



Delhi Policy Group

India Defence Digest

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Delhi Policy Group

Core 5A, 1st Floor, India Habitat Centre, Lodhi Road, New Delhi- 110003

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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)

Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh reviewed operational & COVID-19 preparedness of Armed Forces on April 24, 2020.

Source: Twitter/ @SpokespersonMoD

Naval Air Station Utkrosh & Material Organisation (Port Blair) distributed food to the labourers staying in the vicinity of the Air Station and for children & staff of Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram, April 12, 2020. Source: Twitter/@indiannavy

Air Force transport aircraft landed at Lengpui Airport, Mizoram with 22 tonnes of medical supplies meant for combating COVID-19. IAF has transported 600 tonnes of medical equipment & support material, April 25, 2020. Source: Twitter/ @PBNS_India

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PART I: INDIA'S DEFENCE SCENE

Defence Policy

1. [Government Extends Procurement Deadlines](#)

April 1, 2020, Jane's

The Ministry of Defence has extended deadlines for tenders supporting military procurements in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. The extension includes several responses to defence capital acquisition RFPs that were due to be submitted during March and April as well as industry responses to RFIs and EOIs that are awaiting responses from vendors.

2. [All Exercises with Foreign Militaries Scheduled for 2020 Postponed](#)

April 6, 2020, Jane's

The Indian military has decided to postpone all the joint exercises it was scheduled to hold with foreign militaries this year because of the Covid-19 pandemic. Ministry of Defence in consultation with the Ministry of External Affairs, has deferred about 50 bilateral and multilateral exercises with militaries from several other countries, including Brazil, China, France, Israel, Malaysia, Nepal, South Africa, Russia, and the United States.

3. [Finance Ministry Asks MoD to Reduce Spending Due to Covid-19](#)

April 9, 2020, Jane's

Ministry of Finance has asked the Ministry of Defence (MoD) to reduce expenditure for the first three months of FY 2020/21 as a result of the financial and economic impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Operations and Exercises

4. [Indian Armed Forces Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic](#)

April 1, 2020, PIB

All three services, the OFB and DPSUs are assisting the civilian administration in the fight against COVID-19. The Armed Forces are running six quarantine facilities at Mumbai, Jaisalmer, Jodhpur, Hindon, Manesar and Chennai. In addition, 15 other facilities are being kept ready as standby for use. The Armed Forces have also prepared dedicated COVID-19 facilities including High Dependency Units and Intensive Care Unit beds in 51 hospitals of the Armed Forces across the country. Five viral

testing labs at Armed Forces hospitals have been made part of national grid for COVID 19 tests.

5. [EX NCC Yogdan](#)

April 2, 2020, PIB

National Cadet Corps volunteer cadets are helping civil administration under 'Exercise NCC Yogdan' in fight against Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic since April 01, 2020. Around 50,000 cadets have so far volunteered to contribute in Exercise. An Army Medical Corps team consisted of five doctors, two nursing officers and seven paramedics was deployed in Maldives for capacity building measures and assist in setting up their own testing, treatment and quarantine facilities.

6. [Air Force Response to COVID-19](#)

April 3, 2020, PIB

The Indian Air Force has mobilised its Transport and Rotary Wing aircraft such as C-17, C-130, An-32, AVRO & Dornier aircraft along with the necessary support infrastructure to create and maintain 'air-bridges' between nodal supply bases and recipient locations across the country. IAF has undertaken transportation of medical supplies including PPE, testing kits, sanitization material and associated equipment along with the movement of medical personnel. Furthermore, special flights of the Indian Air Force have evacuated people and carried medical supplies to the neighbouring countries. A C-17 Globemaster carried 15 tonnes of medical supplies to China and airlifted 125 persons. From Iran they brought back 58 stranded Indians. The C-130J Super Hercules aircraft has ferried around 6.2 tonnes of medicines to Maldives. A 15 member team of Armed Forces Medical Services (AFMS) Rapid Response had been sent to Kuwait on April 11 in response to the request from state of Kuwait.

7. [Navy's Standby for Assistance to Neighbouring Counties](#)

April 3, 2020, The Hindu

The Indian Navy has kept six naval ships including five medical teams ready for assistance to neighbouring countries. Five medical teams are also on standby for deployment in Maldives, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan and Afghanistan.

8. [INS Dega and COVID-19](#)

April 14, 2020, PIB

INS Dega of Eastern Naval Command (ENC) ensured that the joint-user airfield at Visakhapatnam remains open round the clock to ensure all special flights, as well as the cargo flight of SpiceJet continued its operations unhindered. Further, the Indian Navy continued to maintain its operational vigil carrying out regular Maritime Surveillance missions. The Dornier squadron of the ENC, INAS 311, operating from the air station, has been undertaking regular maritime surveillance missions.

9. [IN Combat Readiness](#)

April 18, 2020, PIB

Twenty six sailors from INS Angre were placed in isolation after testing positive for Covid-19 at Mumbai. There has so far not been a single case of Covid-19 onboard any ship, submarine or air station of the Indian Navy. The Navy remains combat-ready, mission-capable and continue to remain on patrol covering traditional areas from the Straits of Malacca in the East to Bab-el-Mandeb in the West, including undertaking Op Sankalp to provide reassurance and protection to merchant vessels and anti-piracy patrols in Gulf of Aden.

10. [Army's Response to COVID-19](#)

April 1, 2020, PIB

Indian Army has kept ready more than 8,500 doctors and support staff to extend necessary assistance to civilian administration.

DRDO/DPSU/OFB Response to COVID-19

11. [DRDO](#). Defence Research and Development Organisation has supplied 1, 50,000 litres of sanitizers to various security entities all over the country. Five-layered nano technology face mask N99 are being made on a war footing. Another DRDO laboratory has plans to make 20,000 PPE per day. DRDO is also engaged in minor modification of ventilators so that one machine can support four patients at the same time. A DRDO Laboratory has designed a full body disinfection chamber called as PSE.

12. [CFEES](#). The Centre for Fire Explosive & Environment Safety has developed two configurations of sanitising equipment: Portable Backpack Area Sanitisation and Trolley Mounted Large Area Sanitisation Equipment.

13. [Other Research Centres](#). Research Centre Imarat, Hyderabad and Terminal Ballistics Research Laboratory, Chandigarh have developed face protection mask for health care professionals handling COVID-19 patients.
14. [OFB](#). OFB is producing hand sanitiser, 3000 litres per day to meet the national requirement. The Ordinance Factory Board is also producing 5,000 to 6,000 pieces of protective coveralls per week.
15. [Bharat Electronics Limited](#). BEL will deliver 30,000 ventilators for ICUs by end of May. The design of these ventilators was originally developed by Defence Research and Development Organisation.
16. [Naval Dockyard](#). Naval Dockyard in Mumbai has developed a handheld infrared (IR)-based temperature sensor, which is being manufactured for INR 1,000.

Capability Development

17. [US State Department Approves Sale of Harpoon Block Missiles and MK 54 Torpedoes to India](#)

April 14, 2020, The Times of India

The US Administration on April 13 approved sale of 10 AGM-84L Harpoon Block II air launched missiles and 16 MK 54 Lightweight Torpedoes worth \$155 million to India. The Harpoon missile system will be integrated into the P-8I aircraft to enhance anti-surface warfare ability.

18. [Larsen & Toubro will Setup Advanced IT-Enabled Network for Army](#)

April 7, 2020, The Economic Times

Larsen & Toubro secured an order from the Indian Army to establish a unified network management system. The Project involves creating a centralised network monitoring, management and control system for the Network of Spectrum which interconnects 414 Defence stations. The scope also includes Next Generation Operations System and Software based Unified Network Management System, Eight Network Operations Centres (NOCs) consisting of National NOCs, Disaster Recovery NOCs, Regional NOCs, Security Operation Centres, Tier III Data Centres and Training Infrastructure. The facilities will allow real-time monitoring of the complete IT network and provide full visibility of deployed Network assets, leading to optimal utilization of resources.

19. [Russia Offered Three Refurbished Kilo-Class Submarines](#)

April 3, 2020, Diplomat

The Indian Navy is considering an offer by Russia's state-owned JSC United Shipbuilding Corporation (USC) for three refurbished Russian Navy Kilo-class submarines. The \$1.8-2 billion package also includes upgrade work on three Indian Navy Sindhughosh Kilo -class SSKs. The possible deal was expected to be discussed at a meeting of the India-Russia Inter-Governmental Commission on Military and Military Technical Cooperation (IRIGC-M&MTC) that was scheduled to take place in Goa in March 2020 but was cancelled due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The Indian Navy would receive the Russian-made SSKs at one-year intervals with the first boat slated for delivery three years after the conclusion of the agreement. The refit of the three Sindhughosh Kilo (Project 877EKM)-class SSKs, which entered service in 1990, 1991, and 2000 respectively, would extend their operational life by 10 years.

20. [Indian Defence Exports increased in 2019–20](#)

April 14, 2020, Jane's

India has registered defence export approvals worth INR 86.2 billion (USD1.1 billion) in fiscal year (FY) 2019-20. The value of defence export approvals in FY 2019-20 showed year-on-year increase of 4%, compared with the INR83.2 billion recorded in FY 2018-19, which represented a 78% increase over the INR46.8 billion in approvals registered in FY 2017-18. The value of export approvals in FY 2016-17 was INR15.2 billion. Most defence export approvals have been secured by India's private sector. In FY 2019-20, India's private sector was attributed with 93% of defence export approvals in terms of value, with the remainder secured by state-owned defence public sector undertakings (DPSUs).

21. [Russia Offered 'Tosochka' Heavy Flamethrower](#)

April 25, 2020, Defence Aviation Post

Russian Defence Ministry offered the heavy flamethrower 'Tosochka' vehicle to India. The TOS-1 heavy flamethrower is a Soviet 220mm 30-barrel or 24-barrel multi rocket launcher and thermobaric weapon mounted on a T-72 tank chassis. The TOS-1 was designed to target enemy personnel in fortifications, and in lightly armoured vehicles and transport. The "Combat Vehicle" BM-1 based on a modified T-72A chassis and fitted with a rotating launch system for 24 unguided thermobaric rockets. All rockets can be launched within 6 to 12 seconds. The launch vehicle is

equipped with a fire control system with a ballistic computer, aiming sight and 1D14 laser range finder. It has range 6 Km.

22. [India 3rd-Biggest Military Spender in World](#)

April 28, 2020, Times of India

In the report released by Stockholm International Peace Research Institute published on April 27, India (USD 71 billion) is listed as world's third biggest military spender. The first two are the US (USD 732 billion) and China (USD 261 billion). India's annual military expenditure includes a huge pension bill and the salary bill of 1.5 million troops which outstrips the outlay for military modernization.

Other Issues

23. [BEL Turnover](#)

April 1, 2020, Jane's

Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL) said on 1 April that its turnover in fiscal year 2019–20 climbed 6% year on year to INR 125 billion (USD 1.64 billion). The value of BEL's exports in FY 2019–20 was USD 48.59 million. Some of its important projects in the year include developing and building command-and-control systems, thermal imagers for tanks, communication systems, land-based electronic warfare systems, and electronic fuses for the Indian Armed Forces.

24. [India Set to Deliver Myanmar's First Submarine](#)

April 3, 2020, Jane's

Indian Navy is preparing to deliver a Kilo-class diesel-electric submarine that was in service as INS Sindhuvir to the Myanmar Navy. The transfer will also include operational and maintenance training to the Myanmar Navy, which will be operating a submarine for the first time. Sindhuvir was commissioned into the Indian Navy in 1988 and was in service as part of the 11th submarine squadron, which is based at Vishakhapatnam. The boat completed a refit at the Hindustan Shipyard Ltd. from August 2017 to February 2020.

25. [Sailor Dies Following Explosion on Nuclear Submarine](#)

April 4, 2020, Times of India

A sailor has died following an accident on board an Indian Navy nuclear submarine berthed alongside at the Ship Building Centre (SBC) in

Vishakhapatnam on April 1. The incident happened due to material failure of the high-pressure air system in the forward area of the submarine, which resulted in an explosion that fatally injured the sailor.

26. [Delivery of Rafale Aircraft Delayed Until End July](#)

April 15, 2020, Jane's

The delivery of the first four of 36 Dassault Rafale fighter aircraft to the Indian Air Force has been delayed from May until the end of July due to lockdown measures imposed across France to contain the spread of the Covid-19 coronavirus pandemic. Training of 24 IAF pilots and technicians on the Rafales has also been deferred, as Dassault's Bordeaux-Mérignac production facility, which builds the fighter, is expected to remain closed until at least 11 May.

PART II: NEIGHBOURHOOD DEFENCE SCENE

China

Defence Policy

27. [China Reviews Draft of Biosecurity Law](#)

April 26, 2020, China Military

A draft of China's biosecurity law was submitted to a regular session of the National People's Congress Standing Committee for its second review. The draft focused on preventing and responding to biological threats, safeguarding lives and health, promoting the development of biotechnology, and protecting biological resources and the ecology.

28. [Draft Amendment of China's People's Armed Police Force Law](#)

April 27, 2020, China Military

China has drafted an amendment to the Law on People's Armed Police Force, detailing its scope and responsibilities in such things as dealing with emergency situations, anti-terrorism, disaster relief, maritime law enforcement, and defence combat. The draft has been submitted during the 17th session of the Standing Committee of the 13th National People's Congress.

Operations and Exercises

29. [China Enhances Coastal Capabilities through Live-Fire Drills](#)

April 09, 2020, China Military

Type 022 stealth missile boats from the Eastern Theatre Command Navy of China's People's Liberation Army held live-fire combat-oriented drills in early April. Several missile boats participated in the four-day live-fire exercises. This marked a rare occasion when reports about the activities of these small craft were publicised.

30. [Chinese Aircraft Carrier Liaoning Conducts Exercises in South China Sea](#)

April 13, 2020, Global Times

The Chinese Navy recently organised the Liaoning aircraft carrier group in a cross-regional mobilisation. The carrier led a flotilla through the

Miyako Strait, Bashi Channel and into the South China Sea for exercises. The Chinese Navy will continue to regularly organise similar training and exercises according to its plan to boost the systematic combat capability of its aircraft carrier groups, according to PLA Navy Spokesperson Gao Xiucheng.

31. [China Hones Carrier Fighter Jet Skills](#)

April 20, 2020, China Military

China's People's Liberation Army Navy recently held training sessions for aircraft carrier-based fighter jets and helicopters in the Bohai Bay area, which have been projected as crucial in boosting the combat capability of aircraft carriers, including the recently commissioned Shandong. The sessions included buddy refuelling exercises among J-15 aircraft carrier-based fighter jets.

32. [Paratroopers Hold Armed Parachute Jump Exercises](#)

April 24, 2020, China Military

More than a thousand paratroopers of the Chinese People's Liberation Army Air Force recently held fully armed parachute jump exercises, a type of mission which can possibly enable large numbers of troops to arrive in locations that are otherwise difficult to gain access to, and infiltrate deep into hostile territory.

33. [92nd Joint Patrol on Mekong River Completed](#)

April 25, 2020, China Military

The 92nd Mekong River joint patrol by China, Laos, Myanmar and Thailand concluded on April 24, with Chinese law enforcement boats returning to Guanlei Port in the southwest Province of Yunnan. 109 law enforcement officers from the four countries participated in the mission on board five vessels, which navigated 651 km in four days and three nights.

Military Diplomacy

34. [China and Myanmar Defence Ministers Phone Conversation about COVID-19 Response](#)

April 24, 2020, China Military

Chinese Defence Minister Wei Fenghe spoke over the phone with Myanmar's Defence Minister Sein Win on COVID-19 prevention and

control. Wei conveyed that the Chinese military is willing to strengthen anti-epidemic cooperation and border control with Myanmar to jointly curb the spread of the epidemic in the border areas.

Capability Development and Sales

35. [AG600 Amphibious Aircraft Conducts Test Flights Over Sea](#)

April 14, 2020, China Military

China's independently developed AG600 large amphibious aircraft has conducted test flights over the sea. Codenamed "Kunlong," AG600 is designed to be the world's largest amphibious aircraft and would help provide China a quick-reaction capability in the South China Sea islands. The test flights represent a major step forward, and the airplane is expected to conduct its first take off from a sea surface within the year.

36. [China's FTC-2000G Combat Aircraft Bags First Export Contract](#)

April 19, 2020, China Military

China's Guizhou Aviation Industry Corp has bagged its first export contract for delivery of the FTC-2000G multirole combat aircraft to an undisclosed Southeast Asian country. Local media reports say the deal was signed in late January, about 15 months after the domestically developed plane's first test flight.

37. [China Reportedly Begins Delivering VT4 Main Battle Tanks to Pakistan](#)

April 21, 2020, Defence Blog

Inner Mongolia First Machinery Group Co Ltd, a subsidiary of NORINCO, has reportedly begun delivering new VT4 main battle tanks to Pakistan. The tank factory in Batao, in the province of Inner Mongolia, held a shipment ceremony for the first batch of VT4 tanks equipped with explosive reactive armour (ERA) (Option FY-IV) for a foreign customer.

38. [China Launches Second Type 075 Amphibious Assault Ship](#)

April 24, 2020, China Military

China's second Type 075 Landing Helicopter Dock was launched in Shanghai on April 22. Chinese military websites shared videos of the vessel moving into the water and being towed by several tugboats to a nearby berth at Hudong-Zhonghua Shipbuilding. The Type 075 is a new

amphibious assault vessel, displacing around 40,000 tons, able to embark upto 30 helicopters

39. [China Develops Machine Gun-mounted Robot Assault Vehicle](#)

April 28, 2020, Hindustan Times

The Chinese People's Liberation Army is currently testing a thigh-high robot vehicle which comes equipped with a machine gun and a crane-like mechanism for missile loading. The robot vehicle features night-vision devices and can fire with reasonable levels of accuracy.

Pakistan

40. [Pakistan Army Mushtaq Trainer Aircraft Crash](#)

April 13, 2020, The Economic Times

A Pakistan Army aircraft 'Mushaq' crashed on April 13 near Gujarat during a routine training mission. Both the instructor and the student pilot were killed in the crash.

41. [Pakistan Navy Successfully Test-Fires Anti-Ship Missiles](#)

April 25, 2020, The Economic Times

The Pakistan Navy successfully test-fired a series of anti-ship missiles into the North Arabian Sea on April 24, 2020. The missiles were fired from surface ships, fixed and rotary-wing aircraft, according to Pakistan Navy Spokesperson Rear Admiral Arshid Javed. Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Zafar Mahmood Abbasi witnessed the firing of the missiles.

Bangladesh

42. [Bangladesh Receives Final Surplus UK C-130J Airlifter](#)

April 01, 2020, Jane's

Bangladesh has received the last of five UK-surplus Lockheed Martin C-130J Hercules transport aircraft it ordered, according to the UK Ministry of Defence. Aircraft ZH 887, a short-bodied C-130J (designated C5 in Royal Air Force service), was previously transferred to the Bangladesh Air Force on February 03.

Sri Lanka

43. [SLAF Conducts Aerial Surveillance to Detect Illegal Migrants](#)

April 15, 2020, Sri Lanka Ministry of Defence

The Sri Lanka Air Force (SLAF) has commenced daily aerial surveillance operations to help the Sri Lanka Navy thwart illegal entry of migrants into the country amid the COVID-19 pandemic. SLAF's Y-12 aircraft from the No 8 Light Transport Squadron at Ratmalana and from the No 3 Maritime Squadron at SLAF Academy China Bay are being deployed to conduct aerial surveillance

Nepal

44. [Govt Okays Construction of Defence University](#)

April 16, 2020, The Himalayan Times

The Nepal government has issued a 'Defence University and Development Board Formation Order 2019', to establish the National Defence University. The board's executive director will be an incumbent brigadier general of Nepali Army as recommended by the chief of the army staff and approved by the minister of defence. The university will offer Master's level and higher courses where government officials from various sectors, including security agencies, will pursue higher studies.



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