Inter-Services Organizations Bill, 2023

For Prelims: IAF, Navy, Army, Joint command in Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

For Mains: Inter-Services Organizations Bill, 2023.

Why in News?

Recently, the **Inter-Services Organisations (Command, Control and Discipline) Bill, 2023,** was introduced in Lok Sabha to empower designated military commanders **to take charge of soldiers and enforce discipline,** regardless of the service they belong to.

- The bill came ahead of the **impending move to establish integrated or joint commands,** where all the manpower and assets will be under the operational control of a single three-star general of the Indian Army, Navy and IAF (Indian Air Force).

What are the Key Provisions of the Bill?

- The system is likely to include five joint services commands - **western, eastern, northern, maritime, and air defense.**
- The central government may constitute an Inter-services Organisation, **which may include a Joint Services Command.**
- It will empower the Commander-in-Chief/the Officer-in Command of Inter-Services Organisations to maintain **discipline and ensure proper discharge of duties of all the personnel** from the army, navy and IAF serving under his command.
- The Commander-in-Chief or the Officer-in-Command of an **Inter-services Organisation shall be the head** of such Inter-services Organisation.

What is the Current Set up of Indian Armed forces?

- At present, soldiers from their respective services are governed by different Acts of Parliament.
    - They are the **Navy Act of 1957, the Air Force Act of 1950, and the Army Act of 1950.**
    - In a current joint services setup, an army soldier commanded by a navy officer would have to be sent back to his parent unit for any disciplinary proceedings. The navy officer does not have administrative powers over the said soldier.
- The Indian armed forces currently have 17 commands. There are 7 commands each of the Army and the Air Force. The Navy has 3 commands.
    - Each command is headed by a 4-star rank military officer.
- There is one joint command in Andaman and Nicobar Islands which is the first Tri-Service theatre command of the Indian Armed Forces, based at Port Blair in Andaman and Nicobar Islands of India.
- The other tri-service command, the Strategic Forces Command (SFC), looks after the delivery and operational control of the **country's nuclear assets.**
- There are also some **tri-service organisations like the Defence Intelligence Agency,** Defence Cyber Agency, Defence Space Agency, etc.

How does China Operate its Armed Forces?

- In 2016, China re-organised its **2.3-million People's Liberation Army** into five theatre commands to boost offensive capabilities.
    - Its Western Theatre Command handles **the entire 3,488-km** Line of Actual Control from eastern Ladakh to Arunachal Pradesh.
- India has four Armies and three IAF commands for the **northern borders with China.**

What is the Significance of the Move?

- The bill will pave way for various tangible benefits such as **expeditious disposal of cases,** saving time and public money by avoiding multiple proceedings and greater integration and joint Manship amongst Armed Forces personnel.

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