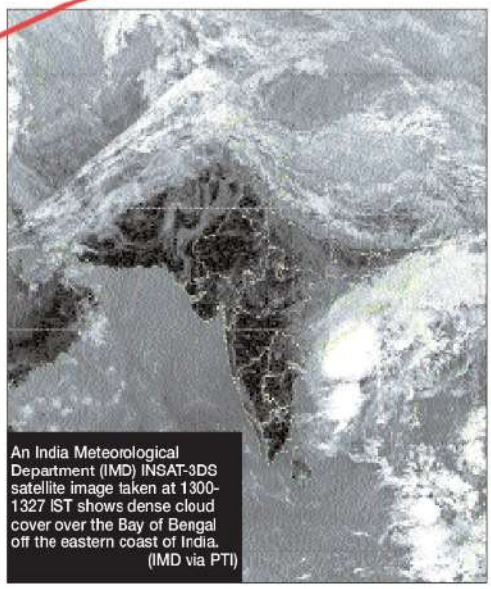
Over 3 lakh evacuated as Cyclone 'Akvan' heads toward Odisha

- Odisha Government has set up 9,299 shelters. The cyclone is likely to cross between Puri and Gopalpur by Friday noon with the maximum sustained winds of 90-100 kmph, gusting to 110 kmph

BHUBANESWAR, Nov 19 (PTI)



People carry their belongings as they evacuate to a shelter as part of precautionary measures in view of Cyclone 'Akvan' in Ganjam district, Odisha on Thursday. (PTI)



An India Meteorological Department (IMD) INSAT-3DS satellite image taken at 1300-1327 IST shows dense cloud cover over the Bay of Bengal off the eastern coast of India. (IMD via PTI)

THE Odisha Government has set up 9,299 shelters, evacuated over 3 lakh people to safety, deployed 423 emergency response teams and closed educational institutes in several districts as it has stepped up precautionary measures in view of Cyclone 'Akvan', which is likely to cross between Gopalpur and Puri on Friday, Chief Secretary Anu Garg said.

The State Government is making all-encompassing preparations to tackle the cyclone's impact, with priority being given to ensure "zero casualties", she said. Tourists have been prohibited from visiting coastal areas, including Gopalpur, Puri, Satapada and Chilika, and fishermen have been asked not to venture into the sea, the chief secretary said.

The coastal and southern regions of the State have been experiencing light to moderate rain since Wednesday night, and the intensity will increase gradually as the weather system nears the coast, Bhubaneswar Meteorological Centre Director Manorama Mohanty told reporters here.

As a precautionary measure, the railway authorities have cancelled two trains between Visakhapatnam and Koraput on Thursday and Friday.

"According to the India Meteorological Department (IMD), the projected path of Cyclone 'Akvan' indicates that it is likely to cross between Puri and Gopalpur. In view of the forecast, the State has set up 9,299 cyclone shelters across the potentially affected districts," Garg said.

The IMD, in its morning bulletin, however, said the system is likely to cross north Andhra Pradesh and south Odisha coasts between Narsapur and Puri, close to east of Gopalpur, by Friday noon with the maximum sustained winds of 90-100 kmph, gusting to 110 kmph.

As a precautionary measure, the chief secretary said, "Altogether 3,05,304 people have so far been evacuated, and this process is going on. They have been moved to 1,224 cyclone and flood shelters."

Altogether 45,364 people have been evacuated in Ganjam, and 18,000 in Gajapati, she said.

As G3 meets in Shenzhen, India watches with strategic caution

Cartel To Manage Global Affairs May Not Sit Easily With India's Focus On A Multipolar World

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The Shenzhen trilateral summit may not signal a crisis for India but govt is closely following the likely outcomes, realising the meeting's potential to alter several dynamics it has to manage almost on a daily basis in its ties with US, China and Russia.

There was no official response from India to the "historic" 90-minute meeting that US President Donald Trump had with his Chinese and Russian counterparts — Xi Jinping and Vladimir Putin — in China's global tech hub, but official sources said India is following the summit and likely ramifications with strategic caution.

The meeting ended with a declaration that committed to UN reforms, to deal more effectively with global challenges, stable energy flows, nuclear risk reduction and the "abuse" of its jurisdiction by International Criminal Court that issued an arrest warrant against Putin. India is not a party to ICC and maintains a safe distance from it.

Overhauling UN — with a focus on expanding the Security Council permanent membership — and securing stable and predictable energy supplies have been core pillars of India's foreign policy in a world marred by conflicts. Any indication of urgency for UN reforms is a positive development. However, there's also little for India to believe that the call for UN to conform to its "fundamental mission" of peace and security is more than just lip service. India holds P5 countries responsible for the delay in Security Council reforms.



The focus on stable energy flows provided some vindication for India's position that Russian oil purchase helped stabilise global energy markets

The focus on stable energy flows does provide some diplomatic vindication for its long-standing position that Russian oil purchase helped stabilise global energy markets. It's also important that the declaration talks about expanding the production and supply of refined petroleum products, as India emerges as a crucial processing hub, refining Russian crude. For India, any potential easing of the rigid US position on India's energy policy would be a welcome development.

The statement in the declaration shunning nuclear war also aligns with India's core nuclear doctrine.

Looking ahead, there are concerns that India might have about the likely implications from the meeting, and the answers to which might lie in doubling down on its strategic autonomy and multi-alignment. Despite its time-tested ties with Russia, a great power cartel or a G3 that operates as an exclusive club to manage global affairs may not sit easily with India's focus on a multipolar world and multipolar Asia or its efforts to lead the Global South into a decision-making role.

There was no direct mention of the wars in West Asia and Ukraine where India is keen to support early resolution and has even put forward a proposal for safety of commercial shipping, while working to secure shipping lanes also in Strait of Hormuz.

While much has been made of US signalling to China through the Manila Quad summit, India realises it must remain vigilant against the consequences of a US-China accommodation. Any understanding between Washington and Beijing that upsets the Indo-Pacific balance may not be in India's interest. Even the Quad summit took place after two years and only on the margins of a multilateral event.

Trump, Xi, Putin Sign 'Peace Declaration', Vow No N-War

Document Silent On Ukraine, Iran; No Commitment On Cutting Arsenals

Shenzhen (China): Chinese President Xi Jinping and his US and Russian counterparts Donald Trump and Vladimir Putin agreed on a symbolic "peace declaration" at an unprecedented three-way meeting Thursday and reaffirmed that nuclear war should never be fought, but announced no arms-control commitments.

A joint declaration released by the world's three biggest nuclear powers capped a three-day diplomatic swing by Trump through Asia that produced few tangible victories, despite his repeated boasts about making history and brokering peace. Instead, the trip raised fresh questions among US allies about his increasingly close relationship with Putin, who continues to wage war with Ukraine.

As expected, the declaration had no commitments to reduce nuclear arsenals, but the powers "reaffirmed that a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought" and added that they would "conduct a dialogue on reducing nuclear risks and preventing proliferation of nuclear weapons," without giving a time frame.

Daryl Kimball, executive director of US-based Arms Control Association, said the reaffirmation that a nuclear war cannot be won was positive, but added, "We need much more than rhetoric. We need action on disarmament diplomacy."

The leaders also pledged to advance reforms of UN, to increase supplies of fuel products for all countries and to uphold the immunity enjoyed by state officials in international courts. The declaration made no mention of conflicts in Ukraine and Iran.

The reference to immunity of state officials came more than three years after the International Criminal Court in The Hague issued arrest warrants for Putin and other Russian officials over alleged war crimes during Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Moscow rejects the allegations. "The pushback against international norms and courts is the most interesting aspect," said Jonathan Eyal, international director at the Royal United Services Institute think-tank in London. "The big powers dictate, the small powers suffer."

The leaders met in a villa in wooded hills beside a lake in Shenzhen. "We are really making history," Trump told Xi and Putin at the start of the meeting before journalists were sent away. "No peace was ever forged by declining opportunities for engagement."

Xi said: "History tells us that when major powers live in harmony, the world is at peace. When major powers clash, the world falls into turmoil."

Putin should get real, end war he can't win: Ukraine

Putin, fresh from a setback in Ukraine after the crippling of a key bridge linking Crimea to Russia, said the three had "numerous shared interests in the settlement of regional conflicts, including obviously the conflict in Ukraine".

Ukraine's foreign minister Andriy Sybiha posted on X that Shenzhen had not proven to be a latter-day "Yalta of Putin's dreams," referring to the 1945 meeting which tried to set out the future of postwar Europe. "Meanwhile, Russia has practically lost its bridge to the real Yalta in occupied Ukrainian Crimea," he said. "Time for him to wake up, get real, and end the war he can never win."

Japan gets a cold shoulder

While Trump highlighted the pomp surrounding his arrival for the summit, which contrasted with the more muted greeting of other leaders, including Putin. Japanese PM Sanae Takaichi landed without any welcoming ceremony. Japan's relations with China have soured since Takaichi's remarks in 2025, when she said Japan could deploy its military if a Chinese move on Taiwan also threatened its territory. Takaichi said Tokyo's position on Taiwan had not changed since 1972.

On Taiwan, Xi told Trump US must "do the right thing" to avoid major setbacks in their relationship. REUTERS

3 'FRIENDS' AT THE TABLE

Trump wrapped up his Asia trip in Shenzhen with separate meetings alongside Putin and Xi, followed by an unprecedented trilateral summit of the three nuclear powers

Photos: AFP and Reuters





Xi gestures towards musicians (not pictured) performing at the summit as Trump looks on

Trump's Take: Declared the trip a 'big win' based on China's elaborate welcome, including Xi greeting him at the airport, military honours, and head-table banquet seating. He floated trilateral nuclear arms cuts and touted deals with Thailand and the Philippines, though key details remained unfinalised

Xi's Response: Trump pushed to discuss ending the Ukraine war, saying he and Xi could help resolve it. Xi ignored Ukraine in his opening remarks, avoiding talks in absence of Kyiv and Europe



Kylin Villa: The talks took place at Kylin Villa, a secluded retreat. The compound previously hosted N Korean leader Kim Jong-il, Xi's father Xi Zhongxun, and envoys of the Dalai Lama

Putin's Pitch: For Putin, the three-way talks offered a much-coveted chance for him to signal that he heads a superpower on par with US and China. Putin addressed Xi as 'dear friend' and smiled contentedly as he shook hands with Trump, who called him 'my friend'. Trump and Putin found common ground in their opposition to the ICC

Risk of US strikes on Iran grows as both sides escalate skirmishes

Trump Weighing Move As Israel Presses For Action And New Intel Warns Tehran Rebuilding Missile & Drone Arsenal: Report

The chances of US launching another round of mass strikes against Iran appear to have grown in recent days, according to Western officials, as the warring sides escalate their skirmishes. US President Donald Trump is yet to make a decision on whether to order attacks, but is considering the move, one official said, asking not to be identified talking about sensitive matters.

Trump has been threatening another phase of high-intensity war on Iran for weeks, but came under pressure after the US midterm elections to opt for a diplomatic resolution. The conflict contributed heavily to his Republican party's loss of Congress.

With peace talks stalled and neither side willing to concede on key points, tensions are rising. Over the past week, Iran has struck US military facilities in Bahrain and Kuwait several times and stepped up strikes on ships going through the Strait of Hormuz. The US, which has two aircraft carrier strike groups in the region and is imposing a naval blockade on Islamic Republic, hit Iran island of Qeshm Tuesday.

Saudi Arabia is facing daily drone and missile attacks from the Iran-backed Houthis in Yemen in what's effectively


Reuters

View of the damage to the Public Investment Fund tower, HQ of the Saudi sovereign wealth fund, following an attack in Riyadh

a second front in the conflict. On Thursday, the skyscraper housing the headquarters of the kingdom's wealth fund was damaged, according to an eyewitness. Saudi authorities announced several other assaults over the past day.

The New York Times Thursday reported that Trump was taking into account new intelligence about Iran rebuilding its missile and drone arsenals and advancing its chemical and biological weapons programmes. He's also under pressure from Benjamin Netanyahu to act quickly. Israel's PM is pressing the US to agree to a joint campaign of airstrikes lasting four to seven days, the NYT reported. Netanyahu's position remains that more military action is needed unless Iran capitulates and ends its nuclear program, according to a person close to the prime minister, who asked not to be named discussing private talks with the US.

American allies in West Asia, meanwhile, have accelerated efforts to prevent a resumption of all-out war. Govt and security officials from the Persian Gulf countries, as well as Pakistan and Turkiye, have engaged in concerted diplomacy, including phone calls with senior US officials, in a bid to avert renewed war in the region. That is according to four regional officials briefed on the matter who spoke on the condition of anonymity because they were not authorised to comment publicly.

The goal of the diplomatic push is to counter Netanyahu's efforts for the US to restart the war or allow Israel to launch airstrikes on Iran's nuclear facilities and missile capabilities, the officials said.

American allies in the region have been concerned that a recent visit to US by Israel's Mossad chief, Roman Gofman, would tilt Trump's thinking in favour of restarting the war, they said. Gofman, who is close to Netanyahu, met with CIA director John Ratcliffe in Washington before travelling to Miami for a meeting with US envoy Steve Witkoff, according to two of the regional officials. The CIA has declined to comment. BLOOMBERG & AP

Xi announces $20 mn to boost co-op among APEC

■ By K J M Varma
BEIJING/SHENZHEN, Nov 19 (PTI)

CHINESE President Xi Jinping on Thursday announced a USD 20 million grant to support practical cooperation between Asia-Pacific countries and said that China will establish a centre to promote research and exchanges among nations in the region.

China is rooted in the Asia-Pacific and will continue to support Asia-Pacific cooperation, Xi Jinping said while addressing the 21-member Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Economic Leaders' Meeting in the Chinese high-tech city of Shenzhen.

"I hereby announce that China will provide USD 20 million to support APEC's practical cooperation," he said.

"We will establish a Centre for Asia-Pacific Community Studies in Shenzhen to conduct policy research and exchanges and provide intellectual support," Xi said.

In line with the needs of Asia-Pacific cooperation, China will set up institutions to promote collaboration in areas such as digital technology, cross-border data flow, clean energy and the development of small and medium enterprises (SMEs), the President said.



Thailand's Prime Minister Anutin Charnvirakul, Malaysia's Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim, Canada's Prime Minister Mark Carney, Australia's Prime Minister Anthony Albanese, New Zealand's Prime Minister Christopher Luxon, Russian President Vladimir Putin, Chinese President Xi Jinping, US President Donald Trump and South Korean President Lee Jae-myung pose for a group photo during APEC summit in Shenzhen on Thursday. (AP/PTI)

These initiatives would contribute to innovation-driven and green growth in the Asia-Pacific region, Xi added.

US President Donald Trump, Russian President Vladimir Putin, Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi and Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney, among other leaders, attended the meeting.

The 21 APEC members are Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, China, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Japan, South Korea, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Peru, the Philippines, Russia, Singapore, Taiwan, Thailand, the US and Vietnam.

India, Japan condemn terrorism at 2+2 dialogue

TOKYO, Nov 19 (IANS)

INDIA and Japan on Thursday unequivocally and strongly condemned terrorism and violent extremism in all its form and manifestations, including cross-border terrorism, and called for action against all United Nations-listed terrorist groups and entities.

The Joint Statement issued after Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and External Affairs Minister (EAM) S Jaishankar co-chaired the fourth India-Japan 2+2 Foreign and Defence Ministerial Meeting with Japanese Minister of Foreign Affairs Toshimitsu Motegi and Minister of Defence Shinjiro Koizumi in Tokyo on Thursday called for concerted actions against all UN-listed terrorist groups and entities, including Al Qaeda, ISIS/Daesh, Lashkar-e-Tayyiba (LeT), Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) and their proxies, and to take resolute actions to root out terrorists' safe havens, eliminate terrorist financing channels and its nexus with transnational crime, and halt cross-border movement of terrorists.



Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar in a photograph with Japan Defence Minister Shinjiro Koizumi and Foreign Affairs Minister Toshimitsu Motegi during the fourth India-Japan 2 plus 2 Foreign and Defence Ministerial meeting, in Tokyo, Japan. (@rajnathsingh/X via PTI)

The ministers reiterated their commitment to reform the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), including expansion in both permanent and non-permanent categories, which a majority of Member States support, to better reflect the current geopolitical realities. They expressed their mutual support for each other's candidatures for a permanent seat in a reformed UNSC. They also expressed appreciation for India and Japan confirming mutual support for respective candidatures to non-permanent seats in the years 2028-29 and 2033-34.

India and Japan on Thursday discussed strengthening economic security and deepening government-to-government, business-to-business and people-to-people linkages as External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar held talks with his Japanese counterpart Toshimitsu Motegi. Earlier, Jaishankar joined Motegi for the unveiling of a logo to mark the 75th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between India and Japan in 2027.

On Thursday, Jaishankar and Defence Minister Rajnath Singh also participated in the fourth India-Japan Foreign and Defence Ministers' Dialogue, known as the 2+2 meeting, in Tokyo.

Jaishankar flagged the growing "weaponisation" of connectivity, resources, services, supply chains and market shares, saying many of these developments had direct implications for national security.