

24 US troops hurt in attacks on Iraq, Syria bases

At least 24 US troops were injured amid a wave of attacks on their bases in Iraq and Syria over the past week, including one incident that caused injuries to 20 person-

FULL COVERAGE: P 28

nel, officials said Tuesday, say media reports. The most significant of these attacks occurred on October 18 at the al-Tanf Garrison in southeastern Syria, where 20 troops suffered "minor injuries" when multiple drones targeted the base, the officials said. US forces have started live-fire drills after the attacks.

EU eyes stronger India ties by posting military attaché

Bid To Add Teeth To Indo-Pacific Strategy

Sachin.Parashar
@timesgroup.com

New Delhi: In a first, the European Union will appoint a military attaché in India as it looks to strengthen security and defence ties with the country, and also to add teeth to its Indo-Pacific strategy that it announced in 2021.

The appointment is significant, coming as it does amid EU's pivot to the Indo-Pacific and its efforts to play a more consequential geopolitical role in the region since it set



out its Indo-Pacific goals two years ago. The EU currently has a military attaché only in about a dozen countries.

EU's new ambassador to India **Herve Delphin** told **TOI** that the appointment in the EU Delegation to India will take place next month. "It's a reaffirmation of the deepening of our cooperation in defence & security. We had a dialogue on maritime security & cyber security. We will soon have one on counter-terrorism. If you look at where we were two years ago, and where we are now, the progress we have made is quite impressive," said Delphin.

For India, which has accused Europe of remaining silent when the rules-based order was challenged in Asia, efforts by the EU to expand presence in the Indo-Pacific and to step up security cooperation are a long-awaited change. Amid some serious differences on India's Russia policy last year, foreign minister S Jaishankar had advised Europe to grow out of the mindset that "Europe's problems are the world's problems but the world's problems are not Europe's problems".

Speaking about concerns over China's assertiveness,



Chinese ship docks at Colombo as Beijing seeks to expand influence

A Chinese research ship docked at Colombo on Wednesday likely adding to India's concerns about China's growing influence in the Indian Ocean.

The arrival of Shi Yan 6 follows last year's visit by a Chinese naval vessel. Shi Yan 6 has been given permission to dock for replenishment until October 28, said foreign ministry spokesman Kapila Fonseka. The vessel had been expected to conduct research with Sri Lankan state institutions, but Fonseka said permission was granted only for replenishment and no research work would be carried out. "The particular permission is very clear," he added.

As per Chinese television, Shi Yan 6 is said to be a geophysical scientific research vessel on an expeditionary voyage in the eastern area of Indian Ocean. China has been trying to expand its influence in Lanka, located on one of the world's busiest shipping routes in what India considers part of its strategic backyard. AP

Delphin said EU had a strong economic partnership with China, but it won't allow its economic openness to be abused.

"Most of our trade and FDI in this region. It's important that there's stability in Indo-Pacific and escalation is contained. Also, that international laws, UNCLOS are abided by. We will resist any form of economic coercion. We have a strong economic partnership with China. But we're also systemic rivals. We won't allow our economic openness to be abused or international laws to be ignored," said Delphin, who assumed office this week.

Delphin said the EU was no longer just an economic power. "People may have re-

alised it also in the way we reacted to Russia's war on Ukraine. We have mobilised a significant amount of money to maintain the supply chain of weapons to Ukraine. We have changed a lot as a global security actor. There are concrete areas of cooperation with India as we develop Coordinated Maritime Presences (CMP) in the Indo-Pacific by European navies," said the ambassador, adding that there's genuine interest in both India and the EU to intensify security cooperation. The EU, which has done CMP in the northwest Indian Ocean, is also funding sustainable connectivity in the region through its Global Gateway initiative.

No immunity if platforms fail to remove child sex content?

Criminal Cases For Unlawful Posts, Says Min

Pankaj.Doval@timesgroup.com

New Delhi: The government is reviewing the continuation of immunity for social media giants under the IT Act if they fail to take down content that causes gross user harm, including cases related to peddling of child sexual abuse material (CSAM), misinformation and religious incitements, and algorithm mismanagement.

Besides, the government plans to invoke provisions of the Information Technology Intermediary Guidelines that would make the likes of Facebook, X (earlier Twitter), Instagram, YouTube and Google criminally liable for punishment under provisions of the Indian Penal Code, minister of state for IT and electronics Rajeev Chandrasekhar told **TOI** on Wednesday.

The government is particularly peeved at some of the

'FOCUS ON SAFETY OF DIGITAL USERS'

“ We are extremely disappointed by the response of YouTube even on serious and heinous aspects such as child sexual abuse content



We have emphasised on this aspect all along for almost the last two-and-a-half years. We are focused on the basic principles of ensuring safety and trust to our digital users, and for ensuring accountability of the platforms. This is something that has also been highlighted by PM Modi

—Rajeev Chandrasekhar | MoS for IT & Electronics

➤ In the US, 41 states are suing Meta for designing features on Instagram and Facebook that addict children, and for collecting data on

children under 13 without their parents' consent

➤ The platforms led to anxiety, depression & insomnia among young adults, petitioners said

platforms for refusing to comply with official notices on content related to child abuse, and taking refuge behind the “safe harbour” protection guaranteed under section 79 of the law over transmission of third-party content.

Chandrasekhar said the ministry has taken a “serious view” of repeated violations by platforms such as YouTube (owned by Google), X, and Telegram, especially as they have “responded inadequate-

ly” to notices over CSAM.

When invoked, rule 7 of the IT Intermediary Guidelines of 2021 will take away the immunity, especially for platforms that fail to take action against objectionable content.

The move comes at a time when several US states are suing Meta platforms and its Instagram unit for “fuelling a youth mental health crisis” by making kids addicted.

► **Related report, P 21**

'Will treat Pak reference to Kashmir at UNSC meet with contempt it deserves'

UNITED NATIONS, Oct 25 (PTI)

INDIA has said it will treat a reference by Pakistan to Kashmir during a Security Council meeting on the Israel-Gaza situation with the contempt it deserves and will not dignify it with a response.

The remarks by India's Deputy Permanent Representative at the UN, Ambassador R Ravindra, came on Tuesday after Pakistan's UN envoy Munir Akram made reference to Kashmir at the Security Council meeting on the situation in the Middle East.

"Before I end, there was a remark of habitual nature by one delegation referring to Union Territories that are integral and inalienable parts of my country," Ravindra said.

"I would treat these remarks with contempt they deserve and not dignify them with a response in the interest of time," Ravindra said.

Hezbollah, Hamas, Palestine Agree to halt Israel's TREACHEROUS, BRUTAL AGGRESSION

BEIRUT, Oct 25 (AP)

THE leader of Lebanon's Hezbollah group held talks on Wednesday with senior Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad figures in a key meeting of three top anti-Israel militant groups amid the war raging in Gaza.

A brief statement following the meeting said that Hezbollah's leader Hassan Nasrallah agreed with Hamas' Saleh al-Arouri and Islamic Jihad's leader Ziad al-Nakhleh on the next steps that the three — along with other Iran-backed militants — should take at this "sensitive stage."

Their goal, according to the statement that was carried on Hezbollah-run and Lebanese state media, was to achieve "a real victory for the resistance in Gaza and Palestine" and halt Israel's "treacherous and brutal aggression against our oppressed and steadfast people in Gaza and the West Bank".

No other details were provided. The discussions in Beirut came as the war between Israel and Hamas, the Palestinian militant group that rules the Gaza Strip, is now in its third week.

The fighting, triggered by Hamas' deadly incursion into



(R) Hezbollah leader Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah meets with Ziad al-Nakhleh, the head of Palestinian Islamic Jihad and Hamas deputy chief, Saleh al-Arouri, in Beirut, Lebanon. (AP/PTI)

Hamas commander in Gaza eliminated

TEL AVIV, Oct 25 (IANS)

THE Israel Defence Forces (IDF) on Wednesday said that in a joint operation with the Shin Bet Intelligence agency, it killed Hamas commander Taysir Mubashir in Khan Younis, a city in the southern Gaza Strip. The IDF said that Mubashir was responsible for several attacks on the Jewish nation and murder of five Israeli military students. Israel officials said that the commander had produced the ammunition's that were detonated from a Hamas terror tunnel near the Orhan outpost in 2004 leading to the killing of Israel soldier Sergeant Roi Nissim.

Israel on October 7 that killed more than 1,400 people in

Israel, has killed more than 5,700 Palestinians in Gaza.