



KAMARAJ IAS ACADEMY
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Serbia and North Atlantic Treaty Organization Conduct First Joint Military Exercise

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Why in News:

Serbia and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) have launched their first-ever joint military exercise "NATO–Serbia".



Key Highlights:?

The joint military exercise began on May 13, 2026.

The drills will continue till May 23, 2026.

Around 600 troops are participating.

The exercise is taking place near Bujanovac in southern Serbia.

Participating Countries:

Troops Participating From:

Serbia, Italy, Romania, Turkiye

Military Observers and Planners From:

France, Germany, Italy, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia, Turkiye, United Kingdom, United States

Objective of the Exercise:

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Plot A P.127, AF block, 6 th street, 11th Main Rd, Shanthi Colony, Anna Nagar, Chennai, Tamil Nadu 600040
Phone: 044 4353 9988 / 98403 94477 / Whatsapp : 09710729833

To improve military cooperation and coordination.

To support peace and stability in the Balkan region.

The drills are being conducted under NATO's:

Partnership for Peace Programme:

A programme designed for cooperation between NATO and non-member countries.

Serbia has been part of the programme for nearly 20 years.

Historical Background:

NATO Bombing of Yugoslavia (1999):

NATO carried out air strikes on Yugoslavia during the Kosovo War in 1999.

Belgrade was heavily bombed.

The issue remains sensitive in Serbia even today.

Kosovo Issue:

A NATO-led peacekeeping force remains stationed in Kosovo.

Serbia does not recognise Kosovo's independence.

Serbia's Foreign and Defence Policy:

Serbia follows a policy of military neutrality.

Maintains relations with both:

NATO countries

Russia

Also purchases weapons from:

NATO countries

China

Russia

Significance:

The exercise shows improving cooperation between Serbia and NATO.

Important for stability and security in the Balkan region.

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Reflects Serbia's balanced diplomatic and defence strategy.

Final Takeaway:

The first-ever joint military exercise between Serbia and North Atlantic Treaty Organization marks a significant diplomatic and military development. Despite past tensions, both sides are working together to strengthen regional peace and security in Europe.