

Defence (8)

• Exercise MAITREE-XV with Thailand

Body: Indian contingent departed 17 August 2026; exercise 18–31 August at Vibhavadi Rangsit Camp, Surat Thani, Thailand. The 15th edition; instituted 2006; previous edition at Umroi, Meghalaya, September 2025

Detail: 85 personnel each side — India represented primarily by 9 Gorkha Rifles, Thailand by the 3rd Battalion, 25th Infantry Brigade, 5th Division. Company-level training

Detail: Focus is counter-insurgency and counter-terrorist operations in jungle and semi-urban terrain under Chapter VII of the UN Charter.

Jungle compresses engagement ranges and degrades radio under canopy; semi-urban adds vertical space and makes discrimination the hardest skill.

India's centre of excellence is CIJWS, Vairengte, Mizoram

Lineage: Thailand is a founding ASEAN member (HQ Jakarta), in BIMSTEC (Secretariat Dhaka) and Mekong-Ganga Cooperation; it shares a maritime boundary with India in the Andaman Sea, astride the approaches to Malacca. Naval engagement via Indo-Thai CORPAT and MILAN

Exam hook: Chapter VI is pacific settlement, not enforceable; Chapter VII allows sanctions (Art 41) and force (Art 42) and is binding. Classical peacekeeping is consent-based — 'Chapter VI and a half'

• India leases two MQ-9B Sea Guardian HALE drones

Body: MoD signed with General Atomics Aeronautical Systems (GA-ASI) for the Indian Navy — two MQ-9B Sea Guardian RPAS on a 30-month lease at about Rs 1,943 crore

Detail: Purpose is Maritime Domain Awareness — persistent ISR over the Indian Ocean Region

Detail: The vocabulary — HALE = High-Altitude Long-Endurance (above ~40,000 ft, 30–40+ hours) · MALE = Medium-Altitude · RPAS includes the ground control station, datalinks and payloads, not just the airframe

Lineage: Altitude widens the sensor footprint because the horizon recedes; endurance buys persistence — a pattern rather than a snapshot. A ship's radar horizon is limited by the Earth's curvature; a HALE platform is not

Exam hook: The scale of the task — coastline about 7,516.6 km, EEZ roughly 2.37 million sq km, about 95% of India's trade by volume moving by sea, with chokepoints at Hormuz, Bab-el-Mandeb, Malacca and the Mozambique Channel. The rest of the architecture: IFC-IOR at Gurugram, the coastal radar chain, and P-8I Poseidon

• Sixth Positive Indigenisation List: 405 items

Body: Department of Defence Production; 405 items, business potential about Rs 3,070 crore — 389 DPSU items and 16 Indian Coast Guard items, covering LRUs, sub-systems, sub-assemblies, spares, components and raw materials

Detail: The point most often missed — a 'Positive' Indigenisation List is in substance a negative import list. After an indicative timeline the item may not be imported and must come from Indian industry. The timeline breaks a chicken-and-egg problem by giving industry advance notice and the Services certainty

Detail: The first five lists covered 5,012 items; the sixth takes the total past 5,400. Contents include ALH, LUH, Su-30MKI, LCA, the AL-31FP engine, T-72, T-90, BMP-II, warships, Konkurs-M, Invar, MRSAM, radars, sonars and HEAT ammunition

Lineage: Import dependence bites at the level of the LRU and the spare, not the platform — a fleet assembled in India can still be strategically dependent if the spares pipeline runs abroad. The AL-31FP entry is the textbook case

Exam hook: The SRIJAN portal (DDP, August 2020) has offered over 33,000 items, with over 15,700 indigenised and import substitution of about Rs 9,000 crore over five years

• Japan's Defence Minister at Western Naval Command

Body: Japanese Defence Minister Shinjiro Koizumi, on his maiden India visit, at Western Naval Command, Mumbai; met CNS Admiral Krishna Swaminathan and FOC-in-C Vice Admiral Sanjay Vatsayan; visited INS Chennai. Talks with Raksha Mantri Rajnath Singh followed on 20 August

Detail: The substantive hook — Japan's revision of its Three Principles on Transfer of Defence Equipment and Technology. 1967: Three Principles on Arms Exports, a near-total ban rooted in Article 9. 1 April 2014: replaced by the Transfer principles with case-by-case screening.

April 2026: comprehensive revision abolishing the five non-lethal categories restriction

Detail: The ceiling on India-Japan defence trade was Japanese domestic law, not intent — the long-discussed US-2 amphibious aircraft is the standing example

Lineage: INS Chennai is a Kolkata-class destroyer, Project 15A, built at Mazagon Dock, commissioned 2016, carrying BrahMos and Barak-8

Exam hook: Naval commands — Western Mumbai · Eastern Visakhapatnam · Southern Kochi (training), plus tri-service Andaman and Nicobar, Port Blair. India-Japan exercises: JIMEX (navy), Dharm Guardian (army), Veer Guardian (air), plus Malabar

• 25th India-UK Defence Consultative Group

Body: New Delhi; co-chaired by Defence Secretary Rajesh Kumar Singh and UK Permanent Under Secretary Jeremy Pocklington, his first India visit in that role

Detail: The DCG was constituted in 1995, meets at Defence Secretary / PUS level, alternates between New Delhi and London, and has sub-groups on military-to-military contacts, defence equipment and science and technology. India has no 2+2 ministerial with the UK — the DCG carries the relationship

Detail: Two frameworks, both signed 24 July 2025 in London — India-UK Vision 2035 and a Ten Year Defence Industrial Roadmap covering jet engines, maritime security, underwater systems and directed energy weapons

Lineage: CETA signed 24 July 2025, in force 15 July 2026, making 99% of Indian tariff lines duty-free in the UK. Exercises: Ajeya Warrior (8th edition, November 2025) and Indradhanush (since 2006). IPOI launched 4 November 2019 at the East Asia Summit, with the UK co-leading the maritime security pillar

Exam hook: The trap — Rolls-Royce has offered an AMCA engine with full IP transfer but has not won the contract; Safran, GE and IHI remain in contention. The honest line: architecture is dense, but the UK supplies only about 3% of India's defence imports against Russia's 36%

• Terrier Cyber Quest 3.0 and the Territorial Army

Body: Territorial Army with CyberPeace; registration closed 31 August, Grand Finale New Delhi, 6–8 October, awards 9 October 2026 — Territorial Army Day

Detail: Three tracks — Bug Hunting (CTF qualifier into a live sandbox on simulated critical infrastructure) · AI Kavach (predictive threat intelligence and anomaly detection) · Creators Challenge (deepfakes, phishing, misinformation), which is new. TCQ 2025 had two tracks and about 10,000 participants

Detail: What the Territorial Army is not — not a career, not an occupation, and not the Army's reserve of ex-regulars. It is a part-time citizens' force and India's second line of defence; gainful civil employment is a prerequisite, age 18–42, graduate, with about two months training a year

Lineage: Territorial Army Act, 1948; first camp inaugurated 9 October 1949 by C. Rajagopalachari; motto Savdhani Va Shoorta — Vigilance and Valour. Structure: ~65 departmental units, ~32 Infantry Battalions, Ecological Task Force battalions and Engineer Regiments

Exam hook: The cyber architecture — Defence Cyber Agency (approved 2018, activated 2019, reports to the CDS via HQ IDS) · CERT-In under Section 70B, IT Act 2000 (MeitY) · NCIIPC under Section 70A, a unit of NTRO

- Mangrol delivered: India's shallow-water submarine hunters**
Body: Mangrol, the third ASW-SWC built by Cochin Shipyard Limited, delivered to the Navy on **21 August 2026**
Detail: The programme covers **16 ASW-SWC** under two contracts of about **Rs 6,311 crore** each, signed **April 2019** — **GRSE Kolkata builds the *Arnala* class (8)** and **CSL Kochi the *Mahe* class (8)**, replacing four Soviet-origin **Abhay-class** corvettes
Detail: Specifications — **78 m**, beam **11.36 m**, about **900 tonnes**, **25 knots**, endurance **1,800 nautical miles**, crew **57**, over **80% indigenous content**, **waterjet propulsion**
Lineage: Roles are underwater surveillance, **coastal ASW**, **Low Intensity Maritime Operations (LIMO)** and **mine warfare**. **INS Arnala** was commissioned **18 June 2025**, **INS Mahe** (first CSL hull) **24 November 2025**, **INS Malvan July 2026**
Exam hook: The name revives an earlier **INS Mangrol** minesweeper; *Mangrol* is a coastal town in **Junagadh district, Gujarat**. Keep the two classes and their yards straight — **Arnala/GRSE** against **Mahe/CSL**
- Siliguri Corridor security review at Sukna**
Body: Union Home Minister reviewed **Siliguri Corridor** security at **Sukna**, with **MHA, MoRTH, Army, BSF, SSB, RPF** and the West Bengal Chief Secretary, DGP and Chief Minister; presentation by the MAC's **Standing Focus Group on Siliguri Corridor**
Detail: The corridor is **20–22 km wide**, about **200 km long**, roughly **12,200 km²**, and is the sole land link to **eight** north-eastern states. **NH-27** running through it is **3,507 km**, India's second longest after **NH-44**
Detail: The doctrine articulated was a **quadrangular approach** — border guarding forces, State police, civil administration and the local community as **equal stakeholders**
Lineage: Borders in the neighbourhood — **Bangladesh 4,096.7 km** (2,217 km in West Bengal) · **Bhutan 699 km** · **Nepal 1,751 km**. **SSB raised 1963**; **Sikkim became the 22nd State** by the **36th Amendment, 1975 (Article 371F)**; **MAC created December 2001**; **Doklam ran 73 days, 16 June–28 August 2017**
Exam hook: The standard distractor — **SSB guards Nepal and Bhutan**; **BSF guards Bangladesh**. Second trap: the corridor lies in **West Bengal**, not **Assam** or **Sikkim**

Sci/Tech (2)

- IndiaAI Mission workshop on the AIKosh datasets platform**
Body: **IndiaAI Mission (MeitY)** workshop at the India Habitat Centre; inaugurated by **Dr Saurabh Garg**, Secretary **MoSPI**; framing address on '**Data as National Wealth: India's Imperative for Sovereign AI**' by CEO **Saurabh Vijay**
Detail: The four properties data must have — **discoverable, understandable, interoperable and securely accessible** across ministries. **Interoperability** is the hardest, which is why harmonisation was on the agenda
Detail: Why data rather than compute — **a model is a compressed representation of its training data**, so training on largely Western English text leaves gaps in Indian languages, law, crops and disease profiles that **no amount of computing power fixes**. That is the defensible meaning of **sovereign AI**
Lineage: **AIKosh** is the **IndiaAI Datasets Platform** pillar. The Mission, approved **2024**, has pillars for **Compute Capacity, Innovation Centre, Datasets, Application Development, FutureSkills, Startup Financing and Safe and Trusted AI**. Companion mission: **BHASHINI**
Exam hook: It applies the **DPI template** — **Aadhaar** for identity, **UPI** for payments, **DigiLocker** for documents — to **data**. The limit: **health records, security data and personal information** stay governed by the **Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023**

- National Space Day: Shiv Shakti Point, three years on**
Body: **23 August** — National Space Day, declared **26 August 2023** and first observed **2024**, so 2026 is the **third** edition. Theme: ***Towards Viksit Bharat***; national event at **Ahmedabad**, presided over by **ISRO Chairman Dr V. Narayanan**
Detail: **Chandrayaan-3** launched **14 July 2023** on **LVM3-M4** from **Sriharikota** and soft-landed **23 August 2023** at a cost of about **Rs 615 crore**, making India the **4th** country to soft-land and the **1st** in the south polar region. **Vikram** lander and **Pragyan** rover (**26 kg**), designed for **one lunar day ≈ 14 Earth days**
Detail: Payloads — lander: **ChaSTE** (soil thermal profile), **ILSA** (seismic), **RAMBHA-LP** (plasma), **LRA** (NASA retroreflector); rover: **LIBS** and **APXS**, which made the first in-situ elemental measurements near the south pole and confirmed **sulphur**
Lineage: **Shiv Shakti Point** was announced **26 August 2023** and approved by the **IAU as Statio Shiv Shakti on 19 March 2024**; **Chandrayaan-2's** impact site is **Tiranga Point**
Exam hook: Why the south pole — an axial tilt of about **1.5°** creates **permanently shadowed regions** near **–175°C** holding **water ice**, usable for drinking water, oxygen and **hydrogen-oxygen propellant** made on site (**ISRU**). Roadmap: **Gaganyaan Rs 20,193 crore**, crewed flight targeted **2027** · **Chandrayaan-4** sample return · **LUPEX** with **JAXA** · **BAS** first module **2028**

Culture/Sport (4)

- National Sports Awards 2025 announced**
Body: Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, on the recommendation of a Selection Committee chaired by **Justice (Retd.) Arun Kumar Mishra**
Detail: **17 Arjuna Awards** · **1 Arjuna (Lifetime)** — **I Arumainayagam**, football · **3 Dronacharya (Regular)** and **2 Dronacharya (Lifetime)** · **Rashtriya Khel Protsahan Puraskar** to the **Army Paralympic Node, Pune**
Detail: Names most likely to be asked — **Tejaswin Shankar** (athletics), **Treesa Jolly** and **Pullela Gayatri Gopichand** (badminton), **Vidit Santosh Gujarathi** and **Divya Jitendra Deshmukh** (chess), **Lalremsiami** and **Rajkumar Pal** (hockey), **Akhil Sheoran** (shooting)
Lineage: The categories — **Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna** (highest, **renamed 2021**) · **Arjuna** (performance over the previous four years, with a Lifetime variant) · **Dronacharya** (coaches) · **Dhyan Chand Award** (lifetime achievement) · **Rashtriya Khel Protsahan Puraskar** (institutions) · **MAKA Trophy** (best university)
Exam hook: **Para-sport and deaf sport sit inside the main list**, not in a parallel honour, and the institutional award went to an **armed forces** unit. Stated honestly: the release **does not name a Khel Ratna awardee** — answer what was announced
- 65th Subroto Cup opens at Ambedkar Stadium**
Body: Ministry of Defence; opened **18 August 2026** at **Dr B.R. Ambedkar Stadium**, New Delhi. Chief guest **Air Marshal S Sivakumar**, Vice Chairman of the Subroto Mukerjee Sports Education Society
Detail: **108 teams** in three categories — **Junior Girls U-17, Junior Boys U-17, Sub-Junior Boys U-15** — in **eight groups per category**. Opening match: **Meghalaya 2–0 Chandigarh** in the Junior Girls category
Detail: **Air Marshal Subroto Mukerjee** was the **first Indian Chief of the Air Staff**, from **1 April 1954**; among the first Indian cadets at **RAF Cranwell** in **1932**, the year the **IAF was raised on 8 October 1932**
Lineage: He conceived the tournament in **1958**; the Society was formed and the first tournament played in **1960**. He **died in Tokyo in 1960** before it was held, and **Jawaharlal Nehru** suggested it carry his name
Exam hook: This explains why the **IAF runs India's most important school football tournament** — it was designed as a **grassroots** tournament, not a service competition. Companion fact: the **Durand Cup (1888)** is **Asia's oldest** football tournament, also run under armed-forces aegis

• SAI Governing Body sets a talent roadmap for 2036

Body: 63rd Governing Body Meeting of the Sports Authority of India, chaired by **Dr Mansukh Mandaviya**, taking forward the PM's **Red Fort** announcement of a nationwide talent hunt

Detail: A **two-stage** model — **identify** athletes performing well at **state and district** level, then **map and assess potential**. Stage one is a **performance** filter and easy; stage two is a **potential** filter and hard, because junior results poorly predict senior results

Detail: Approved the **National Coach Accreditation Board (NCAB)** under the revamped **Khelo India** scheme, plus a **public-private partnership** model with **CSR** participation to expand academy capacity

Lineage: SAI established 1984 to use 1982 Asian Games infrastructure.

Khelo India is grassroots and school sport; **TOPS** funds identified **elite medal prospects** — broad-and-shallow against narrow-and-deep

Exam hook: The arithmetic behind the policy — a **2036** medal depends on a **twelve-year-old identified in 2026**. India has proposed **Ahmedabad** as host city. Swapping Khelo India and TOPS is the standard error

• BRICS Sports Ministers adopt a joint declaration at Visakhapatnam

Body: BRICS Sports Ministers' Meeting, **Visakhapatnam**, under India's **2026 Chairship**; a combined **Youth and Sports** ministerial chaired by **Dr Mansukh Mandaviya** with MoS **Raksha Khadse**; declaration adopted by **consensus**

Detail: Three deliverables — a Working Group on **Sports Technology** · a **Sports Manufacturing Conclave** at **Udaipur, November 2026** ·

Traditional and Indigenous Sports Demonstration Games at **Ahmedabad, 12–13 October 2026**, deliberately **non-competitive** with no medal table

Detail: India's **fourth** BRICS chairship after **2012, 2016 and 2021**; the **18th Summit** is in **New Delhi, 12–13 September 2026**

Lineage: The domestic architecture — **SAI 1984** · **TOPS September 2014**, revamped 2018 · **Mission Olympic Cell 2016** · **Khelo India** from Budget 2017-18 · **Fit India 29 August 2019**

Exam hook: The **National Sports Governance Act, 2025** (assent 18 August 2025) creates a **National Sports Board** and a **National Sports Tribunal** with appeals to the **Supreme Court**, requires **at least 4 women** and **2 athlete representatives** on executive committees, and applies the **RTI Act** to statutory functions. **Sport is Entry 33 of the State List** — the Centre acts through funding and recognition, not a Union entry

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