



Indian DefSpace Symposium

For Prelims: Positive Indigenization List, Initiatives in the Defence Sector, Indian DefSpace Symposium

For Mains: Mission DefSpace, Government Policies & Interventions, Indigenization of Technology, Significance of Indigenisation of Defence and associated challenges.

Why in News?

Recently, the [Indian Space Association \(ISPA\)](#) in association with the [Defence Research and Development Organization \(DRDO\)](#) organized the **Indian DefSpace Symposium** which focuses on the growing government and military focus on the space domain and explores ways to enhance India's space capabilities.

- The event was held as part of the deliberations under '[Mission Def-Space](#),' an ambitious effort launched by Prime Minister of India **to develop innovative solutions in the space domain through the Indian industry and start-ups.**

What is the Need for Transformation of Warfare?

- The nature of warfare is on the fold of major transformation, and **space is being used to enhance combat capabilities in land, sea, and cyber domains.**
- The symposium discusses the need for developing **dual-use platforms with cutting-edge technology** and increasing **offensive and defensive capabilities in the space domain.** and to explore the field of **miniaturization of satellites and reusable launch platforms** to mitigate costs and challenges.
- DRDO emphasized **the need to enhance space situational awareness capability,** safeguard space assets with counter space capabilities, and build resilience and redundancy in a space-based infrastructure.
- It also explores ways to expand the [Navic constellation](#), **provide agile space-based intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR),** and ensure secure satellite-assisted communications.
- The symposium also discussed the need to factor in the presence of **trans-domain weapons,** targeting from air or from inner to outer space, and **integrate future space-based surveillance networks.**

What is India's Stand on Militarisation of Space?

- **Changing Polarity in Current Scenarios:** In India, historically, space has remained the sole jurisdiction of its civilian space agency, the [Indian Space Research Organisation \(ISRO\)](#). India has always maintained a **pacifist** approach towards **space security, opposing the weaponization and militarisation of space.**
 - For the last decade, India's **approach to outer space has been shifting** and is now increasingly driven by national security concerns. Rather than opting for a morally driven policy, **India is focusing on peaceful uses of outer space.**

- Though India **has still not abandoned its policy of non-weaponization**, it has felt that its inaction and ignoring of contemporary developments in outer space could leave it vulnerable to a range of **threats to its [space assets](#)**.
- **Recent Developments: In 2019**, India conducted its first ever simulated space warfare exercise (**[IndSpaceX](#)**) with an eye on Chinese threats and successfully **tested an anti-satellite weapon ([Mission Shakti](#))** in the same year.
 - Also, the launch of the tri-service Defence Space Agency (DSA) has permanently taken the military away from the shadows of civil space.
 - India has also set up the **[Defence Space Research Agency \(DSRA\)](#)** to help develop **space-based weapons for the DSA**. Space is as much recognised as a military domain as **land, water, air and cyber**.
 - In **2020**, the Government of India approved the creation of **[IN-SPACE](#)**- an independent nodal agency under the **Department of Space** to encourage **private participation** in the space domain.

What is Mission Def-Space?

- It is an ambitious effort to **develop innovative solutions for the three Services ([Indian airforce](#), [Navy](#), and [Army](#))** in the space domain through the Indian industry and start-ups.
- 75 challenges are being opened to get **innovative solutions**, based on the defence requirements in the space domain.
- Startups, innovators and the private sector will be invited to **find solutions for the problems that will include both offensive and defensive capabilities**.
- It aims to develop a range of military applications for space warfare and to enable the private industries to **offer solutions to the armed forces for future offensive and defensive requirements**.
- Defense applications in space will not only help the Indian armed forces **but can also be extended to friendly foreign nations**.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Prelims

Q. Consider the following in respect of Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS): (2017)

1. Inaugural IONS was held in India in 2015 under the chairmanship of the Indian Navy.
2. IONS is a voluntary initiative that seeks to increase maritime co-operation among navies of the littoral states of the Indian Ocean Region.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

Ans: (b)

- The 'Indian Ocean Naval Symposium' (IONS) is a voluntary initiative that seeks to increase maritime cooperation among navies of the littoral States of the Indian Ocean Region by providing an open and inclusive forum for discussion of regionally relevant maritime issues. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
- It provides a forum to increase maritime security cooperation, and promote friendly relationships among the member nations.
- The inaugural IONS-2008 was held in New Delhi, India in February, 2008. The Chief of the Naval Staff, Indian Navy was designated as the Chairman of IONS for the

- period 2008-10. Hence, statement 1 is not correct.
- Therefore, option (b) is the correct answer.

Mains

Q1. Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in the defence sector is now set to be liberalized: What influence this is expected to have on Indian defence and economy in the short and long run? **(2014)**

Q2. What is the significance of Indo-US defence deals over Indo-Russian defence deals? Discuss with reference to stability in the Indo-Pacific region. **(2020)**

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