

Rajnath pushes for 'joint military vision' to tackle global challenges

Says 'Fail-Proof Deterrence' Needed Amid China Standoff

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Ahead of the impending creation of integrated theatre commands, defence minister Rajnath Singh on Thursday told the armed forces to evolve a 'joint military vision' and prepare for challenges the country may face in future wars, amid the continuing military confrontation with China and turmoil in the neighbourhood.

"India is a peace-loving nation but the armed forces need to be prepared for war in order to preserve peace... We should have fail-proof deterrence," Singh said, asking the military brass to closely study the ongoing Russia-Ukraine and Israel-Hamas conflicts as well as the current situation in Bangladesh.

The defence minister, addressing the joint commanders' conference (JJC) in Lucknow, said the Army, IAF and Navy should always stay prepared to deal with the "unexpected", with strategies in place for "synergised, swift and proportionate responses to provocations". Singh



Armed forces should stay prepared with strategies in place for 'synergised, swift responses to provocations', Rajnath said

stressed the need for "a broader and deeper analysis" by the top military leadership in view of the situation along the northern borders with China and the happenings in neighbouring countries, which are posing a challenge to peace and stability in the region.

The minister had a closed-door session with the military brass on China and the situation along the 3,488-km line of actual control. Singh said, "Despite global volatility, India is enjoying a rare peace dividend and it is developing peacefully. However, due to the increasing number of challenges, we need to remain alert."

"We need to focus on our present, keep an eye on the activities happening around us at present, and focus on being future-oriented. For this, we should have a strong and robust national security com-

ponent," he added.

The minister also stressed upon the need to evolve a joint military vision to further enhance integration and synergy in operations, doctrines, policies and procurements among the three Services. He further called upon the commanders to "identify and include the right mix of traditional and modern warfare equipment" in their arsenals, while stressing on capability development in space and electronic warfare since they are "integral to tackling modern-day challenges".

Asking them to increase the use of latest technological advancements in the fields of data and artificial intelligence, he said, "These components do not participate in any conflict or war directly. But their indirect participation is deciding the course of warfare to a great extent."

Forces poised to shed more 'vestiges of colonial era'

New Delhi: After taking several steps in line with govt's directive to shed "vestiges of the colonial era" and "Indianise" military traditions and customs, ranging from junking of western tunes in the Beating Retreat ceremony to the introduction of kurta-pyjamas in naval messes, the forces are poised for some more measures, reports **Rajat Pandit**.

During the joint commanders conference, the military brass dwelt upon the need to create a new legacy in the 14-lakh strong forces, with defence minister Rajnath Singh releasing a publication on 'Colonial Practises and the Armed Forces - A Review'.

Several serving military officers and veterans, however, feel that such relentless drives, policies and seminars are unnecessarily diverting the attention of the forces from the clear and present danger posed by China and its expanding military collusion with Pakistan.

"The focus should only be on modernisation and training for future wars," an officer said.

Invest in infra sector, aviation in India: PM woos Singapore Inc



PM Modi with business leaders from Singapore on Thursday

TNN & AGENCIES

New Delhi/ Singapore: PM Narendra Modi on Thursday asked top business leaders in Singapore to look at investment opportunities in India, pitching the country as the best alternative for those looking to build a resilient supply chain, in what was a bid to tap into the China Plus One strategy.

During his meeting leading Singaporean CEOs, PM asserted that India would increase the pace and scale of infrastructure development during his third term and highlighted new opportunities in railways, roads, ports, aviation, industrial parks and digital connectivity, an official statement said.

Modi said India had made transformative progress in the last 10 years and would continue on the same path given its strengths of political stability, policy predictability, ease of doing

business, and its reform-oriented economic agenda. He said the country offered a skilled talent pool, expansive market opportunities, and was contributing 17% to global economic growth.

"If there is any fastest growing aviation market in the world, it is in India...the entire sky is open," the visiting PM said while inviting investment in India. He said even scrapping business in India presents huge investment opportunities, adding there are plans to scrap all old govt vehicles. The PM also announced the establishment of an Invest India office in the island nation.

The list of CEOs at the meeting included those of Singapore sovereign wealth fund Temasek Holdings and GIC, leading bank DBS Group, Singapore Airlines, renewables player Sembcorp, Changi Airport, Singtel, SGC and Capital Land Investment.

Rain effect: Kitchen staples pricier, onions ₹60 per kg & potatoes ₹40

Flood In West UP, High Humidity Destroyed Plants, Hit Yield: Market Assn.

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DEAR VEGGIES

Vegetables	Current Price (₹/kg)	Last Week (₹/kg)
Potato	40	20-30
Onion	60	40
Tomato	50	70
Pumpkin	40	40
Cucumber	60	40
Radish	60	40
Bitter Gourd	80	70
Cauliflower	120	100
Capsicum	400	300
Pointed Gourd	100	80
Sponge Gourd	60	50
Ginger	160	120
Garlic	400	300



Noida: The prices of most vegetables, especially potatoes and onion, shot up at retail shops during the last week, following a similar trend in the wholesale market.

The skyrocketing prices were attributed to the monsoon, which led to supply shortages due to crop damage caused by rain and humidity.

At Sector 27's Indira Market, onions were sold at Rs 60 per kg, 50% higher than last week's Rs 40. Potato prices have nearly doubled at Rs 40 per kg compared to around Rs 20 per kg a week ago.

Sadanand Sah, a vegetable seller, listed the current prices — cucumbers were being sold at Rs 60 per kg against last week's Rs 40, radish at Rs 60, up from Rs

40, brinjal at Rs 80, up from Rs 60, cauliflower at Rs 120, up from Rs 100, ginger at Rs 160, up from Rs 120, and garlic at Rs 400, up from Rs 300

last week. Meanwhile, the price of tomatoes has decreased from Rs 70 to Rs 50 per kg due to fresh arrivals, while the

price of pumpkin has remained constant at Rs 40 per kg for two weeks.

"The govt should keep the vegetable prices in check as they affect each household," said Aanchal Kumari, a resident of Sector 26 who was shopping at the Indira Market.

Sonu Kumar, another vegetable seller in the Sector 12 market, said that there is a 20-30% price increase in all vegetables due to the monsoon at his store.

"We get the vegetables from Azadpur Mandi and Ghazipur Mandi. The prices have increased at the wholesale market as well and this rise is reflecting at the retail shops," he said.

The price hike has also devoid customers of complementary coriander leaves and green chillies by the shopkeepers. Coriander lea-

ves are now priced at Rs 600 per kg, up from Rs 400, and green chillies have risen to Rs 80 per kg from Rs 60 in just one week.

"Flooding and waterlogging often destroy plants and reduce yield. Also, Noida sources vegetables from Delhi and western UP. We hope the situation will improve in around two weeks, once the rainy season ends. Right now, there is no scarcity of vegetables including onion, potatoes, and tomatoes in Noida," Secretary of Noida Phool Mandi, Santosh Singh, said.

According to the India Meteorological Department (IMD), Noida saw a deficit rainfall this monsoon, recording 79.7mm rainfall as against the normal of 399.2mm rainfall from June 1 to Sept 5, 2024.

Putin: India could be mediator on Ukraine

'Brics Partners Making Efforts For Resolution'

TNN & AGENCIES

Russian President Vladimir Putin Thursday said he was constantly in touch with India, China and Brazil over the Ukraine war, adding these countries were ma-

► **Mind games? Putin says he prefers Harris, PAGE OPP**

king efforts to resolve the conflict. An agency report from Vladivostok quoted him as saying these countries could potentially act as mediators.

"If there is a desire of Ukraine to carry on with the negotiations, I can do that. We respect our friends and partners, who, I believe, sincerely seek to resolve all issues surrounding this conflict, primarily China, Brazil and India," Putin said at the Eastern Eco-

India, Singapore talk SCS, semicon

IANS



PM Modi & Singapore's Wong at a semiconductor facility

India and Singapore upgraded bilateral ties to a comprehensive strategic partnership as PM Modi held talks with his counterpart Lawrence Wong. The two countries are looking to enhance cooperation through advanced manufacturing, with focus on semiconductors. Amid growing concerns over Chinese assertiveness, they reaffirmed importance of peace, security and stability in and overflight above South China Sea. **P 12**

nomic Forum in Vladivostok.

Separately, Russian presidential spokesman Dmitry Peskov told the Izvestia daily that India could help in establishing a dialogue on Ukraine. Underlining the "highly constructive, even friendly relations" between Modi and Putin, he said the Indian PM could "lead the line on getting first-hand information from the participants in this conflict" as he "freely communi-

cates with Putin, with Zelensky, and with the Americans".

PM Modi had travelled to Moscow in July, where he told Putin that the conflict could not be resolved on the battlefield, and followed it up with a visit to Kyiv last month during which he reiterated India's willingness to contribute in all possible ways to facilitate an early return of peace.

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Ex-Brexit negotiator Michel Barnier named new French PM

PARIS, Sept 5 (IANS)

IN A bid to break the deadlock over the new French Government after the elections to the National Assembly threw up a fractured mandate, President Emmanuel Macron on Thursday named right-wing leader Michel Barnier as Prime Minister.

Republicans (LR) party leader Barnier, 73, will be the oldest to take over as the Prime Minister of France, since the Fifth Republic commenced in 1958. He succeeds Gabriel Attal, the youngest-ever to hold the post after his appointment in early 2024 and who has been



serving as caretaker in the post since the July elections, the 'BBC' reported.

The EU's former chief Brexit negotiator, Barnier has held various senior posts, both in France and within the EU, during his long political career.

However, he now faces the challenge of a Government that will need to survive a

National Assembly divided into three big political blocs - the largest being the left-wing New Popular Front coalition, followed by Macron's centrist Ensemble, and the far-right National Rally. The three hold nearly 500 seats.

What Pak's SCO invite to Modi means for ties

More A Formality Than A Peace Outreach, It Opens Up The Possibility Of A High-Level Visit From India, Howsoever Implausible It Might Have Seemed Till Now

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Pakistan PM Shehbaz Sharif has invited his Indian counterpart Narendra Modi to Islamabad in Oct for the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Council of Heads of Government (CHG) meeting. In the parched landscape of India-Pakistan relations, the possibility of a Modi visit to Pakistan has been nothing short of chimerical, as obvious from the fate of the SAARC summit, which Islamabad wants to host but has been unable to for the past eight years because of its troubled relationship with New Delhi.

The invite to Modi is for a multilateral event and was extended per the SCO protocol, just like India's own invite in 2023 to then Pakistan foreign minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari for a meeting of SCO foreign ministers in Goa. In this case though, not even Pakistan perhaps expects Modi to come. And that's not just owing to the state of bilateral relations, but also because Modi has in the past attended only the SCO Council of Heads of State (CHS) summit, deputing the external affairs or other Cabinet ministers for the heads of govt meeting.

India has usually been represented by external affairs minister S Jaishankar or his predecessor, Sushma Swaraj, at previous meetings. So, whether the PM sends Jaishankar, or another senior minister, this time or downgrades participation to the level of officials here or in Islamabad, is really the key question.

India And SCO

Modi has been a regular at the SCO heads of state summit, but he skipped the one in Kazakhstan in July this year as the dates clashed with a Parliament session. However, he did express full support for the summit in a conversation with Kazakhstan President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, dispelling doubt about India's commitment to SCO.

India joined the grouping as an observer in 2005 and became a full member, along with Pakistan, in 2017. Despite China's overbearing presence and efforts to project SCO as an anti-West alliance, India has looked to play a proactive



External affairs minister S Jaishankar met his then Pakistan counterpart Bilawal Bhutto at the SCO foreign ministers' summit in Goa last year, but they didn't have any bilateral session on the sidelines

TOI Explains

role in the organisation, underscoring its significance for regional security. The fact that the SCO Charter doesn't allow Pakistan to raise bilateral issues like J&K has worked in India's favour, allowing it to join SCO events even in Pakistan at the level of officials. SCO is also important for India's ties with resource-rich Central Asia.

However, India's support

SCO IS...

- > A nine-member grouping founded in 2001 by China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. India, Pakistan joined as full members in 2017. Iran is also a member.
- > Set to induct Belarus as its latest member – its membership was approved at a top-level summit this year. Afghanistan and Mongolia are observer states and there are several

other dialogue partners. participation. In case Jaishankar does go, like he did to Bishkek for the same meeting last year, will he have a bilateral meeting with his Pakistani counterpart? In Goa last year, Jaishankar welcomed the Pakistan foreign minister but without any form of bilateral interaction, or even a handshake, with him in public.

According to former Indian high commissioner to Pakistan, G Parthasarathy, Jaishankar can go for the heads of govt meeting in line with the existing practice but, on the issue of a bilateral meeting, he should take a call based upon the

na's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) — the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) passes through PoK — and, at the heads of state summit it hosted virtually last year, New Delhi didn't sign on to a long-term economic strategy that SCO announced because of China's imprint on it.

What Will India Do?

The govt will obviously think long and hard over the matter and the external affairs ministry has said nothing on

circumstances. "Pakistan today is virtually bankrupt. It has serious internal and external financial problems. Moreover, its expectations of a return of 'strategic depth' in Afghanistan, after the return of the Taliban, have fallen flat. Islamabad has also lost its diplomatic leverage with friends in the Gulf like UAE and Saudi Arabia, which now enjoy warm and friendly ties with India," Parthasarathy notes.

India will also factor in the recent terror attacks in Jammu, or any attempt to disrupt the upcoming elections in the Union Territory, with Modi having warned Islamabad against use of terrorism and proxy war.

Ties In Deep Freeze

Even Islamabad would not like its invite to Modi to be seen as a peace outreach, as it maintains its position that India must reverse its 2019 decision to revoke J&K's special status for any forward movement in ties. For India of course, the core issue is Pakistan's continued support of cross-border terrorism.

India has already announced elections in J&K and promised restoration of statehood. Islamabad says these initiatives can't be a substitute for self-determination. However, for Pakistan to expect more is wishful thinking. In any case, India believes Pakistan has no locus standi on how internal affairs of J&K are run.

India and Pakistan have had no substantive bilateral engagement since the failed bid to revive the dialogue process in 2015, when then foreign minister Sushma Swaraj visited Islamabad. Jaishankar had accompanied her as foreign secretary. The two sides did manage to negotiate a ceasefire along the LoC in 2021, but that initiative didn't restore ties, apparently because of Pakistan's expectations of "unrealistic" concessions on the Kashmir issue.

Any hope of a thaw in ties after the return of the Sharif brothers is yet to materialise. Swaraj, too, had visited Pakistan for a multilateral event in Dec 2015, but ended up presiding over the relaunch of the bilateral dialogue process. Her visit, however, was preceded by other engagements, including a game-changing pull aside between Modi and his then counterpart Nawaz Sharif in Paris. This time, there's little to inspire confidence.