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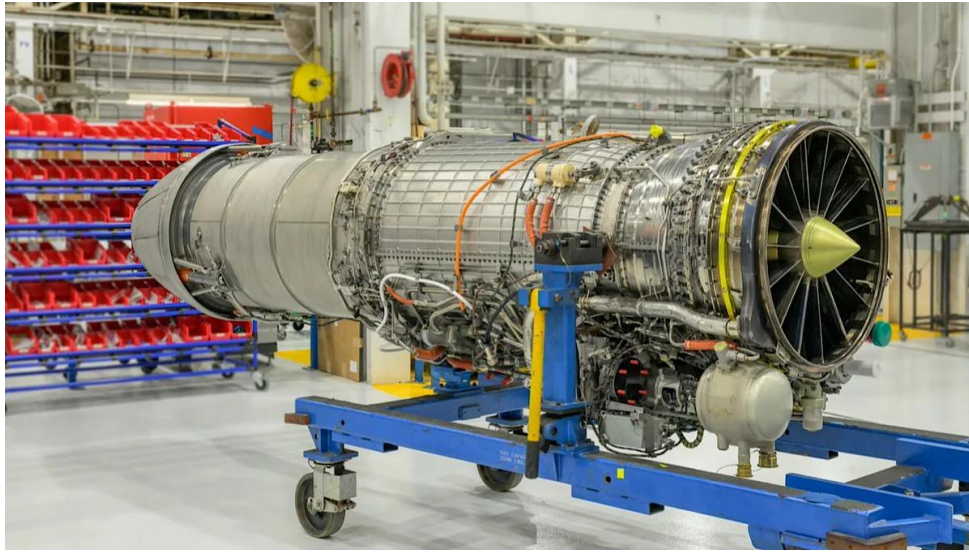
Exercise Mountain Guardian 2026

- The India-UAE Joint Military Exercise MOUNTAIN GUARDIAN 2026 commenced today at the Foreign Training Node, Chaubatia, Uttarakhand. The exercise, being conducted from 05 to 18 October 2026, aims to enhance interoperability, mutual understanding and cooperation, with a focus on Mountain Warfare.
- A total of 92 personnel, with equal representation from both Armies, are participating in the exercise. The Indian Army contingent comprises troops from a Bhairav Battalion, while the UAE Army contingent comprises troops from a Mountain Infantry Battalion.
- During the exercise, troops will undertake joint planning, tactical drills, firing practices, establishment of surveillance grids, drone operations, physical endurance training, rock climbing, obstacle training and integrated field exercises.
- Exercise MOUNTAIN GUARDIAN 2026 will provide an opportunity for both armies to exchange professional experience, enhance tactical proficiency and exchange best practices in operational procedures.
- The exercise will further strengthen military-to-military cooperation between India and the UAE and reinforce the bonds of friendship and trust between the two nations.



Delivery of 2,000th Aero-Engine at HAL Koraput

- Rajnath Singh will inaugurate the milestone event marking the delivery of the 2,000th aero-engine by Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL), Koraput Division, in Odisha on October 06, 2026.
- The event will mark nearly six decades of HAL Koraput's contribution to India's aerospace and defence manufacturing capabilities and operational readiness of the Armed Forces.
- The event will also highlight the establishment of a second production line for Shakti engines, with an investment of ₹218 crore.
- The additional capacity will support the growing requirements of indigenous helicopter platforms, including the **Dhruv Advanced Light Helicopter** and **Prachand Light Combat Helicopter**.
- The event underlines the Government's vision of transforming India from a buyer of defence equipment into a designer, developer and manufacturer of defence systems.



Rajnath Singh To Launch First Fleet Support Ship

- Rajnath Singh will launch Fleet Support Ship-1 (FSS-1), lay the keel of Fleet Support Ship-5 (FSS-5) and also inaugurate the upgraded Slipway-4 and 300-tonne Goliath Crane at Hindustan Shipyard Limited, Vishakapatnam, on October 06, 2026.
- The upgraded Slipway-4, with its extended length and enhanced load-bearing capability, supported by the 300-tonne Goliath Crane, will enable the shipyard to build and launch vessels of up to 45,000 DWT, significantly expanding its capacity to undertake large and complex platforms.
- FSS-1, the first of five Fleet Support Ships being built for the Indian Navy, will enter the waters of the Bay of Bengal just 18 months after steel cutting.
- These 43,500-tonne vessels will replenish warships at sea, extending the Navy's endurance and reach across the Indian Ocean Region.
- The keel laying of FSS-5 will mark the programme's steady march towards series production.



DRDO Plans Laser-Armed Dhruv & Rudra Helicopters

- India is exploring a new frontier in battlefield technology as the DRDO examines the possibility of equipping the **ALH Dhruv** and the armed Rudra helicopter with laser-based directed-energy weapons designed to defeat emerging drone threats.
- The move reflects the rapidly changing character of modern warfare, where unmanned aerial systems have become increasingly common across frontline environments.
- Military planners are now facing a growing challenge from surveillance drones, loitering munitions and coordinated drone swarms capable of overwhelming conventional air-defence systems.
- DRDO is studying the integration of an airborne laser pod that could provide helicopters with a dedicated counter-drone capability. The proposed system would combine advanced thermal imaging sensors, a laser rangefinder and a precision beam-directing mechanism.
- DRDO has already demonstrated a 30-kilowatt class laser-directed energy weapon capable of engaging drones, unmanned aircraft and surveillance equipment.
- DRDO's work in directed-energy technology is not limited to existing systems. The organisation is pursuing increasingly powerful laser weapons intended to expand operational range and lethality
- The helicopter laser concept represents an important extension of this vision. While ground-mounted directed-energy weapons offer protection for fixed installations and strategic assets, airborne platforms could provide significantly greater mobility.



5.56 km Free-Space QKD Link Demonstrated

- India has achieved a significant milestone in quantum-secure communications by successfully testing a 5.56-kilometre open-air Quantum Key Distribution (QKD) link between BISAG-N and IIT Gandhinagar.
- The field trial was conducted on the night of 27-28 September by QNu Labs in collaboration with BISAG-N and IIT-Gandhinagar.
- The demonstration transmitted quantum-encoded light across a 5.56-kilometre atmospheric path, proving that secure quantum communications can operate reliably over several kilometres in real-world conditions.
- The system maintained a **Quantum Bit Error Rate** below 5 per cent, a key benchmark for secure quantum communications. It also generated secret encryption keys at a rate of 230-260 bits per second, effectively producing enough material for approximately one new AES-256 encryption key every second.
- A critical element of the experiment was QNu Labs' Pointing, Acquisition and Tracking (PAT) system, which continuously maintained precise alignment of the narrow optical beam throughout the entire 5.56-kilometre link despite atmospheric disturbances.
- The 5.56-kilometre demonstration therefore serves as a valuable testing ground for technologies required in future space-based quantum networks. Atmospheric transmission allows researchers to evaluate challenges such as turbulence, dust, background noise and precision tracking before attempting similar operations in orbit.



REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Exercise MOUNTAIN GUARDIAN 2026 is being conducted jointly by India and which country?

- A. Oman
- B. UAE
- C. Saudi Arabia
- D. Qatar

Answer: B. UAE

2. Where is Exercise MOUNTAIN GUARDIAN 2026 being conducted?

- A. Leh, Ladakh
- B. Tawang, Arunachal Pradesh
- C. Chaubatia, Uttarakhand
- D. Srinagar, Jammu & Kashmir

Answer: C. Chaubatia, Uttarakhand

3. How many personnel are participating in Exercise MOUNTAIN GUARDIAN 2026?

- A. 72
- B. 82
- C. 92
- D. 102

Answer: C. 92

4. HAL Koraput is set to achieve which major milestone on 6 October 2026?

- A. Delivery of its 1,500th helicopter
- B. Delivery of its 2,000th aero-engine
- C. Production of its 500th fighter aircraft
- D. Launch of its first indigenous UAV

Answer: B. Delivery of its 2,000th aero-engine

5. What is the investment announced for the second production line of Shakti engines at HAL Koraput?

- A. ₹118 crore
- B. ₹168 crore
- C. ₹218 crore
- D. ₹318 crore

Answer: C. ₹218 crore

6. What is the primary purpose of Fleet Support Ships being built for the Indian Navy?

- A. Anti-submarine warfare
- B. Air defence operations
- C. Replenishment and logistical support to warships at sea
- D. Amphibious assault operations

Answer: C. Replenishment and logistical support to warships at sea

7. Which DRDO technology is being explored for integration with Dhruv and Rudra helicopters to counter drone threats?

- A. Hypersonic missiles
- B. Laser-based directed-energy weapons
- C. Electromagnetic railguns
- D. Artificial-intelligence radar

Answer: B. Laser-based directed-energy weapons

8. A 5.56-km free-space Quantum Key Distribution (QKD) link was demonstrated between which two locations?

- A. DRDO and IISc Bengaluru
- B. BISAG-N and IIT Gandhinagar

- C. ISRO and IIT Bombay
- D. BARC and IIT Delhi

Answer: B. BISAG-N and IIT Gandhinagar

9. What was the Quantum Bit Error Rate (QBER) achieved during the 5.56-km QKD demonstration?

- A. Below 2%
- B. Below 5%
- C. Below 10%
- D. Below 15%

Answer: B. Below 5%

10. Berlin Is The Capital Of

- A. France
- B. Qatar
- C. Germany
- D. Maldives

ANSWER: C

11. “Not Just A Nightwatchman: My Innings in the BCCI” Book Is Written By

- A. Shashi Tharoor
- B. Sitaram Yechuri
- C. Vinod Rai
- D. Anurag Thakur

ANSWER: C

12. Where Is The Hq Of The Southern Western Command of The Indian Army?

- A. Jaipur
- B. Jabalpur
- C. Pune
- D. Mumbai

ANSWER: A

13. Sea Dragon Exercise Hosted By

- A. USA
- B. Sweden
- C. France
- D. None of the above

ANSWER: A

14. India Purchased C 130 J from

- A. USA
- B. Sweden
- C. France
- D. None of the above

ANSWER: A

15. Ex KHANJAR Conducted B/W India &

- A. Qatar
- B. Oman
- C. Kazakhstan
- D. Kyrgyzstan

ANSWER: D

16. OPEC Hq Is In

- A. Vienna
- B. New York
- C. Chennai
- D. Abu Dhabi

ANSWER: A

17. Gangtok Is The Capital Of

- A. Sikkim
- B. Tamil Nadu

C. Telangana

D. Tripura

ANSWER: A

18. What Is The Full Form Of JCB?

A. Joseph Cyril Bamford

B. Joseph Cyrus Bamford

C. Joseph Cyril Bofors

D. None of the above

ANSWER: A

19. Lt Gen. Rank Of Indian Army Is Equivalent To Which Rank Of IAF?

A. Vice Admiral

B. Air Commodore

C. Commodore

D. Air Marshal

ANSWER: D