

► President Xi calls for strong sense of community with shared future

China-Vietnam ties 'comrades-plus-brothers'

By GT staff reporters

The visit by the Vietnamese top legislator and his high-ranking delegation is vital for scaling up the cooperation between the two countries, two legislatures, two parties and two peoples, as well as regional cooperation between China and ASEAN, Chinese experts believe, who also have high expectations of the two sides' joint efforts for a stable and peaceful South China Sea.

President Xi Jinping on Monday met with Chairman of the National Assembly of Vietnam Vuong Dinh Hue in Bei-

jing, according to the Xinhua News Agency.

At the invitation of Zhao Leji, chairman of the National People's Congress Standing Committee, Hue is in China for a six-day official visit beginning on Sunday, media reported.

While asking Vuong Dinh Hue to convey his cordial greetings to Nguyen Phu Trong, General Secretary of the Communist Party of Vietnam (CPV) Central Committee, Xi also said that during his visit to Vietnam at the end of last year, he and Nguyen Phu Trong jointly announced the building of a China-Vietnam community

with a shared future that carries strategic significance, opening a new chapter in bilateral ties.

Xi said the most distinctive feature of China-Vietnam relations is that the two sides are a like-minded pair bound by a common destiny, and "comrades-plus-brothers" is the most vivid description of the traditional friendship between the Chinese and Vietnamese parties and countries.

China is willing to scale up the exchange of experience gained in governing both the Party and the country, facilitate the synergy between the Belt and Road Initiative and the Two

Corridors and One Economic Circle strategy, and increase exchanges between young people and sister cities, among others, Xinhua reported.

This is a high-ranking and large-scale delegation with officials from the Vietnamese central government, legislature and the party, which highlighted the profound and extensive significance of the visit, Gu Xiaosong, dean of the ASEAN Research Institute of Hainan Tropical Ocean University, told the Global Times. "Such a high-level and large-scale visit, which is set to last for about one week, is rare," Gu noted.

Vietnam News Agency reported on Sunday that this is the first visit to China by Hue in his capacity as NA Chairman, and also the first by a top Vietnamese legislator in five years.

Recently, South China Sea tensions fanned by the Philippines have been a hot-button issue. In this context, both China and Vietnam, as neighbors in the South China Sea, are working hard to maintain peace and stability. The visit is expected to help both sides further manage their differences, promote security cooperation, and jointly maintain stability in the South China Sea, Gu believes.

► Ferry disaster



The photo shows the boat that sank off the north coast of Mozambique, killing at least 96 people. The converted fishing boat, carrying about 130 people, ran into trouble late on April 7, 2024 as it was trying to reach an island off Nampula province, officials said.

Photo: AFP

AUKUS expansion 'an alarming move destabilizing region'

By GT staff reporters

The defense ministers of the US, UK and Australia will reportedly begin to talk about broadening the AUKUS military alliance, with Japan emerging as the leading candidate for inclusion. However, analysts warned that such an alarming move marks the pact further turning into an "Asian NATO," raising concerns over heightened militarism in Japan and potential destabilization in the region.

The expansion of AUKUS would be on "pillar two," which commits the members to jointly developing quantum computing, undersea, hypersonic, artificial intelligence and cyber technology, the Financial Times reported on Saturday.

Japan is seen as the first candidate to join in the pact. According to a Reuters report on Sunday, US President Joe Biden and Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida "will likely" discuss expanding AUKUS to include Japan during their summit in Washington on Wednesday.

In disregard of the concerns of regional countries and the international community over the risk of nuclear proliferation, the US, the UK and Australia have kept sending signals of AUKUS expansion, co-opting some countries to come on board, and escalating arms race in the Asia-Pacific to the detriment of peace and stability in the region. China is gravely concerned about it, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning said at a press conference on Monday.

"We oppose relevant countries cobbling together exclusive groupings and stoking bloc confrontation," the spokesperson said, pointing out that Japan in particular needs to earnestly draw lessons from history and stay prudent on military and security issues.

Chen Hong, director of the Australian Studies Center of East China Normal University, told the Global Times that in recent years, Japan has continuously attempted to breach the constraints of its pacifist constitution and views potential inclusion in AUKUS as an opportunity to further this agenda.

Troop withdrawal 'reflects Israel's complex dilemmas'

By Deng Xiaoci

The withdrawal of Israeli troops from southern Gaza could reflect that Israel is facing severe challenges and a complex dilemma under immense internal and external pressures, especially with the mounting risks of conflict with Iran following the military's deadly attack on Iranian embassy compound in Syria, according to Chinese observers.

Israeli troops were withdrawn from southern Gaza in preparation for a possible operation in the city of Rafah, Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant confirmed on Sunday, Xinhua News Agency reported.

The sudden withdrawal action is widely believed to be in response to potential retaliation from Iran following the deadly attack on its embassy compound in Syria by the Israeli military on the April 1. This round of Israeli-Palestinian conflict, already lasting more than six months, has not only plunged the Gaza Strip into a se-

vere humanitarian crisis, but also severely impacted the Israeli economy, leading to a sharp deterioration in the business environment and a surge in government spending, observers pointed out.

Despite the Israeli military stating that the withdrawal aims to prepare for following missions, the timing and context of Israel's withdrawal are evidently delicate and complex, Liu Zhongmin, a professor at the Middle East Studies Institute of Shanghai International Studies University, told the Global Times on Monday.

Recent major events surrounding the conflict and its spillover include the UN Security Council's adoption of a cease-fire resolution for Gaza, large-scale protests in Israel with tens of thousands of participants, Israel's attack of the Iranian embassy compound escalating the risk of conflict, Israeli forces killing several international aid workers, and the escalation of conflicts between Hezbollah and Israel in Lebanon, Liu said. "There-

fore, Israel's withdrawal in this context reflects the severe challenges and complex dilemma it faces under immense internal and external pressures. Even though the possibility of Israel launching military operations in southern Gaza in the future cannot be ruled out, its deepening predicament is hard to conceal."

Israel's withdrawal from southern Gaza coinciding with preparations to confront Iran is not coincidental. The withdrawal was originally a gradual process but has now accelerated, likely due to the worsening regional situation over recent days. This large-scale withdrawal is mainly in response to possible retaliatory actions from Iran, a military expert, who requested not to be named, told the Global Times on Monday.

The Sunday withdrawal of troops from Southern Gaza also took place following what media called the worst week since the Hamas attack on October 7, 2023 for Israel's prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

