



France's First Space Military Exercise: AsterX

Why in News

Amid the growing competition among the world powers in the field of space, France has begun its **first space military exercises** to test its ability to defend its satellites.

Key Points

▪ About the Exercise:

- The exercise drills are codenamed "**AsterX**" to commemorate the first French satellite **Asterix** from 1965.
- The exercises are part of France's strategy to become the world's **third-largest space power**, after the USA and China.
- These space military exercises are the first ever attempt not only for the French army but also for Europe.
- Moreover, France has planned to develop **anti-satellite laser weapons** and to strengthen surveillance capabilities to close the gap with rivals; China and Russia.
- **Aim of the Exercise:**
 - To monitor a potentially dangerous space object as well as threats to its own satellite from another foreign power possessing a considerable space force.
- **Participants:**
 - Along with France, the new **US Space Force and German space agencies** are taking part in the exercises.

▪ Background:

- In 2018, **Olymp-K**, a Russian satellite attempted to intercept transmissions from the **Athena-Fidus satellite** which is used by both Italian and French armies for secure communications. This was **termed as an act of 'espionage'**.
 - In 2020, the United States also **accused Russia** of having "conducted a non-destructive test" of an anti-satellite weapon from space.
- In 2019, France announced its **Commandement de l'Espace (CdE)** (French Space Command).
 - It is set to have 500 personnel by 2025.

▪ Similar Initiatives of India:

- **IndSpaceEx:** India's first ever simulated space warfare exercise.
- **Mission Shakti:** An Anti-Satellite (ASAT) Missile Test.

[Source: IE](#)

