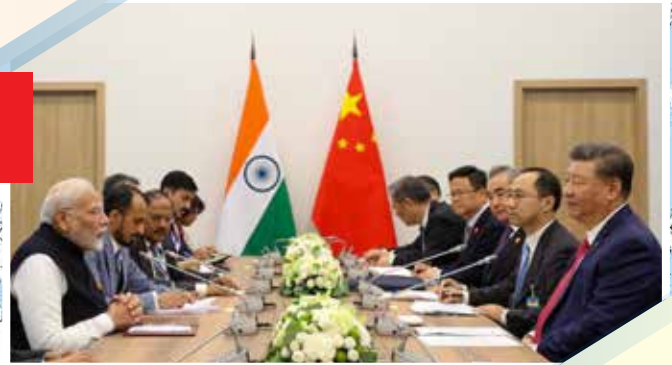


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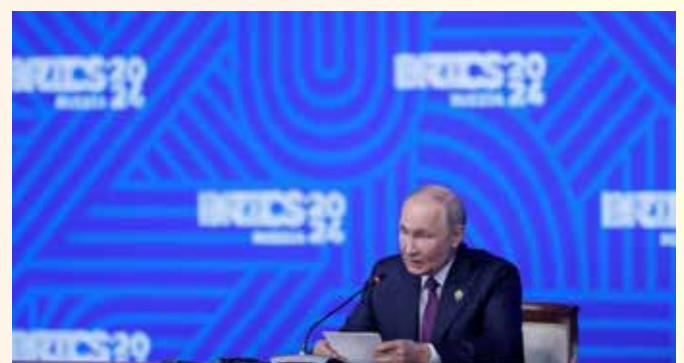
# Indo-Pacific Insights

CGS Centre for Governance Studies



## A Bi-Weekly Roundup of Key Events

### Putin Responds to U.S. Claims on North Korean Troops in Russia



President Vladimir Putin acknowledged U.S. claims that North Korea has sent 3,000 troops to Russia but emphasized that decisions regarding mutual defence agreements with Pyongyang were Moscow's prerogative. While Putin did not deny the satellite images of North Korean troop movements, he deflected responsibility, accusing the West of escalating the Ukraine war by involving NATO officers. Regarding the ongoing conflict in Ukraine, Putin stated that Russia was progressing and open to peace talks, though only on terms reflecting the current situation. He also dismissed claims about Russian interference in Britain as "nonsense."

## October 24

### BRICS Summit Signals Growing Influence Amid Global Economic Shifts

Amid U.S. election uncertainty, Russian President Vladimir Putin hosted the BRICS summit in Kazan, showcasing the growing influence of the emerging economies group, which now represents nearly half of the global population. While the summit discussed bypassing Western-dominated financial systems, including creating alternative payment mechanisms, concrete details were sparse. The presence of leaders like U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan highlighted BRICS' diplomatic clout. Despite mixed results and imbalances among members, BRICS is seen as a hedge against potential Western sanctions, with over 30 countries seeking to join the trade forum.

**October 25**

## **India and China Begin Troop Withdrawal Agreement to End Himalayan Standoff**

India and China have initiated the implementation of an agreement aimed at ending a military standoff on their disputed Himalayan border, marking a significant thaw in relations since deadly clashes in 2020. Troops stationed face-to-face in India's Ladakh region began pulling back earlier this week, with full disengagement expected by the end of the month. The agreement includes provisions for patrolling the frontier and restoring normalcy in areas like Depsang and Demchok, where tensions had been high. This breakthrough paves the way for the first formal talks in five years between Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping, held at the BRICS summit in Russia.

While both sides are cautiously implementing the deal, India remains cautious about reopening economic ties, having imposed restrictions on Chinese businesses and severed direct air links in recent years. Although discussions between Xi and Modi suggested a path to greater cooperation, India is taking measured steps, with some sources indicating potential easing in visa approvals and air travel. This agreement follows a history of border tensions, including the 1962 Sino-Indian War, and comes after over four years of strained ties due to the 2020 Galwan Valley clashes.

## **U.S. Approves \$2 Billion Arms Sale to Taiwan**

The United States has approved a \$2 billion arms sale to Taiwan, including an advanced air defense missile system that was battle-tested in Ukraine. This marks the first delivery of such a system to Taiwan. The sale, which includes \$1.16 billion in missile systems and \$828 million in radar systems, is aimed at bolstering Taiwan's defense capabilities amid growing military pressure from China. The missile system will be provided by RTX Corp. The U.S. continues to support Taiwan's defense despite China's objections over the island's sovereignty.

**October 27**

## **Guam Missile Defence Project Scaled Back to 16 Sites**

The U.S. Missile Defense Agency has revised its multibillion-dollar missile defence plan for Guam, reducing the number of sites from 22 to 16, according to a draft environmental impact statement released Friday. The system aims to provide 360-degree protection for the U.S. Pacific territory against various missile and air threats. It will integrate advanced systems like Raytheon's SM-6, Lockheed Martin's THAAD, and the Patriot PAC-3 over a 10-year period. The 16 remaining sites are all on U.S. military property. The project is essential to securing Guam's strategic position in the Indo-Pacific region, particularly amid rising concerns over China's missile capabilities.

**October 28**

## **North Korea Blames South Korea for Drone Incursion**



North Korea's defence ministry has accused South Korea of sending drones into its territory to distribute anti-North leaflets, calling it a violation of its sovereignty. The accusation follows an investigation revealing that South Korean drones had flown over Pyongyang at least three times this month. North Korean authorities claimed to have uncovered over 230 flight logs since June 2023, detailing the drones' missions. In response, Pyongyang warned of a "merciless offensive" if such actions continued. South Korea's defence ministry did not immediately comment, dismissing North Korea's claims as unworthy of verification. Tensions remain high between the two nations.

**October 29**

## **Canada Accuses Indian Minister Amit Shah of Targeting Sikh Separatists**



The Canadian government accused Indian Home Minister Amit Shah of orchestrating violence and intimidation campaigns targeting Sikh separatists on Canadian soil. This follows reports by The Washington Post, where Canadian officials allegedly identified Shah as the leader behind these plots. Deputy Foreign Affairs Minister David Morrison confirmed the allegations during a parliamentary session, though he provided no further details or evidence. The Indian government has dismissed the accusations as baseless and has not responded immediately. Canada reportedly informed India of Shah's involvement in October 2023.



This claim is part of ongoing tensions between the two nations. In mid-October 2023, Canada expelled Indian diplomats, accusing them of involvement in the murder of Sikh separatist leader Hardeep Singh Nijjar on Canadian soil. India, in turn, expelled Canadian diplomats.

India has long labeled Sikh separatists as "terrorists," and the demand for an independent Khalistan homeland remains a contentious issue. The 1984 anti-Sikh riots, resulting from the assassination of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, remain a painful chapter. Allegations of targeting Sikh separatists are not limited to Canada, with the U.S. also investigating India's involvement in a plot against Gurpatwant Singh Pannun.

## Britain Imposes Sanctions on Myanmar Military to Curb Airstrikes

Britain has imposed additional sanctions on Myanmar's military junta, targeting entities involved in supplying aviation fuel and restricted goods, including aircraft parts. Coordinated with the European Union and Canada, the sanctions aim to limit the junta's ability to conduct airstrikes on civilians. These measures build upon previous sanctions and include asset freezes to block financial transactions with the listed entities. Britain condemned the military's airstrikes on civilian infrastructure, with Catherine West, Minister for the Indo-Pacific, calling the human rights violations "unacceptable." Myanmar's military is facing widespread resistance after its 2021 coup.

## October 30

### Australia Boosts Missile Defence Amid China's ICBM Test

Australia is enhancing its missile defence capabilities in response to concerns over China's test of an Intercontinental Ballistic Missile (ICBM) in the South Pacific. Defence Minister Pat Conroy announced plans to bolster long-range strike and missile defence systems, including deploying SM-6 missiles on its navy destroyers and acquiring new long-range missiles through a A\$7 billion deal with the US. Australia aims to contribute to regional stability by cooperating with security partners like the US, Japan, and South Korea. The country also plans to invest A\$74 billion over the next decade in missile acquisition and domestic manufacturing.

## October 31

### Six Dead as Nearly 100 Rohingya Arrive in Indonesia

At least six people have died after nearly 100 Rohingya refugees arrived by boat in Indonesia's Aceh province, according to local fishing community chief Miftach Tjut Adek. The group, including seven children, remains stranded on the beach in the eastern part of Aceh. The latest arrivals follow the previous week's arrival of about 300 Rohingya in Aceh and North Sumatra.

The UNHCR, along with local authorities, is providing aid and calling on the Indonesian government to ensure their safety. The Rohingya, fleeing persecution in Myanmar, often attempt dangerous sea journeys during calmer months.

## November 1

### China to Offer Visa-Free Entry to Citizens of Nine Countries

China will extend visa-free entry to citizens from nine additional countries, including South Korea, Norway, and Finland.. Starting November 8, nationals from these countries—along with Slovakia, Denmark, Iceland, Andorra, Monaco, and Liechtenstein—will be permitted to enter China for up to 15 days without a visa for purposes such as business, tourism, family visits, or transit. This visa exemption policy will remain in effect until December 31, 2025, as part of China's efforts to promote international travel and strengthen global ties.

## November 2

### North Korea and Russia Reaffirm Strategic Partnership



North Korea's Foreign Minister Choe Son Hui and Russia's Sergey Lavrov met in Moscow, reaffirming their commitment to the provisions agreed upon during a June summit between North Korean leader Kim Jong Un and Russian President Vladimir Putin. The agreement outlined military and other forms of assistance between the two nations if either country faces attack. This meeting comes amid growing concerns about North Korea's involvement in Russia's war in Ukraine. NATO, along with South Korea, the U.S., and Ukraine, has confirmed the deployment of North Korean military units to Russia's Kursk region, near the Ukrainian border.

**November 3**

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## **Grenade Attack in Srinagar Injures 11**

At least 11 people were injured when militants threw a grenade at Indian security forces in a crowded flea market in Srinagar, Kashmir, on Sunday. The grenade missed its intended target and instead injured bystanders. The attackers' identity remains unknown, and the injured were rushed to a hospital in stable condition. The explosion caused panic, sending shoppers fleeing for cover. This attack follows the killing of a top commander of the militant group Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) by Indian troops the previous day. Kashmir has witnessed a surge in militant violence since the new government took office last month.

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