

US statement on PM-Biden talks leaves out Bangladesh

US Prez Lauds Modi For His Peace Message To Ukraine

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: US Prez Joe Biden spoke to PM Narendra Modi to discuss the latter's 'historic' trip to Ukraine and Poland, commending Modi for his message of peace and India's humanitarian support to Ukraine, including to its energy sector, said the White House in a readout of the talks on Monday.

During his visit, Modi had expressed solidarity with Ukraine but also called upon Prez Volodymyr Zelensky to engage with Russia for an early return of peace.

As per the US, Modi and Biden affirmed their continued support for a peaceful resolution of the conflict in



PM Narendra Modi and US Prez Biden affirmed their continued support for a peaceful resolution of the conflict in accordance with international law, on the basis of the UN Charter

accordance with international law, on the basis of UN Charter. Separately, a White House spokesperson said Biden discussed with Modi prospects for moving forward in accordance with Zelensky's plan for a "just peace". India, however, is yet to endorse Zelensky's peace plan.

The US readout skipped any reference to Bangladesh,

amplifying the differences with India over the latter's eastern neighbour. Indian side said the two shared concern over the Bangladesh situation and emphasised the need to ensure safety and security of the minorities, particularly Hindus.

Unlike India, which had a deep-rooted relationship with deposed Bangladesh PM

Sheikh Hasina, the US was quick to welcome the formation of interim govt under Nobel Laureate Muhammad Yunus. Hasina had a difficult relationship with the US which didn't approve of her undemocratic and authoritarian ways even though she was said to have kept a check on extremism in the country.

The US readout said Biden also discussed UNGA meetings in Sept. The talks took place in the middle of efforts by India to host Quad summit on margins of UNGA. In the talks, Modi and Biden also emphasised their continued commitment to work together, including through regional groups like Quad, to contribute to peace and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific.

"The Prez commended PM (Modi) for his historic visits to Poland and Ukraine, the first by an Indian PM in decades, and for his message of peace and ongoing humanitarian support for Ukraine, including its energy sector," said the White House.

India-Brazil strategic partnership has deepened, diversified: EAM Jaishankar

■ Brazilian Foreign Minister Mauro Vieira said in his opening remarks that President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva will be glad to welcome Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the G20 Summit in Rio de Janeiro in November



External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar meets with Brazilian Foreign Minister Mauro Vieira, in New Delhi on Tuesday. They co-chaired the 9th India-Brazil Joint Commission meeting. (ANI)

NEW DELHI, Aug 27 (PTI)

THE India-Brazil strategic partnership has "deepened and diversified" over the years and now spans a very wide range of domains, including defence, space, security, technology and people-to-people relations, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said on Tuesday.

In his opening remarks at the 9th India-Brazil Joint Commission Meeting (JCM) in Delhi, Jaishankar congratulated

the Latin American country for conducting the G20 meetings successfully.

"I would like to reiterate

India's full support to the Brazilian G20 presidency and also recall that we got your fullest support during our own presidency. We appreciate various unique initiatives centred on the theme of building a just world and a sustainable planet," he said.

Brazilian Foreign Minister Mauro Vieira, who arrived here on August 25, said in his opening remarks that President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva will be glad to welcome Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the G20 Summit in Rio de Janeiro in November.

Brazil is currently the chair of the influential bloc. The G20 presidency was relayed to Brazil by India last year. Jaishankar, in his address, welcomed his Brazilian counterpart and the delegation and said he looks forward to a "very productive Joint Commission Meeting".

Day after Biden, Putin dials Modi over Kyiv trip

PM To Visit Russia Again in Oct For BRICS

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New Delhi: A day after he briefed US President Joe Biden about his visit to Ukraine, PM Modi Tuesday “shared insights” about the same with Russian President Vladimir Putin in a phone conversation initiated by the Russian side. In this latest affirmation of India’s balancing act on the Russia-Ukraine war, something which Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said during Modi’s Kyiv visit he didn’t want India to do, Modi called for a sincere and practical engagement between all stakeholders for an early, abiding and peaceful resolution of the conflict.

Modi’s visit to Ukraine followed his trip to Russia last month that had riled the Ame-

“ Discussed measures to further strengthen Special and Privileged Strategic Partnership. Exchanged perspectives on the Russia-Ukraine conflict and my insights from the recent visit to Ukraine.



Reiterated India’s firm commitment to support an early, abiding and peaceful resolution of the conflict

— Modi on X

A Russian readout says Modi in his conversation with Putin emphasised his interest in contributing to a possible political and diplomatic settlement of the situation ‘around Ukraine’. This follows the Indian PM’s statement in Kyiv expressing willingness to contribute in all possible ways to facilitate an early return of peace



US readout skips reference to Bangladesh

A White House spokesperson said President Joe Biden discussed with PM Modi the prospects for moving forward in accordance with Zelensky’s plan for a “just peace”. India, however, is yet to endorse Zelensky’s plan. Interestingly, the US readout skipped any reference to Bangladesh, amplifying the long-standing differences with India over Dhaka. The Indian side had said in its version that leaders shared concern over Bangladesh situation. **P 18**

ricans with its timing, coinciding as it did with the NATO summit in the US. Significantly, Moscow said Modi conveyed his “readiness” to visit Russia again this year for the BRICS summit in Oct. The

talks with Putin took place a day after Biden called Modi and commended him for his “historic” trip and his message of peace.

► **Related report, P 18**

Aus caps enrolment of foreign students at 270,000 for 2025

Sydney: Australia said on Tuesday it would limit the enrolment number of new international students to 270,000 for 2025, as govt looks to rein in record migration that has contributed to a spike in home rental prices. The decision follows a raft of actions since last year to end Covid-era concessions for foreign students and workers that helped businesses recruit staff locally while strict border controls kept overseas workers out.

"There's about 10% more international students in our universities today than before the pandemic and 50% more in private vocational and training providers," said education minister Jason Clare. New enrolments will be capped at 145,000 for universities, which is around 2023 levels, and 95,000 for practical and skills-based courses.

Clare said govt would inform universities on their enrolment caps. University of Melbourne said it had received its indicative cap, without elaborating, and was assessing financial and other implications. "The cap will have detrimental consequences for our university, the higher education sector, and the nation for years to come," said vice-chancellor Duncan Maskell. University of Sydney also said it was studying the likely impact of the cap. "We'll continue to work collaboratively with govts and the sector on managed growth of international higher education, one of Australia's most valuable exports," it said. Universities Australia, the peak body for universities, said the govt move would "apply a



CURBING MIGRATION: The move is a bid to rein in migration that has led to a spike in home rental prices. Net immigration hit a record high in 2023 at 548,800, mostly driven by students from India, China and Philippines

handbrake" to the sector.

International education, Australia's fourth-biggest export, was worth A\$36.4 billion (\$24.7 billion) to the economy in 2022-2023 financial year.

Moody's Ratings sees a modest impact from the proposed cap, adding it does not constitute a material deterioration in the operating environment for the sector.

Polls have showed voters are concerned about large influxes of foreign students and workers putting excess pressure on the housing market, making immigration one of the potential major battlegrounds in an election less than a year away. Net immigration hit a record high in the year to Sept 30, 2023, surging 60% to a record 548,800, mostly driven by students from India, China and Philippines. That was higher than the 518,000 people in the year ending June 2023.

In a bid to contain the surge in migration, the govt last month had more than doubled the visa fee for foreign students. REUTERS

Playing Chinese Chequers In Sri Lankan Waters

That Indian, Chinese warships docked in Colombo the same day has much larger strategic implications, especially with the island country headed for prez polls next month

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Indian and Chinese warships simultaneously docked in Sri Lanka on Monday. Indian Navy's guided missile destroyer INS Mumbai, and Chinese destroyer Hefei and amphibious ships Wuzhishan and Qilianshan.

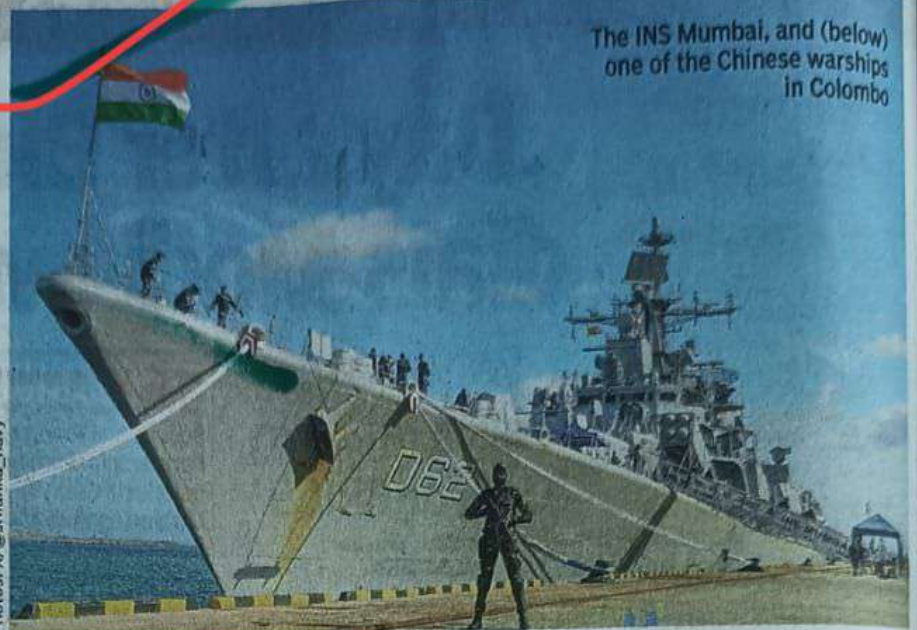
That's dramatic enough. Add to that Lankan presidential polls next month — an election that will likely see Indian and Chinese strategic interests square off against each other.

Here's the low-down on why the waters around Sri Lanka are hotting up.

Goes back to Cold War: Major nations have been nosing around Sri Lanka since the Cold War, resulting in the island nation often catching a strategic cold. India was never happy about US acquiring a listening post in the guise of a Voice of America relay station on the island. US, it is believed, needed this asset to have eyes on the Indian Ocean sealanes to check the then Soviet navy in what is today described as the Indo-Pacific theatre.

Hub of naval visits: Over the years, Sri Lanka emerged as a hub for naval visits from multiple countries. This strategy not only took advantage of the island nation's geographical position, but also helped Colombo move to a multi-alignment posture. From 2009 to 2020, more than 525 warships visited Sri Lanka. Out of this, 110 were from India, 80 were from Japan and 40 from China. Thus, Sri Lanka acting as a port-of-call for international navies is nothing new.

Rise of the Chinese sea dragon: What's changed the game is China's spectacular rise as a naval power and its extended deployment of warships in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR). China



The INS Mumbai, and (below) one of the Chinese warships in Colombo

Photos: X/@sri Lanka_navy



today has the largest navy in the world: over 360 warships and submarines. India? Only 140 warships. Plus, a large Chinese maritime militia has been at the forefront of Beijing's aggressive tactics in the South China Sea. China's communist leaders aren't doing this just to feel grand. They see China's geographical periphery as a seascape with multiple maritime chokepoints: Malacca Strait and Tsushima Strait, to name two. Beijing's strategy is to acquire overwhelming maritime dominance to pre-empt any countermeasures by US and allies to box it in and shut off its trade and supply routes.

Pushing the limits: As a result, China has been pushing the limits of freedom of navigation and maritime sovereignty in large swathes of the Indo-Pacific. It has been intruding into Exclusive Economic Zones of maritime neighbours such as the Philippines and

Vietnam, building and militarising artificial islands, and deploying an array of spy ships in the guise of research vessels. Recall the docking of Chinese 'research vessel' Yuan Wang 5 at Sri Lanka's Hambantota in 2022. India objected to the ship's presence in its strategic backyard. But Beijing today has an almost permanent presence in the IOR through its research and survey vessels that map oceanographic data useful for naval operations.

Chinese influence in Lankan politics: Plus, there are concerns that Beijing's influence in Sri Lanka has taken deep roots. Despite the Aragalaya protests in the summer of 2022, Rajapaksas continue to remain a force in Lankan politics. They and their political allies had furthered Chinese interests when they were in power, taking on huge Chinese loans for white elephant projects. Those loans contributed to Colombo's economic crisis. Although President Ranil Wickremesinghe has steered the Lankan economic ship, China's determination to expand its footprint in the IOR could again put Lankan politicians in a position where they are unable to resist Chinese money and again facilitate greater Chinese naval presence in the region.

India's headache: All of this is a strategic-security dilemma for India. Its troops are still ranged against the Chinese PLA in the higher Himalayas in eastern Ladakh. A southern Chinese threat in addition to the northern China-Pakistan combo is exactly what New Delhi doesn't want.