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(CENJOWS)

GEO-STRATEGIC SCAN

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MAJOR GAS LEAK FROM NORD STREAM PIPELINE

*Indian PM Modi
tells Russia's Putin:
"Now is not an era
of war"*

China's Xi reappears on
state TV amid rumors
over absence

**US DEFENDS
ARMS SALES TO
PAKISTAN
FOLLOWING
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China's Xi reappears on state TV amid rumors over absence

<https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/chinas-xi-reappears-state-tv-amid-rumors-absence-90576982>

<https://www.indiatoday.in/world/story/china-president-xi-jinping-rumours-over-absence-video-2005526-2022-09-27>

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/world/china/another-top-chinese-official-indicted-on-bribery-charges-ahead-of-cpcs-key-meeting/articleshow/94534793.cms>



Source: CNN

Chinese President Xi Jinping reappeared on state television on 27 September when he visited an exhibition of the Communist Party at the Beijing Exhibition Hall on the theme of "Forging Ahead into the New Era." This was his first appearance in public life after his return from the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation summit in Samarkand on September 16, which sparked rumours about his absence from public events ahead of next month's key Congress of the ruling party.

COMMENTS

He was accompanied by Premier Li Keqiang and other top CPC officials. In his speech, Xi highlighted the CPC's and his country's achievements under his leadership over the past 10 years. He called for "concerted efforts to forge ahead determinedly toward a new victory of socialism with Chinese characteristics".

According to observers Jinping being absent from the public could have been due to the seven-day mandatory quarantine at a designated place rule. The quarantine is followed by a three-day homestay as per the official guidelines for those returning from abroad under China's dynamic Zero Covid policy.

Reasons for the Sudden rumour about Xi jinping

Two former ministers were sentenced to death and four officials were sent to life in jail this week in China. According to reports, the six were part of a 'political faction'. Currently, the Communist Party is running an anti-corruption campaign across the country and it is believed that the six were opponents of Jinping. The news of Jinping's house arrest is believed to have been started and spread by the anti-Jinping lobby.

The purge of top Chinese officials of the ruling Communist Party continued on 29 September with another top official being indicted - Zhang Yongze, former vice chairman of the provincial government Tibet Autonomous Region, has been indicted on charges of taking bribes, state-run Xinhua news agency.

His absence sparked rumours of tensions within the the CPC, which is all set to hold its once-in-five-years Congress on October 16 in which 69-year-old Xi is widely expected to get endorsement for a record third term. Refuting the rumours and speculation, the CPC on Sunday announced that all delegates totalling nearly 2,300 were "elected" for the Congress under the guidelines set by Xi Jinping.

China's opaque system frequently gives rise to rumours of political infighting or attempted coups, despite the stable nature of the authoritarian surveillance state that cracks down relentlessly on any sign of dissent. Xi is widely considered China's most powerful leader in decades, has no known active challengers.

It is not unusual for Chinese leaders to drop out of sight for days or even weeks, for example to attend informal political meetings held at the beachside resort of Beidaihe each summer. However, the timing of Xi's absence just weeks before the convening of a key party congress held once every five years provided grist to the rumour mill.

Xi calls for 'solid protection' for Chinese personnel working on CPEC projects in Pakistan as he meets Sharif

<https://www.indiatoday.in/world/story/xi-calls-for-solid-protection-chinese-personnel-working-cpec-projects-pakistan-meets-sharif-2001259-2022-09-16>

Xi and Sharif met on the sidelines of the Shanghai Cooperation Summit in Samarkand during which the two countries signed documents on cooperation in railway, e-commerce and other areas (Details of the agreements were not disclosed). President Xi Jinping called on Pakistan to provide "solid protection" for hundreds of Chinese working on the CPEC projects in the country.

COMMENTS

China has deployed hundreds of its personnel in a host of projects of the USD 60 billion China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) in Pakistan. Recent reports said trouble is brewing between the all-weather friends with China increasingly getting critical of Pakistan's failure in protecting Chinese workers who came under periodic attacks from the militant groups. In April, three Chinese were killed in a suicide bombing in Karachi University carried out by the separatist Baloch Liberation Army. Some of the other attacks were also attributed to radical Islamic militant outfits in Pakistan.

With recurring attacks, China is reportedly pressing Pakistan to permit the Chinese agencies to provide security for their personnel which, according to the media reports, Islamabad is resisting as it meant boots on the ground for China's armed forces.

According to Pakistani media reports, China is also concerned about the slow pace of progress of the CPEC projects. Chinese investors were also reportedly irked by Islamabad's failure to honour its contractual obligations under the CPEC framework.

US, allies push for UN rights body debate on Xinjiang abuses

<https://www.dailypioneer.com/2022/world/us--allies-push-for-un-rights-body-debate-on-xinjiang-abuses.html>

The United States and several Western allies presented a proposal on 26 September for the UN's main human rights body to hold a special debate over reported rights abuses and violations against Uyghurs and other Muslim minorities in China's western Xinjiang region. A core group of countries including Britain, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden were behind a draft resolution at the Human Rights Council that would call for a debate on Xinjiang at the council's next session in early 2023.

COMMENTS

It amounts to the latest geopolitical salvo between the West and Beijing in the wake of recent tensions over issues like the future of Taiwan. If approved, the resolution would mark the first time that human rights concerns in China have been formally put on the council's agenda.

Diplomats in Geneva, where the 47-nation council is based, have been on the lookout for whether Western countries might be able to muster enough political capital to present and push through a resolution on Xinjiang before the council's current session ends on October 7. The draft resolution would only convene a debate in the council and stops short of calling for stronger tools in the council's arsenal to monitor rights abuses, such as convening independent experts to scrutinize countries' activities.

While less intrusive than it might have been, the draft proposal is likely to rankle China, which has pushed back on attempts to single it out and hold it to account over the Xinjiang rights issue. It would also set a formal date for the council to consider Xinjiang.

Some Western countries have sought to build pressure — or at least maintain it — on China after the office of former UN human rights chief Michelle Bachelet issued a long-delayed report last month that suggested “crimes against humanity” and other wrongs took place against Uyghurs and other Muslim minorities as part of China's campaign against violent extremism in Xinjiang in recent years.

Visit of External Affairs Minister to the United States of America (September 18-28, 2022)

https://www.mea.gov.in/press-releases.htm?dtl/35729/Visit_of_External_Affairs_Minister_to_the_United_States_of_America_September_18_2022

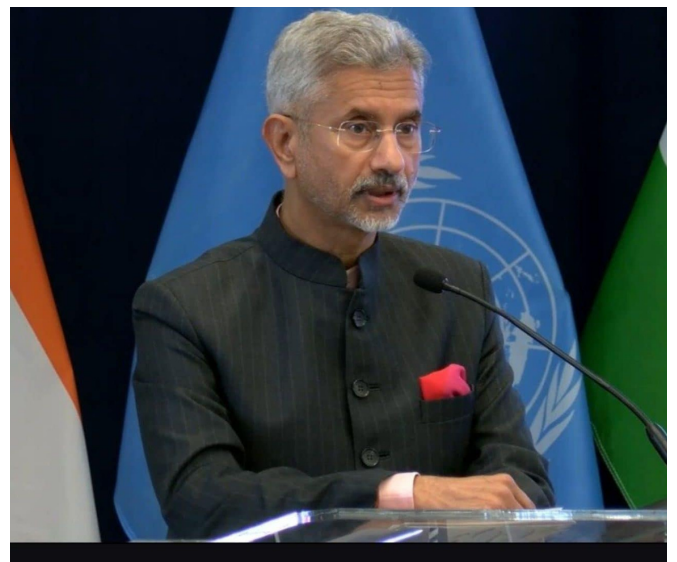
<https://zeenews.india.com/india/india-us-relationship-not-narrowed-to-bilateral-gains-eam-s-jaishankar-after-four-day-us-visit-2515604.html>

‘India-US relationship not narrowed to bilateral gains’: EAM S Jaishankar after four-day US visit

<https://zeenews.india.com/india/india-us-relationship-not-narrowed-to-bilateral-gains-eam-s-jaishankar-after-four-day-us-visit-2515604.html>

External Affairs Minister (EAM), Dr. S. Jaishankar visited the United States of America from 18-28 September 2022. The first phase of the visit was to New York where he led the Indian delegation for the High-Level Week at the 77th Session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA). The highlights were his address at the High Level Session on 24 September and his meetings with UN Secretary General H.E. Mr. António Guterres and Mr. Csaba Korosi, President of the UNGA for its 77th session. In his address to the UNGA, Dr. Jaishankar underlined that India believes that multipolarity, rebalancing, fair globalisation and reformed multilateralism cannot be kept in abeyance. He said that the call for reformed multilateralism — with reforms of the Security Council at its core — enjoys considerable support among UN members. "It does so because of the widespread recognition that the current architecture is anachronistic and ineffective. It is also perceived as deeply unfair, denying entire continents and regions a voice in a forum that deliberates their future," he said. He cited US President Biden's articulation of the need for an increase in the number of both permanent and non-permanent representatives of the UN Security Council (UNSC) and Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov's mention of India and Brazil as worthy candidates for permanent membership within the Council.

He also indirectly called out nations for their discordant views on global terrorism. Hinting at China, he said that terrorism should not be used as a "political tool" and that terror listings at the UN blocked without assigning reason challenges common sense. "Having borne the brunt of cross border terrorism for decades, India firmly advocates a 'zero-tolerance' approach. In our view, there is no justification for any act of terrorism, regardless of motivation. And no rhetoric, however sanctimonious can ever cover up blood stains," he said in the UN General Debate. He emphasised that the Security Council must send an unambiguous and unequivocal message on this count.



Source: News18



Source: [thehindubusinessline.com](https://www.thehindubusinessline.com)

His engagements covered a wide spectrum – he hosted a Ministerial Meeting of the G4 (India, Brazil, Japan, Germany) and participated in a meeting of the L69 – a group consisting of the developing countries of the world. His other plurilateral meetings involved various geopolitical groupings such as QUAD, IBSA, BRICS, while he also had bilateral meetings with Foreign Ministers of the G20 and UNSC member states, amongst others.

Post his UN engagements, he visited the US capital Washington DC for four days (25-28 September) for bilateral meetings with US interlocutors. This included his counterpart Secretary of State Antony Blinken, Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin, Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo, National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan, and five lawmakers, including Senator Mark Warner and Congressman Ami Bera. He also met with members of the American business community and had a planned interaction with the Indian Diaspora.

During his bilateral talks with US Secretary of Defence Lloyd Austin in the Pentagon, Dr. Jaishankar said that the Indo-Pacific's stability, security and prosperity should be secured as the global situation has become very challenging. Both expressed commitments to deepening bilateral defence cooperation and expanding information-sharing and logistics cooperation to drive deeper operational coordination between the US and Indian militaries. Bilateral defence industrial collaboration and military exercises between India and US were also discussed during the talks. Both reaffirmed their commitment to working together as steadfast partners to 'advance the US and India's shared vision for a free, open, and inclusive Indo-Pacific.' The joint statement issued after the meeting also said that the two sides are looking forward to the launch of a new defence dialogue later this year as they work more closely across space, cyber, artificial intelligence, and other domains. QUAD and European Union also found mention during the meeting.

Post his meeting with US Secretary of State Antony Blinken, the EAM said that India and the United States do not share a narrow relationship committed solely to bilateral interests, but one that affects the rest of the globe, especially the Indo-Pacific. He stated that both countries have recognised that this is a relationship with great capability and potential and that there is still much opportunity for growth. He also said that even though our positions are different, both countries give each other ample space to work collaterally.

He used the opportunity of his interaction with the Indian diaspora to make some scathing statements against the mainstream American media for their “biased” coverage of India. He also questioned Biden administration’s approval of a \$450-million sustenance package for F-16 fleet of Pakistan, ostensibly to fight terrorism, stating that America’s relationship with Pakistan has “not served” either of the two countries. He also lauded the Indian-American community for their contribution to the change in the relationship between India and America. Emphasising on India’s growing prominence on the world stage, he said “Today our opinions count, our views matter and... have actually today the ability to shape the big issues of our time.”

COMMENTS

The EAM’s visit to the US was significant for the impressive engagements across the geopolitical spectrum. The most important takeaways from the visit include the growing relevance of India to the world community and the concomitant confidence of the national leadership in global forums and in dealing with the US. This was evident in the EAM’s assertive stance and confident calling out of inconsistent actions by states and agencies.

The growing support for UN reforms and for India’s candidature for permanent membership of the UNSC is evident after years of promotion and negotiations. The EAM himself stated, “This time something has shifted, we've got some tailwind behind us.”

The wide ranging engagement with the US government underlined the positive trajectory of the bilateral relations. The US willingness for a new defence dialogue across multiple domains augurs well for the engagements between the militaries of the two nations as also for the defence industrial ties. The repeated mention of the Indo-Pacific and QUAD indicates the common interests that would be critical drivers of the strategic engagement. The positive and significant contribution of the Indian-American community in the improvement of relations was reiterated and needs constant nurturing.

The diversity in interests and views of the two nations is at times stark. This was evident in the US response to the EAM’s insinuation on the support to Pakistan F-16 program. Even as Secretary Blinken engaged with Pakistan FM Bilawal Bhutto Zardari to mark the 75th anniversary of US-Pakistan relations, he justified the move by stating that the support for the F-16s is about sustaining an existing programme and not a new commitment. The official statement by US State Department spokesperson Ned Price said, “We don’t view our relationship with Pakistan, and on the other hand we don’t view our relationship with India as in relation to one another. These are both partners of ours with different points of emphasis in each, and we look to both as partners because we do have in many cases shared values, we do have in many cases shared interests.”

However, as is evident from different statements, both nations have accepted this divergence and have concurred that these would not be allowed to impact the quality and depth of the relationship. This underscores the importance that each lays on the continuing enhancement of relations.

Russian President Vladimir Putin gives a speech during an event to mark the anniversary of Russia's statehood in Veliky Novgorod on September 21, 2022

TIME magazine:<https://time.com/6215610/putin-nuclear-weapons-threat>
<https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/ukraine-marches-farther-into-liberated-lands-separatist-calls-urgent-referendum>

<https://www.reuters.com/world/us-propose-resolution-un-security-council-condemning-russia-over-referenda-2022-09-27/>

<https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/moscows-proxies-occupied-ukraine-regions-report-big-votes-join-russia-2022-09-27/>

SCENARIO

On 21 September, during a televised address to the nation, Russia's President Vladimir Putin commented on the following pressing issues on the ongoing war.

The Ukrainian counteroffensive is ongoing in the Russian-occupied regions in Kharkiv from the northeast, Donetsk in the north, and Kherson from the south. The active financial support of the West, the military equipment aid from NATO, and the support of highly efficient satellites, drones, artificial intelligence, and cyber capabilities supported by western commercial technology companies have aided the Ukrainian counteroffensive efforts and helped recapture territory, primarily in the northeast. These losses and the strong Western support for Ukraine have pushed Russia to consider dire measures.

The referendum in Kherson, Zaporizhzhia, and Donbas regions. Though Russia formally recognizes the Ukrainian post-Soviet borders under the 1994 Budapest Memorandum, Putin is said to consider swathes of eastern and southern Ukraine to be Russian possessions lost due to mistakes by Soviet leaders Lenin and Khrushchev. On 20 September, the authorities of the occupied regions announced that referendums would be held between 23 to 27 September in Donbas and the military administrations of Kherson and Zaporizhzhia. Ukraine has repeatedly warned that Russian annexation of territories would destroy any chance of peace talks, seven months after Russia invaded its neighbour. Meanwhile, hastily arranged votes had taken place in four areas - the eastern regions of Donetsk and Luhansk, and to the south Zaporizhzhia and Kherson - that make up about 15% of Ukrainian territory.

Partial mobilization. Putin's announcement aims to bring together 300,000 reservists. This is three times the size of the initial forces deployed by Russia in February and 15 per cent of Russia's estimated total conscription potential.

Russian President Vladimir Putin issued an ambiguous yet ominous threat to use a nuclear weapon. "If the territorial integrity of our country is threatened, we will without a doubt use all available means to protect Russia and our people," he said Wednesday in a nationally televised speech. The decree says Russia would go nuclear in response to the use of nuclear weapons or other weapons of mass destruction, and "in the case of aggression against the Russian Federation with the use of conventional weapons, when the very existence of the state is put under threat." In his national address on Wednesday, Putin said Russia was planning to annex its occupied regions of southern and eastern Ukraine following Kremlin-run referendums to create "republics," and added he was ready to defend the "territorial integrity" of the occupied territory "by all means. Meanwhile the United States said that it will introduce a resolution at the United Nations Security Council condemning referendums held by Russia in occupied regions of Ukraine, the U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. said on 27 Sep 2022. Russia has the power to veto the resolution.

BACKGROUND

Russia launched referendums aimed at annexing four occupied regions of Luhansk, Donetsk, Kherson, Zaporizhzhia of Ukraine. Ukraine, Western leaders and the United Nations condemned the votes as an illegitimate precursor to illegal annexation. There are no independent observers, and much of the pre-war population has fled. Russia previously used a referendum as a pretext for annexation in Ukraine's Crimea in 2014, which the international community has not recognised. Russia also announced a military draft this week to enlist 300,000 troops to fight in Ukraine, Kremlin appears to be trying to regain the upper hand in the grinding conflict and since February 24th Putin has frequently emphasised that Moscow has the greatest nuclear arsenal in the world.

He has held high-profile nuclear drills, declared Russia's nuclear forces to be in "special war readiness," and made subliminal threats to use a nuclear weapon if any country stands in the way of his attempt to destabilise the government in Kiev. Putin ordered the military to start stockpiling a variety of smaller weapons with lower explosive yields known as tactical nuclear weapons that would be used on the front lines of a "limited nuclear war."

COMMENTS

In 1945, the United States launched nuclear bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, creating the equivalent of 15,000 to 25,000 tonnes of TNT. These amounts, or just a small portion of them, 1,000 tonnes of TNT or less, can be destroyed by a tactical nuclear weapon. As per estimates, Putin has substantially invested in these weapons and is believed to possess 2,000 tactical nukes with a variety of yields and delivery systems, including its anti-ship missiles, torpedoes, and cruise missiles.

One factor that will change if Russia legally recognizes parts of Ukraine as parts of the Russian Federation—even without any international recognition—is that the Russian doctrine on nuclear weapons would go into effect in these territories. This means that if Ukrainian forces attack Russian forces within those annexed territories, the Kremlin could view that as an attack on Russia itself, and have a legal basis to use nuclear force to defend itself. That change could “deter the West from providing evermore sophisticated equipment in greater numbers to Ukraine—weaponry that Ukrainians used quite effectively on the battlefield. Although unlikely, experts believe the most likely nuclear scenario would be if Putin were to use a tactical nuclear weapon in the face of overwhelming conventional military might that forced the Ukraine advance into Russian territory.

If a nuclear holocaust were to hover over the fight, his intention would be to terrify the Ukrainian government and persuade the United States and its allies to withdraw. No one wins an all-out nuclear war, Russia’s theory holds, but it is not possible to simply dismiss Putin's threat as a form of intimidation, as this threat is too severe to be disregarded.

Russia backs India, Brazil for permanent membership in U.N. Security Council

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/international/russia-backs-india-brazil-for-permanent-membership-in-un->

Russia has voiced its support for India and Brazil as “worthy candidates” for permanent membership in the UN Security Council, calling them “key international actors.” During the 77th Session of the UN General Assembly, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov on September 24, 2022 expressed his support for India in becoming a permanent member of the Security Council.

COMMENTS



Source: India Today

India assumes the presidency of the Group of Twenty (G20) countries on December 1 and therefore reforming the U.N. Security Council has been one of the main themes of India .

SCO Summit :Indian PM Modi tells Russia's Putin now 'is not an era of war'

<https://www.reuters.com/world/indian-pm-modi-tells-russias-putin-now-is-not-an-era-war-2022-09-16/>

Russian President Vladimir Putin and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi attended a meeting on the side lines of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation summit in Samarkand Uzbekistan on September 16,2022. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday told Russian President Vladimir Putin that now is not a time for war, with food, fertiliser and fuel security among the major concerns of the world at present. Putin said that he understood Modi's concerns about the Ukraine war. He said, "I know about your position on the conflict in Ukraine, and I know about your concerns. We want all of this to end as soon as possible." Modi and Putin spoke on the sidelines of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) meeting, whose permanent members, besides India, include China, Russia, Pakistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

COMMENTS

The SCO which consists of China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, India, Pakistan, Iran and Mongolia is rapidly raising its profile. The regional bloc's massive population (more than 40% of the world's total), wealth of natural resources (more than 20% of the world's oil reserves) and strategic location could give considerable influence to an alliance. Prime Minister highlighted the need to address energy and food crises sparked by the COVID-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine. India has increased its Russian oil imports by around five times over the past year and has received Russian fertilisers which will help the agricultural sector, while being a key US strategist and military partner for last two decades. The US has been unhappy that India has been buying more oil from Russia than earlier. India argues that it must protect its citizens from the inflationary impact of the war.

Agnipath: Nepal Puts Decision on Hold, Says New Govt Will Take Call

Indian Express: 16 September 2022

Kathmandu's announcement came in response to Indian media reports quoting Indian Army Chief General Manoj Pande as saying that Nepal will have to decide quickly on the issue or else the quota will be "redistributed". The current Government of Nepal, led by Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba, will not take any decision on the recruitment of Gorkhas in the Indian Army under the Agnipath Scheme. It will instead leave it to the new regime that comes to power after the November 20 elections.

Recruitment of Gorkhas under the short-term hiring scheme for the Indian Military was scheduled to begin on 24 August 2022. It was however put on hold on Nepal's request, with Foreign Affairs Minister Narayan Khadka telling the Indian Ambassador Naveen Srivastava that Nepal would require time to study the scheme. The Nepalese Government is of the opinion that this new form of entry into the Indian Military is not covered under the Tripartite Agreement signed between Nepal, Indian and UK Governments in 1947, soon after Indian independence.

COMMENTS

Decision on Recruitment of Nepalese Gorkhas in Indian Army under the Agnipath Scheme is a sensitive domestic issue in Nepal and may have serious political implications for the ruling party. In order to avoid any protest/unrest against the current dispensation, it is likely to have been pushed to November 2022 for the new Nepalese Government to decide after the elections. However, it is felt that the Gorkha bond between India and Nepal is too strong and Nepal will take a positive decision on this matter soon.



Source: Tribuneindia.com

US defends arms sales to Pakistan following criticism from India

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/9/27/us-defends-arms-sales-to-pakistan-amid-criticism-from-india>

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken has defended US military sales to Pakistan amid criticism from India. Mr Jaishankar said “For someone to say, I’m doing this because it’s for counter-terrorism, when you’re talking of an aircraft like the capability of the F-16, everybody knows where they are deployed”. Blinken said the military package approved earlier this month was for maintenance of Pakistan’s existing fleet and these are not new planes, new systems, new weapons. It’s sustaining what they have. It’s in no one’s interests that those threats be able to go forward with impunity.

COMMENTS

The US has maintained strong ties to both India and Pakistan for decades, despite various points of tension between the nations. Pakistan’s military relies heavily on the US, but the relationship has strained in recent years, particularly during the war in Afghanistan. For its part, India historically has bought military equipment from Moscow and has pressed the US to waive sanctions under Countering America’s Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA). India and US defence ties have increased in the past few years significantly. In 2016, the defence relationship was designated as a Major Defence Partnership (MDP). Several defence agreements have been signed in recent years. These include, Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Association (August 2016), Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement (September 2018) and Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement (October 2020) etc.

Over the last 30 years, the US has made strengthening its relationship with India a high priority as it seeks allies in the region to help counter the growing strength of China. The US has stayed largely quiet on India’s continued relationship with Russia following the invasion of Ukraine, and was pleased when India’s Prime Minister Narendra Modi told Russian President Vladimir Putin that it was “not a time for war”. India is working behind the scenes and that it “weighed in” with Russia during negotiations to open grain shipments from the Black Sea. Actions by both the US and India, at a time when there is an ongoing major global conflict, besides regional instability in Afghanistan, need to be factor sensitivities of each other.

Chinese nationals attacked in Pakistan; 1 killed, 2 injured

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/international/chinese-nationals-attacked-in-pakistan-1-killed-2-injured/article65948055.ece>

A Chinese national was shot dead and two injured when a gunman opened fire inside a dental clinic in Pakistan's southern port city of Karachi, the police said, in what is believed to be the latest targeted attack against Chinese citizens. No one has claimed responsibility for the attack. Both the doctor and his wife had been running the dental clinic for a long period of time and had not received any threats. The doctor and his wife were out of danger at the hospital where they are being treated for bullet wounds.

COMMENTS

The dental clinic is located just opposite to the famous Empress market and the street has other dental clinics as well which have been run by Chinese dentists. Chinese nationals who have either been settled in Pakistan for years and set up their own businesses or have come in the wave of officers and workers after the launch of the Chinese Pakistan Economic Corridor projects, are seen in big numbers. Chinese restaurants, dental Clinics and herbal clinics are running in Karachi.

In April, three Chinese were killed in a suicide blast in Karachi University carried out by the separatist Baloch Liberation Army, which is opposed to China's investments in Balochistan. BLA claimed that its main objective is complete independence for Balochistan. In the province, there has been insurgency for years against the alleged unfair exploitation of resources in the mineral-rich region. Fact that Beijing is involved in huge infrastructure projects as part of its Belt and Road Initiative in Balochistan, there have been reports that separatists have attacked separatists regularly. Some of the other attacks were also attributed to radical Islamic militant outfits in Pakistan. With recurring attacks, China is reportedly pressing Pakistan to permit the Chinese agencies to provide security for their personnel.



Source: dawn.com

IMF to work with international community to support flood-ravaged Pakistan

<https://www.wionews.com/south-asia/imf-to-work-with-international-community-to-support-flood-ravaged-pakistan-517482>

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) said that it will work with the international community to support flood relief and reconstruction efforts in Pakistan following the devastating floods. "We will work with others in the international community to support, under the current programme, the authorities' relief and reconstruction efforts, and especially their ongoing endeavour to assist those affected by the floods while ensuring sustainable policies and macroeconomic stability," the statement said.

COMMENTS

Pakistan is on the verge of economic collapse with a lack of funds, and the recent floods and heavy monsoons in the country have dampened the hope of a quick revival from the economic crisis. As of now, the support from Saudi Arabia (\$ around 8bn in the month of May, \$ 1bn in Aug and the plan to renew \$ 3bn the deposits in Pakistan) and IMF has come to Pakistan (\$ 1.1bn). The initially estimated losses due to the natural disaster have accumulated in the range of USD 18 bn.



Source: foreignpolicy.com

The discussions are going on at the highest levels in India on the possibility of extending humanitarian assistance to Pakistan. While no decision has been taken by the Pakistan Government as yet. It will be the first time since the BJP government came to power in 2014 that India will be extending aid to Pakistan on account of a natural disaster.

The political instability, deteriorating business environment and mismanagement of the economy are the key factors which are not liked by the traditional partners. Exposing the country to economic risks as well as political uncertainty. Pakistan's agriculture sector faces the worst blow as at least 18,000 sq km of agricultural land have been wiped out. Nearly 80 districts of Pakistan have been worst hit by the floods. Thousands of people have been lodged in tents or are waiting for shelter under open skies. The catastrophic floods displaced more than 33 million people and are estimated to have caused USD 30 billion of damage, adding to skyrocketing inflation and a financial crisis.

Sri Lanka to back bids of India and Japan for permanent member status at UNSC: President Wickremesinghe

<https://indianexpress.com/article/world/sri-lanka-india-and-japan-for-permanent-member-uns-c-president-wickremesinghe-8175934/>



Source: *The Hindustan Times*

Sri Lankan President Ranil Wickremesinghe said his government will back the bids of India and Japan for permanent member status at the UN Security Council. Wickremesinghe said “appreciated the support extended by Japan (to Sri Lanka) on the international stage and expressed the government’s willingness to support both Japan’s and India’s campaign to become permanent members of the UN Security Council”.

COMMENTS

India has been at the forefront of the years-long efforts to reform the Security Council. Indian Government says that it rightly deserves a place as a permanent member of the UN body, which in its current form does not represent the geo-political realities of the 21st century. At present, the UNSC comprises five permanent members and 10 non-permanent member countries which are elected for a two-year term by the General Assembly of the United Nations. The five permanent members are Russia, the UK, China, France and the US and these countries can veto any substantive resolution. There has been growing demand to increase the number of permanent members to reflect the contemporary global reality.

India has been the biggest provider of aid this year to the Sri Lanka, which is fighting its worst economic crisis in more than seven decades and struggling to pay for imports, although the situation now is less severe than it was between May and July. Indian Government has till now has provided \$3.8 billion worth of assistance. Japan has expressed willingness to take a lead role in Sri Lanka’s debt restructuring, which is vital for the island’s bid to gain a bailout facility from the International Monetary Fund (\$ 2.9 Bn). Both India and Japan are major creditors of Sri Lanka, besides China and the Asian Development Bank (ADB). As of now, how much Sri Lanka owe is - Market Borrowing (47%), India (2.5%), World Bank (9%), Japan (10%), China (10%), ADB (13%) and Others (9%). India would be invited to a donor conference that Sri Lanka was planning to hold with Japan, China and possibly, South Korea, later this year.

Indian Warship Anchors in Seychelles, Key to New Delhi's Foothold in Western Indian Ocean

<https://www.indianarrative.com/world-news/indian-warship-anchors-in-seychelles-key-to-new-delhis-foothold-in-western-indian-ocean-53868.html>

The Indian Navy is participating in a two-week exercise being conducted by the world's largest multinational Naval partnership, Combined Maritime Forces (CMF), in Seychelles, signalling New Delhi's growing interest in the western Indian Ocean. Indian Naval Ship (INS) Sunayna entered Port Victoria in the capital city of the archipelago of 115 islands which lies northeast of Madagascar on Saturday to participate in CMF's annual training exercise 'Operation Southern Readiness'. This not only reinforces Indian Navy's commitment to maritime security in the Indian Ocean Region but also marks the maiden participation of an Indian Navy ship in CMF exercise," a statement from the Defence Ministry said Monday. CMF is leading the two-week mission in partnership with the Seychelles People's Defence Force, European Union Naval Force, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, and India which began partnering with CMF earlier this year.



Source: The Hindu

COMMENTS

CMF consists of 34 member nations whose forces operate in the Red Sea, Gulf of Aden, Northern Arabian Sea, Gulf of Oman, Arabian Gulf and the Indian Ocean. In addition to Saudi Arabia, the United Kingdom and the US, Participating countries also include Australia, Canada, France, Italy, New Zealand on strengthening regional collaboration and enhancing operational readiness. The CMF nations stand united in upholding international rules-based order to protect the free flow of commerce, ensure regional maritime security and deter illicit activity by non-state actors.

India has handed over four fast patrol boats including PS Zoroaster and PS Topaz to Seychelles. It has also launched a Coastal Surveillance Radar Project in Seychelles. Besides, India has granted US \$3.4 million, along with a 1-megawatt ground-mounted solar plant located on Romainville Island. Broadening their cooperation towards co-existence in the Indo-Pacific Region, both countries have participated in wide-ranging Maritime Security, Air Surveillance, Training and Antipiracy Operations. In addition to the ongoing CMF Exercise, the 9th edition of the 10-day India-Seychelles Joint Training Exercise Lamitiye-2022 was held in March at the Seychelles Defence Academy which cemented mutual confidence, and interoperability and enabled sharing of best practices between the armed forces of the two countries. All these events/ exercises are important to enhance the defence cooperation between the two nations and it contributes immensely in strengthening bilateral military cooperation and interoperability.

Strengthening the cooperation amongst maritime neighbours to tackle the shared regional security challenges faced by countries in the Indian Ocean has been a top priority, India and Seychelles have a key role to play in securing the region by working together on a common platform. The interactions of the two Navies has set in motion a promising trajectory of further growth in the scale and scope of bilateral defence engagements, founded on the principles of SAGAR (Security And Growth for All in the Region), the successful deployments of the Indian Navy under Mission SAGAR further boosting the concept of 'Collective Responsibility' for maritime security in the IOR.

Ukraine's New Weapon to Strike Russian Navy in Sevastopol

<https://www.navalnews.com/naval-news/2022/09/ukraines-new-weapon-to-strike-russian-navy-in-sevastopol/>

A previously unreported drone boat, known as a USV (uncrewed surface vessel), appears to have slipped past Russian Navy patrols. The device was found on a beach close to the major Russian Navy base of Sevastopol in Crimea. War is the mother of invention. Ukraine, facing a much larger and imposing conventional force, has shown itself capable of innovation and improvisation. In this David and Goliath battle, the smaller combatant has not found itself wanting. Now its latest slingshot may have broken cover. An unidentified USV (uncrewed surface vessel) was found on a beach near Russia's major naval base at Sevastopol today. Omega Bay is just outside the entrance to the harbour and is in an area used by the Russian Navy. It is around 150 nautical miles from Ukrainian controlled coasts.

COMMENTS

The clear implications from the detected USV is that the similar and previously unknown USV's are operated by Ukraine. It's a small and purposeful vessel, powered by a single motor, mounted inboard, driving a steerable waterjet. This suggests relatively high performance, it is made for speed, and such a small vessel, about the size of a kayak, would likely have a very small radar signature. There are a number of sensors along the top, the main one is a mast mounted camera and forward looking infrared (FLIR) type device, likely the main sensor for steering and situational awareness. There is a flat antenna behind the camera, possibly for navigation and/or communication, a smaller camera or sensor at the bow which appears to be fixed forward.

The possible role could be that of an explosive laden boat suggesting a warhead. It could also be inferred that this USV is designed to ram another vessel and detonate, like a modern interpretation of an explosive boat. Explosive boats are not new, and they have occasionally had great successes. This design, if that's what this is, seems inherently sensible. They were pioneered by the Italians in World War Two and are still used today. Most recently, in the Red Sea, the Iranian backed Houthi Movement has used remote controlled ones with some effect. It's appearance on a Sevastopol beach, suggests that it has the range to be useful, one cannot be sure of its purpose at this stage. The explosion at Sevastopol caused by the destruction of a floating drone which was destroyed at sea, it appears that the Russian military has enough intelligence and know-how of the USV. Destroying it at sea also suggests that it was carrying explosives.



Source: navalnews.com

Jaishankar meets Jake Sullivan at White House; discusses bilateral ties & ways to advance free, prosperous Indo-Pacific

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/jaishankar-meets-sullivan-at-white-house-discusses-bilateral-ties-ways-to-advance-free-prosperous-indo-pacific/articleshow/94512539.cms>



Source: News18

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar has met US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan at the White House and discussed ways to strengthen, deepen the India-US strategic partnership and advance a free and prosperous Indo-Pacific region.

Jaishankar, who is on a four-day official trip to Washington, also discussed Ukraine's conflict with Sullivan on Tuesday.

"Met today with Indian External Affairs Minister @DrSJaishankar to discuss our shared efforts to deepen the US-India strategic partnership, mitigate the impacts of Russia's war in Ukraine, and advance a free, open, secure, and prosperous Indo-Pacific., Sullivan said in a tweet. Good to meet US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan, Jaishankar said. Earlier in the day, the minister met Foreign Minister Justin Tkatchenko of Papua New Guinea. Spoke about our ongoing cooperation with the Pacific Islands. Discussed next steps for taking it forward in the coming days, he said.

COMMENTS

The meeting between the External Affairs Minister of India S Jaishankar and the US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan at the White House emphasised on establishing a strong India-US strategic partnership. Despite India and US already maintained a good strong relationship, considering the current security environment in the midst of a Russia-Ukraine war and China's assertiveness in the South China Sea and military activities in the Taiwan Strait, India and US probe to upgrade their strategic policies.

However, India's security outreach also includes playing the role of a capacity-builder in the Southern Pacific countries as well.

Through economic inducements, China has entered the Pacific Islands and worked to strengthen its security ties with the island nations. To enhance their current ties, the United States, its allies and partners have also strengthened their engagement. Along with its allies like Australia, India can play a significant role in the Blue Pacific 2050 initiative to promote sustainable growth in the region.

U.S. Marines simultaneously launch major bilateral exercises with Japan, Philippines

<https://www.dvidshub.net/news/430322/us-marines-simultaneously-launch-major-bilateral-exercises-with-japan-philippines>

The U.S. Marine Corps commences two concurrent large-scale bilateral exercises with key allies across the first island chain, from northern Japan through the Philippines, Oct. 1-14.

More than 5,500 personnel will participate in Resolute Dragon 22 in Hokkaido, Japan and in KAMANDAG 6 across Luzon, Batanes, and Palawan in the Philippines. The 3d Marine Division headquarters, based in Okinawa, will exercise command and control for U.S. forces involved in both exercises and provide liaison officers to the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command to rehearse concepts associated with functioning as a joint task force.

“Resolute Dragon and KAMANDAG are important opportunities to bolster the defensive capabilities of our alliances with Japan and the Philippines through realistic combined training,” said Maj. Gen. Jay Barger, 3d Marine Division Commanding General. Meanwhile, 1,400 Japan Ground Self-Defense Force (JGSDF) members from the 2nd Division, Northern Army and 1,600 U.S. Marines from across III Marine Expeditionary Force will conduct Resolute Dragon 22, the second annual iteration of the exercise.



Source: Nikkei Asia

COMMENTS

The first island chain has been vulnerable to various military activities from the Chinese side since a huge percent of it is roughly situated in waters claimed by China. Maintaining an influence over it remains a major focus of the great powers like US and Japan. Initiating large-scale bilateral exercises with its allies are the major initiatives undertaken by US to retain its presence in the region. As a part of its strategy, the U.S. Marine Corps commenced bilateral exercise with the Japanese Maritime Self Defence Force and the Philippine Navy. The Resolute Dragon 22 in Hokkaido, Japan and KAMANDAG 6 across Luzon, Batanes, and Palawan in the Philippines are of great salience since they enable US in bolstering the defensive capabilities of its alliance such as Japan and Philippines.



Source: PTI

Although India is not a part of such an exercise for the time being but Indian Navy has been involved in holding such exercises where US and Japan have actively participated. Exercises like KAMANDAG and Resolute Dragon have larger interests to strengthen their relationship with the other major naval powers of the region. They emphasise mutual security and the ability to rapidly respond to crises throughout the Indo-Pacific. Since India remains a key player in the Indo-Pacific, such exercises are focused to enhance cooperation with India in the region.

India sharpens stand on Ukraine war but business as usual with Russia

<https://www.reuters.com/world/india-sharpens-stand-ukraine-war-business-usual-with-russia-2022-09-28/>



Source: Reuters

India is articulating its position against the Ukraine war more robustly to counter criticism that it is soft on Russia, but it still has not held Moscow responsible for the invasion and will not alter its policy on importing cheap Russian oil and coal.

In their first in-person meeting since the Feb. 24 invasion, Prime Minister Narendra Modi told President Vladimir Putin earlier this month that "today's era is not an era of war" - the clearest position New Delhi has taken on the conflict.

India's foreign minister followed up last week at the U.N. Security Council, describing the trajectory of the Ukraine war as "very concerning" and the risk of a nuclear escalation of "particular anxiety".

Analysts said New Delhi's shift, even though nuanced, reflected concern about the growing economic costs of the conflict and how it would affect India. Russia's first mobilisation of troops since World War Two marks a major escalation of the conflict that has thrown markets into turmoil and threatens a global recession.

Moreover, India is worried the war is pushing Russia closer to China, which has fraught relations with New Delhi, the analysts said. India also hopes its more robust approach would help it meet criticism by Western allies that it is too close to Moscow.

COMMENTS

The Russia-Ukraine war has brought so many challenges to the world. Different countries hold different views about this war. Some have openly confronted Russia's move, and some have remained neutral. India also took a neutral stand in this situation, and it didn't confront Russia openly, but it urged Russia to stop the war. In the meeting of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, Prime Minister Narendra Modi told Mr Putin that the modern era is not the era of war. However, the trade relations with Russia have improved because of cheaper prices.



Source: NBC News

The main concern of India in the Ukraine crisis is the proximity of Russia and China. Russia is India's long strategic friend which has the Veto power in United Nations Security Council. Russia is also one of the biggest military hardware suppliers to India. These make Russia a significant partner of India and give it a privileged position in India's foreign policy.

But the "questioning and concern" of China over the invasion became the topic of discussion. China is the largest trading partner of Ukraine, and it does not want to disturb its relationship with Ukraine by showing that it is very close to Russia. Also, China can face trade backlash from the West, if it is proved that China is giving a military support slanting to Russia.

India needs US support in offsetting China but the ties between Russia and India might impact the Indo-US relationship. There is a also possibility that during crises between India and China, the latter might influence Russia to stop its defense supplies to India which might eventually impact India's supply of spares and weapons during a conflict.

Eleven soldiers dead, 50 civilians missing after Burkina Faso convoy attack

<https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/several-feared-dead-trucks-destroyed-burkina-faso-convoy-attack-2022-09-27/>

Eleven soldiers have been found dead and about 50 civilians are missing after an attack by Islamist militants on a 150-vehicle convoy taking supplies to a town in northern Burkina Faso on 26 Sep, the government said. Twenty-eight people were wounded in the attack, including 20 soldiers, said the statement by government spokesman Lionel Bingo. The army had said in a previous statement that dozens of trucks were destroyed. The assault took place in the commune of Gaskinde in Soum province, where jihadists linked to al Qaeda and Islamic State have escalated attacks and seized territory since 2015.

COMMENTS

Burkina Faso is a landlocked West African country bordered by Mali, Niger, Togo, Ghana, and Ivory Coast. In 2014, the former long-serving president was overthrown from power. The military arrested the President along with his ministers and announced that they have taken power and suspended the constitution. This instability has serious regional and international ramifications because these militants exploited Burkina Faso as a launching pad to carry out terror strikes across the region. This military takeover would continue to obstruct economic development and hinder the stability of the region unless the African Union is strengthened and works effectively to resolve the situation.



Source: Encyclopedia Britannica Inc.

AFRICA

The UN strongly condemns the coup in Burkina Faso and calls on all actors to refrain from violence and seek dialogue,” spokesperson Stephane Dujarric said in a statement. An interesting development also took place on 3rd February 2022 when China announced itself publicly to seek a peaceful solution to the military intervention through dialogue, similar to what China did at the Horn of Africa peace, good governance, and development conference in Ethiopia on June 20, 2022. Beijing’s intention is to portray itself as a security provider through dialogue and diplomacy and also to promote itself as a peacemaker in the region.



Source: The Hindu

Burkina Faso is rich in mineral deposits such as gold and has arable land suitable for growing crops such as cotton and sorghum. However, its economy still faces challenges due to lack of sufficient infrastructure. India and Burkina Faso share good bilateral relations since 1993 when India agreed to assist Burkina Faso with economic development. Burkina Faso exports gold, cotton, and nuts to India and India exports pharmaceutical and agricultural products to Burkina Faso. India has also invested in agricultural and solar power projects in Burkina Faso and this coup makes it an increasingly risky place for India to invest its money, due to compromised trade routes, distribution systems, and less foreign direct investment. Terror attacks have spread throughout western Africa, including Mali, Guinea, Nigeria and Chad, affecting India's interest in the region. The West African region, especially Nigeria, has emerged as an important partner for India, both as an export market and as an import source. India also gets nearly 18% of its crude oil and Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) from West Africa.

UK introduces massive tax cuts, IMF rebukes the move

<https://www.bbc.com/news/business-63051702>

<https://www.reuters.com/world/uk/imf-says-uk-fiscal-measures-will-likely-increase-inequality-urges-rethink-2022-09-27/>

<https://indianexpress.com/article/business/economy/rupee-value-us-dollar-falls-low-news-8173192/>



Source: independent.ie

Prime Minister Liz Truss took office during a time of soaring inflation. To combat the inflation, on 23 September 2022, the UK unveiled its biggest tax cuts and investment incentives package since 1972, to avoid a looming recession. It includes freezing taxes on corporations, dropping payroll taxes, cutting the highest tax bracket and subsidising energy bills temporarily. The package, which is called a mini-budget, was introduced to inculcate a trickle-down effect by increasing consumer spending. However, the £45 billion tax cut would increase government borrowing sharply, as well as the interest rates. Subsequently, the announcement sparked financial turmoil and the pound's value dropped to \$1.03, which is the first since 1985.

IMF has openly criticised the tax plan introduced by the new UK government and has asked to 're-evaluate' the move. IMF works as an early economic warning system and seeks to stabilise the global economy. In a rare public rebuke, IMF warned that the "large and untargeted fiscal package" could increase inequality and lead to "cross purposes to monetary policy". IMF further suggested having more targeted support for the energy crisis to battle inflation.

COMMENTS

With UK's fiscal credibility in question and the pound and UK government bonds crashing, it has sent shockwaves across the global market. The global economy is being tested severely over the past few months. The Indian rupee is similarly extremely vulnerable to these fluctuations happening worldwide. The rupee fell to a record low against the dollar at Rs. 81.67 on 26 September 2022.

Amid the looming recession fears all across the globe, Indian markets have been facing the brunt as well. Reserve Bank of India (RBI) after its meeting on 30 September said that it is expecting inflation to stay at 4% as expected previously, for the next two years. RBI has emptied \$82.8 billion from its foreign exchange reserves this year to save the rupee.

Major gas leaks erupted from gas pipelines in the Baltic Sea

<https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/27/world/europe/pipeline-leak-russia-nord-stream.html?searchResultPosition=1>

<https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/nord-stream-rupture-may-mark-biggest-single-methane-release-ever-recorded-un-2022-09-30/>

On 29 September a total of four gas leaks were discovered in two offshore pipelines, including the Nord Stream pipelines. These pipelines are stretched from Russia to Europe through the Baltic Sea and are a crucial source of energy for Europe. With the ensuing Russo-Ukrainian war, Europe has already been grappling with the energy crisis. Sweden on 27 September issued a warning regarding the leaks discovered in Nord Stream 1. One was found in Swedish waters while shortly afterwards, another leak was found in Danish waters. The cause of the leak could not be conclusively determined. Though the explosions in the Baltic Sea that may have led to the rupture are being considered a deliberate attack, according to European officials.

The United Nations Environment Programme said on 30th September 2022 that the natural gas pipeline rupture has led to the largest release of methane ever recorded. Methane is a greenhouse gas extremely damaging to the climate. The leak rate of the gas stands at 22,920 kilograms per hour from all four marked ruptures. The damage caused is massive and is equivalent to burning around 6 lakh pounds of coal per hour.



COMMENTS

Since Nord Stream 2 had not yet been inaugurated, the rupture will not have any significant effect on the grappling energy crisis that Europe is currently embroiled in. With the already fragile and vulnerable energy sector and Europe bracing itself for a cold winter, such disruptions will aggravate the threat perception even further.

Source: BBC