



Current Affairs - March 2021 to August 2021

Month

Type



- ▶ **53** Current Affairs were found in **Last Six Months** for Type - **Defence**

Defence

- ▶ Tri Nation Table Top Anti-Narcotics & Maritime Search and Rescue exercise (**Exercise Shield - TTX2021**) held between Maldives, Sri Lanka and India Navies, in virtual mode for the first time, with Indian Navy as lead agency and coordinated by Maritime Warfare Centre Mumbai.
- ▶ 11th edition of Indo-US Joint Special Forces Exercise **VAJRA PRAHAR 2021** conducted at Special Forces Training School located at Bakloh (Himachal Pradesh).
- ▶ 12th Indo-Russia joint Army exercise **INDRA-21** held at Volgograd (Russia).
 - ▶ Note that 12th edition of exercise **INDRA NAVY 21**, biennial maritime exercise between **Indian** Navy and **Russian** Navy was also held recently in Baltic Sea, attended by INS Tabar on India's Behalf. It also attended Russia Navy's 325th Navy Day celebrations.
- ▶ 12th edition of exercise **INDRA NAVY 21**, biennial maritime exercise between **Indian** Navy and **Russian** Navy held in Baltic Sea, attended by INS Tabar on India's Behalf. It also attended Russia Navy's 325th Navy Day celebrations.
- ▶ 19th edition of Indian and French Navy bilateral exercise **VARUNA 2021** concluded in Arabian Sea.
- ▶ 1st batch of 83 women soldiers inducted into Indian Army's military police by Corps of Military Police Centre and School at Dronacharya Parade Ground in Bengaluru.

7. ▶ 1st bilateral Naval exercise **AL – Mohed AL – Hindi**, between Indian and Saudi Arabian Navy held at King Abdulaziz Naval base in Al Jubail (Saudi Arabia).
8. ▶ 2nd edition of exercise **Zair-Al-Bahr** between Indian Navy and Qatar Navy conducted in Persian Gulf.
9. ▶ 5th edition of Indo- Kazakhstan Joint Training Exercise **KAZIND-21** began at Aisha Bibi (Kazakhstan), to last till 11 September 2021.
10. ▶ 7th edition of biennial event *Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS)*, hosted by **French** Navy at *La Réunion*.
 - ▶ IONS was initiated by Indian Navy in 2008, to enhance maritime cooperation among Navies of littoral states of Indian Ocean Region. France has assumed Chairmanship in June 2021, for 2 years.
 - ▶ Réunion Island is a French department in Indian Ocean, known for its volcanic, rainforested interior, coral reefs and beaches.
11. ▶ 8th Indo-Kyrgyz Joint Special Forces Exercise “**Khanjar**” began at Special Forces Brigade of National Guards of Kyrgyzstan in Bishkek.
12. ▶ **Indian Naval Landing Craft Utility (LCU) L58**, 8th and last ship of Landing Craft Utility (LCU) Mark IV Class, has been commissioned into Indian Navy at Port Blair (Andaman & Nicobar Islands). It has been Indigenously built by GRSE Kolkata.
13. ▶ As per SIPRI Yearbook 2021 -
 - ▶ 9 nuclear armed states (US, Russia, UK, France, China, India, Pakistan, Israel and North Korea) together possessed estimated 13080 nuclear weapons at start of 2021, marking a decrease from 13400 estimation at beginning of 2020. However, number of deployed nuclear weapons increased to 3825, from 3720 last year.
 - ▶ Nations with number of Nuclear Warheads at beginning of 2021 -
 - ▶ US - 5550
 - ▶ Russia - 6255
 - ▶ UK - 225
 - ▶ France - 290
 - ▶ China - 350
 - ▶ India - 156
 - ▶ Pakistan - 165
 - ▶ Israel - 90
14. ▶ DRDO conducted First Trials of 5th generation Python-5 Air-to-Air Missile, onboard Indigenous Tejas Light Combat Aircraft (LCA).
15. ▶ DRDO flight tested a New Generation Nuclear Capable Ballistic Missile **Agni P (Prime)**, as is a new generation advanced variant of Agni class of missiles. It is a canisterised missile with range capability between 1,000 and 2,000 kms.
16. ▶ Defence Acquisition Council (DAC), under Chairmanship of Raksha Mantri Rajnath Singh, approved issue of RFP for construction of 6 Conventional Submarines under **Project P 75 (I)**, under Strategic Partnership Model, at cost 43000 Crores.

- ✎ It is first case processed under Strategic Partnership model, and will be one of largest 'Make in India' projects.
 - ✎ DAC also approved proposals concerning Capital Acquisitions of various equipment, amounting approx 6000 crores.
17. ▶ Govt approved a long-pending proposal to restructure nearly 200-year-old Ordnance Factory Board that operates 41 ammunition and military equipment production facilities into seven state-owned corporate entities, to improve its accountability, efficiency and competitiveness. 7 new entities will include -
- ✎ Ammunition and Explosives group
 - ✎ Vehicles Group
 - ✎ Weapons and Equipment group
 - ✎ Troop Comfort Items group
 - ✎ Ancillary group
 - ✎ Opto-Electronics group
 - ✎ Parachute group
18. ▶ India Joined Nations that possess nuclear missile tracking vessels, with Indian Navy commissioning its secretive Ocean Surveillance Ship Named **INS Dhruv**, earlier codenamed **VC-11184**.
- ✎ It will boost India's ballistic missile defense capability and electronic maritime warfare.
 - ✎ Other nations with this capability are US, France, Russia and China.
19. ▶ India retained its position as 3rd biggest military spender in world in 2020, according to SIPRI Military Expenditure Report -
- ✎ Top 5 - US (\$778 billion), China (\$252 billion), India (\$72.9 billion), Russia (\$61.7 billion) and UK (\$59.2 billion).
 - ✎ Globally, military spending in 2020 rose to \$1981 billion, rise of 2.6 % compared to 2019.
20. ▶ India – Uzbekistan joint military exercise **DUSTLIK II** commenced in Foreign Training Node Chaubatia at Ranikhet (Uttarakhand). 1st edition was held at Uzbekistan in Nov 2019.
21. ▶ India, Pakistan and other members of Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) will hold a joint anti-terrorism in 2021, called *Pabbi-Antiterror-2021*.
22. ▶ Indian Air Force for the first time Participated in **Ex Desert Flag VI**, an annual multi-national warfare exercise hosted by **United Arab Emirates** Air Force. Nations involved are UAE, India, USA, France, Saudi Arabia, South Korea and Bahrain.
23. ▶ Indian Air Force formally inducted Rafale aircraft into *101 Squadron* at Air Force Station Hasimara in Eastern Air Command.
- ✎ 101 Squadron is second IAF Squadron to be equipped with Rafale aircraft. It was formed on 01 May 1949 at Palam, with active participation in 1965 and 1971 Indo-Pak wars.

-  1st Rafale squadron is *No.17 Golden Arrows* (Ambala). In September 2020, IAF inducted first batch of five Rafales of 36 jets, contracted under a €7.87 billion Inter-Governmental Agreement signed in September 2016.
24. ▶ Indian Army Formally Closed Down Military Farms, which were set up for supplying hygienic cow's milk to troops billeted in various garrisons across British India. First Military farm was raised on 01 Feb 1889 at Allahabad.
25. ▶ Indian Coast Guard (ICG) Ship **Vigraha**, seventh in series of Offshore Patrol Vessels (OPVs), has been commissioned by Raksha Mantri Rajnath Singh in Chennai.
-  It has been designed and built indigenously by Larsen & Toubro Ship Building Limited.
26. ▶ Indian Coast Guard inducted **Advanced Light Helicopters (ALH) Mk-III** in its fleet, which are indigenously manufactured by Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL).
-  The helicopters are capable of undertaking embarked operations from ships which will enhance Coast Guard capabilities.
27. ▶ Indian Naval Air Squadron (INAS) 323, the first unit of indigenously built ALH Mk III aircraft, has been commissioned into Indian Navy, at INS Hansa (Goa).
-  Squadron will operate 3 ALH Mk III, a multirole helicopter with Shakti engine manufactured by Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL).
28. ▶ Indian Naval Ship **Tabar** commenced deployment to several Nations in Africa and Europe. Along with PASSEX Exercises with host navies, it will also participate in bilateral exercises like **Ex Konkani** with Royal Navy (UK), **Ex Varuna** with French Navy and **Ex Indra** with Russian Navy.
29. ▶ Indian Naval Ship Talwar participated in *Exercise Cutlass Express 2021*, conducted along East Coast of Africa.
-  It is an annual exercise conducted to promote maritime security in East Africa and Western Indian Ocean.
-  2021 edition of the exercise involves participation of 12 Eastern African countries, US, UK, India and various international organisations.
30. ▶ Indian Naval Ship Triakand participated in First ever India-European Union Joint Naval Exercise, **IN – EUNAVFOR**, in Gulf of Aden. European Nations Participating in Exercise are Italy, Spain and France.
31. ▶ Indian Navy hosted Goa Maritime Symposium (GMS-21), under aegis of Naval War College Goa, for the first time in virtual mode. Theme for GMS-21 is *Maritime Security and Emerging Non-Traditional Threats: A Case for Proactive Role for IOR Navies*.
32. ▶ Indian Navy launched *Operation Samudra Setu-II* to help in faster transportation of medical oxygen and other requirements from other countries to India, amid COVID-19 pandemic.
33. ▶ Indian Navy participated (for the first time) in multi-lateral maritime exercise **La Pérouse**, conducted in Eastern Indian Ocean Region. The exercise was attended by France, Australia, Japan US Navies.

✍ La Pérouse joint exercise was initiated by France in 2019. Its First edition included ships from Australia, Japan and US.

✍ It is named after the eighteenth century French Naval explorer.

34. ▶ Indian Navy participated in 20th edition of US Navy-led **Southeast Asia Cooperation and Training (SEACAT)** exercise in Singapore, with participation of 20 other partner nations as well.

35. ▶ Indian Navy participated in bilateral exercise with UAE Navy off the coast of Abu Dhabi, named **Zayed Talwar 2021**.

36. ▶ Indian Navy participated in sea phase of Exercise **Malabar 2021**, along with Navies from US, Japan and Australia.

✍ Malabar series of maritime exercise commenced in 1992 as an India - US Exercise, Joined by Japan in 2015 and Australia in 2020.

37. ▶ Indian Navy undertook Passage Exercise (PASSEX) with Royal Bahrain Naval Force, in Persian Gulf under Operation Sankalp.

✍ PASSEXs are conducted regularly by the Indian Navy with units of friendly foreign navies.

✍ Indian Navy's Operation Sankalp in Persian Gulf and Gulf of Oman is aimed as a measure to assure safety and security of Indian vessels.

38. ▶ Indian Navy's first destroyer **INS Rajput** has been decommissioned at Naval Dockyard Visakhapatnam, after serving nation for 41 years.

✍ INS Rajput was commissioned on 04 May 1980, at Poti, Georgia (erstwhile USSR), as lead ship of Rajput Class Destroyers.

39. ▶ Indian Navy's oldest hydrographic survey ship **INS Sandhayak** has been decommissioned, after serving for 40 years.

40. ▶ Indo-UK Joint Naval Exercise **Konkan 2021** held in the English Channel, attended by INS Tabar on Indian Navy's Behalf.

41. ▶ Misc. Defence News (April 2021) -

✍ To help Armed Forces to conduct successful operations, Chief of Defence Staff General Bipin Rawat operationalised 3rd Joint Logistics Node (JLN) in Mumbai, to strengthen logistics support.

✍ DRDO lab Defence Laboratory Jodhpur (DLJ) developed an Advanced Chaff Technology to safeguard naval ships against enemy missile attack. These Include three indigenously developed variants namely Short Range Chaff Rocket (SRCR), Medium Range Chaff Rocket (MRCR) and Long Range Chaff Rocket (LRCR).

✍ India gifted 50 metre patrol vessel P S Zoroaster to Seychelles Coast Guard.

42. ▶ Misc. Defence News (July 2021) -

✍ First lot of 12 Short Span Bridging System (SSBS)-10 m, developed by Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), in association with L&T Ltd, has been inducted into Indian Army. The 12 bridges are part of 102 SSBS-10 m to be built by L&T Ltd.

✍ Israeli Firm *Rafael Advanced Defense Systems* unveiled Sea Breaker, a 5th generation precision-guided missile system, which can precisely target sea and land targets up to a range of 300 kilometres.

✍ Ministry of Defence implemented SPARSH (System for Pension Administration (Raksha)), as an integrated system for automation of sanction and disbursement of defence pension.

- ✍ Indian Army named a firing range at Gulmarg in Baramulla district (J&K) after Bollywood actress Vidya Balan.
- ✍ Indian Navy received first two of its MH-60R Multi Role Helicopters (MRH) from US Navy, manufactured by Lockheed Martin as an all-weather helicopter designed to support multiple missions.
- ✍ Defence Minister Rajnath Singh launched an Artificial Intelligence-powered application developed by ministry and IIT-Kanpur to improve grievance redressal mechanisms of Central government.
- ✍ Indian Navy received its 10th anti-submarine warfare and patrol aircraft P-8I Poseidon from US-based Boeing. Ministry of Defence had initially signed contract with Boeing for 8 P-8I aircraft in 2009 for Navy, which was later extended to 4 additional P-8I aircraft, in 2016.
- ✍ DRDO successfully flight-tested New Generation Akash Missile (Akash-NG), a surface-to-air Missile. It also successfully flight-tested indigenously developed low weight, fire and forget Man Portable Antitank Guided Missile (MPATGM).
- ✍ Russia successfully test-fired its new advanced S-500 air defence missile systems.
- ✍ Indian Navy received first two Sikorsky MH-60R multi-role helicopters from US, as part of 24 Multi Role Helicopters (MRH) deal with Lockheed Martin (US), valued \$2.4 billion.
- ✍ Indian Navy participated in a two-day bilateral Passage Exercise (PASSEX) with UK's Royal Navy Carrier Strike Group.
- ✍ Indian Naval Ship Saryu participated in coordinated patrol (CORPAT) with Indonesian Navy, in its 36th edition.

43. ▶ Misc. Defence News (June 2021) -

- ✍ Indian Army observed 100th anniversary of raising of Army Educational Corps (AEC) on 01 June 2021.
- ✍ Iran's largest navy ship *The Kharg*, sank after catching fire in Gulf of Oman.
- ✍ North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) organized *Steadfast Defender 21 war games* military exercises.
- ✍ 31st edition of India-Thailand Coordinated Patrol (Indo-Thai CORPAT) between Indian and Thai Navies has been conducted.
- ✍ Defence Minister Rajnath Singh approved policy on *archiving, declassification, and compilation, publication of war and operations histories*. Under this, each organisation under Ministry will transfer records such as war diaries and letters of proceedings to History Division, for proper archival.
- ✍ Ministry of Defence signed contract with Goa Shipyard Ltd, for construction of two Pollution Control Vessels (PCVs) for Indian Coast Guard (ICG), at cost of 583 crores. These are scheduled for delivery by November 2024 and May 2025 respectively. At present, ICG has three PCVs in its fleet at Mumbai, Visakhapatnam and Porbander.
- ✍ Defence Minister Rajnath Singh reviewed progress of construction of first Indigenous Aircraft Carrier (IAC) built by Cochin Shipyard Ltd, at Kochi. IAC will be commissioned as INS Vikrant in 2022.
- ✍ Ukraine and North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) launched Joint *Sea Breeze Drills* in Black Sea, despite Russian Protest.

✍ A integrated bilateral exercise between Indian and US Forces in Indian Ocean Region has been concluded. Indian Navy along with Indian Air Force participated with US Navy Carrier Strike Group.

✍ Turkey and Azerbaijan held joint military drills *Mustafa Kemal Atatürk 2021* in Baku.

44. ▶ Misc. Defence News (May 2021) -

✍ Indian Army launched first Green Solar Energy plant in North Sikkim to harness renewable energy, with capacity of 56 KVA.

45. ▶ Misc. Defence News / Events (August 2021)-

✍ Ordnance Factory Tiruchirappalli launched new 7.62 X 39mm portable weapon called *TriCa (Trichy Carbine)*, a mini version of the Trichy Assault Rifle (TAR).

✍ INS Khanjar became first Indian Navy ship to call at heritage coastal port of Gopalpur in Odisha, as part of Aazadi ka Amrit Mahotsav (to commemorate 75th anniversary of Independence) and Swarnim Vijay Varsh (50th anniversary of 1971 War).

✍ Gujarat will host Biennial Defence Expo-2022 (12th edition) in Gandhinagar in March 2022.

✍ US approved sale of Harpoon Joint Common Test Set and related equipment to India for estimated \$82 million. Harpoon is an anti-ship missile.

✍ Indigenous Aircraft Carrier *Vikrant* successfully accomplished its maiden sea voyage, built by Cochin Shipyard Limited with more than 76% indigenous content. It is 262 metres long and 62 m at widest part.

✍ DRDO successfully test-fired medium-range subsonic cruise missile Nirbhay, as India's first Indigenous Technology Cruise Missile (ITCM), with range over 1500 KMs.

✍ Indian Navy ships INS Ranvijay and INS Kora undertook bilateral maritime exercise with Vietnam Navy, at Cam Ranh (Vietnam).

✍ A 'Joint Guidance for the Australia – India Navy to Navy Relationship' document signed between Indian and Australian Navies, aligned to the '2020 Comprehensive Strategic Partnership'.

✍ Defence Minister Rajnath Singh launched *Defence India Startup Challenge (DISC) 5.0 under Innovations for Defence Excellence - Defence Innovation Organisation (iDEX-DIO)*, with Problem Statements in several areas.

✍ Indian Army organised a 400 Km *JAZBAA-E- TIRANGA* Relay Marathon in In Jammu and Kashmir.

✍ India and Russia signed deal for immediate procurement of 70,000 AK-200 series assault rifles from Russia. Thus comes amid India and Russia working on a project to jointly manufacture over 6 lakh AK-203 rifles in India.

✍ First batch of 1 lakh privately *made in India* modern hand grenades handed over to Indian Army by Economic Explosives Ltd, a Nagpur based private company. This is first instance of ammunition being manufactured by private industry in India.

✍ These new multi-mode hand grenades will replace *Grenade No 36* of World War I vintage design.

- ✍ Pakistan launched indigenously developed guided multi-launch rocket system Fatah-1, capable of precisely delivering conventional warheads upto 140 KMs.
- ✍ As part of Its ongoing goodwill visit to Europe and Africa, INS Tabar took part in a Maritime Partnership Exercise with Algerian Navy (with ship Ezzadjer), as India's First Naval Exercise with Algeria.
- ✍ Ministry of Defence signed a contract worth 1349 Crores with Mahindra Defence Systems, to buy 14 Integrated Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW) Defence Suits (IADS) for Indian Navy.
- ✍ 3rd edition of annual exercise *Gandiv* held by National Security Guard (NSG), in Multiple cities in Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat and the National Capital Region.

46. ▶ Misc. Defence News / Events (March 2021) -

- ✍ India Air Force attended Sri Lankan Air Force's 70th anniversary Celebrations. Also, India described Sri Lanka as 'Priority One' partner in defence sphere.
- ✍ DRDO conducted successful flight test of Solid Fuel Ducted Ramjet (SFDR) technology, enabling DRDO to develop a long-range air-to-air missile.
- ✍ India and Philippines signed agreement to facilitate deals on military hardware, including supply of BrahMos cruise missiles.
- ✍ Govt sanctioned 12 new SSB battalions, comprising over 13000 personnel for Guarding Nepal and Bhutan borders.
- ✍ DRDO's Sindhu Netra Satellite was Launched along with Brazil's Amazonia-1 and 17 other co-passenger satellites, onboard Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle PSLV-C51.
- ✍ DRDO conducted final development test of *Air Independent Propulsion (AIP)*, aimed at making Indian submarines more lethal.
 - ✍ AIP marine propulsion technology allows non-nuclear submarine to operate without providing access to atmospheric oxygen by surfacing or by using snorkel. This can replace diesel-electric propulsion system used in non-nuclear vessels.
- ✍ Kalyani Rafael Advanced Systems (KRAS), joint venture between Kalyani Group of India and Rafael Advanced Defence Systems of Israel, released first batch of Medium Range Surface to Air Missile (MRSAM) kits for Indian Army and Air Force.
- ✍ Defence ministry signed deal worth 1188 crores with Bharat Dynamics Limited (BDL), for supply of 4960 Milan-2T Anti-Tank Guided Missiles (ATGMs) for Indian Army.
- ✍ As per report by Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI, India's arms imports came down by 33 %, between 2011-2015 and 2016-2020. India still remains the second highest importer though, only behind Saudi Arabia.
 - ✍ Top 5 global arms exporters were US, Russia, France, Germany and China in 2016-2020.
- ✍ Indian Naval Air Squadron (INAS) 310, The Cobras, a maritime reconnaissance squadron of the Indian Navy based at Goa observed its Diamond Jubilee. It was Commissioned at Hyères, France on 21 Mar 1961.

- ✍ US Navy announced to hold *Group Arabian Sea Warfare Exercise*, as major naval exercise alongside Belgium, France and Japan in Mideast.
 - ✍ India and Madagascar Navies undertook 1st joint patrolling of Madagascar's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and also conducted a Passage Exercise (PASSEX).
47. ▶ Multinational Military Exercise **SHANTIR OGROSHENA 2021** (Front Runner of the Peace) hosted by **Bangladesh**, to commemorate birth centenary of Bangladesh 'Father of the Nation' Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and mark 50 years of Bangladesh liberation from Pakistan.
- ✍ Other Nations to participate in Exercise - India, Bhutan, Sri Lanka.
 - ✍ Theme of exercise is ***Robust Peace Keeping Operations***.
 - ✍ Military observers from USA, UK, Turkey, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Singapore were in attendance throughout exercise.
48. ▶ National Security Advisor Ajit Doval commissioned Indian Coast Guard (ICG) Offshore Patrol Vessel (OPV) **Sajag** into service.
49. ▶ North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) military exercise *DEFENDER-Europe 21* began in Albania, with participation from US and several European nations.
50. ▶ Offshore Patrol Vessel **ICGS Vajra** has been commissioned into Indian Coast Guard, as 6th vessel in series of 7 OPVs being built by L&T.
51. ▶ Raksha Mantri Rajnath Singh flagged-in Indian Army Skiing Expedition *ARMEX-21* in New Delhi, which was conducted in mountain ranges of Himalaya, to promote adventure activity across country.
- ✍ The expedition was flagged off at Karakoram Pass in Ladakh on March 10, 2021 and culminated at Malari in Uttarakhand on July 06, 2021.
52. ▶ Russia Launched its first stealth naval warship, fully equipped with stealth technology making it hard to detect it by enemy vessels.
- ✍ The full stealth warship, Merkuriy naval corvette, is built under Project 20386.
 - ✍ Project 20386 is Russia's newest class of corvettes being constructed by *Severnaya Verf* for the Russian Navy.
53. ▶ US approved sale of six P-8I patrol aircraft to India, for an estimated cost of USD 2.42 billion.
- ✍ P-8I aircraft is a variant of the Boeing P-8 Poseidon aircraft that serves as a replacement for US Navy's P-3 fleet.
 - ✍ Indian Navy is the first international customer for P-8 aircraft, with Indian variant called P-8I.

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