

N Korea confirms missile test with solid propellant

SEOUL, Apr 3 (AP)

NORTH Korea said on Wednesday it had tested a new hypersonic intermediate-range missile powered with solid propellants, extending a run of weapons tests that's deepening a nuclear stand-off with neighbours and the United States.

With the supposed success of the demonstration, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un declared his country had acquired the ability to build solid-fuel, nuclear-capable missiles of all ranges as he pur-



Test-fire of an intermediate-range ballistic missile on the outskirts of Pyongyang, North Korea on Tuesday. (AP/PTI)

sues an arsenal that can credibly threaten rivals in Asia and the United States.

Violation of P

Switzerland seeks bilateral investment treaty with India

Sidhartha@timesgroup.com

New Delhi: After the India-European Free Trade Association (EFTA) trade deal that witnessed \$100 billion investment commitment, Switzerland is now pushing for a new bilateral investment treaty (BIT) with India and a "red carpet" for investors from the four-nation bloc to meet the target.

The issue of the investment treaty, a sore point with most countries, was flagged during a bilateral meeting between the Indian and Swiss finance ministry officials last month, sources said. The model treaty put in place by the Indian govt is unacceptable to most developed nations as it is seen to be limiting the ability of foreign investors to seek remedial action and the progress on dis-

putes under the Indian system is seen to be very slow.

Although the two countries are "taking stock", the Indian side is unwilling to offer any concessions at the moment as it believes that the large market and a strong economic growth in the coming years offer an attracti-

Switzerland is also pushing for a "red carpet" for investors

ve proposition for overseas investors. The model agreement was put in place after India received a few setbacks in arbitration initiated by foreign companies, and cases that came up in the aftermath of the 2G verdict by the Supreme Court, which cancelled the telecom licences granted by DMK-nominated telecom minister A Raja during UPA.

The model BIT is an area of concern not just with Switzerland and the other three nations that are part of EFTA, but also with the UK, which wants modifications as part of the trade deal it has been negotiating with India. In case of EFTA, each member will have to negotiate a separate BIT with India.

As for the red carpet, an EFTA desk will help the European countries to facilitate investments, which was the focus of the commitment over 15 years. Separately, during last month's meeting, Switzerland has also pitched for concessions for financial sector players, such as insurance companies, sources said.

The Swiss side is learnt to have argued that relaxations will create more interest in India and help meet the investment goal.

In swipe at China, Doval says shun terror double standards

At SCO Meeting, Underlines LeT, JeM, IS Threats

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: NSA Ajit Doval stressed the need for perpetrators of cross-border terrorism to be dealt with effectively and expeditiously, as he underlined the threat from India-focused terror groups like LeT and JeM, as well as IS, al-Qaida and its affiliates.

Speaking at an Shanghai Cooperation Organisation meeting in Astana, Doval took a swipe at China as he called for shunning double standards in fight against terrorism & reiterating India's position that all connectivity initiatives must respect sovereignty and territorial integrity of member-states. Both China & Pakistan are SCO member-states.

Doval condemned recent terror attack in Moscow and, in a meeting on the margins with his Russian counterpart



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At the SCO meet in Astana, Doval emphasised the need to counter use of technology by terrorists for cross-border smuggling of weapons & drugs

Nikolay Patrushev, emphasised on the fight against terrorism both in bilateral and multilateral formats, and also exchange of information about terrorists & extremists.

In his SCO address, Doval underlined the need for holding accountable the sponsors, financiers and facilitators of terrorist activities. He highlighted the continued threat from various terror groups in the SCO region, including those designated by the UN Security Council such as LeT, JeM, IS and al-Qaida. Doval

said India is committed to enhancing transit trade and connectivity, without compromising on the issue of sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Doval pointed out that any act of terror, including cross-border terrorism committed by whomsoever, wherever and for whatever motives is not justified, sources here said. He emphasised the need to counter the use of technology by terrorists including drones for cross-border smuggling of weapons and drugs.

India supports the cre-

ation of effective mechanisms for cooperation within RATS-SCO for countering terror financing and supports its further strengthening, he said.

In his remarks, Doval also expressed deep concern on the security situation in Afghanistan including the continued presence of terrorist networks. He said India's priority will remain humanitarian assistance, combating terrorism, preserving the rights of women and children and ensuring the formation of a truly inclusive govt. He noted that as a contiguous neighbour of Afghanistan, India has legitimate security and economic interests in the country.

In the meeting of Kazakhstan President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev with the secretaries of the security councils of the SCO member states, Doval conveyed India's support for Kazakh initiatives in the grouping and for a successful presidency. India is committed to further deepening its relationship with SCO and member states proactively and constructively, Doval said.

Indian Air Force receives first indigenous Crash Fire Tender

NEW DELHI, Apr3 (ANI)

THE Indian Air Force (IAF) on Wednesday said it had recently received the delivery of the first indigenously designed and developed Crash Fire Tender (CFT).

“The IAF recently took the delivery of the first among many, indigenously designed and developed Crash Fire Tender. Manufactured by a Noida-based Indian MSME firm, against a contract worth



Rs 291 cr, the Indian manufacturer ensured the delivery of the CFT within 14 months of contract signing,” posted the Air Force on its social media handle X.

“This was achieved in spite of multiple disruptions in the global supply chain. As envisaged and promised, the IAF continues to handhold the Indian Defence Manufacturing and Production entities,”

read the post.

The Indian Air Force is promoting indigenisation and has procured many made-in-India items to meet its operational requirements.

Maldives says, Indian troops from second platform to leave within April

MALE, Apr 3 (PTI)

MALDIVES President Mohamed Muizzu has said that Indian military personnel manning the second aviation platform would be withdrawn "within the current month" and reiterated that the entire process would be completed by May 10, a media report said here on Wednesday.

Muizzu's statement comes three weeks after the first batch of approximately 25 Indian military personnel stationed in the Maldives manning a helicopter gifted by India departed

from the island nation after handing over the operations of the chopper to an Indian civilian crew as agreed ahead of the March 10 deadline.

Eighty-eight Indian military personnel were operating two helicopters and a Dornier aircraft which were providing humanitarian and medical evacuation services in this archipelagic nation. Following a high-level meeting in New Delhi on February 2 between the two sides, India agreed to replace its military personnel operating the three aviation platforms in the Maldives by May 10.