

Army Day Parade 2027 in Bhopal

New Delhi: The next Army Day Parade will be held in Bhopal during which the force will showcase its rich military heritage and operational prowess. It is observed on January 15 to honour the achievements of the first Commander-in-Chief of independent India, Gen (later Field Marshal) KM Cariappa. **PTI**

'Aatmanirbharta 2.0': Rajnath calls for top-end, state-of-the-art defence tech

Minister says innovators will play the role of 'impact players'

Press Trust of India
New Delhi, October 26

DEFENCE MINISTER Rajnath Singh on Monday said India's bid to achieve 'aatmanirbharta' (self-reliance) in defence is entering the "second phase" as he called on all associated stakeholders to develop top-end and state-of-the-art technologies in the sector.

In his address at the plenary session of the Indian Navy's annual seminar 'Swavlamban 2026' in New Delhi, Singh underlined the need to indigenously manufacture products that are "cost-effective, operationally superior and globally competitive".

While calling for 'Aatmanirbharta 2.0' in the defence sector, Singh emphasised on strengthening research & development (R&D), building resilient supply chains to cut import dependence and achieving technological superiority, thus contributing to the vision of Viksit Bharat by 2047.

Highlighting the significant strides made by the country towards 'aatmanirbharta' in de-



Defence Minister Rajnath Singh inspects an indigenous thermal imaging system during the 'Swavlamban 2026' seminar, in New Delhi on Monday. ANI

fence over the last decade, Singh asserted that the progress achieved so far has created a "strong foundation" for the next phase, which must focus on advanced technologies and objectives that are considered difficult to achieve.

He emphasised the need to build on the gains of the first phase of self-reliance, and said defence innovators with futuristic vision and scientific discipline would play the role of "impact players" in pursuing more challenging technological goals in the next phase.

The Navy is hosting the fifth edition of its flagship seminar at

the Manekshaw Centre here on October 26 and 27.

Chief of Defence Staff Gen N S Raja Subramani, Army Chief Gen Dhiraj Seth and Navy Chief Admiral Krishna Swaminathan were also present.

Singh said supply chain management is not just a technical issue, but a strategic imperative directly linked to the national security. He called for a dynamic roadmap that sets clear timelines for achieving self-reliance in each item, identifies the technologies to be developed and the industries that will drive their innovation, and outlines the resources required to

achieve these objectives.

The minister also highlighted that demand for naval ships is steadily increasing in view of the evolving situation in the Indian Ocean Region, and said, since their construction is capital-intensive, there is a need to explore ways to "reduce costs" while expanding domestic production. Singh also called for development of a 'Dual Technology Roadmap' to identify and prioritise technologies that can serve both civilian and military requirements.

Addressing the plenary session, Navy Chief Admiral Krishna Swaminathan pitched for accelerating the pace of translating innovation into operational capabilities for the naval force, and urged all stakeholders to endeavour to stay ahead of the technology curve.

Advances in artificial intelligence and autonomous systems should be leveraged to bolster naval capabilities, he said.

Vice Chief of Naval Staff (VCNS) Vice Admiral Ajay Kochhar pitched for shortening the "innovation to integration" cycle to augment naval capabilities.

The vice admiral referred to recent conflicts, from short-term engagements to protracted ones, including the conflict in Ukraine, and emphasised how drone production there has grown manifold in the last several years.

Centre approves defence deals worth ₹2.12 lakh cr.

Approvals cover a wide range of platforms, weapons and surveillance systems for the Army, Navy and Air Force; 82% of the total procurement value has been earmarked for the domestic industry

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Defence Acquisition Council, or DAC, chaired by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, on Monday accorded Acceptance of Necessity (AoN) for capital acquisition proposals worth approximately ₹2.12 lakh crore for the three Services, with about 82% of the procurements to be sourced from the domestic industry.

According to the Ministry of Defence, the approvals cover a wide range of military platforms, weapons and surveillance systems aimed at enhancing the operational capabilities, mobility and combat preparedness of the Army, Navy and Air Force.

For the Indian Army, the DAC cleared procurement of high mobility vehicles (HMTs), self-propelled tracked gun systems, gun shot response systems (GSRs), light multi-role helicopters (LMRHs), very short-range air defence systems (VSHORADS), platform-based counter-un-



The very short-range air defence system, or VSHORADS, will boost the Army's capability to engage emerging small-sized aerial threats.

manned aerial systems (C-UAS), long-range unmanned aerial systems, surveillance UAVs, integrated surveillance and strike systems, and long-range kamikaze drones.

Logistics boost

The HMTs are expected to strengthen logistics and mobility, while the self-propelled tracked gun systems will provide mechanised formations with matching mobility and firepower. The GSRs will act as a force multiplier by providing real-time situational awareness. The LMRHs will be used by the Army

and the Air Force for reconnaissance and surveillance, combat operations, search and rescue, and humanitarian assistance and disaster relief missions.

The VSHORADS will enhance the Army's capability to engage emerging small-sized aerial threats, while the platform-based C-UAS will improve the survivability of tanks on the modern battlefield. The surveillance and drone systems are expected to strengthen the Army's reconnaissance, surveillance and targeting capabilities.

For the Navy, the council accorded AoN for the

procurement of Active Off-board Decoy Systems (AODS) and other major naval platforms. The AODS will strengthen the Navy's anti-missile defence capabilities. The indigenously designed and constructed naval platforms will incorporate modern warfare capabilities and enhance the Navy's overall combat potential.

Approvals for IAF

For the Air Force, approvals were accorded for helicopters, air defence systems, weapons and mobile x-band doppler weather radar systems to strengthen its air defence and war-fighting capabilities. The procurement of special utility helicopters will address the IAF's transport requirements, while the radar systems will provide high-resolution, localised weather surveillance.

The DAC's approvals are expected to provide a significant boost to domestic defence manufacturing, with nearly 82% of the total procurement value earmarked for domestic industry.

A.P., Odisha step up evacuations as Cyclone Arnab nears coast

IMD issues red alerts for seven districts in Andhra Pradesh for today; 4,711 pregnant women will be shifted to safer healthcare facilities; Odisha readies 1,700 shelters in five southern districts

Nellore Sravani

Satyasundar Barik

VIJAYAWADA/BHUBANESWAR

The Andhra Pradesh government has directed officials to evacuate people from flood-prone areas, prioritise vulnerable residents, and deploy disaster response teams in the wake of Cyclone 'Arnab'. Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu has ordered heightened preparedness across the State, officials said, adding that 4,711 pregnant women will be shifted to safer healthcare facilities. They said 30,043 fishing boats have returned to the harbours.

With the cyclonic storm moving closer to land, the India Meteorological Department (IMD), Amaravati, has issued red alerts for seven of the 28 districts in Andhra Pradesh for Tuesday. Isolated extremely heavy rainfall, of 200 mm or more, is likely in the districts of Kakinada, East Godavari, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Konaseema, Eluru, West Godavari, Alluri Sitharama Raju, and Anakapalli, while heavy to very heavy rainfall of around 70 mm to 200 mm is likely in the districts of Vizianagaram,



A policeman alerts tourists at Kothapatnam beach in Prakasam district of Andhra Pradesh on Monday. KOMMURI SRINIVAS

Visakhapatnam, NTR, Krishna, Guntur, Bapatla, Srikakulam, and Parvathipuram Manyam.

The storm is likely to cross the coast as a 'very severe cyclonic storm', with wind speed gusting to 140 kmph, close to Yanam or Kakinada in Andhra Pradesh around noon on Wednesday. The State has deputed seven National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) and eight SDRF battalions to districts that are likely to be affected. For assistance, the public can contact 112, 1070, and 18004250101, the government said.

The Andhra Pradesh Eastern Power Distribution Company Limited has

opened 30 divisional control rooms, in addition to 11 circle-level control rooms, to monitor the situation and coordinate emergency response.

1,700 shelters ready

In neighbouring Odisha, the government said over 1,700 shelters are ready to accommodate people likely to be evacuated in the southern districts of Malkangiri, Koraput, Nabarangpur, Gajapati, and Rayagada, which will be impacted by the cyclone.

Addressing the media after a review meeting with Cabinet Secretary T.V. Somanathan through a video conference, Odisha Chief Secretary Anu Garg said,

"We have prepared district-specific plans to face an emergency situation. We are monitoring the condition of roughly 3,000 pregnant women. They will be shifted to safer places if the situation warrants."

The Centre has assured the State that it will send additional disaster response forces and provide assistance of the Army and the Navy if the situation worsens, she said. Special Relief Commissioner Rajesh Pravakar Patil said the State has 135 permanent cyclone shelters in the vulnerable districts and 1,600 temporary shelters have been made available.

Eight NDRF teams, 40 Odisha Disaster Rapid Action Force teams, and fire services personnel have been deployed.

"We are in constant touch with the Chhattisgarh government. When the cyclone curves away to Chhattisgarh, it will trigger heavy rain. This will leave the Mahanadi River in spate. Since we are around the full moon day, discharge of water to the sea would not be that easy," Suresh Pujari, State Revenue and Disaster Management Minister said.

China claims it is strictly abiding by pacts with India

Divya A

New Delhi, October 26

DAYS AFTER Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) Director General Shatrueet Kapur talked about face-offs between Indian and Chinese troops at multiple locations in Arunachal Pradesh, and that the situation continues, Beijing — in its first official comments after the statement — on Monday said it is strictly abiding by the relevant agreements with India and conducts normal border patrols to safeguard its sovereignty.

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) had said on Friday that friction points typically occur when Chinese forces depart from established patrolling patterns in border pockets.

Responding to this, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Guo Jiakun said at a media briefing, “China strictly abides by the relevant agreements and common understandings reached between the two countries, and conducts normal border patrol and control activities to safeguard its territorial sovereignty and stability in the border areas.”

He said China and India maintain communication through diplomatic and military channels. “We hope that India will work with China in the same direction by jointly implementing the common understandings reached between the two sides and maintaining peace and tranquility in the border areas with concrete actions,” Guo said.

Last week, MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal had said the situation along the LAC is disturbed from time to time when Chinese forces diverge from established patrolling patterns, asserting that the main-

tenance of peace and tranquility in the border areas is essential for the overall development of bilateral relations.

“Both sides continue to use existing diplomatic and military mechanisms to resolve outstanding issues and avoid misunderstanding and miscalculation along the LAC,” Jaiswal said.

Kapur’s comments came over a month after India and China held talks amid reports of tensions in Arunachal Pradesh’s Taksing area. While he did not name China, Kapur praised the Indo-Tibetan Border Police’s Shaurya Commando teams for handling the situation in Arunachal Pradesh.

“In the past few days, a situation arose where face-offs happened at several locations in Arunachal, and it still continues,” Kapur said while speaking at the annual felicitation ceremony for ITBP personnel in Rajasthan’s Alwar.

On September 6, the Corps Commander-level talks were held at the Wacha-Damai border meeting point on the Indian side to address ongoing issues along the LAC in the area. India and China have taken a series of measures over the last two years to rebuild their relationship after it came under severe strain following the deadly Galwan clashes in 2020 and the subsequent military face-off that lasted for over four years.

Last month, Prime Minister Narendra Modi held bilateral talks with President Xi Jinping on the margins of the BRICS summit in New Delhi. Modi had stressed that both sides must show sensitivity to each other’s core issues and let relations be guided by the “three mutuals” — mutual respect, mutual sensitivity, and mutual interest.

ONLY FOR FLEX-FUEL VEHICLES, NOT OTHERS

Govt notifies E100 as auto fuel

Dheeraj Mishra

New Delhi, October 26

AMID THE ongoing debate over the use of E20 fuel, the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) Monday notified a key change in the Central Motor Vehicle Rules, allowing flex-fuel vehicles to run on up to E100 or nearly pure ethanol. This does not mean that every petrol car can use E100 now. The new regulation expands the range of fuels that can be used in vehicles and paves the way for the manufacturing and supply of more flex-fuel vehicle components, ethanol production infrastructure, and the deployment of such vehicles on the road.

The Ministry said that ve-

hicles designed as flex fuel vehicles will not have material compatibility issues with E100. It also said that E85 or E100 shall be used in vehicles designed by the original equipment manufacturers as flex-fuel vehicles. This means that the vehicles that use normal fuel or E20 cannot use E100.

“Flex-fuel vehicles are specifically designed with fuel-system components and materials that are compatible with ethanol blends from E20 to E100. Vehicles designed as flex fuel vehicles will not have material compatibility issues. Motorists should check the fuel compatibility sticker on their vehicle and follow the manufacturer’s guidance in the owner’s manual while opting for the fuel choice

at the fuel station,” said the Ministry in its explanatory note on the amendment. It further said the advanced engine management systems will automatically adjust vehicle operation according to the fuel composition, ensure optimum performance under different driving conditions, and reduce dependence on imported crude oil.

“Ethanol has a lower fossil carbon footprint than conventional gasoline. The use of higher ethanol blends can help reduce tailpipe emissions of carbon monoxide and certain hydrocarbons, while contributing to lower lifecycle greenhouse-gas emissions, depending on the feedstock and production pathway,” said MoRTH. **FULL REPORT ON**

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Iran, Mecca pact nations hold 'de-escalation' talks

Saudi Defence Minister, Pakistani Army chief and Türkiye's intelligence head meet Iranian officials; President Pezeshkian says Tehran supports any deal that would deepen regional cooperation

Agence France-Presse
TEHRAN

Senior officials from Saudi Arabia, Türkiye and Pakistan held talks with Iran in Tehran on Monday in an attempt to stop war in West Asia from reigniting.

Officials from the three Mecca pact countries flew to Iran as part of efforts to "de-escalate between the parties to the current crisis", a Saudi Foreign Ministry statement said.

The delegations, which included Saudi Defense Minister Khalid bin Salman, Pakistani Army chief Field Marshal Asim Munir and Turkey's intelligence head Ibrahim Kalin, met Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian, Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi and other top security officials during the visit. The meeting ended without concrete announcements, with the various parties saying they "agreed to continue discussions", according to Iranian state media.

Mr. Pezeshkian said that Iran supports any agreement that would deepen regional cooperation, resolve differences and make greater use of the shared resources and capabilities of Islamic countries.

As the talks in Tehran



Crucial meeting: Saudi Arabia's Defence Minister Prince Khalid bin Salman, Pakistan Field Marshal Asim Munir and Turkish intelligence chief Ibrahim Kalin in Tehran, Iran, on Monday. REUTERS

began, United Nations Secretary General Antonio Guterres said it was "essential to stop any escalation" in West Asia.

"The risk to have the combination of an overwhelming military attack on Iran, and an overwhelming military attack by Iran on the countries of the Gulf, needs to be avoided at all costs," he said.

Earlier, Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmail Baghaei told reporters that the agenda for the meeting wasn't set, but the talks would "address the most pressing threats to regional security."

Mr. Baghaei added that the meeting, proposed

during a visit by Mr. Munir to Tehran last week, could be a first step towards establishing regional security mechanisms based on the interests of countries in the region.

In a televised address on Monday, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan warned that renewed attacks on Iran would destabilise the region. "It is our hope that all parties will refrain from any actions that could drag our region into a new spiral of violence," Mr. Erdogan said.

Rising tensions

Saudi Arabia intercepted another wave of missiles on Sunday as fighting with

Yemen's Houthis continued unabated.

The Saudi-led coalition battling the Iran-aligned group said on Monday that it has degraded their ability to strike targets inside the kingdom after destroying tunnels used to store ballistic missiles.

Tensions between Washington and Tehran have sharpened in recent days. President Donald Trump said on Friday the U.S. may carry out another military operation against Iran and Iran's leaders have said that a renewed U.S. military campaign would be met with a stronger response than before. (With inputs from AP)

Student-led movement ousts strongman Vucic in Serbia's snap election

Associated Press
BELGRADE

The long-serving strongman leader of Serbia, Aleksandar Vucic, conceded defeat on Sunday in a snap election that pitted him and his right-wing party against a diverse student-led opposition movement.

The victory in Sunday's parliamentary vote came after nearly two years of anti-government protests sparked by the 2024 collapse of a canopy at Novi Sad railway station that killed 16 people. It was a seismic political shift in the Balkan country where Mr. Vucic led with virtually absolute power for 14 years.

In conceding the election, Mr. Vucic said his party projects that his opponents, the youth-backed Students' List, will take between 135 and 140 seats in the 250-seat Assembly while his right-wing Serbian Progressive Party will have around 105.

"It is now clear that we have lost and the Students' List has won," Mr. Vucic told supporters at his party's election night event, though he blamed Serbia's independent media as well as alleged inter-



Aleksandar Vucic

ference by unnamed European countries and an "American deep state" for the loss.

Near-record turnout of almost 70%, the Balkan nation's highest at a parliamentary election in more than three decades, likely drove the political upset.

Radomir Saicic, a Students' List candidate, said "tonight is not just about results."

"This is a victory over fear ... it is nobody's trophy, it is a citizens victory. But victory carries responsibility," he added.

The Students' List movement was shaped by university students but none actually appeared on the election list. Instead, its candidates are little-known experts, athletes, farmers and artists.

PM backs 'earned settlement' in U.K. immigration rules

Sriram Lakshman
LONDON

U.K. Prime Minister Andy Burnham has said that he stands by the principle that settlement (permanent residence) in the U.K. should be "earned" and not granted automatically.

An increase in the baseline qualifying period for settlement, from 5 to 15 years, had been proposed by U.K. Home Secretary Shabana Mahmood as part of a draft "earned settlement" immigration overhaul last year, during the Keir Starmer administration. Individuals could qualify depending on income, immigration violations and other factors.

Indian citizens are likely to be significantly impacted by the new rules. Indian nationals constituted the largest group from outside the EU+ (EU and a few other European countries) area to migrate long-term to the U.K. for the year ending December 2025.

"We'll set out the plan on that quite soon," Mr. Burnham said during a TV interview on Monday. He said the government was still considering the responses received in the public consultation process that took place earlier this year. In recent weeks, the



Community bond: U.K. Prime Minister Andy Burnham during a visit to St Martin-in-the-Fields, a homeless charity in London on Monday. REUTERS

Prime Minister has indicated that the government would soften the proposed stance towards social care workers. These individuals formed a significant part of the 'Boris-wave' of migration – a surge in migrants in the early 2020s – who are now becoming eligible for settlement.

Mr. Burnham said that since the U.K. left the EU in 2016, things had not "played out as people said it would at the time" with the country's economy weakening and control over immigration becoming more challenging. He said "revolving-door immigration" was being replaced by permanent immigration to the U.K.

Over the weekend, the *Sunday Times* had reported that Mr. Burnham would be open to considering 'free

movement' (i.e., right to live and work) between the U.K. and EU.

On rejoining EU

In his Monday interview, Mr. Burnham reiterated his wish to see the U.K. rejoin the EU in his lifetime, adding, however, that he would "not move ahead of the public".

"The British public... will be the bosses here. They will decide what will happen in relation to Brexit," he said, as he denied that he was "testing the waters" with the public and media on how a return to the E.U. would be received.

The U.K. and EU are working towards concluding an agreement that would cover agriculture and immigration among other areas, at a summit meeting on November 20.

Lula beats far-right, wins fourth presidential term

Brazilian President makes a dramatic comeback after trailing in the first round; 'Brazil is nobody's backyard', he says amid alleged U.S. meddling in polls in favour of far-right leader Flávio Bolsonaro

Shobhan Saxena

SAO PAULO

Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva secured a historic fourth presidential term, defeating Flávio Bolsonaro of Liberal Party (PL) in Brazil's runoff on Sunday. Lula secured 64 million votes, the highest total ever recorded in a Brazilian presidential election, defeating Mr. Bolsonaro by more than four million votes.

Declaring a "defeat for lies and denialism", Lula, 80, pledged to govern for all Brazilians and protect the country's sovereignty. "Brazil is nobody's backyard," Lula declared at a midnight rally, sending a message to U.S. President Donald Trump as he said Brazil has defeated the far-right lies, foreign interfe-



Aligned stars: Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva greets supporters outside his residence in Sao Paulo on Sunday. REUTERS

rence and election meddling by social media firms.

An emotional Lula thanked women and older voters for their support and praised the mobilisation of youth on the streets and on social media. "People went out to vote because we managed to con-

vince them that their votes were extremely important to safeguarding democracy in the country," he said.

Lula secured an unprecedented comeback in the election. He trailed in the first round, receiving 45.16% of valid votes against 47.03% for Mr. Bol-

sonaro. As the prospect of a Bolsonaro presidency caused a major concern among the young, especially about public education, healthcare and transport, millions joined weekly rallies across Brazil, pledging support for Lula and demanding protection of public services.

Lula told his young supporters that their voices have been heard. "We will make increasing investment in the Unified Health System, develop a national artificial intelligence system, continue to expand public universities and support the digital and creative economies," he said amid loud cheers.

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