



Delhi Policy Group

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Delhi Policy Group

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# DPG India Defence Digest

## Volume 1, Issue 8

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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](mailto:aashna@dpg.org.in).

#### Cover Photographs:

*(Photographs top to bottom)*

*Malabar 2019 Opening Ceremony conducted on board JMSDF ship JS Kaga in Sasebo, Japan on September 26, 2019. Source: [Twitter/@indiannavy](https://twitter.com/indiannavy)*

*Indian Army and US Army officials during the 15th edition of "Yudh Abhyas" a joint military exercise between India and USA at joint Base Lewis McChord near Washington DC, September 5, 2019, Source: [Twitter/@ANI](https://twitter.com/ANI)*

*The Indian Air Force formally inducted the AH-64E Apache Attack Helicopter at Air Force Station Pathankot on September 3, 2019, Source: [DD News](https://www.ddnews.com)*

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**DPG India Defence Digest**  
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**Contents**

<b>PART I: INDIA'S DEFENCE SCENE.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<i>Defence Policy.....</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Operations and Exercises .....</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Capability Development .....</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Visits.....</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>Other Issues.....</i>	<i>9</i>
<b>PART II: NEIGHBOURHOOD DEFENCE SCENE .....</b>	<b>12</b>
<i>China.....</i>	<i>12</i>
<i>Bangladesh .....</i>	<i>16</i>
<i>Pakistan.....</i>	<i>16</i>
<i>Sri Lanka .....</i>	<i>18</i>
<i>Nepal.....</i>	<i>18</i>



## PART I: INDIA'S DEFENCE SCENE

### *Defence Policy*

1. **PM Modi Visit to Russia<sup>1</sup>:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited Vladivostok on September 4-5 for the 20th India – Russia Annual Summit. He also participated in the 5th Eastern Economic Forum as the Chief Guest. During his visit, both sides expressed their commitment to upgrading bilateral defence cooperation, including by fostering joint development and production of military equipment, components and spare parts; improving the after-sales service system and continuing to hold regular joint exercises of the Armed Forces of the two countries. They also agreed to prepare a framework for cooperation on reciprocal logistics support. During the delegation-level dialogue, Russia offered joint design and development of conventional submarines with Air Independent Propulsion in accordance with Indian Navy requirements, with full access to technology and Intellectual Property Rights<sup>2</sup>.
  
2. **Defence Minister Rajnath Singh's Visit to Japan<sup>3</sup>:** Defence Minister Rajnath Singh visited Japan on September 2-3. He paid a courtesy call on Prime Minister Abe and co-chaired the Annual Defence Ministerial Dialogue with his Japanese counterpart Takeshi Iwaya. Defence cooperation aspects discussed included the following:-
  - a. Exchanges between the Japan Self Self-Defense Force and the Indian Armed forces involving all three services.
  - b. Education and Research Exchanges
  - c. Cooperation in Third Countries in the Indo-Pacific Region
  - d. Cooperation in Defence Equipment and Technology
  
3. **Defence Minister Rajnath Singh's Visit to South Korea<sup>4</sup>:** Defence Minister Rajnath Singh visited Korea on September 5-6. He held talks with

<sup>1</sup> "India - Russia Joint Statement during visit of Prime Minister to Vladivostok", MEA, September 5, 2019, <https://mea.gov.in/outgoing-visit-detail.htm?31795/India++Russia+Joint+Statement+during+visit+of+Prime+Minister+to+Vladivostok>

<sup>2</sup> "Russia proposes joint development of submarines with India", The Hindu, September 5, 2019, <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/russia-proposes-joint-development-of-submarines-with-india/article29344103.ece>

<sup>3</sup> "Joint Press Statement on Japan-India Annual Defence Ministerial Dialogue", PIB, September 3, 2019, <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1583948>

<sup>4</sup> "Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh holds talks with Minister of National Defence of Republic of Korea, Mr. Jeong Kyeongdoo in Seoul", PIB, September 6, 2019, <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1584291>

Minister of National Defence of Republic of Korea (ROK), Mr Jeong Kyeong-doo and discussed ongoing Service-to-Service co-operation as well as prospects for enhanced co-operation between defence industries of India and Korea. Two agreements to further defence educational exchanges and extend logistics support to each other's navies were signed. He also called on Prime Minister Mr. Lee Nak-Yeon.

### *Operations and Exercises*

4. **Indo-Thai CORPAT:** The 28th edition of India-Thailand Coordinated Patrol (Indo-Thai CORPAT) between the Indian Navy and the Royal Thai Navy was conducted from September 5-15. INS Kesari and HTMS Kraburi, along with Maritime Patrol Aircraft from both navies participated in the patrol<sup>5</sup>.
5. **Skirmish between PLA and Indian Security Forces:** A faceoff occurred between Indian and Chinese soldiers near Pangong Lake in Eastern Ladakh on September 11. The incident took place when Chinese troops objected to Indian soldiers patrolling the area. The ensuing scuffle led to both sides calling for reinforcements. The situation was, however, defused following delegation-level talks between the two sides<sup>6</sup>. Shortly thereafter, on September 17, Indian forces carried out an integrated military exercise in the same region. The exercise included armoured, infantry, Para troop and mechanised infantry units. Lieutenant General Ranbir Singh, General Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Northern Command, monitored the exercise<sup>7</sup>.
6. **Indian Navy Monitors Pakistan Live Missile Firing:** The Pakistan Navy carried out live firing tests of the AM-39 Exocet anti-ship missile from a helicopter, as well as test firing of an indigenously developed cruise missile in the North Arabian Sea, as part of naval exercise conducted from

<sup>5</sup> "28TH Indo-Thai CORPAT", PIB, September 6, 2019, <https://pib.gov.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=193027>

<sup>6</sup> "Standoff between Indian, Chinese troops in Ladakh resolved: Report", Business Standard, September 12, 2019, [https://www.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/standoff-between-indian-chinese-troops-in-ladakh-resolved-sources-119091200876\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/standoff-between-indian-chinese-troops-in-ladakh-resolved-sources-119091200876_1.html)

<sup>7</sup> "Indian army conducts war games near China border in eastern Ladakh", India Today, September 18, 2019, <https://www.indiatoday.in/india/story/indian-army-war-games-china-border-ladakh-1600471-2019-09-18>

September 25-29, 2019. The Indian Navy deployed Poseidon-8I maritime patrol aircraft and warships to monitor the exercise area<sup>8</sup>.

7. **Exercise Yudh Abhyas<sup>9</sup>**: This joint military exercise between Indian and US armies was conducted from September 5-18 at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, in Tacoma, Washington State. The US contingent comprised a company of 5-20 Infantry Battalion of the US Army, while the Assam Regiment represented the Indian side. Both sides jointly trained, planned and executed a series of tactical drills for neutralisation of likely threats that may be encountered in UN peacekeeping operations.
8. **Exercise SLINEX-19<sup>10</sup>**: The seventh edition of the annual joint India-Sri Lanka maritime exercise SLINEX 19 was held in the Bay of Bengal from September 8-14. Sri Lanka was represented by SLNS Sindurala, a Saryu-class advanced offshore patrol vessel built by Goa Shipyard, and SLNS Suranimala, a Sa'ar-4 Class missile boat. Sri Lankan Navy trainees visited IN ships Khukri and Sumedha as part of a cross-deck visit. They also carried out simulated manoeuvres on the Ship Handling Simulator.
9. **Exercise TSENTR 2019<sup>11</sup>**: India participated in Russia's annual training exercise 'TSENTR 2019', held from September 9-19 at Donguz training ranges, Orenburg, Russia. This year, nine countries participated in the exercise, including China, India, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Pakistan, Uzbekistan, Belarus and Mongolia. Exercise TSENTR 2019 comprised of two modules. The first included defence against terror operations, repelling air strikes, reconnaissance operations and defensive measures. The second focused on offensive operations.
10. **Exercise MAITREE-2019<sup>12</sup>**: Joint Military Exercise MAITREE-2019 between India and Thailand was conducted at the Foreign Training Node, Umroi (Meghalaya) from September 16-29. 50 personnel each from the

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<sup>8</sup> "India deploys warships to keep tabs on Pakistan Naval Exercise", The Times of India, September 26, 2019, <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/india-deploys-warships-to-keep-tabs-on-pakistans-naval-exercise/articleshow/71302822.cms>

<sup>9</sup> "Opening Ceremony Exercise YudhAbhyas - 2019", PIB, September 6, 2019, <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1584315>

<sup>10</sup> "Bilateral exercise SLINEX-19 between India-Sri Lanka commence", ANI, September 10, 2019, <https://www.aninews.in/news/national/general-news/bilateral-exercise-slinex-19-between-india-sri-lanka-commences20190910161021/>

<sup>11</sup> "CURTAIN RAISER: EX TSENTR 2019", PIB, September 5, 2019, <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1584258>

<sup>12</sup> "Indo-Thailand Joint Military Exercise Maitree - 2019", PIB, September, 12, 2019, <https://pib.gov.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=193155>



Indian and Royal Thai Armies participated. Exercise MAITREE is an annual training event conducted alternatively in Thailand and India since 2006. The aim of exercise is joint training of troops in counter terrorism operations in jungle terrain and urban scenarios.

11. **Exercise SITMEX-19<sup>13</sup>**: The maiden Singapore-India-Thailand Maritime Exercise (SITMEX-19) was conducted at Port Blair and in the Andaman Sea from September 16-20. IN ships Ranvir, Kora and Sumedha, along with a P-8I Long Range Maritime Patrol aircraft, were joined by RSS Tenacious, a Formidable-class Guided Missile Stealth Frigate and HTMS Kraburi, a Guided Missile Frigate. They engaged in Gunnery, Force Protection Measures, Air Defence and Communication Exercises to enhance maritime interoperability between the participating navies.
  
12. **Exercise MALABAR<sup>14</sup>**: The 23rd edition of the Trilateral Maritime Exercise MALABAR, between the navies of India, Japan and USA, led for the first time by the JMSDF, commenced off Sasebo, Japan on September 26. The exercise will run till October 4. IN ships Sahyadri and Kiltan along with a P-8I Long Range Maritime Patrol aircraft are participating in the exercise. The US Navy is represented by USS McCampbell, a Los Angeles-Class Nuclear Attack Submarine, and a P-8A Long Range Maritime Patrol aircraft. The JMSDF has fielded its Izumo Class Helicopter Destroyer JS Kaga, Guided Missile Destroyers JS Samidare and Choukai, and a P-1 Long Range Maritime Patrol aircraft. The exercise will encompass a range of complex maritime operations in the surface, sub-surface and air domains, focusing on Anti-Submarine Warfare, Anti-Air and Anti-Surface Firings, Maritime Interdiction Operations including Visit Board Search and Seizure, and a tactical scenario based exercise at sea.
  
13. **Raksha Mantri Day at Sea<sup>15</sup>**: The Raksha Mantri, Shri Rajnath Singh and the Chief of Naval Staff, Admiral Karambir Singh, spent a day at sea on board INS Vikramaditya, off the coast of Goa, on September 29. After witnessing a firepower demonstration, the Raksha Mantri said, "I am most impressed to see the professionalism, commitment and spirited approach

<sup>13</sup> "Sea Phase of maiden IN-RSN-RTN Trilateral Exercise Commences", PIB, September 19, 2019, <https://pib.gov.in/newsite/pmreleases.aspx?mincode=33>

<sup>14</sup> "Exercise MALABAR 2019", PIB, September 25, 2019, <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1586112>

<sup>15</sup> "Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh witnesses prowess and fire power of Western Fleet during "day at sea" onboard INS Vikramaditya", PIB, September 29, 2019, <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1586618>

shown by the brave sailors of the Indian Navy. I am reassured that the security of our nation is in safe hands”.

## *Capability Development*

### Inductions

14. **AH-64E Apache Attack Helicopter<sup>16</sup>:** The Indian Air Force formally inducted the AH-64E Apache Attack Helicopter at Air Force Station Pathankot on September 3. These helicopters will replace the Mi-35 fleet. The Apache carries air to ground Hellfire missiles, 70 mm Hydra rockets, air-to-air Stinger missiles, and one 30 mm chain gun with 1200 rounds as part of its area weapon sub system. It has a fire control radar with 360° coverage, a nose mounted sensor suite for target acquisition and night vision systems. India has signed a contract with the US for 22 Apache Attack Helicopters. The first eight have been delivered. The last batch is to be delivered by March 2020.
15. **17 Squadron IAF<sup>17</sup>:** Indian Air Force resurrected its 17 Squadron at Air Force Station Ambala on September 10. 17 Squadron was initially formed at Ambala on 01 Oct 1951 and has successively been equipped with Harvards, Vampires, Hunters and Mig-21s. It will be India’s first squadron to be equipped with the Rafale aircraft.
16. **INS Khanderi:** India’s second Kalvari-Class Scorpene submarine ‘KHANDERI’ was commissioned by the Raksha Mantri on September 28. At the commissioning ceremony, the Raksha Mantri said, “We need to safeguard the sea lanes of the Indian Ocean to maintain and promote peace and trade in the region. We care about the Indian Ocean and we will take strong action if anyone tries to disturb the peace<sup>18</sup>. The third Scorpene ‘KARANJ’ is currently undergoing sea trials. The fourth, ‘VELA’ was launched in May 2019 and is being prepared for sea trials; while the

<sup>16</sup> “Induction of AH-64E Apache Attack Helicopter”, PIB, September 3, 2019, <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1583956>

<sup>17</sup> “Resurrection Ceremony for 17 Squadron ‘GOLDEN ARROWS’”, PIB, September 10, 2019, <https://pib.gov.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=193115>

<sup>18</sup> “Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh commissions indigenously built submarine INS Khanderi”, PIB, September 28, 2019, <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1586541>

remaining two, 'VAGIR' and 'VAGSHEER', are in various stages of construction<sup>19</sup>.

17. **ICGS Varaha**<sup>20</sup>: Indian Coast Guard Ship Varaha, a 98 metre long offshore patrol vessel, was commissioned at Chennai by Shri Rajnath Singh, the Raksha Mantri, on September 25. The ship is the fourth in the series of seven offshore patrol vessels to be built by L&T Shipyard for the Indian Coast Guard. It will be based at New Mangalore in Karnataka.

### Indigenous Equipment Development

18. **Light Utility Helicopter**<sup>21</sup>: The Light Utility Helicopter (LUH) designed and developed by Hindustan Aeronautics Limited has cleared hot weather and high altitude capability tests. The trials were carried out by test pilots from HAL, the IAF and the Army from August 24 to September 2. With this, the LUH has complied with all requirements of the users and is expected to get operational clearance certification soon.
19. **Man Portable Anti-Tank Guided Missile**<sup>22</sup>: The Defence Research and Development Organisation successfully flight tested the low-weight, fire and forget Man Portable Antitank Guided Missile (MPATGM) in the ranges of Kurnool, Andhra Pradesh on September 11. This is the third series of successful tests of MPATGM.
20. **Naval Version of LCA Tejas**<sup>23</sup>: Tejas Light Combat Aircraft cleared the test of "arrested landing" at the shore-based test facility, INS Hansa, Goa, on September 9, 2019. The next stage will be arrested landings on INS Vikramaditya.

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<sup>19</sup> "Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited delivers second Scorpene submarine "KHANDERI" to Indian Navy", PIB, September 19, 2019, <https://pib.gov.in/newsite/pmreleases.aspx?mincode=33>

<sup>20</sup> "Defence Minister Rajnath Singh commissioned Indian Coast Guard Ship ICGS Varaha", All India Radio, September 25, 2019, <http://newsonair.nic.in/Main-News-Details.aspx?id=372024>

<sup>21</sup> "HAL's Light Utility Helicopter clears tests in Himalayas", Business Standard, September 5, 2019, [https://www.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/hal-s-light-utility-helicopter-clears-tests-in-himalayas-119090500650\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/hal-s-light-utility-helicopter-clears-tests-in-himalayas-119090500650_1.html)

<sup>22</sup> "DRDO successfully tests indigenous anti-tank missile", The Hindu, September 11, 2019, <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/drdo-successfully-tests-indigenous-anti-tank-missile/article29394941.ece>

<sup>23</sup> "Tejas LCA clears 'arrested landing' test, next stop aircraft carrier", The Indian Express, September 14, 2019, <https://indianexpress.com/article/india/tejas-lca-clears-arrested-landing-test-next-stop-aircraft-carrier-5994030/>

21. **Astra Missile<sup>24</sup>**: Defence Research and Development Organisation successfully flight-tested the Beyond Visual Range Air-to-Air Missile 'Astra' from a Su-30 MKI off the coast of Chandipur, Odisha, from September 16-19. Astra has range of more than 100 km with midcourse guidance and RF-seeker based terminal guidance to achieve target destruction with pinpoint accuracy. Successful trials of Astra will culminate in induction of the missile system into Indian Air Force
  
22. **INS Nilgiri Launch<sup>25</sup>**: Mrs Savitri Singh, wife of Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh, launched INS Nilgiri, the first of the P-17A stealth frigates, at Mazagon Dockyard Limited on September 28. Speaking at the event, the Raksha Mantri said that the Government is making concerted efforts to modernise the Navy and equip it with the best platforms. A derivative of the indigenous Shivalik class stealth frigate, Nilgiri incorporates new design concepts for improved survivability, stealth, sea-keeping and manoeuvrability. The ships will be equipped with the indigenous BEL HUMSA sonar, BEL Ajanta electronic warfare suite, Kavach decoy launchers, Barak 8 surface-to-air and Brahmos surface-to-surface and land attack missiles. They will carry two medium helicopters.

### Approvals and Sanctions

23. **Akash Air Defence Missile System<sup>26</sup>**: The Cabinet Committee on Security has cleared the procurement of six squadrons of Akash Air Defence Missile Systems worth Rs 5,000 crore. Akash is a medium-range mobile surface-to-air missile defence system developed by the DRDO and produced by BEL. The missile system can target aircraft up to 30 km away, at altitudes up to 18,000 m. It has the capability to neutralise aerial targets like fighter jets, cruise missiles and air-to-surface missiles as well as ballistic missiles.
  
24. **Modernisation of AD Complex on Navy Ships<sup>27</sup>**: A contract for modernisation of "Air Defence Complex Kashmir and Radar Fregat MAE"

<sup>24</sup> "DRDO conducts five trails of Air-to-Air Missile 'Astra'; All successful", PIB, September, 19, 2019, <https://pib.gov.in/newsite/pmreleases.aspx?mincode=33>

<sup>25</sup> "Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh launches Navy's first new stealth frigate, INS 'Nilgiri'", PIB, September 28, 2019, <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1586548>

<sup>26</sup> "Government clears over Rs 5,000 crore Akash missile project for Air Force", Economic Times, September 6, 2019, <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/government-clears-over-rs-5000-crore-akash-missile-project-for-air-force/articleshow/70994088.cms?from=mdr>

<sup>27</sup> "Contract Signed for Modernisation of Radar and Missile Systems of Delhi Class of Indian Navy Ships", PIB, September 12, 2019, <https://pib.gov.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=193165>

on P-15 (Delhi) Class of ships was signed between the Ministry of Defence, India and JSC Rosoboronexport, Russian Federation on September 12.

**25. Other Procurement<sup>28</sup>:** The Defence Acquisition Council, on September 14, approved procurement of ammunition and equipment worth Rs 2,000 crores. This includes development and production of 125-mm Armour Piercing Fin Stabilised Discarding-Sabot ammunition for T-72/T-90 tanks and a Mechanical Mine Layer (Self-Propelled), developed by DRDO and the Indian industry.

### Visits

**26. CNS Visit to Australia and New Zealand<sup>29</sup>:** Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Karambir Singh visited Australia and New Zealand from September 2-6. His programme included a visit to HMAS Albatross, where he was briefed on the MH60R helicopter, shown facilities and simulators and flew a sortie on board the MH 90 helicopter. The RAN also demonstrated the usage of augmented reality in training. In New Zealand, he interacted with Rear Admiral David Proctor, Chief of Navy, Air Marshal Kevin R Short, Chief of Defence Force, Air Vice-Marshal Tony Davies, Vice Chief of Defence Force and Major General John Boswell, Chief of Army.

**27. CNS Visit to Bangladesh<sup>30</sup>:** Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Karambir Singh visited Bangladesh from September 21-24. During his visit, the CNS held bilateral discussions with Adm Aurangzeb Chowdhury, Chief of the Naval Staff, Bangladesh Navy, Service Chiefs and other senior Government officials. CNS was also taken on a tour of the Khulna Shipyard as well as BN naval bases in Chattogram and Khulna.

**28. COAS Visit to Maldives<sup>31</sup>:** General Bipin Rawat, Chief of Army Staff, is visiting Maldives from September 30 – October 03. During his visit, he will interact with the hierarchy of the Maldivian Government and its armed

<sup>28</sup> "Tejas LCA clears 'arrested landing' test, next stop aircraft carrier", The Indian Express, September 14, 2019, <https://indianexpress.com/article/india/tejas-lca-clears-arrested-landing-test-next-stop-aircraft-carrier-5994030/>

<sup>29</sup> "Visit of Chief of the Naval Staff to Australia and New Zealand 02 to 06 September 2019", Indian Navy, September 2, 2019, <https://www.indiannavy.nic.in/content/visit-chief-naval-staff-australia-and-new-zealand-02-06-september-2019>

<sup>30</sup> "Visit of Admiral Karambir Singh Chief of the Naval Staff to Bangladesh (21 to 24 Sep 19)", PIB, September 21, 2019, <https://pib.gov.in/newsite/pmreleases.aspx?mincode=33>

<sup>31</sup> "Visit of General Bipin Rawat, Coas to Maldives", PIB, September, 29, 2019, <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1586596>

forces. The visit is aimed at strengthening the close bilateral ties between the nations.

29. **Indian Navy Overseas Deployment- Africa<sup>32</sup>:** Returning from her deployment to Europe and Russia, INS Tarkash made port calls at Lagos, Nigeria from September 5-7; Walvis Bay, Namibia from September 15-17; and Maputo, Mozambique from September 25-27. The visits enabled the ship to replenish fuel and provisions and provided opportunity for professional interaction with the Nigerian, Namibian and Mozambique Navies to enable further enhancing of co-operation with them.
30. **Indian Navy Overseas Deployment- South East Asia and Western Pacific<sup>33</sup>:** As part of Indian Navy's Overseas Deployment to South East Asia and Western Pacific, IN Ships Sahyadri and Kiltan made a port call at Laem Chabang, Thailand from August 31 – September 3; Sihanoukville, Cambodia from September 5-8; and Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia from September 12-15. The ships are part of the Indian Navy's Eastern Fleet, based at Visakhapatnam. The visit provided opportunity for the Indian and Royal Thai Navies to undertake a Passage Exercise at sea. The IN ships also conducted bilateral exercise '*Samudra Laksamana*' with the Royal Malaysian Navy to enhance interoperability.
31. **Visit of BNS Somudra Avijan<sup>34</sup>:** Bangladesh Naval Ship (BNS) Somudra Avijan visited Visakhapatnam from September 14-18. During the ship's stay, professional interaction, cross visits and social interactions were carried out between both navies.

### *Other Issues*

32. **Appointment of new Chief of Air Staff<sup>35</sup>:** Air Marshal RKS Bhadauria was appointed as the next Chief of Air Staff, to take over when Air Chief Marshal BS Dhanoa retires on September 30.

<sup>32</sup> "INS Tarkash at Lagos, Nigeria", PIB, September 5, 2019, <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1584253>

<sup>33</sup> "Visit of Indian Naval Ships to Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia", PIB, September 12, 2019, <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1584854>

<sup>34</sup> "BNS Somudra Avijan arrives Visakhapatnam on a Goodwill Visit", PIB, September 14, 2019, <https://pib.gov.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=193199>

<sup>35</sup> "Vice Chief of Air Staff RKS Bhadauria appointed next Chief of Air Staff", PIB, September, 2019, <https://pib.gov.in/newsite/pmreleases.aspx?mincode=33>

33. **Appointment of new Vice Chief of Army Staff<sup>36</sup>:** Lieutenant General Manoj Mukund Naravane assumed charge as Vice Chief of Army Staff (VCOAS) on September 1. Lt. Gen. Naravane succeeds Lt. Gen. D. Anbu who retired from service on August 31. Before taking charge as Vice Chief of the Army Staff, Lt. Gen. Naravane was heading the Eastern Command of the Army.
34. **Appointment of Lt. Gen. Abhijit Guha (Retd) on UN mission in Yemen<sup>37</sup>:** UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres appointed Lt. Gen. Abhijit Guha (Retd) as the head of the UN mission in Hodeida, Yemen. The General served from 2009-2013 as the Deputy Military Adviser and the Military Adviser ad interim in the Office of Military Affairs of the United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations, while also establishing the Office of Peacekeeping and Strategic Partnerships in 2013. Besides leading the UN Mission in support of the Hodeida Agreement (UNMHA), Lt Gen Guha will also take over as chair of the Redeployment Coordination Committee (RCC), tasked with redeploying forces of the Yemeni warring parties in accordance with their agreement. He succeeds Danish Lieutenant General Michael Lollesgaard.
35. **General Bipin Rawat Assumes Charge as Chairman Chiefs of Staff Committee<sup>38</sup>.** General Bipin Rawat received the baton of Chairman Chiefs of Staff Committee from Air Chief Marshal BS Dhanoa on September 27.
36. **SCO Conference on Military Medicine<sup>39</sup>:** The first conference of Military Medicine for Shanghai Co-operation Organisation member states was held at New Delhi on September 12-13, 2019. The conference, organised by Headquarters Integrated Defence Staff, was the first military co-operation event hosted by India under the SCO Defence Co-operation Plan 2019-2020. The aim of the conference was to share best practices in the field of

<sup>36</sup> "Lt. Gen. Mukund Naravane takes charge as Vice Chief of the Army Staff", The Hindu, September 1, 2019, <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/lt-gen-mukund-naravane-takes-charge-as-vice-chief-of-the-army-staff/article29314954.ece>

<sup>37</sup> "UN chief appoints Indian Abhijit Guha as new head of Hodeida mission", Gulf News, <https://gulfnews.com/world/gulf/yemen/un-chief-appoints-indian-abhijit-guha-as-new-head-of-hodeida-mission-1.66397044>

<sup>38</sup> "Chief of Army Staff General Bipin Rawat takes over as Chairman, Chiefs of Staff Committee", PIB, September 27, 2019, <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1586444>

<sup>39</sup> "1st conference of Military Medicine for SCO Member States to be held in New Delhi on 12 – 13 September, 2019", PIB, September 7, 2019, <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1584430>

military medicine, build capacities and overcome common challenges. Senior military medicine experts of SCO member States participated in the deliberations and discussed issues such as combat medical support, humanitarian assistance during disasters and measures to improve patient safety.

37. **BEML-WIPRO MOU:** Defence PSU BEML Ltd and Wipro Infrastructure Engineering (WIN) have signed an MoU to work together in the areas of aerospace, industrial automation, 3-D printing, artificial intelligence and hydraulic system engineering. The MoU entails the two firms working together on projects, products, systems and services for DRDO Labs and other government entities in India as well as overseas. Key focal areas include aerospace components and parts; metal additive manufacturing and design optimisation for new critical aggregates, legacy components & spares; and process automation<sup>40</sup>.

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<sup>40</sup> "Wipro Infrastructure and BEML sign MoU", Business Line, September 16, 2019, <https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/companies/wipro-infrastructure-and-beml-sign-mou/article29432087.ece>



## PART II: NEIGHBOURHOOD DEFENCE SCENE

### China

#### Defence Policy

39. **China-Russia Pledge to Deepen Military Cooperation:** The Vice Chairman of the Central Military Commission, Zhang Youxia met Russian Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu in Moscow on September 04, 2019 and signed an agreement to strengthen military cooperation to jointly maintain global peace and stability. China and Russia had elevated their relationship to a comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination for a new era on June 05, 2019. Zhang said that China is ready to work with Russia to implement the consensus reached between the Presidents of the two countries, boost military ties in the new era, deepen practical cooperation in all areas, jointly safeguard their security interests and maintain global peace and stability. Shoigu suggested that the two countries strengthen coordination on major international and regional issues and jointly deal with the challenges emanating from unilateralism and protectionism<sup>41</sup>. He added that military cooperation plays an important role in and demonstrates the “specialness” of Russia-China ties, and that Russia was willing to improve cooperation in army games, drills and personnel training.
40. **Xiangshan Security Forum:** China will host the 9<sup>th</sup> Beijing Xiangshan security forum from October 20-22. This year’s theme will be “Maintaining International Order and Promoting Peace in the Asia-Pacific Region”. Official delegations from nearly 60 countries and six international organizations, including 25 defense ministers and six Chiefs of Staff will participate in the forum. It has been announced that all attendees will be invited to visit an exhibition on China’s international military cooperation<sup>42</sup>.

#### Operations & Exercises

41. **Kowari – 2019:** China-Australia-US Joint Exercise, “Kowari 2019” was held from August 28-September 04 in Australia. This is the 6<sup>th</sup> annual joint exercise organised by the Special Forces of the three countries. For the first

<sup>41</sup>“China, Russia pledge to deepen military cooperation”, China Military, September 06, 2019. [http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/view/2019-09/06/content\\_9613127.htm](http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/view/2019-09/06/content_9613127.htm)

<sup>42</sup> “China to host Xiangshan security forum in October”, China Military, September 26, 2019. [http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/view/2019-09/26/content\\_9637060.htm](http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/view/2019-09/26/content_9637060.htm)

time, airborne troops of the PLA Air Force participated alongside their counterparts from the Australian Army and the U.S. Marine Corps. The survival exercise involved a series of training activities such as hiking, sea kayaking, mountaineering and canyoneering<sup>43</sup>.

42. **China Pak Air Force Exercise Shaheen VIII:** The air forces of China and Pakistan concluded a two week long joint exercise in Northwestern China during which systematic exercises were conducted for the first time. About 50 aircraft of various types including fighters and early warning aircraft took part in exercises to seize air superiority and carry out ground attack. According to a statement released by the PLA Air Force, the number of personnel, types of weapons used and combat units involved is unprecedented<sup>44</sup>.
43. **Iran-Russia-China to Conduct Naval Drill:** General Ghadir Nezami Pour, head of the international affairs and defence diplomacy of Iran's General Staff of the Armed Forces revealed that China, Russia and Iran are planning to conduct a joint naval drill in the Sea of Oman and northern Indian Ocean. The exercise would include exchange of tactical and military experiences. Officials at the level of defence minister, Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces and Commanders of the armed forces are expected to visit Iran in the near future<sup>45</sup>. This announcement was made against the backdrop of the visit of Major General Mohammad Baqeri, Chief of Staff of the Iranian Armed Forces to Beijing earlier this month.
44. **Chinese Warships in Indian Ocean:** The Indian surveillance system has notified the presence of seven warships of the PLA Navy operating in the Indian Ocean<sup>46</sup>. The PLA Navy's 33<sup>rd</sup> Escort Flotilla, comprising a Type 052D class destroyer, a Type 054A frigate and a Type 903A supply ship sailed from Qingdao for the Gulf of Aden on August 29, 2019<sup>47</sup>. Ostensibly

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<sup>43</sup>"China-Australia-US Joint Exercise KOWARI 2019 held", China Military, September 05, 2019. [http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/view/2019-09/05/content\\_9611995.htm](http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/view/2019-09/05/content_9611995.htm)

<sup>44</sup>"Chinese, Pakistani air forces wrap up unprecedented mock battle exercise", China Military, September 09, 2019. [http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/view/2019-09/09/content\\_9614923.htm](http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/view/2019-09/09/content_9614923.htm)

<sup>45</sup>"China, Russia, Iran plan joint naval drill in international waters", South China Morning Post, September 21, 2019. <https://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy/article/3029819/china-russia-iran-plan-joint-naval-drill-international-waters>

<sup>46</sup>"Chinese warships in Indian Ocean spotted by surveillance network", Hindustan Times, September 17, 2019. <https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/navy-spy-planes-tracking-7-chinese-warships-in-indian-ocean-region/story-wkjJtfgrUmBMTgQ41F1ZxI.html>

<sup>47</sup>"China sends new naval fleet for escort mission", China Military, September 29, 2019. [http://english.chinamil.com.cn/view/2019-08/29/content\\_9605857.htm](http://english.chinamil.com.cn/view/2019-08/29/content_9605857.htm)

intended for anti-piracy escort missions in the Gulf of Aden and off Somalia, the ships, armed with cruise missiles, surface to air missiles and other high performance weapons, were tracked by Indian Naval P-8I aircraft from the time they entered the Indian Ocean.

**45. Chinese Navy Carrier Liaoning:** According to some sources on Twitter, China's aircraft carrier Liaoning left the Qingdao naval base for sea training on September 21. Reports have surfaced that the aircraft carrier has been spotted with a Type 055 DDG on September 22. This report comes amidst months of speculation that the Chinese government plans to sell Liaoning to Pakistan<sup>48</sup> in order to upgrade the Pakistani Navy's capabilities.

### Visits

**46. Chinese Military Delegation Visits Japan:** A delegation of colonel level officers of the PLA visited Tokyo as part of a defence exchange program between the Sasakawa Peace Foundation, the Sasakawa Japan-China Friendship Fund and the China Institution for International Strategic Studies. Launched in 2001, the exchange program provides an important platform for the deepening of mutual trust and understanding between the two defence departments<sup>49</sup>.

**47. Iranian Military Chief Visits Chinese Naval Base:** Chief of Staff of the Iranian Armed Forces, Major General Mohammad Hossein Baqeri arrived in China on September 11 for an official visit at the invitation of his Chinese counterpart. During his stay, he paid a visit to the Chinese Naval Base in Shanghai and held talks with the Chief of the Joint Staff Department of China's Central Military Commission Li Zuocheng to establish an Iran-China joint military commission<sup>50</sup>.

### Capability Development & Sales

**48. Launch of Navigation Satellites:** China successfully launched a new pair of navigation satellites on September 22. The launch of Beidou-3M23

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<sup>48</sup> "China Navy aircraft carrier Liaoning left Qingdao naval base for sea training", Navy recognition, September 23, 2019.

<https://www.navyrecognition.com/index.php/news/defence-news/2019/september/7498-china-navy-aircraft-carrier-liaoning-left-qingdao-naval-base-for-sea-training.html>

<sup>49</sup> "Chinese military delegation visits Japan", China Military, September 20, 2019.

[http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/view/2019-09/20/content\\_9630172.htm](http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/view/2019-09/20/content_9630172.htm)

<sup>50</sup> "Iran's top general to visit China", Tasnim News, Agency, September 08, 2019.

<https://www.tasnimnews.com/en/news/2019/09/08/2092897/iran-s-top-general-to-visit-china>

(Beidou-47) and Beidou-3M24 (Beidou-48) took place from the Launch Centre in the Sichuan province. The satellites are part of a constellation that will expand the system's ability to provide global navigation coverage. The Beidou Navigation Satellite System has been independently developed, constructed and operated by China taking into account the needs of the country's national security and economic and social development. It provides all-time, all-weather and high-accuracy positioning, navigation and timing services to global users<sup>51</sup>.

49. **China Deploying Drones in South China Sea:** A report released by the Ministry of Natural Resources indicates that China is working on a far-reaching reconnaissance system reliant on drones to strengthen its ability to conduct surveillance operations in hard-to-reach areas of the South China Sea. The highly manoeuvrable drones can purportedly provide high-definition images and videos in real time, while flying below clouds, which at times hinder China's satellite surveillance efforts. The system is currently being used for marine management services<sup>52</sup>.
50. **PLA Navy Launches New Type of Amphibious Assault Ship:** China's first amphibious assault ship was launched from Shanghai on September 25. The new ship is the first in the Type 075 class and was launched by China's Hudong-Zhonghua Shipbuilding Company, which is China's largest shipbuilder. The Type 075 class is also defined as a Landing Helicopter Dock<sup>53</sup>.
51. **China to Build Type 071E Amphibious Transport Dock for Royal Thai Navy-:** The Royal Thai Navy on September 09, 2019, signed an agreement with the state-owned China Shipbuilding Industry Corporation to receive a Type 071E amphibious transport dock, reportedly costing \$200.7 million, to be built in three years. The ship can accommodate 600-800 troops as well as two landing craft carried on davits. It has a stern well dock that can launch and recover up to four Type 726 air-cushioned landing craft. It can

<sup>51</sup>"Long March 3B launches latest Beidou-3M satellites", NASA Spaceflight, September 22, 2019. <https://www.nasaspaceflight.com/2019/09/long-march-3b-beidou-3m-satellites/>

<sup>52</sup>"China is deploying drones to spy on the South China Sea like never before", Business Insider, September 12, 2019. <https://www.businessinsider.in/China-is-deploying-drones-to-spy-on-the-South-China-Sea-like-never-before/articleshow/71088458.cms>

<sup>53</sup>"China launches first amphibious assault ship", China Military, September 25, 2019. [http://english.chinamil.com.cn/view/2019-09/25/content\\_9635203.htm](http://english.chinamil.com.cn/view/2019-09/25/content_9635203.htm)

carry up to four large helicopters in its hangars and has two helicopter landing spots<sup>54</sup>.

### *Bangladesh*

52. **Bangladesh Air Force Chief Visits China:** The Chief of Air Staff of the Bangladesh Air Force, Air Chief Marshal Masihuzzaman Serniabat paid an official visit to China from September 15-20 on the invitation of the PLA Air Force. During his visit, he called on General Wei Fenghe, Chinese State Councillor and Minister of National Defence, and General Ding Laihang, Commander of PLA Air Force and exchanged views on bilateral issues of mutual interest<sup>55</sup>.
53. **China to Build Submarine Base in Bangladesh:** Beijing will reportedly help Bangladesh construct its first submarine base. The future base will house the two Chinese-made submarines purchased by Dhaka from Beijing in 2016. The facility will be built in a Southeastern district in the Bay of Bengal and financed by Bangladesh<sup>56</sup>. However, no agreement has been signed yet between the two countries for the base's construction.

### *Pakistan*

54. **US CENTCOM call on Army Chief:** A U.S. delegation led by General Kenneth F. McKenzie Jr, Commander US CENTCOM, called on Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Qamar Javed Bajwa on September 09. The geo-strategic environment and regional security including the Afghanistan and Kashmir situation were discussed<sup>57</sup>.
55. **Second Romanian Built 2300 Tons Corvette For Pakistani Navy Launched:** The second state of the art 2300 Ton Corvette built in Galati, Romania by DAMEN Shipyards was launched on September 03. The Pakistani Chief of Staff (Personal) Vice Admiral Athar Mukhtar was the

<sup>54</sup>"Thailand to acquire amphibious ship from China", Defense News, September 12, 2019. <https://www.defensenews.com/naval/2019/09/12/thailand-to-acquire-amphibious-ship-from-china/>

<sup>55</sup>"BAF Chief to visit China today", New Age Bangladesh, September 15, 2019. <http://www.newagebd.net/article/84601/baf-chief-to-visit-china-today>

<sup>56</sup>"China to help Bangladesh build submarine base, senior official says", Benar News, September 12, 2019. <https://www.benarnews.org/english/news/bengali/submarine-base-09122019155029.html>

<sup>57</sup>"US delegation led by General Kenneth F. Mc Kenzie Jr, Commander US CENTCOM, called on Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Qamar Javed Bajwa", ISPR United, September 09, 2019. <https://www.ispr.gov.pk/press-release-detail.php?id=5420>

Chief Guest for the occasion<sup>58</sup>. The first ship of the class had been launched on May 17. The weapon fit of these vessels is not yet known.

56. **On Kashmir:** The following are the updates on Pakistan's actions:
- a. Pakistan's Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) Director General Maj-Gen Asif Ghafoor, during a press conference reiterated the country's unflinching support for Kashmir, saying that Kashmir was Pakistan's 'jugular vein' and that the country would go to any limit for the right to self-determination for the people in the Indian-occupied Kashmir<sup>59</sup>.
  - b. According to the Indian Border Security Force, Pakistani forces have launched unprecedented cross border firing along the border in the Samba sector of Jammu<sup>60</sup>.
  - c. Soon after, Indian Army forces have reported that the Pakistani Army had moved a brigade-sized force of around 2,000 soldiers to Bagh and Kotli sectors of Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, which were within 30 kms of the Line of Control (LoC). India's security establishment is keeping close watch on the troop movements in Pakistan<sup>61</sup>.
  - d. Two Pakistani nationals were nabbed by the Indian Army near Baramulla district of the Indian side of the LoC. During interrogation, it was revealed that the two were Lashkar-e-Taiba terrorists and that around 300 trained militants were being prepared to enter Indian territory from Pakistan<sup>62</sup>.
  - e. According to intelligence inputs, the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) has recruited 40-60 Afghan terrorists belonging to various terror groups and armed them with sophisticated weapons to carry out attacks in Jammu and Kashmir. As per documents accessed by ANI these terrorists will be trained in Afghanistan and then received by

<sup>58</sup> "Second state of the art 2300 Tons Corvette vessel inducted into Pakistani Navy", Radio Pakistan, September 03, 2019. <http://www.radio.gov.pk/03-09-2019/second-state-of-art-2300-tons-corvette-vessel-inducted-into-pakistan-navy>

<sup>59</sup> "Pakistan can go to any extent for Kashmir: DG ISPR", The News, September 05, 2019. <https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/522343-pakistan-can-go-to-any-extent-for-kashmir-dg-ispr>

<sup>60</sup> "Pakistan unleashes unprecedented cross border firing in Jammu: BSF", The Economic Times, September 17, 2019. <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/pakistan-unleashes-unprecedented-cross-border-firing-in-jammu-bsf/articleshow/71170473.cms>

<sup>61</sup> "Pakistan moves 2000 soldiers within 30 kms of LoC: Report", Live Mint, September 05, 2019. <https://www.livemint.com/news/india/pakistan-moves-2-000-soldiers-within-30-kms-of-loc-report-1567687312838.html>

<sup>62</sup> "2 Pakistani nationals nabbed, planned to guide terrorists into Kashmir", Times of India, September 03, 2019. <https://www.timesnownews.com/india/article/2-pakistan-nationals-nabbed-planned-to-guide-terrorists-into-kashmir/481942>

Pakistani Army in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province of Pakistan from where they will be launched across the border<sup>63</sup>.

### *Sri Lanka*

57. **Cormorant Strike 2019:** The premier field training exercise of the Sri Lankan Armed Forces concluded on Kuchchaveli beach on September 23. The exercise was held for the 10th consecutive year with more than 80 participants from 10 countries. Mission oriented training was conducted for foreign participants by Commando and Special Forces under their respective Brigade Commanders<sup>64</sup>.

### *Nepal*

58. **Nepal Army Receives First Agusta Helicopter<sup>65</sup>:** Nepal's Army received its new Agusta Westland 'AW 139' helicopter on September 19. The military helicopter has been brought in a civil version with a civil registration number and will be used for VVIP transport purposes in Nepal. This is the second Agusta helicopter procured by the Nepal Army.

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<sup>63</sup>"Pakistan Army recruits Afghan fighters to carry out attacks in J&K, forces on alert", Economic Times, September 25, 2019. <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/pakistan-army-recruits-afghan-fighters-to-carry-out-attacks-in-j-k-forces-on-alert/articleshow/71291488.cms>

<sup>64</sup> Mega EXERCISE- Cormorant Strike X- 2019 Begins", Sri Lankan Army, September 03, 2019. <https://www.army.lk/news/mega-%E2%80%98exercise-cormorant-strike-x-2019%E2%80%99-begins>

<sup>65</sup>"Nepali Army lands its new VVIP version Agusta helicopter in civil registration", Aviation Nepal, September 19, 2019. <https://www.aviationnepal.com/nepali-army-lands-its-new-vvip-version-agusta-helicopter-in-civil-registration/>



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