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GEO-STRATEGIC SCAN

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**CHINA, VIETNAM
AGREE TO
"PROPERLY
MANAGE" SOUTH
CHINA SEA DISPUTE**

*Ukraine Strikes
With Kamikaze
USVs – Russian
Bases Are Not Safe
Anymore*



**Pakistan PM Sharif Meets
Chinese President Xi;
Both Agree To
Strengthen All-Weather
Ties, CPEC**

**US COMMITTED
TO WORK WITH
INDIA ON ITS
TRANSITION
AWAY FROM
RUSSIA, SAYS
WHITE HOUSE**



**Special Coverage on
Middle Eastern
Geopolitics**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

01 CHINA
Brig (Dr)
RK Bhutani (Retd)

04 RUSSIA-UKRAINE
CONFLICT
Gp Capt
A Mathur (Retd)

06 INDO-US
Gp Capt
Puneet Bhalla

11 MYANMAR
Col VN Shukla

13 PAKISTAN/ SRI LANKA
Col DM Govil

19 MARITIME
Cdr Naveen Pandita

22 JAPAN/ INDO-PACIFIC
Ms Ulupi Borah
Senior Fellow

24 MIDDLE EAST
Shri Anant Mishra
Associate Fellow

Biden, Xi Clash On Taiwan But Aim To ‘Manage’ Differences

<https://apnews.com/article/biden-taiwan-indonesia-xi-jinping-government-and-politics-961bb4680962cc53b4375af3bcbc4927>

President Joe Biden objected directly to China’s “coercive and increasingly aggressive actions” toward Taiwan during the first in-person meeting of his presidency with Xi Jinping, as the two superpower leaders aimed on 14 November to “manage” their differences in the competition for global influence.

COMMENTS

The nearly three-hour meeting came at a critical juncture for the two countries amid increasing economic and security tensions.

Biden reiterated U.S. support for its longstanding “One China” policy, which recognizes the government in Beijing — while allowing for informal American relations and defense ties with Taipei, and “strategic ambiguity” over whether the U.S. would respond militarily if the island were attacked.

Xi, according to the Chinese government’s account of the meeting, “stressed that the Taiwan question is at the very core of China’s core interests, the bedrock of the political foundation of China-U.S. relations, and the first red line that must not be crossed in China-U.S. relations.”

Biden and Xi also discussed Russia’s aggression against Ukraine and agreed that the use or even the threat of nuclear weapons is “totally unacceptable.” That was a reference to Moscow’s thinly veiled threats to use atomic weapons as its nearly nine-month invasion of Ukraine has faltered. Chinese officials have largely refrained from public criticism of Russia’s war, although Beijing has avoided direct support of the Russians, such as supplying arms.

While there were no watershed breakthroughs but Biden appeared to have secured from Xi the resumption of lower-level cooperation from China on a range of shared global challenges, viz., tackling climate change and maintaining global financial, health and food stability. In this respect, both have agreed to “empower key senior officials” to work on these areas of potential cooperation. Beijing had cut off such contacts with the U.S. in protest of House Speaker Nancy Pelosi’s trip to Taiwan in August.

On the other hand, Xi got Biden’s One China policy commitment.

Both leaders entered the highly anticipated meeting with bolstered political standing at home. Democrats triumphantly held onto control of the U.S. Senate, with a chance to boost their ranks by one in a runoff election in Georgia next month, while Xi was awarded a third five-year term in October by the Communist Party’s national congress, a break with tradition. The White House said Biden specifically mentioned U.S. concerns about China’s actions in Xinjiang, Tibet, and Hong Kong, and the plight of Americans it considers “wrongfully detained” or subject to exit bans in China.

CHINA

The White House said Biden “raised U.S. objections to the PRC’s coercive and increasingly aggressive actions toward Taiwan, which undermine peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait and in the broader region, and jeopardize global prosperity.”

In the meeting, Biden said China’s economic practices “harm American workers and families, and workers and families around the world,” the White House said. The meeting came just weeks after the Biden administration blocked exports of advanced computer chips to China — a national security move that bolsters U.S. competition against Beijing.

Xi’s government said he condemned such moves, saying, “Starting a trade war or a technology war, building walls and barriers, and pushing for decoupling and severing supply chains run counter to the principles of market economy and undermine international trade rules.” White House officials and their Chinese counterparts spent weeks negotiating details of the meeting, which was held at Xi’s hotel with translators providing simultaneous interpretation through headsets. Each leader was flanked by nine N-95 mask-wearing aides, and in the case of Xi, at least one official newly elevated in the recent Congress to its top leadership.

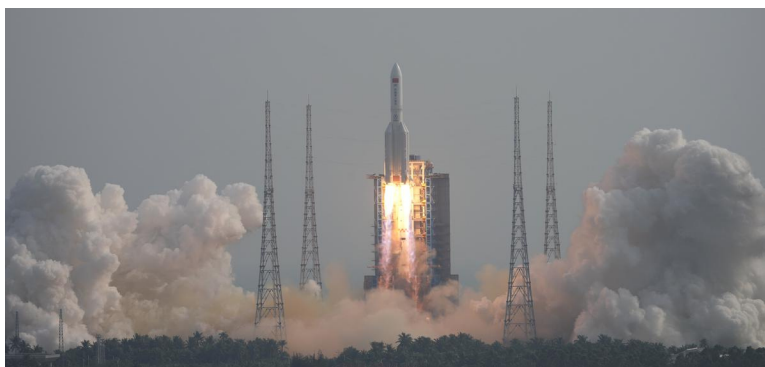
Speaking at a news conference afterward, Biden said that when it comes to China, the U.S. would “compete vigorously, but I’m not looking for conflict.” He added: “I absolutely believe there need not be a new Cold War” between America and the rising Asian power. He also said that despite China’s recent saber rattling, he does not believe “there’s any imminent attempt on the part of China to invade Taiwan.”

The two leaders agreed to have U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken travel to Beijing to continue discussions.

China Successfully Launches Cargo Spacecraft For Its Space Station In Orbit

<https://theprint.in/world/china-successfully-launches-cargo-spacecraft-for-its-space-station-in-orbit/1212524/>

China successfully launched its cargo spacecraft Tianzhou-5 on Saturday to deliver supplies for its space station, the construction of which is expected to be completed this year.



Source: The Hindu

COMMENT



Source: CGTN

The Long March-7 Y6 rocket, carrying Tianzhou-5 which blasted off this morning from the Wenchang Spacecraft Launch Site in the southern island province of Hainan successfully entered its designated orbit. The cargo craft is expected to conduct a fast-automated rendezvous and docking with the space station combination.

Earlier, on October 31, China launched the second lab called Mengtian module to be part of its Tiangong space station taking its construction into the final stage. According to an earlier announcement by the China Aerospace Science and Technology Corporation (CASTC) the low-orbit space station construction was expected to be completed this year.

Two batches comprising three astronauts were flown to the space station, the main module called Tianhe on a six months mission to complete the construction. While one set of astronauts returned, another set of three astronauts is currently based in Tianhe to complete its construction.

Once ready, China will be the only country to solely own a space station and will be a competitor to the NASA-led International Space Station (ISS) which is a collaborative project of several countries including Russia. Observers say the CSS may become the sole space station to remain in orbit once the ISS retires in the coming years. The significant feature of China's under-construction space station is its two robotic arms, especially the long one over which the US has previously expressed concern over its ability to grab objects including satellites from space.

With a larger door, Mengtian is capable of releasing miniaturised satellites into space. "Astronauts can install the small satellites on a payload transfer device, depressurise the airlock cabin, and then convey them out of the cabin," said Meng Yao, a designer of Mengtian. He added, "The robotic arm outside the space station will grab the satellites and then catapult them in specified directions."

Russia-Ukraine Conflict: A Glance

1. Reuters

2. <https://indianexpress.com/article/world/russia-says-it-has-completed-kherson-withdrawal-report>

SCENARIO

- Russian High Command has issued a general retreat to all surviving Russian forces at the Western bank of the Dnipro River.
- Sergei Shoigu, the Minister of Defence for Russia, confirmed the Russian military's departure from Kherson on November 9. After briefing Shoigu on the situation in Kherson City, General Sergei Surovikin, the Russian commander in Ukraine, made the following recommendation: "Having thoroughly examined the existing situation, it is proposed to take up the defence along the left [eastern] bank of the Dnieper River. I am aware that this is a difficult decision, but we will protect the most crucial thing - the lives of our military members - as well as the overall combat efficiency of the unit, which it is pointless to remain on the right bank in a constrained region. Shoigu gave the troops orders after concurring with the assessment.
- The proposal was met with scepticism from Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, who said: "The enemy doesn't offer us gifts. We are moving extremely slowly, without feeling anything, and taking no additional risks.
- Russia occupied Kherson in the early days of the war. Not only does it form a strategically crucial land bridge, a Reuters report pointed out that a canal from the Dnipro is an important source of freshwater, and has been targeted by both sides to cut off resources for the other.,On 15 Nov 22,Russia launched a fresh wave of missile attacks targeting cities and critical infrastructure across Ukraine. In Kharkiv, a critical infrastructure facility was damaged, causing power supply problems and halting Metro service and "ground electric transport.

BACKGROUND

The Russian Federation includes the province of Kherson after Vladimir Putin, the president of Russia, declared martial law to be in effect in all four annexations on October 19, Kherson city was occupied by Russian forces it on September 30 and the Russian Federation formally annexed. Following this Kherson city became a part of the Russian federation. Even though the military will leave the city, they will remain in the Kherson area.

Russia wanted to conquer Kherson City since the conflict began on February 24 and it did so in March. The Russian army moved civilians from the west bank of the Dnipro River to the east bank in Kherson City. 115,000 people were rescued from the city by the military. In the previous week, Ukrainian forces have seized significant tracts of land west of the Dnipro River and are now moving into Kherson city's outskirts. By eliminating army personnel and command posts in the city, they fired at Russian troops by using long-range missiles, the US armed the High Mobility Artillery Rocket System (HIMARS), which was crucial to Ukraine's entry into the city.

COMMENTS

1. The significance of Kherson City is strategic. The city of Kherson sits on the right (west) bank of the Dnipro just before it falls into the Black Sea north of the Crimean peninsula. The Dnipro river is Ukraine's longest and Europe's fourth-longest after the Volga, the Danube, and the Ural, and splits the country into roughly two halves as it winds its way down past Kyiv, Kremenchuk, Dnipro, Zaporizhzhia, and Kherson. It borders the Crimean peninsula, over which Russia has maintained control since 2014. Russia has been one of the main frontlines of the fight and has concentrated on occupying the city since the invasion's inception. The city serves as a key Black Sea port that connects Crimea to the other Ukrainian territories that have been annexed. To be viable, Ukraine needs to keep its access to the Black Sea.

2. The troop pull-out is unexpected, given the significance of Kherson City. While it's unclear what Russia's next move will be, the Kremlin said the withdrawal will not change the status of the region, which Moscow has proclaimed part of Russia.

3. Continued damage to Ukraine's power facilities and other infrastructure could affect heat availability for civilians during the coldest months of the year. At the same time, the change in season means Russian and Ukrainian soldiers are expected to confront unique challenges in the fighting on the ground.

4. The implications of this conflict on the developing countries in South East Asia will be the effects of climate change and environmental consequences and in wake of Russia's February invasion of their country, as more countries are resorting to use of coal and hydrocarbons. These would lead to global warming and decelerate the desired objectives set out for the climate change.

PM Modi, US President Biden Review India-US Ties During Their Meeting In Bali

<https://indianexpress.com/article/india/pm-modi-biden-india-us-ties-g-20-meeting-bali-8269890/>

On 15 Nov 22, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and US President Joe Biden reviewed the state of India-US strategic partnership including in sectors like critical and emerging technologies, advanced computing and artificial intelligence.

The two leaders also discussed topical global and regional developments in their meeting that took place on the margins of the G-20 summit in Bali, Indonesia, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said. It is understood that the Ukraine conflict and its implications figured in the discussions. However, the official statement did not cover it. The MEA said the two leaders expressed satisfaction about close cooperation between India and US in new groupings such as Quad and I2U2 (India, Israel, US and the United Arab Emirates).

“PM Modi thanked President Biden for his constant support for strengthening the India-US partnership. He expressed confidence that both countries would continue to maintain close coordination during India’s G-20 Presidency,” the MEA statement said.

COMMENTS

India is currently part of the G20 Troika (current, previous, and incoming G20 Presidencies) comprising Indonesia, Italy, and India. The prime minister is attending the summit at the invitation of Indonesian President Joko Widodo. The meeting between the two leaders was preceded by the meeting between Indian External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and US Secretary of State Antony Blinken on the sidelines of the ASEAN-India Summit in the Cambodian capital of Phnom Penh, a week earlier. They had discussed a range of issues including bilateral ties, the Ukraine conflict, and the situation in the Indo-Pacific among others.



Source: Zee Business

Joint Statement On The 9th India-U.S. Economic And Financial Partnership

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1875274>

‘India values US As A Trusted Partner’: Nirmala Sitharaman On India-US Ties

<https://www.livemint.com/news/india/india-values-us-as-a-trusted-partner-nirmala-sitharaman-on-india-us-ties-11668163241367.html>

The Indian Union Minister of Finance & Corporate Affairs Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman and United States Treasury Secretary Dr. Janet L. Yellen met at Delhi on 11 Nov 2022 for the 9th meeting of India-U.S. Economic and Financial Partnership. At the joint press conference, Finance Minister said, “India deeply values its relationship with the US as a trusted partner... Our strong ties have been reinforced, through significant and frequent interactions between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and US President Joe Biden and their commitment towards consolidating a strategic partnership.” She added, “We will continue to rely on the close cooperation of the US to address the global economic challenges, in a more coordinated manner and in strengthening multilateralism.”

The joint statement issued after the meeting stated, “The U.S. Treasury and Ministry of Finance launched our Economic and Financial Partnership in 2010 as a framework to cement the economic bonds between our two nations and build a foundation for greater cooperation and economic growth. At this ninth meeting of the Economic and Financial Partnership, we reaffirmed that our regular dialogue is crucial to the U.S.-India economic relationship and to advancing global efforts to tackle pressing economic challenges.”

Discussions were held on a range of subjects, including the headwinds to the global macroeconomic outlook, supply chain resilience, climate finance, multilateral engagement, global debt vulnerabilities, anti-money laundering and combating the financing of terrorism. It also featured a dedicated session on climate finance for the second time, where importance of the evolving role of the multilateral development banks (MDBs) to better address global challenges and fund mobilisation towards meaningful mitigation actions and transparency on implementation were discussed. Both sides reemphasized their commitment to the central role of multilateral cooperation in addressing these global macroeconomic challenges and committed to sustained engagement on various global and bilateral financial initiatives and continued collaboration to meet the most pressing global challenges.

COMMENTS

The ninth meeting of the Economic and Financial Partnership was another reaffirmation of the growing importance of the U.S.-India economic relationship, and strengthening of businesses-to-business links. There is growing acceptance of India's growing role in addressing global economic challenges, its importance in economic prosperity across Indo-Pacific and its potential in providing flexibility to global supply chains.

US says India Can Buy As Much Russian Oil As It Wants, Outside G-7 Price Cap: US Treasury Secretary

<https://www.businesstoday.in/latest/world/story/us-says-india-can-as-much-russian-oil-as-it-wants-outside-g-7-price-cap-us-treasury-secretary-352687-2022-11-12>

The United States is happy for India to continue buying as much Russian oil as it wants, including at prices above a G7-imposed price cap mechanism, if it steers clear of Western insurance, finance and maritime services bound by the cap, US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen said on 12 Nov 2022.

Russian oil "is going to be selling at bargain prices and we're happy to have India get that bargain or Africa or China. It's fine," Yellen added. The cap is intended to cut Russia's oil revenues while keeping Russian crude on the market by denying insurance, maritime services, and finance provided by the Western allies for tanker cargoes priced above a fixed dollar-per-barrel cap.

COMMENTS

The official's comments came after foreign minister S. Jaishankar said on a trip to Moscow that India will keep buying Russian oil as it's economically "advantageous" and that Russia is a "time-tested partner."



Source: Fair Observer

India-U.S. CEO Forum Held Virtually; Forum Chaired Jointly By Shri Piyush Goyal And Ms. Gina Raimondo, US Secretary Of Commerce

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1874875>



Source: First Post

The India-U.S. CEO Forum, chaired jointly by Shri Piyush Goyal, Union Minister of Commerce and Industry, Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, and Textiles and Ms. Gina Raimondo, US Secretary of Commerce was held virtually on 10 Nov 22. This is the sixth time the Forum has been convened since its reconstitution in December 2014 by the Governments of India and the USA. The Forum continues to be an effective platform for dialogue across key sectoral themes and to identify areas for closer collaboration for mutual benefit of both economies. Senior government functionaries, including Mr. Taranjit Sandhu, the Indian Ambassador to the US also participated in the meeting.

Shri Goyal highlighted the significant growth of the India-U.S. economic relations driven by the common interest of promoting sustainability, emerging technologies, globally resilient supply chains and small businesses. He also reiterated the importance of such dialogues in leveraging this momentum.

The CEO Forum, comprising of CEOs from leading Indian and US based companies, is co-chaired by Mr. N. Chandrasekaran, Chairman of Tata Sons and Mr. James Taiclet, President and Chief Executive Officer, Lockheed Martin. CEOs from both sides commended the two governments for implementing transformative reforms and initiatives undertaken to strengthen bilateral cooperation. The CEOs, under the seven working groups, presented priority areas to create stronger partnerships and boost growth across various critical areas such as Entrepreneurship and Promoting Small Businesses, Healthcare and Pharmaceuticals, Aerospace and Defence, ICT and Digital Infrastructure, Energy, Water and Environment, Infrastructure and Manufacturing, Financial Services, Trade and Investments, among others.

This dialogue will serve as the framework under which specific recommendations will be charted out during the sixth edition of the India-US CEO Forum, due to be held early next year.

US Committed To Work With India On Its Transition Away From Russia, Says White House

<https://indianexpress.com/article/world/us-committed-to-work-with-india-on-its-transition-away-from-russia-8257467/>

US State Department Spokesperson Ned Price told reporters at a news conference in Washington on 08 Nov 22 that the Biden administration is committed to work with India on its transition away from Russia. Price was briefing correspondents in the wake of Foreign Secretary Vinay Kwatra's meetings in Washington with Deputy Secretary of State Wendy Sherman, amongst others. The spokesperson accepted that the Indo-Russian relationship matured over a period of time and really came to be during the Cold War, at a time when the United States was not in a position to be an economic partner, a security partner, a military partner to India. He further added, "Now, this is a transition that we've always been clear eyed will not take place overnight, over the course of even a few months or probably even over the course of a couple of years. India is a large country, a vast country, a large economy that has demanding needs." Asked about India buying Russian oil, he emphasised that it's also in the bilateral interest of countries around the world to end and certainly, over the course of time, to wean their dependence on Russian energy.

COMMENTS

The fortnight has seen a spate of meetings at various levels between US and India. Each of these has emphasised the importance of the bilateral relationship in diverse sectors, but has also drawn concerns by the US on India's stance to the Russia-Ukrainian war and its continuing purchase of Russian crude, making India the biggest buyer globally of Russian crude, other than China.

Balancing between the two, India has been confident in keeping its interest paramount in its actions. There is now an overt acceptability by the US of Indian actions, as is evident in continued high level engagement between the two governments. The bilateral relations are further cemented through their partnership in various strategic and economic groupings. Importantly, strengthening of relations has had bipartisan support by both Democrat and Republican governments in the US. The relations are expected to get a further boost with the election of five Indian-Americans to the US House of Representatives in the recently held US midterm elections. As one of the elected members stated, "We are playing an active role at three levels – as leaders, as donors, and as an active demographic bloc seen as a swing constituency."

Myanmar Emergency Update (as of 01 November 2022)

<https://reliefweb.int/report/myanmar/myanmar-emergency-update-1-november-2022>

BACKGROUND

-
- The security situation in Myanmar continued to deteriorate, resulting in new displacements. According to the UN, an estimated 1,443,000 internally displaced people (IDPs) were reported across the country as of 01 November 2022, including 1,113,000 people, who have been newly displaced since 01 February 2021.
- In the North West, heavy armed clashes, air strikes and explosions were reported, as well as the destruction of civilian infrastructure. The transportation of medicine and food remains restricted, particularly in Sagaing Region, where the needs are most acute.
- In Rakhine and Chin (South) States, fighting continues and has resulted in the displacement of some 16,700 people since August 2022, according to the latest UN figures. Movement restrictions and blocked roads and supply chains to Rakhine State (North), as well as restrictions on humanitarian access - limited to life-saving activities, such as food and medical support - have seriously impacted the availability and price of basic commodities in local markets.



Source: Relief Web

REGIONAL SCAN: MYANMAR

- In Kachin and Shan (North), tensions were high following a 23 October air strike in Hpakant Township, Kachin State, where serious fatalities were reported. The price of various goods, such as medicine and food has surged due to strict transportation restrictions. In Shan State (North), the escalating conflict has led to forced recruitment and extortion.
- In the South East, air strikes and shelling persisted with security checks and roadblocks remaining the main barrier to movement. Humanitarian access is increasingly restricted, notably in Kayah and Kayin State, as food and medicine shortages continue to be reported by displaced families. In Tanintharyi Region, some 2,900 displaced people close to Tanintharyi town returned to their villages of origin after the security situation reportedly improved.

COMMENTS

Due to continuous military actions, security situation in Myanmar is likely to worsen further in times to come, which is likely to increase the displacements and increased shortage of food, shelter and medicines to those displaced. The humanitarian crisis in Myanmar appears to be a never ending one. It is therefore essential for the international organisations to make serious efforts to mitigate the misery of those displaced in Myanmar.

Imran Khan Shot At, Injured In His Leg, Blames PM, Home Minister, ISI

<https://www.msn.com/en-in/news/world/imran-khan-survives-assassination-bid-takes-2-bullets-in-leg/ar-AA13I68W>

Former Pakistan PM Imran Khan has survived an assassination attempt in the middle of his long march to the capital, taking two bullets in his right leg as a lone gunman in the crowd fired at him and party colleagues waving at supporters from atop a container truck winding its way through the eastern city of Wazirabad. Imran Khan told that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, interior minister Rana Sanaullah and a senior military officer (Maj Gen Faisal Naseer of the ISI) are behind the assassination attempt on him. PM Sharif and President Arif Alvi has condemned the attack in the strongest words and asked for an immediate report on the incident.

COMMENTS

Pakistan has had a history of attacks on politicians in public. Former PM Benazir Bhutto was assassinated on December 27, 2007, in a gun and bomb attack following an election rally in the garrison city of Rawalpindi. Pakistan's first PM Liaquat Ali Khan had been assassinated in the same city in October 1951. Another former PM, Yousaf Raza Gillani, survived an attempt on his life in 2008. Benazir's father and ex-PM Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was hanged in Rawalpindi in 1979 after being ousted in a military coup.

Since losing the prime ministership six months ago, Imran has claimed on several occasions that the military establishment and the current dispensation colluded with a foreign power in ousting him. Mr Khan and the Army seem to be headed for a dangerous confrontation. Mr Khan has hardly behaved as a democrat over the decades, hobnobbing with the military dictators and leader of banned terrorists groups. He had no qualms about using the army's support to achieve his dream of becoming PM. His track record for governance and management of foreign policy has was underwhelming.

There seems to be no end insight for Pakistan's turmoil. Yet, with the Army chief's scheduled retirement later this month, and Mr Khan sharpening the rhetoric, it will be crucial to see how long the powerful military refrains from stepping into political waters. No Pakistani politician yet has managed to challenge the army and savour success. Any increase in domestic tensions, especially developments that force the military to take its eyes off the activities of terrorists groups, would not bode well for the region.

Pakistan PM Sharif Meets Chinese President Xi; Both Agree To Strengthen All-Weather Ties, CPEC

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/world/pakistan/pakistan-pm-sharif-meets-chinese-president-xi-both-agree-to-strengthen-all-weather-ties-cpec/articleshow/95250309.cms>



Source: XINHUA

On his maiden visit to Beijing, Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif held talks with Chinese President Xi Jinping during which the two leaders agreed to strengthen the all-weather friendship and the USD 60 Billion China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). Mr. Xi had called for providing solid protection for hundreds of Chinese working on the CPEC projects. Mr. Shehbaz told Mr Xi to provide more help for his government to shore up the balance of payments position to avert a crisis similar to Sri Lanka.

COMMENTS

As per the IMF, Pakistan's total non-Paris Club bilateral debt currently stands at about USD 27 billion, of which Chinese debt is about USD 23 billion. China is also unhappy over the delays in the projects of the CPEC, which is the flagship scheme of Xi's multibillion-dollar pet project BRI, resulting in cost overruns and discontentment among Chinese investors. More than 40 attacks have been on Chinese nationals and interests between 2000 and 2020. Pakistan Government has agreed to fully pay the tariff of the CPEC energy projects in a timely manner and hoped for a further increase in the tariff settlement ratio to ensure repayment of the bank loan and normal operation of the CPEC energy projects. China and Pakistan are moving forward more effectively with the construction of their economic corridor, as well as accelerate the construction of infrastructure for the Gwadar Sea Port.

Pakistan Government has created a 50 billion rupee (USD 225 million) escrow account for automatic partial payments to Chinese independent power producers operating in Pakistan. China pledged a 15 billion yuan (USD 2.1 billion) loan facility for Pakistan, but no further concrete support plans were revealed. This trip was more words and little action, and mostly about reaffirming Pakistan and China's all-weather strategic partnership.

India has objected to China over the CPEC as it is being laid through Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir. India also has serious security concerns that arise from strong and rapidly growing China-Pakistan relations. India must ensure keeping China and Pakistan engaged both at bilateral and international forums and we must strengthen our ties with the other nations in the region.

All Chinese CPEC Workers In Pakistan To Move In Bullet-Proof Cars: Report

<https://www.firstpost.com/world/all-chinese-cpec-workers-in-pakistan-to-move-in-bullet-proof-cars-report-11579561.html>

Pakistan and China have agreed to use bullet-proof vehicles for all outdoor movements of the Chinese nationals working on the CPEC projects in Pakistan to protect them from terrorist attacks after Beijing expressed concern over their security. The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) links Pakistan's Gwadar port on the Arabian Sea with Kashgar in northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region. The security of Chinese workers has been a huge hurdle in the implementation of its various projects. The draft minutes of the 11th Joint Cooperation Committee (JCC) of the CPEC, both sides have also agreed to strengthen the capabilities of the law-enforcement agencies and investigators. Chinese side committed to providing security-related equipment for the capacity building of the Pakistani law-enforcement agencies. The Chinese side has also committed that it would establish a training centre for the private security guards and law enforcement agency personnel to equip them with modern techniques and modules. Pakistan had proposed the establishment of a separate joint working group for coordination on security efforts.



Source: First Post

China, Saudi Arabia Assure Islamabad Of Providing Financial Package Of \$13b, Says Pakistan FM Ishaq Dar

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/world/pakistan/china-saudi-arabia-assures-islamabad-of-providing-financial-package-of-13b-says-pakistan-fm-ishaq-dar/articleshow/95319807.cms>

Pakistan's Finance Minister Ishaq Dar said that China and Saudi Arabia will be providing USD 13 billion financial package to Islamabad. China and Saudi Arabia have given assurances to Pakistani delegations under Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif during recent visits that they will take care of Islamabad's financial requirements till June 2023. This is in addition to the rollover of sovereign loan (China approx USD 4 billion and Saudi Arabia approx USD 3 billion) deposits, additional rollovers, commercial loans, additional SWAPS and jacking up oil facilities on deferred payment in line with the IMF agreement.

COMMENTS

Both financial packages will ease the struggling economy of Pakistan as the foreign currency reserves held by the State Bank of Pakistan stand at USD 8.9 billion at the moment. As per the Chinese Government, the commercial loans of USD 3.3 billion will also be provided in due course of time. The total Chinese financial package is likely go up to USD 8.8 billion for the ongoing financial year. An additional amount of USD 4.2 billion will be given by Saudi Arabian Government.

Pakistan's has requested the Saudi Government for an additional USD 3 billion in deposits and jacking up the oil facility on deferred payment by an additional USD 1.2 billion. Therefore, the total Saudi package is expected to touch USD 8.4 billion.

The next bid deadline, for Pakistan Government, is only a few weeks away, with the payment of USD 1 billion due on the five-year Sukuk bond, maturing on 5 December. Despite being cash-strapped, Pakistan had managed to meet the outstanding amount of USD 40 million towards the bond in July. But this time, the amount is much larger and many of Pakistan's friends appear fatigued. Given that Pakistan is entering a protracted period of turmoil and its economy will be a decisive variable for stability in the country.

Pakistan-Afghanistan Chaman Border Crossing Continues To Remain Shut For Third Successive Day

<https://www.outlookindia.com/international/pakistan-afghanistan-chaman-border-crossing-continues-to-remain-shut-for-third-successive-day-news-237607>

Chaman border in Balochistan was closed, after an armed man from the Afghan side opened fire on Pakistani security personnel near Bab-e-Dosti, killing a paramilitary Frontier Corps (FC) soldier. Two other soldiers sustained injuries in the firing. Pakistan authorities halted trade operations following the incident. "Bilateral trade, foot traffic, and immigration system at the border has been suspended for the third day".



Source: Dawn

COMMENTS

Both financial packages will ease the struggling economy of Pakistan as the foreign currency reserves held by the State Bank of Pakistan stand at USD 8.9 billion at the moment. As per the Chinese Government, the commercial loans of USD 3.3 billion will also be provided in due course of time. The total Chinese financial package is likely go up to USD 8.8 billion for the ongoing financial year. An additional amount of USD 4.2 billion will be given by Saudi Arabian Government.

Pakistan's has requested the Saudi Government for an additional USD 3 billion in deposits and jacking up the oil facility on deferred payment by an additional USD 1.2 billion. Therefore, the total Saudi package is expected to touch USD 8.4 billion.

The next bid deadline, for Pakistan Government, is only a few weeks away, with the payment of USD 1 billion due on the five-year Sukuk bond, maturing on 5 December. Despite being cash-strapped, Pakistan had managed to meet the outstanding amount of USD 40 million towards the bond in July. But this time, the amount is much larger and many of Pakistan's friends appear fatigued. Given that Pakistan is entering a protracted period of turmoil and its economy will be a decisive variable for stability in the country.

Sri Lanka Starts Building \$700 Million Port Project Funded By India's Adani

<https://gulfnews.com/world/asia/sri-lanka-starts-building-700-million-port-project-funded-by-indias-adani-1.1668001873186>

Sri Lanka's largest port began on construction of a \$700 million terminal project, partly funded by India's Adani Group, marking the first foray by an Indian company into the sector. The first stage is expected to be done in the third quarter of 2024 and the full project will be completed by 2025-end. Ports-to-edible oils group Adani, controlled by Asia's richest person, Gautam Adani, holds a 51% stake in the West Container Terminal (WCT) of the port, which also has a terminal run by China Merchants Port Holdings Co Ltd.

COMMENTS

The new container jetty will be 1.4 kms in length, with a depth of 20 mtrs and an annual capacity to handle 3.2 million containers. The first phase of the project with a 600-metre terminal is due to be completed within two years. The terminal will revert to Sri Lanka ownership after 35 years of operation. Plans to allow India into the strategic Colombo port goes back several years, but they were scuttled when trade unions linked to the ruling coalition opposed giving New Delhi a partially built terminal within the port.



Source: Gulf News

Later, the government asked Indians to build a brand-new terminal adjoining the Chinese-operated Colombo International Container Terminal (CICT). Colombo is located in the Indian Ocean between the major hubs of Dubai and Singapore, meaning influence at its ports is highly sought after. India and the United States have also expressed concerns that a Chinese foothold at Hambantota could give Beijing a military advantage in the Indian Ocean.

India has this year provided the most financial support to its southern neighbour, which is facing its worst economic crisis in more than seven decades. India is now keen to see long-term projects by Indian companies take off in Sri Lanka. India and China vie for influence in the island nation of 22 million, located near busy shipping routes. India has extended about \$4 billion including swaps and multiple credit lines to Sri Lanka, amid an acute shortage of dollars and essentials.

Ukraine Strikes With Kamikaze USVs – Russian Bases Are Not Safe Anymore

<https://www.navalnews.com/naval-news/2022/10/analysis-ukraine-strikes-with-kamikaze-usvs-russian-bases-are-not-safe-anymore/>

Ukraine conducted a new surprise attack on the Russian Black Sea Fleet on October 29, 2022. This time, it targeted naval combatants at the Russian Naval base of Sevastopol, opening a new era of Naval warfare by using unmanned surface vessels (USV) as suicide drones. The Russian Black Sea Fleet (BSF) was awakened by a shocking drone attack on Saturday morning. Ukraine targeted naval units in and around the main Russian base in the region, the Sevastopol naval base.



Source: Naval News

COMMENTS

Ukrainian unmanned surface vessels (USVs) carried out kamikaze attacks on the Black Sea Fleet units. An Admiral Grigorovich-class frigate, possibly the flagship Admiral Makarov, and mine countermeasure (MCM) ship were reportedly hit by the Ukrainian USVs. Ukraine attacked the base simultaneously with UAVs and USVs, 8 UAVs (Unmanned Aerial vehicles) and 7 USVs were involved in the attack.

The Russian Defense claims that all UAVs and four USVs were repelled by the BSF units, and three USVs were destroyed on land. The Russian MCM vessel, Ivan Golubets, was slightly damaged in the attack. The USV targeted the Admiral Grigorovich-class frigate which didn't seem to apply countermeasures against the drone. The Naval units attacked by the drones were providing security for the merchant ships carrying grain at the grain corridor for months.

A few hours later, Russia suspended its participation in the grain deal, which was considered to ease a possible food crisis due to the Russo-Ukrainian war. It appears that the ships of the Black Sea Fleet, that were subjected to a terrorist attack are involved in ensuring the security of the "grain corridor" as part of an international initiative to export agricultural products from Ukrainian ports.

Japan Hosts Australia, India, U.S. In Naval Exercise Malabar 2022

<https://www.c7f.navy.mil/Media/News/Display/Article/3217030/japan-hosts-australia-india-us-in-naval-exercise-malabar-2022/#:~:text=Opening%20ceremonies%20kicked%20off%20exercise,off%20the%20coast%20of%20Japan.>

Opening ceremonies kicked-off exercise Malabar 2022, Nov. 8, followed by scheduled at-sea exercises involving Naval ships, aircraft and personnel from Australia, India, Japan, and the United States in the Philippine Sea, off the coast of Japan. This year marks the 26th iteration of the Malabar series of exercises, which began in 1992 between the United States and India. The exercise has evolved in scope and partnerships and now includes Japan and Australia. This is the third time that all four nations have participated in Malabar to advance the collective planning, integration and employment of advanced warfare tactics between participating nations.

COMMENTS



Source: Commander, US 7th Fleet Official Website

This year's at-sea exercise includes a variety of high-end tactical training events, submarine integration, Anti-Submarine Warfare training, Air Defense exercises, multinational replenishment-at-sea operations, communications drills, joint warfighting planning scenarios, gunnery exercise, and maritime interdiction operations. This exercise represents an outstanding opportunity for like-minded Maritime Forces to work together, demonstrating shared commitment to the region and collaborative approach toward security and stability. It is more important than ever for the forward-deployed Carrier Strike Group to work closely with other Maritime Forces and deter all who challenge a free and open Indo-Pacific. U.S. Navy forces participating include the embarked staffs of CSG 5, Carrier Air Wing (CVW) 5, and Destroyer Squadron (DESRON) 15 along with the aircraft carrier USS Ronald Reagan (CVN 76), guided-missile cruiser USS Chancellorsville (CG 62), and guided-missile destroyer USS Milius (DDG 69). Australian, Indian, Japanese, and U.S. maritime forces routinely operate together in the Indo-Pacific, fostering a cooperative approach toward regional security and stability.

MARITIME

The Malabar planning and exercise lead rotates each year among participating nations, along with the exercise location to demonstrate the combined ability to exercise across the entire Western Pacific and Indian Ocean. Through this high-end tactical exercise, we were able to improve our tactical capabilities and strengthen cooperation with the U.S., India, and Australian Navies, thereby contributing to the creation of a desirable security environment for Japan. Japan Maritime Self Defense Force (JMSDF) surface units participating include JDS Hyuga (DDH 181), JDS Shiranui (DD 120), JDS Takanami (DD 115), JDS Oumi (AOE 426) along with a P-1 aircraft. Malabar 2022 provides another opportunity for the Indian Navy to enhance interoperability and mutual understanding with the participating navies in keeping with the national vision of security and growth for all in the region. Indian Navy surface units participating include a Shivalik-class FFG, Kamorta-Class Corvette, a P-8I aircraft, and Marine Commandos (MARCOS) personnel. Participation in high-end maritime exercises, such as Exercise Malabar, demonstrates Australia's commitment to working with strategic partners in the Indo-Pacific region. This exercise contributes to regional security by deepening professional relationships among India, Japan and the United States to build interoperability in the Maritime domain. Royal Australian Navy (RAN) participants included His Majesty's Australian Ships Arunta (FFH 151) and Stalwart (A304) and Submarine Farncomb along with a Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) P-8A Maritime Patrol Aircraft.



Source: Commander, US 7th Fleet Official Website

China, Vietnam Agree To "Properly Manage" South China Sea Dispute

<https://www.ndtv.com/world-news/china-vietnam-agree-to-properly-manage-south-china-sea-dispute-3481085>

China and Vietnam agreed on Tuesday to "properly manage" territorial disputes in the South China Sea, rounding off a leaders' meeting in Beijing as part of a diplomatic blitz by Chinese President Xi Jinping.

The socialist neighbours both maintain sweeping claims to sovereignty in much of the contested waterway, parts of which are also claimed by Taiwan, the Philippines, Malaysia and Brunei. Trillions of dollars in ship-borne trade passes through the South China Sea each year, and naval vessels from the United States and other Western nations regularly sail through it, though Beijing has ignored an international court ruling that its claims have no legal basis.

COMMENTS

There are several claimants to the South China Sea dispute with China and Vietnam being the most active ones. Both the countries got involved in a conflict in 1974 over the Paracel Islands of South China Sea which later became a regional issue. In 2009, Vietnam along with Malaysia had submitted a joint statement related to the limits of the continental shelf beyond 200 nautical miles from the baselines to the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf of the United Nations. This greatly agitated China and several incidents were observed in which Chinese ships had cut down cables of the surveillance ships of Vietnam. Despite the dispute in the South China Sea, the economic relationship between both the countries is changing. Today, Vietnam is China's biggest trade partner in ASEAN and sixth biggest globally. Bilateral trade rose 24.6% in 2021 to \$165.9 billion. Vietnam mainly exported agriculture produce and crude oil to China in 1995. By 2020, it was exporting electronics, cotton yarn and agriculture produce. According to reports, Vietnam falls in the category of Southeast Asian countries which is closer to China than the US.

Compared to those figures, India's trade figures with Vietnam are very low. According to Indian statistics for Financial Year 2021-22, bilateral trade between India and Vietnam reached US\$ 14.14 billion. Economy plays a huge role in bringing two countries closer. Vietnam has remained one of India's closest partners in Southeast Asia. Vietnam offered oil blocks to ONGC Videsh Limited which greatly agitated China. Thus, with the deepening of economic relations between Hanoi and Beijing, New Delhi's tensions are increased. It worries that Vietnam, one of its closest partners in the region is getting closer to China and might have significant impact on its foreign and security policies.

French National Strategic Review Lists India As A Key Partner To Stabilise Indo-Pacific Region

[https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/france-lists-india-as-key-partner-to-stabilise-indo-pacific-area/articleshow/95435429.cms?](https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/france-lists-india-as-key-partner-to-stabilise-indo-pacific-area/articleshow/95435429.cms?utm_source=contentofinterest&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=cppst)

[utm_source=contentofinterest&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=cppst](https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/france-lists-india-as-key-partner-to-stabilise-indo-pacific-area/articleshow/95435429.cms?utm_source=contentofinterest&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=cppst)

France, in its just released National Strategic Review, has affirmed that it is committed to building partnership with its key strategic partner India besides Japan, , to stabilise the Indo-Pacific region. The Review released on 9th November 2022 also referred to the modernisation of China's military apparatus that has enabled the People's Liberation Army (PLA) to support an increasingly assertive strategy, including on the military front, whether in the Indo-Pacific region, particularly with regard to the status quo in the Taiwan Strait, or in other regions of the world.

COMMENTS

France has various national interests to have released the National Strategic Review and considering India's geo-strategic location in the Indo-Pacific region, France realises the salience of building partnership with India. Even before releasing the national Strategic Review, French Foreign Minister Catherine Colonna met her counterpart S.Jaishankar on September 2022, where they agreed to set up an Indo-Pacific trilateral framework to roll out development projects, decided to expand strategic cooperation and vowed to work closely to deal with pressing global challenges such as food crisis triggered by the Ukraine war.

China has always been a major concern for France, now followed by the Russia-Ukraine crisis. At this point France is very much determined to work in cooperation with India while trying to address the terrible consequences of the war. Moreover, France and India both want to prevent the Chinese efforts to change the status quo of the region and make sure there is no imbalance in the region.



Source: The Economic Times

US warns of Iran threat to attack targets in Saudi Arabia

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20221102-us-warns-of-iran-threat-to-attack-targets-in-saudi-arabia/>

The US has expressed concern over a potential imminent threat by Iran to attack targets in Saudi Arabia and Iraq's Kurdistan region, according to a report published yesterday by the Wall Street Journal. Riyadh is said to have shared intelligence with Washington of the plot, leading to the kingdom, the US and neighbouring countries raising the alert level for their military forces, the report said citing Saudi and US officials.

A White House spokesperson said that the US will not hesitate to respond if necessary. "We are concerned about the threat picture, and we remain in constant contact through military and intelligence channels with the Saudis," said the spokesperson from the National Security Council. "We will not hesitate to act in the defence of our interests and partners in the region." According to AP, quoting a US official, the attack could take place "soon or within 48 hours." While Pentagon press secretary Brigadier General Pat Ryder said that the Department of Defence remains "concerned about the threat situation in the region," and is "in regular contact with our Saudi partners."

COMMENTS

A Generated Outcome of the Saudi-Turkish Normalisation

Since assuming the position of the crown prince of Saudi Arabia, Mohammad bin Salman (MBS) paid an official visit to Turkey on June 22. The tension between the two states were an all-time high due to Turkey blaming Saudi Arabia for the murder of journalist Jamal Khashoggi in its consulate in Istanbul in 2018. That said, the visit was interpreted as an effort to normalise its diplomatic relations. In accordance with the joint statement released on the MBS visit to Istanbul, the two sides stressed on normalisation and commitment to initiate new bilateral ties, in the political, economic, military, security, and cultural spheres.

Iran's concern

In Iran, the normalisation of ties between Turkey and Saudi Arabia became a topic of greater interest in roughly every household, discussing impact of Tehran's influence and interests in the region, arguing on the fate of Turkey-Iran's diplomatic relations. It was more of an alarm for political decision makers in Tehran. There is no denial to Turkey's growing influence in the Middle East. Its political & economic significance continues to play majorly during the Russo-Ukrainian War. On the similar note, Saudi Arabia is an energy hub. It has become more relevant in the energy market since the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Moreover, Ankara & Riyadh are the two largest power houses in the region.

MIDDLE EAST

If they enter into an alliance, the two will have the necessary strength to exercise influence in regional & to a limited extent, global dynamics, positioning the balance of power in their corner. Taking these facts into account, Tehran had predicted and on numerous accounts expressed concerns about such an alliance which could systematically challenge Tehran's regional influence in Yemen, Syria, Iraq, and Lebanon and expose Tehran to fend for itself in a new global order. Tehran is concerned on the possibility of a possible defence cooperation between the two and the transfer of technology of Bayraktar TB2 drones to Riyadh.

Turkey, Iran and Saudi Arabia: Balance of Power in the Middle East

Taking a note from history, Turkey & Iran share regional rivalry. That said, they also enjoy a stable relationship due to various channels of communication, institutional linkages & socio-cultural history. However, the same cannot be said for Tehran & Riyadh. They are arch-rivals sharing a bit of geographical proximity and oil. Both the nations are in a continued tussle to exercise influence in the Middle East and the Levant. Taking account of Ankara's geography, they have been balancing between Saudi Arabia and Iran. But, since the eruption of Arab Spring, Riyadh and Tehran changed their response towards Ankara, making it difficult for the latter to retain its dual policy.

An Aggressive Response

Pressuring Saudi Arabia, Iran continues to do so with its actors operating in Yemen and Iraq. According to one analyst, Iran backed Houthi rebels have conducted over 430 missile attacks as well as 851 drone attacks in Saudi Arabia since 2015. Despite preliminary talks between the two nations and a temporary ceasefire in Yemen, there is not much of change in the between Iran – Saudi talks. This has resulted in Riyadh's apprehension of more attack on its territories.

An Uncertain Future

Taking the aforementioned analysis into account, a change in Saudi-Iranian relations and a subsequent de-escalation in apprehensions is not foreseeable. A regional order with balance of power instituted by a super power, carries a favourable precondition for the aforementioned outcome. Arguably, a change in stance between Riyadh & Tehran is only possible with a US intervention — which is again unforeseeable. A keen eye for Middle East politics, the author intends to weigh the importance of Iraq in this equation. If Iraq acts as a buffer and brings in a balance, it will benefit the most as a buffer state. One more scenario could arise with a unipolar equation, with which Iran & Saudi Arabia both align to the same pole. With Russia engaged in Ukraine, the roads seem to appear open for China, which is making new roads inward through its policy. This means the US is now being challenged by the Asian giant. In the context of greater economic & social connectivity, it seems the Asian giant has an edge against the US. With a historical precedent set in for the nation which entangles in Gulf politics, it still remains unclear as to where the roads lay. If history intends to repeat for the Asian giant, this could result in only one possible scenario:



Source: Middle East Monitor

A multipolar Middle East

With two economic giants challenging the US, it is highly unlikely for China to not contemplate a military foot print. In this scenario, we will see Iran & Saudi Arabia aligning to two poles, while strengthening their military capabilities for a possible confrontation. If such a scenario comes into play, the trajectory of their relations will point towards a possible confrontation, with an increased possibility of a direct confrontation at some point. These scenarios have been over played in Tehran & Riyadh for the past 90 years. It will be incorrect for this scenario while hypothesing on the future trajectory in the region.