



Decide on plea to let women take CDS exams, HC asks Centre

NEW DELHI, Apr 27 (PTI)

THE Delhi High Court has asked the Centre to decide in eight weeks a representation seeking the entry of women in the Indian Military Academy (IMA), Indian Naval Academy (INA) and Air Force Academy of the Indian Armed Forces through the Combined Defence Services (CDS) examination.

The court passed the order on a petition by Kush Kalra, who challenged a December 2023 notification issued by the UPSC inviting application for recruitment in the Indian Military Academy (IMA), Indian Naval Academy (INA), and Air Force Academy of the Indian Armed Forces and Officers Training Academy (OTA) through the CDS examination.

Noting that the petitioner's representation on the issue was still pending with the authorities, a bench of Acting Chief Justice Manmohan and Justice Manmeet PS Arora on Friday said, "the writ petition is disposed of with a direction to the

respondent to decide the representation in accordance with law within eight weeks".

The petitioner contended that the notification unjustifiably excluded females to appear in the examination to be conducted for the IMA, INA and IAF solely on the grounds of their gender as it only permits them to be considered for Short Service Commission at OTA.

The notification unjustifiably excluded females to appear in the examination to be conducted for the IMA, INA and IAF solely on the grounds of their gender as it only permits them to be considered for Short Service Commission at OTA, said the petitioner

As per the petitioner, now that the Ministry of Defence has removed its entry barrier for females

through the NDA examination and the number of female candidates being recruited is increasing every year, there is no reason why the females should not be recruited through the CDS examination for the IMA, INA and IAF.

The exclusion of eligible female candidates from the opportunity to get training at the premier Indian training institutes is a violation of their fundamental right to equality, the petitioner said.

Press N Korea to end its dangerous behaviour, Blinken exhorts China

WASHINGTON, Apr 27 (IANS)

US SECRETARY of State Antony Blinken has said that he renewed calls for China to exert its influence to press North Korea to cease its "dangerous" activities and return to dialogue during his talks with top Chinese officials in Beijing.

Blinken made the remarks during a press conference after he had separate meetings with Chinese President Xi Jinping, Foreign Minister Wang Yi, Minister of Public Security Wang Xiaohong and other offi-



cial. Blinken's trip to Shanghai and Beijing from Wednesday to Friday came as Washington has been pushing for its drive to "responsibly" manage the Sino-US relationship despite a hardening rivalry over technological leadership, maritime security, trade and other domains.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken meets with Chinese President Xi Jinping at the Great Hall of the People, on Friday in Beijing, China.

(AP/PTI)

China launches first of 8 Hangor-class submarine built for Pakistan

ISLAMABAD/BEIJING, Apr 27
(PTI)

CHINA has launched the first of the eight Hangor-class submarines to be built for its all-weather ally Pakistan to provide it with state-of-the-art warships, adding a new dimension to their growing bilateral military cooperation.

The launch ceremony, held at Wuchang Shipbuilding Industry Group's (WSIG) Shuangliu Base on Friday, was attended by Pakistan Navy chief Admiral Naveed Ashraf.

The development comes as part of the agreement between

Islamabad and Beijing under which the latter had agreed to provide the former with eight state-of-the-art advanced submarines.

Out of the total eight vessels, four are to be built by WSIG, while the remaining four are being built at KS&EW (Karachi Shipyard & Engineering Works) under the Transfer of Technology (ToT) agreement.

The submarines, having advanced stealth features, are to be fitted with state-of-the-art weapons and sensors to operate under a multi-threat environment and can engage targets at stand-off ranges.

INDIA'S UNSC MEMBERSHIP

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United Nations came into existence on October 24, 1945 primarily with the aim of preventing future wars/conflicts.

BY LT GENERAL
M K DAS

IN THE election manifesto titled Sankalp Patra released by BJP on 14 April 2024, the party has promised seeking permanent membership of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) to elevate India's position in global decision making. A couple of months back, Dr. S Jaishankar, the External Affairs Minister had commented that India will get a permanent seat at the UNSC but it won't be easy as there are a lot of countries who want to block us.

This particular initiative by a political party is a welcome step in our pursuit to be developed nation by 2047.

After the surrender of Japan on September 2, 1945, the As world's largest democracy, the absence of India from the high table of UNSC is not at all justified. India has been the largest contributor in the UN Peace Keeping Force in strife torn region and has brought normalcy in the affected countries.officially ended. The six-year war which began on September 3, 1939 left behind a trail of death and destruction in most parts of the world. United Nations came into existence on October 24, 1945 primarily with the aim of preventing future wars/conflicts and maintaining international peace security besides a host of other charter.

UNSC is the most important organ of the UN and has five permanent members (P5) which are United States of America, United Kingdom, France, Russian Federation (in place of erstwhile USSR) and China. It also has 10 non-permanent members which are elected in rotation for a two-year term. The UNSC is also

responsible for approving any changes to the UN Charter.

One look at the UNSC reveals that the permanent members were essentially the victors in the World War II. The five permanent members of the Security Council have the exclusive veto powers and no resolution can be passed with their concurrence. So even if one permanent member vetoes a resolution, nothing can move ahead and the world opinion can wait. There has been a lot of talk about reforms in the UN but the permanent members are not much interested.

After all, such reforms would take away their complete hold on the body. Thus, any reform in the UNSC lies at the mercy of the permanent members.

India and China were one of the early signatories of the UN Charter, well before gaining formal independence. While China became a permanent member of the Security Council, there is some controversy about India squandering away the opportunity to become a permanent member in the 1950s. By this time, the world was divided between the West blocked by the US and the East block led by the USSR. As a young nation, India was struggling with building the nation on a democratic plank and possibly wanted to occupy a moral high ground. The dilemma possibly helped China's cause to become a permanent member of the UN Security Council. Once the powerplay in the international arena was well established, India now perforce has to stake its claim afresh.

As world's largest democracy, the absence of India from the high table of UNSC is not

at all justified. India has been one of the most active members of the UN and has contributed significantly in all the spheres. India has been the largest contributor in the UN Peace Keeping Force in strife torn region and has brought normalcy in the affected countries. India has also been at the forefront of humanitarian aid, medical relief and disaster management.

India made most significant contribution through its astute COVID vaccine diplomacy. India has emerged as the natural leader of the developing nations in voicing concerns about environment, green energy, conservation and developmental goals.

All these may not be sufficient for India's case. Now that we are the fifth largest economy in the world with the aim of becoming the top three economy by 2030, our best chance is possible around that time. As a country, we will have to be smart to leverage our economy to further the aspiration of joining the P5. The reforms in the UN are inevitable as this world body has proved to be ineffective in resolving the international conflict. Russia-Ukraine war and Israel-Hamas conflict are clear examples of the UNSC failure.

With Iran intervention against Israel making the security scenario even more bleak, the current security council appears to be toothless to deal with the looming crisis.

India has to raise the voice for a more effective security council. China is going to block all our efforts to be a permanent member. Obviously, India alone is not the sole claimant to be the permanent member. The changed international

dynamics make Japan, Germany, Brazil and one country from Africa equal contenders for the spot. The UN Security Council is outdated and needs a clear revamp, representing the aspirations of the continents and the emerging global order. Therefore, our efforts should concentrate in isolating China from the rest of the world.

The recent G20 presidency of India was a good step towards aggressive diplomacy wherein India managed to get the African Union to be part of G20.

In today's world, an autocracy like China has no business to call the shots at the UN Security Council. With deft handling and delicate diplomacy as demonstrated in our relations with Russia, India has already shown that it remains strong in protecting the national interest in the emerging power dynamics. India has also stood with old friend Israel in the current crisis in a mature manner.

India has to exhibit collective national will to stake its claim as the rightful permanent member of the security council. India is already a member/associate member of SAARC, ASEAN, BRICS, SCO and QUAD (Australia, India, Japan and US) to name a few. Thus, our global standing as a serious and sincere nation in an ideal multipolar world should be lauded.

The new Government at the Centre should form a committee to lobby for the reforms in UN in general and permanent membership of India in the UN Security Council in particular.

*(The author is a Retd Lt General, PVSM, SM***, VSM)*

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India, Chinese Taipei ask WTO body to delay ruling on ICT import duties dispute till July 26

NEW DELHI, Apr 27 (PTI)

INDIA and Chinese Taipei have asked the WTO's dispute settlement body not to adopt any ruling against New Delhi's import duties on certain information and technology products till July 26 as both sides are engaged in resolving the matter, an official said.

The issue came up during a meeting of the dispute settlement body (DSB) in Geneva on April 26. In the meeting, the two countries asked DSB to delay consideration of a dispute panel's reports until July 26, 2024 in order to help facilitate resolution of the disputes, the Geneva-based official said, adding that the body agreed to that. Earlier also, DSB had agreed to three



previous requests from India and Chinese Taipei to delay consideration of the reports.

As per rules of the WTO, the panel's ruling will have to be adopted by DSB for implementation within 60 days of the release of the order.

However, countries can mutually request DSB for delay in adoption of the ruling.

In its report, a dispute panel of WTO on April 17, 2023 said

import duties imposed by India on certain information and technology products violate global trading norms. The ruling followed a case filed by the EU, Japan and Taiwan against these duties in WTO.

In May 2019, Chinese Taipei had filed a case against India in the WTO over the import duties imposed on certain electronic goods, including telephones for cellular networks; machines for reception and parts of telephone sets. India has stated that these ICT products are part of WTO's Information Technology Products (ITA-2) Agreement, and it is not part of this pact. India is a part of ITA-1, signed in 1997, which did not have any obligation to eliminate customs duties on these products.

Air Force, Navy jets get Rampage missile boost

■ By Ajit Dubey
NEW DELHI, Apr 27 (ANI)

IN A major boost for firepower of its fighter aircraft fleet, the Indian Air Force has inducted the Rampage long-range supersonic air-to-ground missiles which can hit targets at around 250 Km.

The missile known as the High-Speed Low Drag-Mark 2 missile in the Indian Air Force was reportedly used in a big way by the Israeli Air Force during its recent attacks on Iranian targets.

The Indian Air Force has inducted the Rampage in its Russian-origin aircraft fleet including the Su-30 MKI and MiG-29 fighters along with the Jaguar fighter jets, defence sources told ANI.

The Indian Navy has also inducted



the missile in its fleet for the MiG-29K naval fighter jets, they said.

The stand-off weapon will give Indian fighter pilots the option of engaging and taking out targets like communication centres or radar stations, the sources said.

The procurement was part of the emergency powers given by the Defence Ministry to the armed forces to equip themselves with critical weapons and equipment after the standoff with China started in 2020.

The missiles have a longer range

than the Spice-2000s used in the Balakot air strikes in 2019.

The Indian Air Force has gone in for multiple weapon systems including the long-range systems from both abroad and Indian vendors.

(Contd on page 5)

BALLISTIC MISSILES **fired by Houthi rebels** **damage oil tanker**

JERUSALEM, Apr 27 (AP)

BALLISTIC missiles fired by Yemen's Houthi rebels caused "minor damage" to a Panama-flagged oil tanker travelling through the Red Sea on Friday, authorities said.

The attack follows an uptick in assaults launched by the Houthis in recent days after a relative lull in their months-long campaign over Israel's war on Hamas in the Gaza Strip.

The rebels fired three missiles in the attack, one of which damaged the Panama-flagged, Seychelles-registered *Andromeda Star*, the US military's Central Command said. The private security firm Ambrey described the tanker as being "engaged in Russia-linked trade." The vessel was travelling from Primorsk, Russia, to Vadinar, India, Ambrey said.

Houthi military spokesman Brig. Gen. Yahya Saree later claimed the attack early Saturday in a prerecorded statement aired by the rebels. He described the tanker as being "directly hit."

Another vessel, the Antiqua-Barbados-flagged, Liberia-operated *Maisha*, was also nearby at the time of the assault, the US said. The attack occurred off Mocha, Yemen, near the Babel-Mandeb Strait, which connects the Red Sea to the Gulf of Aden. The Houthis have launched more than 50 attacks on shipping, seized one vessel and sank another since November, according to the US Maritime Administration.

**Panama-flagged
'Andromeda Star'
was travelling
from Primorsk,
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Iran to free ~~16 INDIANS~~ on seized ship

NEW DELHI, Apr 27 (IANS)

THE 16 remaining Indian crew members on board a cargo ship seized by Iran are set to be released soon, Iran Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian assured his Portuguese counterpart Paulo Rangel in a telephonic conversation on Saturday.

"The humanitarian issue of the release of the ship's crew is of our serious concern and we have announced consular access, release, and extradition to their ambassadors in Tehran,"



Abdollahian was quoted as saying by the Iranian Foreign Ministry during his discussion with Rangel on MSC Aries - the seized Israeli ship carrying the Portuguese flag.

Last week, Deck Cadet Ann Tessa Joseph, one of the 17 Indian crew members on board the seized vessel, returned home as External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, who had spoken to Abdollahian on the matter, said, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's guarantee works not just within the country, but also outside.

(Contd on page 5)

Manipur violence CONTINUES

IMPHAL, Apr 27 (PTI)

TWO

CRPF personnel were killed and two others injured as militants attacked a camp of security forces in Manipur's Bishnupur district in the early hours of Saturday, police said.

The militants attacked an IRBn (India Reserve Battalion) camp at Naranseina in the Moirang police station area, they said. "The militants fired indiscriminately from hilltops,



2 CRPF men killed in militant attack

targeting the camp. It started around 12.30 am and continued till about 2.15 am. The militants also hurled bombs, one of which exploded in the outpost of CRPF's 128 battalion," a senior police officer said.

The deceased were identified as Sub-Inspector N Sarkar, a native of Assam's Kokrajhar district, and head constable Arup Saini of Bankura district in West Bengal, he said.

The injured were Inspector Jadav Das and constable Aftab Das, he said, adding that they received splinter wounds.

(Contd on page 5)

Man killed in group gunfight

IMPHAL, Apr 27 (PTI)

GUNFIGHT broke out between two groups in Manipur, following which a 33-year-old man was found dead, police said on Saturday. The gunfight happened at Sinam Kom on the border of the Kangpokpi and Imphal East districts on Friday night, they said. He was identified as Laishram Prem, police said.