

Philippines and China trade accusations over SCS collision

Manila: A Philippine boat and a Chinese coast guard ship collided near a hotly contested reef on Sunday, with both countries trading blame for the latest such confrontation in the disputed South China Sea. The incident happened during a Philippine resupply mission to a tiny garrison on Second Thomas Shoal in the Spratly Islands, which is a flashpoint for Manila and Beijing.

It comes a day after the Philippines accused the Chinese coast guard of using water cannons to "obstruct" three government boats delivering provisions to Filipino fishermen near Scarborough Shoal off the main island of Luzon.

The Philippines said China "harassed, blocked, and executed dangerous manoeuvres on Philippine civilian supply vessels". One of its two boats was "rammed" by a Chinese coast guard ship, and a Chinese ship also used water cannons which caused "severe damage" to the engine of one of the supply boats and damaged the mast of the coast guard vessel.

The China coast guard, however, accused the Philippine boat of "deliberately colliding" with its the Chinese vessel, after "disregarding our multiple stern warnings". The Philippine boat "changed direction suddenly in an unprofessional, dangerous manner, deliberately colliding with our coast guard vessel 21556, which was on a normal law enforcement route, and caused a scrape," it said in a statement. AFP

Egyptians vote in elections likely to give Sisi 3rd term as prez

Cairo: Egyptians began voting on Sunday in a presidential election set to hand **Abdel Fattah El-Sisi** a third term in power, as the country grapples with an economic crisis and a war on its border with Gaza.



If Sisi wins a new six-year term, his immediate priorities would be

taming near-record inflation, managing a chronic foreign currency shortage and preventing spillover from the conflict between Israel and Gaza's Hamas rulers. Voting, which runs from 9 am until 9 pm (local time), is spread over three days, with results due to be announced on December 18.

Patriotic songs played on a loop as polling stations opened on Sunday morning in Cairo, where pictures of el-Sisi proliferated in the weeks leading up to the election. Riot police were deployed at entrances to Tahrir Square in the capital's centre.

Critics see the election as a sham after a decade-long crackdown on dissent. The government's media body has called it a step towards political pluralism. Three candidates qualified to stand against Sisi in the election, none of them high-profile figures. The most prominent potential challenger halted



Egyptians line up to cast their votes in Cairo on Sunday

his run in October, saying officials and thugs had targeted his supporters — accusations dismissed by the national election authority.

Authorities and commentators on tightly controlled local media have been urging Egyptians to vote, though some people said days before the poll they did not know when it was taking place. Others said voting would make little difference.

As army chief, Sisi led the 2013 ousting of Egypt's first democratically elected president, Mohamed Mursi of the Muslim Brotherhood, before winning the presidency the following year with 97% of the vote. He secured the same margin of victory in 2018. He has overseen a crackdown that has swept up liberal and leftist activists as well as Islamists. Rights groups say tens of thousands have been jailed. Sisi and his backers say the crackdown was needed to stabilise Egypt and counter Islamist extremism. REUTERS

India will need ₹57L cr for adaptation goals till 2030

INDIA'S SUBMISSION TO UN CLIMATE BODY

Expenditure and money needed for adaptation

- Rs 57 lakh crore till 2030, over 2023-24 base year
- Climate-induced damage could lead to an incremental cost of Rs 15 lakh crore by 2030
- Building adaptation capital stock could be as high as Rs 72 lakh crore after accounting developmental needs

India's total expenditure for adaptation

5.6% of the GDP in 2021-22

Expenditure grew from a share of

3.7% of the GDP in 2015-16

What about emissions?

➤ Emission intensity (emission per unit of GDP) reduced by 33% in 2019 from 2005 levels

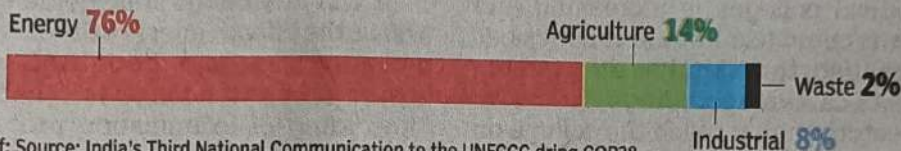
➤ Gross emission of GHG increased by 10% in 2019 from 2016 levels

➤ Net emission of GHG increased by 4.5% in 2019 from 2016 levels

(Net emission = total emission - removals through carbon sink)

(Land use, Land-Use Change and Forestry - LULUCF - sector remained a net sink in 2019)

Sector-wise emissions in 2019



Figures are rounded off; Source: India's Third National Communication to the UNFCCC during COP28

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Dubai: If the 'global goal on adaptation' (GGA) document is adopted at the Dubai climate summit (COP28), more than 195 countries will have to undertake risk and vulnerability assessment of climate hazards, and formulate their specific national adaptation plans by 2025.

They will also have to establish multi-hazard early warning systems and climate information services for risk reduction by 2027.



Its adoption, however, depends on consensus of all countries as adaptation action will need a huge amount of money.

Though India has already been taking several adaptation measures as part of its national plan on climate change, the country would need Rs 57 lakh crore for adaptation alone in a "business as usual" scenario till 2030 over the 2023-24 base

The draft on 'global goal on adaptation' speaks about scaling up finance mobilisation by developed countries to help developing ones in their adaptation efforts but the overall finance provisions appear to be quite weak in terms of scale and scope

year. The country's climate action is, currently, largely financed by domestic resources as climate finance flows from developed countries are falling far short of what is needed to mitigate and adapt to climate change.

The draft on GGA speaks about scaling up finance mobilisation by developed countries to help developing ones in their adaptation efforts but the overall finance provisions appear to be quite weak in terms of scale and scope. It merely urged developed countries to "at least double their collective provision of climate finance for adaptation" to developing countries by 2025 from 2019 levels, for achieving a balance between mitigation and adaptation.

The draft on GGA, released under Article 7 of the overarching Paris Agreement, came hours before the

negotiators moved to 'majlis' (gathering for informal discussions) to thrash out their differences on the draft text on global stocktake (GST) — the other deliverable at COP28. Building consensus over the language used for phase out of fossil fuels (oil, gas and coal) is the biggest task of the 'majlis' before the presidency comes out with a final text.

COP28 president Sultan Al Jaber, meanwhile, repeatedly called on all countries to build consensus on the language on fossil fuels for the final outcome text.

"Now, time has come for all parties to constructively engage and to come to me with that language. I want everyone to show flexibility to act with urgency and to find common ground," said Al Jaber while responding to a question in a press conference.

IAF goes full throttle to turn into an 'aerospace power'

Collaborating With Govt, Pvt Cos To Develop Niche Technologies

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New Delhi: The Indian Air Force has gone full throttle to rename itself as the Indian Air and Space Force (IASF) as part of its ongoing overall drive to transform from "a potent air-power" to "a credible aerospace power" in the years ahead.

After formulating a new doctrine that focuses on effective exploitation of the "air and space continuum" and a "Space Vision 2047", IAF has now explained to the government in detail the rationale of being renamed as IASF. "We expect the proposal to be cleared soon," a source told TOI.

Concomitantly, IAF has cranked up efforts to fully exploit the final frontier of space rather than restricting it to the existing ISR (intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance), communication and navigation capabilities.

IAF is collaborating with ISRO, DRDO, IN-SPACE (Indian National Space Promotion and Authorisation Centre) and the private industry to develop niche space-related tech-



The anti-satellite missile was successfully tested in 2019. The IAF is planning to rename itself as the Indian Air and Space Force

nologies in a major way now.

"Work is underway in areas like PNT (positioning, navigation and timing), advanced ISR and communications, space weather prediction, space situational awareness, space traffic management and the like," he said.

IAF, in fact, is looking at India having over 100 big and small military satellites with the help of the private sector in the next seven to eight

years, while the tri-Service Defence Space Agency set up in 2019 also evolves into a full-fledged Space Command.

"Space has been incorporated in the training for officers and airmen, which includes exercises for space-related contingencies. It's a natural progression from air to space," the source said.

IAF chief Air Chief Marshal VR Chaudhari in recent months has also repeatedly stressed the need for India to develop both defensive and offensive capabilities in the space domain by building on the success of 'Mission Shakti' in March 2019. DRDO had then tested an anti-satellite (A-Sat) interceptor missile to destroy the 740-kg Microsat-R satellite at an altitude of 283-km in low earth orbit.

"Near space, at an altitude from 20 to 100 km, and outer space will be the ultimate high-ground in the battles of the future. Advanced winged bodies are being built to operate seamlessly between air and space. India has to be prepared for all this," the source said.

China, of course, is rapid-

ly developing and deploying A-Sat weapons from "kinetic" ones like direct ascent missiles and co-orbital killers to "non-kinetic" high-powered lasers, electromagnetic pulse weapons, jammers and cyberweapons, as was earlier reported by TOI.

If China has the People's Liberation Army Strategic Support Force for the space domain, the US created a full-fledged Space Force (USSF) as a distinct branch of its armed forces in 2019. Several other countries like the UK, Japan, France and Russia also have space commands or wings in their air forces.

Consequently, IAF has no option but to gradually transcend from existing OCA (offensive counter air) and DCA (defensive counter-air) air-superiority missions to OCS and DCS operations also in the future.

Eventually, IAF's existing fully-automated aid defence network called integrated air command and control system (IACCS) will also have to evolve into IASCCS. Space will have to be harnessed for the battlespace of the future.

India can now influence growth of others: Rajnath

'It Is Trying To Be A Global Growth Engine'

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: India has shown there is "no irreconcilable trade-off between growth and distributive justice", and the government is making all efforts to further boost the country's position as a global growth engine, defence minister Rajnath Singh said on Saturday.

As the fastest growing major economy in the world, India has now reached a position to trigger a "positive impact" on the growth of other countries, Singh said, addressing the annual general meeting of Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI).

Stressing the government's commitment towards inclusive development, he



Defence minister Rajnath Singh with Maharashtra CM Eknath Shinde, in Mumbai on Saturday

said, "Our growth model shows that equal opportunities to everyone and the accelerated growth rate can be achieved simultaneously."

Noting that India has also committed that its growth will not be at the cost of environmental degradation, he said, "We've chosen the path of green growth. We signed

the Paris Agreement. We've formed the International Solar Alliance. We've taken initiatives to promote clean energy. We have also reduced the emission intensity of GDP."

The minister also listed out government's initiatives and achievements in infrastructure development.

"Till 2014, India had 91,000 km of national highways; today it has increased to about 1.5 lakh km. While India had only 74 airports in 2014, today it has increased twofold. Through PM Gati Shakti Yojana and National Infrastructure Pipeline, we have planned infrastructure development worth up to Rs 100 lakh crore in the country," Singh said.

While the government is making all efforts to further strengthen India's position as a growth engine, the minister said, "You all know that the government cannot do this work alone. For that we also need the support of the wealth creators and thought leaders of this country."

Heavy fighting in south Gaza; toll tops 17,700

RAFAH (Gaza Strip), Dec 10 (AP)

HEAVY fighting raged overnight and into Sunday in the southern Gaza town of Khan Younis, as Israel pressed ahead with its offensive after the US blocked the latest international efforts to halt the fighting and rushed more munitions to its close ally.

Israel has faced rising international outrage and calls for a cease-fire after the killing of thousands of Palestinian civilians and the displacement of nearly 85 per cent of Gaza's 2.3 million people within the besieged territory, where UN agencies say there is no safe place to flee.

But the United States has lent vital support to the offensive once again in recent days, by vetoing United Nations Security Council efforts to end the fighting that enjoyed wide international support, and by pushing through an emergency



Palestinians look at houses destroyed in the Israeli bombardment of the Gaza Strip in Rafah on Saturday. (AP/PTI)

sale of over USD 100 million worth of tank ammunition to Israel. The US has pledged unwavering support for Israel's goal of crushing Hamas' military and governing abilities in order to prevent any repeat of the October 7 attack that trig-

gered the war. Hamas and other Palestinian militants stormed into southern Israel that day, killing some 1,200 people and capturing some 240, over 100 of whom were released during a weeklong cease-fire late last month.

GAZA DEATH TOLL TOPS 17,700: THE Palestinian death toll in Gaza from the Israel-Hamas war has surpassed 17,700, around two-thirds of them women and children, according to the Health Ministry in the Hamas-controlled territory.

Israel says 97 of its soldiers have died in the ground offensive after Hamas raided southern Israel on Oct. 7, killing about 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and taking about 240 hostages.

Amid concerns about a wider conflict, Iran-backed Houthi rebels in Yemen threatened to prevent any ship heading to Israeli ports from passing through the Red Sea and Arabian Sea until food and medicine can enter Gaza freely. With only a trickle of humanitarian aid reaching a small portion of Gaza, residents have reported severe food shortages.

Navy holds 'Prasthan' exercise off Mumbai coast

MUMBAI, Dec 10 (IANS)

THE Indian Navy, along with other defence State and civil agencies completed a two-phased exercise 'Prasthan' in the Offshore Development Area, off the Mumbai coast, officials said here on Saturday.

The exercise, which is conducted every six months, was held on the R12A (Ratna) Platform of Oil & Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) around 83 km away from Mumbai harbour. The 'Prasthan' is conducted to validate measures and procedures to address various contingencies that may arise in the oil production platforms and was held in two phases on Friday.

The first phase saw security emergencies such as attack by terrorists and bomb threat from IEDs, and upon receiving the



'Prasthan', a co-ordinated exercise, being conducted by the Indian Navy and other defence, State and civil agencies in the Offshore Development Area off Mumbai.

(PTI)

'threat', Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Western Naval Command, Mumbai, who is also the Commander-in-Chief (Coastal Defence), West activat-

ed the requisite contingency plan.

The Crisis Management Committee (CMC), comprising senior officials from various defence, State and civilian agen-

cies, assembled at the Indian Navy's Operation Centre to facilitate a coordinated response to all emergencies involved. The CMC assessed various aspects of the emergencies and initiated coordinated actions by concerned agencies as per established Standard Operating Procedures.

The Indian Navy, in conjunction with the Indian Air Force, deployed its anti-sabotage teams to neutralise security threats in the affected oil platform.

It also saw actions to counter contingencies such as terrorist intrusion, bomb threat, man overboard, medical evacuation of platform crew and oil spill in the area.

This was followed by the second phase which witnessed action against contingencies such as fire in the oil platform and assisting a disabled vessel in the offshore development area.

China startup pulls off 2nd methane-fuelled rocket launch

Beijing-based startup LandSpace Technology successfully sent a second rocket powered by a methane-based fuel into space. The rocket, ZQ-2, carrying three locally made satellites, took off Saturday from the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center. LandSpace sent the world's first methane-fuelled rocket into orbit in July. SpaceX and others are in a race to develop rockets that can use methane-based fuel, which has potential to be cleaner and safer than solid propellants, liquid hydrogen and other fuels currently used. BLOOMBERG