

The Indo-Pacific Bulletin

The latest weekly developments in and around the region

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At a Glance

QUAD Foreign Ministers meet on the sidelines of the UNGA

North Korea tests short-range Ballistic Missiles

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US and South Korea begin combined Naval Exercise



QUAD Foreign Ministers meet on the sidelines of the UNGA

On 23rd September 2022, the Foreign Ministers of Australia, India and Japan as well as the Secretary of State of the United States of America met on the side-lines of the 77th United Nations General Assembly in New York City. During the meeting, the alliance reaffirmed their support for ASEAN centrality and unity, along with the practical implementation of ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific. The Quad also reiterated its commitment to support regional partners in the maritime domain, while also working with them on supporting the Indo-Pacific Partnership in Maritime Domain Awareness. In addition to this, the ministers also signed guidelines to operationalize the Quad Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief Partnership for the Indo-Pacific announced by the Quad leaders in May 2022. The meeting concluded with the intention to meet for the next QUAD Ministerial Meeting in New Delhi in early 2023.



North Korea tests Short-Range Ballistic Missiles

On 25th September 2022, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) launched two short range ballistic missiles from the Taecheon area at North Pyongyang. The missile flew about 600 km with an altitude of 60 km. In addition to this, on 28th September 2022, North Korea also launched two more short range ballistic missiles, just hours before US Vice President Kamala Harris is scheduled for an official trip to South Korea, which includes a visit to the Korean Demilitarized Zone (DMZ). In a statement by the South Korean Joint Chief of Staff, it was stated that the missiles flew around 360 km, with an altitude of 30 km and the speed of Mach 6. In addition to this, the South Korean President's office has stated that they have detected signs that North Korea is preparing for a submarine-launched missile test.



Exercise Cartwheel Concluded in Fiji

On 23rd September 2022, a multinational military exercise named Exercise Cartwheel was concluded in Fiji. The military training exercise consisted of Republic of Fiji Military Forces, United States Army Pacific, the New Zealand Defence Force, the British Army, and the Australian Defence Force. According to the US Embassy in Fiji, the goal of the exercise is to “expeditionary readiness and interoperability by increasing the capacity to face a crisis and contingencies by developing and stressing units at the highest training levels.” These exercises take place at a time when both China and the United States are competing for hegemony in the Pacific Islands region.





US and South Korea begin combined Naval Exercise

In an apparent response to the 25th September missile launch by North Korea, the United States and South Korea began their combined naval exercise in the East Sea near the Korean Peninsula. In a statement, the Republic of Korea (ROK) Navy stated that the aim of these exercises are to show “powerful resolve to respond to North Korean provocations”. In addition to this, the statement from the South Korean Navy also stated that several US and South Korean Navy ships, including the Ronald Reagan Carrier Strike Group led by USS Ronald Reagan, a nuclear powered aircraft carrier, were mobilised for these drills. Along with this, US and South Korean fighter jets and helicopters also took part in this naval exercise. This will be the first time since 2017 that the two countries are taking part in a major military exercise. The exercises are taking place as US Vice President Kamala Harris met with South Korean President Yoon Suk-yeol, where both leaders condemned North Korea's actions, with the US Vice President underscoring the importance of US-South Korean friendship.

