

Daily Defence Current Affairs

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Major Defence Leadership Appointments

- **Lieutenant General Sandeep Jain, AVSM, SM** assumed the appointment of **Vice Chief of the Army Staff (VCOAS)**.
- An alumnus of the **National Defence Academy (NDA)**, Lt Gen Sandeep Jain was commissioned into the **MAHAR Regiment** in **June 1988**.
- During his nearly **38 years of distinguished service**, he has held several important command and staff appointments across diverse operational areas.
- Before becoming the VCOAS, Lt Gen Sandeep Jain served as the **General Officer Commanding-in-Chief (GOC-in-C), Southern Command**.
- **Lieutenant General Rajesh Pushkar, AVSM, VSM** assumed charge as the **General Officer Commanding-in-Chief (GOC-in-C), Southern Command** on **1 July 2026**, succeeding Lt Gen Sandeep Jain.
- **Lieutenant General Mohit Malhotra, AVSM, SM** took over as the **General Officer Commanding-in-Chief (GOC-in-C), South Western Command**.
- **Air Marshal Jasvir Singh Mann, AVSM, VSM** assumed command as the **Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief (AOC-in-C), Southern Air Command** on **1 July 2026**.
- He was presented with a **Ceremonial Guard of Honour** at the Headquarters of Southern Air Command on the occasion.
- **Air Marshal P.V. Shivanand, AVSM, VM** assumed the appointment of **Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief (AOC-in-C), South Western Air Command** on **1 July 2026**.
- After taking charge, he paid tribute to the **Bravehearts** at the **South Western Air Command War Memorial**.



India & Malaysia Review Entire Spectrum Of Bilateral Military Cooperation

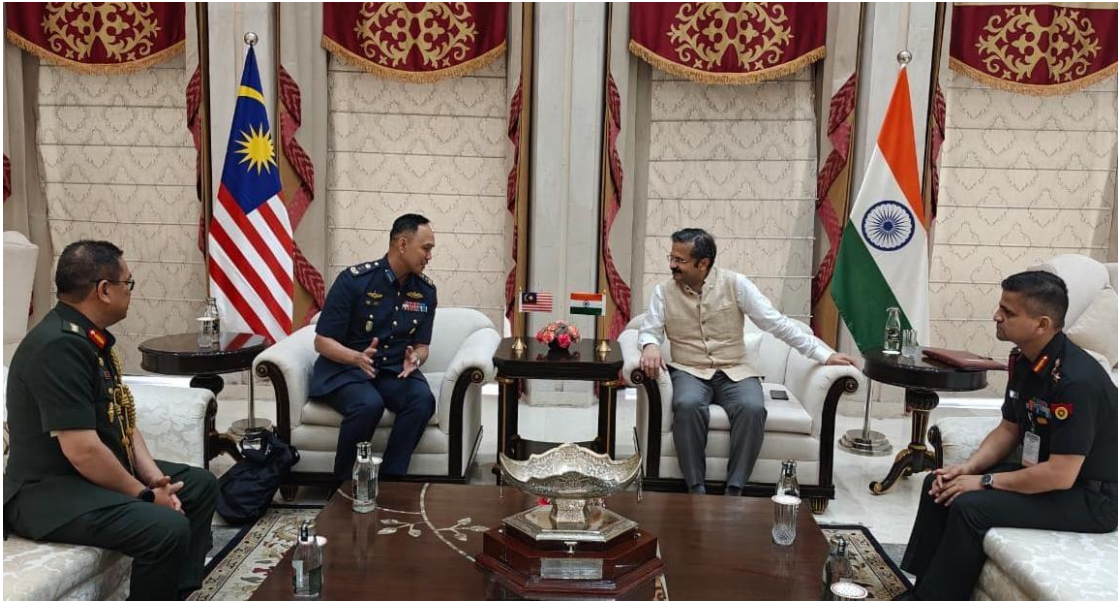
- The 12th India-Malaysia Sub Committee Meeting on Military Cooperation (SCMC) took place in New Delhi on July 01, 2026.
- The meeting was co-chaired by Joint Secretary, Ministry of Defence, India Shri Amitabh Prasad and Assistant Chief of Staff, Defence Operations & Training, Malaysian Armed Forces Maj Gen Amer Mahmud Bin Abdul Rahman.
- The two sides reviewed the entire spectrum of bilateral military cooperation and expressed satisfaction with the steady progress achieved.
- The discussions covered ongoing defence engagements, including military-to-military exchanges, bilateral exercises, training, staff talks, capacity building, maritime cooperation, and cooperation in emerging domains.
- The meeting underscored the importance of strengthening defence cooperation as a key pillar of the India-Malaysia Enhanced Strategic Partnership. Both sides reaffirmed their commitment to further deepening bilateral defence ties based on mutual trust, shared interests, and a common vision for a secure, stable, and prosperous Indo-Pacific.
- **India & Malaysia Relations**
- **Overview**

- India and Malaysia share **strong historical, cultural, economic, and strategic ties** spanning over two millennia.
- Diplomatic relations were established in **1957**, soon after Malaysia (then the Federation of Malaya) gained independence.
- The relationship was elevated to an **Enhanced Strategic Partnership** during the visit of the Malaysian Prime Minister to India in **2024**.
- **Historical and Cultural Relations**
- Ancient trade connected India with the Malay Peninsula through maritime routes.
- Indian culture has significantly influenced Malaysia's language, architecture, traditions, and festivals.
- Malaysia is home to over **2 million people of Indian origin**, making them one of the country's largest ethnic communities.
- Festivals such as **Deepavali, Thaipusam, and Pongal** are celebrated widely in Malaysia.
- **Political Relations**
- Regular high-level visits strengthen bilateral cooperation.
- Both countries cooperate closely in regional and multilateral forums such as:
 - ASEAN
 - East Asia Summit (EAS)
 - ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF)
 - Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA)
 - United Nations (UN)
- India supports ASEAN centrality under its **Act East Policy**.
- **Economic and Trade Relations**
- Malaysia is among India's largest trading partners in Southeast Asia.
- Bilateral trade includes:
 - Petroleum products

- Electronics
- Machinery
- Chemicals
- Palm oil
- Pharmaceuticals
- Agricultural products
- Trade is governed by the **ASEAN–India Trade in Goods Agreement (AITIGA)**.
- Both countries aim to expand investment, digital trade, and green economy cooperation.
- **Investment Relations**
- Malaysian companies have invested in:
 - Infrastructure
 - Highways
 - Construction
 - Renewable energy
 - Real estate
- Indian companies are active in:
 - Information Technology
 - Healthcare
 - Manufacturing
 - Banking
 - Education
- **Defence and Security Cooperation**
- Defence cooperation includes:
 - Joint military exercises
 - Training programmes

- Defence industry collaboration
- Maritime security
- Key exercise:
- **Exercise Harimau Shakti (Army)**
- Cooperation also covers:
- Counter-terrorism
- Cybersecurity
- Intelligence sharing
- Defence exchanges
- **Maritime Cooperation**
- Both countries support:
- Freedom of navigation
- Maritime safety
- Blue Economy initiatives
- Disaster relief cooperation
- Cooperation is important due to the strategic **Strait of Malacca**, one of the world's busiest shipping routes.
- **Education and People-to-People Ties**
- Thousands of Indian students pursue medical and higher education in Malaysia.
- Academic exchanges and scholarships continue to strengthen educational cooperation.
- Tourism between the two countries has grown significantly.
- **Healthcare Cooperation**
- Collaboration in:
- Pharmaceuticals
- Medical tourism

- Traditional medicine
- Healthcare technology
- **Space and Technology**
- Cooperation is expanding in:
 - Digital economy
 - Artificial Intelligence
 - Start-up ecosystem
 - Space technology
 - Innovation
- **Recent Developments (2024–26)**
 - Relations upgraded to an **Enhanced Strategic Partnership**.
 - Both countries committed to increasing bilateral trade and investment.
 - Greater focus on:
 - Semiconductor cooperation
 - Digital payments
 - FinTech
 - Green energy
 - Renewable technologies
 - Supply chain resilience
 - Continued cooperation under India's **Act East Policy** and Malaysia's role as a key ASEAN partner.



Indian Army Creates Integrated Battle Groups in Major Military Reform

- The Indian Army has initiated one of its most significant organisational reforms by raising five **Integrated Battle Groups (IBGs)** and one dedicated **Fire Support Group (FSG)**.
- The move is aimed at transforming the Army into a faster, more agile, and technology-driven force capable of responding effectively to future security challenges. The new formations became operational on 1 July 2026 as part of the Army's ongoing modernisation programme.
- The first phase of the reform has been implemented under the XVII Mountain Strike Corps, headquartered at Panagarh in West Bengal. This corps is primarily responsible for operations along India's northern border with China.
- Unlike the traditional structure, where infantry, armour, artillery, engineers, air defence, signals, logistics, and aviation function separately, an IBG integrates these capabilities into a single formation.
- This enables rapid mobilisation, quicker decision-making, and enhanced operational flexibility across different terrains.
- Each IBG consists of more than **5,000 personnel** and includes infantry, armoured units, artillery, engineers, air defence, signals, logistics, and surveillance assets.
- The formations are tailored according to the operational requirements of specific regions, making them suitable for both offensive and defensive operations.

- A newly introduced Chief Operations Officer, generally of Brigadier rank, will coordinate planning and execution within each IBG, ensuring greater synergy among different combat arms.
- The newly created **Fire Support Group (FSG)** has been established to provide concentrated and precise long-range firepower to the Integrated Battle Groups.
- Equipped with advanced artillery systems and precision-strike capabilities, the FSG is expected to significantly improve the Army's ability to neutralise enemy positions while supporting ground operations.
- Alongside the introduction of IBGs, the Army is also restructuring its formations through initiatives such as Rudra all-arms brigades, **Bhairav** light commando battalions, **Shaktimaan artillery regiments**, and **Divyastra drone** and precision-strike units.



Agnikul and ICEYE Sign SAR Satellite MoU

- Agnikul Cosmos, an Indian private space transportation company, and ICEYE, a Finnish Synthetic Aperture Radar satellite company, signed a MoU on 30 June 2026 and 1 July 2026 to explore building, launching and operating SAR earth observation systems from India. The MoU was signed at Bharat Innovates in Nice, France.
- Synthetic Aperture Radar is an active remote-sensing technology that uses microwave signals to create images of the Earth's surface. SAR can collect data in day and night conditions and can operate through cloud cover, which makes it useful for continuous observation.
- Agnikul Cosmos develops the Agnibaan small satellite launch vehicle, which is part of its full-stack responsive launch capability. Responsive launch systems are

designed for shorter launch timelines and flexible mission planning for small satellites.

- ICEYE operates the world's largest SAR satellite constellation with more than 70 satellites. The partnership includes plans to establish satellite manufacturing capabilities in India and to use India as an Asia-Pacific manufacturing hub for ICEYE's global constellation.
- SAR satellites are used for disaster response, sensitive area monitoring and security applications. The partnership aims to create integrated infrastructure in India for satellite manufacturing, launch and operations for sovereign and commercial missions.



Vidura Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR) System

- Ahmedabad-based PierSight has secured a significant contract, likely from the Indian Army, for the supply of its indigenous Vidura Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR) system.
- This marks a major step in India's push for advanced tactical surveillance capabilities under the Aatmanirbhar Bharat initiative.
- PierSight, a space technology startup headquartered in Ahmedabad, has developed Vidura as a next-generation airborne SAR payload.
- The system is designed to penetrate dense forest cover, cloud layers, and darkness, enabling defence operators to detect concealed movement and structures that optical systems cannot identify.

- This makes Vidura particularly valuable for counter-insurgency, border surveillance, and reconnaissance missions in challenging terrains such as the North-East and Jammu & Kashmir.
- Vidura builds upon PierSight's earlier maritime-focused SAR project, Varuna, which was conceived as a 32-satellite constellation for ocean monitoring. Leveraging the intellectual property and engineering expertise from Varuna, PierSight adapted its SAR technology for land-based tactical surveillance.
- The Vidura system supports P, L, and X-band configurations, offering wide-swath coverage and adaptability across multiple unmanned aerial vehicle platforms. Its drone-agnostic design ensures that defence forces can deploy it on different UAVs without being tied to a single manufacturer.
- Trials for Vidura began in mid-2026, with defence operators already testing its performance in operational conditions. The radar has demonstrated the ability to provide stand-off intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance missions from friendly airspace, thereby reducing risks to personnel.



REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. India and Malaysia elevated their bilateral ties to which level in 2024?

- A. Strategic Dialogue
- B. Comprehensive Economic Partnership
- C. **Enhanced Strategic Partnership**
- D. Defence Cooperation Agreement

Answer: C

2. Which Indian policy forms the basis of India's engagement with Malaysia and the ASEAN region?

- A. Neighbourhood First Policy
- B. Look West Policy
- C. SAGAR Policy
- D. **Act East Policy**

Answer: D

3. Exercise Harimau Shakti is a joint military exercise conducted between India and which country?

- A. Indonesia
- B. Singapore
- C. Thailand
- D. **Malaysia**

Answer: D

4. The Strait of Malacca, important for India–Malaysia maritime cooperation, connects which two water bodies?

- A. Arabian Sea and Bay of Bengal
- B. **Andaman Sea and South China Sea**
- C. Indian Ocean and Red Sea
- D. Bay of Bengal and Java Sea

Answer: B

5. The ASEAN–India Trade in Goods Agreement (AITIGA) primarily aims to promote:

- A. Space cooperation
- B. Defence production
- C. **Trade in goods between India and ASEAN countries**
- D. Cultural exchanges

Answer: C

6. The Indian Army recently operationalised five Integrated Battle Groups (IBGs) and one Fire Support Group under which Corps?

- A. I Corps
- B. II Corps
- C. XIV Corps
- D. **XVII Mountain Strike Corps**

Answer: D

7. What is the primary objective of an Integrated Battle Group (IBG)?

- A. Increase administrative staff
- B. Conduct only peacekeeping operations
- C. **Enable rapid, self-contained and integrated combat operations**
- D. Replace the Indian Air Force in border operations

Answer: C

8. Which of the following is NOT typically an integral component of an Integrated Battle Group (IBG)?

- A. Infantry
- B. Artillery
- C. Engineers
- D. **Merchant Navy**

Answer: D

9. The newly created Fire Support Group (FSG) is mainly responsible for:

- A. Border fencing
- B. Medical evacuation
- C. Logistics management
- D. **Providing concentrated long-range artillery and precision fire support**

Answer: D

10. The establishment of Integrated Battle Groups is primarily intended to:

- A. Reduce India's defence budget
- B. Increase the size of Army divisions
- C. Replace all existing Army regiments
- D. **Improve operational readiness, mobility, and battlefield effectiveness**

Answer: D

11. Who assumed the appointment of the Vice Chief of the Army Staff (VCOAS) on 1 July 2026?

- A. Lt Gen Rajesh Pushkar
- B. Lt Gen Mohit Malhotra
- C. **Lt Gen Sandeep Jain**
- D. Gen Dhiraj Seth

Answer: C

12. Lieutenant General Sandeep Jain was commissioned into which regiment of the Indian Army?

- A. Rajput Regiment
- B. Sikh Regiment
- C. Gorkha Rifles
- D. **MAHAR Regiment**

Answer: D

13. Lieutenant General Sandeep Jain is an alumnus of which prestigious military institution?

- A. Indian Military Academy (IMA)
- B. Officers Training Academy (OTA)
- C. **National Defence Academy (NDA)**
- D. Defence Services Staff College (DSSC)

Answer: C

14. Before becoming the Vice Chief of the Army Staff, Lt Gen Sandeep Jain served as the:

- A. GOC-in-C, Eastern Command
- B. GOC-in-C, Northern Command
- C. GOC-in-C, South Western Command
- D. **GOC-in-C, Southern Command**

Answer: D

15. Who assumed charge as the General Officer Commanding-in-Chief (GOC-in-C) of the Southern Command on 1 July 2026?

- A. Lt Gen Mohit Malhotra
- B. Lt Gen Dhiraj Seth
- C. **Lt Gen Rajesh Pushkar**
- D. Lt Gen Upendra Dwivedi

Answer: C

16. Lieutenant General Mohit Malhotra assumed command of which Army Command?

- A. Northern Command
- B. Eastern Command
- C. Southern Command
- D. **South Western Command**

Answer: D

17. Who assumed command as the Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief (AOC-in-C) of the Southern Air Command?

- A. Air Marshal P.V. Shivanand
- B. Air Chief Marshal A.P. Singh
- C. **Air Marshal Jasvir Singh Mann**
- D. Air Marshal Amar Preet Singh

Answer: C

18. Air Marshal Jasvir Singh Mann was accorded which ceremonial honour on assuming command of the Southern Air Command?

- A. Guard of the President
- B. Tri-Service Salute
- C. National Salute
- D. **Ceremonial Guard of Honour**

Answer: D

19. Air Marshal P.V. Shivanand assumed the appointment of Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief (AOC-in-C) of the:

- A. Western Air Command
- B. Eastern Air Command
- C. Central Air Command
- D. **South Western Air Command**

Answer: D

20. Agnikul Cosmos recently signed a MoU with which company to jointly build, launch, and operate Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR) Earth observation satellite systems from India?

- A. Airbus Defence and Space (France)
- B. Maxar Technologies (USA)
- C. **ICEYE (Finland)**
- D. Thales Alenia Space (Italy)

Answer: C. ICEYE (Finland)