

India, NZ ink def pact, to boost Indo-Pacific cooperation

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: With India and New Zealand now inking an MoU on defence cooperation, their Navy chiefs have discussed measures to enhance naval ties, maritime cooperation in the crucial Indo-Pacific and joint training initiatives. Admiral Dinesh K Tripathi discussed various steps to enhance maritime ties with Rear Admiral Garin Golding, who is also slated to meet Chief of Defence Staff General Anil Chauhan as well as the Army and IAF chiefs.

Rear Admiral Golding's six-day visit marks "a significant step in the evolution of the bilateral defence relations", fostering deeper naval cooperation and reinforcing mutual interests in the Indo-Pacific, an official said.

He will also visit the Western Naval Command at Mumbai, where he will interact with officers and sailors, go onboard indigenous destroyer INS Surat, and explore avenues for future collaboration in ship maintenance and technology.

Don't arm 'terror sponsor' Pak, India tells Netherlands

Both Sides To Boost Defence, Security Ties

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: India on Tuesday asked the Netherlands to not provide arms, weapon systems, platforms and military technologies to Pakistan, which has sponsored cross-border terrorism for decades, in a meeting between defence minister Rajnath Singh and his counterpart Ruben Brekelmans.

In the delegation-level meet, the two countries decided to elevate their bilateral ties in areas including defence, security, information exchanges, maritime cooperation in the Indo-Pacific, and new and emerging technologies like AI and drones.

The clear takeaway, however, was Singh telling Brekelmans that "equipping" Pakistan with defence equipment and technologies "undermines regional security



Equipping Pakistan with defence technologies undermines regional security, Rajnath Singh told his Dutch counterpart Brekelmans

and stability" in South Asia, sources told **TOI**.

"Singh said India has been fighting Pakistan-sponsored terrorism in J&K and elsewhere for decades. India tells all friendly countries that they should not arm Pakistan in any way due to its state policy of fueling terrorism in other countries," a source added.

The Netherlands, for instance, has supplied two Alkmaar-class mine countermeasures vessels or minehunters, which were built at the Van der Giessen-de

Noord shipyard in Alblasserdam. Similarly, the country is also providing 1,900-tonne multi-role offshore patrol vessels from the Damen Shipyards to Pakistan. "Several Dutch companies are interacting with Pakistan in the military arena, especially in the naval domain," another source said.

In the India-Netherlands meet on Tuesday, the two sides also explored the possibilities of collaboration in shipbuilding, equipment and space sectors, "optimising the complementariness

Now, SFJ's Pannun threatens Rajnath

Designated pro-Khalistan terrorist Gurpatwant Singh Pannun has issued a threat to defence minister Rajnath Singh, a day after he urged US Director of National Intelligence Tulsi Gabbard to designate Sikhs For Justice (SFJ) as a terrorist outfit. In a video message, Pannun dared Rajnath to make his travel plans public, saying that pro-Khalistan Sikhs will be waiting to confront him. **TNN**

in skills, technology and scale of the two countries".

"They also discussed working together in domains like AI and related technologies, besides connecting the defence technology research institutes and organizations of the two countries," a defence ministry official said. India also said Dutch armament companies should be encouraged to integrate Indian vendors into their supply chains.

Hope And Horror From The World's Two Major Conflict Zones

Putin, Trump agree to seek 30-day ceasefire on energy, infra targets

Will Work Quickly
For Complete Truce
In Ukraine: Trump

Washington/Moscow: Russian President Vladimir Putin and his US counterpart Donald Trump agreed on a phone call Tuesday to seek a limited 30-day ceasefire against energy and infrastructure targets in Russia and Ukraine.

Talks aimed at advancing toward a broader peace plan, including a maritime ceasefire in Black Sea, full ceasefire and permanent peace, would begin "immediately" in west Asia, White House said.



DIAL P FOR PEACE

However, Putin stopped short of agreeing to a broader US-backed 30-day truce Ukraine has said it is ready to accept.

Calling his lengthy phone call with Putin "very good and productive", Trump said "we will be working quickly for a complete ceasefire". **REUTERS**

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Israeli airstrikes in Gaza kill 400+, shatter 2-mth-old truce

Israel on Tuesday launched its deadliest bombardment on Gaza in the 17-month war with Hamas, killing over 400 Palestinians and shattering a truce in place since Jan.

Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu said he ordered the strikes, which killed mostly women and kids, as Hamas had spurned proposals to secure a ceasefire extension. "Israel will, from now on, act against Hamas with increasing military strength," the PMO stated.

The White House said it



A man mourns his 11-month-old nephew in Gaza City on Tuesday

had been consulted and voiced support for Israel's actions.

Hamas said the head of its govt in Gaza was killed, but was assilient about retaliation. **P 18**

EAM: Longest illegal occupation of territory since WWII in J&K

New Delhi: External affairs minister S Jaishankar slammed selective application of global rules on issues pertaining to sovereignty and territorial integrity, and cited the example of J&K where he said an invasion was turned into a dispute and the attacker

► **Tulsi's remark on caliphate link damaging: B'desh, P 18**

was clubbed with the victim.

Speaking at the Raisina Dialogue, he said after World War II, the longest-standing illegal presence and occupa-

'US first' policy not 'America alone': Tulsi

Amid increasing fears of US isolationism under Trump, director of National Intelligence Tulsi Gabbard said his America First policy shouldn't be misunderstood as "America alone". **P 11**

tion of a territory by another country (Pakistan) pertained to Kashmir. **TNN**

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Open to 'fair debate' on Lokpal jurisdiction over HC judges: SC

Earlier, SC's Prima Facie View Was Such Jurisdiction Would Be 'Dangerous' For Independence Of Constitutional Courts

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New Delhi: Supreme Court on Tuesday created space for a "fair debate" on the contentious issue of anti-corruption watchdog Lokpal assuming jurisdiction to inquire into allegations of taint against high court judges even though the apex court had formed a prima facie view that this would be "dangerous" for independence of constitutional courts.

Solicitor general Tushar Mehta protested strongly against Lokpal assuming jurisdiction over high court judges and told a bench of Justices B R Gavai, Surya Kant and A S Oka that the Jan 27 order of the full bench led by Lokpal A M Khanwilkar, attempting to assume inquiry jurisdiction over HC judges, went against the procedure established through SC judgments for dealing with complaints against con-

stitutional court judges.

The bench agreed and said the field was already occupied and a mechanism was in place to deal with complaints against SC and HC judges. Mehta said the Supreme Court should examine only Section 14(1)(f) of Lokpal Act, which formed the basis for Lokpal's Jan 27 order.

Supreme Court Bar Association president and senior advocate Kapil Sibal said the SC, in its 1991 judgment in the Veeraswami case, had made it mandatory to obtain the CJI's consent before initiation of proceedings against a constitutional court judge. "The law must be clarified to ensure that complaints of this nature (corruption and misuse of office) are forwarded only to the CJI and not to any other authority," he said.

Lokpal's order had come on a complaint filed by a person accusing an HC judge of influencing an additional district judge and another



HC judge who were hearing suits filed by the complainant against a private company.

However, Sibal said there was a wider issue involved. "What happens if a person goes to a police station and wants to file an FIR (for a criminal act allegedly committed by an HC judge)? The fundamental issue is whether a complaint can be filed against SC and HC judges outside the mechanism provided under the Constitution and the additions made through SC rulings. The court may have to examine this issue in this case," he said.

The SG said whether a person could go to a police station to lodge an FIR did not fall within the ambit and scope of the issue arising

SC said the proceedings should not appear one-sided & appointed senior advocate Ranjit Kumar as amicus to present the contrary view for a fair debate on the issue

from Lokpal's Jan 27 order. The procedure for lodging a complaint against a constitutional court judge was provided in the Veeraswami judgment, he said.

The bench agreed and said it would examine the issues relating to Lokpal's jurisdiction to entertain complaints against HC judges. Justice Kant said the proceedings should not appear one-sided and added that there should be an amicus to present the contrary view for a fair debate on the issue. In its order, Lokpal had clarified that it did not have jurisdiction over SC judges. The bench appointed senior advocate Ranjit Kumar as amicus and posted hearing on the matter to April 15.

India, France to hold 4-day joint Naval exercise 'Varuna' from 19th

NEW DELHI, Mar 18 (IANS)

THE Indian and French Navies will participate in a bilateral Naval exercise 'Varuna 2025', the Ministry of Defence officials said on Tuesday.

It will be the 23rd edition of the bilateral Naval exercise.

VARUNA, a testament to the enduring maritime partnership between India and France, is set to take place from March 19 to 22. VARUNA-2025 will feature advanced air defence drills and fighter exercises, including mock air-to-air combat between the French Rafale-M and Indian MiG-29K, designed to refine tactical and operational capabilities.

TERROR attacks intensify in Balochistan, KP in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD, Mar 18 (IANS)

PAKISTAN'S violence-hit Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) and Balochistan provinces continue to witness a major acceleration in targeted terror attacks against security personnel with clashes and counter-terrorism operations also resulting in casualties of militants over the past 24 hours.

As per the latest details, fresh clashes have been reported from different parts of KP and Balochistan in which police officials, constables, security personnel and others have been targeted in ambush attacks, grenade attacks and targeted incidents.

Police sources said that a policeman was killed and another injured while at least six mil-



A paramilitary soldier examines a damaged bus at the site of a suicide bombing in Naushki, a district in Balochistan province on Sunday. (AP/PTI)

itants were killed in various attacks in the KP province. In KP's Bannu city, armed motorcyclists targeted the Lower Head Constable (LHC) while he was on duty at the Miranshah road. The attacks resulted in the death of the constable even as the attackers escaped the scene.

The KP police and the Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) commandos also killed two terrorists during an Intelligence-Based Operation (IBO) in Bannu.

"Terrorists opened fire when the policemen got close to their hideout, leading to a gun battle which lasted for half an hour. The cops seized arms and ammunition and shifted their bodies to a hospital," said a police official.

In Lakki Marwat area of KP, police officials foiled a militant attack on a police station in Serai Gambila. Police sources confirmed that the attackers targeted the police station with light and heavy weapons, adding that the police official on duty foiled the attack after a major gun battle with the terrorists which lasted 15 minutes.