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**INDIAN NAVY TO
JOIN EXERCISE
MALABAR IN
JAPAN NEXT
MONTH**

*India's nuclear
submarine Arihant
successfully test-
fires missile*

Ties in focus as
Pakistan army chief
meets US officials

**AHEAD OF KEY
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Ahead of Key Congress, China Reaffirms Xi As Party's Core

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-10-12/china-reaffirms-xi-as-party-s-core-ahead-of-leadership-congress>

China's top leaders reaffirmed President Xi Jinping's status as the core of Communist Party, as they wrapped a final huddle before a key congress expected to hand him a landmark third term.

COMMENTS

The Central Committee praised the "unusual and extraordinary" accomplishments made under Xi over the past five years, despite a complex international environment and domestic challenges. Xi's core status within the party "reflects the common aspiration of the whole party, the whole army and the whole nation, and is of decisive significance to the endeavours of the party and the country," the report said. That endorsement of Xi and emphasis of his position at the party's core, sets the stage for the Chinese leader to shatter transition norms by staying in office beyond the party's de facto retirement age of 68 and standard two-term limit at the congress beginning Sunday in Beijing.



Source: BBC

This week's meeting also lauded China's efforts in tackling COVID while maintaining economic stability, even as its strict pandemic curbs have constrained growth in the world's second largest economy. A report by the country's top anti-corruption agency was approved, as well as amendments to the party constitution, potentially clearing a path to further elevate Xi's doctrine. The four-day seventh plenum - as this gathering in China's five year political cycle is called - saw some 360 cadres rubber stamp the landmark policy report Xi will deliver at the start. The Chinese leader's opening speech will telegraph key policy priorities for the next five years, providing the most authoritative document on the party's foreign policy, economic goals and military ambitions.

China watchers will be observing, how Xi will steer the country through youth unemployment, high debt, the carnage of the property-development crisis and the balance between managing COVID and economic health. China's Communist Party's Congress is expected to end on 22 October.

China Allows Rare Close-Up of Advanced Missiles Ahead of Party Congress

<https://finance.yahoo.com/finance/news/china-allows-rare-close-advanced-030544153.html>

China has allowed rare, close-up access to some of its most advanced ballistic missiles, as President Xi Jinping touts efforts to deter the US ahead of a key leadership reshuffle next week. Several home-grown weapons systems including the Dongfeng-41 and Dongfeng-17 ballistic missiles were put on display as part of an exhibit Wednesday in Beijing marking Communist Party achievements under Xi's rule.

COMMENTS

While both weapons were paraded through Tiananmen Square to mark the People's Republic's 70th anniversary in 2019, they've rarely been shown at such an intimate distance.

The DF-41 intercontinental ballistic missile is one of the world's longest-range missiles, capable of carrying multiple warheads and striking anywhere in the US. The medium-range DF-17 carries a hypersonic glide vehicle, an ultra-modern system under development that makes missiles harder to intercept.

Both weapons are central to Beijing's success in building one of the largest and most diverse missile arsenals in the world, a key challenge facing US military planners contemplating a potential clash with China over Taiwan. Xi will likely allude to such progress during a speech on Sunday to open the Communist Party's twice-a-decade leadership congress, at which he's expected to secure a third, five-year term in office.

The GJ-11 Sharpe Sword stealth combat drone was also among the weapons on display at the Beijing Exhibition Center. The unmanned aerial vehicle is capable of delivering weapons by a remotely located pilot and doing surveillance at sea, pushing China into technological terrain long dominated by the US.

Russia-Ukraine Conflict: A Glance

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/russian-missiles-target-more-than-40-ukraine-cities-towns/articleshow>

<https://www.euronews.com/2022/10/13/unscrupulous-western-blackmailers-russias-fury-as-un-votes-to-condemn-ukraine-annexations?>

SCENARIO

Russia pounded cities across Ukraine during rush hour, killing civilians and knocking out power and heat, in apparent revenge strikes after President Vladimir Putin declared a blast on Russia's bridge to Crimea to be a terrorist attack. Russian missiles pounded more than 40 Ukrainian cities and towns. Cruise missiles tore into busy intersections, parks and tourist sites in the center of downtown Kyiv with an intensity unseen even when Russian forces attempted to capture the capital early in the war.

A U.N. General Assembly resolution called Moscow's annexation of Ukrainian territories like Kherson, Donetsk, Luhansk and Zaporizhzhia last month "illegal". Kherson is strategically important because it controls the only land route to the Crimean peninsula, which Russia annexed in 2014. It also includes the mouth of the Dnipro river, which divides Ukraine. The vote in the UN was 143-5 with 35 abstentions. North Korea, Belarus, Syria and Nicaragua joined Russia in voting against the resolution, while 19 African countries abstained - including South Africa - along with China, India, Pakistan and Cuba.

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. 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, the Kremlin appears to be trying to regain the upper hand in the grinding conflict since its February 24.

Russia repeated its position that the West, by helping Ukraine, indicated that "they are a direct party to the conflict" and warned the admission of Ukraine to NATO could trigger World War Three. In Brussels, more than 50 Western countries met to pledge more military aid to Ukraine, especially air defence weapons, on the heels of heavy retaliatory strikes this week ordered by Russian President Vladimir Putin in response to an explosion on a bridge in Crimea.

COMMENTS



Source: USA Today

There are three lessons of this conflict. In the first concerns the importance of ground offensive which was undertaken by Ukraine using modern missile technology, loitering munitions (autonomous), low cost unmanned drones and persistent surveillance. Russia has so far largely failed at efforts to perform combined arms manoeuvre, in which infantry, armour, artillery, and aviation operate together to advance against an enemy, primarily due to persistent surveillance. The loud threat of attacks on the Ukrainian Army too has not impacted as the Ukrainians are fighting in small units in close quarters.

The second lesson is the bullying by the stronger power. Russia has given threats of using nuclear weapons both strategic or tactical is part of escalate de-escalate strategy. Russia has used energy crisis as wedging strategy to force European nations to wean away from supporting Ukraine, and the impact on energy costs and economy is being felt.

The third lesson will be that the next stage of war will be to integrate force and diplomacy, wherein the stronger nation stops military operation, except those of purely defensive nature so that the process of negotiation operates on its own logic to come to terms amicably.

India And Pakistan Abstains, Bangladesh And Other South Asian Countries Vote For The Resolution

<https://www.tbsnews.net/bangladesh/ukraines-territorial-integrity-bangladesh-among-143-who-voted-favour-un-resolution-512902>



Source: BBC

Bangladesh has voted in favour of the UN Resolution "Territorial Integrity of Ukraine: Defending the Principles of the UN Charter" at the 11th emergency special session of the UNGA on the Russia Ukraine War. India abstained from voting on the UN General Assembly Resolution denouncing the recent annexation of four Ukrainian Regions by Russia, describing the decision as a "well thought out national position".

Of the 193 member General Assembly, 143 countries voted in favour of a resolution that also reaffirmed the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognised borders. Though a total of 35 nations, including China, South Africa, India and Pakistan, refrained from voting, the resolution was passed with a two third majority. Only four countries joined Russia in voting against the resolution - Syria, Nicaragua, North Korea and Belarus.

REGIONAL SCAN: NEPAL, BANGLADESH AND BHUTAN

Bangladesh said in an explanation of vote (EOV), "We did so because we strongly believe that the purposes and principles of the UN Charter regarding respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity and peaceful settlement of all disputes must be complied universally for everyone, everywhere under all circumstances, without any exception. As member states of the UN, we must continue to work together to promote peace and development. Bangladesh also said it believes that the sovereignty and territorial integrity of any country within its internationally recognised borders should be respected. Bangladesh especially underscored the need to take a similar uniform stand by the international community against the annexation of Palestinian and other Arab lands by Israel.

Additional Background Information

- In addition to Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal, Afghanistan, Myanmar also voted for the Resolution.
- India had earlier abstained from voting on three resolutions against Russia - a similar Security Council Resolution recently and two General Assembly Resolutions in March 2022.

COMMENTS

The outcome of the voting has revealed that many countries remain on the fence, especially in Africa and Central Asia. While the states that chose to abstain may not be among Russia's most fervent supporters, they cannot be classified as outright opponents either. That they also represent nearly half of the global population suggests that, even at this crucial stage in the war, Russia's allies are not as few as the World might like to think.

Ready to Engage With India For Peace: Pakistan PM

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/999686-ready-to-engage-with-india-for-peace-pm>

PM Shehbaz Sharif during the 6th Summit of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA) in Kazakhstan's said that Pakistan is willing to engage conditionally with India for peace and prosperity in the region. "Onus remains on India to take necessary steps to engage towards the result-oriented solutions of all the outstanding issues." Shehbaz urged other countries to take notice of India's 'bullet over ballot' policy as it blatantly quashed the United Nations Security Council's resolutions on holding a plebiscite in Kashmir.

COMMENTS



Source: The News International

Relations between India and Pakistan have been strained over the Kashmir issue and cross-border terrorism emanating from Pakistan. Bilateral ties nosedived after India abrogated Article 370 of the Constitution, revoking the special status of Jammu and Kashmir and bifurcating the state into two Union territories on August 5, 2019. Pakistan needs to take tangible action against the terror infrastructure operating from its soil for an upward trajectory in bilateral relations. Certain steps are being taken by the Pakistan Government by putting Hafiz Saeed in the prison for 32 years. India desires peace and stability in a region free of terror, so that we can focus on our development challenges and ensure the well-being and prosperity of our people.

Ties In Focus As Pakistan Army Chief Meets US Officials

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/10/5/ties-in-focus-as-pakistan-army-chief-meets-us-officials>

General Qamar Javed Bajwa held meetings with US Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin and National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan, during which they discussed the regional security situation, according to the Pakistani military. For its part, the Pentagon said the talks were “focused on opportunities to address key mutual defence interests”.

COMMENTS

In the last decade, Pakistan has steadily moved towards its main regional ally China for its economic and defence needs, which resulted in the gradual cooling-off in its relationship with the US. After the fall of Kabul to the Taliban in August last year, the relationship fractured even more. The Pakistani side felt that the US had left neighboring Afghanistan without an exit strategy whereas the US expressed frustration that Pakistan did not play a role in controlling the Taliban. The situation further deteriorated when Khan engaged in aggressive anti-US rhetoric and blamed what he called a Washington-led foreign conspiracy for overthrowing his government in April 2022 without providing proof of his allegations.

The US has provided \$66m in aid after the floods in Pakistan and also a \$450m F-16 deal after criticism from Pakistan’s archrival, India. The purpose of Bajwa’s visit is to ensure that going forward, the ties between the two countries remain at least cordial and functional. The change in the relationship calculus was more to keep an eye on Afghanistan and keep pressure on the Taliban government. Pakistan will also have to maintain a balancing act with China, which is at loggerheads with the US over several issues. The US has reservations regarding the Chinese role in Pakistan, and they want to use India as a counterbalance against China. And on the other hand, it seems that the US, opening to Pakistan, was perhaps a signal to both India and China. Improving ties with Pakistan is meant to counterbalance China as well as give a signal to India for snubbing the US and the West over the Ukraine conflict and continuing oil imports from Russia.

India's Nuclear Submarine Arihant Successfully Test-Fires Missile

<https://www.dw.com/en/indias-nuclear-submarine-arihant-successfully-test-fires-missile/a-63450173#:~:text=India%20fired%20a%20ballistic%20missile,defense%20ministry%20said%20on%20Friday>

The test launch of a ballistic missile from nuclear submarine INS Arihant makes India the sixth country which can conduct nuclear strikes and counterstrikes on land, sea and air. The successful launch of the Submarine Launched Ballistic Missile (SLBM) by INS Arihant is "significant to prove crew competency and validate" ballistic missiles which is "a key element of India's nuclear deterrence capability," the defense added. The launch makes India the sixth country which can conduct nuclear strikes and counterstrikes on land, sea and air. The other countries with such capabilities are the US, Russia, the UK, France and China.



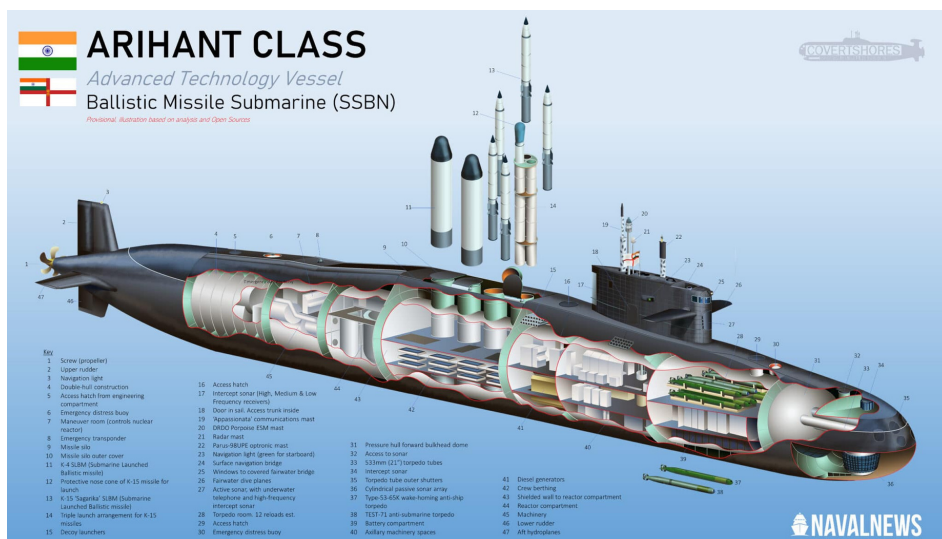
Source: DW

COMMENTS

INS Arihant and its class of submarines are classified as 'SSBN', which is the hull classification symbol for nuclear powered ballistic missile carrying submarines. While the Navy operates the vessel, the operations of the SLBMs from the SSBN are under the purview of India's Strategic Forces Command, which is part of India's Nuclear Command Authority. The successful user training launch of the SLBM by INS Arihant is significant to prove crew competency and validate the SSBN programme, a key element of India's nuclear deterrence capability. In November 2019, India had formally declared its nuclear triad, stated in its nuclear doctrine, operational after INS Arihant completed its first deterrence patrol which means Arihant has begun prowling the deep seas carrying ballistic missiles equipped with nuclear warheads.

INS Arihant is presently armed with K-15 SLBM with a range of 750 km. The missile was tested to a predetermined range and impacted the target area in the Bay of Bengal with very high accuracy. All operational and technological parameters of the weapon system have been validated. A robust, survivable and assured retaliatory capability is in keeping with India's policy to have 'Credible Minimum Deterrence' (CMD) that underpins its 'No First Use' commitment. India has, in addition to completing the nuclear triad, operationalised its second strike capability, with ballistic missile submarine INS Arihant undertaking deterrence patrols. The second indigenous SSBN Arighat, which is in advanced stages of sea trials, is scheduled to be commissioned within this year. As they are powered by nuclear reactors, these submarines can stay underwater indefinitely without the adversary detecting it.

The Submarine Launched Ballistic Missiles (SLBMs), sometimes called the 'K' family of missiles, have been indigenously developed by Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO). The family is codenamed after Dr APJ Abdul Kalam, the centre figure in India's missile and space programmes who also served as the 11th President of India. Because these missiles are to be launched from submarines, they are lighter, more compact and stealthier than their land-based counterparts, the Agni series of missiles which are medium and intercontinental range nuclear capable ballistic assets. The development of the K family missiles has been done in consonance with the ATV project. Part of the K family is the SLBM K-15, which is also called B-05 or Sagarika. It has a range of 750 km. INS Arihant can carry a dozen K-15 missiles on board. India has also developed and successfully tested K-4 missiles from the family, which have a range of 3,500 km. In January 2020, two successful tests of the K-4 missile were conducted from submerged platforms, off the coast of Andhra Pradesh within a span of six days. These tests were a key step towards ultimately deploying K-4s on the INS Arihant. It is also reported that more members of K-family reportedly carrying the code names K-5 and K-6, with a range of 5,000 km and 6,000 km respectively are under development.



Source: navalnews.com

New Images Reveal Russia's 'Missing' Submarine Belgorod In Arctic

<https://www.navalnews.com/naval-news/2022/10/new-images-reveal-russias-missing-submarine-belgorod-in-arctic/>

The whereabouts of a new Russian submarine, the Belgorod, has captured headlines around the world. With a degree of hysteria, there have been reports that it has been deployed with its nuclear 'apocalypse' and 'doomsday' weapons. Even that it has 'disappeared' (submarines do that). Naval News has been keeping an eye on the topic since before these stories broke. Images obtained by Naval News show the submarine operating in the Barents Sea, north of Russia's Kola Peninsular.

COMMENTS

The Belgorod (K-329) is a unique submarine, around 178 meters (583 ft) long, 15 meters (50 ft) wide and in the region of 30,000 tons. This makes it by far the largest built anywhere in the world since the famous Typhoon class. She is armed with the Poseidon strategic weapon which itself is unique. Described by the U.S. Navy as an 'Intercontinental Nuclear-Powered Nuclear-Armed Autonomous Torpedo', it combines incredible range with hard-to-kill performance. There is a concern that, with current weapons, it is effectively unstoppable once launched. Launched in 2019, Belgorod was formally commissioned on July 8 2022, so this is one of her first longer-range trips. The submarine was monitored leaving Severodvinsk in the White Sea a few weeks ago, and she was in the Barents Sea by September 22. There is a prospect of a Poseidon Launch, Predictions are dangerous in this game. However, we view a test launch of Poseidon as not out of the question. This could be routine, to test a new weapon system. Or it could principally be political, as a demonstration. Testing nuclear weapons, even without warheads, may be part of Russia's chosen nuclear escalation ladder. It is around 150 nautical miles from Ukrainian controlled coasts. The topic which needs addressing is the leaks in the Nord Stream gas pipes under the Baltic on September 26. These are believed to have been a deliberate act of sabotage, and Russia is a candidate. Belgorod has another important capability besides carrying Poseidon. She can act as a mother submarine (host platform) for special deep-diving midget submarines which operate on the sea floor. Technically Belgorod would be suited to carry out such an attack, even in relatively shallow waters.

Israel and Lebanon Reach Landmark Maritime Agreement

<https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/11/world/middleeast/israel-and-lebanon-maritime-deal.html>

If ratified by both governments, the deal is expected to avert the immediate threat of conflict between Israel and Hezbollah and could eventually help solve energy shortages. Israel and Lebanon have agreed to a draft deal to resolve a decades-old dispute over the control of an eastern stretch of the Mediterranean Sea, the two countries announced on Tuesday, in a major diplomatic breakthrough between two neighbours that technically remain at war and have no direct official relations. If ratified by both governments, the deal is expected to avert the immediate threat of conflict between Israel and Hezbollah militants in Lebanon, after fears of escalation if negotiations fell apart, and to make it easier for energy companies to extract gas from the eastern parts of the Mediterranean Sea.

The deal would allocate drilling rights at one contested gas field to Lebanon and confirm Israeli control of another field to the south, safeguarding new sources of energy and income for both countries. Officials and analysts hope the deal will give Israel more security, allow Lebanon greater leeway in the future to salve its crippling energy and financial crises, and provide Europe with a potential new source of gas amid energy shortages caused by the Russian invasion of Ukraine. The office of the Lebanese president, Michel Aoun, said in a statement on Tuesday morning that the draft deal satisfied Lebanon, meets its demands and preserves its rights to its natural resources. Even the Israeli prime minister, Yair Lapid, "This is a historic achievement that will strengthen Israel's security, bring billions into Israel's economy and ensure stability on the northern border."

COMMENTS

The deal is a historic breakthrough in the Middle East, one that was setting the stage for a more stable and prosperous region, and harnessing vital new energy resources for the world. Mediated and guaranteed by the United States, the deal is much more limited than the sweeping normalization ones that established full diplomatic ties between Israel and three Arab states in 2020, after years of Israeli isolation in the Middle East. Israel and Lebanon have still not formed diplomatic ties and their pact will take the form of two separate agreements with Washington, one between Israel and the United States and the other between the United States and Lebanon rather than a direct agreement between Israel and Lebanon, according to a senior Western official and a senior Israeli official familiar with the terms of the agreement. The deal nevertheless represents a significant breakthrough for two countries that have a long history of conflict.



Source: CNN

Israel occupied parts of southern Lebanon from 1982 to 2000, and fought a monthlong war in 2006 with Hezbollah, an Iran-backed Lebanese militia, that killed more than 1,500 people, most of them Lebanese. The deal settled a decades-old dispute about the location of the two countries' exclusive economic zones in the eastern Mediterranean, demarcating where both countries have the sole right to extract resources. Lebanon also recognized Israel's existing control of a three-mile-wide stretch of water closest to their shared coast, while Israel allowed Lebanon the right to drill in a previously contested gas field that stretches between the Israeli and Lebanese economic zones, according to the senior Western official and the senior Israeli official.

In exchange, Israel will receive compensation for any gas taken from the section of the field, known as Qana, which is within the Israeli zone. And Lebanon has renounced any claims to a second gas field nearby, Karish, allowing Israel to proceed with the extraction of gas there without fear of reprisals from Hezbollah. Brokered by a U.S. envoy, Amos Hochstein, the deal also bolsters European governments seeking to find long-term alternatives to Russian gas, amid growing fuel shortages in Europe created by the war in Ukraine. It is also a prudent aspect of Lebanon's foreign policy because Lebanon was able to settle a difficult border dispute without going to war. It is to be hoped that this maritime deal reduces the tension between Israel and Lebanon, and establishes a minimum degree of consensus on the essentials of Lebanese foreign policy.

Indian Navy To Join Exercise Malabar In Japan Next Month

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/indian-navy-to-join-exercise-malabar-in-japan-next-month/article65989029.ece>

Japan will host the 2022 edition of the Malabar naval exercise consisting of India, Australia, Japan and the U.S. in the second week of November, according to official sources. Indian Navy will also participate in the International Fleet Review (IFR) being hosted in the first week of November to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the Japanese Maritime Self Defence Force (JMSDF), an official source said.

COMMENTS

The basic purpose of joint exercises is to manifest the military capability of the countries involved. Malabar Exercise which initially started as a bilateral India-US exercise way back in 1992 became a world class naval exercise. Japan joined it and later became a permanent member. The main motive of the exercise is to understand each other operationally since they share a common interest of securing sea lanes of communication and freedom of navigation in the Indo-Pacific particularly South China Sea.

Meanwhile China's assertiveness in the South China Sea and its creation of artificial islands remains a concern. Apart from the South China Sea, China's presence is increasing both in the Pacific Ocean and the Indian Ocean which it calls as 'Near Seas' and 'Far Seas'. Its military activities in the Taiwan Strait which is also close to the EEZ of Japan, is something which cannot be ignored. Thus, Japan realises the salience of being proactive in the waters to maintain its territorial integrity and hence has initiated various strategies to deal with an assertive China.

Australia's involvement as an active partner in the exercise demonstrates that the QUAD is dedicated to oppose any unilateral action that has the capability to change status quo of the region. Chinese belligerence in East Ladakh in 2020 and Taiwan has increased the concern among the QUAD members, besides other countries. It was in 2020 when the Australian Navy participated in the Malabar exercise. Before 2020, Australia had participated in Malabar exercise in 2007.

In the above backdrop, the powerful navies of this grouping have decided to hold the Malabar Exercises off the coast of Yokosuka in Japan in November 2022, which also remains a base of the US Navy.

India Stands For Rules-Based Maritime Borders In Indo-Pacific: Rajnath Singh

https://www.business-standard.com/article/current-affairs/india-stands-for-rules-based-maritime-borders-in-indo-pacific-rajnath-122101500993_1.html

India stands for rules-based maritime boundaries in the Indo-Pacific in which no nation, howsoever big, may be allowed to exclude others from its fair use, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said on Saturday, amid China's increasing assertiveness in the region. In his address to the heads of Asian Coast Guard agencies, the defence minister also called for effective collaboration among maritime nations to deal with challenges to maritime safety.

COMMENTS

Without naming China, the Indian Minister of Defence Rajnath Singh made a statement which strongly emphasised on a maritime order based on international rules in the Indo-Pacific region. He affirmed that irrespective of the military power and the size of a country, no one should assert power to exclude anyone from using the global commons. These global commons would mostly mean the space, the seas and the oceans including the sea lanes of communication (SLOCs).

He also emphasised that apart from only focusing on the navies of the like-minded countries, India's focus would be to develop cordial relations with the Coast Guards of Asian nations. This involves events such as the Indian Coast Guard hosting the 18th Head of Asian Coast Guards Agencies Meeting. The HACGAM is a multilateral forum of 23 countries out of which 18 countries along with two International Organisations remain a part of the event. Besides discussing the issues of maritime prominence in the domain of marine environment protection, maritime search and rescue and maritime law enforcement, the focus was also to emphasise a check on the growing assertiveness of some powers in the water bodies of the region.



Source: *The Hindu*

INS Tarkash Visits Namibia's Port Walvis Bay

<https://theprint.in/world/ins-tarkash-visits-namibias-port-walvis-bay/1158770/>

Indian Navy warship, INS Tarkash visited Port Walvis Bay at Namibia from 3rd Oct-6th Oct 2022 as a part of an ongoing extended-range operational deployment, the Indian Navy said in an official statement. Apart from anti-piracy patrol and joint exercises with regional navies at sea, the deployment was utilised for capacity-building activities like training in damage control and firefighting, diving, medical aspects and casualty evacuation, the Indian Navy said in an official statement.

COMMENTS

INS Tarkash is the second Talwar class frigate of the Indian Navy from Russia which reached the Port Gqeberha also known as Port Elizabeth in Namibia to participate in the seventh edition of trilateral defence cooperation "IBSAMAR" between Indian, Brazilian and South African navies. The Indian Navy was represented by the INS Tarkash, a Chetak helicopter and personnel from the Marine Commando Force (MARCOS). When the foreign ministers of the three nations (India, Brazil and South Africa) gathered in Brasilia (Brazil) on June 6, 2003, the grouping was formally established and given the name IBSA Dialogue Forum.

The trilateral exercise of IBSAMAR VII includes professional exchanges such as damage control and fire-fighting drills, Visits, Board, Search, and cross-boarding lectures and interaction among special forces. In particular, given the existing threat of piracy (Somali pirates) and terrorism (Al-Shabaab) in the area, the Joint Maritime Exercise will enhance maritime security, cooperative operational training, best practise sharing, and interoperability building to tackle common maritime threats.

This is an excellent endeavor within the context of India's relations with Africa, where Indian military diplomacy has recently emerged as a tool to further the diplomatic objectives in Africa. This naval drill will increase mutual trust and confidence between India and the other participating nations. This combined exercise demonstrates India's resolve to further its diplomatic goals while also conveying the message to other African nations of its strategic interests in the region.

In light of China's growing influence in the region through its investments and soft power diplomacy, this exercise is seen as a manifestation of increasing solidarity and cooperation in India-Africa relations. India should collaborate with other African countries, especially those that are vulnerable to piracy and terrorist attacks and are located near the Indian Ocean coast, such as Somalia, Eritrea and Ethiopia. This will support these nations' efforts to fortify their defence forces and counter these threats.

UK PM Truss Reverses The Corporation Tax Cuts, Finance Minister Sacked

<https://www.reuters.com/world/uk/uk-corporation-tax-rise-25-19-this-april-daily-telegraph-2022-10-14/>

<https://www.economist.com/britain/2022/10/14/liz-truss-has-lost-her-chancellor-signature-tax-cut-and-authority>

In September, UK Prime Minister introduced a stimulus package, called a mini-budget, enclosing provisions for massive tax cuts and investment incentives package in an attempt to fight the recession. £45 billion tax cut was predicted by economists worldwide that would increase government borrowing sharply, as well as the interest rates. PM Truss and her government received massive backlash for the move, and the pound plummeted to an all-time low against the dollar.

On 3 October 2022, the British government announced the reversal of the income tax cuts. The tax cut of the top earners from 45% to 40% had been announced in the mini-budget but was rolled back under pressure. This move led to the pound's positive growth, rising back to 1.12 USD. International Monetary Fund (IMF) chief, Kristalina Georgieva, called it a good decision.

Further, in an attempt to restore the faith of the markets in Britain, PM Truss, on 14 October 2022, sacked Kwasi Kwarteng, the chancellor of the exchequer, to replace him with Jeremy Hunt. In the press conference, she also announced the reinstatement of an increase in corporation tax, as planned. In March 2021, Rishi Sunak announced a corporation tax rise from 19% to 25% for the year 2023. The current government scrapped this decision in the mini-budget. However, this was again reversed back to a scheduled increase for the year 2023, according to PM Truss' announcement.

COMMENTS

Due to the controversial mini-budget introduced by the new UK PM, Liz Truss, the Conservative Party is now scrabbling to retain power and has already lost a significant amount of public as well as political support. The move to cut taxes to “increase consumer spending” through a trickle-down effect was widely criticised not just in the UK but also by the IMF and leading economists around the world. While the UK faces a looming threat of recession and an inevitable energy crisis in the coming months, the reversal of the tax cuts, under public pressure, does not create an authoritative platform for the UK Prime Minister one month into the role.

Throughout PM Truss' election campaign, the focus was on creating growth within the country. Scapegoating the finance minister for the contentious stimulus package decision would further negatively affect the popularity of PM Truss amongst businesses and the public. Significant talks are going on within her party to evaluate PM Truss' tenure in the office. A possible candidate that has come up is her rival Rishi Sunak, with Penny Mordaunt as the Deputy.

Concerns Over A Possible Nuclear Attack Amid Energy Crisis

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/oct/14/west-plans-avoid-panic-if-russia-nuclear-bomb-ukraine-putin>

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-10-10/russia-loses-60-of-its-seaborne-crude-market-in-europe>

<https://edition.cnn.com/2022/10/13/energy/europe-energy-crisis-winter-2023/index.html>

In a rare television address, Russian President Vladimir Putin warned the West that in the situation where the territorial integrity of Russia is threatened, they would “certainly use all the means at our disposal to protect Russia and our people. It is not a bluff.” It was interpreted by the analysts to be a potential nuclear threat. To these remarks, US President Joe Biden said there is a high possibility of using tactical nuclear weapons or biological or chemical weapons, which might lead to “Armageddon”. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said that he has started preparing the country for a possible nuclear attack. Western countries have also begun re-examining their emergency support plans and engaging in “prudent planning” to keep chaos and panic under control in the case of an escalation.

COMMENTS

With heavy sanctions on Russia, which have led to 60% losses of all European seaborne crude market for Russia, Kremlin might seem cornered. However, Russia has been engaged in serious diplomatic discussions in an attempt to create allies. With Saudi Arabia, the informal leader of the OPEC+ grouping, on Putin's side, there is still enough clout of Russia in the energy market. Hence, a tactical nuclear attack might be unlikely.

According to the International Energy Agency, 90% of European gas storage facilities are full. This might prove beneficial for the incoming winters in Europe. However, the predictions for energy next year are bleak. Due to the energy crisis and rising inflation, anti-NATO protests have erupted all over Europe, including France and Germany.