

DAILY PT POINTERS

2 January, 2025



The Hindu-GS2(Governance)Page8

The race for fighters: the IAF's dilemma

China has already fielded two fifth generation fighter jets becoming the only country other than the U.S. to have more than one fifth gen fighter. In comparison, the Indian Air Force is at 31 fighter squadrons, desperately awaiting new inductions and with no fifth gen fighter in the line-up for at least a decade

FULL CONTEXT

Dinakar Peri

In the last two weeks, taking the world by surprise, China unveiled a series of high technology platforms establishing its technological supremacy. These include two stealth fighter jets, the launch of an amphibious naval ship, a new "comprehensive" scientific research ship for global deep-sea exploration, a supersonic civil jet prototype and a new bullet train dubbed the world's fastest. The timing couldn't have been starker, highlighting the widening technological gap with the Indian Air Force (IAF) which is struggling to maintain its fighter squadron strength as modernisation is plagued by delayed deliveries.



THE GIST

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- India has an ambitious plan lined up for the acquisition of over 500 fighter jets, a bulk of them to be indigenously designed and manufactured. However, these are at various stages of development and manufacturing and their timely deliveries are critical.
- An aero-engine is likely to remain the single major dependency and the country's Achilles heel for a very long time.

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Scorpene-class submarine among 3 frontline platforms to be inducted by Navy on Jan. 15

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Indian Navy is set to commission three frontline platforms into service at the Naval Dockyard, Mumbai, on January 15. These are the sixth and last Scorpene-class submarine, *Vagsheer*; the fourth and last of the Project-15B stealth destroyers, *Surat*; and the lead ship of the Project-17A

sign and construction, cementing India's position as a global leader in defence manufacturing," the Navy said in a statement.

All three platforms had been manufactured at Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Ltd. (MDL), Mumbai. While the two ships are indigenously designed, the Scorpene-class submarines are manufactured in India under licence from



systems at sea, making them fully operational and ready for deployment."

Equipped with modern aviation facilities, *Nilgiri* and *Surat* can operate a range of helicopters, including Chetak, Dhruv, Sea King, and the newly inducted MH-60R, during both day and night operations. Features such as a Rail-Less Helicopter Traversing System and a Vi-

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- All three platforms had been manufactured at Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Ltd. (MDL), Mumbai. While the two ships are indigenously designed, the Scorpene-class submarines are manufactured in India under licence from Naval Group of France.
- *Nilgiri*, the lead ship of Project-17A, is a major advancement over the Shivalik-class frigates, incorporating significant stealth features and reduced radar signatures through state-of-the-art technology. The Project-15B destroyer, *Surat*, is the culmination of the follow-on class to the Kolkata-class (Project-15A) destroyers, featuring substantial improvements in design and capabilities

The Hindu –GS3(Environment)-Page 12

'Excessive nitrates found in groundwater in 440 districts'

Report suggests that about 56% of India's districts face the problem largely due to subsidised synthetic nitrogenous fertilizer, a key input for farming; a level more than 45 mg per litre is high

Jacob Koshy
NEW DELHI

Excessive nitrates have been found in groundwater in 440 districts as of 2023, an increase from 359 such districts in 2017, a report by



concentration exceeding 100 ppb (parts per billion).

Anything over 30 ppb of uranium is considered unsafe and several of these samples were predominant in regions of Rajasthan, Gujarat, Haryana, Punjab, Tamil Nadu, And-

- Excessive nitrates have been found in groundwater in 440 districts as of 2023, an increase from 359 such districts in 2017, a report by the Central Groundwater Board (CGWB) said on Wednesday. This is a health hazard, particularly for young children, and a source of environmental toxicity.
- The data suggest that about 56% of India's districts have excessive nitrates — defined as more than 45 mg per litre — in groundwater, largely due to the use of subsidised synthetic nitrogenous fertilizer, a key input for farming.
- Of the 15,239 groundwater samples collected from across the country for testing, 19.8% had nitrates or nitrogen compounds above the safe limits. This proportion has not shifted much since 2017. In the 13,028 samples analysed in 2017, 21.6% had excessive nitrates.
- Rajasthan, Karnataka, and Tamil Nadu reported the highest nitrate contamination problem, with 49%, 48%, and 37%, respectively, of their tested samples reporting numbers beyond the safe limit.

The Hindu –GS3(Economy)-Page 13

Cabinet extends DAP special package, crop insurance to stay

The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

The Union Cabinet extended the one-time special subsidy on fertilizer Diammonium Phosphate (DAP) at a rate of ₹3,500 per metric tonne from January 1, 2025 till further orders.

The Cabinet also an



- The one-time special subsidy on Diammonium Phosphate (DAP) fertilizer will continue at ₹3,500 per metric tonne from January 1, 2025, until further notice. This subsidy is over and above the approved nutrient-based subsidy to ensure DAP availability at affordable prices for farmers.
- The budgetary requirement for the DAP subsidy package is estimated to be up to ₹3,850 crore.
- The continuation of the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana and the Restructured Weather-Based Crop Insurance Scheme will be extended until 2025-26, with a total allocation of ₹69,515.71 crore to provide risk coverage for farmers.

HEADLINES OF THE DAY



Indian Express –GS2(Governance)-Page 5

Centre amends prison manual to address caste-based inequality

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 1

THE UNION Home Ministry has amended the prison manual rules to check discrimination and classification of inmates in jails on the basis of their caste. In a communication, sent on December 30, to chief secretaries of all states and Union territories, the Union Home Ministry said Model Prison Manual, 2016, and the Model Prisons and Correctional Services Act, 2023, have been amended to address the issue of any caste-based discrimination of prisoners. The changes have been made in the wake of the October 3, 2024 order of the Supreme Court on the caste-based discrimination of prisoners.

According to the new addition in the manual, the prison authorities will have to strictly

ensure that there is no discrimination, classification, segregation of prisoners on the basis of their caste. "It shall be strictly ensured that there is no discrimination of prisoners in allotment of any duty or work in prisons on the basis of their caste," the letter states.

According to the MHA, changes have also been made in the Miscellaneous' of the Model Prisons and Correctional Services Act, 2023, with a new heading 'Prohibition of caste-based discrimination in Prisons and Correctional Institutions' as Section 55(A). "The provisions of 'The Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act, 2013,' shall have a binding effect even in prisons and correctional institutions. Manual scavenging or hazardous cleaning of a sewer or a septic tank inside a prison shall not be permitted," the letter said.

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HEADLINES OF THE DAY

Air-Governance (GSII)

Govt Launches ONOS To Provide Seamless Access To Digital Knowledge Resources



- The Government has launched the “One Nation, One Subscription” scheme starting today. This initiative aims to provide seamless access to a wide range of digital knowledge resources, including research papers, journals, and academic content, under a single subscription platform.
- The scheme is expected to benefit students, researchers, and institutions across the country by eliminating multiple subscription barriers and ensuring equitable access to knowledge.
- Over 1.8 crore students from Government funded higher education institutions, including universities and IITs, will have access to research papers, published in top journals across the world.