Major activities of Department of Defence for the month of March, 2018

**International Cooperation**

1. A delegation led by Defence Minister of Mongolia visited India and had a bilateral meeting with RM on 8th March, 2018 wherein a range of issues pertaining to Defence Cooperation with Mongolia were discussed.

2. Secretary, National Defence Philippines led delegation visited India and had a bilateral meeting with RM on 9th March, 2018.

3. French Minister for the Armed Forces visited India and had a courtesy meeting with RM on 10th March, 2018 during the State visit of French President to India.

4. Defence Secretary visited Washington D.C., USA from 14th – 16th March, 2018 for a preparatory meeting in connection with the India-USA 2+2 Dialogue to be held in April, 2018.

5. A delegation led by Joint Secretary (PIC) visited Armenia as part of India-Armenia Defence cooperation from 29th – 31st March, 2018.

6. **Swachh Bharat:** During the month of March, 2018, regular cleaning activities in addition to focused steam cleaning of all washrooms have been carried out in heritage building (South Block) occupied by Ministry of Defence.

**Army**

7. A contract for procurement of 1780 Commander Thermal Imaging cum day Sight for BMP 1/2/2k at a cost of Rs. 1072.72 crore from M/s Bharat Electronic Limited was signed on 28.3.2018.

**Air Force**

8. A contract with M/s Elbit systems SAR and Data Links – Elisa Ltd. for procurement of Search and Rescue (SAR) equipments for Indian Air Force, Indian Army and Indian Navy at a cost of USD 64,475,574 was signed on 6th March, 2018.
(9) Contract for supply of Composite Training and Dockyard Support Package (DSP) for EW System contract No. 6180/DEE/C/2017-18/DSP EW Systems was signed on 23rd March, 2018 with M/s BEL Hyderabad for Rs. 193.52 crore.

(10) Assistance was provided by ICGS Samar on area patrol on 1st March, 2018 to seriously wounded fisherman onboard SLFV ‘Geeth Baba 03’ in response to an e-mail received by Maritime Rescue Coordinating Centre (MRCC), Mumbai from MRCC, Colombo. The fisherman was taken onboard ICGS Samar and provided first aid. Later on the injured Sri Lankan fisherman was handed over in stable condition to Sri Lankan Consulate representative post immigration formalities.

(11) On 14th March, 2018, ICG aircraft on routine surveillance reported an adrift fishing boat ‘Nada Fathima’ with 12 crew onboard adrift due loss of her rudder. On receipt of information, ICGS Apoorva on patrol was diverted on 14th March, 2018 to render assistance to distressed boat and boarded the distressed vessel. ICG ship provided medical aid and logistics support to crew of distressed boat and towed the fishing boat ‘Nada Fathima’ to Malpe harbor and safely handed over to fishing boat ‘Shanmon’ arranged by the owner on 15th March, 2018.

(12) On 19th March, 2018, Maldives National Defence Force (MNDF) Air Wing, requested Indian Coast Guard Advanced Light Helicopter CG-852 to undertake search and rescue of a missing fishing boat. Accordingly, CG 852 was launched from Gan with MNDF Air Wing representatives onboard and commenced search in area. After extensive search, CG 852 located the missing boat ‘Concord 2’. Subsequently, the latest position of the boat was communicated to MNDF Coast Guard Fast Interceptor Craft patrolling in area and MNDF Ops Room at Gan.

(13) At 2148 hrs on 6th March, 2018, MCRR, Mumbai received related message from Netherland Coast Guard, MV Adara and JRCC Australia regarding fire onboard MV Maersk Honam in position 379 nautical miles West of Agatti Island (about 650 nautical miles from Kochi). MRCC activated an International Safety Net (ISN) for alerting vessels in vicinity to render immediate assistance to the distressed vessel. MV ALS Ceres, MV Seaspan Zambezi and MV Navigator Centauri transiting through area were also requested for assistance. ICGS Shoor, on patrol was diverted and after initial fire and damage assessment of container vessel, commenced fire fighting operation. ICGS C-427 was deployed with medical team onboard from Vizhinjam on 8th March, 2018 and successfully evacuated 02 sick crew alongwith 01
escort crew (Indian) and brought them to Vizhinjam for medical management. Subsequently, the situation came under control and ICGS Shoor departed the area.

(14) ICGS C-162 has been inducted on 1\textsuperscript{st} March, 2018.

(15) ICGS C-437 has been commissioned on 16\textsuperscript{th} March, 2018.

(16) ICGS Sucheta Kriplani has been decommissioned on 23\textsuperscript{nd} March, 2018 at Paradip.

**Gallantry and Distinguished Service Awards**

(17) The President and Supreme Commander of the Indian Armed Forces conferred three Kirti Chakras and 17 Shaurya Chakras to Armed Forces Personnel for displaying conspicuous gallantry, indomitable courage and extreme devotion to duty at a solemn ceremony at the Rashtrapati Bhawan, New Delhi on 27\textsuperscript{th} March, 2018. One Kirti Chakra and five of the Shaurya Chakras were given posthumously. The President also conferred fourteen Param Vishisht Seva Medals, one Uttam Yudh Seva Medal and twenty two Ati Vishisht Seva Medals to senior officers of the Armed Forces for distinguished service of an exceptional order.

**International Women’s Day**

(18) Addressing a function on women in uniform of Armed Forces Medical Services (AFMS) to celebrate the spirit of ‘Womanhood’ at Manekshaw Centre, New Delhi on 9\textsuperscript{th} March, 2018. Raksha Mantri said that debate about empowerment should not always be the gender based argument, whether individual can perform being a women or a man. Therefore, the whole narration on Women’s Day is to look at it in this context. She highlighted the stellar role, power and potential of women officers in AFMS and felicitated three senior retired lady AFMS officers.

**Financial Powers to Armed Forces**

(19) Raksha Mantri approved the enhancement of powers of the Vice Chief of the Armed Forces in respect of proprietary Article Certificate (PAC) and Single Tender Enquiry (STE) procurement cases with the objective to empower our forces for ensuring operational preparedness. Till now, powers for procurement of articles under PAC and STE had been restricted to 50 and 5 percent respectively of normal powers delegated for revenue procurements. Wherever full powers had been delegated in respect of PAC and STE, a cap of Rs. 50 crore and Rs 5 crore respectively were made applicable. A number of initiatives have
been taken by the Ministry of Defence, in the recent past, to simplify and streamline the procedures and decentralize the decision-making through delegation of powers. Now, the Government has enhanced financial delegation to the Armed Forces in respect of Revenue Procurement as well.

**Defence Corridor**

(20) Under the Prime Minister larger vision of ‘Make in India’, the Ministry of Defence has taken multiple measures to promote indigenization in the defence industry. In the 2018 budget, two Defence Corridors were announced in Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh. Subsequently to the announcement, the process has begun to set up these corridors. As one of the first steps to initiate development of the Tamil Nadu Defence Corridor, an interactive meeting with local industry was held at Tiruchirapalli on 14th March, 2018. The meeting, which was attended by over 200 representatives from the industry, was addressed by Raksha Mantri.

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