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JAPAN'S MILITARY BUILD UP AND ITS GEOPOLITICAL IMPACTS

THIS ARTICLE COVERS 'DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS' AND THE TOPIC DETAILS "JAPAN'S MILITARY BUILD UP AND ITS GEOPOLITICAL IMPACTS". THIS TOPIC IS RELEVANT IN THE "INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS" SECTION OF GS2 IN THE UPSC CSE EXAM.



WHY IN THE NEWS?

The recent address by Japan's Prime Minister Fumio Kishida to the United States Congress, alongside the outcomes of his summit with President Joe Biden, heralds the emergence of a more assertive Japan on the global stage. These events underscore a significant transformation underway in Japan and highlight its growing importance on the international scene.

Japan's abandonment of its post-War pacifism marks a significant shift in its stance towards military power. This decision holds the potential to reshape not only the dynamics of Asia but also the global geopolitical landscape. Japan's newfound determination and military strength align with India's vision of fostering a multipolar Asia within a multipolar world.

BACKGROUND

Following World War II, Japan, humbled by defeat, embraced a **policy of pacifism**. This involved refraining from significant military buildup, limiting defense spending, and abstaining from involvement

in military conflicts globally. This commitment to pacifism stemmed from Japan's desire to atone for its pre-war militarism and imperialism.

To compensate for its pacifist stance, Japan forged a robust bilateral military alliance with the United States. Under the protection of the US in Asia, Japan redirected its efforts toward economic recovery and emerged as a formidable commercial and technological force by the late 1960s. By the early 1970s, Japan had ascended to become the world's second-largest economy, trailing only the United States.

Starting in the mid-2000s, Japan began advocating for a new security framework in Asia, notably through the **concept of the Indo-Pacific**, a pivotal geopolitical idea of the 21st century. This notion, emphasizing the strategic unity of the Indian and Pacific Oceans, was initially articulated by the late Prime Minister Shinzo Abe during his 2007 visit to India. Japan has since dedicated substantial diplomatic, political, and financial efforts to promote this concept, leading to its adoption by key regional players like Australia, Indonesia, India, and the United States.

In the current phase of transition, Japan is not only advancing strategic concepts but also bolstering its military capabilities and demonstrating the political resolve to actively reshape the regional security landscape. Prime Minister Kishida's recent visit to Washington DC effectively symbolized the emergence of a new geopolitical Japan.

REASON FOR THE CHANGE IN POLICY

For years, the United States has urged Japan to play a more active role in ensuring security within Asia. However, Japan, content with its focus on commerce, had been hesitant to embrace this suggestion. In the 21st century, a combination of internal and external factors has prompted a significant reevaluation of Japan's security posture.

Externally, several key factors have converged to catalyze Japan's shift: **the assertive military stance of China**, particularly concerning territorial disputes with Japan; **the strengthening military ties between Beijing and Moscow**, along with their coordinated policies in Northeast Asia; **the increasing military capabilities of North Korea**; and concerns sparked by the Trump Administration regarding the potential withdrawal of US security assurances for Japan and other Asian allies. These elements collectively have reshaped Japan's regional security landscape, compelling a reassessment of its strategic approach

IMPACT ON JAPAN'S MILITARY BUILDUP ON ASIAN GEOPOLITICS

Japan's military buildup carries significant implications for Asian geopolitics, catalyzing shifts in regional power dynamics and security arrangements:

1. **Balance of Power:** Japan's enhanced military capabilities introduce a new element to the balance of power in Asia. As Japan strengthens its defense forces, it potentially offsets the military dominance of other regional powers, influencing their strategic calculations and interactions.
2. **Regional Security:** The buildup of Japan's military capabilities contributes to the evolving security architecture in Asia. It may prompt neighboring countries to reassess their defense postures and alliances, potentially leading to adjustments in regional security arrangements.
3. **Deterrence and Stability:** A militarily stronger Japan could serve as a deterrence against potential aggression or instability in the region. This may contribute to maintaining peace and stability by

dissuading aggressive actions from adversaries and fostering a more predictable security environment.

4. **Alliance Dynamics:** Japan's military buildup could impact its alliances and partnerships in Asia. It may strengthen ties with like-minded countries sharing security concerns, while potentially causing apprehension or prompting responses from others who view Japan's military expansion with suspicion.
5. **Territorial Disputes:** Japan's military capabilities may have implications for ongoing territorial disputes in the region, particularly in the East China Sea and the South China Sea. A stronger Japanese defense posture could influence the dynamics of these disputes and affect the strategies of other claimant states.
6. **Regional Influence:** Japan's increased military capacity could enhance its influence and leadership role in regional security initiatives and multilateral forums. It may seek to play a more proactive role in shaping security policies and responses to common challenges in collaboration with other Asian nations.

Overall, Japan's military buildup adds a new dimension to the complex tapestry of Asian geopolitics, impacting regional dynamics and shaping the strategic landscape in ways that require careful observation and analysis by stakeholders both within and beyond the region.

Ankit Kumar

HEAVY RAINFALL AND FLOOD IN UAE

THIS ARTICLE COVERS 'DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS' AND THE TOPIC DETAILS OF "HEAVY RAINFALL AND FLOOD IN UAE". THIS TOPIC IS RELEVANT IN THE "ENVIRONMENT" SECTION OF THE UPSC CSE EXAM.

WHY IN THE NEWS?

In a recent event, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) experienced one of its most significant rainfall occurrences as a result of a severe thunderstorm impacting the region leading to flooding in Urban areas.

REASONS BEHIND EXTREME RAINFALL IN UAE

CLIMATE'S ROLE

Our climate is constantly evolving, and natural variations like El Niño and La Niña can influence extreme rainfall events. Additionally, long-term climate change, driven by factors like greenhouse gas emissions, is impacting global weather patterns. This can lead to conditions that favour intense precipitation.

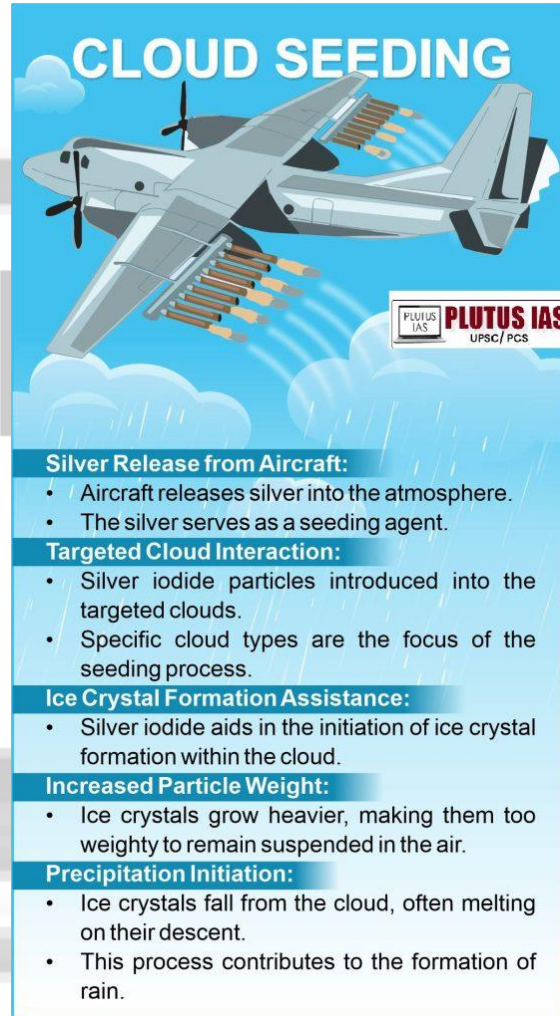
WARMING AND THE MOISTURE CONNECTION

As global temperatures rise, more water evaporates from land surfaces, oceans, and other bodies of water. This warmer air acts like a sponge, holding more moisture. Studies suggest that for every degree Celsius increase, the atmosphere can hold around 7% more moisture. When storms develop, this extra moisture translates to heavier precipitation. This can intensify storms by increasing the amount of rain

that falls (greater volume), the duration of the downpour (lasting longer), or the frequency of storms in a particular region (occurring more often).

CLOUD SEEDING

A Targeted Approach: In some regions struggling with water scarcity, cloud seeding is used as a technique to induce rainfall. This method involves introducing materials like silver iodide crystals into clouds. These crystals act as condensation nuclei, around which water vapour condenses more readily, promoting precipitation. Places like the United Arab Emirates, known for its hot and dry climate, have been actively using cloud seeding to increase rainfall.



CLOUD SEEDING

Silver Release from Aircraft:

- Aircraft releases silver into the atmosphere.
- The silver serves as a seeding agent.

Targeted Cloud Interaction:

- Silver iodide particles introduced into the targeted clouds.
- Specific cloud types are the focus of the seeding process.

Ice Crystal Formation Assistance:

- Silver iodide aids in the initiation of ice crystal formation within the cloud.

Increased Particle Weight:

- Ice crystals grow heavier, making them too heavy to remain suspended in the air.

Precipitation Initiation:

- Ice crystals fall from the cloud, often melting on their descent.
- This process contributes to the formation of rain.

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UNDERSTANDING THUNDERSTORMS

Thunderstorms are intense weather events characterised by heavy rain, lightning, and thunder. These form due to atmospheric imbalances and turbulence. Warm, unstable air rises rapidly in the atmosphere, encountering enough moisture to form clouds and rain. Upward air currents also play a crucial role. These currents can be triggered by colliding cold and warm fronts, sea breezes blowing from the ocean towards land, or mountains forcing air upwards. As the rising air cools, condensation occurs, leading to the formation of rain clouds and, eventually, heavy precipitation.

ABOUT URBAN FLOODING

Urban flooding occurs when excessive rainfall or other factors overwhelm the drainage systems and infrastructure of urban areas, leading to water accumulation on streets, roads, and other urban spaces. This phenomenon poses significant challenges to cities worldwide, impacting infrastructure, property, livelihoods, and public safety.

Causes of Urban Flooding:

Drainage struggles: Outdated drainage systems and clogged pathways can't handle the water surge.

Pavements: Concrete jungles prevent rainwater from soaking in, increasing runoff.

Location: Low-lying areas and those near water bodies are naturally flood-prone.

Climate Change: More intense storms due to climate change push drainage systems to their limits.

Urban heat: Cities trap heat, fueling storms and worsening downpours.

CLIMATIC PATTERN OF UAE

- The United Arab Emirates (UAE) boasts a desert climate marked by scorching temperatures and minimal rainfall. Situated within the Arabian Peninsula, its location exposes it to extreme heat, especially during the summer months when temperatures often exceed 40 degrees Celsius (104 degrees Fahrenheit).
- The country experiences two distinct seasons: a hot season from May to September and a milder period from October to April. Despite the relatively cooler temperatures in winter, daytime temperatures remain warm, offering a pleasant climate for outdoor activities.
- Rainfall is sparse and irregular, typically occurring between November and April, with most areas receiving less than 100 millimetres annually. The UAE is also prone to dust and sandstorms, particularly during the summer, caused by winds like the Shamal and Khamsin.
- Overall, the UAE's climatic pattern is characterised by its arid desert conditions, making it a challenging yet intriguing environment shaped by its geographical location and seasonal variations.

PRELIMS PRACTISE QUESTION

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding the difference between La Nina and El Nino:

1. La Niña is defined by abnormally cold ocean temperatures in the equatorial Indian Ocean, while El Niño is marked by unusually warm ocean temperatures in the equatorial Pacific Ocean.
2. El Niño negatively impacts the southwest monsoon of India, whereas La Niña does not influence the monsoon climate.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

ANSWER: D

MAINS PRACTISE QUESTION

Q1. In your opinion, should governments invest more in researching cloud seeding technology, considering its potential drawbacks and uncertainties?

Himanshu Mishra

