

South Asia

A publication of the Institute of South Asian Studies

MDDI (P) NO. 013/09/2024

Issue No.

39

JAN 2025
TO
JUN 2025



THE 12-DAY WAR: INDO-PAKISTAN DELICATE BALANCE

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Printed in Singapore, 14 July 2025

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A MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR IQBAL SINGH SEVEA

Greetings from the Institute of South Asian Studies (ISAS)!

The 13 June 2025 Israeli strike on Iran triggered a 12-day conflict that shook the Middle East and heightened global anxieties. India and Pakistan found themselves in difficult diplomatic positions. India maintained a cautious stance, calling for de-escalation while avoiding any clear alignment. On its part, Pakistan condemned Israel's actions but refrained from antagonising the United States (US). This issue's feature article explores the conflict's immediate and strategic implications for both countries – from rising energy and transport costs to shifting geopolitical alignments. Strategically, the war enhanced Pakistan's relevance to Washington, tested India's multi-alignment policy and drew renewed US focus to the Middle East – potentially affecting India's standing in the Indo-Pacific.

On 20 January 2025, Donald Trump was sworn in for a second term as US President. Days into office, he signed Executive Orders, which asserted a unilateralist approach, reversed the US' re-entry into the Paris Climate Agreement and introduced sweeping 'reciprocal tariffs' on imports from nearly all major trading partners. These moves deepened uncertainty in the global economy. Although the US did not exit the World Trade Organization (WTO), its actions escalated trade tensions and further crippled a system already weakened by a non-functioning Appellate Body which has been vacant since 2020 due to persistent American opposition. This issue delves into the global implications of the US-led trade war, the WTO's waning credibility and whether regional trade agreements and plurilateral arrangements can uphold a rules-based global trade order.

Meanwhile, the Indo-Pacific has emerged as a new frontier in the global contest over artificial intelligence (AI). Strategic rivalry, economic ambition and national security imperatives are driving AI development and governance debates across the region. The US continues to balance innovation with security concerns, while China's Next

Generation AI Development Plan, which was launched in 2017, aims to make it a global AI leader by 2030 through large-scale investments and data exploitation. Countries like India, Japan and the Association of Southeast Asian member states are also investing in digital infrastructure and norms. This issue examines how diverging governance models are shaping a fragmented AI order and influencing the region's future power dynamics.

India is advancing its clean energy agenda with ambitious goals and is aiming to achieve energy independence by 2047 and net-zero emissions by 2070. Significant progress has been made in expanding solar, wind and nuclear energy, backed by international cooperation with several partners. A major focus is green hydrogen. Launched in 2023, the National Green Hydrogen Mission aims to produce 10 million metric tonnes annually. Major private investments have flowed in, alongside regional initiatives in states like Gujarat and Tamil Nadu. However, challenges persist. Large hydropower and nuclear projects have raised environmental and public health concerns. We assess India's ability to balance energy development with environmental justice, public trust and sustainable infrastructure.

Tensions between India and Pakistan have sharply escalated following the Pahalgam terror attack in April 2025 and India's launching of Operation Sindoor. This reflects a recurring pattern of crisis and retaliation that has defined their relationship since the 1980s. Despite earlier peace efforts – such as the Agra talks, the 2004-07 dialogue and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's outreach to then Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif in 2014 – violence continues to derail diplomacy. India's suspension of the Indus Water Treaty, once considered a stabilising mechanism, has provoked a strong warning from Pakistan, which views it as a potential act of war. With no agreed framework for renewed dialogue, tensions remain dangerously high.

Over the past months, ISAS hosted several events addressing South Asia's

evolving landscape. The key topics included India's Union Budget, the future of Pakistan-Afghanistan relations and the geopolitical dynamics of the Indian Ocean and the Himalayas. A flagship event, 'India-Singapore: Skills for the Future', was held in New Delhi in conjunction with Singapore President Tharman Shanmugaratnam's visit to India. This event brought together senior policymakers, scholars and experts from the public sector to discuss bilateral cooperation in skills and employment.

We also strengthened partnerships with several key organisations, including the Asian Development Bank (ADB), Singapore Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Nayanta University, Confederation of Indian Industry, Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (KAS) and the International Institute for Sustainable Development. A two-day international workshop, co-organised with ADB, focused on gender dimensions in disaster risk management in Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Nepal. In collaboration with KAS Japan, we held a roundtable on 'Economic Security in the Indo-Pacific and IPEF Rules', examining the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF) amid growing economic nationalism and global trade fragmentation.

Our team has continued to produce a wide range of publications. In addition to regular online briefs, insights and working papers, we released two books, five Special Reports, a South Asia Discussion Paper series and a South Asia Scan in the first half of the year. The topics ranged from post-election governance in Sri Lanka, India-France-Japan trilateral cooperation, and cyber resilience and governance challenges in the region to the IPEF's impact on regional economic security and India's trade and socio-economic shifts.

We are grateful to our stakeholders and partners for their continued engagement. ISAS remains committed to providing timely, in-depth analysis of developments that shape South Asia and its global interactions.

We hope you enjoy this issue of the newsletter!

THE 12-DAY WAR:

Indo-Pakistan Delicate Balance

IVAN LIDAREV



Photo courtesy of Oxford Graphic

The 12-day war between Iran on one side and Israel and the United States (US) on the other had substantial impact on both India and Pakistan. The war put both New Delhi and Islamabad in difficult diplomatic positions. India kept a low profile during the conflict and carefully balanced its diplomatic position, calling for de-escalation and negotiations. On its part, Pakistan publicly condemned the Israeli attack on Iran but tried to avoid antagonising Washington and advance its ongoing reset with US President Donald Trump administration. Against this

background, both South Asian nations welcomed the ceasefire on 24 June 2025 with great relief.

Nevertheless, New Delhi and Islamabad are hardly at ease. The strategic outcome of the war is still unclear as both the damages inflicted on Iran's nuclear programme and the possibility of a negotiated resolution to the whole Iran nuclear issue remains uncertain. On balance, it seems more likely that the issues that produced the war have not been resolved. This leaves India and Pakistan confronting

a tense situation in the Middle East and the possibility of renewed conflict.

The impact of the war on India and Pakistan can be best understood on two levels – immediate and strategic.

On the immediate level, the conflict presented diplomatic and economic challenges to the two South Asian countries. Diplomatically, the war forced both India and Pakistan into fine balancing acts. New Delhi had to walk a tight rope between its strategic interest in maintaining good relations with Iran and its close partnership with



Photo courtesy of Oxford Graphic

Israel and the US. On one hand, Iran is an important neighbour flanking India's archrival Pakistan and a connectivity partner whose Chabahar port is crucial for India's attempt to connect with Central Asia, Afghanistan and Russia. On the other hand, Israel is a key exporter of arms to India which stood by New Delhi during its recent conflict with Pakistan, while the US is crucial partner whose support is vital for India's rise. Whereas India has leaned toward the US and Israel in recent years, as evidenced by its compliance with US oil sanctions on Iran and its steeply declining trade with the Islamic republic, it has not severed its ties with Tehran.

Pakistan's balancing act is different. With its large Shia minority, Islamist influence in politics, and anti-Israeli and anti-American public opinion, Islamabad cannot be seen to side with Israel against Iran, a fellow Muslim country. Of course, Islamabad also fears Iranian retaliation, particularly after Tehran struck Sunni Baloch groups on its territory in 2024, in a likely warning to Pakistan. However, Pakistan also needs to advance the ongoing and crucial reset in its relations with the US, which Islamabad needs to stabilise its finances, procure American spare parts for its military and offset its excessive dependence on China. Islamabad's difficult balancing act was further complicated by the lunch between Field Marshall Asim Munir and Trump before the US' involvement in the conflict.

Economically, the conflict threatened India and Pakistan with a severe crisis, but due to its brevity, had limited impact. Energy prices on the global market rose and affected both countries, although they had

ceased to import oil from Iran, at least legally. Simultaneously, the prices of gold, shipping and air travel also rose, putting pressure on consumers and businesses in both South Asian countries. The economically weak Pakistan was in a particularly difficult position, with its imports of Iranian energy to the Gwadar port disrupted and its legal border trade halted, as Islamabad closed its five border crossings into Iran to please Washington.

Additionally, both sides had to evacuate their nationals from the conflict zone. India evacuated many of its citizens from Iran, where it had more than 10,000 nationals with its Operation Sindhu, and eventually offered to do the same for those in Israel. If the conflict had expanded, India might have faced the nightmare scenario of having to evacuate part of its huge and economically important diaspora in the Persian Gulf.

On the larger strategic level, the conflict has three important implications for South Asia. First, it has increased Pakistan's strategic importance to the US – as a source of intelligence on Iran, potential base for covert operations and a partner in Washington's campaign of economic pressure on Tehran. This has served to accelerate the ongoing reset between Washington and Islamabad. As a result, the war has facilitated the reemergence of the Pakistan factor as a major spoiler in US-Indian relations.

Second, the conflict represented a crisis for India's policy of multi-alignment. New Delhi has tried to balance between the US, Israel and the West on one side, and Iran, Russia, China and much of the

Global South on the other. In times of conflict, such as the 12-day war or the Russian invasion of Ukraine, this policy inevitably comes under great strain, as different alignments pull India in contrary directions and make its balancing act difficult. India's uneasy diplomatic stance on the war and its refusal to endorse the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation's condemnation of Israel's attacks on Iran highlighted this situation.

Finally, the war has refocused the US' policy attention on the Middle East, a focus likely to continue if tensions and negotiations over Iran's nuclear programme continue. This focus mostly enhances Pakistan's strategic importance to the US. However, for India, the focus on the Middle East not only prolongs its difficult balancing act but also shifts attention away from the Indo-Pacific, reducing New Delhi's importance to Washington and weakening its position vis-à-vis Beijing.

In conclusion, while the 12-day war had an important immediate impact on India and Pakistan, its true significance lies in its larger strategic effects. Nevertheless, much remains uncertain. Renewed conflict, negotiated solution or Iranian acquisition of nuclear weapons can drastically alter the strategic landscape.

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ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE: Geopolitics in the Indo-Pacific

KARTHIK NACHIAPPAN



Photo courtesy of Oxford Graphic

The geopolitics of artificial intelligence (AI) in Asia is shaped by a dynamic and increasingly competitive interaction of technological ambition and execution, strategic competition, national security pressures and regional power asymmetries. In this context, AI is not just a technological tool, instrument and domain – it is a site of geopolitical contestation, particularly in the Indo-Pacific between China, the United States (US), India, Japan and other Indo-Pacific powers.

What are the geopolitical effects of developing and deploying AI? There are three key geopolitical dimensions to AI that affect how countries compete on this technology. First, AI is dual-use in that it is applicable and critical in two realms – civilian

and military. It can be used for civilian purposes like education, government, healthcare and advanced military objectives through surveillance, cyberattacks and drones. Second, AI development and leadership have economic effects that affect regional geopolitics. AI dominance translates to higher economic competitiveness and growth and ostensibly effective governance. Third, leading on AI allows countries to use and leverage large amounts of data to create Large Language Models that generate outcomes. In this battle, Asian countries hold sway given their larger populations that are all creating and using data.

The US' AI strategy is comprehensive to ensure American leadership

sustains in AI through initiatives focused on innovation, safeguarding national security, promoting trustworthy AI and shaping global norms. The Joe Biden administration's 2023 AI Executive Order moved toward institutionalising AI oversight while continuing to support open AI innovation while the Donald Trump administration has focused on unleashing AI potential through deep investments for big AI firms. The US' approach positions AI as a strategic asset in its ongoing security competition with China and for its domestic economic transformation.

Another geopolitical dimension is China's growing AI dominance and how other countries are responding and competing to curb and dent

China's AI growth and progress. Through China's 2017 Next Generation AI Development Plan, Beijing hopes to become the world's AI leader by 2030. It could achieve this goal through massive data collection and storage, regular and robust state-led investments in AI, leading AI patents globally and integrating AI in domestic and military policy. China's competitors are notably worried about its ongoing exports of AI surveillance systems and how China sets global AI standards and other critical technologies. Also important now are concerns over China's export of AI surveillance systems that help other regimes remain in power and manage their populations.

India continues to emphasise the public use and relevance of AI, the establishment of digital public infrastructures, and using data and AI for development purposes. India has weaknesses and strengths vis-à-vis China. New Delhi has a large and skilled information technology workforce and increasingly large data pools that AI models can use. That said, India's computational power or graphics processing units are relatively underdeveloped, given the lack of indigenous chips to power domestic AI. India's weak

semiconductor base will constrain its AI ambitions and so will palpable gaps in terms of research and development and talent. Given constraints, India has focused on creating rules and norms covering AI, including AI safety, ethics and use through multilateral engagements like the Global Partnership on AI.

Like India, Japan looks to shape the regional AI context through norms and rules. Tokyo is working with the US, the European Union and India to shape AI trust and safety norms to ensure AI models are developed and used with sufficient guardrails. Japan is also concerned with how militaries use AI for various objectives. The AI landscape in Southeast Asia is fragmented with countries having different capacities and priorities. Singapore spearheads efforts in the region with a comprehensive national AI strategy. Other countries like Malaysia, Indonesia and Vietnam are investing more but face gaps in terms of talent and infrastructure. All these countries, however, remain acutely vulnerable to infrastructure, cloud and data policy choices shaped by US-China preferences and alignments.

The geopolitics of this regional AI landscape is shaped deeply but

not exclusively by the US-China rivalry. Techno-nationalist trends are a powerful driver, with countries looking to treat AI as a sovereign asset by protecting data, talent and innovation ecosystems through laws, rules and restrictions. Asian countries are increasing their control over data and infrastructure through laws that limit data transfer (data localisation) and cybersecurity measures that restrict foreign involvement. Specific security pressures are driving some Asian countries to develop AI for military purposes through weapons like drones, shape battlefield analytics and create predictive intelligence that can guide strategy. Finally, Asian countries are keen to use AI to build closer ties with their partners bilaterally and smaller minilateral mechanisms (for example, the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue) that focus on different aspects of AI governance and development.

What are the regional implications of this geopolitics of AI in the Indo-Pacific? First, fragmentation of the AI order will persist and continue with competing governance philosophies and models, democratic and authoritarian competing for sway. Second, there will be competition between different ideas and ways to govern AI through norms as Asian countries seek to exploit and mitigate the effects of AI. And third, the need for greater bilateral and regional coordination and cooperation on AI will only increase, particularly through data flows, infrastructure development and talent cultivation. Undoubtedly, this geopolitics of AI has huge stakes, with the balance of regional power potential at stake. This contest will manifest through competition and coordination on issues like data governance, semiconductors, standards setting and research and knowledge exchange, with countries like India, China, the US and Singapore, positioning themselves to drive certain efforts to protect their interests. This competition and cooperation will shape the digital future of the Indo-Pacific.

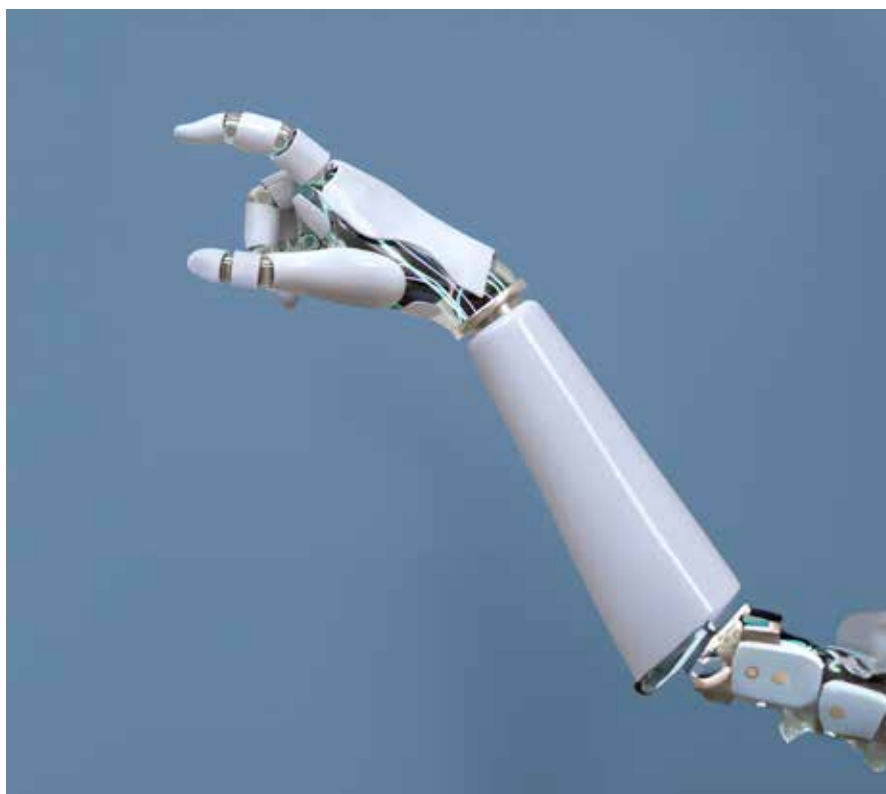


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THE WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION:

The Path Forward

PUSPA SHARMA



Photo courtesy of Oxford Graphic

After becoming President of the United States (US) for the second time, Donald Trump spent no time creating chaos in world affairs. In his first week in office, he signed several Executive Orders, including pulling the US out of important global treaties and agreements, such as the Paris Climate Agreement. However, he has not yet officially pulled his country out of the World Trade Organization (WTO). It is anyone's guess whether he will do so since he has been trying to secure the US' trade and other interests, as he claims, through unilateral actions.

Soon after assuming office, Trump levied and/or raised tariffs on imports

from Canada, Mexico and China. Then, on 2 April 2025, he announced 'reciprocal tariffs' on the US' imports from almost all its trade partners. These tariffs were additional to the pre-existing ones and ranged from 10 to 145 per cent. Some countries and economies, particularly China, retaliated against the US' unilateral tariff hikes, which led to a tariff war. The WTO was established to avoid such unilateral actions and trade and tariff wars by making countries adhere to a rules-based trading system. However, the organisation appears to be failing in its objective.

Several countries have challenged the US' tariff hikes by initiating dispute settlement with the US in the WTO. They are aware that the WTO will not be able to resolve these cases because its dispute settlement system has been made dysfunctional by the US. However, Trump alone is not to be blamed for this. Yet their resort to the WTO's dispute settlement system is perhaps an indication of their regard to multilateralism.

The dispute settlement system of the WTO comprises the Dispute Settlement Body (DSB), which is the WTO General Council, consisting of all WTO members, and the Appellate

Body. In case of a complaint brought by any WTO member against another member, the first attempt is to resolve the matter through consultations. If this fails, the DSB forms a dispute panel to examine and decide on the case. In case of unacceptability of the panel decision by the losing party, it can appeal against it to the Appellate Body. The Appellate Body's decision is final, which, upon adoption by the DSB, should be adhered to by both parties to the dispute. Unfortunately, the Appellate Body has been lying vacant since 30 November 2020 when the term of the last sitting Appellate Body member expired.

In 2016, the Barack Obama administration blocked the reappointment of a judge to the Appellate Body. During Trump 1.0, given his aversion to the WTO, the US' disregard for the organisation continued. The Joe Biden administration also did not bother to make the Appellate Body functional. Due to the US' reluctance, new appointments to the Appellate Body were not made upon its members' subsequent expiry of their terms. As Trump's initial actions have shown, to expect change in the US' outlook during Trump 2.0 would be extraordinary optimism.

Global trade rules are meaningless in the absence of an enforcement mechanism. Therefore, with its dispute settlement system crippled, there is very little that the WTO can deliver. If the WTO remains a mere spectator of the current tariff war, then the relevance of this organisation is in severe doubt.

There have been apprehensions on the WTO's relevance and future for quite some time, for other reasons too. One of them is the WTO members' failure to conclude the Doha Development Round launched in 2001 that was expected to provide trade benefits to developing country members. This failure has conveyed a message to the developing countries that the WTO does not serve their genuine interests.

Another important reason is the trend and a significant rise in the number of regional trade agreements (RTAs). Some of these RTAs, termed mega-regionals, cover a significant proportion of the world's population and global trade. There were apprehensions early on about



Photo courtesy of Oxford Graphic

the potential undermining of the multilateral trading system by the RTAs. Such concerns were not unfounded. Since the RTAs have provided alternative mechanisms for their members' engagement in international trade, there is perhaps less enthusiasm for the WTO.

The WTO would have become a stronger institution had efforts been made to strengthen multilateralism and less attention given to regionalism. However, due to various geopolitical considerations, and countries with major stakes in global trade finding the regional route working in their interests, perhaps they are less bothered about the WTO's future. However, in their current forms, the RTAs are not fully effective in governing trade among their members, particularly with regard to dispute settlement.

Despite some weaknesses in the WTO dispute settlement system, as long as it was working, most of the disputes under the RTAs were also adjudicated under it. This was mainly because of the WTO's system for appeals, which is lacking in most of the RTAs. This is one of the reasons that in the face of Trump's actions, many defenders of multilateralism are calling for salvaging the WTO by taking a plurilateral route.

There are indeed options for plurilateralism in the WTO, and a few plurilateral agreements have been concluded under its auspices. However, the WTO overall cannot function plurilaterally, such as in the case of trade disputes, particularly

when the US remains a WTO member officially but creates hurdles in its operations. Therefore, at least for the next few years, as long as the WTO remains paralysed, RTAs might be the preferred option. Nonetheless, for the RTAs to work effectively, substantial changes should be made in their architecture, notably for dispute settlement.

Countries that are part of the mega-regionals such as the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership and the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership, already have the options to build on. Others, such as India and the EU, which have entered into bilateral free trade agreements (FTAs) with several of their major trading partners but have not joined the mega-regionals, might need to enter the club of the mega-regionals as appropriate. Continuing with bilateral FTAs could be a choice for them, but this would entail significant time and resources.

Reviving and strengthening the multilateral trading system should be the ultimate objective – maybe not in the near term, but one can hope that the US reconsiders its approach and engages in making the WTO functional. At least, it should not block other countries from advancing the multilateral trading system. Otherwise, the WTO faces a bleak future.

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GREEN HYDROGEN IN INDIA:

Promises and Concerns of Energy Transition

AMIT RANJAN



Photo courtesy of Oxford Graphic

India is taking measures to cut down on greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and meet its maximum energy demands through clean energy sources. Its target is to secure energy independence by 2047 and achieve a non-net zero carbon emission by 2070. According to *Economic Survey 2024-25*, India has an installed electricity generation capacity of 213,701 megawatts (MW) from non-fossil fuels, accounting for 46.8 per cent of the total capacity in November 2024. The goal is to reach 50 per cent by 2030. Between 2014 and 2024, India added around 129 gigawatts (GW) of

renewable capacity, including 91 GW of solar power, 27 GW of wind power, 3.2 GW of biomass, 1.3 GW of small hydro and approximately 6.3 GW of large hydro generation capacity.

India has nearly doubled its nuclear generation capacity in a decade, from 4,780 MW in 2014 to 8,180 MW in 2024. The country aims to raise its production to 20 GW by 2030 and 100 GW by 2047. India is inviting foreign companies to produce nuclear energy. During his visit to France from 10 to 12 February 2025, India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited

the International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor in Cadarache in southern France. In the joint statement, India and France agreed to cooperate on the peaceful use of nuclear energy. They also agreed to move forward on mechanisms for the Jaitapur plant in the Indian state of Maharashtra. Modi and French President Emmanuel Macron "welcomed the signing of a letter of intent on a Small Modular Reactor and Advanced Modular Reactor and the Implementing Agreement between India's GCNEP [Global Centre for Nuclear Energy Partnership] and DAE [Department

of Atomic Energy] and France's INSTN [Institut national des sciences et techniques nucléaires] and the CEA [French Alternative Energies and Atomic Energy Commission] for cooperation in training and education of nuclear professionals". And during Modi's visit to the United States (US) on 13 and 14 February 2025, New Delhi and Washington agreed to work together to build a US-designed nuclear reactors in India. New Delhi is also in talks with a Russian firm to construct a small nuclear reactor in the country.

There is much promise in the use of green hydrogen to produce renewable energy. It can replace traditional fossil fuels in transportation and can be used for the production of ammonia, methanol and steel in industries and as a back-up energy source for renewable energy plants. In 2023, India launched the National Green Hydrogen Mission with an outlay of ₹19,744 crores (\$265 million). The objective is to decarbonise the economy, reduce dependence on fossil fuel imports and "enable India to assume technology and market leadership in green hydrogen". The Mission also aims to build the capability to produce at least five million metric tonnes (MMT) of green hydrogen per annum by 2030, with the potential to reach 10 MMT per annum with the growth of export markets.

Indian business tycoon Gautam Adani has committed large investment in the country's green hydrogen project. In 2023, Adani Total Gas Limited initiated the Green Hydrogen Blending Pilot Project. In 2024, the Adani group started green hydrogen in piped natural gas in Shantigram in Ahmedabad, Gujarat. Adani Total Gas is producing it in a joint venture with French energy giant, Total Energies. In 2024, the Uttar Pradesh state government received investment proposals in the green hydrogen sector from 17 companies. These included United Kingdom-based Trafalgar Square Capital, which has committed to establishing a 10,000-tonnes per annum green hydrogen production facility near Uttar Pradesh's capital, Lucknow. Welspun Group plans to invest in a green hydrogen or ammonia plant in Bulandshahr Hygenco Green Energies has proposed setting up a 0.2-million tonne green hydrogen facility in another city, Prayagraj. The state



Photo courtesy of Oxford Graphic

government has set up the target of one million tonnes for green hydrogen or green ammonia production per year by 2029. The foundation for a plant to produce large-scale green hydrogen production for commercial purposes was laid in 2024 in Tuticorin district in India's southern state of Tamil Nadu. Singapore-based company, Sembcorp, has invested in the plant. It aims to initially produce 200,000 metric tonnes of ammonia per annum for export to Japan. Other Indian states are also taking initiatives to produce green hydrogen energy.

Renewable and alternative energy sources are seen as solutions to climate change challenges. However, there are also concerns. Hydropower projects affect the local ecology and cause the displacement of people living near the project area. Big dams in the seismic zone can lead to calamities if a natural disaster takes place. Nuclear energy produces hazardous waste. The Uranium Corporation of India Limited, the sole source of India's domestically mined nuclear reactor fuel in Jadugoda in Jharkhand, had exposed thousands of workers and people from nearby villages to dangerous levels of

radiation. It turned the Subarnarekha River into a river of death. India witnessed strong protests against nuclear plants in Kudankulam in Tamil Nadu, Kovvada in Andhra Pradesh and Haripur in West Bengal in the early 2000s. While the movements in Kudankulam and Kovvada could not affect the plants, the anti-nuclear protest in Haripur succeeded in suspending the nuclear project. The key reasons for the protests were displacement, potential threats to health and possible consequences of catastrophic accidents in the region. Hydrogen is also a leak-prone gas with a warming effect.

The energy transition depends on expanding quality infrastructure across India. The Indian government, the country's business class and foreign investors are investing in the alternative green energy sector. However, the concerns linked with alternative energy sources should be taken into account and not ignored at the policy-making stage.

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POST-OPERATION SINDOOR:

New Strains in India-Pakistan Ties

C RAJA MOHAN



Photo courtesy of ISAS-NUS

The Pahalgam terror attack in April 2025 and India's response in the form of Operation Sindoor in May 2025 have pushed India-Pakistan ties into dangerous waters. Since the late 1980s, there have been several military crises between India and Pakistan. Many of them have been followed by the cooling of tensions after some time, and the resumption of talks for some time, before another military crisis unfolded.

Recall the Kargil war of 1999, when India had to sacrifice several soldiers

to reclaim control over the Kargil heights by Pakistani forces and irregulars. Yet by the summer of 2001, Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee had invited General Pervez Musharraf for a summit meeting in Agra, New Delhi, to find a new framework for peace talks.

The Agra talks did not succeed, and things got worse after the November 2001 terror attack on the Indian parliament led to a massive military mobilisation under Operation Parakram that made relations very

tense through 2002. However, Vajpayee visited Pakistan in January 2004 and agreed with President Pervez Musharraf on a new framework for dialogue.

This engagement between 2004 and 2007 turned out to be productive and included an expanded contact between the two peoples, negotiations to resolve some of the long-standing disputes on Sir Creek and Siachen. It also produced an important approach to long-term peace in Kashmir. The relations went into a tailspin again after



Photo courtesy of Oxford Graphic

the November 2008 terror attacks on Mumbai, but by 2013-14, the two sides were negotiating the prospects for trade normalisation.

Narendra Modi's election as India's Prime Minister in 2014 and his invitation to Pakistan's Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif to attend his inauguration raised hopes for a new round of the peace process. Modi's visit to Sharif's home near Lahore at the end of 2015 on short notice reinforced those hopes.

However, the terror attacks on Pathankot and Uri in 2016 highlighted the enduring problems of constructing a peace process. The terror attack on Pulwama in February 2019 and India's military response in the form of Balakot attacks raised military tensions again. India's decision to change the constitutional status of Kashmir angered Pakistan, and it refused to talk to India unless New Delhi restored the special status of Kashmir. However, within two years of that crisis, India and Pakistan announced a ceasefire agreement and a commitment to negotiate on core issues of mutual concern. That ceasefire agreement, too, has broken down.

After Pulwama and Operation Sindoor, the breakdown in bilateral relations could last longer and with unpredictable consequences. On the face of it, with both sides claiming victory, it should be easier for the resumption of talks. But the anger and outrage on both sides is more intense

than ever before, and it might be hard for both sides to start stabilising bilateral relations.

The post-conflict rhetoric in India has been harsh, with Modi talking about rooting out the sources of terrorism in Pakistan. Having stood up to Operation Sindoor, Islamabad is confident that it can mount significant international pressure on India.

Pakistan's Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has called for talks with India to discuss all outstanding issues, including the Kashmir question. The Indian response has been dismissive. The only thing to talk about is the end to cross-border terrorism and the return of the areas in Kashmir currently under the control of Pakistan to India.

Could third parties press India and Pakistan to talk? While Pakistan sees a measure of success in mobilising the international community to persuade India to talk. However, third-party mediation, especially by the United States (US), has raised hackles in the Indian government and the broader political class.

After initially maintaining a hands-off approach following the Pahalgam attack, the US became more assertively involved as the Indo-Pak crisis escalated. US Vice President James David Vance initially stated that the situation was "fundamentally none of our business", but a shift occurred by 10 May 2025 when US President Donald Trump announced a "full and

immediate ceasefire" between India and Pakistan, brokered by the US.

This announcement followed urgent US diplomatic efforts, led by Vance and US Secretary Marco Rubio, who responded to intelligence suggesting the crisis was nearing a dangerous tipping point. They engaged both sides and encouraged them to end hostilities.

While Pakistan publicly thanked Trump for his intervention, India emphasised that the ceasefire resulted from direct bilateral engagement, with Indian officials highlighting a call between the countries' military leaders as the catalyst. Rubio indicated that broader talks might follow at a neutral venue, but no concrete plans have emerged, and sustained diplomatic dialogue remains uncertain. Both India and Pakistan have since launched diplomatic campaigns abroad to influence global opinion.

While India downplays the US' role, Trump continues to take public credit for averting a catastrophe, even claiming that he threatened to halt trade if escalation continued – a claim India disputes, especially amid ongoing bilateral trade negotiations. For India, bilateralism is of the essence in the engagement with Pakistan, and is unlikely to accept any dialogue with Pakistan under pressure.

If and when India and Pakistan agree to resume dialogue, it will be a big challenge to find a mutually acceptable framework for negotiations. The formula under which India and Pakistan talked to each other during 2004-07 is no longer operative, at least from the Indian perspective. The Indian decision to suspend the Indus Water Treaty of 1960 is bound to create new conditions for escalation from the Pakistan side. Islamabad has said that any break in the supply of Indus waters to Pakistan, a lower riparian state, will be an act of war. India, on its part, has said it will respond with decisive military action to any terror attack. It has been affirmed that Operation Sindoor is not over. India and Pakistan then are sitting on a tinder box that could explode sooner than later.

Professor C Raja Mohan is a Visiting Research Professor at ISAS. He can be contacted at crmohan@nus.edu.sg.

NEW RESEARCH STAFF AT ISAS

ISAS would like to extend a warm welcome to the following researchers who came on board in 2025:



Dr Sandeep Bhardwaj

Visiting Research Fellow
(Joined on 7 April 2025)

Areas of Focus

- Indian Foreign Policy
- India-Southeast Asia Relations
- Regional Order in the Indo-Pacific



Ambassador Nirupama Rao

Distinguished Visiting Research Fellow
(Joined on 24 February 2025)

Areas of Focus

- Indo-Pacific Strategy, Security and Regional Cooperation
- India-China Relations
- India-United States Relations
- India-Sri Lanka Relations
- Communication Strategy and the Public Square in Foreign Policy
- Indian Foreign Policy
- Multipolarity, Strategic Autonomy and a Polarised World
- Feminist Foreign Policy



Dr Ivan Lidarev

Visiting Research Fellow
(Joined on 15 May 2025)

Areas of Focus

- Sino-Indian Relations and Territorial Dispute
- Indian Foreign and Security Policy
- Chinese Foreign Policy, particularly in South Asia
- India's Rise as a Maritime Power
- European Union Relations with East and South Asia

ISAS INTERNSHIP PROGRAMME 2025

ISAS offers research internships to students with a strong academic interest in South Asia. These internships are part of the Institute's educational mission to nurture young scholars and promote deeper awareness and understanding of the region.

The internship serves a dual purpose: it offers students meaningful exposure to policy-relevant research, while also acting as a potential pathway to future research roles at the Institute.

We are pleased to introduce the first batch of ISAS research interns for 2025:



Ms Preeti Chandrakumar Patil

National University of Singapore
Master in Public Policy (Year 1)
Internship Duration: 10 June – 31 July 2025



Mr Pradeek Krishna

National University of Singapore
Master in International Affairs (Year 1)
Internship Duration: 10 June – 31 July 2025



Mr Shivam Bhardwaj

University of Delhi, India
Third Year – Bachelor of Business
Administration (Financial Investment Analysis)
Internship Duration: 24 June – 31 August 2025

During their time at ISAS, the interns will participate in seminars and events, engaging with a diverse community of scholars and policymakers from Singapore and beyond. They will assist their supervisors in data collection and research tasks, and may have the opportunity to co-author papers with ISAS researchers.

We look forward to their contributions and wish them a productive and enriching internship experience.

ISAS RECENT EVENTS

12
FEB

ISAS-SICCI PANEL DISCUSSION

India Budget FY2026 – Prospects and Challenges



On 12 February 2025, ISAS, in collaboration with the Singapore Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SICCI), held a panel discussion titled 'India Budget FY2026 – Prospects and Challenges'. Dr Amitendu Palit, Senior Research Fellow and Research Lead (Trade and Economics) at ISAS, chaired the session.

The panel included Ms Priyanka Kishore, Founder and Principal Economist at Asia Decoded; Mr Vivek Chhabra, Director at Inbrev Asia and Board Member of SICCI; and Mr Vinod Rai, Distinguished Visiting Research Fellow at ISAS and former Comptroller and Auditor General of India.

Held in the context of the first full Union Budget under the Narendra Modi's government in its third term, the discussion explored India's economic outlook amid global headwinds. Dr Palit noted that while India remains among the fastest-growing major economies, growth is expected to moderate to around 6.5 per cent in FY2026 due to global inflation and subdued private investment.

Ms Kishore remarked that although the global economy slightly outperformed expectations last year, India's recovery still depends on domestic consumption and export resilience. Mr Chhabra emphasised the budget's focus on long-term drivers such as infrastructure, healthcare, research and development, and emerging sectors like artificial intelligence. Mr Rai described the budget as a blend of economic and political strategy, appealing to the middle and salaried classes – a move that contributed to the Bharatiya Janata Party's performance in the subsequent Delhi elections.

The panel also highlighted key budget priorities, including tax relief for the middle class, credit support for micro, small and medium enterprises, and sector-specific incentives for agriculture and manufacturing. The potential impact of the United States' reciprocal tariffs under a new Donald Trump administration was also discussed. The panel concluded that while challenges remain – particularly in exports – India's services sector could help cushion external shocks.

20-21
FEB

ISAS-ADB INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP

International Workshop on Gender and Disasters



ISAS and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) jointly hosted a two-day workshop on 'Gender and Disasters' on 20 and 21 February 2025 in Singapore. The event brought together nearly 50 participants, including experts, policymakers, researchers and practitioners, for in-depth discussions on the often-overlooked gender dimensions of disaster risk, with a particular focus on South Asia, specifically Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Nepal.

The first day opened with a plenary session introducing the Sendai Framework Gender Action Plan, setting the stage for a panel discussion where government representatives from

the focus countries shared context-specific strategies for gender-sensitive disaster risk reduction. These approaches addressed local priorities and integrated considerations such as disability and livestock. The day continued with technical sessions featuring six research presentations examining the socioeconomic impacts of disasters across different population groups, enriched by expert commentary from specialists from ADB and the National University of Singapore.

On the second day, a panel examined mainstreaming gender into disaster risk management frameworks, where institutional and country-level practitioners presented practical models and lessons learned. The workshop concluded with a closed-door session on disaster risk financing and solutions, spotlighting initiatives supported by the Asia-Pacific Climate Finance Fund and ADB.

Throughout the event, active engagement and dialogue among the participants fostered a comprehensive exploration of gender issues in disaster risk across the region.

**13
MAR**

ISAS-KAS WORKSHOP

Economic Security in the Indo-Pacific and IPEF Rules



ISAS, in collaboration with the Regional Economic Programme Asia of Konrad Adenauer Stiftung-Japan, organised a roundtable titled 'Economic Security in the Indo-Pacific and IPEF Rules' on 13 March 2025 in Singapore. The event brought together scholars and practitioners from Asia, Europe and the United States (US) to examine how the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity (IPEF) intersects with regional security and trade policy.

Discussions centred on the role of the IPEF amid rising economic nationalism and the fragmentation of global trade. The participants explored how the framework engages with themes such as supply chain resilience, the green economy, de-risking and evolving concepts of economic security.

The first session addressed the shifting global trade landscape under new geopolitical pressures. While the IPEF's Pillar II (supply chains) and Pillar III (clean economy) show some progress, concerns were raised over the framework's credibility, especially given the lack of market access and uncertain US commitment. The second session focused on the weakening of multilateralism and questioned whether the US continues to uphold the rules-based order it once championed. The final session brought diverse country perspectives, including the European Union's economic security approach, Taiwan's role in semiconductor supply chains and India's motivations for joining IPEF. Discussions also touched on private sector engagement, immigration, the role of connector countries and China's responses.

The roundtable offered timely reflections on the evolving dynamics of economic security and rule-making in the Indo-Pacific.

**15
APR**

ISAS-CII-ITD PANEL DISCUSSION

US Trade Policy and Its Impact on Asia



ISAS, in partnership with the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) and the International Institute for Trade and Development, Bangkok, hosted a public panel discussion on 'US Trade Policy and its Impact on Asia' on 15 April 2025 in Singapore. The event, attended by nearly 90

participants, was particularly timely, following United States (US) President Donald Trump's announcement of reciprocal tariffs.

Chaired by Dr Amitendu Palit, Senior Research Fellow and Trade and Economics Research Lead at ISAS, the panel discussion featured four distinguished experts – Mr Sumantha Chaudhuri, Principal Advisor for International Trade Policy at CII, offered the Indian perspective; Dr Sarah Tong, Senior Research Fellow at the East Asian Institute, National University of Singapore, provided insights from China; Dr Deborah Elms, Head of Trade Policy at Hinrich Foundation, Singapore, analysed the US approach; and Dr Andrew Staples, Founder and Principal of GeoPol Asia, Singapore, contextualised the broader impact on Asia and its industries.

The discussion was lively and interactive, with strong audience engagement. The closing remarks by Mr Chaudhuri wrapped up a thought-provoking conversation on the shifting contours of US trade policy and its regional impact.

28
APR

ISAS PANEL DISCUSSION

India-Singapore Futures Forum



On 28 April 2025, ISAS hosted the inaugural India-Singapore Futures Forum to mark 60 years of diplomatic relations. Aimed at deepening strategic and technological ties, the event featured a public session and a closed-door workshop with leading experts from both countries.

The public session examined the evolving geopolitical landscape – particularly United States-China competition – and explored bilateral cooperation in critical technologies, with a focus on artificial intelligence (AI). Indian High Commissioner to Singapore Dr Shilpak Ambule highlighted the India-Singapore Ministerial Roundtable as a key platform for advancing collaboration in digitalisation, advanced manufacturing, health and sustainability.

Ambassador-at-Large Professor Tommy Koh, in his keynote, reflected on six decades of strong India-Singapore ties, underpinned by trust, trade, defence and cultural connections. He cited milestones like the 2005 trade agreement and joint military exercises.

The first panel discussed how Singapore's global connectivity and India's innovation capabilities could power a tech-driven partnership, including potential trilateral cooperation with Africa. The second panel focused on AI collaboration, including sovereign large language models, data access, talent exchange and regulatory frameworks.

The closed-door workshop covered semiconductors, financial technology and space. Experts recommended joint research and development in chip design, enhancing digital payment systems and addressing cybersecurity. Space discussions addressed militarisation, private sector growth and sustainability.

The forum concluded by reaffirming strong potential for collaboration in emerging fields such as quantum computing, advanced biology, augmented reality and nuclear technology.

22
MAY

CSEP-ISAS PANEL DISCUSSION (INDIA)

Pathways for India-China Climate Cooperation



The panel discussion on 'Pathways for India-China Climate Cooperation' was held on 22 May 2025. Jointly organised by ISAS and the Centre for Social and Economic Progress (CSEP) in New Delhi, the event examined the intersection of climate, energy and geopolitics in South Asia. It brought together leading experts to discuss the challenges and opportunities for climate diplomacy between India and China.

Opening the event, ISAS' Director, Associate Professor Iqbal Singh Sevea' highlighted the value of ISAS-CSEP

collaboration and their shared commitment to policy-relevant research in a shifting regional landscape.

The panel featured Dr Pooja Ramamurthi from CSEP, who outlined the project's framework and proposed cooperation pathways; Ambassador Ashok Kantha, who shared diplomatic insights on navigating bilateral tensions; Professor Nimmi Kurian from the Centre for Policy Research, who focused on transboundary governance; and Ms Annika Seiler from the Asian Development Bank, who addressed energy transitions in emerging economies.

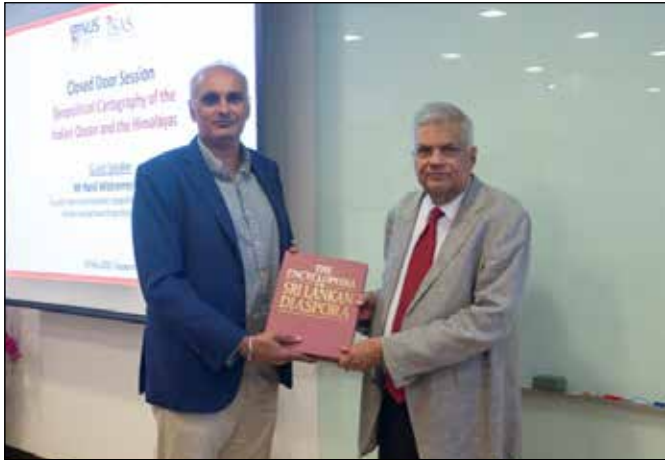
Despite ongoing geopolitical strains – particularly post-2020 border tensions – climate and energy security remain areas of shared interest. Both countries face major decarbonisation challenges, yet are deeply interlinked through trade, technology and shared environmental risks.

The discussion introduced the project's two upcoming working papers: one framing India's climate and energy strategy in relation to China, and another identifying sectoral opportunities for cooperation, including green trade, renewable technology, and climate resilience in border areas. The forum underscored climate diplomacy as a viable, strategic entry point for India-China engagement, with implications for regional stability and the global climate agenda.

30
MAY

ISAS CLOSED DOOR SESSION

Geopolitical Cartography of the Indian Ocean and the Himalayas



On 30 May 2025, ISAS hosted a closed-door session titled 'Geopolitical Cartography of the Indian Ocean and the Himalayas'. The guest speaker was Mr Ranil Wickremesinghe, Founder, Patron and President of Geopolitical Cartographer, and former President and Prime Minister of Sri Lanka.

Mr Wickremesinghe offered a sweeping overview of the evolving geopolitical dynamics in the Indian Ocean, describing the region as the 'centerpoint of civilisation' and noting efforts underway to reshape its strategic architecture. He stressed the absence of a dominant sea power and identified five key states – among them Sri Lanka – that are navigating a complex and shifting regional order.

He discussed China's growing influence, India's central role in shaping the emerging balance and the shared understanding between India and Sri Lanka to safeguard mutual security. Mr Wickremesinghe also called for deeper economic integration to support long-term peace and stability in the region.

The discussion that followed addressed the United States' role in maintaining freedom of navigation, the distinct strategic concerns across the eastern and western Indian Ocean and the impact of India-China tensions on the geopolitical strategies of regional players.

23
JUN

ISAS SEMINAR

Modi 3.0: The Future of Indian Politics



On 23 June 2025, ISAS hosted a seminar titled 'Modi 3.0: The Future of Indian Politics', featuring Dr Rahul Verma, Academic Visitor at ISAS and Fellow at the Centre for Policy Research, New Delhi.

Dr Verma examined the trajectory of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's third term and the future of Indian democracy. The discussion opened with an analysis of the

2024 general election, where the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) lost its majority but formed a coalition government – seen as a partial setback by the opposition. However, subsequent state victories in Haryana, Maharashtra and Delhi showcased the BJP's adaptability and organisational strength.

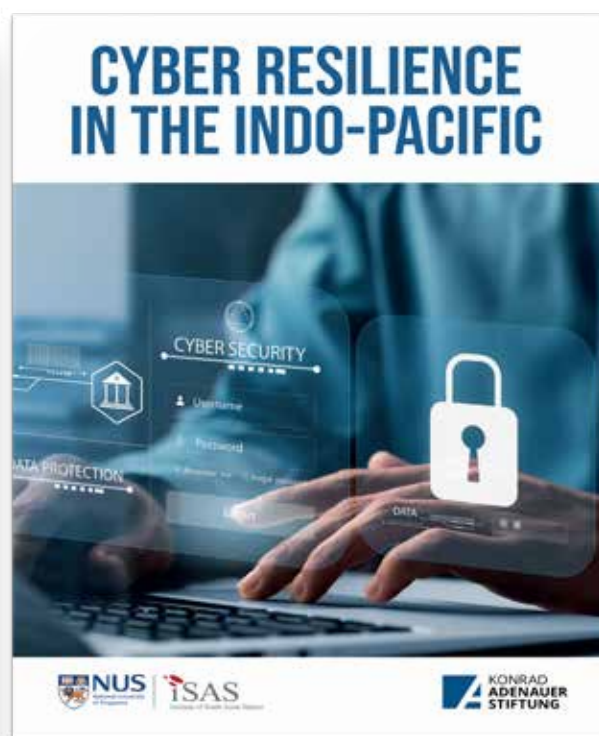
Dr Verma highlighted the growing bipolarity of Indian politics, with the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance and the opposition INDIA alliance forming two main blocs. While smaller parties may win votes, they struggle to convert them into seats. He also discussed how issues like caste reservations impacted the BJP in states such as Haryana and Uttar Pradesh, though the party has since recovered ground.

More broadly, Dr Verma noted a moderation in the BJP's policy ambitions since 2021, in response to a volatile global environment. He concluded that the BJP is likely to remain the dominant force in Indian politics – drawing parallels with Indira Gandhi's era – while underscoring that India's political system remains competitive, with ongoing space for opposition and democratic contestation.

ISAS EVENTS LISTING (JANUARY TO JUNE 2025)

ISAS Roundtable	India-Singapore: Skills for the Future	15 January 2025 (India)
ISAS-SICCI Panel Discussion	India Budget FY2026: Prospects and Challenges	12 February 2025
ISAS- ADB Panel Discussion	Implementation of the Sendai Gender Action Plan	20 February 2025
ISAS-ADB International Workshop	Gender and Disasters	21 February 2025
ISAS Closed Door Session	India's Relations with Singapore and Southeast Asia	7 March 2025
ISAS-SASP Book Seminar	Acts of Seeing: The Role of Popular Visual Culture in Shaping India's Modern History	12 March 2025
ISAS-KAS Workshop	Economic Security in the Indo-Pacific and IPEF Rules	13 March 2025
ISAS Seminar	Liminal India: A Reading from the Jungle Book of Global Politics Today	20 March 2025
ISAS-Nayanta University Closed Door Event	Navigating the World – A Leadership Journey	7 April 2025
ISAS Seminar	The Trial that Shook Britain: How a Court Martial Hastened Acceptance of Indian Independence	10 April 2025
SASP-ISAS Closed Door Session	75 th Anniversary of the adoption of the Constitution of India	14 April 2025
ISAS-CII-IISD-ITD Workshop	Regional Supply Chains and Sustainability: The Changing Dynamics	15 April 2025
ISAS-CII-ITD Panel Discussion	US Trade Policy and Its Impact on Asia	15 April 2025
ISAS Panel Discussion	India-Singapore Futures Forum	28 April 2025
ISAS Closed Door Workshop	India-Singapore Futures Forum	28 April 2025
CSEP-ISAS Panel Discussion	Pathways for India-China Climate Cooperation	22 May 2025 (India)
ISAS Closed Door Session	India's Strategy in Combating Terrorism	27 May 2025
ISAS Seminar	Building India's Technology and Semiconductor Industries: Innovation, Entrepreneurship and Policy	28 May 2025
ISAS Closed Door Session	Geopolitical Cartography of the Indian Ocean and the Himalayas	30 May 2025
ISAS Seminar	Pakistan-Afghanistan Relations: Complicated History; Uncertain Future	17 June 2025
ISAS Seminar	Modi 3.0: The Future of Indian Politics	23 June 2025

LATEST SPECIAL REPORTS, SOUTH ASIA DISCUSSION PAPER AND SOUTH ASIA SCAN



As part of its commitment to knowledge-sharing and policy relevance, ISAS continues to produce rigorous research and timely analysis on South Asia's evolving role in global affairs. Covering topics from governance and economic transformation to cybersecurity and strategic partnerships, these publications offer actionable insights for decision-makers and stakeholders.

Our recent Special Reports address key regional developments:

- 'Sri Lanka After the Elections – Governance in Crisis', co-hosted with Konrad Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS), examines the challenges facing Sri Lanka's new government, including economic instability, International Monetary Fund reforms and patronage politics. It also reflects on the country's democratic prospects and reform potential.
- 'India-France-Japan Trilateral Dialogue – Order and Disorder in the Indo-Pacific', jointly published with the Sasakawa Peace Foundation and the French Institute of International Relations, explores strategic cooperation in the face of geopolitical competition. It covers security, nuclear disarmament, supply chains and climate governance.
- 'China and India – Two Giants Shaping the Global Economy', a joint ISAS-East Asian Institute report, compares how both countries are reshaping trade, innovation and climate governance, and influencing global institutions through divergent policy approaches.
- 'Cyber Resilience in the Indo-Pacific' evaluates digital security in Indonesia, Japan, South Korea and India, highlighting progress and gaps in regional cyber capabilities and advocating for stronger, coordinated responses.

A new South Asia Discussion Paper, 'IPEF Regulations and their Impact on the Economic Security of the Indo-Pacific Region', produced with KAS' Regional Economic Programme Asia, explores the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework's role in economic resilience and strategic cooperation through insights on supply chains, clean energy and technology transitions.

The latest South Asia Scan, 'India in World Trade – A Decade of Change', analyses India's trade shifts in the post-pandemic era and under the China-plus-one strategy. It calls for deeper trade engagement, policy reform and support for small-medium enterprises, with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations emerging as a key partner.

These publications reinforce ISAS' role as a hub for informed dialogue and strategic insight into South Asia's complexities and its global intersections.

BOOKS

Acharya, Amitav and Pardesi, Manjeet S., *Divergent Worlds*, Oxford University Press, 2025

Ranjan, Amit and Shuja, Asif, *Circumventing the Middle East Chokepoints*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2025

SOUTH ASIA DISCUSSION PAPER

IPEF Regulations and their Impact on the Economic Security of the Indo-Pacific Region, Edited by Dr Amitendu Palit, Senior Research Fellow and Research Lead (Trade and Economics), ISAS; and Mr Saeeduddin Faridi, Research Analyst, ISAS, March 2025

SOUTH ASIA SCAN

Mukherjee, Deeparghya, South Asia Scan No. 24 – *India in World Trade: Changing Trends over a Decade and their Implications*, Institute of South Asian Studies, 28 May 2025

SPECIAL REPORTS

Sri Lanka After the Elections: Governance in a Time of Crisis, Dr Rajni Gamage, Research Fellow, ISAS; and Ms Kanika Kaur, Research Analyst, ISAS, 24 February 2025

India-France-Japan Trilateral Dialogue – Order and Disorder in the Indo-Pacific: Trilateral and Policy Perspectives from India, France and Japan, Dr Yogesh Joshi, former Research Fellow, ISAS; Mr Ippeita Nishida, Senior Fellow, Sasakawa Peace Foundation, Japan; Dr Céline Pajon, Head, Japan Research, Centre for Asian Studies, French Institute of International Relations; and Ms Devyani Chaturvedi, Research Analyst, ISAS, 31 March 2025

China and India: Two Giants Shaping the Global Economy, Dr Amitendu Palit, Senior Research Fellow and Research Lead (Trade and Economics), ISAS; Professor Alfred Schipke, Director, East Asian Institute (EAI), NUS; Professor P S Srinivas, Research Professor, EAI; Ms Divya Murali, Research Associate, ISAS; and Ms Tanujja Dadlani, Research Analyst, ISAS, 30 April 2025

Cyber Resilience in the Indo-Pacific, Dr Karthik Nachiappan, Research Fellow, ISAS; and Ms Mriganika Singh Tanwar, Research Analyst, ISAS, 15 May 2025

Everyday Experiences of the State in South Asia, Dr Rajni Gamage, Research Fellow, ISAS; Ms Ramita Iyer, former Research Analyst, ISAS; and Mr Saeeduddin Faridi, Ms Tanujja Dadlani, Research Analyst, ISAS, 30 June 2025

BRIEFS

1195 Political Shifts, Historical Revisions: Bangladesh's Cultural and Political Realignment, Dr Imran Ahmed, Research Fellow, ISAS, 10 January 2025

1196 Nepal's Crippling Economy: Public Frustration and Government Response, Dr Puspa Sharma, Visiting Senior Research Fellow, ISAS, 17 January 2025

1197 Sri Lankan President Visits China: Priorities and Competing Interests, Dr Rajni Gamage, Research Fellow, ISAS; and Dr Shakthi De Silva, Visiting Lecturer, Royal Institute of Colombo, Sri Lanka, 17 January 2025

1198 India's New Data Protection Regime, Dr Karthik Nachiappan, Research Fellow, ISAS, 27 January 2025

1199 India's Engagement with Trump 2.0: A Pragmatic Start, Professor C Raja Mohan, Visiting Research Professor, ISAS, 27 January 2025

1200 India's Cyber Statecraft: Managing and Neutralising Threats, Dr Karthik Nachiappan, Research Fellow, ISAS, 27 January 2025

1201 Delhi Assembly Election: The BJP's Push to Topple the AAP, Dr Ronojoy Sen, Senior Research Fellow and Research Lead (Politics, Society and Governance), ISAS, 27 January 2025

1202 India's Middle Class Budget, Dr Amitendu Palit, Senior Research Fellow and Research Lead (Trade and Economics), ISAS, 4 February 2025

1203 First Budget of Modi's Third Term: Emphasis on Boosting Consumer Consumption, Mr Vinod Rai, Distinguished Visiting Research Fellow, ISAS, 4 February 2025

1204 Precarious Bangladesh and Indian Indifference, Dr Sreeradha Datta, Non-Resident Senior Fellow, ISAS, 10 February 2025

1205 Modi Visits France: Deepening Security Cooperation, Ms Bian Sai, Academic Visitor, ISAS, 10 February 2025

1206 Delhi's Newly Elected Government: Environmental Challenges, Dr Amit Ranjan, Research Fellow, ISAS, 10 February 2025

1207	Delhi Assembly Election: The BJP Storms Back to Power After 27 Years, Dr Ronojoy Sen, Senior Research Fellow and Research Lead (Politics, Society and Governance), ISAS, 13 February 2025
1208	Modi and Trump Unveil an Ambitious Agenda, Professor C Raja Mohan, Visiting Research Professor, ISAS, 17 February 2025
1209	Pakistan's Deepening Political Impasse: The Breakdown of Government PTI Talks, Dr Imran Ahmed, Research Fellow, ISAS; and Mr Muhammad Saad Ul Haque, Research Analyst, ISAS, 18 February 2025
1210	India's Strategy in a BTA with the US, Dr Amitendu Palit, Senior Research Fellow and Research Lead (Trade and Economics), ISAS, 18 February 2025
1211	India's Evolving Relationship with Afghanistan, Dr Imran Ahmed, Research Fellow, ISAS; and Ms Tanujja Dadlani, Research Analyst, ISAS, 20 February 2025
1212	Interim Government in Bangladesh: Struggle for Stability, Dr Imran Ahmed, Research Fellow, ISAS, 21 February 2025
1213	The MCC, the BRI and Nepal, Dr Amit Ranjan, Research Fellow, ISAS, 24 February 2025
1214	Mahakumbh 2025: The Challenge of Waste Management, Mr Vinod Rai, Distinguished Visiting Research Fellow, ISAS, 1 March 2025
1215	India and the European Union: Old Economic Agenda and the New Global Context, Professor C Raja Mohan, Visiting Research Professor, ISAS, 3 March 2025
1216	India and Trump 2.0: Strategic Convergence and Tactical Challenges, Professor C Raja Mohan, Visiting Research Professor, ISAS, 10 March 2025
1217	Talks on India Bangladesh Water Sharing, Dr Amit Ranjan, Research Fellow, ISAS, 11 March 2025
1218	Sri Lanka's 2025 Budget: A Difficult Balancing Act, Dr Rajni Gamage, Research Fellow, ISAS, 13 March 2025
1219	Pro-Monarchy Support in the Himalayan Republic, Dr Amit Ranjan, Research Fellow, ISAS, 17 March 2025
1220	Nepal's Trade with its Giant Neighbours, Dr Puspa Sharma, Visiting Senior Research Fellow, ISAS, 21 March 2025
1221	Tesla, Starlink and India US Partnership, Dr Karthik Nachiappan, Research Fellow, ISAS, 21 March 2025
1222	Pakistan's Mounting Security Challenges, Dr Imran Ahmed, Research Fellow, ISAS; and Mr Muhammad Saad Ul Haque, Research Analyst, ISAS, 24 March 2025
1223	A Nation in Flux: Bangladesh's Political Struggle, Dr Imran Ahmed, Research Fellow, ISAS, 25 March 2025
1224	Bangladesh's Growing Ties with China and Limited Engagement with India, Dr Amit Ranjan, Research Fellow, ISAS, 7 April 2025
1225	US Reciprocal Tariffs: Tough Policy Choices for India, Dr Amitendu Palit, Senior Research Fellow and Research Lead (Trade and Economics), ISAS, 8 April 2025
1226	Narendra Modi in Bangkok: Reinforcing India's 'Act East' Policy, Professor C Raja Mohan, Visiting Research Professor, ISAS, 8 April 2025
1227	India Announces New Scheme: Boost to Electronic Component Production, Mr Vinod Rai, Distinguished Visiting Research Fellow, ISAS, 8 April 2025
1228	Indian Prime Minister Visits Sri Lanka: Reinforcing Strategic Ties, Dr Rajni Gamage, Research Fellow, ISAS, 8 April 2025
1229	The BIMSTEC Summit in Bangkok: Potential and Challenges, Dr Amit Ranjan, Research Fellow, ISAS, 11 April 2025
1230	Delimitation of Constituencies in India: Southern States Up in Arms, Dr Ronojoy Sen, Senior Research Fellow and Research Lead (Politics, Society and Governance), ISAS, 15 April 2025
1231	Girls' Education and Divisions within the Afghan Taliban, Dr Imran Ahmed, Research Fellow, ISAS; and Ms Tanujja Dadlani, Research Analyst, ISAS, 21 April 2025
1232	After Pahalgam: Is the Indus Waters Treaty Doomed?, Dr Amit Ranjan, Research Fellow, ISAS, 28 April 2025
1233	Operation Sindoor and Its Aftermath: The Return of South Asian Brinkmanship, Dr Imran Ahmed, Research Fellow, ISAS, 8 May 2025
1234	India-United Kingdom FTA: Signalling Decisive Shifts and Changes, Dr Amitendu Palit, Senior Research Fellow and Research Lead (Trade and Economics), ISAS; and Mriganika Singh Tanwar, Research Analyst, ISAS, 9 May 2025
1235	Tamil Nadu Elections in 2026: The BJP Hopes for Inroads, Dr Ronojoy Sen, Senior Research Fellow and Research Lead (Politics, Society and Governance), ISAS, 9 May 2025

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- 1236** 2025 Local Elections in Sri Lanka: Pressure on the NPP Government to Deliver, Dr Rajni Gamage, Research Fellow, ISAS, 13 May 2025
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- 1237** India's New Counter-terror Doctrine: Coping with Nuclear Impunity, Professor C Raja Mohan, Visiting Research Professor, ISAS, 14 May 2025
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- 1238** Restoration of Nepal's Monarchy: A Purposeless Call, Dr Puspa Sharma, Visiting Senior Research Fellow, ISAS, 15 May 2025
-
- 1239** Japanese Stake in Yes Bank: Policy Shift by the RBI, Mr Vinod Rai, Distinguished Visiting Research Fellow, ISAS, 16 May 2025
-
- 1240** Sagarmatha Sambaad: Nepal Initiates Biennial Global Dialogue, Dr Puspa Sharma, Visiting Senior Research Fellow, ISAS, 20 May 2025
-
- 1241** Massive Clean-up of the Yamuna: Three Year Target by the Delhi Government, Mr Vinod Rai, Distinguished Visiting Research Fellow, ISAS, 26 May 2025
-
- 1242** The Expanding Social Costs of War in the Age of Media and Misinformation, Dr Amit Ranjan, Research Fellow, ISAS, 29 May 2025
-
- 1243** The United States' Role in the Recent India-Pakistan Crisis, Dr Sandeep Bhardwaj, Visiting Research Fellow, ISAS, 30 May 2025
-
- 1244** India's Delayed Census: Why It Matters, Dr Ronojoy Sen, Senior Research Fellow and Research Lead (Politics, Society and Governance), ISAS, 13 June 2025
-
- 1245** Israel-Iran Conflict: Economic Impact on India, Dr Amitendu Palit, Senior Research Fellow and Research Lead (Trade and Economics), ISAS, 16 June 2025
-
- 1246** The Future of China-India Thaw after the Indo-Pakistan Conflict, Dr Ivan Lidarev, Visiting Research Fellow, ISAS, 25 June 2025
-
- 1247** Resetting India-Canada Relations, Professor C Raja Mohan, Visiting Research Professor, ISAS, 25 June 2025
-
- 1248** Impact of the US' Reciprocal Tariffs on Sri Lanka: Between Protectionism and Regionalism, Dr Rajni Gamage, Research Fellow, ISAS; and Ms Tanujja Dadlani, Research Analyst, ISAS, 27 June 2025
-
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