

Sun, 24 Sept, 2017

(Online)

Sitharaman sees fire power of Arjun tank in Pokhran

Jaisalmer: Defence minister Nirmala Sitharaman witnessed the firing capability of 155 MM ATAGS (Advanced Towed Artillery Gun System) gun developed indigenously for the Indian Army that can hit a target at a long distance, on Saturday at Khetolai area in Pokhran field firing range in Jaisalmer.

Prior to this, she took feedback about the gun from DRDO and Kaveri group company. Army Chief General Vipin Rawat, senior scientists of DRDO and other officers were present on the occasion.

The minister also saw the firing capability of upgraded Arjun Mark 2 developed by DRDO.

Sitharaman and Army Chief General Vipin Rawat reached Jaisalmer airbase by special aircraft of Air Force at 8.35 am where they were extended a warm welcome by Konark Core Commander Lt General P S Rajeshwar, Jaisalmer Air Force station commander D Vedanjana, MLA Chotu Singh Bhati, collector K C Meena and SP Gaurav Yadav.

MLA Chotu Singh Bhati raised the issue of fencing at Shahgarh Bulj area adjoining Indo-Pak border. He said that due to shifting dunes fencing has been damaged at various places and got buried due to which there is a possibility of intrusion from Pakistan side. The MLA demanded to strengthen the security arrangements in the area. Meanwhile, Sitharaman with Army Chief General Rawat and Core Commander Lt Rajeshwar left for Khetolai by helicopter and reached there at 9.15am.

Here, she saw the firing capability of 155mm ATAGS gun developed by DRDO, Pune, in a joint venture with Kaveri group. The army officials briefed her about the benefits of the gun. A DRDO scientist said that the gun has set a record by hitting the world's longest target.

A few days ago, ATAGS 155-millimetre, 52-calibre gun-howitzer fired three shells to a world-record distance of 47.2 km from the gun position, thus, demonstrating its potential to be a world-beating system.

Later, the minister reached Lathi field firing range where they saw the firing capability of Arjun Mark 2. The firing range resonated with explosion. Sitharaman also met the jawans and officers and boosted their morale. She left for Jodhpur in the evening.



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Sitharaman visits forward bases in Raj

Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Saturday visited the field firing range in Khetolai area in Pokhran and met senior Army officers stationed there.

This was her second visit to Rajasthan after she took charge of the defence ministry earlier this month, becoming the first full-time woman defence minister of the country.

At display were the capabilities of ingeniously developed battle tank Arjun MK-2 during a field exercise by Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) at the firing range.

Earlier, Sitharaman visited the forward airbase at Uttarlai Barmer, which was her first field visit after being appointed defence minister. In less than a month of her appointment, Sitharaman has visited a number of armed force bases across the country and held discussions with senior officials, something that is also seen as a confidence building exercise among the ground troops.

Even as her official schedule of Saturday remained restricted to visiting the DRDO exercise, she is also reported to have visited a defence lab and held discussions with officers stationed at the local bases. Her presence and meeting with the Army officials is expected to further boost morals of troops deployed in the bordering areas.

However, unlike her last visit, the Defence minister on Saturday evening returned to Delhi without making a public or press appearance. She arrived at Jaisalmer in morning from a special flight and was received by senior officers of the Army and the Air Force, and flew to Jodhpur from Pakhran to take a flight back to the national capital.

Outlook
THE NEWS SCROLL

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Integrated Test Range campaigns for green and clean India

Balasore (Odisha): DRDO's Integrated Test Range (ITR) in Odisha's Balasore district has initiated a campaign for building a green and clean India.

In order to spread awareness on protecting the environment, the ITR employees and support staff undertook a silent march at Balasore town yesterday carrying placards with "Swachhata hi Seva" written on them.

"Everyone knows we test missiles. Now, we want to show that we have concern for the environment. Though we are very busy in missile programme, we are able to find time for this noble cause," said B K Das, the director of ITR.

He also hoped that ITR's initiative would inspire people to do their bit in keeping the environment clean and green.



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