

➤ EDITOR'S NOTE

Defence diplomacy has traditionally been an important component of any country's foreign policy. From having the 11th largest GDP a decade ago, India's GDP has overtaken United Kingdom's to make it the fifth biggest in the world. Consistent near 7 per cent plus economic growth has made it possible. Similarly, in the 2022 military strength ranking, India is fourth behind the US, Russia and China. As India emerges as a bigger global power, its defence diplomacy footprint is also growing. Indian armed forces have been participating in increasing number of multilateral and bilateral exercises. Indian naval vessels have been making port calls for decades. Indian Armed Forces have been first responders for Humanitarian Aid and Disaster Relief (HADR) during global and regional contingencies such as earthquakes and floods. Indian Air Force has supported evacuation of citizens of many countries from war zones. Indian Military has been actively involved in COVID-19 vaccine distribution. All this has earned India praise and international acknowledgement.

The Indian Air Force participated in three-week Exercise Pitch Black 22 hosted by the Royal Australian Air Force at Darwin, Australia, where 2,500 military personnel of 17 Air Forces took part. The IAF had fielded four Su-30 MKI fighter jets and two C-17 large transport aircraft. It involved combat training in large multi-aircraft integrated formations by day and night in a simulated war environment. In addition to Australia and India, Canada, France, Germany, Indonesia, Japan, South Korea, Malaysia, the Netherlands, New Zealand, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom, and the United States were the other participants.

Similarly, Indian Navy's multilateral exercise MILAN-2022, held in Visakhapatnam saw 40 countries participating, including 13 countries sending warships, and others highest-level delegations. Warships were from the US, Japan, South Korea, Australia, France, Vietnam, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Myanmar, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and Seychelles.

As the Ukraine war lingers on and has entered the 10th month, Ukraine has made gains and retrieved part of its lost territory. While the conflict seems to be becoming a stalemate, the thing of concern is the Russian air strikes that have made a serious dent in Ukrainian public utilities. There is a loss of nearly 50 per cent electricity generation and supply. The infrastructure repair will take time. Nearly 15 regions, including the capital Kyiv, are facing acute water shortage as there is no electricity to pump. Ukraine has a sub-zero winter with lots of snow. Without electricity, heat and water, one can see tough times ahead.

India has had to take a very nuanced and, in many ways, balanced stance on Ukraine conflict. It has used strategic autonomy. It has used neutrality and abstentions to tread the path with caution and care. India has bought larger quantities of oil, coal, and fertilisers from Russia at cheaper rates to fulfil its energy and agricultural needs. Yet PM Modi has articulated that "today's era is not an era of war", and has repeatedly urged both sides to sit across the table to find a solution. India has also underlined that endangerment of nuclear facilities could have catastrophic consequences for public health and environment. While the West has called out India for sitting on the fence, they are conscious of certain historic cooperation lines between Russia and India. Rohith Sai Narayan Stambankadi looks at the subject in greater detail in this issue of *Defence and Diplomacy*.

The importance of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV) and drones has got further underscored during the Ukraine conflict. Drones have also permeated all walks of civil life. Their applications are allowing better infrastructure monitoring, surveillance and policing, aerial logistics delivery, among many others. Unmanned urban air mobility is also unfolding. The future wars will see larger number

of artificial intelligence (AI) supported autonomous platforms. The thrust for indigenisation of drones is from the highest levels. The Drone Federation of India has become very active. The government is incentivising domestic production and helping remove hurdles. Richa Tokas has a closer look at how India is ushering in the indigenous drone.

Digital connectivity and high data transfer speeds have changed the way the world operates. Practically all activities from trade, banking, education, managing utilities, industrial processes, and even warfighting use cyberspace. Cyber espionage, cyberattacks and cyber-conflict including attacks through the "Dark Web" are therefore on the increase. Cyberattack is an act of war and could lead to physical conflict. Many nations, organizations, and individuals have been taking advantage of the poorly governed cyberspace. Many of the cyberattacks are state-sponsored. To police and maintain law and order, the concept of cyber-peacekeeping has begun to evolve. Like the United Nations (UN) peacekeepers, Cyber-peacekeepers, are now a reality. Independent agency is required to investigate major cyberattacks, and in turn help prevent wars. They could help catch global cybercriminals. Divyanshu Jindal analyses Cyber Peacekeeping: Prospects for India.

The countries in North-East Asia, such as Japan, South Korea and Taiwan, have different urgent threat perceptions and security dynamics and concerns. Japan is coming out of its pacifist mindset and is now willing to invest more on defence. Its disputes and threat are from China. South Korea is concerned mainly with the belligerent nuclear-powered North Korea. Democratic Taiwan has to defend itself from Chinese attempt of annexation. In view of peculiar security dynamics, the United States evolved a "hub-and-spoke" alliance system in Asia. The US has forged bilateral security arrangements. The US finds it easier to deal with one-on-one relationship, and get their own interests addressed. The US has had bilateral cooperation with India too, yet the two are part of smaller multilaterals also. There are issues and grievances in hub-and-spoke system. Gaurav Sen looks at what lies beyond the "Hub and Spoke Model" in North-East Asia.

As rapid emergence China began to challenge the unipolar US global position, realignments began in the Indo-Pacific. The Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad) emerged as a grouping with the Japanese initiative. China has direct boundary disputes with India and Japan. China's close strategic relationship with Pakistan also complicates security dimensions for India. Both India and Japan are aspiring powers. Being resident powers of Indo-Pacific, there is special responsibility on them for local security architecture. There are congruence of interest and options for India and Japan. Japan has funds and technology, and India has a market and demographic advantage with skilled human capital. Japan-India relations have the potential to benefit many others in the Indo-Pacific. Simran Walia looks at the Emerging Dynamics of India-Japan Partnership in the Indo-Pacific.

US-India Cooperation is one of the most important aspects of new Indo-Pacific security architecture. It has taken time and effort to fill the perception gaps between the two sides. India has been treading on firm feet, but with caution, maintaining strategic autonomy. The tacit security relationship is important for both and for promotion of democratic free world values in the region. The US has finally recognised the primacy of India in its neighbourhood. The military-to-military engagements have increased through regular exercises that will improve interoperability. The Quad is becoming more active. The foreign policy mandarins are engaging as equals and shaping strategy. Shalabha Sarath looks more closely at the Dynamics of the India-US Partnership in the Indo-Pacific.

Over the last seven decades, Africa has been a significant region where United Nations (UN) peacekeepers were deployed. Of the many UN deployments of Indian military personnel, Africa has had the most missions. India has been amongst the top three troop contributing countries. Indian Air Force's air elements in the recent years have mainly been rotary wing aircraft. Air Vice Marshal Rajesh Isser has not only been in the UNPK Congo in 2003-2004, he has researched and written extensively on the subject. He builds up a case for an Indo-African partnership.

The Arctic is fast becoming the new arena for global power competition. It is important for natural resources, for pure water,

scientific research, and for navigation. The region is governed by the Arctic council. There are territory owning members. The presence has geostrategic significance. Dr Ankita Dutta and Dr Stuti Banerjee look at India's Evolving Strategy for the Arctic.

Finally the issue of *Defence and Diplomacy* carries a Book Review of Sharat Sabharwal "India's Pakistan Conundrum: Managing a Complex Relationship", by Shalini Chawla.

Wishing happy reading.

Jai Hind.

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