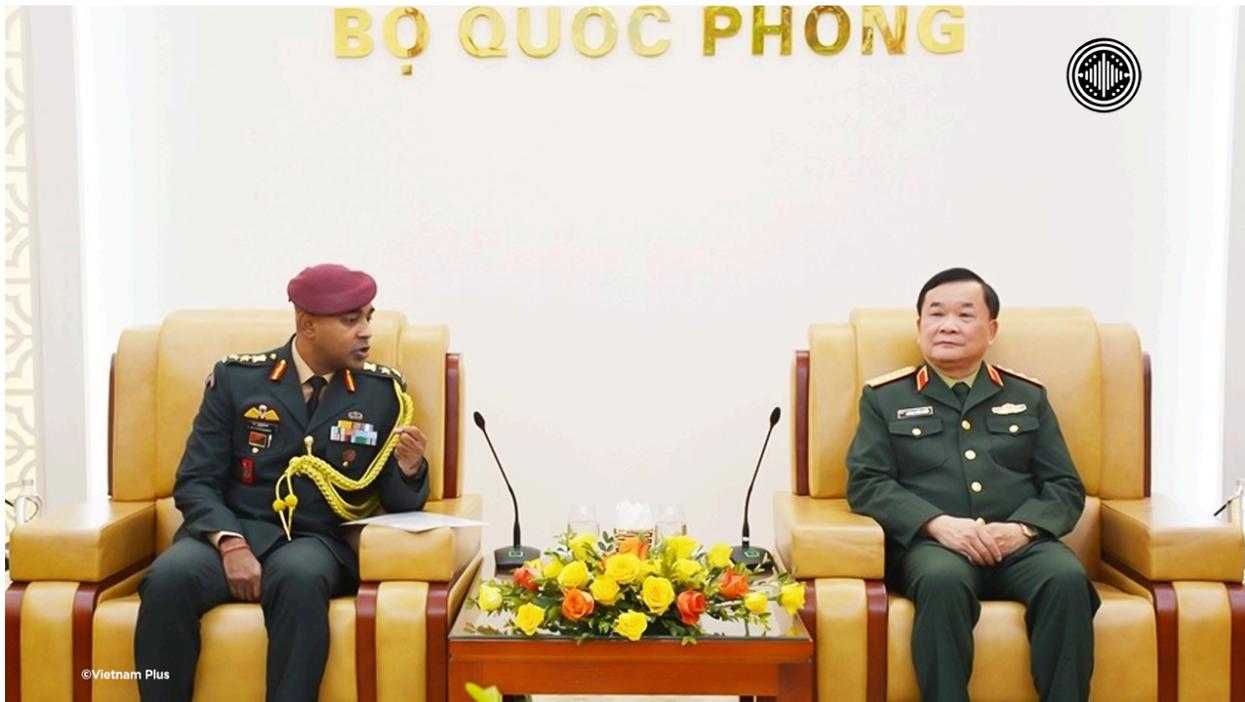


India and Vietnam Fortify Maritime Bonds, Elevating Strategic Partnership



India and Vietnam are significantly strengthening their maritime cooperation and strategic partnership, marked by recent high-level naval visits and defense dialogues. This deepening engagement underscores a shared commitment to regional stability and a rules-based order in the Indo-Pacific, as both nations navigate evolving geopolitical dynamics.

On July 24, 2025, Indian Naval Ships Delhi, Shakti, and Kiltan of the Eastern Fleet, commanded by Rear Admiral Susheel Menon, arrived at Tien Sa Port in Da Nang. This port call, part of the Indian Navy's ongoing operational deployment to Southeast Asia, was met with a ceremonial welcome by the Vietnam People's Navy (VPN) and the People's Committee of Vietnam, reflecting the growing warmth in bilateral ties. These interactions provide a crucial platform for exchanging perspectives on maritime cooperation, regional security challenges, and enhancing defense collaboration, particularly in the naval domain.

The expanding relationship builds upon the elevation of India-Vietnam relations to a "Comprehensive Strategic Partnership" in 2016. This partnership has since seen robust growth across various sectors, particularly in defense and security. Both nations share a converging strategic interest in maintaining peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific, with common concerns regarding maritime assertiveness in the South China Sea. India's "Act East Policy" views Vietnam as a pivotal partner, and conversely, Vietnam sees India as a potential counterbalance to growing regional influences.

Defense cooperation has been a cornerstone of this partnership. Recent developments include the gifting of the indigenously built missile corvette INS Kirpan to Vietnam in July 2023 and discussions on a \$700 million agreement for Vietnam to acquire the BrahMos supersonic cruise missile system, jointly developed by India. Furthermore, bilateral military-to-military staff talks, defense exercises, and training programs are active areas of cooperation, fostering interoperability and mutual understanding between the two forces. The 4th India-Vietnam Maritime Security Dialogue, held in August 2024 in Hanoi, further solidified avenues for cooperation in marine scientific research, ocean economy, and humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR).

The strategic alignment of India and Vietnam is a clear signal of their joint resolve to uphold international law, including the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), and to ensure freedom of navigation and overflight in critical maritime arteries. As both nations continue to pursue their respective national interests in a complex regional environment, their deepening maritime ties are set to play an increasingly important role in shaping the future of the Indo-Pacific.