



# Defence Professionals News & Analysis

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## Defense Business and Industry

### India's QRSAM Missile System Set for Deployment as Army Upgrades Air Defence



22-Feb-25

The Indian Army is set to modernize its air defence capabilities, focusing on countering drone threats through the acquisition of new anti-aircraft guns, enhanced ammunition, and advanced radar systems. Key initiatives include the deployment of the indigenously developed Quick Reaction Surface to Air Missile (QRSAM) system and a significant upgrade of existing platforms like the L-70 guns, emphasizing cost-effectiveness and self-reliance. The modernization reflects lessons from recent conflicts, particularly in Ukraine, and aims to bolster India's air defence strategy, ensuring the protection of critical infrastructure and adapting to evolving aerial threats. This comprehensive overhaul underscores India's commitment to Aatmanirbhar Bharat, reinforcing national security in a changing geopolitical landscape.

### Indian Army Boosts Defense with Lightweight Radars Against Drones



22-Feb-25

The Indian Army is in the process of acquiring low-level lightweight radars to detect Chinese-made drones being used by Pakistan for smuggling. Lt Gen Sumer Ivan DCunha highlighted the need for enhanced surveillance systems, including truck-mounted counter-drone systems and drone-based rockets. Additionally, the modernization of air defense systems is underway with tenders for 220 air defense guns, while the DRDO's Quick Reaction Surface-to-Air Missile system is expected to equip the forces soon. This proactive approach underscores India's commitment to strengthening its defense capabilities and countering emerging aerial threats effectively.

### India's Saber Sniper Rifle Triumphs Over Barrett in Police Contest



22-Feb-25

India's indigenous .338 Saber sniper rifle has outperformed the renowned American Barrett in the All India Police Commando Competition, demonstrating India's growing defense manufacturing capabilities. Developed by Bengaluru-based SSS Defence, the Saber showcased superior long-range precision and reliability, contributing to the National Security Guard's victory over competitors like Maharashtra Police's Force One. This achievement highlights a significant shift towards self-reliance in defense, aligning with the Make in India initiative and reducing reliance on foreign imports. The success of the Saber not only enhances India's strategic capabilities but also opens avenues for international exports, marking a pivotal moment in the nation's defense industry evolution.

### HAL Launches "Yashas" IJT-36: A Cost-Effective Global Combat Trainer



22-Feb-25

Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) has unveiled the "Yashas," an upgraded and weaponized variant of its Intermediate Jet Trainer-36 (IJT-36), aimed at global defense markets. Launched at Aero India 2025, the aircraft features enhancements like a modern cockpit and improved aerodynamics, addressing past design issues. HAL's strategy focuses on creating a cost-effective combat trainer capable of carrying advanced weaponry for light combat missions, targeting both advanced and emerging nations' needs. Competing against established models, HAL must emphasize Yashas's affordability and customization to capture market share while bolstering India's self-reliance in defense production through local components.

### Mahindra and Anduril Partner for AI-Driven Defense Innovations



22-Feb-25

Mahindra Group and Anduril Industries have formed a strategic partnership to develop advanced defense

technologies, including Autonomous Underwater Vehicles (AUVs) for surveillance and reconnaissance, and Counter Unmanned Aerial Systems (CUAS) utilizing AI for drone detection and neutralization. This collaboration aims to enhance naval security and address the growing challenges posed by unmanned platforms. The initiative emphasizes the importance of integrating various sensor data into a cohesive system to improve situational awareness and decision-making for operators. Both companies are committed to leveraging their expertise to foster innovation in defense and contribute to a safer global environment, indicating a significant advancement in India's defense capabilities.

## Tejas Mk1A to Test Astra Mk1 Missile with AESA Radar Soon



22-Feb-25

India's Tejas Mk1A fighter jet is set for a crucial test involving the Astra Mk1 Beyond Visual Range Air-to-Air Missile, confirmed by HAL Chairman D.K. Sunil. This test will utilize the advanced ELTA ELM-2052 AESA radar, enhancing target detection and engagement capabilities, essential for maintaining air superiority against threats from China and Pakistan. The Astra Mk1 missile, developed by DRDO, boasts a range exceeding 80 kilometers and aims to ensure operational readiness for the Indian Air Force, particularly at forward airbases in challenging terrains. This integration represents a significant step towards the Tejas Mk1A's certification, reinforcing India's commitment to modernizing its defense capabilities.

## Astra Microwave Launches Indigenous S-Band Radar Radiating Plate



22-Feb-25

Astra Microwave Products Limited (AMPL) has showcased its indigenously developed S-Band Active Antenna Array Unit (AAAU) Radiating Plate Assembly, marking a significant advancement in India's defense technology. Developed in collaboration with the DRDO's LRDE, this system enhances radar capabilities for airborne, naval, and ground-based applications, featuring rapid beam steering and high modularity. The AAAU's 16-meter radiating plate and indigenous components highlight India's commitment to self-reliance in defense manufacturing. This innovation not only strengthens India's defense electronics but also positions the country as a growing player in advanced radar technologies, furthering its strategic autonomy and operational capabilities in dynamic environments.

## DRDO's VSHORADS Set for User Trials After Successful Tests



22-Feb-25

The DRDO's Very Short-Range Air Defence System (VSHORADS) is poised for Army user trials after successful flight tests off Odisha's coast, demonstrating its ability to intercept high-speed, low-altitude threats like enemy aircraft and drones. This marks a significant enhancement of India's air defense capabilities, particularly for protecting sensitive installations. The upcoming trials will assess integration and operational effectiveness, involving both the Indian Army and Air Force, which underscores the potential for joint operations. Adani Defence's role as a production partner reflects India's commitment to the Make in India initiative, fostering private sector involvement in defense manufacturing and strengthening national security.

## Pakistan Air Force's Aging Fleet Sparks Urgent Modernization Needs



22-Feb-25

The Pakistan Air Force (PAF) is facing critical challenges due to an aging fleet, with over 250 fighter jets, including Mirage III/V and F-16 models, nearing the end of their service life. These aircraft, some over 50 years old, pose operational and maintenance difficulties, pushing the PAF to seek replacements primarily from China, including plans for J-35A stealth fighters and J-10C jets. The upcoming retirement of nearly 44% of its fleet by 2030 underscores the urgency for modernization, reflecting a strategic pivot that could impact regional security dynamics. This situation highlights the need for India to continue enhancing its own defense capabilities to maintain regional stability and deterrence.

## BEML Launches Advanced Armoured Tatra 66 Truck for Indian Forces



22-Feb-25

Bharat Earth Movers Limited (BEML) has unveiled a new armoured Tatra 66 truck featuring an advanced 4-door cabin designed for a 66 Mounted Gun System (MGS). This vehicle enhances the operational capabilities of the Indian armed forces, particularly for high-mobility and combat scenarios. The armoured cabin provides superior ballistic protection and ergonomics for a seven-member crew, including secure storage for weapons. This development supports India's Make in India initiative, combining proven reliability with modern defense needs, reflecting a commitment to enhancing indigenous defense

capabilities and crew survivability in hostile environments. The vehicle's design and functional enhancements indicate BEML's dedication to advancing India's defense industry.

## Tata Power Eyes Six Sites for Nuclear Projects, Seeks Policy Clarity



22-Feb-25

Tata Power Company Limited has shortlisted six potential locations for nuclear power projects in India, reflecting a strategic move to diversify its energy portfolio towards sustainable solutions. CEO Praveer Sinha emphasized the need for policy clarity before proceeding, particularly regarding regulatory frameworks, fuel sourcing, technology transfer, and environmental standards. The Indian government's push for the National Nuclear Energy Mission to invite private sector participation presents opportunities for significant investments and advancements in the nuclear sector. This cautious optimism aligns with the global revival of nuclear energy as a clean source, which could play a crucial role in India's energy security and climate goals.

## HAL Intensifies Development of CATS Hunter ALCM After Warrior Reveal



22-Feb-25

Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) is advancing its focus on the CATS Hunter Air Launched Cruise Missile (ALCM) following the unveiling of the CATS Warrior Loyal Wingman. The CATS Hunter, inspired by the effective SCALP ALCM used in Ukraine, aims to enhance the Indian Air Force's (IAF) capabilities with a more versatile missile compatible with various fighter jets. With a range of 300 kilometers and a design prioritizing stealth through low observability and sea-skimming flight patterns, this indigenous missile is projected to be unveiled in 2026. Such innovations bolster India's defense preparedness and demonstrate HAL's commitment to self-reliance in advanced military technology.

## Indian Navy Teams Up with Private Sector for Advanced Submarine Armor



22-Feb-25

The Indian Navy has partnered with Tonbo Imaging Pvt Ltd to develop a cutting-edge See-Through Armour System featuring multi-spectral HD sensors aimed at enhancing naval situational awareness. This innovative system will allow submarines and ships to operate with improved threat detection and reduced radar emissions,

thereby increasing stealth capabilities during operations. The technology will provide a 360-degree environmental view, crucial for effective navigation and mission success while also improving port security. Testing of the system is expected to commence within the next year, representing a significant advancement in India's defense capabilities and a strong collaboration with the private sector in defense innovation.

## RSPA UCAV to Feature Cutting-Edge Electro-Optical Targeting System



22-Feb-25

The Aeronautical Development Agency (ADA) has announced that the RSPA (Remotely Piloted Stealth Aircraft) Unmanned Combat Aerial Vehicle (UCAV) will feature an advanced Electro-Optical Targeting System (EOTS) developed for the AMCA program, marking a significant advancement in military aviation technology. This integration allows the UCAV to perform complex missions with enhanced accuracy, including precision strikes and surveillance in contested environments, while maintaining its stealth capabilities. The RSPA UCAV will be the first stealth UAV globally equipped with such sophisticated targeting technology, providing India a strategic edge in aerial warfare and highlighting the country's commitment to innovation in defense technologies.

## ideaForge Launches Advanced SWITCH V2 UAV at Aero India 2025



22-Feb-25

ideaForge Technology Limited has unveiled its next-generation SWITCH V2 UAV at Aero India 2025, showcasing significant advancements in performance. With an operational range of 20 kilometers and a flight time of 150 minutes, the SWITCH V2 offers enhanced surveillance capabilities suitable for military, homeland security, and industrial uses. The UAV features versatile payload configurations and boasts a 25% performance improvement over its predecessor in speed, stability, and maneuverability. Notably, it has received certification for military use from the Directorate General of Quality Assurance, establishing it as a reliable asset in defense operations and highlighting India's growing capabilities in the advanced drone sector.

## Seonics Unveils India's First Indigenous Throttle Control for AMCA



22-Feb-25

Seonics has developed India's first indigenous throttle quadrant control grip assembly for the Advanced

Medium Combat Aircraft (AMCA) program, enhancing India's aerospace capabilities. This assembly, tested with a GE Turbofan engine, signifies a leap in domestic defense production, alongside Seonics' contributions to designing side-sticks for the AMCA. The project, led by the Aeronautical Development Agency (ADA), aims to integrate advanced fifth-generation technologies, including stealth features. The involvement of firms like L&T in the development further underscores India's commitment to indigenization in defense and aerospace, fostering self-reliance and technological advancement in the Indian Air Force's future capabilities.

## ACE Ltd Wins ₹420 Crore Defense Contract, Boosting Indigenous Production



22-Feb-25

ACE Ltd has secured a significant defense contract worth 420 crores for supplying 1,121 RTFLT's, capturing a 60% share of the total order. This procurement is crucial for enhancing the combat readiness and logistical efficiency of India's armed forces, aligning with the government's Make in India and Aatmanirbhar Bharat initiatives to boost indigenous manufacturing. The contract is expected to create job opportunities and support MSMEs in component manufacturing, reinforcing ACE's role in India's defense infrastructure and self-reliance. This milestone highlights ACE's technological prowess and commitment to strengthening national defense capabilities through domestic production.

## L&T Shipyard Launches Construction of 3rd Fleet Support Ship



22-Feb-25

On February 20, 2025, L&T Shipyard held the steel-cutting ceremony for the third Fleet Support Ship (FSS), part of a significant project to enhance the operational capabilities of the Indian Navy. The project, valued at ₹19,000 crore and awarded to Hindustan Shipyard Limited (HSL) in August 2023, aims for delivery by mid-2027, with HSL collaborating with L&T for timely construction. The indigenous design supports the Aatmanirbhar Bharat initiative, showcasing India's commitment to self-reliance in defense. These 40,000-ton ships will not only facilitate at-sea replenishment but also bolster humanitarian assistance efforts, reinforcing India's strategic maritime capabilities.

## Invest Kerala Summit Showcases India's Push for Indigenous Defense



22-Feb-25

The Invest Kerala Global Summit showcased India's commitment to indigenous defense production, emphasizing the Indian Navy's focus on domestically built warships and aircraft under the "Atmanirbharta" initiative. The summit highlighted Kerala's strategic advantages, including its coastline, skilled workforce, and robust IT sector, positioning the state as a potential hub for aerospace and defense industries. Significant investment commitments totaling 1.5 Lakh Crores were made, encouraging collaboration between MSMEs and larger companies to enhance innovation. This initiative not only strengthens India's self-reliance in defense technologies but also leverages Kerala's strengths, reinforcing the nation's aim to become a global leader in military hardware development.

## Defense Policy and Budgeting

### IAF Pushes for Swift 5th-Gen Aircraft Acquisition Amid China-Pak

#### Threats



22-Feb-25

The Indian Air Force (IAF) is likely to advocate for the immediate acquisition of fifth-generation stealth aircraft in response to escalating air threats from China and its military cooperation with Pakistan, particularly concerning the potential sale of J-35 fighters to Pakistan. The U.S. F-35 is a prime candidate, given recent openness from U.S. leadership to sell these advanced jets to India; however, logistical, financial, and strategic implications, including technology transfer and operational independence, will be critical in India's decision-making. This acquisition aligns with India's broader modernization goals to enhance air superiority and counterbalance regional military advancements.

## Geopolitics and Security Alliances

### EU Leaders' Visit to India: A Boost for Strategic Ties



22-Feb-25

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen will visit India on February 27-28, accompanied by the EU College of Commissioners, marking a significant step in enhancing the strategic partnership between



India and the EU. The visit will feature high-level talks with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, focusing on shared values and collaboration in trade, technology, and environmental goals, including discussions on a Free Trade Agreement slated for March. This trip reflects a commitment to deepen ties in areas such as defense collaboration and supply chain security, positioning India as a crucial partner for the EU in achieving net-zero objectives. The ongoing discussions underscore the growing convergence in key sectors, which is vital for both parties in the current geopolitical landscape, enhancing India's role on the global stage.

## India Protests Cross-Border Firing in LoC Talks with Pakistan SHARE

22-Feb-25

India and Pakistan recently held a brigade commander-level flag meeting along the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu and Kashmir to address escalating tensions due to cross-border firing and terrorist activities. India lodged a strong protest over unprovoked attacks, including an IED blast that killed two Indian soldiers. Despite historical ceasefire violations by Pakistan, the meeting emphasized mutual respect for the ceasefire agreement, which has largely held since February 2021. Analysts suggest that while Pakistan's military continues its proxy warfare, the Indian Army's readiness to respond decisively has deterred further provocations. The overall sentiment indicates that despite challenges, the ceasefire may endure if the Indian Army maintains its effective retaliatory posture, dissuading Rawalpindi from escalating conflicts further.

## India rebukes Erdogan's Kashmir comments as unacceptable interference. SHARE

22-Feb-25

India has strongly protested Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's recent remarks regarding Kashmir during his visit to Pakistan, labeling them as unacceptable intrusions into India's sovereignty. The Ministry of External Affairs reiterated that Jammu and Kashmir is an integral part of India, emphasizing that no foreign nation has the right to comment on its internal matters. It also criticized Turkey for not addressing Pakistan's use of cross-border terrorism, which poses a significant threat to the region. This response underlines India's commitment to defending its territorial integrity while urging external parties to refrain from interfering in its internal affairs.

## J&K Police and CRPF Meet to Boost Security Collaboration in Kashmir SHARE

22-Feb-25

Senior officials from the Jammu and Kashmir Police and the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) convened a joint security review meeting at the Police Control Room in Kashmir to enhance collaboration in maintaining peace in the region. Co-chaired by IGP Kashmir V.K. Birdi and IG CRPF Mitesh Kumar, the meeting focused on improving operational coordination, intelligence sharing, and logistical planning for counter-insurgency and counter-terrorism efforts. Both leaders affirmed their commitment to joint strategic planning, highlighting the importance of inter-agency cooperation in addressing emerging security challenges and ensuring stability in the Kashmir Valley. This initiative underscores India's proactive approach to internal security and the emphasis on collaborative efforts between forces.

## India Highlights Pakistan's Role in Hindering SAARC Revival Efforts SHARE

22-Feb-25

India's Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) has indirectly indicated that Pakistan's actions are obstructing the progress of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), following Bangladesh's renewed call for the group's revival. MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal highlighted this during discussions between Indian External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar and Bangladesh's Foreign Advisor, where concerns about terrorism normalization and the significance of revitalizing the Ganges Water Treaty were also addressed. The dialogue reflects India's commitment to regional cooperation and emphasizes the need for collaborative efforts among South Asian nations, while clearly identifying Pakistan as a hindrance to SAARC's effectiveness and regional stability.

## India-Bangladesh Border Forces Set Up Communication Hotline SHARE

22-Feb-25

India and Bangladesh are enhancing their border security cooperation by establishing a hotline between their border-guarding forces' deputy commanders. This initiative aims to improve communication and coordination, reflecting both nations' commitment to maintaining peace along their shared border. Additionally, the two countries have identified 99 new areas for erecting fences, which underscores the proactive measures being taken to secure the border against illegal activities. This collaborative approach

not only strengthens bilateral ties but also contributes to regional stability, demonstrating India's proactive defense strategy and commitment to safeguarding its borders efficiently.

## Jaishankar and Wang Yi Strengthen India-China Relations at G20 [SHARE](#)

22-Feb-25

India's External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar met with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi on the sidelines of the G20 Foreign Ministers Meeting in Johannesburg, focusing on enhancing bilateral ties, particularly regarding border peace and the resumption of the Kailash Mansarovar Yatra. Both leaders acknowledged the importance of international cooperation in a polarized global context and emphasized the need to restore mutual trust while managing peace along the Sino-Indian border. Notably, recent military disengagement in eastern Ladakh has facilitated these discussions, with both nations expressing a commitment to enhancing trade and connectivity. The dialogue reflects a significant thaw in relations despite lingering geopolitical tensions, highlighting the potential for continued collaboration as they approach the 75th anniversary of diplomatic relations, which could further solidify their partnership in multilateral forums like G20 and BRICS.

## Indian Navy's First Training Squadron Arrives in Vietnam [SHARE](#)

22-Feb-25

The Indian Navy's First Training Squadron, comprising INS Sujata and ICGS Veera, arrived at Cam Ranh Bay, Vietnam, on February 20, 2025, marking a significant step in enhancing maritime cooperation between India and Vietnam. The visit was warmly welcomed by the Vietnam People's Navy and the Indian mission in Vietnam, and it aims to foster closer ties through cross-training visits, professional interactions, community programs, and notably, a visit to the Vietnam Naval Academy. The culmination of this visit will be bilateral naval exercises designed to strengthen interoperability and share best practices between the two navies. This deployment is in alignment with the Government of India's broader initiative under the Security And Growth for All in the Region (SAGAR) vision, which seeks to enhance maritime security in the region. Furthermore, the longstanding and growing strategic partnership between India and Vietnam was reinforced during a recent visit by Vietnam's Prime Minister to India in August 2024, and this naval engagement is a testament to the commitment of both nations to collaborate

closely on regional security and defense issues. Overall, the naval visit underscores the importance of maritime diplomacy and cooperation in a region that is increasingly focused on collective security and stability, projecting India's proactive stance in strengthening bilateral ties and its commitment to regional peace.

## India's Naval Strategy Emphasizes Nuclear Submarines Over Carriers [SHARE](#)

22-Feb-25

India's shift in naval strategy emphasizes the development of nuclear-powered attack submarines (SSNs) over additional aircraft carriers, as confirmed by Dr. Elizabeth Buchanan from ASPI. This redirection aims to enhance undersea warfare capabilities in response to China's growing naval presence. The decision aligns with global trends favoring stealth and endurance in maritime operations, indicating a move towards asymmetric warfare. While India currently operates the INS Vikramaditya and recently commissioned the INS Vikrant, plans for a third carrier, INS Vishal, are on hold to prioritize the indigenous SSN program, reinforcing India's commitment to self-reliance in defense manufacturing and maritime security.

## China's New Radar in Yunnan Heightens Threat to India's Missile Program [SHARE](#)

22-Feb-25

China's recent establishment of a Large Phased Array Radar (LPAR) site in Yunnan enhances its ballistic missile early warning capabilities, extending surveillance across the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) and into India. This strategic positioning allows China to closely monitor Indian missile tests, particularly from key launch sites like Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam Island. Amid escalating tensions and unresolved border disputes, this development prompts India to potentially accelerate its ballistic missile defense initiatives. The situation underscores the need for India to bolster its technological advancements and maintain deterrence against China's growing military assertiveness while safeguarding its strategic interests in the region.

## Russia may unlock \$300 billion in frozen assets for Ukraine peace. [SHARE](#)

22-Feb-25

Russia may consider using \$300 billion of its frozen sovereign assets in Europe for Ukraine's reconstruction as part of a potential peace settlement, contingent on certain conditions regarding the Russian-controlled territories. The ongoing discussions involve early-stage

negotiations between Russia and the U.S., with a focus on accountability guarantees for fund usage. While Western officials express reluctance over asset confiscation, Russian commentators suggest a willingness to compromise if territorial claims are recognized. This proposition reflects Russia's strategic maneuvering and highlights ongoing geopolitical tensions, as both sides seek a resolution amidst a complex backdrop of financial and territorial disputes.

## Indian Army's Surya Command Boosts Border Logistics with Civil Aviation

[SHARE](#)

22-Feb-25

The Surya Command of the Indian Army has initiated a significant enhancement in military logistics by integrating civil aviation helicopters into its operations in the challenging Himalayan terrain of Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand. This initiative, in collaboration with Thumbby Aviation Private Limited, aims to ensure timely logistics support and infrastructure development at high-altitude forward posts. By utilizing civil helicopters, the Army can effectively address logistical demands, particularly during peak times or emergencies, showcasing an innovative model of civil-military cooperation. This integration not only bolsters operational capabilities but also enhances the overall efficiency of logistics management in remote areas, reflecting India's proactive approach to modern defense strategies.

## Israeli military confirms release of 3 hostages by Hamas.

[SHARE](#)

22-Feb-25

The Israeli military confirmed the release of six hostages by Hamas amid ongoing tensions regarding a ceasefire deal. The freed hostages, including three young men, were received in Israel after being handed over to the Red Cross in Gaza. As the release coincided with the controversial exchange of over 600 Palestinian prisoners, concerns over the future of the ceasefire emerged, compounded by Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu's vow for retaliation following a body transfer mishap. The volatile situation underscores the complexities of negotiations, with Hamas insisting on a lasting ceasefire before any further releases occur, while Israel remains committed to dismantling Hamas's military capabilities.

## Military Operations

### Indian Army Heads to Japan for Joint Exercise DHARMA GUARDIAN

[SHARE](#)

22-Feb-25

The Indian Army contingent has departed for the 6th edition of the India-Japan Joint Military Exercise DHARMA GUARDIAN, set to take place from February 24 to March 9, 2025, in Japan's East Fuji Manoeuvre Training area. This annual exercise aims to enhance interoperability between Indian and Japanese forces in urban warfare and counter-terrorism, reinforcing their commitment to regional security and a free, inclusive Indo-Pacific. Comprising 120 personnel, predominantly from the MADRAS Regiment, this exercise builds on recent diplomatic engagements, further solidifying military ties and mutual trust between the two nations, thereby contributing to a stable regional security architecture.

### Army Jawan Injured in LoC Landmine Blast in Poonch

[SHARE](#)

22-Feb-25

An Indian Army jawan was injured in a landmine explosion along the Line of Control in Poonch district, Jammu and Kashmir. The incident occurred during routine patrolling when soldiers inadvertently triggered the landmine. The injured soldier was promptly evacuated and airlifted to the Command Hospital in Udhampur for treatment. This incident underscores the persistent risks faced by Indian armed forces in sensitive areas, emphasizing the need for enhanced safety protocols and mine clearance efforts to protect soldiers while they undertake crucial surveillance and defense operations. The Indian Army's swift response in evacuating the injured soldier reflects its commitment to the safety and well-being of its personnel.

## Terrorism and Counterterrorism

### Security Forces Detain Six Members of Banned Meitei Group in Manipur

[SHARE](#)

22-Feb-25

In a significant crackdown in Manipur, security forces apprehended 26 militants and members of radical Meitei groups amid ongoing ethnic unrest, which has resulted in over 250 deaths since May 2023. The arrests prompted protests from women claiming the detainees were "village volunteers" protecting their

territories. Operations led by the Army, Assam Rifles, and Manipur Police across various districts also resulted in the recovery of numerous weapons, including AK series rifles and improvised explosives. The increased security measures underscore the government's commitment to restoring order and safety in the region, reflecting a robust response to the ongoing violence while emphasizing the importance of addressing local concerns through dialogue and community engagement. This situation highlights the delicate balance needed to ensure security without alienating local populations.

## Mil Personnel & Veterans

### Pentagon to Lay Off 5,400 Workers to Boost Military Readiness SHARE

22-Feb-25

The Pentagon plans to cut 5,400 probationary workers and implement a hiring freeze as part of a strategy to reduce its civilian workforce by 5-8% to enhance efficiency and focus on military readiness. This decision follows a review by the Department of Government Efficiency, and it does not affect uniformed military personnel. Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth supports these cuts to refocus funding towards operational capabilities, indicating a broader effort to streamline the defense budget amid administrative changes. This move reflects a significant shift in personnel management within the largest U.S. government agency, potentially impacting the overall defense strategy.

## Miscellaneous

### Bhutan PM Hails Modi as Mentor, Seeks Closer Ties SHARE

22-Feb-25

Bhutanese Prime Minister Tshering Tobgay recently lauded Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi as a mentor and elder brother, highlighting his leadership qualities and transformative initiatives like Make in India and Digital India. During his visit to India, Tobgay expressed a desire for Indian guidance in reforming Bhutan's public service and emphasized the deep spiritual and historical ties between the two nations. His invitation for Indian investment in Bhutan's Gelephu Mindfulness City underlines efforts to strengthen bilateral cooperation across sectors. This visit reflects

both countries' commitment to socio-economic development and deepening their diplomatic relations, showcasing India's role as a pillar of support for Bhutan's progress and stability.

### Kash Patel: First Indian-American FBI Director with Gujarat Roots SHARE

22-Feb-25

Indian-American Kash Patel has made history by becoming the first Indian-American to lead the FBI, tracing his roots back to Bhadran village in Gujarat. Born in New York to Gujarati parents who immigrated to the U.S. after facing ethnic repression in Uganda, Patel's ascent exemplifies the American Dream, showcasing how hard work can lead to significant achievements. He has held various positions within U.S. government agencies, emphasizing his commitment to transparency and accountability at the FBI. While his appointment symbolizes a milestone for diversity in leadership, it also brings scrutiny due to his past controversies and connections to former President Trump. Overall, Patel's success story resonates with aspirations for opportunities available to individuals from diverse backgrounds in America.

### POJK Residents Seek Integration with India, Says BJP's Sat Sharma SHARE

22-Feb-25

BJP J&K President Sat Sharma asserted that the people of Pakistan-occupied Jammu and Kashmir (POJK) desire to join India, expressing discontent with their current situation in Pakistan. He highlighted a historic resolution passed by the Indian Parliament in 1994 affirming POJK as part of India, and credited PM Modi's removal of Articles 370 and 35A and surgical strikes for reinforcing India's stance on the matter. Sharma pointed out that rising inflation and insecurity in Pakistan, coupled with the presence of terrorism, has led to calls for integration with India. He urged constructive participation in the J&K budget session to ensure that central funds benefit the local populace.

### MEA Confirms US Deportation of Illegal Indian Immigrants to Panama SHARE

22-Feb-25

India's Ministry of External Affairs confirmed awareness of the U.S. deporting illegal Indian immigrants to Panama and Costa Rica, verifying the details of these flights under a bridge arrangement. The U.S. will cover all operational costs, and the Indian government is committed to assisting its nationals, ensuring their safe and dignified return. The Indian embassy in Panama



has established contact with local authorities and confirmed the safety of deported individuals. While Congress leaders expressed concern over the inhuman nature of these deportations, the Indian government is focused on providing necessary support and maintaining diplomatic relations with the transit countries involved.

## Pakistan Grants 154 Visas for Indian Pilgrims to Katas Raj Temples



22-Feb-25

The Pakistan High Commission has issued 154 visas to Indian pilgrims for their visit to the Shree Katas Raj temples from February 24 to March 2. This initiative aligns with the Pakistan-India Protocol on Visits to Religious Shrines of 1974, which facilitates religious pilgrimages between the two nations, promoting interfaith harmony and mutual understanding. Pakistan's efforts in granting these visas underscore its commitment to fostering cultural ties despite ongoing geopolitical tensions. Such exchanges may help build goodwill and open channels for dialogue, reflecting a positive facet of bilateral relations amidst broader challenges.

## Apple Halts Data Protection Tool for UK Users Amid Government Pressure



22-Feb-25

Apple has announced that it will halt the availability of its Advanced Data Protection (ADP) feature for UK

users, citing pressure from the UK government to create a "back door" for data access. This end-to-end encryption service is crucial for user privacy, ensuring only account holders can view their content. Apple expressed disappointment over the UK's decision, as it undermines data security amidst rising breaches. The debate highlights the ongoing tension between privacy advocates, who emphasize protection from unauthorized access, and law enforcement, which argues that encryption can hinder criminal investigations. Apple's stance reaffirms its commitment to user privacy against governmental demands.

## Trump Calls for Inspection of Fort Knox's Gold Reserves



22-Feb-25

Former President Trump has called for an inspection of the U.S. gold reserves at Fort Knox, which is often misreported as holding 400 tonnes but actually contains around 4,580 tonnes, equivalent to approximately 147.3 million ounces. During a recent address, he expressed a desire to verify the presence of the gold amid conspiracy theories questioning its existence. Despite Trump's comments, Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent reassured the public that annual audits confirm all gold is accounted for. This initiative reflects a broader discussion on government asset transparency, fueled by figures like Elon Musk suggesting live audits to enhance public trust.

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