

# Far and Wide

Every week we share selection of six news from six continents that we believe will impact our world in the near or distant future

August 2024 | Issue #61

## India and US Strategic Defence Alliance: Defence Minister's Visit Paves Way for Enhanced Collaboration Through Key Defence Agreements

Welcome to the latest edition of Far and Wide, where we embark on a journey to explore intriguing stories and global developments.

India and US, once hindered by trust deficit, have now emerged as natural allies with a robust strategic, military, cultural, and economic partnership. This relationship reached new heights during Defence Minister Shri Rajnath Singh's visit from August 23 to 26, 2024, resulting in the signing of two key agreements: the Security of Supplies Arrangement (SOSA) and the Memorandum of Agreement on the Assignment of Liaison Officers, and solidifying a shared commitment towards addressing shared security challenges.

India has become the 18th country to partner with the US under the SOSA. This non-binding agreement allows both countries to access each other's resources in the event of disruptions in defence supply chain. It ensures reciprocal priority support for goods and services critical to national defence, enabling both nations to swiftly secure essential industrial resources, thereby strengthening their national security capabilities. The two nations have also pledged to support each other's requests for delivery of critical defence resources on a priority basis with US reaffirming support under "Defence Priorities and Allocations System" for bilateral defence supplies.

During his four-day visit to the United States, Defence Minister Shri Rajnath Singh toured the US Navy's advanced testing facility at the Naval Surface Warfare Center (Memphis, Tennessee) as India considers establishing a similar facility for indigenous defence development. Visit also involved high-level discussions with US NSA Jake Sullivan and Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin, focusing on regional security, Indo-Pacific cooperation, and defence industrial collaboration

This significantly bolsters India-US defence trade and cooperation, enhancing collaboration in peace, emergencies, and conflict scenarios. The agreements could facilitate easier sourcing for US companies from Indian vendors, boosting India's defence manufacturing sector while marking a pivotal step in deepening the India-US Comprehensive Global Strategic Partnership.



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## Europe

### EU-India regional conference on current threats to online radicalization

The European Union in collaboration with organizing partner Global Counter-Terrorism Council (GCTC) and with India's Ministry of External Affairs held a two-day EU-India Track 1.5 Conference from August 21-22, 2024, in New Delhi to discuss and collaborate on the current and emerging threats in online radicalization and find ways to jointly counter the exploitation of online spaces by extremist and terrorist actors. It brought together leaders in the battle against digital extremism from South Asia (India, Bangladesh, Maldives, and Sri Lanka) and Europe, including specialists, legislators, academics, and law enforcement personnel.

The event is a part of an ongoing series of counterterrorism engagement between the EU and India. It builds on recent counterterrorism-related activities held in India under the EU project Enhancing Security Cooperation in and With Asia (ESIWA). Previous topics covered under this project included women's peace and security, cybersecurity, misinformation and disinformation warfare, and drone terrorism.

Source : EEAS, ANI News

[https://www.eeas.europa.eu/delegations/india/eu-and-india-convene-high-level-regional-experts-discuss-how-combat-exploitation-online-spaces\\_en?s=167](https://www.eeas.europa.eu/delegations/india/eu-and-india-convene-high-level-regional-experts-discuss-how-combat-exploitation-online-spaces_en?s=167)

<https://www.aninews.in/news/world/asia/india-eu-to-host-conference-to-discuss-current-and-emerging-threats-in-online-radicalisation20240820063539/>

In the spirit of #TeamEurope, a diverse group of top security practitioners from European Union institutions, EU Member States (Austria, Italy, Croatia, Estonia, Spain, Germany, Ireland, Netherlands, France and Romania), and key agencies such as European Border & Coast Guard Agency (Frontex) and European Counter Terrorism Centre (Europol) came together to engage in peer-to-peer exchange. The EU's Terrorist Content Online (TCO) Regulation implemented in April 2021, the Digital Services Act (DSA) of February 2024, and the recently established EU platform on illicit content online (PERCI) by Europol, was highlighted as key steps in regulating online spaces to curb the spread of terrorist content.

## North America

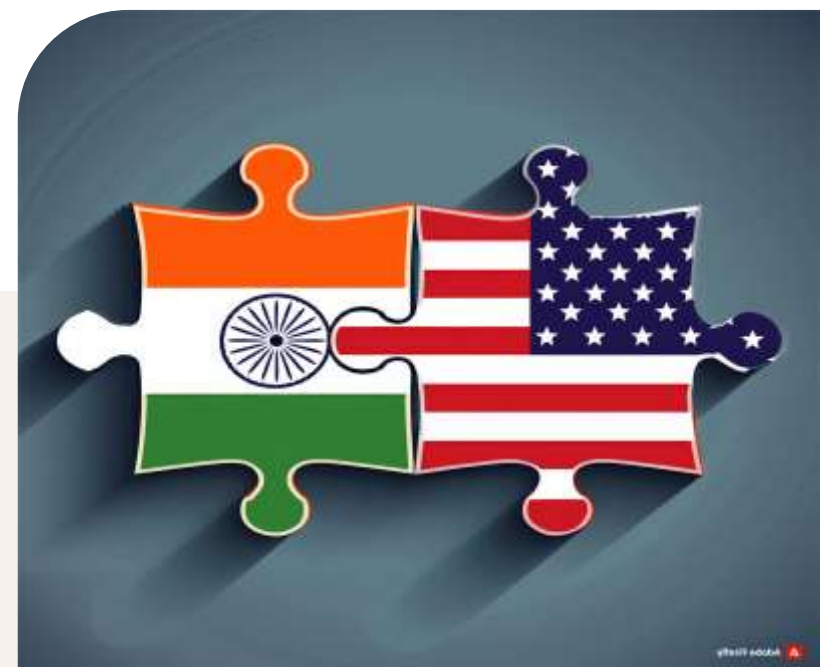


### India and US Strategic Defence Alliance: Defence Minister's Visit Paves Way for Enhanced Collaboration Through Key Defence Agreements

India and the United States, once challenged by trust deficits, have now emerged as strong allies with a robust partnership across strategic, military, cultural, and economic domains. The relationship reached a new high during Defence Minister Shri Rajnath Singh's visit in August 2024, leading to the signing of two key agreements: the Security of Supplies Arrangement (SOSA) and the Memorandum of Agreement on the Assignment of Liaison Officers, which further solidify their shared commitment to addressing security challenges and advancing strategic collaboration.

India became the 18th country to partner with the US under SOSA, a non-binding agreement ensuring reciprocal priority support for critical defence resources, bolstering both nations' national security capabilities. The Memorandum of Agreement facilitates the exchange of military officers, enhancing mutual understanding and interoperability.

During the visit, high-level discussions were held on regional security, Indo-Pacific cooperation, and defence industrial collaboration. The agreements are expected to significantly boost India-US defence trade, strengthen India's defence manufacturing sector, and deepen the India-US Comprehensive Global Strategic Partnership.



Source: Newsonair

<https://www.newsonair.gov.in/india-and-us-enter-into-security-of-supply-arrangement/>

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## South America

### Leveraging the growth of hydrogen economy in South America



Latin America is uniquely positioned to become a global leader in clean hydrogen production and export due to its abundant renewable energy resources including solar, wind and hydro power. Latin America could meet 25-33% of global hydrogen demand, rivalling major players like Australia as the key players are pursuing diverse strategies to develop their hydrogen economies, reflecting their strengths and priorities, according to 'Accelerating the Clean Hydrogen Economy in Latin America'. Countries like Chile and Argentina aim to become globally competitive players, focusing on international markets and developing trade infrastructure and certification schemes. Nations such as Brazil, Colombia and Mexico prioritize using hydrogen to decarbonize their domestic economies, with exports as a longer-term goal. Countries like Panama and Uruguay are taking a targeted approach, developing hydrogen for specific applications such as shipping or industrial sectors

Source: World Economic Forum  
<https://www.weforum.org/publications/accelerating-the-clean-hydrogen-economy-in-latin-america/>

<https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2024/08/latin-american-hydrogen-economy/>

The development of the hydrogen sector in Latin America depends on ensuring clarity on criteria related to safety, technological aspects, and carbon intensity. Latin America has to lower the cost of hydrogen conversion, storage, and transportation to bring clean hydrogen on par with traditional options. Since innovation and R&D are essential for enabling technological scale-up, they must also be emphasized. Nations that prioritize their own markets ought to stimulate regional demand by establishing industrial clusters and offering incentives to high-energy industries. Dedicated hydrogen infrastructure is necessary, yet each nation has different demands. Ports and shipping are examples of export infrastructure that net exporters should prioritize. To promote economies of scale, ecosystem players must coordinate. For exporters, this entails financing in novel ways, encouraging global knowledge sharing, and automating manufacturing..

## Asia



### India-Malaysia Partnership Grows with New Agreements and Initiatives

India and Malaysia have elevated their relationship to a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership during Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim's first visit to India since assuming office. The two nations signed multiple agreements covering education, labour repatriation, tourism, and digital technologies. The leaders recognized the maturity of their bilateral ties, established through the Enhanced Strategic Partnership in 2015, and agreed that the time was right to deepen these relations.

Prime Ministers Narendra Modi and Anwar Ibrahim discussed a wide range of bilateral cooperation, including defence, trade, and digital technologies. They condemned terrorism and agreed to work together to bring perpetrators to justice. The two leaders also welcomed the record high bilateral trade of USD 19.5 billion and committed to reviewing the ASEAN-India Trade in Goods Agreement (AITIGA) to further strengthen trade relations.

Both sides also agreed to enhance collaboration in digital technologies, defence, and tourism, with a focus on strengthening supply chains between India and ASEAN countries. The leaders expressed satisfaction with their cooperation in multilateral forums like the UN and committed to working together for a more representative UN Security Council. PM Modi also announced India's collaboration with Malaysian Paynet and the allocation of 100 seats for Malaysians under the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) Programme.



Source: ANI

<https://aninews.in/news/world/asia/india-malaysia-elevate-ties-to-comprehensive-strategic-partnership-sign-agreements-on-education-labour-tourism20240820223651/>

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## Australia

### Australia-India SATPI Grants: Boosting Strategic and Tech Ties

With the goal of promoting a peaceful, stable, and prosperous area, the Australian government has announced the Australia-India Strategic and Technology Policy Initiative (SATPI) grants. With this project, Australia and India are demonstrating their shared commitment to tackling strategic and technology issues in the Indo-Pacific region.

Source:  
<https://ministers.dfat.gov.au/minister/tim-watts/media-release/inaugural-australia-india-strategic-and-technology-policy-initiative-grants-round>

<https://www.internationalaffairs.org.au/australianoutlook/23-august-2024-the-week-in-australian-foreign-affairs/>

SATPI will support a range of activities, with its flagship being an annual 1.5 track strategic dialogue between the two nations, first proposed during the 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue announced in New Delhi in November 2023. Other funded activities may include conferences, workshops, research, policy papers, and institutional exchanges that further Australian interests in collaboration with India.

The Australian Government has allocated approximately \$1.25 million annually for SATPI grants from 2024-25 to 2026-27. Australian entities, particularly those partnered with Indian organizations, are invited to submit grant applications by 29 September 2024, aiming to advance strategic and technological cooperation between the two countries.

## Africa



### India calls for unified support from African nations on WTO reforms at India-Africa Conclave

Sunil Barthwal, Secretary, Department of Commerce and Industry, Government of India asked African nations to band together in demanding WTO reforms and to focus on important problems like industrial strategy, technology transfer, and food security. He stated at the India-Africa Conclave held in New Delhi on August 22, 2024, that enacting changes and enhancing international trade standards require a coordinated strategy. Through the important institutions of India, such as the Indian Institute of Foreign Trade, the Centre for WTO Studies, and the Centre for Trade and Investment Law, the Commerce Secretary provided customized capacity-building programs to African countries in the areas of trade facilitation, promotion, finance, policy, and negotiations. Additionally, India intends to begin fresh negotiations for a free trade agreement (FTA) with South Africa, a crucial member of the South African Customs Union (SACU)



Source: Akashvani, The Mint  
<https://www.newsonair.gov.in/india-reaffirms-commitment-to-africas-growth-at-cii-india-africa-business-conclave/>

<https://www.livemint.com/news/india-africa-wto-reforms-global-issues-technology-transfer-industrial-policy-fta-gati-shakti-eu-exports-11724322676558.html>

Beyond exports, there's a big chance to increase India's African import portfolio. India sent \$38.17 billion worth of commodities to African nations in FY24. Among the top travel destinations were Tanzania (\$4.62 billion), South Africa (\$8.71 billion), and Nigeria (\$3.6 billion). Petroleum products, engineering items, medicines and pharmaceuticals, grains, textiles, electronics are among the main exports supplied to African countries. Additionally, the secretary disclosed intentions to share the Unified Logistics Interface Portal (ULIP) and the PM Gati Shakti master plan with Africa to promote the growth of effective logistics infrastructure and enhance multimodal connectivity. These initiatives show how digital tools, and infrastructure may save costs and increase the efficiency of logistics