

# Naval diving support craft commissioned

KOCHI, Dec 16 (PTI)

THE naval diving support craft, A20, meant to enhance underwater preparedness and to serve as a force multiplier, was commissioned into the Indian Navy on Tuesday.

The craft was commissioned at the Kochi naval base in a ceremonial event presided over by Vice Admiral Sameer Saxena, Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Southern Naval Command, a defence statement said.

It is the 11th ship to be commissioned in the calendar year -- a significant milestone in the country's shipbuilding capability, it added. The ceremony commenced with the reading of the commissioning warrant by Lt Cdr Hemant Singh Chauhan, the Commanding Officer of DSCA20 and was followed by the hoisting of the naval ensign, accompanied by the national anthem and a ceremonial salute by the colour guard presented by the



Indian Navy's first indigenously-designed and built Diving Support Craft 'DSC A20' sails at sea. (PTI)

ship's crew, it said.

"Simultaneously, the commissioning pennant was hoisted, signifying the craft's induction into active naval service. The commissioning plaque was thereafter unveiled by the chief

guest (Vice Admiral Saxena)," it added. Saxena highlighted the craft's role as a "vital enabler" of the Indian Navy's maritime capabilities in the underwater domain and a "fine example of Aatmanirbhar Bharat with

indigenous design, construction, and system integration."

"These diving support crafts will significantly strengthen the Indian Navy's ability to provide diving expertise, underwater maintenance support and salvage assistance to friendly foreign nations, reinforcing India's role as a first responder and preferred security partner across the region," it said. The DSC A20 is a modern catamaran-hull vessel, equipped with advanced diving systems and state-of-the-art underwater video monitoring, recording and tracking facilities.

"The craft is fitted with a two-man Recompression Chamber, enabling safe and extended diving operations. With enhanced endurance, manoeuvrability and contemporary diving infrastructure, DSCA20 will enhance underwater preparedness and serve as an essential force multiplier in the Indian Navy's maritime security architecture," the statement said.

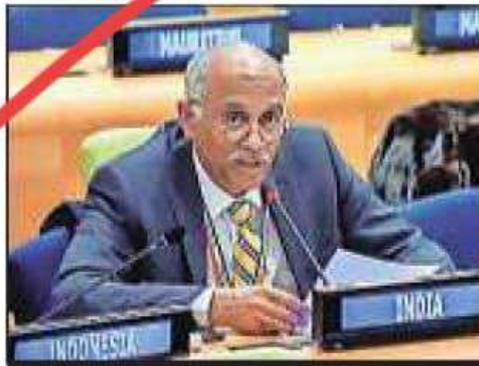
# India slams Pak's divisive agenda at UNSC

■ By Yoshita Singh

UNITED NATIONS, Dec 16 (PTI)

IN A sharp retort, India ripped through Pakistan's "divisive agenda" at the UN Security Council, calling out Islamabad's "unique" way of respecting the will of its people by jailing a Prime Minister and giving lifetime immunity to its army chief.

India's Permanent Representative to the UN, Ambassador Harish Parvathaneni, delivered a strong response in the Security Council on Monday after Pakistan's Ambassador Asim Iftikhar Ahmad raised issues of Jammu and Kashmir and the Indus



Waters Treaty during an open debate on 'Leadership for Peace'.

"Pakistan's unwarranted reference to Jammu and Kashmir in today's open debate attests to its obsessive focus on harming India and its people. A serving non-permanent Security Council Member that chooses to further this obsession in all meetings

"Let me be clear -- India will counter Pakistan-sponsored terrorism in all its forms and manifestations with all its might," said Ambassador Harish Parvathaneni

and platforms of the UN in pursuit of its divisive agenda cannot be expected to fulfill its designated responsibilities and obligations.

"Let me be clear -- India will counter Pakistan-sponsored terrorism in all its forms and manifestations with all its might," Harish said.

# India, Ethiopia elevate ties to strategic partnership

ADDIS ABABA, Dec 16 (PTI)

INDIA and Ethiopia on Tuesday elevated their ties to a strategic partnership, as Prime Minister Narendra Modi held wide-ranging talks with his Ethiopian counterpart Abiy Ahmed Ali during which they discussed issues of bilateral and mutual interest.

Modi, who arrived here from Jordan on his maiden bilateral visit, was accorded a ceremonial welcome at the National Palace ahead of the bilateral talks, reflecting the vibrant India-Ethiopia relations rooted in shared history and a promising future.

"We are elevating India and Ethiopia relations to a strategic partnership. This step will provide new energy, new momentum and new depth to our ties," Prime Minister Modi said during the delegation-level talks.

He thanked PM Ali for his support in India's fight against terrorism. "The support of friendly countries in this struggle against terrorism holds great significance," Modi said.

"Today, we got the opportunity to deliberate on the key aspects of our cooperation, such as economy, innovation, technology, defence, health, capacity-building and multilateral



Prime Minister Narendra Modi with his Ethiopian counterpart Abiy Ahmed Ali as he is welcomed by members of the Indian community, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. (PTI)

cooperation. I am pleased that today, we have decided to double the student scholarship for Ethiopia in India," Modi said.

## PM Modi conferred with Ethiopia's highest honour

ADDIS ABABA, Dec 16 (PTI)

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday was conferred with Ethiopia's highest award 'The Great Honour Nishan of Ethiopia' by his Ethiopian counterpart Abiy Ahmed Ali.

The award was conferred upon PM Modi in a special ceremony on Tuesday.

# PM proposes to double India-Jordan trade to \$5 bn

AMMAN, Dec 16 (PTI)

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday sought to double India-Jordan bilateral trade to USD 5 billion over the next five years, as he invited Jordanian companies to take advantage of the country's high economic growth and reap handsome returns. Modi arrived in Jordan's capital, Amman, on Monday for a two-day visit at the invitation of King Abdullah II. Jordan is the first leg of the Prime Minister's four-day, three-nation tour, which will also take him to Ethiopia and Oman.

On Tuesday, Prime Minister Modi and King Abdullah II addressed the India-Jordan Business Forum here. It was also attended by Crown Prince Hussein and Jordan's Minister of Trade and Industry and Minister of Investment.

The two leaders acknowledged the importance of increasing business-to-business ties between the two countries, and called upon the industry captains from both sides to convert the potential and opportunities into growth and prosperity.

India and Jordan also inked



Prime Minister Narendra Modi with Jordan's King Abdullah II, second right, during the India-Jordan Business Forum, in Jordan. (PMO via PTI)

MoUs in the fields of culture, renewable energy, water management, digital public infrastructure and twinning arrangement between Petra and Ellora, aimed at giving a major boost to bilateral ties and friendship.

King Abdullah II noted that Jordan's free trade agreements and India's economic power could be combined to create an economic corridor between South Asia and West Asia and beyond. Addressing the gathering,

Modi said India's success as

the fastest-growing major economy, which is on course to become the third-largest economy in the world, offers immense business opportunities for its partners in Jordan and across the globe. "The relationship between India and Jordan is one where historical trust and future economic opportunities come together," he noted.

Modi invited Jordanian companies to partner with India and reap the benefits of its 1.4 billion consumer market, strong manufacturing base, and stable,

## Special gesture: Crown Prince drives PM Modi to Jordan Museum

AMMAN, Dec 16 (PTI)

JORDANIAN Crown Prince Al Hussein bin Abdullah II on Tuesday personally drove Prime Minister Narendra Modi to the Jordan Museum here, in a special gesture reflecting the warmth of ties between India and the Arab nation.

The Crown Prince is a 42nd-generation direct descendant of Prophet Mohammad.

The Jordan Museum, located in the Ras al-Ein district of Amman, is the country's largest museum and showcases some of its most significant archaeological and historical artefacts.

Built in 2014, the museum traces the civilisational journey of the region from prehistoric times to the present day.

transparent, and predictable policy environment. Referring to the over 8 per cent growth of the Indian economy, he said India's high GDP numbers are due to productivity-driven governance



As a special gesture, Crown Prince Al Hussein Bin Abdullah II drives Prime Minister Narendra Modi to the Jordan Museum on Tuesday. (PMO via PTI)

The museum's collection includes animal bones dating back 1.5 million years and the 9,000-year-old Ain Ghazal lime plaster statues, considered among the world's oldest ever made.

and innovation-led growth policies. Noting that India is Jordan's third-largest trading partner, the Prime Minister said that in the universe of business, numbers matter.

# Terror-linked network busted in J&K; 12 held

SRINAGAR, Dec 16 (PTI)

THE counter Intelligence wing of Jammu and Kashmir Police on Tuesday carried out pre-dawn raids at multiple locations across the Valley and busted a terror-linked network of anti-national elements operating under the garb of social activism, officials said. During the operation across seven districts, 12 suspects were detained for questioning.

The Counter Intelligence Kashmir (CIK) conducted coordinated searches across multiple districts of the Kashmir valley, exposing a clandestine terror-support ecosystem masquerading as voices of social change, dealing a decisive blow to anti-national elements operating under the garb of social activism, the officials said.

They said the searches were carried out in connection with a 2023 case registered at CIK Srinagar police station under various sections of IPC and the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act. The action was undertaken after obtaining due authorisation through search warrants issued by a special court in Srinagar, designated under the NIA Act, the officials added.

The case stems from credible intelligence inputs indicating that certain individuals in Jammu and Kashmir were "exploiting" platforms linked to mass media, social media, human rights advocacy, environmental causes and women empowerment as a "cover to carry out activities gravely prejudicial to the sovereignty, integrity and security of India", they said. "Discreet verification further revealed their suspected links with secessionist groups and proscribed terrorist organisations," an official said.

Investigations also brought to light that some of these individuals were allegedly in contact with Pakistan-based terror handlers using encrypted communication applications.

"They are suspected to have been actively involved in peddling false narratives, glorifying terrorists and terrorism, radicalising impressionable youth, and systematically attempting to disrupt public order and peace in Jammu & Kashmir," the official said.

Acting on these inputs, 12 locations in Srinagar, Baramulla, Anantnag, Pulwama, Kupwara, Budgam and Shopian were identified and searched.



Security personnel keep vigil during a search operation linked to an ongoing investigation, in Srinagar on, Tuesday. (PTI)

# India, Israel share policy of 'zero tolerance' against terror: EAM

■ By Harinder Mishra  
JERUSALEM, Dec 16 (PTI)

EXTERNAL Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Tuesday condemned the terror attack during a Hanukkah celebration at Sydney's Bondi Beach, saying that India and Israel both have a policy of "zero tolerance" against terrorism.

Jaishankar, who arrived in Israel on Tuesday on a two-day visit, made the remarks while addressing the press alongside Israeli counterpart Gideon Moshe Sa'ar here.

"Let me first of all convey our very, very sincere, deep condolences at the loss of life due to the terror attack at Hanukkah celebrations in Bondi Beach. I want to say that we condemn it in the strongest possible terms," Jaishankar said. He thanked Israel for its support of India in its fight against terrorism.

At least 15 people were killed, and 40 were injured in an attack by two gunmen on a gathering



External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar with Israel Foreign Affairs Minister Gideon Sa'ar during a meeting in Jerusalem, Israel. (PTI)

during the Jewish festival Hanukkah by the Sea celebration on Sunday.

"Where India and Israel are concerned, we are both countries that have a policy of zero tolerance towards terrorism. We appreciate your consistent sup-

port in our fight against terrorism in all its forms and manifestations," Jaishankar said.

He said that they will be discussing a strategic partnership between the two countries, which has "really developed very significantly in the last decade."

Jaishankar said that India and Israel are "very complementary partners, and we must make the most of that."

He also reiterated India's support for the Gaza peace process and expressed hope that it will lead to a just and durable solution.

His visit comes as preparations are underway for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's proposed trip to India.

Netanyahu and Prime Minister Narendra Modi spoke recently over the phone, after which the Israeli leader said the two would be "meeting very soon".

During his stay, Jaishankar would also meet Israeli President Isaac Herzog and Prime Minister Netanyahu. The discussions will revolve around bilateral and regional issues with a view to further deepen the strategic partnership between the two countries," a source here told PTI.

Jaishankar arrived in Tel Aviv from Abu Dhabi, where he participated in the high-profile Sir Bani Vas Forum.

## Jaishankar co-chairs India-UAE Joint Commission

ABU DHABI, Dec 16 (IANS)

EXTERNAL Affairs Minister (EAM) S Jaishankar co-chaired the 16th Joint Commission and 5th Strategic Dialogue with Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan, the UAE's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs in Abu Dhabi.

The two leaders reviewed all aspects of the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership between India and the UAE, as well as identified key priorities for the future.

Taking to social media platform X on Tuesday, EAM Jaishankar said, "In today's world, deeper India-UAE cooperation advances shared interests and contributes to regional and global stability."

During the meeting, the EAM highlighted the significant

growth in bilateral trade, investments, fintech and digital connectivity following the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) and Bilateral Investment Treaty (BIT). He also underlined the vast potential in connectivity and logistics, both bilaterally and through initiatives such as the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC).

EAM Jaishankar underscored the expansion of energy collaboration, with a particular focus on civil nuclear cooperation, strengthening educational ties and cultural exchanges, and consolidating defence and security cooperation. He further emphasised the importance of nurturing cultural linkages and people-to-people exchanges, exploring new frontiers of cooperation in

critical minerals, space, and polar research, as well as closer coordination in multilateral fora and trilateral mechanisms.

On Monday, Jaishankar called on the UAE's Vice President Sheikh Mansour bin Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan in Abu Dhabi, where the two sides discussed ways to enhance economic and defence cooperation between India and the UAE.

"Honoured to call on Vice President HH Sheikh Mansour bin Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan of the UAE today in Abu Dhabi. Had a productive discussion on deepening economic and defence cooperation," EAM posted on X.

Jaishankar also met Khaldoon Khalifa Al Mubarak, Managing Director and Group CEO of Mubadala Investment Company in the UAE.