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1. P Upadhyay INAS takes over as Director General of Naval Armament (June 1, 2023)

P Upadhyay, INAS has taken over as **Director General of Naval Armament (DGONA)** from **KSC Iyer**, who superannuated on 31 May 23.

An overview of the news

- P Upadhyay is an **officer of the 1987 batch** of Indian Naval Armament Service.
- He joined the Naval Armament Organization of the Indian Navy on 12 July 1989.
- An **Electrical Engineering Graduate** from SGSITS Indore, he earned his Post Graduate degrees from Devi Ahilya University in Electrical Engineering with specialization in '**Digital Techniques and Instrumentation**' in 1988.
- He is postgraduate in Mechanical Engineering from University of Pune with specialisation in '**Guided Missiles**', in 1995.
- In a span of 34 years, he has held various important assignments at NAD (Visakhapatnam), NAD (Karanja), NAD (Trombay), NAD (Alwaye).
- He is an alumnus of **Naval Defence College** of NDC-53.
- He is also adept at missile and torpedo maintenance apart from having expertise on ammunition disposal.

Naval Armament

- The Naval Armament Directorate is responsible for the **development, procurement, and maintenance** of armament systems for the Indian Navy.
- It plays a vital role in equipping the naval forces with advanced weaponry and supporting their operational readiness.
- It plays a crucial role in promoting indigenous development and self-reliance in armament systems.
- P. Upadhyay will contribute to the Indian Navy's "**Make in India**" initiative by supporting **indigenous research, development, and production capabilities**.

2. 'Sudarshan Shakti Exercise 2023' (May 28, 2023)

The **Sapta Shakti Command** of the **Indian Army** conducted exercise '**Sudarshan Shakti 2023**' along the western borders in **Rajasthan and Punjab**.

An Overview of the News:

- **Aim:**The exercise aimed at transforming the forces into a modern, lean and agile combat combination capable of taking advantage of new age technologies.

- **Objective:** It focused on validating operational plans in a network-centric environment, involving combat power, combat support and logistics support.
- **Synergized Application:** The exercise involved coordinated application of combat power, combat support and logistic support under all enemy threat zones including grey zone warfare.
- **Force Multipliers and Niche Technologies:** The exercise integrates force multipliers such as special forces and niche technologies, including drones, tethered drones, stray ammunition and electronic warfare.
- **Objectives of the meeting:** To facilitate the exercise to meet the stated objectives of the five pillars of transformation enunciated by COAS Gen Manoj Pandey in January 2023.
- **Commitment to Preparedness:** "Sudarshan Shakti 2023" highlighted the commitment of the South Western Command and its attached units to maintain a high level of operational preparedness and capability to fight technology-intensive future conflicts.

3. Successful completion of naval exercise 'Al Mohed Al Hindi 23' (May 28, 2023)

The sea phase of the **second edition** of the bilateral exercise '**Al Mohed Al Hindi-2023**' between the **Indian Navy and the Royal Saudi Naval Force (RSNF)** was conducted at **Al Jubail, Saudi Arabia** from 23-25 May 2023.

An Overview of the News:

- **INS Tarkash, INS Subhadra and Dornier Maritime Patrol Aircraft (MPA)** participated from the Indian side in the exercise.
- Whereas, the Royal Saudi Naval Force was represented by **HMS Badr and Abdul Aziz, MH60R Helo and UAVs.**
- The three-day exercise, conducted in the waters of the Arabian Sea, witnessed a wide range of maritime operations.
- The successful conduct of '**Al Mohed Al Hindi - 2023**' showcased the high level of professionalism, interoperability and exchange of best practices between the two navies.
- The bilateral exercise has been successful in meeting all its set objectives.

INS Tarkash:

- It is a state-of-the-art stealth frigate belonging to the **INS Talwar** class commissioned on 9 November 2012.
- The ship is named from the Sanskrit word 'Tarkash', meaning "arrow quiver," symbolizing its versatility.
- INS Tarkash is equipped with advanced weapon-sensor technologies and has the capability to deal with all types of threats.
- The design of INS Tarkash incorporates stealth technologies and a special hull for low radar cross-section.
- In April 2023, INS Tarkash was used as part of '**Operation Kaveri**' to evacuate Indian nationals from **Sudan** due to internal unrest.

INS Subhadra:

- It is a patrol vessel of the **INS Sukanya** class.
- The vessel has served as a test bed for the Dhanush ship-launched ballistic missile.

4. Indian soldiers posthumously awarded the Dag Hammarskjold Medal (May 28, 2023)

Indian head constables **Shishupal Singh and Sanwala Ram Vishnoi** were posthumously awarded the **Dag Hammarskjold** Medal.

An Overview of the News

- The Dag Hammarskjold Medal is the **highest award given to United Nations peacekeepers**.
- The medals were received by **Ambassador Ruchira Kamboj**, Permanent Representative of India to the United Nations on behalf of the departed Head Constables.
- The Dag Hammarskjold Medal is awarded posthumously to peacekeepers who have lost their lives during peacekeeping operations.
- The award ceremony took place at the **United Nations Headquarters in New York** to mark the **International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers**.
- The medal is named after **Dag Hammarskjold, the second Secretary-General of the United Nations**.

Important Points:

- **Border Security Force (BSF) head constables Shishupal Singh and Sanwala Ram Vishnoi** lost their lives while serving under the UN flag in the **Democratic Republic of the Congo** as part of the MONUSCO mission.
- **Shabar Tahir Ali**, an Indian national serving with the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), was also awarded the Dag Hammarskjold Medal posthumously.
- The **International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers** is observed annually on 29 May to recognize the dedication, professionalism and bravery of peacekeepers around the world.
- **India** holds the distinction of being the first country to send an **all-women contingent to the UN peacekeeping mission in Liberia** in 2007.

5. MiG-29K makes night landing on INS Vikrant (May 26, 2023)

MiG-29K makes night landing on INS Vikrant

The **Indian Navy** achieved a significant milestone on May 24, 2023 by performing the **first-ever night landing of a MiG-29K** onboard **INS Vikrant**.

An Overview of the News:

- It is noteworthy in this context that the **MiG-29K** night landing within three months of the first landing on **INS Vikrant** is a challenging feat.
- INS Vikrant is currently undergoing air certification and flight integration trials with rotary wing and fixed wing aircraft to achieve '**combat ready**' status very quickly.
- As part of these trials, the first landing of **MiG-29K and indigenous LCA (Navy)** took place on 06 February 2023 and since then there has been considerable progress in day and night landing trials of all helicopters of the Indian Navy.

MiG-29K:

- It is capable of flying in any weather.
- This jet is part of the fighter fleet of INS Vikrant.
- It can fly at twice the speed of sound (2000 km per hour).
- It is capable of carrying a load eight times its own weight.
- It can fly at an altitude of 65000 feet.

INS Vikrant:

- The country's first indigenously designed and built aircraft carrier INS Vikrant has completed extensive sea trials ahead of her maiden voyage on August 4, 2021.
- It was inducted into the Indian Navy on 2 September 2022 in the presence of the Prime Minister.
- It is modeled after **INS Ajay**, the first indigenous warship built in the country, and **INS Nilgiri**, the indigenous light warship (frigate).
- Built by : **M/s Cochin Shipyard Limited.**

6. INSV Tarini crew back home after 188 days (May 25, 2023)

INSV-Tarini-crew-back-home-after-188-days

The crew of **INSV Tarini**, who returned after an **inter-continental voyage**, were accorded a grand welcome at the **flag-in ceremony in Goa.**

An overview of the news

- The crew returned home on 23 May after an arduous voyage of **17,000 nautical miles.**
- Two women officers, **Lt Cdr Dilna K and Lt Cdr Roopa A**, were involved in the entire operation.
- Lt Cdr Dilna is a **Logistics Officer** in the Navy.
- Roopa, who hails from Puducherry, has graduated in **Aeronautical Engineering from Chennai.** He is a Naval Armament Inspection Officer.
- Both Dilna and Roopa are currently posted at **INS Mandovi in Goa.**
- The historic voyage from **Goa to Rio de Janeiro to Cape Town was completed by INSV Tarini in 188 days.**
- It reflects an exemplary display of gallantry, courage and tenacity by the crew and highlights the role of the Indian Navy as a pioneer in the country in ocean sailing.

7. AL-MOHED AL-HINDI 2023 Naval Exercise (May 23, 2023)

AL-MOHED AL-HINDI 2023 Naval Exercise

Indian Navy ships **INS TARKASH and INS SUBHADRA** arrived at **Port Al-Jubail in Saudi Arabia** on 21st May.

An overview of the news

- The visit of these ships marks the beginning of the **harbor phase of the second edition of the naval exercise** between the two countries, known as '**Al-Mohad Al-Hindi 2023**'.
- This year the naval exercise also includes the **participation of a Maritime Patrol Aircraft**.
- During the exercise, naval forces from both countries will engage in **joint maneuvers, training activities, and exchange of expertise**.
- The exercise will focus on enhancing maritime security capabilities and promoting interoperability between the two navies.
- The **inaugural edition** of the exercise was **successfully conducted in 2021**.

About Al-Mohed Al-Hindi Exercise

- The decision on this bilateral exercise between India and Saudi Arabia was taken at the **Riyadh summit held in 2019**.
- Its aim is to carry out **tactical maneuvers, search and rescue operations, and an electronic warfare drill** to enhance interoperability.
- It aims to strengthen the **defense ties between India and Saudi Arabia**.

Importance of the Exercise

- AL-MOHED AL-HINDI 2023 signifies the **growing strategic partnership between India and Saudi Arabia** in the defense sector.
- The exercise will provide an opportunity for both navies to learn from each other's experiences and improve their **operational capabilities**.
- The naval exercise also serves as a platform for fostering diplomatic relations and strengthening regional security cooperation.
- The successful conduct of **AL-MOHED AL-HINDI 2023** may pave the way for future collaborations in defense technology, intelligence sharing, and joint defense projects.
- The exercise contributes to maintaining **stability and security in the region** by promoting cooperation and mutual understanding between the Indian and Saudi Arabian navies.

8. Defence production crosses Rs 1 lakh crore mark for the first time ever (May 19, 2023)

Defence-production

The **value of defense production in the financial year (FY) 2022-23** has **crossed the Rs one lakh crore mark for the first time**.

An overview of the news

- The value is currently **Rs 1,06,800 crore** and may increase further once data is received from the remaining private defense industries.
- The present value of defense production in FY 2022-23 is over **12 per cent higher than Rs 95,000 crore in FY 2021-22.**

Government's efforts to boost defense production

- Simplified **defence industrial licensing, relaxation of export** controls and grant of No Objection Certificate.
- Specific incentives introduced under the **foreign trade policy.**
- **Defence Production & Export Promotion Policy 2020.**
- The government had issued two "**positive indigenization lists**" which included **209 items that could not be imported.**
- The government has also announced two dedicated corridors in **Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh** to act as clusters of defense manufacturing.
- The number of defense licenses issued by the government to industries has increased by **almost 200 per cent in the last 7-8 years.**
- These measures have given a boost to the defense industrial manufacturing ecosystem in the country and have generated tremendous employment opportunities.

The vision of the government

- To achieve a **turnover of \$25 billion**, including **exports of \$5 billion in aerospace and defence goods and services by 2025.**

9. Ashutosh Dixit appointed as Vice Chief of the Air Staff (May 16, 2023)

Ashutosh-Dixit-appointed-as-Vice-Chief-of-the-Air-Staff

On 15 May **Air Marshal Ashutosh Dixit** was appointed as the **Vice Chief of the Air Staff.**

An Overview of the News

- He has commanded the **Mirage 2000 Squadron**, a frontline fighter base in the **Western Sector and a major fighter training base.**
- He has held various positions at **Air Headquarters**, including **Principal Director Air Staff Requirements, Assistant Chief of the Air Staff (Projects) and Assistant Chief of the Air Staff (Plans).**
- He has participated in missions like '**Safed Sagar**' and '**Rakshak**'.
- Prior to this appointment, he was the Air Defense Commander of the Southern Air Command and the Senior Air Officer in the South Western Air Command.

Indian Air Force (IAF):

- It is the air arm of the Indian Armed Forces.
- Its primary mission is to secure Indian airspace and conduct aerial warfare during armed conflicts.

Establishment - **26 January 1950**

Headquarters - **New Delhi**

Chief of Defense Staff (CDS) - **General Anil Chauhan**

Chief of the Air Staff (CAS) - **Air Chief Marshal Vivek Ram Chaudhary**

Vice Chief of the Air Staff (VCAS) - **Air Marshal Amar Preet Singh**

10. Ministry of Defence approves fourth positive indigenization list (May 15, 2023)

The **Defence Ministry** approved the **fourth positive indigenization list**, which includes **928 strategically important line replacement units**, sub-systems, spares and components.

An Overview of the News

- The list aims **to promote self-reliance ('self-reliance')** in the defence sector and reduce imports by Defence Public Sector Undertakings (DPSUs).
- The import **substitution value of the approved list is Rs 715 crore.**
- The Defence Public Sector Undertakings will indigenize these items through various routes including **'Make'** category and in-house development through the capabilities of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) and private Indian industry.

Ministry of Defence (India):

Formed - **1776**

Predecessor Ministry - **Department of Defence (1938-47)**

Headquarters - **Secretariat Building Raisina Hill, New Delhi**

Defence Minister - **Rajnath Singh**