**1 Defence**

**1.1 Commissioning of INS Androth**

The commissioning of **INS *Androth*** is a significant development for the Indian Navy and India's defense sector, particularly in the context of the **Anti-Submarine Warfare Shallow Water Craft (ASW-SWC)** program. This event highlights India's progress toward achieving **'Aatmanirbhar Bharat'** (self-reliant India) in maritime defense.

**Key Points for UPSC Prelims (Defence)**

* **INS *Androth*** is the **second** ship of the **Arnala-class** of Anti-Submarine Warfare Shallow Water Crafts (ASW-SWC). The first ship in this class was INS *Arnala*, commissioned earlier. A total of 16 such ships are planned, with eight being built by **Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers (GRSE)** and the other eight by Cochin Shipyard Limited.
* The ship was built by **Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers (GRSE)** in Kolkata, a public sector shipyard.
* Its commissioning ceremony took place at the Naval Dockyard in **Visakhapatnam**.
* **Purpose:** The ASW-SWCs are designed to replace the aging fleet of *Abhay*-class corvettes. Their primary role is to conduct **anti-submarine operations** in coastal and shallow waters (littorals). They are equipped with advanced sonar systems, anti-submarine rockets, and lightweight torpedoes to detect, track, and neutralize underwater threats.
* **Indigenous Content:** The ship has over **80% indigenous content**, a testament to India's growing domestic defense manufacturing capabilities. This includes indigenously developed sonar systems and other onboard technology.
* **Versatility:** Beyond its primary anti-submarine role, INS *Androth* is also capable of other missions, including **maritime surveillance, search and rescue, and coastal defense**.
* **Name:** The ship is named after **Androth Island**, the largest island in the Lakshadweep archipelago, which holds historical and strategic significance for India.
* **Modernisation Drive:** The commissioning of INS *Androth* is part of a broader, balanced modernization drive of the Indian Navy, which has seen the recent induction of other warships like *Arnala*, *Nistar*, *Udaygiri*, and *Nilgiri*.

**1.2** **Comprehensive Note on Maritime Drills and Defence**

The provided image and notes detail a joint maritime exercise, **NATPOLREX-X**, conducted by the Indian Coast Guard and the Indian Navy. This exercise is specifically designed to address **marine oil spill emergencies** and enhance India's preparedness for such disasters. The drill highlights the crucial, and often collaborative, roles of India's maritime security agencies.

**Key Points for UPSC Prelims (Defence & Disaster Management)**

* **NATPOLREX-X (National Pollution Response Exercise)**: This is the tenth edition of the national-level exercise. It is a major drill focused on marine pollution response.
* **Participating Agencies**: The exercise is a joint effort primarily between the **Indian Coast Guard** and the **Indian Navy**. The Indian Coast Guard is typically the nodal agency for marine oil spill emergencies in Indian waters.
* **Purpose of the Drill**:
  + To test and validate the effectiveness of the **National Oil Spill Disaster Contingency Plan (NOSDCP)**.
  + To enhance the preparedness and coordination of various agencies in responding to marine oil spills.
  + To strengthen India's overall capacity for marine pollution control.
* **Nodal Agency**: The **Indian Coast Guard** is the designated nodal agency for oil spill response in the seas surrounding India. This responsibility is a key part of its mandate, which also includes search and rescue, maritime law enforcement, and coastal surveillance.
* **Location**: The exercise was conducted off the **Chennai coast**. This location is strategically important due to its proximity to major shipping lanes and oil terminals in the Bay of Bengal.
* **Disaster Management Context**: While the exercise has a defence component, its primary focus is on **disaster management** related to marine oil spills. This is a critical area of concern, as oil spills can have devastating environmental and economic consequences. The joint nature of the drill underscores the inter-agency cooperation required for effective disaster response.

**1.3 Indian Army and Civil-Military Cooperation**

The article focuses on a unique initiative by the Indian Army in Uttarakhand, which showcases its evolving role beyond conventional defense to include sustainable development and rural upliftment. This project is part of **Operation Sadbhavana** and is aligned with the government's **Vibrant Villages Programme**. 🏕️

**Key Points for UPSC Prelims (Defence, Internal Security)**

* **Operation Sadbhavana**: This is a major "goodwill" initiative by the Indian Army, launched in 1998, to help people in remote areas like Jammu and Kashmir, Ladakh, and parts of the Northeast. Its goal is to "Win the Hearts and Minds" (WHAM) of the local population by providing development and welfare projects.
* **Indian Army's Evolving Role**: The inauguration of a tent-based homestay in Garbyang, Uttarakhand, demonstrates how the Indian Army is actively involved in promoting **sustainable tourism** and **enhancing rural livelihoods** in border areas. The Army develops these projects but plans to hand them over to the local community for independent operation to ensure they generate revenue for villagers.
* **Vibrant Villages Programme (VVP)**: The Army's initiative aligns with the government's VVP, a centrally sponsored scheme.
  + The VVP aims for the comprehensive development of select villages along the **northern border** (specifically in Arunachal Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Sikkim, Uttarakhand, and Ladakh).
  + The objective is to provide sufficient incentives for people to stay in their native villages, thereby **reversing outmigration** from border areas. This is seen as a way to improve border security.
  + VVP-II is a Central Sector Scheme with 100% funding from the Union Government, which covers a wider range of international land borders.
* **Areas of Focus**: Under Operation Sadbhavana and VVP, the Indian Army undertakes various welfare activities including education (Army Goodwill Schools), healthcare (medical camps), infrastructure development (roads, water supply), and women's empowerment (vocational training centers).
* **Strategic Significance**: These initiatives are crucial for national integration and for strengthening the relationship between the armed forces and the civilian population, which is especially important in areas with past insurgency or cross-border terrorism.