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MESSAGE FROM THE FACULTY COORDINATOR

It gives me immense pleasure to see the release of the first issue of our Department Magazine, RAKSHA DRISHTI, a publication that will undoubtedly serve as a vital platform for analysing contemporary geopolitical and security challenges. This edition reflects the creativity, dedication, and intellectual energy of our students, scholars as they have contributed their actively insights, perspectives, and talents, making this publication both enriching and inspiring.

On this occasion, I would like to place on record our heartfelt compliments and gratitude to our Director General, Lt Gen (Dr) S K Gadeock, AVSM (Retd) and Brig (Dr) Anand Kumar Tewari (Retd), Head of Institution for their constant support and guidance, which have been instrumental in motivating us and shaping this achievement.

I congratulate Ms Arushi Anthal and the Raksha Drishti team for their hard work and vision in bringing this issue to life. May this magazine continue to be a platform for expression, knowledge-sharing, and inspiration for future endeavours.

Best wishes for continued success Jai Hind....



Col (Dr) Subodh Kumar Shahi (Retd) is Associate Professor at AIDSS. He was commissioned in Mechanised Infantry (Recce &Sp), has more than 36 yrs of illustrious career in Indian Army. An alumni of Sainik School Amaravathinagar Defence Services and Staff College (DSSC), Wellington. He holds PhD in International Relations from **Pondicherry** University.

MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

It gives me immense joy and pride to present to you the first edition of Raksha Drishti – a quarterly magazine by AIDSS. Raksha Drishti is an outcome of shared ideas, commitment and sheer hard work of a wonderful team, without which this would not have been possible.

First and foremost, I would like to thank Director General, Lt Gen (Dr) S K Gadeock, AVSM (Retd) and Brig (Dr) Anand Kumar Tewari (Retd), Head of Institution and Col (Dr) SK Shahi, Faculty Coordinator Raksha Drishti, for their constant trust and encouragement that helped me translate this vision to life. I remain deeply humbled by their faith in me.

I aspire for Raksha Drishti to become more than just a publication which serves as a vibrant platform for students and scholars of AIDSS to showcase their immense potential. I hope that this magazine nurtures curiosity and helps young minds feel empowered to contribute to larger issues on defence and strategic studies. With his edition, we take one step towards that journey. It is with humility that I share this edition with you.



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Jai Hind



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OP SINDOOR

FROM PAHALGAM TO MAHADEV

The Trigger & Build-up

It began not with jets crossing the Line of Control, but with gunfire echoing through a quiet valley town. In the pre-dawn hours, India undertook Operation Sindoor, a tri-service targeted operation, retaliation for the 22 April 2025 Pahalgam terror attack, when 26 civilains were martyred at Baisaran Valley.

Just days earlier, Pakistan Army chief General Asim Munir had declared Kashmir "was our jugular vein, and it will be our jugular vein," adding, "We will not forget it, we will not leave our Kashmiri brethren in their heroic struggle." He reminded Pakistanis that "our forefathers thought we were different from the Hindus in every aspect of life... That was the foundation of the two-nation theory that was laid." A week later, terrorists struck Baisaran Valley, with TRF citing demographic changes in Kashmir. The timing of the attack, following Munir's rhetoric, drew sharp criticism. Prime Minister Narendra Modi, cutting short his Saudi visit, vowed the perpetrators "will be brought to justice and will not be spared," even as Pakistan refused to condemn the killings.

Against this backdrop, Operation Sindoor was executed as a precise, non-escalatory mission targeting terror infrastructure while carefully avoiding Pakistani military assets.

Nine high-value sites were destroyed—four in Pakistan's Punjab and five in Pakistan-occupied Jammu and Kashmir—including Lashkar's Muridke headquarters and Jaish's Bahawalpur base.

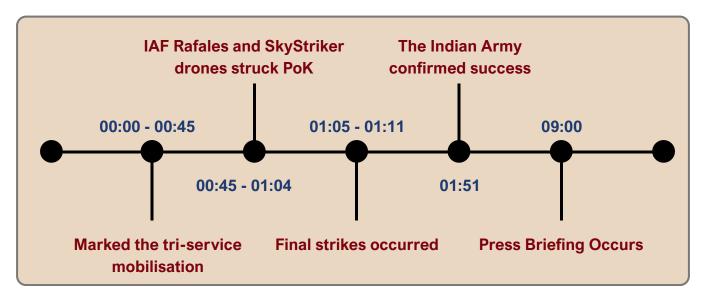
Strike Composition

Operation Sindoor was an intelligence-based operation that utilised satellite surveillance, unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), and human intelligence. Indian Air Force (IAF) fighter aircraft were deployed under the cover of a training exercise, using radar blackouts and Notice to Air Missions (NOTAMs) to conceal their movement and generate maximum surprise. The operation was achieved through stand-off weapons, with fighter aircraft launching missiles from Indian territory.

India utilised two primary weapon systems in the operation: SCALP & HAMMER.



SCALP "Storm Shadow" MISSILE



The timeline of events on the 5th of May, 2025

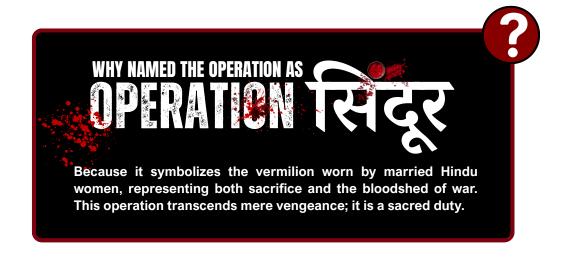
Escalation, Ceasefire, and Fallout

Between May 7 and May 10, 2025, Operation Sindoor spiralled into an 88-hour experiment ground where India tested its policy of limited, punitive war and Pakistan tested the limits of escalation without entering an all-out conflict.

Ceasefire under pressure (May 10)- A ceasefire was agreed upon after hotline talks between the two DGMOs, initiated by Pakistan. Despite ongoing drone violations, India's strong countermeasures compelled Islamabad to comply.

Opening Salvo (7 May): Following India's precision strikes on terror hubs, Pakistan regarded this as a violation of its sovereignty and responded with heavy cross-border shelling, targeting civilian areas and causing casualties. India issued a stern warning to Pakistan. Additionally, Pakistan attempted drone incursions, which were intercepted by India's air defences.

Retaliation & power cripple (May 8-9): India launched significant strikes on 11 Pakistani airbases, damaging about 20% of the Pakistan Air Force infrastructure. In response, Pakistan initiated "Operation Bunyan-un-Marsoos" to target Indian military facilities and launched a cyber-propaganda campaign, but failed to breach Indian defences.



Air Skirmishes: The Unseen Layer

For three nights following Operation Sindoor, Pakistan launched Fatah-II rockets from Punjab (Pak) against military stores near Sirsa, Haryana. India's S-400 and Barak-8 systems downed several rockets, but debris struck villages in subsequently Fatehabad and Sirsa verified as fragments of the Fatah-II, designed reportedly with Chinese assistance. It was the first time post-1971 that long-range Pakistani weapons had touched Haryana, and it marked an escalation possibility beyond Kashmir. Pakistan blamed India for attacking civilians and referred to UN Charter Article 51 for defence against attack. Intense shelling across the LoC followed and struck villages and a gurdwara in Poonch, killing 12 civilians and one Indian soldier and injuring another 51 people.

Operation Mahadev: The Manhunt in Srinagar

India's decision to name its high-stakes counter-terror mission "Operation Mahadev" was no accident—it was a deliberate invocation of divine justice, territorial pride, and cultural strength. Launched on 28 July 2025, the operation that eliminated the three masterminds of the Pahalgam attack went beyond a tactical strike; it became a symbolic act meant to echo across the nation's people, its armed forces, and its historical memory.

The symbolism of Operation Mahadev rested on a powerful triad of name, terrain, and timing. The terrain carried its own resonance: the operation unfolded in the shadow of Kashmir's Mahadev peak, a sacred landmark visible to Amarnath pilgrims, linking the counter-terror strike to the restoration of sanctity in a desecrated space.

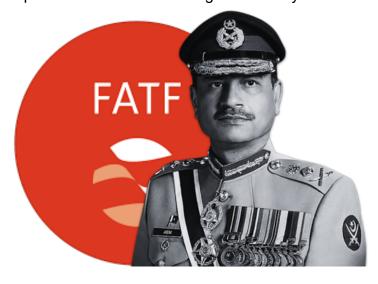
Finally, the timing, coming just before the concluding phase of the Amarnath Yatra, underscored the state's role as a guardian of faith and territory. Together, these three elements transformed the operation from a tactical success into a moment of national and spiritual reckoning.

Following a long battle, three Lashkar-e-Taiba operators were neutralised:

- Suleiman Shah (Hashim Musa/Faisal Jaat/Asif) – the planner of the Pahalgam attack
- Abu Hamza (Jibran/Zibran Bhai) associated with Sonamarg Tunnel attack, Oct 2024
- Yasir (Hamza Afghani) foreign fighter, former Pakistani Army commando

The Aftermath

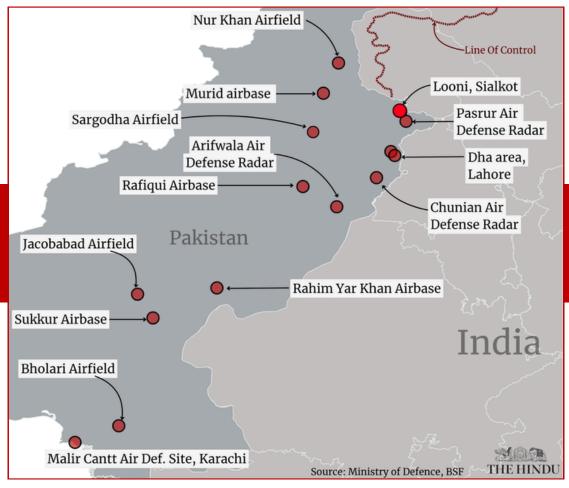
Both Operation Sindoor and Operation Mahadev extended beyond the PoK and Srinagar battlefields. After the 10 May ceasefire, India placed the Indus Waters Treaty in abeyance, halted trade, closed the Attari-Wagah border, and restricted connectivity. It also engaged multilateral fora, sending delegations to 30 countries and seeking Pakistan's reinstatement on the FATF's grey list. These efforts reinforced India's zero-tolerance stance on terrorism and exerted strategic pressure on Pakistan's fragile economy.



During and after Operation Sindoor, India showcased both military strength and indigenous technological prowess. DRDO Chairman described the operation as "a declaration of India's ability to stand tall through self-reliance, strategic foresight, and indigenous technological strength Indian Air Force confirmed that at least five Pakistani fighter jets and one large aircraft were destroyed, Prime Minister Narendra Modi also underlined the success: "During Operation Sindoor, the saw the capabilities indigenous weapons. Our Air Defence Systems, missiles, and drones have proved the strength of 'Atmanirbhar Bharat', especially the BrahMos missiles."

Defence minister Rajnath Singh declared that India's defence procurement will exceed ₹2 lakh crore this financial year, with 75% set aside for domestic firms. India cannot depend on foreign military arsenals, however superior. Strategic autonomy calls for sovereign strength: production, and export design. domestic armaments. The lesson Sindoor is simple: India's competitive advantage will come not from glossy foreign brochures but from the strength domestic defence infrastructure fortified with government initiative, private enterprise, and strategic necessity.

> Yojna Kapoor MA 1st Sem, AIDSS



Targets struck by the Indian Armed Forces as a response to Pakistan's retaliatory strikes



FEATURE ARTICLE

THE INTEGRATED AIR COMMAND AND CONTROL SYSTEM (AICCS): INDIA'S AIR DEFENCE SHIELD

On May 7, 2025, India launched Operation Sindoor in the aftermath of the Pahalgam terror attack. The operation began by targeting nine terrorist hideouts and training camps across the border in Pakistan. It was a calibrated tri-service response that embodied precision, professionalism, and purpose.

The Integrated Air Command and Control System (IACCS) played a decisive role in managing air operations as all air missions were orchestrated through it. IACCS is an automated command and control system. This system integrates radars, control centres, fighter jets and ground based defences to build a network that detects, tracks and identifies aerial targets as hostile when they appear. It enables rapid detection, target recognition and interception of aircraft. drones and missiles. During the Operation, Director General of Air Operations, Air Marshal AK Bharti, highlighted the critical role played by the IACCS by providing a "net-centric operational capability, which is vital to modern-day warfighting."

In many ways, IACCS was the invisible force multiplier that turned Operation Sindoor into a success. Designed by the Indian Air Force (IAF) in collaboration with Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL), IACCS has emerged as the silent nerve centre of India's air defence. It also signals India's growing indigenous defence capabilities.

India's Air Defence

Air defence has always been a vital aspect of warfare. Italian strategist General Giulio Douhet once wrote, "To conquer the command of the air means victory; to be beaten in the air means defeat and acceptance of whatever terms the enemy pleased impose." to observation holds truer today than ever. Air defence refers to the strategies, systems, and operations that protect a nation's airspace from hostile threats. India has built a multi-layered and increasingly sophisticated air defence structure. At the tactical level, it deploys man-portable air defence systems (MANPADS) and shortto medium-range surface-to-air missiles such as Akash, Spyder, and the Quick Reaction Surface-to-Air Missile (QRSAM). At the long-range India operates the Russian-origin S-400 Triumf system.

Understanding IACCS: How it works?

The Integrated Air Command and Control System is more than a command and control system. It is a real time information It provides commanders at system. multiple levels with live updates and consolidated data. It allows for centralised decentralised control with execution wherein threats can be identified swiftly and the responses will be executed reaction time flexibly, reducing the significantly and allowing effective deployment of the air defence assets.

The most important function of IACCS is the creation of a Recognised Air Situation Picture (RASP), a comprehensive map of all aerial activity (friendly, hostile, or neutral) across Indian skies. RASP is mapped fusing data inputs from two-dimensional and three-dimensional ground-based radars, AWACS aircraft such as the DRDO Netra and Phalcon, UAVs and observation posts. Even civilian surveillance systems contribute, ensuring no gap in coverage.

The backbone of IACCS is the Air Force (AFNET), Network a secure digital communication system launched in 2010. AFNET replaced analogue links to an Internet Protocol (IP) and Multiprotocol Switching (MPLS)-based Label allows architecture. This seamless of voice. video. transmission and encrypted data across the defence grid. The shift from legacy troposcatter and line-of-sight networks to a fibre- and satellite-enabled framework created the conditions for IACCS to thrive.

A key subset of IACCS is the Akashteer system, an advanced, Al enabled, multi layered defence coordination system. It integrates radars. sensors. and communication technologies to provide real-time situational awareness and forms a dynamic combat web, capable of detecting. analysing, and neutralising aerial threats autonomously. Akashteer AD system was integrated with IACCS a few months before Operation Sindoor. Akashteer facilitated combined operations in which ground-based resources and the IAF's air defence personnel could collaborate effectively, resulting in the best feasible solution. It also symbolises India's larger move toward tri-service command and control current developments in modern

warfare show a move from a platformcentric to a network-centric approach. A network centric warfare (NCW) is defined as the pursuit of information superiority against an adversary while linking all the communication sensors. platforms, shooters, and Command & Control centers (C-2) for improving battlefield awareness. India's establishment of the AFNET and the acquisition of AEW&CS marked a significant milestone towards the execution of NCW. IACCS enabled the vision to reach operational reality by leveraging AFNET to integrate airborne sensors and ground-based radars. enabling the seamless sharing of real-time data across multiple command-and-control nodes.

From ADGES to IACCS: India's Indigenous Leap in Air Defence

Prior to the 1960s, India's radar coverage was limited, leaving the country vulnerable, a weakness that was highlighted during the 1965 Indo-Pak War, when Pakistani jets exploited holes in India's airspace surveillance. Recognising the necessity, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi launched a project, which resulted in the formation of the Air Defence Ground Environment System (ADGES). ADGES was launched in 1966 with a ₹185 crore budget and a extend radar plan to communication networks throughout the country.

However, technological advancements prompted the development of a new generation of air defence systems by the mid-2000s. Around 2006, ADGES was formally phased out for a more advanced ground network that marked yet another technological leap forward. Post the Kargil conflict the need to enhance India's battlespace coordination became evident. The Directorate of IACCS was founded in 2003, and work on digitising air command and control across the country began the

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launch of AFNET in 2010 was the turning point. It provided the IAF with the secure digital backbone required for a modern command and control system. It also allowed the IAF to join the ranks of technologically advanced NCW- capable forces globally. Building on AFNET, the IACCS framework was rolled out in phases

The Road Ahead

The Integrated Air Command and Control System (IACCS) is set to evolve into an even more robust backbone of national defence. Its future hinges on three major developments. Firstly, Al's role will expand significantly, aiming to support in-flight movement of missile target assignments to enable changing the type of attack while it is in motion.

Secondly, establishing a tri-service Air Defence Command (ADC), "advocated by the late General Bipin Rawat,is deemed essential. This ADC will "enable seamless coordination by integrating all air defence assets, with IACCS serving as the cornerstone. Thirdly, AFNET will undergo "critical upgrades like satellite redundancy and drone-based relays, while outdated radar systems will be replaced with modern high-power radars. IACCS has secured its place as the backbone of India's defence for decades to come.

Tanisha Acharya PhD Scholar, AIDSS



Image Via: Defence News India

FEATURE ARTICLE

S400 - A WORTHY INVESTMENT?

The S-400 emerged at the forefront of India's national consciousness in May, 2025. During Operation Sindoor, which involved precision strikes on terror infrastructure, Pakistan's attempt at a retaliatory kinetic attack was reportedly countered by India's S-400 system. Imposing a veritable "no-go bubble" on India's western front. The consensus in Indian reporting was, and remains, that S-400 coverage significantly shaped Pakistan's operational calculus and hastened movement towards a ceasefire. Given this stellar performance, suddenly the S-400 system was all that everyone was talking about. Here's a look at this weapons system, which has officially been named 'Sudarshan Chakra' after the mythical weapon of Lord Vishnu.

What is the S-400 missile defence system?

The S-400 Triumf, which NATO calls the SA-21 Growler, is among the world's most advanced long-range surface-to-air missile (SAM) systems. Developed by the Russian state owned firm Almaz - Antey, the S-400 is equipped with multi-function surveillance and fire-control radars, anti-aircraft launchers, and a command-and-control vehicle. The advertised strengths of the S-400 lie in its multi-target tracking and engagement capabilities. It can track 80–300 targets and engage up to 36 targets at once.



It is designed to counter aircraft, cruise missiles and some classes of ballistic targets and can employ several missile families to create a tiered defence umbrella. It has a range of up to 400 kilometres, at an altitude of up to 30kms. It also has a rapid deployment time frame of under 5 minutes. All of these features make the S-400 a more versatile defence system than, say, the US made THAAD - Terminal High Altitude Area Defense System, which primarily works against ballistic missiles and has a longer deployment window.

When did India acquire the S-400 missile defence system?

The deal for the purchase of the S-400 from Russia was inked in 2018. Under the \$5.43 billion deal, Russia contracted to supply India with five squadrons of the S-400 air defence system. Three of the promised five squadrons have already delivered. The purchase been happened under the baleful glare of the enduring Trump's US. then presidential term. Trump had, in 2017, America's sianed Countering the Adversaries Through Sanctions Act The (CAATSA). act was aimed at penalising those countries that decided to engage in trade with either Russia, Iran or North Korea. India's purchase of the S-400 in 2018 thus fell on the wrong side of this law. However, India faced no sanctions under the act mainly because, then as now, India asserted its sovereign right to maintain its strategic autonomy in deciding who it did business with. Also, the US was then more focused on building a deeper relationship with India in an attempt to counter China.

By successfully foiling Pakistan's counterstrikes, the S-400 missile defence system has already, and emphatically, proven its importance for India. The degree of this importance can be gauged from the fact that, as mentioned earlier, the S-400 has been officially named 'Sudarshan Chakra', the mythical weapon of Lord Vishnu.

The S-400's importance for India

India. defending the long contentious border on its north western, northern and north eastern frontiers has been a long running challenge. The continuing advances in technology, the development of missiles with ever expanding strike ranges, and the emergence of drone warfare have all contributed to a situation wherein India is perennially exposed to air and missile threats from both Pakistan and China. The close cooperation extended by China to the Pakistani forces during Operation Sindoor has also established, beyond a shadow of doubt, the nature of the double threat. Given that several key army bases, cities and critical infrastructure on the Indian side are situated relatively close to borders. S-400, with the the comprehensive air defence capabilities, and combined with other systems such as Barak-8 (MR-SAM) and Akash, provide much needed defence cover for these assets.

However, the nature of the advantages conferred by S-400 go beyond its direct defence capabilities. By helping to prop up a strong defensive umbrella, the S-400 can complicate the adversary's mission planning increase and stand-off requirements. In simple words, that means it would compel the enemy to think, and rethink, any attempt to start hostilities. Further, the capabilities of the system can give greater leeway to New Delhi in planning cross-border response options, which should discourage any tendencies by adversaries to indulge in any shallow, cross border adventurism.

The Way Ahead

Noting the S-400 air defence system's stellar role in protecting Indian cities and critical assets during the Indo-Pak face off in May, Russia's Deputy Chief of Mission in India Roman Babushkin confirmed in June 2025 that the delivery of the remaining two squadrons was on track and would be completed by 2025-26. Also, as of early September 2025, New Delhi is exploring the possibility of purchasing additional S-400s, even as indigenous long-range missile systems (e.g., XRSAM) mature. Moreover, the Indian Defence Ministry, in a significant move, recently announced that it had identified an Indian firm that would manage maintenance, repair and overhaul (MRO) set up for the S-400 within the country. There already had been plans to establish an MRO facility in India for the S-400. However, after Operation Sindoor these plans have seem to have been fast tracked.

This development of particular is significance. Having an MRO facility for the S-400 within India would help to enhance operational readiness and self-reliance in maintaining advanced air defence systems. Such self-reliance in a critical becomes especially important area considering the fraught and unpredictable scenarios playing out on the world stage. With the US weaponising trade and tariff barriers, and Trump already having singled out India with a high tariff penalty for the purchase of Russian oil, India would do well to take what steps it can to guard against potential sanctions and disruptions in critical supply chains.

AKSHA DRISHTI

Moreover, even though India and Russia are committed to the S-400 deal that they signed, given Russia's heavy have involvement in the Ukraine war, India cannot be sure that Russia would be always willing and able to prioritise India's defence needs. Thus, it is a step in the right direction for India to take the initiative in developing the ability to independently manage and maintain the S-400 systems. Domestically, this step also ties in neatly with the government's promotion of the 'Make in India' initiatives.

Conclusion

In conclusion, one can see that the S-400 has proven a worthy investment and a significant addition to India's defence capabilities. In fact, it would be fair to say that the S-400 has emerged as far more than a defensive shield. By providing credible deterrence against Pakistan and China, the S-400 has enhanced India's operational confidence and strategic autonomy. It has also strengthened New Delhi's broader drive toward self-reliance and long-term resilience in an increasingly unstable global order.

> Vivek Tewari M.A 1st Year AIDSS



FEATURE ARTICLE

A NAVAL BLOCKADE IMPOSED ON PAKISTAN DURING OP SINDOOR

The brutal terrorist attack at Pahalgam on April 22, 2025, which claimed 26 innocent lives, triggered India's swift and decisive military response known Operation Sindoor. While the operation's precision airstrikes dominated headlines, the Indian Navy's deployment of 36 frontline warships in the northern Arabian Sea created an equally significant but less dimension publicised of Indian strategic posture. Within 96 hours of the attack, the largest naval force Pakistan had seen since the 1971 Indo-Pakistan War was waiting for orders, with full capacity to strike select targets in Pakistan.

THE 96-HOUR RAPID NAVAL MOBILISATION

In a remarkable display of operational readiness, the Indian Navy mobilised a formidable armada of 36 frontline naval assets within just 96 hours of the Pahalgam incident. Vice Admiral A.N. Pramod, Director General of Naval Operations, said that the Indian Navy was fully prepared to execute strikes on Pakistan's military infrastructure. He added that naval forces were ready to target locations at sea and on land, including Karachi Port, but were awaiting government orders.

According to Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and India Today, this rapid deployment, involving a Carrier Battle Group led by the aircraft carrier INS Vikrant, destroyers, frigates, submarines, was a testament to the navy's high state of preparedness and logistical efficiency. This swift action allowed India to seize the maritime initiative, denying Pakistan the time and space to formulate a naval response. The forward positioning of these assets in the North Arabian Sea gave India a decisive edge, allowing it to dictate the terms of engagement at sea from the very outset.

THE DE FACTO BLOCKADE

During the crisis, India employed a strategy of maritime sophisticated coercion that amounted to a de facto blockade. The term explains a scenario in which a naval force, by its presence and credible threat posture, manages to effectively deter an enemy preventing them from entering leaving ports in their vessels. Achieving an outcome of a blockade in practice, without a formal declaration. Under international maritime law, a formal naval blockade is considered an act of war, carrying significant legal and diplomatic complications, as it affects

STRATEGIC ANALYSIS

neutral shipping and international trade. This de facto blockade provided India the leeway to accomplish its mission, free from the burden of a formal legal declaration. The Indian Navy's forward positioning created a zone of operational control that severely restricted Pakistan's naval freedom of maneuver. Pakistan's ships were effectively immobilised in their harbours, not through direct engagement, but through extensive force projection, making any Pakistani effort to venture into the open ocean very risky. This strategic containment demonstrated how modern sea power can be used to control an adversary's actions without firing a single shot, leveraging coercion over direct kinetic action.

THE POWER OF COERCION

Satellite imagery and intelligence reports confirmed that Pakistani warships were relocated from exposed naval dockyards in Karachi to relatively safer commercial ports and civilian anchorages.

This unusual scattering was an acknowledgement of their vulnerability. Moreover, some of their naval assets were spotted moving to the west towards the Gwadar port close to the Iranian border in an effort to move out of the strike range of the Indian navy. This defensive scramble underlines psychological dominance that India had gained. India further enhanced this deterrent effect by showcasing its advanced weapon systems.

According to India Today, the deployment included BrahMos supersonic cruise missiles capable of precision land and sea strikes, advanced Medium Range Surface-to-Air Missile (MRSAM) systems for air defence, and Varunastra heavyweight torpedoes.

The clear presence of these platforms sent an unambiguous message: India possessed the capability to inflict devastating damage at will, but was consciously choosing restraint to control the escalatory ladder.

This display of naval power served multiple strategic objectives beyond the immediate tactical advantage. It was a the multi-domain demonstration of coercion capability of India, which proved that their response was not confined to the air and land domains. The psychological impact of this maritime containment was immense, and it played a significant role in Pakistan's decision to de-escalate. The naval pressure reinforced India's upper hand throughout the crisis, allowing its leadership to negotiate from a position of strength. The operation showcased the capacity of the navy as not only a warfighting organisation, but as a versatile tool of national power, which could attain the maximum strategic objectives through coercion.

Keshav Babu B PhD Research Scholar, AIDSS



FEATURE ARTICLE

THE EVOLUTION OF INDIA-PAKISTAN CONFLICT

When colonial rule ended in 1947, the British partitioned the Indian subcontinent, leaving an everlasting wound on South Asia. While cultural and religious reasons are often cited for this partition, these perceived fundamental differences were colonialists. The architected by subcontinent's sudden and immediate partition resulted in mass communal violence and the Kashmir dispute, which has acted as a catalyst in a rivalry that has seen four major wars and several localised border clashes.

The Indian Independence Act of 1947 proposed the partition of India and Pakistan into two newly formed dominion states from the then Indian territory. East Bengal, Sindh, West Punjab, and the province Balochistan of territories included in Pakistan, resulting in two states, East and West Pakistan, by nearly 2,350 km and separated differing significantly in cultures, languages, and economic conditions.



Kashmir, a princely state at the time, had a Muslim majority but was ruled by a Hindu king, Maharaja Hari Singh. Both countries desired Kashmir to join them. Initially, the maharaja remained neutral, but the 22 October 1947 tribal militants invasion from Pakistan forced the Maharaja to sign the Instrument of accession with India for military support which was on 26th October.

1965 Pakistan launched operation ln Gibraltar, aiming to create unrest and rebellion aganist Indian control in Jammu and Kashmir. Following the failed Op Gibraltar on 1st September Pakistan operation grand slam followed with attacking the artillery barrage in Chhamb sector. This lead to a full scale war across and Kashmir sectors. captured several territories in Punjab and both sides claimed victory even though it ended in a stalemate. A UN mandated ceasefire came into effect, ending the war with USSR mediating with the Tashkent agreement. This war showed Pakistan attempt to win Kashmir militarily failed.



Rooted in the Bangladesh liberation movement caused by brutal repression against the Bengali population The third war officially started on 3rd December when Pakistan launched pre-emptive air strikes on Indian airbases. India responded quickly marking the formal start of war. The war lasted a total of 13 days with India а swift victory. having Pakistan surrendered in Dhaka on 16th December 1971 with around 93.000 Pakistani soldiers becoming prisoners of war resulting in the creation of Bangladesh. This was one of the decisive victories India had against Pakistan among the various wars and conflicts the countries have fought against each other.

Kargil War (1999)

On may 3 1999, local shepherds in Kargil reported Pakistani intrusions and on may 26 India guickly launched operation Vijay officially beginning military operations. Operation Badr was launched by General Musharraf where Pakistani soldiers disguised as militants occupied high altitude posts in Kargril which is in Ladakh. Operation Vijay resulted where they took various peaks under extreme conditions. suffered heavy casualties India restored the line of control. This war showed India's superior military power and diplomatic position.



Current Situation

Since the abolition of article 370 Pakistan has downgraded diplomatic ties and cross border shooting has reduced since the 2021 ceasefire agreement. Pakistan now faces economic crisis. an political instability and international credibility on the foreign stage. In the case of India, the country has been more of an influential role in the global stage with closer US and gulf ties. China's role remains a concern as Pakistan leans on China for support with examples like the BRI and CPEC.

Analysis and lessons learned

Kashmir has been the central issue but instead of using diplomatic methods Pakistan used proxy terrorist methods to acquire Kashmir. Because both countries are nuclear states both won't go to full due to the concept of war deterrence. India in these later years has moved from defensive to proactive as we can see from the surgical strikes in Balakot. When it comes to diplomacy India is favoured over Pakistan and in most cases. Pakistan clearly isolated is diplomatically.

The likelihood of a full-scale war between India and Pakistan is low due to nuclear deterrence, though minor conflicts may arise. Pakistan's internal instability could hinder its support for non-state actors involved in terrorism against India. India's global rise may enable it to use diplomatic and economic pressure instead of military Long-term action. peace relies diplomatic discussions, but complete peace may take decades due to prevailing mistrust.

Cyril John Samuel BA 5th Sem, AIDSS

FEATURE ARTICLE

INDIA'S MILITARY RESPONSE TO NAXALISM

One of India's most significant internal security issues for a long time has been LWE, primarily found in isolated tribal of Chhattisgarh. districts Jharkhand. Odisha, Bihar, and Maharashtra. The government has been pursuing a "Naxalmukt" strategy since 2015, combining rights-based and development initiatives with vigorous security campaigns. According to a Home Ministry report published in April 2025, the number of districts affected by LWE decreased from 126 in 2018 to 38 by April 2024, with "most-affected" districts reduced from 12 to 6.

Falling Violence and Major Trends

India's security data reveal a precipitous fall in Left-Wing Extremist violence over the last ten years. Annual LWE incidents have fallen from an all-time high of 2,258 in 2009 to 509 in 2021 and 374 in 2024. Total deaths fell approximately 85% from 1,005 in 2010 to 147 in 2021, and were 150 in 2024. Significantly, 2022 was the first year in 30 years with fewer than 100 security or civilian casualties from Naxal violence.

The spatial spread also decreased: just 46 districts experienced any LWE violence in 2021, compared to 96 districts in 2010. By mid-2025, official counts indicate only 18 districts are still affected, compared to 126 in 2014.

Incidents & fatalities:

Yearly LWE incidents decreased by approximately 77% from 2009 to 2021 and 81% by 2024, to 374. Similarly, deaths decreased by about 85% from 2010 to 2024.

District reach:

Naxal-affected districts decreased from 126 to 70 to 38, with "most-affected" districts reduced from 12 to 6 during this time.

Security force casualties:

Security deaths have declined, from 88 in 2014 to 19 in 2024. Security forces killed more Naxal cadres (up from 63 in 2014 to 2,089 by 2024), indicating better functioning.

Surrenders: Defections of militants picked up pace, with 928 Maoists surrendering officially to the government in 2024 and another 718 by April 2025. Over 13,000 insurgents across all internal conflicts have laid down arms in recent years. This dramatic about-turn is result а continued counterinsurgency pressure; for 2023-24 example. witnessed approximately 159 insurgents eliminated in Chhattisgarh operations, and over 2,000 since cadres eliminated 2001. The territorial hold of insurgents has also contracted, with police reporting that "red" once-strong areas have been reduced to a few thousand km² and major guerrilla forces have broken up into isolated cells.

Security Strategy and Forces

The anti-Naxal campaign of the Indian state has focused on a stratified security offensive since late 2015. A National Policy and Action Plan acknowledges the duality of law enforcement and governance in the development of tribal areas. With respect to law enforcement, this has included the materiel build-up of police and paramilitary personnel in LWE zones. The Centre has deployed dozens of companies additional Central Armed Police Force and India Reserve battalions, while state governments have had the capacity to police with up local special paramilitary forces. The upper hand in jungle operations and related security duties has been aided by the deployment of helicopters into remote areas and the relatively new role of unmanned aerial vehicles for intelligence gathering and mobility.

A government source claims that, in Chhattisgarh alone, there have been over 300 new security camps, along with various others throughout India. number of comprehensive police stations has grown from 66 to over 600. The mobile command post remains a site for force advancing into insurgent territory. New intelligence structures have been formed, making for precision fire. From the perspective of operations, Joint Raids against Naxals are prioritized in affected districts. The Chhattisgarh state police and central forces have begun the coordinated "Joint Action Plan" effective in Bastar commencing 2024, filling the security vacuum, building new camps, and actively providing, both offensively and defensively, to the interests of the state.

These figures attest to an aggressive, continual campaign of searches, raids and road patrols aimed at dismantling rebel cells.

Major Operations and Encounters

The Karreguttalu Hills operation highlighted by officials as the largest-ever anti-Naxal battle. Over 2,000 troops encircled a 60×5 km jungle ridge on the Chhattisgarh-Telangana border that had served as a Maoist "unified headquarters." After 21 days of encounters, forces recovered 31 insurgent bodies and seized 35 firearms. They destroyed 214 bunkers and hideouts and captured large caches: 450 IEDs, 818 grenades, 899 bundles of explosives, plus thousands of kg of food and medicine. NDTV reports also cite the recovery of 450 IEDs and 40 weapons in Karreguttalu. Union Home Minister Amit Shah hailed the operation as a "historic achievement." Official statements noted no security fatalities in the campaign, though media accounts indicate at least 3 Greyhounds commandos were killed by IEDs during the push. Eighteen CAPF personnel were reported injured, reflecting the dangers of the terrain and booby traps.

Elsewhere in 2024–25, other notable clashes occurred. Security forces often conduct long-duration ambushes and area domination drives. For instance, a joint patrol in April 2021 led to a fierce gunbattle with dozens of cadres, costing 22 security personnel their Conversely, many anti-Naxal operations have concluded with large numbers of insurgents surrendering when cut off and surrounded. By March 2025, one wave of surrenders in Bijapur saw 50 cadres lav down arms. Overall, government releases report that in 2024 about 290 insurgents were killed in operations, with over 1,000 arrested and 881 surrendered. Chhattisgarh specifically, since January 2024 about 237 Maoists were killed, 812 arrested and 723 surrendered.

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STRATEGIC ANALYSIS

By 2025, India's security forces report once-formidable insurgency has been severely weakened both territorially and operationally. Official data and independent analysts agree that the last five years have been the insurgency's worst period since the 1970s. A January 2025 analysis noted that with 159 cadres killed in 2024 and nearly 1,650 giving up arms in 2024-25, the movement is "on the brink of collapse." Union Home Minister Amit Shah and Chhattisgarh officials have boasted that key rebel bases have been cleared and the national flag flown over once-sacrosanct hills. Yet even with successes, counter-insurgency experts caution that total victory is not yet fully assured. The government's 2030 "Naxal-free India" (now 2026) deadline hinges on sustaining pressure underlying addressing issues in remaining areas.

There are also reports of civilian harm and grievances, with some groups "no-holds-barred" charging that a campaign in Bastar has led to rights abuse. India's "whole-of-government" approach will be tested in maintaining security gains while building trust in formerly militant villages. For now, however, the security data is striking: LWE violence in 2024 was down by about 80% from a decade earlier, casualties are a fraction of past peaks, and many districts once in open revolt now see no insurgent activity at all. With coordinated military operations across Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand. Odisha. Bihar. Maharashtra continuing into 2025, India appears closer than ever to achieving a long-elusive "Naxal-free" status - even government and analysts acknowledge the final phase will demand constant vigilance and deepened engagement in the Red Corridor.



FEATURE ARTICLE

THAILAND-CAMBODIA CONFLICT

The recent border tensions between Thailand and Cambodia centered around the Preah Vihear Temple Complex but spilled over to several contested sites: the hill known as Phu Makhuea, as well as other temple complexes such as Ta Moan Thom, Ta Moan Toch, and Ta Krabey. The conflict exemplifies western colonial cartography, Cold War proxy-wars in South and Southeast Asia, and the geopolitical jostling modern between China and the United States in the Indo-Pacific region. The problem stems from treaties negotiated under Western hegemony and reanimated through contests of geopolitical influence.

For India, these tensions carry significant strategic weight, particularly as New Delhi intensifies its outreach to Southeast Asia through the Act East Policy. The conflict zone's proximity to the Mekong subregion, where India has invested heavily, makes any instability there a matter of direct concern. Renewed military hostilities along the Thai-Cambodian frontier could disrupt transnational corridors, stall logistical planning, and complicate the political environment necessary for long-term infrastructural collaboration.

India's credibility as a regional stabiliser and development partner hinges on its ability to respond to such intra-ASEAN crises as an engaged actor, not just a distant observer. A coherent Indian response, recognising the internal complexities of the Thailand-Cambodia safeguarding conflict while own economic, political, and strategic interests, is essential.

Background and Current Scenario

At the heart of the dispute lie the Franco–Siamese treaties of 1904 and 1907 and the subsequent Mixed-Delineation Commission that attempted to demarcate boundaries between Siam and French Indochina. Discrepancies between the 'Watershed-based Treaty' text and French surveyors' maps laid the groundwork for later conflict. Notably, the 1907 map deviated from the watershed principle, placing the temple in Cambodian territory—a fact Thailand initially did not dispute.

In 1962, the International Court of Justice ruled in favour of Cambodia's sovereignty over the temple, and Thailand's inaction was deemed tacit acceptance. These ambiguities remained unresolved throughout the Cold War. Thailand allied closely with the U.S., joined SEATO, and American conducting hosted forces sorties during the Vietnam War, while Cambodia. under regimes varying Khmer Rouge, Vietnamese occupation, and later reconstruction—became alignments politically volatile. These institutionalised mistrust and led to border militarisation. Periodic clashes. insurgencies, and refugee crises throughout the Cold War era drew Thailand into defensive postures aligned with the US and away from Cambodia, highlighting the frontier's volatility.

A subsequent 2013 ruling by the International Court of Justice reaffirmed aspects of earlier decisions, yet ambiguity remained and fueled renewed tensions.

In recent times, Thailand and Cambodia have become an arena for geopolitical contention between the Indo-Pacific powers—the United States and China.

China exerts deep economic and political influence over Cambodia through infrastructure investments. military alignment, support. and strategic Phnom enhancing Penh's increasing dependence on Beijing. By contrast, Thailand is a longstanding U.S. defence partner. an arrangement formalized through the Joint U.S. Military Advisory Group established in 1953. It hosts Exercise Cobra Gold, Asia's largest multinational military drill, which in 2025 involved over 3,200 U.S. troops and 30 participating nations. The CARAT naval exercises, most recently held off Sattahip 2025, July enhance maritime interoperability between the U.S. and the Royal Thai Navies, focusing on submarine warfare, mine countermeasures, and air defence.

These diverging allegiances transform border flashpoints into vital nodes of geostrategic contestation, where national stances and postures often channel external support or threats, whether economic, diplomatic or military.



Historically, ASEAN has approached complex regional disputes, including the South China Sea and the Thailand-Cambodia border tensions, with a strong emphasis on consensus and interference. During the recent conflict, Malaysia's Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim mediating role, ASEAN's ongoing commitment to dialogue and de-escalation, though the bloc's response was measured and cautious, with joint communiqués eventually issued after significant bilateral and international pressure. External actors such as the United States also facilitated a ceasefire, with President leveraging Trump diplomatic and economic tools encourage de-escalation, illustrating how ASEAN often shares the regional stage with larger powers during crises. Scholars note that ASEAN's structural framework built on sovereignty, consensus, and nonintervention limits its ability to act swiftly or assertively in intra-member conflicts. While these principles preserve unity in a diverse region, they also constrain capacity for preventive diplomacy and enforcement. Nonetheless, ASEAN continues to serve as an essential platform for engagement and confidence-building, and its evolving mechanisms reflect a balancing between regional autonomy and pragmatic responsiveness. The most recent conflict in July 2025, the worst violence in over a decade, saw the 'Emerald Triangle' erupt in pitched artillery exchanges and aerial engagements. On July 24, 2025, heavy fighting erupted, involving rockets, artillery, and air strikes from both sides. The five-day conflict saw the use of advanced military equipment, with reports of civilian casualties and damage to civilian infrastructure, destabilising regional peace and security during an already testing time for South and South-East Asia.

STRATEGIC ANALYSIS

India's strategic interests in Southeast Asia are intimately tied to the stability and cohesion of the ASEAN region, and the Thailand-Cambodia conflict directly intersects with several of India's core interests, ranging from connectivity and commerce to maritime security and geopolitical influence. While traditionally cautious in engaging with bilateral disputes in the region, India can no longer afford a passive approach, particularly as the conflict becomes more frequent, militarised, and regionally destabilising. Hence, New Delhi must turn its attention to the following key considerations:

First, the security implications for India are substantial. The contested zones lie close to key Southeast Asian maritime routes, including those feeding into the Gulf of Thailand and the South China Sea. India's Andaman and Nicobar Command is increasingly sensitive to Chinese naval movements regional instability. and deepening Cambodia's defence cooperation with China has raised alarms within Indian strategic circles. Should Chinese military presence become more entrenched along Cambodia's southern coast, it would constrain Indian naval mobility in the Bay of Bengal-Malacca Strait axis, strengthening China's posture in the eastern Indian Ocean.

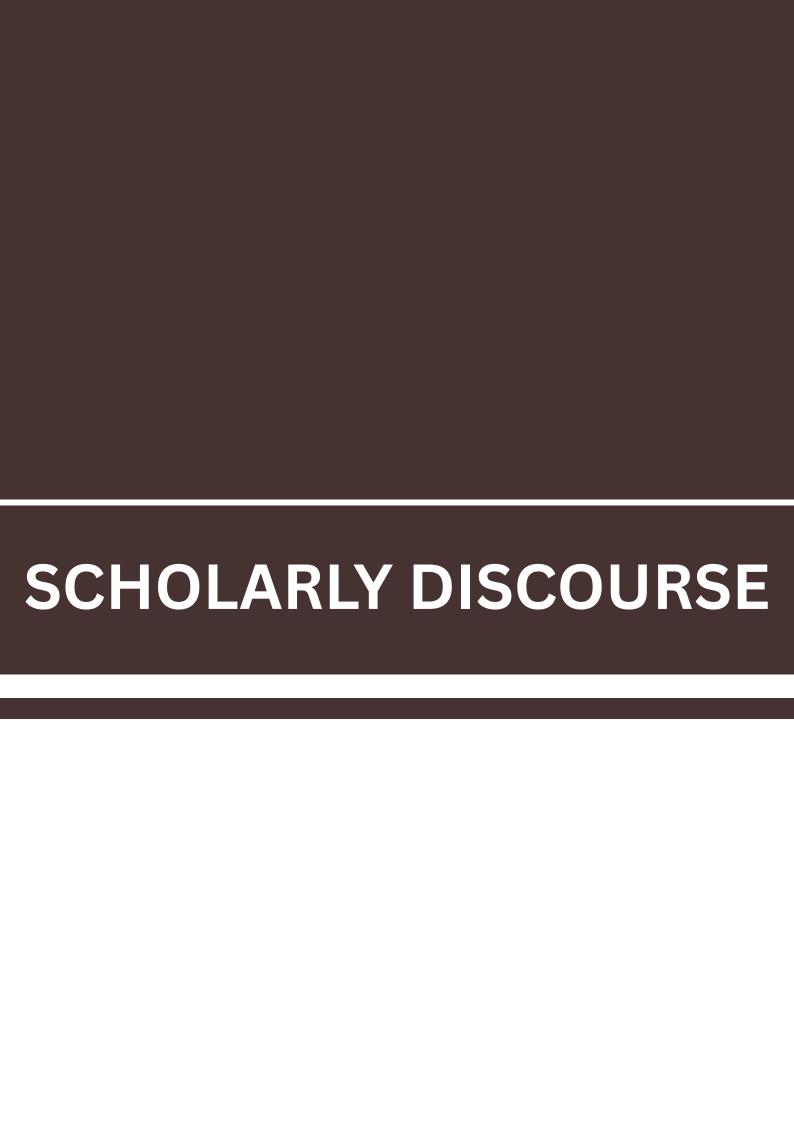
Second. India's economic and infrastructure, the India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway, a bridge to the ASEAN heartland, depends on regional peace and cross-border facilitation. Although the conflict does not physically bisect the highway, political instability the generates weakens its economic and integration prospects. Cambodia's increasing reliance on Chinese funding pose long-term risks to India's connectivity strategy.

Similarly, the Mekong-Ganga Cooperation, of which both Thailand and Cambodia are members alongside India, is premised on regional harmony. Intra-bloc tensions undermine this agenda and cast doubt on the viability initiatives led by India.

Third, India's diplomatic positioning is challenged by the conflict's persistence. India, a neutral development partner and a supporter of ASEAN centrality. With its prolonged minimal diplomatic engagement in response to regional flashpoints could perceived as strategic aloofness, particularly when powers such as China and the United States are actively maneuvering for influence. To navigate these stakes, India must adopt a more layered strategy. India should expand capacity-building programs, especially in civil-military relations, border management, and counter-disinformation with ASEAN partners, to demonstrate softpower utility.

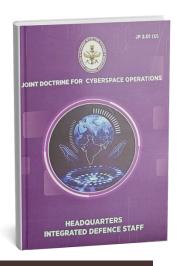
On the strategic front, India should naval diplomacy enhance its and intelligence coordination with Thailand. Concurrently, it should foster stronger ties with Cambodia through cultural exchanges, scholarships, and carefully planned development aid. This calibrated diplomatic approach is essential counteract China's increasing influence.

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COMMENTARY

INDIA'S JOINT DOCTRINE FOR SPECIAL FORCES OPERATIONS



India's Joint Doctrine for Special Forces Operations arrives at a time when the character of conflict is shifting towards hybrid, grey-zone, and multi-domain competition. The doctrine's strengths are conceptual clarity on roles, a practical planning philosophy, and a thorough catalogue of enablers and future capabilities. Its weaknesses lie in unresolved institutional tensions, the risk over-extension into non-strategic tasking, and an underspecified process for interagency fusion at the speed demanded by contemporary crises.

The doctrine's taxonomy of roles – RSTD/PSDA, offensive action, unconventional warfare, hostage rescue, anti-hijacking, maritime interdiction, etc., maps coherently onto India's operational realities. It also highlights that SF do not hold ground; rather, they generate shock, create windows of decision, and de-induct or link up. This clarity reinforces economy of force and preserves SF for tasks where small, skilled teams can lead to outcomes disproportionate to their size.

The doctrine is clear about the strategic ceiling of decisive effects, stating that isolated SF actions rarely deliver strategic outcomes. This is an important corrective to the SOF mystique and a guardrail against over-reliance on cross-border raids as a strategic panacea.

On command and control, the doctrine strikes two notes: SF are "strategic assets" whose tasking and C2 should be exercised at the highest levels, and when supporting field formations, SF are ideally under Regional Commands. For joint operations, employment may flow via HQ IDS/envisaged integrated structures. It also contemplates AFSOD's role expansion under the Chief of Staff hybrid Committee. This approach preserves flexibility but could produce ambiguity in time-critical scenarios unless command relationships are codified by mission type, theatre, and readiness cycle. A clearer decision tree - like, who holds OPCON/TACON when a mission crosses Services and borders - would further solidify the unity of command principle that the doctrine emphasises.

Where the doctrine excels is in its planning philosophy: simplicity, concentration for effect, surprise as a binding criterion, bottom-up planning by executors. rehearsed alternates. realistic timedistance constraints, and a no-secondattempt mindset. This is classic SOF tradecraft. The doctrine explicitly deals hybrid and grey-zone threats, cognitive/information warfare, and the geostrategic landscape. It cautions that SF alone cannot provide solutions to every security problem _ an admonition especially relevant to the domestic CI/CT arena, where the temptation to use "the sharpest tool" is high.

SCHOLARLY DISCOURSE

The discussion on cognitive warfare and information ops implies a need for tighter integration of SF actions with strategic communication and psychological operations to bring about political effects.

A highlight of the doctrine is its granular treatment of enablers: intelligence, secure and interoperable communications, ISR relay, precise fire support, legal support, logistics, space, and information warfare.

The articulation of DIA's role as a singlecivil-military point integrator across agencies is sensible, but the mechanisms for speed, security, and prioritisation that translate fusion into time-dominant actions determine operational value. recognises the need for highly responsive, rapidly updated intelligence links to the unit commander and HQ, which should be exercised relentlessly to prevent friction during golden minutes.

One improvement would be to specify authorities and thresholds for tasking national assets to SF missions during competition versus crisis/armed conflict. Another could be to institutionalise post-strike exploitation and assessment cycles as part of the joint targeting process.

Selection and preparation are rightly portrayed as arduous and tailored: baseline proficiency across weapons/communications/medical/navigat ion/demolition; mission-specific advanced skills; and cultural-linguistic competencies for cross-border and covert work. The emphasis on Live Situation Training and joint exercises is a major positive, bridging with operational peacetime training realities. Here, the proposal to upgrade existing SF schools into Joint Service Training Institutes with Centres Excellence is prudent – if it rationalises curricula. instructors, and evaluation standards across Services.

A risk worth flagging is interoperability debt: if Service-specific pipelines diverge too far in equipment, C2 procedures, and digital tools, joint execution suffers in timesensitive missions. The doctrine acknowledges the need for common SOPs and communications to maintain interoperability.

The futures section is forward-leaning; this is exemplary horizon scanning. For a doctrine, however, the value lies in prioritisation and pathways: which two or three capabilities most change Indian SF's operational art in the next five years? Portable. resilient power and attributable ISR/loitering swarms; and robust, jam-resistant comms likely stand above others. Also, the mention of LAWS should carry explicit ethical-legal caveats and ROE integration, given the doctrine's emphasis on legal and moral dimensions of risk.

In a resource-constrained environment with high political demand for quick, low-signature solutions, SF might be utilised excessively Institutional discipline reinforced by commanders' explicit appetite for risk under defined ROE should prevent erosion of SF's strategic utility.

The doctrine gets the big ideas right economy of force, strategic humility, joint technology planning discipline. and awareness - while leaving open some institutional choices that matter most in the first chaotic hours of a crisis. Tightening command relationships, accelerating interagency fusion. disciplining and employment will convert this thoughtful paper doctrine into repeatable operational advantage.

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COMMENTARY

INDIAN AIR FORCE: CAPABLE YET SHORTHANDED!

The Indian Air Force is the fourth largest in the world by the number of aircraft operated. About 1,700 aircraft are in service as of 2025. This is a respectable number; however, it fails to reflect the dire state the force finds itself in. Of this number, about 500 are rotary-wing aircraft or helicopters, and only around 540 are fixed-wing aircraft with offensive capabilities. This figure is set to fall even further from September 2025, as the roughly 40 MiG-21 Bis aircraft operated by the IAF are scheduled for retirement. This development, coupled with delays in the induction of Tejas Mk.1As, means that the IAF will soon be operating with just 29 squadrons of offensive-capable aircraft. This is a far cry from its target of 42 squadrons, which was devised to counter peer-to-peer threats from all possible fronts.



Though unfortunate, the under-equipped nature of the force's offensive capabilities has long been recognised. However, a new challenge taking shape in the skies of South Asia must be acknowledged: the disparity in early warning and electronic warfare (EW) capabilities. In a world where stealth and avionics dictate the outcome of aerial engagements more than manoeuvrability and agility, the IAF's shortcomings in developing its early warning and EW capabilities must be highlighted. Currently, the IAF operates only five AWACS aircraft — three Israeli EL/M-2090 Phalcon mounted on Russian IL-76's A-50E/I heavy-lift jets bought in 2004 and inducted in 2009, and two Netra Mk-1 mounted on Brazilian Embraer ERJ-145 business jet, inducted in 2017. An additional Netra Mk-1 is used by the Development Defence Research and Organisation (DRDO) for further development, rumoured to be transferred to the IAF.

Quantitatively, this remains inferior to what India's western neighbour possesses, namely nine SAAB Erieye systems and an additional mix of seven Western and Chinese aircraft serving as dedicated airborne EW platforms, a role that does not yet exist in the Indian Air Force. This disparity is particularly concerning when one considers that, unlike Pakistan, a two-front confrontation is a reality India must account for.

SCHOLARLY DISCOURSE

This formidable force operates more than two dozen early warning aircraft and additional dozen dedicated several airborne EW platforms. While most of the PLAAF's capabilities are concentrated near China's eastern coast, in proximity to Taiwan, South Korea, Japan, and the South China Sea. thev could repositioned near the Sino-Indian border. The threat posed by the PLAAF is accentuated by the existence of weapons such as the PL-15 and PL-17, long-range air-to-air missiles designed specifically to neutralise larger aircraft such as early warning systems, tankers, and transport aircraft.

Based on the above data, the IAF's major challenges could be understood. Resolving these challenges is far from simple, requiring several years, if not decades, and thousands of crores of taxpayers' money. Ultimately, however, the investment should pay off in the long run. Acknowledging this reality, the Air invested Force recently in development of upgraded Netra platforms and the installation of newer Active Electronically Scanned Array (AESA) radars in offensive aircraft and the design of new Anti-Radiation Missiles (ARMs), such as the Rudram series.

This series includes four variants, Rudram I - IV, both of which have undergone successful launch trials. The IAF has also sought to accelerate production of the Tejas Mk.1A, a particularly vital step as the MiG-21s retire. One of the greatest achievements of the IAF in the past decade has been the integration of the BrahMos missile, one of the world's most capable stand-off strike systems. BrahMos, as we know, recently saw extensive use during Operation Sindoor.

The Indian Air Force now stands at a significant crossroads, poised between balancing modernisation with pressing shortfalls. **Progress** indigenous in platforms, advanced weaponry, and radar technologies offer hope, but delays and capability gaps remain critical. Urgently addressing this promoting sustained investment in capacity building measures is essential to secure India's skies against evolving threats from India's adversaries.

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COMMENTARY

BEYOND THE BATTLEFIELD: INDIA FORGES ITS FIFTH-DIMENSION DEFENCE

For decades, the Indian Security had been defined by the physical frontiers like the Himalayas and the Indian Ocean. But in 2025, we can see that the biggest yet silent fight going on is through computer codes. This reality became official on August 7th, as the Chief of Defence Staff Gen. Anil Chauhan released India's first set of "Joint Doctrine for Cyberspace Operations". This historic plan literally elevates cyberspace as the fifth dimension of warfare (after air, land, sea and space). It represents a huge shift where a traditional defensive approach is transformed into an integrated, proactive defence and changes how India defends herself where the battleground has no boundaries.

This new doctrine is not just a "good idea", it is an urgent necessity. It is a response to an environment where adversaries want to weaken the military before the first shot is fired. Military planners are dealing with what was science fiction before like the GPS spoofing to disrupt paths of missiles, ransomware attacks on logistics networks to hinder troop movements, and the destruction of critical satellite links in the middle of a war or conflict. It is not just about spying anymore; it can be strategically crippling India's warfighting capability.

It is a warning, and the Seqrite India Cyber Threat Report 2025, published in January of this year, has reported a massive growth of state-sponsored malware assaults using Al-powered malware are used to hit critical infrastructure in India. It will be safe to assume that these tools can be re-purposed to use against the defence network and that the Military Intelligence would have confirmed it

At the heart of this new strategy is the Defence Cyber Agency (DCyA). This year, it has transformed into a fully functioning joint command from a newly formed organisation. It has dual purpose; Building an unbreakable defence for the Indian military networks, and developing an effective offensive cyber capability. The DCyA showed is strength when it led the 'Cyber Suraksha' exercise in this June which was a multi-phased initiative aimed at enhancing cyber resilience at national level.



SCHOLARLY DISCOURSE

This exercise was not just a mere technical test, it was designed to simulate real world cyber threats, reinforce secure practices, and test the analytical and defensive cyber skills of participants in a high-paced gamified environment. Cyber Suraksha Exercise ensured how the three armed forces (Army, Navy and Air Force) of India were still capable of fighting in a cyberspace. This focus on resilience shows that India will be capable of withstanding a first strike in terms of cyber warfare and still be a powerful fighting force.

The August doctrine clearly shifts India towards a strategy of an offensive defence, combining cyber capabilities with realworld miliary action. This framework enables military planners to use cyber capabilities as a first move in a conflict like taking down the air-defence systems of the enemy, or interfering with their battlefield communication signals/systems before any soldier is deployed. This strategy of disabling enemy before they launch an attack is now called "left-of-launch" among strategists. This is aimed at making the enemy blind and deaf, which in turn would provide the traditional forces of India a key advantage.

For a military which must be prepared for a potential two-front war, the capability to disable the enemy without firing a shot is not just a theoretical benefit, it is a critical part of its strategy.

So, even with all these advances, a major vulnerability is still present; the defence supply chain. Our military still depends on networked systems, advanced sensors, smart weapons etc.

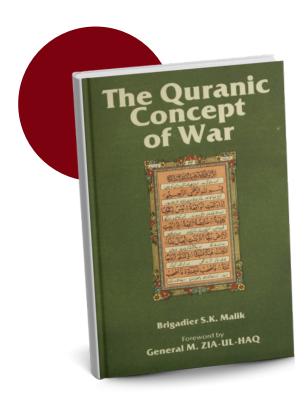
All of which depends on a global supply of hardware. The securing of the hardware big challenge. can be а A small compromised chip in a radar or missile system. "backdoor" or а in any communication networks be can powerful and silent threat that can be activated by the opponent at any time. This issue can lead to the linking of the security measures by DCyA with the Atmanirbhar Bharath program, empowering the domestic production not only with an economic objective, but also as a national security necessity.

Ultimately, the success of India's new cyber doctrine in India will be not be effective only with technology and strategic papers, it depends on the people who are in charge of it. No technology can run without a well-trained be motivated team of "Digital warriors". The government knows the challenges it faces competing with the high-paying private jobs to acquire the best talents. In response, there should be a focus on development of national security talent pool. The Bharath NCX 2025 in July was a key part of this. It brought together the staff of DCyA, NTRO, and other important agencies to test systems and significantly aimed at building a single human network. The path forward for fifth-dimension defence of India is clear now; Build on the strategic foundation laid on 2025 by investing in the highly skilled people needed to master the digital battlefield of the future.

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BOOK REVIEW

THE QURANIC CONCEPT OF WAR



Brig Malik (born in 1930) of Pakistan Army then eventually rising to rank of Maj Gen recognised for his close association with Zia ul Haq and marked his influence through being author for the quranic concept of war, the quranic concept of power and Khalid bin Walid composing of military strategy and warfare.

The study of Quranic concepts and the philosophy of war has attracted the attention of scholars across all eras. This book emphasises on classical Quranic applications related to war and political objectives of that time 570-632 AD. The main references of this book are from the Quran both subject as well as sura wise.

The book begins by exploring the formation of the Muslim Ummah — Why it was created and what purpose it served?

The author explores whether the Quran's applications aim to create chaos or achieve political gain, suggesting it serves significant military as handbook throughout history. War is portrayed as a spiritual endeavour, exemplified by the Prophet's conduct. Following their migration to Medina, Muslims initiated strategic actions against their oppressors, targeting the Meccan economy and enduring prolonged conflicts that drained resources.

The aftermath of war is examined, highlighting the dangers and hardships faced, supported by Quranic verses that present a philosophy of life, death, and the consequences of battle. The book emphasises unwavering commitment in warfare and critiques the concept of retreat.

Malik argues that the Quran provides a divine doctrine of warfare, distinct from Western perspectives, and calls for recognition of traditional views on jihad. While the work touches on historical, political, and moral aspects of Islamic warfare, it leans more towards an editorial stance than a scholarly one.

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STUDENT ANALYSIS

WHY INDIA LACKS DEFENCE TECH?

According to SIPRI data from 2019-23, India was the biggest importer of arms, accounting for 11% of total global arms imports. This highlights India's significant foreign military dependence on equipment. The LCA Tejas, India's indigenously developed fighter aircraft, designed and manufactured by the Aeronautical Development Agency and Hindustan Aeronautics Limited, represents a major step in India's push for selfreliance in defence technology. This fighter jet program, initiated in the 1980s replace the aging MiG-21, was approved in 1983, but the Tejas MK-1A only entered service with the Indian Air Force in 2016, over 30 years later. This delay drew criticism regarding India's defence R&D efficiency.

Air Chief Marshal Amar Preet Singh expressed a loss of confidence in HAL at Aero India 2025, noting that none of the promised 11 Tejas MK-1A aircraft were ready by February. His criticism extended to broader systemic inefficiencies in India's defence procurement ecosystem. India has approved the Advanced Medium Combat Aircraft program, with final government approval in March 2024. The first AMCA prototype is expected to launch by 2028-29, with production commencing from 2032-33.

Based on official data, India will possess fifth-generation fighter jets by 2033. However, countries like America, China, France, Germany, Spain, the UK, Italy, Japan, and Russia are expected to be working on sixth-generation fighter jets in the 2030s. This indicates a technological gap in defence technology between India and these nations.



SCHOLARLY DISCOURSE

Why not India? Why our organisations like DRDO and HAL are not showing their full potential? Is it because of their inefficient structure that is stopping them to reach their full potential? The least we expect from something as important as the defence ministry of a country is having leaders that have some experience in the field of defence or strategic planning, but looking at the past and present trends we can say that it is unfortunately not there in India. The only reason for this statement is when an expert will handle some critical positions like defence ministry, the policy and execution will better than usual. India's space and research organisation performing very well, giving other space organisations tough competition with half the budget given to DRDO. As of 2025-26 fiscal year ISRO has been allocated a total budget of ₹13,416.2 source whereas it is ₹26,816.82 crore source for DRDO. So the problem with DRDO is not the allocation of funds.

The main problems are the inefficient use of funds source, delays, cost overruns. India's some critical defence projects are delayed because DRDO failed to deliver on time, we can take Kaveri engine and Tejas LCA as one of the example.Next biggest problem is limited integration of private sector and academia. DRDO still has monopoly in defence sector where private sector and start-ups don't get equal opportunities even though private companies like TATA advance systems has done good work in projects like Akash missile launchers. DRDO has to work with private sector and start-ups to have fast executions and new ideas.

The conclusion is that India's defence organisations need to be reformed and should collaborate to avoid delays and have new ideas. Also the leaders should be experienced or experts of defence or strategic studies.

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STUDENT ANALYSIS

MALE UAVS': A STRATEGIC GAP IN INDIA'S UAV ARSENAL

High-altitude pose operations great operational challenges such as low air density, decreased engine efficiency, and extreme weather conditions add to the of the operators. Although. woes Turboprop-powered UAVs can overcome these very issues, but they incur a heavy cost. So much so that it increases the mission cost by 8-10 times, which is way higher than piston driven or conventional UAVs straining Operational budget.

The Case for Diversified UAV Procurement

A rather practical approach to this problem can be splitting operational requirements into specific, realistic roles rather than chasing a one-size-fits-all solution. Hence the need to acquire UAVs of different classes arises. HALE UAVs can be a good choice for long duration missions above 35,000 feet, ensuring constant watch over mountains, seas, and tough terrain. On the other hand MALE UAVs are better suited for regular patrols, surveillance, and strikes up to 28,000 feet, keeping things more cost-effective. This separation can dramatically financial pressures, as HALE UAVs would be reserved for only the toughest missions while MALEs handle day-to-day tasks.

MALE UAVs: A strategic gap in India's Uav arsenal

Indian armed forces urgently require Medium Altitude Long Endurance (MALE) UAVs which are capable of precision strikes across diverse and challenging operational terrains, especially in the high-altitude areas like Ladakh and Arunachal Pradesh. The operational reality is however far more different and complicated than it appears on paper.

India's High-Altitude UAV Challenge

Most of the Indian Army's UAVs along the LAC are older models like the Israeli Heron Mk I/II and Searcher II. They've been useful for surveillance and even limited strike roles, but they're starting to show their age and don't really have the altitude or endurance needed for tough Himalayan conditions. The Army now wants MALE UAVs that can fly at least 30,000 feet for more than 24 hours. But even homegrown systems like the TAPAS BH-201(UAV) are still having a hard time meeting those benchmarks.

Technical and Organisational Hurdles

Of course, this approach does bring its own set of challenges—things like managing logistics, keeping up with regular maintenance, and making sure crews are trained well enough to handle two different types of UAVs. These hurdles can't be ignored, since building and sustaining such a mixed fleet takes planning and resources. But the payoff is significant.

SCHOLARLY DISCOURSE

The armed forces would gain greater flexibility in how they deploy their UAVs, with each platform playing to its strengths. Over time, this balance would not only improve mission success rates but also ensure that costs remain under control. In the bigger picture, the long-term benefits of stronger operational capability, financial sustainability, and adaptability far outweigh the short-term difficulties.

Operational Flexibility and Sustainability

Even with these challenges, having a mix of UAVs gives the armed forces more flexibility. MALE UAVs can handle the routine stuff at a lower cost, while HALE UAVs can be kept for high-risk, longer missions in tough high-altitude zones.

This way, the military saves money while still getting the job done, which makes sense given India's budget and the complex terrain it has to cover.

As India's own engine and airframe technology improves, the forces can slowly move away from foreign drones and start using UAVs built at home, designed specifically for local conditions and new threats. That not only improves security but also pushes India's goal of being more self-reliant or 'Aatma Nirbhar'.

So, a layered UAV setup using both HALE and MALE platforms looks like the most practical way forward for India to build a strong, reliable, and affordable aerial fleet.

Rishabh Tiwari BA 1st Sem, AIDSS



STUDENT ANALYSIS

AMBUSH OVER BOYRA

THE PRELUDE

At 12:00 on the 22nd of November a flight of four Gnats from the Indian Air Force's No.22 Squadron based at Dum Dum scrambles to intercept a flight of four Pakistani Sabres carrying out a Close-Air-Support (CAS) mission against the Indian Army's 350 Infantry Brigade along it's axis of advance towards Garibpur. The radar controllers in the area guide the Gnats towards the forward positions of 4 Sikh (from 350 Bde).

There, one of the pilots spots a PAF jet and tries raising the flight leader on R/T but receives no response. The IAF Forward Air Controller (FAC) attached with 350 Bde attempts to do the same but to no avail (it is later discovered that the flight leader was unable to even hear the R/T calls due to a radio malfunction) the pilots are hence unable to exploit this opportunity and the Pakistani Sabres manage to escape and the frustrated pilots return home.

But, their disappointment would not last long, before the day ends the tide shall turn and the Gnats of Dum Dum shall have their Sabres. At Tezgaon four pilots from the PAF's No.14 Sqn are slated to fly the third and last strike mission of the day scheduled to take off at 2 PM.

Before the mission's commencement Sqn Ldr Dilawar Hussain one of the men on the 2 PM mission is approached by Fl Lt Pervaiz Mehdi Qureshi who is complaining about not getting the opportunity to fly that day. Looking at the Fl Lt Qureshi's eagerness Hussain decides to give him his place in the 2 PM sortie.

The four Sabres take off from Tezgaon at 2:20 but one Sabre is forced to turn around due to R/T problems. The remaining now reduced flight of three Sabres continues to it's target area. At 2:40 four Gnats are scrambled from Dum Dum and the formation this time is led by FI Lt Massey after the previous flight leader (having flown two missions already) is replaced by the reserve pilot FI Offr Sunith Soares, the other two pilots in the flight are FI Offr Don Lazarus and FI Lt M.A Ganpathy.

Lazarus rapidly aims at the enemy and fires a short burst-twelve rounds is all it takes before the Sabre catches fire and explodes (not before the pilot miraculously ejects). While this battle progressed Soares and Massey were still chasing their target while he was firing his second burst Massey's right cannon jammed but his third burst hit home.



SCHOLARLY DISCOURSE

30mm rounds from the Gnat's Aden cannon smacked squarely into the Sabre's left wing which started streaming fuel. As the Sabre lost power and altitude the pilot was forced to eject. Both downed pilots Fl Lt P.M Qureshi (who later became Pakistan's Chief Of Air Staff) and FI Offr Khalil Ahmed landed in 4 Sikh's ops area and both pilots were immediately captured by the Indian troops with Qureshi having to be rescued from the wrath of his men by Capt (later Lt Gen) H.S Panag. The news reached the papers and the radio by the 23rd and 24th of November and the four 'Boyra Boys' became famous pilots with legendary status. Lazarus, Massey and Ganpathy were awarded the Vir Chakra for their role in the battle.

thousand feet above the Indian Gnats. Soares calls out his contact and Massey spots the jets as well. Both Massey and Soares break hard to the right flying over Ganpathy and Lazarus move into position to engage. As they engage in a dogfight with the enemy.

Ganpathy calls out his contact as well and manoeuvres to engage. The jet spotted by Ganpathy is attempting to get behind Massey in an effort to rescue his wingman and does not know about the other two Gnats who caught him unaware. As Ganpathy chases his target (who is now fleeing) Lazarus falls behind his leader (the gap is about 600 yards) due to bleeding speed in the tight turn and spots a third Sabre behind Ganpathy!

THE BATTLE

Flying at an altitude of 1000 feet Massey puts the pedal to the metal and the Gnats zip across the sky at a speed of 830 kph towards the Boyra Bulge. At Garibpur the Gnats climb to 3000 feet and are flying nearly line abreast when Soares spots a PAF jet diving at ground targets from a

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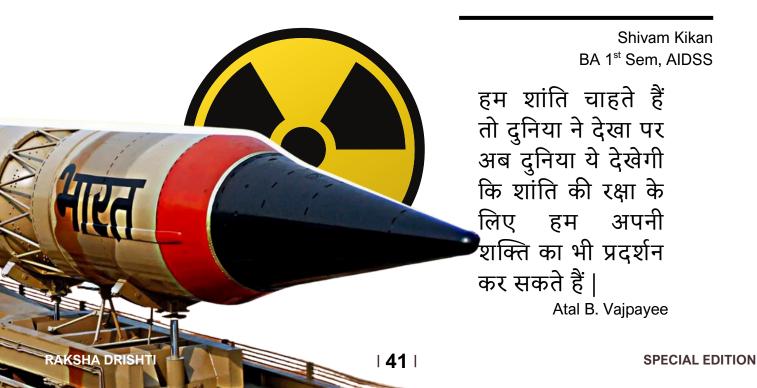
The Boyra Boys — Massey (Far Left), Lazarus (Centre), Soares (Second From Right) and Ganpathy (Far Right). In Box — Flight Lt Pervaiz Mehdi Qureshi upon his capture (Left) and Qureshi after being appointed Air Chief Marshal (Right)

STUDENT ANALYSIS

NFU - INDIA'S NUCLEAR POLICY

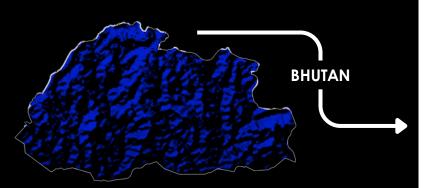
In the very beginning, India's nuclear journey had a peaceful atomic explosion on May 18, 1974, with the code name 'Smiling Buddha', and with the second series of nuclear explosions, that is Pokhran 2, in May 1998. After this nuclear explosion, India became the 6th country in the world to possess nuclear weapons. India has remained a nuclear power in global power politics and the South Asian region. India has repeatedly reminded the world that if we used weapons of mass destruction, they would be used only to protect ourselves from the neighbouring aggressors. The Western world should know that this is the India of the new age, and it will not bow down to their baseless accusations. India is not a puppet state like Pakistan and Bangladesh that would compromise its national interests for the sake of Western interests in the South Asian region.

India nowadays is not only a nuclear state, but a nuclear triad nation. We can protect ourselves from the unjust attacks from our neighbours. We can protect motherland from waterborne threats through our nuclear-capable submarines, such as INS Arihant, which are equipped with K-5 missiles. We have BRAHMOS supersonic cruise missile to defend us from the infiltrating enemies via land, air, and water. We have already seen its capabilities recently in Operation SINDOOR. We also have AGNI-5 intercontinental Ballistic missile withe the range upto 5000KM. It could solve all our problems by clearing off the souls of attackers from our divine skies. We have RAFALE jets that carry SCALP missiles to convert our enemies to ashes even before they try to find cover. India's nuclear doctrine is clear not to use first, but if someone uses it against us it wont be tolerated.

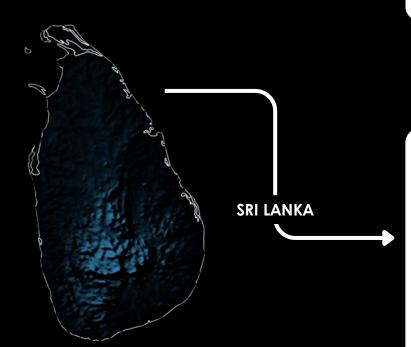








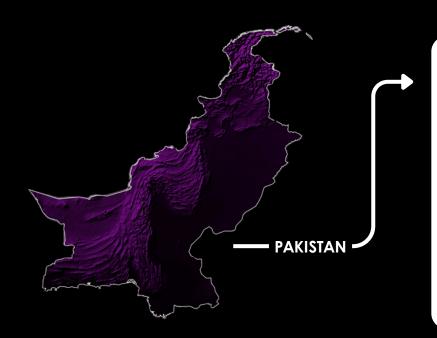
Bhutan stands out with 8.5% GDP growth, driven by hydropower and premium tourism, achieving rare stability. Its Gross National Happiness policy guides fiscal discipline and environmental stewardship, ensuring calm security. Benefiting indirectly from Indian-led initiatives, Bhutan prioritises conservation and measured modernisation. It avoids debt or militarisation, presenting a balanced model amidst regional turbulence



Sri Lanka is in a fragile recovery phase post-debt crisis, with 3.5% growth and IMF-mandated social spending cuts. Its \$1.5 billion defence budget prioritises naval amidst assets **Indo-Pacific** militarisation competition, vet reconciliation. shadows ethnic Politically, it balances IMF reforms with public demands. Colombo strategically navigates India and China, aiming for cooperation over contestation



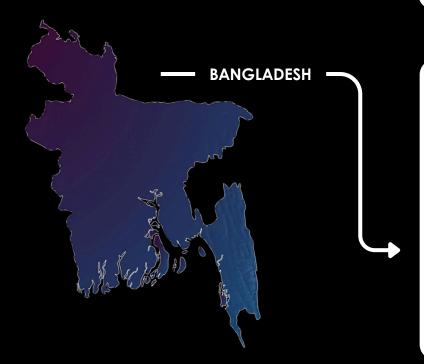
Nepal projects 4.5% growth through remittances and agriculture while balancing China-India relations, but deadly September 2025 Gen Z protests killing 72 people exposed deep vulnerabilities. The unrest, triggered by social media bans and 20%+ youth unemployment, toppled PM Oli's government and installed Nepal's first female PM, highlighting how structural economic challenges threaten democratic resilience amid great power competition.



Pakistan grapples with tension between its military and fragile \$340 billion economy, showing sluggish 2.7% growth under IMF austerity. Inflation and rising debt persist, while military spending on JF-17 Block-III and Babur-class increases. corvettes Αt SCO, Islamabad advocated infrastructure finance and counternarratives. terror Internal economic imbalances and political instability remain its most profound vulnerabilities.



Afghanistan is South Asia's most fragile nation, with a \$17 billion GDP and only 2% growth, hindered by sanctions and reduced aid. The Taliban faces challenges providing basic services and addressing food insecurity. Security is unstable, marked by efforts against ISIS, while the country lacks international recognition. As an SCO observer, Afghanistan's role is confined to counter-terrorism, underscoring its isolation and legitimacy issues.



Bangladesh's economy, driven by garment exports and remittances, grew 3.9% despite constraints, showcasing resilience. Its "Forces Goal 2030" program emphasises maritime security and border integrity. A mid-2025 ammunition with Pakistan diversified suppliers. At SCO, Bangladesh focused on human security, balancing India and China. Its pragmatic strategy aims for steady modernization and economic competitiveness

DEFENCE INSIGHTS



Global defence is experiencing notable alliance shifts. The India-US 10-Year Defence Pact enhances Indo-Pacific security and technology exchange, while the China-Pakistan military alliance boosts regional positioning. New alliances in the Western Balkans and strengthened ties like India-New Zealand illustrate a trend of deepening regional defence partnerships and strategic realignments.



The defence sector is quickly adopting advanced technologies with global investments in hypersonic missiles, Al, and autonomous systems, including drones and surveillance. Militaries are enhancing counter-drone and electronic warfare capabilities, focusing on space militarisation and prioritising cybersecurity to address emerging threats.

Nations worldwide are experiencing a significant surge in military modernisation and procurement. Key developments include the landmark \$142 billion arms deal between the US and Saudi Arabia, and India's \$25 billion investment in indigenous military projects. A global increase in naval contracts totals \$29.6 billion, with a notable emphasis on aerospace, naval platforms, and enhancing domestic defence manufacturing capabilities across Europe.



Export control reforms in international defence trade are notable. The US has streamlined ITAR/EAR for less sensitive while tightening controls items advanced technologies. India updated its SCOMET list to meet non-proliferation standards and enhance oversight. Ongoing India-US discussions focus on harmonising export classifications and simplifying licensing, which is vital for joint manufacturing and technology transfer in changing security environments.



CONFERENCE SPOTLIGHT



ORF - Philippines President



ORF - Conversation with Ambassador (Japan)

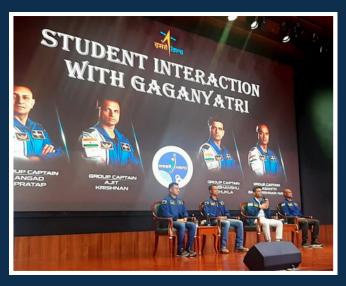


ICWA - Interaction with SCO Secretary General



ICWA Conference

CONFERENCE SPOTLIGHT



STATE OF STA

ISRO's event



Global Forum Conference



Conference on IMEC



Conference on MRSAM

Seema Vimarsh, UoD



CAPS Capstone Seminar

RANNEETI 2025









The Amity Institute of Defence and **Studies** (AIDSS) Strategic hosted RANNEETI 2025 at Amity University Uttar Pradesh on 27-28 March 2025, themed "Shifting Paradigms: Navigating the Changing Geopolitics in the 21st Century." The conclave brought together a distinguished galaxy of leaders and scholars, including Lt Gen Raj Shukla (Retd), Prof. Chintamani Mahapatra, Dr. Stuti Banerjee, Dr. Walter Christman, Prof. Arvind L. Kumar, Air Vice Marshal Anil Golani (Retd), Capt. (Dr.) Ajey Lele (Retd), Dr. Roshan Khanijo, Dr. Pramod Kumar, Dr. J. Jegannathan, Dr. Fouad Nohra, and Dr. Muddasir Quamar. Over two days, sessions addressed geopolitical conflict transformations. zones. technological convergence, and Indian dynamics. The Ocean event encouraged policy-oriented deliberations, global collaboration, and student participation, making it a vibrant platform for advancing dialogue on international security and strategy

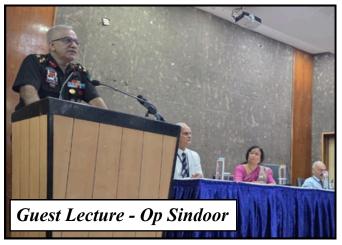


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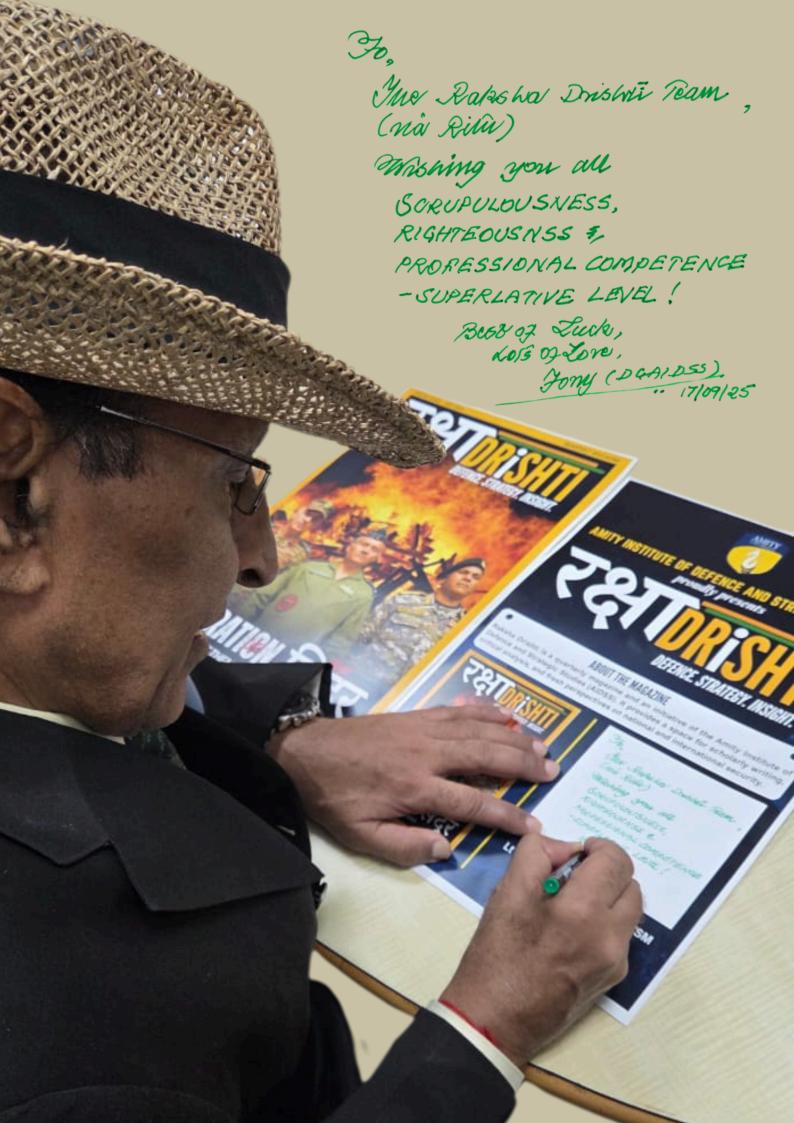
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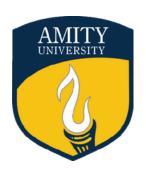
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