

# Navy gets 3 new ships

NEW DELHI, Mar 30 (PTI)

THE Indian Navy on Monday received three new ships constructed by state-run Garden Reach Shipbuilding and Engineers Ltd (GRSE). The ships -- Dunagiri, Sanshodhak and Agray -- are expected to significantly enhance the Navy's overall combat prowess.

Dunagiri is the fifth ship of Nilgiri class under Project 17A, and second of the class. The ships built under Project 17A are versatile multi-mission platforms, designed to address current and future challenges in the maritime domain. The ship is a reincarnation of the erstwhile INS Dunagiri, a Leander class frigate that was part of the Indian Navy's fleet from 1977 to 2010.

The vessel is integrated with potent weapons including

BrahMos missiles, rockets and torpedoes, according to the Navy.

The state-of-the-art frigate reflects a quantum leap in naval design, stealth, firepower, automation and survivability and is an admirable symbol of India's self-reliance in warship building, it said.

The ship, Sanshodhak, is a survey vessel. It is capable of full scale coastal and deep-water hydrographic survey of ports. Its role also includes collecting oceanographic and geophysical data for defence and civil applications.

With a displacement of about 3,400 tons and overall length 110 metres, Sanshodhak is fitted with state-of-the-art hydrographic equipment such as data acquisition and processing system, autonomous underwater vehicle, remotely operated vehicle and digital side scan sonar.

# Myanmar's junta chief nominated as President

NAYPYIDAW, Mar 30 (IANS)

MYANMAR'S junta chief, Min Aung Hlaing, has been nominated as President in a parliamentary process that seems planned to cement his grip on civil society, local media reported on Monday

The Myanmar junta also appointed Commander-in-Chief of the Myanmar Army Ye Win Oo as Commander-in-Chief of the Defence Services.

Ye Win Oo, on Monday, replaced Min Aung Hlaing, who has been serving as Myanmar's Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services since 2011, Xinhua News Agency reported.

The handover ceremony of the commander-in-chief of defence services was held at the Zeyathiri Beikman in Naypyidaw on Monday.

Min Aung Hlaing has ruled Myanmar since 2021, when he ordered a coup toppling the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi, local media Myanmar Now

reported.

In a vote held in Naypyitaw on Monday, a legislature which has military appointees and allies of the junta-backed Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP) in the majority selected Min Aung Hlaing as President, completing his shift from commander-in-chief of the armed forces to head of state.

As per the military-drafted constitution, the bicameral parliament nominates two

presidential candidates while military representatives who have 25 per cent of parliamentary seats nominate a third.

Of the three candidates, the one getting the most votes becomes President, while the other two become vice presidents.

During the session on Monday, the lower house nominated Min Aung Hlaing as a presidential candidate, while the upper house selected Union Solidarity and Development Party lawmaker Nang Ni Ni Aye, Myanmar Now reported.



Min Aung Hlaing

# Lt Gen Singh steps down as Army vice chief

NEW DELHI, Mar 30 (IANS)

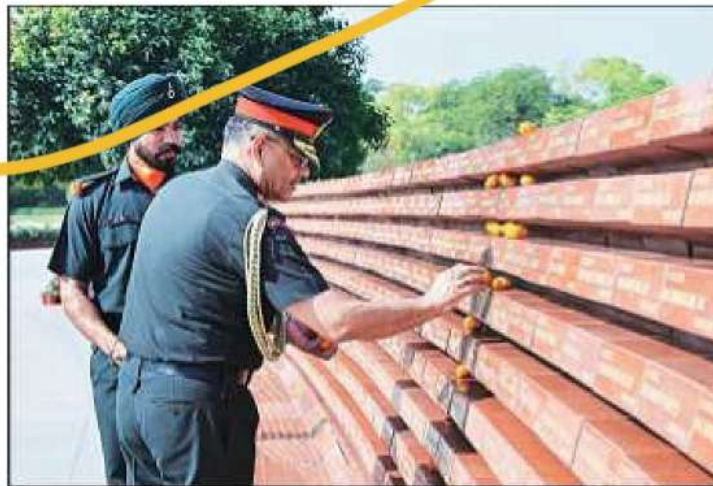
LIEUTENANT General Pushpendra Pal Singh on Monday relinquished the appointment of Vice Chief of the Army Staff, marking the end of his tenure in one of the Indian Army's top leadership positions.

In a post on X, the Indian Army said, "Lieutenant General Pushpendra Singh relinquished the appointment of Vice Chief of the Army Staff, VCOAS."

Following the ceremonial tradition, Lt General Singh paid homage to fallen soldiers by laying a wreath at the National War Memorial in New Delhi. He also reviewed a Guard of Honour at South Block.

An alumnus of La Martiniere College, Lucknow University, and the Indian Military Academy, Dehradun, Lt General Singh has had a distinguished military career spanning several decades.

During his service, he participated in key military operations,



Vice Chief of the Army Staff Lt General Pushpendra Pal Singh pays tribute at the National War Memorial after relinquishing the appointment of Vice Chief of the Army Staff, in New Delhi. (PTI)

including Operation Pawan, Operation Meghdoot, Operation Orchid, and held multiple tenures in Operation Rakshak, gaining extensive operational experience in diverse terrains and conflict zones.

Over the course of his career, Lt General Singh held several important command and staff assignments.

He commanded a Special Forces unit in the Kashmir Valley as well as along the Line of

Control, and later led an Infantry Brigade and a Mountain Division during Operation Snow Leopard along the Line of Actual Control.

He also served as the General Officer Commanding (GOC) of a Corps headquartered in Himachal Pradesh, where he was responsible for strategically significant areas including Jammu, Samba, and Pathankot.

Officials noted that he possesses deep operational insight and a strong understanding of dynamics along both the western and northern borders. Lt General Singh has undergone several prestigious training programmes, including the Staff Course at the Defence Services Staff College in Wellington, the Higher Defence Management Course at the College of Defence Management in Secunderabad, and the Advanced Professional Programme in Public Administration at the Indian Institute of Public Administration.

## After 40 years of service

# Lt General Katiyar to retire as Western Command chief today

CHANDIGARH, Mar 30 (PTI)

LIEUTENANT General Manoj Kumar Katiyar, General Officer Commanding-in-Chief of the Western Command, will retire on Tuesday after 40 years of distinguished service in the Army, according to an official statement.

Speaking to the media on the eve of his retirement, Lt General Katiyar highlighted the significant work undertaken by the Western Command over the last several years, including its role in 'Operation



Sindoor' and 'Operation Rahat' last year. Recalling Operation Sindoor, he said the command successfully thwarted Pakistan's "nefarious" designs and has since maintained a high state of operational readiness.

"We are undertaking large-scale procurement of new equipment, including drones and counter-drone systems and wherever needed, we are also manufacturing these items in-house within our own workshops," he told reporters at the Army's Western Command Headquarters in Chandimandir in Panchkula. He also acknowledged the command's role in Operation Rahat during the mas-

sive floods last year, and thanked the civil administration, the central armed police forces (CAPFs), the Border Security Force (BSF), and the local population for their support across Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Delhi.

"The Western Command has undertaken significant work over the past several years. As you are aware, during Operation Sindoor last year, we thwarted Pakistan's nefarious designs and achieved success. "For this accomplishment, I wish to congratulate all the troops of the Western Command and express my deep gratitude to them," he said.

Lieutenant General Katiyar had assumed the charge as Army Commander, Western Command on July 1, 2023. An alumnus of National Defence Academy, Khadakwasla and Indian Military Academy, Dehradun, Katiyar was commissioned into the 23rd Battalion of The Rajput Regiment in June 1986. He is a graduate of the Defence Service Staff College, National Defence College, and he is also a distinguished graduate of the National War College, USA. In a career spanning 40 years, Lt General Katiyar has served across a wide spectrum of operational areas in Siachen Glacier, along LoC both in the 15 and 16 Corps and along the LAC in 3, 14 and 33 Corps.

# Russian Dy Foreign Minister meets Jaishankar, Misri

NEW DELHI, Mar 30 (PTI)

INDIA and Russia on Monday explored ways to further expand their already close strategic partnership against the backdrop of the escalating West Asia crisis and its economic fallout on the entire world.

The escalating conflict in West Asia is learnt to have figured prominently in Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Andrey Rudenko's meetings in New Delhi including with External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar.

"Good to meet Deputy Foreign Minister Andrey Rudenko of Russia. Spoke about further advancement of our wide-ranging cooperation. As well as regional and global develop-



External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar during a meeting with Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Russia Andrey Rudenko, in New Delhi. (PTI)

ments," Jaishankar said on social media.

People familiar with the meeting said the crisis in West Asia figured in the discussion.

Rudenko also co-chaired India-Russia Foreign Office Consultations along with Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri.

"Both sides reviewed the full spectrum of Special and Privileged Strategic Partnership and shared perspectives on bilateral, regional and global issues of mutual interest," External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said.

It is learnt that the two sides reviewed implementation of decisions taken at the summit talks between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Russian President Vladimir Putin last December.

# Israel Parlt passes \$270 billion Budget

## Parlt allows Netanyahu to complete his term

TEL AVIV, Mar 30 (AP)

ISRAEL'S Parliament on Monday passed its annual Budget in a marathon overnight session, ensuring that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's Government can complete its term until the fall.

Israel needed to pass a Budget before April 1 in order to avoid triggering early elections. Netanyahu still reserves the right to call early elections before then if he wants.

The USD 270 billion Budget, Israel's largest ever, included a 20 per cent increase for the Ministry of Defence due to the ongoing war against Iran. The Ministry's budget has swollen to USD 45 billion, forcing cuts in other Government ministries.

Recent opinion polls in Israel indicate that while Israelis over-



whelmingly support the war, Netanyahu and his political coalition don't appear to be benefiting. Israel's Opposition slammed the Budget for increasing funding to Israel's ultra-Orthodox communities at a time when the country is facing soaring costs over its war in Iran and is still reeling from a two-year war in Gaza. Opposition leader Yair Lapid called it "the greatest theft

in the state's history."

"The Government of gluttony and evasion carried out a nocturnal heist," former Prime Minister Naftali Bennett, who is expected to challenge Netanyahu in upcoming elections, wrote on X. Opposition parties were especially furious over a last-minute amendment providing an additional USD 250 million to ultra-Orthodox schools.

Anger has increased at the ultra-Orthodox community for its refusal to allow its young men to serve in the military while it is stretched to its breaking point and is in desperate need of additional soldiers. Military service is mandatory for most Jews.

Far-right Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich praised the Budget for "taking care of all Israeli citizens, without exception."

## Israeli Parliament approves death penalty for Palestinians convicted of murdering Israelis

JERUSALEM, Mar 30 (AP)

ISRAEL'S Parliament on Monday passed a law approving the death penalty on Palestinians convicted of murdering Israelis.

The Bill's passage marked a major victory for Israel's far-right, which has pushed hard for the measure.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu came to the chamber to vote yes in person. The law makes the death penalty - by hanging - the default punishment for West Bank Palestinians convicted for nationalistic killings.

The law also gives Israeli courts the authority to impose either the death penalty or life imprisonment on its own citizens. It is not retro-active and will apply only to future cases.

The measure has been harshly condemned by Israeli and Palestinian rights groups, who say it is racist, draconian and unlikely to deter attacks by Palestinian attackers.

Opponents of the legislation call it racist, draconian and unlikely to deter attacks by Palestinian militants.

# Trump mulls seizing Iran's Kharg Island oil terminal



Kharg Island

■ By Jon Gambrell and David Rising

DUBAI, Mar 30 (AP)

**US PRESIDENT** Donald Trump openly mused about seizing Iran's Kharg Island oil terminal in the Persian Gulf and the United States and Israel kept up their attacks on Monday on the Islamic Republic, even as there were signs of progress in nascent ceasefire talks.

He also threatened widespread destruction of Iran's

energy resources and other vital infrastructure, including desalination plants, if a deal to end the war is not reached 'shortly'.

Tehran, meanwhile, attacked a key water and electrical plant in Kuwait, part of its campaign targeting the Gulf Arab States, and an oil refinery in northern Israel.

As a diplomatic effort being facilitated by Pakistan toward ending the war moved ahead, President Trump said Iran had agreed to allow 20 oil tankers

## Iran's Revolutionary Guard says it will target residences of US, Israeli officials

DUBAI, Mar 30 (AP)

**IRAN'S** joint military command spokesperson declared on Sunday that the private residences of US and Israeli officials have now become legitimate targets for Iran, as the war in the Middle East enters its first month and continues to widen across the region.

The threat was aimed at United States and Israeli military and political officials living in the Middle East, including Israel.

Ebrahim Zolfaghari said that this decision has been made after the US and Israel have targeted residential homes of Iranians in various cities across Iran.

**IRAN LAUNCHES ATTACKS ON ISRAEL AND HITS MORE INFRASTRUCTURE TARGETS IN GULF STATES:** Sirens sounded at dawn near Israel's main nuclear research centre, a part of the country that has been targeted repeatedly in recent days. Israel's military also said it had taken out two drones launched from Yemen, where the Iranian-backed Houthis entered the war on Saturday with their first missile attack. Later, a fire broke out at an oil refinery in the northern city of Haifa.

through the Strait of Hormuz starting Monday as "a sign of respect." At the same time, with 2,500 US Marines now in the region and a similarly sized contingent on its way, he raised the idea of taking Iran's Kharg Island.

"Maybe we take Kharg Island, maybe we don't," he told the 'Financial Times' in an interview published early Monday. "We have a lot of options."

Trump says diplomatic approach is going well, but sug-

gests military expansion is possible: Trump told reporters aboard Air Force One late Sunday that the US was negotiating "directly and indirectly" with Iran, though Iran has insisted that it has not been in any talks with Washington.

"We're doing extremely well in that negotiation, but you never know with Iran because we negotiate with them and then we always have to blow them up," Trump said.

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## Indian national killed in Iranian strikes in Kuwait

DUBAI, Mar 30 (PTI)

**AN INDIAN** national has been killed in Kuwait in Iranian strikes on a power and water desalination plant, taking the total number of Indian fatalities from the ongoing conflict in West Asia to eight since it began a month back.

Kuwait's Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy said a service build-

ing at the facility was damaged in Sunday's attack, Kuwait's state-run KUNA news agency reported.

It was the fifth Indian fatality on land since the Iran-US conflict erupted on February 28.

The embassy of India in Kuwait, confirming the death, expressed its "deepest condolences" at the "tragic demise" of the Indian national.

Ambassador Paramita Trpathi visited Kuwait's central mortuary on Monday where the mortal remains of the Indian national who lost his life last evening during the attack on a desalination facility, were brought, the embassy said on social media.

"The Embassy is in touch with the family of the deceased Indian national and is

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