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EXERCISE KHAAN QUEST



Context:

- On July 25, 2024, the Indian Army contingent departed for the **Multinational Military Exercise KHAAN QUEST**, which will take place in **Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, from July 27 to August 9, 2024.**
- This exercise **aims to enhance peacekeeping capabilities among military forces from various countries.**

Background:

- KHAAN QUEST began in **2003** as a **bilateral exercise between the United States and the Mongolian Armed Forces.**
- Since **2006**, it has evolved into a multinational peacekeeping exercise, with the upcoming edition marking its **21st iteration.**
- The previous exercise was held in Mongolia from **June 19 to July 2, 2023.**

Key Points:

- **Contingent Composition:** The Indian Army contingent consists of 40 personnel, primarily from a Battalion of the Madras Regiment, along with additional troops from various Arms and Services. Notably, the contingent includes one woman officer and two women soldiers.
- **Exercise Objectives:** KHAAN QUEST aims to prepare the Indian Armed Forces for peacekeeping missions in a multinational context, focusing on interoperability and military readiness in operations aligned with Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter.
- **Training Focus:** The exercise will emphasize physical fitness, joint planning, and tactical drills, including:
 - Establishment of static and mobile checkpoints
 - Cordon and search operations
 - Patrolling
 - Civilian evacuation from hostile areas
 - Counter-IED drills
 - Combat first aid and casualty evacuation
- **International Collaboration:** KHAAN QUEST provides a platform for participating nations to share best practices in tactics, techniques, and



	procedures for joint operations, fostering camaraderie and interoperability among soldiers from different countries.
<p>Rashtrapati Bhavan Renames Halls to Reflect Indian Cultural Identity</p>	<p>Context:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rashtrapati Bhavan serves as a prominent symbol of India's national identity and heritage. • The renaming initiative reflects ongoing efforts to make this historic site more accessible and representative of Indian cultural ethos. <p>Key Points</p> <p>Renaming of Halls:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Durbar Hall is now Ganatantra Mandap. • Ashok Hall is now Ashok Mandap. <p>Cultural Relevance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The term 'Durbar' historically refers to the courts of Indian rulers and was associated with colonial governance. • The new name, 'Ganatantra Mandap,' emphasizes the concept of a republic, which is foundational to Indian society. • 'Ashok' signifies peace and unity, drawing from Emperor Ashok, a historical figure known for promoting non-violence and coexistence. • The renaming to 'Ashok Mandap' aims to eliminate colonial influences while preserving the cultural significance of the term.
<p>Union Budget 2024-25: Prime Minister's Rs. 2 Lakh Crore Package to Boost Employment and Skilling for 4.1 Crore Youth</p>	<p>Context:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The budget, presented by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, emphasizes employment and skill development as key priorities. • The package comprises five major schemes designed to facilitate employment, enhance skills, and support various sectors, including MSMEs (Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises). <p>Key Highlights:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial Commitment: The Prime Minister's package includes a substantial outlay of Rs. 2 lakh crore, targeting employment and skilling opportunities for 4.1 crore youth. • Implementation through EPFO: Three of the five schemes will be executed via the Employee Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO), promoting workforce formalization and providing incentives for both employers and employees.

**Employment Linked Incentive Schemes:**

- **Scheme A: First-Time Employment Support**
 - Targets first-time employees registered with EPFO.
 - Provides a one-month wage (up to Rs. 15,000) in three installments.
 - Aims to ease the transition for new entrants into the workforce.
- **Scheme B: Job Creation in Manufacturing**
 - Incentivizes employers for hiring first-time employees in the manufacturing sector.
 - Offers benefits based on EPFO contributions during the first four years of employment, targeting employees with salaries up to Rs. 1 lakh.
- **Scheme C: Employer Support**
 - Reimburses employers Rs. 3,000 per month for two years for EPFO contributions for each additional employee with a salary of up to Rs. 1 lakh.

Additional Schemes

- **Scheme D: Centrally Sponsored Skilling Scheme**
 - Aimed at skilling 20 lakh youth over five years in collaboration with state governments and industries.
 - Involves upgrading 1,000 Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) to meet industry skill needs.
- **Scheme E: Internship Opportunities**
 - Offers internships to 1 crore youth in 500 top companies over five years.
 - Provides an internship allowance of Rs. 5,000 per month and one-time assistance of Rs. 6,000.

Focus on Women and Infrastructure:

- **Women's Workforce Participation:** The budget proposes establishing working women hostels and crèches, alongside women-specific skilling programs and support for women self-help groups.
- **Infrastructure Investment:** An 11% increase in capital expenditure to ₹11.11 lakh crore is expected to create job opportunities across various sectors, addressing urban and rural unemployment.



Global Biofuels Alliance

Context:

- The GBA is a multi-stakeholder alliance designed to unite major consumers and producers of biofuels, facilitating capacity building, technical support, policy sharing, and the implementation of internationally recognized standards.
- Since its inception, the **GBA has expanded to include 24 member countries and 12 international organizations, demonstrating significant global support.**

Key Points:

- **Objectives of the GBA:**
 - Accelerate the **global uptake of biofuels.**
 - Serve as a central knowledge repository and expert hub.
 - **Facilitate technology advancements and sustainable biofuel utilization.**
 - Promote collaboration among diverse stakeholders to drive biofuel development and deployment.
- **Membership Growth:** The GBA has attracted considerable interest, growing to 24 member countries and 12 international organizations since its launch. It has held three meetings of its Temporary Executive Committee (TEC) to define immediate initiatives, including a workshop series and policy framework for biofuels.
- **International Engagement:** The GBA has established a presence at various global forums, including COP28, the World Economic Forum, and the World Biogas Summit. It was also invited to participate in meetings under the G20 and G7 presidencies, enhancing its visibility and influence.
- **Opportunities for India:** The GBA positions India as a knowledge base and production hub for biofuels, including ethanol, Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF), and Compressed Bio Gas (CBG).
- Participation in the GBA is expected to elevate India's status in the **global biofuels sector and support domestic initiatives like the PM-JIVAN Yojna and the SATAT scheme.**
- **Future Initiatives:** The GBA plans to conduct workshops and develop country-specific policy frameworks to facilitate the adoption of biofuels.



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- It aims to create a virtual marketplace to connect industries and stakeholders, promoting technology transfer and collaboration.

About:

- On September 9, 2023, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, alongside leaders from the USA, Brazil, Italy, Argentina, Singapore, Bangladesh, Mauritius, and the UAE, launched the **Global Biofuels Alliance (GBA)** during the **G20 Summit in New Delhi**.
- This initiative aims to **foster collaboration among governments, international organizations, and industries** to enhance the production and adoption of biofuels globally.



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