

18 MARCH 2019**TRANSCATHERER AORTIC VALVE THERAPY (TAVR)****Why in news?**

- Recent clinical trials show that TAVR therapy can be useful in younger and healthier patients, which was primarily reserved mostly for old and sick patients.
- It can serve as a viable alternative for open heart surgery.

In Brief:**About TAVR:**

- Transcatheter aortic valve replacement (TAVR) is a minimally invasive procedure to replace a narrowed aortic valve (Aortic valve stenosis) that fails to open properly.
- Aortic valve stenosis occurs when the heart's aortic valve narrows. This narrowing prevents the valve from opening fully, which obstructs blood flow from your heart into your aorta and onward to the rest of your body.

BADGHIS PROVINCE**Why in News?**

- Recently Taliban terrorists abducted atleast 50 members of the Afghan security forces in Badghis province of Afghanistan.

In Brief:**About Badghis:**

- It is one of the thirty-four provinces of Afghanistan, located in the northwest of the country.
- Recently this area is witnessing heavy Taliban atrocities.

About Talibans:

- They are a Sunni Islamic fundamentalist political movement and military organization in Afghanistan currently waging war within that country.
- In 2001, the United States launched the campaign "War on Terror" campaign mainly to suppress al-Qaeda and the Talibans.
- However now the USA is in peace talks with the Talibans in order to bring peace in Afghanistan and neighbouring countries.

Note

New Hydro policy help to meet Renewables target:

In Brief :

The union cabinet approved a new Hydro-electricity policy that, among other things included large hydro projects within the ambit of renewable energy.

Prior to the policy, only small hydro projects of a capacity of less than 25MW were treated as renewable energy. Large hydro projects were treated as a separate source of energy.

The reason for the reclassification of hydro as renewables is to add all that capacity to the renewable energy kitty.

Benefits of hydro policy:

- No additional charges: The policy is a purely cosmetic no additional charges have been created through this policy
- Inclusion of large hydro in renewable energy, that energy mix changes drastically.
- Huge imbalance: It provides grid stability and a better energy mix which a renewable source like wind and solar do not.
- Impact on PSUs: The policy had the benefit that it could be the effect on the stock prices of state run hydro electric companies such as NHPC and SJVN at a point where government is looking to sell its stake in these companies.

How the hydro policy has changed India's energy mix numbers

Installed Capacity		
	Before policy	After policy
Renewable sources (in MW)	75,055.92	1,20,455.14
Renewable sources (% share in energy mix)	21.43	34.40
Share within renewables (In %)		
Source	Before policy	After policy
Hydro	6.03	41.45
Wind	47.02	29.30
Bio-power	12.28	7.65
Solar	34.68	21.61

SOURCE: CENTRAL ELECTRICITY AUTHORITY, GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

Balakot air strikes: When key naval assets were put on alert

Why in News:

As tensions between India and Pakistan mounted, India put its key naval assets, including the aircraft carrier INS Vikramaditya and nuclear submarines, on operational alert.

“The major combat units of the Navy, including the Carrier Battle Group with INS Vikramaditya, nuclear submarines and scores of other ships, submarines and aircraft swiftly transited from exercise to operational deployment mode as tensions between India and Pakistan escalated.

In Brief:

Tropex Link:

1. The deployment came amid the largest war game of the Navy, Theatre Level Operational Readiness Exercise (TROPEX 19), which began on January 7 and which was planned to be concluded by March 10.
2. However, the Pulwama terrorist attack on February 14 “led to the rapid redeployment of the Navy for operations in the North Arabian Sea.”

Note



3. The announcement is in contrast to the assertions of senior government officials that India did not undertake any escalatory mobilisation after the Balakot air strikes. They had consistently referred to the strikes as “non-military pre-emptive counter-terror strikes” and had accused Pakistan’s government of whipping up “war hysteria” in order to mislead the international community.

4. At the briefings held on February 28 and March 4 and 16, the officials stressed that the Indian military had carried out no military operation post February 27, and denied reports from Pakistan that an Indian submarine had been deployed in the Arabian Sea near Pakistan.

5. The Navy said the availability of a large number of combat-ready assets in the theatre of operations for TROPEX allowed it to “expeditiously respond to the developing situation in synergy with the three services.”

6. “The overwhelming superiority of the Indian Navy in all three dimensions forced the Pakistan Navy to remain deployed close to the Makran coast and not venture out in the open ocean,” the Navy said.

Navy chief Admiral Sunil Lanba will preside over the debrief of the TROPEX in Kochi. About 60 ships of the Navy, 12 ships of the Coast Guard and 60 aircraft had taken part in the exercise. It began with a tri-service amphibious exercise in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. This was followed by the largest coastal defence exercise, ‘Sea Vigil,’ with the participation of all 13 coastal States and UTs along with all maritime stakeholders.

Prelims titbits: A must read for Prelims:

1. TROPEX- Theatre Level Readiness and Operational Exercise

1. It is an inter service military exercise involving the participation of the Indian Army, Navy and the Coast Guard.

2. Commences at the beginning of each year and lasts a month.

3. 3 phases: Independent work up Phase, joint work up Phase and tactical phase.

4. Aim: to test the combat readiness of the Indian naval units as well as the Air force, Army and the Coast Guard.

5. Seeks to strengthen the interoperability and joint operations in a complex environment.

6. Began in 2005, the exercise had been held annually with the exception of 2006.

7. The last edition was conducted in the year 2017.

2. Makran Coast



Note



3. Sea Vigil Exercise

1. The first coastal defence Exercise Sea Vigil, conducted by the Navy and Coast Guard, in close coordination with State Governments and Union Territories concluded today, 23 Jan 2019.
2. It was the largest such exercise the country had ever witnessed in recent times and saw participation by more than 100 ships, aircraft and patrol boats manned and operated by various security agencies.
3. The exercise comprised two distinct phases.

For further reference:

<http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=187714>

India, Maldives agree to cooperate on defence, development, health

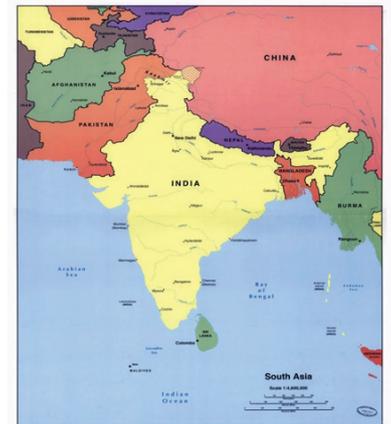
Why in News?

India and the Maldives discussed measures to strengthen ties and agreed to collaborate in the fields of defence, development cooperation, capacity building and health as External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj held talks with the country's top leadership, including her Maldivian counterpart Abdulla Shahid.

In Brief:

Sushma holds bilateral talks with country's top leadership

1. It is the first full-fledged bilateral trip from India to the island nation after the government of President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih came to power in November last year.
2. Ms. Swaraj and Maldivian Foreign Minister Shahid reviewed progress on important bilateral issues, including implementation of agreed outcomes of President Solih's visit to India last year.
3. Ms. Swaraj also called on the Speaker of the Parliament of Maldives, Qasim Ibrahim, and reiterated India's commitment to supporting the country in its path of peace, development, prosperity and democracy.
4. She unveiled a plaque dedicating the renovated **IGM Hospital to the people of Maldives in the city of Male.**
5. **IGMH is the first and largest government health-care facility in the Maldives, built with Indian assistance.**



Note

For Further Reference:

<https://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-international/india-maldives-agree-to-cooperate-on-defence-development-health/article26564136.ece>



Mastering IR and Organisations-Also read: Maldives' Entry in to IORA and Myanmar's blockade; Maldives as a member of other organisations

Pinaki Chandra Ghose set to be India's first Lokpal

Why in News:

Former Supreme Court judge and current member of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), Pinaki Chandra Ghose, is likely to be India's first anti-corruption ombudsman, or Lokpal, after his name was cleared and recommended by the high-level selection committee chaired by Prime Minister.

In Brief:

The Idea Behind Lokpal:

The idea of an anti-corruption body and an ombudsman to look into corruption allegations against administrators, including legislators, has been floating around for over five decades now. It finally got shape with the passing of the Lokpal and Lokayuktas Bill, 2013, in Lok Sabha on December 18, 2013, but only after a nationwide protest led by India against Corruption, a civil society movement of activist Anna Hazare.

Time Line of the Bill:

- 1963: The idea of an ombudsman first came up in parliament during a discussion on budget allocation for the Law Ministry.
- 1966: The First Administrative Reforms Commission recommended the setting up of two independent authorities- at the central and state level, to look into complaints against public functionaries, including MPs.
- 1968: The Lokpal Bill was introduced in parliament but was not passed. Eight attempts were made till 2011 to pass the Bill, but in vain.
- 2002: The Commission to Review the Working of the Constitution headed by M.N. Venkatchiliah recommended the appointment of the Lokpal and Lokayuktas; also recommended that the PM be kept out of the ambit of the authority.
- 2005: The second Administrative Reforms Commission chaired by Veerappa Moily recommended that office of Lokpal be established without delay.
- 2011: The government formed a Group of Ministers, chaired by Pranab Mukherjee to suggest measures to tackle corruption and examine the proposal of a Lokpal Bill.
- 2013: Lokpal and Lokayuktas Bill, 2013, was passed in both Houses of Parliament.
- 2016: Lok Sabha agreed to amend the Lokpal Act and Bill was sent to Standing Committee for review.

Salient Features of Lokpal:

The Act allows setting up of anti-corruption ombudsman called Lokpal at the Centre and Lokayukta at the State-level.

The Lokpal will consist of a chairperson and a maximum of eight members.

Note



The Lokpal will cover all categories of public servants, including the Prime Minister.

But the armed forces do not come under the ambit of Lokpal.

The Act also incorporates provisions for attachment and confiscation of property acquired by corrupt means, even while the prosecution is pending.

The States will have to institute Lokayukta within one year of the commencement of the Act.

It has been made mandatory for public servants to declare their assets and liabilities along with that of their spouse and dependent children.

The Act also ensures that public servants who act as whistleblowers are protected.

A separate Whistle Blowers Protection Act was passed for this purpose.

Second Scorpene submarine ready for induction

Why in News:

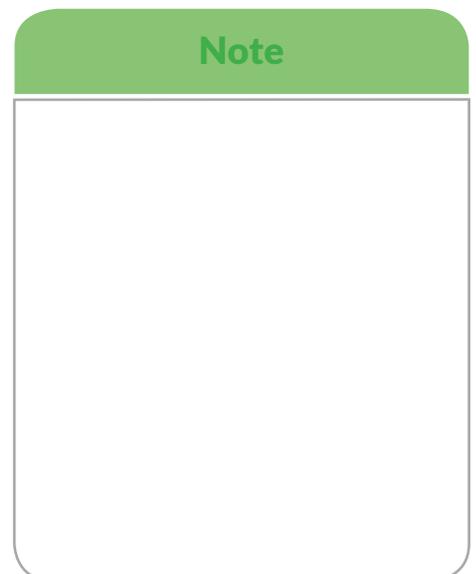
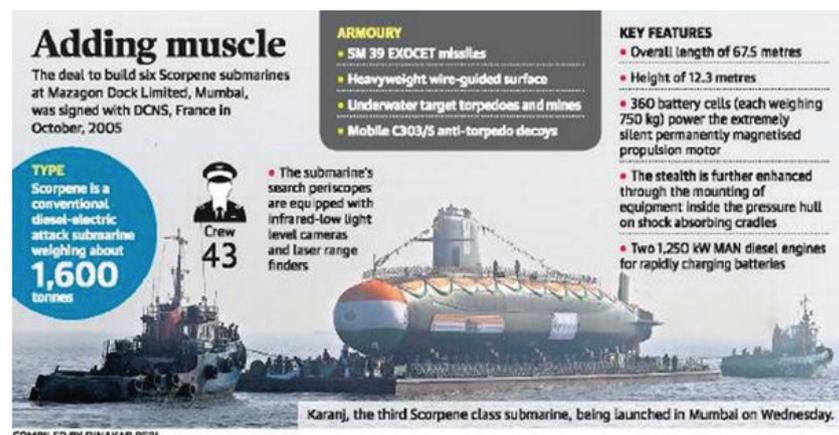
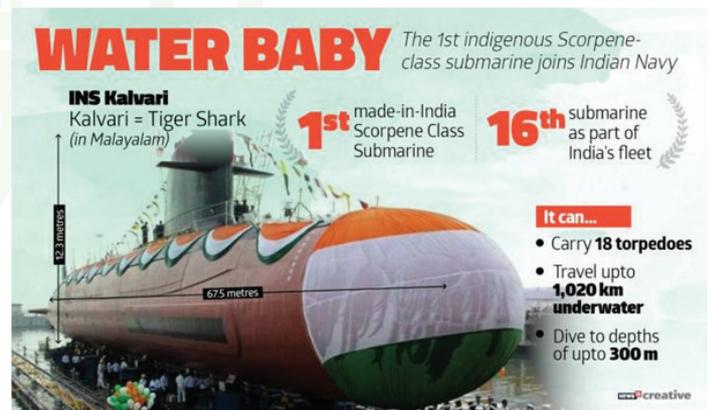
The Navy is set to induct the second Scorpene submarine Khanderi. The remaining submarines in the series are in advanced stages of manufacturing and trials.

Project 75

- Under Project 75, six Scorpene submarines are being built with assistance and technology transfer from DCNS of France under deal signed in October 2005.
- The Scorpene class submarines are a class of diesel-electric attack submarine

The 6 submarines are

- INS Kalvari
- INS Khanderi
- INS Karanj
- INS Vela
- INS Vagir
- INS Vagsheer



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5 SPECIAL FEATURES OF INS KHANDERI

- 1 Can launch a crippling attack on the enemy with precision guided weapons
...
- 2 Has superior stealth features
...
- 3 Can launch missiles from both underwater and the surface
...
- 4 Can run in extreme temperatures
...
- 5 Powered by a diesel-electric engine



Note

