

STRATEGIC FOCUS

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WE ENTER 11TH YEAR IN SERVICE

The IADN is a leading Independent defence and strategic news and information-providing website. It is a 'Not-for-profit' 'self-sustaining' 'non-partisan' 'knowledge building' website providing exclusive, non-partisan in-depth news and analysis on leading defence strategic and security-related issues about India.

The IADN was founded in March 2012 by Mr Shantanu K. Bansal. It can be called a unique venture that has played an instrumental role in presenting defence and strategic issues to a wider audience. Before IADN, the issues related to defence and security were limited to the interest of some scholars and government, the IADN took the initiative to enlighten the public about the prevailing security situation of the country hence assisting the much-needed 'strategic culture.' Having been inspired by IADN many such news and analysis platforms mushroomed across the open domain.

With extreme efforts, the IADN was able to transform itself into an open information and knowledge-sharing platform. Time and again through its unique way of reporting, it has touched upon minds worldwide, providing a way for better policy orientation in the sector it serves. Today IADN is backed by a strong, ever-growing community of more than 5 lakh followers hence having a prominent say on the leading issues of National Interest.

The IADN has a spotless record, it has the intact quality of reporting as it should be. The team of editors, content writers and graphic designers from various backgrounds, represents every region of India- North, South, West and East reflecting the true spirit of India. Our serving/veteran team members have got the opportunity to associate with leading companies, institutions and government organisations.



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NEW ACQUISITION AND PROCUREMENT

Acquisition of New Weapons,
Parts and Collaborative
Developments



INS VIKRANT GETS ADVANCED UPGRADE: NEW GUIDANCE RADAR AND MISSILES INSTALLED

India's first homegrown aircraft carrier, INS Vikrant, has received a significant upgrade with state-of-the-art military equipment, including a new guidance radar and surface-to-air missiles. The upgrade is aimed at fortifying the warship's defensive capabilities amidst escalating regional tensions. The newly installed equipment includes the Multi-Function Surveillance, Track and Guidance Radar (MF-STAR) and Barak-8 Medium Range Surface to Air missiles (MRSAMs). These systems are of Israeli

origin, with MRSAMs being manufactured in India under license. The combination of MF-STAR and MRSAM is a proven defense mechanism, also deployed on the Indian Navy's Kolkata and Visakhapatnam class destroyers. The MF-STAR radar is designed to detect threats such as aircraft, anti-ship missiles, and cruise missiles, while the MRSAM can engage and neutralize these threats at distances exceeding 80 kilometers.

IAF TO ALL SET TO PLACE ADDITIONAL ORDER FOR TEJAS JETS



The Indian Air Force is all set to place additional orders for the single-engine fighter jet TEJAS, to replace its Mikoyan MiG-21s. The TEJAS is a single-engine, multi-role light fighter jet designed and developed in India. The IAF already has two squadrons of TEJAS jets, and the first squadron was raised in Sullur, Tamil Nadu reported India Today.

IAF TO EXTEND LIFE OF RUSSIAN SU-30MKI FIGHTER JET FLEET BY MORE THAN 20 YEARS



Having started the induction of Sukhoi Su-30MKI fighter jets about two decades ago, the Indian Air Force is now planning to extend the service life of its Russian-origin combat aircraft by more than 20 years. The Indian Air Force has inducted 272 of the Su-30MKI fighter aircraft operating in its fleet and the twin-engine planes are going to be the mainstay of the force for at least the next 15-20 years.

DEFENCE MINISTRY INKS OVER ₹5,300 CRORE DEAL WITH BEL

The defence ministry on Friday sealed an over ₹5,300 crore deal with state-run Bharat Electronics Ltd (BEL) for procurement of electronic fuses for the Indian Army for a period of 10 years. An electronic fuse is an integral

component of medium to heavy calibre artillery guns which provide sustained artillery firepower for military operations. The ministry said the fuzes are being procured for usage in artillery guns which are capable of lethal engagements in various kinds of terrain including high-altitude areas along the northern borders.

INS IMPHAL TO BOOST INDIA'S 'PRINCIPLE IN INDO-PACIFIC REGION'; KNOW KEY FACTS ABOUT STEALTH GUIDED MISSILE DESTROYER



INS Imphal was commissioned into the Indian Navy in Mumbai on Tuesday, December 26. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said the commissioning of INS Imphal will boost India's maritime power. He said the induction of INS Imphal into the Indian Navy shows India's self-reliance in the defence sector. Prime Minister Narendra Modi said it was "proud moment for India as INS Imphal" was commissioned into the India Navy.

INDIAN AIR FORCE INDUCTS SAMAR AIR-DEFENCE SYSTEM



The Indian Air Force (IAF) has inducted the Surface To Air Missile For Assured Retaliation (SAMAR) system, an IAF source told Janes on 20 December. According to the source, the service also test-fired the system in mid-December at Air Force Station Suryalanka located in the southern coastal region of India. The source did not elaborate on the number of systems the service has inducted. However, another IAF official told Janes in February that the first batch will include five SAMAR units.

DEFENCE MINISTRY SIGNS DEAL TO BUY 6 HIGH-TECH PATROL VESSELS FOR COAST GUARD WORTH ₹1,614 CRORE



In a major boost to Indian Coast Guard's capabilities, India's defence ministry has decided to procure six next generation offshore patrol vessels. A deal was signed on Wednesday with Mazagon Dockyard Shipbuilders Ltd. "The Ministry of Defence signed a contract with Mazagon Dockyard Shipbuilders Ltd on December 20 for the procurement of six next generation offshore patrol vessels for the Indian Coast Guard (ICG)," said the ministry.

INDIAN NAVY INDUCTS UNMANNED SHIPBORNE COPTER SCHIEBEL S-1



Indian Navy completed maiden pilot training of unmanned shipborne Camcopter Schiebel S-100 at INS Garuda Kochi reported Alpha Defence. Commander K Sri Vatsa, CO Garuda presented the graduation certificates. The induction of Schiebel S-100 will enhance surveillance capability of the Indian Navy in IOR.

DEFENCE MINISTRY CLEARS ORDER FOR INDIGENOUS TYPE-2, TYPE-3 AREA DENIAL MUNITIONS



On December 13, 2023, the Defence Ministry approved a proposal to purchase rockets for the Pinaka multi-barrel rocket launcher system. The order includes two types of rockets, known as Area Denial Munition Type-2 and Type-3, which will be procured from indigenous sources. The rockets will give additional lethality to the Pinaka system, which is already in

service with the Indian Army reported TOI. Area denial weapons are defensive devices that prevent adversaries from occupying or traversing an area. They may not be completely effective in preventing passage, but they can severely restrict, slow down, or endanger the opponent.

DEFENCE MINISTRY CLEARS 70,000 SIG SAUER ASSAULT RIFLES FOR INDIAN ARMY



In a major boost to the firepower of soldiers, the Indian Army will get 70,000 more Sig Sauer assault rifles which will be given to troops deployed in counterterrorism operations and other duties. The approval for the procurement was given at a high-level meeting of the Defence Ministry held recently and attended by the top brass of the military, government sources said. The approval for the Indian Army to buy more than 70,000 of these assault rifles worth over Rs 800 crore has come at a time when the forces are deployed in a military standoff with China and are carrying out

extensive counterterrorism operations along the line of control in Jammu and Kashmir against Pakistan-sponsored terrorist activities, they said.

NAVY PLANS TO GET MADE IN INDIA MIDGET SUBMARINES FOR SPECIAL FORCES OPERATIONS



The Indian Navy (Indian Navy) plans to acquire indigenous-built swim delivery vehicles as part of efforts to modernize and strengthen the capabilities of its Marine Commando (MARCOS) for special maritime operations. They are also known as underwater chariots (Undersea chariots) and small submarines (Midget Submarines). According to a report by the 'Indian Express', these small submarines operating within the sea will be able to carry a crew of at least six people and will be powered by lithium-ion batteries. According to sources, after the initial prototype is approved, there are plans for the Navy to buy a few dozen such small submarines.

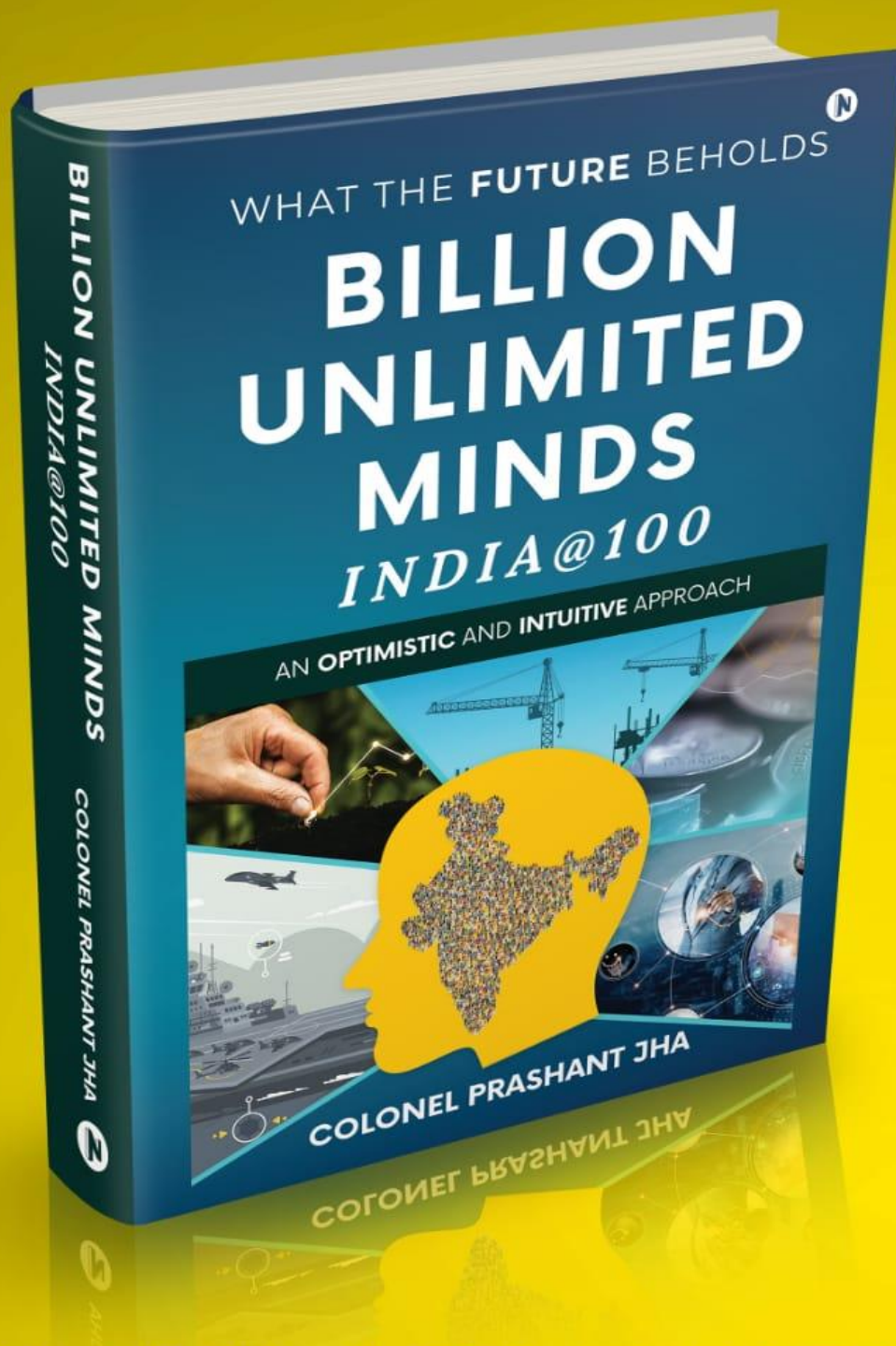
INDIAN AIR FORCE ENHANCES SECURITY WITH ADVANCED ANTI-DRONE TECHNOLOGY

In a proactive move to safeguard its airbases, the Indian Air Force (IAF) has equipped its stations with sophisticated counter-drone systems designed to identify and neutralize any unauthorized unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) posing a threat to military installations. Air Commodore Shekhar Yadav, at the head of the Air Force Station in Pune, highlighted the new security measures during a press briefing. The installation of these systems ensures that all flying operations within and around the designated ‘no drone zones,’ which extend to a 3-kilometer radius of each airbase, remain secure against UAV-related risks.

INDIAN NAVY'S SHIPS GET INDIGENOUS FIREPOWER BOOST: MOD INKS CONTRACT WORTH RS 2,956 CRORE FOR 16 SUPER RAPID GUNS



The Ministry of Defence (MoD) on Tuesday (28 November) signed a contract with Bharat Heavy Electricals Ltd (BHEL) for 16 upgraded Super Rapid Gun Mounts (SRGMs) and related accessories, for combat ships of the Indian Navy. The deal, valued at Rs 2,956 crore, will equip the Navy with medium-calibre defence systems capable of anti-missile and anti-aircraft actions, known for their rapid-fire rate and high precision.



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Meet The Author



Colonel Prashant Jha is a keen development enthusiast and a compulsive optimist. An alumnus of the Army War College and Defence Services Staff College, he commanded an Air Defence Regiment in the western sector.

Colonel Jha helps entrepreneurs, learners and individuals with opportunities in India. He writes extensively on India's development, sustainability and geopolitics. He is passionate about artificial intelligence, microeconomics, sustainability solutions and new age technologies to solve problems of mankind.

**Let's Work Together To
Build A Brighter Future,**



**The Opportunities for
India Are Endless,**



**And Our Growth Is Sure
To Be Phenomenal!**



What the Future Beholds



This book provides an in-depth look at the current state of India and the steps that can be taken to ensure its future success. It covers a wide range of subjects, from economics, sustainability to political reforms and social change.



The book talks about India's needs to harness its billion unlimited minds and take the next leap of faith. The book is an invaluable resource for anyone interested in India and its potential to becoming a natural leader in the world order.

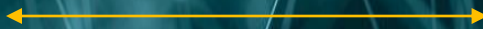


It provides invaluable insights into the strategies necessary for India to become a world leader in the years to come. This book is an essential read for anyone interested in India's future over next two decades and beyond.

CALL FOR CHAPTERS

THEME

INTELLIGENCE REVOLUTION: ROLE OF MILITARY INTELLIGENCE
AND CORPORATE INFLUENCE IN THE FUTURE CONFLICT



In the rapidly changing landscape of contemporary warfare, the role of intelligence agencies and corporate entities has become pivotal in shaping the future of conflicts worldwide. The proposed co-edited book, "Intelligence Revolution: Role of Military Intelligence and Corporate Influence in the Future Conflict," seeks to explore and analyze this crucial intersection. This book aims to provide an in-depth examination of the evolving dynamics of military intelligence, the influence of private corporations on national security, and their collective impact on the global security landscape. In the 21st century, the nature of warfare has transformed significantly, with intelligence agencies and corporate entities playing increasingly prominent roles. This co-edited book addresses the pressing need to understand the intricate relationship between military intelligence and corporate influence in shaping the future of conflicts. As technological advancements, economic interests, and political agendas converge, the implications for global security are profound. This book serves as a platform to explore the multifaceted dimensions of this intelligence revolution and its relevance in contemporary times.

EDITORS

Dr Monojit Das, executive editor of IADN having over 6 years of research experience as an M.Phil and Ph.D. researcher with co-authored articles and books published on security and international relations. Experience in liaising with civil government to promote India's cultural diversity globally and developing a mechanism to initiate academic exchanges between institutes to promote Indian education and strengthen bilateral relations with friendly nations. My co-authored two books on national security included in curriculum of multiple institutions and invited a BOS member to develop a cyberpsychology program at CIIPS-SCBC, RRU, Institute of National Importance, Gol.

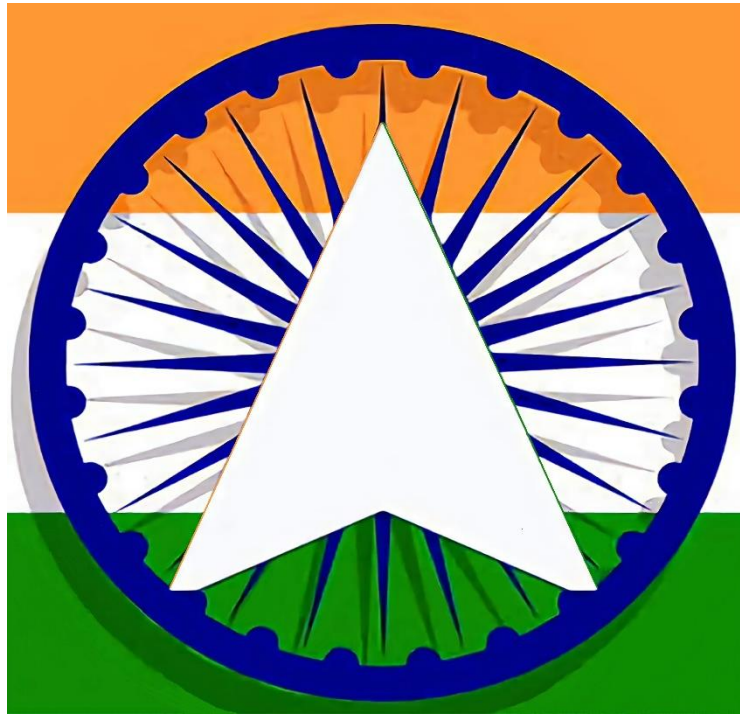
Mr Shantanu K. Bansal, Founder of IADN, he has more than 10 years of experience in research and analysis. An award-winning researcher, he writes for the leading defence and security journals, think tanks and in-service publications. He has worked with the Army Training Command (ARTRAC), Helicopter Training School (HTS), Defence Services Staff College (DSSC) and Institutions alike. He has written two in-service books which include "75 Stratagems of India" of the Indian Army and "60 years of Chetak" of the Indian Air Force (IAF). With hands-on experience in the information warfare domain he has been in the forefront of all national-level dialogues, symposiums.



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THE NEW LOGO OF IADN INSPIRED BY LORD SHRI RAM'S ARROW

On the auspicious occasion of 22nd January 2023 when the Shri Ram Mandir inauguration took place in Ayodhya, U.P., the IADN handles across changed its logo inculcating the generational wisdom with today's era warfare. The tip of the arrow in the logo symbolises the right direction and purpose, which is essential to today's information warfare domain. Arrow has been referred to as a symbol of strength and righteousness since time immemorial. In contrast to new-generation missile technology and Target Acquisition capabilities, the symbol of the arrow remains eternal and forward-looking.

The National flag of India in the background consists of three colours - saffron, white and green which was adopted by the Constituent Assembly on 22 July, 1947 with the Ashok Chakra which is a depiction of the Dharma Chakra. The 24 spokes radiating from the centre represent righteousness, justice, and forwardness in all directions. The symbolism of the wheel is that of constant movement of information inspired by India's deep legacy with 24-hour commitment. The new IADN logo shows progress in the right direction, repealing stagnation of the flow of knowledge and information in the digital domain while keeping the utmost national security interest forward. The new IADN symbol is inspired and designed by Shantanu K. Bansal.



ENGAGING CHINA

Col Prashant Jha (Retd.)



An Alumnus of the Army War College, Mhow and Defence Services Staff College (DSSC), Wellington. In his illustrious career in the Indian Army, he commanded an Air Defence regiment in the Western Sector. He writes extensively on India's development, geopolitical trends and economic issues. He authored the book "Billion Unlimited Minds: India@100"

China has been a nation of concern, especially for all its neighbours, the United States and the developed West. Why and how did China become so powerful developed, rich and silently assertive with its arm-twisting and debt-trapping character, merits a deeper study! The aim here is not to fully emulate the narrative but to try to understand this yellow nation.

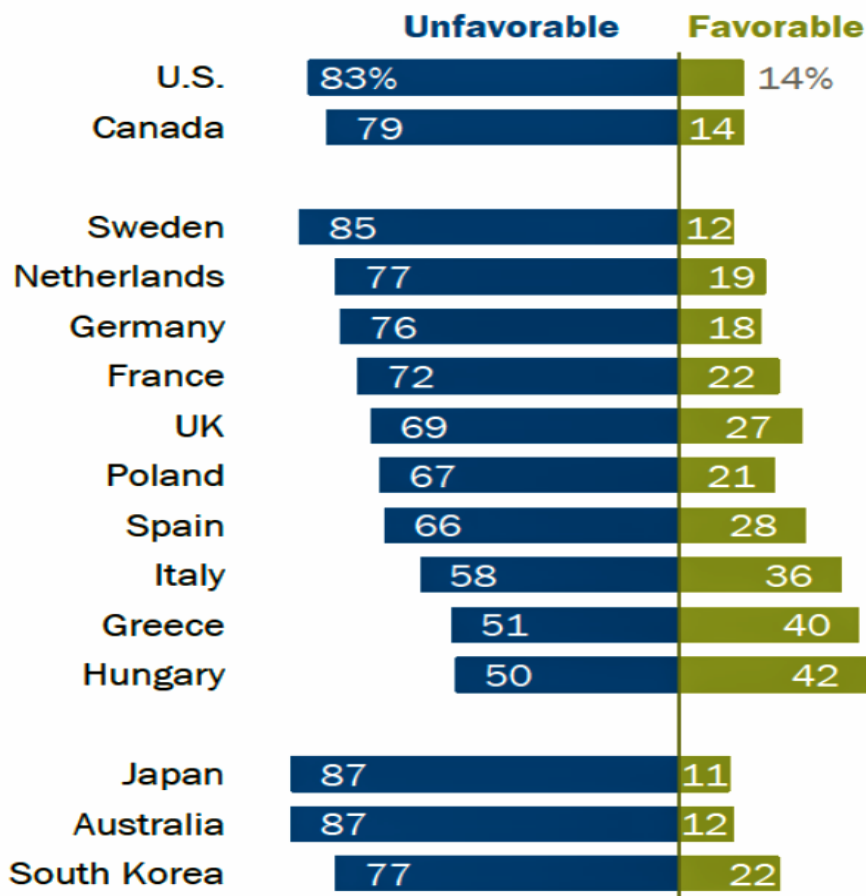
A few basics about the present before we start thinking of the future. China is a middle-income, mid-aged, highly advanced technology with, a huge export in both

manufacturing and service-led economy of 19 trillion-plus USD. The world at large can curse China but can't undo China. There is hardly a nation which has a trade surplus with China. Each household from the Western nations to India, Africa and Latin America has a sizeable content of Chinese goods. Our NRI children in the West and Americas have most Chinese FMCG. We at home, like many Indians, own a Chinese smartphone, a Chinese TV, Laptop among many items and so do our families.

*India has been formally an adversary of China for **the last 60 years**. But, today, the Embassy of India reported a **101 bn USD** surplus **trade with China***

India has been formally an adversary of China for the last 60 years. But, today, the Embassy of India reported a 101 bn USD surplus trade with China making her the largest trading partner in India. Does it not sound simply a paradox? Can anyone insulate from China? Let us have a look at the below interesting graphics about what few mattering nations feel about China

% who have a(n) ___ opinion of China



Do we call the above graphics as propaganda? Chinese has outwitted the world at large in every aspect of international trade and affairs. The developed world is so heavily dependent on China due to its cheap manufactured ready products and the whole trade is very much intertwined by a complex multilateral supply chain system. The poor global south looks up to China as their saviour and hence favours the Chinese.

The famous adage by Sun Tzu – Know your enemy and you need not worry a consequence of a thousand battles hold so good and so right. Chinese have ensured that their enemies are not able to know them and their intent never since the cementing of the CCP. They are a registered and declared opaque nation and you can do little about it. Their electronics are a confirmed snoop and despite this, the world continues to buy and cares less about it due to the basic fact that it's cheap. The driver chips for every LED bulb are ex China. India is still to make them despite all the noise of Make in India and make by India. All this is because of what and why, we can make our guesses.

China *has outwitted the world at large in every aspect of **international trade** and affairs*

If we study the Chinese establishment's behaviour over the last few months, we would infer an internal consolidation in China with focus on increased domestic investment, economic growth, and big no to corruption, disloyalists and military growth in the South China Sea to unify Taiwan. Unification of Taiwan though is planned by 2047, may happen much earlier. The Americans can't stretch it any further. The one country many systems seem to work so well in China. It has four major municipalities led by Shanghai and Beijing. It has rich regions like Hong Kong and Macao. And it has more than a million TVE (Towns and village enterprises)

Chinese do not seem to be much concerned about alternate reshoring of low end manufacturing under the China plus one policy. The Chinese labour today is still cheap, competitive and huge in numbers. China looks more at markets in the global south, the Central Asian republics and East Asia. It considers engaging with India as an elder brother! That's where India has a right concern.

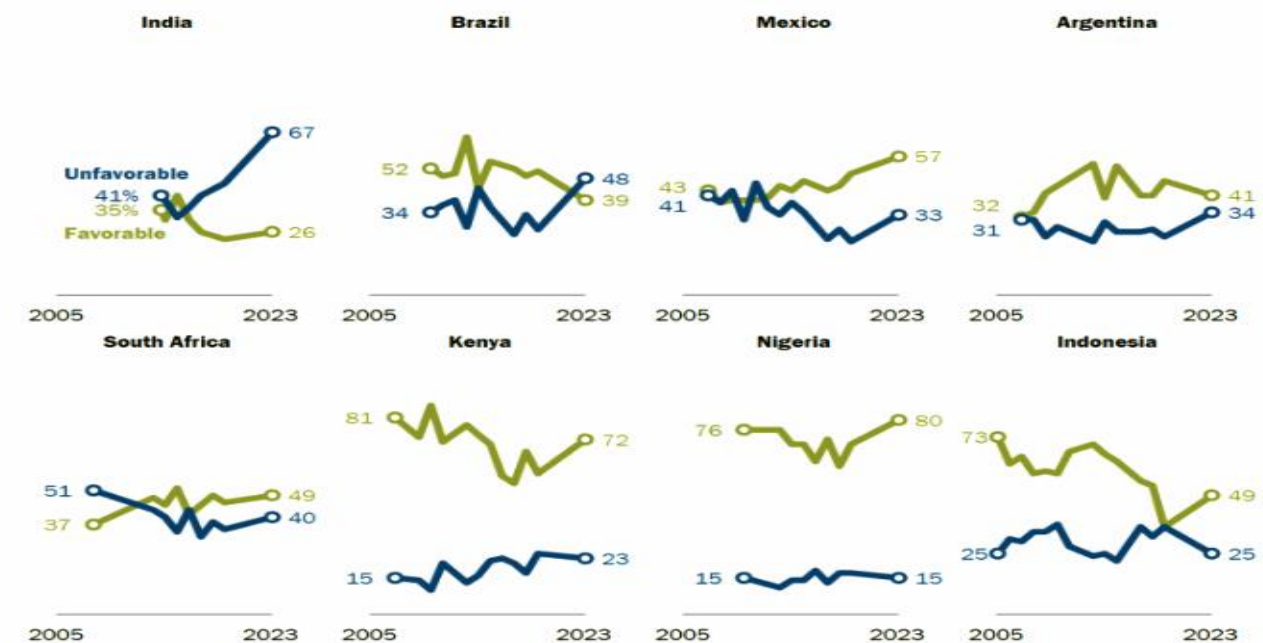
China looks more at markets in the **global south**, the **Central Asian** republics and **East Asia**

If we look at the political map above, China is at an inflexion point and wants not only to dominate the seas in the east but down south and the huge rare earth minerals in the west of China in the Central Asian Republics. The BRI is just one of the many projects. Apropos, it is not at all complex to understand and accept the fact that Chinese are on a higher path in every sense of the word. If we study Chinese Global times, South China morning post and the diplomatic stance of the present Chinese establishment, we will observe a paradigm shift towards more pragmatism, positive engagement, less of war or arm-twisting rhetoric and a policy of peaceful means to further their national ambitions and foreign policy. Recently, two major stances merit reference here. President Xi asked diplomats to be more articulate and conciliatory on all foreign policy issues and the latest appreciative article in the Chinese media about rising India under the present establishment.

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Unfavorable views of China have grown in some middle-income countries

% who have a(n) ___ view of China



Note: Those who did not answer not shown.

Source: Spring 2023 Global Attitudes Survey: Q3b.

"China's Approach to Foreign Policy Gets Largely Negative Reviews in 24-Country Survey"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

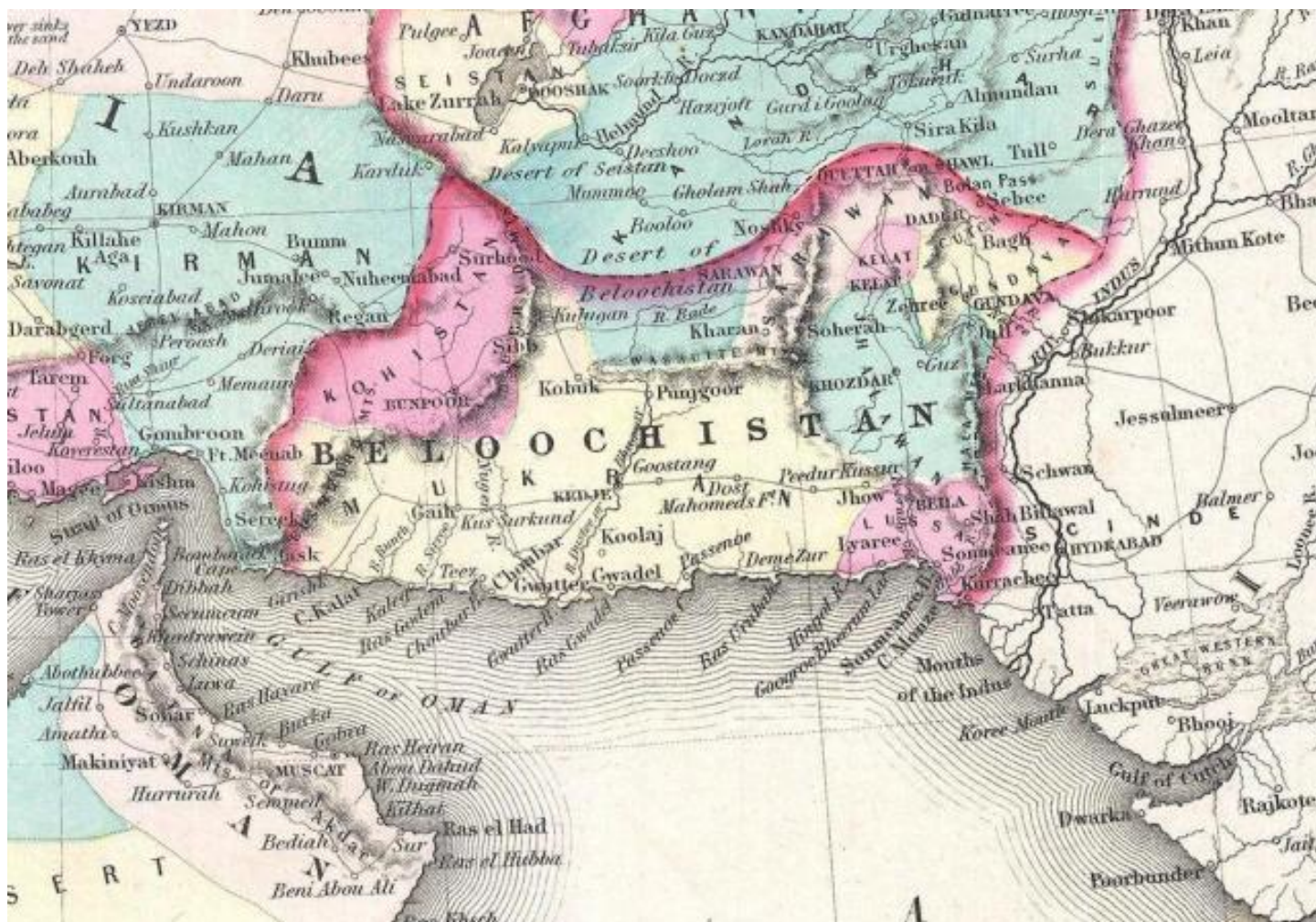
How do we treat our boundary issues? Simple answer! Occupy and hold if you do not want to lose any more territory. It's a thousand times easier to hold than capture an occupied area. The latest deployment post the Galwan incident and fortifying border defences is an apt example. India will have to double its efforts in building its border military surveillance and defensive infrastructure.

*Lessons from the **TVE** (Towns and village enterprises) of **China** to transition **India** into a **manufacturing** and **service-led export nation** is the need of the hour.*

The disregard to Indian claims will continue and thus India will certainly need to deal from a position of strength as we grow stronger. How do we reduce our dependency on Chinese imports? The noise around make in India, all the PLI around electronics manufacturing and much more need to be actualised. Lessons from the TVE (Towns and village enterprises) of China to transition India into a manufacturing and service-led export nation is the need of the hour. It's not happening at the speed of the noise that is being made about the same. India needs to implode here. It's easy here, because we are a thriving democracy. In the same breadth, it is very difficult here, because the land, selfish motives, poor governance and corruption still thrive here.

Concluding my thoughts by just making a few simple points! Let us break the mould and remould India! Let India implode bottoms up and export. The ODOP (One District One Product) is just the tip of the iceberg. Why can't we have city-states, and export zones and free them to do global trade? The template is available. We need to just sign it off. India must engage more with China than less. **[End]**

*The **ODOP** (One District One Product) is just the tip of the iceberg... India must **engage more with China** than less.*



IRAN AND PAKISTAN A WAR OF DECEPTION

ADITI DUBEY



A graduate in Economics from Delhi University. A master in defence and strategic studies from NALSAR University of Law, Hyderabad. She works with Janes Defence as a research analyst in the defence data development domain. An ethical hacker, she takes interest in issues related to military tactics, international laws, arms acts and tribunals.

The latest discordance between Iran and Pakistan has taken an intemperate move after both countries started striking each other's border territories. Recently, Iran has taken aggressive steps against Pakistan inside its border under the guise of a 'retaliatory strike' against Sunni militant group "Jaish al-Adl". Jaish al-Adl is one of the major militant organizations operating against Iran in the south-eastern region of Sistan and Baluchistan. The organisation's

goal is to liberate the Sunni-populated region of Sistan and Baluchistan from Shia authoritarian Iran.

To add fuel to the fire, Pakistan brutally carried out its so-called highly accurate retaliatory military operation under the codename “Marg Bar Sarmachar”, claiming more casualties. However, the complexity created by the episodes of military incidents shows a rift between the military friendship of Iran and Pakistan as both countries share a common enemy. Both countries have a distinct history of forcefully occupying the Balochistan region, which was once an independent principality.

Currently, the occupied Balochistan is distributed between Iran and Pakistan. The people of the occupied Balochistan region, particularly Pakistan-occupied Balochistan, have been victims of state-sponsored mass disappearances and extrajudicial killings for years and such atrocities are still ongoing.

Initially, both Iran and Pakistan launched several joint operations against their common adversaries, but the recent incident where they were seen as pitting against each other indicates a contemporary change in their approach.

Notably, according to Pakistan’s narration, the Baloch insurgent group Baluchistan Liberation Army (BLA) which has given nightmares to the Pakistan Army for years, is operating from the border areas of Iran (as Pakistan claims).

Wrapping up the latest developments, both Iran and Pakistan have increased their extra-judicial killings, but this time it is framed as an official retaliation against each other to outwit the world. This could be also seen as a decisive strategy to steer clear of the bad books of human rights violations. Additionally, Pakistan and Iran are still conducting naval exercises in the Persian Gulf which clearly shows no sign of differences between the two. **[End]**



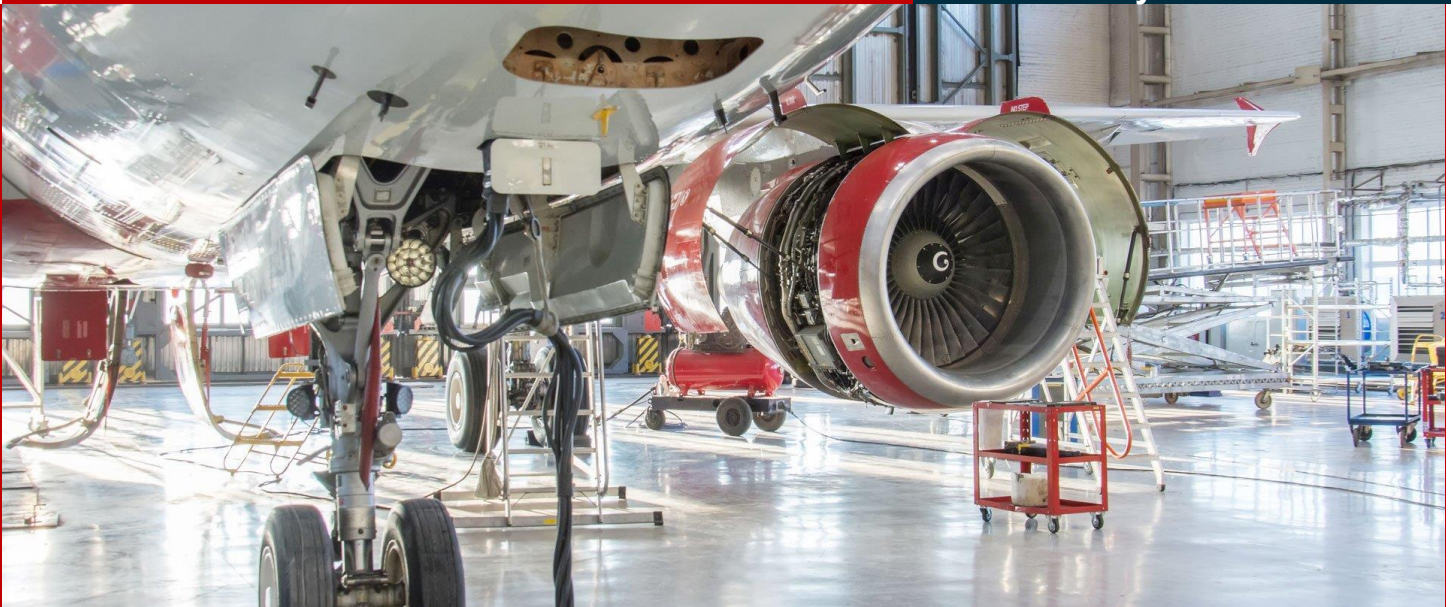
HAPPY 75TH REPUBLIC DAY

The 75th Republic Day Parade showcased the nation's extraordinary Nari Shakti as impressive march-pasts by women who received standing ovation by the invitees. President Droupadi Murmu and French President Emmanuel Macron arrived at the Kartavya Path in the traditional buggy which made a comeback after 40 years. Our coverage continues across platforms.



TECHNOLOGY FOCUS

Technologies Which Are
Changing the Battlefield In
India and Beyond



DEFENCE SECRETARY INAUGURATES NEW DESIGN & TEST FACILITY AT HAL'S AERO ENGINE R&D CENTRE

Defence Secretary Giridhar Aramane on Friday inaugurated a new design and test facility at Hindustan Aeronautics Limited's (HAL) Aero Engine Research and Development Centre (AERDC), Bangalore. The AERDC is currently involved in the design and development of several new engines including two strategic engines - Hindustan Turbo Fan Engine (HTFE) of 25 kN (kilonewtons) thrust for powering trainers, UAVs, twin-engine small fighter aircraft or regional jets, and Hindustan Turbo Shaft Engine (HTSE) of 1200 kN thrust for powering light and medium weight helicopters (3.5 to 6.5 tonnes in single/twin engine configuration).

INTEGRATION OF ADVANCED UAVS ENHANCES SURVEILLANCE, RECONNAISSANCE, AND COMMUNICATION CAPABILITIES OF INS VIKRANT CARRIER



In a momentous achievement, the Indian Navy has successfully conducted tests for the landing and take-off of an Indian-made unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) from its indigenous aircraft carrier, INS Vikrant. This ground breaking development, undertaken quietly at the beginning of the year, signals a significant leap forward in India's maritime capabilities and underscores the navy's commitment to staying at the forefront of technological advancements.

DRONEACHARYA INTRODUCES BHUJANG: HIGH- ALTITUDE MULTI-ROTOR DRONE



DroneAcharya Aerial Innovations Limited (DAIL), a pioneering Indian drone company, has unveiled BHUJANG (Battlefield Hybrid UAV for Joint Attack, Navigation, and Guarding), a robust, high-altitude multi-rotor drone designed for a wide range of missions, including combat, transport, and surveillance. Positioned as India's premier super high-altitude multi-rotor multi-role drone, BHUJANG features a quadcopter configuration with four powerful engines. It is equipped with an advanced Electro-Optic (EO) sensor and is armed with a precision targeting system.

OJAS AEROSPACE DEVELOPS HIGH-ALTITUDE MULTI-COPTER DRONE

This drone represents a monumental leap in security, surveillance, and reconnaissance capabilities, redefining the landscape of Defence operations. This ground breaking technology platform offers not only unparalleled intelligence gathering but also provides a foundation for the integration of lethal and weaponized systems, ensuring a comprehensive and versatile solution for the most critical security challenges. This drone can access hard-to-reach areas, providing real-time, high-resolution

imagery and video feeds. From tracking potential threats to monitoring critical infrastructure, the drone's state-of-the-art sensor suite ensures comprehensive situational awareness, enabling faster and more informed decision-making.

INDIA'S HAPS PROTOTYPE ACHIEVES LANDMARK FLIGHT, PAVES THE WAY FOR STRATOSPHERIC OPERATIONS

Bangalore-based NewSpace Research and Technologies Pvt Ltd (NRT) achieved a significant milestone in India's aerospace ambitions as its solar-powered High Altitude Pseudo-Satellite (HAPS) completed its maiden flight, lasting over 21 hours. The successful trial, conducted during the Winter Solstice, provides a substantial boost to India's plan of deploying long-endurance drones capable of operating in the stratosphere.

INDIAN ARMY TO BOOST T-90 TANKS WITH AUTOMATIC TARGET TRACKER, DIGITAL BALLISTIC COMPUTER



DAC has paved way for procurement of this tech, which will enable tanks to track & hit targets with more precision. As of now, T-90 tanks are positioned manually to hit targets. The T-72 tanks will be gradually replaced by 1,700 Future Ready Combat Vehicles (FRCV), which the Indian Army is currently procuring. Battlefield Management System equipment will be installed on the FRCVs (BMS). In a meeting on November 30, the Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) has reportedly approved the purchase and integration of two technological kinds for T-90 tanks: the Digital Ballistic Computer (DBC) and Automatic Target Tracker (ATT), both of which are a component of the fire control system.

DRDO CARRIES OUT SUCCESSFUL FLIGHT TRIAL OF LETHAL UAV



The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has successfully demonstrated the flight trial of Autonomous Flying Wing Technology Demonstrator, an indigenous high-speed flying wing UAV from the Aeronautical Test Range (ATR), in Karnataka's Chitradurga. The successful flying demonstration of this autonomous stealthy unmanned aerial vehicle is a testimony to the maturity of the technology readiness levels in the country.

ARMY TO USE AI TO TRACK ENEMY DEPLOYMENT

The Army is in the process of inducting an indigenously-developed software that will enable it to profile all equipment on the enemy side and also help it to better utilise and draw usable information out of intelligence inputs. Sources said, “The software we are inducting is Artificial Intelligence-based, which can collect electronic signatures of the equipment across the borders and profile them, thus helping in determining their movement in future.” Also, for faster decision making, AI software has been developed for predictive analysis. It will also help sift through intelligence input, which come in bulk, a source said. It will grade the inputs as per the credibility of sources.

DRDO LOOKS TO INDUSTRY TO BUILD LASER-INDUCED SENSING TECH

The Defence Research and Development Organisation is looking for industries to transfer its laser-induced sensing technology for detection of biological agents developed by its lab, the Laser Science and Technology Centre (LASTEC). Pointing out that laser is a powerful technology for

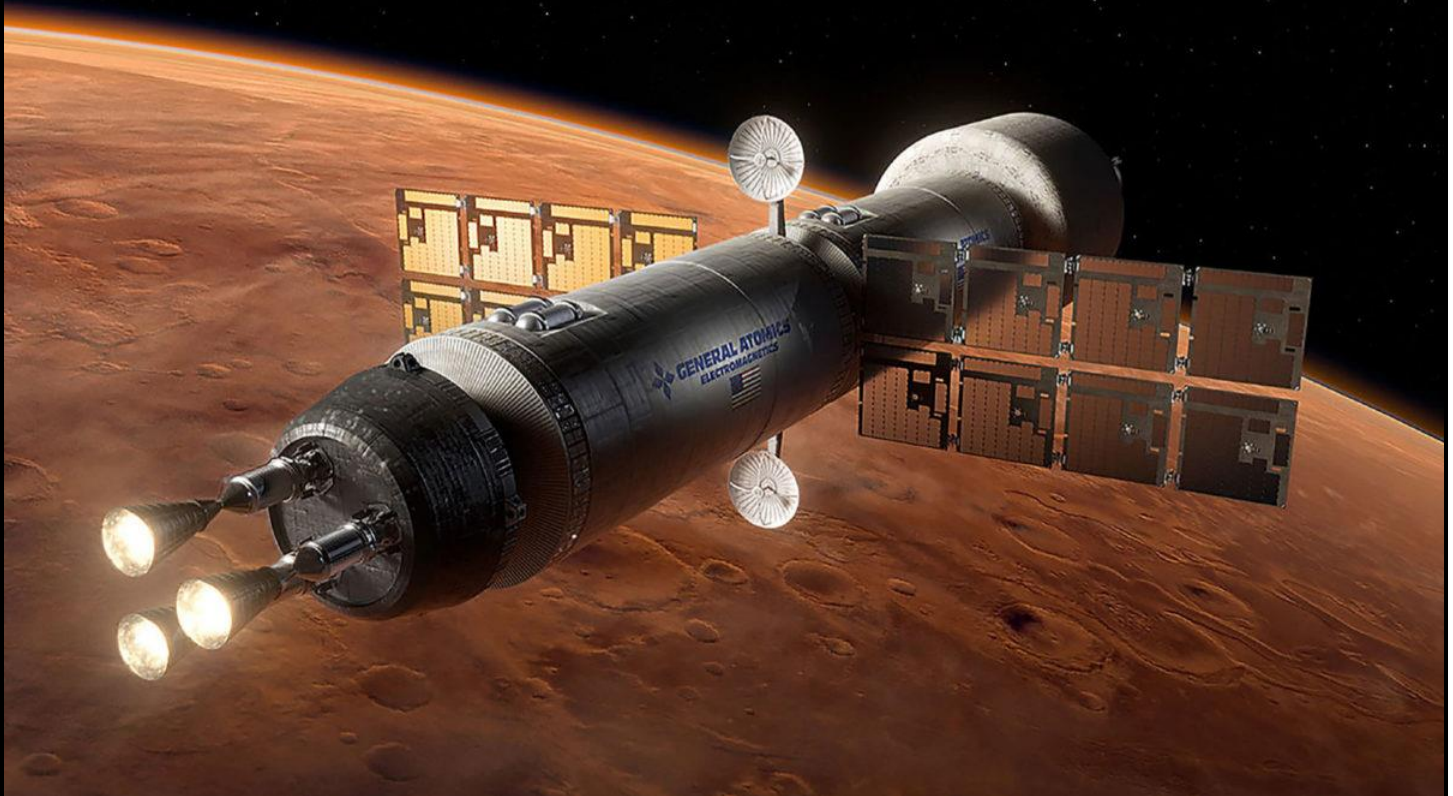
homeland security in defence as well environmental sciences and medical sciences, DRDO says that in the present scenario due to increased bio-terrorist activities, threat to military personnel and civilians appears in the form of biological, chemical warfare (BCW) agents and explosives.

RAMAN RESEARCH INSTITUTE DEVELOPS INDIGENOUS EXPERIMENTAL FACILITY TO HELP DEEPEN KNOWLEDGE IN QUANTUM TECHNOLOGIES

Scientists at the Raman Research Institute (RRI) have indigenously built an experimental facility to simultaneously cool and trap a large number of sodium and potassium atoms near absolute zero temperatures using laser light and magnetic fields. With this, RRI, an autonomous institute funded by the Department of Science and Technology, Government of India, has joined the handful of laboratories globally to demonstrate such efficient simultaneous production of a mixture of two species of ultra-cold neutral atoms with inter-species interactions control.

SPACE

From The Field of Space And
Space Technologies

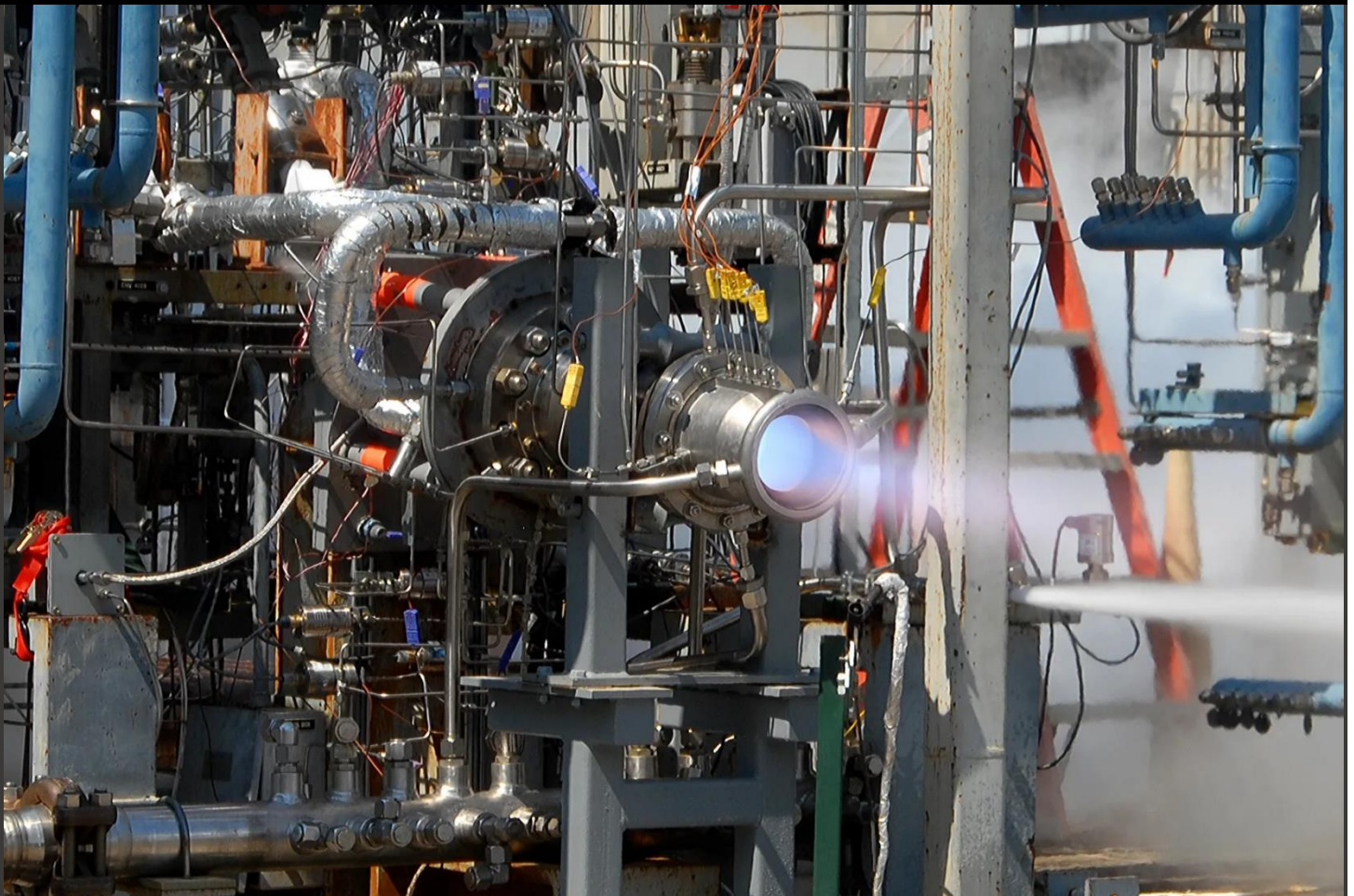


NUCLEAR BASED ENGINES TO POWER FUTURE INTERPLANETARY MISSIONS OF ISRO

According to a December 29, 2023 article in the Times of India, India's nuclear sector will power future Indian space missions through nuclear propulsion. The article says that ISRO chairman S Somanath announced plans to collaborate with the department of atomic energy. The article also mentions that the radioisotope heating units in Chandrayaan-3's propulsion module worked well, which generated enthusiasm. A nuclear rocket engine uses a fission reactor to create high temperatures. The engine then transfers this heat to a liquid propellant, which is expanded and exhausted through a

nozzle to propel the spacecraft. Nuclear thermal rockets work similarly to chemical rockets. A heat source releases thermal energy into a gaseous propellant inside the engine. A nozzle at one end allows the propellant to expand away from the vehicle, carrying momentum.

ISRO RECENTLY COMPLETES ANOTHER SERIES TESTS OF ITS SCRAMJET ENGINE



ISRO recently completed another series of Testing of its Scramjet engine. Earlier ISRO tested it with Hydrogen as fuel now using Kerosene (Isroscene) as fuel. Kerosene reduces overall volume and more suitable for long duration flight. Today, satellites are launched into orbit by multi-staged satellite launch vehicles that can be used only once (expendable). These launch vehicles carry oxidiser along with the fuel for combustion to produce thrust. Launch vehicles designed for one time use are expensive and their

efficiency is low because they can carry only 2-4% of their lift-off mass to orbit. Thus, there is a worldwide effort to reduce the launch cost.

START-UP ABYOM SPACETECH DEVELOPS A RE-IGNITABLE & THROTTLEABLE CRYOGENIC ENGINE

Indian private space company, Abyom SpaceTech develops a re-ignitable & throttleable cryogenic engine for rockets & launch vehicles, emphasizing rapid reusability. The company's Reusable Sounding Rocket (RSR) facilitates various space experiments and data collection. The Small Reusable Launch Vehicle (SRLV) is designed for efficient satellite launches into low earth orbits. Finally, the Medium Reusable Launch Vehicle (MRLV) targets diverse satellite launches into multiple orbits.

SAANKHYA LABS BAGS RS 96.42 CR PURCHASE ORDER FROM NEWSPACE INDIA LIMITED

Saankhya Labs, a subsidiary of homegrown telecom gear maker Tejas Networks, Friday said it has received a provisional purchase order of Rs 96.42 crore from NewSpace India Limited (NSIL) for the supply of two-way Mobile Satellite Services (MSS) terminals for vessel communication and support system in marine fishing vessels for Monitoring, Control and Surveillance (MCS) along the coastal states of India.

ISRO PLANNING FOR LEO CONSTELLATION LIKE SPACE X TO COUNTER CHINA

The Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) is planning for a low-earth orbit (LEO) satellite communications constellation. In March 2023, ISRO's LVM-3 rocket launched 36 OneWeb satellites into orbit, completing OneWeb's LEO constellation. The constellation now has 618 satellites that will provide broadband internet from space around the world. LEO satellites are placed in orbits ranging from 200 km to 1,500 km from Earth. This significantly increases bandwidth and reduces latency in space to around 50-70 milliseconds.

ISRO TO DEVELOP ITS OWN LIFE SUPPORT SYSTEM FOR GAGANYAAN MISSION AFTER FAILING TO GET IT FROM OTHER COUNTRIES: SOMANATH



Somanath affirmed ISRO's commitment to indigenous development, leveraging existing knowledge and local industries. He outlined the challenges confronting the Gaganyaan program. Emphasising the nation's dedication to skill-building and design enhancement. ISRO Chairman S

Somanath declared the agency's determination to independently engineer the Environmental Control and Life Support System (ECLSS) for the impending Gaganyaan mission. "We have no experience in developing an environmental control life support system. We were only designing rockets and satellites. We thought that this knowledge would come from other nations, but unfortunately after so much discussion, nobody is willing to give it to us," Somanath said.

ISRO'S PSLV TO LAUNCH ESA'S INSIDE-OUT SOLAR SPACE TELESCOPE PROBA-3 IN MID 2024

ISRO's workhorse rocket, the Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV) has been picked to deploy the European Space Agency's (ESA) experimental Project for On-Board Autonomy-3 (PROBA-3) mission in mid 2024. The PROBA-3 mission consists of two elements flying in tandem to study the Sun. The mission essentially forms a solar observatory measuring 144 metres in length, split into two elements flying in formation. ISRO is looking to launch sixteen missions in 2024, which will be the most number of launches it attempts in a single year so far. One of these missions has been contracted to the ESA, with the PSLV tasked with ferrying an innovative technology demonstration mission to Earth orbit. The PROBA-3 mission consists of two elements, a Coronagraph spacecraft and an Occulter spacecraft. The two spacecraft will have to be in very precise locations in relation to each other to form a single instrument that allows scientists to investigate the outer atmosphere of the Sun, or the solar corona.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Covering International and
Geopolitical Matters

ASIA AND PACIFIC REGION



FRENCH PRESIDENT EMMANUEL MACRON TO VISIT INDIA AS CHIEF GUEST IN REPUBLIC DAY

The Republic Day celebrations on January 26 will feature French President Emmanuel Macron as the chief guest. Additionally, a contingent from the French Army is scheduled to take part in this year's Republic Day parade. The invitation extended to President Macron for the Republic Day

festivities reflects the substantial improvement in relations between the two nations, spanning various domains such as defence, security, clean energy, trade, investment, and new technologies. India and France affirmed their dedication to collaborating in the co-development and co-production of advanced defence technologies, with a focus on extending these benefits to third countries as well.

THAILAND ANNOUNCES THE IDENTIFICATION OF THE WORLD'S THIRD-LARGEST LITHIUM RESERVES

Thai authorities have announced the identification of lithium deposits, asserting them to be the world's third-largest reserves of this crucial material used in the production of batteries for electric vehicles. Discovered at two sites in the southern province of Phang-Nga, one location is estimated to hold 14.8 million tonnes of lithium, while the other site is still undergoing surveying. This places Thailand in the third position globally for known lithium deposits, trailing behind Bolivia and Argentina, which possess 21 million tonnes and 20 million tonnes, respectively, according to a statement from a government spokesperson on Thursday.

JAPAN ACHIEVES SUCCESSFUL MOON LANDING

Japan's lunar lander successfully touched down on the moon's surface just past midnight on Saturday. However, a technical issue related to the spacecraft's ability to utilize solar power has introduced uncertainty about the mission's ability to fulfil all of its objectives. With this landing, Japan joins the ranks of the fifth country to achieve a moon landing, following the U.S., Russia, China, and India. Officials from the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) expressed confidence that the Smart Lander for Investigating Moon spacecraft executed a gentle landing and

accomplished its objective of achieving a high-precision landing. They noted the need for additional time to confirm whether the lander successfully landed within 100 meters of its intended target site.

ATTACK AT U.S. MILITARY BASE AFTER IRAN PLEDGED RETALIATION FOR THE

Armed groups supported by Iran targeted US troops in Iraq shortly after Tehran promised retaliation and accused Israel of a lethal attack on a facility housing its elite forces in Damascus, heightening concerns of a broader regional conflict. The attack led to at least one Iraqi casualty, and potential American casualties, as reported by the US Central Command (CENTCOM). This incident unfolded hours after Tehran declared its intent to seek revenge against Israel for its strike on the Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) in Syria.

NORTH KOREA CLAIMS THAT IT TESTED ITS NEW UNDERWATER NUCLEAR WEAPON SYSTEM

North Korea declared that it had conducted a test of an "underwater nuclear weapon system" in response to joint naval exercises by Washington, Seoul, and Tokyo, which included a US nuclear-powered aircraft carrier. The North considered these drills as a serious threat to its security, prompting Pyongyang to undertake a significant test of its underwater nuclear weapon system, known as 'Haeil-5-23,' currently under development in the East Sea of Korea. This information comes from a statement by the defence ministry, as reported by the state news agency KCNA. In the previous year, North Korea had claimed to have conducted multiple tests of an alleged underwater nuclear attack drone, a different variant of the Haeil, which translates to "tsunami" in Korean. The regime asserted that it had the

capability to unleash a "radioactive tsunami." However, analysts have expressed skepticism regarding North Korea's possession of such a weapon.

AMERICA (NORTH AND SOUTH)



U.S.A TARGETS AN ANTI-SHIP MISSILE BELONGING TO HOUTHI REBELS THAT WAS IN THE PROCESS OF BEING LAUNCHED

The United States conducted new airstrikes against Yemen's Huthi rebels targeting an anti-ship missile that was "ready to launch," according to the military. Washington aims to diminish the military capabilities of the Iran-backed Huthis. Despite more than a week of strikes, the rebels have persisted in their attacks on shipping in the Red Sea and have pledged to continue targeting merchant vessels. At approximately 4 am Sanaa time (0100 GMT), U.S. forces carried out airstrikes against a Huthi anti-ship missile that was poised to launch into the Gulf of Aden, as stated by US

Central Command. In November, the Huthis initiated attacks on Red Sea shipping, asserting that they targeted vessels with Israeli connections in solidarity with Palestinians in Gaza. Later, they expanded their list of legitimate targets to include American and British interests. The operation represents the fifth series of strikes by the United States against the rebel group in recent weeks. Numerous locations in Yemen, including a Huthi radar site and missiles deemed a threat to both civilian and military vessels by Washington, have been targeted in these operations.

INDIA IS SET TO COOPERATE FOR THE SEAMLESS IMPLEMENTATION OF DIGITAL PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE IN CUBA

India and Cuba have officially entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to collaborate in the exchange of successful digital solutions implemented on a population scale for digital transformation. The signing ceremony took place between the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology of India and the Ministry of Communications of the Republic of Cuba in the national capital as outlined in a press release from the former ministry. The Ministry emphasized that India aims to work closely with Cuba, leveraging their development partnership in digital transformation to facilitate the seamless adoption of Digital Public Infrastructure in Cuba.

PRESIDENT LULA OF BRAZIL PLEDGES TO UPHOLD THE ONE-CHINA POLICY

During a meeting with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi in Fortaleza, Brazil, Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva affirmed unwavering commitment to the one-China policy. Lula expressed optimism about

increasing high-level exchanges between the two nations to elevate the China-Brazil comprehensive strategic partnership. Furthermore, he conveyed Brazil's readiness to strengthen cooperation with China and welcomed additional investments from Chinese enterprises. Highlighting important consensus on various major issues, the Brazilian president urged collaborative efforts to enhance the overall strength and global influence of developing countries.

CANADA AND THE PHILIPPINES HAVE AGREED ON DEFENSE COOPERATION

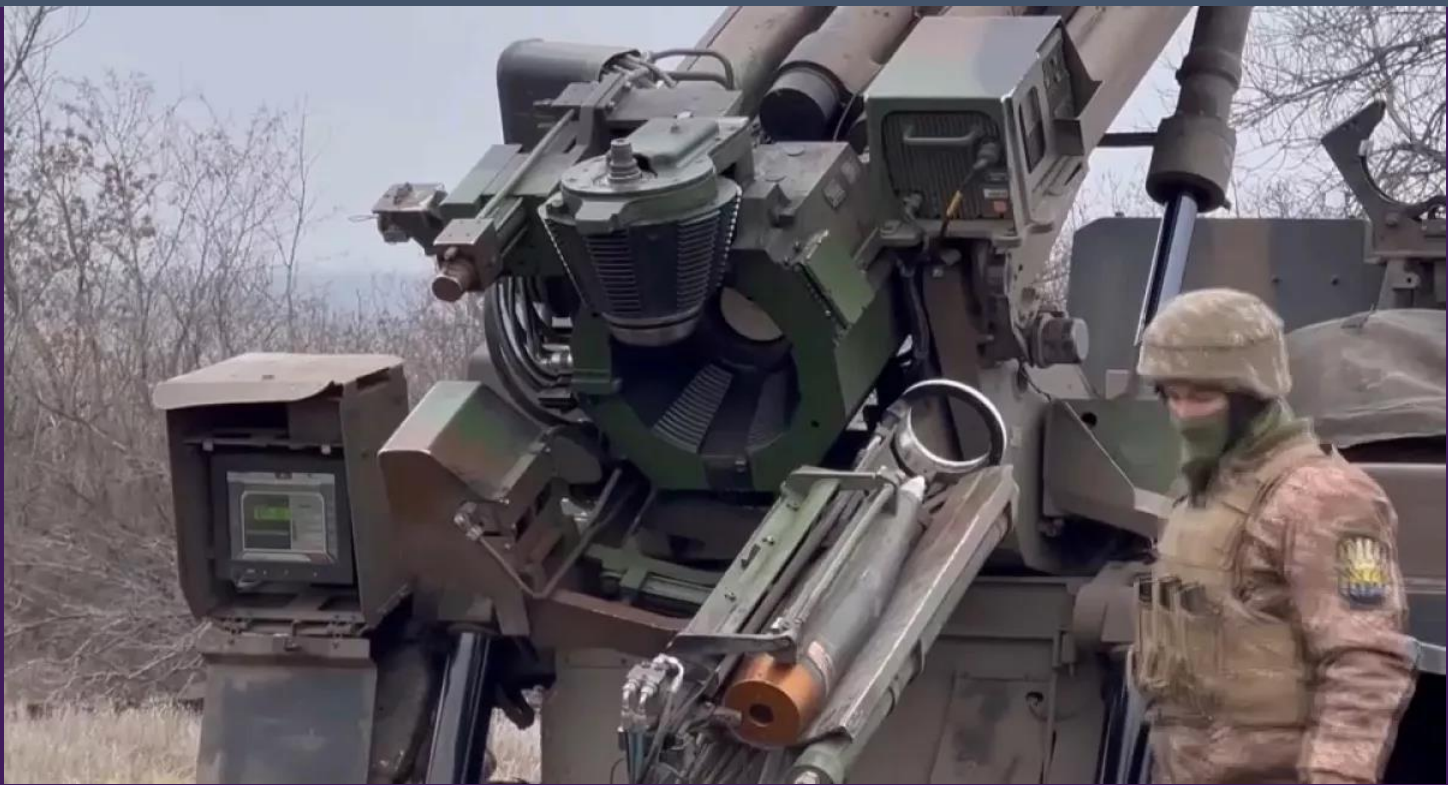
The Philippines and Canada officially inked a memorandum of understanding on defence cooperation, a development that Manila's defence minister believes could potentially lead to a troop agreement between the two nations. Defence Secretary Gilberto Teodoro expressed satisfaction with the strong intention on both sides to enhance their relationship by achieving new milestones in defence cooperation, possibly culminating in the Visiting Forces Agreement, as stated in a released statement.

CHINA EXPANDS ITS TRADE CONNECTIONS WITH SOUTH AMERICA THROUGH THE CONSTRUCTION OF A SILK ROAD MEGA PORT

A contingent of Brazilian farmers and officials has arrived in the Peruvian fishing town of Chancay, drawn by the prospect of a new Chinese mega port emerging on the Pacific coast. Pledged to commence operations later this year, the \$3.5 billion deep-water port aims to significantly enhance South America's trade connections with China. This strategic port is expected to serve as a direct entry point for China into the resource-rich region. Over the past decade, Beijing has surpassed the United States as

South America's largest trade partner, particularly in soy, corn, and copper imports. Both Beijing and Lima envision Chancay evolving into a regional hub, facilitating the export of copper from the Andean nation and soy from western Brazil, streamlining the current routes through the Panama Canal or around the Atlantic en route to China.

EUROPE



FRANCE INTENDS TO PROVIDE UKRAINE WITH ADDITIONAL CRUISE MISSILES AND IS IN THE PROCESS OF DEVISING A SECURITY PACT

In a press conference, French President Emmanuel Macron announced that France plans to deliver approximately 40 additional Scalp-EG cruise missiles and hundreds of bombs to Ukraine in the coming weeks. Macron mentioned that the French defence industry is operating under a "war economy" framework to increase production and supply equipment to

Ukraine, including 155mm Caesar howitzers. Addressing international matters over two hours into a comprehensive press conference in Paris, Macron highlighted the Russian war of aggression in Ukraine as the most significant threat to Europe's security. He revealed that France is in the process of finalizing a bilateral security agreement with Ukraine, akin to the one recently concluded by the U.K. last week.

A FOUR-MEMBER CREW, INCLUDING TURKEY'S INAUGURAL ASTRONAUT, HAS REACHED THE INTERNATIONAL SPACE STATION

A four-member crew, including Turkey's inaugural astronaut, arrived at the International Space Station (ISS) for a two-week stay in the latest mission arranged entirely at commercial expense by the Texas-based startup company Axiom Space. The rendezvous occurred approximately 37 hours after the Axiom quartet's liftoff in a rocketship from NASA's Kennedy Space Center in Cape Canaveral, Florida. Both the Crew Dragon vessel and the Falcon 9 rocket, responsible for carrying it into orbit, were supplied, launched, and operated by Elon Musk's SpaceX under a contract with Axiom, just as they were in the first two Axiom missions to the ISS since 2022.

TWO ROYAL NAVY WARSHIPS FROM THE UK COLLIDE OFF THE COAST OF BAHRAIN

While on a mission in the Gulf, the Royal Navy minesweeper HMS Chiddingfold experienced a collision with another vessel due to a mechanical failure, drawing attention to a series of recent mishaps that have caused embarrassment for Navy authorities. The incident occurred as HMS Chiddingfold became stuck in reverse, ultimately colliding with HMS

Bangor at a port in Bahrain. This collision led to a significant breach in the glass-reinforced plastic hull of HMS Bangor, prompting concerns about the vulnerability of Royal Navy minesweepers. Despite the severity of the impact, no injuries were reported. This embarrassing occurrence adds to the challenges faced by the Navy, with growing concerns about potential ramifications for UK operations in the Gulf during a critical period. Both vessels play a crucial role in ensuring secure trade routes through specialized mine-sweeping efforts, underscoring the strategic importance of maritime security.

ITALY ADVOCATES FOR A PROMPT DECISION REGARDING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN EU MARITIME FORCE IN THE RED SEA

Italy is urging for a swift political decision to establish an EU maritime security mission in the Red Sea soon, to make it operational at the earliest, stated the foreign minister. European Union member states provided preliminary support for the mission, expressing concern over potential disruptions by Yemen's Iran-aligned Houthi militia in the Red Sea, as such disturbances in one of the world's major trading routes could impact the global economy. A mission led by the U.S. is currently underway in the region. EU member states aimed to initiate their mission no later than February 19 and make it operational shortly thereafter. Some diplomats expressed optimism about expediting the process, considering the tensions in the region. The matter is scheduled for discussion by foreign ministers.

SWEDEN CALLS IN AN IRANIAN DIPLOMAT IN RESPONSE TO DETENTIONS AND A MISSILE STRIKE

The Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Sweden released a statement confirming the summoning of an Iranian diplomat to Stockholm. This action is a direct response to the ongoing legal conflicts between the two nations, with a specific focus on the arbitrary detention of Swedish citizens in Iran and the recent missile strike on Erbil, Iraq. Sweden reaffirmed its insistence on the swift release of its citizens detained in Iran without clear cause, emphasizing the significance of consular access and adherence to international commitments on consular matters. The ministry also protested Iran's missile strike on Erbil.

AFRICA



THE LARGEST SOLAR BATTERY IN THE WORLD IS NOW OPERATIONAL IN SOUTH AFRICA

Norwegian company Scatec ASA has announced the commencement of electricity production and supply from the Kenhardt project in South Africa, recognized as the world's largest solar and battery project. Situated in the

Northern Cape Province, this approximately \$1 billion project boasts a solar capacity of 540 MW and a battery storage capacity of 225 MW/1,140 MWh. It delivers 150 MW of dispatchable power consistently from 5 am to 9.30 pm throughout the year under a 20-year power purchase agreement with South Africa's national power and grid company, Eskom. Remarkably, the project surpassed fossil fuels in a competitive bidding process, affirming renewable sources as the most cost-effective electricity option. Terje Pilskog, CEO of Scatec, described the project as "more than just a power plant" and emphasized its role as "a testament to the limitless potential of integrating solar and battery storage to meet the evolving energy needs of today and tomorrow."

THE UNITED STATES UNDERSCORES THE IMPORTANCE OF 'ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY' IN SECURITY OPERATIONS IN NIGERIA

Senior U.S. diplomat Victoria Nuland held discussions with Nigerian National Security Adviser Nuhu Ribadu, focusing on "advancing accountability and transparency" following security operations in Nigeria, as stated by the State Department. Nigeria's military, supported by the United States, Britain, and other allies, is engaged in a prolonged conflict against Islamist insurgents in the northeast. The State Department emphasized in a statement that both parties concurred on the significance of safeguarding civilians, upholding human rights, and promoting accountability and transparency in the aftermath of security operations.

SUDAN PUTS ITS MEMBERSHIP IN THE IGAD REGIONAL BLOC ON HOLD

The government of war-torn Sudan has declared the suspension of its membership in the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the East African regional bloc that has sought to mediate talks between the conflicting parties in the country. This announcement was made by the foreign ministry, aligned with Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, the army chief and de facto leader of Sudan. For nine months, the Sudanese army and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) paramilitary group have been engaged in a conflict resulting in thousands of casualties and the displacement of over seven million people. In a statement, the foreign ministry mentioned that Burhan had sent a letter to President Ismail Omar Guelleho of Djibouti, the current chair of IGAD, "to inform him of the Sudanese government's decision to suspend its membership in this organization.

SOMALIA DECLINES THE OFFER OF MEDIATION WITH THE ETHIOPIAN GOVERNMENT REGARDING THE SOMALILAND PORT DEAL

Somalia asserted that mediation would not be considered in the dispute with Ethiopia unless Addis Ababa nullified a contentious agreement with the breakaway region of Somaliland. Tensions in the Horn of Africa heightened when landlocked Ethiopia entered into a memorandum of understanding with Somaliland on January 1, granting it access to the sea. The foreign ministry of Somalia declared, "There is no space for mediation unless Ethiopia retracts its illegal MOU and reaffirms the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Somalia," in a statement posted on its official social media accounts. This statement follows discussions on the crisis by the African Union's conflict resolution body, which urged both countries "to exercise restraint, de-escalate, and engage in meaningful dialogue towards finding a peaceful resolution of the matter."

MILITARY EXERCISES

India Participating in
International and Bilateral
Military Exercises



INDIAN NAVY IN JAPAN

On December 2, 2023, INS Kadmat, engaged in a Long Range Operational Deployment to the North Pacific Ocean, docked at Yokosuka, Japan for an Operational Turnaround (OTR).

During the stay, the ship's crew conducted onboard visits, including professional interactions and community welfare activities. Engagements with the Japan Maritime Self Defence Force (JMSDF) consisting of cross-

ship visits, a professional exchange of ideas, a Joint Yoga Camp, and a coordination meeting for the Maritime Partnership Exercise (MPX).

INS Kadmatt also conducted fueling operations with JMSDF Fast Combat Support Ship, JS Towada, on November 28, 2023, off Okinawa, under the Reciprocal Provisioning of Supply and Services (RPSS) agreement signed between the two navies.

INDIAN NAVY IN MADAGASCAR



As part of the Indian Navy's Long Range Mission Based Deployment, INS Sumedha is undertaking a port call at Antsiranana, Madagascar from 04 to 06 December 2023. The visit was aimed at reinforcing the Indian Navy's commitment to enhance Maritime Security, building bridges of friendship and strengthening maritime cooperation with Madagascar.

During her stay, INS Sumedha engaged in professional interactions, cross training for exchange of best practices and interaction with Malagasy Navy personnel. The visit was aimed at enhancing interoperability towards capacity building between the two friendly navies in the Indian Ocean Region in line with the Prime Minister's vision of Security And Growth for All in Region (SAGAR). The ship also undertook Maritime Partnership Exercise (MPX) with Malagasy Navy upon departure on 06 December 2023, wherein, various facets of maritime operations such as communication drills, tactical manoeuvres and flying operations were planned.

INDIAN COAST GUARD IN SAUDI ARABIA



Indian Coast Guard Ship Sajag, an Offshore Patrol Vessel, made a port call at King Abdul Aziz Port, AD Dammam, Saudi Arabia on December 5, 2023, for a three-day visit. The visit aimed to strengthen long standing

diplomatic ties and enhance cooperative engagements with the Saudi Border Guards and Saudi Naval Forces personnel. This involved professional exchanges and interactions such as training on Vessel Board Search & Seizure (VBSS), Maritime Search & Rescue (M-SAR), cross-deck visits, and a Tabletop Exercise on Marine Pollution Response (MPR).

The overseas deployment of ICG Ship Sajag aligned with the Government's plan to foster bilateral relationships and strengthen international cooperation with Friendly Foreign Countries (FFCs). During this West Asia deployment, the ship had earlier made port calls to Port Sultan Qaboos, Oman, and would make a port of call to Mina Rashid, UAE in the later part of the deployment.

The visit of ICGS Sajag to West Asia accentuated India's warm and cordial relations with Gulf countries, further reiterating the commitment to foster friendly relations through maritime cooperation in consonance with India's maritime vision "SAGAR - Security and Growth for All in the Region."

INDIAN NAVY IN KENYA



As part of the long-range deployment to Africa, Indian Naval Ship Sumedha arrived at Port Lamu, Kenya on December 9, 2023. The visit marked the maiden port call by any Indian Naval Ship at the recently developed port in Kenya.

During the port call, personnel from both navies engaged in a wide range of professional interactions, deck visits, and sporting exchanges, aimed at enhancing cooperation and exchanging best practices. A joint Yoga session, deck reception, medical camp, and a Maritime Partnership Exercise were planned as part of the visit.

VINBAX-2023



The Indian Armed Forces contingent, comprising 45 personnel, reached Hanoi, Vietnam to participate in the fourth edition of Joint Military Exercise VINBAX-2023. The exercise was conducted in Hanoi, Vietnam from the 11th to the 21st of December 2023. The Indian contingent included 39 personnel from an Engineer Regiment of Bengal Engineer Group and 6

personnel from the Army Medical Corps. The Vietnam People's Army contingent was also represented by 45 personnel.

Exercise VINBAX was instituted in 2018, with the first edition held at Jabalpur, Madhya Pradesh. It is an annual training event conducted alternatively in India and Vietnam. The last edition took place at Chandimandir Military Station in August 2022.

The exercise aimed to foster a collaborative partnership, promote interoperability, and share best practices between the two sides under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter on Peacekeeping Operations. The exercise was conducted as a Command Post Exercise cum Field Training Exercise with a focus on the deployment and employment of an Engineer Company and a Medical Team.

The exercise culminated with a Validation Exercise, showcasing the standards attained by both contingents. Both sides conducted technical military operations by scenarios akin to the worldwide deployment of United Nations' contingents.

INDIAN NAVY IN PHILIPPINES



As part of the ongoing Long Range Operational Deployment, INS Kadmatt arrived at Manila, Philippines on December 12, 2023. The visit aimed to bolster maritime cooperation between India and the Philippines.

A wide range of engagements between personnel of both navies were conducted during the port call. These included professional interactions, Subject Matter Expert Exchanges, and cross-deck visits, aimed at enhancing cooperation and exchanging best practices. Visits by school children and community outreach/social impact activities.

Post-departure from Manila, a Maritime Partnership Exercise was conducted in the South China Sea between INS Kadmatt and BRP Ramon Alcaraz, an offshore patrol vessel of the Philippine Navy.

INDIAN NAVY IN THAILAND



As part of its Long Range Operational Deployment to the North Pacific Ocean and South China Sea, INS Kadmatt reached Bangkok, Thailand, on December 19, 2023. The objective of the visit was to further strengthen maritime cooperation between India and Thailand and enhance interoperability between both navies.

Harbor activities were conducted during the operational turnaround including a cross-ship visit by personnel from the Royal Thai Navy (RTN) Academy and a planning conference for the Maritime Partnership Exercise (MPX). Upon departure from Bangkok, the ship engaged in the MPX with HTMS Rattanakosin, a corvette of the Royal Thai Navy.

Admiral R Hari Kumar, Chief of the Naval Staff, visited INS Kadmatt on December 21, 2023, to interact with the ship's crew. The CNS led the Indian Naval delegation at the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS) Conclave of Chiefs (CoC), hosted by the Royal Thai Navy in Bangkok, Thailand, from December 19 to 22, 2023.



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