



Delhi Policy Group

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ABOUT US

Founded in 1994, the Delhi Policy Group is among India's oldest independent think tanks with its primary focus on international and strategic issues of critical national interest. Over the past decades, the Delhi Policy Group has established itself in both domestic and international circles, particularly in the area of national security.

In keeping with India's increasing global profile as a leading power and the accompanying dynamism of India's foreign and security policy, the Delhi Policy Group has expanded its focus areas to include India's broader regional and global role; India's initiatives to strengthen its strategic periphery; India's political, security and connectivity challenges and policies across the Indo-Pacific; and the strategic partnerships that advance India's rise. To support these goals, the DPG undertakes research, publishes policy reports and organises conferences on strategic and geo-political, geo-economic, and defence and security issues.

DPG India Defence Digest

DPG India Defence Digest is compiled by our research team from publicly available information and open source media. Your comments and feedback can be addressed to Shreyas Deshmukh at Shreyas@dpg.org.in.

Cover Photographs:

(Photographs top to bottom)

Indian Navy Mobilises IL38 to transport face masks from Delhi for Goa Health Workers, March 27, 2020. Source: [Twitter/@SpokespersonMoD](#)

Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh unveils draft of Defence Procurement Procedure 2020, March 20, 2020. Source: [Twitter/@SpokespersonMoD](#)

General MM Naravane COAS speaks on the need for AI & precision guided weapons in present day warfare at Pragyan Conclave, Indian Army Seminar on "Changing Characteristic of Land Warfare & its Impact on the Military", March 4, 2020. Source: [Twitter/@adgpi](#)

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PART I: INDIA'S DEFENCE SCENE

Defence Policy

1. [DPP 2020](#)

March 20, 2020, PIB

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh unveiled the new draft Defence Procurement Procedure (DPP) on March 20. DPP 2020 aims at further increasing indigenous manufacturing and reducing timelines for procurement of defence equipment. Major changes proposed include Indigenous Content ratio has been hiked about 10% to support the 'Make in India' initiative; a new category Buy (Global – Manufacture in India) has been introduced with minimum 50% indigenous content of total contract value on cost basis; leasing has been introduced as a new category for acquisition in addition to the existing 'Buy' & 'Make' categories to substitute high initial capital outlays with periodical rental payments; and the scope and options for product support have been widened to include contemporary concepts in vogue, including Performance Based Logistics, Life Cycle Support Contract, Comprehensive Maintenance Contract, etc to optimise life cycle support for equipment.

Operations and Exercises

2. [Armed Forces in The Fight Against COVID-19](#)

March 20, 2020, PIB

India's Ministry of Defence has mobilised all necessary resources to support the national effort towards the management of COVID-19 cases. Since the outbreak of Novel COVID-19 in Wuhan, China, India has evacuated citizens from China, Iran, Italy and Japan and quarantined them at their facilities, to be released after mandatory isolation. From February 1 to March 20, the Air Force has evacuated 1059 people. The Indian Navy has set up a quarantine camp at INS Vishwakarma at Vishakhapatnam and isolation facilities at INHS Asvini at Mumbai. All Army Hospitals have been kept on alert to meet any eventuality.

3. [India-France Joint Patrols](#)

March 21, 2020, The Hindu

India and France conducted their first joint patrol from Reunion Island in March 2020. The patrol was conducted by a P-8I aircraft with French Navy

personnel onboard. Such joint patrols, which India had earlier restricted to the Bay of Bengal neighbours, will henceforth be carried out periodically in the Southwestern Indian Ocean. Earlier, in September 2019, France became the first country to deploy a Liaison Officer at the Indian Navy's Information Fusion Centre (IFC-IOR) as part of efforts to improve Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA).

Capability Development

4. [New Explosive Detection Device RaIDer-X](#)

March 1, 2020, PIB

A new explosive detection device RaIDer-X was unveiled at the National Workshop on Explosive Detection (NWED-2020) in Pune on March 1. RaIDer-X has been co-developed by High Energy Materials Research Laboratory (HEMRL) and Indian Institute of Science. It has the capability to detect explosives from a stand-off distance. A data library can be built in the system to expand its capability to detect a number of explosives in pure form as well as with contaminants. Bulk explosives in concealed condition can also be detected by the device.

5. [DAC Approval for Procurement of 83 Tejas Mk1A and 16,479 LMGs](#)

March 18, 2020, PIB

The Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) accorded approval for procurement of 83 Mk1A version of the Tejas Light Combat Aircraft from HAL including ten trainer versions by finalising the contractual and other issues on March 18. The proposal will now be placed for consideration of Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS). The DAC has also accorded approval for acquisition of Aerial Fuses and Twin-Dome Simulators worth Rs 1,300 crores for Hawk Mk32 aircraft of the Indian Air Force. The DAC also approved an amendment to the Defence Procurement Procedure (DPP) 2016 to enable review by a Costing Committee of bids submitted by Joint Ventures of Defence Public Sector Undertakings (DPSUs)/Ordnance Factory Board (OFB)/DRDO from whom procurement of Defence items is undertaken on a nomination basis. This will bring more transparency in costs and compress the timelines for negotiation of the contract.

6. [Acquisition of 16,479 LMGs](#)

March 19, 2020, PIB

The Acquisition Wing of Ministry of Defence has signed a capital acquisition contract with Israel Weapons Industries for procurement of 16,479 Negev 7.62X51 mm LMGs at a cost of Rs 880 crore on March 19.

7. [Indian MH-60R helos to be Saudi-standard](#)

March 25, 2020, Jane's

The 24 Sikorsky MH-60R Seahawk maritime helicopters ordered by India will be built to the same configuration as the 10 helicopters received by the Royal Saudi Naval Forces (RSNF), with some "unique modifications" also included. The RNSF standard that will form the baseline configuration for the Indian Navy (IN) adds the Lockheed Martin AGM-114R Hellfire II air-to-surface missile and BAE Systems Advanced Precision Kill Weapon System (APKWS) which, while integrated by the USN, are not typically carried.

8. [A New Bridge Over Teesta River](#)

March 21, 2020, PIB

The Border Roads Organisation (BRO) opened a new 360 ft long bailey suspension bridge for traffic over Teesta River in Munshithang near Chungthang town. Commenced of construction of the bridge was in October 2019 and it was completed in January 2020. The bridge will facilitate movement of logistics for the Armed Forces deployed in forward areas.

Other Issues

9. [Defence Minister Rajnath Singh & US Defence Secretary Dr. Mark T. Esper Review Bilateral Defence Co-operation](#)

March 20, 2020, PIB

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh held a telephonic conversation with his United States counterpart Secretary of Defence Dr Mark T Esper on March 20. The two reviewed progress in bilateral and multilateral defence co-operation and agreed to expand military-to-military engagements and defence trade & industry cooperation as part of the India-US comprehensive global strategic partnership. The Defence Minister briefed Secretary Esper about the Indian initiative to coordinate COVID-19 relief efforts in South Asia.

10. [PRAGYAN CONCLAVE 2020](#)

March 4, 2020, PIB

A two-day Indian Army International Seminar on the subject of 'Changing Characteristics of Land Warfare and its Impact on the Military' was organised by Centre for Land Warfare Studies (CLAWS) on March 4-5 in New Delhi. The event brought together cross-domain national and international experts to deliberate on the complex subject of 'Changing Characteristics of Land Warfare and its Impact on the Military'. During the seminar deliberations were focused on emerging ideas, perspectives and narratives that define 'New Age Warfare'.

11. [Fund Crunch for New Naval Facility](#)

March 14, 2020, The Economic Times

The Indian Navy has taken up a case with MoD for leasing of the 260 m berth at M/s L&T shipyard, Kattupalli, Chennai for a period of eight years (2022-2030) for interim berthing of IAC 1 (INS Vikrant) on the East Coast. The total financial implications for leasing the berth along with 'ready to use' infrastructure are Rs 30.48 crore per year plus Rs 48 crore refundable deposit. The decision was taken due to shortage of funds impacting creation of a strategic naval base codenamed Project Varsha on the East coast. The base was originally planned to be commissioned by 2018.

12. [Delay in Rafael Delivery to India Due to Covid-19](#)

March 22, 2020, Hindustan Times

The delivery schedule of Rafale fighter jets to the Indian Air Force from France could get affected if lockdown measures in France to prevent the spread of the Covid-19 are extended beyond March-end. The first batch of four Rafale jets was supposed to be delivered in May 2020 and 16 more by February 2021, with the remainder 18 expected in April-May 2022.

13. [Procurement of Fleet Support Vessels for Indian Navy](#)

March 23, 2020, The Economic Times

Turkey's TAIS had emerged as the lowest bidder for a contract to manufacture five of the 45,000-tonne Fleet Support Vessels (FSVs) worth \$2.3 billion at the Vizag-based Hindustan Shipyard Limited in 2019. The contract was signed by HSL last month after clearances were given by the Ministry of Defence (MoD). The FSV project was initially introduced in 2016 after the Navy projected a requirement for ships that could carry fuel and

other supplies for warships at sea. Turkish shipyards are a major supplier of warships to the Pakistani Navy and concerns had been raised on how access to the strategic HSL by its engineers and workers could result in serious security issues.

PART II: NEIGHBOURHOOD DEFENCE SCENE

China

Defence Policy

14. [China Clarifies Procedures Regarding Maritime Criminal Cases](#)

March 02, 2020, China Military

China's Supreme People's Court and the Chinese Coast Guard have jointly released a circular which specifies the standard procedure to be followed in maritime criminal cases. It lists out principles and procedures to be followed by coast guard agencies while investigating cases, as well as the procuratorates they should file warrants to and if need be transfer cases to.

Operations and Exercises

15. [HADR Drill of Exercise Cobra Gold 2020](#)

March 15, 2020, China Military

Chinese troops, along with nearly 200 troops from seven countries, participated in the humanitarian assistance disaster relief field training exercise as part of Exercise Cobra Gold 2020, in Chachoengsao Province, Thailand. They participated in group training simulating air and ground search, water salvage, on-site medical first-aid, etc., for different types of disasters.

16. [China-Cambodia Military Exercise Golden Dragon 2020 Phase - 1](#)

March 18, 2020, China Military

The first phase of the China-Cambodia joint military exercise, Golden Dragon 2020 began on March 15. Commanding officers finalised specifics of the training, including organisation, grouping patterns, and training venues.

17. [PLA Warplanes Conduct Night-time Exercises Near Taiwan](#)

March 18, 2020, China Military

Warplanes of the Chinese People's Liberation Army reportedly conducted night-time exercises near Taiwan for the first time on March 16. Chinese J-11 fighters and KJ-500 airborne early warning and control aircraft flew

into the waters southwest of Taiwan for the night-time exercises. Similar drills are expected to become more frequent.

18. [Chinese Naval Planes Conduct Anti-Submarine Drills in South China Sea](#)

March 21, 2020, South China Morning Post

Amid increasing US patrols and exercises in the South China Sea, Chinese military aircraft conducted an anti-submarine drill in the region. The drill involved two aircraft which worked together to identify 'suspicious objects' in disputed waters, according to a PLA Navy Captain.

19. [Aircraft Carrier Liaoning Hosts Fighter Jet Drills](#)

March 25, 2020, China Military

The Chinese People's Liberation Army Navy's first aircraft carrier, the Liaoning, recently set out for a voyage and hosted fighter jets carrying out takeoff and landing exercises, to minimise the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak on the training of more carrier-based fighter pilots. The exercise took place in the Bohai Gulf, where J-15 fighter jets took off from and landed on the flight deck of Liaoning.

Visits

20. [Chinese Defence Minister Holds Phone Talk with US Defence Secretary](#)

March 04, 2020, China Military

Chinese State Councillor and Defence Minister General Wei Fenghe and US Defence Secretary Dr. Mark Esper held a telephone conversation on March 03. They discussed efforts being made to contain the Covid-19 epidemic, and the recent conversation between their respective heads of state about reaching a consensus on developing US-China relations.

21. [Xi Holds Talks with Pakistani President to Deepen Ties amid Fight Against COVID-19](#)

March 18, 2020, Ministry of National Defense of the People's Republic of China

President Xi Jinping held talks with Pakistani President Arif Alvi on his visit to China. He praised Pakistan's support for China following the Covid-19 outbreak, and stated that China will continue to support Pakistan in maintaining national independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Capability Development and Sales

22. [Chinese Arms Company Develops Combat Robot Vehicle](#)

March 02, 2020, China Military

Chinese private arms company Zhong Tian Zhi Kong Technology Holdings Company introduced a new unmanned ground vehicle capable of transporting ammunition and supplies in complicated terrains and providing fire cover when armed. The Mule-200 unmanned ground vehicle (UGV) was unveiled at the Unmanned System Exhibition and Conference 2020 (UMEX2020) in Abu Dhabi. The 500kg mule-200 is a medium sized, multipurpose crawler UGV which can carry loads up to 200kg. It has been designed to accompany infantry units and transport ammunition and supplies, equip firearms and provide fire support at close range.

23. [China's Newly Commissioned Destroyer, Frigate Achieve Battle Readiness](#)

March 05, 2020, China Military

Two of the Chinese PLA Navy's recently commissioned warships, the Type 052D guided missile destroyer Guiyang and Type 054A guided missile frigate Zaozhuang, have passed an all-subject training examination in the Yellow Sea, and are now ready for combat.

24. [Upgraded Type 053H3 Frigate Joins Real Combat Scenario Exercise](#)

March 09, 2020, China Military

A Type 053H3 frigate of the PLA East China Sea Fleet underwent a midlife modernisation program and replaced its old HHQ-7 short-range surface-to-air missile with the more advanced HHQ-10 anti-aircraft missile system. It has also been equipped with a new type of close-in weapon system, believed to be developed from the Russian AK-630 naval close-in weapon system based on a six-barreled 30 mm rotary cannon.

25. [Chinese Military to Procure Suicide Drones](#)

March 12, 2020, China Military

The Chinese military announced its plans to procure two different types of loitering munitions, also known as suicide drones. The announcement came on the Chinese military's weapon and equipment procurement website, and did not specify the type, quantity, or contract value of munitions it intended to buy, listing the details as confidential.

26. [China Launches New Remote Sensing Satellites](#)

March 24, 2020, China Military

A group of new remote sensing satellites was sent into orbit by China on March 24. The group of satellites was from the Yaogan-30 family, and was launched by a Long March-2C carrier rocket. It was the 329th mission of the Long March rocket series.

Pakistan

27. [Pakistani Army is shifting COVID-19 affected citizens to Pakistan Occupied Kashmir \(PoK\), Gilgit-Baltistan and Balochistan](#)

March 30, 2020, Strat News Global

According to this report, the Pakistani Army is shifting COVID-19 affected citizens to Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (POK) and Balochistan, Pakistan's most marginalised areas. POK residents led by political activist Dr Amjad Ayub Mirza have alleged that special quarantine centres have been set up in Mirpur and other major cities in the occupied regions, to ensure that COVID-19 infected people are kept away from any place near army facilities and army family housing. Another quarantine camp, in the town of Taftan in Balochistan, has already received substantial international criticism for its abysmal lack of sanitary facilities, being described as "a prison" and the "dirtiest place I have ever stayed in my life".

28. [Saudi Arabia's Deputy Defence Minister Meets General Bajwa](#)

March 02, 2020, ISPR Pakistan

Prince Khalid Bin Salman Bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, Deputy Minister of Defence of Saudi Arabia, called on General Qamar Javed Bajwa, Chief of Army Staff at GHQ on March 02. The two exchanged views on issues including defence and security cooperation, measures to further enhance bilateral defence collaboration including Training Exchange Program and an overall regional security situation.

29. [Culmination of Exercise SEASPARK-2020](#)

March 03, 2020, ISPR Pakistan

Pakistan Navy's major maritime exercise SEASPARK-20 culminated in the North Arabian Sea. The exercise included live weapon firing of anti-ship missiles from various fleet combat platforms including surface, subsurface

and aviation units of the Pakistan Navy. Units from Pakistan's Army and Air Force also participated in the exercise.

30. [Pakistan Navy Ship Yarmook Visits Turkey](#)

March 07, 2020, ISPR Pakistan

Pakistan Navy's ship Yarmook visited Golcuk in Turkey as part of a goodwill visit meant to enhance naval collaboration and build interoperability between Pakistan and Turkey's navies. The Commanding Officer of PNS Yarmook called on Senior Naval Fleet Commanders and the Mayor of Golcuk. He also met with the Fleet Commander of the Turkish Navy, Vice Admiral Ercument Tallioglu.

31. [Pakistan's Effort to Launch 750km Range Missile Crashes](#)

March 23, 2020, Hindustan Times

Pakistan's efforts to build a 750 km range ground-launched cruise missile Babur II have suffered a set-back with the delivery platform crashing to the ground after two minutes or 14 kilometres in flight. The missile was launched from the Sonmiani test range in Balochistan on March 19. This was the second consecutive test failure of the Babur II subsonic missile, after the previous test failed on April 10, 2018.

32. [3rd International Pakistan Army Team Spirit \(PATS\) Competition-2020](#)

March 03, 2020, ISPR

3rd International Pakistan Army Team Spirit (PATS) Competition-2020 was conducted from March 3-5 at National Counter Terrorism Centre near Kharian, Pakistan. Representatives from 16 countries including Belarus, China, Egypt, Germany, Indonesia, Saudi Arabia, Maldives, Palestine, Russia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Turkey, UAE, UK, USA and Uzbekistan participated in the competition, based on evaluating physical endurance, mental agility and tactical proficiency of the teams.

33. [Keel Laying Ceremony of Pakistan Navy's Second Type 054 A/P Frigate Held in China](#)

March 23, 2020, ISPR Pakistan

The keel laying ceremony of the Pakistan Navy's second Type 054 A/P frigate was held at Hudong Zhonghua Shipyard in China. Cmde Afzar Humayun, Chief Naval Overseas (China), was the Chief Guest, and highlighted the importance of the frigates building project for Pakistan Navy.

Bangladesh

34. [Dhaka, Paris to Boost Defence Cooperation](#)

March 10, 2020, New Age Bangladesh

Bangladesh and France stressed the need for enhancing cooperation in the defence sector, after French Defence Minister Florence Parly met with Bangladesh's Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in Dhaka. The French Minister also held a separate meeting with Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen at the PMO. In the two meetings, she expressed her country's intent to provide advanced French defence hardware including Rafale, a twin-jet fighter aircraft, and unmanned combat air vehicles to Bangladesh.

35. [Military Operations Exchange Among Bangladesh, UK, US](#)

March 10, 2020, Dhaka Tribune

Bangladesh is hosting a trilateral special operations exchange between the militaries of Bangladesh, the United States and the United Kingdom, aimed at promoting regional stability and ensuring a free and open Indo-Pacific region. Named Operation Monogram, the exchange commenced on February 16 and concluded on March 12, with an aim to enhance the relationship among Bangladeshi, US and UK military partners. It is the first ever exchange involving US and UK militaries with Bangladesh Army and Navy participation.

Sri Lanka

36. [Joint Combined Exchange Training Balance Style 2020/01 Commences in Trincomalee](#)

March 03, 2020, Sri Lanka Navy

The Sri Lanka Navy and U.S. Army conducted the Joint Combined Exchange Training Balance Style 2020/01, at the Special Boat Squadron HQ in Trincomalee on March 02, 2020. The four-week long exercise training mainly focused on human rights, law of armed conflict, small unit tactics, military operations in urban environments, tactical combat casualty care, combat marksmanship, close quarter battle, mission planning, and maritime operations.

Nepal

37. [Nepal May Route Payment for Russian Mi-17 Helicopters Via China Or India](#)

March 04, 2020, Defense World

Nepal is keen to buy Russian Mi-17 Helicopters but cannot pay in US dollars due to the US sanctions against Moscow. It has been in talks with Russia to work out payment options for an undisclosed number of Mi-17 V-5 helicopters. Nepal's Defence Minister Ishwar Pokhrel is scheduled to be in Moscow from 21-23 April for a security conference and the issue of payments for the helicopters could possibly be discussed with Russian Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu.

38. [Defence Minister, COAS Skip House Panel's Meeting on Irregularities in Army](#)

March 05, 2020, Himalayan Times

The Parliamentary State Affairs and Good Governance Committee in Kathmandu, which was supposed to discuss alleged corruption in Nepali Army, postponed its meeting after Defence Minister Ishwar Pokhrel and Chief of Army Staff General Purna Chandra Thapa did not attend. The Committee had invited them to discuss complaints alleging irregularities with appointments, promotions, construction of barracks, and fast-track project construction.



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