrid warfare, using drones and cyberattacks to test NATO’s cohesion, leaving Europe divided, hesitant, and vulnerable.

BEHIND RUSSIA’S PROVOCATIONS?

For the European leaders gathered in Copenhagen on 1 October 2025, Russia’s use of drones and cyberattacks is not random harassment but a deliberate grey-zone strategy: cheap provocations that force NATO into costly responses, as Loss explains.

By intruding into NATO airspace and disabling airports or logistics through cyber probes, Russia exposes gaps in European defence and intelligence, testing how far the alliance is willing to go.

Frederiksen warns that this is “only the beginning” of a hybrid war aimed not at conquest but at destabilisation, sowing doubt, and dividing European societies.

To enforce its agenda, Moscow benefits from cost asymmetry: a less than €50,000 Geran drone can force NATO to fire a €1 million missile, multiplying the strain on European defence budgets. Moreover, every cyber intrusion and aerial provocation doubles as intelligence-gathering, offering Russia insights into NATO’s readiness, command structures, and political hesitation.

NATO struggles because Europe remains split between states that see Russia as an existential threat and those that see it as a distant problem. Into this uncertainty comes Donald Trump: his revived rhetoric about “buying” or even “taking” Greenland from Denmark, a NATO and EU member, corrodes trust in U.S. leadership and backing.

For Copenhagen, this complicates the credibility of NATO guarantees: how can Denmark rely on its main ally while Washington eyes part of its sovereign territory? Russia surely sees opportunity in this ambivalence: Trump’s Greenland ambitions underscore that NATO unity is fragile and that U.S. priorities certainly do not align with European security. Thus, drones and cyberattacks are not about military gain but about stressing the layers in NATO’s fabric, showing Europeans they cannot rely fully on Washington. In this sense, Russia’s hybrid warfare exploits not just technological asymmetry but also the political vacuum created by U.S. unpredictability, leaving Europe hesitant, divided, and easier to weaken.

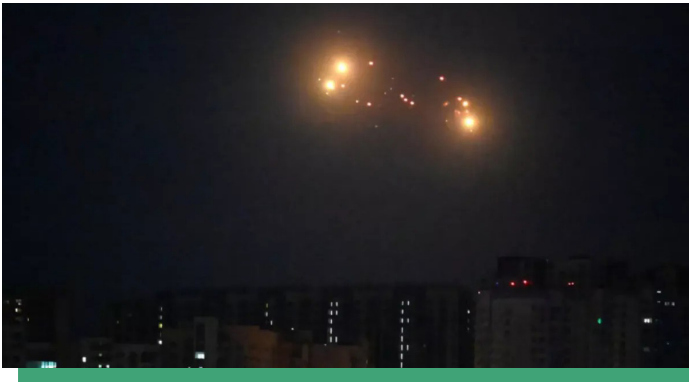


RUSSIA’S REAL AGENDA

What does Russia actually want? Not, as some fear, to invade Berlin or Paris. As Italian foreign minister Antonio Tajani bluntly put it, “Putin doesn’t want World War III.” Russia’s true goal is subtler: to keep Europe distracted, divided, and economically drained. By pushing cheap provocations, drones, cyber probes, and military jets brushing NATO airspace, Moscow ensures Europe spends more on defence and less on social welfare, infrastructure and competitiveness.

Already, €800 billion is earmarked for defence over the next four years, while pension reforms and welfare cuts sweep the continent.

Europe debates seizing €140 billion Russian assets, building a costly “drone wall,” and intercepting Russia’s sanction-evading ghost fleet—moves raising legal, political, and geopolitical dilemmas, including India’s.



This dynamic benefits both Moscow and Donald Trump’s Washington. Trump, whose influence looms over NATO through its new Secretary-General Mark Rutte, who wants Europe to pay more for its own defence, especially by buying American arms, while remaining dependent on U.S. strategic leadership.

For Putin, the revenge motive is strong. After the Cold War, Russia sought integration with Europe, from joining NATO and the European Union to creating a “common market from Vladivostok to Lisbon.” Rebuffed and patronised, Moscow turned eastwards, building ties with China and India. Now, Putin’s agenda is not to conquer Europe but to make it irrelevant, politically divided, economically uncompetitive, and socially fractured.

EUROPE’S COUNTERMOVES

Europe is not totally passive. Three initiatives stand out.

- Frozen Russian assets: Around €140 billion held in European banks are earmarked for Ukraine’s defence. Legal challenges abound, and central bankers warn it could erode global trust in the euro.
- Drone wall: Brussels wants a “multi-layered zone” of anti-drone systems along the eastern flank. Germany, France and Italy hesitate, preferring national control, while the Nordics and Baltics demand urgency.
- Ghost fleet interception: Europe is alarmed by Russia’s “dark fleet” of 800 oil tankers sailing under shifting flags to bypass sanctions. Yet maritime law complicates interception, although France has done it. For India, a

major buyer of discounted Russian oil, Europe’s policing of sea routes raises difficult questions: Could Delhi find itself inadvertently drawn into Europe’s sanction wars?

The Copenhagen summit revealed more fractures than resolutions. Leaders squabbled over who should control defence projects, the European Commission or national capitals, and how to use frozen assets. Viktor Orbán’s Hungary continued blocking sanctions, while Germany pushed its own deregulation agenda.

For his part, Putin, in his speech at the Valdai Club annual meeting, called concerns that Russia would attack NATO “nonsense,” accusing Western elites of stoking hysteria to justify military build-ups.

Russia’s hybrid warfare will remain Europe’s “new normal”—cheap cyber and drone provocations draining resources, inflating defence costs, eroding welfare budgets, and driving unsustainable debt burdens across the continent



INDIA’S DILEMMA

Europe often presents itself as a “geopolitical garden,” as Josep Borrell famously said. Yet in reality, the EU is trapped by its own illusions and by the conflicting agendas of mid-power states, Hungary vetoing sanctions, France dreaming of “strategic autonomy,” Britain clinging to its imperial past, and Poland and the Baltic States calling for NATO dominance. The continent oscillates between U.S. dependency and internal paralysis.

Propaganda exacerbates this paralysis. As German scholar Hans-Georg Moeller of the University of Macau argues, Europe’s “innocent arrogance”, a moral superiority complex, blinds it to new global geopolitical realities.

While China, India and others advance, Europe builds



to the U.S., or it can recalibrate, recognising that Moscow's provocations are less about conquest and more about manipulation.

Independent voices suggest Europe must resist propaganda, regain pluralism, and pursue pragmatic diplomacy, including with India, a rising power that values multipolarity. Whether European leaders dare to step outside their cognitive warfare bubble remains uncertain.

For now, drones buzz in the skies, cyber intrusions sparkle on government screens, and ghost tankers sail the seas. The provocations may be small, but their cumulative effect is huge: keeping Europe on edge, overspending on security, sowing division, and drifting towards irrelevance on the global chessboard.

victimhood narratives and spends its political capital on symbolic gestures against Russia that weaken its own welfare state, lead to social unrest, and create geopolitical irrelevance.

For India, the European debates matter. On the ghost fleet, Europe's attempts to police tanker traffic clash with India's interest in cheap Russian oil. Delhi risks secondary sanctions or strained EU ties. Yet India also sees opportunity: if Europe seeks partners beyond the U.S. orbit, India could position itself as a pragmatic interlocutor, bridging between sanctions-hardened Russia and a resource-hungry Europe.

BETWEEN HOPE AND DECLINE

Looking ahead, asymmetric warfare, cyber intrusions, drone swarms, and economic disruption will likely remain Europe's "new normal." It is cheap for Russia, exhausting for Europe. Each drone shot down costs thousands or even millions, and each cyberattack demands millions in defensive upgrades. Meanwhile, the public is nudged to accept defence budget hikes at the expense of welfare and unsustainable public debt.

Europe faces stark choices. It can continue down its current path, fragmented, drained by military spending and submissive



*(Ricardo Martins. PhD in Sociology, specialising in international relations, geopolitics, and Latin American politics. He recently completed his postdoctoral fellowship at Utrecht University in the Netherlands and covers major developments in Latin America for News Analytics. The views expressed are of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of **The News Analytics Herald.**)*

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- *Russia deploys drones, cyberattacks, and ghost fleets as low-cost hybrid warfare.*
- *NATO's deterrence weakens amid European disunity and U.S. unpredictability.*
- *Moscow's aim: distract, divide, and economically drain Europe, not invade.*
- *EU countermeasures—frozen assets, drone wall, ghost fleet tracking, all lacks unity.*
- *India sees both risks and opportunities in Europe's sanctions and oil politics.*

ELECTRONIC WARFARE: THE INVISIBLE BATTLEFIELD

HI-TECH

Electronic warfare (EW) has quietly become the decisive battleground of modern conflicts. By manipulating the electromagnetic spectrum, nations can blind radars, jam communications, and cripple enemy systems without firing a shot. From drone swarms to cyber intrusions, EW now rivals conventional firepower, forcing militaries worldwide to rethink strategy, resilience, and survival in this invisible domain of war.



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

Electronic warfare (EW) encompasses all strategies and technologies used to exploit the electromagnetic spectrum, including radio waves, microwaves, infrared, visible light, ultraviolet light and X-rays. The spectrum is an integral part of various military operations and serves as the backbone for communication, navigation and targeting.

Contemporary combat is not just about deploying and using weapons; it is also about disrupting communications, radars and navigation systems. EW works quietly in the background, manipulating the invisible waves that are essential to modern warfare. It represents the clash of invisible forces that can determine the outcome of conflicts.

EW tactics have evolved from niche techniques to core elements of military strategy. Their significance has increased alongside technological advancements and the growing

availability of affordable tools, making engagement in spectrum warfare more feasible. EW has rapidly emerged as a crucial yet often underestimated element of contemporary warfare. This shift has led militaries to rethink their electronic strategies.

ELECTRONIC WARFARE

Electronic warfare aims to deny the enemy the use of the electromagnetic spectrum, while ensuring that friendly forces can operate freely within it. EW includes proactive actions, such as jamming, deceiving and electromagnetic attacks. It also includes protective measures, such as electronic shielding and countermeasures. EW can be carried out from the air, land, sea or space, using both manned and unmanned systems. EW is built on three main pillars.

- **Electronic Attack or ECM:** Electronic attack techniques seek to disrupt, deceive or destroy the enemy's electronic systems. For instance, high-power microwave systems



can render electronics inoperable from a distance, effectively disabling drones or missiles. Electronic jamming is carried out by emitting radio frequency signals to saturate enemy receivers and hinder or prevent their ability to receive or transmit information. Spoofing involves sending false signals to the enemy to confuse or deceive their electronic systems.



- **Electronic Protection or ECCM:** EP/ECCM refers to actions taken to protect personnel, facilities, equipment or weapon systems from any effect of the use of the electromagnetic spectrum by either side. EP employs techniques such as encryption, frequency hopping or anti-jamming technologies. Modern EP uses adaptive algorithms that automatically adjust frequencies to minimise interference.
- **Electronic Support Measures (ESM):** ESM refers to actions taken to search for, intercept, identify and locate sources of intentional or unintentional electromagnetic energy. This pillar often feeds into broader intelligence operations, enabling predictive strikes. The primary technique is Signals Intelligence (SIGINT), a form of information gathering that involves intercepting signals.

TERRESTRIAL AND AIRBORNE EW

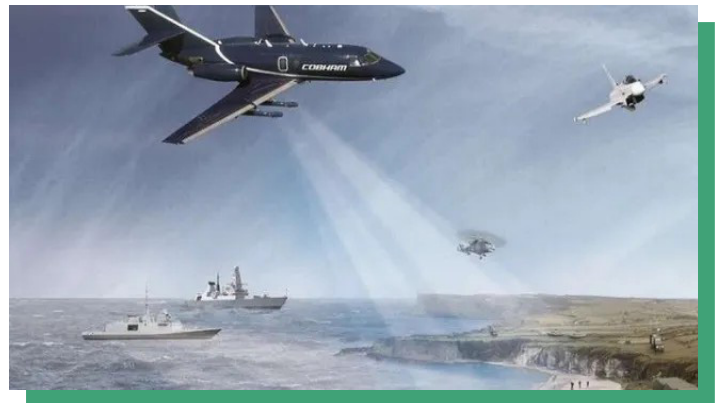
EW capabilities are traditionally categorised into two distinct categories: terrestrial and airborne. Each has its respective advantages and disadvantages, making it imperative for militaries to use both. Ground EW capabilities were traditionally used to intercept and jam enemy radio and radar signals. Terrestrial EW sensors and jammers have their limitations; variance in the terrain in which they operate hinders their effectiveness. Airborne EW is primarily employed to intercept, decrypt and disrupt communications, radars and other command and control (C2) systems over large areas. However, these capabilities are limited by aircraft endurance. Modern military operations also rely on satellite-based EW capabilities, including broad area surveillance, early warning, communications and C2.

Nagorno-Karabakh showcased EW's strengths and limits: Armenian systems disrupted Azerbaijani drones, yet swarming strikes overwhelmed defences, exposing vulnerabilities and underscoring the urgent need for integrated counter-drone strategies.

DEGRADING EFFECTS

On a tactical level, EW can degrade the enemy's situational awareness by disrupting their communications. Deception techniques, such as inserting false data into sensors or communications systems, can mislead enemy forces. Attacks against airborne, ground-based and space-based enemy sensors can blind air defences and delay decision cycles, creating windows for kinetic strikes. The integration of AI has made these operations quicker and more accurate, affecting the decision-making cycle.

EW doctrines adopted by global powers vary due to their differing goals and priorities. NATO focuses on integrated and interoperable EW systems, reflecting its philosophy of collective security. Chinese doctrine advocates achieving information dominance by leveraging EW in a networked environment. Russia employs an EW strategy of strategic



flexibility by integrating EW with hybrid warfare. These divergent methods highlight EW's role as a force multiplier tailored to respective geopolitical contexts.

The Nagorno-Karabakh conflict highlighted the critical role of EW in modern warfare. Azerbaijan attempted to overwhelm Armenian defences with precision strikes using Turkish Bayraktar TB2 drones. Armenia countered them with Russian Polye-21 EW systems, disrupting Azerbaijani drone signals and C2 for several days. However, drone swarms eventually saturated the defences. The conflict exposed EW's vulnerability to massed aerial attacks and underscored the need for integrated EW counter-drone systems.

Syria has been described as the "most aggressive EW environment on Earth." Russian forces jammed U.S. and NATO communications, disrupting operations. In 2020,

Turkey's Koral EW system neutralised Syrian air defences, blinding their radars and enabling drone incursions. Pro-government "electronic armies" employed cyber-EW hybrids to target opposition networks. The conflict highlighted EW's dual-use in hybrid warfare.

The Russia-Ukraine war represents EW's maturation in peer-level conflict. Russia deployed extensive EW systems, including jammers and aerial decoys, to disrupt Ukrainian and NATO surveillance radars. Ukraine captured some of these



assets for allied analysis and countermeasure development. Russian EW systems have reportedly caused significant Ukrainian drone losses, primarily through GPS scrambling and radio-control jamming. Meanwhile, Ukraine's targeting of Russian EW assets has been prioritised to enable counteroffensives. Both sides have adapted dynamically.

EW's importance grows as networked systems, commercial satellites, and low-cost technologies expand vulnerabilities. Even smaller actors now wield outsized impact through affordable, disruptive EW attacks.

These wars demonstrate EW's potential to break asymmetry, where superior electromagnetic spectrum control increases the effectiveness of kinetic strikes. Future forces must prioritise resilient, AI-augmented EW systems to dominate this invisible battlefield.

FUTURE TRAJECTORY

Three trends have amplified EW's importance. First, systems (military and civilian) are far more networked. Precision-guided munitions, networked sensors and satellite-enabled navigation make modern systems efficient but also vulnerable. Second, the commercial space and telecom sectors have proliferated capabilities, including small satellites and broadband networks, creating numerous new targets and disruption vectors. Third, inexpensive technologies (software-defined radios, low-cost drones and portable jammers) reduce the cost of effective EW attacks, allowing smaller actors to impose outsized effects.

AI and Automation: AI-driven EW systems can rapidly detect, analyse and jam signals, reducing response times. Machine learning is also used to predict and counter enemy EW tactics.

Miniaturisation: Smaller, less expensive EW systems, such as those on drones, enable even non-state actors to disrupt advanced militaries.

Cyber-EW Convergence: EW increasingly overlaps with cyber warfare, targeting networked systems. For example, hacking into radar systems can complement traditional jamming.

Space as a Battleground: Satellites, critical for communication and navigation, are vulnerable to EW attacks like jamming or spoofing. China and Russia have demonstrated anti-satellite EW capabilities.

Resilience Needs: Militaries are investing in spectrum-agile systems, low-probability-of-intercept communications and redundant networks to counter EW threats.

Emerging technologies are redefining electronic warfare. AI, quantum advances, and cross-domain integration demand resilient, adaptive strategies, making electromagnetic dominance as vital as conventional firepower for battlefield success.



MYRIAD CHALLENGES

Military forces will face myriad challenges in electronic warfare as technologies continue to advance rapidly. Spectrum congestion, cyber intrusions and countermeasure developments will create new threats. Advances in quantum, photonic and space-based technologies will drive EW's growth. Quantum computing will enable precise navigation without GPS reliance, while post-quantum cryptography will secure communications. By 2030, quantum technology is expected to deliver unbreakable encryption and realistic battlefield simulations. Notable effects of AI, machine learning,



that investing in electronic warfare (EW) and spectrum management strategies is as vital as traditional firepower for battlefield success. With technologies such as quantum computing and AI now central to warfare, embracing innovative EW techniques is more important than ever to stay ahead and prepared.



offensive cyber capabilities and directed energy weapons will shape EW systems.

Emerging technologies are already reshaping EW strategies. The impact of electromagnetic denial or deception will grow stronger as battlefield systems become increasingly automated and sensor-equipped. Militaries must enhance resilience and adaptability in electronic warfare. Investment in AI, quantum technologies and integration across domains—combining EW with cyber and kinetic operations—will be key. Training and doctrines must evolve, making the invisible as critical as the visible. Recent conflicts have underscored

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

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- EW harnesses the electromagnetic spectrum to conduct offensive attacks, protective measures, and intelligence operations.
- Recent wars demonstrate EW's decisive power in disrupting drones, radars, and critical communication networks.
- Major powers adopt distinct EW doctrines, shaped by national security priorities and geopolitical ambitions.
- AI, quantum advances, cyber-EW convergence, and space warfare are transforming future electronic warfare capabilities.
- Resilient, adaptive, AI-enabled EW systems will determine battlefield dominance in the invisible electromagnetic domain.

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INDO PACIFIC 2025 INTERNATIONAL MARITIME EXPOSITION



The Indo Pacific 2025 International Maritime Exposition, scheduled for 4–6 November 2025 in Sydney, Australia, will be the region's premier naval and maritime industry event. Hosted by the Royal Australian Navy and supported by the Australian Government, it will feature leading global shipbuilders, defence firms, and technology providers showcasing the latest in naval platforms, submarines, maritime security systems, and autonomous technologies. With a strong focus on Indo-Pacific cooperation, the event will also host senior naval delegations, strategic dialogues, and industry partnerships. For India, it is an important platform to expand maritime collaboration and highlight indigenous naval capabilities.

Official site: <https://www.indopacificexpo.com.au/>

DEFENSE & SECURITY 2025



Set in Bangkok from 10 to 13 November, Defense & Security 2025 is Thailand's premier biennial defence exhibition, spotlighting land, air, naval, and security systems across Asia and beyond. The event draws defence ministers, military delegations, OEMs, and technology innovators into a focused forum showcasing weapon systems, cybersecurity, surveillance, unmanned systems, and logistics platforms. For India and its defence industry, the show offers strategic engagement opportunities with Southeast Asian markets, potential co-development partnerships, and insights into evolving security doctrines in the Indo-Pacific. Expect high-profile discussions, live demonstrations, and deal-making across a fast-growing regional defence landscape.

Official site: <https://www.asiandefense.com/2025/en/index.asp>

SAFETY & SECURITY ASIA 2025



Safety & Security Asia 2025 is a premier tri-service exhibition and conference scheduled to take place in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, from 11-13 November 2025, bringing together defence, security, and public safety stakeholders across Asia and beyond. It serves as a high-level platform for showcasing next-generation equipment, technologies, and solutions in areas such as cybersecurity, border security, unmanned systems, homeland protection, counter-terrorism, and surveillance. The event facilitates strategic dialogue among governments, armed forces, police agencies, and industry leaders to address evolving threats in the region. With hundreds of participating exhibitors and keynote sessions, the show is expected to set benchmarks for Asian security cooperation and technology integration.

Official site: <https://www.safetyssecurityasia.com/>

THING

THAILAND MARINE & OFFSHORE EXPO 2025



Mark your calendars: Thailand Marine & Offshore Expo 2025 is set to sail into Bangkok from 12-14 November 2025, bringing together Asia's leading maritime, offshore, and marine tech innovators. The event showcases shipbuilding, marine propulsion, underwater systems, oil & gas infrastructure, and sustainable solutions across the coastal-industrial domain. Beyond trade booths, the expo features live demonstrations, technical workshops, and policy panels. For Indian firms in ship design, marine electronics, coastal engineering, and offshore services, it presents an ideal platform to connect with Southeast Asian buyers, forge joint ventures, and display coastal-ecosystem innovations. Don't miss this maritime nexus.

Official site: <https://www.thai-marine.com/>

MilCIS 2025



Australia's premier conference on military communications and information systems runs from 18 to 20 November 2025 at the National Convention Centre, Canberra. It brings together defence agencies, government bodies, industry players, researchers, and technology providers to discuss developments in cyber, space, digital communications, and electronic warfare. MilCIS features technical presentations, panel discussions, tutorials, and an exhibition showcasing new systems and solutions. For those invested in future defence tech and secure communications domains, MilCIS is an unmissable gathering of strategic ideas and innovations.

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

WILDFIRE PREPAREDNESS USA 2025



As climate change intensifies, the United States faces longer and more destructive wildfire seasons. In 2025, federal and state agencies will have expanded preparedness strategies, emphasising early-warning systems, AI-driven fire modelling, and community evacuation drills. The U.S. Forest Service is investing heavily in fuel reduction, controlled burns, and rapid-response aerial firefighting units. Public campaigns highlight defensible space around homes, smarter land use, and neighbourhood-level fire plans. Partnerships with tech companies are driving real-time satellite monitoring and predictive alerts. The focus is clear: reducing risks, protecting lives, and strengthening resilience against increasingly unpredictable wildfires nationwide.

Official site: <https://intelligence-sec.com/events/wildfire-preparedness-usa-2025/>

DIGITAL TWINS FOR DEFENCE PLATFORMS

ECOSYSTEM

Digital twins are transforming defence. By creating real-time virtual replicas of vehicles, bases, and weapons systems, militaries can monitor, simulate, and optimise performance like never before. From predicting breakdowns to rehearsing missions and fusing sensor data, this emerging technology is reshaping readiness and decision-making, offering forces a decisive edge in modern warfare.



NEWS ANALYTICS EDITORIAL DESK

The idea of building a “twin” in the digital world is no longer confined to science fiction. Digital twins are real, powerful tools already changing the way industries operate. In simple terms, a digital twin is a living, virtual copy of a physical system—an aircraft, a ship, a tank, or even a military base—constantly updated with data from sensors and operations. While the technology first took shape in manufacturing and aviation, its potential for defence is immense. For militaries, creating digital twins of vehicles, bases, and weapon systems means being able to simulate, optimise, and manage assets in real time. The scope of digital twins in defence, their use cases such as predictive maintenance, mission rehearsal, and sensor fusion, and their promise for the future battlefield is immense.

WHAT IS A DIGITAL TWIN?

A digital twin is not just a computer model. Unlike a static simulation that runs in isolation, a digital twin is a dynamic

digital version of a real asset that continuously mirrors its physical counterpart. Sensors placed on machines or systems feed live data into the twin, which updates itself accordingly. This twin can then be used to understand what is happening now, predict what may happen next, and test different scenarios without risking the real asset.

For defence platforms, this means that a commander could see the exact status of an aircraft or tank fleet at any given time, or simulate how a base would function under attack, or even test the performance of a missile system against enemy countermeasures—all in the safety of a virtual environment.

DIGITAL TWINS FOR VEHICLES

Defence vehicles are among the most complex machines ever built. Tanks, fighter jets, submarines, and warships are equipped with thousands of components and countless sensors. Each of these generates critical data about performance and



wear. When combined into a digital twin, this data creates a highly accurate virtual replica.

For example, a digital twin of a fighter aircraft can record flight data, monitor engine health, and simulate performance in different weather or combat conditions. Engineers and pilots can use it to anticipate failures, test modifications, or



rehearse missions. Similarly, a tank's digital twin could track stress on its tracks or vibration in its engine to forecast when parts will need replacement. Warships, with their complex propulsion systems and layered weaponry, can also benefit from digital twins that monitor hull integrity, energy usage, and even the impact of simulated damage.

The advantage is simple: instead of reacting to breakdowns or relying on fixed schedules for servicing, militaries can keep vehicles combat-ready through real-time monitoring and predictive insights.

Predictive maintenance via digital twins prevents costly breakdowns by using real-time data, avoiding wasteful fixed schedules and dangerous post-failure repairs for critical defence platforms.

DIGITAL TWINS FOR MILITARY BASES

Military bases are no longer just static installations. Modern bases are like living ecosystems, made up of power grids, water supplies, communication networks, cyber systems, and logistics hubs. A digital twin of a base can create a complete virtual version of this environment. Commanders can then monitor energy use, track supplies, and even test how the base would respond to natural disasters or hostile attacks.

Imagine a base under a simulated drone swarm attack: the digital twin could show how radar and defence systems react, highlight weak points, and suggest changes before an actual attack occurs. In peacetime, the same twin could help reduce energy costs, optimise logistics, and improve overall efficiency.

DIGITAL TWINS FOR WEAPONS SYSTEMS

Weapons systems are the sharp edge of military power, and digital twins can make them sharper. Artillery, missile

batteries, radars, and electronic warfare systems can all be replicated in the digital world. A missile system, for example, can be virtually tested against different weather patterns or enemy jamming techniques. Artillery systems can use their digital twin to predict barrel wear or improve targeting accuracy.

By linking weapons systems with vehicle and base twins, militaries can create integrated simulations where every element works together. This opens the way to realistic mission rehearsals and faster decision-making during operations.

STAYING AHEAD OF FAILURE

One of the strongest use cases for digital twins is predictive maintenance. Defence platforms are expensive and often unavailable for long stretches due to breakdowns or scheduled overhauls. Traditionally, equipment is either serviced at fixed intervals, which can be wasteful, or repaired only after it fails, which can be dangerous.

A digital twin changes this by combining real-time data with AI analytics to forecast exactly when a part is likely to fail. For instance, an aircraft engine's twin may show that unusual vibrations indicate a bearing problem that will worsen within 50 flight hours. Maintenance crews can then act before the engine fails in mid-air.

The result is more reliable fleets, lower costs, and higher operational readiness. Predictive maintenance is already being used in the civil aviation sector, and defence forces are beginning to adopt it for fighters, ships, and armoured vehicles.

Legacy defence platforms struggle with digital integration; adding sensors to old tanks or ships is costly, complex, and often impractical for modernisation.

MISSION REHEARSAL

Perhaps the most exciting role of digital twins is in mission rehearsal. Military simulations are not new, but digital twins take them to the next level. Instead of training on generic models, soldiers and commanders can now rehearse missions on exact replicas of their own equipment and environments.

A pilot can fly a strike mission in the digital twin of their actual aircraft, with real-time data on its condition and weapon load. A naval commander can simulate sailing through contested waters, testing how their ship's sensors would perform against enemy submarines. A base commander can rehearse defence against a cyber or drone attack, watching the twin reveal vulnerabilities before they become real.

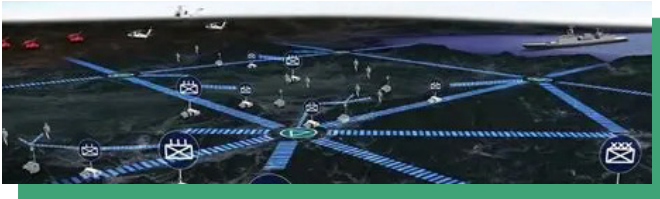
The true value lies in feedback. Every rehearsal updates the twin, which becomes smarter and more accurate over time, providing better preparation for future operations.

SITUATIONAL AWARENESS

Modern warfare is defined by information overload. Satellites, drones, radars, electronic sensors, and even social media generate a flood of data. Commanders often struggle to make sense of it all quickly enough to act.

Digital twins can act as fusion centres, combining data from multiple sources into a single, coherent picture of the battlefield. Instead of separate feeds from radar and drones, commanders see a real-time digital replica of the battlespace with threats, opportunities, and predictions clearly marked. Artificial intelligence helps filter noise, highlight priorities, and even simulate enemy moves.

This not only reduces the time between detecting a threat and responding to it but also allows for better coordination across air, land, sea, and cyber domains.



CHALLENGES TO DEFENCE ADOPTION

Despite their promise, digital twins in defence face challenges. The first is security: feeding sensitive operational data into networks and clouds always raises the risk of cyber espionage. Nations will need strict controls to ensure sovereignty and protect classified information.

The second is integration. Defence forces often rely on legacy platforms that were not designed for digital ecosystems. Adding sensors and connectivity to old tanks or ships is costly and sometimes impractical.

Third, high-fidelity twins require powerful computing resources and significant investment. Creating a twin of

Digital twins revolutionises defence by creating real-time virtual replicas of platforms, enabling predictive maintenance, mission rehearsal, and sensor fusion—shifting how militaries design, operate, and sustain assets.

a fighter jet is already complex; simulating an entire battlefield is even more demanding.

Finally, trust in artificial intelligence remains an issue. Commanders may hesitate to act on recommendations from a system they cannot fully explain. Building confidence in AI-driven twins will take time, testing, and clear accountability.

TECHNOLOGICAL TREND

Despite these hurdles, the momentum behind digital twins in defence is strong. The United States Air Force already uses them to manage F-35 and F-15 aircraft fleets. The Royal Navy has begun to twin its ships for performance monitoring. India, too, is exploring digital twin technologies for submarines and smart shipyards.

The future may see digital twins extending beyond platforms to entire operations. Satellites, drones, cyber systems, and human intelligence could all feed into a theatre-wide twin of the battlespace. This would allow commanders to not only see the present but also rehearse future moves and prepare for unforeseen scenarios.

Emerging applications include space militarisation, where twins of satellites track orbital paths and resilience to cyberattacks; AI-augmented command, where wargaming is done within the twin to support strategic decisions; and immersive soldier training using augmented and virtual reality built around the twin.

Digital twins are more than a technological trend. They represent a shift in how militaries design, operate, and sustain their platforms. By creating real-time virtual replicas of vehicles, bases, and weapons systems, defence forces gain a powerful tool for predictive maintenance, mission rehearsal, and sensor fusion.

They make forces proactive rather than reactive, adaptive rather than rigid, and integrated rather than siloed. While challenges of cost, security, and integration remain, the advantages are too significant to ignore.

In the coming years, digital twins may well become the backbone of Defence 5.0, a future where the physical and digital worlds work hand in hand to ensure readiness, resilience, and superiority in modern warfare.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- *Digital twins create real-time virtual replicas of vehicles, bases, and weapon systems.*
- *They enhance predictive maintenance, mission rehearsal, and operational readiness across defence platforms.*
- *Bases and weapons systems gain efficiency, resilience, and improved defence through digital simulations.*
- *Challenges include cyber risks, high costs, integration with legacy systems, and AI trust issues.*
- *Despite hurdles, digital twins are set to transform Defence 5.0 into an adaptive, integrated force.*

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