

Exercise 'DHARMA Guardian-2023'

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Context- India and Japan participated in the exercise **"DHARMA Guardian-2023"** in Belgaum, Karnataka.

Key Highlights-

- The activity was held to share encounters acquired during tasks, to improve interoperability in the preparation and execution of different activities in wilderness and semi-metropolitan/metropolitan landscape.
- In addition, the year 2022 marks the 70th anniversary of diplomatic ties between the two nations.

Relations between India and Japan in the area of defense

- The partnership between India and Japan in the areas of defense and security is a key component of the ties that exist between the two countries. It has increased in strength over the past few years as a result of growing agreement on strategic issues and the growing significance of a shared perspective on issues of peace, security, and stability.

Exercises

- India and Japan regularly hold discussions about armed forces staff as a result of their participation in comprehensive Tri-Service Exchanges.
- Bilateral exercises like **JIMEX, Bilateral Maritime Exercises, and Passage Exercises** are regularly attended by the Indian Navy and JMSDF.

- Indian Army – JGSDF participates annually in bilateral exercise Dharma Guardian, which is similar to multilateral exercises like **MILAN and MALABAR**.
- The first “**Veer Guardian**” took place in 2023, and it involved careful planning and skillful execution by the Indian and Japanese air forces.

Relevance of Japan for India

- The strength of Japan’s manufacturing can contribute to the expansion of India’s indigenous defense industry.
- India can learn from Japan’s border infrastructure building experience.
- Japan provides India with substantial development assistance for specific projects. Example: **Project Bullet Train**.
- **Combined Factors:**
 - **Indo-Pacific open:** The development and well-being of both nations depend on an open and prosperous Indo-Pacific.
 - **China’s hegemony:** India and Japan are concerned about China’s expanding military capabilities and assertiveness in territorial disputes.
 - **US role in Asia:** The two nations must take action to safeguard and maintain the rules-based order in their immediate vicinity as a result of the growing uncertainty regarding America’s future role in Asia.

Way Ahead

- The Indo-Japanese relationship has the potential to reshape the Asian landscape and contribute to the establishment of an open and secure Indo-Pacific by capitalizing on shared interests.