



MANOHAR PARRIKAR INSTITUTE FOR
DEFENCE STUDIES AND ANALYSES

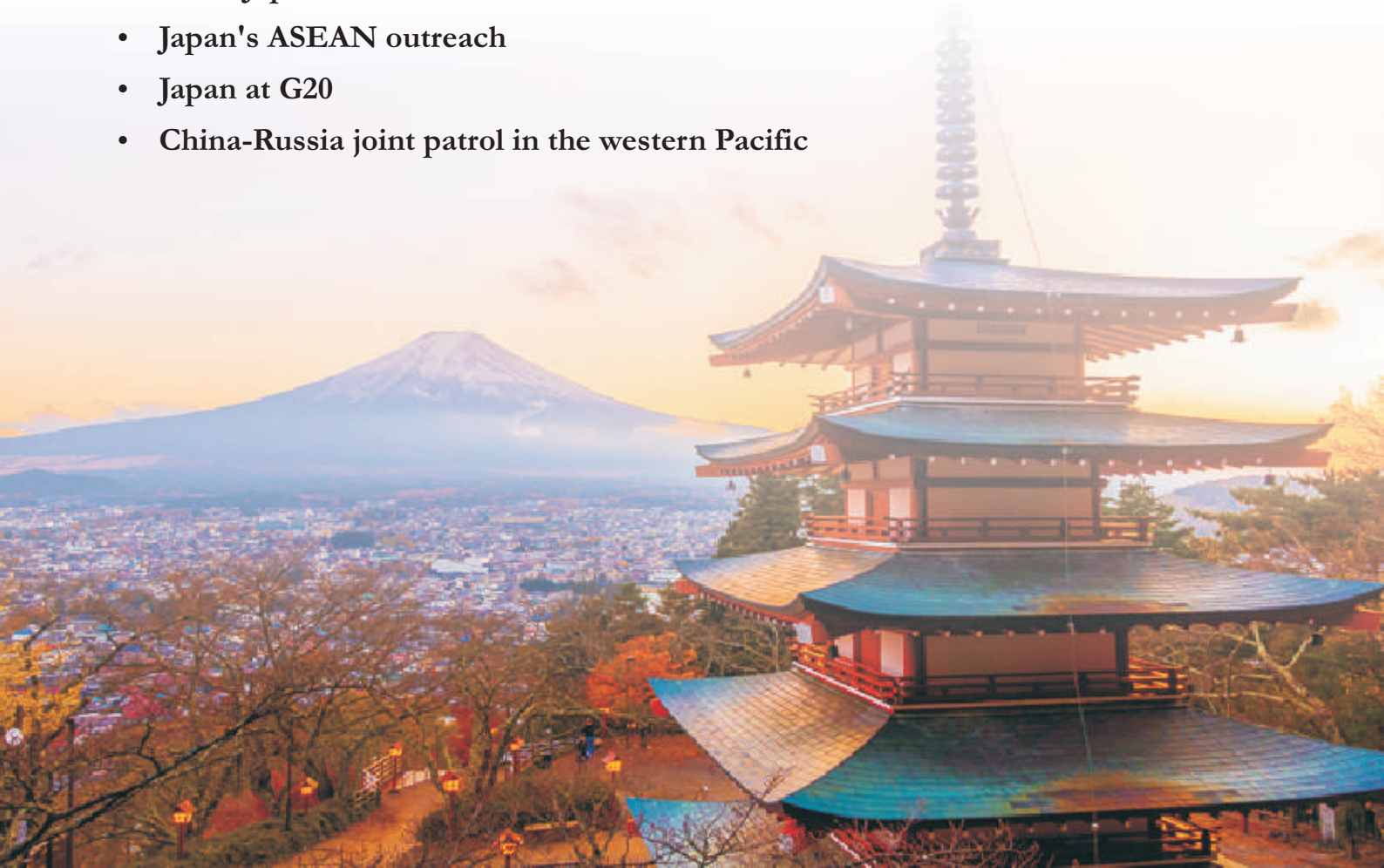
मनोहर पर्रिकर रक्षा अध्ययन एवं विश्लेषण संस्थान

JAPAN

Digest

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Lower House election

Prime Minister Fumio Kishida has led the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) to victory securing 261 out of the 465 seats in the powerful Lower House election on October 31. Previously, LDP enjoyed 276 seats in the Lower House. LDP's junior coalition partner, Komeito secured 32 seats. Together they managed to secure 293 seats. However, in a surprising development for the LDP, the newly elected secretary-general Akira Amari lost in the single-seat district vote even though he secured a seat through proportional representation. Given this unexpected setback, Amari expressed his willingness to step down as LDP's secretary-general. Foreign Minister Toshimitsu Motegi is likely to step in as LDP's new secretary-general.

The opposition also delivered a few surprises. Nippon Ishin no Kai (Japan Innovation Party) secured 41 seats, considerably gaining from their previously held 11 seats. While the Constitutional Democratic Party emerged as the largest opposition party, it lost 13 seats, going down from 109 seats to 96 seats.

Prime Minister Kishida's first policy speech at the Diet

Prime Minister Kishida made his first policy speech on October 8 at the Diet where the need for revising Japan's National Security Strategy was argued given the "increasingly severe" regional security environment. Additionally, Japan will also revise the National Defense Program Guidelines, and the Mid-Term Defense Program. The objective is to reinforce defence capabilities, with focus

on maritime security and missile defence capabilities. Reiterating Japan's commitment to promote a Free and Open Indo-Pacific, Kishida prioritised US-Japan security alliance. Furthermore, he pledged to work together with Australia, India, ASEAN and Europe.

Subsequently on October 19, as North Korea reportedly fired a submarine-launched ballistic missile, Kishida articulated that "all options would be considered, including the possession of so-called enemy-base strike capability".

Discussion on doubling defence budget

In the run-up to the Lower House election, the ruling LDP's manifesto called for doubling Japan's defence spending to 2 percent of the GDP in response to the regional security setting. LDP claimed that it is time to "drastically reconsider" building Japan's capabilities in response to developments across the Taiwan Strait and the contested Senkaku Islands on the one hand and advancements in Pyongyang's nuclear and missile programme on the other.

Earlier in May, Defence Minister Nobuo Kishi suggested that Japan needs to increase its defence capabilities at a "radically different pace than in the past," and thus appropriately allocate funds required to defend the national sovereignty.

India-Japan Maritime Exercise

From 6-8 October, the 5th India-Japan bilateral maritime exercise (JIMEX) was held in the Arabian Sea. The objective was to deepen mutual understanding of operational procedures and improve inter-

operability by way of conducting several advance exercises. Multidimensional exercises encompassing weapon firings, cross-deck helicopter operations and complex surface, anti-submarine and air warfare drills were undertaken to build coordination between the navies. JIMEX started in 2012 with the aim of bolstering India-Japan maritime security cooperation.

Japan's ASEAN outreach

Advancing Japan's Free and Open Indo-Pacific, Prime Minister Kishida virtually participated in three ASEAN centric meetings, including the Japan-ASEAN Summit, ASEAN+3 (Japan-China-South Korea) Summit, and the East Asia Summit. The underlying theme of the discussions was the urgent regional security situation, especially focussing on the developments in the East and South China Seas, North Korea, Taiwan Strait, Myanmar, and human rights situation in Hong Kong and Xinjiang. Japan expressed the intention of hosting ASEAN leaders as 2023 will commemorate 50th Anniversary of ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation. In the fight against pandemic, Japan gave around 16 million vaccines to ASEAN nations in addition to US\$ 296.3 million grant aid to develop cold chain delivery systems. The focus of Japan-ASEAN cooperation remains on maritime security, connectivity, SDGs, digital transformation, quality infrastructure, and supply chain resilience. With the aim of realising carbon neutrality, the ASEAN-Japan Climate Change Action Agenda 2.0 was adopted. Japan will support ASEAN with energy transition, technical cooperation, and human resource development.

Japan at G20

At the G20 Summit in Rome, Japanese Prime Minister Kishida virtually addressed the Global Economy and Global Health session where he presented his economic policy founded on a "virtuous cycle of growth and distribution." Kishida has proposed a new type of capitalism for Japan where income surges and each person shares the benefit of economic development. Additionally, Kishida also reflected on narrowing the rural-urban divide by digitalizing rural areas. Meanwhile, Japan has welcomed the global minimum tax on multinational companies, and is working on its implementation. While urging the G20 nations to cooperate on fighting the pandemic, Japan informed that it will globally supply about 60 million doses of vaccine.

China-Russia joint patrol in the western Pacific

Advancing defence cooperation, China-Russia reportedly conducted joint patrol in the western Pacific. Japan's defence ministry indicated that the vessels entered the Western Pacific through Tsugaru Strait. The ships entered the East China Sea through Osumi Strait, situated between Osumi Peninsula and Tanegashima Island. Japan's Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary, Yoshihiko Isozaki has stated that Tokyo is keenly observing the developments, and takes surveillance activities seriously in the air and sea domains around Japan. Meanwhile, American Navy Secretary Del Toro reacted by suggesting that China and Russia are "trying to intimidate other nations with their actions that don't abide by a rules based international order."