

India, US discuss coop in Indian Ocean region

NEW DELHI, Aug 25 (PTI)

FOREIGN Secretary Vikram Misri discussed with US Under Secretary of State Allison M Hooker ways to deepen India-US cooperation in the Indian Ocean region during a call.

External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said both sides discussed opportunities for practical cooperation and complementarity in the region.

“Foreign Secretary @VikramMisri held a productive call with US Under Secretary of State Allison M Hooker to advance discussions on the India-US Indian Ocean Strategic Venture (IOSV) initiative, launched by the leaders of the two countries in February 2025,” he said on social media.

“Both sides discussed opportunities for practical cooperation and complementarity in the Indian Ocean Region, including maritime security, strategic infrastructure and connectivity, in line with the priorities of partner countries,” he said.

Shah: Govt eye on ending illegal immigration soon

'4-Point Plan Shared With Border States'

Bharti Jain @timesofindia.com



Stating that this country is not a 'dharamshala', and only citizens have the right to live here, Shah said infiltrators trigger unnatural demographic shifts

New Delhi: Home minister Amit Shah Tuesday said the Narendra Modi govt has set a goal to make the country illegal immigration-free in a "very short period of time" and, for this purpose, reached out to the border states over the past eight months, sharing with them its document on a quadrangular approach to border security.

The policy drawn up by the Centre enlists the border guarding forces, state and district administration, relevant arms of Union govt and locals as key stakeholders in securing the borders.

Addressing the valedictory session of the National Security Strategy Conference (NSSC) organised by IB, Shah said "this country is not a 'dharamshala', and only citizens have the right to live here". He added, "Infiltrators are a threat to the

country's security, economy and trigger unnatural demographic shifts."

With NSSC focused on anticipating security trends and challenges over the next 15-20 years and devising strategies to avert them, Shah said challenges should be identified and destroyed before they become big. "By creating such an ecosystem, we will be able to create a secure, infiltrator-free and narcotics-free India," he said at the event attended by over 850 officials of the Central security agencies and forces, the state/UT police and intelligence agencies.

Commending the state police forces, central agencies and the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) for having eliminated the challenge posed by three hotspots — J&K, Left-wing extremism-hit areas and the north-east — Shah said that

had the past govts visualised these problems before they became acute, the country would not have had to bear the brunt of them for decades. Shah also described the dismantling of the Popular Front of India (PFI) network "in one night" (in multi-state raids of Sept 2022), apart from imposing a ban on it, as "an excellent instance of Centre-state coordination".

He emphasised on the need to take the country's first anti-terror doctrine — PRAHAAR — from document to practice to "eradicate terrorism and dismantle the terror ecosystem".

With Shah's latest focus being to eliminate the drug menace, Shah sought the cooperation of states in making the country narcotics-free. "Police of all states should work on three D's 'detect, disrupt and destroy' for 'a drug-free India'."

India & China welcome border peace, Beijing seeks 'package solution'

Sachin.Parashar
@timesofindia.com

New Delhi: Ahead of Chinese President Xi Jinping's visit to India next month, India and China held the 25th round of Special Representatives Dialogue on the Boundary Question, endorsing efforts to formalise the turnaround in the relationship on the back of border peace.

While India said both sides agreed to work towards a political settlement of the boundary question in their long-term interests, Beijing also recalled a 2005 bilateral agreement to stress its proposal for a package solution.

Indian special representative Ajit Doval was quoted as saying India and China were partners, not competitors, and developing a stable, predictable and forward-looking relationship carried significance for Asia and the world.

"The normalcy we have witnessed in our relationship has been a direct result of both sides maintaining peace and tranquillity in the border areas," said Doval, stressing the significance of border peace for further progress in bilateral ties. Doval's Chinese counterpart, Wang Yi, however, reiterated China's position that the border issue must be placed in an "appropriate position" in ties.

According to a Chinese readout, Doval and Wang held "in-depth communications" on boundary demarcation negotiations and improving border management, while reaffirming their commitment to the 2005 agreement on political parameters and guiding principles for a "fair, reasonable, and mutually acceptable package settlement" to the boundary question.

China-India ties have surpassed the bilateral scope and hold global and strategic significance, Wang Yi said, pointing to consensus reached in Modi-Xi meetings in Kazan and Tianjin

China had dropped the mention of package settlement in its readout of the last round of talks but had used it for special representative meetings earlier. Indian govts in the past had said they were exploring a "final package settlement" covering all sectors of the boundary under the 2005 bilateral agreement, but India has not used that formulation recently, stressing instead on a fair, reasonable and mutually acceptable settlement framework.

The talks took place ahead of likely back-to-back bilateral meetings between PM Narendra Modi and Xi — the first in Kyrgyzstan on the margins of the upcoming SCO summit and the second at the Brics summit that India will host on Sept 12 and 13.

According to Beijing, Wang said China-India relations had surpassed the bilateral scope and held global and strategic significance, and pointed to consensus reached in Modi-Xi meetings in Kazan and Tianjin. "China is willing to join hands with India... and serve as good neighbours, friends and mutually enabling partners, thereby realising the vision of the Dragon-Elephant Tango," he said.

Doval also called on Chinese Vice-President Han Zheng and discussed ways to improve bilateral relations.

Iran trade, Chabahar remain part of India's calculations

► Continued from P 1

Prashant Garg, an Indian national and director of PP Softtech, was also designated. Although the approximately \$120 million in imports would be a change in the overall scheme of things, the message from Washington is unmistakable: doing business with Iran is no longer merely a question of complying with US sanctions on Tehran. Foreign intermediaries, importers, brokers, shipping companies and financial institutions that help Iran generate revenue can themselves become targets.

That, says treasury secretary and Trump enforcer Scott Bessent, is the purpose of "Operation Economic Outcast": it is designed to sever Iran's remaining financial lifelines by targeting oil and petrochemical revenues, shipping, banking, technology, gold, aviation and digital assets. Nearly 60 entities, individuals and vessels were designated in the latest round. "Our objective is to sever every economic lifeline that sustains this tyrannical regime until Tehran stands alone," Bessent warned, adding that President Trump was personally calling foreign leaders with "specific requests" to cease their interactions with Iran.

For India, the shocks from Washington are growing by the week. Although New Delhi



Analysts say the latest sanctions risk aggravating a relationship already battered by disputes over tariffs, Russia and the Trump administration's increasingly transactional approach to Delhi

has reduced its economic exposure to Iran over the years, trade with Tehran and the strategically important Chabahar port — through which India accesses Afghanistan to get around Pakistan — remain part of its calculations. Indian exports to Iran — including rice, tea and pharmaceuticals — could also face additional disruption as sanctions and the suspension of Dubai-based trade and financial transactions make payments and shipping more difficult.

The latest sanctions, therefore, risk aggravating a relationship already battered by disputes over tariffs, Russia and the Trump administration's increasingly transactional approach to New Delhi, according to analysts. Evan Feigenbaum, a veteran Asia policymaker, captured the concern bluntly, saying the "one-two punch" of secondary

sanctions would "further erode US-India relations", which he said had "largely tanked during Trump's second term".

The asymmetry is striking when one factors in China. Washington is threatening India with the full force of secondary sanctions, yet when it comes to Beijing, which is Iran's biggest oil customer, Washington remains feckless. Although the administration has also sanctioned a substantial number of Chinese and Hong Kong-linked entities in its Iran crackdown, the scope of the action stops short of targeting China's major financial institutions or imposing the kind of sweeping country-level economic penalties that would risk a direct confrontation with Beijing because China possesses enormous leverage over the US through its dominance of rare earths and critical minerals.

Iran, meanwhile, has dismissed the campaign as bluster. Parliament speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf said Washington was not in an economic position to further restrict Iran's relations with other countries and claimed Tehran's trading partners were not taking the American warnings seriously. Tehran has also threatened retaliation against countries that cooperate with Washington, while China has rejected unilateral US sanctions as ineffective and called for diplomacy.

Operation Economic Outcast

US begins squeeze on Iranian trade

4 Indian firms have been sanctioned for links with Iran's military activities, procurement networks, petroleum and petrochemical trade

WASHINGTON DC, Aug 25 (ANI)

THE United States has sanctioned four India-based companies over their alleged involvement in Iran-related petroleum and petrochemical trade and procurement networks, according to a release by the US State Department.

The designations were announced as part of the latest round of US sanctions targeting entities allegedly linked to Iran's military activities, procurement networks, and petroleum and petrochemical trade under what the State Department described as "Operation Economic Outcast".

The State Department claimed that "PORTEASE PARTNERS LLP (PORTEASE)" facilitated the import of multiple shipments of Iranian petrochemical products to India.

It added, "INDRISMIYA ASHARAFMIYA SHEKH

(INDRISMIYA) is an Indian national and a designated partner of PORTEASE. HARISH RAM-CHANDRA RANGI (HARISH) is an Indian national and a designated partner of PORTEASE."

The State Department claimed that SADASHIVA OVERSEAS LIMITED (SADASHIVA OVERSEAS) is an India-based company that imported approximately USD 69 million worth of Iranian-origin petroleum products from multiple companies, including US-designated BON-JOURE COMMODITY F.Z.E., between February 2024 and June 2025.

Read Editorial
US' ECONOMIC STRIKE
on page 8

The release mentioned, "SADASHIVA OVERSEAS is being designated pursuant

to section 3(a)(ii) of E.O. 13846 for knowingly engaging in a significant transaction for the purchase, acquisition, sale, transport, or marketing of petroleum or petroleum products from

(Contd on page 5)

‘SHE WHO DARES, LEADS’

NSG launches first Commando Conversion Course for women

NEW DELHI, Aug 25 (IANS)

IN A pioneering initiative aimed at strengthening the operational capabilities of women in India's counter-terrorism framework, the National Security Guard (NSG) Training Academy in Manesar has commenced the first Mahila Commando Conversion Course (MCCC) for women personnel from State Police Forces and Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs).

The NSG described the initiative as a new milestone in Nari Shakti, saying the course is aimed at preparing women personnel for demanding specialised roles in counter-terrorism operations.

The intensive 12-week course has been designed to develop physically robust, technically



proficient and operationally prepared women commandos. The training programme includes rigorous physical conditioning, weapons handling and marksmanship, tactical intervention, hostage rescue and other specialised aspects of counter-terrorism operations.

The NSG Training Academy's initiative is intended to go beyond individual skill development by extending the specialised counter-terrorism expertise of the force to women personnel drawn from different security forces.

According to the NSG, the course will help create a wider pool of trained operational personnel while promoting common professional standards and strengthening interoperability among various forces involved in India's security architecture.

The initiative is also aimed at ensuring that the women personnel, after completing the course, can take their enhanced skills and operational knowledge back to their respective forces.

Canada hits back at US with tariffs up to 50%

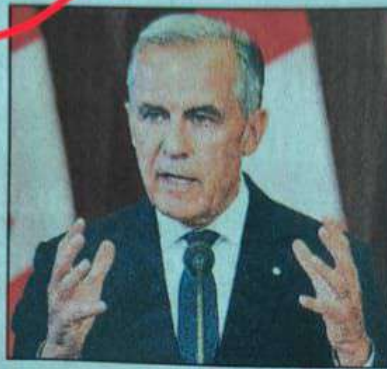
From Lake Ontario To Lake America? Trump's Latest Salvo Takes Ties With Ottawa To Uncharted Waters

Chidanand Rajghatta | CNN

Washington: US-Canada relations are in danger of tipping into Niagara Falls, which straddles both countries, after Trump threatened to rename Lake Ontario—in to which the storied waterfall empties—as Lake America. Ontario's pugnacious premier Doug Ford, in turn, effectively said "bring it on", warning of cutting electricity exports to the US and restricting critical minerals such as nickel and uranium.

The latest instalment of the increasingly surreal trade war between neighbours who have the longest peaceful and unmilitarised border in the world (8,891 km) came after Trump decided that if Canada would not fall in line economically, he would mess with it cartographically. "The United States is giving serious consideration to changing the name of Lake Ontario to Lake America in that we don't expect to be doing much business with Ontario any longer," Trump posted on his social media account, with a separate post showing the change in nomenclature.

Canada on Tuesday announced retaliatory tariffs covering more than 700 American products worth roughly \$20 billion after US President Donald Trump wielded his tariff bazooka first. The measures, due to take effect Sept 8, include tariffs of 15%, 25% and 50% on American exports ranging from steel and dairy to appliances, seafood and cosmetics. Ottawa also announced a C\$7.5 billion



Canada PM Mark Carney has said Ottawa will return to talks if the US changes its approach, but the relationship has already entered unfamiliar territory

support package for industries hit by the dispute.

The latest confrontation follows the collapse of trade talks after Canadian PM Mark Carney rejected US demands he claimed went beyond trade, touching Canadian cultural and French-language protections. Trump, for his part, insists Canada has been "ripping off" America for decades and says the country is "easily the most difficult and unreasonable" trading partner, even as he denied having problems with Canada's French heritage.

"I would never interfere with Canadians speaking French! In fact, I have never even thought of doing such a stupid thing. This lie was made up by a weak and ineffective Prime Minister in an attempt to gain political support, which he has totally lost, from the people of Quebec. I love French Canadians!" Trump wrote.

There is a delicious historical irony to Trump's proposed renaming campaign. "Ontario" is derived from the Iroquoian word *kanadario*,

generally translated as "sparkling water." "Canada" is said to come from the Huron-Iroquois word *kanata*, meaning "village" or "settlement." And "America"? That name wasn't exactly minted in Philadelphia. It came from Amerigo Vespucci, the Italian explorer, with German cartographer Martin Waldseemüller first putting "America" on his 1507 map.

So, historically speaking, the names of both countries and the lake in question are products of Indigenous languages and European cartography. Nobody involved in today's quarrel can quite claim to have invented the labels, and the geopolitical equivalent of "finders, keepers" is therefore on rather shaky historical ground.

The larger casualty from the spat may be something less easily renamed: the extraordinary ease with which the US and Canada once conducted business. For generations, the two countries were the diplomatic equivalent of the neighbours who borrowed each other's lawnmowers and never bothered with keeping the score. Their economies became so intertwined that auto parts can cross the border repeatedly before a finished vehicle emerges; energy, minerals, agriculture and manufacturing operate through deeply integrated supply chains.

Trump's trade strategy has shaken that arrangement. Carney has said Canada will return to talks if the US changes its approach, but the relationship has already entered unfamiliar territory.

Oman and Iran plan temporary shipping lane via Strait of Hormuz

Iran and Oman's foreign ministers Tuesday said they discussed a framework for a temporary corridor through the Strait of Hormuz and a mine-clearing project in the waterway which both border.

The two countries have sought to regulate transit through the Strait of Hormuz, as written in the US-Iran memorandum of understanding, after the waterway became a flashpoint in West Asia war.

Oman's foreign minister Badr al-Busaidi and his Iranian counterpart Abbas Araghchi "discussed a phased framework that could provide a practical and implementable basis for moving forward" in talks in Tehran, a joint statement shared by Oman said. The framework "includes the establishment of a joint temporary navigational corridor through the Strait of Hormuz and an agreement to implement a joint project to clear the Strait of mines," the statement added. Technical negotiations will continue, the statement said.

The announcement came as US President Trump's repeated claims on Truth Social that "all mines have been removed and/or detonated from within the International Waters of the Strait of Hormuz". "Iran has been notified that any ship or boat placing new mines will be immediately and systematically destroyed... There is a Zero Tolerance policy on mine placement in full force and effect," he added. AFP