

Daily Defence Current Affairs

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India Expands Nuclear Arsenal To 190 Warheads

- India has once again marginally expanded its nuclear arsenal in 2025, bringing its estimated stockpile to approximately 190 warheads by early 2026, according to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) Yearbook 2026.
- The report highlights that New Delhi continues to modernise its nuclear delivery systems, with increasing emphasis on long-range capabilities designed to reach deep into China, while simultaneously maintaining focus on its enduring rivalry with Pakistan.
- The SIPRI assessment describes Operation Sindoor in May 2025 as an unusually severe military crisis between India and Pakistan. During this confrontation, India struck targets in Pakistan's air and missile bases believed to have nuclear-related roles. Despite the intensity of the exchanges, both sides took deliberate steps to avoid escalating a full-scale nuclear conflict.
- India has retained its position as the world's fifth-largest military spender and the second-largest importer of major arms during the 2021–25 period. Military expenditure reached \$92.1 billion in 2025, marking an 8.9 per cent increase from the previous year.
- India ranks behind only the United States, China, Russia and Germany in defence spending.
- The SIPRI report identifies 162 countries as recipients of major arms between 2021 and 2025. The five largest recipients were Ukraine, India, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Pakistan, together accounting for 35 per cent of total arms imports.
- India alone accounted for 8.2 percent of global arms imports, consolidating its position as the world's second-largest arms importer.



India to Invest ₹13k-cr In Dual Use Airport At Great Nicobar Island

- India will invest ₹13,000 crore to construct a new dual use airport under the Great Nicobar Island Development project that will be used both for military and civilian purposes, with construction expected to be completed in five years.
- Sources said a feasibility study was carried out to expand the existing airfield at **INS Baaz** for more robust military purposes but it was not found to be feasible, given the requirement of significant land reclamation and its impact on flora and fauna.
- Defence sources said the **GNI project** is a strategically significant national initiative designed to safeguard India's maritime interest and the suggestion that the requirements can be met through just the expansion of existing defence assets reflects an incomplete understanding of the nature of maritime power in the **Indo Pacific**.
- "The runway of INS Baaz has recently expanded to 4,500 ft. The expansion of INS Baaz to the desired 10,000 ft requires significant land reclamation and impacts tribal area, flora and fauna," sources said. The larger runway is needed to operate large transport and surveillance aircraft, besides fighter jets to protect Indian interests, they added.
- The Joint User Greenfield and Naval Air Station at GNI will enhance Indian ability to support operations and respond to crises and maintain logistic in a forward location.



L&T Signs ₹18,600 Crore Tamil Nadu Pact For Data Centres

- Larsen & Toubro has signed a landmark ₹18,600 crore MoU with the Tamil Nadu government, spanning three sectors — data centres, electronics manufacturing, and shipbuilding — with the projects expected to generate over 8,200 jobs and strengthen the state's industrial ecosystem.
- The agreement was formalised at the Secretariat in Chennai in the presence of Chief Minister C. Joseph Vijay and L&T CMD SN Subrahmanyam. This marks the first major industrial MoU signed under the new government, signalling a strong push towards digital infrastructure, advanced manufacturing, and strategic defence capabilities.
- The largest component of the investment is a ₹15,000 crore hyperscale and edge AI data centre expansion in Kanchipuram district, designed to meet the rising demand for cloud services, artificial intelligence applications, and secure data storage.
- The facility will create around 500 jobs and is expected to position Tamil Nadu as a leading hub for digital infrastructure in South Asia. The state government has emphasised that this project will be critical in supporting its ambition to build a trillion-dollar digital economy by 2036.
- The second project involves ₹2,500 crore investment in electronics and electrical systems manufacturing in Coimbatore, generating approximately 2,000 jobs.

- The third project is the ₹1,100 crore expansion of L&T's Kattupalli shipyard in Tiruvallur district, expected to create nearly 5,700 jobs. The expansion will enhance the shipyard's ability to handle vessels from the Indian Navy, US Navy, and UK Royal Navy, while also supporting offshore wind installation and fabrication infrastructure.
- The state government has highlighted that the investments will generate substantial direct and indirect employment opportunities, contributing to its long-term goal of expanding the economy to USD 1.5 trillion by 2036.



Defence Investiture Ceremony 2026

- President Smt Droupadi Murmu conferred **07 Kirti Chakras**, including 02 posthumous; **15 Vir Chakras**, including 03 posthumous; and **29 Shaurya Chakras**, including 01 posthumous, to the personnel of the Defence Forces, Central Armed Police Forces and State/Union Territory Police during Phase-I of Defence Investiture Ceremony 2026 at Rashtrapati Bhawan.
- These Gallantry awards were given to the personnel for displaying raw courage, unparalleled bravery and total disregard to personal safety in the line of duty.
- **Highlights of the Ceremony**
- During the ceremony, the President presented:
 - **07 Kirti Chakras**, including **02 posthumous awards**
 - **15 Vir Chakras**, including **03 posthumous awards**
 - **29 Shaurya Chakras**, including **01 posthumous award**

- These gallantry awards are among India's highest peacetime and wartime decorations and are awarded for acts of valor performed under challenging and life-threatening circumstances.
- **Kirti Chakra Awardees**
- The **Kirti Chakra** is India's second-highest peacetime gallantry award, recognizing conspicuous courage and self-sacrifice away from the battlefield.
- The recipients included:
 - Lance Naik Meenatchi Sundaram A
 - Naib Subedar Doleshwar Subba
 - Major Arshdeep Singh
 - Air Commodore Prasanth Balakrishnan Nair
 - Captain Lalrinawma Sailo
- **Posthumous Kirti Chakras**
- The following soldiers were honored posthumously for their supreme sacrifice:
 - Sepoy Janjal Pravin Prabhakar
 - Lieutenant Shashank Tiwari
- **Vir Chakra Awardees**
- The **Vir Chakra** is India's third-highest wartime gallantry award. Several Army and Air Force officers were recognized for exceptional bravery during military operations.
- Notable recipients included:
 - Colonel Koshank Lamba
 - Group Captain Ranjeet Singh Sidhu
 - Group Captain Manish Arora
 - Group Captain Animesh Patni
 - Group Captain Kunal Kalra
 - Group Captain Joy Chandra
 - Lieutenant Colonel Sushil Bisht
 - Squadron Leader Sarthak Kumar
 - Squadron Leader Siddhant Singh
 - Squadron Leader Rizwan Malik
 - Flight Lieutenant Aarshveer Singh Thakur
 - Naib Subedar Satish Kumar
- **Posthumous Vir Chakras**
- The award was conferred posthumously on:

- Sub-Inspector Mohd Imteyaj
- Constable Deepak Chingakham
- Rifleman Sunil Kumar
- **Shaurya Chakra Awardees**
- The **Shaurya Chakra** is awarded for acts of courage and valor during peacetime operations. The recipients represented the Army, Navy, Air Force, Assam Rifles, CRPF, and other security forces.
- Some of the prominent awardees were:
- Inspector Laxman Kewat
- Inspector Rameshwar Prasad Deshmukh
- Lieutenant Colonel Neetesh Bharti Shukla
- Major Aditya Pratap Singh
- Major Ashish Kumar
- Assistant Commandant Mohd Shafiq
- Lieutenant Commander Suraj Prashar
- Ram Goyal
- Assistant Commandant Vipin Wilson
- Wing Commander Abhimanyu Singh
- Major Bhargav Kalita
- Major Leishangthem Deepak Singh
- Major Anshul Baltoo
- Major Shivkant Yadav
- Subedar P.H. Moses
- Major Vivek
- Lieutenant Colonel Ghatage Aditya Shrikumar
- Captain Yogender Singh Thakur
- Subedar Shamsheer Singh
- Naik Rahul Singh
- Lieutenant Commander Dilna K
- Lieutenant Commander Roopa A
- **Posthumous Shaurya Chakra**
- The Shaurya Chakra (Posthumous) was awarded to:
- Lance Dafadar Baldev Chand
- **Significance of the Gallantry Awards**

- India's gallantry awards symbolize the nation's gratitude toward security personnel who display extraordinary courage while protecting national interests. These decorations inspire future generations of soldiers and reinforce the values of duty, sacrifice, and patriotism.
- The 2026 Defence Investiture Ceremony showcased numerous acts of heroism performed in counter-terrorism operations, border security missions, special operations, aviation missions, and internal security duties. The awardees exemplified the highest traditions of the Indian Armed Forces and security services.



Indian Army Issues RFI for Indigenous Loitering Munition System

- The Indian Army has taken another significant step towards strengthening its indigenous defence capabilities by issuing a Request for Information (RFI) for an advanced loitering munition system. The move reflects India's growing focus on self-reliance in defence technology under the **Atmanirbhar Bharat** initiative and highlights the increasing importance of unmanned systems in modern warfare.
- **What is Loitering Munition?**
- A loitering munition is an unmanned aerial weapon system capable of hovering or "loitering" over a target area for a certain period before engaging a target with precision. It combines the features of a drone and a guided missile, enabling surveillance, target identification, and strike capabilities in a single platform. These systems have become increasingly important in contemporary conflicts due to their flexibility, accuracy, and relatively low operational costs.
- **Key Features Sought by the Indian Army**

- According to the RFI, the Army is seeking an indigenous loitering munition capable of operating in diverse terrains, including high-altitude regions. The proposed system is expected to:
 - Operate effectively at altitudes up to approximately 18,000 feet.
 - Possess a range of around 15 kilometres.
 - Offer an endurance of about 45 minutes.
 - Deliver high precision with minimal targeting error.
 - Possess anti-armour capabilities suitable for engaging modern battlefield threats.
 - Function in challenging operational environments, including mountainous regions and border areas.
- **Integration with Future Combat Platforms**
- The proposed loitering munition forms part of the Indian Army's broader modernization efforts, particularly under the Future Ready Combat Vehicle (FRCV) programme. The Army aims to integrate advanced unmanned systems, including loitering munitions and surveillance drones, into its armoured and mechanised formations. Such integration will significantly enhance battlefield awareness, precision-strike capabilities, and operational effectiveness.
- **Growing Importance of Drone Warfare**
- Recent global conflicts have demonstrated the transformative role of drones and loitering munitions in warfare. Recognising this shift, the Indian Army released a comprehensive technology roadmap for Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS) and loitering munitions in 2026. The roadmap identifies these technologies as critical components of future military operations and encourages domestic industry participation in their development.
- India has also accelerated the induction of indigenous drone systems, including precision-guided munitions and kamikaze drones, to enhance its operational capabilities and reduce dependence on foreign suppliers.
- **Boost to Indigenous Defence Manufacturing**
- The Army's RFI emphasizes a high level of indigenous content, reinforcing the government's commitment to promoting domestic defence manufacturing. This initiative is expected to create opportunities for Indian public-sector enterprises, private defence companies, startups, and research institutions working in drone technology, sensors, communications, propulsion systems, and artificial intelligence.

- The growing demand for indigenous drones and loitering munitions is likely to strengthen India's defence industrial ecosystem and position the country as a significant player in advanced military technologies.



REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. According to SIPRI Yearbook 2026, India's estimated nuclear warhead stockpile reached approximately how many warheads by early 2026?

- A) 150
- B) 175
- C) 190
- D) 210

Answer: C) 190

2. Which organization publishes the annual report on global military expenditure, arms transfers, and nuclear arsenals?

- A) IAEA
- B) SIPRI
- C) NATO
- D) ASEAN

Answer: B) SIPRI

3. India ranked as the world's _____ largest military spender in 2025.

- A) Third

- B) Fourth
- C) Fifth
- D) Sixth

Answer: C) Fifth

4. India's military expenditure in 2025 was approximately:

- A) \$82.1 billion
- B) \$92.1 billion
- C) \$102.1 billion
- D) \$112.1 billion

Answer: B) \$92.1 billion

5. During the period 2021–25, India accounted for what percentage of global arms imports?

- A) 6.5%
- B) 7.4%
- C) 8.2%
- D) 9.8%

Answer: C) 8.2%

6. Which military operation was described by SIPRI as a severe India-Pakistan crisis in May 2025?

- A) Operation Vijay
- B) Operation Meghdoot
- C) Operation Sindoor
- D) Operation Trident

Answer: C) Operation Sindoor

7. How much investment has been approved for the new dual-use airport at Great Nicobar Island?

- A) ₹10,000 crore
- B) ₹11,500 crore
- C) ₹13,000 crore
- D) ₹15,000 crore

Answer: C) ₹13,000 crore

8. The new airport at Great Nicobar Island will primarily serve:

- A) Only civilian purposes
- B) Only military purposes
- C) Both military and civilian purposes
- D) Tourism purposes only

Answer: C) Both military and civilian purposes

9. Which existing airfield was considered for expansion before the new airport project was approved?

- A) INS Vikrant
- B) INS Baaz
- C) INS Hansa
- D) INS Garuda

Answer: B) INS Baaz

10. The runway at INS Baaz has recently been expanded to:

- A) 3,500 ft
- B) 4,000 ft
- C) 4,500 ft
- D) 5,000 ft

Answer: C) 4,500 ft

11. The Great Nicobar project is strategically important because of its location in the:

- A) Arctic Region
- B) Mediterranean Region
- C) Indo-Pacific Region
- D) Atlantic Region

Answer: C) Indo-Pacific Region

12. The proposed facility at Great Nicobar will function as a:

- A) Commercial seaport

- B) Space launch centre
- C) Joint User Greenfield Airport and Naval Air Station
- D) Nuclear research centre

Answer: C) Joint User Greenfield Airport and Naval Air Station

13. Larsen & Toubro signed an MoU with which state government for investments worth ₹18,600 crore?

- A) Karnataka
- B) Andhra Pradesh
- C) Telangana
- D) Tamil Nadu

Answer: D) Tamil Nadu

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