

# India reaches 'major power' status on Asia Power Index

NEW DELHI, Nov 28 (PTI)

INDIA has reached "major power" status on the Asia Power Index-2025 on the back of economic growth and military capability based on its performance in Operation Sindoor, Australia-based think tank Lowy Institute said on Friday.

However, there are still gaps between India's ambition and the reality of continued limits on its influence, particularly relative to China, it said. The annual Asia Power Index measures resources and influence to rank the relative power of states in



Asia. India was ranked among middle powers in the Asia Power Index-2024 with a comprehensive power score of 38.1, which increased marginally to 40 points to reach the threshold of a

"major power".

India is ranked third on the index after the US (80.5 points) and China (73.7 points). Japan ranks fourth with 38.8 points.

India ranks third for two measures -- economic capability and future resources. It increased its economic capability rank by one place to third, overtaking Japan. Increases in its inward investment have seen India rise to ninth place in economic relationships. The Lowy Institute said India's economic and military capabilities have both increased in the 2025 edition of Asia Power Index.

# Over 80 killed as cyclone Ditwah grapples Lanka

COLOMBO, Nov 28 (PTI)

SRI LANKA on Friday grappled with one of its worst disasters as cyclonic storm Ditwah wreaked havoc, causing floods and landslides that left more than 80 dead, amid a trail of destruction and damage to infrastructure.

India launched 'Operation Sagar Bandhu' to assist Sri Lanka in its hour of crisis, and the first tranche of relief materials was handed over after the consignments were transported by the Indian Navy's aircraft carrier INS Vikrant and frontline ship INS Udaigiri to the island nation.

The relief came as Sri Lankan authorities warned of an "unprecedented disaster situation" in the Western Province from Friday night due to rising water levels in the Kelani and Attanagalu rivers.

Both Colombo and the next most populous district of Gampaha are under severe threat, prompting officials to urge residents in vulnerable areas to

## India launches 'Operation Sagar Bandhu' to assist Sri Lanka



A flooded hospital after heavy rains is seen in Chilaw, north of Colombo, Sri Lanka.

evacuate, they said.

Late on Friday, the Disaster Management Centre (DMC) confirmed more than 80 people have died, while 34 remain missing in the past three days, as rescue operations intensify, according to news portal NewsFirst.Lk.

The DMC said as many as 1,48,603 individuals from 44,192 families were suffering due to widespread flooding, while 5,024 families (approximately 14,000 people) had taken shelter in 195 emergency centres.

Scores of houses were destroyed completely or partially, leaving thousands homeless as Cyclone Ditwah unleashed torrential rainfall, triggering extensive flooding, landslides in central hill regions and major disruptions in other parts that have left several areas inaccessible. "It is unlikely this situation will change. We expect the Kelani River's water levels to exceed those recorded during the 2016 floods," Director General Ajith Gunasekara told reporters.

(AP/PTI)

# India inks pact with US for sustainment support of Navy's MH-60R helicopters

NEW DELHI, Nov 28 (IANS)

IN A bid to ensure domestic capability build-up in the long run, the Centre on Friday said it has signed a Rs 7,995 crore agreement with the United States for sustainment support of the Indian Navy's fleet of MH60R helicopters through Follow-on Support and Follow-on Supply Support for a period of five years.

The Ministry of Defence said, in a statement, that it has signed Letters of Offer and Acceptance (LOAs) with the US Government under the Foreign Military Sales programme of the US, in the presence of Defence Secretary Rajesh Kumar Singh here.

Sustainment Support is a comprehensive package which includes provisioning of spares, support equipment, product support, training and technical support, repair and replenishment of components and setting up of 'Intermediate' level component repairs and Periodic Maintenance Inspection facilities in India. In-country develop-



ment of these facilities will ensure capability build-up in the long run and reduced dependence on the US, thus aligning with the vision of Aatmanirbhar Bharat, the Government said.

The sustainment support would significantly enhance the operational availability and maintainability of the technologically advanced, all-weather capable MH60R helicopters.

# INS Karmuk participates in Singapore-India-Thailand Maritime Exercise

SINGAPORE, Nov 28 (PTI)

INDIAN Naval Ship (INS) Karmuk is close to completing its week-long participation in the Singapore-India-Thailand Maritime Exercise (SITMEX-25).

The fifth edition of SITMEX, which began on November 23 and was hosted this year by the Republic of Singapore Navy, aims to bolster maritime cooperation, enhance inter-operability and strengthen the collective capability of the three navies in the Indo-Pacific region.

The exercise opened with a three-day Harbour Phase that included cross-deck visits, professional exchanges and friendly sporting events to build mutual understanding and camaraderie among participating personnel. Naval Component Commander Commodore Nitesh Garg and INS Karmuk's Commanding Officer called on High Commissioner of India to Singapore Dr Shilpak Ambule and briefed him on the ship's visit for the ongoing maritime exercise, according to the High Commissioner on Friday.

The Indian High Commission welcomed INS Karmuk, describing it as an indigenously built Kora-class corvette, and extended best wishes to the three navies for "a productive series of professional exchanges".

Commodore Garg shared his insights on the ongoing SITMEX 25.

# Assam Rifles, militants engage in firing along Indo-Myanmar border

IMPHAL, Nov 28 (IANS)

A **FIERCE** encounter between the Assam Rifles and militants broke out along Manipur's India-Myanmar border areas on Friday, and the operation is still underway, officials said.

A defence spokesperson and a police official said separately that a patrolling party of the Assam Rifles came under fire from terrorists along the border areas on Friday morning.

The troops retaliated immediately with controlled and cautious fire to ensure civilian safety, the defence spokesperson added, noting that additional forces have been deployed to the area and the operation is currently in progress. Further details are awaited. Manipur shares a 398 km unfenced bor-

**Security forces in separate joint ops arrest six people, including five militants, who were allegedly involved in extortion from Imphal East and Imphal West distts**

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der with Myanmar, making the frontier highly vulnerable to trans-border movement of militants, inimical elements, and large-scale drug smuggling.

Meanwhile, the security

forces in separate joint operations have arrested six people, including five militants belonging to a proscribed outfit, who were allegedly involved in extortion from Imphal East and Imphal West districts.

A police official said that the active cadres belong to banned Kangleipak Communist Party outfit and they were arrested in Imphal East and Imphal West districts in the past 24 hours. They were allegedly involved in extortion from the public, contractors, government employees, petrol pumps, private schools, and government colleges in Imphal valley areas.

KCP militant Khulem Robindro Singh (36), one of the 5 arrested militants, was reportedly involved in recruitment of youths for the extremist group.

# Putin on 2-day visit to India from Dec 4



NEW DELHI, Nov 28 (PTI)

**RUSSIAN** President Vladimir Putin will undertake a two-day visit to India from December 4 to hold annual summit talks with Prime Minister Narendra Modi that is expected to produce significant outcomes to further solidify the bilateral strategic ties.

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), announcing the visit, said on Friday that it will set the vision for strengthening the India-Russia 'Special and Privileged Strategic Partnership'. "At the invi-

tation of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin will pay a State visit to India from December 4 to 5 for the 23rd India-Russia annual summit," it said.

President Droupadi Murmu will also receive Putin and host a banquet in his honour.

"The forthcoming State visit will provide an opportunity for the leadership of India and Russia to review progress in bilateral relations, set the vision for strengthening the 'Special and Privileged Strategic Partnership' and exchange views on regional and global issues of mutual interest," the MEA said in a brief statement. The focus of the Modi-Putin talks are expected to focus on deepening cooperation in areas of defence and security, trade and civil nuclear energy. The Ukraine conflict is also likely to figure prominently in the talks.

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