



INDO-PACIFIC CIVIL SOCIETY FORUM

#03/2022/October-December, 2022

IPEF Ministerial Discusses Technology and Export Controls

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>

On December 19, 2022 the United States Secretary of Commerce Gina Raimondo hosted a virtual Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity (IPEF) ministerial meeting. The meeting witnessed a discussion on how member states could cooperate on technology and export controls. Participating members also emphasised the importance of establishing high standard rules and standards in the IPEF Framework. The beginning of discussions also gave members an insight into each other's conceptual understanding of issues such as the digital economy and competition policy.

The meeting discussed IPEF's ways and means towards tangible benefits, especially on trade and investment promotion, supply chain resilience, green economy and clean energy, digitalisation, and capacity building related to taxation and anti-corruption. The meeting also witnessed deliberation on projects which could be pursued promptly, with consensus amongst IPEF members.

Piyush Goyal, India's Minister of Commerce and Industry, too participated in the meeting. Goyal expressed his belief that IPEF could pave the way for inclusive development by stepping up trade and investment in the Indo-Pacific region.



He also urged members to focus energy on the early harvest of deliverables which can benefit all the members. His statement reflected that India, which had opted out of the trade pillar, was still keen on involvement in IPEF's focus areas. India can play a major role in building.

It must be noted that India will hold the next special negotiation round for Pillars 2-4 of IPEF (covering supply chains, clean economy and fair economy) during February 08-11, 2023.

Raimondo welcomed India's offer to host this round and assured that the US would work closely with India in this regard.

With 14 IPEF partners representing 40 per cent of global GDP, the IPEF seeks to fuel economic prosperity and investment, promote sustainable and inclusive economic growth, and benefit regional workers and consumers.

Home to 60 per cent of the world's population, the Indo-Pacific is projected to be a key driver for global economic growth in the decades to come.

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Parliament Passes Anti-Piracy Bill

The Parliament of India passed a Bill to prevent maritime piracy and stringent punishment for those convicted of such crimes. Moving the Bill for consideration and passage in the Rajya Sabha, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said it has provisions for preventing maritime piracy, will strengthen India's maritime security and give it an effective legal instrument to combat the menace.

The Bill will also enable the country to fulfil its international obligations and improve India's standing at global forums.

(BS, 21.12.22)



IPEF negotiations get underway

The Office of the United States Trade Representative (USTR) and the Department of Commerce joined the first negotiating round for the IPEF in Brisbane, Australia, from December 10-15, 2022. The round was hosted by Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

In addition to text-based discussions, USTR officials held detailed conceptual discussions for the following topics under Pillar I: environment, labour, digital economy, competition policy, and inclusivity.

(OUSTR, 15.12.22)

UK pushes Indo-Pacific trade deals

The UK has been looking to increase involvement in the Indo-Pacific region, and the two deals represent a key piece of economic diplomacy in the region. The British Prime Minister's office has stressed its continued commitment to signing the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) and the UK-India Free Trade Agreement (FTA) under Sunak.

But some within the government argue that British farmers and business owners should not be sacrificed for the sake of meeting deadlines. Negotiations could be delayed further if the government bows to domestic pressure.

(NA, 22.12.22)

EU-ASEAN deepen ties

Since 2020, the EU-ASEAN engagement has led to a strategic partnership committed to enhancing 'prosperity, promoting security, strengthening resilience, and improving sustainable connectivity.'

With its Indo-Pacific policy, the EU is trying to play a more significant role in the region. Its main objective is better economic access to the growing ASEAN market. It is a major player in trade and investment and wants to expand that to the green sustainable and digital economy.

If, in the process, it acquires a better strategic interface, the EU will be contented.

(ORF, 20.12.22)

India-Canada to seek early trade pact

India and its strategic importance found a special mention as Canada launched its Indo-Pacific strategy to balance China. In its engagement with India, Canada will grow economic ties through deeper trade and investment and cooperate on building resilient supply chains.

Canada will further seek to expand market access by concluding an Early Progress Trade Agreement (EPTA) as a step toward a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement, the strategy paper hoped.

(ET, 29.11.22)

China's using 'military threats'

China's ties with major regional partners, including Australia, India, Japan, South Korea and the U.S., are worsening daily. The smaller nations also have strained ties with China over the latter's trespassing in their maritime limits.

All these nations have accused China of using military threats to maintain its hegemony, encroaching upon other countries' sovereign limits and silencing the critics. *(TP, 26.12.22)*

Japan unveils record defence budget

Japan will boost its defence budget for 2023 to a record ¥6.8tn (US\$55bn), or a 20-per cent increase, in the face of regional security concerns and threats by China and North Korea.

The strategy aims to provide Japan with a 'counterstrike capability' that can pre-empt enemy attacks and protect itself from growing risks from North Korea, Russia and China, who they fear may attempt to invade Taiwan. *(AJ, 23.12.22)*

Indo-Pacific Endeavour returns to Australia

Indo-Pacific Endeavour 2022 (IPE22), Australia's flagship regional engagement activity, has come to a close, with HMAS Adelaide sailing into Darwin. From late September to early December, IPE22 involved five ships, 11 helicopters and approximately 1800 personnel.

The contingent visited 14 countries, including Bangladesh, Brunei, Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Maldives, the Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Timor-Leste, and Vietnam. *(AGPR, 02.12.22)*

India to acquire its 3rd aircraft carrier

As a blue-water force, considering the vast area of operations, operational philosophy centred on sea control and growing threat in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR), the Indian Navy requires three operating aircraft carriers.

This is also important for sustaining India's Maritime Dominance in all three geographical expanses of the IOR. The Standing Committee on Defence has also acknowledged the requirement for a third aircraft carrier for the Indian Navy. *(TET, 09.12.22)*

South Korea Unveils Indo-Pacific Strategy

South Korea unveiled the details of its Indo-Pacific strategy, focusing on promoting freedom, peace and prosperity through establishing a rules-based order and cooperation on human rights.

In its final report on the strategy, the government said it would pursue nine core lines of effort to fulfil its vision for a free, peaceful and prosperous Indo-Pacific region under the three cooperation principles of inclusiveness, trust and reciprocity. *(YNA, 28.12.22)*



Nepal Institute for International Cooperation and Engagement

NIICE is an independent, apolitical and non-partisan research think tank registered under the Companies Act 2006 of Nepal. It undertakes independent research and activities on International Relations, Foreign Policy, Security Studies and Development issues.



Since Indo-Pacific Affairs is NIICE's primary research topic, they have published several books and articles and organised numerous seminars, webinars and workshops on issues.

www.niice.org.np



Bay Area Council Economic Institute

Since 1990, the Bay Area Council Economic Institute has been 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 United States and the world's leading centre for technology and innovation.

Through its economic and policy research and many partnerships, the Institute addresses major factors impacting the region's competitiveness, economic development and quality of life and state, including infrastructure, globalisation, science and technology, and health policy.

www.bayareaeconomy.org/



Fundación IDEA

Fundación IDEA is one of the first and main think tanks in Mexico. Since 2005, it has worked on different public policy topics and with private companies, the Mexican federal and local governments, organisations (USAID, W.B., IDB, OECD, etc.), and foundations. More recently, it has been executing projects directly for the U.S. cooperation mechanisms through the U.S. Department of State.

Besides its work on innovation, IP, trade, and other economic topics, it has a strong and relevant experience nationwide in projects and programmes on the Rule of Law and Gender/Inclusion. Some of these are multiannual and multimillion-dollar programmes.

www.fundacionidea.org.mx/

Paramadina Public Policy Institute



PPPI is an independent, non-profit, and non-partisan think tank under the umbrella of Paramadina University. It seeks to promote sound and applicable public policy in Indonesia through multidisciplinary research. It exists to provide relevant practical solutions for Indonesia's policymaking needs.

Since its establishment in 2010, PPPI has continually advised ministries and high-level government institutions. It has collaborated with various international and national donors, corporations, and civil society organisations.

<https://policy.paramadina.ac.id/>

Institute for Competitiveness



I-Com is a think-tank founded in 2005 by a group of scholars, professionals and managers, with offices in Rome and Brussels. I-Com aims to promote debates and analyses on competitiveness concerning innovation in the Italian, European and international politico-economic contexts. The main areas of interest of I-Com are digitalisation, energy, innovation, health and institutions.

In 2017, I-Com joined the Global Trade and Innovation Policy Alliance, a worldwide network of 25 independent think tanks from five continents, each active in innovation and international trade.

www.i-com.it/

Nepal Economic Forum



NEF is a not-for-profit organisation aiming to be Nepal's premier economic policy and research institution. It is an impact-driven economic and development think tank that seeks to redefine Nepal's development discourse by analysing, facilitating and disseminating contemporary issues on society and the economy.

Owing to a committed and conscious approach to research and dissemination, NEF ranked among the top 100 think tanks in the Asia-Pacific region due to research conducted by the Think Tanks and Civil Societies Programme of the Lauder Institute at the University of Pennsylvania. NEF has managed to maintain its position in the list among other reputed organisations since 2016.

<https://nepaleconomicforum.org/>

**Members profile will be updated in future editions.*

AGPR: Australian Government Press Release; AJ: Al Jazeera; BS: Business Standard; ET: Economic Times; NA: Nikkei Asia; ORF: Observer Research Foundation; OUSTR: Office of the United States Trade Representative; TET: The EurAsian Times; TP: The Print; YNA: Yonhap News Agency



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