

PENTAGON REPORT

China’s nuclear arsenal to more than triple by 2035

AFP, Washington

China’s nuclear arsenal is likely to more than triple to 1,500 warheads by 2035, the Pentagon said in a Tuesday report that also highlighted the increasing sophistication of the country’s air force.

Washington has identified Beijing as the most consequential challenge to the United States, and the annual report on China’s military emphasized improvements to both its nuclear and conventional forces.

“The Department of Defense estimates that (China’s) operational nuclear warheads stockpile has surpassed 400,” the report said. “If China continues the pace of its nuclear expansion, it will likely field a stockpile of about 1,500 warheads” by 2035.

That figure would still however lag far behind the arsenals of the United States and Russia, which each include several thousand nuclear warheads.

China “probably intends to develop new nuclear warheads and delivery platforms that at least equal the effectiveness, reliability and/or survivability” of those under development by the United States

and Russia, the report said. Pentagon Press Secretary Brigadier General Pat Ryder said Tuesday that an increased Chinese nuclear arsenal would be a source of instability.

“The more proliferation there is, the more concerning it is, the more destabilizing to the region it is,” Ryder told journalists.

The report also said Beijing is working to modernize its ballistic missile arsenal, launching some 135 in testing during 2021 – “more than the rest of the world combined,” excluding those fired in conflicts.

China is “developing new intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) that will significantly improve its nuclear-capable missile forces,” the report said. And Beijing’s air force – the

third-largest in the world with more than 2,800 aircraft – is making strides.

It is “rapidly catching up to Western air forces and continues to modernize with the delivery of domestically built aircraft and a wide range of UAVs,” according to the report.

“This trend is gradually eroding longstanding and significant US military technical advantages... in the air domain,” it said.



Protestors hold placard and shout slogans during an anti-government demonstration near the parliament building in Colombo, Sri Lanka yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Russia, China carry out joint air force drills

AFP, Moscow

Russian and Chinese air forces took part in joint military exercises in the Asia-Pacific region, the Russian defence ministry said yesterday.

“The Russian Air Force and the Air Force of the People’s Liberation Army of China conducted another joint air patrol in the Asia-Pacific region,” the ministry said in a statement.

Russian strategic missile carriers TU-95 and Chinese Xian H-6 flew over the Sea of Japan and East China Sea for eight hours, according to the statement.

A pariah in the West since the Ukraine offensive, Putin has sought to bolster ties with Asia, particularly with China. “For the first time in the history of air patrols, Russian planes landed in the people’s Republic of China, and Chinese aircraft landed on the territory of the Russian Federation,” the ministry said.

The exercises were carried out “in strict compliance with international law,” the statement read.

COVID PROTESTS IN CHINA

Clashes erupt in Guangzhou

EU chief heads to Beijing amid protest crackdown

AGENCIES

People in the Chinese city of Guangzhou clashed with riot police in hazmat suits on Tuesday night as authorities investigated more of those who have taken part in a string of protests against the world’s toughest Covid restrictions.

The demonstrations, which escalated over the weekend as they spread to Shanghai, Beijing and elsewhere, are one of the biggest acts of public defiance seen since President Xi Jinping came to power in 2012.

The southern city of Guangzhou became the latest to announce an easing of curbs yesterday, but with record numbers of cases nationwide, there seems little prospect of a major U-turn in a policy that Xi has said is saving lives and has proclaimed as one of his political achievements.

Announcing the lifting of lockdowns in parts of Guangzhou, authorities did not mention the protests and the district where Tuesday’s violence flared remained under the tight controls.

Meanwhile, EU chief Charles Michel set off for Beijing on Tuesday, maintaining



plans to meet President Xi Jinping despite the turmoil of large-scale protests in major Chinese cities, reports AFP.

In one video of those clashes posted on Twitter, dozens of riot police clad in white protective suits and holding shields over their heads, advanced in formation over what appeared to be torn down lockdown barriers as objects flew at them.

Police were later seen escorting away a row of people in handcuffs.

Another video clip showed people throwing objects at the police, while a third showed a tear gas canister landing amidst a small crowd on a narrow street, sending people running off to escape the fumes.

15 killed as blast hits Afghan school 20 people injured

REUTERS, Kabul

A blast tore through a religious school during prayer time in the northern Afghan province of Samangan yesterday, killing 15 people, a provincial spokesperson said. At least 20 people were also wounded in the explosion in the provincial capital of Aybak, Emdadullah Muhajir, spokesperson for Samangan’s provincial government added. “A blast took place around 12:45pm inside Jahdia Madrasa in the centre of city. Lots of boys are studying at this madrasa (religious school),” he said. It was not immediately clear who was behind the blast. Muhajir said an investigation had begun. Interior ministry spokesperson Abdul Nafi Takor confirmed the blast but put the death toll so far at 10 with more injured. “Our detective and security forces are working to identify the perpetrators of this unforgivable crime and bring them to justice,” Takor said. The Taliban say they are focused on securing the war-torn nation since taking over the country last year, however several attacks, including at mosques, have taken place in recent months, some of which have been claimed by the Islamic State. Pakistan has called on the Taliban to ensure they live up to promises that they will not harbour international militants. The Taliban deny harbouring militants.

JP relieved, AL troubled over rebels

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day of filing.

November 29 was the final day for submitting the candidacy.

AL candidate Dalia filed her papers with the returning officer on Tuesday.

Speaking to reporters, she said she was hopeful about getting votes from the city dwellers.

About the rebel candidates, she said, “The central leaders are aware and will take necessary steps. The party still has enough time to settle the matter.” She, however, refused to elaborate on the issue.

The final date for candidacy withdrawal is December 8, while all filed nomination papers are to be scrutinised on December 1 (Thursday).

After submitting his nomination papers, incumbent RCC Mayor Mostafa warned against vote rigging through EVMs.

He, however, added, “The people will make no mistake in voting for me.”

Former Rangpur Jamaat-e-Islami Amir Mahbubur Rahman Belal had collected nomination papers but yesterday announced he would not be taking part in the polls.

“It was the party’s decision,” he told reporters.

Moreover, Kawsar Jahan Babla, a Rangpur BNP leader, who contested the RCC polls in 2017, said he had to opt out of the race this year as per his party’s directives.

Abdul Baten, the returning officer

of the RCC election, said 10 aspirants have submitted their nomination papers for the post of mayor, while 198 submitted papers to run for the councillor posts in 33 wards. Meanwhile, 69 female aspirants filed their papers for 11 reserved councillor posts.

The RCC was formed on June 28, 2012, comprising 33 wards. Its first election was held on December 20 that year, in which AL leader Sharfuddin Ahmed Jhantu was elected mayor with 1,06,255 votes.

His nearest candidate was JP leader Mostafa, who was elected mayor in the 2017 RCC polls.

There 4,26,469 voters in the city corporation and of them, 2,12,302 are male and 2,14,167 are female.

New tech, immediate impact

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grow among the raucous Brazil fans.

They had seen this script before, most notably when Argentina were made to wait before having three of their goals ruled out for offside in a sensational 2-1 loss to Saudi Arabia.

The semi automated offside system, which has been introduced this World Cup, had the simple aim of shortening the time taken by the VAR to make decisions, as Nicolas Evans, head of football research and standards for FIFA Technology Innovation, revealed.

“We debriefed in 2018 after the World Cup and the biggest area for improvement we saw was the time it took to make offside decisions.”

But while most decisions have been quickly caught, the near-infallible nature of the system points to the VAR being the one taking up the lion’s share of the time.

That was evident for Vinicius’ phantom goal when officials not only took around three minutes to cancel the goal, as Richarlison was offside before the final pass to Vinicius, but also failed to project the 3D renderings of the offside that fans have come to expect.

In fact, there was no other visual cue at all till well after the decision was made and the most likely reason for that is that officials simply did not know where to look. The offside had occurred in the build-up and it can be questioned whether the referees – like fans watching the replays – were caught unaware.

There was another curious moment after Cristiano Ronaldo claimed a goal from a Bruno Fernandes cross. CR7 was insistent that he had gotten the telling touch, but FIFA and Adidas confidently stated after the match he had not. Their confidence led to some bemusement. After all, how could they know?

As it turns out, there is no way they could not have known.

The journey began six years ago, when KINEXON, a huge stakeholder

in the performance-tracking world, began working on the device now embedded in the official ball, Al Rihla.

The biggest concern regarding that was whether implanting a device in the heart of the ball would change how it felt and reacted, especially as neither party wanted a repeat of the ‘Jabulani’, which was criticized even by players at the 2010 World Cup in South Africa.

After the development of the final product, which weighs in at just 14 grams, FIFA blind-tested players during competitions such as the 2021 FIFA Arab Cup in Qatar and the 2021 FIFA Club World Cup in Abu Dhabi.

They even employed a ‘mechanical shooter test’ in a lab setting, programming a robot to kick the ball with varying speeds, spin and direction. High-speed cameras evaluated the flight of the ball, ensuring that the presence of the sensor did not create abnormal flight paths.

In the case of VAR, this sensor works in tandem with HawkEye, which fans of tennis or cricket will be familiar with. But HawkEye does not only track the ball, it also captures 29 different points from each player’s body, including limbs, extended knees and shoulders.

This data is merged with the data from one of the two sensors housed in Al Rihla, the Ultra-wideband (UWB), which provides precise positional data and can transmit that data in real-time to constantly track the ball’s position.

KINEXON’s system captures the data at 500 frames per second, meaning it generates a new image 500 times per second. Such precision means that their data would have a maximum variance of two milliseconds with true positioning.

All that data is then used to generate 3D renderings, which is what is overlaid onto broadcasts to give fans a direct look at how each

reviewed call was decided. Unless, of course, the officials are uncertain about where exactly to look.

A crucial final piece of the process, given that a machine can malfunction without warning, is the human verification process, which, as mentioned before, can take whatever amount of time is required.

Meanwhile, much to Ronaldo’s chagrin, there exists a secondary sensor, the Inertial measurement unit (IMU) which detects nuanced movements of an object in space.

So, any time the ball is kicked, headed, thrown or even so much as tapped, the system picks it up at 500fps.

Still, while there are some who have begrudgingly accepted decisions due to the cutting-edge nature of the tech in play, there is no doubt that crazed sports fans will find a flaw before the end of the World Cup.

For now, that flaw is as harmless, however annoying, as the consumption of a few extra minutes.

TCB to buy 2.2cr

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Development Corporation (BADC) will buy 50,000 tonnes of muriate of potash (MOP) fertiliser from Canadian Commercial Corporation for Tk 358.48 crore.

The MOP will cost \$679.65 per tonne, said Additional Secretary Sayeed Mahbub Khan of the cabinet division, adding that MOP earlier cost \$778.15 per tonne.

BADC will also import 30,000 tonnes of TSP fertiliser from Morocco’s OCP Group for around Tk 150 crore, he said.

The latest purchase price of TSP will be \$474 per tonne while its earlier price was \$687.25 per tonne, he added.

The government has been buying fertiliser for weeks to provide the vital agricultural input to farmers at subsidised rates amid the current economic uncertainty.

ACC yet to decide on probe

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opened an account with the branch in March. The firm gave an address in Banani which turned out to be fake.

The ACC in its investigation found that PK Halder, who is facing at least 36 cases for misappropriation over Tk 3,000 crore from financial institutions, put his men at the top of the institutions.

His men, who were members of the board of directors of the financial institutions, sanctioned loans for fictitious organisations and took away the money from International Leasing

and Financial Services Limited, FAS Finance and People’s Leasing, and Financial Services Limited, according to the case documents.

There are allegations that PK Halder and his associates between 2009 and 2019 swindled around Tk 10,000 crore from four financial institutions, including Reliance Finance, according to ACC investigators.

WHAT ACC IS DOING

Usually, allegations and newspaper clippings are sorted out by the ACC’s scrutiny cell and forwarded to the

commission for a decision. “The commission can either drop it or take steps for enquiry,” said an ACC official.

“Bangladesh Bank is investigating the incident [Islami Bank loan anomalies]. Let’s see what they find,” said Jahurul Haque, ACC commissioner (investigation).

ACC Chairman Mohammad Moinuddin Abdullah said, “The commission is collecting primary information from newspaper reports. Within two or three days, we’ll reach a decision on launching a probe.”

BNP to meet IGP today

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DMP commissioner around a month ago saying they want their rally in front of their office.

He said the commissioner responded saying there would be traffic jam if it is held at Nayapaltan. “It’s a lame excuse ... Saturday is a holiday. So, there wouldn’t be much

traffic that day.”

Fakhrul further said the people of Dhaka division have taken up the challenge to hold a successful rally on December 10. “We have to make the rally successful and we will.”

Alleging that the government has been desperate to stop the BNP’s divisional rallies, he said,

“Many rallies and grand rallies were held at Nayapaltan before with no problems.”

He once again asked the government to take a safe exit. “Otherwise, you know the history.”

“People have woken up. This movement is to free people from misrule.”