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1. Defence Ministry launches 75 newly Artificial Intelligence products in New Delhi (July 11, 2022)

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh inaugurated the first-ever 'Artificial Intelligence in Defence' (AIDef) symposium and exhibition, organised by the Department of Defence Production, Ministry of Defence, at **Vigyan Bhawan in New Delhi** on 11 July.

• **Important facts**

- The event featured an exhibition showcasing the latest AI-enabled solutions developed by research organisations, industry and start-ups and innovators and the launch of AI products for the market.
- This is a major event where 75 newly developed AI products/technologies in Defence were launched as part of 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav'.
- These products will promote the 'Aatmanirbharta' initiative in Defence.
- These products are being tested and will soon be deployed in the security of the nation.
- Apart from the 75 products being launched, another 100 are in various stages of development.
- Panel discussions on 'Deploying AI in Defence', 'GenNext AI Solutions' and 'AI in Defence - Industry Perspective' were also held at the event.

• **Products are in the following domains-**

1. Automation/unmanned/robotics systems
2. Cyber security and human behaviour analysis
3. Intelligent monitoring system
4. Logistics and supply chain management
5. Control, Communication, Computer and Intelligence
6. Surveillance and Reconnaissance (C4ISR) systems
7. Operational data analytics

• **Artificial Intelligence in defence**

- The AI Task Force on Defence was set up in 2018 to provide a road map for promoting AI in defence.
- A Defence AI Council, headed by the Defence Minister, is working in this direction.
- The Defence Minister had announced that "25 defence-specific AI products" would be developed by 2024.

- A Defence AI Project Agency (DAIPA) has also been created under the defence production secretary for AI-enabled projects.
- The Navy is also building an AI Centre of Excellence at INS Valsura in Jamnagar, which already has a modern laboratory on AI and Big Data analysis.
- **What is Artificial Intelligence?**
- It is a broad branch of computer science that deals with the creation of smart machines capable of performing tasks that typically require human intelligence.

2. Indian Navy commissions the first ALH Squadron INAS 324 in Visakhapatnam (July 5, 2022)

Indian Naval Air Squadron INS 324 was commissioned into the Indian Navy at Visakhapatnam on 4 July.

- **INAS 324 Squadron**
- The unit is the first Naval Squadron on the Eastern Seaboard to operate indigenously designed and manufactured Advanced Light Helicopter (ALH) Mk III (MR) helicopters.
- It is named after a bird species named 'Kestrels' which has superior sensing capabilities, symbolizing the envisaged role of aircraft and air squadrons.
- The insignia of the squadron depicts a 'Kestrel' searching over vast blue waters and white sea waves, which signifies the role of Maritime Reconnaissance (MR) and Search and Rescue (SAR) role of the squadron.
- The ALH Mk III helicopters are equipped with state-of-the-art equipment including advanced surveillance radars and electro-optical sensors.
- These helicopters can also be deployed for Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) operations and for special operations with the Marine Commandos (Marcos).
- **Advanced Light Helicopter (ALH)**
- It is an indigenously developed utility aircraft by Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) with a twin-engine.
- Its development was initiated in 1984, and was initially designed with German assistance from the Messerschmitt-Bolko-Blohm (MBB).
- As of 2020, over 300 HAL Dhruves have been produced for the domestic and export markets.
- The major variants of Dhruv are classified as Dhruv Mk-I, Mk-II, Mk-III & Mk-IV.
- HAL has received orders for 73 ALHs for the ALH Mk-III and Mk-IV variants from the Indian Army, Coast Guard and Navy in 2017.
- HAL has also supplied it to Nepal Army, Mauritius Police and Maldives.

3. Indian Naval Ships visit Singapore (July 4, 2022)

Indian Naval Ships - Sahyadri and Kadmat - going to be deployed in South-East Asia visited Singapore.

- Both the ships under the command of Rear Admiral Sanjay Bhalla, Flag Officer Commanding, Eastern Fleet, visited Singapore from 1 to 3 July.
- During the visit the Navy crew participated in professional interactions with the Navy of the Republic of Singapore towards enhancing mutual cooperation and interoperability.
- During this, social and informal exchanges were also held with the aim of strengthening the ties and mutual understanding between the navies.
- The ships' visit to Singapore on July 1 on the 'Singapore Armed Forces (SAF) Day' helped enhance maritime cooperation and further cement the strong ties of India's friendship with Singapore that will contribute to security and stability in the region.
- Earlier, on February 4, 2021, Singapore's Defense Minister Ng Ing Hen attended the inaugural session of the Defense Ministers' Conference (DMC) of the Indian Ocean Region.
- On the occasion, he also announced Singapore's support to India's leadership in promoting a rules-based maritime order in the Indian Ocean region.
- **Simbex- 2021**
- The Singapore Navy and the Indian Navy conducted the annual Singapore-India Maritime Bilateral Exercise (SIMBEX) from September 2 to 4, 2021.
- A virtual scheme was also included in Simbex- 2021.
- This was followed by a 'contactless' sea phase in the southern part of the South China Sea in international waters.
- **INS Sahyadri**
- It is an indigenously built stealth frigate.
- It participated in the tripartite vernacular Malabar War with Japan and the United States off the coast of Guam.
- **INS Kadmat**
- It is the second of four anti-submarine warfare corvettes built for the Indian Navy by the Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers of Kolkata under Project 28.
- It is an indigenously built ASW corvette.
- It was inducted into the Eastern Naval Command of the Indian Navy.
- Its role is in anti-submarine warfare.

4. New Manufacturing Facilities at Bharat Dynamics Limited Dedicated to the Nation (July 2, 2022)

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh dedicates to the nation new manufacturing facilities at Bharat Dynamics Limited, Bhanur.

- Rajnath Singh visited the Bhanur Unit of Bharat Dynamics Limited (BDL) in Telangana on July 2, 2022.
- During his visit he dedicated to the Nation a number of new manufacturing facilities set up by the Defence Public Sector Undertaking (DPSU).
- These include the Warhead Facility at Bhanur Unit and Radio Frequency (RF) Seeker Facility at Kanchanbagh Unit.
- Rajnath Singh also unveiled a statue of the Father of the Nation Mahatma Gandhi in the BDL campus.
- **Bharat Dynamics Limited (BDL)**
 - It is a Government of India Enterprise under the Ministry of Defence.
 - It was established in Hyderabad in the year 1970.
 - It manufactures guided missiles and allied defence equipment for the Indian Armed Forces.
 - It has been working in collaboration with DRDO and foreign Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs).

5. Indian Army, Air Force join to conduct landmark cycling expedition from Delhi to Drass (July 2, 2022)

To commemorate 75 years of India's independence, the Indian Army and the Indian Air Force have joined forces to conduct a historic cycling expedition from Delhi to Drass beginning on 22 July.

- The team of cyclists will be led by Major Srishti Sharma of Corps of Signals.
- The Indian Air Force team is led by Squadron Leader Maneka.
- The team comprises 20 soldiers and air warriors and will be led by two women officers of the Army and Air Force.
- The expedition was flagged off on July 2 at morning from the National War Memorial in New Delhi.
- The cyclists will cover a distance of 1,600 km in 24 days.
- The expedition will culminate on the 26th of this month at the Kargil War Memorial in Drass in memory of the brave martyrs who made the supreme sacrifice during the Kargil War.

- The expedition will proceed through Punjab before entering Himachal Pradesh.
- **Aim of the expedition**
- Cyclists interact with school children at various stages along the way to raise the energy of young Indians towards nationalism.
- They will act as a beacon to guide the immeasurable enthusiasm and zeal of the future leaders of the country.

6. DRDO carries out maiden flight of unmanned combat aircraft (July 2, 2022)

The Defense Research and Development Organization (DRDO) successfully carried out the maiden flight of the Autonomous Flying Wing Technology Demonstrator from the Aeronautical Test Range in Chitradurga, Karnataka on July 1.

- The aircraft performed a complete flight, including take-off, way point navigation and touchdown.
- The flight was conducted in a fully autonomous mode.
- It is designed and developed by the Bengaluru-based Aeronautical Development Establishment (ADE), a premier research laboratory under the DRDO.
- The unmanned fighter aircraft is powered by a small, turbofan engine.
- The vehicle's airframe, as well as its undercarriage, flight control and avionics systems, were indigenously developed.
- The program is associated with the development of India's fifth generation stealth fighter Advanced Medium Combat Aircraft or AMCA.
- **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

7. Defence Ministry inaugurated PayRoll Automation for Distribution of Monthly Allowances (PADMA) (July 1, 2022)

Recently the Defence Ministry inaugurated PayRoll Automation for Distribution of Monthly Allowances (PADMA), an automated pay and allowance module for the Indian Coast Guard.

- **About PADMA**

PADMA is an automated platform leveraging latest technology that will ensure seamless and timely disbursement of salaries and allowances to around 15,000 Indian Coast Guard personnel.

This module has been developed under the aegis of Defence Accounts Department and will be operated by Pay Accounts Office, Coast Guard, Noida.

• Importance

This initiative marks the beginning of a centralised pay system, the foundation of which is being laid by the Defence Accounts Department Headquarters to provide a 'one stop pay accounting' solution for all organisations under the ministry.

The launch of PADMA will strengthen the concept of Digital India Vision. Also it is a 'Self-reliant India' initiative as the entire module is designed and developed by Indian entrepreneurs assisted by domain experts.

• About Indian Coast Guard

The Indian Coast Guard was established under the Coast Guard Act, 1978 by Parliament on 18 August 1978 as an independent armed force with the objective of safeguarding the Indian seas in peacetime.

Motto - "Vayam Raksham: We Protect".

Headquarters- New Delhi

Director General- Director General Virender Singh Pathania

Coast Guard Day - February 1

8. Exercise RIMPAC-22 (July 1, 2022)

Exercise RIMPAC-22 will be conducted from June 29 to August 4 in and near the Hawaiian Islands and Southern California.

27 countries are participating in the current edition of the multidisciplinary exercise.

• RIMPAC-22

Its objective is to build interoperability and trust among friendly navies.

The theme of RIMPAC 2022 is Capable, Adaptive, Partners.

The first RIMPAC was held in 1971 involving forces from Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom (UK) and the United States (US).

• India's participation

India participated in RIMPAC for the first time in the year 2014 when the indigenously built Shivalik class stealth frigate INS Sahyadri participated in the exercise.

INS Sahyadri again represented the country in the 2018 edition.

In the year 2016, INS Satpura joined the maritime exercise.

- Prior to 2014, the Indian Navy's presence in the WarGames was only as an observer for the 2006, 2010 and 2012 editions.
- In the current edition, INS Satpura of the Indian Navy and a P8I maritime patrol aircraft are participating in the exercise.

- **P8I Maritime Patrol Vessel**

- The P-8I is a long-range multi-mission maritime patrol vessel built by Boeing for the Indian Navy.
- It was designed to protect India's coastline and territorial waters.
- It can conduct anti-submarine warfare (ASW), anti-surface warfare (AsuW), intelligence, maritime patrol and surveillance and military testing.

- **INS Satpura**

- INS Satpura (F48) is a Shivalik-class stealth multi-role frigate built for the Indian Navy.
- INS Satpura was built at the Mazagon Dock Limited (MDL) in Mumbai.
- INS Satpura is an indigenously designed and built 6000 ton guided missile stealth frigate capable of detecting and destroying air, surface and underwater adversaries.

9. The Indian Navy launched 'Operation Sankalp' in the Persian Gulf (June 22, 2022)

The Indian Navy has launched 'Operation Sankalp' in the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman as a measure to ensure the safety of Indian ships.

- The stealth frigate of the Indian Navy, INS Talwar is presently deployed for Operation Sankalp, the third consecutive year of Indian Navy presence in the Gulf region, with the objective of safeguarding India's maritime interests.

- **Operation Sankalp**

- The Indian Navy had launched Operation Sankalp in the Gulf region on June 19, 2019, following the deteriorating security situation in the region following attacks on merchant ships in the Gulf of Oman.
- It was started to ensure the safe passage of Indian flag ships passing through the Strait of Hormuz.
- The operation is carried out in collaboration with stakeholders including the Ministry of External Affairs, the Ministry of Shipping, the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas.
- Under this, the Indian Navy is constantly monitoring the situation in the Gulf region. It maintains a presence in the region to ensure the security of maritime trade as well as the security of Indian flag merchant ships.

- **Persian Gulf**

- Also called the Arabian Gulf, it is a shallow marginal sea in the Indian Ocean located between the Arabian Peninsula and southwestern Iran.
- Its length is about 990 km and its width ranges from a maximum of about 340 km to a minimum of 55 km in the Strait of Hormuz.

- **Gulf of Oman**

- The Gulf of Oman is located in the northwestern part of the Arabian Sea between the eastern part of the Arabian Peninsula (Oman) and Iran.
- It is 560 km long and connects to the Persian Gulf through the Strait of Hormuz.
- It provides the only gateway into the Persian Gulf from the Arabian Sea and the Indian Ocean.
- It is a shipping route for the oil-producing region around the Persian Gulf.

10. New Advanced Light Helicopter Squadron 840 CG inducted in Indian Coast Guard (June 21, 2022)

The Indian Coast Guard Region (East) inducted the Advanced Light Helicopter (ALH) Mark-III, indigenously developed by Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd (HAL), in Chennai on 20 June.

- The ALH will be the first aircraft of the newly created "840 Squadron" to be stationed at Chennai and the first ALH Mk-III to be deployed in the Coast Guard area east.
- The aircraft was received with a traditional water cannon salute at Coast Guard Air Station, Chennai.
- Coast Guard Zone East Commander Inspector General A.P. Badola welcomed the aircraft and crew.
- Three more ALHs will be inducted into the squadron shortly.
- The aircraft has Beyond the Visual Range Detection using modern radars.
- It is equipped for target neutralization operations using its mounted heavy machine gun.
- The operational area of the squadron would cover the entire eastern sector due to its strategic importance and geographical location.

- **Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL)**

- It is a Government of India owned aerospace and defence company headquartered in Bangalore.
- It was established as Hindustan Aircraft Limited in Bangalore on 23 December 1940 by Walchand Hirachand, who became the chairman of the company.
- It is governed under the management of the Indian Ministry of Defence.
- It is presently engaged in the design, manufacture and assembly of aircraft, jet engines, helicopters and their spare parts.

- Its branches are located in Nasik, Korwa, Kanpur, Koraput, Lucknow, Bangalore, Hyderabad and Kasaragod.
- The HAL HF-24 Marut fighter-bomber was the first fighter aircraft manufactured in India.
- **Indian Coast Guard**
 - It performs non-military functions.
 - Established - 18 August 1978 by the Coast Guard Act, 1978
 - Operates - under the Ministry of Defence
 - Headquarter - in New Delhi
 - Jurisdiction - over the territorial waters of India including contiguous zone and exclusive economic zone.
 - It is responsible for the protection of the marine environment in the maritime regions of India.