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Gaganyaan: DRDO to provide special space food and emergency survival kit for ISRO's manned mission

ISRO is already working on a Humanoid prototype (with a female form) for the Gaganyaan missions, which is expected to be sent out on a mission next year to test it out before actually sending humans in space

By Huma Siddiqui

Special Space food, crew health monitoring and emergency survival kit is all going to be provided to the Indian Space Research Organisation's Human Space Mission by Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO). According to officials, "Both ISRO and DRDO have an MoU in place to provide all necessary support for the Human Space Mission which includes critical technologies like radiation measurement and protection, parachutes for the safe recovery of the crew module and fire suppression system."

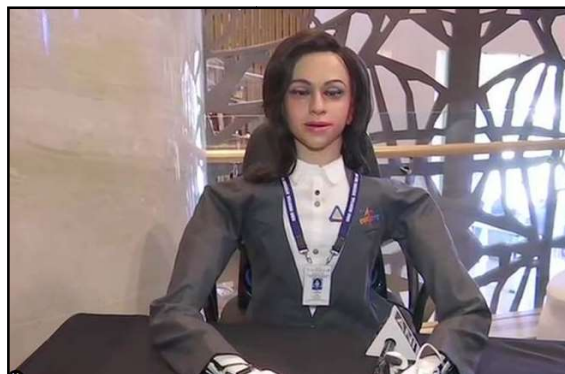
Adding, "There is an agreement in place between the two agencies to provide technologies for human-centric systems and technologies specific to the Human Space Mission."

ISRO is already working on a Humanoid prototype (with a female form) for the Gaganyaan missions, which is expected to be sent out on a mission next year to test it out before actually sending humans in space.

In the unmanned mission scheduled for 2021, a Humanoid will carry out all tasks which a real human will be doing in Space is under development at ISRO and will monitor crew parameters, perform the Environmental Control and Life Support System (ECLSS) functions. Also, it is expected to copy all crew activity which would include the switch operations on a panel etc.

It will also be wearing a spacesuit which will help in understanding the efficacy in space flight in a real environment. Modifications are expected to be made based on the data collected.

Named 'Vyommitra' which will be embedded with Artificial Intelligence (AI) it shall also be expected to give its support to the crew in operations of Environmental Control and Life Support System (ECLSS).



The Vyommitra which is being developed in a male form will later be modified as the IAF personnel who have been shortlisted for first manned Gaganyaan flight in 2022.

Besides, the DRDO, Institute of Aerospace Medicine (IAM) of the IAF is the nodal agency for aero-medical aspects of the mission and will also be managing the crew healthcare for the Human Space Programme.

<https://www.financialexpress.com/lifestyle/science/gaganyaan-drdo-to-provide-special-space-food-and-emergency-survival-kit-for-isros-manned-mission/1888944/>

Coronavirus: DRDO to help in COVID-19 detection and diagnosis

By Huma Siddiqui

According to the DRDO chairman, “COVID-19 -- the official name given to coronavirus by World Health Organisation (WHO) is a public health problem. It needs early detection in an effort to treat infected persons. DRDO can extend its laboratory-based detection expertise to health care fraternity of the country.”

Defence Research and Development Establishment (DRDE) Gwalior is a premier laboratory of Defence Research and Development Organisation which is working in the field of development of detection systems against enlisted biological agents such as Anthrax. In an exclusive interaction with Financial Express Online, Dr G Satheesh Reddy, Secretary, Department of Defence R&D and Chairman, DRDO, has said that “DRDE has developed diagnostic kits against these enlisted agents. This expertise of the laboratory can be harnessed to develop a diagnostic system against infectious diseases.”

According to the DRDO chairman, “COVID-19 — the official name given to coronavirus by World Health Organisation (WHO) is a public health problem. It needs early detection in an effort to treat infected persons. DRDO can extend its laboratory-based detection expertise to health care fraternity of the country.”

“DRDO is in contact with the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) to augment the diagnostic capability in case of any eventuality,” he added.

COVID -19 reaches India

After two cases have been tested positive – one in New Delhi and another in Telangana, the government has now decided to expand the screening of passengers returning from international travels.

According to a notification issued by Directorate General of Civil Aviation, the universal screening will include passengers coming on flights from countries South Korea, Thailand, Singapore, Nepal, Indonesia, Vietnam and Malaysia. Passengers coming from Italy and Iran, China, Hong Kong, and Japan was already being screened.

The Ministry of Health has announced the screening of passengers from 12 countries at 21 airports, including 12 major and 35 minor seaports.

There are plans to suspend travel visas in an effort to control the spread of the virus. The government has already suspended travels to countries including China and Iran and has urged passengers to avoid non-essential travels to countries like Italy, South Korea and Singapore.

Globally, the Coronavirus has spread to more than 70 countries and reportedly killed around 3,000 people, and reports indicate that more than 90,000 have been infected from the time it was first detected in the Wuhan province of China last December.

While countries like the US have reported two deaths, Iran according to reports has reported 66 deaths, followed by 34 deaths in Italy and 22 in South Korea 22.

<https://www.financialexpress.com/lifestyle/health/coronavirus-drdo-to-help-in-covid-19-detection-and-diagnosis/1887525/>

BEL beats firms from Russia, Poland to secure \$40mn defence deal from Armenia

To boost defence exports from India, Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL) won a \$40-million deal competing with firms from Russia and Poland, for supplying four Swathi Weapon Locating Radars (WLR) to Armenia.

By Savita V Jayaram

The \$40-million defence export deal has been signed by Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL) with Armenia to supply four Swathi Weapon Locating Radars (WLR) manufactured, indigenously developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).

This defence equipment is an electronically scanned phased array radar that automatically locates mortars, hostile artillery and rocket launchers in its 50-km range. It also helps track friendly fire, to locate the impact point of friendly artillery fire and issue necessary corrections as needed be.

Swathi Weapon Locating Radars

During the Kargil war in 1997, the Indian army did not possess any WLRs. It was the first equipment procured from the [US](#), once [defence](#) sales commenced a couple of years later. According to the DRDO, this radar has the capability to handle simultaneous fire from weapons deployed at multiple locations and is designed to detect projectiles with small cross-section across the battlespace horizon.



As mentioned on the DRDO website, "The radar uses advanced signal processing techniques for detection and tracking projectiles in the presence of ground, weather clutter and other forms of interference in electronic warfare scenario."

The Ministry of Defence is also reaching out to Latin America, Middle East and Southeast Asian countries to boost [defence exports](#) from India.

<https://www.ibtimes.co.in/bel-beats-firms-russia-poland-secure-40mn-defence-deal-armenia-814437>

India focusing on dynamic response: Army Chief

New Delhi: Besides strengthening its conventional fighting capabilities, India is now focusing on a dynamic response along its western (Pakistan) and northern (China) that is below an all out war, Army Chief M M Naravane said here on Wednesday.

Elaborating upon this aspect, he said the Balakot airstrikes demonstrated that if one was skilful, escalation does not always lead to war. Moreover, he noted that the Indian Army was looking to tap blockchain technologies, lasers and directed energy weapons for possible military use.

Addressing a seminar, the Army Chief said the force has analysed the changing character of war within the overall framework of conflict, as relevant to the Indian context adding, “the 'grey zone' and its varied nuances are receiving our concerted attention.”

Talking about the new phenomenon of showing military prowess below the threshold of an all-out conflict, he quoted the examples of the Houthi rebels attack on Riyadh airport and oil facilities in Saudi Arabia and closer home, the Balakot airstrike. He said these saw short, intense and escalatory cycles of military activity in full media glare, “where sophisticated information narratives played an equally important role.”

For years, Indians were told that if and when the International Border (IB) between India and Pakistan is crossed it would escalate to a full-fledged war, the Army chief noted.

“Balakot demonstrated that if you play the escalatory game with skill, military ascendancy can be established in short cycles of conflict that do not necessarily lead to war,” he said.

Naravane said the future wars have possibly entered the era of 'contested equality,' wherein technology will make unequals, equal. “Perhaps that is already happening -- the battle winning factor in future combat may not be numerical equivalence but technological superiority,” he said while highlighting the growing importance of artificial intelligence and cyber.

Naravane pointed out that Chinese dominance in the South China Sea showed small incremental steps -- none of them serious enough to warrant any action or reaction -- cumulatively achieved the aim without firing a single shot or inviting retaliatory action.

The Chinese way of war, epitomised by thinkers such as Sun Tzu, has given a new lease and life to the concept of “non-contact or grey zone warfare”, where one shed the binary approach to conflict, Naravane said. He also asserted that the rise of non-state actors such as terrorists demands that victory in war is formulated in a nuanced manner.

<https://www.dailypioneer.com/2020/india/india-focusing-on-dynamic-response--army-chief.html>

THE ASIAN AGE

‘Tanks, fighters will soon be obsolete like Walkman’

Gen Naravane said that combat is no longer confined to the physical domain.

By Pawan Bali

New Delhi: Indian Army Chief Gen M.M. Naravane said on Wednesday that China has not been involved in real, hard core combat for a few decades now and yet through regular showcasing of

military might it has created an aura of being undisputed military leader in key technological domains to create deterrence.

Gen. Naravane said that Balakot demonstrated that if you play the escalatory game with skill, military prowess can be established without a full fledged war.

“For years we were told that if and when air crosses the border, it would escalate to full-fledged war. Balakot demonstrated that if you play the escalatory game with skill, military ascendancy can be established in short cycles of conflict that do not necessarily lead to war,” said Gen Naravane. He said that the icons of the 20th century battlefield, like the main battle tank and modern aircraft, are on their way out like Sony Walkman.

Pointing towards China dominance in the South China sea, Army chief said that nature of warfare has changed where geo-strategic spaces are being constricted without altering the state of peace. He said that Chinese dominance in the South China Sea showed small incremental steps — none of them serious enough to warrant any action or reaction — cumulatively achieved the aim without firing a single shot or inviting retaliatory action.

Gen. Naravane said that the Chinese way of war, epitomised by thinkers such as Sun Tzu, has given a new lease and life to the concept of “non-contact or grey zone warfare,” where ambiguity and careful risk escalation are key. Gen Naravane said that combat is no longer confined to the physical domain.

<https://www.asianage.com/india/all-india/050320/tanks-fighters-will-soon-be-obsolete-like-walkman.html>



Thu, 05 March 2020

Gen Naravane: Mulling use of laser weapons in military

*In the last three years, Army saw 233 of its men ending their lives,
the Air Force 57 personnel and the Navy 15 of its men committing suicide*

New Delhi: Army Chief Gen MM Naravane on Wednesday said the Army was looking at lasers and directed energy weapons for possible military use.

He was speaking at an international seminar on “Changing characteristics of land warfare and its impact on the military” organised by Army-backed think-tank Centre for Land Warfare Studies (CLAWS).

The Army Chief said the force was embracing technologies and inducting them with speed into units. “The leveraging of emerging, disruptive domains is also receiving our concerted attention. Capacities in space, cyber and electronic warfare, similarly, are being given a boost,” Gen Naravane said.

Apart from strengthening conventional prowess, the Army was focusing on dynamic response — that would mean actions below the threshold of an all-out war — and plans and capacities are being refined along the Line of Control with Pakistan and Line of Actual Control (LAC).

“We are developing kinetic and non-kinetic responses to address the threat. Technology is also tipping doctrinal cycles. Doctrines are now chasing technologies. We are also looking at tapping ‘block chain technologies’ (these allow digital information to be distributed, but not copied),” the Army Chief added.

Rapidly evolving, dual-use technologies present new opportunities and are changing the character of warfare. Armies, have to be extremely agile to the scale and pace of change.

No change in nuclear policy

New Delhi: Months after Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said he didn't know what would happen in future with regard to nuclear "no first use" policy, the government on Wednesday said in Parliament, "There has been no change in India's N-doctrine." TNS

<https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/gen-naravane-mulling-use-of-laser-weapons-in-military-50898>

THE ECONOMIC TIMES

Thu, 05 March 2020

Defence industry received \$8.82 million FDI during Apr 2000- Dec 2019: Govt

The top countries from where India attracted maximum FDI during the period include Mauritius, Singapore, Japan, Netherlands and the US. In a separate reply, the Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal said total merchandise imports from China were USD 76.3 billion in 2017-18, which decreased to USD 70.3 billion in 2018-19

New Delhi: India's defence industry received foreign direct investment (FDI) of USD 8.82 million (Rs 51.93 crore) during April 2000 and December 2019, Parliament was informed on Wednesday.

In 2018-19, FDI in the sector was aggregated at USD 2.18 million, according to the data provided by Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal in a written reply to the Lok Sabha.

Foreign fund inflows in retail trading stood at USD 2 billion during April 2000 and December 2019, the data showed.

The top countries from where India attracted maximum FDI during the period include Mauritius, Singapore, Japan, Netherlands and the US.

In a separate reply, the minister said total merchandise imports from China were USD 76.3 billion in 2017-18, which decreased to USD 70.3 billion in 2018-19.

Total imports from China during 2019-20 (April-January) were USD 57.9 billion, he said.

Trade remedial measures were taken against as many as 89 products like EVA sheets, electrical insulators and Flax yarn against China, the minister informed.

Similarly, six countervailing measures and one safeguard steps has been taken against the neighbouring country.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/defence-industry-received-8-82-million-fdi-during-apr-2000-dec-2019-govt/articleshow/74479514.cms>



Fall in suicide cases in Defence services

In the last three years, Army saw 233 of its men ending their lives, the Air Force 57 personnel and the Navy 15 of its men committing suicide

New Delhi: The three Services reported lesser number of suicides last year than that reported in the two years preceding 2019.

The Indian Navy, Air Force and Army reported 95 cases of suicide by their personnel in 2019, Minister of State for Defence Shripad Naik told the Lok Sabha on Wednesday in a written reply

He informed the House that the Navy reported two cases, Air Force 20 cases and Army 73 cases of suicide last year. While there were a total of 107 suicides in 2018 with the Navy, Air Force and Army reporting 8 cases, 16 cases and 83 cases respectively, the number of suicide cases in 2017 was 5, 21 and 77 in Navy, Air Force and Army respectively.

In the last three years, it means, the Army saw 233 of its men ending their lives, the Air Force 57 personnel and the Navy 15 of its men committing suicide.

The Defence Institute of Psychological Research (DIPR), after conducting a number of studies since 2006, has listed domestic and personal problems, marital discord, stress and financial trouble as the major causes of suicides by armed forces personnel.

The central government has taken several steps towards stress amelioration amongst troops like deployment of trained psychological counsellors, improvement in the quality of food and clothing, training in stress management and provision of recreational facilities, he said.

“Buddy system, leave concessions, approachability of seniors, facilities for movement of troops from border areas and establishing grievance redressal mechanism at various levels are some of the other steps that have been taken,” the minister added.

<https://www.dailypioneer.com/2020/india/fall-in-suicide-cases-in-defence-services.html>

Pragyan conclave 2020: Indian Army's International Seminar analysing future warfare

New Delhi: “PRAGYAN CONCLAVE 2020”, a two-day Indian Army International Seminar being organised by Centre for Land Warfare Studies (CLAWS), commenced on 04 Mar 2020 at Manekshaw Centre, New Delhi. The event brings together a cross-domain national and international expert to deliberate on the complex subject of ‘Changing Characteristics of Land Warfare and its Impact on the Military’.

This event was attended by Raksha Rajya Mantri (RRM), Shri Shripad Yesso Naik, Chief of the Army Staff, General MM Naravane, Vice Chief of the Army Staff, Lieutenant General SK Saini along with other dignitaries from the Ministry of Defence, three Services, Central Armed Police Forces and leading Think Tanks & Academic Institutions of the country.

The seminar provided a platform for deliberations on emerging ideas, perspectives and narratives that define the 'New Age Warfare' which is increasingly witnessing a change in its character as well as battlespace with the usage of new 'means' to pursue the 'ends'.

The Keynote Address was delivered by RRM Shri Shripad Yesso Naik. He emphasised on the need for comprehensive transformation of the Armed Forces by taking a wider view of the changing security dynamics. He mentioned the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) and the Department of Military Affairs (DMA) as a significant step forward in this direction.

During the Inaugural Address, the Chief of the Army Staff stated that the 'nature' of warfare is 'constant'; however, the 'character' keeps 'evolving'. And with the advent of technology, Armed Forces need to be agile and keep pace with the continuous change. He also mentioned that the creation CDS has provided further impetus to the 'jointmanship' between the three Services.

On the first day of the Seminar, the subject experts deliberated on two key themes over two sessions. The first session delved on "Evolving Warfare: An Insight into the Changing Realm", wherein the speakers reflected on the emerging trends in fighting future warfare and its implications on the military in terms of prospects and possibilities. While the second session focused on the theme "The Technological Revolution – A Seminal Challenge", wherein the deliberations highlighted on the optics of Information Warfare in multi domain operations, cyber and space warfare and implications of AI and Robotics under new domains of battlespace in fighting 21st century warfare. The second day of the Seminar will delve on the themes- 'Transformation in the Battle Spaces' and 'Hybrid/Sub-Conventional Warfare'.

During the event, the Chief of the Army Staff also felicitated the winners of the 'Field Marshal Manekshaw Open Essay Competition on National Security'- a flagship event of CLAWS to encourage strategic thinking in the youth of the country.

<https://indiaeducationdiary.in/pragyan-conclave-2020-indian-armys-international-seminar-analysing-future-warfare/>

Business Standard

Thu, 05 March 2020

Indian armed forces now have 9,449 women personnel, most in the army: Govt

Minister of State for Defence Shripad Naik said there are 685 women personnel in the Navy, 1,872 in the Air Force and 6,892 in the Army

New Delhi: The number of women personnel in the Indian Armed Forces is 9,449, according to information shared by the government in parliament on Wednesday.

Minister of State for Defence Shripad Naik said there are 685 women personnel in the Navy, 1,872 in the Air Force and 6,892 in the Army.

In a written reply to a question in Lok Sabha, the minister said the Indian Army and the Indian Navy have inducted 102 and 18 women this year so far.

The Air Force has not inducted any woman in 2020 till now, the minister stated. In 2019, the Navy, the Air Force and the Army had inducted 54, 77 and 364 women respectively, said Naik.

https://www.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/nearly-9-500-women-personnel-in-indian-armed-forces-govt-120030401291_1.html



Thu, 05 March 2020

सेना के पहले महिला सैनिकों के दस्ते की ट्रेनिंग शुरू, बेंगलुरु सीएमपी सेंटर में जमकर बहा रही पसीना

**बेंगलुरु के कोर ऑफ मिलिट्री पुलिस महिला सैनिकों के दस्ते की कड़ी ट्रेनिंग चल रही है।
महिलाओं को सशक्त बनाने के लिए उन्हें सेना में जवान के पद पर भर्ती किया गया है**

बेंगलुरु: हाल ही में सुप्रीम कोर्ट ने महिला सशक्तिकरण की दिशा में एक बड़ा आदेश देते हुए सेना में महिला अधिकारियों को स्थाई कमीशन देने का आदेश दिया था। महिलाओं को और अधिक सशक्त करने के लिए सेना में इस साल से महिलाओं को जवान के पद पर भर्ती किया गया है और इनकी ट्रेनिंग भी शुरू हो गई है।

पिछले 28 साल से महिलाएं सेना में सिर्फ अफसर के पदों पर तो थीं लेकिन निचले स्तर पर नहीं थीं। वहीं अब महिला जवानों के पहले दस्ते की भर्ती पूरी हो चुकी है और बेंगलुरु में ट्रेनिंग भी शुरू हो गई है। 8 मार्च यानि अंतर्राष्ट्रीय महिला दिवस से ठीक पहले एबीपी न्यूज़ की टीम सेना की पहली महिला-सैनिकों के बैच का जज्बा, जुनून और जोश जानने के लिए बेंगलुरु के कोर ऑफ मिलिट्री पुलिस यानि सीएमपी सेंटर पहुंची।

सबसे पहले पीटी ग्राउंड में दौड़

सीएमपी सेंटर में दिन निकलने से पहले ही महिला दस्ते की ट्रेनिंग शुरू हो जाती है। सबसे पहले पीटी ग्राउंड में दौड़ और शारारिक व्यायाम होता है। देश के अलग अलग राज्यों और परिवेश से आईं ये युवतियां अपने पुरुष साथियों जैसी ही ट्रेनिंग करती हैं। किसी भी तरह से वे पुरुष साथियों से हल्की या कम शारारिक वर्जिश नहीं करतीं।

7-9 हफ्तों की ट्रेनिंग पूरी हो चुकी है

सीएमपी सेंटर के डिप्टी कमांडेंट आर एस दलाल ने एबीपी न्यूज़ को बताया कि साल 2017 में ये फैसला लिया गया था कि महिलाओं को जवान के रैंक यानि सिपाही और हवलदार के पद पर तैनात किया जाए। इसके लिए एक लंबी प्रक्रिया के बाद दिसंबर 2019 में अलग अलग रिक्रूटमेंट सेंटर्स से कुल 101 महिलाओं को चयनित किया गया था। अब महिला सैनिक दस्ते की 7-9 हफ्तों की ट्रेनिंग पूरी हो चुकी है।

61 हफ्तों तक होगी ट्रेनिंग

इस महिला दस्ते की कुल 61 हफ्तों की ट्रेनिंग है। शुरुआत के 19 हफते बेसिक मिलिट्री ट्रेनिंग दी जाएगी जो भारतीय सेना के सभी जवानों को भर्ती के बाद दी जाती है। इसके बाद इन महिलाओं को प्रोवोस्ट और एडवांस मिलिट्री-पुलिस की ट्रेनिंग दी जाएगी। सीएमपी सेंटर के इंस्ट्रक्टर, लेफ्टिनेंट कर्नल संतोष भाग बताते हैं कि सेना-पुलिस का काम सेना की सभी छावनियों और कैंट में नियम-कानून लागू करने से लेकर ट्रैफिक-व्यवस्था संभालना, वीआईपी गेस्ट्स को एस्कोर्ट करना और क्राइम इन्वेस्टिगेशन है। इसके लिए भी बेंगलुरु में ट्रेनिंग के दौरान उन्हें खास प्रशिक्षण दिया जाएगा।

'आंखों पर पट्टी बांधकर हथियार चलाना सीख गई'

युद्ध के दौरान कोर ऑफ मिलिट्री पुलिस का एक अहम कार्य है जिनेवा-संधि के तहत युद्धबंदियों की देखभाल करना। इसके लिए भी इन महिला सैनिकों को खास तौर से प्रशिक्षण लेना होगा। 1971 की जंग में पाकिस्तानी सेना के कमांडर, लेफ्टिनेंट जनरल नियाजी सहित बाकी 93 हजार पाकिस्तानी युद्धबंदियों की कस्टडी भी मिलिट्री-पुलिस के हवाले थी। बंगलुरु स्थित सीएमपी सेंटर में सुबह-सवेरे फिजीकल-ट्रेनिंग के बाद महिला-रिफ्रूट वैपल-हैंडलिंग यानि हथियार चलाने की ट्रेनिंग के लिए पहुंचती हैं। आंखों पर पट्टी बांधकर भी ये महिला सैनिक हथियार को चलाना सीख गई हैं।

'पिता से प्रेरणा लेकर लिया सेना में आने का फैसला'

इस दौरान एबीपी न्यूज़ ने इन महिला-रिफ्रूट से जानना चाहा कि आखिर क्यों वे सेना में शामिल हुई हैं। वो भी तब जबकि सेना में एक कड़ी ट्रेनिंग और दुश्मन से मुकाबला करते वक्त जान तक जोखिम में डालनी पड़ सकती है। पंजाब की एक मात्र महिला-रिफ्रूट बताती हैं कि उनके पिता सेना में थे जिनसे प्रेरणा लेकर वे फौज में भर्ती हुई हैं। कुछ महिला रिफ्रूट एनसीसी में सेना की लाइफ और रोमांच से प्रेरित होकर इस मुकाम तक पहुंची हैं। लेकिन सबके दिल में देश प्रेम की जबरदस्त भावना है और देश पर मर मिटने के लिए तैयार हैं। इसीलिए एक महिला कैडेट कहती हैं, "सर खतरा कहां नहीं है, फिर देश की सुरक्षा के लिए क्यों ना जान जोखिम में डालें?"

भारतीय सेना में कुल 6892 सैन्य महिला अधिकारी हैं

बता दें कि इस वक्त भारतीय सेना में कुल 6892 सैन्य महिला अधिकारी हैं, लेकिन जवान के रैंक पर पहली बार भर्ती की गई हैं। सेना में महिला अधिकारियों की भर्ती 1992 में शुरू हुई थी। उस वक्त महिला सिर्फ शॉर्ट सर्विस कमीशन के तहत ही चुनिंदा विंग और ब्रांच में ही कार्य कर सकती थीं। वे अधिकतर, सेना की कांबेट-आर्म यानि इंफैंट्री, आर्मर्ड और आर्टलरी को सपोर्ट करने वाली कांबेट सपोर्ट आर्म्स जैसे आर्मी-एविएशन, एयर-डिफेंस, एजुकेशन, सिग्नल, इंजीनीयर्स, लीगल इत्यादि जैसी कुल दस ब्रांच में ही काम कर सकती थी। शॉर्ट सर्विस कमीशन होने के चलते वे सिर्फ लेफ्टिनेंट कर्नल के पद तक ही पहुंच सकती थीं।

सुप्रीम कोर्ट ने स्थाई कमीशन देने का दिया था आदेश

पिछले साल यानि साल 2019 से सेना ने महिला अधिकारियों को परमानेंट कमीशन देने का ऐलान किया था। इस साल से सेना में शामिल होने वाली महिला अधिकारियों को इस फैसले का फायदा होने वाला था, लेकिन उससे पहले ही सुप्रीम कोर्ट ने उन 332 महिला अधिकारियों को भी स्थाई कमीशन देने का आदेश दे दिया जो पिछले कई सालों से सेना में अपनी सेवाएं दे रही थीं।

परमानेंट यानि स्थायी कमीशन के मायने ये हैं कि अब सेना में महिला अधिकारी भी कर्नल ब्रिगेडियर या फिर जनरल रैंक के पद तक पहुंचने के लिए योग्य मानी जाएंगी। अभी तक शॉर्ट सर्विस कमीशन यानि 20 साल से पहले ही उन्हें रिटायर कर दिया जाता था और वे लेफ्टिनेंट कर्नल के पद से आगे नहीं बढ़ पाती थीं। सुप्रीम कोर्ट के इस फैसले से वे अब सेना की बटालियन की कमान भी संभालने के योग्य मानी जाएंगीं। पिछले साल से सेना ने जवानों के पद पर भी महिलाओं की भर्ती शुरू कर दी। शुरुआत में महिलाओं को मिलिट्री-पुलिस में काम करने का मौका मिलेगा। उसके बाद माना जा रहा है कि धीरे-धीरे कर वे दूसरी ब्रांच और विंग में भी तैयारी की जाएंगीं।

महिला अधिकारी को बनाया इंचार्ज

बेंगलुरु में इन महिला-जवानों को प्रशिक्षण दे रहीं लेफ्टिनेंट कर्नल जूली सिंह बताती हैं कि उन्हें एक महिला-अधिकारी होने के नाते उनका प्रशासनिक-इंचार्ज बनाया गया है। उनका कहना है कि इस बैच को ट्रेनिंग देने वाले इंस्ट्रक्टरों तक को 'जेंडर-सेंसेडाइजेशन' की ट्रेनिंग दी गई थी, क्योंकि अभी तक पुरुष-इंस्ट्रक्टरों का व्यवहार पुरुष-सैनिकों से थोड़ा सख्त और रूखा होता था। यहां तक की इन इंस्ट्रक्टरों को महिला-जवानों को किस तरह देखना है उस तक का प्रशिक्षण दिया गया।

2030 तक 1700 महिला सैनिक होंगी सेना में शामिल

भारतीय सेना साल 2030 तक करीब 1700 महिला सैनिकों को कोर ऑफ मिलिट्री पुलिस में शामिल करने का प्लान बना रही है ताकि धीरे-धीरे कर उन्हें सेना का अहम हिस्सा बनाया जा सके। हालांकि, महिलाओं को कॉम्बेट रोल यानि यौद्धा के तौर पर तैनात करने के लिए सेना फिलहाल हिचकिचा रही है। सेना का मानना है कि ऐसा करने से पहले समाज को महिलाओं के प्रति अपनी सोच को बदलनी होगी। महिलाओं को कॉम्बेट रोल देने के मामले पर सुप्रीम कोर्ट भी सेना और सरकार के साथ ही खड़ी दिख रही है।

लेकिन सीएमपी सेंटर में इन नई महिला जवानों को बेसिक मिलिट्री ट्रेनिंग देने वाले इंस्ट्रक्टर, लेफ्टिनेंट कर्नल संतोष का साफ कहना है कि मिलिट्री-पुलिस में शामिल होने से इन महिलाओं का कॉम्बेट रोल के लिए दरवाजा खुल चुका है, क्योंकि निकट-भविष्य में '71 की तरह जंग हुई और दुश्मन देश के सैनिकों को बंदी बनाया गया तो उन युद्धबंदियों को संभालने की जिम्मेदारी इस महिला दस्ते को ही निभानी होगी।

<https://www.abplive.com/news/india/indian-army-first-women-soldiers-squad-training-started-in-bengaluru-ann-1318286>

अमरउजाला

Thu, 05 March 2020

महिलाएं जिन्होंने भारतीय सेना ज्वाइन कर देश का मान-सम्मान बढ़ाया, जानिए उनकी सफलता की कहानी

जब भी देश पर खतरा मंडराया है पुरुषों के साथ-साथ महिलाओं ने भी बढ़-चढ़ कर हिस्सा लिया है। पुरुषों के साथ कंधे से कंधा मिलाकर दुश्मनों के छक्के छुड़ाए हैं। आज हम आपको उन महिलाओं के बारे में बताने जा रहे हैं जिन्होंने सेना में शामिल होकर देश की रक्षा कि है, सेना और देश दोनों का मान बढ़ाया है।

किरण शेखावत

राजस्थान की बेटा व हरियाणा की बहू लेफ्टिनेंट किरण शेखावत देश में ऑन ड्यूटी शहीद होने वाली पहली महिला अधिकारी थीं। 24 मार्च 2015 की रात को गोवा में डॉर्नियर निगरानी विमान दुर्घटनाग्रस्त हो गया था। जिसमें लेफ्टिनेंट किरण शेखावत शहीद हो गई थीं। 1 मई 1988 को गांव सेफरागुवार विजेन्द्र सिंह शेखावत के घर किरण का जन्म हुआ। लेफ्टिनेंट किरण शेखावत अपनी शहादत से पांच साल पहले भारतीय नौसेना में भर्ती हुई थीं।

नौसेना की पहली महिला लेफ्टिनेंट जनरल

पुनीता अरोड़ा भारतीय नौसेना की पहली महिला लेफ्टिनेंट जनरल थीं। पुनीता का जन्म 13 अक्टूबर 1932 को पाकिस्तान के लाहौर प्रांत में हुआ था। 2004 में पुनीता अरोड़ा, भारतीय नौसेना में लेफ्टिनेंट जनरल के पद तक पहुंचने वाली प्रथम भारतीय महिला बनीं। पुनीता ने अपनी ड्यूटी का काफी वक्त पंजाब में गुजारा। 2002 में विशिष्ट सेवा पदक मिला। उनके 36 साल के कार्यकाल में कुल 15 पदक मिले थे।

भारतीय वायुसेना की पहली महिला एयर मार्शल

पद्मावती बंधोपाध्याय को भारतीय वायुसेना की पहली महिला एयर मार्शल होने का गौरव प्राप्त है। वे चिकित्सा सेवा की महानिदेशक रहीं। पद्मावती ने सन् 1968 में भारतीय वायुसेना ज्वाइन की थी। 34 साल बाद अपनी निःस्वार्थ सेवा भाव और देशप्रेम का चलते सन् 2002 में एयर वाइस मार्शल के पद पर पहुंचने वाली भारतीय वायु सेना की महिला अधिकारी बनीं।

सेना की स्वॉर्ड ऑफ ऑनर हासिल करने वाली देश की पहली महिला कैडेट

दिव्या अजित कुमार ने सात साल पहले मात्र 21 साल की उम्र में सेना की स्वॉर्ड ऑफ ऑनर हासिल करने वाली देश की पहली महिला कैडेट बन गई थी। दिव्या ने पढ़ाई में भी तीन स्वर्ण पदक जीते हैं। कप्तान दिव्या अजित कुमार को सितंबर, 2010 में सेना के वायु रक्षा कोर में नियुक्त किया गया था। गणतंत्र दिवस (26 जनवरी 2016) पर पहली बार अखिल भारतीय महिला कप्तान दिव्या अजित कुमार ने नेतृत्व किया। उन्होंने 154 महिला अधिकारियों और कैडेटों के एक दल के नेतृत्व किए थे, जहां अमेरिकी राष्ट्रपति "बराक ओबामा" भी उपस्थित थे।

ये तीन महिलाएं बनीं देश की पहली फाइटर प्लेन पायलट

18 जून 2016, यह वही दिन था जब इन तीन जांबाजों को देश के नभ को सुरक्षित रखने का जिम्मा सौंप दिया गया था। इसी के साथ, बिहार के बेगूसराय की भावना कंठ, मध्यप्रदेश के रीवा की अवनी चतुर्वेदी और वडोदरा की मोहना सिंह पहली बार वायुसेना में बतौर फाइटर प्लेन पायलट कमीशन हो गईं। ये तीन महिलाएं देश की पहली महिला फाइटर पायलट बन चुकी हैं।

13 लाख रक्षा बलों में पहली महिला जवान

शांति तिग्गा ने 13 लाख रक्षा बलों में पहली महिला जवान बनने का अनोखा गौरव हासिल किया है। भर्ती प्रशिक्षण शिविर के दौरान तिग्गा ने बंदूक को हैंडल करने के अपने कौशल से अपने प्रशिक्षकों को काफी प्रभावित किया और निशानेबाजों में सर्वोच्च स्थान हासिल किया था। शारीरिक परीक्षण, ड्रिल और गोलीबारी समेत आरटीसी में समूचे प्रदर्शन में उसे सर्वश्रेष्ठ प्रशिक्षु आंका गया था जिसके आधार पर उन्हें पहली महिला जवान बनने का मौका मिला था।

कारगिल गर्ल

गुंजन सक्सेना को 'कारगिल गर्ल' के रूप में भी जाना जाता है। कारगिल युद्ध में जहां भारतीय सेना ने दुश्मनों के छक्के छुड़ाए थे वहीं हमारी महिला पायलट भी इसमें पीछे नहीं थीं। फ्लाइट लेफ्टिनेंट गुंजन सक्सेना एक ऐसा नाम है जो आज भले ही कम लोग जानते हो लेकिन गुंजन पहली महिला पायलट थीं कारगिल युद्ध के दौरान लड़ाई में भारत की तरफ से पाकिस्तान से लोहा लिया था। इसके लिए गुंजन को उनके साहस के लिए शौर्य वीर अवॉर्ड दिया गया था। गुंजन के मुताबिक कारगिल के दौरान भारतीय सेना के घायल जवानों को सुरक्षित निकालकर लाना उनकी सबसे बड़ी प्रेरणा थी।

मेजर खुशबू कंवर

देश की राजधानी दिल्ली में राजपथ पर आयोजित गणतंत्र दिवस के मौके पर असम राइफल्स के महिला सैनिक दस्ते का परेड की खुशबू तंवर ने किया। असम राइफल्स की महिला टुकड़ी पहली बार गणतंत्र दिवस की परेड में शामिल हुई।

भावना कस्तूरी

15 जनवरी 2019 को आर्मी डे के मौके पर आर्मी परेड का नेतृत्व एक महिला अफसर ने किया। लेफ्टिनेंट भावना कस्तूरी आर्मी सर्विस कोर के 144 जवानों को लीड किया।

<https://www.amarujala.com/photo-gallery/shakti/women-s-day-2020-best-indian-army-women-s-punita-arora-kiran-shekhawat-avani-chaturvedi?pageId=10>



Thu, 05 March 2020

Banks' decision to recover tax deduction from pensions a slap in the face of disabled soldiers

Faced with possible action of contempt of court and uproar in the media, the MoD asked the PCDA to withdraw the circular mandating Tax Deducted at Source (TDS) on disability. But it was the MoD in the first place that had asked the PCDA to do so
By Lt Gen (Retd) PC Katoch

It is not known how many noticed the recent acid attack on disabled soldiers – although some did. For the first time in the history of the country, a few disabled soldiers received the princely sum of Rs 100 as monthly pension; that it was not Re 1 is a wonder.

Banks implemented the government's decision from last year to do away with exemption of IT for disabled soldiers who had continued serving. The norm to recover arrears is that not more than one-third is recovered in a month from the salary or the pension. But in the instant case, the plan obviously was to continue paying Rs 100 in monthly salary until the recovery of full arrears. This, despite most disabled soldiers surviving on pension – throwing acid on the wounds. And it was done despite the issue being sub-judice in court.

Faced with possible action of contempt of court and uproar in the media, the MoD asked the PCDA to withdraw the circular mandating Tax Deducted at Source (TDS) on disability. But it was the MoD in the first place that had asked the PCDA to do so.

On February 24, a report appeared in *The Economic Times* saying neither Defence Minister Rajnath Singh nor Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman were kept in the loop when the decision was taken last year by MoD (Finance), which is absurd. On July 8 last year, Singh had told Rajya Sabha that the decision to tax the pension of the disabled was being examined. But this was after Sitharaman told Parliament that the decision to tax the pensions of the disabled was on recommendations of the Army – implying the issue was sealed. Banks do not remit pensions on 24th of the month. Following the February media report, the MoD could still have asked the PCDA to not deduct TDS, with the matter being sub-judice, but this was not done.

In mid-2019, TV media sought the views of Major General Ian Cardozo (a war hero and the first amputee in action to command an active battalion and a brigade) on the issue of doing away with IT exemption for disabled soldiers. Following his television appearance, Army Chief General Bipin

Rawat (now the Chief of Defence Staff) wrote a letter to General Cardozo. His reply (reproduced below) must be read to understand the issue in its entirety:

“Thank you for your letter No. 0043/1/COAS Sectt dated 09 July 2019. It is very kind of you to have taken the trouble to write to me. I received your letter on 02 September 2019 on my return from the UK. Along with your letter, I also received a copy of a letter written to you by Lieutenant General Prakash Katoch, on the subject of withdrawing of exemption of income tax to war disabled soldiers. Lieutenant General Vijay Oberoi has also written an article on this subject expressing his deep anguish on this unfortunate development.

This issue raises concerns about other related matters that are a cause for considerable concern for the Indian Army community which deserves to be commented upon. I wish to inform you, Sir, in this context a little about myself and connected issues so that you are better informed about disability issues. After I retired from the Army I worked for children with disabilities for eight years. During this period I joined a group called the 'Disabilities Rights Group', whose main mandate was to push the government of India to recognize the problems faced by disabled persons in every possible human endeavour.

This group and other disability institutions were able to revolutionise how the government looked at disability and ensured major reforms. It facilitated the evolution of 'The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act 2016' that ensured that the Act conformed to with the United Nation's Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

After this period of eight years working for persons with disabilities, the government of India appointed me as chairman of the Rehabilitation Council of India. I worked in this appointment for nine years without pay or allowances of any sort. All that I asked for was a free hand to do my work and to the credit of the government, they respected my request and did not interfere. The Army, however, has been ambivalent on how it looks at disability and disabled soldiers.

While I was still at the Artificial Limb Centre recovering from my wounds, I asked to meet Lieutenant General GG Bewoor, GOC-in-C Southern Command who had hosted a reception for the large number of battle casualties at Pune and Kirkee. As the senior most officer battle casualty on that day; I projected to the Army Commander the issue of war-disabled officers returning to own units and being given command of infantry units if found otherwise fit. The Army Commander surprisingly said this “issue is for doctors to decide!” On my saying that instead of doctors it should be “the COAS and the army commanders to decide”, he said that he did not need advice of persons like me as to how to do his job. You have said something similar in your letter at page 4, para 6.

As a consequence of this view, doctors have been given authority in deciding what a war-disabled soldier 'can do or cannot do', an authority far in excess of their charter. This needs to change. Fortunately there have been Army Chiefs like Sam Manekshaw, General Raina and General Krishna Rao who thought differently and mitigated the concept that war disabled officers had limited utility in the army. Their attitude contributed positively in my long struggle of 7 years to convince the world in general that battle casualties needed to be given an opportunity to command infantry battalions and later on infantry brigades.

Thereafter, promotions opened up with no limit to rank and appointment and officers like YN Sharma, Pankaj Joshi and Vijay Oberoi vindicated the trust reposed on them by the Army. All three rose to the rank of Lieutenant General and the appointment of Army Commander and Vijay Oberoi retired as the Vice Chief of Army Staff. In this matter, General Sam Manekshaw was a great visionary. He directed the MS to set up a committee to look into the improvement of the career prospects battle casualties 'otherwise who would stick their necks in battle in the next war?'

The committee took its own time in coming to a conclusion and recommended a 'status quo' on the existing policy after General Manekshaw had retired. Their recommendations suited the views of the

next Chief – General GG Bewoor! General Prakash Katoch has commented on General Bewoor on other issues and I fully agree with his comments.

During my move in the chain of evacuation after I was wounded I had several bad experiences with officers of the Army Medical Corps. That does not mean that all medical officers are bad. On the contrary, however, I do feel they have been given more powers than they deserve and there is no one to rein them in! Lieutenant General BK Chopra's letter as DG AFMS to the Defence Secretary in December 2014 is direct indictment of his own failures and the failure of army doctors to prevent officers (mostly senior officers including one who happened to be an Army Chief) taking the system for a ride! Worse still, according to your letter, medical officers have themselves taken advantage of their power and authority to cheat the system to benefit themselves. The issue is what action will be taken to punish such miscreants.

In my interaction with the government and the public as Chairman Rehabilitation Council of India, I have always proclaimed the Indian Army as the only institution that effectively punished wrong doers in uniform. Your letter and it's appendices that gives details of how wrongdoing has been carrying on without being punished, is a great disappointment to veterans like us who retired 25 years ago. "Action to withdraw exemption of income tax for all who have been given the concession including battle casualties projects the Army's inability to punish wrongdoers and instead to punish those who were deservedly granted this exemption. Mass punishments, as you would know from your days at the NDA are not only unethical, but also never delivers the right outcomes.

The alacrity with which Government acted on the recommendation of Army HQ on this issue is part of their concerted drive to denigrate and downsize the armed forces. In my interaction with Mr Raghavan, an ex-High Commissioner to Pakistan, on this issue at a seminar at the Lal Bahadur Shastri Academy at Mussoorie in March 2018 is enlightening. I said to him 'Mr Raghavan it looks like you hate us!' his answer floored me. He said, 'General don't you know? We hate you! We have always hated you!' This perhaps explains the committed resolve of the bureaucracy to downsize the Armed Forces. The tragedy is that they have succeeded largely in their efforts in the past few years wherein hard earned privileges have gradually been withdrawn, while Service Chiefs appear to be passive spectators.

In my first interaction on TV on the issue of withdrawal of exemption of income tax on battle casualties, I blamed the bureaucracy for this action. Later, it became known that it was the Army that initiated the case and I was subsequently asked on TV as to what I had to say now? What was I to say? All that I could say was that whoever had done this had done wrong in punishing all battle casualties instead of punishing those who had misused the concession for personal gain. "As our Chief and Head of Family, all army personnel and retired, including our families look up to you to protect their interests, status and well-being of the Army and its personnel. Judging from the 'free-run' that the bureaucracy has had in downsizing the armed forces in recent years; we feel very much let down.

I do hope that the issues stated in your letter highlighting the alleged moral decline in the Army will be examined and action taken to stem the rot. In particular, I hope that the miscreants who have manipulated the system in the exemption of income tax and other issues will be punished. I concur with the views of General Prakash Katoch and General Vijay Oberoi in their letters and articles. Their views and comments need to be addressed."

Exemption of IT for disabled was removed because of the "Army's inability to punish wrongdoers and instead to punish those who were deservedly granted this exemption", as mentioned by General Cardozo. Instead, recourse was taken behind the euphuism of "broad banding" which amounts to a PT/drill instructor punishing the whole course because of missteps by some.

The Army did not bother to find out how many hundreds of civilian and CAPF avail disability pension and are exempt income tax with even below 20% disability. No thought was given for having medical boards in last 4-5 years of service in the sister service or under tri-service arrangements. Why

could inquiries not be held for specific cases where misuse was felt and disability pension stopped if misuse was proved? Applying the so called broad banding to disabled soldiers is morally wrong and unethical. This needs review by the political authority even if the CDS makes it a prestige issue.

The disability pension of Indian Armed Forces was exempt from IT since 1922 for good reason, till the Army created this sub-class of disabled who continued serving. Sitharaman puts the blame on the Army but where is her conscience and how much would removal of IT exemption for disabled soldiers help her economic dreams? She probably only needed to drop a hint to the Army hierarchy. Wonder if she knows that the Indian military currently has higher numerical strength of active duty personnel than the US military but the recipients of disability benefits of US are 4.7 million compared to 0.2 million in India – as tweeted by Major Navdeep Singh.

India's 'deep state' is intent on denigrating and deriding the Armed Forces, waiting to strike at the right moment. Despite the sterling campaign to conquer East Pakistan to liberate Bangladesh and taking 93,000 POWs, the 3rd CPC reduced military pensions from 70% to 50% simultaneously increasing pension of civilians from 30% to 50%. Field Marshal Sam Manekshaw would not have accepted this, so the deep state waited for General GG Bewoor to take over knowing he would not say anything.

Similarly, recommendations of the 7th CPC was objected to by three Service Chiefs being highly discriminatory to Armed Forces bringing their emoluments below that of CAPF and police. MoD waited for them to retire and then directly issued implementation orders from MoD, which are supposed to be issued by Services HQ. General Rawat has endeared himself to the hierarchy for various actions, becoming the first CDS. But while he is focused on military pensions, he needs to address why 22% of civilian defence employees are eating up 45% of the defence pension outlay.

Whether those in MoD, PCDA and ones involved in drafting and issuing the mischievous orders are in contempt of court only the Court can decide but the Government could develop compassion some towards disabled soldiers. The Court needs to abrogate the unethical decision of removing IT exemption for disabled who continued serving. Exemption of IT on disability pension as authorised sine 1922 should continue.

The defence minister needs to stand up for the Armed Forces – the same way he stood up for the CAPF and the police as the Home Minister. Merely asking the PCDA to cancel the mischievous circular, forcing concerned disabled to resort to individually seek refunds does not reduce their misery. Rajnath Singh needs to direct the PCDA to immediately pay full pension through banks to those gifted with Rs 100 and ask for completion report within four to five days.

(The author is veteran Indian Army. Views are personal.)

<https://www.news18.com/news/opinion/banks-decision-to-recover-tax-deduction-from-pensions-a-slap-in-the-face-of-disabled-soldiers-2525791.html>



Thu, 05 March 2020

US Def Secy Mark Esper to meet Rajnath on Mar 16-17

New Delhi: Carrying forward Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Donald Trump's assertion during the latter's visit to India on further strengthening defence and strategic ties, US Defence Secretary Mark Esper will hold bilateral talks with Defence Minister Rajnath Singh here March 16-17. Besides reviewing growing military ties, the two leaders are also expected to focus on

defence trade. At present, India has procured weapons worth over 18 billion dollars in the last few years.

Esper's visit comes days after Modi on February 25 said during the joint press conference with Trump here increasing the bilateral defence and security cooperation is a very key aspect of “one of the most important partnerships” of the 21st century. He also announced that the two countries decided to have comprehensive global partnership thereby giving a strong fillip to strategic ties. Trump announced that the two countries have finalised defence deals worth USD 3 billion and asserted that their focus was on having a comprehensive trade deal.

The relations between the two countries have never been as good as they are now, Trump said, adding that the countries have made “wonderful deal”.

Talking about defence and strategic ties between the two countries, Trump said the US is looking forward to providing India with some of the best and most feared military equipment on the planet.

“We make the greatest weapons ever made: airplanes, missiles, rockets, ships. We make the best. And we're dealing now with India. But this includes advanced air defence systems and armed and unarmed aerial vehicles,” Trump said after announcing the three billion dollar deal for 24 naval multi-role helicopters and six Apache attack helicopters. In this backdrop the Indian and US Defence Ministers will take stock of the defence ties including further enhancing joint training amongst all the three Services and exchange of officers for courses in each other's country.

The two leaders are also likely to review the progress made in further promoting joint ventures to manufacture frontline weapons in India besides access to cutting-edge defence technology of the US, sources said here on Wednesday. These projects come under the ambit Defence Trade and Technology Initiative inked between the two countries some years ago.

India and US are in advanced stage of negotiations for some defence deals and the two defence ministers may also review their progress, officials said. The proposed deals include six more P-8I long-range maritime patrol aircraft (\$1.8 billion), the National Advanced Surface to Air Missile System-II for the missile shield over Delhi (\$1.8 billion), 30 Sea Guardian armed drones (over \$2.5 billion) and 13 big MK-45 naval gun systems for warships (\$1.02 billion).

The US may also push its case for selling their fighter jets F-18, F-15EX (upgraded version of F-16) or F-21 for the big 'Make in India' project to manufacture 114 jets for the IAF.

The proposed contract is worth over 20 billion dollars. The US is also in the race to sell 57 multi-role fighter jets capable of operating from aircraft carriers of the Indian Navy.

As regards the DTTI projects, the two countries have earmarked seven systems for joint development and production. These include air-launched small aerial systems (drone swarms), light-weight small arms technology, intelligence, surveillance, targeting and reconnaissance (ISTAR) systems and anti-drone technology.

<https://www.dailypioneer.com/2020/india/us-def-secy-mark-esper-to-meet-rajnath-on-mar-16-17.html>

Not signing the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty has cost India dear

By M Ramesh

It is not known how many noticed the recent acid attack on disabled soldiers – although some did. For the first time in the history of the country, a few disabled soldiers received the princely sum of Rs 100 as monthly pension; that it was not Re 1 is a wonder.

Apart from losing out on much larger access to clean and cheap nuclear power, it has forced Pakistan to build its own nukes and, thereby, render our conventional military superiority irrelevant

Exactly 50 years back to this day (March 5) the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) came into force, essentially drawing a red line between nuclear haves and have-nots and disallowing the latter to cross over. India did not like this inequity and decided to stay out. Up on the moral high ground, it is nice and cosy.

Half a century down the line it is good time to reflect upon that decision. Dug-in heels has caused India to remain stuck. If India had signed the Treaty, it would probably have had — let's guess — ten times more than the 6,780 MW of nuclear power that it has today. Nuclear power, if one goes strictly by the book, is safe — and also clean and cheap. Imagine the multiplier effect of, say, 60,000 MW of clean, cheap electric power on the economy.

In the absence of any assistance from abroad, India has struggled to bootstrap itself up the greasy pole of technology. A good example is the 500 MW Prototype Fast Breeder Reactor that India began building in 2004 and is yet to complete — apparently, because of the fear of handling the tricky coolant, liquid sodium.

A successful PFBR campaign would have armed India with technology and confidence to build a dozen more, removing the constraint of low availability of domestic uranium (because a by-product of the breeder reactors is more nuclear fuel for other reactors.)

Not signing the NPT, therefore, meant a measly 6,870 MW in half a century.

But that is still beside the point. There was some inevitability to India not wasting ink on signing a veritably iniquitous Treaty. The Treaty was opened for signature in 1968, only three years after India defended itself successfully against a better armed Pakistan, which had assumed India to be vulnerable after having been emaciated by a war with China three years earlier.

Indian leaders must have retained a tactile memory of the 1965 war when they planned to build nukes to discourage future aggression by the hostile neighbour. At such a time, if somebody had asked India to give up the idea of building nuclear weapons, especially when Pakistan's backers were rich with them, India would have dismissed it outright.

Then came the 1971 conflict, which strengthened India's resolve to fortify itself with deterrent weapons. And so, in 1974, the Smiling Buddha exploded in the Rajasthan desert, not only causing the nuclear haves to huddle into a Nuclear Suppliers Group but also forcing Pakistan to build its own nukes, even if had to "eat grass".

But when India and Pakistan became nuclear weapon owners, it rendered India's conventional military superiority irrelevant. If India had signed the NPT, it is difficult to see Pakistan being assisted by China to kick the equaliser goal with India — and India would have retained the military edge.

Perhaps the presence of nukes on both sides of the border kept an uneasy peace, but still India was the loser because it lost the power over a junior opponent. It had to be mindful of the finger on the trigger in Islamabad. It was not until Balakot last year that India could call Pakistan's nuclear bluff.

Thus the status of 'a great nation that stood its moral ground' — assuming that India has it — has come with a heavy price tag.

However, all this is with the benefit of hindsight. Back in March 1970 who could have predicted this course of history?

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/opinion/not-signing-the-nuclear-non-proliferation-treaty-has-cost-india-dear/article30980267.ece#>



Thu, 05 March 2020

Chandrayaan-3 to be launched in first half of 2021: Govt

Chandrayaan-III mission has been configured based on the lessons learnt from Chandrayaan-II, says MoS Jitendra Singh

New Delhi: It is not known how many noticed the recent acid attack on disabled soldiers – although some did. For the first time in the history of the country, a few disabled soldiers received the princely sum of Rs 100 as monthly pension; that it was not Re 1 is a wonder.

Chandrayaan-3 will be launched in the first half of 2021, Union Minister Jitendra Singh said, indicating that there could be a slight delay in the launch of the third moon mission.

In written response to a question in Lok Sabha, Minister of State in the Prime Minister's Office Mr. Singh said four biological and two physical science experiments related to microgravity will be conducted during the Gaganyaan project, India's manned mission to space.

Mr. Singh said the revised configuration takes care of the robustness in design, capacity enhancement for mission flexibility and at the same time retained the heritage of Chandrayaan-II to the extent possible.

"The tentative launch schedule for Chandrayaan-III is first half of 2021. Chandrayaan-III mission has been configured based on the lessons learnt from Chandrayaan-II," Mr. Singh said.

Chandrayaan-II hard-landed on lunar surface last year.

The Indian Space Research Organisation had then resolved to launch the project again. It had said the project is likely to be launched by the end of the year.

Elaborating on the progress made on Gaganyaan, Mr. Singh said hardware realisation has commenced for ground test and space flight training of four astronaut candidates has also commenced.

"Four biological and two physical science experiments related to microgravity from academic institutions are short-listed..." Mr. Singh said.

National collaboration for design, development and delivery of human centric products such as crew medical kit, crew health monitoring system, emergency survival kit, dosimeters, earmuffs and fire suppression system has started, Mr. Singh said.

A three-week training programme for flight surgeon was also completed at ISRO with participation of CNES, the space agency of France, he added.

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/chandrayaan-3-to-be-launched-in-first-half-of-2021-govt/article30981976.ece>

ISRO postpones launch of top-notch imagery satellite

Bengaluru: India on Wednesday postponed the launch of its latest earth observation satellite “GISAT-1” onboard powerful geosynchronous rocket due to “technical reasons”, a day before its scheduled lift-off from the spaceport of Sriharikota in Andhra Pradesh.

“The launch of GISAT-1 onboard GSLV-F10, planned for March 5, 2020, is postponed due to technical reasons. Revised launch date will be informed in due course,” the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) said in a statement.

The city-headquartered space agency, however, did not elaborate on the technical reasons that forced the postponement of its first launch this year from Sriharikota.

The 2,268-kg “state-of-the-art agile” Geo Imaging satellite that would operate from geostationary orbit was tipped to continuously observe land, ocean and atmospheric parameters at high resolution and send near real time images of earth immediately unlike remote sensing satellites which would take at least 14 days. — PTI

‘Chandrayaan-3 in first half of 2021’

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- He indicated that there could be a slight delay in the launch of the third moon mission
- In written response to a question in LS, he said four biological and two physical science experiments related to microgravity would be conducted during the Gaganyaan project. PTi

<https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/isro-postpones-launch-of-top-notch-imagery-satellite-50902>