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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

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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)

Air Chief Marshal Birender Singh Dhanoa inducting Chinook Helicopter at 12Wing Air Force Station in Chandigarh, March 25 2019. Source: Indian Airforce Website

INS Sujata in Mozambique on HADR mission, March 19, 2019. Source: Twitter/SpokpersonNavy

Opening ceremony of the Africa-India Field Training Exercise 2019, Afindex-19, at the Aundh Military Station, March 18, 2019. Source: Hindustan Times

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PART I: INDIA'S DEFENCE SCENE

Operational Aspects

1. On March 27, 2019 India carried out a successful Anti – Satellite test by shooting down an Indian satellite in Low Earth Orbit. With the successful demonstration of ASAT capability, India joins an exclusive club of nations (US, Russia, China) possessing this capability¹.
2. In terms of recent India-Pakistan tensions, whereas cross border military action appears to have eased, nonetheless tensions across the LC (Line of Control) and IB (International Border) persist with a heightened security posture, troop deployments and Trans LC firing. Seven soldiers were martyred in different incidents of cross border firing during the month. Counter terrorist operations by security forces also continue in the Kashmir Valley; approximately 23 terrorist having been neutralised during this month in a series of encounters. Intense counter terrorist operations and other measures such as banning of the Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) and Jamat-e-Islami (JI) are putting intense pressure both on separatists and militants, which may pave the way for a post- general election political process in the J&K.
3. In the maritime domain, during February-March 2019, the routine Naval Exercise TROPEX 19 (Scheduled February 7 to March 10, 2019) was converted into operational deployment post the Pulwama incident and India's counter-terrorism strikes. 72 warships and 60 aircraft including the aircraft carrier INS Vikramaditya were already deployed for the exercise when these incidents took place. Operational readiness continues to be maintained in the North Arabian Sea. Media reports suggest that the deployments included submarines INS Chakra and INS Kalvari, Boeing P-8I maritime surveillance aircraft, several destroyers and frigates². There were also speculative reports about the possible deployment of India's nuclear submarine INS Arihant.
4. While the focus of attention of counter-terrorism operations remained along Western borders and the LC with Pakistan, the Indian armed forces

¹ "India tests first anti-satellite missile system, codenamed Mission Shakti", The Economic Times, March 29, 2019, <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/politics-and-nation/pm-modis-big-announcement-india-successfully-tests-anti-satellite-weapon/articleshow/68592702.cms>

² "Naval build-up in Arabian Sea puts Pakistan on back foot", Hindustan Times, March 18, 2019, <https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/naval-build-up-in-arabian-sea-puts-pakistan-on-back-foot/story-nfNiZp0tyZC9U93JouvXLJ.html>

concurrently undertook joint operations with the Myanmar Army against the insurgent group "Arakan Army" during the period February 17 to March 2, 2019. These groups have been posing a threat to the joint Kaladan Multi-modal Transit and Transport project³.

5. Responding to widespread devastation following 'Cyclone Idai' in Mozambique on March 18, 2019 the Indian Navy led a Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) mission as the first responder, including the evacuation of hundreds of personnel stranded at Buzi near the port of Beira. Ships of the First Training squadron of the Indian Navy, Sujata, Sarathi and Shardul, operating in the Southern Indian Ocean, were diverted to Beira based on the request of the Government of Mozambique. Later, India sent a fourth ship, INS Magar, with more relief material for providing medical assistance, food, clothes, medicine and potable water to the affected people⁴.

Capability Development

6. Mindful of prevailing security challenges, efforts at capability development of the armed forces continue apace. During the month of March, significant approval and acquisition activities took place:
 - a. The Defence Acquisitions Council (DAC) approved the procurement of one million DRDO developed, private industry manufactured 'Multi Mode' hand grenades to replace the WW-II vintage HE (High Explosive) - 36 Ordnance Factory manufactured grenades⁵.
 - b. India signed a deal with Russia to indigenously manufacture some 0.75 million AK-203 Assault rifles through a joint venture 'Indo-Russia Rifles Private Limited'. These rifles will be manufactured at an Amethi based production facility, which was dedicated to the nation by the Prime Minister on March 3, 2019⁶.

³ "India-Myanmar joint operation destroys militant camps on eastern border", The Indian Express, March 16, 2019, <https://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-myanmar-joint-operation-destroys-militant-camps-eastern-border-5629147/>

⁴ "Cyclone Idai: India reaches out to Mozambique", The Hindu, March 19, 2019, <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/cyclone-idai-india-reaches-out-to-mozambique/article26583775.ece>

⁵ "Defence Acquisition Council clears procurement plan of over Rs 2,000 crore, The Economic Times, March 21, 2019, <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/defence-acquisition-council-clears-procurement-plan-of-over-rs-2000-crore/articleshow/68506991.cms?from=mdr>

⁶ "AK-203 Kalashnikov rifles to be made at Amethi's Korwa, says defence minister", Hindustan Times, March 03, 2019, <https://www.hindustantimes.com/lok-sabha-elections/ak-203->

- c. On March 7, 2019 India signed a US \$3.3 billion deal to lease a third Russian nuclear-powered Akula-1 Class submarine for a period of 10 years. The Submarine will be delivered by 2025 and will replace INS Chakra, which India leased from Russia in 2012⁷.
- d. After the successful launch of the first Indian manufactured Scorpene class submarine 'INS Kalvari', the Indian Navy is likely to induct the second submarine, 'INS Khanderi', by early May for which trials have been completed. The third submarine 'INS Karanj' is in an advanced stage of trials and could be inducted by end of 2019. The fourth, 'INS Vela', is likely to be launched for trials shortly. 'INS Vagir' and 'INS Vagshree', the fifth and sixth of the series, are however still on the assembly line⁸.
- e. Post successful harbour trials, a Hindustan Shipyard Limited (HSL) manufactured 'Missile Tracking Ocean Surveillance Ship' is now ready to undergo sea trials. This 10,000 tonne, 300 crew, ship has been constructed indigenously at a cost of US \$231 million and is equipped with X-Band and S-Band scanned array and missile tracking radars⁹.
- f. The IAF is in the process of trials evaluating integration of Spice -2000 Israeli bombs with Su-30s to complement Mirage-2000s, which are the only Spice-2000 compatible aircraft in the IAF arsenal presently¹⁰.
- g. The Indian Air Force (IAF) formally inducted the first four Chinook CH-47F helicopters into the fleet during a ceremony held at the Chandigarh Air Base on March 25, 2019. By the end of 2019, the fleet size is likely to

kalashnikov-rifles-to-be-made-at-amethi-s-korwa-says-defence-minister/story-S46pyS06b4NrMNhiugKnAO.html

⁷ "India and Russia sign \$3 billion nuclear submarine lease agreement", The Defence Post, March 8, 2019, <https://thedefensepost.com/2019/03/08/india-russia-3-billion-akula-submarine-lease/>

⁸ "Second Scorpene submarine ready for induction", The Hindu, March 17, 2019, <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/second-scorpene-submarine-ready-for-induction/article26561731.ece>

⁹ "Sea trials of ocean surveillance ship evoke good response", The Hindu, March 18, 2019, <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/andhra-pradesh/sea-trials-of-ocean-surveillance-ship-evoke-good-response/article26562547.ece>

¹⁰ "More firepower for IAF! Su-30 MKI jets to be equipped with SPICE 2000 bombs used in Balakot strike: Report", Financial Express, March 5, 2019, <https://www.financialexpress.com/defence/more-firepower-for-iaf-su-30-mki-jets-to-be-equipped-with-spice-2000-bombs-used-in-balakot-strike-report/1505631/>

increase to 15¹¹. The Chinooks replace the Russian Mi-26 in the heavy lift class helicopters for Air maintenance of troops deployed in the Northern Command of the Indian Army.

- h. The Chief of Naval Staff, Admiral Sunil Lanba, inaugurated the Indian Navy's Nuclear, Biological and Chemical Training Facility (NBCTF) at INS Shivaji in Lonavala, Maharashtra on March 25, 2019. The facility has been constructed by the Goa Shipyard Limited¹².
- i. DRDO has made a major breakthrough in the field of military medicine by developing a range of 'Combat Casualty Drugs' that include bleeding wound sealants, super absorptive dressing and glycated salines. These 'golden hour' drugs are useful before troop casualties from the frontline can be evacuated to the hospitals¹³.

Exercises and Conferences

7. During the month a series of military exercises were held to hone operational readiness and to develop cooperation with friendly nations. Some of the significant exercises were:
 - a. On March 14, 2019 the IAF conducted an operational readiness exercise in J&K and Punjab. Approximately 50 combat aircraft including SU-30 MKI, Mirage-2000 and Mig-29 took part in the exercise¹⁴.
 - b. The eighth edition of India-Bangladesh Army exercise 'Sampriti 2019' was held at Tangail, Bangladesh from March 3-17, 2019. It was aimed at

¹¹ "IAF inducts Chinook helicopters as US muscles into Russia's copter monopoly", Business Standard, March 26, 2019, https://www.business-standard.com/article/defence/iaf-inducts-chinook-helicopters-as-us-muscles-into-russia-s-copter-monopoly-119032600488_1.html

¹² "Indian Navy Chief Inaugurates Nuclear Warfare Training Facility At Lonavala; To Give Officers A Hands-On Experience", Swarajyamag, March 27, 2019, <https://swarajyamag.com/insta/indian-navy-chief-inaugurates-nuclear-warfare-training-facility-at-lonavala-to-give-officers-a-hands-on-experience>

¹³ "Indian defence lab develops 'combat drugs' to reduce casualties in Pulwama type attacks, warfare", The Hindu, March 11, 2019, <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/indian-defence-lab-develops-combat-drugs-to-reduce-casualties-in-pulwama-type-attacks-warfare/article26495523.ece>

¹⁴ "Close to 50 fighters take part in IAF exercise", Hindustan Times, March 16, 2019, <https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/close-to-50-fighters-take-part-in-iaf-exercise/story-J0TLjs03IHqbAp5PQFbUtO.html>

strengthening cooperation and interoperability in counter insurgency and counter terrorism operations¹⁵.

- c. A 10 day Africa India Field training exercise (AFINDEX) was held at Aundh, Maharashtra from March 18-28, 2019. Seventeen African nations (*Egypt, Ghana, Kenya, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Benin and Botswana*) participated; exchanging best practices in conducting tactical level operations under UN mandated tasks¹⁶.
- d. In a bilateral maritime engagement with Indonesia, the Coast Guard Ship 'INS Vijit' visited Sabang Port from March 17-20, 2019¹⁷.
- e. The 33rd Edition of the India-Indonesia coordinated Patrol (Ind-Indo Corpat) is being conducted from March 19 - April 4, 2019. As part of this coordinated exercise, Ships and Maritime Patrol Aircraft from both sides are jointly patrolling respective sides of the 236 nautical miles International Maritime Boundary¹⁸.
- f. The Indian Navy's anti-submarine warfare (ASW) corvette, INS Kadmatt, sailed into Langkawi, Malaysia on March 25, 2019 for 7-day official visit. The ship participated in the 15th Edition of the Langkawi International Maritime & Aerospace Exhibition (LIMA-19)¹⁹.
- g. The second Edition of Indo-Pacific Regional Dialogue (IPRD) 2019 was held at Delhi on March 5-6, 2019. Representatives of 13 Indo-Pacific nations participated (*Australia, Bangladesh, Canada, China, Indonesia, Israel, Japan, Seychelles, Singapore, South Korea, Sri Lanka, the United*

¹⁵ "India-Bangladesh joint military exercise 'Sampriti 2019' in Tangail", All India Radio, February 27, 2019

<http://newsonair.nic.in/Main-News-Details.aspx?id=360308>

¹⁶ "Indian Army holds military exercise with 17 African nations", Business Standard, March 18, 2019, https://www.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/indian-army-holds-military-exercise-with-17-african-nations-119031800828_1.html

¹⁷ "Indian Coast Guard Ship INS Vijit Visits Indonesian Port Of Sabang, As Part Of Maritime Cooperation Efforts", Swarajyamag, March 19, 2019, <https://swarajyamag.com/insta/indian-coast-guard-ship-ins-vijit-visits-indonesian-port-of-sabang-as-part-of-maritime-cooperation-efforts>

¹⁸ "33rd Edition of India-Indonesia Coordinated Patrol (Ind-Indo Corpat) Commences at Port Blair", PIB, March 19, 2019, <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=189468>

¹⁹ "INS Kadmatt to participate in maritime and aerospace exhibition in Malaysia", Business Today, March 26, 2019, <https://www.businesstoday.in/current/economy-politics/ins-kadmatt-to-participate-in-maritime-and-aerospace-exhibition-in-malaysia/story/331025.html>

Kingdom, and the United States of America). Issues related to achieving regional cohesion through maritime connectivity, measures to maintain a free and open Indo-Pacific, opportunities and challenges due to the impact of 'Industry 4.0' on the maritime space were amongst the issues discussed²⁰.

Visits

8. India-US foreign office consultations and Strategic Security Dialogue were held at Washington from March 11-13, 2019. The Indian Foreign Secretary Vijay Gokhale-led delegation interacted with Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, David Hale, and Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security, Andria Thomson. Concerns were raised with Washington over Pakistan using US-supplied defence equipment for "offensive action" against India²¹.
9. Chairman COSC and Navy Chief Admiral Sunil Lanba visited the UK from March 12-15, 2019, during which he interacted with the UK Chief of Defence Staff and the Chief of Naval Staff of the Royal Navy. They discussed issues related to strengthening mutual defence engagements²².
10. GOC-in-C Eastern Command, Lt. Gen. M M Naravane, visited Bangladesh on March 22, 2019 to discuss measures to enhance military co-operation²³.

Other Developments

11. Saudi Arabia has replaced India as the largest global Arms importer for the period 2014 - 2018, with the two countries procuring 12% and 9.5% of global arms respectively. While it is encouraging that there is a 24% decline in Indian imports compared to the period 2013-2017, the

²⁰ "Indo-Pacific Regional Dialogue – 2019", PIB, March 2, 2019, <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=189144>

²¹ "India seeks US view on use of F-16 for offensive action", The Economic Times, March 18, 2019, <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/india-seeks-us-view-on-use-of-f-16-for-offensive-action/articleshow/68457244.cms>

²² "Navy Chief Admiral Sunil Lanba on four-day visit to UK from Tuesday", The Indian Express, March 11, 2019, <https://indianexpress.com/article/india/navy-chief-lanba-on-four-day-visit-to-uk-from-tuesday-5621354/>

²³ "Eastern Army commander visits Bangladesh to enhance military ties", The Times of India, March 23, 2019, <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/eastern-army-commander-visits-bangladesh-to-enhance-military-ties/articleshow/68539078.cms>

reduction is largely due to delays in delivery of fighter jets and submarines procured or produced under license from Russia and France²⁴.

12. On March 23, 2019 the Government appointed Vice Admiral Karambir Singh as the next Navy Chief. He will succeed Admiral Sunil Lanba who will complete his term on May 31, 2019²⁵.

²⁴ "India the second-biggest importer of weapons after Saudi Arabia between 2014-'18, says report", Scroll, March 12, 2019, <https://scroll.in/latest/916266/india-the-second-biggest-importer-of-weapons-after-saudi-arabia-between-2014-18-says-report>

²⁵ "Vice Admiral Karambir Singh to be the next Navy chief", Business Standard, March 23, 2019, https://www.business-standard.com/article/news-ani/vice-admiral-karambir-singh-to-be-the-next-navy-chief-119032300515_1.html

PART II: NEIGHBOURHOOD DEFENCE

China

13. China's efforts at strengthening the PLA and developing indigenous defence technology and manufacturing capability continue unabated. The Military budget for fiscal 2020 was announced at the second session of the 13th National People's Congress (NPC) on March 5, 2019. An allotment of US \$ 177.5 billion, which is an increase of 7.5% over the previous year, was made. China remains the second largest spender on defence, after the US, whose allocation for fiscal 2019 was US \$ 750 billion. The Chinese military budget accounts for nearly 1.3% of its GDP²⁶.
14. Although China, with a 4.2% share in global arms imports, still remains the sixth largest importer of arms, it has also emerged as the fifth largest arms exporter²⁷. Bulk of its military exports are to Asian countries with 35% of weapons being exported to Pakistan and 19% to Bangladesh. It is significant to note that China is also the leading exporter of armed drones (UCAVs) in the world. During the period 2014-18, China supplied 153 drones to 13 countries, as compared to the United States that sold only five armed drones to the UK in the last ten years. Primary clients of China include West Asian countries like Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates²⁸.
15. The PLA Navy recently deployed a new 'Vertical Takeoff and Landing (VTOL)' fixed-wing drone on the helicopter deck of the Lanzhou, a Type 052C guided missile destroyer, during an exercise in the South China Sea. The drone can carry out reconnaissance and search missions at longer ranges for destroyers and frigates, guide artillery fire (Naval gun

²⁶ "China lowers defence budget growth to 7.5% in 2019", The Global Times, March 05, 2019. <http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1140965.shtml>

²⁷ "Global arms trade: USA increases dominance; arms flows to the Middle East surge, says SIPRI", Stockholm Institute Peace Research Institute, March 11, 2019. <https://www.sipri.org/media/press-release/2019/global-arms-trade-usa-increases-dominance-arms-flows-middle-east-surge-says-sipri>

²⁸ "China sells arms to more countries and is world's biggest exporter of armed drones, says Swedish think tank SIPRI", South China Morning Post, March 12, 2019. <https://www.scmp.com/news/china/military/article/2189604/china-sells-weapons-more-countries-and-biggest-exporter-armed>

fire) from warships and conduct damage assessment during amphibious landing operations²⁹.

16. To secure the emerging arms market in Africa, China organized a military exhibition at the African Union HQs in Ethiopia during the month. The exhibition titled "CPLA (Chinese People's Liberation Army): A Force for World Peace" attracted military representatives from African member states, officials from the U.N, NATO and numerous other countries³⁰.
17. For strengthening indigenous capabilities, China is making efforts to develop variants of the 200 ton Y-20 transport aircraft to include: airborne early warning systems, aerial refuellers, electronic warfare platforms and airborne medical facilities. Efforts are also being made to replace the existing Russian engines in this aircraft with indigenously developed WS-20 engines³¹.
18. It was reported that China is likely to sign a deal with Russia for co-development of a new generation heavy-lift helicopter with a cargo capacity of 15 tons. The capability is a notch lower than the currently operational, though dated, Mi-26 heavy lift helicopters. The helicopter is likely to be equipped with the new AI-136T turbo shaft engines³².
19. According to a report by China's National broadcaster (CCTV) on March 25, 2019, the J-11B fighter jet of PLAAF has become the first aircraft to be armed with an indigenously developed air-to-air missile.³³
20. In its effort to develop close military relations with friendly foreign countries, China participated in an annual joint military Exercise 'Dragon Gold' with Cambodia during the month. It is also learnt that China will participate in Exercise "Sary-Arka-Antiterror 2019", a SCO

²⁹ "Rare VTOL drone deployed on PLA destroyer", Global Times, February 28, 2019. http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/view/2019-02/28/content_9435911.htm

³⁰ "China's Military for World Peace, Exhibition launched in Africa", Maritime Executive, March 19, 2019. <https://www.maritime-executive.com/article/china-s-military-for-world-peace-exhibition-launched-in-africa>

³¹ "China to debut one or more Y-20 Variant Aircraft this year", Defence World, March 13, 2019. http://www.defenseworld.net/news/24453/China_to_Debut_One_or_More_Y_20_Variant_Aircraft_This_Year#.XJRyQigza01

³² "Russia, China expects to sign heavy helicopter contract in coming months", Defence Blog, February 20, 2019. <https://defence-blog.com/news/russia-china-expects-to-sign-heavy-helicopter-contract-in-coming-months.html>

³³ "China's most powerful air-to-air missile equipped on warplanes", Global Times, March 26, 2019, http://english.chinamil.com.cn/view/2019-03/26/content_9459759.htm

exercise, later this year³⁴. In addition, the Russian and the Chinese Navies will hold a joint Naval exercise during the period late April to early May 2019.

21. There were reports of a sizeable presence of Chinese military troops near the Wakhan border with Afghanistan. China, however, denied any unusual military presence stating that its cooperation with Tajikistan is in consonance with international laws³⁵.



Source: google map

22. Concerned at China's growing military power and influence, Taiwan has initiated a formal request to the United States for acquiring additional fighter jets³⁶. Formal approval from the US President/Congress is however yet to be accorded³⁷.

³⁴ "SCO members to hold joint anti-terror exercise", Business Standard, March 16, 2019. https://www.business-standard.com/article/news-ians/sco-members-to-hold-joint-anti-terror-exercise-119031600526_1.html

³⁵ "China denies having troops in Afghanistan's Wakhan corridor", Associated Press, February 28, 2019. <https://www.militarytimes.com/flashpoints/2019/03/01/china-denies-having-troops-in-afghanistans-wakhan-corridor/>

³⁶ "Taiwan needs new US fighter jets to take on China", The Economic Times, March 07, 2019. <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/taiwan-asks-us-for-new-fighter-jets-to-defend-against-china/articleshow/68303297.cms>

³⁷ "Sale of fighter jets approved for Taiwan, Delivery isn't scheduled until 2021", The China Post, March 24, 2019. <https://www.military.com/daily-news/2019/03/24/sale-66-fighter-jets-approved-taiwan-delivery-scheduled-2021.html>

Pakistan

23. After 28 days of closure, Pakistan finally announced opening of its airspace for domestic and international flights on March 26, 2019. The country had partially resumed flight operations from Islamabad, Karachi, Peshawar and Quetta earlier this month. It is, however reported that flights of certain airlines will still not operate through Pakistan air space due to security reasons³⁸.
24. Reacting to Pakistan's hostile and proxy war activities on its Eastern borders, Afghanistan sent a letter to the UN Security Council complaining about violation of its territory by the Pakistan military including shelling, violation of its airspace by military aircraft and construction of military posts and barriers on its soil³⁹.
25. As a symbol of continuing solidarity with Pakistan, PLAAF sent its Bayi Aerobatic Team to Pakistan with J-10 fighter aircraft to participate in the March 23, 2019 Pakistan National Day celebrations. Contingents from Saudi Arabia and Turkey also participated in the parade, where Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad was the guest of honour⁴⁰.
26. Pakistan's military is seeking a key economic role in a multi-billion dollar project involving exploration of the world's largest untapped copper and gold reserves. An Army controlled engineering firm, Frontier Works Organization (FWO), is spearheading this venture, demonstrating the Pakistan military's clout in national governance⁴¹.

³⁸ "Pakistan opens airspace for all flights", The Dawn, March 27, 2019.
<https://www.dawn.com/news/1472142>

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/business/international-business/pakistan-airspace-finally-opened-to-overflying-flights-air-india-turkish-united-fly-over-pakistan/articleshow/68733760.cms?>

³⁹ "Afghanistan moves UN over violations by Pak military on its soil", Hindustan Times, February 25, 2019. <https://www.hindustantimes.com/world-news/afghanistan-moves-un-over-pakistan-violations/story-ou4qvYrrXJs7LC7OP8e8FO.html>

⁴⁰ "Chinese fighter jets arrive in Pakistan for its national day parade", Global Times, March 17, 2019. <http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1142361.shtml>

⁴¹ "Pakistan military eyes key role developing giant copper and gold mine", The Economic Times, March 13, 2019. <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/pakistan-military-eyes-key-role-developing-giant-copper-and-gold-mine/articleshow/68387458.cms>

Nepal

27. The US Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defence for South and Southeast Asia, Joe Felter, visited Nepal in late February, 2019. During the visit, he spoke of Nepal's vital role in the region's stability, within the larger ambit of Indo – Pacific security. He also endeavored to provide a strategic context to the decades long military cooperation between Nepal and the US⁴², which he said is aimed at assisting the former to develop capability to defend its sovereignty, security and independence. It is learnt that the US will partner Nepal in setting up its National Defence University.
28. On March 01, 2018, Nepal concluded a \$18.9 million Foreign Military Sales (FMS) defense deal with the US Department of Defence and renowned Polish aircraft manufacturer Polskie Zaklady Lotnicze for the supply of two new M28 Skytruck aircraft. This makes Nepal the third country in Asia Pacific to operate a M28 after Vietnam and Indonesia⁴³.
29. Nepal Army Air Service also inducted two US manufactured Piper Archer training aircraft to its modest fleet of fixed wing aircraft (which would now have a total of four aircraft)⁴⁴.

Sri Lanka

30. The India-Sri Lanka annual bilateral Exercise 'Mitra Shakti' is being hosted by Sri Lanka from March 26 to April 8, 2019. Troops from the 1st Battalion of the Bihar Regiment of the Indian Army and Gemunu Watch Battalion of the Sri Lankan Army are participating in the exercise which entails tactical level operations in an international counter-insurgency and counter-terrorism environment under United Nations mandate⁴⁵.

⁴²"Nepal a vital security partner: US", The Himalayan Times, February 26, 2019. <https://thehimalayantimes.com/nepal/nepal-a-vital-security-partner-us/>

⁴³"US contracts Military Aircraft deal for Nepal, extends \$19 mn finance", Nepali Sansar, March 14, 2019. <https://www.nepalisansar.com/business/us-contracts-military-aircraft-deal-for-nepal-extends-19-mn-finance/>

⁴⁴"Nepal army first Piper Archer military training aircraft joins midair base inside a container", Aviation Nepal, February 20, 2019. <https://www.aviationnepal.com/nepal-army-first-piper-archer-military-training-aircraft-joins-mid-air-base-inside-a-container/>

⁴⁵"India-Sri Lanka joint exercise Mitra Shakti-VI to commence from March 26", Business Standard, March 19, 2019. https://www.business-standard.com/article/news-ani/india-sri-lanka-joint-exercise-mitra-shakti-vi-to-commence-from-mar-26-119031900893_1.html

31. On March 18, 2019, Australia launched a seven nation Indian Ocean military exercise starting in Colombo. 1,000 Australian security personnel in four naval ships and a military aircraft participated in their biggest joint exercise yet with Sri Lanka. The exercise with India commenced on March 26, 2019. The Australian ships will thereafter travel to Malaysia, Thailand, Vietnam, Indonesia and Singapore⁴⁶.

Myanmar

32. Myanmar's military has set up a panel to investigate atrocities committed against the *Rohingyas* during a crackdown that began in 2017. The panel of three officers is investigating events in Myanmar's Rakhine State in August, 2017 which resulted in more than 700,000 Rohingyas fleeing to Bangladesh. The investigating team will look into accusations compiled by Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and a U.N. fact-finding mission⁴⁷.

⁴⁶"Australia to launch Indian Ocean military exercises from Colombo", The Economic Times, March 15, 2019. <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/australia-to-launch-indian-ocean-military-exercises-from-colombo/articleshow/68426495.cms>

⁴⁷"Myanmar military panel to probe atrocities against Rohingya", UCA News, March 20, 2019. <https://www.ucanews.com/news/myanmar-military-panel-to-probe-atrocities-against-rohingya/84770>



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