

23 July 2020: PIB Summary & Analysis

1. Grant of permanent commission to women officers in Indian Army

Context:

The Ministry of Defence has issued a formal sanction letter granting Permanent Commissions (PC) to women officers of the Indian Army.

Details:

- This will pave the way for women taking up larger roles within the Army.
- The order specifies grant of PC to Short Service Commissioned (SSC) women officers in all the ten streams of the Indian Army i.e., Army Air Defence (AAD), Signals, Engineers, Army Aviation, Electronics and Mechanical Engineers (EME), Army Service Corps (ASC), Army Ordnance Corps (AOC), and Intelligence Corps in addition to the existing streams of Judge and Advocate General (JAG) and Army Educational Corps (AEC).

Also read: [Women in Commanding Role: RSTV – Big Picture](#)

2. General Financial Rules (GFR) 2017

Context:

Restrictions on Public Procurement from certain countries.

Details:

- The government amended the GFR 2017 to enable the imposition of restrictions on bidders from countries that share a land border with India on grounds of **defence of India**, or matters directly or indirectly related to **national security**.
- The Department of Expenditure has issued this Order.
- As per this Order, any bidder from countries that share a land border with India can bid in the procurement of goods/services **only if the bidder is registered with the Competent Authority**.
- **Who is the Competent Authority?**
 - The Registration Committee constituted by the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT).
- **Also required:**
 - Political clearance from Ministry of External Affairs
 - Security clearance from Ministry of Home Affairs
- The Order takes into its ambit public sector banks and financial institutions, autonomous bodies, Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs) and Public-Private Partnership projects receiving financial support from the Government or its undertakings.
- The GOI has also written to the Chief Secretaries of the state governments to implement this Order in procurement by State Governments and state undertakings, etc.
 - For State Government procurement, the Competent Authority will be constituted by the states but **political and security clearance will remain necessary**.
- Relaxation has been provided in certain limited cases, including for the procurement of medical supplies for containment of the COVID-19 pandemic till 31st December 2020.

- By a separate Order, countries to which the Government of India extends lines of credit or provides development assistance have been exempted from the requirement of prior registration.
- The Order does not apply to procurement by the private sector.

General Financial Rules:

- GFRs are a set of rules that deals with matters concerning public finances.
- They are issued by the Department of Expenditure under the Finance Ministry.
- These rules are to be followed by all departments/ministries and organisations under the government and other specified bodies while dealing with matters involving public finances.
- They were first issued in 1947, and later were modified in 1963, 2005 and the latest in 2017.

3. Study in India Programme

Context:

India holds the first-ever INDSAT exam under 'Study in India' Programme.

Details:

- The HRD Ministry conducted the first INDSAT exam under the programme.
- INDSAT - Indian Scholastic Assessment (Ind-SAT) Test.
- About 5000 students from various countries like Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, Ethiopia, Rwanda, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, etc. attended the test, which was conducted by the National Testing Agency.
- The test was held in the proctored internet mode.
- **Ind-SAT** is an exam for grant of scholarships and admissions to foreign students for studying in select Indian universities under the Study in India programme.

About the Study in India Programme:

- Under this programme, foreign students come to study in 116 select higher education institutions in India for undergraduate and postgraduate programmes.
- It is under the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD).
- The scheme was launched in 2018 and is helmed by EdCIL (Educational Consultants of India), a Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSE) under the MHRD.
- **Objective of the scheme:** To make India a preferred education hub for students all across the globe, by elevating its position in the global educational landscape.
- The programme focuses on attracting international students from select 30 plus countries across South-East Asia, the Middle East and Africa.

4. Hydrogen-CNG (H-CNG)

Context:

The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways invites public suggestions on the inclusion of H-CNG as an automotive fuel.

What is H-CNG?

- H-CNG is a blend of hydrogen and CNG, the ideal hydrogen concentration being 18%.
- This blended gas provides the advantages of both CNG (compressed natural gas) and hydrogen.
- Tests conducted by the Automotive Research Association of India and the IOCL have found that compared to conventional CNG, use of H-CNG can reduce the emission of carbon monoxide up to 70%, besides enabling up to 5% savings in fuel.
- In 2018, the Environment Pollution Prevention and Control Authority (EPCA) had recommended to the Supreme Court that Delhi's buses switch to H-CNG from the current CNG being used as fuel.

