

Israel assures US it won't hit oil or N-sites in Iran: Report

Netanyahu's Office Says, 'We Listen To Opinions Of US, But We'll Make Decisions Based On Our Nat'l Interests'

Washington: The Biden administration believes it has won assurances from Israel that it will not hit Iranian nuclear or oil sites as it looks to strike back following Iran's missile barrage earlier this month, two US officials said Tuesday. The officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said that Israel had agreed to focus its next attack on military targets in Iran instead of sites related to Iran's oil industry or its uranium enrichment efforts.

The administration also believes that sending a US Terminal High Altitude Area Defence battery to Israel and roughly 100 soldiers to operate it has eased some of Israel's concerns about possible Iranian retaliation and general security issues. The Pentagon on Sunday announced the THAAD deployment to help bolster Israel's air defences following Iran's missile attacks on Israel in April and Oct.

However, the US officials cautioned the assurance is not iron-clad and that circumstances could change. The officials also noted that Israel's track record on fulfilling assurances in the past is mixed and has often reflected domestic Israeli politics that have upended Washington's expectations.

The most recent example of that was last month when US officials were told by their Israeli counterparts that Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu would welcome a US- and French-led temporary ceasefire initiative for Lebanon only to see Israel launch a massive air strike that killed Hezbollah chief Hassan Nasrallah two days later. Netanyahu's office said in a statement that "we listen to the opinions of the US, but we will make our final decisions based on our national interests." The White House National Security Council declined to confirm that Netanyahu offered Biden any



SHOOTING ATTACK IN ISRAELI CITY: An assailant shot dead an Israeli policeman and wounded 5 others near the southern city of Ashdod on Tuesday in what police called a 'terrorist' attack. The gunman was killed in the attack at an interchange along a highway to Tel Aviv

Amid spat, Macron says Bibi 'mustn't forget Israel created by UN decision'

Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu should not forget his country was created as a result of a resolution adopted by the United Nations, French Prez Emmanuel Macron told cabinet on Tuesday, urging Israel to abide by UN decisions.

"Mr Netanyahu must not forget that his country was created by a decision of the UN," Macron told the weekly French cabinet meeting, referring to the resolution adopted in Nov 1947 by the UN General Assembly on the plan to partition Palestine into a Jewish state and an Arab state.

"Therefore this is not the time to disregard the decisions of the UN," he added, as Israel wages a ground offensive against the Iran-backed Hezbollah in southern Lebanon, where the UN peacekeepers are deployed. France has repeatedly denounced Israeli fire against the UN peacekeepers, who include a French contingent.

UNSC Resolution 1701 sta-

assurances about targets.

West Asia has been bracing for an expected response from Israel after Iran launched roughly 180 ballistic missiles on

Oct 1. Oil prices fell about 5% Tuesday on reports. Brent crude, the international benchmark, was trading at below \$74 a barrel on Tuesday. Fears

that only the Lebanese army and the UN peacekeeping mission UNIFIL should be deployed in south Lebanon. But Netanyahu has called on UN to move the 10,000 strong peacekeeping force out of "harm's way", saying Hezbollah was using them as "human shields".

On Tuesday, Netanyahu hit back at Macron's comments, saying the country's founding was achieved by the 1948 Arab-Israeli war, not a UN ruling. "It was not the UN resolution, but rather the victory achieved in the war of independence with the blood of heroic fighters, many of whom were Holocaust survivors - including from the Vichy regime in France."

Meanwhile, Italy's PM Giorgia Meloni said that she plans to visit Lebanon on Oct 18. Her decision to travel to country, despite daily Israeli attacks there, highlights Italy's determination to support the UN operation and underscores Rome's anger with Netanyahu. AP

US warns Israel to boost aid into Gaza or risk losing weapons funding

Washington: The Biden administration has warned Israel that it must increase the amount of humanitarian aid it is allowing into Gaza within the next 30 days or it could risk losing access to US weapons funding. Secretary of state Antony Blinken and defence secretary Lloyd Austin warned their Israeli counterparts in a letter dated Sunday that the changes must occur.

A similar letter that Blinken sent to Israeli officials in April led to more humanitarian assistance getting to the Palestinian territory, state department spokesman Matthew Miller said Tuesday. But that has not lasted. "In fact, it's fallen by over 50% from where it was at its peak," Miller said. "So the secretary, along with secretary Austin, thought it was appropriate to make clear to the government of Israel that there are changes that they need to make again, to see that the level of assistance making it into Gaza comes back up from the very, very low levels that it is at today."

For Israel to continue qualifying for foreign military financing, the level of aid getting into Gaza must increase to at least 350 trucks a day. Israel must institute additional humanitarian pauses and provide increased security for humanitarian sites, Austin and Blinken said in their letter. They said Israel had 30 days to respond to the requirements. An Israeli official confirmed a letter had been delivered but did not discuss the contents. AP

that the increasing hostility between Israel and Iran would disrupt oil flows from West Asia had driven up prices for Brent to the \$80 a barrel range. AP

S-W monsoon withdraws from India

NEW DELHI, Oct 15 (PTI)

THE southwest monsoon has completely withdrawn from the country and the northeast monsoon has begun over southeast peninsular India, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said on Tuesday.

This year, the southwest monsoon reached Kerala on May 30 and covered the entire country by July 2. It began its retreat from northwest India on September 23.

Typically, the southwest monsoon arrives in Kerala by June 1 and covers the country by July 8, with its withdrawal from northwest India starting around September 17 and completing by October 15.

"Today, the southwest monsoon has withdrawn from the entire country. Simultaneously, northeast monsoon rainfall activity has commenced over southeast peninsular India," the IMD said in a statement.

The country recorded 934.8 mm of rainfall compared to the



normal of 868.6 mm -- the highest since 2020 -- in the monsoon season this year.

Intense low-pressure systems, especially in August and September, resulted in 8 per cent more rainfall than usual in India during the 2024 monsoon season, according to the weather department.

The rainfall was 2 per cent higher than normal in June and July, while August and

September saw 12 per cent above normal rains.

The IMD said India did not experience any "break monsoon" conditions this year because of the large number of low-pressure systems.

Regionally, central India received 19.5 per cent more rain than usual, peninsular India saw 14 per cent more rain and northwest India recorded 7 per cent above-normal rain.

However, eastern and north-eastern India got 14 per cent less rain than expected, the IMD said.

The rainfall in June was 11 per cent below normal, but July saw 9 per cent more rain, August had 15.3 per cent extra and September recorded 11.6 per cent more-than-normal rainfall.

Only three of India's 36 meteorological subdivisions had less rainfall than normal this season. Twenty-one subdivisions saw normal rainfall, 10 had excess and two reported large excess.

Rajasthan, Gujarat, western Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Telangana and Andhra Pradesh were among the states with more rainfall than usual, according to the IMD.

In 2023, India recorded 820 mm of rainfall, which was 94.4 per cent of the long-period average (LPA). In 2022, the country received 925 mm (106 per cent of the LPA) rain, 870 mm rain in 2021 and 958 mm rain in 2020.

In major boost, India signs \$3.3bn US deal for 31 Predator drones

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New Delhi: By 2029, India will have enough satellite-controlled versatile 'birds' for long-range reconnaissance missions over land and sea, and to then destroy selected targets with precision, in a major boost for the country's unmanned warfare capabilities.

India inked the Rs 28,000 crore (\$3.3 billion) contract with the US govt for the 31 "birds" or weaponised MQ-9B 'Predator' remotely-piloted aircraft, along with another Rs 4,350 crore (\$520 million) deal with drone-manufacturer General Atomics to set up a MRO facility here, in South Block on Tuesday.

"Under the deal, the first MQ-9B high-altitude long-endurance (HALE) drone will be inducted by Jan 2029, with all the 31 being delivered in batches by Oct 2030. The 'birds' will provide a quantum jump in the ISR (intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance) capabilities of our armed forces," an official told TOI.

The two such unarmed drones taken on lease from General Atomics since Sept 2020 - one of them



Under the deal, the first MQ-9B high-altitude long-endurance drone will be inducted by Jan 2029, with all the 31 being delivered in batches by Oct 2030, an official said

crashed in Sept — have certainly helped India keep close track of the increasing presence of Chinese warships and spy vessels in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) as well as the People's Liberation Army's build-up along the 3,488-km Line of Actual Control.

"DRDO, unfortunately, has not been able to develop such long-range 'hunter-killer' drones, which are also capable of anti-submarine warfare, till now. We especially need them for the IOR," the official added.

Consequently, 15 MQ-9B Sea Guardians are earmarked for the Navy, while the Army and IAF will get eight Sky Guardians each, all armed with Hellfire missiles, GBU-39B precision-guided glide bombs and other weapons.

Joint General Debate on decolonisation at UN

India condemns Pak's 'unsubstantiated allegations' on J&K

NEW YORK, Oct 15 (ANI)

COUNSELLOR Eldos Mathew Punnoose exercised India's right of reply against Pakistan at the Joint General Debate on decolonisation at the United Nations on Monday. Punnoose condemned Pakistan's "unsubstantiated allegations" regarding the Union Territories of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh.

He emphasised the need for Pakistan to cease its ongoing human rights violations in Pakistan-occupied Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh.

**Asks
Pak to cease
human rights
abuses**

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Why Trudeau's, Again, Fighting India

His domestic political play is also a smokescreen behind which he wants to repair relations with China, accused of poll interference. For New Delhi, the key is to stop Ottawa from piggybacking Washington

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Justin Trudeau has launched his seasonal strike on India. What that does to India-Canada relations is, for him, secondary. By now, India has also figured out this play, including the China dimension, and shifted priorities to limiting the impact on US, where it has extended full cooperation to probe and act on findings shared on cases related to Sikh separatists.

On Monday too, while coming out strongly against Canada for identifying Indian diplomats as 'persons of interest' in an ongoing investigation, India was quick to work out and announce an official visit to US for the GOI inquiry committee set up specifically to examine findings shared by Washington on the Sikh issue.

More than what happens in Canada, the immediate concern for Indian authorities is the impulse among sections within US govt to collaborate with Trudeau and forge a joint front against India. New Delhi has adopted different approaches to the two countries, on grounds that Washington has shared findings with Indian authorities while Ottawa has handed no material and instead, chosen to play to the gallery.

It's soon becoming clear that what's of consequence to Trudeau is the fact that besides helping him keep key Canadian-Sikh political allies like NDP's Jagmeet Singh within his fold, a strident anti-India position allows him to deflect the pressure he faces on China's interference in Canada's electoral process.

In fact, Trudeau has actively sought to equate India with China when it comes to foreign interference in Canada, even though all Canadian parliamentary reports on the matter put China ahead of India on this score. Canada's Foreign Interference Commission, where he is to depose on Wednesday, observed in its initial report in May: "With these limitations in mind, the intelligence collected by Canada indicates that the People's Republic of China stands out as a main perpetrator of foreign interference against Canada."

These relate to influencing electoral outcomes of parliamentary constituencies that the opposition felt they ought to have won. Trudeau has had to walk a thin

line on the subject in his earlier testimonies and utterances, where he has conceded to Chinese interference but denied any of that having made an impact on the actual electoral outcome in 2019 and 2021 elections where his party had emerged as the single-largest entity.

In trying to cope with this pressure, he has built up a political case of alleged foreign interference by India using the killing of India's proscribed terrorist Hardeep Singh Nijjar to his advantage. He has aligned anti-India pro-Khalistani forces within Canada to build India up as a target equal to China, if not bigger.



Uday Deb

This seemingly well thought-out political strategy has allowed him to create space for resuming high-level engagement with Beijing after his govt was forced to expel Chinese diplomat Zhao Wei last year for alleged intimidation of an opposition member of parliament from Conservative Party.

Canadian foreign minister Melanie Joly sought to break the ice in July through an official visit to Beijing, the first in last seven years. She held detailed discussions with her Chinese counterpart Wang Yi, who proposed to set aside old differences and upgrade bilateral ties to a strategic partnership.

For Trudeau, whose father Pierre was the first

Canadian PM to visit China in 1973, the relationship with Beijing nosedived after he honoured a US request to detain Huawei CFO Meng Wanzhou in Vancouver in 2018 for her dealings with Iran. The matter was resolved over the next three years after China also detained two Canadians, who were released as a way forward was found to drop charges against Meng.

The relentless pressure from Conservative Party on China's interference in Canada's electoral politics has kept matters on boil. But by propping up the Khalistan issue, Trudeau is hoping for an easier, broader across-the-spectrum consensus than get caught in a high stakes battle over China. Also, between the two options of balancing China and US compared to India and US, he appears to be tilting to the former given that his request for getting Canada to join the AUKUS nuclear submarine project is still pending.

For India, Canada, and more specifically the Trudeau administration, is now a file in the India-US folder. Ottawa relies on Washington's support to strengthen its case against New Delhi. This is worked through Five Eyes, which is essentially an alliance of western intelligence agencies, where the Canadian effort finds resonance among those in US who see Sikh separatists as a security/intelligence asset against India.

This came to the fore recently when just days prior to Modi's US visit last month, summons were issued against the national security advisor in a case involving Sikh separatists in US. The NSA chose to drop out of the visit, which was also to be Biden's last Quad summit. Also, both sides progressed on other sensitive issues that eventually led to them sealing the \$4bn deal to purchase 31 Predator drones on Tuesday, signalling that they have chosen to insulate progress in other key spheres of the strategic partnership from this issue.

Similarly, the question now is to insulate the Indo-US partnership from Trudeau's efforts at politicising the issue of Sikh separatists for his political benefit, which is now providing cover to the quiet repair and possible rapprochement with China. The trajectory that this Indo-US conversation takes will inform the salience of the subject in the bigger picture, because the issue (of Sikh separatism) by itself is of more relevance to Trudeau's politics than to India or US.

Canada PM dials Starmer, fgn min talks of sanctions

India: Same Old Trudeau Saying Same Old Things

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau doubled down on his govt's allegations about the involvement of Indian diplomats in criminal activities as he dialled his UK counterpart Keir Starmer to discuss the issue and foreign minister Melanie Joly didn't rule out sanctions against India.

► **EDIT PAGE: Why Trudeau is, again, fighting India**
► **Canada using NIA post to blame India, FLAP OPP**

Canadian authorities engaged other Five Eyes countries — Australia, New Zealand and US — on the issue and Trudeau alleged in a press conference that India had ignored "evidence" shared by Canada about the alleged involvement of Indian diplomats, forcing Joly to order their expulsion.

“...it is necessary to disrupt the criminal activities that continue to pose a threat to public safety in Canada. That is why we acted. Because we will always — first and foremost — stand for the right of Canadians to feel safe and secure in their own country



—Justin Trudeau

Pjb murder plotters hiding in Canada: NIA

At a time when Canada is upping the ante against India, NIA has told SC that operatives of banned Khalistan Liberation Force based in Canada and Pakistan plotted the murder of a Shaurya Chakra awardee teacher in Punjab in 2020. **FLAP OPP**

However, Indian govt sources dismissed his remarks as "same old Trudeau saying the same old things for the same old reasons".

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Trudeau trying to deflect from meddling probe?

Indian govt believes Justin Trudeau's move to escalate matters over the killing of Hardeep Singh Nijjar was triggered by his deposition scheduled for Wednesday before an influential commission to explain the charge that his govt has been derelict in preventing China's interference in domestic politics.

"The effort seems to be a counter to the damning perception by manufacturing a narrative that it was India which was meddling in internal affairs," said a source familiar with details of multiple rounds of parleys between the two govts since last year when Trudeau first raised the alleged involvement of Indian agencies in Nijjar's killing.

He also said that Trudeau and his security establishment have yet to produce evidence to back up their "outrageous charge". **FLAP OPP**

Jaishankar, Pak PM shake hands at SCO meet, but offer little hope of thaw

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Islamabad: Foreign minister S Jaishankar began his visit to Pakistan for SCO heads of govt meeting — the first Pak trip by an Indian foreign minister in nearly a decade — participating in a dinner hosted by PM Shehbaz Sharif for the delegates on Tuesday.

Sharif extended his hand as Jaishankar walked up to him at the venue — the PM's residence — and the handshake that followed lasted several seconds as they exchanged courtesies.

After having ruled out a bilateral meeting, both sides also played down expectations of a brief pull aside on the sidelines of the summit Wednesday, maintaining Jaishankar's 24-hour presence in Pa-



Foreign minister S Jaishankar with Pak PM Shehbaz Sharif

kistan was only about SCO.

After the dinner, Pakistan minister Ahsan Iqbal put the onus for a bilateral meeting on India. He also said it was time for both sides to uphold the Lahore Declaration that Shebaz's brother Nawaz Sharif had reached with then Indian PM A B Vajpayee in 1999.

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