

Monthly Defence Current Affairs

February 2025

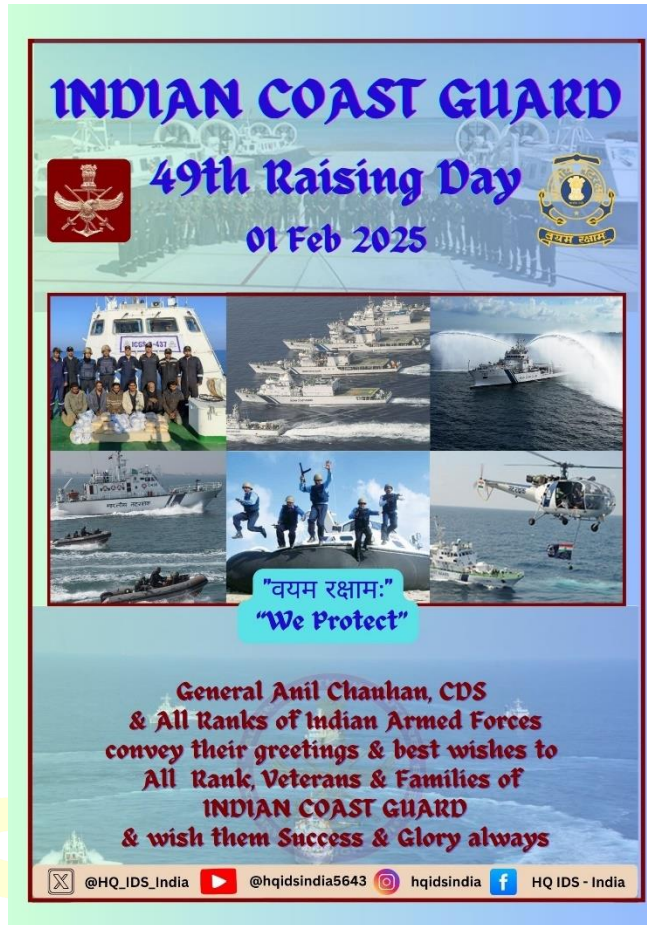
IAF Officer Set To Take Bharat to ISS

- IAF group captain **Shubhanshu Shukla** is set to represent the country as the first Indian astronaut to travel to the **International Space Station** (ISS) aboard a **SpaceX Dragon spacecraft** from the **space station in Florida** soon.
- Shubhanshu Shukla is designated as pilot of the **Axiom Mission 4** to the ISS, as part of a joint effort between **NASA and the ISRO**. The US space agency announced that the spaceflight will lift off "no earlier than spring 2025".
- IAF Group captain Shubhanshu Shukla said he is looking forward to sharing his experience with "**Bharatvaasis**", adding that he plans to take items representing the country on his spaceflight and hopes to perform some yoga poses aboard the orbital laboratory.
- Apart from India, the Axiom Mission 4 or Ax-4 mission will "realize the return" to human spaceflight for **Poland, and Hungary**, with each country's first government-sponsored flight in more than 40 years.
- While Ax-4 marks these countries' second human spaceflight mission in history, it will be the first time all **three nations** will execute a mission on board the ISS.
- "This historic mission underscores how Axiom Space is redefining the pathway to low-Earth orbit and elevating national space programs globally".



ICG 49th Raising Day

- PM Modi- On their Raising Day, we laud the Indian Coast Guard for safeguarding our vast coastline with bravery, dedication and relentless vigilance. From maritime security to disaster response, from anti-smuggling operations to environmental protection, the Indian Coast Guard is a formidable guardian of our seas, ensuring the safety of our waters and people.
- Indian Coast Guard is a maritime law enforcement and search and rescue agency of India with jurisdiction over its territorial waters including its contiguous zone and exclusive economic zone.
- Founded: 1 February 1977
- Abbreviation: ICG
- Agency executive: Paramesh Sivamani, Director General;
- Anniversary: Coast Guard Day: 1 February
- Employees: 13,842 sanctioned strength (2018–19)
- Formed: 18 August 1978
- Headquarters: Indian Coast Guard Headquarters, New Delhi



Union Budget 2025-26 for MoD

- In alignment with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of a 'Viksit Bharat @ 2047' and fostering a technologically advanced and self-reliant ('Aatmanirbhar') military, the Union Budget 2025-26 has allocated ₹6,81,210.27 crore for the Ministry of Defence (MoD). This allocation, accounting for 13.45% of the Union Budget, marks a 9.53% increase from the previous fiscal year, emphasizing the government's commitment to strengthening India's defense capabilities.

Capital Outlay and Modernization

- A significant portion of the budget, ₹1,80,000 crore (26.43%), is earmarked for capital outlay, focusing on modernization and infrastructural development. This includes ₹1,48,722.80 crore for capital acquisitions, such as advanced aircraft and next-generation submarines, and ₹31,277.20 crore for R&D and infrastructure. The budget prioritizes domestic procurement, with ₹1,11,544.83 crore (75% of the modernization budget) allocated for indigenous purchases, fostering self-reliance and boosting local industries.

Operational Readiness and Revenue Allocation

- The budget allocates ₹3,11,732.30 crore for operational readiness and maintenance of the Armed Forces, a 10.24% increase from FY 2024-25. This fund supports pay and allowances, as well as essential supplies like fuel, ordnance, and equipment maintenance. An additional ₹1,97,317.30 crore is reserved for personnel expenses, ensuring the welfare and preparedness of the forces.

Boosting Defence Research and Development

- The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) receives a 12.41% budget increase, totaling ₹26,816.82 crore. This allocation aims to enhance fundamental research and collaborations with private industries, driving innovation in emerging technologies such as AI, robotics, and cybersecurity.

Encouraging Private Sector Innovation

- To promote self-reliance in defense technology, ₹449.62 crore is allocated to the Innovations for Defence Excellence (iDEX) scheme. This initiative supports startups and private enterprises in developing cutting-edge solutions, strengthening India's defense ecosystem.

Welfare of Veterans and Defence Pension

- Acknowledging the sacrifices of veterans, ₹1,60,795 crore is allocated for defense pensions, covering approximately 34 lakh pensioners. The budget also allocates ₹8,317 crore for the Ex-Servicemen Contributory Health Scheme (ECHS), ensuring superior healthcare for veterans and their families.

Strengthening the Indian Coast Guard

- The Indian Coast Guard (ICG) sees a substantial budget increase of 26.50%, amounting to ₹9,676.70 crore. The capital budget of ₹5,000 crore, a 43% rise from the previous year, enables the acquisition of Advanced Light Helicopters, Dornier Aircraft, and Fast Patrol Vessels, enhancing coastal security and emergency response.

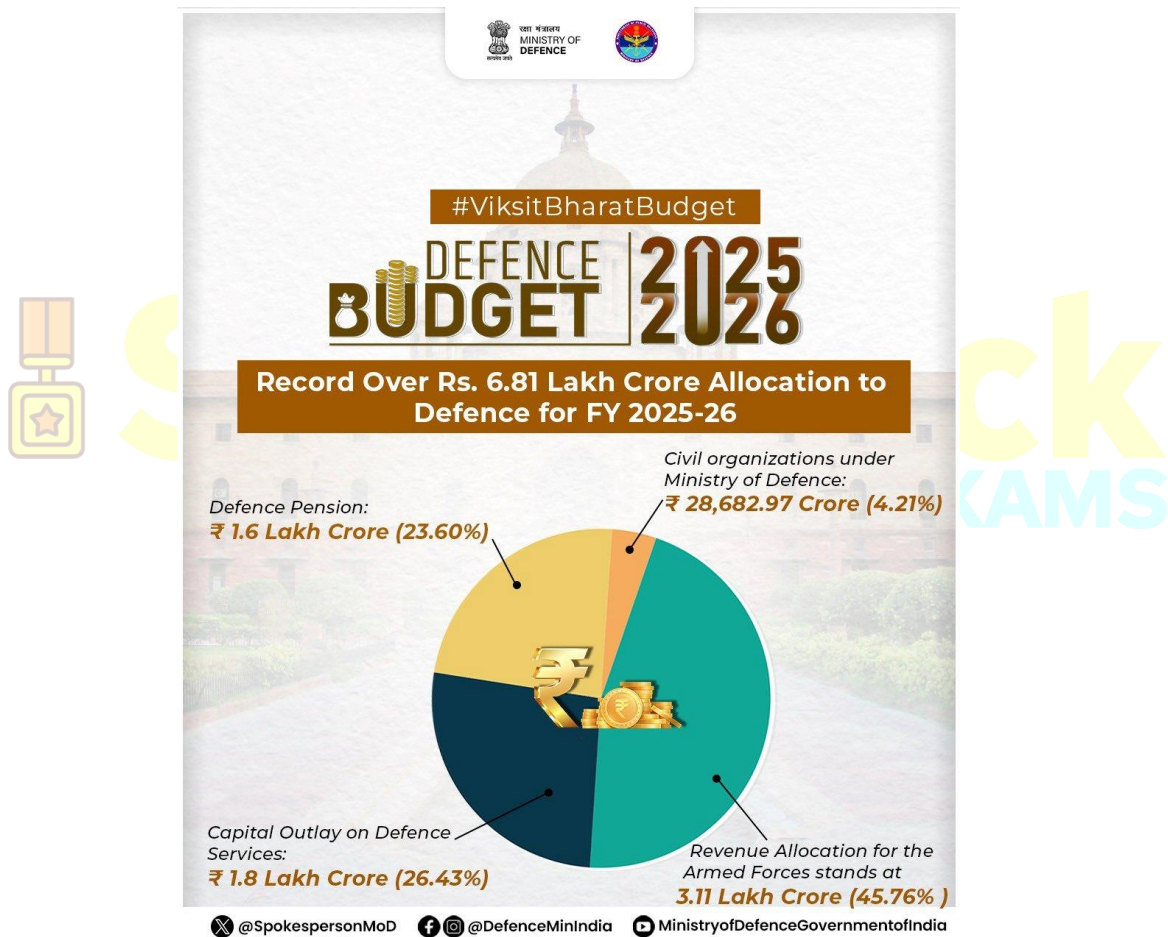
Enhancing Border Infrastructure

- With ₹7,146.50 crore allocated to the Border Roads Organisation (BRO), the budget supports infrastructure projects like tunnels, bridges, and strategic roads

in critical regions such as Arunachal Pradesh and Jammu & Kashmir. These developments not only bolster national security but also promote economic growth and employment opportunities in border areas.

Conclusion

- The Union Budget 2025-26 demonstrates India's resolve to advance its defense capabilities while promoting self-reliance and modernization. Through strategic investments in technology, infrastructure, and welfare, the budget reinforces India's preparedness to tackle emerging security challenges and contribute to the nation's growth and development.



DRDO Successfully Conducts Successive Flight-trials

- DRDO has successfully conducted three successive flight-trials of **Very Short-Range Air Defence System (VSHORADS)** from Chandipur off the coast of Odisha. These tests were carried out against high-speed targets flying at very low altitude.

- During all the three flight-tests, the missiles intercepted and completely destroyed the targets having reduced thermal signature mimicking low flying drones at different flying conditions.
- VSHORADS is a **Man Portable Air Defence system** designed and developed indigenously by Research Center Imarat in collaboration with other DRDO laboratories and Development cum Production Partners.
- The missile system has the capability to meet the needs of all the three branches of the Armed Forces, viz. **Indian Army, Navy and Air Force.**



Exercise Ekuverin

- The **13th edition** of joint military exercise Ekuverin between the Indian Army and the **Maldives National Defence Force** has commenced in the archipelago nation, officials here said.
- Ekuverin meaning 'Friends' in Dhivehi language is a bilateral annual exercise conducted alternatively in India and Maldives. In 2023, it was conducted at Chaubatia in Uttarakhand from June 11 to 24.
- The 14-day exercise is aimed at enhancing interoperability in counter insurgency and counter terrorism operations and carry out joint humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations.



Rashtrapati Bhavan Hosted A Wedding

- The Rashtrapati Bhavan serves as the official residence of the President of India. President Murmu has been highly impressed by Gupta's performance and has thus arranged for the wedding ceremony conducted in the Mother Teresa Crown Complex within the Rashtrapati Bhavan premises.
- Poonam Gupta is a CRPF assistant commandant. She is currently posted as a personal security officer (PSO) of the President.
- Gupta will reportedly marry another assistant commandant, Avneesh Kumar, who is currently posted in Jammu and Kashmir.
- February 12 was the date that has been fixed for the occasion.
- A highly qualified officer, Gupta holds a bachelor's degree in Maths, a postgraduate degree in English Literature, and a BEd from Gwalior's Jiwaji University.
- Gupta was ranked 81st in the UPSC CAPF exam, as per the report. She was earlier posted at a Naxal-affected area in Bihar.



Army Partners With IIT-Guwahati For Lightweight Bunker Material

- The Indian Army has recently partnered with the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Guwahati to develop innovative epoxy bamboo-based composites aimed at enhancing the construction of bunkers in high-altitude areas.
- This collaboration, formalized through a MoU is part of the Army's broader initiative to modernize its defence infrastructure.
- The primary goal is to replace traditional building materials with lightweight and durable alternatives that can withstand harsh environmental conditions while providing adequate protection against small arms fire.
- This initiative aligns with the Indian Army's vision for a "**Decade of Transformation**," emphasizing innovation and self-reliance as part of the 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' initiative.



Global Firepower Index 2025

- India has secured **4th place** in the Global Firepower Index 2025 (GFP Index), showcasing its military strength on the global stage.
- The ranking highlights India's expanding defence capabilities across the Army, Navy, and Air Force, reinforcing its position as one of the world's most powerful military forces.
- Meanwhile, Pakistan has dropped from **9th place** in 2024 to 12th in the latest rankings.
- The Global Firepower Index 2025 evaluates military power based on over 60 parameters, including defence technology, financial resources, logistics, and strategic positioning.
- The **United States** remains the most powerful military, followed by **Russia and China**. Other countries in the **top 10** include **South Korea, the United Kingdom, France, Japan, Turkey, and Italy**.



Trump withdraws US from UNHRC

- President Donald Trump signed an executive order withdrawing the US from the UN Human Rights Council, prohibiting any future funding for the UN agency for Palestinian refugees.
- Trump on Tuesday also directed the US to review its participation in the UN's Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), the body that uses culture and history as a bridge-building mechanism between nations.

- “The United States helped found the UN after World War II to prevent future global conflicts and promote international peace and security. But some of the UN’s agencies and bodies have drifted from this mission and instead act contrary to the interests of the United States while attacking our allies and propagating anti-Semitism,” the Executive order said.
- The executive order said that as in 2018, when the US withdrew from the UNHRC, the US will reevaluate its commitment to these institutions and three UN organisations that deserve renewed scrutiny are the UNHRC; the UNESCO and the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA).
- Israel and the US have accused the Human Rights Council of unfairly targeting and maligning Israel. In 2019, the US and Israel withdrew from UNESCO, with Israel criticising the agency as “erasing” Jewish history within Israel’s borders.



India To Receive 4th Squadron S-400 by year-end

- **In Short**
- Three S-400s deployed in key strategic areas
- Army gets fourth S-400 squadron by 2024
- 70,000 AK-203 rifles to be procured in 2025

- India will receive the fourth of five Russian-made S-400 air defence system squadrons by the end of 2025, Defence Ministry sources confirmed adding that the final squadron is expected in 2026.
- The Rs 35,000 crore deal for five S-400 squadrons was signed in 2018, and three squadrons have already been deployed.
- Each S-400 squadron includes 16 vehicles, comprising launchers, radar, control centres, and support vehicles. It can track aerial threats up to 600 km away. The S-400 uses four missile types, capable of engaging targets at ranges of up to 400 km.
- It can intercept fighter jets, ballistic missiles, and drones, making it a vital part of India's defence arsenal. These systems are critical for protecting India's strategic assets.
- Sources also stated that the Army is set to receive 70,000 AK-203 assault rifles in 2025, followed by an additional one lakh units in 2026 under an arms deal with Russia.



Iran Inaugurates Its First Drone-carrier Warship

- Iran has inaugurated its first drone-carrier warship, saying the vessel is capable of operating in oceans far from its mainland.
- The report said the vessel, manned by the paramilitary Revolutionary Guard's navy, can carry several squadrons of drones as well as helicopters and cruise missiles. Named **Shahid Bagheri**, it's capable of launching cruise missiles.

- With a 180-meter-long runway for drones, the vessel can travel up to 22,000 nautical miles without needing to refuel in ports. The report said it was converted from a commercial ship and would increase Iran's power of deterrence.



TROPEX-25

- The 2025 edition of Indian Navy's capstone Theatre Level Operational Exercise (TROPEX) is currently underway in the **Indian Ocean Region**.
- TROPEX 25 is being conducted over a duration of three months from **Jan - Mar 25**. The exercise is being conducted in various phases - both in **Harbour and at Sea**, integrating various facets of combat operations, cyber and electronic warfare operations, live weapon firings during Joint Work Up Phase and Amphibious Exercise (AMPHEX).
- During the exercise, the combined fleets comprising approximately **65 Indian Naval Ships, 09 Submarines** and over **80 Aircrafts** of different types, are put through complex maritime operational scenarios.



MoD inks Rs 642 Crore Contract with BEL

- The Ministry of Defence signed a contract with **Bharat Electronics Limited** in New Delhi for procurement of **28 EON-51 systems** for 11 New Generation Offshore Patrol Vessels and three Cadet Training Ships for the Indian Navy at a total cost of **Rs 642.17 crore**, including taxes under Buy (Indian-IDDMM) category.
- EON-51 is an Electro Optical Fire Control System which provides search, detection and classification of targets using Electro Optical and Thermal Imagers devices.
- The scheme will generate employment over a period of three years and encourage active participation of various Indian industries including MSMEs, thus significantly contributing to the Government's efforts to achieve 'Aatmanirbharta' in defence.



'Ex Winged Raider' 2025

- The troops of the Indian Army recently participated in a comprehensive training exercise christened Ex Winged Raider. The exercise focused on special airborne operations, demonstrating a high level of operational readiness and inter-service synergy.
- The exercise involved rehearsing various airborne insertion techniques from both fixed-wing and rotary-wing aircraft, enhancing the skills of participating personnel.

- The exercise also witnessed a first in the Eastern Theatre in terms of training on airborne operations from the Chinook Helicopter.



Exercise Cyclone 2025

- The special forces of the Indian and Egyptian armies have engaged in joint military exercises known as "Exercise Cyclone". The inaugural exercise, "Exercise Cyclone-I," took place in Jaisalmer, Rajasthan, starting on January 14, 2023.
- The second edition occurred in Anshas, Egypt, from January 22 to February 1, 2024. In 2025, a joint military exercise between special forces is scheduled to be held at Mahajan Field Firing Range, Rajasthan from February 10-23.
- The exercises aim to enhance defence cooperation between India and Egypt by focusing on sharing professional skills and improving interoperability of special forces in desert environments.



HAL's Upgraded Flagship Jet Training Aircraft

- HAL has rebranded its **Hindustan Jet Trainer (HJT)-36** as '**Yashas**'. The unveiling took place at the Aero India 2025 event in Bangalore. The renaming follows major modifications to resolve departure characteristics and spin resistance throughout the aircraft envelope.
- The Yashas is designed for Stage-II pilot training, counter-insurgency operations, counter surface force operations, armament training, and aerobatics.
- It is powered by a **FADEC-controlled AL-55I Jet engine**, which provides a best-in-class thrust-to-weight ratio, optimized thrust management, and reliability.
- The Yashas features a stepped-up rear cockpit with a drooped nose for excellent all-around vision and enhanced situational awareness, as well as a state-of-the-art glass cockpit with **multi-function displays (MFDs)** and a **head-up display (HUD)**.
- The HAL HJT-36 "**Sitara**", now known as Yashas, is an intermediate jet trainer and light attack aircraft.



Thales, Bharat Dynamics to provide first Supply of MANPADS

- Thales and Bharat Dynamics Limited announced on Tuesday at Aero India 2025 here that they will soon provide the first supply of Laser Beam Riding MANPAD

(LBRM) Very Short-Range Air Defence missiles and launchers to the Ministry of Defence.

- Earlier in 2021, a partnership agreement was signed between Thales and BDL to collaborate on the LBRM project with the support of the Indian and UK governments, stated a press release issued by Thales on Tuesday.
- According to the press note, LBRM, manufactured with up to 60 percent indigenous content in India, are short-range, man-portable air defence systems optimised to counter air threats, including fixed-wing Fighter Ground Attack aircraft, late-unmasking Attack Helicopters, and drones.



PM Modi, President Macron launch India-France Roadmap on AI

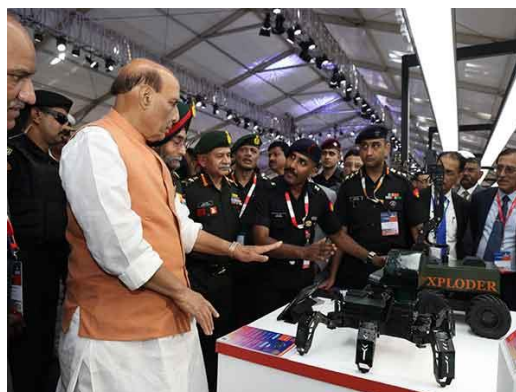
- India and France signed a declaration of Intent on establishing a partnership on Advanced Modular Reactors and Small Modular Reactors, with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Emmanuel Macron also launching an India-France Roadmap on Artificial Intelligence (AI).
- The two leaders stressed the urgent need for reforming the United Nations Security Council and agreed to coordinate closely in multilateral forums, including on UNSC matters.
- President Macron and Prime Minister Modi announced the grand inauguration of the **India-France Year of Innovation** in New Delhi in March 2026 by launching its Logo.
- The two leaders welcomed the launch of **FRIND-X (France-India Defence Startup Excellence)** in Paris on 5-6 December 2024, involving the DGA and the

Defence Innovation Agency, in line with the vision enshrined in **HORIZON 2047** and the **India-France Defence Industrial Roadmap**.



Aero India: Army officer's Kamikaze UGVs to be inducted under emergency procurement

- Two innovations developed by Major Rajprasad RS of the Indian Army including the "Xploder -Kamikaze and IED Disposal remotely operated vehicles" and "Mobile Reactive Muniton System" were unveiled at Aero India 2025 in Bengaluru.
- The innovations have been developed in-house by the officer from the **7 Engineer Regiment** and have been showcased at India Pavilion to Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, in the presence of Army Chief General Upendra Dwivedi.
- The Mobile Reactive Muniton System is seen as an advancement in the domain of mine warfare, designed for remote deployment via aerial platforms such as UAVs or **Vehicle-Based Mine Delivery Systems (VBMS)**.



Narendra Modi US Visit Highlights

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi met Donald Trump for the first time since his return to the White House on January 20 for his second term as US President.
- The two leaders praised their strong bond and hoped for stronger ties and trade deals as the meeting took place amid concerns over Donald Trump's reciprocal tariff plans, which can impact India hard.
- India has more tariffs than nearly any other country, said Donald Trump while announcing reciprocal tariffs. The tariffs could mean duties levied on Indian imports to the US, which Trump had earlier stated would be equal to the taxes charged by other nations on their products.
- Commenting on India-China tensions, he said, "I look at India, I do see the skirmishes on the border which are quite vicious... If I could be of help, I would love to help... I would hope that China, India, Russia and US, all of us can get along. It's very important."
- Donald Trump on Thursday said that the United States will be increasing its military sales to India by billions of dollars and his administration is paving the way to provide India with **F35 Stealth fighters**.
- Donald Trump in the US, spoke about India's vision of '**Make India Great Again (MIGA)**' - a phrase inspired by Mr Trump's signature slogan '**Make America Great Again (MAGA)**'. According to PM Modi, a joint vision of 'MAGA' and 'MIGA' becomes a mega partnership for prosperity.
- The two leaders also announced that India and the US have set a **USD 500 billion** target for bilateral trade **by 2030**.
- We will strengthen oil and gas trade to ensure India's energy security. In the energy infrastructure, investment will increase. In the nuclear energy sector, we spoke about deepening our cooperation, in the direction of small modular reactors.



BrahMos-NG Set For First Flight In 2026

- The BrahMos-NG (Next Generation) missile is slated for its first flight test in 2026, with production expected to begin in 2027-28.
- It is designed to be more compact and lightweight than its predecessor, while retaining the same capabilities.
- BrahMos Aerospace has begun work on the **BrahMos-LR (Long Range) variant**, an iteration of the BrahMos supersonic cruise missile, which has an extended range of **800km** while retaining its **Mach 3 speeds**.
- The BrahMos-LR's development marks overcoming constraints imposed by the **Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR)**. BrahMos was previously limited to a 290km range due to international agreements.



Govt Starts Process of Procuring Nearly 1000 Surveillance Helicopters

- The Indian government has initiated a significant procurement process for nearly **1,000 surveillance** helicopters designed for high-altitude operations, as announced on February 13, 2025.
- This move is part of a broader strategy to enhance the operational capabilities of the Indian Army, particularly in challenging terrains such as those found in the northern and eastern regions of the country.
- The preferred categorisation for the project as per provisions of Chapter-II of **DAP-2020** may be indicated by the vendors with due justification.
- The helicopters will be capable of operating at altitudes up to 5,500 meters, ensuring functionality in extreme conditions typical of mountainous areas in India.
- The Request for Information (RFI) emphasizes that the helicopters should have a modular design to facilitate future upgrades without significant structural changes.



Bharat Forge Partners Liebherr-Aerospace & Transportation

- Bharat Forge has announced a strategic partnership with **Liebherr-Aerospace & Transportation SAS** to establish an advanced aerospace manufacturing facility in Pune, India.

- The new facility is designed to cater to the increasing global demand for aerospace components, specifically focusing on high-precision parts such as landing gear components.
- The manufacturing plant will incorporate a state-of-the-art ring mill along with advanced forging and machining technologies. It aims to produce precision-engineered components essential for the aerospace sector.

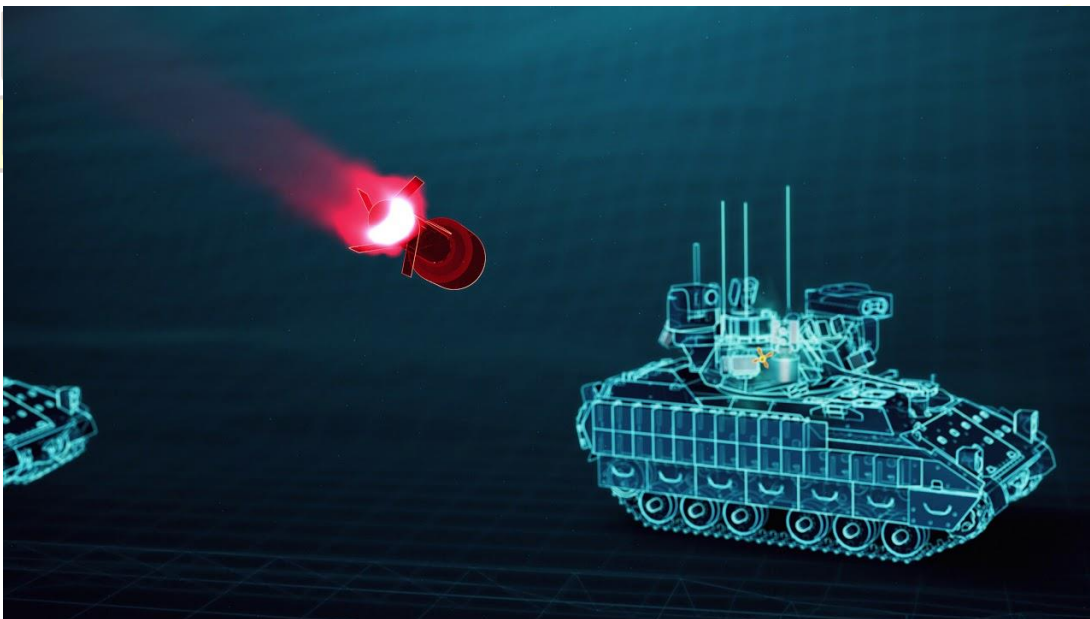


DRDO Develops Hard-Kill Active Protection System

- DRDO of India has made significant advancements in developing a hard-kill **active protection system** aimed at enhancing the survivability of armoured vehicles against modern threats, such as ATGMs and kinetic energy rounds.
- Hard-kill APS are designed to physically intercept and destroy incoming munitions before they can impact the vehicle. This is typically achieved through the use of explosive countermeasures that can neutralize threats at close range.

Key Features of DRDO's Hard-Kill APS

- 1. Kinetic Countermeasures:** The system employs kinetic projectiles or explosive devices to intercept incoming threats. This method is crucial for neutralizing RPGs, ATGMs, and high-explosive anti-tank (HEAT) rounds effectively.
- 2. Integration with Existing Platforms:** DRDO is focusing on integrating this hard-kill APS into existing platforms like the T-90S Bhisma tanks, enhancing their defensive capabilities against evolving battlefield threats.
- 3. Dual Approach:** The system is designed to work alongside soft-kill measures, which include electronic countermeasures like multispectral smoke grenades and jammers that confuse or blind incoming missiles. This comprehensive strategy aims to provide layered defence against a variety of threats.
- 4. Development Timeline:** The initiative reflects a broader effort by the Indian Army to modernize its armoured units, with DRDO actively engaging in technology development and testing phases to ensure effectiveness against both current and future threats.



IAF Plans To Retire The Oldest Jaguar Fighters Between 2028 And 2031

- India is the world's only Jaguar operator, maintaining approximately 120 aircraft distributed among six squadrons.
- A portion of these Jaguars are undergoing upgrades to meet the **DARIN-III** (Display Attack Ranging Inertial Navigation) standard, which includes an Elta

active electronically scanned array radar, an indigenous D-JAG integrated electronic warfare system, a new mission computer, and a glass cockpit.

- These upgraded aircraft are also equipped with MBDA ASRAAM close combat missiles. Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) is currently delivering six upgraded DARIN-III aircraft each year.
- The Jaguar was first used operationally during the Indian Peace Keeping Force operations in Sri Lanka between **1987 and 1990** for reconnaissance and was also utilized during the **Kargil War of 1999**. The aircraft further carried out aerial reconnaissance during the standoff with **Pakistan in 2001-2002**.
- The IAF plans to retire the oldest Jaguar aircraft between 2028 and 2031, replacing them with **HAL TEJAS MK-1A aircraft**.



PM Modi, President Trump Boost Bilateral Ties with 'Mission 500'

- India and the US bolstered their ties during two-day visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi with a series of initiatives across domains including 'Mission 500', 10-year framework for major defence partnership and decisions concerning energy trade and civil nuclear cooperation.
- President Donald Trump and Prime Minister Modi launched a new initiative - 'U.S.-India **COMPACT (Catalyzing Opportunities for Military Partnership, Accelerated Commerce & Technology)** for the 21st Century' - to drive transformative change across key pillars of cooperation.
- The leaders welcomed the significant integration of U.S.-origin defence items into India's inventory to date, including **C-130J Super Hercules, C-17**

Globemaster III, P-8I Poseidon aircraft; CH-47F Chinooks, MH-60R Seahawks, and AH-64E Apaches; Harpoon anti-ship missiles; M777 howitzers; and MQ-9Bs.

- They announced plans to pursue this year new procurements and co-production arrangements for "**Javelin**" **Anti-Tank Guided Missiles** and "**Stryker**" **Infantry Combat Vehicles in India** to rapidly meet India's defence requirements.
- To this end, the leaders set a bold new goal for bilateral trade - "Mission 500" - aiming to more than double total bilateral trade to **\$500 billion by 2030**.



Exercise Komodo 2025

- Indian Navy platforms **INS Shardul** and Long Range Maritime Surveillance **P8I** aircraft are in Bali, Indonesia, to participate in the International Fleet Review (IFR) 2025, scheduled from 15 Feb to 22 Feb 25.
- This follows the participation of **INS Mumbai & the P8I aircraft** in the **LA PEROUSE exercises** in Indonesia in Jan 2025 and visit of Adm Muhammad Ali, Chief of Staff of the Indonesian Navy, to India, as part of the high-level delegation for the Republic Day Parade 2025.



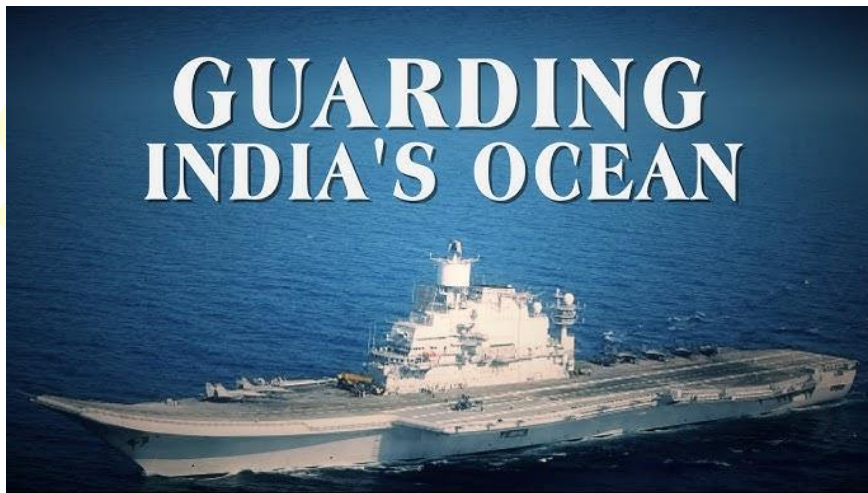
Exercise Dharma Guardian

- The Indian Army will conduct the **sixth edition** of the joint military exercise Dharma Guardian with Japan at **Mount Fuji in Japan** from February 25 to March 9.
- Aim of the exercise is to enhance interoperability between the two forces while undertaking joint urban warfare and counter-terrorism operations under UN mandate.
- Along with **Exercise Dharma Guardian**, both countries attach importance to the **Malabar exercise, Exercise Shinnyu Maitri**.



Indian Ocean Conference

- India, with its Indian Ocean partners like Singapore and Oman, is hosting the Eighth **Indian Ocean Conference (IOC) in Muscat** this weekend.
- Foreign ministers from around 30 countries in the region will be converging at the conference to discuss the future of this most happening region.
- Oman, the host, like India, has been a major seafaring nation and has maintained linkages with India for over five millennia. Both countries are strategic partners and work closely in many areas of development in the region.
- Oman hosts a sizeable Indian community totalling approximately 664,783 individuals as of August 2024, according to the Government of Oman.
- The two leaders jointly released the logo celebrating the **70th anniversary** of the diplomatic relations.
- They also jointly released a book titled '**Mandvi to Muscat: Indian Community and the Shared History of India and Oman**'.



DRDO Develops New Pinaka Rocket Variant

- DRDO of India is currently developing a **new high-calibre Pinaka rocket** with a range of **120 km**. An official from DRDO informed Janes at Aero India 2025 in Bangalore that the development of this new Pinaka rocket variant began in 2024 and is already in an advanced stage, with the first test expected in October 2025.
- The new longer-range rocket variant will be launched from the Pinaka Multi Barrel Rocket Launcher (MBRL), and a new pod will be fitted to the Pinaka MBRL to launch it.

- DRDO is also working on additional Pinaka variants, including one with a range of 120 km, and another with a range of over 200 km.
- The IAF is also considering adopting modified Pinaka systems as a cost-effective alternative to more expensive options like the Pralay missile, including both surface-to-surface and air-to-surface capabilities for Su-30 aircraft.



Flying Wedge Defence And Aerospace Secures International Export Order

- Flying Wedge Defence and Aerospace Secures International Order for 35 Autonomous Aircraft: Bangalore-based start-up Flying Wedge Defence and Aerospace has successfully secured an export order for **35 FWD 100 ISR** autonomous aircraft from a sub-Saharan nation.
- The FWD 100 ISR is a sub-variant of the FWD 200B model, designed for intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance missions.
- It features advanced optical payloads for precise surveillance and has a wingspan of 6 meters, a length of 3.8 meters, and a maximum takeoff weight of 90 kg. The aircraft boasts a remarkable operational endurance of up to 24 hours.



Qatar Committed to investing \$ 10 billion in India

- India and Qatar upgraded their ties to a strategic partnership as PM Modi held bilateral talks with the visiting Qatar Amir, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani,

discussing ways to enhance cooperation in areas like trade, investment, energy and security.

- Qatar committed to investing \$ 10 billion in India, as it announced Qatar Investment Authority will open an office in India.
- The leaders spoke about signing a bilateral Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement and agreed to double the current \$ 14 billion bilateral trade in the next 5 years.
- Apart from the establishment of strategic partnership, 6 other deals were signed including a revised agreement for avoidance of double taxation and another for financial and economic collaboration. They also agreed to expedite negotiations for the India-Qatar Bilateral Investment Treaty.
- Qatar is the **5th GCC (Gulf Cooperation Council) country** with which India has signed a strategic partnership agreement, after **UAE, Saudi Arabia, Oman and Kuwait**.
- The official said that while talks are underway for an **India- GCC FTA**, India and Qatar at the bilateral level will look at the possibility of having an FTA in the future.



India's First Private PSLV To Launch TDS-1

- India's first privately manufactured **Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV)** is set to launch the **Technology Demonstration Satellite (TDS-1)**, which will test 35 new indigenous technologies.
- This milestone mission, scheduled for the third quarter of 2025, marks a significant step in India's space exploration efforts, as it will be the first PSLV built by the private sector under a contract for five rockets involving a consortium of **HAL and Larsen & Toubro (L&T)**.

- The **TDS-1 mission** is crucial as it represents the first PSLV manufactured by the private sector under a contract for five rockets.



IIT-Madras Incubated Start-Up Water Fly's 'e-Flying Boat'

- Waterfly Technologies, an IIT-Madras-incubated start-up, is developing electric sea gliders, also known as Wing-In-Ground (WIG) craft, as a sustainable alternative to traditional air and ferry travel.
- The company plans to transform transportation across coastal regions. Waterfly Technologies showcased its design at Aero India in Bangalore. A prototype is expected by the end of 2025.
- These sea gliders are designed to take off from the water and fly at an altitude of around four meters, maintaining that height by leveraging ground effect for efficiency. The craft can fly up to 150 meters. Their flatter design improves aerodynamic efficiency.
- The sea gliders are expected to reach speeds of up to 500 km/h, combining the speed and comfort of aircraft with the affordability and manoeuvrability of boats.
- The initial battery-powered sea gliders will have a **500 km range**, with a hydrogen-electric variant capable of traveling up to **2,000 km**. The "E-flying boat" aims to offer zero-carbon travel.



MoD inks a Contract worth ₹1220.12 Cr with BEL

- The Ministry of Defence has signed a contract with M/s Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL), Bengaluru for procurement of 149 Software Defined Radios for Indian Coast Guard at a total cost of ₹1220.12 Cr under Buy (Indian-IDDM) category.
- These state-of-the-art radios will enable secure and reliable information sharing, collaboration, and situational awareness through high-speed data and secure voice communication.
- This will strengthen the Indian Coast Guard's capability to fulfil its core responsibilities, including maritime law enforcement, search and rescue operations, fisheries protection, and marine environment protection. Additionally, these radios will enhance interoperability for joint operations with the Indian Navy.



MoD signs ₹697.35 Cr contracts with ACE Ltd & JCB India Ltd

- The Ministry of Defence has signed contracts with M/s ACE Limited and M/s JCB India Limited for procurement of quantity **1868 Rough Terrain Fork Lift Truck (RTFLT)** at a total cost of **₹697.35 crore** for Indian Army, Indian Airforce and Indian Navy.
- Rough Terrain Fork Lift Truck (RTFLT) is a critical equipment which will assist in various combat and logistics support tasks by avoiding manual handling of enormous number of stores and thus enhancing the operational effectiveness of Indian Army, Indian Air Force and Indian Navy.



Mahindra Group Partners With US Firm

- Mahindra Group has announced a strategic partnership with US-based Anduril Industries to enhance India's defence capabilities through advanced technology.
- This collaboration, unveiled on February 19, 2025, focuses on developing Autonomous Maritime Systems and Counter-Unmanned Aerial Systems (CUAS), along with innovative **Command and Control (C2) software**.
- The partnership aims to create modular Development of Autonomous Underwater Vehicles AUVs designed for rapid deployment in security, surveillance, reconnaissance, and survey missions. These vehicles will significantly improve operational capabilities underwater.
- The collaboration will also focus on technologies capable of detecting and neutralising drone threats, Counter-Unmanned Aerial Systems (CUAS). This is

crucial for enhancing protection against the increasing use of unmanned aerial systems in security operations.



Global Firepower Index 2025

- Global defence spending has reached unprecedented levels in 2025, driven by escalating geopolitical tensions and security concerns. The total military expenditure worldwide is estimated to be around **\$2.46 trillion**, marking a significant increase from previous years.
- India has recently solidified its position as the fourth-largest defence spender globally, with a military budget of **\$75 billion** for 2025.

Top 10 Military Powers In 2025

- 1. United States:** Leading the pack, the U.S. has allocated a staggering \$895 billion for defence, which constitutes approximately 62.3% of the combined military budgets of the top five spenders.
- 2. China:** Following the U.S., China has committed \$266.85 billion to its military, focusing on modernisation and regional security initiatives, particularly in the South China Sea.
- 3. Russia:** With a defence budget of \$126 billion, Russia continues to invest heavily in military capabilities amid ongoing conflicts and strategic ambitions in Eastern Europe.
- 4. India:** India ranks fourth globally with a defence budget of \$75 billion, emphasizing military modernisation and self-reliance in defence production as it addresses regional threats.
- 5. Saudi Arabia:** Allocating \$74.76 billion, Saudi Arabia remains a key player in Middle Eastern defence spending, reflecting its ongoing security partnerships.
- 6. United Kingdom:** The UK has set aside \$71.5 billion, focusing on maintaining its military capabilities in a changing global landscape.
- 7. Japan:** Japan's defence budget stands at \$57 billion, aimed at enhancing its self-defence forces amid regional tensions.
- 8. Australia:** With a commitment of \$55.7 billion, Australia is investing in advanced military technologies and capabilities.
- 9. France:** France's defence budget is approximately \$55 billion, supporting its strategic military operations and commitments.
- 10. Ukraine:** Ukraine rounds out the top ten with a budget of \$53.7 billion, reflecting its ongoing conflict and need for enhanced military support.

Comparative Summary

Rank	Country	Defence Budget (USD)
1	United States	\$895 billion
2	China	\$266.85 billion
3	Russia	\$126 billion
4	India	\$75 billion
5	Saudi Arabia	\$74.76 billion
6	United Kingdom	\$71.5 billion
7	Japan	\$57 billion
8	Australia	\$55.7 billion
9	France	\$55 billion
10	Ukraine	\$53.7 billion

Indian Navy To Induct INS Himagiri, INS Udaygiri

- The Indian Navy is set to add **INS Himagiri and INS Udayagiri**, two advanced stealth frigates, to its fleet under **Project 17A**. These warships are part of the Nilgiri class and will boost the Navy's combat capabilities in warfare domains, including anti-air, anti-surface, and anti-submarine operations.
- Both INS Himagiri and INS Udayagiri are made with 75 per cent indigenous components.
- Weighing **6,600 tons**, these giants can cruise at **30 knots (56 km/h)**. Their stealth technology minimises radar, infrared, and acoustic signatures, making it difficult for enemies to detect enemies.
- **Ships in the Project 17A series**
 - **Nilgiri**: The first ship in the series, launched in 2019
 - **Himgiri**: The first of the three ships built at GRSE
 - **Udayagiri**: Launched in 2023
 - **Dunagiri**: Launched in 2023
 - **Taragiri**: Named after a hill range in the Himalayas
 - **Vindhya Giri**: Named after a mountain range in Karnataka
 - **Mahendragiri**: The seventh and final ship in the series



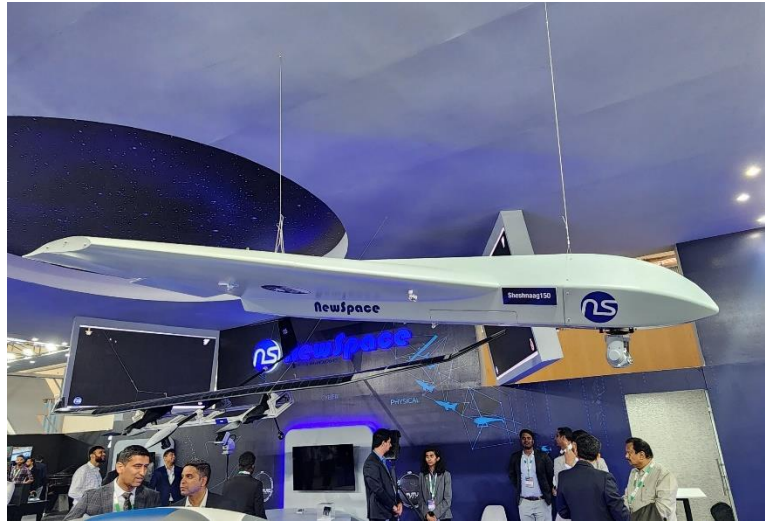
Avantel Bags Contract From ISRO's Commercial Arm NSIL

- Avantel Limited has secured a significant contract from **New Space India Limited (NSIL)**, the commercial arm of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO).
- The contract, valued at ₹43.25 Crores, involves the supply, installation, and commissioning of devices for Xponders. This announcement led to a notable increase in Avantel's stock price, rising by 8.73% to ₹116.40.
- In addition to this contract, Avantel has also received a **Comprehensive Annual Maintenance Contract (CAMC)** worth **₹5.81 Crores** for the maintenance of Wind Profiler Radar systems at the Satish Dhawan Space Centre. This contract is scheduled for execution until January 2030.
- Avantel specialises in various high-tech solutions including satellite communications, HF communications, and radar systems, catering primarily to defence and aerospace sectors. The company is actively expanding its portfolio with new developments in software-defined radios and other advanced communication technologies.



Sheshnaag-150

- India is currently facing significant challenges in selecting its next manned fighter aircraft, with a recent offer from both Russia and the U.S. to acquire **F-35 & Su-57 stealth fighters** adding to the complexity.
- Simultaneously, a breakthrough in indigenous defence technology has been achieved with the successful flight test of the Sheshnaag-150, a long-range collaborative attack swarming drone developed by **New Space Research Technologies (NRT)**.
- This system is designed for coordinated swarm attacks, capable of overwhelming enemy defences and executing precision strikes.
- With an operational range exceeding 1,000 km and an endurance of over 5 hours, the Sheshnaag-150 can loiter over target areas, providing real-time surveillance and strategic attack options.
- The drone's capability to carry warheads weighing between 25-40 kg enables it to inflict substantial damage on enemy infrastructure, vehicles, or personnel.



Indian Army Procures Critical Cbrn Defence Equipment

- Indian Army has signed a contract on 25 February 2025 for procurement of 223 Automatic Chemical Agent Detection and Alarm (ACADA) systems with M/s L&T Ltd at a cost of Rs 80.43 Cr, under the Buy Indian (IDDM) category.
- This will give a significant boost to the GoI's Atamnirbharta drive since more than 80% of the components and sub-systems of the equipment will be sourced locally.
- ACADA has been designed and developed by DRDO's Defence Research and Development Establishment, Gwalior and marks a significant milestone in the nation's indigenisation initiative in the niche CBRN domain.
- The ACADA system is used to detect chemical warfare agents (CWA) and programmed toxic industrial chemicals (TICs) by sampling the air from the environment.



DRDO & Indian Navy Successfully conduct trials of Naval Anti-Ship Missile

- DRDO) and Indian Navy carried out successful flight-trials of first-of-its-kind Naval Anti-Ship missile from ITR Chandipur on February 25, 2025. The trials demonstrated the missile's capability against ship targets while launched from an Indian Naval Seaking Helicopter.
- The trials have proven the missile's Man-in-Loop feature and scored a direct hit on a small ship target in sea-skimming mode at its maximum range. The missile uses an Indigenous Imaging Infra-Red Seeker for terminal guidance.



REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. When the Indian Coast Guard celebrate its 49th Raising Day?

- A. January 31, 2025
- B. February 1, 2025
- C. March 15, 2025
- D. April 10, 2025

ANSWER: B

2. Which aircraft carrier was visited by senior officers to observe the Joint Phase of TROPEX 25?

- A. INS Vikrant

- B. INS Vikramaditya
- C. INS Viraat
- D. INS Chakra

ANSWER: A

3. What is the total defence budget allocation for the Ministry of Defence for FY 2025-26?

- A. Rs 6,50,000 crore
- B. Rs 6,81,210.27 crore
- C. Rs 7,00,000 crore
- D. Rs 6,20,000 crore

ANSWER: B

4. What percentage of the total defence budget is allocated for Capital Outlay on Defence Services?

- A. 20.34%
- B. 23.12%
- C. 26.43%
- D. 30.25%

ANSWER: C

5. How much budget has been allocated for DRDO in FY 2025-26?

- A. Rs 23,855.61 crore
- B. Rs 25,500 crore
- C. Rs 26,816.82 crore
- D. Rs 27,000 crore

ANSWER: C

6. Which missile system was successfully tested by DRDO from Chandipur, Odisha?

- A. Akash
- B. Nag
- C. VSHORADS
- D. Astra

ANSWER: C

7. Who is the CRPF officer serving as the personal security officer (PSO) of the President of India?

- A. Avneesh Kumar
- B. Poonam Gupta
- C. Droupadi Murmu
- D. Rajnath Singh

ANSWER: B

8. Which institution has the Indian Army partnered with to develop epoxy bamboo-based composites for bunker construction?

- A. IIT Delhi
- B. IIT Guwahati
- C. IIT Kanpur
- D. IIT Madras

ANSWER: B

9. What is the primary advantage of using epoxy bamboo-based composites for bunker construction in high-altitude areas?

- A. They are more expensive but stronger
- B. They provide better camouflage
- C. They are lightweight and durable, reducing logistical burdens
- D. They increase the cost of transportation

ANSWER: C

10. What is India's ranking in the Global Firepower Index 2025?

- A. 2nd
- B. 3rd
- C. 4th
- D. 5th

ANSWER: C

11. As per Forbes' latest ranking, what is Pakistan position among the most powerful countries?

- A. 10th
- B. 12th
- C. 15th
- D. 8th

ANSWER: B

12. Which international body did U.S. President Donald Trump withdraw funding from, specifically targeting Palestinian refugee aid?

- A. United Nations Human Rights Council
- B. World Health Organization
- C. United Nations Security Council
- D. United Nations Development Programme

ANSWER: A

13. What major change is the Donald Trump administration planning for the US Agency for International Development (USAID)?

- A. Expanding its global operations
- B. Reducing its workforce to fewer than 300 employees
- C. Increasing foreign humanitarian aid funding
- D. Merging USAID with the Department of State

ANSWER: B

14. Which institute has partnered with the Indian Army to develop bamboo-based composite bunkers?

- A. IIT Delhi
- B. IIT Guwahati
- C. IIT Madras
- D. IIT Kanpur

ANSWER: B

15. Where was the 5th Joint Working Group meeting between the Ministry of Defence of India and Spain held?

- A. Madrid
- B. New Delhi
- C. Barcelona
- D. Mumbai

ANSWER: B

16. What is the primary objective of the Indian Navy's TROPEX 25 exercise?

- A. Conducting peacekeeping operations in the Indian Ocean
- B. Validating warfighting skills and ensuring maritime security
- C. Strengthening diplomatic ties with neighboring nations
- D. Testing new naval equipment in deep-sea environments

ANSWER: B

17. Why is Marseille considered a strategic telecommunications hub?

- A. It hosts the headquarters of global telecom giants
- B. It is a major port for naval operations
- C. It serves as a gateway for submarine cables linking Europe to Africa, West Asia, and Asia
- D. It is a center for cybersecurity research

ANSWER: C

18. What is the projected target for India's defence exports by 2025-26?

- A. Rs 21,000 crore
- B. Rs 25,000 crore
- C. Rs 30,000 crore
- D. Rs 35,000 crore

ANSWER: C

19. What is the primary focus of the Indian Army's Ex Winged Raider exercise?

- A. Naval warfare operations
- B. Special airborne operations
- C. Cybersecurity training
- D. Amphibious assault tactics

ANSWER: B

20. Where is the third edition of Exercise Cyclone held in 2025?

- A. Jaisalmer, Rajasthan
- B. Cairo, Egypt
- C. Anshas, Egypt
- D. Mahajan Field Firing Range, Rajasthan

ANSWER: D

21. Which organization has rebranded the Hindustan Jet Trainer (HJT)-36 as 'Yashas'?

- A. Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL)
- B. DRDO
- C. Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL)
- D. Indian Air Force (IAF)

ANSWER: C

22. Which Indian defence PSU has partnered with South Korea-based STX Engine to develop battle tank and marine engines?

- A. Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL)
- B. Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL)
- C. Bharat Dynamics Limited (BDL)
- D. BEML Limited

ANSWER: D

23. At which event was the MoU between BEML Limited and STX Engine signed?

- A. DefExpo 2024
- B. Singapore Airshow 2025
- C. Aero India 2025
- D. Paris Air Show 2025

ANSWER: C

24. What is the name of the remotely operated vehicle designed for IED disposal and Kamikaze operations by Major Rajprasad RS?

- A. MRMS-X
- B. Xploder-Kamikaze
- C. Reactive Warbot
- D. Mine Eliminator

ANSWER: B

25. Which system is designed for remote deployment via UAVs or Vehicle-Based Mine Delivery Systems?

- A. Mobile Reactive Munition System (MRMS)
- B. Smart Mine Deployment Unit (SMDU)
- C. Advanced Warfare Mine System (AWMS)
- D. Autonomous Bomb Neutralizer (ABN)

ANSWER: A

26. When is the first flight test of the BrahMos NG (Next Generation) missile scheduled?

- A. 2019
- B. 2026
- C. 2021
- D. 2022

ANSWER: B

27. How many surveillance helicopters is the Indian government planning to procure for high-altitude operations?

- A. 500
- B. 750
- C. 1,000
- D. 1,500

ANSWER: C

28. Which company has partnered with Liebherr-Aerospace & Transportation SAS to establish an aerospace manufacturing facility in Pune?

- A. Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL)
- B. Bharat Forge
- C. Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL)
- D. Larsen & Toubro (L&T)

ANSWER: B

29. Which country is participating with India in the joint military exercise 'Cyclone 2025'?

- A. Saudi Arabia
- B. UAE
- C. Egypt
- D. France

ANSWER: C

30. Where will the sixth edition of the joint military exercise Dharma Guardian between India and Japan be conducted?

- A. Tokyo
- B. Kyoto
- C. Mount Fuji
- D. Okinawa

ANSWER: C