

China looming large, India & Aus crank up def partnership

In 2+2, Discuss Indo-Pacific Strategy, Trade

Rajat Pandit@timesgroup.com

New Delhi: India and Australia held the second edition of their two-plus-two ministerial dialogue with foreign minister S Jaishankar and defence minister Rajnath Singh discussing ways with their counterparts, Penny Wong and Richard Marles, respectively, to strengthen defence and security partnership, boost trade and investment ties and to enhance Indo-Pacific cooperation amid Chinese assertiveness.

With China's expansionist muscle-flexing in the Indo-Pacific figuring on their radars, the two countries decided to further crank up their overall bilateral defence-strategic ties, including cooperation in information exchange, maritime domain awareness and niche areas like AI, cyber, anti-submarine and anti-drone warfare.

Australian deputy PM and defence minister Richard Marles stressed that China was "the biggest security anxiety" for both India and his country, while also being their



Australian deputy PM Richard Marles (R) at a Delhi stall on Monday

largest trading partner.

Sources said India also shared its deep concerns about China's salami-slicing tactics on its land borders as well as expanding naval forays into the Indian Ocean Region (IOR), even as Beijing also strong-arms its smaller neighbours in the South China and East China Seas as well as the Taiwan Strait.

Singh, on his part, said there is "consensus" that "a strong India-Australia partnership augurs well for the overall peace, security and prosperity of the Indo-Pacific region".

India and Australia in recent years have been steadily stepping-up their bilateral defence ties, junking inhibitions

of the past to replicate New Delhi's upward trajectory for long with the other two Quad countries, the US and Japan.

"It's hard to overstate how important we regard India and our relationship with India in a difficult world, particularly in the IOR... We are neighbours. We have a deep strategic alignment. But more importantly, we have shared traditions of democracy, the rule of law, freedom of speech and heritage, including cricket," Marles said.

"We see the defence relationship as critical to the bilateral partnership. We see our relationship with India right up there, among one of the most important relationships that we have in the

world," he added.

While emphasising that the armed forces of the two countries should enhance cooperation in niche training areas like AI, cyber, anti-submarine and anti-drone warfare, Singh said shipbuilding, ship repair and aircraft MRO (maintenance, repair and overhaul) could also be potential areas of collaboration.

"Australia operates common platforms like P-8 maritime patrol aircraft and MH-60 'Romeo' helicopters. Australian warships transiting the IOR can also avail MRO facilities in India," the official said.

India and Australia already have a mutual logistics support arrangement (MLSA), which was inked in June 2020 and provides for refuelling and berthing facilities for each other's warships and aircraft. India has such reciprocal military logistics pacts with the US and Japan as well as other countries like France, South Korea and Singapore.

On Monday, the two ministers agreed that deepening cooperation in defence industry and research would also give a fillip to the already strong relationship, while they also discussed cooperation for joint research in underwater technologies.

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World may see 2.5-2.9°C temp rise: UN report

Vishwa.Mohan@timesgroup.com

New Delhi: Global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions increased 1.2% last year over 2021 to reach a new record, said the latest emission gap report released by the UN Environment Programme on Monday, while warning that the world is on track to witness a 2.5°-2.9° Celsius temperature rise above pre-industrial (1850-1900) levels this century even if all the current pledges under the Paris Agreement are implemented by 2030.

Referring to historical emissions, the report shows that the US accounts for 4% of current world population but contributed 17% of global warming from 1850 to 2021, including the impact of methane and nitrous oxide emissions. India, by contrast, accounts for 18% of the world population but to date only contributed 5% of the warming.

The report also called for an urgent need for increased climate action noting how the current temperature rise trajectory (2.5°-2.9°C) would lead to devastating consequences

of climate change in terms of frequent extreme weather events in this century.

The report shows that if nothing changes, emissions in 2030 will be 22 Gt (gigatonnes) higher than the 1.5° limit will allow. That's roughly the total present annual emissions of the United States, China, and the European Union (27 nations) taken together.

"All of this is a failure of leadership, a betrayal of the vulnerable, and a massive missed opportunity," UN secretary-general Antonio Guterres said while reacting to the findings of the report which also flagged that even in the most optimistic scenario, the likelihood of limiting warming to 1.5°C is only 14%.

Highlighting a glaring gap between rhetoric and reality, the report noted that the net-zero (emission) pledges are not even currently considered credible. "None of the G20 countries are reducing emissions at a pace consistent with their net-zero targets," it said.

The report shows that the top seven global emitters remain the same as in 2021.

'India, US want 'open, inclusive' Indo-Pacific'

NEW DELHI, Nov 20 (ANI)

STATING that India and the United States have made important steps towards strengthening their defence partnership, US Ambassador to India, Eric Garcetti said the two countries are committed to promoting resilient and rules-based international order to safeguard "free open and inclusive" Indo-Pacific.

He further said that during the India-US 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue, the Ministers of both countries discussed the ongoing conflicts in Ukraine and the Middle -East.

Speaking at an event in the national capital, Garcetti said, "I think the joint statement (2+2 Dialogue) reflects both countries' resolve to promote

resilient rules-based international order to safeguard free open and inclusive Indo-Pacific through the Quad and other metrics, global issues. The ministers discussed the tragic humanitarian consequences to the conflict in Ukraine and the Middle East, reiterating their stance with Israel against terrorism, but also seeking to alleviate civilian suffering and adherence to international humanitarian law.

The US envoy further said that the US is looking forward to welcoming more visitors in December, and January and many major investments in Indian technology by US private sector companies as well. As government-to-government conversations, expanding round space, defence, and pro-

duction well. "We made important steps toward strengthening our major defence partnership which continues to grow, increasing the acceleration that we have seen through initiatives like the roadmap US-India in industrial cooperation and defence".

He further stressed that New Delhi and Washington should deepen their Artificial Intelligence (AI) conversation.

"India-US collaboration and cooperation in emerging domains, and also more importantly, because we sometimes just focus on weapons and what's being sold, or potentially co-developed. But the operational level of our militaries, which I think is as critical as any equipment, and our countries discuss ways to deep-

en our science and our technology partnerships to harness technology with the global good instead of technology that harms us than divides us, technology that can connect us and protect us," he said.

Garcetti also informed that the US administration is in conversation with the Indian government to get more staff at consulates and is also speeding up visas.

The India-US 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue was held in the national capital last week. External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and Defence Minister Rajnath Singh participated in the meeting with their US counterparts; Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Secretary of Defence Lloyd Austin.

6.3 PER CENT: 'GDP growth to dip marginally in 2024'

MUMBAI, Nov 20 (PTI)

INDIA'S real GDP growth will decline marginally to 6.3 per cent in 2024 from the 6.4 per cent estimated for 2023, an American brokerage firm said on Monday. The next calendar year will be of two halves, wherein the Government spending before the upcoming General Elections will be the key driver for growth, while after the elections, it will be the re-acceleration in investment growth, especially from the private sector, Goldman Sachs said in a report.

From a fiscal year perspective, the brokerage said it expects growth to accelerate to 6.5 per cent for FY25 from the 6.2 per cent it has projected for the ongoing FY24, it added.

"India has the best structural growth prospects in the region. We believe GDP growth is likely to stay robust at 6.3 per cent Y-o-Y (year-on-year) in 2024," the brokerage said, adding the country is less sensitive to potential external shocks like longer rates globally, persistent dollar strength



and geopolitical uncertainties.

The brokerage said risks around the growth outlook are evenly balanced but added that "the main domestic risk" is emanating from political uncertainty, with elections approaching in the April-June quarter of 2024.

The election season is already underway with Assembly polls in five States, which will be followed by the General Elections later, it said, adding that outcomes of these elections will be "keenly watched" by investors from the standpoint of economic reforms and/or policy continuity. It expects headline consumer price inflation to come at 5.1 per cent for 2024, against 4.7 per cent estimated by the Reserve Bank.

Others see Ind-Aus ties as stability factor: EAM

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Foreign minister **S Jaishankar** said the growing bilateral relationship with Australia had larger implications for the region and a number of other countries were looking at it as a factor of stability and security. "This has hap-



pened at a time when there is increasing uncertainty in the world. We are seeing sharper polarisation, deeper stresses. We have to build and act for stability on a daily basis," Jaishankar said.

"We do face exceptional challenges—some regional, some global, many of them involve challenges to the rule of law and as comprehensive strategic partners, it is important to also plan for those exceptions. Our partnership in the Quad format has been very beneficial for the Indo-Pacific Region and our own bilateral rela-

Army chief in S Korea to boost def cooperation

Army chief General Manoj Pande met top South Korean generals to discuss measures to further boost bilateral defence ties and collaboration during his ongoing visit to the country. Gen Pande held discussions with South Korean chairman of the joint chiefs of staff, General Kim Seung-kyum, and is slated to meet South Korean Army chief of staff, Gen Park An-su, among others. TNN

tionship," he added.

According to the foreign ministry, the leaders at the two-plus-two ministerial dialogue also focused on critical minerals, energy, climate change, space, education and people to people contacts. Foreign minister Penny Wong said the India-Australia partnership was crucial to the region and the relationship had never been more consequential.