US and South Asian Politics

Why in news?

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- Six rockets were launched near Kabul airport by terrorist elements, coinciding with the Kabul visit of U.S. Defence Secretary.
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- Notably, the US had unveiled their new South Asian policy.
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What are the highlights of the policy?

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- The US is planning to send about 3,000 more troops to Afghanistan to enhance military and security conditions.
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- Despite increasing US presence, it stresses on the responsibility of the Afghan leadership to step up and fully own the war with time.
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- Also, the US for the first time openly criticised Pakistan for being soft on terror.
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- It also stressed on India’s positive role and asked for its increased collaboration with US in Afghanistan.
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What enhanced role will India play?

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- Indian help has been sought in Afghan with primary focus in the areas of economic assistance and development.
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- India has decided to take up 116 “high-impact community developmental projects” in 31 provinces of Afghanistan.
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- Recently, four attack helicopters were gifted by India to Kabul.
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- India has promised training for Afghan police to fight terrorism, organised crime, trafficking of narcotics and money laundering.
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How has Pakistan been marginalised?

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- Mr. Trump had made it clear that Washington could no longer be silent about Pakistan’s safe havens for terrorist organisations.
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- This comes at a time when New Delhi is actively leading a global campaign to tag Islamabad as a state sponsoring terror.
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- The Xiamen BRICS declaration earlier this month also listed Pakistan-based terror organisations for the first time.
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- These developments have forced Pakistan’s government to admit that groups like Lashkar-e-Taiba are a threat for all.
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How has India - U.S ties strengthened?

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- China’s growing assertiveness in the Indo-Pacific region is a shared concern for both India & US.
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- Both reiterated the critical importance of freedom of navigation and unimpeded lawful commerce in the global commons.
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- Washington is no longer shying about selling sensitive military technologies to India.
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- The sale of 22 Sea Guardian Unmanned Aerial Systems, was announced recently.

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- With this, the Indian Navy will acquire what is currently the world’s most advanced maritime reconnaissance drone.
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- Also, other global theatres like South China Sea have also provided India and US avenues to cooperate.
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- The challenge will be to sustain the present momentum.
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Source: The Hindu

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