

# समाचार पत्रों से चयित अंश Newspapers Clippings

दैनिक सामयिक अभिज्ञता सेवा

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## **A lean and mean fighting force**

*With a combination of a Non-Field Force review and a limited Field Force review restricted to the two military lines, the Army can cut down its size by 2,00,000 troops over three to five years. This will free up some of the financial resources necessary to improve troop quality*

Defence Minister Manohar Parrikar wants to trim the flab of the Army to make it ‘smart and lean rather than big, unwieldy, and manpower-centric’. The bad news is that he has asked the Army itself to do this task. The increased defence pensions (after grant of one-rank-one-pension) and salaries (the Army is 13-lakh strong and growing) have eaten into finances for acquisitions and modernisation.

The Army is ill-suited to undertake its own manpower shedding for three reasons. One, since it does not know what is expected of it, it has taken upon itself a long list of tasks which would exhaust even the superman. From fighting sub-conventional, conventional and nuclear wars to participating in United Nations Peacekeeping, military exercises with friendly nations, being first responders in natural calamities, seeking a formalised role in disaster management, cleaning the Ganges river, flag marching to restore law and order, advising Government on combating Left-wing extremism, regulating traffic in cantonments and everything imaginable where disciplined manpower could be used. Given this, the Army is overstretched and overworked; it could do with more rather than less manpower.

Two, of the three Defence services, the Army, being boots on the ground, worries most about the two military lines. In the absence of political directives about what is to be achieved in war against Pakistan and China, and a joint war-fighting doctrine about how the three Services would achieve military aims in war, the Army is, unfortunately, seeking to equip itself to fight the last wars better. Unlike the last wars, future wars will be fought in six domains — land, air, sea, space, cyber and electromagnetic — and on two battlefields, regular and irregular (terrorism). To be fair to the Army, it can prepare itself to fight on land alone, which, regretfully, will not help. On the one hand, more boots on the ground gives a false sense of security to the army leadership. On the other hand, modernisation without clarity of why and how the wars will be fought negates the purpose of war preparedness.

And three, it is illogical to ask the Army chief to voluntarily downsize his domain which will mean less promotion avenues for officers and men. Meeting me in his office in January 2010, the then Army chief, General Deepak Kapoor, said with pride that he had got two divisions (each with 12,000 soldiers) sanctioned and raised during his tenure. “The last raising was of 29 Division in 1983”, he added.

His own experience with the Army leadership would have informed Defence Minister Parikkar about its reluctance to downsize. In April 2015, Mr Parrikar told the media that, “The Government had frozen the cost of new 17 corps at Rs38,000 crore over eight years and it would consist of 35,000 soldiers.” (The raising of 17 corps with 90,000 soldiers at the cost of Rs70,000 crore was

sanctioned in July 2013 without making any budgetary allocation). In less than a year, Army chief General Dalbir Singh informed the media on January 13 this year that, “We are on target to raise 17 mountain corps without changes by 2021.”

What is the way to reduce the Army’s strength: Through Non-Field Force or non-fighting forces, and Field Force or fighting forces reviews. The NFF is the easy part and comprises tweaking rather than wholesome review. According to Mr Parikkar, the Army will consider cutting down training establishment strengths since simulators have been inducted, and will reduce operators where automation has happened. To recall, then Army Chief, General VP Malik, in 1998 had announced reduction of 50,000 troops through NFF. This was never implemented as the 1999 Kargil war increased guarding responsibilities and added more troops (Rashtriya Rifles) to the Army’s strength. While a similar exercise could be done now, it will not make substantive difference to the skewed salaries/acquisitions allocations ratio.

The real answer lies in FF review. With help from the Defence Minister who is member of the Cabinet Committee on Security headed by the Prime Minister, the following should be considered.

On the Line of Actual Control with China: Since the role of security forces after the 2013 Border Defence Cooperation Agreement has been downgraded from guarding to policing on the LAC, the Indo-Tibetan Border Police, as the first line of defence, should assume greater responsibility. Except for Ladakh, where China says it does not have border with India, and four agreed flashpoints, namely, north Sikkim, Diphu, Bum la (Tawang), and Fish-tail in the eastern sector, the remaining LAC should be policed by the ITBP. In February 2015, the Union Ministry of Home Affairs announced raising the ITBP strength by 49 battalions; more should be done if needed.

Except for a few pockets in depth, the Army should be withdrawn from most of the LAC to return to its war role. The ITBP’s policing task will be assisted by border confidence building measures already in place. The Chinese proposal of June 2015 for a ‘code of conduct’ in response to India’s suggestion of defining the LAC, for added peace and tranquillity on the disputed border, should be considered.

Troops of two Army corps, namely, 3 and 4 Corps involved in counter-insurgency in the North-East, should also revert to its war role. Once this is done, the Army would have two tasks to perform: Maintain and upgrade its defences, and conduct tactical level exercises. Under Article IV of the 1996 bilateral agreement between India and China, division level troops (12,000) are allowed near the LAC and up to brigade-group (5,000) can do military exercises without notification to the other side. This will help in identifying gaps in defences, war stores, equipment, ammunition, missiles, storage sites, and help in coordination with the Indian Air Force. Once troops rehearse war tasks, their morale will be up. Moreover, higher headquarters of the Army and the IAF will be able to resolve their operational differences and have better coordination in crisis.

The overall results on the LAC will be astonishing. The Army will become professional, confident, and it will be able to dispense with the 17 mountain corps (90,000 troops). The finances so saved can be used for equipment for mountain warfare.

On the Line of Control with Pakistan: The Army should adopt an offensive-defence posture on the LoC. According to National Security Advisor Ajit Doval, the forces have three options: Defensive option, which the Army adopted in 2004 by fencing itself; Offensive option, which will be war; and the intermediate option of offensive-defence, which involves activities like aggressive patrolling, raids, use of special forces, increased firepower and so on.

The Army had adopted this stance between 1990 and 2004 when the enemy was always on tenterhooks looking out for surprises. The offensive-defence posture will have numerous advantages. It will raise the morale of one's own troops and keep the enemy nervous; since the focus will be on providing war withal to field units, higher headquarters will seek fast-tracked and timely acquisitions from the Government; and it will deter the Pakistan Army from raising the ante.

The biggest advantages of offensive-defence posture would be professionalism and slashing of manpower. Once the Army gives up its counter-insurgency role, bulk of the 80,000 strong RR will become unnecessary.

Thus, with a combination of NFF and limited FF review restricted to the two military lines, the Army's strength can be reduced by over 2,00,000 troops in three to five years. This is not all. Given the pro-active doctrine (Cold Start) adopted by the Army on the border with Pakistan, up to 1,00,000 troops can be reduced without compromising on war-fighting capabilities. Then, the under-10 lakh Army will have the finances to improve troops' quality over quantity, a must for a modern Army. (*The writer is editor, FORCE news magazine*)

*Mail Today*  
*10 Mar, 2016*

## **Another hurrah for IAF's women**

The sky is not the only domain in which the IAF's women officers are scripting glory.

Just when three women flight cadets are training to become fighter pilots, a set of women officers have made it to the prestigious Defence Services Staff College at Wellington.

Wing commanders Sapna Devi and D Malik and squadron leaders S Batra and Avadhi are undergoing the course that will prepare them for command roles.

This is the first time when women officers are undergoing this course.

*The Economic Times*  
*10 Mar, 2016*

## **Defence shipyards set for makeover**

*Infrastructure modernisation plan is being implemented in four phases*

The government is undertaking a comprehensive modernisation programme of defence shipyards.

The programme is intended to increase productivity and reduce build periods through upgradation of existing infrastructure, enhancement of capacity and incorporation of 'state-of-the-art' ship building technology.

A comprehensive assessment of the modernisation needs of the defence shipyards has been made based on the requirement of the ongoing and future projects and funds sanctioned for the purpose, said sources at Goa Shipyard Ltd. (GSL) on Wednesday. For instance, the government had sanctioned Rs.480 crore for modernisation of GSL out of which Rs.100 crore had been provided in the last two years.

The GSL and Hindustan Shipyard Ltd. (HSL) have the capability to build various categories of vessels such as patrol vessels, tankers, landing platform docks, survey vessels, tugs and barges. Accordingly, the defence public sector undertaking (DPSU) shipyards such as Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Ltd. (MDL), Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers Ltd. (GRSE) and HSL apart from GSL have embarked on a comprehensive modernisation programme.

GSL has undertaken a planned modernisation programme and is in the process of creating infrastructure for indigenous construction of MCMVs (mine counter measure vessels) for Indian Navy.

Infrastructure modernisation plan is being implemented in four phases of which first two were completed in March 2011. Work for the remaining phases are in progress.

On completion of modernisation plan, GSL will have the capacity to build high technology glass-fibre reinforced plastic (GRP) hull MCMVs indigenously with the help of foreign technology provider.

This will also substantially enhance production and shipbuilding capacity of the yard.

Post modernisation, GSL will overcome constraints in terms of launch weight restriction by installation of 6,000 tonne shiplift and transfer system with associated civil structures (that is, improvement from the existing 1,500 tonne to 6,000 tonne capacity).

There will be addition of construction berths for offshore patrol vessels. There will be augmentation of jetty berthing space (from 4 wet berths to 10 wet berths) and material handling and crane capacity (addition of new workshop cranes from 5 tonne to 80 tonne capacity), a GSL spokesman told *The Hindu*.

*The Economic Times*  
10 Mar, 2016

## **Lower Spending Irks Def Ministry**

The defence ministry has cracked down on an abnormal lag in revenue expenditure by the three services, sending out a terse note to all departments that last minute expenses in the month of March will be subject to a special audit by Defence Minister Manohar Parrikar.

As pointed out in several articles by ET, the defence ministry has over the past two years lagged significantly in spending money allocated to it, especially under the modernisation fund, ₹11,595 crore which has been returned this year.

Taking note of this inability to spend, the ministry has sent a notice that 'expenditure has lagged' with a significant 30% of the non-salary revenue budget (out of a total of ₹48,000 crore) remaining unspent till the beginning of February, according to a note accessed by ET.

The ministry has now cracked down on this seeming inability to exhaust committed funds, with the note sent by Joint Secretary AN Das saying that better planning is required and a 'rush of expenditure on procurement should be avoided during the last quarter of the fiscal year and in particular the last month of the year'.

All departments have been asked to submit a compliance report on expenditure throughout the year that would be submitted to Parrikar as well as the Finance Ministry for analyses.

*The Asian Age*  
*10 Mar, 2016*

## **Anil Ambani gets boost in defence**

The Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP) has approved 12 industrial licenses to Anil Ambani led Reliance Defence for manufacture of wide range of defence equipment required by the armed forces.

Reliance Defence is a subsidiary of Reliance Infrastructure Limited.

DIPP has approved these licenses to the strategic business units (SBU) under Reliance Defence to address defence programs in India and overseas. The foray of Reliance into these areas will give added traction to the government's initiative for Make in India and skill India initiatives, said market sources.

In the aerospace segment, with licences for manufacture of military aircraft and helicopters, market experts said that the company will be looking at addressing the amphibious aircraft requirement of the Indian Navy pegged at Rs 9,000 crore, light utility helicopters, an opportunity valued at more than Rs 20,000 crore. In addition, there is a requirement of 160-200 medium to heavy helicopter, valued at Rs 50,000 crore.

For the naval systems, Reliance is focusing on key systems as is evident from the licences for air independent propulsion technology and hull penetrators and connectors along with motor shafts and propulsion systems, said market experts.

Reliance Naval Systems is already working on C4I, underwater systems, weapons, radars and electro optic systems. Indian Navy has ambitious plans of inducting new vessels under different programs amounting to Rs 300,000 crore. Typically, systems contribute 50 to 60 per cent of the cost in case of Naval warships.

For the export market, Reliance Strategic Electronics Division (SED) plans to target the global market of Rs 50,000 crore (\$7 billion) to manufacture Night Vision Devices (NVDs) and surveillance devices. There is a large market for combat vehicles in the Middle East, Africa and South America.

Anil Ambani-led Reliance is aiming at developing an infantry combat vehicle which will not only address the domestic requirement but can also address the global requirements.

## **Living a life less ordinary**

### *The shortage of officers in the Army suggests that its allure is fading*

The Indian Army, one of the world's 10 largest employers with a head count of over 1.2 million, has an officer shortfall problem. The proud fighting force is short of 9,106 officers, defence minister Manohar Parrikar said in a written response to a question in the Lok Sabha recently. This is about 18% short, less than the alarming 26% in 2010, but still an uncomfortably high number. The shortage of officers has been attributed, among other things, to tough selection procedures, difficult service conditions, perceived high degree of risk involved in the service career and a conscious restriction on numbers that could be trained without compromising on quality of training.

It is crucial that a force of this size has an adequate complement of officers; the Indian Army stands out in that its officer casualties are often disproportionately high compared to other armies because they lead from the front. There is plenty of fighting for the Army to do even without a war; battling insurgency claims young officers, such as the two captains from the elite Special Forces recently killed in Kashmir. The Army's impressive recruitment advertisements are designed to attract more youth to serve as officers and wear their heart on their sleeves, but now the ads of "India's best construction company and biggest logistic operator" have been taken too literally, as when the Defence Ministry called on it to build pontoon bridges over the Yamuna floodplains for an Art of Living function. This event is not the only one where the Army has been called upon; it is also asked to pull children out of borewells, build footbridges for the Commonwealth Games, maintain law and order in a country prone to communal strife and step in when natural calamities strike. These are unlikely to be reasons why nationalistic youth sign up for the forces.

Add to this the seemingly never-ending wait for the One Rank One Pension scheme to be implemented, with all its associated bitterness, and it becomes clear that the Army's allure as a place to work is fading. Sad incidents such as the avalanche on Siachen bring home harshly the risks of the job, but these are a given; more relevantly, youth are ready to challenge the time-tested notions of nationalism and patriotism that are so essential to the Army's appeal. Some wish to contribute to nation building in other ways, or opt for more lucrative careers in the private sector. To arrest this trend, the Army needs to be allowed to do the job it is mandated to, emoluments need to rise and the lives of soldiers need to be valued in more meaningful ways than the sad gun salutes to heroic.

## **Scale the heights**

The Raksha Rajya Mantri Rao Inderjit Singh Flagged off the first ever all girls NCC Mount Everest expedition. The team of 10 girl cadets is scheduled to scale Mount Everest between 15 to May 25 2016. Lt Gen A Chakravarty, AVSM, VSM, director general of National Cadet Corps, had proposed the conduct of first ever NCC Girls Expedition to Mt Everest in 2014.

All India trials at 25 selected hubs were carried out and 100 girl cadets were nominated to undergo the Customised Mountaineering Course at Himalayan Mountaineering Institute (HMI), Darjeeling. Based on their performance, 40 girl cadets were selected for the first Pre-Everest Expedition.

Pre-Everest Expedition to Mt Deo-Tibba (19,688 Feet), near Manali in Himachal Pradesh was conducted for 40 cadets in Apr-May 2015. Fifteen cadets were selected for the next phase based on their performance. In Aug 2015, the team set off on the second Pre-Everest Expedition to Mt Trishul (23,360 feet), and helped in selecting 10 girl cadets for Everest Expedition.

The culmination of Pre-Expedition activities was winter training at Siachen Base Camp in January. The training camps exposed the team to extreme cold conditions and further refined ice craft skills.

The team lead by Col Gaurav Karki, along with 15 service personnel and 10 girl cadets would reach Nepal on Mar ch 31, 2016 and after a long trek to Base Camp from April 8 to April 25 is likely to summit the peak between May 15 to May 25.

The aim of mountaineering expeditions in NCC is to strengthen the character and instill qualities of courage, comradeship, discipline and leadership in the cadets. NCC has always been in the forefront in adventure activities. The first mountaineering course for NCC Cadets was conducted for 42 days at Himalayan Mountaineering Institute (HMI), Darjeeling in 1961. Every year, NCC sponsors 354 boy and girl cadets for basic mountaineering courses at HMI, Darjeeling, NIM Uttarkashi, ABVIMAS Manali and JIM and WS Pahalgam.

Mountaineering Expedition as an adventure activity was introduced in NCC in the year 1970, since then, NCC conducts two mountaineering expeditions every year.

## **The Indian Ocean challenge**

### *China has resisted every effort of India to enhance its role in eastern neighbourhood*

It is a truism that in any country including India, the coastal population inevitably focuses attention on maritime security, while those far from the sea remain fixated on land borders. India's security challenges across its land borders with Pakistan and China have only accentuated this trend. Moreover, with its focus on import substitution, rather than export promotion, India's share in world trade fell significantly in the first four decades after Independence. With its economy collapsing in 1990, India was forced to drastically change its outlook towards domestic, regional and global economic issues. What followed has been the growing integration of India with the global economy, and its emergence as a constructive and increasingly important partner, with a growing market for trade and investment. We have since moved from an economy afflicted by what was once pejoratively described as the "Hindu rate of growth" to becoming a vibrant, emerging economy.

Foreign trade and investment have inevitably become focal points for accelerated economic growth in India. We have wisely embarked on increasingly integrating our economy, with the fastest growing economies of the world, in East and Southeast Asia. We now have Comprehensive Economic Partnerships with the 10 members of ASEAN, ranging from Myanmar to the Philippines, as also with Japan and South Korea. We are negotiating a free trade agreement with Australia and have endeavoured to undertake similar arrangements with our SAARC partners. Moreover, ASEAN-led forums like the East Asia Summit have led to an Indian strategic role across the Bay of Bengal, which traverses the Indian Ocean and western Pacific, crossing the disputed waters of the South China Sea. Progress on economic integration in South Asia has, however, been slow, primarily because of Pakistani recalcitrance. Significantly, tensions and disputes with China have not adversely affected a blossoming trade and investment relationship between India and China — the world's two most populous countries.

Despite these developments, India cannot ignore the fact that China has acted as a spoiler in every effort New Delhi has made to enhance its role in its eastern neighbourhood. Beijing vigorously opposed our participation in economic and security forums linked with ASEAN, including the ASEAN Regional Forum and the East Asia Summit. China continues to maintain links across its borders with Myanmar, with some of our northeastern separatist outfits. We are now steadily moving towards a more proactive response to counter these Chinese efforts. Our aim remains to develop viable security architecture across and beyond our eastern shores. Concerns about Chinese military bases and inroads across the Bay of Bengal will continue. But, concerted diplomatic efforts, with partners like the US and Japan have enabled us to strengthen the security of our eastern sea-lanes. China has not succeeded in its efforts to secure a predominant role in Myanmar, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka or the Maldives. This will, however, remain a continuing challenge for us.

While India has fashioned policies to safeguard the security of its eastern shores, the same cannot be said for what is transpiring in our western neighbourhood, across the Arabia Sea. It is here that we

cannot now overlook the implications of China's new thrust, at not only establishing a virtually permanent presence in the Indian Ocean, but also by its doing so in collusion with Pakistan. New Delhi should carefully note Chinese moves to outflank us on our western shores, through a network of roads and ports. The Chinese strategic objectives are based on a Silk Road Economic Belt that links China with Central Asia, Pakistan Occupied Kashmir, the Persian Gulf States, Russia and the Baltic States. Beijing's 21st century Maritime Silk Route, in turn, extends from China's coast to Europe through the Indian Ocean. China is simultaneously building ports across the Indian Ocean, in Asia and Africa. What India cannot afford to ignore is that while the silk road envelops both its eastern and western neighbours, this road links up with the Maritime Silk Road and the Indian Ocean, in the Pakistani Port of Gwadar, located at the mouth of the Persian Gulf.

Gwadar is perilously close to India's sea-lanes, linking India to the oil-rich Persian Gulf, from where we get over 70 per cent of our oil supplies. China has now secured virtual control of the port facilities in Gwadar, after pledging \$46 billion to Pakistan, to promote its ambitious silk route projects. Over a decade ago, then Pakistan President Musharraf told an audience in Islamabad, just after the visit of then Chinese Prime Minister Zhu Rongji, that in the event of a conflict with Pakistan, India would find the Chinese navy positioned in Gwadar. Given its difficulties in obtaining bases in countries like Myanmar, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh, China feels Pakistan is a crucial partner, in its quest to have base facilities, strategically positioned close to the Straits of Hormuz and astride India's vital sea-lanes to the Persian Gulf, where around seven million Indians live. China has simultaneously commenced an effort to strengthen Pakistan's navy, with the supply of four frigates and eight submarines, to reinforce these efforts.

China's interest in having a military presence astride the Straits of Hormuz arises from the fact that this narrow 2-mile-wide corridor is the route for the transportation of 17 million barrels of oil per day (mbpd), with 15.2 mbpd traversing thereafter through the Straits of Malacca, which includes 80 per cent of Japan's oil supplies. The entire Indian Ocean Region, extending to the Gulf of Aden, accounts for 40 per cent of the world's oil production and 57 per cent of the world's oil trade. Not surprisingly, the US has positioned its powerful 5th Fleet in Bahrain to oversee the security of these vital sea-lanes. The nature and extent of US interest in this region could well change, as the US itself is becoming a net exporter of oil and gas. Moreover, apart from the rivalries of external powers, stability in this region is being adversely affected by Iranian-Saudi rivalries, which have a sectarian dimensions.

Ideally, it would be useful if the major Asian oil importers — India, China, Japan and South Korea — cooperated on developments that threaten the security of vital sea-lanes and energy corridors. But, given existing tensions and suspicions, this may be too much to expect anytime soon.

## **WON'T ACCEPT NUKE CURBS, SAYS PAKISTAN**

**Islamabad:** Pakistan's top diplomat Sartaj Aziz said on Wednesday that Pakistan will not accept any restrictions on its nuclear programme. Mr Aziz, adviser to the Prime Minister on foreign affairs, said national security was the top priority of the government and there would be no compromise on the country's nuclear programme, our Pakistan correspondent reports. Winding up a debate on an adjournment motion moved by Hafiz Hamdullah in Senate regarding US secretary of state John Kerry's statement that Saudi Arabia could purchase a nuclear bomb from Pakistan, Mr Aziz said Mr Kerry's statement was misquoted by the media. He said that Pakistan's nuclear programme was for deterrence and the entire world is appreciative of its Command and Control System. Mr Aziz said that during the visit of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif to the US, the authorities were categorically told that Pakistan would not accept any restriction on its nuclear programme.

## **Kim: Pyongyang has miniaturised nuke warheads**

**This picture released by North Korea's official Korean Central News Agency on Wednesday shows North Korean leader Kim Jong-un with scientists and technicians working in the field of nuclear weapons at an undisclosed location. — AFP**

North Korean leader Kim Jon-g-un on Wednesday said the country has miniaturised nuclear warheads to mount on ballistic missiles and ordered improvements in the power and precision of its arsenal.

Mr Kim has called for his military to be prepared to mount pre-emptive attacks against the US and South Korea and stand ready to use nuclear weapons, stepping up belligerent rhetoric after coming under new UN and bilateral sanctions for its nuclear and rocket tests.

Mr Kim's comments, released on Wednesday, were his first direct mention of the claim, to have successfully miniaturised a nuclear warhead. "The nuclear warheads have been standardised to be fit for ballistic missiles by miniaturising them," KCNA quoted Mr Kim as saying as he inspected the work of nuclear scientists, adding "this can be called a true nuclear deterrent".

According to photographs reviewed by Reuters, North Korea is using Chinese-made trucks in a new mobile artillery system showcased five days ago.

In photographs published by North Korean state media, the vehicle used in the MRLS artillery battery has the bodywork and some markings of a Chinese-made Sinotruk HOWO truck.

China's foreign ministry, asked about the trucks, said the government has consistently followed UN resolutions. "China will strengthen its strict controls," spokesman Hong Lei said.

Meanwhile, a US artillery brigade based in the South heated things up, launching a barrage of rockets in Rocket Valley, near the border town of Cheorwon, on Wednesday.

The live-fire drills came hours after a report by reclusive North Korea that it had miniaturised nuclear warheads to be mounted on ballistic missiles.

The drills in Rocket Valley were separate to the annual joint US-South Korean maneuvers which involve about 17,000 US troops and more than 3,00,000 South Koreans.

*The Statesman*  
10 Mar, 2016

## **N Korea has miniaturised nuclear warheads: Kim**

North Korean leader Kim Jong-Un says his scientists have successfully miniaturised their mononuclear warheads to place on a ballistic missile and create a "true" deterrent, state media said today.

While Pyongyang has boasted of mastering miniaturisation before, this is the first time Kim has so explicitly claimed a breakthrough that experts see as a gamechanging step for the North's nuclear capabilities.

Kim also stressed that the warheads were "thermo-nuclear" devices, echoing the North's claim that the fourth nuclear test it conducted in January was of a more powerful hydrogen bomb.

"The nuclear warheads have been standardised to be fit for ballistic missiles by miniaturising them," Kim noted during a visit with nuclear technicians, the North's official KCNA news agency said.

"This can be called a true nuclear deterrent," President Kim was quoted as saying.

*Mail Today*  
10 Mar, 2016

## **Putin warns N Korea of action over nuke threats**

Russia has warned Kim Jong-Un to stop threatening to launch nuclear weapons on foreign powers, as it could create 'a legal basis' for military action against North Korea.

The Russian warning followed a call by Kim for his military to be prepared to mount pre-emptive attacks against the U.S and South Korea and stand ready to use nuclear weapons.

U.S. and South Korean troops began large-scale military drills this week, which the North called 'nuclear war moves' and threatened to respond with an all-out offensive.

Russia's Foreign Ministry, released a statement on Monday, warning Kim Jong-Un to think of the consequences of his nuclear threats.

'We consider it to be absolutely impermissible to make public statements containing threats to deliver some 'preventive nuclear strikes' against opponents,' a Russian Foreign Ministry statement said, according to NK News.

'Pyongyang should be aware of the fact that in this way the Democratic People's Republic of Korea will become fully opposed to the international community and will create international legal grounds for using military force against itself in accordance with the right of a state to self-defense enshrined in the United Nations Charter

The warning from Russia comes as Kim Jong-Un announced in state media that North Korea has successfully miniaturised nuclear warheads to mount on ballistic missiles.

However South Korea, which is currently carrying out its largest ever joint-military drill with the U.S. on the peninsula, has rubbished the claims

Kim Jong-Un's comments, released on Wednesday, were his first direct mention of the claim, made repeatedly in state media, to have successfully miniaturised a nuclear warhead, which has been widely questioned and never independently verified.

'The nuclear warheads have been standardised to be fit for ballistic missiles by miniaturising them,' KCNA quoted Kim as saying as he inspected the work of nuclear scientists, adding 'this can be called a true nuclear deterrent'.

'He stressed the importance of building ever more powerful, precision and miniaturised nuclear weapons and their delivery means,' KCNA said.

Kim also inspected the nuclear warhead designed for thermo-nuclear reaction, KCNA said, referring to a miniaturised hydrogen bomb that the country said it tested on January 6.

Rodong Sinmun, official daily of the North's ruling party, carried pictures of Kim in what seemed to be a large hangar speaking to aides standing in front of a silver spherical object.

They also showed a large object similar to the KN-08 intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) previously put on display at military parades, with Kim holding a half-smoked cigarette in one of the images.

South Korea's defence ministry said after the release of the images that it did not believe the North has successfully miniaturised a nuclear warhead or deployed a functioning ICBM.

That assessment is in line with the views of South Korean and U.S. officials that the North has likely made some advances in trying to put a nuclear warhead on a missile, but that there is no proof it has mastered the technology.

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi, speaking by telephone to U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry, described the situation on the Korean peninsula as 'very tense' and called for all parties to remain calm and exercise restraint, China's foreign ministry said.

North Korea conducted its fourth nuclear test on January 6 claiming to have set off a miniaturised hydrogen bomb, which was disputed by many experts and the governments of South Korea and the United States. The blast detected from the test was simply too small to back up the claim, experts said at the time.

The U.N. Security Council imposed harsh new sanctions on the isolated state last week for the nuclear test. It launched a long-range rocket in February drawing international criticism and sanctions from its rival, South Korea.

South Korea on Tuesday announced further measures aimed at isolating the North by blacklisting individuals and entities that it said were linked to Pyongyang's weapons programme.

China also stepped up pressure on the North by barring one of the 31 ships on its transport ministry's blacklist. – ©Daily Mail

*The Pioneer*  
10 Mar, 2016

## **US: UN should provide detailed reports on Iran nuke programme**

The United States is urging the UN agency to provide detailed reporting on Tehran's compliance to a landmark nuclear deal crimping its atomic programmes.

The request comes after a recent report from the UN's International Atomic Energy Agency that some Western nations among the six countries that struck the deal with Iran find too light on specifics.

In contrast, Russia and China, which are also among the six, are content with the report.

Chief U.S. IAEA delegate Henry S. Ensher on Wednesday told the IAEA's 35-nation board that "robust and detailed reporting on Iran's implementation of its commitments" remains vital even with the agreement now in effect. Pre-deal IAEA reports were more in-depth than the one issued last month — the first since the agreement was implemented.

*The Statesman*  
10 Mar, 2016

## **Iran fires missiles marked with 'Israel must be wiped out'**

Iran reportedly test-fired two ballistic missiles Wednesday with the phrase "Israel must be wiped out" written in Hebrew on them, a show of force by the Islamic Republic as U.S. Vice President Joe Biden visited Israel.

Such phrases have been emblazoned on Iranian missiles before, but this test comes shortly after the implementation of a nuclear deal with world powers, including the U.S., and follows similar drills in recent days. Hardliners in Iran's military have fired rockets and missiles despite U.S. objections since the deal, as well as shown underground missile bases on state television.

There was no immediate reaction from Jerusalem, where Biden was meeting with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who strongly opposed the nuclear deal. Biden, speaking next to Netanyahu, did not acknowledge the missile launch directly but he issued a strong warning to the Iranians.

"A nuclear-armed Iran is an absolutely unacceptable threat to Israel, to the region and the United States. And I want to reiterate which I know people still doubt here. If in fact they break the deal, we will act," he said.

The semiofficial Fars news agency offered pictures Wednesday it said were of the Qadr H missiles being fired. It said they were fired in Iran's eastern Alborz mountain range to hit a target some 1,400 kilometers (870 miles) away off Iran's coast into the Sea of Oman. The U.S. Navy's 5th Fleet, which patrols that region, declined to comment on the test.

Soldiers often write slogans or messages on rockets and missiles. During Israel's 2006 war with Lebanon's Hezbollah militants, Israeli children were photographed writing messages on artillery shells in a community near the border. More recently, pictures emerged online of U.S. missiles bound for Islamic State group targets that had "From Paris with love" written on them, referring to last year's attacks.

*The Pioneer*  
10 Mar, 2016

## **A budget cut that has unsettled the PLA**

*While India hopes that the Rafale deal will materialise, a modest hike in China's Defence Budget is surprising. It will be difficult for Beijing to tackle unhappiness in the PLA ranks, at a time when it has undertaken reforms*

One of the most unexpected news coming from China recently is the low raise in the People's Liberation Army Defence Budget for the coming year. During the first session of the National People's Congress, it was announced that the increment would only be 7.6 per cent compared to 10.1 per cent last year; it is the smallest military budget increase in several years; the first single-digit since 2010.

Even *The Global Times*, the party mouthpiece, admitted that the news came as a surprise "as some media previously predicted that the Defense Budget would increase by as high as 20 per cent". It is also what the usually well-informed *South China Morning Post* had expected.

China's 7.6 per cent increase corresponds to \$146 billion, while India's entire defence allocation is only \$40 billion, the 0.96 per cent rise for India will not give the nation a chance to catch up.

Prakash Nanda, a defence analyst commented: "What is more surprising is that not only did Mr Arun Jaitley fail to mention the Defence Ministry in his speech, but his ministry also went one step further in removing the Ministry of Defence from the list of 'important ministries' in highlighting the budget proposals in its Press releases." All this is quite worrying.

Defence Minister Manohar Parrikar, however, announced that the Rafale deal with Dassault of France was on, though the minister boasted to be a 'tough negotiator' and wanted the 'best price' for Rafale fighter jets from France.

It is fine to be a tough negotiator, but Mr Parrikar should not forget that Dassault too is a hard bargainer. Further, the position of the French consortium is not the same as two years ago: Their order-book is full with firm orders from Egypt and Qatar, adding to the French Air Force needs; and first order, first serve, remains the rule.

Small mercy for the Indian Air Force, Mr Parrikar announced that the next Budget takes into account the Rafale deal for which 'adequate money' had been kept aside. One can only hope that an agreement will soon be found. Let us return to the other side of the Himalaya, where the situation is not too bright...and transparency even worse than in India.

Watching the beginning of the deliberations of the two sessions, ie, the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference and the National People's Congress, one realises that China is bound to face serious difficulties in the near future.

With the ‘modest’ rise in the defence outlay, the Communist Party of China may find it difficult to tackle ‘unhappiness’ in the PLA ranks, at a time Beijing has undertaken sweeping reforms and with renewed tensions over the South China Sea and Taiwan Strait.

Never since 1949, have reforms been so drastic; one can mention the retrenchments of 300,000 defence personnel, the re-shuffle of the theatre commands, the setting up of a PLA Rocket Force and a Strategic Support Force or the 15 new departments, offices and commissions. All these require funds. In this context, the reduction in Defence Budget appears ‘surprising’.

*The South China Morning Post* reported that “military officers have taken the rare step of publicly registering disappointment at the increase in China’s defence budget”.

Major General Qian Lihua, former head of the Foreign Affairs office of the Ministry of National Defence, acknowledged during a CPPCC panel discussion that this year represented a “big reduction”. This type of acknowledgement is rare in China.

Retired Rear Admiral Yin Zhuo, also a member of the CPPCC, openly said that “the growth in defence spending should be commensurate with the national economy — but it also needed to be proportional to the country’s security need”.

Mr Yin further told *China National Radio*, “We should not let our military’s development stall... because the security challenges at our peripherals, especially at sea, have been increasing.”

Mr Yin added that the current share of defence spending to gross domestic product (which is around 1.5 per cent) was still too low: “I think two per cent to 2.5 per cent would be optimum,” Mr Yin asserted, adding: “And we are slashing 300,000 military personnel — additional resources are needed to resettle these veterans.”

Though some Taiwanese sources claim that the retrenched troops may find their way “to form to 10 armed police tactical units and 100 armed police warfare groups, both likely to be stationed in the restive Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region”, the information has never been confirmed.

During the NPC, China announced that it will build a more comprehensive national security system. The draft of the new law calls for implementing national security policies in fields involving politics, territory, economy, society, resources, cyberspace and others.

These drastic measures, many China watchers believe, could trigger the ‘collapse’ the Middle Kingdom in the new future.

Already last year, David Shambaugh, a respected Chinese expert, who is director of the China Policy Programme at the George Washington University, wrote on the subject in a Saturday essay in *The Wall Street Journal*; His ‘The Coming Chinese Crackup’ circulated widely on social media.

He had then remarked: “The endgame of communist rule in China has begun, and President Xi Jinping’s ruthless measures are only bringing the country closer to a breaking point.”

Mr Shambaugh has now elaborated his theory in a 203-page new book, *China’s Future*, where he argues that “China is in a state of ‘atrophy’ and ‘decline’, which will continue if no major political reform takes place in the near future”. The professor’s main argument is the following: “Despite appearances, China’s political system is badly broken, and nobody knows it better than the

Communist Party itself. China's strongman leader, Mr Xi, is hoping that a crackdown on dissent and corruption will shore up the party's rule." His new book elaborates on his earlier conclusions

According to Mr Shambaugh, it is the political system which is not up to the mark; if China continues on its present track of hard authoritarian rule, the mainland will crack up. The only way out would be to 'unleash innovation and effectively reform the financial system' but this is unlikely, as the Communist Party is too insecure; it can't envisage any means other than control, repression and coercion.

Mr Shambaugh argues that continuing with the current policies is "a recipe for further social volatility." Last week, when Mr Xi paid a highly-publicised visit to China's top media organisations, journalists had to pledge 'absolute loyalty' to Mr Xi.

A *Guardian* article published an article entitled, 'Love the party, protect the party: How Xi Jinping is bringing China's media to heel'.

Add the instability of the so-called 'minorities' areas (Tibet, Xinjiang, etc). It remains an explosive issue if these regions continue to be mishandled by Beijing, as it is presently. Ultimately, authoritarianism has limits and Mr Xi seems to have entered a vicious circle. He may find it impossible to reset the Middle Kingdom to 'normal'. India does not have these problems.

*The Times of India*  
10 Mar, 2016

## **NASA tests inflatable heat shield for its spacecraft to Mars**

NASA has successfully tested its donutshaped inflatable heat shield technology that works like a parachute and will enable a spacecraft to land safely when it descends through the high-temperature atmosphere of a planet such as Mars.

Before Nasa uses its new inflatable technology for slowing spacecraft that are entering the atmosphere of other planets, it will first need to be packed into the tight confines of a rocket.

Engineers at Nasa's Langley Research Centre in the US put the technology to test by packing a donut-shaped test article, with a diameter of 9 feet and also known as a torus, to simulate what would happen before a space mission. Called the Hypersonic Inflatable Aerodynamic Decelerator, or HIAD, it works like a parachute, using the drag of a planet's atmosphere to slow the space vehicle as it descends towards the surface, researchers said. Slowing the spacecraft protects it from the intense heat of atmospheric entry, and allows it to land more softly. "During testing, we used a vacuum pump to compress the test article into a small space," said Keith Johnson, a lead engineer for the project. "We packed and unpacked it and did thorough inspections to check for leaks and damage to the Zylon and Teflon materials. We repeated this three times," said Johnson. The technology will enable the delivery of heavy cargo, science instruments and people to other worlds.

According to test engineer Sean Hancock, HIAD was packed the same way each time to see how the material would handle folding, packing, and compressing.

Doing so helps engineers understand how it would perform after exposure to handling, storage and deployment during a space flight mission, researchers said.

"The test included all the components for the latest inflatable torus design, so it was a good final check to prove that the materials can tolerate packing," Johnson said. After successful testing, Nasa

engineers can move forward in the development of creating a larger HIAD that can withstand the high temperatures experienced when it descends through the atmosphere of a planet such as Mars.

*The Times of India*  
10 Mar, 2016

## **ISRO set to launch 6th Navsat today**

Indian Space agency ISRO's sixth navigation satellite, IRNSS-1F, is set to be launched through PSLV C32 on Thursday. The launch, aimed at providing navigation like the US's GPS, will take place from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre at Sriharikota in Andhra Pradesh.

*The Times of India*  
10 Mar, 2016

## **A mini fuel cell powers drones for over an hour**

Scientists have developed a miniaturised fuel cell that can power drones for more than one hour and may lead to smartphone batteries that require charge only once a week.

The solid oxide fuel cell (SOFC), developed by researchers at Pohang University of Science and Technology (POSTECH) in South Korea, may replace lithium-ion batteries in smartphones, laptops, drones, and other small electronic devices.

Drones are used for various applications, such as aero picturing. Despite attracting attention as a new growth area, the biggest problem of drones is its small battery capacity.

*The Times of India*  
10 Mar, 2016

## **30 years on, Chernobyl still poisoning lives**

### ***Food and Water in Affected Region Continue To Be Contaminated With High Levels of Radiation***

Economic crises convulsing Russia, Ukraine and Belarus mean testing in areas contaminated by the Chernobyl nuclear disaster has been cut or restricted Greenpeace said, and people continue to eat and drink foods with dangerously high radiation levels.

According to scientific tests conducted on behalf of the environmental campaigning group, overall contamination from key isotopes such as caesium-137 and strontium-90 has fallen somewhat, but lingers, especially in places such as forests.

People in affected areas are still coming into daily contact with dangerously high levels of radiation from the April 1986 explosion at the nuclear plant that sent a plume of radioactive fallout across large swathes of Europe.

“It is in what they eat and what they drink. It is in the wood they use for construction and burn to keep warm,” the Greenpeace report, entitled ‘Nuclear Scars: The Lasting legacies of Chernobyl and Fukushima’ says.

The research report published on Wednesday said Ukraine “no longer has sufficient funds to finance the programmes needed to properly protect the public... this means the radiation exposure of people still living in the contaminated areas is likely increasing”.

Ukraine is suffering economic hardship, worsened by a pro-Russian insurgency in its eastern territories, while Russia and Belarus are also experiencing financial pressures. The report found that in some cases, such as in grain, radiation levels in the contaminated areas -where an estimated 5 million people live -had actually increased.

“And just as this contamination will be with them for decades to come, so will the related impacts on their health. Thousands of children, even those born 30 years after Chernobyl, still have to drink radioactively contaminated milk,” the report says. Russia's ministries of health and natural resources did not immediately respond to a request for comment on the report. In Ukraine, the health, agriculture and ecology ministries did not immediately respond. Greenpeace said it had also conducted tests in areas contaminated by the 2011 Fukushima disaster in Japan. It added that the Japanese government's decontamination efforts had so far been inadequate and left the door open to recontamination of areas deemed to have been cleaned. Long-term exposure to radiation can lead to severe illnesses. Doctors in the areas worst affected by Chernobyl have long reported a sharp rise in certain cancer rates.

Victor Khanayev, a surgeon in Russia, said many people were too poor to ensure they only ate food that was not contaminated.

*The Tribune*  
10 Mar, 2016

## **First case of Zika virus link to paralysis traced**

In a first, a 15-year-old girl infected with the Zika virus, which causes incomplete brain development in newborns, was diagnosed with a paralysis-causing myelitis by French researchers.

This is the first case of acute myelitis, inflammation of the spinal cord, following infection with Zika virus to be reported, according to a research team from the Pointe-a-Pitre University Hospital and the University of the Antilles in French West Indies.

A young patient in the acute phase of an infection by Zika virus presented motor deficiency in the four limbs, associated with very intense pain and acute urinary retention.

The presence of the virus was confirmed in the cerebrospinal fluid, blood and urine, researchers said.

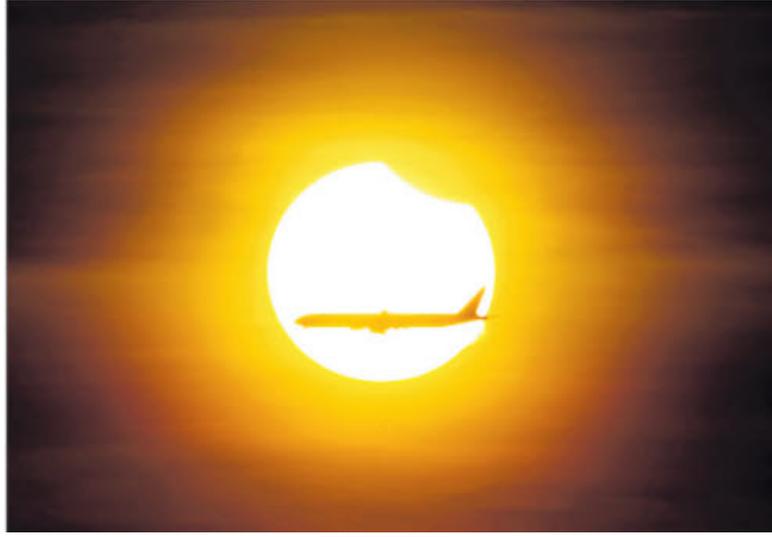
In January this year, the girl was admitted to the Pointe-a-Pitre University Hospital in Guadeloupe, with left-side hemiplegia.

She showed urinary retention on her second day in hospital. The hemiplegia (paralysis of one side of the body) and pain became worse and the doctors recorded a loss of sensation in the legs, the researchers said.

They detected high concentrations of Zika virus in the serum and cerebrospinal fluid on the second day after admission, nine days after the symptoms began. Tests for shingles, chickenpox, herpes virus, legionellosis and mycoplasma pneumonia were negative.

The patient was treated with methylprednisolone, an anti-inflammatory drug, from the first day and daily for five days. Seven days after admission, her neurological condition had improved. "At present, the patient is still in hospital but she is out of danger," researchers said.

## Hide and seek



An aeroplane flies past the sun during a partial solar eclipse in Singapore on Wednesday. While thousands across Indonesia witnessed a total eclipse, it was a partial affair in India. ---Reuters

*नवभारत टाइम्स*  
10 मार्च, 2016

## समूचे इंडोनेशिया में पूर्ण सूर्यग्रहण

विशाल इंडोनेशियाई द्वीपसमूह के समूचे हिस्से पर बुधवार को पूर्ण सूर्यग्रहण देखा गया। इसे देखकर मुस्लिम आबादी ने दुआएं कीं। 06:19 बजे (स्थानीय समय) चंद्रमा, पृथ्वी और सूरज के बीच सरकने लगा और तकरीबन एक घंटे बाद देश के पश्चिमी हिस्से में पूर्ण सूर्यग्रहण का नजारा दिखा। एशिया और ऑस्ट्रेलिया के कुछ अन्य हिस्सों में आंशिक ग्रहण देखा गया। भारत के कुछ ही हिस्सों में आंशिक सूर्यग्रहण दिखाई दिया। इस दौरान पवित्र स्नान किया गया।

कोलकाता



नॉन पेन, कंबोडिया



जकार्ता, इंडोनेशिया

