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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)

DRDO/ADA developed LCA (Navy) undertaking the maiden landing on board INS Vikramaditya on January 11, 2020.

Source: Twitter/@DRDO_India

Lt Gen Ranbir Singh, GOC-in-C Northern Command, interacting with Gen Han Weiguo, Commander PLA Ground Forces; January 8, 2020. Source: Twitter/ @NorthernComd_IA

Rajnath Singh dedicates 51st K9 Vajra-T guns to nation at L&T Armoured System Complex, at Hazira, Gujarat on January 16, 2020. Source: All India Radio/<http://newsonair.nic.in/Main-News-Details.aspx?id=378845>

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PART I: INDIA'S DEFENCE SCENE

Defence Policy

1. **India-Finland Defence MoU¹**. India and Finland signed a Memorandum of Understanding on defence cooperation on January 15, on the sidelines of the Raisina Dialogue. The MoU covers production, procurement, R&D and industrial cooperation.
2. **Indian Army Will Withdraw From CI/CT Ops²**. The Indian Army plans to draw down all its regular forces deployed in counterinsurgency, counterterrorism and internal security duties from the North-East in the next 18-24 months, to focus on conventional warfare. Two battalions have already been taken off from such duties.

Operations and Exercises

3. **Ex Naseem-Al- Bahr³**. Royal Navy of Oman (RNO) ships Al Rasikh & Khassab arrived at Mormugao Port, Goa on January 5 to participate in the 12th edition of the Indo-Oman biennial naval exercise, Naseem-Al- Bahr (Sea Breeze). IN ships Beas and Subhadra will participate in the exercise.
4. **Operation Vanilla⁴**. Responding to a request received from Madagascar, INS Airavat, which was mission deployed in the Southern Indian Ocean was diverted to Antsiranana to undertake a Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief mission following cyclone Diane. INS Airavat is geared to set up a medical camp and provide, food, water and other necessary relief material. The Indian Navy is monitoring the situation and is prepared to render all necessary assistance to the local population.

¹ "India and Finland ink MoU to enhance bilateral defence cooperation", PIB, January, 2020, <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1599439>

² "Plan to cut Army from internal security duties in N-E, will be done in next 18-24 months: Chief", The Indian Express, January 29, 2020, <https://indianexpress.com/article/india/northeast-citizenship-act-nrc-assam-army-naravane-6240157/>

³ "Royal Navy of Oman Ships Arrive at Goa to Participate in Exercise Naseem-Al-Bahr", PIB, January 6, 2020, <https://www.indiannavy.nic.in/node/25153>

⁴ "Indian Navy Launches 'Operation Vanilla' to Provide Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief at Madagascar", PIB, January 29, 2020, <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1600896>. See also <https://www.indiannavy.nic.in/node/25341>

Capability Development

5. **Trial at Sea of LCA Tejas⁵.** DRDO successfully carried out the maiden arrested landing of the Naval version of LCA Tejas onboard of INS Vikramaditya on January 11, followed by the take-off from the ship's ski-jump a day later. These trials Tejas had earlier been completed from the Shore Based Test Facility at Goa. Tejas is single-engine, delta wing, multirole light fighter designed by the Aeronautical Development Agency (ADA) and Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) for the Indian Air Force and the Indian Navy.
6. **Induction of 222 Squadron⁶.** The Indian Air Force inducted No 222 Squadron, the Tigersharks, at Air Force Station Thanjavur on January 20. This is the first Su-30 MKI squadron based in Southern India and the first squadron equipped with air launched BrahMos anti-ship cruise missiles. The Squadron will operate closely with the Indian Army and Navy. The positioning of the squadron at Thanjavur is intended to augment India's strike capability in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR).
7. **DAC Approvals⁷.** The Defence Acquisition Council accorded approval for procurement of equipment worth over Rs 5,100 crore from indigenous sources. These include Electronic Warfare Systems for the Army designed by DRDO and manufactured locally by Indian industry. The systems will be used in deserts and plains and will provide comprehensive Electronic Support and Counter Measure capabilities to the field formations. The DAC also approved prototype testing of trawl assemblies designed by DRDO for T-72 and T-90 tanks, which provide a de-mining capability to the Army.
8. **Shortlisting of Partners for Project P-75I⁸.** On January 21, the DAC shortlisted two Indian and five foreign shipbuilders to take part in a Rs 50,000-crore project to build submarines. The shortlisted Indian companies are Larsen & Toubro and Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited and the foreign companies are the French Naval Group, Germany's

⁵ "Maiden landing of DRDO-developed LCA Navy onboard INS Vikramaditya", PIB, January 11, 2020, <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1599123>

⁶ "Induction of 222 Squadron at Air Force Station Thanjavur", PIB, January 20, 2020, <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1599898>

⁷ "Defence Acquisition Council, chaired by Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh, approves several procurement proposals to boost 'Make in India'", PIB, January 21, 2020, <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1600018>

⁸ "2 Indian, 5 foreign yards cleared for Rs 50K-cr submarine project", The Hindustan Times, January 22, 2020, <https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/2-indian-5-foreign-yards-cleared-for-rs-50k-cr-submarine-project/story-tXyjGd1itJGZO2N7XOhKVK.html>

Thyssenkrupp Marine Systems, Russia's Rubin Design Bureau, Spain's Navantia and South Korea's Daewoo Shipbuilding & Marine Engineering Company. Six advanced submarines will be built under project P-75I. The project will be pursued under 'strategic partnership' (SP) model.

9. **K9 Vajra-T**⁹. Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh flagged off the 51st K9 VAJRA-T Gun from Larsen & Toubro's Armoured System Complex at Hazira in Gujarat on January 16. L&T Defence is currently executing the 'K9 VAJRA-T' Tracked, Self-Propelled Howitzer Guns program and has delivered 51 of the 100 guns ordered ahead of schedule.
10. **Test Firing of K-4 Ballistic Missile**¹⁰. The DRDO has conducted test firings of the K-4 SLBM from a submerged pontoon off the Andhra Pradesh coast on January 19, and again on January 24. K-4 is a nuclear capable submarine launched ballistic missile with a strike range of 3500 Km. The missile will equip India's Arihant class nuclear powered submarines.

Visits

11. **Northern Army Commander's Visit to China**¹¹. The Indian Northern Army Commander, Lt Gen Ranbir Singh, visited China from January 6-9. He met Gen Han Weiguo, Commander People's Liberation Army Ground Force and exchanged views on measures to enhance peace and tranquillity along the borders. Lt Gen Ranbir Singh led a high-level military delegation comprising of one major general and two colonels, who visited vital military and civil establishments in Beijing, Chengdu, Urumqi and Shanghai.
12. **Visit of RAN ship to Mumbai**¹². Royal Australian Navy (RAN) Ship HMAS Toowoomba is visiting Mumbai from January 29. HMS Toowoomba is on an Overseas Deployment in the region and is under the operational control of Combined Task Force 150. Senior Naval officers from India's

⁹ "Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh flags off 51st K9 VAJRA-T Gun from L&T Armoured System Complex in Gujarat", PIB, January 16, 2020, <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1599550>

¹⁰ "India successfully test-fires K-4 Ballistic Missile", India Today, January 19, 2020, <https://www.indiatoday.in/india/story/india-launches-underwater-ballistic-missile-1638305-2020-01-19>

¹¹ "Northern Army commander meets PLA's ground forces' commander in China", India Today, January 8, 2020, <https://www.indiatoday.in/india/story/northern-army-commander-meets-pla-s-ground-forces-commander-in-china-1635095-2020-01-08>

¹² "Royal Australian Navy Ship HMAS Toowoomba at Mumbai", PIB, January 29, 2020, <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1600897>

Western Naval Command used the opportunity to discuss shared interests in the maritime domain with Australian naval officers.

Other Issues

13. **Appointment of Chief of Defence Staff¹³**. General Bipin Rawat assumed charge as Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) from January 1. As the CDS, General Rawat will be the Principal Military Advisor to the Raksha Mantri on all Tri-Services matters. He will also head the Department of Military Affairs (DMA). He was earlier Chief of the Army Staff.
14. **Appointment of Air Officer-in-Charge Administration¹⁴**. Air Marshal MSG Menon assumed charge as the Air Officer-in-Charge Administration of Indian Air Force on January 1. He was earlier Director General (Works & Ceremonials) at Air HQ.
15. **Appointment of Air Officer-in-Charge Maintenance¹⁵**. Air Marshal Vibhas Pande assumed charge as the Air Officer-in-Charge Maintenance of Indian Air Force on January 1, 2020. He was earlier Director General (Aircraft) at Air HQ.
16. **Appointment of Chief of Staff Southern Naval Command¹⁶**. Rear Admiral MD Suresh assumed charge as Chief of Staff of the Southern Naval Command, the Training Command of the Indian Navy on January 8. He was earlier Assistant Chief of Integrated Defence Staff at the Defence Intelligence Agency, in HQ IDS.
17. **Appointment of Vice Chief of the Army Staff¹⁷**. Lt Gen Satinder Kumar Saini assumed charge as Vice Chief of the Army Staff on January 28. Before this, he was heading the Army's Southern Command.

¹³ "General Bipin Rawat assumes charge of first Chief of Defence Staff", PIB, January 1, 2020, <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1598155>

¹⁴ "Air Marshal MSG Menon VSM assumes charge as Air Officer-in-Charge Administration", PIB, January 1, 2020, <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1598145>

¹⁵ "Air Marshal VibhasPande VSM assumes charge as Air Officer-in-Charge Maintenance", PIB, January 1, 2020, <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1598146>

¹⁶ "Rear Admiral MD Suresh, AVSM, NM Assumes Charge as Chief of Staff, Southern Naval Command", Indian Navy, January 8, 2020, <https://www.indiannavy.nic.in/content/rear-admiral-md-suresh-avsm-nm-assumes-charge-chief-staff-southern-naval-command>

¹⁷ "Lt Gen Satinder Kumar Saini Assumes Appointment of VCOAS", PIB, January 28, 2019, <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1600893>

18. **Terrorist Surrender in Assam**¹⁸. 644 terrorists of eight banned insurgent outfits surrendered in Assam, along with 177 arms, on January 23. The surrendered terrorists belong to ULFA (I), NDFB, RNLf, KLO, CPI (Maoist), NSLA, ADF and NLFB. It was one of the largest surrenders of terrorists in recent times.

¹⁸ "Assam: 644 terrorists of 8 banned outfits surrender", DD News, January 23, 2020, <http://ddnews.gov.in/national/assam-644-terrorists-8-banned-outfits-surrender%C2%A0>

PART II: NEIGHBOURHOOD DEFENCE SCENE

China

Operations and Exercises

19. **China-Pakistan Ex "Sea Guardian - 2020"**¹⁹. The Pakistan Navy and the PLA Navy conducted joint exercises off Karachi from January 06 -14, encompassing a harbour and a sea phase. China participated with the guided-missile destroyer Yinchuan (Hull 175), the guided-missile frigate Yuncheng (Hull 571), the comprehensive supply ship Weishanhu (Hull 887), and the submarine rescue ship Liugongdao (Hull 865). Pakistani contributed two Zulfiquar-class frigates, two fast attack craft , one fixed-wing anti-submarine patrol aircraft and two ship-borne helicopters. The stated purpose of the exercise was to enhance security cooperation while innovating methods of conducting China-Pakistan joint naval drills and enhancing the capability of the two navies to jointly cope with maritime terrorism and crime.
20. **China-Tanzania Ex "Sincere Partners 2019"**²⁰. The ground forces of China and Tanzania concluded joint military exercise 'Sincere Partners' in the city of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. Beginning December 23 2019, the drills covered subjects like command post exercise, explosive operation, and light weapons shooting and reinforced pragmatic cooperation between the two militaries, thus upgrading their capabilities to conduct military missions.
21. **PLA begins Major Military Exercise in Tibet**²¹. The PLA's Tibet Military Command started its New Year exercises deploying its latest weapons including the Type 15 light battle tank and the new 155-MM vehicle-mounted howitzer. Both the tank and howitzer are specifically designed with advantages for plateau regions.

Visits

¹⁹"China, Pakistan kick off "Sea Guardians-2020" naval drill in Karachi", China Military, January 06, 2020. http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/view/2020-01/06/content_9710755.htm

²⁰"China, Tanzania conclude "Sincere Partners 2019" joint military training", China Military, January 21, 2020. http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/view/2020-01/21/content_9722909.htm

²¹"China's PLA begins major military exercises in Tibet", Economic Times, January 06, 2020. <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/chinas-pla-begins-major-military-exercises-in-tibet/articleshow/73117556.cms>

22. **Chinese Coast Guard Ship Visits Philippines²²**. A vessel of the China Coast Guard (CCG), arrived in Manila, for the third meeting of the Joint Coast Guard Committee (JCGC) on Maritime Cooperation between the CCG and the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) on January 14. The meeting discussed and identified cooperation projects and new cooperation fields. Both sides also emphasized the commitments to deepening cooperation between China and Philippine Coast Guards, jointly addressing maritime emergencies, humanitarian and environmental protection concerns, and building the South China Sea into a sea of peace, stability and prosperity.

Capability Development and Sales

23. **China's First Type 055 Destroyer Commissioned²³**. The Nanchang, China's first Type 055 guided-missile destroyer, was commissioned in the PLA Navy on January 12 in the port city of Qingdao. The commissioning of Nanchang marks the Navy's leap from the third to the fourth generation of destroyers.
24. **China Launches New Destroyers²⁴**. According to a Global Times report, a Type 055 guided missile destroyer and a Type 052D guided missile destroyer were launched by China and the two ships are expected to enter military service in two years. The ships were launched on December 27. The Type 055 is China's first 10,000 ton-class guided missile destroyer with a 112-cell vertical launch system, and the smaller Type 052D has 64 vertical launch cells. Both types have good detection, air defense and anti-ship capabilities.
25. **Upgraded JF-17 Fighter Jet Makes Maiden Flight²⁵**. The first JF-17 Block 3 prototype co-developed by Pakistan and China, with the serial number 3000, reportedly features technologies from China's J-20 fighter jet. It made its maiden flight in December in Southwest China's Sichuan Province. The aircraft has a new and larger holographic wide-angle head-up display and integrated cockpit display similar to the one used by the J-20, in addition to an advanced infrared missile approach warning system

²²"Chinese, Philippine Coast Guards deepen maritime law enforcement cooperation", China Military, January 17, 2020. http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/view/2020-01/17/content_9719810.htm

²³"China's first Type 055 destroyer Nanchang commissioned", China Military, January 12, 2020. http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/view/2020-01/12/content_9715286.htm

²⁴"China launches powerful destroyers, delivery expected in two years", China Military, December 30, 2019. http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/view/2019-12/30/content_9705922.htm

²⁵"Upgraded JF-17 fighter jet makes maiden flight", China Military, January 02, 2020. http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/view/2020-01/02/content_9708099.htm

used by the J-10C, J-16 and J-20 fighter jets. The Block 3 prototype is expected to enter Pakistan Air Force service.

26. **Chinese Rocket Force Conducts Nuclear Attack Survival Exercise²⁶**. The PLA's Rocket Force conducted a nuclear attack survival exercise where troops in an underground missile facility had to endure extreme conditions and make sure they could still launch nuclear counterattacks. During this exercise, a Rocket Force Brigade mobilized into the launch bunker that was then struck by a mock hostile nuclear attack as the troops carried out contingency plans and operated missiles for counterattack. They also simulated a situation where missile fuel leaked and a troubleshooting team was immediately deployed to repair.

Pakistan

27. **Pakistan Passes Bill for Extending Term of Military Chief²⁷**. Pakistan's upper house of parliament has approved a bill that allows the government to extend the term of the country's Army Chief. The Pakistani Senate voted to pass three bills that set a higher retirement age for the chiefs of the Pakistani army, navy and air force, allowing the Prime Minister to extend their terms at his discretion.
28. **U.S Resumes Pakistan Military Training Program²⁸**. The United States has resumed the International Military Education and Training Program that was suspended in 2018 after Pakistan and Russia signed an agreement to allow Pakistani military officers to receive training in Russian military institutions. This was announced by the U.S. State Department shortly after Secretary of State Mike Pompeo spoke to Pakistani Chief of the Army Staff General Qamar Javed Bajwa to discuss the killing of senior Iranian commander Qasem Soleimani.
29. **Successful Launch of Surface-to-surface Ballistic Missile²⁹**. On January 23, the Pakistani Army conducted a successful training launch of surface

²⁶"Chinese Rocket Force exercise ensures nuclear counterattack capability", China Military, January 17, 2020 http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/view/2020-01/17/content_9719396.htm

²⁷"Pakistan passes bill legalising extensions for military chiefs", Al Jazeera, January 08, 2020. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/01/pakistani-passes-bill-legalising-extensions-military-chiefs-200108104629260.html>

²⁸"U.S. resumes Pakistan Military Training Program", AA, January 04, 2020. <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/asia-pacific/us-resumes-pakistan-military-training-program/1692116>

²⁹"Pakistan today conducted a successful training launch of surface to surface ballistic missile Ghaznavi, capable of delivering multiple types of warheads up to a range of 290

to surface ballistic missile Ghaznavi, which is capable of delivering multiple types of warheads up to a range of 290 kilometres. The training launch was part of the Field Training Exercise of the Strategic Forces Command of the Army aimed at rehearsing operational readiness procedures during day and night.

30. **Pakistani Ships Visit Seychelles³⁰**. Pakistani Navy ships Moawin and Aslat visited Seychelles and Port Victoria as part of the Pakistani Navy's Overseas Deployment around the African region. During the visit, Mission Commander & Commanding Officers of the visiting ships called on important authorities of Seychelles.
31. **Pakistan Navy Flotilla Visits Muscat, Oman³¹**. A Pakistan Navy flotilla comprising Ships Rah Naward, Gwadar and Pakistan Maritime Security Agency (PMSA) Ship Dasht visited Muscat, Oman as part of overseas deployment. Both the Middle East countries displayed commitment and desire to further augment and expand naval collaborations in various domains with the Pakistani Navy.
32. **Pakistani Navy Inducts Maritime Patrol Aircraft³²**. The induction ceremony of the state-of-the-art Maritime Patrol Aircraft (MPA) and tactical Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) in the Pakistan Navy was held at Karachi on January 04. Speaking on the occasion, Pakistan's Chief of the Naval Staff said that induction of marinised ATR aircraft with weapons and sensors would substantially enhance operational capabilities of Pakistan Navy's Fleet Air Arm. He further added that the LUNA NG UAVs in Fleet Air Arm would augment Pakistan Navy's Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR) capabilities.
33. **Major Gen Babar Iftikhar Appointed New DG ISPR³³**. Maj Gen Babar Iftikhar has been appointed the new head of the Pakistani military's media wing, the Inter-Services Public Relations. He has replaced Maj Gen Asif

kilometers", ISPR, January 23, 2020. <https://www.ispr.gov.pk/press-release-detail.php?id=5592>

³⁰ "Pakistan Navy ships Moawin&Aslat visit Port Victoria, Seychelles", Pakistan Observer, January 19, 2020. <https://pakobserver.net/pakistan-navy-ships-moawin-aslat-visit-port-victoria-seychelles/>

³¹ "Pakistan Navy Flotilla visits Muscat, Oman as part of overseas deployment", ISPR, January 05, 2020. <https://www.ispr.gov.pk/press-release-detail.php?id=5574>

³² "Pakistan Navy inducts Maritime Patrol Aircrafts (MPA) and Unmanned Aerial Systems, enhances Operational Capability of its Air Arm", ISPR, January 04, 2020. <https://www.ispr.gov.pk/press-release-detail.php?id=5572>

³³ "Major Gen Babar Iftikhar replaces Asif Ghafoor as DG ISPR", The Dawn, January 16, 2020. <https://www.dawn.com/news/1528680>

Ghafoor who moves to become the General Officer Commanding Okara. Maj Gen Iftikhar was previously commanding an Armoured Division.

Bangladesh

34. **Exercise "Safeguard 2020"**³⁴. The Bangladesh Navy concluded its annual maritime exercise Safeguard 2020 through the successful launching of missiles in Chittagong. A large number of ships, including frigates, corvettes, offshore patrol vessels (OPVs), minesweepers, patrol craft, missile boats and Navy's maritime patrol aircraft and helicopters, directly took part in the 18-day exercise involving the Bangladesh Coast Guard, Army, and Air Force. The main theme was the protection of the country's maritime sovereignty, safeguarding sea resources, ensuring safety of sea routes, including prevention of smuggling and piracy, and conservation of biodiversity in coastal areas.
35. **Apache selected for Bangladesh attack helicopter**³⁵. Boeing has been selected to supply AH-64E Apache attack helicopters to Bangladesh, proceeding through a U.S. Foreign Military Sale, this points to growing defence ties between the South Asian country and the United States. Bangladesh wants to buy new fighters to fortify its defence capabilities against aerial threats as well as to create its platform for anti-surface, maritime and offensive counter-air operations.
36. **Bangladesh Air Force Chief visits Egypt**³⁶. The Bangladesh Air Force Chief is on an official visit to Egypt at the invitation of the Egyptian Defence Ministry and Air Force Commander. During his visit, he will meet Lieutenant General Mohammad Abbas Helmi Hashem, the Commander of the Egyptian Air Force, to discuss matters related to mutual interests.

Sri Lanka

37. **Russia Agrees to Provide Arms to Sri Lanka**³⁷. Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov stated in a joint press conference with his Sri Lankan

³⁴ "Navy's 'Exercise Safeguard' ends through missile launch", Dhaka Tribune, January 16, 2020. <https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/nation/2020/01/16/navy-s-exercise-safeguard-ends-through-missile-launching>

³⁵ "Boeing bags deal to supply Apache choppers to Bangladesh", New Age, January 24, 2020. <https://www.newagebd.net/article/97525/boeing-bags-deal-to-supply-apache-choppers-to-bangladesh>

³⁶ "Bangladesh Air Force Chief left for Egypt", Daily Bangladesh, January 25, 2020. <https://www.daily-bangladesh.com/english/Bangladesh-Air-Force-chief-left-for-Egypt-visit/35873>

³⁷ "Russia agrees to continue providing arms to Sri Lanka for Defence", Colombo Page, January 14, 2020. http://www.colombopage.com/archive_20A/Jan14_1579019798CH.php

counterpart that Russia would continue to provide all necessary arms and ammunition to the Sri Lankan Army for Sri Lanka's security. The two Foreign Ministers held bilateral discussions on cooperation in a number of areas including defense, politics, trade, and science & technology.

38. **India Pledges \$ 50 Million for Military Procurement**³⁸. India's National Security Advisor Ajit Doval pledged USD 50 million to Sri Lanka as aid for military procurement during his visit to Colombo. His discussions with President Gotabaya Rajapaksa focused on strengthening cooperation between the security forces of the two countries and enhancing maritime security by increasing interaction between the two Coast Guards.
39. **Iran Offers Training Opportunity for Sri Lankan Police and Military**³⁹. Iran's Ambassador to Sri Lanka Mohammad Zaeri Amirani met Sri Lanka's Defence Secretary Kamal Gunaratne on January 02 to discuss possible training opportunities that could be offered to Sri Lankan Police and Armed Forces personnel in Iran in a move "for improved bilateral cooperation and friendship between Iran and Sri Lanka".
40. **Sri Lanka Army Chief Appointed as Acting Chief of Defence Staff**⁴⁰. Sri Lanka President Gotabaya Rajapaksa has appointed Army Commander Lt. General Shavendra Silva as a new acting Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) after Admiral Ravindra Wijegunaratne stepped down from the post. Silva took over as the country's army chief in August last year.

Nepal

41. **Nepal-US Militaries to Hold Joint Exercise**⁴¹. Armies from Nepal and the United States will hold a month-long military exercise in Nepal on rescue, international humanitarian law and combating urban revolt. The exercise will be held from February 17 - March 19. Nine personnel from the US army and 36 from the Nepal Army will be involved in the joint exercise.

³⁸"India pledges USD 50mn for military procurement", Economy Next, January 20, 2020. <https://economynext.com/india-pledges-usd-50mn-for-military-procurement-41044/>

³⁹"Iranian Ambassador calls for better relations between Iran and Sri Lanka", Ministry of Defence-Sri Lanka, January 02, 2020. http://www.defence.lk/Article/view_article/806

⁴⁰"Sri Lanka Army Chief Shavendra Silva Appointed as Acting Chief of Defence Staff", New Indian Express, January 01, 2020. <https://www.newindianexpress.com/world/2020/jan/01/sri-lanka-army-chief-shavendra-silva-appointed-as-acting-chief-of-defence-staff-2083601.html>

⁴¹"Nepal-US military to hold joint exercise", Khabarhub, January 30, 2020. <https://english.khabarhub.com/2020/24/70799/>



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

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