

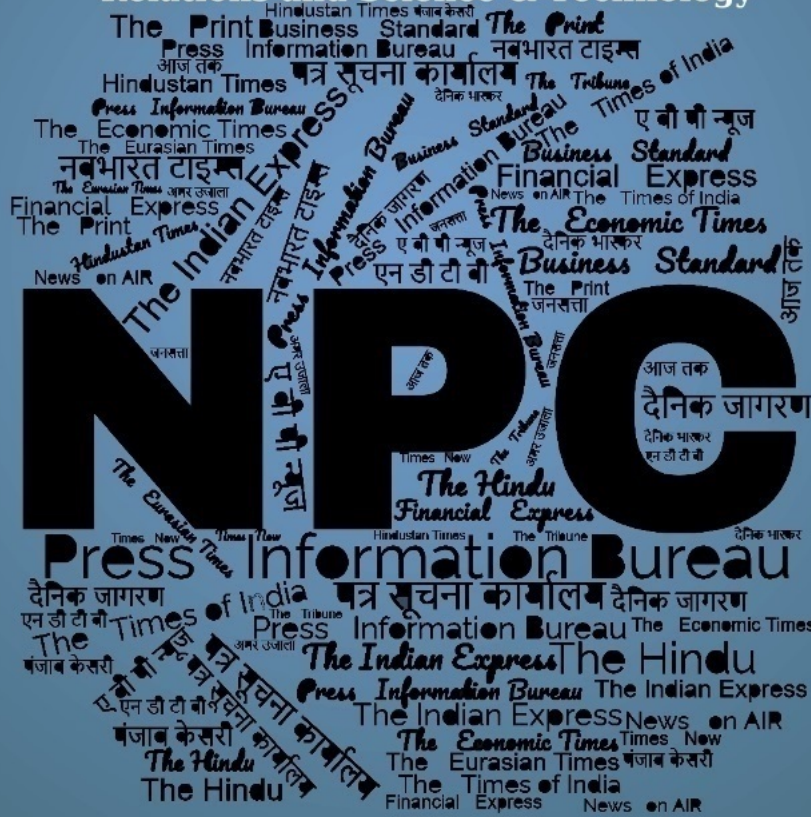
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समाचार पत्रों से चयनित अंश Newspapers Clippings

डीआरडीओ समुदाय को डीआरडीओ प्रौद्योगिकियों, रक्षा प्रौद्योगिकियों, रक्षा नीतियों, अंतर्राष्ट्रीय संबंधों और विज्ञान एवं प्रौद्योगिकी की नूतन जानकारी से अवगत कराने हेतु दैनिक सेवा

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Centre tasks group of secretaries with reviewing Agnipath Scheme; eyes making recruitment more attractive

The NDA government has tasked a group of secretaries from 10 key ministries to review the Agnipath scheme and suggest ways to make the armed forces recruitment programme more attractive, underscoring the urgency with which the Centre wants to address any lacunae after it became a key election issue. Those selected under the scheme are called Agniveers.

The panel of secretaries will give a final presentation to Prime Minister Narendra Modi after his return from the G7 summit in Italy, people aware of the details told ET. The group can suggest additional monetary benefits as part of tweaks in the scheme, the people cited said. The review of the programme is also included in the revised 100-day agenda of the new government. The G7 summit runs from June 13 to 15. "The group of secretaries will prepare the details before June 16 and submit a detailed presentation at the Prime Minister's Office (PMO)," a senior official aware of the discussions told ET. The presentation is likely to be on June 17 or 18, he said.

The PMO will take the final call on changes in the scheme after reviewing the recommendations and feedback from other stakeholders, including states. "The army is also carrying out own internal assessment," the official said. The government had rolled out the Agnipath scheme in June 2022 for shortterm induction of personnel into the Indian armed forces.

Criticism for Scheme

Agnipath was launched to boost the recruitment of youth in the armed forces amid a burgeoning defence pension bill. The scheme faced intense criticism by the opposition during the election campaign, especially in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Haryana, Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh - traditional recruitment areas for the armed forces - for not guaranteeing job security, part of the broader theme of rising unemployment.

Under the Agnipath scheme, Agniveers are recruited for a four-year term. Over this period, they get a regular monthly salary starting at Rs 30,000 and going up to Rs 40,000 in the fourth year. Additionally, and on completion of the four-year tenure, an Agniveer will get about Rs 12 lakh as a one-time Seva Nidhi Package.

The armed forces can also offer permanent enrolment to Agniveers, depending on their requirements. According to a study by the Observer Research Foundation, one Agniveer costs the government Rs 1.75 lakh less every year than a full-time recruit. For a batch of 60,000 Agniveers, the total saving on salaries would amount to Rs 1,054 crore.

It said that the more significant impact would be on the pension bill in the medium to long term. Pensions account for almost 20-25% of the defence budget. In the interim budget, the Centre allocated Rs 1.41 lakh crore for defence. A key ally of the ruling coalition, the Janata Dal United (JDU), has also sought a review of the scheme. Last week, senior JD(U) leader and spokesperson KC Tyagi said that his party wanted the shortcomings in the scheme to be discussed in detail.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/group-of-secretaries-tasked-with-reviewing-agnipath-scheme-eye-of-making-army-recruitment-programme-more-attractive/articleshow/110948584.cms>



Wed, 12 Jun 2024

Indian Army issues tender to procure VSHORADS

The Indian Army issued a request for information (RFI) to procure an unknown number of very short-range air-defence systems (VSHORADSs) on 11 June.

According to the RFI, the VSHORADS must comprise grip stock/tripod launchers, sight systems to intercept targets both in day and night, and missiles.

The VSHORADS should have the capability to engage the fighter and transport aircraft, helicopters, and unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), the RFI said.

The Indian Army seeks to procure VSHORADS in two configurations – a manportable version and a vehicle-mounted version.

According to the Indian Army, the system is envisaged to be deployed across all terrain in the country such as high-altitude areas, plains/riverine, desert, coastal areas, and maritime.

The VSHORADS missiles must feature infrared (IR) or imaging IR (IIR) seeker systems with cooled or uncooled medium-wave camera modules.

India's Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) approved the procurement of VSHORADS for the Indian Army in January 2023.

The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has been developing VSHORADS for the Indian Army since 2020.

<https://www.janes.com/osint-insights/defence-news/weapons/indian-army-issues-tender-to-procure-vshorads>

BrahMos Aerospace: Celebrating 26 Years of Supersonic Excellence

On June 12, 2024, BrahMos Aerospace marked a significant milestone: the 26th anniversary of the Indo-Russian joint venture revolutionising supersonic missile technology. Coinciding with both the Philippines Independence Day and Russia National Day, this year's BrahMos Day commemorates past achievements and sets the stage for future advancements.

BrahMos Aerospace's Chief Executive Officer, Atul Dinkar Rane, and Deputy Chief Executive Officer, Dr Sanjeev Kumar Joshi, shared insights into their strategic initiatives and vision for the future exclusively with Financial Express Online.

Strategic Leadership and Vision

Mr Rane and Dr Joshi have been at the helm of BrahMos Aerospace since December 2021. Reflecting on their tenure, Mr Rane emphasised their focus on three pivotal areas: meeting the requirements of the Armed Forces, harnessing export potential, and driving indigenisation. Their efforts have borne fruit, resulting in major contracts and significant advancements in indigenous production. "In these two and a half years, we've received substantial orders, including India's largest export deal with the Philippines worth around \$375 million and a massive Rs 20,000 crore order from the Indian Navy for advanced BrahMos systems," said Mr Rane. These achievements underscore the strategic importance of BrahMos in the national and international defence sector.

A Historical Perspective

The journey of BrahMos began in 1998 with an Inter-Governmental Agreement (IGA) between India and Russia to develop the world's best supersonic cruise missile. Named after the Brahmaputra and Moscow rivers, BrahMos represents a formidable collaboration between Indian and Russian scientists and technocrats. The first successful test firing of the BrahMos missile took place in June 2001, setting a precedent for numerous milestones to follow. Under the visionary leadership of Dr A Sivathanu Pilla, the first CEO, BrahMos was established as a supersonic cruise missile system meant to be capable of being launched from land, sea, underwater, and air platforms.

Strengthening Defence and Expanding Horizons

The Indian Armed Forces' confidence in BrahMos is unwavering. "The Indian Navy has repeatedly affirmed that BrahMos remains their primary strike weapon," Mr. Rane noted. The Indian Air Force (IAF) and Army have also placed significant orders, underscoring BrahMos's reliability and strategic value. Celebrating its Silver Jubilee last year, the Service Chiefs and the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) lauded BrahMos as a formidable weapon system, highlighting its unmatched precision and after-sales support.

The global interest in BrahMos is growing, with countries across Southeast Asia, the Middle East, North Africa, and Latin America expressing interest in acquiring this cutting-edge missile system. The Philippines, the first international customer, has been particularly impressed with BrahMos's performance and training programs.

Addressing Challenges and Future Prospects

Addressing concerns about the high cost of BrahMos, Dr Joshi highlighted the missile's value proposition. "BrahMos offers unmatched quality, reliability, and precision, with low maintenance costs and a long shelf-life," he explained. The missile's supersonic speed, reaching targets in a fraction of the time compared to other cruise missiles, significantly enhances its effectiveness in combat situations.

Looking ahead, BrahMos Aerospace is poised to expand its footprint in the global defence market. Conversations with potential customers, including Indonesia, are progressing well. The company's strategy includes continuous capability enhancement and robust supply chain management to meet the growing demand.

Supporting the Defence Ecosystem

BrahMos's success is deeply intertwined with the Indian defence ecosystem. The company's emphasis on indigenisation aligns with the government's "Make-in-India" initiative, fostering a robust industrial base. "Our industry partners are crucial to our success. We encourage them to invest in capacity building to meet the increasing demand," said Dr Joshi. BrahMos Aerospace also benefits from supportive government policies such as the Defence Acquisition Procedure (DAP) 2020 and the Defence Production and Export Promotion Policy (DPEPP). These policies have created a favourable environment for Indian defence industries to thrive and compete globally.

A Vision for the Future

As BrahMos Aerospace celebrates 26 years of innovation and excellence, its leadership remains committed to providing unparalleled precision strike systems to the Indian Armed Forces and expanding its global presence. "BrahMos is a testament to the power of joint ventures and collaborative efforts," Mr Rane concluded.

<https://www.financialexpress.com/business/defence-brahmos-aerospace-celebrating-26-years-of-supersonic-excellence-3522683/>

अमर उजाला

Wed, 12 Jun 2024

Army Chief: इस साल से भारतीय सेनाओं के प्रमुखों में दिखेगा ये बड़ा बदलाव, भारत-चीन युद्ध से क्या है कनेक्शन?

भारतीय सेना के वाइस चीफ ऑफ आर्मी स्टाफ लेफ्टिनेंट जनरल उपेंद्र द्विवेदी देश के नए आर्मी चीफ होंगे। वे 30 जून 2024 को अपना कार्यभार संभालेंगे। खास बात यह है कि जनरल उपेंद्र द्विवेदी के आर्मी चीफ बनते ही वे उस

पीढ़ी में शामिल होंगे, जिनका जन्म भारत-चीन युद्ध के बाद हुआ है। भारतीय सेनाओं को इस साल एक बड़ा मनोवैज्ञानिक पीढ़ीगत बदलाव देखने को मिलने वाला है। जिसकी शुरुआत नौसेना प्रमुख एडमिरल दिनेश त्रिपाठी की नियुक्ति के साथ ही हो चुकी है। खास बात यह है कि इसी साल भारत-चीन युद्ध को 61 साल पूरे हो जाएंगे। वहीं पूर्व सेनाध्यक्ष जनरल वीपी मलिक कहते हैं कि भारत को असली खतरा चीन से है और नए सेनाध्यक्ष को भी चीन से संभावित खतरे को देखते हुए इस पर ध्यान देने की जरूरत है।

देखने को मिलेगा यह मनोवैज्ञानिक पीढ़ीगत बदलाव

मौजूदा आर्मी चीफ जनरल मनोज पांडे की जन्मतिथि 6 मई, 1962 है। वे उस पीढ़ी के आखिरी चीफ हैं, जिनका जन्म भारत-चीन युद्ध से ठीक पहले हुआ था। अभी तक तीनों सेनाओं में जितने भी आर्मी चीफ रहे हैं, वे सभी 1962 से पहले पैदा हुए थे। उनमें से कुछ ने या तो भारत-चीन के बीच हुई उस भीषण जंग में हिस्सा लिया था, या फिर वे उस तारीख के गवाह रहे हैं, उन्होंने उसे अपने सामने घटते हुए देखा था। भारत-चीन के बीच युद्ध 20 अक्टूबर से 20 नवंबर, 1962 तक लद्दाख और अरुणाचल प्रदेश के उच्च हिमालयी इलाकों में लड़ा गया था। वहीं, भारतीय सेनाओं को इस साल एक बड़ा मनोवैज्ञानिक पीढ़ीगत बदलाव यह देखने को मिलेगा कि जितने भी आर्मी चीफ आगे नियुक्त होंगे, उन सभी का जन्म वर्ष 1962 के बाद का होगा। क्योंकि इस साल तीनों सेनाओं को नए चीफ मिलने की प्रक्रिया शुरू हो चुकी है।

तीनों सेनाओं के प्रमुखों का जन्म 1962 के बाद!

तीनों सेनाओं में जो भी प्रमुख बनता है, वह अधिकतम तीन साल या 62 वर्ष की आयु तक, जो भी पहले हो, सेवा कर सकता है। जनरल उपेंद्र द्विवेदी का जन्म 01 जुलाई 1964 को हुआ था। खास बात यह है कि जनरल उपेंद्र द्विवेदी 1962 के भारत-चीन युद्ध के बाद पैदा हुए पहले 4 स्टार जनरल होंगे। वहीं, 30 अप्रैल को भारतीय नौसेना की कमान संभालने वाले एडमिरल दिनेश त्रिपाठी की जन्मतिथि भी 15 मई 1964 है। जबकि इस साल सितंबर 2024 में जो भी भारतीय वायुसेना के एयर चीफ मार्शल बनेंगे, उनकी जन्मतिथि भी 1962 के बाद की होगी। माना जा रहा है कि वायु सेना उप प्रमुख एयर मार्शल अमनप्रीत सिंह नए एयर चीफ मार्शल बन सकते हैं, हालांकि उनकी जन्मतिथि को लेकर कोई पुख्ता जानकारी नहीं मिल सकी है। वहीं मौजूदा एयर चीफ मार्शल विवेक राम चौधरी की जन्मतिथि 01 सितंबर 1961 है।

आज भी बरकरार है टीस

हालांकि सेना से जुड़े सूत्रों का कहना है कि भले ही यह बात आपको प्रतीकात्मक लगे, लेकिन इस युद्ध की टीस आज भी बरकरार है। इस युद्ध को हुए 61 साल होने वाले हैं। भले ही भारत-चीन के बीच आज सीधे जंग नहीं हो रही है, लेकिन अपरोक्ष रूप से दोनों देश एलएसी पर आमने-सामने हैं। 2020 में हुई गलवान हिंसा को हम कैसे भूल सकते हैं, पूर्वी लद्दाख में भारत और चीन के बीच चल रहा सैन्य गतिरोध पांचवें वर्ष में प्रवेश कर गया है, लेकिन अभी कोई समाधान नहीं मिला है। भले ही नए सेना प्रमुख का जन्म 1962 के युद्ध के बाद पैदा हुआ हो, लेकिन 61 साल बाद भी उसे फिर से चीन की चुनौती का सामना करना पड़ेगा। यह घटनाक्रम दुनिया की दूसरी सबसे बड़ी सेना के लिए इसलिए भी महत्वपूर्ण है, क्योंकि इससे मनोवैज्ञानिक पीढ़ीगत बदलाव की शुरुआत होने की संभावना है, जो उस युद्धों की यादों को ताजा करेगा।

सेना में पढ़ाई जाती है मिलिट्री हिस्ट्री

भारतीय सेना के पूर्व सेनाध्यक्ष जनरल वीपी मलिक अमर उजाला से खास बातचीत में कहते हैं कि सैन्य नेतृत्व पर इसका कोई असर होने का सवाल ही नहीं उठता। सेना में सभी को मिलिट्री हिस्ट्री पढ़ाई जाती है। जो समय-समय

पर बदलती रहती है। जिससे सेना सीखती भी है और नए अफसरों को सिखाती भी है। वह कहते हैं कि जब 1959 में उन्होंने सेना में कमीशन लिया था, तो उन्हें भी 1947 से पहले और बाद का इतिहास पढ़ाया गया था। इससे कंटिन्यूटी बनी रहती है, जो सेना के लिए बेहद जरूरी है।

असली खतरा चीन से है

जनरल वीपी मलिक कहते हैं कि लेफ्टिनेंट जनरल उपेंद्र द्विवेदी जो आगे सेनाध्यक्ष बनेंगे, वे हालात को अच्छे से समझते हैं और पहचानते हैं। वे काफी अनुभवी हैं। वे नॉर्डन कमांड के इंचार्ज भी रह चुके हैं, उन्हें चीन से पैदा हो रहे खतरों पर ध्यान देना होगा, क्योंकि असली खतरा चीन से है। सीमाओं पर चीन की नई चुनौती है, जिससे निपटने के लिए नए सेना प्रमुख को पेशेवर ध्यान और कुशलता की आवश्यकता होगी, तथा मजबूत प्रतिरोधक क्षमता पर विशेष ध्यान देना होगा।

चीन-पाकिस्तान का गठबंधन बेहद खतरनाक

वहीं चीन और पाकिस्तान का जो ये गठबंधन है, इस खतरे से भी उन्हें जूझना होगा। चीन को साधने के लिए तो हमने चीनी सीमा एलएसी पर 50-60 हजार अतिरिक्त सैनिकों की तैनाती कर दी है, लेकिन पाकिस्तान को साधना बेहद जरूरी है। वह कहते हैं कि भले ही भारत-पाकिस्तान सीमा पर सीजफायर है, लेकिन पाकिस्तान ने प्रॉक्सी वार छेड़ रखी है। चाहे बालाकोट हो या उरी सर्जिकल स्ट्राइक, पाकिस्तान को इससे कोई ज्यादा फर्क नहीं पड़ा है। उससे शांति की बातें करना बेकार है और अपने आतंकी संगठनों लश्कर-ए-तैयबा और जैश-ए-मोहम्मद के जरिए कश्मीर में माहौल खराब करने की लगातार कोशिश करता रहेगा।

इंटीग्रेटेड थिएटर कमांड दें ध्यान

जनरल वीपी मलिक आगे कहते हैं कि नए सेनाध्यक्ष के सामने और भी कई चुनौतियां हैं। हिन्द महासागर में कई चुनौतियां पैदा हो रही हैं। चीन, श्रीलंका और मालदीव सुरक्षा के लिए खतरा बन रहे हैं। वहीं, इंटीग्रेटेड थिएटर कमांड बनाने को लेकर जनरल मलिक कहते हैं कि इस पर तेजी से ध्यान देना पड़ेगा। चीन-पाकिस्तान से संभावित खतरे को देखते हुए यह बेहद जरूरी है। इसे हर हाल में तय वक्त पर पूरा किया जाना जरूरी है। इसके अलावा सेना के आधुनिकीकरण पर भी ध्यान देना होगा। नई टेक्नोलॉजी के साथ नए हथियार सेना के लिए बेहद जरूरी हैं। सेना को आधुनिकीकरण की सख्त जरूरत है। वहीं सीमा पार से हो रही आतंकियों की घुसपैठ पर रोक लगाने के लिए 24x7 बॉर्डर सर्विलांस पर ध्यान देना बेहद जरूरी है। सैटेलाइट, यूएवी और रडार के जरिए इस घुसपैठ को रोका जाए।

30 जून को संभालेंगे कार्यभार

मोदी सरकार 3.0 ने तीसरे कार्यकाल की शुरुआत बड़े नीतिगत फैसले के साथ करते हुए नए आर्मी चीफ की नियुक्ति का एलान कर दिया। भारतीय सेना के वाइस चीफ ऑफ आर्मी स्टाफ लेफ्टिनेंट जनरल उपेंद्र द्विवेदी देश के नए आर्मी चीफ होंगे। वे अपना कार्यभार मौजूदा सेनाध्यक्ष जनरल मनोज पांडे के 30 जून को रिटायर होने के बाद संभालेंगे। जनरल पांडे इससे पहले 31 मई को रिटायर होने वाले थे, लेकिन 26 मई को सरकार ने एक नोटिफिकेशन जारी करके, उन्हें एक माह का अतिरिक्त सेवा विस्तार दे दिया था।

<https://www.amarujala.com/india-news/this-big-change-will-be-seen-in-the-chiefs-of-indian-armies-from-this-year-2024-06-12>

The Tribune

Thu, 13 Jun 2024

No room for complacency along LAC

-By Lt Gen Pradeep Bali (retd)

THERE are a number of pressing issues warranting the attention of the new government. Among these, the requirements and concerns of the armed forces merit top priority as these directly affect national security. Enhanced financial outlay for capability development, implementing structural reorganisation at the macro level and a review of the recruitment systems need to be addressed in a committed and decisive manner.

Our major adversary on the northern borders is continuing with its duplicitous stance. China's new Ambassador to India Xu Feihong (appointed after a gap of 18 months), after presenting his credentials on May 31, called for joint efforts to "enhance political mutual trust, manage differences properly, and advance mutual beneficial cooperation so as to bring China-India relations forward along the right track". However, the situation on the borders, especially in eastern Ladakh, remains tense, with no significant forward movement even after 21 rounds of high-level military talks held so far.

Along with the enhanced deployment of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) troops and significant construction of military infrastructure, recent satellite imagery has indicated the largest deployment of Chinese J-20 stealth fighter jets — its most advanced — at a dual-use military and civilian airport in Shigatse, the second largest city in the Tibet Autonomous Region which is less than 150 km from the Line of Actual Control, opposite Sikkim.

For India, the acquisition of major platforms like the third aircraft carrier, new-generation submarines and fighter jets is essential for building capabilities which enable credible deterrence against China. However, what is even more important is the present situation on the LAC, and this translates into current intent. While China will keep voicing platitudes about the need for friendly bilateral relations, the ground elements of the PLA will continue to look for positions of strength and advantage along the LAC.

For the Indian Army, the focus will thus remain on enhancing intelligence and surveillance capabilities with an increasing number of military satellites and accelerating the process of acquiring state-of-the-art weapons and equipment. These include battlefield transparency systems, unmanned combat aerial vehicles and latest night vision capabilities, even imported ones as Atmanirbharta will take its time.

All this costs money and an enhancement of the 'status quoist' defence budget. On February 1, the Finance Minister presented the Interim Budget for 2024-25, which had an allocation of Rs 6,21,541 crore for the Ministry of Defence (MoD), a 4.72 per cent increase over the defence budget for 2023-24.

However, compared to the revised allocation for last year, it was a marginal fall in real terms. As a percentage of government expenditure, this was just 13 per cent, continuing a multi-year trend of

falling defence outlay, representing 1.89 per cent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Interestingly, the bulk of the allotment for capital acquisitions, Rs 1.72 lakh crore — 27.67 per cent of the total defence budget — will be taken away by committed liabilities.

The finance ministry is getting ready to present the full Budget for 2024-25 next month. One key change would be in the accounting of the more-than-expected RBI dividend of Rs 2.11 trillion for the Central Government. As a result, some of the extra receipts would be used for pre-payment of debt and to further reduce the fiscal deficit.

While the full Budget for the current financial year may not be much different from the interim one, a substantial increase in the total defence allocation would be prudent for enhancing national security.

An integrated and unified theatre command structure has been on the anvil for almost five years now. Despite the political executive being positively inclined and desirous of this, an inordinate delay has taken place. Prolonged confabulations due to inter-services turf wars and specious arguments for status quo have been the major stumbling blocks.

There has been a concerted effort by the Department of Military Affairs, under the CDS, to give this restructuring a final shape, incorporating optimum utilisation of all elements, including cyberspace and space. While the CDS can and surely will be a facilitator for this change, it has to be strongly driven by the political leadership so that the armed forces evolve into a fully synergised joint organisation. It would make sense, therefore, for this subject to be on the government's 100-day agenda.

The third issue of concern is the new recruitment system for the armed forces, the Agnipath scheme, which was unveiled in June 2022 and the process set in motion in January 2023. Recruits have been enrolled under the name of Agniveers, with only 25 per cent to be retained after four years and the remainder being released from service with benefits and generic promises of re-employment in other departments, including Central police organisations. This scheme was imposed on the armed forces in haste under some imagined benefits of a younger profile for the services. Almost two years down the line, the feedback from the unit-level organisations, the cutting edge of the Army, is anything but encouraging. It's not a happy situation now, with Army recruitment a low-priority option for the mostly rural youth who have traditionally been the main source of our soldiery.

Some political parties had opposed the Agnipath scheme during the recent election campaign. Now, with a coalition in power, one of its constituents, the Janata Dal (United), has called for a review of this system of recruitment. It will indeed be ironic if a policy which did not find favour with the organisation on which it was imposed and which was stridently opposed by retired officers of the Army were to see a rollback not due to sane advice but the exigencies of coalition politics. Be that as it may, the recruitment system of the forces needs an urgent review, well before the first lot of Agniveers heads for retrenchment.

Expectations from new governments are always high, though the present dispensation is largely a continuation of the same leadership. It is to be hoped and expected that the urgent concerns of the armed forces will be prioritised.

<https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/comment/no-room-for-complacency-along-lac-630188>

Indian Air Force Eyes Mirage 2000-N Fighters From Qatar, Greece To Boost Its Strength

For the Indian Air Force (IAF), desperately short of fighters (currently at 31 squadrons instead of the 40), temporary relief may be at hand with Qatar offering it 12 little-used Mirage-2000-5 fighters. A team headed by a Group Captain (equivalent to a Colonel in the Army) is likely to visit Doha in the coming weeks to assess the aircraft.

The offer is being seriously considered as the offer price is reasonable and it comes with spares, including engines, "testers" and importantly, air-to-air weapons like the MICA. Each aircraft, including the additional engines, spares and weapons come to less than Rs 500 crores, a steal, according to sources. The fighters haven't been used much-- they have 30 percent of their life, approximately 1,500 hours of flying in them and the Indian ability of "jugaad" could extend their life even further.

This, when the indigenous LCA-Mark 1A deliveries may be slightly delayed and the purchase of 12 Sukhoi-30MKI fighters the government has cleared is still going through discussions, is a bonus. The fact that India has about 50 Mirage-2000s helps, as the Qatari plane is the 2000-5, an upgraded version, but not very different to fly or maintain. So, for the pilots and engineers it will not be a greatly different plane, and not much additional training is necessary.

The Mirage-2000 has a good record, having been used in the Kargil war and later, the attack on a Jaishe Mohammed terrorist training camp in Balakot, deep inside Pakistan. The Mirage-2000 was again used when the Pakistan Air Force attacked Indian armed force bases in India the day after the Balakot attack. The only concern is the fact that, according to reports, Pakistan appears to be interested in the aircraft. As a result, decision-making, if the aircraft are found to be suitable, will have to be quick. For, Pakistan, regardless of its economic distress, always has funds for its armed forces.

Greek Defence Cooperation

Meanwhile, Michel Spinellis, a senior Greek defence ministry official, will be in New Delhi to discuss closer military ties with India. Greece is already a strategic partner and they have offered 18 Mirage-2000s. These are older planes and they can be broken up and used for spares. Initial reports suggest that some of the 18 can be purchased and India has asked the Greeks for an offer. The Greeks may suggest a joint offer to the French to buy Rafales.

India has 36 and the Hellenic Air Force, 24. Ordering more Rafales jointly could lead to a slight reduction in price and also, early delivery, the Greeks argue. Both offers from Qatar, a country from which India has purchased enormous quantities of natural gas and Greece, already a close friend, are welcome, particularly because fighter strength is plummeting. The Qatari jets is the equivalent of 60-65 percent of a squadron, something the IAF badly needs.

<https://www.timesnownews.com/india/indian-air-force-eyes-mirage-2000-fighters-from-qatar-greece-to-boost-its-strength-article-110933302>



Wed, 12 Jun 2024

Indian Air Force Constructing Second Runway at Ladakh's Strategic Airbase

Amid a surge in militancy-related incidents in Jammu division and concerns over 'unprovoked tensions' with China in Ladakh, the Indian Air Force (IAF) has begun constructing a second runway at the strategic Leh airbase in Ladakh, ETV Bharat has learnt. This addition aims to accommodate increasing military and civilian air traffic and ensure uninterrupted operations during hostilities along the border.

A defense official, speaking on the condition of anonymity, confirmed, "Work on the second runway has already started at the airbase."

The number of military and civilian flights at Leh has surged in recent years, but the limited operational window for aircraft, due to rarified air and climatic conditions, restricts flights to morning hours, according to the officer.

Previously, civilian flights were infrequent, and military operations primarily involved transport aircraft and helicopters. However, due to the prevailing situation along the Line of Actual Control (LAC), operations of fighter aircraft and helicopters have significantly increased. Various fighter aircraft, including the Rafale, MiG-29, Su-30, and Apache helicopters, now regularly operate from Leh on a rotational basis.

The official noted that air traffic to and from Leh is expected to rise further, highlighting the need for an additional runway to ensure continuous operations. "There was also an incident last year when a stranded C-17 blocked the runway for two days. Such a situation could be disastrous during any volatile situation along the LAC as it would hold up combat and logistical missions. It will also help during unprovoked tensions with the neighbours," the official added.

According to officials, the Leh airbase is crucial for maintaining India's military posture along the LAC and in Siachen. Heavy lifters like the C-17, IL-76, and Chinook, along with smaller aircraft such as the AN-32, maintain a constant air bridge to the 10,000-foot-high base, ferrying troops, supplies, weapons, and equipment. This is particularly significant in winter when the road link to the region is cut off by snow. Additional airfields, such as those at Daulat Beg Oldi (DBO), Fukche, and the recently upgraded Nyoma airstrip, support these operations.

The official also asserted, "Ladakh will be the first high-altitude airbase of the IAF to have twin runways. Interestingly, several Chinese air bases in Tibet have multiple runways. Hotan, a dual civil-military airport in northwest China, has two paved runways. Shigaste and Changdu Bangda in the eastern theater possess similar capabilities. China has been upgrading its air bases in Tibet,

with satellite imagery revealing new facilities and infrastructure. Why should we stay behind when we too can upgrade?"

Meanwhile, according to the official, the IAF has increased patrolling of sensitive areas along the LAC and Line of Control (LOC) in response to the surge in militant attacks in Jammu and Kashmir.

<https://www.etvbharat.com/en!/state/indian-air-force-constructing-second-runway-at-ladakh-strategic-airbase-enn24061202883>

The Tribune

Thu, 13 Jun 2024

Central armed forces aim for double-range sniper rifles

To enhance their operational capability, the country's border-guarding forces are looking to induct large-calibre and long-range sniper rifles with double the range of the existing weapons.

A requirement has been projected to the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) that controls the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) for a 12.7 mm rifle with an effective range of over 1,500 metres. At present, the 7.62 mm sniper rifles available with the CAPFs have a range of about 800 metres.

Sources said the Border Security Force (BSF) has been tasked to set up a technical committee to evaluate the 12.7 mm rifles on the basis of field trials and lay down standard specifications and qualitative requirements that meet the operational parameters of the forces. These specifications will be a benchmark for procuring the long-range sniper rifles, which will be used for border guarding as well as counter-terror and anti-Naxal operations.

A few years ago, the BSF had inducted a small number of US-made Barret M-95 12.7 mm rifles for use along the LoC in J&K to counter Pakistani snipers. The Army already uses different variants of 12.7 mm rifles, including the Barret and the Russian OSV-96. The rifles being sought by the CAPFs are required to be functional in temperatures from minus 20°C to 55°C in day as well as night in all-weather conditions with the use of optical telescopic sights, thermal imagers, spotting scopes and ballistic weather gauges.

India's ordnance factories have developed a multi-calibre anti-material rifle, Vidhwansak, which has three variants — 12.7 mm, 14.5 mm and 20 mm.

Focus on 12.7 mm guns

- CAPFs looking to have 12.7 mm rifles with an effective range of over 1,500 metres
- At present, the 7.62 mm sniper rifles available with CAPFs have a range of about 800 metres
- Rifles of 12.7 mm calibre are being favoured as these increase the kill probability

<https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/india/central-armed-forces-aim-for-double-range-sniper-rifles-630241>

Pakistan's SEATO To India's QUAD — Will Another US-Led Security Pact Get Axed Over Differences With India?

A prolonged period of inactivity by the four members of QUAD (Australia, India, Japan, and the United States) in the Indo-Pacific has led to a pessimistic prediction in certain quarters that it may go the way of SEATO—"a paper tiger" that lasted from 1954 until its inglorious end in 1977.

Among the reasons why much is not happening in the QUAD are said to be increasing differences between India and the United States over issues that have more to do with the domestic issues in the two countries in an election year than the geopolitical ones that had led to the formation of the group and remain as relevant as before.

Of course, it is now said that with national elections in India having been concluded and Prime Minister Narendra Modi getting a renewed mandate, though with a much lesser majority, the worst is over, and things are expected to improve. In his first foreign visit after taking the oath as Prime Minister for the third consecutive time, Modi is all set to fly to Italy to attend the G-7 summit, starting on June 13, as a special invitee by the host, Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni. There, he is expected to meet QUAD partners -U.S. President Joe Biden and Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida.

Despite Washington and New Delhi routinely highlighting the immense potential and brilliant future of the Indo-US partnership, their relationship has been beset with many frictions.

Most of such instances flow from the growing perception, well nurtured by the liberal establishment in the U.S., that India under Modi has been transformed into an illiberal democracy. So much so that "Freedom House," a Washington-based organization that champions the causes of democracy and human rights, has downgraded India's score from "free" to "partly free," citing "rising violence and discriminatory policies affecting the Muslim population."

Freedom House says that Modi's government engages in the "harassment of journalists, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and other government critics" and that "the BJP (Modi's ruling party) has increasingly used government institutions to target political opponents.

What is worse is that the State Department under Biden seems to have seen merits in such anti-Modi government perceptions. For the last two years, the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF), affiliated with the U.S. State Department, has recommended that India be designated a country of "particular concern."

In fact, the State Department did not even consider it diplomatically inappropriate when India was in the midst of elections to say that it is "observing" the arrest of Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal by the Enforcement Directorate and the income-tax notices issued to the Congress Party.

Understandably, India protested these remarks as interference in its internal affairs and summoned senior officials of the US embassy in Delhi to convey its protests.

Incidentally, many in India's strategic establishment strongly believe that Western countries in general and the U.S. in particular have directly or indirectly interfered in India's just-concluded elections like never before. Western media think tanks, academic circles, and human rights organizations were encouraged to lead a systematic attack on the Modi government and appeal to Indian voters to reject Modi electorally.

As Kanwal Sibal, one of India's foremost diplomats, who was the Foreign Secretary, has pointed out, "The intensity of these attacks increased prior to this year's election. The New York Times, the Washington Post, the Economist, the Financial Times, Le Monde, Deutsche Welle, the Wall Street Journal, France 24, the BBC, and the journal Foreign Affairs have led a manifestly orchestrated campaign against Modi's re-election. Attacks have come from the US International Commission of Religious Freedoms, V-Dem of Sweden, the Open Society Foundation of George Soros, the Human Rights and Religious Freedom reports of the US State Department, etc. Individual US Congressmen have joined the chorus, too".

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In fact, Sibal does not find it a matter of simple coincidence when he says that "the substance of these attacks has been identical with that of the principal Indian opposition party's criticism of Modi personally and of his government." The opposition party here is the Congress, and the identical attacker has been Congress leader Rahul Gandhi.

Besides, a new line of attack on India has been opened up with the allegations that India is encouraging/committing extrajudicial killings in the United States (and Canada) of Sikh separatists belonging to the Khalistan movement. American prosecutors, fully backed by the Biden regime, have alleged that an unnamed Indian government official hired a hit-man to kill the leader of the organization Sikhs for Justice, Gurpatwant Singh Pannun, whom India considers a terrorist. The American point, like that of Canada, is that these attempts were made on American soil, and the target was one of its citizens.

But there are merits when Indian officials say that not only are these charges unproven, but these are also examples of sheer double standard on the part of the U.S. as it protects persons who openly work for the disintegration of India, a leading American partner, and fellow democracy. After all, the U.S. has an egregious history of assassinating its opponents and enemies on foreign soil.

Even otherwise, many strategic observers think that now the American establishment is resisting the Modi government's belief in India maintaining its strategic autonomy, not taking sides in the ongoing Ukraine war, maintaining close ties with Russia by defying American sanctions, and taking a position on global climate policies that are in sharp variance with that of Washington, particularly over proposed emissions trajectories.

Impact on QUAD

It is said that all these developments seem to have some effect on the QUAD. All told the annual QUAD summit that President Biden initiated in 2021 has not been held over the last two years. Biden hosted the first in-person leaders' meeting of the QUAD at the White House in 2021, and Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida hosted the second summit in May 2022.

The 2023 Quad meeting was supposed to be held in Australia in May, but because of some important domestic developments, Biden had to cancel his trip. However, the summit was still held, though on the sidelines of the G7 summit in Hiroshima.

This year, India was supposed to host it in January, and the Modi government was seriously considering it immediately after the country's Republic Day celebrations on January 26. But it had to be postponed as President Biden was unwilling to visit at that time. Washington had said that the summit would be rescheduled in India later this year, but it seems highly unlikely, at least before the US Presidential elections in November.

According to Ian Hall, an expert on Indian politics at the Griffith University of Australia, there is now a growing skepticism about the QUAD among foreign policy elites in both New Delhi and Washington. Other commentators may contest this, but critics of the QUAD have now found a great opportunity to say that being an unnatural organization, it would wither away like SEATO.

It may be noted that SEATO (South East Association Treaty Organization) was established at the behest of the U.S. in 1954 to contain the communist influence in South East Asia, but the Philippines and Thailand were the only South East Asian countries to join. Pakistan was the other Asian country as a member country. The result was that SEATO was dominated by "outsiders"- the U.S., U.K., France, New Zealand, and Australia. Critics "find" QUAD to have many of the features of the failed SEATO. Because it does not contain significant Southeast Asian countries, there is a divergence in the outlooks of the U.S. and India that refuses to be an American "vassal."

But then the above may be an argument that is a little over fetched. All four QUAD partners believe strongly in the principles of "a free and open Indo-Pacific" that has "freedom, the rule of law, democratic values, sovereignty, and territorial integrity."

Besides, unlike SEATO, QUAD is not exactly a military organization. There is no doubt that four partners are concerned about a hegemonic China and are collaborating militarily at bilateral levels and multilaterally on other forums, but QUAD, as such, has broader objectives of working together across the Indo-Pacific region on a series of initiatives on health, education, new technologies, maritime domain awareness(which aims to help combat illegal fishing as well as respond to humanitarian and natural disasters by improving technology and training), infrastructure, cyber security, climate change adaptation and mitigation.

If QUAD is still viewed in some quarters as anti-China (QUAD meetings rarely name China specifically), it is precisely because its principles oppose China's, or for that matter, any country's, unilateral and forcible attempts to change the territorial status quo and maritime boundaries, disregard for international law, and threats to free and open navigation. But that does not make QUAD anti-China.

Similarly, discernible observers point out that, given the long-term objectives, the Indo-US relationship will endure, notwithstanding the present challenges, as their partnership is vital for shaping geopolitics for the rest of the 21st century.

This partnership is furthermore influenced by India's large, most prosperous, and influential diaspora in the U.S., attempts towards its division on linguistic, religious, and caste lines notwithstanding. There are merits, indeed, in the words of India's External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar, that "there is structural soundness in the India-US relationship," and it is "certainly proofed against political check." And that being the case, QUAD is unlikely to disintegrate because of perceived Indo-US differences.

<https://www.eurasiantimes.com/pakistans-seato-to-indias-quad-will-another/>



Wed, 12 Jun 2024

Roaring In US Backyard, Meet 'Crown Jewel' Of Russian Navy, 'Silent Killer' Kazan Submarine Stationed In Cuba

Ahead of their arrival in Cuba, the Russian missile frigate Admiral Gorshkov and the nuclear-powered Yasen-class cruise missile submarine Kazan conducted military drills in what has been deciphered as a message to the West amid rising tensions.

The Russian Ministry of Defense (RuMoD) announced on June 11 that the nuclear submarine Kazan and the frigate, Admiral of the Fleet of the Soviet Union Gorshkov, are conducting an exercise on the use of high-precision missile weapons in the Atlantic Ocean, RIA Novosti [reported](#).

The message from RuMoD read: "The tactical ship strike group of the Northern Fleet, consisting of the multi-purpose nuclear submarine missile cruiser of project 885M "Kazan" and the frigate "Admiral of the Fleet of the Soviet Union Gorshkov," performing long-range tasks, began to conduct an exercise on the use of high-precision missile weapons in the Atlantic Ocean."

The report (machine translated from Russian to English) stated that the submarine and the frigate's crews rehearsed high-precision missiles on marine targets using computer models. The marine targets were ship groups of the notional enemy located at a distance of more than 600 kilometers.

Interestingly, the drills coincide with Russian forces kickstarting the second phase of the tactical nuclear drills with Belarus. The Russian state media, RIA Novosti, published a report [titled](#): 'From Belarus to Cuba.' Russia sent a message to Washington," on June 11 to emphasize Russia's military maneuvers.

Analysts have observed that the exercises portray Russia as a major world power with influence that extends well beyond its borders. The drills come when several Western officials and observers have inferred that Moscow's global influence is waning, surmised

There have been reports that the Russian flotilla headed for Cuba was shadowed by US and Allied warships and planes as it made its way to the Caribbean. According to publicly available ship and flight tracking data, Russia's ships may have come within 30-90 miles of the Florida coast while sailing south.

Cuba reportedly welcomes the Russian flotilla on June 12 for naval exercises in the Caribbean Sea until June 17. The Ministry of Defense of Cuba noted that the exercises are related to historically friendly relations between the two countries and comply with all international rules.

Although both the ships that will participate in the drills in Cuba are nuclear-capable, Havana specified that none of them will be armed with nuclear weapons as it docks in the Caribbean country. Washington has also claimed that the exercises "pose no direct threat to the United States."

This is not the first time that Russia and Cuba, both criticized and sanctioned by the West, have conducted military drills. The joint drills were conducted every year between 2013 and 2020, which is essentially why Washington views this week's port call as "routine."

It may be mentioned that Russian President Vladimir Putin's warning that his country would arm unnamed nations with weapons capable of striking Kyiv's Western allies, analysts have now dismissed those concerns.

However, it may be noteworthy that Russia's Kazan Yasen-class submarine, counted amongst the quietest in the world, will conduct maneuvers in the US's backyard. It could potentially worsen tensions between the two biggest nuclear powers despite the US underplaying its presence.

Kazan In The Caribbean

Kazan is a Russian Yasen-class submarine, which US officials previously described as sophisticated. It is an extremely quiet vessel "on par with" the US modern submarine fleet. Three Yasen/Yasen-M class submarines—Severodvinsk, Kazan, and Novosibirsk—are currently in service with the Russian Navy.

Five more Yasen-Ms are currently under construction, and Russian officials had earlier declared their intention to purchase three more.

While Russia's surface fleet is in disarray amid Ukrainian drone attacks, its Yasen-class submarines are still regarded as some of the greatest in the world. The Yasen-class submarine, in conjunction with the Russian Navy's Borei-class ballistic missile submarines, is believed to be essential for Russia's defensive and deterrence strategies.

Edward Geist of the US-based RAND Corporation describes Yasen-class submarines as "the crown jewel of the contemporary Russian Navy and perhaps the pinnacle of present-day Russian military technology."

The 13,800-ton Yasen-class submarine was designed by the Malakhit Marine Engineering Bureau and built by Sevmash Shipyard in Severodvinsk. Another upgraded version, the Yasen-M, has a

quieter nuclear reactor, additional sensors, and new quieting technology. The submarine is 119.8 meters long and can travel 31 knots when submerged.

Since the Yasens are effectively cruise missile submarines, they are frequently assigned the unique vessel classification “SSGN” rather than “SSN.” The letter “G” stands for “guided missiles.” The Kazan is capable of attacking other submarines and ships and taking out enemy ballistic missile submarines. It can quickly hit ports and naval sites and is designed to take out carrier battle groups.

Analysts have determined that the Virginia Class of the US Navy and the Astutes of the Royal Navy, the primary Western equivalents of the Russian Yasen-M class, are substantially smaller.

The Kazan can carry the (3M55) Onik missiles, which have a range of 320 nautical miles (or 592.64 kilometers). Submarines used for land attacks can carry the 1,600 nautical mile (3963.2 km) range (3M14K) of Kalibr missiles. Land-attack missions can also be carried out with the Oniks.

There are eight PM-346 complex (3-14B) vertical launch tubes for Onik and Kalibr cruise missiles on any Yasen-class submarine. The system can launch missiles using the submarine’s surface and underwater positions. The sub can also be equipped with hypersonic missiles.

Alexei Rakhmanov, general director of United Shipbuilding Corporation (USC), had previously stated that the 885 (M) project would deploy Zircon hypersonic missiles on nuclear-powered Yasen class submarines, with preparations already underway.

Writing for Naval News in 2021, OSINT and Naval Analyst H.I. Sutton said, “The Yasen-M Class boats are larger and carry more weapons than their western equivalents. They will also be quicker to field hypersonic weapons (although service introduction is going slower than previously reported). But they carry fewer cruise missiles than the enlarged Block V Virginia Class. This will significantly narrow the gap even before the US Navy adds hypersonic weapons and the anti-ship capable Tomahawks.”

That said, the Yasen-class submarines are notorious for operating close to the United States. When questioned about the threat posed by Chinese and Russian cruise missile submarines operating close to the US mainland, USNORTHCOM commander Gen. Glen VanHerc stated last year that Russia had been deploying its Yasen-class nuclear cruise missile attack submarines more regularly in recent years.

“[The risk is] absolutely increasing. Within the last year, Russia has also placed their [Yasens] in the Pacific,” he said. “Now, not only the Atlantic, but we also have them in the Pacific, and it’s just a matter of time – probably a year or two – before that’s a persistent threat, 24 hours a day. That impact has reduced decision space for a senior national leader during a crisis.”

While the US officials have downplayed the deployment of Kazan and noted that the submarines do not pose a risk as they practice with Cuba, military analysts have said there is always an overarching concern about hostile submarines conducting electronic warfare and collecting intelligence by intercepting signals from adversaries’ vessels.

With its lethal missiles and cutting-edge capabilities, the deployment of these submarines in the Atlantic and the Pacific could also pose a threat to the security of the United States and its allies in Europe.

<https://www.eurasiantimes.com/crown-jewel-of-russian-navy-meet-silent/>

Mursan & Hilsa, now on Mars: Indian scientists name 3 craters on red planet after geophysicist, 2 towns

Scientists from Ahmedabad's Physical Research Laboratory (PRL) have discovered three new craters on Mars, which now bear names to honour the institute and two towns in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh.

They have been named Lal Crater — after Indian geophysicist and former PRL director Devendra Lal — and Mursan and Hilsa, after towns of the same names in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, respectively.

These names were approved by the International Astronomical Union's (IAU) Working Group for Planetary System Nomenclature (WGPSN) on 5 June.

The scientists said that all three craters are located in the Tharsis volcanic region of Mars, a vast volcanic plateau centred near the equator in the planet's western hemisphere. With a width spanning 65 kms, Lal is the largest of the three new craters. The other two — both around 10 km wide — are located on the eastern and western sides of the rim of the Lal Crater.

“The entire area of Lal Crater, in the Tharsis volcanic region on Mars, is covered with lava. There is geophysical evidence of material other than lava in this crater, with a 45-metre thick sedimentary deposit in the subsurface of the crater, obtained using subsurface radar SHARAD (shallow radar),” a PRL spokesperson told ThePrint.

According to the researchers, this discovery provides compelling evidence that water moved large volumes of sediment into the crater now named Lal. The findings also confirm that Mars once had water, which flowed on its surface.

“The two small superimposed craters on either side of Lal Crater, named Mursan and Hilsa, provide the timeline for the infilling process of the Lal Crater and suggest that the infilling has been episodic,” the institute's spokesperson said.

Not the first Indian name for a Martian crater

This is not the first time Indian scientists have discovered and named a crater on the Red Planet. A number of the craters discovered by Indians have been named after Indian cities and towns.

For instance, the Poona, Lonar and Kakori craters have all been named after former and modern names of Indian towns and cities.

According to an international rule, craters less than 60 kms in diameter are named after towns with populations under 100,000. Once approved by the WGPSN, the names are considered official and can be used on maps and in publications.

The surface of Mars is full of craters of different sizes. Scientists also have different theories about what might have caused the planet's surface to be so cratered.

National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) scientists estimate that there are more than 43,000 impact craters on the surface of Mars with diameters greater than 5 kms. They also believe that most craters on the planet were formed by meteorite impacts early in its history, but some may be from more recent impacts.

The largest crater on Mars is believed to be the Hellas Planitia, which has a diameter of about 1,400 miles or over 2,250 kms. This enormous crater is located in the southern hemisphere and has a depth of over 11 kms beneath the average surface level of Mars. There have been speculations of it once being a large ocean.

Other large Martian craters include Argyre, Isidis, Schiaparelli and Lyot.

<https://theprint.in/science/mursan-hilsa-now-on-mars-indian-scientists-name-3-craters-on-red-planet-after-geophysicist-2-towns/2127734/>

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