

## Geopolitical and Security Environment

**The Election Commission of India announced dates for the next general elections as well as elections for three state assemblies.**

The general elections would be held in phases, from 16 April to 9 May 2009.

With elections imminent, the country is witnessing hectic political activities. While the incumbent Congress party-led United Progressive Alliance (UPA) coalition as well as the main opposition National Democratic Alliance (NDA) led by the BJP are gearing up for the elections, it is interesting to note that some fringe and regional parties seem to have managed a third alternative – known as the “Third Front” – to fight against the two dominant coalitions. With both Congress and BJP unlikely to win majority on their own, regional and smaller parties are likely to play a major role in Indian politics for the next decade or so.

National economic outlook seems gloomy with third quarter results (October-December 2008) showing negative trends. It is generally agreed that India is likely to register a growth of around 6% for the next couple of years. Geopolitical situation in and around India's neighbourhood is also not encouraging with problems of insecurity and instability in Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, to which Indian establishment seems to be adopting a “wait and watch” policy.

Indian Parliament approved the interim Union budget (called “vote-on-account”) in its last session, including the interim budget for national defence. Defence budget estimates stood at the equivalent of US\$32 billion, a 35% increase over the previous year's figure. As expected, capital expenditure, largely devoted for military purchases from abroad, increased by more than 30%. MT will carry out a detailed piece on Indian military expenditure in one of its forthcoming issues. India held a major aerospace exhibition, “Aero India 2009” at the Yelanka Air Force Station, Bangalore, from 11 to 15 February 2009. This biennial air show was organised by the Defence Exhibition Organisation (DEO), MoD in association with the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII). Many other organisations like the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and related establishments were involved in the event that attracted more than 600 companies from 35 countries. Speaking at the opening ceremony, Defence Minister A.K. Antony said that despite the economic recession, there was no question of scaling down defence expenditures, or compromising with the ongoing acquisition programmes. A survey of military industrial collaborative efforts with detailed analyses as a fall-out of Aero India 2009 will be published by the MT in one of its later issues.

## Defence Issues Tabled in Parliament

The following main defence-related issues were tabled for discussion in the last session of Parliament.

**Some incidents of spying in Armed Forces have been noticed.**

Seven cases were registered during the last three years (2006–2008), in which seven serving persons have been arrested and nine serving personnel have been dismissed from service. The Pakistan-based Military Intelligence Organisations and ISI have been identified for involvement in spying activities against India. This information was given by Defence Minister AK Antony in a written reply to Mr Jai Prakash Aggarwal in Rajya Sabha on 25 February 2009.

**Ordnance Factory Board (OFB) have created production capacity based on the requirement of Armed Forces.**

While annual supply of 30mm ammunition conformed to the requirement of the user, annual supply of 23mm ammunition suffered disruptions on account of certain drawbacks in design. The design has been suitably modified by OFB. The supply of the ammunition as per modified design has been planned from next financial year. The tank ammunition was produced as per approved technology and the supply was affected only after proof and acceptance by the designated agency. The indigenous technology of propellant was not available for 125mm HE/HEAT ammunition and a decision was taken to use triple-base propellant developed by DRDO. For 125mm APFSDS ammunition, a decision was taken to use Russian technology due to limited capacity of indigenous sources. Subsequently, quality problem were noticed in these ammunition and a decision was taken in the MoD in consultation with all stakeholders to: replace triple base propellant by single base propellant in 125mm HE/HEAT ammunition; and, replace combustible cartridge case of Russian design with combustible cartridge case of DRDO technology in APFSDS ammunition. This information was given by Defence Minister AK Antony in a written reply to Mr Nandi Yellaiah in Rajya Sabha on 25 February 2009.

**The Coast Guard enforces the monitoring, control and surveillance of the deep sea fishing vessel operating under the letter of permission (LoP) scheme.**

Coast Guard checks that the deep sea fishing vessels have the mandatory clearances and they are recalled if such certification period expires. Twenty-two vessels have been recalled between 1st November, 2008 to 31st January, 2009 for not fulfilling the requirement mentioned in their LoPs. This information was given by Defence Minister A K Antony in a written reply to Mr D Raja in Rajya Sabha on 25 February 2009.

**There have been 16 air crashes/ accidents involving aircraft / helicopter of Defence forces in the past year.** Each accident is investigated through a Court of Inquiry and remedial measures are undertaken accordingly to check their recurrence in future. Besides, a continuous and multi-faceted effort is always underway to enhance and

upgrade flight safety. Measures to enhance the quality of training to improve the skill levels, ability to exercise sound judgement and situational awareness of pilots are being pursued. Constant interaction with Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs) both indigenous and foreign, is also maintained to overcome the technical defects of aircraft. In addition, anti-bird measures are also undertaken. This information was given by Defence Minister AK Antony in a written reply to Prof. Alka Balram Kshatriya in Rajya Sabha on 25 February 2009.

**The proposals received in connection with the procurement of 126 Medium Multi-Role Combat Aircraft (MMRCA) are under technical evaluation.**

This will be followed by field evaluation and thereafter, commercial negotiations. The induction of the aircraft into the Indian Air Force is likely to commence from 2012-13. Government is not planning to set up a hi-tech facility at Nagpur costing about Rupees 3000 million for indigenising components of these aircraft. Product support including spare parts will be supplied by the vendor as per the terms of the contract that will be concluded. A contract for 20 indigenous Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) has been signed. One IAF squadron is expected to be equipped with this aircraft in 2010-11. This information was given by Defence Minister AK Antony in a written reply to Mr Gireesh Kumar Sanghi in Rajya Sabha on 25 February 2009.

**There have been shortfalls in the intake of officers in the Armed Forces,**

which is partly attributable to changes in the socio-economic environment and the resultant change in career preferences, availability of employment opportunities in other sectors, tough selection procedures, difficult service conditions coupled with perceived high degree of risk involved in service career. A total number of 750 posts of Lt Colonel have been upgraded earlier to Colonel towards implementation of A V Singh Committee (Phase-I) report. Further, 1896 posts in the ranks of Colonel, Brigadier, Major General and Lieutenant General in the three Services have been upgraded towards implementation of AV Singh Committee (Phase-II) report. Several proposals to reduce shortage of officers in the Armed Forces relating to reduction in the intake of Permanent Commissioned Officers along with increase in the Short Service Commissioned (SSC) officers, changes in selection process, improvement in service conditions of SSC officers, augmentation of selection and training infrastructure etc have been approved ‘in principle’ by Government. Besides, the Armed Forces have undertaken sustained image projection and publicity campaign to create awareness among the youth on the advantages of taking up a challenging and satisfying career. Candidate-friendly recruitment procedures to attract more number of candidates and a focused publicity drive in various institutions to attract potential candidates have been undertaken. Awareness campaigns, participation in career fairs and exhibitions, advertisements in print and electronic media, motivational lectures in school, colleges are also some of the other measures in this direction. This information was given by Defence Minister Mr AK Antony in a written statement to Mr Prakash Javadekar in Rajya Sabha on 18 February 2009.

**Replacement of ageing and obsolete defence weaponry is part of modernisation of the Armed Forces**

which is a continuous process based on threat perception, technological changes and budget allocation. The process involves formulation of a Long Term Integrated Perspective Plan (LTIPP), five-year Services Capital Acquisition Plan (SCAP) and Annual Acquisition Plan (AAP). Procurement of required equipment and weapon system is carried out as per the AAP and in accordance with the Defence Procurement Procedure (DPP). While contract for procurement of assault rifles has been concluded recently, procurement case for howitzers and night vision devices are in progress. This information was given by Defence Minister Mr AK Antony in a written statement to Mr BK Hariprasad in Rajya Sabha on 18 February 2009.

## Maritime Security Reorganisation

**The government recently announced a slew of measures to strengthen maritime and coastal security against threats from the sea.**

In the backdrop of multiple agencies involved in coastal security and the resultant problems of coordination, the government has designated the Indian Navy as the authority responsible for overall maritime security, both coastal and offshore. The Indian Navy will be assisted by Coast Guard, State Marine Police and other Central and State agencies for the coastal defence of the nation. Joint Operation Centres (JOCs) at Mumbai, Visakhapatnam, Kochi and Port Blair will be set up under the charge of existing Naval C-in-Cs. The JOCs will be jointly manned and operated by the Navy and Coast Guard with inputs from diverse agencies including Coast Guard, Navy and concerned Central and State Government agencies. The Naval C-in-Cs will be designated as the C-in-Cs Coastal Defence. A National Command, Control, Communication and Intelligence network for real-time maritime domain awareness linking the operations rooms of the Navy and Coast Guard, both at the field and the apex levels, will also be established.

The Indian Coast Guard will be designated as the authority responsible for coastal security in territorial waters including areas to be patrolled by the Coastal Police. The Director General Coast Guard will be designated as Commander Coastal Command and will be responsible for overall coordination between central and state agencies in all matters relating to coastal security. The Defence Minister said the government has approved setting up of nine additional Coast Guard sta-

tions to integrate into the 'hub-and-spoke concept' with coastal police stations along with manpower. These stations are to be located at Karwar, Ratnagiri, Vadinar, Gopalpur, Minicoy, Androth, Karaikal, Hutbay and Nizampatnam. The Coastguard is being empowered both in terms of providing assets like ships, boats, aircraft and helicopters and necessary manpower for their enhanced role in guarding our coast line. One post of Addl DG, one post of COM North West, three posts of DDG have been sanctioned in addition to about 20% increase in afloat units and 30% increase for shore support. The Intelligence set up of Coast Guard is also being improved with adequate manpower resources.

Government has also approved the proposal for setting up of Static Coastal Radar Chain and a comprehensive network chain of AIS stations along the entire coast as well as island territories. This will be implemented by Ministry of Shipping, Road Transport and Highways in coordination with Coast Guard. Further, AIS Transponders on vessels below 300 tonnes are also proposed to be installed. This work will be done by Ministry of Shipping in coordination with Coast Guard.

#### **Military Production, Procurement and Development News**

**The Defence Minister AK Antony laid the keel of the country's first Indigenous Aircraft Carrier (IAC) at the Cochin Shipyard in Kochi on 28 February 2009.** Scheduled to be completed by 2014, the feat will catapult India as only the fourth member of the exclusive club of nations which have the capability of designing and building 40,000 tonne aircraft carriers. Speaking on the occasion, Mr Antony said that the country will operate two to three aircraft carriers simultaneously in a not too distant future.

The design and construction of IAC was sanctioned by the government in January 2003. The ship will have a length of 260m and a maximum breadth of 60m and will be powered by four LM2500 gas turbines developing a max. total power of 80 MW for speeds in excess of 28 knots. The ship will operate CTOL aircraft in the STOBAR mode, with two take-off runways and a landing strip with three arrestor wire, and her hangar will house a maximum of 30 aircraft in a mix of MiG-29Ks, LCA TEJASs and Ka 31 AEW helicopters. The carrier is designed with a very high degree of automation for machinery operation, ship navigation and survivability.

India's premier agency in the aviation sector, Aeronautical Development Establishment (ADE) will be handing over **NISHANT, the first indigenously made Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV)** to Indian Army very soon. NISHANT, which means "end of darkness" is a tactical UAV system for area surveillance.

ADE has also embarked upon an ambitious programme to build a MALE UAV with multi-mission capability. Named RUSTOM, this will have a 300km range with a 200kg payload and an endurance of more than 24h. RUSTOM, which will fly in about three years, will be used by all three services for reconnaissance surveillance, target acquisition and designation, communications relay and signal intelligence.

In a unique event, on 16 February 2009, **the Indian Navy commissioned two ships, INS CARNICOBAR and NS CHATLAT on the same day.** These are the first two in a series of ten water-jet powered fast boats being built at Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers, Kolkata. These boats are the first ever water jet powered ships of the Indian Navy. The commissioning marks another step in the direction of indigenisation of the Navy's ship building efforts.

**Defence Minister A K Antony felicitated Defence PSU Mishra Dhatu Nigam Limited (MIDHANI)** entirely on the company being conferred with the Mini Ratna Category-1 status. The status was conferred by the Department of Public Enterprises (DPE).

#### **Major Appointments**

**Air Marshal Naresh Verma AVSM VSM** has taken over as the first ever Director General (Administration) at Air Headquarters, Vayu Bhawan, New Delhi, on 1 March 2009. He will be looking after the land and infrastructural development, Organisation and Ceremonials, Sports and Adventure as well as Air Force Schools. During his service career, he held many important appointments. These include appointment of Chief Administrative Officer at bases such as Bhuj, Jamnagar, Yelahanka and Air Force Station New Delhi and that of Principal Director, Air Force Works at Air Headquarters. He has also functioned as Senior Officer-in-Charge Administration at Central Air Command as well as Western Air Command prior to taking over as the first Director General (Administration) at Air Headquarters. For his distinguished service he has been awarded the Vishisht Seva Medal and Ati Vishisht Seva Medal in the year 2001 and 2006 respectively.

**Air Marshal TS Randhawa** has taken over as Director General (Inspection & Safety) at Air Headquarters on 4 January 2009. An alumnus of 38th NDA course, the Air Marshal has over 3000 hours of flying to his credit. During his long and illustrious career, the Air Marshal has held a number of important staff and field appointments. He has served as the Chief Operations Officer at a frontline Air Force Base and also commanded a premier Flying Station. He was in charge of all Fighter Operations in South Western Air Command from 2002 – 2004. He has worked in the Operational, Personnel and Intelligence Branches at Air Headquarters, in various appointments. He is a graduate of Defence Services Staff College, Wellington, and also of the Higher Command Course at the College of Air Warfare, Secunderabad. During his tenure as Assistant Chief of Integrated Defence Staff (Training and Doctrine) at HQ IDS, Ministry of Defence, he conceptualized

and evolved the "Joint Doctrine for the Armed Forces of India" and Joint Doctrine for Amphibious Operations. The Joint Doctrine is the first of its kind for the country and a milestone in the history of the Armed Forces.

**Lt.Gen. Noble Thamburaj** assumed the office of Vice Chief of The Army Staff on 1 January 2009. Lt.Gen. Thamburaj is a 1969 batch officer had a distinguished career spanning 38 years. Associated with the Services right from childhood, this second generation officer is an alumnus of King George's Military School Chail, Sainik Schools Amravati Nagar and Jamnagar, and the 34th NDA Course, before he was commissioned into the Bombay Sappers. An alumnus of Defence Services Staff College, Wellington, the General has done his Senior Command, Higher Command and NDC Courses. He is also accredited with higher Technical qualification, M Tech (Bldg Sc) from IIT Delhi and M Phil (Defence Studies) from Indore University.

**Vice-Adm. Dilip Deshpande, AVSM, VSM** took over as the Chief of Materiel (COM) on 1 January 2009. Vice Admiral Dilip Deshpande was commissioned in the Indian Navy on 18 September 1969. After initial training onboard INS MYSORE, he was appointed for Marine Engineering Duties on INS SAGARDEEP. He participated in the 1971 operations on the Western Sea board. During a career spanning over 38 years he has held a number of distinguished appointments. In addition to Air Engineer Officer of Air Squadron 561, he was the Production Department Head at Naval Aircraft Yard (Kochi), Head of the Base Maintenance Facility (Goa), Commodore Superintendent of NSRY (Kochi) and Oi/c FMU(Mb). He has also handled various appointments at NHQ including that of Director of Naval Air Materiel.

#### **Visits**

India and Maldives will work together to meet the threat of sea-borne terrorism. This emerged during a meeting between the Defence Minister AK Antony and the visiting **Minister of Defence and National Security of Maldives, Mr. Ameen Faisal** in New Delhi on 3 February 2009. Mr. Faisal led an 8-member Maldivian delegation on a visit to India from 1 to 5 February, 2009. Mr Antony assured the Maldivian leader of India's continued support to the island nation in meeting all its security and development needs. The two leaders agreed that both countries have a joint interest in the security of the sea lanes of communication. They also decided to enhance training and joint exercises. The Indian Army conducts a joint exercise 'Ekueuvrin' with the Maldivian National Defence Forces on counter-terrorism. The Indian Coast Guard also conducts an exercise on maritime rescue operations and patrolling of seas around Maldives called 'Dosti'.

**A delegation from Mauritius** met their Indian Naval Counterparts on 2 February 2009. Discussions relating to various issues, particularly relating to hydrography was held. The four-member Mauritian delegation led by Mrs. Asha Devi Burrenchobey, Permanent secretary, Ministry of land and survey visited India from 1 to 8 February to hold the fourth meeting of joint committee on hydrography. The talks were held on 2 February with integrated headquarters of the MoD (Navy) and the team thereafter proceeded to Dehradun for further talks with the Indian side led by Chief of Hydrology Department, Rear Admiral B.R Rao.

#### **Military Exercises**

The Indian Air Force carried out the second edition of **Exercise "Dakshin Prahar"** to validate the concept of flexible use of airspace. Starting from 18 to 24 February under the aegis of the Southern Air Command (SAC), this week-long unique operational exercise has now become an annual feature. Fighter aircraft such as Su-30MKI, MRAGE 2000 and upgraded versions of maritime JAGUAR took part in the exercise in order to cover the vast area of responsibility of the SAC which extends far and wide covering not only the peninsular airspace, but also the offshore installations on the east coast and Lakshadweep & Minicoy Islands in the South West.

The Indian Army, Navy and the Air Force jointly conducted **the largest ever amphibious exercise, codenamed Exercise "Tropex 2009"** at Madhavpur beach, Gujarat, recently. The amphibious landing, the most complex of all military manoeuvres involving coordination and synergy from conceptualization to planning and final execution, was ably demonstrated on the shores of Madhavpur. The element of Coast Guard was also a part of this short, swift and intense conflict.

#### **Other Military News**

**The Indian Naval Academy, Ezhimala was inaugurated by the Prime Minister recently.** Located in Kannur district of Kerala, this Academy will not only be the premier officer training establishment of the Indian Navy, but also the largest Naval Academy in Asia. Commencing June 2009, all officers inducted into the Indian Navy under various schemes will undergo basic training at this Academy. The inaugural function was also attended by the Defence Minister and the Chief Minister of Kerala. The Chief of Naval Staff Admiral Suresh Mehta presided over the ceremony. **Defence Minister AK Antony inaugurated the Army College of Medical Sciences recently at the Delhi Cantonment.** The College started functioning from academic year 2008-09. It offers 4 – years MBBS for the award of Degree of Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery, following one year compulsory internship. The college is affiliated to Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University, Delhi and approved by Medical Council of India. The annual intake of the College is 100 students, most of whom are primarily intended to be inducted into the armed forces.