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Indo-Pacific Weekly Mail August 25-31, 2025

Greetings Colleagues,

The Consortium is pleased to share its latest newsletter for the Indo-Pacific. Press the reply button for your feedback and comments.

India's Modi visits China, Cautious about Border Dispute

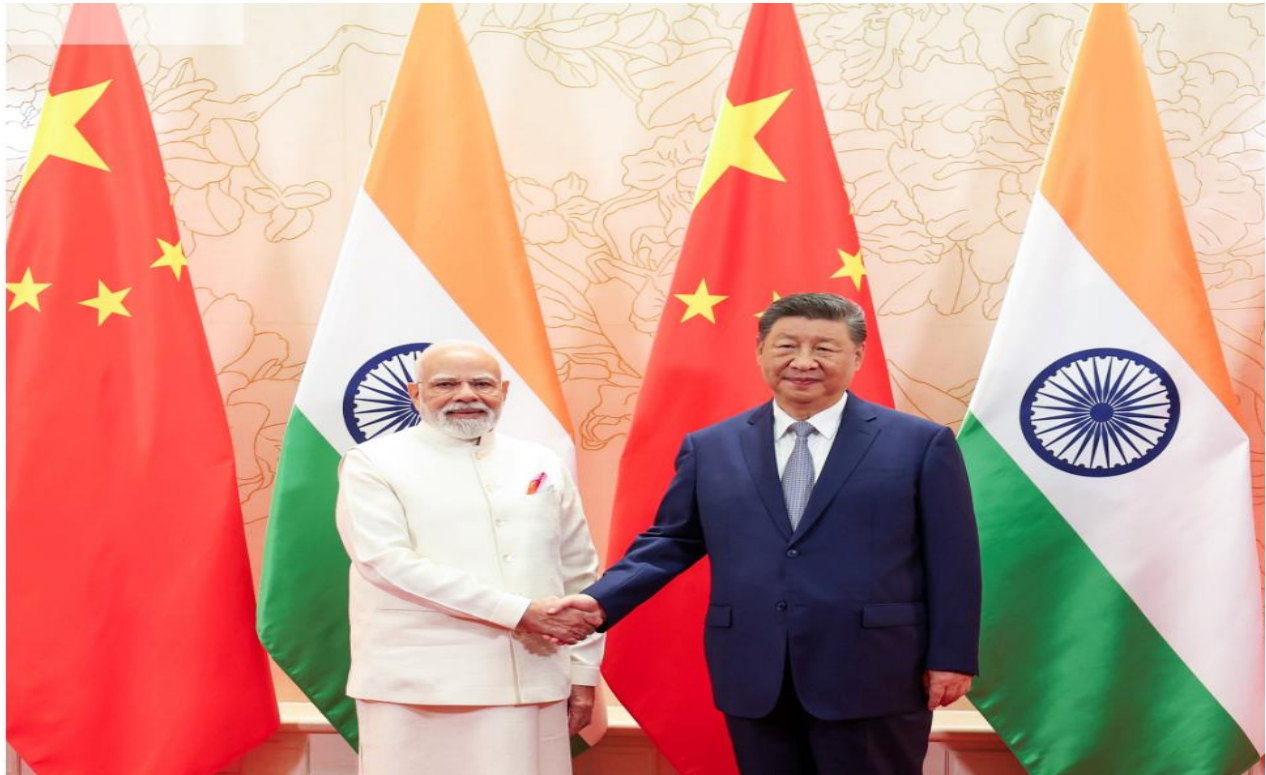


Figure 1: Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping in Tianjin, China Aug. 31, 2025, Image /India's PMO/

Indian Prime Minister Modi's visit to Tianjin, China, and have met with Chinese President Xi Jinping after seven years. The meeting of the two Asian leaders has sparked the discussion on India-China Thaw or resetting the ties between the two neighboring rivals. The first question is: What brings India and China to mend their relations after five years of strained ties? A straightforward answer is to obtain a respite from the US tariffs on trade and maintain the flow of supply chain. The United States has seen India and China both as abusers of trade policies and causing harm to American business and Industry. Particularly, President Trump has imposed a 50 percent tariff on Indian imports, aiming to reduce the trade disparity between the two countries and pressure India to cease purchasing oil from Russia.

Modi's visit to China and his handshake with Xi could provide some relief for India as it grapples with US tariffs. On the other side China see Indian consumers to amplify its slump growth and economy. However, Modi's China visit comes with the cautious awareness that China's partnership is often seen as untrustworthy and unreliable. India is well aware of China's support for Pakistan during Operation Sindoor and its involvement in ongoing border disputes in the Himalayan region of northern India, including China's claim over the Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh.

It is worth noting that India had non-combatant conflict with China in 2020 in Galwan, northern Himalayas. The Galwan clash was the biggest military confrontation between India and China in over five decades that has seen China continue with its bellicosity towards India. Historically, from

“Hindi-Chini Bhai-Bhai” to summit between Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping in 2019, the latest border clash is a testimony to China's double-crossing and aggressive behavior in the region. In such a scenario it would be pertinent to put the lens on India's cozying up with China.

Additionally, [Xi Jinping's recent visit to Tibet](#) and his assertion regarding the selection of the next Dalai Lama for the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR), along with the construction of the [world's largest hydropower dam](#) in the Himalayas on the Brahmaputra River, raise security concerns for India.

China and India usher in another chapter of their relationship, aiming to discuss bilateral talks on border management and maintain stability at the Line of Actual Control (LAC), resolving their differences; however, it's yet to be seen how both leaders walk the talk. The Modi-Xi meeting marks a turning point in realpolitik, amid unprecedented geopolitical uncertainty and a confrontational global politics where friends and foes are defined by interests, not by nature as the British statesman Lord Palmerston said, “We have no eternal allies, and we have no perpetual enemies. Our interests are eternal and perpetual, and those interests it is our duty to follow”.

India and Japan Expand Ties

India's Modi visited Tokyo and met Japanese Prime Minister Ishiba. Modi's visit aims to [expand Ties with Tokyo and increase cooperation](#).

Both leaders agreed to enhance cooperation in trade, security, technology, health, space, and sustainable ecology. Both leaders signed the joint vision for the "next decade to drive the special strategic and global partnership."

Delhi seeks Tokyo's investment and technological skills to boost its emerging economy, aiming at self-reliance. Both nations face challenges due to the repercussions of the United States' tariffs on their economies. In a positive outcome, Japan has pledged to invest JPY 10 trillion in India, reflecting a strong commitment to collaboration. During a recent trip, Prime Minister Modi and Mr. Ishiba rode together on a bullet train, symbolizing the deepening partnership between India and Japan.

Notably, India and Japan are the two prominent members of the QUAD, a quadrilateral structure of like-minded democracies, alongside the United States and Australia, which focuses on a free and open Indo-Pacific. The Quad grouping aims to establish a rule-based order in the Indo-Pacific and counter China's assertive actions. India is poised to host the Quad Summit in New Delhi this winter. However, the recent announcement regarding President Trump's absence raises concerns about the potential implications for advancing the group's objectives. [Read More](#)

US Kicks off Military Exercise Pacific Vanguard 2025

The U.S. Navy and U.S. Marine Corps begin multilateral maritime exercise Pacific Vanguard 2025 with allied countries forces- Royal Australian Navy (RAN) and Air Force (RAAF), Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force (JMSDF), Royal

New Zealand Navy, Republic of Korea (ROK) Navy This exercise provides personnel from the five nations' forces ashore opportunities to build shared multi-domain awareness and develop relationships that will help streamline combined operations in response to any crisis. The exercise unites service members from five Indo-Pacific countries to enhance their skills in maritime operations, anti-submarine warfare, air warfare, and maneuvering.

In Pacific Vanguard Exercise 25, the U.S. military and its allies and partners continually operate in designated land, air, and sea areas of the Mariana Islands to safely train service members in equipment use, tactics, joint operations, and humanitarian aid missions.

U.S. 7th Fleet is the U.S. Navy's largest forward-deployed numbered fleet and routinely interacts and operates with allies and partners in preserving a free and open Indo-Pacific region. [Read More](#)

China Demonstrate its Global influence at SCO Summit

China hosts the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) with Russia's Putin and India's Modi in attendance, with leaders of more than 20 countries and heads of 10 international organizations. China's "Uphold the Shanghai Spirit" initiative aims to expand cooperation and strengthen partnerships with countries in the Global South. China views the SCO as an opportunity to expand its influence across the continent, particularly at a time when US tariffs have targeted many countries in the Global South. While Europe suffers

and is engaged by Russia's unstoppable war, and the US's increasing involvement in the Gaza crisis, it provides the opportunity for China to pull the countries into its camp. Putin reiterates strong ties with China and describes the SCO as promoting a "multipolar world order," and hopes the summit will strengthen global solidarity and fairness [Read More](#)

Indo-Pacific Quiz

When was Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) formed?

- | | |
|---------|---------|
| a. 2001 | c. 2002 |
| b. 2003 | d. 2004 |

Which Southeast Asian country got independence on August 31, 1957?

- | | |
|--------------|--------------|
| a. Singapore | c. Indonesia |
| b. Cambodia | d. Malaysia |

Consortium Highlights

- ❖ Event Highlight: CIPR hosted the Report Discussion Event for the project, ***U.S.-Japan Alliance: Strengthening Defense and Security in the Indo-Pacific***, in Washington D.C., on August 22nd, 2025. [Watch B-Roll Here](#).

- ❖ Upcoming Roundtable Discussion: South Asia Quagmire, Sept. 19, 9:00
A.M. EST
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Indo-Pacific Quiz Key

Here are the **Answers** for August 24 Newsletter Quiz

Q. On August 26, 2021, in which country did 13 US soldiers die in the Abbey Gate Attack?

c. Afghanistan

Q. Who is President Trump's new appointee as Ambassador to India?

b. Sergio Gor

Contributions: Indu Saxena