

Daily Defence Current Affairs

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IAF Dronathon 2026

- IAF is organising Dronathon-2026 with an aim to offer domestic manufacturers to exhibit their capabilities and advancements in Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS) and Counter Unmanned Aerial Systems (CUAS).
- The event is designed to help stakeholders to witness emerging drone and counter drone technologies along with their operational demonstration and foster mutual learning.
- The event is scheduled to take place at Pokhran range, Jaisalmer from 14 to 16 Sep 26. The event comprises of static display and live demonstrations. It will help to identify contemporary solutions and evaluate their combat effectiveness.
- Key areas of focus include surveillance and reconnaissance, autonomous operations, swarm technologies, and electronic warfare.
- Aligning with the national vision of Atmanirbhar Bharat. Dronathon-2026 aims to bolster the indigenous defence ecosystem by integrating industry experts, start-ups, and innovators.
- Through such initiatives, the IAF remains committed to building a technologically advanced, indigenous and future ready force capable of meeting security challenges in the rapidly changing operational environment.



EX Veer Guardian-2026

- Indian Air Force (IAF) and the Japan Air Self Defence Force (JASDF) will conduct bilateral Air Exercise, Veer Guardian-2026, at Air Force Station Jodhpur, from 09 Sep 26 to 22 Sep 2026.
- The Indian Air Force will participate with a diverse mix of frontline combat aircraft including indigenous Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) Tejas, Su-30 MKI and Rafale. JASDF will participate with its F-2A fighter aircraft.
- During the fourteen-day exercise, participating air warriors will undertake advanced operational missions and engage in extensive professional interactions.
- The program integrates mission planning conferences, subject matter expert exchanges, and interaction between personnel on engineering and aspects of aerospace safety, fostering deep operational synergy between the two Air Forces.

- Exercise Veer Guardian-26 reflects a deepening strategic partnership between India and Japan by enhancing tactical proficiency and aerospace operational synergy. The exercise reaffirms the longstanding bonds of friendship and strategic cooperation between the two nations.



CONS On An Official Visit To Australia And NZ

- Admiral Krishna Swaminathan, Chief of the Naval Staff, will undertake an official visit to Australia and New Zealand commencing 09 Sep 2026. The visit is aimed at further strengthening the Indian Navy's bilateral cooperation with the Royal Australian Navy (RAN) and the Royal New Zealand Navy (RNZN).
- The visit to Australia builds upon the growing momentum in India–Australia relations, following the Third India-Australia Annual Summit held in Jul 2026 and the Second India–Australia Defence Ministers' Dialogue held in Jun 2026.
- The two countries have continued to deepen cooperation in defence and security, including maritime security and regional cooperation.
- During the visit, the CNS will hold bilateral discussions with the senior leadership of the RAN and engage with senior Australian defence leadership. The engagements will provide an opportunity to review ongoing naval cooperation and explore avenues for strengthening operational interaction, interoperability, information sharing, training and professional exchanges between the two navies.
- The CNS will also visit key operational and training establishments and interact with personnel of the RAN. The engagements will include discussions on

maritime capabilities, emerging technologies and professional military education, reflecting the expanding scope of cooperation between the two navies.

- The visit underscores India's growing defence and maritime engagement with Australia and New Zealand and the commitment of the Indian Navy to further deepen cooperation with the Royal Australian Navy and Royal New Zealand Navy, through practical and sustained maritime engagement, contributing towards peace, security and stability in the Indo-Pacific.



Tata Emerges Lowest Bidder for Rs 20,000-Crore Project Zorawar

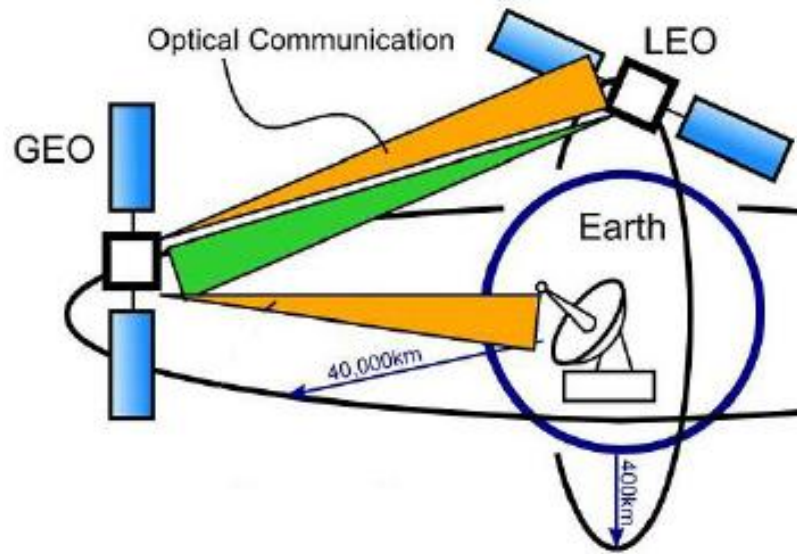
- Tata Advanced Systems Ltd (TASL) has emerged as the lowest bidder in a gruelling defence ministry contest to develop a next-generation light battle tank, beating four other entities vying for the key project valued at nearly ₹20,000 crore, said people familiar with the matter.
- The Ministry of Defence selected TASL following a rigorous three-year evaluation of both technical and commercial bids from five competing entities.

- While TASL initially emerged as the lowest bidder last year, the formal issuance of a Production Order (PO) was delayed after a competitor raised objections regarding the selection process.
- Following a thorough review by the Army and the defence ministry, the objections were dismissed, clearing the path for the project to proceed.
- **The Make-I Framework and Next Steps**
- The Armoured Fighting Vehicle-Indian Light Tank (AFV-ILT) programme is being executed under the defence ministry's 'Make-I' acquisition category.
- This framework is designed to boost indigenous defence manufacturing by providing 70% government funding for the design and development phases of major projects.
- As the L1 bidder, TASL has been tasked with developing and demonstrating two operational tank prototypes within a strict 130-week timeframe.
- Furthermore, Mahindra Defence Systems, which emerged as the second-lowest bidder (L2), will also be invited to develop a prototype, ensuring a competitive and resilient supply chain for the armed forces.
- **Designed for the Heights: Project Zorawar**
- Named after the legendary 19th-century Dogra General Zorawar Singh Kahlon—often referred to as the "Conqueror of Ladakh"—Project Zorawar aims to bridge a critical operational gap in the Indian Army's armoured capabilities. Heavy main battle tanks like the T-72 and T-90 struggle to manoeuvre effectively in extreme elevations and low-oxygen environments. The new AFV-ILT is specifically engineered for high-altitude warfare in the Himalayas, as well as operations in desert and marshy terrains.
- **Key Expected Specifications:**
- **Weight Class:** Approximately 25 tonnes, allowing for rapid air-transportability and superior mobility in restricted mountain passes.
- **Firepower & Tech:** TASL has reportedly proposed an indigenous turret system. The final tanks are expected to feature advanced artificial intelligence capabilities, active protection systems, and seamless integration with tactical surveillance drones.
- **Lethality:** To adapt to modern battlefield realities, the platform will be equipped with self-developed loitering munitions (kamikaze drones), granting the crew extended hunter-killer capabilities.



India's Astrogate Labs To Launch Indigenous Optical Inter-Satellite Link

- Astrogate Labs, a deep-tech company based in Bangalore, has announced a major breakthrough in India's space communications sector.
- The firm is developing the country's first indigenous Optical Inter-Satellite Link terminal, with flight readiness targeted for 2027.
- This milestone was unveiled at the Bangalore Space Expo 2026, where the company also demonstrated AstroLink Micro, its 10 GBPS laser communication terminal.
- The announcement builds on Astrogate's earlier success in supplying space-to-ground laser communication terminals to ISRO, making it the only Indian company to deliver this strategic technology to the national space agency.
- Astrogate's space-to-ground terminals have already achieved Technology Readiness Level 8, meaning they are fully qualified for flight. The company has also completed cross-compatibility testing with the University of Western Australia's TeraNet mobile optical ground station, confirming interoperability with international infrastructure.
- The unveiling of the OISL capability at the Expo marks Astrogate's transition from satellite-to-ground optical communications to satellite-to-satellite connectivity, a critical step in building advanced orbital networks.
- SpaceX has already demonstrated this architecture at scale, with its 2025 Starlink progress report citing more than 13,000 bidirectional laser links operating as an optical mesh in orbit.
- Astrogate aims to replicate and indigenise such capabilities for India's space ecosystem.



REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Where is IAF Dronathon-2026 scheduled to be held?

- A. Pokhran Range, Jaisalmer
- B. Air Force Station Jodhpur
- C. Deolali Range, Maharashtra
- D. Chandipur, Odisha

Answer: A. Pokhran Range, Jaisalmer

2. Which of the following is a major focus area of Dronathon-2026?

- A. Nuclear propulsion
- B. Swarm technologies
- C. Underwater warfare
- D. Aircraft carrier operations

Answer: B. Swarm technologies

3. Exercise Veer Guardian-2026 is being conducted between the Indian Air Force and which country's air force?

- A. France
- B. Australia
- C. Japan
- D. South Korea

Answer: C. Japan

4. Which fighter aircraft is being deployed by the Japan Air Self-Defence Force (JASDF) in Exercise Veer Guardian-2026?

- A. F-15J
- B. F-2A
- C. F-35A
- D. F-16

Answer: B. F-2A

5. Under which acquisition category is the AFV-Indian Light Tank programme being executed?

- A. Make-II
- B. Buy (Global)
- C. Make-I
- D. Buy & Make

Answer: C. Make-I

6. What is the approximate expected weight of the light tank being developed under Project Zorawar?

- A. 15 tonnes
- B. 20 tonnes
- C. 25 tonnes
- D. 35 tonnes

Answer: C. 25 tonnes

7. Astrogate Labs is developing an indigenous terminal for which technology?

- A. Optical Inter-Satellite Link
- B. Quantum Radar
- C. Satellite Navigation
- D. Synthetic Aperture Radar

Answer: A. Optical Inter-Satellite Link

8. What is the targeted flight-readiness year for Astrogate Labs' indigenous Optical Inter-Satellite Link terminal?

- A. 2026
- B. 2027
- C. 2028
- D. 2030

Answer: B. 2027

9. Cho La Incident Was Done In

- A. 1967
- B. 1988
- C. 1998
- D. 1980

ANSWER: A

10. VL-SRSAM Is A Quick Reaction Surface-to-air Missile Developed By

- A. NASA
- B. BEL
- C. DRDO
- D. ISRO

ANSWER: C

11. Wartime Gallantry Award Is/Are

- A. Param Vir Chakra
- B. Maha Vir Chakra
- C. Vir Chakra
- D. All of the above

ANSWER: D

12. WNC Hq Is In

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

ANSWER: A

13. Mitra Shakti Ex Held B/w India &

- A. Sri Lanka
- B. USA
- C. UK
- D. Nepal

ANSWER: A

14. SLNS Sayurala Is A Ship Of

- A. Oman

- B. Qatar
- C. Sri Lanka
- D. Maldives

ANSWER: C

15. "The Blue Book: A Writer's Journal" Book Is Written By

- A. Amitava Kumar
- B. Vikas Kumar Jha
- C. Usha Uthup
- D. Richa Mishra

ANSWER: A

16. CONAKRY Is The Capital Of

- A. GUINEA
- B. GUATEMALA
- C. GRENADA
- D. GREECE

ANSWER: A

17. IRBM Stands For

- A. Intermediate Resource Ballistic Missile
- B. Intermediate Range Ballistic Missile
- C. Intermediate Range of Ballistic Missile
- D. Intermediated Range Ballistic Missile

ANSWER: B

18. BEL HQ Is In

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

ANSWER: A

19. Major Rank Of Indian Army Is Equivalent To Which Rank Of The Indian Navy?

- A. Captain
- B. Inspector
- C. Lt Commander
- D. Vice-admiral

ANSWER: C

20. War Cry of ASSAM REGIMENT

- A. Parakramo Vijayate
- B. Rhino Charge
- C. Jai Bajrangbali
- D. Duty, Honour, courage

ANSWER: B