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Nirmala: will take pak's peace Call seriously

Days after Pakistan Army Chief General Qamar Javed Bajwa favoured talks to resolve outstanding



issues between the two countries, Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Monday said any such comment will be taken “seriously” by India. She also said the armed forces will “fully honour” the recent decision to halt anti-militancy operations in Jammu & Kashmir during the holy month of Ramzan. Pakistan Army is the most powerful institution in that country and has a major say in the defence and foreign policy. Perceived to be hawkish in its stance with India, Bajwa’s comments a few weeks back calling for a dialogue came as a surprise.

Addressing the passing out parade of cadets at the Pakistan Army Academy, he said peaceful resolution of disputes between India and Pakistan including the core issue of Kashmir can be found through comprehensive and meaningful dialogue. “While such dialogue is no favour to any party, it remains the inevitable precursor to peace across the region. Pakistan remains committed to such a dialogue, but only on the basis of sovereign equality, dignity and honour,” he said. When asked to respond to his remarks, Sitharaman said here on the sidelines of a seminar on artificial intelligence (AI), “Any comment on wanting peace will definitely be taken seriously.” Incidentally, for the first time in the history of Pakistan, senior Indian military officials and diplomats posted in Islamabad attended the military parade to mark the Pakistan Day. The Pakistan Army invited Indian defence attaché and senior diplomats for the function on March 23. Meanwhile, when asked about the recent incidents of ceasefire violations by Pakistan and whether India will stick to its decision to not launch any operation in Jammu & Kashmir during Ramzan, Sitharaman said the armed forces will abide by the decision.

“We shall fully honour the policy which the Home Ministry on behalf of the government of India announced. The policy has clearly laid out how it is going to pan out and we shall abide by everything that was announced,” the minister said. Her reiteration came in the backdrop of continuing cross-border firing by Pakistan Rangers along the International Border in some districts of Jammu for the last few days. Addressing the seminar, she underlined the need for incorporating AI applications in the Army, Navy and the Air Force. The Minister said AI can also be utilised in checking chemical, biological and nuclear weapons as well as keeping a vigil on outer space.

MAIL TODAY

BrahMos gets a lifespan boost

India successfully testfired BrahMos supersonic cruise missile on Monday

By Sudhi Ranjan Sen

A TRIAL to validate the ‘life extension’ of Indo-Russian joint venture BrahMos supersonic cruise missile from 10 to 15 years was conducted successfully from a test range along the Odisha coast on Monday. The new technology has been developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation. “Every

piece of ordnance has a designated life span. But we have developed means to extend the life of the BrahMos missile—it entails going through subsystems, components of missile and ensuring that the missile functions perfectly and delivers for another five years,” director general of team BrahMos Sudhir Mishra told INDIA TODAY TV. The missile was test-fired from a mobile launcher stationed at Launch pad 3 of the Integrated Test Range (ITR) at Chandipur at 10.40 am. “Each BrahMos costs about \$4 million (`27-`30 crore). Extending the life means that forces can spend that money on other weapon systems,” Mishra said, explaining the significance of the test. The BrahMos, whose variants can be launched from land, air and sea, is already being used the army and navy. The missile was recently fired from a Su-30MKI. The range of missile was extended from 290km to 400km in March 2017.



Tue, 22 May, 2018

Navy women sail around the world, create history

By Mayabhushan

After covering more than 21000 nautical miles through fair and foul weather at sea, the INSV Tarini



with its six Indian Navy women sailors onboard, waded into the pier at the INS Mandovi near Panaji, after scripting history as the first all women naval crew to circumvent the globe. Defence Minister Niramala Sitharaman, who was flagged in the expedition after the crew spent nearly nine months at sea, said that the extraordinary and unprecedented feat by Indian Navy women sailors was a message to millions of youngsters in India, that tough goals can be achieved by them. Sitharaman, who was glowing in her praise of Lieutenant Vartika Joshi and her crew, also said that their feat should

not be viewed as an achievement for women alone, but for Indian youngsters, for whom the historic ‘Navika Sagar Parikrama’ should be a motivation. “It is not just for the girls. It is not just for the women of this country. The women of the country have shown its possible for youngsters, if they want to do something, that they can indeed do it. So I would lift the whole motivation argument, not just confine it to the ladies of this country, but for all youngsters,” Sitharaman told a function held at the naval base, soon after the 55-foot sailboat was flagged during a formal ceremony, which was also attended by Indian Navy Admiral Sunil Lanba. “So I would want not for a minute undermine this by saying the girls have achieved, young Indians have achieved and the kind of grit shown by these young ladies is amazing. They have made history, not only for themselves, but for the naval history and maritime history of the world,” Sitharaman also said.

The expedition was flagged off last year by Sitharaman, soon after the latter was appointed Defence Minister in the Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led National Democratic Alliance Government, and has since completed the global circumnavigation across six legs with stopovers in Australia, New Zealand, Falkland Islands, South Africa and Mauritius traveling a distance of 21,600 nautical miles. Sitharaman also said, that the inspirational journey of the Navika Sagar Parikrama team was being keenly followed by herself, the Prime Minister of India along with several social media users, who constantly use to ask her for updates of the expedition. “wherever I went in this country, people would start a conversation (on social media) with me saying how are the girls, what are they doing, when are they returning. That has become the conversation among many people who have been closely following the ministry of Defence, particularly the navy,” Sitharaman said.

“I am immensely grateful that the Prime Minister kept tag of what was going on. Occasionally, he directly spoke to them to keep the nation’s motivation and interest on record. He has also agreed to meet them at the latest, that is day after,” the Defence Minister also said.



Tue, 22 May, 2018

MoD sends SSC proposal to FinMin

By Ajay Banerjee

Senior officials of the Ministry of Defence and the Army today met to fine-tune the contours of the



Army’s long-running proposal to increase the intake of short service commission (SSC) officers and correspondingly reduce the number of permanent commission or regular commissioned officers. Sources confirmed to The Tribune that the meeting was scheduled at the level of Joint Secretary in the MoD and the officers of the Army’s wing dealing with the matter. It is learnt the first phase of the proposal to increase the intake of SSC officers has been sent to the Ministry of Finance. This will include a separate

quantum of a lump-sum grant to SSC officers retiring after 10 years and 14 years of service. Besides, there will be adequate paid study leave for enrolling in professional colleges while in service.

The second phase of the plan, which includes giving ex-servicemen status and medical treatment facility, as admissible to regular officers, was discussed again today. The Army has suggested that all the additional benefits be announced in one go and not in phases. Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman is reportedly taking personal interest in the matter. The Tribune had reported in its edition today as to how the Army had proposed to make SSC a better option to reduce permanent commission officers.

Lt General Shakti Gurung (ret'd), a former Military Secretary, says, “The idea is to make SSC attractive with golden handshake and address the issue of cutting down on flab while reducing the level of dissatisfaction.” The matter for having more SSC officers instead of permanent commission officers has been under discussion for the past six years. Last year in October, the MoD okayed some steps to change the entry schemes into the Army. The University Entry Scheme that allowed young graduates to gain entry directly was suspended. The technical commission after graduation has been reduced to just 80 cadets per year and is scheduled to be suspended in two years. In lieu of this, the technical entry after Class XII will be encouraged.

At present, the ratio between permanent commission and SSC is 4:1, or four-times that it should be. The Ajai Vikram Singh Committee envisaged a ratio of 1:1.1 between full-time regular officers and the support cadre, largely from the SSC. The Cabinet Committee on Security, in October 2008, had approved a reduction of regular cadre.



Tue, 22 May, 2018

UK Navy detonates Nazi mine

The World War II device was found on West Sussex coast

THE Royal Navy bomb squad have safely detonated a 2,200lb Nazi sea mine after it was discovered on Sunday by a shocked beachgoer who thought it was an oil drum. Paul Austin found the Second World War device washed up on the West Sussex coast and initially joked about throwing stones at it.

The sea mine was found on a sheltered beach near holiday homes in the seaside resort of Bognor Regis, prompting calls for nearby residents to stay indoors. Now, the Royal Navy team have successfully destroyed the bomb in a controlled explosion earlier in the evening. Paul Austin, who found the device and alerted emergency services, told BBC News: "At first it looked like a big oil drum. I didn't think it was a bomb." "We were almost standing on it, but then we stepped away. I said: 'Let's throw stones at it', as a joke. But then I thought — actually, that's a torpedo or a bomb." He added that emergency service teams had told him the device — which is about 500 yards from his front door — was one of the biggest bombs the Nazis made. Bomb disposal teams inspected the metal mine, which is about 6ft (1.8m) long and is thought to weigh 2,200lbs (1,000kg), and have been trying to make it safe. A one-mile maritime and air exclusion zone has been enforced and the device will probably be towed out to sea and detonated, according to the coastguard. Residents near Elmer Beach, where the device was found, have been told to leave their windows open in case of an explosion and only use the rear of their homes.



THE ASIAN AGE

Tue, 22 May, 2018

China launches satellite to explore dark side of moon

China successfully launched a relay satellite today to enable a rover to communicate with the Earth from the Moon's mysterious far side, as part of the Communist giant's ambitious goal of being the first country to send such a probe. Named Queqiao (Magpie Bridge), the 400-kg satellite has a designed life of three years. It was carried by a Long March-4C rocket that blasted off at 5:28 AM (local time) from southwest China's Xichang Satellite Launch Center, the China National Space Administration (CNSA) said. "The launch is a key step for China to realise its goal of being the first country to send a probe to soft-land on and rove the far side of the Moon," said Zhang Lihua, manager of the relay satellite project.

About 25 minutes after lift-off, the satellite separated from the rocket and entered an Earth-Moon transfer orbit with the perigee at 200 kms and the apogee at about 400,000 kms. The solar panels and the communication antennas were unfolded. Queqiao is expected to enter a halo orbit around the second Lagrangian (L2) point of the Earth-Moon system, about 455,000 kms from the Earth. It will be the world's first communication satellite operating in that orbit, state-run Xinhua news agency reported. The satellite carries several antennas. One, shaped like an umbrella with a diameter of five metre, is the largest communication antenna ever used in deep space exploration,



said Chen Lan, deputy chief engineer of the Xi'an Branch of the China Academy of Space Technology (CAST). The satellite could stay in the halo orbit around the L2 point of the Earth-Moon system for a long time by using relatively little fuel, thanks to the gravitational equilibrium at that point. But the mission must overcome many challenges, including multiple adjustments to its orbit and braking near the Moon and taking advantage of the lunar gravity, Zhang said.

दक्षिण चीन सागर में चीन ने बमवर्षक विमान तैनात किया

फिलीपीन सरकार ने कहा है कि दक्षिण चीन सागर में अपने दावों की रक्षा करने के लिए वह उचित कूटनीतिक कार्रवाई कर रही है। हालांकि उसने टकराव से बचने की नीति अपनाते हुए इस संदर्भ में चीन का नाम नहीं लिया। चीन ने विवादित सागर में सैन्य संबंधी अपनी कार्रवाई में अपने कब्जे वाले एक द्वीप पर कथित रूप से पहली बार लंबी दूरी के बमवर्षक विमान तैनात किए हैं, जिससे अंतरराष्ट्रीय समुदाय के माथे पर शिकन आ गई है। पेंटागन के एक प्रवक्ता ने पिछले हफ्ते कहा था कि विवादित क्षेत्र का चीन द्वारा सैन्यकरण करने से क्षेत्र में अस्थिरता आएगी। फिलीपीन के विदेश विभाग ने सोमवार को दोहराया था कि सरकार अपने संप्रभु अधिकार वाले क्षेत्र के एक-एक इंच की रक्षा करने के लिए पूरी तरह से प्रतिबद्ध है। विभाग ने कहा कि राजनयिक माध्यम से उचितभाषा में , चाहे वह भाषा निंदा की हो या चिंता जताने की, स्पष्ट तौर पर सन्देश दे दिया गया है।