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YUDH ABHYAS -2024



Context:

- The **20th edition** of the **India - USA** joint military exercise, Yudh Abhyas-2024, began on **9th September 2024**.

Key points:

- The exercise is being conducted at the **Mahajan Field Firing Ranges in Rajasthan**.
- It will take place from 9th to 22nd September 2024, as part of an annual series that alternates between **India and the USA since 2004**.

Objective of the Exercise:

- The main goal of Yudh Abhyas 2024 is to **improve joint operational capabilities** for **counter-terrorism** operations in semi-desert conditions.
- The exercise is conducted under **Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter**, focusing on peacekeeping and security operations.

Significance of the Joint Exercise:

- Yudh Abhyas provides a platform for **both armies to exchange knowledge on tactics, techniques, and operational procedures**.
- It strengthens interoperability and fosters camaraderie between the Indian and US military forces.
- The joint exercise is an important step toward **deepening defence cooperation** and further enhancing bilateral relations between the two nations.



FOCAC Summit

Context:

- The 2024 Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) summit is held in **Beijing, marking its ninth edition.**

Key points:

- The summit, attended by **53 African nations**, marks a crucial phase in **China's relationship with Africa.**

China's \$51 Billion Pledge:

- **Funding Announcement:** At the 2024 FOCAC summit, Chinese President Xi Jinping pledged **\$51 billion for 30 infrastructure projects across Africa.**
- **Financial Assistance:** China will offer **360 billion yuan** (\$50.7 billion) in financial support.

Evolution of China-Africa Relations:

- **Historical Ties:** In the 1950s, China supported African nations in their decolonization efforts, building bilateral trade relationships. This partnership strengthened in the 1970s when African countries supported China's recognition in the UN Security Council.
- **First Major Project:** The Tanzania-Zambia railway, completed in 1976, marked China's first infrastructure project in Africa.
- **Current Trade:** China became Africa's largest bilateral trading partner in **2009**, with trade reaching \$282 billion in 2023. Africa exports mainly commodities like metals and fuel, while importing manufactured goods from China.

China's Role in Africa's Development:

- **Belt and Road Initiative (BRI):** Africa is a key partner in China's BRI, through which China has invested over \$120 billion in infrastructure development.
- **Lending Preferences:** African nations are attracted to Chinese funds due to fewer restrictions related to environmental or human rights concerns, unlike loans from institutions like the IMF and World Bank.
- **Geopolitical Influence:** China's approach of non-interference in internal affairs and rejection of human rights politicization appeals to African nations.

Overview of FOCAC:



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- **Established:** FOCAC was founded in **2000** to formalize the strategic partnership between China and African nations.
- **Membership:** It includes **53 African countries**, with Eswatini as the only non-member due to its ties with Taiwan.
- **Summit Frequency:** Held every **three years**, alternating between China and an African nation.
- **Current Theme:** The 2024 summit focuses on "**Joining Hands to Advance Modernization and Build a High-Level China-Africa Community with a Shared Future.**"

Supreme Court Unveils New Flag and Insignia



Context:

- On September 1, 2024, President Droupadi Murmu introduced the **Supreme Court of India's new flag and insignia** during the National Conference of District Judiciary in New Delhi.

About:

- The new flag, characterized by its **blue color**, incorporates symbols that reflect India's legal and cultural heritage, including the **Ashoka Chakra**, the **Supreme Court building**, and the **Constitution of India**.

Flag and Insignia Features:

- **Flag Design:** The newly designed flag of the Supreme Court is blue and prominently features symbolic elements representing India's legal and cultural legacy.
- **Insignia Details:** The insignia includes the inscription "**Yato Dharmastato Jayah**" in Devanagari script, alongside the title "Supreme Court of India."

Significance of 'Yato Dharmastato Jayah':

- The Sanskrit phrase "**Yato Dharmastato Jayah**" translates to "**Where there is righteousness, there is victory**" or "**Victory is assured where righteousness prevails.**" This phrase signifies that justice and virtue lead to success.



Arnoux's Beaked Whales

Context:

- A team of researchers has recently made a significant discovery in **Antarctica**, identifying a **rare species of whale known as Arnoux's beaked whales**.
- These elusive creatures had not been observed by researchers for decades until this recent sighting.

Discovery Details:

- **Location and Timing:** The whales were spotted off the **coast of Antarctica** during a survey conducted in 2022. The researchers, while examining the Weddell Sea for top predators, observed the whales in their natural habitat.
- **Appearance and Size:** Arnoux's beaked whales are noted for their impressive diving capabilities. They can grow up to **30 feet in length and have dark bodies that make them resemble dolphins**.

About:

- **Scientific Name:** Berardius arnuxii,
- Arnoux's beaked whales are listed as **Least Concern on the IUCN Red List**.
- They are often referred to as the southern four-toothed whales due to the four visible teeth in their lower jaws, even when their mouths are closed.

Vishvasya-Blockchain Technology Stack

Context:

- On September 4, 2024, the **Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY)** launched the **Vishvasya-Blockchain Technology Stack**.
- **Aim:** This initiative aims to enhance transparency, security, and efficiency in digital service delivery through a geographically distributed **Blockchain-as-a-Service (BaaS) system**.

Key Features of Vishvasya-Blockchain Technology Stack:

- **Geographically Distributed BaaS:** The stack supports a range of permissioned blockchain applications and is hosted across NIC Data Centers in Bhubaneswar, Pune, and Hyderabad, ensuring scalable and robust service delivery.



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- **NBFLite Lightweight Platform:** A lightweight blockchain platform designed for rapid prototyping, research, and learning.
- **Praamaanik:** A blockchain-enabled solution for verifying the origin and authenticity of mobile applications.

National Blockchain Framework (NBF)

The NBF has been initiated with the goal of creating reliable digital platforms. It includes:

- **Distributed Infrastructure:** Supports secure and transparent operations.
- **Core Framework Functionality:** Provides essential blockchain functionalities.
- **Smart Contracts & API Gateway:** Facilitates automated and secure transactions.
- **Security, Privacy & Interoperability:** Ensures data protection and system compatibility.

Applications of Vishvasya BaaS:

The Vishvasya BaaS supports a variety of applications, including:

- e-Stamps Solution
- Judiciary Application
- IPS Officers' Service Level Training Record Management
- Forensic Application
- Praamaanik: Mobile app authenticity verification
- Consent Management Framework
- IoT Device Security Management
- Cotton Bale Identification and Tracking
- Domicile Certificate Chain
- Document Chains: (Caste Certificate Chain, Property Chain, Education Certificate Chain)
- Tracking of Agriculture Produce
- Inspection System for Child Care Institutions

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