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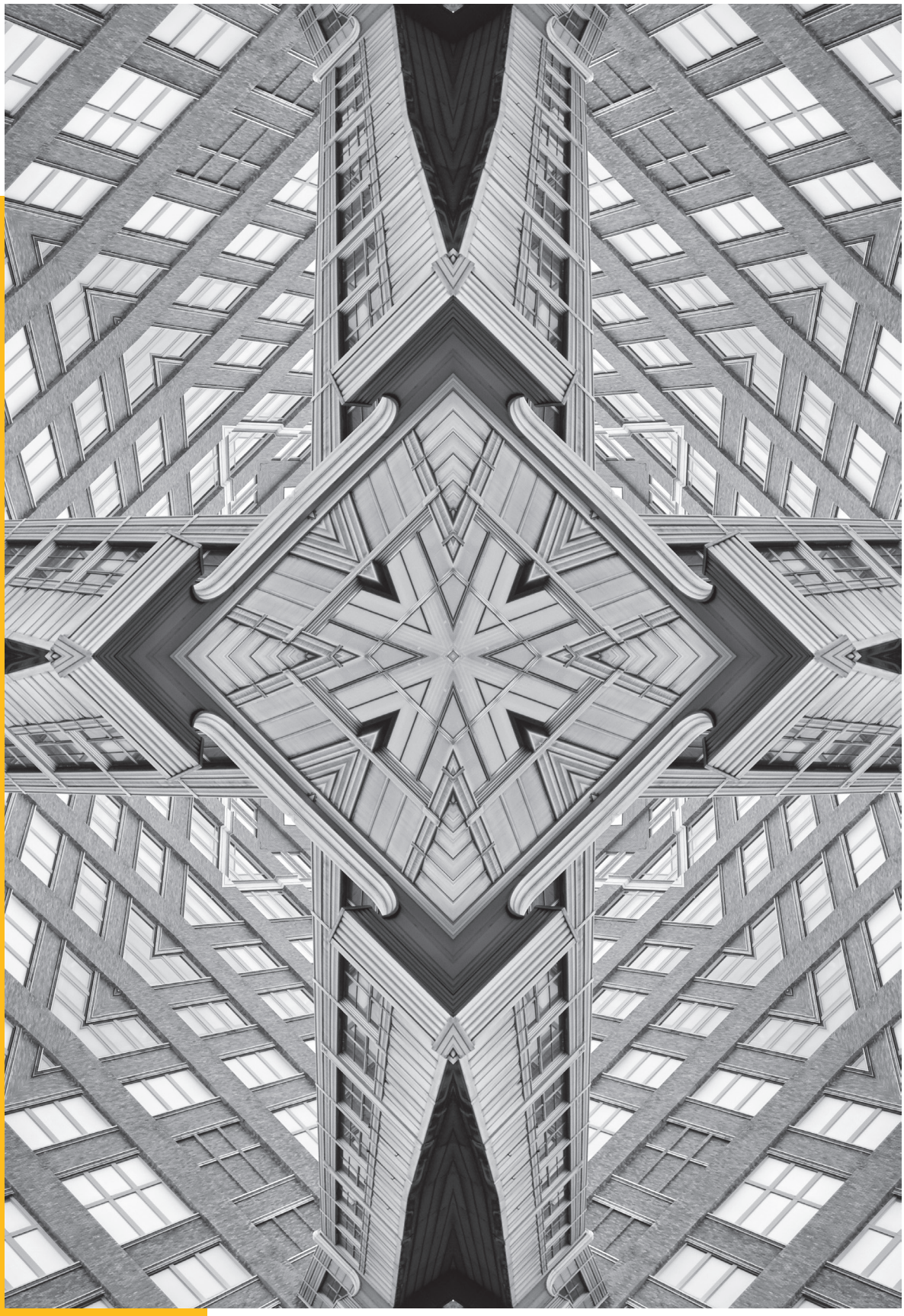

ISSUE NO. 488 JULY 2025

Forging India-Taiwan Engagement: Theoretical Foundations, Policy Debates, and Pragmatic Pathways

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Abstract

As India and Taiwan complete 30 years of informal relations this year, there is scope to deepen cooperation in the domains of trade, technology, digitalisation, and security. This paper offers a framework for India's engagement with Taiwan, identifies the pillars of their current relationship and areas for future collaboration, and explores the limitations and challenges. The dual-track engagement—proactive engagement and soft balancing with geo-economic tools—has built a pragmatic foundation for the long-term India-Taiwan partnership. However, this relationship confronts systemic pressures and material constraints that constrain the partnership's pace, depth, and visibility in sensitive domains.

Attribution: Harsh V Pant and Suyash Desai, "Forging India-Taiwan Engagement: Theoretical Foundations, Policy Debates, and Pragmatic Pathways," *ORF Occasional Paper No. 488*, July 2025, Observer Research Foundation.

Introduction

The 2024 Taiwan presidential elections marked a historic third consecutive win for the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP)—the first time a party has achieved such a feat since the direct presidential elections began in 1996.[1] DPP's presidential candidate, Lai Ching-te,[a] secured 40.1 percent of the popular vote in a three-party race, followed by Kuomintang's (KMT) Hou Yu-ih, who secured 33.5 percent of the votes, and Taiwan's People's Party (TPP) candidate Ko Wen-je, who garnered 26.5 percent.[2]

The victory was tarnished by the split verdict in Taiwan's Legislative Yuan, with the KMT, DPP and TPP winning 52, 51, and eight seats, respectively. This fragmented outcome marks a new era of a divided government in Taiwan, with the ruling party for the first time in over 16 years not controlling the majority in the national parliament.

Therefore, while Lai Ching-te's election indicates continuity on the most crucial policy issues, the joint opposition of the KMT and the TPP has increased partisan gridlock, slowing governance and policymaking.[3] The two blocs differ on multiple important issues, notably the "1992 Consensus", an agreement between the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and the KMT asserting that only one China exists.[4] Interpretations vary within Taiwan: the DPP rejects "the 1992 Consensus", arguing it fails to consider the Taiwanese aspirations since it predates the island's democratisation.[5] However, as scholars Hass, Glaser, and Bush wrote in a 2023 analysis, former President Tsai Ing-wen adopted a pragmatic, moderate stance—without explicitly endorsing the "1992 Consensus"—due to domestic political constraints she faced in the past eight years.[6]

From his statements in the run-up to the presidential elections, and over one year into governance, President Lai appears poised to continue with Tsai's pragmatic approach to cross-strait relations.[7] However, he has had a pro-independence reputation, with the latest instances in July and August 2023, when he clarified that Taiwan is not a part of the People's Republic

a Taiwan's elected President, Lai Ching-te, was Vice President under President Tsai Ing-wen's administration. Although he got 40 percent of the popular vote, it is much lower than the popular vote which former President Tsai Ing-wen received in 2016 (56.12 percent) and 2020 (57.13 percent).

of China.[8] He maintained a similar line of thought in 2024 and 2025, as seen in his speeches.[b,9]

Similarly, the KMT, one of the parties to this agreement, adopted it as a policy in 2008 under Ma Ying-jeou's administration. However, its position heading into the 2024 Taiwan elections remained ambiguous[10]—especially after China tightened its grip on Hong Kong and CCP General Secretary Xi Jinping's 2019 statement linking the "1992 Consensus" with "One Country, Two Systems."[11] In the past eight years, the KMT's views on the "1992 Consensus" have fluctuated between Ma's "rapprochement with respective interpretations" approach and former KMT Chairman Hung Hsiu-chu's soft stand with no "respective interpretations" approach.[12] Furthermore, as scholars Chen and Paris-Rodriguez have observed, since the DPP took office, the KMT has been headed by four chairpersons—Hung Hsiu-chu (2016-17), Wu Den-yih (2017-20), Johnny Chiang (2020-21), and Eric Chu (2021-present), with each having his own interpretation of the "1992 Consensus".[13] This is palpable in the party's confusing approaches to a number of important policy issues.

The two blocs also have fundamental differences in dealing with the PRC. Historically, they have had different interpretations of Taiwan's political status and its working relationship with China.[14] Since the 1980s, the KMT has abandoned its anti-Communist policies and pursued engagement with Beijing. It introduced policies to facilitate Taiwan-China interactions, promoted closer economic ties, considered a peace agreement, signed the Economic Co-operation Framework Agreement (ECFA),[c] and resumed institutionalised cross-strait negotiations.[15] Put simply, the KMT seeks security and deterrence through integration rather than confrontation. It advocates closer economic and political ties with Beijing, emphasising

b In his inaugural speech in May 2024, National Day speech in October 2024, and New Year speech in 2025, he maintained the same stance, resulting in a strong reaction from Beijing in the form of criticism, military exercises, and increased diplomatic pressure. See: https://english.president.gov.tw/News/6816; "President Lai Delivers 2025 New Year's Address," *Office of the President of the Republic of China*, January 1, 2025, https://english.president.gov.tw/News/6893. For instance, in his 2024 National Day speech, he said, "The Republic of China and the People's Republic of China are not subordinate to each other…and the PRC has no right to represent Taiwan". See: https://english.president.gov.tw/News/6816.

c ECFA was a free trade agreement between the PRC and ROC aiming to reduce tariffs, commercial barriers and create cross-strait integration. It was signed on June 29, 2010, in Chongqing, however, was terminated by the PRC in December 2023 – a month before the most recent Presidential elections.

stability and dialogue under the framework of the "1992 Consensus". It has also historically prioritised de-escalation and economic interdependence with China as a means of reducing tensions.

Conversely, the DPP's stand on China has evolved—from its opposition role under Tsai's leadership to her presidency. As party president during the KMT's rule, Tsai criticised the Ma administration for recognising the "1992 Consensus", opposed the ECFA, and campaigned in 2012 on replacing the "1992 Consensus" with a new Taiwanese consensus.[16] However, after taking office in 2016, her position became more moderate. The Tsai administration refrained from publicly rejecting "one China", avoided explicitly claiming independence, and acknowledged the "1992 Consensus" as a historical event.[17] Nonetheless, the DPP asserts that Taiwan is a sovereign entity separate from the PRC.

The "1992 Consensus" and Taiwan's approach towards the PRC are just two examples of the fundamental policy differences between the island's two main political blocs.

Table 1: DPP and KMT: Policy Differences

Policy Areas	DPP (Democratic Progressive Party)	KMT (Kuomintang)
International Relations	Pro-United States and Japan; strengthens ties with democratic countries and partners.	Balances United States-China relations, promotes dialogue with Beijing.
	Supports Taiwan's participation in international organisations.	Open to diplomatic flexibility, including unofficial participation in international organisations.

Policy Areas	DPP (Democratic Progressive Party)	KMT (Kuomintang)
	Rejects "One Country, Two Systems"; emphasises Taiwan's sovereignty and identity.	Prefers a pragmatic approach to cross-Strait relations to reduce tensions.
	Strengthens ties with Indo-Pacific countries like India and Australia, and with European nations, to counter Beijing's influence.	Supports economic engagement with China while maintaining autonomy.
National Security	Increases defence spending and promotes asymmetric warfare strategies.	Supports military modernisation but prefers cost-effective approaches over heavy reliance on the United States.
	Strengthens cyber security and counters Chinese influence operations.	Less aggressive on cyber security threats from China; prefers engagement.
	Increased conscription duration during the previous Tsai administration.	Maintains some level of conscription but focuses on professionalisation.
Regionalism and Cross-Strait Relations	Opposes the "1992 Consensus"; rejects Beijing's claim over Taiwan.	Supports the "1992 Consensus" (with varying interpretations).

Policy Areas	DPP (Democratic Progressive Party)	KMT (Kuomintang)
	Promotes the New Southbound Policy to reduce reliance on China.	Encourages cross-Strait economic integration and dialogue.
	Asserts a distinct Taiwanese identity and prioritises sovereignty.	Less aggressive on identity issues.
United States-Taiwan Relations	Strong advocate for deepening US-Taiwan ties (military, economic, technological).	Supports US-Taiwan ties but avoids provoking China.
	Aligns with the US Indo-Pacific Strategy to contain/counter/deter China.	Advocates for maintaining stability in the US-China-Taiwan dynamics. Not so clear stand on Taiwan's place in the US Indo-Pacific Strategy.
Approach to Multilateralism	Actively engages in regional and global multilateral forums to counter Chinese influence.	Seeks practical participation in multilateral organisations on a limited basis while balancing relations with China.
	Strengthens cooperation with democracies through QUAD, G7, and EU engagements.	Prefers regional economic integration without overt political alignments.

Policy Areas	DPP (Democratic Progressive Party)	KMT (Kuomintang)
	Supports Taiwan's bid for CPTPP (Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership).	Open to economic engagement through RCEP (Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership) and other trade pacts.
Dealing with China	Takes a firm stance on Taiwan's sovereignty and rejects Chinese pressure.	Supports maintaining dialogue and economic engagement with Beijing.
	Opposes deepening economic reliance on China, promoting supply chain diversification.	Believes economic interdependence can reduce tensions.
	Restricts Chinese media, investment, and political influence in Taiwan.	More open to cultural and economic exchanges with China.
Semiconductor Policy	Prioritises Taiwan's semiconductor dominance.	Supports Taiwan's semiconductor industry but open to broader investment options.
	Strengthens government support for R&D and chip manufacturing.	Encourages private-sector-led semiconductor development.
	Promotes US-Taiwan semiconductor cooperation (e.g., CHIPS Act).	Balances US-Taiwan and China-Taiwan semiconductor trade relations.

Policy Areas	DPP (Democratic Progressive Party)	KMT (Kuomintang)
	Restricts advanced semiconductor exports to China, aligning with US restrictions.	Supports trade but cautious about overreliance on China.

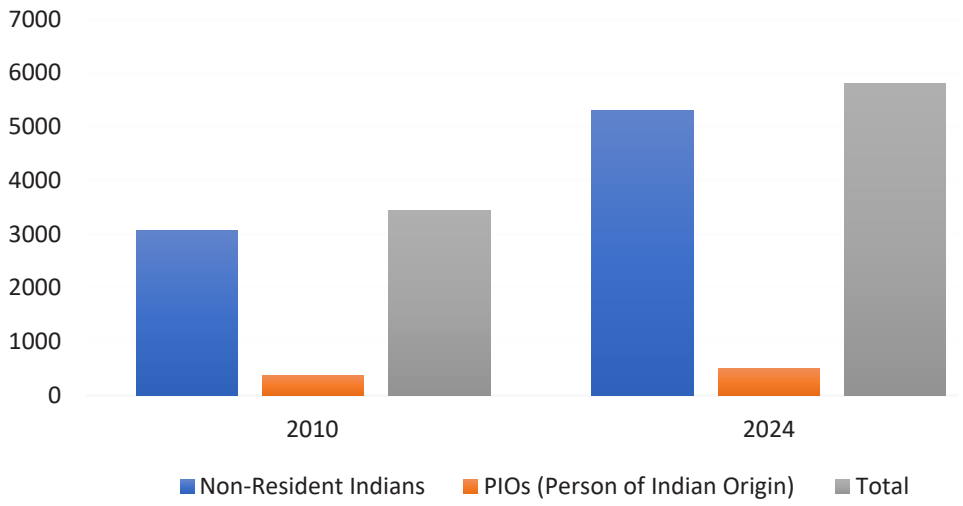
Sources: Authors' own, using various open sources.

As highlighted in Table 1, these differences extend beyond cross-Strait relations, reflecting Taiwan's broader approaches to Indo-Pacific powers like the US, Japan, Australia, and India.

Taiwan and India: A Match Made in Heaven?

Taiwan has sought to enhance its strategic, economic, and technological relations with India under both the Tsai and Lai administrations. Despite the absence of formal diplomatic relations, bilateral engagement has grown over the past decade. In 2025, the two countries mark 30 years of unofficial diplomatic ties. People-to-people exchanges have been a driver, alongside economic, technological, and security aspects—especially after the COVID-19 pandemic.

Figure 1: Indian Population in Taiwan



Source: Ministry of External Affairs[18]

Figure 1 shows that the Indian population in Taiwan grew from 2,358 in 2010 to 5,804 in 2024—a 68.42-percent increase over 14 years. The Non-Resident Indians (NRI) are driving this growth, whose numbers rose by 72.86 percent, from 3,068 to 5,303. Of these, 3,000 are students. This is a 76.76-percent increase over seven years, with 1,689 Indian students in 2017 and 2,239 in 2021. Furthermore, Indians rank among the top 10 groups of international students, and also the fastest-growing community in Taiwan. Similarly, the number of Persons of Indian Origin (PIOs) in Taiwan increased by 32.54 percent from 378 to 501.

Labour-sharing initiatives under the Tsai and Lai administrations, along with generous scholarships from Taiwan's Ministry of Education for Indian degree and language-learning students, are contributors to this growth. In 2024, the two countries signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to facilitate the employment of Indian workers in Taiwan.[19] While the MoU's details remain undisclosed, reports suggest it involves hiring up to 100,000 Indian workers in industry, agriculture, and healthcare.[20] However, the divergence of opinions within Taiwanese polity and society is also starkly visible when it comes to accepting immigrants, especially from India. This divergence manifested itself in a small-scale protest in December 2024, where Taipei residents gathered outside the Presidential Office, urging the government to cancel its plans of bringing in Indian migrant workers to fill the labour shortage.[21] According to the Ministry of Labour, around that time, approximately 2,700 Indian professionals were already employed in Taiwan, primarily in the high-tech sector.[22]

Although the Taiwanese Legislative Yuan approved the proposal to accept and encourage Indian labour within 30 days, racist comments by the then-outgoing Taiwanese labour minister and a distasteful local media article about Indian workers—highlighting concerns about sexual offences—reflect underlying misgivings and societal differences in Taiwan regarding India.[23] However, there is bipartisan support in the Legislative Yuan to strengthen ties with India, aligning with Taiwan's broader strategy to diversify its international partnerships under the New Southbound Policy.[24] This policy identifies India as a key partner, underscoring its strategic importance.[25] Both major political parties in Taiwan emphasise strengthening its ties with the world's largest democracy. Since the two countries are steadily converging on economic, technological, cultural, security, and geopolitical verticals, especially over the past eight years, it is crucial to develop a framework for improving bilateral relations and realistically highlight the pillars of cooperation, areas of potential convergence, and limitations for India-Taiwan ties.

India-Taiwan Framework

Since time immemorial, states have practised power politics using economic tools. For instance, the Athenian surrender to Sparta in 404 BCE was primarily due to Sparta's successful disruption of Athenian grain imports through control of the Hellespont – leveraged by Persian financial support to construct a fleet capable of challenging Athenian supremacy at sea.[26] Similarly, through the Marshall Plan, the United States provided massive economic aid to Western Europe to rebuild the war-torn Europe, but more importantly, to contain the rise of communism.[27] Moreover, the US administration has used the global 10 percent baseline tariff on all countries, starting April 5, 2025, as an economic tool to pursue its foreign policy goals.[28] The concept of geo-economics appeared during the post-Cold War period when political scientist Edward Luttwak highlighted modern statecraft's transition from military power and geopolitical considerations to economic strategies and trade as the primary tools of global influence and conflict.[29] In reality, these concepts were a part of the statecraft long before the post-Cold War period.

Political scientists Blackwill and Harris argue that geo-economic soft balancing occurs when two relatively weaker states cooperate, collaborate, and leverage economic, technological, and other non-military tools to counterbalance a stronger or hegemonic power. They define geo-economics as "the use of economic instruments to promote and defend national interests, and produce beneficial geopolitical results; and the effects of other nations' economic actions on a country's geopolitical goals."[30] However, they also argue that countries could marshal geo-economic tools to attain not only geopolitical but also geo-economic and other interests.[31] Political scientist Csurgai argues that "geo-economics illustrates the interactions between state agencies and various economic sectors to enhance the power position of states in the contemporary international system."[32] Political scientists Mattlin and Wigell suggest that geo-economic strategies are typical of non-Western powers—Brazil, China and India—because they rely on non-military means in their soft balancing vis-à-vis the United States.[33] Using this definition, Mattlin and Wigell introduce and incorporate the soft balancing variable into the framework of geo-economics.[34] Political scientist Pape describes the non-military mechanism of strengthening the regional economic blocs, diverting trade,

and coordinating mutual commitment to resist the policies of the superior or threatening state as one of the strategies of soft balancing.[35] Similarly, political scientist Paul argues, "[Soft balancing] occurs when states generally develop ententes or limited security understandings with one another to balance a potentially threatening state or a rising power."[36] To add to the above-mentioned definitions, political scientist Larionova argues that "geopolitical perspectives, strategic partnerships, or alignments help (relatively) weaker states gain leverage against hegemonic power by joining forces through international institutions or regional complexes. Put simply, by soft balancing through the strategic partnership at the geopolitical level, actors can increase their influence."[37]

We use the above-mentioned concepts to argue that geo-economic soft balancing occurs when two relatively weaker states cooperate, collaborate, and leverage economic, technological, and other non-military tools to counterbalance a stronger or hegemonic power. In India's case, however, its partnership with Taiwan goes beyond soft balancing. New Delhi has sought to carve out its own strategic space through economic, technological, and other bilateral engagements—independent of the hegemon's influence. The hegemon's role is limited to triggering the initial momentum for diversification or recalibration. India's engagement with Taiwan, therefore, reflects a broader strategic calculus shaped by developmental priorities, economic interests, and a desire for greater strategic autonomy.

However, in the strategic sphere, India–China and China–Taiwan relations are still important drivers of the India–Taiwan partnership. They are not the only determining factors, as India has refrained from using the Taiwan card in an instrumental or confrontational manner against China. Rather than posing Taiwan as a counterweight to China—which is not possible due to the scale, scope, and nature of engagement—New Delhi engages Taipei in areas of mutual benefit while maintaining strategic ambiguity.

This dual-track engagement—proactive engagement and selective geo-economic soft balancing—has built a pragmatic foundation for the long-term India–Taiwan partnership. The following sections examine the principal pillars of cooperation, particularly in the economic and digital

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domains. This paper also explores potential areas of collaboration, such as cooperation against China's information warfare, military mobilisation, and assessments of the People's Liberation Army as a discipline. This is followed by highlighting limitations of engagement within this framework, as well as policy recommendations. Together, these domains underscore the evolving contours of the India–Taiwan relationship—rooted not only in shared concerns about regional power asymmetries but also in converging interests shaped by technological interdependence, and economic and strategic foresight.

Pillars of Cooperation: Economy, Trade and Technology

Increased economic, trade, digital, and technological engagements form the cornerstone of India–Taiwan relations. The two countries have steadily expanded their partnership to reap economic benefits, strengthen supply chain resilience, and leverage complementary strengths in high-end manufacturing, semiconductors, digital innovation, and market expansion. These synergies are driving a new phase of mutual resilience and growth.

Economic and Trade Relations

India-Taiwan economic interaction has gained strong momentum in the past decade. India is Taiwan's 17th largest trading partner and 14th largest export destination.[38] Bilateral trade between the two countries grew from US$2 billion in 2006 to US$10.9 billion in 2023, registering over 545 percent growth in the last 18 years.[39]

Table 2: India-Taiwan Trade, by Year

Year	India's Exports to Taiwan (US$ Billion)	India's Imports from Taiwan (US$ Billion)	Total Trade (US$ Billion)	Trade Balance (US$ Billion)
2015–2016	1.4	3.3	4.7	-1.9
2016–2017	2.2	3.1	5.3	-0.9
2017–2018	2.15	3.9	6.05	-1.75
2018–2019	2.6	4.5	7.1	-1.9

Pillars of Cooperation: Economy, Trade and Technology

Year	India's Exports to Taiwan (US$ Billion)	India's Imports from Taiwan (US$ Billion)	Total Trade (US$ Billion)	Trade Balance (US$ Billion)
2019–2020	1.7	4	5.7	-2.3
2020–2021	1.6	4	5.6	-2.4
2021–2022	2.7	6.2	8.9	-3.5
2022–2023	2.6	8.3	10.9	-5.7

Sources: Department of Commerce, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India; Observer Research Foundation[40]

India's biggest exports to Taiwan include minerals and ores like coal, iron, copper, and steel; petroleum products like refined petroleum, naphtha, and derivatives; agricultural products like maize, wheat, red chilli, and turmeric; organic chemicals; plastic; rubber; textile products; precious stones; and select industrial equipment.[41] Imports from Taiwan include electronic components like semiconductors, integrated circuits, and printed circuit boards; industrial machinery and tools; plastics and polymers; optical instruments for electronic and medicinal use; petrochemicals, industrial chemicals, and dyes; automotive components, iron and steel products for machinery; telecommunication equipment like smartphones, networking gear and communication devices, solar panels, and medical devices.[42]

Table 3: India-Taiwan Exports and Imports

Exports from India to Taiwan	Trade Value (US$ Million)	Percentage of Total Exports (%)	Imports from Taiwan to India	Trade Value (US$ Million)	Percentage of Total Imports (%)
Naphtha, mineral fuels	1,492.84	45.8	Poly (vinyl chloride) in primary forms	386.57	10.21
Aluminium, not alloyed, unwrought	162.65	4.99	Polyamide 6 (nylon 6)	148.39	3.92
Ferrochromium (more than 4% carbon)	119.26	3.66	Terephthalic acid	139.36	3.68
Zinc, not alloyed (99.99% or more)	85.6	2.63	Solar cells	106.16	2.8
Ferro-silicomanganese	62.69	1.92	Flat-rolled alloy steel, cold-rolled	97.91	2.59
P-xylene	45.18	1.39	Other electronic integrated circuits	71.12	1.88
Frozen fish, minced (surimi)	43.35	1.33	Parts/ accessories for data processing machines	65.49	1.73

Exports from India to Taiwan	Trade Value (US$ Million)	Percentage of Total Exports (%)	Imports from Taiwan to India	Trade Value (US$ Million)	Percentage of Total Imports (%)
Communication apparatus (wired/ wireless networks)	38.34	1.18	Machining centers	52.23	1.38
Non-industrial diamonds, worked but not mounted	38.31	1.18	Digital still/video cameras	51.13	1.35
Refined copper, cathodes and sections	38.3	1.18	Machines for data reception, conversion, transmission	49.54	1.31

Source: India-Taipei Association[43]

The two countries have also been indulging in commercial projects like Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement, Customs Mutual Assistance Agreement, the ATA Carnet Protocol, the Agricultural Co-operation Agreement, Industry Promotion Agreement, the Intellectual Property Understanding, the Labour Mobility Agreement, and discussions on establishing semiconductor hubs.[44]

Despite these mutual initiatives, cumulative foreign direct investment (FDI) from Taiwan to India from 2000 to 2023 is valued at just under US$932.55 million.[45] In comparison, despite cross-Strait tensions and crises from the 1990s to 2023, Taiwan has been one of the largest sources of FDI for the PRC.[46] Since the late 1980s, Taiwan's cumulative FDI into China is estimated at nearly US$200 billion.[47] Taiwanese firms have played an important role in China's economic development, especially in the manufacturing, electronics, and service sectors. This trend has slowed

down recently, with under 5 percent of Taiwan's total outbound FDI inflows going into China between 2020 and 2023.[48] In the same period, India and Vietnam collectively made up almost a quarter of Taiwan's total outbound FDI projects.[49]

Table 4: Taiwan's FDI, China and India

Year	FDI in China (US$ Billion)	FDI in India (US$ Million)
1990–1999	8	5
2000–2010	100	10
2011	15	16
2012–2015	20	20
2016	10	23
2017–2020	5	50
2021	2	1,200
2022	2	1,300
2023	1.5	1,000

Source: Ministry of Economic Affairs, Republic of China (Taiwan)[50]

With the continuation of the DPP presidency, India expects Taiwanese companies to continue diversifying away from China and expanding in India. There are around 228 Taiwanese firms with investments of over US$4.5 billion in India, creating 170,000 jobs.[51] Bilateral economic engagement has been steadily growing, underpinned by a series of agreements, including the September 2018 Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on trade and commerce; the February 2020 MoU on education, academic exchanges, and cultural cooperation; the April 2023 MoU on science and technology; the May 2022 MoU on intellectual

property rights; the January 2024 MoU on tourism promotion; the June 2024 MoU on traditional medicine; and the July 2024 MoU on air service connectivity. Additionally, a recent memorandum regarding migrant workers and discussions on a potential India–Taiwan Free Trade Agreement (FTA) signal a further deepening of economic ties.[d] These developments reflect a concerted effort by both sides to broaden the scope of bilateral cooperation and enhance economic resilience.

Technological and Digital Cooperation

Technological cooperation is another important vertical expansion of India-Taiwan relations. In 2022, Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced a semiconductor policy that attracted global attention.[52] India seeks foreign investments in its indigenous semiconductor industry to develop and design fabrication facilities, ATMPs (Modified Assembly, Testing, Marking, and Packaging units), and OSAT (Outsourced Semiconductor Assembly and Testing) facilities. The policy provides up to 50 percent fiscal support for project costs to investors establishing semiconductor fabrication in India.[53] Additionally, provincial governments like Gujarat contribute an extra 20 percent towards the project costs.[54]

Taiwan is a leader in the semiconductor industry, manufacturing 63.8 percent of the world's semiconductors. Its sub-7 nanometer (nm) high-end ICs garnered 70 percent of the global market share, while its 2 nm process technology—the most advanced globally—captured 59 percent of the market in 2022.[55] Taiwanese leadership aims to diversify by enhancing its semiconductor industry and fostering international collaborations with like-minded partners such as India to build advanced, sustainable semiconductor supply chains.[56]

India's first commercial semiconductor fabrication is a joint venture between Taiwan's Powerchip Semiconductor Manufacturing Corporation (PSMC) and India's Tata Electronics Private Limited—a joint venture of INR 91,000 crores, which was approved in February 2024.[57] Furthermore, Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company (TSMC), the world's

d Information from an interview by one of the authors with an Indian diplomat aware of these developments.

largest semiconductor manufacturer, has established an office in Bangalore to provide customer support and actively recruits engineers from the Indian Institutes of Technology annually.[58] Additionally, since 2023, Taiwan's Foxconn has been in talks with TSMC and Japan's TMH to set up semiconductor fabrication units in India,[59] following Foxconn's withdrawal from a US$19.5 billion semiconductor joint venture with Indian metals-to-oil conglomerate Vedanta.[60] To attract Foxconn, the Indian government also awarded the Padma Bhushan to its chairman, Young Liu.[61] Now, the Taiwanese company and India's Hindustan Computers Limited (HCL) Group are planning a joint venture to set up a semiconductor outsourced assembly and testing unit.[62] Foxconn is investing US$37.2 million in the project, and will hold an equity stake of 40 percent.[63] Similarly, MediaTek, the fourth largest semiconductor company, has multiple semiconductor research and development centres in India and invests heavily in local talent for advanced chip designs.[64] Elsewhere, United Microelectronics Corporation is also in talks with the Indian government and multiple Indian partners to set up a fabrication lab in India, and Micron Technology in June 2023 announced a new US$2.75 billion ATMP in India.[65]

With the Government of India leading this effort, the India Taipei Association (ITA), Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, India Semiconductor Mission, and SEMI jointly organised a semiconductor forum in May 2024 to foster dialogue and encourage cooperation between India's and Taiwan's semiconductor industries.[66] Under the 2021 "India Semiconductor Mission (ISM)," the Indian government has partnered with 104 universities and institutions nationwide to revamp their semiconductor curricula and create specialised courses, including collaborations with 15 major Taiwanese universities.[67] In March 2025, Taiwanese Deputy National Security Advisor Hsu Szu-Chien, in an interview with the Press Trust of India, proposed an FTA to invigorate their semiconductor collaboration and help reduce India's dependence on the PRC.[68]

With India's pro-investment policy initiatives like the ISM and the Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme, it is positioning itself as a reliable partner for the expansion of Taiwan's semiconductor industry. This technological collaboration is a positive-sum game for both India

and Taiwan, as the former acquires advanced semiconductor technology, attracts investments, creates jobs, and reduces import dependence through diversification, while Taiwan benefits from access to India's vast market, skilled workforce, and a diversified production base to reduce geopolitical risks.

However, the collaboration within the semiconductor industry is just one aspect of increasing cooperation between India and Taiwan in the technological and digital verticals. In 2019, both countries established a joint research centre of artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) at National Chung Cheng University, Chiayi, Taiwan; the Indian Institute of Technology Ropar, Punjab; and Chitkara University, Punjab.[69] Through these initiatives, India and Taiwan are aiming to foster academia-to-academia and academia-to-industry collaboration on AI and ML applications in manufacturing, fintech, smart cities, image analysis, text mining, and big data.

The two countries are also exploring their hardware-software compatibility, with Taiwan's dominance in 5G hardware (chipsets, base stations) fitting seamlessly with India's market demands and expertise. This synergy is evident in potential joint ventures, such as MediaTek supplying 5G chipsets to Indian telecoms like Jio and Airtel, which rely on Nokia and Ericsson gear powered by Taiwanese components.[70] Moreover, the two countries collaborate in renewable energy technologies, robotics, electronic vehicles, biotech, STEM, start-up ecosystems, venture capital funds, smartphone manufacturing, and more. Table 5 highlights all recent collaborations in technological and digital verticals.

Table 5: India-Taiwan Collaborations in Technological and Digital Verticals

Area	Project/ Initiative	Description	Date
Semiconductor Manufacturing	Tata-PSMC-Himax Alliance	Tata Electronics partnered with Taiwan's Powerchip Semiconductor Manufacturing Corporation (PSMC) and Himax Technologies to establish a semiconductor fabrication plant in Gujarat, India, focusing on display and ultralow-power AI sensing products.	March 2025
Smartphone Manufacturing	Tata-Pegatron iPhone Plant Acquisition	Tata Electronics acquired a 60% stake in Pegatron Technology India, managing an iPhone manufacturing plant near Chennai, strengthening its position as an Apple supplier.	January 2025
Artificial Intelligence	AI-Based Pandemic Prevention System	National Chung Cheng University (Taiwan) and SRM Institute of Science and Technology (India) developed a system featuring automatic body monitoring, facial recognition, and social contact analysis to aid in pandemic prevention.	March 2021

Pillars of Cooperation: Economy, Trade and Technology

Area	Project/ Initiative	Description	Date
Electric Vehicles (EVs)	Gogoro-Belrise Battery Swapping Network	Gogoro partnered with Belrise Industries and the Maharashtra state government to invest US$2.5 billion in battery charging and swapping infrastructure, promoting electric vehicle adoption in India.	January 2023
Renewable Energy	Solar Power Collaboration	India and Taiwan explored partnerships in solar energy technologies to create alternatives to China's dominance in the renewable energy sector.	November 2024
Robotics & Automation	Taiwan Excellence Initiatives	Taiwanese firms demonstrated commitment to innovation and collaboration with India's manufacturing sector, focusing on automation and smart manufacturing solutions.	August 2024
Biotechnology	Biotech and Pharma Collaborations	Taiwan sought collaborations with India to enhance its position in the global life sciences market, aiming to counter China's dominance in pharmaceuticals and biotechnology.	March 2025

Pillars of Cooperation: Economy, Trade and Technology

Area	Project/ Initiative	Description	Date
STEM Education	Scholarships and Academic Opportunities	**India-Taiwan Joint Research –** Collaborative projects in AI, biotech, green energy, and aerospace under a bilateral science and technology cooperation program. **Taiwan Education Centre at IIT Guwahati** – Established to enhance academic and industry collaboration, focusing on STEM and technological advancements. **Higher Education Exposition & Job Fair** – Taiwanese universities engaged with Indian students to promote STEM education and research opportunities.	2024
Startup Ecosystem	India-Taiwan Startup Bridge	An initiative to foster deeper collaboration between the startup ecosystems of both countries, enabling startups, investors, incubators, and corporations to connect and expand globally.	Ongoing

Area	Project/ Initiative	Description	Date
Venture Capital	Yali Capital Deep Tech Venture Fund	Yali Capital launched an INR 810 crore venture fund to back early-stage deep tech startups in India, reflecting growing interest in deep tech investments.	July 2024

Sources: Authors' own, using various open sources.

Potential Areas of Collaboration

As Taiwan and India deepen their partnership across multiple fronts, newer avenues of collaboration are emerging beyond the traditional economic and technological domains. These include countering disinformation, enhancing joint understanding of Chinese military mobilisation, promoting Mandarin language training, and exploring cooperation in space. Both countries are well positioned to share expertise and build mutual capacities.

Addressing Misinformation and Disinformation

According to political scientists Nyhan and Reifler, "Misinformation consists of false or misleading information that is shared without deliberate intent to mislead, often because the individual believes it to be true."[71] Similarly, political scientists Benkler, Faris and Roberts describe disinformation as, "False or misleading information that is deliberately created and disseminated to deceive and manipulate."[72]

In 2003, the PRC revised the "Political Works Guidelines for the People's Liberation Army". This revised edition introduced China's three warfares: opinions warfare, psychological warfare, and legal warfare.[73] Some recent additions to these concepts are political warfare, external propaganda warfare, and cognitive domain warfare.[e]

The latest 2020 edition of *The Science of Military Strategy*, a textbook for PLA officers, discusses cognitive warfare as a force multiplier for improving combat capabilities.[74] All of these concepts combine to form Chinese influence operations. As political scientist Kania highlights, these are primarily employed—both in peacetime and wartime—to control the prevailing discourse and influence perceptions in a way that advances China's interests.[75] They are also deployed to control the adversary's behavioural patterns while limiting opponents' ability to respond.[76] Influence operations have long been a part of Chinese coercion techniques, with references found in the literature written by Mao Zedong and in practice during the Mao era following the formation of the PRC.[77]

e This claim is based on authors' own understanding and reading of the PLA over the years.

Table 6: Mao-Era Information Warfare in Today's Terms

Modern IW Concept	Mao-Era Equivalent
Psychological Warfare	Indoctrination, struggle sessions, mass rallies, Political indoctrination, morale warfare
Public Opinion Warfare	Propaganda campaigns, Red Guards, *dazibao*
Legal Warfare	Ideological labeling, party control of legality
Cyber/Cognitive Warfare	Unified thought control, re-education
Strategic Messaging	Peking Review, "anti-imperialist" framing
Information Asymmetry	Using time, space, and ideology to offset material weakness
Cultural Weaponisation	Use of emotions and symbols as war fighting tools

Sources: Authors' own, using various open sources[78]

Recent studies highlight that Xi Jinping has adopted Mao-era tactics to expand China's influence operations, aiming to shape international discourse and curb dissent beyond its borders.[79] Taiwan is arguably one of the most impacted countries by China's influence operations. Such operations involve a network of Chinese state and CCP institutions, including the Taiwan Affairs Office of the State Council, the CCP's United Front Work Department, the PLA's Political Work Bureau and newly formed Cyber Force, the Central Propaganda Department, the Communist Youth League, the Central Foreign Affairs Commission, and the Central Leading Group for Publicity, Ideology and Cultural Work, as well as the CCP's liaison department.

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However, certain activities have also been traced back to individual private firms or hacking syndicates, possibly state-sponsored or backed by certain units of the former PLA Strategic Support Force (PLA SSF) (now the PLA Cyber Force).[80] These activities range from organised personal attacks, propaganda dissemination via mainstream and online media, and election interference. For instance, Taiwan's Doublethink Labs has documented Chinese influence campaigns during the 2020 and 2024 elections that pushed narratives such as "Taiwan's martial law past, the failure of democracy, DPP's untrustworthiness, Tsai Ing-wen's failures, Taiwan's co-dependence on China, and its status as an American client state."[81] Moreover, during the 2024 elections, a 300-page e-book titled *The Secret History of Tsai Ing-wen* began to circulate on social media and via email, containing scandalous—and false—allegations about the President gaining power through sexual promiscuity.[82]

After Taiwan, India and the United States are among the primary victims of China's disinformation campaigns.[83] Reports indicate that China has used social media to spread false narratives about the Indian border dispute, seeking to amplify social tensions in India's conflict-ridden northeastern state of Manipur, and running campaigns against the Indian government and the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) during the 2024 General Elections and subsequent provincial elections.[84]

Furthermore, the Indian diaspora in Taiwan has also been targeted. During and after the 2024 India-Taiwan labour mobility MoU negotiations, Chinese disinformation campaigns circulated harmful stereotypes about Indian workers. In response, Taiwan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Labour issued public statements highlighting and condemning the Chinese disinformation campaigns.[85]

Thus, the battle against China's disinformation warfare is a major potential area of convergence for India and Taiwan in the near and long term. The island country has developed a multi-institutional approach to countering Chinese disinformation campaigns, involving a network of government institutions like the Ministry of National Defense, the Presidential Office, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and other relevant ministries, depending on the nature of the campaign. This is complemented by active civil society

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networks like Taiwan FactCheck Center, Doublethink Labs, and other international tech platforms. Furthermore, Taiwan undertakes a rigorous public education campaign at provincial, school, and institutional levels to spread awareness. However, India is still developing an ecosystem that involves government institutions, legal frameworks, cybersecurity and defences, and public awareness measures to counter Chinese influence operations. The Indian government is acutely aware of the task at hand due to the size of the country and population, as well as the sprawling digital ecosystem.

In 2024, the Indian Union Home Minister, Amit Shah, emphasised the need for international cooperation against disinformation campaigns.[86] Earlier, in December 2023, a workshop on cybersecurity was undertaken by Taiwan, India, and the United States under the Global Cooperation and Training Framework in New Delhi, demonstrating the commitment to tackling these challenges.[87] However, there is immense potential and need for cooperation between India and Taiwan at the government, institutional, societal, and personnel levels. There is a need for a shared strategic framework jointly developed by India, Taiwan, and other Quad countries against international disinformation and misinformation warfare campaigns. At the very least, this could include building resilience through shared tools, resources, and real-time information across public and private institutions, and co-developing AI tools to detect disinformation, flag fake content, and trace their source vectors.

Taiwan fits into this due to its Mandarin language capabilities and robust defences against Chinese influence operations over the years. Conversely, India brings a large democratic digital ecosystem, deep technological talent, and experience in managing a complex and diverse information environment. But more importantly, both India and Taiwan have been constant victims of Chinese coercion. Together, they can co-create frameworks, technologies, and policy models that bolster institutional and societal resilience against China's disinformation and influence operations in the Indo-Pacific region and beyond.

Understanding Chinese Military Mobilisation and the PLA as a Discipline

Not only in information operations, but India and Taiwan are two major victims of the PRC's armed coercion. Although the theatre commands, military services employed, and operational terrain differ in the cases of India and Taiwan, patterns of force mobilisation—especially under the new theatre command's brigade-battalion structure—and the PLA's latest 'basic form of operations' – 'integrated joint operations'—are similar.[88] The PLA's Eastern Theatre Command (ETC) is operationally responsible for the PRC's Taiwan contingency.[89] It has mobilised forces at least five times to conduct military exercises around Taiwan since August 2022, when former US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi visited the island country.[90] As meticulously documented by scholars Lewis and Brown, the PRC has started using the Chinese military to exert grey-zone pressures on Taiwan and has violated Taiwan's de facto Air Defence Identification Zone (ADIZ) around 10,000 times.[91] These include crewed air patrols into Taiwan's ADIZ,[f] circumnavigations around Taiwan, crossings of the median line, use of uncrewed aerial vehicles, surveillance balloons, and PLA Navy (PLAN) vessels in the Taiwan Strait.[92]

Similarly, the India-China border has witnessed at least five major stand-offs in the past decade. These include the 2013 Depsang stand-off, the 2014 Chumar and Demchok stand-offs, the 2015 Burtse stand-off, the 73-day stand-off at the Doklam Plateau near the China-India-Bhutan tri-junction, and the ongoing 2020 stand-off at multiple points in eastern Ladakh.[93] However, these are just the more prominent incidents, as official data from the Government of India suggest that Chinese transgressions on the Indian side of the Line of Actual Control (LAC) have increased since 2015.[94] One of the author's personal data extrapolations suggests that China has transgressed the LAC between 5,500 and 7,500 times across the western, central, and eastern sectors in the past 15 years.[g]

f Taiwan's ADIZ overlaps with China's, including airspace near Fujian, Zhejiang, and Guangdong provinces, and across the Taiwan Strait, East China Sea, and South China Sea. https://amti.csis.org/the-skys-the-limit-comparing-chinas-adiz-intrusions/

g One of the authors' forthcoming publication on the India-China border dispute.

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More importantly, with China establishing National Defence Mobilisation Offices (NDMOs) across the country since December 2022, a new pattern of national defence mobilisation is emerging that integrates joint efforts between military and civilian agencies.[95] Under the NDMS system, the PRC would be able to harness political, economic, social, cultural, technological, and other civilian resources in peacetime and wartime.[96] Although these reforms are still in the nascent stages, once operational, the NDMS would allow the PRC to mobilise society and harness civilian and military resources more systematically and institutionally in case of a potential escalation on the eastern, southern, or western fronts involving Taiwan, the United States, or India.[97] Despite operating in different theatres and geographies, the patterns of mobilisation preceding the PLA escalation–ranging from political and psychological signalling to logistic build-up, the troop movements involving the PLA, People's Armed Police (PAP), armed militia, and civilian resources, and the infrastructure activity–would probably be similar, if not uniform. While much ambiguity remains regarding the emerging patterns of PLA mobilisation, this represents a potential area of convergence for India and Taiwan.

Furthermore, there is no recent information on how China mobilises its troops, as the last major war that China fought was in 1979 with Vietnam. However, the partial mobilisation of the PLA during the COVID-19 pandemic, the India-China stand-off, and the mobilisation for military exercises around Taiwan provide valuable insights into the Chinese armed forces' organisation, deployment, and sustenance after Xi's military reforms. These instances reveal evolving patterns in logistics, command structures, and civil-military integration during non-war and near-war contingencies. India and Taiwan could share notes on the rotation of group armies, rotation of combined armed brigades within theatre commands, deployment of support brigades, shifts in transport nodes, and more. Jointly cataloguing the emerging patterns of PLA mobilisation and developing sophisticated early warning capabilities would enhance deterrence against Chinese military coercion on both the eastern and western fronts.

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Beyond mobilisation, which is just one aspect of Chinese military studies, the two countries also have the potential to share notes on multiple aspects of the PLA's operations. Political scientist Fravel, in his book *Active Defense*, provides evidence from Chinese-language literature that Taiwan is consistently regarded as the PRC's 'primary strategic direction'.[98] He also argues that India is an increasingly important secondary theatre, especially for border defence, deterrence, and preparation for localised, high-altitude conflict.[99] India also figures in China's planning for strategic depth, two-front pressures, and managing its western periphery.[100] Thus, with the existential threat for one and the revisionist-coercive threat for another, it is important that governments, institutions, academic and policy communities, armed forces, and media study the PLA as a discipline–an aspect currently missing in both India and Taiwan.

Despite being direct targets of China's military coercion, India and Taiwan have developed a limited understanding of the PLA, shaped largely by their respective regional contingencies. Taiwan's focus remains on the Eastern and Southern Theatre Commands, which oversee the Cross-Strait and South China Sea disputes. Similarly, India worries about the Western Theatre Command (WTC), alongside the Tibet and Xinjiang Military Districts, responsible for India-China border contingencies. This compartmentalisation has hindered a holistic understanding of the PLA as a military institution, which has been outsourced to the United States. Consequently, this heavy reliance on US-produced PLA scholarship has fostered a predominantly America-centric strategic discourse, rather than a locally rooted understanding of "local wars under high-technology conditions", the strategic focus of Chinese military strategy since 1993. Therefore, a joint effort by India and Taiwan to share resources and cultivate a comprehensive, regionally nuanced understanding of the PLA as a discipline represents a key area of convergence.

Other Potential Areas of Cooperation

India's China-watching academic, diplomatic, and military communities are handicapped due to the lack of Chinese language skills. This limitation restricts access to primary sources and impedes state-of-the-art research, ultimately weakening India's policy-making ability and rendering its China policy reactive.[101] Taiwan offers a solution by enabling intensive language training for Indian civilian, diplomatic, and military communities. However, the language courses in Taiwan are generalised, with limited emphasis on specialised military, diplomatic, and strategic studies and Party-polity-specific language training.[h] This is a potential area of convergence for Taiwan and India, with an assured positive response from Indian diplomatic, military, and academic communities.

Similarly, there is potential for the two countries to collaborate on space cooperation, as their space programmes have complementary strengths. The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) is a flagbearer in launching small, low-cost satellites, while Taiwan's National Space Organisation (NSO) lacks launch capacity and relies on the United States and France.[102] Taiwan's Formosat series could be an ideal payload for the Indian Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV) missions. Furthermore, inspired by Ukraine's use of Starlink, Taiwan is working on its low Earth orbit (LEO) satellite communication systems for improved deterrence.[103]

Additionally, Taiwan needs qualified migrant workers, while India needs Chinese language teachers. Thus, engaging in academic and industrial partnerships and exchanges can create mutually beneficial opportunities for India and Taiwan. It is a win-win situation, with these collaborations having the potential to deepen people-to-people ties and enhance bilateral relations. Finally, collaboration across multiple sectors—including joint initiatives in green energy, smart grid technology, big data and machine learning, tourism, biotechnology, healthcare, and cybersecurity—offers immense potential. These partnerships can drive innovation, address shared challenges, and strengthen strategic ties between the two democracies.

h One of the authors has stayed in Taiwan (Kaohsiung and Taipei) and pursued all the Chinese language courses at the language training centres.

Limitations Within this Framework

Within the dual-track framework, structural realism[104] and asymmetric interdependence theory[105] suggest that systemic pressures and material constraints inhibit India-Taiwan cooperation from materialising fully. Additionally, strategic caution due to the anarchic system and power differentials reinforces these limitations. As a result, the pace, depth, and visibility of strategic cooperation, especially in sensitive domains.

Table 7: Material Constraints and Systemic Pressures within India-Taiwan Cooperation

Material Constraints	Systemic Pressures
Lack of formal diplomatic ties	China's dominant regional power
Military and security asymmetry	Global "One China" policy system
Economic asymmetry	Global power dynamics and balancing behaviour
Dependence on China for trade	Economic globalisation and interdependence
Regional strategic calculations	Strategic caution reinforced by systemic anarchy

Source: Authors' own

For instance, despite all the noise around Taiwan's New Southbound Policy, India does not figure highly in the island country's worldview.[106] It is visible through Taiwan's diplomatic and economic policy initiatives, as well as its cultural and people-to-people connections. For instance, Taiwan has become a primary destination for Indians to learn the Chinese

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language, especially after the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020.[107] Taiwan uses standardised textbooks by the National Taiwan Normal University (NTNU) to teach the Chinese language to foreigners. India does not appear even once in these standardised textbooks, while case studies centred on the US,[i] Europe, and China dominate. This reflects Taiwan's US-, Europe-, and China-centric worldview in Taiwanese society.

Similarly, an area of focus for the Taiwanese diplomatic corps is the US and China.[108] This is followed by Japan, South Korea, Southeast Asian countries, and Western Europe.[109] However, India's importance has increased in the past few years, and under the previous and current DPP governments, there has been a genuine attempt to reach out to and engage with India. This is also evident in Taiwan's recent initiative to open a third representative office in Mumbai, following those in New Delhi and Chennai. However, given Taiwan's limited capabilities and resources, India remains an untapped but promising partner in its diplomatic outreach.

Furthermore, despite Taiwan's recently emerging bipartisan support for engaging with India, there is still ambiguity within sections of Taiwanese polity and society about dealing with India. A section of Taiwanese polity remains soft on the PRC and views the US, India, and other like-minded countries with scepticism. However, this has reduced with the rise of Xi Jinping and the deterioration of China-Taiwan relations over the past eight years. Nevertheless, the existence of this section within mainstream Taiwanese politics is a major hindrance, restricting Taiwanese foreign policy to a step-forward, two-steps-back approach.

Finally, there is a major public perception gap about India within Taiwanese society. Taiwan views India through outdated stereotypes, often shaped by media portrayals, selective news coverage, and historical perceptions rather than contemporary realities. Many Taiwanese people, if not all, still associate India with poverty, overpopulation, or spirituality—while remaining unaware of its recent technological advancements, booming start-up ecosystem, thriving economy, and growing geopolitical influence on the world stage.

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i One of the authors has studied all the textbooks – both 2003 and 2017 editions.

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Similarly, Taiwan is hardly on India's diplomatic radar.[110] Both countries have only grown closer in the last two decades, when India-China relations deteriorated. However, this does not mean that China hyphenates India's Taiwan policy. It is much more than just indulgence with Taiwan for deterrence against China. As highlighted in the framework section, India has refrained from leveraging Taiwan as a tool against China and instead prioritised reaping economic benefits from this partnership. Nevertheless, India-China relations have influenced India's evolving approach to Taiwan. For instance, in the past, India was cautious about China's sensitivities and dealt with Taiwan on a case-by-case basis to avoid unnecessary escalation with Beijing. Since 2010, however, India stopped mentioning the 'One China' policy publicly[111] after Beijing issued staple visas to visitors from Arunachal Pradesh in 2010.[112] In 2014, the former Indian External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj made it clear to her Chinese counterpart Wang Yi that India would only support the "One China" policy if the PRC supported the "One India" policy.[113] Following a series of stand-offs and China's raising of the abrogation of Article 370 at the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), India has maintained ambiguity on the "One China" policy by neither discarding nor affirming it.[114] Taiwan has appreciated this, as it has benefited from the India-China problems. Furthermore, India's engagement with Taiwan surged notably after the 2020 Galwan Valley clash. This highlights that despite India's Taiwan policy being independent of the India-China relations, it remains reactive to the broader bilateral dynamics.

Additionally, despite three decades of India's Look East policy and nearly 15 years of the Act East policy, Taiwan has not emerged as a pillar in India's regional strategy. This is partly due to geopolitical considerations and the limitations imposed by the comparative economies of scale that China and Taiwan offer. In the past, the opportunity cost of engaging with Taiwan by upsetting China's sensitivities has outweighed the strategic and economic benefits that Taipei had to offer. However, this has slowly changed in the past two decades, and as highlighted throughout this essay, under the current Indian administration, the bilateral engagement on political, economic, and technological verticals has increased.

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Similarly, Indian societal understanding of Taiwan is extremely limited. Indians often conflate Taiwan with Thailand, Hong Kong, or as a part of China. Moreover, it is rarely discussed in the Indian National Parliament or national security circles and had barely featured in the Indian media before the 2020 India-China Galwan clash. Since then, its relevance has grown due to the Himalayan conflict.[115] Furthermore, unlike in the US or Europe, the pro-Taiwan lobby in India is not that strong, lacking both institutional influence and sustained political backing.[116] While there is growing interest about Taiwan among strategic thinkers and parts of the business community, this has not yet translated into a coherent constituency capable of shaping India's Taiwan policy.

Finally, India's general domestic problems—such as bureaucratic inertia, limited labour and land reforms, regulatory uncertainty, and a slow judicial process—coupled with Taiwan-specific limitations like limited fiscal space, infrastructure deficiencies, and challenges in attracting foreign investment for the semiconductor fabrication industry, may hinder the full realisation of this relationship.

Policy Recommendations and Conclusion

This paper recommends that India pursue a soft-hedging strategy that leverages asymmetric economic interdependence with Taiwan while preserving its strategic ambiguity. Put simply, this strategy maximises economic and limited strategic gains without triggering a systemic backlash from the dominant power—China. By continuing to adopt this framework of calibrated soft balancing through geo-economic and technological engagement with Taiwan, India can enhance its strategic space while mitigating escalation risks inherent in an anarchic and power-asymmetric system. Furthermore, India should consider institutionalising functional cooperation in the strategic space, such as resource and information sharing, to enhance understanding of the PLA and its activities and establish credible deterrence.

The paper recommends the following policy measures to enhance the India-Taiwan bilateral relationship:

1. **Institutionalise functional cooperation**: India and Taiwan should deepen sector-specific ties (semiconductors, education, critical technology, digital economy) through governmental and independent institutional MoUs, working groups, think tanks, and Track-1.5 dialogues, without triggering formal diplomatic escalation. This should be replicated in the strategic spaces, where think tanks and independent scholars could collaborate on issues of vital interest. Measures allowing Taiwanese scholars, and policy and security practitioners into India on "scholarships" would be a starting step towards it.

2. **Enhance strategic ambiguity**: India must maintain its "One China" policy formally, but continue expanding unofficial political, economic, technological, and security exchanges with Taiwan, preserving deniability and flexibility. Most importantly, this should continue to be independent despite India's difficulties with China.

3. **Diversify supply chains and technology collaboration**: India should actively integrate Taiwanese firms into its "China+1" strategy, particularly in electronics, ICT, and other critical supply chains,

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thereby creating long-term and mutually beneficial economic interdependence.

4. **Strengthen resilience to Chinese pressure**: India should invest in cyber cooperation, critical infrastructure protection, and joint academic research with Taiwan on Chinese coercion and security issues. Collaborations with platforms such as Taiwan FactCheck Center, Doublethink Labs, and other international tech initiatives should be pursued, along with efforts to replicate such platforms in India.

5. **Promote multilateral linkages**: Use forums like the Global Cooperation and Training Framework (GCTF) involving Taiwan, the US, Japan, and others to embed Taiwan into India's broader Indo-Pacific engagement without direct bilateral confrontation. Use the Quadrilateral platform for soft indulgence of Taiwan on issues of mutual concern in the Indo-Pacific region.

6. **Academic exchanges**: Indian universities and government agencies need Chinese language teachers, and India and Taiwan should institutionalise the flow of teachers to India on a regular basis. Furthermore, allow cross-exchange of scholarship on strategic issues. Create fellowships like the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Taiwan Fellowship, allowing Taiwanese scholars in India for research and networking.

7. **Strategic clarity on territorial claims:** Historically, the Republic of China (ROC) has regarded parts of Arunachal Pradesh as "South Tibet," rejecting the McMahon Line established during the 1914 Simla Convention. On Aksai Chin, while the ROC has not explicitly claimed the territory, it has consistently rejected border agreements made by the People's Republic of China (PRC), such as the 1963 Sino-Pakistan Agreement that ceded parts of the disputed Kashmir region to China. Although Taiwan—especially under the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) government—has de-emphasised these historical claims in recent years, clearer statements and explicit condemnation of Chinese aggression would strengthen India–Taiwan relations.

Policy Recommendations and Conclusion

8. **Continuation:** Continue the ongoing engagement in trade, technology, culture, and digital cooperation while exploring newer avenues for collaboration in emerging technologies, green energy, and public health.

9. **Deepen policy focus on South Asia—especially India:** Taiwan's Foreign Ministry and think tanks should strengthen the South Asia policy division under the existing New Southbound Policy framework to prioritise India-specific research, outreach, and partnerships.

10. **Streamline visa and talent attraction:** Taiwan should ease visa regulations for Indian scholars, students, and professionals—including multi-year research fellowships and tech visas—to build a sustainable talent pipeline and deepen people-to-people ties.[j]

India–Taiwan relations are shaped by potential and constrained by caution. Both sides understand the value of closer ties especially in semiconductors, education, Mandarin learning, supply chains, and countering authoritarian coercion. However, their cooperation is hindered by the PRC factor, lack of institutional support, and the absence of a long-term strategic vision. These hurdles can be overcome through incremental engagement across different verticals, quiet diplomacy, pragmatic collaboration, and seizing low-risk, high-reward opportunities.

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