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1

INDIAN NAVY – INDONESIA NAVY BILATERAL MARITIME EXERCISE ‘SAMUDRA SHAKTI PROGRESSES IN THE BAY OF BENGAL

- INS Kamorta, an Anti-Submarine Warfare Corvette is jointly exercising with Indonesian Warship KRI Usman Harun, a multi-role Corvette in the Bay of Bengal as part of the ongoing Indian Navy – Indonesian Navy Bilateral Exercise ‘Samudra Shakti’
- The joint exercises include manoeuvres, Surface Warfare exercises, Air Defence exercises, Weapon firing drills, Helicopter Operations and Boarding Operations.

2

VERY SEVERE CYCLONIC STORM ‘BULBUL’

- Very Severe Cyclonic Storm Bulbul is an active tropical cyclone which struck the Indian state of West Bengal.
- At Category 2 hurricane-equivalent intensity and is currently a flood and storm surge threat to Bangladesh.
- Originating from the remnants of Severe Tropical Storm Matmo over the southern Bay of Bengal.
- It is only the fourth tropical cyclone ever recorded to regenerate over the Andaman Sea, having crossed Southeast Asia overland.
- The cyclone has been named by Pakistan.

What is Tropical Cyclone?

- Tropical cyclone, also called typhoon or hurricane, an intense circular storm that originates over warm tropical oceans and is characterized by low atmospheric pressure, high winds, and heavy rain.
- Drawing energy from the sea surface and maintaining its strength as long as it remains over warm water, a tropical cyclone generates winds that exceed 119 km per hour.
- Tropical cyclones are known by various names in different parts of the world. In the North Atlantic Ocean and the eastern North Pacific they are called hurricanes, and in the western North Pacific around the Philippines, Japan, and China the storms are referred to as typhoons. In the western South Pacific and Indian Ocean they are variously referred to as severe tropical cyclones, tropical cyclones, or simply cyclones.
- A characteristic feature of tropical cyclones is the eye, a central region of clear skies, warm temperatures, and low atmospheric pressure.

3

MILAN 2020 CONCLUDES AT VISAKHAPATNAM

- MILAN exercise concluded at HQENC Visakhapatnam
- MILAN series of biennial a multilateral naval exercise which commenced in 1995, was conducted at Andaman and Nicobar Command (ANC) until last year, is being conducted for the first time on the mainland at ENC with increased scope and complexity of the Exercise.
- MILAN 2020 is aimed to enhance professional interaction between friendly foreign navies and learn from each other’s strengths and best practices in the maritime domain.

- The event would also provide an excellent opportunity for Operational Commanders of friendly foreign navies to interact with each other in areas of mutual interest.

4 “SWACHH – NIRMAL TAT ABHIYAAN”

- To strive to make our beaches clean and create awareness amongst citizens about the importance of coastal ecosystems, the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) are undertaking a mass cleanliness-cum-awareness drive in 50 identified beaches under the “Swachh – Nirmal Tat Abhiyaan”.
- The identified beaches are in 10 coastal States/Union Territories (UTs) namely Gujarat, Daman & Diu, Maharashtra, Goa, Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, Andhra Pradesh, and Odisha. The beaches have been identified after the consultation with the States/UTs.
- The cleaning drives in all beaches are being undertaken, involving school/college students of Eco-clubs, district administration, institutions, volunteers, local communities and other stakeholders.
- Environment Education Division of the Ministry and Society of Integrated Coastal Management (SICOM) under the aegis of this Ministry will be responsible for the overall coordination for the drive in 50 beaches. Respective State Governments and Central Ministries will also be actively participating in the beach cleaning drives.
- The Ministry has also decided that on completion of the drive, best three beaches will be suitably awarded along with a Certificate of Appreciation for all the participating Eco-clubs.

5 HADR EXERCISE TIGER TRIUMPH TO COMMENCE AT VISAKHAPATNAM

- In consonance with the growing partnership between India and the US, the maiden India US joint Tri services Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) Exercise named ‘TIGER TRIUMPH’ is scheduled on the Eastern seaboard.
- Indian Naval ships Jalashwa, Airavat and Sandhayak, Indian Army troops from 19 Madras and 7 Guards, and Indian Air Force MI-17 helicopters and Rapid Action Medical Team (RAMT) would be participating in the exercise.
- The US would be represented by US Navy Ship Germantown with troops from US Third Marine Division.
- The Exercise is aimed to developing interoperability for conducting HADR operations.

6 INDO-FRENCH JOINT TRAINING EXERCISE SHAKTI– 2019

- The joint military exercise between Indian and French Army, Exercise ‘SHAKTI-2019’ was held at Mahajan Field Firing Range.
- The aim of the exercise was to achieve interoperability, to acquaint each other with operational procedures, combat drills and understand the functioning in such a situation. It was evident that both the armies were able to achieve this aim.
- The exercise was conducted in two phases. The first phase of combat conditioning and tactical training was completed successfully by both the contingents.

- The exercise also included newly inducted 'RUDRA' helicopter, the weaponised version of the Advanced Light Helicopter 'Dhruv' produced indigenously by India.
- It was a significant milestone achieved in ensuring cordial relations between the two countries and another step forward towards global war on terror.

7

INDO-UZBEKISTAN JOINT FIELD TRAINING EXERCISE (FTX)-2019 EXERCISE DUSTLIK-2019

- The inaugural Indo-Uzbekistan Joint Field Training Exercise (FTX)-2019, Exercise DUSTLIK-2019 culminated after 10 days of joint training with Uzbekistan Army.
- Training was focused on counter insurgency and counter terrorism operations in urban scenario as well as sharing of expertise on skills at arms; both combat shooting and experiences in counter insurgency and counter terrorism.
- The exercise also provided an opportunity to armies of all nations for greater cultural understanding, sharing experiences and strengthening mutual trust and cooperation.

8

VEER SAVARKAR WAS A MULTIDIMENSIONAL PERSONALITY - A FREEDOM FIGHTER, SOCIAL REFORMER, WRITER, POLITICAL THINKER

- Releasing the book – 'Savarkar: Echoes from a Forgotten Past'
- Very few in India know that Veer Savarkar started one of the most powerful social reform movements against untouchability in India
- Highlighting that it was Veer Savarkar who named the 1857 rebellion as the first war of independence
- The seven Shackles described by Savarkar are
 - First, the rigid caste system which, according to Savarkar, "deserves to be thrown into the dustbins of history".
 - The second reform Veer Savarkar wanted was to popularize Vedic literature to everyone, not only to a particular caste. He called Vedic literature civilizational knowledge for the entire human race and India's unique gift to mankind.
 - The third was to break away from caste-based vocational rigidity and encourage persons to pursue any vocation of their choice based on aptitude and ability. In the absence of motivation of competition, or lack of aptitude, Savarkar believed, "merely following what one's father did, will make one both complacent and unproductive."
 - Fourth, Savarkar believed in global mobility and the need for Indians to venture out into foreign lands so as to "bring back the best of the world and carry the fragrance of India and her culture to every corner of the globe."
 - Fifth, Savarkar wanted to break away from the taboo on inter-caste dining. He had said, "Religion is in the heart, the soul, the spirit; not the stomach!"
 - The sixth was promotion of inter-caste marriage
 - The seventh aspect, Veer Savarkar underscored was the need to develop a scientific temper. "We are 200 years behind Europe", he had remarked adding, "It is through science, modern thoughts

and industrialization that we can ensure that every man woman in India will have a job to do, food to eat, clothes to wear and a happy life to lead.”

9

UNESCO HAS DESIGNATED MUMBAI AS A MEMBER OF UNESCO CREATIVE CITIES NETWORK (UCCN) IN THE FIELD OF FILM AND HYDERABAD IN THE FIELD OF GASTRONOMY

- UNESCO has designated Mumbai as a member of UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN) in the field of FILM and Hyderabad in the field of GASTRONOMY.
- UCCN, created in 2004, is a network of cities which are thriving, active centres of cultural activities in their respective countries.
- The UNESCO Creative Cities Network now counts a total of 246 cities.
- The member cities that form part of the Network come from all continents and regions with different income levels and populations.
- They work together towards a common mission: placing creativity and the creative economy at the core of their urban development plans to make cities safe, resilient, inclusive and sustainable, in line with the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
- The 7 categories for recognition under UCCN are as follows-
 - Crafts and Folk Arts
 - Design
 - Film
 - Gastronomy
 - Music
 - Media Arts
 - Literature
- Previously, 3 Indian cities were recognized as members of UCCN, namely:
 - Jaipur-Crafts and Folk Arts(2015)
 - Varanasi-Creative city of Music (2015)
 - Chennai-Creative city of Music(2017)

10

SCO JOINT URBAN EARTHQUAKE SEARCH & RESCUE EXERCISE (SCOJTEX)-2019

- On the initiative of Government of India, the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) is hosting “Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Joint Urban Earthquake Search & Rescue Exercise (SCOJtEx.)-2019” of all 08 SCO member countries, with the aim to rehearse the disaster response mechanism, share knowledge, experience, technology & also for mutual coordination, etc.
- This exercise shall also provide an opportunity to enhance the coordination & co-operation involving multi-agency operations in an earthquake scenario.
- The four day long simulation exercise shall be held at Delhi.
- The participants of all 08 member countries namely China, India, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan shall be participating in this exercise.

- The four day long simulation exercise shall be conducted as per the International Search & Rescue Advisory Group (INSARAG) methodology & guidelines.
- The main focus of Shanghai Cooperation Organization Joint Exercise on Urban Earthquake Search & Rescue (SCOJtEx-2019) shall be to test the region's preparedness and resilience towards effective activation of Inter- governmental interaction for immediate response.

11**FINANCE MINISTRY LAUNCHES TWO NEW IT INITIATIVES - ICEDASH & ATITHI**

- ICEDASH is an Ease of Doing Business (EoDB) monitoring dashboard of the Indian Customs helping public sees the daily Customs clearance times of import cargo at various ports and airports.
- With ICEDASH, Indian Customs has taken a lead globally to provide an effective tool that helps the businesses compare clearance times across ports and plan their logistics accordingly.
- This dashboard has been developed by CBIC in collaboration with NIC.
- ICEDASH can be accessed through the CBIC website.
- With ATITHI, CBIC has introduced an easy to use mobile app for international travellers to file the Customs declaration in advance.
- Passengers can use this app to file declaration of dutiable items and currency with the Indian Customs even before boarding the flight to India.

12**INDIA'S FIRST GLOBAL MEGA SCIENCE EXHIBITION 'VIGYAN SAMAGAM'**

- Bringing the world's major Mega Science projects together, India's first-ever global Mega-Science exhibition, 'Vigyan Samagam', was inaugurated at the Science City in Kolkata.
- Mega Science Projects give rise to newer technologies which find numerous other applications in our day-to-day lives.
- This will help in building high-tech manufacturing capabilities in the country and promote 'Make in India' for advanced technologies.
- Vigyan Samagam exhibition will traverse its visitors through the world from micro to macro, unveiling the efforts of the international community in understanding the Universe.
- The Exhibition will highlight India's contribution to the world's science, technology and innovation, and researches in the areas of high energy physics, nuclear physics, astronomy and astrophysics, nuclear energy etc.
- It will also showcase that DAE not only works on nuclear technologies, but also works on fundamental science and research; and the wide-ranging connectivity of DST across institutional and disciplinary barriers across the country.

13**WASTELANDS ATLAS' – 2019**

- The wasteland mapping exercise is carried out by National Remote Sensing Centre (NRSC), Department of Space using the Indian Remote Sensing Satellite (IRSS) data.
- The atlas is then jointly published by The Department of Land Resources (Ministry of Rural Development) and National Remote Sensing Centre.

- The Wastelands Atlas – 2019 is the fifth edition of all atlases. The previous editions released were in 2000, 2005, 2010 and 2011.
- The changes in wastelands between 2008-09 and 2015-16 have been presented in this Atlas. The effort has resulted in estimating the spatial extent of wastelands for entire country to the tune of 55.76 Mha (16.96 % of geographical area of the Country) for the year 2015-16 as compared to 56.60 Mha (17.21%) in the year 2008-09.
- During this period 1.45 Mha of wastelands are converted into non wastelands categories. There is a net conversion of 0.84 Mha (0.26%) of different wasteland categories in the country during 2008-09 to 2015-16.
- A reduction in wasteland area was observed in the categories of land with dense scrub, waterlogged and marshy land, sandy areas, degraded pastures (grazing land) and gullied and ravinous land.
- It provides district and state wise distribution of different categories of wastelands area including mapping of about 12.08 Mha hitherto unmapped area of Jammu & Kashmir.
- The wastelands have undergone positive change in the states of Rajasthan (0.48 Mha), Bihar (0.11 Mha), Uttar Pradesh (0.10 Mha), Andhra Pradesh (0.08 Mha), Mizoram (0.057 Mha), Madhya Pradesh (0.039 Mha), Jammu & Kashmir (0.038 Mha) and West Bengal (0.032 Mha).
- Majority of wastelands have been changed into categories of 'croplands' (0.64 Mha), 'forest-dense / open' (0.28 Mha), 'forest plantation' (0.029 Mha), 'plantation' (0.057 Mha) and 'industrial area' (0.035 Mha).

14

INDIAN RAILWAY'S INTRODUCES 'UTTAM RAKE'

- 'Uttam Rake' is the Latest Addition to Make Travelling in Mumbai Local Trains More Comfortable & Safe.
- Uttam rake has improved interiors and advanced features to bring more comfort for Mumbaikars.
- **Salient Features of Uttam rake:**
 - Provision of CCTV Surveillance System in all coaches.
 - Anti-dent partitions in coaches to prevent thefts.
 - Modular Luggage rack.
 - High backrest seats in First Class coaches.
 - Provision of Fibre Reinforced Plastic (FRP) seats in Second Class coaches with wooden finishing for better aesthetics.
 - Improved Dual Lock Stopper with dual slot handles windows in all coaches.
 - Wider and improved grab handles for better grip.
 - Latest Brushless DC (BLDC) fans in all coaches which consumes 30% less energy than conventional fans.
 - Provision of modular type diffused LED lights.
 - Electrically operated Passenger Alarm System in place of traditional emergency chains.
 - Smooth finished corrugated FRP ceiling and Wooden finished Roof Ventilation Duct Area to enhance the aesthetic appeal of coach interior.
 - Provision of camouflaged aluminium moulded strips on floor to discourage theft.
 - Stainless steel protective plate near all passenger seats to avoid colour fading due to footwear friction.
 - Red Emergency Buttons.
