

The Pioneer, 2 May 2006

Naval top brass meets today to assess force's readiness

The Navy's capabilities to influence a conflict and air-land battle, network-centric operations and awareness about entities working in its area of interest will be the main focus of the three-day naval commanders' conference in New Delhi starting on Tuesday. The top brass will also address the entire gamut of naval doctrine and progress made in implementing it in operations. Two doctrinal themes that have dominated the Indian naval operational thinking and planning over the past year will be deliberated upon during the conference which is held twice a year, a naval spokesman said on Monday. Union Defence Minister Pranab Mukherjee and Indian Navy chief, Admiral Arun Prakash, will address the commanders on the first day of the meet. Elaborating upon the themes, the spokesman said the first theme, termed "Maritime Manoeuvre from the Sea", is designed to ensure that in a short, swift and intense conflict between nation states, the Indian Navy is able to directly address and favourably influence the progress and outcome of the air land battle.

The Pioneer, 3 May 2006

Navy must ensure Standard Operating Procedures: Pranab

Union Defence Minister Pranab Mukherjee on Tuesday expressed concern at the number of accidents taking place at sea and in the air and urged the armed forces to adhere to the standard operating procedures and punish personnel deviating from them. Inaugurating the three-day biennial conference of naval commanders, Mukherjee asked the top brass to deliberate on a strategy to ensure that such incidents were prevented and there was a sense of accountability and responsibility fixed at higher levels to contain these incidents. "I am deeply concerned at the sinking of INS Prahar in Arabian Sea. Appropriate measures should be undertaken forthwith to ensure that the personnel involved in the operations of ships follow the stipulated Standard Operating Procedures (SOP). Deviations shall be treated seriously and appropriate punishment should be awarded to the erring personnel," he said. The minister also noted with concern the Navy war-room case. He said the leak has the potential to put the national security at peril and that serious efforts should be made to prevent such incidents in future. The Defence Minister said: "A zero defect system has to be devised to ensure secrecy and security of sensitive defence information. The naval commanders need to sensitise the personnel under their command to plug all possible loopholes in this regard." Touching upon the emerging global security scenario, he said the world expects India to play a major role in the region, given its economic growth in the past one-and-half decade.

The Tribune, 3 May 2006

Defence Minister takes Navy to task

New Delhi, May 2: Defence Minister Pranab Mukherjee today expressed unhappiness over the leak of information from the Navy's War Room and told the armed forces to enforce counter-espionage measures and sensitize all top secret installations to ensure that no leakage of classified information takes place. Inaugrating the three-day top naval commanders' conference here, he referred to the recent incidents involving the leak of classified information even from the War Room. The Defence Minister asked officials to come up with 'a zero defect system to ensure secrecy'. This is for the second time in less than a month that the Defence Minister has issued strict warning to services top brass to put in place a fool-proof security system. The Defence Minister told the Naval commanders, 'leaked out information has the potential to put the national security in peril' in the future. The Minister's remarks come as the CBI, in a bid to get to the root of the sensational war room leaks, has arrested some key players and cancelled the passport of R. Shankaran, another key suspect, who is also the nephew of Naval Chief Admiral Arun Prakash's wife. Mr Mukherjee was of the opinion that sensitization should not only be undertaken in key buildings and bases but also at lower formation levels. 'Naval commanders need to sensitise the personnel under their command to plug all possible loopholes in this regard', he said.

The Hindu, 7 May 2006

Focus on Navy's influence on land operations (Arunkumar Bhatt)

ONBOARD INS VIRAAAT: The recently held conference of naval commanders deeply examined the question of how the Navy can influence a war on land, according to Chief of the Naval Staff, Admiral Arun Prakash. Admiral Prakash said that the role of a navy to influence land operations had attracted a fresh look in view of the operations of the U.S. Navy in land-locked Afghanistan. He was addressing reporters onboard this aircraft carrier during a special exercise for the Prime Minister that concluded on Saturday in the Arabian Sea. The naval commanders also considered new challenges of information and communication technology leveraged net-centric warfare in which sensors and weapons on various platforms such as surface ships, submarines, aircraft, UAVs (unmanned aerial vehicles) and satellites are integrated with computer links. Net-centric warfare enables a commander to fight a

battle from multi-platforms in multi-dimensions in real time.

The Tribune, 7 May 2006

PM watches live missile firing in Arabian Sea (A.K. Dhar)

On board INS Viraat, May 6: Breaking from his routine, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh today made a foray into the high seas with the men in battle blues to witness first hand the efforts being undertaken by the armed forces to combat the threat of missiles. On his first-ever day at sea after taking over as Prime Minister, he witnessed a day and night war manoeuvre in the turbulent Arabian Sea off the coast of Goa, including live long-range surface-to-surface missile firings and their interception by anti-missile systems. Power-packed naval fast speed missile corvette fired their surface-to-surface missiles at dummy targets and Indian Navy's Israeli acquired anti-missile system Barak tracked, intercepted and neutralised them, as the Prime Minister, the Chief of Naval staff, Admiral Arun Prakash, and Naval top brass watched from the deck of the Indian Navy's flagship carrier INS Viraat. The Indian Navy has now installed this anti-missile system in seven of its frontline warships to give them invincibility against incoming missiles.

The Indian Express, 8 May 2006

PM's day out on INS Viraat (Shiv Aroor)

ON BOARD INS VIRAAT, MAY 6: After the turbulence of the militant attacks in Doda and communal violence in Vadodara in the last week, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh had "the calmest 12 hours he has had since he became Prime Minister" when he spent a day and night for the first time ever on the navy's aircraft carrier INS Viraat hundreds of kilometres into the Arabian Sea yesterday. The stillness of the sea notwithstanding the devastating show of force by the navy's frontline warships and aircraft, was a visible salve on a frayed week of governance in Delhi. Minutes before a chopper flew him off deck back to Mumbai nearly 18 hours later, he said in an impassioned address to Viraat's 2,000 personnel in the ship's enormous hangar, transmitted live to the the entire Western fleet, "Our government is committed to providing the Indian Navy with the capabilities that span the entire naval strategic spectrum, from sea denial to sea control, while ensuring long-range sustainability and the ability to project power at short notice."

The Indian Express, 9 May 2006

Navy pushes for Israeli Barak on all warships (Shiv Aroor)

ON BOARD INS BRAHMAPUTRA, MAY 8: When the Indian Navy gave Prime Minister Manmohan Singh an operational demonstration last Saturday of a Barak missile intercepting and destroying an incoming anti-ship missile, there was a subtle message embedded in the brazen firepower. The navy has emerged as the first of the three armed forces to successfully induct anti-missile defence into its operational profile and, going by the accuracy of the Israeli-made Barak system, now wants to put Baraks on all its frontline warships, starting with this missile frigate three months from now. Barak launchers are currently operational on aircraft carrier INS Viraat, two Delhi-class destroyers, two Godavari-class frigates and two Rajput-class destroyers among a few others. The three indigenously-built Brahmaputra-class guided missile frigates will be armed with Barak launchers and missiles over the next three to six months.

The Times of India, 10 May 2006

India to buy 3 more stealth frigates (Rajat Pandit)

New Delhi: In a major defence deal, the Navy is all set to order three more Talwar-class "stealth" frigates from Russia. To be inducted within five years, these multi-role guided-missile warships will cost well over Rs 1,000-crore each. That's not all. Faced with rapidly depleting force-levels, the Navy now has as many as 33 warships "under production or order", mainly in public sector shipyards, to retain its war-waging capabilities. Moreover, the Navy has also got government approval "in principle" for 30 more warships after these 33. "The technical and commercial negotiations for the three new frigates from Russia have now been wrapped up. The contract will be signed formally as soon as the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) approves it," said sources. The first three such frigates, INS Talwar, INS Trishul and INS Tabar, were inducted in Navy in 2003-2004 after considerable delay due to glitches in missile systems. The Navy, however, now simply loves these 4,000-tonne frigates due to the deadly punch they pack, with a wide array of sensor and weapon systems, including the 200-km-range 'Klub-N' cruise missiles. The next three frigates, incidentally, will also be armed with the 300-km range BrahMos supersonic cruise missiles. Sources said Navy, which wants to maintain its present force-level of around 140 warships and submarines, is going in for "this import option" since the order books for the indigenous shipyards is "now full".

The Pioneer, 14 May 2006

INS Tillanchang a friendship gift to Maldives

Union Defence Minister Pranab Mukherjee will hand over a fast attack craft INS Tillanchang to Maldives on Sunday during his two-day visit signifying the efforts made by the Indian Navy to foster close ties with countries in the Indian Ocean and help them in training and giving defence equipment. Mr Mukherjee will hand over the vessel, named after one of the islands of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands and built by defence public undertaking Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers (GRSE), Kolkatta, to his Maldives counterpart Ismail Shafeeu.

The Pioneer , 18 May 2006

Second edition of Konkan exercise begins

The second edition of Konkan, the generic series of exercises between the Indian and Royal Navy, began from Goa on Wednesday, will culminate in Mumbai on May 29. The Indian side was led by Flag Officer Commanding Western Fleet Rear Admiral Anup Singh and Rear Admiral Neil Morisetti was leading the British Navy fleet. Giving details of the 11-day exercise, a naval spokesman said the Indian Navy was fielding its guided missile destroyer 'Mumbai', guided missile frigates 'Ganga' and 'Brahmaputra,' fleet replenishment tanker 'Shakti' and submarine 'Shankush.' The Royal Navy contingent comprised aircraft carrier 'Illustrious,' guided missile destroyer 'Gloucester,' fleet replenishment tanker 'Fort Victoria,' nuclear powered submarine 'Sovereign' among others.

The Indian Express, 18 May 2006

Ban on spares: Navy Chief to talk with UK counterpart (Shiv Aroor)

NEW DELHI, MAY 17: During Royal Navy Chief Admiral Sir Jonathon Band's three-day trip here starting May 27, Admiral Arun Prakash is expected to convey his deep consternation at the Tony Blair government's threat to stop supplying spares for BN-2 Islander aircraft if the navy hands over an aircraft to Myanmar. Busy in Iraq, US held up on assault rifle deal Saddam refuses to enter plea 26 killed in Iraq, shrines attacked Son of top Iraqi judge shot dead US Marines to take part in Belgaum exercise. The threat, expressed by British High Commissioner Michael Arthur and first reported by Express in Jan 25, was followed up with another by British Minister for Defence Production Lord Paul Drayson while attending DefExpo in February.

The Indian Express, 19 May 2006

Navy steps up vigil as Lankan refugees pour in Jaya Menon

Chennai, May 18: With a significant increase in the inflow of refugees from north-eastern Sri Lanka into India, the Navy has stepped up surveillance in the sea separating the two countries. With 102 refugees reaching Rameshwaram on Tamil Nadu coast this morning, the number of refugees to have fled the island nation since January this year has crossed 1,000. Help us get EU ban on LTTE: Lanka Lanka wants more air links with India, Praful agrees India ready to help Lanka but wants no publicity Delhi worried after Colombo plans fresh strikes on Tigers PM had told Merkel about Lanka cloud, poll-bound TN put on alert. Naval Chief Admiral Arun Prakash said the situation was being "keenly" monitored. "We are watching the situation very carefully. We have enhanced our state of preparedness and stepped up surveillance both at sea and by air." He was in Chennai to discuss coastal and maritime security off the Tamil Nadu coast and around the international maritime border with Sri Lanka.

The Hindu, 21 May 2006

Joint naval exercise with British navy on (Arunkumar Bhatt)

Mumbai: Indian Navy and the British Royal Navy are staging a joint tactical exercise, Konkan 06, off the west coast, between Goa and Mumbai. It is a fully simulated naval war. The first part of the Konkan 06, harbour phase is under way. It includes collective planning of the operation and training. The second phase would be the combat part that includes surface and anti-submarine warfare in multi-threat scenario, naval air warfare, command and control warfare and fleet air defence, according to Captain Abhay Lambhate, a naval spokesman here. The exercise that began on May 17 will continue till May 29. The action also includes cross-deck flying in which helicopters of both the navies will land and take off from each other's warships, search and rescue missions and naval gun support. Rear Admiral Anoop Singh, Flag Officer Commanding Western Fleet is leading the Indian task group flying his flag on missile destroyer INS Mumbai. Other warships are missile frigates INS Ganga, INS Brahmaputra and INS Godavari, hunter-killer submarine, INS Shankush support vessel, INS Shakti. The Royal Navy's participants are HMS Illustrious, an aircraft carrier of 22000-ton displacement, having a squadron of Harrier GR7 ground attack aircraft, a joint force of the Royal Navy and the Royal Air Force. The carrier flies the flag of UK Maritime Forces Commander, Rear Admiral Neil Morisetti. The British carrier is accompanied by HMS Gloucester, 5200-ton destroyer and Royal Fleet Auxiliary Ships Fort Victoria and Diligence.

The Indian Express, 24 May 2006

India, US agree: Chinese navy needs to be engaged (Shiv Aroor)

New Delhi, May 23: The Indian and US navies today identified common ground in their operational need to engage the Chinese navy to gain a perspective on Beijing's long-term maritime intentions. The two forces have also agreed to institutionalise exchange of operational information in the Indian Ocean region. After his meeting with Indian Navy Chief Admiral Arun Prakash here on Monday, US Pacific Fleet commander Admiral Gary Roughead is understood to have received a perspective on the navy's assessment of China's rapid build-up of force and amplified activity in the Indian Ocean region (IOR). Next month, Chinese military observers will for the first time visit Guam in the Pacific to witness a US Navy-Air Force exercise Valiant Shield, involving three American aircraft carriers and a large complement of fighters. "We believe that since we're being transparent, they would do likewise," the Admiral said. The US Quadrennial Defence Review, in fact, recommends one more aircraft carrier for the US Pacific fleet, more submarines and an enhanced anti-submarine and anti-ballistic missile capability, implicitly predicated on Beijing's own expeditious arsenal build-up and movement.

The Pioneer, 26 May 2006

Naval exercise business wise

As the Red Arrow group gave a thrilling display of Hawk acrobatics over Goa's Bogmalo beach on Tuesday, on the ground the British officials prepared the pitch for display of their wares for the Indian defence market. The Red Arrow's crowd-pulling show was timed to coincide with the on-going Indo-UK Navy exercise off the Arabian coast. The two events did not have anything in common, but by roping in the Red Arrow, the British turned the naval exercise into a media affair, and an opportunity to showcase their latest offerings to the Indian forces. During the four-phase naval exercise the Indian Navy fielded the guided-missile destroyer Mumbai, guided-missile frigates Ganga and Brahmaputra, the fleet replenishment tanker Shakti, its submarine Shankush. The Royal Navy task force included the aircraft carrier Illustrious, the guided-missile destroyer Gloucester, the fleet replenishment tanker Fort Victoria, the submarine support ship Diligence and the nuclear-powered submarine (SSN) Sovereign. The Royal Navy task force also had one French frigate, FNS Surcouf, embedded within it.

The Pioneer, 30 May 2006

'Need to expand military cooperation in naval exercises'

India and UK on Monday discussed the entire gamut of maritime security in the backdrop of terrorism, conducting multilateral naval exercises and expanding the scope of military to military co-operation when chief of Royal Navy and first Sea Lord Admiral Jonathan Band met Naval Chief Admiral Arun Prakash here. The British naval chief, who arrived here on a three-day visit, held discussions with his Indian counterpart on issues of terrorism in the Indian Ocean Region, a naval spokesman said here on Monday adding the two sides also explored the possibilities of expanding the scope of joint exercises. The two chiefs reviewed the performance of the recently concluded 11-day exercise of Konkan series of drills and agreed to hold the next round of exercises in 2008.