

No plan to contain China, says India

India on Friday reaffirmed that its Indo-Pacific strategy was not aimed at China's containment.

During the second India-China Maritime Affairs Dialogue held in Beijing, the Indian delegation led by Pankaj Sharma, Joint Secretary (Disarmament and International Security Affairs) in the Ministry of External Affairs, cited Prime Minister Narendra Modi's remarks at the Shangrila dialogue in Singapore in June.

"The Indian side also elaborated on India's vision for the Indo-Pacific region as articulated in Prime Minister Modi's keynote address at this year's Shangrila Dialogue in Singapore," an Indian Embassy press statement said.

In his address, Mr. Modi had pointed to the 10 countries of Southeast Asia as the junction of India and Pacific oceans "in both the geographical and civilisational sense". "India does not see the Indo-Pacific Region as a strategy or as a club of limited members. Nor as a grouping that seeks to dominate. And by no means do we consider it as directed against any country." The Embassy readout said India and China discussed "perspectives on maritime security and cooperation," signalling their intent to find common ground in the Indian Ocean and the Pacific. They also brainstormed ways to work together in the field of "blue economy, and further strengthening of practical cooperation".

Maritime cooperation

The statement highlighted that stepped up "maritime cooperation" was "a platform to strengthen political and strategic mutual trust between the two countries."

It added exchanges in the maritime domain were "an important area of India-China bilateral relations".

In the past, India has been concerned about China's forays in the Indian Ocean, including Sri Lanka and the Maldives.

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