2. Board considered following terms of references:

1. Modern trends in SL sy environment and threat scenario.
2. Depletion of str of the SLAC regts from 20203 to 2027 based only on OR retirement after 22 years.
3. As instr by the Dte of SD, the re-org of Armd, Armd Recc and RFT regts based on the str (3294 str physically under COs) envisaged by the Dte of SD ltr මාරඅම/ප්‍ර/ප්‍රති/51/01 (05) dated 13 Mar 23.
4. Justification of the para 2.c restructuring.
5. Proposed plan with justification of allotment of a SLAC regt each for Corps/SFHQs (6 Regts).
6. Future of the 6 (RFT) SLAC and 7 (V) SLAC.
7. Other matters envisaged by the board.

**OBSERVATIONS**

3. The bd observes that the Sri Lanka Army is experiencing a considerable str reduction in the immediate timeframe due to retirement after completion of service, premature retirement, AWOL and few other reasons. SLAC also will undergo the same str reduction.

4. Accordingly, the bd perceives the need to restructure the entire Army incl SLAC, considering the aforementioned str reduction and future recruitment options.

5. The bd also notes the need to redeploy the Army based on the new ORBAT and redraft Concept of Ops to suit the new establishment. Accordingly, the 6 x SLAC regts need to be poised to support the envisaged Army field deployment.

6. While the Sri Lanka Army is undergoing the current revamp in physical as well as the conceptual spheres, the Bd envision that the contemporary and future operational environment will keep on becoming intensely volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous.

7. Accordingly, it is evident that the Army will have to execute its role and tasks with lesser number of tps in more challenging situations. Thus, the bd observes the need to formulate and activate a capability and capacity enhancement strategy so that the Army will continue to be effective in the face of contemporary and future threats/challenges.

8. The bd observes that the future Army, as it is been practiced today, need to be effective in the full spectrum of conflict by ensuring a balanced structure and a composition, thus retain its versatility.

9. The bd observes that the Dte of SD has stipulated the str of SLAC (physically aval for COs) to be 3294 by the Dte of SD ltr මාරඅම/ප්‍ර/ප්‍රති/51/01 (05) dated 13 Mar 23.

10. The bd observes the need to restructure Armd, Armd Recc and RFT Regt org to suit the str indicated at para 11 above.

11. The bd observes that the AHQ, together with other modernization needs has forwarded a comprehensive 10 year modernization plan; Sri Lanka Army Strategic Plan to Strengthen the Fleet 2022 – 2031 to the MOD, in which the AFV modernization has been projected.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

12. The modern trends of Sri Lankan security environment and threat scenario are at **annex A**.

13. The bd opines the future OR str reduction of the SLAC as tabulated below as indicated by the RHQ SLAC ltr සන්නද්ධ/පා/08/ඒ (21) dated 28 Mar 2023:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Ser | Regt | Strength as at31 Dec 23 | Strength as at31 Dec 24 | Strength as at31 Dec 25 | Strength as at31 Dec 26 | Strength as at31 Dec 27 | Total Strength Reduction |
| (a) | (b) | (c) | (d) | (e) | (f) | (g) | (h) |
| 1. | 1 SLAC | 21 | 17 | 45 | 37 | 14 | 134 |
| 2. | 3 SLAC | 22 | 30 | 56 | 67 | 13 | 188 |
| 3. | 4 SLAC | 50 | 27 | 66 | 29 | 17 | 189 |
| 4. | 5 SLAC | 32 | 25 | 39 | 32 | 8 | 136 |
| 5. | 6 SLAC | 43 | 22 | 46 | 50 | 19 | 180 |
| 6. | 7(V) SLAC | 34 | 10 | 11 | 25 | 26 | 106 |
| 7. | Total | 202 | 131 | 263 | 240 | 97 | 933 |

14. The OR str of the SLAC as at 26 Mar 2023 as submitted by RHQ SLAC ltr සන්නද්ධ/ප්‍ර/ක්‍රියා/06/ඒ (137) dated 28 Mar 2023 is 4779 and accordingly the SLAC will experience approx 20 per cent str reduction by the end of 2027.

15. The bd recm to bid for recruitment vacancies in the future to maintain the str in the long run considering the overall fall out details (retirement, premature retirement, AWOL etc.) of the SLAC.

16. In order to restructure the org of the Armed, Armed Recc and RFT Regts to suit the str stipulated by the Dte of SD ltr මාරඅම/ප්‍ර/ප්‍රති/51/01 (05) dated 13 Mar 23, the bd opines the organizations suggested by the RHQ SLAC as at **annex B** are suitable.

17. The bd, having considered the str depletion and the AHQ instr, considered the suitability of the new orgs of Armed, Armed Recc and RFT Regts and the justification of the new organizations are at **annex C**.

18. The bd opines that the 6 x SLAC Regts need to be placed under 6 x Corps/SFHQs to provide Armr support based on the annex A threat and operational environment analysis. This ORBAT need to be activated in two stages:

1. Stage 1 - By 31 December 2023.
2. Stage 2 - Once the 6 (RFT) and 7 (V) SLAC are equipped.

19. The bd recommends fol plan to achieve the above requirement:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Ser** | **Regiment** | **AFV** | **Stage 1** | **Stage 2** | **Remarks** |
| (a) | (b) | (c) | (d) | (e) | (f) |
| 1. | 3 SLAC | MBT | 1 Corps |  |
| 2. | 4 SLAC | MBT | SF (J) & SF (E) | SF (J) |  |
| 3. | 5 SLAC | AFV (T) | SF (Wanni) |  |
| 4. | 6 SLAC | AFV (W) / MRAVP | N/A | SF (E) | Transform to classic role with AFV(W) in 2026-2027 |
| 6. | 1 SLAC | AFV (W) | SF (West) & SF (C) | SF (West) |  |
| 7. | 7 SLAC | MRAPV | N/A | SF (C) | Transform to classic role with AFV(W) in 2028-2029 |

20. The bd also opines when the 1 Corps engages in any AOR, the respective SLAC should provide support as reqd to 1 Corps tps depending on the nature of the operation. To ensure this, all SLAC regts should establish liaison, rehearse contingencies and keep skeleton ORBATs ready to provide Armr support to the 1 Corps.

**ANY OTHER MATTERS**

21. The bd affirms that the versatility of the Sri Lanka Army has been derived from its inherent balanced composition. The Capstone Doctrine published in 2018, Land Operations Doctrine published in 2021 and the OOTW Doctrine published in 2022, testifies that the cardinal strength of the Army is its combined arms nature which is the basis of its adaptability.

22. It is inalienable that SLAC is a vital entity that provides the Army with the aforementioned inalienable versatility to perform across the spectrum of operations. The combined arms character is basis on which, Land Forces of the world retain adaptability to face the changing threat scenarios. A composite Land Force also will provide much needed deterrence, despite the size of the force.

23. Accordingly, the bd affirms, considering Sri Lanka’s land mass, terrain configurations and the geo-strategic worth, the Sri Lanka Army should equip, maintain and modernize an appropriate AFV inventory. The size of this force as envisioned by the Sri Lanka Army Way Forward Strategy 2020-2025, is two brigades. The bd also testify that the threat perception and operational tasks envisaged by the doctrinal component of the Army also dictates that two brigade size Armoured component need to be maintained by the Sri Lanka Army.

24. Considering the above, the bd recommends that the SLAC need to be ready, organizationally, conceptually and physically to perform the assigned doctrinal role and tasks, across the spectrum of conflict, i.e from conventional war to nation building and intermittent combat / non-combat operations ranging from UNPKO, COIN, CT including disaster response tasks.

25. Bd opines that the capability and capacity enhancement of the SLAC regts need to take place in a suitable timeframe considering the str reduction and aforementioned tasks.

26. Following aspect could be derived by analyzing data pertaining to the AFV fleet of the SLAC:

a. T - 55 MBTs and BTRs/WMZs are the mainstay of the Sri Lanka Army’s Armoured component.

b. T - 55 MBTs are becoming obsolete as the production has been discontinued including ammo production (100mm version).

c. BTRs are is still battle worthy AFVs but need to be repaired or overhauled.

d. WMZs are modern AFVs which can be further continued to be used.

e. BMPs/T - 86 (T) to be repaired suitably.

f. T 63 - 2s and T 85 are serviceable, yet are old AFVs. Spares and ammo (73 mm) are scares to be purchased.

g. All AFVs of British origin can only be used for ceremonial purposes.

1. All AFVs need a stock of essential spare parts as indicated to Dte of Plans.

27. For fleet modernization, the bd recommends to stick to the Sri Lanka Army Strategic Plan to Strengthen the Fleet 2022 – 2031 with timely adjustments as the **Option One**.

28. The bd recommends the following alternate options if the Option One may not be supported by the national economy. Following aspects were considered while formulating alternate options:

1. Ineffectiveness of the 100mm main gun/ammo in the modern battlefield.
2. 1940 vintage tank.
3. Protection level is below the current battlefield demand.
4. Main armament (100mm) and its ammo are ineffective against modern AFV protection level.
5. Fire Control System, Sight configurations (incl NVDs) are obsolete.
6. Communication system obsolete.
7. Sacristy (discontinued production) of spare parts, ammo.
8. Need to upgrade/repair/overhaul the BTR fleet.
9. T 63 – 2 and T – 85 fleet can be used after repairs for a short time period but need t be replaced with a suitable AFV in the medium and long timeframe.
10. Need to equip the two RFT regiments in order to form the two Armoured Brigades in a future timeframe to fulfill the designated doctrinal obligations.

29. **Options to Modernize the SLAC AFV Fleet**.

1. **Option One**. T - 55 to be replaced with a suitable version of T - 72 MBT (As per the Sri Lanka Army Strategic Plan to Strengthen the Fleet 2022 – 2031).
2. Has a 125mm moderately modern main armament and ammo which can contest against a modern adversary.
3. Moderate protection, communication, FCS and other components.
4. Still in production and availability of spare parts.

b. **Option Two**. T - 55 MBTs to be upgraded in collaboration with the Chinese PLA.

1. T - 59G has been upgraded to 3rd Generation MBT standards (Thermal Imagers, Digital FCS and better armour).
2. It is an up-gunned 122mm version.

(Note: The cost effectiveness of both above options needs to be re-confirmed)

 c. **Common to Both Options**.

1. BTR fleet need to be repaired/overhauled.
2. BMP/T 86(T) fleet need to be repaired.
3. T 63 – 2 and T – 85 fleet to be used with repairs in the short run and to be replaced with a suitable AFV in the next stage.
4. 6 SLAC needs to be equipped with a suitable wheeled AFVs or MARPs.
5. 7 (V) SLAC needs to be equipped with indigenous MRAPs.