

Daily Defence Current Affairs

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India-Middle East Defence Ties Deepen

- India's Minister of State for Defence, Sanjay Seth, has engaged in high-level discussions with his Saudi Arabian counterpart at the prestigious World Defence Show 2026 in Riyadh. This key meeting underscores the deepening strategic ties between New Delhi and Riyadh amid growing defence collaborations.
- Sanjay Seth met Khaled bin Hussein Al-Biyari, Assistant Minister of Defence for Executive Affairs of Saudi Arabia, on the sidelines of the event. The encounter highlights India's proactive diplomacy in the Gulf region.
- Held in Riyadh, the World Defence Show 2026 serves as a major platform for global defence stakeholders. The event facilitates dialogues on military technology, joint ventures, and security partnerships.
- This interaction follows closely on the heels of India's participation in the 8th Abu Dhabi Dialogue, where migrant welfare and skills development were key topics. Prashant Pise, Additional Secretary for Emigration Policy and Welfare, led the Indian delegation in Dubai from 31 January to 1 February.
- The Abu Dhabi Dialogue, established in 2008, acts as a voluntary consultative mechanism. It involves 11 Asian labour-origin countries and seven destination states, promoting cooperation on contractual labour mobility and best practices.
- **India–Saudi Arabia Relations**
 - India and Saudi Arabia share a strong and steadily growing relationship based on energy cooperation, trade, investment, and strategic partnership. Over the years, their ties have expanded from a traditional buyer–seller energy relationship to a broad-based partnership covering defense, security, technology, and cultural exchange.
- **1. Historical Background**
 - Diplomatic relations were established in **1947**.

- Relations gained momentum after the **Delhi Declaration (2006)**.
- In **2010**, the Riyadh Declaration elevated ties to a **Strategic Partnership**.
- In **2019**, the relationship was upgraded to a **Strategic Partnership Council**, strengthening institutional cooperation.

• **2. Economic & Trade Relations**

- Saudi Arabia is one of India's **largest trading partners** in West Asia.
- Bilateral trade generally exceeds **\$40–50 billion annually** (varies year to year).
- India imports:
 - Crude oil
 - LPG and petrochemicals
- India exports:
 - Rice, food products
 - Chemicals
 - Machinery
 - Textiles and engineering goods
- Saudi Arabia is among India's **top oil suppliers**, ensuring India's energy security.

• **3. Energy Cooperation**

- Saudi Arabia is a major supplier of crude oil to India.
- Both countries are exploring cooperation in:
 - Renewable energy
 - Green hydrogen
 - Strategic petroleum reserves
- Indian companies are involved in Saudi Arabia's **Vision 2030** projects.

- **4. Indian Diaspora**

- Around **2.5 million Indians** live and work in Saudi Arabia.
- They form one of the largest expatriate communities.
- The Indian diaspora contributes significantly through remittances and skilled workforce participation.

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- **5. Defence & Security Cooperation**

- Joint military exercises and naval cooperation.
- Cooperation in:
 - Counter-terrorism
 - Intelligence sharing
 - Maritime security in the Indian Ocean region.

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- **6. Cultural & Educational Ties**

- Cultural exchanges and academic collaboration.
- Growing cooperation in tourism and people-to-people contacts.
- Yoga and Indian culture are increasingly popular in Saudi Arabia.

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- **7. Strategic Importance**

- Saudi Arabia plays a key role in:
 - India's energy security
 - Stability in West Asia
 - Cooperation in Islamic world diplomacy
- India supports Saudi Arabia's **Vision 2030** reforms.



Maoist Eradication By March 31 2026

- Union Home Minister Amit Shah has declared that India's anti-Naxal strategy is delivering strong results, with the Maoist menace set to be eradicated by 31 March. Speaking in Raipur on Sunday, Shah emphasised a multi-pronged approach combining security operations, infrastructure development, and the dismantling of Maoist financial networks.
- This optimistic assessment came during a high-level security review meeting on Left-Wing Extremism (LWE) chaired by Shah in Chhattisgarh's capital. The meeting occurred just weeks before the Central government's self-imposed deadline to eliminate the Maoist insurgency nationwide.
- The gathering included key figures such as Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai and Deputy Chief Minister Vijay Sharma. Also present were the Union Home Secretary, the Director of the Intelligence Bureau (IB), and the Special Secretary for Internal Security in the Ministry of Home Affairs.
- Since January 2024, more than 500 Naxalites have been neutralised in Chhattisgarh alone, including high-profile figures like CPI (Maoist) general secretary Nambala Keshava Rao, alias Basavaraju. Around 1,900 others have been arrested, while over 2,500 have laid down arms and surrendered.
- Chhattisgarh accounts for the bulk of recent successes, with Bastar seeing over 200 Naxal deaths in 2024 alone. This has prompted Maoists to retreat deeper into forests or flee to neighbouring states.
- Critics, however, caution against over-optimism. Maoists retain influence in pockets of Jharkhand, Odisha, and Maharashtra, with an estimated 4,000-5,000 hardcore cadres nationwide.



ISRO Accelerates Space Station Mission

- India's space agency, the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), is accelerating its ambitious plans to establish the country's first space station, even as it juggles multiple high-priority missions.
- Program Director Imtiyaz Ahmed revealed on Monday that work is underway on nearly 80 satellites, which will bolster scientific research, foster innovation, enhance disaster management, strengthen internal security, improve navigation, and crucially relay signals for the Gaganyaan human spaceflight programme back to Earth.
- These satellites form a vital backbone for India's growing space ecosystem. Ahmed, speaking to IANS in Samastipur during the golden jubilee celebrations of India's inaugural indigenously built satellite, Aryabhata, emphasised their role in advancing technological self-reliance.
- ISRO's current portfolio brims with transformative initiatives. These include Earth Observation missions designed to monitor environmental changes and natural phenomena with unprecedented precision.
- The Navigation with Indian Constellation (NVS) programme aims to refine India's regional satellite navigation system, offering reliable positioning services akin to global standards.
- Further afield, the Indian Data Relay Satellite System (IDRSS) promises to revolutionise communication by maintaining continuous contact with satellites

in low Earth orbit, a necessity for real-time data transfer during critical operations.

- The Gaganyaan mission, India's bold step into crewed spaceflight, stands as a centrepiece, with these satellites ensuring seamless signal relay to ground stations.




Defence Buying 2.0

- In a major overhaul of defence procurement rules, the government is set to tweak the age-old L1 formula to give extra credits to Indian companies and startups that focus on research and development and invest in owning intellectual property rights (IPR) rather than just obtaining technology transfers
- The draft Defence Acquisition Procedure (DAP), which will determine how the armed forces spend their \$23 billion annual capital outlay, marks a doctrinal change from 'Made in India' to 'Owned by India,' with a focus on fostering the startup ecosystem with assured orders and protection from expensive trials that had to be conducted on a 'no cost, no commitment' undertaking in the past.
- As per the draft rules--the government has invited comments before they can be notified by the end of March--capital acquisitions will prioritise Indian companies retaining source codes and critical design data as well as having complete freedom for upgrades and modifications. The L1 formula--in which the lowest, technically compliant bidder would automatically be declared the winner--has been tweaked to add technical parameters as well as indigenous design.

‘Design Powerhouse’

Defence procurement rules institutionalise civil-military fusion



Commercial-off-the-shelf drone swarms, space tech, cyber-security tools allowed	Enable conversion of advanced civil tech in military capability
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BCCL

Ex-Agniveer wing, cell set up in MHA

- The Ministry of Home Affairs has set up a dedicated ex-Agniveer wing and an ex-Agniveer cell to coordinate post-service career progression and rehabilitation of Agniveers, the government told the Lok Sabha on Tuesday in response to a question by Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi.
 - Raising the issue, Gandhi asked whether the Home Ministry had been tasked with coordinating the career progression of Agniveers after their term ends and sought the rationale for assigning the responsibility to MHA "instead of the Ministry of Defence, given that Agniveers serve in the armed forces".
 - He also asked whether the government had assessed "the potential overlap or coordination challenges between ..
 - Replying to the question, Minister of State for Home Nityanand Rai said that as per the Cabinet Secretariat notification, the subject 'Coordinating activities for further progress of Ex-Agniveers' has been allocated to MHA.
 - "A dedicated ex-Agniveer wing and an ex-Agniveer cell under the Ministry of Home Affairs have been created for smooth coordination, monitoring and formulation of rehabilitation policies for ex-Agniveers," he added.
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REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Where did the World Defence Show 2026 held?

- A) Abu Dhabi
- B) Doha
- C) Riyadh
- D) Muscat

Answer: C) Riyadh

2. Who represented India at the World Defence Show 2026?

- A) Rajnath Singh
- B) Sanjay Seth
- C) Ajit Doval
- D) S. Jaishankar

Answer: B) Sanjay Seth

3. Sanjay Seth met which Saudi official during the event?

- A) Mohammed bin Salman
- B) Khaled bin Hussein Al-Biyari
- C) Faisal bin Farhan
- D) Turki Al-Faisal

Answer: B) Khaled bin Hussein Al-Biyari

4. The Abu Dhabi Dialogue was established in which year?

- A) 2005
- B) 2008
- C) 2012
- D) 2015

Answer: B) 2008

5. The Abu Dhabi Dialogue primarily focuses on:

- A) Defence procurement
- B) Oil trade
- C) Labour mobility and migrant welfare
- D) Space cooperation

Answer: C) Labour mobility and migrant welfare

6. Diplomatic relations between India and Saudi Arabia were established in:

- A) 1945
- B) 1947
- C) 1950
- D) 1962

Answer: B) 1947

7. The Riyadh Declaration (2010) elevated India–Saudi ties to:

- A) Economic Partnership
- B) Defence Pact
- C) Strategic Partnership
- D) Trade Alliance

Answer: C) Strategic Partnership

8. Approximately how many Indians live in Saudi Arabia?

- A) 1 million
- B) 1.5 million
- C) 2.5 million
- D) 4 million

Answer: C) 2.5 million

9. The government has set what deadline to eliminate Maoist insurgency?

- A) 31 December 2025
- B) 26 January 2026
- C) 15 August 2026
- D) 31 March 2026

Answer: D) 31 March 2026

10. Which state has witnessed major anti-Naxal operations recently?

- A) Bihar
- B) Chhattisgarh
- C) West Bengal
- D) Telangana

Answer: B) Chhattisgarh

11. Bastar region is located in which state?

- A) Odisha
- B) Maharashtra
- C) Chhattisgarh
- D) Jharkhand

Answer: C) Chhattisgarh

12. India's human spaceflight mission is called:

- A) Chandrayaan
- B) Mangalyaan
- C) Gaganyaan
- D) Aryabhata

Answer: C) Gaganyaan

13. ISRO is working on approximately how many satellites currently?

- A) 25
- B) 40
- C) 60

D) 80

Answer: D) 80

14. The Indian Data Relay Satellite System (IDRSS) is meant to:

- A) Track weather changes
- B) Provide continuous communication with satellites
- C) Launch rockets
- D) Monitor borders

Answer: B) Provide continuous communication with satellites

15. The Navigation with Indian Constellation (NVS) programme aims to improve:

- A) Defence missiles
- B) Space tourism
- C) Satellite navigation services
- D) Nuclear research

Answer: C) Satellite navigation services

16. The draft Defence Acquisition Procedure (DAP) emphasizes:

- A) Foreign imports
- B) Lowest price only
- C) Indigenous design and IPR ownership
- D) Reduced defence spending

Answer: C) Indigenous design and IPR ownership

17. The traditional L1 formula in defence procurement refers to:

- A) Long-term contract
- B) Lowest bidder
- C) Level-1 security
- D) Logistics model

Answer: B) Lowest bidder

18. The ex-Agniveer wing has been set up under which ministry?

- A) Ministry of Defence
- B) Ministry of Labour
- C) Ministry of Home Affairs
- D) Ministry of Skill Development

Answer: C) Ministry of Home Affairs

19. Saudi Arabia's long-term reform and diversification plan is known as:

- A) Vision 2025
- B) Gulf Reform Plan
- C) Vision 2030
- D) National Growth Strategy

Answer: C) Vision 2030

20. India–Saudi defence cooperation includes collaboration in:

- A) Agriculture research
- B) Maritime security and counter-terrorism
- C) Film production
- D) Banking reforms

Answer: B) Maritime security and counter-terrorism