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Tue, 22 Aug 2023

NSTL Capable of Designing Submarine, Says DG Naval Systems

The Naval Science and Technological Laboratory (NSTL) is capable of designing a submarine, said director general naval systems and material Dr Y. Sreenivas Rao. He was speaking at the 54th Raising Day of NSTL in Visakhapatnam on Monday.

Rao said that the responsibility of NSTL has increased by having its products on the list of positive indigenous list. He said that NSTL has the capability of designing a submarine due to its state-of-the-art hydrodynamic research facilities.

He also said that NSTL has been putting its best efforts into strengthening the nation with state-of-the-art underwater weapons, with the integral support of industries and academic institutions.

In his address, Dr Abraham Varughese, outstanding scientist and director of NSTL, explained the genesis of the laboratory and its evolution to the present stage of being a state-of-the-art premier naval research laboratory in the country.

He also briefed on the status of ongoing projects and stressed the innovative technologies to meet futuristic requirements as per the 2, 5, and 10-year plans of the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO). He also gave details of new technological improvements in the laboratory towards achieving the targets.

Senior scientists were present on the occasion.

<https://www.deccanchronicle.com/nation/in-other-news/220823/nstl-capable-of-designing-submarine-says-dg-naval-systems.html>



Press Information Bureau
Government of India

Ministry of Defence

Tue, 22 Aug 2023

INS SUNAYNA Enters Durban, South Africa

INS Sunayna entered port of Durban, South Africa on 21 Aug 23. The ship undertook passage exercise with South African Navy Ship SAS King Sekhukhune I off Durban. Post exchange of pleasantries at sea, the ship entered Durban harbour. The ship was received by Cdr Kenneth Singh officiating Flag Officer Commanding Naval Base Durban and HCI Pretoria Officials.

The visit apart from commemorating 30 years of diplomatic partnership between India and South Africa is aimed at enhancing interoperability, jointness and mutual cooperation between both Indian Navy and South Africa Navy. During the port call, the two navies will share best practices and experiences through professional interactions, subject matter expert exchanges and cross deck visits, additionally social interactions with senior military and civil dignitaries are also planned.

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1951029>



Tue, 22 Aug 2023

CDS, Top Tri-Services Military Commanders Meet to Discuss Maritime Theatre Command

Working towards the creation of three new Theatre Commands, Chief of Defence Staff General Anil Chauhan on Tuesday began deliberations with top Military Commanders from the three services about nuances of Maritime Theatre Command and the related issues in the maritime domain.

The meeting of the Chief of Defence Staff with the Commands deployed in the peninsular and Island territories of the country comes a few weeks after he had held a similar meeting with Military Commanders responsible for securing the borders with China.

"CDS is meeting the senior Military Commanders from the three services including the Andaman and Nicobar Command, Southern Air and Naval Commands, and Navy's Western and Eastern Commands to discuss the future structures and responsibilities of the Maritime Theatre Command being created to tackle the threats from that domain," top government sources said.

The Maritime Theatre Command is envisaged to be responsible for tackling threats and security challenges from all sides encompassing the entire Indian Ocean and Pacific region where the activities of the Chinese military have increased in the last many years.

The meetings involving top military commanders are taking place when the CDS is in the advanced stages of strengthening integration and jointness among the defence forces for setting up three new Theatre Commands which will look after threats from the Northern front, the Western front and the maritime domain.

The top leadership of the country created the office of the Chief of Defence Staff over three years ago to enhance jointness and integration among the defence forces for tackling the threat from adversaries in future in a more robust way including the capabilities in both Cyber and Space domains.

The Department of Military Affairs has been mulling over multiple issues including the one that whether the heads of these new formations should be three-star generals or four-star ones.

Most of the suggestions in this regard have been in favour of appointing four-star officers to head these formations as the Theatre Commanders would have many Commander-in-Chief rank officers under them and it would be better that a four-star officer leads them to avoid issues over seniority amongst them and have proper command and control structures in place.

It is also being felt that if the Theatre Commanders are at the three-star rank, the interference of their respective services headquarters may continue in their functioning.

The Chief of Defence Staff along with the Service Chiefs is also ironing out issues of integration and looking at having common rules for discipline, intelligence gathering and operations.

Studies have also been ordered under senior military officers to integrate intelligence gathering, common operations directorate, training, maintenance and logistics.

The DMA is also looking at significant savings with the creation of new formations as a number of existing formations at the Services Headquarters' level will get optimised with the raising of new centralised Tri-Services' Commands.

The CDS has been working towards achieving consensus amongst the three Service Chiefs regarding important policy aspects related to the Theatre Commands.

The Chiefs are also moving ahead as per the government directives towards a joint and integrated future recently the Air Force Chief visited the Army Air Defence College in Gopalpur, Odisha and the Naval airfield near Visakhapatnam. The Navy Chief also met the senior JCOs of the Three Services as part of the efforts to promote a Tri-Service culture among the forces.

The Navy has also started a service-neutral campaign to invite youth to join the forces from 'Hind Mahasagar to the Himalayas and Kutch to Kohima' in this direction.

As part of promoting the Tri-Service culture in the forces, the services are having cross postings of personnel from one force to the other as recently Army officers from Air Defence units are getting posted to the Air Force Surface to Air Missile (SAM) Squadrons.

The joint acquisition of weapon systems has already started in the Armed Forces with the case of procurement of Predator drones from the US to be followed up by the Medium Altitude Long Endurance drones being next on the agenda.

The Services will also have joint maintenance of their equipment like the Helicopters, Small Arms, Aircraft etc to make significant savings both monetarily as well as in time.

<https://www.aninews.in/news/national/general-news/cds-top-tri-services-military-commanders-meet-to-discuss-maritime-theatre-command20230822191616/>

Indian Air Force Shows Strategic Airlift of Garud Special Forces, Squadron Leader Speaks

The Indian Air Force on Tuesday (August 22) displayed strategic airlift of Garud special forces, specialized weapons, equipment, taking off and landing of AN-32 aircraft, advanced light helicopter and also Sukhoi-30 at Jorhat Air Force station in Assam. It also inducted a Sukhoi-30 squadron at Jorhat Air force station in line with capacity-building in the eastern theatre.

In conversation with news agency ANI, Squadron leader Deepak Gurjar spoke about the Sukhoi-30 aircraft. "This aircraft (Sukhoi) is being manufactured in India and our HAL is manufacturing it. The weapons inside this aircraft are excellent, effective and sufficient to tackle any rival aircraft."

Flight Lieutenant Pratishtha Singh threw light on the induction of women in the Indian Air Force. "With the induction of Agniveer, we have an induction of women also in the Indian Air Force and I would truly encourage that. There's nothing better than serving the nation. Since the literacy rate has increased, simultaneously the rate of women induction in the Air Force has also increased."

Notably, the Indian Air Force recently conducted successful trials of the Heavy Drop System from a cargo aircraft.

According to the officials, the Heavy Drop system is designed and developed by a laboratory of the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).

"The trial of the system has been completed in partnership with Aerial Delivery Research and Development Establishment towards achieving self-reliance in the military sector," IAF officials said.

<https://www.republicworld.com/india-news/general-news/indian-air-force-shows-strategic-airlift-of-garud-special-forces-squadron-leader-speaks-articleshow.html>



CRPF Inducts Hi-Tech WhAP Armoured Vehicle in Kashmir

The Central Reserve Police Forces (CRPF) in Kashmir has received a shot in the arm to fight militancy with induction of a sophisticated vehicle which is capable of operating on land and also in marsh areas and streams using its water jets.

The central force has started inducting the new Wheeled Armoured Amphibious Platform (WhAP) vehicles in militancy affected south Kashmir. The 8X8 vehicles have been jointly built by TATA & DRDO and can carry 12 equipped soldiers including the driver. A variant of the vehicle can be mounted with a remotely operated turret over its roof. The first vehicle has reached the jawans of 110 Battalion in south Kashmir's Pulwama district. "Our efforts are to improve our operational efficiency. With the passage of time, we attempt to augment ourselves. In this regard we try to arm ourselves with new tools and equipment available and provide the best possible facility and

training to our jawans and officers,” said CRPF Inspector General, Kashmir operations sector, Gyanendra Kumar Verma in a video interview in south Kashmir.

He reviewed the deployment on Saturday and did a close inspection of the newly inducted WhAP aimed to ‘strengthening our capabilities to ensure safety and security’, the CRPF said in a statement.

The CRPF has been fighting militancy along with army and police in Jammu and Kashmir for the past three decades. Besides, the police and CRPF have often been controlling law and order flare ups in the restive valley. In 2022, lowest of 17 paramilitary personnel and 14 policemen were killed in J&K in anti-insurgency operations, according to police.

Without providing the specific details of the vehicle or their number, Verma said that they would be training the jawans on the new vehicle. “The vehicle has reached here with a particular design. With all its features, the vehicle will be understood, and the forces’ personnel will be provided with training. Only then will we provide its details,” Verma said.

There are as many as 60 battalions (around 60,000 personnel) of CRPF in Kashmir valley apart from very few units of other central armed police forces (CAPFs) or central paramilitary forces. From time to time, more get inducted temporarily for events like elections or Amarnath yatra.

The CRPF is also involved in road opening duties on the Srinagar- Jammu national highway.

The vehicle, called TATA Kestrel, has the capacity to carry 12 jawans and can reach a top speed of 100 km/ hour. The 25-ton vehicle, with anti-blast seats and protection against land mines, is apt for high altitude operations and can also act amphibious by riding through water streams propelled by hydro jets on its rear on both sides.

The army was provided with WhAP last year and the central forces were provided with vehicles this year, and this is the CRPF’s first deployment of the vehicle in Kashmir.

An official of CRPF deployed in Kashmir, on condition of anonymity, said that the vehicle has different variants with CRPF and army. “The vehicle with the army is mounted with artillery which is not amphibious and was deployed in Leh. But here we are yet to get information about what variant of the vehicle it is and what are its different features,” he said.

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/cities/chandigarh-news/crpf-inducts-sophisticated-amphibious-vehicle-to-combat-militancy-in-kashmir-101692728906620.html>



Tue, 22 Aug 2023

Revolutionizing Indian Army: Agniveer Initiative Paves the Way for Technological Transformation

By Huma Siddqui

The pioneering Agniveer initiative, launched in 2022, has yielded exceptional results in bolstering the Indian Army’s technical prowess and modernization efforts. The first two Agniveer batches, representing a paradigm shift in recruitment strategy, have ushered in a new era of highly qualified personnel within the armed forces. This recruitment scheme has witnessed an impressive surge in technically skilled individuals, marking a significant departure from the traditional recruitment policy. Notably, an impressive five percent of recruits possess diplomas or certificates from

esteemed Industrial Training Institutes, while 15 percent hold graduate degrees. These numbers stand in stark contrast to the previous approach and underscore the scheme's resounding success.

According to sources in the defence and security establishment, with more than 19,000 Agniveers set to join their respective battalions imminently, and an additional 20,000 slated to complete their training by September, the infusion of technologically proficient individuals into the Indian Army is poised to drive transformative change. This augmentation includes the induction of 110 B.Tech graduates into the force, exemplifying the scheme's commitment to enhancing the Army's technological prowess.

Sources quoted above have asserted that this infusion of advanced technical skills is closely aligned with the evolving demands of modern warfare. These skilled recruits are poised to play a pivotal role in shaping the ongoing technological advancements underway within the Army. The initiative seeks to equip the force with state-of-the-art weaponry and equipment, infused with cutting-edge technologies that are essential for success in contemporary military operations.

The physical standards achieved by Agniveer recruits are on par with those of previous batches, reinforcing the programme's ability to maintain rigorous standards while taking up innovation. The resounding success of the initial Agniveer cohorts firmly underscores the programme's contribution towards realizing the Indian Army's aspiration of becoming a dynamic and technology-savvy force.

Looking ahead, the Agnipath scheme is set to recruit more than 1.75 lakh Agniveers by 2026, added sources in the defence and security establishment. This strategic endeavor is expected to significantly influence the age profile of the armed units, imbuing them with youthful vigor and agility that is essential in the contemporary military landscape.

The Agnipath initiative has, however, brought about a transformative shift in the recruitment landscape. In contrast to the previous model, which recruited individuals aged between 16 and a half years and 21 years for a minimum of 15 years of service, the new scheme has introduced a more flexible age bracket of 17.5 to 21 years. Additionally, only a quarter of recruits will be absorbed for permanent service, introducing greater flexibility and dynamism.

The Agnipath scheme's journey has not been without challenges. Initially met with opposition and criticism, the government responded with measures and reservations to enhance its appeal to aspirants. These initiatives include provisions for skill certification, qualification upgrades, and post-service benefits such as the one-time Seva Nidhi package worth Rs 11.71 lakh, which is tax-exempt.

Furthermore, the initiative has secured 10 percent of job reservations in key ministries such as the Ministry of Defence, Home Affairs, and even the private sector. This cross-sectoral embrace reaffirms the transformative impact of the Agniveer program on both national security and civilian industries.

<https://www.financialexpress.com/business/defence-revolutionizing-indian-army-agniveer-initiative-paves-the-way-for-technological-transformation-3218596/>



Tue, 22 Aug 2023

India to Soon Become \$5 Trillion Economy, Says PM Modi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on August 22 said India will soon become a \$5 trillion economy and is poised to become the growth engine of the world in the coming years.

Speaking at the BRICS Business Forum Leaders' Dialogue, Mr. Modi highlighted that "mission-mode" reforms has improved the ease of doing business in India and invited businesses to be part of the country's development journey.

While mentioning about the strides made by India on the digital payments front, Modi said there are many possibilities for using the Unified Payments Interface (UPI) for BRICS.

He also said that Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (BRICS) together can contribute significantly to global welfare, particularly of the Global South.

The Prime Minister, who is in South Africa to participate in the first in-person summit of BRICS nations since 2019, told the gathering that despite the turmoil in the global economy, India today is the fastest growing major economy in the world.

"Soon, India will become a \$5 trillion economy. There is no doubt that India will be the growth engine of the world in the years to come," Mr. Modi said and added that the country converted disasters and hardships into opportunities for economic recovery.

"The reforms that we have done in the mission mode in the last few years have resulted in continuous improvement in the ease of doing business in India," he said.

Highlighting the reforms undertaken, including technology-based solutions to address the social and economic challenges, as well as the efforts to reduce the compliance burden, Mr. Modi said India is now rolling out the red carpet by removing the red tape.

Investor confidence has increased due to the implementation of Goods and Services Tax (GST), and the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, the prime minister said and asserted that the people of India have taken a pledge to become a developed nation by 2047.

Inviting businesses to join India's development journey, Modi said New Delhi has opened up sectors like defence and space for private investments, and that manufacturing sector is becoming competitive due to reduction in logistics cost.

As PM @narendramodi is heading to Johannesburg, take a look at what PM's visit to South Africa & Greece has in store. pic.twitter.com/H9PiW1592C

— Arindam Bagchi (@MEAIndia) August 22, 2023

Further, the Prime Minister said his government is taking steps to make India a global manufacturing hub in areas like solar energy, wind energy, electric vehicles, green hydrogen, green ammonia.

"It is natural that this will create a big market for renewable technology in India," he said.

With the use of technology, Mr. Modi said India has taken a giant leap towards financial inclusion, and rural women have benefited the most.

Direct Benefit Transfers (DBT) worth more than \$360 billion have been done, resulting in increased transparency in service delivery, and reducing corruption and middlemen, he said.

Referring to the UPI (Unified Payments Interface) platform, Modi said it is used in India from street vendors to big shopping malls.

Countries like UAE, Singapore and France are joining the UPI platform and there are many possibilities of working on this with BRICS countries as well, Mr. Modi said.

Large scale investments are being made in infrastructure that will lay a strong foundation for a new India of the future.

PM Modi arrives for BRICS Leaders Retreat

Mr. Modi arrived at the Summer Place for the BRICS Leaders Retreat and to deliberate on global developments with other leaders of the bloc.

Mr. Modi arrived on a four-day visit to South Africa and Greece. In South Africa, he will attend the 15th BRICS Summit in Johannesburg from August 22-24 at the invitation of the country's President Matamela Cyril Ramaphosa.

This is the first in-person BRICS Summit after three consecutive years of virtual meetings because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

“Reinforcing the intra-BRICS bonds! PM @narendramodi arrives at the Summer Place to participate in the BRICS Leaders Retreat. Warmly greeted by the host, President @CyrilRamaphosa of South Africa,” Ministry of External Affairs spokesman Arindam Bagchi said in a post on X, formerly Twitter.

“PM, along with other BRICS leaders will deliberate on global developments and leveraging the BRICS platform to find solutions to global challenges,” he said.

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/prime-minister-narendra-modi-south-africa-15th-brics-summit/article67223064.ece>

ThePrint

Tue, 22 Aug 2023

As Modi & Xi Reach BRICS Meet, Militaries Focus on LAC De-escalation, Discuss Finer Points

Top defence and security brass of India and China have agreed on the need to de-escalate the tensions along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) at the earliest with instructions given to tactical commanders to come out with a ‘workable solution’, ThePrint has learnt.

Sources in the defence and security establishment told ThePrint that the focus right now is to move forward on the legacy issue of Depsang Plains where both sides have blocked each other from patrolling to their claimed lines and the one at Charding Nullah Junction (CNJ) near Demchok where the Chinese, under the guise of being civilians, have set up tents in areas claimed by India.

They said that following the first ever two-day Corps Commander level talks held on 13-14 August, three days of talks were held at Major General rank and below starting last Friday during which the effort was on to thrash out a workable solution.

Despite disengagement from the Galwan Valley, Pangong Tso, Gogra (PP-17A) and Hot Springs (PP-15), the Indian and Chinese armies continue to maintain thousands of troops and equipment along the LAC.

During the Corps Commander level talks, both sides agreed to “resolve the remaining issues in an expeditious manner”. As reported first by ThePrint, both sides had agreed to freeze additional build-up of troops and equipment along the LAC.

The sources said that instructions from “top” is to move forward and ease the tensions.

These measures could include pull back of a certain number of troops and equipment, joint verification/survey of positions held so that no new posts come up along the troubled areas, creation of new limits of patrolling and certain Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to be followed before launching any kind of patrolling.

These developments came ahead of the visit of PM Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping to Johannesburg for the BRICS Summit (22-24 August), where the possibility of a bilateral meeting or a pull aside between the two leaders has not been ruled out.

Xi is also slated to travel to India next month for the G-20 Summit (9-10 September). Beijing and New Delhi have not confirmed Xi's attendance, so far.

What Maj Gen talks were about

Sources said that the talks were held at two different locations. Major General P. K. Mishra led the talks at Daulat Beg Oldie (DBO), close to the Depsang Plains. He commands the 3 Div, also known as the Trishul Division, which looks after the area.

Talks in the southern side of Eastern Ladakh was led by Major General Hariharan, who heads the Uniform force, a formation of the Rashtriya Rifles that was pulled out from Jammu and Kashmir and brought to the LAC, as reported first by ThePrint.

Sources said that on Friday, the talks focussed on proposals that were decided to be discussed during the Corps Commander-level talks.

On Saturday, the Maj Generals went back to their tactical commands to thrash out the issues and held another round of discussions on Sunday.

Sources said that while Demchok is a relatively small issue, the problem is with Depsang and the Chinese insistence on reciprocity when it comes to patrolling claimed areas. As reported by ThePrint earlier, the LAC is disputed at Depsang Plains, which fall under India's Sub Sector North (SSN), as elsewhere.

The SSN is sandwiched between the Siachen Glacier on one side and Chinese-controlled Aksai Chin on the other, making it strategically important.

According to the sources, tensions at Depsang Plains can be traced to China's 18-km incursion into the area, which is close to the strategic DBO, in 2013, and the 2017 Doklam stand-off.

In the Depsang Plains, the patrolling points are a little away from the perceived LAC like in other areas, and this is called the limit of patrolling. Soldiers don't go beyond the points, even though the LAC is still ahead.

However, the LAC perception in Depsang is starkly different between China and India. According to locally established agreements, both sides were allowed patrolling until certain areas that fell into individual perceptions of the LAC, but sources said the practice "came under stress" after the Doklam stand-off.

Sources said that the Chinese have not built up in India's claimed areas in Depsang, but have installed cameras and blocked access because of a road constructed by them in 2013 behind the Bottleneck area in what is known as the Raki Nala region.

Indian troopers used to go by foot beyond the Bottleneck area, through which, as the name suggests, vehicles are not accessible.

Just a few hundred metres from the Bottleneck area is a place called Y junction. Indian soldiers used to patrol PPs 10, 11, 11A, 12, and 13, but the Chinese have now blocked the passage to these points.

The 'Y' Junction is the starting point of the two routes. The north route, following the Raki Nala, goes towards PP10 and the southeast route goes towards PP13 along what is known as Jiwan Nala.

The Chinese have a round-the-clock team blocking Indian access to the plains. They use the road to quickly come and block entry every time the camera detects movement.

The Chinese are saying that they should be allowed to patrol till their claim lines, the sources said.

The problem is that the Chinese claim line is much into India held territory after the Bottleneck area, they said, adding that the Chinese claim line here is about 1.5 km from an Indian military camp in an area known as Burtse.

<https://theprint.in/defence/as-modi-xi-reach-brics-meet-militaries-focus-on-lac-de-escalation-discuss-finer-points/1725352/>



Tue, 22 Aug 2023

South Korea Says President Yoon Suk Yeol Looking Forward to First India Visit for G20

In a significant diplomatic move, Deputy National Security Advisor (NSA) Vikram Misri engaged in high-level discussions with South Korean counterparts during his visit to Seoul. The discussions revolved around the augmentation of collaborative efforts in critical and emerging technologies, marking an essential stride in the bilateral relationship between India and South Korea.

According to reliable sources, Deputy NSA Vikram Misri and South Korean Foreign Minister Park Jin convened on Tuesday to explore opportunities for bolstering cooperation in the realm of critical and emerging technologies. Both sides were unanimous in their belief that this domain holds immense potential for fostering stronger ties between the two nations.

During the meeting, Foreign Minister Park conveyed President Yoon Suk Yeol's anticipation for his inaugural visit to India in September. The visit is slated to coincide with the G20 Summit, where President Yoon is expected to engage in a bilateral meeting with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi. This exchange further underscores the growing affinity between India and South Korea.

Deputy NSA Misri's visit to Seoul aligns with the fourth India-Republic of Korea Strategic Dialogue held at the Deputy NSA-level. The discussions during the dialogue served as a reaffirmation of the shared commitment to advancing multifaceted bilateral relations.

India & South Korea bolster defence collaboration

Apart from his meeting with Foreign Minister Park, Deputy NSA Misri also held a significant conversation with South Korea's Minister of Defense Acquisition Program Administration (DAPA) Eom Donghwan. Both dignitaries emphasized the pivotal role of defense cooperation in shaping the bilateral ties and stressed the importance of bolstering defense technology, equipment, and industry collaboration.

A notable highlight of the discussions was Misri's invitation to South Korean enterprises to consider investments in India's dedicated defense corridors. This gesture aligns with India's efforts to stimulate defense-related investments and technological advancements.

In a reciprocal move, Indian defense companies are gearing up to participate in the International Aerospace & Defense Exhibition (ADEX) scheduled for October 2023 in Seoul. This participation underscores the commitment to forging closer defense-related bonds between the two nations.

To ensure the continued progression of defense technology collaboration, both sides agreed to convene the fifth Steering Committee Meeting between India's Defense Research and Development

Organization (DRDO) and South Korea's DAPA at the earliest. This upcoming meeting is anticipated to pave the way for fresh avenues of cooperation in the defense technology domain.

As Deputy NSA Vikram Misri's visit to Seoul culminates, the consensus between India and South Korea to amplify cooperation in critical and emerging technologies and the defense sector marks a promising chapter in their diplomatic rapport. The outcomes of these discussions are poised to chart a course for deeper collaboration and mutual growth.

<https://www.republicworld.com/world-news/rest-of-the-world-news/south-korea-says-president-yoon-suk-yeol-looking-forward-to-first-india-visit-for-g20-articleshow.html>



Wed, 23 Aug 2023

South Korea to Hold First Nationwide Defence Drills in Six Years amid North Threats

South Korea is set to hold its first nationwide air defence drills in six years on August 23 amid North Korea's growing nuclear and missile threats, with pedestrians required to take shelter and drivers asked to pull over in some areas.

The drills are a key element of the annual Ulchi civil defence exercises, held alongside the Ulchi Freedom Shield drills, which South Korean and U.S. troops began on Monday, to improve responses to a North Korean attack or other contingencies.

At 2 p.m., an air-raid siren will sound, calling for people to get off the streets for about 15 minutes before the alert is eased, according to the interior and safety ministry.

Pedestrians must go directly to a designated shelter or nearby underground space, while drivers in about 200 areas nationwide must pull to the side of the road. People in nearly 500 supermarkets, movie theatres and other public facilities will be guided to evacuate.

Medical institutions and public transportation will operate normally.

Some community centres near apartment complexes in Seoul announced the planned drills with loudspeakers on Tuesday, asking residents to follow instructions, which will be aired on the radio.

"The drills are meant to effectively respond to an actual air raid. Don't be surprised and please find a nearby shelter," the announcement said.

In some regions bordering North Korea, residents are expected to face additional scenarios, including chemical, biological and radiological training, wearing a gas mask and using emergency food rations, the ministry said.

The Ulchi civil defence exercises were launched in 1969 in the wake of a raid by North Korean commandos into the presidential compound in Seoul. There are about 17,000 shelters installed across the country of 52 million.

But the air defence training has not taken place since 2017.

In late May, Seoul came under fire after it issued a false air raid alarm and evacuation warning following North Korea's failed satellite launch, even though the capital was far off the rocket's trajectory, triggering panic among some residents.

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/international/south-korea-to-hold-first-nationwide-defence-drills-in-six-years-amid-north-threats/article67225853.ece>

Poland's Leader Says Russia's Moving Tactical Nuclear Weapons to Belarus, Shifting Regional Security

Poland's President Andrzej Duda confirmed Tuesday that Russia has begun shifting some short-range nuclear weapons to neighboring Belarus, a move that he said will change the security architecture of the region and the entire NATO military alliance.

Both Russian President Vladimir Putin and his Belarusian counterpart Alexander Lukashenko said last month that Moscow had already shipped some of its tactical nuclear weapons to Belarus after announcing the plan in March. The U.S. and NATO haven't confirmed the move.

NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg denounced Moscow's rhetoric as "dangerous and reckless," but said in July that the alliance hadn't seen any change in Russia's nuclear posture.

Tactical nuclear weapons are intended for use on the battlefield and have a short range and a low yield compared with much more powerful nuclear warheads fitted to long-range missiles. Russia said it would maintain control over those it sends to Belarus.

Officials in Moscow and Minsk have said that the warheads could be carried by Belarusian Su-25 ground attack jets or fitted to short-range Iskander missiles.

Duda made his comments at a joint news conference with visiting Portuguese President Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa. "I was telling President (de Sousa) about the implementation of the declarations by Vladimir Putin that Russia's tactical nuclear weapons will be moved to the territory of Belarus," Duda said. "Indeed, this process is taking place, we are seeing that."

Duda gave no details, but said that in an "obvious way it is changing the architecture of security in our part of Europe."

"It is changing the architecture of security in our immediate neighborhood, but also of the eastern flank of NATO, at the same time. So in fact it is changing the situation for all of the alliance," he said. Lukashenko said that hosting Russian nuclear weapons in his country is meant to deter aggression by NATO member Poland, even though Warsaw has made no such threats. Poland is offering neighbor Ukraine military, humanitarian and political backing in its struggle against Russia's invasion and is taking part in international sanctions on Russia and Belarus.

Duda also hailed the recent approval by the U.S. State Department of the potential sale of 96 Boeing AH-64E Apache helicopters to Poland that would lead to a huge boost in Poland's and NATO's defense potential and was a sign of special relations between Washington and Warsaw.

De Sousa pledged continuing support for Ukraine's struggle and for other countries in the region, saying the situation on Europe's eastern borders is as important to Portugal as that in its own neighborhood.

"We are united, we stand in solidarity, without any hesitations and I have duly taken note of the Polish concerns over what may be understood as the need to be closely watching any moves that may question the eastern borders of the European Union or of NATO," de Sousa said.

"We are vigilant, we stand in solidarity and we are operational," de Sousa said.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/polands-leader-says-russias-moving-tactical-nuclear-weapons-to-belarus-shifting-regional-security/articleshow/102955348.cms>



Tue, 22 Aug 2023

ISRO Releases Images of Moon Captured from 70 Km Altitude by Lander Camera

ISRO on Tuesday released images of the Moon captured by the Lander Position Detection Camera (LPDC) of the Chandrayaan-3 mission from an altitude of about 70 km on August 19.

LPDC images assist the Lander Module (LM) of the mission, scheduled to make a soft landing on the Lunar surface on Wednesday, in determining its position (latitude and longitude) by matching them against an onboard moon reference map, the Bengaluru-headquartered national space agency said.

The ISRO on Monday released images of the Lunar far side area captured by the Lander Hazard Detection and Avoidance Camera (LHDAC).

This camera that assists in locating a safe landing area -- without boulders or deep trenches -- during the descent is developed by the Ahmedabad-based Space Applications Centre (SAC), a major research and development centre of ISRO.

According to ISRO, to achieve the mission objectives of Chandrayaan-3, several advanced technologies are present in the Lander such as LHDAC.

Chandrayaan-3, launched on July 14, is a follow-on mission to Chandrayaan-2 to demonstrate end-to-end capability in safe landing and roving on the lunar surface.

<https://www.newindianexpress.com/nation/2023/aug/22/isro-releases-images-of-moon-captured-from-70-km-altitude-by-lander-camera-2607725.html>

