

EAM bats for **EXPANDING** India's ties with S Korea

SEOUL, Mar 6 (PTI)

EXTERNAL Affairs Minister S Jaishankar has met South Korea's top leadership and called for expanding India's strategic partnership in new areas like critical and emerging technologies, semiconductors and green hydrogen to make the bilateral ties more contemporary.

Jaishankar said this as he co-chaired the 10th India-South Korea Joint Commission Meeting (JCM) with his counterpart Cho Tae-yul in Seoul. He said the two sides held a comprehensive and produc-

India-South Korea Joint Commission Meeting in Seoul today," Jaishankar posted on X.

The conversations covered the expanded bilateral ties, cooperation in the field of defence, science and technology, business and trade, people-to-people exchange and cultural cooperation, he said.

"Also spoke of advancing trilateral cooperation. Exchanged views on the developments in the Indo-Pacific, our convergences to challenges in the region and regional & global issues of mutual interest," Jaishankar posted on X.

In his opening remarks,



External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar with Minister of Foreign Affairs of South Korea Cho Tae-yul during 10th India-Korea Joint Commission Meeting, in Seoul, South Korea on Wednesday. (PTI)

tive discussion on cooperation in the fields of defence, science and technology and trade.

"Co-chaired with @FMChoTae_yul a comprehensive and productive 10th

Jaishankar said that during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to South Korea in 2015 the bilateral relations were elevated to a special strategic partnership.

Trump & Biden rematch a done deal after Super Tuesday wins

'Uncommitted' Protest-Vote Over Gaza Again Raises Questions For Prez

Charleston (US): Nikki Haley ended her long-shot challenge to Republican presidential frontrunner Donald Trump on Wednesday, ensuring the former president will be the party's candidate in a rematch with Democratic President Joe Biden in Nov's election.

Haley, the former South Carolina governor and Trump's ambassador to UN, bowed out a day after Super Tuesday, when Trump beat her soundly in 14 of 15 Republican nominating contests. "The time has now come to suspend my campaign," Haley told supporters during a speech in Charleston. "I have no regrets."

Just as Haley was conceding the race, he criticised her before inviting her supporters to join him. "Nikki Haley got TROUNCED last night, in record setting fashion," Trump wrote on the Truth Social media platform. In contrast, Biden praised Haley for daring to "speak the truth" about Trump and extended his own invitation to her supporters.

Trump and Biden quickly trained their focus on each other as the results became clear. In a victory speech at his Mar-a-Lago estate in Florida, Trump focused on Biden's immigration policies and called him the "worst president" in history. "Our cities are being overrun with migrant crime," he said, though crime data does not support that assertion.

Biden again cast Trump as a threat to American democracy. "Tonight's results leave the American people with a clear choice: Are we going to keep moving forward or will we allow Donald Trump to drag us backwards into the chaos, di-



'Nikki Haley got TROUNCED last night, in record setting fashion,' Trump wrote on Truth Social after winning 14 of 15 contests



Biden's one stumble was in American Samoa, a tiny American territory, where he tied a businessman for its delegates

After years of hostility, top Republican backs ex-prez

Washington: Top US Senate Republican **Mitch McConnell** on Wednesday endorsed Donald Trump's run for president after years of icy relations between the two men.

"It is abundantly clear that former President Trump has earned the requisite support of Republican voters to be our nominee for president of the US. It should come as no surprise that as nominee, he will have my support," McConnell said. That came the week after McConnell said he would step down as the party's leader in the Democratic-controlled Senate at the end of the year.

McConnell's endorsement was first reported by the Washington Post.

McConnell and Trump vision, and darkness that defined his term in office?" he said in a statement.

On the Democratic side,

had worked closely together on a tax overhaul and on judicial nominations during Trump's presidency in 2017-2021, including those for three Supreme Court justices that tilted the balance of power on the court toward conservatives for a generation. But the relationship between the pair had been frosty since the 2020 election. McConnell publicly acknowledged that Democrat Joe Biden had won the presidential race, a fact that Trump has continued to deny. McConnell also criticised Trump for the role he played on Jan 6, 2021, when hundreds of Trump supporters stormed US Capitol to try to stop the certification of Biden's victory following a fiery speech by Trump. REUTERS

President Biden swept all 15 states that held Democratic contests, as well as the Iowa caucuses. His one stumble ca-

me in American Samoa, a tiny American territory in the Pacific Ocean, where he tied a little-known businessman, Jason Palmer, for the territory's delegates, three to three, according to AP. However, a protest vote in Minnesota and six other states organised by activists opposed to his forceful support of Israel in its war against Hamas attracted unexpectedly strong results. The "uncommitted" vote in Minnesota stood at 19% with nearly 90% of the votes counted, according to Edison Research, higher than the 13% that a similar effort in Michigan drew last week.

The "uncommitted" vote was also on the Democratic ballot in six other Super Tuesday states — Alabama, Colorado, Iowa, Massachusetts, North Carolina and Tennessee. Support in those states ranged from 3.9% in Iowa to 12.7% in North Carolina, with more than 85% of the votes counted in each of those states, according to Edison Research.

The rematch between Trump, 77, and Biden, 81 — the first repeat US presidential contest since 1956 — is one that few Americans want. Opinion polls show both Biden and Trump have low approval ratings among voters.

Immigration and the economy were leading concerns for Republican voters, Edison exit polls in California, North Carolina and Virginia showed. A majority of Republican voters in those states said they backed deporting illegal immigrants. Trump, who frequently denigrates migrants, has promised to mount the largest deportation effort in US history if elected. REUTERS

Minicoy base to boost maritime security in IOR

New Delhi: Describing the new naval base — INS Jatayu — at Minicoy as significant for India's maritime security and strategic posture in the Indo-Pacific, Navy chief Admiral R Hari Kumar Wednesday said it would serve as the "eyes and ears" of the nation on the lines of INS Baaz in the Andaman and Nicobar archipelago.

INS Jatayu's commissioning is part of the govt's plan to incrementally boost the military presence and security infrastructure in the strategically-located Lakshadweep island in the Arabian Sea. TNN

How Sriharikota's little sister boosts India's space ambitions

Kulasekarapattinam in Tamil Nadu will host the country's second launchpad for rockets. It offers a straight route to space and the promise of a supportive ecosystem

U.Tejonmayam@timesgroup.com

The latest launchpad for India's expansive space goals is coming up close to the southern tip of Tamil Nadu, not very far from Kanniyakumari. PM Narendra

Modi laid the foundation stone for Kulasekarapattinam spaceport on February 28 and the facility is expected to start operations in two years. Spread over 2,292 acres across three villages in two taluqs and expected to cost about Rs 806 crore, the site will be handling the launch of smaller satellites.

TOI Explains

ready in two years. While Satish Dhawan Space Centre at Sriharikota has two launchpads, Kulasekarapattinam will begin with one launchpad. But like at Sriharikota, it will also have rocket integration facilities, a mobile launch structure and checkout computers. The upcoming launchpad will be used for launching Isro's Small Satellite Launch Vehicle (SSLV) rocket, which carries relatively smaller satellites.

Locational Advantage

Rockets launched from Kulasekarapattinam can save fuel as it avoids the need for a special flight path, unlike a

PSLV rocket launched from Sriharikota. PSLV rockets have to perform what is known as a 'dogleg manoeuvre', a sharp turn to deviate from a straight flight path. The manoeuvre, dictated by the need to avoid flying over Sri Lanka so as to spare it the risk of falling space debris, entails an extra consumption of fuel. That, in turn, translates into reduced payload capacity. A rocket launched from Kulasekarapattinam can fly straight south, which means greater payload ratio.

Small Sats, Big Money

Kulasekarapattinam will launch nano- and microsatellites, which are becoming the preferred tools for navigation and remote sensing due to their affordability. Experts say the global small satellite market, valued at \$3.2 billion in 2020, is projected to touch \$13.7 billion by 2030.

Isro has launched 432 satellites for 34 countries, including micro- and nanosatellites, and is now aiming to tap into the global small satellite market with its SSLV rocket. The new complex can do two launches a month, catering to global demand for launching small satellites, Isro said. The new spaceport will also see more private sector participation on both launch vehicles and satellite services. In 2022, the Centre opened the space sector to private players and recently permitted 100% FDI in it.

More Tech, More Jobs

With an eye on creating an ecosystem for space technology industries, Tamil Nadu gov't is planning to set up a space industrial and propellant park on 2,000 acres close to the spaceport. The park, to be set up by the Tamil Nadu Industrial Development Corporation, is expected to create an industry cluster and spark job creation. It will have facilities for manufacturing propellant required for space activities and building launch vehicles, satellites and related equipment.

Ready in 2 Years

Soon after the PM had left, an RH-200 rocket lifted off from a makeshift launchpad from the site off Bay of Bengal. Close to 60 years back, Indian Space Research Organisation (Isro) had fired its first Rohini rocket from the sleepy fishing village of Thumba in Thiruvananthapuram on the western coast. If the launch of another sounding rocket, from Kulasekarapattinam this time, reminds of the historic first scripted in Kerala, it also forms the prologue to Indian space programme's next leap into the future.

Isro chairman S Somanath has said the new spaceport will be

WHAT IS A DOGLEG MANOEUVRE?

> A PSLV rocket launched from Sriharikota must perform a 'yaw' or 'dogleg' manoeuvre to avoid flying over Sri Lanka, protecting the landmass from rocket debris

> The move involves a sharp turn (see map) that causes the rocket to deviate from a straight flight path after liftoff

> For dogleg manoeuvre, the rocket veers southeast-wards at liftoff before turning towards South Pole

> This manoeuvre requires more fuel, which eats into the rocket's carrying capacity. That reduces the payload it can take to space

> The rocket can fly straight in the southward direction, thus removing the need for the small satellite launch vehicle (SSLV) to carry extra fuel. That means more payload capacity

432

No. of foreign satellites launched by Isro, including more than 123 micro- and nanosatellites

34

Number of countries for which Isro has launched satellites

SSLV

Height | 34m

Diameter | 2m

Number of stages | 3

Payload capacity | 500kg to low earth orbit



For the dogleg manoeuvre, the PSLV rocket makes a steep 40-degree arc as it bypasses Sri Lanka around 4.25 minutes after liftoff

A rocket launched from Kulasekarapattinam won't require a dogleg manoeuvre as there is no landmass along the flight path

ISRO SHAR BHARIKOTA

China def deal for non-lethal arms and training, says Maldives prez

Male: Maldives will get free "non-lethal" military equipment and training from China's military under a newly inked agreement with Beijing, President Mohamed Muizzu has said, underlining it would strengthen the island nation's independence and autonomy.

The president also met major general Zhang Baoqun, deputy director of the office for international military cooperation of China, and president of the Export-Import Bank of China, Ren Shengjun separately in a courtesy call.

Speaking late Tuesday evening with residents of Dhaalu atoll Meedhoo, Muizzu, widely seen as a pro-China leader, shared details as he said China and Maldives had always maintained military cooperation and that the only new development with this agreement is the assistance Maldives will be receiving to strengthen its military capacity. News portal Sun.mv quoted the President as saying that the non-lethal weaponry would include tear gas, pepper spray and similar articles of weapons. PTI

Houthi attack on ship kills 2, Indian Navy joins rescue

A missile attack by Yemen's Houthi rebels on a commercial ship in the Gulf of Aden killed two of its crew members and forced survivors to abandon the vessel on Wednesday, authorities said, the first fatal strike in a campaign of assaults by the group over Israel's war on Hamas in the Gaza Strip.

The attack on the Barbados-flagged bulk carrier True Confidence further escalates the conflict. The Greek operators of the True Confidence said those on board included 15 Filipinos, four Vietnamese, two Sri Lankans, an Indian and a Nepali national. The crew abandoned the ship and deployed lifeboats. A US warship and the Indian Navy were on the scene, trying to assist in rescue efforts. **P 21**

US NO.1 ON DEFENCE SPEND, BUT CHINA GROWING FASTEST

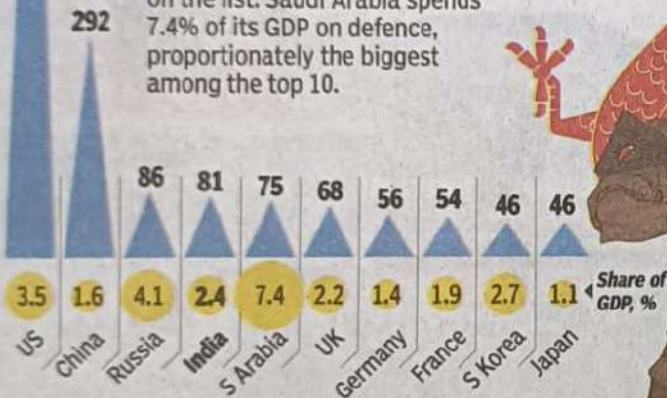
This fiscal, China's military will spend more than thrice what India normally sets aside for defence. While US has the biggest defence bill, China's expenditure has grown the fastest.

Global Top Ten in 2022

877 Expenditure (\$ bn)

China Spends More Than It Shows

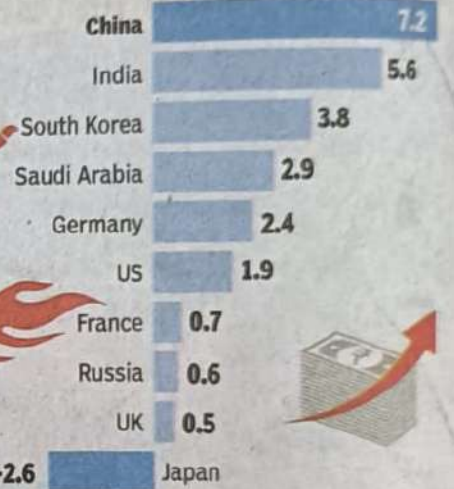
China's defence budget has ballooned to \$230 billion this year but what it actually spends could be higher than what it declares, experts say. The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) - which tracks global military expenditure and arms trade - says that China spent \$292 billion on its military in 2022. That makes its defence budget second only to that of US, which spent \$876.9 billion in 2022. US' military budget is more than the combined budgets of the next nine countries. India is fourth on the list. Saudi Arabia spends 7.4% of its GDP on defence, proportionately the biggest among the top 10.



Dragon's Military Budget Up 7.2% Yearly

Between 2012 and 2022, China saw an average annual increase of 7.2% in its defence spend, the highest among the top 10 countries. With a 5.6% annual growth rate, India is second on this front. Among the global top 10, Japan is the only country that saw its military budget contract during this period.

Annual Growth Rate (2012-22, %)



Source: SIPRI; Note: Data for the latest comparable year for countries included. Figures for China and Saudi Arabia are SIPRI estimates. Data highly uncertain for Russia