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Defence News

Defence Strategic : National/International



Press Information Bureau
Government of India

Ministry of Defence

Tue, 21 Mar 2023

Indian Army Takes Lead in Promoting the National Green Hydrogen Mission

In line with the 'National Green Hydrogen Mission', the Indian Army has put in motion the process for installation of a Green Hydrogen based Micro Grid Power Plant project in the forward areas along the Northern borders which are not connected by National / State Grid. An MoU was accordingly signed between Indian Army and National Thermal Power Corporation Renewable Energy Limited (NTPC REL) on 21 March 2023 at Sena Bhawan, New Delhi. On behalf of the COAS, the Quarter Master General (QMG) signed the MoU with Mr Mohit Bhargava, CEO, NTPC REL.

Indian Army is providing requisite land on lease for 25 years with a commitment to purchase generated power through a Power Purchase Agreement (PPA). The proposed projects will be installed by NTPC on Build, Own and Operate (BOO) Models at a jointly identified location in Eastern Ladakh.

The project entails setting up a Solar Power Plant for hydrolysis of water to produce Hydrogen, which, during non-solar hours will provide power through fuel cells. This will set the stage for similar projects in the future and contribute towards reducing dependence on fossil fuel-based generator sets with concomitant abatement of green-house gas emissions.

With this MoU, the Indian Army has become the first government organisation to enter into an agreement with National Thermal Power Corporation Renewable Energy Limited with firm plans to roll out similar projects in the future.

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1909140>

Amid Stand-off with China, Army to Source Green Hydrogen Power for Eastern Ladakh

Amid the continued stand-off with China in Eastern Ladakh, the Army is going for a green-hydrogen-based micro-grid project to power up its forward bases and deployments along the northern borders and in Eastern Ladakh. The move comes at a time when the protracted stand-off with China at the western sector of the Line of Actual Control (LAC) is entering its third year.

“The Indian Army has become the first government organisation to enter into an agreement with National Thermal Power Corporation Renewable Energy Limited with firm plans to roll out similar projects in the future,” the army said in a statement. Sources in the defence and security establishment explained that until now these areas, which were cut off from the power grid, were being powered through diesel-run generators. With this MoU, the dependence on diesel-run generators will decrease, along with a reduction in the emission of harmful pollutants. Sources added that the plan envisages the development of solar power plants. Solar power plants, they explained, would be used to conduct the hydrolysis of water to produce hydrogen. Consequently, this hydrogen will be stored in cylinders and used to provide power through fuel cells during non-solar hours.

While the exact location for the plant has not been identified, a few shortlists have been put forward. The project will first be carried out in one location and then be extended, sources added.

“Indian Army is providing requisite land on lease for 25 years with a commitment to purchase generated power through a Power Purchase Agreement (PPA). The proposed projects will be installed by NTPC on Build, Own and Operate (BOO) Models at a jointly identified location in Eastern Ladakh,” the statement said.

The Memorandum of Understanding for the project between the Army and the National Thermal Power Corporation Renewable Energy Limited was signed on Tuesday.

<https://theprint.in/defence/amid-stand-off-with-china-army-to-source-green-hydrogen-power-for-eastern-ladakh/1461789/>



Press Information Bureau
Government of India

Ministry of Defence

Tue, 21 Mar 2023

India-Jordan Second Consultative Meeting on Defence Cooperation

The second Consultative Meeting on Defence Cooperation between India and Jordan was held today in New Delhi. The two countries discussed a range of issues including military training

and courses, Cyber Security, military exercises, military medicine and capacity building in various areas to enhance defence engagements. Both sides also exchanged their respective capabilities in defence industry and research & development for forging collaborations in mutually beneficial areas.

The Jordanian delegation also interacted with the representatives of defence industry. The meeting was co-chaired by Shri Amitabh Prasad, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Defence, and Brigadier General Hasan Dakhallah Nimer Al-Sbeihat, Director, Directorate of Military Training, Jordan.

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1909230>



Wed, 22 Mar 2023

Parliament Panel for Enhancing Indian Army's Capital Budget

The capital budget of the Indian Army should be increased to facilitate enhancing its deterrent capacity to ward off challenges from the two “hostile” neighbours, a parliamentary panel has said in an apparent reference to Pakistan and China.

The committee appreciated the efforts made by the Defence Ministry towards the indigenisation of military platforms and hoped that the country would see “100 per cent contract value” going to Indian vendors in the years ahead. Referring to the challenges before the Army, the parliamentary standing committee cited proxy wars, in an apparent reference to Pakistan-backed cross-border terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir.

The committee was of the view that funds slated for modernisation of the armed forces should always be incremental. “The committee also desired that there should be a separate allocation for committed liabilities and new schemes, under the modernisation/capital budget,” it said.

The report of the panel was tabled in the Lok Sabha on Tuesday. “Our expenditure should be in proportion to the increase in defence spending of our neighbours. Therefore, the committee recommended that the capital budget of the Army should be increased to have a deterrent capacity to ward off at least two hostile neighbours,” it said, in an indirect reference to Pakistan and China.

The committee noted that the capital outlay for the Navy for 2023-24 was projected at Rs 52,804.75 crore. “Against this projection, the committee found that this year’s allocation is pragmatic and supportive for the Navy as the ministry actually allocated the same amount as projected, although, this projection is Rs 14,818.21 crore less than the projection it made in the year 2022-23,” it said.

“This also indicates that the requirements of the Navy for the new scheme have decreased, and gone down which may affect its modernisation drive. The committee recommended to be apprised of the reasons for the lower projection in comparison to last year,” the panel said.

The committee recommended that from next year onwards a separate statement of the net budget be provided after taking into account the inflation, noting that it is a recurring and unavoidable phenomenon in all aspects of economic theory which applies to the Navy also.

<https://www.financialexpress.com/defence/parliament-panel-for-enhancing-indian-armys-capital-budget/3018323/>

The Tribune

Wed, 22 Mar 2023

Procurement of Fighter Jets must not be Delayed: Parliamentary Committee

The procurement of additional fighter jets should not be delayed any further and a final decision needs to be taken on having a third aircraft carrier, said the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Defence in its report tabled in the House today.

The committee said, “In no uncertain words, (we) recommend that Ministry of Defence may take a final decision, chalk out a trajectory and start the planning process for the third aircraft carrier which would eventually enhance India’s maritime capabilities.”

The committee said requests of the Navy in regard to manufacturing a third aircraft carrier have been brought up several times. Two aircraft carriers are consistently required for meeting threat perceptions and for preparedness and striking capabilities during war. The third is needed as carriers have long maintenance schedules.

The induction of an aircraft carrier is a long gestation exercise and the entire budget for a carrier is not required in a particular year but in a staggered manner which may be spread out over a decade

The committee said it found “considerable delay” in the supply of 40 LCA Tejas jets from Hindustan Aeronautics Limited. “The government should consider buying state-of-the-art fifth generation fighter aircraft over the counter without losing time to keep the force in a comfortable position,” the committee said.

<https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/nation/procurement-of-fighter-jets-must-not-be-delayed-parl-committee-490135>

The Tribune

Wed, 22 Mar 2023

Forces to Unitedly Tackle Terrorism, Internal Security Challenges: Army

Army Chief Gen Manoj Pande on Tuesday said India would continue to face terrorism and internal security challenges in the future and the security forces of the country would “unitedly” tackle these.

He was speaking after inaugurating the All-India Police Commando Competition organised by the National Security Guard (NSG) at its garrison in Manesar here.

General Pande said the new-age technology had enabled the enemy to perpetrate its activities using drones, Internet, cyberspace and social media.

“You all know that terrorism and internal security situation is affecting our country in different ways. We are facing these challenges unitedly. Due to this, the (security) situation is improving in various states.

“These challenges will continue in the future too. Some of these challenges will be there for a long time, some will be present indirectly while some will remain secretly,” he said.

General Pande said the “possibility” of terrorist attacks taking place in the country could not be ignored as he praised intelligence and security forces for foiling and thwarting a number of such designs and networks.

He praised the NSG, a federal counter-terrorist force, for developing special skills in bomb detection and disposal, sniping, countering drones as well as effectively coordinating with other security agencies.

<https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/nation/forces-to-unitedly-tackle-terrorism-internal-security-challenges-army-490138>

THE ECONOMIC TIMES

Tue, 21 Mar 2023

India will Always Remain Maritime Nation: Vice Admiral Dinesh Tripathi

Asserting that India will always remain a maritime nation, Vice Admiral Dinesh Tripathi, Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Western Naval Command, on Tuesday said that the prosperity and well-being of the country's people depend on the security of the seas around the nation. He was addressing a programme at the launch of the anti-submarine warfare shallow watercraft 'Androth' built by Defence PSU Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers (GRSE) Ltd for the Indian Navy.

The GRSE is building eight anti-submarine warfare shallow water crafts for the force, while another eight are being made by a sister shipyard, its chairman and managing director Commodore (retd) P R Hari said.

"India was, India is and India will always remain a maritime nation. The prosperity and well-being of our people depend on the security of the seas around us," Tripathi said. The ship 'Androth' was named and launched by his wife Shashi Tripathi. Vice Admiral Tripathi said that the construction of ships such as this for anti-submarine warfare is in sync with provisioning of the combat-ready, credible, cohesive force which is ready to face current and future challenges in the maritime domain.

The ASW shallow watercraft has been designed entirely by the GRSE, he said.

"I commend the GRSE for building its 108th warship, which is the highest number by any Indian shipyard," Tripathi said. Stating that the association of GRSE and the Indian Navy go a long way back, Hari said that 63 years of co-existence has seen tremendous growth for both the organisations. "We at GRSE are proud to have partnered with the Navy in its quest for attaining blue water capability and also in its transition from a buyer's navy to a builder's navy," he said.

Hari said that the GRSE has delivered 70 warships and 15 more are under various stages of construction.

While seven of these under-construction ships have been launched and are undergoing fitting out of components at GRSE's fitting out jetty (FOJ) here, seven are in the fabrication stage, he said.

Hari said that the GRSE makes various types of warships from missile boats to landing crafts to corvettes, frigates and now ASW shallow watercraft and also advanced stealth frigates.

He said that 'Androth' is the second of the eight ASW SWCs being built by GRSE, with the first having been launched in September, 2022.

The GRSE CMD paid homage to two contract workers who died in an "unfortunate accident" during the construction of this ship.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/india-will-always-remain-maritime-nation-vice-admiral-dinesh-tripathi/articleshow/98876180.cms>

THE TIMES OF INDIA

Wed, 22 Mar 2023

India Needs to Develop both Offensive and Defensive Space Capabilities: IAF chief

India needs to develop "both offensive and defensive space capabilities to safeguard our assets", Air Chief Marshal V R Chaudhari said on Tuesday, in the backdrop of China furiously building and deploying anti-satellite weapons from direct ascent missiles and co-orbital killers to directed-energy laser weapons and electronic jammers.

"The race to weaponize space has already started and the day is not far when our next war would spread across all domains of land, sea, air, cyber and space. We need to capitalize on our initial successes in space and prepare ourselves for the future," the IAF chief said.

India did successfully test an anti-satellite (A-Sat) interceptor missile to destroy the 740-kg Microsat-R satellite, at an altitude of 283-km in the low earth orbit (LEO), under "Mission Shakti" in March 2019.

After the creation of a small tri-service Defence Space Agency (DSA) the same year, instead of a full-fledged Space Command that the armed forces were demanding, India has also been taking some initial steps to develop other counter-space capabilities as well as the ability to protect its own satellites from electronic or physical attacks. But the huge strides made by China have even the US worried, with the final frontier of space becoming increasingly contested as well as congested. Half of the around 700 operational satellites of China, for instance, are that of its People's Liberation Army.

In contrast, while India does have several dual-use civilian satellites, the IAF and Navy has only one dedicated military satellite each as of now. The Army's first dedicated satellite GSAT-7B will be launched for Rs 4,635 crore towards end-2025.

Speaking at a seminar, ACM Chaudhari said defence minister Rajnath Singh has "categorically stated" it was now time for the IAF to become an "aerospace force" and be ready to protect the country from the "ever-evolving threats".

With "on-demand launch" of satellites and spacecraft becoming the new normal, and growing exploitation of it by private and military stakeholders, space has definitely become the "ultimate high ground", the IAF chief said.

"The Indian aerospace industry along with other players like ISRO and the DSA need to collaborate and chalk out the path for the future. We have already demonstrated our nano-satellite technology by deploying 104 satellites using PSLV-C37 last year," he said.

ACM Chaudhari said the Indian defence industries also "need to further the development" of directed energy weapons (DEWs), especially lasers, and hypersonic weapons and also integrate them onto airborne platforms to get desired ranges and accuracy. Such weapons provide significant advantages over traditional ones in terms of precision engagement, low-cost per shot, logistical benefits and low detectability, he said.

India should also be looking at "adopting, absorbing and more importantly indigenously-developing" advanced technologies in unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) or drones. "The use of such evolving technology in terms of swarms etc. in the military context will lead to a much higher demand of UAVs and UCAVs (combat UAVs) in the future," the IAF chief said.

"Research is already progressing in drone-related technologies, including Quantum drones (QD). Quantum computing itself has the ability to impact the aerospace ecosystem in enabling efficient and accurate simulation, optimization of complex systems and improved data processing capabilities," he said.

"Development of UAV technology within the quantum realm shall enhance concepts like Manned Unmanned Teaming (MUM-T) to much higher levels offering a new level of interoperability which could make a huge difference in the wars of tomorrow," he added.

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/india-needs-to-develop-both-offensive-and-defensive-space-capabilities-iaf-chief/articleshow/98879627.cms>



Tue, 21 Mar 2023

Not just Production, Self-reliance should Cover Design, Development: IAF chief

As the country sharpens its focus on achieving self-reliance in defence, Indian Air Force chief Air Chief Marshal VR Chaudhari on Tuesday stressed that Atmanirbharta should not be confined only to production, but also encompass design and development; even as he called for building

offensive and defensive space capabilities to safeguard assets, and developing directed energy weapons that have significant advantages over traditional weapons.

He said stakeholder collaboration was imperative to achieve self-reliance, and without it, “we will wallow in the dark.”

“The key to faster development of niche technology is to identify core areas of development, clearly articulate requirements, and closely interact with the industry to design and develop the technology,” Chaudhari said while speaking at a seminar on India’s Aerospace Capabilities and Technology Requirements.

It does not end here, he said.

“Well established defence manufacturing public sector enterprises must hand-hold and get the developed technology into the market for mass production. Unless all stake holders come together, I am afraid, we will continue to wallow in the dark and not see tangible progress,” the IAF chief said.

His comments come at a time when boosting self-reliance in the defence manufacturing sector is one of the top priorities for the government. Indigenous research and development, and production of platforms, sensors and weapons will play a critical role in future capability building, he said.

The ongoing Russia- Ukraine conflict has shown that technological capability needs to be complemented with combat sustenance, and “our defence industries need to adopt the twin mantras of technical quality and production scalability to meet the requirements of armed forces in any future conflict,” he said.

In early March, chief of defence staff General Anil Chauhan said that self-reliance in defence manufacturing was one of the biggest lessons for India from the ongoing Russia-Ukraine conflict, and the three services would have to be the driving force for the campaign to succeed.

The government has taken a raft of measures during the last three years to promote self-reliance. These include creating a separate budget for buying locally made military hardware, increasing foreign direct investment (FDI) from 49% to 74%, and notifying as many as 411 weapons and systems that cannot be imported.

The race to weaponise space has already started (China has made steady strides), and the day is not far when the next war will be fought across land, sea, air, cyber and space, the IAF chief said.

“We need to capitalise on our initial successes in space and prepare ourselves for the future. The Indian aerospace industry along with other players like Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and Defence Space Agency (DSA) need to collaborate and chalk out the path for the future,” Chaudhari said.

“The weapons of India @100 would look very different from weapons of India @75,” he said, drawing attention to the technological advances likely over the next 25 years. Technology grows exponentially, and its effects are super exponential, he said.

“Directed energy weapons, particularly lasers, provide significant advantages over traditional weapons such as precision engagement, low cost per shot, logistical benefits and low detectability. Our defence industries need to further the development of these weapons and also integrate them onto airborne platforms to get desired ranges and accuracy.”

Over the years, India has mastered indigenous defence production of foreign designs under licence, said Air Marshal Anil Chopra (retd), director general, Centre for Air Power Studies.

“The next natural step, if we really want to be self-reliant, is to design modern systems and have intellectual property rights over them. This will not only help design systems of the future but also give us freedom of export to any country. Also, space is the next frontier that requires our attention. We have mastered basic space technologies, but the number of satellites has to go up significantly as we are far behind China on this front. Developing directed energy weapons is equally critical as these give you unlimited ammunition that can hit targets at the speed of light,” Chopra added. Chaudhari said the air force’s focus was on building indigenous capabilities, and upgrading its older equipment.

“We are totally in sync with the government’s push towards Atmanirbharta and in the next few years, we are looking forward to inducting light combat aircraft (LCA) Mk 1A, HTT-40 trainers, indigenous weapons and a wide array of radars. The light combat helicopter (LCH) has been inducted and I am confident that the helicopter will add teeth to the IAF’s strike capability. We are fully committed to the development of LCA Mk 2 and the advanced medium combat aircraft (AMCA). The induction of C-295 aircraft is a step in the right direction and will boost the Indian aerospace manufacturing ecosystem.”

The C-295 medium transport aircraft will be manufactured in India jointly by Tata Advanced Systems Limited (TASL) and European firm Airbus Defence and Space. In a shot in the arm for the government’s Make in India initiative, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on October 30, 2022, laid the foundation stone of the C-295 manufacturing facility at Vadodara in Gujarat.

The IAF chief said advanced technologies in unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) have increasing applications and practical relevance now, and it will remain so in the future.

“The use of such evolving technology in terms of swarms etc. in the military context will lead to a much higher demand of unmanned combat aerial vehicles/UAVs in the future”, he said.

Significant advancements in radar and stealth technologies have triggered a cat-and-mouse game between radars, surface-to-air missile systems and attacking aircraft, he said.

“We need to harness this technology to meet our future requirements and to have an edge. As a country, we need to focus on R&D and manufacturing in the field of stealth and anti-stealth technologies,” Chaudhari added.

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/not-just-production-self-reliance-should-cover-design-development-iaf-chief-101679386827552.html>

THE ECONOMIC TIMES

Tue, 21 Mar 2023

Status quo Maintained with China on LAC in Ladakh: Army Commander

Northern Army Commander Lt Gen Upendra Dwivedi on Tuesday said status quo is maintained with China on the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in Ladakh and talks are going on at different levels, while the situation is under control in Jammu and Kashmir where efforts are on to stop

terror incidents completely. The General Officer Commanding-in-Chief (GoC) of Udhampur-based Northern Command was addressing a mega 'Veterans Sampark' rally which was attended by over 800 veterans and 'veer naris' at a unit of Jammu and Kashmir Rifles at Digiana here.

"The status quo is maintained with China on LAC. Talks are going on at different levels and all our formations are at a high level of operation preparedness," Lt Gen Dwivedi, who took over the charge of the Army commander of the Northern Command and the Colonel of the Regiment of Jammu and Kashmir Rifles and Ladakh Scouts on February 1 last year, said.

The Indian Army and the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) have been locked in a standoff in multiple areas along the LAC in eastern Ladakh since May 2020.

Lt Gen Dwivedi also talked about continuity of the ceasefire on the Line of Control (LoC) with Pakistan but said there have been some infiltration attempts which have been successfully foiled by the Indian Army.

"The situation in the hinterland is largely under control. Our counter-insurgency/counter terrorism grid is fully working with civil administration and efforts are on to stop terror incidents completely," he said.

Maj Gen (retd) Govardhan Singh Jamwal; Director, Sainik Welfare Department, J and K, Brigadier (retd) Gurmeet Singh Shan; Commander, 92 Infantry Brigade, Brig S K Goswami; and Commandant, JAK Rifles regimental center, Brig Rajesh Sharma also attended the rally, which was jointly organized by 7 JAK Rifles and 26 Infantry Division.

"The purpose of this rally is to reach out to the ex-servicemen of Jammu and Kashmir Rifles, their closest relatives and veer naris living in the nearest district of Jammu and surrounding areas, to solve their problems and anomalies related to pension and to get medical help from medical experts," Lt Gen Dwivedi said.

On the occasion, latest information was disseminated about the welfare schemes run by the Indian Army and the central and state governments for ex-servicemen, their families and veer naris.

The Northern Commander said since most of the soldiers and ex-servicemen of the regiment are from Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh and Punjab, the Army will organise more such rallies in these areas to reach out to the ex-servicemen and solve their problems.

"It is my endeavor to meet my ex-soldiers and brave women at their homes. We have met ex-servicemen and veer naris in Kupwara, Srinagar, Palampur, Leh, Akhnoor, Rajouri and Dehradun and will organise rallies in Anantnag, Amritsar, Jutogh and Darjeeling in the future," he said.

Talking about the bravery of the JAK Rifles, Lt Gen Dwivedi said the regiment was raised in Jammu in 1820 and has given a wonderful example of its valor and sacrifice, conquering areas like Tibet, Gilgit, Yasin, Darel, Hunza-Nagar, Chilas and Chitral under the leadership of General Zorawar Singh.

"The regiment has participated in every war since 1820 and was made an integral part of the Indian Army as the Jammu and Kashmir Regiment. In 1963, our regiment was again renamed as Jammu and Kashmir Rifles regiment which has set many examples of service to the country in every field and was honoured with a total of 2,365 awards including two PVC, two AC, one Padam Bhushan, five MVC, 11 KC," he said.

Referring to the Agniveer scheme, he said under the new policy there will be a written test first and only those who pass the written test will be called for physical and medical tests.

He said the Army is committed to provide alternate career options to its veterans and has set up Army Welfare Placement Organisation and Directorate of Resettlement North Zone.

The Army commander also informed the gathering about the transit facility set up by Garud Defense Guidance Cell (GDGC) at Raiwala and Rishikesh, which provides the facility of stay for jawans with their families at Raiwala (Raiwala Retreat) and Rishikesh (Holiday Home) during their journey.

He said the 14th Reunion and 31st Biennial will be organised at JAK Rifles Center later this year.

As a gesture of respect and gratitude, war veterans, gallantry awardees, veer naris and next of kins were felicitated in recognition of their contribution in the service of the nation.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/status-quo-maintained-with-china-on-lac-in-ladakh-army-commander/articleshow/98858679.cms>

ThePrint

Wed, 22 Mar 2023

Part of Army's ALH Dhruv Helicopter Fleet Resumes Operations

After being grounded for over 10 days, some of the ALH Dhruv helicopters of the Indian Army have resumed operations, said Indian Army officials on Tuesday.

The remaining fleet will be cleared for operations after checks are carried out by the technician teams including HAL officials, added Army officials.

Earlier this month, an Indian Navy Advanced Light Helicopter (ALH), on a routine sortie off the Mumbai coast, made an emergency landing after it experienced a sudden loss of power and rapid loss of height. According to the Indian Navy, the Pilot carried out controlled ditching (an emergency landing on water). All three crew members on board the helicopter were rescued by naval patrol craft after immediate search and rescue.

Following this, the defence forces have halted the operations of the ALH Dhruv helicopters till the time investigators find the reason for the incident and precautionary checks are carried out.

The ALH choppers are operated by all three defence forces including the Army, Navy and Air Force along with the Indian Coast Guard.

The ALH Dhruv choppers are used in multiple roles by the Indian defence forces including transportation of men and material.

The ALH Dhruv has become one of the important parts of helicopter missions undertaken by all three forces involved in different terrains they are deployed.

<https://theprint.in/india/part-of-armys-alh-dhruv-helicopter-fleet-resumes-operations/1462644/>

India Encourages Japan to Invest in Defence Sector

India has encouraged Japan to invest in the defence sector, foreign secretary Vinay Kwatra has said. During the discussions between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Japanese counterpart Fumio Kishida, the issues that came up included private sector investment and also, high levels of FDI. And it was also not joint production, but also joint innovation and design.

Asked if China's recent aggressive policies can up during the meeting, he said regional security was discussed though there were no specific points about the recent problem in east Ladakh. But there is no plan to have additional members in the quad, which comprises India, Australia, Japan and the United States of America.

For now, consolidation is more important than expansion, he added. Also, joint training in defence and closer cooperation is on the anvil. The foreign secretary also noted that last 2 plus 2 meeting between the two countries has gone well and that efforts are being made to work with third countries.

Speaking on economic issues, he said the construction of the Bullet Train to link Gujarat and Maharashtra was making progress. There was also progress on projects related to connectivity that involved Bangladesh.

<https://www.timesnownews.com/india/india-encourages-japan-to-invest-in-defence-sector-article-98863624>

US keen to Partner More with India on Defence, Wants Specific Pact for Air Force, says top Pentagon Official

Noting that the trust factor between the US and India has increased, a visiting top Pentagon official Tuesday said both countries are keen on signing an agreement specific to the air forces as they look at defence technology cooperation including that for jet engines.

However, Frank Kendall, US Secretary for Air Force, flagged American concerns over the Make in India programme of the Indian government saying that the requirement of having a larger share of products manufactured in India should be implemented in stages rather than expectation of having it all in one go.

“The requirements of a certain percentage to be produced in India can be problematic. They can be difficult to meet as a practical matter. We need to phase in that transition. You may start with a small fraction but have a clear path to get there over a period of time,” he said. Responding to a question by ThePrint at a select briefing after his meetings with various stakeholders in India's defence and security establishment, he said the US is keen to talk to India on how it can meet the country's requirement for new fighters.

“India has its own requirements. They should decide what kind of capabilities it needs in its fighter force. If American capabilities can meet those requirements, I think we are prepared to discuss.”

“There are opportunities that exist that require modification of our existing fighters that might be suitable for India. We are very keen to work with India on that possibility,” he said alluding to the offer by American firm Lockheed Martin for its F-21 fighters, which are an upgrade of the F-16s.

Talking about greater cooperation, he said the US and India are looking at signing the air information sharing agreement.

“This is very general for us to be able to exchange what we are doing,” one of the American officials at the briefing chipped in.

Kendall said India and the US are also working on signing certain clauses of the Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement (BECA), one of the three foundation agreements that was signed in 2020.

Speaking about cooperation, he said that the US and India discussing the possibility of a jet engine technology transfer is a big step in the right direction and there are a lot of opportunities for both countries to collaborate on when it comes to artificial intelligence and space, besides emerging technology.

He underlined that the US is “leaning forward more than they have in the past” in terms of technology sharing.

“There is more potential there. We are also looking forward to trying and relaxing some of our constraints,” he said.

However, he flagged the American concern over when it comes to Make in India programme.

Kendall held meetings with External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and also the team of National Security Advisor Ajit Doval.

<https://theprint.in/defence/us-keen-to-partner-more-with-india-on-defence-wants-specific-pact-for-air-force-says-top-pentagon-official/1461940/>



Tue, 21 Mar 2023

India, US Looking to Work Closely to Fend off Chinese Aggression, Defence Agreements to be Signed soon

With China continuing to be a threat, particularly in the Indo-Pacific, India and the United States of America (USA) are looking to work closely by signing several defence agreements in the near future.

According to Frank Kendall, the US Secretary of the Air Force, India and the USA were working on several agreements including:

- An information-sharing agreement between the Indian Air Force and the US Air Force.
- An agreement on the sharing of jet-engine technology. The GE offer, he said, was on the table and it was a step in the right direction.

India and the USA were talking about unmanned aerial vehicles, artificial intelligence, quantum computing, microelectronics, robotics and different kinds of munitions.

Elaborating on the possibility of India buying US fighters, both for the Navy and the Air Force, he said that Washington was prepared to discuss the cases, provided India thought they were suitable. India is looking for a modern fighter for the IAF and either the US F-18 or the French Rafale for the Navy.

Kendall mentioned that India and the USA could do a lot together in the space sector and the agreement signed by the two National Security Advisors-- Ajit Doval and Jake Sullivan has provided more opportunities. "There is a lot more we can do together," he said.

Asked about the lack of trust between the two countries regarding the sharing of technology, Kendall replied he had had "candid conversations" with Indian officials and there were "growing trust" levels between the two countries.

Referring to China, Kendall said there are "general concerns about peace and stability" in the Indo-Pacific. Kendall, following his visit to the USA's allies like South Korea, the Philippines and Australia, added that he was aware of China helping Bangladesh with submarines. He said India and the USA shared security concerns and confirmed that China was a challenge.

<https://www.timesnownews.com/india/india-us-looking-to-work-closely-to-fend-off-chinese-aggression-defence-agreements-to-be-signed-soon-article-98872607>

THE ECONOMIC TIMES

Tue, 21 Mar 2023

India-Africa Military Exercise Begins in Pune

India and 23 African nations on Tuesday began a nine-day mega military exercise in Pune with a greater aim to expand their overall military cooperation. A number of new generation equipment manufactured in India is being used at the exercise to give a feel of their efficacy to the troops of the participating nations.

The African countries which are participating in the Africa-India Field Training Exercise (AFINDEX) include Botswana, Cameroon, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Morocco, Niger and Nigeria.

Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Seychelles, Senegal, Sudan, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe are also attending the exercise, Army officials said.

The joint exercise has been hosted by the Indian Army in keeping with India's outreach to Africa.

"The military cooperation and engagement between the participating member nations are vital for refining the interoperability and operational preparedness for UN peacekeeping operations," said an Army official. The objectives of the exercise are to continue to build upon the initiatives

taken to strengthen India-Africa relations, with a focus on enhancing peace and security, said the official.

He said the joint exercise will bring out practical aspects of the theme-based training and aim to enable the participants to comprehend and put into practice the validated drills and procedures through situation-based discussions and tactical exercise.

Chief of Army Staff General Manoj Pande will also host an 'India-Africa Chiefs Conclave' on March 28, a day before the military exercise comes to an end.

An exhibition of indigenously developed military platforms will also be organised on March 29 by the Indian industry to showcase the country's defence manufacturing capabilities to the visiting delegates.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/india-africa-military-exercise-begins-in-pune/articleshow/98876298.cms?from=mdr>

नवभारत टाइम्स

Tue, 21 Mar 2023

बांग्लादेश ने चीन की मदद से बनाया पहला सबमरीन बेस, बंगाल की खाड़ी में भारत के लिए कितना खतरा?

बांग्लादेश बंदरगाह पर पनडुब्बियों और युद्धपोतों को सुरक्षित जेटी फैसिलिटी प्रदान करने के लिए आधुनिक सुविधाओं से युक्त सबमरीन बेस को शुरू किया है। चीन की मदद से बने इस सबमरीन बेस को कॉक्स बाजारा के पेकुआ में स्थापित किया गया है। सोमवार को प्रधानमंत्री शेख हसीना ने अपने आधिकारिक निवास गणभवन से 'बीएनएस शेख हसीना' नाम के सबमरीन बेस का उद्घाटन किया। 1.21 अरब डॉलर की लागत से बने इस बेस में एक बार में कुछ छह पनडुब्बी और आठ युद्धपोतों को तैनात किया जा सकता है। बंगाल की खाड़ी में स्थित यह बेस आपातकाल में पनडुब्बियों की सुरक्षित और तेज आवाजाही में भी मदद करेगा। हालांकि, इसे भारत के लिए खतरे के तौर पर देखा जा रहा है।

चीन की मदद से सैन्य ताकत बढ़ा रही हसीना

प्रधानमंत्री शेख हसीना ने 3 मार्च 2017 को 'बीएनएस शेख हसीना' नाम के इस सबमरीन बेस की आधारशिला रखी थी। यह बांग्लादेश की अब तक की सबसे उल्लेखनीय नौसैनिक कूटनीति उपलब्धियों में से एक है। 2009 में सत्ता में आने के बाद से ही शेख हसीना के नेतृत्व वाली सरकार ने अपने पिता बंगबंधु शेख मुजीबुर रहमान की तैयार की गई रक्षा नीति के अनुसार 'फोर्सज गोल 2030' को लागू करना शुरू कर दिया है। इस बेस की आधारशिला रखते हुए शेख हसीना ने कहा था

कि नौसेना को एक आधुनिक और ताकतवर फोर्स में बदलने के लिए सरकार ढांचागत विकास और युद्धपोतों को शामिल करने जासे काम को जारी रखे हुए है।

बीएनएस शेख हसीना का सामरिक महत्व

2016 में शी जिनपिंग बांग्लादेश का दौरा करने वाले 30 वर्षों में पहले चीनी राष्ट्रपति बने। बांग्लादेश की भारत के साथ अधिक निकटता के कारण चीन ने पहले इस देश को उपेक्षित छोड़ा हुआ था। क्षेत्रीय विशेषज्ञों के अनुसार, शी जिनपिंग की यात्रा के बाद बांग्लादेश ने चीन से दो पनडुब्बियां खरीदीं। ऐसे में चीन ने बांग्लादेश के लिए पनडुब्बी बेस बनाने का वादा किया था, जो बाद में भारत के लिए चिंता का विषय बन गया। हाल के वर्षों में बांग्लादेश ने अपनी रक्षा क्षमताओं का विस्तार किया है। पड़ोसी म्यांमार के करीब एक नया एयरबेस बनाया है। देश भर में कई नई सैन्य छावनियां खोली हैं और अपने नौसैनिक बेड़े में नए फ्रिगेट जोड़े हैं।

बांग्लादेश का इरादा क्या है

एक अंतरराष्ट्रीय न्यायाधिकरण ने पड़ोसी म्यांमार और भारत के साथ बांग्लादेश के लंबे समय से चले आ रहे समुद्री सीमा विवादों का निपटारा कर दिया है। इसके बाद बांग्लादेश के लिए बंगाल की खाड़ी में तेल की खोज के लिए बहुराष्ट्रीय कंपनियों से बोली मंगाने का रास्ता खुल गया है। बांग्लादेशी अधिकारियों का दावा है कि इस समझौते ने समुद्र के 111,631 वर्ग किलोमीटर से अधिक क्षेत्र पर उनके देश की संप्रभुता सुनिश्चित की है, जो इसके जमीनी क्षेत्रफल के लगभग बराबर है। बांग्लादेश की नौसैनिक क्षमता बढ़ने से देश के विशाल समुद्री क्षेत्रों की सुरक्षा सुनिश्चित करने में मदद मिल सकती है। इसके साथ ही मानव तस्करी, पशु तस्करी रोकने और मछुआरों को सुरक्षा सुनिश्चित करने में भी सहायता मिलेगी।

चीनी पनडुब्बियों को ऑपरेट कर रहा बांग्लादेश

नवंबर 2016 में बांग्लादेश ने जिन दो पनडुब्बियों को चीन से खरीदा था, उनके नाम "बीएनएस नवजात्रा" और "बीएनएस जॉयजात्रा" रखा गया। इसके साथ ही बांग्लादेशी नौसेना के पास हवा, सतह और पानी के भीतर ऑपरेशन को अंजाम देने की क्षमता प्राप्त हुई थी। दोनों पनडुब्बियां टाइप 035G क्लास की हैं। इनकी लंबाई 76 मीटर लंबाई और चौड़ाई 7.6 मीटर है। दोनों पनडुब्बियां दुश्मन के युद्धपोतों और पनडुब्बियों को निशाना बनाने में सक्षम टॉरपीडो और माइन से लैस है। चटगांव में बांग्लादेशी नौसेना के सबसे बड़े नौसैनिक अड्डे "बीएनएस इस्सा खान" में वर्तमान में दो मिंग क्लास की पनडुब्बियों को तैनात किया गया है।

भारत के लिए कितना खतरनाक

चीन की मदद से बना बांग्लादेश का सबमरीन बेस भारत के लिए ज्यादा खतरा नहीं पैदा करेगा। बांग्लादेश भारत का मित्र देश है। बांग्लादेश की नौसैनिक ताकत भारत के मुकाबले काफी कम है। हालांकि, इनके चीन कनेक्शन से भारत के लिए मुश्किलें जरूर खड़ी हो सकती हैं। इस बेस के जरिए

चीन भारतीय नौसेना की जासूसी कर सकता है। चीन की चाहत किसी न किसी तरह बंगाल की खाड़ी में अपनी मौजूदगी को बनाए रखना है। ऐसे में वह भारत के ऊपर दबाव डालने की रणनीति अपना सकता है।

<https://navbharattimes.indiatimes.com/world/asian-countries/bangladesh-built-first-submarine-base-in-bay-of-bengal-with-the-help-of-china-know-how-danger-to-india/articleshow/98858923.cms>

नवभारत टाइम्स

Tue, 21 Mar 2023

जापान समंदर में उतारेगा सबसे खतरनाक पनडुब्बी, पानी के अंदर 'सफेद व्हेल' उड़ाएगी चीन के होश

एक शांत देश अब बहुत बदल चुका है। चीन की तरफ से मिलती चुनौतियों ने उसे बदलने पर मजबूर कर दिया है। पहले जापान ने अपनी राष्ट्रीय रक्षा नीति में बदलाव किया और अब पनडुब्बियों के बेड़े को बदल रहा है। एशिया निक्केई की एक रिपोर्ट के मुताबिक जापान चुपचाप अपनी पनडुब्बी क्षमता को बढ़ाने में लगा हुआ है। वह अपने बेड़े में कुछ ऐसी पनडुब्बियों को शामिल कर रहा है जो काफी खतरनाक हैं। इस अपग्रेडेशन के बाद जापान, चीन के साथ प्रतिद्वंद्विता कर पाएगा।

क्यों ताकतवर है जापान की नई पनडुब्बी

सोमवार को जापान के रक्षा मंत्रालय को नई पनडुब्बी हकुगी मिली है जिसे कावासाकी हेवी इंडस्ट्रीज ने तैयार किया है। जापानी भाषा में हकुगी का मतलब होता है सफेद व्हेल। यह पनडुब्बी ताइगी कैटेगरी की है जो डीजल-इलेक्ट्रिक पनडुब्बियां और लिथियम-आयन बैटरी से लैस है। यह पनडुब्बी काफी लंबे समय तक पानी के अंदर रह सकती है। साथ ही इसे ऑपरेट करना भी काफी आसान है।

डीजल-इलेक्ट्रिक पनडुब्बी बिल्कुल किसी हाइब्रिड व्हीकल की तरह काम करती है। यह बैटरी सिस्टम को चार्ज करती है जबकि डीजल से ऑपरेट होती है। एक बार जब पनडुब्बी गहरे पानी में होती है तो ऑपरेशन मोड पर बैटरी पावर पर स्विच कर जाती है। बैटरी से ऑपरेट होते हुए इन पनडुब्बियों को इंजन जरा भी आवाज नहीं करता है। जबकि परमाणु ऊर्जा से चलने वाली पनडुब्बियां अपने रिएक्टर्स को स्विच ऑफ नहीं कर पाती हैं।

कैसे ताकतवर हुई जापान की सेना

इस क्षमता को जापान की पारंपरिक पनडुब्बियों के साथ मिलाया गया है। इस क्षमता के बाद जापान, पनडुब्बियों के मामले में चीन से एक कदम आगे हो गया है। अमेरिकी विशेषज्ञों की मानें तो ये ताकतवर पनडुब्बियां, संभावित ताइवान संकट में पूर्वी चीन सागर की रक्षा करने में सक्षम होंगी। साथ ही अगर प्रशांत महासागर में चीन कोई हरकत करता है तो उसे मुंहतोड़ जवाब मिलेगा। जापान की नई पनडुब्बियां चीनी जहाजों को समंदर में कहीं भी गश्त करने से रोक पाएंगी। इस एक वजह से अब जापान की सेनाएं अमेरिकी सेनाओं की और ज्यादा मददगार साबित हो सकेंगी।

लिथियम वाली पनडुब्बियां

जापान इस समय दुनिया का वह इकलौता देश है जिसकी सेनाओं के पास लिथियम आयन बैटरी वाली पनडुब्बियां हैं। वर्तमान समय में जापान के पास चार पनडुब्बियां हैं। इनमें से दो ताइगी कैटेगरी की और दो सोरसू क्लास की हैं। इन पनडुब्बियों के इंजन लिथियम इयान बैटरीज से चलते हैं। क्योटो स्थित बैटरी प्रोवाइडर जीएस यूसा की मानें तो लिथियम-आयन बैटरी लीड-एसिड बैटरी की तुलना में तेजी से रिचार्ज होती है। इनमें डिस्चार्ज रेट और ऊर्जा की क्षमता भी ज्यादा होती है। साथ ही ये बैटरीज लंबे समय तक पानी में रह सकती हैं। इस पनडुब्बी की कुल उत्पादन लागत करीब 72 बिलियन येन यानी 550 मिलियन डॉलर थी।

चीन को भी चाहिए ऐसी पनडुब्बी

जापान की 22 पनडुब्बियों में से एक, हकुगी, हिरोशिमा स्थित मैरीटाइम सेल्फ-डिफेंस फोर्स के क्योर नेवल बेस में शामिल होगी। यह पनडुब्बी ओआशियो कैटेगरी की पनडुब्बी ओयाशियो की जगह लेगी। इस पनडुब्बी को जापान ने 25 साल के बाद रिटायर कर दिया है। जापान की यह नई पनडुब्बी इसलिए भी महत्वपूर्ण हो जाती है क्योंकि चीन की नजरें भी अब लिथियम-अयान बैटरीज वाली पनडुब्बियों पर हैं।

<https://navbharattimes.indiatimes.com/world/asian-countries/why-japan-is-quietly-upgrading-its-submarine-capabilities-against-china/articleshow/98874809.cms>



Tue, 21 Mar 2023

Ukraine says Russian Cruise Missiles Destroyed in Crimea

Ukraine said Tuesday that Russian cruise missiles were destroyed in a blast on the Crimean peninsula that was annexed by Moscow in 2014, but denied responsibility for the "mysterious" incident.

"An explosion in the town of Dzhankoi in the north of temporarily occupied Crimea destroyed Russian Kalibr-NK cruise missiles as they were being transported by rail," Ukrainian military intelligence said in a statement on social media.

Russian investigators had earlier said that air defence systems repelled a drone attack at Dzhankoi and that debris from the incident damaged a shop and home and left one person injured.

"The targets of all downed drones were civilian objects," the Investigative Committee added in its statement.

Dzhankoi is a logistics hub on the border between Russian-controlled Crimea and southern Ukraine, which came under the control of Russian forces after they invaded in February last year.

Oleg Kryuchkov, an advisor to the Russian-installed head of Crimea, said the attack was apparently "revenge" for the annexation, several days after Moscow celebrated the ninth anniversary of the region's takeover.

Russian President Vladimir Putin visited Crimea over the weekend, his first to the peninsula since he sent troops to Ukraine on February 24 last year.

<https://www.newindianexpress.com/world/2023/mar/21/ukraine-says-russian-cruise-missiles-destroyed-in-crimea-2558194.html>

Science & Technology News



Tue, 21 Mar 2023

All about ILMT, Asia's Largest 4-meter Telescope Inaugurated in Uttarakhand

Asia's largest 4-meter International Liquid Mirror Telescope was launched in Devasthal in Uttarakhand on Tuesday. The observatory will explore the deep celestial sky, classifying objects from asteroids to supernovae, and space debris.

The telescope was inaugurated by Science & Technology minister Dr. Jitendra Singh, who said that the inauguration of the observatory places India at a different and much higher level of ability to study the mysteries of the skies and astronomy and to share the same with the rest of the world.

WHAT IS ILMT?

The International Liquid Mirror Telescope has a 4-meter-diameter rotating mirror made up of a thin layer of liquid mercury to collect and focus light. The metal mercury is in liquid form at room temperature, which is highly reflective and designed to survey the strip of the sky passing overhead each night.

The telescope has three components: A bowl containing a reflecting liquid mercury metal, an air bearing (or motor) on which the liquid mirror sits, and a drive system. The mercury is protected from the wind by a scientific grade thin transparent film of mylar. The reflected light passes through a sophisticated multi-lens optical corrector that produces sharp images over a wide field of view and a 4k CCD camera, located above the mirror at the focus, records 22 arcminute wide strips of the sky.

WHY IS THIS A BIG MOMENT FOR ASTRONOMY IN INDIA?

ILMT is the first liquid mirror telescope designed exclusively for astronomical observations and is the first optical survey telescope in India. The Devasthal observatory is equipped with the largest aperture telescope available in India that will use Big Data and Artificial Intelligence/Machine Learning (AI/ML) algorithms to classify objects in the sky.

The telescope is designed to survey the strip of the sky passing overhead each night, allowing it to detect transient or variable celestial objects such as supernovae, gravitational lenses, space debris, and asteroids. The data gathered by the telescope will be analyzed quickly using AI and machine learning to catalog the objects in the sky, including variable and transient stellar sources.

"The 3.6-meter DOT, with the availability of sophisticated back-end instruments, will allow rapid follow-up observations of the newly-detected transient sources with the adjacent ILMT. The data collected from the ILMT, over an operational time of 5 years, will be ideally suited to perform a deep photometric and astrometric variability survey," the minister said.

Maintained by the Aryabhata Research Institute of Observational Sciences (ARIES), the telescope observed first light in May last year. It is a result of a collaboration between multiple international universities and scientific institutions.

<https://www.indiatoday.in/science/story/all-about-ilmt-asias-largest-4-meter-telescope-inaugurated-in-uttarakhand-2349672-2023-03-21>

ThePrint

Tue, 21 Mar 2023

China's Developmental Projects Impacts Climate, Environment: Experts

Ongoing China's mega development projects in the South Asia region are impacting the climate and environment, experts raised concerns.

In the 52nd Session of the United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva on Tuesday, organised by the Organisation for Poverty Alleviation and Development and European Foundation for South Asian Studies (EFSAS), experts highlighted the construction of highways, buildings and dams in Gilgit Baltistan by China under its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) project.

Talking about the impact, Myra MacDonald, a former journalist and an author said, “My focus is, yeah, ultimately China is spending billions of dollars, you know, building the CPEC project, which passes through Pakistan, which is also a disputed area. And as far as the climate is concerned, it passes through the Himalayan.”

“Well, I think the main point is that we need to look at the rise in climate change and how unpredictable it’s becoming. And if you consider the Carico room has amongst the biggest glaciers in the world, then when they start to melt or in unpredictable ways, we’re going to see a lot of flashes, more than we already see. Flash floods, and landslides, create a very difficult environment. And what I would argue is that these giant infrastructure projects that are being built are neither resilient to the unpredictability of the climate change that’s coming up, nor particularly economically viable,” she added.

Myra believes that Gilgit Baltistan faces a big risk to end up with as the region is already suffering from climate change and is geologically unstable.

“I make the same argument a bit about the diamond Bashadam that is going to displace maybe more than 30,000 people. Sometimes the numbers are bigger. It’s not clear to me at a time of accelerating climate change in that region, that it’s actually the best thing to do to address the needs of either the people of Gilgit Baltistan or even the people of Pakistan. I should also mention that China is not paying for it, she said.

Tim Foxley, a Research Fellow at EFSAS, who worked for the British Ministry of Defence, SIPRI and RUSI highlighted the Chinese close ties with the Taliban government and its intention to explore oil and minerals from the region.

“We know that the Chinese in January signed a deal for petrol exploration in Northern Afghanistan, and we know they have been talking to the Taliban about reactivating the copper mine in Logar province, so we haven’t seen a lot of activity yet but inevitability these big projects raises environmental concerns like deforestation, displacement of population, water and soil pollution”, Tim Foxley told ANI.

He added, “So if we look at wider across the BRI impact in Asia, we see a whole lot of these problems. So, we need to be very careful of what Chinese may or may not do when they sign contracts and deals in Afghanistan”.

<https://theprint.in/world/chinas-developmental-projects-impacts-climate-environment-experts/1462399/>

