

UK to host first official visit of Indian Chief of Defence Staff

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Air Chief Marshal Sir Richard Knighton's welcome of India's Chief of Defence Staff General Anil Chauhan on UK soil is a signal of trust and ambition between the militaries of two global powers.

UK Chief of the Defence Staff (CDS) Air Chief Marshal Sir Richard Knighton will host India's Chief of Defence Staff General Anil Chauhan for a three-day visit starting 19 April. During their talks, the two military commanders will discuss deepening cooperation across training, operations and defence industry partnerships.

Senior UK civil and military leaders will also interact with General Chauhan during his visit. Representatives of the British defence industry will meet him to progress talks on greater defence co-production between the two countries. General Chauhan will also be given a tour of the Royal College of Defence Studies, where he will meet a multinational cohort of students.

This is the first official visit by an Indian CDS to the UK and marks the fifth senior UK-India military engagement this year, following the UK Chief of the Air Staff Air Chief Marshal Harv Smyth's visit to India in March.

Lindy Cameron, British High Commissioner to India, said:

General Chauhan's landmark visit shows the trust and ambition driving the UK-India defence partnership. We are stepping up cooperation to strengthen interoperability, spur innovation and support a free, open and secure Indo-Pacific.

From joint training and defence industry cooperation to strategic dialogue, we are moving faster and closer, because India is a key defence partner for the UK. We will continue to build on this momentum in the months ahead.

Commodore Chris Saunders MBE Royal Navy, Defence Adviser, British High Commission, said:

It is an honour to accompany General Chauhan, Chief of Defence Staff India to the United Kingdom. The visit signals the significant progress we have achieved together across all areas of defence and highlights how much common ground we can share going forward.

The visit will enable an opportunity to further discuss deepening our strong military-to-military engagement, expanding our cooperative training ambitions and exploring how we can develop greater defence industrial collaboration where both UK and India seek to use defence as an 'Engine for Growth' and to support India's route to self-reliance. Exciting times for UK-India defence co-operation!

Further information

- The UK and India launched a 10-year Defence Industrial Roadmap under the Vision 2035 agreement to support growth, strengthen security and contribute to international stability.
- The UK Ministry of Defence has set up a dedicated programme office, Defence Partnership-India (DP-I), to drive bilateral defence collaboration.
- In February 2026, the UK and India signed an agreement for the Indian Air Force to deploy three Qualified Flying Instructors to RAF Valley in the UK, the training base for British fast-jet pilots. Indian officers are embedded as instructors across all three UK service academies.
- In 2025, the UK and India ran their largest-ever maritime exercise, bringing together both nations' Carrier Strike Groups. This included a separate air-defence exercise with fast-jet aircraft from the Royal Navy, Indian Air Force and Indian Navy. This was followed by Exercise Ajeya Warrior in Rajasthan, with 2nd Royal Gurkha Rifles training alongside the 21 Sikh Regiment.

Media

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