

US military destroys 3 Houthi anti-ship missiles in Red Sea

WASHINGTON DC, Jan 20 (ANI)

THE United States carried out a fresh round of attack against the Houthi rebels in Yemen destroying three anti-ship missiles in the Red Sea.

The White House confirmed in a statement that this was the fourth preemptive action taken by the US military amid boiling tensions in the Red Sea.

“This morning, US forces conducted three successful self-defence strikes against Houthi targets in Yemen. This is the fourth preemptive action that the US military has taken in the past,” White House said in a statement on Friday.

The US Central Command informed that the attack was carried out at around 6:45 pm (Sanaa time) after the anti-ship missiles “presented an imminent threat” to merchant vessels and the US Navy ships in the region. “As part of ongoing efforts to protect freedom of navigation and prevent attacks on maritime vessels, US Navy ships are present in the Red Sea. On January 19 at approximately 6:45 PM (Sanaa time), US Central Command forces conducted strikes against three Houthi anti-ship missiles that were aimed into the Southern Red Sea and were prepared to launch,” the US Central Command posted on X. “US forces identified the missiles in Houthi-controlled areas of Yemen and determined that they presented an imminent threat to merchant vessels and the US Navy ships in the region. US forces subsequently struck and destroyed the missiles in self-defense. This action will make international waters safe and secure for US Navy vessels and merchant vessels,” it added.

Jaishankar holds talks with his Palestinian counterpart

KAMPALA, Jan 20 (PTI)

EXTERNAL Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Saturday met with Palestine's Foreign Minister Dr Riyad al-Maliki here and held a "detailed and comprehensive discussion" on the ongoing conflict in the Gaza Strip.

Jaishankar is here in the Ugandan capital to attend the two-day Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) summit, which began on Friday.

"Good to meet with Palestinian FM Dr Riyad al-Maliki in Kampala this afternoon. ... Had a detailed and comprehensive discussion on the ongoing conflict in Gaza," Jaishankar posted on X along with a photo of the meeting.

JAISHANKAR CALLS ON LANKAN PRESIDENT WICKREMESINGHE: Jaishankar called on Sri Lankan President Ranil Wickremesinghe and discussed the progress of bilateral initiatives.

"Pleased to call on Sri Lankan President @RW_UNP on the sidelines of the NAM Summit in Kampala," Jaishankar posted on X.

"Appreciate his continued guidance for the advancement of our bilateral initiatives. India's commitment is reflected in our Neighbourhood First and SAGAR policy," he said.

INDIA-BANGLADESH RELATIONS ARE GROW-



External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar meets Palestinian Foreign Minister Riyad al-Maliki, in Kampala on Saturday. (ANI)

ING, SAYS EAM: EXTERNAL Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Saturday met newly-appointed Bangladesh Foreign Minister Mohammed Hasan Mahmud here and hailed the bilateral relations, which are "growing from strength to strength."

Jaishankar also congratulated Dr Mamud on his appointment as the Foreign Minister of Bangladesh as the two leaders are meeting for the first time after the new Government took over in India's neighbourhood earlier this month.

Rajnath attends NCC Republic Day Camp Parade 2024

NEW DELHI, Jan 20 (ANI)

AHEAD of Republic Day, Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Saturday attended the Republic Day parade camp organised by the National Cadet Corps in the national capital.

The country observes Republic Day on January 26 every year.

Singh heaped praise on the NCC students and said, "After seeing your performance today, I would like to say it was excellent. I would like to congratulate and bless the NCC students for organising such a wonderful cultural programme. Your dedication has inspired me. I am confident



Defence Minister Rajnath Singh with NCC cadets during his visit to NCC Republic Day Parade 2024 camp at Delhi Cantt in New Delhi on Saturday. (PTI)

that every cadet of the NCC is filled with such dedication and

talent." "I was told that some of the cadets have come from distant villages. I would like to say that any village in the country is not 'distant'. This is the Mantra of 'Shreshtha Bharat, Ek Bharat'" he added.

Speaking on the importance of the NCC, the Union Minister said, "In this competitive era, students aspire to achieve a lot of things in their lives. Some want to pursue medicine while some want to enter the engineering field. Many students look forward to kicking off their startups. In order to fulfil your dreams, you have to work hard. Some might question why join the NCC at the same time when there is a lot to do with their studies."

For simultaneous polls, Rs 10,000 cr needed every 15 years for new EVMs: EC

NEW DELHI, Jan 20 (PTI)

THE Election Commission would require an estimated Rs 10,000 crore every 15 years to procure new Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) if simultaneous polls are held for Lok Sabha and Assemblies, according to the poll body.

In a communication sent to the Government, the Commission noted that the shelf

life of EVMs was 15 years and one set of machines could be used to conduct three cycles of elections in their life span if simultaneous polls were held.

According to estimates, a total of 11.80 lakh polling stations would be required to be set up across India for Lok Sabha polls this year.

During simultaneous polls, two sets of EVMs would be needed per polling station -- one for



the Lok Sabha seat and another for Assembly constituency. Based on past experiences,

the EC said in the communication sent to the Government, certain percentage of Control Units (CUs), Ballot Units (BUs) and Voter-Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT) machines are required as reserves to replace defective units at different stages, including on election day.

At least one BU, one CU and one VVPAT machine make up for one EVM.

Keeping in mind various aspects, the minimum EVMs and VVPATs required for simultaneous polls would be: 46,75,100 BUs, 33,63,300 CUs and 36,62,600 VVPATs, the Commission said in its letter to the Law Ministry in February last year.

In early 2023, the tentative cost of EVM stood at Rs 7,900 per BU, Rs 9,800 per CU and Rs 16,000 per unit of VVPAT.

Women, kids main victims of Gaza war: UN

heads of households and at least 10,000 children may have lost their fathers.

In a report released on Friday, the agency pointed to gender inequality and the burden on women fleeing the fighting with children and being displaced again and again. Of the territory's 2.3 million population,

it said, 1.9 million are displaced and "close to one million are women and girls" seeking shelter and safety.

UN Women's executive director, Sima Bahous, said this is "a cruel inversion" of fighting during the 15 years before the Hamas attack on October 7. Previously, she said, 67% of all

citizens killed in Gaza and the West Bank were men and less than 14% were women.

She echoed UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres' calls for a humanitarian ceasefire and the immediate release of all hostages taken captive in Israel on October 7.

"However much we mourn

the situation of the women and girls of Gaza today, we will mourn further tomorrow without unrestricted humanitarian assistance and an end to the destruction and killing," Bahous said in a statement accompanying the report.

"These women and girls are

deprived of safety, medicine, health care, and shelter. They face imminent starvation and famine. Most of all, they are deprived of hope and justice," UN Women's executive director Sima Bahous said.

The Health Ministry in Hamas-run Gaza says nearly 25,000 Palestinians have been