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NOTE FROM HEAD CS3

Dear All,

2021 saw multiple instabilities emerging in South Asia. Nation States apart from Afghanistan and Myanmar muddled through with major disruptions - surge of COVID 19 Delta variant, economic challenges (Sri Lanka and Pakistan) and political turmoil (Nepal). Afghanistan and Myanmar underwent catastrophic fractures of the regime structures with the Taliban so called Islamic Emirate replacing Republic in Kabul on August 15th and a military coup upstaging the democratic experiment once again on February 01 in Nay Pyi Taw. Against this brief backdrop, what forebodes the region in 2022 and what are the key drivers for stability in 2022 needs detailed consideration. The impact of COVID 19 is expected to continue across the board in South Asia with the Omicron variant which has made the presence felt in a marginal way but having the potential to spread rapidly as is seen from the trajectory in other parts of the World – South Africa, the United States and Europe. South Asia with high density of population and unacceptance of voluntary restrictions by the public may see the rise of Omicron which has the properties of immune escape. Looking at other drivers a country wise examination may be more relevant.

In Afghanistan Taliban's acceptance of integration global and regional in all spheres from political to economic and security shedding isolationist conservative religious ideological blinkers will see the country emerge from the depths of humanitarian and economic crisis to a degree of low normalcy. In neighbouring Pakistan relations between the Establishment (Military and the ISI) and the political class will be key drivers apart from economy. There are many sub plots in the first named vector which may need detailed examination and have been undertaken elsewhere. Hence, such complexities can only be unboxed through navigating relational and security waves through systematic inquiry. Thus, the endeavour of South Asian Monitor is to unravel some of these issues through analytical articles and journals, written by informed academicians. I am sanguine that this Monitor will generate interest and help you in your future research projects.

Maj Gen RPS Bhaduria, VSM (Retd)
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Table of Contents

TABLE OF CONTENTS	3
ANALYSIS	4
PAKISTAN NATIONAL SECURITY DOCUMENT: UNLIKELY TO BE ANY CHANGE IN ARTICULATION TOWARDS INDIA	4
ANALYSIS	7
Myanmar: Another Year of Instability Ahead.....	7
NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH.....	10
Afghanistan	10
Afghanistan: Taliban Struggling on Multiple Fronts.....	10
Nepal	11
Bhutan	11
Maldives: Balancing India China in the Atolls	13
Bangladesh PM Visit to Maldives	14
Defence and Security Developments	15
LINK FEST	16

ANALYSIS

PAKISTAN NATIONAL SECURITY DOCUMENT: UNLIKELY TO BE ANY CHANGE IN ARTICULATION TOWARDS INDIA

-MAJ GEN JAGATBIR SINGH, VSM (RETD)

India is surrounded by increasing accumulating strategic adversities as far as its neighbours are concerned. There is also increasing collusivity between China and Pakistan. However, the neighbour with whom India has continued to have difficulties remains Pakistan. Since inception, Pakistan has followed a revisionist policy as far as India is concerned and its foreign policy has been framed around the perceived existential threat it faces from India.

On 28 December 2021, the Pakistan Cabinet approved its first National Security Policy Document (NSP) aimed at guiding its defence and foreign policies. Moed Yusuf, Pakistan's National Security Adviser (NSA) has stated that "it is a truly historic achievement; a citizen-centric comprehensive national security policy with economic security at the core." The five-year policy document covering 2022-26 is being flaunted by the government as the first-ever strategy paper of its kind that sets out the state's national security vision and guidelines for the attainment of those goals. The policy, however, has not been publicly shared yet. The security policy was unveiled at the 36th NSC meeting chaired by Prime Minister Imran Khan with participation from key ministers, Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee, all Services Chiefs, NSA and senior civil and military officers, according to a press release issued after the meeting.

The NSP-2022-2026 was presented for approval by the NSA, who briefed the participants about the salient features of the policy. He highlighted that Pakistan was shifting to a comprehensive national security framework, whereby the ultimate purpose of the national security was to ensure safety, security and dignity of citizens of Pakistan. "To ensure this citizen-centric approach to security, the NSP put economic security at the core," as per Moed Yusuf. According him, a stronger economy would create additional resources that would in turn be judiciously distributed to further bolster military and human security. A national security document is a vision of a path a nation should take in pursuit of its national objectives, it is therefore an outline of the country's major security concerns and lays down the guidelines for dealing with them which includes both external and internal security challenges and the its comprehensive national power. To sum up, it is the base document for employing of tools of national power in accordance with national policy to achieve its security objectives in accordance with national interests. All strategies flow from it, including the military strategy from which the joint land, air and maritime strategies are derived.

A National Security Policy document thus provides clarity and facilitates a synchronised whole nation approach while dealing with the various security challenges. The policy is devised with the consultation of all stakeholders concerned. A national security strategy has to integrate these components of policy in focussed pursuit of clearly articulated goals and priorities. It has to be more than a sum of the parts and provide an overarching, strategic focus to them. There dynamics between goals, changes in the internal and external environments and the strategy designed to deal with them. A viable strategy has to continuously align ends with means and goals with resources as well as with the aspirations of the population. Incidentally, the US in the period from 2002 to 2021 has published six National Security Strategy documents. Maj Gen Babar Iftikhar, the DG ISPR, said the policy was an important milestone in strengthening Pakistan's national security. "Pakistan's armed forces will play their due part in achieving the vision laid out in the policy."

While the policy remains classified, it will no doubt shed light on major issues to include security, foreign relations and economic issues. As far as India is concerned what needs to be seen is the articulation of the Pakistan policy with regard to Kashmir, terrorism, the proxy war, their nuclear policy, relations with China, policies with regard to Afghanistan and as well their relations with other countries in the region and beyond. More importantly, the national objectives would need to be specified, with the capabilities and means required to achieve these. Unfortunately, Pakistan has remained wedded in the belief that India seeks to divide Pakistan along ethnic lines, and even though there have been repeated attempts by India to rebuild relations any peaceful initiative in recent years has been opposed by the military apparatus the recent examples being Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee's visit to Lahore in February 1999 which was followed by Pakistan's intrusion across the LoC and occupying heights overlooking Kargil; and Prime Minister Modi's visit to Lahore in December 2016 to visit Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif which was followed by the Pathankot terrorist attack in January 2016. While the attack derailed the attempts to engage by both leaders, the attack in Uri later that year and in Pulwama in February 2019 only reinforced the futility of trying to engage with Pakistan while they continued to support terrorist activities and therefore forced a change in India's policy of strategic restraint by carrying out surgical strikes. There has been no bilateral meeting between the two Prime Ministers since 2015 as there remains a deeply embedded hostility towards India.

Due to its geo – strategic location Pakistan has always found itself to be at the centre of global geo politics be it the Cold War, Afghanistan occupation by USSR, and the global war against terrorism .Since its inception its foreign policy has been largely driven by its security concerns rather than political, economic or social issues. Today, Pakistan is closest to China and this mutual trust emanates as both have a common goal in countering India.

In our context, the discourse over national security has been limited to dealing with specific security-related episodes such as terrorist attacks ranging from Parliament, Mumbai, Pathankot, Uri and Pulwama, the Line of Control with Pakistan; the stand-off with Chinese forces at Doklam and Galwan. There is rarely a holistic discussion of India's national security in the public space. We need to possess an overarching national security strategy (NSS) that comprehensively assesses the challenges to the country's security and spells out policies to deal effectively with them; of course such a strategy must be executed within the parameters laid down by the Constitution of India and the country's democratic political dispensation. What remains to be seen is that while publically the National Security Policy talks about economic growth and developmental progress; it is unlikely that these will take precedence over its primary security concern - India for which it will lean heavily towards China. It is unlikely that there will be any tectonic shifts in the policy which will continue to be guided by the pressures of conformity in their strategic thinking towards India. Pivotal equations between India and Pakistan will continue to be dominated by Kashmir, the ongoing proxy war and terrorism; it is unlikely that this prevailing equilibrium is likely to be reset by this classified policy document.

***Major General Jagatbir Singh** was commissioned into 18 Cavalry in December 1981, a Regiment he has subsequently commanded. He has held various command, staff and instructional appointments and has served in varied terrains. Amongst his command assignments was conversion of an Armoured Brigade to an Arjun profile in the Desert Sector and command of an Armoured Division. He has been an instructor at the Indian Military Academy and served twice both as an Instructor and Senior Instructor and Head of Training Team in Defence Services Staff College. He has been writing articles on security related issues post retirement which have been published in various newspapers and magazines.

ANALYSIS

Myanmar: Another Year of Instability Ahead

Facing multiple forces in opposition the Myanmar military has failed to contain resistance in the country over the past 11 months after having taking over the reins of power by force from an elected government. The coup leader Min Aung Hlaing and self-appointed prime minister perhaps did not anticipate level of resistance that he would face when he took over power. The confrontation ranges from a widespread Civil Disobedience Movement (CDM) which has seen large number of civilians in the country providing support, political opposition in the form of Committee Representing Pyidaungsu Hluttaw (CRPH), comprising mainly National League for Democracy (NLD) MPs elected to the coup-dissolved Parliament, which had formed the National Unity Government (NUG), the well-armed and experienced fighters of the ethnic armed organizations (EAOs) and the highly motivated youth of the People's Defense Force (PDF). The military has adopted hard line tactics for which it is famous scorched earth,

Political Developments

Political focus remained on curtailing the opposition threat by judicial injunctions by the State Administrative Council (SAC), the official name of the military led junta government. The SAC junta plan is to use the judiciary which now comprises mainly of former generals to sentence NLD and other political party leaders not aligned to the military so that they are disqualified from participation in further political activity in the country whenever the same is resumed. Thus NLD Chair Aung San Suu Kyi was sentenced to four years in custody which as per reports has now been reduced to two years under house detention. The Charges against her were ludicrous to say the least and are not expected to stand test of judiciary in an international court of law or in a fair trial in Myanmar as well. On Dec. 6, the regime court sentenced detained State Counselor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi to four years in prison after convicting her of two out of 12 cases against her—sedition and breaching COVID-19 restrictions. President U Win Myint was also given two years for the same offenses.

At the end of December many opponents were sentenced to lengthy prison terms. Hardest hit was Magway Region's ousted chief minister, Aung Moe Nyo, who was given 18 years behind bars after being found guilty on multiple charges of violating Myanmar's Anti-Corruption Law for allegedly accepting bribes and misusing state funds. "The chief minister was facing a total of six corruption charges. [The judges] handed down an 18-year prison sentence—three years for each charge," his lawyer Myint Aung told Myanmar Now.

At a regime cabinet meeting on Dec. 13, coup leader Min Aung Hlaing stressed that detained State Counselor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and President U Win Myint are free to meet their lawyers. Presumably, therefore, he assumes the duo's lawyers have informed them of the latest political developments in the country—including the formation of the NUG, its legislative body the CRPH, and what the regime brands their “terrorist” activities—and that Daw Aung San Suu Kyi has given the lawyers her views on them. Min Aung Hlaing's reference to Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and her lawyers came in the context of his call for his subordinates to step up the arrests of members of the PDF, which the junta has portrayed as a terrorist group. Observers say Min Aung Hlaing's intention is to drive a wedge between Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, who embraces the principle of nonviolence, and the CRPH, NUG and PDF.

On other charges the court postponed verdicts against detained leader Aung San Suu Kyi concerning two charges of possessing illegally imported walkie-talkies seized during a pre-dawn raid on her residence in the capital on February 1, according to court sources. The ousted State Counsellor was charged under the Export and Import Law and the Telecommunications Law and faces up to four years in prison if convicted of the offences.

At a meeting of his regime's cabinet in Naypyitaw on Dec. 3, coup leader Min Aung Hlaing admitted Myanmar's economy is suffering from the impact of COVID-19 and the post-coup political upheaval, which has forced foreign firms to withdraw from the country. For various reasons, the regime is being deprived of tax revenue, including income tax, he added.

Myanmar's transition to democracy after a long period of military rule commenced in 2008 with the adoption of a Constitution that reduced the role of the military in the parliament to 25 % of the members and introduced three ministries from the armed forces which were essentially security portfolios. Two elections later the National League for Democracy (NLD) won a landslide success in the 2020 November 8, multi parliamentary elections which was rejected by the military seeing its role being circumscribed and it resorted to the familiar route of usurping power by force on February 01 with expectations of a token resistance at the political level. The slow and steady transition of the country where aspirations of the people at large towards freedoms was hardly appreciated, nor the willingness to sacrifice their lives for the cause of democracy. Thus the coup in 2021 is different from the one in 1958, the second coup of 1962 and the third in 1988 as a new democratic movement has emerged with an immensely popular shadow government. This self-proclaimed government has reach throughout society. With the help of the protest movement, it operates underground schools, clinics and hospitals. Unwittingly the coup may have led to greater democratisation in Myanmar but it may take time for the NUG to come to power in the country.

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NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

This section explores ongoing security issues and perspectives from India's neighbouring countries, including – Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Bhutan and Maldives.

Afghanistan

Afghanistan: Taliban Struggling on Multiple Fronts

The Islamic Emirate officially called by the United Nations as Defacto Authority in Afghanistan continued to struggle on multiple fronts. On the humanitarian situation there is some relief while cash doles by the United Nations is easing the financial crunch to some degree. On the international front much has been promised by the Organisation for Islamic Cooperation (OIC) in a foreign ministers meet in Islamabad, Pakistan but the United States remains the main source of relief providing \$ 475 million this year even the staccato of protests for release of assets are continuing. International recognition of the Defacto Authority henceforth referred to as Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) or the Taliban remains a chimera for now and is unlikely in the near term given that there is no significant change in the internal dynamics of oppression of women, media and only token inclusion of minorities. Meanwhile governance and security capacity building are a work in progress. Global and regional rivalries are also manifesting as is evident with a contest for the contract for operation of international airports between Turkey, Qatar and the UAE. In the first interview after his hurried departure from Kabul in a helicopter on August 15, former President Ashraf Ghani claimed that he was hustled out of the City by his staff and did not envisage leaving the country. All in all, portends for 2022 remain uncertain and despondency continues for the Afghan people.

Key Trends: OIC

The Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) has pledged to set up a humanitarian trust fund for Afghanistan as millions face hunger and poverty. The OIC meeting did not give the new Taliban government any formal international recognition and Afghan Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi was excluded from the official photograph taken during the event. An OIC resolution released after the meeting said the Islamic Development Bank would lead the effort to free up assistance by the first quarter of 2022. Organization of Islamic Cooperation in a statement said that the organization's Secretary-General Hissein Brahim Taha announced Tariq Aali Bakheet's appointment as his special envoy to Afghanistan. Tariq Ali Bakheet was Taha's Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian, Cultural, and Social Affairs.

Nepal

The Election Commission in Nepal has summoned both factions of the ruling Nepal Communist Party (NCP) on Friday for discussions, reported The Himalayan Times. This comes after both factions had filed their respective claims of being the original NCP. The report said the commission is likely to discuss the impending elections that were scheduled for April and May. Dahal faction earlier expelled Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli from the primary membership of the party. The split in the ruling party happened last year after Prime Minister Oli dissolved the lower house of parliament on 20 December. The move rattled Oli's party rival Pushpa Kamal Dahal who had been trying to unseat Oli from the post of the prime minister for months. The dissolution move came when it became clear to Oli that Dahal faction was to bring a no-confidence motion against him.

Since the dissolution of the lower house, both factions have been holding their separate meeting of the party standing committees. Oli, however, repeatedly mocked the claims of Dahal and other rival leaders. Oli's government has been facing criticism from all sides, as people accused him of plunging the country into a constitutional crisis. Members of civil society also criticized Oli for subverting the democratic gains of the country.

On the legal front, many experts also raised doubt over the legality of Oli's decision to dissolve parliament. Opponents have filed multiple litigations in the Supreme Court, challenging the constitutional validity of the 20th December move. Currently, a three judges bench, headed by the chief justice, has been hearing a slew of petitions in the matter. Political parties have also been taking out protest rallies, opposing the "undemocratic" decision of Prime Minister Oli. However, till now the fragmented opposition in Nepal has failed to put a united show against their, what they call, autocratic prime minister.

Bhutan

Bhutan: LG Polls and Parliament Session

Key Trends

Bhutan held the third local government elections in the country on December 22. With an increase in participation by 12.62 this marked a success in the process of democracy in the country with reports of increase in political competition. Sixth Session of the Third Parliament was also concluded in December with a number of important bills based. Bhutan rolled out booster doses to the priority groups. With this, Bhutan becomes the first country in the South Asian region to administer

booster doses. The priority groups include residents above the age of 18 in the high-risk areas, elderly above 65 years across the country, persons with chronic medical conditions, all health workers, and all outbound travellers above the age 18. Bhutan conferred its highest civilian award, Ngadag Pel gi Khorlo on Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Bhutan is also exploring more trade routes to Bangladesh. More than 93 per cent of the health ministry's priority group has received their booster dose for COVID-19.

Third LG election

A record of 68.42 percent of the registered voters voted in the third local government (LG) elections, which concluded on December 22. Out of 463,033 registered voters in the country, 316,798 turned up and cast their votes either on the electronic voting machines (EVM) or through postal ballots, according to the official results declared by the Election Commission of Bhutan (ECB). The voter turnout increased by 12.62 percentage points from the second LG elections in 2016, which saw a 55.8 percent voter turnout. The country elected a total of 197 gups, 205 mangmis and 14 dzongkhag thromde ngotshabs (town representatives). Of the 1,044 chiwogs in the country, about 1024 elected their tshogpas. 3,514 candidates participated in the third LG election. Of that, 597 candidates contested for the post of Gup, 617 candidates for the Mangmi's post and 2,263 people contested to become Tshogpas. There were also two Thrompon candidates, six Thromde Tshogpa candidates and 29 candidates for the Thromde Ngotshab elections. 491 women took part in the Local Government Elections.

Parliament Session

His Majesty The King graced the closing ceremony of the sixth session of the third parliament. During the month-long session of the parliament, the National Assembly adopted the Framework Agreement on the establishment of the International Solar Alliance, Fiscal Incentives Bill of Bhutan 2021, the Customs Duty (Amendment) Bill of Bhutan 2021, the Tax Bill of Bhutan 2021 and the Goods and Services Tax (Amendment) Bill of Bhutan 2021. The House also adopted the Biodiversity Bill of Bhutan 2021, the Civil Society Organization (Amendment) Bill of Bhutan 2021, and the Royal Bhutan Police (Amendment) Bill 2021. The National Assembly also re-deliberated on United Nations Convention against Corruption (Amendment) and Anti-Corruption (Amendment) Bill 2021 and deliberated on the Forest and Nature Conservation Bill of Bhutan 2021. National Council deliberated on Ratification of the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC), the Anti-Corruption (Amendment) Bill of Bhutan 2021, Fiscal Incentive (FI) Act of Bhutan 2021, Review Report on Drafting a Civil Liability Bill, Review Report on Mental Health Issues and Suicide in Bhutan among others. The joint sitting deliberated on the Review Report

on Annual Audit Report 2020 along with the two Performance Audit Report of the Public Accounts Committee as reported by the Bhutan Broadcasting Service Report.

First GNH of Business Certificate awarded

Three companies – Bank of Bhutan Ltd., Bhutan Power Corporation Ltd., and Bhutan Telecom Ltd. – were awarded the GNH of Business Certificate on December 30th for doing their business in conformity with the Gross National Happiness (GNH) values giving a fillip to the concept first coined by Fourth King of Bhutan, King Jigme Singye Wangchuck, in 1972 and has gathered much steam since then.

[Sources used – Bhutan Broadcasting Service, Kuensel online and Indian MEA/PIB]

Maldives

Maldives: Balancing India China in the Atolls

Key Trends

Political divisions in Maldives on foreign policy came to the fore after leaders and parties strongly resented the “India Out,” campaign launched by the former President Abdulla Yameen Abdulla Gayoom. Gayoom who is known to be close to China launched rallies in atolls over the issue after he was exonerated from charges of corruption by the Supreme Court in November. Meanwhile Chinese investments in Maldives are falling and may become a subject of discussion during the visit of the Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi to the country in January 2022. Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina was on a visit to Maldives in December with the welfare of large number of workers working in the tourism sector in the atoll nation of particular interest. In what could give a fillip to the economy, Maldives welcomed 1.3 millionth tourist for the year this evening – successfully reaching the target set for the year. The government’s aim for 2022 is to achieve the 2 million tourist arrivals

India Out Campaign – PPM and Yameen Isolated

Former President Abdulla Yameen Abdulla Gayoom has urged a referendum to identify public views regarding the stationing of Indian military personnel in the Maldives. Gayoom who launched a campaign ‘India Out’ touring atolls claimed that it was spreading faster in Maldives than any pandemic. He focused on military personnel in Maldives and said that that Indian military personnel weren’t in Maldives to assist the Maldivian people. “If they are here to protect interests, then the government should be able to reveal what’s in the agreements,” he said. “If they made such great agreements, then they should deliver the happy news of such great agreements made in the people’s interest.” The Maldivian government expressed

concern over anti-India propaganda, warning that spreading hatred and false allegations regarding bilateral ties with neighbouring countries not only tarnishes the relations with allies who extends consistent support to the Maldivian people, but also affect the safety and security of their citizens in Maldives, and Maldivians living abroad. Former President and current Speaker of the Parliament said that claiming Maldives will not need neighboring countries was an attempt to weaken Maldivians.

Gayoom and his party the Progressive Party of Maldives (PPM) leading the campaign may be isolated. Jumhoory Party (JP) joined government coalition partner Adhaalath Party (AP) in condemning the 'India Out' campaign headed by former President Abdulla Yameen Abdul Gayoom to protest against Indian military presence in Maldives. On the particular point of visit by military personnel, JP said it believes short-term visits by military personnel between Maldives and India for training exercises to be mutually beneficial, and that such military cooperation was internally accepted and practiced.

Hoarafushi MP Ahmed Saleem claimed that it was not unusual for military stationing presence between countries with military ties these days. Making this remark via Twitter, MP Saleem noted that members of Maldivian military personal were in India even right now. He further questioned whether the presence of Maldivian soldiers hindered the power of Indian military within their country.

China Balancing

Maldives reiterated to uphold the 'One-China' policy when the Ambassador of China to the Maldives Wang Lixin paid a courtesy call to Vice President Faisal Naseem. Meanwhile Chinese Foreign Minister and State Counsellor is due to visit Maldives in January 2022. Bank of China – which previously committed to financing the 1,700-unit project in Hulhumale' – the first housing project the current government broke ground on in the greater Male' region – has withdrawn the offer. According to information published on Isles – the website on government projects – the contractor of the project – Sinohydro Global Construction – is facing difficulties in securing 85 percent of the funds for the project. It is not clear if this is due to economic stringency or has political motives.

Bangladesh PM Visit to Maldives

Bangladesh is deepening its ties with the Maldives as part of greater objective of regional integration in South Asia in the areas of trade, connectivity, migration and tourism. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina visited the Maldives on December 22-23 where she focused on regularising nearly 50,000 of the total 100,000 Bangladeshi workers, fresh recruitment and also offer training and education facilities for the Maldivians in Bangladesh. Maldives President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih, during his visit to Dhaka in March had extended the invitation to Hasina. The PM held a bilateral meeting with Maldives President at the Presidential Palace on December

23. During her visit, 13 armoured vehicles from the Bangladesh Army were also handed over to the Maldives Defence department as a token of friendship.

Bangladesh and the Maldives agreed to address and counter the threats posed by organised crimes, piracy, narcotic, and human trafficking, through multilateral and regional for including Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), in the quest of attaining security, stability and peace in the Indian Ocean region. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and President of the Maldives Ibrahim Mohamed Solih agreed on the importance of working together bilaterally, regionally and internationally in combating the rising menace of terrorism, violent extremism and radicalization, according to a joint communiqué issued. Both leaders emphasised that the regional organisations such as South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation has an important role to play in promoting regional cooperation in many areas, particularly in combating the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic.

Bangladesh government might give loans to the Maldives after the Island nation sought funds. The Maldives' economy is largely dependent on tourism and its economy contracted by 32 percent last year due to the pandemic. The low level of usable reserves and high indebtedness pose significant risks to macroeconomic stability of the Maldives, according to the World Bank. "The Maldives requested us for a loan for a longer term. We are actively considering it," Bangladesh Bank Governor Fazle Kabir told a roundtable yesterday during the final session of the three-day Annual BIDS Conference on Development: Celebrating 50 Years of Bangladesh.

Defence and Security Developments

Maldives Transport and Contracting Company (MTCC) has been awarded a project by the Maldives National University (MNU) to build a Maritime Survival Center. Under the project, MTCC will fill 1,200 cubic meters of sheet-piled land, pile sheets on a 35-meter quay wall, install concrete boulders, construct a 4.2-meter-long and 6.4-meter-wide ramp, and install a mooring bollard as per Sun Online. Police revealed that Criminal Court's order to block online mediums used to preach other religions in Maldives have not been enforced yet. The order was issued by the court in November after Police submitted the case following a collaborative investigation with relevant authorities into various online mediums used to preach other religions to Maldivians.

President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih, ratified the third amendment to the Anti-Terrorism Act. Parliament passed this bill at the 44th sitting of its third session of this year, held on November 29. The government proposed bill was submitted to the Parliament by Kurendhoo MP Abdul Ghanee Abdul Hakeem. With the new amendment, the time frame given to Police for the complete investigations related to terrorism cases has been extended to three months. Prior to this, Police had a deadline of 45-days to complete investigations into terrorism-related cases. Police will now be able to detain

persons suspected of terrorism-related offenses for 48-hours without a court order. President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih, inaugurated the Joint Interagency Operations Center (JIOC) - a new center established to counter terror attacks. The center was inaugurated in a ceremony at Bandaara Koshi. The ceremony was attended by Defense Minister Mariya Ahmed Didi, Chief of Defense Force Major General Abdulla Shamaal, and other top government officials.

[Summarised based on Sun Online, Rajje TV and other news sources]

LINK FEST

Label	Tags	Type	Link	Author
Asia briefing	Asia, Terrosim, Comba	Podacst	https://podcasts.apple.com/in/podcast/asia-briefing/id1449957309	South China Morning post
Asia Geopoltics	Episode: AUKUS and Indo Pacific	Podcast	https://podcasts.apple.com/in/podcast/aukus-and-the-indo-pacific-geopolitics/id852773346?i=1000536869586	The Diplomat
South Asia Chat	Episode 108: Sri Lanka's New Strategy In India	Podcast		National University of Singapore (NUS)
The Asia Review	Episode: Jagjeet Lally, "India and the Silk Roads: The History of a Trading World" (Oxford UP, 2021)	Newsletter	https://www.globaltimes.cn/opinion/asian-review/	Jagjeet Lally
The Seen and Unseen	Episode: The Most Dangerous Place: A History of the United States in South Asia.	Podacst	https://podcasts.apple.com/in/podcast/america-in-south-asia/id1190896090?i=1000423202193	



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