

# 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

February 2025 | Issue #80



## PM Modi and President Trump Strengthen US-India Strategic and Economic Ties

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

The US-India Strategic Partnership Forum (USISPF) congratulated Prime Minister Narendra Modi and US President Donald Trump for the successful outcomes of their first meeting since Trump's inauguration. The discussions reaffirmed the strength of the US-India partnership, emphasizing shared democratic values, economic collaboration, and regional security. A key highlight was the commitment to negotiating a Bilateral Trade Agreement (BTA) by Fall 2025 and the launch of "Mission 500," aimed at increasing bilateral trade to \$500 billion by 2030. The agreement will focus on reducing trade barriers, promoting transparency, and ensuring a balanced trade partnership between the two nations.

Defence cooperation was a major focus, with the introduction of the "U.S.-India COMPACT" initiative to enhance military collaboration and technological innovation. The U.S. announced increased military sales to India, including F-35 fighter jets, Apache helicopters, and other advanced defence equipment. Discussions also included co-production agreements for Javelin Anti-Tank Guided Missiles and Stryker Infantry Combat Vehicles. Additionally, energy security and supply chain resilience were emphasized, with plans to advance the US-India 123 Civil Nuclear Agreement and develop small modular reactors in India. The leaders also launched a strategic mineral recovery initiative to secure critical resources.

The meeting underscored counterterrorism cooperation, with the U.S. approving the extradition of 26/11 Mumbai attack accused Tahawwur Rana, signaling a strong stance against terrorism. Strengthening people-to-people ties was another key aspect, with initiatives to boost educational exchanges, tourism, and cooperation on illegal immigration and drug trafficking. As India prepares to host the Quad Leaders' Summit in 2025, PM Modi invited President Trump to visit India, further cementing the long-term commitment to deepening US-India relations across economic, defence, and strategic domains.

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## Europe

### India and EU to Advance FTA Talks in March 2025

Source : The Economic Times

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/foreign-trade/india-eu-to-hold-next-round-of-talks-on-proposed-fta-from-march-10/articleshow/118336117.cms>

India and the European Union (EU) will hold the next round of negotiations on the proposed Free Trade Agreement (FTA) from March 10 to 14, according to a senior government official. Before these talks, the European Commission delegation will visit India on February 28 to prepare for the discussions.

Simultaneously, India and the UK are also set to resume their FTA negotiations. On February 24, the UK's Minister of State for Trade Policy, Douglas Alexander, will meet with Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal to review progress. This will be followed by formal trade discussions between Indian and UK officials on February 25.

India and the UK have already conducted 14 rounds of negotiations since the FTA talks began in January 2022. The upcoming discussions will build upon the progress made in previous meetings. Additional Secretary in the Department of Commerce, L Satya Srinivas, emphasized that both sides have reviewed the outcomes of the last round and will work towards further advancing negotiations.

These engagements reflect India's commitment to strengthening economic ties with key global partners, aiming to finalize trade agreements that enhance market access, promote investment, and boost bilateral trade with both the EU and the UK.

## North America



### Modi-Trump Meeting Strengthens Trade, Defence, Technology, and Energy Ties

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi met U.S. President Donald Trump on February 14, 2025, at the White House, setting a \$500 billion bilateral trade target by 2030. India plans to increase imports of U.S. oil and gas, reducing the trade deficit, while Trump welcomed India's tariff cuts on American goods. Modi introduced "Make India Great Again" (MIGA) as a counterpart to Trump's MAGA, emphasizing a "mega partnership for prosperity" in defence, energy, and technology. They announced initiatives like I-MEECH economic corridor, critical mineral supply chains, and AI, semiconductor, and biotech collaborations. India also launched the Autonomous Systems Industry Alliance to enhance defence ties.

Both leaders discussed extradition, defence, immigration, and trade. Modi thanked Trump for extraditing Tahawwur Rana, convicted of aiding terrorism, while Trump announced plans to sell F-35 jets to India. Modi reaffirmed India's commitment to repatriating undocumented migrants and countering human trafficking. The U.S.-India COMPACT initiative was launched to enhance military, trade, and tech cooperation. Trade tensions remained, with Trump advocating "reciprocal tariffs" and Modi proposing concessions. They also reaffirmed support for the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC) as an alternative to China's Belt and Road Initiative.

Additionally, they launched the TRUST initiative to boost cooperation in defence, AI, quantum tech, biotech, energy, and space, ensuring secure tech partnerships. Trump offered to mediate the India-China border dispute, but India declined, reaffirming its bilateral stance. The leaders also advanced the U.S.-India civil nuclear agreement, focusing on localization and technology transfer for U.S.-designed nuclear reactors. India aims to generate 100 GW of nuclear energy by 2047, pushing key legal reforms to facilitate collaboration.



Source: Jagran Josh

<https://www.jagranjosh.com/general-knowledge/modi-trump-meeting-key-takeaways-check-details-here-1739518133-1>

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## South America

### India and Brazil Strengthen Agricultural Ties Through Innovation and Trade Cooperation



On February 14, H.E. Ronaldo Caiado, Governor of Goias, Brazil, met with Bhagirath Choudhary, India's Minister of State for Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare, at Krishi Bhawan, New Delhi, to explore opportunities for strengthening bilateral trade and cooperation in sugarcane, ethanol, pulses, research & development, innovation, and digital agriculture.

Minister Choudhary emphasized the long-standing partnership between India and Brazil, both bilaterally and on global platforms. He expressed confidence that the Governor's visit would deepen collaboration, enhance agricultural productivity, and strengthen food security, benefiting both nations.

Governor Caiado highlighted the agricultural similarities between India and Goias, such as favorable farming conditions and a rich agricultural landscape, which provide a strong foundation for knowledge-sharing, technology exchange, and capacity-building initiatives. He underscored that enhanced cooperation could drive innovation in farming practices and contribute to mutual economic growth.

Ajeet Kumar Sahu, Joint Secretary (International Cooperation), briefed the Brazilian delegation on India's key initiatives, including crop insurance, agricultural credit, and the development of Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) in agriculture.

Source: ChiniMandi

<https://www.chinimandi.com/india-and-brazil-to-explore-areas-of-bilateral-trade-and-cooperation-in-sugarcane-and-ethanol/>

## Asia



### External Affairs Minister Jaishankar Boosts Regional Diplomacy at Muscat Conference

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar held bilateral meetings with his counterparts from Mauritius, Maldives, Nepal, Bhutan, and Sri Lanka on the sidelines of the Indian Ocean Conference in Muscat, Oman.

Jaishankar met Mauritius' Foreign Minister Dhananjay Ritish Ramful for the first time and reaffirmed India's commitment to strengthening their special bond. He also held discussions with Maldives' Foreign Minister Abdulla Khaleel, reviewing various aspects of India-Maldives cooperation.

In his meeting with Sri Lanka's Foreign Minister Vijitha Herath, Jaishankar emphasized India's commitment to supporting Sri Lanka's economic recovery and overall progress. Similarly, in talks with Nepal's Foreign Minister Arzu Rana Deuba, both leaders reviewed bilateral cooperation and expressed interest in further strengthening ties.

Jaishankar also met Bhutan's Foreign Minister D.N. Dhunghyel, focusing on advancing bilateral and regional cooperation. He highlighted the strength of India-Bhutan relations, describing them as a dynamic and time-tested partnership.

Throughout these meetings, Jaishankar reiterated India's commitment to deepening regional ties, enhancing cooperation across various sectors, and supporting the economic and strategic stability of its neighboring nations. The engagements underscored India's proactive role in fostering diplomatic and economic partnerships in the Indian Ocean region.

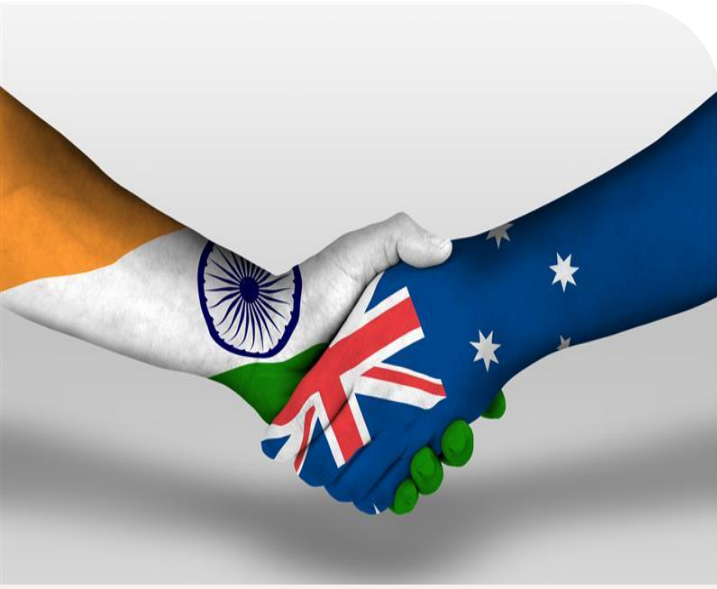


Source: ANI News

<https://aninews.in/news/world/middle-east/jaishankar-holds-talks-with-his-counterparts-from-maldives-mauritius-nepal-sri-lanka-and-bhutan20250217002951/>

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## Australia

### India-Australia Strengthen Ties with First Senior Officials' Antarctica Talks

The first India-Australia Senior Officials' Consultation (SOC) on Antarctica was held virtually, led by Paramita Tripathi from India's Ministry of External Affairs and Adam McCarthy and Sarah Storey from Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. Representatives from the Ministry of Earth Sciences (India) and the Australian Antarctic Division also participated. Discussions covered a wide range of issues related to Antarctica.

India and Australia's bilateral relationship has seen significant growth, expanding cooperation in energy, science, technology, and space. Prime Ministers Narendra Modi and Anthony Albanese met in November 2023 during the G20 Summit in Brazil, reaffirming their commitment to deeper collaboration and climate action.

A key outcome of their discussions was the launch of the India-Australia Renewable Energy Partnership (REP). This initiative focuses on cooperation in solar PV, green hydrogen, energy storage, investment in renewable energy projects, and workforce skill development.

The leaders emphasized the importance of research, innovation, and sustainable practices, particularly in the critical minerals sector, which supports the global clean energy transition. These minerals are essential for emerging technologies like batteries and rooftop solar. The growing India-Australia partnership aims to drive transformative global action in renewable energy and environmental sustainability.

Source : ANI News

<https://aninews.in/news/world/asia/india-australia-hold-senior-officials-consultation-on-antarctica20250214013056/>

## Africa

### Rajnath Singh Enhances Bilateral Defence Cooperation at Aero India 2025

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh held bilateral meetings with his counterparts from Zimbabwe, Yemen, Ethiopia, Gambia, and Gabon during the Aero India 2025 summit, reinforcing India's global defence partnerships.

In discussions with Zimbabwe's Defence Minister Oppah Muchinguri Kashiri and Ethiopia's Defence Minister Aisha Mohammed, both sides reviewed existing defence cooperation and signed MoUs to institutionalize military training, capacity building, and collaboration in defence industries. Singh also met Yemen's Defence Minister Lt. Gen. Mohsen Mohammed Hussein Al Daeri, focusing on expanding engagements in military training and strategic cooperation.

During talks with Gambia's Defence Minister Sering Modou Njie and Gabon's Defence Minister Brigitte Onkanowa, the leaders emphasized enhancing defence cooperation through capability development, best practice exchanges, and strengthening the defence industry.

Key areas of discussion across all meetings included military medicine, technology transfer, and private sector participation in defence production. These engagements reaffirm India's commitment to fostering strong international defence partnerships through training, knowledge-sharing, and joint strategic initiatives.



Source: The Economic Times

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/rajnath-singh-holds-bilateral-meetings-with-defence-ministers-of-five-countries/articleshow/118185207.cms>