

# DEFENCE NEWSLETTER

Vol 3 | Issue 3 | March 2024



MANOHAR PARRIKAR INSTITUTE FOR  
DEFENCE STUDIES AND ANALYSES

मनोहर पर्रिकर रक्षा अध्ययन एवं विश्लेषण संस्थान

Centre for Defence Economics and Industry, MP-IDSA

## Contents

### **Key Events**

- President's Standard and Colours Presentation to Indian Air Force Units
- Raksha Mantri Inaugurates DefConnect 2024, Launches ADITI Scheme
- Raksha Mantri Addresses Naval Commanders' Conference 2024
- Raksha Mantri Holds Telephonic Conversation with US Secretary of Defence
- Raksha Rajya Mantri Inaugurates ICG Jetty at Vadinaar, Dwaraka
- DMA Organises Brain-Storming on Aatmanirbhar Bharat
- INS Jatayu at Minicoy Island (Lakshadweep) Commissioned
- CNS Visits Eastern Naval Command, Visakhapatnam
- DDP Issues Notification for Re-Organisation of DGQA
- MH 60R 'Seahawks' Commissioned into the Indian Navy
- Spanish Secretary of State for Defence Meets Defence Secretary
- 10<sup>th</sup> India-Italy Joint Defence Committee Meeting Held
- 12<sup>th</sup> Edition of India-Italy Military Cooperation Group Meeting Held
- BRO Connects Strategic Nimmu-Padam-Darcha Road in Ladakh
- First All-Women Maritime Surveillance Mission Conducted
- Indian Navy Anti-piracy Operations

### **Aatmanirbhar Bharat**

- MoD Signs Capital Acquisition Contracts worth Rs 39,125.39 crore
- MoD Inks MoU with BEML, BEL & MIDHANI
- DRDO Successfully Conducts Mission Divyastra
- Air Chief Marshal Launches SWCs at GRSE
- MoD Inks Contract with AVNL for Armament Upgrades of ICV
- MoD Signs Contract worth over Rs. 2,890 cr with HAL for Dornier Upgrade
- Indian Navy Signs MoU with IIT Kharagpur
- India's First Indigenous 1500 HP Engine for MBT Tested

### **Defence Diplomacy**

- India-Malaysia Bilateral Maritime Exercise Samudra Laksamana Held
- First Training Squadron Participates in Cutlass Express 24
- US Coast Guard Ship Bertholf Visits Port Blair
- First Training Squadron Visits Port Louis
- Indian Army Participates in Exercise Lamitiye-2024 in Seychelles
- India-US Exercise Tiger Triumph-24 Held
- India-Mozambique-Tanzania Trilateral Exercise Held
- ICG Ship Samudra Paheredar Arrives at Manila Bay, Philippines
- INSV Tarini Flagged Off For Return Voyage from Port Louis

## KEY EVENTS

### President's Standard and Colours Presentation to Indian Air Force Units

President Smt Droupadi Murmu, Supreme Commander of the Indian Armed Forces, [awarded](#) the President's Standard and Colours to four IAF Units at Air Force Station Hindan on 8 March 2024. The prestigious President's Standard to 45 Squadron and 221 Squadron and the President's Colours to 11 Base Repair Depot (BRD) and 509 Signal Unit (SU) were awarded.

### Raksha Mantri Inaugurates DefConnect 2024, Launches ADITI Scheme

The iDEX-DIO, under the aegis of DDP, MoD, [organised](#) DefConnect 2024 on 4 March 2024, inaugurated by Raksha Mantri Rajnath Singh. The RM [launched](#) the Acing Development of Innovative Technologies with iDEX (ADITI) scheme to promote innovations in critical defence technologies. Start-ups are eligible to receive grant-in-aid of up to Rs 25 crore. The corpus of the ADITI scheme is worth Rs 750 crore till 2026.

### Raksha Mantri Addresses Naval Commanders' Conference 2024

The first edition of the biennial Naval Commanders' Conference of 2024 [commenced](#) from 5 March 2024. The inaugural session of the three-day event saw Raksha Mantri Rajnath Singh [embarking](#) at sea to witness the Indian Navy's ability to conduct 'twin-carrier operations.' The Raksha Mantri [emphasised](#)

the need to enhance tri-service synergy and readiness.

### Raksha Mantri Holds Telephonic Conversation with US Secretary of Defence

Raksha Mantri Rajnath Singh [held](#) a telephonic conversation with US Secretary of Defence Lloyd Austin on 18 March 2024. Both Ministers reviewed recent bilateral events such as the INDUS-X Summit held in February 2024 and Tri-Service exercise 'Tiger Triumph' which commenced in India on 18 March 2024. The two Ministers discussed ways and means to implement the 2023 India-US Defence Cooperation Roadmap.

### Raksha Rajya Mantri Inaugurates ICG Jetty at Vadinaar, Dwaraka

Raksha Rajya Mantri, Ajay Bhatt [inaugurated](#) the Indian Coast Guard (ICG) Jetty Vadinar on 1 March 2024. Majority of India's crude oil passes via the strategically important Indian Coast Guard Region (North-West).

### DMA Organises Brain-Storming on Aatmanirbhar Bharat

The Department of Military Affairs (DMA) under the MoD, [conducted](#) a brainstorming on 4-5 March 2024 in collaboration with the SIDM to provide impetus to indigenisation and enhance participation of private industry in defence R&D and manufacturing. Chief of Defence Staff General Anil Chauhan highlighted the need for 'Whole of Nation' approach for fostering innovation in defence

manufacturing. Defence Secretary Giridhar Aramane delivered the keynote address.

### **INS Jatayu at Minicoy Island (Lakshadweep) Commissioned**

Adm R Hari Kumar, CNS [commissioned](#) INS Jatayu, second naval base in Lakshadweep after INS Dweeprakshak in Kavaratti, in the presence of Administrator of Lakshadweep Praful K Patel and V Adm V Srinivas, Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Southern Naval Command on 6 March 2024. The naval base will extend IN's operational reach and augment connectivity.

### **CNS Visits Eastern Naval Command, Visakhapatnam**

Adm R Hari Kumar, Chief of the Naval Staff [visited](#) Eastern Naval Command, Visakhapatnam from 21–23 March 2024. He awarded on the spot Unit Citation to INS Sumitra for her successful conduct of Anti-Piracy Operations in the Central Arabian Sea, apprehending 11 Somali Pirates and rescuing 17 Iranian and 19 Pakistani nationals from hijacked Fishing Vessels Iman and Al Naemi.

### **DDP Issues Notification for Re-Organisation of DGQA**

The DDP [issued](#) notification for re-organisation of Directorate General of Quality Assurance (DGQA) on 28 March 2024 to enable single point technical support for complete equipment/ weapon platform at all levels and provides for a separate Directorate of Defence Testing and Evaluation Promotion to speed up Quality Assurance processes and trials.

### **MH 60R 'Seahawks' Commissioned into the Indian Navy**

The Indian Navy [commissioned](#) the newly inducted MH 60R Seahawk multi-role helicopter on 6 March 2024 at INS Garuda, Kochi. The helicopters are a part of the 24-aircraft FMS contract signed with the US in Feb 2020. The helicopter is designed for anti-submarine warfare (ASW), anti-surface warfare (ASuW), search and rescue (SAR), medical evacuation (MEDEVAC) and vertical replenishment (VERTREP).

### **Spanish Secretary of State for Defence Meets Defence Secretary**

Defence Secretary Giridhar Aramane [held](#) talks with the visiting Spanish Secretary of State for Defence Maria-Amparo Valcarce Garcia in New Delhi on 8 March 2024. Both sides reviewed ongoing projects and discussed future joint plans in maritime and air domains.

### **10<sup>th</sup> India-Italy Joint Defence Committee Meeting Held**

Defence Secretary Giridhar Aramane and Italian Secretary General of Defence & National Armament Director Lt Gen Luciano Portolano [co-chaired](#) the 10<sup>th</sup> India-Italy Joint Defence Committee (JDC) meeting in New Delhi on 13 March 2024.

### **12<sup>th</sup> Edition of India-Italy Military Cooperation Group Meeting Held**

The 12<sup>th</sup> edition of India-Italy Military Cooperation Group (MCG) meeting was [held](#) on 12-13 March 2024 in New Delhi. The discussions focused on new initiatives to further enhance the defence cooperation

and military to military level exchange between the two countries.

### **BRO Connects Strategic Nimmu-Padam-Darcha Road in Ladakh**

Border Roads Organisation (BRO) [connected](#) the strategic Nimmu-Padam-Darcha road in Ladakh on 25 March 2024. The 298-km road will connect Manali to Leh through Darcha and Nimmu on Kargil–Leh Highway. The Nimmu-Padam-Darcha road crosses only one pass, Shinkun La (16,558 feet), on which tunnel work is about to commence by the BRO. This will result in the road having all weather connectivity to the Ladakh region.

### **First All-Women Maritime Surveillance Mission Conducted**

A maiden all-women maritime surveillance mission was [undertaken](#) by the Andaman & Nicobar Command on the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of INAS 318 and International Women's Day on 8 March 2024. The crew based at INS Utkrosh comprised Lt Cdr Shubhangi Swaroop, Lt Cdr Divya Sharma and Lt Vaishali Mishra.

### **Indian Navy Anti-piracy Operations**

On 4 March 2024, INS Kolkata mission-deployed in the Gulf of Aden [responded](#) to a request from MSC Sky II, a Liberian-flagged Container Vessel, which was reportedly attacked by a drone/ missile, approx. 90 nm South East of Aden. The vessel was escorted to the territorial waters of Djibouti by the IN ship. INS Kolkata also [intercepted](#) pirate ship MV Ruen on 16 March 2024. The merchant vessel had been hijacked in December 2023.

## **AATMANIRBHAR BHARAT**

### **MoD Signs Capital Acquisition Contracts worth Rs 39,125.39 crore**

The MoD [signed](#) capital acquisition contracts worth Rs 39,125.39 crore on 1 March 2024. These included with M/s HAL for procurement of Aero-engines for MiG-29 aircraft, with M/s L&T for procurement of Close-in Weapon System (CIWS) and High-Power Radar (HPR) and with M/s BrahMos Aerospace for procurement of missiles and Ship borne system.

### **MoD Inks MoU with BEML, BEL & MIDHANI**

The MoD [signed](#) a tripartite MoU with BEML, BEL and MIDHANI for indigenous development of Advanced Fuelling and Control System for Engines for combat vehicles on 4 March 2024.

### **DRDO Successfully Conducts Mission Divyastra**

DRDO [conducted](#) first successful flight test of indigenously developed Agni-5 missile with Multiple Independently Targetable Re-Entry Vehicle (MIRV) technology on 10 March 2024.

### **Air Chief Marshal Launches SWCs at GRSE**

'Agray' and 'Akshay', the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> ships of ASW Shallow Water Craft (SWC) Project being built by M/S GRSE for Indian Navy, were [launched](#) on 13 March 2024 at M/S GRSE, Kolkata, by Air Chief Marshal V R Chaudhari. The ships have been named after erstwhile Abhay-class corvettes of Indian Navy.

### **MoD Inks Contract with AVNL for Armament Upgrades of ICV**

The MoD, on 13 March 2024, [signed](#) a contract with Armoured Vehicles Nigam Limited (AVNL) for the procurement of 693 Armament Upgrades of Infantry Combat Vehicle BMP2 to BMP2M.

### **MoD Signs Contracts worth Rs 8073 Cr with HAL for ALH Dhruv Mk III**

The MoD [signed](#) contracts worth Rs 8073.17 crore with HAL on 13 March 2024 for acquisition of 34 Advanced Light Helicopters (ALH) Dhruv Mk III along with Operational Role Equipment for Indian Army (25 ALHs) and Indian Coast Guard (09 ALHs) under Buy (Indian-IDDM) category.

### **MoD Signs Contract worth over Rs. 2,890 cr with HAL for Dornier Upgrade**

The MoD [signed](#) a contract with HAL on 15 March 2024 for Mid Life Upgrade (MLU) of 25 Dornier Aircraft along with associated equipment for the Indian Navy at a cost of Rs.2,890 cr. The upgrades will incorporate state-of-the art Avionics Systems and Primary Role sensors.

### **Indian Navy Signs MoU with IIT Kharagpur**

Indian Navy and IIT Kharagpur, [signed](#) a MoU on 19 March 2024 at New Delhi to promote technology development, innovative solutions and joint R&D.

### **India's First Indigenous 1500 HP Engine for MBT Tested**

Defence Secretary Giridhar Aramane [presided](#) over the maiden test-firing of

India's first indigenously-made 1500 Horsepower (HP) engine for Main Battle Tanks at BEML's Engine division in Mysuru complex on 20 March 2024. User testing will be done in mid-2025.

## **DEFENCE DIPLOMACY**

### **India-Malaysia Bilateral Maritime Exercise Samudra Laksamana Held**

Exercise Samudra Laksamana was [conducted](#) from 28 February-2 March 2024 at Visakhapatnam. INS Kiltan and Royal Malaysian Ship KD Lekir participated.

### **First Training Squadron Participates in Cutlass Express 24**

INS Tir, the lead ship of First Training Squadron (1TS) [participated](#) in Exercise Cutlass Express-24 (CE-24) held at Port Victoria, Seychelles from 26 February-8 March 2024, along with 16 friendly foreign countries.

### **US Coast Guard Ship Bertholf Visits Port Blair**

USCG Ship Bertholf reached Port Blair on 7 March 2024 for joint [exercise](#) with Indian Coast Guard (ICG) 'Sea Defenders-2024', held from 9-10 March 2024 off the coast of Port Blair.

### **First Training Squadron Visits Port Louis**

The First Training Squadron (1TS), [comprising](#) INS Tir and CGS Sarathi, concluded visit to Port Louis, Mauritius, on 15 March 2024 as part of their Long-Range Training Deployment. The visit coincided with the 57<sup>th</sup> Mauritius National Day celebrations, where Smt. Droupadi Murmu,

the Hon'ble President of India, was the Chief Guest.

### **Indian Army Participates in Exercise Lamitiye–2024 in Seychelles**

An Indian Army contingent participated in the 10<sup>th</sup> edition of joint military exercise 'Lamitiye-2024' [conducted](#) at Seychelles from 18-27 March 2024. The aim of the exercise was to enhance interoperability in sub-conventional operations in semi-urban environment under UNPKO.

### **India-US Exercise Tiger Triumph–24 Held**

HADR Exercise Tiger Triumph–24 with the US was [conducted](#) on the Eastern Seaboard from 18 to 31 March 2024. The harbour phase of the exercise was [conducted](#) at Visakhapatnam from 18 to 25 March 24 while the Sea phase was held from 26 to 31 March 2024.

### **India-Mozambique-Tanzania Trilateral Exercise-2024 Held**

INS Tir and INS Sujata [participated](#) in the second edition of India Mozambique

Tanzania (IMT) Tri Lateral (TRILAT) Exercise from 21-29 March 2024.

### **ICG Ship Samudra Paheredar Arrives at Manila Bay, Philippines**

ICG ship Samudra Paheredar, a specialized Pollution Control Vessel, [arrived](#) at Manila Bay, Philippines on 25 March 2024 on a three-day visit.

### **INSV Tarini Flagged Off For Return Voyage from Port Louis**

INSV Tarini, on transoceanic sailing expedition, set sail from Port Louis, Mauritius on 30 March 2024. The sailing vessel [crewed](#) by Lt Cdr Roopa A and Lt Cdr Dilna K undertook return voyage to Goa which will cover a distance of approx 2900 nm. The expedition was flagged off by distinguished yachtsman, Cdr Abhilash Tomy(Retd), KC, NM who is also the official mentor of these two women officers. Earlier, INSV Tarini arrived at Port Louis on 21 March 2024 after a non-stop voyage of 22 days from INS Mandovi, Goa.

'The Newsletter is a compilation of media reports and does not necessarily reflect the views of the Manohar Parrikar IDSA or the Ministry of Defence, Government of India'.