

Highlights from the region

9th January, 2023 | Volume - 02 - 01/01

Japan's role as a factor of stability in the Indo-Pacific region came to the fore during the past week as New Delhi and Tokyo at beginning of the year affirmed to strengthen their multifaceted partnership. While Japan will look to focus on maintaining Free & Open Indo-Pacific region when Prime Minister Fumio Kishida meets the US President mid-January, Kishida has vowed to boost the country's economy. Meanwhile, Australia has decided to strengthen its defence preparedness as the Albanese government will spend up to \$2 billion beefing up Australia's missile capabilities, including buying a renowned long-range rocket system from the USA. In SE Asia's biggest state Indonesia, President Jokowi will undertake a cabinet reshuffle, probably the last such exercise ahead of Feb 2024 Presidential polls. Hong Kong's economy meanwhile has suffered hugely due to curbs imposed due to pandemic.

[India and Japan: An alliance for the future](#)

The Print | 4th January 2023

India's relationship with Japan is one of the strongest of any nation. Both India and Japan share a common heritage of Buddhist ideals and a strong people-to-people bond that goes beyond economic alliances. The India-Japan relationship is manifested in multi-cornered cooperation and in the ever-widening scope of the bilateral alliance.

[Kishida and Biden to meet at White House on Jan. 13](#)

Japan Times | 4th January 2023

Prime Minister Fumio Kishida and U.S. President Joe Biden will hold talks at the White House on Jan. 13 to discuss North Korea, Ukraine, China's tensions with Taiwan and a "free and open Indo-Pacific," the White House said on Tuesday.

[PM Kishida urges wage growth to revive Japan economy](#)

Kyodo | 4th January 2023

Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida pledged Wednesday to prop up the country's stagnant economy, saying wage growth will become a "driver" for economic recovery with prices rising at home following the Ukraine crisis.

[Australia buys 20 'god of war' missile launchers](#)

Sydney Morning Herald | 5th January 2023

The Albanese government will spend up to \$2 billion beefing up Australia's missile capabilities, including buying a renowned long-range rocket system credited with helping Ukraine turn the tide in its war against Russia. The government is purchasing 20 land-based High Mobility Artillery Rocket System (HIMARS) launchers from the United States, which have been hailed by one analyst as the "new God of war" after their success on the battlefield in Ukraine.

[President Jokowi eyes cabinet reshuffle in coming days](#)

The Jakarta Post | 6th January 2023

President Joko "Jokowi" Widodo said he may reshuffle his cabinet in the next few days, as some political sources bet on a last major realignment of his government to complete programmes ahead of elections due to be held in 2024. Speculation about a reshuffle has been growing since Nasdem, one of seven political parties in the ruling coalition, announced it would back former Jakarta Governor Anies Baswedan in the 2024 presidential election - a politician seen as a potential rival to Jokowi's successor.

[2023 outlook: U.S. must deepen its outreach to Southeast Asia](#)

Nikkei Asia | 4th January 2023

The administration of U.S. President Joe Biden last year accelerated overtures toward members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. At a special summit in Washington last May, Biden promised "a new era in U.S.-ASEAN relations" and committed to funding an additional \$150 million in programs in Southeast Asia. Then at their annual bilateral summit in Phnom Penh in November, Biden and his ASEAN counterparts agreed to establish a comprehensive strategic partnership.

[Hong Kong's isolation estimated to cost economy \\$35 billion](#)

The Strait Times | 4th January 2023

Hong Kong's economy lost an estimated US\$27 billion (S\$35 billion) in potential growth due to the effects of the pandemic and the city's strict Covid-19 curbs, according to Natixis. Natixis based its calculation on the assumption that Hong Kong's economy would have grown an average annual 2.8 per cent over the past three years in the absence of Covid-19.

[India's importance to the Quad](#)

Sunday Guardian | 31st December 2022

If you can read a map you can understand India's importance to the Quad—and vice versa. The Chinese have no trouble in this regard. Beijing takes a look at the Indo-Pacific stretching from East Africa across the Indian Ocean and over to, say, USINDOPACOM headquarters in Honolulu. And it wants to control or dominate all of it. And it might like its odds if it can take on the regional nations one-on-one. Beijing might

think the Japanese won't like it but they can be browbeaten into minding their own business. The Australians are too few and too far south. India is no pushover, but can be contained.

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