



BACKGROUNDERS
Press Information Bureau
Government of India

Kargil Vijay Diwas 2026

A Tribute to Valour, Sacrifice, and the Spirit of India

July 24, 2026

Kargil Vijay Diwas honours the courage, sacrifice, and unwavering resolve of the Bravehearts of Operation Vijay. It commemorates India's historic victory in the Kargil War and celebrates the spirit that safeguarded the Nation's sovereignty. The occasion also reflects Kargil's enduring legacy. It continues to strengthen India's military preparedness, inspire generations, and reinforce the Nation's unwavering commitment to its security.

When Courage Conquered the Peaks

The Kargil War stands among the greatest chapters in India's military history. It reflects unmatched bravery, grit, and determination. It remains a lasting symbol of national pride and inspiration.

This year, the nation marks the 27th Kargil Vijay Diwas with gratitude and reverence. It commemorates India's historic victory in 1999. Indian soldiers reclaimed the snow-covered heights of Kargil through extraordinary courage and unwavering resolve. On 26 July, the Tricolour once again flew proudly over the rugged mountains of Ladakh. It became a timeless symbol of sacrifice, valour, and India's unbreakable spirit.



The Kargil conflict began in May 1999. Intruders crossed the Line of Control and occupied Indian positions on commanding heights. Their aim was to cut the link between Kashmir and Ladakh. The larger objective was to force India into negotiations on the Kashmir dispute. But they underestimated the will of a nation. India responded with Operation Vijay. The mission reflected meticulous planning, unwavering determination, and the indomitable spirit of Indian soldiers. After more than two months of intense fighting, every intruder was driven out. Every occupied position returned to Indian control.

Kargil Vijay Diwas honours every Braveheart who sacrificed everything for the motherland. Their sacrifice strengthened India's resolve to secure every inch of its territory. The conflict reshaped the nation's military preparedness and defence outlook for the years ahead. Its lessons continue to guide India's march towards a stronger and more self-reliant future. It reminds every Indian that courage, sacrifice, unity, and sovereignty will forever remain the nation's greatest strength.

The Road to Operation Vijay

The Kargil War began in the summer of 1999, soon after the Lahore Declaration. While much of India endured scorching heat, fierce battles unfolded across the icy heights of Kargil. Pakistani forces infiltrated Indian territory and occupied winter vacated posts on commanding ridges. The conflict tested courage, endurance, and sacrifice in one of the world's harshest battlefields. It remains the only conventional war fought between two nuclear armed nations.



The Infiltration

The intrusion was part of Pakistan's Operation Badr. Pakistani forces, disguised as Kashmiri terrorists, crossed the Line of Control and occupied Indian positions. Their aim was to cut the link between Kashmir and Ladakh. They also sought to isolate Indian Army troops on the Siachen Glacier. The larger objective was to force India into negotiations on the Kashmir dispute.

On 3 May 1999, local residents first reported suspicious movement in the Kargil sector. Reconnaissance patrols were immediately dispatched to verify the reports. Extensive patrolling and aerial surveillance soon revealed the scale of the occupation. The infiltrators had entrenched themselves on dominating heights overlooking the Srinagar to Leh Highway. Many positions stood above 5,000 metres, making every military operation exceptionally challenging.

Operation Vijay Begins



India responded with restraint, resolve, and determination. The government directed that the Line of Control would not be crossed. The mission was clear. Every occupied post had to be reclaimed.

The Indian Army launched Operation Vijay to evict the intruders. The Indian Air Force joined the campaign

through Operation Safed Sagar on 26 May 1999. The Indian Navy also deployed in full strength, demonstrating India's resolve across every domain. Together, the three Services executed a coordinated campaign.

Operation Vijay followed the strategy of contain, evict, and deny. Priority was given to recapturing the heights dominating the Srinagar to Leh Highway. Additional troops, artillery, engineers, specialised equipment, and logistics were rapidly inducted. Soldiers climbed near vertical cliffs under relentless enemy fire. They battled freezing temperatures, thin air, and unforgiving terrain.

Battles That Changed the Course of the War

The Battle of Tololing marked one of the first major breakthroughs of the campaign. Indian troops launched their assault in the last week of May 1999. Point 4590 and Tololing was fully recaptured on 13 June, opening the way for further advances.

The Battle of Tiger Hill became one of the defining moments of the war. Tiger Hill was among the highest peaks in the Dras sector and one of the Indian Army's most important objectives. After a daring assault, the peak was recaptured on 4 July 1999, significantly shifting the momentum in India's favour.

Fierce fighting also took place at Point 4875, Batalik, Mushkoh Valley, and Kaksar. Indian soldiers fought peak by peak to reclaim every occupied position. After nearly three months of relentless operations, every occupied Indian post was recaptured. India secured victory without crossing the Line of Control, earning global respect for its restraint, professionalism, and unwavering resolve.



A Victory That Inspired a Nation

The Kargil War became a defining chapter in India's history. It showcased the extraordinary courage of Indian soldiers and united the nation in pride. On **14 July 1999**, then Prime Minister **Atal Bihari Vajpayee** addressed the nation and declared **Operation Vijay** a success. He paid tribute to the courage, sacrifice, and unwavering resolve of the Armed Forces.

The victory reaffirmed that every inch of Indian territory would be defended at any cost. It strengthened the nation's faith in its Armed Forces and inspired generations of Indians.

The Bravery That Defined Kargil

The victory in Kargil was made possible by countless acts of courage. Every peak reclaimed reflected the determination and sacrifice of India's Armed Forces. While every soldier contributed to Operation Vijay, several acts of exceptional gallantry became defining moments of the conflict. Heroes such as Grenadier Yogendra Singh Yadav, Captain Vikram Batra, Captain Vijyant Thapar, and many others became symbols of courage and selfless service.

The nation honoured this extraordinary valour with its highest military decorations. 4 soldiers were awarded the **Param Vir Chakra**, India's highest gallantry award. 9 received the **Maha Vir Chakra**, while 55 were honoured with the **Vir Chakra**. 1 soldier was conferred the **Sarvottam Yudh Seva Medal**. 6 received the **Uttam Yudh Seva Medal**, and 8 were awarded the **Yudh Seva Medal**. The Sena Medal was awarded to 83 personnel, while 24 received the Vayu Sena Medal. These honours reflect the extraordinary courage, leadership, and sacrifice displayed during the Kargil War.

Read the inspiring stories of these Bravehearts [Click To Read More Here.](#)

From Battlefield Lessons to a Stronger Defence Ecosystem

The Kargil War became a turning point in India's defence journey. It highlighted the need for stronger coordination, faster modernisation, and greater self-reliance. Over the years, India has undertaken wide ranging reforms to strengthen its defence ecosystem and build indigenous capabilities. Today, these efforts are shaping a stronger, more capable, and increasingly Atmanirbhar military.

Some of the key reforms and initiatives are outlined below:

Establishment of the Department of Military Affairs

The Department of Military Affairs was created as a part of Higher Defence Management Reforms. It functions under the CDS, who serves as its Secretary. The department promotes jointmanship among the Army, Navy, and Air Force. It also supports coordinated defence doctrines, planning, and procedures across the three Services.

Creation of the Chief of Defence Staff

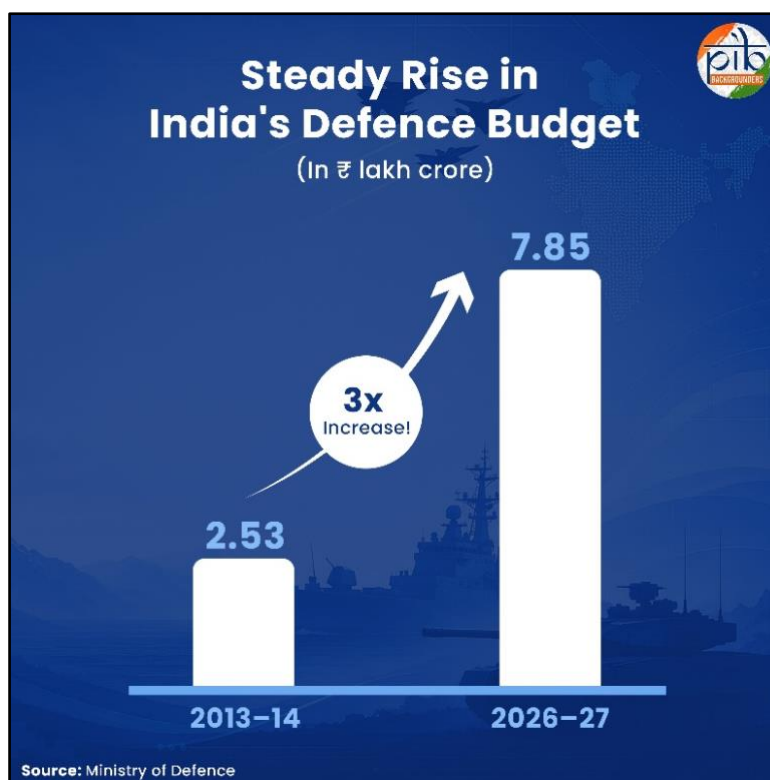
One of the most significant reforms was the creation of the post of Chief of Defence Staff (CDS). The CDS serves as the single point military adviser to the Government. The role also promotes greater jointness among the Army, Navy, and Air Force. General Bipin Rawat became India's first CDS in 2020. The post is currently held by General N. S. Raja Subramani.

Foreign Direct Investment in Defence

The defence industry was opened to private sector participation. The FDI limit has increased to 74 per cent through the Automatic Route for new defence industrial licences. It also allows up to 100 per cent through the Government Route where modern technology is introduced. As of March 2026, the sector has attracted FDI worth ₹6,670.59 crore. The Government also promotes co-development and co-production with Foreign Original Equipment Manufacturers to strengthen advanced defence manufacturing.

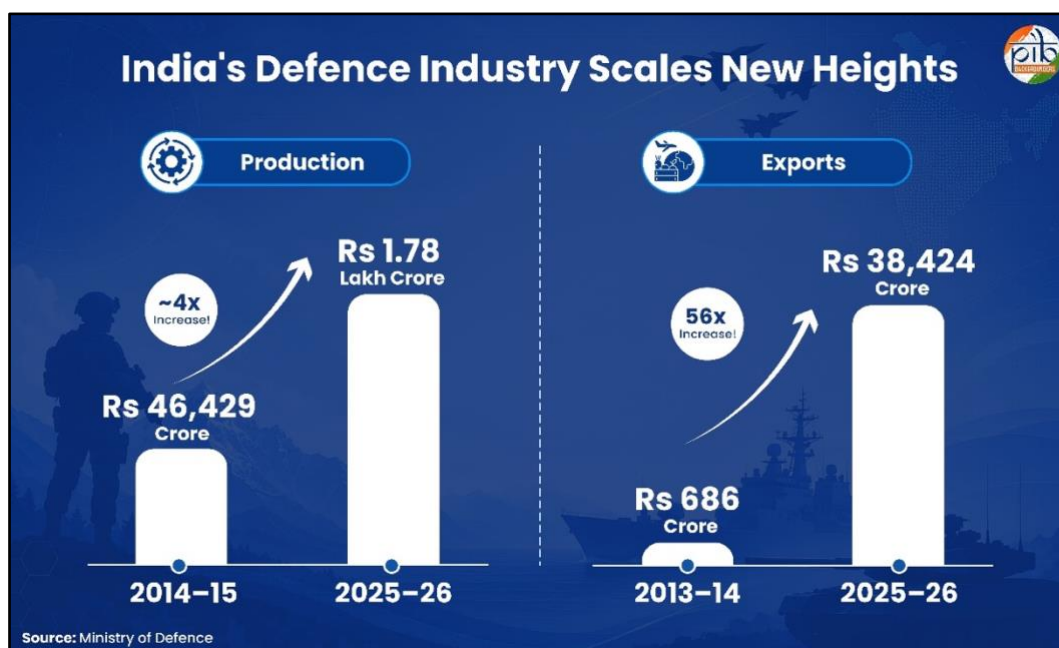
Enhanced Defence Budget

India's defence allocation has risen steadily from ₹2.53 lakh crore in 2013–14 to ₹7.85 lakh crore in 2026–27. Capital expenditure has also increased from ₹94,587.95 crore in 2014–15 to ₹2.19 lakh crore in 2026–27. These investments are strengthening long term military capability through modern equipment, infrastructure, and strategic assets.



Growth in Defence Production and Exports

India's defence production reached an all-time high of ₹1.78 lakh crore in 2025–26, almost four times higher than ₹46,429 crore in 2014–15.



Defence exports increased from ₹686 crore in 2013–14 to ₹38,424 crore in 2025–26, a rise of more than 56 times. Today, Indian defence products are exported to over **80 countries**. Driven by Make in

India and Aatmanirbhar Bharat, India is steadily emerging as a defence manufacturing nation. Nearly 65 per cent of defence equipment is now produced within the country, compared to an earlier import dependence of 65 to 70 per cent.

Accelerating Indigenous Defence Manufacturing

The Ministry of Defence launched the **Srijan Defence Portal**. The portal connects Defence Public Sector Undertakings and Service Headquarters with industries, MSMEs, and startups for indigenisation. Positive Indigenisation Lists were introduced in 2021 under the Aatmanirbhar Bharat initiative.

Till May 2026, five **Positive Indigenisation Lists** covering 5,012 items of DPSUs have been notified. More than 15,700 defence items, including 3,204 Positive Indigenisation List items, have been indigenised during the last five years. DPSUs have placed domestic orders worth ₹9,782 crore, strengthening MSMEs, startups, research institutions, and India's defence manufacturing ecosystem.

Defence Industrial Corridors Driving Regional Manufacturing

Defence Industrial Corridors have emerged as key growth centres for defence manufacturing, strengthening regional supply chains and fostering integrated industrial ecosystems. By April 2026, the Uttar Pradesh Defence Industrial Corridor had attracted investment commitments worth ₹42,057 crore, with grounded investments of ₹4,409 crore, supported by the establishment of the Defence Technology & Test Centre (DTTC) to enhance testing and innovation capabilities. During the same period, the Tamil Nadu Defence Industrial Corridor attracted investments worth ₹32,699 crore, with actual investments reaching ₹6,446 crore. Together, these corridors are accelerating industrial infrastructure development, expanding domestic manufacturing capacity, and generating new employment opportunities.

Agnipath Scheme

The Agnipath Scheme was launched to recruit young men and women into the Armed Forces as Agniveers for a four-year service period. The scheme aims to create a youthful, tech-savvy, and combat-ready military force with a modern outlook. Agniveers receive military training, specialised skill development, and educational opportunities through partnerships with institutions such as IGNOU and NIOS. The scheme also provides nationally recognised skill certificates and career pathways after service.

The legacy of Kargil continues to inspire reforms that are strengthening India's Armed Forces and reinforcing the nation's security.

Towards a Future Ready Military

The character of warfare has changed significantly since the Kargil War. Modern conflicts demand advanced technology, superior firepower, and rapid decision making. India has strengthened its military capabilities through the induction of modern platforms and the development of next generation defence technologies. These capabilities are enhancing operational readiness across land, air, sea, space, and emerging domains.

Some of the key platforms and emerging technologies driving this transformation are outlined below.

INDIA'S DEFENCE MILESTONES

2014-2026

A DECADE OF INDIGENOUS STRENGTH & STRATEGIC CAPABILITY

2015



AKASH SAM
Inducted in Army Air Defence Corps

- DRDO-developed short-to-medium range surface-to-air missile system.
- Capable of engaging targets up to 25 km.

2016



TEJAS Mk1

- India's first indigenous light combat aircraft (DRDO/HAL).
- Inducted into 45 Squadron "Flying Daggers" at Sullur.

2019



MISSION SHAKTI
ASAT Test

- Showcased India's capability to destroy satellite in low earth orbit.
- Made India the 4th nation after the USA, Russia and China to demonstrate a live anti-satellite kill capability.

2020



RAFALE-17 SQUADRON
"GOLDEN ARROWS"

- 35 Rafale multirole fighters inducted at Ambala on 10 Sept 2020.
- Equipped with Meteor BVR missiles, HAMMER bombs & Spectra EW suite.

2020



RUDRAM-1

- New generation Anti Radiation Missile (RUDRAM) flight tested successfully in 2020.

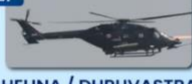
2021



S-400 TRIUMF-1ST SQUADRON
(INDIA-RUSSIA)

- First S-400 squadron delivered and operationalised.
- Can track & destroy aircraft, cruise missiles & ballistic missiles up to 400 km away.

2021



HELINA / DHRUVAstra
Helicopter-launched ATGM

- Joint trials of Helina (Army) and Dhruvastra (IAF) from Advanced Light Helicopter (ALH) platform successful.

2022



INS VIKRANT
India's first indigenous aircraft carrier

- Commissioned on 2 Sept 2022 at Cochin Shipyard Limited.
- 262 m long, 45,000 tonnes displacement.
- Built with over 76% indigenous content.

2022



HAL LCH "PRACHAND"
Light Combat Helicopter

- LCH indigenously designed with 45% made-in-india components.
- Aerial combat capability of operating at an altitude of over 5000m.

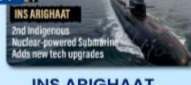
2022



BRAHMOS EXTENDED RANGE
(450 KM)-AIR-LAUNCHED

- Successful air-launch of 450 km range BrahMos from Su-30MKI in May 2022.
- World's fastest operational cruise missile for deep-strike capability.

2024



INS ARIGHAAT
2nd Indigenous Nuclear-powered Submarine
Adds new tech upgrades

- 2nd Nuclear Ballistic Missile Submarine
- Strengthens India's nuclear triad at sea.

2024



LONG RANGE ANTI-SHIP HYPERSONIC MISSILE

- DRDO Conducts the successful flight trials of India's first Long Range Hypersonic Missile (LR-ASHM)

2024



MISSION DIVYAstra
Project 75 Complete

- DRDO conducted First Trial of Agni 5 with Multiple Independently Targetable Re-Entry Vehicle (MIRV).

2025



6TH SCORPENE (VAGSHEER)
Project 75 Complete

- INS Vagsheer, 6th & final Kalvari-class submarine.
- Built at Mazagon Dock Limited under Project 75. (DRDO-Naval Group France collaboration).

AATMANIRBHAR BHARAT | SURAKSHIT BHARAT | VIKSIT BHARAT

Modern Platforms in Service

India has inducted advanced platforms across the three Services to strengthen combat capability and enhance operational effectiveness.

- Arjun Mk IA Battle Tank:** The Arjun Mk IA battle tank was inducted into the Indian Army in February 2021. It strengthened India's indigenous armoured capability.

- **INS Vikrant:** India's first indigenous aircraft carrier, INS Vikrant, was commissioned on 2 September 2022. It marked a major milestone in maritime capability and self-reliance.
- **Rafale Fighter Aircraft:** By 2030, India will operate 62 Rafale fighter aircraft, including 26 Rafale M aircraft. India will become the first country after France to operate both variants.
- **Apache and Chinook Helicopters:** The induction of Apache attack helicopters and Chinook heavy lift helicopters has enhanced combat capability and strategic airlift capacity.
- **Integration of Drone Warfare:** India has integrated drone warfare into its military doctrine. Drones now strengthen surveillance, reconnaissance, precision operations, and battlefield effectiveness.
- **BrahMos Cruise Missile:** The first successful BrahMos launch took place on 12 June 2001. This multi-platform supersonic cruise missile can be launched from land, sea, and air. It has a range of up to 290 kilometres and travels at nearly Mach 2.8.
- **Project 17A Stealth Frigates:** Project 17A is the Indian Navy's advanced stealth frigate programme to build seven next generation guided missile warships. These frigates are designed for anti-air, anti-surface, and anti-submarine warfare.
- **Sandhayak Class Survey Vessels:** The Sandhayak class survey vessels strengthen the Indian Navy's hydrographic capability by mapping the seabed and coastal waters. The indigenous class comprises INS Sandhayak, INS Nirdeshak, INS Ikshak, and INS Sanshodhak, enhancing India's maritime survey and navigation capabilities.
- **Arnala Class Anti-Submarine Warfare Shallow Water Craft:** The Arnala class strengthens the Indian Navy's coastal defence and anti-submarine warfare capability. The indigenous eight ship class comprises INS Arnala, INS Androth, INS Anjadip, INS Amini, INS Abhay, INS Agray, INS Akshay, and the recently commissioned INS Ajay. INS Arnala is the largest waterjet propelled warship inducted into the Indian Navy. [Click To Read More: Guardians of India's Maritime Frontiers](#)

Emerging Technologies and Strategic Capabilities

India is investing in advanced technologies to prepare its Armed Forces for the battlefields of tomorrow.

- **Mission Shakti:** On 27 March 2019, India successfully conducted Mission Shakti, an anti-satellite missile test, from Dr APJ Abdul Kalam Island. With this achievement, India joined the exclusive group of nations possessing anti-satellite capability.
- **Artificial Intelligence in Defence:** In 2022, India introduced 75 Artificial Intelligence based technologies for surveillance, cyber security, logistics, autonomous systems, and battlefield support.
- **Mission Divyastra:** On 11 March 2024, India successfully tested a long range missile carrying multiple warheads against different targets under Mission Divyastra.

- **Pinaka Long Range Guided Rocket:** The maiden flight test of the Pinaka Long Range Guided Rocket was successfully conducted on 29 December 2025. The rocket demonstrated a maximum range of 120 kilometres and achieved textbook precision during the trial.
- **Advanced Air Defence System:** On 23 August 2025, DRDO successfully tested an advanced air defence system. It combines missile interceptors, short range air defence weapons, and laser based technologies.
- **Hypersonic Missile Technologies:** India has advanced next generation propulsion systems for hypersonic missiles. In January 2026, DRDO completed a successful long duration scramjet combustor ground test. A new Hypersonic Wind Tunnel in Hyderabad now supports future high speed missile development.
- **Kusha Long Range Surface to Air Missile:** In July 2026, DRDO successfully conducted the maiden flight test of the Kusha missile. It intercepted a simulated high speed aerial threat. The system can neutralise fighter jets, missiles, unmanned aerial vehicles, and large enemy aircraft across a wide range and altitude. It has been developed indigenously by DRDO laboratories and industry partners.
- **Long Range Land Attack Cruise Missile:** In June 2026, DRDO successfully flight tested the Long Range Land Attack Cruise Missile from Dr APJ Abdul Kalam Island. The missile successfully achieved all test objectives. It is an indigenously developed system with all major sub systems developed by DRDO laboratories and Indian industry partners.
- **Netra Airborne Early Warning and Control System:** In June 2026, DRDO handed over the Final Operational Clearance certificate for the indigenous Netra Airborne Early Warning and Control (AEW&C) system. The system was developed jointly by DRDO, the Indian Air Force, and industry partners. It significantly enhances airborne surveillance, situational awareness, and battle management capabilities.

From modern combat platforms to next generation technologies, India continues to build a future ready military. These capabilities strengthen deterrence, enhance operational preparedness, and reinforce the Nation's ability to safeguard its sovereignty.

Kargil's Enduring Legacy

A stronger military is most meaningful when matched by unwavering resolve. Since Kargil, India has steadily strengthened both its defence capabilities and its response to evolving security challenges. This approach continues to shape the Nation's security doctrine and operational posture.

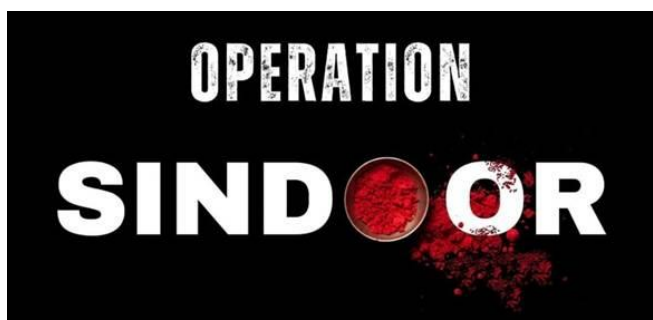
Surgical Strikes and Balakot Air Strikes

India's response to cross border terrorism has entered a new phase over the last decade. Following the Uri terror attack, India conducted Surgical Strikes on 28 and 29 September 2016. The operation inflicted heavy losses on terrorists and their protectors across the Line of Control. It marked a more proactive approach against cross border terrorism.

A few years later, on 14 February 2019, the Pulwama terror attack claimed 40 CRPF jawans. India's response came swiftly. On 26 February 2019, in an intelligence-led operation, the Balakot airstrikes eliminated a large number of Jaish-e-Mohammad terrorists. The facility targeted was located far from civilian areas and headed by Maulana Yousuf Azhar, brother-in-law of JeM chief Masood Azhar. These pre-emptive actions showed the world that India would no longer tolerate proxy war through terrorism.

Operation SINDOOR

India's evolving military doctrine was further demonstrated during Operation SINDOOR in May 2025. The operation followed the terrorist attack on civilians in Pahalgam. The Armed Forces struck nine terrorist camps in Pakistan and Pakistan occupied Jammu and Kashmir.



The operation relied on accurate intelligence, drones, loitering munitions, and layered air defence. Key Jaish-e-Mohammad and Lashkar-e-Taiba command centres were destroyed. The strikes resulted in over 100 terrorists killed in action. Those eliminated included individuals linked to IC-814 hijack and Pulwama blast like Yusuf Azhar, Abdul Malik Rauf and Mudassir Ahmad.

Pakistan launched drone and missile attacks on 7 and 8 May. India's integrated air defence systems intercepted them swiftly. The response showcased India's net centric warfare capabilities and integrated counter unmanned aerial systems grid.

From Kargil to Operation SINDOOR, India's response to terrorism has become increasingly proactive, precise, and decisive.

Celebrating the Spirit of Kargil

While the legacy of Kargil continues to shape India's military resolve, it also lives on in the Nation's collective memory. Every year, Kargil Vijay Diwas brings the country together to honour the courage and sacrifice of the Bravehearts of 1999. Across the country, commemorative events are being organised to pay tribute to their supreme sacrifice. These initiatives celebrate their legacy while inspiring future generations with the values of courage, duty, and patriotism.

Shaurya Vijay Yatra

Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh flagged off the 13-day **Shaurya Vijay Yatra** on 14 July 2026. The motorcycle expedition began at the National War Memorial in New Delhi. It will conclude at the Kargil War Memorial in Dras after covering 1,900 kilometres. 28 riders, including serving and retired defence personnel with their families, are participating. The expedition carries the motto "**One Ride, One Nation, One Salute.**"



Wheels of Valour: Sanchar Shakti



As part of the nationwide **Wheels of Valour: Sanchar Shakti** expedition, the Corps of Signals Dare Devils created a new world record on 1 July 2026. Ten riders performed on two motorcycles inside the Atal Tunnel. They completed the 9.8-kilometre tunnel in 9 minutes and 47.97 seconds. The feat honoured the spirit of Kargil Vijay Diwas while showcasing

military skill, endurance, and teamwork.

Tiger Hill Expedition 2026

The Indian Army and the Civil Administration, Dras, organised the Tiger Hill Expedition on 17 July 2026. The initiative promoted military tourism while preserving the legacy of the Kargil War. Eleven trained local trekking guides also participated, creating livelihood opportunities for local youth.



Honouring Veterans and Bravehearts

On 16 July 2026, Tri Services Ex Servicemen and their families visited the Kargil War Memorial and Heritage Hut Museum. The visit honoured the Bravehearts of Kargil and strengthened the enduring bond among veterans, serving personnel, and their families.

Ex Servicemen, school children, and villagers also paid tribute at the Khalubar War Memorial on 10 July 2026. The ceremony reaffirmed the enduring values of patriotism, courage, and selfless service.



Commemorative Treks and Military Displays

On 13 July 2026, 137 soldiers undertook a commemorative trek to Point 5140, also known as Gun Hill. The trek honoured the Regiment of Artillery for its decisive contribution during Operation Vijay.

Indian Army also organised a Weapon and Equipment Display at Hanle. The exhibition showcased modern weapons, drones, and surveillance systems. It highlighted the Indian Army's technological capabilities and operational readiness in high altitude areas.

Leh to Dras Motorcycle Expedition



On 12 and 13 July 2026, Indian Army riders undertook a motorcycle expedition from Leh to the Kargil War Memorial in Dras. The riders crossed the challenging Fotu La, Namika La, and Umba La passes. The expedition honoured the Bravehearts of Operation Vijay while demonstrating endurance, camaraderie, and military spirit.

These commemorative events ensure that the legacy of Kargil continues to inspire every generation with the timeless ideals of courage, sacrifice, and service to the Nation.

The Victory That Lives On

Twenty-seven years later, the echoes of Kargil still resonate across the Nation. The victory stands as an enduring symbol of courage, sacrifice, and unwavering patriotism. Every peak recaptured reminds us that India's sovereignty is non-negotiable and will be defended at any cost. Inspired by the valour of its Bravehearts, India has emerged stronger, better prepared, and increasingly self-reliant. As the Nation salutes the heroes of Kargil, it also renews its solemn resolve to uphold their legacy. Their courage will forever inspire generations to serve the Nation with honour, duty, and unwavering commitment.

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