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TODAY'S ANALYSIS

(17 January 2025)

TOPICS TO BE COVERED

- NAG MARK 2 ANTI TANK GUIDED MISSILE TESTED
- INDIA'S ENGAGEMENT WITH TALIBAN (2021-PRESENT)
- MCQs



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NAG MARK 2 ANTI TANK GUIDED MISSILE TESTED

- **Date of Test:** January 13, 2025
- **Conducted by:** Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)
- **Location:** Pokhran, Rajasthan
- On January 13, 2025, India successfully conducted field trials of the **Nag Mark 2**, a third-generation **Anti-Tank Guided Missile (ATGM)** developed indigenously by the **Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)**.
- This achievement marks a significant **advancement in India's defense capabilities**, particularly in anti-tank warfare, and strengthens the country's position in modern military technology.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- **Successful Performance:**
 - The missile **hit all targets** accurately during the trials, which were conducted at both **maximum and minimum range limits**.

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- The success in both range conditions showcases its **high precision and operational reliability**.

- **Precision and Reliability:**

- The **Nag Mark 2** demonstrated **exceptional accuracy** in targeting and destroying enemy tanks and armored vehicles, even in challenging battlefield conditions.
- The missile's **reliability** under field conditions further assures its effective deployment in real-world scenarios.

- **Fire-and-Forget Technology:**

- The **fire-and-forget capability** allows the operator to lock onto a target before firing.
- Once launched, the missile autonomously guides itself to the target, requiring minimal input from the operator.
- This feature makes the **Nag Mark 2** highly effective in dynamic, fast-changing combat environments, ensuring that it remains a reliable weapon against swiftly evolving threats.

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NAG MARK 2 DEVELOPMENT FEATURES

- **Designed for Modern Armoured Vehicles:**

- The **Nag Mark 2** is specifically designed to neutralize **modern tanks** and **armored vehicles**, even those protected by advanced **Explosive Reactive Armour (ERA)**.
- This capability makes it highly effective against technologically advanced enemy armor.

- **Specialized in Anti-Tank Warfare:**

- As a key component of India's **anti-tank strategy**, the **Nag Mark 2 missile** provides a **potent tool to counter the armored threats** faced by the **Indian Army**, especially along India's borders, which are vulnerable to tank invasions or other armored threats.

- **Integration with NAMICA:**

- The missile is integrated with the **Nag Missile Carrier (NAMICA) Version 2**, a specialized vehicle designed to launch the missile.
- The **NAMICA Version 2** allows the missile to be launched from a mobile platform, providing **improved mobility** and **greater flexibility** on the battlefield.

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- The combination of the missile and the launch vehicle ensures that the **weapon system is highly adaptable** to different tactical situations.

STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE

- **Strengthening India's Defence Capabilities:**

- The successful trials of the **Nag Mark 2** missile significantly enhance **India's ability to counter armoured threats** from neighboring countries, especially in regions with complex terrain, such as the mountainous borders of the northern states.
- By increasing the precision and effectiveness of anti-tank weapons, India can bolster its defense preparedness in areas that are often subject to heightened military tensions.

- **Boosting Self-Reliance in Defence:**

- The successful development and testing of the **Nag Mark 2** missile is a crucial step towards achieving **self-reliance in defense production**, in line with India's **Atma Nirbhar Bharat (Self-Reliant India)** initiative.

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- By developing its own advanced military technologies, India can reduce its dependence on foreign weapons and enhance local defense production, which is vital for national security and economic growth.
- **Enhancing Indigenous Technological Capabilities:**
 - The **Nag Mark 2** missile's advanced **fire-and-forget technology**, guidance systems, and integration with mobile launch platforms highlight India's growing technological capabilities in the defense sector.
 - These advancements not only enhance India's defense preparedness but also place it in a stronger position to contribute to global defense markets in the future.

KEY FEATURES OF NAG MARK 2

- **Fire-and-Forget Technology:**
 - This advanced technology allows the **missile to be fired and then autonomously guided to the target without further operator input**, making it highly effective in unpredictable and rapidly changing battlefield environments.

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- **Versatility and Targeting:**

- The **Nag Mark 2** is designed to target and destroy modern armored vehicles, including tanks equipped with **Explosive Reactive Armour (ERA)**, ensuring its effectiveness in a wide range of combat scenarios.
- This capability makes it adaptable to various operational requirements, from high-intensity warfare to low-intensity border conflicts.

- **Platform Compatibility – NAMICA:**

- The missile is deployed from the **Nag Missile Carrier (NAMICA)**, a mobile platform that allows the **missile to be launched quickly** and efficiently, even in remote or challenging terrains.
- The integration of **NAMICA Version 2** with the missile enhances its flexibility and operational effectiveness on the battlefield.

- **Precision Targeting:**

- Equipped with an advanced guidance system, the missile is capable of striking **with high accuracy**, ensuring that the missile hits its target even under challenging battlefield conditions.
- This feature is crucial for **minimizing collateral damage** while effectively neutralizing enemy armor.

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INDIA'S ENGAGEMENT WITH TALIBAN (2021-PRESENT)

- India's relationship with the Taliban since the group's return to power in Afghanistan in **August 2021** has evolved, marked by **cautious diplomatic engagement, humanitarian aid, and strategic interests.**
- India, historically wary of the Taliban's extremist ideologies and ties with Pakistan, had to adjust its approach given the changing political and security situation in Afghanistan.



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INDIA'S HISTORICAL STANCE ON TALIBAN

- **Vijay K. Nambiar's Meeting (2000):**

- In 2000, **Vijay K. Nambiar**, India's High Commissioner to Pakistan, met **Mullah Abdul Salam Zaeef**, the Taliban's representative in Pakistan.
- This **interaction was one of the few occasions** India engaged with the Taliban.
- Nambiar's assessment was that **India could not have meaningful ties with the Taliban due to their close relationship with Pakistan**, complicating diplomatic relations.

- **India's Stance during the Taliban's First Rule (1990s):**

- During the **Taliban's first rule (1996-2001)**, India refused to engage with them due to the group's extreme interpretation of **Islamic law, oppression of women, and their links to terrorist organizations**.
- Instead, India supported the Afghan government led by **Hamid Karzai (2001-2014)** and later **Ashraf Ghani (2014-2021)**, providing significant **development assistance** to Afghanistan during these periods.

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TALIBAN'S RETURN TO POWER IN 2021

- **Taliban Takeover:**

- **In August 2021, as U.S. and NATO forces** withdrew from Afghanistan, the **Taliban quickly took control**, leading to the **collapse of the Ashraf Ghani government**.
- India had **invested heavily in Afghanistan over two decades**, primarily in **infrastructure** and development projects.
- India was forced to reassess its diplomatic approach as the Taliban became the **de facto power** in Afghanistan.

- **First Contact (August 31, 2021) – Doha:**

- **India's first official engagement** with the Taliban took place in **Doha, Qatar**, on August 31, 2021.
- India's **Ambassador to Qatar, Deepak Mittal**, met **Sher Mohammad Abbas Stanekzai**, the head of the Taliban's political office.
- During this meeting, the **Taliban expressed interest** in continuing **cultural, economic, and political relations** with India, citing historical ties.
- India responded cautiously, signaling that its engagement would be **limited** and **carefully calibrated**.

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HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

Despite concerns over the Taliban's **governance practices**, India took steps to provide **humanitarian aid** to the Afghan people while maintaining its distance from the Taliban government.

- **Humanitarian Aid (December 2021):**

- India sent **1.6 tonnes of medical supplies** to Afghanistan, a humanitarian gesture aimed at **assisting the Afghan people without directly supporting the Taliban regime.**

- **June 2022 – First Official Diplomatic Visit to Kabul:**

- India sent a team led by **J.P. Singh**, a senior official from the Ministry of External Affairs, to Kabul.
- The team's mission was to supervise the **delivery of humanitarian aid** and meet with **Amir Khan Muttaqi**, the Taliban's foreign minister.
- India provided aid to victims of the **Khost and Paktika earthquake**, signaling continued humanitarian support.

- **Technical Team in Kabul:**

- Even after the embassy evacuation, India deployed a **small technical team** to Kabul to monitor aid delivery, indicating India's commitment to its **humanitarian obligations** in Afghanistan.

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STRENGTHENING DIPLOMATIC TIES (2022-2024)

India continued to engage diplomatically with the Taliban while emphasizing key concerns such as **women's rights**, **inclusive governance**, and the security situation in Afghanistan.

- **December 2022 – Women's Rights and Inclusive Government:**

- India expressed concern over the **Taliban's ban on women's education** and other **restrictions on women's rights**.
- India called for an **inclusive government** in Afghanistan that would represent the diverse ethnic and religious communities of the country.
- India reiterated the importance of **UN Security Council Resolution 2593**, which called for respecting human rights and forming an inclusive government.

- **October 2023 – Closure of Afghan Embassy in New Delhi:**

- In October 2023, Afghanistan's embassy in **New Delhi** closed due to logistical constraints and lack of resources.
- However, Afghan diplomats continued to work at the **Indian consulates** in **Mumbai** and **Hyderabad** to maintain diplomatic engagement.

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- **January 2024 – Meeting with Amir Khan Muttaqi:**
 - Indian diplomats met **Amir Khan Muttaqi**, the Taliban's foreign minister, in Kabul to discuss **visa issues** for Afghan **businessmen, students, and patients**.
 - India remains open to providing **humanitarian visas** on a case-by-case basis despite logistical challenges due to the closure of the embassy.

KEY DRIVERS OF INDIA'S ENGAGEMENT WITH TALIBAN

Several key factors have influenced India's approach to engaging with the Taliban:

- **Geopolitical and Regional Dynamics:**
 - **Pakistan's Influence:** The Taliban's strong **ties to Pakistan** present challenges for India, particularly regarding concerns over **terrorism** and the possible **flow of refugees** from Afghanistan to India.
 - **China's Role:** China has been increasing its **influence in Afghanistan** by signing economic and trade agreements with the Taliban. **India is cautious about falling behind China in securing its interests in the region.**
 - **Iran and Russia:** India continues to engage with **Iran and Russia**, both of which share concerns about the Taliban's policies and its regional impact.

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- **Security Concerns:**

- India is concerned about **terrorist groups** like **Jaish-e-Mohammad** and **Lashkar-e-Taiba** using Afghanistan as a **base** for attacks against India.
- India is working to ensure that the Taliban does not allow such groups to operate from Afghan soil.

- **Visa Issues:**

- The Taliban's request for **visas** for Afghan **businessmen, students, and patients** to visit India faces logistical challenges, as India's embassy in Kabul remains closed. However, India is open to issuing **humanitarian visas**.

KEY DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

India's long-term engagement in Afghanistan is visible through its investment in infrastructure and development projects, many of which have strategic importance:

- **Salma Dam (Afghan-India Friendship Dam):**

- Completed in **2016**, the **Salma Dam** is a **42 MW hydropower and irrigation project** in **Herat Province**, providing water and power to thousands of Afghan homes.
- However, the region has faced security challenges due to Taliban attacks.

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- **Stor Palace Restoration:**

- India collaborated with the **Aga Khan Development Network** to restore the **Stor Palace** in Kabul, an important historical site, further strengthening cultural ties.

- **Zaranj-Delaram Highway:**

- Built by India's **Border Roads Organisation**, this **218 km highway** connects **Zaranj** (near Iran's border) to **Delaram**. It enhances **trade** and **transportation** connectivity.
- India also used the **Chabahar Port** in **Iran** to ship goods to Afghanistan, bypassing Pakistan's denial of overland access.

- **Afghan Parliament Building (2015):**

- India constructed the **Afghan Parliament Building** at a cost of **\$90 million**, symbolizing its support for **democracy** in Afghanistan.
- The building remains a testament to India's development cooperation with Afghanistan.

- **Infrastructure and Health Projects:**

- India has built essential infrastructure in Afghanistan, including a **220kV transmission line** to improve electricity supply to **Kabul**, and has helped restore **telecommunications** in several provinces.

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BILATERAL TRADE RELATIONS

Trade relations between India and Afghanistan have continued despite the challenges, bolstered by initiatives like the **air freight corridor**:

- **Trade Growth:**

Bilateral trade crossed **\$1 billion** in **2019-20**, with India exporting products such as **pharmaceuticals, cement, and sugar** to Afghanistan, and Afghanistan exporting **fruits** to India.

- **Air Freight Corridor:**

In **2017**, India established an **air freight corridor** to facilitate trade, particularly exports from Afghanistan to India, bypassing logistical challenges in the region.

STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE OF INDIA'S INVESTMENT

India's involvement in Afghanistan goes beyond economic aid and is seen as a key part of its strategic objectives in the region:

- **Counter Terrorism:**

India aims to prevent Afghanistan from becoming a **safe haven for terrorists** who may target India. India is keen on ensuring the Taliban doesn't support or harbor groups like

Jaish-e-Mohammad or **Lashkar-e-Taiba**.

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- **Regional Connectivity:**

Through projects like the **Zaranj-Delaram Highway** and **Chabahar Port**, India is improving regional connectivity and boosting trade routes that bypass Pakistan, further enhancing its strategic presence in Afghanistan.

- **Soft Power:**

India's extensive development work in Afghanistan helps bolster its **soft power** in the region, enhancing its image and fostering goodwill among the Afghan people.



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MCQs

1. Consider the following features of Nag Mark 2 missile and mark the correct one:

1. It is anti tank guided missile.
2. It is in the Fire & Forget missile.

- (A) Only 1
(B) Only 2
(C) Both 1 & 2
(D) Neither 1 nor 2



Ans. (C)

2. Which of these is a defining feature of Nag Missile Carrier (NAMICA) Version 2?

- (A) It enables launching of Nag Mark 2 from fighter jets.
(B) It enables launching of Nag Mark 2 from naval ships.
(C) It enables launching the missile from a mobile platform that allows the missile to be launched quickly and efficiently.
(D) None of the above

Ans. (C)

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3. Which of these infrastructure projects is not built by India?

- (A) Garland Road
- (B) Zaranj Delaram Highway
- (C) Parliament House of Afghanistan
- (D) Salma Dam

Ans. (A)

4. Which of these were the reasons for India not recognising Taliban?

1. Extreme interpretation of Islamic law.
2. Oppression of women
3. Their links to terrorist organizations.

- (A) Only 3
- (B) Only 1 & 3
- (C) Only 2 & 3
- (D) All of the above

Ans. (D)

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