

Social Media Turned Nepal Upside Down

The story of Nepal's deadliest political upheaval in decades begins not with political manifestos or grand speeches, but with Instagram posts and TikTok videos. Young Nepalis, scrolling through social media during another power outage in their cramped apartments, watched the children of their political leaders flaunt designer clothes, luxury cars, and foreign vacations while ordinary families struggled to afford basic necessities. These "nepo kids" were the privileged offspring of Nepal's ruling elite, unknowingly lit the fuse that would explode into a revolution claiming 51 lives and toppling a government.

The irony: the very platforms these young elites used to showcase their wealth became the organizing tools for their parents' political downfall. When 22-year-old Sagar Dhakal posted a viral video comparing a politician's son's \$50,000 watch to his own family's monthly income of \$200, it crystallized years of simmering resentment. Within hours, the hashtag #NepoKidsNepal was trending, with thousands sharing similar comparisons. The political establishment's response was swift and took a twist, they banned 26 social media platforms, including Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, and YouTube.

That digital blackout on Tuesday morning transformed scattered online anger into coordinated street rage. Generation Z, already politically awakened and economically frustrated, saw the social media ban as confirmation of everything they believed about their corrupt leadership: that when challenged, the powerful would silence dissent rather than address grievances. University students in Kathmandu were the first to pour into the streets, but within hours, the movement had spread to every major city across Nepal. These weren't seasoned political activists following party lines, they were young people who had grown up watching democracy fail to deliver on its promises.

The deeper roots of this explosion trace back to Nepal's transition from monarchy to republic in 2008, a transformation that promised equality and opportunity but delivered instead a new form of elite capture. The same families who had prospered under the old system simply rebranded themselves as democrats, using political parties as vehicles for personal enrichment. Corruption became so endemic that transparency organizations ranked Nepal among the most corrupt nations globally.

Meanwhile, economic opportunities for educated youth remained scarce, forcing hundreds of thousands to migrate to Gulf countries and Malaysia for menial jobs despite holding university degrees.

Behind the seemingly spontaneous uprising



lay months of careful digital organizing by tech-savvy students and young professionals. Unlike previous political movements in Nepal, this one emerged from civil society rather than established parties. Key figures included Sagar Dhakal, whose viral video sparked the initial outrage, and Priya Sharma, a 24-year-old software engineer who created encrypted messaging networks to coordinate protests after the social media ban. These digital natives understood something their elders missed: that in an interconnected world, attempting to control information flows only amplifies the very messages you're trying to suppress.

The government's violent response revealed the panic within Nepal's political class. Prime Minister K.P. Sharma Oli, already facing criticism for his authoritarian tendencies and close ties to China, ordered police to use tear gas and rubber bullets against peaceful protesters. The images of young demonstrators being beaten while demanding accountability struck a nerve across Nepali society. Parents who had initially worried about their children's political involvement began joining the protests themselves. The movement gained moral authority when police violence killed 21 protesters, including several teenagers.

The tipping point came when protesters breached the heavily fortified parliament building in Kathmandu and set it ablaze. The symbolism was unmistakable, Nepal's youth were literally burning down the institutions that had failed them. As government buildings across the country went up in flames and politicians' mansions were ransacked, the security forces began switching sides.

Junior officers, many from humble backgrounds similar to the protesters, refused

orders to fire on their own generation.

The chaos provided cover for various power plays that had been brewing beneath the surface of Nepali politics. The military, traditionally apolitical, saw an opportunity to position itself as the stability-bringer while distancing itself from the discredited civilian government. Senior military officers, led by General Prabhu Ram Sharma, facilitated backroom negotiations that resulted in Oli's resignation. The appointment of former Chief Justice Sushila Karki as interim prime minister wasn't accidental, her reputation for integrity and her status as Nepal's most prominent female legal figure made her an acceptable compromise candidate to all factions.

China emerges as perhaps the biggest winner from Nepal's political upheaval, though not in ways immediately apparent. Beijing had grown frustrated with Oli's unpredictability and his recent overtures to India, despite his generally pro-China stance. A period of instability allows China to reset relationships with new leaders while positioning itself as the essential partner for Nepal's reconstruction. Chinese infrastructure investments, already substantial through the Belt and Road Initiative, become even more crucial as Nepal seeks to rebuild burned government buildings and restore economic confidence. The interim government's first major decision was to approve a Chinese-funded highway project that Oli had delayed.

India faces a more complex threat. While Delhi traditionally prefers stable, predictable neighbors, the old political establishment in Nepal had become increasingly unreliable.

The youth movement's anti-corruption message resonates with Indian strategic

interests, as cleaner governance in Nepal might reduce Chinese influence over the long term. However, the immediate instability creates security concerns, particularly with over 12,500 prisoners having escaped during the chaos. Indian border security has been quietly reinforced, though Delhi publicly maintains its support for Nepal's democratic processes.

Domestically, several groups stand to benefit from the political realignment. Nepal's women's movement, long marginalized in the male-dominated political sphere, gains unprecedented representation with Karki's appointment. Civil society organizations that had been suppressed under increasingly authoritarian governance find new space to operate. The business community, while initially concerned about stability, recognizes that systemic corruption was strangling economic growth and welcomes the possibility of cleaner governance.

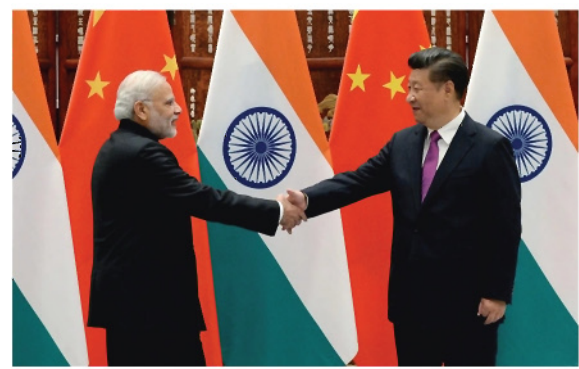
The international community, led by Western donors who had reduced aid to Nepal due to corruption concerns, sees an opportunity for re-engagement. The European Union and United States, which had been critical of Oli's authoritarian drift, are likely to increase development assistance to a government that emerges from genuine popular demand for reform.

Yet the most significant beneficiaries may be Nepal's youth themselves, who have discovered their political power. This generation, educated and connected but economically marginalized,



Author: Shruti Kaushik

India's SCO Play Pragmatism, Patience, and Power Projection



The Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's direct engagement with Chinese President Xi Jinping and the Russian President Putin amid escalating global tensions, such as China's expanding military capabilities, U.S. criticism of India-Russia ties, Putin's efforts to solidify anti-Western partnerships, and North Korea's growing alignment with Russia and China, raises a variety of speculations.

The mainstream media across the world portrayed India's engagement with SCO as a pragmatic move, aimed at mitigating the risks posed by the US tariffs and, even forming an alliance potentially with China and Russia to overcome the Western influence. These perspectives were not only shaped by the recent 50% tariffs imposed by the U.S., but also by concerns over the growing influence of BRICS and the de-dollarization trends.

However, India knows what exactly it wants and has been playing the game over the years, from the Cold War playbook of non-alignment to engaging with multiple blocs simultaneously while fully committing to none. Its presence prevents the SCO from becoming purely anti-Western bloc, positioning it as a Eurasian institution but not a rival of NATO. From the words of Mr. Modi, 'no hegemonism' clearly epitomizes the Indian view of SCO as not a Sino-Russian-dominated forum, but itself holds a significant place as does every member of the bloc. India's presence may also normalize the presence of North Korea in the forum, and it undermines the US framing of the SCO as an anti-Western alliance.

The historical perspective of sidelining India in Central Asia due to its geography and the role

of Pakistan completely shifted as India placed itself in a significant place in Central Asia, even without any military alignment. Though India's military capability does not match that of China on paper, it can observe the Chinese, Russian, and Central Asian operational styles by simply being a part of the SCO. It is evident that it's all about information and influence, but not dependency.

(LAC) poses not only a military threat through potential water weaponization but an ecological devastation for the northeastern states. India embeds these issues into SCO connectivity, pushing for multilateral oversight without direct confrontation. It underscores India's shift from merely reactive diplomacy to proactive securitization. From the words of Mr. Modi, "connectivity based on sovereignty" disparaged such projects, positioning India as a Global South leader on climate-security linkages.

India's act isn't mere balancing but demonstrating its economic assertiveness, where SCO membership amplifies leverage in the U.S. negotiations. Despite pressures, SCO participation signals that it won't subordinate its interests to external forces. Domestic Indian analysts argue that SCO allows India to watch over technology transfer from China to Pakistan while pushing domestic Indian innovations into the SCO digital economy. While New Delhi endorses economic cooperation, it competes fiercely on defense and technology.

Finally, by engaging Putin on Ukraine mediation and Xi on trade resets, India uses SCO to project 'active autonomy', inspiring other Global South nations to hedge against conventional superpowers, which could fracture SCO's unity if India rallies Central Asian countries against China on its debt trap.

India is demonstrating its well-known traits: patience and quiet achievement. Western analysts often misinterpret India's patience as passivity; however, its approach in the SCO reflects a long-term strategy. India aims to maintain a presence in every major multilateral grouping to avoid exclusion.

Author: LEA

A New Map of Power Europe's Energy Break with Russia



Europe is in the middle of one of the fastest and most dramatic energy transformations in modern memory. Just three years ago, Russian pipelines supplied nearly half of the continent's natural gas. They weren't just delivering fuel—they were delivering influence, giving Moscow a quiet but powerful lever over Europe's politics and economy. Today, that grip has fallen to below 20 percent, replaced by a mix of U.S. LNG, Norwegian pipelines, and increasingly, flows from Muslim-majority countries such as Qatar, Algeria, and Azerbaijan. What began as a wartime necessity has become a strategic pivot that no one can ignore.

The map of energy influence is being redrawn. Tankers from Doha now dock in European ports that once received Siberian gas. Algerian pipelines are drawing Southern Europe closer to North Africa's political currents. Azerbaijan's Southern Gas Corridor has transformed the South Caucasus into a critical artery of Europe's energy bloodstream. These countries are no longer just selling gas—they are shaping Europe's future, deciding when and where the continent's lights stay on, and quietly building leverage far beyond the marketplace.

Russia feels the shift keenly. Once indispensable to Europe, it is scrambling to find alternative buyers in Asia. China has exploited this, securing cheap contracts while slowing key pipeline projects like Power of Siberia 2.

Meanwhile, global LNG buyers remain tied to established suppliers, leaving Moscow with fewer options and diminishing influence. The war that was supposed to expand Russia's reach has instead accelerated its isolation.

Europe itself is changing. Analysts estimate that EU gas demand could drop 20 percent by 2030 as wind, solar, and electrification reduce reliance on fossil fuels. Yet the transition is messy. Countries like Hungary, Slovakia, and Austria are still tied to Gazprom through legacy contracts, and the EU's growing dependence on suppliers from the Muslim world introduces an unpredictable element: power over Europe is no longer just about pipelines—it now comes from nations whose priorities, politics, and cultures are far removed from Europe's own.

The human reality is this: energy is power, and power shapes everything. Europe has freed itself from Russian leverage, but it has not escaped influence—it has merely shifted it. Every LNG tanker, every new pipeline, every delivery contract is a thread in a web of dependency. The challenge for Europe is to manage this web carefully, balancing security, diplomacy, and the urgent need to transition to cleaner energy, without giving away control to players who are unafraid to wield power ruthlessly. In this new world, freedom comes with responsibility—and every choice carries a weight far beyond the meter.

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Middle East Alliances

A Shift After Qatar's Attack

The Arab world is actively collaborating and showing unity against Israel following the Israeli attack on Hamas officials in Qatar. An emergency Arab and Muslim summit was convened in Doha, Qatar, on September 15, 2025, with leaders and representatives from the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and Arab countries attending to denounce the Israeli strike and demonstrate solidarity with Qatar. The summit aimed to draft a resolution condemning Israel's action and to discuss collective responses.

Key developments include:

1. Qatar is hosting the summit as a focal point for Arab and Muslim solidarity against Israel's attack.

2. Egypt is proposing a NATO-style joint Arab military force to protect member states against aggression, with ongoing consultations among Arab countries, including Saudi Arabia, to form a coordinated defense mechanism.

3. Gulf states such as the UAE, despite having diplomatic ties with Israel through the Abraham Accords, condemned the Israeli attack and engaged in regional consultations for a collective response. The UAE has considered reducing or scaling back diplomatic engagement with Israel as a form of pressure.



4. Arab leaders like Pakistan, Turkey, Iran, and Saudi Arabia are supporting calls for a collective, possibly military, response, while Qatar remains cautious about direct military involvement due to its ties with the US.

In summary, after the Qatar attack, there is significant Arab and Muslim collaboration aimed at unified political, diplomatic, and potentially military measures against Israel, emphasizing solidarity and deterrence against further Israeli actions in the region.

Author: LEA



The Global Rise of Anti-Immigration Sentiments and Its Impact on India



Immigration is buzzing, and anti-immigration sentiments are the talk of the town worldwide, driven by socio-political factors like economic insecurities, fear of cultural erosion, and rising nationalism. Unsurprisingly, the Indian diaspora, as the world's largest migrant community with over 35 million people, is increasingly targeted in this debate. From the very recent anti-immigration rallies against the Indian diaspora in Australia to similar incidents reported in countries such as Canada, the US, the UK, Ireland, and others. Indian migrants often faced growing hostility, discrimination, and political scapegoating in public discourse, often leading to social tensions and violence.

There is a growing misconception that Indian migrants are stealing jobs, suppressing wages, or even causing housing price inflation, though it is not aligned with any empirical data. The United States alone has recorded over 700 immigration-related protests in early 2025, fuelled by nationalistic and protectionist policies, reflecting public polarization around migration policies. These incidents could have multifaceted implications for India, spanning across economic, social, diplomatic, and domestic policy arenas.

On the economic side, India is the world's largest recipient of remittances, amounting to \$120 billion mostly from the US, Europe, and the Middle East, as indicated in the 2024 World Bank report. Remittances are the money sent by immigrant individuals to their households in the home country. These remittances surpassed the FDI inflows and foreign aid to India, becoming a reliable foreign currency inflow that used to alleviate foreign currency crisis, supporting India's balance of payments. A part of the remittances also helps boost India's GDP by reducing poverty and increasing domestic purchasing habits.

The stricter immigration policies, including US visa restrictions, Canadian admission cuts, could induce the students and workers to reconsider their destination, limit the flow of remittances that might strain India's foreign exchange.

Subsequently, it affects domestic economic growth, particularly in states like Punjab and Kerala, which are remittance-dependent. There may be an indirect harm to trade and investment due to potential strain with countries over immigration policies.

Tighter rules on H-1B visas in the US or skilled migration programs elsewhere could discourage the Indian professionals, particularly tech and healthcare, from emigrating to brain gain and leaving people to stay in India. Though it might boost domestic innovations, in the short term, it could reduce knowledge transfer and global exposure of Indian workers. Another factor deterring emigrants from those destinations is rising hate crimes, vandalism, and harassment that put the safety and welfare of Indians abroad at risk. It is also prompting family living abroad returns or relocations that could strain India's social services if large numbers repatriate, though it could foster community support networks.

For many of the Indian students, the US, the UK, Canada, and Australia are the desired destinations. These anti-immigration policies led the parents and students to seek alternative destinations like Germany, France, Italy, and other European countries, which also have either not much scope after the study or it also witnessing rising anti-immigrant sentiments. Restrictions on student visas could affect 2+ million annually, reducing cultural exchanges, future remittances from skilled graduates, and forcing India to enhance its own education infrastructure to retain talent.

The anti-immigrant policies also influence the domestic political landscape. Any incidents abroad resonate strongly in the Indian media, leveraged by political opposition and civil societies to put pressure on the reformation of India's foreign policy and the Indian government. If it persists, India should also create a more domestic job market. In an anticipatory move, India also introduced reforms like the Immigration and Foreigners Act 2025 to modernize its own systems, emigrants, exemptions, and others. Like other countries, it might fuel nationalist sentiments or debates on emigration.

Overall, while anti-immigration policies bring challenges like diminished remittances and risk for diaspora, they also foster domestic growth and policy innovation amid global labour shortages in aging populations.

Author: LEA

Regulating Online Gaming

A New Frontier in India's Internal Security Strategy

When we start thinking about national security, our mind usually turns to borders, guns, bombs, terrorism, or cyber warfare. But today in this digital era, threats come from unexpected quarters, and Online gaming has become one of them. What appears to be entertainment and harmless is becoming a channel of fraud, illicit activities, and, most importantly, a primary tool of radicalization, recruitment, and fundraising for extremist groups and terror outfits.

The advent of modern technology is a boon to the online gaming industry globally estimated around \$200 billion business. India's online gaming industry has also exploded in recent years, driven by the affordable smartphones and internet, with a very youthful population, roughly 500 million users valued at over \$20 billion. While online gaming acts as a force for good, forging new connections, rapidly increasing engagement raises concerns over addiction, financial exploitation, and national security vulnerabilities. As a result, for the first time, India has placed online gaming squarely within the ambit of its internal security strategy, introducing the Promotion and Regulation of Online Gaming Bill, 2025, aiming to protect citizens while nurturing a safe and secure digital economy.

Categories of the Online Gaming Industry in India

India's online gaming industry is a one of the rapidly growing in the world of online gaming, spanning across three broad categories such as E-Sports which is including competitive tournaments requiring skill, discipline and strategy, Social and Educational Games which is casual but often skill-based, useful for learning and social interaction, and Online Money Games which involves financial stakes, often associated with debt, addiction, and crime. While the first two categories are boon for the digital economy, creating jobs for young people, the third one emerged as a serious national security challenge.

How online gaming has become a security challenge

Addiction and Social Harm: Algorithms used to maximize user engagement have led to widespread addiction. Astoundingly, the government estimated that approximately 45 crore Indian people collectively spent ₹20,000 crore per year through real-money online gaming. Reports suggest that in the span of the initial four months of FY 2025-26, the monthly UPI payment for online gaming applications reached ₹10,000 crore, implying annual spending of ₹1.2 lakh crore. Families have seen their savings wiped out by compulsive money games, where some cases even leading to suicide

and self-harm.

"So, I am a college student of 2nd year, and I lost nearly 80k in online gambling. So, it all started with 2000 rupees when I first played on an online gambling platform (Stake). Then I had taken 5k from my friend in an urge to recover my money, but I lost that too," a college student recounted spiralling losses.

Frauds and Financial Exploitations: Many people identify the legal gap in online games and have started exploiting vulnerable users. Unregulated digital wallets and cryptocurrency integrations have enabled perpetrators to launder funds, posing risks to economic stability. The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has been actively apprehending people laundering using online games recently. For instance, ED probes have exposed a massive cross-border laundering network's Flewin' app scam that routed funds to Chinese-controlled crypto wallets.

Data Privacy and Cyber Vulnerabilities: With gaming platforms collecting potential user information, including banking details, breaches could expose personal data to hackers. Reports suggest that over 80% of gamers in the Indian gaming community experienced a cyberattack, averaging a ₹7,894 loss per incident, along with account hijacking and malware threats.

National Security Threats: The most alarming thing is gaming chatrooms and anonymous identities. Many of the gaming platforms have integrated end-to-end encryption in the game communication. It has been exploited by the non-state actors for radicalization, terror funding, and recruitment. Intelligence reports link platforms like PUBG to recruitment in volatile and sensitive areas like Kashmir, where extremists use in-game communications for propaganda and coordination.

India's Response: A Balanced Approach to Regulation.

The Indian government introduced the Promotion and Regulation of Online Gaming Bill 2025 to mitigate national security risks associated with online gaming platforms. This act delineates a clear dichotomy banning harmful elements while promoting beneficial ones. It not only applies nationwide but also applies to foreign-operated platforms targeting Indian users, ensuring extrajudicial reach.

Some key takeaways from the provision

1. Complete ban on online games. Penalty is up to 3 years of imprisonment and ₹1 crore fine. For repeated crime, up to 5 years and a ₹2 crore

fine. It would directly curb money laundering and online fraud, potentially stop criminal exploitation.

2. Recognizing e-sports as a legitimate sport and promoting social/educational games through guidelines, academies, and awareness campaigns. It implies a potential shift to focus on productive digital engagement, reducing exposure to risky platforms while fostering youth skill development.

3. Provision establishes a National Online Gaming Authority to oversee registration, grievance resolution, and compliance guidelines. It ensures centralized monitoring, facilitating rapid response to security threats like radicalization.

4. Provision authorizes authorities to conduct searches, seizures, and arrests without warrants, integrating the IT Act and other provisions for further actions like blocking unlawful contents.

5. It also mandates KYC, AML protocols, financial audits, and content traceability to activities.enhance data privacy, prevent misuse for illicit

Implications for Internal Security

The Act emphasizes online gaming as a domain of strategic importance, like critical to infrastructure. Banning of potential money gaming would disrupt pipelines for organized crime and terrorism. This provision also enables law enforcement officers to monitor in-game communications, countering radicalization efforts. Economically, tax compliance and auditing prevent revenue leaks that could undermine fiscal security.

The act significantly curtails offshore operators and strengthens India's control over its ecosystem. By employing the act properly, citizens get confidence in governance, and it positions India as a pioneer in responsible gaming regulation.

Regulating online gaming is not a simple task, especially as technological innovations often outpace regulation. However, balancing security and innovation will be an ongoing challenge. The Promotion and Regulation of Online Gaming Act, 2025, marks a significant shift in recognizing online games not just as a form of entertainment but as an important aspect of India's internal security strategy. By banning predatory gaming practices, curbing exploitation, and promoting responsible innovation, the Act aims to protect youth, strengthen the economy, and safeguard national sovereignty amid rising digital threats.

Author: LEA

The Great Nicobar Project and Its Strategic Application



The Great Nicobar Project (GNP), once again in the spotlight after Congress MP Sonia Gandhi published an article in *The Hindu* stating the project itself 'a grave misadventure', stirring controversy on the strategic development program that aimed at bolstering the Indian national economy and security strategy.

What is this mega project about? It's a large-scale infrastructure and strategic development plan centred around Great Nicobar Island, the southernmost tip of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. Key components of the project include an International Container Transshipment Terminal (ICTT) at Galathea Bay, a civilian cum military use International Airport, a mega Power Plant, and a Township development with residential, commercial, and institutional infrastructures, covering 130 sq. km, including pristine forests, with the estimated cost around ₹72,000 - ₹80,000 crores.

impact, including destroying (~8 lakh trees) a huge part of the pristine tropical forest, disrupting endemic flora and fauna, and affecting species like the leatherback sea turtle, which depends on the Galathea Bay, which is one of the last places for nesting. It could also damage coral reefs and cause mangrove loss.

Cutting and diverting enormous trees may take more time than the intended time, and it's quite challenging. Also, there are concerns over the denotification of sanctuaries for the benefit of projects.

The allocated space is intersected with the home of two indigenous tribal communities, Shompen (Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group-PVTG) and Nicobarese, fearing displacement, loss of livelihood, exposure to disease, and erosion of culture.

Great Nicobar is in a seismically active zone, making it vulnerable to natural disasters, land sinking, tsunamis like the 2004 tsunami, putting infrastructures at risk. While countries are

Great Nicobar Island project will transform region into a Major Maritime Hub

Strategic Importance

The global geopolitical uncertainty and the growing Chinese influence in the Indian Ocean mandate India to take bold decisions, ensuring its territory, sovereignty, and economy are safeguarded. Great Nicobar is located just ~90 nautical miles north of the Malacca Strait, one of the busiest maritime choke points in the world, handling nearly 40% of the global trade and a huge share of China's and Japan's energy supplies. Due to the proximity, Singapore and Malaysia dominate most of the transshipment in the Malacca region. The Nicobar facility gives a foothold in the same market, reducing dependency on overseas hubs for Indian trade, and could serve as an alternate container transshipment hub, attracting global shipping lines and integrating India into major East-West trade routes.

Along with the transshipment facility, a major international airport at this location bolsters India's ability to monitor, influence, and secure the critical lanes. Both facilities can be used by the Indian Navy and Air Force, serving as a forward base in the eastern Indian Ocean, enhancing surveillance, logistics, and quick deployment capability, deterring the increased presence of China in the IOR. Acting as an unsinkable aircraft carrier, India is not just projecting its power in the Bay of Bengal but also into the South China Sea and broader Indo-Pacific frameworks.

Facilitating the Indo-Pacific Strategy

The Indo-Pacific strategy revolves around securing the key trade routes free, open, and secure. The Great Nicobar allows India to monitor and secure vital Sea Lines of Communication (SLOCs) that facilitate global energy and trade flows, increasing India's importance in the Quad alliance. In addition, the major hub could be a direct counterbalance to China's 'string of pearls' ports across the IOR, preventing encirclement. The transshipment hub and international airport improve India's connectivity with ASEAN, including Singapore, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, and Vietnam, making India a stronger regional power through the deeper integration with the 'Act East Policy'.

How it Assists Quad (India-US-Japan-Australia)

The port and airport can serve as a logistical hub for Quad naval exercises like Malabar, strengthening interoperability between Quad forces in the eastern Indian Ocean. As this hub provides an Indian alternative to Chinese-dominated maritime routes and ports, it ensures the Quad's goals to create secure and reliable supply chains independent of China.

Great Nicobar is an ideal base for operating surveillance drones, aircraft, and radar systems, which can help Quad's Indo-Pacific Maritime Domain Awareness (IPMDA) initiative to track illegal fishing, smuggling, and naval movements. Additionally, it strengthens collective security for the US and Japan, which are highly dependent on the Malacca Strait trade.

Concerns over the Project

The project may pose a severe environmental

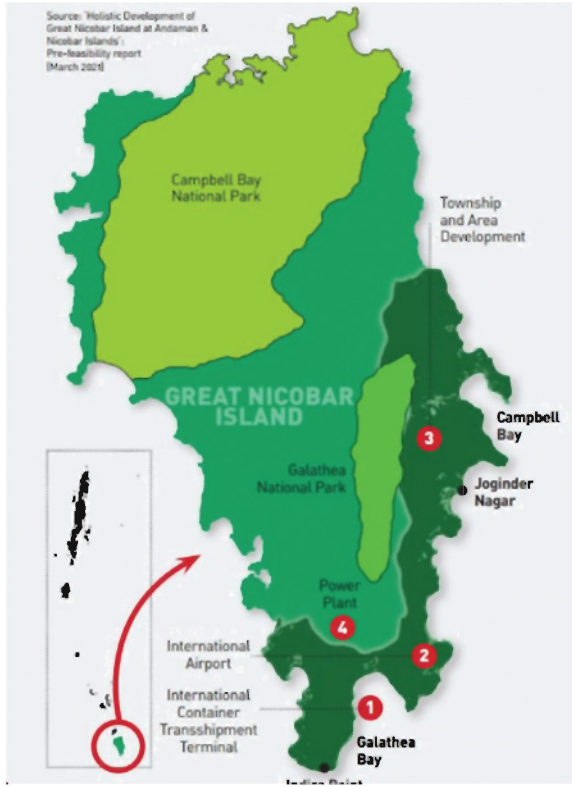
pledging to carbon reduction and biodiversity protection, cutting down nearly a million trees and disturbing a climate-sensitive island ecosystem raises severe concerns.

Cross-takeaway applicable to the Great Nicobar Project

Compared with similar island-based projects globally, the trade-offs are evident. The Great Nicobar Project is much like others, promising strategic advantages, strengthening maritime presence, improving connectivity, and opening space for tourism and trade. **The Kansai Airport project in Japan** asserts how reclaimed land can serve as a vital transport and economic hub. The **Hulhumale** development in the **Maldives** illustrates how artificial islands can procure climate-resilient housing and proliferate greater tourism. Likewise, **Hong Kong's** reclamation works enabled urban expansion and improved transport capacity, while the South China Sea reclamation by **China** shows how artificial islands can extend to military use and maritime control.

On the other hand, Kansai (Japan) remains plagued by subsidence and seismic risks, causing the country to spend enormously on long-term maintenance. The Great Nicobar is also highly seismically active, raising concerns. Hulhumale (Maldives) brought ecological stress from the loss of the reef and disrupted the fisherfolk's livelihoods. High engineering costs and marine habitat loss undermine Hong Kong's projects, while reef destruction and triggered international protests shifted environmental damage into a geopolitical dilemma, posing severe criticism of the South China Sea reclamations. Overall, for India's Great Nicobar Project, these lessons underline that strategic and economic gains are real, but they must be balanced against ecological fragility, seismic vulnerability, and indigenous rights while promoting genuine sustainability and long-term mitigation determined as a strategic asset rather than costly liability.

Author: LEA



72 Hours of Israel's Military Campaign



have described Israel's actions as unprecedented and dangerous, pressing for extraordinary summits in response.

Humanitarian Impact

- Over 200 people have reportedly died across these countries in the last three days.
 - Gaza alone reports more than 64,000 total casualties since October 2023, with escalating fatalities amid recent strikes.
 - Civilians, including children and non-combatants, are among the victims of these attacks.
- Israel's recent actions represent a dramatic expansion of its military reach and have intensified the regional crisis in the Middle East.

Author: LEA



Israel has recently conducted several high-profile strikes on foreign soil, with the most notable being its first-ever airstrike in Qatar targeting Hamas leaders in Doha on September 9, 2025. Additionally, Israel has carried out attacks in Lebanon, Syria, Tunisia, and Yemen within the past week, reflecting a marked escalation in its regional military strategy and willingness to target perceived threats far beyond its borders.

Israel's Attack in Qatar

On September 9, 2025, Israel executed a precise airstrike on a facility in Doha housing senior Hamas officials, killing six people, including a Qatari security officer.

This was Israel's first strike on Qatari soil, a country known for hosting Hamas negotiations and mediating peace talks. The operation involved at least 15 fighter jets and was described by the Israeli government as an independent Israeli action, without U.S. advance approval, though the U.S. was informed afterward.

The attack triggered strong condemnation from Qatar, which called it "state terrorism," and sparked backlash from Gulf and international actors, as well as fears of derailing fragile ceasefire negotiations in Gaza.

Other Recent Foreign Strikes

In the past 72 hours, Israel has struck Lebanon, Syria, Tunisia, and Yemen, in addition to Gaza and Qatar.

• In Lebanon, Israeli jets targeted locations linked to Hezbollah, resulting in multiple fatalities and violating ongoing ceasefire agreements.

• In Syria, multiple air bases and military sites were bombed, with reported explosions near Latakia and Homs.

• In Tunisia, Israeli drones struck ships associated with pro-Palestinian groups attempting to breach the Gaza blockade.

• In Yemen, an airstrike hit Sanaa Airport, targeting Houthi positions.

Israel's operation of precision - Yemen

Israel's "Drop of Luck" Mission refers to a high-risk and highly coordinated Israeli operation carried out on August 28, 2025, in Sanaa, Yemen, targeting key senior leadership of the Iran-backed Houthi movement. Israeli air

strikes targeted a Houthi government meeting in the capital, killing Houthi Prime Minister Ahmed al-Rahawi and several other senior officials. The strike marked the deadliest blow the leadership has ever sustained in a single attack.

Mossad & Military Intelligence Coordination

Mossad operatives reportedly pre-positioned surveillance drones, cleverly disguised as commercial quadcopters, in proximity to key Houthi compounds, ensuring real-time observation without raising suspicion. Meanwhile, deep-cover assets embedded within Sanaa supplied biometric confirmation of target identities a full 48 hours before the strike, guaranteeing precise targeting. Simultaneously, advanced AI systems processed more than 2.3 million data points derived from intercepted communications, heat maps, and movement logs, integrating them into predictive models that anticipated the targets' movements and security routines. This multilayered intelligence effort exemplifies the increasingly sophisticated fusion of human and artificial intelligence in modern covert operations. Israeli jets navigated beneath civilian radar corridors over the Red Sea, mimicking commercial flight paths. Decoy drone swarms were deployed from Eritrean airspace to confuse Houthi radar systems.

International Reaction

These attacks have sparked widespread condemnation for violating the sovereignty of multiple nations and causing significant civilian casualties, with many leaders calling for urgent ceasefires and diplomatic intervention. The Malaysian Prime Minister and other leaders

Time (IST)	Event Description	Preferred Icon
02:30	F-35I jets depart Negev base	
02:45	Mid-air refueling over the Red Sea	
03:15	Rampage missiles strike Sanaa compound	
03:40	Delilah deployed over Taiz	
04:10	Wind Demon launched from an F-15I over Iraq	
04:50	Iron Beam intercepts retaliatory UAVs	
06:00	All aircraft returned safely	

Urban Warfare Engulfs GAZA CITY

Gaza City has entered its most volatile phase of the war this September, with Israeli strikes and evacuation orders colliding with a mounting humanitarian disaster.

The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) in recent days intensified bombardments on high-rise buildings across northern Gaza, saying they concealed Hamas command posts, weapons stockpiles and sniper positions. Several towers were reduced to rubble. But the demolitions have left thousands of families without shelter and accelerated displacement at a time when food and medicine are already running out.

UN agencies and the World Health Organization said Israel's evacuation orders were "unfeasible." Nearly a million people remain trapped in Gaza City, while humanitarian zones in the south are overflowing and critically short of supplies. Aid workers warn that starvation and disease are fast becoming defining features of the conflict.

Israel insists its strategy is aimed at stripping Hamas of its last urban strongholds before committing to any ground incursion. But the risks are mounting. Urban warfare favors Hamas, which relies on tunnel systems and ambush tactics to inflict casualties even as its rocket arsenal has diminished.

Images of destruction have meanwhile



damaged Israel's international standing. Washington has continued to back Israel's security objectives but is urging restraint. Arab states that normalized ties with Israel face rising domestic pressure, while Egypt, Qatar and Turkey are under pressure to broker humanitarian access. Russia and China have seized on the crisis to question Western credibility on human rights.

For now, Gaza City remains both a battlefield and a humanitarian emergency. What happens there will determine not only Israel's military trajectory but also how long the international community tolerates the mounting civilian toll.

Author: Shruti Kaushik

G7 Powers in Constitutional Crisis

The simultaneous governmental instabilities in France and Japan signal a dangerous fracturing of democratic governance in two of the world's most established democracies. As these G7 powers grapple with leadership vacuums and institutional paralysis, the ripple effects threaten global markets, international alliances, and the multilateral cooperation that has underpinned the post-war order.

France's political landscape has entered uncharted territory with Michel Barnier's government collapse in December 2024, marking the shortest-lived administration in Fifth Republic history. The no-confidence vote represents a fundamental breakdown in France's capacity to govern effectively. The crisis stems from National Assembly fragmentation following 2024 elections, where President Macron's parliamentary dissolution game backfired spectacularly, creating a hung parliament where Marine Le Pen's National Rally holds kingmaker status, paralyzing the legislative process.

The inability to pass a budget has pushed France toward a constitutional crisis. Without fiscal clarity, the European Union's second-largest economy faces potential credit downgrades and market volatility that could ripple through the eurozone. This governmental paralysis weakens European cohesion precisely when the continent faces mounting pressures from assertive Russia, migration challenges, and shifting American priorities. France's role in West Africa, UN Security Council position, and NATO contributions all require decisive

leadership that current political chaos makes impossible.

Japan's political stability faces unprecedented challenges as Liberal Democratic Party electoral setbacks and internal divisions create a leadership crisis threatening the nation's ability to navigate regional security challenges and economic pressures. The LDP's loss of lower house majority signals the end of post-war political predictability. Prime Minister Ishiba's administration faces constant no-confidence threats while struggling to maintain coalition unity on critical issues.

This instability comes at a dangerous moment for regional security. China's assertiveness around Taiwan, North Korea's advancing missiles, and US-China competition demand steady Japanese leadership. The inability to implement defense reforms or strengthen alliances undermines Japan's position as a key Indo-Pacific pillar, while economic partnerships face delays that benefit competitors and adversaries.

These concurrent crises reflect broader challenges facing democratic systems worldwide. Both countries experience consequences of political polarization, economic inequality, and institutional rigidity that make effective governance increasingly difficult. The paralysis demonstrates how constitutional frameworks designed for different eras may be inadequate for modern governance challenges requiring rapid responses.

France and Japan represent 12% of global

GDP and serve as crucial trade network nodes. Simultaneous governmental instability creates systemic economic risks as investment decisions delay, policy coordination becomes impossible, and market confidence wavers. This timing is concerning given existing global headwinds including inflation pressures, supply chain vulnerabilities, and ongoing geopolitical tensions.

The inability of both governments to address pressing issues risks eroding public confidence in democratic governance, creating dangerous feedback loops where institutional weakness breeds political extremism. The vacuum in leadership emboldens authoritarian actors who view democratic disarray as opportunity to advance their interests.

Both countries require immediate steps to restore effectiveness while addressing underlying crisis causes. France needs electoral reforms encouraging coalition-building and constitutional changes providing clearer deadlock resolution mechanisms. Japan must adapt institutions for competitive democracy, strengthening prime ministerial authority and decision-making processes.

Both nations must address social and economic grievances fueling political polarization through inclusive governance addressing economic inequality and national identity concerns.

Author: Shruti Kaushik



On March 15, 2025, armed men returned to the streets of Mekelle, shattering the fragile peace that ended Ethiopia's bloodiest conflict in decades. The Pretoria Agreement of 2022, once hailed as a triumph, has unraveled its promises of disarmament, reintegration, and restored services to Tigray largely unfulfilled.

The crisis now pits TPLF chairman Debretsion Gebremichael against interim regional leader Getachew Reda, exposing Ethiopia's enduring struggle between central authority and regional autonomy. Their personal feud has fractured Tigrayan politics, producing rival administrations, divided security forces, and renewed clashes that have already displaced tens of thousands.

Eritrean forces remain entrenched in Tigray despite pledges to withdraw, adding an explosive regional dimension. In February, Eritrea launched a nationwide mobilization, while Ethiopian forces massed at the border. The standoff threatens to reignite one of Africa's deadliest interstate rivalries.

For Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, already weakened by conflicts in Oromia and Amhara, economic turmoil, and disillusionment with his rule, the timing is disastrous. His push for Red Sea access, including a controversial deal with Somaliland, has further antagonized Eritrea, where President Isaias Afwerki views

Ethiopian maritime ambitions as existential threats.

The consequences extend beyond Ethiopia and Eritrea. Any renewed war could destabilize Red Sea shipping lanes that carry 12% of global trade, overwhelm Sudan with new refugees, and test the African Union's credibility as a peace broker. International players from the U.S. and EU to China, Turkey, and Gulf states are watching closely, each with competing stakes.

For civilians, another conflict would be catastrophic. Millions remain displaced, aid is fragile, and memories of atrocities from 2020–2022 are fresh. Women and children are again most vulnerable to violence, forced recruitment, and exploitation. Economically, neither Ethiopia nor Eritrea can sustain another war without devastating consequences.

The path forward requires more than external pressure. Tigrayan autonomy, credible security guarantees, and a genuine commitment from leaders are essential. Yet the key actors—Abiy, Isaias, Debretsion, and Getachew continue to prioritize power over people.

As September 2025 closes, the Horn of Africa stands at a dangerous crossroads. Without urgent mediation, Ethiopia risks sliding back into full-scale war an avoidable tragedy whose consequences will echo far beyond its borders.

Author: Shruti Kaushik



Alpine Quest

A Navigational Application

Alpine Quest is a navigational application that makes topographic maps available offline and can be stored locally, cutting the dependency on cell coverage or the internet. It is primarily built for people who are involved in outdoor activities and sports, including hiking, hunting, trailing, off-roading, etc. However, non-state actors are exploiting it for their personal agenda, using it in the high terrain areas of the border, and being completely off the security radar, raising concerns over national security frameworks.

So far, the application can be used on Android



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devices only.

'Psyberia' is the developer behind the application, reportedly active from 2010, providing three Android applications among one is paid. The name AMBROSI CAMILLE FRANCOIS, listed as a developer in the Google Play app support, describes the developer as being from Spain.

Recent Incidents in India involving AlpineQuest Applications

1. Jan 23-24, 2025 — Militants in Jammu & Kashmir "equipped with Alpine Quest" (media report). Several Indian news outlets reported that militants operating in parts of J&K were using the AlpineQuest offline navigation app to navigate difficult terrain and evade detection. (media coverage emphasized offline map use and tactical advantage).

2. Jan 28, 2025 — SATP terrorism update referencing AlpineQuest use. South Asia Terrorism Portal (SATP) published an update noting press reports that Pakistan-based terrorists were using the AlpineQuest app to navigate in J&K. (South Asia Terrorism Portal)

3. Jan 28, 2025 — DRDO / government reference (document) summarizing reports that AlpineQuest was supplied to militants. A government/defense-linked document and related reporting referenced claims that the app had been provided to militants (used in summaries of the threat landscape). (See the DRDO/NPC reference in public briefing materials). (DRDO)

4. Late April 2025 (Apr 24-30, 2025) — Reporting around the Pahalgam attack: investigators and media link digital footprints/tools (including AlpineQuest) to cross-border actors. Multiple Indian outlets covering the Pahalgam attack investigation reported that digital forensics and media accounts indicated use of advanced navigation/communication tools (reports named AlpineQuest among the apps mentioned) and suggested links to Pakistan-based facilitators/safehouses. (Hindustan Times)

5. Apr 23-24, 2025 — Security researchers: trojanized / fake AlpineQuest APKs used in espionage campaigns (non-India context). Cybersecurity firms and tech press reported that malicious actors had distributed trojanized/fake AlpineQuest APKs that contained spyware (reports primarily described targeting of Russian military personnel and espionage campaigns). These are important because they demonstrate risk from inauthentic APKs and supply-chain abuse — but these specific malware reports do not claim use by terrorist groups to infiltrate India. (The Hacker News)

Author: LEA

Ukraine Strikes Russian Oil and Infrastructure in Deep Drone Raids

Ukraine launched a large-scale drone campaign overnight on September 13-14, striking Russian energy and fuel infrastructure across several regions, including the strategic oil port of Primorsk.

According to Ukrainian security sources, explosive-laden drones damaged at least two oil tankers at Primorsk, one of Russia's main export terminals on the Baltic Sea. Satellite images taken on September 14 showed fire damage near the docking area, though Russian officials downplayed the extent of disruption.

Shortly before midnight on September 13, drones struck a fuel facility in Vtorovo, Smolensk region, sparking a blaze that burned for hours. Around the same time, explosions were reported in Leningrad oblast, where regional authorities confirmed damage to auxiliary power lines.

By the early hours of September 14, additional drones reached Belgorod oblast, where debris from intercepted aircraft injured several civilians at approximately 02:30 local time. Russia's Defense Ministry said dozens of drones

were destroyed by air defenses, including Pantsir-S1 and S-400 systems, but acknowledged "localized incidents" at energy facilities.

The drone wave used a mix of long-range fixed-wing aircraft and modified commercial UAVs, some reportedly equipped with GPS spoofing and terrain-hugging flight paths to bypass radar. The attacks struck four oblasts within a six-hour window, stretching Russian air defenses across a wide geographic area.

In retaliation, Russia launched missile and drone strikes against Ukrainian power infrastructure during the night of September 14.

Energy facilities in Kharkiv and Dnipro were hit, triggering temporary blackouts. Ukraine's air force said 21 of 30 incoming Shahed drones were intercepted.

The strikes mark an intensification of Ukraine's campaign to disrupt Russian export routes and fuel supply lines, while Moscow continues its efforts to cripple Ukraine's grid. The overnight exchange underscores how strategic infrastructure, not just frontline positions, has become the central battlefield of the war.

Author: Shruti Kaushik



North Korea's Solid-Fuel Engine Test

North Korea's announcement that it has completed the final ground test of a solid-fuel intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) engine represents a turning point in East Asian security dynamics. Unlike liquid-fuel missiles, which require lengthy preparation and can be detected during fueling, solid-fuel systems can be launched with little warning. This drastically reduces the reaction time available to adversaries and makes Pyongyang's missile arsenal far more survivable in a conflict scenario.

The timing of the test reflects careful calculation. Kim Jong-un's regime faces continued sanctions, food shortages, and diplomatic isolation, yet military achievements provide both domestic legitimacy and bargaining leverage. By showcasing progress on solid-fuel propulsion, Pyongyang signals that it cannot be coerced into denuclearisation talks. Instead, it seeks to raise the stakes, forcing Washington and its allies to reckon with an adversary capable of striking further, faster, and with less vulnerability to preemptive attack.

The implications for regional defence planning are profound. For Seoul and Tokyo, already within range of North Korea's shorter-range arsenal, a credible solid-fuel ICBM extends the threat envelope to the U.S. homeland, potentially weakening extended deterrence guarantees. This in turn could fuel debates in both countries about expanding their own strike capabilities, revisiting nuclear options, or demanding deeper U.S. security commitments. For Washington, the challenge is twofold: bolster missile defence systems while maintaining diplomatic channels that prevent miscalculation. Yet missile defence has physical and financial limits and solid-fuel missiles are far more difficult than countering older liquid-fuel variants.

China and Russia's responses add another layer of complexity. Both have downplayed the significance of the test, a silence that effectively shields Pyongyang from stronger international pressure. Beijing in particular benefits from a North Korea that distracts U.S. military resources in the Pacific, though it risks instability on its border if tensions spiral out of control. Moscow, preoccupied with Ukraine, has an incentive to keep Washington's attention divided.

The next phase to watch is whether North Korea moves from ground tests to flight trials. A successful launch would confirm operational readiness and cement Pyongyang's ability to target U.S. cities with little warning. At that point, deterrence on the Korean Peninsula would enter a new and dangerous phase, one in which miscalculation carries higher risks and crisis stability becomes far more fragile.

North Korea's solid-fuel milestone is not merely an engineering achievement—it is a strategic gambit. It forces the region to prepare for a future where Pyongyang's arsenal is faster, deadlier, and harder to contain. The question now is whether diplomacy can adapt as quickly as North Korea's missile technology.

Author: Shruti Kaushik

Australia's Ghost Shark

The New Predator Beneath the Indo-Pacific



Australia has unveiled its Ghost Shark autonomous undersea drone fleet, part of a A\$1.7 billion program with U.S. defence disruptor Anduril. Officials describe it as the nation's most significant leap in naval warfare since the Collins-class submarines. But the real impact lies not in the announcement itself, but in how Ghost Shark redefines undersea deterrence and alters the balance of power in contested waters, especially the South China Sea.

Roughly the size of a school bus, Ghost Shark unmanned undersea vehicles (UUVs) are run by algorithms, not crews. They can dive deep, stay submerged for weeks, and relay encrypted sensor data to allied command networks. Unlike nuclear submarines, which are expensive and politically sensitive, Ghost Sharks are designed for attrition warfare with affordable, expendable, and risk-tolerant, yet capable of surveillance, strike, and deception.

Defence sources highlight the system's modularity. With interchangeable payload bays, Ghost Shark can be reconfigured within hours. One mission could sow a sonar curtain across a chokepoint; the next might deploy seabed mines or electronic warfare pods designed to jam adversary communications.

The platform's strategic weight grows when viewed in the context of allied cooperation. Early prototypes are already being trialled with Japanese seabed sensor arrays near Okinawa, part of a distributed "sensor web" stretching across the first island chain. In practice, this network would make Chinese submarine patrols increasingly visible.

The implications for the South China Sea are immediate. Beijing's undersea strategy depends on deploying ballistic missile submarines from Hainan Island into deep waters, shielded by its artificial island bases. Ghost Shark threatens to erode that sanctuary. Swarms of silent UUVs, working in tandem with U.S. and Japanese networks, could trail Chinese boomers from the moment they leave port, undermining Beijing's nuclear deterrent without risking manned submarine encounters.

For Australia, Ghost Shark is a technology milestone. Canberra is not just a junior partner in AUKUS, but an active co-architect of an undersea order designed to contain Chinese influence from Okinawa to the Spratlys. For Beijing, it could be a nightmare scenario, an ocean where its submarines can hide nowhere, even in the South China Sea it seeks to dominate.

Author: Shruti Kaushik

Europe's Breakaway in Orbit

Project Bromo to escape Starlink's grip and Beijing's shadow in space

For decades, Europe has lived with an uncomfortable reality: when it comes to space-based communications, it is either reliant on Washington or increasingly exposed to Beijing. That dependency has long been rationalised as the cost of sheltering under the American security umbrella. But frustration has been building, and now Europe is preparing to act. Project Bromo, a joint venture between Airbus, Thales, and Leonardo, is its most serious attempt yet to reclaim sovereignty in orbit.

At its core, Bromo is a plan to field a satellite mega-constellation of hundreds, possibly thousands, of spacecraft forming two distinct layers. The civilian layer will deliver broadband across Europe, Africa, and the Mediterranean, reducing reliance on U.S. commercial systems. The defence layer, far more ambitious, will serve as a militarised backbone able to withstand jamming, cyberattacks, and hostile satellites. It will rely on laser-based inter-satellite relays, quantum-secured links, and hardened ground stations, providing what European officials call a "sovereign internet in the sky."

The urgency stems from two painful lessons. First, during the Ukraine war, European militaries discovered their operations depended on Starlink, a private network ultimately controlled from California. It was a sobering reminder that sovereignty cannot rest on bandwidth leased from a billionaire. Second, China's Guowang constellation is racing ahead, targeting Africa and Latin America. For European strategists, this is more than lost market share; it is the spectre of digital colonisation, where Beijing dictates the information flows of the Global South.

Bromo also carries a quieter, more secretive edge. Inside Airbus's Toulouse labs, engineers are reportedly testing optical coatings that make satellites harder to detect by Chinese and Russian tracking radars.

One senior official likened it to "painting satellites with invisibility." Even if the technology remains experimental, its pursuit reveals how seriously Europe is preparing for the possibility of orbital warfare.

What makes Bromo compelling is not just its technological promise but what it signals about Europe itself. For years, "strategic autonomy" was discussed mainly in trade or diplomatic terms.

Space was deemed too costly, too risky, too dominated by others. Bromo changes that equation. It marks Europe's willingness to take risks, to compete directly with Washington and Beijing, and to accept that ruffling allies may be the price of genuine independence.



Of course, the gamble is immense. Mega-constellations are notoriously difficult to finance and coordinate, and Europe's own political fragmentation adds to the challenge. Yet the decision to move forward matters. Success would give Europe, for the first time, a militarised constellation independent of the transatlantic umbrella. Failure would leave the continent locked into permanent dependency on Silicon Valley's entrepreneurs or Beijing's orbiters.

Ultimately, it is about Europe's search for identity in a century where power is measured not only by armies or economies, but by who commands the invisible networks above our heads.

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