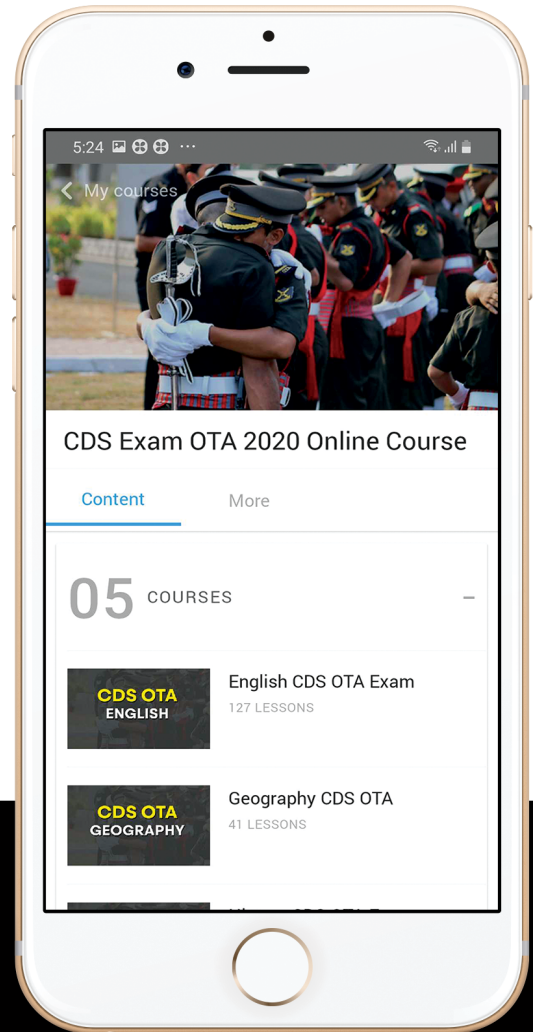




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# DEFENCE UPDATES

## 01 – 16 MAY 2021

### China eyes World War II-era airstrip in Kiribati

- China is eyeing the World War II-era airstrip in the archipelago of Kiribati, deep in the Pacific, positioned just 1,800 miles from Hawaii.
- Dave Makichuk, writing in Asia Times said that the two nations re-established ties two years ago and have embarked on new cooperation projects, including infrastructure investment as well as trade and cultural exchanges.
- This could give Beijing an airbase in an incredibly strategic location, between North America and New Zealand, potentially giving China's military much greater reach throughout a critical and increasingly tense region, The War Zone reported.
- An UK based news agency first reported on Chinese developments in Kiribati, which also included improvements to a bridge associated with the airstrip, on May 5, 2021, based on information from I-Kiribati politician Tessie Lambourne.
- "The government hasn't shared the cost and other details other than it's a feasibility study for the rehabilitation of the runway and bridge," Lambourne, who formed the Boutokaan Kiribati Moa Party last year, which is in opposition to President Taneti Maamau's Tobwaan Kiribati Party, told the UK news agency.
- The site -- on the island of Kanton, also spelled Canton, part of the archipelago nation of Kiribati -- currently has a single usable runway, officially measuring 6,230 feet in length, although the total unimproved length is closer to 8,000 feet, based on satellite imagery, reported Asia Times.
- The ribbon-shaped island, which has a total area of only around 15 square miles and a population of approximately 20, is part of Kiribati's wider Phoenix Islands group, none of the others of which are inhabited.
- During World War II, the coral atoll's airstrip was used by the US Army Air Forces as part of an air ferry route between Hawaii and the South Pacific.
- After the war, civil operators also used it as a trans-Pacific stopover. The United States also made use of the island for space and missile tracking up until the late 1960s. Today, Canton Island Airport is used only for emergencies.

- The Australian Strategic Policy Institute (ASPI), a Canberra-based think tank funded in part by the Australian Department of Defense, fretted in a September 2020 article that Beijing was likely to reclaim seabed and expand island installations in Kiribati as well as fortify them, as it has done to some South China Sea islands.
- It accused China of "moving to achieve control over the vital trans-Pacific sea lines of communication under the guise of assisting with economic development and climate-change adaptation."
- The island would in fact become "a fixed aircraft carrier," according to one military analyst. And should it become a military facility, the airstrip would most likely be used as a base for the plethora of unmanned reconnaissance drones used by the People's Liberation Army (PLA).
- It could also hold an overt military component, including other anti-access and area denial capabilities, such as surface-to-air missiles or shore-based anti-ship cruise missiles.
- The existing runway, once modernized, could be long enough to support fighter deployments, but the improved section would likely need to be extended out to the full 8,000 feet length to support maritime patrol aircraft or even bombers.
- A considerable investment would also need to be made to supporting infrastructure to sustain any kind of meaningful, longer-term deployment, including hangars, fuelling and maintenance facilities and accommodations for aircrew and ground personnel, said Makichuk.
- As well as providing a foothold in a strategic location, China's plans for Kiribati could also impact its access to that nation's extensive exclusive economic zone, which covers more than 1.35 million square miles and includes some of the most productive fishing grounds in the Pacific.

## **DG AFMS gets nod to recruit Ex-AMC/SSC medical officers**

- Under the 'Tour of Duty' scheme, 400 ex-AMC/SSC medical officers, released between 2017 and 2021, are expected to be recruited on contract basis for a maximum period of 11 months, the ministry said in a statement.
- The order which was issued on May 8, says a fixed monthly lump sum amount will be admissible by deducting the basic pension from the salary drawn at the time of retirement plus specialist pay wherever applicable.

## **First batch of 83 women soldiers inducted into Army**

- An attestation parade was held at Dronacharya Parade Ground in Bengaluru on 8 May 2021 and the soldiers were inducted into the Corps of Military Police.
- The Commandant of the CMP Centre and School congratulated them on their successful completion of the intense 61 weeks of training.

## **Brigadier Ajeet Deshpande takes over as new Commandant of Army Ordnance Corps Centre**

- The officer took over the reins of AOC Centre from Brigadier J J S Bhinder, who has proceeded on his next assignment.
- Over the years the AOC Centre has emerged as a premier training institution of the Indian Army. The AOC Centre trains Ordnance personnel of the Army for providing logistics support to field army.

## **Indian Army turns flags 'blue' from 'red' for people-friendly look in Kashmir**

- In an effort to make the Indian Army cantonments and military convoys more population friendly, the Indian Army has now changed the red flags on its convoys to blue colour.
- Lieutenant Colonel Q Khan said, "the flags on the military convoys moving with troops from different locations in and out of the Kashmir valley have been changed to blue from red while the walls on the cantonments are proposed to have the pictures of young achievers from Kashmir."
- The officer further said that the troops carrying lathis have also been asked to only use whistles in order to ask vehicles to stop. "The messages and pictures on vehicles are of the scenic places of Kashmir," he added.
- The Indian Army troops travelling in the convoys have also been asked to behave more politely with the people during stopovers, ascertained the officer.

## **Rolls-Royce and HAL Sign MoU for Supporting MT30 Marine Engine Business**

- Through this MoU, Rolls-Royce and HAL will expand their long-standing partnership in India and work together in the area of marine applications for the

first time. This partnership will leverage the rich experience of HAL's IMGT (Industrial and Marine Gas Turbine) Division that works on marine gas turbines with Indian shipyards.

### **About the MT30 marine engines:**

- These are billed as the world's most power-dense, best-in-class naval gas turbines currently in service with naval programmes worldwide in various propulsion arrangements across seven ship types.
- The MT30 has the potential to provide next-gen capabilities to the Indian Navy's future fleet and can deliver its full power of up to 40 MW in ambient temperatures up to 38°C, without any power degradation throughout the life of ship.

## **DCGI approves anti-COVID drug developed by DRDO for emergency use**

- An anti-COVID-19 therapeutic application of the drug 2-deoxy-D-glucose (2-DG) has been developed by Institute of Nuclear Medicine and Allied Sciences (INMAS), a lab of Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), in collaboration with Dr Reddy's Laboratories (DRL), Hyderabad. Clinical trial results have shown that this molecule helps in faster recovery of hospitalised patients and reduces supplemental oxygen dependence. Higher proportion of patients treated with 2-DG showed RT-PCR negative conversion in COVID patients. The drug will be of immense benefit to the people suffering from COVID-19.
- Pursuing Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's call for preparedness against the pandemic, DRDO took the initiative of developing anti-COVID therapeutic application of 2-DG. In April 2020, during the first wave of the pandemic, INMAS-DRDO scientists conducted laboratory experiments with the help of Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology (CCMB), Hyderabad and found that this molecule works effectively against SARS-CoV-2 virus and inhibits the viral growth. Based on these results, Drugs Controller General of India's (DCGI) Central Drugs Standard Control Organization (CDSCO) permitted Phase-II clinical trial of 2-DG in COVID-19 patients in May 2020.
- The DRDO, along with its industry partner DRL, Hyderabad, started the clinical trials to test the safety and efficacy of the drug in COVID-19 patients. In Phase-II trials (including dose ranging) conducted during May to October 2020, the drug

was found to be safe in COVID-19 patients and showed significant improvement in their recovery. Phase IIa was conducted in six hospitals and Phase IIb (dose ranging) clinical trial was conducted at 11 hospitals all over the country. Phase-II trial was conducted on 110 patients.

- The drug comes in powder form in sachet, which is taken orally by dissolving it in water. It accumulates in the virus infected cells and prevents virus growth by stopping viral synthesis and energy production. Its selective accumulation in virally infected cells makes this drug unique.
- In the ongoing second COVID-19 wave, a large number of patients are facing severe oxygen dependency and need hospitalisation. The drug is expected to save precious lives due to the mechanism of operation of the drug in infected cells. This also reduces the hospital stay of COVID-19 patients.

## **Nation Salutes Indian Air Force Helping Covid Warriors Win Health Wars**

- The Indian Air Force (IAF) has ordered round-the-clock readiness of the entire heavy-lift fleet and substantial numbers of medium-lift fleets to operate in a hub and spoke model.
- In support of the national effort to combat COVID-19 second wave, the IAF fleet is operating from a hub with sorties within India and abroad
- IAF in a statement on Friday said, "Presently 8x C-17, 4 x IL 76, 8 x C130, 20 x An-32, 1 x DO - 228 Dornier aircraft and 20 Helicopters have been tasked for COVID Tasks."
- While the force has augmented Aircrew for all fleets to ensure round-the-clock operations, IAF has taken stringent measures to preserve its combat potential in the face of COVID 19.
- "98% of all air warriors have been vaccinated with the first dose and 85 % percent with the second dose. Sustained efforts to ensure 100% vaccination at the earliest are ongoing," informed IAF.
- While the force, with its measures, has restricted active cases to 1% of the IAF population, strong measures to enhance capacities in hospitals and medicare centres have also been taken. With proper planning and precaution, the efforts of the air force personnel have succeeded in executing major mobilisation.
- As per the force, "As of 30 Apr 21, IAF has used their heavy-lift assets to airlift 39 cryogenic oxygen containers from Singapore, Thailand, and Dubai, and has

already rapidly positioned 126 oxygen tankers at key locations within the country.”

- Oxygen containers were the primary load ferried on Friday with heavy-lift transport aircraft making both domestic and international sorties. C-17s airlifted four cryogenic oxygen containers from Singapore to Panagarh Airbase. The airlift of four more cryogenic oxygen containers from Singapore is in progress.
- Mobilising the C-17s, two cryogenic oxygen containers were airlifted from Chandigarh to Bhubaneswar, one from Baroda to Ranchi, two from Gwalior to Raipur, two from Mumbai to Bhubaneswar.
- The airlift of two cryogenic oxygen containers from Agra to Ranchi, two containers from Indore to Surat, two containers from Chandigarh to Ranchi, six containers from Hindan to Ranchi is in progress.
- In addition, IAF IL-76 has also airlifted three oxygen plant equipment from Delhi to Dimapur and an Army load of 11.5T with 90 medicos from Dimapur to Bakshi ka Talab for setting up of Covid Hospital at Lucknow.

## **Nation Salutes Indian Navy Helping Covid Warriors Win Health Wars**

- Seven Indian Naval ships viz. Kolkata, Kochi, Talwar, Tabar, Trikand, Jalashwa and Airavat have been deployed for shipment of liquid medical oxygen-filled cryogenic containers and associated medical equipment from various countries.
- Two ships, the INS Kolkata and INS Talwar, have entered the Port of Manama, Bahrain, to carry back 40 tonnes of liquid oxygen to Mumbai.
- The INS Jalashwa is enroute to Bangkok while the INS Airavat is on its way to Singapore on similar missions.
- It may be recalled that Operation Samudra Setu was launched last year by the Navy and around 4000 Indian citizens stranded in neighbouring countries, amidst COVID 19 outbreak, were successfully repatriated back to India.

## **BRO celebrates 61<sup>st</sup> Raising Day on 7<sup>th</sup> May 2021**

- BRO was formed on 7 May 1960, with the primary goal of securing India’s borders and developing infrastructure in remote areas of India’s north and northeastern states.

- It is a leading road construction agency under the MoD. Apart from road construction it also executes maintenance works along Northern and Western frontiers mainly to meet strategic requirements of the Indian Army. It is responsible for over 53,000 Km roads.

## **Subedar Vishnu Saravanan Wins Qualification Spot for India for Tokyo Olympics in Laser Standard Class**

- Vishnu Saravanan became the second Indian sailor to qualify for the Tokyo Olympics, after he finished at the third spot in the Laser Standard category and first in the medal race at the ongoing Mussanah Open Sailing Championship.
- A Naib Subedar in the Indian Army, Vishnu comes from a family of sailors. He picked up the sport and blossomed further under the watchful eyes of his father and coach Saravanan. Like Vishnu, his father Saravanan too served in the Indian Army as a Subedar. After picking up the basics of the sport from his father and winning quite a few national-level competitions, Vishnu enrolled on the Boys Sports Company, MEG and Centre in the year 2014.
- Thanks to his consistent performances, the now 22-year-old Vishnu was enrolled in MEG and Centre as Junior Commissioned Officer in the year 2017. With his qualification, Vishnu has become just the eleventh Indian sailor to qualify for the Olympics.
- In fact, Vishnu is just the second Indian sailor after Nethra Kumanan to earn a direct qualification to the Olympics in sailing. All the remaining nine represented the country at the Olympics qualified to fill up the unfilled quotas.
- Vishnu's sister – Ramya Saravanan too is an international sailor. She, too, was in the fray for an Olympic ticket at the ongoing Mussanah Open Sailing Championship but missed out having finished sixth in the Laser Radial Class event.

## **U.S. Air Force is one step closer to receive autonomous unmanned combat aircraft**

- The U.S. Air Force Life Cycle Management Center has announced that the Skyborg leadership team conducted a two-hours and ten minute flight test April 29 of the Skyborg autonomy core system (ACS) aboard a Kratos UTAP-22 tactical unmanned vehicle at Tyndall AFB, Florida.

- In a release late Wednesday, Air Force Life Cycle Management Center said that Termed Milestone 1 of the Autonomous Attributable Aircraft Experimentation (AAAx) campaign, the ACS performed a series of foundational behaviors necessary to characterize safe system operation. The ACS demonstrated basic aviation capabilities and responded to navigational commands, while reacting to geo-fences, adhering to aircraft flight envelopes, and demonstrating coordinated maneuvering. It was monitored from both airborne and ground command and control stations.

## **Israel Defense Forces unveil revolutionary robotic system**

- Named as Jaguar, this system is one of the first military robots in the world that can substitute soldiers on the borders. It is currently being integrated into the Gaza Division in southern Israel in order to protect the Israeli-Gaza border.
- It is developed by Israeli Aerospace Industries (IAI). The drone is equipped with a 7.62 mm MAG machine gun which operates both while stationary and on the move. The robot utilizes high-resolution cameras, transmitters, powerful headlights, and a remote-controlled PA system. Additionally, it has the ability to self-destruct if it falls into enemy hands.
- The most unique aspect of the 'Jaguar' is its semi-autonomous system—the robot possesses the ability to self-drive to a set destination, knows how to spot and bypass obstacles and bumps using sensors and an advanced driving system, all while IDF observers and commanders have full operational control.

## **India gets additional P-8I maritime patrol aircraft**

- P-8I is a long-range, multimission maritime patrol aircraft offered by Boeing for the Indian Navy. P-8I replaced the ageing fleet of the Indian Navy's Tupolev Tu-142 aircraft.
- The P-8I aircraft is a variant of the P-8A Poseidon multimission maritime aircraft (MMA) operated by the US Navy.
- It was designed to protect the vast coastline and territorial waters of India. It can conduct anti-submarine warfare (ASW), anti-surface warfare (AsuW), intelligence, maritime patrol, and surveillance and reconnaissance missions.

- According to the U.S. Defense Security Cooperation Agency, the complete package include:
  - i. 6 Boeing P-8I aircraft
  - ii. 8 Multifunctional Information Distribution System-Joint Tactical Radio Systems 5 (MIDS-JTRS 5)
  - iii. 42 AN/AAR-54 Missile Warning Sensors
  - iv. 14 LN-251 with Embedded GPS/INS (EGIs) and related equipment
- In January 2009, Boeing was selected by the Indian Government to supply eight P-8I maritime reconnaissance aircraft to the Indian Navy. The contract also includes an option for four P-8I aircraft. The Indian Navy is the first export customer for the aircraft.
- The maiden flight of the first P-8I aircraft was made in September 2011. The official flight test programme of the aircraft began in July 2012. The second P-8I aircraft performed its first flight in the same month.
- The first P-8I aircraft was delivered to the Indian Navy in December 2012 and the remaining aircraft were delivered between 2013 and 2015.
- India's Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) approved the acquisition of four additional Boeing P-8I aircraft in mid-2016.
- In November 2019, the Defence Acquisition Council provided its approval for the procurement of six additional P-8I aircraft for the Indian Navy.

### **P-8I cockpit, avionics, and weapons**

- The P-8I aircraft is manned by nine crew members. The cockpit is integrated with primary flight display, multifunction displays, identification friend or foe (IFF), flight management system, and stores management system.
- The aircraft is equipped with a CAE AN/ASQ-508A magnetic anomaly detection (MAD) system, APS-143C(V)3 multimode radar and a global version of the Raytheon APY-10 surveillance radar.
- The APY-10 radar provides precise information in all-weather, day and night missions. The P-8I also integrates BEL Data Link II communications system, Avantel mobile satellite system and a speech secrecy system from Electronics Corporation of India (ECIL).
- The internal weapons bay can house Mark 54 torpedoes, depth charges, and free-fall bombs. The under-wing hardpoints can be armed with air-to-surface missiles.

- In December 2010, India requested a sale of AGM-84L Harpoon Block II anti-ship missiles and associated equipment to equip its P-8I aircraft. The Harpoon Block II carries a 226kg blast / fragmentation warhead. It can be fired against land and sea targets.

### **Countermeasures of the Indian Navy aircraft**

- The countermeasures are provided by the directional infrared countermeasures (DIRCM) system and the electronic support measures (ESM) system supplied by Northrop Grumman. The DIRCM can protect the aircraft from incoming infrared-guided missiles.

### **Engines and performance**

- The P-8I aircraft is powered by two CFM56-7 engines supplied by CFM International, a joint venture between Snecma Moteurs and GE Electric. Each engine provides a take-off thrust of 27,300lb. The engines are equipped with a new-generation full authority digital engine control (FADEC) system.
- The P-8I aircraft can fly at a maximum speed of 789km/h and can reach a maximum altitude of 12,496m. The aircraft has a maximum range of 2,222km with four hours on station.

## **Hanwha Defense ready to offer new light tank to Indian Army**

- Indian Army released Request for Information (RFI) to seek prospective vendors to procure around 350 light tanks (weighing less than 25 tonnes) in a phased manner under the Make in India initiative. These will improve mountain warfare ability.
- South Korea's Hanwha Defense is pushing a new combat vehicle with a 105mm turret mounted on its K21 chassis for the Indian Army.
- Hanwha Defense says the vehicle has a 105mm turret mounted on a K21 infantry fighting vehicle chassis. It has strong firepower and maneuverability that enables the vehicle to perform a wider variety of tactical operations than main battle tanks.
- The company also shared a promo video of its K21-105 tank, which is classified as a medium tank.

## AFMC Passing Out Parade 15 May 2021

- 110 Medical Cadets, including 21 female cadets, of the 55th (C3) batch of the Armed Forces Medical College have been commissioned.
- Among these 94 will be inducted into Army, 6 will be inducted into Navy and 10 into Indian Air Force.
- Commandant AFMC Lt Gen Nardeep Naithani congratulated all the officers.

## MNS Officers - Frontline Warriors During COVID-19

- 294 MNS Officers are being mobilized for the newly-raised COVID-19 hospitals by DRDO at Delhi, Lucknow, Ahmedabad, Varanasi and Patna.
- They are also deployed with UN Peace Keeping Force to countries namely Congo, Sudan, Lebanon, Friendly Foreign mission to Tajikistan etc.
- They are upholding the theme of International Nurses Day 2021, i.e., 'Nurses – A Voice to Lead, A Vision for Future Healthcare'.



## REVIEW QUIZ

1. On which of these islands China wants to build its military presence by using an old WW-I airstrip?

- A. Hawaii
- B. Kiribati
- C. Vanuatu
- D. Tuvalu

**ANSWER: B**

2. Army Corps of Military Police Centre is at

- A. Hyderabad
- B. New Delhi
- C. Bengaluru
- D. Chennai

**ANSWER: C**

**3. Brigadier Ajeet Deshpande takes over as new Commandant of**

- A. Army Aviation Corps
- B. Army Ordnance Corps
- C. Army Air Defence Corps
- D. Army Service Corps

**ANSWER: B**

**4. Army Ordnance Corps Headquarters is at**

- A. Nagpur
- B. Tezpur
- C. Secunderabad
- D. Agartala

**ANSWER: C**

**5. Indian Army turned its flags to which color from 'red' for people-friendly look in Kashmir?**

- A. Blue
- B. Yellow
- C. Green
- D. White

**ANSWER: A**

**6. HAL has signed an MoU with which international company for supporting MT30 Marine Engine Business?**

- A. Rolls-Royce
- B. Hanwha
- C. Rheinmetall
- D. Airbus

**ANSWER: A**

**7. BRO Raising Day**

- A. 04 May 2021
- B. 05 May 2021
- C. 06 May 2021
- D. 07 May 2021

**ANSWER: D**

**8. Subedar Vishnu Saravanan won Qualification Spot for India for which games in Laser Standard Class?**

- A. Asian Games
- B. Tokyo Olympics
- C. National Regatta
- D. Commonwealth Games

**ANSWER: B**

**9. Skyborg autonomy core system (ACS) is a part of which system being developed by USAF?**

- A. Autonomous Unmanned Aerial Combat System
- B. Autonomous Unmanned Marine Combat System
- C. Autonomous Unmanned Ground Combat System
- D. Autonomous Unmanned AI Robot System

**ANSWER: A**

**10. U.S. Defense Security Cooperation Agency has recently cleared the sale of six numbers of which aircraft to our country?**

- A. Boeing P-8I Poseidon
- B. General Dynamics F-16 Falcon
- C. Rockwell B-1 Lancer
- D. Lockheed C-130T Hercules

**ANSWER: A**

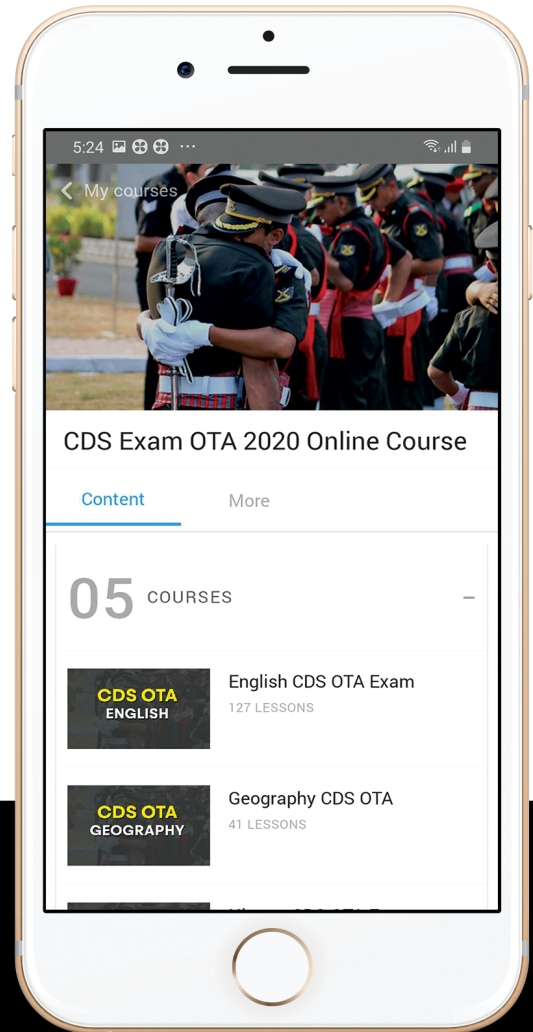
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