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एलओसी पर पहुंचे रक्षा मंत्री जवानों का बढ़ाया हौसला

राज्य ब्यूरो, श्रीनगर : रक्षा मंत्री अरुण जेटली ने शुक्रवार को उत्तरी कश्मीर में एलओसी पर पहुंचकर सेना का हौसला बढ़ाया। इस मौके पर रक्षा मंत्री ने सेना की युद्धक तैयारियों पर संतोष जताया। साथ ही जवानों को दुश्मन की हर साजिश का करारा जवाब देने को कहा। केंद्रीय वित्त व रक्षा मंत्री बुधवार से जम्मू-कश्मीर के दौरे पर हैं। वह श्रीनगर में जीएसटी परिषद की बैठक में हिस्सा लेने गए हैं। बुधवार को उन्होंने श्रीनगर स्थित बादामी बाग सैन्य मुख्यालय में थलसेना प्रमुख जनरल बिपिन रावत व उत्तरी कमान प्रमुख के साथ हालात का जायजा लिया था।

शुक्रवार सुबह रक्षा मंत्री ने उत्तरी कश्मीर में एलओसी के साथ सटे कई अग्रिम इलाकों का हवाई मुआयना किया। इसके बाद उन्होंने उड़ी सेक्टर के रामपुर सब सेक्टर में एक अग्रिम चौकी पर सेना के अधिकारियों व जवानों के साथ बैठक की। इसी सब सेक्टर में करीब दस दिन पहले घुसपैठ का एक बड़ा प्रयास हुआ था, जिसे जवानों ने नाकाम बनाया था।



रक्षा मंत्री अरुण जेटली ने शुक्रवार को उत्तरी कश्मीर में एलओसी पर पहुंचकर सैन्य तैयारियों का जायजा लिया • प्रेद

सेना के जवान और अधिकारी जिन हालात में सरहदों की हिफाजत कर रहे हैं, उन्हें पूरा देश समझता है। देश का प्रत्येक नागरिक इसके लिए उनका आभारी है और वह उनके पीछे एक मजबूत ढाल की तरह खड़ा है।

-अरुण जेटली, रक्षा मंत्री

रक्षा मंत्री के साथ चिनार कोर कमांडर लेफ्टिनेंट जनरल जेएस संधु भी थे।

रामपुर सब सेक्टर में जीओसी बारामुला डिवीजन मेजर जनरल जेएस कलिता ने उन्हें उत्तरी कश्मीर में एलओसी के मौजूदा हालात, सरहद पार जारी गतिविधियों व घुसपैठ से निपटने की तैयारियों से अवगत कराया। इस दौरान रक्षा मंत्री ने जवानों व अधिकारियों को संबोधित किया। उनके साथ चाय पर चर्चा करते हुए उनके अनुभव भी सुने। जेटली ने जवानों की समस्याओं का भी संज्ञान लिया।

THE TIMES OF INDIA

Army again pushes for its very own air force

By Rajat Pandit

The Army has now strongly revived its old quest for a “mini air force“ of its own, in a move that has been bitterly opposed by the IAF in the past. The force wants three squadrons of heavy-duty attack helicopters, among other choppers, for its three primary “strike“ corps geared for rapid armoured thrusts into enemy territory .

For starters, the 1.3-million strong Army is seeking the government's approval for acquisition of 11 Apache attack helicopters from the US as “a follow-on contract” to the earlier Rs 13,952 crore deal inked for 22 such choppers for the IAF. “The procurement proposal is likely to be considered by the defence acquisitions council (DAC) in its meeting to be chaired by defence minister Arun Jaitley on Saturday,” said a defence ministry source. The Army is in a hurry because the “50% repeat order option”, with the same terms and conditions, can be exercised only till September 28 since the original contract was inked on that date in 2015. One part of that “hybrid” deal had been inked with Boeing for the choppers, while the other for its weapons, radars and electronic warfare suites was signed with the US government. Apart from the 22 Apaches to be delivered to IAF from July 2019 onwards, the contract also involves acquisition of 812 AGM-114L-3 Hellfire Longbow missiles, 542 AGM-114R-3 Hellfire-II missiles, 245 Stinger Block I-92H missiles and 12 AN APG-78 fire-control radars.

Even during the procurement process for the 22 Apaches, the Army had demanded their “ownership and control” because helicopter gunships are used as the “air manoeuvre arm” of ground forces to target enemy infantry and tanks the world over. The Army believes it should have “full command and control” over “tactical air assets” for rapid deployment along with its strike corps, while the IAF should concentrate on its “larger strategic role”.

The IAF, in turn, had contended it should retain all attack and medium-lift helicopters because it would be “very expensive” if the Army duplicated efforts and resources by getting its own “little air force”.

THE ASIAN AGE

Sat, 20 May, 2017

Indian firms to build military firepower soon

Top defence body clears policy which allows local firms to manufacture equipment through foreign partnerships.

New Delhi: India has finalised its much-awaited defence policy to allow local private firms to build — through long-term foreign partnerships — high-tech equipment like submarines, fighter aircrafts and armoured vehicles.

The strategic partnership model, whose “broad contours” were finalised by the Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) on Saturday, may get the Cabinet’s approval this month itself, in a boost to the Centre’s effort to cut reliance on imports in matters of national security.

The defence ministry’s apex procurement panel, which usually meets once a month, has now met twice in a week, in a clear indication of the government’s keenness to push through the critical policy.

Saturday’s two-hour deliberations, chaired by defence minister Arun Jaitley, reviewed ongoing acquisitions of military hardware and finalised “the broad contours of a policy aimed at engaging the Indian private sector in the manufacture of high-tech defence equipment in India”.

The model is a government-led effort for a transparent and competitive process to seek technology transfers and manufacturing know-how and set up domestic manufacturing infrastructure and supply chains.

Foreign manufacturers such as Lockheed Martin, Boeing, BAE Systems and Saab are looking to India as one of the biggest sources of future growth. India is forecast to spend \$250 billion on modernisation of its armed forces over the next decade.

A defence ministry power-point presentation on the subject says that while six Indian strategic partners will be shortlisted for each segment, preferably two or more global original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) will be identified for each segment. This will happen concurrently. “Even if one OEM is shortlisted, the process will be taken forward”, the document says.

As of now, the policy is expected to be implemented in three segments — fighter aircraft, submarines and armoured vehicles. However, the defence ministry may “add more segments or subdivide the existing ones as the model matures”.

Finally, only one strategic partner will be selected per segment to maintain focus on core areas. While selecting the strategic partner, aspects like “willful default, debt restructuring and non-performing assets”, besides the technical and financial requisites, will be considered.

In the final run, the selection will be based on a combination of price bids and segment-specific capabilities of the companies, says the document prepared after extensive stakeholder consultations with the Indian industry.

On the other hand, the degree of willingness of an OEM to conduct Transfer of Technology (ToT) to its Indian partner will be the main criterion in deciding whether the foreign company can qualify to partner an Indian company to manufacture military equipment.

In evaluating ToT, considerations will include “range, depth and scope of technology transfer offered in identified areas, extent of indigenous content proposed, extent of eco-system of Indian vendors/manufacturers proposed, measures to support strategic partnership in establishing systems for integration of platforms, plans to train skilled manpower, and extent of future research and development planned in India”, the presentation said.

The other critical criterion to be considered will be the willingness of the foreign company to help develop an ecosystem in India.



Sat, 20 May, 2017

An energy boost for Indian firms

The 10 new nuclear plants could help India meet climate goals

India has stopped worrying and come to love the reactor, again. After several years of a policy tangle that was messy even by Indian standards, nuclear power is set to make a return. The Narendra Modi government’s decision to authorise the construction of 7,000 MW of new Indian reactor capacity will have multiple benefits. The first is to pump ~700 billion of capital expenditure into the economy at a time when private investment continues to flag. The second is to revive India’s moribund domestic nuclear industry. The real victim of the last government’s flawed nuclear liability law was the dozen or so Indian firms that made reactor components had to more or less shut shop because of the law’s effect on them. This negligence was little short of criminal given the effort taken to create this capability in the teeth of decades of sanctions. The third is to help India ramp up its renewable baseload power capacity – the kind of power that solar and wind cannot provide. This is essential to New Delhi’s ability to fulfil its carbon emission commitments under the Paris climate agreement as well as maintain high rates of economic growth.

Finally, though the present plan seems to be to build 10 700 MW reactors, the sheer amount of money involved gives India’s domestic nuclear firms to scale up their designs and potentially break the 1,000 MW barrier, a long-standing goal of the indigenous nuclear industry. The decisions, however, indicates that the far more ambitious plans that had followed by the US lifting of nuclear sanctions against India have been temporarily shelved. The original idea had been to leverage the domestic nuclear industry’s ability to manufacture reactor components that were a third cheaper than the global norm and make India a global hub of nuclear reactor technology and manufacturing.

A necessary element of that was for India to learn how to manufacture large reactors – in the 1,000 MW plus range – through foreign partnerships and imported reactors. The liability law, however, put that original plan in the freezer and then began to destroy India’s indigenous nuclear capacity as well. The present decision represents a return to nuclear basics for India. Given the uncertainty that afflicts the energy sector worldwide in terms of pricing, climate and fuel choice, it probably makes sense to opt for a tried-and-tested nuclear path for the time being.

Pre-2006 Army retirees to get disability aid

By Vijay Mohan

Years after multiple judicial pronouncements and strictures by courts, the Ministry of Defence (MoD) today issued orders authorising disability pension to those who had sought pre-mature retirement prior to 2006.

In 2004, the Delhi High Court had deprecated the MoD rule that prohibited grant of disability and war injury benefits to premature retirees. Similar orders were passed by the Punjab and Haryana High Court and later upheld by the SC.

In 2009, the MoD issued a letter authorising disability benefits to voluntary retirees but had restricted its applicability to only post-2006 retirees. The cut-off date of 2006 was also struck down by the Principal as well as Chandigarh Benches of the Armed Forces Tribunal and the decision was reinforced in 2014 by a Division Bench of the Punjab and Haryana High Court headed by Justice Hemant Gupta. The MoD, however, continued to refuse benefits to affected disabled personnel, except those who approached courts.

In November 2015, a committee of experts constituted by then Defence Minister, Manohar Parrikar, to reduce litigation in the armed forces come down heavily on the MoD for indulging in filing frivolous appeals against its employees, including disabled soldiers. The panel specifically recommended the removal of the prohibition once it had been struck down by courts. The committee stated that the denial of benefits was based upon a “false foundation, wrong inputs and unethical propaganda”.

MAIL TODAY

Sat, 20 May, 2017

19 EU nations to pay for joint army projects

EU MEMBER states will pay for joint military “projects” in a move previously opposed by Britain, a senior EU official has revealed.

The cash would form part of Franco-German efforts to develop a more integrated European defence to respond to threats on Europe’s borders.

Nineteen countries, including France, Germany, Italy and

Spain, will start talks next month on the so-called Cooperative Financial Mechanism, or CFM, which could be running sometime next year, said the Brussels official in a briefing to EU defence ministers. Britain, which has voted to leave the bloc, had long opposed such defence integration, fearing the development of an EU army.

The fund would be the third part of a financing plan involving a proposed research facility led by the European Commission, the EU executive, and money from the EU’s common budget for defence. The commission could also pay into the fund. “This is about liquidity. Too often, projects cannot get off the ground or are delayed because countries don’t have

the money available,” the official said. “This would ring-fence funds especially for defence.”

The steps, if agreed, would mark the biggest EU defence funding and research plan in more than a decade to reverse billions in cuts and send a message to the US that Europe wants to pay for its own security.

Daily Mail

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Sat, 20 May, 2017

Chinese jets intercept US plane over East China Sea

Routine Mission: US military says its aircraft was designed to detect radiation

Washington: Two Chinese SU-30 aircraft carried out what the US military described as an “unprofessional” intercept of an American aircraft designed to detect radiation while it was flying in international airspace over the East China Sea. “The issue is being addressed with China through appropriate diplomatic and military channels,” said Air Force spokeswoman Lieutenant Colonel Lori Hodge.

She said the US characterization of the incident was based on initial reports from the US aircrew aboard the WC-135 Constant Phoenix aircraft “due to the manoeuvres by the Chinese pilot, as well as the speeds and

proximity of both aircraft.” “Distances always have a bearing on how we characterize interactions,” Hodge said, adding a U.S. military investigation into the intercept was underway.

She said the WC-135 was carrying out a routine mission at the time and was operating in accordance with international law. Chinese foreign ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying declined to comment on the specific incident and referred questions to the defence ministry which has yet to comment.

“For a long time US ships and aircraft have been carrying out close up surveillance of China which can really easily cause misunderstandings or misjudgments or cause unexpected incidents at sea or in the air,” she said. “We hope that the US side can respect China’s reasonable security concerns. “But as for this question you have raised and are concerned about, we need to understand and check what was the actual situation on the scene,” she said. On February 8, a US Navy P-3 spy plane and a Chinese military aircraft came close to each other over the South China Sea in an incident the Navy saw as unsafe but also inadvertent. Reuters reported the aircraft came within 1,000 feet of each other in the vicinity of the Scarborough Shoal, between the Philippines and the Chinese mainland. China is deeply suspicious of any US military activity in the resource-rich South China Sea, parts of which are disputed by China and its smaller neighbours including the Philippines, Vietnam and Malaysia.



Sat, 20 May, 2017

Japan scrambles jets over China exercise

Tokyo: Japan scrambled fighter jets on Thursday after four Chinese coastguard vessels entered what Japan considers its territorial waters near disputed East China Sea islets and a drone-like object flew near one ship, Japan said.

Japan and China have long been at loggerheads over the tiny, uninhabited islands, called the Senkaku in Japan and Diaoyu in China. They are controlled by Japan but claimed also by China.

“This is escalating the situation and absolutely unacceptable,” defence minister Tomomi Inada told a news conference on Friday, referring to the incursion and drone flight.

In Beijing, Chinese foreign ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying said the drone had been released by “relevant media” for aerial photography, rather than by the coast guard, but did not name the organisation. “As the islands are Chinese territory, China has every right to carry out normal coast guard patrols there,” she said.



Sat, 20 May, 2017

GSLV: too late for changing times

By Madhumathi D.S

‘It may be ISRO’s short-lived rocket, not its primary satellite vehicle as planned’

The GSLV space vehicle’s quiet but laudable success earlier this month could be a small solace that has come too late for the Indian Space Research Organisation.

The late bloomer may even be a short-lived intermediate rocket instead of being ISRO’s primary satellite vehicle as it was planned, as a few ISRO old-timers and industry watchers privately suggest.

Adds to reliability

Its fine feat of putting the South Asia Satellite perfectly to space on May 5 no doubt adds to the GSLV’s reliability. But ISRO actually needed this achievement at least a good decade ago, when it was still building and using 2,000-2,500-kg communication spacecraft for its own use.

The GSLV was conceived in the early 1990s to launch Indian communication satellites of 2,000-kg class to an initial and later adjusted distance from Earth, called the 'GTO' (geosynchronous transfer orbit). This rocket took about 25 years and 11 flights to be fully realised. GSLV F-09 of May 5 was the fourth to click in a row.

The GSLV is caught in a glaring mismatch: it cannot lift India's bigger satellites; and the size that it can lift is out of fashion and does not make economic sense.

As to why the GSLV could not rise sooner to the occasion, the external geopolitical reasons beyond the agency are well known now.

While ISRO was perfecting the GSLV and falling behind schedule with the rocket's crucial cryogenic stage, it progressed on the spacecraft side and upgraded the communication satellites to 3,000-plus kg in 2005. This was done to pack more punch (or transponders) per spacecraft. It would be roughly 24 regular transponders for 2,000 kg; 36 transponders for 3,000 kg and 48 transponders in a four-tonner.

Replying to a query from The Hindu, Gagan Agrawal, analyst with the U.S.-based space industry consulting firm Northern Sky Research, said: "The communications satellite market is consistently looking at payload sizes greater than four tonnes and the question remains whether the GSLV or [the bigger] MKIII can cater to the market [yet.]"

Not many customers

ISRO's smaller PSLV rocket has made a niche in the world market for light lifts. For the GSLV, there may not be many commercial customers requiring its service.



Sat, 20 May, 2017

Book donations 'save' 878 trees in a month

By Manash Gohain

The Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan might not have expected such a response when it urged its students at the start of the 2017 academic session to give their used textbooks to juniors in an initiative meant to save paper and reduce cost of schooling. In just over a month, the Kendriya Vidyalaya students "donated" 2.5 lakh books, spurring the school organisation to think of making the exercise more systematic for all its students. At the end of April, the total number of books passed down to juniors stood at 2,58,385. The Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan calculated that with the average weight of one book being around 200 grams, the donated books would weigh 51,677 kg. A ton of paper requires 17 trees to be felled. "So under this initiative, around 878 trees have been saved in the month of April alone," claimed Santosh Kumar Mall, commissioner, KVS.

Speaking about the initiative, Mall said that students promoted to higher classes had been urged to pass on their textbooks to the juniors who required them. He said it was heartening to see such a good response to the initiative. "We saw this as not only being financially helpful to many, but it would also help save paper. We have around 12 lakh students studying in 1,000 Kendriya Vidyalayas," said Mall.

KVS is planning a more organised way to take forward the initiative from the next session by involving more students. "We want to do this on bigger scale so that more students are benefited and more trees are saved," said Mall. Students and parents, however, had one concern - would NCERT improve the quality of the textbooks so that they could be used by students over three or four years? A student who accepted some books from a senior said, "If the printing and paper quality of the books are improved further, even I will be able to hand down these books to my juniors. At present, however, I don't think this textbook can be used for more than two years."

Students like him recognise the benefits to both the environment and to students from underprivileged families when old books are re-used year after year, as this scheme aims to do.