

## ► 'Relationship built on strong foundation, holds great potential for further growth' Chinese, Fijian leaders hail devt of bilateral ties

By Liu Caiyu and  
Zhang Wanshi

Chinese President Xi Jinping met with Prime Minister of the Republic of Fiji Sitiveni Rabuka in Beijing on Tuesday, after the leader from the Pacific Island country (PIC) has traveled in Southwest China's Yunnan Province, and in East China's Fujian and Zhejiang provinces.

Noting that Fiji was the first PIC to establish diplomatic relations with China and that 2025 marks the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties, Xi said that for nearly half a century, the two countries have

always supported and helped each other, setting a good example of equal treatment and friendly cooperation between countries large and small.

China attaches great importance to China-Fiji relations and is willing to continue to provide assistance to the best of its ability for Fiji's economic and social development, and work with Fiji to grasp the general direction of bilateral relations and promote the building of a China-Fiji community with a shared future to better benefit the two peoples, Xi said.

Experts highlighted the importance of Rabuka's visit in

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shaping the future of bilateral ties, saying the existing bilateral relationship is built on a strong foundation and holds great potential for further growth.

"The recent visits to China by leaders of PICs, including the Solomon Islands and Fiji in this instance, have common features such as longer durations and paying visits to provinces beyond Beijing. This indicates a deepening of bilateral relations, moving beyond mere formalities between leaders,

which could turn into a substantial impetus for enhanced cooperation between the two countries," said Chen Hong, executive director of the Asia Pacific Studies Center at East China Normal University.

Rabuka started his visit in Yunnan Province on August 12. The next day, he traveled a long distance from capital Kunming to Malipo county in Wenshan Zhuang and Miao Autonomous Prefecture. Malipo was once a poverty stricken county.

Rabuka's visit to Yunnan aims to gain insights from China's successful efforts in combating poverty, Chen said.

Rabuka also visited Zhejiang and Fujian provinces, which bear similarities to Fiji as coastal regions.

Rabuka's itinerary is related to the modernization and development needs of Fiji. As a island country rich in agricultural and fisheries resources but affected by climate change, the areas involved in his visit, such as agricultural and fisheries development, port construction, shipbuilding, tourism, and green development, are all areas that the Fijian government attaches great importance to and will have great potential for future cooperation, Chen said.

### ► Honoring Hungarian history



Honour guards march with historical Hungarian flags during the flag-raising ceremony as part of the celebrations marking the country's National Day, the Saint Stephen's Day, on August 20, 2024, in front of the parliament building in Budapest. Every year on August 20, Hungary celebrates the establishment of the Hungarian State and the country's more than 1,000-year-old history. Photo: VCG

## Blinken's urge to break cease-fire impasse 'reflects US desire to reduce its involvement'

By Zhao Yusha

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said on Monday that Israel had accepted a proposal to bridge the differences that are holding up a cease-fire and hostage release deal in Gaza, and he called on Hamas to do the same.

Observers said on Tuesday that Blinken's remarks reflect the US' eagerness to reduce its involvement in the Middle East, as US is mired its own chaotic domestic and international affairs.

Blinken spoke after holding a meeting with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu earlier on Monday, and he will travel to Egypt and Qatar for further negotiations. The three mediators have spent months trying to end the war in Gaza, with the talks repeatedly stalling, media reported.

"In a very constructive meeting with Prime Minister Netanyahu today, he confirmed to me that Israel supports the bridging proposal," Blinken said, without saying what the proposal entails. "The next important step is for Hamas to say 'yes.'"

Hamas, however, accused the US of "buying time for Israel to continue its genocide" after Blinken announced Israel has accepted a bridging proposal for a Gaza truce deal.

Recently, the US has increased its pressure on Israel to reach a cease-fire deal with Hamas as Washington is so preoccupied with its chaotic domestic politics and international affairs, such as an escalating Russia-Ukraine crisis, thus it is attempting to reducing its involvement in the Middle East, said Liu Zhongmin, a professor at the Middle East Studies Institute of Shanghai International Studies University.

However, Liu remains skeptical about whether it is the opportune moment to reach a cease-fire deal. It is usual practice for Israel to say one thing and do another.

Israel agreed to participate in cease-fire negotiations but it did not cease its bombing of Gaza, Liu said, noting that whether Israel will adhere to the deal is still to be seen.

## Modi's Kiev visit 'a symbolic gesture' for peace talk

By Liu Xin

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi is reportedly scheduled to visit Ukraine on Friday, marking the first visit by an Indian leader since the Russia-Ukraine conflict began in February 2022.

While India is prepared to contribute to resolving the conflict, analysts said on Tuesday that Modi's visit, which aims to repair ties with the West and the US, is a largely symbolic gesture and unlikely to significantly advance peace talks.

Modi will complete a two-day visit to Poland from Wednesday and thereafter he will travel to Ukraine, according to India's Ministry of External Affairs (MEA).

This will be the first visit by an Indian prime minister to Ukraine after the two countries established diplomatic relations in 1992, India's MEA said in a release on Monday. The MEA announced that Modi's

"landmark visit to Ukraine will help further consolidation and expansion of bilateral ties."

Shortly after Modi's return from a visit to Russia in July, India proposed a visit to Ukraine in an effort to balance its relations between the US and Russia, Liu Zongyi, secretary-general of the Research Center for China-South Asia Cooperation at the Shanghai Institutes for International Studies, told the Global Times on Tuesday.

Modi's visit to Russia had sparked dissatisfaction among several Western countries, particularly the US. By Modi's visiting Ukraine, India aims to repair its relations with the West while maintaining a delicate balance between the US and Russia, Liu said.

However, the proposal to visit Ukraine was made before the conflict in Russia's Kursk region, and with the ongoing clashes now a daily occurrence, India finds itself in a dilemma, said Liu. He noted that Modi's visit to Ukraine is merely a gesture and will

not have a substantial impact on the current situation.

Although India's international status has risen in recent years, its influence remains largely confined to South Asia. Mediation in the Russia-Ukraine conflict typically involves either major powers facilitating negotiations or smaller nations collectively voicing concerns through multilateral channels. Cui Heng, a research fellow with the Center for Russian Studies of East China Normal University, told the Global Times.

For India, the lack of collective support and limited resources it can dedicate to global issues like the Russia-Ukraine conflict make its role in mediation relatively limited, Cui said.

Russian presidential aide Yuri Ushakov said on Monday that Moscow was not ready to hold peace talks for now given Kiev's attack on Russia's Kursk region, but that Russia was not withdrawing its earlier peace proposals, Reuters reported.

