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1. Agni-5 missile with MIRV technology

Why in News?

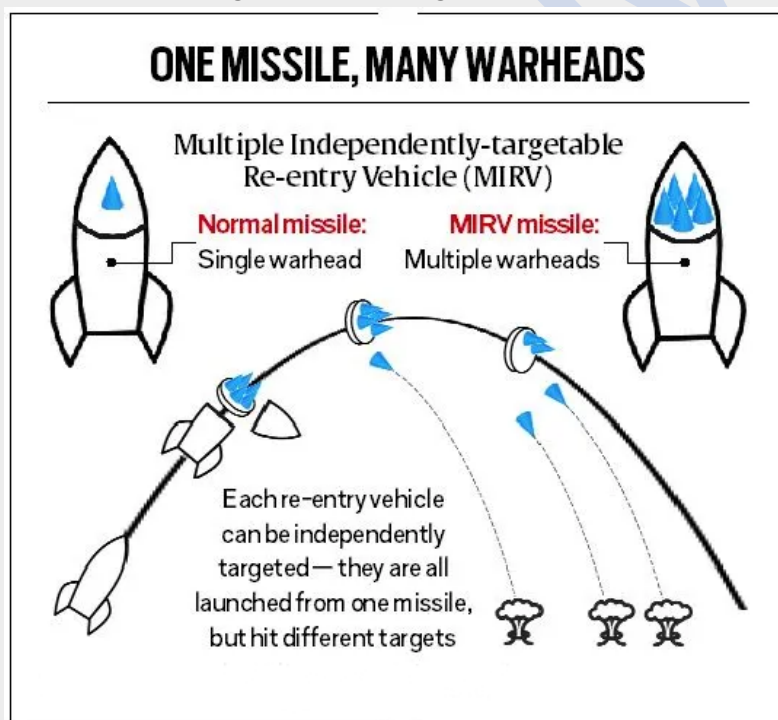
India announced the successful testing of an Agni missile capable of carrying multiple warheads meant to hit multiple targets simultaneously. The success of Mission Divyastra, as the test was named, was announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

What are Agni-5 missiles?

Agni is a long-range missile developed indigenously by the Defence Research and Development Organisation, DRDO. The family of Agni missiles has been in the arsenal of the Indian armed forces since the early 1990s. This latest variant of the missile is equipped with what is known as MIRV (Multiple Independently Targetable Re-entry Vehicle) technology, first developed at least five decades ago but in possession of only a handful of countries.

What is MIRV technology?

The MIRV can target multiple targets that can be hundreds of kilometers apart with a single



missile. This Agni, capable of carrying nuclear warheads, has a range of more than 5,000 km, making it a long-range missile, and is aimed mainly at thwarting the challenge from China.

As of now, the United States, Russia, China, France and the United Kingdom are known to have MIRV-equipped missiles. These missiles can be launched from land or from sea from a submarine. While Pakistan is developing such a missile system, Israel too is suspected to either possess the missile or be developing it.

When was the Agni-5 last tested?

Agni-5 has been successfully tested multiple times since 2012. In December 2022, a successful flight test of Agni-5 was undertaken off the coast of Odisha.

Medium to Intercontinental versions of Agni missile systems 1 to 5 have varying ranges — starting from 700 km for Agni-1 to 5000 km and above for Agni-5. In June 2021, DRDO successfully tested Agni P, a canisterised missile with a range capability between 1,000 and 2,000 km. This means that the missile can be launched from road and rail platforms, making it easier for it to be deployed and launched at a quicker pace.

What makes MIRV technology specially lethal?

According to the Center for Arms Control and Non-proliferation, "In contrast to a traditional missile, which carries one warhead, MIRVs can carry multiple warheads. Warheads on MIRVed missiles can be released from the missile at different speeds and in different directions."

The MIRV is also difficult to develop, which is why very few countries have them. "The development of MIRV technology is not easy. It requires the combination of large missiles, small warheads, accurate guidance, and a complex mechanism for releasing warheads sequentially during flight," the Center for Arms Control and Non-proliferation said.

While the USA had the technology in 1970 and the Soviet Union followed suit in the same decade, since then, only a few countries have the MIRV capabilities, a club India has now joined.

Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains Paper III; Science & Technology

Source: The Indian Express

2. India-EFTA Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement

Why in news?

India-European Free Trade Association signed a Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement (TEPA) on 10th March 2024.



About EFTA

EFTA countries comprise of Switzerland, Iceland, Norway & Liechtenstein. EFTA is an inter-governmental organization set up in 1960 for the promotion of free trade and economic integration for the benefit of its four Member States.

Importance

For the first time, India is signing FTA with four developed nations - an important economic bloc in Europe. For the first time in history of FTAs, binding commitment of \$100 bn investment and 1 million direct jobs in the next 15 years has been given. The agreement will give a boost to Make in India and provide opportunities to young & talented workforce.

Agreement Details

The agreement comprises of 14 chapters with main focus on market access related to goods, rules of origin, trade facilitation, trade remedies, sanitary and phytosanitary measures, technical barriers to trade, investment promotion, market access on services, intellectual property rights, trade and sustainable development and other legal and horizontal provisions. EFTA is an important regional group, with several growing opportunities for enhancing international trade in goods and services. EFTA is one important economic block out of the three (other two - EU & UK) in Europe. Among EFTA countries, Switzerland is the largest trading partner of India followed by Norway.

The highlights of the agreement are:

- EFTA has committed to promote investments with the aim to increase the stock of foreign direct investments by USD 100 billion in India in the next 15 years, and to facilitate the generation of 1 million direct employment in India, through such investments.
- For the first ever time in the history of FTAs, a legal commitment is being made about promoting target-oriented investment and creation of jobs.
- EFTA is offering 92.2% of its tariff lines which covers 99.6% of India's exports. The EFTA's market access offer covers 100% of non-agri products and tariff concession on Processed Agricultural Products (PAP).
- India is offering 82.7% of its tariff lines which covers 95.3% of EFTA exports of which more than 80% import is Gold.

Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains Paper III; Economics

Source: PIB

3. Centre signs pact with Tripura govt, TIPRA Motha

Why in News?

The Centre recently signed a tripartite agreement with the Tripura government and the state's main opposition party, the TIPRA Motha, for a time-bound "honorable resolution" of the long-pending demands of the state's tribal population, including economic, political, land, linguistic and cultural rights.

Signed on March 2, the agreement comes just ahead of the Lok Sabha elections, and has put an end to the indefinite fast-unto-death started by TIPRA Motha founder and royal scion Pradyot Kishore Manikya Debbarma on February 27. It has also facilitated the TIPRA Motha's joining the BJP in the state government, with two of its members sworn in as ministers. The rest of the Opposition camp has slammed TIPRA Motha for joining hands with the BJP.



What are the demands?

The Tipra Motha's demands include a "Greater Tipraland" — a separate state for Tripura's tribals which seeks to include those living outside the Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council (TTAADC) area as

well. The party has sought more powers for the TTAADC, including direct funding from the Centre, its own police force, and share of revenue from gas exploration in the state. It also wants the Roman script to be declared as the official script for the indigenous Kokborok language.

What does the accord say?

"Under the pact, it was agreed to amicably resolve all issues of indigenous people of Tripura relating to history, land and political rights, economic development, identity, culture and language. Along with this, it was agreed to constitute a joint working group/ committee to work out and implement the mutually agreed points on all the above mentioned issues in a time-bound manner to ensure an honourable solution," the Centre said in a statement.

"In order to maintain a conducive atmosphere for implementation of the pact, all stakeholders shall refrain from resorting to any form of protest/ agitation, starting from the day of signing of the agreement," it added.

What did Home Minister Amit Shah say?

Union Home Minister Amit Shah termed the signing of the accord "historic", and said: "With this agreement, we have honoured history, corrected mistakes and accepted today's reality. Nobody can change history but we can learn from our mistakes and go ahead keeping sight of the realities".

Shah's comments were an oblique reference to allegations of deprivation meted out to tribals in Tripura, who became a minority in their state due to non-tribals settling in large numbers

before the 1971 Bangladesh Liberation War, and of concerns of illegal immigration from Bangladesh.

Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains Paper II; Governance

Source: The Indian Express

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