

India, China should view each other as partners, not rivals: FM Wang Yi

■ By K J M Varma

BEIJING, Mar 8 (PTI)

INDIA and China should view each other as “partners, not rivals” and “opportunity instead of threat”, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi said here on Sunday. Wang, at his annual press conference on the sidelines of the Chinese Parliament, the National People’s Congress (NPC), said both countries should stick to the direction set by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Xi Jinping to improve relations without interference.

Modi and Xi had a successful meeting in Tianjin last August, Wang said. “Building on the fresh start enabled by their Kazan meeting in 2024, the Tianjin summit brought about further improvement in China-India relations,” he added.

“We are heartened to see re-energised interactions at all levels, a new record in bilateral trade, and closer people-to-people exchanges. All this has brought tangible benefits to the two peoples,” he said. On the future course of the ties, Wang said both countries “must maintain the correct strategic perception of each other as partner rather than rival, and opportunity instead of threat”. “Both sides also must uphold good-neighbourliness and friendship, and jointly safeguard peace and stability in the border areas and focus on development,” he said.

“As each other’s important neighbours and members of the Global South, China and India enjoy profound civilisational ties and share extensive common interests,” Wang said. “Mutual trust and cooperation is beneficial to the development of the two countries, while division and confrontation is detrimental to the rejuvenation of Asia,” the Chinese foreign minister said.

Enhance political loyalty, Xi tells Chinese military after purges

BEIJING, Mar 8 (PTI)

CHINESE President Xi Jinping on Saturday called on the PLA to enhance political loyalty after the recent purge of the top brass of the military, while a top General called on the defence personnel to resolutely obey the Chinese leader’s command.

Meeting a largely condensed delegation of military officials of PLA and the People’s Armed Police Force at the National People’s Congress (NPC), China’s parliament, Xi stressed fully leveraging the unique strengths of enhancing political loyalty in the military, state-run Xinhua news agency reported.

He also called for concerted efforts to modernise national defence and the armed forces in a steady, sustained manner. This is Xi’s first meeting after the removal of two senior Chinese military officials, including the highest-ranking PLA official, Gen Zhang Youxia, in January, regarded as a major purge of the PLA in recent history, sending shock waves among the rank and file.

The two sides should follow the direction set by leaders and remove interference, he said without elaborating. He said India and China should support each other hosting BRICS summits. While India is set to host the summit this year, China is due to host the summit in 2027.

India assures assistance to its nationals in Saudi Arabia

DUBAI, Mar 8 (PTI)

INDIA'S ambassador to Saudi Arabia Suhel Ajaz Khan on Sunday held a virtual interaction with representatives of the Indian community and reassured them of assistance following joint US-Israel strikes on Iran.

Khan was accompanied by Deputy Chief of Mission, Abu Mathen George, and Counsellor (Community Welfare), Y Sabir.

The Ambassador reassured the community of the Embassy's readiness to extend all necessary assistance to Indian nationals in need, India in Saudi Arabia said in a post on X.

Khan also briefed participants

Indian national among two killed after projectile falls in Saudi residential area

DUBAI, Mar 8 (PTI)

AN Indian national is among two killed after a projectile fell on a residential location in Saudi Arabia on Sunday, officials said.

The military projectile fell in a residential area in Saudi Arabia's al-Kharj Governorate on Sunday, killing two people and injuring 12 others, the

Saudi Civil Defence said.

A Civil Defence spokesman said the projectile struck a residential compound belonging to a maintenance and cleaning company in Al-Kharj.

The incident killed one Indian national and one Bangladeshi national, while 12 Bangladeshi residents were injured, *Al-Arabiya* news reported.

on the Embassy's recent initiatives, including the establishment of a 24/7 control room to

provide prompt support. Community representatives expressed appreciation for the

Embassy's proactive outreach and engagement, it added.

The Indian mission in Saudi Arabia on Sunday also issued an advisory for its citizens to continue to remain vigilant and adhere to safety guidelines and follow advisories issued by local authorities diligently.

The advisory has come in the wake of recent attacks between the US and Iran.

"The Embassy of India, Riyadh and the Consulate in Jeddah and its outsourced services through VFS, are continuing to function normally and will issue updates and advisories as and when necessary. Consular Camps are being undertaken on a regular basis," the advisory said.

India taps alternative crude supplies as Iran conflict drags on

“Non-strait sources are fully operational and we are sourcing more and more supplies from non-conflict zones. Non-Strait sources accounted for 60% of supplies in 2025 which after the Middle East conflict climbed to 70%,” a top Oil Ministry source said.

NEW DELHI, Mar 8 (PTI)

INDIAN Refiners have begun negotiating for additional crude cargoes from the US, Russia and West Africa to ensure supplies remain adequate in the event of the Middle East conflict drags on for a longer period, industry officials and analysts said.

Refineries, which convert crude oil into fuels like petrol and diesel, have deferred planned maintenance shutdowns and are maintaining normal processing rates to create buffers that could meet the country's requirement in near term, they said.

India imports about 88 per cent of its crude oil requirement, with roughly half of those supplies in February passing through the Strait of Hormuz, the narrow sea lane between Iran, Oman that serves a key energy transit route for global markets.

The recent military strikes by the United States and Israel on Iran, and Tehran's retaliatory attacks on US bases in neighbouring countries as well as Israel, have sharply escalated tensions in the region,



leading to a near halt in tanker movements through the strategic waterway.

“Non-strait sources are fully operational and we are sourcing more and more supplies from non-conflict zones,” a top oil ministry source said. “Non-Strait sources accounted for 60 per cent of supplies in 2025 which after the Middle East conflict climbed to 70 per cent.”

Indian refiners are tapping crude from West Africa, Latin America and the US, he said adding the US Treasury Department issuing a 30-day waiver to allow the sale and delivery of sanctioned Russian oil that has already been loaded on vessels to India has opened up another avenue.

Budget session to resume from today

NEW DELHI, Mar 8 (PTI)

THE second half of the Budget session of Parliament is set for a stormy start on Monday, with the Lok Sabha scheduled to take up the Opposition-sponsored resolution seeking the removal of Speaker Om Birla.

The ongoing conflict in West Asia is also likely to figure prominently as the Opposition is already attacking the Government over its stance towards Iran, the US “waiver” on India’s Russian oil purchase, among other issues.

Besides, the outcome of the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in poll-bound West Bengal, which led to the deletion of nearly 60 lakh votes, is also expected to cast its shadow on parliamentary proceedings.

The no-confidence resolution against Birla was given by several Opposition leaders who alleged that he had acted in a “blatantly partisan” manner in the House. They had also accused the Speaker of making certain false claims against the Congress members when he spoke of some “unexpected action” in the Lok Sabha and had asked Prime Minister Narendra Modi not to come to the House to reply to the debate in the Motion of Thanks on the President’s Address. Birla had recused himself from the proceedings of the House from the date of submission of the notice, with the Lok Sabha secretariat saying he would return only after the disposal of the agenda.

On Saturday, PM Modi backed Birla, saying he had taken all Parliamentarians along and was committed to the principles of the Constitution and Parliamentary democracy. Apart from the no-trust notice, the US-Israel strikes on Iran will come up during the session.

Iranian drone damages desalination plant in Bahrain

It was the first time an Arab country had reported Iran targeting a desalination plant during the nine-day war.

DUBAI, Mar 8 (AP)

AN IRANIAN drone attack caused "material damage" to a desalination plant, Bahrain said on Sunday morning.

It was the first time an Arab country had reported Iran targeting a desalination plant during the nine-day war.

Hundreds of desalination plants sit along the Persian Gulf coast, and the Arab countries in the region rely heavily on the facilities for their drinking water.

Meanwhile, Israel renewed its assault on southern Lebanon early on Sunday as the war entered its ninth day and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu promised "many surprises" in the next phase of the conflict rippling across the region.

The latest strikes in Lebanon killed 12 more people, pushing the death toll there above 300

Israeli strikes kill 12 people in Lebanon; toll 300



A thick plume of smoke rises from an oil storage facility hit by a US-Israeli strike late on Saturday in Tehran, Iran. (AP/PTI)



A portrait of the late Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, on the wreckage of a building that was destroyed by an Israeli airstrike in Dahiyeh Beirut's southern suburbs, Lebanon on Sunday. (AP/PTI)

after Israel ordered large swaths of the country to evacuate during an offensive that its military said would be aimed at stamping out Iran-supported forces there.

Israel and the United States

launched the war on Feb 28, saying they were targeting Iran's nuclear and missile programmes and suggesting they sought to topple the Government. The conflict has since spread across the region,

rattling global markets, disrupting air travel and leaving Iran's leadership weakened by hundreds of Israeli and American airstrikes.

Iran has fired missiles and drones at neighbouring coun-

tries in the Gulf, Israel has intensified attacks in Lebanon, and strikes have been reported from Cyprus to waters off of Sri Lanka.

As Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu laid out the next phase of the war late on Saturday, saying Israel aims to destabilise Iran's regime and allow change in Government, Israel launched another wave of strikes late Saturday, hitting an oil storage facility in Tehran - the first apparent strike on a civilian industrial site - sending pillars of fire into the night sky.

(Contd on page 5)

52,000 Indians returned following partial opening of airspace

NEW DELHI, Mar 8 (PTI)

The security situation in West Asia remains precarious