

Daily Defence Current Affairs

19 March 2025

Naval Exercise - Varuna 2025

- The **23rd edition** of the bilateral naval exercise VARUNA, a testament to the enduring maritime partnership between India and France, is set to take place from 19 to 22 Mar 25.
- Since its inception in 2001, VARUNA has evolved into a cornerstone of cooperation, showcasing the two nations' commitment to enhancing naval interoperability and operational synergy.
- The joint participation of the aircraft carriers **Vikrant and Charles de Gaulle**, alongside their fighter aircraft, destroyers, frigates, and an Indian Scorpene-class submarine, highlights the collaborative strength of both Navies.
- VARUNA 2025 will feature advanced air defence drills and fighter exercises, including mock air-to-air combat between the **French Rafale-M and Indian MiG-29K**, designed to refine tactical and operational capabilities.



Chief Of Navy, RNZN, Visits India

- RAdm Garin Golding, Chief of Navy, Royal New Zealand Navy is in India on an official visit from 16 to 21 Mar 25, towards strengthening maritime cooperation and bilateral ties between the two Navies. His engagements include high-level discussions and operational interactions at New Delhi and Mumbai.
- The visit began on 17 March with RAdm Golding attending the Raisina Dialogue. On 18 March, he laid a wreath at the National War Memorial, paying tribute to India's fallen heroes.
- Discussions focused on enhancing naval ties, joint training initiatives, and maritime cooperation.
- India and New Zealand have signed a significant defence pact aimed at strengthening their bilateral defence and security ties. This agreement was finalized following discussions between Indian PM Narendra Modi and New Zealand PM Christopher Luxon.
- The pact marks a significant step forward in the strategic partnership between the two nations, building on their existing friendly relations. India and New Zealand have been enhancing their defence cooperation through various exchanges and visits, including recent naval interactions.
- **Historical Relations:** India and New Zealand have a longstanding, friendly and growing relationship. Our ties go back to the 1800s, with Indians settling in Christchurch as early as the 1850s. Larger numbers of immigrants from Punjab and Gujarat came to New Zealand in the 1890s. Indian troops fought alongside the Anzacs in Gallipoli in 1915.
- India and New Zealand have cordial and friendly relations rooted in the linkages of the Commonwealth, parliamentary democracy, and the English language. Both countries became independent in the same year and diplomatic representation of India was established in 1950 with the opening of a Trade Commission, which was later upgraded to High Commission.
- India shares Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) with New Zealand.



Rajnath Singh Takes Up Arms Sales to Pakistan with Netherlands

- Defence Minister Rajnath Singh raised the sales of arms and military technology to Pakistan in a meeting with his Dutch counterpart, pointing out that India has been fighting Pakistan sponsored terror for decades and transfer of such weapons can unsettle the balance of power in the region.
- In a meeting with Defence Minister of the Netherlands, Ruben Brekkelmans, Singh pitched for extending partnerships with Indian defence companies and integrating supply chains, with cooperation in high technology areas.
- The minister pointed to recent examples of weapons sales to Pakistan by the Netherlands, including the handing over of **two Offshore Patrol Vessels** last year.



Putin Agrees To 30-day Halt To Attack On Ukraine's Energy Grid

- In a significant step toward de-escalation, Russian President Vladimir Putin agreed to a limited ceasefire, halting attacks on Ukraine's energy infrastructure following a high-stakes phone call with US President Donald Trump.
- However, the Russian leader stopped short of committing to a broader ceasefire, tempering hopes for a swift end to hostilities.
- "We agreed to an immediate ceasefire on all energy and infrastructure targets, with the understanding that we will work quickly to reach a complete ceasefire and, ultimately, an end to this very horrible war between Russia and Ukraine," Trump wrote.
- **What has been Ukraine's response?**
- Zelenskyy, who had previously signalled openness to a ceasefire focused on infrastructure protection, responded cautiously to the developments. He expressed a willingness to further explore the agreement but underscored the need for additional details before committing fully.
- While a halt to attacks on energy infrastructure would mark a notable breakthrough —representing the first partial ceasefire since Russia's full-scale invasion began in 2022 — the scope of the agreement remains narrow.



India Asks US to List Sikh Group As Terrorist Organisation

- India has asked the U.S. to list a Sikh separatist group as a terrorist organisation, an Indian government source said on Tuesday, more than a year after the U.S. said it had foiled a plot with Indian links to kill a leader of the group in the U.S.
- Washington went public about the plot in November 2023 and later charged a former Indian spy service officer with directing the plot against **Gurpatwant Singh Pannun**, a dual U.S.-Canada citizen and the general counsel of **Sikhs for Justice (SFJ)**, in an episode that tested growing India-U.S. friendship.
- India denied any official connection to the plot, set up a panel to probe Washington's accusations and said in January that the panel had recommended legal action against an unnamed person.
- India's request to the U.S. to list SFJ as a terrorist group came during talks between Indian Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and visiting U.S. national intelligence chief Tulsi Gabbard, said the Indian government source, who declined to be identified as the discussions were confidential.



REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Which edition of the bilateral naval exercise VARUNA scheduled to take place?
A. 23rd
B. 24th
C. 25th
D. 26th

ANSWER: A

2. Which aircraft carriers are participating in VARUNA 2025?

- A. INS Vikramaditya and Charles de Gaulle
- B. INS Vikrant and Charles de Gaulle
- C. INS Vikrant and INS Arihant
- D. INS Vikramaditya and INS Shivalik

ANSWER: B

3. Who is the Chief of Navy of the Royal New Zealand Navy (RNZN) visiting India in March 2025?

- A. Admiral John Smith
- B. RAdm Garin Golding
- C. Vice Admiral Robert Blake
- D. Admiral Peter Thompson

ANSWER: B

4. Port Al-Shuwaikh Is Located At

- A. Kuwait
- B. Oman
- C. Iran
- D. Pakistan

ANSWER: A

5. Varuna Is A

- A. Helicopter
- B. Machine Gun
- C. Drone
- D. Fighter Jet

ANSWER: C

6. Varuna Has Been Developed By The____.

- A. Sagar Defence Engineering Private Limited
- B. DRDO
- C. IIT Kanpur
- D. HAL

ANSWER: A

7. Ex 'KONKAN, INDRADHANUSH' Conducted b/w India &

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

ANSWER: D

8. ___ Is India's Border Guarding Organisation On Its Border With Pakistan And Bangladesh.

- A. SSB
- B. ITBP
- C. BSF
- D. None

ANSWER: C

9. Eastern Region (E) Of ICG Is Located At

- A. Chennai
- B. Mumbai
- C. Kolkata
- D. None of the above

ANSWER: A

10. Priyadarshini-class Patrol Vessels Is Manufactured By

- A. CSL
- B. MDL
- C. GRSE
- D. None of the above

ANSWER: C

11. Indian Navy Founded On

- A.** 26 January 1945
- B.** 26 January 1950
- C.** 26 January 1960
- D.** 26 January 1970

ANSWER: B

12. With Which Nation India Holds 2+2 Dialogue?

- A. Pakistan

- B. Japan
- C. USA
- D. Both B& C

ANSWER: D

13. DRDO Lakshya Is A

- A. Fighter Jet
- B. Ship
- C. Tank
- D. UAV

ANSWER: D

14. Exercise Samudra Shakti Conducted B/w Indonesia &

- A. India
- B. Nepal
- C. Bangladesh
- D. Bhutan

ANSWER: A

15. Captain Rank of Indian Navy Equivalent to Which rank of IAF?

- A. Flying Officer
- B. Flight Lieutenant
- C. Group Captain
- D. None

ANSWER: C

16. Brussels Is The Capital Of

- A. Belgium
- B. Belize
- C. Benin
- D. Bhutan

ANSWER: A

17. "Jungle Nama" Book Is Written By

- A. Jhumpa Lahiri
- B. Amitav Ghosh
- C. Hew Strachan
- D. Nirupama Rao

ANSWER: B

18. Rapid Action Force Hq Is In

- A. Mumbai
- B. Lucknow
- C. Surat
- D. New Delhi

ANSWER: D

19. War Cry Of SIKH LIGHT INFANTRY Is

- A. Garud ka hun bol pyare
- B. Everywhere
- C. Raja Ramachandra ki jai
- D. Jo bole So Nihal, sat sri akal

ANSWER: D

20. "Wings of Fire" Book Is Written By

- A. Jhumpa Lahiri
- B. Amitav Ghosh
- C. Hew Strachan
- D. Dr. APJ Kalam

ANSWER: B