

# The Indo-Pacific Bulletin

*The latest weekly developments in and around the region*

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WELCOME TO INDIA'S G20 PRESIDENCY

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## India's G20 & UNSC Presidency Begins

On December 01, 2022 India began its year-long presidency of the Group of 20 (G20) taking over from Indonesia at a time of geopolitical turmoil and uncertainty over post-pandemic economic recovery. On 1st December, India also assumed the presidency of the United Nations Security Council for the month of December. As the UNSC Chair, India has declared to focus on building a new orientation towards reformed multilateralism and on global counter-terrorism. During its term as the G20 Chair, India will hold more than 200 meetings across some 50 cities involving ministers, officials and civil society, leading up to a marquee summit in the capital New Delhi in September 2023. The summit will be attended by around 30 heads of state and government, from G20 members and invited countries. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has called for international cooperation to deal with global issues, outlining the country's approach to the G20. He said in a statement the challenges of "climate change, terrorism, and pandemics can be solved not by fighting each other, but only by acting together". Apart from the 200 G20 meetings, there are various business engagements for the B20 summit on the side-lines, such as seminars, engagement groups like Think20, Ted Talk opportunities that are a part of the entire G20 kit. During various meetings ahead of the launch, significant national priorities were identified, which would be focus areas from technology, LiFE (Lifestyle For Environment), economic growth with inclusivity, women-led development and more, according to sources. Bollywood and artists will also be seen engaging and contributing to promoting India's G20 presidency. December is the last month of India's two year tenure as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council.



## Canada launches its Indo-Pacific strategy

On 28 November 2022, Canada released an Indo-Pacific strategy which termed China an “increasingly disruptive” global power. Calling India a “crucial partner”, the strategy said that Canada will seek new opportunities to partner and engage in dialogue with India in areas of common interest and values, including security, and the promotion of democracy, pluralism and human rights. Based on five interconnected strategic objectives, it announced an ambitious plan, beginning with an investment of almost \$2.3 billion over the next five years. Canada is the latest among several Western countries which have recently outlined Indo-Pacific strategy. As China becomes more assertive and grows in influence, Canada is stepping up as a reliable partner in the region to promote security and stability across the region and at home, the strategy said. “Canada will increase our military engagement and intelligence capacity as a means of mitigating coercive behaviour and threats to regional security,” it adds. The five objectives are promoting peace, resilience, and security; expanding trade, investment, and supply-chain resilience; investing in and connecting people; building a sustainable and green future and Canada as an active and engaged partner in the Indo-Pacific. Under the strategy, Canada also committed \$143.3 million to strengthen its presence, visibility and influence in the region.

## Chinese & Russian Nuke Bombers Roar Over The Indo-Pacific & Conduct Cross-Landings

On 30 November 2022, Russia’s Defense Ministry announced that Russian and Chinese strategic bombers made cross-landings at the airfields of both countries for the first time during their coordinated aerial patrols. An air group consisting of strategic missile carriers Tu-95MS of Russian Aerospace Forces (VKS) and strategic bombers H-6K of the PLA Air Force carried out air patrols over the waters of Japan and East China Seas amid simmering tensions in the region. The bombers were escorted by the fighter jets of both countries during some stages of the patrol drills. The Russian Defense Ministry said in a statement, “For the first time in the history of aerial patrolling, Russian aircraft landed at an airfield in the People’s Republic of China, and Chinese planes landed at an airfield on the territory of the Russian Federation.” Although Chinese bombers have been previously deployed to Russia for training, this may have been the first time Tu-95 bombers have visited China. The Russian Tu-95 (NATO codename: Bear) is the backbone of Russia’s strategic long-range air attack force alongside the Tu-160. Both these bombers have also seen deployment in the ongoing Ukraine war. China dispatched its most commonly fielded bomber H-6K which has seen further upgrades. According to the Pentagon’s most recent report on the Chinese military, China now has an upgraded H-6N variant, Beijing’s “first nuclear-capable air-to-air refuelable bomber.”



## 4th India-France Annual Defence Dialogue

On 29 November 2022, India and France discussed ways to deepen their bilateral military ties with a focus on defence industrial cooperation pivoting on the Make in India initiative, increasing the scope and complexity of exercises between their armed forces, and boosting maritime cooperation in the Indo-Pacific. The 4th India-France Annual Defence Dialogue between Defence Minister of India Rajnath Singh and his French counterpart Sebastien Lecornu was held on Monday. This was the first visit of the incumbent French Defence Minister to India. A wide range of bilateral, regional, defence and defence-industrial cooperation issues were discussed, and the ministers reviewed the ongoing military-to-military cooperation which has gone up substantially in the recent years, the defence ministry said in a statement. Strengthening maritime cooperation was one of the main points on the agenda, the officials said. The Indo-Pacific region is of significance to both India and France who have made repeated calls for a free, open and rules-based order in the region amid China's assertive behaviour in the disputed South China sea.



## India and the US on Same Page In Rejecting China's Opposition To Joint Military Exercise

On 2 December 2022, the United States rejected China's opposition to an India-US joint military exercise near the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in Uttarakhand, asserting that it is "none of their business". The official spokesperson of the Ministry of External Affairs of India had earlier stated that the joint exercises have "nothing to do with the 1993 and 1996 agreements" with China. Elizabeth Jones, the newly-appointed US Charge d'Affaires to New Delhi, also said that Washington will support New Delhi's efforts to become more capable in dealing with regional security challenges and that Washington sees its ties with New Delhi as one of its "most consequential relationships". On the meeting between Joe Biden and Xi Jinping in Bali last month, Jones said it doesn't signal a rapprochement between the two sides and that the US is committed to the Indo-Pacific. The over two-week long mega military exercise "Yudh Abhyas" that took place at a military facility in Auli, Uttarakhand around 100 km from the LAC concluded on Friday. Jones said that Washington sees a natural partnership between India and the US and that the defence cooperation between the two sides was on an upswing.

