

90th anniversary of the Indian Air Force (IAF)

October 10, 2022

In news— 90th anniversary of the Indian Air Force was observed on October 8.

History of IAF-

- It was **established on October 8, 1932 as an auxiliary air force of the British Empire which honoured India's aviation service** during World War II with the prefix Royal.
- **Its first aircraft came into being on April 1, 1933** with six RAF-trained officers and 19 Havai Sepoys (air soldiers).
- The Air Force was officially raised as the supporting force of the Royal Air Force of the United Kingdom in 1932 and the first operational squadron was created in 1933.
- After India gained independence from Great Britain in 1947, the name Royal Indian Air Force was kept and served in the name of Dominion of India. With the government's transition to a Republic in 1950, the prefix Royal was removed.
- **Since 1950, the IAF has been involved in four wars with neighbouring Pakistan.**
 - **Other major operations undertaken by the IAF include Operation Vijay, Operation Meghdoot, Operation Cactus and Operation Poomalai.** The IAF's mission expands beyond engagement with hostile forces, with the IAF participating in United Nations peacekeeping missions.
- **The President of India holds the rank of Supreme**

Commander of the IAF.

- The **Chief of the Air Staff, an air chief marshal,** is a four-star officer and is **responsible for the bulk of operational command of the Air Force.**
 - There is never more than one serving ACM at any given time in the IAF.
 - The rank of Marshal of the Air Force has been conferred by the President of India on one occasion in history, to Arjan Singh.
 - On 26 January 2002, Singh became the first and so far, only five-star rank officer of the IAF.
- **The theme for 2022 anniversary celebrations was IAF: Transforming for the Future .**
 - During the celebration, Air Force Day fly-past at the Sukhna Lake complex, Chandigarh. This is the first time that the annual parade and fly-past is being held outside Delhi-NCR.

Weapon system branch-

- As part of the celebration, the central government has approved the creation of a **weapon system branch for the officers of the Indian Air Force,** which would save it \$410 million or INR 3,400 crore in flying training, said Air Chief Marshal V R Chaudhari.
- This is the **first time since Independence that a new operational branch is being created.**
- The new branch will essentially man the specialised streams of surface- to-surface missiles, surface-to-air missiles, remotely piloted aircraft, and weapon system operators in twin and multi-crew aircraft, he said.