

# Jaishankar, Blinken meet amid Asean discussions on Taiwan, Myanmar

[Sachin.Parashar@timesgroup.com](mailto:Sachin.Parashar@timesgroup.com)

New Delhi:

In what was their second bilateral meeting in less than a month, foreign minister S Jaishankar and US Secretary of State Antony Blinken on Thursday discussed regional and global issues, including the Sri Lanka crisis and what the US described as Russia's "brutal aggression" against Ukraine and its implications for global food security.

The meeting took place in Cambodia on the sidelines of the Asean Regional Forum and against the backdrop of a spike in US-China tensions over the visit to Taiwan by US House of Representatives Speaker Nancy Pelosi. Neither side officially said that the current Taiwan situation was discussed in the meeting.

"They discussed Sri Lanka's economic crisis and emphasised that both nations stand with the people of Sri Lanka and support their aspirations for a return to economic and political stability through democratic and constitutional processes," said a US State Department spokes-person, adding that the leaders noted their shared efforts to promote a "free, open, secure and prosperous" Indo-Pacific. The two leaders had met last month in Bali on the sidelines of a G20 summit. Blinken had then too discussed the implications of Russia's "unprovoked aggression". According to the US, Blinken also condemned the Myanmar military government's execution of democracy activists, and they discussed promoting "accountability for the regime's atrocities as well as our collective efforts to put Burma back on the path to democracy". There was no Indian readout of the meeting but Jaishankar tweeted that he discussed the "ever strengthening" India-US relationship and the global situation.

Jaishankar also participated in the India-Asean foreign ministers' meeting in which he underlined "strong convergence" with Asean on many issues, including Indo-Pacific, UNCLOS, connectivity, terrorism, Myanmar and Ukraine. Myanmar along with the Taiwan situation dominated the Asean meetings with the group threatening to rethink its "fivepoint consensus" with the military government if more political prisoners were executed.

Despite the complex nature of its ties with Myanmar, owing mainly to joint efforts to check insurgency along the border areas, India joined other UNSC members last month in condemning the executions. The foreign ministry also expressed “deep concern” last week while calling for a peaceful resolution of the issues involved.

The two sides discussed the situation in South China Sea and reaffirmed the shared commitment to international law including UNCLOS. India and Asean are also likely to hold an “informal meeting” of the defence ministers in November this year.

While India has so far avoided making any statement on the Cross-Strait tensions, Asean said in a statement that it was concerned about the possibility of any “miscalculation, serious confrontation, open conflicts and unpredictable consequences among major powers”. Calling for maximum restraint, the statement reiterated Asean members states’ support for their respective ‘One-China’ policies.

AFP



Antony Blinken with S Jaishankar in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, on Thursday