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PM's three nation visit

Why in news?

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Prime Minister completed his three-nation tour of Portugal, United States and Netherlands.

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What are the outcomes?

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- **Portugal** - PM met his Portuguese counterpart and signed 11 MoUs in areas including double taxation avoidance, investments, science and technology, and culture.

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- The two nations have agreed to establish a joint science and technology fund worth 4 million euros.

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- **U.S** - PM met with US President, following which the two nations issued a joint statement.

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- He also interacted with the Indian diaspora as well as top US CEOs inviting them to invest in India.

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- PM faced three imperatives in making U.S visit a success.

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- **Establishing a personal understanding** with U.S President - Both the leaders established some personal warmth.

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- But they should also move beyond their early affinity and identify global issues on which they can seek each other's advice and support.

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- **To signal that the US-India relationship remains solid -**

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- The joint statement reaffirmed an emphasis on cooperation in the Indo-Pacific maritime collaboration and articulated a common understanding of the terrorist threat.

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- It also highlighted deepening defense ties, including a significant offer of Guardian UAVs.

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- The UAV deal is significant because it required the administration to overcome a 'presumption of denial' under its MTCR obligations.

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- But issues like India's concerns on the immigration process, H1B visa curbs and U.S' withdrawal from the Paris climate accord were not brought up.

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- **To shape the new administration's view of regional challenges** - It is particularly related to that of China and Pakistan. Here the fruits of the summit are somewhat less clear.

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- The joint statement reaffirmed the US-India strategic convergence in Asia.

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- **On China** - It highlighted a shared concern over North Korea and posed a critique of China's Belt and Road Initiative.

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- But it did not made it clear whether India and U.S have a similar view of the challenge that China poses to our shared interests in Asia.

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- Without that common view, US-India defence cooperation could eventually wane.

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- **On Pakistan** - US made a strong statement in the wake of the Uri attacks.

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- It also designated Syed Salahuddin as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist.

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- This might suggest that U.S is moving towards present Indian goverment's view of Pakistan.

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- But it is yet to develop a complete South Asia strategy to address the problems of cross-border militancy from Pakistani territory.

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- U.S still has numerous investments with Pakistan.

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- It also cannot afford to alienate Pakistani when it is considering reinvesting in an Afghan peace process.

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- For the US, the visit might mean finding ways to ensure that trade disputes are handled respectfully and involving in areas of strategic importance with ease.

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- **Netherlands** - PM lauded the Netherlands for helping India successfully get a membership of MTCR.

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- The Netherlands expressed its support for India's early membership to the 48-member NSG and the Wassenaar Arrangement.
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- Netherlands also welcomed India's recent application for membership in the Australia Group and supported the country's bid for a permanent UN Security Council seat.
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- MTCR membership enables India to buy high-end missile technology and also enhances its joint ventures with Russia.
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- The aim of the MTCR is to restrict the proliferation of missiles, complete rocket systems, unmanned air vehicles and related technology for those systems capable of carrying a 500 kilogramme payload for at least 300 kilometres, as well as systems intended for the delivery of weapons of mass destruction (WMD).
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Source: The Indian Express

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