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KEY EVENTS

President Approves Distinguished Service and Gallantry Awards

On the eve of 75th Republic Day on 25 January 2024, President Smt Droupadi Murmu approved distinguished service and gallantry awards to Indian [Army](#), [Air Force](#), [Navy](#) personnel. The President also approved President's Tatrakshak Medal & Tatrakshak Medal to six [Indian Coast Guard](#) personnel.

Raksha Mantri Visits the UK

Raksha Mantri Rajnath Singh was on a two-day [visit](#) to United Kingdom (UK) from 8 January 2024. He held a bilateral meeting with UK Defence Minister Grant Shapps on 9 January 2024. Both Ministers [discussed](#) a range of defence, security and cooperation matters with particular emphasis on enhancing defence industrial collaboration. Two agreements were signed following the meeting - a MoU on bilateral international cadet exchange programme, and a Letter of Arrangement between DRDO and UK's Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (DSTL) on defence collaboration in R&D.

Raksha Mantri also [interacted](#) with top UK Defence industry leaders and CEOs at the UK-India Defence Industry CEOs Roundtable held on 10 January. The meeting was also attended by UK Minister of State for Defence Procurement, James Cartlidge. The Roundtable included thematic discussions on strengthening the India-UK defence industrial relationship.

Raksha Mantri [called](#) on Prime Minister Rishi Sunak on 10 January 2024. He noted the recent enhancement in bilateral defence engagement, spanning joint exercises, training, capability building, increased

interoperability, military-to-military ties especially in the maritime domain. He emphasised the ongoing efforts to enhance defence industrial cooperation, including in the technology domain. Shri Singh outlined his goal of integrating defence industries of both countries including through supply chain integration to build resilience. He also emphasised the importance of bilateral start-up level interaction.

Raksha Mantri Addresses Indo-American Chamber of Commerce Conference

The capital and technological know-how from the US can help India to achieve its goal of becoming a developed country by 2047, while investments here can give the American companies high returns and an avenue of de-risking. This was stated by Raksha Mantri Rajnath Singh while [addressing](#) a conference organised by Indo-American Chamber of Commerce (IACC) in New Delhi on 30 January 2024.

Indian Navy Responds to Maritime Incidents

Indian Navy [responded](#) to a hijacking incident on-board Liberian-flagged bulk carrier MV Lila Norfolk on 5 January 2024. The vessel had sent a message on UKMTO portal [indicating](#) boarding by unknown armed personnel in the evening on 4 January 2024. INS Chennai, the guided missile destroyer arrived at the scene and did a continuous aerial recce by MQ9B (Sea Guardian), P8I and integral helicopters. Subsequently, Indian Navy Marine Commandos boarded and undertook thorough sanitisation of the ship, after which the ship recommenced her passage to her destination under escort of INS Chennai.

INS Visakhapatnam, mission [deployed](#) in Gulf of Aden for anti-piracy operations, responded to a distress call by the Marshall Island-flagged MV Genco Picardy following a drone attack on 17 January 2024. The vessel with 22 crew (9 Indian) reported zero casualties and fire under control. Indian Navy specialists from INS Visakhapatnam boarded the vessel in early hours of 18 January 2024 to inspect the damaged area and after a thorough inspection rendered the area safe for further transit.

The Indian Navy in collaboration with Seychelles Defence Forces and Sri Lanka Navy successfully [intercepted](#) and rescued the hijacked vessel, Lorenzo Putha 04 about 955 nm east of Mogadishu, Somalia on 27 January 2024. Indian Navy deployed INS Sharda on 28 January and also tasked HALE Sea Guardian to locate and intercept the hijacked vessel. Operational coordination and information sharing through the Sri Lanka and Seychelles International Liaison Officers at IFC-IOR, New Delhi resulted in the interception of the hijacked fishing vessel in Seychelles EEZ on 29 January 2024 by the Seychelles Coast Guard (SCG).

INS Sumitra, Indian Navy's indigenous Offshore Patrol Vessel deployed for anti-piracy and maritime security Operations East of Somalia and Gulf of Aden on 28 January 2024 responded to a [distress message](#) regarding hijacking of an Iranian flagged Fishing Vessel (FV) Iman, which had been boarded by pirates and the crew taken as hostages. The FV was intercepted by INS Sumitra and following coercive posturing, the vessel and her crew (17 Iranian Nationals) were safely rescued in the early hours of 29 January 2024.

Subsequently, INS Sumitra intercepted another Iranian flagged fishing vessel Al Naeemi on 29 January 2024, which had been boarded by pirates and her crew taken hostage compelled the safe release of the crew and the vessel.

Chief of Staff Royal Saudi Naval Forces Visits India

Admiral Fahad Abdullah S Al-Ghofaily, Chief of Staff, Royal Saudi Naval Forces was on a four-day official [visit](#) to India from 10-13 January 2024. Admiral Al-Ghofaily called on Adm R Hari Kumar, the Chief of the Naval Staff on 11 January 2024 at New Delhi and held discussions on collaborative mechanisms and measures to further strengthen Navy to Navy cooperation. Admiral Al-Ghofaily also visited IFC-IOR at Gurugram and Southern Naval Command at Kochi.

12th India-Oman Joint Military Cooperation Committee Meeting Held

Defence Secretary Giridhar Aramane [co-chaired](#) the 12th Joint Military Cooperation Committee (JMCC) meeting with Secretary General, Ministry of Defence, Oman, Mohammed Bin Naseer Bin Ali Al Zaabi in Muscat on 31 January 2024. The JMCC meeting delved into many new areas of cooperation in the fields of training, joint exercise, information sharing, oceanography, ship building and MRO. Towards implementing India-Oman Joint Vision Document entitled 'A Partnership for the Future', adopted during the visit of Head of State of the Sultanate of Oman, Sultan Sultan Haitham Bin Tarik in December 2023, the Defence Secretary and Secretary General signed a MoU pertaining to procurement of defence material and equipment.

AATMANIRBHAR BHARAT

Ministry of Defence Signs Contracts for Procurement of Military Equipment

Ministry of Defence [inked](#) two contracts for procurement of Qty-697 Bogie Open Military (BOM) Wagons at a cost of Rs 473 Cr with M/s Jupiter Wagons Limited and procurement of Qty-56 Mechanical Minefield Marking Equipment (MMME) Mark II at a cost of Rs 329 Cr with M/s BEML Ltd, under Buy (Indian-IDDM) category on 4 January 2024 in New Delhi.

IDEX- DIO Participates in the Vibrant Gujarat Global Summit 2024

iDEX-DIO [participated](#) in the tenth edition of the Vibrant Gujarat Summit 2024 from 10 to 12 January 2024 at Gandhinagar, Gujarat. An iDEX Pavilion was set up based on the theme of the Summit 'Gateway to the Future', wherein the iDEX innovators exhibited their futuristic technologies in the field of Unmanned Solutions, Artificial Intelligence, Cyber Security, Advance Material, etc.

DRDO Conducts Successful Flight-Test of NG AKASH Missile

DRDO [conducted](#) a successful flight-test of the New Generation AKASH (AKASH-NG) missile from the Integrated Test Range (ITR), Chandipur off the coast of Odisha on 12 January 2024. The flight-test was conducted against a high-speed unmanned aerial target at very low altitude. The AKASH-NG system is a state-of-the-art missile system capable of intercepting high speed, agile aerial threats.

Raksha Rajya Mantri Visits DRDO's Dr APJ Abdul Kalam Missile Complex

Raksha Rajya Mantri Ajay Bhatt [visited](#) DRDO's Dr APJ Abdul Kalam Missile

Complex Hyderabad on 14 January 2024. He reviewed the ongoing missile technologies and related Programmes at Research Centre Imarat (RCI).

MoD Inks Contract with MDL for 14 Fast Patrol Vessels for Indian Coast Guard

The MoD [signed](#) contract with Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Ltd (MDL), Mumbai on 24 January 2024 for acquisition of 14 Fast Patrol Vessels (FPVs) for the Indian Coast Guard (ICG). The value of the contract is Rs 1070.47 cr. These multi role FPVs will be indigenously designed, developed and manufactured by MDL under Buy (Indian-IDDM) category.

DEFENCE DIPLOMACY

India-UAE Joint Military Exercise 'Desert Cyclone' Conducted In Rajasthan

UAE troops from the Zayed First Brigade [participated](#) in the 1st edition of the India-UAE joint military exercise 'Desert Cyclone' conducted in Mahajan, Rajasthan from 2-15 January 2024. The Indian Army contingent was represented by a battalion from the Mechanised Infantry Regiment. The aim of the exercise was to enhance interoperability in sub-conventional operations under Chapter VII of the UN Charter on Peace Keeping Operations.

INS Kabra Arrives at Colombo, Sri Lanka

Indian Navy's Fast Attack Craft INS Kabra [arrived](#) at Colombo, Sri Lanka on 8 January 2024. Essential spares and stores meant for the Sri Lanka Navy and Air Force were handed over by the ship.

Indian Navy-Royal Thai Navy Bilateral Exercises Held

The maiden bilateral maritime exercise between the Indian Navy (IN) and Royal

Thai Navy (RTN) was [conducted](#) from 20-23 December 2023. INS Kulish and IN LCU 56 participated in the exercise. The 36th edition of India-Thailand Coordinated Patrol (CORPAT) was also conducted along with the bilateral exercise. Maritime Patrol Aircraft from both navies participated in the Sea Phase of the exercise. The Indo-Thai Bilateral Exercise is being named as 'Ex-Ayutthaya', which translates to 'The Invincible One' or 'Undefeatable', and symbolises the significance of two of the oldest cities Ayodhya in India and Ayutthaya in Thailand.

Royal Navy Ship HMS Spey Visits Kochi

HMS Spey, an offshore patrol vessel of the Royal Navy was on a goodwill [visit](#) to Kochi from 17-27 January 2024. A team from Headquarters Sea training (HQST) conducted training module on Force Protection Measures, Damage Control and Firefighting on-board HMS Spey.

Indian Contingent Participates in Special Forces Exercise 'Cyclone' in Egypt

An Indian Army contingent from the Parachute Regiment (Special Forces) [participated](#) in the 2nd edition of India-Egypt Joint Special Forces Exercise CYCLONE, conducted at Anshas, Egypt from 22 January to 1 February 2024. The aim of the Exercise is to acquaint both the sides with each other's operating procedures in the backdrop of Special Operations in desert/ semi desert terrain under Chapter VII of UN Charter.

Indian-Kyrgyzstan Special Forces Exercise Held in Himachal Pradesh

The 11th edition of India-Kyrgyzstan Joint Special Forces Exercise [KHANJAR](#) was

held at the Special Forces Training School in Bakloh, Himachal Pradesh. The exercise was conducted from 22 January to 3 February 2024. The Indian Army contingent was represented by troops from The Parachute Regiment (Special Forces) and the Kyrgyzstan contingent was represented by Scorpion Brigade.

IAF Participates in Ex- Desert Knight

On 23 January 2024, the Indian Air Force (IAF) [conducted](#) Exercise Desert Knight along with French Air and Space Force (FASF) and UAE Air Force. While the French participation included the Rafale fighter aircraft and a Multi Role Tanker Transport, the UAE Air Force fielded the F-16. These aircraft operated from the Al Dhafra air base in the UAE. The IAF contingent comprised of Su-30 MKI, MiG-29, Jaguar, AWACS, C-130-J and Air to Air Re-fueller aircraft. IAF aircraft operated from bases within India.

India-Saudi Arabia Joint Military Exercise 'Sada Tanseeq' Held in Rajasthan

The inaugural edition of India-Saudi Arabia Joint Military Exercise '[SADA TANSEEQ](#)' was held from 29 January till 10 February 2024. The Saudi Arabian contingent comprising 45 personnel was represented by Royal Saudi Land Forces. The Indian Army contingent also comprising 45 personnel was represented by a Battalion from the Brigade of the Guards (Mechanised Infantry). The aim of the Exercise was to train troops of both sides for Joint Operations in Semi Desert terrain under Chapter VII of the UN Charter.

'The Newsletter is a compilation of media reports and does not necessarily reflect the views of the Manohar Parrikar IDSA or the Ministry of Defence, Government of India'.