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A Daily Current Awareness Service



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‘3rd phase development of Naval Academy soon’

Vice Admiral A.R. Karve, Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Southern Naval Command, has said the third phase development of the Indian Naval Academy (INA) will start soon.

Talking to reporters at the INA here on Saturday after his address at the passing-out parade of 339 cadets of the Indian Navy and 67 cadets of the Indian Coast Guard, Vice Admiral Karve said the second phase development would soon come to a closure.

“Once we get the necessary approval, activities of the third phase will start,” he announced. To a question, he said the intake of cadets would be increased to 1,800 after the completion of the second phase and 2,700 after the third phase. Stating that the INA provided world-class training facilities which enabled the Navy to successfully mould its cadets, he said India had an advanced capability of construction of modern warships. INS Chennai was commissioned just a few days ago in Mumbai, he said, adding that it was a testimony to the progress made by indigenous shipyards. Existing ships and future warships would be equipped with sophisticated weapons, propulsion, and other systems, he said, adding that the training being imparted at the INA was tailored to offer proficiency to officers to operate and maintain these sophisticated systems.

Asked about the new admission procedure for the selection of cadets for the INA Course (B.Tech.), the Southern Naval Chief said from next year, a joint entrance examination would be the benchmark for selection of cadets.

The decision was taken with the objective of providing a level-playing field to candidates who passed the Plus Two examinations under different State Boards.

In response to a query, the Vice Admiral said the Admiral’s Cup sailing regatta being hosted by the INA had become popular now.

Naval cadets of 24 countries had confirmed participation for the event next month. To a question on proposals for land acquisition for further development of the INA, he said due process of acquisition was being followed.

Acquisition procedure was moving as expected, he added.

MAIL TODAY

Naval officers ‘quitting’ over pay panel advice

In The first and admittedly direct fallout of the seventh pay commission among other issues, the Indian Navy (IN) has admitted to a ‘spike’ witnessed this year in the number of its officers wanting to resign or seek Premature Retirement (PR). Data shows it is the highest in the last seven years. In the leaked note, Commodore Rajesh Dhankar, Principal Director of Personnel, Indian Navy, predicted a continuation in the present trend of ‘increase in the number of PR requests.’

To ‘manage the change’, the Navy is considering a slew of steps. A dialogue has been initiated between the naval headquarters and the three commands in Mumbai, Vizag and Kochi. Those within the force, are seeing this move as a tightening of stance, aimed at stemming the flow and making it more difficult for officers to exit. The cause, according to sources, is the seventh pay commission, the implementation of which was notified in July this year. There has been widespread criticism of the provisions by the Defence veterans.

The three service chiefs too, have represented against many of its clauses before the Prime Minister and the Defence Minister. Insiders believe the provisions to be ‘hurtful’ and say ‘they do not help the cause of

attracting the best talent.’ As a measure of the resistance to the pay commission, Defence Minister Manohar Parrikar had claimed he would ensure the deletion of its recommendations, a move which has not yielded till now. Navy’s data shows till date, in the current year, 135 cases of PR have been received. Compare this to 69 cases in 2015, 91 in 2014, 96 in 2013, 132 in 2012, 122 in 2011, 114 in 2010 and 125 in 2009 and the situation speaks for itself. At present, for seeking PR applications, requests are made between three-twelve months of the intended date of exit.

WHAT THE LEAKED NOTE SAYS

According to the two-page note, one of the factors contributing to the exodus is the aspect of officers being ‘u-graded in the 20th year of service,’ a reference to those who’ve missed their promotions (ranks in the armed forces) after going through three boards. It also states, “The present system of granting PR to officers has been working well since the number of officers opting out of service has been equal to or marginally more than the calculated PR

exits.” Navy is now looking to set up an ‘Annual PR Board’ to balance the exits with requirements on the field. Under the new system, if finalised, outgoing officers will have to apply by March 31 for resigning in the subsequent year i.e if they wish to exit anytime in 2018, they’d have to apply by March 31, 2017. In the month of May, the Annual PR Board would consider these requests and come out with a list of approved resignations by July.

While the Navy did not respond to a set of questions sent, a source said, “We have no problem if officers who see no future in the force want to resign. However, we have to ensure it does not happen in a way that important positions remain unmanned.” Played down the ‘impact’ of resignations, the source said, “This may appear big,

but it is only marginally higher than what we had anticipated. One must understand that when a pay commission is about to be awarded, those who’ve been wanting to go also stay on because one’s pay gets revised and it has a direct fallout on the pension they will draw.” With the pay commission being notified, those waiting have decided to bolt for better opportunities.

According to an assessment shared by a senior officer, “We are getting the numbers. But when we look at the quality, it leaves a lot to be desired. Obviously, we won’t be lowering the bar to accommodate subpar candidates which leaves us with deficiencies.” Many pointed to the consistent woes of armed forces, which have precipitated ugly, public spats, impact impressionable minds as factors keeping youngsters away from choosing the armed forces for a career. This comes at a time when the Navy has been grappling with a 17 per cent shortfall in the number of sanctioned officers.

The Indian Army has an even bigger shortfall at 23 per cent while the Indian Air Force (IAF) is better placed with barely 4 per cent shortfall. This data was submitted by the three services to the seventh pay commission.



Sun, 27 Nov, 2016

Old Kashmir hand Lt General Qamar Javed Bajwa to be new Pakistan army chief

In what could also be of interest to India, Pakistani media reports suggest that Lt Gen Bajwa considers extremism a bigger threat to Pakistan than India.

Lt General Qamar Javed Bajwa of the Baloch regiment, currently serving as the Inspector General of Training and Evaluation in General Headquarters at Rawalpindi, will be the new Pakistan army chief. He will assume charge on Tuesday, the day General Raheel Sharif retires from service.

At a time of frequent skirmishes between India and Pakistan on the Line of Control, the selection of Lt General Bajwa, who is seen as a Kashmir expert, is significant. Lt Gen Bajwa has commanded an infantry battalion and an infantry brigade, and as major general, led the Force Command Northern Areas which is responsible for northern areas of Kashmir, including the Siachen glacier. He then went on to command 10 Corps, Pakistan’s biggest corps.

Apart from appointing Lt Gen Bajwa, Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif on Saturday named Lt General Zubair Hayat as the new Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee (CJCSC).

In what could also be of interest to India, Pakistani media reports suggest that Lt Gen Bajwa considers extremism a bigger threat to Pakistan than India. A senior Pakistan army officer, who served under Lt General Bajwa in 10 Corps, told The Sunday Express that the chief-designate was “not a hardliner”, rather a “simple and straight-forward general who is sensibly bold”.

Lt General Bajwa has another India connection. As a brigadier, he served with the UN peacekeeping mission in Congo as a brigade commander alongside former Indian Army chief General Bikram Singh.

Named CJCS on Saturday, Lt Gen Hayat was believed to be in contention for the army chief post. The other two names doing the rounds were of Bahawalpur Corps Commander Lt Gen Javed Iqbal Ramday and Multan Corps Commander Lt Gen Ishfaq Nadeem.

Like his predecessor General Sharif, Bajwa moves to the top post after serving as Inspector General of Training and Evaluation in Rawalpindi.

General Sharif, who was chosen as army chief in 2014, will become the first Pakistan army chief in more than 20 years to step down on time. Several previous Pakistani military leaders obtained extensions of their three-year terms.



Sun, 27 Nov, 2016

India expects no change in Pak policy with new Army chief

statesman news service

NEW DELHI, 26 NOV: The Indian establishment is not expecting any change in Pakistan's policy of hostility towards India under Lt Gen Qamar Javed Bajwa, who has been named as the new Pakistan Army Chief.

Gen Bajwa is said to be a confidant of outgoing Army chief, Gen Raheel Sharif. It is learnt that Gen Sharif had told Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif in September that he was not interested in extension of his term and that Gen Bajwa should be made the next Army chief in view of his experience in handling sensitive

assignments like Kashmir.

Gen Bajwa is currently serving at the General Head Quarter as Inspector General of Training and Evaluation, the position Gen Sharif held before becoming army chief. He has also commanded the 10 Corps, Pakistan Army's largest, which is responsible for the area along the Line of Control (LoC).

Gen Bajwa has served with a UN mission in Congo as a brigade commander alongside former Indian army chief Gen Bikram Singh, who was also there as a division commander. He is said to be low-key, not attention-seeking and remains well-connected with his troops.

However, Indian policy makers say they would wait and watch how the Pakistan Army behaves under his leadership in the coming days, given the number of ceasefire violations that have taken place from the other side of the LOC this month.

Pakistan has been openly meddling in the affairs of Jammu and Kashmir since the early July killing of separatist leader Burhan Wani. But tension between India and Pakistan increased manifold after the Uri terror attack on an army camp in September, which led India to conduct 'surgical strikes' on terrorist launch pads in Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (POK).

Pakistan, however, continues to deny that any 'surgical strikes' took place in the territory under its control.

It is common knowledge that Pakistan's foreign policy on India, Afghanistan and the United States is not formulated by the civilian government in Islamabad but by the army at the garrison town in Rawalpindi.

Gen Raheel Sharif, a known India biter, started displaying his anti-India stance soon after he took command of the Pakistan Army in November 2013. He is the younger brother of Maj Shabbir Sharif, who died in the western sector during the 1971 war.

US defence logistics deal crawls, Ash Carter's farewell visit to India next month

During Carter's visit, the two sides will discuss the impact of the political transition in Washington on the India-US defence relationship.

Nearly three months after the Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA) between India and the US was signed in the presence of Defence Minister Manohar Parrikar and his American counterpart Ash Carter, the pathbreaking agreement is yet to be operationalised. The agreement allows the Indian and American militaries to access each other's bases for supplies and repairs.

The delay is because the defence ministry has not shared its "points of contact" list with the Pentagon. Ministry sources said a routine bureaucratic process was involved, wherein an accounting standard for the three services is still being worked out. It forms part of the "points of contact" list to be submitted to the Pentagon.

The "points of contact" list is a list of designated officials, with their contact details, to whom the US military would have to send its request for logistics support under LEMOA. The Americans furnished their "points of contact" list at the time the agreement was signed. Senior US government officials told The Sunday Express they were confident of the LEMOA being operationalised, and were not looking at a specific deadline.

Although it has not been officially announced so far, Defence Secretary Carter will be making his farewell visit to India early next month. No progress is, however, expected on the other two pending foundational agreements, the Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement (COMCASA) — formerly known as the Communications and Information Security Memorandum of Agreement (CISMOA) — and Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement (BECA). These agreements allow for the secure exchange of communication between the militaries, and the sharing of geospatial data, respectively. The defence ministry has not shown any interest in the Pentagon's attempts to resume negotiations on these two agreements.

The two sides have, however, been negotiating hard on defining the exact contours of the Major Defence Partner (MDP) status bestowed by the US on India. This is a unique nomenclature created solely for India, and was announced during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to the US in June. During Parrikar's visit to the US in August, he had shared with Carter a non-paper on India's expectations from the MDP status. The two sides have since exchanged multiple notes on the subject and a clear framework on the MDP status — which will allow India to get the latest defence technologies from the US — is expected to emerge during Carter's visit. No official announcement is expected to be made, though.

During Carter's visit, the two sides will discuss the impact of the political transition in Washington on the India-US defence relationship. American officials say that institutional mechanisms created during the Obama administration, such as the DTTI and MDP status, will ensure a healthy relationship between the two countries. They, however, concede that the next defence secretary may not necessarily share the personal chemistry that Carter shares with Parrikar. US officials gave the example of a meeting at the Pentagon, where, they said, Carter, a physics major, used the metaphor of the Zeeman's Paradox to describe the bilateral relationship. While all the other officials were flabbergasted, Parrikar, an IIT graduate, went on to recite the full formula of perspective geometry. The two sides are expected to announce the signing of the much-delayed M777 howitzer deal during Carter's visit. The Rs 5,000 crore deal, which has been approved by the Cabinet Committee on Security, and for which funds were sanctioned by the finance ministry earlier this month, envisages the procurement of 145 heli-portable artillery guns, which will be assembled in India. This will be the first induction of artillery guns in the Army since the ill-fated 155 mm Bofors guns in the 1980s.