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China irked at India's South China Sea stand

Dec 29, 2015

Deccan Herald

Beijing has conveyed to New Delhi its concern over India's growing clamour on the South China Sea dispute, particularly in reference to the row in the joint statement issued after Prime Minister Narendra Modi's meeting with his Japanese counterpart Shinzo Abe earlier this month. China is understood to have conveyed its concerns to India through diplomatic channels, both in New Delhi and Beijing, making it clear that it would expect "the countries outside the region" to respect efforts being made by "the countries in the region" to maintain security and stability of South China Sea, rather than "provoking tension and confrontation". Modi and he on December 12 last urged all states to avoid unilateral actions that could lead to tensions in South China Sea—apparently a call to Beijing to refrain from building new islands and air-strips in the disputed waters and from efforts to curb freedom of navigation and over flight. China, according to the diplomatic sources, conveyed to India that it always respected the freedom of navigation and over-flight for all states in the South China Sea in accordance with international laws and would continue to do so. South China Sea has been at the centre of an escalating conflict between China and its maritime neighbours—Brunei, Malaysia, Vietnam and Philippines. China claims it was the first country to discover, name, explore and exploit the resources of the South China Sea Islands and the first to continuously exercise sovereign powers over them. Citing maps it published in 1935 and 1948, Beijing argues that it has indisputable sovereignty over the South China Sea Islands—Dongsha Islands, Xisha Islands, Zhongsha Islands and Nansha Islands—and the adjacent waters. A recent commentary on China's state-run People's Daily argued that South China Sea islands had been China's territory since ancient times and successive governments of China had exercised continuous jurisdiction over the islands "by means of administrative control, military patrol, production and business operations, and maritime disaster relief, among others".

The article on People's Daily accused Japan of illegally seizing Xisha and Nansha islands on South China Sea during its war of aggression against China in 1930s and 1940s. After the end of World War II and its victory, China sent warships and garrisoned troops to recover the Xisha and Nansha islands and built various military and civilian facilities on the islands, thus "resuming exercise of sovereignty over the South China Sea Islands de jure and de facto", it added. Vietnam recently opposed construction of schools and filling stations in one of the Paracel (Xisha in Chinese and Hoang Sa) islands, which have been at the centre of a bilateral dispute. China has also been accused of embarking on large-scale land reclamation and construction works in Spratly (Nansha in Chinese) islands, violating Exclusive Economic Zones and Continental Shelf of Vietnam, Philippines, Malaysia and Brunei. Beijing, however, claimed that construction undertaken by it in the reefs and islands of the South China was well within the sovereign rights of China. China is understood to have conveyed to India that it seeks to peacefully resolve South China Sea disputes "through negotiation and consultation" with its maritime neighbours "on the basis of respecting historical facts and in accordance with international law, including the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)".

Isro's disaster management programme

Dec 29, 2015

Deccan Herald

In a bid to contribute to the country's efforts in efficient management of natural disasters, Indian Space Research Organisation (Isro) has evolved a comprehensive space-based Disaster Management Support (DMS) Programme. Isro's effort came at a time when Tamil Nadu was battered by natural disaster in the form of unprecedented rain and flood. A senior official told Deccan Herald on Monday that the proposed DMS programme addresses disasters such as flood, cyclone, drought, forest fire, landslide and earthquake. According to him, earth observation satellites together with meteorological and communication satellites and aerial survey system form the base for providing timely support and services for disaster management. To support the total cycle of disaster/emergency management for the country, in near real time, the database creation is addressed through National Database for Emergency Management (NDEM), a GIS-based repository of data. NDEM is envisaged to have core data, hazard-specific data, and dynamic data in spatial form as well as textual form. The database enables development of decision support system in the form of customised user interfaces with necessary security mechanisms. Explaining about the highlights of NDEM, the Isro official said that exclusive NDEM facility is established at Shadnagar in a secured environment with necessary computer infrastructure.

Modi's Pakistan efforts working? LoC appears quiet 2 months

Dec 29, 2015

Asian age

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's diplomacy and engagement with Pakistan seems to be working, and hardly any ceasefire violations by the Pakistan Army along the LoC have been reported from early November this year, sources said. This indicates the Pakistan Army, for now, appears to be backing peace efforts between the two countries. It is also speculated the United States has put intense pressure on Pakistan Army chief Gen. Raheel Sharif, who was in Washington recently, to fully support the India-Pakistan peace initiative. "From November 2 this year (2015), there were hardly any ceasefire violations by the Pakistan Army on the Line of Control," sources said. The sources added that in the corresponding period last year, there were about seven to eight ceasefire violations; but hardly violations by the Pakistan Army on the LoC from November. There were 152 such ceasefire violations from January to October this year, but then they suddenly ceased. Prime Minister Narendra Modi made a surprise visit to Pakistan on Friday, landing in Lahore to meet Pakistan PM Nawaz Sharif on the occasion of Mr Sharif's birthday. In early December external affairs minister Sushma Swaraj had visited Islamabad, and before that the NSAs had met in Bangkok.

China legalises anti-terror operations abroad

Dec 29, 2015

Asian Age

China has legalised overseas counter-terror operations by its military, details of a controversial new law showed, as it tries to tie violence linked to mainly Muslim Xinjiang into global concerns about extremism. Under the counter-terrorism legislation passed at the weekend Beijing “may send personnel outside the border to carry out anti-terror activities” when the “relevant country” agrees, according to the text published by the official Xinhua news agency. The measure applies to the People’s Liberation Army, the people’s armed police and employees of the country’s public security organs, Xinhua said. In recent years the People’s Republic has increasingly moved away from Deng Xiaoping’s dictum of “keeping a low profile” in foreign and military affairs. It is expanding the reach of its armed forces far around the world, seeking to build a “blue water” Navy capable of operating in distant seas and commissioning its first aircraft carrier, the Liaoning, in 2012. In November Beijing announced it would build a logistics hub in the African nation of Djibouti to support its units on United Nations and anti-piracy missions in the region. China is a top contributor of peacekeepers to the continent and has helped patrol the waters off the lawless Somali coast. Beijing has long proclaimed its belief in non-interference in other countries’ domestic affairs, but two years ago a top public security official said it had considered a drone strike against a drug lord in Myanmar linked to the murders of 13 Chinese sailors. The new legislation could apply to similar actions in the face of situations such as the November murder of a Chinese citizen by the ISIS. The law establishes a co-ordinating body to “direct national counter-terrorism work”, the text read.

Israeli defense official sacked for information breach

29 Dec 2015

The Statesman

Israel's Defense Ministry says it has dismissed a senior official for a "serious information security breach." Yair Ramati headed the ministry's missile-defense program, a position he held for four years. The ministry announced Ramati's dismissal late Sunday. It gave no further details, but defense officials said he had kept sensitive information on his personal computer. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to talk to the media. Yitzhak Ben Israel, the head of Israel's space agency and a friend of Ramati's, told Israeli Army Radio that any information breach was done "unknowingly." But Ben Israel said that if the information was exposed, there was the possibility of "real damage." "If you are well-known, and Yair was well-known ... you need to assume that your personal computer is a target to foreign actors," he said. Israel is considered a world leader in missile-defense technology. It is developing a multilayered system with defenses against everything from long-range guided missile attacks from Iran to crude rockets fired from Lebanon and the Gaza Strip. Its rocket-defense system, Iron Dome, was considered a great success during last year's war against Gaza militants, when it intercepted hundreds of incoming rockets. Ramati just last week lauded the successful final testing of a U.S. and Israeli developed missile-defense system called "David's Sling." He has seen through other important defense projects during his tenure.

PAR PANEL ASKS AYUSH TO 'VIGOROUSLY' PURSUE AMENDMENT TO TWO KEY ACTS

29 December 2015

The Pioneer

A Parliamentary Standing Committee has taken exception to the undue delay in amending two crucial legislations — the Drugs and Magic Remedies (Objectionable Advertisements) Act 1954 and the Drugs and Cosmetics Rules 1945 and has asked the AYUSH Ministry to “vigorously” pursue the matter within a given time frame. “The Committee notes that there has been a recurring delay in amending the Drugs and Magic Remedies (Objectionable Advertisements) Act 1954 and the Drugs and Cosmetics Rules 1945. “Though the process of amending the said Acts and Rules has been set in motion, its logical culmination is still a distance away. The committee would like the Ministry to vigorously pursue the matter of amending the said Act and Rules within a given time frame,” said the panel led by Ram Gopal Yadav. It noted that though the process of amending has begun, its logical culmination was still a “distance away”. In its action taken report, the government said the Health department under whose jurisdiction task force for suggesting amendments in the Drugs and Magic Remedies (Objectionable Advertisements) Act 1954 was constituted, has been requested to expedite consolidation of the amendment provisions recommended by the task force and views received by stakeholders and government departments. The Government also said that the recommendations of Ayurvedic, Siddha and Unani Drugs Technical Advisory Board (ASUDTAB) regarding curbing the problem of misleading advertisements of ASU drugs has been taken up by the Ministry. It further said action has also been initiated for inserting a new provision of prior approval of advertisement contents in the Drugs and Cosmetics rules 1945. The draft notification of the proposed amendments rules is being processed for finalisation, followed by approval of the competent authority and vetting by Law Ministry.

Wheels within wheels of the Nawaz and Modi show

Dec 29 2015

The Tribune

In the ugly parlance of dialogue, the low-hanging fruit can't be plucked by wattage and theatre alone. The bureaucracies and institutional interests on both sides of the border are not impressed by high-voltage histrionics. Also in this section .Courting the environment .French connection & higher education.



Narendra Modi & Nawaz Sharif in Lahore.

WELL, who saw that coming? But now that we have seen it, there's a big little question — does it make any sense? The reluctant, preliminary answer: It doesn't really. **Contd....**

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Dec 29 2015

The Tribune

Welcome as an Indian Prime Minister is in Pakistan and enthusiastic as our Prime Minister was to host him, you get the sense that neither really understands all the moving parts and endless strands that is Pak-India. The good news? It's South Asia —rules don't always apply here. And both Nawaz and, now, Modi seem willing to try the unconventional. Let's try and unpack this. Buried in the bilateral relationship since Mumbai has been a quite vexing question: how to move on from Mumbai? There was, of course, a simple answer: Pakistan should get the Pindi anti-terrorism trials done and maybe muzzle Hafiz Saeed a bit. But there was a problem: the boys wouldn't agree. You could see why. You can't squeeze your asset at the behest of the enemy the asset was recruited to fight against. So the more India insisted that Mumbai must be the starting point, the more Pakistan dug in its heels. It was, unhappily, logical. Which caused an impasse. Leaving one other option: India should move on from Mumbai. Accept it for what it was — as seen from a security prism here: a terrible thing that happened, but not something the entire relationship could be held hostage to. Basically, a version of stuff happens; this is the world we live in, now let's be grown-ups about it. But that needed time and a Modi. Manmohan was too close to Mumbai — it happened on his watch. And his partner over in Pakistan was the novice Zardari, who was reviled at home. Modi doesn't suffer from the softness problem. It's the advantage all right-wingers, and the boys, here have. Plus, most of the attack dogs are theirs anyway. Do something dramatic from the right, and it's harder to make the accusation of un-patriotism stick. But if time and the right credentials work in Modi's favour, that still doesn't explain the strategy. Or make any apparent. Clearly, he has a solid exit. If this blows up in his face, he can turn to the world and say, look, I tried. I put my reputation on the line. You just can't trust Pakistanis. But you can sense that's inadequate. Modi had that excuse when Nawaz went to his inauguration in Delhi. It would have earned him many more diplomatic brownie points to go for peace then. But we all know what Modi did. He spurned Nawaz, was scornful of the boys and dreamt up his one-point agenda: terrorism. In terms of strategy, that actually made more sense: isolate Pakistan on the terrorism issue and keep it on the defensive internationally. Especially since there's no suggestion that the military here is eager to talk. For a while it seemed to work. Pakistan flailed around, dredging up Kashmir and dreaming up the dossiers. It was high-risk stuff by the Indians, but in a relationship still defined by Mumbai, it's not like there were any good options. Then, it seems, fate intervened. Modi and his allies reverted to type at home. Communalism soared. News from India was one ugly story after another. No more was Pakistani perfidy the issue. The official line had been eclipsed. Boom - Paris. Quickly, Bangkok; Heart of Asia. And now Raiwind. It will be spun as a new configuration: India having a direct line to the boys via the NSA and Nawaz solidifying his pre-eminence on the civilian side. But we've all seen too much of Pak-India to believe that. And that's the first problem with this new phase: If it is domestic Indian troubles causing India to change course on the external front, then what does that say about the determination and purposefulness on the Indian side? For things to move on Pak-India, you really do need theatre and wattage.

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Without top-down pressure, the bottom-up won't change. But there has to be a plan. Wattage and theatre don't impress the entrenched bureaucracies and institutional interests on both sides. If you just turn it over to the foreign secretaries and ask them to get stuff done, there's nothing they'll love more. The notes and positions have long been memorised and are recited with ease. In the ugly parlance of dialogue, the low-hanging fruit can't be plucked by wattage and theatre alone. We saw it with the Composite Dialogue. While Pakistan cleverly tried to suggest Siachen could be resolved, it was really Sir Creek that made the most sense. That is, until you watched the naval folk with their maps and coordinates trot out their positions. You could end up feeling Israel-Palestine is easier to solve. So if Modi is doing this for domestic reasons, you can bet the resistance domestically will be even greater. And Nawaz — good man, got the right idea and is determined to boot. But this Jindal business suggests he may still not get it. He tried it via Shahbaz early on and was slapped down. On Afghanistan too we saw his preference for the informal and personal with Achakzai as his emissary. That went nowhere either. You can see why he tries it — the boys control the formal channels. And for precisely that reason you can see why he keeps getting slapped down — the informal channels are harder to control. Maybe Modi and Nawaz do know what they're doing. But in this business would you bet against the boys? A clue may lie in the answer to this: about the Lahore stopover, were the boys informed or were they asked? We'll know soon enough.

Chinese version of Tagore's 'Stray Birds' off shelves

Dec 29 2015

The Tribune

A Chinese translation of "Stray Birds", a collection of poems by Indian Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore, has been withdrawn after it spawned huge controversy, the media reported on Monday. Tagore's "Stray Birds" has long been deemed as a work of elegance and wisdom by its Chinese fans. But the new translation by Chinese writer Feng Tang has shocked readers with racy translations and sexual innuendos that are often misinterpreted, Xinhua news agency reported. Feng Tang, 44, is an author most known for a series of provocative novels about life in Beijing in the 1990s. In one sharply criticised case, Feng translated Tagore's original line "The world puts off its mask of vastness to its lover" into Chinese that read "The world unzipped his pants in front of his lover." Considering the huge controversy sparked by Feng's translation, Zhejiang Wenyi Publishing House, the publisher of the translation, announced on Monday that it would pull the books off shelves and websites, and recall the sold ones. Users on Chinese microblog Sina Weibo chastised the translation as "a blasphemy against a classic". In a widely circulated article, children's author Zhang Hong called Feng's translation a cultural terrorist attack against young readers.

India biggest exporter of doctors, nurses to Europe: OECD report

Dec29 2015

The Times of India

LONDON: India has emerged as the largest exporter of doctors and nurses to European countries, a media report said today. More than a third of National Health Service (NHS) doctors, some 35 per cent, in the UK alone were born abroad, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) said. "India and the Philippines were the largest exporters of doctors and nurses to OECD countries, by a 'spectacular' margin," the Telegraph quoted the yet-to-be-published report. The UK is also among the most dependent on foreign nurses, the report said. In total, 21.7 per cent of nurses were born abroad, a sharp increase from a decade earlier when the figure was 15.2 per cent. Across the EU, only Luxembourg, Ireland and Estonia are more dependent on nurses from overseas. The report also shows that the UK is the second highest exporter of medics, second only to Germany with 17,000 British doctors working abroad. 17,000 UK doctors now work in other European health systems, behind India, China and Germany. More than 50,000 British nurses now work in healthcare systems in the other OECD nations, behind only the Philippines and India. "Overseas staff are a crucial part of the NHS team but they must have the relevant qualifications and good communication skills," a UK Department of Health spokesperson said. "These figures largely pre-date our reforms which are intended specifically to increase the supply of home-grown staff. There are already more than 8,500 additional nurses on our wards and 10,100 more doctors since 2010, while recent changes to student nurse bursaries are set to increase the number of home-grown nursing, midwifery and allied health training places by up to 10,000 by 2020," the official said. The NHS had turned to the Indian sub-continent during labour shortages in the 1960s and early 2000s to increase the headcount of doctors. A permit-free system as well as some short-term two-year training visas allowed Indian doctors to apply for and successfully complete specialist or general practice training in the UK. The new OECD report, to be released in the New Year, will renew calls for the UK to do more to increase the count of UK medics within the NHS and reduce reliance on foreign staff.

International figures say India no longer biggest arms importer

Dec 29, 2015

Business Standard

The authoritative Congressional Research Service (CRS), which provides data and analysis to the US Congress, finds that India no longer features in the world's three biggest arms importers. The CRS report, according to The New York Times, finds that of the world's total arms trade of \$71.8 billion in 2014, the three biggest importers were South Korea (\$7.8 billion in contracts signed), Iraq (\$7.3 billion) and Brazil with \$6.5 billion. In March, the equally authoritative Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) had declared, in its annual weapons trade report for 2014, that Saudi Arabia had surpassed India as the world's biggest arms importer. According to that report, Saudi Arabia imported \$6.46 billion

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worth of arms, compared to India's \$5.57 billion. This is not the only divergence in public figures relating to defence procurement, particularly that of India. On December 8, the defence ministry told parliament that India had bought Rs 24,992 crore (\$3.78 billion) worth of foreign weaponry in 2014-15. Ten days later, the same defence ministry told the same parliament that India had spent Rs 29,222 crore (\$4.42 billion) on foreign arms in that same period. There are several reasons for such divergent figures in tracking the weapons trade. First, some institutions track the signature of defence contracts in a particular year. On the other hand, others track the actual delivery of defence systems during that year. For example, India signed a \$2.1 billion contract with Boeing for eight P8-I multi-mission maritime aircraft in 2009-10. Agencies tracking arms contracts would have put that entire amount in India's arms trade ledger for that year. Others, who track delivery, would spread the \$2.1 billion across the six years till 2015, when the last P8-I was delivered. There is also a reason for divergence in the defence ministry's own figures. The figure placed before parliament on December 8 represents actual orders placed on foreign vendors during the year, and assumes orders placed on Indian vendors to be 100 per cent indigenous. The higher figure placed before parliament on December 18 tracks foreign components in "Indian" weapon systems, treating them as imports. For example, the warship INS Kochi was built by Mazagon Dock Ltd, Mumbai (MDL) and is, technically, an indigenous system. But it contains numerous foreign systems, such as the Israeli MF-STAR radar. According to the Defence Procurement Procedure of 2013 (DPP-2013), the cost of foreign systems, sub-systems and components in "indigenous" platforms are treated as imports, along with the freight, insurance, service costs, license fees, royalties and duties relating to their import. Calculating according to DPP-2013, the "indigenous content in defence procurements for the year 2014-15 is approximately 40 per cent", the defence ministry informed parliament on December 18. Based on the total procurement outgo of Rs 78,754 crore (\$11.9 billion) for 2014-15, an imported component of 60 per cent adds up to Rs 47,252 crore (\$7.14 billion). That outgo is only from the capital budget. In addition, a significant portion of imported spares and components comes from the revenue budget, which, after deducting salaries, amounts to Rs 46,905 for the three services. Conservatively assuming a foreign outgo of 20 per cent from that component of the revenue budget, another Rs 9,381 crore (\$1.4 billion) is added to India's defence imports. India's total defence imports, arrived at by adding Rs 47,252 crore (\$ 7.14 billion) of imports from the capital account to Rs 9,381 crore (\$1.4 billion) of imports from the revenue account, amounts to \$8.54 billion for 2014-15. This means going by either CRS's calculations, or those of SIPRI, India remains for now the world's biggest arms importer. On the export side, the CRS report notes that America is handily the world's biggest arms exporter. From \$26.7 billion in 2013, the sale of US arms rose in 2014 by almost \$10 billion (35 per cent) to \$36.3 billion, more than half of the global \$71.8 billion arms export market. Russia is a distant second, logging \$10.2 billion in arms sales in 2014. Sweden is in third position (\$5.5 billion); France is fourth (\$4.4 billion) and China is fifth (\$2.2 billion).

Pakistan in talks with US to procure latest F-16 jets: PAF chief

29,De 2015

The Tribune

The Pakistan Aeronautical Complex (PAC) on Monday rolled out the 16th Block 2 JF-17 aircraft and formally handed it over to the Pakistan Air force (PAF). Paris Air Show: Pakistan's first JF-17 export order irks India A target of producing sixteen JF-17 Thunder jets was given to the complex, said the spokesperson, adding it has now been decided to expand the production capacity of the PAC Kamra. Meanwhile, Chief of Air Staff Air Chief Marshal Sohail Aman said Pakistan is in negotiations with the United States to procure the latest F-16 fighter jets, but did not specify an exact number, Express News reported. "We are in talks with US defence officials to get some latest F-16s but the deal may take some time," the Air chief said while talking to reporters after the rolling out ceremony of the 16th JF-17 Thunder aircraft at the PAC Kamra. Further, the Air chief said by the year 2020, PAF will say "goodbye to some of its old fighter jets, including the Mirage." While expressing his satisfaction over the production and quality level of the JF-17 Thunder he said it is at par with the F-16 in terms of performance and operations. 'JF-17 thunder fighter has capability to compete with any modern fighter jet' The latest models of the jets, which are locally produced in cooperation with China, are lightweight multi-role aircraft capable of Mach 2.0 (twice the speed of sound) with an operational ceiling of 55,000 feet. The decision of expansion into the aircraft's production has reportedly been made in view of interest shown by various countries in purchasing these warplanes from Pakistan. In July this year, Pakistan was successful in securing its first ever export order for its JF-17 Thunder fighter at the first day of the International Paris Air Show where a contract was confirmed to have been signed with an Asian country, Indian media had reported.

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Big data, online security to become mainstream in 2016

29 Dec 2015

The Times of India

NEW DELHI: The new year will see more banks, insurers and credit-rating firms across the globe turning to enhanced security measures to guard against online fraud more effectively, global software and cloud major Oracle has predicted. "(The year) 2016 will witness an increase in the proliferation of experiments default risk, policy underwriting, and fraud detection as firms try to identify hotspots for algorithmic advantage faster than the competition," the leading US-based cloud service provider said in its outlook for 2016 on Monday. The professional data scientists will see increasing demand for their skills from established companies including in India, it added. Oracle has 12 development centres in India, including facilities in many emerging cities like Vijayawada, Thiruvananthapuram, Noida and Ahmedabad. "(The year) 2016 will be the year when big data becomes more mainstream and is adopted across various sectors to drive innovation and capture digitization opportunities," said Neil Mendelson, vice president, Oracle's big data product management, in a statement. "We will also see the emergence of dataflow programming which provides simpler reusability of functional operators and gives pluggable support for statistical and machine learning functions," the 2016 outlook added. In 2016, simpler big data discovery tools will let business analysts shop for datasets in enterprise "Hadoop" clusters, reshape them into new mashup combinations and even analyze them with exploratory machine learning technique. "This will improve both self-service access to big data and provide richer hypotheses and experiments that drive the next level of innovation," the company said. In 2016, organizations will witness technologies mature and become more mainstream thanks to cloud services and appliances with pre-configured automation and standardization. "Companies will not only capture a greater variety of data in 2016, they use this in a variety of algorithms, analytics and apps," it noted. Amazon exclusive sale: Buy OnePlus X ?16,999 amazon.in An ideal stay awaits you at OYO. Get 25% off. OYO Rooms Recommended By Colombia 2016 will be the year where Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies such as Machine Learning (ML), Natural Language Processing (NLP) and Property Graphs (PG) will be applied to ordinary data processing challenges. "The new shift will include widespread applications of these technologies in IT tools that support applications, real-time analytics and data science," the outlook stated. Increasing consumer awareness of the ways data can be collected, shared, stored and stolen will amplify calls for regulatory protections of personal information in next year. "The continuous threat of ever more sophisticated hackers will prompt companies to both tighten security, as well as audit access and use of data," the outlook report predicted. India is home to Oracle's second largest workforce of developers and engineers and accounts for its largest research and development investment outside the US.

First chip that uses light for data transfer developed

29 Dec 2015

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Traditional microprocessor chips use electrical circuits to communicate with one another and transfer information.

WASHINGTON: A microprocessor chip that uses light, rather than electricity, to transfer data at rapid speeds while consuming minute amounts of energy has been developed by researchers, including those of Indian-origin. The new technology could pave the way for faster, more powerful computing systems and network infrastructure. "Light based integrated circuits could lead to radical changes in computing and network chip architecture in applications ranging from smartphones to supercomputers to large data centres, something computer architects have already begun work on in anticipation of the arrival of this technology," said Milos Popovic, assistant professor at the University of Colorado Boulder in US. Traditional microprocessor chips - found in everything from laptops to supercomputers - use electrical circuits to communicate with one another and transfer information. In recent years, however, the sheer amount of electricity needed to power the ever-increasing speed and volume of these data transfers has proven to be a limiting factor. To overcome this obstacle, the researchers including Rajesh Kumar also from CU-Boulder turned to photonics, or light-based, technology. Sending information using light rather than electricity reduces a microchip's energy burden because light can be sent across longer distances using the same amount of power. "One advantage of light based communication is that multiple parallel data streams encoded on different colours of light can be sent over one and the same medium - in this case, an optical wire waveguide on a chip, or an off-chip optical fibre of the same kind that as those that form the Internet backbone," said Popovic, whose team developed the technology in collaboration with a team led by Rajeev Ram, a professor at Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). "Another advantage is that the infrared light that we use - and that also TV remotes use - has a physical wavelength shorter than 1 micron, about one hundredth of the thickness of a human hair," said Popovic. "This enables very dense packing of light communication ports on a chip, enabling huge total bandwidth," he said. The new chip has a bandwidth density of 300 gigabits per second per square millimetre, about 10 to 50 times greater than current packaged electrical-only microprocessors. Measuring just 3 millimetres by 6 millimetres, the chip bridges the gap between current high-speed electronics manufacturing and the needs of next-generation computing for chips with large-scale integrated light circuits. It retains state-of-the-art traditional electronic circuitry while incorporating 850 optical input/output (I/O) components in order to create the first integrated, single-chip design of its kind. This is a milestone. It's the first processor that can use light to communicate with the external world," said Vladimir Stojanovic, associate professor at the University of California, Berkeley. The study was published in the journal Nature.