



INDO-PACIFIC CIVIL SOCIETY FORUM

#08/2024/January-March, 2024

Multinational Naval Exercise MILAN 2024

The Indo-Pacific Civil Society Forum (IPCSF) is an informal coalition of civil society organisations (NGOs, think tanks, etc.) working across the region toward realising a shared vision of peace, security, stability, and prosperity.

<https://cuts-wdc.org/indo-pacific-forum.htm>

The biennale multinational naval exercise MILAN 2024 flagged off the coast of Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh. The exercise, hosted by the Indian Navy, brings together naval forces from around the world for joint training and cooperation.

With participation from several countries, including the U.S., Japan, Australia, and Russia, MILAN 2024 aims to enhance interoperability and maritime security in the Indian Ocean and Indo-Pacific region. The exercise features various drills and scenarios focused on counter-piracy operations, search and rescue missions, and disaster relief efforts.



MILAN serves as a platform for navies to exchange best practices, build trust, and strengthen regional cooperation. It underscores India's commitment to fostering peace and stability in the region through multilateral engagements.

The ongoing exercise highlights the importance of collective efforts in addressing common maritime challenges and ensuring the safety of sea lanes. It also reflects the growing significance of naval diplomacy in promoting mutual understanding and cooperation among nations.

As MILAN 2024 progresses, it is expected to further enhance the capabilities and readiness of participating navies, contributing to a more secure and prosperous maritime environment.

Indo-Pacific Defence Drills *European Air Forces on the Rise*

In a significant move to bolster regional security, air forces from France, Germany, and Spain are set to participate in Indo-Pacific defence exercises in 2024. This deployment, involving a range of military aircraft including Eurofighters and Rafale fighters, is intended to demonstrate Europe's commitment to the region and its support for international norms like freedom of navigation.

The operations will span several major exercises, including the Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) and Pitch Black in Australia, reflecting a robust engagement strategy despite ongoing tensions in Ukraine. This strategic deployment underlines the interconnected security dynamics between Europe and the Indo-Pacific, showcasing a strong European stance on global security challenges.

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U.S. Co-hosts 6th Indo-Pacific Business Forum

The Government of the United States, in partnership with the Government of the Philippines, is all set to sponsor the 6th Indo-Pacific

Business Forum (IPBF) on May 21, 2024. Business leaders from all across the region will explore business partnership opportunities and also support the showcasing of high-impact private sector investment and job growth.

To maintain a prosperous and well-connected Indo-Pacific, the aim is to maximise the region's identity as the fastest-growing region in the world, accounting for 60 per cent of the world economy and two-thirds of all economic growth over the last five years.

(MN, 13.02.24)

U.S.-led Supply Chain Resilience Takes Effect

A first-of-its-kind multinational deal signed among the U.S., Japan and other Indo-Pacific economies on supply chain resilience has finally been brought into effect in February 2024. To address supply chain disruptions in the region, this deal has been negotiated under the U.S.-led Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF), launched in 2022.

'Critical sectors' and 'key goods' have been identified by the member countries, developing action plans and recommendations to coherently increase the resilience and competitiveness of those products.

A Supply Chain Crisis Response Network, an emergency communication channel has also been brought to the forefront, as a platform to exchange information.

(KN, 24.02.24)

U.S. Applauds Trade Group Progress

The U.S. Secretary of Commerce, Gina Raimondo, has recently praised the progress made by the member countries of the IPEF at a Ministerial meeting held in Bangkok in March 2024. The group upholds four major pillars: trade, supply chains, clean and fair economy, advancing economic growth, sustainability and competitiveness.

The idea is to diversify the global supply chains, especially for semiconductors. However, the problem for the U.S. lies in prioritising open market access for Asian members, as industries in the U.S. might suffer because of expanded free trade policies.

(TAP, 14.03.24)

ASEAN Summit on the South China Sea

Australia's Prime Minister Anthony Albanese stated that maritime security, trade, and clean energy will shape the country's future with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) bloc as China looks to increase its presence in the contested South China Sea.

Australia is hosting the ASEAN summit in Melbourne, which marks the 50th anniversary of its ties to ASEAN even as differences remained across the 10-member bloc on China's plans to extend diplomatic and military presence in the region.

(Rappler, 06.03.24)

ADB-BII to Promote Green Trade in Asia and the Pacific

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) and British International Investment (BII), the UK government's development finance institution have launched a new trade finance partnership to promote green trade in Asia and the Pacific.

The initiative preliminarily focuses on renewable energy, climate-smart agriculture and energy efficiency to reduce climate impacts. With this effort, the global supply chains shall be attempted to be made green, inclusive, and resilient, with a sense of social responsibility.



(ADB, 18.01.24)

Australia Grants US\$42mn for ASEAN's Efforts

Australia's Foreign Minister Penny Wong has declared A\$64mn (US\$ 41.8mn) as a fund for maritime security at the ASEAN congregation, held in Melbourne, in March 2024. In this regard, it was mentioned that the countries as partners were recognised to be Indonesia, Malaysia, Vietnam and the Philippines, to delimit their maritime boundaries.

Since ASEAN and Australia have been long-standing partners in the Indo-Pacific region, there is a concerted effort to address any illegal manoeuvres from China. Nonetheless, despite such efforts, what concerns the ASEAN nations the most is Australia investing billions of dollars in co-creating nuclear submarines, leveraging the threat of an arms race in the Indo-Pacific region.

(AJ, 04.03.24)



Germany Boosts Indo-Pacific Engagement

A 'never before' military deployment has been envisaged by Germany, to India, as a part of their Indo-Pacific strategic outlook. The primary implementor shall be the German Air Force, sending jets to India, probably joined by the French, Spanish and British forces as well.

The Indian Air Force will serve as the host for a significant military exercise set to take place in southern India in August 2024. Germany will dispatch military aircraft, including fighter jets, tankers and transport planes for the exercise.

(BS, 07.03.24)

Japan-U.S.-South Korea Critique China

The first trilateral Indo-Pacific Dialogue between the U.S., South Korea and Japan had been recently organised to address the 'hegemonic moves' of China in the region, especially the Taiwan Strait and the South China Sea.

A joint statement was also released that retaliated against any unilateral attempt to alter the *status quo* by force, to maintain security and prosperity in the international community.

This development was all the more relevant because of the upcoming Taiwanese Presidential elections. There was a discussion regarding the territorial dispute between China and the Philippines in the South China Sea, which is escalatory and requires solutions through diplomatic means.

(TJN, 09.01.24)

China's FM Wang Blitzes in New Zealand

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi made a rare visit to New Zealand, stressing the need to work with 'friends' in the face of the 'tumultuous international situation.' The trip marks the start of a diplomatic blitz through New Zealand and Australia, Wang's first visit to either country since 2017.

The whistlestop tour is expected to focus heavily on trade as China looks to lessen the pain from slowing economic growth at home.

(BSSN, 18.03.24)

Taiwan Vows Indo-Pacific Climate Action

The event, themed around preventing and mitigating climate change, involved allies Palau and the Marshall Islands, as well as Guam, Kiribati, Japan, Malaysia, Nauru, Papua New Guinea, Thailand and the Philippines. Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida delivered a speech via a video link during the event.

Led by LY Vice President Chiang Chi-chan, Taiwan's cross-party group included legislators Hung Sun-han, Ko Chih-en and Wang Ting-yu, all of whom urged the Asian-Pacific Parliamentarians' Union member states to support Taiwan's participation in the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change.

(TT, 13.03.24)

Perth USAsia Centre



The Perth USAsia Centre is a leading foreign policy think tank focused on Indo-Pacific strategy. In January, the team welcomed First Nations Foreign Policy Fellow [Sarah Leary](#). A proud Palawa woman from Tasmania and a former diplomat, Leary is delivering advocacy, [research](#) and activities focused on WA's contribution to Australia's First Nations foreign policy agenda.

Most recently, the Centre and its partners hosted the 2024 [Japan Symposium](#), which focused on Australia and Japan's energy security partnership. Browse educational resources, including explainers and online courses at <https://perthusasia.edu.au/education/>.

Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations



ICRIER is one of India's premier economic think tanks with the motto of "linking India with the world." Established in 1981 to provide policy advice to effectively deal with external economic shocks, it has grown to become one of India's most well-known independent and informative policy research organisations. ICRIER with UNESCAP and MSL India jointly organised the [First Asia-Pacific E-commerce Policy Summit](#) on March 14, 2024.

<https://icrier.org/>

Centre for Indonesian Policy Studies



CIPS is an independent, non-profit, non-partisan think tank advocating for practical policy reforms informed by evidence-based policy research and analysis. During the quarter the Centre published a study on Information Communication Technologies (ICT) titled ['Papua New Guineas Digital Transformation: Understanding Legal and Regulatory Challenges](#). It outlines the existing infrastructure, regulatory frameworks, and consequences of government gaps in the planning, funding, and procurement process.

www.cips-indonesia.org

Bay Area Council Economic Institute

Bay Area Council Economic Institute is a leading think tank focused on the economic and policy issues facing the San Francisco/Silicon Valley Bay Area.

This is one of the most dynamic regions in the US and the world's leading centre for technology and innovation. The Institute has recently published an [article](#) on U.S.-China relations.

www.bayareaeconomy.org



Japan Research Institute, Limited

Japan Research Institute (JRI) is a 'knowledge engineering' company with three functions: think tank, consulting, and IT solutions. With the core principle of 'co-creating new customer value', JRI identifies issues, makes concrete proposals to solve them, and supports their implementation.

JRI's Economics Department researches domestic and international economies and makes policy recommendations. During the quarter JRI Senior Economist Yosuke Yasui along with others wrote a discussion paper on ["ESG as a Tool for Advancing SDGs from High-Income to Low-Income Countries: Evidence from Matched Data of Japanese Central Headquarters and Overseas Subsidiaries."](#)

www.jri.co.jp/en



Kenya Institute for Public Policy Research and Analysis

KIPPRA is an autonomous Institute whose primary mission is to conduct public policy research leading to policy advice. KIPPRA's mission is to produce consistently high-quality analyses of key issues of public policy and to contribute to the achievement of national long-term development objectives by positively influencing the decision-making process. These goals are met through the effective dissemination of recommendations resulting from analysis and by training policy analysts in the public sector.

KIPPRA therefore produces a body of well-researched and documented information on public policy, and in the process assists in formulating long-term strategic perspectives. KIPPRA serves as a centralised source from which the government and the private sector may obtain information and advice on public policy issues.

<https://kippra.or.ke/>

