Jammu Drone Attack

Why in news?

Drones were used for the first time to drop explosive devices, triggering blasts inside the Air Force Station's technical area in Jammu.

Why is this significant?

- Indian authorities reportedly suspect that it was carried out by the Lashkar-e-Taiba, which is patronised by Pakistan.
- There were no casualties at the base.
- But there were at least two more subsequent attempts to use drones to attack military targets.
- The use of drones brought to the fore a troubling new mode of terrorism for the country.
- The use of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV), autonomous weapons systems and robotic soldiers by states in warfare and policing are increasing.
- This has raised moral and practical questions that remain unresolved.
- Non-state actors have quickly adopted these new modes.

What were the similar earlier incidents?

- In 2018, Syrian rebels used homemade drones to attack Russian military bases in Syria.
- The same year, Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro had a narrow escape after a drone flying towards him exploded a short distance away.
- In 2019, Houthi rebels claimed responsibility for bombing Saudi oil installations using drones.

What advantages do these new modes offer?

- New modes of sabotage and violence enabled by technology reduce costs, while increasing their efficacy.
- They also reduce the risk of identification for terrorists.
- Simultaneously, security agencies would find conventional tools redundant in combating terrorism.

- Terrorism may not even require organisations, as individuals with sufficient motivation and skills can carry out such attacks.
- The key international framework at present for controlling the proliferation of technology that can be weaponised include the Wassenaar Arrangement and Missile Technology Control Regime.
- These are also largely useless in the emerging scenario.

How have states dealt with terro so far?

- States including India have sought to deal with terrorism with a combination of various approaches.
- These include stringent laws, invasive surveillance, harsher policing and offensives against other countries that support terrorist groups.
- This approach has only had limited success in ensuring peace anywhere while the human and material costs have been high.

What is the way forward?

- The new technologies and Artificial Intelligence will make the task of combating terror even more challenging.
- Terror groups do capitalise on state patronage.
- But technology too is enabling them to be autonomous in an unprecedented fashion.
- The entry of drones calls for a more complex response to terrorism.
- Enhanced international cooperation and consensus on the development and deployment of technologies are required to deal with the challenge.
- India can and must take an active role in the process.

Source: The Hindu

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