

US vetoes UN's Gaza ceasefire resolution, again

United Nations: The US on Tuesday again vetoed a draft UN Security Council resolution on the Israel-Hamas war, blocking a demand for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire as it instead pushes the 15-member body to call for a temporary ceasefire linked to the release of hostages held by Hamas.

Thirteen council members voted in favour of the Algerian-drafted text, while Britain abstained. It was the third such US veto since the start of the current fighting on Oct 7.

US ambassador to the UN Linda Thomas-Greenfield signalled Saturday that the US would veto the draft resolution over concerns it could jeopardi-

US, which has proposed a rival resolution, had argued that vetoed draft did not link ceasefire to the release of hostages

se talks between the US, Egypt, Israel and Qatar that seek to broker a pause in the war and the release of hostages held by Hamas in the Gaza Strip. "Demanding an immediate, unconditional ceasefire without an agreement requiring Hamas to release the hostages will not bring about a durable peace. Instead, it could extend the fighting between Hamas and Isra-

el," Thomas-Greenfield told the council ahead of the vote.

The Algerian-drafted resolution vetoed by the US did not link a ceasefire to the release of hostages. It separately demanded an immediate humanitarian ceasefire and unconditional release of all hostages.

The US has now proposed a rival draft resolution calling for a temporary ceasefire in the Israel-Hamas war and opposing a major ground offensive by its ally Israel in Rafah, according to the text seen by Reuters on Monday. It said it plans to allow time for negotiations and will not rush to a vote. Until now, Washington has been averse to the word ceasefire in

any UN action on the Israel-Hamas war, but the US text echoes language that President Joe Biden said he used last week in conversations with Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu.

The US draft resolution would see the Security Council "underscore its support for a temporary ceasefire in Gaza as soon as practicable, based on the formula of all hostages being released, and calls for lifting all barriers to the provision of humanitarian assistance at scale." This is the second time since Oct 7 that Washington has proposed a Security Council resolution on Gaza. Russia and China vetoed its first attempt in late Oct. REUTERS

Tejas Mark-1A flies with India-made digital flight control comp for 1st time

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Tejas Mark-1A prototype flew with digital fly-by-wire flight control computer (DFCC) for the first time on Tuesday, just days before the deliveries of the “improved” indigenous fighter are supposed to begin to IAF.

Under the Rs 46,898 crore contract inked with Hindustan Aeronautics (HAL) in Feb 2021, 83 Tejas Mark-1A have to be delivered to IAF in Feb 2024-Feb 2028 timeframe. Officials admit there is “a slight delay” but say at least two jets are likely to be delivered by March-end, with a few more to follow by year-end.

Defence ministry said DFCC, developed by Aeronautical Development Establishment, was integrated in “Prototype LSP-7”



IAF has so far inducted 40 Tejas

and successfully flown on Tuesday, which is “a significant development” towards Tejas Mark-1A programme. “All critical parameters and performance of the flight controls were found satisfactory,” it said.

IAF has so far inducted 40 Tejas Mark-1 jets.

The improved Mark-1A version of the single-engine jet includes advanced mission computers, high performance DFCCs, smart multi-function displays, advanced electronically scanned array radars and advanced self-protection jammers.

Eye on China, Army to 'combatise' more formations under Central Command

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Continuing with its re-balancing of forces and firepower to the northern borders with China, the 12-lakh strong Army now plans to "combatise" additional formations under its Lucknow-based Central Command.

Uttar Bharat Area based in Bareilly, which is largely a static formation geared for administrative, training and other peace-time purposes, for instance, will be converted into a full-fledged corps, with additional infantry, artillery, aviation, air defence and engineer brigades under it. "The final approval is yet to come but Army wants UB Area to transform into an operation-

AFP/Photo for representation



Bareilly-based Uttar Bharat Area, largely a static formation geared for peace-time purposes, will be converted into an operational corps tasked with guarding the middle sector of LAC

al corps tasked with guarding the middle sector of the 3,488-km long line of actual con-

trol," a source said.

This new corps, likely to be called the 18 Corps, will cover the stretch between Leh-based 14 Corps in Ladakh and the Sukna-based 33 Corps in Bengal. The Army has been deploying additional formations for the LAC in all three sectors — western (Ladakh), middle (Uttarakhand, Himachal) and eastern (Sikkim, Arunachal).

The Mathura-based 1 Strike Corps, which has around 70,000 soldiers and heavy weaponry, for instance, was earlier "rebalanced" to LAC from its previous role on the western front with Pakistan, as was reported by TOI.

Consequently, apart from "pivot" corps, there are now two "strike" corps for the LAC:

the 1 Corps for the northern sector, including Ladakh, and Panagarh-based 17 Corps for eastern one, including Chumbi Valley opposite Sikkim.

As part of the re-balancing, UB Area got one division and three independent brigades under it over the last couple of years to get "combatised" in order to tackle the threat from China. "The UB Area will be further upgraded," the source said.

China has so far rebuffed India's push for troop disengagement from the two remaining major face-offs at Depsang Plains and the Charding Ninglung Nallah (CNN) track junction at Demchok in Ladakh, let alone accept any return to status quo ante.

US drone major Skydio ties up with Aeroarc of India

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New Delhi: US drone major Skydio has tied up with Indian unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) company Aeroarc for joint manufacturing here for the Indo-Pacific region.

Skydio, which was among the top five US drone-makers approved by the defence department there for purchase by the federal government, after the use of China-made UAVs was banned in 2020, says it will "support the establishment of India as a global hub for advanced defence technology."

Skydio will bring "advanced autonomous flight technology" to India. Its deal with Aeroarc will develop, manufacture, deploy and support small uncrewed air-

craft systems (sUAS).

"The Skydio-Aeroarc collaboration will serve needs of the Indian defence ministry as well as other global defence customers in the Indo-Pacific region," the company said.

Without disclosing the investment figure, Aeroarc MD Arjun Aggarwal said it will be "a significant amount" for this partnership with Skydio, which was valued upwards of \$2.2-billion last year, and the targeted revenue for this venture is about \$300-500 million by the end of this decade.

Skydio CEO & co-founder Adam Bry said: "...we're excited to continue our investment in India and partner with Aeroarc on critical, dual-use products and capabilities... that help allied nations

in the Indo-Pacific region deter conflict and protect troops. We believe autonomous drone technology is central to the future of India's defence innovation strategy."

Aggarwal said: "Our partnership symbolises the strengthening defence and technological ties between India and the US. Aligned with our prime minister's 'make in India for the world' initiative, we will locally manufacture state of the art drones, catering to both domestic and international markets. This will amplify India's role in the global defence supply chain and enhance the resilience of both nations against supply disruptions, as recently seen due to situations in Ukraine and the Middle East."

PM: Art 370 was wall between country and J&K development

'Far From Hartals & Bandhs, Youth Now Scripting Their Own Future'

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I have full faith in you and we will make Viksit J&K, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said, expressing confidence in achieving the vision of a developed J&K.

Modi expressed satisfaction that Article 370's removal had dismantled a "wall between the country and J&K's development". He highlighted the shortcomings of families that had governed J&K since independence, accusing them of prioritising power grabs over people's welfare.

"They're only concerned about their families, not about your interests. Those thinking about the welfare of their own families will never spare a thought for common citizens. I am happy that J&K is now getting freedom from dynasty politics," the PM said.

He did not explicitly name any individual or political party, but alluded to Con-



PM Modi during the launch of various development projects in Jammu on Tuesday. He also flagged off the first electric train in Kashmir

gress and regional parties National Conference and Peoples Democratic Party, which had governed J&K before 2019.

"Earlier, only disheartening news of bombs, kidnappings and separation used to come from J&K. But now, Jammu & Kashmir is developing and moving forward. Far from hartals and bandhs,

youth of J&K are scripting their own future," he said.

The PM outlined milestones in education in J&K lately. "There are two IITs, two AIIMS, one of which was inaugurated by me here today," he said. "The number of medical colleges has gone up from four to 12, besides 45 nursing and paramedical colleges."

Modi also celebrated the

constitutional advancements in social justice, including granting SC status to Valmiki community and inclusion of Paddari, Pahari, Gadda Brahmans, and Kolis in ST category.

The PM highlighted the commendations he received regarding J&K's hospitality during his recent foreign trip to West Asia. He also mentioned the surge in tourism, with 2 crore tourists visiting J&K last year, creating earning opportunities in the region. "I assure you that people would forget Switzerland and come to J&K as infrastructure is going to get a big boost," he said, referencing projects inaugurated or initiated.

Modi flagged off the first electric train in Kashmir and congratulated the people on its inauguration. "The day is not far when people will be able to travel across the country by taking a train from Kashmir," he said.

Foreign minister defends ties with Russia, says it has never hurt India

'Our Purchase Of Russian Oil Helped Stabilise Energy Market'

TIMES NEWS NETWORK



Jaishankar said if no one had purchased crude from Russia and got supplies from other countries, prices in the energy market would have shot up even further

The minister said if no one had purchased crude from Russia and got supplies from other countries, prices in the energy market would have shot up even further. "Global inflation would have been much higher — and that would have been a huge political issue in lower-income countries," he said.

On being asked if India could mediate in the Russia-Ukraine conflict, the minister said India is open to the idea only when it is approached. When asked if India would like support from Europe in the border con-

New Delhi: Defending India's ties with Russia, foreign minister S Jaishankar said everyone conducts relationships based on their past experiences and Russia has never hurt India's interests. The minister also said India's purchase of Russian oil had helped stabilise the energy market.

"If I look at the history of India post-Independence, Russia has never hurt our interests. The relations of powers like Europe, the US, China or Japan with Russia, they have all seen ups and downs. We have had a stable and always very friendly relationship with Russia," said the minister in an interview to a German daily.

"And our relationship with Russia today is based on this experience. For others, things were different, and conflicts may have shaped the relationship. We, on the other hand, had a politically and militarily much more difficult relationship with China, for example," he added.

Red Sea events have exposed fragility of connectivity: EAM

The recent developments in the Red Sea reflected the fragility of existing connectivity link and it reinforced the need to create multiple transport corridors with in-built resilience, EAM S Jaishankar said on Tuesday. He highlighted India's deepening ties with Europe and said the ambitious India-West Asia-Europe Economic Corridor would create significant opportunities for global economic growth. PTI

flict with China, he said his point was "just as I do not expect Europe to have a view of China that is identical to mine, Europe should understand that I cannot have a view of Russia that is identical to the European one".

"Let us accept that there are natural differences in relationships," he said.

When asked if India is undermining the sanctions against Russia, Jaishankar said if Europe had wanted to maximise the damage at the time, it would have had to stop all economic relations with Russia completely.

India to send 4 relics of Buddha to Thailand

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: As an extension of its 'Look East' policy, India will send four holy relics of Lord Buddha to Thailand for a month starting Feb 22, the second such outreach in two years it has made to a country with a large Buddhist population.

In a similar special goodwill gesture to its "spiritual neighbour" Mongolia, India had sent the sacred 'Kapilvastu relics' to Mongolia in Dec 2022. The relics, believed to contain Gautam Buddha's remains, were part of the collection on display at the National Museum and had last been part of a multi-city display in Sri Lanka in 2012.

Though the relics were accorded the 'AA' category status by the Archaeological Survey of India on account of their rarity and delicate nature, and were typically not sent out of the country, an exception was made for Mongolia following a special request from govt and in light

of India's long-standing diplomatic ties with its 'Third neighbour' in the East.

This time too, the Kapilvastu Piprahwa relics, which are preserved at the National Museum, are being sent to Thailand on the request of the Thai govt. In addition to the four relics, on govt's request, the relics of two disciples of Lord Buddha, preserved in Madhya Pradesh's Sanchi, will also

LOOK-EAST POLICY

be sent to Thailand for display, culture secretary Govind Mohan said.

India has doubled down on its efforts to leverage its 'soft power' and to develop and promote the Buddhist circuit by investing heavily in developing infrastructure projects along the circuit. Mohan said the relics will be displayed at three other locations in Thailand in turns, from March 4 to 18. On March 19, the relics will be brought back to India, he said.