

India-Vietnam strategic ties a source of security, stability: EAM



External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar visits the INS Sudarshini docked in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam on Wednesday. (PTI)

HO CHI MINH, Oct 18 (PTI)

EXTERNAL Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Wednesday said that the comprehensive strategic partnership between India and Vietnam was emerging as

a “source of security, stability and progress in the region.”

Jaishankar was speaking when he visited the Indian sail training ship INS Sudarshini, which was on a port call coinciding with his four-day offi-

cial visit to Vietnam.

“Vietnam is the only nation to which India has gifted a fully operational missile corvette INS Kirpan. The joint commission that I see further deepens our defence relations. So, today as INS Sudarshini docks in Ho Chi Minh City, let me say that the strong and favourable winds of our growing partnership will fill our sails that will help synchronise our efforts in order to race ahead,” the Minister said addressing the gathering on board the INS Sudarshini.

“From what I understood from the briefing, this training ship highlights the importance of discipline, hard work, ability to adapt, competence to the right press, and the courage to face unforeseen situations,” he said.

Military should always be ready for uncertainties, says Rajnath

NEW DELHI, Oct 18 (PTI)

DEFENCE Minister Rajnath Singh on Wednesday commended the Army for its high standard of operational readiness and said "war preparedness" should be a continuous phenomenon and that the military should always be ready for the uncertainties.

In an address to the top commanders of the Army, Singh, referring to the situation in eastern Ladakh, expressed full confidence in the force to effectively confront any contingency even as he noted that the ongoing talks between the two sides for peaceful resolution of the row will continue at all levels.

The Defence Minister complimented the Border Roads Organisation (BRO) for carrying out an "incomparable improvement" of road net-



Defence Minister Rajnath Singh with Minister of State for Defence Ajay Bhatt, Chief of Defence Staff General Anil Chauhan and Chief of Army Staff General Manoj Pande during the Army Commanders' Conference in New Delhi on Wednesday. (PTI)

works in areas along the Western and Northern frontiers while working under difficult conditions.

Singh said the present "complex and ambiguous" global

situation affects everyone and called on the Army top brass to "expect the unexpected" and plan, strategise and prepare accordingly. The Defence Minister said that unconven-

tional warfare will be part of the future conventional wars as it is evident in the recent conflicts happening in various parts of the world.

The five-day Army Commanders' conference that began on Monday in Delhi has been focusing on bolstering the force's overall combat capabilities considering the possible national security challenges, including along the frontier with China.

The Defence Minister said modernisation of weapons for every soldier through "Atma Nirbharta" (self-reliance) is the key focus of the Government.

"Defence diplomacy, indigenisation, information warfare, defence infrastructure and force modernisation should always be contemplated in such a forum," Singh told the Army commanders.

IAF tests BrahMos cruise missile successfully

■ By Ajit K Dubey
NEW DELHI, Oct 18 (ANI)

IN A major success for the indigenous weapon systems, the Indian Air Force (IAF) has carried out a successful restoration of the air-launched version of the BrahMos supersonic cruise missile in the Bay of Bengal.

The BrahMos air-launched version missile was test-fired from a Su-30MKI fighter jet which has the capability to launch the BrahMos cruise missiles that can hit enemy targets at long ranges.

“The BrahMos air-launched missile was fired from a Su-

30MKI fighter jet in the last few days. The aircraft had taken off with the missile from an air base in the southern peninsula and travelled over 1,500 Km to successfully strike a target from a longer range than before,” defence officials told ANI. The missile was the longer-range version of the supersonic weapon system which has been one of the unique weapons possessed by India in partnership with the Russian industry.

India has been working towards developing a very long-range version of the air-launched BrahMos cruise missiles which would be able

to hit

The Indian Air Force had recently carried out two trials of the land attack missile system and the results were very good as missiles hit bull's eye in the user trials, the sources said.

India is also exporting the missiles to friendly foreign countries including the Philippines which would be using them in the coastal battery role.

The BrahMos Aerospace corporation is also looking at exporting the missiles to more countries and helping achieve the export targets set by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Biden supports two-state solution

Biden announces USD 100 mn humanitarian aid to Gaza and West Bank

TEL AVIV, Oct 18 (PTI)

US PRESIDENT Joe Biden on Wednesday said he supports a two-state solution so that Israel and the Palestinian people can both live safely and securely in dignity and in peace as he announced USD 100 million for humanitarian aid in the war-torn Gaza and the West Bank.

Biden, who is in Tel Aviv on a solidarity visit to express support for Israel amid the ongoing conflict with Hamas-led Palestinian factions, made the remarks after a meeting with Israeli Prime Minister

Benjamin Netanyahu.

He said that "nations of conscience" like the US and Israel are not measured solely by the example of power. "We are measured by the power of our example, and that's why as hard as it is, we must keep pursuing peace," he said.

"We must keep pursuing a path so that Israel and the Palestinian people can both live safely and securely in dignity and in peace," Biden said.

"For me, that means a two-state solution," the US President said.

Biden said the recent attacks have made him even more

determined in his efforts to push for a two-state solution.

"We must keep working for Israel's greater integration with its neighbours. These attacks have only strengthened my commitment and determination and my will to get that done," Biden said.

The two-state - an independent Palestinian state alongside Israel - has long been proposed as the best solution for lasting peace in the volatile region. However, the biggest obstacle to the solution is the borders of the two states.

On Wednesday, the 57-member Organization of Islamic

Cooperation in a statement said it supports the embodiment of the independent and sovereign State of Palestine on the borders of June 4, 1967, with its capital, Al-Quds (East Jerusalem). Later in a post on X, Biden announced \$100 million for humanitarian assistance in Gaza and the West Bank to support over 1 million displaced and conflict-affected Palestinians.

"Let me make myself clear: The vast majority of Palestinians are not Hamas. And Hamas does not represent the Palestinian people," he said in another post.

Drone attack on base hosting US troops intercepted in Iraq

BEIRUT, Oct 18 (AP)

TWO drones launched at a base hosting US troops in western Iraq were intercepted Wednesday, a US defence official said.

Hours later, an Iranian-backed militia in Iraq announced it had launched another drone attack on a second base. No injuries were reported in either incident.

The salvos came at a time of increasing tension and fears of a broader regional conflict in the wake of the latest Hamas-Israel war.

Since the beginning of the war on October 7, much atten-

tion has been focused on Hezbollah, the powerful Hamas ally across Israel's northern border in Lebanon, and its formidable arsenal.

The group has traded so-far limited strikes with Israel on the border in recent days.

But Iranian-backed militias in Iraq have also threatened to attack US facilities over American support for Israel.

"Our missiles, drones, and special forces are ready to direct qualitative strikes at the American enemy in its bases and disrupt its interests if it intervenes in this battle," Ahmad "Abu Hussein" al-Hamidawi, head of the Kataib

Hezbollah militia, said in a statement last Wednesday. He also threatened to launch missiles at Israeli targets.

Following Tuesday night's blast that killed hundreds at a hospital in Gaza, the group issued another statement in which it blamed the US and its support for Israel for the catastrophe and called for an end to the US presence in Iraq.

"These evil people must leave the country. Otherwise, they will taste the fire of hell in this world before the afterlife," the statement said.

No group claimed responsibility for the first drone attack Wednesday.

'India's GDP to grow at 6.5-6.8 pc this fiscal'

NEW DELHI, Oct 18 (PTI)

DELOITTE India on Wednesday said it expects GDP growth in the current fiscal to be in the range of 6.5-6.8 per cent primarily due to upcoming festive spending as well as higher Government expenditure before national elections mid-next year.



In its India economic outlook report, released earlier this month, Deloitte said India will need at least 6.5 per cent growth every fiscal to become the world's third largest economy by 2027, with its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) crossing USD 5 trillion.

The country needs 8-9 per cent economic growth to become a developed country by 2047, it added.

The Indian economy grew 7.8 per cent in the June quarter, higher than the 7.2 per cent in the year-ago period. "In light of the Q1 GDP growth, we have revised our growth estimate for this year to reflect it. We expect GDP to grow in the range of 6.5-6.8 per cent primarily due to festive spending in the coming months followed by higher government spending before the upcoming national elections mid-next year," Deloitte India said. Deloitte India Economist Rumki Majumdar said navigating geopolitical uncertainties and the slowdown in global economy, undoubtedly, would not be easy.

India, France officials hold two-day military dialogue

NEW DELHI, Oct 18 (PTI)

SENIOR officials of India and France held a two-day military dialogue with a focus on boosting overall defence cooperation.

The 21st edition of India-France Military Sub Committee (MSC) meeting was held on October 16 and 17 at the Air Force station in the national capital. India-France MSC is a forum established to advance defence cooperation through regular talks at strategic and operational levels.