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INDIA SEEKS STATUS AS A MAJOR SPACE POWER WITH MORE SATELLITE LAUNCHES

April 27, 2017 SpaceDaily.com reported: "Aiming to lower the cost of access to space, the Indian Space and Research Organization (ISRO) chairman A.S. Kiran Kumar has said the space agency is aiming to increase the number of satellite launches from the existing seven to 12 per year. Experts said that increasing the number of launches will help India tap a fast-growing commercial space market.

'Earlier, we were doing 2-3 (launches) per year, then we increased it to 4-5, last few years we have been doing seven launches. Now, we are trying to go up to 8-9 PSLV per year, two GSLV-Mk II and one GSLV-Mk III. Total about 12 per year,' PTI quoted the ISRO chairman as saying.

Noting that it will require capacity addition, the ISRO chairman said the agency is at present building a second vehicle assembly building to improve the turnaround time. It will increase output for the PSLV and ISRO will be able to use the same launch pad for more launches. Experts concurred with Kumar, saying that ISRO has proven its capabilities and taking additional steps to scale up its operations, including roping in private players."..."

SYRIA WAR: 'ISRAELI STRIKE' HITS MILITARY SITE NEAR DAMASCUS AIRPORT

April 27, 2017 BBC News reported: "An Israeli missile strike has caused a large explosion and fire at a military site near Damascus international airport, Syrian state media report.

A fuel tank and warehouses were damaged, the Sana news agency said. But Syrian rebel sources said an arms depot run by Lebanon's Hezbollah movement, which is fighting in Syria as an ally of the government, was hit.

Israel said the explosion was 'consistent' with its policy to prevent Iran smuggling weapons to Hezbollah. But it stopped short of confirming it was responsible."..."

CHINA LAUNCHES 1st DOMESTICALLY-MADE AIRCRAFT CARRIER

April 26, 2017 Voice of America News reported: "China has launched its first aircraft carrier built entirely on its own, in a demonstration of the growing technical sophistication of its defense industries and determination to safeguard its maritime territorial claims and crucial trade routes.

The 50,000-ton carrier was towed from its dockyard just after 9 a.m. Wednesday following a ceremony in the northern port city of Dalian, where its predecessor, the Soviet-built Liaoning, also underwent extensive refurbishing before being commissioned in 2012, the Ministry of National Defense said.

Development of the new carrier began in 2013 and construction in late 2015. It's expected to be formally commissioned sometime before 2020, after sea trials and the arrival of its full air complement."..."

SENATORS TOLD NORTH KOREA NUCLEAR THREAT IS URGENT

April 26, 2016 freebeacon.com reported: "The Senate took part in a rare White House briefing on Wednesday to hear what senior leaders described as "an urgent national security threat" posed by North Korea's nuclear and missile programs.

The hour-long secret session for all senators was held at the Eisenhower Executive Office Building, next to the White House, and included a brief appearance from President Trump who made short, introductory remarks.

Marine Corps Gen. Joseph Dunford, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, also took part in the session. His presence is an indication that military options for dealing with North Korea likely were discussed. New steps by the administration will include the imposition of additional economic sanctions.

"The United States seeks stability and the peaceful denuclearization of the Korean peninsula. We remain open to negotiations towards that goal. However, we remain prepared to defend ourselves and our allies," Defense Secretary Jim Mattis, Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, and Director of Intelligence Dan Coats said in a joint statement after the briefing.

Trump's approach seeks to pressure North Korea into dismantling nuclear, ballistic missile, and proliferation programs through imposing tighter economic sanctions and diplomatic measures, the three leaders said. The senior officials noted that past efforts to halt the North Korean illicit arms programs had failed.

"With each provocation, North Korea jeopardizes stability in Northeast Asia and poses a growing threat to our allies and the U.S. homeland," they stated.

Sen. John Barrasso (R., Wyo.) told MSNBC the meeting was "very consequential" and included discussion of North Korea's shift from liquid to solid fuel missiles, and improving nuclear weapons and missile capabilities. Barrasso said he favors increasing sanctions, including sanctions on China.

Sen. Chris Coons (D., Del.) called the session "very clear-eyed, sober and serious."

Coons told MSNBC the administration is working to avoid a conflict and "making it clear to China how serious we are about preventing North Korea from developing the capability to deliver a nuclear warhead by ICBM against the United States or one of our key allies, and that there are real efforts being made to avoid a misunderstanding or miscalculation because I do think this is a very dangerous circumstance and situation."..."

MEXICO ON ALERT AFTER NUCLEAR MATERIAL THEFT

April 25, 2017 SpaceDaily.com reported: "Authorities in Mexico put several states on alert Monday after thieves stole nuclear material used in medical equipment that is dangerous if not handled properly.



The iridium was inside industrial X-ray equipment that was stolen from the back of a truck in Tlaquepaque, Jalisco state, an interior ministry statement said.

'This was industrial equipment that included Iridium-192... which can be dangerous for people if it is taken out of its container,' the statement said.

It issued a warning for Jalisco, Colima, Nayarit, Aguascalientes, Guanajuato, Michoacan, San Luis Potosi, Durango and Zacatecas states..."

NORTH KOREA STAGES LARGE-SCALE ARTILLERY DRILL AS U.S. SUBMARINE DOCKS IN SOUTH

April 25, 2017 Reuters reported: "North Korea conducted a big live-fire exercise on Tuesday to mark the foundation of its military as a U.S. submarine docked in South Korea in a show of force amid growing concern over the North's nuclear and missile programs.



The port call by the USS Michigan came as a U.S. aircraft carrier strike group steamed toward Korean waters and as top envoys for North Korea policy from South Korea, Japan and the United States met in Tokyo.

Fears have risen in recent weeks that North Korea would conduct another nuclear test or long-range missile launch in defiance of U.N. sanctions, perhaps on the Tuesday anniversary of the founding of its military.

But instead of a nuclear test or big missile launch, North Korea deployed a large number of long-range artillery units in the region of Wonsan on its east coast for a live-fire drill, South Korea's military said. North Korea has an air base in Wonsan and missiles have also been tested there.

'North Korea is conducting a large-scale firing drill in Wonsan areas this afternoon,' the South's Office of Joint Chiefs of Staff said in a statement."..."

ISRAEL PM ISSUES HOLOCAUST DAY WARNING

April 24, 2017 AFP.com reported: "Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Sunday threatened to destroy those who call for the destruction of Israel, in a speech to mark the annual Holocaust Remembrance Day.

'Iran and the Islamic state want to destroy us, and a hatred for Jews is being directed towards the Jewish state today,' he said at a ceremony in Jerusalem's Yad Vashem memorial.

'Those who threaten to destroy us risk being destroyed themselves,' Netanyahu warned.

'From being defenceless people, we have become a state with a defensive capacity that is among the strongest in the world,' he said."..."

NORTH KOREA THREATENS TO SINK US AIRCRAFT CARRIER

April 24, 2017 Arutz Sheva 7 reported: "The North Korean regime threatened a US supercarrier on Sunday, pledging to sink the 100,000 ton behemoth 'with a single strike'.

The USS Carl Vinson, a Nimitz-class nuclear powered carrier, was ordered to the Korean coast by President Trump after an attempted North Korean ballistic missile test.

Pyongyang's official mouthpiece, Rodong Sinmum, publicized the statement which included an explicit threat to use force against the carrier.

'Our revolutionary forces are combat-ready to sink a U.S. nuclear powered aircraft carrier with a single strike,' the statement read."..."

US SUPERCARRIER DUE IN SEA OF JAPAN 'IN DAYS': PENCE

April 22, 2017 SpaceDaily.com reported: "The US supercarrier Carl Vinson will arrive in the Sea of Japan in days, Vice President Mike Pence said Saturday, after days of mixed messages from Washington over the warship's whereabouts.

The strike group was supposedly steaming towards North Korea last week amid soaring tensions over the rogue state's apparent ramping up for a sixth nuclear test, with Pyongyang threatening to hit back at any provocation.

But the US Navy, which had earlier said the aircraft carrier would sail north from waters off Singapore as a "prudent measure" to deter the regime, admitted Tuesday the ships were in fact sent away from Singapore and towards Australia to conduct drills with the Australian navy.

The aircraft carrier will arrive "in a matter of days", Pence, who is in Sydney, said, after the location of the naval strike group became contentious.

"We are sending an armada. Very powerful," Trump had tweeted, while Pentagon chief Jim Mattis had said the Vinson was "on her way up".

MUSLIMS WANTS 'BLASPHEMERS' PROSECUTED ... WORLDWIDE!

April 20, 2017 World Net Daily reported: "For years, Islamic nations have successfully pressed the United Nations to pass non-binding resolutions condemning 'defamation of religion.'

In nations such as Pakistan, the penalty for 'blasphemy' against Islam or its prophet is death. While the sentence has not been imposed in recent years, some people who have been accused of blasphemy have been murdered by Muslim vigilantes before they can get to court.

Reuters reported just days ago an estimated 65 defendants, lawyers or judges involved in blasphemy cases have been murdered since 1990. WND reported seven years ago the defamation resolutions introduced in the U.N. by the 57-member Organization of Islamic Cooperation were losing support.

But now a worldwide Christian ministry that operates in dozens of Muslim-dominated countries warns a new effort is under way.

'The aim is not simply to remove anything posted on the Internet deemed offensive to Islam, but to find out who posted it and prosecute them,' says the non-profit charity Barnabas Aid, which assists persecuted Christians globally.

Pakistan's interior minister, Chaudhry Nisar Ali Khan, has already said he wants to extradite anyone overseas accused of Islamic blasphemy, the group said."..."