

24 October 2024

Sixth India-Singapore Defence Ministers' Dialogue

Context: Recently, sixth India-Singapore Defence Ministers' Dialogue, co-chaired by Indian Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and Singapore's Defence Minister Dr. Ng Eng Hen. This significant meeting underscores the growing importance of defence relations between India and Singapore, reinforcing their comprehensive strategic partnership.

Key Takeaways from the Dialogue:

- **Enhanced Defence Cooperation:** India and Singapore have pledged to deepen their defence relations, focusing on the co-development and co-production of defence equipment. This collaborative approach not only strengthens military ties but also promotes technological innovation.
- **Joint Military Training:** The extension of the Joint Military Training Army agreement emphasizes the importance of regular joint exercises, which are crucial for interoperability and preparedness in addressing regional security challenges.
- **Commitment to Regional Security:** The dialogue reaffirmed the shared commitment of both nations to regional peace, stability, and security. In an era marked by geopolitical tensions, such collaborations are vital for fostering a secure and stable environment in the Indo-Pacific region.
- **Celebrating 60 Years of Diplomatic Relations:** Looking ahead, India and Singapore are set to commemorate 60 years of diplomatic relations in 2025. This milestone presents an opportunity to reflect on the achievements of the partnership and set new objectives for future cooperation, particularly in the defence sector.

About India-Singapore Defence Ministers' Dialogue:

- **Established:** Inaugurated in 2016, the India-Singapore Defence Ministers' Dialogue serves as a vital platform for enhancing bilateral defence cooperation.
- **Purpose:** The dialogue aims to strengthen and deepen the defence relationship between Singapore and India, reflecting their mutual strategic interests and commitments.

About India-Singapore Relationship:

Historical Ties:

- **Foundational Connection:** Established in 1819 by Sir Stamford Raffles.
- **Recognition of Independence:** India was one of the first countries to recognize Singapore's independence in 1965, initiating a fruitful bilateral relationship.



Trade and Economic Cooperation:

- **Bilateral Trade Growth:** The Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA) has led to bilateral trade reaching USD 35.6 billion in 2023-24, with India being a net importer.
- **Tax Agreements:** The Direct Tax Avoidance Agreement (DTAA), signed in 2016, aims to prevent tax evasion and enhance economic ties.

Defence Relationship:

- **Strategic Maritime Reach:** Defence collaboration enhances India's regional strategic maritime capabilities and reinforces Singapore's role as a security partner in the Indian Ocean.
- **Joint Exercises:** Key military exercises include:
 - » Exercise Agni Warrior (Army)
 - » Exercise SIMBEX (Navy)
 - » Air Force Exercise Joint Military Training (JMT)

Fintech and Multilateral Cooperation:

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- **Fintech Developments:** Significant strides in cross-border fintech, including the RuPay card and UPI-Paynow Linkage.

Indian Community in Singapore:

- **Population Stats:** Ethnic Indians make up 9.1% of Singapore's resident population, with Tamil as one of the four official languages.
- **Indian Citizens:** Approximately one-fifth of the 1.6 million foreigners in Singapore are Indian nationals.

Satellite Spectrum

Context: Recently, Union Communications Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia has declared that satellite spectrum in India will be assigned "administratively" rather than through auctions. This decision aligns with international best practices, recognizing satellite spectrum as a globally shared public resource managed by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU).

Key Benefits of Administrative Assignment:

- **Efficient Allocation:** Administrative assignment facilitates optimal utilization of satellite spectrum, allowing for effective management of resources.
- **Equitable Access:** This approach ensures fair access to satellite spectrum for all stakeholders, promoting inclusivity in the satellite communications sector.
- **Global Consistency:** Aligns with established international standards for satellite spectrum management, enhancing cooperation among countries.

Telecommunications Act, 2023:

- Establishes that while spectrum is typically assigned through auctions, exceptions exist for categories like satellite spectrum, which requires an administrative approach.
- **Section 4(4):** Spectrum allocation for certain entries, including satellite spectrum, is conducted without an auction.

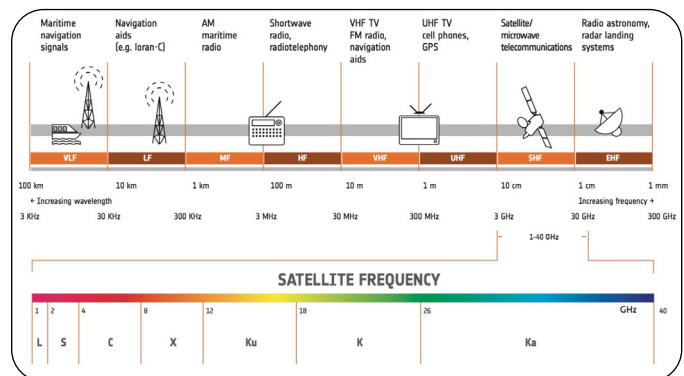
What is Satellite Spectrum?

- Satellite spectrum refers to specific radio frequencies allocated for satellite communications (satcom), enabling data transmission between satellites and Earth stations.

- **Management:** Its management and allocation are coordinated by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), a UN agency.

Benefits of Satellite Communication:

- **Wider Coverage:** Can reach remote and rural areas lacking traditional infrastructure.
- **Resilience:** Fewer ground components make systems less vulnerable to natural disasters or extreme weather.
- **Market Growth Potential:** India's satellite communications sector is projected to grow from \$2.3 billion to \$20 billion by 2028, driven by untapped markets and increased demand for broadband.



Why Most Countries Avoid Auctions for Satellite Spectrum

International Coordination:

- Satellite spectrum serves multiple operators and has no national boundaries.
- The ITU's coordination makes exclusive auctions impractical.

Non-Exclusive Nature:

- Satellite spectrum can be utilized by multiple providers, unlike terrestrial spectrum, which is exclusive to individual operators.
- This shared access reduces the feasibility of conducting auctions.

Past Experiences:

- Countries like the United States, Brazil, and Saudi Arabia have experimented with auctions but reverted to administrative assignments due to cumbersome processes.
- The US last held a satellite spectrum auction in 2004, which led to a return to administrative methods.

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Regulatory Efficiency:

- Administrative allocation allows for more efficient and timely spectrum assignment.
- It simplifies regulatory processes, enabling satellite operators to deploy services without auction-related delays.

About the International Telecommunication Union (ITU):

- The ITU is the United Nations specialized agency for information and communication technologies (ICT).
- It was established in 1865 as the International Telegraph Union.
- In 1947, the ITU became a specialized agency of the United Nations.
- **Intergovernmental Organization:** The ITU serves as a platform for coordination between governments and private sector entities regarding global telecommunications and ICT services.

Membership:

- The ITU has 193 member countries.
- It includes over 1,000 organizations, including companies, universities, and regional and international bodies.

Functions:

- Allocates global radio spectrum and satellite orbits.
- Coordinates and sets technical standards related to telecommunications and ICT.
- Works to improve access to ICTs in underserved communities worldwide.

India and ITU:

- India has been an active member of the ITU since 1869.
- It has been a regular member of the ITU Council since 1952.
- **Headquarters:** The ITU is headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland.

Kartarpur Corridor Agreement

Context: India and Pakistan have recently renewed the Kartarpur Corridor agreement, ensuring that this vital link for Indian pilgrims to the Kartarpur Sahib Gurudwara in Pakistan remains open for another five years, extending until 2029.

- This renewal is a significant development for the Sikh

community, allowing uninterrupted access to one of their most revered religious sites.

Key Details of the Renewal:

- **Duration:** The renewed agreement extends the corridor's operation for five more years, until 2029.
- **Pilgrim Capacity:** The corridor will accommodate up to 5,000 pilgrims daily, facilitating a large number of devotees wishing to pay their respects.
- **Service Fee:** Pakistan will continue to charge a nominal service fee of \$20 per pilgrim to help cover operational costs.



Eligibility and Requirements:

- **Who Can Use the Corridor:**
 - » Indian citizens.
 - » Persons of Indian origin.
- **Required Documents:**
 - » **For All Pilgrims:** A valid passport and an Electronic Travel Authorization (ETA).
 - » **For OCI Card Holders:** Must present their Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) card.
- **Travel Guidelines:**
 - » **Travel Schedule:** Pilgrims will embark in the morning and must return on the same day.
 - » **Visit Restrictions:** Access is limited to Gurdwara Sri Kartarpur Sahib, and travel beyond this site is not allowed.

About the Kartarpur Corridor Agreement:

- **Date Signed:** The initial agreement was signed on October 24, 2019.
- **Purpose:** Its primary aim is to facilitate easy access for

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Indian pilgrims to Gurdwara Darbar Sahib Kartarpur, located in Narowal, Pakistan.

- **Corridor Overview:** The Kartarpur Corridor is a 4.7-kilometer (2.9-mile) visa-free crossing that connects Gurdwara Darbar Sahib in Pakistan to Gurudwara Dera Baba Nanak in India.

Historical Background:

- The idea for the Kartarpur Corridor was first proposed in 1999 by Indian PM Atal Bihari Vajpayee and Pakistani PM Nawaz Sharif during the Delhi-Lahore Bus diplomacy.
- The groundwork for the corridor was laid on November 26, 2018, by PM Narendra Modi in India, followed by PM Imran Khan's foundation-laying ceremony on November 28 in Pakistan. The corridor was officially completed on November 12, 2019, in time for the 550th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak, a significant event for

the Sikh community.

Significance:

- The Kartarpur Corridor holds immense cultural and spiritual significance for Sikh devotees, allowing them easier access to the birthplace of Guru Nanak. Politically, the corridor is seen as a bridge between India and Pakistan, symbolizing a step toward peace and easing long-standing tensions between the two nations.

Conclusion:

The renewal of the Kartarpur Corridor agreement is a positive development for interfaith dialogue and cultural exchange, providing Sikh pilgrims with a meaningful connection to their heritage. As this corridor continues to facilitate spiritual journeys, it reinforces the idea that shared cultural and religious values can foster understanding and cooperation between nations.

Power Packed News

Expansion of News Services in Nepal's Indigenous Languages

- The Rashtriya Samachar Samiti (RSS), Nepal's state news agency, has launched news services in Maithili, Awadhi, Bhojpuri, and Tharu languages, enhancing access to information for diverse linguistic communities.
- The initiative was inaugurated by the Minister for Communications and Information Technology and it aligns with the Ministry's 100-day targets and reinforces Nepal's commitment to its federal structure by promoting multilingualism.
- In addition, Gorkhapatra, Nepal's oldest daily newspaper, introduced a page dedicated to the Ranatharu language..
- In India, Maithili, Awadhi, and Bhojpuri are prominent regional languages spoken mainly in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, contributing to India's rich linguistic diversity. Tharu, spoken by the indigenous Tharu people, is prevalent in the Terai region.
- These languages reflect shared traditions, customs, and histories, strengthening ties among communities and promoting regional identity, thereby enriching the cultural landscape of both India and Nepal.

New Genus of Jumping Spiders

- A new genus of jumping spiders, Tenkana, has been discovered in southern India. It includes two previously known species and a newly identified species called Tenkana jayamangali.
- The name Tenkana comes from the Kannada word for "south," as the species are found in southern India and northern Sri Lanka. The newly discovered species, Tenkana jayamangali, is named after the Jayamangali river in Karnataka, where it was first found.
- Tenkana spiders belong to the Plexippina subtribe of jumping spiders and are distinct from related groups such as Hyllus and Telamonia.
- These spiders prefer dry, ground-level habitats, unlike their forest-dwelling relatives. They have been found in Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, Karnataka, Telangana, and Andhra Pradesh.
- The research, published in the journal Zookeys, was based on genetic studies and physical examinations. Two species that



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DELHI MUKHERJEE NAGAR: 9205274741, 42 | **LAXMI NAGAR**: 9205212500, 9205962002 | **RAJENDRA NAGAR**: 9205274743 | **UTTAR PRADESH** PRAYAGRAJ: 0532-2260189, 8853467068 | **LUCKNOW** (ALIGANJ): 0522-4025825, 9506256789 | **LUCKNOW** (GOMTI NAGAR): 7234000501, 7234000502 | **GREATER NOIDA**: 9205336037, 38 | **KANPUR**: 7887003962, 7897003962 | **GORAKHPUR**: 7080847474, 9161947474 | **ODISHA** BHUBANESWAR: 9818244644/7656949029



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were previously part of the genus *Colopus* have now been reclassified under *Tenkana*.

Prabowo Subianto Sworn in as Indonesia's Eighth President

- Prabowo Subianto was sworn in as Indonesia's eighth President on October 20, 2024, after winning nearly 60% of the vote. He now leads Indonesia, the world's third-largest democracy and the most populous Muslim-majority nation.
- Prabowo, a former special forces commander, has introduced key policies, including a free meal program for schoolchildren. His administration consists of 48 ministers and 58 deputy ministers.
- His presidency follows Joko Widodo's decade-long leadership, which brought significant economic growth and infrastructure development to the country.
- Under Prabowo's leadership, Indonesia is expected to continue with economic reforms and improve social welfare programs. Indonesia, the world's largest archipelago with over 17,000 islands, has its capital in Jakarta, and its currency is the Indonesian Rupiah.



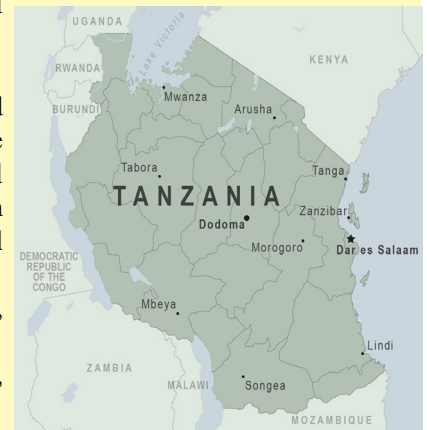
Places in News

Dar Es Salaam

INS Suvarna, while on its anti-piracy deployment in the Gulf of Aden, made a port call at Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania, from October 19 to 21, 2024.

About Dar Es Salaam:

- Dar Es Salaam, located along the Indian Ocean coast, is Tanzania's largest city and economic capital. Historically, it has served as a vital port and trade center for the region, facilitating commerce and connectivity between East Africa and the global market. The city's strategic location has contributed to its development into an economic powerhouse within the region, making it a critical hub for both regional and international commerce.
- Tanzania is bordered by several countries: Uganda and Kenya to the north, Mozambique to the south, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo to the west.
- Its major rivers, including the Rufiji and Ruvuma, drain into the Indian Ocean, further enhancing its geographic importance.



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