

15th MAY 2023

Samudra Shakti Exercise 2023

- **Context:** India and Indonesia recently conducted bilateral naval exercise Samudra Shakti-23.

Key Highlights

- The primary purpose of the Samudra Shakti exercise is to enhance interoperability and mutual cooperation between the naval forces of India and Indonesia.
- By conducting joint exercises and sharing best practices, the navies aim to strengthen their operational capabilities and foster regional peace and stability.
- The indigenously built anti-submarine warfare corvette INS Kavaratti, Dornier Maritime Patrol aircraft and Chetak helicopter took part in this exercise from Indian side.
- The harbor phase of exercise featured key activities like cross deck visits, professional interactions, subject matter expert exchanges, and engaging sports fixtures. These interactions facilitated a deeper understanding and collaboration between the Indian and Indonesian naval personnel.
- During the sea phase, the exercise involved dynamic exercises, including weapon firing, helicopter operations, anti-submarine warfare, air defense exercises, and boarding operations. These exercises enhance the tactical skills and coordination between the participating forces.
- This bilateral exercise signifies the commitment of both India and Indonesia towards maritime security and cooperation in the region.

INS Mormugao

- **Context:** The Indian Navy recently achieved a significant milestone as the guided missile destroyer INS Mormugao successfully conducted its maiden firing of a Brahmos Supersonic cruise missile.

Key Highlights

- The successful Brahmos firing marked a significant achievement for INS Mormugao. The destroyer, equipped with advanced weaponry and sensors, demonstrated its capability to engage targets with precision and effectiveness.
- The successful Brahmos firing by INS Mormugao holds a special place in the Indian Navy's pursuit of self-reliance.
- It represents the country's commitment to enhance its indigenous defense capabilities and reduce dependency on external sources.
- The event symbolizes the Navy's progress towards achieving 'Aatmanirbharta' and highlights its growing firepower to safeguard national interests and maintain maritime security.

About INS Mormugao

- INS Mormugao, measuring 163 meters in length and 17 meters in breadth, is an advanced warship constructed in India.
- With a displacement of 7400 tonnes, its enhanced stealth features and reduced Radar Cross Section (RCS) contribute to its tactical advantage in operations.
- INS Mormugao is equipped with state-of-the-art weapons and sensors, ensuring its combat readiness in various scenarios. The ship boasts Surface to Surface Missiles and Surface to Air Missiles for effective engagement of targets.
- Its Anti-Submarine Warfare capabilities are enhanced through indigenously developed Rocket Launchers, Torpedo Launchers, and ASW helicopters.
- It is also equipped to operate under Nuclear, Biological, and Chemical (NBC) warfare conditions, ensuring its preparedness for any contingency.

UTSAH Portal and PoP Portal

- **Context:** To improve the quality and effectiveness of higher education in India, the University Grants Commission (UGC) has launched two new portals- 'UTSAH' portal and the Professor of Practice (PoP) portal.

Key Highlights

- These portals have been launched with the aim of promoting transparency, access, and collaboration within the higher education sector.
- These initiatives align with the National Education Policy 2020 and its strategic goals.

About UTSAH Portal

- The UTSAH portal is designed to effectively track and support the implementation of the National Education Policy 2020 and its strategic initiatives in Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs).
- It offers an all-encompassing platform that allows stakeholders to obtain comprehensive information regarding UGC's initiatives and efforts towards enhancing the quality of higher education.
- On UTSAH portal, students can explore the 'Student corners' section for important updates, scholarships, and resources.
- Similarly, faculty members can access the 'Faculty corners' section for professional development opportunities, research grants, and teaching resources.

About Professor of Practice (PoP) Portal

- The Professor of Practice (PoP) portal has been launched to bridge the gap between academia and industry by facilitating the hiring of experienced professionals in specific domains.
- Experts can create a detailed profile showcasing their expertise, years of work experience, and other relevant information.
- Institutions and universities can view the details of registered experts on the portal, enabling them to connect and engage with domain experts based on mutual convenience.

16th MAY 2023

Exercise Jal Rahat

- **Context:** The Indian Army's Gajraj Corps, in collaboration with various disaster management groups, recently conducted a joint flood relief drill called 'Exercise Jal Rahat' in Assam.

Key Highlights

- The drill took place at Hagrama Bridge on the Manas River in Assam, aiming to enhance flood relief preparedness ahead of the monsoon season.
- The exercise emphasized coordination among multiple agencies and focused on efficient rescue operations and the utilization of innovative strategies.
- Exercise Jal Rahat aimed to strengthen the preparedness of flood relief efforts.
- Alongside the Indian Army's Gajraj Corps, personnel from Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB), National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), State Disaster Response Force (SDRF), District Disaster Management Authority (DDMA), and police representatives participated in the exercise.
- The exercise like Jal Rahat provides an opportunity for agencies to synchronize their efforts, share best practices, and address any gaps in coordination. The goal is to ensure a well-coordinated and swift response to mitigate the impact of floods and safeguard the affected communities.

Start-ups Exchange Programme

- **Context:** India and Bangladesh have initiated a start-up exchange programme to foster collaboration and partnership between the entrepreneurial communities of both countries.

Key Highlights

- The programme aims to exchange 50 start-ups ideas to explore opportunities, share knowledge, and enhance cooperation in various sectors.
- The exchange programme includes start-ups from sectors such as e-commerce, health, transport and logistics, energy, education, and skill development.
- This collaboration has the potential to foster economic growth, create job opportunities, and drive innovation in both India and Bangladesh.
- The High Commission of India in Bangladesh organized an interactive session in Dhaka for the group of 10 start-ups upon their return from India.

- During their visit, the Bangladeshi start-ups were introduced to India's renowned "Start-up India" initiative. They participated in interactive sessions that covered essential topics such as establishing a start-up, business model creation, role of incubators, marketing strategies, cyber security, artificial intelligence, start-up evaluation, and funding opportunities.
- The framework of the start-up exchange programme was decided by the Prime Ministers of India and Bangladesh during their bilateral summits.

17th MAY 2023

'75/25' Initiative

- **Context:** The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has unveiled the "75/25" initiative, aiming to revolutionize the management and prevention of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) in India.

Key Highlights

- This ambitious program sets a target of providing standard care to all patients suffering with hypertension and diabetes by 2025.
- The "75/25" initiative places NCDs at the forefront of India's healthcare agenda and aims to improve the overall well-being of millions of individuals.
- Alongside this initiative, the launch of the Shashakt Portal and the release of revised operational guidelines for the National Programme for Prevention and Control of Non-Communicable Diseases (NP-NCD) are further bolstering the country's healthcare system.
- To effectively implement the "75/25" initiative, The Government is planning to train 40,000 Primary Health Care Medical Officers through the Shashakt Portal.

Chevalier de la Legion d'honneur

- **Context:** Recently, N. Chandrasekaran, Chairman of Tata Group, was conferred with Chevalier de la Legion d'honneur award for his remarkable contributions in

strengthening the trade relationship between India and France.

About the award

- The Chevalier de la Legion d'honneur is France's highest civilian honor which recognizes outstanding achievements and expertise in various fields.
- The Chevalier de la Legion d'honneur was established by Napoleon Bonaparte in 1802. The prestigious order bears the motto "Honneur et Patrie" (Honour and Fatherland).
- The list of distinguished Indians who have been honored with the award includes JRD Tata, Satyajit Ray, Pandit Ravi Shankar, Zubin Mehta, E Sreedharan, Amitabh Bachchan, Lata Mangeshkar, Shah Rukh Khan, among others.

Mukhyamantri Sikho Kamao Yojana

- **Context:** The Madhya Pradesh Government has given its approval for a new scheme 'Mukhyamantri Sikho Kamao Yojana' (Chief Minister Learn and Earn Scheme), aimed at providing opportunities for unemployed youth in the state.

Key Highlights

- This scheme seeks to equip young individuals with the necessary skills and knowledge to enhance their employability and income potential.
- Under the 'Mukhyamantri Sikho Kamao Yojana,' the government plans to offer training in around 700 different types of works across various sectors. These sectors include engineering, hotel management, tourism, travel, hospital services, ITI, software development, banking, insurance, accounting, chartered accountancy, financial services, industries, and MSME industry.
- Youth who have completed their 12th grade, ITI, graduation, or post-graduation are eligible to enroll in the scheme.
- Participants will receive a monthly stipend based on their educational qualifications. Those who have passed Class 12th will be given Rs 8000 per month,

while ITI pass-outs will receive Rs 8,500 per month. Similarly, individuals with a diploma or higher degree will receive Rs 9,000 and Rs 10,000 per month, respectively.

18th MAY 2023

Operation Karuna

- **Context:** India has launched Operation Karuna, a mission aimed at providing assistance to Myanmar following the devastation caused by Cyclone Mocha.

Key Highlights

- In a display of swift action and solidarity, three Indian Navy ships loaded with crucial relief material reached Yangon, Myanmar. They carried emergency food items, tents, essential medicines, water pumps, portable generators, clothes, and sanitary and hygiene items.
- Operation Karuna showcases the enduring bond between India and Myanmar during times of crisis, and demonstrates India's commitment to alleviating the suffering of the affected population.
- The cyclone's impact reverberated beyond Myanmar's borders, causing severe destruction in Bangladesh. Cox's Bazar, home to one million Rohingya refugees from Myanmar, witnessed the devastation of shelters within the world's largest refugee camp.
- Despite the readiness of relief agencies to provide food and essential supplies, the approval of the military regime in Myanmar posed challenges. While relief agencies stand prepared to offer assistance, the approval process had delayed the distribution of aid.

Shipbuilding Financial Assistance (SBFA)

- **Context:** To promote maritime sector, India has taken a significant step by providing Shipbuilding Financial Assistance (SBFA).

Key Highlights

- The scheme aims to provide subsidies for vessels used in offshore wind energy projects and undersea cable laying, with the objective of making India-made ships competitive with those manufactured in other countries.
- Under the Shipbuilding Financial Assistance (SBFA), Indian Shipyards can receive financial assistance of up to 20% of the Contract Price or the Fair Price (whichever is lower) for each specialized vessel they build.
- A total of 21 shipyards have already registered under the scheme, including renowned companies such as L&T Shipbuilding Ltd, Cochin Shipyard Ltd, Titagarh Wagons Ltd, and Goa Shipyard Ltd.
- Apart from wind energy vessels, the scheme also extends its support to other types of vessels. This includes liquefied natural gas (LNG) and liquefied petroleum gas carrying vessels, chemical tankers, and floating or submersible drilling or production platforms.
- The latest development holds great significance in light of the increasing assessment of offshore wind energy potential along the Indian coastline.

19th MAY 2023

RBI withdraws Rs. 2,000 denomination notes

- **Context:** The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has recently taken a significant step by withdrawing the Rs 2000 banknotes from circulation.

Key highlights

- The RBI has decided to withdraw Rs.2,000 notes as it has fulfilled the currency requirement objective and the availability of alternative denominations.
- Initially introduced to meet the urgent need for currency after the demonetization exercise in 2016, the printing of these notes ceased in 2018-19 as the objective was achieved and other denominations became adequately available.

- To facilitate the exchange and deposit of Rs 2000 banknotes, individuals are advised to approach bank branches. There is a limit of Rs 20,000 for exchanging these notes at a time, applicable to both account holders and non-account holders.
- Despite the withdrawal, the Rs 2000 banknotes will retain their legal tender status. Individuals can continue to use them for transactions and receive them in payments.
- RBI encourages people to deposit or exchange these notes at bank branches on or before September 30, 2023.

■ DO YOU KNOW:

As of March 31, 2023, the total value of Rs 2000 notes in circulation stands at Rs 3.62 lakh crore, constituting 10.8% of the overall notes in circulation.

Article 239AA of Constitution of India

- **Context:** The recent Supreme Court ruling that interpreted Article 239AA which is related to Delhi Government, has been nullified by an ordinance promulgated by the President of India.

About Article 239AA

- Article 239AA of the Constitution holds significant importance in defining the special status and governance structure of Delhi Government.
- Article 239AA was inserted into the Constitution by the 69th Amendment Act in 1991. It conferred special status on Delhi, following the recommendations of the S. Balakrishnan Committee.
- The provision grants Delhi an administrator and a Legislative Assembly, along with specific powers and limitations.
- According to Article 239AA, the Legislative Assembly of Delhi has the power to make laws on the matters related to State List or Concurrent List, excluding police, public order, and land.
- Article 239AA states that in case of a difference of opinion between the Lieutenant Governor (LG) and the ministers, the matter shall be referred to the

President for a decision. This provision ensures that disputes are resolved through a proper constitutional process, with the ultimate decision lying with the President.

Supreme Court's Recent Ruling

- On May 11, a unanimous ruling by a five-judge Bench of the Supreme Court addressed the power tussle between the Delhi government and the Centre. The ruling reiterated the federal model established by Article 239AA, outlining the Delhi Government has upper hand in administration of NCTD.

Supreme Court's 2018 Ruling

- The Constitution Bench ruling in 2018 emphasized that although Delhi cannot be granted the status of a state, the concept of federalism applies to it.
- The ruling recognized the importance of cooperative federalism in the governance of Delhi, highlighting the unique nature of the city's administration.

20th MAY 2023

INS Vaghsheer

- **Context:** Indian Navy has commenced sea trials for INS Vaghsheer, the sixth Scorpene Submarine, developed under Project-75.

Key Highlights

- Vaghsheer, the sixth submarine of the Kalvari class under Project-75, initiated its sea trials i.e. a crucial step brings the submarine closer to its delivery to the Indian Navy
- The sea trials are a comprehensive assessment of the submarine's systems, including propulsion, weapons, and sensors, ensuring their functionality and effectiveness.

Interesting Fact

INS Vaghsheer derives its name from the Sand Fish, a deadly predator inhabiting the depths of the Indian Ocean.

- Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited (MDL) has been playing a significant role in the nation's submarine-building program, and the launch of Vaghsheer marks another successful achievement for them
- Equipped with state-of-the-art technology, the Scorpene Submarine boasts exceptional stealth features.
- Advanced acoustic absorption techniques, low radiated noise levels, a hydro-dynamically optimized shape, and the ability to launch precision-guided weapons grant the submarine unparalleled invulnerability.

MH60R Helicopter

- **Context:** The Indian Navy recently achieved a significant milestone with its newest helicopter, the MH-60R, also known as Romeo, successfully carried out its maiden landing and take-off from INS Kolkata, an indigenously designed and constructed destroyer.

Key Highlights

- The acquisition of the MH-60R helicopters is part of the Indian Navy's strategy to modernize its ageing naval helicopter fleet.
- The MH-60R helicopters offer advanced features and cutting-edge technologies that will enhance the navy's effectiveness in maritime operations.
- These helicopters significantly enhance the navy's ability to counter underwater threats, monitor maritime activities, and conduct surveillance operations.
- The MH-60R's versatility and advanced systems make it a valuable asset in the naval fleet.
- While the navy has received three MH-60R helicopters, there are 21 more yet to be delivered.
- The navy's ongoing partnership with Lockheed Martin-Sikorsky will continue to bolster its capabilities and ensure the successful delivery of the remaining helicopters.

World Health Statistics 2023

- **Context:** The World Health Organization (WHO) has released a World Health Statistics 2023 report which shows true magnitude of COVID-19's toll on human lives and well-being.

Key Highlights

- The COVID-19 pandemic has caused unprecedented devastation worldwide, leading to millions of lives lost and significant disruptions to global health.
- According to the WHO, the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in over 20 million deaths. At the end of 2021, it is estimated that 14.9 million excess deaths can be attributed to the pandemic.
- The report highlights a concerning trend of stalled progress in key health indicators since 2015.
- This stagnation poses a formidable challenge to the timely attainment of the United Nations-mandated Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030. The SDGs, consisting of 17 goals, aim to address poverty, peace, the environment, and human rights.
- The age group of 55-64 years old has witnessed the highest number of Years of Life Lost (YLL) globally, with over 90 million years of life lost.
- Among the pressing health burdens of our time, non-communicable diseases (NCDs) take center stage. The report reveals that NCDs have been the primary cause of annual deaths, increasing from 61% in 2000 to nearly 75% in 2019.
- It highlights the urgency of addressing the burden of NCDs and accelerating progress in key health indicators. Without swift and decisive action, the goal of reducing NCD mortality and achieving SDG targets by 2030 remains uncertain.

21st MAY 2023

National Capital Civil Service Authority

- **Context:** In a significant move towards effective governance, the National Capital Civil Service Authority has been established through the Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi (Amendment) Ordinance, 2023.

Key Highlights

- The National Capital Civil Service Authority has been set up to ensure administrative efficiency and accountability within the civil service.

- It will play a crucial role in the transfer and disciplinary proceedings of Group-A officers.
- The authority is chaired by the Chief Minister of the Government of the National Capital Territory of Delhi. The two other members are Chief Secretary and the Principal Home Secretary.
- Decisions within the authority are made through a majority vote of the members present and voting. This democratic approach ensures a fair and inclusive decision-making process.
- The ordinance grants the central government the authority to establish rules regarding the tenure, salaries, allowances, powers, and duties of officers. This enables the central government to define the framework within which the National Capital Civil Service Authority operates, ensuring alignment with national interests.

Sagar Parikrama Yatra Phase-V

- **Context:** The Sagar Parikrama Yatra Phase-V, an ambitious initiative by the Government of India, was recently launched by Union Minister Parshottam Rupala.

Key Highlights

- This phase aims to address the challenges faced by fishermen and other stakeholders, promoting their economic upliftment through various government schemes.
- The inauguration of the Sagar Parikrama Yatra Phase-V took place in Karanja, a coastal town situated in Maharashtra's Raigad district.
- The Sagar Parikrama Yatra Phase-V encompasses a comprehensive route, covering several coastal regions. This extensive exploration aims to foster connectivity and highlight the significance of these regions in trade, agriculture, and education.
- With the launch of Phase-V, the Sagar Parikrama program has now completed four phases. This unprecedented initiative has successfully covered 19 locations across Gujarat, Daman & Diu, Maharashtra, and Karnataka.

G-7 Hiroshima Summit

- **Context:** The Group of Seven (G7) countries met in Hiroshima, Japan for the annual summit on May 19-21, 2023.

Key Highlights

- Due to the recent banking turmoil in the US and Europe, the leaders committed to maintaining financial stability and the resilience of the global financial system.
- G7 countries will accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda (AAAA).
- The G7 Summit in Hiroshima not only addressed global issues but also paid homage to the victims of the atomic bombings, emphasizing the importance of nuclear disarmament and the prevention of future nuclear catastrophes.
- Hiroshima, this year's venue for the G7 Summit holds historical significance as it was the first city to be hit by a nuclear weapon on August 6, 1945, during World War II.
- The bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki brought an immediate end to the war. The estimated death toll varies from 110,000 to 210,000.

- The devastation experienced by these cities has been a compelling argument against the use of nuclear weapons and for nuclear disarmament.
- This year, India along with Poland and Spain were invited to attend G7 meeting as guest countries.

About G7

- The Group of Seven (G7) composed of Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom, and the United States.
- The G7 Summit brings together leaders from seven of the world's most powerful democracies to discuss pressing global issues.
- The G7 focuses on a wide range of topics, including economic policy, security, climate change, energy, and gender equality.
- The presidency of the G7 summit rotates among its member nations, allowing each country the opportunity to host the event. This year, Japan assumes the role of the host, overseeing the summit's proceedings.
- In addition to the member nations, representatives from the European Union also participate in the summit, fostering collaboration between the G7 and the EU.

