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1. India begins cooperation with Bahrain-based Combined Maritime Forces (Aug. 9, 2022)

India began cooperation with Bahrain-based Combined Maritime Forces (CMF)

Background

- In April 2022, during the India-US 2+2 talks, India announced that it would join the CMF as an associate partner to strengthen cooperation in regional security in the western Indian Ocean.
- In July 2022, India formally commenced cooperation with the Joint Maritime Force (CMF), a multilateral partnership based in Bahrain.

What are Combined Maritime Forces (CMF)?

- The CMF is a multinational naval partnership to promote security, stability and prosperity in the approximately 3.2 million square miles of international waters, which include some of the world's most important shipping lanes.
- The Group of 34 Nations is commanded by a Vice Admiral of the US Navy, who also serves as Commander US Naval Forces Centcom and US Fifth Fleet.
- All three commands are co-located in US Naval Support Activity Bahrain. Pakistan is a full member of the CMF.
- India is the 35th member of this group.
- **It consists of four task forces -**

1. CTF 150 (maritime security and counter-terrorism)
2. CTF 151 (counter-piracy)
3. CTF 152 (Arabian Gulf security and cooperation)
4. CTF 153 (Maritime security in the Red Sea & Gulf of Aden)

Significance of CMF

- Curb illegal fishing
- Counter-piracy
- Counter-terrorism
- Protection of trade routes

About Bahrain

- Prime Minister - Salman ibn Hamad Al Khalifah

- Capital - Manama
- Official Language - Arabic
- Official Religion - Islam
- Currency - Bahraini Dinars

2. Indian army launches “him- drone-a-thon” (Aug. 8, 2022)

Indian Army in collaboration with Drone Federation of India has launched 'Him Drone-a-thon' program on 8 Aug 22.

What is the 'Him Drone-a-thon' programme?

- It is a pan-India continuous interaction between all stakeholders including industry, academia, software developers and drone product manufacturers.
- It will be conducted in different phases with quantitative parameters (like height, weight, range, stability etc.), which will be progressively enhanced based on the demonstrated abilities.
- The wide range of activities planned under this include interactions and ideas among users, development agencies, academicians etc., seeking industry feedback, visits to operational locations by development agencies.

Development in the following categories are included under this programme

- Logistics/ Load carrying Drone in High Altitude Areas
- Autonomous Surveillance/ Search & Rescue Drone
- Micro/ Nano Drones for Fighting in Built Up Areas

What is a drone?

- Drones are also known as unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) or unmanned aircraft.
- A drone is a flying robot that can be controlled remotely or can fly independently using software-controlled flight technology in its embedded systems.
- It works in conjunction with onboard sensors and a global positioning system (GPS).
- Drones first came to the market in the 1990 and were developed by the military.
- Drones can be used for surveillance, situational analysis, crime control, VVIP security, disaster management, etc.
- It offers benefits to almost every sector of the economy, including national defence, agriculture, law enforcement, and mapping, among others.
- The Central Government has approved the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme of Drones and Drone Components.

3. US Navy ship docks in India for the first time for repairs (Aug. 8, 2022)

American Naval Ship Charles Drew arrived in India for the first time on 7 August for repairs and maintenance at L&T Kattupalli Shipyard at Ennore near Chennai.

Important facts

- This will be the first time that a US Navy ship is being repaired at an Indian shipyard.
- India had proposed during the 2+2 dialogue in April that the US Navy could leverage the services and expertise of the Indian shipyard.
- The repair of US Navy ships at the Indian shipyard has been enabled due to the Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA) in 2016.
- LEMOA facilitates the exchange of goods and munitions between the two navies.
- The USNS Charles Drew will be at Kattupalli shipyard for 11 days and undergo repairs in various areas.
- It is a new dimension to the fast expanding Indo-US strategic partnership.

Major Shipyards in India

- Cochin Shipyard Limited - Cochin/Kochi - Kerala
- Hindustan Shipyard Limited - Visakhapatnam - Andhra Pradesh
- Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers - Kolkata - West Bengal
- Goa Shipyard Limited - Goa - Goa
- L&T Shipbuilding Limited - Hazira - Gujarat
- ABG Shipyard Limited - Mumbai - Maharashtra

Largest Shipyard in India and the world

- Cochin Shipyard is the largest shipyard in India.
- In terms of revenue, the largest revenue generated by Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers is ₹1,658.79 crore.
- INS Vikrant, India's first indigenous aircraft carrier is being built by Cochin Shipyard.
- Hyundai Heavy Industries in Ulsan, South Korea is the largest dockyard in the world.
- Seawise Giant is the largest ship ever built in history. It was made in Japan by Sumitomo Heavy Industries.
- INS Vikramaditya is India's largest aircraft carrier and warship.

4. Indian Navy's All Woman Aircrew Creates History (Aug. 5, 2022)

5 officers of INAS 314 of the Indian Navy based at Naval Air Enclave, Porbandar created history by completing the first all-female independent maritime reconnaissance and surveillance mission in the North Arabian Sea on 3 Aug 2022 aboard a Dornier 228 aircraft.

Important facts

- The mission was carried out by five officers of Indian Naval Air Squadron (INAS) 314 based at Naval Air Enclave in Porbandar, Gujarat.
- The aircraft was captained by the Mission Commander, Lt Cdr Aanchal Sharma.
- His team consisted of Pilots Lt Shivangi and Lt Apoorva Geete and Tactical and Censor Officer Lt Pooja Panda and SLT Pooja Shekhawat.
- The ground training and extensive mission briefings were provided to the women officers ahead of this historic flight.
- This will pave the way for women officers in the aviation cadre to assume more responsibility and aspire for more challenging roles.
- It is a pioneering initiative in women empowerment which includes induction of women pilots, selection of women air operations officers in the helicopter stream and piloting a women's sailing expedition around the world in 2018.

Indian Naval Air Squadron 314

- The sixth Dornier aircraft squadron was commissioned on 29 November 2019 at a ceremony held at Naval Air Enclave, Porbandar.
- It marks another milestone in efforts towards enhancing maritime security and surveillance footprint in the North Arabian Sea.
- It is a frontline naval air squadron that operates the state-of-the-art Dornier 228 maritime reconnaissance aircraft.
- The squadron is commanded by Commander SK Goel, a qualified Navigation Instructor.

5. DRDO successfully test-fires indigenously developed laser-guided Anti-Tank Guided Missiles (Aug. 5, 2022)

India on 4 August successfully test fired the indigenously developed laser-guided anti-tank guided missiles (ATGM) at Ahmednagar in Maharashtra.

Important facts

- The ATGM was test-fired from Main Battle Tank (MBT) Arjuna by DRDO and Indian Army in collaboration with Armored Corps Center and School (ACC&S) at KK Range.
- The missiles struck with precision and successfully destroyed targets at two different ranges.

- The telemetry system has recorded satisfactory flight performance of the missiles.
- The ATGM has been developed with multi-platform launch capability and is currently undergoing technical trials with the 120 mm rifled gun of MBT Arjun.
- This indigenous anti-tank guided missile is fitted with a Tandem High Explosive Anti-Tank (HEAT) weapon, which is capable of destroying armoured vehicles with state-of-the-art Explosive Reactive Armour (ERA).
- Earlier in June, the DRDO and the Indian Army successfully test-fired an indigenously built tank destroyer missile at the KK range in Ahmednagar, Maharashtra.

Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)

- It is a premier defence research and development agency under the Ministry of Defence, Government of India.
- It aims to make India self-reliant in critical defence technology and systems.
- It was set up in 1958.
- Headquarters - New Delhi
- Chairman - G. Satheesh Reddy

6. India,US to hold mega military exercise in Uttarakhand's Auli in October (Aug. 4, 2022)

India and the US will conduct the 18th edition of the 'Yudh Abhyas' series from October 14 to 31 in Auli, Uttarakhand.

Important facts

- The exercise is aimed at enhancing understanding, cooperation and interoperability between the two armies.
- The previous edition of the exercise was held in Alaska, USA in October last year.
- The exercise is being conducted in the backdrop of rapidly changing situations in the Indo-Pacific.

India - US Defence Cooperation

- India-US defence ties have been getting stronger over the past few years.
- In June 2016, the US designated India as a "major defence partner".
- The two countries have signed major defence and security agreements including the Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA) over the years.
- In 2018, COMCASA (Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement) was signed between India and US.

- This allows for interoperability between the two armies and paves the way for the sale of high-end technology from the US to India.
- In the year 2020, BECA (Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement) was signed to further boost bilateral defence ties.
- It provides for sharing of high-end military technology, logistics and geospatial maps between India and US.

Other Exercises of India with the USA

- VAJRA PRAHAR (Army)
- Cope India (Air Force)
- Red Flag (USA's multilateral air exercise)
- Malabar Exercise (trilateral naval exercise of three countries India, USA and Japan)

7. IAF to participate in multilateral exercise 'Pitch Black' in Australia (Aug. 3, 2022)

The Indian Air Force (IAF) will join 16 other countries, including the Quad partner countries, for the biennial Exercise Pitch Black to be conducted by the Australian Air Force later this month.

Important facts

- About 100 aircraft and 2,500 military personnel from 17 countries will reach the northern region later this month for the Pitch Black 2022 exercise.
- This year's Pitch Black participants include Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Indonesia, India, Japan, Malaysia, Netherlands, New Zealand, Philippines, South Korea, Singapore, Thailand, United Arab Emirates, UK and US.
- The 2020 edition of this exercise was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

About Exercise Pitch Black

- It is a biennial warfare exercise hosted by the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF).
- It enhances interoperability and strengthens relationships among participants.
- This will provide the Indian Air Force with a unique opportunity to exchange knowledge and experience with these countries in a dynamic combat environment.
- Its last edition was held in 2018.
- Its aim is to practice Offensive Counter Air (OCA) and Defensive Counter Air (DCA) combat in a simulated war environment.

Other exercise between India and Australia

- AUSINDEX - It is a biennial bilateral maritime exercise between the Indian Navy and the Royal Australian Navy (RAN).
- The first edition of the exercise was held in 2015.

8. India, Vietnam 3rd edition army exercise “Ex VINBAX 2022” begin at Chandimandir in Haryana (Aug. 1, 2022)

The third edition of the Vietnam-India bilateral military exercise "EX WINBEX 2022" is being held at Chandimandir from August 1 to 20, 2022.

Important facts

- It is a sequel to the bilateral exercise conducted earlier in Vietnam in 2019 and marks a major milestone in the strengthening of bilateral ties between India and Vietnam.
- Both the countries share a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership and defence cooperation is a key pillar of this partnership.
- Vietnam is an important partner in India's Act East policy and Indo-Pacific vision.
- India has a rich legacy of deploying troops in UN missions and has excellent capabilities to provide UN peacekeeping training, including best practices for training potential UN peacekeepers at tactical, operational and strategic levels.
- The joint exercise will also provide an opportunity to the soldiers of both the countries to learn about each other's social and cultural heritage.
- The Indian Army is represented by soldiers from 105 Engineer Regiment.
- **The theme of Ex VINBAX - 2022** - employment and deployment of an Engineer Company and a Medical Team as part of United Nations Contingent for Peacekeeping Operations.

India and Vietnam

- The two countries signed a "Joint Vision" document to "significantly increase the scope and scale" of bilateral ties by 2030 during the recent visit of Defence Minister Rajnath Singh to Vietnam.
- Both countries are listed among the fastest growing economies in Asia and both aim to enhance peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific region through multi-faceted cooperation.
- As emerging economies and important countries, there is a broad convergence of interests with regard to creating alternative supply chains in Asia.
- They are equally concerned about China's aggressive and expansionist policies in the Indo-Pacific.
- The two countries have also shared a comprehensive strategic partnership since 2016 and defence cooperation is a key pillar of this partnership.

- The two countries have also cooperated in UN peacekeeping, ship visits and bilateral exercises.
- The two countries have signed a Memorandum of Understanding on Mutual Logistics Support, the first of its kind that Vietnam has signed with any country.

9. Indo-Oman joint military exercise commences in Rajasthan (Aug. 1, 2022)

The joint military Exercise AL NAJAH -IV between contingents of Indian Army and the Royal Army of Oman is starting from 1 August at the Foreign Training Node of Mahajan Field Firing Range in Bikaner, Rajasthan.

Important facts

- It will take place from August 1 to 13. It is the fourth edition of Exercise AL NAJAH -IV.
- The joint military exercise aims to enhance the level of bilateral defence cooperation between the both countries.
- A 60-member team of the Royal Army of Oman has reached the exercise site.
- The Indian Army will be represented in the exercise by soldiers from 18 Mechanized Infantry Battalions.
- The previous edition of this exercise was conducted in March 2019 in Muscat.

The scope of the exercise

- Professional interaction, mutual understanding of exercises and procedures, establishment of joint command and control structures and elimination of terrorist threats.
- It will focus on counter-terrorism operations, regional security operations and peacekeeping operations under the United Nations Charter, besides conducting joint physical training programmes, tactical exercises, techniques and procedures.

India's Joint Military Exercise with other countries

- Mitra Shakti - India & Sri Lanka
- Maitree Exercise - India & Thailand
- Yudh Abhyas - India and US
- Vajra Prahar - India and US
- Garuda Shakti - India & Indonesia
- Nomadic Elephant - India & Mongolia
- Shakti Exercise - India & France
- Surya Kiran - India and Nepal

- SIMBEX - India and Singapore
- CORPAT - India and Thailand

About Oman

- Sultan - Haitham bin Tariq Al Said
- Capital - Muscat
- Official Language - Arabic
- Official Religion - Islam
- Currency - Omani rial

10. Point 5140 at Dras sector named as Gun Hill (July 30, 2022)

Point 5140 in Dras, Kargil Sector has been renamed as Gun Hill, to celebrate the victory of the Indian Armed Forces and to pay tribute to the supreme sacrifice of the Gunners in "Operation Vijay".

Important facts

- The Artillery Regiment of the Indian Army, with lethal and precise firepower, was able to make an impressive impact on the enemy troops including Point 5140, which was a key factor in the early completion of the operation.
- Captain Vikram Batra captured 'Gun Hill' on 20 June 1999 on the strength of the valour of his comrades and hoisted the Indian tricolour.
- The Army has now renamed Point 5140 hill in Dras sector as 'Gun Hill' in memory of the decisive role of Bofors-like cannon and gunners in the victory of Kargil war.

Operation Vijay (Kargil War)

- The Kargil War, popularly known as 'Operation Vijay', began on 3 May 1999 and ended on 26 July 1999.
- It was an armed conflict between India and Pakistan that took place in the Kargil district of Ladakh and other places along the Line of Control (LoC).
- It was fought for over 60 days (between May and July 1999) and finally India regained control of all its territories.
- In the 60-day long struggle, the victory of Tiger Hill was one of the significant achievements.