



**Delhi Policy Group**  
Advancing India's Rise as a Leading Power

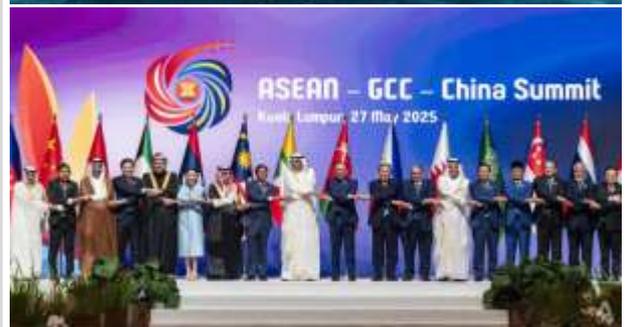


# INDO-PACIFIC MONITOR

## MAY 2025

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Volume VI, Issue 5





# Delhi Policy Group

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#### ABOUT US

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#### INDO-PACIFIC MONITOR

This publication is a monthly analytical survey of developments and policy trends that impact India's interests and define its challenges across the extended Indo-Pacific maritime space, which has become the primary theatre of global geopolitical contestation. It is authored by Cmde. Lalit Kapur (Retd.), DPG Senior Fellow for Maritime Strategy, assisted by Ms. Divya Rai, based on open source reports and publications. Your comments and feedback may be addressed to the author at [lalit@dpg.org.in](mailto:lalit@dpg.org.in). To subscribe, please [click here](#).

#### Cover Images:

*US President Donald Trump and Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman exchange copies of the Strategic Economic Partnership Agreement at Riyadh on May 13, 2025. Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs Saudi Arabia*

*HMS Prince of Wales and HMS Astute during Operation Highmast – UK Carrier Strike Group deployment to the Indo-Pacific, May 2025. Source: Royal Navy*

*Leaders of ASEAN and the GCC pose with China's Premier Li Qiang at the ASEAN-GCC-China Summit in Kuala Lumpur on May 27, 2025. Source: ASEAN*

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INDO-PACIFIC MONITOR  
Volume VI, Issue 5  
May 2025

Contents

Abstract .....	1
Operation Sindoor .....	3
Xi Jinping Visits Russia .....	6
President Trump Visits the Gulf .....	8
Mauritius Sovereignty Over Diego Garcia .....	10
The 46th ASEAN Summit .....	13
Other Indo-Pacific Developments .....	16



## INDO-PACIFIC MONITOR

May 2025

### Abstract

General elections in Australia and Singapore on May 03 resulted in incumbent Prime Ministers Anthony Albanese (Australia) and Lawrence Wong (Singapore) returning to power with improved majorities in parliament.

Operation Sindoor conducted by India from May 07-10 saw India's military response to Pakistan-based and sponsored terrorist groups crossing previous thresholds in geographic reach, platforms employed and their impact. Prime Minister Narendra Modi enunciated a new doctrine for dealing with terror attacks on May 12.

China's President Xi Jinping visited Russia 07-10 May to attend the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations of victory over Germany in World War II, and the two powers concluded a Joint Statement on further deepening of the Russia-China Comprehensive Strategic Partnership.

US President Trump visited Saudi Arabia, Qatar and the UAE from May 13-16, the first official international visits of his second term. The four-day tour resulted in announcements of business deals and commitments worth over \$ 3.2 trillion. The US-UAE major defence partnership was established on May 16.

Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese made Indonesia the first international destination of his second term, visiting the country for the Australia-Indonesia Annual Leaders' Meeting May 15.

Mauritius and the UK signed an agreement on May 22 regarding the return of sovereignty over the Chagos Archipelago to Mauritius, including Diego Garcia. The agreement was hailed by the US, India and Japan, among others. It will enter into force following ratification by parliaments of both countries.

The 24<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Council of Ministers of the Indian Ocean Rim Association was held virtually on May 21 and an IORA Colombo Communique was released. The ministers welcomed Ambassador Sanjiv Ranjan as the new Secretary-General of IORA.

The 2025 edition of the annual IISS Shangri La Dialogue got underway at Singapore on May 30. The keynote address was delivered by France's President Emmanuel Macron. US Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth delivered an address



on the United States' New Ambitions for Indo-Pacific Security on May 31, warning of the China threat, asserting the US commitment to the Indo-Pacific and appealing to the regional community to boost defence capability in the face of serious security challenges.

Two Chinese frigates and a Coast Guard cutter harassed Philippine Navy Ship BRP Emilio Jacinto near the Scarborough Shoal on May 08, further exacerbating tensions in the region. This was a rare occasion when the Philippines used a naval warship for operations in the area. China claimed to have expelled it from the area.

INS Sunayna (IOS Sagar) completed her voyage to the Southwest Indian Ocean with 44 trainees from Indian Ocean nations embarked and returned to Kochi May 08.

INSV Tarini completed circumnavigation of the world by two lady officers of the Indian Navy as part of Navika Sagar Parikrama II. The ship and its crew returned to Goa on May 29.



## Operation Sindoor

by Divya Rai

On April 22, terrorists backed by Pakistan killed 26 Hindu tourists in Pahalgam, Jammu and Kashmir after separating them on the basis of their religion. The Resistance Front (TRF), an offshoot of Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), claimed responsibility for this calculated attempt to incite communal violence and destabilise India. India responded with a series of non-kinetic measures. With Pakistan refusing to act against terror groups, India launched Operation SINDOOR as a punitive response to the Pahalgam massacre on May 07, targeting nine terror camps across the Line of Control and deep inside Pakistan belonging to the Lashkar-e-Taiba, Jaish-e-Mohammed, and Hizbul Mujahideen<sup>1</sup>.

Pakistan responded to India's strikes on terrorist infrastructure with military escalation. On the night of May 7-8, Pakistan launched a wave of drone and UCAV attacks against multiple military targets in northern and western India—including Awantipura, Srinagar, Jammu, Pathankot, Amritsar, Kapurthala, Jalandhar, Ludhiana, Adampur, Bhatinda, Chandigarh, Nal, Phalodi, Uttarlai, and Bhuj<sup>2</sup>. The Pakistani strikes, involving hundreds of drones and missiles, were effectively neutralised by India's Integrated Counter-UAS Grid and air defence systems.

India then expanded its operations and responded with "equal intensity in the same domain" on Pakistani air defence systems at several locations. A notable achievement was India's ability to bypass and jam Pakistan's Chinese-supplied air defence systems in Lahore within just 23 minutes, underscoring advanced Indian operational capabilities. Violence peaked on May 9 and 10, with Pakistan launching its own counter-offensive, Operation Bunyan Marsoos, which was largely thwarted. India executed effective strikes against key Pakistan Air Force bases, including PAF Base Nur Khan, Sargodha base and several radar sites and air defence units.

Pakistan's Director General of Military Operations (DGMO) initiated contact with his Indian counterpart on May 10, resulting in an agreement to halt all firing and military action on land, in the air, and at sea, effective from 1700 hours IST that

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<sup>1</sup> PIB. "Operation Sindoor: Indian Armed Forces Carried Out Precision Strike at Terrorist Camps", May 7, 2025. <https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2127370>.

<sup>2</sup> PIB. "Pakistan's Bid to Escalate Negated - Proportionate Response by India", May 08, 2025. <https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2127670>.



day<sup>3</sup>. Even after the May 10 agreement, Pakistan deployed swarm drones to drop weapons and narcotics in Jammu, Punjab, and Rajasthan<sup>4</sup>. The ceasefire, however, held.

Before the announcement of the “stoppage of firing”, US President Donald Trump claimed that the United States had brokered the truce between India and Pakistan. India firmly rejected this assertion, reiterating that no third party was involved in mediation. The US statement undermined years of carefully constructed de-hyphenated diplomacy and fuelled scepticism in India regarding the reliability of its trade and defence relationship with Washington.

Alongside the military confrontation, shaping the strategic narrative outside the battlefield was equally important. An intense information war raged online where Pakistan launched an aggressive campaign to spread misinformation about the scale, scope and impact of Indian strikes. It is no surprise the narrative was largely shaped and amplified by Western media, which allowed Pakistan to dominate the information battle. However, this misleading narrative conceals a more important truth: the core issue of cross-border terrorism. It is in the interest of many countries to back Pakistan to keep the conflict with India simmering. Additionally, they continue to support Pakistan by providing substantial financial aid. For instance, notwithstanding India’s protests, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) approved a \$1 billion bailout for Pakistan during an active military escalation<sup>5</sup>.

Operation SINDOOR unfolded across land, air, and sea—a seamless demonstration of synergy between the Indian Army, Air Force, and Navy. The Indian Air Force (IAF) played a crucial role in striking targets under defended conditions and following attacks, demonstrating its capacity for coercive precision operations. It conducted high-impact air operations on targets such as the Nur Khan Air Base and the Rahimyar Khan Air Base, with visual evidence of damage presented during official briefings. The Indian Navy asserted maritime dominance in the Arabian Sea, deploying its advanced anti-missile and anti-aircraft defence capabilities as a part of a joint operational plan

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<sup>3</sup> Ministry of External Affairs – India. “Statement by Foreign Secretary”, May 10, 2025.

[https://www.mea.gov.in/Speeches-Statements.htm?dtl/39489/Statement\\_by\\_Foreign\\_Secretary\\_May\\_10\\_2025](https://www.mea.gov.in/Speeches-Statements.htm?dtl/39489/Statement_by_Foreign_Secretary_May_10_2025)

<sup>4</sup> Ministry of External Affairs – India. “Statement by Foreign Secretary”, May 10, 2025.

[https://www.mea.gov.in/Speeches-Statements.htm?dtl/39492/Statement\\_by\\_Foreign\\_Secretary\\_May\\_10\\_2025](https://www.mea.gov.in/Speeches-Statements.htm?dtl/39492/Statement_by_Foreign_Secretary_May_10_2025)

<sup>5</sup> IMF. “IMF Executive Board Completes First Review of the Extended Fund Facility Arrangement with Pakistan and Approves the Request for an Arrangement Under the Resilience and Sustainability Facility,” May 9, 2025.

<https://www.imf.org/en/News/Articles/2025/05/09/pr-25137-pakistan-imf-completes-1st-rev-of-eff-arrang-and-approves-req-for-arrang-under-rsf>



coordinated with the Indian Army and Air Force. Central to this operation was the deployment of the Carrier Battle Group (CBG), supported by MiG-29K fighters and Airborne Early Warning helicopters, which formed the first layer of the Navy's layered Fleet Air Defence system. This robust forward-deployed posture effectively denied Pakistan any opportunity to threaten India's maritime interests. The Navy's deployment in the Arabian Sea compelled the Pakistan Navy to remain confined to its harbours or operate only close to its coastline.

Addressing the nation on May 12, Prime Minister Narendra Modi highlighted India's ability to apply military power with restraint and precision. He set out a new doctrine on India's response to terror attacks. First, if there was a terror attack on India, there would be a befitting response directed at every place from where the roots of terrorism emerge. Second, India will not tolerate nuclear blackmail and will strike terrorist hideouts developing under the cover of nuclear blackmail. Third, India will not differentiate between the government sponsoring terrorism and the masterminds of terrorism, both would be held accountable. The Prime Minister unequivocally stated that discussions on trade, water, and terrorism cannot proceed simultaneously.<sup>6</sup>

For the first time, Indian forces targeted and destroyed terrorist infrastructure inside Pakistan without crossing the Line of Control and with resounding success. This operation showcased coordinated military response between all three forces to the evolving threat of asymmetric warfare, highlighting the effectiveness of joint operations. Operation SINDOOR served as a reminder – if terror is state policy, it will be met with a visible and forceful response from India. But the challenge ahead lies in sustaining this strategic clarity amidst evolving regional and global dynamics.

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<sup>6</sup> PIB. "English Rendering of PM's Address to the Nation", May 12, 2024.  
<https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2128268>.



## Xi Jinping Visits Russia

China's President Xi Jinping paid an official visit to Moscow from May 07-10 to attend celebrations of the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the victory over Germany in World War II. It was his third interaction with President Putin during the current year, and 11<sup>th</sup> visit to Moscow since becoming China's President in 2013. Bilateral talks at the Kremlin on May 08 saw the two leaders agreeing to "deepen strategic cooperation, promote the steady, sound and high-quality growth of China-Russia relations, jointly uphold the correct historical perspective on WWII, safeguard the authority and standing of the United Nations, and defend international fairness and justice"<sup>7</sup>.

The two Presidents jointly signed the Joint Statement Between the People's Republic of China and the Russian Federation on further deepening the China-Russia Comprehensive Strategic Partnership of Coordination for the New Era<sup>8</sup>. They witnessed the exchange of more than 20 bilateral documents, spanning issues of global strategic stability to the digital economy and film cooperation, injecting new momentum to the development of bilateral relations. These included a joint declaration on further strengthening cooperation to uphold the authority of international law<sup>9</sup>, and a joint statement on Global Strategic Stability<sup>10</sup>.

The leaders said that China and Russia will enhance coordination and cooperation to respond to the "double containment" policy pursued by the US. They opposed the attempt by the US and allies to advance NATO eastward into the Asia-Pacific, enticing regional countries to implement their "Indo-Pacific Strategy" and thereby undermining regional peace, stability and prosperity. They opposed the establishment of a nuclear-sharing military alliance against China and Russia through deploying nuclear weapon systems in the region under the pretext of "extended deterrence" and the deployment of global anti-missile systems and land-based medium-range missile systems that undermine strategic stability. The leaders expressed support for the UN to play

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<sup>7</sup> President Xi Jinping Holds Talks with Russian President Vladimir Putin, May 08, 2025, [https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa\\_eng/zy/jj/xjpdelsjxgswcxjnslnwgzzslqd/202505/t20250509\\_11617679.html](https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/zy/jj/xjpdelsjxgswcxjnslnwgzzslqd/202505/t20250509_11617679.html)

<sup>8</sup> Xi, Putin sign joint statement on further deepening China-Russia comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination for a new era, May 08, 2025, [https://english.www.gov.cn/news/202505/08/content\\_WS681cbf2cc6d0868f4e8f25b3.html](https://english.www.gov.cn/news/202505/08/content_WS681cbf2cc6d0868f4e8f25b3.html)

<sup>9</sup> Joint Declaration of the People's Republic of China and the Russian Federation on Further Strengthening Cooperation to Uphold the Authority of International Law, May 09, 2025, [https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa\\_eng/zy/jj/xjpdelsjxgswcxjnslnwgzzslqd/202505/t20250509\\_11617838.html](https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/zy/jj/xjpdelsjxgswcxjnslnwgzzslqd/202505/t20250509_11617838.html)

<sup>10</sup> Joint Statement by the People's Republic of China and the Russian Federation on Global Strategic Stability, May 09, 2025, <http://en.kremlin.ru/supplement/6310>



a central role in the governance of artificial intelligence (AI) and emphasised the importance of respecting national sovereignty and adhering to the laws of each country as well as the UN charter in the process.

China-Russia relations have grown substantially in the last decade. China is Russia's leading trade partner<sup>11</sup>: bilateral trade in 2024 amounted to a record \$ 245 billion. Investment cooperation is growing and about 90 top priority Russian-Chinese projects worth about \$ 200 billion are being implemented. An intergovernmental agreement on promotion and mutual protection of investment signed on May 08 will contribute to the growth of mutual investment. Nearly all Russian-Chinese trade transactions are now carried out in Rubles and Yuan, shielding the trade system from the influence of third countries and adverse fluctuations in global markets. The Power of Siberia gas pipeline has reached its full design capacity, with 31 billion cubic metres of gas delivered to China. The Far Eastern Gas Pipeline to be launched in 2027 will increase Russian gas exports by another 10 billion cubic metres. Rosatom is building Russian-designed power units at the Tianwan and Xudapu Nuclear Power Projects. The Nika accelerator complex, built with China's assistance, was launched in Dubna, Moscow Region, in March, allowing for unique physics experiments that help study the nature and properties of elementary particles.

Chinese car producers, manufacturers of industrial equipment, microelectronics and household appliances are expanding their presence in the Russian market. Large-scale joint projects are being implemented in non-ferrous metallurgy, chemical and cellulose industries, biotechnology, pharmaceuticals, space development and other knowledge-intensive areas. Russia is actively upgrading the Trans-Siberian and Baikal-Amur railway routes, along with supporting infrastructure. Progress has been made on the development and commercial operation of the Northern Sea Route. Consequently, passenger and freight flows between Russia and China are growing. In 2024, 1.6 million Russian citizens visited China, and about 1.2 million Chinese nationals visited the Russian Federation.

Cooperation is also growing in international organisations, including the BRICS and the SCO, where China is now presiding. Russia supports the priorities of China's SCO chairmanship and looks forward to taking part in the SCO Summit in Tianjin in September 2025.

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<sup>11</sup> Media Statements by Vladimir Putin and Xi Jinping, May 8, 2025, <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/76873>



In sum, cooperation between Russia and China is on a steady growth path. The partnership is on track to becoming a defining factor in 21<sup>st</sup> century geopolitics and will impact the Indo-Pacific and the world in the years ahead. The leaders of both countries personally control all aspects of the bilateral partnership and do all they can to expand cooperation, both on bilateral issues and on the international agenda. It is not going to be easy to drive a wedge between the two countries, notwithstanding active US action to do so.

## President Trump Visits the Gulf

Eight years after becoming the first President in US history to make Saudi Arabia the destination of his first international visit, US President Donald Trump repeated the choice, making Saudi Arabia the destination of the first official visit abroad in his second term (this excludes his trip to the Vatican, to attend the funeral of Pope Francis). The visit from May 13-16 encompassed Saudi Arabia, Qatar and the UAE. Unlike in 2017, Israel was not included as part of the tour. Trump was accompanied by a Republican delegation and several business chief executives. The four-day tour resulted in business deals and commitments amounting to over \$ 3.2 trillion.

In May 2017, the Trump visit followed the Obama administration's concluding the 2015 nuclear deal with Iran and differences with Saudi Arabia about the civilian toll of the war in Yemen. He was received at King Khalid International Airport by King Salman. The visit resulted in the US committing to sell Saudi Arabia arms worth \$ 350 billion over the next decade and immediate sales worth \$ 110 billion, the single largest deal in US history<sup>12</sup>. It also included a US-GCC Summit, as well as an Arab Islamic American Summit.

In May 2025, the Trump visit came after former President Biden's differences on human rights with Saudi Arabia's de facto leader Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, resulting in Biden describing Saudi Arabia as a pariah after the murder and dismemberment of Jamal Khashoggi. Trump was received at the airport by the Crown Prince. He secured a \$ 600 billion commitment by Saudi Arabia to invest in the US<sup>13</sup>. The US and Saudi Arabia signed the largest defence sales agreement in history, amounting to nearly \$ 142 billion and covering air force advancement and space capabilities, air and missile defence, maritime

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<sup>12</sup> Trump signs largest arms deal in American history with Saudi Arabia, May 21, 2017, <https://theweek.com/speedreads/700428/trump-signs-largest-arms-deal-american-history-saudi-arabia>

<sup>13</sup> Fact Sheet: President Trump Secures Historic \$ 600 Billion Investment Commitment in Saudi Arabia, May 13, 2025, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/fact-sheets/2025/05/fact-sheet-president-donald-j-trump-secures-historic-600-billion-investment-commitment-in-saudi-arabia/>



and coastal security, border security and land forces modernisation, and upgrades of information and communication systems. The visit included a meeting of the Saudi-US Investment Forum, where Trump encouraged Saudi Arabia to join the Abraham Accords, said he would lift sanctions on Syria and asked Iran to negotiate over its nuclear programme. Trump also met Ahmed al-Sharaa, Syria's President along with Prine Mohammed bin Salman and Turkey's Recep Tayyip Erdogan. He also participated in a GCC Summit, attended by the leaders of Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Kuwait and Bahrain; the UAE and Oman sent representatives.

From Riyadh, Trump flew to Qatar on May 14-15, where he met with Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani. The visit resulted in agreements to generate an economic exchange worth at least \$ 1.2 trillion<sup>14</sup>. These included an order for up to 210 Boeing 787 Dreamliner and 777X aircraft powered by GE Aerospace engines, valued at \$ 96 billion, Boeing's largest-ever widebody and largest-ever 787 order. The US announced over \$ 243 billion worth of deals in Qatar, including an agreement with Raytheon for Qatar's acquisition of counter-drone capabilities, an agreement with General Atomics for Qatar's acquisition of MQ-9B remotely piloted aircraft systems, and a statement of intent to strengthen the security partnership outlining over \$ 38 billion in potential investments including support for burden-sharing at Al Udeid Air Base and future defence capabilities related to air defence and maritime security.

Trump's final visit during his Gulf tour was to the UAE on May 15, where he became the second serving US president to visit the country (the first was George W Bush, in January 2008). The visit resulted in a commitment by the UAE to invest \$1.4 trillion into the US's AI and energy sectors over the next decade and an order from Etihad to buy 28 Boeing aircraft valued at \$ 14.5 billion<sup>15</sup>.

The Trump visit to the three richest states in the Gulf highlights shifting US priorities in the region following the change in US administration, bringing together economic interest, a strategic reset and personal business. Notably, the Biden visit to Saudi Arabia in July 2022 ended with little to show. The investment commitment of \$3.2 trillion, including a substantial defence

<sup>14</sup> Fact Sheet: President Donald J Trump Secures Historic \$ 1.2 Trillion Economic Commitment in Qatar, May 14, 2025, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/fact-sheets/2025/05/fact-sheet-president-donald-j-trump-secures-historic-1-2-trillion-economic-commitment-in-qatar/>

<sup>15</sup> Fact Sheet: President Donald J Trump Secures \$ 200 Billion in New US-UAE Deals and Accelerates Previously Committed \$ 1.4 Trillion UAE Investment, May 15, 2025, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/fact-sheets/2025/05/fact-sheet-president-donald-j-trump-secures-200-billion-in-new-u-s-uae-deals-and-accelerates-previously-committed-1-4-trillion-uae-investment/>



component, will help bring manufacturing and jobs back to the US. The strategic component upended the Biden belief that it is the US job to sit in judgment over foreign leaders and dispense justice for their sins and brought pragmatism in foreign policy to the fore. The Trump visit was about enhancing US influence in the region, including as a counter to China and Xi Jinping's visit to Saudi Arabia in December 2022. At the personal level, the Trump organisation is involved in promoting real estate projects in Dubai, a golf resort in Qatar and partnerships with state-backed investors in Abu Dhabi. Critics bring up questions of conflict of interest, as political decisions may impact on personal business interests and blur the line between national interest and personal gain. Trump's acceptance of a Boeing 747-8 jet as a present from Qatar has also led to criticism over potential legal, ethical and national security concerns.

The continued normalisation of Saudi-US relations and infrastructure projects gained by Trump in the region will have spinoffs for India, opening up job vacancies for expatriate labour and junior management. It will also help in strengthening frameworks like the I2U2 and the IMEC, although the latter will have to wait for further improvement in Saudi-Israeli relations. The visit also counters China's growing influence in the region. It remains to be seen whether the goodwill generated will continue beyond the current US administration.

## Mauritius Sovereignty Over Diego Garcia

On October 03, 2024, Mauritius and the UK announced that they had reached an agreement on the exercise of sovereignty over the Chagos Archipelago including Diego Garcia<sup>16</sup>. The agreement was subject to the finalisation of a treaty and supporting legal instruments. On May 22, the UK presented to its parliament the text of the agreement with Mauritius regarding the return of sovereignty over the Chagos Archipelago, including Diego Garcia. The agreement will come into force once it is ratified by the parliaments of UK and Mauritius. In parallel, the UK and Mauritius established a strategic partnership framework to cement and boost their relations for mutual benefit<sup>17</sup>.

The Chagos Archipelago is a group of seven atolls comprising around 60 islands about 500 Km South of the Maldives and 1770 Km East of India's

<sup>16</sup> UK and Mauritius Joint Statement, 3 October 2024, <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/joint-statement-between-uk-and-mauritius-3-october-2024>

<sup>17</sup> Joint Communique: UK-Mauritius Strategic Partnership Framework, May 22, 2025, <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/joint-communique-uk-mauritius-strategic-partnership-framework>



foothold at Agalega. The archipelago was claimed by France in 1715 and became a dependency of the French administration in Mauritius. Mauritius and the Chagos Archipelago were ceded to Britain in 1814, after Napoleon's defeat. In 1965, Britain separated the Chagos Islands from Mauritius to form the British Indian Ocean Territory (BIOT), purchasing the islands. Mauritius would subsequently argue that it was forced to sell in order to get independence from Great Britain. Be that as it may, Diego Garcia was then leased to the US for construction of its sole Indian Ocean base, with the islands being forcibly depopulated between 1965 and 1973. Mauritius has since been seeking their return through legal battles in British courts, an advisory opinion from the International Court of Justice and a vote in the UN General Assembly, all of which have gone in its favour.

Diego Garcia's strategic location allows it to support a wide array of operation activity across the Middle East and the Indian Ocean, helping to combat the challenges of terrorism and hostile states. It has an airfield with the capability of supporting a wide range of strike aircraft; a deep-water port that can berth a Carrier Strike Group as well as nuclear submarines, seismic monitoring equipment and one of the four ground antennas for the Global Positioning System (GPS).

The agreement presented to parliament states that Mauritius is sovereign over the Chagos Archipelago in its entirety, including Diego Garcia<sup>18</sup>. As sovereign, Mauritius authorises the UK to exercise all its rights and authorities with respect to Diego Garcia as required for the long-term, secure and effective operation of the Base, including full responsibility for defence and security of Diego Garcia as well as jurisdiction and control arrangements. The UK is required by the agreement to give preference to suitably qualified Mauritian nationals and companies as contractors on the Base. Mauritius shall, however, exercise criminal and civil jurisdiction over its nationals and other persons and activities in Diego Garcia as specified in the agreement. The UK may authorise the US to operate the base jointly with the UK. Mauritius is free to implement a programme of resettlement on the islands of the Chagos Archipelago other than Diego Garcia.

In consideration of the agreement, the UK has agreed to pay Mauritius a sum of GBP 165 million annually for the first three years, and an annual payment of GBP 120 million annually from the fourth to the 13<sup>th</sup> years. Payment for the 14<sup>th</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Agreement between the government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Government of the Republic of Mauritius concerning the Chagos Archipelago including Diego Garcia, May 22, 2025, [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/682f25afc054883884bff42a/CS\\_Mauritius\\_1\\_2025\\_Agreement\\_Chagos\\_Diego\\_Garcia.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/682f25afc054883884bff42a/CS_Mauritius_1_2025_Agreement_Chagos_Diego_Garcia.pdf)



year onwards will be by GBP 120 million indexed for inflation using the GDP deflator published by the UK for the preceding year<sup>19</sup>. The UK will also capitalise a trust fund for the benefit of Chagossians, paying an amount of GBP 40 million for the fund, one year after the agreement enters into force. Further, the UK shall grant Mauritius a sum of GBP 45 million annually for a period of 25 years as part of a development framework for projects to be undertaken by Mauritius. These amounts constitute the full and final settlement of all claims by Mauritius in relation to the Chagos Archipelago.

The agreement is to have a duration of 99 years from the date of its entry into force. It may be extended for a further period of 40 years in the first instance, and subsequent periods as both sides agree to. In the event Mauritius decides to terminate the agreement (this is permissible in case of a failure by the UK to make the payments required, or an armed attack on the territory of Mauritius by the UK or from Diego Garcia), Mauritius agrees to grant the UK the right of first refusal in respect of the use of Diego Garcia on the same terms as may be offered to a third state or third party.

The agreement sets out a 24-mile buffer around Diego Garcia, where nothing can be built without UK consent. Foreign military and civilian forces will also be barred from other islands in the archipelago, with the UK retaining the power to veto any access to the Chagos islands.

The UK-Mauritius Strategic Partnership Framework promises to boost bilateral economic and trade cooperation, enhance Mauritius's status as a regional financial hub and instil further confidence in Mauritius as an investment destination. It also commits to deepening cooperation to fight irregular migration, drugs trafficking, piracy and IUU fishing, including through capacity building to secure Mauritius's EEZ, building patrolling capability across the Chagos Archipelago to support a secure maritime domain, provision of training and institutional partnerships to boost Mauritian maritime security capability and to tackle the challenge of climate change together. Ministers will meet in an Annual Strategic Dialogue to review and keep evolving the strategic framework as necessary to support mutual security and prosperity.

The agreement effectively finds a way to safeguard the interests of both parties. On the one hand, it finally acknowledges the sovereignty of Mauritius over the archipelago, the battle for which has been going on for nearly 15 years. It enables the UK to claim compliance with the opinion of the International Court of Justice in 2018, which said the original inhabitants of the islands had

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<sup>19</sup> Letter No. 1 regarding implementation and interpretation of Article 11 of the Agreement between the UK and Mauritius appended to the Agreement, Ibid.



wrongly been forced to leave and they should be returned to Mauritius. It also enables the UK to claim partial compliance with a UN General Assembly resolution of 2019, which also asked the UK to give up the islands to Mauritius. On the other, it safeguards the continued operation of the Diego Garcia logistics support facility by the US, its only base in the Indian Ocean, well into the next century, fulfilling a major security interest. The agreement has been backed by all Five Eyes partners – the US<sup>20</sup>, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, as well as India<sup>21</sup>.

## The 46th ASEAN Summit

The 46<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Summit took place at Kuala Lumpur on May 26, along with the 2<sup>nd</sup> ASEAN-GCC Summit and the first ASEAN-GCC-China Summit. The summits were chaired by Dato' Seri Anwar Ibrahim, the Prime Minister of Malaysia. A host of documents were released on the occasion, including a Chairman's Statement on the 46<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Summit<sup>22</sup>, the ASEAN Political-Security Community Strategic Plan<sup>23</sup>, the ASEAN Leaders' Statement on an Extended and Expanded Ceasefire in Myanmar<sup>24</sup>, a Leaders' Statement on Responding to Global Economic and Trade Uncertainties<sup>25</sup>, the ASEAN Community Vision 2045<sup>26</sup>, and the Kuala Lumpur Declaration on ASEAN 2045<sup>27</sup>.

<sup>20</sup> US Support for UK and Mauritius Agreement on Chagos Archipelago, May 22, 2025, <https://www.state.gov/u-s-support-for-uk-and-mauritius-agreement-on-chagos-archipelago/>

<sup>21</sup> Statement on Chagos Treaty signed between the United Kingdom and Mauritius regarding return of Mauritian sovereignty over Chagos Archipelago, May 22, 2025, [https://www.mea.gov.in/Speeches-Statements.htm?dtl/39518/Statement\\_on\\_Chagos\\_Treaty\\_signed\\_between\\_the\\_United\\_Kingdom\\_and\\_Mauritius\\_regarding\\_return\\_of\\_Mauritian\\_sovereignty\\_over\\_Chagos\\_Archipelago](https://www.mea.gov.in/Speeches-Statements.htm?dtl/39518/Statement_on_Chagos_Treaty_signed_between_the_United_Kingdom_and_Mauritius_regarding_return_of_Mauritian_sovereignty_over_Chagos_Archipelago)

<sup>22</sup> Chairman's Statement of the 46<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Summit Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 26 May 2025, <https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/01.-FINAL-Chairmans-Statement-of-the-46th-ASEAN-Summit.pdf>

<sup>23</sup> ASEAN Political-Security Community Strategic Plan, May 26, 2025, [https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/06.-APSC-Strategic-Plan\\_adopted.pdf](https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/06.-APSC-Strategic-Plan_adopted.pdf)

<sup>24</sup> ASEAN Leaders' Statement on an Extended and Expanded Ceasefire in Myanmar, <https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/FINAL-ASEAN-Leaders-Statement-on-an-extended-and-expanded-ceasefire.pdf>

<sup>25</sup> ASEAN Leaders' Statement on Responding to Global Economic and Trade Uncertainties, <https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/Final-ASEAN-Leaders-Statement-on-Responding-to-Global-Economic-and-Trade-Uncertainties-1.pdf>

<sup>26</sup> ASEAN Community Vision 2045: Resilient, Innovative, Dynamic and People-Centred ASEAN, May 26, 2025, [https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/05.-ASEAN-Community-Vision-2045\\_adopted.pdf](https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/05.-ASEAN-Community-Vision-2045_adopted.pdf)

<sup>27</sup> Kuala Lumpur Declaration on ASEAN 2045: Our Shared Future, [https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/04.-Kuala-Lumpur-Declaration-on-ASEAN-2045-Our-Shared-Future\\_adopted.pdf](https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/04.-Kuala-Lumpur-Declaration-on-ASEAN-2045-Our-Shared-Future_adopted.pdf)



The Chairman's Statement of the 46<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Summit takes stock of progress made by ASEAN since the 45<sup>th</sup> ASEAN summit. It recognizes the substantive movement in building the ASEAN Community across the Political-Security, Economic and Socio-Cultural pillars and reaffirms ASEAN's full commitment to implementation of the ASEAN Community Vision 2025. It commends the work of the High-Level Task Force for its development of the ASEAN Community Vision 2045. It identifies key deliverables under the themes "Inclusivity and Sustainability", reaffirms the continued relevance of the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia as the foundational code of conduct governing inter-state relations within the region, and reaffirms the commitment to preserve Southeast Asia as a region free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. On regional and international issues, it reaffirms the importance of maintaining and promoting peace, security, stability, safety and freedom of navigation in and overflight above the South China Sea. It underscores the importance of full and effective implementation of the Declaration on Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC) and welcomes the progress in ongoing negotiations on the Code of conduct in the South China Sea (COC), looking forward to a substantive code that is in accordance with international law, including the 1982 UNCLOS. On Myanmar, it expresses deep concern over the escalation of conflicts and the humanitarian situation and the minimal progress on the implementation of the Five-Point Consensus (5PC). ASEAN leaders upheld the decision limiting Myanmar's participation at ASEAN Summits and the Foreign Ministers' Meetings to the non-political level and reiterated that ASEAN community building and decision-making should not be affected. The statement expresses grave concern over the continued war in the Middle East and the dire humanitarian situation in Gaza, condemning all attacks against civilians and civilian infrastructure. It expresses grave concern over the surge in DPRK's intercontinental ballistic missile testing and ballistic missile launches and the increased tension in the Korean Peninsula, emphasising the importance of full compliance with all relevant UNSC resolution and of abiding by international laws. Finally, it expresses deep concern over the recent announcement by the United States to impose unilateral tariffs and their potential impact on ASEAN economies, while committing to frank and constructive dialogue with the US and to not imposing retaliatory measures in response to US tariffs.

The ASEAN Political-Security Community Strategic Plan sets out nine goals, with objectives and measures to achieve them, as follows:

- Goal 1. A peaceful, stable and secure region based on the fundamental principles enshrined in the ASEAN Charter, the UN Charter and international law.



- Goal 2. A community that sustains and reinforces its centrality through ASEAN-led mechanisms and other relevant platforms, leveraging its strengths in the peaceful conduct of relations among states, as well as in forging new and potential partnerships while ensuring substantive and mutually beneficial relations.
- Goal 3. A community that is able to project ASEAN position on regional and global issues.
- Goal 4. An ASEAN that remains a primary driving force in shaping the regional architecture and contributes towards a rules-based international order amidst geopolitical tensions and rivalries.
- Goal 5. An ASEAN that is a contributor to the maintenance of international peace and security through upholding the rules-based multilateral system and international law.
- Goal 6. A Southeast Asia that is a zone of peace, freedom and neutrality, and free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction.
- Goal 7. An ASEAN with shared commitment to maintaining and promoting peace, security and stability in the region, as well as to the peaceful resolution of disputes, including full respect for legal and diplomatic processes, without resorting to the threat or use of force, in accordance with the universally recognized principles of international law, including the 1982 UNCLOS.
- Goal 8. A community that pursues the implementation of the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP) through concrete projects and activities.
- Goal 9. An inclusive and cohesive community that respects political, social, religious, cultural and ethnic diversities, which upholds the principles of democracy, rule of law and good governance, and respects fundamental freedoms, promotes and protects human rights, and promotes social justice.

ASEAN leaders adopted the ASEAN Community Vision 2045 through the Kuala Lumpur declaration, to succeed the ASEAN 2025 vision. They encouraged stakeholders to support and contribute to the implementation of ASEAN 2045, agreed to enhance ASEAN's institutional capacity and effectiveness and strengthen the ASEAN Secretariat to advance implementation of ASEAN 2045. They tasked the Secretary General of ASEAN to monitor and report on the progress of implementation of the ASEAN 2045 to the ASEAN summit annually, and agreed on a mid-term review for the vision.



Speaking at the opening ceremony of the ASEAN-China-GCC Summit<sup>28</sup>, China's Premier Li Qiang expressed satisfaction at the agreement to strengthen the trilateral partnership and usher in a new chapter of trilateral cooperation. He had three observations. First, that economic globalization was suffering heavy blows never seen before. Opportunities could be created if the three joined hands to meet challenges. The three markets, when connected, would form one of the world's largest intra-regional markets and produce a multiplier effect. Second, cooperation between China, ASEAN and the GCC had a long history and a bright future. The future of trilateral cooperation was as boundless as the oceans. Third, China with its high-quality development would consistently inject new impetus into trilateral cooperation. Noting that cooperation was the only way to overcome common challenges, he said that China stands ready to work with ASEAN and GCC countries to embrace greater openness and cooperation, promote steady economic growth and join hands to synergise economic opportunities towards shared prosperity.

ASEAN unity and centrality have been established as the guiding mantra for activities of Southeast Asian countries. The organisation may not have been effective on the geopolitical front, but has succeeded in establishing a Southeast Asian economic and socio-cultural community and establishing relationships with a wide array of dialogue and sectoral dialogue partners. The initiative to bring together GCC and China with ASEAN promises significant economic potential. It will lead to further expansion of China's influence over ASEAN, to the detriment of the US, but that price seems to be acceptable to ASEAN leaders.

## Other Indo-Pacific Developments

Australian General Elections. General elections in Australia on May 03 resulted in a landslide victory returning Prime Minister Anthony Albanese and his Labor Party to power. The Labor Party won all 77 of the seats it held in the House of Representatives and gained 17 more, adding up to a total of 94 seats in the 150 seat house. It marked the first time a single party won more than 90 seats. The opposition's Liberal National Coalition lost 15 of the 58 seats it held in the last parliament. Its leader Peter Dutton lost his parliamentary seat in his home state of Queensland. Prime Minister Anthony Albanese made very little change to his earlier cabinet<sup>29</sup>. Richard Marles remained the Defence Minister, Penny

<sup>28</sup> Speech by Chinese Premier Li Qiang at the opening ceremony of the ASEAN-China-GCC Economic Forum, May 28, 2025,

[https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa\\_eng/xw/zyxw/202505/t20250528\\_11635042.html](https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/xw/zyxw/202505/t20250528_11635042.html)

<sup>29</sup> Australia Ministerial Arrangements, May 12, 2025,

<https://www.pm.gov.au/media/ministerial-arrangements-12may25>



Wong remained Minister for Foreign Affairs and Dr Jim Chalmers remained the treasurer.

Singapore General Elections. General elections in Singapore on May 03 returned incumbent Prime Minister Lawrence Wong and his People's Action Party (PAP) to power, winning 87 seats (four more than were held previously) of the 97 seats in parliament<sup>30</sup>. The PAP has ruled Singapore since independence in 1965. This was Wong's first election as Prime Minister and the election result is seen as an endorsement of his leadership.

Albanese Visit to Indonesia. Shortly after being elected to his second term as Australia's Prime Minister, Anthony Albanese went to Jakarta for the Australia-Indonesia Annual Leaders' Meeting on May 15<sup>31</sup>. He discussed how Australia and Indonesia can expand and deepen their cooperation in the spirit of a true partnership with President Prabowo Subianto. The two agreed to continue to deepen cooperation in pursuit of mutual prosperity and sustainable and inclusive economic growth in both countries<sup>32</sup>. The acknowledged that on the fifth anniversary of the Indonesia-Australia Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement, it was time to commence a review to ensure the Agreement remained fit for purpose and bolstered economic resilience. They reaffirmed the importance of working together to promote an Indo-Pacific region that is peaceful, stable, prosperous and rules based with ASEAN at its centre, where competition is managed responsibly, sovereignty and territorial integrity are respected and where countries can independently make decisions in their own interest. They welcomed new defence initiatives including the Indonesian Armed Forces use of Australian training ranges and increased military medicine cooperation. They reaffirmed that UNCLOS is the comprehensive legal framework within which all activities in the oceans and seas must be carried out, and underscored that the integrity of UNCLOS must be maintained.

India Japan Defence Minister's Meeting. India's Defence Minister Shri Rajnath Singh and Japan's Defence Minister General Nakatani met in New Delhi on May 05, 2025<sup>33</sup>. General Nakatani expressed his condolences for the Pahalgam terrorist attack and joined the RM in condemning terrorism in all its forms. The

<sup>30</sup> Singapore's ruling party extends monopoly with decisive election win, May 4, 2025, <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/singapore-votes-test-ruling-partys-monopoly-2025-05-03/>

<sup>31</sup> Investing in the Australia-Indonesia Relationship, May 15, 2025, <https://www.pm.gov.au/media/investing-australia-indonesia-relationship>

<sup>32</sup> 2025 Annual Leaders' Meeting Joint Communique, May 15, 2025, <https://www.pm.gov.au/media/2025-annual-leaders-meeting-joint-communique>

<sup>33</sup> Raksha Mantri holds bilateral meeting with his Japanese counterpart in New Delhi, May 05, 2025, <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2127087>



ministers welcomed the growing diversity and frequency of defence exercises and exchanges between the two countries and agreed to enhance the scope and complexity of these engagements. They also agreed to stand up another dialogue for “Japan-India Defence Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific Region”<sup>34</sup>. Both sides agreed to enhance industry cooperation, including in niche areas such as automation and Artificial Intelligence. The two ministers also decided to take forward cooperation in the cyber and space domains.

Shangri La Dialogue 2025. The 2025 edition of the annual IISS Shangri La Dialogue got underway in Singapore on May 30, 2025. Delivering the keynote speech, France’s President Emmanuel Macron urged the international community to unite and face countries seeking to grab territories and resources. Urging leaders at the conference to build a positive new alliance between Europe and Asia, he emphasised the common search for strategic autonomy and the risk of regional countries becoming “collateral damage” in the struggle for power between the US and China. Speaking on United States’ New Ambitions for Indo-Pacific Security during the first plenary on May 31, US Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth spoke extensively on China as a military threat to the region, asserted the US commitment to the Indo-Pacific, urged the Asian community to increase its defence spending to upgrade their own defences, and reiterated how the US was enhancing its forward force posture, helping allies and partners strengthen their defence capability, and rebuilding the defence industrial base.

Quad Simulation Exercise. The Quad partners (India, Australia, Japan and the US) convened at the Asia-Pacific Centre for Security Studies, Honolulu, Hawaii from April 28 – May 02 for a Tabletop Simulation exercise to launch the Quad Indo-Pacific Logistics Network (IPLN)<sup>35</sup>. The IPLN enables the Quad partners to leverage shared logistics capabilities to support civilian response to natural disasters more rapidly and efficiently across the region.

White Paper on China’s National Security in New Era. China issued a white paper titled “China’s National Security in the New Era” on May 12, 2025<sup>36</sup>. The paper posits that China injects certainty and stability into a turbulent world, particularly in the Asia-Pacific. Its overall national security concept provides

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<sup>34</sup> Japan, India to set up defense consultation body for deeper cooperation, May 06, 2025, <https://asia.nikkei.com/Politics/Defense/Japan-India-to-set-up-defense-consultation-body-for-deeper-cooperation>

<sup>35</sup> Quad Concludes Simulation Exercise to Advance Indo-Pacific Logistics Network, May 07, 2025, <https://www.state.gov/releases/office-of-the-spokesperson/2025/05/quad-concludes-simulation-exercise-to-advance-indo-pacific-logistics-network/>

<sup>36</sup> China’s National Security in the New Era, May 12, 2025, [http://www.scio.gov.cn/zfbps/zfbps\\_2279/202505/t20250512\\_894771.html](http://www.scio.gov.cn/zfbps/zfbps_2279/202505/t20250512_894771.html)



guidance for national security in the new era. An important facet is providing long-term support for the steady development of China's modernisation. It seeks to strengthen security in development and pursue development in security. It focuses on implementing China's global security initiatives and promoting international common security. Finally, it advances the modernisation of the national security system and capabilities in the process of deepening reform.

US-UAE Major Defence Partnership. Defence Ministers from the US and UAE signed a Letter of Intent (LOI) to establish a comprehensive Major Defence Partnership on May 16<sup>37</sup>. The LOI represents a shared commitment to develop a structured roadmap that will guide, enhanced military-to-military cooperation, joint capability development, and long-term defence alignment between the two nations. The two sides will explore a phased framework for advancing bilateral force readiness, interoperability, and innovation-driven collaboration. Following the partnership agreement, the US Defense Innovation Unit and UAE's Tawazun Council signed a Memorandum of Understanding to strengthen defence cooperation and enhance mutual capacity for finding solutions to military requirements by developing and accessing cutting-edge technologies through non-traditional processes<sup>38</sup>.

IORA Colombo Communique. The 24<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Council of Ministers of the Indian Ocean Rim Association took place virtually on May 21. The Colombo Communique was issued<sup>39</sup>. The ministers expressed their gratitude to Dr Salman Al Farisi, the former Secretary General of IORA for his leadership and dedication and welcomed Ambassador Sanjiv Ranjan as the new Secretary-General of IORA as of January 01, 2025. They condemned all terrorist attacks, in particular the recent terrorist attack in Pahalgam, India, and expressed their deepest sympathies to the victims and their families. They also welcomed the European Union as the 12<sup>th</sup> Dialogue Partner of IORA.

Indo-Pacific Maritime Domain Awareness (IPMDA). The US State Department approved the Foreign Military Sale to India of IPMDA and related equipment for

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<sup>37</sup> Joint Press Statement on US-UAE Major Defense Partnership, May 16, 2025, <https://www.defense.gov/News/Releases/Release/Article/4189772/joint-press-statement-on-us-uae-major-defense-partnership/>

<sup>38</sup> US Defense Innovation Unit and United Arab Emirates Partnering to Enhance Defense-Tech Ecosystems, May 19, 2025, <https://www.defense.gov/News/Releases/Release/Article/4192007/us-defense-innovation-unit-and-united-arab-emirates-partnering-to-enhance-defen/>

<sup>39</sup> The Colombo Communique, May 21, 2025, <https://mfa.gov.lk/en/24th-council-of-ministers-meeting/>



an estimated cost of \$ 131 million<sup>40</sup>. The equipment comprises SeaVision software (including requested software enhancements), Technical Assistance Field Team Training, remote-software and analytical support, access to SeaVision documentation and other related elements of logistics and program support. The SeaVision platform integrates Automatic Identification System (AIS) and other vessel tracking data to enable secure, real-time maritime monitoring. It also integrates commercial satellite-based radio frequency detection capabilities, enabling the detection and monitoring of vessels operating without transponders.

China Harasses Philippine Navy Ship Near Scarborough Shoal. Two Chinese frigates and a Coast Guard cutter harassed the Philippines Navy Ship BRP Emilio Jacinto near the Scarborough Shoal on May 08<sup>41</sup>. This was one of the rare occasions Manila used a Navy ship for operations in the area. Beijing claimed it had expelled the Philippine warship from the area and urged Manila to immediately stop infringements and provocations, and avoid China's firm resolve to safeguard territorial sovereignty and maritime rights and interests<sup>42</sup>.

IOS Sagar. INS Sunayna (IOS Sagar) completed its deployment to the Southwest Indian Ocean and returned to Kochi on May 08<sup>43</sup>. The ship visited Dar-es-Salaam (Tanzania), Nacala (Mozambique), Port Louis (Mauritius), Port Victoria (Seychelles) and Male (Maldives) during its deployment. The deployment was part of the Indian Navy's commitment as the 'First Responder' and 'Preferred Security Partner' of IOR nations under the GOI's strategic vision of MAHASAGAR (Mutual and Holistic Advancement for Security Across the Region).

Japan Protests China's Unilateral Development of Resources in the China Sea. Japan protested the installation of a new structure on the west side of the geographical equidistance line between Japan and China in the East China Sea<sup>44</sup>. It strongly urged China to resume the implementation of the June 2008 agreement, in which China and Japan agreed to cooperate on the development of natural resources in the East China Sea.

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<sup>40</sup> India – Indo-Pacific Maritime Domain Awareness, April 30, 2025, <https://www.dsca.mil/Congressional-Notification-Archive/Article/4170460/india-indo-pacific-maritime-domain-awareness>

<sup>41</sup> Chinese frigates harass Philippine Navy Warship Near Scarborough Shoal, May 08, 2025, <https://news.usni.org/2025/05/08/115881>

<sup>42</sup> Beijing Urges Manila to Stop Provocations, May 09, 2025, <http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/VOICES/16385061.html>

<sup>43</sup> INS Sunayna (IOS Sagar) Returns to Kochi on Successful Completion of Month-Long Deployment, May 08, 2025, <https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2127730>

<sup>44</sup> New Movement by China Concerning Unilateral Development of Natural Resources in the East China Sea, May 14, 2025, [https://www.mofa.go.jp/press/release/pressite\\_000001\\_01262.html](https://www.mofa.go.jp/press/release/pressite_000001_01262.html)



Operation Highmast. The UK Carrier Strike Group (CSG) deployment to the Indo-Pacific, Operation Highmast, got underway on April 22. The CSG led by the aircraft carrier HMS Prince of Wales with F-35B Lightning fighters embarked and comprising an array of ships and an Astute class submarine passed through the Suez Canal on May 24 and is presently in the Red Sea / Indian Ocean<sup>45</sup>. The deployment to the Indo-Pacific is expected to last for eight months and will include exercises with India, Japan and Australia.

Navika Sagar Parikrama II. INSV Tarini arrived Goa on May 29 on successful completion of its 25,400 nautical mile (About 50,000 Km) eight-month long circumnavigation of the world voyage relying on sails and wind power<sup>46</sup>. The two women mariners stopped only at the ports of Fremantle, Lyttleton, Port Stanley and Cape Town en route. They were received by Shri Rajnath Singh, the Hon'ble Raksha Mantri as well as senior officers from the Indian Navy.

Delivery of First ASW Shallow Water Craft. Arnala, the first of the eight ASW Shallow Water Craft built by GRSE Kolkata was delivered to the Indian Navy on May 08 at M/s L&T Shipyard, Kattupalli<sup>47</sup>. The induction of these ships will boost the coastal ASW capabilities of the Indian Navy.

Induction of INSV Kaundinya. The Indian navy formally inducted and named an ancient stitched ship at INSV Kaundinya at Naval Base Karwar on May 21<sup>48</sup>. The ship is a joint project between the Indian Navy, the Ministry of Culture and M/s Hodi Innovations, funded by the Ministry of Culture.

North Korean Warship Topples During Launch. North Korea's unnamed Choe Hyon class destroyer toppled over during a risky and unconventional sideways launch at Hambuk Shipyard, Chongjin on May 21<sup>49</sup>. The 5000 ton destroyer lost balance resulting in its stern sliding into the water while the bows remained dockside, resulting in its toppling into the water. Attempts were being made to refloat the warship at the time of writing.

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<sup>45</sup> Royal Navy Carrier Heads "East of Suez", May 25, 2025, <https://maritime-executive.com/article/royal-navy-carrier-heads-east-of-suez>

<sup>46</sup> Indian Navy to Welcome Navika Sagar Parikrama II Crew After Historic Circumnavigation, May 27, 2025, <https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2131664>

<sup>47</sup> Delivery of 'Arnala' – First Anti-Submarine Warfare Shallow Water Craft to the Indian Navy, May 08, 2025, <https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2127729>

<sup>48</sup> Traditionally Built 'Ancient Stitched Ship' Inducted into the Indian Navy as INSV Kaundinya, May 21, 2025, <https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2130294>

<sup>49</sup> How North Korea Botched the Launch of a Warship, New York Times, May 27, 2025, <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/05/27/world/asia/north-korea-warship-destroyer.html>



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