

No govt order on Maldives troops recall: Navy chief

New Delhi: Union government has not told the defence personnel to pull out from Maldives following a request from Male, Navy chief Admiral R Hari Kumar said on Thursday.

India's ties with Maldives have come under strain after Maldives President Mohamed Muizzu's election win last year pledging to end his country's "India-first" policy and later calling for withdrawal of Indi-

an troops by March 15. Muizzu's decisions are seen as a pivot away from India to build stronger ties with China in a region where New Delhi and Beijing compete for influence.

"We await instructions, whatever is the decision," Kumar said when asked about the return of defence personnel from Maldives, adding that New Delhi has "not really" issued any communication to the Navy so far. REUTERS

Padma Vibhushan for Venkaiah Naidu, Chiranjeevi, Bhushan for Foxconn CEO

New Delhi: Former vice-president M Venkaiah Naidu, Telugu superstar and politician K Chiranjeevi, social worker and founder of Sulabh International Bindeshwar Pathak, actor Vyjayantimala Bali and Bharat Natyam exponent Padma Subrahmanyam are the five recipients of Padma Vibhushan this year.

Global electronics giant Foxconn chief Young Liu, actors Mithun Chakraborty and the late Vijayakanth besides music director Pyarelal Sharma (of Laxmikant-Pya-

Kirti Chakra for Army doctor, 5 others

An Army doctor who laid down his life after rescuing others during a major fire near Siachen Glacier last July is among 6 soldiers to be awarded Kirti Chakra, the second highest medal for gallantry during peacetime. **FLAP OPP**

relal fame) were among the 17 awarded Padma Bhushan.

First woman Supreme Court judge and former go-

vernor M Fathima Beevi and singer Usha Uthup made it to the list of Padma Bhushan as well. Rohan Bopanna, the world No. 1 doubles tennis player, art collector Kiran Nadar and former banker Kalpana Morparia were among those awarded Padma Shri. Awarding "unsung heroes", engaged in social sphere and working in areas such as climate and medicine, is evident in this year's selection as well. TNN

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Army doctor among 6 to get Kirti Chakra, 2 of them posthumously

16 Soldiers Awarded With Shaurya Chakra

Times News Network

New Delhi: Army doctor Captain Anshuman Singh (26), who laid down his life after rescuing others during a fire near Siachen Glacier last July, is among the six soldiers to be awarded the Kirti Chakra, the country's second highest medal for gallantry during peacetime, on Republic Day.

The two others awarded Kirti Chakras posthumously are Havildar Abdul Majid (Para-Special Forces) and Sepoy Pawan Kumar (Rashtriya Rifles), both of whom displayed exemplary bravery during several operations in J&K.

Majors Digvijay Singh Rawat (Para-Special Forces), Deependra Vikram Basnet (Sikh Regiment) and Havildar Pawan Kumar Yadav (Mahar Regiment) are the other awardees of the Kirti Chakra.

The 16 Shaurya Chakra awardees include Majors Manoj Francis PF (Para-Special Forces) and Amandeep Jakhar (Sikh Regiment), Captains M V Pranjali (Rashtriya



Captain Anshuman Singh died after rescuing others during a fire near Siachen Glacier last July

Rifles, posthumous) and Akshat Upadhyay (Jat Regiment), Naib Subedar Baria Sanjay Kumar Bhamar Singh (Mahar Regiment), Havildar Sanjay Kumar (Assam Rifles), Rifleman Alok Rao (Assam Rifles, posthumous) and civilian Parshotam Kumar, associated with Rashtriya Rifles.

Lieutenant Bimal Ranjan Behera from Navy, and IAF pilots Wing Commander Shalish Singh and Flight Lieutenant Hrishikesh Jayan Karuthedath are the other awardees. A CRPF assistant commandant, Bibhor Kumar Singh and four J&K Police officials, deputy superintendent Mohan Lal, sub inspector Faroz Ahmad Dar, assistant sub-inspector Amit Raina and constable Varun Singh, also get Shaurya Chakras.

Most gallantry awards for Red belt, J&K service

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New Delhi: Two BSF personnel killed during a UN peace-keeping mission in Congo and current DG (law and order) in UP Police Prashant Kumar, popularly called the "encounter specialist", were honoured for gallantry on Republic Day eve, which saw 1,132 personnel from the police, fire services, home guards, civil defence and correctional service being named for four different categories of police and service medals.

The medals announced on Thursday include 277 gallantry medals, comprising two President's Medal for Gallantry (PMG) and 275 medals for gallantry (GM); 102 President's Medal for Distinguished Service (PSM); and 753 Medal for Meritorious Service (MSM).

Among the 277 gallantry medal awardees, 119 were honoured for brave actions in Left Wing Extremism affected areas and 133 in terrorism-hit J&K. At 72, J&K Police have the highest number of med-

als, followed by CRPF with 66, Chhattisgarh Police with 26, Jharkhand Police with 21, Sashastra Seema Bal with 21, Maharashtra Police with 18 and Odisha Police with 15.

Figuring among the eight gallantry winners in Delhi Police is ASI Shambhu Dayal Meena who was killed after being stabbed by a snatcher who he had confronted.

Overall, CRPF has got the highest police medals this year at 127, followed by J&K Police with 86, UP Police with 83, Maharashtra Police with 62, BSF with 53, Chhattisgarh Police with 38, Jharkhand Police with 36, SSB with 34 and Delhi Police with 29.

Of the 102 President's Medal for Distinguished Service, 94 have gone to personnel of the police service and four each to fire service and civil defence and home guard service personnel. The 102 Medal for Meritorious Service announced include 67 for police service, 32 for fire services, 27 for civil defence and home guard services and 27 for correctional services.

BrahMos missile system exports to begin soon, says DRDO chief

■ By Ajit Dubey

NEW DELHI, Jan 25 (ANI)

INDIA will begin the export of ground systems for the BrahMos supersonic cruise missile in the next 10 days while the missiles of the system would be sent by March this year, DRDO chairman Dr Samir V Kamat said on Thursday.

The Defence Research and Development Organisation chairman, in an interview with ANI, said the first set of BrahMos missile systems is expected to reach Philippines by the end of March.

"The ground systems should be sent in the next 10 days, the missiles will hopefully go by March (to Philippines)," Kamat said. BrahMos missiles export to the Philippines is the biggest ever defence export contract signed with any foreign country by India.

India had signed a deal with the



Indian Navy carried out successful engagement of land target at enhanced range with advanced supersonic cruise missile. (PTI)

Philippines worth USD 375 million in January 2022 for the supply of

Orders for 307 ATAGS howitzers for Army to be placed: Kamat

NEW DELHI, Jan 25 (ANI)

THE first order of 307 Advanced Towed Artillery Gun Systems (ATAGS) for deployment along the borders with China and Pakistan will be placed before the end of the current financial year--FY 24, Defence Research and Development Organisation chairman Dr Samir V Kamat said on Thursday.

shore-based anti-ship variant of the BrahMos supersonic cruise missile.

In an interview with ANI, the DRDO chairman said that exports are going to play a significant role in the defence sector. "I am sure over the coming years exports are going to become a very important part of our portfolio," he said.

66 pc decline in terrorist incidents in J&K after removal of Article 370: Shah

JAMMU, Jan 25 (PTI)

ASSERTING that a new era of peace has begun in Jammu and Kashmir, Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Thursday said the union territory has witnessed a 66 per cent decline in terrorist incidents and an 81 per cent drop in civilian killings since the scrapping of Article 370.

Addressing a function in Jammu via videoconferencing, Shah credited Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership for transforming Jammu and Kashmir, which was "known for terrorism", into a tourism hub.

Shah virtually flagged off 100 e-buses in Jammu and distrib-



uted more than 1,000 appointment letters to Jammu and Kashmir Administrative Service (JKAS) and police officers, and compassionate appointees. "I want to tell you that there has been a fall of 66 per cent in terrorism-related incidents. There has been a decline of 81 per cent in civil-

ian killings and 48 per cent in killings of security forces after the scrapping of Article 370," he told the gathering.

This shows that a new era of happiness, peace and normalcy has begun in Jammu and Kashmir, he said.

The Centre revoked Article 370, which accorded a special status to the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir, on August 5, 2019. The government also divided Jammu and Kashmir into two union territories -- Jammu and Kashmir, and Ladakh. Shah said 2,654 organised stone-pelting incidents took place in Jammu and Kashmir in 2000 but no such incident took place in 2023.

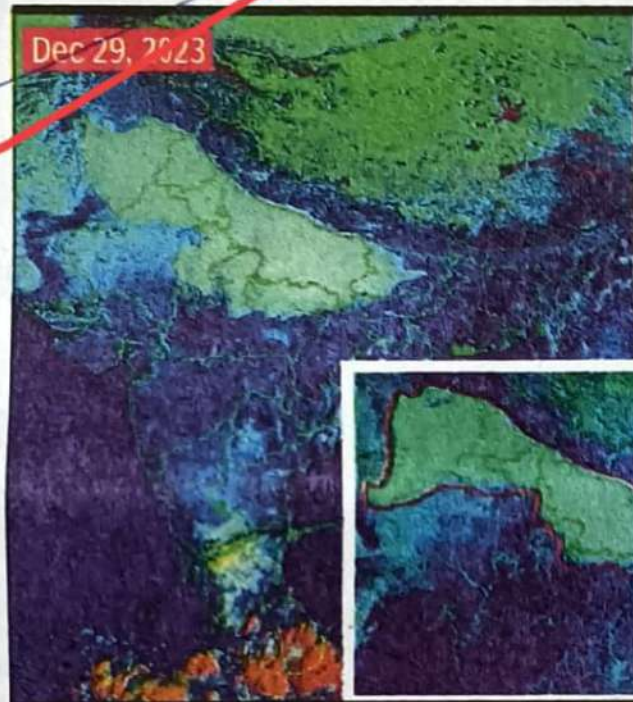
North India covered in fog for over 1 month, longest spell in sat records

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New Delhi: The giant fog layer over north India, which at times covers a 2,500km swathe from Lahore to Dhaka, has now persisted for more than a month. This makes it the longest spell of large-scale fog/low cloud cover over the region since daily satellite data started being analysed in 2014.

Since satellites started being used to monitor fog, the previous longest spell in the region was recorded in the winter of 2019-20. It lasted roughly three weeks, from Dec 14 to Jan 2, met officials said. The current spell has already lasted for around 32 days and is likely to persist for three-four days more, as per forecasts.

"This winter, fog and low-cloud coverage over the Indo-Gangetic plains started around Dec 24 in the western end covering Punjab and Harya-



The fog spell began in Punjab-Haryana around Dec 24 and spread east. It continues to cause 'cold day' conditions in the region as well as bitterly chilly mornings (cold wave)



na. It spread to Delhi, north Rajasthan and west UP by Dec 25, and gradually covered east UP in the next few days and Bihar by Dec 31. Thereafter, it extended into parts of Bengal, Bangladesh and the northeast," said R K Jenamani, senior IMD scientist who specialises in fog.

This is a single spell of fog/low cloud since it has continued to cover a large area of north India every day since Dec 24, Jenamani said. During this period, the fog layer has waxed and waned in terms of the area under its coverage.

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