

Jaishankar meets Japan's PM Kishida



TOKYO, Mar 8 (PTI)

EXTERNAL Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar on Friday called on Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida and apprised him of the progress made by the two countries in the just-concluded Foreign Ministers Strategic Dialogue.

Jaishankar, who is on a visit to Japan from March 6-8 on Thursday co-chaired the 16th India-Japan Foreign Ministers Strategic Dialogue with his Japanese counterpart Yoko Kamikawa and participated in the first Raisina Roundtable, a key step towards enhancing track two exchanges between India and Japan.

"Honored to call on Japanese PM @kishida230 as I conclude my visit to Tokyo. Conveyed warm greetings of PM @narendramodi," the minister said on X. "Apprised him of the progress made in Foreign Ministers Strategic Dialogue. Value his guidance on the further strengthening of our Global and Special Strategic Partnership," Jaishankar said

in his post.

Kishida, 66, is serving as the Prime Minister of Japan and the President of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) since 2021.

Jaishankar, during his visit, also met Yoshihide Suga, the former Prime Minister of the country who now serves as the Chairman of the Japan-India Association.

"Pleasure to meet former PM Yoshihide Suga, now Chairman of the Japan India Association. His leadership was impactful in advancing India-Japan ties as well as the Quad. Count on his continued support for these endeavours," the foreign minister said on X.

Suga, 75, served as the Prime Minister of Japan and President of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) from 2020 to 2021.

Jaishankar also met the Secretary-General of Japan's ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), Toshimitsu Motegi, here on Friday and held a fruitful conversation on ways to strengthen ties in an uncertain world.

UNSC reform model

India presents on behalf of G4

UNITED NATIONS, Mar 8 (PTI)

INDIA has presented a detailed model on behalf of the G4 nations for Security Council reform that includes new permanent members elected democratically by the General Assembly and displays flexibility on the veto issue.

Participating in the Intergovernmental Negotiations on Security Council reform (IGN) on Thursday, India's Permanent

Representative to the UN Ambassador Ruchira Kamboj said the UN's 80th anniversary next year serves as a milestone to achieve concrete progress on the long-pending subject.

Kamboj presented the 'G-4 model' on behalf of Brazil, Germany, Japan and India for debate, dialogue and finally negotiations. The proposals elicited strong support from wider UN members.

"The realities of 1945, when the Council was established,

have long been superseded by the geo-political realities of the modern era and a new century; with the need for change being felt across the board," Kamboj said as she shared the exhaustive G4 model with UN Member States in the General Assembly. Catering to these new realities, the G4 model proposes that the Security Council's membership increase from the current 15 to 25-26, by adding six permanent and four or five non-permanent

members. Among the six new permanent members, two each are proposed to be from African states and Asia Pacific states, one from Latin American and Caribbean states; and one from Western European and Other States. The G4 model notes that the current composition of the Security Council, with its "glaring under-representation and un-representation" of key regions in both categories of membership, is "detrimental" to its legitimacy and effective-

ness. It stressed that the Council's inability to address critical conflicts and maintain international peace and security underscores the urgent need for reform.

"Any reform that does not address the lack of representation, particularly in the permanent category, would only exacerbate the current imbalances in the Council's composition and render it ill-equipped to address today's international challenges," she said.

A&N Command undertakes maiden all-women maritime surveillance mission

NEW DELHI, Mar 8 (PTI)

THE maiden all-women maritime surveillance mission was undertaken by the Andaman & Nicobar Command on Friday, underscoring its towards providing equal opportunities and fostering gender neutrality within the armed forces, officials said.

The occasion coincided with International Women's Day.

"A maiden all-women maritime surveillance mission was undertaken by the Andaman & Nicobar Command on the 40th anniversary of INAS 318 and International Women's Day," the Defence Ministry said in a statement.

The crew based at INS Utkrosh comprised Lt Cdr Shubhangi Swaroop, Lt Cdr Divya Sharma and Lt Vaishali Mishra, it said.

"This milestone underscores the commitment of the Andaman & Nicobar Command towards providing equal opportunities to all genders and fostering gender neutrality within the armed forces," it added. According to the Ministry statement, the occasion highlighted the crucial role played by women combatants



Women Indian Armed Forces personnel during a maiden all-women maritime surveillance mission, that was undertaken by the Andaman & Nicobar Command on the 40th anniversary of INAS 318 and International Women's Day on Friday. (PTI)

"in all the walks of the Naval Air Arm, which included pre-flight briefing, meteorological briefing, medical check-up and Air Traffic Control (ATC) briefing, all of which were conducted by women officers".

"The successful completion of the mission affirms the capability of women to undertake independent operational tasks, highlighting their invaluable contributions towards the nation's defence and security," the statement said.

INAS 318 is the elite Naval Air squadron in the Andaman & Nicobar Command, engaged in a surveillance role since its commissioning on March 8, 1984. The squadron commenced its journey with the induction of Islander aircraft, eventually replaced by the Dornier aircraft in 1999. The Dornier aircraft is capable of carrying out long-range maritime surveillance using state-of-the-art Maritime Patrol Radars, the statement said.

IAF guarding skies, making paramount contribution to space programme: Murmu

■ By Kunal Dutt

GHAZIABAD, Mar 8 (PTI)

PRESIDENT Droupadi Murmu on Friday said the Indian Air Force's contribution to the nation's service is etched in "golden letters" and it is not only guarding the skies but also making a paramount contribution to the country's space programme.

In her address at a ceremony held at the Hindan Air Force Station to award President's Standard and Colours to four units of the IAF, Murmu said she believed that more and more women will sign up for the force and serve the nation and emphasised that increased



President Droupadi Murmu during the President's Standard and Colours Presentation 2024, at the Air Force Station, Hindon, in Ghaziabad, on Friday. (PTI)

representation of women in the force will make it "more inclusive". She also extended her wishes to women on International Women's Day.

The President is the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces. The IAF's contribution to the nation's service in protecting the country is "etched in golden letters", she said.

"It is a matter of joy that the IAF is not only guarding our skies but also making a paramount contribution to India's space programme," the President said.

The President said the four astronauts chosen to be part of the Gaganyaan mission are IAF officers.

ELECTORAL BONDS: SC to hear SBI's plea on Monday

NEW DELHI, Mar 8 (PTI)

A FIVE-JUDGE constitution bench of the Supreme Court will hear on March 11 an application filed by the State Bank of India (SBI) seeking extension of time till June 30 to disclose details of each electoral bond encashed by political parties before the scheme was scrapped last month.

The bench, headed by Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud, will also hear a separate plea which has sought initiation of contempt action against the SBI alleging it "wilfully and deliberately" disobeyed the apex court's direction to submit details of the contributions made to political parties through electoral

bonds to the Election Commission by March 6.

According to the apex court's cause list for Monday, the bench, also comprising justices Sanjiv Khanna, B R Gavai, J B Pardiwala and Manoj Misra will assemble at 10:30 am to hear the two petitions.

In a landmark verdict delivered on February 15, a five-judge constitution bench had scrapped the Centre's electoral bonds scheme of anonymous political funding, calling it "unconstitutional" and ordering disclosure by the Election Commission of the donors, the amount donated by them and the recipients by March 13.

Ordering closure of the scheme forthwith, the top court

had directed the SBI, the authorised financial institution under the scheme, to submit by March 6 the details of the electoral bonds purchased since April 12, 2019 till date to the Election Commission which was asked to publish the information on its official website by March 13. On March 4, the SBI had moved the apex court seeking extension of time till June 30 to disclose the details of the electoral bonds encashed by political parties.

In its application, the SBI has contended that retrieval of information from "each silo" and the procedure of matching the information of one silo to that of the other would be a time-consuming exercise.