

## **As tension rises over South China Sea, Chinese Army preparing hard to win wars**

30/07/2016 21:49 by admin

Amidst the growing conflict over the disputed South China Sea, Chinese President Xi Jinping is pushing his country's People's Liberation Army (PLA) to train hard to win wars as it expands its high tech arsenal.

### **Chinese Army**

The PLA, which is 2.3 million-strong, is turning 89 tomorrow.

Reorganised from top to bottom by Xi in the last four years, the People's Liberation Army (PLA) - the world's largest - is bracing for major showdowns in its increasingly volatile neighbourhood triggered by the international tribunal verdict quashing China's expansive claims over the resource-rich South China Sea (SCS).

Reform is a comprehensive and revolutionary change, and obstacles and policy issues that may hold back reform measures must be addressed so as to build a strong armed forces commensurate with China's international status, Xi has said as he consolidated his hold over the military to emerge as the most powerful Chinese leader in recent times.

Operating under the ruling Communist Party of China (CPC) unlike other militaries which function directly under governments, the PLA now enjoys a whopping over USD 145 billion annual budget, next only to the US military with whom it looks set for a confrontation in the SCS.

Focusing his attention on the PLA the day he took power in 2013, Xi wanted the military to function under the command of the Party, increase its capability to win wars and operate in proper working style by weeding out corruption.

Over 40 top commanders including two retired military chiefs faced investigation for corruption, which became rampant in the PLA with allegations of generals selling ranks for hefty bribes.

On July 25, a Chinese court sentenced former military chief Guo Boxiong to life in prison for corruption.

He was reported to have accepted bribes worth about USD 2.3 million mainly selling military ranks to highest bidders.

Xi also carried out the biggest anti-corruption drive to cleanse the party in which thousands of officials have faced punishment.

While firming up his grip on the military, Xi also stepped up PLA's reorganisation and brought the entire command and control under the Central Military Commission (CMC), the highest military body headed by him.

On April 20, Xi appeared in public with a new title -Commander-in-Chief of the newly-established CMC joint battle command centre which he inspected on the day dressed in camouflage fatigues.

The centre belongs to a tiered command system including the CMC, theatre commands and others.

It is part of the overall reform of the PLA's organisation, a culmination of Xi's military thought, state-run Xinhua news agency reported.

- (With PTI inputs)