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## Multilateral Maritime Exercise La Perouse

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### Why in News

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**Indian Navy Ships INS Satpura and INS Kiltan** alongwith **P8I Long Range Maritime Patrol Aircraft** are participating, **for the first time in multilateral maritime exercise La Pérouse**, being conducted in the Eastern Indian Ocean Region from 5<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> April 2021.

Post conduct of **La Perouse**, the **Indo-French Naval** exercise “**Varuna**” is scheduled in the **Western Indian Ocean**, wherein **UAE** too shall be participating.

### Key Points

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- **About the Exercise:**

- The first edition of **La Pérouse** joint exercise, **initiated by France in 2019**, included ships from Australia, Japan and the US.
- The exercise is **named after the eighteenth century French Naval explorer**.
- **India's participation in 2021 completed the QUAD force representation** in the French led Naval Exercise.
  - **QUAD** is a **grouping of India, USA, Australia and Japan** which aims to safeguard the interests of democratic nations in the Indo-Pacific region and address global challenges.
- It will witness complex and advanced naval operations including **surface warfare, anti-air warfare and air defence exercises, weapon firing exercises, cross deck flying operations, tactical manoeuvres and seamanship evolutions** such as replenishment at sea.
- It will provide an opportunity for these five like-minded, high-end naval forces to develop closer links, sharpen their skills, and promote maritime cooperation throughout a free and open Indo-Pacific.

- **Naval Significance of Indo-Pacific:**

- The **Indo-Pacific is slowly but surely turning into a serious Naval Theatre for multi-national activities** with a vision to establish a free, open, inclusive and a rule-based ordering of the Indo-Pacific to support the freedom of navigation and peaceful cooperative use of the seas.
- The goal is to respect and adhere to the international laws like the **United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)** and peaceful resolution of territorial sea disputes.
  - The role of the **QUAD navies in the IOR (Indian Ocean Region)** has been well illustrated by the effective cooperative engagement capabilities of the multi-national Naval powers through naval exercises like formation sailing, live fire drills, Search and Rescue (SAR) operations etc.
  - Navies of member countries of **QUAD** participated in **Malabar wargaming exercise** in November 2020.
- On the other hand, **China endeavours to establish a defensive perimeter around its seas (Yellow Sea, East China Sea and part of South China Sea)** by following a sea denial policy in these regions.



## QUAD+ France Pacific Ocean Concerns:

- The **region of Pacific Islands** stretches from Hawaii in the north to Tonga in the south, and Easter Island in the east to New Caledonia in the west.
- **US interest in the Indo-Pacific region** has always been well illustrated with the fact that **US Indo-Pacific Command** established after World War II is the largest unified command.
- **France** has a direct **strategic and economic stake in New Caledonia, French Polynesia, and Wallis and Futuna**. France is a member of the Pacific Community and the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP).
- **Japan** although has trade ties with China but has always been **suspicious of China's growth as a military power**. China's assertiveness closer to Japanese waters and airspace have been a testing time for Japan.
- **Indian Navy** has always maintained a tactical advantage over the IOR to ensure compliance to the internationally established Rules of the Road (ROR) for the seas.

This has been respected by the world (like declaration of warships transiting IOR etc.), but Indian Navy has **observed and reported multiple sightings of undeclared Chinese ships and submarines** suspiciously lurking within the IOR.

## Indo-French Joint Exercises

- **Desert Knight-21** and **Garuda** (Air exercise)
- **Varuna** (Naval exercise)
- **Shakti** (Army exercise)



**Source: IE**