

India to build more roads on China border

The Ministry of Defence has decided to significantly enhance infrastructure along the Sino-Indian border including near Doklam, where the militaries of both sides were engaged in a two-month standoff.

The decision was taken at the Army's commanders conference from October 9 to 15 which extensively deliberated on the recent face-off with China, besides analysing all possible security challenges on the northern border, according to official sources.

Bolstering capabilities

"It has been decided that there would be a concerted heft towards road construction activities in this sector. To that end four passes to Niti, Lipulekh, Thangla1 and Tsangchokla have been decided to be connected by 2020 on priority," Director General Staff Duties (DGSD) Vijay Singh told reporters here on Friday.

He said the commanders also examined organisational changes of some of the formations to enhance existing capability, indicating that the Army leadership was looking at bolstering its current operational preparedness.

Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman also addressed the conference and lauded the swift and effective response of the Army in dealing with external and internal threats.

The Minister emphasised "the need to guard against inimical forces", he said.

Integration of services

Referring to the government's 'Make in India' programme, Ms. Sitharaman also stressed on the urgent need to become self-reliant in the defence sector.

"She emphasised on jointness and integration by all services for emerging challenges," the DGSD said.

Chief of Army Staff (COAS) Bipin Rawat said the Army will have to be prepared for "all eventualities at all times" and therefore utmost priority has to be given to procurement of arms, ammunition and equipment.

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