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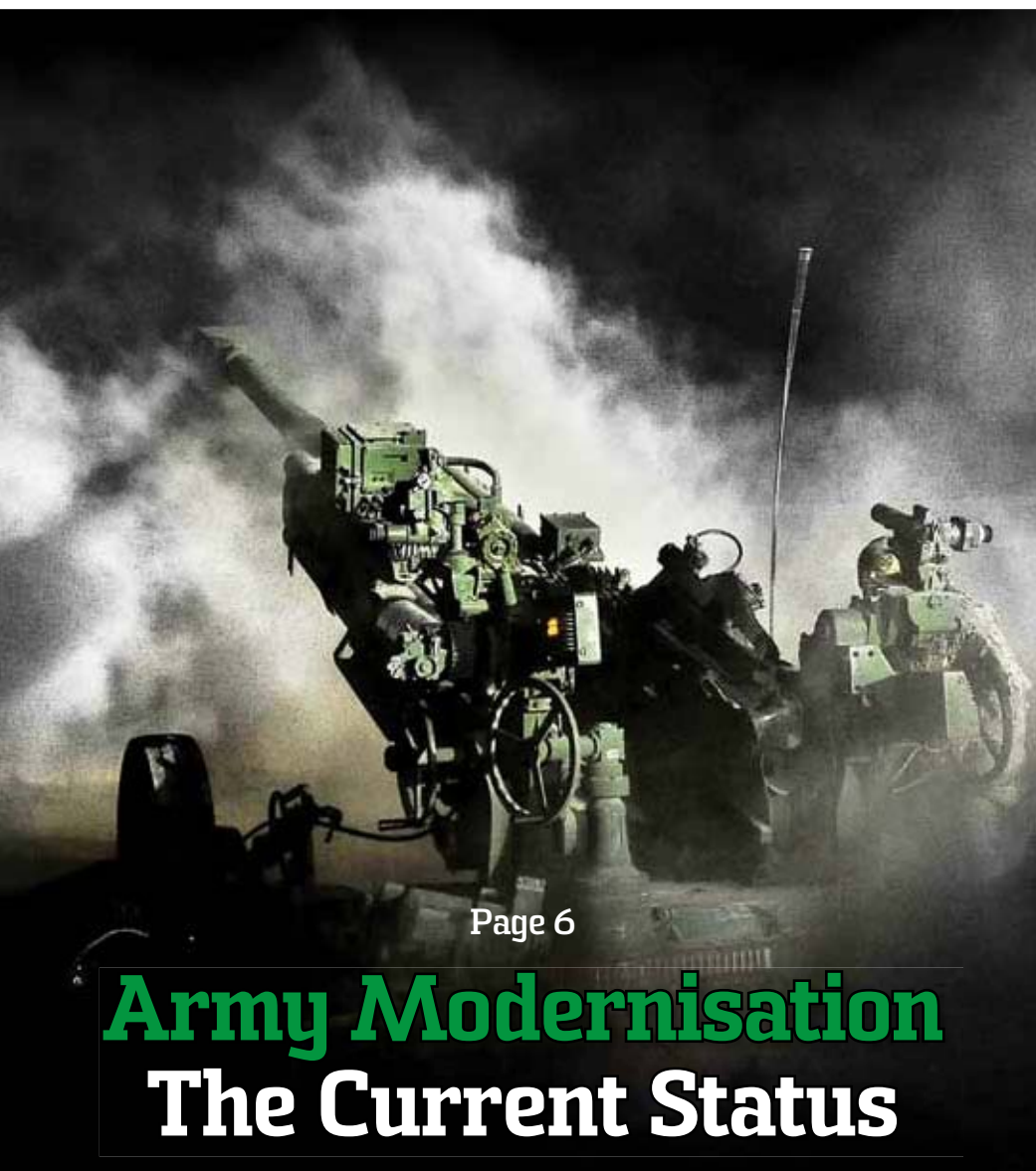


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“In a country like India with limited support from the industry and market, initiating 50 years ago (in 1964) publishing magazines relating to Army, Navy and Aviation sectors without any interruption is a commendable job on the part of SP Guide Publications. By this, SP Guide Publications has established the fact that continuing quality work in any field would result in success.”

Narendra Modi, Hon'ble Prime Minister of India (\*message received in 2014)



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[ **SP's @ 53** PURSUING EXCELLENCE OVER FIVE DECADES SINCE 1964 ]

## INS Shardul on joint EEZ surveillance in the South Indian Ocean

In keeping with India's national objective of ensuring a secure and stable regional environment to allow unhindered economic and social development, not just in India, but also in the Indian Ocean region, Indian naval ship Shardul is on a two-month-long deployment in the South Indian Ocean with an aim to provide surveillance support in the region.

The warship during the initial phase of deployment carried out joint EEZ surveillance of Mauritius from March 8-26, 2017, in close coordination with the National Coast Guard of Mauritius. Post successful completion of joint EEZ surveillance of Mauritius, the warship entered EEZ of Seychelles on March 27, 2017, for Phase I of EEZ surveillance. The warship under the command of Commander Rohit Mishra entered Port Victoria on March 28, 2017, for OTR. The coordination meeting with officials from Seychelles Coast Guard and INS Shardul was conducted at Seychelles Coast Guard Headquarters to discuss the modus operandi, extent of surveillance area and communication plan was framed.



INS Shardul set sail from Port Victoria on March 31, 2017, with three Seychelles Coast Guard personnel embarked onboard for Phase II of EEZ surveillance and commenced EEZ surveillance on April 1, 2017. The deployment was aimed to show presence, deter IUU fishing and drug trafficking. The ship carried out extensive patrol in area (sanitising about 21,000 sq nm) and interrogated merchant and fishing vessels ensuring safe waters for transit of mercantile traffic and to safeguarding of EEZ of Seychelles.

The warship will enter Port Victoria on April 6, 2017, for second OTR and mission debrief. The debrief of the joint EEZ surveillance of Seychelles would be attended by the High Commissioner of India to Seychelles, senior officials from SPDF and Seychelles Coast Guard. The warship will set sail from Port Victoria harbour on April 8, 2017, for Phase III of EEZ surveillance of Seychelles prior returning to India mid-April 2017. **SP**



### Cover:

*If we carry out a realistic analysis of the budget requirements (maintenance and modernisation) for a 40 division army, a 42 squadron air force and 150 platform navy, the services will require 3 to 4 per cent of the GDP as their budget minus the defence pensions. Will this ever be possible?*

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## Armed forces modernisation is a continuous process

**T**he modernisation of the armed forces is going on at a lethargic pace which is worrisome. India somehow has not been able to strike the appropriate balance between economic development and national security as the powers that be 'talk' when 'action' is what is needed.

In two separate viewpoints, Lt General V.K. Kapoor (Retd) and Lt General P.C. Katoch (Retd) have brought to fore how the lackadaisical approach has affected the country's preparedness as well the morale of the armed forces. The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Defence has in fact slammed the government on Demands for Grants for 2017-18. This committee, like all other committees, is just an advisory body whose observations and recommendations are consigned to the cupboard or trash can without much ado. It is certainly not akin to the Senate Armed Services Committee of the US, to whom the US Government is answerable, which should be the case in any democracy.

Serious concerns have been raised by Lt General Kapoor who states that India has not improved its equipment status since the Kargil conflict. In fact, he goes to the extent of stating it has further deteriorated. During the UPA-I and II the situation had deteriorated considerably and it was widely acclaimed that the new Modi government which took over the reins of the country in May 2014 would rectify the situation. However, the current pace is too slow, and the hidebound and bureaucratic attitude of all stakeholders despite having a technology savvy then Defence Minister in Manohar Parrikar, was also surprising.

The 'Make in India' rhetoric sounded good for electioneering but it has not changed the ground situation because we do not have the technology or the know-how to make modern weaponry and our procedures are out of tune with reality, the General has opined. India needs to modernise its armed forces fast as we not only have belligerent neighbours in China and Pakistan, we need to be a lot more proactive as a regional power.

India's influence in the region is substantial and we need to have

that hold for geopolitical reasons. The Prime Minister of Bangladesh Sheikh Hasina will be in India soon to take the two countries' cooperation levels to greater heights. Not only is she a close friend of India, the manner in which she has gone after the Pakistan sponsored terrorists and terrorist infrastructure in her country, she portrays to the world the true nature of Pakistan. General Katoch points out that her visit to India is important in the background of rising China's aggressive posture. There is no doubt that economically Bangladesh needs Chinese investments and China needs Bangladesh markets. However, it is the Chinese intent of the defence relationship with India's neighbours and development of ports for use by the People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) that is a matter of concern.

Meanwhile, the debate on the removal/retention of Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) from certain districts of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) has once again taken the centre stage. This will remain a bone of contention for a long time to come with political posturing at the state and central levels.

Happy reading!

A blue ink signature of Jayant Baranwal, consisting of several loops and a long horizontal stroke.

**Jayant Baranwal**  
Publisher & Editor-in-Chief





LT GENERAL  
P.C. KATOCH (RETD)

# Visit of Bangladesh PM – Expectations

**C**oming up next month in April is the all important visit of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina of Bangladesh to India. Not only is she a close friend of India, the manner in which she has gone after the Pakistan sponsored terrorists and terrorist infrastructure in her country, she portrays to the world the true nature of Pakistan. Last year when the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) meet in Islamabad was called off and Pakistan accused India of influencing SAARC members, she went on record to say, "It is over the situation in Pakistan that we decided to pull out [from the SAARC summit in Islamabad]. Terror from Pakistan has gone everywhere, which is why many of us felt frustrated by Pakistan. India pulled because of the Uri attack, but for Bangladesh the reason is totally different....One of the other main reasons of my government for SAARC pull out was hurt felt over Pakistan's strident criticism of the war crimes process in Bangladesh in which dozen Jamaat-e-Islami leaders, accused of brutalities during the liberation war in 1971, have been hanged or indicted."

Her visit to India is important in the background of rising China's aggressive posture. There is no doubt that economically Bangladesh needs Chinese investments and China needs Bangladesh markets. However, it is the Chinese intent of the defence relationship with India's neighbours and development of ports for use by the People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) that is a matter of concern considering that China has indicated beyond 2025 she will act to claim her territorial claims (however illegal) in her quest for 'Great Power' status. This includes China's militarisation of the Indian Ocean. Already there are write-ups that China aims to create a South China Sea (SCS) like situation in the Arabian Sea anchored on Pakistani ports of Gwadar, Omari, Karachi, and Hambantota in Sri Lanka. With the same aim, China is developing deep-sea port of Kyaukpyu in Myanmar and had offered to fund 99 per cent of the Sonadia Islands deep-water port projects but latter was rejected by the Sheikh Hasina Government.

China's plan for developing the Chittagong port is part of the same strategy. Indian security concerns also need to be viewed in context of any future change in Government in Bangladesh considering that during the Khaleda Zia regime four major anti-India terrorist camps were operative in Bangladesh and the regime with radical support was pro-Pakistan and China. China's enormous investments in Bangladesh should not concern India as long as it does not impinge on India's security concerns. That Pakistan, Bangladesh and Myanmar respectively occupy the first, second and third positions in China's defence exports is well known. Year 2009 onwards, Beijing has been Bangladesh's biggest arms supplier, accounting for over 80 per cent of the total arms delivered to the country in that period. In October 2016, en route to Goa to attend the Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (BRICS) Summit, Chinese President Xi Jinping made a stopover in Dhaka and signed off loans worth \$24 billion. In Novem-

ber 2016, Bangladesh purchased two submarines from China for an estimated \$203 million. Then there is also the question of the multi-modal BCIM (Bangladesh, China, India and Myanmar) Economic Corridor which will be the first expressway between India and China also passing through Bangladesh and Myanmar.

How this will progress is yet to be seen with the China-Pakistan intent upon keeping India constrained within South Asia and already destabilising India, including the North East, at the subconventional level. In December 2016, Defence Minister Manohar Parrikar visited Bangladesh, followed by Bangladesh Navy Chief Admiral Muhammad Farid Habib visiting India, and Foreign Secretary S. Jaishankar visiting Dhaka in February this year. Bangladesh has traditionally been a friend of India and Prime Minister Hasina has endeared herself to Indians with her "zero tolerance policy" against terrorism, categorically stating, "We won't tolerate any sorts of terrorism and militancy and won't allow our land to be used for carrying out terrorist acts against any country." And, it is not the statement alone but the effective execution that has mattered. Had it not been for Bangladesh, a preacher like Zakir Naik would have continued to spew venom and radicalise Muslims.

At New Delhi, Sheikh Hasina will be meeting Prime Minister Narendra Modi and hold delegation level talks. Besides connectivity and development initiatives, terrorism and cooperation in defence and security are also likely to be high on the agenda. Both countries are likely to sign a defence pact. This should address security concerns of both nations. What should have happened also is inking of the Teesta Water Agreement to the mutual benefit of both nations. But this is unlikely because of India's internal politics and the attitude of West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee. In India, water is supposed to be a State subject but then Teesta River also flows through Sikkim and when more than one state is involved, why should such river water not become a subject for the Centre? Given the politics in India, the Government of West Bengal and that at the Centre are unlikely to be of the same political party in the foreseeable future. Does this mean we will let the issue of sharing Teesta River waters with Bangladesh continue to hang indefinitely?

Modi had promised Hasina during his 2015 Dhaka visit that he will get Mamata Banerjee to agree to the Teesta deal after Bengal's concerns were addressed. The time to deliver has come. At a recent global water conference in Budapest, Hasina pitched strongly for lower riparian rights on trans-regional rivers. As significantly, Hasina wanted Indian participation in the ambitious \$3 billion Ganges water barrage project, but India is yet to respond while Chinese companies are prepared to finance the complete project. Will we miss the bus? **SP**

*The views expressed herein are the personal views of the author.*



LT GENERAL  
VK. KAPOOR (RETD)

# Modernisation of the Army – The current status



MoD has approved the import of 145 M777s, 155mm ultra light howitzer through the FMS programme

**D**uring the UPA-I and II the situation had deteriorated considerably and it was widely acclaimed that the new Modi Government which took over the reins of the country in May 2014 would rectify the situation. However, the current pace is too slow, and the hidebound and bureaucratic attitude of all stakeholders despite having a technology savvy then Defence Minister in Manohar Parrikar, was also surprising. Apart from the complicated process of procurement and the attitudes of the stakeholders, another major cause was the lack of funds. The modernisation of the services is well behind the schedule. In this article we are focusing on the modernisation of the army only.

The 'Make in India' rhetoric sounded good for electioneering but it has not changed the ground situation because we do not have the technology or the know-how to make modern weaponry and our procedures are out of tune with reality. Hence our policies do not match the capabilities desired despite all the political rhetoric about national security. And this is at a time when our threats and

challenges have become far greater than they have ever been earlier.

An update on some of the equipment projects undertaken and which are in various stages of development/procurement is given in the succeeding paragraphs.

## Assault Rifles

In September 2015, the Ministry of Defence (MoD) terminated its 2011 tender to import 66,000 multi-calibre assault rifles as none of the four competing models qualified. Thus the Indian Army has re-launched its quest for an imported assault rifle, after recently rejecting the locally designed option, in order to plug a vital operational gap. The army has once again sent out its global request for information (RFI) for 7.62 x 51mm assault rifles instead of its earlier proposal to induct the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)-designed Excalibur 5.56 x 45mm rifle. The Excalibur is an upgraded version of the DRDO's Indian Army Small Arms System (INSAS) 5.56 x 45mm rifle that entered service with the Indian Army

in the mid-1990s, but was rejected by it in 2010, for being 'operationally inadequate'. The current stance is at variance with the Army Chief of Staff General Dalbir Singh's earlier declaration that the army would acquire the Excalibur. The Army Commanders Conference in New Delhi in April 2016, however, overturned this choice and the army has unanimously opted to import the more powerful 7.62 x 51mm rifle for its infantry battalions and its 100 odd counter-insurgency units (both Rashtriya Rifles and Assam Rifles).

## Carbines

The MoD was in the process of finalising the outcome of the 2010 tender for 44,618, 5.56mm close quarter battle (CQB) carbines, trials for which concluded in 2013. Israel Weapon Industries (IWI) ACE carbine was shortlisted over the Italian rival Beretta's ARX-160 model, but over the past few months the contract ran into procedural problems and has been scrapped on September 29, 2016. The army, which has been operating without a carbine since 2010 after retiring the licence-built World War II Sterling sub-machine gun, has an urgent requirement for 1,60,800 CQB carbines.

## Artillery Firepower

As part of its artillery modernisation plan, the army is looking at inducting several types of howitzers through in-house manufacture by DRDO/Ordnance Factory Board, inter-governmental pacts and global tenders. The last major acquisition of towed gun-howitzers was that of 400 pieces of 39-calibre 155mm FH-77B howitzers with a range of 30 km from Bofors of Sweden in 1987. This gun proved its mettle in the Kargil conflict. After about 25 years of neglect attempts are now afoot to fulfil its long-postponed 1999 Field Artillery Rationalisation Plan (FARP), under which the army aims to import, locally develop, and licence-produce some 2,820-3,000 assorted 155mm howitzers to equip its artillery regiments for an estimated \$8-9 billion. These include 1,580 towed gun systems (TGS), 814 mounted gun systems (MGS), 100 self-propelled howitzers (SPHs) — all of which are 155mm/52-calibre — and 145 BAE Systems M777 155mm/39-calibre ultra lightweight howitzers. Locally upgraded and retrofitted guns will make up additional numbers. While many projects are afoot, none has fructified.

In December 2015 the MoD began price negotiations with Larsen & Toubro (L&T) for 100 modified South Korean SPHs, worth around \$800 million. The K9 Vajra-T, an L&T version of Samsung Techwin's K9 Thunder 155mm/52-calibre gun customised for India's 2012 SPH

tender, was shortlisted for acquisition in late September 2015 following trials the previous year. In these the K9 bested Russia's MSTA-S self-propelled gun, which had been modified to 155mm/52-calibre standard and mounted on a T-72 tank chassis.

Similarly in the towed category of howitzers, France's Nexter Systems, with its Trajan 155mm/52-calibre howitzer modified for the Indian tender of 2011-12, and Elbit of Israel's ATHOS 2052 gun were required to undergo the supplementary trials from mid-2015 after completing desert and high-altitude firings in 2013-14. The army plans to acquire 400 guns under the Defence Procurement Procedure's (DPP) 'Buy and Make' category and licence-build the remaining 1,180 towed howitzers.

In May 2015 the MoD approved the import of 145 M777s, 155mm ultra light howitzer, along with Selex Laser Inertial Pointing Systems (LINAPS) via the US foreign military sales (FMS) programme. The M777 purchase is to equip the army's 17 Mountain Strike Corps, which is presently being raised for deployment along the disputed border with China. This deal has been in the process since 2008.

In the meanwhile, the Ordnance Factories Board (OFB) have also been tasked to produce a 45-calibre/155mm howitzer based on the transfer of technology (ToT) obtained from Bofors in the 1980s. The DAC approved a proposal from the OFB to manufacture 144 pieces of 155mm/45-calibre howitzers with the option to acquire another 400 provided the prototypes successfully meet the army's GSQR in user trials. So we can see that while many projects for enhancing our artillery firepower are afoot, nothing has materialised till date.

## Armour

Presently the army is hard put to maintain its current fleet of Arjun Mk1 tanks because of lack of spares. The Arjun tank is indigenous in name only because a large number of its systems and parts amounting to about 60 per cent are still imported.

The development of Arjun Mark II tank with a large number of improvements has commenced and some technical trials incorporating the improvements have been carried out in Rajasthan. However, the abnormally high weight of plus 68 tonnes which would demand new tank transporters and new railway rolling stock together with the unsuccessful trials of firing the anti-tank missile through the main gun of the tank have held up the development and delivery of the Arjun MkII. Additional problems are likely to be encountered in production of spares by ancillary units due to the

(Left) Akash surface-to-air missiles on display; (right) Arjun MkII MBT







HAL is scheduled to produce the first of 140 Ka-226T twin-engined utility helicopters within two years for the AAC and IAF

relatively small order of the tanks (118) for the army. Further delay is expected in series manufacture of the Arjun MkII.

As per media reports the Army has till now inducted around 780, T-90 tanks out of a total 1,657 T-90S tanks it eventually wants. The defects in feeding the ballistic data of various lots of ammunition fired from the tanks has now been brought under control.

The T-72 M1 modernisation programme under Project Rhino is inordinately delayed. This was intended to extend the service life of the MBT by 20 years; enhance their accuracy with new fire control system (FCS) whose trials have been completed and some units have received the new fire control systems. However, when all modifications will be completed is not known.

## Future Infantry Combat Vehicle (FICV) Programme

On February 15 six local companies submitted their project reports for the army's ₹1,00,000 crore Future Infantry Combat Vehicle (FICV) programme which was initiated in 2008-09 but abandoned three years later, and resurrected once again in 2014. The FICV project is a 'test case' for India's indigenous weapon-designing capability.

The bids are from five private sector companies that have technology tie-ups with overseas vendors and the OFB. They will design and build 2,610 tracked, amphibious and air-transportable 20-tonne FICVs to replace the army's ageing fleet of Russian BMP-2/2K Sarath ICVs under the DPP's 'Make (Indian)' category.

MoD has appointed a 10-member Integrated Project Management Team (IPMT), headed by a two-star army general who will evaluate the bids and shortlist two development agencies (DA) that will build one FICV prototype each within 24-36 months.

## Air Defence

Considering the high costs of new weapon systems, the army is going in for weapon upgrades for L-70, ZU-23-2 Twin gun, and ZSU-23-4 Schilka. Meanwhile, the army is looking for successors to L-70 and the ZU-23-2 (23mm Twin guns). Successor to Schilka (ZSU-23-4) already exists in the form of Tangushka, but in limited numbers. A request for information has already been issued to find a replacement for Schilka.

In the missile systems, Kvadrat (medium-range) and OSA-AK (short-range) are also at the end of their life-cycle. They were to be replaced by Akash and Trishul surface-to-air (SAM) missiles. Trishul has been foreclosed and Akash is being inducted for semi-mobile roles. For air defence of mechanised units, it has been planned to acquire medium-range SAM (MRSAM) and quick reaction SAM (QRSAM) systems.

## Army Aviation – Helicopters

Presently the Army Aviation Corps (AAC) has in its inventory the light observation class (Cheetah and Chetak) mostly. These helicopters are obsolete and have been in service since the 1960s and require immediate replacement. As per the latest information in this field the AAC is likely to receive licence-built Russian Kamov Ka-226T 'Hoodlum' light multi-role helicopters from 2018 onwards. The Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) is likely to form a joint venture with Russian Helicopters to licence-build 200 Kamov Ka-226T 'Hoodlum' light multi-role helicopters. HAL is scheduled to produce the first of 140 twin-engine Ka-226Ts within two years for the AAC and the Indian Air Force (IAF) at a new facility in Tumakuru, 74 km north of Bengaluru.

## Conclusion

The list of voids and obsolescence of army's major weapon systems is alarming. This happens to a force when it is neglected by the government for a long period of time as it has happened in the case of the army. We have only covered four arms of the Army. If every arm and service of the Indian Army is considered for filling up of voids and modernisation the list will indeed be endless. How are the army and the government planning to make up these shortages and voids if the funding remains at the current scale? If we carry out a realistic analysis of the budget requirements (maintenance and modernisation) for a 40 division army, a 42 squadron air force and 150 platform navy, the services will require 3 to 4 per cent of the GDP as their budget minus the defence pensions. Will this ever be possible?

The work culture of our DPSUs also needs to be looked into. In a scathing assessment, the latest Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) report given in the *Economic Times* on July 27, 2016, dealing with the Army Projects of 2007-12, the central auditor said defence public sector units have miserably failed in meeting the objective of self-reliance, with a majority of contracts

entrusted to them facing delays, hampering the capability enhancement plans of the Indian Army. The report, which echoes the sentiments of the private sector that has been battling the government for more orders and is upset that a majority of contracts in the last two years have gone to PSUs. During 2007-12 period, 63 per cent of the contracts given were delayed for various reasons. "Besides impacting defence preparedness, the delay had financial implications towards loss of interest on payments made to DPSUs. The objective of self-reliance in defence production had also not been achieved" This report was tabled in Parliament on July 26, 2016.

Let us look at ourselves with a view to carry out self-introspection regarding defence modernisation. Have we improved our equipment status since the Kargil conflict? The obvious answer is NO, and in fact we have, as per the existing inventory of equipment, deteriorated further. **SP**

**The 'Make in India' rhetoric sounded good for electioneering but it has not changed the ground situation because we do not have the technology or the know-how to make modern weaponry and our procedures are out of tune with reality**



LT GENERAL  
PC. KATOCH (RETD)

# Military modernisation kaput – And the curse of committees

**T**he Parliamentary Standing Committee on Defence has slammed the government on March 9 through its report tabled in Parliament on Demands for Grants for 2017-18, for its lack of adhocism, casual and lackadaisical approach saying it would adversely affect the country's defence preparedness as well as hit the morale of the armed forces. Media may enjoy using the term "slammed" but what is the use? This committee, like all other committees, is just an advisory body whose observations and recommendations are consigned to the cupboard or trash can without much ado. It is certainly not akin to the Senate Armed Services Committee of the US, to whom the US Government is answerable, which should be the case in any democracy. Isn't it a shame that in a paper submitted to the Indian Government, the National Security Council had appreciated Parliament as the top target of terrorists three years before the attack that found us totally unprepared? But military modernisation is not the only issue that is hitting the morale of the armed forces, as indicated by the above committee.

There are many issues contributing to this, some prominent ones being: (1) Armed Forces Tribunal directed the government to implement Non-Functional Upgradation (NFU) in respect of the military, which has already been granted to the Indian Administrative Service (IAS) and other allied services including the Indian Police Service (IPS), but government has failed to act; (2) military is the only service downgraded in status by the Seventh Central Pay Commission (CPC) including reduction in allowances and reduction in disability pensions; (3) the Ministry of Defence's (MoD) October 18, 2016, letter lowering status of armed forces that adds to existing functional woes of civilian officers with lower designation refusing to take directions from military officers, now claiming superiority having been granted NFU and Seventh CPC; (4) refusal of MoD to cancel the October 18, 2016, letter on grounds it is for assigning duties and responsibilities with respect to Armed Forces Civil Services Officers (AFCSO) posted to service HQs — implying this state of affairs is acceptable to the government; and, (5), a Member of Legislative Council (MLC) from Solapur, Maharashtra, publicly abuses security forces by asking how

soldiers' wives have babies when soldiers are posted on borders for many years, and this rat is let off because of vote bank politics.

If the youth in universities are being programmed for shouting anti-India slogans as part of hybrid warfare of our enemies, so is the move to downgrade military in stature even as it controls increased hostility from across borders. Whether certain government functionaries are gullible innocents or willing collaborators of our adversaries is the moot question. Getting back to the snubbing by the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Defence to the government, the highlights include: in terms of modernisation demands for FY 2017-18, the Army, Navy and Air Force have only received 60 per cent, 67 per cent and 54 per cent respectively; only ₹86,488 crore has been earmarked for modernisation from the total defence outlay of ₹2,74,000 crore — what makes matters worse is bulk of this capital will be used to pay "committed liabilities" of earlier arms contracts instead of new projects;

Army received only ₹25,254 crore against its demand of ₹42,500 crore, and with committed liabilities of ₹23,000 crore it leaves only ₹2,254 crore for new projects — which is likely to affect both modernisation and operational preparedness; IAF that should have a 458 aircraft force by 2027 is making do with just 235 aircraft at present, with many of them on their last legs; huge deficiencies in authorised and existing levels of ships, submarines and aircraft, and; the Committee has asked government to provision at least another ₹13,000 crore additional capital for modernisation.

As per media, MoD has written to the Ministry of Finance (MoF) for additional funds but that may be the end

of the story what with the euphoria of the recent elections. India somehow has not been able to strike the appropriate balance between economic development and national security. With predictable difference of opinions, any coherent national security strategy must have a long-term thought process and vision, the basis for which is strategic culture. We neither have a national security strategy and while we desire global status, we take decisions in the cloistered confines of MoD and MoF, which is hardly appropriate. **SP**

*The views expressed herein are the personal views of the author.*



**With predictable difference of opinions, any coherent national security strategy must have a long-term thought process and vision, the basis for which is strategic culture**



LT GENERAL  
VK. KAPOOR (RETD)

# Armed Forces Special Powers Act in J&K

**T**he debate on the removal/retention of Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) from certain districts of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) has once again taken the centre stage. Political parties in J&K have traditionally come to power on positions of sympathy. Both Omar Abdullah's National Conference and Mehbooba Mufti's People's Democratic Party (PDP) have always projected themselves as representing Kashmiri interests to the Centre. Both blamed an obdurate Centre for their failure to remove AFSPA from the state. While Omar Abdullah found himself backing off from his promises, pushed from revoking AFSPA altogether to removing it from a few areas to not at all, the PDP, which had always made the repeal of AFSPA an article of faith, found itself meeting the BJP halfway to form a state government in 2015. In the "Agenda for Alliance" signed off by the two parties, it cautiously agreed to "examine the need for denotifying disturbed areas".

## What is AFSPA and Why was it Enacted

AFSPA was enacted in 1958 to bring under control what the Government of India considered disturbed areas. It was first implemented in Manipur and Assam in 1958, following the Naga movement. The Central Government empowered the Governors of the states and administrators of union territories to take a call whether the areas of that particular state or union territory is disturbed or not.

The armed forces were meant to fight external aggression. Internal employment was meant to be only in exceptional circumstances. Thus, they were not equipped with any powers — like the police forces are — for internal situations. The AFSPA was carefully drafted in 1958 to equip the forces with legal powers to respond swiftly and without encumbrance in counter-insurgency situations. The AFSPA was extended to J&K in 1990, where even the CrPC is not applicable. J&K has the Ranbir Penal Code wherein, unprotected by an alternative legislation, Army personnel could be arrested for virtually any perceived excesses. Soldiers would be literally forced to confine themselves to the barracks!

In the case of AFSPA (Manipur and Assam) 1958, the Government of India used Article 355 of the Constitution to confer power in the hands of Governors. "Keeping in view the duty of the Union under Article 355 of the Constitution, inter alia, to protect every State against internal disturbance, it is considered desirable that the Central Government should also have power to declare areas as 'disturbed', to enable its armed forces to exercise the special powers". Later "The Armed Forces (Assam and Manipur) Special Powers Act, 1958" were substituted by "The Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, 1958", getting the acronym of AFSPA, 1958.

## Jammu and Kashmir Disturbed Areas Act

The Jammu and Kashmir Disturbed Areas Act, which extended

legal immunities to the state police in notified areas, had lapsed in 1998. And the last time the J&K Government had notified disturbed areas under AFSPA was 2005, which meant a six-month review was long overdue. But the legalities are blurred in practice anyway. For instance, the J&K AFSPA stipulates that the power to declare areas disturbed lies with the Centre or the State Governor. But officials in the Union Home Ministry claim the Centre had only notified a few areas and the state government had spread the scope of the law across J&K. So it was in the state administration's power to withdraw it from these districts, they said.

## Winning Hearts and Minds

The quibbling over legalities and the blame games cover up for a worrying displacement. In spite of the government's protestations, armed forces are no longer used merely in aid of civil power. In many areas of J&K, the army has become the face of the state.

Sadbhavana project of the Army has taken on economic and developmental roles that should have been reserved for governments, laying roads, starting schools, doling out scholarships, providing employment and skills training. Many of these schemes were aimed at "winning hearts and minds", making the army more people friendly. Even senior generals have protested, however, that the task of reaching out to hostile groups and disaffected sections of the population lies with politicians. Yet it is common knowledge that the GOC Corps in Srinagar is in touch with the civilian government and its ministers. This becomes more pronounced because the home-grown militants are often known to the political hierarchies of all political parties and the political leaders with their local contacts are some of the best sources of information.

Over the years, the civilian leadership has ceded space to men in uniform and slowly lost legitimacy in Kashmir. It is a tall order, then, to expect this leadership to cut down on powers and immunities granted to the armed forces. Moreover the militancy graph has waxed and waned over the years and at no time has the political leadership expressed its desire to take over the reins of the government completely and send the army back to the barracks. The truth is that in the current situation normal governance is not feasible and the political parties are aware of this fact even though from time to time they do make media statements regarding the removal of AFSPA. However to acquire a proper understanding of the AFSPA, one needs to study the circumstances prevailing in J&K and the need for the Act. The AFSPA can be revoked by the Governor of J&K or by the Central Government at the recommendation of the J&K cabinet. For this to occur the Chief Minister has to win the confidence of her entire cabinet.

## Police and the Army

They are simultaneously engaged in similar or related roles. If you

compare the powers of the police under the CrPC vis-à-vis the Army under the AFSPA, it's evident the police enjoys more encompassing powers relating to arrest, search, summoning of witnesses, and preventive detention. Similarly the Central Police Forces function under the State Director General of Police and have the same powers and protection as the State Police where as the Army is in "Aid to Civil Authorities", including riots and agitation. They can only act on the written orders of a civil magistrate. In fact, this illustrates the difficulty in anti-terrorist operations. Can you imagine soldiers waiting for the magistrate's written permission to open fire while terrorists strike and disappear?

Major General G.D. Bakshi (Retd) writes in an article in the *Times of India* on November 18, 2011: "The scale of militarisation of the current internal conflicts is not generally understood. In J&K alone, the Indian Army has since 1990 recovered over 80,000 AK series rifles; over 1,300 machine guns; over 2,000 rocket launchers; some 63,000 hand grenades and 7 million rounds of ammunition."

## Impact of Withdrawing the AFSPA

The situations in J&K or the North East are in no way a consequence of the AFSPA, which is merely an instrument that helps the Army keep a lid on conflicts born from socio-political and economic causes. The withdrawal of the act from Manipur saw the return of terrorists, and the state has become virtually ungovernable. Withdrawal of the AFSPA from J&K, as is being demanded from time to time will bring all military operations to a dead halt and any hurry on our part to dismantle the apparatus which has brought near normalcy to the state is fraught with danger. Moreover if it is withdrawn from certain areas of J&K, those areas will become the stronghold of the terrorists because the Army will not be able operate without the protection enabled by the AFSPA. Some senior political leaders have contended that the Army does not operate in Srinagar but this is incorrect. Each morning the Army and a few companies of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) sanitise the strategic road through the city for the logistic convoys of the Army to move to Kargil and Ladakh for the critical winter-stocking tasks. The road and an area of nearly 3 sq km on either side has to be sanitised. The airfield in Srinagar has to be sanitised to ensure that no surface-to-air missiles (SAMs) or remotely-propelled grenades (RPGs) are fired at the aircraft.

Srinagar is the hub of all political activity in J&K and crucial intelligence, even about line of control (LoC) crossings, is gathered in these urban centres. Premature removal of the act from these areas would be highly counterproductive. Once removed, AFSPA cannot, in practice, be reimposed in a hurry.

The AFSPA is enforced only in exceptional circumstances. So the only occasion to modify, dilute or withdraw the Army's powers can be when you agree that such circumstances have ceased to exist. Wholly or partially withdrawing AFSPA is rightly a political call, but the consequences must be understood. Like in Manipur, such areas would turn into terrorist havens and politicians, so vociferously calling for withdrawing the act, would find themselves totally impotent!

## State-sponsored Proxy War by the Neighbour

Many argue that despite the act being in force for years the situation remains unchanged. To that the Army rightly points out that in J&K, the jihadi terror camps are located in the neighbourhood and a state-sponsored proxy war is being waged by our neighbour. The entire terror infrastructure is intact and this fact drove Foreign Secretary S. Jaishankar to say on February 14, 2017, that Pakistan needs to shut down "terrorism factory" and there is now international concern about it.

The military can at best prevent the situation from getting out of control but has no powers to destroy the terror camps deep inside unless the nation decides to strike well beyond the borders and

is prepared to go to war. Surgical strikes in September 2016 jolted Pakistan and their Army as it showed the change strategy on part of India. However, neither country wants a war at this time and hence even surgical strikes just across the LoC can have limited gains at best. If on the other hand the situation in Jammu and Kashmir is seen as an internal conflict then in any case military intervention can never be the solution to internal conflicts. Imposition of the AFSPA can only be a means to achieving a measure of stability after which the political leadership needs to get its act together. But sadly, opportunities have repeatedly been squandered. J&K and the North East are essentially political and bureaucratic failures — the gentlemen who sit behind desks in protected rooms are the ones to blame. Unfortunately, they have all become conveniently accustomed to govern through military force.

## Sanctions to Prosecute Army Personnel in Human Rights Violations

In J&K, barring a few, the majority of the complaints have been duly dealt with. Moreover in a large number of instances the complaints were proved to be false and fabricated. The Army is obviously not very good at managing public perception. But the one thing they can be proud of is that in the Army never allows a rogue to exist amongst their ranks, and act ruthlessly the moment one is noticed. However, one cannot deny that some cases may have gone unnoticed or unproven. The Army will need to be even more vigilant in this regard.

## Impact of Dilution or Removal of the AFSPA

The Army is of the opinion that they have to act whenever ordered. But what this will lead to is rendering it as ineffective or inefficient as police forces. It is a choice the politicians must make because no soldier in his right senses would be willing to take the necessary risks unless he was protected. After all, these men are called upon to engage highly motivated, battle-hardened terrorists.

## Amendments to the Act

The Justice Jivan Reddy Commission has gone into precisely this, and has made its recommendations. The report was submitted to the government in June 2005. But our feeling is that this legislation has stood the test of time. We must understand that things are much worse now than when AFSPA was legislated. Dilution is not recommended, if anything, the act must be revisited to see how it can be strengthened to meet emerging challenges, perhaps also including means to deal with the rogues. The Army would be only too happy to be kept aloof from these operations which they call "dirty operations". It is a fact that most state police forces have been literally emasculated by politicians, and the nation has no other option but to fall back on using the only apolitical force there is.

## Conclusion

US military who only a few months ago were planning to pull the last American troops out of Afghanistan by end of 2016 are now quietly talking about an American commitment that could keep thousands of troops in the country for decades. The shift in mindset, made possible by President Barack Obama's decision last fall to cancel withdrawal plans, reflects the Afghan Government's vulnerability to continued militant assault and concern that terrorist groups such as Al Qaeda continue to build training camps whose effect could be felt far beyond the region, said senior military officials.

India has already experienced the era of the early 1990s when the Soviets had just left Afghanistan, and a large number of trained and unemployed terrorists were diverted to J&K. There is no gain-saying that it won't happen this time. Constant vigil is the need of the hour. We cannot afford to lower our guard. **SP**





LT GENERAL  
P.C. KATOCH (RETD)

# Special Forces – Efforts to bridge equipment voids

**M**edia is agog with news headlines “Army on Shopping Spree, Commandos to Get Deadlier,” reporting that after the successful ‘surgical strikes,’ the Ministry of Defence (MoD) is fast-tracking some long-delayed modernisation of the Army’s Special Forces to make them even more lethal and mobile for clandestine warfare. As per MoD sources, seven requests for proposals (RFPs) have been issued to the United States, Israeli, Swedish and other companies for acquisition of the specialised weaponry on a fast-track basis, fast-track basis being redundant hype as all RFPs have similar response period. Besides going by the earlier experience, it will take a number of ‘years’ before the weapons and equipment sought actually gets fielded. So let us keep the ‘fast-track’ business aside, even as news reports quoting MoD resources say “Restricted” tenders have been issued to select foreign arms companies for acquisition of new assault rifles, sniper rifles, general purpose machine guns, lightweight rocket-launchers, tactical shotguns, pistols, night-vision devices and ammunition.

In addition, trials are reportedly in progress to acquire some 120 light strike vehicles (LSVs), which can be carried by helicopters, for special operations. Incidentally, all the weapons and equipment mentioned have been authorised to Army’s Special Forces units since year 2002. All the equipment promised to be acquired through the foreign military sale (FMS) route immediately post-9/11 has still not fetched up. Disregarding global norms, our Army also went in for rapid expansion of the Special Forces which created enormous deficiencies in Army Special Forces units. And, it is these criticalities that are being attempted to be bridged. That is why the more Tavor assault rifles ex Israel is just for 1,120 pieces for now. LSVs were offered by a Singapore defence firm more than a decade back but these were not even called for trials perhaps because the expected bribe was not offered. The media also talks of disposable rocket launchers, which have been in use by the Indian Army past decade. As significantly, the news reports say that there is no progress to establish a Special Operations Command, as proposed by the Naresh Chandra Committee.

Special Forces are being used strategically world over to further national interests of their countries. Their employment is actually extension of foreign policy of the concerned country. Leading nations employing Special Forces proactively trans-frontiers are perhaps the United States, Russia, UK and Israel. US Special Forces

(USSF) are operating in over 100 countries. This is in addition to almost all diplomatic missions in foreign countries having USSF presence. Since China has already positioned the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) troops in her development projects globally included Pakistan, Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK), Nepal, Myanmar, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Seychelles and other countries in garb of workers and technicians of development projects, we can safely posit a sizeable section being Chinese Special Forces. Pakistan has employed the Special Services Group (SSG) actively in Afghanistan, J&K, Nepal and Bangladesh, and is forging links with extremist/terrorist organisations in India.

What India needs is an Integrated Special Forces Command (ISFC) directly under the Prime Minister with parallel links to the Prime Minister’s Office (PMO) and the National Security Advisor (NSA). The Prime Minister should have a Special Forces Cell under him manned by the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) and Special Forces personnel, tasked with: evolving policy and doctrine for strategic employment of Special Forces at strategic level; oversee their manning, equipping, training, tasking, intelligence, inter-agency synergy; coordinate and monitor their operational employment, and; coordinate joint training and operations with foreign Special Forces. The balance Special Forces should be clubbed under the Chief of Defence Staff as an Integrated Commando Command (ICC) for supporting military operations; cross border tactical tasks and within border tasks beyond capabilities of regular infantry.

The case for raising of a Marine Brigade is gathering dust in the MoD for the last decade-and-a-half should be activated and the Marine Brigade clubbed with the ICC. Tasks of the IFSC and ICC would complement each other in specific situations. The main difficulty in establishing the ISFC will be the reluctance of the organisations and agencies presently controlling them, namely the Services, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), the Cabinet Secretariat. However, the exercise is essential in the present context, akin to the efforts for integrating the nine major intelligence agencies, which is yet to fully take off in face of stiff opposition. Diplomacy and conventional war by themselves cannot contend with asymmetric wars of Pakistan and China. Conventional response to asymmetric threats do not work and merely fortressing one’s house is no answer. We need a well thought out coordinated proactive approach. Establishment of the ISFC and ICC will be vital steps towards this. **SP**

**Conventional response to asymmetric threats do not work and merely fortressing one’s house is no answer. We need a well thought out coordinated proactive approach. Establishment of the ISFC and ICC will be vital steps towards this.**

## Defence Minister hands over indigenous DRDO Naval Systems

**T**he Minister of Defence, Finance and Corporate Affairs Arun Jaitley handed over three Naval Systems indigenously developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) to the Chief of the Naval Staff, Admiral Sunil Lanba recently.

The Minister also released two other products developed by DRDO namely IP-based Secure Phone and the Gallium Nitride Technology. Jaitley remarked that DRDO is becoming an important instrument for self-reliance of the nation. He stated that some of the best innovations have come from the pool of scientists of DRDO. The Defence Minister also said that great societies and nations are made through people working on important tasks in anonymity, like the DRDO scientists.

The Minister gave away the annual DRDO awards in various categories during the function. Apart from the scientists and teams who won awards in various vistas of technological excellence, the Advanced Systems Laboratory in Hyderabad and the Microwave Tube Research & Development Centre in Bengaluru won the coveted Silicon Trophy and Titanium Trophy respectively.

Dr Subhash Bhamre, Minister of State for Defence, said DRDO is playing an important role in self-reliance of defence forces and the export potential of the organisation is finding a place in the



global defence market.

The Chairman of DRDO and Secretary, Department of Defence (R&D) Dr S. Christopher said that the Defence Acquisition Council cleared order value of DRDO products has gone up to ₹2,56,000 crore out of which about ₹1,00,000 crore was in the last two years alone. **SP**

## India-Russia Military Industrial Conference



**M**inister of Defence, Finance and Corporate Affairs Arun Jaitley while inaugurating the India-Russia Military Industrial Conference said relations with Russia are a key pillar of India's foreign policy and Russia has been India's long-standing time-tested strategic partner since the last 70 years. The Minister stated that since the signing of the India-Russia Strategic Partnership in 2000, ties between the two sides have acquired new heights with enhanced level of cooperation in almost all areas including defence.

Jaitley further added that India-Russia Military Technical Cooperation has graduated from a simple buyer-seller relation to one involving joint research, development and production of advanced

defence systems. The BrahMos Missile System as well as the licensed production of Su-30 in India are examples of such flagship cooperation, he emphasised. He called upon Russian companies to come forward for technology transfer to Indian companies and facilitate manufacturing of components/ parts and subsystems at least for those cases where the requirement is in large numbers and is recurring in nature. The Minister was of the opinion that there is tremendous potential for collaboration between Indian and Russian companies for export, so as to become part of the global supply chain.

The Minister for Industry and Trade of Russian Federation, Denis Manturov who jointly inaugurated the conference also addressed the gathering. About 150 representatives from Russia are participating in the conference which includes over 100 representatives from its defence industry. Major Russian companies include United Aircraft Corporation, United Engine Corporation, RAC MiG, Russian Helicopters and Ural Vagonzavod. From the Indian side over 100 private companies including several SMEs have participated. **SP**

## Indo-Nepal joint exercise Surya Kiran concludes

**I**ndo-Nepal Joint Military Training was held at Pithoragarh from March 7 to 20, 2017. Ekta Shakti Battalion of the Punjab Regiment of Indian Army and Durga Bahsh Battalion of Nepalese Army participated in the joint exercise named Surya Kiran-XI, which was the 11th iteration aimed at training troops in counter-insurgency operations and enhancing defence cooperation and military relations between the two countries. It provided an ideal platform for the personnel of the two armies to share their experiences.

The training culminated with 48 hours outdoor exercise in which troops of both contingents carried out a cordon and search operation in a mock village. **SP**

## Increasing infrastructure for digital army top priority: Dr Bhamre

**T**he Minister of State for Defence Dr Subhash Bhamre recently said that increasing of infrastructure for the digital army based on state-of-the-art technologies is a top priority of the government.

In his inaugural address at the Defcom India 2017 with the theme 'Infrastructure and Skilled Human Resource for Digital Army', Dr Bhamre said that this initiative for creation of operational information networks and systems should be expedited at all levels. He stated that the robust, secure, high capacity data networks and information systems are an urgent necessity for Operational Commanders. "They are also a critical facet of the force modernisation plans of the Indian Army, which will further form a fulcrum for Tri-Services integration in times to come," he added. The Minister however, said that the creation of infrastructure for the Digital Army will need indigenous Indian solutions and systems from the security point of view. Dr Bhamre emphasised that the creation of indigenous capabilities in information and communication technologies (ICT) for the defence sector will give a major fillip to the 'Make in India' programme.

The Chief of the Army Staff General Bipin Rawat said that in the present complex environment, technology is imbibed by the armed forces in a manner that will rapidly keep pace with the changing technologies before they become obsolete. "But for that to happen it is important that we are able to identify the correct type of technology and equipment that is to be inducted into the armed forces," he stated. General Bipin Rawat further emphasised that the Army has to keep pace with the digitised world and ensure that most of its systems are digitised as early as possible. At the same time it has to



be remembered that war will be fought on the border and therefore the technology to be incorporated into the Army's communication system has to be ruggedised and lightweight.

The two-day event organised jointly by the Corps of Signals of the Indian Army and the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), was also addressed by Signal Officer-in-Chief and Senior Colonel Commandant, Corps of Signals Lt General Ashish Ranjan Prasad and Director General of CII Chandrajit Banerjee. **SP**



## Can you give us what we need: Asks Army Chief

**G**eneral Bipin Rawat chaired a combined session of 'the user and the provider' attended by renowned industrialists, academicians as well as the decision making hierarchy of the Army and released the 'Compendium of Problem Statements Vol II', which has been prepared by Army Design Bureau

(ADB) after detailed interaction with all stakeholders including soldiers deployed in field.

The first volume, with 50 problem statements released on December 5, 2016, was received with tremendous amount of enthusiasm, 28 new problem statements have now been added which will enable industry and academia to understand the 'Felt Needs' and come up with indigenous solutions incorporating the latest technology trends for India's military power.

Giving feedback on the first volume, industrialists and academicians expressed keenness to step up R&D for solutions to Army's problems and deeply appreciated Army's efforts calling the raising of ADB as a path-breaking step.

R.S. Bhatia pointed that India is probably the only great nation where industrial might of the country is not yet reflected in its defence forces.

General Rawat took the opportunity to challenge the industry and academia by asking them to align the solutions to the stated problems. "We want to fight next war with technology on our side and not like the past", he said. He sought efforts towards the most important need to bring in transparency of the battlefield to allow better decision making. Pointing out the drawbacks in trial equipment, he asked the industry and academia to focus on the fact that Indian Army will fight its wars in varied terrain and weather conditions seeking them to come up with robust, rugged, miniaturised yet technologically compatible solutions. He further nudged them to come up with a 'Society for Defence Manufacture' as the next step. **SP**





## Commissioning of INLCU

**I**NLCU L51 was commissioned into the Indian Navy on March 28, 2017, by Vice Admiral Bimal Verma, Commander-in-Chief, Andaman and Nicobar Command, at Port Blair. The commissioning ceremony was attended by Vice Admiral Dilip Deshpande, Controller of Warship Production and Acquisition, Rear Admiral V.K. Saxena (Retd), Chairman and Managing Director of the Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers Limited (GRSE) and other senior officers from the Indian Navy.

It is the first of the eight ships of the LCU Mk IV class. It has been built by GRSE, Kolkata. Conceived and designed indigenously, the commissioning of the ship adds a feather to the glorious chapter in the nation's 'Make in India' initiatives and indigenisation efforts in the field of warship design and construction. With a displacement of 900 tonnes the magnificent ship spans 62.8 m in length and 11 m in breadth.

The ship is propelled by 2 MTU diesel engines of 1,840 kW rating and can sustain speeds up to 15 knots. The ship has been built to assist in amphibious operations by carrying out beaching operations and has an endurance of 1,500 nm. The ship will also play a key role in carrying out maritime surveillance of Andaman and Nicobar Islands for preventing anti-poaching, illegal fishing, drug trafficking, human trafficking and other illegal activities. It will also enhance the capabilities of the Andaman and Nicobar Command in humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR) operations.

The armament onboard the ship consists of two 30mm CRN-91 guns manufactured by the Ordnance Factory in Medak. The gun is controlled by an electrical day-night fire control system namely stabilised optronic pedestal (SOP) manufactured by the Bharat



Electronic Limited. The ship is also equipped with 12.7mm heavy machine guns and 7.62mm medium machine guns. In addition, the ship is fitted with state-of-the-art electronic warfare suite for early detection of adversaries. The ship is also equipped with Integrated Platform Management System and Integrated Bridge System for automated controls and quick functioning. INLCU L51 is commanded by Cdr Vishwesh S. Nadkarni. **SP**

## First Bn 9GR celebrates 200 years

**T**he First Battalion of the 9 Gorkha Rifles which was raised by the British in 1817 as the 'Fatehgarh Levy' celebrated 200 years of its raising on March 16, 2017, at Secunderabad. The 9 Gorkha Rifles has a unique honour that all its battalions have been awarded the Chief of the Army Staff's citation for exceptional performance in the line of duty. The Regiment has been awarded three Victoria Crosses, five Mahavir Chakras and 17 Vir Chakras in the two centuries of its existence. Some of the Regiment's battle honours are Afghanistan, France and Flanders, Mesopotamia, North

Africa, Chindits, Burma, Phillora, Kumarkhalli, Dera Baba Nanak and Jammu and Kashmir.

India and Nepal share a unique bond through 32,000 Nepali citizens who serve in the Indian Army and approximately 90,000 veterans drawing their pensions in Nepal. The celebrations culminated with a special dinner which was attended by serving and retired soldiers, including former Governor of Punjab, General B.K.N. Chibber. More than 500 veterans from remote areas in Nepal graced the occasion with their families to reaffirm their regimental bonds. **SP**

# Indian Navy's TU-142M gets de-inducted



Welcoming the next-generation: Indian Navy's TU-142M flies over Boeing P-8I aircraft at INS Rajali in Tamil Nadu

[ By Our Special Correspondent ]

**A**fter having served the Indian Navy with pride and élan for 29 years, during which it accomplished 30,000 hours of accident-free flying, the TU-142M aircraft were given a befitting farewell in a special ceremony organised on March 29, 2017, at INS Rajali, India's premiere Naval Air Station in Arakkonam, Tamil Nadu. The ceremony was attended by Admiral Sunil Lanba, PVSM, AVSM, ADC Chief of the Naval Staff, Vice Admiral H.C.S. Bisht, Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Eastern Naval Command, serving and retired officers and men, who have served in the INAS 312 and other senior officials from the Navy as well as from civil administration.

Speaking on the occasion, Admiral Sunil Lanba lauded the stellar role played by TU-142M aircraft in the defence of the country as a maritime reconnaissance and airborne ASW aircraft. He recollected the crucial role played by the Squadron in Operation Cactus in Maldives, where fleeing mercenaries were detected and tracked till they

were apprehended by Indian warships. The Admiral also mentioned the maiden participation by TU's as the first Indian Naval Aircraft in the Republic Day flypast at New Delhi on January 26, 1999. He also acknowledged the professionalism of the pilots, the maintainers and all those personnel associated with flying and maintaining the aircraft in peak efficiency during their service. The rich legacy of the squadron would continue as the baton is being passed on to the proud crew of the worthy successors, viz. the P-8I Squadron, said the Admiral.

With the imposing looks and a lethal punch to match, the TU-14M aircraft which have been nothing short of a 'Flying Destroyer', were given an impressive farewell as they flew for one last time along with three Chetak helicopters, two Dorniers, one each IL-38 and the Boeing P-8I. In appreciation of the stellar service of the TU-142M aircraft, a TU Static Display was also inaugurated by the Chief of Naval Staff at INS Rajali.

INAS 312 was commissioned on November 18, 1976, at INS Hansa, Goa, with five Lockheed L1049G Super Constellation aircraft acquired from No. 6 Squadron of the IAF. After de-induction of Super Constel-





(TOP, L-R) Commissioning of TU-142M by Defence Minister K.C. Pant at INS Hansa; TU static display inaugurated by Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Sunil Lanba at INS Rajali; (Above) Water canon ceremony for TU-142M.

lation from the squadron in 1983, TU-142M LRMR ASW aircraft was inducted into INAS 312 on April 16, 1988, by the then Defence Minister K.C. Pant at INS Hansa. The squadron later shifted its base to the East Coast of India in April 1992 and has since then been based at INS Rajali, Arakkonam. In fact, the first TU-142M landed at Rajali on March 7, 1992, and from here started a glorious chapter of Long Range Maritime Air Operations of the Indian Navy. The TU-142M truly brought in the era of dominant Maritime Reconnaissance and Airborne ASW for the Indian Navy and has always been counted as amongst the best and the most feared LRMR platforms in the world.

INAS 312 has the unique distinction of operating the heaviest, fastest and highest flying turboprop in the world namely the TU-142M which has been the mainstay of LRMR and ASW operations of the Indian Navy for close to three decades. Over the years, the TU-142M has rendered yeoman service to the nation and has taken part in all major exercises and operations including Operation Cactus in Maldives, Op Vijay in 1998, Op Parakram in 2002 and Anti-piracy Operations from 2011 till date. The squadron was awarded Unit Citation by

the Chief of Naval Staff in the year 2002 for outstanding professionalism and momentous contribution to the Service and adjudged the Best Frontline Squadron on numerous occasions over the years.

After 29 years of dedicated service, the TU-142M LRMR ASW aircraft was drawn down on March 29, 2017. Commander Yogender Mair, the last Commanding Officer of the Squadron with TU-142M aircraft handed over the reins to Commander V. Ranganathan, who will be the first Commanding Officer of the Squadron with the Boeing P-8I aircraft. The Boeing P-8I aircraft dedicated to the nation by the erstwhile Defence Minister Manohar Parrikar on November 13, 2015, is the third type of aircraft, after the Lockheed L1049G Super Constellation and the TU-142M aircraft, to be operated by INAS 312. The P-8I aircraft has proven all its systems and has been fully integrated into the operational grid of the Indian Navy.

The other event of milestone proportion was the celebration of Silver Jubilee of INS Rajali the air station which was synonymous with the TUs, and its home for the last 29 years. A special cover was also released by the Postal Department to mark the occasion. **SP**





AIR MARSHAL  
B.K. PANDEY (RETD)

# Airbus C295 on the horizon!

*Induction of the Avro fleet into the IAF had begun in the early 1960s and having rendered over five decades of service, retirement of the fleet is certainly overdue*



**A** statement in the last week of March this year by Air Chief Marshal B.S. Dhanoa, Chief of the Air Staff, Indian Air Force (IAF), that the contract negotiations for 56 Airbus C295 aircraft to replace the ageing fleet of Avro HS 748 are likely to commence shortly, helped elevate the sagging spirits of the tactical transport fleet of the IAF.

The strategic airlift capability of the IAF had been reinforced through the induction in September 2013, of the 10 C-17 Globemaster III from Boeing of the US. In the tactical airlift segment, the mainstay continues to be the 100-odd An-32 twin-turboprop medium tactical transport aircraft procured from the erstwhile Soviet Union. The fleet of An-32 aircraft whose induction had commenced in the mid-1980s, is ageing. However, with a midlife upgrade currently underway, the An-32 fleet is expected to be in service for another two decades or so. The tactical transport fleet had received a partial relief when in February 2011, six C-130J Super Hercules heavy tactical transport aircraft powered by four turboprop engines were inducted into the IAF. Action is in hand to induct another seven of such platforms which would include one C-130J lost in an accident. This should be of some solace to the transport fleet of the IAF.

Induction of the Avro HS 748 fleet into the IAF had begun in the

early 1960s and having rendered more than five decades of service, retirement of the fleet is certainly overdue. To cover the gap thus created in the medium-lift category, in May 2013, the Ministry of Defence had issued a request for proposal for the supply of 56 twin-engine tactical transport aircraft with a payload capacity of around 10 tonnes. The original equipment manufacturers in the race for the tender valued at \$2.5 billion were CASA/EADS, renamed Airbus Military (Spain), Alenia Aermacchi (Italy), Boeing and Lockheed Martin (United States), Antonov (Ukraine), Ilyushin (Russia) and Embraer (Brazil).

After a rigorous evaluation by the IAF, the Airbus C295 was declared as the preferred platform. A unique feature of this tender is that 40 of the 56 platforms would be manufactured in India with the involvement of the Indian aerospace industry in the private sector. This is the first time that in such a collaborative project, the Indian public sector aerospace major the Hindustan Aeronautics Limited has not been taken on board. Instead, Airbus has entered into partnership with the Hyderabad-based Tata Advanced Systems Limited and has established a joint venture to manufacture 40 C295 for the IAF as also produce the aircraft required by other services or agencies in the country.

After nearly four years of what has been an agonising wait for the IAF, the Airbus C295 project is finally moving forward. **SP**

## Inauguration of 'Test Bed' at INS Rajali



**A**dmiral Sunil Lanba, Chief of the Naval Staff, inaugurated the first ever Integrated Automatic Aviation Meteorological System (IAAMS) at INS Rajali on March 28, 2017. The IAAMS is an ambitious project of the Indian Navy to modernise the meteorological infrastructure of the nine Naval Air Stations (NAS).

The IAAMS project will give a major fillip to aviation safety, through automation of weather monitoring process. Equipped with state-of-the-art meteorological sensors, viz., radar vertical wind profiler, transmissometer, ceilometer and automatic weather observation system, IAAMS undertakes automatic and continuous recording of relevant weather parameters that are vital for accurate weather forecasting. It has a special alarm feature that alerts the duty staff during abnormal change of weather parameters that may affect safe flying operations. The system can also provide automatic dissemination of routine weather reports as per World Meteorological Organisation standards to other air stations and air traffic controller towers without human intervention.

Installation at remaining eight NAS

would be undertaken by the system integrator SGS Weather and Environmental Systems Private Limited, New Delhi, and is expected to be completed by March 2019. **SP**

## F-35 successfully conducts first firings of MBDA's ASRAAM

**T**he F-35 Lightning II stealth fighter jet has successfully conducted its first firing trials of the MBDA advanced short range air-to-air missile (ASRAAM). The trials are the first time a British-designed missile has been fired from the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter, and the first time any non-US missile has been fired from the aircraft.

Conducted from both Naval Air Station Patuxent River and Edwards Air Force Base in the United States, the effort has seen both flight trials and air-launched firings of the ASRAAM successfully take place.

MBDA is currently under contract, awarded in 2016, to produce the highly capable infrared (IR) guided air-to-air missile for the UK's F-35s. ASRAAM's large rocket motor and clean aerodynamic design gives it a high kinematic capability that delivers superior end-game performance compared with other countries' in-service IR missiles.

The trials were conducted by the inte-



grated test teams at Patuxent and Edwards, which include Lockheed Martin, BAE Systems, MBDA and Northrop Grumman. **SP**

## Ka-52 Alligator helicopters deliveries to Egypt soon

**R**ussian Helicopters, a leading global designer and manufacturer of helicopters, confirms that the first of an eventual 46 Alligators will be handed over to Cairo this year.

The Ka-52 Alligator is an all-weather, day-night combat helicopter. It is designed to destroy armoured and unarmoured ground targets, low-speed aerial targets and enemy front line and tactical reserve troops, and to undertake reconnaissance missions and coordination of groups of military helicopters.

The Alligator is equipped with stealth technologies and active IR and electronic jammers, and is designed to Russian and international standards for combat helicopters and their operation. The Ka-52 has a twin-seat cockpit and can be controlled by either pilot. Its coaxial rotors provide advanced flight abilities and allow it to manoeuvre rapidly in tight airspace to secure a favourable attacking position.

The Alligator's other advantages include a high degree of protection for the crew, state-of-the-art automated systems that make piloting easier, and ease of ground maintenance. Powerful armoured protection and ejection seats unique for its class make the Ka-52 Alligator one of the safest helicopters for crew.

The helicopter is equipped with satellite navigation, with colour displays in the cockpit conveying a wide range of information, including a digital map of the terrain. **SP**

## New Director General (Inspection & Safety) at Air Headquarters

**A**ir Marshal S. Harpal Singh has assumed office of Director General (Inspection and Safety) on March 21, 2017.

Air Marshal S. Harpal Singh graduated with 56th course of National Defence Academy and was commissioned in the fighter stream of Indian Air Force on June 15, 1980. He has over 2,400 hours of flying on various aircrafts. The Air Officer has commanded a fighter squadron, was Chief Operations



Officer of a major fighter base in the Western sector, commanded a radar base and was Air Officer Commanding of a major fighter station in the Eastern sector. He has served in various staff appointments at Air Headquarters, Tri Services Organisations and was the Senior Air Staff Officer of South Western Air Command prior to assuming the present assignment.

He is a Fighter Combat Leader, a graduate of Defence Services Staff College, and has undergone the General Course for Senior Officers at National Institute of Defence Studies, Japan. For his distinguished services of an exceptionally high order he was awarded Ati Vashist Seva Medal and Vayu Sena Medal. **SP**

## The decisive factor

**T**he Hermes 450 UAV division performs the most flight hours in the Israeli Air Force (IAF). In the first eight months of 2016, it clocked 16,807 flight hours. The division, which operates from Palmachim Air Force Base, performs the most flight hours of all IAF divisions. The small aircraft operates around the clock and calendar.

According to Lt Colonel Daniel, a UAV Squadron Commander, the Hermes 450 division is central part of the IAF's UAV division. "It combines excellent technological capabilities with low costs. It's a simple aircraft with great operational benefit" Major Liran, Deputy Commander of the Squadron: "The division stands out with a large number of aircraft, so we can provide a large number of centres and assist multiple elements at once."

The aircraft cooperates with almost every other IAF aircraft: its cooperation with the fighter division focuses on quick closure, it flies over enemy territory, identifies targets and contacts the attack aircraft. "The aircraft can direct the fighter to the target without it wasting time on understanding the mission. The operators see the target, analyse the data and communicate it to the attacker. This allows us to assist with a much higher pace of work," explained Major Liran.



The division's slogan can't be missed in the squadron's briefing room: "To be a decisive factor in the next war". In the past years, the division has implemented the slogan and made the UAV one of the most important aircraft in the IAF, a fact clearly expressed in the division's close cooperation with various IAF aircraft and divisions. **SP**

## Schiebel Camcopter S-100 heading towards MUM-T operations



**S**chiebel and Patria have been working together to integrate Patria's sophisticated Compact Airborne Networking Data Link (CANDL) communication network onto the Camcopter S-100 unmanned aerial system (UAS).

The two European companies' joint effort is the first step of an ongoing programme of work examining how the Camcopter S-100 can be deployed to directly support manned helicopter operations.

Patria's CANDL provides a solid backbone to explore the benefits of Manned-UnManned Teaming (MUM-T) operations, where the combined strengths of each air asset can be optimised to increase overall situational awareness and enhance decision making.

As Schiebel's Chief Technical Officer Chris Day points out, "Using the unmanned element of a MUM-T operation to provide both the forward and higher altitude view will help to keep pilots and the manned assets safe as well as improve overall mission effectiveness." **SP**

## Heron 1 UAV fully operational

**T**he Singapore Minister for Defence Dr Ng Eng Hen officiated at a ceremony to mark the achievement of full operational capability (FOC) status by the Republic of Singapore Air Force's (RSAF) Heron 1 unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) at Murai Camp recently.

Dr Ng highlighted the significance of this milestone to the overall enhancement of the Singapore Armed Force's (SAF) capabilities. He said, "The FOC of Heron 1 brings the RSAF's unmanned aerial capabilities to the level of advanced militaries globally... The Heron 1 is among the most advanced UAV systems in its class, able to perform several missions simultaneously as with a suite of state-of-the-art sensors and enhanced range.... Apart from these conventional operations, it can also be deployed against terrorist threats, because its persistence enables it to cover a wide area of surveillance."

Dr Ng also lauded the team effort by the Air Imagery Intelligence Experts, the Engineers, Defence Science and Technology Agency (DSTA) scientists and engineers in

contributing to the Heron 1's FOC, noting that the leap in capability from the Searcher to the Heron 1 is "a significant achievement for all of us, and [for] which we have [had to] overcome many challenges along the way".

Featuring state-of-the-art avionics, detection capabilities and communications systems, as well as fully automatic take-off and landing capabilities and longer flight endurance, the Heron 1 UAV provides the SAF with better battlefield situational awareness and enhanced mission effectiveness. Equipped with a multi-mission sensor, it is able to respond to a wide range of missions, including non-conventional threats. **SP**

## Pentagon contract announcement

**G**eneral Atomics-Aeronautical Systems Inc, Poway, California, has been awarded a \$98-million ceiling indefinite-delivery/indefinite-quantity contract for the MQ-9 technology maturation effort. This effort will provide a broad enterprise of activities associated with development of capabilities for the MQ-9 Reaper unmanned aircraft system (UAS).

The objective is to develop approved capabilities for the MQ-9 UAS to satisfy criteria to be on-ramped onto a contract to integrate the capability into the MQ-9 fleet. Work will be performed at Poway and orders on this indefinite-delivery/indefinite-quantity will be placed by September 20, 2021. **SP**



## HAL turnover at ₹17,406 crore; receives orders worth ₹21,000 crore

**P**ublic sector undertaking Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) has achieved the highest ever turnover of ₹17,406 crore for the financial year ending March 31, 2017. "It is business as usual for us with the company doing well on expected lines. We also contributed around ₹800 crore to the government exchequer by way of interim dividend. This is in addition to ₹162 crore paid to government as dividend tax. The PBT stood at ₹3,294 crore," said T. Suvarna Raju, Chairman and Managing Director of HAL.

The company expects 'Excellent' MoU rating for the FY 2016-17 from the government as it has met all the relevant parameters related to its performance. HAL's total sales for the year 2015-16 stood at ₹16,736 crore and the PBT was at ₹3,288 crore.

Some of the highlights included production of 12 Su-30MKI aircraft in Phase-IV; 24 advanced light helicopter (ALH); overhauling of 197 aircraft / helicopters, 473 engines and production of 178 new aero-structures. It received orders worth ₹21,000 crore that included 12 Do 228 aircraft for the Indian Navy; 32 ALH for the Indian Navy and the Coast Guard and AL-31 FP engines for Su-30MKI. The year also witnessed maiden flight of HTT-40 and the light utility helicopter (LUH) in addition to carriage trials of LCA



with fixed air-to-air refuelling probe. HAL attained 100 per cent RPM for 25 kn turbofan engine (HTFE-25) and launched metal cutting for 1,200 kW turboshaft engine (HTSE 1200). **SP**

## BEL achieves turnover of ₹8,800 crore

**N**avratna defence PSU the Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL) has ended the year 2016-17 by registering whopping top line figure of about ₹8,800 crore (provisional), a growth of about 17 per cent over the previous year's turnover of ₹7,522 crore.

Some of the flagship projects executed during the year include Akash Weapon System, Handheld Thermal Imager with Laser Range Finder, 3D Tactical Control Radar, Weapon Locating Radar, Upgraded L-70 Guns, Fire Control Systems, Hull Mounted Sonar, Radio Relays, Elements of Integrated Air Command and Control System, Ship-borne EW Systems, etc.

BEL's Chairman and Managing Director M.V. Gowtama said, "During the year the company's main focus has been on indigenisation to achieve self-reliance, capacity building and expansion and increased outsourcing to SME sector. Also, BEL has been able to maintain good order acquisition this year. These efforts will enable BEL to continue to have sustained growth while effectively addressing future opportunities in defence business." **SP**

## CAE to deliver training services for NATO E-3A AWACS aircrews

**C**AE has announced that it has signed a contract with the NATO Support and Procurement Agency (NSPA) to provide comprehensive training services, including instructors, for the NATO E-3A Airborne Warning and Control System (AWACS) aircrew training programme located at NATO Airbase Geilenkirchen in Germany.

The new contract, with options to extend up to five years, expands on the previous contract for CAE to provide maintenance and support services on the E-3A flight deck simulator and flight training device. In addition to continuing to maintain and support the training devices, CAE will now provide aircrew instructors, mission simulator operators, courseware development and crew resource management training.

"We are pleased to expand our relationship with the NATO E-3A Component and now provide integrated training services to support the mission training of NATO E-3A aircrews," said Marc-Olivier Sabourin, CAE's Vice President and General Manager, Europe/Africa. "This programme is another example of CAE leveraging its training systems integration experience and expertise to help our defence customers enhance safety, efficiency and readiness."

CAE has been involved with the NATO E-3A training programme since delivering the CAE-built E-3A flight deck simulator in 1982. Since that time, CAE has provided maintenance and support services, as well as a range of simulator upgrades and modifications. CAE will now provide a cadre of instructors and mission system operators to support the delivery of training to NATO E-3A AWACS aircrews. **SP**

## DCNS and PT PAL cooperate for Indonesia's naval projects

**F**ollowing the visit of French President François Hollande to Indonesia, DCNS and PT PAL signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to strengthen their cooperation in the submarine and surface ship fields, in accordance with the Indonesian-French Defense Dialogue (IFDD).

Indonesia wants to reinforce its naval capacity and is discussing with France to explore projects of submarine and surface ships to be built in Indonesia with a high level of local industrial content, through Indonesian-French long-term cooperation.

Following signature of this MoU, DCNS CEO Hervé Guillou declared: "As the European leader in naval combat systems, warship designer and builder, DCNS is committed to establishing long-term partnerships with the Indonesian industry to enhance Indonesia's local high-tech industrial content. Our cooperation with Indonesia's largest shipyard PT PAL is a perfect illustration of this ambition and we are looking forward to bringing our strong expertise in technology transfers for complex naval programmes to provide an industrial project and develop Indonesian Navy operational capability." **SP**

## Theft at Kendall Jenner's home!

**T**he Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) has said it was investigating the 'grand theft' — burglary that took place at Kendall Jenner's home.

"This case is considered grand theft because of the value of amount of the missing items," the spokesperson clarified, confirming the claimed value of the missing items is estimated to be \$2,00,000. "This wasn't described as a party, but there were other people at the residence who don't live there. The homeowner said she had friends over."

Just months after Kim Kardashian West was robbed at gunpoint in Paris, the LAPD said that her sister Kendall Jenner's home was robbed. According to a LAPD spokesperson, police received a call around 1:15 a.m. that the 21-year-old model's Hollywood Hills residence was burglarised and several personal belongings were missing.

Police said there was no suspect in custody nor was there a suspect description at this time, but there is video footage from security cameras.

Jenner isn't the first celebrity to have their California home burglarised this year, leading some to believe that there's a new Bling Ring in town. Alanis Morissette, Cesar Millan and Nicki Minaj's houses were also broken into, as well as Kevin Hart's home last June. **SP**



## Yet another intrusion at White House



**T**he White House, the most guarded place in the United States, is finding itself in a spot, being the most important place where individuals with no permission are trying to get in or break in. Recently, the White House apprehended an individual after he jumped a low metal barrier just outside the White House fence.

The White House Press Secretary Sean Spicer wrote on Twitter that the individual "jumped bike rack on Pennsylvania Ave but did not make it onto White House property." Spicer added, "Great response by @SecretService."

President Donald Trump was not at the White House then as he and his family were spending the weekend at his resort in Palm Beach, Florida.

The incident comes about a week after a man breached a 5-foot

outer perimeter fence and scaled an 8-foot vehicle gate to gain entry to the White House grounds. Video surveillance footage shows Jonathan Tuan Tran, 26, of Milpitas, California, climbing the fence near the Treasury Department adjacent to the White House security fence and making his way to a south entrance, the criminal complaint said. Tran, who the Secret Service said, was carrying two cans of mace, is charged with entering restricted grounds while carrying a dangerous weapon and faces up to 10 years in prison.

Trump was inside the executive mansion at the time. He praised the Secret Service for doing a "fantastic job" apprehending a "troubled person." **SP**

## Oscar mix-up, PwC executives get threats

**I**n the days since Sunday night's Oscars ceremony, during which *La La Land* was incorrectly named Best Picture instead of *Moonlight* before the mistake was corrected, the fallout has accumulated to frightening levels for the two PricewaterhouseCoopers accounts responsible for monitoring the ceremony.

The two PwC executives Martha Ruiz and Brian Cullinan have received death threats over their involvement in the debacle and have been given security details to protect themselves and their families. The Academy announced that it would not invite the two executives back for any future event including Oscars, though they will keep their jobs at the firm. PricewaterhouseCoopers's involvement in future ceremonies which was under review, has now been cleared. According to various accounts of the goof up, Cullinan was directly responsible for handing Warren Beatty the wrong envelope to announce Best Picture.

PwC which has overseen Oscar balloting for 83 years has been retained by the Academy of Motion Pictures. **SP**



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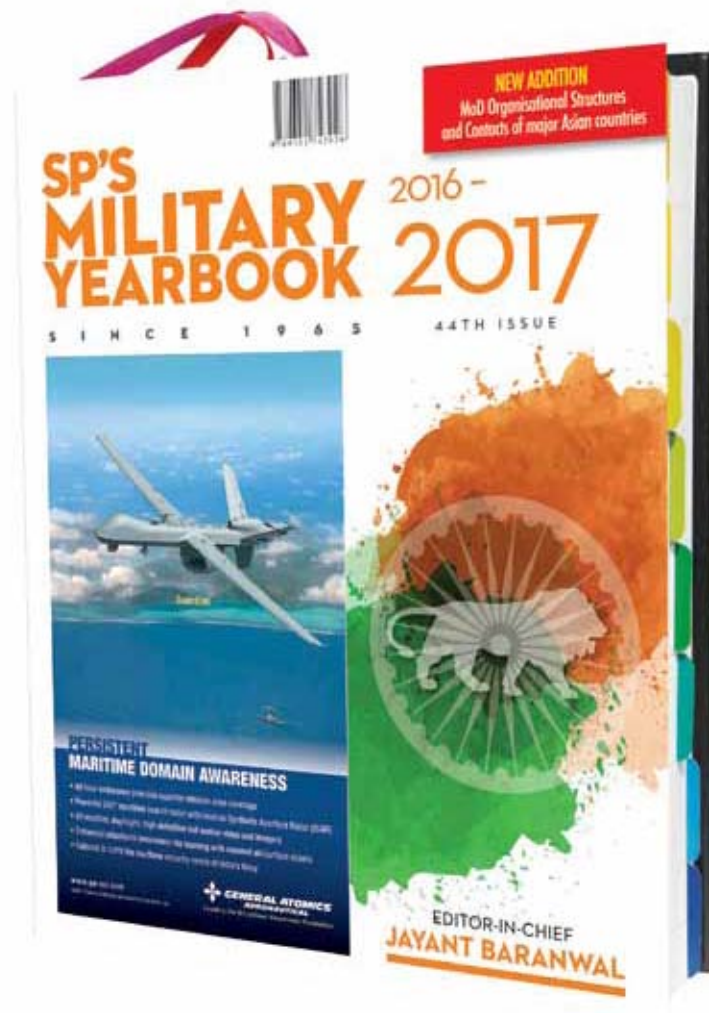
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