

Advanced Towed Artillery Gun System (ATAGS)

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In news– In a first, an indigenously developed howitzer gun, ATAG, became part of the 21-gun salute during the Independence Day ceremony at the Red Fort recently.

What is the 21-gun salute tradition?

- When the National Anthem is played by the Military Band after the unfurling of the Tricolour **at the Red Fort by the Prime Minister, a 21-volley gun salute is fired by a ceremonial battery from an artillery regiment.**
- The **tradition of gun salutes originates from the Western navies** where guns from the ports and those from incoming ships used to be fired in a particular manner to convey that there was no belligerent intention.
- This tradition was carried forward as a way of paying respects or for according official welcome to the Crown, royals, military commanders and heads of states.
- **India inherited the tradition from the British rulers who had gun salutes comprising 101 volleys, 31 volleys and 21 volleys, and so on depending on the hierarchy.**
- **In India, artillery gun salutes are fired on the Republic Day, the Independence Day and also at the time of oath taking ceremony of the President,** among other occasions.
- Over the years, this 21-gun salute, which are blanks – was fired by the World War era howitzers of British make **known as 'Ordnance Quick Fire 25 Pounder' or just '25 Pounder'.**
- Including the ATAGS in the symbolic activity of 21-gun salute is a crucial step in the journey and is significant towards its induction into the Army.

About the Advanced Towed Artillery Gun System (ATAGS)-

- **It is an indigenous 155 mm x 52 calibre howitzer gun developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)** with its Pune-based facility Armament Research and Development Establishment (ARDE) being the nodal agency.
- The ATAGS project was started in 2013 by DRDO to replace older guns in service in the Indian Army with a modern 155 mm artillery gun. The ARDE has collaborated with Bharat Forge Limited and Tata Advanced Systems Ltd for the manufacturing of this specialised gun system.
- **Howitzers is an umbrella term for a category of long-range artillery guns.**
- The ATAGS **was used alongside the traditional British-origin '25 Pounders' artillery guns.**
- The armament system of **ATAGS mainly comprises** barrel, breech mechanism, muzzle brake and recoil mechanism to fire 155 mm calibre ammunition held by Army with a longer range, accuracy and precision and provides greater firepower.
- **The ATAGS is configured with all electric drive** to ensure maintenance free and reliable operation over a longer period of time.
- It has advanced features in terms of high mobility, quick deployability, auxiliary power mode, advanced communication system, automatic command and control system with night firing capability in the direct fire mode.
- **It is compatible with C4I (command, control, communications, computers, and intelligence) systems like the Artillery Combat Command and Control System (ACCCS) called Shakti** for technical fire control, fire planning, deployment management, and operational logistics management of the Army.
- The development process of ATAGS by the DRDO coincides with development of Howitzer Dhanush for Advanced

Weapons and Equipment India of the erstwhile Ordnance Factory Board.

- The system is currently undergoing an evaluation by the Directorate General Quality Assurance (DGQA) marking its final stage before the Army places orders for it.
- **The DGQA is a nodal agency for the quality assurance of all arms, ammunition,** equipment and stores supplied to the Armed Forces.