Minister Of Defence (MoD) Addressed the Second Edition of The Biannual Naval Commanders' Conference

Naval Commanders' Conference is an **apex-level biannual event** facilitating deliberations on significant strategic, operational and administrative issues among the Naval Commanders.

- The MoD lauded the **Indian Navy's readiness towards safeguarding the maritime interests of the country,** which has resulted in establishing its credibility as the **first responder in the Indian-Ocean Region (IOR).**

Importance of Indian-Ocean Region

- **Geopolitical:** IOR is emerging as a new theatre for geo-political competition between global powers e.g., USA, France etc.
  - Hence, it is crucial for **pursuing India's vision of a net security provider,** while also containing the rising footprint of China.
- **Security:** Incidents like **piracy, hijacking, drone attacks, missile attacks** and disruption of sea cable connections in the seas make it extremely sensitive.
- **Economic:** With 1/3rd of the world's bulk cargo traffic and 2/3rd of the world's oil shipments, IOR remains an important lifeline to international trade and transport.
- **Climate Security:** Indian Ocean has warmed faster than any other ocean since 1950s (IPCC report 2021).
  - Prompt **Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR)** by India is critical for sustaining its credibility as the first responder in the region.

> **India's initiatives to Establish leadership in IOR**
> - **Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA),** an inter-governmental organisation established in 1997 to strengthen regional cooperation within IOR.
> - **Information Fusion Centre – Indian Ocean Region (IFC IOR)** hosted by the Indian Navy to further **maritime safety and security in IOR.**
> - **MAHASAGAR** (Maritime Heads for Active Security And Growth for All in the Region), Indian Navy's outreach initiative.
> - **Neighbourhood First policy, SAGAR, HADAR** initiatives (like Vaccine Maitri, Operation Karuna, etc.)

Union minister of Cooperation launches initiatives to strengthen cooperatives sector

Key initiatives launched

- **Margdarshika:** Action plan for 2 lakh new Multi-Purpose Primary Agricultural Cooperative Societies (PACS), Dairy, and Fishery Cooperatives.
  - PACS are the **grass root level arms** of the short-term co-operative credit structure.
- **Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for 'White Revolution 2.0':** It is focused on women's empowerment through dairy initiatives.
  - It is expected to increase milk procurement to **1,000 lakh kilograms per day by 2029.**
- **SOPs for 'Cooperation among Cooperatives':** for financial inclusion.
  - Through this program, cooperative bank accounts were **opened for members of cooperative societies.**

Significance of cooperatives sector

- **Removing inequality:** as they are people-centered, not capital-centered, they distribute wealth in a more fair way.
- **Empowerment of farmers:** cooperative societies like NAFED, IFFCO, and AMUL have played a crucial role in the social and economic development of the farmers.
- **Financial inclusion:** cooperative banks provide loans to their members at low interest rates.
- **Women empowerment:** as it helps in increasing their representation and income.

> **About White Revolution**
> - The milk revolution, popularly known as **White Revolution, started in 1970** with the programme - **Operation Flood.**
> - **Operation Flood was implemented in three phases:**
>   - **Phase I (1970-80):** Linked 18 milksheds to 4 major cities (Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Chennai).
>   - **Phase II (1981-1985):** Established 43,000 village cooperatives, boosting milk powder production from 22,000 to 140,000 tons.
>   - **Phase III (1985-1996):** Added 30,000 new cooperatives; emphasis on research and development in animal health etc.
> - **Current Status:** India is the highest milk producer with 230.58 million tonnes production(2022-23).

Governing AI for Humanity: UN Advisory Body on Artificial Intelligence final report

Advisory body was formed last year to undertake analysis and **advance recommendations for the international governance of Artificial Intelligence (AI).**

Need for Global Governance of AI

➤ Accelerated development of AI **concentrates power and wealth on a global scale,** with geopolitical and geoeconomic implications.
➤ **Lack of understanding of AI's inner workings** to fully control its outputs or predict its evolution.
➤ As AI technology is **transboundary in structure and application,** it cannot be left to market forces alone.
➤ For **equitable distribution** of AI's opportunities such as optimizing energy grids, improving public health and agriculture, etc.

Gap in Global AI governance

➤ **Lack of truly global and comprehensive frameworks:** despite numerous AI governance documents and initiatives.
➤ **Lack of representation:** In the sampled countries, seven countries are parties to all the AI governance efforts, whereas 118 countries are parties to none (primarily in the global South).
➤ **Implementation issue:** Commitments do not translate into tangible outcomes leading to hindrance in sharing of the opportunities provided by AI equally.

> **Recommendations**
>
> ➤ **An independent international scientific panel on AI.**
> ➤ Twice-yearly intergovernmental and multi-stakeholder **policy dialogue on AI governance.**
> ➤ **Creation of an AI standards exchange,** bringing together stakeholders.
> ➤ Creation of an **AI capacity development network.**
> ➤ **Creation of a global fund for AI** to facilitate access to AI.
> ➤ **Creation of global AI data framework,** developed through a process initiated by a relevant agency.
> ➤ **AI office within the UN Secretariat** for supporting and coordinating global efforts in AI risk management and global governance.

Cabinet Committee on Security In Principle Approved Fencing Of India-Myanmar Border

The government is reported to have approved fencing the **entire 1,643 km porous India-Myanmar border** at an approximate coast of Rs 31,000 cr.

➤ **Only 30km border** of India with Myanmar is **fenced so far.**

About Porous border

➤ **Definition:** Porous border refers to border areas **not protected enough to stop people going through.** It could be both open (unfenced) and closed (fenced).
➤ **Current status**
  ⊙ In addition to Myanmar, India shares **open borders with Nepal and Bhutan.**
  ⊙ **India also shares porous border** issues with **Pakistan, Bangladesh and China.**
➤ **Threats to national security:** Such a border facilitates:
  ⊙ **Cross-border terrorism, insurgency in the North East,** arms smuggling, human trafficking etc.
  ⊙ **Drug trafficking** (Myanmar is part of the Golden Triangle).
  ⊙ **Refugee influx** (resulting from political instability neighbours).

Challenges in border fencing

➤ **Rugged terrain:** Marshy land, riverine borders, and **extreme climatic** conditions (like in Siachen Glacier) pose technological and financial challenges.
➤ **Lack of demarcation:** Some of India's borders with its neighbours are disputed and therefore are not demarcated.
➤ **Popular discontent due to cross-border ethnic ties:** For example, Zo Reunification Organisation of Mizoram protested against government's decision to fence the India-Myanmar border and suspend the Free Movement Regime (FMR).

Initiatives for effective border management

Comprehensive Integrated Border Management System (CIBMS): Integration of manpower, sensors, networks, intelligence and command control solutions.

Border Electronically Dominated QRT Interception Technique (BOLD–QIT): Being deployed under CIBMS for the **use of different kinds of intrusion detection sensors** (radar, electro optics, etc.)

Border Infrastructure and Management (BIM) Scheme: A Central Sector Scheme for the construction of border fence, border flood lights, etc

Forest (Conservation) Amendment Act,2023: Strategic projects concerning national security located **within 100 km of distance** from the **International Borders, LAC, and LoC are exempted from the purview of the Act** (thus exempted from some prior approvals)

FATF launched Mutual Evaluation Report (MER) for India

MER on 'Anti-money laundering (AML) and counter-terrorist financing (CFT) measures' placed India in the '**regular follow-up**' category.

➤ This recognises India's **effective compliance with FATF standards in AML/CFT efforts.**

Key highlighted

➤ **Key areas of improvement:** Understanding Money laundering and terror financing (ML/TF) risk, national coordination and cooperation, use of financial intelligence for ML, predicate offences and TF investigations.

➤ **Main sources of ML:** Illegal activities committed within country including fraud such as cyber-enabled fraud, corruption and drug trafficking.

➤ **Security threats:** Islamic State or al-Qaeda linked groups active in and around Jammu and Kashmir are the most significant terror threats.
  ◉ India also faces terrorism threats from **regional insurgencies in the Northeast and North, and Left-Wing Extremist groups**

➤ **Issues in implementation of PMLA:** Despite rising investigations under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), the **number of prosecution complaints and concluded trials** did not show a proportionate increase.

Key recommendations

➤ **Implementing targeted financial sanctions** to ensure freezing of funds and assets without delay.

➤ **Define domestic PEPs** (politically exposed persons) under the PMLA.
  ◉ Currently, foreign PEPs are defined under PMLA.

➤ **Protect the NPOs from terror abuse through** risk-based enhanced measures.

➤ MER is an **assessment of a country's measures to combat** ML & TF and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

➤ **India, along with four other G20 countries** (UK, France, Italy, and suspended Russia), is in the top **"regular follow-up" category.**

➤ **Most developing countries** fall under the **"enhanced follow-up" category,** requiring annual reports, compared to every three years for "regular follow-up" countries.

Seven Net-Zero Climate Resilient City Action Plans (CRCAP) 2070 released

They are released at the **National Workshop on Multi-Level Action for Climate Resilient Cities** in line with India's goal of achieving **Net-zero emissions by 2070.**

➤ **Ahmedabad** has released its **Net zero CRCAP 2070 last year** during the U20 Mayoral Summit.

Key highlights from the eight Net-zero CRCAP

➤ **Climate Finance:** All 8 cities require **more than USD 85,000 billion until 2070** for financing climate action projects like water supply and sanitation, energy efficiency etc.

➤ **Emission Reduction:** Based on current efforts, **91% reduction** in city emissions are possible.

➤ **Creation of Green jobs:** Implementation of climate actions are expected to **create approximately 8 lakh green jobs.**

About Climate Resilience:

➤ It is the **ability to anticipate, prepare for, and respond to hazardous events, trends, or disturbances related to climate.**

➤ It involves assessing **climate-related risks** and taking steps to cope with the risks.

Need for Climate Resilient Cities

➤ **Extreme Weather Events:** to strengthen resilience capabilities to withstand **climate-related shocks such as flooding, sea level rise, urban heat islands** etc.

➤ **Climate change mitigation and adaptation:** Cities account for approximately **two-thirds of global energy use** and over **70 percent of energy-related greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.**

Initiatives for Climate Resilient Cities

➤ **Capacity Building for Low-carbon and Climate Resilient City Development (CapaCITIES) Project:** By Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) for mainstreaming climate action in urban development.

➤ **India's ClimateSmart Cities Assessment Framework:** Assessment of Smart cities' performance based on five themes to tackle climate change.

➤ **Resilient Cities Network (R-Cities):** Launched in 2020, for improving climate resilience based on 3 pillars- Climate Resilience, Circularity and Equity.

Also in News

Contempt of Court

The **Jharkhand** government has filed a **Contempt** petition against the Centre alleging **delay in appointment of the Chief Justice of the High Court.**

About Contempt of Court

➤ Defined under **Contempt of Courts Act, 1971.**

➤ **Article 129 and Article 215** give power to the **SC and HCs** to **punish contempt.**

Two types of contempt

➤ **Civil contempt: Wilful disobedience** to any judgment, decree, direction, order, writ or other process of a court or wilful breach of an undertaking given to a court;

➤ **Criminal Contempt: Publication** of any matter which
  ◉ **Scandalises** or **lowers the authority of, any court;** or
  ◉ **Prejudices,** or **interferes** with the due course of any **judicial proceeding;** or
  ◉ **Interferes** with, or **obstructs** the **administration of justice.**

Revised Guidelines for Electric Vehicle Charging Stations

Recently, the Government released guidelines for EV charging stations in line with the new **PM E-DRIVE Scheme.**

About the Guidelines:

➤ Aim at **increasing EV adoption** by ensuring charging stations are **safe, reliable, and accessible, and developing a robust national charging network,** initially prioritising key locations.

➤ Guidelines will apply to **Privately-owned, semi-restricted areas** (E.g. office buildings) and **public spaces** (E.g. petrol pumps, railway stations).

➤ **New revenue-sharing model** between government and private players.

➤ **Tariff** for electricity supply to Charging station shall **not exceed 'Average Cost of Supply' till 31st March, 2028.**

➤ Specifies **minimum density** of public charging stations.

Asia's Largest Bio-CNG Plant

The Indore Municipal Corporation produces **17,000 kilograms of Bio-CNG every day** from Asia's largest municipal solid waste-based facility.

- The plant was **launched in 2022.**
- It is part of **Galvanizing Organic Bio-Agro Resources Dhan (GOBARdhan) initiative** to turn waste into wealth.

About GOBARdhan initiative

- **The Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation of Ministry of Jal Shakti** is the coordinating department.
- **Aim:** converting biodegradable/ organic waste into valuable resources such as biogas, compressed biogas (CBG), and organic manure and to promote circular economy.

Fast Track Immigration - Trusted Travellers' Programme (FTI-TTP)

More than 18,000 individuals registered on the first list of FTI-TTP.

- In June 2024 the FTI-TTP was inaugurated at Indira Gandhi International Airport, New Delhi.

About FTI-TTP

- **Nodal Ministry:** Ministry of Home Affairs
- **Objective:** To **speed up the Immigration clearance process** for eligible persons at select major airports through **electronic gates.**
- **Two phases:** In the first phase, **Indian citizens and OCI cardholders** are covered and in the second phase, **foreign travellers** will be covered.
- **Airports covered: 21 major airports** in the country will be covered.
- **Nodal agency:** Bureau of Immigration

Amur Falcon

Manipur's Tamenglong district imposes a ban on hunting of Amur Falcon.

About Amur Falcon

- It is locally known as **'Kahuaipuina'** in Manipur.
- **Migratory raptor**: Make voyage from breeding grounds in Russia and China to southern Africa.
  - **22,000 km journey** (longest sea crossing of any raptor)
  - Passes through **Manipur and Nagaland.**
- Faces the threat of **illegal trapping and killing** during migration.
- **Feeds on dragonflies** that follow a similar migration path over Arabian Sea.
- **IUCN Red List Status:** Least Concern.

Pagers

Recently, many Pagers used by Hezbollah in Lebanon exploded simultaneously.

About of Pagers

- Pagers or beepers are **wireless communication devices,** first patented in 1949 by Alfred J. Gross.
- **Functions:** To **receive and display alphanumeric or voice messages via radio frequencies** from a base station or a central dispatch.
- **Benefits**
  - **Long battery life,** easy to use and one-way pagers are **generally untraceable.**
  - **Tone, beep, or vibration for message alert is desired** in noisy environments or setups like hospitals.
  - Due to non-dependence on **cellular networks,** they are reliable in situations (like natural disasters).

Project 200

Bengaluru-based space startup **Bellatrix Aerospace** unveiled a **Project 200.**

About Project 200

- It is an innovative **satellite designed to operate at an Ultra-Low Earth Orbit** (180 km-250 km).
- **Advantage of Ultra-LEO:** At 200 km, a satellite's capability would improve significantly due to **reduced communication latency and improved image resolution.** Cost **of the satellite is also low.**
  - So far, **limitations on propulsion technology** have prevented satellites from operating at this orbit.
    - Conventional LEO satellites typically orbit well above 400-450 km.

Exercise AIKYA

National Disaster Management Authority and Southern Command of the **Indian Arm** are set to host the Exercise AIKYA in Chennai (Tamil Nadu).

- The exercise's **primary objective** is to **improve disaster preparedness and foster strong collaboration** among key stakeholders.
- The exercise will incorporate **simulations, technology discussions, and expert insights** into various disaster management roles.
  - Since 1900, India has suffered an economic loss of $150 billion with largest loss from floods and storms (SBI Ecowrap 2023).

Place in News — Jordan (Capital: Amman)

World Health Organization (WHO) declared **Jordan as the first country in the world to eliminate leprosy.**

Political features

- **Location:** in the north of the Arabian Peninsula and in West Asia.
- **Bordering nations:** Syria, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Israel, Palestine (West Bank).
- **Bordering water bodies:** Jordan river, Dead Sea and Gulf of Aqaba

Geographical features:

- **Highest Point:** Jabal Umm Ad Dami
- **Rivers:** Yarmūk River, Jordan River.

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