

PSIR & GS-2 Daily Brief

About this initiative : Briefs, scans the best academic platforms, national newspapers & leading think tanks to pick the most relevant articles & research. It converts them into crisp, high-impact points you can directly use in your mains answers.

PSIR
Optional by
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| ForumIAS |



Article - 1

Defending democracy during backsliding :
Carnegie EIP

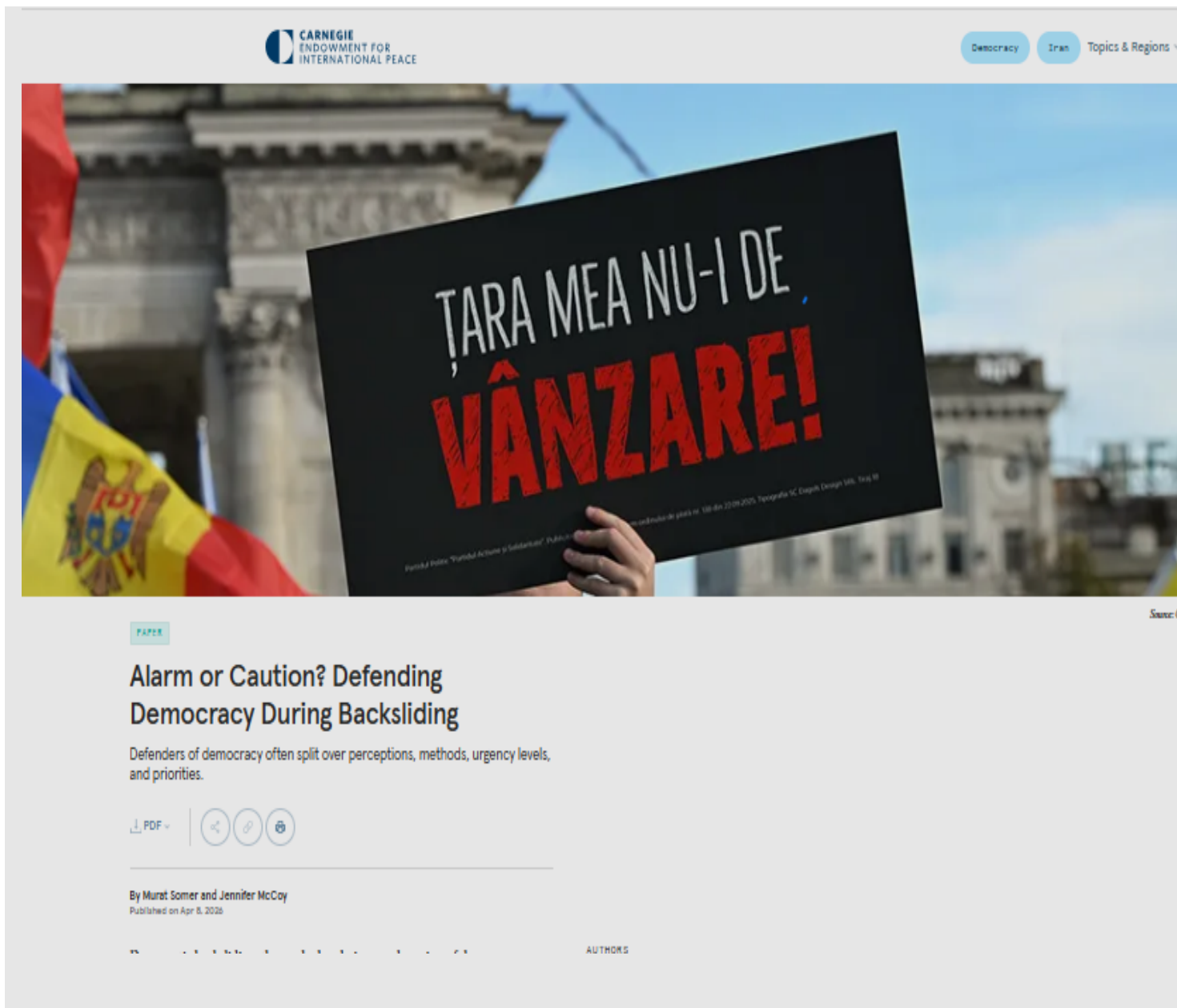
Article - 2

Malaysia's growing significance in India's Act East Policy : ORF

Article - 3

Bolstering deterrence through submarine dominance : The Hindu

Article - 1 : Defending democracy during backsliding



Context How democracies weaken slowly under elected governments, and why confusion among citizens and opposition groups makes democratic backsliding harder to stop.

Facts

■ Since 1990, 25 countries experienced democratic backsliding.

■ Democracy eroding in 9 countries including Mexico and Hungary.

■ Democracy defender's classification - cautioners, alarmists and strategic alarmists.

Analytical Crux

Democratic decline rarely begins like a coup; it begins through small legal-looking steps, mixed signals and public confusion. The biggest danger is not only the backsliding leader, but also the inability of democratic forces to agree on. If opposition react too late, institutions get hollowed out; if they react too early or harshly, they may lose public trust. The Key lesson is early warning, common language, voter education & broad coordination. In democratic backsliding, timing and unity matter as much as intention.

Verbatim Quotes

“Democratic backsliding & piecemeal erosion of democracy, is the primary challenge to the quality and survival of liberal democracy in the 21st century.”

“Among many challenges, a key one is to develop new discourses, mental frames, methods & coalitions to overcome the regime uncertainty that backsliding produces.”

Article - 2 : Malaysia's growing significance in India's Act East Policy



Context Malaysia is becoming a key partner for India not only in trade, but also in semiconductors, digital links, maritime security and India's wider Indo-Pacific strategy.

Facts

- The Strait of Malacca handles 55-60% of India's trade and 30% of world trade.
- Malaysia is the first southeast Asian country to sign a defence cooperation pact with India in 1993.
- India - Malaysia ties rest on three major pillars: semi-conductors, digital integration & defence maritime cooperation.

Analytical Crux

Malaysia is not just another ASEAN partner, it sits at the meeting point of India's trade security, technology strategy and maritime interests. India's Act East policy must move beyond symbolism and build durable cooperation in semiconductors, digital systems and maritime security. Malaysia also gives India a reliable middle-power partner at a time when sea-lanes, supply chains and Indo-Pacific balance are becoming uncertain. Malaysia is both a strategic gateway and a force multiplier for India in Southeast Asia.

Verbatim Quotes

"India's global influence to be built not only on ties with major powers but also on strong partnerships with middle powers and regional neighbours."

"Strong strategic ties with Malaysia gives India a better position in dealing with strategic anxieties amid escalating geopolitical hegemonic rivalry in the Indo-Pacific region."

Article - 3 : Bolstering deterrence through submarine dominance

Bolstering deterrence through submarine dominance

On April 3, the word 'Aridhaman' found mention in Indian Defence Minister Rajnath Singh's cryptic post on X. This prompted widespread speculation that it signalled the quiet commissioning of INS Aridhaman, the third submarine in the Indian Navy's SSBN (nuclear ballistic missile submarine) programme. Launched in 2009, the Indian Navy commissioned its first SSBN, INS Arihant, in 2016, followed by the second submarine, INS Arighat, in 2024. Speculation about the commissioning of INS Aridhaman assumed momentum since last year after Admiral Dinesh Tripathi, Chief of Naval Staff, confirmed that the submarine was in the final stages of its trials. The next submarine in this series, which is of the Arihant class as well, is likely to be commissioned next year.

Compared to its predecessors, INS Arihant and INS Arighat, INS Aridhaman has greater firing power and marks a gradual upgrade in the series of SSBNs commissioned by the Indian Navy. It is a larger 7000-tonne vessel, which can reportedly carry up to 24 K-15 Sagarika missiles, and up to eight nuclear-tipped K-4 or K-5 missiles. In contrast, the previous submarines in this series hold the capacity for carrying 12 K-15 Sagarika missiles and four K-4 missiles.

Through the commissioning of INS Aridhaman, India appears to have further emboldened its nuclear triad, which refers to New Delhi's capability to launch strategic nuclear delivery systems from land, sea, and air. Importantly, apart from India, the P5 countries - the U.S., Russia, China, France and the U.K. - possess the nuclear triad capabilities. In addition to this, the commissioning of the submarine further enhances India's deterrence capabilities in the maritime domain. Strengthening of



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Given the changing nature of warfare, it is essential to strengthen deterrence capabilities across land, air, and sea

sea-based deterrence is seen as especially critical, given that it has rapidly emerged as a key imperative in bolstering India's nuclear capabilities. To be sure, India's nuclear outlook is anchored on its 'no first use' policy. However, the strategic environment in the Indian Ocean is continually worsening, led by increasing Chinese presence in the region by way of research and survey vessels which possess dual-use technologies and run the risk of being deployed for the purpose of intelligence gathering. Sea-based deterrence is indeed critical to forestall adversarial manoeuvres by China and even Pakistan.

Notably, the Indian Ocean has for long remained dormant due to the lack of any significant maritime security conflict. However, in today's time, the changing nature of warfare, which possesses the possibility of swift transition from one domain to the other, makes it essential to strengthen deterrence capabilities across all domains - land, air, and sea. More recently, the evolving conflict in West Asia serves as a crucial reminder of how modern warfare is not limited to a single domain anymore. What started as American and Israeli air campaigns against Iran has quickly assumed a critical maritime character, whereby the Strait of Hormuz has now emerged as the epicentre shaping much of the future of this war. Furthermore, last year, Operation Sindoor, India's measured counter-terror response against Pakistan, too demonstrated that a naval dimension to the campaign could have indeed been a possibility. Wars in this era do not belong with different domains in silos but rather remain susceptible to spilling over to other domains as well. This complexity of modern warfare underlines why

possessing nuclear triad capabilities, especially boosting deterrence, will continue to remain a key priority for India's national security apparatus.

Furthermore, the SSBN project has significantly boosted India's defence establishment's quest for self-reliance in defence production. With active conflicts persisting in different strategic pockets of the world, a strain in defence supply chains appears to be on the horizon. For India, the prolonged Russia-Ukraine war has spurred momentum in strategies to work towards self-reliance in defence production given Moscow's importance for India as a traditional defence partner.

In addition to this, plans to soon induct a fourth vessel of the Arihant class is likely to guide India's SSBN programme going forward. Importantly, New Delhi also seeks to commission India's first fully indigenously designed nuclear attack submarine (SSN) by 2036, with the commissioning of the second in the programme in 2038. The rapid strides taken by the Indian Navy in building its nuclear-powered submarine programme signals that submarine dominance is fast emerging as a key component in scripting New Delhi's strategy to bolster deterrence.

Going forward, the key challenges confronting the Indian Navy in this domain are likely going to emanate from how efficiently New Delhi balances spending its resources on upgrading its submarines programme with how it inducts new technologies such as Artificial Intelligence and autonomous systems in design and production of these vessels. At a time when the roster of the Indian Navy's assets is continually compared with that of China, it will be critical for New Delhi to keep pace with Beijing.

Context India's growing submarine capability, especially through INS Aridhaman, is strengthening its nuclear deterrence and making sea-based power central to national security.

Facts

It strengthens India's nuclear triad and sea-based deterrence.

India aims to commission its first indigenous SSN by 2036 & second by 2038.

Apart from India, only the P5 countries - US, Russia, China, France and UK possess nuclear triad capability.

Analytical Crux

In present-day warfare, deterrence cannot rest only on land and air power; sea-based capability is now essential.

INS Aridhaman strengthens India's ability to maintain a more credible and secure nuclear posture at sea.

Maritime security is no longer secondary because modern conflicts quickly move across air, sea and land domains.

For India, undersea capability is becoming a central pillar of strategic stability, not a side element.

Verbatim Quotes

"Sea-based deterrence is indeed critical to forestall adversarial manoeuvres by China and Pakistan."

- Harsh V. Pant

"Wars in this era do not belong within different domains in silos but rather susceptible to spillover to other domains as well."

- Harsh V. Pant

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