

DRDO turns to Pune firm for sub-launched aerial vehicles

New Delhi: DRDO has decided to develop underwater-launched unmanned aerial vehicles (ULUAVs) that will be launched from a submarine, reports **Surendra Singh**.

DRDO's Technology Development Fund (TDF) has awarded a contract for ULUAVs to Pune-based defence startup, Sagar Defence Engineering Pvt Ltd, which had earlier developed a maritime spotter drone for Indian Navy.

Mridul Babbar, director & vice-president of business development, Sagar Defence, told **TOI**, "This project is highly advanced. However, the ULUAV technology they (US) have is inferior as its range is 7 km and can last for 30 minutes in one charge. However, DRDO has entrusted us to develop a ULUAV that can last for one hour in a single charge and can have a range of 20 km."

Lt Gen Dwivedi named next Army chief, as per seniority

Extension For Gen Pande Had Sparked Supersession Speculation

Rajat.Pandit@timesgroup.com

New Delhi: Lt General Upen- dra Dwivedi will take over as the next Army chief from Gen Manoj Pande on June 30, govt announced late Tuesday, junking all speculation that a supersession could be in the offing for the post. Govt has gone by the seniority principle in appointing Lt Gen Dwivedi, who was commissioned into the 18 Jammu & Kashmir Rifles in December 1984 and is currently the vice chief, as the 30th Army chief.

He will take over the reins of 12-lakh strong force at a time when India remains locked in a tense military confrontation with China along 3,488-km Line of Actual Control, which is into its fifth year now, while there has been no



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let-up in Pakistan's attempts to actively aid and abet cross-border terrorism.

In an unusual move on May 26, govt had granted a month's extension to Gen Pande just six days before his slated retirement, triggering speculation that a supersession in the military hierarchy was on the cards. **TOI**, however, had then quoted a top govt official as saying that "any speculation or controversy is unwarranted" be-

cause it had been decided that the top military post would be filled only after the election process was completed.

An alumnus of Sainik School at Rewa in Madhya Pradesh like the new Navy chief Admiral Dinesh Tripathi, Lt Gen Dwivedi is well-versed with the threats posed by both China and Pakistan, having served a two-year tenure as GoC-in-C of Northern Command before becoming vice

chief in Feb.

China, which has till now rejected India's push for sequential disengagement, de-escalation and de-induction in eastern Ladakh, will be the foremost national security challenge that he will have to grapple with. The People's Liberation Army, which has upped the ante in the eastern sector as well, has over 1.4 lakh troops 'forward deployed' along the entire LAC.

As the Northern Command chief, Lt Gen Dwivedi provided "strategic guidance and operational oversight" for planning and executing sustained operations along the northern and western borders with China and Pakistan, in addition to overseeing counter-terrorism operations in J&K.

Days after bus attack, fresh strike in J&K leaves 2 critical

Jammu. Security forces killed a terrorist in a shootout late Tuesday evening after a group of three gunmen threw a grenade and fired gunshots at a house in Seda Sohal village of Hiranagar tehsil in J&K's Kathua district, leaving two villagers critically injured, sources said, reports **Sanjay Khaju-**

► **Reasi attack: High alert in Jammu, Rajouri, P 28**

ria. This comes after Sunday's deadly ambush on a bus carrying pilgrims in Reasi district, where nine people were killed and 41 wounded.

Officials remained silent on any casualty in Kathua, which is close to the Pakistan border. The attack occurred after locals sounded the alarm over "suspicious movement" in the area.

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EAM: Terror export can't be policy of a good neighbour

'Will Make Efforts To Resolve Issues With China'

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Cross-border terrorism cannot be the policy of a good neighbour, S Jaishankar said Tuesday responding to questions about ties with Pakistan. Shortly after taking charge as external affairs minister for the second time, Jaishankar also said relations with neighbours will be the first and overriding priority for the new NDA govt's foreign policy under Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

According to the minister, Bharat First and Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam will be the guiding axioms for India's foreign policy. On China, he said the focus will be on completing the disengagement process in eastern Ladakh.

"With Pakistan, we have the issue of terrorism — cross-border terrorism — how do we find a solution to it...that cannot be a policy



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of a good neighbour," said the minister, talking to reporters after assuming office. He was asked about former Pakistan PM Nawaz Sharif's peace overture in his message to Modi and ties with Pakistan. On Nawaz's message, Jaishankar recalled Modi's response to it. Appreciating Nawaz's message, Modi had stressed the significance of security

in his response.

Asked about ties with China, Jaishankar said some issues remained along the border with that country and efforts will be made to resolve them. "Our focus with regard to China will be on how to resolve the remaining issues," he said. India has repeatedly told China this is important for return of normalcy to ties.

"Bharat First" (India First) and Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam (the world is one) will be the two guiding axioms of Indian foreign policy. Together, we are very confident it will position us as 'Vishwa Bandhu' — a country which is in a very turbulent world, in a very divided world, a world of conflicts and tensions, it would actually position us as a country which is trusted by many, whose prestige and influence will grow, whose interests will be advanced," he said.

US NSA coming next week for first high-level engagement with Modi 3.0

Sachin.Parashar
@timesgroup.com

New Delhi: US national security advisor (NSA) Jake Sullivan is likely to visit India next week for a meeting with his counterpart, Ajit Doval, to undertake a comprehensive review of cooperation under the initiative on critical and emerging technology (iCET). The meeting, previously scheduled for early this year, was put off twice because of Sullivan's preoccupation with the Gaza conflict.

Sullivan is likely to meet Indian officials on June 18 in what will be the first high-level engagement between the two govts under PM Narendra Modi's third term in office. Indian officials are waiting for US to formally announce the visit in a few days.

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US president Biden and Modi had launched iCET in May 2022 to expand strategic

technology partnership, with focus on co-production and co-development, and defence industrial cooperation between the two countries. The meeting will see talks on plans under the same initiative to address regulatory barriers and develop a new defence industrial roadmap for joint development and production, including of jet engines. Talks are also expected on progress in implementing GE-HAL jet engine technology deal which is expected to see unprecedented transfer of technology from US to India. The deal was announced during Modi's state visit to US last year.

However, Sullivan's meetings will also be closely followed for what he has to say on Khalistan separatist Gurpatwant Singh Pannun foiled murder-for-hire plot which can potentially turn into a major irritant in the relationship. US is pressing

India for action against the Indian official who allegedly masterminded the plot to eliminate Pannun, a US and Canadian national.

The two sides are expected to discuss progress in the probe that India is carrying out into the case since Nov last year, after having received information from the US. Indian govt maintains that it is investigating the leads shared by the US because these have a bearing on India's own security.

The US has also been pushing India to join the Canadian probe into the killing of another Sikh separatist last year near Vancouver.

A White House readout of President Biden's call with Modi last week had said they also discussed Sullivan's upcoming travel to New Delhi to engage the new govt on "shared US-India priorities, including the trusted, strategic technology partnership".