200 Army personnel for Zapad exercise

China, Pakistan taking part as observers in the multinational exercise in Russia

DINAKAR PERI
NEW DELHI

A contingent of 200 Army personnel will participate in the multinational Exercise ZAPAD 2021 being held at Nizhniy, Russia from September 3 to 16, the Army said on Wednesday. Of the 17 countries invited for the exercise, there are nine Participating countries and eight Observers including China and Pakistan, a defence source said.

ZAPAD 2021 is one of the theatre level exercises of Russian armed forces and will focus primarily on operations against terrorists, the Army said. "The NAGA Battalion group participating in the exercise will feature an all arms combined task force. The exercise aims to enhance military and strategic ties amongst the participating nations while they plan and execute this exercise," it stated.

All set: The Indian contingent for the ZAPAD 2021 exercise beginning at Nizhniy in Russia on Friday. ▪ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

In all, 17 countries have been invited by Russia for the exercise. Of these nine are Participating countries which include Mongolia, Armenia, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Serbia, Russia, India and Belarus. The other eight countries are Observers which include Pakistan, China, Vietnam, Malaysia, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Uzbekistan and Sri Lanka, the source added.

The Indian Contingent has been put through a strenuous training schedule which encompasses all facets of conventional operations including mechanised, airborne and heliborne, counter terrorism, combat conditioning and firing, the Army added.

This month, the Army will take part in a multinational exercise peace mission in Russia with a 200-strong battalion from Sikh Li infantry, another source said.