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Press Information Bureau
Government of India

Ministry of Defence

Sun, 11 Feb 2024

Indian Navy's Annual Refit Conference (ARC 24) and Annual Infrastructure Conference (AIC 24)

Indian Navy's Annual Refit Conference 24 (ARC 24) and Annual Infrastructure Conference 24 (AIC 24) were conducted on 08 – 09 Feb 24 at Naval Dockyard, Mumbai, under the Chairmanship of VAdm Kiran Deshmukh, Chief of Materiel. Refit Plans of Indian Naval Ships & Submarines, augmentation of infrastructure to meet the maintenance requirements of the new ships and submarines being inducted, Materiel Cooperation with Friendly Foreign Countries & digital solutions being implemented in enhancing maintenance were discussed. Foreseeable challenges in Maintenance of Indian Navy's Platforms & their solutions, including changes at the Strategic level required to make Refit & Repair Processes efficient were also deliberated.

The Chief of Materiel complimented all Naval Dockyards & Repair Yards for the efforts in successfully ensuring enhanced operational availability of naval assets. He also highlighted the importance of all Logistics & Maintenance Organisations to be more agile by harnessing new technology & efficient work processes, as also the requirement for modernisation of marine assets & yard infrastructure.

During the AIC, progress of various Technical and Marine Infrastructure projects was reviewed by the Chief of Materiel. He emphasised the need to develop 'Future Ready' repair and support infrastructure while modernising and revitalising the existing infrastructure. He expressed happiness with the progress made in the ongoing infrastructure projects and appreciated the completion of various projects in the previous year including the Wet Basin and Refit Jetty at Port Blair.

VAdm Sanjay J Singh, The Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief Western Naval Command, addressing the forum complemented the efforts put in by all concerned in ensuring enhanced operational availability of platforms and emphasised the need to maintain the focus towards supporting heightened operational readiness, upskilling of workforce to develop expertise in new inductions and attention to information security.

The conference was attended by delegates from Naval Headquarters, the three Naval Commands, the Tri-Services Andaman and Nicobar Command, Director General Naval Projects, Naval Dockyards, Repair Yards and Material Organisations of the Indian Navy.

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2005034>



**Press Information Bureau
Government of India**

Ministry of Defence

Fri, 09 Feb 2024

Adm R Hari Kumar Chief of the Naval Staff Visit to Andaman and Nicobar Command (ANC)

Adm R Hari Kumar, Chief of the Naval Staff accompanied by Mrs Kala Hari Kumar, President (NWWA) visited Andaman and Nicobar Command (ANC) from 06 to 09 Feb 2024. They were received in Port Blair by Air Marshal Saju Balakrishnan, Commander-in-Chief, Andaman & Nicobar Command (CINCAN) and Mrs Latha Saju, President DWWA (A&N Region).

The CNS visited HQ ANC and was briefed on the role and significance of India's only operational Joint Services Command. The CINCAN highlighted the Geo-strategic potential of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands emphasizing ANC's role in supporting military operations and contributing to 'Act East' Policy. The CNS also visited Vijay Baugh and laid the foundation stone for sailors' accommodation in presence of CINCAN and senior leadership of HQ ANC. He also inaugurated the Precision Approach Radar (PAR) at INS Utkrosh. This facility will enable highly accurate horizontal and vertical guidance to land an aircraft safely in low visibility conditions, such as heavy rain and fog. The CNS also inaugurated the IUHDSS (Integrated Underwater Harbour Defence and Surveillance System) at Naval Jetty, Port Blair thereby enhancing security of Port Blair harbour.

During the visit to the ANC units in the Northern and Southern Group of Islands, Adm R Hari Kumar, CNS inaugurated the Naval Communication Network (NCN) Centres at INS Kohassa, INS Baaz and INS Kardip which would further augment the communication and operational capability of the ANC. The new NCN will enhance real time situational awareness and jointness in communication. The CNS interacted with the personnel posted in various units and establishments across the Command, recognising their significant contributions to the maritime security of ANC he lauded the efforts of ANC personnel towards protecting national interests.

Mrs Kala Hari Kumar President NWWA interacted with ladies of ANC during a special DWWA Diwas and also visited the NWWA Kendra. Mrs Kala Hari Kumar inaugurated the VC facility 'Saksham' at Navy Children School, Port Blair.

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2004689>



**Press Information Bureau
Government of India**

Ministry of Defence

Fri, 09 Feb 2024

Air Chief Marshal VR Chaudhari, Chief of the Air Staff Visits Military Institute of Technology, Pune

Air Chief Marshal VR Chaudhari PVSM AVSM VM ADC, Chief of the Air Staff visited Military Institute of Technology (MILIT), Girinagar, Pune on 09 Feb 24 and interacted with all participants of Defence Services Technical Staff Course (DSTSC-06).

The Air Chief spoke on a very relevant topic “Transition of IAF into a Contemporary and Future Ready Aerospace Force”. The CAS articulated the vision of IAF as laid down in the latest edition of IAF’s doctrine (2022) viz; “to be an agile and adaptive Air Force that provides decisive aerospace power in furtherance of our national interests”. To be able to do so, the Chief brought out that the IAF needed to ‘See First and See the Farthest, Reach First and Reach the Fastest, Hit First and Hit the Hardest’. He also brought out IAF’s contribution to nation building highlighting the sterling role played by IAF towards Humanitarian Assistance & Disaster Relief during national calamities and evacuation of Indian diaspora from conflict zones. He highlighted the need to reimagine, reform, redesign and rebuild our traditional war fighting machinery to adapt to emerging paradigms of future wars.

The CAS also inaugurated the country’s only Armament Technology Lab, and praised the institute for its role in shaping officers of the three services including Officers from Friendly Foreign Countries (FFCs) to tenant command and staff appointments.

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2004687>



Press Information Bureau
Government of India

Ministry of Defence

Fri, 09 Feb 2024

India and Rwanda Hold their Maiden Joint Defence Cooperation Committee Meeting

India and Rwanda held the first edition of Joint Defence Cooperation Committee (JDCC) meeting in Kigali, Rwanda on February 8, 2024 to discuss a wide range of opportunities to enhance defence cooperation between the two countries. Detailed discussions were held in areas like training cooperation, joint military exercises, defence industrial cooperation etc. The Indian delegation highlighted the growing prowess of Indian defence manufacturers to export to friendly countries.

The Rwandan side evinced keen interest in augmenting training cooperation, expressing confidence in the growing capabilities of the Indian defence industry. The Rwandan side highlighted areas where the Indian Armed Forces and industry could collaborate with their Defence Forces under the aegis of the Defence MoU signed between the two countries during the visit of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi to Rwanda in 2018.

Earlier the Indian delegation called on Defence Minister of Rwanda, Mr. Marizamunda Juvenal and conveyed the warm greetings of Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh. The Indian delegation was led by Joint Secretary Shri Amitabh Prasad and included senior officials from the Ministry of Defence and the Indian Armed Forces. The Charge d’Affaires in the Indian mission in Kigali, Shri Nilratan Mridha also attended the meeting.

Bilateral relations between India and Rwanda have been cordial and have grown steadily over the years. The visit of the Indian delegation for the JDCC meeting is likely to further strengthen defence relations with Rwanda.

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2004555>



**Press Information Bureau
Government of India**

Ministry of Defence

Fri, 09 Feb 2024

Stockholm International Peace Research Institute

As per Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, India's military expenditure from the year 2019 to 2022 is as under:

(In Current US\$ Million)

Year	2019	2020	2021	2022
	71,468.90	72,937.10	76,348.50	81,363.20

The increase in defence spending is attributable to the requirement of funds projected by the Services and the availability of resources with the Government.

This information was given by Raksha Rajya Mantri Shri Ajay Bhatt in a written reply to Shri Natarajan PR in the Lok Sabha today.

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2004476>



**Press Information Bureau
Government of India**

Ministry of Defence

Fri, 09 Feb 2024

FDI in Defence Sector

Defence Industry sector was opened up in May 2001 for private sector participation. Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) limit in defence sector was enhanced in 2020 up to 74% through the Automatic Route for companies seeking new defence industrial license, and up to 100% through the Government Route wherever it is likely to result in access to modern technology. So far, Rs 5,077 crore worth of FDI has been reported by companies operating in the defence sector.

Further, the Government promotes co-development and co-production of niche defence technologies with Foreign Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs) to encourage FDI in the defence sector.

This information was given by Raksha Rajya Mantri Shri Ajay Bhatt in a written reply to Shri Vinod L Chavda in the Lok Sabha today.

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2004475>



**Press Information Bureau
Government of India**

Ministry of Defence

Fri, 09 Feb 2024

**Raksha Rajya Mantri Visits Saudi General Authority for
Defence Development in Riyadh; Discusses Avenues for
further Cooperation During Talks with its President**

**Shri Ajay Bhatt pays a visit to Saudi Arabian Military Industry - Advanced Electronics
Company headquarters; Deliberations focussed on strengthening defence ties & future
collaboration**

Raksha Rajya Mantri Shri Ajay Bhatt, who headed the Indian delegation for the World Defence Show 2024 in Riyadh, concluded his visit to Saudi Arabia on February 08, 2024. The Raksha Rajya Mantri, on the final day of his engagements, visited the General Authority for Defence Development (GADD), and met with its Governor Dr Faleh bin-Abdullah Al-Sulaiman. They discussed the areas of bilateral defence cooperation and avenues for further collaboration. He also invited GADD Governor to visit India at a convenient date.

Shri Ajay Bhatt also visited King Abdulaziz City for Science and Technology (KACST) and met with its President Dr Munir M Eldesouki. He toured the KACST premises, including laboratories and production sites.

On February 07, the Raksha Rajya Mantri paid a visit to the Saudi Arabian Military Industry - Advanced Electronics Company (SAMI-AEC) headquarters in Riyadh. Both sides engaged in insightful discussions on strengthening the defence ties and future collaboration. Later, he visited Al-Turaif, a UNESCO World Heritage site in Diriyah.

A community event was hosted in the honor of Shri Ajay Bhatt at the Embassy of India, Riyadh. Addressing the gathering, he spoke about the Government of India's focus on holistic development of the nation and empowering women in all fields. A cultural programme was also organised by the students of Indian Schools in Riyadh, which showcased the richness of India's heritage and spirit of unity across borders.

Women officers from the three Services - Squadron Leader Bhawana Kanth, Colonel Ponung Doming and Lieutenant Commander Annu Prakash - who were part of the Indian delegation, interacted with over 700 Indian students from various CBSE affiliated schools in Riyadh. The students were eager to know about the opportunities for women in the Indian Armed Forces and were thrilled to listen to the stories of grit, passion, and success.

The visit of the Indian delegation, led by the Raksha Rajya Mantri, has reaffirmed the inherent strength of bilateral ties, opened new avenues for cooperation and solidified shared commitments towards a safer and prosperous future.

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2004274>

NAL Tests Drone-like Prototype at Karnataka's Challakere

Scientists from city-based National Aerospace Laboratories (NAL), a Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) lab, achieved a breakthrough by successfully testing an unmanned aerial vehicle called High-Altitude Pseudo Satellite (HAPS) at Chitradurga's Challakere earlier in Feb. L Venkatakrisnan, chief scientist and programme director (high-altitude platform) at NAL, told TOI: "HAPS is similar to drones but is designed to hover in the stratosphere above the airspace used by commercial airplanes. This platform, which can be powered by solar cells and batteries, can be operated for up to 90 days while regular high-altitude long-endurance (HALE) drones operate for about 48 hours at best."

He said HAPS platforms are of interest to military operators for intelligence, surveillance roles. They can also be used for civilian roles by acting as telecommunication satellites mainly in case of environmental disasters.

"Compared to satellites, HAPS, which operates in the stratosphere, offers lower latency and less path loss," Venkatakrisnan said. It can also be deployed comparatively rapidly at a lower cost. It can connect to multiple ground stations simultaneously.

"The HAPS we tested in Challakere is a prototype. It's a scaled-down 5-metre-long system with 12-metre wingspan, weighing 23kg. By 2027, we're confident of building a full-scale version that could have a wingspan of under 30m and weigh more than 100kg but less than 150kg. It will be able to carry payloads weighing 15kg and have multiple uses," Venkatakrisnan explained.

During the trials, the prototype rose to an altitude of 2.7km and remained airborne for 8.5 hours. It met all targeted performance metrics, as per the scientists associated with the project.

This is part of a series of planned tests by CSIR-NAL to develop a full-scale 30-metre-wingspan HAPS by 2027 that can fly at 23km altitude for at least 90 days.

Pointing out that HAPS requires significant engineering expertise to fly unmanned for days using solar-powered batteries instead of jet fuel and withstand atmospheric turbulence despite being a lightweight structure, Venkatakrisnan said tests of the battery management system and the propeller for the full-scale version will be completed by Sept 2024.

"The realisation of the full-scale airframe is aims to achieve by 2027. As of now, the only functional HAPS in the world is the Airbus Zephyr, which means we aren't really far off so far as the technology goes," he added.

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/bengaluru/nal-tests-drone-like-prototype-at-karnatakas-challakere-national-aerospace-laboratories/articleshow/107611077.cms>

First Rehearsal for IAF's Vayu Shakti Drill Held at Pokhran

The first rehearsal for Vayu Shakti 24 exercise of the Indian Air Force (IAF) scheduled on February 17 at Pokhran field firing range in Jaisalmer district was held on Sunday at the Pokhran range. The

rehearsal was seen by soldiers of Indian Army, IAF and other security forces along with police and civil administration personnel and their family members. Fighter planes of the IAF including Rafale, Tejas, Sukhoi, MiG 29, and helicopters fired on dummy hideous of the enemy.

A defence spokesperson said, “The pilots demonstrated their flying capacity and firing power by striking the pseudo targets including fake radar of enemies, army squad, cache of arms, bunker, etc, and demolished 18 targets. Rafale, Sukhoi, MiG 21 Bison, MiG 29, Tejas, Jaguar, Mirage, Hawk and fighter helicopters MI 35, MI 17, Apache, LCH, etc, demonstrated their firing power with rockets and laser-guided bombs. Along with indigenous Aakash missiles and Spider missiles, they destroyed the targets. Besides this, AN 32, IL 76, IL 78 and C 130 took part in this rehearsal and C130 Hercules while landing at the temporary sir strip dropped the commandos.”

Preparations are going on at five air bases. Mainly Sukhoi 30 and Rafale have been deployed at Jodhpur air base along with Tejas, Prachand and Dhruv helicopters. These planes are taking part in rehearsal activities at Pokhran range. Planes have also been deployed at Jaisalmer, Uttarlai in Barmer, Nal in Bikaner and Suratgarh air bases. A Chinook helicopter has been deployed at Phalodi air base which is taking part in the rehearsal.

According to sources, in this exercise 121 aircraft will take part including 77 fighter planes, 41 helicopters and 5 transport aircraft. Three kinds of weapons, including surface-to-air missiles, air-to-surface precision and non-precision missiles, air-to-air guided missiles and bombs, will be fired on dummy hideous.

In this exercise around 15,000 air warriors are taking part, including pilots and ground staff. Sources said that Sukhoi MKI equipped with carpet bombs will take off from Jodhpur air base while Rafale will be equipped with air-to-air and air-to-surface missiles. A full rehearsal will take place on February 14.

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/jaipur/iaf-vayu-shakti-drill-rehearsal-at-pokhran-jaisalmer/articleshow/107612481.cms>



Sun, 11 Feb 2024

Indian Army Looking for more ADTCRs, to Strengthen Air-Defence Capabilities

In an effort to strengthen its air-defence capabilities, the Indian Army is looking for more ADTCRs or Air Defence Tactical Control Radars in the near future. The issue is before the Defence Acquisition Council or DAC, headed by defence minister Rajnath Singh and is likely to be discussed when it meets on February 16.

The ADTCR is an essential part of the Army’s air-defence equipment and tracks incoming threats and passes on the information to the weapons to destroy them, whether guns or missiles. India makes the indigenously and the imported systems, now 30-40 years old, are ready to be replaced. The ADTCR is an important weapon system when it comes to tracking and then, destroying enemy threats.

Also on the agenda of the DAC is the Nirbhay subsonic cruise missile with a range of about 1000 km. Indigenously developed (by the Defence Research and Development Organisation), it is likely to be used by all three services. The BrahMos, produced jointly by India and Russia, is supersonic but has a range of 300 km.

The Prachand anti-tank mine has been domestically developed by the DRDO as well please and can be used extensively along the borders and the line of control. It also has an anti-personnel version. The DAC is expected to clear it as well. All three items are indigenous and compatible with the current atmanirbharata or self reliance policy.

<https://www.timesnownews.com/india/indian-army-looking-for-more-adtcrs-to-strengthen-air-defence-capabilities-article-107606806>

THE TIMES OF INDIA

Mon, 12 Feb 2024

Army Chief Visiting US to Boost Strategic Partnership

Army chief General Manoj Pande is headed to the US to further consolidate the bilateral strategic partnership and enhance military collaboration in the Indo-Pacific region, in a visit that comes when joint production of Stryker armoured fighting vehicles is also being discussed as part of expanding defence-industrial cooperation.

Gen Pande will discuss issues ranging from military transformation and co-production initiatives to China's expansionist behaviour in the Indo-Pacific and other security challenges with US Army chief General Randy George and other top officials during his visit from Feb 13 to 16, sources said.

He is also slated to visit several military establishments, including the Army Geospatial Centre at Fort Belvoir, the National Defence University at Fort McNair and frontline Stryker and Special Forces units. India and US had discussed the joint manufacture of the eight-wheeled Stryker armoured infantry combat vehicles, which combine firepower with rapid mobility on the battlefield, during the two-plus-two ministerial dialogue on Nov 10. The plan is to co-produce the Stryker vehicles with "existing Indian capabilities being taken into account", sources said.

Final commercial negotiations for the co-production of GE-F414 jet engines for the Tejas Mark-II fighters in India, with 80% transfer of technology for around \$1 billion, are already underway. "The contract between Hindustan Aeronautics and General Electric should be inked within a month or two," a source said.

India's proposed acquisition of the 31 MQ-9B high-altitude, long endurance drones - 15 Sea Guardians for Navy and 8 Sky Guardians each for Army and IAF - and associated equipment for \$3.9 billion is also now firmly on track after the Biden administration formally notified the US Congress about it on Feb 1.

Under the bilateral defence-industrial cooperation roadmap finalised last June to fast-track technology collaboration and co-production, the priority areas identified are air combat and support, including aero-engines; ISR (intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance) systems; ground mobility systems; undersea domain awareness; and smart munitions, including long-range artillery ammunition.

The two countries are also now close to inking the Security of Supply Arrangement (SOSA), identified as a key priority in the roadmap to further integrate their defence-industrial ecosystems while strengthening supply chain resilience. Similarly, a Reciprocal Defence Procurement agreement is also on the anvil but it will take some more time.

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/army-chief-visiting-us-to-boost-strategic-partnership/articleshow/107607767.cms>

Sun, 11 Feb 2024

CDS Directs Local Army Units to Help in Rehabilitation of Villages along LAC in Uttarakhand

Working towards development of villages on the northern borders, Chief of Defence Staff General Anil Chauhan has directed the local Army formations to help in the rehabilitation of Nelang and Jadhong villages in Uttarakhand near the China border.

The villages were inhabited till 1962 but they moved out of there after the war with China started at that time to places in Uttarkashi and adjoining areas.

The efforts to strengthen the border villages had started in the last few years as the Narendra Modi government has started the Vibrant Villages programme under which villages along the LAC from Ladakh, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh are being developed.

"Operation Sadbhavna has also been extended to these areas where the Army formations can also carry out activities to support the villages. As part of these, the CDS has directed the local Army units to help rehabilitate the villages of Nelang and Jadhong," defence officials told ANI.

"The CDS gave the instructions to the local formations during a recent visit to border areas in Uttarakhand also known as the central sector along the LAC," they said.

Development of border villages, which are also now being termed as the first villages of the country on the border.

The responsibility for the development of these villages has been given to the core team of central and state agencies including the local Army units, ITBP battalions and the civilian agencies.

The core teams are now making efforts to help the villagers come back to their villages and they have identified issues in achieving their objectives.

"The first issue is about identification of original citizens of these villages as the natives moved out in 1962 and now it is a tough task to identify the real inheritors of the land vacated by them. Many of the owners have died since then," the officials said.

There is also a need to restart commercial activities for the natives to help them earn their livelihood from their villages only.

The Army is trying to help the villages by creating tourism opportunities by developing infrastructure for them.

"The skies are very clear in this area due to zero pollution and the altitude of 13,000 feet here. Stargazing can be a popular activity here and we are trying to promote this as a tourism activity here," an Army official said.

The attempt is also to promote the Jadh festival of the Jadhong village where the natives visit their local devatas (deities) and the Army is also trying to help them build their temples there, they said.

The Army had also worked with the civilian agencies to hold the Jadh community festival last year and would be doing so this year as well.

Once commercial activities begin in the area and road connectivity is improved, the villages can be developed for tourism.

The Army is also looking to take its units and establishments from the lands near the villages to forward areas to help in the rehabilitation of the Nelang village.

The villages located at around 13,000 feet altitude are seen as one of the most beautiful locations in the state of Uttarakhand and have a big tourism potential.

<https://www.aninews.in/news/national/general-news/cds-directs-local-army-units-to-help-in-rehabilitation-of-villages-along-lac-in-uttarakhand20240211185944/>

THE ECONOMIC TIMES

Fri, 09 Feb 2024

PAC Asks Defence Ministry to Take Strict Action against those Causing Procurement Delays

Noting that the Army inventory management has a key role in the country's defence preparedness, a parliamentary panel has recommended the government to dispose of the large volume of "non-moving" items, streamline the procurement process, and initiate "strict action" against those causing procurement delays.

In a report tabled in the Lok Sabha on Thursday, the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) said that with the Indian Army managing a humongous inventory of approximately 4.5 lakh items, it is imperative that the lacunae ailing the inventory management be urgently plugged and the process streamlined.

It pointed out that a whopping 31 per cent of authorised inventory of the three central ordnance depots comprised non-moving items - items which have neither been demanded nor issued for more than five years, including obsolete, obsolescent and surplus items.

The committee is "alarmed to note that the value of 22.44 per cent of non-moving inventory (where rates were available) in the central depots was Rs 272.05 crore along with non-moving/surplus inventory valuing Rs 32.50 crore," it stated.

The panel committee enjoined the Defence Ministry to streamline the processes of procurement to reduce delays and recommend that strict action be taken against every echelon/individual accountable for any delay in the process of procurement, particularly for fixing eligibility and technical criteria, specification changes, trials and for documentation, according to the report.

It also asked the ministry to apprise it of the action taken against defence public sector undertakings (DPSUs) and ordnance factories for slippage in meeting the targets.

"The Committee desire that the existing monitoring mechanism be made more stringent and expert teams be constituted for training/upgrading specifications to expedite procurement," the report said.

The PAC report said that a performance audit was conducted to assess the efficiency of the supply chain management of central ordnance depots in meeting the requirements of the Indian Army between 2014-15 and 2018-19, and the committee observed from findings that there were instances of both deficiency and surplus in Class A stores. The committee also observed from audit findings that there were discrepancies in data relating to Class B stores.

Provisioning for Class A stores (major and minor equipment and ammunition) is done at the Army headquarters and for Class B stores (related to spares, accessories, general stores and clothing) at the central ordnance depots.

The committee is of the considered view that inventory management has a key role to play in the defence preparedness of the country.

The committee stated it is being highlighted since 2000 by audit, while on one hand major resources such as storage space and manpower of these depots were engaged in maintaining a large quantum of ineffective inventory, on the other hand depots were facing shortage of accommodation and serviceable stores were lying in the open.

"The Committee are disappointed to note that despite a lapse of more than 23 years, the problem of deficient storage accommodation has not been resolved yet. The Committee note from the ministry's reply that while there has been an urgent necessity to create and modernize the storage infrastructure, due to budget constraints, fructification of projects of modernization has been taking considerable time," it said.

"The Committee urge upon the Ministry/Army to carry out an extensive review of their inventory and dispose of non-moving inventory which would bring down holding costs and also free up storage space. The Committee desires that ISO certifications of storage management also be referred/adhered to and SOPs for managing stocks are prepared and followed," it stated said.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/pac-asks-defence-ministry-to-take-strict-action-against-those-causing-procurement-delays/articleshow/107565093.cms>

The Tribune

Sat, 10 Feb 2024

Parl Panel Slams MoD for Delay in Setting up Defence University

The Public Accounts Committee of Parliament, in its report to the House has 'expressed concern' over the inordinate delay in setting up Indian National Defence University (INDU) and recommend that it may be set up at the earliest.

The committee has noted that post-Kargil War, deficiencies in India's security management system envisioned such a defence university. The Kargil Review Committee recommended setting it up.

After several years of deliberation, in May 2012, the Cabinet approved setting up of INDU. The committee said land for the university was acquired in September 2012 at a cost of Rs 164.62 crore. The proposal was revised in February 2015 thereby enhancing the scope of the project. "However, the revised proposal for establishment of the university was still pending with the Ministry of Defence," the report said. "The entire process of setting up INDU has been beset by delays owing to extensive deliberations for several years without any concrete results," the report of the committee said.

A Group of Ministers reviewed the entire spectrum of defence management. Thereafter, a committee was set up to 'examine' establishment of INDU in India. A 'project formulation team' was created and it continues to operate till date with recurring expenses on pay and allowances of staff deployed but without any tangible results on ground.

The parliamentary committee said it was "disappointed to note that 57 years after it was first mooted, and over seven years after the Indian National Defence University Bill, 2015, was made available for public consultation, the university has still not been established".

The report recommended that INDU may be established with world-class infrastructure, learned faculty, and idea and content developers to match up to similar institutions on the global arena.

The report asked the existing committee to submit its report urgently to enable an early decision in the matter. Such an autonomous institution of national importance was first mooted by the Chief of Staff Committee in 1967 and again endorsed by the Lt Gen Sethna Committee in 1982.

<https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/india/parl-panel-slams-mod-for-delay-in-setting-up-defence-university-589271>



Sat, 10 Feb 2024

IAF Signs Contract with Bharat Electronics Ltd for Made-in-India Software-Based Radio Sets

The Indian Air Force on Saturday informed that it has signed a contract with state-owned Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL) for the procurement of software-based light weight man-portable radio communication sets. The indigenously developed communication sets will use components implemented by the means of software as against the conventional ones that use analog hardware for the purpose.

The Indian Air Force has signed a contract with Bharat Electronics Limited, for procurement of Light Weight Man Portable modern communication Sets. These Indigenous Software Designed Radio (SDR) technology-based sets will provide a boost to the IAF's Communication Network: IAF pic.twitter.com/KQf4iHggHB

— ANI (@ANI) February 10, 2024

"The Indian Air Force has signed a contract with Bharat Electronics Limited, for procurement of Light Weight Man Portable modern communication Sets. These Indigenous Software Designed Radio (SDR) technology-based sets will provide a boost to the IAF's Communication Network," the Air Force posted via its official handle on social media platform X (formerly Twitter).

The order placed by IAF is in line with the Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led central government's efforts to reduce India's dependence on imports for its military needs. BEL is a 'Navratna' undertaking of the Government of India under Ministry of Defence. It has previously designed the Akash Air Defence Weapon System, Coastal Surveillance System, Weapon Locating Radar and 3D Tactical Control Radar used by various arms of India's Armed Forces.

Besides designing and manufacturing defence equipment, the Public Sector Undertaking (PSU) also specialises in the production of non-military equipment. The Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) used across the nation for State Assembly and Lok Sabha elections have been designed by BEL. The company also produced around 30,000 ICU ventilators in a record time during the COVID-19 pandemic.

<https://english.jagran.com/india/iaf-signs-contract-with-bharat-electronics-limited-for-software-based-radio-sets-indian-air-force-latest-news-updates-10132678>

Rs 5077 Crore FDI Reported by Companies Operating in Defence Sector: Govt

Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) worth Rs 5077 crore has been reported by companies operating in the defence sector, the defence ministry said in Lok Sabha on Friday. The data was provided by Minister of State for Defence Ajay Bhatt while replying to a question.

The defence industry sector was opened up in May 2001 for private sector participation, he said.

"The FDI limit in the defence sector was enhanced in 2020 up to 74 per cent through the automatic route for companies seeking new defence industrial licence and up to 100 per cent by the government route wherever it is likely to result in access to modern technology," Bhatt said.

"So far, Rs 5077 crores worth of FDI has been reported by companies operating in the defence sector," he added.

The minister said the government also promotes co-development and co-production of niche defence technologies with foreign original equipment manufacturers to encourage FDI in the defence sector.

To a separate question, he said the defence ministry has signed a contract with the Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Ltd (MDL) on December 20 for procurement of six next generation offshore patrol vessels for Indian Coast Guard (ICG) at a total cost of Rs 1614 crore.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/rs-5077-crore-fdi-reported-by-companies-operating-in-defence-sector-govt/articleshow/107559622.cms>

Science & Technology News



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Ministry of Science & Technology

Sun, 11 Feb 2024

‘SWATI’ (Science for Women-A Technology & Innovation) Portal Launched in New Delhi to Create a Single Online Portal Representing Indian Women and Girls in STEMM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics & Medicine)

Launching the Portal on the occasion of International Day of Women and Girls in Science at Indian National Science Academy (INSA), New Delhi, Prof Sood said, the database of SWATI Portal will serve in policy making to address the challenges of Gender-gap

The Portal is a complete interactive database; and the first-of-its-kind in India which is developed, hosted and maintained by the National Institute of Plant Genome Research (NIPGR), New Delhi

This is a dynamically growing portal and the endeavour is to have data of all women scientists of the country included: Dr Subhra Chakraborty

In 21st Century, we still have way to go to address Gender Parity in all sectors of life: Prof. Quarraisha Abdool Karim

This is the initiative of Inter Academy Panel (IAP) on Women in Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics & Medicine (STEMM)

Principal Scientific Advisor to the Government of India Prof Ajay Kumar Sood today launched “Science for Women-A Technology & Innovation (SWATI)” Portal, aimed at creating a single online portal representing Indian Women and Girls in STEMM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics & Medicine)

Launching the Portal on the occasion of International Day of Women and Girls in Science at Indian National Science Academy (INSA), New Delhi, Prof Sood said, the database of SWATI Portal will serve in policy making to address the challenges of Gender-gap.

The Portal is a complete interactive database; and the first-of-its-kind in India which is developed, hosted and maintained by the National Institute of Plant Genome Research (NIPGR), New Delhi under the leadership of Dr. Subhra Chakraborty, Director, NIPGR, New Delhi; Link to join SWATI: <https://bit.ly/JoinSWATI>.

Dr Chakraborty in her address highlighted this aspect and said that this probably world’s first Interactive Portal of its kind. She also quoted figures of 2021 UN Report to highlight the under representation of women across all sectors.

Dr Chakraborty reiterated that this is a dynamically growing portal and the endeavour is to have data of all women scientists of the country included.

Prof. Quarraisha Abdool Karim, President TWAS, in her Keynote Address said that even in 21st Century, we still have way to go to address Gender Parity in all sectors of life. She said, education is a great equalizer and access to it must be made available to women and girls across all streams.

The event was organized with a view to focusing on the importance of “Science for Women & Women in Science” as well as emerging opportunities and inclusiveness of women in S&T endeavours. This will be beneficial towards dissemination of knowledge, new advances in fundamental science and role/importance of innovation and entrepreneurship development in strengthening the backbone of Atmanirbhar Bharat. This would also provide an opportunity to discuss and evolve a roadmap for ‘Women in Science’ & ‘Science for Women’.

The other objectives of the SWATI Portal include to scale up the effort exponentially to include each and every Indian woman in science, across all career stages and subjects, spanning both Academia and the Industry enabling reliable and statistically significant long term research on the issues of equality, diversity and inclusivity in India; Inclusion of each and every Indian WiS, career stages, subjects, spanning both Academia and the Industry; Enabling reliable and statistically significant long term research on the issues of equality, diversity and inclusivity in India, developing active search engine and searchable database (Name, Affiliation, Area of Interest).

The various Sections in the portal include Icons - Awardees (Padma / Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar / Stree Shakti Science Samman) & Directors, Secretaries Academy Presidents; Faculty- Indian Universities, Autonomous organizations including S&T Ministry/ CSIR/ DBT/ DST/ CSIR/ MHRD/ UGC/ GATI/ KIRAN; Research fellows- Post docs, JRFs, SRFs, technical Staff; Students-

PhD Scholars, Research Interns, Graduates, Post graduates, Undergraduates; WiS Entrepreneurs, Startups, Business & Science Administrators; STEMM background professionals in alternate careers(e.g. Science, Journalism etc).So far, 3000 'WiS Data Cards' have been incorporated.

The event was graced by the distinguished scientists of national/ international repute viz. Prof. CNR Rao, Linus Pauling Research Professor & Hon. President, JNCASR, Bangalore, Prof. P N Tandon, Formerly, Professor & Neurosurgeon, Dept. of Neurosurgery, AIIMS, Former President, NASI; Presidents of the three Science Academies viz. Prof. Balram Bhargava (President, NASI), Prof. Waghmare (President, IASc), Prof. Ashutosh Sharma (President, INSA),Dr. Manju Sharma, Former Secretary to the Govt. of India, DBT, Prof. Chandrima Shaha, Former President, INSA including other distinguished women scientists viz. Dr. Renu Swarup, Former Secretary to the Govt. of India, DBT; Prof. Rohini Godbole, Vice President, IASc, IISc, Bangalore and Prof, Shobhona Sharma, Former Senior Professor, TIFR Mumbai and Chair, INSA 'Women in Science' Panel; Dr. Soumya Swaminathan, Former DG, ICMR & Chief Scientist, WHO; Prof. Paramjit Khurana, Delhi University, South Campus.

Several eminent speakers/ scientists/entrepreneurs/ start-ups from all across the country have been invited to share their expertise on the subjects of relevance; several young women scientists, researchers, P.G. students, faculty members, technocrats and start-ups from various institutions, universities, PG Colleges as well as the industries all across the country are likely to participate in the event.

With this endeavour of the IAP, a platform would be created to encourage and bring together, all the young women scientists, faculty members, researchers and also the young start-ups from India and abroad under one umbrella for pursuing the cause of Science.

Women constitute, the 50% of human resource, which is vital for the progress of the society. To empower women is to increase their role in the decision-making that affects their lives both within and outside the household. It is important to educate more women especially in the field of science & technology, because science education not only enhances awareness level but also builds a mind-set with an ability to judge between right and wrong. It provides a scientific approach to cope up with the problems being faced by the women, ensuring their socio-economic development. The women scientists can provide opportunities by making them aware on several scientific & societal issues, thus bridging the gender gap and removing the barriers of negativity.

Therefore, realizing the role of women scientists, the Inter-Academy Panel (IAP) of the three Science Academies viz. IASc, NASI and INSA with several distinguished women scientists from various institutions of repute and representatives from Govt. Departments/Agencies (DST, DBT, DAE, CSIR, ICMR & ISRO), has been working towards promoting gender sensitization, mentorship, gender parity, creating skilled human resource; helping towards the development of rural women and other related areas with the motive to ensure the inclusion of more Women in S&T related issues in all pragmatic ways and strengthen the application of S&T for the welfare of women.

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2004958>



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Ministry of Science & Technology

Sun, 11 Feb 2024

Union Minister for Science & Technology, Dr Jitendra Singh Convenes the Monthly Joint Meeting of Different Science Ministries and Departments; Reviews the Space Hackathon Held Last Month for the Students to Sharpen their Skills and Innovation

The 30-hour hackathon on technical issues related to the Geospatial BHUVAN portal was organised as part of the IISF-2023 in Faridabad last month

Dr Jitendra Singh expresses satisfaction at the huge response for the first of its kind Space hackathon

The Science Secretaries meeting lauds the operationalization of the Anusandhan National Research Foundation

Union Minister for Science & Technology, Dr Jitendra Singh today convened the monthly joint meeting of different Science Ministries and Departments, in New Delhi, wherein among other agenda items, he reviewed the Space Hackathon held last month for the students to sharpen their skills and innovation.

The 30-hour hackathon on Space related challenges like technical issues related to the Geospatial BHUVAN portal was organised as part of the India International Science Festival - 2023 (IISF-2023) held at the DBT THSTI - RCB Campus in Faridabad, Haryana from 17th to 20th January 2024.

Expressing satisfaction at the huge response for the first of its kind Space hackathon, the S&T Minister appreciated the fact that over 4,000 teams were registered in the span of one month. 57 teams were shortlisted for the grand finale at Faridabad.

The high-level joint meeting of different Science Ministries and Departments included representatives from Science & Technology, Biotechnology, CSIR, Earth Sciences, Dept. of Space and Atomic Energy.

The S&T Minister was informed that after the conclusion of a gruelling 30-hour hackathon at the IISF venue, initial jury shortlisted the top 24 teams. Main jury selected 16 teams for the pitch presentation, and finally four teams were declared winners and their ideas will be supported by ISRO. Besides, 11 runners up were also declared.

Dr Jitendra Singh also commended all the scientific departments for the grand success of the IISF-2023 that saw close to 35,000 participants including more than 11,000 delegates. Seven State S&T Ministers, 27 State officials and Secretaries and 75 delegates also participated in the four-day Science Fest.

The Science Secretaries monthly meeting also lauded the Departments for the ground work involved in the operationalization of the Anusandhan National Research Foundation (NRF) with its

issue of notification on 5th February 2024. Dr Jitendra Singh suggested that DST could go for the search of Anusandhan NRF Logo.

Dr Jitendra Singh was informed that a demonstration was held for the One portal being designed for all fellowships of various Science Departments. A Security Audit of the portal is now being conducted by NIC before it is launched for the scholars.

The meeting also discussed a proposal for Service conditions of Research Scientists in various Government Departments and Institutions.

Dr Jitendra Singh called for mobilization of the recently set up Science Media Communication Center (SMCC) to raise awareness about new achievements and discoveries/inventions. He directed a Workshop of all Nodal Officers of Laboratories and Departments be held for easier flow of newsworthy achievements.

The S&T Minister was informed that Brazil, being the G20 Presidency host this year, has called for drafts to formulate the G20 Bioeconomy Initiative and the first Experts Meeting will be held on 13-14 March in Brazil.

Today's meeting was held as part of the monthly review meetings of Science Secretaries, initiated by Dr Jitendra Singh in order to break the silos and evolve a synergistic integrated approach among different scientific streams.

Principal Scientific Advisor to Government of India, Dr Ajay K Sood; Secretary, DSIR & DG, CSIR, Dr N Kalaiselvi; Secretary, DST, Prof. Abhay Karandikar; Secretary, DBT, Dr Rajesh S Gokhale; & Secretary, Ministry of Earth Sciences, Dr M Ravichandran attended the deliberations.

Senior Officers of the Science Ministries and Departments, including Science & Technology, Biotechnology, CSIR, Earth Sciences, ISRO and Atomic Energy were also present.

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2005027>

