

THE MARITIME MANDALA: INDIA'S STRATEGY FOR POWER, PARTNERSHIP, AND SECURITY IN THE INDO-PACIFIC

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Abstract

This study examines India's evolving maritime strategy in the Indo-Pacific through the conceptual lens of a "maritime mandala," characterized by concentric layers of security partnerships, naval outreach, and strategic alignments shaped by regional power transitions. The research examines how India's maritime policies, grounded in the Look East/Act East frameworks and driven by China's expanding footprint, have influenced its engagement with both intermediate and extended neighbourhoods. Drawing on contemporary scholarship, official maritime doctrines, and secondary data, the study analyses India's security cooperation with Southeast Asia, East Asia, Australia, and the United States. It evaluates how these partnerships enhance India's strategic influence and secure critical sea lanes. The findings reveal that India's naval modernization, multilateral exercises, enhanced collaborative capacity building, and deepening defense diplomacy have collectively strengthened its position in the Indo-Pacific, although structural constraints and great-power conflict continue to limit its strategic autonomy. The paper concludes that India's maritime mandala offers a viable long-term approach for balancing China, expanding India's regional footprint, and contributing to an inclusive and rules-based Indo-Pacific order.

Keywords: Indo-Pacific, maritime strategy, India, maritime mandala, strategic partnerships, China, naval diplomacy, security architecture.

Introduction

The term "Indo-Pacific" was first introduced by German geopolitical scholar Karl Haushofer in the 1920s in his work *Indopazifischen Raum* (Haushofer, 1924). The concept later reappeared in the writings of Indian historian Kalidas Nag in the 1940s (Ganguly, 2024). In the contemporary strategic lexicon, however, the term gained prominence after Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's address to the Indian Parliament in 2007, where he described the "**confluence of the two seas**," the Pacific and the Indian Oceans, as a dynamic and interconnected strategic space fostering "freedom and prosperity" (Abe, 2007). Abe's articulation gained significance at a time when geopolitical power was shifting from West to East and regional multipolarity was accelerating. Earlier constructs, such as the Asia-Pacific, were increasingly viewed as inadequate to address emerging geopolitical and geoeconomic realities (Pulipaka & Musaddi, 2021).

The twenty-first century is widely described as a maritime century, with the Indo-Pacific region emerging as the focal point of global economic activity, strategic competition, and transnational security challenges (Brewster, 2021). The maritime domain, shaped by globalised trade routes and great-power conflict, has become a principal arena for power projection and economic interconnectivity (Kumar, 2024). Conceptually, the Indo-Pacific is a flexible yet analytically significant maritime construct, spanning from the eastern coast of Africa to the western shores of the Americas and encompassing some of the world's busiest and most strategic sea lanes (Choong, 2019; Bhattacharya & Eadon, 2021; Scott, 2020).

India's contemporary maritime strategy is firmly anchored in its historical and geographical orientation toward the Indian Ocean. Although India's early security concerns were predominantly continental, shaped by threats along its land borders, maritime considerations gradually assumed strategic salience following the arrival of European trading powers, particularly the British, whose naval dominance played a decisive role in shaping the colonial state (Sen, 2023). After independence in 1947, India maintained a cautious maritime posture, constrained by its non-aligned foreign policy and persistent land-based security challenges involving China and Pakistan. The Indian Navy's first major demonstration of maritime assertiveness came during the 1971 Indo-Pakistan War, when the blockade of Karachi signalled India's willingness to employ sea power for strategic effect (Sen, 2023). Since then, maritime strategy has steadily evolved from a peripheral concern to a central pillar of national security.

In the broader Indo-Pacific context, India and China conceptualize maritime autonomy through markedly different stakeholder approaches. China adopts a highly state-centric, strategic model characterized by large-scale infrastructure investments and security partnerships designed to secure long-term leverage. Initiatives under the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and the development of dual-use port facilities across the Indian Ocean Region reflect Beijing's emphasis on economic coercion, strategic dependence, and sustained naval presence. By cultivating local economic constituencies and embedding financial ties, China seeks to consolidate its status as a dominant maritime power and reshape regional security architecture in its favour.

India's stakeholder approach, by contrast, is more inclusive and cooperative. Rather than relying primarily on economic leverage, New Delhi emphasizes capacity-building, developmental partnerships, and shared governance of the maritime domain. Humanitarian and disaster-relief initiatives such as Mission SAGAR, along with multilateral and mini-lateral engagements with the United States, Japan, Australia, and ASEAN states, reinforce India's credibility as a benign and stabilizing actor. India's focus on maritime security prioritizes collaborative action on non-traditional threats, including piracy, climate-induced disasters, maritime domain awareness and search-and-rescue operations.

These contrasting orientations reflect deeper divergences in strategic interests and geopolitical goals. Beijing's model is fundamentally transactional and hierarchical, designed to establish economic hegemony and military reach. India, conversely, seeks to preserve regional stability and strategic autonomy by fostering rule-based cooperation rather than dependencies. India's grand

strategy has often been described as evasive, balancing a form of calibrated alignment in which strategic partnerships are leveraged to counterbalance China's growing influence while avoiding confrontation.

Together, these patterns illustrate the distinct logics guiding Indian and Chinese maritime engagement in the Indo-Pacific. While China pursues maritime dominance through coercive economic instruments and power projection, India seeks maritime leadership through partnership-building, developmental diplomacy, and cooperative security, constituting the strategic core of what this study conceptualizes as **the Maritime Mandala**.

China, however, recognized the geostrategic value of the Indian Ocean much earlier, strengthening maritime linkages with South Asian states such as Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, and Myanmar to secure its sea lines of communication and expand its geopolitical presence (Goud & Mookherjee, 2015). In response, India's maritime strategy has evolved from a defensive stance to a proactive orientation encompassing the entire Indian Ocean Region (IOR) and extending into the western Pacific. India's policy of maintaining a "peaceful periphery" is reflected in its maritime partnerships with IOR island states, where the Indian Navy increasingly serves as a net security provider (Muni & Chadha, 2015).

India's strategic maritime engagement extends to counter-piracy operations, SLOC protection, Malacca Strait escort missions, and heightened naval cooperation with ASEAN members through mechanisms like the ADMM-Plus and the Expanded ASEAN Maritime Forum. The transformation of the Look East Policy (LEP) into the more comprehensive Act East Policy (AEP) underscores India's growing focus on Southeast Asia's maritime security landscape (Pant, 2013; Huisken, 2010).

Prime Minister Narendra Modi further elevated maritime security as a national priority by emphasizing the link between naval strength, economic prosperity, and India's strategic rise (Avram, 2014). As India deepens its naval capabilities and builds stronger maritime partnerships, the Indo-Pacific becomes central to safeguarding its long-term interests. **In this context, the present study aims to analyze the strategic significance of the Indo-Pacific region in the framework of global maritime security and India's national interests.**

Research Methodology

The study draws upon a wide range of **primary, secondary, and tertiary** sources to examine India's Maritime Security Strategy in the Indo-Pacific: Strategic Evolution, Partnerships, and Emerging Challenges. The secondary data has been collected from:

- Academic books, government reports, research papers, and peer-reviewed journals
- Reputable online databases, institutional publications, and verified internet sources

Review of Literature

The rise of China, India's evolving strategic posture, and shifting geopolitical dynamics in the Indo-Pacific have been the subject of extensive scholarly attention. Researchers have examined China's expanding influence, India's strategic responses, and the growing possibility of friction between the two Asian powers in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR). This section reviews seminal

and contemporary contributions that shape the academic understanding of Sino-Indian conflict and maritime security competition.

John W. Garver's *Protracted Contest: Sino-Indian Conflict in the Twentieth Century* remains a foundational text for understanding long-term structural antagonisms between the two states (Garver, 2001). Garver argued that India and China have been locked in a persistent struggle for "mutually acceptable accommodation" since the mid-twentieth century. He predicted two possible trajectories for their future: either China respects India's primacy in South Asia, or India accepts China's expanding influence in the region. Garver concluded that India, due to historical patterns, might tacitly acknowledge China's strategic rise, an assessment that partly underestimated India's later maritime modernization and growing Indo-Pacific partnerships.

Contemporary scholarship has re-examined Garver's claims in light of new realities, especially China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), naval modernization, and the militarization of the Indian Ocean. Researchers like Mohan (2012) and Pant (2014) assert that Garver's predictions over China's expanding presence from Gwadar to Djibouti. These analyses indicate that the Sino-Indian maritime conflict is now a central issue in Asian geopolitics.

Lyle J. **Goldstein's** *Meeting China Halfway* (2015) introduces a distinctive perspective focused on conflict de-escalation and mutual accommodation. Goldstein highlights the accelerating U.S.-China conflict and the role of India within this strategic triangle. He argues that the U.S. sale of P-8I maritime surveillance aircraft to India deepened Beijing's concerns about India's emerging capabilities in the Indian Ocean. According to Goldstein, Sino-Indian tensions are increasingly embedded within the broader U.S.-China competition. He proposes confidence-building measures such as territorial compromise, joint naval transparency initiatives, and trilateral cooperation, though some of these proposals, notably territorial swaps, appear overly optimistic and politically unfeasible.

More recent scholarship offers additional nuance. Brewster (2018) proposes the concept of the "String of Pearls" not as an aggressive containment strategy but as China's pragmatic attempt to secure sea lanes vulnerable to disruption. Conversely, scholars like Scott (2019) and Kaplan (2016) argue that China's growing port infrastructure and dual-use facilities represent strategic encirclement, compelling India to enhance its maritime partnerships, particularly through the **Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD)**¹.

David Brewster's work on India's maritime strategy emphasizes the centrality of the Indian Ocean for India's geopolitical identity and strategic autonomy (Brewster, 2014). Brewster argues that India perceives China's naval presence as a direct challenge to its regional primacy, particularly after the commissioning of PLAN submarines in the IOR since 2013. Similarly, Malik (2022) highlights India's strategic anxieties about China's naval expansion and its implications for the security of sea lines of communication (SLOCs), which are vital for India's economy.

A growing body of literature also examines the impact of China's BRI on maritime rivalries. Scholars such as Blanchard & Flint (2017) and Singh et al. (2018) argue that China's infrastructure diplomacy contributes to geopolitical leverage, enabling dual-use maritime logistics that could support future naval operations. This is complemented by Pant & Rej (2020), who emphasize how

India has responded through initiatives like the **Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI)**² and enhanced cooperation with France, Japan, and Australia.

Regarding the Himalayan frontier, scholars such as Raghavan (2020) revisit Goldstein's proposals on border settlements, noting that territorial swaps are politically untenable after the 2020 Galwan Valley clash, which fundamentally altered trust dynamics. Together, these works indicate that Sino-Indian competition has evolved from a primarily continental contest into a multidimensional conflict spanning maritime strategy, economic influence, and global power alignments. Contemporary scholarship underscores that conflict in the Indian Ocean is no longer speculative but an emergent reality shaped by infrastructure expansion, naval deployments, and competing visions of regional order.

Result and Discussion

India's growing economic and strategic profile since the early 2000s has significantly reshaped its engagement across Asia. The expansion of India's commercial activities with Southeast Asia, East Asia, and the Pacific reinforced the need for a stronger maritime presence, leading to accelerated naval modernization. India's Look East Policy, launched in the early 1990s and upgraded to the Act East Policy in 2014, evolved through two major phases (Muni, 2013). The first involved economic integration and institutionalized India-ASEAN cooperation, while the second expanded to strategic engagements, defence diplomacy, and closer partnerships with Japan, the U.S., Russia, South Korea, and Australia. India's maritime orientation became more pronounced with its increasing participation in multilateral exercises, most notably the 2007 Malabar Exercises involving the U.S., Japan, Australia, and Singapore (Prabhakar & Lawrence, 2014).

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India's Maritime Strategic Relations with Its "Intermediate" Neighbourhood.

1. India-Singapore Security Cooperation

India and Singapore have cultivated strong maritime cooperation, beginning with the 2003 Defence Cooperation Agreement and subsequent joint military exercises. Key engagements such as the SIMBEX series, particularly SIMBEX 2005, in which India deployed its flagship INS Viraat, destroyers INS Rajput and Ranjit and the missile corvette INS Khukri, demonstrated India's capacity to project naval power into the South China Sea (Brewster, 2013). These exercises focused on anti-submarine warfare and maritime domain awareness.

The partnership expanded through the comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA), reinforcing strategic economic linkages (Prabhakar & Lawrence, 2014). Singapore's participation in the 2007 Malabar Exercise further underscored the deepening of maritime interoperability and its recognition of India as an essential Indo-Pacific security partner.

2. India-Malaysia Security Cooperation

India and Malaysia have strengthened defence ties through participation in MILAN exercises, LIMA shows and bilateral training activities. Malaysia has placed considerable emphasis on the development of submarine warfare, benefiting from Indian expertise in the operation and maintenance of Scorpene-class submarines (Jha, 2011). India's support in training Malaysian Sukhoi pilots, repairing Russian-origin equipment and developing communication systems has been crucial (Prabhakar & Lawrence, 2014). These engagements highlight India's role as a regional security provider and defence capacity builder.

3. India-Indonesia Security Cooperation

India and Indonesia share a longstanding maritime heritage, formalized through the 2001 Defence Cooperation Agreement (Jha, 2011). Their strategic engagement expanded through coordinated patrols, naval visits and discussions on the maritime challenges, including China's expanding activities around the Natuna Islands. The 2012 India-Indonesia Joint Commission meeting addressed overlapping concerns related to the South China Sea, reflecting shared interests in maintaining a rules-based maritime order.

4. Indian-Vietnam Security Cooperation

India's defence cooperation with Vietnam has been one of its most robust partnerships in Southeast Asia. Starting with the 1994 Defence Agreement, relations deepened through the 2000 Defence Assistance Program, the 2007 Strategic Partnership and the 2009 MoU on Defence Cooperation. India's naval ships have regularly visited Vietnamese ports, especially Cam Ranh Bay, a key strategic facility in the South China Sea (Brewster, 2018). India also provides training for Vietnamese submarine crews and supplies avionics for Vietnam's Russian-made missile systems. Joint patrols and enhanced coast guard cooperation highlight India's role in strengthening Vietnam's capacity in the face of China's assertiveness.

India's Maritime Strategic Relations with Its "Extended" Neighbourhood.

1. India-Australia Security Cooperation

India-Australia relations have transformed significantly, particularly after the 2009 Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation (Mohan, 2012). Bilateral naval exercises began in 2015, with an emphasis on anti-submarine warfare and interoperability. Both countries cooperate on humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR), counter-piracy, and maritime domain awareness. Their strategic convergence has grown under the broader Indo-Pacific framework and the revival of the Quad, reflecting shared concerns over China's naval assertiveness (Brewster, 2014).

2. India-South Korea Security Cooperation

India-South Korea ties span defence technology, nuclear safety, shipbuilding, and space collaboration. The 2012 Seoul Nuclear Security Summit marked a major step in cooperation on

nuclear non-proliferation and fissile material security (Prabhakar & Lawrence, 2014). South Korea's advanced shipbuilding capabilities complement India's naval modernization goals, enabling cooperation in maritime infrastructure and defence manufacturing (Yoon, 2014). Emerging partnerships in satellite launches and peaceful space cooperation further reinforce their technological synergy.

3. India-Japan Security Cooperation

Japan's strategic partnership with India has deepened since the early 2000s, driven by shared democratic values, economic interdependence, and concerns about China's maritime behaviour.

The 2008 Aso-Singh Declaration³ elevated the relationship to a comprehensive level security partnership, focusing on political coordination, maritime security, and defence cooperation

Japan's participation in the Malabar exercises, bilateral JIMEX drills, and coast guard cooperation has enhanced operational compatibility between the two navies. The potential co-production of the US-2 amphibious aircraft for search-and-rescue and maritime surveillance represents a major technological collaboration. Japan has also supported India's integration into global export control regimes and civilian nuclear networks, although a final nuclear agreement remains incomplete.

4. India-United States Security Cooperation

India-U.S. defence ties have grown remarkably, supported by shared interests in maintaining a free and open Indo-Pacific. The annual Malabar exercises, which often include Japan and Australia, are central to enhancing naval interoperability (Bishoyi, 2015).

The U.S. remains a major defence supplier to India, with more than \$13 billion in contracts for helicopters, aircraft, and surveillance platforms. However, India's reluctance to sign foundational agreements such as CISMOA and LSA, due to concerns about strategic autonomy, has been a challenge. Despite this, gradual progress has occurred through selective agreements, increased high-technology transfers, and expanding defence-industrial cooperation.

Analytical Summary

The results clearly indicate that India's maritime engagements in the Indo-Pacific are shaped by:

1. Maritime reorientation and strategic competition.

India's movement from a continental to a maritime strategy is widely documented and interpreted as a direct response to China's expanding maritime capabilities and infrastructural reach (Brewster, 2014; Tellis, 2005). Scholars emphasize that control of sea-lines of communication (SLOCs) and access to maritime chokepoints are crucial determinants of national power in the Indo-Pacific and explain India's sustained investments in naval platforms, maritime diplomacy, and regional partnerships (Kaplan, 2010; Mearsheimer, 2014).

2. The role of partnerships and multilateral architectures.

The increased tempo of exercises, capacity building, and logistics cooperation with partners, particularly the Quad members, ASEAN littorals, and IOR island states, reflects India's attempt to build a resilient regional security architecture without formal alliance commitments (Pant & Rej, 2020; Brewster, 2018). Research shows such networks produce operational benefits (interoperability, information-sharing) and strategic signalling without forcing India to compromise on strategic autonomy (Tellis, 2005; Friedberg, 2011).

3. China's dual-use infrastructure and regional implications.

Analyses of the Belt and Road Initiative and China's port diplomacy suggest that civilian maritime infrastructure (ports, logistics hubs) can have latent strategic utility to the PLAN, which complicates sea-control calculations for India and its partners (Blanchard & Flint, 2017; Fravel, 2019). Scholars argue India must respond with a mix of capacity building for partners, improved maritime domain awareness (MDA), and selective investments in dual-use facilities to hedge against these developments (Singh et al., 2018; Brewster, 2018).

4. Non-traditional security and resilience.

Recent literature highlights the importance of non-traditional maritime missions-HADR counter-piracy, fisheries protection, counter-trafficking- as durable entry points for influence and legitimacy in the IOR (Brewster, 2014; Malik, 2022). These missions increase India's normative credibility as a "net security provider" while producing practical cooperation with littoral states.

Recommendations

Below are pragmatic, prioritized recommendations for Indian policymakers (Ministry of Defence, Ministry of External Affairs, Indian Navy, and partner agencies). Each recommendation is grounded in the literature and tailored to strengthen India's maritime posture while preserving strategic autonomy.

1. Institutionalize maritime partnerships and transparency

- Negotiate and ratify foundational logistics and information-sharing agreements (e.g., frameworks similar to LSA/CAS/Logistics arrangements) with trusted partners while ensuring safeguards that protect strategic autonomy. Such arrangements enhance sustainment and rapid response capability for deployments (Tellis, 2005; Pant & Rej, 2020).
- Expand structured naval-to-naval and coast-guard dialogues with ASEAN states and island partners to codify regular patrols, MDA exercises, and crisis-response protocols (Brewster, 2018).

2. Strengthen indigenous shipbuilding and sustainment

- Prioritise investment in domestic shipyards, modular shipbuilding, and maintenance yards to reduce dependence on foreign suppliers and shorten turnaround for surface combatants, patrol vessels, and auxiliaries (Mearsheimer, 2014; Brewster, 2014).
- Create public-private consortia and export incentives for Indian shipbuilders to increase economies of scale and regional market share (Tellis, 2005).

3. Scale Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA) and data fusion

- Expand an integrated, distributed MDA architecture: combine coastal radars, AIS networks, satellite imagery, and partnered shore-based sensors with a shared fusion centre accessible to partner states where appropriate (Fravel, 2019; Blanchard & Flint, 2017).
- Offer MDA as a security public good to smaller IOR states (capacity building, training, low-cost radar installations), thus deepening practical cooperation and trust.

4. Institutionalize non-traditional security cooperation

- Make HADR, fisheries protection, and counter-trafficking core pillars of India's maritime engagement programs for the IOR; these missions build goodwill and legitimate presence (Brewster, 2014; Malik, 2022).
- Expand coast-guard level assistance (training, spares, patrol boats) to island states to increase interoperability and local capacity.

5. Targeted investments in dual-use logistics and basing

- Pursue commercially framed, dual-use logistic nodes (maintenance, berthing, spares depots) in friendly ports, structured as sovereign PPPs or trilateral ventures, to secure access without provocative basing (Kaplan, 2010; Friedberg, 2011).
- Prioritise resilient logistics corridors that support the rapid deployment and sustainment of naval task groups.

6. Build tri- and multilateral crisis-communication mechanisms with China and partners

- Establish confidence-building measures (CBMs) for naval encounters, hotlines, pre-notification for large exercises, and agreed codes of conduct to reduce escalation risk in contested waters (Goldstein, 2015; Fravel, 2019).
- Simultaneously pursue defensive deterrence and pragmatic engagement to prevent inadvertent crises.

7. Deepen defence industrial cooperation and technology transfers

- Negotiate selective co-production and technology-sharing pacts (for ASW sensors, unmanned surface/sub-surface systems, and maritime surveillance aircraft) with Japan, Australia, South Korea, and the U.S. to upgrade capabilities while preserving India's strategic autonomy (Prabhakar & Lawrence, 2014; Yoon, 2014).

8. Strategic communications and normative leadership

- Promote India's rules-based maritime governance agenda (UNCLOS adherence, freedom of navigation, sustainable fisheries) at ASEAN, IORA, and UN forums to build normative legitimacy and diplomatic alliances (Pant & Rej, 2020).
- Use soft power, development assistance, training, and scholarships to consolidate long-term influence among littoral states.

Conclusion

The transformation of India's maritime posture since the early 2000s reflects a deliberate strategic recalibration driven by economic integration with East and Southeast Asia, the imperative to secure critical SLOCs, and growing concern over China's maritime footprint. India has gradually moved from a primarily continental strategy toward proactive maritime engagement across the Indian Ocean and into the western Pacific, guided by diplomacy, multifaceted defence cooperation, naval modernization, and capacity building for smaller littoral states.

This study finds that India's emerging role as a regional security provider is both operational (escorts, patrols, exercises) and normative (capacity building, adherence to a rules-based order). Yet, persistent challenges remain: China's infrastructural and naval expansion, India's own industrial and logistical constraints, and the political sensitivities of partner states. To sustain and

upgrade its maritime role, India needs to institutionalize partnerships, close capability gaps, and translate episodic operational successes into long-term strategic influence.

Note

1. **The Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad)** is an informal strategic framework comprising **Australia, India, Japan, and the United States**, designed to advance security, resilience, and a rules-based order in the Indo-Pacific region. Although it does not constitute a formal military alliance, the Quad functions as a platform for coordinated action on shared strategic interests, including **maritime security, critical and emerging technologies, supply-chain resilience, counterterrorism, cyber governance, climate adaptation, and freedom of navigation** in accordance with international law. The grouping first emerged from **ad-hoc cooperation during the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami relief operations**, demonstrating the utility of multilateral humanitarian coordination. It was **initially institutionalized in 2007**, followed by a period of inactivity, and was **revitalized in 2017** in response to growing strategic uncertainties in the Indo-Pacific, especially concerns surrounding the rapid expansion of China's military and economy.
2. **The Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI)** is a multilateral maritime cooperation framework launched by **India in November 2019** during the **14th East Asia Summit (EAS) in Bangkok**. It aims to promote a **free, open, inclusive, and rules-based maritime order** in the Indo-Pacific by strengthening collaboration among regional and extra-regional stakeholders. However, IPOI is not a military or security bloc; rather, **it is a capacity-building and issue-driven initiative** designed to enhance **maritime governance, security, and sustainable ocean development through a decentralized, partner-led model**.
3. **The 2008 Aso-Singh Declaration** was a significant diplomatic agreement between **Japan and India, aimed at enhancing security cooperation and promoting economic partnership**. The declaration emphasized the importance of shared perceptions of the evolving regional and global environment, and it was signed by **Prime Ministers Taro Aso of Japan and Manmohan Singh of India**. The declaration included commitments to bolster security cooperation, including defense dialogue, and to promote economic partnership through various initiatives such as the exchange of students and researchers, and the development of infrastructure projects. It also reaffirmed the strategic and global partnership established in 2006, which was crucial for the development of bilateral relations between the two countries.

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