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SYSTEMS UNDER STRAIN

GEOSTRATEGIC
THE STRATEGIC SIGNIFICANCE OF MARITIME POWER FOR BHARAT 2047

BIG STORY
INDIA, IMEC AND THE NEW GEOPOLITICS OF CONNECTIVITY

DIPLOMACY
INDIA'S MULTI-VECTOR DIPLOMATIC HEDGING

ANNIVERSARY EDITION

THE POWER PANEL



DR. LAUREN DAGAN AMOS
Senior Fellow at the Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies and lecturer at Bar-Ilan University, Tel Aviv, Israel.



AMBASSADOR DEEPAK VOHRA, IFS (R)
Former Ambassador to Armenia, Sudan and Poland. Former special Advisor to the Government of South Sudan.



VICE ADMIRAL AJENDRA BAHADUR SINGH (R)
Former C-in-C of the Eastern Naval Command and Western Naval Command. Deputy Chief (DOT) & (Ops) in HQ IDS.



JUSTUS NAM
Geopolitical analyst, former Foreign Service Officer and Research Fellow at the Lancaster University China Centre, Nairobi, Kenya. Covers Africa for The News Analytics Herald.



DR. VAISHALI RAGHUVANSHI
Assistant Professor, International Studies at Banaras Hindu University.



AMBASSADOR ANIL WADHWA, IFS (R)
Former Ambassador to Italy, Thailand, Oman and Poland. He has served as Secretary (East) in the Ministry of External Affairs.



M A HOSSAIN
Senior journalist from Dhaka, Bangladesh. Specialises in the South-East Asian region. The News Analytics Herald South-East Asia Correspondent.



DR AMIT DUA
Associate Professor, Computer Science and Information Systems Department, Birla Institute of Technology and Science, Pilani.

FOREWORD



THE CHANGING CHARACTER OF POWER

For much of the post-Cold War era, the world operated on the belief that economic interdependence would moderate conflict, global institutions would preserve stability, and expanding connectivity would generate shared prosperity. Today, those assumptions are under increasing strain.

The international system is undergoing a profound transition. The rules-based order that shaped global affairs for decades is giving way to a more contested environment where power is increasingly determined by technological capabilities, critical infrastructure, supply chains, energy security, data networks, and strategic geography. Nations are no longer competing solely for territory or resources; they are competing for influence over the systems that sustain modern economies, militaries, and societies.

History teaches us that established structures rarely collapse overnight; rather, they gradually lose their ability to address emerging realities. Alliances are being recalibrated, technological rivalries are intensifying, and economic interdependence is increasingly viewed through the lens of national security.

For India, these developments carry profound implications. National security can no longer be defined solely by conventional military threats. Supply-chain resilience, energy security, cyber infrastructure, critical technologies, maritime connectivity, and space-based capabilities have become integral elements of national power. Strategic autonomy today requires resilience across these domains as much as military preparedness.

The current edition of *The News Analytics Herald* examines these evolving realities and the shifting foundations of global power. In an era where systems themselves have become arenas of competition, preparedness, adaptability, and national resilience may prove to be the decisive advantages.

General (Dr) MM Naravane (R)
PVSM, AVSM, SM, VSM, PhD
Former Chief of Army Staff

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

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rajshukla@newsanalytics.in

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srikumarmenon@newsanalytics.in

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

mahampiholi@newsanalytics.in

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EDITOR'S NOTE



THE NEWS ANALYTICS HERALD

The July 2026 edition of The News Analytics Herald (TNH) is a special one. As we present this Anniversary Edition, it offers an opportunity to reflect on a meaningful journey and express our gratitude to the many individuals and institutions who have contributed to it.

TNH is driven by the conviction that India must contribute more prominently to global strategic thought. Guided by this vision, the publication seeks to advance informed discourse on geopolitics, defence, global affairs, and emerging technologies while fostering analytical rigour, intellectual independence, and meaningful debate on issues of national and international significance.

The trust, goodwill, and credibility earned among readers and institutions alike have enabled TNH to steadily strengthen its presence across strategic, academic, diplomatic, and policy ecosystems. Supported by expanding accessibility and an increasingly diverse global readership, these developments are both an affirmation of our purpose and a reminder of the responsibility that accompanies it. They reinforce our commitment to delivering credible analysis, informed perspectives, and a deeper understanding of the forces shaping our world.

We remain deeply grateful to our well-informed readers, global correspondents, distinguished diplomats, senior Armed Forces veterans, academic scholars, and strategic thinkers whose contributions continue to enrich our pages. Our sincere thanks also go to our esteemed Editorial Board for its guidance and wisdom, and to the TNH team whose dedication, professionalism, and perseverance continue to strengthen the publication every day.

We are equally thankful to our sponsors, partners, and parent organisation, Geostrat Media Ventures, for their unwavering support and belief in our vision.

As we look ahead, our commitment remains unchanged to build The News Analytics Herald into a globally respected institution of strategic thought from India.

The journey continues. The responsibility grows. So does our resolve.

Jai Hind!



Sandhya Srivastava
Editor-in-Chief &
Publisher

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Editorial Board
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Edited & Published By
Sandhya Srivastava on behalf of
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New Delhi – 110020
+91- 98100 49515

Corporate Office
Geostrat Media Ventures
L29 - L34, First Floor, Block L
Connaught Place, New Delhi-110001
+91- 9557597977

Email: reachus@newsanalytics.in
Website: www.newsanalytics.in

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NATO'S SEARCH FOR STRATEGIC COHESION

GLOBAL AFFAIRS

NATO won the Cold War but now struggles to define victory in the peace that followed. As power shifts eastwards and America looks elsewhere, the alliance faces a defining question: is it adapting to a changing world, or merely preserving the habits of a bygone era?



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

In our world in 2026, America innovates, China stipulates, Bharat motivates, and Europe regulates. As my neighbourhood became increasingly violent, I erected a huge fence (expensive to maintain) around my home to deter a marauding gang, and I developed some fancy weaponry. For a while, we faced off, then one day the adversary gang lost its cohesion and strength, and is no longer a threat to me. Some of its members have even joined my security force and many, in fact, are now my security guards. What should I do with the fence, especially as many people want to rent it while others ask me to burn it, given the heavy maintenance costs? This is the story of the world's most powerful military alliance and the central framework for European collective defence, otherwise called NATO.



THE ORIGINAL MISSION

NATO was created in 1949 as the Cold War was beginning to take shape to contain former comrades-in-arms, the Soviet Union, which was seen as an aggressive superpower out to communise the free world. The Soviet Union no longer exists, so an enemy had to be invented. The USSR's anchor state, Russia, saw many of its former partners within the USSR abandon a sinking ship and quickly switch sides, rushing to join NATO and the European Union. Moscow itself wanted to, but the West rubbed Russia's nose in the dirt. The prevailing post-World War attitude of Europe was that a nonstop party had started again, and if someone sought to disrupt it, as Adolf had tried to do, Europe could always dial America to come rescue it. NATO's expansion eastwards after the end of the Cold War, despite solemn promises to Russia, contributed to Moscow's sense of insecurity.

The Soviet Union disappeared, but NATO's search for purpose endured, transforming a Cold War alliance into a permanent institution.

RUSSIA'S RETURN

Shattered and humiliated by a triumphant West, Russia began to rebuild its economy and military. In 2008, it quickly obliterated the Georgian military and in 2022 went after Ukraine, where it faces unexpected resistance, thanks to open help to Kyiv from NATO that wants to regain its prestige after abandoning Georgia.



While deferring its admission, NATO members have given substantial support to Ukraine, including weapons, training, intelligence sharing, financial assistance, and logistical support. NATO itself coordinates some assistance and helps standardise Ukrainian forces with NATO equipment and procedures.

As American support dries up, NATO must feel like it has no clothes left after dressing up the demanding guest in Kyiv. Russia says this is tantamount to NATO involvement in the conflict, and has cited NATO enlargement as a major security concern and part of its rationale for actions against Ukraine.

AN UNEQUAL ALLIANCE

In 2026, European countries are much wealthier than they were during the Cold War and could, in theory, defend themselves, as Washington DC keeps urging. The United States bears a disproportionate share of NATO's military spending, and is now saying “enough”.

It wants its bride price back, before signing the divorce papers, as it is besotted with China, which Europe considers a massive challenge. The serving French President called NATO brain-dead, unable to look beyond its obsession with Russia. U.S. President Donald Trump has repeatedly questioned whether the alliance remains fit for its original purpose and demands that European allies spend more on defence.

Europe remains wealthy enough to defend itself, yet strategically dependent enough to keep looking across the Atlantic

Despite its many internal contradictions (two prominent NATO members, Greece and Türkiye, are ever ready to fly at each other’s throats), some out-of-touch-with-reality fellows argue that NATO is still relevant and needed. The Ukraine-Russia conflict involves Uncle Sam indirectly, even though it does not officially have boots on the ground, so NATO screams and shouts and threatens Russia.

In Gaza and Iran, the USA is the prime aggressor, so Brussels-based NATO maintains a deafening silence, despite some occasional criticism of America and Israel. American sociologist Robert Merton’s Law of Unintended Consequences can be seen in action in Europe, as Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022 revived concerns about territorial aggression in Europe and revitalised NATO. It demonstrated that large-scale conventional war in Europe is not a relic of history.

NATO members rallied, Finland and Sweden abandoned long-held neutrality to join, and defence spending surged across the alliance. While NATO has expanded rather than shrunk, its size (32 members) paradoxically threatens its cohesion. It is, of course, the only military alliance that integrates the armed forces, command structures, intelligence systems, logistics, and nuclear deterrence of North America and Europe.



RELEVANCE RECONSIDERED

No organisation currently matches NATO's military capabilities or command network. The real debate is increasingly not "NATO or no NATO" but "what kind of NATO?" I believe that in a world at war with itself, with China applauding from a distance, NATO is evolving into a more European-led alliance as the United States shifts attention towards the Indo-Pacific and asks European members to assume greater responsibility.

NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte has explicitly said that NATO is expected to become more European-led while retaining a significant U.S. role. Recent U.S. requests (and anger at being ignored) for European allies to provide more aircraft, ships, and military capabilities in the war with Iran reflect this trend. NATO is not obsolete in the sense of being

irrelevant or inactive, but, unable to overcome the memories of its original purpose, is unable to respond to the changing demands of a transforming world as Europe increases defence spending and the United States seeks a less dominant role.



A CHANGING WORLD

As the world splinters and fractures, new non-NATO partnerships emerge, such as QUAD, the ASEAN Regional Forum and the almost-dead AUKUS. The question today is whether the world needs dinosaurs like NATO and the United Nations that have been unable to prevent national interests from overriding global concerns.

If the world is changing and power shifting, should Europe remain stuck in a mental time warp that nothing needs to change? The most interesting question isn't really whether the European Union and NATO are relevant, but rather: relevant to whom, and for what?

For Eastern European members, especially those now in the European Union, who endured years under the Russian jackboot, NATO and the EU are lifesavers and their guarantee against a return to the bad old days when Moscow took all the decisions. For Western European members who had grown comfortable with a "peace dividend", 2022 was a wake-up call.

For the US, the question is whether the alliance serves American strategic interests as defined today, or whether it's an institutional habit from a different era. For the rest of the world, NATO is No Action Talk Only, while the European Union pontificates and postulates. In a world that faces over 50 kinetic conflicts, NATO may have some utility if it sheds its Western arrogance and accepts that the global security architecture is being increasingly shaped by the new kids on the block.

The debate is no longer whether NATO survives, but whether it can remain relevant in a multipolar century.

It is still not prepared to treat weaker non-member nations as equals. The Alliance is under more internal strain than at almost any point in its history. The Ankara Summit is unlikely to produce any spectacular results. Russophobia is so strong in NATO members, and so fixated are they on weakening Russia via the conflict in Ukraine, that they are unable to play any meaningful role in other global hotspots such as Israel-Iran or Pakistan-Afghanistan.

Western Europe spent centuries tearing itself apart in catastrophic wars and the EU's predecessor institutions were explicitly designed to make war between France and Germany structurally impossible by entangling their economies. Tensions were swept under the carpet and we saw the longest period of peace in Western Europe with European integration.

The Global South, a powerful voice in international geopolitics, still hurts (with some exceptions) from centuries of Western exploitation. So, when the Prime Minister of Bharat asks his countrymen to de-Macaulay-fy their minds, he is signalling the end of centuries of humiliation of the rest by the West.

The arch-colonist Thomas Macaulay was convinced that British education would create a class of Indians, culturally and intellectually aligned with the British rulers. He could not have been more wrong.

As Bob Dylan crooned in the mid-1960s, “The times they are a-changing”: The order is rapidly fadin'
And the first one now will later be last
For the times, they are a-changin.'

(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.)***

QUICK INSIGHTS

- ***NATO survives, but struggles to redefine purpose beyond Cold War origins.***
- ***Russia's resurgence revived NATO while exposing alliance contradictions and dependencies.***
- ***America increasingly demands that Europe assume greater responsibility for continental defence.***
- ***NATO remains powerful, yet faces growing relevance and cohesion challenges.***
- ***Multipolarity is reshaping global security beyond traditional Western-led institutions.***

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INDIA, IMEC AND THE NEW GEOPOLITICS OF CONNECTIVITY

BIG STORY

The turmoil that has engulfed West Asia since 2023 has exposed the fragility of global trade networks and the limits of military deterrence. Far from undermining IMEC, these crises have reinforced the strategic necessity of resilient connectivity, making infrastructure increasingly central to regional stability and global security.



DR. LAUREN DAGAN AMOS, TEL-AVIV, ISRAEL | SENIOR FELLOW AT THE BEGIN-SADAT CENTER FOR STRATEGIC STUDIES
FOR **THE NEWS ANALYTICS HERALD**

The India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC) was announced with considerable optimism at the G20 Summit in New Delhi in September 2023. It was presented as a transformative initiative linking India, the Gulf, and Europe through an integrated network of maritime routes, railways, energy infrastructure, and digital connectivity. Since then, however, the regional environment has changed dramatically. The Hamas attacks of October 2023, the prolonged war in Gaza, the disruption of shipping in the Red Sea, escalating tensions involving Iran and its regional proxies, and the growing volatility of the wider Middle East have led many observers to question whether IMEC remains realistic.

But the reality it seems is precisely the opposite. The current crisis does not undermine the logic of IMEC; rather, it reinforces it. The instability that has shaken West Asia since 2023 has exposed the limitations of security paradigms based solely on military deterrence and demonstrated the growing importance of resilient connectivity. In this context, IMEC should not be viewed merely as an infrastructure project or a geopolitical alternative to China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Instead, it represents an attempt to construct a new regional architecture based on strategic redundancy, functional cooperation, and secure interdependence.

THE RESILIENCE IMPERATIVE

For decades, the Middle East has been perceived primarily as a source of disruption to global trade. Regional wars, political rivalries, and instability repeatedly threatened the movement of goods and energy between Asia and Europe. The recent attacks on commercial vessels in the Red Sea and the persistent concerns surrounding the Strait of Hormuz have only reinforced this perception. These developments revealed an uncomfortable reality: globalisation remains highly dependent on a limited number of vulnerable maritime chokepoints.

Military deterrence remains an essential component of statecraft, and states continue to invest heavily in defence capabilities. However, recent crises have shown that deterrence alone cannot guarantee the uninterrupted functioning of global supply chains. Missiles may be intercepted and adversaries deterred, but disruptions to ports, shipping lanes, digital infrastructure, and energy networks can still generate significant

In an age of persistent disruption, resilient connectivity is no longer an economic option but a strategic necessity.

economic consequences far beyond the battlefield.

The strategic response to this new reality lies not in abandoning deterrence, but in complementing it with resilience. This is where IMEC becomes strategically significant. Rather than replacing existing routes, IMEC seeks to create strategic redundancy. It offers alternative pathways through a combination of maritime and overland infrastructure connecting India to Europe via the Gulf and the Eastern Mediterranean. If one route becomes vulnerable to disruption, another can continue to function. In an era defined by uncertainty, redundancy is no longer a luxury; it is increasingly becoming a national security imperative.

Importantly, IMEC should also be understood within a broader global trend. Around the world, states are investing in economic corridors as instruments of strategic influence. China's Belt and Road Initiative, the International North-South Transport Corridor, the Middle Corridor linking Central Asia to Europe, and the Lobito Corridor in Africa all reflect the same underlying logic: infrastructure has become a source of geopolitical power.

If the twentieth century was defined by the control of territory, the twenty-first century is increasingly being defined by the control of connectivity.

INDIA'S STRATEGIC ANCHOR

Within this emerging landscape, India occupies a unique position. India is often described as one participant among many in IMEC. Yet this characterisation understates its significance. India is better understood as the corridor's eastern strategic anchor. It provides market scale, expanding maritime capabilities, advanced digital infrastructure, and legitimacy across the Global South. At the same time, India's growing dependence on West Asian energy supplies and



trade routes means that regional instability directly affects its own strategic interests.

For New Delhi, therefore, IMEC is not simply an economic opportunity. It is increasingly linked to questions of national security, supply-chain resilience, and global influence. The corridor allows India to deepen its engagement with the Middle East while strengthening its connections with Europe and positioning itself at the centre of emerging patterns of intercontinental connectivity.

From an Israeli perspective, IMEC offers a different, though equally significant, opportunity.



Much of the public discussion surrounding Israel's role focuses on Haifa Port as the Mediterranean gateway to Europe. Geography certainly matters. However, Israel's most valuable contribution extends beyond its location.

Modern economic corridors depend on more than railways and ports. They require cybersecurity, protection of critical infrastructure, resilient digital systems, maritime awareness, and crisis-management mechanisms capable of functioning under conditions of disruption. Israel's experience in these domains positions it not merely as a transit point, but as a contributor to the resilience of the corridor itself.

This creates an opportunity to rethink India-Israel cooperation. Traditionally, bilateral relations have often been framed through a defence lens, centred on missiles, drones, intelligence sharing, and counterterrorism. While these areas remain important, IMEC introduces a new agenda: the security of connectivity.

Protecting ports, safeguarding digital infrastructure, securing supply chains, enhancing maritime domain awareness, and strengthening resilience against cyber threats and sabotage are becoming central elements of contemporary security. The focus shifts from protecting borders alone to protecting interdependence.

GEOPOLITICAL REALITIES

At the same time, IMEC faces undeniable geopolitical challenges. The corridor traverses one of the world's most

Twenty-first century geopolitics is increasingly defined not by control of territory, but by control of connectivity.

politically sensitive regions. The absence of Saudi-Israeli normalisation, domestic political pressures across the Arab world, and the ongoing rivalry between regional powers complicate its implementation. Moreover, the growing strategic competition between Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates demonstrates that Gulf states should not be treated as a homogeneous bloc with identical interests.



Another important question concerns Türkiye. One of the less discussed paradoxes surrounding IMEC is its deliberate bypassing of a country that geographically bridges Asia and Europe. Türkiye possesses significant logistical advantages, extensive transportation networks, and strategic access to European markets.

Why, then, has it been excluded from the corridor's current design? The answer highlights an important reality about contemporary connectivity initiatives: geography alone does not determine routes. Perceptions of predictability, strategic trust, and political alignment increasingly shape decisions about infrastructure and investment.

IMEC is therefore not necessarily the shortest available route. Rather, it is the route currently perceived by its participants as offering greater reliability and long-term certainty.

FUNCTIONAL NORMALISATION

Perhaps the most intriguing aspect of IMEC, however, lies in its potential political implications.

Conventional approaches often assume that political reconciliation must precede economic integration. The experience of IMEC suggests that the relationship may also operate in reverse. As states coordinate customs procedures, digital standards, cybersecurity protocols, and logistics systems, they develop habits of cooperation based on shared interests.

Connectivity, in other words, can generate its own form of normalisation. This process of what might be termed "functional normalisation" does not eliminate political disagreements. Rather, it creates incentives to manage them pragmatically. Cooperation emerges not because states agree on every issue, but because disruption becomes increasingly costly for all involved.

IMEC's greatest value may lie not in transporting goods, but in building trust across a fractured region.

BEYOND INFRASTRUCTURE

Ultimately, IMEC should be understood as more than a transportation initiative. It is an experiment in building a new regional operating system in West Asia, one based not solely on military deterrence, but also on resilience, redundancy, and institutionalised cooperation.

The crises that have shaken the region since 2023 have not invalidated the logic of connectivity. On the contrary, they have highlighted its necessity. In an age of persistent disruption, resilient connectivity is itself becoming a form of security.



The future of regional order may therefore depend not only on the ability of states to deter threats, but also on their ability to build corridors capable of surviving them. IMEC's greatest contribution may ultimately lie not in the goods it transports, but in the architecture of trust, resilience, and cooperation that it seeks to create across one of the world's most fragmented regions.

(Dr. Lauren Dagan Amos is a researcher specialising in India's foreign and security policy, with a regional focus on the Indo-Pacific. She is a Senior Fellow at the Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies (BESA) and a lecturer at Bar-Ilan University, Tel Aviv, Israel. The views expressed by the author do not necessarily reflect the views of ***The News Analytics Herald.****)*

QUICK INSIGHTS

- ***IMEC strengthens resilience through strategic redundancy across vulnerable trade routes.***
- ***India serves as the corridor's eastern anchor and strategic beneficiary.***
- ***Connectivity is emerging as a critical source of geopolitical power.***
- ***Functional cooperation may foster regional normalisation despite political differences.***
- ***IMEC's value extends beyond infrastructure to regional trust and stability.***

THANK YOU



Congratulations on this milestone anniversary! It is a moment that calls for both celebration and reflection on how far this endeavour has been realised.

In an era of digital deluge, the idea of The News Analytics Herald was bold and, admittedly, somewhat ambitious. Creating a publication that not only reports events but also dissects them through the prism of strategic analysis and ground-level context into a coherent, credible editorial voice. I am delighted that the vision has matured with each issue.

As Consulting Editor, one had the privilege of contributing to the intellectual scaffolding that underpins this publication. From the early conversations about editorial framework and analytical methodology, to the evolving mandate of covering defence, security, geopolitics, and emerging technology through a rigorous, evidence-based lens. This journey has been as instructive for us as I hope the publication has been for its readers.

What distinguishes The News Analytics Herald is not the breadth of its coverage, but the depth of its intent. In an era of information saturation and shrinking attention spans, it has held firm to the conviction that analysis must precede opinion.

To the editorial team, contributing writers, and the leadership that has sustained this vision through the inevitable pressures of publishing, my sincere admiration and gratitude. The News Analytics Herald has been built into something that matters and is credible.

With warm regards and continued commitment.

Brig Vivek Verma, PhD (R)
Consulting Editor
The News Analytics Herald

ANNIVERSARY EDITION

THANK YOU FOR



H.E. INDRA MANI PANDEY, HONOURABLE SECRETARY GENERAL, BIMSTEC

On the happy occasion of The News Analytics Herald (TNH) celebrating its 4th Anniversary, I extend my warm congratulations to TNH Team. TNH has been a keen partner in promoting BIMSTEC's initiatives and creating awareness about the growing cooperation under BIMSTEC. I commend commitment of TNH to better communication and outreach and wish it continued success in its effort towards advancing regional cooperation. I reaffirm the BIMSTEC Secretariat's readiness to work with TNH and other media platforms as well as academia, think tanks and research institutions to realise our shared goals of promoting regional cooperation.



AIR CHIEF MARSHAL ARUP RAHA (R) PVSM, AVSM, VM, ADC | FORMER CHIEF OF THE AIR STAFF, INDIAN AIR FORCE

I am glad to learn that "The News Analytics Herald" is publishing a Special Anniversary Edition to celebrate its evolution into a successful strategic affairs platform. It has enhanced institutional presence across multiple domains like defence, academic and policy ecosystems, shaping perspectives on global & national issues. I convey my congratulations to team TNH & wish great success in their future endeavours.



GENERAL M. M. NARAVANE (R) PVSM, AVSM, SM, VSM | FORMER CHIEF OF THE ARMY STAFF, INDIAN ARMY

My compliments to The News Analytics Herald on its Anniversary. Through its growing institutional presence, commitment to analytical excellence and wide readership, TNH has earned recognition as a respected voice in the strategic affairs domain. As we witness long drawn out as well as sporadic conflicts in various parts of the globe and experience it's global impact, contributions of TNH to advancing informed, incisive and balanced discussion on geopolitics, defence and global issues is both timely and commendable. I convey my best wishes to the editorial team for continued success in strengthening strategic understanding and public discourse in the years ahead.



ADMIRAL R HARI KUMAR (R) PVSM, AVSM, VSM, ADC | FORMER CHIEF OF THE NAVAL STAFF, INDIAN NAVY

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AMBASSADOR GITESH SARMA, IFS (R) | FORMER HIGH COMMISSIONER/ AMBASSADOR TO AUSTRALIA, UZBEKISTAN, FIJI & THE PACIFIC ISLANDS

I take immense pleasure in conveying my warmest congratulations to 'The News Analytics Herald' on its Anniversary in July 2026. Within a short period, TNH has established itself as a highly respected platform for strategic affairs by adhering to rigorous intellectual standards. This is commendable and is of great service to everyone looking to understand international developments. I wish the entire TNH team great success on this milestone and in their onward journey.



AMBASSADOR JEITENDRA KUMAR TRIPATHI, IFS (R) | FORMER AMBASSADOR TO ZIMBABWE

I am delighted to note that “The News Analytic Herald” has completed another year of professional journalism. Within this short span of time, the publication has carved its own niche in the world of news and professional analysis of happenings of global importance. Though the last one year, was full of diplomatic, strategic, economic and military turbulence at various flashpoints world over, the TNH has successfully faced the challenge of unbiased analysis. I wish TNH all the success for the future.

LOVE & WISHES



AMBASSADOR ANIL WADHWA, IFS (R) | FORMER AMBASSADOR TO ITALY, THAILAND, OMAN, POLAND AND FORMER SECRETARY, MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

Heartiest congratulations to The News Analytic Herald on its remarkable journey of growth and influence. Over the years, it has evolved into a respected strategic affairs publication with an expanding institutional presence across defence, academic and policy ecosystems. Its deepening engagement with policymakers, diplomats, scholars, defence professionals and strategic thinkers worldwide has enriched informed discourse and strengthened its role as a credible forum for analysis and this Anniversary edition celebrates these achievements. May The News Analytics Herald enjoy continued success and greater impact in the years ahead.



AMBASSADOR SUSHIL KUMAR SINGHAL, IFS (R) | FORMER AMBASSADOR TO ANGOLA

My warm congratulations to The News Analytical Herald on the occasion of its anniversary in July 2026. It is heartening to see TNH grow into a impactful platform for policymakers, diplomats, academics, defence professionals and strategic thinkers around the world. At a time when informed analysis and balanced perspectives are more important than ever, TNH's contribution to serious public discourse is truly valuable. I wish the editorial team continued success in its efforts to encourage thoughtful debate and deeper understanding of national and global issues.



AMBASSADOR SRIKUMAR MENON, IFS (R) |
FORMER AMBASSADOR TO SOUTH SUDAN, ANGOLA, SAO TOME & PRINCIPE

Heartfelt congratulations to "The News Analytics Herald" on this milestone anniversary. TNH's impactful journey during the past years is a testament to its diligence and steadfast adherence to clarity, credibility, and purpose. It has now evolved into a trusted platform for strategic analyses, setting a benchmark for informed discourse on global affairs and international relations. Its contribution to strengthening India's strategic discourse is commendable. I wish TNH continued success in its endeavors, while inspiring policymakers, scholars and readers alike, across the domains of defence, diplomacy, and academia. Wishing the TNH team continued growth, influence, and excellence in the years ahead.



MR. SUNIL TARNEJA | AGM, IRCTC

Congratulations to The News Analytics Herald on this significant milestone. In an era where informed perspectives are essential for sound decision-making, TNH has distinguished itself as a platform that bridges strategic thought, policy discourse, and industry insights. Its growing contribution to knowledge-sharing across defence, diplomacy, academia, and business is truly commendable. I extend my best wishes to the entire TNH team for continued growth, greater influence, and enduring success in the years ahead.



ANIL JOSHI | FORMER EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, BHEL

As The News Analytics Herald marks its Anniversary, I feel honoured to be associated with a publication that reflects the spirit of a confident and rising India. Through meaningful strategic discourse, informed national security perspectives, and global outreach, TNH has emerged as a beacon of intellectual strength and patriotic commitment. At a time when the world seeks balanced leadership and vision, TNH is contributing to India's strategic voice with dignity and purpose. My heartfelt congratulations to the entire team, with wishes for greater global impact and continued excellence.



NADIA HALLAK BEIRUT, LEBANON |
THE NEWS ANALYTICS HERALD ARAB CORRESPONDENT

On the occasion of The News Analytics Herald's anniversary, I extend my sincere congratulations and best wishes to the entire team for its remarkable achievements and contributions to strategic analysis and specialized media. The publication has become a distinguished platform for intellectual dialogue and the exchange of ideas among experts and decision-makers. I wish TNH continued success, growth, and excellence in advancing knowledge and fostering understanding and cooperation at both regional and international levels.

ANNIVERSARY EDITION

THANK YOU FOR



MA HOSSAIN, DHAKA, BANGLADESH |
THE NEWS ANALYTICS HERALD SOUTH-EAST ASIA CORRESPONDENT

Congratulations to The News Analytics Herald on its Anniversary and the remarkable milestones achieved along its journey. As a Senior Correspondent covering South Asia and the ASEAN region, I have witnessed TNH's steady emergence as a respected platform for strategic thought, policy dialogue, and informed analysis. May TNH continue to foster intellectual exchange, strengthen regional understanding, and contribute meaningfully to the global strategic discourse in the years ahead.



ROVENA CERKA, TIRANA, ALBANIA |
THE NEWS ANALYTICS HERALD EUROPE CORRESPONDENT

On the occasion of the anniversary of The News Analytics Herald, I extend my sincere congratulations for its valuable contribution to fostering international dialogue. The publication has played an important role in bringing together policymakers, academics, and security professionals, strengthening partnerships and inspiring ideas. I wish TNH continued success as a reference point for strategic thinking and global cooperation.



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

Congratulations to The News Analytics Herald on its Anniversary! It's inspiring to witness the remarkable milestones achieved along this journey. TNH has become a trusted and welcoming space for thoughtful discussion, bringing together policymakers, diplomats, defense professionals, and scholars in genuine, meaningful engagement. Its growing recognition is a testament to the passion and dedication behind every insight shared. May the legacy of TNH flourish for many more years. I am proud to be part of this history. All my best wishes to TNH.



KEONI EVERINGTON, TAIPEI, TAIWAN |
THE NEWS ANALYTICS HERALD TAIWAN & CHINA CORRESPONDENT

Congratulations to The News Analytics Herald on its anniversary and its growing list of impressive milestones. It has been an honor to contribute to this publication and be a member of an elite team of experts. It was a privilege to have the opportunity to add some insight into Taiwan's point of view on the tectonic geopolitical changes documented in this publication. In the process, I have gained new perspectives and knowledge about the South Asia region. Best wishes on the continued success and expansion of TNH.



DR. LAUREN DAGAN AMOS | RESEARCHER AND LECTURER,
BAR-ILAN UNIVERSITY, ISRAEL

Namaste from Israel
Congratulations to The News Analytics Herald on this important milestone. At a time of profound global change, fostering informed dialogue and strengthening intellectual bridges between India and Israel has never been more important. I wish TNH continued success in advancing thoughtful analysis, meaningful partnerships, and the enduring spirit of India–Israel friendship in the years ahead. It has been a privilege to contribute to a platform that values diverse perspectives and encourages cross-border understanding and collaboration.



NOEL ADALIA DIMASACAT, MANILA, PHILIPPINES |
SPEAKER AND TRANSFORMATIVE TECHNOLOGY LEADER AWARDEE

Congratulations to The News Analytics Herald on this inspiring milestone. Your journey is a reminder that dedication, courage, and a clear purpose can create a lasting impact. May TNH continue to bring people together, share meaningful ideas, and inspire future generations. Your commitment to truth, learning, and positive change is truly admirable. Wishing your team continued strength, passion, wisdom, and success as you begin another chapter of growth and service.

LOVE & WISHES



JUSTUS NAM, NAIROBI, KENYA
FORMER FOREIGN SERVICE OFFICER AND EXPERT ON AFRICA

Congratulations to The News Analytics Herald on reaching another anniversary. As a contributor, it has been especially encouraging to see the publication grow from a promising initiative into a recognised platform for strategic and policy discourse. In a world increasingly shaped by complexity and competing narratives, spaces that foster thoughtful analysis are more important than ever. I wish the TNH team continued success in the years ahead and look forward to engaging with its work for many years to come.



PROF. ASHOK SANGAPPA ALUR | VICE CHANCELLOR,
KODAGU UNIVERSITY, GOVERNMENT OF KARNATAKA

Heartfelt congratulations to The News Analytics Herald on this significant anniversary. TNH's thoughtful analyses, institutional partnerships, and growing presence across defence, academia, and policy circles have enriched India's strategic discourse. Your recognitions reflect journalistic rigour and commitment to informed debate. May TNH continue to illuminate complex issues, foster dialogue, and inspire policymakers and citizens alike in the years ahead. With Best Wishes.



AIR MARSHAL ANIL KHOSLA (R), PVSM, AVSM, VM, ADC |
FORMER VICE CHIEF OF THE AIR STAFF

It gives me great pleasure to congratulate The News Analytics Herald on its milestone anniversary. From ISSN listing to integration within Indian Armed Forces digital platforms and the National Digital Library of India, TNH has earned its place as a serious voice in India's strategic discourse. Its growing reach across defence, academic, and policy communities reflects both editorial rigour and genuine relevance. I wish the team continued success in the years ahead.



LT GEN RAH SHUKLA (R) PVSM, YSM, SM, ADC | FORMER GOC-IN-C ARTRAC

TNH has acquired a formidable presence in the strategic-military space in a short period of time. My best wishes for its continued growth- may it scale the dizzying heights of professional success.



VICE ADM MA HAMPIHOLI (R) PVSM, AVSM, NM |
FORMER FOC-IN-C, SOUTHERN NAVAL COMMAND

As a premier news magazine, The News Analytics Herald has continued to delight readers interested in contemporary Geopolitics, Global security insights and technologies. Besides the contributions from adept experts, the Editor-in- Chief and the fellow editors deserve the readers' sincere appreciation. The design of the magazine stands out, too. The many milestones achieved in the past year, such as ISSN registration, membership of AIM, NDLI etc is indeed a recognition of the high standards of journalism. Best wishes on the publication's anniversary and its continued endeavour to excel.



DR. AFTAB ALAM | DEAN, FACULTY OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES,
ALIGARH MUSLIM UNIVERSITY

Heartiest congratulations to The News Analytics Herald on its Anniversary. It has been a privilege to witness and contribute to its remarkable journey as a publication for informed analysis and thoughtful debate on defence, security, foreign policy, and strategic affairs. TNH's commitment to intellectual rigour and excellence has earned it well-deserved recognition. I wish the publication continued success in advancing strategic discourse and fostering informed public engagement.

GLOBAL INFLUENCER

PRIME MINISTER GIORGIA MELONI: EUROPE'S

POWER PROFILE



In international affairs, influence is measured not merely by economic or military power, but by the ability to shape strategic debates during periods of uncertainty. In 2026, few European leaders have exercised such influence more effectively than Giorgia Meloni, Prime Minister of Italy.

Europe today confronts one of its most complex strategic environments since the end of the Cold War. The continent faces continuing tensions with Russia, slowing economic growth, rising defence obligations, migration pressures across the Mediterranean, energy security concerns, and intensifying competition from both the United States and China. Amid these overlapping challenges, Giorgia Meloni has emerged as one of the most consequential voices shaping Europe's response.

When she assumed office in October 2022, many questioned whether her leadership would create friction within the European Union and NATO. Instead, she has pursued a pragmatic approach that has steadily enhanced Italy's standing within both institutions. While retaining her political identity, PM Meloni has positioned Italy as a dependable contributor to European security, a supporter of transatlantic cooperation, and an increasingly influential actor in Mediterranean geopolitics.

What makes PM Meloni particularly relevant today is her ability to bridge multiple strategic fault lines simultaneously. She has maintained support for NATO and Ukraine while advocating greater European resilience. She has defended national interests while remaining engaged within European institutions. She has strengthened ties with Washington while pursuing a more active Mediterranean and African policy designed to enhance Italy's regional influence. These balancing acts have elevated her stature far beyond Rome.

One of PM Meloni's most significant contributions has been recognising that the Mediterranean is once again becoming a central theatre of global geopolitics. For decades, Europe's strategic focus remained largely continental. Today, instability across North Africa, migration flows, maritime security challenges, energy corridors, and growing competition among external powers have restored the Mediterranean's geopolitical significance.

Italy's geography places it at the centre of these developments. Under PM Meloni's leadership, Rome has sought not merely to participate in regional affairs but to shape them. Her government's outreach to Africa, support for infrastructure partnerships, and efforts to strengthen Italy's position as a regional energy hub reflect a broader strategic vision extending beyond traditional European politics.

This approach is particularly relevant as Europe searches for new sources of economic resilience and strategic influence in an increasingly fragmented international system.

OF THE MONTH

STRATEGIC REALIST

PM Meloni's prominence also reflects a wider transformation occurring across Europe. The era in which European governments could rely primarily on economic integration while outsourcing hard-security concerns is fading rapidly. Defence spending is rising, while military readiness, industrial capacity, technological competitiveness, and energy security have once again become central elements of statecraft.

In such an environment, leaders capable of combining political pragmatism with strategic clarity naturally gain influence. PM Meloni's willingness to engage with these realities has positioned Italy as an important voice in discussions surrounding NATO's future, European defence capabilities, and broader geopolitical strategy.

Her significance extends beyond Europe. For India, PM Meloni embodies a broader shift in global politics, where influential powers are increasingly shaping regional balances, pursuing strategic autonomy, and contributing to the evolving architecture of a multipolar order.

India and Italy differ in geography and capabilities, yet both increasingly emphasise strategic autonomy, economic resilience, secure supply chains, technological innovation, and maritime security. Both recognise that connectivity, infrastructure, and industrial competitiveness are becoming essential instruments of national power. Both are navigating a world in which geopolitical competition increasingly intersects with economics, technology, and critical infrastructure.



The growing partnership between New Delhi and Rome reflects these converging interests. Cooperation across defence, technology, energy, manufacturing, space, and maritime domains has expanded steadily in recent years. As Europe seeks stronger engagement with the Indo-Pacific and India deepens ties with key European stakeholders, Italy's strategic relevance continues to grow.

For Indian policymakers, PM Meloni's leadership offers a useful case study in strategic adaptation. Faced with fiscal constraints, external pressures, and a rapidly evolving geopolitical environment, Italy has sought to leverage geography, diplomacy, partnerships, and institutional influence to enhance its relevance. It demonstrates that influence in contemporary geopolitics is not determined solely by material power, but also by strategic positioning and policy consistency.

That is ultimately why Giorgia Meloni merits recognition as TNH's Global Influencer of the Month. As the world enters a period marked by strategic competition, technological disruption, and shifting power balances, leaders capable of navigating complexity while safeguarding national interests become increasingly significant. PM Georgia Meloni has emerged as one such leader.

In a year defined by geopolitical uncertainty and strategic recalibration, her rise reflects a broader reality: influence in the twenty-first century belongs not merely to those who possess power, but to those who can translate it into strategic direction.

INDIA'S MULTI-VECTOR DIPLOMATIC HEDGING

DIPLOMACY

As great-power rivalry fragments the international system, India is refusing to choose sides. Instead, it is building influence through strategic flexibility, balancing security, economics and diplomacy across competing power centres while preserving the autonomy needed to navigate an increasingly volatile multipolar world.



AMBASSADOR ANIL WADHWA, IFS (R) |
FOR **THE NEWS ANALYTICS HERALD**

For much of the post-Cold War era, the dominant assumption in international politics was that countries would eventually align themselves with one major power centre or another. Strategic ambiguity was often viewed as a temporary condition, a bridge between old alignments and new commitments. Today, however, the international system is moving in the opposite direction. Rivalries are deepening, economic interdependence is being weaponised, supply chains are fragmenting and competing geopolitical blocs are emerging across regions. In this turbulent environment, India has quietly developed a diplomatic approach that reflects neither neutrality nor alignment. Instead, it is practicing a sophisticated form of multi-vector diplomatic hedging.

India's strength lies not in choosing camps, but in preserving options across an increasingly divided geopolitical landscape.



The phrase may sound technical, but the reality is visible across India's foreign policy. New Delhi is simultaneously strengthening security cooperation with the United States and its allies in the Indo-Pacific, maintaining long-standing strategic ties with Russia, expanding engagement with Europe, deepening partnerships in West Asia, investing in relations across Africa and Latin America, and positioning itself as a leading voice of the Global South. Rather than choosing between competing power centres, India is building relationships with all of them, while preserving room for independent decision-making. This is strategic autonomy for an age of competitive multipolarity.

The world confronting Indian policymakers today bears little resemblance to the relatively

stable order that followed the Cold War. The geopolitical centre of gravity is shifting towards Asia. The rivalry between the United States and China is shaping trade, technology, military competition and global governance. Russia's confrontation with the West has hardened geopolitical divisions across Eurasia. Conflicts in Europe and West Asia have exposed vulnerabilities in energy markets and global supply chains. Emerging technologies are increasingly becoming instruments of strategic competition. For a country of India's size, ambitions and developmental priorities, rigid alignment with any one bloc would impose unnecessary constraints. Economic growth requires access to diverse



markets, technologies, investments and energy sources. National security demands cooperation with multiple partners. Diplomatic influence depends upon maintaining credibility across competing camps. India's answer has been calibrated engagement rather than exclusive partnerships.

A CHANGING ORDER

The Indo-Pacific offers perhaps the clearest example of this strategy. India's concerns regarding China's growing military capabilities, expanding naval presence and increasingly assertive behaviour have encouraged closer cooperation with like-minded partners. The Quad, comprising India, the United States, Japan and Australia, has evolved into an important platform for advancing maritime security, resilient supply chains, critical technologies, health security and infrastructure cooperation.

Yet India has been careful not to transform the Quad into a formal military alliance. While strengthening defence cooperation with Washington, Tokyo and Canberra, New Delhi continues to emphasize that the grouping remains focused on maintaining a free, open and inclusive Indo-Pacific. India seeks deterrence without entanglement. It wants stronger capabilities and strategic partnerships, but not alliance obligations that could compromise its freedom of action.

New Delhi pursues partnerships for capability, not alliances that restrict strategic independence or freedom of diplomatic action.

BALANCING PARTNERSHIPS

The same balancing instinct is visible in India's approach towards Russia. Despite growing convergence with Western countries, India has resisted pressure to downgrade its relationship with Moscow. Russia remains an important defence partner, a significant supplier of military equipment and a useful strategic actor in Eurasia. Following the outbreak of the Ukraine conflict, India maintained diplomatic engagement with both Moscow and Western capitals while continuing energy purchases driven by national economic considerations. Critics sometimes interpret this approach as inconsistent. In reality, it reflects a conscious effort to avoid becoming captive to the geopolitical priorities of others. India recognizes that partnerships should enhance strategic flexibility rather than reduce it. Maintaining channels with Russia while expanding cooperation with the West enables New Delhi to preserve options in an increasingly uncertain international environment.

At the same time, India's engagement with Europe has expanded dramatically. European capitals increasingly view India not merely as a large market but as a strategic partner capable of contributing to economic resilience, technology cooperation and supply chain diversification. The relationship now encompasses clean energy transitions, digital governance, connectivity initiatives, critical technologies, maritime cooperation and emerging industrial partnerships besides trade and investment. The growing interest from European countries reflects a broader recognition that India possesses the demographic scale, economic potential and political stability that many investors and governments seek as they reassess their dependence on concentrated supply chains.



BRIDGING REGIONS

Nowhere is India's diplomatic agility more evident than in West Asia. A decade ago, balancing relations among regional rivals required delicate diplomacy. Today, India simultaneously maintains strong partnerships with Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Israel, Iran and other regional actors. Each relationship serves different strategic purposes. The Gulf states are crucial energy suppliers, investment partners and hosts to large Indian communities. Israel remains an important source of defence technologies and innovation partnerships. Iran provides connectivity opportunities linking India to

Central Asia and beyond. Rather than viewing these relationships through a zero-sum lens, New Delhi has pursued a pragmatic approach that focuses on overlapping interests. The emergence of new minilateral arrangements, including initiatives connecting India, the Gulf and Europe, demonstrates how India is increasingly positioned as a bridge between regions rather than a participant in exclusive blocs.

Beyond the major power centres, India's engagement with the Global South has become a defining feature of its diplomacy. Many developing countries face challenges that mirror India's own developmental experience: infrastructure deficits, climate vulnerabilities, energy transitions, food security concerns and limited representation in global governance institutions. India has sought to leverage this shared experience to strengthen partnerships across Africa, the Pacific Islands, Latin America and parts of Asia.

Its message resonates because it combines advocacy with practical cooperation. Development partnerships, digital public infrastructure, capacity-building programmes, humanitarian assistance and climate-related initiatives have become important tools of Indian diplomacy. Rather than presenting itself as an alternative great power, India often positions itself as a partner capable of amplifying the concerns of developing nations within international institutions. This role gained visibility during India's presidency of the G20, where New Delhi consistently emphasized the developmental priorities of emerging economies and championed greater inclusivity in global governance.

Multi-vector diplomacy transforms India's geographic position into geopolitical leverage across competing regions, institutions, and power centres.

POWER THROUGH FLEXIBILITY

Underlying this multi-vector strategy is a deeper recognition that power in the twenty-first century is increasingly multidimensional. Military strength remains important, but it is no longer sufficient. Influence today is also determined by technological capabilities, control over supply chains, digital ecosystems, financial networks, energy security and innovation capacity. India's diplomatic outreach is therefore increasingly linked to economic and technological objectives. Semiconductors, critical minerals, artificial intelligence, telecommunications, renewable energy, advanced manufacturing and resilient logistics networks have all become integral components of foreign policy.

This explains why India often appears comfortable engaging countries that compete with one another. Different partners bring different strengths. Some contribute investment. Others provide technology. Some enhance security cooperation. Others facilitate market access or energy security. This also explains India's growing basket of free trade agreements around the world. Of course, hedging is not without risks. Managing relationships with rival powers simultaneously requires diplomatic skill, policy consistency and clear communication. There is always the possibility that escalating crises could narrow the space for strategic manoeuvre. Furthermore, countries increasingly seek commitments, not merely cooperation. India's challenge will be to ensure that flexibility does not create perceptions of ambiguity and that autonomy does not appear as indecision. Strategic hedging succeeds only when supported by growing national capabilities. Economic strength, technological innovation, military modernisation and institutional capacity remain essential foundations of diplomatic independence.

The emerging world order is neither unipolar nor bipolar. It is increasingly characterized by overlapping coalitions, shifting partnerships and multiple centres of influence. In such an environment, countries that preserve flexibility while expanding their networks of cooperation are likely to enjoy greater strategic space. India's multi-vector diplomacy is ultimately an effort to maximize that space. It reflects the calculations of a rising power seeking to navigate an increasingly complex geopolitical landscape without surrendering its independence. In a century likely to be shaped by competitive multipolarity, that may prove to be one of New Delhi's most important strategic advantages.

(Ambassador Anil Wadhwa, IFS (R) is a former Secretary (East) in the Ministry of External Affairs and Indian Ambassador to Italy, Thailand, Oman and Poland. The views expressed are of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of ***The News Analytics Herald.****)*

QUICK INSIGHTS

- ***India balances competing powers while preserving strategic autonomy and flexibility.***
- ***Quad cooperation strengthens deterrence without creating formal alliance obligations.***
- ***Russia, Europe, and West Asia remain vital pillars of engagement.***
- ***Global South outreach enhances India's diplomatic influence and development partnerships.***
- ***Multi-vector diplomacy maximises options in an increasingly competitive multipolar world.***

THE FRAGILE LOGIC OF GREAT-POWER ENGAGEMENT

COUNTERVIEW

The United States and China continue to talk, not because rivalry is fading, but because the costs of miscalculation are rising. In an era defined by strategic distrust, technology wars, and contested supply chains, engagement has become a mechanism for managing competition rather than resolving it.



JUSTUS NAM | NAIROBI, KENYA
FORMER FOREIGN SERVICE OFFICER AND A FORMER RESEARCH FELLOW AT THE LANCASTER UNIVERSITY CHINA CENTRE |
FOR **THE NEWS ANALYTICS HERALD**

The United States and China continue to engage not because they trust one another, but because the consequences of silence have become too dangerous. Military hotlines have been restored, senior officials continue to meet, and working groups have resumed. Yet these mechanisms are designed less to build cooperation than to prevent confrontation. What exists today is not a pathway towards strategic convergence but a framework for managing strategic distrust. The world's two largest powers increasingly see one another as long-term competitors, yet neither can afford the consequences of an unmanaged crisis. Engagement, in other words, has become a tool of risk management rather than reconciliation.

MANAGING DISTRUST

That marks a significant departure from the assumptions that shaped much of the post-Cold War era. For decades, policymakers believed economic interdependence would moderate geopolitical rivalry. Trade, supply chains, and investment would raise the costs of confrontation and encourage cooperation. China's integration into the global economy appeared to validate that view. As Beijing became a manufacturing powerhouse and one of America's largest trading partners; many assumed economic logic would eventually outweigh strategic competition. Instead, the opposite occurred. Bilateral trade exceeded US$570 billion in 2025, yet the relationship now sits alongside technology restrictions, investment screening measures, military competition, and a level of political distrust unseen in decades. Economic integration did not eliminate rivalry. It created

> ***Economic interdependence did not prevent rivalry; it simply created new arenas through which strategic competition could unfold.***



new arenas in which rivalry could unfold, blurring the distinction between economics and geopolitics.

Nowhere is this transformation more visible than in Taiwan. For Beijing, Taiwan is tied to national reunification and political legitimacy. For Washington, it has become central to the credibility of American alliances across the Indo-Pacific. Taiwan is also at the heart of the global technology ecosystem, producing more than 60 percent of the world's semiconductors and over 90 percent of its most advanced chips. Any serious disruption in the Taiwan Strait would reverberate through global manufacturing, financial markets, defence industries, and emerging technologies. This reality explains why military activity around the island has intensified. China has expanded military exercises and air patrols, while the United States has deepened security cooperation with allies such as Japan, Australia, and the Philippines. Neither side seeks war, but both are investing heavily in deterrence because neither believes trust alone can preserve stability.



TECHNOLOGY WARS

Technology has become the second major front in this competition. Semiconductors now occupy the strategic position once held by oil because they underpin artificial intelligence, advanced communications, quantum computing, and modern weapons systems. Washington's restrictions on advanced chips and semiconductor manufacturing equipment reflect a growing belief that technological leadership is inseparable from national security. Beijing has responded by accelerating efforts to achieve technological self-sufficiency while restricting exports of critical minerals such as gallium and germanium. These measures reflect a broader shift: governments increasingly view economic security as national security. Supply-chain resilience, technological dependence, critical minerals, and industrial capacity now shape foreign policy alongside traditional military concerns.

Taiwan has become the most dangerous intersection of military deterrence, technological dominance, and great-power credibility.

The consequences extend well beyond the United States and China. Companies now weigh geopolitical risk alongside labour costs and market access when making investment decisions. Governments are spending billions of dollars to secure strategic industries and diversify supply chains. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has warned that severe geoeconomic fragmentation could reduce global output by as much as 7 percent over the long term. Whether that figure materialises is less important than the trend it captures. Strategic competition is reshaping trade, finance, industrial policy, and technological development across regions far removed from either power.

AFRICA'S LEVERAGE

Africa is no longer a peripheral actor in these shifts. The energy transition, the growth of electric vehicle production, and the race to secure advanced manufacturing inputs have increased demand for resources found across the continent. The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) supplies more than 70 percent of global cobalt production. Zambia remains a major producer of copper. Zimbabwe holds significant lithium reserves. Rare earths, graphite, manganese, and nickel found across Africa are becoming essential to industries expected to drive economic growth for decades to come.

Yet strategic importance has not always translated into strategic advantage. Africa was strategically important during the Cold War, the post-9/11 era, and the commodity boom of the 2000s, but heightened external interest rarely produced



broad-based industrial transformation. Strategic relevance alone does not produce development. What makes the current moment different is that Africa possesses greater bargaining power than it did during previous geopolitical transitions. Unlike the Cold War, external powers are competing not primarily for ideological influence but for access to resources, markets, logistics corridors, and industrial partnerships. Unlike the commodity boom of the 2000s, Africa now has the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), a market of roughly 1.4 billion people with a combined GDP exceeding US$3.4 trillion. This combination of strategic resources and growing economic scale gives African states more leverage than they have enjoyed in decades.

The evidence is visible in competing investments. The United States and its partners have backed the Lobito Corridor as part of efforts to diversify critical mineral supply chains. China continues to deepen its presence through infrastructure investment, industrial projects, and mineral value chains under the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) framework. The European Union, Gulf states, India, and other actors are pursuing similar initiatives. Competition for access is increasing because Africa's role in future supply chains is becoming harder to ignore.

OPPORTUNITY OR DEPENDENCE

The challenge is converting that leverage into long-term economic gains. The debate over whether Africa should align with the United States or China misses the point. Both powers pursue their own interests, but they do so through different instruments and priorities. China's infrastructure-led engagement has often aligned with African ambitions for connectivity, industrialisation, and economic transformation. Yet translating external partnerships into sustainable development ultimately remains the responsibility of African states.

The real question is whether African governments can use this competition to secure better outcomes. Access to minerals matters, but control over processing, refining, manufacturing, and technology transfer matters more. Exporting cobalt, lithium, and copper generates revenue. Building battery manufacturing, mineral processing, and industrial ecosystems generates development. The objective should not be dependence on any single external partner but strategic diversification. Africa's leverage will depend on engaging multiple partners while preserving policy autonomy.

Taiwan has become the most dangerous intersection of military deterrence, technological dominance, and great-power credibility.

The Sahel offers a reminder that external engagement by itself does not create development or stability. The contraction of French military influence, the expansion of Russian security partnerships, China's growing economic presence, and the recalibration of American engagement have produced a crowded geopolitical landscape. Yet insecurity persists because external actors cannot substitute for domestic institutions, regional cooperation, or coherent national strategies. External partnerships are most effective when they support clearly defined domestic objectives. Countries that lack a strategy often become arenas in which others compete. Countries that possess one are better positioned to shape the terms of engagement.

The fragile logic of great-power engagement therefore extends far beyond the relationship between the United States and China. The two powers continue to engage because neither can afford the consequences of unmanaged confrontation, but engagement should not be mistaken for trust. Taiwan, advanced technology, military power, supply chains, and competing visions of international order continue to push both countries towards deeper rivalry even as diplomats work to prevent escalation.

For Africa, the significance of this moment lies not only in the risks it presents but also in the opportunities it creates. The next decade offers the strongest negotiating position the continent has enjoyed in half a century because global demand for African resources, markets, and connectivity is rising at the same time that major powers are competing to secure them. Such opportunities rarely remain open for long. In the twenty-first century, influence increasingly flows through supply chains, technology ecosystems, and critical minerals rather than traditional geopolitical alignments. Africa's challenge is not simply to participate in these networks but to move up on them. If the continent fails to convert strategic relevance into industrial capability, it will once again provide the raw materials for a transformation that takes place elsewhere. If it succeeds, the current era of great-power competition may be remembered as the moment Africa moved from being an object of geopolitical competition to becoming one of its principal beneficiaries.

(Justus Nam is a geopolitical analyst, a former Foreign Service Officer and a former Research Fellow at the Lancaster University China Centre. His work focuses on African geopolitics, diplomacy, and security, with particular attention to regional integration and China–Africa relations. The views expressed are of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of ***The News Analytics Herald.****)*

QUICK INSIGHTS

- ***US-China engagement now manages risks rather than building strategic trust.***
- ***Taiwan remains the most dangerous flashpoint in great-power competition.***
- ***Technology and semiconductors have become central instruments of national security.***
- ***Africa's critical minerals are increasing its geopolitical and economic leverage.***
- ***Strategic diversification offers Africa opportunities for industrialisation and long-term growth.***

THANK YOU

News Analytics expresses its deep gratitude to the Honourable Ambassadors, Honourable High Commissioners and senior Members of Parliament for offering us their valuable insight into important developing geopolitical dynamics. We are truly honoured and privileged to have interacted with you during our journey of exploring global challenges and understanding the complex forces shaping the future of our interconnected world.



H.E. Indra Mani Pandey, Honourable Secretary General, BIMSTEC
Interview carried in the December 2025 edition.



H.E. Dr. Oleksandr Polishchuk Honourable Ambassador of Ukraine to India.
Interview carried in the October 2025 edition.



H.E. Reuven Azar, Honourable Ambassador of Israel to India.
Interview carried in the September 2025 edition.



Ambassador Youssef Sadaka, Lebanon's former envoy to Cyprus and Ukraine
Interview carried in the August 2025 edition.



H.E. Mariano Agustín Caucino, Honourable Ambassador of the Argentine Republic to India. Interview carried in the May 2025 edition.

THANK YOU



Mr. Ashraf Rifi Member of Parliament, Lebanon.
Interview carried in the February 2025 edition.



H.E. Jagannath Sami, High Commissioner of the Republic of Fiji to India.
Interview carried in the October 2024 edition.



H.E. Mr. Askar Beshimov, Ambassador of the Kyrgyz Republic to India.
Interview carried in the September 2024 edition.



H.E. Ms. Ina Hagniningtyas Krisnamurthi, Ambassador of the Republic of Indonesia to India. Interview carried in the August 2024 edition.

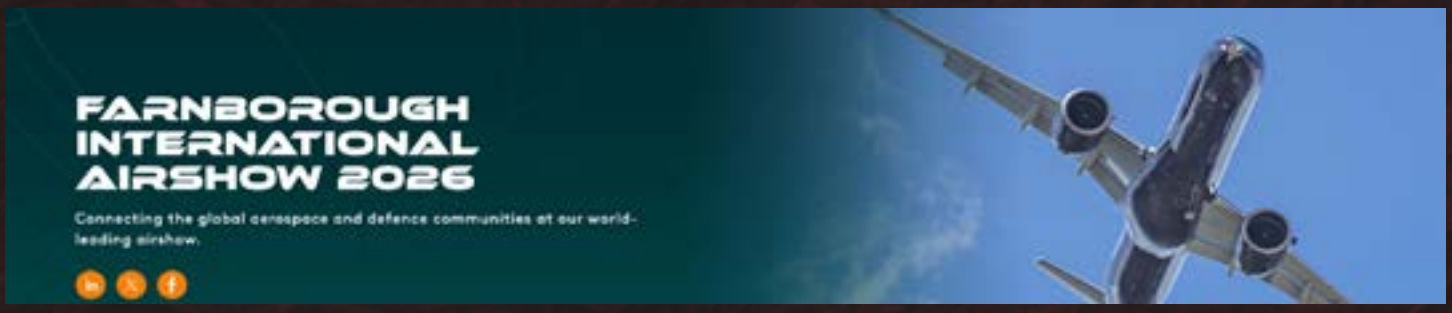


H.E. Mateja Vodeb Ghosh, Ambassador of the Republic of Slovenia to India.
Interview carried in the June 2024 edition.

CURTAIN RAISER

FARNBOROUGH INTERNATIONAL AIRSHOW 2026

SPECIAL COVERAGE *The Apex of Aerospace, Defence and Innovation*



As geopolitical competition intensifies and aerospace technologies evolve rapidly, Farnborough International Airshow 2026 will bring together governments, industries, and innovators to showcase next-generation aviation, defence capabilities, autonomous systems, and strategic partnerships shaping the future of global security and aerospace.

From 20–24 July 2026, the global aerospace and defence community will converge at Farnborough, Hampshire, in the United Kingdom for the Farnborough International Airshow (FIA) 2026. Widely regarded as one of the world's premier aerospace and defence exhibitions, Farnborough has long served as a platform where governments, military leaders, aerospace manufacturers, technology firms, investors, and policymakers shape the future of aviation and security. Held biennially, the event alternates with the Paris Air Show and remains one of the industry's most influential forums for announcing major aircraft orders, unveiling advanced technologies, and forging strategic partnerships.

Farnborough's significance extends far beyond aircraft displays. The event increasingly reflects the changing nature of aerospace power, where military capability, industrial resilience, digital technologies, sustainability, space systems, and autonomous platforms are becoming deeply interconnected. As geopolitical competition intensifies and defence spending rises across multiple regions, FIA 2026 is expected to provide an important snapshot of the strategic priorities shaping the aerospace and defence sectors over the coming decade.

DEFENCE IN AN AGE OF COMPETITION

The strategic backdrop to Farnborough 2026 is markedly different from previous editions. Ongoing conflicts in Europe, instability across West Asia, growing tensions in the Indo-Pacific, and the accelerating militarisation of emerging domains have reinforced the importance of air and space power. Governments are reassessing force structures, replenishing inventories, and investing heavily in next-generation capabilities.

Against this backdrop, defence manufacturers are expected to showcase advances in combat aircraft, integrated air and missile defence systems, long-range precision strike capabilities, autonomous platforms, electronic warfare, and network-centric operations. Unmanned systems, artificial intelligence-enabled decision support tools, and collaborative combat technologies are likely to feature prominently as militaries increasingly seek force multipliers capable of operating in contested environments.

The exhibition will also provide insight into the evolving relationship between traditional defence industries and emerging technology firms. As warfare becomes more data-driven and digitally enabled, aerospace innovation is increasingly being shaped by software, sensors, advanced computing, and cyber resilience.

THE FUTURE OF AVIATION

Commercial aviation remains another major pillar of Farnborough. Aircraft manufacturers, airlines, leasing companies, engine producers, and suppliers will use the event to assess market trends and future requirements.

The aviation sector continues to balance strong passenger demand with pressure to reduce emissions and improve operational efficiency. Consequently, sustainable aviation fuels, advanced propulsion technologies, lightweight materials, digital maintenance systems, and next-generation aircraft designs are expected to receive significant attention.

Space has become an integral component of modern aerospace strategy. Satellites underpin military communications, navigation, intelligence gathering, missile warning, and commercial connectivity. As a result, Farnborough 2026 is expected to feature growing participation from space-sector organisations and companies involved in launch systems, satellite technologies, and space-based services.

The increasing convergence between space, cyber, and defence technologies reflects a broader reality: future security competition will extend far beyond traditional air power. Nations now view access to and protection of space-based assets as essential elements of national resilience and military effectiveness.



OPPORTUNITIES FOR INDIA

For India, Farnborough 2026 offers significant opportunities. As one of the world's fastest-growing aviation markets and an increasingly important defence manufacturing hub, India is likely to attract considerable attention from global aerospace stakeholders.

The country's emphasis on self-reliance, indigenous defence production, aerospace manufacturing, and emerging technologies aligns closely with themes expected to dominate the exhibition. Indian firms participating at Farnborough will have opportunities to showcase capabilities, attract investment, explore technology partnerships, and integrate more deeply into global aerospace supply chains.

One of Farnborough's most important functions is facilitating industrial cooperation. Aerospace and defence programmes have become increasingly multinational, requiring collaboration across governments, manufacturers, suppliers, and technology providers.

Supply-chain resilience has emerged as a strategic concern following recent global disruptions. Governments are now placing greater emphasis on secure sourcing, domestic industrial capacity, and trusted manufacturing partnerships. Consequently, discussions at Farnborough are expected to focus not only on platforms and capabilities but also on industrial ecosystems that sustain them.

MORE THAN AN AIRSHOW

Farnborough's enduring relevance lies in its ability to reflect the direction of the aerospace and defence industries. The exhibition is no longer simply about aircraft orders or flying displays. It has evolved into a global forum where governments, industries, and innovators debate the future of security, mobility, sustainability, and technological competition.

As the world navigates an increasingly contested geopolitical environment, Farnborough International Airshow 2026 is expected to reaffirm its status as the premier stage where innovation, industry, and strategy converge. The technologies unveiled and partnerships forged in Hampshire this July may well shape the future trajectory of aerospace and defence well into the next decade.

THE STRATEGIC SIGNIFICANCE OF MARITIME POWER FOR BHARAT 2047

GEOSTRATEGIC

"If India desires to be a maritime power, it is not sufficient to create a navy, however efficient and well manned. It must create a maritime tradition in the public, a sustained interest in the oceanic problems and a conviction that India's future greatness lies on the seas."

KM Panikkar, in India and the Indian Ocean



VICE ADMIRAL AJENDRA BAHADUR SINGH (R) | FORMER COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF THE EASTERN NAVAL COMMAND AND WESTERN NAVAL COMMAND | FOR THE NEWS ANALYTICS HERALD

India's vision of becoming a developed nation by 2047—Viksit Bharat (VB 2047)—rests on sustained economic growth, rising prosperity, and enhanced geopolitical influence. Achieving the targeted US$30 trillion economy and a per capita income approaching US$18,000 will require annual growth rates of 7–8 per cent over the next two decades. Such ambitions are inseparable from India's maritime geography and its ability to harness the opportunities offered by the seas.



Yet this economic aspiration coincides with an era of growing maritime instability. The Indian Ocean Region (IOR) faces persistent security challenges, ranging from disruptions in the Red Sea and Gulf of Hormuz to the militarisation of the South China Sea. China's expanding maritime footprint and its strategic nexus with Pakistan add further complexity. Simultaneously, state and non-state actors increasingly challenge freedom of navigation, maritime trade, and the rules-based order embodied in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). In this uncertain environment, naval power has re-emerged as a critical instrument of statecraft. For India, safeguarding trade routes, protecting maritime interests, and projecting influence across the Indo-Pacific is an essential prerequisite for achieving VB 2047.

VISION & POLICY FRAMEWORKS

Recognising the centrality of the maritime domain, India has launched several initiatives, including SAGAR, MAHASAGAR, Sagarmala, Maritime India Vision 2030, Maritime Amrit Kaal Vision 2047 (MAKV), and the Shipbuilding Policy. These frameworks seek to transform

India into a maritime-enabled nation through investments in ports, shipping, logistics, coastal infrastructure, and the blue economy. Recent maritime legislation covering ports, shipping, and ocean resources further reflects a forward-looking approach to maritime governance.



THE ECONOMIC ENGINE

A US$30 trillion economy will require export values of approximately US$8–9 trillion in goods and services. Supporting such growth demands world-class ports, efficient logistics, and secure sea lanes. India imports more than 80 per cent of its crude oil requirements, most of which transit through the Arabian Sea from the Persian Gulf. Even as renewable energy expands, liquefied natural gas, green hydrogen, and maritime transport will remain critical components of India's energy architecture.

Any disruption in key maritime corridors could increase energy costs, slow industrial production, and undermine economic confidence. Protecting shipping lanes and ensuring uninterrupted trade flows, therefore, become national economic imperatives. Comprehensive national power must provide the shield that safeguards India's maritime lifelines.

The seabed now carries data as valuable as cargo, making underwater infrastructure a strategic national asset.

THE DIGITAL SEAFLOOR

Maritime security today extends beyond ships and cargo. More than 95 per cent of global intercontinental data traffic travels through subsea fibre-optic cables. Mumbai, Chennai, and Kochi serve as critical landing points linking India to Europe, the Middle East, and Southeast Asia.

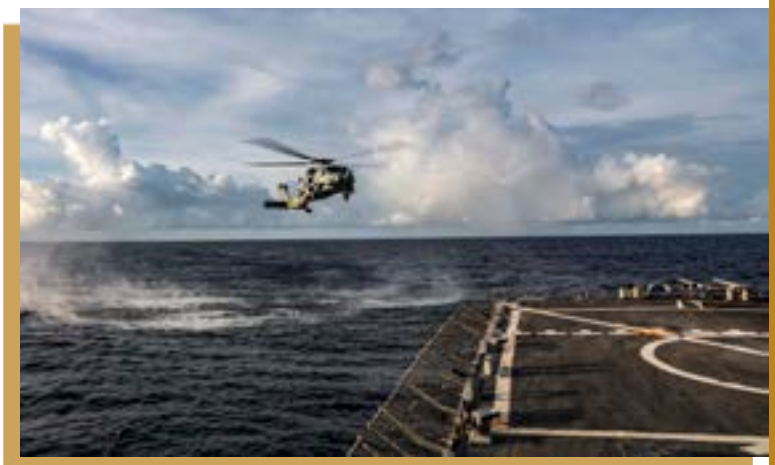
Recent incidents have demonstrated the vulnerability of these cables to sabotage, accidental damage, and espionage. Protecting this underwater digital infrastructure is essential for India's financial, technological, and communication networks. This requires specialised oceanographic capabilities, autonomous underwater vehicles (AUVs), seabed monitoring systems, and dedicated security protocols to secure the digital foundations of the economy.

STRUCTURAL TRANSFORMATION

Maritime power cannot rest solely on a capable navy. It requires a comprehensive transformation of India's industrial, technological, and logistical ecosystem. MAKV recognises that the oceans are not merely transport corridors but reservoirs of energy, food, minerals, and economic opportunity.

The Blue Economy must become a major driver of future growth. Its pillars include shipbuilding, deep-sea fishing, offshore energy exploration, offshore wind and green hydrogen hubs, deep-sea mining, marine biotechnology, aquaculture, and maritime services.

At the same time, the Indian Ocean's narrow choke points—including the Bab-el-Mandeb, Hormuz, Malacca, Sunda, and Lombok Straits—remain critical vulnerabilities. These bottlenecks can become pressure points through which state or non-state actors disrupt global trade. Securing them is therefore central to India's maritime strategy.



ENHANCING MARITIME CAPABILITIES

The Indian Navy's long-term force planning must be aligned with the requirements of VB 2047. Future force structures must integrate traditional naval platforms with cyber, space, and autonomous systems.

India will require independently deployable task groups capable of sustained operations across distant waters. Such forces are likely to include aircraft carriers, nuclear attack submarines (SSNs), advanced destroyers, frigates, amphibious platforms, and logistics vessels. The possibility of simultaneous challenges from multiple adversaries necessitates a fleet capable of operating across diverse theatres. Several

The future Indian century will be shaped not only by geography, but by India's ability to dominate it.



priorities stand out:

Long-Term Shipbuilding Programmes: Public and private shipyards require visibility regarding future requirements to enable investments in infrastructure, technology, and workforce development.

Reduced Construction Timelines: Indian shipbuilding timelines remain longer than global benchmarks. Accelerating production of major combatants and support vessels is essential.

Autonomous Systems: Future maritime operations will increasingly rely on unmanned aerial, surface, and underwater platforms. Investments in UAVs, autonomous surface vessels, and unmanned underwater vehicles are critical for persistent surveillance and enhanced maritime domain awareness.

Underwater Domain Awareness (UDA): Effective monitoring of the subsurface environment demands specialised sensors, seabed surveillance networks, anti-submarine warfare capabilities, and extensive collaboration with partner navies.

Indigenous Systems: India must continue developing domestic weapons, sensors, and shipborne systems while maintaining realistic assessments of technological readiness and operational requirements.

CLOSING THE GAPS

The key question remains whether current maritime growth trajectories are sufficient to achieve VB 2047. Where deficiencies exist, course corrections must follow.

Critical gaps persist in advanced marine technologies, propulsion systems, underwater capabilities, aviation platforms, specialised skills, and access to capital. Significant investments are needed in ports, waterways, shipbuilding infrastructure, logistics networks, and technology integration.

While policy frameworks are largely in place, implementation remains uneven. Bridging the execution gap is essential. This requires measurable targets, institutional accountability, and empowered structures capable of driving maritime transformation beyond traditional bureaucratic constraints. Innovation, speed, and adaptability must become defining characteristics of India's maritime strategy.

BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS

India's maritime ambitions cannot be pursued in isolation. The country increasingly relies on flexible regional frameworks such as the Quad, IORA, IONS, and BIMSTEC to support a free, open, and rules-based Indo-Pacific.

The Indian Navy conducts extensive bilateral and multilateral exercises while expanding operational cooperation with partner navies. The Information Fusion Centre–Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR) has emerged as a key institution for maritime domain awareness and information sharing.

Humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR) also remain central to India's maritime diplomacy. The Indian Ocean is highly vulnerable to cyclones, tsunamis, and



climate-related disasters. India's ability to deploy relief assets rapidly has strengthened its reputation as a reliable security provider and first responder across the region.

These partnerships enhance India's influence, strengthen maritime security, and contribute to a broader whole-of-nation approach to building comprehensive national power.

SECURING THE INDIAN CENTURY

The path to Viksit Bharat 2047 is fundamentally linked to the sea. India's economic ambitions, energy security, digital connectivity, and regional influence depend upon secure maritime corridors and resilient maritime infrastructure.



A US$30 trillion economy cannot flourish without secure sea lanes, protected energy flows, and uninterrupted maritime trade.

As geopolitical competition increasingly shifts to the maritime domain, diplomacy must be reinforced by credible naval power and robust industrial capacity. Securing choke points, protecting critical infrastructure, developing a thriving blue economy, and building a competitive shipbuilding ecosystem are no longer optional objectives; they are strategic necessities.

The strength of India's maritime capabilities will determine its ability to navigate a contested world while sustaining economic growth and strategic autonomy. Maritime power is not an alternative to national development; it is one of its essential foundations. If India is to realise the promise of Viksit Bharat 2047, the oceans must become the core of its national strategy.

(Vice Admiral Ajendra Bahadur Singh (R) has commanded IN Ships Veer, Vindhyagiri, Trishul and the Aircraft Carrier Viraat. He has extensive experience in Tri Services organisations. He has a rare distinction of being the Commander-in-Chief of the Eastern Naval Command and Western Naval Command. The views expressed are of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of ***The News Analytics Herald.)***

QUICK INSIGHTS

- ***Maritime power is essential to achieving Viksit Bharat 2047 economic goals.***
- ***Secure sea lanes underpin trade, energy security, and national growth.***
- ***Undersea cables are critical infrastructure requiring dedicated maritime protection.***
- ***Blue Economy development can unlock new engines of long-term prosperity.***
- ***Strong naval capabilities and partnerships are vital for Indo-Pacific influence.***

HOW CONNECTIVITY BECAME THE ULTIMATE GEOPOLITICAL WEAPON?

INVESTIGATING

The struggle for power in the Indo-Pacific is no longer centred on fleets and firepower alone. It is increasingly fought through cables, ports, satellites, and data networks. The states that control connectivity control leverage, influence, and, ultimately, strategic freedom of action.



M A HOSSAIN | DHAKA, BANGLADESH
SOUTH-EAST ASIA CORRESPONDENT, THE NEWS ANALYTICS HERALD

There is an old imperial axiom, frequently attributed to various statesmen but belonging, in spirit, to all of them: control the routes, and you control the world. The British understood this when they planted garrisons at Gibraltar, Aden, and Singapore, not for their scenic value, but because they commanded chokepoints through which global commerce breathed. Today, the language of empire has changed. The garrisons are gone, replaced by fibre-optic cables, deep-water ports, satellite constellations, and data corridors. The logic, however, remains brutally unchanged. Connectivity is power and power, in the hands of a determined state, is always eventually weaponised.

This is the defining strategic reality of the Indo-Pacific 2026, a region that carries more than 60% of global maritime trade, hosts the world's fastest-growing digital economies, and sits directly beneath a canopy of competing satellite networks. The battleground here is not primarily kinetic. It is infrastructural. Whoever owns the pipes, the ports, and the platforms controls, in very meaningful ways, the future.

THE SUBMARINE CABLE

The British Empire understood something fundamental about global dominance. Its strength did not rest solely on warships or colonial garrisons. It rested on communication.



In the late nineteenth century, Britain constructed the "All-Red Line", a vast telegraph network linking London to its imperial possessions. The cables rarely touched foreign territory. Information moved faster through British-controlled networks than through those of any rival.

Consider what lies beneath the ocean's surface today. More than 400 undersea cables carry approximately 95% of the world's international data traffic, financial transactions, military communications, diplomatic cables, and civilian internet use. These are not abstract technicalities. They are the circulatory system of modern civilisation. And they are alarmingly vulnerable.

In 2022, mysterious cuts to undersea cables near the Shetland Islands disrupted

communications across northern Europe. In the Red Sea, Israeli media and some officials blamed Houthi activities (widely assessed to be enabled by Iranian intelligence), which damaged four major cables in early 2024, throttling roughly a quarter of the internet traffic flowing between Asia and Europe. These incidents were not accidents. They were proof of concept. If a relatively limited non-state actor can achieve this degree of disruption, the calculus for a major power grows considerably darker.



Undersea cables carry more than data; they carry power, influence, and vulnerabilities capable of shaping strategic outcomes.

China has been particularly methodical here. Chinese state-linked firms (most prominently HMN Technologies, formerly Huawei Marine) have built or maintained a significant share of the undersea cable infrastructure across the Indo-Pacific and beyond. The strategic implications are not subtle. A state with deep familiarity with cable routing, landing stations, and repair protocols possesses an enormous information advantage over any adversary relying on the same infrastructure. Washington has moved, belatedly, to restrict Chinese involvement in cable projects connecting U.S. territories. But the damage, in many corridors, is already embedded in the architecture.

THE GEOMETRY OF DEPENDENCE

Throughout history, control of strategic chokepoints has translated into geopolitical influence. Britain understood this at Gibraltar and Suez. The United States understood it through the Panama Canal. Trade routes have always been arteries of power.

Maritime ports are the second vector of this quiet campaign. China's Belt and Road Initiative, whatever its developmental rhetoric, has functioned strategically as the most ambitious port-acquisition programme since the Dutch East India Company. Hambantota in Sri Lanka. Gwadar in Pakistan. Djibouti and Piraeus in Greece. The pattern is consistent: financing offered on terms that recipient governments struggle to meet, followed by equity stakes, operational control, and eventually a presence that is, for all practical purposes, permanent.

The Indo-Pacific geometry here is particularly acute. The Strait of Malacca, through which nearly 40% of global trade passes, represents a chokepoint of extraordinary sensitivity. Beijing has long acknowledged what Chinese strategists call the "Malacca Dilemma": the vulnerability of Chinese energy imports to interdiction at this narrow passage. Its response has been dual-track. Domestically, it has pursued overland pipelines and alternative routes. Externally, it has cultivated port relationships along the entire length of the Indian Ocean littoral, a strategic arc that Indian planners describe, with barely concealed anxiety, as the "String of Pearls".

India has responded with countermoves of its own, named the "Necklace of Diamonds". The Chabahar port development in Iran, pursued in partnership with Tehran despite American pressure, is explicitly designed to provide an alternative access corridor to Central Asia that bypasses Pakistan. New Delhi's investments in Oman, the Maldives, and along the Andaman chain reflect a similar logic: connectivity as deterrence, infrastructure as a strategic buffer. The contest is not between good actors and bad ones. It is between competing visions of who gets to set the terms.



DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Beneath the cables and beyond the ports lies an even more elusive domain: the digital infrastructure layer. Satellite communication systems, cloud computing platforms, 5G networks, and the data centres that underpin them are not merely commercial assets. They are, increasingly, instruments of national power and sites of profound vulnerability.

Satellite systems have become indispensable to everyday life. They guide ships and aircraft, synchronise financial markets, support telecommunications networks, monitor weather patterns, and provide military intelligence.

Most people encounter these capabilities through smartphone navigation. Yet the broader reality is far more consequential. Modern economies depend on positioning, navigation, and timing systems with a degree of reliance that few citizens

fully appreciate. A significant disruption to these networks would produce effects that extend far beyond inconvenience. It could impair transportation systems, financial transactions, communications infrastructure, and military operations simultaneously.



Ports financed as commercial assets can evolve into strategic footholds, quietly redefining influence across critical maritime corridors.

Elon Musk's Starlink system demonstrated this with uncomfortable clarity during the early months of the Ukraine war, providing battlefield connectivity that Ukrainian forces described as operationally decisive. The lesson was not lost on anyone paying attention. Low-Earth orbit satellite constellations have crossed from civilian convenience into military-critical infrastructure almost without public debate. China's response — the development of its own Guowang constellation, projected to eventually exceed 13,000 satellites — reflects a direct acknowledgement that space-based connectivity is now a domain of great-power competition.

In the Indo-Pacific specifically, the United States has moved to accelerate partnerships around digital infrastructure through frameworks like the Blue Dot Network and the G7's Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment. The ambition is legitimate. The execution has been uneven. American and allied financing has struggled to match the speed and willingness to absorb political risk that Chinese state-backed lending has consistently demonstrated. Bureaucratic caution is a poor match for strategic urgency.

THE NEXT CRISIS

None of this is an inevitable catastrophe. States have always competed for positional advantage, and the history of infrastructure competition, from railway rivalries in the nineteenth century to airline route disputes in the twentieth, shows that such contests can be managed short of open conflict. The concern is not competition per se. It is the accumulation of leverage at chokepoints, the normalisation of infrastructure as coercion, and the erosion of the shared norms that once made global connectivity a genuinely common good.

The Indo-Pacific is where this contest will be decided. Its sea lanes, its cables, its ports, and its digital corridors represent not merely commercial routes but the physical expression of the international order itself. To allow any single power to establish decisive dominance over those networks would be to concede something far larger than a trade route. Above all, it requires abandoning the comforting illusion that infrastructure is politically neutral.

Connectivity built for dependence is not connectivity at all. It is a leash, elegantly engineered, commercially packaged, and very difficult to remove once fitted. The nations that understand this reality will shape the future. Those that do not may discover, too late, that sovereignty is no longer measured solely by the territory they control, but by the networks upon which they depend.

(M. A. Hossain, senior journalist and international affairs analyst based in Bangladesh. He covers South Asia and South-East Asia for The News Analytics Herald. The views expressed are of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of ***The News Analytics Herald.****)*

QUICK INSIGHTS

- ***Connectivity infrastructure has emerged as the primary arena of geopolitical competition.***
- ***Undersea cables remain critical vulnerabilities carrying global data and communications.***
- ***Chinese port investments expand strategic influence across key Indo-Pacific chokepoints.***
- ***Satellite networks and digital infrastructure increasingly shape national power projection.***
- ***Sovereignty now depends as much on networks as territorial control.***

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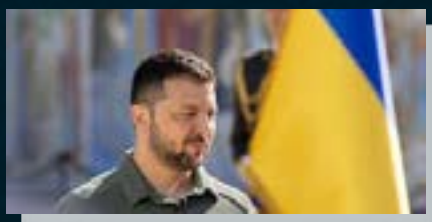
IN THE SPOTLIGHT

U.S.–IRAN WAR KEEPS MARKETS ON EDGE



Global markets remained resilient in early June despite renewed U.S.–Iran military tensions near the Strait of Hormuz. It was reported that oil prices rose nearly 3% after fresh Gulf hostilities threatened hopes of reopening the key maritime chokepoint. The U.S. and Iran accused each other of escalation, while diplomatic efforts to end the conflict remained fragile. The episode showed how energy markets, maritime security and great-power conflict had become tightly linked, with investors balancing war risks against strong AI-driven stock momentum.

UKRAINE SAYS DEEP STRIKES STRENGTHEN ITS POSITION



Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy said Kyiv's deep strikes inside Russia were allowing Ukraine to negotiate "on equal footing". It was reported that Ukraine had targeted Russian oil terminals and military infrastructure far from the front, aiming to weaken Moscow's war economy and improve Kyiv's leverage in any future talks. The remarks came as Ukraine intensified long-range drone operations against Russia's energy system, signalling a shift from defensive endurance to economic interdiction.

TAIWAN REPORTS CHINESE PROVOCATION NEAR PRATAS ISLANDS



Taiwan said a Chinese coast guard vessel and oceanographic survey ship carried out a coordinated operation near the Taiwan-controlled Pratas Islands in the South China Sea. Taipei described the action as a deliberate provocation and dispatched coast guard vessels in response. The Pratas Islands are strategically vulnerable because of their distance from Taiwan and proximity to Hong Kong. The episode reinforced concerns that Beijing may expand pressure beyond Taiwan's main island through grey-zone maritime operations.

RUSSIA'S SECHIN SAYS U.S. BENEFITS FROM HORMUZ CLOSURE



Rosneft chief Igor Sechin said U.S. energy companies were the main beneficiaries of the Strait of Hormuz closure, while warning that prolonged tensions could damage long-term oil demand. His remarks from St Petersburg appears significant as the Gulf conflict continued to disrupt a route carrying roughly one-fifth of global crude flows. The statement reflected Moscow's attempt to frame the Hormuz crisis as both an energy shock and a geopolitical opportunity for U.S. producers.

XI SIGNALS STRONGER CHINA–NORTH KOREA ALIGNMENT



Chinese President Xi Jinping said China would work with North Korea to oppose hegemony and attempts to revive militarism, according to comments reported from North Korean state media. Xi's remarks came ahead of his first visit to North Korea in seven years. The message signalled Beijing's intent to reinforce ties with Pyongyang amid intensifying U.S.-China rivalry, Korean Peninsula uncertainty and broader bloc formation in Northeast Asia.

EU ADVANCES UKRAINE AND MOLDOVA ACCESSION TRACK



The European Union agreed to open the first accession negotiations cluster with Ukraine and Moldova. The European Council and European Commission described the decision as a strategic choice supporting peace, security and prosperity across Europe. The move carried strong geopolitical symbolism, embedding Kyiv and Chisinau more deeply in Western institutional structures despite Russia's war and pressure on Europe's Eastern neighbourhood.

USTR GREER TO VISIT INDIA FOR TRADE TALKS



U.S. Trade Representative Jamieson Greer is set to travel to India after the G7 summit, with a senior U.S. official saying a trade agreement was possible. It is also said that trade would also feature in President Trump's meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi during the G7 gathering in France, though no deal was expected there. The development reflected the growing strategic weight of India-U.S. economic negotiations amid supply-chain diversification, tariff politics and Indo-Pacific alignment.

MASSIVE RUSSIAN AIR STRIKES IGNITE KYIV CATHEDRAL



Russian missile and drone strikes across Ukraine have killed at least 11 people and caused significant damage to civilian infrastructure, according to Ukrainian authorities. In Kyiv, the historic 11th-century Dormition Cathedral was heavily damaged by a fire following the attacks. President Volodymyr Zelensky condemned the strike, describing it as one of the most serious assaults on Christian cultural heritage in recent times, although Russia denied targeting the site. In Kharkiv, five rescue workers died while responding to a fire triggered by a strike. Separately, a Ukrainian drone attack on Russia's Tula region reportedly killed three people and injured three others.

THE END OF BORDERLESS ECONOMIC ORDER

GEOECONOMICS

For three decades, globalisation promised a world where markets transcended borders and economics softened geopolitics. That era is now under strain. Security, resilience, and strategic competition are increasingly reshaping trade, technology, and investment, creating a new economic order defined less by openness and more by control.



DR. VAISHALI RAGHUVANSHI
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, INTERNATIONAL STUDIES |
BANARAS HINDU UNIVERSITY |
FOR **THE NEWS ANALYTICS HERALD**

The post-Cold War era was defined by the belief that markets would transcend borders. Capital, goods, data, and ideas were expected to move freely across an increasingly interconnected world. Economic interdependence was seen not only as a source of prosperity but also as a stabilising force that would reduce geopolitical conflict. Today, globalisation is not ending, but it is being fundamentally reorganised around power, security, and control.



Globalisation is not disappearing; it is being rebuilt around security, trust, and strategic alignment.

The world is entering an era where the borderless economic order is giving way to a more fragmented and strategically bounded system. Four forces are driving this transformation: sanctions, friend-shoring, economic nationalism, and technological decoupling. Together, they are reshaping the institutions, rules, and geography of the international economy.

SECURITY FIRST

For more than three decades, governments and businesses pursued efficiency above all else. Firms optimised supply chains for cost and scale, governments encouraged liberalisation, and international institutions promoted integration. The assumption was simple: a more interconnected world would be both wealthier and more stable.

The 2008 global financial crisis exposed vulnerabilities within this model. Subsequent backlash against free trade, rising populism, the COVID-19 pandemic, Russia's invasion of Ukraine, and the U.S.–Iran conflict further accelerated the reassessment. Interdependence, once viewed as a strength, increasingly appeared as a source of vulnerability.

Supply-chain disruptions, energy insecurity, medical shortages, and geopolitical coercion demonstrated how economic openness could transmit shocks across borders. As a result, governments began prioritising resilience and national security alongside efficiency.

This shift provides the backdrop to the emergence of new economic borders.

SANCTIONS STATECRAFT

Economic sanctions have long been a diplomatic tool, but

their scale and purpose have evolved significantly. Recent sanctions have expanded from targeted measures against individuals and narrow sectors to restrictions on entire financial systems, central banks, and key industries. Secondary sanctions have widened their reach by penalising third parties that engage with sanctioned entities. Increasingly, sanctions target advanced technologies, critical minerals, and strategic industries rather than only traditional commodities.



Sanctions are no longer merely instruments of punishment. They are becoming structural mechanisms that determine participation in specific sectors of the global economy. This encourages governments and firms to diversify away from vulnerable financial channels, suppliers, and technologies while developing alternative systems. In effect, sanctions are creating economic fault lines that increasingly mirror geopolitical divisions.

GEOGRAPHY OF TRUST

If the old model of globalisation encouraged production wherever costs were lowest, the emerging model favours production within politically trusted networks.

Friend-shoring involves relocating manufacturing and sourcing to countries considered politically stable and strategically aligned. Governments seek to reduce exposure to coercion through export controls, embargoes, or supply-chain manipulation. Businesses increasingly evaluate geopolitical alignment alongside traditional concerns such as labour costs and regulation.

The result is a gradual reorganisation of global production. Rather than a single integrated system, manufacturing networks are increasingly clustered around trusted partners and security relationships. The logic behind friend-shoring is fundamentally political. Trust has become a critical economic variable. Borders are not disappearing; they are being redrawn along strategic lines.

INDUSTRIAL REVIVAL

A second feature of the new economic order is the resurgence of economic nationalism. Governments across advanced and emerging economies are subsidising strategic industries, restricting foreign acquisitions in sensitive sectors, imposing local-content requirements, and introducing measures to protect domestic capabilities.

Rather than allowing markets alone to determine outcomes, states are increasingly identifying sectors deemed essential for national power and security. Economic, technological, and security policies are becoming deeply intertwined.

This trend has three major consequences.

First, trade rules are becoming more fragmented as governments introduce country-specific requirements and subsidies.

Second, international institutions that once aspired to neutrality now operate within an environment of explicit strategic competition.

Third, industrial policies increasingly trigger reciprocal responses, creating a cycle of subsidies and protection measures that further politicise trade and investment.

Economic nationalism is therefore not simply a return to protectionism. It is an attempt to rebuild domestic and allied industrial capacity in a world where economic power has become an instrument of statecraft.

The new battleground of global power is not territory alone, but technology, data, and digital infrastructure.

DIGITAL FRONTIERS

The most profound transformation may be occurring in the digital domain. Technological decoupling is reshaping the architecture of the global digital economy. Export controls now target advanced semiconductors, chip-making equipment, artificial intelligence systems, and dual-use technologies. Governments increasingly impose restrictions on cross-border data flows and mandate local data storage.

At the same time, digital ecosystems are fragmenting into competing standards, platforms, and governance frameworks covering telecommunications, cloud services, payment systems, and artificial intelligence.

These developments limit technology diffusion across rival blocs and encourage the creation of parallel innovation ecosystems. Political competition is increasingly embedded within technical standards that underpin global connectivity.

Digital borders are less visible than physical ones but equally consequential. They determine who can access technologies, how data moves, and which systems remain interoperable. The earlier vision of a largely borderless internet has given way to a reality shaped by digital sovereignty and techno-nationalism.

A NEW GLOBALISATION

The decline of the borderless economic order does not mean globalisation is reversing. Trade volumes remain substantial, investment flows continue, and digital interactions remain extensive. What is changing is the structure of globalisation itself.

Several characteristics define this new phase.

Selective interdependence is replacing unrestricted integration. States pursue deep economic engagement within trusted networks while reducing dependence on strategic competitors.

Globalisation is becoming multi-speed. Consumer goods may continue to flow relatively freely, while advanced technologies and strategic resources face tighter controls.

Economic networks increasingly align with geopolitical coalitions, creating overlapping but non-universal systems of trade, finance, and technology.

Finally, uncertainty has become a permanent feature. Businesses and governments must navigate shifting alliances, evolving regulations, and geopolitical risks capable of rapidly altering economic conditions.

In this environment, borders function less as barriers and more as filters through which states manage flows of capital, goods, talent, technology, and data according to strategic priorities.

CHALLENGES AHEAD

The emerging order presents difficult trade-offs. Resilience often comes at the cost of efficiency. Diversified supply chains, redundant production capacity, and friend-shoring arrangements improve security but increase costs for businesses and consumers.

There is also a growing risk of deeper fragmentation. If sanctions, friend-shoring, and technological decoupling evolve into rigid competing blocs, the global economy could become more prone to instability and miscalculation.

Governance challenges are equally significant. Many emerging practices, including technology restrictions, subsidies, and data controls, remain weakly regulated at the multilateral level. As legal frameworks lag behind strategic realities, disputes increasingly risk being resolved through power politics rather than established rules.

The burden of adjustment is also uneven. Major powers possess the ability to shape new frameworks, while smaller states often have little choice but to adapt. Their challenge is avoiding dependency on a single bloc while preserving strategic flexibility.

Borders are not returning as walls; they are re-emerging as strategic filters of economic power.

REDEFINED BORDERS

The world is not de-globalising so much as it is re-globalising on new terms. The vision of a borderless economic order governed primarily by market forces is giving way to a more contested landscape where security, power, and strategic rivalry shape the movement of trade, capital, technology, and data.

Sanctions, friend-shoring, economic nationalism, and technological decoupling are interconnected responses to a world where interdependence itself has become both a source of leverage and vulnerability.

The resulting system is more bound, more politicised, and more fragmented, yet still deeply interconnected. Understanding this transformation requires recognising that borders are not disappearing. They are being reimagined as instruments of twenty-first-century economic statecraft.

The future of globalisation will not be defined by openness alone, but by how states balance integration with security in an increasingly competitive world.

(Dr. Vaishali Raghuvanshi, Assistant Professor, International Studies, at Banaras Hindu University. She has research interests in World Politics, South Asian Studies, Peace and Conflict Studies and Border Studies. The views expressed are of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of ***The News Analytics Herald.****)*

QUICK INSIGHTS

- ***Globalisation is shifting from efficiency-driven integration to security-focused resilience.***
- ***Sanctions increasingly shape participation in critical sectors of the global economy.***
- ***Friend-shoring is redrawing supply chains around political trust and alignment.***
- ***Technology controls and data restrictions are creating new digital borders.***
- ***Economic power is increasingly wielded as a strategic instrument of statecraft.***

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AI AND THE FUTURE OF STRATEGIC POWER

HI-TECH

Artificial intelligence is rapidly becoming the defining currency of national power. As the United States and China race for technological dominance, India faces a different challenge: securing strategic autonomy in a world where computation, data, and chips increasingly determine influence.



DR. AMIT DUA, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR
COMPUTER SCIENCE AND INFORMATION SYSTEMS DEPARTMENT |
BIRLA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY AND SCIENCE, PILANI |
FOR **THE NEWS ANALYTICS HERALD**

In February 2026, something significant happened in Bengaluru. A company launched India's first fully homegrown artificial intelligence model. Named Sarvam, it was trained from the ground up using around four thousand borrowed graphics chips at a cost that was modest by global standards. More importantly, it could operate across all twenty-two Indian languages.

Sarvam's significance extends beyond technology. It demonstrated how a country with limited resources can think differently about power in an age where intelligence itself is becoming an industrial asset.

The timing was revealing. In the same year, American companies were projected to spend nearly US$286 billion on artificial intelligence. India's entire national AI mission operates on roughly US$1.25 billion. The disparity is immense. India cannot compete through spending. It is attempting a different strategy altogether.

THE NEW HIGH GROUND

Artificial intelligence has ceased to be merely a commercial product. It has become an instrument of statecraft. Governments increasingly guard advanced models, computing infrastructure, and semiconductor supply chains the way earlier generations protected oil fields, shipping lanes, and strategic minerals. Defence establishments are integrating AI into intelligence gathering, logistics, and operational decision-making.

Today, two countries dominate the landscape. The United

Compute power has become the strategic high ground, increasingly shaping economic influence, military capability, and geopolitical leverage.

States and China are investing on a scale unmatched by any other nation. American private investment in AI reached approximately US$286 billion last year, more than twenty times Chinese private-sector spending. China, however, compensates through state-led investment, directing an estimated US$900 billion into strategic industries over the past decade, including nearly US$200 billion into AI-related firms.



The objective extends far beyond product development. Both countries are competing to establish long-term dominance over the technologies that will shape economic and military power for decades. Consequently, most frontier AI models are developed either in the United States or China, leaving many countries dependent on technologies designed elsewhere.

Soldiers have always fought for the high ground. The force that controls the ridge sees the battlefield first and chooses the moment of engagement. Compute power has become that ridge.

China's DeepSeek model demonstrated that advanced AI development may not require the vast expenditure once assumed. Yet lower costs do not create a level playing field. The commanding heights of AI remain concentrated in two capitals, while most of the world remains dependent on them.

THE CHOKEPOINT BENEATH

Beneath the headlines, artificial intelligence rests upon a simple foundation: semiconductors.

India currently imports nearly 90 per cent of the chips it consumes, with a substantial share originating from China. When it comes to advanced semiconductors, India remains dependent on foreign suppliers and external supply chains. This dependence has strategic consequences.

The United States' proposed AI diffusion framework in 2025 effectively categorised countries according to their access to advanced technologies. India found itself placed in the middle tier, neither a close ally nor an outright adversary. Although the framework was later withdrawn before implementation, the signal was unmistakable. India had been shown where it ranked within the global technology hierarchy.

The response is straightforward: build domestic capability. Tata's semiconductor fabrication facility in Dholera is expected to begin production by the end of this year. While its initial output will rely on mature technologies rather than cutting-edge nodes, it represents a critical first step. More recently, Tata announced a partnership with ASML, the Dutch company whose advanced lithography machines remain unavailable to China because of Western export restrictions.

This illustrates both India's opportunity and its limitations. Trusted access to Western technology offers advantages, but it does not confer technological independence. India remains a participant in a system designed elsewhere. It may gain access to the house, but ownership remains with others.



Without control over semiconductors, technological ambition remains vulnerable to external decisions, supply chains, and dependencies.

THE FRUGAL PATH

Recognising these constraints, India is pursuing a distinctive strategy. Rather than attempting to match American or Chinese spending, New Delhi is emphasising affordability, accessibility, and strategic autonomy. The objective is not

scale for its own sake. The objective is sovereignty.

Government programmes are providing subsidised computing resources to domestic startups. Indigenous models such as Sarvam and Krutrim are being promoted as public alternatives capable of serving India's linguistic and developmental requirements. The strategy seeks to transform scarcity into an advantage.



India already operates one of the world's largest digital public infrastructures. Its digital payments ecosystem processes nearly half of global real-time payment transactions. This provides an enormous testing ground for AI applications at a population scale.

The country also possesses a vast reservoir of technical talent. Roughly one-fifth of the world's chip designers are of Indian origin. Although manufacturing capability remains limited, India's engineering workforce continues to attract major global investment. Google alone has committed billions of dollars towards expanding its presence in the country.

The logic resembles judo rather than boxing. The lighter competitor does not attempt to overpower the heavier one. Instead, he uses positioning, leverage, and efficiency to compensate for his disadvantages. India's stated doctrine, sovereignty over data combined with inclusion by design, reflects the same philosophy.

It cannot outspend the giants. It hopes to out-position them. The wager is ambitious. In a world where computing power remains scarce and expensive, the country that makes intelligence affordable and accessible may gain influence that sheer expenditure cannot purchase.

THE GLOBAL SOUTH

If India cannot dominate the technology itself, it may still influence the rules governing it. In February, New Delhi hosted the largest artificial intelligence gathering ever organised in the Global South. The symbolism mattered. For decades, developing nations largely participated in technology debates designed elsewhere. Hosting the conversation shifted the centre of gravity, if only temporarily.

Prime ministers, technology executives, and policymakers gathered at Bharat Mandapam. Eighty-eight signatories endorsed the summit declaration. India's diplomacy serves both practical and strategic purposes.

By convening stakeholders, India gains the ability to shape agendas, frame debates, and determine priorities. It has consistently pushed international discussions away from abstract security concerns and towards questions of access, affordability, development, and digital inclusion, areas where India's experience provides credibility.

Simultaneously, New Delhi continues to deepen partnerships with the United States and Western technology firms, attracting investment in cloud infrastructure, semiconductors, and advanced computing. Yet this strategy contains risks.

Many developing countries remain consumers rather than creators of AI systems. They contribute data, users, and markets while remaining dependent on technologies produced elsewhere. Several participants at the summit highlighted persistent gaps in financing, infrastructure, and technological access.

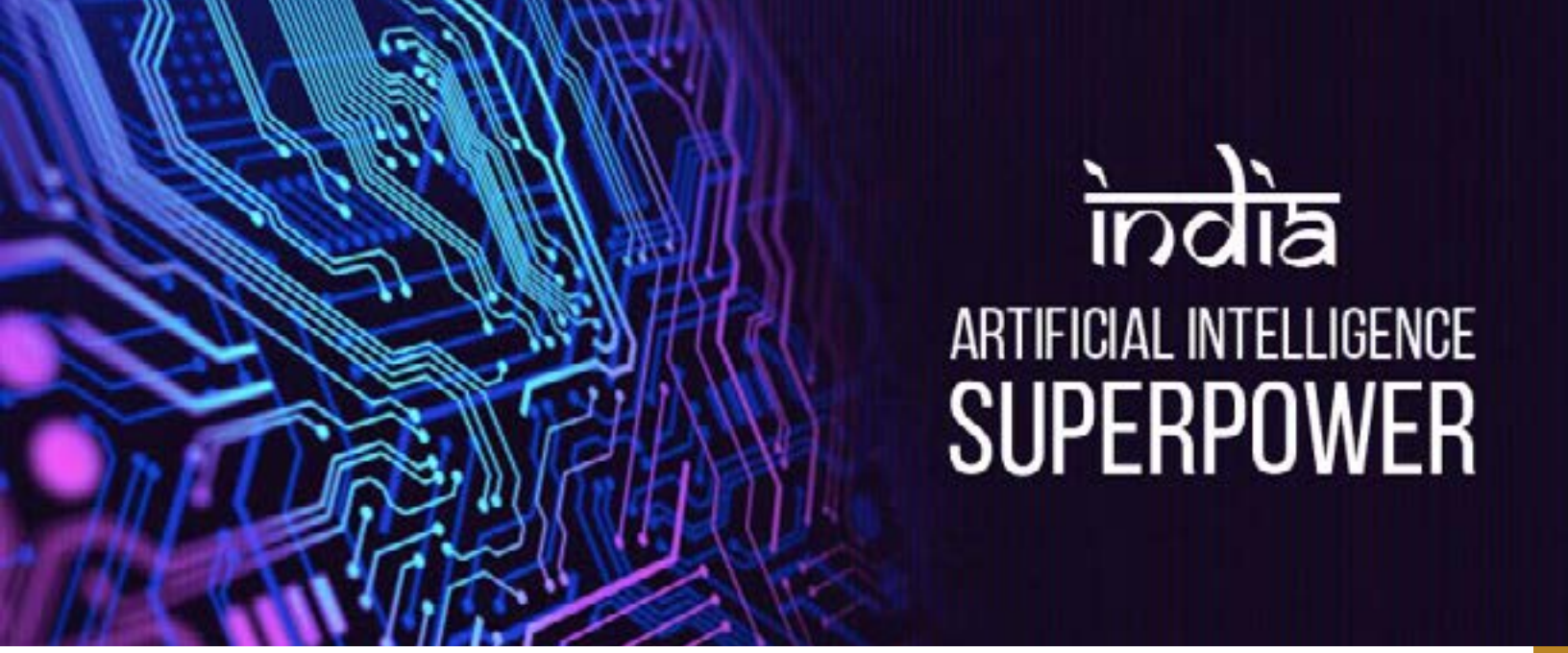
India itself is not immune to this challenge. Convening meetings and issuing declarations are useful tools of influence,



India's AI challenge is not matching superpowers, but achieving sovereignty before dependence hardens into permanence.

but influence is not the same as power. Hosting the discussion does not guarantee control over the outcome. A country may sit at the head of the table and still lack the ability to determine the menu.

The distinction matters. Until India acquires greater control



over critical technologies, advanced semiconductors, and large-scale computing infrastructure, it will remain partially dependent on systems created by others.

THE DECADE THAT DECIDES

The coming decade will determine whether India's strategy succeeds. It will not outspend the United States. It cannot match China's manufacturing ecosystem. Those realities are unlikely to change.

The challenge is therefore different: converting trust, talent, and diplomatic influence into genuine technological autonomy before dependence becomes entrenched. India possesses important advantages. It has a large engineering workforce, an increasingly supportive policy environment, a globally recognised digital public infrastructure, and growing international credibility. More importantly, its leadership increasingly views computation as a strategic asset rather than merely an economic sector.

Whether these strengths prove sufficient depends on execution. Artificial intelligence is evolving at an extraordinary speed. Success will require institutions capable of moving with similar urgency. Delays that were manageable in previous technological revolutions may prove costly in this one.

History does not always reward the first mover. Often, it rewards the nation that persists, adapts, and scales effectively over time. India is betting that it can become such a nation. The stakes extend beyond national ambition. The outcome will shape whether emerging economies can build meaningful technological sovereignty in a world increasingly dominated by a handful of AI superpowers.

At its core, India's strategy is an attempt to avoid becoming permanently dependent on technologies designed elsewhere. It is a wager that a country need not possess the largest budget to shape the future, provided it can combine innovation, scale, talent, and strategic clarity.

If that wager succeeds, India may emerge not merely as a major AI market, but as an influential architect of the next technological order. If it fails, the country risks becoming a consumer within systems controlled by others.

The decision will not be made by rhetoric or declarations. It will be made by chips, infrastructure, institutions, and the speed at which they can be built. That is the contest now underway. It is one that will help determine the future balance of power in the twenty-first century.

(Dr Amit Dua is an Associate Professor at BITS, Pilani. He is a TEDx speaker and the author of multiple books on cutting-edge technologies. The views expressed are of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of ***The News Analytics Herald.****)*

QUICK INSIGHTS

- ***Artificial intelligence is emerging as a critical instrument of national power.***
- ***India pursues AI sovereignty through innovation, affordability, and strategic autonomy.***
- ***Semiconductor dependence remains India's greatest vulnerability in the AI race.***
- ***Global South leadership offers influence, but not technological control.***
- ***The next decade will determine India's technological independence and strategic relevance.***

THE NEXT BIG

MS&D 2026 – MARITIME SECURITY & DEFENCE CONFERENCE | HAMBURG, GERMANY |3–4 SEPTEMBER 2026



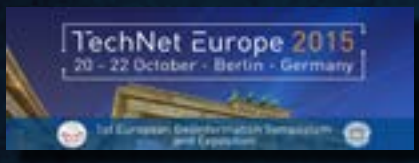
Held alongside SMM 2026, the world's leading maritime exhibition, MS&D focuses on naval modernisation and maritime security challenges. Key themes include naval platforms, autonomous maritime systems, maritime domain awareness, undersea infrastructure protection, hybrid maritime threats, naval logistics, unmanned surface and underwater vehicles, and the security of global sea lines of communication. The conference attracts senior naval officers, defence ministries, coast guards, shipbuilders, maritime technology companies, classification societies, and policymakers. With growing tensions across the Indo-Pacific, Red Sea, and critical maritime chokepoints, MS&D has become an increasingly important forum for global maritime security dialogue.

MSPO 2026 – INTERNATIONAL DEFENCE INDUSTRY EXHIBITION | KIELCE, POLAND | 8–11 SEPTEMBER 2026



MSPO is the largest defence exhibition in Central and Eastern Europe and one of NATO Europe's most significant defence industry events. Hosted at the Targi Kielce Exhibition & Congress Centre, it brings together defence ministries, military delegations, government officials, armed forces leaders, and major defence manufacturers. Key themes include land systems, armoured vehicles, missile systems, air defence, aerospace technologies, military communications, cyber security, unmanned systems, and defence industrial cooperation. The exhibition serves as a major platform for NATO capability development, defence procurement, and strategic partnerships, particularly relevant to European security and the Ukraine conflict.

TECHNET EUROPE 2026 |BERLIN, GERMANY | 15–16 SEPTEMBER 2026



Organised by AFCEA Europe, TechNet Europe 2026 focuses on digital defence transformation and the future operational environment facing NATO and European security organisations. Official themes include hybrid warfare, C4ISR systems, cybersecurity, command-and-control networks, digital resilience, artificial intelligence, military communications, and interoperability across NATO and EU structures. Discussions will be led by senior representatives from NATO, the European Union, national defence ministries, and military commands. Participants include defence officials, military planners, technology companies, cyber specialists, communications providers, and security professionals working on next-generation digital defence solutions.

THING

AFRICA AEROSPACE & DEFENCE (AAD) 2026 | PRETORIA, SOUTH AFRICA | 16–20 SEPTEMBER 2026



Africa Aerospace & Defence (AAD) is the African continent's premier aerospace and defence exhibition and the only event that combines a major trade exhibition with a live airshow. Hosted biennially in Tshwane, it showcases air, land, maritime, homeland security, and aerospace technologies. Key themes include military aviation, defence modernisation, border security, space technologies, cybersecurity, defence manufacturing, and industrial partnerships. Target participants include African and international armed forces, government agencies, aerospace companies, defence manufacturers, technology providers, procurement officials, and strategic investors seeking opportunities across the African defence and aerospace sectors.

EURO DEFENCE EXPO (EUDEX) 2026 |ESSEN, GERMANY | 22–25 SEP 2026



EUDEX 2026 is positioned as a major European defence and security exhibition focused on strengthening defence industrial cooperation and military modernisation across Europe. The event highlights emerging defence technologies, military mobility, integrated security systems, cyber resilience, autonomous platforms, defence innovation, and NATO interoperability. It provides a forum for policymakers, defence ministries, armed forces, procurement agencies, research institutions, and industry leaders to discuss future capability requirements. Particular emphasis is expected on European strategic autonomy, industrial resilience, defence supply chains, and collaborative defence programmes within the evolving European security environment.

SUBSEA SECURITY WORLD SUMMIT & EXPO 2026 | SINGAPORE | 23–24 SEP 2026



The Subsea Security World Summit & Expo addresses one of the fastest-emerging security challenges: the protection of undersea infrastructure. The event focuses on subsea cables, offshore energy assets, seabed surveillance, underwater domain awareness, autonomous underwater systems, maritime security, and critical infrastructure resilience. Growing concerns over attacks on undersea communications networks and offshore installations have elevated the strategic importance of this sector. Participants include naval officers, coast guards, maritime security agencies, telecom operators, offshore energy companies, defence contractors, policymakers, and technology providers specialising in underwater monitoring and seabed security.

THE BATTLE FOR SPACE INTERNET

DEEP-TECH

The contest for power is rapidly extending into orbit, where satellite networks are becoming as strategically important as ports, pipelines, and data cables. The nations that control space-based communications will increasingly shape military resilience, digital sovereignty, and geopolitical influence in the decades ahead.

TECH DESK
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The struggle for strategic advantage is increasingly moving beyond land, sea, air, cyberspace, and into orbit. What was once viewed as a commercial race to provide broadband connectivity has rapidly evolved into a contest over critical infrastructure, military communications, digital sovereignty, and geopolitical influence. Satellite mega-constellations, military communications networks, and orbital infrastructure are emerging as foundational elements of twenty-first century power.

The battle for space internet is no longer simply about connecting remote communities. It is about who controls the architecture of future communications, who secures access during conflict, and who shapes the rules governing an increasingly crowded orbital environment. As nations seek to reduce vulnerabilities in terrestrial networks and secure resilient communication systems, the competition for orbital dominance is becoming a defining feature of contemporary geopolitics.

THE RISE OF ORBITAL CONNECTIVITY

For decades, satellite communications remained limited to specialised government, military, and commercial applications. High costs, limited bandwidth, and technological constraints prevented widespread adoption. The emergence of Low Earth Orbit (LEO) satellite constellations has fundamentally altered this equation.

Unlike traditional geostationary satellites positioned nearly 36,000 kilometres above Earth, LEO satellites operate at much lower altitudes, reducing latency and enabling faster communications. Thousands of interconnected satellites can provide near-global internet coverage, creating resilient communication networks that are difficult to disrupt through conventional means.

The most visible example is Starlink, operated by SpaceX, which has demonstrated how large-scale constellations can deliver broadband services across continents, conflict zones, and remote regions. Similar initiatives are being pursued by Amazon's Project Kuiper, China's Guowang constellation, Europe's IRIS² programme, and several national projects.

These systems are creating a new layer of strategic infrastructure in space. Much like undersea cables became indispensable to global communications, orbital internet networks are

Orbital networks are becoming the new strategic infrastructure, shaping communications, resilience, and power across global systems.

increasingly becoming a critical asset underpinning economic activity, military operations, and state capacity.

INTERNET AS STRATEGIC POWER

The significance of space-based internet extends far beyond connectivity. Communication networks determine how information flows, how militaries coordinate operations, and how governments maintain continuity during crises.

The conflict in Ukraine provided a glimpse into this reality. Satellite internet services enabled resilient communications even when terrestrial infrastructure faced disruption. The ability of space-based networks to sustain command-and-control functions highlighted their growing strategic value.

Future conflicts are likely to witness an even greater reliance on orbital communications. Military units, naval platforms, unmanned systems, and intelligence networks increasingly require secure, uninterrupted connectivity across vast operational theatres. Satellite constellations provide redundancy and survivability that conventional networks cannot easily match.

Consequently, communication infrastructure is becoming a strategic instrument of national power. Countries that control large-scale orbital networks gain influence not only through technology but through the ability to provide or deny access to critical communications services. Space internet is rapidly evolving from a commercial service into a strategic capability that influences military effectiveness, national resilience, and geopolitical leverage.

DIGITAL SOVEREIGNTY

The expansion of privately operated satellite constellations raises important questions about sovereignty. Traditional telecommunications networks operate within clearly defined national jurisdictions. Orbital networks transcend borders.

A country may find that a significant portion of its communications infrastructure depends upon satellites owned by foreign corporations or operated under foreign regulatory frameworks. This introduces concerns regarding data security, service continuity, and strategic dependence.

The issue becomes particularly sensitive during periods of geopolitical tension. Access to communication networks controlled by external actors may be influenced by commercial decisions, political pressures, or strategic considerations beyond a nation's control.

As a result, digital sovereignty is increasingly extending into space. Governments are seeking greater influence over satellite infrastructure, licensing frameworks, and data governance arrangements. Several countries are exploring sovereign constellations, public-private partnerships, and national regulations aimed at reducing dependency on foreign systems.

The emerging contest is therefore not merely technological but political. The future architecture of global connectivity will influence who controls information flows and how nations safeguard strategic autonomy in an interconnected world.



ORBITAL MILITARISATION

As orbital networks become strategically valuable, they are also becoming potential military targets. Communication satellites, ground stations, navigation systems, and orbital relay networks now constitute critical components of military capability. Any conflict involving major powers is likely to include efforts to degrade, disrupt, or manipulate space-based infrastructure.

This has accelerated the militarisation of space. Anti-satellite weapons, electronic warfare systems, cyber capabilities, and directed-energy technologies are being developed to target orbital assets. At the same time, militaries are investing in resilient architectures capable of operating even under contested space conditions.

The distinction between civilian and military infrastructure is also becoming increasingly blurred. Commercial constellations may support civilian communications during peacetime while simultaneously providing strategic advantages during conflict. This dual-use character complicates traditional notions of deterrence and escalation. The result is a new strategic environment where control of orbital communications networks becomes intertwined with national security and military planning.

The line between civilian and military space infrastructure is rapidly disappearing, complicating deterrence and escalation.

GREAT-POWER COMPETITION

The battle for space internet is increasingly shaped by strategic competition between the United States and China. The United States currently enjoys significant advantages through private-sector innovation, launch

capabilities, and operational constellations. Companies such as SpaceX have transformed access to space and established an extensive orbital presence.

China, however, is pursuing an ambitious response. Its planned Guowang constellation seeks to deploy thousands of satellites and establish a competing communications architecture. Beijing views space infrastructure as a critical component of technological self-reliance, digital influence, and military modernisation.

The competition extends beyond technology. It involves standards, regulations, spectrum allocation, launch capacity, manufacturing ecosystems, and geopolitical influence. Developing nations may increasingly face choices regarding which orbital ecosystem they integrate with, much as they have faced competing offers in telecommunications and digital infrastructure. The future of space internet may therefore resemble a broader technological bifurcation, with rival communication architectures reflecting competing geopolitical visions.

INDIA'S STRATEGIC IMPERATIVE

For India, the rise of space internet presents both opportunities and challenges. India possesses one of the world's most sophisticated space programmes and has demonstrated capabilities across satellite development, launch services, navigation systems, and planetary exploration. Yet the emergence of mega-constellations requires a significant recalibration of strategy.

The country's digital economy, military communications, and critical infrastructure will increasingly depend upon secure and resilient connectivity. Reliance solely on foreign orbital systems could create strategic vulnerabilities. Recognising these realities, India has begun liberalising its space sector and encouraging private participation. Domestic firms are exploring satellite broadband services, while regulatory frameworks are evolving to accommodate next-generation communications infrastructure.

The challenge extends beyond commercial deployment. India must consider how orbital communications integrate with defence planning, maritime security, disaster response, border management, and national cybersecurity.

The country's geographic position in the Indian Ocean region further amplifies the strategic importance of space-based connectivity. Reliable communications across maritime domains, remote territories, and frontier regions are becoming increasingly essential. India's long-term objective should not simply be access to satellite internet but meaningful participation in shaping the future architecture of orbital communications.

Space internet is no longer a technology issue; it is rapidly becoming a question of strategic autonomy.

THE NEXT FRONTIER OF POWER

The battle for space internet is fundamentally a contest over the infrastructure of the future. Communications networks increasingly determine economic competitiveness, military effectiveness, technological innovation, and geopolitical influence.

Satellite mega-constellations are creating a new layer of global infrastructure that transcends national boundaries while simultaneously raising profound questions about sovereignty, security, and governance. As orbital communications become central to both civilian and military operations, control over these systems will carry growing strategic significance.

For India, the challenge is clear. The country must balance openness to innovation with the pursuit of strategic autonomy. This requires investment in indigenous capabilities, regulatory foresight, public-private partnerships, and integration of space infrastructure into broader national security planning.

The next great contest may not be fought over territory on Earth but over the communications architecture that surrounds it. In this emerging era, orbital connectivity is becoming a decisive instrument of national power, and the nations that shape it will influence the future balance of global influence.

QUICK INSIGHTS

- *Space internet is emerging as a critical infrastructure for national power.*
- *LEO constellations are transforming global communications and strategic competition.*
- *Orbital networks increasingly support military operations and national resilience.*
- *US-China rivalry is shaping the future architecture of space connectivity.*
- *India must build sovereign capabilities to secure strategic autonomy.*

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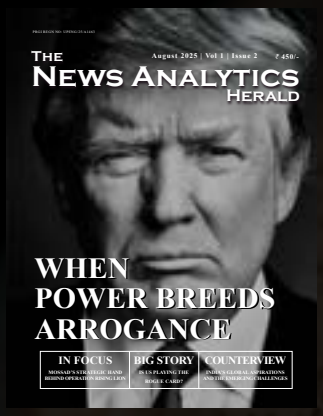
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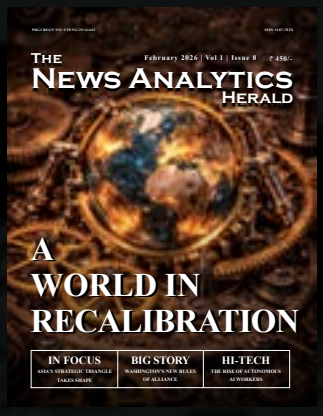




















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