

The Indo-Pacific Bulletin

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At a Glance

G20 Summit 2022 at Indonesia

New Zealand Prime Minister raises Taiwan issue with the Chinese President at APEC meeting

ASEAN Summit 2022 at Cambodia

India and Australia host Fifth Bilateral Cyber Policy Dialogue

Biden-Xi Meeting



G20 Summit 2022 at Indonesia

On 15th and 16th November 2022, the 17th annual summit of G-20 was hosted in Bali, Indonesia under the theme chosen by the Indonesian presidency of the G20 - 'Recover Together, Recover Stronger'. The G20 Summit at Indonesia saw participation from world leaders including the President of the United States, China and France as well as the Prime Ministers of India, Japan, Australia and the United Kingdom. At the conclusion of the summit, India has assumed the charge of the G20 presidency and the 18th summit of the G20 will be held in India in 2023. Member countries adopted a declaration deploring Russia's aggression in Ukraine "in the strongest terms" and demanding its unconditional withdrawal. The G20 economies agreed in their declaration to pace interest rate rises carefully to avoid spill-overs and warned of "increased volatility" in currency moves, a great change from last year's focus on mending the scars of the Covid-19 pandemic.. The leaders also promised to take coordinated action to address food security challenges and applauded the Black Sea grains initiative. Additionally, the leaders agreed to pursue efforts to limit the global temperature increase to 1.5 degrees Celsius - confirming they stand by the temperature goal from the 2015 Paris Agreement on climate change. Leaders recognised the importance of digital transformation in reaching the sustainable development goals. They encouraged international collaboration to further develop digital skills and digital literacy to harness the positive impacts of digital transformation, especially for women, girls, and people in vulnerable situations. Leaders also expressed their continuous commitment to promoting a healthy and sustainable recovery which builds towards achieving and sustaining universal health coverage. They welcomed the establishment of a new financial intermediary fund for pandemic prevention, preparedness and response (the 'Pandemic Fund') hosted by the World Bank.



New Zealand Prime Minister raises Taiwan issue with the Chinese President at APEC meeting

On 18 November 2022, Jacinda Ardern, the Prime Minister of New Zealand and the Chinese President Xi Jinping had a meeting on the sidelines of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit in Bangkok. The meeting went on for about 50 minutes – running well over the scheduled half hour. It was their first in-person meeting since 2019. PM Jacinda Ardern has spoken with President Xi Jinping about cooperation between New Zealand and China, while also raising areas of tension and warning that international norms that had benefited the two countries were “being tested”. New Zealand has maintained relatively cordial relations with China over the past four years, even as neighbouring Australia’s relationship has deteriorated. Those relations have been strained, at times, by Beijing’s increasingly muscular presence in the Pacific and its efforts to build security pacts with a series of Pacific countries. They devoted much of their discussion to regional security issues, saying North Korea’s recent missile launch was “a step up in escalation”. Xi said that the partnership had been mutually beneficial and should be taken “to a higher level”.



ASEAN Summit 2022 at Cambodia

From 10th to 13th November 2022, Jagdeep Dhankar, the Vice President of India attended the 19th ASEAN-India Summit in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. India hailed the deep cultural, economic and civilizational ties that have existed between India and South East Asia from time immemorial and stated that the India-ASEAN relationship forms the central pillar of India's ACT-EAST policy. India reiterated its support to ASEAN centrality in the Indo-Pacific. ASEAN and India adopted a joint statement announcing the elevation of the existing Strategic Partnership to Comprehensive Strategic Partnership. It reiterated the commitment to enhance India-ASEAN cooperation in various areas such as maritime activities, counter-terrorism, cyber security, digital economy, environment, science & technology, tourism, among other areas. It proposes expediting the review of ASEAN-India Trade in Goods Agreement (AITIGA) to make it more user-friendly, simple, and trade-facilitative. Both sides reaffirmed the importance of maintaining and promoting peace, stability, maritime safety and security, freedom of navigation and overflight in the Indo-Pacific region. As part of maintaining “ASEAN-Centrality”, the two sides reaffirmed the importance of deepening dialogue and coordination through ASEAN-led mechanisms including the ASEAN-India Summit, the East Asia Summit, the Post-Ministerial Conference with India (PMC+1), the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), the ASEAN Defense Ministers’ Meeting-Plus (ADMM-Plus), the Expanded ASEAN Maritime Forum (EAMF).





India and Australia host Fifth Bilateral Cyber Policy Dialogue

On 17 November 2022, India and Australia discussed strategic cooperation in the cyber sector, including cyber threat assessment, next-generation telecommunications capacity building and cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region. India and Australia convened their fifth Bilateral Cyber Policy Dialogue which was co-chaired by the Ministry of External Affairs Joint Secretary, Cyber Diplomacy Division, Muanpui Saiawi and Tobias Feakin, Ambassador for Cyber Affairs and Critical Technology, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Australia, the Ministry of External Affairs said in a statement. Australia and India agreed to explore opportunities for further collaboration with the private sector and academia, including through the Australia-India Cyber and Critical Technology Partnership. Discussions at this dialogue included strategic priorities, cyber threat assessment, next-generation telecommunications capacity building including 5G technology, cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region, and the latest developments in cyber at the United Nations, the statement said. Australia and India will jointly conduct a cyber boot camp, as well as cyber and tech policy exchanges, in collaboration with Indo-Pacific partners. The sixth India-Australia Cyber Policy Dialogue will be held in 2023.

Biden-Xi Meeting

On 14 November 2022, US President Joe Biden on Monday met Chinese President Xi Jinping in Indonesia's Bali on the sidelines of the Group of 20 (G-20) Summit. Biden and Xi discussed several issues including the Taiwan dispute, Ukraine War, and Chinese coercive behaviour. The meeting lasted for around three hours. Biden also raised concerns over China's human rights record with regard to Tibet, Xinjiang, and Hong Kong regions, where the Chinese regime is accused of human rights violations. He also objected to China's "coercive and increasingly aggressive actions" toward Taiwan. It was the first time that Biden and Xi met in person since 2021 when Biden was sworn in as the President of the United States of America (USA). Biden and Xi "spoke candidly about their respective priorities" on a range of issues. Despite expressing concerns on Chinese human rights records in Xinjiang and Tibet, which China is extremely sensitive about, Biden reiterated that there must be areas of cooperation between the United States and China and that lines of communication must remain open. Notably, Biden reiterated the US commitment to the "One China" policy and that it remains opposed to the change of status quo on the issue of Taiwan by any side. This is significant as there have been several comments by Biden over the past year that have sparked questions whether the US policy on China and Taiwan has changed. China considers the self-ruled island of Taiwan as a breakaway province. Its unification with mainland China is a goal of Beijing and China, including its current leader Xi, have not ruled out the use of force for the purpose of unification.

