

# Russia holds N-drills, Ukraine seeks Swedish fighter jets after Trump-Putin talks delayed

**Moscow/Kyiv:** Russia said on Wednesday it had carried out a major training exercise involving nuclear weapons, a day after the US announced a delay in plans for a second summit between Presidents Vladimir Putin and Donald Trump on the Ukraine conflict.

The Kremlin released video showing General Valery Gerasimov, head of the general staff, reporting to Putin on the drills. Russia said it fired missiles from ground launchers, submarines and aircraft, including intercontinental ballistic weapons that are capable of striking the US. Nato has also been conducting nuclear deterrence exercises this month.

In a separate development, Sweden said it had signed a letter of intent to export Gripen fighter jets to Ukraine, as European governments move to boost Kyiv's defences in a war that



Russia on Wednesday unleashed a broad attack that hit Ukrainian power plants, a kindergarten and other sites, killing six people. On Wednesday, video footage posted by Ukrainian officials showed emergency workers carrying children from a burning kindergarten in Kharkiv. The strike on the kindergarten killed one person and wounded several others, officials said

has ground on for three years and eight months, and shows no sign of ending soon.

Ukrainian pilots have been in Sweden to test the Gripen, a rugged and relatively low-cost

option compared to aircraft such as the US F-35. "We have started the work to obtain Gripens... and expect the future contract to allow us to acquire no less than 100 such jets," Uk-

rainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said during a visit to Swedish defence manufacturer Saab. Kyiv aims start using them next year, he said.

After months of stalled diplomacy, Putin and Trump spoke last week and announced they would hold a summit in Hungary that the Kremlin said could take place within a couple of weeks. But after the two countries' top diplomats spoke on Monday, the US said the next day that Trump had no plans to meet Putin "in the immediate future". Trump said he did not want to have a wasted meeting—something the Kremlin said Putin also wanted to avoid.

Russian officials said, however, that preparations continued for a summit. A US official said the summit had not been cancelled, but the US was focusing for now on Trump's upcoming visit to Asia. REUTERS

Officers jailed for

Migrant boat sinks

# S Korea launches first 3,600 tonne naval attack sub



GEOJE, Oct 22 (IANS)

SOUTH Korea launched its first 3,600-tonne-class naval submarine on Wednesday, in a bid to bolster its underwater deterrence against North Korean threats.

The first of the three Changbogo-III Batch-II class submarines under construction was unveiled in a launch ceremony at shipbuilder Hanwha Ocean Co.'s dockyard in Geoje, about 330 kilometres southeast of Seoul, on Wednesday.

Named after iconic Joseon Dynasty (1392-1910) engineer JangYeong-sil, the 89-meter-long Batch-II submarine is part of the military's Changbogo-III or KSS-III programme to acquire advanced diesel-electric attack submarines.

"As the Navy's first 3,600-tonne-class submarine, the ROKS Jang Yeong-sil is a world-class diesel submarine and a core strategic asset with enhanced capabilities to respond to various maritime threats," the Navy and the Defence Acquisition Programme Administration (DAPA) said. Compared with the 3,000-tonne Batch-I class submarine that has been commissioned for active duty, officials said the new submarine is not only larger in size but is equipped

with upgraded detection and strike capabilities that help the submarine remain stealthy for a longer period of time.

The submarine's combat system, which serves as the brain, and the sonar system, which functions as the eyes, have both been upgraded for better information processing and target detection features, while its lithium-ion batteries allow it to stay underwater longer and move faster. An array of sound absorption technologies has been incorporated to increase the submarine's covertness, while more homegrown equipment has been used to ensure a more stable operation of the submarine, officials said.

**NORTH KOREA FIRES 1ST BALLISTIC MISSILES IN FIVE MONTHS:** NORTH Korea fired its first ballistic missiles in five months Wednesday, about a week before South Korea is scheduled to host the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit and US President Donald Trump's visit on the occasion.

The Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) said it detected multiple short-range ballistic missiles launched northeastward at about 8:10 a.m. from Junghwa in North Korea's southern North Hwanghae Province.

# Army undergoing high-tech upgrade for next-gen battles

## Tank-Killing Missiles Part Of Overhaul

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New Delhi: From inducting modern sniper rifles, machine guns, carbines, rocket-launchers, loitering munitions, tank-killing missiles and software-defined radios to raising new 'Bhairav' light commando units and 'Ashni' drone platoons, the Army is now progressively transforming its 382 infantry battalions to meet the myriad challenges of tech-driven warfare.

"Multiple initiatives, institutional measures and technology transformations are being undertaken. The focus is on lethality, mobility, battlefield transparency, situational awareness, survivability, training and restructuring," director general of infantry Lt-General Ajay Kumar said Wednesday.

The aim is to equip, upskill and enhance the capability of the humble foot-soldiers, who



**BATTLE REWIRED**

are often forgotten in the race to acquire big-ticket fighter jets, submarines and howitzers, to "fight as weapon systems".

The infantry is by far the largest arm of the 11.5-lakh strong Army. Moreover, boots on the ground will always be relevant because victory in conflicts, be it Russia-Ukraine or Israel-Hamas, will continue to be measured in the amount of land or real estate captured, Lt-Gen Kumar said.

Towards this end, the Army has inked a wide array of deals for ISR (intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance) drones, kamikaze drones, loitering mu-

nitions for precision strikes, night sights, bullet-proof jackets, ballistic helmets, foliage penetration radars, light specialist and all-terrain vehicles, among others.

The latest is the Rs 2,770 crore contract for 4.2 lakh close-quarter battle carbines, 60% to be manufactured by Bharat Forge and the rest by PLR Systems (Adani Defence-Israel Weapon Industries joint venture). "Deliveries will start in a year and be completed in two years," Lt-Gen Kumar said. Similarly, with there being a huge deficiency in new-generation Anti-Tank Guided Missiles, emergency procurements of a limited number of launchers and missiles are being undertaken till a viable indigenous option is available. One such deal is for 12 Javelin launchers and 104 missiles from the US.

"The recent graduation to the philosophy of 'shoot-to-kill' (from the earlier shoot-to-wound) has also enabled upgrade of assault rifles and light machine guns from 5.56 mm to 7.62 mm calibre. Vintage sniper rifles are also being replaced with .338 sniper rifles," Lt-Gen Kumar said.

With drone warfare redefining the nature of conflicts, the infantry is also trial-evaluating nine different types of drones for ISR and 'suicide' missions, in addition to the deals already inked.

This is also in tune with ongoing force restructuring under which all 382 infantry battalions (each has 800 soldiers) have now raised "first person view" Ashni drone platoons as part of the "eagle on the arm" concept. "Each platoon of 20-25 specially trained soldiers will have surveillance as well as short and medium-range loitering munitions," he said.

Parallely, the infantry has also raised the first five 'Bhairav' light commando battalions, each with 250 specially trained and equipped soldiers, to enhance swift strike capabilities along the borders with Pakistan and China, as was reported by TOI.

"The raising of another four has started. In the next six months, we will have 25 such lean and mean battalions capable of carrying out deep strikes against high-value enemy targets. The aim is to bridge the gap between infantry units and Para-Special Forces," Lt-Gen Kumar said.

# Staggered pan-India SIR likely in a wk, 3 mths for each phase

## May Be Held 1st In States Set For Polls Next Yr

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New Delhi: A staggered pan-India special intensive revision (SIR) of electoral rolls will get underway within four-five days, with each phase likely to be spread over three months, on the lines of the one completed in Bihar. The last intensive revision of the roll was undertaken over two decades ago.

Sources indicated that the nationwide SIR may be held in phases, with certain states/UTs such as J&K and Lakshadweep, which will soon be snow-bound, and ones where nearly 75%-80% of the electorate has been mapped by matching current electors with

### AADHAAR ALONE MAY NOT SUFFICE

Photo: IANS

> **Timeline for pan-India SIR likely to be finalised in a day or two followed by its announcement in 4-5 days**

> **List of documents to be accepted as proof of identity, age and citizenship to more or less remain the same as in the Bihar exercise**

> **Aadhaar will be accepted only as a proof of identity. At least one other document from EC's list may be needed for proof of citizenship and**

entries in the 2003/2004 rolls published after the last intensive revision, being left out of the initial phase.

"They can be taken up later as barely 20%-25% of electors in these states will need to submit documents to prove their eligibility as per Article 326 of the Constitution. The immediate priority will be the five states due for assembly polls next



CEC Gyanesh Kumar flanked by ECs in the capital on Wednesday

residence, an official said

> **Documents unique to a state/UT may be considered**

> **The list of 11 documents is not exhaustive but only indicative, officials added**

year," said an EC official.

Going by the three-month SIR schedule followed in Bihar, the final roll — to be published after claims and objections to the draft roll are settled — for states/UTs likely to be covered in the initial phase may be out by Jan-end or beginning of Feb.

The preparation for the upcoming countrywide SIR

— the intent for which was announced by EC in its June 24 notification for the SIR in Bihar — was the key topic of discussion at the two-day conference of chief electoral officers being held by EC on Wednesday and Thursday.

The conference's opening day, presided over by chief election commissioner Gyanesh Kumar, saw EC assess the preparedness of all state/UT CEO offices for the nationwide SIR. The meeting is a follow-up of the Sept 10 CEO's conference, when all CEOs had briefed EC on the last SIR undertaken and the roll published thereafter.

Sources said CEOs are upbeat about the upcoming nationwide SIR, with some states already having mapped up to 75% of their electorate based on the roll from the last intensive revision.

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GDP, inflation.

Naga flag & constitution

# Trump again says India to cut Russia oil, Modi ignores claim

Chidanand Rajghatta | TNN

Washington: US President Donald Trump said on Tuesday that he had spoken to "Prime Minister Modi today" and that "he's (Modi's) not going to buy much oil from Russia", suggesting that he had received assurances from the PM that New Delhi would be tapering Russian oil purchases without completely stopping the transactions.

"We just have a very good relationship... He wants to see that war (between Russia and Ukraine) end as much as I do," Trump said at a White House Diwali event. "So they have cut it (oil purchases) way back, and are continuing to cut it way back..." he added. Trump also dropped a clanger by disclosing he and Modi talked about "let's have no war with Pakistan", though he appeared to be talking about an earlier conversation.

In a social media post, PM Modi confirmed Trump's call but did not address the issue of capping Russian oil.

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Photo: AFP

“Thank you, President Trump, for your phone call and warm Diwali greetings. On this festival of lights, may our two great democracies continue to illuminate the world with hope and stand united against terrorism in all its forms —PM Modi



President Trump lights a diya at White House Tuesday during Diwali celebrations at which FBI chief Kash Patel and other prominent US Indians were also present

► MAGA embraces darkness of racism over WH Diwali, P 16

## No Trump meet in near future as PM may skip Malaysia Asean

India and the US seem at odds over talks between the two leaders, with MEA denying that they discussed Pakistan in the Diwali phone call. Also, in what would rule out any likelihood in the near future of an in-person encounter with Trump, New Delhi is exploring the possibility of Modi addressing the Asean summit meetings in Malaysia later this week virtually, apparently because of the Bihar

polls. The US president said he will be in Malaysia for the event. He is unlikely though to travel to South Africa for the G20 summit next month, where Modi will be present.

The govt is not enthused by the prospect of a Trump meeting in the absence of any breakthrough in trade negotiations, as well as the president's claims ad nauseam about having ended a war between India and Pakistan. P 12