

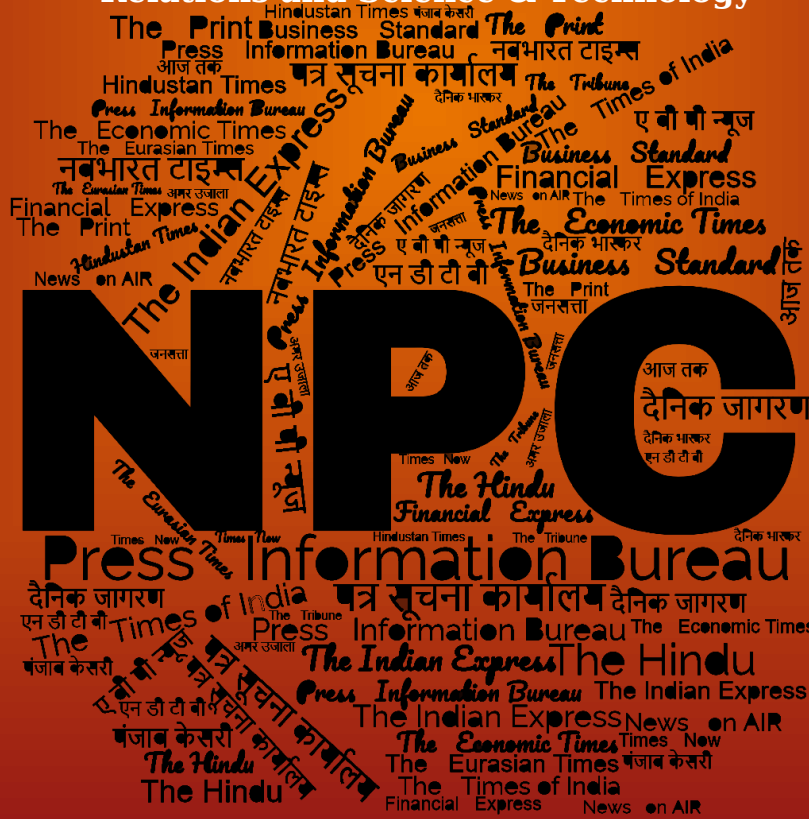
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समाचार पत्रों से चयित अंश Newspapers Clippings

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Defence Strategic: National/International



Press Information Bureau
Government of India

Ministry of Defence

Wed, 24 Jan 2024

Press Release: Ex- Desert Knight

On 23 Jan 24, the Indian Air Force (IAF) conducted Exercise Desert Knight along with French Air and Space Force (FASF) and United Arab Emirates (UAE) Air Force. While the French participation included the Rafale fighter aircraft and a Multi Role Tanker Transport, the UAE Air Force fielded the F-16. These aircraft operated from the Al Dhafra air base in the UAE. The IAF contingent comprised of Su-30 MKI, MiG-29, Jaguar, AWACS, C-130-J and Air to Air Refueller aircraft. The exercise in Indian FIR was conducted over the Arabian Sea, with IAF aircraft operating from bases within India.

The main focus of Exercise Desert Knight was on enhancing synergy and interoperability between the three Air Forces. The interactions during the exercise facilitated the exchange of operational knowledge, experiences and best practices amongst the participants. Such exercises are indicative of the growing diplomatic and military interactions in the region, apart from showcasing the prowess of the IAF.

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1999010>



Tue, 23 Jan 2024

51 IAF Aircraft Including Rafale, Sukhoi, Jaguar, Tejas to Participate in R-Day Flypast

A total of 51 Indian Air Force aircraft including 29 fighter aircraft, 8 transport aircraft, 13 helicopters, and one heritage aircraft will participate in the Republic Day flypast this year.

Four aircraft from the Indian Army and one from the Indian Navy will also fly in two separate formations with the IAF aircraft. All these aircraft will operate from six different bases.

According to the Indian Air Force officials, Rafale, Sukhoi -30, Jaguar, C-130, and Tejas aircraft will participate in the flypast in different formations.

<https://www.deccanchronicle.com/nation/current-affairs/51-iaf-aircraft-to-participate-in-r-day-flypast-879508>

DefSat Conference to Bring Space Strategists together from Feb 7-9

Chief of Defence Staff Anil Chauhan, top space scientists and strategic thinkers will deliberate on future-ready space capabilities at the DefSat-2024 conference next month.

The three-day conference, organised by Satcom India Association, will be inaugurated on Feb. 7 and bring together visionaries, stakeholders from government agencies, armed forces, and policymakers to space industry leaders, technology innovators, and diplomats.

"SIA-India is proud to have support from pivotal government entities and esteemed organizations such as Niti Aayog, ISRO, NSIL, IN-SPACe, DoT, DRDO, and Ministry of Defence," Subba Rao Pavuluri, President, SIA-India said.

The conference is likely to be attended by Uttarakhand Governor Lt. Gen Gurmit Singh (Retd); V K Saraswat, Member, NITI Aayog; Shailesh Nayak, Director, National Institute of Advanced Studies; Lt Gen Vinod C Khandare (Retd), Principal Adviser in the Defence Ministry; Lt. Gen M U Nair, Head of the National Cyber Coordination Centre; Air Vice Marshal Pawan Kumar, Director General-Defence Space Agency; Radhakrishnan Durairaj, Chairman-cum-Managing Director NewSpace India Limited among others

<https://www.ndtvprofit.com/nation/defsat-conference-to-bring-space-strategists-together-from-feb-7-9>

THE TIMES OF INDIA

Army's 'Shaurya Sandhya' Show from Feb 2 to 4

An Army Exhibition 'Shaurya Sandhya 2024' will be conducted at Mankapur Sports Complex from February 2 to 4. The event is being organized by the Headquarters Uttar Maharashtra and Gujarat Sub Area. This is first of its kind exhibition and display by Indian Army in Nagpur. The event is open to the public.

The event will be attended by Union minister Nitin Gadkari, deputy chief minister Devendra Fadnavis, Chief of Army Staff Gen Manoj Pande and many high ranking military and civil dignitaries.

The event will have display of sky diving, para motor, slithering by special forces team, equitation (horse riding), motor cycle dare devil team and scintillating show by the canine warriors of the Indian Army. The event will culminate with Army symphony band along with a drone show for 10-15 minutes comprising 100 drones.

The three-day 'Know Your Army Exhibition', will be centre of attraction. On display will be an impressive array of weaponry and equipment spanning from the vintage era to cutting edge next generation technology". There will be performances by the Indian Army's martial arts team, hot air ballooning and a melodious performance by the military pipe band.

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/nagpur/army-exhibition-shaurya-sandhya-2024-at-mankapur-sports-complex-nagpur/articleshow/107097438.cms>

Indian Navy Chief Admiral R. Hari Kumar Terms Red Sea Situation Fragile

Indian Navy Chief Admiral R. Hari Kumar has characterised the Red Sea situation as "fragile" and cited attacks in the Arabian Sea as a "cause of concern, particularly for us." In an interview with WION's diplomatic correspondent Sidhant Sibal, Admiral Kumar disclosed India's measures to address the situation, stating, "We have more than 10 ships deployed, 2 of them primarily for anti-piracy tasks, and the rest of them out for anti-drone support."

Expressing awareness of the Chinese presence in the region, he noted, "We keep a close watch on what is happening."

Responding to the ongoing diplomatic row with the Maldives, where President Muizzu has called for the removal of Indian troops, Admiral Kumar highlighted military engagement between the two countries, affirming, "Whatever the order, which is given from the government, we are willing to do."

The Navy Chief also touched upon India-France ties, the Indo-Pacific situation, and bilateral exercises with nations like Thailand.

Full interview:

Sidhant Sibal: How do you assess the current situation in the Red Sea & Arabian Sea?

Admiral R. Hari Kumar: First of all, I'm very happy to be on this channel with you, Sidhant. If you ask me, what is the situation like I would say it is quite fragile. We have been seeing a number of attacks on merchant ships, at least 15 of them have been reported over the last about 45 days or so in the Red Sea region alone. And this doesn't count those which have been near misses, or which have failed attempts, and which have been prevented, etc. So, there's a large number of things which are happening in the Red Sea. The merchant ships are getting targeted. Largely merchant ships which have a particular linkage with Israel are being targeted. But when it comes further this side, towards the North Arabian Sea and Central Arabian Sea, there have been drone attacks on the merchant ships. Some have been in extended ranges, and this is a cause of concern particularly for us because this is our region and we want to keep it safe, secure and stable. And we find that piracy is also another aspect which is probably taking advantage of all this disruption that's happening in the Red Sea. Piracy has also resurfaced; we saw one successful piracy attack and subsequently, there was an attack on one of our vessels which had a large number of Indian crew. And so, in general, if you say in this region, it is a matter of concern for us, that it has suddenly moved from a safe and stable region to a somewhat fragile situation. Then of late, we have seen the issues in the North Arabian Sea, and disputes happening between Iran and Pakistan. So, all in all, there are a lot of challenges, to which therefore we responded to them. So we have had a forward presence, mission deployed ships and we have increased the number of deployments and currently, we are pursuing two operations. One of the anti-piracy operations and the other one is an anti-drone operation. So the anti-piracy operation, something which has been going on since 2008, and I would say it has tapered off in the early part of 2023, we thought it has almost become nil, but then we find that towards the end of 23, it is again resurfaced. So therefore, we have, you know, taking practical action to ensure that you know the piracy is stopped and pushed back to the shores, on the other side. At the same time, we are pursuing anti-drone operations also. We used to have Operation Sankalp, which we used to have from 2017 onwards, essentially to support the ships in

the Persian Gulf and that we have sort of strengthened, so that, you know, the merchant ships in this area, in case they're getting targeted to help them. These are two ongoing operations right now. We are the largest resident naval power in the Indian Ocean region. So, therefore, we need to take proactive action to ensure that the region remains safe and secure.

Sidhant Sibal: So, you mentioned the situation being fragile in the region. Now, you also talk about various operations, but if you can give a number, how many Indian warships are there when it comes to the Arabian Sea? The northern part, the central part, Gulf of Aden, to deal with the ongoing situation.

Admiral R. Hari Kumar: From 2008 onwards, we have been continuously deploying one warship in the Gulf of Aden for anti-piracy operations. And so far by now we must have rotated about 106 ships, which are 24/7 deployed there to ensure that we support the merchant ships, escort the merchant ships and so on. Similarly, we have been sending ships off and on to the Gulf of Guinea as well on the west coast of Africa, to protect our interests there and now with the escalated anti-piracy operations as well as anti-drone operations, we have more than 10 ships deployed, 2 of them primarily for the anti-piracy tasks and the rest of them out for the anti-drone support. So are deployments currently extending the northern coastal part of Somalia, that is from Bab-el-mandeb onward, eastward and then in the North Arabian Sea, central Arabian Sea and closer towards the east coast of Somalia as well for anti-piracy operations. So it's not just the ships alone but there are, you know, there are P8i aircraft, sea guardians. Closer to the coast, we have Dorniers. All these assets are being deployed to try and maintain 24/7 surveillance of our area of interest to ensure we know what is happening there, who's there, and what are you doing.

Sidhant Sibal: So we saw that attack on MV Chem Pluto, in the month of December. Any outcomes of who was responsible, we know we had the debris of the drone, what has been the investigation that was responsible because it came very close to India's exclusive economic zone?

Admiral R. Hari Kumar: It was about 210 Nautical miles from Gujarat, just outside our exclusive economic zone. And it had suffered a little bit of damage. So we responded immediately, and teams embarked, the ship was brought to Mumbai, escorted by us and then our EOD team embarked on the ship and cleared the ship of explosive content, and explosive material and the debris is being taken for analysis. So what has been established, is that it is definitely a drone that has caused this damage. But the fragments are very few because a lot of it had already perished and it is now gone for forensic analysis. You can conclusively say, it's a drone. But where it has come from, who has launched it, etc is still under discussion. But we are hopeful that we will get some further details, because the way the number of attacks is happening, you should be able to get a little bit more clarity soon.

Sidhant Sibal: But do you think the region is in a precipice?

Admiral R. Hari Kumar: I wouldn't say that it is on a precipice, but I would say probably it is on the edge in many ways. And this region If you look at it, you see the attacks by the Houthis on merchant shipping, it is further made complex by the presence of the US-led coalition which is there in the Red Sea, from Bab el Mandap onwards, the presence of many more multinational ships in the northern Indian Ocean region. Also, drone attacks are happening. Now some of the merchant ships, have already started rerouting around the Cape of Good Hope and coming around, now what does it imply it, it implies that you know, freight charges are going to go u, the transit time is going to be increased by almost 10 days, then insurance costs will go up, etc. So, further with the, you know, with the realignments that are happening, the war that is going on between Israel and Hamas. So, all this has got a domino effect on the whole region. So, we hope that it stabilizes and draws down, rather than you know, getting more and more people involved in it and you know, escalating.

We want to see this region as a region of peace, a region of safety and security for all those who use it for legitimate purposes.

Sidhant Sibal: Navy's larger role in the Indian Ocean region and beyond, we have seen Indian ships now making port calls to far parts of the world from West Africa to Australia

Admiral R. Hari Kumar: So when you look at the Indian Ocean region we are guided by the principle of SAGAR, Security and Growth for All in the Region which has been articulated very clearly by our honourable Prime Minister. So when we look at that and use that as a base doctrine, so therefore, we look at all the friendly foreign countries in the Indian Ocean region first, we are involved in their training, capacity building, capability development and exercises. So all those aimed at you know, building mutual trust and you know, long-term engagement with them. So that you know, the oceans, really, the problems in the oceans are something which cannot be solved by just one country alone. So, you need cooperation from the countries in the region. So therefore, what we do, is we engage with them and you know, we treat them equally, because irrespective of the size of the force that you have, you always have something to contribute, either it's some expertise or local knowledge or some skill that you have, which you can bring to the table or the information that you have, you know, it'll all add to cooperation and coordination. So, therefore, we engage with them. Now, the navies typically have four roles, that is, the main purpose of course, is combat. Otherwise, we do have three more, which is a constabulary role, a benign role and a diplomatic role. So in the diplomatic role, we engage with countries in the region and then engage with others you know, partners, friends and partners. So, the task of the Navy, I would say, is that the need for a navy rises with the need for peaceful shipping or merchant shipping and dies with it. That means, if you have trade, if you have merchant ships, you require a navy, if you don't have trade, if you have nothing to trade, if you don't have any merchant ships, carry your stuff then you don't. So that is the basic essence of why the Navy is required. So, as a maritime force, our job is to protect, preserve, promote, and pursue India's national interests in the maritime domain wherever they like. So therefore, we have an interest in the west coast of Africa, and we have an interest in the Indo-Pacific. So therefore, it is incumbent on us to be able to, you know, protect these interests, when required by the government. So you will see that, you know, our ships have been deployed to the Gulf of Guinea, they have you know, visited you know, ports on in the Atlantic, at the same time they also, you know, visited ports in the South China Sea. Last year, one of our ships went to Japan. We have deployed our submarines to Australia and Indonesia. So it just sort of shows the flexibility, the reach, the endurance, and the ability to, you know, deploy to you know, large distances as a credible military naval force.

Sidhant Sibal: I think you mentioned the Indian Ocean region. Now, there is one concern of increased Chinese presence. How does the Indian Navy deal with it?

Admiral R. Hari Kumar: Every country has the right to use oceans for legitimate purposes. Oceans do not divide, they actually unite. So China is looking for, you know, energy sources, for raw materials, minerals, etc. It's also looking for markets. So, therefore, China is here to engage with the countries in the region for various things. It's okay with us so long as you know, it is pursuing legitimate interest, but at the same time, we find now the number of Chinese warships has gone up. At any point in time, there are anything between six to eight naval units present here, there are research vessels present and there's a large number of fishing vessels also present here. So therefore, you know, in addition, they also now have a base in Djibouti which from all the information that we have, is essentially to support operations from the base, by their ships and related assets. So, therefore, we keep a close watch on what is happening there. We keep a close watch on the research activities that are being pursued. And so long as it is, it does not affect our interests, then we do you know, keep a watch, but if it does impinge upon our interest, then of course, we take necessary action.

Sidhant Sibal: There are reports that a Chinese vessel is moving towards Maldives. What's your assessment about that?

Admiral R. Hari Kumar: Some of these research vessels have been engaging with the countries in the region, engaged with Sri Lanka, they have done research work for them in the country's EEZ, similarly they have engaged with Bangladesh to carry out research activities in the EEZ of Bangladesh. So, this, probably they're making a visit and perhaps they have been invited by the Maltese government to do some research work jointly. So we will keep a watch on it closely.

Sidhant Sibal: So your message to the family members of those ex-Indian Navy sailors who are in Qatari custody. We saw the positive news, but your message to their family members

Admiral R. Hari Kumar: The government of India is making every effort to ensure that you know they're brought back safe. So I've personally been interacting with all the authorities here. And every effort is being made to ensure that they come back.

Sidhant Sibal: Coming back to Maldives a bit. Now we know that there is an ongoing diplomatic crisis with the Maldivian govt. Maldives President has given a 15th March deadline for Indian troops to leave, etc, troops deployed to maintain Indian assets used in humanitarian purposes, your comments.

Admiral R. Hari Kumar: See, we have been engaging with the Maldives military for a long time. It's not just something that just started recently. They've been going over a long time. We have training exchanges, and a large number of them do training with us. We are engaged in capability development as well as capacity building with them. We have some of our ships, you know, Dornier aircraft, all this is positioned there to assist the Maldives military in doing various tasks that have been given. We have maintenance teams there to support etc. It's a decision between the two governments. So in case we are told to whatever the order, which is given from the government, we are willing to do but military to military or the Navy to Navy between us, you know, we've been engaging extensively. Even now, officers and sailors from Maldives are doing training in our institutions, so it's a continuous process. So depending on whatever the decision between the governments, we will just follow it.

Sidhant Sibal: If you can shed some light on the bilateral aspect? We have several, several bilateral exercises, recently we had with Thailand as well.

Admiral R. Hari Kumar: We've just completed the exercise at the end of December. The first, you know, exercise with Thailand, and I had also just gone on a visit to Thailand and met the chief there because Thailand is now the chair for the IONS. And for the next two years, they have taken over from France and they will head the IONS, Indian Ocean naval symposium for the next two years and thereafter it is our turn in 2025, in December. So, it was a very important activity they had coordinated Thailand for you know, in the change of leadership of the IONS. So, this exercise especially in the wake of the celebrations yesterday at Ayodhya, assumes significance because we also brought some soil from Ayutthaya and Ayutthaya is almost as important as Ayodhya and the meaning is the invincible one or undefeatable. So, the exercise has been named as exercises Ayutthaya. And we have incidentally, there's just one of the exercises that we are engaging with. Last year we had almost 27 exercises, 56 Maritime engagement exercises, and we had seven coordinated patrols, 7 joint EEZ patrols and so on. So, we have been engaging with friendly foreign countries in the region extensively. And this exercise Ayutthaya is one of them, which happened.

Sidhant Sibal: From east to west countries. We saw the visit of the Saudi Navy chief as well. The carrots from Saudi Arabia training with us if you can elaborate on that aspect, how we are training, building capacity and engaging with these countries like Saudi Arabia.

Admiral R. Hari Kumar: Incidentally, last year, there was a request from Saudi Arabia to give sea training to 55 cadets of the Royal Saudi Naval Force. This was the first time that such a request had come, and we said we had worked out a time when our own training schedule was minimal. And we had offered the slot to them, so these cadets who are trained in their naval academy, had come down to Cochin, they did a few days of harbour training and they spent extensive time at sea, hands-on, doing the actual work at sea. And they were very happy with the quality of training because the first time probably they got exposure to various aspects that we do at sea whether it is handling, lowering of a boat, etc a whole lot of things, the entire thing that is normally taught to our own officers, the same training was given to them over those 24 days. And I had gone and interacted with them at Cochin, and this to get feedback from them, as to whether they were happy with the training. They were exceptionally happy with the quality of training, and they had recommended once they went back, that this training should continue. So in fact when the Saudi Navy chief visited, he, apart from the Delhi meeting travelled to Cochin where our training establishments are located and he went around to see the training facilities which included the simulators and state-of-the-art equipment, as well as our training places and INS Vikrant, our indigenous carrier. So the team was very satisfied and impressed with the quality of training, they had already requested to accommodate 67 cadets in the next batch which is likely to come in this year, somewhere in May- June or so. And also, they want 2 cadets to be trained in the Naval Academy. We run a four-year B tech graduation course where you get a permanent commission and also another two officers for Watchkeeping on different ships. So this engagement is going to be quite positive and progressive. And we're sure that we'll be able to work together, because when you train together, especially in the junior level, then the bonds that are built you know they last for almost your entire lifetime in the service.

Sidhant Sibal: From bilateral to multilateral. We're looking at the Milan exercise in February if you can talk about that, how many countries are participating and what will be the scale of this year's Milan exercises

Admiral R. Hari Kumar: We have invited more than 58 countries. We got responses from almost 47 countries so far. We are quite sure that we may have about 50-plus countries participating, already 18 ships and one aircraft are likely to be a part of Milan. So it has got a harbour phase, where the participants are introduced to subject matter experts, there are seminars, there's interaction, they get a flavour of India and some participants are even taken to see the Taj Mahal and some are taken to Bodhgaya, So that is one part of it in the harbour. And apart from the others, they get an idea of our culture, cultural shows and the various culinary delights. And then there is a sea phase. So in the sea phase, the largely participating ships, and some of the observers will embark and we will have our own ships as well. So they engage in various exercises, whether it is maritime interdiction operations, air defence, anti-surface exercises, or firings. So all this will be undertaken in Vizag. So, it is going to be the largest exercise conducted by the Indian Navy so far with such a large participation.

Sidhant Sibal: Sir, the French President is visiting India this week, any big ticket announcements, like Rafale M...

Admiral R. Hari Kumar: I'm not too sure that any announcement is required or will be done but the DAC has already approved the 26 Rafale cases for the Navy, so now the activities for the price negotiation, and contractual requirements, are being taken forward. And the second one that we're doing with France is the three additional Scorpène or the Kalvari class submarine which is also approved by the DAC and which is being pursued because MDL is a shipbuilder for that and we are working with them for their bid documents, etc. So these are the two big projects which are having, and it is already on, in the sense.

Sidhant Sibal: So my final question to you is, we have talked about the situation in the Red Sea Arabian Sea and the situation in the Indian Ocean region. But in the larger Indo-Pacific region, there is a lot of volatility there, there are countries who have been involved in aggressive actions. What's your sense, of how the situation can go in a positive trajectory or can go in a very negative trajectory?

Admiral R. Hari Kumar: See, in the Indo-Pacific region there are many existing disputes, both territorial and maritime, so in a sense, it is fragile. While we should use diplomacy and negotiations to resolve these issues, there is always a scope for escalation and escalation means it can go into configuration and maybe into a conflict. So, therefore, there's a need for us to be prepared and therefore that is our primary role to deter any conflict-like situation from developing. There are a large number of other anti-narcotics, gun running, smuggling, then illegal immigration, and IUU fishing, so a whole lot of these things are happening in the Indian Ocean region by various actors. The money that gets generated, translates into violence, into terrorism, and so on. These are problems without passports, they can move from one region to another, though they don't require any passport, nothing. They traverse down, they sell drugs, they can sell army, they can bring in people, they can cause terrorism. So, therefore, there is a need for great vigilance and therefore we are cooperating with many of the countries in the region, as you're aware, there is cooperation between the quad countries as well, because we have a common vision of a free, open, inclusive Indo Pacific which is based on rules-based order. And we were working on various aspects like IPMDA-maritime domain awareness in the Indo-Pacific, where the inputs are collated together at various places so that you have a fairly comprehensive picture of what is happening in the region and who is doing what and what are they up to and so on. So, there is collaboration and some amount of competition.

<https://www.wionews.com/india-news/exclusive-indian-navy-chief-admiral-r-hari-kumar-terms-red-sea-situation-fragile-683080>



Tue, 23 Jan 2024

India, European Union have much in Common to Share in Security, Defence Domains: EU Envoy

Herve Delphin, European Union Ambassador to India, held a meeting with Chief of Defence Staff General Anil Chauhan. Delphin said that India and the European Union have much in common to share in security and defence sectors.

Taking to X, Delphin stated, "Thanks to General Anil Chauhan #CDS for hospitality and productive exchange. India, EU have much in common and to share in Sec&Def domain with concrete avenues for #DefenceCooperation (Maritime Sec, CT, Cyber, etc..)."

During the meeting, Herve Delphin and General Anil Chauhan discussed avenues of furthering defence cooperation between India and the EU.

In a post shared on X, Integrated Defence Staff Headquarters stated, "Mr Herve Delphin, Ambassador, Delegation of European Union to India paid courtesy call on General Anil Chauhan, #CDS. Avenues of furthering #DefenceCooperation between EU-India discussed.

Earlier in December, India and the delegation of the European Parliament Sub-Committee on Security and Defence (SEDE) held meetings with Defence officials and highlighted their mutual

interests in deepening India-EU defence cooperation along with greater collaboration in the Indo-Pacific.

The SEDE delegation met with the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Defence and exchanged views on India - EU security cooperation and the role of parliamentarians in furthering partnership among democratic partners.

"The Delegation also had meetings with the Chief of Defence Staff and the Defence Secretary. The meetings reflected our mutual interests in deepening and widening India-EU strategic security and defence cooperation along with greater collaboration in the Indo-Pacific," the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said in a release.

A Delegation of Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) visited India from December 18 to 20, comprised of MEPs from two committees of the European Parliament viz., Delegation for Relations with India (D - IN) and Sub-Committee on Security and Defence (SEDE).

The D-IN comprising 11 MEPs was headed by Morten Lokkegaard and the Subcommittee on Security and Defence (SEDE) comprising 6 MEPs was headed by Nathalie Loiseau.

The European Parliament delegations also called on the External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar. The two sides about the India-EU partnership based on shared values like democracy, respect for the rule of law, multilateralism, rules-based trade and rules-based international order.

"They also had useful discussions on geopolitical convergences, supply chain security, digital sensitivities, AI and maritime security," the release added.

Later on the second day of their visit, both delegations called on the Lok Sabha speaker Om Birla on December 19 and discussed our common worldview based on values of democracy, rule of law, multilateralism and diversity.

The D-IN delegation met with the Minister of Commerce and Industry, Piyush Goyal on December 18. They deliberated on the progress of the India-EU Free Trade Agreement (FTA) negotiations currently underway and also explored avenues to further enhance the economic ties.

"The D-IN delegation called on the Deputy Chairman of Rajya Sabha, Harivansh Narayan Singh and also met the members of the External Affairs Committee of the Parliament chaired by Shri P P Chaudhary," the release stated. Moreover, the D-IN delegation also visited Mumbai. During the meetings held in Mumbai, avenues for enhanced synergy and cooperation in the defence industry and manufacturing were also explored.

<https://www.aninews.in/news/world/asia/india-european-union-have-much-in-common-to-share-in-security-defence-domains-eu-envoy20240123203824/>



Tue, 23 Jan 2024

First Challenger 3 Rolled out

Rheinmetall BAE Systems Land (RBSL), a joint venture between Rheinmetall of Germany and BAE Systems of the UK, has rolled out the first example of the Challenger 3 main battle tank (MBT), P1, at its Telford facility in the UK and will start trials in February 2024.

Details of the trials were revealed at Defence iQ's International Armoured Vehicles conference in London this week.

There will be a total of eight prototypes of the Challenger 3 to enable a wide range of trials to be undertaken, followed by Low-Rate Initial Production (LRIP) and Full-Rate Production (FRP).

<https://www.shephardmedia.com/news/landwarfareintl/first-challenger-3-rolled-out/>



Tue, 23 Jan 2024

New Zealand to Send Defence Team to Support Red Sea Security

As part of an international alliance to maintain maritime security in the Red Sea, New Zealand will send a six-person defence team to the Middle East, Prime Minister Christopher Luxon announced on Tuesday. The Houthi group in Yemen, who are aligned with Iran, have been attacking civilian ships in the Red Sea for weeks, allegedly as a form of protest against Israel's military operation in the Gaza Strip. As a result, the United States and Britain have been attacking them with airstrikes.

"Houthi attacks against commercial and naval shipping are illegal, unacceptable and profoundly destabilising," Luxon said during a media briefing.

"This deployment ... is a continuation of New Zealand's long history of defending freedom of navigation both in the Middle East and closer to home."

US and British forces launched a new wave of attacks on Monday, hitting a Houthi subterranean storage facility as well as missile and observation capabilities, according to the Pentagon.

The Houthi strikes have hampered global shipping and fueled worries about global inflation. They have also raised concerns that the consequences from the Israel-Hamas conflict might destabilise the Middle East. Luxon stated that no New Zealand defence personnel will enter Yemen or engage in war, but will participate to the collective self-defense of ships in the Middle East in accordance with international law. Foreign Minister Winston Peters stated that New Zealand's actions should not be confused with its stance on the Israel-Hamas conflict.

"Any suggestion our ongoing support for maritime security in the Middle East is connected to recent developments in Israel and the Gaza Strip, is wrong," Peters said.

New Zealand has been calling for a humanitarian truce, humanitarian pauses and the urgent need for further steps towards a sustainable ceasefire in Gaza.

<https://www.firstpost.com/world/new-zealand-to-send-defence-team-to-support-red-sea-security-13645442.html>



Wed, 24 Jan 2024

Germany to Send Ukraine Six 'Sea King' Helicopters for Air Defence

Germany will send six helicopters to Ukraine out of Germany's military inventory to be delivered from the second quarter of this year, its defence minister Boris Pistorius announced on Tuesday, the first delivery of its kind from Germany.

The helicopters, called "Sea King" helicopters, should help Ukraine with everything from surveillance of the Black Sea to transporting soldiers, Pistorius said.

The minister was speaking at a meeting of the Ukraine Defence Contact Group, where over 50 states and organisations plan capabilities on Ukraine's frontline. Germany and France have led the coalition for air defence together since November.

"For the protection of the Ukrainian people and infrastructure, air defence continues to be the number 1 priority. We also need more speed with arms production," Pistorius said.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/germany-send-ukraine-six-sea-king-helicopters-air-defence-2024-01-23/>

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Tue, 23 Jan 2024

ISRO, NSIL Explore Opportunities to Manufacture LVM-3

NewSpace India Ltd (NSIL) along with the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) held a stakeholders conference to explore partnership options between NSIL and Indian Industry for manufacturing ISRO's heaviest launcher Launch Vehicle Mark 3 (LVM3) in Bengaluru recently.

NSIL which is the commercial arm of ISRO said that the event brought together nearly 70 plus participants from over 30 companies to discuss and debate business partnership options.

The initiative was undertaken by NSIL and ISRO in light of the emerging global commercial Launch Service market needs especially for the LVM3 class of launch vehicle.

LVM3 presently has the capability to launch satellites of 4 tonne class in Geostationary Transfer Orbit (GTO) and 8 tonne in Low Earth Orbit (LEO).

"The need for the PPP mode of partnership with Indian industry for releasing more LVM3 to meet the global launch service demand is essential to stay competitive and relevant in the market. Towards this effort of NSIL and ISRO, Indian industries should come forward and become the risk sharing and investment partner as part of the programme," NSIL said.

It added that the global launch service market assessment for the decade clearly indicates that there is enough demand for launching communication satellites in GTO and satellites for mega constellations in LEO.

NSIL also said that the LVM3 has a great potential and opportunity to capture this niche global launch service market in the coming years.

"NSIL has engaged the services of M/s IIFCL Projects Limited (IPL) to explore the potential PPP partnership options for LVM3 production through Indian industry," it said.

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/karnataka/isro-nsil-explore-opportunities-to-manufacture-lvm-3/article67769021.ece>

Shiv Shakti to Nari Shakti: ISRO R-Day Tableau to Celebrate Gender Equality

Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) will participate in the Republic Day parade after an immensely successful year marked by two historic launches.

The space agency's tableau will showcase its successful landing on the Moon in August 2023, with the Indian flag marking the Shiv Shakti point. The tableau will also have smaller displays of India's first mission to study the Sun, along with its upcoming Gaganyaan mission and Bharatiya Antariksh Station.

Once it successfully demonstrates human spaceflight, India has set a target of 2035 for its own space station.

While the tableau will demonstrate the successes of the space agency, it will also seat eight women scientists who have made these missions possible. According to officials, 212 other women scientists from the space agency will also be in attendance at the parade.

Officials in the know of things said: "The tableau and the list of invitees is a reflection of the Prime Minister's penchant for women empowerment. Around 200 women, who will participate in the event, will include recognisable faces like Nigar Shaji, the mission director for Aditya L1."

The name Shiv Shakti for the point on the Moon, where India touched down, was also to signal this same inclusivity and gender equality.

On August 23, 2023, India became the fourth country to successfully soft-land on the surface of the Moon, making it the first nation to do so near the southern pole of the Moon. It was declared National Space Day to mark the historic achievement. After the achievements of 2023, the space agency is aiming higher.

While ISRO is working on several ground tests, test vehicle missions, and unmanned flights in preparation of sending astronauts to space, it plans to launch the first components of its space station by 2028. The space agency is also working on heavier-lift launch vehicles for other components needed to set up the space station by 2035.

The Moon missions will continue with Chandrayaan-4 being a sample-return mission, where the spacecraft will bring back Moon rocks and soil.

<https://indianexpress.com/article/india/shiv-shakti-to-nari-shakti-isro-r-day-tableau-to-celebrate-gender-equality-9124590/>

