

DEFENCE NEWSLETTER

Vol 5 | Issue 3 | March 2026



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**

- **Raksha Mantri Releases ‘Defence Forces Vision 2047**
- **Raksha Mantri Calls for India to Emerge as Global Drone Manufacturing Hub**
- **Raksha Mantri Highlights Changing Nature of Warfare**
- **Raksha Mantri Reviews West Asia Situation**
- **Raksha Mantri Chairs Parliamentary Consultative Committee Meeting on BRO**
- **Raksha Mantri Chairs First IGoM Meeting to Review West Asia Situation**
- **Raksha Rajya Mantri Highlights Role of MSMEs and Start-ups**
- **Raksha Rajya Mantri Highlights India’s Neighbourhood Policy**
- **MoD Releases Manual of Security Instructions 2026**

AATMANIRBHAR BHARAT

- **Raksha Mantri Exhorts GRSE to Build Niche Platforms**
- **Raksha Mantri Highlights Self-Reliance and Shipbuilding Goals**
- **DAC Clears Capital Acquisition Proposals Worth ₹2.38 Lakh Crore**
- **Contract for Self-Propelled Fuel Barges Concluded**
- **MoD Inks Contracts for ALH Mk-III (MR)**
- **GRSE Delivers Indigenous Ships to Indian Navy**
- **MoD Signs Contract with BEL for Indigenous Mountain Radars**
- **First Next Generation Offshore Patrol Vessel ‘Shachi’ Launched**
- **DRDO Develops Indigenous Aerial Delivery System for Indian Navy**

DEFENCE DIPLOMACY

- **Indian Navy Continues IOS SAGAR Initiative**
- **Indian Contingent Participates in Exercise LAMITIYE–2026 in Seychelles**
- **Indian Navy Hosts IONS Maritime Exercise (IMEX) TTX 2026**

KEY EVENTS

Raksha Mantri Releases ‘Defence Forces Vision 2047’

Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh [released](#) the ‘Defence Forces Vision 2047’ document in New Delhi on 10 March 2026, outlining a long-term roadmap to transform the Indian Armed Forces into a modern, integrated and technologically advanced military. Prepared by Headquarters Integrated Defence Staff, the document identifies key reforms, capability development priorities and organisational changes required to address evolving security and technological challenges. The vision emphasises jointness and integration among the Services, development of multi-domain capabilities, and adoption of advanced technologies and modern training frameworks. It also highlights the importance of Aatmanirbharta in defence, focusing on strengthening indigenous manufacturing and technological capabilities. The roadmap adopts a phased approach with short-, medium- and long-term capability goals, and underscores the need for a whole-of-nation approach to national security.

Raksha Mantri Calls for India to Emerge as Global Drone Manufacturing Hub

Raksha Mantri Rajnath Singh [emphasised](#) the need for India to develop a robust indigenous drone manufacturing ecosystem while addressing the National Defence Industries Conclave 2026 in New Delhi on 19 March 2026. He noted the expanding

role of MSMEs, start-ups and innovators in the defence ecosystem, supported by initiatives such as Innovations for Defence Excellence (iDEX). During the event, new editions of the Defence India Start-up Challenge (DISC-14) and ADITI initiatives were launched, along with over 200 problem statements to promote innovation across defence domains.

Raksha Mantri Highlights Changing Nature of Warfare

Raksha Mantri Rajnath Singh [emphasised](#) that modern warfare extends beyond traditional battlefields to include the economic, cyber, space, and information domains, while addressing the Diamond Jubilee celebrations of Sainik School, Ghorakhal, on 21 March 2026. He underscored the need for a robust military supported by well-prepared citizens to safeguard national interests in an increasingly complex security environment. He also highlighted initiatives to strengthen youth participation in nation-building, including the expansion of Sainik Schools under the public-private partnership model and increased intake in the National Cadet Corps. He also emphasised the growing role of women in defence institutions, noting that the inclusion of girls in Sainik Schools would help strengthen ‘Nari Shakti’.

Raksha Mantri Reviews West Asia Situation

Raksha Mantri Rajnath Singh [reviewed](#) the evolving security situation in West Asia

and its implications for India's defence preparedness during a high-level meeting on 24 March 2026. Discussions focused on the regional and global security environment, including the potential impact of escalating conflicts on India, particularly on defence supply chains, procurement, production, and the maintenance of existing military assets. The Raksha Mantri emphasised the need to study operational and technological lessons emerging from ongoing conflicts systematically. He also called for the formulation of a comprehensive and integrated roadmap for the next decade, incorporating lessons learnt, emerging challenges and opportunities, while ensuring self-reliance and sustained operational readiness.

Raksha Mantri Chairs Parliamentary Consultative Committee Meeting on BRO

Raksha Mantri Rajnath Singh [chaired](#) a meeting of the Parliamentary Consultative Committee for the Ministry of Defence on the Border Roads Organisation (BRO) in New Delhi on 25 March 2026. The discussions focused on infrastructure development, connectivity and their role in enhancing national security and operational preparedness. Highlighting the importance of border infrastructure, the Raksha Mantri noted that the BRO is contributing to an integrated ecosystem of security, development and connectivity, particularly in the North-East and areas affected by Left-Wing Extremism. The meeting included a comprehensive overview of the

BRO's role, achievements and challenges, including its contribution to disaster management and socio-economic development in border areas. The discussions highlighted the organisation's continued role in strengthening operational readiness and supporting broader national development objectives.

Raksha Mantri Chairs First IGoM Meeting to Review West Asia Situation

Raksha Mantri Rajnath Singh [chaired](#) the first meeting of the Informal Group of Ministers (IGoM) on 28 March 2026 to assess the evolving situation in West Asia and its implications for India. The meeting underscored the importance of close coordination with state and district administrations, along with timely public communication. Ministries and departments were directed to ensure the dissemination of accurate information and counter misinformation, reinforcing the government's commitment to maintaining preparedness and safeguarding national interests amid evolving geopolitical developments.

Raksha Rajya Mantri Highlights Role of MSMEs and Start-ups

Raksha Rajya Mantri Sanjay Seth [highlighted](#) the critical role of MSMEs, start-ups and innovators in strengthening defence capabilities and advancing Aatmanirbharta, during the valedictory session of the National Defence Industries Conclave 2026 held in New Delhi on 20 March 2026. He emphasised their

contribution to building a robust defence manufacturing ecosystem and expressed confidence in achieving targets of ₹50,000 crore in defence exports

Raksha Rajya Mantri Highlights India's Neighbourhood Policy

Raksha Rajya Mantri Sanjay Seth [stated](#) that India remains committed to the welfare of its neighbours while maintaining a zero-tolerance approach towards terrorism, during a national seminar on 'Changing Dynamics in India's Neighbourhood' held in New Delhi on 11 March 2026. He highlighted evolving regional dynamics and referred to Operation Sindoor as an example of India's resolve and growing reliance on indigenous defence capabilities. The event also witnessed the release of a policy document on Artificial Intelligence in the military domain, along with the launch of initiatives such as SAMADH, an AI-based situational awareness platform, and the Integrated Online Training and Evaluation Programme aimed at enhancing jointness among the Armed Forces.

MoD Releases Manual of Security Instructions 2026

Defence Secretary Rajesh Kumar Singh [released](#) the Ministry of Defence's Manual of Security Instructions 2026 in New Delhi on 9 March 2026. The manual provides comprehensive and updated security guidelines for the Ministry, with provisions for periodic revision in response to evolving security challenges. The Defence Secretary emphasised the

importance of strict adherence to security protocols in view of emerging threats and called upon officials and security personnel to ensure effective implementation of the guidelines.

AATMANIRBHAR BHARAT

Raksha Mantri Exhorts GRSE to Build Niche Platforms

Raksha Mantri Rajnath Singh [called upon](#) Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers (GRSE) to focus on developing advanced and niche platforms in line with evolving technology trends, while addressing personnel at the shipyard in Kolkata on 5 March 2026. He highlighted GRSE's longstanding contribution to India's maritime capability, noting its role in equipping the Indian Navy and Coast Guard with a range of platforms over the decades. He also emphasised the importance of innovation, skill and competitiveness in strengthening India's shipbuilding sector and achieving the goal of Viksit Bharat.

Raksha Mantri Highlights Self-Reliance and Shipbuilding Goals

Raksha Mantri Rajnath Singh [emphasised](#) self-reliance as critical to addressing global uncertainties while inaugurating the 'Sagar Sankalp' maritime dialogue in Kolkata on 6 March 2026. He highlighted ongoing geopolitical and supply-chain disruptions, underscoring the need for Aatmanirbharta in the defence and maritime sectors. He noted that domestic defence production has crossed ₹1.5 lakh crore, with exports expected to reach approximately ₹29,000

crore by April 2026, and reiterated the target of ₹50,000 crore in defence exports by FY 2029–30. He further outlined the government's objective of positioning India among the top 10 shipbuilding nations by 2030 and the top five by 2047.

DAC Clears Capital Acquisition Proposals Worth ₹2.38 Lakh Crore

The Defence Acquisition Council (DAC), [chaired](#) by Raksha Mantri Rajnath Singh, accorded Acceptance of Necessity (AoN) for defence procurement proposals worth approximately ₹2.38 lakh crore on 27 March 2026. The approvals span key capability enhancements across the Army, Air Force and Coast Guard. The approvals reflect continued emphasis on capability augmentation and modernisation of the armed forces, with the current financial year witnessing record levels of acquisition approvals and contract signings.

Contract for Self-Propelled Fuel Barges Concluded

The Ministry of Defence [concluded](#) a contract with M/s Shoft Shipyard Private Limited, Thane, on 2 March 2026 for the construction of four 500-tonne self-propelled fuel barges for the Indian Navy. The barges will be built under the classification rules of the Indian Register of Shipping and are intended for refuelling naval ships and submarines in harbour and at anchorage. The project is aligned with the government's Aatmanirbhar Bharat and Make in India initiatives and involves an MSME shipyard.

MoD Inks Contracts for ALH Mk-III (MR)

The Ministry of Defence [signed](#) contracts worth ₹5,083 crore on 3 March 2026 for the acquisition of six Advanced Light Helicopters (ALH) Mk-III (Maritime Role) for the Indian Coast Guard and Vertical Launch Shtil surface-to-air missiles for the Indian Navy. The ALH Mk-III (MR) contract, valued at ₹2,901 crore, was concluded with Hindustan Aeronautics Limited under the Buy (Indian-IDDMM) category, and includes associated equipment, logistics and support packages. The project involves over 200 MSMEs and is expected to generate significant employment.

GRSE Delivers Indigenous Ships to Indian Navy

The Indian Navy [received](#) 'Agray', the fourth Anti-Submarine Warfare Shallow Water Craft (ASW SWC), on 30 March 2026 in Kolkata. The platform is equipped with advanced systems, including lightweight torpedoes, indigenous rocket launchers, and shallow-water sonar, enabling effective detection and engagement of underwater threats. With over 80 per cent indigenous content, the delivery of 'Agray' underscores the growing strength of India's defence manufacturing ecosystem and aligns with the broader objective of self-reliance. The indigenous stealth frigate 'Dunagiri' was [delivered](#) to the Indian Navy on 30 March 2026 at GRSE, Kolkata, marking a significant milestone in India's warship

building programme under Project 17A. Designed as a multi-mission platform, the frigate incorporates advanced stealth features, enhanced automation and improved survivability. Built with approximately 75 per cent indigenous content and involving a wide network of MSMEs, the project highlights the growing strength of India's defence industrial ecosystem. Both the vessels have been indigenously designed and constructed by GRSE.

MoD Signs Contract with BEL for Indigenous Mountain Radars

The Ministry of Defence [signed](#) a contract worth approximately ₹1,950 crore with Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL) on 31 March 2026 for the procurement of two Mountain Radars for the Indian Air Force under the Buy (Indian-IDDM) category. Indigenously designed and developed by DRDO's Electronics and Radar Development Establishment, the radars will enhance India's air defence capabilities, particularly in challenging mountainous terrain. The project also includes associated equipment and infrastructure for operational deployment.

First Next Generation Offshore Patrol Vessel 'Shachi' Launched

The first of eleven Next Generation Offshore Patrol Vessels (NGOPVs), 'Shachi' (Yard 1280), was [launched](#) at Goa Shipyard Limited on 31 March 2026. The launch marks a key milestone in the Indian Navy's ongoing efforts to strengthen

indigenous shipbuilding capabilities. The NGOPVs are being constructed at Goa Shipyard Limited and Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers, Kolkata, and are designed for a wide range of multi-domain operations. These include maritime surveillance, search and rescue, protection of offshore assets, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, and anti-piracy missions.

DRDO Develops Indigenous Aerial Delivery System for Indian Navy

DRDO has developed the ADC-150 aerial delivery system for the Indian Navy's P-8I aircraft, with the successful [completion](#) of developmental flight trials. The system has been developed within a compressed timeframe to meet operational requirements and is expected to enter service. The Naval Science & Technological Laboratory, Visakhapatnam, served as the nodal laboratory, with contributions from the Aerial Delivery Research and Development Establishment, Agra, for parachute systems; the Centre for Military Airworthiness and Certification, Bengaluru, for certification; and the Defence Research and Development Laboratory, Hyderabad, for instrumentation support.

DEFENCE DIPLOMACY

Indian Navy Continues IOS SAGAR Initiative

The Indian Navy [commenced](#) the second edition of the Indian Ocean Ship (IOS) SAGAR initiative on 16 March 2026 to strengthen maritime cooperation in the

Indian Ocean Region. The initiative, aligned with India's SAGAR (Security and Growth for All in the Region) vision, includes participation from 16 member nations of the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS).

IOS SAGAR is an operational engagement programme that enables naval personnel from partner countries to train and sail together aboard an Indian Naval Ship.

Indian Contingent Participates in Exercise LAMITIYE–2026 in Seychelles

An Indian Armed Forces contingent [participated](#) in the 11th edition of the joint military exercise LAMITIYE–2026 with the Seychelles Defence Forces from 9 to 20 March 2026. The biennial exercise, held since 2001, sees participation by all three services of the Indian Armed Forces in this edition. The Indian contingent included personnel from the Assam Regiment, along with assets from the Indian Navy and Indian Air Force, including INS *Trikand* and a C-130 aircraft. The exercise focuses on enhancing interoperability and cooperation in sub-conventional operations in a semi-urban environment, including peacekeeping scenarios.

Indian Navy Hosts IONS Maritime Exercise (IMEX) TTX 2026

The Indian Navy [conducted](#) the IONS Maritime Exercise (IMEX) TTX 2026 at the Maritime Warfare Centre, Kochi, on 27 March 2026, bringing together delegates from multiple Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS) member countries. The exercise focused on addressing non-traditional maritime security challenges in the Indian Ocean Region. With participation from several regional and international navies, the exercise underscored the importance of collaboration, trust-building and coordinated responses to evolving maritime threats. Conducted in a simulated environment, it enabled participants to examine operational approaches, decision-making processes and information-sharing mechanisms without the constraints of live deployments. The exercise also marked a significant step as India assumes the IONS Chairmanship for the 2026–2028 cycle. It contributed to refining regional maritime security frameworks and strengthening cooperation among partner navies, reinforcing IONS as a key platform for addressing shared maritime challenges.

'The Defence 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'.