

# समाचार पत्रों से चयित अंश Newspapers Clippings

दैनिक सामयिक अभिज्ञता सेवा

**A Daily Current Awareness Service**



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## **Modi asks MoD to set up theatre commands**

Seeking to bring in major reforms in the country's defence forces, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has asked the Ministry of Defence to initiate steps towards creating theatre commands for the military. Under theatre commands, all the troops and resources of the three forces—Army, Navy and Air Force—would be combined and put under the command of one officer, who would be from either of the three services. At the combined commanders conference headed by the Prime Minister, the Integrated Defence Staff, under the Defence Ministry, was asked to prepare a roadmap for theatre commands and new initiatives would be taken by this yearend, senior Defence Ministry sources told India Today.

The three services had made a detailed presentation to the Prime Minister at the conference, which was held recently. As part of defence reforms, the government is also appointing a new four star general to look after the issues related to the three services. All these structures would be provided in the roadmap by the military officers under the guidance of political leadership, the sources stated. At the conference, the IAF had raised questions over the command structure and equipment integration under the theatre commands.

However, the need for new military structures were recognised.

*Sat, 11 Feb, 2017*

## **'Make in India' To Figure Prominently At Aero India**

As the Government is striving to boost the nascent defence industry, 'Make in India' policy will figure prominently during the five-day international aerospace exhibition Aero India 2017 starting February 14 in Bengaluru. Nearly 500 companies, including 279 foreign and 270 Indian ones, will take part in the biennial event that is held since 1996.

With the focus on medium and small scale industries, the exhibition will have seminars on the problems faced by Indian entrepreneurs. Several countries will also participate in discussions organised by three prominent industrial bodies including Confederation of Indian Industries(CII), Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce(FICCI) and Punjab, Haryana and Delhi(PHD) chamber of industry.

Moreover, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat and Kerala are setting up exclusive SEZ pavilions for attracting investment. Defence Minister Manohar Parrikar will inaugurate the exhibition on February 14 in which more than 51 countries including US, UK, France, Israel, Russia, Sweden and South Africa are some of the 51 countries taking part in the expo. Many companies will also display their frontline planes and 72 aircraft from different countries will be on display. Moreover, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat and Kerala are setting up exclusive SEZ pavilions for attracting investment, defence ministry officials said here on Friday.

Defence Ministers and top officials of many countries including UK will represent their respective industries. British Defence Minister Harriett Baldwin will lead her delegation at Aero India as Britain and India focus on partnership, collaboration, investment and technology transfer, UK government officials said here.

In all, 65 delegates comprising Ministers of Defence, Service Chiefs including IAF and Indian Army chiefs, heads of department from Bahrain, Bangladesh, Brazil, Brunei, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Egypt, France, Germany, Indonesia, Israel, Japan, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, Nigeria, Oman, Seychelles, Sri Lanka, Sudan, South Africa, Sweden, Switzerland, Tanzania, Thailand, Turkey, the UAE, the UK, USA and Uzbekistan have confirmed their presence.

## A shot in the arm for defence acquisition

*Govt. moots new procurement body to simplify the purchase procedure*

The government plans to set up a Defence Procurement Organisation (DPO) to integrate and streamline the long and arduous process of defence acquisitions.

A government appointed committee, headed by former Director of Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Lucknow, Dr. Pritam Singh, has submitted a report on the modalities of setting up the DPO to Defence Minister Manohar Parrikar on Thursday.

“The aim is not to create another bureaucracy. The DPO will be a vertical under the Defence Ministry and the philosophy is to integrate the processes,” defence sources said on Friday.

The Defence Procurement Process, which applies to all defence capital procurements, has been modified several times to bring in transparency and speed up acquisitions but it continues to be lengthy and complicated.

Observing that the main motive of the procurement process should be to create an engine of growth, sources said: “In the present system the focus on development is low key while production process is mostly with the Defence Public Sector Undertakings (DPSU). There is no match between the capabilities of the two.”

“The report has just been submitted and is being studied. The time frame is about 2-3 years for the structures to fall in place,” sources stated.

More power

In a related move to shorten the procurement cycle, the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS), chaired by the Prime Minister earlier this week, has increased the financial powers of the Defence Minister.

In the past, the Defence Minister was entitled to clear deals up to 500 crore, which has now gone up to 2,000 crore. Jointly, the Finance Minister, the Defence Minister can approve projects up to 3,000 crore, up from the earlier 1,000 crore. The Defence Secretary too has now been given financial powers upto 500 crore to clear deals. This ensures that a major chunk of the procurements are approved within the Ministries, sources said. About 70% of the deals by number are below 3,000 crore. So now only deals of 3,000 crore and above would go to the CCS for approval.

## SAAB offers Maritime Gripen to Indian Navy

Swedish aircraft manufacturer SAAB plans to offer the maritime variant of its Gripen single engine fighter jet in response to the Navy's tender for 57 carrier-based aircraft.

Last month, the government had issued a Request for Information (RFI) “to procure approximately 57 Multi-Role Carrier Borne Fighters (MRCBF) for the aircraft carriers of the Indian Navy.”

“Gripen is in the process of responding to the RFI for maritime aircraft,” Tony Ogilvy, Head of Marketing of Gripen Maritime, said on Friday.

The maritime variant of Gripen is based on the latest Gripen-E variant, however there is no flying prototype yet. “We have a certified design for the Gripen-M. We have to now go into prototype building now,” he stated.

Specific requirements

The aircraft is capable of both Catapult Assisted Take-Off But Arrested Recovery (CATOBAR) and Short Take-Off But Arrested Recovery (STOBAR) operations, Mr. Ogilvy said. This is a requirement specified by

the Navy. In addition, the Gripen-M has a small footprint similar to that of a Sea Harrier, which he said means “a full squadron can easily embark on a medium sized aircraft carrier.”

The RFI did not specify if the Navy wants a single or twin engine aircraft leaving the contest open.



Sat, 11 Feb, 2017

## MoD posts to be manned by armed services identified

By Ajay Banerjee

### Swedish firm offers to set up facility

- Swedish defence manufacturer Saab on Friday said it could set up a world-class fighter jet production facility in India if it was selected by the Ministry of Defence for the job
- The MoD is about to select a foreign manufacturer, which will partner an Indian company to produce a fighter jet that will replace MiG-21 series of jets over 8-10 years

Almost 17 years after the Kargil Review Committee (KRC) spoke about integration of the armed forces personnel with the Ministry of Defence (MoD), the ministry now wants subject experts from the three services on crucial posts presently manned by the bureaucracy.

This is part of the ongoing integration-cum-restructuring exercise in the MoD. The exercise has four clear dimensions—right-sizing of manpower to cut down growing costs of salaries and pensions; integrating the services with the MoD; speeding up procurement of new weapons and balancing the budget to provide more for firepower.

Sources said an internal committee of the MoD today submitted its observations on what all could be implemented towards right-sizing suggested by the high-powered Lt Gen DB Committee. A report of the Shekatkar committee was submitted to Defence Minister Manohar Parrikar on December 21 last year. It talks about enhancing the combat potential of the armed forces and re-balancing the defence expenditure. It has recommended a series of measures to trim, redeploy and integrate manpower under the MoD to have an effective military. The committee has laid down a path to reduce expenses by Rs 25,000 crore over the next five-years.

For integration of the services, the MoD has identified several posts at the middle level in the ministry that can be manned by officers from the three armed forces—the Army, the IAF and the Navy. “These people will be subject and domain experts on equipment,” said a senior functionary.

On speeding up procurement, yesterday a committee headed by Dr Pritam Singh (former Director IIM-Lucknow) submitted its report on setting up of a defence procurement organisation. This will shorten the lengthy procurement process that takes years to identify what all is needed.

## THE ASIAN AGE

Sat, 11 Feb, 2017

## India seeks foolproof nuclear agreements

A three-day conference on nuclear terrorism concluded in the city, with the external affairs ministry emphasising on ratification of international treaties relevant to nuclear security. “The 2017 edition of the Implementation and Assessment Group (IAG) Meeting of the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism (GICNT) concluded successfully,” the ministry said.

“Some of the important themes that were discussed during the IAG meeting... include radioactive source security, sustainability, strengthening institutional knowledge and challenges encountered in adopting and implementing national legislation involving radioactive and nuclear material,” it said.

“In his concluding address, R.B Grover, member, Atomic Energy Commission of India, highlighted the importance of proliferation resistant technological options that contribute to nuclear security,” the ministry said. “In particular, he urged the GICNT to focus on the security of radio-isotopes that could be separated from spent fuel.” The MEA said India’s hosting of the 2017 meeting of the IAG reflects its strong and continued support to global nuclear nonproliferation and peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

China, which has been blocking India’s bid to join the Nuclear Suppliers Group, maintains its tough stand on the issue and calls for a two-step “non-discriminatory” solution.



*Sat, 11 Feb, 2017*

## **China’s Imperial Designs under Sovereignty Guise**

*By Makhan Saikia*

The way US President Donald Trump is handling Xi’s China has raised hackles of his party men. The ties between the two nuclear-armed countries could rapidly deteriorate into an economic or even military confrontations if compromise on issues, including trade, Taiwan and the SCS, cannot be found. China’s grand imperial designs have no end, probably. With Xi Jinping, the country has certainly bolstered its claim over more and more territories, including the ones in the most controversial chain of islands in the South China Sea (SCS). It is nothing new for China as it has been claiming its ownership and control over the entire SCS islands. But what came as a rude shock to the international community, particularly to the nations around the SCS, was Beijing’s swift move to construct artificial islands in the disputed areas. It caused tremors in Malaysia, Philippines, Indonesia, Thailand, Brunei and Vietnam. All of them looked for an immediate intervention by the US and the other regional powers, like Japan, so as to contain China’s aggressive expansionist agenda. But then President Barack Obama maintained a feeble stance on China’s sovereignty claims. The Obama Administration did not recognise any ownership of the islands and asserted that these are international water, and, therefore, China alone cannot have its sole right to either occupy or claim them altogether. But then finally the US sent the USS Decatur, a warship into the area in the last October near the most disputed Paracel Islands, calling it as the “freedom of navigation exercises”. The White House said it was to “demonstrate lawful uses of the sea that the United States and all States are entitled to exercise under international law”.

Ironically, what the international community had witnessed was reassertion by Beijing and coming up with more construction activities in controversial islands. Meanwhile, China accused the US of an illegal act and of being “intentionally provocative”. Since then what brought the Chinese authorities to international attention was the Philippines’ successful attempt to drag the former to the UN special tribunal at The Hague. The Tribunal recognised the claims made by the Philippines and said, “China’s ‘nine-dash line’ had no foundation under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)”. The Tribunal also declared that China had supported activities that infringe on the Philippines’ rights to stock fish and preserve marine environment.

Another remarkable judgment was given by the Tribunal regarding UNCLOS Article 121, which says that any island that can sustain human habitation or economic life is entitled to claim a 200 nautical mile exclusive economic zone and continental shelf. The Tribunal clearly said that none of the contested islands in the SCS, including the Spratly Islands and the Scarborough Shoals, are islands under Article 121. But the Tribunal did not make any judgments over issues pertaining to contested territorial claims by several nations. However, China reacted strongly to the Tribunal’s verdict and said that it will not be bound by the same. To Beijing, these island chains are its own lands and, therefore, it does not need any one’s permission or verdict to conduct



any activity out there. Further, to the leadership in China, it is just asserting its sovereign territorial claims in the SCS and nothing else.

Now as the Philippines has complained that China may try to build on a reef the former's coast. Delfin Lorenzana, the Defence Secretary of the Philippines, claimed that China's actions would be unacceptable in the flashpoint waterway. And, he strongly believes that China would eventually reclaim the Scarborough Shoal, which is just 230 kilometre from the main Philippine island of Luzon. This is adding fuel to the fire in the SCS zone. Why China is adopting this new offensive? Is it planning to demonstrate to Donald Trump that Chinese claims of sovereignty over the SCS will remain unchanged?

It seems China is on its regular course of action whether it is the SCS or any other controversial territorial claims the nation has been making over decades. Of course, with Xi, Beijing has expanded its globetrotting campaign and shaken the entire continent. To some, China's latest move may have been inspired by Trump's nominee for the post of the Secretary of the State in January, Rex Tillerson, that China should be barred from artificial islands it has built in the SCS. He also said that China's control and construction of artificial islands in waters claimed by neighbouring countries was "akin to Russia's taking of Crimea". In a first response to Tillerson's comment, China's Foreign Ministry emphasised the importance of mutual respect and cooperation with the US. Nevertheless, Lu Kang Lu, one of the spokesmen of the ministry, hinted at some hope and said that China-US relations are based on "non-confrontation, non-conflict, mutual benefit and win-win cooperation". China has restrained from taking a tough stand against the Trump Administration so far. But all indications are that China's attitude rightly demonstrates its control over the SCS as a foregone conclusion. If America takes up a military venture, then only it can stop China from the SCS. And it is unlikely to happen. Then, how Tillerson will move forward, remains a mystery. For, Xi, he will maintain calm as he is winding down his first term by the end of the year and the party top guns are locked in a power struggle to appoint their allies in the new Cabinet. But, Xi is not likely to be seen as weak at all.

Naysayers, activists, globalists, leaders from various parts and finally, of course the Democrats, and some of Trump's own partymen are concerned about the way Trump is handling Xi's China. Some of the world's leading China experts bring home startling facts about the future of the US-China relations. A report submitted by the group to the White House on February 5 highlights that the ties between the two nuclear-armed countries could rapidly deteriorate into an economic or even military confrontations if compromise on issues, including trade, Taiwan and the SCS, cannot be found.

However, the boisterous language that the Trump Administration used for China will not help de-escalate the tension between the two global powers. What Evan Medeiros, one of Obama's top advisers on Asia, says reflects the chances of possible damage in the bilateral relations: "You can't do everything simultaneously. You can't pick a fight with China on Taiwan, on trade, on North Korea and the South China Sea at the same time. It simply won't work. You'll just end up in a big fight with China that doesn't produce anything for the United States".

Though the current situation is "somewhere between uncertain and very worried" as Medeiros echoed, there is some glimmers of hope from Trump. Being a billionaire businessman, he will have to understand the global and regional realities wherein interests of both America and China lie together. He and his establishment must see to it that China is not pushed and pressed too far. If this happens at all, neither China nor America will be benefitted. Hope, Trump realises it sooner. *The writer is Senior Editor, The Pioneer)*



*Sat, 11 Feb, 2017*

## **Pakistan kicks off 37-nation naval drill**

Islamabad: Pakistan kicked off a naval exercise with 36 countries including the US, Russia, China and the UK in the Arabian Sea off the coast of Karachi on Friday morning. Aman-17 is the fifth such exercise that Pakistan

has organised every alternate year since 2007. It includes search and rescue operations, gunnery drills, anti-piracy demonstrations, replenishment at sea and maritime counter-terrorism demonstrations.

A Pakistan navy spokesman said the drill aimed to demonstrate the allied nations' capabilities to fight terrorism and maritime threats and to provide a platform for participants to hone their skills, and build cooperation.

PM Nawaz Sharif said Pakistan, being a major stakeholder in maritime security of the Arabian Sea, is fully committed to ensuring freedom of navigation and lawful maritime order.



Sat, 11 Feb, 2017

## PRESENCE OF CARBON, NITROGEN, OXYGEN AND HYDROGEN

# White dwarf star discovered

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Los Angeles, 10 February

Scientists, using NASA's Hubble space telescope, have discovered a white dwarf star about 200 light-years from the Earth, whose atmosphere is rich in the building blocks for life - carbon, nitrogen, oxygen and hydrogen, the components of water.

Researchers from the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) in the US said that a minor planet in the planetary system was orbiting around the white dwarf and its trajectory was somehow altered, perhaps by the gravitational pull of a planet in the same system.



That change caused the minor planet to travel very close to the white dwarf, where the star's strong gravitational field ripped the minor planet apart into gas and dust.

Those remnants went into orbit around the white dwarf much like the rings around Saturn, said Benjamin Zucker-

man from UCLA - before eventually spiraling onto the star itself, bringing with them the building blocks for life.

Zuckerman said the study presents evidence that the planetary system associated with the white dwarf contains materials that are the basic building blocks for life.

Although the study focused on this particular star - known as WD 1425+540 - the fact that its planetary system shares characteristics with our solar system strongly suggests that other planetary systems would also.

"The findings indicate that some of life's important preconditions are common in the universe," said Zuckerman.

The researchers think these events occurred relatively recently, perhaps in the past 100,000 years or so, said Edward Young from UCLA.

They estimate that about 30 per cent of the minor planet's mass was water and other ices, and approximately 70 per cent was rocky material.



Sat, 11 Feb, 2017

## First-of-its-kind Braille atlas launched

The Ministry of Science and Technology has come up with a comprehensive Braille atlas to help the nearly 50 lakh visually-challenged people in the country, especially students.

Each atlas, which will cost nearly 600, will include 20 maps on different themes — physical, socio-economic, river system, crop pattern, natural vegetation, cultural, metropolitan areas, and roads and railways.

**Attention to detail**

“This is the first time that a comprehensive atlas has been prepared for the visually-challenged with attention to minute details. The atlas has been developed in Hindi and English by the National Atlas and Thematic Mapping Organisation (NATMO), Kolkata,” said Tapti Banerjee, NATMO director.

Made using indigenously developed silk-screen painting technology, the atlas was released by Union Minister for Science and Technology Harsh Vardhan on Friday. According to Mr. Vardhan, the government intended to give some free copies to institutes teaching visually impaired students.

### **Tactile maps**

The maps are embossed with simple lines and point symbols while the area coverage is easily distinguishable in terms of shapes and textures. The NATMO, meanwhile, was awarded by Prime Minister Narendra Modi at this year’s Indian Science Congress held at Tirupati. It has also prepared Braille maps for West Bengal and Meghalaya in Bengali and English, respectively. Also, the institute has also been asked to come up with State maps in English and regional languages by Assam, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and Gujarat.