

India seeks to strengthen defence ties with Five Eyes

New Delhi has some form of defence pacts with four of the grouping's members

SATARUPA BHATTACHARJYA
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India sought to strengthen its defence cooperation with the United States, New Zealand, and Australia through official engagements on Monday.

The US, New Zealand, and Australia are part of the Five Eyes intelligence-sharing alliance that includes Canada and the United Kingdom. India has agreements on critical and emerging technologies with the US and the UK. It now has some form of defence pact or association with four members of the Western grouping.

The signing of a new defence agreement with New Zealand and continued talks with Australia on maritime security are seen as measures India is taking to counter China's reach in the Indian Ocean region.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi held a meeting with his New Zealand counterpart Christopher Luxon, who is also in India to attend a security conference.

"Both sides noted the need for ensuring the safety and security of sea lanes of communication and agreed there needs to be regular dialogue to discuss enhancement of maritime safety," a joint statement released by India's Ministry of External Affairs said.

India and New Zealand are expected to build military relations by holding joint exercises, staff training, and port calls by naval ships, the statement added. Tarini, an Indian Navy sailing vessel, went to New Zealand in December, while the frigate HMNZS Te Kaha will visit Mumbai. The statement said New Zealand expressed interest in joining the Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative, an India-led forum.

Also on Monday, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh met US Director of National Intelligence Tulsi Gabbard in New Delhi to follow up on the earlier discussions held in Washington, DC, between Modi and US President Donald Trump. Singh and Gabbard talked of ways to enhance collaboration on defence innovation and niche technologies, with the aim of advancing mutual strategic interests, a statement from India's Ministry of Defence said.

Singh and Gabbard "reviewed the significant strides made in the areas of military exercises, strategic cooperation, integration of defence industrial supply chains and information-sharing ties, especially



DURING HIS MEETING with US Director of National Intelligence Tulsi Gabbard in New Delhi on Monday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi warmly recalled his visit to Washington, DC, last month and his "extremely productive" discussions with President Donald Trump. The PM told Gabbard he was looking forward to welcoming him to India later this year

PHOTO: PTI



INDIA AND NEW ZEALAND on Monday inked a pact to institutionalise defence relations and vowed to boost cooperation in the Indo-Pacific even as Prime Minister Narendra Modi flagged concerns to his Kiwi counterpart Christopher Luxon over certain pro-Khalistani elements indulging in anti-India activities in the island nation

PHOTO: PTI

in the maritime domain, between India and the US", the statement said.

Singh posted on X (formerly Twitter) that his meeting with Gabbard covered a host of topics, including information-sharing, to further deepen India-US relations.

Gabbard told NDTV that Trump and Modi were working towards strengthening "shared objectives" for both countries.

India also held the ninth edition of

defence-policy talks with Australia in New Delhi on Monday. A statement from the Indian government said the two sides focussed on "cooperation priorities, including maritime domain awareness" and reciprocal information-sharing, as well as military exercises.

"Both countries also explored the possibilities of (their) defence-industry collaboration," the statement added.