



Delhi Policy Group

Advancing India's Rise as a Leading Power

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Author

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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. To subscribe, please [click here](#).

Cover Images:

US President Donald Trump meets China's President Xi Jinping at Busan, South Korea on October 30, 2025.

Source: US Department of State

INS Vikrant and HMS Prince of Wales together with escorts exercising in the Arabian Sea, October 2025. Source: Indian Navy

Sanae Takaichi is designated the 104th Prime Minister of Japan, Tokyo, October 21, 2025. Source: Prime Minister's Office of Japan

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INDO-PACIFIC MONITOR

October 2025

Abstract

October 2025 was marked by changes of government in Japan, the Seychelles and Madagascar. In Japan, Sanae Takaichi was elected as the prime minister on October 21. In the Seychelles, Patrick Herminie was elected as President on October 12. In Madagascar, a military coup deposed President Andry Rajoelina, who fled the country, and Colonel Michael Randrianirina was sworn in as President on October 17.

The month was also marked by multilateral summits. The ASEAN and related summits took place in Kuala Lumpur from October 26-28, while the APEC summit commenced at Gyeongju, South Korea on October 31.

UK Prime Minister Kier Starmer visited India from October 08-09, with a delegation comprising over 125 business leaders and the Vice Chancellors of nine universities. Visit outcomes focused on trade and investment, technology and innovation, education and the defence sector. Sri Lanka's Prime Minister Harini Amarasuriya visited India from October 16-18.

Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese visited the US from October 19-21, signing a landmark deal for the processing of rare earths and critical minerals and obtaining public endorsement of the AUKUS pact from President Trump.

US President Donald Trump undertook the first tour of the Indo-Pacific during his second term from October 26-30. In Kuala Lumpur on October 26, he witnessed the signing of a joint declaration by Cambodia and Thailand to move towards resolving longstanding hostilities over their shared border. In Japan from October 27-29, he formalised a new "Golden Age" framework for the US-Japan alliance. In South Korea on October 30, he announced that the US will share nuclear technology with South Korea to allow it to build nuclear-powered submarines in the US. His visit culminated in a summit meeting with China's President Xi Jinping at Busan on October 30, during which deals were struck on export of Chinese rare earths and a reduction in fentanyl related tariffs on China.

Australia and Singapore commemorated the 60th anniversary of their relations by upgrading ties to a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership 2.0 during the visit of Singapore Prime Minister Lawrence Wong to Australia on October 08. Australia and Papua New Guinea signed a mutual defence treaty at Canberra on October 06, during the visit of PNG Prime Minister James Marape to Canberra.



The October 2025 edition of the IMF's World Economic Outlook was launched on October 14. The outlook projects the world's economic growth rate slowing from 3.3% in 2024 to 3.2% in 2025 and 3.1% in 2026. India remains the world's fastest growing large economy, with growth rate accelerating to 6.6% in 2025 but slowing to 6.2% in 2026.

India's Defence Minister visited Australia on October 09-10 for the maiden India-Australia Defence Ministers' Dialogue, reviewing the gamut of India-Australia defence relations. He also visited Kuala Lumpur from October 31 to participate in the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus. He met with the US Secretary of War Pete Hegseth on the sidelines, and both leaders signed the 10-year framework agreement for the US-India Major Defence Partnership.

An expert Japanese panel recommended upgrading future submarines with long-range vertically launched strike missiles as well as advanced propulsion, including nuclear. The panel's report will now be considered by Japan's Ministry of Defence.

Japan's Sanae Takaichi led government announced its decision to revise the three key security documents – the National Security Strategy, the National Defence Strategy and the Defence Buildup Programme – by the end of 2026. The government also announced that it is considering accelerating the target of increasing defence spending to 2% of the GDP from 2027 to this fiscal year. Separately, the LDP policy chief Takayuki Kobayashi indicated an intent to liberalise defence exports by revising or scrapping the long-standing three principles on transfer of defence equipment and technology.

Australia protested the unsafe behaviour of a Chinese interceptor aircraft that dropped flares in close proximity to its P-8 Poseidon aircraft operating near the Paracel Islands on October 19.

The India-UK naval exercise KONKAN 2025 took place off India's Western seaboard from October 05-12. India-Japan naval exercise JAIMEX 2025 took place off Yokosuka from October 16-18, while India-Australia joint military exercise AUSTRALIND took place near Perth from October 13-26.

China's 48th escort mission for the Gulf of Aden sailed from Qingdao on October 11.

The Starmer Visit to India

In July 2025, India's Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi visited the UK, overseeing the signing of the bilateral Comprehensive and Economic Trade Agreement and formulating the India-UK Vision 2035 statement¹. UK Prime Minister Sir Kier Starmer reciprocated from October 08-09, visiting Mumbai at the head of a delegation comprising more than 125 business and cultural leaders and 9 vice-chancellors of universities in the UK². The Starmer visit highlights the UK's efforts to reimagine its global standing and India's rise as an economic powerhouse.

Outcomes from the Starmer visit can be divided into four broad heads. First is trade and investment. The Free Trade Agreement signed in July is presently undergoing the process of ratification in both countries. Both leaders remarked about the fact that even as this process is ongoing, the trade, business and investment communities in the two countries are very excited about the prospects of full implementation of the agreement. The visit gave both sides the opportunity to discuss deepening their strategic economic engagement in order to derive the full benefits from tariff reduction under the FTA.

The second pillar of the visit was technology and innovation. Major announcements were made with regard to the establishment of the India-UK Connectivity and Innovation Centre, the India-UK Joint Centre for Artificial Intelligence and a Critical Minerals Industry Guild to secure resilient supply chains and promote green technologies. Both sides also agreed to launch phase two of the UK-India Critical Minerals Supply Chain Observatory and the establishment of a new satellite campus at IIT, the Indian School of Mines in Dhanbad.

The third pillar of the visit was education. Indian students already form the single largest cohort of foreign students in the UK. Both leaders discussed increasing collaboration between the two countries in the education sector. The universities of Lancaster and Surrey were given their respective approvals for opening their campuses in India under the New Education Policy. Nine UK universities have now received approval to open their campuses in India, and Southampton University has already opened a physical campus in Gurugram and taken on its first cohort of students.

The fourth pillar was the defence sector. The two Prime Ministers reviewed cooperation in this sector, which has expanded considerably in recent years; in fact, as the visit was in progress, the HMS Prince of Wales Carrier Strike Group was exercising with the Indian Navy under Exercise KONKAN (covered separately). The two leaders discussed the possibility of collaboration in electric propulsion technology and the

¹ India - UK vision 2035, July 24, 2025, https://www.mea.gov.in/bilateral-documents.htm?dtl/39846/INDIAUK_VISION_2035

² India-UK Joint Statement, October 09, 2025, <https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2176767>

implementation of the Defence Industrial Roadmap announced in July 2025. They also discussed cooperation in the maritime domain and welcomed progress in establishing a Regional Maritime Security Centre of Excellence to further their cooperation under the Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative. The two leaders welcomed progress on an arrangement that will see IAF Qualified Flying Instructors integrated into RAF training.

A particularly novel feature of Starmer's visit was the UK's fascination with India's digital governance infrastructure, notably the Aadhaar digital ID program. Starmer met with Nandan Nilekani, Infosys co-founder, to draw lessons from India's vast digital identification drive, highlighting his intent to launch a similar "Brit Card" in the UK. This exchange signals more than technological curiosity; it is a strategic move to modernise migration, labour, and border policies in Britain, positioning the UK at the intersection of innovation and oversight.

The visit did bring out some areas of friction. Starmer resisted calls from UK businesses to open Britain further to highly skilled Indian migrants, balancing domestic politics with global engagement. On Ukraine and relations with Russia, he recognised the need for open dialogue rather than confrontation, understanding that India's priorities in its neighbourhood differ from those of the Euro-Atlantic bloc.

Starmer's India visit signals the UK's recognition of a world where leverage lies not just in legacy alliances, but in forging new pathways with rising powers. By blending economic ambition, technological curiosity, strategic diplomacy, and respect for India's sovereignty, Britain is betting on a partnership that can enhance its own standing while supporting India's ascent. India, for its part, leverages this opportunity to attract investment, acquire technology, and affirm its place as a security and economic anchor from the Indo-Pacific to the West. Both nations are learning to operate in a landscape replete with shifting alliances, contested norms, and emergent interests.

For geopolitics, Starmer's trip marks a new chapter – a move from transactional ties to a relationship shaped by mutual respect and shared futures. The repercussions will be felt in global governance, multilateral institutions, and the wider contest for economic and technological influence. In all, this visit underscores a world in motion, where strategic vision, adaptability, and genuine cooperation hold the key to navigating the challenges ahead. The India-UK partnership, fortified by this high-level dialogue, will serve not only the national interests of the two countries, but also play a decisive role as the architecture of global power continues to evolve.

The Australia - US Re-engagement

Although Australia remains a staunch ally of the US, bilateral relations during the current Trump presidency haven't provided much to celebrate. There is disquiet

about Australia's normalisation of trade relations with China. Opinion in Australia is largely against Trump (though in favour of a continued US-Australia alliance), as shown by a recent poll by the University of Sydney's United States Study Centre, with only 16% of Australian's believing that the second Trump administration has been good for Australia³. The US imposed 10% tariffs on Australian exports in April 2025, arousing strong reaction in Australia. A review of the AUKUS submarine deal was announced in June 2025, to align the agreement with the administrations "America First" agenda. This exacerbated Australian worries stemming from challenges in the US submarine building rate, Trump's ambivalence toward traditional U.S. alliances and his disdain for deals negotiated by his predecessors. Albanese's attempts to meet Trump, first during the G-7 meeting in Canada in June, and then at the UNGA session in New York in September, did not work out. Kevin Rudd, Australia's ambassador to the US since 2023, sharply criticised Donald Trump in 2020, before assuming his present appointment, describing him as a "village idiot", "the most destructive president in history" and a "traitor to the west"⁴.

Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese's visit to the US from October 19-21, 2025, thus marked a major diplomatic milestone in the Australia-US alliance, occurring amid global realignments and domestic scrutiny in both countries. His first in-person summit with President Donald Trump at the White House focused on revitalising key aspects of the relationship—security, trade, and technology cooperation—while also seeking new stability in an uncertain geopolitical environment.

The visit took place at a time when the Biden administration's Indo-Pacific policy has given way to Trump's "America First" framework, forcing US allies (including Australia) to find ways to seek continuity in their strategic alignment. The relationship with the US, forged through over a century of military and economic collaboration, remains central to Canberra's foreign policy. However, the Trump administration's transactional approach generates apprehension in Australian political circles about the durability of this alliance. Albanese's challenge, therefore, was to secure practical commitments from Washington while projecting Australia's strategic independence. The visit was especially significant because it concluded months of ambiguity over the AUKUS defense agreement and reinforced cooperation on critical minerals—a vital component of both countries' industrial and defence policies.

³ The Albanese-Trump Summit: Where do Australians stand on their most important ally? October 16, 2025, <https://www.usssc.edu.au/the-albanese-trump-summit-where-do-australians-stand-on-their-most-important-ally>

⁴ Australian PM defends ambassador to US after Trump run-in, October 22, 2025, <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cpv14jlm7dyo>

The most visible outcome from the visit was the signing of a landmark deal on processing of rare earths and critical minerals valued at approximately \$ 8.5 billion⁵. The agreement aims to reduce both nations' dependence on Chinese supply chains for essential materials used in electronics, electric vehicles, and weapons systems. It includes provisions for joint investments in mining and processing projects, long-term offtake agreements, and price stabilisation mechanisms to encourage private investment. Albanese described the deal as an "investment pipeline ready to go," emphasising Australia's role as a secure supplier for America's strategic industries. The pact also included US commitments to support Australian producers with financing through the US International Development Finance Corporation.

The other major outcome from the visit was Trump's public endorsement of the AUKUS pact, ending speculation that his administration might withdraw from or renegotiate it. The US president pledged that the nuclear submarines promised under the deal would be delivered "on time and on terms beneficial to all parties." This reaffirmation stabilises Australia's long-term defence planning and reasserts trilateral cooperation with the United Kingdom. Under AUKUS, Australia will acquire three US-built nuclear-powered submarines beginning in 2032 before jointly developing and building a new class of submarines with the UK. Trump's administration has also indicated interest in "improving" certain provisions of the original agreement to accelerate delivery and clarify operational costs.

The two leaders also addressed bilateral trade concerns. Trump's renewed tariffs targeting Chinese goods have indirectly affected Australian exporters, prompting Albanese to negotiate protections for industries such as steel, rare minerals, and agriculture. While no new trade agreement was signed, discussions appeared constructive, with Trump promising to "review tariffs in a way that keeps Australian jobs safe". Albanese also proposed a framework for mutual investment in green technology and manufacturing, linking it with Australia's broader decarbonisation strategy without explicitly challenging Washington's more protectionist tone.

The tone of the meeting was cordial, though layered with strategic tension. Albanese entered the meeting aware of Trump's unpredictable negotiating style and his administration's scepticism toward multilateral cooperation. Nevertheless, both leaders appeared eager to project harmony publicly. During their press appearance, Trump praised the "unbreakable bond" between the two nations, while Albanese highlighted shared democratic values and "a century of standing shoulder to shoulder in war and peace". Trump avoided public pressure on Albanese on Australia's defence spending and called Albanese "a great prime minister". Even Trump's

⁵ United States-Australia Framework for Security of Supply in the Mining and Processing of Critical Minerals and Rare Earths, October 20, 2025, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/2025/10/united-states-australia-framework-for-securing-of-supply-in-the-mining-and-processing-of-critical-minerals-and-rare-earths/>

antipathy for Australia's ambassador, Kevin Rudd, was papered over, with Rudd apologising to Trump and the latter accepting the apology.

For Australia, domestic optics were as important as diplomatic outcomes. By securing economic commitments from Washington and demonstrating leadership on defence, Albanese sought to strengthen his Labour government's credibility against opposition claims that it had been too slow in consolidating the relationship after Trump's re-election. Regionally, the visit occurred against the backdrop of increasing Chinese assertiveness. Beijing has tightened restrictions on rare-earth exports, and tensions over Taiwan and the South China Sea continue to dominate Indo-Pacific security debates. In this context, the critical minerals accord serves a dual purpose: securing economic opportunity for Australia while supporting Washington's broader strategy of reducing dependency on Chinese resources. The meeting also precedes a planned Trump–Xi summit in Seoul later this month, underscoring the timing of Albanese's visit as an effort to influence American policy before that encounter.

The success of this summit may serve as a stabilising moment in an otherwise volatile phase of Western cooperation. It demonstrated that pragmatic diplomacy – grounded in shared economic interests such as supply chain resilience – can bridge ideological divides between conservative and progressive administrations. However, underlying questions persist about how long Canberra can balance its security dependence on the US with its economic ties to China. Observers warn that future developments under both Trump's and Albanese's governments will determine whether this alliance renewal translates into enduring strategic stability.

In sum, the October 2025 Albanese visit to Washington reinforced the durability of the Australia–US relationship through tangible progress on defense and minerals cooperation while revealing ongoing tensions within that partnership. By combining economic pragmatism with cautious diplomacy, Albanese appeared to have recalled one of Canberra's oldest lessons: Australia thrives when it can align with Washington without becoming wholly dependent on it.

The Trump Takaichi Summit

One week after assuming charge as Japan's Prime Minister, Sanae Takaichi hosted US President Donald Trump for a bilateral visit, Trump's first to Asia in his second term. The visit was significant for the evolving US–Japan alliance, highlighting both continuity and new ambitions in regional diplomacy and economic policy. The summit meetings – Trump's first with Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi, Japan's newly inaugurated and first female leader – were conducted amidst shifting global trade dynamics and intensifying Indo-Pacific security concerns.

Trump's arrival in Tokyo was met with significant pomp, symbolising not just a diplomatic routine but a conscious reaffirmation of bilateral ties. From his meeting with Emperor Naruhito at the Imperial Palace to the full military honour guard welcome at the Akasaka Palace, the ceremonial dimension of the trip was striking. Takaichi, just days into office, leveraged the occasion to demonstrate both her statesmanship and Japan's intent to maintain a strong, mutually-respectful alliance with the United States. Trump, ever attuned to gestures, took evident pleasure in the careful choreography – a tribute to his own penchant for gold-plated symbolism and showmanship, furthered by “gift diplomacy” including exchanges of commemorative baseball caps and gold golf balls.

Central to the visit was Trump's first summit with Prime Minister Takaichi. The tone, as projected by both leaders, was cordial and optimistic. Trump effusively praised Takaichi's strength and wisdom, affirming that the alliance was in good hands. Takaichi, a protégé of the late Shinzo Abe, balanced her deference to the US with assertiveness in defending Japanese interests—her body language and confident handshake were widely analysed in Japanese media. Notably, some observers saw her warmth toward Trump as part strategy, part necessity: with growing uncertainty in global geopolitics, cultivating goodwill with the White House was critical for Japanese security and economic confidence.

Trade and investment figured prominently in summit discussions. Trump and Takaichi formalised a “golden age” framework for the U.S.-Japan relationship⁶, anchored by a limited 15% tariff arrangement for Japanese imports and an unprecedented \$550 billion Japanese fund earmarked for U.S. investments—particularly in pharmaceuticals, semiconductors, and energy. Not only did this package reflect Japan's pragmatic desire to secure the U.S. as an economic partner during rising Sino-American competition, but it also allowed Trump to frame the trip domestically as a major win for American jobs and industry. A standout component was the agreement on critical minerals and rare earth elements⁷, areas where both leaders stressed the urgency of securing supply chains outside of Chinese control. This deal, brief in writing but significant in scope, was heralded as a bulwark against future technological and geopolitical instability. The two countries also signed a Memorandum of Cooperation on technology prosperity, focused on accelerating AI adoption and innovation and trusted technology leadership⁸.

⁶ Implementation of the Agreement for a New Golden Age for the US-Japan Alliance, October 27, 2025, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/2025/10/implementation-of-the-agreement-toward-a-new-golden-age-for-the-u-s-japan-alliance/>

⁷ United States Japan Framework for Securing the Supply of Critical Minerals and Rare Earths Through Mining and Processing, October 27, 2025, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/2025/10/united-states-japan-framework-for-securing-the-supply-of-critical-minerals-and-rare-earths-through-mining-and-processing/>

⁸ Memorandum of Cooperation Regarding the Technology Prosperity Deal Between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of Japan, October 28, 2025, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/articles/2025/10/u-s-japan-technology-prosperity-deal/>



Security was, as ever, a central pillar of the summit. Trump, repeating prior criticisms about “one-sided” treaties, pressed for further Japanese defence contributions. Takaichi, while committing to advance the time frame of the existing pledge for defence spending (2% of GDP) by two years, affirmed her government’s intent to pursue an even tighter US-Japan security partnership and bolster Japan’s own deterrence capabilities. Concrete steps included discussions on joint naval exercises, expanded intelligence sharing, and multilateral cooperation through frameworks like the Quad (Japan-US-Australia-India) and trilaterals with South Korea and the Philippines. A potent symbol of this military focus was Trump’s appearance alongside Takaichi aboard the USS George Washington, an American aircraft carrier docked near Tokyo. Addressing U.S. troops, both leaders cast the alliance as the “greatest in the world,” committed to peace but ever-ready for shared defence.

Both leaders used the summit to bolster their reputations at home – Trump as a dealmaker-restorer of lost American glory, Takaichi as a competent, unifying national leader in a turbulent era. For Trump, it was a “victory lap”: he repeatedly alluded to upcoming meetings with China’s Xi Jinping and his “pivot to Asia” as evidence that U.S. leadership was back and stronger than ever. For Takaichi, successfully managing a high-profile summit so early in her tenure offered proof that Japan’s first female prime minister could go toe-to-toe with seasoned global leaders, all while promoting Japanese industry and interests.

Public and expert reaction in both countries was mixed but generally positive. Commentators heralded the rare earths partnership and increased investment as pragmatic and farsighted. Some U.S. critics pointed out that the headline investment figure (\$550 billion) did not specify timelines or enforcement mechanisms, casting doubt on how much would materialise in practice. In Japan, cautious optimism prevailed, tempered by reminders that deepening U.S. ties cannot substitute for broader international diversification. Human rights groups took note of Trump’s brief meeting with families of Japanese citizens abducted by North Korea – a nod to longstanding Japanese domestic concerns, though with little prospect for concrete progress.

The Trump-Takaichi summit marks the start of a possibly transformational era for bilateral relations, rooted in pragmatism and mutual need as much as values. It demonstrates a shared recognition of Asia’s centrality to 21st-century economic and security affairs. The emphasis on supply chain resilience and military cooperation sets the tone for future regional alignment; yet, real tests loom as both governments seek to turn ambitious announcements into practical achievements. A successful visit by all visible measures, the summit ultimately highlights the durability and evolving character of the U.S.-Japan alliance in an uncertain world. Whether it ushers in more than a “golden age” in name alone will depend on policy follow-through, evolving global power balances, and the unscripted challenges that will confront both leaders in the years ahead.

The Trump Xi Jinping Summit

The long talked about and much-hyped summit between US President Donald Trump and Chinese President Xi Jinping took place at the Gimhae Air Base in Busan, South Korea, on October 30. The 100-minute summit marks a significant waypoint in US-China relations, with ramifications for global trade, strategic competition and international diplomacy. It was the first in-person encounter between Trump and Xi in six years, during a period defined by an escalating trade war, technology disputes and geopolitical friction.

The leaders met in the backdrop of the Gyeongju meeting of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit; a forum historically dedicated to advancing free trade and economic cooperation. Recent years have, however, seen the US adopting protectionist measures and China doubling down on its state-led economic model; these shifts have unsettled global markets and tested the very foundations of APEC. Heading into their meeting, both leaders described it as an opportunity for a “great success” and a “reset for globalisation in the post-Covid era”. On completion, Xi Jinping went on to attend the APEC summit, while Trump headed back to Washington DC.

The atmosphere was cordial. Both Trump and Xi exchanged warm pleasantries, with Trump lauding his counterpart as “a great leader of a great country” and Xi expressing his “great pleasure” at reconnecting after a long hiatus⁹. For observers, the personal rapport was as notable as the strategic substance, signalling a desire on both sides to break the ice and craft a working relationship after years of cold exchanges.

Major items on the agenda included the dispute over tariffs and access to rare earth minerals. For months, China’s restrictions on rare earth exports – China controls 90% of the world’s production of rare earths – had triggered waves of punitive tariffs from the Trump administration, sending shockwaves through global supply chains and industries. During the Busan meeting, Trump announced a one-year deal on rare earths, saying that “all the rare earths have been settled,” with provisions to re-negotiate annually. In addition, Trump revealed a cut in fentanyl-related tariffs on China to 10 percent, bringing the overall level of tariffs on Chinese products down to 47 percent, reversing previous increases designed to curb illicit trade that had exacerbated tensions. These outcomes indicate a pragmatic approach: both sides sought limited, targeted progress rather than sweeping agreements.

Beyond rare earths, the summit addressed other critical side issues. The leaders pledged to collaborate on resolving the Ukraine conflict, with Trump highlighting strong dialogue and mutual commitments to seek solutions. Another major topic was the sale of TikTok’s U.S. operations, a long-standing point of tension over national

⁹ President Xi Jinping Meets with US President Donald J. Trump in Busan, October 30, 2025, https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/xw/zyxw/202510/t20251030_11743886.html

security concerns and data sovereignty. Reports indicate that both sides expect a final deal to be reached, potentially offering a model for handling cross-border technology disputes in the future. Trump also secured Chinese commitments to resume purchases of U.S. soybeans, a move welcomed by American farmers and markets hit by trade disruptions. In his typical upbeat fashion, Trump described the summit as a great success, with its outcomes measuring at 12 on a scale of ten.

Notably, the topic of Taiwan—often a flashpoint in US-China relations—was not formally discussed during this closed-door summit, according to Trump. While both sides have clashed over arms sales and strategic ambiguity regarding the island, their choice to avoid this divisive issue illustrates the delicate balancing act underpinning these talks. It also reflects a broader trend: the summit prioritised practical trade and economic topics, leaving more intractable geopolitical disputes for future negotiation.

Financial markets responded optimistically to news of rare earth and tariff agreements, with Chinese stocks soaring to decade highs and global indices—from Wall Street to Tokyo—hitting record levels. The hope is that easing trade uncertainty will stabilise supply chains and boost business confidence, offering a rare bright spot in a landscape marked by strategic unpredictability.

Both Trump and Xi signalled intentions to continue dialogue. Trump announced plans to visit China in April, with Xi expected to reciprocate with a US visit soon thereafter. These future engagements will be closely watched, as negotiators attempt to build upon the “framework agreement” reached in Busan and avoid backsliding into confrontation.

For Trump, the summit offers a chance to claim diplomatic progress and economic wins going into a turbulent election cycle. For Xi, finding ways to deescalate the trade war and secure stable access to key resources underpins his narrative of a responsible global leader. The limited scope of agreements—a one-year rare earths deal, temporary tariff cuts, and technology negotiations—reflects the deep structural rivalries between the two powers. Observers are cautious: while the meeting may reset the tone, fundamental disagreements over economic systems, national security, and global leadership remain unresolved.

The 2025 Trump-Xi summit did not solve the array of disputes defining US-China ties, but it did bring temporary calm to the relationship and set the stage for ongoing negotiation. In a global environment marked by volatility and division, even incremental progress represents a meaningful achievement. The point to note, however, is that the US remains far more dependent on China for rare earths, whose supply has been effectively weaponised to suit China's purpose, than China depends on US exports. The world will continue to watch as both nations navigate the delicate path between competition and collaboration, with far-reaching consequences for trade, technology, and international norms.



India Australia Defence Ministers' Dialogue

The 2014 framework for security cooperation between India and Australia calls for regular meetings of Defence Ministers¹⁰. Australia's Defence Minister Richard Marles has visited India twice: the first time in November 2023 for the 2nd 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue, and the second time for a bilateral visit in June 2025. India's Defence Minister Shri Rajnath Singh reciprocated with a visit to Australia on October 09-10, 2025¹¹, the first by an Indian Defence Minister since AK Antony visited Australia in June 2013. The landmark visit marks a significant step forward in India-Australia relations, reflecting a transformation from partnership to collaboration in the strategic, industrial and technology domains, setting the stage for an era of joint defence innovation and Indo-Pacific security.

Ties between India and Australia have deepened significantly since the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership was established in 2020. The two countries share the view that many of the future challenges are likely to occur in and emanate from the maritime domain, in which both countries have agreed to boost cooperation. Both countries have also agreed to deepen and broaden defence cooperation by enhancing the scope and complexity of their military exercises and engagement activities to address shared security challenges. The objective is to promote peace, security, stability and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific, where both countries have a shared interest in maintaining a free, open, inclusive and rules-based region. Both countries seek to ensure freedom of navigation and overflight and maintain open, safe and efficient sea lanes for transportation and communication. Both countries are committed to supporting a rules-based maritime order that is based on respect for sovereignty and international law, particularly the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). Their shared concerns include terrorism, piracy, drugs and arms smuggling, irregular migration, people smuggling, trafficking in human beings, poaching of marine species, narcotics trafficking, IUU fishing and the Indo-Pacific's environmental challenges – in short, the complete range of non-traditional challenges to security. Notably, traditional security challenges do not form part of the declared shared vision¹².

The ministers discussed a Joint Maritime Security Collaboration Roadmap to advance maritime cooperation and looked forward to their leaders renewing and

¹⁰ Framework for Security Cooperation between Australia and India, November 18, 2014, <https://www.dfat.gov.au/geo/india/Pages/framework-for-security-cooperation-between-australia-and-india-2014>

¹¹ India-Australia Defence Ministers' Joint Statement, October 09, 2025, <https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2176670>

¹² Joint Declaration on a Shared Vision for Maritime Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific between the Republic of India and the Government of Australia, June 04, 2020, <https://www.dfat.gov.au/geo/india/joint-declaration-shared-vision-maritime-cooperation-indo-pacific-between-republic-india-and-government-australia>

strengthening the Joint Declaration on Defence and Security Cooperation. They upgraded the annual official-level defence policy dialogue to an annual Defence Ministers' Dialogue. They welcomed the signing of the Australia India Implementing Arrangement on Mutual Submarine Rescue Support and Cooperation, and welcomed progress in operationalising the Australia-India Implementing Arrangement on Air-to-Air Refuelling signed in 2024. They welcomed the establishment of Joint Staff Talks as a forum to progress joint exercises, operations and interoperability across all domains.

Australia welcomed India's participation in Exercise Talisman Sabre in 2025 and looked forward to India's participation in 2027. India welcomed Australia's invitation to participate in submarine rescue exercise Black Carillon. The ministers welcomed the RAAF's participation in IAF Exercise Tarang Shakti in 2024, as well as the participation of the RAN and IN in navy-to-navy engagements in 2026. They welcomed additional Indian students at the Australian Defence College in 2026, as well as a position at the Australian Defence Force Academy for the first time in 2027.

The ministers welcomed Australia's first defence trade mission to India in October 2025, as well as the inaugural India Pavilion at Australia's Land Forces Expo 2024 as reflecting growth in the bilateral defence industry relationship. Both agreed to pursue defence collaboration in contemporary technology. Australia thanked India for the offer of maintenance, repair and overhaul of RAN ships in Indian shipyards during their deployment in the Indian Ocean Region.

The ministers expressed their pleasure at collaborative maritime domain awareness and anti-submarine warfare activities by their maritime patrol aircraft in the Indian Ocean. They agreed to continue aircraft deployment from each other's territories to build operational familiarity. They looked forward to collaborative activity on maritime domain awareness during Exercise Malabar 2025 in November. Australia welcomed the opportunity to observe the India-US exercise Cope India in 2025 for the first time, alongside Japan.

Participating in the maiden India-Australia Defence Industry Business Round Table in Sydney, Rajnath Singh highlighted the huge potential for joint research, development and production of advanced defence systems¹³. He encouraged companies from both countries to collaborate on high-end technologies – AI, cyber security, autonomous systems and next-generation platforms.

The Indian Defence Minister's visit to Australia shows steady progress in shoring up bilateral security ties, bridging not just geography and strategy, but also industry and innovation. An upgraded joint declaration on defence and security cooperation appears to be in the offing. It is evident that India-Australia cooperation is destined

¹³ Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh addresses the maiden India-Australia Defence industry Business Round Table in Sydney, October 10, 2025,
<https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2177149>

to grow. This development will significantly impact the shape of security in the Indo-Pacific in the years ahead.

Exercise Konkan 2025

In July 2025, the Prime Ministers of India and UK signed on to the India-UK Vision 2035¹⁴. The vision statement committed to enhancing interoperability and readiness by continuing to conduct military joint exercises. It further reaffirmed India as a regional hub for sustainment of logistics support to UK armed forces presence in the Indian Ocean Region. The recently conducted Exercise Konkan 2025 was manifestation of both aspects of this vision.

Exercise Konkan began in 2004 as a bilateral event aimed at fostering operational understanding between the Indian and British navies. Originally conducted biennially alternately in Indian and British waters, it has grown in sophistication over the last two decades and now incorporates complex seamanship evolutions as well as advanced elements across the sub-surface, surface, air and electronic dimensions of maritime warfare. It serves to build familiarity, goodwill and compatibility between the two navies, while enabling the Indian Navy to benchmark its tactical thinking against that of an advanced partner navy

The 2025 edition of the exercise was conducted in two phases from October 05-12¹⁵. Unusually, the sea phase took place first, from October 05-08 in the Arabian Sea. The Indian Navy (IN) fielded IN ships Vikrant with Mig-29 fighters and Ka-31 AEW helicopters, Tushil, Teg, Kolkata, Imphal, Deepak and a submarine¹⁶, the largest contingent for any edition of Exercise Konkan. The RN fielded HM ships Prince of Wales and Richmond with F-35B fighters and Merlin and Wildcat helicopters as well as RFA Tidespring, making this the first time ever that aircraft carriers from both the Indian and Royal Navies participated in a joint exercise. The dual carrier strike group collaboration enabled the conduct of high-tempo tactical air warfare, Beyond Visual Range air combat, joint surface and subsurface manoeuvres, and integrated air defence and reconnaissance operations. Other participating units included JS Akebono and HNoMS Roald Amundsen, both part of the HMS Prince of Wales Carrier Strike Group. Exercises included advanced operational drills such as anti-air, anti-surface, and anti-submarine warfare exercises, tactical air warfare, flying operations, deck-based air defense, replenishment-at-sea, coordinated maneuvering, and surface gunnery shoots.

¹⁴ India-UK Vision 2035, July 24, 2025, https://www.mea.gov.in/bilateral-documents.htm?dtl/39846/INDIAUK_VISION_2035

¹⁵ Exercise Konkan 2025 Commences on the Western Seaboard, October 05, 2025, <https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2175054>

¹⁶ Japan-UK-India-Norway Multilateral Exercise, October 09, 2025, <https://www.mod.go.jp/msdf/en/release/202510/20251009en.pdf>

A harbour phase followed at Mumbai and Goa from October 09-12. This included professional interactions, cross-deck visits, sports fixtures, cultural engagements, Joint Working Group meetings and subject matter expert exchanges. The HMS Prince of Wales CSG separately conducted a joint exercise in the Arabian Sea with the Indian Air Force on October 14. On completion, it set out homeward, marking the approaching end of its eight-month deployment to the Indo-Pacific.

Exercise Konkan has joined the ranks of advanced bilateral and multilateral exercises India conducts with developed navies, including Ausindex with Australia, Varuna with France, Jimex with Japan, Indra with Russia, Tiger Triumph with the US, Malabar with the Quad countries, and La Perouse led by France. It enables India and the UK to reaffirm their role as net security providers in the Indo-Pacific, sending a signal of deterrence and collective resolve to uphold the rules-based international order, freedom of navigation and building stability against maritime threats. It also provides a platform to experiment with new tactics, strategies and technologies, strengthening the warfighting edge of both navies and facilitating multinational coalition building for future contingencies.

Other Indo-Pacific Developments

Japan Gets First Female Prime Minister. Having been elected as the leader of Japan's Liberal Democratic Party on October 04, Sanae Takaichi was elected as Japan's 104th Prime Minister and the first woman to hold the post on October 21¹⁷. A protégé of the late Shinzo Abe, Takaichi received 237 votes in the 465 seat lower house and 125 votes in the 248 seat upper house. Her cabinet includes Shinjiro Koizumi as the Defence Minister, Toshimitsu Motegi as the Foreign Minister, Yoshimasa Hayashi as the Minister for Internal Affairs and Communications, and Minoru Kihara as the Chief Cabinet Secretary. Satsuki Katayama becomes the country's first female Finance Minister. Amongst the first actions of the new government was announcing the decision to revise Japan's three key security documents – the National Security Strategy, the National Defense Strategy and the Defense Buildup Program – by the end of 2026¹⁸. The government also announced that it is considering accelerating the target of increasing defence spending to 2% of the GDP by the end of this fiscal year, instead of 2027 as planned earlier.

¹⁷ Designation of the Prime Minister, October 21, 2025,

<https://japan.kantei.go.jp/104/actions/202510/21shimei.html>

¹⁸ Takaichi to put defense push in spotlight in bid to satiate Trump demands, October 23, 2025,

<https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2025/10/23/japan/politics/japan-pm-takaichi-defense-spending/>



India-US Major Defence Partnership Framework Agreement. India's Defence Minister Shri Rajnath Singh met with US Secretary of War Pete Hegseth at Kuala Lumpur on the sidelines of the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus on October 31¹⁹. The two leaders signed the 10-year framework for the US-India major defence partnership, intended to provide a unified vision and policy direction to deepen bilateral defence cooperation.

Seychelles President. Seychelles' opposition leader Patrick Herminie defeated Wavel Ramkalawan in a run-off vote on October 12, becoming the country's sixth president²⁰. Herminie won 52.7% of the vote, while Ramkalawan received 47.3%. The victory gives Herminie's United Seychelles Party full control of the government after it reclaimed a majority in parliament during the first round of general elections last month.

Madagascar Coup. Madagascar's history of political instability since its independence in 1960 was marked by yet another coup in October 2025. The crisis began after weeks of massive youth-led demonstrations across the country, attributed to persistent poverty, widespread corruption and crippling shortages of electricity and water, demanding the resignation of President Andry Rajoelina. The government attempted to suppress dissent with force, leading to violence escalating and dozens dead and injured. The turning point came when Colonel Michael Randrianirina, commander of Madagascar's elite CAPSAT unit announced that the military had seized power to restore stability and act on behalf of the people. A parliamentary vote impeached President Rajoelina who fled the country, reportedly with assistance from France. Colonel Randrianirina announced dissolution of the major state institutions and his intention of forming a transitional council comprising military and gendarmerie officers, and was sworn in as President on October 17²¹. The council pledged to appoint a prime minister and establish a civilian government that would oversee the country till elections scheduled within two years. The African Union suspended Madagascar's membership, condemning the military's actions as unconstitutional.

Sri Lanka PM Visit. Sri Lanka's Prime Minister Harini Amarasuriya called on India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi at New Delhi on October 17²². The two leaders

¹⁹ Raksha Mantri and US Secretary of War meet on the margins of 12th ADMM-Plus in Kuala Lumpur, October 31, 2025, <https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2184622>

²⁰ Seychelles' Patrick Herminie wins presidential run-off election, October 12, 2025, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/10/12/seychelless-patrick-herminie-wins-presidential-run-off-election>

²¹ Madagascar coup leader Randrianirina sworn in as president, October 17, 2025, <https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/madagascar-military-ruler-randrianirina-sworn-president-reuters-witness-2025-10-17/>

²² Prime Minister of Sri Lanka calls on Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, October 17, 2025, <https://www.mea.gov.in/press->

discussed measures to strengthen cooperation in a number of areas, including education, technology, innovation development cooperation and welfare of fishermen.

Australia-Singapore. Australia and Singapore commemorated the 60th anniversary of their relations by upgrading their partnership to a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership 2.0 during the visit of Singapore Prime Minister Lawrence Wong to Australia on October 08²³. The upgraded CSP strengthens five pillars: contributing to regional peace and security including defence cooperation; expanding the economic partnership; acting together on climate change; strengthening cooperation in new domains including pandemic preparedness, research, AI and emerging technologies; and furthering partnerships between public service, universities and art institutions. New agreements on Enhanced Defence Cooperation and Economic Resilience were signed. The two countries will improve their military's reciprocal access to facilities.

Malaysia US Elevate Bilateral Relations. Malaysia and the US elevated their relations to a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership on October 26. They had formalised a comprehensive partnership in 2014²⁴. Areas covered under the CSP include trade and investment, advanced technology, defence and security, energy security, regional peace and stability, and people-to-people ties.

India's National Statement at 20th East Asia Summit. India's national statement at the 20th East Asia Summit was delivered by External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar on October 27. India welcomed Timor Leste to the forum, brought out concerns about the reliability of supply chains and access to markets, ongoing conflicts and terrorism, principles being applied selectively and the difference between what was preached and practised. Fully supporting the activities of the East Asia Summit, India highlighted its commitment to furthering maritime cooperation in line with the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific and 1982 UNCLOS.

Thailand Cambodia Border Dispute. Prime Ministers Hun Manet of Cambodia and Anutin Charnvirakul of Thailand met in Kuala Lumpur on October 26 to sign an agreement to move towards resolving longstanding hostilities over their shared

[releases.htm?dtl/40222/Prime_Minister_of_Sri_Lanka_calls_on_Prime_Minister_Shri_Narendra_Modi_October_17_2025](#)

²³ Joint Declaration by the Prime Ministers of Australia and Singapore on the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership 2.0, October 08, 2025, <https://www.pm.gov.au/media/joint-declaration-prime-ministers-australia-and-singapore-comprehensive-strategic-partnership>

²⁴ Malaysia and United States Elevate Bilateral Relations to Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, October 26, 2025, <https://www.kln.gov.my/web/guest/-/malaysia-and-the-united-states-elevates-bilateral-relations-to-comprehensive-strategic-partnership>

border²⁵. The signing was witnessed by US President Donald Trump. Trump also signed trade agreements with Cambodia, Thailand and Malaysia during his visit.

US South Korea Technology Prosperity Deal. The US and South Korea signed a technology prosperity deal on October 29, during the visit of US President Donald Trump to South Korea²⁶. He had signed a similar deal with Japan in Tokyo a day earlier. The focus of both is accelerating AI adoption and innovation as well as trusted technology leadership.

South Korea to Build US Nuclear Submarines. US President Donald Trump announced on October 30 that Washington will share its closely held nuclear technology with Seoul to allow it to build nuclear powered submarines in the Philadelphia Shipyard in the US²⁷. The shipyard was acquired by South Korea's Hanwha group late last year as part of South Korea's investment in US shipbuilding. Trump and South Korean President Lee Jae Myung also agreed on the need for Seoul to secure fuel for nuclear-powered submarines. South Korea has the ambition of building its own fleet of SSNs to patrol and defend the Yellow Sea and the Sea of Japan.

Japan South Korea Summit. Japan's Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi met with South Korea's President Lee Jae Myung at Gyeongju on October 30, on the sidelines of the APEC Summit²⁸. The two leaders concurred on managing their differences and developing Japan-ROK relations in a future-oriented and stable manner, based on the foundation that has been established since normalisation of their relations. The agreed on actively promoting shuttle diplomacy and continuing close communication between the two governments.

Australia-PNG Mutual Defence Treaty. Australia and Papua New Guinea signed on to a mutual defence treaty at Canberra on October 06²⁹, during the visit of PNG Prime Minister James Marape to Australia. The text of the treaty recognises that an armed attack on either of the parties within the Pacific would be dangerous to each other's peace and security and commits them to consult to meet the common danger, in

²⁵ Under Trump's Aegis, Cambodia and Thailand Agree to Resolve Border Dispute, October 26, 2025, <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/10/26/world/asia/trump-cambodia-thailand.html>

²⁶ Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Republic of Korea regarding the US-ROK Technology Prosperity Deal, October 29, 2025, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/articles/2025/10/u-s-korea-technology-prosperity-deal/>

²⁷ South Korea to build nuclear-powered subs in the US, Trump says, October 30, 2025, <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2025/10/30/asia-pacific/south-korea-us-nuclear-powered-submarines/>

²⁸ Japan-ROK Summit Meeting (Summary), October 30, 2025, <https://japan.kantei.go.jp/104/diplomatic/202510/30rok.html>

²⁹ Australia and Papua New Guinea sign Mutual Defence Treaty, October 06, 2025, <https://www.pm.gov.au/media/australia-and-papua-new-guinea-sign-mutual-defence-treaty>

accordance with their constitutional processes³⁰. In doing so, it falls short of the collective commitment that an attack on one party would be considered an attack on both. It further commits both parties to engage in defence cooperation activities to build a long-term mutually beneficial partnership in defence. The treaty, a PNG initiative, effectively makes PNG Australia's third alliance partner, after the US and New Zealand, and cements Australia's defensive shield to the Northeast.

Fiji Australia Defence Ministers' Meeting. Defence Ministers of Australia and Fiji met at Suva on October 03³¹. They reviewed the status of defence cooperation between their countries and agreed that Fiji will embed a Royal Fiji Military Forces company with Australia's 7th Brigade in 2026.

South Pacific Defence Ministers' Meeting. Defence Ministers / representatives from Australia, Chile, Fiji, France, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea and Tonga met at Vinã Del Mar for the 10th South Pacific Defence Ministers' Meeting from October 22-24³². They were joined by observers from Japan, UK and the US.

World Economic Outlook. The October 2025 edition of the IMF's World Economic Outlook was launched on October 14. The outlook projects the world's economic growth rate slowing from 3.3% in 2024 to 3.2% in 2025 and 3.1% in 2026³³. India remains the world's fastest growing large economy, with growth rate accelerating to 6.6% in 2025 but slowing to 6.2% in 2026.

Japan's Submarine Plans. A report indicates that an expert Japanese panel has recommended equipping its future submarines with long-range vertically launched strike missiles as well as advanced propulsion, including nuclear³⁴. The panel's report was submitted to Japan's Defence Ministry in September 2025. Sanae Takaichi, Japan's Prime Minister, has said in the past that she views the idea of possessing nuclear submarines favourably. Japan's current generation of submarines are equipped with torpedo tube-launched anti-ship missiles and Lithium ion batteries.

³⁰ Papua New Guinea – Australia Mutual Defence Treaty, also known as the Pukpuk Treaty, <https://www.dfat.gov.au/sites/default/files/png-australia-mutual-defence-treaty.pdf>

³¹ Joint Statement: Fiji-Australia Defence Ministers' Meeting, October 03, 2025, <https://www.minister.defence.gov.au/statements/2025-10-03/joint-statement-fiji-australia-defence-ministers-meeting>

³² Joint Communique – South Pacific Defence Ministers' Meeting, October 25, 2025, <https://www.minister.defence.gov.au/statements/2025-10-25/joint-communique-south-pacific-defence-ministers-meeting>

³³ World Economic Outlook October 2025, <https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/WEO/Issues/2025/10/14/world-economic-outlook-october-2025>

³⁴ With nuclear sub proposal, Japan faces array of political and tech challenges, October 08, 2025, <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2025/10/08/japan/japan-nuclear-submarines-analysis/>

Japan's Defence Exports. The policy chief of Japan's ruling party the LDP has indicated a strong intent to liberalise Japan's defence export policy by revising or potentially scrapping the long-standing three principles on transfer of defence equipment and technology as well as guidelines on implementing the rules. The desire to revise the three principles was also voiced by Japan's new Defence Minister Shinjiro Koizumi during his first press conference³⁵.

Quad Ports of the Future Conference. India hosted the first Quad Ports of the Future Conference at Mumbai on October 30, bringing together 120 delegates from 24 Indo-Pacific countries to discuss ways to build resilient, secure and future-ready ports³⁶. Discussions focused on advancing a shared Quad vision for the maritime sector.

Houthi Red Sea Attack. A Houthi cruise missile attack on the Dutch ship M/V Minervagracht on September 29 in the Gulf of Aden left the ship on fire, disabled and adrift and the crew being evacuated to other ships³⁷. The ship subsequently sank and one crew member succumbed to injuries. The Houthis claimed that the vessel had violated their ban on ship entering 'occupied Palestine'.

Chinese Coast Guard Cutters Ram Philippines Fishery Vessels Near Thitu Island. Chinese Coast Guard cutters rammed and water cannoned two Philippine fishery vessels near Thitu Island on October 11³⁸. Thitu hosts Manila's primary base in the Spratly Islands and is also home to several hundred Philippine nationals who rely on fishing for their livelihood. China's artificial base at Subi Reef is barely 12 NM from Thitu.

Australia Protests Unsafe Behaviour by Chinese Aircraft. China's Southern Theatre Command claimed to have expelled an Australia P-8 Poseidon aircraft that illegally intruded into China's airspace over the Xisha Qundao (Paracel Islands) on October 19³⁹. On its part, Australia protested about Chinese military aircraft releasing flares in close proximity to its patrol aircraft over international waters in the South China Sea⁴⁰. The incident occurred a day before Australian Prime Minister Anthony

³⁵ Koizumi Keen to Ease Rules on Defence Equipment Exports, October 23, 2025, <https://www.nippon.com/en/news/yj2025102201148/>

³⁶ India Hosts first Quad Ports of the Future Conference with delegates from 24 Indo-Pacific nations, October 30, 2025, <https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/blue-economy/india-hosts-first-quad-ports-of-the-future-conference-with-delegates-from-24-indo-pacific-nations>

³⁷ Houthis Attack Dutch Ship in the Red Sea, October 02, 2025, <https://news.usni.org/2025/10/02/houthis-attack-dutch-ship-in-the-red-sea>

³⁸ Chinese Cutters Ram Philippine fishery Vessels in Spratly Islands, October 14, 2025, <https://news.usni.org/2025/10/14/chinese-cutters-ram-philippine-fishery-vessels-in-spratly-islands>

³⁹ China expels Australian P-8A in South China Sea, October 20, 2025, http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/2025xb/H_251454/L_251456/16416496.html

⁴⁰ Australia accuses China of 'unsafe' military jet manoeuvres, October 20, 2025, <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c4gk98j083jo>

Albanese's meeting with US President Donald Trump in the White House. Australia has consistently maintained, as has the US, that China's claims in the South China Sea have no legal basis.

North Korea Tests Hypersonic Missiles. A day after the inauguration of Japan's new prime minister Sanae Takaichi, North Korea test fired two hypersonic missiles on October 22⁴¹.

Japan India Bilateral Exercise. Japan's Self Defence Forces exercised with INS Sahyadri off the Southwest Coast of Japan from October 16-18⁴². JSDF representation included JS Asahi, JS Oumi, submarine Jinryu and elements of the JGSDF and JASDF. The exercise will further deepen peacekeeping cooperation.

L&T General Atomics Partnership for MALE UAV Manufacture in India. Larsen & Toubro and the US based General Atomics Aeronautical Systems Inc. entered into a strategic partnership to manufacture Medium Altitude Long Endurance (MALE) Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems (RPAS) in India, for the Indian Armed Forces⁴³. Under this partnership, L&T will participate in the upcoming 87 MALE RPAS programme of the MoD, where L&T will be the prime bidder and GA-ASI the technology partner.

Commissioning of INS Androth. INS Androth, the second ASW Shallow Water Craft built by GRSE Kolkata, was commissioned at Visakhapatnam on October 06⁴⁴. At 77 metres in length and displacing about 1500 tonnes, the ship is designed to undertake a range of anti-submarine operations in coastal and shallow waters.

Decommissioning of IN Ships. INS Abhay and INFAC T-82 were decommissioned at Mumbai on October 06, after rendering more than three and two decades of service respectively⁴⁵.

IFC-IOR Foreign Liaison Officers. The first International Liaison Officer representing Kenya was inducted into IFC-IOR on September 30⁴⁶. Major Brian Lekarie Twalsh brings the foreign complement of IFC-IOR to 15 officers, representing Australia,

⁴¹ North Korea Tests Hypersonic Missile System, October 23, 2025,

<https://news.usni.org/2025/10/23/north-korea-tests-hypersonic-missile-system>

⁴² Japan-India Bilateral Exercise JAIMEX 25, October 20, 2025,

<https://www.mod.go.jp/msdf/en/release/202510/20251020en.pdf>

⁴³ L&T and GA-ASI Announce Strategic Partnership for MALE RPAS Manufacture in India, October 31, 2025,

⁴⁴ Commissioning of INS Androth, Second ASW Shallow Water Craft, October 06, 2025,

<https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2175480>

⁴⁵ INS Abhay and INFAC T-82 decommissioned, October 06, 2025,

<https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2176497>

⁴⁶ https://x.com/IFC_IOR/status/1972972709584740429

Bangladesh, France, Italy, Japan, Kenya, Maldives, Mauritius, Seychelles, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, UK, USA and Myanmar.

US Marine Force Rotational Deployment Darwin. The 2,500 strong US Marine Rotational Force at Darwin completed its six month deployment and headed for home on October 07⁴⁷. The force will return to Australia in early 2026.

China's Escort Mission in the Gulf of Aden. China's 48th escort mission comprising a destroyer, a frigate and a supply vessel sailed from Qingdao for the Gulf of Aden on October 11⁴⁸. The mission, which has been maintained from 2008 onwards, provides China a presence in the Horn of Africa region.

USN Aircraft Crashes. A US Navy MH-60R helicopter and an F/A-18 F Hornet fighter aircraft, both from the USS Nimitz CSG, crashed about 30 minutes apart in the South China Sea on October 26⁴⁹. All crew members were recovered. Fuel supply problems are thought to be behind the two crashes.

DAC Approval. India's Defence Acquisition Council accorded approval for proposals worth Rs 79,000 crores (about \$ 9 billion) on October 23⁵⁰. For the Navy, these included the procurement of Landing Platform Docks (LPDs) to be built in an Indian shipyard, guns, torpedoes and smart ammunition.

Exercise Austrahind. The fourth edition of India-Australia joint military exercise Austrahind took place near Perth, Australia from October 13-26⁵¹. An Indian Army contingent of 120 personnel, mainly from the Gorkha Rifles, participated. The exercise focused on joint company level operations in open and semi-desert terrain, providing opportunity to hone operational capabilities, integrate emerging technologies and operate jointly in a combat environment.

USN-IN Exercise. The US and Indian navies completed a bilateral training exercise featuring USN P-8A Poseidon and IN P-8I Neptune near Diego Garcia in the Indian

⁴⁷ US Marines head home after six months in the region, October 07, 2025, <https://www.defence.gov.au/news-events/releases/2025-10-07/us-marines-head-home-after-six-months-region>

⁴⁸ China sends new navy fleet on escort mission in Gulf of Aden, waters near Somalia, October 11, 2025, http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/2025xb/C_251453/M_251459/16414642.html

⁴⁹ Super Hornet, Helicopter Assigned to USS Nimitz Crash in South China Sea in Separate Incidents, Crew Safe, October 26, 2025, <https://news.usni.org/2025/10/26/super-hornet-helicopter-assigned-to-uss-nimitz-crash-in-south-china-sea-in-separate-incidents-crew-safe>

⁵⁰ DAC clears proposals worth about Rs 79,000 crores to enhance the capability of the Armed Forces, October 23, 2025, <https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2181814>

⁵¹ Indian Army Contingent Departs for India-Australia Joint Military Exercise Austrahind at Australia, October 12, 2025, <https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2178040>



Ocean, held from October 22-28⁵². Both teams engaged in intensive anti-submarine warfare and maritime domain awareness drills designed to enhance operational interoperability and information sharing between the two navies.

India's Maritime Interaction with Foreign Countries

Dates	IN Ships/Units	Port Visited	Remarks
28 Sep – 01 Oct	Trikand ⁵³	Taranto, Italy	Mediterranean deployment
29 Sep – 26 Oct	Sutlej ⁵⁴	Port Louis, Mauritius	Hydrographic Survey
02-05 Oct	Sahyadri ⁵⁵	Kemaman, Malaysia	Indo-Pacific deployment
03-05 Oct	Kadmatt ⁵⁶	Makassar, Indonesia	Indo-Pacific deployment
06-09 Oct	Trikand ⁵⁷	Safaga, Egypt	Mediterranean deployment
11-14 Oct	ICGS Sachet ⁵⁸	Maputo, Mozambique	Carrying HADR material
13-16 Oct	Sahyadri	Busan, South Korea	Maiden bilateral exercise with ROK Navy
14-17 Oct	Kavaratti, KRI John Lie ⁵⁹	Off Visakhapatnam	5 th India-Indonesia Ex Samudra Shakti
16-18 Oct	Sahyadri, JS Asahi, JS Oumi, JS Jinryu ⁶⁰	Off Yokosuka	Sea Phase of bilateral ex JAIMEX 2025

⁵² U.S. 7th Fleet Public Affairs. "U.S., Indian Navies Conduct Bilateral Training near Diego Garcia". October 28, 2025. <https://www.c7f.navy.mil/Media/News/Display/Article/4325918/us-indian-navies-conduct-bilateral-training-near-diego-garcia/>.

⁵³ Indian Navy Ship Trikanth visits Taranto, Italy, October 02, 2025, <https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2174284>

⁵⁴ INS Sutlej Arrives Port Louis for 18th Joint Hydrographic Survey Mission in Mauritius, October 02, 2025, <https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2174132>

⁵⁵ Indian Naval Ship Sahyadri visits Kemaman, Malaysia Operational Deployment to South China Sea and Indo-Pacific, October 05, 2025, <https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2174949>

⁵⁶ Spokesperson of the Indian Navy- Twitter. October 7, 2025. <https://x.com/indiannavy/status/1975544914168717618>

⁵⁷ Spokesperson of the Indian Navy- Twitter. October 8, 2025. <https://x.com/indiannavy/status/1975896363725631541>

⁵⁸ ICGS Sachet makes port call at Maputo, strengthens maritime cooperation with Mozambique, October 11, 2025, <https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2177871>

⁵⁹ Indian Navy hosts fifth edition of bilateral exercise Samudra Shakti – 2025 with Indonesian Navy at Visakhapatnam, October 15, 2025, <https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2179326>

⁶⁰ Japan India Maritime Exercise (JAIMEX) – 2025, October 22, 2025, <https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2181539>



21-24 Oct	Sahyadri ⁶¹	Yokosuka	Indo-Pacific deployment
28-31 Oct	Sahyadri ⁶²	Sasebo	

⁶¹ Ibid

⁶² Spokesperson of the Indian Navy- Twitter. October 29, 2025.
<https://x.com/indiannavy/status/1983534629190783252>



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