

Daily Defence Current Affairs

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'Lokayan-26' Expedition

- Valletta [Malta], The Indian Naval Sail Training Ship INS Sudarshini has arrived at the historic port of Valletta, Malta, marking a significant milestone in her landmark transoceanic expedition Lokayan-26, according to an official press release by the Ministry of Defence.
- The ship arrived in Valletta on 12 March, underscoring the deep-rooted maritime ties between India and Malta. This visit represents an important leg of the ship's ambitious 22,000-nautical-mile global voyage.
- The arrival follows a successful transit through the **Suez Canal** and a recent port call at Alexandria.
- Following the visit to Malta, the ship will sail towards the French coast to participate in the Escale a Sete maritime festival. As the press release noted, she will proudly represent India alongside some of the world's most celebrated tall ships.



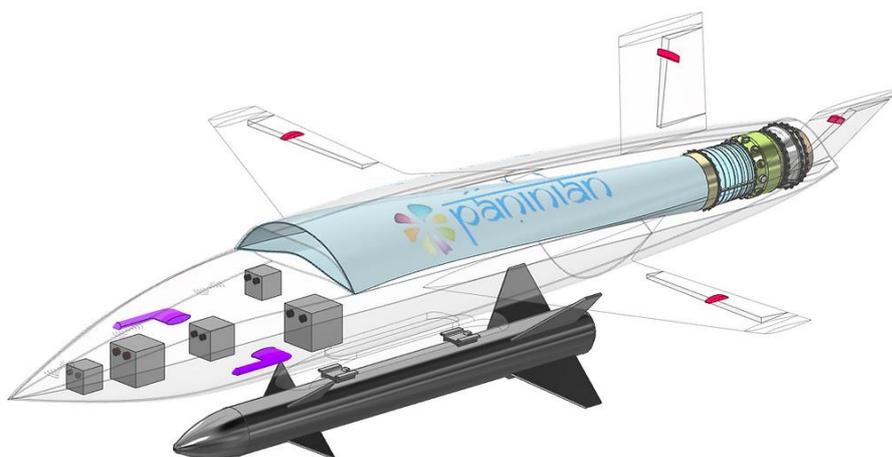
Indian Navy Escorts Vital LPG Tankers 'Shivalik' & 'Nanda Devi'

- In a significant development amid escalating tensions in West Asia, two LPG-laden ships, the Shivalik and the Nanda Devi, have successfully crossed the Strait of Hormuz under the escort of an Indian Navy warship.
- These vessels, both flying the Indian flag and operated by the Shipping Corporation of India (SCI), mark the first such India-bound LPG carriers to navigate this critical chokepoint in nearly two weeks.
- The ships are collectively transporting approximately 85,000 metric tons of natural gas, vital for India's energy needs. Travelling at typical LPG tanker speeds, they are projected to reach Indian shores by Monday night, providing much-needed relief to the nation's liquefied petroleum gas supplies.
- The Indian Navy warship escorting the tankers had all its air defence systems fully operational during the crossing. The **Strait of Hormuz**, a mere 33 kilometres wide between **Iran and Oman**, is one of the world's most strategically vital maritime corridors, handling about **20 percent** of global oil trade.
- Beyond these two vessels, more than two dozen India-flagged ships remain stranded on either side of the Strait. Approximately 23,000 Indian seafarers serve aboard merchant, harbour, and offshore vessels across the broader Gulf region, amplifying the human stakes in this conflict.



Paninian's SVAYATT-M1, India's AI-Powered Loyal Wingman

- Paninian India, founded in 2020 by DRDO and HAL alumni, operates from a 50,000 sq ft facility with simulation labs, wind tunnels, and composite manufacturing. It received the MEITY TIDE 2.0 grant for indigenous innovation and employs over 200 engineers across 10 projects.
- The SVAYATT-M1 is a Collaborative Combat Aerial Vehicle (CCAV) designed as a low-cost loyal wingman for manned aircraft in high-threat zones. It features a low-observable airframe, Paninian's in-house turbofan engine, AI-driven mission planning via Kalman Intel, and swarm coordination for strikes.
- SVAYATT-M1 lacks publicly disclosed detailed numerical specifications like exact dimensions, weight, speed, or range, as it remains a conceptual prototype from Paninian India.
- It employs a low-observable airframe for reduced radar and infrared signatures, enabling stealthy penetration of contested airspace. The platform integrates Paninian's in-house turbofan engine and supports STOBAR carrier operations for naval flexibility.
- AI-driven systems handle mission planning, target prioritization, swarm coordination, and GPS-denied navigation via Kalman filters. It enables manned-unmanned teaming (MUM-T) with jets like Su-30MKI, Rafale, or AMCA, acting as a loyal wingman for high-risk tasks.



Throttle Aerospace Supplies Tethered Drones

- Bangalore-based Throttle Aerospace has successfully delivered its advanced tethered drones to the Indian Army, marking a key milestone in indigenous defence manufacturing.
- This delivery, reported in early March 2026, enhances the Army's capabilities for persistent surveillance along critical borders.
- Tethered drones differ from conventional UAVs by remaining connected to a ground station via a cable, providing continuous power and secure data transmission without battery limitations. They excel in long-endurance missions, often lasting hours or days aloft, ideal for high-altitude and contested environments prevalent along India's northern frontiers.
- The handover occurred at the Gopalpur Seaward Firing Range, underscoring practical field integration testing. Throttle Aerospace, rooted in India's vibrant aerospace ecosystem, aligns with the Atmanirbhar Bharat initiative by supplying home-grown technology tailored to military needs.
- This development builds on prior contracts, such as the Indian Army's 2023 procurement of 130 tethered drone systems valued at approximately ₹250 crore from firms like New Space Research & Technologies. While that deal focused on long-range intelligence gathering, Throttle's contribution appears to expand the fleet with specialised variants.



Mazagon Dock's ₹23,758 Cr Order Book

- Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Ltd, a cornerstone of India's maritime defence industry, boasts an impressive order book valued at ₹23,758 crore, fuelling investor interest amid escalating regional tensions.

- Established in 1934 under the Ministry of Defence and based in Mumbai, the company excels in designing, constructing, repairing, and refurbishing advanced warships and submarines for the Indian Navy and Coast Guard. With a market capitalisation of ₹93,927.03 crore, its shares recently dipped by up to 5.2 per cent to a low of ₹2,320, down from the previous close of ₹2,447.90.
- The company's legacy is formidable, having delivered 806 vessels since 1960, including 31 warships from missile boats to sophisticated destroyers, and 8 submarines.
- Mazagon Dock has also catered to international clients with cargo ships, passenger vessels, supply ships, multipurpose support vessels, water tankers, tugs, dredgers, fishing trawlers, barges, and even border outposts. Beyond naval assets, it has produced offshore structures like jackets, wellhead platform main decks, process platforms, and jack-up rigs, underscoring its versatility across defence and commercial sectors.
- At the heart of its current momentum lies the Shipbuilding Division, which dominates the order book with high-value contracts from the Ministry of Defence. Key projects include the P15B Destroyers worth ₹28,745 crore and P17A Stealth Frigates at ₹27,254 crore, both pivotal for bolstering India's naval prowess. The division is also executing orders for 21 Indian Coast Guard Ships (ICGS), encompassing CTS, NGOPV, and FPV types to enhance coastal security.



REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. The Indian Naval Sail Training Ship that arrived at Valletta, Malta during the Lokayan-26 expedition is:

- A. INS Vikrant
- B. INS Sudarshini
- C. INS Nilgiri
- D. INS Kolkata

ANSWER: B

2. The Lokayan-26 expedition undertaken by INS Sudarshini aims to cover approximately:

- A. 10,000 nautical miles
- B. 15,000 nautical miles
- C. 22,000 nautical miles
- D. 30,000 nautical miles

ANSWER: C

3. The LPG carriers 'Shivalik' and 'Nanda Devi' recently crossed which strategically important maritime passage under Indian Navy escort?

- A. Strait of Malacca
- B. Strait of Gibraltar
- C. Strait of Hormuz
- D. Bab-el-Mandeb Strait

ANSWER: C

4. SVAYATT-M1, developed by Paninian India, is primarily designed as a:

- A. Ballistic missile system
- B. Autonomous underwater vehicle
- C. Collaborative Combat Aerial Vehicle (loyal wingman drone)
- D. Satellite surveillance platform

ANSWER: C

5. Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited is headquartered in which Indian city?

- A. Chennai
- B. Visakhapatnam
- C. Mumbai
- D. Kochi

ANSWER: C

6. C295 Aircraft Manufactured By

- A. Boeing
- B. Airbus
- C. HAL
- D. None

ANSWER: B

7. Indian Space Science Data Centre Is Located At

- A. Chennai
- B. Bengaluru
- C. New Delhi
- D. Kochi

ANSWER: B

8. __ Becomes Indian Army's First Woman Sky Diver

- A. Roop Rai
- B. Lance Naik Manju
- C. Corporal Manju
- D. None

ANSWER: B

9. __ Plans To Establish The National Government Cloud To Store Sensitive Data.

- A. MOD
- B. MEA
- C. Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology
- D. None of the above

ANSWER: C

10. The Hawker Siddeley HS 748 Is A

- A. Helicopter
- B. Machine Gun
- C. UAV
- D. Transport Aircraft

ANSWER: D

11. 'Swift and Sure' Is The Motto Of

- A. Army Aviation Corps**

- B. Sikh Regiment
- C. Rajput Regiment
- D. Gorkha

ANSWER: A

12. Which Regiment Has Motto: "Veer Bhogya Vasundhara"?

- A. RAJPUTANA RIFLES
- B. RAJPUT REGIMENT
- C. DOGRA REGIMENT
- D. SIKH REGIMENT

ANSWER: A

13. ICMF Stands For

- A. Integrated Cryogenic Engine Manufacturing Facility
- B. Integrated Cry Engine Manufacturing Facility
- C. Integrated Cryogenic Engine Make Facility
- D. None of the above

ANSWER: A

14. "Bolo Shri Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj ki jai" Is The War Cry Of

- A. Maratha Light Infantry Regiment
- B. Grenadiers
- C. Punjab Regiment
- D. Parachute Regiment

ANSWER: A

15. Rabat Is The Capital Of

- A. Morocco
- B. Montenegro
- C. Monaco
- D. Maldives

ANSWER: A

16. "Without Fear or Favour" Book Written By

- A. R K Narayan
- B. Khushwant Singh
- C. Neelam Sanjiva Reddy

D. APJ Abdul Kalam

ANSWER: C

17. Exercises B/w The India And Bangladesh Is Called:

A. GARUDA SHAKTI

B. SLINEX

C. SAMPRITI

D. Yudha Abhyas

ANSWER: C

18. __Is The Legal Branch Of The Indian Army.

A. Army Court

B. Supreme Court

C. Judge Advocate General's (JAG) Department

D. None of the above

ANSWER: C

19. Exercises B/w India And Kyrgyzstan Is Called:

A. KHANJAR

B. SLINEX

C. NOMADIC ELEPHANT

D. Yudha Abhyas

ANSWER: A

20. Exercises B/w India And France Is Called:

A. Varuna

B. SLINEX

C. NOMADIC ELEPHANT

D. Yudha Abhyas

ANSWER: A