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15 November 2024

India Successfully Tests Long Range Land Attack Cruise Missile Off Odisha's Coast

Context: India successfully conducted the maiden flight-test of its Long Range Land Attack Cruise Missile (LRLACM) from the Integrated Test Range (ITR) at Chandipur, Odisha. This test represents a major advancement in India's defense capabilities, particularly in its missile technology.

Key Features of the LRLACM:

- **Range:** The missile has a range of over 1,000 kilometers, providing India with significant standoff capability to strike strategic land-based targets well behind enemy lines.
- **Advanced Navigation:** Equipped with a waypoint navigation system, the missile follows a precise, pre-determined flight path to ensure accuracy and reliability in hitting its target.
- **Maneuverability:** The LRLACM is capable of performing complex maneuvers, including changes in altitude and speed, which makes it difficult to intercept and evade detection.
- **Launch Flexibility:** The missile can be launched from both ground-based mobile platforms and naval vessels, giving it strategic flexibility across different domains of warfare.

Development and Production:

- **Development Lead:** The missile was developed by the Aeronautical Development Establishment (ADE) in Bengaluru, under the umbrella of the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).
- **Collaboration:** The missile's design and testing involved contributions from other DRDO laboratories and key Indian defense industries, including Bharat Dynamics Limited (BDL) and Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL).
- **Indigenous Production:** These Indian companies are responsible for the integration, production, and supply of key components, ensuring that India reduces its reliance on foreign suppliers for critical defense technologies.

Strategic Importance:

- **Enhanced Strike Capability:** With its long range, the missile provides India with a potent tool to target critical infrastructure or military assets deep inside enemy territory.
- **Strategic Deterrence:** The missile strengthens India's deterrence capabilities, ensuring that it can respond effectively to potential threats from regional adversaries.
- **Self-Reliance in Defense:** The LRLACM is a testament to India's focus on "Make in India" for defense, showcasing the country's ability to develop cutting-edge technologies domestically and reducing dependence on foreign arms suppliers.

Geopolitical and Defense Implications:

- **Regional Security:** The LRLACM enhances India's capability to maintain regional security and stability by providing a credible long-range strike option, crucial in dealing with emerging security challenges.
- **Global Positioning:** With this missile, India joins an elite group of nations, such as the United States, that possess advanced long-range, precision-guided cruise missiles, which can play a key role in global defense dynamics.
- **Flexibility for Armed Forces:** The dual-launch platform (land and sea) of the missile increases its versatility, providing both Indian Army and Indian Navy with a strategic advantage in various scenarios.

India's First All-Women Battalion in the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF)

Context: In a landmark move to promote gender equality and empower women, the Union Government of India has approved the creation of the first-ever all-women

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battalion within the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF).

About All-Women Reserve Battalion:

- **Formation and Leadership:**
  - The battalion will consist of 1,025 female personnel, selected from the existing CISF workforce, which totals about 1.8 lakh personnel.
  - It will be led by a senior officer of the rank of Commandant, ensuring leadership and discipline comparable to other CISF units.
  - The battalion will be part of CISF's reserve battalion structure, designed to assist in high-security tasks and major national events, such as elections.
- **Training and Preparedness**
  - The battalion's training program will be intensive and specialized to equip personnel for high-risk security duties, including VIP protection, airport security, and counter-terrorism operations.
  - Female personnel will be trained as elite commandos, ensuring they can handle security challenges with the same proficiency as their male counterparts.
- **Roles and Responsibilities:** The battalion will primarily focus on high-profile security operations, including:
  - VIP protection and high-risk security environments.
  - Safeguarding airports, metro stations, and other sensitive installations such as nuclear plants and aerospace facilities.

Why is This Move Significant?

- **Empowering Women in Security Forces:**
  - The formation of the all-women battalion addresses the gender imbalance within the CISF, where women currently make up only 7% of the total personnel.
  - This initiative encourages more women to join the CISF, empowering them to take on critical national security roles.
- **Encouraging Gender Inclusivity:**
  - The Mahila Battalion (Mahila meaning "women" in Hindi) represents a concrete step toward gender inclusivity in national security forces.
  - It breaks traditional gender barriers, setting a precedent for future generations of women to follow in security and law enforcement roles.
- **Reflecting Changing Dynamics of National Security:**
  - The creation of an all-women battalion reflects the changing role of women in national security, where women are increasingly taking on more challenging and visible roles.
  - This is a clear acknowledgment of the growing capabilities and leadership skills of women in security operations, both at the operational and strategic levels.

About CISF:

- **Evolution of CISF:**
  - CISF was established in 1969 to safeguard critical infrastructure, such as airports, nuclear power plants, and aerospace facilities.
  - Over the years, the force has grown to handle increasingly complex security challenges, adapting to national needs.
- **Role of Reserve Battalions:**
  - Currently, CISF operates 12 reserve battalions, composed of both male and female personnel. These battalions are typically deployed for duties like election security, protecting government buildings, and large-scale public events.
  - However, the all-women battalion will be a specialized unit focused on high-security operations, particularly VIP security, and safeguarding sensitive national infrastructure.

India's "Adaptive Defence" Strategy

Context: India is embracing a new era of defense strategy with the launch of the "Adaptive Defence" framework, introduced by Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath

Singh at the Delhi Defence Dialogue (DDD) on November 12, 2024. The strategy is designed to address the rapidly changing nature of modern warfare, including emerging technologies, hybrid threats, and complex geopolitical dynamics.

Key Components of Adaptive Defence:

- **Anticipating Future Threats:**
  - **Proactive Defense:** Focus on preparing for potential threats rather than simply reacting to past events.
  - **Risk Assessment:** Identifying emerging security risks and developing capabilities to address them before they materialize.
- **Situational Awareness:**
  - **Continuous Monitoring:** Enhanced surveillance and intelligence-sharing systems to stay informed of evolving global security trends.
  - **Strategic Vigilance:** Ensuring the defense forces can quickly assess and respond to the changing security landscape.
- **Flexibility:**
  - **Strategic and Tactical Agility:** Ability to quickly adapt plans and operations to respond to new or unexpected threats.
  - **Decision-Making:** Emphasis on flexibility at all levels of military operations, ensuring swift and informed responses.
- **Resilience and Agility:**
  - **Building Robust Defense:** Developing resilient defense systems that can endure and remain operational even during crises.
  - **Agility in Response:** Ensuring forces can respond quickly to dynamic challenges, whether conventional or unconventional.

Integration with Futuristic Technologies:

- **Cutting-Edge Tech:** Incorporating technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), cyber defense, quantum computing, and drones to enhance operational capabilities.
- **Tech-Driven Warfare:** Leveraging these technologies for enhanced precision, surveillance, and decision-making in combat.

Significance of Adaptive Defence in Modern Warfare

- **Changing Nature of Warfare:**
  - **Grey Zone and Hybrid Warfare:** Traditional warfare models are becoming less relevant as non-traditional, transnational threats such as terrorism, cyber-attacks, and information warfare take center stage.
  - **Continuous Adaptation:** Adaptive Defence is seen as essential for dealing with these emerging challenges, emphasizing the need for constant evolution in tactics and strategy.
- **Complex Threat Landscape:**
  - India faces a range of threats, including traditional border-related conflicts, as well as cyber warfare, terrorism, and psychological operations.
  - The strategy is built to address this broad spectrum of threats in a comprehensive manner.

India's Commitment to Self-Reliance and Indigenous Production

- **"Make in India" Initiative:**
  - **Self-Reliance in Defense:** Aimed at reducing reliance on foreign suppliers, India is pushing for the indigenous production of defense technologies and platforms.
  - **Key Projects:** Successful indigenous defense projects such as Light Combat Aircraft 'Tejas', INS Vikrant (aircraft carrier), and various missile systems developed by DRDO.
- **Exporting Defense Products:**
  - In 2023-24, India's defense exports surpassed Rs 10,000 crore, with the USA, France, and Armenia as top destinations.
  - The government has set a target of Rs 50,000 crore worth of defense exports by 2029, reflecting India's growing defense manufacturing capabilities.

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RBI Introduces Framework for Reclassification of FPI to FDI

Context: Recently, Reserve Bank of India (RBI) introduced an operational framework to streamline the process of converting Foreign Portfolio Investments (FPI) into Foreign Direct Investments (FDI) when FPIs exceed the prescribed limit of 10% in Indian companies.

- The RBI's framework aligns with recent SEBI updates, effective May 30, 2024, which also outline procedures for reclassifying FPI holdings that exceed the 10 percent threshold.

Background: FPI Investment Limits in India

- FPIs are allowed to hold a maximum of 10% of a company's total paid-up equity capital under existing regulations.
- If an FPI exceeds this limit, it faces two options:
  - **Divestment:** Sell the excess shares to comply with the 10% cap.
  - **Reclassification:** Convert the excess stake into FDI, subject to approval from the Indian government and the invested company.

Key Features of the RBI's New Framework

- **Reclassification Process:**
  - If an FPI's holdings exceed 10%, the FPI can opt to reclassify the excess shares as FDI.
  - Once reclassified, the entire investment will be treated as FDI, even if the stake later falls below 10%.
- **Timeline for Reclassification:**
  - The reclassification must be completed within five trading days from the date the 10% cap is breached.
  - This ensures timely compliance and clarity for FPIs.
- **Regulatory Approvals:**
  - The reclassification process requires approvals from both the Indian government and the invested company.
  - The reclassified investment must comply with existing FDI norms, including sectoral caps, entry routes, and other conditions.
- **Custodian Role:**
  - FPIs must notify their custodian about the intent to reclassify their holdings.
  - After the reclassification is approved, the custodian will facilitate the transfer of securities from the FPI's designated demat account to one specifically set up for FDI holdings.
- **Sectors with Restrictions:**
  - Reclassification is not permitted in sectors where FDI is restricted (e.g., defense, telecommunications, and sectors related to national security).
  - This ensures that the reclassification aligns with the country's FDI policy and prevents foreign ownership in sensitive sectors.
- **Reporting and Compliance:**
  - FPIs must comply with the Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA) and submit required reports under the Foreign Exchange Management (Mode of Payment and Reporting of Non-Debt Instruments) Regulations, 2019.

  - Once the custodian confirms compliance, the reclassification process will be completed.

Implications for Foreign Investors:

- **Enhanced Flexibility:**
  - The framework provides greater flexibility for FPIs to retain investments beyond 10% by converting them into FDI.
  - This conversion offers a more permanent and strategic form of ownership, aligning with long-term investment goals.
- **Transparency and Clarity:**
  - The new framework brings clarity to the reclassification process, ensuring that FPIs understand the regulatory requirements, the timeline, and the steps involved in the process.
- **Long-Term Engagement:**
  - By facilitating reclassification into FDI, the framework encourages FPIs to view their Indian investments as long-term, strategic commitments rather than short-term positions.
  - This shift is expected to deepen foreign engagement and contribute to sustainable growth in Indian companies.

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Power Packed News

PM Modi's Development Initiatives in Bihar

- During his recent visit to Bihar, Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched several development projects worth over Rs 12,100 crore.
- One of the key initiatives is the AIIMS Darbhanga project, which will be the second All India Institute of Medical Sciences in Bihar, after Patna. The project is worth more than Rs 1,260 crore and aims to improve healthcare facilities in the region.
- In addition to this, PM Modi also inaugurated National Highway projects worth around Rs 5,070 crore and laid the foundation for the Sonenagar Bypass Railway line, which will connect Chiralapothu to Bagha Bishunpur in Aurangabad.
- Railway projects worth over Rs 1,520 crore were dedicated to the nation, and new train services were introduced in the Jhanjharpur-Laukaha Bazar section.
- Furthermore, the Prime Minister laid the foundation for initiatives in the petroleum and natural gas sector, valued at over Rs 4,020 crore. These projects are expected to boost economic growth, improve infrastructure, and enhance connectivity throughout the state.

Haiti's New Leadership Amidst Crisis

- Alix Didier Fils-Aime has been sworn in as the new Prime Minister of Haiti, replacing Garry Conille, who was dismissed by the Transitional Presidential Council. This council, formed in April, was tasked with selecting new political leaders and organizing elections in an effort to stabilize the country.
- Haiti, a Caribbean nation, is currently facing a severe humanitarian crisis, further exacerbated by escalating gang violence. In the first three months of 2024 alone, gang-related violence led to approximately 2,500 deaths or injuries. The security situation remains critical, especially in the capital, Port-au-Prince, where violence is severely disrupting daily life.

- As the new Prime Minister, Fils-Aime faces the formidable challenge of addressing these urgent issues. His primary responsibilities will be improving national security, combating gang violence, and overseeing the organization of elections.
- Haiti's future stability will depend on effectively resolving these crises, which will require strong leadership, effective governance, and international cooperation.

16th India Game Developer Conference in Hyderabad

- The 16th India Game Developer Conference (IGDC) recently began in Hyderabad, attracting over 20,000 attendees. Organized by the Game Developer Association of India (GDAI), it is one of the most important events in the gaming industry.
- The conference includes more than 150 sessions and features over 250 speakers, including notable industry figures like Jordan Weisman, creator of BattleTech, and Tim Morten, known for StarCraft II.

About India Game Developer Conference (IGDC):

- The IGDC provides a platform for professionals to discuss the latest trends, challenges, and innovations in the gaming industry. It focuses on encouraging creativity and technical skills and has become a key event for India's growing video game sector.
- The conference also plays a significant role in shaping policies and developing infrastructure to support the industry's growth.