



# Delhi Policy Group

Advancing India's Rise as a Leading Power



## INDO-PACIFIC MONITOR

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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:

*INS Tabar and HMS Richmond flank HMS Prince of Wales during the IN-RN passage exercise in the Northern Arabian Sea, June 09-10, 2025. Source: UK Carrier Strike Group*

*G7 Leaders and Invited Partners Group Photograph, Kananaskis, June 17, 2025. Source: PIB*

*Australian Deputy Prime Minister Richard Marles, Japan's Foreign Minister Takeshi Iwaya, NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte, New Zealand Prime Minister Christopher Luxon and South Korean National Security Advisor Wi Sung Lac at the NATO Summit, the Hague, June 25, 2025. Source: NATO*

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# INDO-PACIFIC MONITOR

June 2025

## Abstract

Two multilateral summits of global importance were held during the month. Leaders of the G7 met at Kananaskis, Canada, from June 16-17 for the 51<sup>st</sup> G7 Summit. The leaders of India, Australia, Brazil, Mexico, South Africa, South Korea and Ukraine also attended the outreach session. Leaders of NATO countries came together for the 34<sup>th</sup> NATO Summit at the Hague from June 24-25 and agreed to invest 5% of their GDP annually on core defence requirements by 2035. Leaders of the Indo-Pacific Four countries (AP4) were invited to attend the NATO Summit, but chose to send representatives.

India-Canada relations made progress, with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and meeting his counterpart, Mark Carney, on the sidelines of the G7 Summit on June 17. The two countries agreed to restore High Commissioners to their respective capitals and resume regular consular services.

Early general elections held in South Korea on June 03, which followed the impeachment of former President Yoon Suk-yeol, resulted in the Democratic Party's Lee Jae-myung being elected President and assuming office on June 04.

Japan's Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba spoke with South Korea's President Lee Jae-Myung on June 09. The leaders expressed their intention to move bilateral relations forward, recognising that Japan-ROK coordination, as well as trilateral cooperation with the US, is increasingly important in a severe regional strategic environment.

Indonesia's President Prabowo Subianto met Russia's President Vladimir Putin at St. Petersburg on June 19 and concluded a strategic partnership between the two nations. The Singapore Prime Minister met China's President Xi Jinping in Beijing on June 24 and reaffirmed Singapore's strong friendship with China.

Australia's Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister Richard Marles visited India from June 03-04 to commemorate the fifth anniversary of the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership between the countries. He also visited the Maldives and Sri Lanka.



It was reported on June 11 that the Pentagon has launched a review of the 2021 AUKUS agreement. The 30-day review is led by the US Under Secretary of Defence for Policy, Elbridge Colby, and focuses on various aspects of the nuclear submarine deal involving Australia, the UK and the US.

On June 21, Japan was said to have postponed the 2+2 Foreign and Defence Ministerial Meeting scheduled with the US for July 01. The action followed a demand from the US that Japan increase its defence spending to 3.5% of the GDP, and suggestions that the 5% benchmark for NATO allies would apply to Japan as well.

Japan tested a new hypersonic missile, as well as a Type 12 surface-to-surface missile with range increased from 200 to 1000 Km, during its annual Fuji firepower exercise on June 08. China described the test as a breach of Japan's pacifist constitution.

China's Liaoning and Shandong aircraft carrier strike groups operated in the Philippine Sea from June 09-21, marking the first time the two had been deployed together in the Western Pacific.

The Royal Navy's HMS Spey carried out a Taiwan Strait transit on June 18.

The Royal Navy's HMS Prince of Wales Carrier Strike Group transited through the Indian Ocean during the month. The group exercised with the Indian Navy off the West Coast of India from June 9-10 and entered Singapore on June 23.

Indonesia signed an MoU to purchase 48 Turkish fifth generation KAAN fighter aircraft on June 11. It also expressed interest in acquiring the Italian aircraft carrier Giuseppe Gabrialdi on June 21.

INS Arnala, the first of India's new generation of shallow water ASW craft, was commissioned on June 18.



## In the Doldrums: NATO Indo-Pacific Four Links

Four years ago, the 31<sup>st</sup> NATO Summit in Madrid had marked revival of the alliance following Russia's invasion of Ukraine. A new NATO Strategic Concept was unveiled as NATO sought to expand its geographic remit to Africa and the Asia-Pacific<sup>1</sup>. The four US Indo-Pacific allies, Japan, South Korea, Australia and New Zealand had been invited to the Madrid Summit for the first time; their leaders attended summits thereafter in Vilnius and Washington DC. Although NATO's primary focus remained Russia and its invasion of Ukraine, the 2022 NATO Strategic Concept spoke of China as a strategic competitor, with its stated ambitions and coercive policies challenging NATO interests, security and values<sup>2</sup>. "We will step up cooperation with our Indo-Pacific partners, including on cyber defence, new technologies, maritime security, climate change and countering disinformation", said NATO's Secretary General<sup>3</sup>.

The Hague NATO Summit of June 24-25 paints a very different picture. A brief summit declaration reaffirms the commitment of the Allies to NATO<sup>4</sup>. It highlights the Allies commitment to invest 5% of GDP annually on core defence requirement as well as defence and security related spending by 2035, with 3.5% of GDP being allocated to resource core defence requirements and meeting NATO capability targets, while the balance 1.5% is to protect critical infrastructure, protect networks, ensure civil preparedness and resilience, unleash innovation and strengthen the defence industrial base. Allies also decided that direct contributions to Ukraine's defence and defence industry would be included in calculating their defence spending. The trajectory and balance of spending under this plan is to be reviewed in 2029 (i.e. after President Trump demits office). Finally, the Allies reaffirmed their commitment to rapidly expanding transatlantic defence industrial cooperation and to harnessing emerging technology and the spirit of innovation to advance their collective security, eliminating defence trade barriers in the process. Unlike in the past, the Summit Declaration does not describe Russia's military

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<sup>1</sup> For an overview of the Madrid Summit, see Lalit Kapur, "The NATO Madrid Summit June 2022", Indo-Pacific Monitor Volume III, Issue 6, June 2022, [https://www.delhipolicygroup.org/uploads\\_dpg/publication\\_file/indo-pacific-monitor-3883.pdf](https://www.delhipolicygroup.org/uploads_dpg/publication_file/indo-pacific-monitor-3883.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> NATO 2022 Strategic Concept, [https://www.nato.int/nato\\_static\\_fl2014/assets/pdf/2022/6/pdf/290622-strategic-concept.pdf](https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/2022/6/pdf/290622-strategic-concept.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Press Conference by NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg following the meeting of the North Atlantic Council at the level of Heads of State and Government with Partners (2022 NATO Summit), [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/opinions\\_197292.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/opinions_197292.htm)

<sup>4</sup> The Hague Summit Declaration issued by the NATO Heads of State and Government participating in the Meeting of the North Atlantic Council in the Hague, 2 June 25, 2025, [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official\\_texts\\_236705.htm?selectedLocale=en](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_236705.htm?selectedLocale=en)



action in Ukraine as a war or invasion, nor does it state, as the Washington Summit of 2024 did, that “Ukraine’s future is in NATO”<sup>5</sup>.

The 5% of GDP target is not an arbitrary figure. Although the specifics are classified, it encompasses a five-fold increase in air defence capabilities to counter attacks from the air, including by drones and missiles. It includes thousands of more tanks and armoured vehicles notwithstanding their vulnerability as displayed in Ukraine, because of the need to protect soldiers on the battlefield and to manoeuvre. It also includes enlarging stockpiles of missiles and artillery ammunition, a pre-requisite for effective deterrence.

Barring New Zealand, leaders of the Indo-Pacific Four (IP4) did not attend the Summit. Australia was represented by the Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister Richard Marles. Japan sent Takeshi Iwaya, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, while South Korea sent Wi Sung Lac, the National Security Advisor. The statement between the NATO Secretary General and the IP4 partners reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening dialogue, based on recognition that the security of the Euro-Atlantic and the Indo-Pacific is interconnected<sup>6</sup>. It records that the partners are transparently increasing their respective defence spending and will look to enhance defence industrial cooperation. It recognises the importance of interoperability of their forces including through pursuing the same standards, where appropriate.

China’s response to the Hague Declaration was on expected lines. Noting that NATO countries already account for 55% of the world’s military spending in 2024 and yet the alliance still required to raise defence spending to build a more lethal NATO, China’s spokesperson questioned NATO’s objectives<sup>7</sup>. He said that though it called itself a regional organisation, it kept reaching beyond the geographic scope defined in its treaty and into the Asia-Pacific by claiming what happens there and in the Euro-Atlantic are interconnected. He said the world is not blind to NATO’s calculations and countries in the Asia-Pacific are certainly wary of it.

The big takeaway from the Summit is the commitment, in line with US desires, to raise NATO defence spending to 5% of the GDP by 2035, ten years hence. The US has urged European Allies and Canada to increase defence spending

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<sup>5</sup> Washington Summit Declaration, July 10, 2024,

[https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official\\_texts\\_227678.htm?selectedLocale=en](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_227678.htm?selectedLocale=en)

<sup>6</sup> Statement between NATO Secretary General and the four Indo-Pacific partners in the context of the NATO Summit in the Hague, June 25, 2025,

<https://www.mofa.go.jp/files/100866371.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Guo Jiakun’s Regular Press Conference on June 26, 2025,

[https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/xw/fyrbt/lxjzh/202506/t20250626\\_11659493.html](https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/xw/fyrbt/lxjzh/202506/t20250626_11659493.html)



throughout its history, without much success. Commitments still remain relatively easy to make. It is notable that NATO had committed to increase defence spending to 2% of GDP in 2014. Eleven years later, only 24 of the 32 members fulfil that commitment, Croatia, Portugal, Italy, Canada, Belgium, Luxembourg, Slovenia and Spain do not. The last six of the laggards still spend 1.5% of the GDP or less on defence. Spain and Slovenia, the last two, have already made known their desire to be exempted from the 5% commitment. How many actually meet the target by 2035 remains to be seen.

Relations between NATO and the IP4 appear to be fraying, as is evident from the absence of three leaders from the Summit without clearly defined reasons. Possibly they wished to avoid coming under pressure to commit to the 5% of GDP target set by the US for NATO. The US strike on Iran may have influenced Japan's decision. There is also annoyance at the US having unilaterally imposed tariffs on them, irrespective of their allied status. Optics matter; it is unlikely that the IP4 would have skipped the Summit had there been a different administration. The dissonance in relations between NATO and the IP4 will no doubt delight China.

Apart from the IP4, Asia still sees NATO as a Europe-focused alliance susceptible to US pulls and pressures rather than a global security forum. Moreover, the Summit was notable for the absence of declared decisions on support for Ukraine. Nor was there any mention of China, or of the possible drawdown of US forces in Europe. These issues are evidently work in progress. For the time being, the US remains engaged with NATO. Whether this will last remains to be seen.

## Five Years of the India Australia CSP

Five years ago, the Prime Ministers of India and Australia, Narendra Modi and Scott Morrison, came together in a virtual summit on June 04, 2020 and elevated the bilateral relationship between their countries from a strategic to a comprehensive strategic partnership (CSP)<sup>8</sup>. Among the documents signed that day were a joint statement on the comprehensive strategic partnership, a joint declaration on a shared vision for maritime cooperation in the Indo-Pacific, an arrangement concerning mutual logistics support, a framework arrangement on cyber and cyber-enabled critical technology cooperation, and an implementing arrangement concerning cooperation in Defence Science

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<sup>8</sup> Joint Statement on a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership between Republic of India and Australia, June 04, 2020, [https://mea.gov.in/bilateral-documents.htm?dtl/32729/Joint\\_Statement\\_on\\_a\\_Comprehensive\\_Strategic\\_Partnership\\_between\\_Republic\\_of\\_India\\_and\\_Australia](https://mea.gov.in/bilateral-documents.htm?dtl/32729/Joint_Statement_on_a_Comprehensive_Strategic_Partnership_between_Republic_of_India_and_Australia)



and Technology to the MoU on Defence Cooperation<sup>9</sup>. For a relationship that had struggled for many years to deal with the Australia's reaction to India's nuclear tests in 1998, this was a signal development. Australian Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister Richard Marles visited New Delhi on June 03 and 04 to commemorate the fifth anniversary of the CSP, which underpins the bilateral relationship and shared vision for the Indian Ocean<sup>10</sup>.

The CSP is based on mutual understanding, trust, common interests and the shared values of democracy and the rule of law. Both countries share the vision of an open, free, rules-based Indo-Pacific region supported by inclusive global and regional institutions that promoted prosperous, stable and sovereign states on the basis of shared interests. It encompasses cooperation under 12 pillars: enhancing science, technology and research collaboration; maritime cooperation for an open and inclusive Indo-Pacific; defence cooperation; regional and multilateral cooperation; terrorism; economic cooperation for a more prosperous shared future; innovation and entrepreneurship; agriculture cooperation and water resource management; education, culture, tourism and people-to-people ties; support in UN and international bodies; and public administration and governance. It identifies dialogue mechanisms for implementation, including increased prime ministerial meetings and a meeting of foreign and defence ministers in the 2+2 format at least every two years.

Much has been achieved since the CSP was signed. The population of India's diasporas in Australia stands at 976,000<sup>11</sup>. There are frequent exchanges at the highest political levels. Two editions of the India-Australia 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue have been held, the first in September 2021<sup>12</sup>, the second in November 2023<sup>13</sup>. The third edition of this dialogue will be held in Australia later this year. The India-Australia Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement was signed

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<sup>9</sup> List of the documents announced/signed during India-Australia Virtual Summit, June 04, 2020, [https://www.mea.gov.in/bilateral-documents.htm?dtl/32728/List\\_of\\_the\\_documents\\_announcedsigned\\_during\\_India\\_Australia\\_Virtual\\_Summit](https://www.mea.gov.in/bilateral-documents.htm?dtl/32728/List_of_the_documents_announcedsigned_during_India_Australia_Virtual_Summit)

<sup>10</sup> Travel to South and Southeast Asia, June 01, 2025, <https://www.minister.defence.gov.au/media-releases/2025-06-01/travel-south-southeast-asia>

<sup>11</sup> Population of Overseas Indians, Australia, <https://www.mea.gov.in/population-of-overseas-indians.htm>

<sup>12</sup> Joint Statement on Inaugural India-Australia 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue, September 11, 2021, [https://mea.gov.in/bilateral-documents.htm?dtl/34250/Joint\\_Statement\\_on\\_Inaugural\\_IndiaAustralia\\_22\\_Ministerial\\_Dialogue\\_11\\_September\\_2021\\_New\\_Delhi](https://mea.gov.in/bilateral-documents.htm?dtl/34250/Joint_Statement_on_Inaugural_IndiaAustralia_22_Ministerial_Dialogue_11_September_2021_New_Delhi)

<sup>13</sup> Joint Statement: Second India-Australia 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue, New Delhi (20 November 2023), [https://www.mea.gov.in/bilateral-documents.htm?dtl/37284/Joint\\_Statement\\_Second\\_IndiaAustralia\\_22\\_Ministerial\\_Dialogue\\_New\\_Delhi\\_20\\_November\\_2023](https://www.mea.gov.in/bilateral-documents.htm?dtl/37284/Joint_Statement_Second_IndiaAustralia_22_Ministerial_Dialogue_New_Delhi_20_November_2023)



in April 2022 and became effective in December 2022. Total bilateral trade between the two countries expanded to USD 24 billion in 2023-24<sup>14</sup> and is poised for further growth (Australian DFAT data, however, shows bilateral trade to have reached A\$50.1 billion (about USD 32.5 billion) in 2023-24<sup>15</sup>). The 6<sup>th</sup> India-Australia Maritime Security Dialogue was held in August 2024<sup>16</sup>. Australia has taken the lead in the maritime ecology pillar of India's Indo-Pacific Ocean's Initiative. A Centre for Australia-India Relations has become operational in Sydney. An Australia-India Migration and Mobility Partnership Arrangement has been concluded, promoting two-way mobility of students, graduates, academic researchers and business people. Two Australian universities have committed to setting up campuses in India. Given the backdrop of the tepid bilateral relationship for the first six decades of India's independence, progress in advancing the bilateral relationship across the board has been significant.

On the military front, Exercise Malabar was expanded into the quadrilateral format in November 2020, with Australia becoming a full participant. It would go on to host the exercise in 2023. At the bilateral level, Exercise AUSINDEX took place in 2021 and 2023, with exercise content upgraded to encompass all dimensions of naval warfare. The next edition of this exercise will take place later this year. India participated in the 2022 and 2024 editions of Australia's Exercise Pitch Black, while Australia participated in the 2024 edition of India's exercise Tarang Shakti. India sent observers for the 2023 edition of Australia's Exercise Talisman Sabre. An Indian Submarine, INS Vagir, visited Fremantle in Australia in August 2023<sup>17</sup>, the longest deployment by any Indian submarine to date. The two countries share maritime domain awareness information, with an Australian Liaison Officer at India's Information Fusion Centre for the Indian Ocean Region. They deploy surveillance aircraft from each other's territories to monitor the Indian Ocean. Officers from the Armed Forces regularly attend NDC and DSSC equivalent courses in each other's institutions. An exchange programme for young Indian and Australian officers named after India's first Chief of Defence Staff, General Bipin Rawat, has been ongoing since 2023.

<sup>14</sup> India-Australia Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement Celebrates 3<sup>rd</sup> Anniversary of Signing, April 02, 2025, <https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2117812>

<sup>15</sup> Australian Government, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, India key economic indicators, <https://www.dfat.gov.au/sites/default/files/inia-cef.pdf>

<sup>16</sup> 6<sup>th</sup> India-Australia Maritime Security Dialogue, August 13, 2024, [https://www.mea.gov.in/press-releases.htm?dtl/38152/6th\\_IndiaAustralia\\_Maritime\\_Security\\_Dialogue](https://www.mea.gov.in/press-releases.htm?dtl/38152/6th_IndiaAustralia_Maritime_Security_Dialogue)

<sup>17</sup> Indian sub makes Australian debut, September 01, 2023, <https://www.defence.gov.au/news-events/news/2023-09-01/indian-sub-makes-australian-debut>



The two sides have a common position on being able to exercise rights and freedoms in all seas and oceans, including the East and South China Seas, as permitted by the 1982 UNCLOS. They are both seriously concerned about militarisation of disputed features and the dangerous use of coast guard and maritime militia vessels in the South China Sea, and call for any Code of Conduct in the South China Sea to be effective, substantive and fully consistent with international law, without prejudice to the legitimate rights and interests of other states. They are also fully committed to empowering the Quad as a partnership for regional and global good. They are both committed to ASEAN centrality and the ASEAN-led regional architecture including the East Asia Summit, the ASEAN Regional Forum and the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus. They are also committed to other regional fora such as the Pacific Island Forum and IORA.

It is in this changed environment that Australia's Deputy Prime Minister Richard Marles visited India and met his counterpart Shri Rajnath Singh on June 04<sup>18</sup>. Both sides expressed satisfaction and recognised that defence has emerged as an important pillar of the collaboration under the bilateral CSP. They welcomed signing of the Australia-India Joint Research Project and agreed to intensify and diversify defence industry collaboration. They called for the continued strengthening of bilateral defence cooperation, and agreed to work together to combat terrorism in all its forms.

Why is the India-Australia relationship important? The two are among the most capable maritime powers and share a common vision for their shared maritime space in the Eastern Indian Ocean. As China's assertion expands and the availability of US power becomes more uncertain, India-Australia cooperation provides a check to Chinese expansionism in the region.

Taking stock, interoperability between the countries is developing nicely, as is shared maritime domain awareness. What more can the two sides do to make the Indo-Pacific a safer place for all? One area that has under-performed is defence industry cooperation. It has proved difficult to get defence industry to collaborate in a substantive manner. More can also be done by increased sharing of intelligence in the maritime domain. The two sides could put in more effort to build trilateral cooperation with Indonesia, the maritime bridge between India and Australia. Nevertheless, from where the two countries were in 2020, their progress under the CSP has been truly substantial. The challenge will be to maintain this progress in an increasingly uncertain world.

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<sup>18</sup> Raksha Mantri holds bilateral meeting with Australian Deputy PM & Defence Minister in New Delhi, June 04, 2025, <https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2133807>



## The AUKUS Review

On June 11, the news broke that the Pentagon had launched a review of the 2021 Aukus nuclear submarine deal between the US, UK and Australia. The review, according to people familiar with the matter, was said to be to determine if the US should scrap the project<sup>19</sup>. Elbridge Colby, the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, was reported to be leading the review<sup>20</sup>. The report was picked up and amplified by media in the US and Australia. Australia's Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister Richard Marles said that he had known of the review for some weeks, welcomed it, described it as a natural step for the incoming administration to take and said Australia would engage with it<sup>21</sup>.

Media reports talk of the review being necessitated by the inability of the US submarine industrial base to ramp up production as required for Pillar 1 of AUKUS, i.e. the nuclear submarine deal, so that is where this brief focuses. On September 15, 2021, US President Joe Biden, Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison and UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson announced the creation of AUKUS at the White House<sup>22</sup>. Its declared purpose was to preserve peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific. Pillar 1 under AUKUS agreement was intended to deliver a nuclear-powered submarine fleet to Australia<sup>23</sup>. A trilateral effort of 18 months duration was launched to seek the optimal path to deliver this capability and bring it into service at the earliest achievable date. Australia cancelled the 2016 contract awarded to France's Naval Group to design 12 Attack Class conventional submarines to be built at the Australian Submarine Corporation facility in Osborne, Adelaide, resulting in a nine-month freeze in Australia-France relations, with a reset happening only after Australia agreed to pay Naval Group € 555 million (about \$ 830 million) as part of "a fair and equitable settlement"<sup>24</sup>. 18 months later, in March 2023, US President Joe Biden, Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese, and British Prime Minister Rishi

<sup>19</sup> Pentagon Launches Review of Aukus Nuclear Submarine Deal, June 11, 2025,

<https://www.ft.com/content/4a9355d9-4aff-49ec-bf7e-ea21de97917b>

<sup>20</sup> Defense Department Conducting Review of AUKUS Security Pact, June 11, 2025,

<https://news.usni.org/2025/06/11/defense-department-conducting-review-of-aukus-security-pact>

<sup>21</sup> Television Interview, Sky News, June 12, 2025,

<https://www.minister.defence.gov.au/transcripts/2025-06-12/television-interview-sky-news>

<sup>22</sup> Remarks by President Biden, Prime Minister Morrison of Australia, and Prime Minister Johnson of the United Kingdom Announcing the Creation of AUKUS, September 15, 2021,

<https://bidenwhitehouse.archives.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2021/09/15/remarks-by-president-biden-prime-minister-morrison-of-australia-and-prime-minister-johnson-of-the-united-kingdom-announcing-the-creation-of-aukus/>

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Naval Group Settlement, <https://www.pm.gov.au/media/naval-group-settlement>



Sunak came together in San Diego, California, to announce the optimal pathway for delivery of nuclear submarine capability to Australia<sup>25</sup>. This pathway encompassed the following:

- Beginning 2023, Australian military and civilian personnel would embed with the US Navy, the Royal Navy and in the US and UK submarine industrial bases to enable training of Australian personnel. The US would increase SSN port visits to Australia, with Australian personnel joining the US crew for training and development.
- By 2027, the US and UK would begin forward rotations of SSNs to Australia to accelerate the development of the Australian naval personnel, workforce, infrastructure and regulatory system necessary to establish a sovereign SSN capability.
- Starting in the 2030's, pending Congressional approval, the US would sell Australia three Virginia class submarines, with the potential to sell two more if needed. This plan was subsequently expanded to sell a used Virginia class submarine in 2032, a second used submarine in 2035, and a third new submarine in 2038, with two more new boats being sold if required.
- In the late 2030's, the UK would deliver the first SSN-AUKUS to the RN, while the first Australian-built SSN-AUKUS would be delivered to Australia in the early 2040s.

That despite limited opposition, there has been a political consensus in all three countries on the delivery of SSNs to Australia under AUKUS has been abundantly clear for some time. Australia even tailored its Defence Strategic Review of 2023 to justify AUKUS to the domestic audience, while the US NDAA 2024 includes provisions to enable the programme and incentivise the US industrial base to support it. The key issue, from the US perspective, is the availability of sufficient SSNs to deter China in the event of conflict in the Indo-Pacific, including over Taiwan. Going by the 355 battle force ship goal of 2016 and the 381 battle force ship goal of 2023, the USN should have 66 SSNs. It currently has 49<sup>26</sup>: 23 Los Angeles Class, three Seawolf Class, and 23 Virginia class boats. Raising this number to 66 boats in the next 15 years would require the commissioning of two boats per year, more if 3-5 boats are to be sold to

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<sup>25</sup> Joint Leaders' Statement on AUKUS, March 13, 2023, <https://bidenwhitehouse.archives.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2023/03/13/joint-leaders-statement-on-aukus-2/>

<sup>26</sup> Attack Submarines – SSN, updated March 17, 2025, <https://www.navy.mil/Resources/Fact-Files/Display-FactFiles/article/2169558/attack-submarines-ssn/>



Australia. The US submarine industrial base has, however, been able to deliver only around 1.2 SSNs per year in recent years.

The other way to ensure sufficient US SSN capacity in the Indo-Pacific would be an agreement under which the boats to be sold to Australia would bandwagon with the US in the event of any untoward contingency. However, these boats are described as a sovereign capability, with no assurance that they will be committed to a China contingency. It is thus the question of whether the US will have sufficient strength to deter a China contingency from 2032 (when the first boat is to be sold to Australia) that has to be addressed by the review.

There has been considerable progress under Pillar 1 of AUKUS. Australian personnel have embedded with both the USN and the RN as well as the industrial and maintenance bases of the two countries to learn how to build, maintain and operate SSNs. An Australian naval officer earned his dolphins on board USS Vermont in December 2024, becoming the first in a line of trainees to do so<sup>27</sup>. The 2024 NDAA authorised the sale of Virginia-class submarines to Australia. To strengthen shipyard production capacity to deliver 2 boats per year by 2028, the US Congress approved over \$ 3.3 billion in funding in NDAA 2025<sup>28</sup>. The plan is to increase this to 2.33 boats per year thereafter to cater for Australia's requirements<sup>29</sup>. Australia has committed over \$ 3 billion in funding for the US submarine industrial base under AUKUS, the first tranche of \$ 500 million was delivered in February 2025<sup>30</sup>. Action to develop Australia's submarine industrial base have begun. US and UK SSN port visits to Australia have commenced, enabling integration of Australian personnel into their maintenance. Infrastructure to support forward deployment of SSNs in Australia is under construction. For all purposes, the AUKUS plan is 'on track'.

What would cancellation of the proposed sale of Virginia class boats by the US to Australia at this stage imply? Their existing Collins class submarines, commissioned between 1996 and 2003, were designed for a life of 30 years. The Australian government approved a life-of-type extension program for them in

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<sup>27</sup> For the First Time, Australian Submariner Earns US Dolphins, December 18, 2024, <https://www.usff.navy.mil/Press-Room/News-Stories/Article/4009231/for-first-time-australian-submariner-earns-us-dolphins/>

<sup>28</sup> <https://www.reed.senate.gov/news/releases/reed-delivers-another-33-billion-to-help-propel-us-submarine-industrial-base-forward-and-strengthen-domestic-manufacturing-and-us-economy>

<sup>29</sup> Navy Force Structure and Shipbuilding Plans: Background and Issues for Congress, CRS Report RL 32665, January 31, 2025, P 18-19.

<sup>30</sup> Australia makes \$ 500 million AUKUS payment ahead of US Defence Secretary meeting, February 7, 2025, <https://www.reuters.com/world/australia-makes-500-mln-aukus-payment-ahead-us-defence-secretary-meeting-2025-02-07/>



2024, to take them through to the 2030s<sup>31</sup>. Cancellation of the sale would mean that Australia may be left without key submarine capability in the mid-to-late 2030s, till the first SSN-AUKUS is delivered by UK. It will not necessarily imply cancellation of the SSN building project itself.

There is also the possibility that the review is due to a changed US perspective. There has been pressure on Australia, among other allies, to increase defence spending to 3.5% of their GDP, pressure that the allies have so far resisted. The AUKUS review may be a means of bringing additional pressure bear, signalling US turn inward and retreat from the Indo-Pacific unless the allies comply. It would mean giving up on a fully equipped forward submarine operating base that lies outside the range of most of China's ballistic missiles, unlike Guam or the bases in Japan. It would also mean giving up on the long-held belief that the US is an Indo-Pacific power.

Acknowledgement of the review has led to an upsurge of media commentary, with the government and its supporters arguing that this is a natural step for the incoming administration to take and there is nothing to worry about<sup>32</sup>, while AUKUS sceptics have proclaimed it as the death knell for AUKUS<sup>33</sup>, or an opportunity to escape a controversial deal that would ultimately leave Australia less able to defend itself<sup>34</sup>. The truth probably lies somewhere in between. What the review actually means for AUKUS will be known only when it is completed, around mid-July 2025. Among others, China will watch the outcome with keen interest.

## INS Arnala Joins the Fleet

The commissioning of INS Arnala in the presence of the Chief of Defence Staff, General Anil Chauhan<sup>35</sup>, on June 18, 2025 marks the induction of the first of a class of 16 indigenously designed and constructed warships into the Indian

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<sup>31</sup> Government approves next phase of Collins Class life-of-type extension, June 5, 2024, <https://www.minister.defence.gov.au/media-releases/2024-06-05/government-approves-next-phase-collins-class-life-type-extension>

<sup>32</sup> Interview by Richard Marles, MP, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence to Sky News, June 12, 2025, <https://www.minister.defence.gov.au/transcripts/2025-06-12/television-interview-sky-news>

<sup>33</sup> Hugh White: why the AUKUS 'dream' was never realistic and is likely to die, June 16, 2025, <https://theconversation.com/hugh-white-why-the-aukus-dream-was-never-realistic-and-is-likely-to-die-259028>

<sup>34</sup> Keating says US AUKUS review could 'save Australia from itself' as Morrison urges against overinterpreting move, June 12, 2025, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2025/jun/12/paul-keating-malcolm-turnbull-bob-carr-rex-patrick-david-shoebridge-say-us-aukus-review-a-chance-to-exit-pact>

<sup>35</sup> INS Arnala Commissioned into the Indian Navy in the Presence of the Chief of Defence Staff, Gen Anil Chauhan at Naval Dockyard, Visakhapatnam, June 18, 2025, <https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2137263>



Navy's Eastern Fleet. The ships take on the names of a diverse set of Soviet-origin ships that served the Indian Navy from the 1970's onwards, including the Arnala class corvettes, Abhay class corvettes and the Mahe class inshore minesweepers. They will replace the four Abhay-class Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW) corvettes the Indian Navy acquired from the Soviet Union between 1989 and 1991, providing a fillip to India's shallow-water ASW capability.

Built by Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers (GRSE) in collaboration with L&T Shipyard Kattupalli, INS Arnala has an overall length of 77.6m, a beam of 10.5m and a draught of 2.7m. Its full load displacement is about 900 tons, maximum speed is 25 knots, and endurance is 1800 nm at 14 knots. Its weapon outfit includes two triple tubes for the lightweight anti-submarine torpedo, an RBU-6000 ASW rocket launcher, a twin anti-torpedo defence system (ATDS), a 30mm Close in Weapon System (CIWS) for anti-missile defence, a very short range air defence missile launcher and a twin 12.7mm gun with a stabilised optronic control system. Sensors include a low frequency variable depth sonar, a hull-mounted sonar and navigational radars. The ship is propelled by three marine diesel engines connected with three waterjets through a reversible reduction gearbox. It has a complement of 7 officers and 50 sailors.

The Arnala-class ships are designed primarily for sub-surface surveillance and to interdict and destroy enemy submarines, including midget submarines, in coastal waters. They are also capable of a variety of low-intensity maritime operations, minelaying operations, coordinated ASW operations with aircraft, and search and rescue operations by day or night.

The acquisition of this new class of ship provides an insight into the time-consuming nature of India's acquisition process. In December 2013, the Defence Acquisition Council accorded acceptance of necessity for the procurement of 16 ASW shallow water craft at a cost of Rs 13,440 crores. The tender for procurement was issued to Indian shipyards, including in the private sector, in June 2014. Over three years later, in October 2017, Cochin Shipyard Limited (CSL) and GRSE emerged as the two lowest bidders. 19 months later, in April 2019, India's Ministry of Defence signed contracts with GRSE and CSL for the construction of eight vessels each (the Arnala class and Mahe Class respectively), to be delivered between 2022 and 2026. Designing of the vessels was done in-house by the shipyards, and construction began in December 2020. The first ship was to have been delivered within 42 months from the date of order. She was, instead delivered by GRSE on May 08, 2025, more than 72 months from the date of order. The first ship built by CSL is yet to be delivered.



Notwithstanding these delays, Indian shipbuilding is doing reasonably well. Two more ships of the class should be delivered by the end of the year. Himgiri, the Project 17A frigate built by GRSE and Tamal, the second Talwar class frigate being built by Russia's Yantar Shipyard, along with a Diving Support Vessel (Nistar) are due for delivery shortly. Udaygiri, the second Project 17A frigate built by Mazagon Docks Limited (MDL), is also expected before the end of the year. Notably, all future ships for the IN will be built within the country, providing reality to the slogan of 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' at least as far as the building of warships is concerned.

## Other Indo-Pacific Developments

South Korean Elections. The Democratic Party's Lee Jae-myung was elected President during early Presidential elections in South Korea on June 03. He secured 49.42% of the vote, defeating the ruling People Power Party nominee Kim Moon-soo, who secured 41.15% of the vote. The Reform Party's Lee Jun-seok secured 8.34% of the vote. Lee Jae-myung assumed office the same day.

G7 Summit. G7 leaders gathered at Kananaskis, Canada from June 15-17, with the objective of building stronger economies by making communities safer and the world more secure, promoting energy security and accelerating the digital transition, as well as fostering partnerships of the future<sup>36</sup>. They highlighted the importance of a free, open, prosperous and secure Indo-Pacific, based on the rule of law, and discussed growing economic cooperation with the region. Stressing the importance of constructive and stable relations with China, they called for China to refrain from market distortions and harmful overcapacity, tackle global challenges and promote international peace and security. They discussed their serious concerns about China's destabilising activities in the East and South China Seas and the importance of maintaining peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait. They welcomed participation in the Summit by the leaders of South Africa, Brazil, Mexico, South Korea, India, Australia as well as the Secretary General of the UN and the President of the World Bank. They agreed to joint statements on securing critical mineral supply chains; driving secure, responsible and trustworthy AI across public and private sectors; cooperation to unlock the potential of Quantum technologies, a multilateral effort to fight wildfires, protecting the rights of everyone in society, and countering migrant smuggling.

G7 Leaders' Statement on Iran Israel Developments. G7 leaders meeting at Kananaskis, Canada on June 17, released a joint statement in recent

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<sup>36</sup> Chair's Summary, June 18, 2025, <https://g7.canada.ca/en/news-and-media/news/chairs-summary/>



developments between Israel and Iran<sup>37</sup>. They affirmed Israel's right to defend itself and reiterated their support for the security of Israel. Describing Iran as the principal source of regional instability and terror, they were clear that Iran can never have a nuclear weapon. They urged resolution of the Iranian crisis leading to a broader de-escalation of hostilities in the Middle East, including a ceasefire in Gaza. US President Donald Trump returned home after this statement, cutting short his stay in Canada and precluding the opportunity to meet leaders of non-G7 countries attending the summit, including India.

India Canada Reset. India-Canada relations were reset when Prime Ministers Narendra Modi and Mark Carney met at Kananaskis, Canada, on the sidelines of the G7 Summit on June 17<sup>38</sup>. The leaders agreed to designate new high commissioners with a view to returning regular services to citizens and businessmen in both countries<sup>39</sup>. India had, in October 2024, withdrawn its High Commissioner and other senior diplomats from Canada due to apprehensions about safety.

Prabowo Visits Russia. Indonesia's President Prabowo Subianto visited St. Petersburg, Russia from June 18-20 for a bilateral meeting with President Vladimir Putin and to attend the 2025 St Petersburg International Economic Forum<sup>40</sup>. The leaders adopted a declaration on a strategic partnership between the two nations<sup>41</sup>. Other documents signed on the occasion were agreements on cooperation in higher education, an MoU on cooperation in transport, information, communication technologies and the media; and an MoU between the Russian Direct Investment Fund and Danantara, Indonesia's sovereign wealth fund.

China Singapore Summit. Chinese President Xi Jinping met with Singaporean Prime Minister Lawrence Wong on June 24 in Beijing, congratulating him on his re-election and marking the 35th anniversary of diplomatic relations

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<sup>37</sup> G7 Leaders' Statement on Recent Developments Between Israel and Iran, June 17, 2025, [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/api/files/document/print/en/statement\\_25\\_1523/STATEMENT\\_25\\_1523\\_EN.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/api/files/document/print/en/statement_25_1523/STATEMENT_25_1523_EN.pdf)

<sup>38</sup> Prime Minister Meets Prime Minister Mark Carney on the sidelines of the G7 Summit, June 18, 2025, [https://www.mea.gov.in/press-releases.htm?dtl/39689/Prime\\_Minister\\_meets\\_Prime\\_Minister\\_Mark\\_Carney\\_on\\_the\\_sidelines\\_of\\_the\\_G7\\_Summit](https://www.mea.gov.in/press-releases.htm?dtl/39689/Prime_Minister_meets_Prime_Minister_Mark_Carney_on_the_sidelines_of_the_G7_Summit)

<sup>39</sup> Prime Minister Carney meets Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi, June 17, 2025, <https://www.pm.gc.ca/en/news/readouts/2025/06/17/prime-minister-carney-meets-prime-minister-india-narendra-modi>

<sup>40</sup> President Prabowo Arrives in Russia for Bilateral Meeting with President Putin, June 19, 2025, <https://setkab.go.id/en/president-prabowo-arrives-in-russia-for-bilateral-meeting-with-president-putin/>

<sup>41</sup> Russian-Indonesian Talks, June 19, 2025, <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/77214>



between the two countries. Xi highlighted the fruitful cooperation between the two countries, citing successful projects like the Suzhou Industrial Park, and called for both sides to maintain a long-term strategic outlook, deepen political trust, and expand collaboration in areas such as the Belt and Road Initiative, digital economy, green development, and artificial intelligence. Prime Minister Wong reaffirmed Singapore's strong friendship with China, its adherence to the one-China policy, and opposition to "Taiwan independence"<sup>42</sup>.

Japan South Korea Leaders' Telecon. Japan's Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba spoke telephonically with South Korea's President Lee Jae-Myung on June 09<sup>43</sup>. The Prime Minister congratulated the President on his inauguration. Leaders expressed their intention to move Japan-ROK relations forward, and recognised that Japan-ROK coordination as well as trilateral cooperation with the US is important given the increasingly severe strategic environment. They also hoped to have an early in-person meeting and reaffirmed the importance of close cooperation between the two governments.

Quad Summit. The next Quad Summit is likely to be held in November, with the four members of the grouping now focused on giving shape to an agenda to bolster economic security and maritime security, according to "people familiar with the matter"<sup>44</sup>. Dates, however, are yet to be finalised.

US Strike on Iran's Nuclear Facilities. US B-2 bombers and support aircraft struck Iran's nuclear facilities at Fordow, Natanz and Esfahan early on the morning of June 22, using GBU-57 Massive Ordnance Penetrators, to destroy or severely degrade Iran's nuclear programme<sup>45</sup>. Operation Midnight Hammer, as it was called, comprised the strikes by B-2 bombers on these targets as well as Tomahawk missile strikes from a submarine on Esfahan. Initial battle damage assessments indicated that the three sites sustained extremely severe damage and destruction.

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<sup>42</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs-China. "Xi Jinping Meets With Singaporean Prime Minister Lawrence Wong", June 4, 2025.

[https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa\\_eng/xw/zyxw/202506/t20250625\\_11658514.html](https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/xw/zyxw/202506/t20250625_11658514.html).

<sup>43</sup> Japan-ROK Summit Telephone Talks (Summary), June 09, 2025,

<https://japan.kantei.go.jp/103/diplomatic/202506/09rok.html>

<sup>44</sup> Quad Leaders's Summit Likely to be Held in November, June 12, 2025,

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/quad-leaders-summit-likely-to-be-held-in-november-101749705610058.html>

<sup>45</sup> Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Dan Caine Hold a Press Conference, June 22, 2025,

<https://www.defense.gov/News/Transcripts/Transcript/Article/4222543/secretary-of-defense-pete-hegseth-and-chairman-of-the-joint-chiefs-of-staff-gen/>



India Launches Op Sindhu. India launched Operation Sindhu to evacuate its nationals from Iran on June 18<sup>46</sup>. The operation was extended to Israel on June 19<sup>47</sup>.

SQUAD Defence Ministers' Meeting. Defence Ministers from Australia, Japan, the Philippines and the US met at Singapore on May 31, on the sidelines of the Shangri-la Dialogue<sup>48</sup>. Expressing serious concern about China's actions in the East and South China Seas, they announced four key developments in their partnership: synchronizing of priority defence investments, enhancing information sharing, strengthening cybersecurity and resilience, and increasing operational coordination and interoperability.

China's Reaction to US Defense Secretary's Remarks at Shangri-La Dialogue. China's Foreign Ministry Spokesperson reacted strongly to US Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth's remarks at the Shangri-La Dialogue 2025<sup>49</sup>. He said, "Hegseth deliberately ignored the call for peace and development by countries in the region, and instead touted the Cold War mentality for bloc confrontation, vilified China with defamatory allegations, and falsely called China a 'threat'. The remarks were filled with provocations and intended to sow discord. China deplores and firmly opposes them and has protested strongly to the U.S." He went on to add, "No country in the world deserves to be called a hegemonic power other than the U.S. itself, who is also the primary factor undermining the peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific". The reaction is typical of China's aggressive reactions when it feels it has been affronted.

Cancellation of Japan-US 2+2 Meeting. Japan was reported to have cancelled the Foreign and Defence Ministers 2+2 meeting scheduled to have been held in Washington DC on July 01 following US demands that Japan spend more on defence<sup>50</sup>. Japan currently spends around 1.8% of its GDP on defence, and the

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<sup>46</sup> India launches Operation Sindhu to evacuate Indian nationals from Iran, June 18, 2025, [https://www.mea.gov.in/press-releases.htm?dtl/39693/India\\_launches\\_Operation\\_Sindhu\\_to\\_evacuate\\_Indian\\_nationals\\_from\\_Iran\\_June\\_18\\_2025](https://www.mea.gov.in/press-releases.htm?dtl/39693/India_launches_Operation_Sindhu_to_evacuate_Indian_nationals_from_Iran_June_18_2025)

<sup>47</sup> Operation Sindhu – Evacuation of Indian Nationals from Israel, June 19, 2025, [https://www.mea.gov.in/press-releases.htm?dtl/39700/Operation\\_Sindhu\\_Evacuation\\_of\\_Indian\\_nationals\\_from\\_Israel](https://www.mea.gov.in/press-releases.htm?dtl/39700/Operation_Sindhu_Evacuation_of_Indian_nationals_from_Israel)

<sup>48</sup> Joint Statement on the Meeting of Defense Ministers from Australia, Japan, the Philippines and the United States, May 31, 2025, <https://www.defense.gov/News/Releases/Release/Article/4202565/joint-statement-on-the-meeting-of-defense-ministers-from-australia-japan-the-ph/>

<sup>49</sup> Foreign Ministry Spokesperson's Remarks on US Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth's Negative Comments on China at the Shangri-La Dialogue, June 01, 2025, [https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/xw/fyrbt/202506/t20250601\\_11638402.html](https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/xw/fyrbt/202506/t20250601_11638402.html)

<sup>50</sup> Japan scraps US meeting after Washington demands more defence spending, June 21, 2025, <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2025/06/21/japan/politics/japan-us-two-plus-two-cancelled/>



Trump administration has been demanding that this figure be increased to at least 3% of the GDP at the earliest, and 5% eventually.

Maiden Visit of EUNAVFOR Ships to India. Ships from Spain and Italy, ESPS Reina Sofia and ITS Antonio Marcegaglia, operating under the European Union Naval Force (EUNAVFOR) in the Horn of Africa visited Mumbai from May 26 – June 01, marking the maiden visit of EUNAVFOR ships to India<sup>51</sup>. The ships carried out subject matter expert exchanges and a table-top exercise with the IN, and a joint exercise at sea on leaving harbour<sup>52</sup>.

Indian Navy PASSEX with HMS Prince of Wales. INS Tabar, a submarine and P-8I aircraft participated in a passage exercise with HMS Prince of Wales and HMS Richmond in the Northern Arabian Sea on June 09&10<sup>53</sup>. The exercise included unified control of integral helicopters, tactical manoeuvres, coordinated anti-submarine operations and professional exchange of officers.

Commissioning of Tamal. The Indian Navy is set to commission Tamal, its latest stealth frigate built by the Yantar Shipyard in Kaliningrad, Russia, on July 01<sup>54</sup>. Tamal will be the last Indian warship inducted from a foreign source; all future ships will be built in India.

MV Wan Hai 503. MV Wan Hai 503, a Singapore owned container carrier, experienced an internal container explosion and resultant major fire off the Kerala Coast on June 9, 2025<sup>55</sup>. The ship was abandoned and 18 of the 22 crew members on board were rescued by the Indian Navy, in an operation coordinated with the Indian Coast Guard; the other four are missing. The vessel was reported to be carrying 2182 metric tons of fuel and hundreds of containers, including some containing hazardous cargo<sup>56</sup>. To prevent the ship from drifting on to the Kerala Coast, the Indian Navy inserted a salvage team on board through a helicopter on June 13 and connected a towline to a tug<sup>57</sup>. Meanwhile, a criminal inquiry was opened against the master and crew of the

<sup>51</sup> Maiden Visit of EUNAVFOR Ships to India, June 01, 2025, <https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2133148>

<sup>52</sup> [https://x.com/IN\\_WNC/status/1929952231052456353](https://x.com/IN_WNC/status/1929952231052456353)

<sup>53</sup> <https://x.com/sidhant/status/1932706241152987223>

<sup>54</sup> Indian Navy set to Commission the Latest Stealth Frigate Tamal in Russia, June 22, 2025, <https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2138662>

<sup>55</sup> Indian Navy has Safely Rescued 18 out of 22 Crew Members of Singaporean Flagged MV Wan Hai 503, <https://indiannavy.gov.in/content/indian-navy-has-safely-rescued-18-out-22-crew-members-singaporean-flagged-mv-wan-hai-503>

<sup>56</sup> ICG Intensifies Operations as Burning Container Vessel Drifts off Kerala Coast, June 11, 2025, <https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2135826>

<sup>57</sup> Indian Navy Undertakes Daring Aerial Insertion of Salvage Team on Board MV Wan Hai 503, June 14, 2025, <https://indiannavy.gov.in/content/indian-navy-undertakes-daring-aerial-insertion-salvage-team-onboard-mv-wan-hai-503>



ship following a determination that the fire was likely caused by a misdeclared cargo of explosives<sup>58</sup>. The unmanned vessel was being held 60 miles off the Kerala Coast at the time of writing.

Rafale-M Program Launched. A high-level Indian defence delegation convened a pivotal meeting with French defence officials during the Paris Air Show. The Inter-Governmental Agreement signed between India and France on April 28, 2025, covers the procurement of 26 Rafale Marine aircraft (22 single-seaters and four twin-seaters), along with training, simulators, associated equipment, weapons, and a five-year performance-based logistics support package. This meeting formally launched the Rafale Marine program, marking a significant milestone in India-France defence cooperation and India's efforts to strengthen its naval strike capabilities<sup>59</sup>.

Japan Tests New Missiles. Japan reportedly tested two new missiles during its annual Fuji Firepower Exercise on June 08<sup>60</sup>. These include the improved Type 12 SSM, with a range extended from the original 200 Km to 1000 Km, as well as a hypersonic missile with a range of 900 Km, upgradable to 3000 Km in future versions<sup>61</sup>. China observed that Japan's development of long-range strike capability breaches the restriction posed by the pacifist constitution that prohibits the JSDF from possessing offensive weapons<sup>62</sup>, and if this kind of policy is allowed to spread unchecked, it would ultimately affect the peaceful development prospects of the entire region.

China's Aircraft Carrier Operations. The PLA Navy's Liaoning Carrier Strike Group was reported operating Southeast of Iwo Jima on June 09, in one of the farthest deployments to date for the Chinese aircraft carrier<sup>63</sup>. In a parallel deployment, CNS Shandong and its strike group were sighted operating Southeast of Miyako Island<sup>64</sup>. This was reported as the first time two Chinese carriers have deployed together in the Western Pacific. A spokesman for the

<sup>58</sup> Wan Hai 503 Crew Faces Negligence Inquiry After Deadly Blast, June 17, 2025, <https://maritime-executive.com/article/survivors-from-wan-hai-503-charged-with-negligence-after-deadly-blast>

<sup>59</sup> Ministry of Defence, Government of India- Twitter. June 21, 2025. <https://x.com/SpokespersonMoD/status/1936287586084884900>

<sup>60</sup> Japan GSDF Conducts Large-Scale Live-Fire Exercise, June 08, 2025, <https://jen.jiji.com/jc/i?g=eco&k=2025060800303>

<sup>61</sup> Japan's move to deploy offensive weapons impacts regional stability, June 11, 2025, [http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/OPINIONS\\_209196/Opinions\\_209197/16390873.html](http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/OPINIONS_209196/Opinions_209197/16390873.html)

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Chinese Aircraft Carrier Operating near Iwo Jima for First Time, June 09, 2025, <https://news.usni.org/2025/06/09/chinese-aircraft-carrier-operating-near-iwo-jima-for-first-time>

<sup>64</sup> China Deploys 2 Aircraft Carriers to Western Pacific for the First Time, June 10, 2025, <https://news.usni.org/2025/06/10/china-deploys-2-aircraft-carriers-to-western-pacific-for-the-first-time-uss-george-washington-leaves-japan-for-carrier-qualification>



PLA (Navy) described the deployment as a routine training exercise to test capabilities in far seas defence and joint operations. The deployment ended on June 21 when the Liaoning CSG sailed back into the East China Sea and the Shandong CSG sailed into the South China Sea<sup>65</sup>.

Taiwan Strait Transit. The Royal Navy's HMS Spey conducted a Taiwan Strait transit on June 18<sup>66</sup>. Taiwan described the transit as defending the freedom of navigation in the Taiwan Strait and demonstrating the firm UK position that the strait constitutes international waters.

Australia to Gift Patrol Boat to Maldives. Australia's Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister Richard Marles announced with Maldives Minister of Defence Mohamed Ghassan Maumoon that Australia would gift a Guardian Class Patrol Boat to the Maldives<sup>67</sup>. The boat is presently under construction and would be completed in 2026. The announcement was made during Mr Marles visit to the Maldives on June 02.

Australia Sanctions Russia's Shadow Fleet. In a first, the Australian government imposed sanctions on 60 vessels linked to Russia's shadow fleet on June 18<sup>68</sup>. The shadow fleet allegedly enables the illicit trade of Russian oil and other sanctioned goods.

Australia Pledges Further Support to Ukraine. Australian Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister Richard Marles announced at the Hague that Australia will deploy a RAAF E-7A Wedgetail AEW&C aircraft under Operation Kudu to Europe from August to November to help protect a vital international gateway for humanitarian and military assistance into Ukraine<sup>69</sup>. Australia also imposed additional sanctions to weaken Russia's war economy.

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<sup>65</sup> Chinese Dual Carrier Deployment Wraps, UK Royal Navy Warship Transits Taiwan Strait, June 23, 2025, <https://news.usni.org/2025/06/23/chinese-dual-pacific-carrier-deployment-wraps-u-k-royal-navy-warship-transits-taiwan-strait>

<sup>66</sup> MOFA response to UK naval vessel transiting Taiwan Strait, June 19, 2025, [https://en.mofa.gov.tw/News\\_Content.aspx?n=1328&sms=273&s=120079](https://en.mofa.gov.tw/News_Content.aspx?n=1328&sms=273&s=120079)

<sup>67</sup> Joint Media Release: Maldives to receive Guardian-class Patrol Boat from Australia, June 02, 2025, <https://www.minister.defence.gov.au/media-releases/2025-06-02/joint-media-release-maldives-receive-guardian-class-patrol-boat-from-australia>

<sup>68</sup> Australia Imposes Sanctions on Russian Shadow Fleet Vessels, June 18, 2025, <https://www.foreignminister.gov.au/minister/penny-wong/media-release/australia-imposes-sanctions-russian-shadow-fleet-vessels>

<sup>69</sup> Australia deepens collaboration with NATO and takes further action to hold Russia to account, June 25, 2025, <https://www.foreignminister.gov.au/minister/penny-wong/media-release/australia-deepens-collaboration-nato-and-takes-further-action-hold-russia-account>



North Korea Refloats Destroyer. North Korea relaunched its second Choe Hyon-class guided missile destroyer at the Rajin Shipyard on June 12<sup>70</sup>. It may be recalled that a failed launch on May 21 at the Chongjin Shipyard had led to the ship capsizing. She was subsequently raised and towed to the Rajin Shipyard, where she was restored and re-launched.

Indonesia to Buy Turkish Fighter Aircraft. Indonesia and Turkey signed a Memorandum of Understanding for the purchase of 48 future fifth-generation KAAAN aircraft during the INDO Defence 2025 exhibition held in Indonesia<sup>71</sup>.

Indonesia Expresses Interest in Procuring Aircraft Carrier. Indonesia's Navy has expressed an interest in acquiring the retired Italian aircraft carrier Giuseppe Gabrialdi, according to Fincantieri's Director of Sales Business Unit<sup>72</sup>. No formal decision has, however, been taken. The Italian carrier was decommissioned in October 2024, but is reported to be in good condition with approximately 15-20 years of remaining operational life following a refit.

USN Appointments. Adm. Daryl L Caudle, serving as Commander Fleet Forces Command was appointed as the Chief of Naval Operations on June 18<sup>73</sup>. R Adm Michael P Donnelly was promoted to V Adm and appointed Commander of the US Seventh Fleet at Yokosuka, relieving V Adm Frederick W Kacher. R Adm Curt A Renshaw was promoted to V Adm and appointed Commander of the US Naval Forces Central Command and Commander of the US Fifth Fleet.

HMS Prince of Wales Arrives Singapore. HMS Prince of Wales made her first Indo-Pacific port call on her deployment to the region when she entered Singapore on June 23<sup>74</sup>. Other ships of her strike group that also entered Singapore were HMS Dauntless, RFA Tidespring, HNoMS Roald Amundsen and HMNZS Te Kaha. In parallel, HMS Richmond and SPS Mendez Nunez visited Jakarta while HMCS Ville de Quebec visited Kuala Lumpur. The strike group

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<sup>70</sup> North Korea Refloats Destroyer After Failed Launch in May, June 16, 2025, <https://news.usni.org/2025/06/16/north-korea-refloats-destroyer-after-failed-launch-in-may>

<sup>71</sup> First KAAAN export prospect: Turkey to deliver 48 jets to Indonesia, June 12, 2025, <https://www.defensenews.com/global/europe/2025/06/12/first-kaan-export-prospect-turkey-to-deliver-48-jets-to-indonesia/>

<sup>72</sup> Indonesia Eyes Giuseppe Gabrialdi Aircraft Carrier Procurement, June 21, 2025, <https://www.navalnews.com/naval-news/2025/06/indonesia-eyes-giuseppe-garibaldi-aircraft-carrier-procurement/>

<sup>73</sup> Secretary of Defense Flag Officer Announcement for June 18, 2025, <https://www.defense.gov/News/Releases/Release/Article/4221190/secretary-of-defense-flag-officer-announcement-for-june-18-2025/>

<sup>74</sup> Flagship Debuts in Singapore as Carrier Group Begins Key Southeast Asia Visits, June 23, 2025, <https://www.royalnavy.mod.uk/news/2025/june/23/20250624-flagship-debuts-in-singapore-as-carrier-group-begins-key-south-east-asia-visits>



will proceed to Darwin to participate in Australia's Exercise Talisman Sabre on completion of this visit.

## IN Visits Abroad

Dates	Ship	Port Visited
June 19-22	INS Karmuk <sup>75</sup>	Port Klang
June 19-22	INS Teg <sup>76</sup>	Port Louis, Mauritius
June 21	INS Tabar, Mormugao <sup>77</sup>	Muscat
June 24	INS Tarkash <sup>78</sup>	Djibouti
June 26-30	INS Teg <sup>79</sup>	Port Victoria, Seychelles

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<sup>75</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/HighCommissionofIndiaMalaysia/posts/indian-naval-ship-ins-karmuk-in-malaysia-to-participate-in-11th-international-da/1192908876207796/>

<sup>76</sup> "INS Teg on Operational Deployment to The Southwest IOR Concludes Visit to Port Louis, Mauritius", June 23, 2025. <https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=2138898>

<sup>77</sup> India in Oman (Embassy of India, Muscat) – Twitter. June 20, 2025. [https://x.com/Indemb\\_Muscat/status/1936020020087197717](https://x.com/Indemb_Muscat/status/1936020020087197717)

<sup>78</sup> Western Naval Command - Twitter. June 24, 2025. [https://x.com/IN\\_WNC/status/1937464679158173941](https://x.com/IN_WNC/status/1937464679158173941)

<sup>79</sup> INS Teg Arrives at Port Victoria, Seychelles, June 27, 2025, <https://indiannavy.gov.in/content/ins-teg-arrives-port-victoria-seychelles>



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