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1. Indian Navy conducts Exercise Poorvi Lehar (XPOL) off the East Coast (April 23, 2024)

On April 20, 2024, the Indian Navy conducted Exercise Poorvi Lehar (XPOL) 2024 on the East Coast to assess its preparedness for maritime security challenges.

An Overview of the News

- Vice Admiral Rajesh Pendharkar, Flag Officer-Commanding-in-Chief (FOC-in-C) of the Eastern Naval Command (ENC) headquartered in Vishakapatnam, Andhra Pradesh, oversaw the exercise.
- **XPOL comprised multiple phases:**
 - Tactical Phase: Involving combat training in realistic scenarios.
 - Weapon Phase: Conducting various firings successfully.
- The exercise saw active participation from ships, submarines, aircraft, and special forces.
- Assets from the Indian Air Force (IAF), Andaman and Nicobar Command, Eastern Naval Command, and Coast Guard participated, showcasing high interoperability among the services.
- Notably, aircraft operated from various locations to ensure continuous Maritime Domain Awareness.

About the Indian Navy:

- Dinesh Kumar Tripathi was appointed as the 26th Chief of the Naval Staff by the Government of India, taking charge on 30 April.
- Indian Navy Day is celebrated every year on 4 December.
 - Headquarters - **New Delhi, Delhi**
 - Established-**1950**

2. Siachen Day - 13 April (April 13, 2024)

Siachen Day is annually observed by the Indian Army on 13 April.

An Overview of the News

- It commemorates Operation Meghdoot, initiated on 13 April 1984.
- The day pays tribute to the courage and sacrifice of Indian Army soldiers stationed at the Siachen Glacier.

Location and Significance:

- Siachen Glacier, situated in the eastern Karakoram range in the Himalayas, forms part of the Union Territory (UT) Ladakh.
- It is recognized as the highest and coldest battlefield in the world.
- The area symbolizes India's strategic presence and territorial integrity in the region.

Operation Meghdoot:

- Operation Meghdoot was a significant military endeavor launched by India.
- Objective: Secure control of the entire Siachen Glacier, located in Jammu and Kashmir (now part of northern Ladakh).
- It marked India's proactive stance in response to escalating activities by Pakistan in the Ladakh region.
- The operation was pivotal in gaining Indian control over the entire Siachen Glacier.

Role of Indian Air Force (IAF):

- Integral to Operation Meghdoot was the participation of the Indian Air Force (IAF).
- Airlifting Troops: IAF helicopters played a crucial role in transporting Indian Army soldiers to the Siachen region.
- Support and Logistics: IAF provided essential support and logistics during the operation, facilitating troop deployment and sustenance in the challenging terrain.

3. India Air Force Readies for 'Gagan Shakti-2024': Ten-Day Exercise at Pokhran (April 2, 2024)

On April 1, 2024, the exercise started at the field firing range in Pokhran, Rajasthan.

An Overview of the News

- Over ten thousand Air Force personnel are expected to participate in this exercise.
- The exercise, held every five years, involves both the Western and Northern fronts, with fighter planes and helicopters engaged in simulated attacks on mock targets at the Pokhran Field Firing Range in Rajasthan.

Logistical Support by the Indian Army:

- An operational rail deployment that moved almost 10,000 IAF personnel across the country was made possible by the logistical support that the Indian Army provided prior to 'Gagan Shakti 2024'.
- Strategic rail transport planning, provision of 'Joint Express' trains with required facilities, and network assurance via the Movement Control Organization (MCO) are all part of the Army's engagement.

- To enhance operational capabilities, two ammunition trains are being sent to supply exercise zones with ammunition from depots.

Recap of 'Gagan Shakti-2018' Exercise:

- More than 11,000 sorties were conducted in the 2018 version, which tested the readiness for fast deployment from the western to the eastern regions in less than 48 hours.

'Tarang Shakti', the Future Mega Exercise:

- The IAF will organize "Tarang Shakti," an international exercise involving 12 air forces from around the world, after "Gagan Shakti-2024."

'Tarang Shakti's' Goals:

- The objectives of "Tarang Shakti" are to improve interoperability, exchange best practices, and promote military cooperation among member countries.
- With the participation of AWACS, transport, fighter, helicopter, and unmanned systems, Tarang Shakti is expected to be the biggest international air exercise conducted in India.

4. Indian Navy hosts CHAKRAVAT HADR exercise with 8 countries (Oct. 10, 2023)

The annual humanitarian assistance and disaster relief exercise 'Chakrawat' began in Goa on October 9, 2023. It is a three-day event organized by the Indian Navy.

An Overview of the News

- The 'CHAKRAVAT' 9 exercise involves the participation of the three armed forces, paramilitary forces and several disaster response organizations.
- The annual Joint Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) exercise CHAKRAVAT was initiated as a result of the Prime Minister's directive during the Joint Commanders' Conference in 2015.
- CHAKRAVAT is an annual joint HADR exercise involving the participation of all three services (Army, Navy, Air Force), paramilitary forces, disaster response organizations, NGOs, academic institutions and international organizations.
- In the 2023 edition, eight countries from the Indian Ocean region are also participating, with the aim of coordinating efforts at the national level.

Objective:

- The primary goal of the exercise is to develop collective and coordinated response mechanisms to deal with humanitarian crises and natural disasters.
- Given the increasing vulnerability of the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) to natural disasters due to climate change, the role of the Indian Navy in Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) operations is critical.

Challenges arising from climate change:

- Climate change has increased the risk of natural disasters in the IOR, and coastal states in the region have limited capacity to respond effectively.
- The Indian Armed Forces aims to be the 'first responder' in the region, and a whole-of-government approach is being promoted to enhance preparedness and response.

Participating Agencies:

- Apart from the three armed services, various national agencies such as the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), and others participate in the exercise.
- This collaborative effort ensures a comprehensive response to disaster situations.

Joint Partnership:

- The insignia of this year's exercise represents the crests and flags of all participating agencies and countries, emphasizing the importance of joint and integrated action in HADR efforts.

Events during practice:

- The three-day exercise includes a seminar, a table-top exercise and a multi-agency capacity demonstration.
- Topics discussed at the seminar included climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction, disaster response in IOR, and NGO collaboration in disaster reduction and response.
- An industrial showcase displays HADR equipment, and a multi-agency capability display displays rescue and relief exercises with lessons learned.

5. IAF Unveils New Flag on 91st Foundation Day (Oct. 9, 2023)

Chief of the Air Staff Air Chief Marshal VR Chaudhari unveiled the new flag of the Indian Air Force during the 91st Air Force Day Parade in Prayagraj on October 8, 2023.

An Overview of the News

- The theme of the 91st Air Force Day is '**IAF - Airpower Beyond Boundaries**'.

Features of the new flag:

- The new flag features the national emblem Ashoka symbol prominently on the fly side, at the top right corner, just above the Air Force crest.
- '**Satyamev Jayate**' is inscribed in the Devanagari script below the **Ashoka symbol**.
- The Himalayan Garuda with outstretched wings symbolizes the combat capabilities of the Indian Air Force.

- There is a light blue circle around the Himalayan Garuda with 'Indian Air Force' written on it.
- The motto of the Indian Air Force, '**Nabh Sprisham Deeptam**', is inscribed in golden Devanagari letters below the Garuda, signifying the aspiration to **"To touch the sky with splendour"**.

Retirement of the Old Flag:

- During the Air Force Day Parade, the 72-year-old flag was lowered with full respect.
- The retired flag will be preserved in a museum as a historical artifact.

Historical Background of Indian Air Force:

- The Indian Air Force was established on October 8, 1932, and its first flight took place on April 1, 1933.
- Subroto Mukherjee, one of the founding members, is recognized as the "Father of the Indian Air Force" and became the first Chief of the Air Staff on April 1, 1954 after India gained independence.
- The headquarters of the Indian Air Force is located in Delhi.
- Before India's independence, the force was known as the Royal Indian Air Force and was later renamed the Indian Air Force.
- The Indian Air Force has played a significant role in various wars, including the Kargil conflict in 1947, 1948, 1965, 1971 and 1999.

6. All the three armies of India will participate in the Bastille Day Parade of France (July 12, 2023)

France celebrates Bastille Day, also known as Fête Nationale Française, on 14 July each year.

An Overview of the News

- The event commemorates the historic demolition of the **Bastille in 1789 during the French Revolution**.
- **In 2023, France and India are celebrating 25 years of their strategic partnership.**
- As part of the celebrations, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been invited as the guest of honor at the Bastille Day parade in France.
- All the three branches of the Indian Armed Forces will participate in the Bastille Day parade along with their French counterparts. This highlights the growing military cooperation between the two countries.

About Bastille Day Parade

- Captain Aman Jagtap will lead the 77 marching personnel and 38 band members of the Indian Army contingent participating in the Bastille Day Parade.
- Commander Vrat Baghel will lead the Indian Navy contingent, while Squadron Leader Sindhu Reddy will lead the Indian Air Force contingent.
- The contingent representing India is from the Punjab Regiment, one of the oldest regiments of the Indian Army.
- He earned the Battle Honors '**Loose**' and '**France and Flanders**' when he took part in an offensive near Neuve Chapelle in September 1915. In World War II, he earned **16 battle honors and 14 theater honors**.
- The Rajputana Rifles Regimental Band is accompanied by a contingent of the Punjab Regiment, which is the most senior rifle regiment in the Indian Army. Prior to India's independence, the regiment had received six Victoria Crosses. The regiment's band was established in 1920 at Nasirabad, Rajasthan.

7. Indian Coast Guard conducts Coastal Security Exercise 'Sagar Kavach' (April 27, 2023)

Coast Guard District Headquarters Haldia, under the aegis of **Headquarters Coast Guard Region (NE)** conducted the joint Coastal Security **Exercise named "Sagar Kavach"**, from **25-26 April 23 along the coast of West Bengal**.

An overview of the news

- The stakeholders who participated in the exercise alongwith Indian Coast Guard included **Indian Navy, BSF, Marine Police, West Bengal Police, CISF, Forest Dept., Fisheries Dept., Customs, Haldia Dock Complex, MMD** and various intelligence agencies.
- **Coast Guard, Indian Navy ships and aircraft, BSF patrol boats, Marine Police, Customs and CISF** were deployed in the two-day exercise.
- The efficacy of men and materials was tested for vigilance in preventing any intrusion into our coastal areas.

Purpose of the Exercise

- To assess maritime threats in the current **geo-political situation and validate existing Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)** of all stakeholders.
- Strengthening of security system along the **coast of West Bengal**.
- To examine the effectiveness of layered security arrangements such as **air-surveillance, deep sea patrolling by large ships of the Coast Guard and Navy and patrolling by boats of Coast Guard air cushion ships, Marine Police, CISF, Customs and BSF**.

8. Air Force Commanders' Conference (April 21, 2023)

The **Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) General Anil Chauhan** on 20th April attended the **Indian Air Force Commanders' Conference at Air Headquarters (Vayu Bhavan)** in New Delhi.

An overview of the news

- The theme of this year's three-day conference, which began on April 19, is '**Beyond Boundaries: Robust Foundations**'.
- Held every year, this conference discusses the **progress made in the past year and for the future**.
- The CDS highlighted the need to create a clear path towards fleet maintenance while taking steps towards increasing indigenization.
- He also discussed the modalities for increasing the **integration between the three services** and the benefits that would accrue from it.

Chief of Defence Staff - **General Anil Chauhan**

Chief of Indian Air Force - **V. R. Chaudhari**

Chief of Indian Army - **General Manoj Pande**

Chief of Indian Navy - **Admiral R Hari Kumar**

9. PM Narendra Modi inaugurated Asia's biggest air show Aero India 2023 in Bengaluru (Feb. 13, 2023)

Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** inaugurated the **14th edition of Aero India show** in **Bengaluru** on 13 February.

An overview of the news

- The 14th edition of Aero India 2023 is being organised by the **Indian Department of Defense Production** from February 13 to 17 at the **Yelahanka Air Force Station in Bengaluru, Karnataka**.
- The theme of the five-day event is '**The Runway to a Billion Opportunities**'.
- The **main objective** of the event is to promote indigenous production and exports of aerial platforms and attract foreign investment.
- **98 countries** are participating in the event and MoUs worth **Rs 75,000 crore** are expected to be signed during the event.
- Defence Ministers' Conference, CEOs' Round Table, Brainstorm Startup Event, India and Karnataka Pavilion and an Air Show are the highlights of the event.

- In the India Pavilion section, **115 Indian companies** will display **227 products** made in India.
- **LCA Tejas Mark 1** is the main attraction of these products.
- Made in India **Tejas Light Combat Aircraft**, Advanced Light Helicopter Dhruv Mark III and IV, Light Combat Helicopter Prachanda participating in HAL's HTT 40 Trainer Air Show.

Significance of Aero India 2023

- The event will promote the export of indigenous air platforms - Light Combat Aircraft (LCA)-Tejas, HTT-40, Dornier Light Utility Helicopter (LUH), Light Combat Helicopter (LCH) and Advanced Light Helicopter (ALH).
- The event will help **integrate domestic MSMEs and start-ups** into the global supply chain.
- It will attract foreign investment including partnership for **co-development and co-production**.
- This event will make a significant contribution to the development of the aerospace and aviation sector.

10. Air Marshal AP Singh will be the new Vice Chief of the Air Force (Jan. 31, 2023)

Air Marshal Amanpreet Singh has been appointed as the **new Vice Chief of the Air Staff**.

An overview of the news

- He will **replace Air Marshal Sandeep Singh**.
- Air Marshal AP Singh is currently serving as the Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Central Air Command, Prayagraj.
- Air Marshal AP Singh was commissioned into the fighter stream of the Indian Air Force on 21 December 1984.

Achievements/Services

- He has served as Project Director (Flight Test) at National Flight Test Centre.
- Air Marshal AP Singh has also headed the 'MiG 29 Upgrade Project Management Team' in Moscow, Russia.
- He has also served as the Air Defense Commander in the South Western Air Command.

Indian Air Force

- It was established on 8 October 1932. It comes **under the Union Ministry of Defence.**
- The President of India is the Supreme Commander of the Air Force.
- Every year **October 8** is celebrated as **Air Force Day.**
- **Chief of the Air Staff: Air Chief Marshal Vivek Ram Choudhary**

Chiefs of other Services/Paramilitary Forces

- Army Chief - General Manoj Pandey
- Navy Chief – Admiral R Hari Kumar
- **Chief of Defense Staff (CDS) - Lt Gen Anil Chauhan**
- Indian Coast Guard Director General - Director General Virender Singh Pathania
- Border Security Force (BSF) Director General – Sujoy Lal Thousen
- Sashastra Seema Bal Director General - Anish Dayal Singh