



# IAS PARLIAMENT

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## GIST OF IDSA

FEBRUARY 2020



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# **I N D E X**

## **IDSA FEBRUARY 2020**

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## **IDSA FEBRUARY 2020**

### **1. THE AFTER EFFECTS OF JCPOA WITHDRAWAL**

#### ***What is the issue?***

An uptick in US-Iran tensions in the past 15 months has led to an increase in US regional force posture and commitments.

#### ***Why US withdrew from JCPOA?***

- The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action known commonly as the Iran nuclear deal or Iran deal, is an agreement on the Iranian nuclear program reached in Vienna on July 14, 2015.
- It is inked between Iran and the P5+1 (the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council—China, France, Russia, United Kingdom, United States—plus Germany) together with the European Union.
- The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), has been in a precarious position ever since President Donald Trump announced in May 2018 that he was withdrawing from the agreement.
- The deal's flaws for Trump included
  1. A weak inspections regime overseen by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA),
  2. Agreement's 'sunset' clauses which did not place sufficient restrictions on Iran's future nuclear ambitions,

3. Iran's continued testing of ballistic missiles.

- In January 2018, Trump insisted that his aim is to deny Iran all paths to a nuclear weapon – not just for 10 years but forever.
- Secretary of State Mike Pompeo in May 2018 put forth 12 demands required of Iran.
- These included a change in Iran's regional behavior (ranging from Afghanistan, Yemen, Palestine and Syria) to halting the launch or development of nuclear-capable ballistic missiles to Iran stopping its enrichment activities.

#### ***What is IAEA's view on Iran's commitment?***

- As for Iran's ballistic missile tests, United Nations Security Council (UNSC) resolution 2231 of July 20, 2015, which recognized the JCPOA and removed UNSC sanctions on Iran, 'called on' Iran not to undertake such activities until eight years after JCPOA Adoption Day (October 18, 2023) or until the time that the IAEA gives the 'broader conclusion' determination regarding Iran's nuclear programme.
- The IAEA gives such a certification when it is satisfied about the 'completeness' (absence of undeclared activities) as well as the 'correctness' (non-diversion from declared nuclear



activities) of a country's nuclear programme.

- In 2018, the IAEA gave a broader conclusion determination for 70 out of the 129 states that had the Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement (CSA) and the Additional Protocols (AP) in force.
- Given Iran's past concealment activities and lack of transparency, such a determination could have possibly taken longer than eight years but the IAEA was regularly affirming that Iran was living up to its JCPOA commitments when Trump withdrew.

#### ***How Iran concerns global powers?***

- Iran on its part affirms that its ballistic missile activities are an essential feature of its security profile and that there was no binding requirement prohibiting such tests either in the JCPOA (which by the way deals exclusively with its nuclear programme) or in the UNSCR 2231.
- The US, France and the UK (unlike Russia and China), however do not accept Iran's justifications but note that testing of medium range ballistic missiles (MRBMs) like the Shahab-3 is a serious concern, as it is a Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) Category-I system, 'technically capable of delivering a nuclear weapon'.
- Iran's regional behavior has also been cited by Trump as a factor that

impinged on his decision to withdraw from the deal.

- 'Maximum Pressure' Campaign

#### ***What are the aftermaths of sanctions on Iran?***

- After the Trump withdrawal, unilateral restrictive measures targeting Iran's oil exports, among others waived as part of the deal, were re-imposed.
- US officials assert that these restrictions have led to a massive loss of oil revenue, of up to \$50 billion per year.
- Other than China and Syria, no other country is currently importing Iranian oil.
- The access of Iranian banks to the SWIFT network was cut off by the Belgian-based entity in November 2018.
- Many other European companies, including automobile manufacturers, have gone back on their plans and agreements entered into in the aftermath of the JCPOA, fearful of the repercussions of US secondary sanctions.
- The European Union's (EU) efforts to put in place alternate payment mechanisms for Iran oil trade have not been successful.
- The Instrument for Trade Exchanges (INSTEX) was formed in January 2019 and its Iranian counterpart came into being in April 2019.



- However, reports note that no trade exchanges have taken place as part of the mechanism so far.
- UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson, recognized Trump's concerns about the JCPOA, has called for negotiations to begin on a 'Trump deal' to replace it.
- However, it is not clear what the contours of such an agreement could be.

### ***What is the action of Iran after withdrawal of JCPOA?***

- The JCPOA allowed Iran to enrich uranium, though with severe restrictions pertaining to total stockpile, limited to 300 kgs of uranium hexa-fluoride (UF<sub>6</sub>) and enrichment levels (3.67 per cent).
- Iran breached both these commitments in July 2019, two months after President Hassan Rouhani stated as much on May 8, 2019, a year after the Trump withdrawal.
- Between May and December 2019, Iran's uranium stockpile more than doubled from 174 kgs to 372 kgs, out of which about 160 kgs is enriched to 4.5 per cent U-235.
- While these numbers are far less than the quantities Iran had in its possession at the time the JCPOA came into being (over 8700 kgs of UF<sub>6</sub> enriched to five per cent and nearly 450 kgs of UF<sub>6</sub> enriched to 20 per cent U-235), Iran's opponents will

surely point to them as posing rising proliferation danger.

- Iran has since breached the JCPOA commitments related to its heavy water stockpile and prohibition on enrichment at the Fordow plant (both in November 2019).
- In January 2020, in the aftermath of Soleimani's killing, Iran announced that there would be no restrictions on the numbers of centrifuges and that it will not follow any operational restrictions on its nuclear programme.
- Iran not only rejects the possibility of a 'Trump deal', but also insists that it is Washington which has to return to the negotiating table as well as compensate it for the economic and other damages it has suffered since May 2018.

### ***What lies ahead?***

- Trump's unilateral upending of the multi-laterally negotiated agreement has not only negatively impacted regional stability but has worked against the administration's stated goal of reducing US commitments in the region.
- An uptick in US-Iran tensions in the past 15 months for instance has led to an increase in US regional force posture and commitments.
- It will be hard for Iran to reverse its JCPOA violations unless it gets some economic relief in return.
- Trump administration officials meanwhile are especially worried



about the upcoming deadline of October 18, 2020, when the UNSCR 2231 stipulation of Iran requiring UNSC approval for conventional arms imports will expire.

- Prospects of a diplomatic breakthrough between Tehran and Washington, brokered by mediators like Oman or the EU, seem dim at the moment.
- Iran's legislative elections on February 21, 2020 are expected to place hardliners in control of the parliament, which could further constrict President Rouhani's negotiating space.

## 2. THIRD BODO ACCORD

### *Why in news?*

The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), the Assam government and the Bodo groups have signed an agreement to redraw and rename the Bodoland Territorial Area District (BTAD) in Assam.

### *What is Bodo Land Movement?*

- Bodos are the single largest tribal community in Assam, making up over 5-6 per cent of the state's population.
- They have controlled large parts of Assam in the past.
- The four districts in Assam — Kokrajhar, Baksa, Udalguri and Chirang — that constitute the Bodo Territorial Area District (BTAD), are home to several ethnic groups.

- Several Bodo groups have been demanding a separate land for the ethnic community since 1972, a movement that has claimed nearly 4,000 lives.
- In 1966-67, the demand for a separate state called Bodoland was raised under the banner of the Plains Tribals Council of Assam (PTCA), a political outfit.
- In 1987, the All Bodo Students Union (ABSU) renewed the demand. "Divide Assam fifty-fifty", was a call given by the ABSU's then leader, Upendra Nath Brahma.
- The unrest was a fallout of the Assam Movement (1979-85), whose culmination — the Assam Accord — addressed the demands of protection and safeguards for the "Assamese people", leading the Bodos to launch a movement to protect their own identity.
- Alongside political movements, armed groups have also sought to create a separate Bodo state.
- In October 1986, the prominent group Bodo Security Force (BdSF) was formed by Ranjan Daimary.
- The BdSF subsequently renamed itself as the National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB), an organisation that is known to be involved in attacks, killings, and extortions.



### **Why the demand for separate Bodoland?**

- For centuries, they survived sanskritisation without giving up their original ethnic identity.
- However in the 20th century, they had to tackle a series of issues such as illegal immigration, encroachment of their lands, forced assimilation, loss of language and culture.
- The 20th century also witnessed the emergence of Bodos as a leading tribe in Assam which pioneered the movements for safeguarding the rights of the tribal communities in the area.
- From then on, they have been consistently deprived of the political and socio-economic rights by successive state and central governments.
- The Bodos have not only become an ethnic minority in their own ancestral land but have also been struggling for their existence and status as an ethnic community.

### **What is Bodo-land agreement all about?**

- The first Bodo accord was signed with the ABSU in 1993, leading to the

creation of a Bodoland Autonomous Council with limited political powers.

- The BTC was created in 2003 with some more financial and other powers.
- The BTAD and other areas mentioned under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution have been exempted from the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019, that enables undocumented non-Muslims from Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan who entered India on or before December 31, 2014 to apply for Indian citizenship.
- According to the Third Bodo agreement, the Bodoland Territorial Area District (BTAD) district is currently spread over four districts of Kokrajhar, Chirang, Baksa and Udalguri.
- As per the agreement, villages dominated by Bodos that were presently outside the BTAD would be included and those with non-Bodo population would be excluded.
- The memorandum of settlement says that the criminal cases registered against members of the NDFB factions for “non-heinous” crimes shall be withdrawn by the Assam government and in cases of heinous crimes it will be reviewed.
- The families of those killed during the Bodo movement would get Rs. 5 lakh each.



- As of now the agreement has not addressed the issue of “citizenship or work permit” for non-domiciles in the BTAD, to be renamed as the Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR).

#### ***What are the expected outcomes?***

- A Special Development Package of Rs. 1500 Crore would be given by the Centre to undertake specific projects for the development of Bodo areas.
- A committee will decide the exclusion and inclusion of new areas in the BTAD.
- Subsequent to this alteration, the total number of Assembly seats will go up to 60, from the existing 40.
- The signing of the agreement would end the 50-year-old Bodo crisis.
- Around 1500 cadres of NDFB(P), NDFB(RD) and NDFB(S) will be rehabilitated by Centre and Assam Government, They will be assimilated in the mainstream now.
- After the agreement, the NDFB factions will leave the path of violence, surrender their weapons and disband their armed organizations within a month of signing the deal.

#### ***What are challenges lies ahead?***

- Previous accords have created clear winners and losers that have sharpened inter and intra-ethnic cleavages.
- The 2003 Bodo Accord, which saw the creation of BTAD comprising Udalguri, Kokrajhar, Baksa and

Chirang districts, largely excluded the majority non-Bodo population from the accord, and skewed representation in the new body in favour of the minority Bodo community to the chagrin of the majority non-Bodo population.

- The latest accord has repeated the mistakes of 2003 by excluding the non-Bodos while granting amnesty to the militants implicated in ethnic violence against them.
- It remains to be seen how the 2020 Bodo Accord addresses the structural factors that have driven ethnic violence against the non-Bodos and fueled subsequent counter-mobilizations in the past.
- A similar stipulation leading to the inclusion of villages with over 50 per cent Bodo population was contained in the 1993 Bodo Accord.
- This had provoked ethnic violence in villages with less than 50 per cent Bodo population as recalcitrant groups (the NDFB and the Bodo Liberation Tiger Force) sought to shift the ethnic balance, sparking counter-mobilizations from the non-Bodo communities leading to further violence.

#### ***What measures are needed?***

- Both the central and the state government would have to keep a close watch for the emergence of any potential recalcitrant groups made up of remaining militants from the



NDFB-S, which, perceiving exclusion from the accord, may seek to employ an outbidding strategy aimed at violent expulsion of the non-Bodos in an attempt to assert leadership over the movement.

- The structural and political shifts that the merger of four NDFB factions will bring, needs to be carefully watched.
- Such an approach would need to consist of rehabilitation offers to remaining cadres still active along the Indo-Bhutan and Indo-Myanmar border areas, combined with continued efforts to disrupt the activities of cadres still aligned with UNLFWSEEA.
- This is particularly important considering the possibility of anti-talks insurgent groups projecting the recently passed Citizenship (Amendment) Act as a threat to the 'indigenous' communities to garner support and recover the lost ground.

### **3. UNIFYING DEFENSE RESOURCES**

#### ***Why in news?***

Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) office is working on the establishment of joint commands among the three defence services.

#### ***What is the role of CDS?***

- General Bipin Rawat, former Chief of Army Staff (COAS), has been appointed as India's first Chief of Defence Staff (CDS).

- As CDS, he will head the newly created Department of Military Affairs (DMA) within the Ministry of Defence (MoD).
- The DMA, once fully operational, will deal with all three wings of the armed forces and focus on promoting jointness in procurement, training and staffing through joint planning and integration besides restructuring of military commands through the establishment of joint/theatre commands.
- The CDS will also administer tri-services organizations and commands.
- The first CDS is mandated to bring about jointness in operation, logistics, transport, training, support services, communications, repairs and maintenance of the three Services by December 2022.

#### ***What are 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 beckoning.



- The three services will retain their independent identities as well, there are two tri-services commands at the moment.
- The joint command at the moment, the Andaman and Nicobar Command (ANC), is a theatre command, which is headed by the chiefs of the three services in rotation.
- It was created in 2001 after a Group of Ministers had given a report on national security following the Kargil War.
- The Strategic Forces Command was established in 2006 and is a functional tri-services command.

***What is the structure being followed at present?***

- 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.
- These commands report to their respective services, and are headed by three-star officers.

- Though these commands are in the same regions, but they are not located together.

***How many such commands are expected to roll out?***

- While the number of commands India needs is still being studied, the CDS has envisaged that there could be between six to nine commands.
- It is not certain how many land-based theatre commands on the borders will come up.
- The CDS said it will be studied, and the study group will be given the options for creating two to five theatre commands. One possibility is to have single commands looking at the China and Pakistan borders respectively, as they are the two major threats. The other option is to have a separate command for the border in the Jammu and Kashmir region, and another command looking at the rest of the western border.
- There could be independent commands looking at the border with China which is divided by Nepal.
- There will be two functional commands as well. A proposed Logistics Command will bring the logistics of all the services under one person, and the CDS is also looking at a Training and Doctrine Command, so that all services work under a common doctrine and have some basic common training.



### ***How do joint commands work?***

- One of the main advantages is that the leader of a unified command has control over more varied resources, compared to the heads of the commands under the services now.
- For instance, the head of one of the proposed commands, Air Defence Command, will have under him naval and Army resources, too, which can be used as per the threat perception.
- And the officer commanding the Pakistan or China border will have access to the Air Force's fighter jets and can use them if needed.
- Not all naval resources will be given to the Air Defence Command, nor will all resources of the Air Force come under another proposed command, Peninsula Command, for the coasts.
- The Peninsula Command would give the Navy Chief freedom to look at the larger perspective in the entire Indian Ocean Region in which China's presence is steadily increasing.
- The other key advantage is that through such integration and jointness the three forces will be able to avoid duplication of resources.
- The resources available under each service will be available to other services too.
- The services will get to know one another better, strengthening cohesion in the defence establishment.

### ***What is the way forward?***

- Study for a proposed Air Defence Command has already been initiated and a report on the details of the command are expected by end of March.
- The Air Defence Command would become operational by the end of this year, and the Peninsula Command by the end of 2021, followed by theatre commands joint commands looking at the land boundaries with the first of these to begin rolling out by the end of 2022.
- But the idea is still at a "very preliminary" stage, and added that at the moment it is "just very loud thinking", thus rollout of the theatre commands will take "much longer".

## **4. DEFENCE BUDGET 2020-2021**

### ***What is the issue?***

The slowdown in economic growth seems to have cast its shadow on the allocation of the defence budget for 2020-21.

### ***What is the state of Indian economy with respective to defense perspective?***

- The annual nominal GDP growth, which was in the range of 11 to 11.55 per cent (at current prices) since 2014-15, is down to 7.53 per cent in 2018-19 as per Revised Estimates (RE) of the budget.
- Despite government lowering the Central Government Expenditure (CGE) by nearly 90000 crore in 2019-



20, the revised fiscal deficit at the RE stage has only gone up from the Budget Estimate (BE) target of 3.3 per cent to 3.8 per cent at the RE stage.

- What makes it worse is the declining trend in the share of defence expenditure as a percentage of both CGE and GDP.
- As a major portion of the expenditure on capital acquisition is through imports, and platforms manufactured in the country have substantial import content, any adverse movement in the rupee-dollar exchange rate impacts the purchasing value of the available resources. It also impacts the maintenance expenditure as repair and overhaul of weapon platforms, and spares and fuel expenditure are also impacted by the adverse exchange rate (US\$).
- The share of Pay and Allowances and Defence Pensions component has been increasing every successive year.
- About 60 per cent of the total MoD expenditure is on these two heads, both of which are first charges on the budget allocation.
- That just leaves only 40 per cent of the budget to meet the modernization, capital works (infrastructure), operational and maintenance (O&M) expenditure, training, revenue works (maintenance of infrastructure), transportation, research and development, and other miscellaneous expenditure.

- Their share has declined by 10 percentage points over the last decade.
- This adversely impacts both capability creation and maintenance of existing weapon platforms.
- In the capital budget allocation (which caters for both modernization and capital works i.e. infrastructure), the first charge is to meet the projected committed liabilities of contracts signed in the past years for the milestones likely to materialize during the year.

#### ***What are the reforms brought in Defense sector?***

- The biggest reform in higher defence organization since independence has been the appointment of a Chief of Defence Staff (CDS), who heads the newly-created Department of Military Affairs (DMA) within the Ministry of Defence (MoD).
- The DMA, once fully operational, will deal with all three wings of the armed forces and focus on promoting jointness in procurement, logistics, transport, training, support services, communications, repairs and maintenance; ensuring optimal utilization and rationalization of infrastructure; and promoting the use of indigenous equipment by the defence services.



### **How economic slowdown impacts defence reforms?**

- Slowdown in economic growth not only seems to have cast its shadow on the allocation of the defence budget for 2020-21 but has also compounded the challenges for the country's first CDS.
- Defence budget, as commonly understood, consists of defence revenue and defence capital demands, i.e., two of the four demand for grants of the MoD, the other two being MoD (Civil) and Defence Pensions.
- However, with the creation of DMA, effective January 1, 2020, the defence budget for all purposes must include all four demand numbers of the MoD.
- Prior to the creation of DMA, Service Headquarters (HQs) were 'Attached Offices' of the MoD.
- Hence, only two budget demands, i.e., Defence Services (Revenue) and Defence Services (Capital) were included in Defence Services Estimates, popularly known and classified as Defence Expenditure.
- With DMA now a part of the MoD, leaving out Defence Pensions, the second-largest head of expenditure of the four MoD budget demands, not only keeps it out of focus but is also not consistent with the definition of Defence Expenditure.
- While slippages in the achievement of milestones in some contracts may provide some headroom, the

remaining has to be managed by carrying forward the payments due to Defence Public Sector Undertakings (DPSUs).

- Given the situation, CDS does not seem to have the luxury of time on his side.
- It is, therefore, necessary for him to 'make a virtue of necessity'. He has to immediately initiate some short-term measures while setting up expert groups to address and identify the long-term measures.
- There is no dearth of committee reports recommending optimization of the defence expenditure.

### **What are the measures taken in this regard?**

- The government has been aware of both budgetary allocations falling short of the needs and also its inability to meet the pressing needs for finding additional allocations for defence.
- The government in July 2019 had amended the terms of reference to enable the 15th Finance Commission to address serious concerns regarding the allocation of adequate, secure and non-lapsable funds for defence and internal security.
- Their term was further extended to submit the first report for the first fiscal year viz. 2020-21 and to extend the tenure for the presentation of the final report covering FYs 2021-22 to 2025-26 by October 30, 2020.



- MoD has suggested levying of a special cess and the Finance Commission is to set up an expert group, comprising representatives from the ministries of Defence, Home Affairs and Finance to consider the modalities for a non-lapsable fund.
- These issues are complex and despite best intentions, it may be challenging to find an optimal solution for them.

#### **What measures are needed?**

- **Rationalization of Manpower** - A large number of units/establishments/echelons have existed since before or were added after the Independence.
- CDS's mandate to promote and ensure jointness in the three services should bring about merger and consolidation of some of them into singular leaner entities.
- Existence of each organization (unit establishments and echelons, whatever might be the nomenclature) must be reviewed periodically using 'work study' tools and any such entity which has outlived its necessity should be disbanded/merged/consolidated.
- **Combatants-Civilian Manning-Outsourcing** - The cost to the government taking into account the pay and allowances, accommodation, clothing, ration, leave entitlement, etc. and future pension liabilities in case of combatants are substantially

higher than that of civilian employees in the same grade of pay.

- Hence, some of the services can be outsourced on a competitive basis at a much lower cost.
- Combatants need to man only positions that have an operational role, the other essential but not directly related to operations need to be manned by civilian defence employees.

## **5. ENTRY OF WOMEN IN PERMANENT COMMISSION**

### **Why in news?**

Supreme Court (SC) has granted entry of women in permanent commission in armed forces at par with their male counterparts.

### **What is the brief history of induction of women officers in Army?**

- The induction of women officers in the Army started in 1992.
- They were commissioned for a period of five years in certain chosen streams such as Army Education Corps, Corps of Signals, Intelligence Corps, and Corps of Engineers.
- Recruits under the Women Special Entry Scheme (WSES) had a shorter pre-commission training period than their male counterparts who were commissioned under the Short Service Commission (SSC) scheme.
- In 2006, the WSES scheme was replaced with the SSC scheme, which was extended to women officers.



- They were commissioned for a period of 10 years, extendable up to 14 years. Serving WSES officers were given the option to move to the new SSC scheme, or to continue under the erstwhile WSES.
- They were to be however, restricted to roles in streams specified earlier which excluded combat arms such as infantry and armoured corps.
- Official notes had shown women officers in a poor light, saying isolation and hardships would eat into their resolve and that they would have to heed to the call of pregnancy, childbirth and family.
- The note had mentioned that women ran the risk of capture by enemy and taken prisoner of war.

### **What are the highlights of SC judgement?**

- Elaborating upon the 2010 judgement of the Delhi High Court, as well as consequent policies adopted by the Ministry of Defence as intimated through its letter of February 25, 2019, the Supreme Court has laid down the law with great clarity.
- Along with granting a role to women in combat arms, the judgment essentially highlights the denial of equal opportunity in their existing roles for promotion to higher commands.
- The court held that the note reflected the age-old patriarchal notion that

domestic obligations rested only with women.

- The court also dismissed the point that women are physiologically weaker than men as a “sex stereotype”.
- It has also said that it only shows the need “to emphasize the need for change in mindsets to bring about true equality in the Army”.
- The court noted that challenging abilities of women on the ground of gender is an offence not only to their dignity as women but to the dignity of the members of the Indian Army men and women who serve as equal citizens in a common mission.
- The Supreme Court rejected arguments against greater role for women officers, saying these violated equality under law.
- They were being kept out of command posts on the reasoning that the largely rural rank and file will have problems with women as commanding officers.
- The biological argument was also rejected as disturbing.

### **What are the implications of the Judgement?**

- The spirit of the order is the principle of non-discrimination.
- According to Article 16, Gender only cannot serve as the basis for inequitable and unequal treatment in any sphere, including in defence forces.
- It also held that right to equality under Article 14 needs to be



prescribed by a right to rationality that forbids any “blanket” and “absolute” prohibition.

- The implications of the judgment will have to be borne by the human resources management department of the Army, which will need to change policy in order to comply.
- With immediate effect, in addition to permanent commissions in ten arms and services of the Indian Army, WOs will also be eligible for ‘command positions’ in their respective units, as applicable to their male counterparts.
- But the bigger shift will have to take place in the culture, norms, and values of the rank and file of the Army, which will be the responsibility of the senior military and political leadership.

#### **What lies ahead?**

- There are certain other policies which would be immediately impacted by the Supreme Court’s decision, foremost would be the numbers to be recruited.
- Considering that all appointments have been opened up to women in the 10 arms and services, the Adjutant General in conjunction with the Military Secretary (MS) would have to decide on whether the logic for maintaining the current fixed intake at the academies should remain or be jettisoned, more so when it might turn out that proportionately woman candidates perform equally as well as

their male competitors in the selection process.

- Going hand in hand with this would be the aspect of cadre management.
- To ensure a level playing field, defense forces need appoint women in Rashtriya Rifles and Assam Rifles units.
- Training of WOs in counter-insurgency would merit much greater importance.
- Their numbers posted to other difficult areas in high altitudes too would doubtless increase.
- This would have to be seen in concert with the management of ‘spouse postings’ – an institutional support mechanism wherein the request for a common place of posting for a married officer couple is examined and granted to the extent feasible, a dynamic issue which takes much time and effort to guarantee satisfaction.
- Finally, comes the issue of promotion to select ranks (Colonel and above), where there can be no discrimination based on gender.

## **6. INDO-AFRICA DEFENCE MINISTER CONCLAVE**

### **Why in news?**

The first India-Africa Defence Ministers’ Conclave led at DefExpo2020 in Lucknow.



### **What is India-Africa Defence Minister conclave about?**

- It is a fresh initiative by India to enhance relations with countries in the continent.
- Defence ministers of about 14 African countries are expected to participate in the conclave.
- This initiative will provide an opportunity for India and the African countries to understand common security challenges and explore further cooperation in the defence and security sector.
- Peace and security are currently a key priority for the African countries. “Silencing Guns: Creating conducive conditions for African Development” is AU’s theme of the year.
- The AU road map to attaining this vision acknowledges the linkage between peace, security and development.
- In recent years, India has given a high priority to strengthening its ties with the African countries.
- India’s increasing outreach is visible from the numerous high-level visits from India to Africa and the announcement to open 18 new diplomatic missions in the continent.
- The India-Africa Defence Ministers’ Conclave is a step towards engaging the African countries on peace and security.
- It is hoped that the conclave leads to a candid discussion on common

security challenges and examines the ways and means to further enhance cooperation between India and the African countries.

### **What are the existing security challenges in Africa?**

- In recent years, there has been an overall decline in conflicts in Africa. However, conflict continues to simmer in parts of the Horn of Africa, North Africa, West Africa, Sahel and the Great Lakes region.
- As in the rest of the world, terrorism and violent extremism is also a cause of instability in Africa.
- There are a large number of terror groups operating on the continent. Boko Haram continues to terrorise civilians in Nigeria and the neighbouring countries in West Africa.
- In the Sahel, a large number of violent incidents have been attributed to the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) affiliated Islamic State in Greater Sahara and a coalition of extremists linked with Jama’at Nusrat al-Islam wal Muslimeen (JNIM) or Group for the Support of Islam and Muslims.
- In North Africa too, threat from ISIS continues to linger. Similarly, maritime challenges such as piracy, armed robbery, and illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, smuggling, human and drug trafficking have long troubled the Indian Ocean and Atlantic Ocean littoral countries in Africa.



### ***How African nations are strengthening its defence?***

- African countries have developed mechanisms such as the African Peace and Security Architecture for conflict resolution and peacekeeping in the continent.
- Similarly, maritime security is an increasing priority.
- The African Union (AU) has adopted a pan-African maritime strategy, known as 2050 Africa's Integrated Maritime (AIM) Strategy, to tackle the growing maritime insecurity in the region.
- This strategy is unique as it calls for both reduction of traditional maritime challenges and also sustainable development of the African blue economy.
- While African countries have been involved in finding African solutions to African problems, they have also welcomed support from external partners and international organizations.
- They are still dependent to a large extent on funding by the United Nations (UN) and bilateral donors to sustain the peace operations.

### ***What is significance of India-Africa Defence Cooperation?***

- Defence and security engagement has been a part of India -Africa ties for several decades.
- This mainly involved training, participation in the UN peacekeeping

missions in the region, and maritime cooperation.

- India has trained military officers from several African countries at its military training institutions.
- The current Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari is a prominent alumnus of India's Defence Services Staff College, Wellington.
- India has also contributed to peace in the African continent through active participation in the UN Peacekeeping Operations (UNPKO).
- Similarly, India has a robust maritime security cooperation with Indian Ocean littoral states in Africa. India has deployed its navy for anti-piracy patrolling, surveillance and humanitarian and disaster relief operations on request from African countries across the Indian Ocean region.
- Further, the Indian Navy was the first international responder in Cyclone Ida in Mozambique in 2019.
- Similarly, it was the first to respond to the cyclone in Madagascar last month.
- India has also conducted joint military exercises with representatives from Africa countries.
- The first Africa-India Field Training Exercise-2019 (AFINDEX-19) took place at Pune in March 2019.
- This landmark exercise brought together representatives of the Indian Army and 17 African nations.



AFINDEX-19 provided an opportunity for the participating nations to work together in humanitarian mine assistance and peacekeeping operations under the UN mandate. Similarly, several African countries have been part of the MILAN series of biennial exercises of the Indian Navy.

- Some African navies are expected to participate in the latest edition of the exercise next month.
- This naval exercise aims to increase cooperation with countries in the Indian Ocean region.

## 7. INDIA'S STRATEGY ON POK

### *What is the issue?*

External Affairs Minister (EAM) remarks on Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) is most significant expositions on the issue in recent times.

### *What is Pakistan occupied Kashmir (PoK)?*

- Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (PoK) is that part of the Jammu and Kashmir (India) which was invaded by Pakistan in 1947.
- The region is referred by the United Nations and other international organizations, as 'Pakistani-controlled Kashmir' (or Pakistan Administered Kashmir) and it was re-named as 'Pakistan occupied Jammu-Kashmir'.
- Pakistan occupied Kashmir is divided into two parts:

1. Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) (attached to the western part of Indian Kashmir.)

2. Gilgit-Baltistan (referred to as the 'Northern Areas' till August 2009)

- Baltistan was the area of west Ladakh province which was occupied by Pakistan in 1947.
- Because of its location, PoK is of immense strategic importance. It shares borders with several countries - the Punjab and North-West Frontier Province provinces (now called Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa) in Pakistan to the west, the Wakhan Corridor of Afghanistan in the north-west, Xinjiang province of the People's Republic of China to the north and India's Jammu and Kashmir to the east.

### *Who administers PoK?*

- After accession, the Indian part of J&K followed the democratic path as per Article 370 of the Indian constitution while the area under Pakistani occupation was bifurcated into two- 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' (AJK) and the 'Northern Areas,' which consisted of Gilgit-Baltistan.
- AJK is governed under the Azad Kashmir Interim Constitution Act passed in 1974.
- Even though AJK has a president, prime minister, and a council, the governing structure is powerless and dependent on the Pakistani establishment for the smallest issues.



- The leaders of AJK surrendered the Northern Areas to Pakistan under the Karachi Agreement of 1949.
- The Karachi Agreement, which governs the rule of Pakistan over Gilgit-Baltistan, was signed between the president of Azad Kashmir, the Muslim Conference and a minister without portfolio from Pakistan, Mushtaq Ahmed Gurmani.

### **What are India's measures taken on PoK?**

- For decades, J&K has reeled under the state-sponsored terrorism from Pakistan.
- The incessant spate of violence had apparently overshadowed India's legitimate claim on PoK, though some tough messaging was on display when a parliamentary resolution emphasising J&K as an integral part of the country was unanimously adopted in February 1994, at a time when the Pakistan-sponsored militancy in J&K was at its peak.
- The resolution not only strongly condemned Pakistan for its support and encouragement to "subversive and terrorist activities in the Indian state of J&K" but had also asked Pakistan to vacate territories that were under its illegal occupation.
- Nevertheless, indiscriminate violence and terrorism in J&K continued to cast shadow on the unresolved issue of PoK and India's legitimate claim over it for over the next two decades.

- What happened as a result was that a legitimate territorial claim underpinned by an Instrument of Accession incrementally degenerated into what was considered worthless jingoism — one that failed to resonate with India's strategic policy pursuits.
- While India was categorical about preserving its territorial integrity vis-a-vis J&K, expressed aversion to third party interference on the issue, and later highlighted Pakistan-abetted terrorism in the region, it did not speak enough on PoK to effectively influence the world opinion.
- There are no solid explanations for India's qualms in expressing and asserting its position on PoK more frequently than it has.
- This is despite the fact that the official version of India's stance on PoK has remained unchanged since 1947.
- The downplaying of the country's legitimate claims on PoK failed to instil a strong sense of justification for those claims in public as well as at the global level.

### **What is the significance of EAM's statement on PoK?**

- Although references to PoK have been made in the past as well by officials and ministers, what makes the current assertion noticeable is the frequency and intensity with which they are being made.
- Abrogation of Article 370 of the Constitution has provided a fillip to



India's position on PoK, signalling a paradigmatic shift in how it seeks to pursue its strategic interests.

- The surge in official references to PoK has disrupted the inertia of the past years.
- Stridency in statements that talks with Pakistan will only be on PoK seems to be graduating towards an attempt to turn the tables in dealing with Pakistan.
- To trace the beginning of this policy shift, forceful assertion of India's claim on PoK began with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Independence Day speech in August 2016, when he made explicit reference to parts of PoK.
- Media coverage pursuant to the surgical strikes of September 2016 further sensitised the people about PoK.
- It is believed that the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), as the flagship project of China's ambitious Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), in clear disregard of the Indian sensitivities, might have provoked the political establishment to rejuvenate its extant claims on the territory.

### **What is the future strategy of India on PoK?**

- **Strong Negotiation** - It has been argued that strengthening claims on PoK and injecting it into India's Kashmir strategy will potentially buttress India's negotiating capability,

not only vis-a-vis Pakistan but also China.

- Since China is in possession of parts of the former princely state, including the Trans-Karakoram Tract provisionally ceded to it by Pakistan in 1963.
- Pushing PoK high on India's strategic priorities will make India's Kashmir policy more effective.
- A conducive situation as is evolving now demands a set of measures that may serve as vital components of a long-term strategy on PoK.
- **Sustain Momentum** -In the coming days, it is all the more necessary that institutional mechanisms are set up and bolstered to monitor developments in PoK on a real-time basis.
- India must also be more open towards cultivating people from the terrain who are willing to come on board and contribute towards its broader policy objectives in PoK.
- **Shore up Public Awareness** - There is an urgent need to widen the ambit of knowledge and awareness on PoK before stimulating a meaningful discourse on the subject.
- In this context, raising India's stand on PoK must spread across ideological aisles.
- **Sensitise International Public Opinion** -On the external front, India must undertake diplomatic efforts towards sensitizing the international



community about its legitimate claims on PoK.

- Indian foreign office should target especially those countries who are either involved in developmental/infrastructure projects in PoK or are willing to do so.
- With friendly countries like the United States, Japan and France showing their sensitivity to the Indian position on the issue vis-à-vis Pakistan, India should activate its diplomatic missions to communicate its policy shift with regard to Kashmir in general and PoK in particular.
- **Political Representation** - The government must give serious thought to reserving parliamentary seats for representatives from PoK.
- The erstwhile Constitution of J&K had allotted seats in the state assembly for members from PoK, which, it noted, shall lie vacant until PoK is integrated with India.
- That there was no such quota in the Lok Sabha was something of a constitutional incongruity.
- Despite the fact that the constitution of J&K no longer exists, and the erstwhile state stands bifurcated into two Union Territories, it is all the more compelling to consider this option in accordance with the revised map of India.
- The constitutional impediments that may exist in this regard need to be overcome by introducing the required changes.