

March - 05

## TNPSC BITS

- ❖ Maharashtra government decided to rename Aurangabad and Osmanabad as Chhatrapati Sambhaji Nagar and Dharashiv respectively.
- ❖ India hosted the first meeting of the governing board of BIMSTEC Energy Centre (BEC) in Bengaluru.
- ❖ GSM Association (GSMA) has conferred Government Leadership Award 2023 to India for implementing best practices in telecom policy and regulation.

## TAMIL NADU

### Pact with UNEP



- ❖ The Tamil Nadu government signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).
- ❖ It aims to develop an urban cooling programme in the State.
- ❖ The programme is being undertaken under the framework of the 'Cool Coalition' and the India-Denmark Green Strategic Partnership.
- ❖ The MoU will facilitate capacity-building for a range of stakeholders on sustainable cooling.

- ❖ It enhances South-South cooperation through training to other States in India and other countries on lessons from the programme

## NATIONAL

### Army exercise Topchi

- ❖ Indian Army conducted its annual training exercise Exercise Topchi in Devlali, Nashik, Maharashtra.
- ❖ The event shows the capability of the Indian artillery.
- ❖ This year, we have stressed on 'Atma nirbharata' (self-reliance).
- ❖ It showcased the integrated employment of firepower and surveillance assets to include guns, mortars, rockets, drones, and aviation assets.
- ❖ The guns and other systems be it the K-9 Vajra, Dhanush system or M777 gun system and Pinaka multi-barrel rocket launchers.



### Army puts up imposing firepower display

The Indian Army on Sunday put up an imposing firepower display with a raft of indigenous artillery guns, rocket systems and ammunition, including weapons deployed along the contested Line of Actual Control (LAC) where the Indian and Chinese armies have been locked in a lingering dispute for over 32 months. **By Rahul Singh**

#### EXERCISE TOPCHI-2023

The blockbuster demonstration of the Army's capabilities by the elite School of Artillery featured several big guns. HT was invited to witness the show.

The focus of the exercise was to showcase indigenous capabilities and strides made in achieving self-reliance in the defence sector, said Lieutenant General S Harimohan Iyer, commandant of the Devlali-based School of Artillery. "Atmanirbharta in defence is scaling new heights. The army is ready for any challenge," he said.

The drills came at a time when the army is pursuing a major firepower upgrade, and is set to induct more artillery guns, longer range rockets and loitering munition to bolster its capabilities along the China border.

#### Weapons deployed in the exercise

##### Dhanush towed artillery gun

It made its maiden appearance at the R-Day parade in 2017. Made by Jabalpur-based Gun Carriage Factory, its costs ₹14.5cr apiece.

Known as the desi Bofors, it's the first long-range artillery gun to be produced in India. The army has operationalised its first Dhanush regiment along the China border, and is now looking at raising a second regiment by March 2023.

**38km range**

#### K9 Vajra-T guns

The guns have been manufactured in India by private sector defence major Larsen & Toubro and South Korea's Hanwha Techwin. The army has already inducted 100 of these guns under a 2017 contract worth \$720 million, and some of them have been deployed in the Ladakh sector after winterisation upgrades as the guns were bought for a desert role. The army plans to buy 100 more of these.

#### M777 ultra-light howitzers

India ordered 145 M777 howitzers from the US for \$750 million in November 2016. The M777s were the first artillery guns to be ordered after the Bofors scandal unfolded in the late 1980s.

The 155 mm/39-calibre howitzers can be sling-loaded to helicopters and deployed to high-altitude areas. M777 manufacturer BAE Systems delivered 25 ready-built howitzers and the remaining guns have been built locally in collaboration with Mahindra Defence.

#### Sharang guns

The upgraded Sharang artillery guns are a key element of the artillery modernisation. The army already has three Sharang regiments, it's raising a fourth one, and eventually plans to have 15 such regiments. The Sharang project involves upgrading the army's vintage Soviet-origin 130mm M46 towed artillery pieces to 155 mm/45-calibre standard. The guns have an enhanced range - up from 27km to 37km - and better terminal effectiveness.

#### What's next

The army is looking at inducting ATAGS by the year-end. The indigenous howitzer was deployed for the ceremonial 21-gun salute at the 75th Independence Day ceremony at Red Fort last year along with

British guns that have been traditionally used for the event. The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) began the ATAGS project in 2013 to replace older army guns with a modern 155

mm artillery gun. It partnered with two private firms, Bharat Forge Limited and Tata Advanced Systems Limited, for manufacturing the gun, which has a range of 48 km.

### Joint training exercise 'Trishakti Prahar'

- ❖ The Indian military concluded a joint training exercise - Exercise Trishakti Prahar in North Bengal.

- ❖ The aim of the exercise was to practice battle preparedness of the security forces, using latest weapons and equipment in a networked, integrated environment, involving the Army, the Indian Air Force and CAPFs.
- ❖ As a part of the exercise, swift mobilisation and deployment practices were carried out in various locations across north Bengal.
- ❖ The area is strategically important to India.
- ❖ This narrow Siliguri region 20 to 30-km-wide passage touches Bangladesh in the south and Bhutan in the north.



### **TARKASH exercise**



- ❖ India and USA military recently conducted the TARKASHA exercise in Chennai, Tamil Nadu.

- ❖ It is a joint exercise by the National Security Guard (NSG) and US Special Operations Forces (SOF).
- ❖ For the first time “Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN)” terror response was included in this drill.
- ❖ CBRN weapons have the capability of creating mass casualties as well as mass disruption and therefore, are classified as weapons of mass destruction.
- ❖ The Protocol for the Prohibition of the Use of CBRN in War, also known as the Geneva Protocol, signed on June 17, 1925, at Geneva, Switzerland.
- ❖ It entered into force on February 8, 1928.
- ❖ Most recent use of CBRN weapons is came in the form of a sarin gas attack carried out by the Syrian army in 2013 against civilians during the Syrian Civil War.

### **Country Reports on Terrorism 2021: India**



- ❖ The U.S. Bureau of Counterterrorism released a report named 'Country Reports on Terrorism 2021: India'.
- ❖ The Indian government has made significant efforts to detect, disrupt, and degrade the operations of terrorist organizations.
- ❖ Terrorism affected the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K), the north eastern States, and parts of central India.
- ❖ Lashkar-e-Tayyiba, Jaish-e-Mohammed, Hizbul Mujahideen, ISIS, al-Qa'ida, Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen, and Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen Bangladesh, are the terrorist groups active in India.
- ❖ In 2021, 153 terrorist attacks were reported in India's Jammu and Kashmir.

- ❖ The attacks caused 274 deaths which included 45 security personnel, 36 civilians, and 193 terrorists.
- ❖ NIA (National Investigation Agency) through September 2021, investigated 37 cases related to ISIS and arrested 168 people.

## INTERNATIONAL

### **‘Chip 4’ talks for supply chain**

- ❖ Japan, USA, South Korea and Taiwan have taken part in the virtual conference of the “Chip 4” alliance.
- ❖ It is held under a new U.S.-led framework to help ensure a stable supply of semiconductors.
- ❖ It aims to discuss ways to maintain supply chain resilience in times of natural disasters and other contingencies.



### **83.7 percent enriched uranium**

- ❖ International Atomic Energy Agency discovered uranium particles enriched up to 83.7 per cent in the underground Fordo nuclear site of Iran.
- ❖ But there is no stockpile of uranium enriched above 69 per cent is being built by Iran.
- ❖ Iran’s 2015 nuclear deal limited Tehran’s uranium stockpile to 300 kilograms (661 pounds) and enrichment to 3.67%.

- ❖ The 3.67% enrichment is enough to fuel a nuclear power plant.
- ❖ The U.S.' unilateral withdraw from the accord in 2018 set in motion a series of attacks and escalations by Tehran over its program.



### **Sweden International Information Campaign**



- ❖ The Swedish government has announced an international information campaign to discourage migrants from coming to the country.
- ❖ The campaign will spread information about the migration policy of Sweden.
- ❖ During the campaign, the Sweden Government will create contact points in foreign countries.

- ❖ Sweden has been welcoming refugees and resettling them since 1950.
- ❖ According to the Sweden Government, in 2019, 76% of the refugees who arrived in the Nordic countries ended up in Sweden.
- ❖ Sweden is planning on decreasing this number by adopting this campaign.

## SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

### CE-20 cryogenic engine



- ❖ ISRO has successfully conducted the flight acceptance hot test of the CE-20 cryogenic engine.
- ❖ It will power the Cryogenic Upper Stage of the LVM3 launch vehicle for the Chandrayaan-3 mission.
- ❖ Chandrayaan-3 interplanetary mission has three major modules — the Propulsion module, Lander module and Rover.

## STATES

### First women MLAs from Nagaland

- ❖ Two women created history in Nagaland by becoming the first two women to win the Assembly polls.
- ❖ Hekani Jakhalu and Salhoutuonuo Kruse are both from Nagaland Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio's Nationalist Democratic Progressive Party.

- ❖ No woman was elected an MLA in Nagaland, though the state has witnessed 14 Assembly elections since its formation.
- ❖ Four women were among the 183 candidates who contested this year's elections for the Nagaland Assembly.



## MISCELLANEOUS

### Strongest telecoms operator

- ❖ Brand Finance has compiled a list of companies based on their brand value.
- ❖ In this post, we will explore the Top 150 most valuable and strongest telecoms operator brands according to Brand Finance 2023 rankings.
- ❖ Swisscom is the strongest telecoms brand earning 92/100 and elite AAA+ rating.
- ❖ It is followed by Jio and Etisalat as the second and third strongest brands.
- ❖ Huawei is ranked the most valuable and strongest telecoms infrastructure brand.

THE LEADER BOARD		Strongest telecom brands globally	Top Indian firms in terms of brand value
Company	Rank in 2023 (2022)	Company	Global rank in 2023 (2022)
Swisscom	1 (2)	Airtel	21 (20)
<b>Reliance Jio</b>	<b>2 (5)</b>	<b>Reliance Jio</b>	<b>27 (32)</b>
Etisalat	3 (1)	VIL	89 (102)
MTC	4 (4)	Tata Communications	131 (132)
Telcel	5 (8)	BSNL	148 (149)
Singtel	6 (9)		
Vodacom	7 (NA)		

Source: Brand Finance

