

Title : DRDO shows off Suite of Sensors, Weapons & EW System for LCA-Tejas



Date : Published January 23, 2022

SOURCE: RAUNAK KUNDE / NEWS BEAT / IDRW.ORG.

Marching this Republic Day Parade tableau will feature Suite of Sensors, Weapons & EW System for LCA-Tejas Mk1A Program. Uttam AESA Radar, Airborne Self Protection Jamming Pod (ASPJ), Rudram-1 an air-to-surface anti-radiation missile, Astra a beyond-visual-range active radar homing air-to-air missile, 1-ton Long Range Glide Bomb (LRGB), Smart Anti-Airfield Weapon (SAAW) a precision-guided anti-airfield weapon and 450kg Tara High-Speed Low Drag (HSLD) GPS / INS guidance and control kit and glide fin kit.

Interestingly none of the mentioned weapons systems have been tested onboard nor have been integrated yet. Prototypes of Uttam AESA Radar have commenced testing onboard two LSP jets and will be introduced from the 21st Tejas Mk1A aircraft. Airborne Self Protection Jamming Pod (ASPJ) is still undergoing testing onboard Su-30MKI but is yet to begin testing onboard Tejas.

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Title : German Navy chief steps down after his New Delhi comments on Putin, Ukraine



Date : Published January 23, 2022

SOURCE: WION

In a diplomatic earthquake, German Navy chief VAdm Kay-Achim Schönbach stepped down on Saturday after his comments in New Delhi which called for rapprochement with Russian President Vladimir Putin and Ukraine can't become a NATO member.

His comments went against the present narrative coming from Europe amid the deteriorating situation in Eastern Europe and buildup by Russian troops at the border with Ukraine. Speaking at think tank IDSA on Friday, he said, "Does Russia really wants small and tiny strip of Ukraine soil, integrate the country. No, this is nonsense. Putin is probably putting pressure because he knows he can do it, and he splits EU opinion. What he really wants is respect. "

Ahead of stepping down, he called his comments in Delhi a "mistake". Meanwhile, the Twitter bio of the German Navy chief official handle has been updated to "currently vacant" & the picture of VAdm Kay-Achim Schönbach has been removed.

The German Defence Ministry was quick to disown the comments. German newspaper BILD, quoting the German Defence Ministry said, "In terms of content and choice of words, the statements in no way correspond to the position of the Defense ministry. Admiral Schönbach is given the opportunity to make a statement to the Inspector General"

And not just in Berlin, the fallout off comments were seen on Ukraine's capital Kyiv. Ukraine's foreign ministry summoned the German envoy to the country over Navy Chief's remarks.

In his Delhi comments, the German Navy chief explained that good ties are needed with Russia to rein in China and Crimea being lost now. He explained, "Even we India, Germany we need Russia, We need Russia against China...Having this big country, even if it's not a democracy, as a bilateral partner, giving them a chance. It's easy and keeps Russia away from China because China needs resources of Russia".

Russia doesn't want NATO to reach its borders, with countries like Ukraine joining it. It wants "security guarantees" from the west and NATO that Ukraine doesn't join the security block.

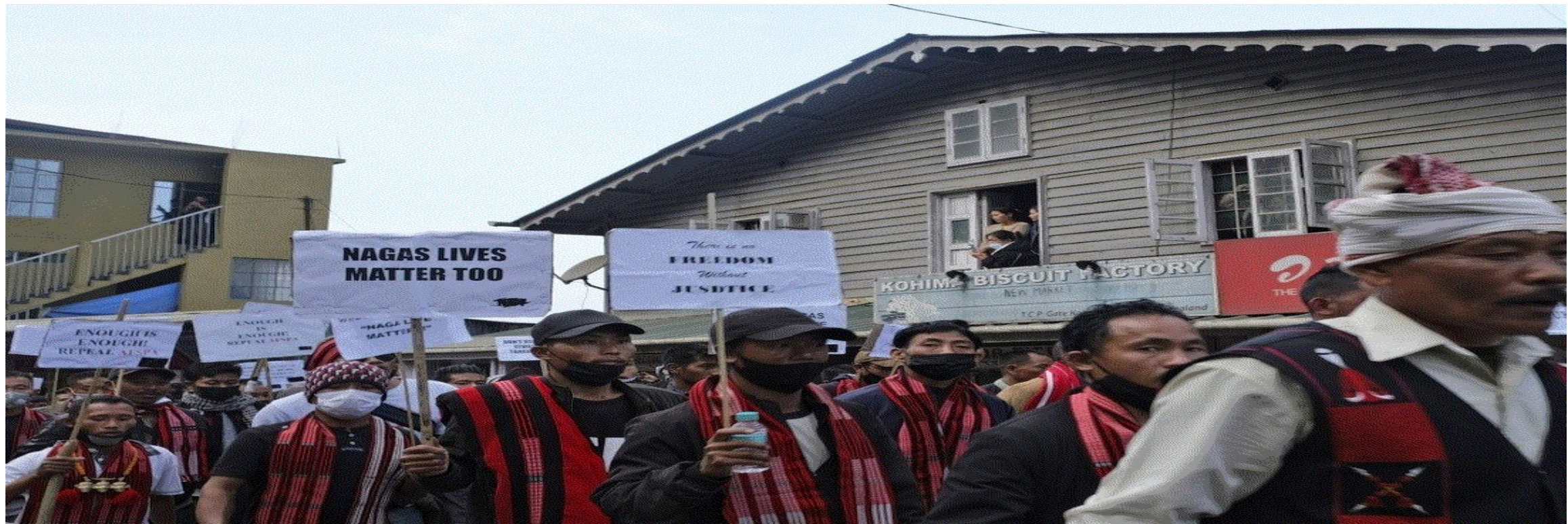
The number of talks this month between Russia and the US hasn't yielded any results. The comments in Delhi come even as the German navy chief visit was aimed to show Berlin's increased engagement in the Indo Pacific but ended up with his resignation.

The visit of the German Navy chief also coincides with the visit of German frigate "Bayern" making a port call in Mumbai, as part of its seven-month deployment to the Indo-Pacific region.

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Title : Why India is worried about China and Myanmar as conflict flares up in its northeast region



Date : Published January 23, 2022

SOURCE : SCMP

Trouble has returned to India's remote northeast, a region that has long had a testy relationship with New Delhi. The area spans seven states, including four that share a border with Myanmar and one with China.

More than 200 ethnic groups and tribes live across the resource-rich region, where several insurgents and separatist movements operate. Many of these separatist groups claim the Indian government has done little to help their communities since independence, but exploits them of their assets, from rare herbs in Assam to metals like copper in Sikkim and gold in Nagaland.

In recent months, the northeast has been rocked by fresh violence and protests against Prime Minister Narendra Modi's administration. These have been complicated by unrest in Myanmar against a military coup that toppled the elected government in February 2021.

At the same time, China's growing engagement with Myanmar, its assertiveness in the Asia-Pacific and its ongoing border stand-off with India have also rattled New Delhi.

Since the latter half of 2021, a series of separate events fuelled by historical tensions and territorial feuds have shattered the uneasy peace in India's northeast.

In August, decades-old border disagreements between the states of Assam and Mizoram were reignited after massive crowds from both sides clashed at a contested spot, killing at least six police officers and injuring more than 50 people.

In November, militants in Manipur state linked to the separatist People's Liberation of Army of Manipur ambushed a convoy consisting of personnel from the Indian paramilitary force, the Assam Rifles, killing seven of them, including the commanding officer's wife and son.

In December, eight civilians in Nagaland state were killed after Indian soldiers attacked a pickup truck, mistakenly believing it to be ferrying insurgents. The shooting sparked a violent protest that led to the deaths of six more civilians and one soldier, and injured many others.

As anger over the Nagaland killings continues to simmer, civil society organisations have demanded that the Indian armed forces prosecute every soldier involved in the December incident and that all army camps in the Mon district, where the incident occurred, be moved out of civilian areas.

On January 15, multiple representatives from the Konyak community – Nagaland’s largest tribe – held a summit to discuss a response towards the bloodshed.

“We decided to give the government 10 more days for them to ensure justice for those dead. If they don’t, then we will escalate our movement,” said Phoe Konyak, the general secretary of the Konyak Students Union (KSU).

While the KSU secretary refused to elaborate on the next steps, a statement by various civil society organisations, including the KSU, warned they would “continue the non-cooperation” with the Indian army and “abstain” from participating in any government-organised events held in the area, if there was no action taken by January 25.

Participants at the summit also announced that a “Genocide Park” memorial would be built at the spot of the clashes.

Meanwhile, there are fears a 2015 peace deal signed between the Modi government and the separatist Nationalist Socialist Council of Nagaland, which has yet to be fully implemented, will be scuppered.

While India’s Union Home Minister Amit Shah expressed regret and blamed the Nagaland killing on “mistaken identity”, it has triggered fresh upheaval in the state, with its ramifications being felt across the northeast.

Anti-government protests have spread in the region, with locals demanding that New Delhi repeal the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA), a controversial colonial-era law that gives sweeping powers to the Indian army – including the power to

shoot suspects and the ability to make arrests without warrants – in any area the government declares to be “disturbed”. The legislation also protects officials from any legal proceedings against them.

The demand is being echoed by even local government figures linked to the ruling party, including Meghalaya’s chief minister Conrad Sangma, whose party is in alliance with Modi’s Bharatiya Janata Party.

But many within the Indian army say that repealing AFSPA would affect military and paramilitary forces engaged in counter-insurgency operations. Already, the Assam Rifles has been forced to “temporarily” suspend its operations in Mon district, even though the district is a sensitive border-district along the India-Myanmar boundary.

Amid these woes, the Modi government is also dealing with a vexed question around the influx of refugees from neighbouring Myanmar.

India and Myanmar share a 1,643km-long porous border, where the Indian states of Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur and Mizoram lie. Many tribes in the area have close ties across the border. Hence, local Indian populations have been sympathetic to refugees fleeing from the Myanmar coup.

Unwilling to be seen siding with those opposing the Myanmar junta, the Indian government has cautioned the four states against taking in refugees, except only those in dire circumstances. But locals have strongly protested the order, which has become an emotive issue for communities along the border.

In addition, New Delhi might have reasons to fear that the coup has distracted Naypyidaw from taking action against India’s northeastern militant groups, who often seek shelter across the border in Myanmar.

“There is a sense the Myanmar junta has lost control over some of these Indian groups that take shelter in the country and hence, isn’t able to crack down on them the way New Delhi would like,” said Deepak Sinha, a retired Indian army brigadier who has overseen many counter-insurgency operations in the region.

In early January, local media reports said some Indian army commandos had crossed the border to Myanmar and killed at least two members of the People's Liberation Army of Manipur. But the Indian military later dismissed the reports as "baseless and factually incorrect".

New Delhi has long harboured suspicions that Beijing is covertly supporting rebel groups and insurgents operating in the northeast, according to Sinha.

"In the past, many of these rebel leaders have been hosted and trained inside China," he said. According to Indian media reports, Paresh Baruah – the leader of the banned United Liberation Front of Asom, which has waged an armed struggle against the Indian government to establish Assam as an independent state – is currently living in China.

One of India's persistent concerns is that Beijing will exploit the unrest in the northeast. The Global Times, a state-backed Chinese tabloid, has in the past carried articles by Chinese academics who have suggested that Beijing should consider backing separatist forces in the northeast if New Delhi bolstered its diplomatic ties with Taiwan. The tabloid has also said China could stop recognising the border state of Sikkim as part of India.

Already, China considers the Indian-administered region of Arunachal Pradesh as being illegally occupied by India. Both countries have been in conflict for decades over territories along their almost 3,500km border.

Last month, China's Ministry of Civil Affairs announced new Chinese names for 15 places in Arunachal Pradesh. India said assigning "invented" names would not change the issue of sovereignty, to which Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian responded that southern Tibet had historically been Chinese territory and the renaming it came within "the scope of China's sovereignty".

Such concerns have also meant that India is eager to not displease Myanmar's military junta regime, even though New Delhi has traditionally shared warm relations with Aung San Suu Kyi, the ousted Myanmar leader who has been jailed by the junta.

New Delhi is closely watching the advances that Beijing has made in its ties with the Tatmadaw, Myanmar's military. Chinese special envoy Sun Guoxiang has made multiple trips to Myanmar since the coup, with China recently stepping up its defence ties with Myanmar by giving it a Ming-class submarine. The Myanmar junta, in a statement last month, said it enjoyed a special "kinship" with China and called the joint infrastructure projects with Beijing "a major priority" for the country.

As a result, ten months after the coup, New Delhi made its first outreach to Naypyidaw when it sent Foreign Secretary Harsh Shringla for a two-day visit. While the differences between the two sides were glaring – Shringla’s request to meet Suu Kyi was reportedly rejected – the two sides spoke of trade, humanitarian and food aid as well as an “expeditious implementation” on ongoing connectivity projects.

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Title : India ready to ship wheat to Afghanistan via Pakistan early February



Date : Published January 23, 2022

SOURCE : TNN

India and Pakistan have finally arrived at an agreement to transport 50,000 MT of Indian wheat to Afghanistan through the land route that passes through the Attari-Wagah border, ToI has learnt. The gigantic exercise involving thousands of trucks is expected to roll out early February. India and Pakistan had been engaged in finalising the modalities for transporting wheat to drought-stricken Afghanistan for almost 2 months. The government is learnt to have conveyed to Pakistan that it will be ready to despatch the first consignment by the second week of next month.

India recently sent its third batch of assistance to Kabul, mostly life-saving medicines, by air. Its offer of delivering wheat to Afghanistan through the border with Pakistan though, despite unceasing hostility in ties with Islamabad, is still the most significant initiative in its outreach to the Taliban who returned in August last year to take control of the strategically important country.

Pakistan has rarely, if ever, allowed transit facilities for Indian aid to Afghanistan in the past several decades and in 2002 had rejected the same proposal by India when Afghanistan was faced with a similar humanitarian crisis. The Taliban have not just welcomed India's proposal to ship wheat to Afghanistan via Pakistan at this "critical time" but had also sought an early approval from Pakistan PM Imran Khan. ToI had first reported on October 19 that India had contacted Pakistan for transporting 50,000 MT of wheat to Afghanistan.

As per the understanding the 2 sides have reached, Afghan trucks operating under UN's World Food Programme (WFP) will ferry Indian wheat from the India-Pakistan border to Afghanistan via Pakistan's Torkham border crossing with Afghanistan. Pakistan had announced earlier this week that it had put all arrangements in place and was awaiting final confirmation from India for the despatch of the first consignment.

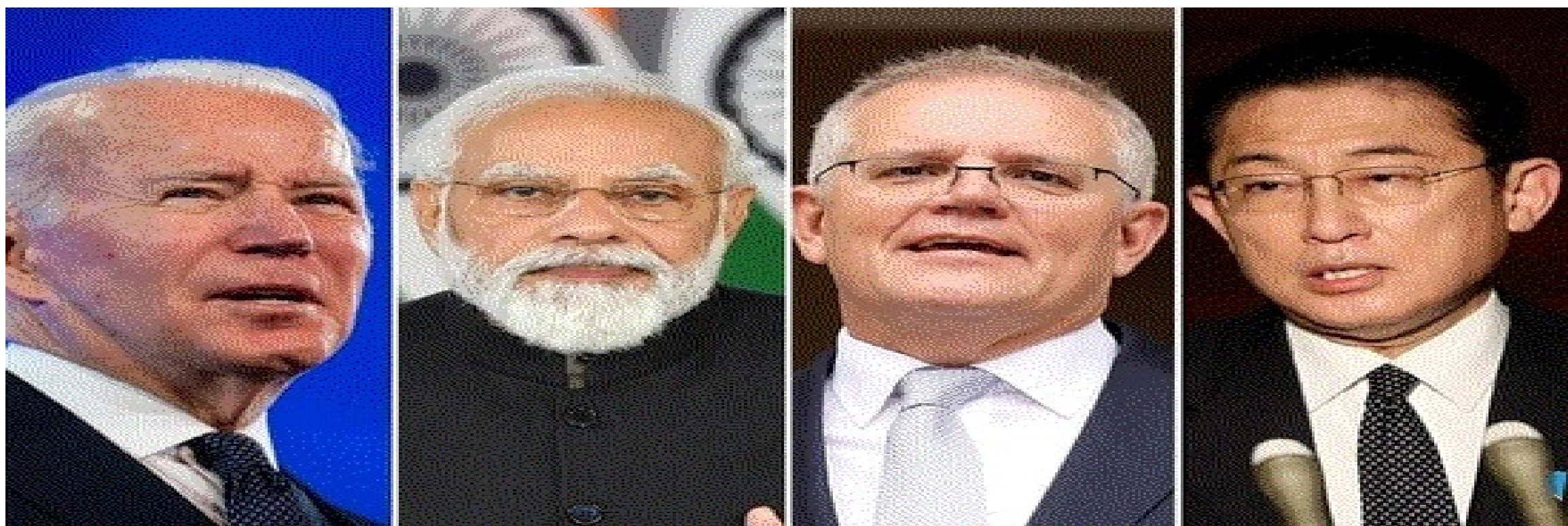
Official sources denied that there had been any delay by India while recalling that Pakistan had taken well over a month to approve the Indian government's proposal last year. India is still working to resolve logistical issues involved in transporting 50,000 MT of wheat to the border. The exercise has been further complicated by the upcoming elections in Punjab.

India also wanted UN to supervise distribution of wheat and other aid to Afghanistan. The security conference on Afghanistan hosted by NSA Ajit Doval in November had called for humanitarian assistance to be provided in an unimpeded, direct and assured manner to Afghanistan and also that the assistance was distributed within the country in a non-discriminatory manner across all sections of the Afghan society.

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Title : Quad summit announced, to be held after Australian elections in May



Date : Published January 23, 2022

SOURCE : HT

With US President Joe Biden accepting Japanese Prime Minister Kishida Fumio's invitation to visit Tokyo in the first half of 2022 on Friday, the Quad summit is expected to take place in May with free and open Indo-Pacific, Covid-19 response, climate, clean energy, and infrastructure on the agenda. The last Quad summit was held on September 24, 2021, in Washington.

According to officials in knowledge of the matter, the Quad summit has been announced but will take place only after the Australian general elections in May. Formal invites will be sent by Japan only after the dates convenient to all are finalised. A meeting of Quad foreign ministers and sherpas is also likely to set up the agenda for the summit.

The meeting of Quad security grouping comes at a time when erstwhile Cold War powers US and Russia are locked on Ukraine, Shia Houthis in Yemen have targeted Sunni UAE with armed drones and China is eyeing Taiwan while building fortress Tibet and Sinkiang through massive Sinicization campaign.

While US President Biden accepted Kishida's invitation for attending the Quad summit, the big takeaways from the virtual summit was that Washington encouraged increase in Japanese defence spending, vowed to protect Senkaku Islands from Chinese aggression and agreed to work with other pacific partners like Australia, France and New Zealand for humanitarian disaster relief work.

Both US and Japan have agreed on a economic dialogue in two plus two format with focus on building global supply chains not dependent on China. This decision to intensify economic cooperation in the Indo-Pacific also dovetails into the Quad's vision for alternate supply chains with both Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison facing adverse trade relations with China on account of mounting trade deficit and high tariff sanctions respectively.

While there will be no further admission into Quad grouping, all the participating countries recognise the centrality of ASEAN countries in tackling Indo-Pacific and intensification of engagement with Indonesia has already begun in a bid for an open Indo-

Pacific. This is because all the ingress routes to South China Sea are under Indonesian jurisdiction – from Malacca Strait to Ombai-Wetar strait near Timor in far Pacific.

The Modi government is already engaging Indonesia as it is in proximity to Andamans and Nicobar Islands and there is discussion on New Delhi supplying Jakarta with BrahMos supersonic land attack missiles after Manila.

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Title : Pakistan is paying the price for Dasu attack that killed Chinese workers — \$11.6 million



Date : Published January 23, 2022

SOURCE : THE PRINT

Nine months after a terror attack on Dasu dam killed 10 Chinese construction workers in Pakistan, the Imran Khan government has finally agreed to pay less than half of what Beijing demanded — \$11.6 million. The government approved the amount to be given to the families of the Chinese workers killed or injured in the terror attack that took place on 14 July 2021.

The Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) of Pakistan, which is the prime minister's consulting forum, met Finance Minister Shaukat Tarin on Friday and took the decision. China had previously demanded that the Pakistan government pay \$38 million to the families of 36 Chinese workers affected in the attack.

The attack had also claimed lives of four Pakistani workers.

Allegations suggesting that the Chinese contractor had vacated the site and raised several demands as preconditions to resume work. But these were rubbished by Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Zhao Lijian in a press conference on Friday. He reportedly said: "I'm not aware of the situation you mentioned. As far as I know, the Dasu hydropower project has resumed."

"Recently, we have seen [the] president of Pakistan, Dr Arif Alvi, Prime Minister Imran Khan and some media's positive comments on the progress made in the CPEC (China-Pakistan Economic Corridor) flagship project," he added.

The Dasu Hydropower Project in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa province, which has now resumed operation, is funded by the World Bank. It, however, is not a part of the CPEC. According to a statement by PM Imran Khan, the dam will provide low-cost, clean energy. "Phase one of Dasu Dam will be completed by 2025, which will add 2160 megawatts of electricity to the national grid. This capacity will increase to 4320 megawatts with the completion of its second phase by 2029," he had said.

In August 2021, former member of Senate Sehar Kamran alleged that the Indian Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) and Afghan National Directorate of Security was involved in the attack.

Pakistan's foreign minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi had also made a similar statement, alleging that the bombing was carried out by terrorists backed by the Indian and Afghan intelligence agencies.

Reports suggested that the Pakistani intelligence found the involvement of Pakistan Taliban in the attack and also claimed involvement of Indian and Afghan intelligence. It was also claimed that the vehicle carrying the explosives was smuggled into Pakistan.

India's Ministry of External Affairs rejected the allegations, calling them 'absurd'. "This is yet another attempt by Pakistan to malign India, in a bid to deflect international attention from its role as the epicentre of regional instability and a safe haven for proscribed terrorists," MEA spokesperson Arindam Bagchi had said.

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Title : Pak's National Security Policy is designed to deceive



Date : Published January 23, 2022

SOURCE : SUNDAY GUARDIAN LIVE

Pakistan's "first-ever National Security Policy" (NSP) is as anodyne as it is hypocritical. The solitary purpose seems to be to mislead the world into believing that it is a decent state which formulates something as modern as policy. The truth is that it is second-most dangerous rogue state—China, its imperial hegemon, being on the top—in the world. Consider Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan's message carried in the NSP document: "The National Security Policy 2022-2026 centres on my government's vision, which believes that the security of Pakistan rests in the security of its citizens. This citizen-centric approach to national security prioritises national cohesion and the prosperity of people, while guaranteeing fundamental rights and social justice without discrimination."

Could India's Prime Minister—or, for that matter, that of the UK, Japan, or any other civilised nation—have said anything different? Won't they too swear by "citizen-centric approach," "national cohesion," "prosperity of people," "fundamental rights," etc.? Haven't we seen this movie before? Don't we see it all the time?

The difference is that the leaders of civilised nations say these things because the countries they represent are doctrinally and systemically committed to these ideas and principles, even when the leaders' actions are not in consonance with these lofty ideals and grand promises. Pakistan, on the other hand, doctrinally and systemically nurtures jihad, radicalizes its children, soldiers and society, foments trouble in the neighbourhood (India, Afghanistan), offers refuge to global terrorists (Osama bin Laden, Hafiz Saeed, Dawood Ibrahim, et al), and exports terror all over the world.

And yet, Prime Minister Imran Khan had the cheek to pontificate: "Realising the symbiotic relationship between economic, human, and traditional security is now imperative for Pakistan's long-term development. Domestic stability and regional peace based on mutual co-existence, regional connectivity, and shared prosperity are essential prerequisites to optimising national security. Moreover, to achieve the vast potential of our citizens, it is necessary to promote delivery-based good governance through strengthening of institutions, rule of law, transparency, accountability, and openness."

Mr Khan, you can't have economic security and long-term development when the only thing the most powerful men in your country are obsessed with is hurting India. You can't talk about regional peace, mutual co-existence, regional connectivity, and

shared prosperity when your military bosses in Rawalpindi arm and train jihadists to wreak havoc in Kashmir and other parts of India.

Despite all clichéd and hypocritical remarks, the NSP makes it clear that, notwithstanding the platitudes, Pakistan remains the same when it comes to relations with India. Just as a leopard can't change its spots, Pakistan can't become a civilised nation.

The NSP says, "Towards the immediate east, bilateral ties have been stymied as a consequence of the unresolved Kashmir dispute and India's hegemonic designs. Pakistan remains committed to normalisation of relations with its neighbours based on mutual respect, sovereign equality, and a collective effort to find pathways for conflict resolution with the belief that shared economic opportunities are cornerstones for achieving prosperity in Pakistan and the region. Pakistan also maintains mutually beneficial relationships with all major powers and will further these based on commonality of interests."

Hypocrisy and mendacity are natural bedfellows. India liberated Bangladesh and saved millions of people from the barbarity of its genocidal army, and yet New Delhi never harboured any thoughts of annexing it, though that action would not have been improper, for Bangladesh after all was part of India. So much for "India's hegemonic designs." Then there is Pakistan's claim that it wants the normalisation of relations with its neighbours. Well, if that's so, why doesn't it stop aiding, arming, and abetting jihadists against India? Yes, Kashmir is a dispute, but then there are so many cases of disputes between countries over territories; they don't send terrorists to their neighbouring countries because of such disagreements.

Pakistan's NSP is just eyewash, a blend of homilies and inanities. It is intended to deceive the world, especially India, not to make Rawalpindi fiends human. Some Indian national security experts have already bitten the bait; at least one of them viewed the NSP favourably and repeated the dangerous notion that it is in India's interest to keep Pakistan stable.

At least the visible part of Pakistan's NSP, the one that has been released, is eyewash; most probably, the meat is in that part which is classified. Even if it is as trite as the published portion, the fact remains that Pakistan is and will remain a terrorist state in the foreseeable future. For nobody is interested, either in Islamabad or in Rawalpindi, in genetically modifying the essential principles of their nation. The concept of Ghazwa-e-Hind still electrifies them. What can we say about a leopard that doesn't want to change its spots?

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Title : US-Japan's ASEAN 'outreach' augurs well for India's plan to counter China

The ASEAN Integration

One Vision. One Identity. One Community.

Date : Published January 23, 2022

SOURCE : SUNDAY GUARDIAN LIVE

In what augurs well for India's plan to counter China, US President Joe Biden, and Japanese Prime Minister Kishida Fumio have vowed to deepen cooperation with ASEAN countries as part of their strategy to push back against China's belligerence in the Indo-Pacific and other sea regions. "It's also a welcome development that the two leaders have decided to deepen ties and cooperation with India in their joint plan aimed at realizing a free and open Indo-Pacific region," highly-placed diplomatic sources told The Sunday Guardian.

Sources also told TSG that "ahead of the much-awaited virtual meeting between the US President and Japanese Prime Minister on Friday, Washington sought India's inputs on Chinese activities in the Indo-Pacific region." "Foreign Secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla shared India's perspective and inputs on the Indo-Pacific amidst growing Chinese influence during a telephonic talk with US Deputy Secretary of State Wendy Sherman on Wednesday," sources said. "Situation in the Indo-Pacific was discussed between the two officials, and the Indian foreign secretary shared useful inputs with Sherman," a diplomat said. Sources also told this newspaper that it is important that the US official collected these inputs and other useful information just before Biden's meeting with the Japanese Prime Minister. "Indo-Pacific, South China Sea and East China Sea were the issues on which Biden and Kishida focused a lot during the 80 minutes meeting," sources said.

"The two leaders (Biden and Kishida) resolved to push back against the People's Republic of China (PRC)'s attempts to change the status quo in the East China Sea and the South China Sea." President Biden and Japanese PM Kishida Fumio also shared concern about China's action in several regions like Xinjiang, and Hong Kong.

However, the emphasis on increasing ASEAN outreach by the two leaders is what matters the most for India. "The two leaders vowed to deepen cooperation with like-minded countries such as Australia, India, ASEAN, and Europe, toward realizing a free and open Indo-Pacific region."

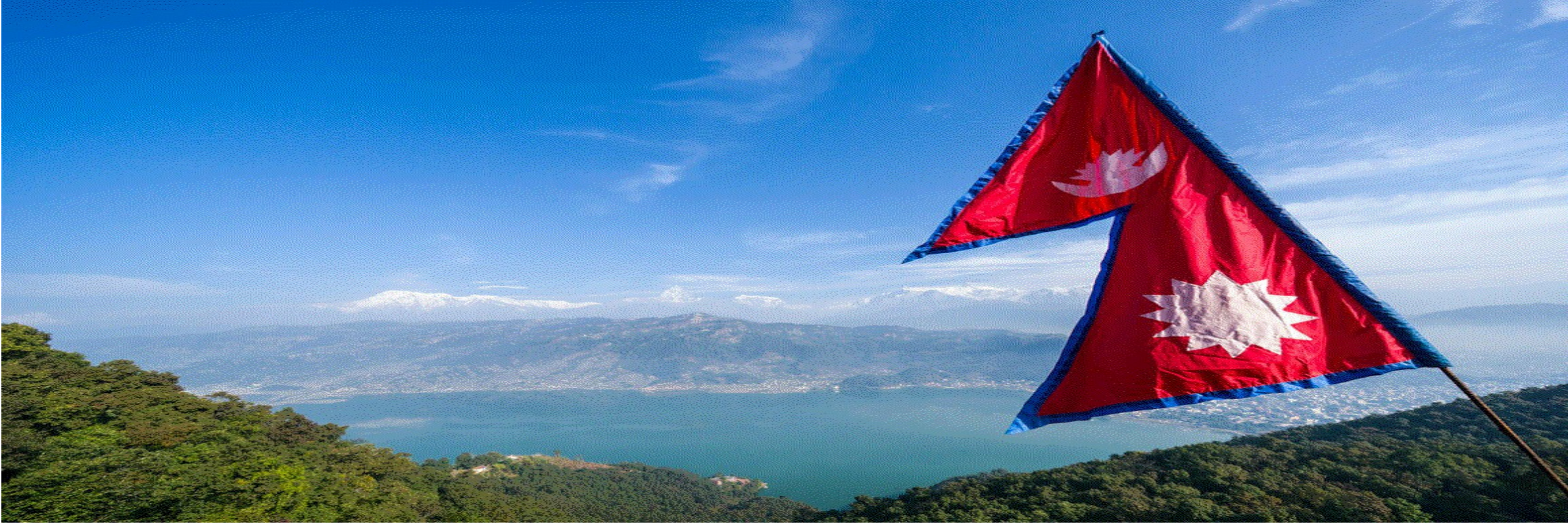
There is no denying that located in the middle of the Indo-Pacific waters, ASEAN is facing the challenge resulting from China's aggression. With this in view, ASEAN states are quite crucial for India as regards its action plan to counter China in the region. "India is always keen that the US and other Quad nations like Japan and Australia and even European countries also step up their outreach to ASEAN nations with the main purpose to rein in Beijing in the Indo-Pacific," says a diplomat.

“That the Biden administration is turning its focus in a much bigger way on ASEAN with China’s perspective in mind should be a welcome development as far as India’s strategy is concerned,” he added. In another significant development, Joe Biden is likely to meet the 10 ASEAN leaders in Washington soon in what is being seen as a good opportunity for the US as far as its strategy to counter China is concerned, sources say.

In his meetings with ASEAN countries’ foreign ministers, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar has been highlighting the issues related to Chinese aggression in the Indo-Pacific and other regions of the sea. Recently, Jaishankar’s interaction with Cambodian Foreign Minister Prak Sokhonn was significant in the backdrop of all this. Sources say that Biden’s proposed meeting with ASEAN leaders also figured during the interaction. Significantly, Cambodia at present holds the rotating chair of ASEAN.

Moreover, the second in-person Quad summit to be held in Japan later this year will be an important development from the point of view of Chinese aggressive behaviour in the Indo-Pacific. Sources say drastic preparations are being made to finalize the agenda and strategy ahead of the summit. This summit will be attended by Biden and Prime Minister Narendra Modi apart from heads of Japan and Australia.

Title : To damage India and US, China is funding Nepal politicians



Date : Published January 23, 2022

SOURCE : SUNDAY GUARDIAN LIVE

With the general elections approaching in Nepal, the proxy war played in South Asia had reached its peak in the Himalayan kingdom. China has increased its funding to anti-India and anti-United States political parties there so that it can install a proxy government in Kathmandu to sabotage the major projects of both countries and fulfill its strategic objectives.

Sources in the Indian security establishment who are privy to the developments told 'The Sunday Guardian' that agencies have tracked many channels and methods of Chinese political funding in the run-up to the elections. What was alarming for the agencies is the proportion and magnitude of investment done by Beijing for the upcoming general elections.

People in the security agencies and experts on Nepal believe that countering India's influence in Kathmandu is one point but the other motive of Beijing is to sabotage the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) project of the US in Nepal, so as to give a loud message to the rest of the world that they don't allow the world's leading power to interfere in its immediate neighbourhood.

Another alarming development for the Indian security agencies is that just a few kilometres away from the Indo-Nepal border, many Chinese nationals are running different kinds of factories and money is transferred to political parties and candidates at the local level through these factories. One official privy to the developments said, "This is really disturbing not only for India but for all the countries who have stakes in Nepal. We have traced many meat, cigarette and other manufacturing factories near the border in recent months. All the factories have started with Chinese investment. The Chinese nationals are living and running these political operations under the grab of friendly investment. It is not a normal operation."

"Such factories are operational also in many other districts of Nepal. Through these factories, Chinese are helping their local assets who would fight the coming elections and work for them from a position of power after the polls. The funding to top leaders and assets is being done through a different channel," he added. It has also come to notice that Chinese propaganda in the run-up to the elections had another socio-political dimension. They have started a 'one village-one person' campaign. It is aimed at influencing the village committees as before the parliamentary polls, the elections to local bodies are scheduled in April-May in the Himalayan Kingdom. Unlike many countries, the village units are powerful and influence the decision-making in Nepal.

A senior Nepali politician of the ruling party, who wished not to be named, said, “China wants unilateral hegemonic access in Nepal. They are using every method to negate India’s influence and moreover to sabotage the US’ MCC project. In December, a senior functionary of International Department of the Communist Party of China (CPC) had a conference call with Shankar Pokharel, the General Secretary of main Opposition party Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninist) or CPN-UML, on the MCC issue.”

“It was reported that the Opposition leadership has assured Beijing that it would not allow activities that could damage Sino-Nepal relations. It is easy to make inferences about the activity. MCC is one dimension. They are investing huge resources to send a clear signal that Beijing would not allow any such development activity in Nepal which it sees as a potential threat,” he added.

The MCC project is the result of an agreement signed between the US and Nepal in September 2017 under which Kathmandu will receive grant assistance worth more than US \$550 million for the development of energy and infrastructure projects. But even after more than four years, the agreement had not been ratified by the Nepalese parliament. As per the clause of the agreement, it can only start if the recipient country gets it ratified by its parliament. Since the last four years Beijing has been successful in dividing the political parties over this issue, China also thinks that the major portion of the grants under the agreement would be spent on the construction of the infrastructure and power projects in the southern portion of Nepal and the surplus power might be supplied to the southern neighbour India.

Hence, Beijing is leaving no stone unturned to influence the elections in Nepal and install a government favourable to it. It is to be seen now as to what approach India and the United States are going to adopt to counter the Chinese strategic investments in this turf war in Nepal.

Title : How AUKUS and Afghanistan are changing India's Indo-Pacific strategy



Date : Published January 23, 2022

SOURCE : IANS

Two significant developments in 2021 have cast a shadow over India's evolving strategy towards the Indo-Pacific region and the reliability of the United States (US) in this strategically important theatre. The first is the hasty American withdrawal from Afghanistan and the capture of power by the Taliban. From India's point of view, the "victory" of the Taliban and Pakistan in Afghanistan has sharply deteriorated the security environment in South Asia and presented a fresh set of challenges.

The second development relates to the unveiling of the new defence partnership between Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States (AUKUS). The AUKUS is expected to strengthen Australia's naval capabilities by equipping it with nuclear-powered submarines. AUKUS entails a long-term commitment and Australia has cancelled the submarine deal negotiated with France, another important Indo-Pacific power, to sign into the AUKUS.

The manner of American withdrawal from Afghanistan and the launch of the AUKUS has been debated across the Indo-Pacific region. Both of these developments are expected to have implications for India's security and consequently for its Indo-Pacific strategy.

Of these two developments, Afghanistan has had a direct impact on India's foreign and security policies. India has no option but to mitigate the fallout of American withdrawal from the region. China has managed to position itself in an enviable position whereas the Taliban have reached out to Beijing for support. For India, the China-Pakistan relationship and Pakistan's active support to anti-India terror groups remain a key challenge in the geopolitics of Afghanistan.

Along with this, India is engaged in a border standoff with China in Ladakh for more than a year now. India has to match the Chinese military deployments along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) and deploy strategic assets in the region. As a result, continental dimensions of India's security are likely to consume the energies of India's strategic establishment for the foreseeable future. Will it affect the maritime realm and India's Indo-Pacific outreach?

Since the unveiling of the AUKUS in September 2021, questions have been raised about what it means for India, what will be the future of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (the Quad) after the AUKUS and should India really invest its energies into the

Quad. In the last few years, the Quad is seen as a cornerstone of India's Indo-Pacific strategy. Some analysts have even expressed fears that the Quad will end up running out of steam. That India should find ways to expand the menu of its strategic options beyond the Quad.

India's foreign secretary Harsh Shringla had assured the sceptics that AUKUS will not overshadow the Quad. The Quad and AUKUS are not groupings of similar nature. Shringla added that AUKUS is a security alliance whereas the Quad is a plurilateral club of four maritime democracies that share similar values and vision for the Indo-Pacific region. From the perspective of the Indian establishment, AUKUS will not have any impact on the functioning of the Quad.

The first in-person meeting between the four Quad leaders at the White House, in the wake of the unveiling of AUKUS, was an important marker. It signalled the continued relevance of the Quad for the United States as well as Australia despite the AUKUS. For India and Japan, Quad and the Malabar Naval Exercises, in which all four Quad nations participate, offer much-needed diplomatic room while dealing with the Chinese challenge. The intensive diplomatic engagement between India and the United States since the announcement of AUKUS should assuage the sceptics. Besides, India's ties with Australia are deepening as well.

So, what does India's Indo-Pacific Strategy look like after the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan and the AUKUS? First, just like the other three partners, India remains committed to the Quad and has indicated its willingness to expand the agenda of the Quad. The expanded agenda of the Quad from cybersecurity and infrastructure to vaccines and climate change is likely to provide a broad range of issues to synergise strategies and work together. Afghanistan has featured in the Quad joint statement. Therefore, Afghanistan might actually present opportunities for the Quad countries to further strengthen and deepen their diplomatic and security partnerships with each other.

It is imperative to consider Afghanistan and the Indo-Pacific together as they remain interconnected challenges in India's strategic calculus. An expansive agenda may perhaps dilute the military component but as long as each of the four Quad partners continues to build up their military capabilities, it will complement the efforts of the grouping as a whole to manage the rise of Chinese power.

Second, maritime security will remain a central plank of India's Indo-Pacific strategy. Despite the developments in Afghanistan, in August, India, which is a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), organized a debate on maritime security. It was the first time that such a debate took place in the UNSC and indicated India's priorities. The Indian Navy's expanded scope of activities and engagements from the region between the Suez Canal and Japan also point towards this direction.

There is a school of thought in India that argues for focusing more on the maritime domain precisely because challenges on northern peripheries limit India's geostrategic space. In the wake of AUKUS, India is deepening its strategic partnership with France including exploring possibilities to acquire advanced French weapons platforms.

The Taliban in Afghanistan and the likely increase in smuggling of drugs will necessitate the growing attention to the issue of maritime security along India's western coastline in the Arabian Sea. It will have implications for India's internal as well as coastal security.

And finally, India's geopolitical position will warrant it to engage with partners in the continental as well as the maritime realm in bilateral, trilateral as well as multilateral formats. India does not have the luxury to choose one over the other. Managing China's rise in the continental domain is as important as building capabilities to ensure stability in the maritime realm. India's Indo-Pacific strategy will be defined by these considerations. AUKUS and Afghanistan will not change the broad contours of India's Indo-Pacific strategy.

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Title : Jammu and Kashmir: Fifteen 'hybrid' militants in gunsight



Date : Published January 23, 2022

SOURCE : TRIBUNE INDIA

Fifteen “hybrid terrorists” or “militants disguised as civilians” were killed last year, Jammu and Kashmir’s top body on security has claimed amid concern in the Valley that the government is peddling a new narrative to deflect criticism over the alleged killing of civilians.

“Hybrid terrorists” — who have no previous record of militancy before they are shot or caught — entered the security parlance in the Valley after the 2019 scrapping of Jammu and Kashmir’s special status. The term is seen as blurring the lines between militants and civilians.

The recent killings of several purported civilians have triggered protests, with families accusing the security forces of murdering their “innocent” children. The forces have defended their action.

On Friday, the Valley’s core group — co-chaired by General Officer Commanding, 15 Corps, Lt Gen. D.P. Pandey, and director-general of police Dilbag Singh — held a review meeting on security at the army headquarters in Srinagar.

“The core group discussed fresh strategies of the terrorist organisations and their handlers, including the use of hybrid terrorists and targeting of soft targets,” the defence spokesperson, Col Emron Musavi, said in a statement.

“15 terrorists killed in 2021 were fresh names not on the security forces radar.”

The label “hybrid terrorists” had been in use for months but gained greater currency after the recent Hyderpora “gunfight” that killed a “foreign militant” and three others whose families claim they were innocent civilians.

The forces claimed that one of them — Ramban resident Amir Magrey — was a hybrid militant although his father, a known counter insurgent who has spent his life fighting militants and killed one with a stone, has questioned the claim.

The family says it was offered no evidence of the slain member's involvement in militancy, echoing a charge voiced by several other families that have lost their sons to "encounters".

Pulwama resident Mushtaq Wani, whose son Athar Mushtaq, 17, died in an alleged encounter in Srinagar in December 2020 along with two other youths, is impatiently waiting for evidence.

"During a news conference (on January 18 last year), the IGP (Vijay Kumar) claimed to have collected 60 per cent evidence of my son's so called involvement in militancy and promised to offer the rest in the next few days. It has been more than a year, but he has offered no evidence," Wani, 45, told The Telegraph.

"Instead, seven of us were booked (under the anti-terror law UAPA) for demanding the body of my son. Even our local imam sahab, Gulzar Ahmad, who offered my son's funeral prayers (in absentia) was arrested and has not been released for more than a year."

The family claims Athar was killed in a staged gunfight but the police say he was a militant. The police buried him in the Sonamarg area of Ganderbal, around 150km from his home, as part of a strategy to bury "militants" in remote areas to prevent pro-azadi gatherings at their funerals.

The core group listed social media as a key challenge, claiming the "propaganda of the nexus through Internet and social media" was being used to "legitimise killing of Kashmiri civilians by terrorists".

"The use of social media to spread disinformation is widespread and needs to be countered proactively by a joint effort. Efforts at synergy in exposing fake news, booking of radicals trying to foment unrest and proactive sharing of information by state agencies are being upgraded," the defence spokesperson said.

At a seminar at the 15 Corps headquarters last month, top security officers had broached a narrative that saw civil society members in the Valley — described as "white-collar terrorists" or militant "over-ground workers" (OGWs) — and not the militants themselves as the biggest hurdle to peace.

The OGWs are known for arranging “logistics” and “movement support mechanism” for militants but it seems the term is being expanded to include many more people in Kashmir, including “prominent civil society members, and their diaspora in particular”.

At Friday’s meeting, DGP Singh and Lt Gen. Pandey appreciated that after the amendment of Article 370, certain targets had been achieved towards the restoration of peace and prosperity in the region.

The group expressed satisfaction that the year 2021 had witnessed “a reduction in terrorist infiltration, reduced terrorist incidents, reduced terror recruitment.... increased arrest of terrorists and booking of OGWs”.

Pandey urged continued efforts along with civil society to “counter the separatist propaganda and break the cycle of violence for long-term peace in Kashmir.”

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Title : 2 Terrorist Killed In Jammu And Kashmir’s Shopian, 17th This Month



Date : Published January 23, 2022

SOURCE : PTI

Two terrorists were killed in an operation by security forces in the Shopian district of Jammu and Kashmir on Saturday. In the last 22 days, 17 terrorists have been killed in over a dozen encounters in the valley as the new year started with security forces intensifying their offensive against terrorists.

The police said an operation was launched at Kilbal village in the Shopian district following a tip-off about the presence of terrorists. In the ensuing encounter, two terrorist were killed. On Friday, the Core Group meeting of security forces said that frequent operations against terrorists are launched based on human intelligence and it has helped them to reduce collateral damage during operations.

The local support in anti-terrorist operations is seen as crucial and terrorist activities have reduced in the last year.

The meeting, besides senior officials of military and paramilitary forces, was attended by Lt Gen DP Panday, Corps Commander of Army's 15 Corps and Dilbag Singh, Director General of J&K police.

In a statement, the Core Group said the ceasefire along the Line of Control between India and the Pakistani army has improved the security situation along the border. There has been a decrease in the infiltration of terrorists from Pakistan. The meeting however asked security forces to remain alert given the intelligence inputs that terrorist launch pads across the Line of Control are still active.

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Title : Time for Arunachal Regiment?



Date : Published January 23, 2022

SOURCE : The Arunachal Times

We all have heard of the Assam Regiment, the Assam Rifles, the Sikh Regiment, the Kumaon Regiment, the Gurkha Regiment, etc. We also heard of the Naga Regiment. The Assam Regiment and the Naga Regiment are the only army units of Northeast India. The Assam Rifles is a paramilitary unit under the ministry of home. The Assam Regiment has about 25 battalions and the Naga Regiment has four battalions.

A few years back, the government raised the Arunachal Scouts as an infantry formation based in Arunachal Pradesh, specializing in mountain warfare. Most soldiers of the Arunachal Scouts are local and established with the purpose of defending the Indian-Tibet border in Arunachal Pradesh. Presently there are only two battalions of the Arunachal Scouts: the first raised in 2010 and the second in 2013. The Arunachal Scouts are part of the Assam Regiment.

India and China have had an acrimonious relationship over the last 60 years. The major conflict was the Sino-India war of 1962, where Chinese forces entered almost 100 kms inside India along five axes. There have been regular clashes at Nathu La in 1967, Sumdorong Chu in 1987, Doklam confrontation in 2017, Chinese incursions in Asaphila, Tuting and Chaklagam areas of Arunachal in 2017-2018 and the recent Sino-India conflict at Pangong Tso Lake and Galwan Valley in Ladakh. Tense situation exists all along the Sino-India border.

The Chinese still claim Arunachal Pradesh as 'Southern Tibet' and issues stapled visas to Arunachal citizens. They object to visits by senior Indian officials, ministers to Arunachal and uses rivers originating in China to arm-twist India. The McMahon Line demarcates the eastern border between India and China. About 890 kms in length, the McMahon Line followed the watershed principle and runs along the highest ridges of these eastern Himalayan ranges, running from east of Bhutan to the trijunction of India, China and Myanmar.

In case of any future conflict, the battleground would be the mountains, hills and valleys of Arunachal Pradesh. Considering the mountainous terrain, dense jungles, deep gorges and ravines, it may be easily understood that persons living in these areas are better suited to fight the enemy. The locals are accustomed to the terrain and weather and can easily live off the land. To fight and defeat the enemy in such terrain and weather, India needs to have a specialized Arunachal Regiment, composed of at least 5-6 battalions. Similarly, the mountain divisions of the army should be composed mostly of soldiers hailing from

mountainous regions. Enlisting of soldiers need not always base on pro rata basis based on population only; rather, it should be based on strategic principles to suit military objectives.

Though modern weapons are required, wars and battles are won by effective soldiers. Therefore it is high time that more battalions of the Arunachal Scouts should be formed and the entire formation should be transformed and renamed as Arunachal Regiment. This small step may be one of the best ways to tackle the Chinese challenge.

(The contributor is retired Group Captain, Indian Air Force)

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Title : Narco-terror on the rise, security officials on toes in J&K



Date : Published January 23, 2022

SOURCE : The Tribune

The increased recovery of drugs smuggled from Pakistan into J&K has rung alarm bells among security establishments, leaving them on toes as these consignments are being diverted towards narco-terrorism.

On Friday, the Army seized 31 kg of narcotics along the Line of Control (LoC) in Poonch district. Defense PRO, Lt Col Devender Anand said, "The Army along with the police launched a relentless operations in the area that were backed up with a well integrated surveillance grid coupled with extensive domination of the areas close to the LoC. On the intervening night of January 19 and 20, narcotics weighing approximately 31 kg was found near the LoC."

In November last year, the police had seized 52 kg heroin worth Rs 100 crore (according to international market) from a Punjab-bound truck. As per investigation, heroin was smuggled into Kashmir from Pakistan and was being sent to Punjab for sale. The sale of drugs was supposed to be used to fuel terrorism.

DGP Dilbag Singh had recently appealed to the villagers along the LoC to keep vigil on smuggling of narcotics, especially in border districts of Rajouri and Poonch, from Pakistan.

A top level meeting of the Army and the police was also held in 6th Sector Brigade headquarters Potha, Surankot, in Poonch last month where detailed presentation regarding narco-terrorism and smuggling of drugs was made. Top Army brass and police officials, including the DGP, were present in the meeting.

On January 7, the police found a drone in Gujral village in Akhnoor in Jammu. It is suspected that the drone was used to smuggle contraband and weapons from Pakistan.

Zorawar Singh Jamwal, who is the chairman of Team Jammu, an organisation that works against drug abuse in J&K, says the recovery of drugs from highways and borders has increased. "While Pakistan has failed in succeeding against India through proxy war, it is now targeting the youth of our country with drugs terrorism."

Reasi SSP Shailender Singh said the police in his district achieved a major success and crossed the mark of 254 arrests with the registration of 208 FIRs regarding drug abuse since March 2021. The district police on January 19 found 4.70-kg charas worth Rs 15 lakh and heroin worth Rs 50,000 from peddlers.

In April 2019, the Ministry of Home Affairs had suspended the cross LoC trade between India and Pakistan following incidents of seizure of arms, ammunition, narcotics and fake currency that was being smuggled in Pakistani trucks at the two trade points in Uri and Poonch.

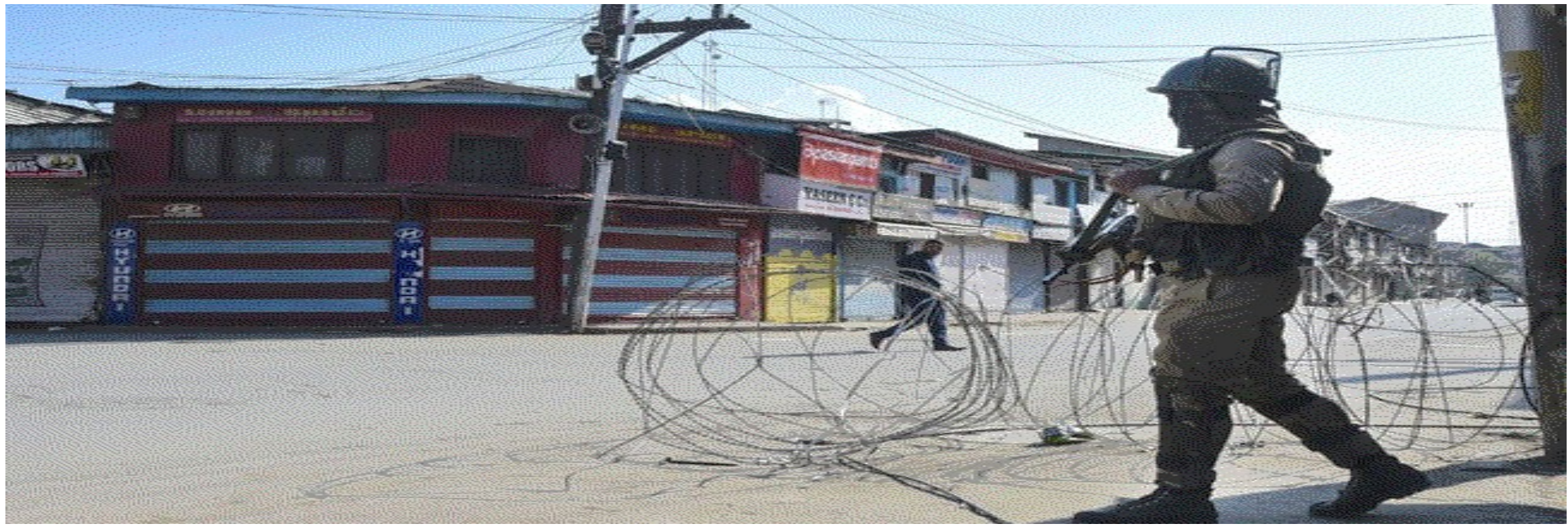
Recent seizures

52 kg heroin seized from a Punjab-bound truck in November last year. It was said to have been smuggled into Kashmir from Pakistan. On January 19, Reasi police seized 4.7 kg charas worth Rs15 lakh and heroin worth Rs50,000 from peddlers.

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Title : Jaish Terror Associate Arrested In J&K's Pulwama



Date : Published January 23, 2022

SOURCE : PTI

Security forces on Saturday arrested a terrorist associate of Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) in Pulwama district of Jammu and Kashmir, police said. A police spokesperson identified the terrorist associate as Umer Farooq Bhat, a resident of Renzipora, Awantipora.

Incriminating material, including a hand grenade, was recovered from Bhat's possession, he said. "Preliminary investigation revealed that the arrested terror associate was involved in providing shelter, logistic support, transportation of arms/ammunition and assisting the terrorists in shifting their locations. Besides, he was also passing sensitive information regarding the movement of police/security forces to the terrorists of proscribed outfit JeM," the spokesperson said.

A case has been registered and investigation has been initiated, he said.

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