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CURRENT AFFAIRS

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1. Unify Defence Resources

Why in News?

- Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) briefed that the government is working on a tentative timeline for the establishment of joint commands among the three defence services — Army, Navy and Air Force.

Joint Commands

- It is a unified command in which the resources of all the services are unified under a single commander looking at a geographical theatre.
- It means that a single military commander, as per the requirements, will have the resources of the Army, the Navy and the Air Force to manage a security threat.
- The commander of a joint command will have the freedom to train and equip his command as per the objective, and will have logistics of all the services at his disposal.

Utility

- The services will get to know one another better, strengthening cohesion in the defence establishment.
- Through integration and jointness the three forces will be able to avoid duplication of resources.

Present Structure

There are 17 commands, divided among the three services.

- The Army and the Air Force have seven commands each, while the Navy has three commands.
- The commands under the Army are Northern, Southern, Eastern, Western, Central, Southwestern and the Army Training Command.
- The Air Force has Eastern, Western, Southern, Southwestern, Central, Maintenance and Training commands, and the Navy is divided into Western, Eastern and Southern commands.

Tri-services commands

There are two Tri-services commands

- o Andaman and Nicobar Command (ANC), headed by the chiefs of the three services in rotation. It was created in 2001 followed by the Kargil War.
- o The Strategic Forces Command was established in 2006 and is a functional tri-services command.

2. Initiatives for Tribal Communities

Why in News?

The Ministry of Tribal Affairs has launched the "Programme for Capacity Building of Scheduled Tribe Representatives in Local Self Governments."

- "1000 Springs Initiatives" an online portal on GIS-based Spring Atlas has also been launched.

Capacity Building Initiative

- It is aimed at empowering tribal Panchayati Raj Institution (PRI) representatives by enhancing their decision making capabilities at local government level.
- It also focuses on
    - Constitutional and legal provisions that protect and promote the rights and welfare of the tribal population
    - Ensures greater participation of ST PRIs representatives in planning, execution and monitoring of government policies and programmes.

1000 Springs Initiative

- It is an online portal on GIS-based spring Atlas with the hydrological and chemical properties of the springs mentioned.
- It is an integrated solution around natural springs.
- The initiative aims at improving access to safe and adequate water for the tribal communities living in difficult and inaccessible parts of rural areas in the country.
- The initiative includes provision of
    - Infrastructure for piped water supply for drinking
    - Water for irrigation
    - Community-led total sanitation initiatives
    - Water for backyard nutrition gardens,
    - Generating sustainable livelihood opportunities for the tribal people

3. <u>International Judicial Conference 2020</u>

Why in News?

The International Judicial Conference was organised by the Supreme Court of India.

Key Points:

- The **theme** of the conference - **Judiciary and the Changing World**.
- **Important Topics of discussion at the Conference:**
    - Gender Justice
    - Contemporary Perspectives on Protection of Constitutional Values
    - Dynamic Interpretations of the Constitution in a Changing World
    - Harmonisation of Environment Protection vis-à-vis Sustainable Development
    - Protection of Right to Privacy in the Internet Age
    - eCourt Integrated Mission Mode Project
    - National Judicial Data Grid
    - The conference introduced the concept of Just World in the judicial system of India.

eCourt Integrated Mission Mode Project

- The eCourts Integrated Mission Mode Project is one of the national eGovernance projects being implemented in High Courts and district/subordinate Courts of the Country.
  - o It aims at ensuring digital interconnectivity between all courts from the taluk level to the apex court.
- It is monitored and funded by the Department of Justice, Ministry of Law and Justice.
  - o However, it is being implemented by the National Informatics Centre (NIC).
- **Objectives of the project:**
  - o To provide efficient & time-bound citizen centric services delivery.
  - o To provide transparency in accessibility of information.
  - o To enhance judicial productivity, both qualitatively and quantitatively.
  - o To make the justice delivery system affordable, accessible, cost effective, predictable, reliable and transparent.
- It will be implemented in 3 phases over a period of 5 years.
  - o Phase I - began in 2010
  - o Phase II - began in 2015
- e-Courts National Portal was launched in 2013.

National Judicial Data Grid (NJDG)

- It is a part of the eCourts Integrated Mission Mode Project.
- It was launched in 2015.
- **Objective:**
  - o Its aim is to track judicial performance across different courts in the country.
  - o The portal provides online information to litigants such as details of case registration, cause list, case status, daily orders and final judgments.
  - o The NJDG acts as a national data warehouse for case data including the orders or judgments for courts across the country.
- The eCourts portal and NJDG serve as tools of efficient court and case management for judiciary which aids in disposal of pending cases.

4.   A Future for the World's Children' Report
Why in News?

Recently, the World Health Organization (WHO), UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) and The Lancet medical journal have released 'A Future for the World's Children' report.

Key Points:

- The report assesses the capacity of 180 countries in ensuring that the youngsters can thrive and survive.
    - It calculates the Flourishing Index and Sustainability Index.
- Flourishing Index
    - Flourishing is the geometric mean of Surviving and Thriving.
    - The parameter of Surviving considers maternal survival, survival in children younger than 5 years old, suicide, access to maternal and child health services, basic hygiene, sanitation, and lack of extreme poverty.
    - The parameter of Thriving considers educational achievement, growth and nutrition, reproductive freedom, and protection from violence.
    - Norway leads the table for survival, health, education and nutrition rates - followed by the Republic of Korea and the Netherlands.
    - The Central African Republic, Chad and Somalia rank at the bottom

Sustainability Index

- **Methodology:**
    - The Sustainability Index ranks countries on the basis of excess carbon emissions compared with the 2030 target.
    - It also states that today's national conditions for children to survive and thrive must not come at the cost of eroding future global conditions for children's ability to flourish.
    - The leading countries in the Flourishing Index trail behind in the case of the Sustainability Index, with Norway (156th), the Republic of Korea (166th) and the Netherlands (160th)
    - The only countries on track in Flourishing as well as in the Sustainability Index are Albania, Armenia, Grenada, Jordan, Moldova, Sri Lanka, Tunisia, Uruguay and Vietnam.
    - The lowest emitters are Burundi, Chad and Somalia whereas the U.S, Australia, and Saudi Arabia are among the 10 worst emitters.

Performance of India:

a) India stands 77th (sustainability index) and is at 131st on a ranking that measures the best chance at survival and well-being for children.

b) India has improved in health and sanitation but has to increase its spending on health.

Concerns expressed:

No single country is adequately protecting children's health, their environment and their futures.

Threats:

Health and future of every child and adolescent worldwide is under immediate threat from:

- ecological degradation
- climate change
- and exploitative marketing practices that push heavily processed fast food, sugary drinks, alcohol and tobacco at children.

Progress reversing:

- Despite improvements in child and adolescent health over the past 20 years, progress has stalled, and is set to reverse.
- It has been estimated that around 250 million children under five years old in low- and middle-income countries are at risk of not reaching their developmental potential, based on proxy measures of stunting and poverty.

Recommendations

- It suggests the elimination of CO_2 emissions with the utmost urgency.
- It requests to place children and adolescents at the centre of global efforts to achieve sustainable development.
- New policies and investment in all sectors to work towards child health and rights with the incorporation of children's voices into policy decisions

5.   Mission Purvodaya

Why in News?

- Union Minister of Steel announced at a workshop organized by Confederation of Indian Industries (CII) that GoI is to make Odisha the steel hub of India.
    - This is to be achieved by the Government with the help of Japan.

Key Points:

- Odisha has been selected to establish a steel hub due to its strategic location, availability of raw materials and strong connectivity.
- The city of Kalinga Nagar is to be developed as the epicenter of Mission Purvodaya.
- With implementation of the mission, more than 75% of steel is to come from eastern India with Odisha alone contributing more than 100 metric tonnes per annum

Mission Purvodaya

- The mission was launched in January 2020 and aims to develop Eastern India as an integrated steel hub.
- Under the mission, the GoI aims to generate employment opportunities and also increase growth of the steel sector.
- This will also help achieve the target of National Steel Policy, which is producing 300 MT of steel by 2030.

6. SERB Women Excellence Awards 2020

Why in News?

Dr Niti Kumar, Senior Scientist from Division of Molecular Parasitology and Immunology, CSIR-CDRI, Lucknow has received SERB Women Excellence Award-2020.

- Her research group is trying to understand the protein quality control machinery in human malaria parasite for exploration of alternative drug targets for malaria intervention

Key Points:

- This award is given to women scientist below 40 years of age who have received recognition from national academies
- The women researchers will be supported by a research grant of 5 lakhs per annum for 3 years by the Science and Engineering Research Board, Department of Science & Technology, Government of India (SERB-DST).

7. UKIERI- UGC Higher Education Leadership Development Programme

Why in News?

Recently the Union Minister for Human Resource Development launched the Higher Education Leadership Development Programme for Administrator.

Key Points

- It is a joint initiative of University Grants Commission (UGC) and British Council in India under the auspices of UK India Education and Research Initiative (UKIERI).
- **Objectives:** To train the middle and senior level administrative functionaries in Indian Universities.
  - It will enable them to bring about systemic changes in approach, tools and skills in universities of India.
  - The programme is a step towards institutional development in line with Governments' commitment to improve the quality of education being imparted in Universities.
  - The programme will help develop a global outlook and promote learning for inclusive and internationally connected higher education systems.
- Two workshops will be conducted by UK based trainers, who will train about 300 academic administrators in the level of Registrar and Joint/Deputy/Assistant Registrar to enable them to bring about professional transformation in the higher education institutions.
- The University Grants Commission (UGC) will conduct this programme in collaboration with Advance HE as the training partner.
  - UGC: It was established in 1953 and became a statutory body by an Act of Parliament in 1956. It works for the coordination,

determination and maintenance of standards of teaching, examination and research in university education.
- o Advance HE: It is a non-profit organisation that operates the Higher Education Academy (HEA). HEA is a British professional membership scheme promoting excellence in higher education.

UK-India Education and Research Initiative (UKIERI)
- The initiative was started in 2006 with the aim of enhancing educational linkages between India and the UK.
- It is a multi-stakeholder programme that has strengthened the research, leadership, education and skill sector relations between the two countries.
- The initiative is currently in the third phase (2016-2021). The aim in this phase is to promote institutional and individual excellence in educational practices, research, and employability.