



CENTRE FOR  
JOINT WARFARE  
STUDIES  
(CENJOWS)

# GEO-STRATEGIC SCAN

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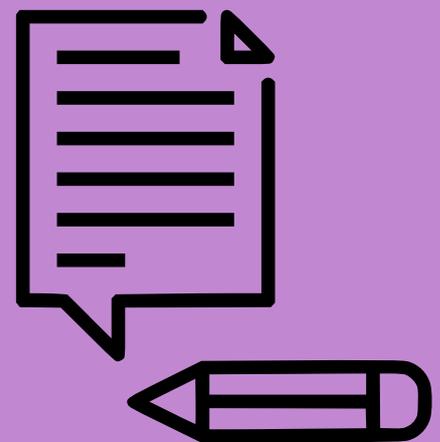
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## Russia-Ukraine Conflict: A Glance

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### UKRAINIAN COUNTER OFFENSIVE

**Kinetic War.** On June 03, 2023, President Volodymyr Zelensky announced that the armed forces of Ukraine were ready for the long-awaited counteroffensive. In recent days, Ukrainian troops have been testing Russian defences across most of the 1,000km front. On June 08, 2023, it became evident that Ukraine had begun a significant southerly offensive in the Zaporizhia region in a two-pronged attack, which makes up the centre of the gravity, with heavy artillery bombardment and the use of western tanks like German Leopard tanks, American Bradley armoured fighting vehicles and M113 armoured personnel carriers. On June 12, 2023, Volodymyr Zelensky confirmed that the “counter-offensive and defensive actions are taking place” and hailed “results” in heavy fighting in Donetsk, a region in the country's east. According to Russia's Defence ministry, the incursions originated from five different points along the frontline in Donetsk, an eastern region. On the night of June 9 to 10, Russia carried out a missile attack on Mirgorod Air Base in Poltava Oblast, home to the MiG-29 fighters, using Iskander ballistic as well as cruise missiles. Russia has denied that Ukraine had achieved any breakthroughs.

**Water War.** On June 06, 2023, a blast has resulted in the partial destruction of the Nova Kakhovka dam in a Russian-controlled area of south-east Ukraine submerging 29 villages in the region of Kherson. Seismic signals recorded from an explosion at the Kakhovka Dam is estimated to be the of the magnitude estimated between 1 and 2.

## RUSSIA-UKRAINE CONFLICT

### RUSSIA-UKRAINE WAR

#### Nova Kakhovka dam collapse

About 42,000 people are at risk after the collapse of the Nova Kakhovka dam caused flooding. Water from the reservoir supplies fresh water to the Crimean peninsula to the south, as well as the Zaporizhzhia nuclear plant upstream.



Source: AJLabs

Ukrainian officials said that after the destruction of the dam and that the reservoir water can no longer be supplied to cool reactors at the Zaporizhzhia nuclear plant. Earlier, the Ukrainian units had moved out from Kherson city in the days leading up to the blast. They may have been attempting a risky cross-river operation over or near the Kakhovka dam and bridge. President Vladimir Putin said the dam breach was a “barbaric act”.

The UN convened an emergency session of its Security Council to discuss the issue, during which Russia and Ukraine blamed each other for the blasts. Though the reason behind the damage remains unclear, experts have said a deliberate explosion inside the dam was the most likely cause behind its collapse.

**Battle of Bakhmut.** Ukraine said it had launched “offensive actions” on the frontline and had success near Bakhmut, a town in the country’s east. Bakhmut “remains the epicentre of hostilities”. After more than eight months of fighting, both sides had expended more human and military resources than in any other battle of the war.

**Hybrid Warfare.** Ukraine has started developing, testing, and fielding long range drones to strike deep into Russia. One longer-range Ukrainian drone is the UJ-22, made by Ukrjet and with a reported range of up to 800 kilometres. Ukrainian cyber defence has been bolstered by the rapid delivery of cyber capacities and capabilities by the private sector, and cooperation with international partners. While there have been no overwhelmingly destructive cyber-attacks in Ukraine so far, the cyber front is far from ‘quiet’.

## COMMENTS

The selection of Zaporizhzhia for the launch of counter offensive is logical as it could trap large number of personnel in Kherson province and damage the bridge connecting Crimea. Russia has built multiple lines of defence in this area and Ukraine’s flanks would be exposed to Russian Attacks by Air Force using long range standoff weapons. The ongoing threat that both sides pose to one another and the unresolved dispute over the regions of Ukraine that Russia has claimed to annex are likely to remain fixed for many years to come. This implies that the fight in Ukraine could go on indefinitely, escalating into a terrible, protracted war that could claim thousands more lives without leading to a clear winner.

## RUSSIA-UKRAINE CONFLICT

**Water as a Weapon.** Ukraine will gain from the Kakhovka dam blast and will have impact on Zaporizhia nuclear power plant upstream, as it draws on water to cool its reactors. The take aways are that firstly, the damage is not new in the history of warfare and will be waged again in other wars. Secondly, there is a need to develop technological solutions to mitigate this threat like use of heavy quadcopter drones to evacuate civilians in case of such calamities. Thirdly, the doctrinal issue for joint warfighting needs to be delved into as the terrain will neither be fully maritime nor riverine and finally, the displaced civilians need to be evacuated safely.



Source: ABC News

**The Future of Hybrid Warfare:** The Ukraine War serves as an example of the pivotal role played by the tech behemoths, who have established an effective defence against hybrid threats. Although, the Ukrainian conflict is mostly of a traditional and territorial in nature, high-tech businesses have nevertheless played a significant role in providing the cutting-edge technologies that have shaped the war. The combination of Cyber and EW Cyber can change the conflict in one nation's favour.



Source: South China Morning Post

LEO Satellites, drones and smartphones are examples of tech-enabled platforms that guarantee secure communications, intelligence and cyber operations, highlighting the strategic value of these platforms in conflict. Since the start of the Russian invasion, private companies have helped Ukraine by providing security measures that had a chance to fix zero-day exploits and other software flaws. The tech businesses that have so far developed and used these technologies in Ukraine have announced their entry as independent actors in upcoming hybrid battles. Therefore, policymakers and practitioners cannot wish away their significance in upcoming high-tech warfare. The challenge will be to push for the creation of a powerful public-private partnership.

## RUSSIA-UKRAINE CONFLICT

**Economic War.** In addition to fighting the conventional war, Russia has used the strategy of hitting Ukraine “economically” by targeting ports and industrial hubs. The international community is also concerned about the severe implications the war has for the world economy, particularly energy and grain supplies.

### NUCLEAR

President Vladimir Putin said Russia will move tactical nuclear weapons into Belarus next month, during a meeting with his Belarusian counterpart, Alexander Lukashenko. According to Mr Putin, the facilities to store nukes will be ready by July 7th or 8th.



*Source: New York Post*

### COMMENTS

Russia resupplies its forces from Belarusian territory but the deployment of a nukes in Belarus would mark an escalation of the country’s role in the war in Ukraine. The role of treaties controlling the Proliferation of nuclear weapons needs to be reinforced.

# Will Strive to take India Nepal ties to Himalayan Heights: PM Modi After Talks with Prachand

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/india/will-strive-to-take-india-nepal-ties-to-himalayan-heights-pm-modi-after-talks-with-prachanda/articleshow/100676148.cms>

- "India and Nepal will strive to take their relationship to Himalayan heights and resolve the boundary issue and all such matters in this spirit", Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Thursday after holding wide ranging talks with his Nepalese counterpart Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda', who is on a four day visit to India. In his media statement after the talks, Modi said he and Prachanda took many important decisions to make the partnership between the two countries a "super hit" in the future, even as the two leaders remotely inaugurated a number of projects and laid the foundation stone of some others.
- The two sides also signed seven agreements to boost cooperation in a range of areas, including extension of cross border petroleum pipeline, development of integrated check posts and boosting cooperation in hydroelectric power. One of the key pacts signed was the revised India Nepal Treaty of Transit.
- Following the talks, the two leaders virtually inaugurated integrated check posts at Rupaidiha in India and Nepalgunj in Nepal. They also virtually flagged off a cargo train from Bathnaha in Bihar to Nepal Custom Yard.
- The Nepalese Prime Minister said he appreciated Modi's "Neighbourhood First Policy".
- "The relations between Nepal and India are age old and multi faceted. This relationship stands on the solid foundation built on one hand by the rich tradition of civilisational, cultural and socio economic linkage and on the other by the firm commitment of the two countries to the time tested principles of sovereign equality, mutual respect, understanding and cooperation," he said.

## COMMENTS

India and Nepal share a land border of over 1850 km. Being landlocked, for the transportation of its goods and services, Nepal relies very heavily on India as its access to the sea is through India. Nepal imports a prime proportion of its requirements from and through India. The India Nepal Treaty of Peace and Friendship of 1950 forms the bedrock of the special relations between the two countries. Nepalese Gorkha soldiers form part of Indian Army in a sizeable number. In the context of its overall strategic interests in South Asia, Nepal is very important to India. Further, in view of increasing Chinese footprints in Nepal, the strategic relevance of developments in Nepal is only going to grow and therefore Indo Nepal relations in times to come need a very calibrated and careful management.

## Ex-Pak PM Imran Khan Booked Under Anti-Terrorism Law After SC Lawyer's Murder

<https://www.newindianexpress.com/world/2023/jun/07/former-pakistan-pm-imran-khanbooked-under-anti-terrorism-law-after-murder-of-supreme-court-lawyer-2582775.html>

Pakistan's former prime minister Imran Khan was booked under anti-terrorism law in the murder case of Advocate Abdul Razzaq Shar, a Supreme Court lawyer. The lawyer was killed in Quetta, the capital of Balochistan province. He was on his way to the provincial high court when unknown assailants targeted and killed him in a drive-by shooting. Siraj Ahmad, the son of the deceased, accused Khan of being the brains behind the murder.



Source: The Indian Express

### COMMENTS

The murder case is the latest in a long list of legal challenges faced by Khan, who has had more than 100 cases registered against him since his removal from office as his party is facing a statewide crackdown in the aftermath of violent protests last month. The PTI chief was arrested on 09 May 23 from an Islamabad court over a corruption case, after which thousands of his supporters protested across the country.

Public and private properties were ransacked, and military installations and monuments were particularly targeted as the government alleged it was a conspiracy that involved PTI workers. The government has promised to try those involved in attacks on military installations before military courts. More than 50 people have been approved for trial in military courts. The Quetta murder case and the language used in this statement indicate the army is shaping the ground for Khan to be potentially tried in cases. Pakistan government has also registered a case of fraud and forgery against Khan, his wife Bushra Bibi for allegedly preparing and submitting fake and forged receipts regarding Toshakhana gifts.

## Cash-Strapped Pakistan Allocates Rs 1.8 Trillion For Defence In Budget 2023-24

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/world/pakistan/cash-strapped-pakistan-allocates-rs-1-8-trillion-for-defence-in-budget-2023-24/articleshow/100883053.cms>

Cash-strapped Pakistan on Friday hiked defence spending by 15.5 per cent and allocated over Rs 1.8 trillion, as the government unveiled a Rs 14.4 trillion budget for 2023-24 as it battled to fend off a looming default due to shrinking foreign reserves. Finance Minister Ishaq Dar, who presented the budget in the National Assembly, the lower house of parliament, said the government will target a growth rate of 3.5 percent in the coming fiscal year.

## COMMENTS

A sum of Rs 1,804 billion has been proposed for defence. The defence expenditure is 15.5% higher than last year, making up about 1.7% of the GDP. GDP growth declined from 6.1% last year to 0.3% this year as per government statistics. This is the biggest growth decline since 1971 for Pakistan. Add the highest inflation in the nation's history. The defence sector expenses are the second biggest component of the annual expenditure after the debt payments, which for the next year would be Rs 7,303 billion and are the biggest single expense of the country.



*Source: Times of India*

The new budget comes as the chances for the revival of a stalled IMF are fading fast, as the USD 6.5 billion assistance package agreed upon in 2019 is set to end on 30 June 23. The fund has insisted that the government should meet tough conditions before releasing USD 1.1 billion. The economic situation has never been so grim in a country that since independence has thrice seen military coups and the ouster of elected governments. Cash-strapped Pakistan's economy has been in a free fall mode for the last many years, bringing untold pressure on the poor masses in the form of unchecked inflation, making it almost impossible for a vast number of people to make ends meet. Their woes increased manyfold after last year's catastrophic floods that killed more than 1,700 people and caused massive economic losses.

## Economy Shows Signs Of Improvement But Recovery Remains A Challenge: IMF DMD

<https://www.dailymirror.lk/business/Economy-shows-signs-of-improvement-but-recovery-remains-a-challenge-IMF-DMD/215-260395>

Sri Lanka's economy is showing tentative signs of improvement, due to the implementation of critical policy actions, acknowledged visiting senior IMF official but noted recovery remains challenging. IMF Deputy Managing Director (DMD) Kenji Okamura, who concluded his observation visit to the island nation, asserted that now, more than ever, it is essential to continue the reform momentum, under strong ownership by both the authorities and Sri Lankan people.

### COMMENTS

The current economic crisis has its genesis in policy missteps aggravated by external shocks. Continued open dialogue with the creditors will help to reach restructuring agreements to restore debt sustainability, in line with the programme targets. Undoubtedly, safeguarding the stability of the financial sector is of utmost importance in this process. Sri Lanka navigates its way through the economic crisis, it remains imperative to protect the poor and most vulnerable that have been disproportionately affected by the crisis.



Source: ORF

The importance of fiscal measures, in particular revenue measures, for a return to macroeconomic stability in Sri Lanka. Tourism is also picking up in Sri Lanka. Tourism has traditionally been the third largest foreign exchange earner in the country and an important income generator for Sri Lanka.

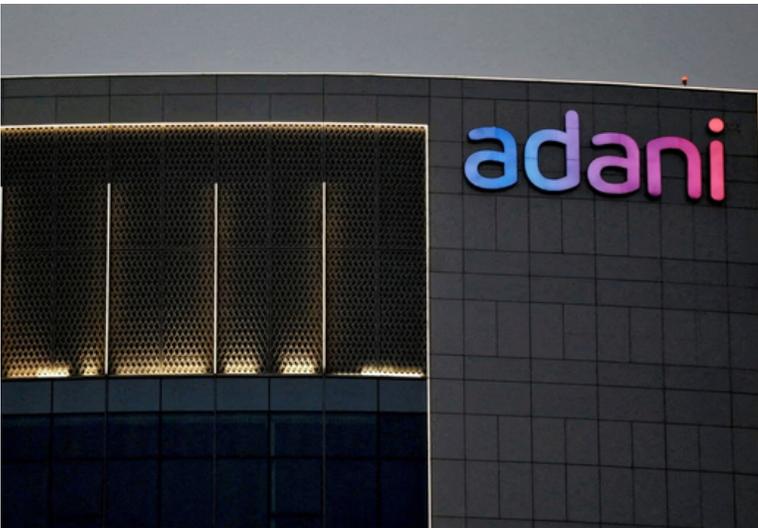
IMF was closely monitoring the protests and social unrest since the tax reforms. Sri Lanka has a long and challenging road ahead. After securing debt restructuring, it will need to make painful choices, tackle vested interests, and undertake severe fiscal tightening. In addition, it will have to enhance and improve social protection to minimize the pain of the less fortunate. The beleaguered people of Sri Lanka can only hope that relief comes soon.

# Adani To Complete Sri Lanka Energy Project By December 2024

<https://colombogazette.com/2023/06/12/adani-to-complete-sri-lanka-energy-project-by-december-2024/>

India's Adani Group is looking to complete the renewable energy project in Sri Lanka by December 2024. Power and Energy Minister Kanchana Wijesekera said that he discussed the progress of the 500 MW renewable energy project in Mannar and Pooneryn with Anil Sardana, MD & CEO of Adani Transmission Ltd and the project management team.

## COMMENTS



Source: LiveMint

Crisis-hit Sri Lanka has approved a \$442-million wind power project of Adani Green Energy. The Board of Investment (BOI) had approved two wind power plants by India's Adani Green Energy Ltd with a total investment of \$442 million. The project would likely create 2,000 jobs, and in two years, generate about 350 MW of power. The BOI's approval effectively takes the Adani Group's total investments in the island nation over the \$1 billion mark. It has already committed to pumping in \$700 million at a strategic port terminal in Colombo, and work on the West Container Terminal began in November 2022.

Meanwhile, the signing of the renewable energy project comes amid a renewed push by India and Sri Lanka to link their energy grids, an idea that the neighboring countries first mooted over a decade ago. Currently, Sri Lanka generates power totaling some 4,200 MW a year, and the annual demand for energy is estimated to increase by about 5% over the next two decades. Authorities have said they aim to add about 2,800 MW of renewable energy into the national grid over the next three years.

India's proactive approach towards Sri Lanka, encompassed by several high-level visits, and announcements of development projects, is a positive step towards realizing the Neighborhood First doctrine. While this deepens India's engagement with Sri Lanka, the focus has been on supporting Sri Lanka's economic recovery, developmental aid, and energy security – areas that are crucial for long-term development in the island nation. In the long term, this approach coupled with unconditional support is likely to garner greater goodwill than big-ticket projects that impact a limited section of society.

# S. Korea, Poland Mull Joint Development Of Wheeled Armored Vehicles: Official

<https://en.yna.co.kr/view/AEN20230610000700325?section=national/defense>

SEOUL, June 10 (Yonhap) -- South Korea and Poland appear to be considering a joint project to develop wheeled armored vehicles, the state arms procurement agency said Saturday. Officials from South Korea's Defense Acquisition Program Administration (DAPA) visited the state-owned Polska Grupa Zbrojeniowa (PGZ) late last month and discussed the joint development of the South Korean Army's K808 wheel-type armored vehicles, called "Baekho," according to the agency.

## COMMENTS

The joint development between Poland and South Korea is a sign of growing bilateral ties between countries that are geographically distant. South Korea signed big agreements with Poland last year to sell weaponry systems such as K2 battle tanks, K9 self-propelled howitzers, and FA-50 light attack aircraft.[1] The two countries had only very recently signed arms deal worth \$13.7 billion.[2]

Since the inception of the Russia-Ukraine Conflict, Poland, a substantial member of the European Union went all out to assist Ukraine through supply of 'lethal weapons' to contain Putin's 'Special Operations'. But as the conflict is deepening without any consensual resolution, the European Union and NATO member countries are reaching out to various countries to continue the supply of weapons. Warsaw is looking beyond the EU to not only enhance bilateral cooperation but also open a gateway for non-EU countries to deliver weapons.

The Polish government sources have also mentioned that South Korea's fast delivery of weapons is another instrumental factor why the European Union must look towards East Asia, in particular South Korea. Poland and South Korea are now driven towards cementing bilateral ties, after a decision to constitute a consultative body overseeing defence industry cooperation. Joint military drills were overseen by both the Chief of Defence Staff in February 2023.[3]

The South Korean Government had earlier sworn to not provide any 'lethal weapon' to countries engaged in a conflict. However, through these developments, South Korea may indirectly engage in the Russia-Ukraine conflict, apart from assisting with humanitarian aid.

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[1] Yonhap (2023), "South Korea, Poland Mull Joint Development of Wheeled Armoured Vehicles" [Online: web] URL: <https://en.yna.co.kr/view/AEN20230610000700325?section=national/defense> Accessed 10 Jun 2023

[2] Joyce Lee and Josh Smith, (2023), "Inside South Korea's Race To Become One Of The World's Biggest Arms Dealers" [Online: web] URL: <https://www.reuters.com/business/aerospace-defense/inside-south-koreas-race-become-one-worlds-biggest-arms-dealers-2023-05-29/> Accessed 10 Jun 2023

[3] Yonhap (2023), "S. Korea, Poland Agree To Launch Arms Cooperation Dialogue, Joint Drills" [Online: web] URL: <https://en.yna.co.kr/view/AEN20230224002800325> Accessed on 10 Jun 2023

## THE KOREAN PENINSULA

Yoon Seok Yeol, the South Korean President shares the vision of making his country the 'world's largest arms dealer' [4]. The Korean government is pursuing military diplomacy and defence cooperation to expand the connection with buying countries beyond a seller-buyer relationship.

Officials from Hwanha Aerospace mentioned that Germany's limited production capacity is compelling partners in the EU to look up to South Korea and that such decisions by indigenous companies may increase arms export in the future.



## S. Korea Wins Seat On U.N. Security Council For 2024-25

<https://en.yna.co.kr/view/AEN20230605003653325>



NEW YORK/SEOUL, June 7 (Yonhap) -- South Korea was elected as a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) for a two-year term, expanding its foothold in the U.N. body to better address the North Korean issue and other global security challenges.

As the only candidate nation in Asia, Seoul was chosen in a vote at the U.N. General Assembly in New York, returning to the UNSC in 11 years after last sitting on the council in 2013-14. South Korea won the seat after garnering 180 votes among 192 member states during the assembly.

[4] ibid

## COMMENTS

South Korea makes a return to the United Nations Security Council for the third term, previously held between 1996-1997 and 2013-2014. The return to the UNSC had been a long-standing foreign policy agenda for the Yoon Seok Yeol administration. As the only country from the Asia Pacific region, South Korea would be required to fulfil agendas beyond just security.

“We are ready to deal with other significant regional and thematic Security Council issues, including counterterrorism and the long standing DPRK issues, both nuclear and the human rights situations,” stated Hwang Joon-kook – S. Korean Permanent Representative to the UN.[5]

North Korea’s unprecedented nuclear missile testing has emerged as the major security threat not only for South Korea, but also for Japan and the US. However, any attempt to create a lobby against North Korea in the council would entail for the South Korea seeking and getting support from China-Russia. Therefore, to comment on South Korea’s agenda to bring down Kim Jong-Un’s regime in Pyongyang seems distant. Moreover, in the turn of the events unfolding in the Russia-Ukraine conflict, unanimity on agenda related to North Korea may be difficult to come about .

However, it certainly underpins Yoon’s vision for ‘values diplomacy’ not only at the regional level but also the global level, raising confidence in South Korea’s partnership and cooperation.



Source: WION

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[5] KBS World (2023), “S. Korea Wins Non-Permanent UNSC Membership for 2024-25” [Online: web] URL: [https://world.kbs.co.kr/service/news\\_view.htm?lang=e&Seq\\_Code=178298](https://world.kbs.co.kr/service/news_view.htm?lang=e&Seq_Code=178298) Accessed 15 June 2023

## Blinken Visits Saudi Arabia To Rebuild Strained Ties, Promote Israel Normalization

<https://www.indiatoday.in/world/story/blinken-visits-saudi-arabia-amid-strained-ties-israel-normalization-in-mind-2389726-2023-06-07>

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken arrived in Saudi Arabia on Tuesday on a mission to steady Washington's relationship with Riyadh after years of deepening disagreements on issues ranging from Iran and regional security to oil prices. Blinken met with the kingdom's de-facto ruler, Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, also known as MbS, and they "discussed deepening economic cooperation, especially in the clean energy and technology fields", according to a State Department readout.



Source: *The Times of Israel*

### COMMENTS

In recent years, the US and Saudi are at odds on a number of issues, including Iran, security in the Middle East, and energy prices. For the U.S, Saudi alliance to prevail, this move is largely seen as a measure to avert regional shift and the dangers it poses to American security. This includes a requirement to collaborate with allies to maintain pressure on terrorist organisations, nuclear weaponization by Iran and preventing a possible growing Chinese influence.

The recent collaboration between Saudi Arabia and China in defence and sensitive tech and Assad's re-entry into the Arab world facilitated by Mohammed bin Salman Al Saud have sparked US concerns. Both Saudi Arabia and the US have reaped benefits from their alliance, which serves crucial goals for both regimes.

Despite common interests, the present policies and actions may result in strained US-Saudi relations in the foreseeable future.

## China Signs 'Strategic Partnership' With Palestinian Authority During Abbas Visit

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/china-signs-strategic-partnership-with-palestinian-authority-during-abbas-visit/>

China said Wednesday it has established a "strategic partnership" with the Palestinian Authority during a visit to Beijing by PA President Mahmoud Abbas. The announcement marks another step in China's campaign to gain political and economic influence in the Middle East, where it is competing for influence with the United States.

**COMMENTS**

This partnership can be seen as a desire by Abbas to win favour from a major world power for supporting the faltering Palestinian economy. With PLO facing budgetary difficulties since Covid 2021 the authorities have to reduce government employees' pay, which has caused concerns by Palestians. This agreement comes when the Palestinian Authority (PA) and the West Bank are losing faith in the administration, and unrest is on the rise, owing to the involvement of the terrorist groups at large.

In addition to strengthening its military and financial ties with the entire region, China wants to establish itself as a strategic counterweight to the US. The West can be largely held accountable as per experts for the Palestinian move to partner itself with Beijing concurrent with growing Chinese geopolitical interests in the Middle East.

## Iran Unveils What It Calls A Hypersonic Missile Able To Beat Air Defenses Amid Tensions With US

<https://indianexpress.com/article/world/iran-unveils-hypersonic-missile-8648361/>

Iran claimed that it had created a hypersonic missile capable of travelling at 15 times the speed of sound. The announcement comes as tensions remain high with the United States over Tehran's nuclear program. Iran's state television reported that the missile — called Fattah, or "Conqueror" in Farsi — had a range of up to 1,400 kilometers. The report also claimed the missile could pass through any regional missile defense system, though it offered no evidence to support the claim.

**COMMENTS**

The Fattah missile is projected to use a depressed trajectory during its ballistic phase, limiting the effectiveness of ground radars and electro-optical sensors given its line-of-sight (LOS) geometry. A hypersonic strike capability indicates Iran's indigenous technological capabilities, as the weapon requires highly integrated input, target and command mechanism wherein space assets are paramount. The US Treasury has put sanctions against people and firms from Iran, China, and Hong Kong for supporting Iran's ICBM programme. NATO is also concerned given that Iran is the fourth nation to develop a hypersonic missile, despite UNSC's continuous flagging to cease the programme. Israel is already demonstrating an interest in bolstering its own deterrence capabilities by developing its first-ever hypersonic interceptor, Sky Sonic system.



Source: Al Arabiya

# Iran's Ayatollah Ali Khamenei Says 'Nothing Wrong' With A Nuclear Deal With West

<https://indianexpress.com/article/world/iran-unveils-hypersonic-missile-8648361/>

There is nothing wrong with the agreement (with the West), but the infrastructure of our nuclear industry should not be touched," Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said, adding that Tehran should continue working with the UN nuclear watchdog under the framework of safeguards.

## COMMENTS

News reports allude to contacts between USA and Iran, facilitated by Oman. There is no interim deal as yet, though both sides are believed to have indicated terms for the commitments sought from each other.

The US commitments by enabling Iraq to pay Iran, \$2.76 billion, could only be used by US approved third party vendors to buy food and medicine for Iranian residents.



*Source: Livemint*

Iran claims its nuclear programmes are purely for civilian purposes. However, Israelis maintain that dialogues are ineffective in deterring Iran and argue for military strikes on facilitators.

Even though this has alarmed some Israeli officials, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu reportedly suggested that Israel is capable of "living with" such understandings.

# Japan, China To Resume Defense Officers' Mutual Visits, 1st In 4 Yrs

<https://mainichi.jp/english/articles/20230530/p2g/00m/0na/039000c>

- Japan and China will resume reciprocal visits by their senior defense officers later this year, an organizer of the program said Tuesday, in what could be the first such interaction in four years.
- The restart of the mutual visits between the Self-Defense Forces and the People's Liberation Army, with the aim of building confidence and preventing contingencies, follows the end of China's strict "zero-COVID" policy in January involving lockdowns and quarantines.
- About 10 high-ranking SDF members will visit China in July and the PLA members will come to Japan in the fall at the earliest, respectively, according to the nongovernmental Sasakawa Japan-China Friendship Fund.
- Since the start of the program in 2001, the SDF has made 13 China trips and the PLA has visited Japan 12 times, including the latest exchanges in 2019, the fund said.
- The move comes as tensions between Tokyo and Beijing have mounted over issues such as Taiwan, a self-ruled democratic island which Communist-led China regards as a breakaway province to be brought into its fold, by force if necessary.

## COMMENTS

The Japan-China Defense Officers mutual visit is being organised once again after a long interval of 4 years. These visits have been organised by the Sasakawa Japan-China Friendship Fund[1] together with the China Institute for International Strategic Studies.

According to the fund, about 10 high-ranking SDF members will visit China in July and the PLA members will come to Japan in the fall at the earliest. These high-profile visits have been attributed to the growing tensions with regards to Taiwan and the People's Republic of China's claim over it as well as the question of the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands.

These Officer level talks began in 2001 but were cancelled in 2010 following the arrest of a Chinese trawler captain whose vessel had repeatedly rammed two Japanese Coast Guard vessels off the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands in the East China Sea[2]. The talks resumed again in 2011 but were cancelled by China in 2012. The talks were resumed again in 2018 when the Central Military Commission of the Chinese Communist Party agreed to resume the military exchange with the JSDF. However, following the COVID-19 Pandemic the talks were stalled.

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[1] The Sasakawa Japan-China Friendship Fund is one of the largest private funds in the world, that was founded in 1989 with a philosophy of "promoting understanding, nurturing talent, and furthering cooperation to shape the future." (As taken from- <https://www.spf.org/en/programs/china/>).

[2] Source- <https://thediplomat.com/2023/05/japan-china-to-resume-military-exchanges-in-july-after-4-years/>.

These talks have been organised by the Sasakawa Japan-China Friendship Fund as a measure to build peace amongst the two neighbours. According to Sasakawa “The situation between governments and the private sector is different. At times like this, it is effective for the private sector to create a window for mutual understanding. It’s very important to hobnob together and have informal conversations. This military exchange is unique even in the world.”[3]

For Yohei Sasakawa, honorary chair of the Sasakawa Peace Foundation these talks are essential “particularly in a situation like this, I believe it is really effective for the private sector to arrange a gateway to mutual understanding”[4].

At the Governmental level the defense relations between the two neighbours are being moulded at both bilateral as well as multilateral levels. For instance, Japanese Defense Minister Hamada Yasukazu and Chinese Defense Minister Gen. Li Shangfu on May 16 held the first call using a dedicated “hotline.” The Defense ministers have met in Singapore on the sidelines of the Shangri-La Dialogue on June 2-4 2023[5].

Both the nations want to maintain stable and friendly relations with each other. This can be seen from Japan’s statement regarding China in its G-7 statement wherein Prime Minister Kishida Fumio has stressed that Tokyo will build constructive and stable relations with Beijing[6].

Japan-China relations is governed not only by the claims made by China on the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands, security as well as defense concerns but also the historical relationship the two nations shared especially during the Modern period. Japan refusal to acknowledge the Nanking Massacre as well as some of the other atrocities that were committed in China and other parts of Asia during the Second World War has affected its relations not only with China but also with South Korea.

China’ cancellation of this meet in 2010 and 2012 reflects its views with regards to Senkaku/Diaoyu islands in particular and the East China Sea in general.

In these times of growing contestation between countries for territories, China-Japan’s relations may not see improvement. China’s repeated one-sided aggression as well as claims over territories such as Senkaku Islands may lead to relationship between the two states to decline even further.

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[3]Source-- <https://thediplomat.com/2023/05/japan-china-to-resume-military-exchanges-in-july-after-4-years/>.

[4] From-<https://mainichi.jp/english/articles/20230530/p2g/00m/0na/039000c>.

[5] Source-- <https://thediplomat.com/2023/05/japan-china-to-resume-military-exchanges-in-july-after-4-years/>.

[6] Source-- <https://thediplomat.com/2023/05/japan-china-to-resume-military-exchanges-in-july-after-4-years/>.

# Japan Aims To Boost Deterrence Capacity, Defense Chief Says

[https://www3.nhk.or.jp/nhkworld/en/news/20230603\\_20/](https://www3.nhk.or.jp/nhkworld/en/news/20230603_20/)

- Japan's Defense Minister Hamada Yasukazu says his country's efforts to strengthen its defense capabilities will be conducted within the bounds of the nation's exclusively defense-oriented policy.
- Hamada addressed the Shangri-La Dialogue in Singapore on Saturday.
- He said Japan intends to deter any challenges against the existing international order by means of enhanced deterrence capabilities at home.
- He also said Japan is not aiming to acquire military forces that could pose a threat to other countries.
- In an apparent reference to threats from North Korea and China, Hamada noted that military provocations, including ballistic missile launches as well as repeated incursions by foreign vessels into Japanese territorial waters, have become regular occurrences in the region.
- He said such activities are interfering with a free, open and stable maritime environment.
- Hamada also noted that especially in the East and South China seas, there have been moves to unilaterally change the status quo by force and coercion, challenging the existing international order.
- He underlined the necessity for Japan and China to maintain constant communications to avoid a contingency in an unstable security environment characterized by tensions and distrust.
- The minister indicated that Japan will seek trust-building efforts with China through dialogue, to establish constructive and stable bilateral relations.



Source: *The Japan Times*

## COMMENTS

The Defense Ministers of Japan Hamada Yasukazu and China Li Shangfu engaged in a dialogue on 3rd June 2023 in Singapore[7].

It is the first meeting between the two nations' defense chiefs since June last year. The talks have come up as the G-7 leaders reaffirmed "the importance of peace and stability" across the Taiwan Strait and called for a peaceful resolution of cross-strait issues at their summit in Hiroshima last month[8]

[7] Taken from- <https://mainichi.jp/english/articles/20230603/p2g/00m/0in/044000c>.

[8] Taken from- <https://mainichi.jp/english/articles/20230603/p2g/00m/0in/044000c>.

## JAPAN

In the recent times, the Chinese threats have been growing in the East Asian region. This growing threat was also addressed in the G-7 meeting in Hiroshima, wherein the leaders of these states proclaimed "the importance of peace and stability" across the Taiwan Strait and want for a peaceful resolution of cross-strait issues[9].

The statement given by Hamada Yasukazu has to be seen in this context. Japan's commitment to retain peace can be seen from Hamada's statement that "Japan is not aiming to acquire military forces that could pose a threat to other countries[10]."

This statement can be seen as an explicit declaration of Japan's commitment to protect its boundaries in the face of growing threats from North Korea [11] and China. Thus, Hamada Yasukazu's statement can be seen as Kishida government's commitment to increase and strengthen its military capabilities.



Source: Wikipedia

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[9] Taken from- <https://mainichi.jp/english/articles/20230603/p2g/00m/0in/044000c>.

[10] Taken from- [https://www3.nhk.or.jp/nhkworld/en/news/20230603\\_20/](https://www3.nhk.or.jp/nhkworld/en/news/20230603_20/).

[11] On the 31st of May 2023, North Korea, attempted to launch a spy satellite on the first day of a pre-declared launch window through 11th June 2023. However, North Korean officials stated that its rocket experienced trouble. It has pledged to make another attempt "as soon as possible."

# Li Shangfu: China's Defence Minister At Shangri-La Dialogue Warns Of 'Cold War Mentality' In Digs At US

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/jun/04/li-shangfu-chinas-defence-minister-at-shangri-la-dialogue-warns-of-cold-war-mentality-in-digs-at-us>

China's defence minister, Li Shangfu, has said a cold war mentality is resurgent in the Asia-Pacific region, but Beijing seeks dialogue over confrontation. The remarks came after Li refused to formally meet the US defence secretary, Lloyd Austin, at the Shangri-La Dialogue in Singapore.

## COMMENTS

Gen Li Shangfu through his first major international speech set the tone for Xi Jinping's third term and explained the priorities for China in the coming few years like challenging the American-led order and pressing for an increasing role of China in global security order.

The speech also sets a benchmark that no rapprochement between the US and China can be possible until the US tones down criticism of China, takes back sanctions against Gen Li Shangfu, subdue mechanisms like QUAD and AUKUS and decides to meet China halfway and as equals. Chinese newspapers hailed the speech as historic and one that "showed the mirror to the West" while Western media termed the speech as a sign of growing Chinese belligerence.

He further said that "The cold war mentality is now resurging and greatly increases security risks of bloc confrontation in the Asia Pacific. Some big power continues to promote their so-called Indo-Pacific strategy." These remarks were about QUAD, which in the wake of Chinese belligerence has called for a "free and open Indo-Pacific - which is also inclusive and resilient." [1] He argued that such mechanisms hold countries hostage and pitch countries against each other.

It is interesting to note the use of phrases like "mutual respect should prevail over bullying and hegemony", "treating each other as equals", and "fairness and justice should transcend the law of the jungle" as these are violated by China frequently in one part or the other of the world.

India can read between the lines regarding how the relationship may go forward. China does not want India to get closer to the US and may expect India to not participate actively in mechanisms like QUAD which the Chinese feels is aimed at them. Also, China's continued use of the phrase "Asia-Pacific" as against "Indo-Pacific" shows that China does not like seeing India in a central position in the region as it challenges the Chinese hegemony and status in the region.

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[1] "Joint Statement from Quad Leaders." 2021. The White House. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/09/24/joint-statement-from-quad-leaders/>.

India was represented by Dy NSA Vikram Misri at Shangri La Dialogue 2023 where he explained how “in recent years the world has got used to the vocabulary of the Indo-Pacific, which has been at the centre of contemporary geo-economic and geostrategic discourse.” In a veiled attack on China, Dy NSA Misri said that respect for foundational regimes of international law like UNCLOS is very important as “when nations disregard their legal obligations or violate long-standing agreements, the damage to trust and confidence is immense.”

In a response to a question raised by a Chinese delegate regarding inclusiveness and openness of collaboration, he said that he hoped “this principle will be respected equally and by everyone else also in different geographies when it comes to that.”

## Honduras Opens Embassy In China After Breaking Off Ties With Taiwan

<https://apnews.com/article/china-honduras-castro-embassy-beijing-taiwan-0467dc8852986afdb2fee3ced223f5b0>

Honduras opened an embassy in Beijing on Sunday, Chinese state media reported, months after the Central American nation broke off relations with Taiwan to establish diplomatic ties with China.

China’s Foreign Minister Qin Gang and his Honduran counterpart Enrique Reina took part in the inauguration of the embassy on Sunday morning, China’s official CCTV said. The report said Honduras still needed to determine the embassy’s permanent location and would increase its number of staff.



*Source: LinkedIn*

With President Xiomara Castro's six-day visit to China, Honduras established full-diplomatic relations with China as a symbol of deepening and strengthening diplomatic ties.

China in recent times has been successful in diplomatically isolating Taiwan with a number of countries severing ties with Taiwan in favour of China like Panama (2017), the Dominican Republic, El Salvador and Burkina Faso (2018), Solomon Islands and Kiribati (2019) and Nicaragua (2021) and now Honduras the latest entry in the list. Eight countries have severed ties with Taiwan in President Tsai-Ing-Wen's reign with Honduras being the ninth.

China has been victorious in poaching Taiwanese diplomatic support in their favour due to their deep pockets and chequebook diplomacy. China is known to have spent billions of dollars to get countries in favour of the "One China principle."

Establishing ties with China for these smaller nations may be good in the near future with China pouring in investments, and sending tourists which may boost their economy and aid countries in the global diplomatic arena with China being an economic powerhouse and permanent member. But in the long run, these countries run the risk of being trapped in China's debt, China arm-twisting them at the UN and other multilateral institutions to take a stance in favour of China.

Taiwan's already small diplomatic support base is further shrinking and this may create problems for Taiwan in the coming future with lesser support for its initiatives on the global stage and fewer countries criticising China for its bellicose behaviour. As of June 2023, only 13 countries recognise Taiwan and have diplomatic relations with them.

Since China has not remained sensitive to India's concerns regarding its territorial integrity and sovereignty, India though has refrained from playing the Taiwan card but has maintained an ambiguous position on Taiwan by not mentioning the "One China Principle" since 2010 [2] and keeping all policy options open. India must develop robust ties with Taiwan in a dynamic situation.

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[2] Chari, Seshadri. 2022. "India has moved away from 'One China' policy. Now it must develop independent ties with Taiwan." ThePrint. <https://theprint.in/opinion/india-has-moved-away-from-one-china-policy-now-it-must-develop-independent-ties-with-taiwan/1069351/>.

## PM Modi's Visit Will Affirm Deep And Close Partnership Between India And United States

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/pm-modis-visit-will-affirm-deep-and-close-partnership-between-india-and-us-says-white-house/article66943863.ece>

The upcoming Official State visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to the U.S. will affirm the deep and close partnership between the two countries and the warm bonds of family and friendship that link Americans and Indians together. Prime Minister Modi will embark on his first state visit to the U.S. at the invitation of President Joe Biden and First Lady Jill Biden.

### COMMENTS

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi's official state visit to the United States on June 22, 2023, at the invitation of President Joe Biden, signifies that India and the United States are geopolitically, economically, and technologically aligned. This visit will allow US corporations to de-risk their presence in China and invest in India. Both leaders will also discuss ways to strengthen their commitment to a free, open, prosperous, and secure Indo-Pacific region, with a focus on security and tactical technology partnership. This visit is crucial because it demonstrates the importance that the United States places on its relations with India, and deals on trade, defence, and vital minerals are on the agenda. During Modi's visit, the US-India Business Council will also organise the INDUS-X conference.
- Both India and USA in recent years have collaborated on a variety of defence programmes, including cooperative military exercises, defence equipment purchase, and intelligence sharing. Developments, such as the Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement (COMCASA) and India-US 2+2 Dialogue have bolstered the two countries' defence ties. However, the DTTI has failed to deliver any tangible outcome so far. The United States has also backed India's application for a permanent membership on the United Nations Security Council, emphasising the significance of India's role in ensuring global peace and security.



Source: LinkedIn

- Both governments have also been working together in a variety of fields, including cybersecurity, artificial intelligence, and space technology. As of June 2023, the United States is one of India's major investors in the technology industry, with over 200 US-based businesses operating in the country. Similarly, Indian firms have made significant investments in the United States, creating thousands of jobs and contributing to the local economy.
- The signing of a Memorandum of Understanding with General Electric could be the most significant deliverable from Prime Minister Modi's State visit to the United States. The Indian government has chosen 99 General Electric F414 fighter jet engines to power the next generation of its Tejas Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) Mk II. The Biden administration contacted GE, and a deal is under negotiation with Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) officials. The agreement is for the manufacture of GE-F414-INS6 engines for use in HAL's Tejas-Mk II Light Combat Aircraft (LCA).
- India is also set to announce a major drone deal with the US during PM Modi's upcoming visit to Washington. The deal to buy 20-20 MQ-9 Predator drones from the US will bolster the India- US strategic partnership.
- US Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin too recently visited India to examine ways to set the framework for bilateral defence cooperation agreements, particularly in areas of essential technology transfer for co-development of military hardware.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi's planned visit to the United States may establish new benchmarks for bilateral relations between the two countries. The visit is anticipated to focus on improving the US-India strategic cooperation, notably in the fields of defence and security, especially the new iCET framework. The United States regards India as a critical partner in its attempts to counter China's growing global influence.



Source: Swarajya

## President Murmu Arrives In Serbia On 4-Day Visit

<https://www.aninews.in/news/world/europe/president-murmu-arrives-in-serbia-on-4-day-visit20230607185204/>

President Droupadi Murmu on 07 June 2023, arrived in Serbia for an official state visit. Upon her arrival, the Indian President paid floral tributes at the Mahatma Gandhi Bust in Serbia's Gandijeva Street. Nikola Selakovic, Minister of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Policy of Serbia and Aleksandar Salic, Mayor of Belgrade were present at the Mahatma Gandhi Bust floral tribute event.

## India & Serbia Agree To Set Bilateral Trade Of 1 Billion Euros By End Of This Decade

<https://newsonair.com/2023/06/09/india-serbia-agree-to-set-bilateral-trade-of-1-billion-euros-by-end-of-this-decade/>

President Droupadi Murmu and her Serbian counterpart Aleksandar Vucic agreed to set a target for bilateral trade from the present 320 million euros to one billion euros by the end of the decade, said the Ministry of External Affairs in Belgrade on June 8.

President Droupadi Murmu is on a three-day State visit to Serbia from the 7th to the 9th of June. While briefing media about the India-Serbia relations, Secretary (West), Ministry of External Affairs Sanjay Verma said that during the visit, President Droupadi Murmu highlighted that the relations between both sides have a shared understanding of each other's core interests. Earlier, in a joint press statement to the media, President Murmu highlighted the positive outcomes of the delegation-level talks and the resolve of the two nations to work on diverse areas of potential cooperation.



Source: Twitter

President of Serbia, Mr. Aleksandar Vucic also promised simplification of the issue of visas to Indians. He hoped that direct flights between the two countries would begin soon. It will promote tourism and business between the two countries, he added. Apart from the delegation-level talks, a high-powered business delegation consisting of members from three Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry, ASSOCHAM, FICCI, and CII also held talks with a business delegation from Serbia.

## COMMENTS

President Draupadi Murmur visited Serbia amidst the anti-violence protests in the Balkan country. She will be the first Indian president to visit Serbia. In the past, Vice President Venkiah Naaidu paid an official visit to Serbia during 14-16 September 2018 and met with President Aleksandar Vucic, Prime Minister Ana Brnabic and Ms. Maja Gojkovic, Speaker of the National Assembly of Serbia.

President Murmur and President Vucic have agreed to reach an ambitious one billion euros in trade volume between the two countries by the end of the decade. At present the trade volume stands at 32 crore Euros. Six key areas of cooperation between India and Serbia have been outlined by President Vucic. These industries include pharmaceuticals, agriculture, industrial cooperation, information technology, artificial intelligence, culture (including film production), cemetery graphics, and defence and military technology collaboration. Recognising the work ethic and honesty of Indians, President Vucic announced his wish to develop direct travel links between Belgrade and Delhi. In order to attract Indian airlines that fly directly between Serbia and India, he put out a number of concessions and subsidies that Serbia was prepared to provide.

Serbia was the only European country which provided free visa-free entry for Indians until the year end of 2022. The visa-free provision was withdrawn from January 2023 because Indians have used this opportunity to migrate illegally into the central and southern European countries. Serbia is also witnessing a human resource gap in skilled and semi-skilled workforce because of emigration caused by conflicts and sanctions. The easy visa process for Indians promised by President Vucic will help Serbia to fill the gap.

## EU Ministers Seal 'Historic' Migration Deal

<https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/eu-ministers-seek-long-stalled-migration-deal-2023-06-08/>

European Union ministers agreed on 08 June on how to share the responsibility for looking after migrants and refugees, and after 12 hours of negotiations got Italy and Greece to sign up to a deal that has eluded the bloc for nearly a decade. Home affairs ministers from the 27-member bloc sealed the deal, hoping to end years of division dating back to 2015 when more than a million people - mostly fleeing war in Syria - reached the EU across the Mediterranean. Hosting immigrants has become an increasingly divisive issue in the bloc since 2015.

Unable to agree how to share the responsibility, EU countries mostly focused on bringing down arrivals, with U.N. data showing fewer than 160,000 people made it across the sea last year to the bloc of half a billion people. Nearly 2,500 people died or went missing in the dangerous crossing over the same period. Countries on the EU's southern edge, including Italy and Greece, have long demanded more help to cope with the numbers of people arriving on their shores. Richer countries, including Germany and Sweden, have baulked at how many head to their soil.

## COMMENTS

The EU states receive a large amount of illegal migrants from the conflict-induced regions of North Africa and West Asia. In 2022, EU's border management agency, Frontex reported that it estimates 330,000 unauthorised border crossing, highest since 2016.[1] There are three major routes the migrants take: the Western Balkans Route, the Central Mediterranean Route, and the Eastern Mediterranean Route. The Western Balkan Route is estimated to carry nearly half of the total illegal immigrants; around 47%, who majorly consist of Syrians, Afghans and Tunisians. Along with the recently arrived immigrants, there are many who already live in Europe without authorisation.

There have been numerous debates and concerns over how countries should deal with immigrants regarding social services, security issues, deportation policies and integration efforts. In addition to these concerns, the migration issue has also shaped the domestic politics and ideology in the region. The rise of far-right political parties and radically conservative, ultra-nationalist and nativist tendencies are a result of this. The unmonitored movement of refugees inside the bloc also threatens the EU's free and open borderless zones.

The new migration agreement tries to solve the issues of allotting how many refugees a country should and can take in to provide asylum. The agreement states that each EU state will be assigned a share of people it can accommodate, which will be calculated based on the size of the country's GDP and population, and the number of irregular border crossings the country witnesses. Countries which refrain from receiving people would instead be able to fund the other host countries by providing at least EURO 20,000 per person a year. The agreement would also have a new expedited border process for those who are unlikely to receive legal asylum to refrain them from illegally settling in the bloc.



*Source: VOA*

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[1] Frontex. "EU's external borders in 2022: Number of irregular border crossings highest since 2016." Frontex, 13 January 2023, <https://frontex.europa.eu/media-centre/news/news-release/eu-s-external-borders-in-2022-number-of-irregular-border-crossings-highest-since-2016-YsAZ29>. Accessed 10 June 2023.

## EUROPE

It states that they would be sent away within six months of their decline of asylum applications.

There are three issues with the agreement. First, the agreement is more focused on restricting people to enter rather than receiving and accommodating them. As the agreement mentions only a limited number of asylum seekers will be accommodated. Second, the agreement does not mention what happens to the asylum seekers after the rejection of application. Where will they be sent to or directed towards? Do the migrants have to return to their conflict-induced or unstable countries or will they be directed towards non-EU member states. Third, the goal of the agreement is to evenly distribute the migrants, however, countries are not mandated to accommodate them. This may again result in the uneven distribution of migrants, with some countries having a higher proportion of them.

Implications for India: In 2022, Indians constituted 2.2% of the total illegal migrants crossing in EU Borders. Indian irregular migrants to Europe are a result of both push and pull factors, including greater possibilities for education and work, a pleasant lifestyle, the presence of family members and relatives, and unproductive agricultural sectors, underemployment and unemployment, societal constraints, etc. However, Indian irregular migrants' applications for asylum in European countries are not prioritised as the EU considers India to be a safe country of origin for asylum seekers. The new EU migration agreement will increase the return rate of irregular migrants from India. This would result in the decrease of brain drain and increase of semi-skilled workforce for India.



Source: Reuters



Source: Reuters

## South Africa's Putin Problem

<https://foreignpolicy.com/2023/06/07/south-africa-russia-ukraine-war-putin-icc-arrest/>

South Africa is considering the possibility of China hosting the BRICS summit in August, officials say. South African media reports suggest the government was considering a proposal to move the summit to China, or neighbouring Mozambique, to eliminate diplomatic pressure on Pretoria. Pretoria is attempting to resolve the dilemma of hosting Russian President Vladimir Putin at the BRICS summit while continually being a member of the International Criminal Court (ICC).

### COMMENTS

South Africa refused to condemn the Russian invasion of Ukraine while actively pursuing its own interests. On March 17, the ICC issued an arrest warrant under article 8 of the Rome Statute against Putin for his alleged role in war crimes, including deporting and transferring children from Ukraine to Russia. South Africa, along with 122 other states, is a signatory of the ICC. Under Article 27 of the ICC, no country is immune from ICC prosecution, and for this reason, India, China, Russia and the US are not signatories to the International Criminal Court, which prosecutes individuals for heinous crimes.

South African deputy minister Obed Bapela earlier sought to initiate a new law that will provide exemptions to Putin and other leaders attending the meeting. But there have been serious doubts regarding the ease of execution of the law. Russia continues to remain South Africa's significant partner, and through the BRICS, they reinforce their relationship. BRICS envisions a multipolar world, political stability, and economic growth, increasing the importance of this multilateral grouping. Reports mention the option of transferring the BRICS August Summit to China, as the latter is not a signatory of the ICC, which can save South Africa from engaging in a cold relationship with the US, as the US is South Africa's second largest trade partner after Brazil.

There are ranging debates about whether to hold the BRICS summit without Putin or not, as Russia's absence will challenge the unity and solidarity of the BRICS nations. Amending the national law to defy the ICC arrest warrant is also not a desirable process, in view of the counter-views against Putin being aired in South Africa. Diplomatic pressure on Pretoria from the West has dwindled South Africa's support for Putin. South Africa had criticised the ICC on various occasions for its weak execution and biased legislation. It fell short of arresting the then-Sudanese President, Omar al-Bashir, wanted on genocide charges, the ICC was silent on Tony Blair and George W Bush's 2003 Iraq invasion.

For India, it would be preferable to have the BRICS summit in South Africa as planned rather than China, since visiting China for the BRICS summit will cause diplomatic embarrassment, given China's attitude towards the G20 meeting held in Srinagar in May 2023, which China boycotted. Hosting BRICS in South Africa will provide an opportunity to both India and China to interact on the sidelines of BRICS. In order to host a successful BRICS summit, South Africa needs to devise a way that is favourable for every member state.

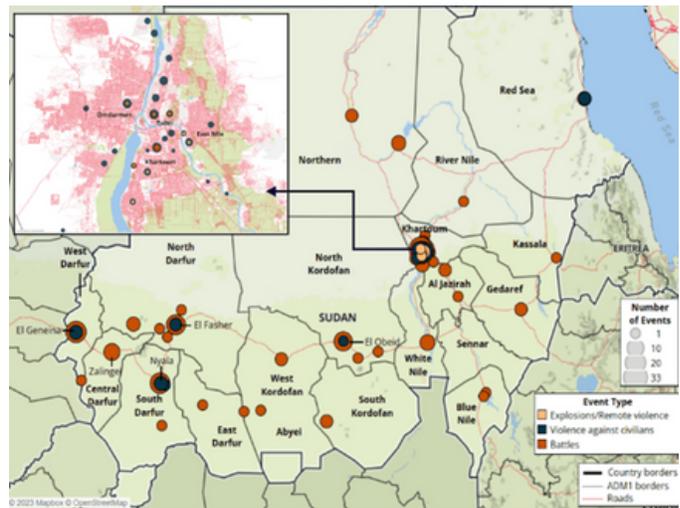
# Clashes Resume In Sudan As 24-Hour Ceasefire Ends

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/clashes-resume-in-sudan-as-24-hour-ceasefire-ends/articleshow/100913164.cms>

Deadly fighting has raged in the northeast African country since mid-April, when army chief Abdel Fattah al-Burhan and his former deputy Mohamed Hamdan Daglo, who commands the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF), turned on each other.

## COMMENTS

Tussle for power between regular army force and paramilitary force led by Daglo turned violent resulting in unrest in Sudan. The US-Saudi brokered ceasefire ended with renewed fighting among factions as building peace between rivals is not possible, removing those who are fighting need joint coordination among international community, laying out peace agreement where both parties can agree is a long-term initiative.



Source: Aclad

According to the UN Human Rights, some 1.2 million people have been displaced. Regional spill over is another concern for neighbouring countries, as Sudan is surrounded by seven countries. Chad has closed its border with Sudan, as none of its neighbour can handle the effect of the Sudanese conflict on their territory as they are already embroiled in their own internal issues. Refugee crises and the Nile's future might contest African geopolitics in the near future. International stakeholders are struggling to negotiate the conflict, but any immediate peace seems impossible for now as foreign actors are also guided by their respective national interests. Moscow is interested in constructing a Russian naval base in Sudan, the UAE maintains warm relations with the RSF, Israel aims to contain Iran by strengthening diplomatic relations with Sudan. The quick realisation of the fact that Sudan's conflict is not limited to itself accelerated the evacuation operation by international actors. India's operation Kaveri successfully evacuated more than 3000 nationals. Sudan's Ambassador to India, Abdallah Omer Bashir Alhusain limited foreign intervention by calling Sudan's conflict an internal matter while supporting India's increased role in economic recovery and infrastructure development once the conflict ends. The Sudan conflict is bringing only chaos and distress, so efforts can be made in providing humanitarian aid and protecting civilians, India deployed its largest only women contingent of 25 women from Assam Rifles and Corps of Military Police in Abyei (disputed area between Sudan and South Sudan) under United Nation Interim Security Force for Abyei to provide relief and assistance to local women and children, which reflects India's commitment to a regional peace and security.

# Unleashing the Potential: India-Africa Business Engagement in the Global South

<https://www.financialexpress.com/business/defence-unleashing-the-potential-india-africa-business-engagement-in-the-global-south-3123482/>

With 32 Senior Ministers from Africa traveling to India for this annual convention, the sessions will witness the participation of over 800 international delegates from 45 African countries. The growing cooperation between India and Africa is poised to witness a boost, leveraging the emerging scenario of Global South collaboration. With a trade target of US\$200 billion by 2030, a significant surge from the current US\$90 billion level, and a goal to double Indian investments in Africa to \$150 billion, the stage is set for a transformative partnership.

## COMMENTS

In cooperation with the Global South, India and Africa's relations can establish a rightful place in the emerging world economic order according to the 18th CII-EXIM Bank India-Africa Conclave. India and Africa's relations have been significantly getting stronger.

Africa has been the center of focus for many countries because of its rich resources. India mainly exports refined petroleum products and pharmaceuticals and imports crude oil, gold, coal and other minerals from Africa. New Delhi has also provided millions of dollars in education and humanitarian aid to boost its soft power. Despite political, economic and security challenges in some nations, Africa as a whole is projected to have nearly a quarter of the global workforce and consumer market by 2030, making the continent an attractive partner for governments and businesses worldwide.

India has emerged as one of the top five investors in Africa in recent years, with cumulative investments on the continent amounting to around \$74 billion.

Mauritius, Mozambique, Sudan, Egypt and South Africa have been the top recipients of Indian investments. However, other countries, such as the US, China and Russia, have also been increasing their engagement with Africa in recent years. Indian companies are also increasingly active in countries rich in natural resources such as Ghana and Nigeria. A number of Indian multinationals already have significant interests in the region, in strategic sectors including agribusiness, pharmaceuticals, information and communications technology (ICT) and energy.

China has emerged as Africa's largest economic partner, with two-way trade worth \$254 billion last year, a jump of 35% from 2020. Over the past decade, Beijing has pumped billions of dollars into Africa, building roads, bridges and power installations in return for access to markets and resources. The continent has many of the fastest-growing economies in the world, and its total GDP currently stands at about \$2.6 trillion.