

Daily Defence Current Affairs

20 February 2026

Airbus India Line To Meet Regional Demand

- Global aviation giant Airbus is looking to address regional needs with its new helicopter production line in India and sees a sizeable market for more than 1,000 choppers just for the civilian sector, besides large requirements of the armed forces.
- Airbus Helicopters CEO Bruno Even said the partnership with Tata to set up a final assembly line in India is part of a commitment by the European consortium to bring in technology and expertise, and the plan is to not only have manufacturing locally but also invest in training and maintenance, repair and overhaul facilities. The first helicopter from the new line is expected to be ready by early 2027.
- While Modi and Macron inaugurated the facility virtually from Mumbai, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, Civil Aviation Minister K Rammohan Naidu, and France's Minister of the Armed Forces and Veterans Affairs Catherine Vautrin, were present at the FAL site for the inauguration.
- The delivery of the first made-in-India H125 helicopter is expected in early 2027, and the FAL will serve the Indian market as well as other markets in the region.
- Airbus sees the H125M as an “ideal successor” to Cheetah and Chetak helicopters used by the Indian armed forces. These helicopters were a result of an industrial collaboration agreement dating back over 60 years between Airbus and government undertaking Hindustan Aeronautics.
- TASL and Airbus said that the H125M is optimised to serve as a “high-altitude force multiplier across a spectrum of critical missions”, adding that it is designed to excel in tactical reconnaissance and surveillance.



Iran's Diplomatic Window Is Closing

- The US military build-up in the Middle East means Iran's window to reach a diplomatic agreement over its atomic activities is at risk of closing, according to the head of the United Nations nuclear watchdog.
- The International Atomic Energy Agency has discussed concrete proposals with Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi to inspect sites bombed last year by Israel and the US, Director General Rafael Mariano Grossi told Bloomberg Television. Whether those plans can be finalized urgently is an open question.
- IAEA inspectors haven't verified the state of Iran's stockpile of near-bomb-grade uranium or assessed the scope of damage dealt to enrichment facilities for more than eight months. Before the Israeli attacks in June, Iran had enough highly-enriched material to quickly craft about a dozen warheads, if orders were given to weaponize its nuclear program.
- At the heart of the nuclear dilemma is the issue of uranium enrichment — the tightly-guarded process of separating uranium isotopes which can be used to fuel nuclear reactors or bombs. Israel and the US want to cease all enrichment activity and dismantle plants. Iran insists on retaining some fuel making capacity for peaceful purposes.
- During his first term, Trump walked away from an agreement which capped Iranian enrichment activities and imposed IAEA inspections in return for sanctions relief. The Islamic Republic subsequently expanded its program,

accumulating tons of enriched uranium until its nuclear sites were bombed during last year's 12-day war.



UK PM Starmer Blocks Trump from Using RAF Bases

- UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer blocked Donald Trump from using RAF bases to carry out strikes on Iran, amid rising tensions between the United States and Tehran over its refusal to sign a deal aimed at curbing its nuclear programme.
- According to a report by The Telegraph, the US president was believed to have withdrawn his support for Starmer's Chagos Islands agreement following the British government's refusal to grant consent for the use of UK military bases to launch bombing operations.
- The US had reportedly begun drawing up contingency plans for a direct attack on Iran, deploying long-range bombers and aerial refuelling aircraft to the Middle East in recent days.
- Defence officials were said to have informed Trump that the country would be ready for military action by Saturday, marking the largest American military build-up in the region since the 2003 invasion of Iraq.
- Any US strike on Iran was likely to involve the Diego Garcia base in the Chagos Islands, a British overseas territory that the UK is planning to hand over to Mauritius, as well as European airbases in allied countries.

- Amid a massive US military buildup in the Middle East that has fueled fears of a wider war, Trump said negotiations with Iran to end the tense standoff were going well but insisted Tehran has to reach a "meaningful" agreement.



Exercise MILAN in Vizag

- Defence Minister Rajnath Singh has called upon the international community to effectively tackle the evolving complex and interconnected challenges at sea while acting in the spirit of mutual respect and give and take.
- The Defence Minister was addressing Navy Chiefs and Heads of Delegations from 74 countries during the inaugural ceremony of Exercise MILAN at Visakhapatnam in Andhra Pradesh on February 19.
- Rajnath Singh asserted that traditional threats coexist with emerging challenges such as piracy, maritime terrorism, illegal fishing, trafficking, cyber vulnerabilities, and disruptions to critical supply chains, adding that climate change is intensifying natural disasters, making humanitarian and disaster relief operations more frequent and demanding.
- The Defence Minister emphasised that the robust legal framework provided by the UN Convention on the Law of the Seas (UNCLOS) to address matters related to international waters can be further strengthened through a comprehensive global naval architecture.



India and Israel Sign Another MoU Deepening Defence Ties

- Ahead of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Israel later this month, an MoU was signed between India and Israel to deepen defence ties and strengthen ongoing joint activities, including future seminars and cooperative initiatives.
- The International Defence Cooperation Directorate (SIBAT) within Israel's Ministry of Defense (IMOD) have facilitated meetings between leading Indian and Israel defence industries leading to the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU).
- SIBAT in cooperation with the Society of Indian Defence Manufacturers (SIDM) and India's Ministry of Defence led a seminar and B2B meetings this week between leading Indian and Israeli defence companies, the IMOD said.
- Modi would arrive on February 25 on a two-day visit to Israel. He is likely to touch upon all issues of bilateral and regional interest during his meetings.



REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Airbus' new helicopter Final Assembly Line in India is being set up in partnership with which Indian company?

- A. Hindustan Aeronautics Limited
- B. Mahindra Defence
- C. Tata Advanced Systems Limited
- D. Larsen & Toubro

ANSWER: C

2. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) is primarily concerned with which issue regarding Iran?

- A. Missile testing programme
- B. Uranium enrichment and nuclear inspections
- C. Oil exports
- D. Cyber warfare activities

ANSWER: B

3. Which UK Prime Minister reportedly blocked the use of RAF bases for potential US strikes on Iran?

- A. Boris Johnson
- B. Rishi Sunak
- C. Keir Starmer
- D. Theresa May

ANSWER: C

4. Exercise MILAN, recently hosted by India, is related to which field?

- A. Air Force combat drills
- B. Naval and maritime cooperation
- C. Army counter-terror exercises
- D. Space defence collaboration

ANSWER: B

5. MoU signed ahead of PM Narendra Modi's visit aims to strengthen India's defence ties with which country?

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

ANSWER: D

6. India's First Indigenous Aircraft Carrier Is

- A. INS Virat
- B. INS Vikrant
- C. INS Vikramaditya
- D. INS Samudragupta

ANSWER: B

7. INS Vikrant Is Manufactured By

- A. GRSE
- B. CSL
- C. BHEL
- D. DRDO

ANSWER: B

8. Hq Of Cochin Shipyard Ltd Is At

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

ANSWER: A

9. Which Is Not The Commissioned Ranks In The Army Service?

- A. Brigadier
- B. Colonel
- C. General
- D. Commander

ANSWER: D

10. Armaments Research & Development Establishment (ARDE) Is Located In

- A. Pune, Maharashtra
- B. Bengaluru, Karnataka
- C. Chennai, Tamil Nadu
- D. None of the above

ANSWER: A

11. Motto Of Integrated Defence Staff

- A. Victory Through Jointness

- B. Victory Everywhere
- C. Always Ahead
- D. None of the above

ANSWER: A

12. First Made In India Passenger Aircraft Is ___

- A. Dornier 228
- B. Chetak
- C. Cheetah
- D. None of the above

ANSWER: A

13. Saab AB Is An Aerospace Company of

- A. USA
- B. Sweden
- C. France
- D. China

ANSWER: B

14. Joint Ex B/w India And Singapore Is Called:

- A. Bold Kurukshetra
- B. SLINEX
- C. Indra
- D. Yudha Abhyas

ANSWER: A

15. Neptune Is A

- A. Destroyer
- B. Tank
- C. Anti-Ship Missile
- D. Machine Gun

ANSWER: C

16. KINGSTON Is The Capital Of

- A. JAMAICA
- B. JAPAN
- C. JORDAN
- D. Maldives

ANSWER: A

17. Which of the following Country Is Not The Member Of ASEAN?

- A. Brunei
- B. Laos
- C. Vietnam
- D. China

ANSWER: D

18. Hq of 15/Chinar Corps of Indian Army Is In

- A. Srinagar
- B. Jaipur
- C. Kochi
- D. Baramulla

ANSWER: A

19. The Cartosat Is A

- A. Air to Air missile
- B. Sniper Rifle
- C. Anti-tank Guided missile
- D. Earth Observation Satellite

ANSWER: D

20. Where Is The Hq Of The SAC Of The IAF?

- A. Kochi
- B. Vishakhapatnam
- C. Shillong
- D. Thiruvananthapuram

ANSWER: D