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Mon, 24 Sept 2018

India approves military equipment procurement

India's Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) has approved procurement of equipment valued at \$1.25 billion for the Indian defence forces, the Indian Ministry of Defence announced on 18 September.

Approved projects include the acquisition of two regiments of Akash missile systems from Bharat Dynamics for the protection of critical equipment. The missile is an upgraded version of previously inducted Akash missiles with seeker technology, providing 360° coverage in a compact configuration with reduced signature.

The DAC also approved a programme to progress the design and development of individual underwater breathing apparatus (IUWBA) for T-90 tanks. Developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation's (DRDO's) Defence Bioengineering and Electromedical Lab, the IUWBA will be used by tank crews as safety gear to enable emergency escape when negotiating water obstacles while deep fording.

Additionally, a project will be undertaken for the design and development of test equipment for the guided weapons system of the T-90 tank, being developed by the DRDO.

<https://www.shephardmedia.com/news/landwarfareintl/india-approves-procurement-military-equipment/>



Tue, 25 Sept 2018

Sitharaman set to travel to France for ministers' meet

New Delhi: Undeterred by the unseemly controversy over the statements of former French president Francois Hollande on offsets related to Rafale fighter deal between India and France, defence minister Nirmala Sitharaman is expected to travel to France next month for the first annual defence ministers dialogue with her counterpart Florence Parly as the two countries seek to expand their strategic ties beyond bilateral joint exercises, with a focus on West Asia and the Indo-Pacific. Minister Sitharaman will be in Paris on October 12 and 13 and will also meet President Emmanuel Macron during her visit.

She will attend the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting (ADMM plus) in Singapore the following week. Sitharaman's visit is for the annual defence minister dialogue decided during French President Emmanuel Macron's visit to India in March, and it is also in reciprocation to Parly's visit to India in October 2017. "Former president Hollande's statement was aimed at defending himself against allegations surrounding his partner. India and France are strategic partners and will continue to be so," said a senior defence ministry official seeking anonymity. While France is keen to sell more Rafale fighters to India beyond the contracted 36 fully loaded platforms, India is looking at the country as a close strategic partner with whom it has convergence -- from the Reunion Islands in far Pacific to the Persian Gulf in West Asia. India and France are partnering with UAE in the Persian Gulf and Australia in the Indo-Pacific for a political alliance to ensure that sea lanes of communication are free from dominance of any aspiring global power. "Maritime security in the Indian Ocean has become a prime area of Indo-French strategic cooperation.

The western Indian Ocean is outside the jurisdiction of the US Indo-Pacific Command which is responsible for implementing the Indo-US joint strategic vision for the Indo-Pacific region. This strategic gap is being filled in by Indo-French joint strategic vision for the Indian Ocean region and the logistics agreement signed between the two countries on the pattern of

LEMOA (Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement) with the US. France is an Indian Ocean power with permanent naval presence in the western Indian Ocean and keeps an eye on maritime security in the Madagascar channel. China's inroads into Africa is a subject of concern to both countries. France is therefore a credible partner. Very specific and detailed understandings have been reached between the two countries on what the responsibilities of each of them will be in the area of maritime security," said Kanwal Sibal, former foreign secretary and former Ambassador to France.

India and France have traditionally been close defence allies with Indian military training on high tech drones with their French counterparts in Africa as well as navies of the two countries exercising in antisubmarine warfare in Reunion Islands between May 1-7 in 2017 as part of the second leg of the Varuna bilateral naval exercise. While India signed the logistics agreement with France during President Macron visit, ratification from Paris is still awaited to operationalize the agreement. Defence minister Sitharaman will also discuss military collaboration with Indian Defence PSUs with her counterpart as France is at the core of "Make in India" initiative.

For instance, Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) is working with Dassault Aviation for upgrades of Mirage-2000 fighters for the Indian Air Force (IAF), MDL is working with DCNS for Scorpene independent air propulsion submarines for the Indian Navy and Turbomeca engines are at the heart of indigenous Advanced Light Helicopter (ALH) project India is looking towards acquiring French Safran jet engines for its Light Combat Aircraft project but the deal is still work under progress and the two defence ministers will be discussing the way forward. Over the years France has emerged a key defence supplier to India. From 2013- 2017, 8.5 per cent of total French defence exports were for India with an annual ballpark figure of more than 600 million Euros before the Rafale contract payouts.

पंजाब केसरी

Tue, 25 Sept 2018

डीजी कोस्ट गार्ड ने किया रक्षा मंत्री का आभार व्यक्त

37वीं कोस्ट गार्ड कांफ्रेंस का रक्षा मंत्री ने किया उद्घाटन

नई दिल्ली, (पंजाब केसरी) : राजधानी में सोमवार को 37वीं कोस्ट गार्ड कमांडर्स कांफ्रेंस का आयोजन किया गया। इस अवसर पर रक्षा मंत्री निर्मला सीतारमण मुख्य अतिथि के रूप में उपस्थित रही। उन्होंने ओखी चक्रवात और केरल में हुई तबाही के दौरान इंडियन कोस्ट गार्ड के प्रयासों को भी खूब सराहा। कांफ्रेंस के मौके पर रक्षा मंत्री ने कोस्ट गार्ड की अनुकरणीय कार्यक्षमता की खूब प्रशंसा की। उन्होंने कहा कि कोस्ट गार्ड दूरदर्शिता, नेतृत्व, वैज्ञानिक दृष्टि कोण और चुनौती का सामना करने में सक्षम है। कोस्ट गार्ड की उत्कृष्ट क्षमता और बेहतर सर्विलांस न केवल भारत, बल्कि इंडो-पैसिफिक रीजन में बेजोड़ है। रक्षा मंत्री ने कोस्ट गार्ड के नेतृत्व का उदाहरण देते हुए ओखी चक्रवात और केरल में आई बाढ़ के दौरान लोगों की जान बचाने के मामले में साहसिक योगदान की भी प्रशंसा की। उन्होंने कांफ्रेंस में चर्चा के दौरान कहा कि कोस्ट गार्ड द्वारा मछुआरों को समुद्र में सुरक्षा के लिए प्रेरित करने के साथ-साथ तकनीक के मामले में भी जागरूक किया जाए। सर्विलांस फेस-1 पर रक्षा मंत्री द्वारा कोस्ट गार्ड को बधाई दी गई और आश्चर्य किया गया कि रक्षा मंत्रालय द्वारा फेस-2 के कार्य को भी तय समय में पूरा कर लिया जाएगा। इस अवसर पर इंडियन कोस्ट गार्ड के डीजी राजेन्द्र सिंह ने रक्षा मंत्री का आभार व्यक्त करते हुए कहा कि रक्षा मंत्रालय के सहयोग और निरंतर नए परिवर्तन के कारण इंडियन कोस्ट गार्ड की क्षमता किसी भी चुनौती का सामना करने में सक्षम है। उन्होंने आगे कहा कि कोस्ट गार्ड लोगों की जान बचाने के साथ ही समुद्री पर्यावरण की देखभाल करने के लिए प्रतिबद्ध है।



रक्षा मंत्री निर्मला सीतारमण के साथ कार्यक्रम में जाते कोस्ट गार्ड के डीजी राजेन्द्र सिंह

भारत और चीन करेंगे आंतरिक सुरक्षा समझौता

नई दिल्ली, प्रेटर : भारत और चीन पहली बार आंतरिक सुरक्षा सहयोग पर दस्तखत करेंगे। चीन के जनसुरक्षा मामलों के मंत्री झाओ केझी की अक्टूबर में होने वाली भारत यात्र में दोनों देशों के बीच समझौता होगा। यह दोनों देशों के संबंधों में नई शुरुआत होगी। 1 चीन के जनसुरक्षा मामलों के मंत्री नई दिल्ली की यात्र में गृह मंत्री राजनाथ सिंह से मुलाकात करेंगे। दोनों नेता आंतरिक सुरक्षा के कई पहलुओं पर चर्चा करेंगे। संभावना तलाशेंगे कि दोनों देश कैसे आंतरिक सुरक्षा में सहयोग बढ़ा सकते हैं। भारत और चीन इस्लामी आतंकवाद के खतरे से जूझ रहे हैं।

चीन ने आतंकवाद पर काबू पाने के लिए कई सख्त कदम उठाए हैं। दोनों देश आंतरिक सुरक्षा से जुड़ी खुफिया जानकारियां साझा करेंगे। व्यवस्था को बेहतर बनाने के लिए साथ मिलकर कार्य करेंगे। पिछले साल हुए डोकलाम विवाद के बाद ऐसे समझौतों को बहुत महत्वपूर्ण माना जा रहा है। डोकलाम में दो महीने तक दोनों देशों की सेनाएं आमने-सामने रही थीं। दोनों में झड़प होने की आशंका जताई जा रही थी। वूहान में पीएम मोदी व चीन के राष्ट्रपति शी चिनफिंग के बीच हुई अनौपचारिक वार्ता के बाद रिश्तों के विकास में गर्मी आई। इसके बाद दोनों देशों की सेनाओं में हॉटलाइन से जुड़ने का समझौता हुआ। नई दिल्ली, प्रेटर : भारत और चीन पहली बार आंतरिक सुरक्षा सहयोग पर दस्तखत करेंगे। चीन के जनसुरक्षा मामलों के मंत्री झाओ केझी की अक्टूबर में होने वाली भारत यात्र में दोनों देशों के बीच समझौता होगा। यह दोनों देशों के संबंधों में नई शुरुआत होगी। 1 चीन के जनसुरक्षा मामलों के मंत्री नई दिल्ली की यात्र में गृह मंत्री राजनाथ सिंह से मुलाकात करेंगे।

दोनों नेता आंतरिक सुरक्षा के कई पहलुओं पर चर्चा करेंगे। संभावना तलाशेंगे कि दोनों देश कैसे आंतरिक सुरक्षा में सहयोग बढ़ा सकते हैं। भारत और चीन इस्लामी आतंकवाद के खतरे से जूझ रहे हैं। चीन ने आतंकवाद पर काबू पाने के लिए कई सख्त कदम उठाए हैं। दोनों देश आंतरिक सुरक्षा से जुड़ी खुफिया जानकारियां साझा करेंगे। व्यवस्था को बेहतर बनाने के लिए साथ मिलकर कार्य करेंगे। पिछले साल हुए डोकलाम विवाद के बाद ऐसे समझौतों को बहुत महत्वपूर्ण माना जा रहा है। डोकलाम में दो महीने तक दोनों देशों की सेनाएं आमने-सामने रही थीं। दोनों में झड़प होने की आशंका जताई जा रही थी। वूहान में पीएम मोदी व चीन के राष्ट्रपति शी चिनफिंग के बीच हुई अनौपचारिक वार्ता के बाद रिश्तों के विकास में गर्मी आई। इसके बाद दोनों देशों की सेनाओं में हॉटलाइन से जुड़ने का समझौता हुआ।



Govt to organise 4th edition of int'l science fest

In a tribute to the former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, the Government has decided to organise the fourth edition of India International Science Festival (IISF) in his hometown in Lucknow in Uttar Pradesh. To be attended by approximately 10,000 delegates including students and teachers from India and abroad, a world record attempt will be made to "isolate

DNA” by 500 students from class 8th to 10th standard. The festival will be inaugurated by President Ramnath Kovind.

Union Science and Technology Minister Dr Harsh Vardhan said that it was the former Prime Minister who had brought Science to the centre stage of national agenda. “ It was Vajpayee who had added Jai Vigyan to Lal Bahadur Shastri’s slogan of “Jai Jawan, Jai Kisan”, he added while addressing a curtain raiser of the festival here.

Dr Harsh Vardhan said, IISF is the biggest platform in the country to bring together students, researchers, innovators, artists and general public to celebrate India’s achievements in science and technology. The Minister said that IISF is a medium to encourage the young minds towards the field of science and to promote the networking of stakeholders working towards the propagation of science.

IISF-2018 with its focal theme “Science for Transformation” will have 23 special events. The Global Indian Science & Technology Stakeholders Meet (GIST), Industry Academia Meet and Science & Technology for Harnessing Innovations (SATHI) - A National startup entrepreneurship summit and Student Science Village are some of the important events, being organized. The Science Village program is linked with the Pradhan Mantri Sansad Adarsh Gram Yojana to reach out to the rural masses and propagate science and for seeking scientific solutions to the diverse challenges facing our society, particularly rural India.

Secretary Department of Biotechnology, Dr Renu Swaroop said that the special role of women scientists and entrepreneurs in shaping the scientific growth trajectory will be another highlight of the festival. “The programme aspires to develop new entrepreneurship and explore new vistas of opportunities in the field of science and technology among the women. Approximately 800 women scientist/entrepreneurs will attend the event,” she said.

There will be a special effort to engage with stakeholders of the Northeast and the aspirational districts. Another feature of IISF-2018 will be mega science and industry expo that will highlight the outstanding contributions of India in the field of science, technology, and industry.



Tue, 25 Sept 2018

Inspired by Kalam, ex-DRDO Scientist quits US job to start an organic

Observing that the solution to most of our health problems lies in nature and how we harness it to fulfill our needs, Dr Hari decided to learn more about organic farming

By Ahmed Sherif

DRDO scientist Dr Hari Nath was given the opportunity to pursue post-doctoral research in the USA. As a defence scientist and a government employee, he needed permission to take a year off to work on his research in the Medical University of Carolina.

He was given the permission, and also a special comment from the then-President of India, Dr APJ Abdul Kalam – who knew him from the President’s days in the DRDO.

“Kalam Sir granted me leave for two years, but he asked me to promise that I would come back and serve my country,” recalls Dr Hari Nath, speaking to The Better India. Dr Nath’s journey since would have certainly made Kalam sir proud.

Before the research sabbatical, Dr Hari Nath had been working as a scientist at the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) for nearly 12 years. The post-doctoral research course saw him work on developing drugs for cardiac diseases alongside some of the finest scientists in India.

But once he moved to America, where he was awarded several drug patents and published several papers, his perception towards medicine – especially how and why it was created – began to change.

“Most of my research outcomes were not reaching the common public, but were benefitting multinational drug companies,” shares Dr Hari.

But the revelation stayed with him undisturbed until matters hit close to home. Years later, his mother developed lumbar spondylitis and arthritis. All Dr Hari could do was to advise her to visit a physician through a phone call. Naturally, it was an emotionally difficult time for him.

The visit to the doctor was not of much use, as the treatment was limited to painkillers and IV injections which had serious side-effects – like gastric ulcers.

“The pain became so unbearable that one night she called me and was crying about feeling trapped in her body, unable to escape the pain,” recalls Dr Hari.

Desperate to find a solution, Dr Hari found an article written by a Japanese scientist. The piece discussed that Moringa leaves could be used to treat over 200 illnesses, with arthritis being one of them. The same concept was also a part of local folklore, where the leaves were held in high regard.

Dr Hari was happy to learn this as there were four Moringa trees in his mother’s backyard. He shared the remedy with her, and she blended some leaves from the tree and consumed them raw, which upset her stomach. “So then, I suggested her to boil the leaves in water, and drink that,” he adds.

The solution worked like a miracle. When he later asked her about the pain, she replied, laughing, “What pain? I am free of pain.” The moringa leaves gave her a new lease on life. And gave Dr Nath a whole new idea.

In 2015, he returned to his hometown– Pennagaram in Tamil Nadu, so that he could take better care of his mother. He also used his expertise to turn moringa leaves into a powder along with other herbs that could benefit health. His mother encouraged him to work on this remedy as a solution for everyone suffering from pain.

Today, he creates a concoction known as the ‘Moringa Bullet’, which has helped locals suffering from arthritis, high blood pressure and diabetes.

The path to organic farming

Observing that the solution to most of our health problems lies in nature and how we harness it to fulfil our needs, Dr Hari decided to learn more about organic farming.

“When I was a child, I had a lush green childhood, with healthy farms and our soil was rich and our diet– healthy. We ate mostly millets,” says Dr Hari. He describes how our immune system starts with our mother’s milk and develops as we eat healthy food.

“We have a large microbial world inside our intestines that help in digestion, and this changes with the food we eat,” observes Dr Hari. “The millet diet we earlier consumed was very useful for our gut bacteria to process vitamins, but our diet today makes it weaker,” adds Dr Hari.

And it’s true. A 2007 study found that the importance of fibre is intimately tied with our gut microbes. A proper fibre diet feeds and makes these bacteria thrive, increasing our metabolism and absorption of nutrients.

“These days, with polished white rice, our diet is primarily carbohydrates, which are not much use to the microbes in our gut,” notes Dr Hari. Combine that with the fertilisers and such, our diet is changing so rapidly that our body simply cannot adapt, he says.

Plants too had high organic content in their soil earlier, which was derived from compost made from manure and other animal droppings. This organic content is similar to our gut bacteria, helping the plant process nutrients, he says. As he points out, fertilisers changed the soil composition drastically.

Seeing and experiencing all this first-hand pushed Dr Hari to an initiative that would benefit the people, and not merely remain trapped between research papers.

Speaking about the need of good farming practices and what pushed him to take up organic farming, Dr Hari says, “If there is one shortcoming of research science, is that it is a very reductionist approach. We break the human system down to organs, organs into tissues and

tissues into cells, finally to the molecular level. We keep dissecting and see if drug molecules work to cure ailments. All this does is address the disease and not the root cause of the disease.”

And as the saying goes, we are what we eat. Dr Hari decided to make healthy sustainable crops to make people healthy. He wanted to make the soil.

Dr Hari Nath proudly presents his crops!



Dr Hari Nath proudly presents his crops!

So how does he do this?

Today, Dr Hari grows indigenous varieties of crops in his farmland, including moringa, curry leaves, amla and other seasonal vegetables.

He also uses compost pits where he deposits cow dung, urine, dry hay and green moss. This compost is mixed in the soil to bring back organic content into the soil. This increases soil biology and makes plants much healthier!

He even has organic ways of dealing with pests. He makes pest-repellents using ginger, garlic and green chillies, soaking them in cow urine and spraying it on the crops during cultivation.

Along with that, he has reached out to local farming communities to promote organic farming. He feels, “We need to be the ambassadors of nature and take charge of the food we grow by respecting nature.”

He signs off, “Farming is a science for me; it is art, and it is culture; it is a way of ‘Vasudeva Kutumbakam’, which means ‘the whole world is a family living together’.”

(Edited by Shruti Singhal)

<https://www.thebetterindia.com/160175/inspired-kalam-drdo-tamil-nadu-scientist-farmer-organic/>