

DAILY PT POINTERS

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The Hindu-IR(GSII)-Page 1

India, China reach deal on easing LAC tensions

Both arrive at an agreement on patrolling arrangements, and resolution of all remaining friction points, says Foreign Secretary; gone back to where the situation was in 2020, says Jaishankar

Subhasini Haider
NEW DELHI

India and China have reached an agreement on the “patrolling arrangements” and the resolution of the military stand-off at the Line of Actual Control (LAC), the Union government announced on Monday, in a breakthrough that officials told *The Hindu* include the remaining friction points of Demchok and Depsang.

The announcement by Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri came during a press briefing on Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s visit to Russia for the BRICS summit on Tuesday. Chinese President Xi Jinping is scheduled to attend the event.

“Over the last several weeks, Indian and Chinese diplomatic and military negotiators have been in close contact with each other in a variety of forums, and as a result of these discussions, agreement has been arrived at on patrolling arrangements along the LAC in the India-China border areas, leading to disengagement and a resolution of the issues that had arisen in these areas in 2020.” Mr.

Run-up to resolution

The Indian and Chinese militaries have been locked in the stand-off along the Line of Actual Control since May 2020. India announced that it has reached agreements on patrolling and other issues

June-July 2024: Minister Jaishankar meets Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi in Almaty, Kazakhstan

July-August: Working mechanism of diplomats, military holds meetings in Delhi, Beijing

September: National Security Adviser Ajit Doval meets Wang Yi in St. Petersburg

October: Military commanders, diplomats meet at LAC points



Major headway:

Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri made the announcement on the breakthrough during a press briefing on PM Narendra Modi’s visit to Russia on Tuesday. PTI

Misri said, adding that the two sides would now take the “next steps” on this.

A few hours later, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar confirmed the importance of the agreement on patrolling, which had come to a stop in 2020, after which the two sides accepted “buffer zones” in some areas of dispute that denied the militaries their normal patrolling routes.

While the External Affairs Ministry did not give further details of the agreement, and whether the “buffer zones” would continue to exist for patrolling purposes, Mr. Misri said the two sides had “reached an agreement on the issues that were being dis-

cussed”. “With that we have gone back to where the situation was in 2020. With that we can say the disengagement process with China has been completed,” Mr. Jaishankar said in an interview to the television channel NDTV.

In the past, the government has said that disengagement would only constitute the beginning and that normalcy at the LAC would only follow after “deinduction and demobilisation” of troops that China had amassed at the LAC, leading to counter-deployments by India.

The timing of the announcement, just a day before the BRICS summit, indicates that a meeting

between Mr. Modi and Mr. Xi, which has been speculated about, is more likely to take place.

Although the two leaders met as many as 18 times between 2014 and 2020, they have spoken publicly only twice since the clashes in the Galwan Valley.

Significantly, the Chinese government did not announce or comment on the border agreement on Monday. Asked about a possible meeting between the leaders, Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokesperson Lin Jian said they would inform “if anything comes up”.

CONTINUED ON
» PAGE 10

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- these discussions are leading to gradual disengagement and could eventually resolve the tensions that escalated after the 2020 border clashes.
- The BRICS Summit, themed “Strengthening Multilateralism for Just Global Development and Security,” will offer leaders a platform to discuss pressing global issues and assess the progress of ongoing BRICS initiatives. PM Modi is also expected to hold bilateral meetings with other BRICS leaders and invited dignitaries.

The Hindu-Environment(GSIII)-Page 9



How policies shape high-performance building standards and climate goals

Governments are trying to adopt high-performance buildings through policies and financing mechanisms that promote energy efficiency, resource management, and carbon neutrality. India has made significant progress through initiatives under its National Action Plan on Climate Change.

Introduction
In response to the pressures of climate mitigation as well as adaptation, high-performance buildings (HPBs) are emerging as essential solutions in the construction sector. They address both urban and climate challenges since the built environment contributes to these issues and presents opportunities for change. HPBs are designed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, conserve energy and water use, and cut operational costs using climate-adaptive designs. They also improve occupants' well-being, making them attractive to both businesses and occupants.

How is India supporting HPBs?
India has made significant progress in promoting energy-efficient buildings through initiatives such as National Green Building Council (NGBC), Energy Conservation Building Code (ECBC), developed by the Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE), and the Green Building Council of India (GBCI). The Green Building Council of India (GBCI) has also introduced a Green Building Index (GBI) to certify green buildings. The government has also introduced policies and incentives to promote energy efficiency, resource management, and carbon neutrality. India has also established a National Green Building Council (NGBC) to promote energy-efficient buildings, which were first introduced in 2007. The NGBC has established a Green Building Index (GBI) to certify green buildings. The government has also introduced policies and incentives to promote energy efficiency, resource management, and carbon neutrality. India has also established a National Green Building Council (NGBC) to promote energy-efficient buildings, which were first introduced in 2007.

High-performance buildings is attracting HPBs deliver substantial energy savings and reduce emissions of greenhouse gases compared to conventional buildings. For example, a large commercial building in Singapore that adopted energy-efficient conditioning and smart lighting systems reduced its energy consumption by 20%, resulting in significant cost savings. HPBs also improve indoor air quality and thermal comfort, contributing to occupant well-being.

India's commitment to higher property values due to lower operating costs, smaller environmental footprint, and growing demand from environmentally conscious investors and tenants. These properties benefit from enhanced asset value, lower vacancy rates, and longer lease durations. The financial benefits of energy-efficient buildings to be capitalisation rates, which investors use to assess the value of a property relative to its investment cost.

Why is supporting energy efficiency savings of energy is central to HPB design and drive sustainable construction solutions. Since green spaces are critical to promoting energy-efficient buildings as part of their climate strategies.
The European Union's Green Deal, which targets 30% of new buildings to be carbon-neutral by 2030, includes energy-efficient building design and retrofit. Germany's EPC has also been instrumental in promoting

How do HPBs make financial sense?
HPBs offer long-term savings on energy costs and reduce maintenance expenses. They also offer higher resale values and better occupancy rates. For example, a large commercial building in Singapore that adopted energy-efficient conditioning and smart lighting systems reduced its energy consumption by 20%, resulting in significant cost savings. HPBs also improve indoor air quality and thermal comfort, contributing to occupant well-being.

How are HPBs financed?
Green financing options like HPBs by covering their carbon savings into their value, using the same

comparable to offer their carbon savings—play a key role in this process. They can also be made by reducing emissions and/or covering carbon costs. For example, in Singapore with carbon pricing, like the European Union and China, HPBs that improve energy efficiency and become carbon-neutral can generate carbon credits. These credits can be sold to other developers to offset their own carbon emissions. However, to maximize the potential of these systems, it's important to ensure there is accurate monitoring and secure data transparency in the monitoring, reporting, and verification of the credits.

Government and climate-focused funds have also ways to finance HPBs. In 2020, India's green bonds worth \$2 billion were issued to fund green projects that align with sustainability goals. Global climate funds like the Green Climate Fund also provide financial support for HPBs.

- In response to the pressures of climate mitigation as well as adaptation, High-Performance Buildings (HPBs) are emerging as essential solutions in the construction sector.
- They address both urban and climate challenges since the built environment contributes to these issues and presents opportunities for change. HPBs are designed to reduce greenhouse-gas emissions, minimise energy and water use, and cut operational costs using climate-adaptive designs. They also improve their occupants' well-being, making them attractive to both businesses and occupants.
- Beyond environmental benefits, HPBs offer financial advantages like enhanced property value, lower utility bills, and access to carbon financing. Governments worldwide are trying to adopt HPBs through progressive policies and financing mechanisms that promote energy efficiency, resource management, and carbon neutrality. India is also beginning to align its policy frameworks and business strategies to support these structures.

The Hindu –GS 2(Governance)-Page 10

Secularism is a core part of the Constitution: SC

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday said secularism is an indelible and core part of the Basic Structure of the Constitution.

The court made the oral observation while hearing a batch of petitions filed by former Rajya Sabha member Subramanian Swamy and others challenging the inclusion of the words “socialist” and “secular” in the Preamble to the Constitution.

“This court has in a number of judgments held that secularism was always part of the Basic Structure of the Constitution. If one looks right to equality and

the word ‘fraternity’ used in the Constitution, there is a clear indication that secularism has been held as the core feature of the Constitution,” a Bench of Justices Sanjiv Khanna and Sanjay Kumar said.

Justice Khanna disagreed with the argument of the petitioners that the term “socialism” would curtail personal liberty and individualism.

“One should not take the meaning adopted in Western countries... Socialism can also mean that there should be equality of opportunity and the wealth of the country should be distributed equally,” Justice Khanna remarked.



Advocate Ashwini Upadhyay, a petitioner, said he was not against the words “socialist, secular, and integrity” or their insertion in the Constitution but against the insertion of these words into the Preamble in 1976 and that too with a retrospective effect from November 26, 1949.

The Preamble was

amended in December 1976 by the Indira Gandhi government to introduce the words “socialist” and “secular”. The phrase “unity of the nation” was replaced with “unity and integrity of the nation”. The changes were made in the Preamble through the 42nd Constitution Amendment during the Emergency.

Originally, the text of the Preamble declared India as a “sovereign, democratic republic”. The words “socialist” and “secular” were inserted between “sovereign” and “democratic”.

The largest Bench in the history of the Supreme Court (13 judges) in the *Ke-savananda Bharati* case

had held that the Preamble was an integral part of the Constitution, and was subject to the amending power of Parliament, provided the Basic Structure was not tinkered with.

Advocate Sriram Parakkat, appearing for CPI leader Binoy Viswam, said the 42nd amendment was indeed “infamous”. It had after all tried to reduce the power of the Supreme Court and the High Courts. “While subsequent amendments more or less restored the Constitution to what it was pre-1976, this change was made in the Preamble... that we are secular and socialist... was retained,” Mr. Parakkat submitted.

- The Supreme Court said secularism is an indelible and core part of the Basic Structure of the Constitution.
- The court made the oral observation while hearing a batch of petitions filed by former Rajya Sabha member Subramanian Swamy and others challenging the inclusion of the words “socialist” and “secular” in the Preamble to the Constitution.
- “This court has in a number of judgments held that secularism was always part of the Basic Structure of the Constitution. If one looks right to equality and the word ‘fraternity’ used in the Constitution, there is a clear indication that secularism has been held as the core feature of the Constitution,
- The Preamble was amended in December 1976 by the Indira Gandhi government to introduce the words “socialist” and “secular”. The phrase “unity of the nation” was replaced with “unity and integrity of the nation”. The changes were made in the Preamble through the 42nd Constitution Amendment during the Emergency.

What is Z-Morh tunnel? Why is it strategically important?

BASHARAT MASOOD & MAN AMAN SINGH CHHINA
SRINAGAR, CHANDIGARH, OCTOBER 21

MILITANTS SHOT dead seven people in Jammu and Kashmir's Ganderbal district on Sunday evening. The attackers opened fire at a campsite housing workers of APCO Infratech, a construction firm which is building the strategically vital Z-Morh tunnel on the Srinagar-Leh highway.

What is the Z-Morh tunnel?

The 6.4 km long tunnel connects the town of Kangan to the tourist spot of Sonamarg in central Kashmir's Ganderbal district. The tunnel is being constructed near Gagangir village, which lies roughly 10 km away from Sonamarg. The tunnel's name comes from the Z-shaped stretch of road at the location of its construction. (Map)

What is the importance of the tunnel?

The strategically vital Srinagar-Leh highway (National Highway-1) is one of only two roads that connect Ladakh to the rest of India – the other being the Manali-Leh highway (NH-3). The Z-Morh tunnel is a part of the larger Zojila tunnel project which seeks to provide all-weather connectivity between Srinagar, Drass, Kargil, and Leh on NH-1. Currently, both NH-1 and NH-3 remain shut during winter. The stretch of road, which the Z-Morh tunnel will help by-pass, is located at an altitude of more than 8,500 feet, and is closed for months in the winter due to heavy snowfall and the threat of avalanches. This inconvenience tourists who frequent the resort town of Sonamarg, and hampers the movement of troops and supplies to Ladakh. Ladakh is strategically vital for India. Indian forces are deployed against Pakistan in Siachen Glacier and in Turtuk sub sector which abuts Baltistan in Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (PoK). There is also widespread deployment against China in Eastern Ladakh, more so since the 2020 Galwan clashes. The Zojila tunnel project – including the

14 km-long under-construction tunnel at Zojila which will connect Sonamarg in the Kashmir valley to Drass in Ladakh – will allow the transportation of troops and supply by road all year round. This will make it easier to mobilise forces in times of need, and also cut costs associated with air transportation. Currently, the Army relies on transport aircraft from the Air Force for maintaining its



A photo of the under construction Z-Morh tunnel from September 2021. The tunnel is now almost complete, and is expected to be inaugurated soon. (AP File)

forward locations along the Line of Control.

When did the Z-Morh tunnel project begin? When is it likely to be completed?

The tunnel project was originally conceived by the Border Roads Organisation (BRO) in 2012. The BRO had awarded the construction contract to Tunnelway Ltd.

However, the project was later taken over by the National Highways & Infrastructure Development Corporation Limited (NHIDCL). The NHIDCL re-tendered the tunnel project, and the contract was bagged by APCO Infratech.

The project was originally expected to be completed by August 2023, but was delayed for various reasons. The soft opening of the tunnel was carried out in February this year. At the moment, the tunnel project is almost complete. Its inauguration had been delayed by the Model Code of Conduct (MCC) in place because of the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly elections.

The Zojila tunnel, being constructed by Megha Engineering, is expected to be completed by December 2026.

- **Seven people were killed in Jammu and Kashmir** on Sunday evening (October 20) when suspected militants targeted the workers of infrastructure company APCO Infratech, which is constructing the Z-Morh tunnel on the Srinagar-Sonamarg highway.
- The Z-Morh tunnel is a 6.4-kilometer tunnel connecting the Sonamarg health resort with Kangan town in central Kashmir's Ganderbal district. The tunnel has been constructed near Gagangir village ahead of Sonamarg. The tunnel will provide all-weather connectivity to Sonamarg, a famous tourist destination on the Srinagar-Leh highway.
- The tunnel has acquired its name for the Z-shaped road stretch at the place where the tunnel is being constructed.

'STATE OF THE ECONOMY' ARTICLE PUBLISHED IN THE RBI'S OCTOBER BULLETIN

India's growth outlook supported by robust domestic engines: RBI bulletin

HITESH VYAS
MUMBAI, OCTOBER 21

DESPITE GEOPOLITICAL tensions, the country's growth outlook is supported by robust domestic engines, a Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) article said.

The article said as per its economic activity index (EAI), the gross domestic product (GDP) growth is projected at 6.8 per cent in the July-September 2024 quarter, lower than the RBI's projection of 7 per cent for the same period. In the quarter ended June 2024, the real GDP growth slipped to a five-quarter low of 6.7 per cent due to slower growth in agriculture, government spending and services.

"In spite of recent geopolitical tensions, India's growth outlook is supported by robust domestic engines," the 'State of the Economy' article published in the RBI's October bulletin said.

The article has been prepared by the RBI's Deputy Governor



The innate strength of India's external sector lies in its strong macroeconomic fundamentals, the RBI article said. *File*

tution. Some high frequency indicators have, however, shown a slackening of momentum in the second quarter of 2024-25. This is partly attributable to idiosyncratic factors like unusually heavy rains in August and September, and Pitrui Paksha - goods and services tax (GST) collections; automobile sales; bank credit growth; merchandise exports; and the manufacturing purchasing managers'

"In India, aggregate demand is poised to shrug off the temporary slowdown in momentum in the second quarter of 2024-25 as festival demand picks up pace and consumer confidence improves," it said. Rural demand is expected to get a boost from the improved agricultural outlook.

The article said that private investment should pick up steam in response to signs of pick-up in

shown a deceleration in real gross value added by non-government non-finance companies. Real investments in plants and machinery remained subdued while net fixed assets have slowed down.

Apparently, the crowding in effect of government capex is lagged. Given the moderation in sales growth, corporates appear to be protecting margins by conserving spending on both raw materials and manpower while delaying an aggressive capex push, the article said.

There is a view gaining ground that the time for private investment is now; delay risks loss of competitiveness.

"The stage is set for the private sector to deploy capital and invest in growth, build capacities, create employment and improve efficiencies," the article stated.

It further said that with the financial sector ready to intermediate resources for productive investment, buffered by healthy balance sheets, and the government's continued thrust on capex,

external demand for India's exports although escalation of geopolitical tensions remains a potential threat," the article said.

As per the World Trade Organization (WTO) goods trade barometer (September 2024), global goods trade has continued to recover in the third quarter of 2024 despite headwinds.

The RBI's article said that in terms of aggregate supply, above normal rainfall in the monsoon season augurs well for overall kharif production in the country as well as for reservoir storage, which brightens the Rabi season outlook.

The increased likelihood of La Niña conditions developing during the post-monsoon season of 2024 is beneficial for overall precipitation, although the possibility of excessive rainfall damaging the standing kharif crops remains a risk. It said that the country's external sector is showing resilience despite rising geopolitical tensions. The innate strength of India's external sector lies in its

- Despite geopolitical tensions, the country's growth outlook is supported by robust domestic engines, a Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) article said.
- The article said as per its economic activity index (EAI), the gross domestic product (GDP) growth is projected at 6.8 per cent in the July-September 2024 quarter, lower than the RBI's projection of 7 per cent for the same period. In the quarter ended June 2024, the real GDP growth slipped to a five-quarter low of 6.7 per cent due to slower growth in agriculture, government spending and services.
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HEADLINES OF THE DAY

PIB –Health (GSII)

Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana achieves sales worth Rs.1000 Crores in October 2024

Jan Aushadhi Kendras grew more than 170 times in number in last 10 years; more than 14,000 kendras now cover almost all the districts of the country

Posted On: 21 OCT 2024 4:46PM by PIB Delhi

Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana (PMBJP) has reached a remarkable milestone by achieving sales worth Rs. 1000 Crores in October 2024, a significant advancement from previous year when this target was met in December, 2023. This achievement highlights the growing trust and reliance of the people on affordable and quality medicines. This was possible only with the unwavering support of the citizens, who have embraced the initiative by purchasing medicines from over 14,000 Jan Aushadhi Kendras across the country. This substantial growth is a testament to PMBI's commitment to making healthcare accessible and affordable for all by reducing out of pocket expenditure. Notably few days ago, PMBI had sold medicines worth Rs. 200 crores in one single month of September 2024.

In the last 10 years, there has been a growth of more than 170 times in number of Kendras which were only 80 in 2014 and have now grown to more than 14,000 Kendras covering almost all the districts of the country.



Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana (PMBJP) has reached a remarkable milestone by achieving sales worth Rs. 1000 Crores in October 2024, a significant advancement from previous year when this target was met in December, 2023

- 'Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana (PMBJP)' is a campaign launched by the Department of Pharmaceuticals in association with Central Pharma Public Sector Undertakings, to provide quality medicines at affordable prices to the masses through dedicated outlets called 'Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Kendra'. These provide generic medicines at much lesser price. The potency of these medicines are same as compared to expensive branded medicines available in the open market.

HEADLINES OF THE DAY

PIB -Defense(GSIII)

Ministry of Defence



JOINT MILITARY TRAINING BETWEEN INDIAN AIR FORCE AND REPUBLIC OF SINGAPORE AIR FORCE BEGINS AT AIR FORCE BASE IN WEST BENGAL

Posted On: 21 OCT 2024 4:20PM by PIB Delhi

- On 21st October 2024, the Indian Air Force (IAF) and Republic of Singapore Air Force (RSAF) commenced the 12th edition of the Joint Military Training (JMT) exercise at Air Force Station Kalaikunda, West Bengal.
- The bilateral phase of the exercise will be conducted from 13 to 21 November 2024 and is expected to generate intense collaboration between the two forces, as they engage in advanced air combat simulations, joint mission planning and debriefing sessions. The bilateral phase aims to enhance interoperability, sharpen combat readiness and promote the exchange of knowledge between the two Air Forces.
- Since its inception, JMT has been conducted under the ambit of a bilateral agreement signed between the two nations. JMT exercise comes right after RSAF's participation in one of the largest multinational aerial exercises, Ex-Tarang Shakti hosted by the IAF, which is reflective of a growing professional association between the two Air Forces.

HEADLINES OF THE DAY

Air -Environment(GSIII)

COP16 Begins In Colombia, Nearly 200 Countries To Participate



- The two-week United Nations Biodiversity Conference (COP16) started today in Colombia to assess historic commitments to halt and reverse the loss of nature. Environmental leaders from nearly 200 countries are expected to participate, where 196 countries signed an ambitious global treaty, the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, to protect biodiversity. At COP 16, governments will be tasked with reviewing the state of implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.
- Parties to the Convention are expected to show the alignment of their National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) with the Framework