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No help to Pak to come out of economic crisis: Jaishankar

Jaishankar also made it clear that it is in nobody's interest to see a country get into severe economic difficulties, and that too a neighbour. Once a country is in the throes of a serious economic problem, it has to make policy choices to get out of it, the career diplomat-turned-politician said, adding that others cannot solve it for the country. The world can only provide options and support systems, Jaishankar said, making it clear that "Pakistan will have to make tough choices". He said India has also undergone the same challenges several times in its modern history, with the last one being 30 years ago with the balance of payment crisis. Meanwhile, Jaishankar said ever since Narendra Modi came to power in 2014, the country's approach to the neighbouring countries has undergone a perceptible change and also reminded all about the Prime Minister's decision to call heads of state for the swearing-in function to start a new relationship. Citing the case of Maldives, he said India's help in the recent past includes the Greater Male project and also added that he was present at the foundation stone laying event a few weeks ago. India is also buying or selling power with many of its neighbours, Jaishankar said, adding that it recently started buying power from Nepal.

Going forward, the country is also mulling to up its focus on education and healthcare spending in the neighbourhood, Jaishankar said. He also assured that India will also be using its G-20 presidency to give a voice to the problems of the 'global south' and asserted that India is the best-placed country to do that. The Prime Minister and his top ministers have spoken to 125 countries in the past month in India's effort to be an effective voice of the global south, Jaishankar said. Speaking at the same event, Maldives' Minister of Finance Ibrahim Ameer said climate finance is a big challenge and expected help to flow through on the commitment at the earliest. His counterpart from Bhutan, Lyonpo Namgay Tshering said an easing of global financial conditions is also the need of the hour. Jaishankar said there are multiple second and third-order impacts of the major world events and policy decisions, which India will be flagging to the world as part of its G-20 presidency. The EAM also said that the G-20, with nearly 200 events across the country, is a marketing of India to influential people across the world by exposing them to cultural and socio-economic changes taking place in the country. The businesses should share equal responsibility for the skewed trade balance with China, Jaishankar said, blaming India Inc for not developing sufficient sourcing capabilities within the country. Stating that the Government's

flagship 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' initiative pitching for self-reliance is a corrective attempt, Jaishankar warned that "massive external exposure" puts our national security at threat. With some experts, including former RBI Governor Raghuram Rajan pitching India to focus more on services, Jaishankar said neglecting manufacturing will lead to damaging India's "strategic future". In 2022, India-China trade touched USD 135.98 and New Delhi's trade deficit with Beijing crossed the USD 100 billion mark for the first time despite frosty bilateral ties. Termining the challenge posed by the trade imbalance with China as very serious and formidable, the career bureaucrat turned politician said the responsibility here is not just of the government, but it is an equal responsibility of businesses as well. "Indian corporates haven't developed the kind of backward (linkages), vendor supplies, components and parts, ingredients and intermediates that should be supporting us," he said. Acknowledging that the Government is also to be blamed for such a trade imbalance, Jaishankar said the self-reliance motto is a corrective step taken by the administration after the flaws that got exposed during the COVID pandemic. "Atmanirbhar Bharat... it is not a slogan. It is actually a messaging to (the) industry, to people saying, please, what you can source from India, you have an obligation to source, not as a moral obligation. Our national security is at threat if you have this kind of massive external exposure," the career diplomat-turned-politician said.

With schemes like production-linked incentives (PLI), the purpose is to bring back the manufacturing prowess in the country, he said, arguing that a major economy like India cannot be service-centric and neglect manufacturing. "Those who do down manufacturing, they are actually damaging this country's strategic future," he said, adding that significant industrial capacity is a prerequisite for national security requirements. Jaishankar also said that under the previous UPA Government, the country was contemplating signing a free trade agreement with China in 2006 when the ties with Beijing were better and we looked forward to an optimistic future where market access improved. However, India did not get the market access it had hoped to get and also lost out on businesses which moved to China and that too under Chinese ownership, making it a flawed market. He said that there is a "deep strategic intent" behind the "misleading rhetoric" of 'Asia for Asians', and asked all not to fall for what is essentially designed to appeal to "very primitive chauvinism" in people. Asia is growing faster because it is global, and it will continue to grow till it is diverse and multipolar, Jaishankar said, asserting that the responsibility of ensuring the same falls on India. (PTI)

While presenting general budget for 2023-24 in the Parliament on February 1, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman had announced Rs 35,581 crore worth Revenue grants for Jammu and Kashmir and Rs 5958 crore for the Union Territory of Ladakh. The Central grants in the Revised Estimates for ongoing financial year of 2022-23 were hiked by about Rs 9000 crore and pegged at Rs 44538.13 crore. The Government is also expecting significant budgetary allocations for both urban and rural local bodies through spending by the District Development Councils (DDCs), Block Development Councils (BDCs) and Panchayats remain an area of concern. The Central and J&K Governments have been giving special focus to DDC, BDCs and Panchayats ever since elections were held to them. "Healthy grant for DDCs, BDCs and Panchayats will lead to further development in rural areas," sources pointed out. The Union Home Ministry has major say in budget of the Union Territories. This is more so in cases of the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir as it has to spend a lot on Security Related Expenditure (SRE) due to three decades long militancy. "In view of financial discipline maintained by Jammu and Kashmir, the Finance Ministry is expected to increase the budget for next financial year as compared to current fiscal year," sources said but added that the hike would be nominal as J&K's budget has already crossed Rs one lakh crore for the past three years. Describing around Rs 1.2 lakh crore worth budget for Jammu and Kashmir as "quite significant", sources said this will help in boosting infrastructure development across the Union Territory.

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Two high-level meetings in March 1st week before presentation of J&K budget by FM

The Union Finance Minister and the Finance Secretary before being approved," sources said. This will be fourth consecutive budget of Jammu and Kashmir which will be presented in the Parliament in the absence of Legislative Assembly in the Union Territory. Annual budgets of J&K for 2020-21, 2021-22 and 2022-23 were also presented in the Parliament. The budget for 2019-2020 was adopted by the then State Administrative Council (SAC) here while budget of 2018-19 was last to be presented in the Assembly of erstwhile State of Jammu and Kashmir by then Finance Minister Dr Haseeb Drabu before the Government collapsed after withdrawal of support to Mehbooba Mufti-led coalition Government by the BJP in June 2018 followed by withdrawal of special status of erstwhile State of J&K on August 5, 2019 by the Central Government and its bifurcation into two Union Territories. "Till there is an elected Assembly in Jammu and Kashmir, the UT's budgets will continue to be presented in the Parliament," sources said. During current financial year of 2022-23, Jammu and Kashmir was granted Rs 1,12,950 crore worth budget and for next fiscal year of 2023-24 it could go up to Rs 1.2 lakh crore.

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Central schemes made tangible change in development profile of J&K: Yadav

team for organizing mega job fairs across the UT and said that the present dispensation was trying its best to bring Jammu Kashmir on the glorious path of rapid progress and prosperity. He said that the Government is committed to develop J&K and numerous innovative steps are being initiated in this regard. Regarding establishment of 3rd tier of Panchayati Raj system in the UT, Union Minister observed that with the establishment of this vital democratic setup the developmental process has received a big push towards socio economic uplift of common people. Union Minister said that the programme showcases continuous commitment of the Government towards providing job opportunities for the youth. He asserted that this job fair will be a significant step forward towards fulfilling the continuous commitment of Prime Minister of India to provide job opportunities for the youth. District Development Council, Chairperson, Lal Chand, DDC Vice Chairperson, Juhl Manhas Pathania, Principal Secretary Forest, Ecology and Environment, Dheeraj Gupta, Commissioner Secretary, Labour and Employment, Sarita Chauhan, PCCF, Dr Mohit Gera, Deputy Commissioner, Kritika Jyotsna, President MC, Jogeshwar Gupta, SSP, Dr Vinod Kumar and other senior officers of various departments were present on the occasion. The Union Minister also had a round of stalls established by

various Government departments for generating awareness regarding different schemes launched by the Government of India besides exhibiting their respective products. The Minister also interacted with the officers and reviewed the progress on various schemes. He also handed over key under "Mumkin" scheme and disbursement under Tejaswini scheme besides distributing e-Shram cards among the beneficiaries. Around 13 local companies and 1000 unemployed youth of the district have participated in this huge event. Later, Union Minister had an interactive session with District Development Council members and District Officers regarding development and welfare programmes being implemented in the district. DDC Chairperson and Vice Chairperson projected several demands and issues including increase in MGNREGA wages, bringing of Dhar Ladha and Yug Dhar and other places of area on tourism map, disposal of pending liabilities under MGNREGA and 14th FC, clearance of forest issues, land compensation, establishment of wooden depots and their necessary classification under approved rates. Union Minister also laid e-foundation for construction of proposed residential accommodation (2BHK) for District Development Council and PRI members at Birwan, Udhampur. Union Minister also visited Government Higher Secondary School Tikri. He also interacted with the FRA beneficiaries and distributed Sewing Machines and Solar lights under green India mission among the beneficiaries.

Man injured in blast his head and right eye after some unascertained blast occurred while he was digging earth in his kitchen garden. The injured person has been identified as Mohammad Jamal Dar son of Ghulam Mohammad Dar. He was evacuated to a nearby hospital for treatment. "He reportedly has suffered the injuries due to some mysterious blast while digging earth in his kitchen garden in Wapora Sopore," a Medical Officer said adding "After initial treatment he was referred to SKIMS for further treatment."

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Army chief visits Vaishno Devi

After prayers, he returned here and flew back to New Delhi. During his visit to Northern Command headquarters yesterday, the Army chief reviewed security scenario in the hinterland and Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu and Kashmir and operational preparedness of the troops. Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, Feb 23: Army chief Gen Manoj Pandey today visited holy cave shrine of Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Ji and offered prayers. Gen Pandey, who was on a three-day visit to Jammu, visited the cave shrine this morning and offered prayers. Excelsior Correspondent

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