

# Putin hosts top Chinese gen, calls for closer military ties

President Vladimir Putin on Wednesday lauded what he described as important "high-tech" Russian military cooperation with China at a meeting in Moscow with a top Chinese general who is a close ally of President Xi Jinping.

China and Russia declared a "no limits" partnership in February 2022 when Putin visited Beijing just days before he sent tens of thousands of troops into Ukraine.

Receiving General Zhang Youxia, vice chairman of China's Central Military Commission, and Russian defence minister Sergei



Shoigu, Putin sent his best wishes to Xi, saying the two leaders had developed a good friendship and working relations. He emphasized that while "Russia and China aren't building any military alliances based on Cold War patterns," their cooperation is a "serious factor in stabilizing the international situation." Zhang told Putin that China respected Russia for its ability to withstand what the West casts as its most stringent sanctions ever imposed on a major economy.

The US casts China as its biggest competitor and Russia as its biggest nation-state threat while President Biden argues that this century will be defined by existential contest with between democracies and autocracies. REUTERS

# Parliament Winter session in Dec 2nd week

NEW DELHI, Nov 8 (PTI)

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THE Winter session of Parliament is likely to commence in the second week of December and could conclude ahead of Christmas, sources said on Wednesday.



The session, they said, could commence days after the counting of votes in five States on December 3.

Three key bills which seek to replace the IPC, CrPC and the Evidence Act are likely to be taken up for consideration during the session as the standing committee on Home has already adopted the three reports recently.



# EU takes Ukraine closer to membership, Zelensky calls it a 'historic step'

**Brussels/Kyiv:** Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky praised as a "historic step" a recommendation by the European Union executive Wednesday to invite Kyiv for membership talks as soon as it meets final conditions, even as it fights to repel Russia's war.

The recommendation by the European Commission is an important milestone on Kyiv's road to Western integration and a geo-political gambit for the EU as Ukraine has been fighting against a large-scale Russian invasion since February 2022. The Commission said the talks should formally be launched once Kyiv satisfies remaining conditions related to reining in corruption, adopting a law on lobbying in line with EU standards and strengthening national minority safeguards.

"This is a strong and historic step that paves the way to a stronger EU with Ukraine as its member," Zelensky said on social media, vowing to press on with necessary reforms.

EU leaders are due to decide mid-December on whether to accept the Commission's recommendation. Any such decision requires unanimity of the bloc's 27 members, with Hungary seen as the main potential obstacle. If accepted, EU officials expect formal accession talks with Kyiv to start next year. Such negotiations take years before candidates meet extensive legal and economic criteria to join. The bloc is also wary of taking in a country at war.

The Commission's report



Ukraine president Volodymyr Zelensky (right) with European Commission president Ursula von der Leyen. EU executive on Wednesday recommended to invite Kyiv for membership talks as soon as it meets final conditions

Wednesday showed that Kyiv met four out of seven conditions to start talks, though more were near completion.

A top aide to the Hungarian prime minister Viktor Orban said Budapest would not support Ukraine's EU integration unless Kyiv changes its laws on minorities, in particular as regards education.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine put enlargement back at the top of the EU's political agenda as the geo-political rivalry between Moscow and the West erupted with a new force. "Completing our Union is the call of history," said European Commission president Ursula von der Leyen. "Completing our Union also has a strong economic and geopolitical logic. Past enlargements have shown the enormous benefits both for the accession countries and the EU. We all win." REUTERS



# Gaza & W Bank must be unified under Palestinian Authority: US

## G7 Urges 'Humanitarian Pauses', But Stops Short Of Calling For Ceasefire

US secretary of state Antony Blinken said Wednesday that Gaza should be unified with the West Bank under the Palestinian Authority once the war ends, the strongest signal yet from the Biden administration about what it would like to see at the end of Israel's fight against Hamas. Blinken went beyond

post-crisis governance in Gaza. It must include Palestinian-led governance and Gaza unified with the West Bank under the Palestinian Authority.

"And it must include a sustained mechanism for reconstruction in Gaza, and a pathway to Israelis and Palestinians living side by side in states of their own, with equal measures of security, freedom, opportunity, and dignity," Blinken said in Tokyo, where he had attended a meeting of foreign ministers from the Group of 7 nations. He offered no details about how such an arrangement might be implemented.

Hamas took charge of the Gaza Strip in 2007 following a bout of factional fighting. But in the wake of its incursion into Israel on Oct. 7, Netanyahu vowed to crush the group. Israel's ground invasion of Gaza has raised questions about the political settlement to follow and the potential role for the Palestinian Authority, which administers parts of West Bank and the 2.7 million Palestinians who live there under its president, Mahmoud Abbas.

In Tokyo, foreign ministers from the world's major industrialised democracies called on Wednesday for "humanitarian pauses" in the fighting in Gaza to allow more aid to enter and to help protect Palestinian civilians, adding to pressure on the Israeli government to relent in its assault on the enclave. The statement by the G7 nations stopped short of calling for a ceasefire, which Blinken said would risk leaving Hamas in place with the "capacity to repeat Oct. 7 again and again." "We underscore the importance of protecting civilians and compliance with international law, in particular international humanitarian law," the statement said. NYT

## Lone Palestinian-origin lawmaker censured in US House over stance

The US House voted Tuesday to censure Democrat representative **Rashida Tlaib**, formally rebuking the sole Palestinian American in Congress for her statements on the Israel-Hamas war.



Twenty-two Democrats joined most Republicans to pass the resolution, which accuses Tlaib of "promoting false narratives" and of "calling for the destruction of the state of Israel." The vote was 234-188. The resolution specifically cited a video Tlaib published on social media containing the phrase "from the river to the sea", a pro-Palestinian rallying cry that is viewed by many Jews as antisemitic and calling for Israel's eradication. NYT

remarks by the White House, which on Tuesday cautioned Israel against reoccupying Gaza after the end of its war with Hamas. PM Netanyahu had suggested that his country could hold a security role there "for an indefinite period."

"We must also work on the affirmative elements to get to a sustained peace," Blinken said. "These must include the Palestinian people's voices and aspirations at the centre of



Israelis hold a candlelit vigil in Tel Aviv on Tuesday to mark one month of the October 7 attack by Hamas on Israel

## Israel: Key attack planner cornered in Gaza bunker, Hamas armourer killed

Thousands of Palestinian civilians trudged in a forlorn procession out of the north of the Gaza Strip on Wednesday seeking refuge from Israeli air strikes and fierce ground fighting between Israeli troops and Hamas militants. However, the central and southern parts of the small, besieged Palestinian enclave were also under fire as the war between its Hamas rulers and Israel entered its second month. Palestinian health officials said an air strike that hit houses in Nusseirat refugee camp killed 18 people on Wednesday morning. In Khan Younis, six people, including a young girl, were killed in an air strike.

Gaza City, the Hamas militant group's main stronghold in the territory, is now encircled by Israeli forces. The military said troops have advanced to the heart of the densely-populated city while Hamas says its fighters have inflicted hea-

vy losses. About 15,000 people fled northern Gaza on Tuesday — triple the number that left Monday, UN monitors said. They are using Gaza's main north-south highway during a daily four-hour window announced by Israel. Thousands of others remain inside the encircled north, including at Gaza City's main Al Shifa hospital.

The Israeli military said on Wednesday two separate strikes eliminated a leading Hamas armourer, Mahsein Abu Zina, and fighters engaged in anti-tank or ground-to-ground rocket fire. Israel also said that Yahya Sinwar, the most senior Hamas leader in Gaza and believed to be a key planner of the Oct. 7 attacks, had been cornered in his bunker. Military spokesperson Rear Admiral Daniel Hagari said combat engineers were using explosive devices to destroy Hamas tunnel network. Israel says 33 of its soldiers have been killed. AP & REUTERS



and aspirations at the cent...

# World on track to produce 110% more fossil fuels by 2030: UNEP

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The world is on track to produce 110% more fossil fuels (coal, oil and gas) by 2030 than what the 1.5 degree Celsius of warming threshold allows and 69% more than what it needs to limit warming to 2 degrees C, said a global 'production gap report' brought out Wednesday by the UN Environment Programme jointly with three global think-tanks.

The increase in production of fossil fuels comes despite 151 governments having pledged

to achieve net-zero emissions, mostly by mid-century.

The report analysed 20 major fossil fuel-producing countries including India and noted that though the global coal, oil, and gas (key drivers of overall GHG emissions) demand will peak this decade, the countries plan put together would still lead to an increase in global coal production until 2030, and in global oil and gas production until at least 2050.

"Governments are literally doubling down on fossil fuel production that spells double



The increase in production of fossil fuels comes despite 151 governments having pledged to achieve net-zero emissions, mostly by mid-century

trouble for people and planet... We cannot address climate catastrophe without tackling its root cause: fossil fuel dependence," said UN chief António Guterres while reacting to the report that comes ahead of COP28 starting November 30.

The report underlined that the near term increase in coal production is led by India followed by Russia, and both are planning significant increases in coal production through 2030. It means India will continue to bank on coal for its electricity demand to meet its deve-

lopment goals even as the country is simultaneously giving greater focus to renewable energy as per its commitment under the Paris Agreement.

The global Government Plans and Projections pathways show that, compared with 2020 levels, annual oil and gas production is projected to increase by 27% and 25% by 2030, and by 29% and 41% by 2050, respectively. On the other hand, annual coal production is projected to increase by 10% between 2020 and 2030, before falling by 41% between 2030 and 2050.

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# Army to bolster aviation wing with copters, drones, missiles

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**New Delhi:** The Army is slowly but steadily bolstering the strike, surveillance and airlift capabilities of its aviation corps, with plans underway to induct 126 light utility helicopters, 90 Prachand combat choppers, six heavy-duty Apache gunships and 25 more advanced light helicopters as well as satcom-enabled weaponised drones and air-launched Helina anti-tank guided missiles.

The Army Aviation Corps (AAC) is now planning to set up additional integrated aviation brigades after the first three came up during the ongoing over three-year-old military confrontation with China in eastern Ladakh, with two of them deployed along the line of actual control and one on the western front with Pakistan, senior officers said on Tuesday.

Progressive induction of new choppers will also see the 12-lakh strong Army finally begin to retire its old Cheetah and Chetak helicopters — workhorses in high-altitude areas but dogged by a high crash rate — from 2027 onwards.

“By then, Hindustan Aeronaut-

ics (HAL) should start delivering the new light utility helicopters (LUHs) in the 3-tonne class...this entire process of phasing out the Cheetah/Chetak fleet and replacing them will take around 10-12 years. Some choppers will also be leased in the interim. Eventually, the AAC needs 250 LUHs,” an officer said.

The armed forces have been demanding new LUHs to replace their over 350 Cheetah/Chetak choppers, which are of the design vintage of the 1960s, lack modern avionics and in-built safety mechanisms, for almost two decades now. While this will take some time, the AAC is forging ahead well on other fronts. The recent induction of satcom-enabled Israeli Heron Mark-II drones, which can stay airborne for 35 hours at a stretch, for instance, has boosted strategic surveillance along the LAC.

The AAC will also get new Israeli Hermes 900 StarLiner remotely-piloted aircraft systems early next year. The mega \$3 billion contract for 31 top-notch armed MQ-9B Reaper or Predator-B drones — 15 for Navy and 8 each for Army and IAF — is also likely to be inked with the US within this fiscal.



# India, US to focus on defence, tech ties in 2+2 talks tomorrow

## Meeting To Discuss Spat With Canada, West Asia Conflict

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**New Delhi:** In the 5th 2+2 ministerial meeting on Friday, India and the US will look to build upon the gains from Prime Minister Narendra Modi's landmark state visit earlier this year, with a focus on defence technology transfer and coproduction, strategic technology collaborations, nuclear cooperation, and people-to-people ties. China and the Indo-Pacific, including Quad cooperation, and Israel-Hamas and Ukraine-Russia wars are among the global and regional issues the two sides will look to address.

India's diplomatic spat with Canada is also likely to figure in foreign minister S Jaishankar's bilateral meeting with his counterpart Antony Blinken on the margins of the 2+2 talks. Secretary of defense Lloyd Austin will also have a bilateral meeting with defence minister Rajnath Singh, said the government in its official announcement on Wednesday, as the two sides look to reaffirm the India-US Comprehensive Global Strategic Partnership.

"The 2+2 will enable a high-level review of progress being made in cross-cutting aspects of defence and security cooperation, technology value chain collaborations and people-to-people ties," said the statement, adding that the ministers will review progress in the futuristic roadmap for the India-US partnership as envisioned by Modi and Biden during their meetings in June and September.

After their summit in June, Biden had visited India in September for the G20 and met Modi on the sidelines. A major takeaway from Modi's state visit was the MoU signed by GE and HAL for manufacture of fighter jet engines



in India. This followed the announcement last year by Biden and Modi of the initiative on Critical and Emerging Technology (iCET) under which India and the US have worked to finalise a defence industrial roadmap for joint development and production, munition related technologies, and other systems.

The 2+2 will discuss progress under the initiative before it comes up for annual review by the NSAs in January. The two sides are also looking to finalise an agreement for development of next generation small modular reactor technologies. India will also hope for the confirmation of an official acceptance of the invite for Biden to attend the Republic Day parade next year as the chief guest.



# Eye on China, US gives \$553m for Adani's Colombo port project

**New Delhi:** In a move that signals Washington's intent to confront China's growing influence in India's neighbourhood and has come as a shot in arm for the Adani Group, the US International Development Finance Corporation (DFC) on Wednesday announced a funding of \$553 million (around Rs 4,600 crore) for a

► **China base in Oman worries US, P 24**

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deepwater shipping container terminal at Colombo Port, which is being developed with Adani Ports as a JV partner.

The US financing for the largest and busiest transshipment port in the Indian Ocean

## STRATEGIC MOVE

► US financing for the **largest & busiest transshipment port in the Indian Ocean** is seen as an attempt to counterbalance China's influence in Sri Lanka, where it funded and built a deepwater port in Hambantota, as well as the South Asia region

► After the India Middle East Economic Corridor, **this is the second major initiative where the US has played a key role**

is seen as a bid to counterbalance China's influence in the country, where it built a deepwater port in Hambantota, as well as the South Asia region. TNN

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# 148 vs 133: India beats China in QS univ rankings for Asia

Bombay & Delhi IITs In Top 50, 5 Other Institutes In Top 100

Manash Pratim Gohain & Hemali Chhappia | TNN

## TOP LEAGUE

New Delhi: India has surpassed China as the most represented higher education system in Asia with 148 featured universities, 37 more than last year. Mainland China with 133 universities is second and Japan with 96 the third highest represented in the latest QS World University Rankings for Asia.

IIT-Bombay and IIT-Delhi are among the top 50, while there are five other Indian institutions in top 100. A total of 856 institutions from 25 countries have been listed in the rankings released on Wednesday. IIT-Bombay leads nationally in both QS's academic and employer reputation indicators, drawing on the expert opinion of over 1.4 lakh academics and employers. It ranks within the top 20 Asian institutions for employer reputation.

Some of the highlights for Indian universities based on key indicators are outstanding level of research output by volume; overall stability with around 50% of the ranked universities being either stable or having improved; highly trained faculty; and significant improvement for specific institutions even while they lag behind peers in internationalisation indicators.

Year-on-year performance revealed 21 for Indian universities improving, 15 remaining unchanged and 37 new entries. In fact, India takes the lion's share of the new entries, while Mainland China saw only seven new additions to its list of ranked institutions.

"The increasing visibility of Indian universities in the QS rankings reflects the dynamic expansion of India's higher education landscape," said Ben Sowter, senior vice president at QS, adding, "While the significant growth in the number of Indian institutions and their research contributions marks a noteworthy development in the region's educational profile, it also illuminates the path ahead for India

## INDIAN UNIVERSITIES IN QS WORLD UNIVERSITY Asia 2024 - Top 200

2024	2023	Change	QS WUR	Institution
40	40	0	149	IIT-Bombay
46	46	0	197	IIT-Delhi
53	53	0	285	IIT-Madras
58	52	6	225	IISc, Bangalore
59	61	2	271	IIT-Kharagpur
63	66	3	278	IIT-Kanpur
94	85	9	407	University of Delhi
111	124	13	364	IIT-Guwahati
116	114	2	369	IIT-Roorkee (IITR)
117	119	2	606	Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi
179	185	6	427	Anna University, Chennai
187	181	6	847	University of Calcutta
199	207	8	1084	Banaras Hindu University



## TOP PERFORMING INDIAN INSTITUTIONS BY INDICATOR

QS Indicators	Institution	Regional Rank
Papers per Faculty	Anna University	1
Staff with PhD	IIT-KGP, IIS, IIT-K, IIT-Mandi, IIT-Ropar, IIT-Bhubaneswar, Indian Institute of Science Education and Research, Indian Institute of Information Technology, Design & Mfg Kancheepuram	1
Faculty Student	North Eastern Hill University	2
Citations per Paper	Shoolini University of Biotechnology and Management Sciences	5
Employer Reputation	IIT-Bombay	19
Outbound Exchange Students	Amity University	19



to further elevate its standing in the global academic community."

While India falls below the regional average in academic reputation (11.8 points as against regional average of 19) and employer reputation (9.6 as against 18), it achieves the second-best regional results in papers per faculty (36 against 14.8) among the higher education systems. India also achieves its best average score for faculty with PhD indicator (42.3 as against 22), indicating strong research output and a highly qualified faculty. In QS's staff with PhD indicator, nine of the top 10 uni-

versities are Indian, with Indian Institute of Science in Bengaluru bagging the top spot in Asia.

India produces an exceptional amount of research and boasts of seven of Asia's 10 best universities in terms of papers per faculty, with Anna University achieving regional pre-eminence in research productivity, securing the first spot in this indicator

"Our citation per paper has come down by a factor of 2 and that is something we are going to check on. Otherwise, it is heartening to know that we are on the top and things seem to be going fine," said Subhasis Chaud-

huri, director, IIT-Bombay.

Mahesh Verma, vice-chancellor, Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University (Delhi) which had overall rank of 77 in and 28 among Indian institutions in terms of academic reputation, expressed his optimism that it will continue to improve in the next ranking cycle.

Another highlight is North Eastern Hill University, Shillong has also distinguished itself, ranking second regionally for its faculty/student ratio, indicating a commitment to providing students with accessible, high-quality teaching and learning environments.



# CJI: Contempt power not to protect judges from criticism

## 'Only To Prevent Interference In Justice Delivery'

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**New Delhi:** The much-feared and criticised contempt of court powers were not meant to "protect a judge from criti-

► **FULL Q & A: P 20**

cism but to prevent individuals from interfering in dispensation of justice by courts", CJI D Y Chandrachud told **TOI** as he spoke on a wide range of issues, on completing a year as head of the judiciary, and more than 23 years as a constitutional court judge.

Justice Chandrachud became CJI on November 9 last

“Public perceptions change every week, but a judicial career is measured in decades, thus, **judges are well insulated and unconcerned with the vicissitudes of everyday public perception**

It is true that social media represents a new era of unfiltered public discourse, and I have even seen deep fakes of myself or false articles attributing to me things that I have never said.

However, I believe it is both **futile and a distraction to try and target every false or misleading post**



...If the courts are **hearing many cases that also have a bearing on politics**, it is the **natural result of a vibrant democracy** where ideas and issues are constantly being contested across a range of fora, including courts

—CJI D Y Chandrachud

year and has one more year to go in the top post.

On conflict between fundamental rights and national interest in the political sphere, CJI Chandrachud said, "The role of the court is to ensure that the actions of the government, even when pursuing the national interest, always respect the rule of law

and the Constitution. The task of the judge is to decide each case on its merits within the framework provided by the Constitution."

Asked about attempts to settle political scores through court battles, the CJI said, "Legal issues have always had a close bearing on political disagreements... whether it is

the constitutionality of laws, disputes concerning elections, or criminal proceedings involving public figures, courts always have had a role to play in ensuring that politics operates within the confines of the rule of law and the Constitution."

On social media posts vilifying judges and others, he said, "I believe it is both futile and a distraction to try and target every false or misleading post. Certainly, when a post gains traction and may undermine judicial proceedings, it must be responded to."

The CJI also dwelt on changes to 160-year-old penal laws. "This is a question for Parliament to consider. It is not the court's role to consider the desirability of larger legislative changes absent specific challenges before us," Chandrachud said.