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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 Aashna John at aashna@dpg.org.in.

Cover Photographs:

(Photographs top to bottom)

Defence Minister Shri Rajnath Singh received by Brig Gen Gan Siow Huang, Chief of Staff, Air Staff, Republic of Singapore Air Force at Sembawang Air Base, Singapore, November 18, 2019. Source: [Twitter/@SpokespersonMoD](#)

Joint military training exercise between Indian Army and Uzbekistan Army culminated successfully, November 13, 2019. Source: [Twitter/@adgpi](#)

India-US Joint Tri services Humanitarian Assistance & Disaster Relief (HADR) Exercise 'TIGER TRIUMPH' on the Eastern seaboard from November 13-21, 2019. Source: [Twitter/@IAF_MCC](#)

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PART I: INDIA'S DEFENCE SCENE

Defence Policy

1. **4th Indian-Russian Navy Staff Talks.** Staff talks between the Indian and Russian Navies were held at New Delhi on October 30. Discussions focused on operational interaction through the 'INDRA' series of exercises; training interaction; sharing of best practices; medical and logistics cooperation and exchange of high-level visits. The Russian Navy delegation called on Vice Admiral MS Pawar, Deputy Chief of the Naval Staff, and discussed various maritime engagement issues relating to operations as well as training¹.
2. **Defence Minister's visit to Uzbekistan.** Defence Minister Shri Rajnath Singh represented the Prime Minister at the 18th meeting of the Council of Heads of Government of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation at Tashkent, Uzbekistan, from November 1-3. During his visit, he called on member countries of the SCO to strengthen and implement existing international laws and mechanisms to counter terrorism and its enablers without exceptions or double standards². He also held bilateral consultations with his counterpart, Major General Bakhodir Nizamovich Kurbanov, the Defence Minister of Uzbekistan, and concluded three MoUs on cooperation in the fields of military medicine, training, and capacity building. The two ministers presided over the "Curtain Raiser" of the first India-Uzbekistan Joint Exercise "Dustlik 2019"³.
3. **ADMM-Plus.** Defence Minister Shri Rajnath Singh visited Bangkok, Thailand to attend the 6th ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting-Plus (ADMM-Plus) on November 17-18. During the meeting, his address focused on stability and sustainability in the Indo-Pacific⁴. On the side-lines of ADMM-Plus, he held bilateral meetings with US Secretary of Defence Dr. Mark Esper; Deputy Prime Minister of Thailand General Prawit Wongsuwan; Defence Minister of Japan Mr Taro Kono; Defence Minister

¹ "4th Indian Navy (IN) - Russian Federation Navy (RuFN) Staff Talks", PIB, November 1, 2019, <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetailm.aspx?PRID=1589955>

² "Raksha Mantri Calls on SCO to strengthen Existing Laws to Counter Terrorism", PIB, November 2, 2019, <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetailm.aspx?PRID=1590071>

³ "Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh holds talks with Defence Minister of Uzbekistan Major General Bakhodir Nizamovich Kurbanov in Tashkent", PIB, November 3, 2019, <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetailm.aspx?PRID=1590146>

⁴ "Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh urges international community to eliminate scourge of terrorism in his address at ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus in Bangkok", PIB, November 18, 2019, <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetailm.aspx?PRID=1591996>

of Australia Ms Linda Reynolds; and Defence Minister of New Zealand Mr Ron Mark. Shri Rajnath Singh reviewed the entire gamut of bilateral defence relations with his respective counterparts and discussed ways to further improve ties⁵. He also spoke at a business seminar 'India Rising', organised by the Indian Chamber of Commerce at 'Defence & Security Exhibition 2019', Bangkok, where he reaffirmed the Indian Government's commitment to achieve USD 26 billion defence industry by 2025⁶.

4. **4th Singapore-India Defence Ministers' Dialogue.** Shri Rajnath Singh was in Singapore on November 19-20. During his visit, he co-chaired the 4th Singapore-India Defence Ministers' Dialogue with his counterpart Dr Ng Eng Hen. Both sides registered their commitment to conclude a Memorandum of Understanding to facilitate the use of Chandipur Integrated Test Range by the Singapore defence establishment and agreed to conduct a trilateral maritime exercise involving Singapore, India and Thailand annually. Shri Rajnath Singh offered setting up of Joint Test Facilities under the Defence Testing Infrastructure Scheme of India⁷. He also met Deputy Prime Minister & Finance Minister of Singapore Mr Heng Swee Keat.
5. **Approval in Principle for Post of Chief of Defence Staff (CDS).** The Government has approved in-principle the creation of a post of CDS. An Implementation Committee will now further determine and finalise the exact responsibilities, an enabling framework for this new post and all other issues involved to ensure smooth operationalisation⁸.
6. **Make in India.** To give a boost to 'Make in India' initiative, the Government of India has put in place multiple policy reforms⁹, including launch of an innovation eco-system titled "Innovations for Defence Excellence (iDEX)", notification of a separate procedure for 'Make-II'

⁵ "Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh holds various bilateral meetings on the sidelines of ADMM-Plus in Bangkok", PIB, November 17, 2019, <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetailm.aspx?PRID=1591881>

⁶ "Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh reiterates Govt's commitment to achieve USD 26 billion defence industry by 2025", PIB, November 18, 2019, <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetailm.aspx?PRID=1591938>

⁷ "Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh & his Singaporean counterpart Dr NG Eng Hen co-chair Defence Ministers' Dialogue in Singapore", PIB, November 20, 2019, <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetailm.aspx?PRID=1592403>

⁸ "Appointment of Chief of Defence Staff", PIB, November 18, 2019, <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetailm.aspx?PRID=1592071>

⁹ "Make In India' Initiative", PIB, November 18, 2019, <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetailm.aspx?PRID=1592061>

category under the Defence Procurement Procedure to encourage indigenous development and manufacture of defence equipment; notification of a 'Strategic Partnership Model' enabling Indian entities to seek technology transfer from global OEMs to set up domestic manufacturing infrastructure and supply chains; establishment of two defence industrial corridors in Tamil Nadu and UP to serve as engines of economic development and growth of the defence industrial base; utilisation of Third Party Inspection Services, creation of a Defence Investor Cell; creation of an offset portal, rationalisation of Defence Products List wherein no industrial license is required, etc.

Operations and Exercises

7. **EX SAMUDRA SHAKTI.** India - Indonesia Bilateral Naval Exercise 'Samudra Shakti' was conducted from November 4-7 at Visakhapatnam and in the Bay of Bengal. INS Kamorta, an Anti-Submarine Warfare Corvette, participated from the Indian side. The Indonesian Navy was represented by KRI Usman Harun, a multi-role Corvette. The joint exercise included manoeuvres, Surface Warfare, Air Defence, Weapon firing drills, Helicopter Operations and Boarding Operations¹⁰.
8. **EX ZA'IR-AL-BAHR¹¹.** The Indian and Qatari Emiri Navies jointly conducted their first bilateral Maritime Exercise, "Za'ir-Al-Bahr", from November 17-21 at Doha. INS Trikand, a Guided Missile Stealth Frigate, and a P-8I Patrol Aircraft participated from the Indian side. Qatar was represented by a Barzan Class Fast Attack Craft and Rafale fighter aircraft. The exercise included a three-day harbour phase and a two-day sea phase. It aimed to strengthen cooperation and enhance interoperability between the two navies.
9. **EX TIGER TRIUMPH¹².** The Indian and the US navies jointly conducted their first Tri-services Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) Exercise 'Tiger Triumph' from November 13-21 at Visakhapatnam and Kakinada. INS Jalashwa, INS Airavat and INS Sandhayak, Indian Army troops from 19 Madras and 7 Guards, and Indian Air Force MI-17

¹⁰ "Indian Navy – Indonesian Navy Bilateral Maritime Exercise 'Samudra Shakti' Progresses in the Bay of Bengal", PIB, November 7, 2019, <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetailm.aspx?PRID=1590856>

¹¹ "Joint Exercise between the Qatari Emiri Navy and the Indian Navy Forces (the Roar of the Sea)", PIB, November 18, 2019, <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetailm.aspx?PRID=1591973>

¹² "Curtain Raiser - HADR Exercise TIGER TRIUMPH to Commence at Visakhapatnam", PIB, November 12, 2019, <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1591367>

helicopters and Rapid Action Medical Team participated from the Third. The US was represented by USS Germantown with troops from Third Marine Division. The exercise included a four-day Harbour Phase and five-day Sea Phase. It aimed at developing interoperability for conducting HADR operations.

10. **EX DUSTLIK-2019**¹³. The Indian and Uzbek Armies jointly conducted their first Field Training Exercise (FTX) 'DUSTLIK-2019' from November 4-13 at Chirchiq Training Area, Uzbekistan. The exercise focused on counter insurgency and counter terrorism operations in an urban scenario as well as sharing expertise in combat shooting.
11. **EX SHAKTI-2019**¹⁴. The Indian and French armies jointly conducted exercise 'Shakti-2019' from October 31 to November 13, at the Mahajan Field Firing Range, Rajasthan. India was represented by troops from the Sikh Regiment while the French Army was represented by troops from the 21st Marine Infantry Regiment of 6th Armoured Brigade. The exercise included 'RUDRA' helicopters and the weaponised version of the Advanced Light Helicopter 'Dhruv'. Its aim was to improve interoperability, acquaint each other with combat procedures, combat drill and an understanding of functioning in such situations.
12. **Mid Planning Conference for MILAN 2020**¹⁵. The Mid Planning Conference for Exercise MILAN, a biennial multilateral naval exercise (scheduled to be conducted at Visakhapatnam in Mar 2020) was organised at Visakhapatnam from November 8-10. The conference was attended by 29 delegates from 17 friendly foreign navies. The scope of exercises planned during the harbour and sea phase of MILAN 2020 was discussed during the conference. The exercise was till last year conducted in Andaman and Nicobar Command (ANC). It will be conducted for the first time by the Eastern Naval Command, with increased scope and complexity.

¹³ "Indo-Uzbekistan Joint Field Training exercise (FTX)-2019 Exercise Dustlik-2019", PIB, November 13, 2019, <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetailm.aspx?PRID=1591496>

¹⁴ "Closing Ceremony Indo-French Joint Training Exercise Shakti- 2019", PIB, November 13, 2019, <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetailm.aspx?PRID=1591493>

¹⁵ "MPC for MILAN 2020 Concludes at Visakhapatnam", PIB, November, 9, 2019, <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetailm.aspx?PRID=1591096>

Capability Development

13. **Inauguration of DRDO's Igniter Complex¹⁶.** Defence Research & Development Organisation inaugurated its Igniter Complex at the High Energy Materials Research Laboratory (HEMRL) in Pune on November 5. HEMRL primarily engages in developing rocket and gun propellants, pyrotechnic devices, high explosive systems and synthesis of high energy molecules. Ignition is a crucial and highly critical phenomenon in the ignition chain of Rocket motors. The facility is equipped for design, processing and evaluation of ignition systems.
14. **Test of Prithvi-II¹⁷.** The DRDO conducted successful night tests of two Prithvi-II short range surface-to-surface ballistic missiles from the Integrated Test Range off Odisha on November 20. The missiles were test-fired from separate Tatra Transporter Erector Mobile Launchers with a gap of 30 seconds. The twin trials were conducted as part of a user training exercise by the Strategic Forces Command.
15. **Induction of ATGM Spike¹⁸.** The Northern Command of the Indian Army inducted 'Spike' anti-tank guided missiles on October 16. The Spike is a portable missile with range of 4 km which can be used to destroy tanks and bunkers. 210 missiles were procured from Israel with 12 launchers for Rs 280 crores under the emergency purchase mechanism.
16. **Commissioning of 6th Squadron of Dornier Aircraft¹⁹.** The Indian Navy commissioned its 6th squadron of Dornier aircraft, INAS 314, at Porbandar on November 29. The indigenously manufactured Dornier-228 is multi-role short range maritime reconnaissance aircraft. The squadron, nicknamed Raptors, has four new CS Dorniers, equipped with glass cockpits, an advanced surveillance radar, electronic Intelligence sensors and networking features.

¹⁶ "Raksha Rajya Mantri Shri Shripad Naik inaugurates DRDO's Igniter Complex at HEMRL, Pune", PIB, November 5, 2019, <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetailm.aspx?PRID=1590541>

¹⁷ "Night test of nuke capable Prithvi-II ballistic missile goes successful", The News Indian Express, November 21, 2019, <https://www.newindianexpress.com/nation/2019/nov/21/night-test-of-nuke-capable-prithvi-ii-ballistic-missile-goes-successful-2064876.html>

¹⁸ "Army inducts anti-tank guided missiles along LoC to bolster defence", The Economic Times, November 26, 2019, <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/army-inducts-anti-tank-guided-missiles-along-loc-to-bolster-defence/articleshow/72241204.cms>

¹⁹ "Porbandar: Navy to commission its 6th Dornier aircraft squadron on Nov 29", The Indian Express, November 26, 2019, <https://indianexpress.com/article/india/porbandar-navy-to-commission-its-6th-dornier-aircraft-squadron-on-nov-29-6137377/>

17. **Shortlisting Companies for Procurement of Naval Utility Helicopters²⁰.** The Indian Navy has shortlisted TATA, Adani, Mahindra Defence and Bharat Forge as strategic partners for manufacturing 111 Naval Utility Helicopters worth Rs 25,000 crores. The four Indian firms will now need to partner with foreign original equipment manufacturers including European Airbus Helicopters, American Sikorsky-Lockheed Martin and Russian Rosoboronexport. The procurement case will now be taken up for approval by the Defence Acquisition Council with shortlisted names of both Indian and foreign manufacturers.
18. **Procurement of MK 45 Naval Guns²¹.** The US State Department has notified the US Congress of possible sale of 13 MK 45 naval guns and 3,500 rounds of D349 ammunition worth \$1 billion to India. The guns will be produced by BAE Systems Land and Armaments. The MK-45 Gun System is used for anti-surface warfare and anti-air defence missions. The guns are intended for fitment on the Indian Navy's Visakhapatnam class destroyers, expected to enter service from 2021, and Nilgiri class frigates, the first of which is expected to commission in 2022²².
19. **Procurement of T-90S Tanks²³.** India has concluded a \$3.12 billion contract with the Ordnance Factories Board for local production of 464 T-90S main battle tanks after paying a technology transfer fee to Russia. Russian equipment manufacturer Uralvagonzavod and arms export agency Rosoboronexport will be paid \$1.2 billion for technology transfer, while India's state-owned Ordnance Factory Board will be paid \$1.92 billion for local production of 464 T-90S tanks. The parts that will be locally produced include panoramic night sights, thermal imaging fire-control systems and explosive reactive armour, while the engines and transmission system that make up 45 percent of the cost of a T-90S tank will come from Russia. OFB and Uralvagonzavod are expected to

²⁰ "Four Indian firms including Tata, Adani in final race for Rs 25,000 crore chopper deal for Navy", The Economic Times, November 12, 2019, <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/four-indian-firms-including-tata-adani-in-final-race-for-rs-25000-crore-chopper-deal-for-navy/articleshow/72028786.cms>

²¹ "U.S. Approves \$1 Billion Sale of Naval Guns to India", Bloomberg, November 21, 2019, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2019-11-21/u-s-approves-sale-of-1-billion-naval-guns-to-india>

²² "As Trump clears big gun sale, Indian Navy set to 'regain' key capability", The Week, November 21, 2019, <https://www.theweek.in/news/india/2019/11/21/as-trump-clears-big-gun-sale-indian-navy-set-to-regain-key-capability.html>

²³ "India pays Russia \$1.2 billion in technology transfer fees for T-90S tanks", Defence News, November 27, 2019, <https://www.defensenews.com/land/2019/11/26/india-pays-russia-12-billion-in-technology-transfer-fees-for-t-90s-tanks/>

manufacture 120 T-90S tanks per year and complete the project within four years.

20. **Rafale Aircraft**²⁴. Three Rafale fighter aircraft have been handed over to the Indian Air Force by November and they are being used for training of IAF pilots and technicians in France. The first batch of four Rafale jets will arrive in India by May 2020.
21. **DAC Approvals**²⁵. The Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) has approved capital procurement for the Services valued at Rs 22,800 crore. This includes Thermal Imaging Night Sights for Assault Rifles; an Airborne Early Warning and Control (AEW&C) system; Long Range Maritime Reconnaissance (LRMR) Anti-Submarine Warfare P8I aircraft; and twin-engine heavy helicopters (TEHH) for the Indian Coast Guard.

Visits

22. **Defence Minister's Visit to Russia**. Shri Rajnath Singh visited Russia from November 5-7. During his visit, the Defence Minister co-chaired the 19th India-Russia Inter-Governmental Commission on Military and Military Technical Cooperation (IRIGC-M&MTC) with his counterpart General Sergey Shoigu. The ministers reviewed the bilateral defence engagement and status of Inter-Governmental Defence Agreements. The Russian side affirmed its readiness to operationalise the joint venture Indo-Russia Rifles Private Limited for the manufacture of Kalashnikov AK 203 rifles in India at the earliest²⁶. Shri Rajnath Singh also met the Russian Minister of Industry and Trade, Mr Denis Manturov, and jointly inaugurated the 'India-Russia Defence Industry Cooperation Conference'²⁷. He also visited defence production facilities in St Petersburg²⁸.

²⁴ "Rafale Jet", PIB, November 20, 2019

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetailm.aspx?PRID=1592470>

²⁵ "Defence Acquisition Council, chaired by Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh, approves Capital Procurement for the Services amounting to over Rs 22,800 crore", PIB, November 28, 2019, <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1594075>

²⁶ "Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh co-chairs IRIGC-M&MTC meeting with his Russian counterpart General Sergei Shoigu", PIB, November 6, 2019, <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetailm.aspx?PRID=1590655>

²⁷ "Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh urges Russian Defence Industry to jointly manufacture defence equipment with India", PIB, November 5, 2019, <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetailm.aspx?PRID=1590550>

²⁸ "Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh pays homage to Mahatma Gandhi in his first engagement of Russia visit", PIB, November 5, 2019, <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetailm.aspx?PRID=1590477>

23. **Vietnam Army Chief Visit to India²⁹**. Chief of General Staff, Vietnam People's Army and Deputy Minister of National Defence Senior Lieutenant General Phan Van Giang visited India from November 24-28. During the visit he held talks on issues of mutual & strategic concern with Defence Minister Shri Rajnath Singh and COAS General Bipin Rawat.
24. **Visit of South Korean Navy Chief³⁰**. Admiral Sim Seung-seob, South Korea's Navy Chief, visited India on November 27. He held talks on issues of common maritime interest and ways to enhance cooperation with Indian Navy Chief Admiral Karambir Singh and Defence Secretary Ajay Kumar.
25. **INS Kiltan Visits Jakarta³¹**. INS Kiltan visited Jakarta, Indonesia from November 10-12. During the port call, personnel of both navies shared best practices and experiences. The ship also participated in a PASSEX with the Indonesian Navy on Nov 13.

Other Issues

26. **Air Force Commanders Conference³²**. The Second bi-annual Air Force Commanders' Conference was held on November 25-26 at New Delhi. Deliberations focused on joint operations, anti-drone operations, countering asymmetric warfare and further strengthening precision targeting, cyber and information warfare capability. Issues pertaining to indigenisation, streamlining procurement of equipment, strengthening training and optimisation of HR policies were discussed during this Conference.

²⁹ "Army Chief Meets Vietnam Counterpart To Discuss Strategic Issues", Business Standard, November 25, 2019, https://www.business-standard.com/article/news-ani/rajnath-singh-vpa-s-chief-of-the-general-staff-hold-talks-on-india-vietnam-defence-cooperation-119112501534_1.html

³⁰ "Korea's Navy chief meets Indian counterpart Karambir Singh, Def Secy", Business Standard, November 27, 2019, https://www.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/korea-s-navy-chief-meets-indian-counterpart-karambir-singh-def-secy-119112701471_1.html

³¹ "INS Kiltan on goodwill visit to Jakarta", The New Indian Express, November 11, 2019, <https://www.newindianexpress.com/states/andhra-pradesh/2019/nov/11/ins-kiltan-on-goodwill-visit-to-jakarta-2060147.html>

³² "Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh Inaugurates Air Force Commanders' Conference", PIB, November 25, 2019, <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1593398>

27. **DEFCON India 2019³³**. Seminar 'DEFCON INDIA 2019' was held on November 26-27 at New Delhi. The theme for the seminar was "Communications: A Decisive Catalyst for Jointness". Discussions during the seminar focused on leveraging communications for achieving jointness between the three services.
28. **Cyber Attack on Nuclear Power Plant³⁴**. A malware infection was identified in NPCIL Kudankulam Nuclear Power Project (KKNPP) Internet connected system. The affected system contains data related to administrative functions, but does not permit access to controls of the Nuclear Power Plant.
29. **Appointment of Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief of Western Air Command³⁵**. Air Marshal B Suresh assumed charge as the Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief of Western Air Command, Indian Air Force from November 1. Prior to his present appointment, he was the Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Southern Air Command.
30. **Appointment of Director General Inspection and Safety³⁶**. Air Marshal Manavendra Singh assumed charge as Director General Inspection and Safety, Air Headquarters, New Delhi on November 01. He was earlier the Senior Air Staff Officer, Southern Air Command.
31. **Appointment of Air Officer in Charge Personnel³⁷**. Air Marshal Amit Dev assumed charge as Air Officer in Charge Personnel, Air Headquarters Vayu Bhawan, New Delhi from November 1. Prior to this, he was Director General Air (Operations) at Air HQ.

³³ "DEFCON India 2019 (26-27 November 2019)", PIB, November 26, 2019, <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1593564>

³⁴ "Cyber attack on KKNPP", PIB, November 20, 2019, <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1592498>

³⁵ "Air Marshal B Suresh Assumes the Command of Western Air Command as AOC-In-C", PIB, November 1, 2019, <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetailm.aspx?PRID=1589980>

³⁶ "Air Marshal Manavendra Singh AVSM VrC VSM Assumes Charge as Director General Inspection and Safety", PIB, November 1, 2019, <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetailm.aspx?PRID=1590064>

³⁷ "Air Marshal Amit Dev AVSM VrC VSM Charge as Air Officer in Charge Personnel", PIB, November 1, 2019, <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetailm.aspx?PRID=1590016>

32. **Appointment of DGAFMS³⁸**. Lt. Gen. Anup Banerji assumed charge as the Director General, Armed Forces Medical Services (DG AFMS) from November 1. Prior to this, he served as the DGMS (Army).

33. **Mig-29KUB Crash³⁹**. An Indian Navy Mig-29KUB trainer aircraft crashed in Goa on November 16, while on a routine training sortie. The aircraft encountered a flock of birds after take-off from Naval Air Base Dabolim. Both pilots ejected safely. An inquiry has been instituted by the Navy.

³⁸ "Lt Gen Anup Banerji takes charge as DG AFMS", PIB, November 1, 2019, <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleseDetailm.aspx?PRID=1589978>

³⁹ "MIG fighter Aircraft Crashes near Goa Both Pilots Safe", PIB, November 16, 2019, <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleseDetailm.aspx?PRID=1591822>

PART II: NEIGHBOURHOOD DEFENCE SCENE

China

Defence Policy

35. **China-New Zealand Military Strategic Dialogue**⁴⁰. The 10th strategic dialogue between the Chinese and New Zealand militaries took place in Wellington on November 08. The two sides exchanged in-depth views on issues of common concern such as bilateral ties, military to military relations and regional security. The bilateral relationship was upgraded to a comprehensive strategic partnership in 2014.
36. **China-South Korea Defence Agreement**. The South Korean Minister of Defence and his Chinese counterpart agreed to set up more military hotlines and to push ahead with a visit by the South Korean Minister to China next year to “foster bilateral exchanges and cooperation in defence”. This agreement comes at a time of growing resentment at the \$5 billion (£3.9bn) annual fee that Washington is demanding from Seoul to keep 28,500 US troops in South Korea⁴¹.

Operations and Exercises

37. **China-Saudi Arabia Naval Exercise ‘Blue Sword’**. The Royal Saudi Naval Forces, represented by the Special Forces of the Western Fleet, carried out joint naval exercise Blue Sword 2019 with the PLA Navy in Jeddah on November 17. The exercise targets building mutual trust, enhancing cooperation, exchanging experiences, developing the capacity of participants to combat maritime terrorism and piracy, and improving training and combat readiness⁴².

⁴⁰ ‘Chinese and New Zealand militaries hold 10th strategic dialogue in Wellington’, China Military, November 11, 2019. http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/view/2019-11/11/content_9673271.htm

⁴¹ ‘China signs defence agreement with South Korea as US angers Seoul with demand for \$5bn troop payment’, The Telegraph, November 18, 2019. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2019/11/18/china-signs-defence-agreement-south-korea-us-angers-seoul-demand/>

⁴² ‘Saudi Arabia, China conduct drill to improve combat readiness’, Arab News, November 17, 2019. <https://www.arabnews.com/node/1585431/saudi-arabia>

38. **China-US Disaster Management Exercise.** The China-US Disaster Management Exercise 2019 began on November 18 in Hawaii. Soldiers from the Chinese PLA Eastern Theatre Command and the US Army Pacific (USARPAC) participated in the event. The exercise aims to share the experience of the two armed forces in humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, and improve their capacities to jointly carry out these operations⁴³.
39. **China-ADMM Plus Counter Terrorism Exercise.** A joint counter-terrorism exercise between China the PLA's Southern Theatre Command and ADMM-Plus countries successfully wrapped up after 12 days on November 21. This was the largest counter-terrorism land-based drill since the founding of the Experts' Working Group in 2011. During the drill, participating troops mainly carried out targeted training on weapons and equipment operation, typical building breakthrough, and armoured infantry combat shooting⁴⁴.
40. **China-Russia-South Africa Naval Drill.** The PLA Navy participated in a joint naval exercise with Russia and South Africa on November 25. The Chinese guided-missile frigate Weifang along with the Russian missile cruiser Marshal Ustinov, tanker Vyazma and the South African frigate Amatola and tanker Drakensberg took part in the exercise. The Weifang is part of China's 33rd fleet that escorts civilian ships in the Gulf of Aden and waters off Somalia. Global Times reported that the exercise would boost the countries' capability to face maritime security threats, secure sea lanes and contribute to world peace⁴⁵.
41. **Chinese Marine Corps Conducts Amphibious Landing Drills.** According to a Global Times report of November 25, the Chinese Marine Corps recently conducted comprehensive amphibious landing drills at an undisclosed location. The drills included the loading of amphibious armored vehicles onto landing ships and land assault. They were combat-oriented and aimed to build an even harsher battlefield environment. Two ships that participated are the landing ship Baxianshan from the PLA East

⁴³ 'US-China Disaster Management Exchange 2019 kicks off in Hawaii', China Military, November 19, 2019. http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/view/2019-11/19/content_9678793.htm

⁴⁴ 'ADMM-Plus joint counter-terrorism drill wraps up', China Military, November 22, 2019. http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/view/2019-11/22/content_9681245.htm

⁴⁵ 'China-Russia-S. Africa naval drills to help safeguard sea lanes, maritime security', China Military, November 26, 2019. http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/view/2019-11/26/content_9683589.htm

China Sea Fleet and the landing ship Luoxiaoshan from the PLA South China Sea Fleet⁴⁶.

42. **Iran-Russia-China Wargames.** The commander of Iran's army announced on November 27 that Iran will team up with Moscow and Beijing in December to hold mass war drills. His statement mentioned that the three countries have reached a meaningful strategic point in their relations with regard to their shared and non-shared interests. "We do not condone the kind of security that only caters to the benefits of one specific country at a specific time and which disregards the security of others," Commander Khazadi said. "Seas, which are used as a platform for conducting global commerce, cannot be exclusively beneficial to certain powers."⁴⁷
43. **India-China 'Hand-in-hand' Military Exercise.** India and China agreed to hold a joint military exercise on counter-terrorism, called 'Hand-in-Hand', in Meghalaya in December. The exercise would enhance the capacity of both Indian and Chinese troops to respond to any emergency situation to counter terror. It was previously held in December 2018 in Chengdu, China⁴⁸.

Visits

44. **Bangladesh Chief of Army Staff Visits Beijing.** Chinese State Councillor and Defense Minister Wei Fenghe met the Chief of Bangladesh Army Staff General Aziz Ahmed in Beijing on November 06. The Chinese Councillor noted that China was ready to work with Bangladesh to strengthen strategic communication, expand cooperation in personnel training, equipment and technology, disaster relief, peacekeeping and in other fields⁴⁹.
45. **Chinese State Councillor Visits Thailand.** During a goodwill visit to Thailand on November 17, Chinese State Councillor and Defence Minister

⁴⁶ 'Chinese Marine Corps conducts amphibious landing drills', China Military, November 25, 2019. http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/view/2019-11/25/content_9682534.htm

⁴⁷ 'Iran, Russia, China to hold joint wargames in message to the world', Free Beacon, November 27, 2019. <https://freebeacon.com/national-security/iran-russia-china-to-hold-joint-wargames-in-message-to-the-world/>

⁴⁸ 'India, China to hold joint military exercise to counter terror', Eleven Myanmar, November 20, 2019. <https://elevenmyanmar.com/news/india-china-to-hold-joint-military-exercise-to-counter-terror>

⁴⁹ 'Chinese defence minister meets Bangladesh Chief of Army Staff', China Military, November 07, 2019. http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/view/2019-11/07/content_9670383.htm

Wei Fenghe met Thai Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha and agreed to further enhance military cooperation and signed an MoU on the same. The Thai premier said he hoped the two countries would further strengthen military cooperation in equipment and technology, joint exercises and joint training, as well as multilateral security, and that Thailand is willing to actively participate in the Belt and Road Initiative⁵⁰.

Capability Development and Sales

46. **China Debuts at Defence and Security 2019.** Seven Chinese companies engaged in military trade participated in Thailand at the Defense and Security exhibition for the first time, in the form of national exhibition delegation named "China Defense". As one of the most influential biennial exhibitions in South East Asia, Defense and Security 2019 has attracted growing attention from countries across the world. Chinese equipment on display includes 50 kinds of marine equipment such as mobile assault and airborne weapons, VT4 (formerly MBT-3000) main battle tanks (MBT) that have already been deployed by Thai troops, as well as VT5 made-for-export light tanks, the VN16 tracked amphibious assault vehicle (AAV) and the newly developed VN18 amphibious armored infantry fighting vehicle (IFV)⁵¹.

Pakistan

47. **Dawn of the East 1 Tripartite Military Drills.** The Armed Forces of Egypt, Jordan and Pakistan participated in a tripartite military drill titled "Dawn of the East 1" that took place from November 03-08 in Pakistan. It was the first time that the Egyptian Army took part in this drill⁵². The exercise comes within the framework of developing military ties between the three armies to the level of partnership and exchange of expertise in the counterterrorism field⁵³.

⁵⁰ 'China, Thailand agree to enhance military cooperation', China Military, November 17, 2019. http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/view/2019-11/17/content_9677092.htm

⁵¹ 'China Defence debuts at Defence and Security 2019 in Bangkok', China Military, November 19, 2019. http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/view/2019-11/19/content_9678727.htm

⁵² 'Egypt's army goes on military exercises with Russia, Jordan, Pakistan', Egypt today, November 01, 2019, <https://www.egypttoday.com/Article/2/77380/Egypt%E2%80%99s-army-goes-on-military-exercises-with-Russia-Jordan-Pakistan>

⁵³ 'Dawn of the East 1: Pakistan Army holds joint military drills with Egyptian and Jordanian special forces', Times of Islamabad, November 02, 2019. <https://timesofislamabad.com/02-Nov-2019/dawn-of-the-east-1-pakistan-army-holds-joint-military-drills-with-egyptian-and-jordanian-special-forces>

48. **Pakistani Army Chief Meets Iranian President.** On November 19, the Pakistan Army Chief met the Iranian President while on an official visit to Tehran,. According to a release by the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), the Army Chief discussed "regional security environment and matters of mutual interest" while the Iranian President "appreciated Pakistan's successes against terrorism"⁵⁴. The Pakistani Army Chief also met Iran's Supreme National Security Council leader as well as the Army Chief.
49. **Pakistan-Bahrain Military Exercise.** A bilateral exercise titled Shaheen Al Jazeera-2019 between Pakistan Navy's Special Service Group and Royal Bahrain Defence Force's Special Operation Force (SOF) concluded on November 16 after 10 days. The aim of the exercise was to strengthen military relationships, improve coordination & interoperability and exchange of professional expertise in SOF domains⁵⁵.
50. **Successful Launch of Shaheen-1.** On November 18, Pakistan successfully conducted a launch of its surface to surface ballistic missile Shaheen-1. The launch was conducted as part of a training exercise aimed at testing the operational readiness of the Army Strategic Forces Command. Shaheen – 1 is capable of delivering all types of warheads up to a range of 650 km⁵⁶.
51. **Deputy Commander of PLA Calls on Pakistan COAS.** Deputy Commander of Chinese People's Liberation Army, Lieutenant General You Haitao, called on Chief of Army Staff General Qamar Javed Bajwa on November 11 at General Headquarters in Rawalpindi. During the meeting, matters of mutual interest were discussed and army-to-army staff talks took place⁵⁷.

⁵⁴ 'Pakistan Army Chief meets Iran's Hassan Rouhani' The News PK, November 19, 2019. <https://www.thenews.com.pk/latest/571279-pakistan-army-chief-meets-irans-hassan-rouhani>

⁵⁵ 'Pakistan-Bahrain military exercise ends', The Dawn, November 18, 2019. <https://www.dawn.com/news/1517329>

⁵⁶ 'Pakistan today successfully conducted training launch of surface to surface ballistic missile Shaheen-1', ISPR, November 18, 2019. <https://www.ispr.gov.pk/press-release-detail.php?id=5507>

⁵⁷ 'Deputy Commander PLA meets COAS', Associated Press of Pakistan, November 11, 2019. <https://www.app.com.pk/deputy-commander-pla-meets-coas/>

Bangladesh

52. **Bangladesh-US Navy Exercise 'CARAT'**. The U.S. and Bangladesh navies concluded the 'Cooperation Afloat Readiness and Training' (CARAT) exercise on November 07. CARAT is designed to address shared maritime concerns and strengthen the bilateral partnership. The exercise encompassed training in a range of capabilities including diving, engineering, aviation, hydrography, maritime domain awareness and maritime law. Speaking at the concluding session, Bangladesh Navy Commodore M. Anwar Hossain said that the long-standing partnership between Bangladesh and the United States has contributed to peace, stability and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific region⁵⁸.
53. **U.S. Seeks Closer Military Ties with Bangladesh**. Alice Wells, the U.S. acting Assistant Secretary Of State for South and Central Asian Affairs, said that the United States is seeking an expanded military relationship with Bangladesh. Ms Wells was on an official visit to Dhaka on November 05. The expanded relationship would take place under the Bay of Bengal initiative. This new U.S. State Department program involves foreign military financing to build maritime and border security capacity for Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and the Maldives. Washington's offer comes after Dhaka confirmed recently that it would construct its first submarine base in a southeastern district in the Bay of Bengal, with technical and training assistance from China⁵⁹.
54. **Bangladesh Army Chief to Visit Myanmar**. Bangladesh's Army Chief is scheduled to pay a week-long visit to Myanmar early next month amid an ongoing dispute about repatriation of Rohingya refugees. As per a statement released by the Bangladesh army's Inter Services Public Relation (ISPR), the purpose of the visit is to improve existing military ties of both countries and strengthen cooperation between the armies of Bangladesh and Myanmar, including exchange of training⁶⁰.

⁵⁸ 'U.S. and Bangladesh navies conclude Cooperation Afloat Readiness and Training 2019', DVIDS, November 08, 2019. <https://www.dvidshub.net/news/351040/us-and-bangladesh-navies-conclude-cooperation-afloat-readiness-and-training-2019>

⁵⁹ 'State Department Official: US Seeks Closer Military Ties with Bangladesh', Benar News, November 05, 2019. <https://www.benarnews.org/english/news/bengali/US-Bangladesh-military-ties-11052019180727.html>

⁶⁰ 'Bangladesh Army Chief to pay rare visit to Myanmar', AA News, November 26, 2019. <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/asia-pacific/bangladesh-army-chief-to-pay-rare-visit-to-myanmar/1656422>

Sri Lanka

55. **U.K. and Sri Lanka Conduct Joint Disaster Relief Exercise.** British troops from the Royal Air Force (RAF) trained with Sri Lankan troops in Trincomalee during the last week of October. According to an RAF press release, there were many parallels with the Sri Lankan Air Force (SLAF) Regiment. "Our common heritages coupled with our common goal of providing world leading Air [Force] Protection has provided the foundation of a very fruitful exchange of knowledge, tactics, techniques and procedures (TTPs) and methodologies"⁶¹.

Nepal

56. **Nepal-Russia Military Agreement.** Russia and Nepal have agreed to sign a military and technical cooperation agreement, but no date has been set yet, according to Russian Foreign Minister after talks with his Nepali counterpart on November 25. Russia plans to expand export of helicopters to Nepal while Nepal seeks a full-fledged membership to the SCO⁶².

⁶¹ 'Britain's RAF train Sri Lankan air force in Trincomalee', Tamil Guardian, October 26, 2019. <https://www.tamilguardian.com/content/britain%E2%80%99s-raf-train-sri-lankan-air-force-trincomalee>

⁶² 'Nepal to ink military agreement with Russia', UNI, November 25, 2019. <http://www.uniindia.com/nepal-to-ink-military-agreement-with-russia/world/news/1800912.html>



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