

INDIA'S RECORD PERFORMANCE AT THE 19TH ASIAN GAMES

Why in News?

- India finished with a record haul of 107 medals at the Hangzhou (China) Asian Games, its best ever after the previous best haul of 70 medals (16 gold) at the Jakarta 2018 Asian Games.
- India has won 28 gold, 38 silver and 41 bronze medals and there are no events scheduled for India on the final day of the event on October 8.

Key Takeaways from the India's Performance at the 19th Asian Games:

- **Team medals in shooting indicate a new depth of talent:** Gains in compound archery is good news since the event is likely to be included in the Olympics.
- **The track-and-field domination:** It added to India's image as a growing sporting nation.
- **The badminton gold and table tennis bronze:** This has forced China to acknowledge India's existence in a discipline in which they have long taken their dominance for granted.
- **5 events where India saw a dip:** These were tennis, bridge, kurash, wushu and table tennis.
 - But in table tennis, the bronze won by Sutirtha Mukherjee and Ayhika Mukherje (after defeating the strong Chinese contenders) was actually one of the most significant among the 107 medals.
- **Doesn't translate into a medal rush at the Paris Olympics next year:** This is because a bunch of medals in Hangzhou have come in events that aren't in the Olympics and in many, the level of competition will increase several folds.

The Reason for India's Overall Performance Improvement:

- **The government funding** of the Olympic disciplines, primarily under the **Target Olympic Podium Scheme**.
- With no scarcity of financial resources, **the quality of coaches, sports science experts and exposure trips abroad**, have added up to improvement.

An Illustrative Case is Archery:

- **The government spent Rs 24 crore in 2022-23.** The federation tied up with NTPC in a deal worth Rs 115 crore over a period of five years, with an additional Rs 15 crore for one-time support to build infrastructure.

- **Approximately Rs 2 crore was spent on hiring coaches from South Korea and Italy**, getting sports performance and neuro-science experts from the US as well as getting 50 Indian coaches “exposed” to international seminars.
- **Another Rs 3 crore was spent on national camps**, where psychologists, nutritionists, strength and conditioning experts, were employed along with using video analysis software.
- **This investment paid dividends.** From just two archery medals in 2018, the count went up to nine in 2023.
 - **The compound archers completed a clean sweep** of all the five gold medals on offer.
 - Archers **Jyothi Surekha Vennam and Ojas Pravin Deotale**, with three gold medals each, were the most successful athletes of this Games.

WHAT IS TERRITORIAL ARMY (TA)?

The Territorial Army (TA) recently inducted its first batch of Mandarin-trained officers to support the regular Army's efforts to enhance expertise in the Chinese language.



About Territorial Army (TA):

- The Indian Territorial Army (TA) is a **second line of defence after the regular Indian Army**; it is **not a profession**, occupation or a source of employment.
- It is only meant for those people who are already in **mainstay civilian professions**; in fact, gainful employment or self-employment in a civil profession is a prerequisite for joining the TA.
- **Role:**
 - The duties of the TA include “**relieving the Regular Army from static duties**”, while also **providing assistance to civil authorities** in times of natural calamities and tragedies.
 - They also **help civil administration with providing essential services** in areas where state machinery is stretched or there **are security threats**.
- **Volunteers of the TA usually serve in uniform for a few days every year**, so that they can bear arms for national defence in times of dire need or national emergencies.
- **History:**

- TA was raised by the Britishers in 1920 through Indian Territorial Act of 1920 and it was organised into two wings namely - 'The Auxiliary Force' for Europeans & Anglo-Indians and 'The Indian Territorial Force' for Indian Volunteers.
 - After Independence Territorial Army Act was passed in 1948 and the Territorial Army was formally inaugurated by the first Indian Governor General Shri C Rajagopalachari on 09 Oct 1949.
 - **Motto: Savdhani Va Shoorta (Vigilance and Valour).**
 - **Conditions of Eligibility:**
 - **Nationality: Citizens of India.** (Men & Women).
 - **Age: 18 to 42 years**
 - **Educational Qualifications: Graduate** from any recognized university
 - **Physical Standards:** A candidate must be **physically and medically fit** in all respects.
 - **Employment: Gainfully Employed**
 - **Serving member of the Regular Army/ Navy/ Air Force/ Police/ GREF/ Para Military and like forces are not eligible**
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WHAT IS CARD-ON-FILE TOKENISATION?

Recently, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) proposed to introduce Card-on-File Tokenisation (CoFT).



About Card-on-File Tokenisation:

- Tokenisation refers to **replacement of actual credit and debit card details** with an alternate code called the “**token**”, which will be unique for a combination of card, token requestor and device.
- This shall be unique for a **combination of card, token requestor** (i.e. the entity which accepts request from the customer for tokenisation of a card and passes it on to the card network to issue a corresponding token) and **the merchant** (token requestor and merchant may or may not be the same entity).

- **Advantage:** A tokenised card transaction is **considered safer** as the actual card details are not shared with the merchant during transaction processing.
- Customers who do not have the tokenisation facility will have to key in their name, 16-digit card number, expiry date and CVV each time they order something online.

What is Card-on-File transaction?

- It is transaction where in **cardholders authorizes merchants to store their payment information** securely and bill cardholders' stored accounts for future purchases.

WHAT IS IRON DOME?

Iron Dome, Israel's anti-missile system recently intercepted over 5,000 rockets launched from Gaza, a narrow strip that is home to 2.3 million Palestinians.



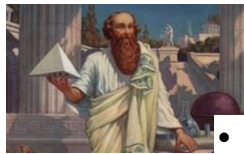
About Iron Dome:

- It is **Israel's air missile defense system** that can defend **against short-range rockets**, intercepting them in the air above the state.
- It is capable of successfully **handling multiple rockets at a time**.
- **Developed by Rafael Advanced Defense Systems and Israel Aerospace Industries**, the system became **operational in March 2011**.
- **Features:**
 - The Iron Dome functions by **detecting, analyzing, and intercepting** varieties of **targets such as mortars, rockets, and artillery**.
 - It is **powered by missile-defense batteries**.
 - It has **all-weather capabilities** and is able to **function night or day** and in all conditions, including fog, rain, dust storms, and low clouds.
 - It is able to **launch a variety of interceptor missiles**.
 - It is designed to shoot down missiles with a **range of about 40 miles or less**.
 - It also **has the ability to be moved**, either onto ships or across land, to better suit defense needs.
 - It **must be reloaded to continuously intercept** incoming missiles.
 - The Iron Dome **operates through three main components:**

- a **radar** that detects incoming rockets,
 - a **command-and-control system** that determines the threat level,
 - an **interceptor** that seeks to destroy the incoming rocket before it strikes.
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WHO WAS PYTHAGORAS?

An ancient Babylonian tablet displaying a concept predating Pythagoras by over a millennium suggests the Pythagorean theorem could be the world's oldest known case of plagiarism.



About Pythagoras:

- Pythagoras was a **Greek philosopher and mathematician**.
- Pythagoras lived during the **6th century B.C.** on the **island of Samos, Greece**.
- He is commonly said to be the **first pure mathematician who proposed that everything is a number**.
- He is best known in the modern day for the **Pythagorean Theorem**.

Pythagoras' Theorem:

- It states that **in a right-angled triangle, the square of the length of the hypotenuse (the side opposite the right angle) is equal to the sum of the squares of the lengths of the other two sides**.
 - This formula has been **applied to measuring distance and space** as, for example, in planning and executing the construction of a building.
 - Pythagorean Brotherhood:
 - Pythagoras founded a **secretive** religious and philosophical community known as the Pythagorean Brotherhood.
 - The **members, known as Pythagoreans**, followed a **strict set of rules and beliefs**, including the **idea that mathematics and numbers held mystical and spiritual significance**.
 - It was here he **taught that "the whole cosmos is a scale and a number"**.
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ISRAEL AT WAR AFTER HAMAS SURPRISE ATTACK

Why in news?

- Israel declared a state of war after Palestinian militants launched barrages of rockets into southern and central Israel.
- The attack also combined gunmen breaching security barriers with a barrage of rockets fired from Gaza.
- The attack came 50 years and a day after Egyptian and Syrian forces launched an assault during the Jewish holiday of Yom Kippur.
- This was done in an effort to retrieve territory Israel had taken during a brief conflict in 1967.
- Attributing the attacks to the Palestinian militant group Hamas, the Israel Defence Forces began to carry out air strikes on Hamas targets in the Gaza Strip.

Israel- Palestine: Synopsis of the Conflict

- **Early Phase**
 - In the 19th century the land of **Palestine was inhabited by a multicultural population** (approx. 86% Muslim, 10% Christian, and 4% Jewish) – living in peace.
 - **In the late 1800s**, a group in Europe decided to colonize this land. **Known as Zionists**, their goal was to create a Jewish homeland.
 - They considered locations in Africa and the Americas, before settling on Palestine.
 - Hitler’s rise to power, led to increased Jewish immigration to Palestine. With the steady influx of Jews, the conflict in Palestine started to grow.
- **UN Partition Plan**



○ In 1947 the **United Nations** decided to intervene. However, it did not choose the principle of “self-determination of peoples.”

- Under considerable Zionist pressure, the UN recommended giving away 55% of Palestine to a Jewish state.
- This was done despite the fact that this group represented only about 30% of the total population, and owned under 7% of the land.
- **1947-1949 War**
 - Fighting began almost as soon as the Resolution of November 1947 was approved.
 - On May 14, 1948, one day before the British Mandate (Palestine was a British colony) expired, Britain declared "the establishment of a Jewish State in Eretz-Israel, to be known as the State of Israel".
 - This sparked a full-scale war (1948 Arab–Israeli War).
 - By the end of the war, Israel had conquered 78 percent of Palestine; and a new map was drawn up.
- **1967 War**
 - Also known as a six-day war, Israeli forces launched a highly successful surprise attack on Egypt.
 - Israel occupied the final 22% of Palestine that had eluded it in 1948 – the West Bank and Gaza Strip
 - It also **occupied parts of Egypt** (since returned) and **Syria** (which remain under occupation).
- **Oslo peace process**
 - In the 1993 a breakthrough agreement was negotiated between Israeli and Palestinian leaders in Oslo, Norway.
 - Under this process, the Israeli government and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) agreed on a **plan to implement a two-state solution**.

What is Hamas?

- **About**
 - Hamas is the largest Palestinian militant Islamist group and one of the two major political parties in the region.
 - Currently, it governs more than two million Palestinians in the Gaza Strip.

- The organisation, however, is also known for its armed resistance against Israel (more on this later).
- Hamas as a whole, or in some cases its military wing, is designated a terrorist group by Israel, the United States, the European Union, the United Kingdom, and other countries.
- **Background**
 - The group was founded in the late 1980s, after the beginning of the **first Palestinian intifada**, or uprising, against Israel's occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip.
 - Hamas is essentially the internal metamorphosis of the Palestinian Muslim Brotherhood.
- **Reasons for its creation**
 - The main reason for Hamas' creation was a deep sense of failure that had been set within the Palestinian national movement by the late 1980s.
 - This primarily happened after the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) — involved in the armed struggle against Israel from the mid-1960s to 'liberate Palestine' — made two massive concessions.
 - The PLO recognized Israel and its right to exist — thereby, relinquishing its goal of liberating Palestine.
 - Two, it also dropped the armed struggle as a strategy, for the sake of a negotiated settlement.
 - Hamas gained prominence after it opposed the Oslo Peace Accords signed in the early 1990s between Israel and the PLO.
- **Some of the worst flare-ups between Hamas and Israel**
 - The deadliest face-off between the two sides took place in 2014.
 - At least 2,251 Palestinians, including 1,462 civilians, were killed during 50 days of fighting.
 - On the Israeli side, 67 soldiers and six civilians were killed.
 - In May 2021, hundreds of Palestinians were wounded in clashes with Israeli security forces at the **Al Aqsa compound in Jerusalem**.
 - After demanding Israel withdraw security forces from the compound, Hamas launched a series of rockets from Gaza into Israel.
 - Israel hit back with air strikes on Gaza. Fighting went on for 11 days.

GANGETIC RIVER DOLPHIN

A recent publication by scientists and researchers has revealed that 19 Gangetic river dolphins had been rescued from the irrigation canals of the Ganga-Ghagra basin in Uttar Pradesh between 2013 and 2020.



About Gangetic river dolphin:

- It is a **freshwater species** and one of the few river dolphins found in the world.
- **Distribution:** It inhabits the **Ganges-Brahmaputra-Meghna** and **Karnaphuli-Sangu** river systems of Nepal, India, and Bangladesh.
- **Common Names:** Blind dolphin, Ganges dolphin, Ganges susu, hihu, side-swimming dolphin, South Asian River Dolphin
- It has been recognized as **India's National Aquatic Animal**.

Features:

- It has a long thin snout, rounded belly, stocky body and large flippers.
- It feeds majorly on fishes and is usually found in counter-current systems of the main river channel.
- Its eyes lack lens, and as a result, this species is also referred to as the "**blind dolphin**".
- They have a **highly developed bio-sonar system** that facilitates them to hunt for fish even in murky waters.
- Being a mammal, the Ganges River dolphin cannot breathe in the water and must surface every 30-120 seconds. Because of the sound it produces when breathing, the animal is popularly referred to as the 'Susu'.
- **Conservation status:**
 - **IUCN:** Endangered
 - **Wildlife (Protection) Act:** Schedule-I
 - **CITES:** Appendix I