



Delhi Policy Group

Advancing India's Rise as a Leading Power



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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 Image:

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi welcomes Vietnam's Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh at Hyderabad House, New Delhi on August 01, 2024. Source: MEA Photo Gallery

The US Abraham Lincoln Carrier Strike Group and Italian Cavour Carrier Strike Group and their aircraft in formation in the Pacific, August 9, 2024. Source: US Navy

Australia's Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister Richard Marles and Indonesia's Defence Minister and President-elect Prabowo Subianto sign the new Bilateral Defence Cooperation Agreement in Indonesia, August 29, 2024.

Source: @RichardMarlesMP

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INDO-PACIFIC MONITOR

August 2024

Abstract

The month witnessed three major political upheavals in Indo-Pacific countries. In Bangladesh, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina fled the country following violent protests, leading to the installation of an interim regime led by Nobel Laureate Mohammed Yunus backed by the Bangladesh army. In Thailand, Paetongtarn Shinawatra was selected as the Prime Minister, replacing Srettha Thavisin who was dismissed by the country's Constitutional Court. In Japan, Prime Minister Fumio Kishida announced that he will not run in elections for leadership of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party to be held in September, effectively announcing that he will be stepping down as Prime Minister.

Vietnam's Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh paid a State Visit to India from July 30-August 01, strengthening bilateral cooperation across the fields of political, defence and security, trade and investment, science and technology, and culture and people-to-people exchanges.

Malaysia's Prime Minister Dato' Seri Anwar Ibrahim visited India on August 20, upgrading bilateral ties to a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership.

Japan's Defense Ministry unveiled a record budget request of ¥ 8.5 trillion (over \$ 58 billion) for the fiscal year commencing 2025, including a \$ 2 billion constellation of small satellites to provide domain awareness.

The 34th AUSMIN (Foreign and Defence 2+2 Ministerial Meeting) was held in Washington D.C. on August 06, resulting in agreement on the substantial stepping up of the US military presence in Australia.

The third India-Japan 2+2 Ministerial Meeting took place on August 20, resulting in incremental progress in bilateral defence and security cooperation. The India-Japan Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation dating back to 2008 is to be updated to reflect contemporary realities.

India's Defence Minister Shri Rajnath Singh visited the US from August 23-26, taking bilateral defence relations forward.



The Indonesian and Australian Defence Ministers paid reciprocal visits to each other's country on August 19-20 and August 28-29, formalising a new treaty level Defence Cooperation Agreement between the two countries.

The three AUKUS partners moved decisively forward in developing Australia's nuclear submarine capability by formalising a trilateral agreement for cooperation related to naval nuclear propulsion, implementing an exemption for export licensing for defence trade between them (including an exemption from ITAR provisions), and commencing a submarine tendered maintenance period for USS Hawaii at HMAS Stirling, with Australian personnel as part of the maintenance team.

Sabina Shoal, well within the Philippines' EEZ, emerged as a new flashpoint in South China Sea tensions between China and the Philippines. China sought to enforce its claim to virtually the entire South China Sea and prevent the Philippines from resupplying its vessel in the Sabina Shoal. Aggressive action by China's Coast Guard resulted in damage to Philippines Coast Guard vessels.

Warships from Italy and France exercised with US and Japanese ships in the Philippine Sea, marking an increased demonstration of the NATO presence in the Indo-Pacific.

INS Arighaat, India's second SSBN, was commissioned at Visakhapatnam on August 29.

Houthi attacks on MT Delta Sounion at the mouth of the Red Sea left the tanker abandoned and in danger of sinking, threatening to result in her cargo of 150,000 tonnes of oil spilling and creating an environmental disaster in the region.



India-Viet Nam Developments

The State Visit of Vietnam's Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh to India from July 30 – August 01, 2024, is a step forward towards the strengthening of bilateral relations. The visiting leader was accompanied by a high-level official delegation comprising numerous ministers and senior officials. His visit resulted in the signing of nine cooperation agreements, two announcements and the release of a joint statement¹.

The broad outcome was the joint decision to strengthen cooperation across five broad heads. First among these is the promotion of political relations and greater strategic trust. The leaders agreed to increase delegation exchanges and meetings through the Party, parliament, government and other levels. They welcomed signing of the Plan of Action for implementation of the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership during the period 2024-2028. Viet Nam announced its membership of the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI) and affirmed early completion of procedures to join the International Solar Alliance (ISA), both key Indian global initiatives.

The two sides agreed to deepen defence and security cooperation by promoting implementation of the joint statement on the Vietnam-India defence partnership until 2030. This joint statement was an outcome of the visit of India's Defence Minister to Vietnam in June 2022². Cooperation is to be expanded in maritime security, cyber security and counter-terrorism. Other areas are peacekeeping operations, hydrography, information sharing, strategic research, maritime safety, search and rescue operations, humanitarian assistance, disaster management, and emergency response and relief³. According to the Vietnamese side, a USD 500-million credit package

¹ Joint Statement on Strengthening of the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership Between the Republic of India and the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, August 01, 2024, https://www.mea.gov.in/bilateral-documents.htm?dtl/38069/Joint_Statement_on_Strengthening_of_the_Comprehensive_Strategic_Partnership_Between_the_Republic_of_India_and_the_Socialist_Republic_of_Viet_Nam

² Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh & his Vietnamese counterpart General Phan Van Giang Hold Bilateral Talks in Hanoi, June 08, 2022, <https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1831981>

³ Joint Statement on Strengthening of the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership Between the Republic of India and the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, August 01, 2024, https://www.mea.gov.in/bilateral-documents.htm?dtl/38069/Joint_Statement_on_Strengthening_of_the_Comprehensive_Strategic_Partnership_Between_the_Republic_of_India_and_the_Socialist_Republic_of_Viet_Nam

was signed during the visit⁴. India's readout, however, says that the Line of Credit extended to Viet Nam is US\$ 300 million⁵! Viet Nam has proposed five focus areas for defence cooperation: delegation exchanges and dialogue, staff talks, Service-Service cooperation, Education and Training, and Defence Industry Cooperation. India has welcomed these areas and proposed they be expanded to include information security, military medicine and submarine search and rescue⁶.

The third area is trade and investment. The two sides aim to increase two-way trade from its present level of under \$ 15 billion to \$ 20 billion by 2030⁷, while doubling investment value. The leaders "reiterated their mutually beneficial cooperation in the oil and gas sector, including exploration and production in Viet Nam's continental shelf". They concurred on the need for the ongoing review of the ASEAN-India Trade in Goods Agreement to generate a more user-friendly, simple and facilitative trade regime for both countries. Six major contracts were signed in aviation, airports and logistics. Vietjet Air announced a direct air service from Da Nang to Ahmedabad.

Fourth, the two countries will expand cooperation in science, technology and innovation. This includes collaboration for R&D in the fields of core technology, semiconductor chips, artificial intelligence, atomic energy, rare earths, the petrochemicals sector and new energy, and promoting the establishment of joint ventures to produce IT products and train engineers to meet the development needs of the IT industry. The two sides welcomed progress towards the establishment of the ASEAN-India tracking, data reception station and data processing facility in Viet Nam.

The fifth broad area is culture, tourism and people-to-people exchanges. The two sides welcomed the establishment with India's help of the Army Software Park at the Telecommunications University, Nha Trang. They encouraged greater student, faculty and research exchanges between universities, think tanks and other institutions of the two countries. India pledged its

⁴ PM's visit to India produce (sic) specific, practical outcomes: Foreign Minister, August 02, 2024, <https://en.dangcongsan.vn/international-cooperation/pm-s-visit-to-india-produce-specific-practical-outcomes-foreign-minister-20003161.html>

⁵ List of Outcomes: State visit of H.E. Pham Minh Chinh, Prime Minister of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam to India, August 01, 2024, https://www.mea.gov.in/bilateral-documents.htm?dtl/38068/List_of_outcomes_State_visit_of_HE_Pham_Minh_Chinh_Prime_Minister_of_the_Socialist_Republic_of_Vietnam_to_India

⁶ 14th India Vietnam Defence Policy Dialogue Held in New Delhi, August 02, 2024, <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseIframePage.aspx?PRID=2040680>

⁷ India's two-way trade with Vietnam in 2023-24 was \$ 14.8 billion, as per Ministry of Commerce country-wise export-import data bank, <https://tradestat.commerce.gov.in/eidb/iecmt.asp>



commitment to the restoration and conservation of F Block of the My Son World Heritage Site, in addition to work already done in A, H and K Blocks.

Although over 3000 Km from New Delhi, Hanoi has shared warm bilateral relations with India since both countries gained their independence from colonial rule. The relationship was upgraded from a strategic partnership to a comprehensive strategic partnership in 2016. Given the distance factor and Vietnam's location, the relationship is getting along as well as could be expected.

Advancing Indo-Pacific Alliances: The 34th AUSMIN Consultations

The 34th US and Australian Foreign and Defence Ministers' Consultations (AUSMIN) took place at Annapolis, in the US, on August 06, 2024⁸. Coming close on the heels of the US-Japan 2+2 on July 28, the US-Philippines 2+2 on July 30 and the Japan-Philippines 2+2 on July 08, the event spoke of the growing interlinkages between US allies in the Indo-Pacific.

The US and Australia share a common position on the importance of maintaining peace and stability in the South and East China Seas and countering attempts at coercion. They are united on the need to maintain peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait and to resist any actions that escalate tensions or undermine the status quo. They are committed to deepening and strengthening the architecture that upholds a shared vision for the Indo-Pacific. The AUKUS agreement and the web of alliances between Australia, the US, Japan and the Philippines (sometimes called the security Quad, or the SQUAD) lies at the centre of the military part of this architecture, while the QUAD, whose foreign ministers met in Tokyo on July 29, also forms part of the overall web.

The alliance with Australia, in the words of Secretary Antony Blinken, is at the heart of US work in the Indo-Pacific⁹. It provides the US with forward basing facilities out of range of Chinese short and medium range ballistic missiles, and therefore beyond China's Anti-Access/Area Denial (AA/AD) capability. It has,

⁸ Joint Statement on Australia-US Ministerial Consultations (AUSMIN) 2024, August 6, 2024, <https://www.state.gov/joint-statement-on-australia-u-s-ministerial-consultations-ausmin-2024/>

⁹ Secretary Antony J Blinken, Secretary of Defense Lloyd J Austin III, Australian Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Defense Richard Marles, and Australian Foreign Minister Penny Wong at a Joint Press Availability, August 6, 2024, <https://www.state.gov/secretary-antony-j-blinken-secretary-of-defense-loyd-j-austin-iii-australian-deputy-prime-minister-and-minister-for-defense-richard-marles-and-australian-foreign-minister-penny-wong-at-a-joint-p/>



therefore, become a focus for advanced deployment of US military personnel and resources. Infrastructure investments by the US have already taken place at RAAF Bases Darwin and Tindal. Site surveys for upgrades to RAAF Bases Curtin, Learmonth and Scherger, all located in Australia's Northern part, are in progress. Proof of principle prepositioning of US army equipment at Bandiana, in Southern Australia, has been completed. The two sides are now assessing options for establishing a Logistics Support Area in Queensland, in Northern Australia. There is agreement to conduct more frequent rotational deployments to Australia across the land, air and maritime domains, including frequent rotations of bombers, fighter aircraft and maritime patrol aircraft. The two sides have also committed to working with Japan to expand and enhance its participation in force posture cooperation exercises, including with the US Marine Rotational Force at Darwin. Nuclear attack submarine deployments to Perth have commenced (USS Annapolis was at Perth in March 2024). Work is in progress to establish the Submarine Rotational Force West at Perth, with Australian submarine personnel presently undergoing training on maintenance of US nuclear attack submarines at Hawaii.

The two sides have also announced significant progress in strengthening advanced capabilities and resilience of their respective defence industrial bases. There is commitment to expand cooperative development, based on the co-production of the Guided Multiple Launch Rocket System (GMLRS) by 2025. An MoU for co-assembly of the GMLRS is to be finalized by December 2024, with follow on mechanisms to enable Australia to produce the GMLRS for global consumption. Another MoU for cooperative production, sustainment and follow-on development of the Precision Strike Missile (PrSM) is to be finalized by December 2024, and a Joint Programs Office established in 2025. The two sides also welcomed progress on development of an air-launched hypersonic weapon under the Southern Cross Integrated Flight Research Experiment (SCIFiRE) and supported the Hypersonic Attack Cruise Missile (HACM) flight test program. They committed to developing a strategic roadmap on concrete cooperative activities for Integrated Air and Missile Defence.

For regional security integration, the two sides agreed to expand Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR) cooperation by fostering greater trilateral activities in the Indo-Pacific between the US, Australia and Japan. They affirmed a shared ambition to increase maritime domain awareness in collaboration with regional partners, including India, Japan and the Philippines. They reiterated their commitment to cooperation with the Philippines, including through regular Maritime Cooperative Activities in the Philippines' EEZ and capacity building efforts. They highlighted the



deployment of Marine Rotational Force Darwin to Papua New Guinea in 2024, and affirmed their commitment to integrate new capabilities and test new operating assumptions during Exercise TALISMAN SABRE 2025, which 17 countries have been invited to join.

It is not just in the military field that Australia-US cooperation is growing. A joint statement of over 5500 words identifies multiple other areas of cooperation¹⁰. Australia has endorsed the US' Framework to Counter Foreign State Information Manipulation through a bilateral MoU. A partnership between Geoscience Australia and the US Geological Survey will enhance cooperation on satellite imaging data collection and analysis capability and assist in resources management, urban planning, climate change and disaster relief. Exchanges are ongoing in technical security, cyber security and threat analysis. The US has invested \$ 5 billion in Australia for critical minerals in last three years.

Australia's geographic position for US in the Indo-Pacific is analogous to that of Israel in the Middle East – a security dependency (ally) that fear of abandonment will keep tied to US leadership in the brewing geopolitical competition and possible confrontation with China. One result of China's aggressive turn has been that Australia's desire to integrate itself with Asian neighbours now takes second place to bolstering the alliance with the US. The result will be that opposition to China's coercive activities in the Asia-Pacific from US allies will continue to grow, portending a future of possible conflict.

Malaysia's Prime Minister makes his Maiden Visit to India

by Divya Rai, Research Associate, Delhi Policy Group

On August 20, 2024, Malaysian Prime Minister Dato' Seri Anwar Ibrahim made his maiden visit to India after taking office in November 2022. The visit also represented the first meeting between the two Prime Ministers. Prime Minister Anwar was accompanied by a high-level delegation, including ministers from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Investment, Trade and Industry, Tourism, Arts & Culture, Digital, and Human Resources.

The major highlight of this visit was the upgrade of bilateral ties from an Enhanced Strategic Partnership to a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership¹¹.

¹⁰ Joint Statement on Australia-US Ministerial Consultations (AUSMIN) 2024, August 6, 2024, <https://www.state.gov/joint-statement-on-australia-u-s-ministerial-consultations-ausmin-2024/>

¹¹ PIB, "Joint Statement on India – Malaysia Comprehensive Strategic Partnership," August 20, 2024. n.d. <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseIframePage.aspx?PRID=2047076>.

This significant upgrade was underscored by the signing of nine Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) and the announcement of several key initiatives¹² in various sectors, including digital, defence, economic, worker repatriation, and culture.

Discussions between the two leaders addressed various critical issues, including the need to combat radicalization and extremism. Prime Minister Modi emphasised India's commitment to maintaining freedom of navigation and overflight in the South China Sea (SCS), in accordance with international laws and advocated for peaceful resolutions to disputes in the region. Malaysia is one of the ASEAN nations facing challenges due to China's expansive territorial claims in the SCS¹³.

India and Malaysia share a long-standing diplomatic relationship that dates back to 1957, when India established ties with the Federation of Malaya, the predecessor state of Malaysia¹⁴. The two countries enjoyed a strong relationship since 1960s; however, the bilateral relations between India and Malaysia experienced notable friction during 2019. This turbulence was primarily due to remarks made by then-Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad regarding the situation in Kashmir and India's Citizenship Amendment Act¹⁵, which led to diplomatic tensions and economic repercussions, including a decline in palm oil exports from Malaysia to India.

The year 2023 saw a reset in bilateral relations when the Defence Minister Rajnath Singh visited to Malaysia in July 2023¹⁶. The visit resulted in signing of the exchange of letters to amend the 30-year-old MoU on bilateral defence cooperation. The 1993 MoU on Defence Cooperation was amended to enhance military collaboration and technology exchange. Additionally, Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) inaugurated its first regional office in Kuala Lumpur with an aim is to explore business opportunities, particularly in the maintenance of the Malaysian Air Force's Sukhoi Su-30MKM fighter jets¹⁷. The

¹² PIB, "List of Outcomes: State Visit of Prime Minister of Malaysia, H.E Mr. Anwar Ibrahim to India," August 20, 2024. n.d. <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2046969>.

¹³ PIB, "Joint Statement on India – Malaysia Comprehensive Strategic Partnership," August 20, 2024. n.d. <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseIframePage.aspx?PRID=2047076>.

¹⁴ MEA, "India-Malaysia Bilateral Relations", n.d. https://www.mea.gov.in/Portal/ForeignRelation/India-Malaysia_2024.pdf.

¹⁵ The Hindu, "Malaysian PM's statement on Indian citizenship 'factually incorrect': MEA." December 21, 2019. <https://www.thehindu.com/news/international/malaysian-pms-statement-on-indian-citizenship-factually-incorrect-mea/article61604432.ece>.

¹⁶ PIB, "Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh meets his Malaysian counterpart in Kuala Lumpur; Also calls on Prime Minister of the Southeast Asian nation," n.d. July 10, 2023. <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1938452>.

¹⁷ Ibid



broader scope of bilateral cooperation included joint ventures, joint development projects, port calls, and training and military exercises.

The recent visit follows a significant increase in defence collaboration over the past two years. India and Malaysia have been conducting regular joint military exercises across the Army, Navy, and Air Force. For instance, the Indian Navy has been actively engaging with the Royal Malaysian Navy through various port visits, exercises, trainings, and interactions. The Royal Malaysian Navy participated in MILAN 2024, and the two navies conducted the third edition of Exercise Samudra Laksamana off Visakhapatnam¹⁸. Later, two Indian Naval ships, as part of the Indian Navy's Operational Deployment, made a port call at Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia, on May 12¹⁹. They also conducted the Maritime Partnership Exercise (MPX)/PASSEX with the Royal Malaysian Navy. Earlier this month, the Indian Air Force (IAF) participated in Exercise Udara Shakti 2024 in Malaysia on August 10²⁰, showcasing the diverse degree of interaction between the two countries.

The recent visits by Prime minister of Malaysia to India highlight a significant improvement in bilateral relations between the two countries. At the 12th Malaysia-India Defence Cooperation Committee meeting in New Delhi, Malaysia expressed interest in co-design, co-production, and co-development in the field of defence industry²¹.

AUKUS Developments

Four developments this month indicated that as the three-year anniversary of AUKUS approached, the agreement was on track towards providing Australia with nuclear submarine capability as envisaged. In the first, Australia, the UK and the US signed a trilateral agreement for cooperation related to Naval Nuclear Propulsion. The agreement formalises the commitment made by leaders in March 2023. In the second, the three countries moved to implement an export licencing exemption for defence equipment, removing licensing requirements for most controlled goods, technologies and services. The move effectively establishes a defence free trade zone between the three countries. In the third, USS Emory Land arrived at HMAS Stirling, Australia's Garden Island

¹⁸ PIB, "India - Malaysia Bilateral Maritime Exercise Samudra Laksamana," March 1, 2024. n.d. <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseIframePage.aspx?PRID=2010643>.

¹⁹ PIB, "Visit of Indian Naval Ships to Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia," May 12, 2024. n.d. <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseIframePage.aspx?PRID=2020376>.

²⁰ PIB, "Indian Air Force to Participate in Bilateral Exercise Hosted by Malaysia," August 12, 2024. n.d. <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1851187>.

²¹ PIB, "Defence Secretary & Malaysian Deputy Secretary General (Policy) co-chair 12th Defence Cooperation Committee meeting in New Delhi," September 19, 2023. n.d. <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1958830>.



Base in Perth, for the forthcoming maintenance of an SSN in which Australian personnel will also participate. In the fourth, USS Hawaii, a Virginia-class submarine, arrived at HMAS Stirling and commenced the Submarine Tendered Maintenance Period.

On August 05, 2024, the three AUKUS partners signed the trilateral agreement among the Governments of Australia, the UK and the US for cooperation related to naval nuclear propulsion²². The US President had earlier the same day made a Presidential Determination approving the agreement and determining that its execution will promote and will not constitute an unreasonable risk to common defence and security²³. The agreement is essential to Australia's capacity to safely build, operate and maintain a conventionally-armed, nuclear propelled submarine capability. It will enable the US and UK to transfer submarine-specific material and equipment for Australia's future nuclear-powered submarines, and will also enable Australia to prepare for Submarine Rotational Force-West at HMAS Stirling from 2027, supporting the rotational presence of US Virginia class and the British Astute class submarines.

The agreement was tabled in Australia's parliament on August 12, 2024²⁴. It is intended to establish a legally-binding framework to facilitate the communication and exchange of naval nuclear propulsion information between and among Australia, the UK and the US, and the transfer of nuclear material and equipment from the UK and the US to Australia for conventionally armed, nuclear propelled submarines, under the enhanced trilateral security partnership 'AUKUS'. It specifies that all reactors for Australia's nuclear submarine program will be provided by the UK or the US as sealed units. It requires Australia to indemnify the UK and the US against any liability, loss, costs, damage or injury arising out of, related to, or resulting from nuclear risks

²² Announcement of the Agreement Among the Government of the United States of America, the Government of Australia, and the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland for Cooperation Related to Naval Nuclear Propulsion, August 08, 2024, <https://www.state.gov/announcement-of-the-agreement-among-the-government-of-the-united-states-of-america-the-government-of-australia-and-the-government-of-the-united-kingdom-of-great-britain-and-northern-ireland-for-coop/>

²³ Memorandum on Presidential Determination on the Proposed Agreement Among the Government of the United States of America, the Government of Australia, the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland for Cooperation Related to Naval Nuclear Propulsion, August 05, 2024, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/presidential-actions/2024/08/05/memorandum-on-presidential-determination-on-the-proposed-agreement-among-the-government-of-the-united-states-of-america-the-government-of-australia-and-the-government-of-the-united-kingdom-of-great/>

²⁴ National Interest Analysis (2024) ATNIA 14 with attachment on consultation, Agreement among the Government of Australia, the Government of the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland and the government of the United States of America for Cooperation Related to Naval Nuclear Propulsion, https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Tabled_Documents/6967

connected with the design, manufacture, assembly, transfer or utilisation of any material or equipment transferred while it is in service in Australia. It specifies that all Australian nuclear-powered submarines shall be conventionally armed and shall operate under IAEA safeguards. Australia will become responsible for management, storage and disposal of spent nuclear fuel and radioactive material arising from use of these power plants. The agreement also specifies that it will remain in force till 31 December 2075 and that any Party may, by giving at least one year's written notice to the other parties, terminate the agreement.

On August 15, 2024, the US State Department submitted to Congress a determination that Australia and UK export controls are comparable to those of the United States and (they) have implemented a reciprocal export exemption for US entities²⁵. The State Department also announced that it would publish an interim final rule to amend the International Traffic in Arms Regulations (ITAR) and implement an export licencing exemption for Australia and the UK, to be effective from September 01, 2024. The changes in export control legislation enable licence-free trade for over 70% of defence exports from the US to Australia that were subject to ITAR²⁶. They also enable licence-free trade for over 80% of defence trade from the US to Australia that was subject to Export Administration Regulations.

The US submarine tender USS Emory S Land arrived at HMAS Stirling on August 16²⁷. USS Hawaii (SSN 776) arrived on August 23²⁸. A mixed crew of US Navy and Royal Australian Navy personnel will, over the next several weeks, take part in a Submarine Tendered Maintenance Period (STMP) for on USS Hawaii. Effectively, it provides on-job training at HMAS Stirling for the Australian team. The event was marked by a joint statement from the AUKUS partners²⁹. This is another step in preparing Australia to independently operate, maintain and support its own SSNs.

²⁵ "AUKUS Defense Trade Integration Determination", August 15, 2024, <https://www.state.gov/aukus-defense-trade-integration-determination/>

²⁶ "Generational export reforms to boost AUKUS trade and collaboration", 16 August 2024, <https://www.minister.defence.gov.au/media-releases/2024-08-16/generational-export-reforms-boost-aukus-trade-and-collaboration>

²⁷ US Submarine Tender to Support Pillar 1 Milestone, August 16, 2024, <https://www.navy.mil/Press-Office/News-Stories/Article/3876437/us-submarine-tender-to-support-aukus-pillar-1-milestone/>

²⁸ USS Hawaii (SSN 776) joins USS Emory S Land (AS 39) in First-ever Nuclear Powered Attack Submarine Maintenance Availability in Australia, August 23, 2024, <https://www.pacom.mil/Media/News/News-Article-View/Article/3882274/uss-hawaii-ssn-776-joins-uss-emory-s-land-as-39-in-first-ever-nuclear-powered-a/>

²⁹ Joint Statement – Submarine Tendered Maintenance Period, August 23, 2024, <https://www.defense.gov/News/Releases/Release/Article/3882302/joint-statement-submarine-tendered-maintenance-period/>



USS Hawaii (SSN 776) arrived at HMAS Stirling in Perth and commenced her Submarine Tendered Maintenance Period on August 22³⁰. 30 Australian personnel have been embedded into the crew of USS Emory Land for hands-on training of maintenance activity. An Australian officer is part of the crew of USS Hawaii.

The four developments demonstrate that the AUKUS submarine transfer agreement remains on track and Australia is being prepared to operate and maintain nuclear propelled submarines.

Other Indo-Pacific Developments

Bangladesh Prime Minister Ousted. Sheikh Hasina, the Prime Minister of Bangladesh from June 1996 to July 2001 and again from January 2009 to August 2024, was ousted from power and fled the country on August 5 as uncontrollable crowds of demonstrators surrounded and looted her residence. General Waker-Uz-Zaman, the Bangladesh Army Chief, announced she had resigned, although there was no resignation letter or speech. India's External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar told the Lok Sabha that Sheikh Hasina had, after fleeing Bangladesh, arrived in Delhi³¹. Khaleda Zia, a former prime minister and the opposition leader was released from house arrest and Mohammad Yunus, a Nobel laureate, was named head of the interim government. Sheikh Hasina was reported to have said that her government would have survived had she handed over St Martin's Island to the US for construction of a military base³².

General Secretary To Lam. To Lam, the President of Vietnam, was officially elected as the General Secretary of the Communist Party of Vietnam on August 03. He had been officiating in that position since July 18, when his predecessor Nguyen Phu Trong fell ill. General to Lam had earlier been elected President of Vietnam on May 22.

³⁰ Arrival of USS Hawaii (SSN 776) for first AUKUS Nuclear-Powered Submarine Maintenance Activity in Australia, August 22, 2024, <https://www.defence.gov.au/news-events/releases/2024-08-22/arrival-uss-hawaii-ssn-776-first-aukus-nuclear-powered-submarine-maintenance-activity-australia>

³¹ Suo Moto Statement by EAM, Dr. S. Jaishankar in Lok Sabha on the situation in Bangladesh, August 06, 2024, https://www.mea.gov.in/Speeches-Statements.htm?dtl/38098/Suo_moto_statement_by_EAM_Dr_S_Jaishankar_in_Lok_Sabha_on_the_situation_in_Bangladesh

³² All about St Martin's Island that Sheikh Hasina claims played role in her ouster, August 11, 2024, <https://www.indiatoday.in/world/story/sheikh-hasina-bangladesh-myanmar-st-martins-island-sovereignty-us-myanmar-china-2580577-2024-08-11>

Kishida to Step Down. In a press conference on August 14, Japan's Prime Minister Fumio Kishida announced that he would not run in the ruling Liberal Democratic Party's (LDP) presidential election when his three-year term expires in September³³. This means that Japan will have a new Prime Minister on completion of the election³⁴. The LDP decided on August 19 to hold the election on September 27³⁵.

Prime Minister Modi's Visits to Poland and Ukraine. Prime Minister Narendra Modi paid an official visit to Poland on August 21-22 and to Ukraine on August 23. In Poland, the bilateral relationship was upgraded, making the country India's 36th strategic partner³⁶. An Action Plan for 2024-2028 was also published³⁷. In Ukraine, leaders of the two countries expressed mutual interest in working to elevate the bilateral relationship from a comprehensive to a strategic partnership. A Joint Statement was issued³⁸.

Third Voice of Global South Summit. India hosted the 3rd Voice of Global South Summit in a virtual format on August 17, 2024³⁹. The summit theme was "An Empowered Global South for a Sustainable Future". Prime Minister inaugurated the summit and spoke at the Inaugural Leaders' Session. There were, in addition, 10 Ministerial sessions, covering Foreign, Health, Finance, Energy, Education, Commerce, IT, Youth, and Environment Ministries. The Summit witnessed participation of 173 dignitaries from 123 countries across the Global South, including 21 Heads of State/Government, 34 Foreign Ministers and 118 Ministers and Vice Ministers.

³³ Press Conference by Prime Minister Kishida, August 14, 2024,

https://japan.kantei.go.jp/101_kishida/actions/202408/14kaiken.html

³⁴ "Kishida to step down in September in bid to show LDP has changed, August 14, 2024,

<https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2024/08/14/japan/politics/kishida-ldp-presidential-race/>

³⁵ Japan's ruling party sets leadership race for Sept. 27, August 19, 2024,

<https://english.kyodonews.net/news/2024/08/93b16bfa98ea-japans-ruling-party-sets-leadership-race-for-sept-27.html>

³⁶ India – Poland Joint Statement "Establishment of Strategic Partnership", August 22, 2024,

https://www.mea.gov.in/bilateral-documents.htm?dtl/38201/India_Poland_Joint_Statement__Establishment_of_Strategic_Partnership

³⁷ Action Plan for the Implementation of the India-Poland Strategic Partnership, August 22,

2024, <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2047822>

³⁸ India-Ukraine Joint Statement on the Visit of Prime Minister of India to Ukraine, August 23,

2024, <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2048245>

³⁹ Chair's Summary: 3rd Voice of Global South Summit (August 17, 2024), August 20, 2024,

https://www.mea.gov.in/bilateral-documents.htm?dtl/38186/Chairs_Summary_3rd_Voice_of_Global_South_Summit_August_17_2024

India-Japan 2+2 Ministerial Meeting. The India-Japan 2+2 Ministerial Meeting took place on August 20⁴⁰. A Joint Statement was issued on the occasion⁴¹.

Visit by Raksha Mantri to the US. Shri Rajnath Singh, Raksha Mantri (RM) undertook an official visit to the US from August 23-26⁴². A day before his arrival, India's Ministry of Defence and the US Department of Defense entered into a Security of Supply Arrangement (SOSA)⁴³. Shri Rajnath Singh and his host General Lloyd Austin expressed happiness on the conclusion of SOSA⁴⁴. They also welcomed signing of the Memorandum of Agreement between India and the US on deployment of Liaison Officers, as a result of which India will deploy its first Liaison Officer to Headquarters US Special Operations Command in Florida. They noted that the upcoming INDUS X Silicon Valley Summit would witness the announcement of several key initiatives. The ministers also agreed to advance priority co-production projects, including jet engines, unmanned platforms, munitions and ground mobility systems under the US-India Roadmap for Defence Industrial Cooperation⁴⁵. They also advanced discussions to expand cooperation in the undersea and space domains. The RM also met US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan⁴⁶, interacted with senior leaders of the US defence industry and visited the Naval Surface Warfare Centre during his visit⁴⁷.

Reciprocal Visits by Defence Ministers of Indonesia and Australia. Indonesia's Defence Minister and President-elect Prabowo Subianto visited Canberra, Australia on August 19-20 to conclude negotiations for the bilateral Defence

⁴⁰ For an overview, see Lalit Kapur, "India-Japan 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue Marks Modest Progress", <https://www.delhipolicygroup.org/publication/policy-briefs/india-japan-22-ministerial-dialogue-marks-modest-progress.html>

⁴¹ Joint Statement Third Japan-India 2+2 Foreign and Defence Ministerial meeting, August 20, 2024, https://www.mofa.go.jp/s_sa/sw/in/pageite_000001_00002.html

⁴² Raksha Mantri to be on an official visit to the US from August 23-26, 2024, August 21, 2024, <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2047127>

⁴³ DOD, India Ministry of Defence Enter Into Security of Supply Arrangement, August 22, 2024, <https://www.defense.gov/News/Releases/Release/Article/3880791/dod-india-ministry-of-defence-enter-into-security-of-supply-arrangement/>

⁴⁴ Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh and US Secretary of Defense Mr (sic) Lloyd Austin hold bilateral talks in Washington DC, August 23, 2024, <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2048377>

⁴⁵ Readout of Secretary of Defense Lloyd J Austin III's Meeting with Indian Minister of Defense Rajnath Singh, August 23, 2024, <https://www.defense.gov/News/Releases/Release/Article/3883392/readout-of-secretary-of-defense-lloyd-j-austin-iiis-meeting-with-indian-ministe/>

⁴⁶ Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh Meets US National Security Advisor Mr. Jake Sullivan in Washington DC, August 24, 2024, <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2048402>

⁴⁷ Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh Visits Naval Surface Warfare Centre in US, August 25, 2024, <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2048691>

Cooperation Agreement⁴⁸. Australia's Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister Richard Marles visited Indonesia on August 28-29 to sign the agreement⁴⁹, which complements the Lombok Treaty of 2006 and the Joint Declaration on a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership of 2018, upgrading the Australia-Indonesia Defence Cooperation Arrangement to a treaty level agreement⁵⁰. The agreement enables more complex joint activities and exercises between the Armed Forces of the two countries, operations from each other's territory for mutually determined cooperative activities, the continued exchange of personnel for education and training, technical cooperation including in the areas of science and technology, and enhanced legal protections for personnel of the two countries.

Japan's Defence Budget. Japan's Defence Ministry announced that it is seeking a budget exceeding ¥8.5 trillion (over \$ 58 billion) for the fiscal year commencing April 2025⁵¹. The budget request is about 10% over last year's record budget of ¥ 7.7 billion. Japan is reported to be planning a \$2 billion constellation of small satellites to monitor ships and military sites⁵², improving its domain awareness in the region facing repeated intrusions by China.

Philippines China Coast Guard Altercation in Sabina Shoal. An altercation between Philippines and China's Coast Guard vessels left a Philippines' boat with a hole in the deck with another suffering structural damage due to a collision with Chinese Coast Guard vessels impeding their passage to the Sabina Shoal⁵³, about 60 Km East of the Second Thomas Shoal and 150 Km from Palawan Island. China, which claims the entire region despite an unambiguous adverse ruling by the Permanent Court of Arbitration in 2016, accused the Philippines of trying to resupply the BRP Teresa Magbanua, stationed in the Sabina Shoal, of plotting to establish a permanent presence. As before, the US condemned the "dangerous actions by the People's Republic of

⁴⁸ Joint Media Statement, August 20, 2024, <https://www.pm.gov.au/media/joint-media-statement-australia-indonesia-meeting>

⁴⁹ Australia Indonesia Defence Cooperation Agreement Signed, August 29, 2024, <https://www.minister.defence.gov.au/media-releases/2024-08-29/australia-indonesia-defence-cooperation-agreement-signed>

⁵⁰ Joint Ministerial Statement on Australia-Indonesia Defence Cooperation, August 20, 2024, <https://www.minister.defence.gov.au/statements/2024-08-20/joint-ministerial-statement-australia-indonesia-defence-cooperation>

⁵¹ Japan seeks another record-breaking defense budget for fiscal 2025, August 30, 2024, <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2024/08/30/japan/politics/japan-defense-budget-request/>

⁵² After Chinese Incursions, Japan Plans a \$2 Billion Defensive Satellite Network, August 30, 2024, <https://www.wsj.com/world/asia/after-chinese-incursions-japan-plans-a-2-billion-defensive-satellite-network-8fbaf6e2>

⁵³ Chinese and Philippine Ships collide at Sabina Shoal, a new flashpoint, August 19, 2024, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2024/08/18/china-philippines-sabina-shoal-collision/>

China (PRC) against lawful Philippine maritime operations in the South China Sea” and described China’s actions as “the latest examples of the PRC using dangerous and escalatory measures to enforce its expansive and unlawful maritime claims”⁵⁴. Japan, meanwhile, expressed serious concern over China’s repeated actions and urged de-escalation of tensions, while lauding the Philippines for consistently complying with the award by the arbitral tribunal and describing it (the award) as legally binding⁵⁵. The incident proves that the agreement China and the Philippines had reached last month is restricted to the Second Thomas Shoal, and China is moving its ‘action’ lines deeper within the Philippines EEZ.

Intrusion by Chinese Aircraft into Japan’s Airspace. A Chinese military reconnaissance aircraft intruded into Japan’s airspace on August 26. Japan lodged a strong protest with China⁵⁶.

EAM at Jasjit Singh Memorial Lecture at CAPS. Delivering the Jasjit Singh Memorial Lecture on India’s Grand Strategy in an Uncertain Multipolar World at the Centre for Air Power Studies on August 02⁵⁷, EAM Dr. S. Jaishankar called for building core strengths and deep capabilities as soon as possible, focus on technology and related HR, mitigating external exposure to leveraging by building multiple options, finding convergent partners and advancing specific agendas, leapfrogging on capabilities and avoiding siloed thinking by adopting integration, jointness and holistic approaches.

EAM Visit to Kuwait. External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar paid an official visit to Kuwait on August 18, 2024, calling on the Ruler, the Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister, and meeting with prominent members of the Indian community as well as representatives of professional and community associations⁵⁸.

⁵⁴ US Support for the Philippines in the South China Sea, August 19, 2024, <https://www.state.gov/u-s-support-for-the-philippines-in-the-south-china-sea-11/>

⁵⁵ Recent Surge in Tensions in the South China Sea, August 27, 2024, https://www.mofa.go.jp/press/release/pressite_000001_00562.html

⁵⁶ Protest Regarding the Intrusion of a Chinese Military Reconnaissance Plan into Japan’s Territorial Airspace, August 27, 2024, https://www.mofa.go.jp/press/release/pressite_000001_00559.html

⁵⁷ Remarks by EAM Dr. S. Jaishankar at the Jasjit Singh Memorial Lecture at CAPS, August 02, 2024, https://www.mea.gov.in/Speeches-Statements.htm?dtl/38092/Remarks_by_EAM_Dr_S_Jaishankar_at_the_Jasjit_Singh_Memorial_Lecture_at_CAPS

⁵⁸ Visit of External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar to Kuwait (August 18, 2024), https://www.mea.gov.in/press-releases.htm?dtl/38178/Visit_of_External_Affairs_Minister_Dr_S_Jaishankar_to_Kuwait_August_18_2024



EAM Visit to the Maldives. External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar undertook an official visit to the Maldives from August 9-11, 2024⁵⁹. He called on the President Dr. Mohammed Muizzu, held discussions with his counterpart Moosa Zameer, met with the Ministers of Defence, Finance and Economic Development and Trade, the Governor of the Maldives Monetary Authority and a delegation from the Maldivian Democratic Party led by its President Abdulla Shahid. He inaugurated India's Line-of-Credit assisted project of water and sewerage network in 28 islands of the Maldives and six High Impact Community Development Projects, visited the India-assisted Greater Male Connectivity Project site and inaugurated the Addu Reclamation and Shore Protection Project and Addu Detour Link Bridge Projects. Memorandums of Understanding on capacity building of additional 1000 Maldivian Civil Servants in India and on the introduction of UPI in Maldives were exchanged.

Germany Philippines Defence Ministers' Meeting. On August 4, 2024, Secretary of National Defense Gilberto C. Teodoro, Jr. and German Federal Minister of Defense Boris Pistorius met in Manila, marking the first visit to the Philippines by a German Federal Defense Minister⁶⁰. The Ministers expressed a strong commitment to revitalizing defence relations. Furthermore, they affirmed their shared belief in promoting peace and cooperation as outlined in the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific, the German Federal Government's Policy Guidelines for the Indo-Pacific, and the European Union (EU) Strategy for Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific. The Philippines welcomed Germany's application to participate as an observer in the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting (ADMM)-Plus Experts' Working Groups.

Colombo Security Conclave (CSC). National Security Advisor's from India, Maldives, Mauritius and Sri Lanka met in Colombo on August 30 and signed the Charter and the MOU for establishment of the CSC Secretariat⁶¹. The CSC's core objective is to promote regional security by addressing transnational threats and challenges of common concern to the Member States.

⁵⁹ Visit of External Affairs Minister to Maldives (August 09-11, 2024),

https://www.mea.gov.in/press-releases.htm?dtl/38149/Visit_of_External_Affairs_Minister_to_Maldives_August_0911_2024

⁶⁰ Department of National Defense, Philippines, "Joint Press Statement for the Bilateral Meeting between Philippines and Germany", August 4, 2024.

<https://www.dnd.gov.ph/Release/2024-08-04/2217/Joint-Press-Statement-for-the-Bilateral-Meeting-between-Philippine-Secretary-of-National-Defense-Gilberto-C-Teodoro,-Jr-and-German-Federal-Minister-of-Defence-Boris-Pistorius/>

⁶¹ Joint Press Statement on Colombo Security Conclave, August 30, 2024,

https://www.mea.gov.in/press-releases.htm?dtl/38242/Joint_Press_Statement_on_Colombo_Security_Conclave



US Philippines Agreement on Visa Applicants from Afghanistan. The US and Philippines reached an agreement on allowing Afghan nationals to transit to the Philippines to complete their visa processing for Special Immigrant Visas and resettlement to the United States⁶². The US government will support necessary services for Afghans temporarily in the Philippines, including food, housing, security, medical, and transportation to complete visa processing.

NATO Warships Mark Indo-Pacific Presence. Warships from NATO countries marked their presence in the Indo-Pacific during the month. The Italian aircraft carrier ITS Cavour and accompanying frigate ITS Alpino exercised with USS Abraham Lincoln in the Philippine Sea on August 09⁶³, and again with USS Dewey from August 18-21⁶⁴. This was the first time ITS Cavour was deploying to the Indo-Pacific. Days later, on August 14, the French FS Bretagne exercised with Japan's JS Murasame in the area South of Kanto⁶⁵, preceded by exercises with the USN in the Philippine Sea on August 13⁶⁶. Earlier, the Canadian Navy had joined ships from Australia, the Philippines and the US in conducting a "Multilateral Maritime Cooperative Activity" within the EEZ of the Philippines on August 07-08⁶⁷.

Chinese Aircraft Carrier Deploys to Philippine Sea. The PLA Navy Shandong Carrier Strike Group was reported to have deployed in the Philippine Sea for the second time in 2024⁶⁸, with Japan reporting sighting her 261 miles South of Miyako Island on the evening of August 12. The CSG comprised CNS Shandong, the aircraft carrier; CNS Yan'an, a cruiser, CNS Zhanjiang, a destroyer, and CNS Yuncheng, a frigate. The Chinese CSG arrived the area at

⁶² On the US Philippine Agreement Regarding the Processing of US Special Immigrant Visa Applicants from Afghanistan, August 19, 2024, <https://www.state.gov/on-the-u-s-philippine-agreement-regarding-the-processing-of-u-s-special-immigrant-visa-applicants-from-afghanistan/>

⁶³ US Navy and Italian Navy Conduct First Indo-Pacific Multi Large Deck Event, August 13, 2024, <https://www.pacom.mil/Media/News/News-Article-View/Article/3870211/us-navy-and-italian-navy-conduct-first-indo-pacific-multi-large-deck-event/>

⁶⁴ US and Italian Naval Forces Conduct Bilateral Operations, August 22, 2024, <https://www.cpf.navy.mil/Newsroom/News/Article/3883220/us-and-italian-naval-forces-conduct-bilateral-operations/>

⁶⁵ Japan – France Bilateral Exercise, https://www.mod.go.jp/msdf/en/release/202408/20240815en_02.pdf

⁶⁶ US, France Naval Forces Conduct Bilateral Operations in Indo-Pacific, August 15, 2024, <https://www.cpf.navy.mil/Newsroom/News/Article/3875163/us-france-naval-forces-conduct-bilateral-operations-in-indo-pacific/>

⁶⁷ Multilateral Maritime Cooperative Activity Joint Statement, August 7, 2024, <https://www.c7f.navy.mil/Media/News/Display/Article/3865011/multilateral-maritime-cooperative-activity-joint-statement/>

⁶⁸ Chinese Aircraft Carrier Shandong Deploys to Philippine Sea, August 12, 2024, <https://news.usni.org/2024/08/12/chinese-aircraft-carrier-shandong-deploys-to-philippine-sea>



the about the same time that the Abraham Lincoln Carrier Strike Group left it, enroute the Middle East.

Norway to Join UK CSG Deployment to the Indo-Pacific Next Year. Norway will join the UK's Carrier Strike Group (CSG) deployment to the Indo-Pacific in 2025⁶⁹. The deployment will include two Norwegian vessels and is part of a broader effort to enhance maritime security and build partnerships in the region. The CSG, led by HMS Prince of Wales, will operate alongside the Japanese Self Defence Forces and other allies, emphasizing the importance of security in both the Euro-Atlantic and Indo-Pacific areas. The deployment is set to last approximately seven months.

Commissioning of INS Arighaat. Eight years after commissioning INS Arihant, India's second ballistic missile nuclear submarine of the class, INS Arighaat, was commissioned at Visakhapatnam in the presence of Shri Rajnath Singh, India's Defence Minister, on August 29⁷⁰. The submarine can carry 12 K-15 ballistic missiles with a range of 750 Km, or four K-4 ballistic missiles with a range of 3500 Km. It is powered by a single 83 MW pressurised water reactor, giving it a maximum speed of 24 knots underwater. Two more submarines of the class are at different stages of construction.

Sale of Sonobuoys to India. The US State Department approved the possible Foreign Military Sale to India of a variety of High-Altitude Anti-Submarine Warfare and other sonobuoys, valued at approximately \$ 52.8 million⁷¹. The sonobuoys are intended for use by MH-60R helicopters.

Taiwan Strait Transit. USS Ralph Johnson conducted a routine Taiwan Strait transit on August 22, 2024, remaining in the corridor beyond the territorial sea of both China and Taiwan⁷². This is the zone where UNCLOS permits high-seas freedom of navigation.

MT Delta Sounion Attack Threatens Environmental Disaster. MT Delta Sounion, a Greek oil tanker carrying about 150,000 tonnes of cargo was attacked by Houthis near the mouth of the Red Sea on August 21. The initial

⁶⁹ GOV.UK. "Norway to join UK Navy deployment to Indo-Pacific next year," August 6, 2024. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/norway-to-join-uk-navy-deployment-to-indo-pacific-next-year>.

⁷⁰ Second Arihant-class Submarine 'INS Arighaat' Commissioned into Indian Navy in the Presence of Raksha Mantri in Visakhapatnam, August 29, 2024, <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2049870>

⁷¹ India – Anti-Submarine Warfare Sonobuoys, August 23, 2024, <https://www.dsca.mil/press-media/major-arms-sales/india-anti-submarine-warfare-sonobuoys>

⁷² 7th Fleet Destroyer Transits Taiwan Strait, August 22, 2024, <https://www.cpf.navy.mil/Newsroom/News/Article/3882216/7th-fleet-destroyer-transits-taiwan-strait/>

attack resulted in a fire that was extinguished, but the ship lost propulsion and was drifting. Its crew was rescued and taken to Djibouti by an EU vessel. On August 23, the Houthis released a video showing three massive explosions on the vessel, intended to sink it using demolition charges. The US spokesman said that the Houthi action threatened to dump over a million barrels of oil into the Red Sea, causing what would be the world's biggest environmental disaster⁷³.

Exercise Udara Shakti. An Indian Air Force contingent comprising seven Su-30 MKI aircraft and crew participated in the India-Malaysia Exercise Udara Shakti in Kuantan, Malaysia from August 05-09⁷⁴. The Royal Malaysian Air Force (RMAF) deployed seven Su-30 aircraft for the exercise. The two sides carried out air combat scenarios, did subject matter expert exchanges and flew each other's aircraft. The exercise, whose first edition took place in 2018, represents a significant milestone in the growing military-to-military cooperation between India and Malaysia.

Exercise Mitra Shakti. The 10th edition of India-Sri Lanka military exercise Mitra Shakti was conducted at the Army Training School, Maduru Oya in Sri Lanka, from August 12-25⁷⁵. The exercise is intended to enhance the ability of both sides to undertake counter insurgency operations in a sub-conventional scenario, operating in a semi-urban environment.

Russian Navy Chief Visits India. Admiral Aleksandr Alekseyevich Moiseyev, Commander-in-Chief Russian Federation Navy, visited India from August 19-22⁷⁶. He called on India's Navy Chief and other high level officials in New Delhi, visited IFC-IOR in Gurugram, and then went to Mumbai to see Naval Dockyard (Mumbai) and Mazagon Docks Limited.

Brazilian Navy Chief Visits India. Admiral Marcos Sampaio Olsen, Commander of the Brazilian Navy, visited India from August 19-24⁷⁷. His programme included calls on his host, India's Chief of the Naval Staff and other senior officials in Delhi, a visit to IFC-IOR in Gurugram and a visit to Mumbai.

⁷³ Houthi Attacks on the SOUNION Oil Tanker Threaten Becoming an Environmental Disaster, August 24, 2024, <https://www.state.gov/houthi-attacks-on-the-sounion-oil-tanker-threaten-becoming-an-environmental-disaster/>

⁷⁴ Indian Air Force Team Returns After Successful Participation in Exercise Udara Shakti 2024 at Malaysia, August 10, 2024, <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2044075>

⁷⁵ India-Sri Lanka Joint Military Exercise Mitra Shakti Commences in Maduru Oya, Sri Lanka, August 12, 2024, <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2044570>

⁷⁶ Visit by Admiral Aleksandr Alekseyevich Moiseyev, Commander-in-Chief of the Russian Federation Navy, August 19, 2024, <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2046733>

⁷⁷ Visit of Admiral Marcos Sampaio Olsen, Commander Brazilian Navy, August 21, 2024, <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2047230>

India's Goodwill Visits and Maritime Partnership Exercises.

Ship	Dates	Port	Country	Remarks
INS Shalki ⁷⁸	August 02-03	Colombo	Sri Lanka	Visit
INS Tabar ⁷⁹	August 05	-	Germany	MPX with German Navy
INS Tabar ⁸⁰	August 07-10	London	UK	Visit followed by MPX
INS Tabar ⁸¹	August 14-15	Gothenburg	Sweden	Visit
INS Tabar ⁸²	August 18-19	Esbjerg	Denmark	Visit
ICGS Sujay ⁸³	August 21-22	Jakarta	Indonesia	Visit as part of overseas deployment to East Asia
INS Tabar ⁸⁴	August 25-26	Malaga	Spain	Visit followed by MPX
INS Mumbai ⁸⁵	August 26-29	Colombo	Sri Lanka	Coincides with visit of PLA (Navy) ships to Colombo ⁸⁶
INS Tabar ⁸⁷	August 30-September 02	Toulon	France	Visit and for Exercise Varuna
INS Shivalik ⁸⁸	August 30-September 02	Surabaya	Indonesia	

⁷⁸ Visit of INS Shalki to Colombo, August 03, 2024,

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2041161>

⁷⁹ Indian Naval Ship Tabar Conducts MPX with Sea Lynx of German Navy, August 07, 2024,

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2042688>

⁸⁰ Indian Naval Ship Tabar Reaches London, UK for a Four Day Visit, August 08, 2024,

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2043148>

⁸¹ Indian Naval Ship Tabar Reaches Gothenburg, Sweden for a Two Day Visit, August 15, 2024,

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2045739>

⁸² Indian Naval Ship Tabar Reaches Esbjerg, Denmark for a Two Day Visit, August 18, 2024,

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2046437>

⁸³ ICGS Sujay makes port call in Indonesia for a two-day visit as part of overseas deployment to East Asia, August 21, 2024,

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2047352>

⁸⁴ Indian Naval Ship Tabar Reaches Malaga, Spain for a Two Day Visit, August 27, 2024,

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2049200>

⁸⁵ INS Mumbai arrives in Colombo,

<https://news.navy.lk/eventnews/2024/08/26/202408261500/>

⁸⁶ A trio of Chinese People's Liberation Army Navy warships arrive in Colombo,

<https://news.navy.lk/eventnews/2024/08/26/202408261600/>

⁸⁷ https://x.com/ians_india/status/1829091406217982415

⁸⁸ <https://x.com/IndianEmbJkt/status/1829431000776192464>



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