

# समाचार पत्रों से चयित अंश Newspapers Clippings

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## Civil-military rank parity row: MoD withdraws letter

New Delhi: Defence minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Friday passed orders withdrawing an October 2016 letter that allegedly downgraded the status of military officers compared to their civilian counterparts, in an attempt to put the resulting controversy to rest.

The letter on rank equivalence between military officers and the Armed Forces Headquarters Civil Services (AFHQ CS) triggered a row as it equated a civilian principal director, considered the equivalent of a brigadier, to a two-star general, a director-ranked officer to a brigadier, and a joint director to a colonel. Before the letter was issued, a colonel was equivalent to a director and a lieutenant colonel to a joint director. "The cadre restructuring of AFHQ CS as approved by the Union Cabinet shall be duly implemented," the defence ministry said in a statement. "Designations to be created in consequence of additional posts sanctioned by the Cabinet will be done in consultation with Service HQs." The ministry said local designations assigned to both service and civilian officers in service headquarters and inter-service organisations have been withdrawn.

Describing the Friday order as positive, a senior army officer said on condition of anonymity that "the ministry must ensure no back door entry to create abnormal cadre equivalence in the future."

The order made it clear that both military and civilian officers will use their "respective cadre designations only".

The ministry said the position that existed prior to 2016 letter would prevail as far as the channel of reporting of annual performance appraisal report was concerned.

The letter had said that issues regarding rank equation were examined in detail. Signed by a joint secretary, it said the government had referred to administrative orders issued by the army, navy and air force during 2003-08.

But several serving officers said the orders mentioned in the letter were only for internal cadre management and had been misinterpreted to the disadvantage of the armed forces.

The government follows the rank equation while assigning duties, deciding the channel of reporting, and also on deciding when and which officers are to be sent for training. This also determines perks such as stenographic and secretarial assistance.



## Territorial Army can have women: Delhi HC

The Delhi High Court today paved the way for recruitment of women in the Territorial Army (TA), saying any provision that bars them is ultra vires of the fundamental rights provided under the Constitution. The Territorial Army is the second line of defence after the regular Army.

A Bench of Acting Chief Justice Gita Mittal and Justice C Hari Shankar said the words "any person" in Section 6 of the TA Act shall include both men and women. The court also said that any provision of the Act which bars or bans recruitment of women into the TA would be ultra vires of the fundamental right of equality.

The ruling came on a PIL alleging discrimination against women in recruitment in the TA, in which actor Mohanlal and cricketers Kapil Dev and MS Dhoni are honorary members with senior ranks. The

petitioner had alleged “institutionalised discrimination” against women for not being recruited in the TA, which is an organisation of volunteers who get training in order to be mobilised in case of an emergency.



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## Army to rescue of locals, defuses bombs along LoC

By Shyam Sood

For the past few days, the Army’s Engineer regiment has been defusing unexploded bombs, mortar shells and improvised explosive devices (IEDs) in Nowshera sub-division in Rajouri district along the Line of Control (LoC). To detect the bombs and IEDs, drones fitted with high-resolution cameras had been pressed into the service, said the Army.

“For the past few days people approached my office about the presence of live bombs and mortar shells in the fields and grazing areas at different places, including Kalal, Jhangar, Kalsian and Bhawani,” said Abdul Sattar, SDM, Nowshera. The matter was taken up with the Army which assured that a massive search operation would be launched to detect the bombs/mortar shells, added the SDM. “Several bombs were detected by inhabitants of various border villages. This included those villages too whose residents had migrated to relief camps after heavy mortar shelling in May. They had recently returned to their homes,” said Bahadur Singh, former sarpanch of Kalsian village.

“The Army averted major incidents by detecting and defusing the live bombs and IEDs planted along the LoC in the Nowshera sub-division,” said an Army officer.

Advanced technology and cameras were used to detect the bombs which were destroyed at safe places, he said, adding that the search and destroy operation was launched on Tuesday and was still in progress.

### Pak firing in Poonch

Jammu: The Pakistan army on Friday resorted to shelling and small arms firing along the Line of Control in Poonch district. The Indian Army retaliated strongly. PTI’



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## Def ministry snips biz ties with ‘tainted’ Bhandari’s cos

*Facing Probe, Arms Dealer Absconding*

By Rajat.Pandit

New Delhi: The defence ministry has suspended all business dealings with companies of absconding arms dealer Sanjay Bhandari, who is facing cases for violating the Official Secrets Act as well as alleged financial crimes ranging from money laundering to corruption in arms deals.

The defence ministry’s vigilance wing on Friday issued an order to all departments and wings as well as the Army, IAF and Navy headquar- ters to suspend all business dealings with Bhandari’s flagship Offset India Solutions (Pvt) Ltd and all its group companies with immediate effect. “The OIS Group’s response to a show-cause notice in June 2017 was not found satisfactory. So, business dealings with the OIS Group, its companies and functionaries will remain suspended for six months or until further orders, in accordance with the MoD guidelines issued in November 2016 to deal with such cases,” said an official.

The guidelines were promulgated “to ensure probity, transparency, propriety and compliance” in the defence procurement process. At present, MoD has debarred four major foreign and two Indian companies for 10 years, while business dealings are suspended with 13 other firms.

As for the case against OIS (P) Ltd, which handles offsets for several foreign companies, the CBI is investigating allegations of graft against Bhandari and his associate Bimal Sareen in the Rs 2,896 crore deal to procure 75 Swiss Pilatus PC-7 basic trainer aircraft (BTA) inked in May 2012.

The propeller-driven Pilatus aircraft were an emergency purchase after IAF training schedule went haywire following the grounding of the entire fleet of the 114 old piston-engine HPT-32 aircraft after a crash killed a trainee pilot in August 2009.

Though IAF pilots are undergoing their Stage-1 training on the Pilatus aircraft, the inking of the “follow-on” contract to acquire 38 more such turboprop planes for Rs 1,450 crore has been put on hold due to the allegations of graft in the original deal.

Bhandari ran into trouble when several “classified” documents dealing with bigticket defence procurements and plans were seized in an income tax raid on his premises in April 2016. The Delhi Police then registered an FIR under the Official Secrets Act against Bhandari and the CBI also began a probe after it was found that OIS (P) Ltd had allegedly received 7,50,000 Swiss Francs from the Swiss Pilatus company in 2010. But amid all this, Bhandari managed to flee to London.



*Sat, 06 Jan, 2018*

## **Massive stars more abundant in nearby galaxy: Study**

Astronomers have revealed an 'astonishing' overabundance of massive stars - with masses over ten times that of the Sun - in a neighbouring galaxy. The discovery, made in the gigantic star-forming region 30 Doradus in the Large Magellanic Cloud galaxy, has 'far-reaching' consequences for our understanding of how stars transformed the pristine universe into the one we live in today, researchers said.

“We were astonished when we realised that 30 Doradus has formed many more massive stars than expected,” said Fabian Schneider from the University of Oxford in the UK. The team used ESO's Very Large Telescope to observe nearly 1,000 massive stars in 30 Doradus, a gigantic stellar nursery also known as the Tarantula nebula. The researchers used detailed analyses of about 250 stars with masses between 15 and 200 times the mass of our Sun to determine the distribution of massive stars born in 30 Doradus - the so-called initial mass function (IMF). Massive stars are particularly important for astronomers because of their enormous influence on their surroundings (known as their 'feedback').

They can explode in spectacular supernovae at the end of their lives, forming some of the most exotic objects in the universe - neutron stars and black holes. “We have not only been surprised by the sheer number of massive stars, but also that their IMF is densely sampled up to 200 solar masses,” said Hugues Sana from the University of Leuven in Belgium. “Until recently, the existence of stars up to 200 solar masses was highly disputed, and the study shows that a maximum birth mass of stars of 200- 300 solar masses appears likely,” said Sana, co-author of the study published in the journal *Science*. In most parts of the universe studied by astronomers to date, stars become rarer the more massive they are.

The IMF predicts that most stellar mass is in low-mass stars and that less than one per cent of all stars are born with masses in excess of ten times that of the Sun. Measuring the proportion of massive stars is extremely difficult - primarily because of their scarcity - and there are only a handful of places in the local universe where this can be done. The team turned to 30 Doradus, the biggest local star-forming region, which hosts some of the most massive stars ever found, and determined the masses of massive stars with unique observational, theoretical and statistical tools.