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Sun, 11 June, 2017

Israel to offer to build Spike missile under Make in India

New Delhi: Navy Chief Admiral Sunil Lanba, also the chairman of Chiefs of Staff Committee, will be on a four-day visit to Israel from Sunday as Tel Aviv is set to offer manufacturing of Spike hand held “fire and forget” anti-tank guided missile (ATGM) to India under Make in India.

This is the last Indian highprofile visitor to Israel before Prime Minister Narendra Modi lands in Tel Aviv on July 5. Admiral Lanba will be in Israel till June 15.

Admiral Lanba visit comes after a Parliamentary delegation led by minister of state for agriculture and parliamentary affairs SS Ahluwalia went all over the Jewish nation in search of state of the art agricultural technologies.

Top government sources told Hindustan Times that Lanba will be visiting Haifa naval port along with interactions with Army and Air Force chiefs of Israel. His visit will be to understand regional security without delving into hardware acquisition.

However, it is now clear that Israel wants to participate in the Make in India initiative with offer to making Spike ATGM.

Even though the Modi government wants to focus on ties with Israel beyond defence, India is looking towards making medium altitude long endurance armed Heron TP unmanned aerial vehicle under Make in India.

*Sun, 11 June, 2017*

Helmets, bullet-proof jackets in, Army awaits a rifle

The Army is pushing for a standard rifle to replace the existing 5.56-calibre INSAS rifle designed three decades ago

In a step to improve survivability of Indian Army troops fighting against armed terrorists or guarding the Line of Control (LoC), the first lot of 10,000 light-weight bullet-proof helmets arrived in May-end. The final trials for new-age modular bullet-proof jacket is on, separately another 50,000 such jackets have been purchased using the financial powers available with the Army headquarters.

The Army is now pushing for a standard rifle that will be 7.62 calibre, firing 51mm ammunition (bullets) to replace the existing INSAS (Indian Small Arms System) rifle a 5.56 calibre which was designed some three decades ago. Some developments have taken place on this front which is no more than ‘half-steps’ while the decision awaits the policy nod.

“The existing INSAS rifle should have been replaced long ago, it does not inspire confidence among troops,” says Lt Gen Vinod Bhatia (retd), a former Director General Military Operations (DGMO).

The all-important helmets

A total of 1.58 lakh such helmets are being procured for about Rs 170 crore. “Deliveries have commenced and the first batch of 10,000 has come in,” a senior serving officer confirmed. The helmets are designed to bear the impact of 9mm ammunition fired from a short range which is equal to standard protection among leading armed forces.

As of now Army soldiers, wear a bulletproof “patka”— a modified round moulded headgear — that can only give protection on forehead and back of the head. It weighs around 2.5kg.

Kanpur-based Indian company, MKU Industries, has been contracted and given three years to supply the new-age helmets. These can be fitted with radio to provide situational awareness and also night sights. The same

will be used in any future wars and counter insurgencies. “Modernisation is a continuous process. Such new items add to the potential of the soldier,” says Lt Gen Gurmit Singh (retd), who once headed the Srinagar-based 15 Corps

Bullet-proof jackets

Despite numerous efforts in the past decade, the Army faces a shortage of bullet-proof jackets — a mandatory requirement to save lives in counter-insurgency operations. In March 2016, 50,000 BP jackets were ordered for

Rs 140 crore as an emergency measure and the first batch of some 20,000 was received by the Army in October. The rest of these are coming in batches.

The Indian Army needs 3,53,765 new BP jackets sanctioned as per the plan of 2009. Of these, 1.86 lakh jackets were to be supplied in the 11th plan (2007-2012) and another 1.67 lakh jackets were to be supplied during the 12th plan (2012-2017). With the 12th plan having ended in March 2017, the only 50,000 have been ordered and these jackets are based on old specifications of the Army and not the modern light weight modular ones needed to allow greater agility to troops while protecting the head, neck, chest, groin and sides of the infantry soldiers.

New Rifle to replace INSAS

The most reliable weapon of an infantry or a paramilitary soldier is a good self-loading rifle that can fire with accuracy.

India now stands on the cusp of a policy decision that is to have an indigenous produced weapon or have a proven foreign weapon made in India. A global hunt is on to buy 185,000 7.62x51mm-calibre assault rifle and it will cost almost \$1 billion.

The forces have so far not accepted the ‘Excalibur’ rifle being made by the Ordnance Factory Board (OFB) which is an upgrade of the INSAS. The OFB has made eight such pieces which are being tested by the Army. “The OFB is not a weapon developer, its producer of weapons,” warns Lt Gen Bhatia on seeing too much into the new gun. A global request for information (RFI) was issued in June last year and it contains modified requirements, including the facility of a detachable 40 mm under-barrel grenade launcher and holographic sights allowing a sniper-shot.

The broad parameters specify the lightweight rifle should have a minimum effective or kill range of 500 metres with limited recoil. The Army wants the rifle to be compatible with eye-visible laser-target pointers, holographic and other sights, and the rifle should have a design, metallurgy and performance parameters to remain relevant for at least the next 25 years.

In the meanwhile, Israel Weapon Industries (IWI) has set up a joint venture with an Indian partner, Punj Lloyd, to manufacture small arms, including assault rifles. The plant, in Madhya Pradesh, was opened in May this year.



Sun, 11 June, 2017

Women troops will deal with female protesters: Army chief

Sometimes we have to face women during counterinsurgencies. They could be tackled easily if we have enough strength of women officers... General Bipin Rawat, Army chief

Dehradun: Indian army chief General Bipin Rawat suggested on Saturday that the force could deploy its first women combatants for operations in regions such as Kashmir, where soldiers are facing pushback from stone-pelting female protesters.

Rawat’s comments came days after he said the army will open combat roles to women, and the process will begin with them initially recruited in the military police.

“Sometimes we have to face women in the front during counter-insurgencies. They could be tackled easily if we have enough strength of women officers and sizable other rank and file cadre,” Rawat said at the passing-out parade of the latest batch of soldiers at the Indian Military Academy (IMA). Women are currently recruited into selective areas of the army such as medical, legal, educational and engineering wings.

His statement came in reply to a question from reporters on how the army planned to tackle rising incidents of stone pelting by women in Kashmir.

The General said a social media campaign in Kashmir was misleading youth and spreading hate against security forces.

Kashmir has been on the boil since last July when Hizbul Mujahideen militant Burhan Wani was killed by security forces. In the months since, more than a 100 civilians have died in clashes with the army and police during counter-insurgency operations.

Rawat also played down the issue of Chinese incursions into Indian territory, saying they were matter of “perceptions” by the two countries.

“A disinformation campaign against India and Indian security forces is being run in valley among every section of the society in general and youth in particular via social media but it will not be allowed to succeed” he said.

On China, he stressed on the need to improve relations with the Communist giant. “Counter intrusions take place from both the sides of LAC. We also fly our helicopters on the space that may be considered intrusion by the other side,” Rawat said.

He was referring to the recent incident of a suspected Chinese helicopter violating Indian airspace by hovering over Uttarakhand’s Chamoli area along the border. He denied that these cross overs were attempts by Beijing to intrude into Indian Territory.

Incidents of Chinese troops crossing over to the Indian side of the border often spark fear in the bordering areas and at times even lead to standoffs between the two countries.

Sources said that such violation of the Indian airspace in Chamoli and other areas of the state from the Chinese side have occurred in the past as well.

In July 2016, some members of the People’s Liberation Army of China entered into Indian Territory in the state’s Chamoli area, triggering a nationwide outrage. The intruders even shooed away Chamoli district administration officials who had gone to investigate the matter.



Sun, 11 June, 2017

Army set to deploy fleet of armed choppers in NE

India Has Redoubled Efforts To Enlarge Its Deployments In The Nation’s Eastern Sector In An Attempt To Keep A Check On Neighbour China

New Delhi: Beefing up its force levels in the northeast to counter China, the Indian Army is all set to deploy a squadron of weaponised Dhruv advanced light helicopters in Assam’s Likabali town.

This will be the army’s first armed helicopter unit in the region.

India has redoubled its efforts to strengthen its deployments in the eastern sector, with the raising of a new mountain strike corps and stationing of front-line Sukhoi-30 fighter planes. The armed force is also engaged in the reactivation of advanced landing grounds, deploying supersonic cruise missiles and proposed basing of special operations aircraft.

Speaking on the condition of anonymity, army sources said the Dhruv Mk-IV squadron with 10 indigenously-built helicopters was likely to be functional in two to three months, as part of an overarching plan to scale up the force's offensive capabilities in the eastern sector.

There are four weapon stations on the helicopter with a turret gun in its nose area. Weaponised Dhruv helicopters are equipped with air-to-air missiles, 70 mm rockets and 20 mm turret guns.

Newer variants are being equipped with anti-tank guided missiles, infrared jammers and obstacle avoidance systems.

The army's aviation wing has an armed chopper squadron near Jodhpur and another unit is coming up in one of the northern states.

The army is speeding up a new mountain strike corps whose raising was kicked off in January 2014 in West Bengal's Panagarh.

Aimed at countering China in the northeast, the government will spend around ₹ 40,000 crore on the new corps, 17 Corps, which is likely to be fully operational by 2025.

The corps will be equipped with M777s ultra light-weighted howitzers ordered from the United States in November 2016 under a \$750-million contract. The contract is for 145 M777s.

Of these, 25 ready-built weapons will be supplied by the United States of America (USA) over the next two years and the remaining 120 howitzers will be produced in the country under the Modi government's ambitious Make in India initiative.

Manufactured by Britain's defence and aerospace company, BAE Systems, the guns will be built in India in collaboration with Mahindra Defence. The 155 mm/39-caliber howitzers have been bought to increase the army's capabilities in high altitude

Last August, India cleared the deployment of a special version of BrahMos supersonic cruise missiles in the northeast.

Weeks after the Indian government cleared the new BrahMos regiment at a cost of ₹ 4,300 crore, China warned that such a move would have "a negative influence" on stability along the border.



Sun, 11 June, 2017

490 pass out of IMA, 187 from OTA

On Chinese incursions

It is a matter of perception... We also use intrusions while patrolling. It is vital to have better understanding between two nations, rather than aggravating things

On turmoil in Valley

Youths in J&K are being misinformed and misguided by forces inimical to peace. Security forces have to devise ways to counter this... Terrorism is the biggest challenge for us.

As many as 490 gentlemen cadets, including 67 from 10 friendly nations, passed out from the Indian Military Academy (IMA) here today with Chief of Army Staff Gen Bipin Rawat reviewing the passing-out parade at the historic Chetwode drill square.

Another 187 cadets passed out from the OTA, Gaya. Among them were 64 of the Technical Entry Course, 33 Special Commission Officers and 90 of the Technical Entry Scheme. GOC-in-C Western Command, Lt Gen Surinder Singh, reviewed the passing-out parade.

Earlier, the immaculately turned-out cadets put up a well synchronised parade before Gen Rawat. As the parade started, two Army choppers flew over the drill square to shower rose petals on the tarmac, carpeting it with flowers.

Among the 423 Indian cadets, Uttar Pradesh accounts for the highest 74, followed by Haryana with 49, Uttarakhand 40, Rajasthan 30, Bihar 28 and Delhi 23.

Later, speaking to reporters, Rawat said women need to be given combat roles in the army as terrorists often used women as shields.

Awards were presented to the medal winners, which included Sword of Honour and Gold Medal to Avinash Chhetry, who stood overall first in merit in regular course. Vikas Sangwan and Rohit Joshi were presented silver and bronze medals.

Wilfred Cprian was awarded silver medal for standing first in order of merit among foreign cadets. He also presented Chief of Army Staff Banner to Singerh

Company. These cadets belonged to Tajikstan, Afghanistan, Papua New Guinea, Tonga, Lesotho, Fiji, Tanzania, Bhutan, Sudan and Kyrgyzstan.



Sun, 11 June, 2017

13 armed intruders killed in 4 days along LoC, says army

Srinagar: One militant was killed as the Indian Army foiled an infiltration bid in Gurez sector in north Kashmir on Saturday, taking the number of deaths of infiltrators to 13 in the past four days.

While confirming Saturday's development, an army spokesperson said one weapon was recovered from the militant. The operation is underway, the spokesperson added.

"The sinister designs of Pakistan army to push in multiple groups of armed intruders across the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu and Kashmir continue to be defeated by proactive operations being carried out on the LoC. Relentless operations mounted by troops have successfully intercepted groups of armed intruders all along the LoC in Gurez, Machhil, Naugam and Uri Sectors, leading to the elimination of 13 armed intruders in the past 96 hours," the army said in a statement.

Forty infiltration attempts were prevented along the Line of Control so far this year.

On Friday, the army gunned down five militants in north Kashmir's Uri sector.

The army's northern command said on Thursday it was tackling several infiltration bids along the LoC in north Kashmir. The army has been engaging with armed militants in four sectors — Machhil, Naugam, Gurez and Uri — in the three frontier districts of north Kashmir since Wednesday.

While three militants were killed on Thursday in Nowgam sector of Kupwara district, four more were killed in the district's Machhil sector on Wednesday. A soldier was also killed in Nowgam.

Meanwhile, militants opened fire on two ITBP vehicles at Vessu on the Srinagar-Jammu highway on Saturday morning, missing their target and injuring a civilian in a car behind them.

The civilian, Arif of Anantnag, was on his way to work at a construction company at Banihal when the militants fired at the Indo-Tibetan Police Force (ITBP) vehicles in front of him. The fire missed the target and hit his car, injuring him in the back, police said.

Though he is stable, he was referred to the Shri Maharaja Hari Singh Hospital (SMHS) in Srinagar.

Residents said they heard gunshots soon after the morning prayers at 5am. Twenty empty cases of AK ammunition were recovered from the spot. It was the second militant attack on security forces in the Qazigund area of Anantnag district in a week. On June 3, two soldiers were killed and four injured in a militant ambush on an army convoy near a toll post at Qazigund on the highway.

What happens when a Kashmiri joins Indian Army

Moazum Mohammad pieces together an account of the fraught relationship Kashmiri personnel share with their communities

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At around 9 am on 10 May 2017, the body of 22-year-old Lieutenant Ummer Fayaz Parray reached his home in the cluttered village of Sarsuna, in Kashmir's Kulgam district. Ummer had been abducted in Shopian village the previous night, and early that morning, his body was discovered in Hermain village. His death was widely covered by the mainstream media. Many politicians released statements condemning Ummer's killing, and others paid tributes to him for his service to the nation. Before burial, the army officer's body was draped in the Indian tricolour. Soldiers offered a gun salute to their slain colleague, and lay wreaths by his body.

These were extraordinary sights for the villagers of Sarsuna who attended the funeral. The ceremonies at the funeral were a declaration that the young man was an officer of the Indian armed forces — a fact that many of them had, until then, been unaware of. "Nobody in the village knew that he was in the army," Ummer's uncle, Manzoor Ahmed Parray, said. "They believed he was studying outside." "We knew he [had earlier] studied in army school but we did not know he was working with the army," a villager, who asked not to be named, later told me.

The road to Sarsuna—located around 65 kilometres from Srinagar—passes through green fields, with a canopy of apple and cherry trees. The village comprises over 100 households, and a majority of its residents run or work in apple orchards. I reached the village at about noon on 15 May. It was quiet; the only people in sight were young boys returning home from school.

At Ummer's home, the dull silence remained. In a dimly lit room on the first floor of the twostorey house, I spoke with the slain officer's family—his parents, Jameela and Fayaz Ahmad; his uncles Mushtaq Ahmad and Manzoor Ahmad; and his grandfather, 73-year-old Mohammad Ashoor Parray. Through our conversations, I had to repeatedly encourage his family to speak—they were hesitant, and worried about what would happen if their statements were published. Their accounts — and my interactions with other Kashmiri security personnel — offer some insight into the fraught relationship these officials share with their own communities.

On 30 April, Manzoor told me, Ummer arrived for a 15-day leave of absence from his posting, in Aknour, in Jammu. Six months earlier, Ummer had been posted there with the infantry unit of the 2 Rajputana Rifles regiment in the Indian army. He had taken leave to attend the wedding of his cousin — one of the daughters of his maternal uncle— which was scheduled to take place a few kilometres from Sarsuna, in Batpora village in Shopian district, on 11 May.

Manzoor told me that he picked up Ummer at Wanpoh, along the 300-kilometre Srinagar-Jammu national highway. "I took him to Anantnag where my two school-going children live in a rented room. We spent the night there and came here [Sarsuna] the next day without announcing about his arrival to anyone," he said.

Apprehensive about Ummer's safety, the family maintained this secrecy over the next few days. Manzoor said that Ummer spent two days with his family in Sarsuna, and that no one apart from the family knew of his presence. "Even my sister, who lives in the adjacent village, could not meet him because we did not tell anyone," he said. He added that Ummer then returned to Anantnag, and came back to Sarsuna two days before the wedding.

On 9 May, at about 3 pm, Ummer and his mother, Jameela, left for Shopian on a motorcycle. "He was happy and eagerly looking forward to attending the wedding," Jameela said. Her eyes were moist as she spoke. Fayaz told me that, before leaving, Ummer insisted that his father come to Shopian soon as well. "You have to come

tomorrow,” Fayaz recalled Ummer said. “We would not have allowed him to go there if I knew his [dead] body would return,” he told me. “We never knew such a thing would happen.”

When the mother and son reached Batpora village, the celebrations were ongoing in Jameela’s brother’s home. “My brother has four daughters but no son. Everyone was excited till this happened,” Jameela said. “At around 8.30 pm, I was in the washroom, which was outside the house, when three men carrying guns entered the house,” she said. “I heard some screams, but I thought someone fell from a window.” Jameela continued, “When I came out, I saw a person leaving through the gate. But I did not see them taking away my son.”

Manzoor was not present in the house at the time of the abduction, but had pieced together an account based on the observations of the family members who were present, such as Ummer’s cousins and a maternal uncle, who is partially blind. He said they told him that three persons who wore masks and were carrying guns had barged into the house. They made their way to Ummer, who was sitting with the bride-to-be on the first floor. “We have to talk to him for 10 minutes,” the gunmen told the family, Manzoor said. “We don’t know how many [gunmen] were outside,” he added. “Once I learnt Ummer had been taken away, I urgently went out in search of him,” Jameela said.

Jameela, along with a few relatives and some other residents of Batpora, equipped with flashlights, entered the paddy fields surrounding the village to look for Ummer. “My legs were caked with mud and dirt,” she said. She added that she did not inform the police or her husband about Ummer’s abduction until the following morning. “I believed he would return after being questioned,” she said.

At 5 am on 10 May, Fayaz told me, he received a call while he was offering morning prayers at the neighbourhood masjid in Sarsuna. He then lapsed into silence. Manzoor said that some locals in Hermain had discovered a body at the local bus stop that morning. “A doctor who is posted in the concerned hospital saw the identity card in his pocket and confirmed his death,” he said. The family members added that the wedding was postponed.

I asked the Parray family about how Ummer came to join the army. They told me that, until fifth grade, Ummer studied in a neighbourhood school. Then, Manzoor told me, they decided to send him to a school outside the village. Ummer applied to an army school in Ashmuqam, in south Kashmir. “We sent him to army school so that he could focus on his education,” Manzoor said. “He passed the school’s entrance examination and got admitted.”

In 2012, Ummer qualified for admission into the National Defence Academy. Fayaz said that Ummer had not undergone any coaching for the entrance exam. Ummer’s family was very happy with the prospect, but decided to keep it a secret. “We did not fear for his life when he joined army. He was appointed on merit as an officer. We were happy,” Manzoor said. Like many other Kashmiris, Ummer “too, had gone to offer his services for the country,” Ashoor, Ummer’s grandfather, said.

In Sarsuna, “only 15–20 people are government employees,” Mushtaq, Ummer’s other uncle, told me. “The rest of the village works in their fields.” He continued, “Nobody works in the police or the army here.” Mushtaq said that many of the young people in the area were employed with the Rehbar-eTaleem—a government scheme under which educated young adults are locally employed as teachers in primary and middle schools. If it were not for the scheme, Mushtaq said, “They too would have joined the army.” So far, Mushtaq told me, Sarsuna had seen only one villager join the militancy—Fayaz’s uncle, Mohammad Ayub Parray, who was killed in the 1990s.

“When I came out, I saw a person leaving through the gate. But I did not see them taking away my son”
JAMEELA AHMAD Ummer’s mother So far Sarsuna has seen only one villager join the militancy — Fayaz’s uncle, Mohammad Ayub Parray, who was killed in the 1990s

Nearly a month since his killing, it is still unclear who is responsible for Ummer’s death. Several news reports, as well as the security forces in the region and central and state leaders, suggested that Kashmiri militants may be responsible for the abduction and killing. On 12 May, the United Jihad Council, an umbrella grouping of militant outfits in the state, released a statement denying any involvement in Ummer’s death.

“Our militants are not involved in murder of Lt Ummer Fayaz. Such a killing is condemnable,” Syed Salahuddin, the chief of the Hizbul Mujahideen and of the UJC, said in the statement. He alleged that Ummer had been “murdered by the Indian agencies and militants are being accused of it to shield the real face of the Indian agencies.”

Ummer’s family members were hesitant to accuse anyone. “We can’t say who killed him, but those who killed him committed a sin,” Fayaz said. Hardly any of the Kashmiri security personnel I reached out to after Ummer’s death were willing to speak to me. I contacted six security personnel— including veterans and serving army officers. All of them refused to speak to me even off the record. A former army officer I met in north Kashmir’s Baramulla district told me that he would be happy to serve me a cup of coffee and discuss films, but not his professional life.

On 22 May, I visited the sprawling headquarters of Jammu and Kashmir Light Infantry at Rangreth, on the outskirts of Srinagar. At the heavily guarded gate, a group of Kashmiri soldiers checked and noted down my credentials. Inside the complex, I met two Kashmiri soldiers—one hailed from south Kashmir and the other from north Kashmir. Though they insisted that they had no trouble visiting their homes, both soldiers did not give me their names. “I am returning from my home right now,” said the soldier from north Kashmir, who was dressed in civilian clothing. The other soldier said that he joined the army in 1997, during the peak of the militancy. “Nobody kills you unless you commit wrong,” he told me.

At the headquarters, I also met a 52-year-old former army official. He, too, spoke to me only on the condition of anonymity. The officer, who retired only recently, said he joined the army a few years prior to the surge in militancy in Kashmir, which began in 1989. For 13 years after that, he told me, he did not visit his home, located in a south Kashmir district. (As we spoke, a person standing a few yards away, at the door of the room in which we stood, urged the former officer to leave. “Come out. We are getting late,” the man shouted.)

For over a decade, the former officer said, he would call his family to Jammu and meet them there. In November 2002, he was posted in outside the state, when his father died. He was able to visit only on his father’s chehlum—the fortieth day after his death. That was the first time he visited his home since the 1990s, the former officer told me. “My brother told me not to visit. Despite that, I reached home late evening, for two days. I visited the grave at 4 am,” he said.

During his visit, he continued, he ran into a former school classmate. He told me that his classmate was a former police official, and had been dismissed from the service. The classmate had then joined the Hizbul Mujahideen. “We had lunch together at my home but he did not know I was in the army,” he told me. At the time, he added, “I also did not know he had been dismissed and was now a militant.” During this lunch, the classmate said that he had heard of an army official visiting the village. The classmate insisted that he has to visit the official. The former officer said he tried to dissuade his friend, but was unsuccessful.

“When he insisted, I revealed that I am the soldier. He did not believe me. But I showed him my I-card,” he added. The former officer’s classmate then warned him. “I have been sent here for recce,” he told me his classmate said. “We have to lift you in the evening and you should leave before that happens.” Following this incident, he said, he did not return home for over a year.

Yet, a number of Kashmiris appear to be signing up to join the army. According to Colonel Rajesh Kalia, a Kashmir-based defence spokesperson, the recruitment rallies the army has conducted in the valley in recent times have received an overwhelming response. Kalia said that in north Kashmir’s Pattan district alone, 19,000 Kashmiris applied for soldier’s posts in the army during a recruitment rally held between 4 April and 12 April. “The response and enthusiasm shows motivation of young boys for a better future,” he said. On 28 May, a day after the Hizbul Mujahideen commander Sabzar Bhat and his associate Faizan Ahmad were killed in Tral, the army held an entrance examination for junior commanding officers and other ranks. The army later released a statement noting that “defying shutdown,” nearly 1,300 aspirants appeared for the exam.

I asked a young man who had applied for a soldier’s post this year why he had done so despite being familiar with the risk that Kashmiris in the armed forces face. “As Kashmiris, we are killed by bullets. As an army man, the same bullet will kill me,” he said. “But till that time, I will earn for my family.” Jameela, Ummer’s

mother, had attributed the decision to destiny. “It was god’s will to make him qualify exams,” she said as I was leaving their home. “Today, [his death] is also god’s will.”



Sun, 11 June, 2017

‘Indian, Chinese armies have good coordination and understanding’

The Chief of Army Staff (COAS), General Bipin Rawat has said that the Indian and Chinese armies have good coordination and understanding. He was talking to the mediapersons at Indian Military Academy (IMA) on Saturday.

The Army Chief played down the recent alleged helicopter intrusion by Chinese army in Chamoli district as he termed them as difference in perception of border by the forces of the two countries.

He said local coordination between the forces of two countries guarding the Border is good. The COAS said that the militants are making use of internet and social networking sites to misguide the youth of Kashmir. He highlighted the need of adopting latest technology by armed forces to counter militants and said that army is trying to track militants without bothering the general public in Kashmir. General Rawat clarified that objective of army is to restore peace and normalcy in Kashmir. On the question of combat roles for women in army, General Rawat said that with proper training it is possible.

He said that the army is planning to induct female soldiers in Military Police as it has been seen that in many cases the armed forces have to deal with female protestors where the army had to take help of local police to provide female constables. The Army Chief said that army is planning to reduce the minimum height criteria for natives of Garhwal and Kumaon. It is pertinent to mention here that the minimum height criteria was revised few years ago resulting in less recruitment of youths in the army.

Earlier the minimum required height for the residents of Garhwal and Kumaon was 157 cm which is now raised to 162 cm. General Rawat said that talks are going on the Government of Uttarakhand on the issue of handing over of the operation of Veer Chandra Singh Garhwali Medical College Srinagar to army.



Sun, 11 June, 2017

Russia Calls for Dialogue in Qatar Crisis

Moscow called on Saturday for dialogue between Qatar and its neighbours in the Gulf, promising help in mediating the crisis, as Russia’s Foreign Minister met his Qatari counterpart.

“We have observed with concern the news of this escalation,” Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said in opening remarks of his meeting with Qatari Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani in Moscow.

“We cannot be happy in a situation when the relations between our partners are worsening. We are in favour of resolving any disagreements through... Dialogue.

Qatar is reaching out for support abroad as it has fallen out with its Arab neighbours, who accuse it of sponsoring extremist groups and resent its ties to the Muslim Brotherhood movement and sponsorship of Al-Jazeera network.

Bahrain, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates have cut diplomatic ties Monday and are trying to blockade Qatar by air and sea.

Lavrov said that Russia is “ready to try to do everything in its power” to help resolve the crisis and said unity is needed to fight terrorism.

“For us, unity is clearly necessary for maximum effect on this front (against terrorism),” he said.

Qatar has denounced the allegations against it and Al- Thani during his meeting with Lavrov called the measures against the country “illegal”.

Some reports alleged that Russian hackers helped spark the crisis but Moscow has dismissed this as a “stale claim” with “zero evidence.”