

Indian Army conducts 5-day “Skylight” exercise

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Context - In a five-day-long satellite communication exercise, the Indian Army has tested all of its space-based assets to ensure their operational readiness, sources in the defence establishment said.

The Army has also completed a study on the communication, cyber and electromagnetic effects reported during the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war.

Key Highlights

- The exercise named “Skylight” was conducted from July 25 to July 29. The Army is utilizing the services of a number of satellites belonging to the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO).
- The types of satellite communication terminals tested during the exercise included static terminals, transportable vehicle-mounted terminals, man-portable and small form factor man-pack terminals.
- The Indian Army is closely studying the war in Ukraine to derive communication technology-related lessons from it, they added.
- The studies established the efficacy of reliable satellite communication like the one afforded by ‘Starlink’. Taking a cue from the same and also the latest trends in satellite technology, the Army has placed some realizable challenges before the industry and academia.
- These include the future requirement of fighting troops for small form factor handheld secure satellite phones, satellite IoT and satellite high speed data backbone, some of which will call for utilization of Low Earth Orbit (LEO) satellite constellations.
- As on date, Indian Army is utilizing the services of a number of ISRO satellites as it does not have a dedicated satellite. In March, The Defence Acquisition Council cleared a proposal for a GSAT-7B communications satellite. The army is on course to get its

own satellite by December 2025.