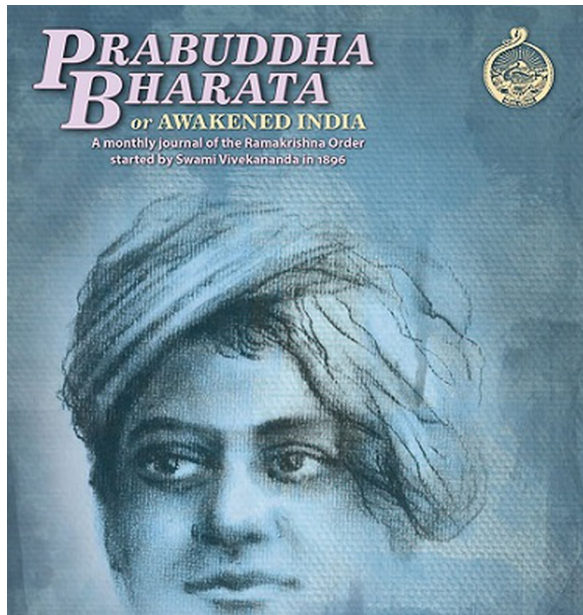


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Prabuddha Bharata



- PM Modi to address 125th anniversary celebrations of 'Prabuddha Bharata' journal 'Prabuddha Bharata' is a monthly journal of the Ramakrishna Order which was started by Swami Vivekananda
- It has been in publication since 1896 and carries articles on social sciences and humanities comprising historical, psychological, cultural and social sciences themes.
- 'Prabuddha Bharata' is regarded as a significant medium for spreading the message of India's ancient spiritual wisdom.
- It was initially published in Chennai for two years after which the publication operation was shifted to Almora town of Uttarakhand.
- The place of publication was again moved in April 1899 to the Advaita Ashrama and the journal has been publishing from there ever since.
- Several prominent people such as Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Sri Aurobindo, Netaji Subhas Chandra Sister Nivedita and the first Vice President of India Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan have contributed their writings towards the journal in the fields of history, psychology, social issues, Indian culture etc.

Foreign Exchange Determination in India



Foreign exchange Rate & Exchange Rate Regimes:

- Foreign Exchange Rate is a price of one country currency in relation to other country currency
- It is the amount of domestic currency that must be paid in order to get a unit of foreign currency.
- As per Purchasing Power Parity theory, the foreign exchange rate is determined by the relative purchasing powers of the two currencies.
- An exchange rate regime is the system that a country's monetary authority, generally the central bank-, adopts to establish the exchange rate of its own currency against other currencies.
- Each country is free to adopt the exchange-rate regime that it considers optimal, and will do so using mostly monetary and sometimes even fiscal policies.

Megacity Plan for Little Andaman



- The NITI Aayog has proposed to leverage the strategic location and natural features of the Little Andaman island by building a new greenfield coastal city.
- It will be developed as a free trade zone and will compete with Singapore and Hong Kong.

- This plan outlined in the 'Sustainable Development of Little Andaman Island Vision Document' by NITI Aayog for the fragile Little Andaman Island in the Andaman and Nicobar island group has raised alarm among conservationists.

Importance of this project:

- The islands are situated in a strategic location in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR). Therefore they are critical for India's security.
- These islands have the potential to become an important element of India's "Act East Policy" of engaging with countries in the East Asia region.
- The Andaman and Nicobar chain of islands could be used as a basis for Indian maritime power projection into the Indo-Pacific and even beyond into the south-west Pacific.
- They could be used for India's Third Fleet and the trans-shipment hub.
- This could potentially be a strategic game-changer, rivalling the ports of Singapore or Colombo.
- Thus, better infrastructure and connectivity will help India enhance its economic and defence capabilities in the islands.

International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor



- Assembly of the world's largest nuclear fusion reactor began in France, It is known as the International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor or ITER.
- The ITER project is a joint effort by countries such as Japan, India, the European Union, the United States, Russia, China and South Korea.
- It was launched in 2006, has a five-year assembly phase and plans to reach its maximum power output by 2035.
- ITER will be the first fusion device to produce net energy. ITER will be the first fusion device to maintain fusion for long periods of time.

- And ITER will be the first fusion device to test the integrated technologies, materials, and physics regimes necessary for the commercial production of fusion-based electricity.
- Thousands of engineers and scientists have contributed to the design of ITER since the idea for an international joint experiment in fusion was first launched in 1985.
- The ITER Members—China, the European Union, India, Japan, Korea, Russia and the United States—are now engaged in a 35-year collaboration to build and operate the ITER experimental device, and together bring fusion to the point where a demonstration fusion reactor can be designed.

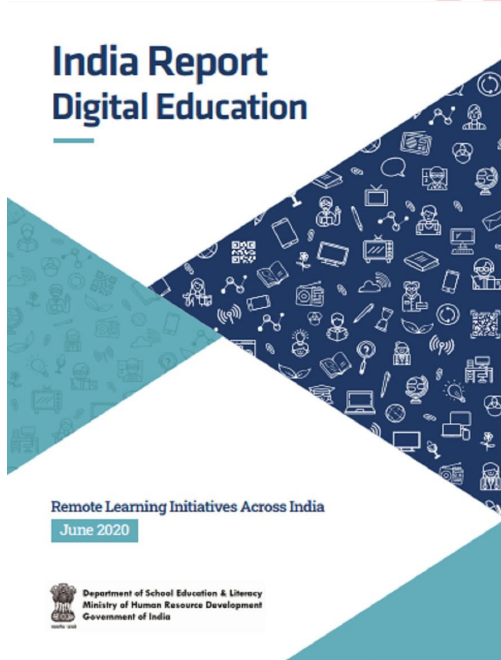
Significance of ITER

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- ITER will be the first fusion device to test the integrated technologies, materials, and physics regimes necessary for the commercial production of fusion-based electricity.

The project is funded and run by seven member entities

- The European Union, China, India, Japan, Russia, South Korea and the United States.

India Report- Digital Education June 2020



- Union Minister for HRD Shri Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' launches India Report- Digital Education June 2020

Who Prepares a Report?

- The report, prepared by Digital Education Division of MHRD in collaboration with Education Departments of states and union territories.

AIM

- The report elaborates on the innovative methods adopted by the Ministry of HRD.

Education Departments of States and Union Territories for ensuring accessible and inclusive education to children at home and reducing learning gaps.

- This report brings a better understanding of the various initiatives taken to facilitate remote learning and education for all by taking schools to the students.

Key Points

- Enlisting the various initiatives taken by the HRD Ministry, DIKSHA platform, Swayam Prabha TV Channel, Online MOOC courses, On AIR – Shiksha Vani, DAISY by NIOS for differently-abled, e-PathShala, National Repository of Open Educational Resources (NROER) to develop e-content and energized books, telecast through TV channels, e-Learning portals, webinars, chat groups, distribution of books and other digital initiatives along with State/UT governments.

- The report stated some of the major digital initiatives taken by the state governments, which include SMILE (Social Media Interface for Learning Engagement) in Rajasthan, Project Home Classes in Jammu, Padhai Tunhar Duvaar (Education at your doorstep) in Chhattisgarh, Unnayan Initiatives in Bihar through portal and mobile application, Mission Buniyaad in NCT of Delhi, Kerala's own educational TV channel (Hi-Tech school program), e-scholar portal as well as free online courses for teachers in Meghalaya, and online certificate programs for teachers on 'Management of mental well-being during COVID' in Telangana.
- Highlighted some innovative apps and portals launched by some of the states as a means to facilitate remote learning. They include Top Parent App and KHEL (Knowledge Hub for Electronic Learning) (Madhya Pradesh), Sampark Baithak App (Uttarakhand), Biswa Vidya Assam Mobile Application (Assam), Vidyavahini App, Mera Mobile Mera Vidyalaya and Unnayan Bihar Teacher App (Bihar), Phoenix Mobile application (Chandigarh), Learning Outcomes Smart Q Mobile App (Maharashtra), iScuela Learn Mobile Application (Punjab), Sikkim Edutech App (Sikkim), EmpowerU Shiksha Darpan (Tripura), Top Parent app (Uttar Pradesh) among others.

ShramShakti portal



Ministry of Tribal Affairs

- The Union Minister of Tribal Affairs launched "ShramShakti", a National Migration Support Portal at a programme held at Panjim, Goa.
- It would effectively help in the smooth formulation of state and national level programs for migrant workers.
- The tribal migration repository, ShramShakti would be able to successfully address the data gap and empower migrant workers who generally migrate in search of employment and income generation.
- The various data that will be recorded via Shram Shakti include demographic profile, livelihood options, skill mapping and migration pattern.
- It would also help the government in linking the migrant population with existing welfare schemes – under AtmaNirbhar Bharat; various data that will be recorded via ShramShakti include demographic profile, livelihood options, skill mapping and migration pattern.
- The cell would address multiple needs of migrants – legal support, skill development, job linkages, access to public services, health, insurance, financial inclusion

shramshakti Digital Data Solution

- Shramshakti is a National Migration Support Portal.
- Shram-Saathi is a training manual for migrant workers.
- Shramshakti and Shram-Saathi is a joint initiative of Union Ministry of Tribal Affairs (MoTA) and Goa Government.

- The Chief Minister of Goa will also launch a dedicated Migration cell in Goa in order to facilitate and support approximately 4 lakh migrants who come from different States to Goa.
- The MoTA has also sanctioned Tribal research Institute, Tribal Museum, Van Dhan Kendras and Tribal Lok Utsav in Goa.

Jal Jeevan Mission to help revive urban waterbodies



- The Mission would also aim to bridge the gap of 2.64 crore sewer connections in the 500 cities under the existing Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT).
- The mission would include rejuvenation of water bodies to boost the sustainable freshwater supply and creation of green spaces. “JJM(U) will promote circular economy of water through development of city water balance plan for each city focusing on recycle/reuse of treated sewage, rejuvenation of water bodies and water conservation

Van Dhan programme

VAN DHAN SCHEME

Features of the Scheme:	
	10 SHGs* of 30 tribal gatherers is constituted
	To be trained and provided with working capital
	SHGs will market their products within and across states
	To form clusters to aggregate their stock and link with facility of primary processing in Van Dhan Vikas Kendras
	Involvement of big corporates under PPP** model



- Van Dhan Vikas Karyakram is an initiative targeting livelihood generation for tribal population by harnessing the wealth of forest i.e. Van Dhan.

Aims

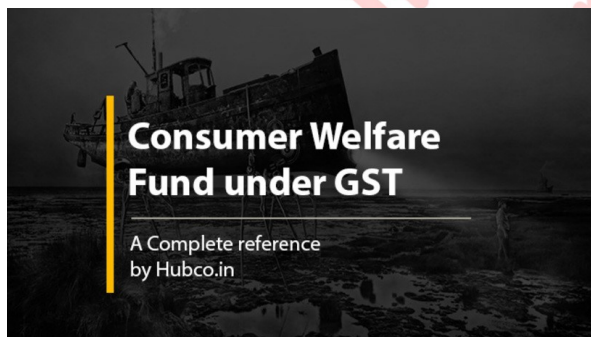
- The programme aims to tap into the traditional knowledge and skill sets of tribal people by adding technology and Information Technology for upgradation of output at each stage and to convert the tribal wisdom into a remunerative economic activity.
- Van Dhan Vikas Karyakram seeks to promote and leverage the collective strength of tribal people to achieve a viable scale to take on the predatory market forces in the areas where these are still prevalent.
- Van Dhan Vikas Karyakram is primarily a component under the Mechanism for Marketing of Minor Forest Produce (MFP) through Minimum Support Price (MSP) & Development of Value Chain of Ministry of Tribal Affairs (MoTA).
- The training component of the Scheme is proposed to be taken up in programme (Karyakram) mode to provide enhanced livelihood and income generation for tribals.

Udyog Manthan



- Udyog Manthan, a marathon of webinars covering 45 sectors focused on Quality and Productivity in all major sectors of manufacturing and services, started on January 4, 2021.
- This collaborative exercise is an initiative of the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) in association with Department of Commerce, Quality Council of India, National Productivity Council, Bureau of Indian Standards, Industry chambers and various concerned ministries.
- The initiative is being received very well by the industry. Udyog Manthan is only the beginning of a Quality and Productivity movement in the country.
- The government's efforts in bringing out technical regulations for many sectors are being widely appreciated.
- Udyog Manthan will cover various sectors including pharma, medical devices, closed circuit camera, Electronics System Design and manufacturing, New and Renewable Energy, Robotics, Aerospace and Defence, Quality in Government processes which will shine a guiding light towards realizing the vision of AatmaNirbhar Bharat.

Consumer Welfare Fund



- Under the Central Goods and Services Tax (CGST) Act, 1917, Government has set up the Consumer Welfare Fund (CWF) to promote and protect the welfare of the consumers
- It has worked successfully under the extant Consumer Welfare Fund(CWF) Guidelines, 2019 and achieved the objective for which it has been set up.
- The Government has not revised these guidelines. Except during Covid-19 period, during which restrictions were imposed on movements, gatherings of persons and different kinds of other activities, agencies/organizations who were provided financial assistance from CWF have carried out the activities for which they were given the funds.

The Government has taken following other steps to promote and protect the welfare of the consumers by creating awareness and strengthening consumer movements in the country:

- I. A Pan-India consumer awareness campaign "JagoGrahakJago" through print, electronic, outdoor and social media through various agencies/ organizations/ Ministries like All India Radio, Doordarshan, National Film Development Corporation, Bureau of Outreach & Communication, Department of Posts, etc.

- II. Participation in various fairs/festivals/events to generate awareness among the consumers living in rural and backward areas of the country.
- III. Providing grant-in-aid to States/UTs to generate awareness in regional languages.
- IV. Dissemination of consumer awareness messages through social media.
- V. Celebration of World Consumer Rights Day/National Consumer Day.
- VI. Bureau of Indian Standard (BIS) Mobile Care App.
- VII. The Consumer Protection Act, 2019 (CP Act 2019) has been implemented w.e.f. 20th July, 2020.
- VIII. Government has set up a National Consumer Helpline (NCH) with toll free number 1800-11-4000 or short code 14404 to handle the consumer grievances
- IX. Consumer awareness programmes are organized through the network of BIS Offices across the country for promoting the concept of standardization, certification and quality consciousness among consumers as well as manufactures.
- X. BIS has a full-fledged department, namely Complaints Management and Enforcement Department, functioning at its HQ in New Delhi, as the nodal department to cater to Consumer Complaints regarding standards. Publicity about Standard Marks i.e. on ISI Mark, Hallmark and Registration Mark is given primarily through its network of branch and regional offices along with the Headquarters by BIS.

Implementation of ONORC scheme



- The Department in association with State/UT Governments is implementing 'One Nation One Ration Card' (ONORC) plan for nation-wide portability of ration cards under the National Food Security Act, 2013 (NFSA). So far, the facility has been enabled in 32 States/UTs covering nearly 69 Crore beneficiaries, almost 86% of NFSA population of the country.
- Under ONORC, the beneficiaries, if desire, can lift their entitled foodgrains from any ePoS (electronic Point of Sale device) enabled Fair Price Shop (FPS) of their choice by using their same/existing ration cards with biometric authentication on the ePoS device at the time of lifting the foodgrains through portability.
- No direction has been given to States/UTs for issuance of new ration cards to beneficiaries under ONORC. However, for the sake of uniformity under ONORC operations, States/UTs have been advised to adopt a standard bi-lingual format for ration cards whenever they decide to issue/print new ration cards under NFSA in the future.

World Wetland Day 2021



- This year's World Wetland Day theme shines a spotlight on wetlands as a source of freshwater and encourages actions to restore them and stop their loss.

Chauri Chaura centenary celebrations



- Prime Minister will inaugurate the year-long centenary celebrations tomorrow via video-conferencing.
- The day marks 100 years of the 'Chauri Chaura' incident, a landmark event in the country's fight for independence.
- A large group of freedom fighters participating in the Non-cooperation movement, clashed with local police who opened fire. The locals attacked the police station and set fire to it, killing its occupants
- Mahatma Gandhi, who was completely against violence, stopped the Non-cooperation movement on 12 February the same year
- After an immediate crackdown, the British colonial rulers arrested hundreds of people for the "Chauri Chaura" incident. Mahatma Gandhi was also arrested but later released in February 1924, on grounds of poor health
- Over 200 people were tried on charges of rioting; six of them died in police custody.
- The trial lasted eight months; most of those held were sentenced to death. The Allahabad High Court in April 1923 reviewed the death sentences; 19 were confirmed and 110 were given life sentence

Villagers in Maharashtra's Kurnoor install speakers on temple to listen news bulletin of AIR Pune



- The villagers of Kurnoor in Akkalkot tehsil of Solapur district, a settlement of around six thousand residents, have installed speakers on Lord Dutta Mandir and the priest, Dhondiba Dhumale tunes in Regional Marathi news bulletin of AIR Pune.
- The villagers listen to the news while engaged in their preparations for the day ahead. .

- The activity is going on for last two years and the villagers feel they are getting the real news they need
- The speakers are kept silent when there is any death in the vicinity. Apart from news the temple speakers also provides the villagers important national messages, speeches of Prime Minister and other relevant important programmes.

World Bank to provide USD 500 million to Bangladesh for improving Road and Digital Connectivity



- The government of Bangladesh signed an agreement with the World Bank for the upgradation of rural roads and connectivity in the western region on Monday.
- The project is expected to benefit over 20 million people in the western region of Bangladesh.
- The project will help upgrade the 48 kilometre two-lane Jashore-Jhenaidah road to a modern 4-lane highway. It will also help improve 600 kilometre of connecting rural roads and build or develop new rural markets.
- The project will finance installation of fiber-optic cables along the highway to ensure fast and reliable internet service, said the World Bank Press release.
- World Bank Country Director for Bangladesh and Bhutan Mercy Tembon said that better connectivity and logistics will help farmers reach new and existing markets quickly and at less cost.
- The project envisages setting up of separate lanes for slow moving vehicles to reduce accidents along highways. It will also install road crash barriers, signage and safe crossing facilities for pedestrians.
- The project is the first of a multi-phased USD1.4 billion 10-year program to upgrade the existing 110 kilometre two-lane highway, Bhomra-Satkhira-Navaron and Jashore-Jhenaidah. In the current phase, the project will be implemented in four districts namely Jashore, Jhenaidah, Magura, and Chuadanga.
- The government of Bangladesh signed an agreement with the World Bank for the upgradation of rural roads and connectivity in the western region yesterday.
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On the alert, always (Written by M.P. Nathanael)

- Despite the training and precautionary measures adopted, security forces lost many personnel in 2009 and 2010, with 76 CRPF men killed in a terrible attack in Dantewada in April 2010
- But the CRPF hit back with a vengeance and neutralised close to 200 Maoists between 2009 and 2011.
- The CRPF slowly gained the upper hand and is now largely on the offensive.
- It has forced the Maoists to be on the run or surrender, which has brought down incidents of violence in LWE-affected States.
- As lives are still lost, the intelligence set-up in the LWE-affected States needs to be geared up not only to avert attacks on security forces but also so that they can be on the offensive against the extremists.
- Extensive use of Belgian Malinois dogs could help in timely detection of IEDs.
- Drones, too, are being used as force multipliers though they have not been very effective in thwarting IED blasts.
- Efforts are on to upgrade technical intelligence.
- CRPF personnel should stay in pucca buildings as temporary huts are not only prone to attacks but also take a toll on the men due to the vagaries of the weather, though there can be no denying that there has been considerable improvement in recent years.
- There is the issue of funds too.
- Lately, against a projected demand of ₹114 crore for construction of accommodation, a meagre ₹33 crore was allotted.
- The responsibility of providing suitable accommodation to the Central Armed Police Force (CAPFs) battalions devolves on the States where they are deployed, though the CRPF has now undertaken this task on its own to hasten the work.

The U.S. and India: a tale of two sieges (Written by Narayan Lakshman)

- On January 6, 2021, the U.S. Capitol building was partially taken over by a violent mob comprising supporters of former President Donald Trump.
- They attacked law enforcement officers, vandalised public property, and threatened lawmakers in Congress.
- Twenty days later, a rally planned on Republic Day in India led to violence after farmers protesting three new laws
- The common thread between the sieges on two major public buildings — the U.S. Capitol and the Red Fort — is that a discontented collective vented its anger about a recent political development through a mass rally.

- In India, anger has been rising steadily since Parliament passed three laws reforming the way the mandi, or marketplace, system works.
- A second similarity across the two sieges is the emergence of disturbing images on social media, showing a darker side of the mass rallies – a propensity for targeted or planned violence.
- In the widest arc of history, democracy has often been about the informal balance of power in societies — usually favouring a religious or racial majority — expressed through formal trappings of democratic practice, principally the institution of elections.
- The institutions of a free press and free and fair elections typically get degraded and devalued by society in the process.

Booting out partial democracy

- On February 1, the Myanmar army seized power, turning a partial democracy into a full-fledged military rule, yet again.
- This creates a perception of déjà vu as one recalls 1962, 1988 and 1990, the milestone years when the generals took similar drastic actions to overthrow a democratic government
- Between March 2016 and January 2021, the National League for Democracy (NLD) led by Aung San Suu Kyi shared power with the military.
- This was a bold experiment to govern an intensely complex nation in Southeast Asia. Myanmar thus became a car driven by two drivers.
- The military's actions, its spokesman pointed out that there was “terrible fraud in the voter list” in the parliamentary elections held in November 2020, and that the Election Commission “failed to settle the matter.”
- Claiming that this development would “obstruct the path to democracy”, the army declared an emergency, transferring all powers to Commander-in-Chief Min Aung Hlaing.
- The decision seems questionable on legal and constitutional grounds. First, electoral issues need to be addressed and resolved by relevant authorities, not the military leadership.
- Second, Article 417 of the Constitution empowers the President to proclaim emergency, in consultation with the National Defence and Security Council. It does not seem that the Council met or presidential consent was obtained
- Deeper reflection raises a fundamental question: what troubled the NLD-military equation in the past five years, making it an uneasy relationship which collapsed completely this week?
- The fact that the generals swung into action hours before the newly elected Parliament was due to hold its first session shows that discussions to resolve differences may have continued until the last minute.
- First, ideologically the two segments of the political elite have been at war with each other

- The army has a sense of entitlement to power on the grounds that it secured independence, defended the country against secession, and ensured stability and development.
- It views itself as the guardian of the state. NLD leader Ms. Suu Kyi, the other protagonist, has always expressed admiration for the army (especially because it was established and nurtured by her father), but she has been a staunch advocate of democracy, a system in which the army should be completely apolitical.
- Second, in political terms the fight is for power. The army has been used to exercising power for long, which yields it immense economic dividends too.
- Third, presidential ambitions and the future of Senior General Min Aung Hlaing's career constitute a relevant issue. Back in 2016, and even now, argue well-informed sources, he nurtured the dream to be Myanmar's President. Ms. Suu Kyi was opposed to it.
- Besides, she was perhaps unwilling even to extend his tenure. He is due to retire from the army in July.
- The military leadership understands the people's psyche well. The divide between the Burmans, the majority group, and the ethnic minorities remains wide.
- The latter are generally opposed to a strong Central government.
- Many worry how India, the world's largest democracy, should cope with the forcible overthrow of democracy in a neighbouring country.
- The government is committed to the policy of non-interference in another state's internal affairs.
- It is also guided by the national interest
- Therefore, in managing relations with Myanmar, India will astutely balance its principles, values, interests and geopolitical realities.

First Indo-US Combat Drill Of Biden Era In Rajasthan Next Week



- In the first such bilateral wargame after the Biden administration took charge in Washington and reiterated India's role as a key partner in the Indo-Pacific as well as the need to strengthen the "Quad".
- Indian officials say the 'Yudh Abhyas' exercise, which will be held at the Mahajan Field Firing ranges from February 8 to 21, will once again underscore the continuing upward trajectory in defence cooperation with the US, which enjoys bipartisan support among the Democrats and Republicans.

- The US contingent for Yudh Abhyas will include a brigade headquarters and a battalion group of around 250 soldiers from a Stryker Brigade Combat Team.
- India will also field an infantry brigade headquarters and a battalion group from the Jammu and Kashmir Light Infantry for the exercise
- The aim is to further enhance interoperability in counter-terrorist operations in a semi-urban, semi-desert terrain, along with attack helicopters and infantry combat vehicles,” said an officer.
- Yudh Abhyas, which comes after India conducted the 24th edition of the top-notch ‘Malabar’ naval exercise with the other Quad countries (US, Japan and Australia) in November, will be followed by the ‘Vajra Prahar’ land combat exercise in March

Tata To Build Military Aircraft In India



- In a first for the industry, the Tata Group will develop and manufacture a military aircraft in India, has acquired intellectual property rights for a German-origin platform.
- The plan, ET has reliably learnt, is to integrate indigenous sensors and payloads to convert it into an intelligence-gathering asset.
- The high-altitude, twin-engine aircraft, capable of playing multiple roles from signal intelligence to cross-border surveillance, is currently in the final stages of testing in Germany. It is likely to arrive in India in the next three months for further integration.
- This would be the first time that an Indian private entity is looking at making a full military-grade aircraft, which until now has been the domain of the state-owned Hindustan Aeronautics NSE -0.77 % (HAL).
- Tata Advanced Systems (TASL) will showcase the capabilities of the aircraft at the AeroIndia in Bengaluru next week. Though the company has not shared details of the design, the aircraft is likely to be based on the Grob G 180 SPn – a German-made jet that never reached serial production due to financial strains.

Aero India 2021 — World’s First ‘Hybrid’ Air Show Takes Flight In Bengaluru



- The world’s first ‘hybrid’ air show – Aero India – is set to be organised in Bengaluru from 3 to 5 February.
- “This is the first-of-its-kind hybrid air show. This means that while people can attend the show in person, those who can’t make it due to Covid restrictions in their countries can attend it digitally

- Aero India will see the participation of top aviation firms, while India will showcase its indigenous defence capability, with an eye on Africa and the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) for the export of fighter jets, helicopters and missiles.
- Apart from global aviation giants such as Boeing, Lockheed Martin, Dassault and Airbus, the show will also see the participation of top defence firms involved in the aviation sector including Thales, BAE Systems and missile manufacturer MBDA.
- India hosting the defence ministers of about 28 IOR countries, including Iran. India sees the IOR as a natural extension of its sphere of influence, and has gone from calling itself the next “security provider” in the region to the “preferred security partner”.

Multinational Exercise Sea Dragon Concluded In Guam



- The U.S. Navy and partners from Australia, Canada, India and Japan successfully completed operations for the multilateral exercise Sea Dragon 2021 in Guam, Jan. 27.
- For two weeks, over 190 personnel from the five nations conducted over 250 hours of ground and classroom training, culminating in high-level exercises to track a real-world U.S. Navy submarine.
- Now in its third year, the goal of Sea Dragon is twofold: to demonstrate advanced ASW tactics, while at the same time continuing to build on multinational participation with U.S. allies and partners, as well as commitment to the security of the Indo-Pacific region.
- Canada, India, Japan, Australia, and the U.S. are natural maritime partners, sharing common values and seafaring traditions. Exercises such as Sea Dragon are vital in strengthening relationships and maritime security.