

INDIA-SWEDEN STRATEGIC COMPASS

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INDIA-SWEDEN

India, Sweden Hold 10th Joint Working Group Meeting on Defense Cooperation

India and Sweden recently held their 10th Joint Working Group (JWG) meeting on Defence Cooperation in June 2025, co-chaired by Dr. Garima Bhagat from India and Brig Gen Dennis Hedstrom from Sweden's Ministry of Defence.

The meeting focused on reviewing existing defense collaboration and exploring new opportunities in defense and industrial partnerships, with industry representatives from both nations holding B2B interactions to foster stronger industry links.

On the sidelines, the Indian defense industry



delegation led by SIDM India held B2B interactions with the Swedish delegation led by Swedish Security & Defence Industry Association (SOFF), further strengthening bilateral defence ties and promoting industry partnerships.

Source: Ministry of Defence @facebook, June 28



Strengthening India-Sweden Research Partnerships

During the recent visit to Luleå University of Technology (LTU), Ambassador-Designate Anurag Bhushan had insightful meetings with three leading research groups:

The Robotics and Artificial Intelligence Group was led by Senior Lecturer Dr. Sumeet Gajanan Satpute and PhD student Vignesh Kottayam Viswanathan.





The Ambassador-Designate visited two cutting-edge robotics labs, where he engaged with advanced robots and drones in action.

The visit included the Operation and Maintenance Engineering Group, hosted by Professor Ramin Karim, along with several Indian PhD and Master's students. The Ambassador-Designate toured the renowned eMaintenance Lab and discussed ongoing research in predictive maintenance and digital solutions.

The Entrepreneurship and Innovation Research Group was led by Professor Vinit Parida, with a focus on strategies for attracting and recruiting Indian STEM students to LTU. He also met with Markus Gustafsson and Lars-Eric Aaro, former board members of LTU, to explore student related collaboration opportunities. This visit marks another step forward in fostering strong academic, research, and people-to-people ties between India and Sweden.

India in Sweden @ facebook, August 5

Justice Surya Kant interacts with Indian Diaspora in Gothenburg

The Indian diaspora in Sweden has made significant contributions across sectors including IT, engineering,

academia, healthcare, and entrepreneurship. Their active role in strengthening the socio-economic and cultural fabric of Sweden is widely recognized and appreciated.

The interaction revolved around topics such as the evolving role of the Indian judiciary, the importance of constitutional values, India's growing global stature, and the relevance of the Indian legal system for the diaspora. Justice Shri Surya Kant also addressed questions from the audience and lauded the community for maintaining strong ties with their roots while positively contributing to their host nation.

During his visit to Sweden, Justice Suryakant also met with Mr. Niklas Kebbon, Acting Director-General for Legal Affairs and Head of the Department for Human Rights and International Law at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

They exchanged views on the role of the judiciary in safeguarding democratic values, the promotion of human rights, and the importance of international



legal cooperation. The discussion reflected a shared commitment to the rule of law and to strengthening global partnerships in the field of justice and human rights.

India in Sweden @ facebook, July 13 and July 9

Dialogue held on governance and cooperation

The Embassy of India in Stockholm, in collaboration with the Institute for Security and Development Policy (ISDP), hosted an engaging discussion on “Human Rights, Indian Constitution and the Emergence of India as a Resilient Power”. The event brought together a distinguished gathering of policymakers, legal experts, diplomats, scholars, and members of the Indian diaspora, serving as a vital platform for dialogue on democratic governance and global cooperation. It opened new avenues for collaboration and partnership between India and Sweden, particularly in the areas of democratic governance, judicial cooperation, and strategic dialogue.

Dr. Niklas Swanström, Executive Director, ISDP, delivered the welcome remarks and highlighted India’s growing strategic relevance in Nordic and broader European discourse.

The keynote address was delivered by Justice Surya Kant, Judge on the Supreme Court of India, who offered profound insights into India’s constitutional foundations, democratic institutions, and the judiciary’s role in upholding human rights.

Mr. Rashid Farivar, Member of the Swedish Parliament, delivered a special address, underscoring



the importance of strengthening bilateral relations and shared democratic values.

Ambassador-Designate Anurag Bhushan in his remarks reiterated the shared democratic values between India and Sweden and Embassy’s commitment to fostering stronger people-to-people connections. The discussion and interactive session was moderated by Dr. Jagannath Panda, Head of the Stockholm Centre for South Asian and Indo-Pacific Affairs, ISDP.

The event further reinforced the shared vision of both nations to promote open, inclusive, and resilient societies.

India in Sweden @ facebook, July 8

India Triumphs Again at Gothia Special Olympics 2025!



The Gothia Cup 2025, also known as the World Youth Cup, took place in Gothenburg, Sweden, from July 13 to July 19, 2025.

India achieved historical success, with Special Olympics Bharat winning the Gothia Special Olympics Trophy for the second consecutive year and Punjab’s Minerva Academy FC clinching the U-14 Boys’ title against Argentina, becoming the first Indian team to win the World Youth Cup twice. This edition marked the 50th anniversary of the Gothia Cup.

India in Sweden @ facebook, July 22



Celebrating Independence Day

Independence Day Celebration was hosted by the Mission at the prestigious venue of Norra Latin. Ambassador Daniel Wolvén, Head of Department for Asia, the Pacific Region and Latin America at the MFA, was the Chief Guest of the event. The dignitaries included Mr. Mattias Karlsson, Member of Swedish Parliament, Kiran More, former India team cricketeer, and Ambassador-Designate Anurag Bhushan.

The evening had impressive and vibrant performances – music, dance, and culture that truly showcased the richness and diversity of India’s traditions.

Independence Day was also celebrated in other parts of Sweden. The event in Gothenburg was organized by the Maharashtra Mandal (Gothenburg) while that in Helsingborg was organized by Sambandh (Helsingborg).

India in Sweden @ facebook, August 16



A spot of cricket!

MP Mattias Karlsson, along with 11 fellow Members of Parliament, played a friendly cricket match under the guidance of legendary Indian coach Kiran More in Stockholm. Ambassador-Designate Anurag Bhushan was also present at the match. The event was organized by Anchor Sports.





SPECIAL FEATURE

Trump's Two-Track Diplomacy on Ukraine

On August 15, 2025, U.S. President Donald Trump met Russian President Vladimir Putin in Anchorage, Alaska, in a high-stakes three-hour closed-door summit. The meeting sought to explore the contours of a possible settlement to the Ukraine war. According to Russian sources, Putin reiterated demands that Kyiv abandon its NATO membership ambitions and withdraw from the portions of Donetsk and Luhansk still under Ukrainian control. Compared to his earlier June proposal—which insisted Ukraine surrender Donbas in its entirety along with Kherson and Zaporizhzhia—this marked a modest scaling back of Russian terms.

Putin further pressed for binding assurances that NATO would not expand further eastward and that no NATO peacekeeping troops would be stationed in Ukraine after any peace deal. For Moscow, these demands are tied not only to the war itself but also to Russia's long-term security architecture. Yet President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has consistently dismissed any withdrawal from sovereign Ukrainian territory, calling Donbas a “fortress” that safeguards the rest of the country. The Alaska summit, while not producing breakthroughs, underscored the persistent

gulf between Moscow's red lines and Kyiv's non-negotiables.

Just three days later, on August 18, Trump hosted Zelenskyy at the White House, flanked by European leaders including those of Britain, France, Germany, Italy, and Finland, as well as senior EU and NATO officials. The Washington summit produced two notable outcomes.

First, Trump floated a tentative U.S. security commitment for Ukraine. He signaled willingness to provide American air support for EU troops should they deploy inside Ukraine. However, European capitals remained cautious, arguing that any credible mission would require the U.S. to commit ground forces—a step Trump has shown little appetite for.

Second, Trump used the meeting to press for direct dialogue between Zelenskyy and Putin. In a symbolic move, he phoned Putin from the White House during the summit to brief him and reportedly secured a Russian commitment to meet Zelenskyy within two weeks. Both Washington and Brussels endorsed such bilateral talks, to be followed by a possible trilateral format including the United States. For Zelenskyy, this pathway is fraught but unavoidable, as he has acknowledged that any territorial questions must ultimately be negotiated directly with Putin.

India's Cautious Endorsement

India, which has carefully balanced between Russia and the West since the war's outbreak, responded positively to Trump's initiatives. The Ministry of External Affairs hailed the Trump–Putin talks as “commendable leadership in the pursuit of peace” and expressed hope for an “early end to the conflict.” Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in a social media statement following a briefing call from Putin, reiterated India's consistent position: calling for an end to hostilities while avoiding the assignment of blame.

New Delhi's calibrated reaction reflects three intertwined priorities. First, India seeks to preserve its long-standing strategic partnership with Russia, a critical supplier of defense equipment and energy. Second, India cannot afford to alienate the United States or its European partners, who remain indispensable to India's technology, investment, and Indo-Pacific strategy. Third, India positions itself as a responsible actor of the Global South, emphasizing dialogue, sovereignty, and peaceful resolution rather than punitive or coercive approaches.

For India, these developments underscore the fluidity of great power alignments. Should the Trump-brokered Putin–Zelenskyy talks materialize, India will likely welcome the move as a stabilizing step—even if the outcome remains uncertain. Simultaneously, New Delhi will need to hedge against the risk that a U.S.–Russia rapprochement sidelines Europe or weakens the multilateral consensus on Ukraine.

Swedish Reactions to Trump's Diplomacy

Sweden's initial response to the August 2025 Trump–Putin summit in Alaska was marked by caution and skepticism. Foreign Minister Maria Malmer Stenergard told Swedish Radio that “no serious peace talks between Ukraine and Russia can take place without Zelenskyy,” underscoring that Sweden and its partners must maintain pressure on Moscow. She was clear that the summit “is not seen as a success.” Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson echoed these concerns, warning that “many Swedes are concerned” about the Trump–Putin talks. He stressed that “a bad peace, on Russia's terms, would mean that Russia could threaten more European countries.” Like several European leaders, Kristersson emphasized that a ceasefire should be a prerequisite for negotiations—an approach that contrasts with President Trump's assertion that a settlement could be achieved even while hostilities continue.

In contrast, Stockholm's response to the subsequent Trump–Zelenskyy summit in Washington was markedly more positive. With EU leaders also present, the meeting was seen as more inclusive and balanced. Prime Minister Kristersson announced on Swedish Radio that Sweden is prepared to contribute to Ukraine's security guarantees, including through air surveillance and naval resources.

The Washington meeting helped lay the groundwork for a broader “Coalition of the Willing,” now encompassing 31 countries, including Sweden, to coordinate security guarantees for Kyiv. Sweden has simultaneously expanded its bilateral defence cooperation with Kyiv. On August 24, Defence Minister Pål Jonson announced via X that Sweden will begin joint production of defence materials domestically for export to Ukraine. He emphasized that this partnership represents a “win-win”: it bolsters Ukraine's armed forces while advancing Sweden's own industrial base and long-term rearmament objectives.

Sources: Reuters; SVT Nyheter; BBC; Politico (August 2025)

INDIA-NORDIC

PM Modi receives phone call from President Alexander Stubb of Finland

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi received a phone call from the President of the Republic of Finland H.E. Alexander Stubb on August 27. President Stubb shared his assessment on the recent meetings held between the leaders of Europe, the United States and Ukraine in Washington on resolution of the conflict in Ukraine. Prime Minister Modi reiterated India's consistent support for peaceful resolution of the conflict and early restoration of peace and stability.

The leaders also reviewed progress in the India-Finland bilateral relationship and reaffirmed their commitment to enhance cooperation in emerging fields including quantum technologies, 6G, artificial intelligence, cybersecurity and sustainability. President Stubb reiterated Finland's support for an early conclusion of a mutually beneficial India-EU Free Trade Agreement. He also affirmed support for

the success of the AI Impact Summit to be hosted by India in 2026. The Prime Minister extended an invitation to President Stubb to visit India at an early date. The leaders agreed to remain in touch.

Source: Ministry of External Affairs, August 27

SAS Unveils New Direct Flight to Mumbai Enhancing Nordic–South Asia Travel

Scandinavian airline SAS is set to launch a new direct route between Copenhagen and Mumbai, creating stronger travel links between Denmark, India, Sweden, Norway, and Finland. This strategic expansion aims to support growing demand for seamless travel between Northern Europe and South Asia, benefiting tourism, trade, and business engagement across the regions. By offering five weekly flights and convenient schedules, the new route will provide travelers with faster, more efficient access.

Source: Travelandtourworld.com, June 6



INDIA-EU

PM Modi receives phone call from French President Macron

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi received a phone call from the President of the French Republic H.E. Emmanuel Macron. The leaders exchanged views on the ongoing efforts for the peaceful resolution of conflicts in Ukraine and West Asia.

President Macron shared his assessment of the recent meetings held between the leaders of Europe, the US and Ukraine in Washington. He also shared his perspectives on the situation in Gaza. Prime Minister Modi reiterated India's consistent support for the peaceful resolution of the conflicts and early restoration of peace and stability.

The leaders also reviewed progress in the bilateral cooperation agenda, including in the areas of trade, defense, civil nuclear cooperation, technology and energy. They reaffirmed their joint commitment to strengthen the India-France Strategic Partnership and to make 2026 the 'Year of Innovation' to highlight the strong ties between the two nations.

President Macron also conveyed support for an early conclusion of the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between India and the EU. The leaders agreed to remain in touch on all issues.

Source: Ministry of External Affairs, August 21

India, Eurasian Economic Union pave way for talks on free trade pact

India and the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), comprising Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic and Russia, have signed the Terms of Reference to launch negotiations for a Free Trade Agreement (FTA), according to a statement issued by India's Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

The terms of reference were signed in Moscow by Additional Secretary, Department of Commerce, Ajay Bhadoo, on behalf of India, and Deputy Director, Trade Policy Department, Eurasian

Economic Commission (EEC), Mikhail Cherekaev.

During his visit, Bhadoo also called on the Minister in charge of Trade, EEC, Andrei Slepnev. The heads of negotiation groups apprised the Minister about the milestone achieved with the signing of the terms of reference and discussed the next steps to formally launch the negotiation process, including organizational aspects of the future trade deal, the statement said.

Both sides noted that trade turnover between India and the EAEU stood at \$69 billion in 2024, representing a 7 per cent increase over 2023. The proposed FTA, covering economies with a combined



GDP of \$6.5 trillion, is expected to expand market access for Indian exporters, support diversification into new sectors and geographies, enhance competitiveness, and deliver significant benefits to Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), the official statement said.

The Terms of Reference provide the framework for negotiations and are expected to unlock untapped trade potential, increase investments and establish a stronger, more durable India-EAEU economic partnership. Both sides reaffirmed their commitment to the early conclusion of the agreement and to building a long-term institutional framework for trade cooperation.

Trade discussions between India and Eurasia include various sectors, such as pharmaceuticals, fertilisers, and electric vehicles.
Source: IANS, August 20, 2025

INDIA-GLOBAL

PM Modi calls on HM King Charles III

Prime Minister Narendra Modi called on His Majesty King Charles III at Sandringham Estate, the King's summer residence.

Prime Minister expressed his happiness at the recovery of His Majesty's health and the resumption of his Royal duties. Prime Minister and His Majesty discussed matters related to health and sustainable living, including Ayurveda and Yoga, as well as ways to spread their benefits to people across the world.

The two leaders also discussed bilateral ties. They noted that the signing of the historic India-UK Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement would impart a new momentum to the partnership. Prime Minister apprised His Majesty of the progress made by India in the renewable energy sector to promote sustainable development. They also discussed ways to collaborate and promote their shared vision regarding climate change and sustainability.

The Prime Minister and His Majesty also discussed ways in which the UK and India could work together in the Commonwealth.

The Prime Minister thanked His Majesty for joining the green campaign - *Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam* [plant for mother] and handed over a sapling that will be planted in Sandringham Estate during the upcoming planting season in autumn. The Prime Minister thanked His Majesty for his hospitality and invited him to pay a State Visit to India.

Source: Ministry of External Affairs, July 24

Great Leap in India-UK Ties

During his official visit to the United Kingdom on July 23-24, 2025, Prime Minister Narendra Modi met with the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, Sir Keir Starmer. Upon his arrival at the UK Prime Minister's country residence, Chequers, in Buckinghamshire, PM Modi was warmly received



by Prime Minister Starmer. The two leaders held a one-on-one meeting as well as delegation level talks.

The two Prime Ministers welcomed the signing of the historic India-UK Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) which will raise the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership to a new level, while significantly enhancing bilateral trade, investment, economic collaborations and job creation in both economies. The two sides have also agreed to negotiate a Double Contribution Convention, which will come into effect along with the CETA and will facilitate professionals and service industry in both countries by promoting competitiveness and reducing the cost of doing business for commercial entities. Noting the growing collaboration in the fields of capital markets and financial services, Prime Minister Modi underlined that the two sides could work to promote greater interaction between GIFT City in Gujarat, India's first international financial services center, and UK's vibrant financial ecosystem.

The two leaders reviewed the entire gamut of the bilateral relationship and adopted the India-UK Vision 2035. The Vision 2035 document sets out a more ambitious agenda for the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, aiming to steer the relationship over the next decade in key areas such as trade and economic growth, technology and innovation, research and education, defence and security, climate action, health, and people-to-people ties.

The two leaders also welcomed the finalization of a Defence Industrial Roadmap to promote collaboration in co-design, co-development and co-



production of defence products to meet the growing demand in both countries as well as for the world market. Welcoming the regular engagement between the armed forces of the two countries, they expressed satisfaction at the deepening defence and security partnership.

The two leaders expressed satisfaction with the growing collaboration in new and emerging technologies and called for accelerated implementation of the Technology and Security Initiative (TSI), which focuses on telecom, critical minerals, AI, biotechnology and health technology, semiconductors, advanced materials and quantum. The TSI marked the completion of its first year.

The two Prime Ministers also welcomed the growing partnership between India and the UK in the education sector, with six UK universities working to open campuses in India under the New Education Policy (NEP). Southampton University, which opened its campus in Gurugram on 16 June 2025, is the first foreign university to open its campus in India under the NEP.

Both sides acknowledged the valuable contribution of the Indian diaspora in the UK in the areas of academia, arts, literature, medicine, science, sports, business and politics. They agreed that this living bridge is a key pillar for the growth and development of India-UK relations.

Prime Minister Modi thanked Prime Minister Starmer for his strong support and solidarity extended to the people of India in the wake of the

Pahalgam terror attack. The two leaders committed to strengthen the global fight against terrorism. Noting that extremism and radicalisation pose threats to both societies, they agreed to further enhance bilateral cooperation to deal with the two-head menace. Prime Minister Modi also sought UK's cooperation to bring to justice economic offenders and fugitives.

The two leaders also exchanged views on global and regional issues of mutual interest, including on the developments in the Indo-Pacific, West Asia and the Russia-Ukraine conflict.

Prime Minister thanked Prime Minister Starmer for his warm hospitality and invited him to visit India at the earliest convenience.

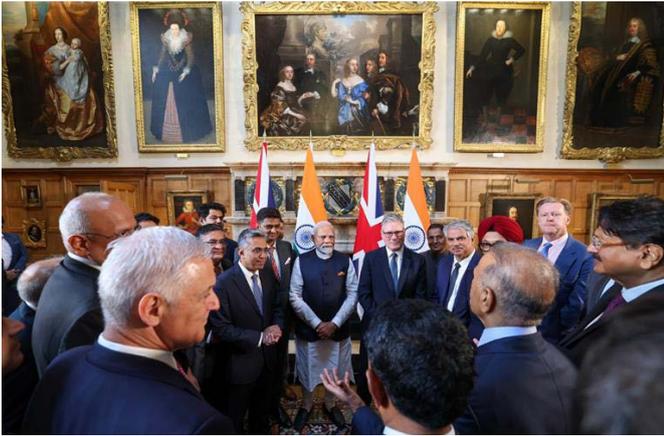
Apart from the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA), the two sides also signed/adopted the India-UK Vision 2035, Defence Industrial Roadmap, Statement on Technology and Security Initiative, and an MoU between Central Bureau of Investigation, India and National Crime Agency of UK.

Source: Ministry of External Affairs, July 24

Modi, Starmer meet with Indian and UK business leaders

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi and the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, Rt Hon. Sir Keir Starmer met today with business leaders from India and the UK following the signing of the historic





India-UK Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA). Leading industry captains from both sides from the health, pharmaceuticals, gems and jewellery, automobiles, energy, manufacturing, telecom, technology, IT, logistics, textiles and financial services sectors were present in the meeting. These sectors contribute significantly to employment generation and inclusive economic development in both countries.

The two leaders noted the expansion in bilateral trade and investment ties in recent years. Interacting with the business leaders, they encouraged them to realise the full potential of opportunities flowing from the CETA for deepening trade, investment and innovation partnerships. While reaffirming their shared commitment to drive economic growth through enhanced bilateral collaboration, they noted that the new agreement will give a boost to business sentiment in the two economies and to the global economic landscape. Highlighting the tangible benefits of the CETA, the two leaders walked through a showcase featuring an impressive line-up of flagship products and innovations from both nations. The exhibits included gems and jewellery, engineering goods, quality consumer products and advanced technological solutions.

The India-UK business leaders hailed the historic trade agreement and expressed optimism that it will usher in a new era in the Comprehensive

Strategic Partnership and deepen collaboration not only in trade and economy, but also in emerging technologies, education, innovation, research and the health sector.

Both leaders reaffirmed their commitment to supporting businesses, small and large, in harnessing the potential of the new agreement and deepen the bonds of economic cooperation for years to come.

Source: Ministry of External Affairs, July 24

Designation of The Resistance Front (TRF) by US Department of State

The Government of India welcomed the decision of the United States Department of State to designate The Resistance Front (TRF) as a Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO) and as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist (SDGT). India acknowledge(s) and appreciate(s) the leadership of Secretary of State Mr. Marco Rubio in this regard.

The TRF, a proxy of the Pakistan-based terrorist organization Lashkar-e-Tayyiba (LeT), has been involved in numerous terror-related activities, including the heinous attack on civilians in Pahalgam, Jammu and Kashmir, on 22 April 2025 for which it twice claimed responsibility.

India has consistently emphasized the need for global cooperation in the fight against terrorism and the dismantling of terror infrastructure. The designation of TRF is a timely and important step reflecting the deep cooperation between India and the United States on counter-terrorism.

India remains committed to a policy of zero tolerance towards terrorism and will continue to work closely with its international partners to ensure that terrorist organizations and their proxies are held accountable.

Source: Ministry of External Affairs, July 18



EDITOR'S NOTE

The past two months have underscored both the dynamism and the strategic depth of India–Sweden relations, as well as their positioning within broader European and global currents. A landmark development was the 10th Joint Working Group on Defence Cooperation, which not only reviewed existing partnerships but also opened new avenues for industry-to-industry collaboration. The parallel business interactions between Indian and Swedish defence associations demonstrated the maturity of this pillar and its potential to evolve into a cornerstone of bilateral engagement.

Equally significant has been the growing emphasis on research and innovation. Ambassador-Designate Anurag Bhushan's visit to Luleå University of Technology highlighted the expanding academic linkages in robotics, AI, and entrepreneurship, offering a glimpse of how educational and technological collaboration can drive people-to-people ties. The strong presence of Indian students in Swedish institutions adds further vitality to this connection.

Justice Surya Kant's visit to Sweden, and his people-to-people interactions brought constitutional values and judicial cooperation into the bilateral discourse. His participation in the ISDP–Embassy dialogue

on human rights and governance emphasized the democratic foundations that India and Sweden share and are keen to advance in global fora.

These bilateral developments took place against the backdrop of shifting global geopolitics, notably President Trump's Alaska summit with President Putin and the subsequent Washington meeting with President Zelenskyy. Sweden reacted with caution but reinforced its commitments to Europe's evolving security framework, while India offered a calibrated endorsement of dialogue and peace. Nordic engagements, from Prime Minister Modi's conversations with Finland's President Stubb to SAS's launch of direct flights to Mumbai, reinforced the widening arc of India's partnerships in Northern Europe.

Taken together, these developments reflect the resilience and adaptability of India–Sweden relations. Rooted in shared democratic values, the partnership today spans defence, technology, sustainability, people-to-people exchanges, and joint responses to global challenges. As both nations navigate a turbulent world, the past two months reaffirm that India and Sweden remain committed to building a future-oriented, inclusive, and strategic partnership.

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Disclaimer: The views expressed here are as published in the original sources and not of the ISDP or the SCSA-IPA.

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ABOUT ISDP

The Institute for Security and Development Policy is a Stockholm-based independent and non-profit research and policy institute. The Institute is dedicated to expanding understanding of international affairs, particularly the interrelationship between the issue areas of conflict, security and development. The Institute's primary areas of geographic focus are Asia and Europe's neighborhood.

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