

To Lead Global South, What India Needs Is Its Own Meiji Moment



The consensus achieved during the September 2023 G20 Declaration, followed by the joint declaration at the equally complex BRICS Summit, reinforced India's growing global influence. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership, supported by a dedicated government team, helped bring diverse countries together. To fully leverage this influence, however, India must use its position to strengthen a multilateral system strained by geopolitical rivalries. The Global South increasingly looks to India for leadership, but sustaining this role requires institutionalising strategic direction across governments and generations.

Modi's leadership has extended beyond governance programmes to shaping India's development ambitions and civilisational confidence. His call for Viksit Bharat 2047 represents a generational commitment to building a prosperous, self-reliant and globally influential India. India could therefore consider a "Modi Restoration"—consolidating the strategic confidence established under his leadership, embedding it within democratic institutions and advancing it through meaningful jan bhagidari.

The historical parallel is Japan's Meiji Restoration. Beginning in 1868, Japan transformed from a largely feudal society into a modern industrial power by investing in education, technology, administration and infrastructure. It absorbed Western knowledge without abandoning its cultural identity, strengthening its ability to engage major powers. India need not emulate Japan's militaristic trajectory; the relevant lesson lies in its clarity of national purpose and sustained investment in state capacity.

As India targets developed-country status and a \$40-trillion economy by 2047, ambition must be matched by institutional strength, policy continuity and disciplined execution. India's growing geopolitical confidence was visible during the G20 and BRICS summits, where it engaged major powers, bridged competing interests and articulated Global South concerns. This outward assertion reflects Modi's panch pran: building a developed India, overcoming the colonial mindset, taking pride in its heritage, strengthening unity and fostering civic responsibility.

The emphasis on citizen participation also recalls Lal Bahadur Shastri's "Jai Jawan, Jai Kisan", which transformed national resilience into a shared public mission. Similarly, Viksit Bharat 2047 seeks to make citizens participants rather than merely beneficiaries of development.

Economic and governance reforms have supported this ambition. The National Single Window System has streamlined approvals, GST has created a common national market, and PM Gati Shakti seeks greater coordination in infrastructure planning and logistics. Digital Public Infrastructure has further strengthened India's technological capabilities. The "minimum government, maximum governance" approach, reflected in initiatives such as Jan Vishwas, seeks to reduce unnecessary regulatory burdens and replace disproportionate penalties for minor violations with more appropriate measures.

These reforms have strengthened India's capacity to navigate a changing global economy. While engaging the US amid tariff pressures, India has diversified relationships with the UAE, UK, Australia and the EU. Make in India, production-linked incentives and infrastructure expansion are also positioning India as a potential democratic manufacturing hub within China+1 strategies.

The next phase must convert ambition into institutional maturity. Strategic sectors such as semiconductors, artificial intelligence, secure electronics, renewable energy, electric mobility and green hydrogen require stronger institutions, while judicial delays, bureaucratic capacity constraints, regulatory uncertainty and skilling gaps require sustained attention.

The Meiji transformation endured because its national purpose ultimately transcended one ruler. Similarly, the Modi vision must evolve into an enduring national doctrine capable of sustaining strategic direction, developing future leadership, delivering broad-based growth and ensuring that Viksit Bharat remains a generational mission rather than a time-bound programme.

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Trump Invites Putin to G20 Summit

US President Donald Trump has invited Russian President Vladimir Putin to attend the December G20 Summit in Miami, as Washington seeks to maintain dialogue with Moscow over the Ukraine war.



Secretary of State Marco Rubio said the gathering could provide Putin with an opportunity to engage with Trump and other world leaders. The Kremlin said no decision has yet been made on Putin's attendance.

(AJ, 24.09.26)

US-Iran Explore Phased Hormuz Deal

US and Iranian negotiators are exploring a phased agreement to reopen the Strait of Hormuz in return for Washington easing its economic blockade of Iran. Tehran wants sanctions and trade restrictions lifted, while Washington seeks unrestricted navigation through the key energy route.

Talks remain unresolved, with both sides reluctant to surrender leverage without reciprocal commitments.

(II, 24.09.26)

EU-Philippines Advance FTA Talks

The European Union and the Philippines have reached a substantial agreement in negotiations for a free trade deal, marking a major step towards deeper economic ties. The

agreement is expected to improve market access, boost trade and investment, and strengthen supply-chain resilience.

Formal negotiations are expected to conclude in the coming months, followed by legal procedures and ratification before the agreement can enter into force.

(EEAS, 22.09.26)

Global Economy Shows Resilience

The OECD said the global economy has proved more resilient than expected despite disruptions caused by the Iran war, raising its 2026 growth forecast slightly to 2.9 percent. However, renewed increases in oil and gas prices could fuel inflation and weaken growth.

The OECD also warned that rising government borrowing costs, geopolitical uncertainty and potential weakness in AI investment pose significant risks to the global outlook.

(TG, 23.09.26)

Floods Cross Borders

Floods and other climate-related disasters increasingly demonstrate how environmental risks transcend national borders. Extreme rainfall, river flooding and associated disruptions can affect neighbouring countries simultaneously, making coordinated regional preparedness essential. Strengthening early-warning systems, sharing hydrological data and improving disaster-response mechanisms can help communities respond more effectively.

Cross-border cooperation is particularly important in regions where rivers, ecosystems and climate risks are shared, reinforcing the need

for collaborative disaster management.

(Tol, 26.09.26)

India-Australia-Canada Trade Ties

India's expanding trade engagement with Australia and Canada reflects efforts to deepen economic partnerships and diversify export markets. Trade agreements can improve market access, reduce barriers and create opportunities for businesses across sectors, including goods and services.

These developments underline India's broader strategy of strengthening economic ties with key partners amid evolving global trade and geopolitical conditions.

(Tol, 26.09.26)

India-EU-Canada Back Multilateralism

India, the European Union (EU) and Canada have reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening multilateralism amid growing global economic and geopolitical uncertainties. The three sides emphasised the importance of rules-based international cooperation, open trade and effective multilateral institutions.



The partnership also highlights the need for coordinated responses to emerging disruptions affecting international cooperation.

(Tol, 23.09.26)

Plan to Spot 10,000 Textile Exporters

The government is planning to identify around 10,000 potential textile exporters across districts to expand India's presence in global markets. The initiative aims to discover export-ready businesses, particularly among small and medium enterprises, and support them in meeting international standards and accessing overseas markets.

District-level identification could help broaden the country's exporter base, strengthen local textile clusters and integrate more businesses into global value chains.

(ET, 28.09.26)

India's BRICS Presidency Boosts Cooperation

India's 2026 BRICS Presidency has focused on strengthening cooperation across political, economic and people-to-people spheres, with more than 350 meetings and high-level engagements held across 25 cities. Key outcomes include new initiatives on digital agriculture, agro-ecology, healthy lifestyles, traditional medicine, climate resilience and sustainable development.

BRICS now comprises 11 members, representing nearly half of the world's population and around 40 percent of global GDP.

(PIB, 10.09.26)



India's Nuclear Power Rises

The Nuclear Power Corporation of India Limited (NPCIL) began initial fuel loading at Unit 8 of the Rajasthan Atomic Power Project (RAPP) in Rawatbhata on September 19.

The 700 MWe indigenous pressurised heavy water reactor is expected to begin commercial operations during the current financial year. The development marks another step in India's nuclear expansion programme, with PP-8 being the fourth of 16 planned 700 MWe PHWRs.



(IE, 21.09.26)

Agreement. The framework could allow Canadian companies to participate in international carbon markets and support investment in carbon-removal technologies and nature-based solutions.

Canada said any future ITMO trading would follow Article 6 requirements, including environmental integrity, additionality and measures to prevent double counting of emissions reductions.

(GoC, 24.09.26)

EU Strengthens Carbon Market

EU member states have agreed on a position to amend the Market Stability Reserve (MSR) of the EU Emissions Trading System. The proposed changes seek to improve long-term market liquidity and predictability while addressing potential allowance surpluses.

Under the Council's position, the current 400-million allowance invalidation threshold would be suspended until 2030, followed by a



higher 800-million threshold from 2031. The Council will now negotiate the final text with the European Parliament.

(EC, 23.09.26)

Sustainable Debt Market Hits US\$7.3tn

The global sustainable debt market reached US\$7.3tn in cumulative aligned volume, according to the Climate Bonds Initiative. Green bonds recorded their strongest quarter on record, with US\$210.8bn issued in Q2 2026.



Total aligned sustainable debt issuance reached US\$529.7bn in the first half of the year. Green bonds accounted for 69 percent of aligned H1 issuance.

(CBI, 09.09.26)

EDF Plans 10 European SMRs

France's state-owned power company EDF plans to build 10 small modular reactors (SMRs) across the European Union by 2035. The first is planned for France, with another proposed for Italy, while EDF is exploring projects in Poland, Belgium and Finland.

Each reactor is expected to generate around 400 MW. The initiative reflects Europe's renewed interest in nuclear power as countries seek to reduce fossil-fuel dependence and strengthen energy security.

(Reuters, 18.09.26)

Spain's Hydrogen Highways

Spain has moved four hydrogen pipeline sections into the approval process, covering 234 km of infrastructure. The sections will support three proposed green hydrogen projects with a combined electrolysis capacity of 900 MW.

The development represents a step towards building the infrastructure needed to connect hydrogen production with industrial demand. It



also highlights Europe's efforts to develop dedicated hydrogen networks as investment in low-carbon hydrogen production and related infrastructure expands.

(FCW Team, 24.09.26)

Africa Expands Green Hydrogen

The African Development Bank Group is deploying \$20 million in targeted project-preparation grants to support four green hydrogen facilities across Egypt, Morocco, Namibia and South Africa. The funding will address early-stage engineering and infrastructure barriers that can delay investment in large-scale projects.

The initiative aims to help convert renewable energy resources into industrial-scale green hydrogen, ammonia and other low-carbon fuels, while attracting additional private investment in Africa's emerging hydrogen economy.

(ENN, 21.09.26)

COP31 Sets Antalya Priorities

The COP31 Presidency has outlined ten priority themes for the 2026 Action Agenda ahead of the climate conference in Antalya. These include clean-energy transition, green industrialisation, climate-resilient cities, food security and oceans, alongside a Climate Implementation Bridge focused on translating climate and development priorities into finance-ready projects.

Finance, technology and capacity building have been identified as cross-cutting enablers. The agenda aims to strengthen implementation and international cooperation ahead of COP31.

(SKH, 02.09.26)

Canada Carbon-Market Takes Shape

Canada is exploring a policy framework for trading internationally transferred mitigation outcomes (ITMOs) under Article 6 of the Paris

India: National & Strategic Developments

Building a Sustainable Digital Backbone

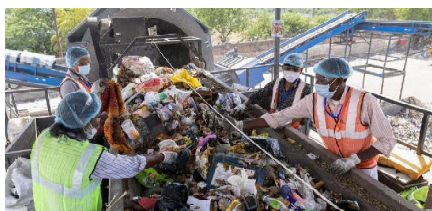
Karnataka has approved its Sustainable Data Centre Policy 2026–2031, a five-year framework aimed at expanding the state's digital infrastructure. The policy targets 1 GW of cumulative data-centre IT capacity and provides around ₹13 billion for implementation.

It seeks to attract investment, strengthen digital infrastructure and promote sustainable data-centre development, reflecting Karnataka's ambition to support growing demand for cloud computing, artificial intelligence and other digital services.

(TH, 18.09.26)

India Advances Circular Economy

Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav reaffirmed India's commitment to integrating circular economy principles into sustainable development at the World Circular Economy Forum 2026. He highlighted how traditional practices of reuse, repair and conservation are being reflected in contemporary policies.



The approach seeks to reduce resource consumption, minimise waste and promote sustainable production and consumption, positioning circularity as an important component of India's broader environmental and development strategy.

(NoA, 25.09.26)

Safe Tables for a Global Summit

The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has issued strict directives to five-star hotels, emphasising zero tolerance for food-safety violations ahead of the BRICS Summit.

The move seeks to ensure compliance with hygiene and food-safety standards at hospitality venues hosting delegates. Enhanced inspections and monitoring are expected to strengthen food-safety preparedness and maintain high standards during major international events.

(ET, 02.09.26)

A Safety Net for India's Gig Workforce

India's gig workforce is projected to grow substantially, increasing the need for effective social protection. The new social security framework provides for schemes covering life and disability protection, accident insurance, health and maternity benefits, old-age support and childcare.



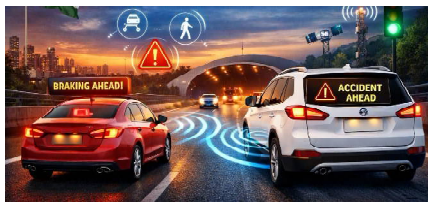
While registration and eligibility rules are being established, questions remain over funding, benefit design and delivery. Effective implementation will be crucial to ensuring meaningful social security for gig and platform workers.

(Tol, 17.09.26)

Cars Set to Talk on Indian Roads

India is moving towards connected vehicles that can communicate with one another and surrounding infrastructure to improve road safety and traffic management. Vehicle-to-vehicle and vehicle-to-infrastructure communication could enable cars to share information about hazards, congestion, sudden braking and road conditions.

Such technology may support faster warnings, smoother traffic flows



and more efficient mobility, while requiring robust standards, data protection and cybersecurity safeguards.

(IE, 31.08.26)

CCPA: Consumer Grievance Hub

Ministries, regulators and government departments are increasingly turning to the Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA)

to address consumer grievances and strengthen enforcement. The shift reflects growing recognition of the CCPA's role in tackling unfair trade practices, misleading advertisements and consumer rights violations.

Greater inter-agency coordination could improve grievance redressal, enforcement consistency and accountability, while helping consumers navigate increasingly complex markets and digital services.

(Mint, 21.09.26)

Seven Years, Safer Roads Ahead

Seven years after the Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Act, 2019, experts at a Road Safety Network roundtable called for stronger implementation of India's road-safety framework.

Priorities included safer speed management, pedestrian and cyclist infrastructure, stronger road-design accountability, improved emergency and post-crash care, better crash data, and greater attention to smaller



towns and rural areas. Experts from NIMHANS, IIT Delhi, Parisar and CrashFree India stressed translating legal provisions into measurable safety outcomes.

(<https://odishabarta.com/>, 27.09.26)

Healthcare Steps into the Digital Age

The National Health Authority has launched a Digital Academy to accelerate adoption of electronic medical records and hospital information systems under the Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission.

The initiative includes specialised training for government hospital administrators and medical officers, with courses covering digital health tools, standards and data protection. The move seeks to address implementation bottlenecks, strengthen workforce capabilities and expand interoperable digital healthcare across India.

(Mint, 13.09.26)

NITI Aayog on Quantum Risks

NITI Aayog is developing a quantum-communication risk assessment framework with financial and telecom regulators, including RBI, SEBI and TRAI. The framework will help regulated entities assess quantum-related risks and prepare for quantum-safe security.



The initiative complements the National Quantum Mission and signals growing integration of emerging quantum risks into sectoral technology and regulatory planning. (ET, 21.09.26)

APAAR ID Raises Child Data Concerns

India's APAAR student ID consent form permits Aadhaar and demographic information to be shared with the Ministry of Education and notes that personal information may be made available to educational institutions, UDISE+, scholarship systems and recruitment agencies.

While consent can be withdrawn, data already processed remains unaffected. The form raises questions around parental consent, children's data protection and safeguards within government-backed digital infrastructure. (Medianama, 2026)

US-China Chip Controls



US lawmakers renewed calls in September for tighter controls on China's access to advanced AI chips amid debate over more flexible licensing of certain semiconductor exports.

Proposed legislation would introduce tracking mechanisms and notification requirements for advanced chips potentially diverted from their intended destinations. The debate underscores tensions between semiconductor trade,

national security and technology access. (RC, 23.09.26)

ITAT Agra on Financial Records

The ITAT Agra held that continued use of an old PAN in a bank account could not, by itself, establish that ₹30 lakh deposited during demonetisation belonged personally to a partner.

The case involved a proprietorship converted into a partnership without corresponding updates to bank records. The ruling highlights how inaccurate institutional records can affect the interpretation and use of financial information in tax proceedings. (TaxGuru, 21.09.26)

SEMICON India 2026

SEMICON India 2026, held in New Delhi from September 17-19, 2026 brought together more than 600 exhibitors from 52 countries and generated 56 MoUs, announcements and strategic initiatives.

Covering semiconductor design, manufacturing, packaging, materials, equipment, research, startups and talent, the event highlighted India's transition from establishing policy foundations towards expanding commercial production and its broader semiconductor ecosystem.

CCI Flags AI Competition Risks

The Competition Commission of India (CCI) Chairperson Ravneet Kaur warned that rapid AI adoption could amplify anti-competitive practices in digital markets, including self-preferencing, discriminatory pricing, tying and market manipulation.

She noted that AI is accelerating changes in already concentrated markets. The concerns build on CCI's

earlier study of AI and competition, which examined market concentration, ecosystem lock-in and algorithmic collusion. (PTI, 07.09.26)

Robots Drive Trade Innovation

Robotics, artificial intelligence (AI) and pharmaceuticals are becoming important drivers of global trade and economic cooperation. Advances in these sectors are creating opportunities for cross-border investment, manufacturing and services while reshaping supply chains.



Governments are seeking trade frameworks that promote innovation, technology transfer and market access. Their convergence could enhance competitiveness while creating new challenges related to regulation, workforce skills and responsible technology adoption. (Mint, 18.09.26)

CERT-In on Supply-Chain Security

CERT-In conducted a September training programme on technical guidelines for Software, AI, Cybersecurity, Hardware and other Bills of Materials (SBOM, AIBOM, CBOM and HBOM).

The initiative focused on standardising technology-component inventories to strengthen vulnerability management, supply-chain security, risk assessment, compliance and incident response. It reflects growing attention to technology dependencies and complex digital supply-chain risks. (CERT-In, 03.09.26)

Trump Rejects International Regulation of AI

At the United Nations General Assembly on September 22, 2026, US President Donald Trump rejected efforts to establish global governance or international regulation of artificial intelligence, arguing that such frameworks could constrain innovation and US technological leadership.

He advocated encouraging AI development while monitoring potential risks through US institutions. Trump also referred to AI as "super intelligence" and emphasised maintaining the US lead over China in the technology. (AFP News, 22.09.26)



AI Fintech Boosts MSME Banking

India is increasingly deploying AI-powered fintech solutions to address financing challenges faced by micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs). Applications include fraud detection, invoice factoring and dynamic credit scoring, using real-time financial and market data to improve lending decisions.

These tools could reduce approval times and collateral-related barriers, particularly for underserved businesses. However, regulatory challenges, data quality and limited digital access in rural areas remain important considerations for wider adoption and financial inclusion.

(BS, 25.09.26)

India-US Trade Drives Manufacturing

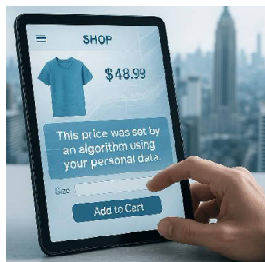
The US-India Business Council has highlighted the potential of a bilateral trade agreement to deepen economic ties and support manufacturing, technology and AI cooperation.

It could also facilitate technology partnerships and expand opportunities in emerging sectors. The assessment comes amid



continuing negotiations, with trade, investment and technology access remaining central to the bilateral economic relationship. (BW, 25.09.26)

When Algorithms Meet Consumer Rights



India's Consumer Protection (E-Commerce) Amendment Rules, 2026, coming into force in January

2027, expand scrutiny of digital marketplaces. The rules introduce obligations covering search rankings, sponsored listings, price reductions, seller disclosures, dark patterns and consumer grievances.

The changes highlight the intersection of consumer and competition law, requiring platforms to ensure that ranking and disclosure practices enable consumers to make genuinely informed choices.

(BS, 14.09.26)

TRAI Seeks Human Oversight in AI

The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) has stressed the need for human oversight, auditability and



accountability as AI becomes increasingly integrated into telecom networks. AI can improve network efficiency and fraud detection but could also make scams and other harmful activities more sophisticated.

There is a need for safeguards and intervention mechanisms, particularly where automated risk assessments could adversely affect legitimate consumers, businesses or communications.

(BS, 14.09.26)

RBI to Standardise Loan Rates

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) plans to harmonise rules governing loan interest rates across regulated entities to improve transparency and consumer protection. Lenders currently follow differing practices for calculating interest, including day-count conventions and benchmark reset dates.

The proposed framework aims to standardise these practices and strengthen monetary-policy transmission. RBI has clarified that the exercise is intended to rationalise existing practices and does not directly alter borrowers' EMLs or repayment obligations. (Mint, 05.08.26)

IRDAI Tightens Expense Limits

The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) has proposed phased reductions in insurers' expense-of-management limits and a new framework for intermediary commissions.

Life insurers would reduce company-level expenses to 15 percent of gross direct premium income within two years and 12.5 percent within five years. For general insurers, the proposed limit would decline from 30 percent to 20 percent. The regulator also proposes commission limits based on product type, distribution channel and complexity.

(BS, 23.09.26)

Satellite Broadband Nears Launch

The Department of Telecommunications' Digital Communication Commission has approved recommendations on satellite spectrum allocation, clearing a regulatory hurdle for operators including Eutelsat OneWeb, Starlink and Jio Satellite.

The framework proposes a 5 percent spectrum usage charge on annual adjusted gross revenue, reduced to 4 percent in rural and remote areas, with spectrum allocated for five years. Commercial services will still require Cabinet approval, security clearances and other regulatory permissions. (BS, 08.09.26)

UPI to Add MDR on Large Payments

The National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) has announced a 0.4 percent merchant discount rate (MDR) on specified UPI person-to-merchant transactions above ₹2,000 from October 15, 2026. The MDR will apply to merchants rather than consumers, with exemptions for small merchants and specified categories.



The measure represents a shift from UPI's longstanding zero-cost model and is intended to support the financial sustainability of the digital payments ecosystem and its infrastructure.

(Reuters, 15.09.26)

India-Vietnam Ties and Northeast

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar and Vietnam's Foreign Minister Le Hoai Trung reviewed bilateral relations on September 15, 2026 under the Enhanced Comprehensive Strategic Partnership.

At the same time, analysis of India-ASEAN relations points to limited gains from the Northeast's intended "gateway" role, with several flagship connectivity projects continuing to face delays. *(DD India, 15.09.26)*

ASEAN Upgrades Trade Agreement

ASEAN economic ministers meeting in Manila agreed to implement the upgraded ASEAN Trade in Goods Agreement (ATIGA) by the end of 2026, ahead of the earlier mid-2027 timeline.

Ministers also initiated work towards reviewing the ASEAN Trade in Services Agreement, while the Digital Economy Framework Agreement is expected to be signed at the November leaders' meeting. The developments provide useful context for India's ongoing review of the ATIGA. *(JP, 20.09.26)*

Trump-Xi Summit Amid Rivalry

Chinese President Xi Jinping and US President Donald Trump are holding their second summit of 2026 amid continuing tensions over tariffs, rare earths, artificial intelligence and other strategic issues.

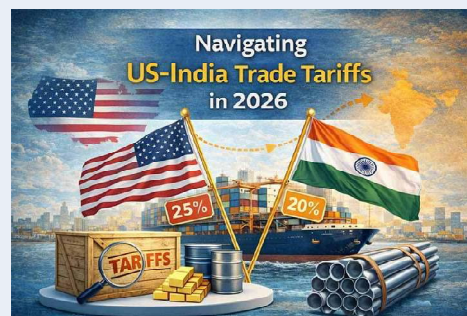


Following Trump's May visit to China, the latest meeting is being held in US, with the White House planning a state dinner for Xi. The two sides have also agreed to extend their trade truce, which was due to expire on November 10. *(NA, 23.09.26)*

India-US Sanctions Pressure Trade

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio met External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar in New York on September 23, 2026 amid concerns over the newly enacted Lindsey O. Graham Sanctioning Russia and Iran Act of 2026.

Signed by President Trump, the law authorises tariffs of up to 100 percent on major importers of Russian crude oil or natural gas. India, as a major buyer of Russian oil, has consequently come under greater scrutiny, adding complexity to ongoing India-US trade discussions. *(TH, 21.09.26)*



Indian Navy Expands Partnerships

INS Mysore concluded the Samudra Laksamana 4/26 exercise with the Royal Malaysian Navy on



September 10, 2026. India and New Zealand are also planning their first bilateral naval exercise in 2027.

At Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) 2026, the Indian Navy assumed the Deputy Commander Task Force role for theatre-level anti-submarine warfare for the first time, reflecting its expanding maritime engagement.

Japan's F-2 Deploys to India

Japan's Mitsubishi F-2 fighter operated from an Indian air base for the first time during Veer Guardian 2026, flying alongside India's Tejas, Rafale and Su-30MKI fighters. The two-week exercise concluded at Jodhpur on September 22, 2026.

The deployment marks the first time Japan Air Self-Defense Force fighters have operated from Indian territory in a bilateral exercise, deepening India-Japan defence cooperation. *(AGN, 22.08.26)*

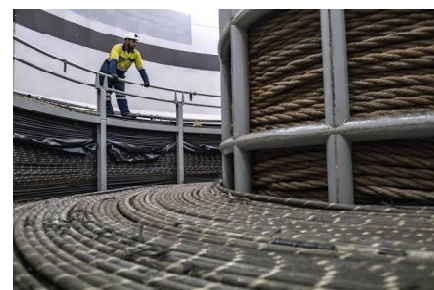
ASEAN-India Maritime Exercise Begins

The second ASEAN-India Maritime Exercise (AIME 2026) is scheduled for September 28-October 02 off the Philippines, co-hosted by India and the Philippines, with Subic as the main venue. The exercise follows India's declaration of 2026 as the "ASEAN-India Year of Maritime Cooperation."

It provides an opportunity to strengthen maritime cooperation while maintaining ASEAN's emphasis on strategic balance and avoiding the emergence of rival military blocs. *(IS, 17.08.26)*

US Backs Trans-Pacific Cable

The US Trade and Development Agency have funded a feasibility study for a new submarine cable linking the US with Thailand and up to five Southeast Asian countries. The proposed 11,500-mile cable could connect Thailand with the US through Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Vietnam.



The initiative reflects US's effort to expand secure digital infrastructure and strengthen regional connectivity amid strategic competition with China. *(JT, 15.09.26)*

Invitation to Trade Not Just Aid (TRaNJIA)

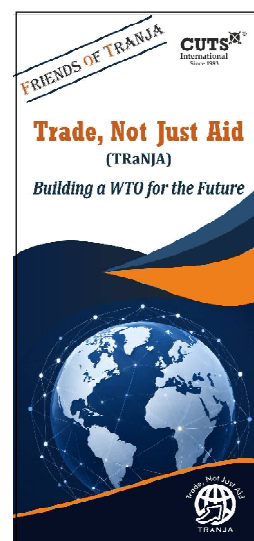
Building a WTO for the Future

The future of trade depends on the voices of people as much as policymakers. In this crucial juncture, CUTS international led TRaNJIA (Trade Not Just Aid): Building a WTO for the Future presents an independent platform that promotes evidence-based research, policy dialogue, and capacity building on trade and investment by documenting real-world experiences of both beneficiaries and affected groups.

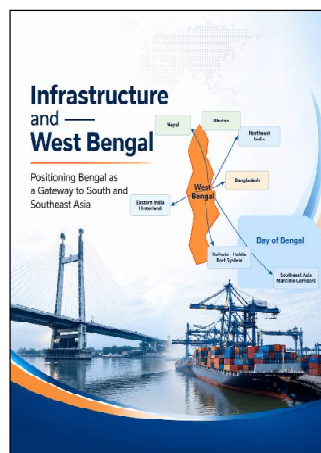
To connect with a larger global audience, Friends of TRaNJIA (FoT) campaign brings together governments, businesses, academia, civil society, and communities to promote a stronger, more inclusive, and rules-based multilateral trading system. Together, we can rebuild trust in trade and advance a more prosperous, sustainable, and interconnected world.

We invite you to join Friends of TRaNJIA - a network designed to expand this community and deepen engagement across stakeholders.

<https://cuts-citee.org/pdf/brochure-fot.pdf>



Discussion Paper



Infrastructure and West Bengal Positioning Bengal as a Gateway to South and Southeast Asia

CUTS International's Discussion Paper examines how West Bengal can leverage its strategic location to become a gateway connecting Eastern and Northeast India with Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal and Southeast Asia. It assesses road, rail, port, inland waterway, air and border infrastructure, while highlighting BBIN and BIMSTEC connectivity.

The paper proposes a phased roadmap covering trade facilitation, logistics infrastructure, multimodal connectivity, deep-sea ports and regional economic corridors to strengthen Bengal's role in trade, investment and regional cooperation.

<https://cuts-crc.org/pdf/DP-infrastructure-and-west-bengal-positioning-bengal-as-a-gateway-to-south-and-southeast-asia.pdf>

CUTS-Primus UPI MDR Study

CUTS International and Primus Partners are preparing a joint brief on the implications of the new merchant discount rate (MDR) applicable to certain UPI transactions from October 15, 2026.

The study will examine potential effects on consumers, small merchants, competition and India's digital payments ecosystem using transaction, survey and market data. CUTS will contribute its consumer-protection perspective, while both organisations will undertake research and stakeholder engagement.

When the market starts thinking for itself, who pulls the plug?

The Sunday Guardian, September 27, 2026

By Tasmita Sengupta & Sohom Banerjee

<https://tinyurl.com/5fevwzre>

Four Reforms to Rebuild Trust in Exams for Nilekani & Co

The Asian Age, September 02, 2026

By Pradeep S. Mehta

<https://tinyurl.com/3zjdt7jd>

Sources: AGN: Aerospace Global News; AJ: Al Jazeera; BS: Business Standard; BW: BusinessWorld; CBI: Climate Bonds Initiative; EC: EU Council; EEAS: European External Action Service; ENN: Energy News Network; ET: Economic Times; GoC: Government of Canada; IE: Indian Express; II: Iran International; IS: India Sentinels; IT: India Today; JP: Jakarta Post; JT: Japan Times; NA: Nikkei Asia; NoA: News on Air; PIB: Press Information Bureau; PTI: Press Trust of India; RC: Roll Call; SKH: SDG Knowledge Hub; TG: The Guardian; TH: The Hindu; TH: The Hindu; Tol: Times of India

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