

एलएसी पर बढ़ेगी भारत की ताकत

नई दिल्ली, (पंजाब केसरी): वास्तविक नियंत्रण रेखा पर भारतीय सेना को एक और बड़ी ताकत मिलने जा रही है। लद्दाख में चीन के सामने तैनात भारतीय बलों को जल्द ही देश में बना टैंक 'जोरावर' मिलने जा रहा है। इस टैंक को भारत की प्रमुख डिफेंस रिसर्च एजेंसी रक्षा अनुसंधान और विकास संगठन (डीआरडीओ) और निजी क्षेत्र की फर्म लार्सन एंड टूब्रो (एलएंडटी) ने बनाया है। स्वदेशी लाइट टैंक जोरावर अपने ट्रायल के एडवांस स्टेज में हैं। इस बेहद एडवांस फीचर वाले टैंक को दो साल में तैयार किया है। सबसे खास बात ये है कि इन टैंकों को चीन के सामने सीमा पर तैनात किया जाएगा। यह टैंक हल्का और तेज होने के कारण पहाड़ी क्षेत्रों में विशेष रूप से उपयोगी है। जोरावर को भारतीय सेना की आवश्यकताओं के अनुसार विकसित किया गया है ताकि उच्च ऊंचाई वाले क्षेत्रों में इसकी तैनाती आसानी से की जा सके। इसके डिजाइन और निर्माण में नवीनतम तकनीकों का उपयोग किया गया है। डीआरडीओ प्रमुख डॉ. समीर वी. कामत ने शनिवार को गुजरात के हजीरा स्थित लार्सन एंड टूब्रो संयंत्र में प्रोजेक्ट की प्रोग्रेस खुद चेक की।



Satellite images show China digging in close to Pangong

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NEW DELHI: China's military is digging in for the long haul in the area around Pangong Lake in eastern Ladakh, having constructed underground bunkers to store weapons and fuel and hardened shelters for armoured vehicles at a key base in the region, according to satellite images.


The People's Liberation Army (PLA) base at Sirijap, nestled amid mountains on the northern shore of Pangong Lake, is the headquarters for Chinese troops stationed around the lake and was built in an area claimed by India and located about 5km from the Line of Actual Control (LAC). Till the start of the standoff on the LAC in May 2020, this region was almost completely devoid of human habitation.

The base, built during 2021-22, has underground bunkers that can be used to store weapon systems, fuel or other supplies, according to images provided by BlackSky, a US-based firm capable of capturing images 15 times a day with its satellites. One image, captured on May 30, clearly shows the eight sloping entrances to a large underground bunker. Another smaller bunker, with five entrances, is located near the larger one.

Besides several large buildings for the headquarters, the base has hardened shelters or covered parking for armoured vehicles deployed in the area. These shelters are meant to protect vehicles from air strikes using precision-guided munitions, experts said.

"The base hosts an expanse of armoured vehicle storage facilities, test ranges and fuel

continued on 710



The Indian Express,
Page-08, 06th July 2024

2 Gaganyaan astronauts to go to ISS aboard the Axiom-4 mission

ANONNA DUTT
NEW DELHI, JULY 5

THE INDIAN Space Research Organisation has selected two of its four trained Gaganyaan astronauts to go to the International Space Station (ISS) in collaboration with National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) later this year, said officials familiar with the matter.

The mission will take place "no earlier than October 2024," according to the information available on NASA website. The astronauts will have to go to the United States ahead of the mission to train on the specifics of the ISS, said one of the officials quoted above. "While they have general training for space-fairing, much of their training in India focussed on Gaganyaan modules. They will have to be familiarised with ISS modules and protocols," the official said.

The Axiom-4 mission, which will take the Indian astronauts to the ISS, is the fourth private astronaut mission of NASA and a private US company Axiom Space. The mission is expected to dock with the ISS for fourteen

days. At the time when the Axiom-4 mission was announced last year, NASA in a release had said: "The Ax-4 crew members will train with NASA, international partners, and SpaceX for their flight. Axiom Space has contracted SpaceX as launch provider for transportation to and from the space station, and to familiarize the private astronauts with systems, procedures, and emergency preparedness for the Dragon spacecraft."

This has been in the works for a while. Last year, a joint statement by India and US during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to the US had said that NASA would provide advance training to Indian astronauts. Later the same year, NASA administrator Bill Nelson during his Delhi visit had said that the space agency will train an Indian astronaut for a mission to the International Space Station by 2024 end.

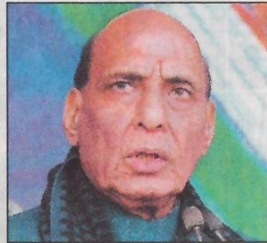
India's own human space-flight is unlikely to take place before 2025, with the first unmanned flight still to take off. The first flight carrying humans will be launched only after two successful unmanned flights.

Punjab Kesari, Page-04, 06th July 2024

देश का रक्षा उत्पादन 1.27 लाख करोड़ के रिकॉर्ड स्तर पर पहुंचा

नयी दिल्ली, (पंजाब केसरी): रक्षा मंत्री राजनाथ सिंह ने शुक्रवार को कहा कि भारत का वार्षिक रक्षा उत्पादन 2023-24 में करीब 1.27 लाख करोड़ रुपये के रिकॉर्ड स्तर पर पहुंच गया तथा यह 'मेक इन इंडिया' कार्यक्रम में एक और उपलब्धि है। वित्त वर्ष 2022-23 में रक्षा उत्पादन का मूल्य 1,08,684 करोड़ रुपये था। सिंह ने सोशल मीडिया मंच 'एक्स' पर लिखा कि भारत को एक अग्रणी वैश्विक रक्षा विनिर्माण केंद्र के रूप में विकसित करने के लिए सरकार अधिक अनुकूल व्यवस्था बनाने को प्रतिबद्ध है।

रक्षा मंत्रालय की ओर से शुक्रवार को जारी बयान के अनुसार, " रक्षा मंत्रालय ने प्रधानमंत्री नरेन्द्र मोदी नीत सरकार की नीतियों और पहलों के सफल कार्यान्वयन के आधार पर, 'आत्मनिर्भरता' प्राप्त करने पर ध्यान केंद्रित करते हुए वित्त वर्ष 2023-24 में मूल्य के संदर्भ में स्वदेशी रक्षा उत्पादन में अभी तक की सर्वाधिक वृद्धि हासिल की है।" इसमें कहा



गया कि 2023-24 में वार्षिक रक्षा उत्पादन करीब 1.27 लाख करोड़ रुपये के रिकॉर्ड स्तर पर पहुंच गया। बयान में कहा गया, " सभी रक्षा सार्वजनिक क्षेत्र उपक्रमों (डीपीएसयू), रक्षा सामग्री बनाने वाले अन्य सार्वजनिक क्षेत्र उपक्रमों और निजी कंपनियों से प्राप्त आंकड़ों के अनुसार देश में रक्षा उत्पादन का मूल्य रिकॉर्ड स्तर अर्थात 1,26,887 करोड़ रुपये तक पहुंच गया है। यह गत वित्त वर्ष के रक्षा उत्पादन की तुलना में 16.7 प्रतिशत की वृद्धि दर्शाता है।" सिंह ने इस उपलब्धि के लिए रक्षा क्षेत्र के सार्वजनिक उपक्रमों तथा रक्षा सामग्री बनाने वाले अन्य

मजबूत सुरक्षा तंत्र के साथ-साथ देश आत्मनिर्भर भी बनेगा : पीएम मोदी

प्रधानमंत्री नरेन्द्र मोदी ने शुक्रवार को कहा कि भारत को एक अग्रणी वैश्विक रक्षा विनिर्माण केंद्र के रूप में स्थापित करने के लिए सरकार एक सहायक वातावरण तैयार करने के लिए पूरी तरह से प्रतिबद्ध है और इससे सुरक्षा तंत्र को तो मजबूती मिलेगी ही, यह देश को आत्मनिर्भर भी बनाएगा। प्रधानमंत्री ने रक्षा मंत्री राजनाथ सिंह की ओर से 'एक्स' पर पोस्ट की उस जानकारी पर प्रतिक्रिया देते हुए यह बात कही जिसमें उन्होंने बताया कि भारत ने 2023-24 में रक्षा उत्पादन के मूल्य में अब तक की सबसे अधिक वृद्धि दर्ज की है। प्रधानमंत्री ने इसके जवाब में कहा, "बहुत उत्साहजनक घटनाक्रम। उन सभी को बधाई जिन्होंने इस उपलब्धि में योगदान दिया है। हम अपनी क्षमताओं को और बढ़ाने तथा भारत को एक अग्रणी वैश्विक रक्षा विनिर्माण केंद्र के रूप में स्थापित करने के मकसद से एक सहायक वातावरण तैयार करने के लिए पूरी तरह से प्रतिबद्ध हैं। यह हमारे सुरक्षा तंत्र को बढ़ाएगा और हमें आत्मनिर्भर बनाएगा।"



सार्वजनिक क्षेत्र के उपक्रमों सहित भारतीय उद्योग व निजी उद्योग को भी बधाई दी।

उन्होंने कहा, " प्रधानमंत्री नरेन्द्र मोदी के नेतृत्व में 'मेक इन इंडिया' कार्यक्रम हर साल नये कीर्तिमान स्थापित कर रहा है।" सिंह ने 'एक्स'

पर लिखा, " भारत ने 2023-24 में रक्षा उत्पादन के मूल्य में अभी तक की सर्वाधिक वृद्धि दर्ज की है। रक्षा उत्पादन 2023-24 में 1,26,887 करोड़ रुपये तक पहुंच गया, जो पिछले वित्त वर्ष के उत्पादन के मूल्य से 16.8 प्रतिशत अधिक है।"

AN INTEGRATED UAV IN THE TANK TO ENHANCE VISIBILITY

India Unveils Light Battle Tank for Ladakh-like Terrain

Zorawar developed in two years by DRDO-L&T; Likely to be inducted by 2027 after trials

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Hazira (Gujarat): India has unveiled its first indigenously designed and developed light battle tank that will be capable of delivering devastating firepower at high altitude battlefields and operating in all-weather conditions.

Developed in a record time of under two years in response to Chinese armoured deployments in Eastern Ladakh, the 25 ton tank named 'Zorawar' is the result of a public-private partnership between DRDO and L&T.

DRDO Chief Samir V Kamat reviewed the project at the L&T production facility in Hazira on Saturday, with the Zorawar carrying out high speed ground tests and showcasing its ability to transverse high incline slopes.

Next, the tank will head to a specialised

track near Chennai where it will be thoroughly tested in all conditions, following which it will be offered to the Army for trials.

"We have to go through summer trials and winter trials and there will also be high altitude trials. In my estimation, it will take about a year to year and a half to complete the full cycle of trials. I would say that by 2027 we should get the first tank into service," Kamat said after reviewing the project.

He added that the short developmental cycle has been achieved as DRDO synergised its capabilities with the industry. L&T's JD Patil said that the short development time is a world record when it comes to such a system. He added that it took the company just 19 months to get the tank running for tests from when the contract was awarded by DRDO.

"This partnership example provides the way ahead for development of

complex systems / platforms indigenously through Synergy of strengths between both strong partners - DRDO and L&T, leveraging each other's proven capabilities and track record to accomplish the development, complete first set of track trials and concurrently achieve production readiness of high order under two years," Patil said.

The need for a light tank was felt after tensions built up in eastern Ladakh in 2020 and China deployed light armour at high altitude locations. Following consultations with the Army, the DRDO in April 2022 initiated its development with L&T.

Named Zorawar by the Army the tank has more mobility and higher accuracy fire power than the Chinese Type 15 tanks that have been deployed on the Ladakh border.

The weight of the tank has been kept at 25 tons for higher mobility at extreme altitudes and will feature a 105 mm gun made by

John Cockerill, which will also be produced in India.

It features active protection against attacks and has an integrated Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) that will greatly enhance battlefield visibility.

The project ran into a slight delay last year after Germany held back export clearances for the tank engine that was placed by India. After repeated delays in German government clearances for the export, an American alternative was chosen for the project that brought the development back on track.

The Army has a requirement of 354 light tanks, which can be deployed at high altitude areas of Ladakh. For now, 59 are to be made by L&T-DRDO.



Dainik Jagran, Page-09, 07th July 2024

'खड़ी पहाड़ी पर आसानी से चढ़ जाएगा भारत का 'जोरावर'

हजीरा, एएनआइ: भारत की सैन्य क्षमता लगातार मजबूत हो रही है। इसी क्रम में दो वर्ष के रिकार्ड समय में स्वदेशी हल्के टैंक का परीक्षण किया है, जो खड़ी पहाड़ी पर आसानी से चढ़ सकता है। चीन के साथ सीमा विवाद के बीच वास्तविक नियंत्रण रेखा (एलएसी) पर सेना की लड़ाकू क्षमताओं को बढ़ाने के लिए बनाया गया यह टैंक रक्षा क्षेत्र में आत्मनिर्भरता के पथ पर बढ़ते भारत की शक्ति का प्रमाण है।

इस टैंक के सेना में शामिल होने के बाद पूर्व लद्दाख के ऊंचाई वाले क्षेत्रों में भारत की ताकत और बढ़ेगी। चीन ने इस क्षेत्र में इसी तरह के टैंकों को तैनात कर रखा है। गलवन में चीन से झड़प के बाद तनाव के बीच लद्दाख सीमा पर इस टैंक की जरूरत महसूस हो रही थी। इस टैंक का नाम जोरावर रखा गया है। डोगरा राजवंश के जनरल जोरावर सिंह के नाम पर यह नाम रखा गया है। जनरल जोरावर ने पश्चिमी तिब्बत में सैन्य

चीन को मुंहतोड़ जवाब देने के लिए तैयार है भारत

भारत चीन को मुंहतोड़ जवाब देने के लिए तैयार है। पूर्वी लद्दाख में गलवान घाटी में हुई झड़पों के बाद से भारत ने युद्ध क्षमताओं को बढ़ाने के लिए कई कदम उठाए हैं। इसने अरुणाचल सहित एलएसी के साथ पहाड़ी क्षेत्रों में आसानी से परिवहन योग्य एम-777 अल्ट्रा लाइट हावित्जर तोपों की बड़ी संख्या में तैनात की है। सेना ने पूर्वी लद्दाख में टी-90 और टी-72 जैसे भारी टैंक भी तैनात किए हैं। सीमा पर के-9 वज्र ट्रैक्टर सेल्फ-प्रोपेल्ड हावित्जर को भी तैनात कर दिया है।

अभियानों का नेतृत्व किया था।

रक्षा अनुसंधान एवं विकास संगठन (डीआरडीओ) और प्राइवेट कंपनी लार्सन एंड टुब्रो (एलएंडटी) ने इस टैंक को विकसित किया है। टैंक का प्रारंभिक परीक्षण गुजरात के हजीरा स्थित संयंत्र में किया गया।

● दो वर्ष के रिकार्ड समय में किया गया परीक्षण, 2027 में सेना में शामिल होने की है उम्मीद

● पूर्वी लद्दाख में तैनात चीन के टैंकों से मुकाबले के लिए बनाया गया है 'जोरावर'



डीआरडीओ एवं निजी कंपनी लार्सन एंड टुब्रो द्वारा विकसित टैंक जोरावर ● एएनआइ

डीआरडीओ के प्रमुख डा. समीर वी. कामत ने गुजरात के हजीरा स्थित एलएंडटी संयंत्र में परियोजना की प्रगति की समीक्षा की। डा. कामत ने कहा कि 2027 में इस टैंक को सेना में शामिल किया जा सकता है। भारतीय सेना 350 से अधिक

हल्के टैंकों की तैनाती पर विचार कर रही है, जिनमें से अधिकतर को पहाड़ी सीमावर्ती क्षेत्रों में तैनात किया जाएगा। शुरू में सेना को 59 टैंक दिए जाएंगे। वायुसेना सी-17 श्रेणी के परिवहन विमान में एक बार में दो टैंकों की आपूर्ति कर सकती है

जोरावर की खूबियां

- इसे लद्दाख जैसे ऊंचाई वाले क्षेत्रों के लिए डिजाइन किया गया है।
- वजन सिर्फ 25 टन है, जो टी-90 जैसे भारी टैंकों का आधा है।
- फील्ड आर्टिलरी- एफवी433, 105 एमएम है, इसमें तीन लोग बैठ सकते हैं।
- इसकी ताकत एक हजार हार्स पावर और स्पीड-70 किलोमीटर प्रतिघंटा है।

क्योंकि यह टैंक हल्का है और इसे पहाड़ी घाटियों में उच्च गति से चलाया जा सकता है। डीआरडीओ प्रमुख ने बताया, दो से दई साल में हमने न केवल इस टैंक को डिजाइन किया है, बल्कि इसका पहला प्रोटोटाइप भी बनाया है।

The Economic Times,
Page-02, 08th July 2024

ADDING STEALTH TO CONVENTIONAL BOAT

Indian Submarines Set for Indigenous Edge in Open Seas

Air-independent propulsion is ready, will be fitted in first submarine next year: Sr DRDO scientist

Manu Pabby

Hazira (Gujarat): An indigenously developed air-independent propulsion (AIP) system that will significantly increase underwater endurance of conventional submarines is ready and will be fitted onboard the first submarine next year, a senior DRDO scientist in charge of the project has said.

An AIP system adds significant stealth to conventional submarines, greatly enhancing operational effectiveness. It increases the ability of a submarine to stay underwater from a matter of a few days to almost two weeks, giving it a big edge in the open seas.

DRDO chief Samir Kamat inaugurated an AIP Integration and Testing facility at L&T's AM Naik Heavy Engineering Complex on Saturday. The advanced system will be manufactured and tested at the complex over the next year, before being fitted onboard the submarine at Mazagon Dockyard Limited (MDL).

Suman Roy Choudhury, programme director, AIP, Naval Materials Research Laboratory (NMRL), said the AIP would be fitted onboard INS Kalvari submarine when it comes in for its first major refit in September next year.

The Kalvari is the first of the

Scorpene line of submarines made by MDL and has been selected for the complex procedure that will involve cutting the boat into two halves and inserting a new AIP section. The section will increase the length and weight of the submarines, requiring a procedure that will be done with the assistance of its original manufacturer, France's Naval Group.

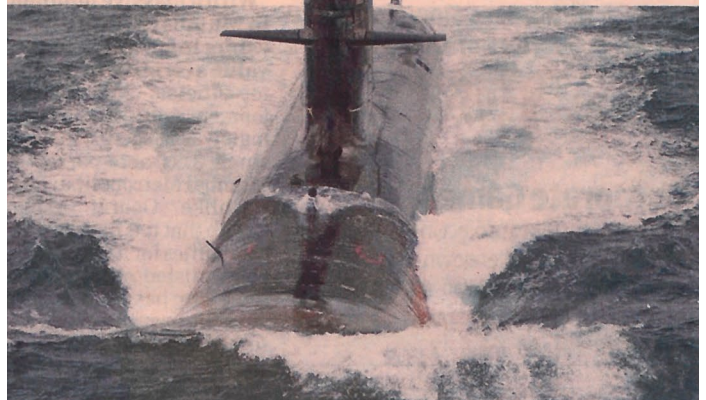
Once proven successful, the AIP can be fitted onboard five more Kalvari class submarines as and when they come in for their major refit to MDL. Successful integration of the AIP on time could also mean that the additional three Kalvari class submarines that are currently under price negotiations with MDL could also have the system from the very beginning.

Developed by DRDO in partnership with private sector players like L&T, the AIP has undergone extensive trials and a shore-based version was demonstrated to the Navy. DRDO has gone for a fuel cell-based AIP, which has high safety margins and better performance than many other such systems available globally.

A COMPLEX PROCEDURE



Kalvari, first of Scorpene line of submarines made by MDL, has been selected for the complex procedure that will involve cutting boat into two halves and inserting a new AIP section



{ 2023-2024 }

Defence production hits record high of ₹1.27L-cr

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NEW DELHI: India recorded the highest ever growth in the value of local defence production in the financial year 2023-24 on the back of enabling policy measures, with the figure reaching almost ₹1.27 lakh crore, defence minister Rajnath Singh announced on Friday.

The development, hailed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, comes at a time when the country is pursuing an ambitious agenda for achieving self-reliance in the defence manufacturing sector.

Of the total value of production in 2023-24, 79.2% was contributed by defence public sector undertakings and other PSUs,

Shot in the arm for forces

₹1,26,887 crore
Value of local defence production in 2023-24

₹21,083 crore
worth exports



Many congratulations to our industry... The Government is committed to create more conducive regime for developing India as leading Global Defence Manufacturing Hub. — **Rajnath Singh**, defence minister

and the remaining 20.8% by the private sector, the defence ministry said in a statement.

The value of defence production is around 17% higher than in the previous financial year.

The Make in India programme is crossing new milestones, year after year, Singh wrote on X. "The value of production has reached ₹1,26,887 crore in 2023-24 which is 16.8%

higher than the value of production in the previous financial year. Many congratulations to our industry including DPSUs, other PSUs manufacturing defence items and the private industry. The Government is committed to create more conducive regime for developing India as leading Global Defence Manufacturing Hub," he said.

India produces a raft of weapons and systems, including the Tejas light combat aircraft (LCA), different types of helicopters, warships, tanks, artillery guns, missiles, rockets and a variety of military vehicles.

Praising the development, Modi said India was committed to enhancing its defence capabilities. "Very encouraging develop-

ment. Compliments to all those who have contributed to this feat. We are fully committed to nurturing a supportive environment to further enhance our capabilities and establish India as a leading global defence manufacturing hub. This will enhance our security apparatus and make us Aatmanirbhar," he wrote on X.

The feat was achieved because of policy reforms and the ease of doing business brought in by the government during the last 10 years, the ministry statement said.

Defence exports touched a record-high of ₹21,083 crore in FY 2023-24, reflecting a growth of 32.5% over the last fiscal when the figure was ₹15,920 crore, it added.

At ₹1.27 lakh crore, defence production registered a new high in 2023-24, says Centre

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The country has recorded the highest-ever growth in indigenous defence production in value terms in the financial year (FY) 2023-24, the Defence Ministry said on Friday.

As per the data received from all Defence Public Sector undertakings (DPSUs), other PSUs manufacturing defence items, and private companies, the value of defence production in the country has gone up to a record-high figure of ₹1,26,887 crore, reflecting a growth of 16.7% over the defence production of the previous financial year, the Ministry said in a statement.

The value of defence production in FY 2022-23 was ₹1,08,684 crore.

"Of the total value of production [VoP] in 2023-24, about 79.2% has been contributed by DPSUs/other PSUs and 20.8% by the private sector. The data show that in terms of abso-



FY24's figure reflected a growth of 16.7% over the previous year's defence production.

lute value, both DPSUs/PSUs and private sector have recorded a steady growth in defence production," the statement said.

The feat has been achieved due to the policy reforms, initiatives and ease of doing business brought in by the government in the past 10 years with a focus on attaining self-reliance, it stated.

New milestones

"The Make in India programme is crossing new milestones, year after year,

under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Many congratulations to our industry including DPSUs, other PSUs manufacturing defence items and the private industry. The government is committed to creating more conducive regime for developing India as a leading global defence manufacturing hub," Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said on X.

In addition, the spiralling defence exports have contributed tremendously to the overall growth in indigenous defence production, the Ministry pointed out.

Defence exports touched a record-high of ₹21,083 crore in FY 2023-24, reflecting a growth of 32.5% over the last fiscal when the figure was ₹15,920 crore.

In the past five years (since 2019-20), the value of defence production has been increasing steadily, and has grown by over 60%, the statement added.

The Hindu, Page-10,
06th July 2024

Forces seek to raise Agnipath age limit, increase retention

Rahul Singh

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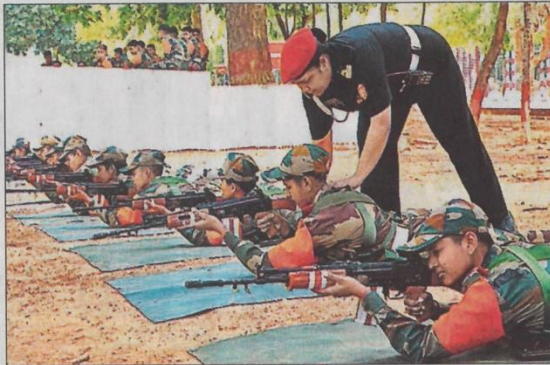
NEW DELHI: The armed forces are expected to suggest to the government that the age ceiling for Agnipath inductees be raised to 23, and that at least 50% be retained after four years, senior military officials aware of the matter said on Friday.

The officials, who asked not to be named, attributed the suggested changes in the controversial scheme for recruiting soldiers that was introduced two years ago to a desire to boost "combat effectiveness". The scheme has come under fire from aspirants across the country and especially the northern states, and is believed to have lost the Bharatiya Janata Party some votes across the region in the summer's national election.

The proposed overhaul of Agnipath, which will have to be approved by the government, is being sought at a time when the scheme has ignited a firestorm of controversy and deepened the political divide over its impact on national security.

The first modification of the scheme that the armed forces are planning to propose to the government is for raising the upper age limit from 21 to 23 to induct graduates who can be groomed for technical jobs in the three services, said one of the officials cited above.

The second one is for the retention of at least 50% Agniveers in service, as against the current 25%, to hedge against a



The overhaul of Agnipath scheme is being sought at a time when the scheme has ignited a firestorm of controversy. PIB

manpower crunch in specialised areas, said a second official.

"These changes are essential to bolster combat effectiveness," said the first official. "The three services used to induct graduates in big numbers under the legacy recruitment system. There is a need to raise the age limit by two years to allow graduates to apply."

Only young men and women aged between 17 and a half and 21 are eligible under the scheme that seeks to recruit soldiers for only four years, with a provision of retaining 25% of them in regular service for another 15 years.

Under the legacy system, applicants aged between 17 and a half and 23 could apply for technical positions even though the upper age limit was 21 for general duty. Soldiers recruited under legacy recruitment system serve for about 20 years before they retire in their late 30s with pension and

other benefits, which Agniveers released from service after four years are not entitled to.

The low retention rate can lead to a manpower crunch in critical streams, said a third official. "If X number of Agniveers are assigned to a particular technical stream and none of them are among the 25% soldiers retained in service, it will lead to a huge void in those areas. The retention rate needs to be raised to avoid this. The scheme must address issues related to better management of trained manpower," he said.

The row swirling around the scheme deepened on Thursday after former navy chief Admiral KB Singh criticised the recruitment model, saying it will "degrade the combat effectiveness" of the military. "The only motivation driving the Agnipath is reducing the pension bill. The

fact that this scheme will degrade combat effectiveness is known to all who understand national security," he wrote on X, in response to a post on the subject by another former navy chief, Admiral Arun Prakash.

Singh's comments are significant because he was among the key figures involved in discussions on the Agnipath proposal and retired from the top job in November 2021, months before the government announced the scheme in June 2022.

Earlier this week, Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi released a video purportedly of the father of an Agniveer, saying the family had not received any compensation from the Centre after his son was killed in a landmine explosion in Naushera in Jammu & Kashmir in January. The army, however, rebutted this, saying a chunk of the compensation was paid to the next of kin of Agniveer Ajay Kumar and the rest would be disbursed shortly.

The scheme was also at the centre of an intense debate in Parliament recently, with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and other senior ministers accusing the Congress of spreading lies about the recruitment model. Earlier this week, Gandhi attacked the government in Lok Sabha over the scheme, claiming that the Agniveers recruited under it were not granted the status of martyrs and were akin to "use and throw" labour. To be sure, there is no official "martyr" status that is granted to any soldier.

AGNIVEER DIES BY SUICIDE AT AGRA AIR FORCE STATION

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AGRA: A 22-year-old Agniveer allegedly died by suicide at the Air Force Station in Agra on Wednesday, police said on Friday.

The Agniveer, who had joined the Indian Air Force (IAF) in 2022 and was posted in Agra six months ago, shot himself using his service rifle at the Air Force Station. While no suicide note was found on the spot, a detailed probe is underway, police added.

The deceased was a resident of Narayanpur village in Ballia district of Uttar Pradesh.

"The Agniveer allegedly died by suicide by shooting himself with his INSAS rifle at about 1.30 am on Wednesday. No suicide note was found. IAF officials informed Shahganj police he was taken to a hospital where he was declared dead," assistant commissioner of police (Loha Mandi circle) Mayank Tiwari said.

"The deceased's family was informed and his brother-in-law and others arrived in Agra on Wednesday. A post mortem was carried out at SN Medical College and the body was handed over to his family. A probe is underway," he added.

HELP IS JUST A CALL AWAY

SNEHI: 011-65978181

SUMAITRI: 011-46018404

'Indo-Russian venture delivered 35,000 assault rifles to MoD'

Dinakar Peri
NEW DELHI

Just ahead of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Russia, the Indo-Russian Rifles Private Limited (IRRPL), a joint venture between the two countries, has produced and transferred 35,000 Kalashnikov AK-203 assault rifles to the Indian Ministry of Defence; Rostec state corporation of Russia announced on Friday.

"The IRRPL joint venture, co-founded by Roboronexport on the Russian side, has completed the first phase of the project to produce AK-203 Kalashnikov assault rifles in India. To increase the degree of localization, all necessary equipment has been shipped to the Korwa Ordnance Factory in Amethi, Uttar Pradesh state, and production facilities are now fully equipped," said Alexander Mikheev, Director General of Roboronexport in a statement.

"This made it possible to produce and deliver a

batch of 35,000 Kalashnikov assault rifles to the Indian Army within the timeframe agreed with the Ministry of Defence of India."

Mr. Modi is scheduled to visit Russia on July 8 and 9 for the 22nd annual summit.

As reported by *The Hindu* in May, the initial lot has been handed over to various Army Units and the later batches are being inspected and will be handed very soon.

Under an over ₹5,000 crore contract signed in July 2021, over 6.1 lakh AK-203 assault rifles are to be manufactured in India with technology transfer from Russia, by a joint venture Indo-Russian Rifles Private Limited (IRRPL).

As reported by *The Hindu* earlier, as per contractual terms, the first 70,000 rifles will be produced in India with a phased increase in the extent of localisation from 5% to 70%. The remaining rifles will be produced with 100% localisation.

