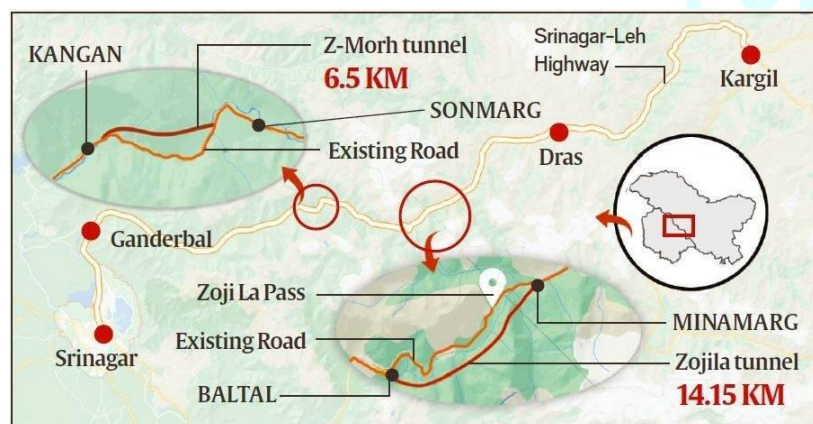


Daily Defence Current Affairs

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Sonamarg Tunnel Project

- The Sonamarg Tunnel project, around 12 km long, has been constructed at a cost of over **Rs 2,700 crore**. It comprises of the Sonamarg main tunnel of 6.4 km length, an egress tunnel and approach roads.
- Situated at an altitude of over 8,650 feet above sea level, it will enhance all-weather connectivity between Srinagar and Sonamarg enroute to Leh, bypassing landslide and avalanche routes and ensuring safer and uninterrupted access to the strategically critical Ladakh region.
- Along with the Zojila Tunnel, set for completion by 2028, it will reduce the route length from 49 km to 43 km and boost vehicle speed from 30 km/hr to 70 km/hr, ensuring seamless **NH-1 connectivity** between **Srinagar Valley and Ladakh**.



Sweden to Contribute Up To 3 Warships To Reinforced NATO

- Sweden will contribute up to three warships to a NATO effort to increase the alliance's presence in the Baltic Sea as it tries to guard against sabotage of underwater infrastructure, the government said.

- The Swedish military also will contribute an **ASC 890 surveillance aircraft**, the government said. And the country's coast guard will contribute four ships to help monitor the Baltic, with a further seven vessels on standby.
- Sweden became the Western military alliance's **32nd member** in March. It followed neighbouring Finland into NATO after Russia launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine. The government said this will be the first time that Sweden as a NATO ally contributes armed forces to the alliance's defence and deterrence.
- The decision comes as a string of incidents in the **Baltic** has heightened concerns about possible **Russian activities in the region**.
- The **undersea cables and pipelines** that crisscross the sea link **Nordic, Baltic and central European countries**, promote trade, energy security and, in some cases, reduce dependence on Russian energy resources.
- Ten Baltic Sea cables have been damaged since 2023, affecting Estonia, Finland, Sweden, Germany and Lithuania. At least two incidents involved ships later accused of dragging their anchors.



Myanmar's Defence Ties with Russia irk China

- Myanmar junta's growing defence ties with Russia, including recent delivery of six **Sukhoi SU30 fighter jets**, has irked China as it fears losing influence in its backyard.
- Myanmar Air Force has acquired six Sukhoi Su30 SME fighter jets from Russia, with the Chinese origin **JF17 Thunder fighters** facing major technical trouble
- Myanmar Air Force acquired the Russian warplanes under a \$400 million contract signed in 2018 and the jets were commissioned at the Meiktila Air Base in Mandalay on December 15, 2024.



330 Indigenous Choppers Remain Grounded For Transmission Checks

- A possible transmission fault is being probed after a fatal crash of an Advanced Light Helicopter that led to the deaths of three coast guard personnel this week.
- The indigenous fleet of Helicopters - about 330 of them are currently in service - has been grounded for comprehensive checks while the crash is being probed.
- Sources said that the crash occurred after the crew reported a sudden loss of control second before the chopper hurtled to the ground. It is learnt that flight data being studied did not show any obvious reason for the loss of control.



Armed Forces Veterans' Day

- Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) General Anil Chauhan will attend the ninth Armed Forces Veterans' Day event on 14 Jan 2025.
- THE ARMED Forces Veterans' Day is celebrated every year on January 14 across India to pay respects to the armed forces veterans for their selfless duty and sacrifices and to reinforce solidarity towards the next of kin of the bravehearts.
- Notably, the Field Marshal steered the formation of the Directorate of Resettlement later came to be known as Directorate General Resettlement, a key organization under the Department of Ex-servicemen Welfare of the Ministry of Defence. The body looks after the various opportunities, training and policy making on the subject of resettlement of retired soldiers.
- Interestingly, the next day, January 15 is celebrated as Army Day because on this day in 1949, Field Marshal Cariappa took over the command of the Indian Army from General Sir FRR Bucher, the last British Commander-in-Chief and became the first Indian Commander-in-Chief of Independent India.
- **Traditions in other countries**
- In many Defence forces in the world, there is a long tradition of celebrating the contributions of the veterans and the fallen soldiers. In the US and many other countries in the West, the Veterans Day also marked as the Armistice Day or Remembrance Day is commemorated every year on November 11, as a mark of respect towards the military veterans.
- The day marks the anniversary of the end of World War I. Most of the battles of the first World War had formally come to an end at the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month of 1918 when the Armistice with Germany went into effect.

- Anzac Day on April 25 is observed in Australia and New Zealand as a show of respect to the all Australian and New Zealand soldiers who served and died in all wars, conflicts, and peacekeeping operations of the two Armies. April 25 has been chosen to mark the day in 1915 when the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps (ANZAC) landed for the Gallipoli campaign for their first engagement in World War I.
- **What programmes are held on Veterans' Day**
- The day is marked by programmes held across major military stations across the country and major cities. These programmes include ceremonial parades, gatherings of veterans, Veer Naris and their families. These programmes give opportunities to military formations to interact with the veterans and their families at their respective stations.



Indian Army to celebrate 77th Army Day

- The Indian Army, set to celebrate its 77th Army Day on January 15, is showcasing its significant technological advancements as part of its ongoing commitment to operational excellence and self-reliance, a release said.
- In 2023, the Indian Army declared the "**Year of Technology Absorption**" and has now extended this initiative for another year, aligning with the Ministry of Defence's declaration of 2025 as the '**Year of Reforms.**'
- As part of that, since 2014, the Indian Army has been conducting its annual innovation competition, rebranded as **Inno-Yoddha in 2023**. This initiative provides a platform for soldiers to showcase indigenous solutions addressing capability voids.



India Plans To Ink At Least Four Mega Defence Deals

- India plans to ink at least four mega defence deals for fighters, submarines, helicopters and artillery guns, collectively worth over Rs 1.5 lakh crore, before this fiscal ends on March 31, as part of the long-term plan to boost the firepower and combat capabilities of the armed forces.
- The first off the block will be the around Rs 63,000 crore contract with France for the direct acquisition of 26 Rafale-Marine fighter jets, which will operate from the deck of indigenous aircraft carrier INS Vikrant.
- The deal for the 22 single-seat maritime jets and four twin-seat trainers for the Navy, along with weapons, simulators, crew training and five-year performance-based logistics support as well as spares for the 36 Rafales already inducted by the IAF, is now headed for the final nod from the PM-led cabinet committee on security (CCS).
- Another major deal with France will be the Rs 38,000 crore one for three additional Scorpene diesel-electric submarines, with air-independent propulsion (AIP) for longer underwater endurance, to be built at the Mumbai-based Mazagon Docks (MDL).

The three new boats — with the first slated to roll out by 2031, followed by the other two at intervals of a year each — will add to the six Scorpene or Kalvari-class submarines already built at MDL under the over Rs 23,000 crore 'Project-75'. The sixth submarine 'Vagsheer' is slated to be commissioned, along with guided-missile destroyer Surat and stealth frigate Nilgiri, by PM Narendra Modi on Jan 15.

"The Rafale deal is likely to be cleared by the CCS before this month ends, and will be followed by the Scorpene deal soon after," a source said. Modi, incidentally, is slated to visit France for the Artificial Intelligence Summit on Feb 11 and 12.

The other two mega deals are for 156 indigenous Prachand light combat helicopters for around Rs 53,000 crore and 307 indigenous advanced towed artillery gun systems (ATAGS) for Rs 8,500 crore.

The 156 new Prachand helicopters (90 for Army, 66 IAF), which are capable of offensive operations in high-altitude areas like Siachen Glacier and eastern Ladakh, will be manufactured by Hindustan Aeronautics Limited. They will add to the 15 such choppers (10 IAF and five Army) already inducted under a Rs 3,887 crore contract inked in 2022.

The ATAGS designed and developed by DRDO, which is touted to have a strike range up to 48 km, in turn, will be produced by Bharat Forge and Tata Advanced Systems.



REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What is the length of the main tunnel in the Sonamarg Tunnel project?

- A. 12 km
- B. 6.4 km
- C. 8.6 km
- D. 7.2 km

ANSWER: B

2. Which country supplied six Sukhoi Su-30 SME fighter jets to the Myanmar Air Force?

- A. China
- B. United States
- C. Russia
- D. France

ANSWER: C

3. How many additional Scorpene diesel-electric submarines will India acquire from France?

- A. Two

- B. Three
- C. Four
- D. Five

ANSWER: B

4. What theme has the Indian Army extended for another year in alignment with the Ministry of Defence's declaration of 2025 as the 'Year of Reforms'?

- A. Year of Innovation
- B. Year of Modernization
- C. Year of Technology Absorption
- D. Year of Defence Excellence

ANSWER: C

5. The Sonamarg Tunnel project will improve connectivity between which two regions?

- A. Srinagar and Leh
- B. Jammu and Sonamarg
- C. Srinagar and Sonamarg
- D. Leh and Kargil

ANSWER: C

6. INS Vikrant Is A

- A. Helicopter
- B. Machine Gun
- C. Aircraft Carrier
- D. Fighter Jet

ANSWER: C

7. India's First Aircraft Carrier Was

- A. INS Chakra
- B. INS Arihant
- C. INS Virant
- D. INS Virat

ANSWER: C

8. Ex 'NASEEM-AL-BAHR' Conducted b/w India &

- A. Qatar
- B. Oman
- C. UAE

D. Maldives

ANSWER: B

9. NISTAR & NIPUN Is A

A. Diving Support Vessels

B. OPV

C. Tank

D. Frigate

ANSWER: A

10. NISTAR & NIPUN Is Manufactured By

A. CSL

B. HSL

C. MDL

D. GRSE

ANSWER: B

11. ___ Launched 'Puneet Sagar Abhiyan', A Nationwide Flagship Campaign.

A. DRDO

B. NCC

C. IAF

D. None of the above

ANSWER: B

12. Group Captain Rank Of IAF Is Equivalent to Which Rank of Indian Navy?

A. Colonel

B. Captain

C. Commander

D. Major

ANSWER: B

13. F 18 Super Hornet Fighter Aircraft Manufactured By

A. Boeing

B. Lockheed Martin

C. Airbus

D. HAL

ANSWER: A

14. Defence Electronics Research Laboratory (DLRL) Centre Is Located In

- A. Hyderabad, Telangana
- B. Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh
- C. Gwalior, Madhya Pradesh
- D. Tezpur, Assam

ANSWER: A

15. IAI Harpy Is A

- A. Drone
- B. Tank
- C. Submarine
- D. None of the above

ANSWER: A

16.INS Kadamba Is An Indian Navy Base Located At

- A. Karwar in Karnataka
- B. Mumbai, M.H.
- C. Marmugao, Goa
- D. Kochi, Kerala

ANSWER: A

17. CID Stands For

- A. Crime Investigation Depo
- B. Crime Investigate Department
- C. Crime Investigation Department
- D. None of the above

ANSWER: C

18. Aizawl Is The Capital Of

- A. Mizoram
- B. Manipur
- C. Odisha
- D. Punjab

ANSWER: A

19. "Search of the Divine: Living Histories of Sufism in India" Book Is Written By

- A. Supriya Sule
- B. Amit Singh

- C. Rana Safvi
- D. Akash Jain

ANSWER: C

20. India Meteorological Department Comes Under The Ministry Of__.

- A. MHA
- B. Ministry of Earth Sciences
- C. Ministry of I&T
- D. MOD

ANSWER: B

