

The Indo-Pacific Bulletin

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Malabar 2022 Begins

On 9th November 2022, the 26th edition of the Malabar exercise featuring the navies of all the four Quad countries — India, Australia, Japan and the United States — began at the Yokosuka island near the East China Sea in the backdrop of China's increasing military muscle-flexing in the region. Indian Naval ships Shivalik and Kamorta have been deployed for the 10-day high-voltage exercise being hosted by the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force. The opening ceremony of the quadrilateral naval exercise was attended by Indian Eastern Fleet Commander Rear Admiral Sanjay Bhalla, Japanese SDF Fleet Commander Vice Admiral Yuasa Hideki, Commander of US Navy Seventh Fleet Vice Admiral Karl Thomas, and Commander of Australian Fleet Rear Admiral Jonathan Earley. The Quad nations and many other like-minded countries are working towards ensuring a free, open, and inclusive Indo-Pacific. This year's exercises involve a variety of high-end tactical training events, submarine integration, anti-submarine warfare training, air defense exercises, multinational replenishment-at-sea operations, communications drills, joint warfighting planning scenarios, gunnery exercise, and maritime interdiction operations. The US forces at the exercise include aircraft carrier USS Ronald Reagan, guided-missile cruiser USS Chancellorsville, and guided-missile destroyer USS Milius. This year marks the 30th anniversary of the Malabar exercise which began in 1992.



Foreign Secretary Vinay Kwatra meets Senior Pentagon Official

On 9th November 2022, Foreign Secretary Vinay Mohan Kwatra met US Under Secretary of Defence for Policy Colin Kahl and the two senior officials discussed initiatives to further advance the bilateral defence cooperation and underlined the importance of the 'India-US Major Defence Partnership' which has helped in shaping the future of the Indo-Pacific region. Kwatra, currently on an official visit to the US, met Deputy Secretary of State Wendy Sherman on Monday and discussed Indo-US ties and ways to further advance their bilateral security and regional cooperation, the situation in the Indo-Pacific region and Ukraine. India, the US and several other world powers have been talking about the need to ensure a free, open and thriving Indo-Pacific in the backdrop of China's rising military manoeuvring in the region.

Indian VP Dhankhar arrives in Phnom Penh for 19th India -ASEAN Summit and 17th East Asia Summit

On 11th November 2022, the Vice President of India Jagdeep Dhankhar arrived in the Cambodian capital Phnom Penh for the 19th ASEAN-India Summit and the 17th East Asia Summit. Cambodia is the 2022 chair of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). Indonesia, which will be hosting the 17th G20 Summit next week, will be taking over the ASEAN chairmanship in 2023. This is Dhankhar's first official visit abroad after taking oath as the 14th Vice President of India on August 11. External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar is also part of the delegation which has accompanied the Vice President to Cambodia. During the Summit, the Vice President and the ASEAN leaders will review the commemorative activities which have been held during the course of the year. On 13th November, the Vice President will participate in the 17th East Asia Summit which comprises the 10 ASEAN member states (Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Singapore, Thailand, the Philippines, and Vietnam) and its eight dialogue partners-India, China, Japan, Republic of Korea, Australia, New Zealand, the United States, and Russia.



US Treasury Secretary & Indian Finance Minister meet to discuss India -US Ties



On 11th November 2022, Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman while meeting US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen reiterated India's stand on US relations. Sitharaman said, "India deeply values its relationship with the US as a trusted partner." Yellen who is in India to participate in the US-India Economic and Financial Partnership also emphasized the close ties between Indian and American businesses and people while listing ways to further the bilateral relationship including through the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework and stronger supply chains through friend-shoring. Speaking at the 9th meeting of the India-US Economic Financial Partnership, in Delhi, Yellen said "Our strong trade, investment and people-to-people ties make bilateral, economic, and financial relationships, a critical element to our partnership," Yellen also emphasized the need for multilateral institutions, addressing the debt burden faced by many developing countries and mitigating the existential threat posed by climate change. India recently joined the US-led Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF) in a bid to boost economic ties further.

French National Strategic Review lists India as a key partner to stabilise Indo-Pacific

On 09 November 2022, France, in its just released National Strategic Review, has affirmed that it is committed to building partnership with its key strategic partner India besides Japan, Australia, Indonesia and Singapore, to stabilise the Indo-Pacific region. The Review released on Wednesday also referred to the modernisation of China's military apparatus that has enabled the People's Liberation Army (PLA) to support an increasingly assertive strategy, including on the military front, whether in the Indo-Pacific region, particularly with regard to the status quo in the Taiwan Strait, or in other regions of the world. The Strategic Review expressed concern over PLA's ambitions and its impact on the region. The document will set a baseline for debate on France's 2024-2030 national defence budget, which will come before the French parliament early next year.

