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Military Medicine Conference

India is hosting the **first conference of Armed Forces Medical Services (AFMS) of Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO)** in New Delhi from 12th-13th September 2019.

- Also, this is the first military cooperation event, being hosted by India, after it joined SCO in June 2017.
- The conference has been organised by the Indian Armed Forces supported by **Headquarters Integrated Defence Staff (HQ IDS)**.
- The primary objectives of the conference are **to share best practices in the field of military medicine**, build capacities and overcome common challenges.
- Deliberations are taking place between military medicine experts of SCO Member States on **rendering of combat medical support, humanitarian assistance during disasters** and **measures to improve patient safety**.
- The Defence Minister of India has called upon the **Armed Forces Medical Services (AFMS)** of SCO countries to devise ways to effectively deal with new threats posed to soldiers by the ever-advancing battlefield technology.
 - In India, the **Directorate General Armed Forces Medical Services (DGAFMS)** is **an apex organization** which coordinates the medical services of the Army, Navy and Air Force.
 - It is under the Ministry of Defence, headed by a Lieutenant General (Lt Gen)/equivalent officer of Navy or Air Force.
- The conference gains importance in the background of building capabilities to **deal with the menace of bioterrorism**, a real threat the world is facing today.

The **Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS)** is a permanent organ of the SCO which serves to promote cooperation of member states **against the three evils of terrorism, separatism and extremism**. It is **headquartered in Tashkent**.

Bio-terrorism

- A biological attack or bioterrorism is the **intentional release of viruses, bacteria, or**

other germs that can sicken or kill people, livestock, or crops.

- Bacillus anthracis, the bacteria that causes anthrax, is one of the most likely agents to be used in a biological attack.
- In the Indian context, with the existence of hostile neighbours like Pakistan, the threat of biological warfare cannot be ruled out entirely.

India's Preparedness

- Several nodal ministries have been earmarked for dealing with epidemics caused by bioterrorism.
 - **Early Detection: The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare** is tasked with providing directions and technical support for capacity building, surveillance and **early detection of an outbreak.**
 - **Assessment of Threat: The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)** is responsible for the assessment of the threat, intelligence inputs and implementation of preventive mechanisms.
 - **National Disaster Response Force (NDRF)** is a specialised force constituted under MHA to deal with chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) attacks.
 - **Biowarfare: The Ministry of Defence (MoD)** is responsible for managing the matters and **consequences of biowarfare.**
 - The **Defence R&D Organization (DRDO)** is actively pitched into developing **protective systems and equipment** for troops to contend against nuclear, biological and chemical warfare.
- India has ratified the **Biological Weapons Convention (BWC)**, which effectively prohibits the development, production, acquisition, transfer, stockpiling and use of biological and toxin weapons and is a key element in the international community's efforts to address the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.
- India is one of the participants in **the Australia Group**, an informal arrangement which aims to allow exporting or transshipping countries to minimise the risk of assisting chemical and biological weapon (CBW) proliferation.

Source: PIB

Pradhan Mantri Kisan Maan Dhan Yojana

The Prime Minister recently launched the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Maan-Dhan Yojana, & National Pension Scheme for the Traders and the Self-Employed, at an event in Ranchi.

The **Pradhan Mantri Kisan Maan-Dhan Yojana (PM-KMY)** aims to **secure the lives** of 5 crore small and marginal farmers by providing them a minimum pension of

₹3000 per month, who attains the age of 60 years.

- **Eligibility:** All **small and marginal farmers** (who own cultivable land up to **2 hectares**) as per the land records of the concerned State/UT and are between **18 and 40 years** of age are eligible under this scheme..
- **Contributions:** Under **PM-KMY**, monthly contributions by a farmer can be made from the instalments of **Pradhan Mantri-Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN)** or through **Common Service Centres (CSCs)**.

Common Service Centres (CSCs)

- The CSC is a strategic cornerstone of the **National e-Governance Plan (NeGP)**, approved by the Government of India in **May 2006**, as part of its commitment in the **National Common Minimum Programme** to introduce e-governance on a massive scale.
- The objective of CSCs is to provide high quality and cost-effective video, voice and data content and services, in the areas of e-governance, education, health, telemedicine, entertainment as well as other private services.
- A highlight of the CSCs is that it offers **web-enabled e-governance services in rural areas**, including application forms, certificates, and utility payments such as electricity, telephone and water bills.
- The **National Pension Scheme for the Traders and the Self-Employed** aims at providing a **minimum assured pension of ₹ 3000 per month**, to small traders and self-employed individuals **after they attain the age of 60 years**.
 - Around **3 crore** small traders would be benefitted from this scheme.
 - Traders and self-employed persons in the age group of **18-40 years** are eligible to join the scheme.
 - The monthly contribution under the scheme is of ₹ 55 to ₹ 200, depending on the age of the applicant.
 - The self-employed shop owners, retail owners and other traders having an annual turnover of **less than ₹ 1.5 crores** will **only** be able to join the scheme.
 - Any person making a contribution to **Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO)**, **Employees' State Insurance Corporation (ESIC)**, **National Pension System (NPS)**, **Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maan-dhan (PM-SYM)**, and/or paying income tax is **not eligible** for the scheme.

Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO)

- It is a **government organization** that manages the provident fund and pension accounts of member employees and **implements the Employees' Provident Fund and Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 1952**.

The Employees' Provident Fund and Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 1952 provides for the institution of provident funds for employees in factories and other establishments.

- It is **administered by the Ministry of Labour & Employment**, Government of India.
- It is **one of the World's largest Social Security Organisations** in terms of its customer base and the volume of financial transactions undertaken.

Employees' State Insurance Corporation (ESIC)

- It is a **government organization** formed under the provisions of **Employees' State Insurance Act, 1948**.
- It looks at providing **social security benefits** to the workers registered under the **Employee State Insurance Scheme**.
- It is **administered by the Ministry of Labour & Employment**, Government of India.

The Prime Minister also launched **462 Ekalavya model residential schools** across the country in tribal-dominated areas.

The schools would focus to provide quality upper primary, secondary and senior secondary level education to Scheduled Tribe students in these areas.

Source: PIB

Global Antimicrobial Resistance Research and Development Hub

Recently, India has joined the **Global Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) Research and Development (R&D) Hub** as a new member.

- Working with AMR(R&D) Hub would help India to expand existing capabilities, resources and collectively focus on new R&D intervention to address drug-resistant infections present in the country.
- **Global Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) Research and Development (R&D) Hub** is a collaboration of 16 countries, the European Commission, two philanthropic foundations and four international organizations (as observers).
- It was launched in **2018** during the **71st session of the World Health Assembly**, following a call from **G20 Leaders in 2017**.
- It is supported through a **Secretariat**, established in **Berlin, Germany**.
- It aims to further improve the coordination of international efforts and initiatives to tackle **Antimicrobial Resistance** while further increasing investments into R&D for AMR.
- The work of the Global AMR R&D Hub will be aligned to the priorities set by
- It enforces the **One Health Approach** by including environmental aspects and veterinary medicine against antimicrobial resistance.
- It integrates **human and animal health, worldwide food safety and environmental factors**.

Source: PIB

K2-18b: Potentially Habitable Planet

Scientists have found **signatures of water vapour** in the atmosphere of K2-18b.

- K2-18b is the **only planet orbiting a star outside the Solar System (exoplanet)** that is known to have **both water and temperatures** that could support life.
- However, K2-18b's size and surface gravity are much larger than Earth's. Its radiation environment, too, maybe hostile.
- K2-18b **orbits** the **cool dwarf star K2-18**, which is about 110 light-years from Earth in the Leo constellation.
- It is **eight times the mass of Earth**. It was discovered in 2015 by NASA's Kepler spacecraft.
- It resides in a **habitable zone or Goldilocks zone**, the area around a star where it is not too hot and not too cold for liquid water to exist on the surface of surrounding planets.
 - The size of the habitable zone clearly depends on the luminosity of the star, which determines the equilibrium temperature of the planet.
 - For low-mass, cool stars, the region is closer to the star, and for higher mass, hotter stars, the region is more distant from the star.

Source: TH

Exercise MAITREE

Indian Army and Royal Thailand Army (RTA) will conduct their joint Military Exercise **MAITREE-2019** at Meghalaya from Sept 16-29, 2019.

- Exercise MAITREE is an **annual training event** that is conducted in India and Thailand

alternatively, since **2006**.



- In the backdrop of changing facets of global terrorism, this exercise is a significant exercise for both the nations as they face the **security challenges** from terrorism. The **Southern regions** of Thailand (eg. Satun city, Patthalung province, Bangkok, etc) that are mostly visited by foreigners are prone to terrorist attacks.
- The scope of this exercise covers **company level joint training** on insurgency & counter-terrorism operations in jungles and urban scenarios.
- The joint military exercise between the Indian Army (IA) and the Royal Thailand Army (RTA) will give a boost to the **defence cooperation and bilateral relations** between the two nations.
- The Royal Thailand **Navy** and the Indian Navy have been participating in Coordinated Patrols (**CORPATs**) in the Indian Ocean region since 2005.

Joint Military Exercises of India with Other Countries

Name of Exercise	Country
Garuda Shakti	Indonesia
Ekuverin	Maldives
Hand-in-Hand	China
Kuruksheetra	Singapore
Mitra Shakti	Sri Lanka
Nomadic Elephant	Mongolia
Shakti	France
Surya Kiran	Nepal
Yudh Abhyas	USA

Source: PIB

Samudra Laksamana

The Indian Navy and the Royal Malaysian Navy will be participating in the bilateral exercise '**Samudra Laksamana**' that will take place from 12th to 15th September 2019.



- The exercise includes two phases:
 - A **harbour phase** wherein professional interactions, official calls, social engagements, visits by the local populace and various sports events would be conducted.
 - The **Sea Phase** of the exercise would enable the two navies to further sharpen their skills in order to **enhance interoperability** between the navies to ensure **peaceful and secure seas for all**.
- **From the Indian side**, Indian Navy Ships **Sahyadri and Kiltan** will participate in the exercise.
- The visit of the IN ships would further bolster the strong bonds of friendship between the two countries and contribute to the **security and stability** in the region.

INS Sahyadri and Kiltan

- The ships are part of the Indian Navy's **Eastern Naval Command**, based at **Visakhapatnam**.
- **INS Sahyadri** is a Shivalik-class multi-role **guided missile** stealth frigate.
- **INS Kiltan** is a Kamorta-class **anti-submarine** warfare corvette.
- INS Sahyadri and Kiltan, are the **latest, indigenously designed and built multi-role** ships of the Indian Navy.
- The two ships are equipped with a versatile array of weapons and sensors and can carry multi-role helicopters representing the 'coming of age' of India's warship building capabilities.

Source: PIB

NATGRID to Link Social Media Accounts to Central Database

Recently, National Intelligence Grid (NATGRID) has proposed to link social media accounts to central databases.

- Linking social media accounts will help to track online terror-related information

exchange through individual accounts, online Radicalisation across the country.

- But at the same time linking the social media accounts to sensitive government data could expose the system to **“Trojan Attacks.”**

National Intelligence Grid (NATGRID)

- NATGRID is the integrated intelligence grid connecting databases of core security agencies of the Government of India.
- NATGRID is intending to set up an Entity Extraction, Visualization, and Analytics (EVA) system.
- It was first proposed in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks on Mumbai in 2008.
- It is a **counter-terrorism measure** that collects and collates a host of information from government databases including:
 - Tax and Bank account details,
 - Credit card transactions,
 - Visa and Immigration records,
 - Itineraries of Rail and Air travel.
- The combined data from NATGRID will be made available to **10 Central Intelligence Agencies.**
- NATGRID faced opposition on charges of possible violations of privacy and leakage of confidential personal information.

Trojan Attacks

- Trojans are non-replication programs
- It operates without the permission or knowledge of computer users.
- Trojans infect outside machines only with the assistance of a computer user, like clicking a file that comes attached with an email from an unknown person, plugging USB without scanning, opening unsafe URLs.

Source: TH
