



RACE IAS

Daily current affairs

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What are the rules for resignation and reinstatement of an officer?

Context:

Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer Shah Faesal, who resigned from the service in protest against the “unabated” killings in Kashmir in 2019, has been reinstated.

- Faesal’s resignation, in January 2019, had not been accepted by the government, pending investigation into some of his posts on social media.

What rules apply when an IAS officer chooses to resign?

The resignation of an officer of any of the three All-India Services – IAS, the Indian Police Service (IPS) and Indian Forest Service – is governed by Rules 5(1) and 5(1)(A) of the All India Services (Death-cum-Retirement Benefits) Rules, 1958.

- An officer serving in a cadre (state) must submit his/her resignation to the chief secretary of the state.
- An officer who is on central deputation is required to submit his/her resignation to the secretary of the concerned Ministry or Department.

Before forwarding the resignation to the central government, the concerned state is supposed to send information on the issues of dues and vigilance status, along with its recommendation.

Can the resignation be rejected?

The state checks to see if any dues are outstanding against the officer, as well as the vigilance status of the officer or whether any cases of corruption etc. are pending against him/her. In case there is such a case, the resignation is normally rejected.

Competent authorities are:

Minister of State at the Department of Personnel & Training (DoPT) in respect of the IAS, the Minister for Home Affairs in respect of the IPS, and the Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change in respect of the Forest Service.

Is an officer allowed to withdraw a resignation that has already been submitted?

The central government may permit an officer to withdraw his/her resignation "in the public interest".

Sources: Indian Express

Global Security Initiative:

Context:

A new Global Security Initiative has been put forward by Chinese President Xi Jinping.

- This initiative will look to counter the Indo-Pacific strategy and the Quad - the India, U.S., Australia, Japan grouping.

Aim of this initiative:

- As per the Chinese President, Global Security Initiative will stay committed to the vision of common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security.
- It would oppose unilateralism, and say no to group politics and bloc confrontation.
- This initiative would oppose the wanton use of unilateral sanctions and long-arm jurisdiction.

Key Principles:

- This initiative would build an Asian security model of mutual respect, openness and integration.

- It would oppose the destruction of the international order under the banner of so-called rules.
- It will also oppose the dragging of the world under the cloud of the new cold war.
- This initiative will oppose the use of the Indo-Pacific strategy to divide the region and create a new Cold War, and the use of military alliances to put together an Asian version of NATO.

Need for:

With growing threats posed by unilateralism, hegemony and power politics, and increasing deficits in peace, security, trust and governance, mankind is facing more and more intractable problems and security threats.

- Thus, China held that the Global security initiative is envisaged to uphold the principle of “indivisible security”.
- The principle of “indivisible security” means that no country can strengthen its own security at the expense of others.

What are Events Signaling a New Cold War?

- China’s aggressive development under the relatively enlightened authoritarianism.
- In order to contain rising China’s assertiveness, the US under its ‘pivot to Asia policy’ Has launched a Quad initiative & Indo pacific narrative.
- Most recently, the US proposed to expand G7 to G-11 without including China in it.
- China’s actions in the South China Sea, first by land reclamation and then constructing artificial islands for extending extra-territorial claim, has seen sharp criticism from the US and its allies.

What are China’s views on the Quad?

- There is a general understanding that the Quad would not take on a military dimension against any country. The strategic community in China, nevertheless, had branded it an emerging “Asian NATO”.
- Notably, Japanese PM Shinzo Abe’s “Confluence of Two Seas” address to the Indian Parliament gave a fresh impetus to the Quad concept. This recognised the economic rise of India.

Concerns for India:

- There could be a warning for New Delhi in these efforts, that others are stitching up formal, institutionalized security cooperation that leave India out.
- With two new treaties now in the region—AUKUS being the other—and more potentially on their way, New Delhi needs to consider seriously whether its continuing scepticism of closer security cooperation with others best serves India's interest.
- More problematically, it is another indicator that India has not entirely escaped its traditional aversion to external security partnerships even when the limitations of its domestic capacities are self-evident.

Sources: the Hindu.

Issues surrounding sedition:

Context:

NCP chief Sharad Pawar recently created a stir with his affidavit before the Bhima Koregaon inquiry commission, wherein he said that the archaic **sedition** law should be repealed.

- He said there were acts like Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA) in place that could effectively deal with these activities.

Need for:

- The section is being more misused than used these days; anyone who criticises the government is arrested under the stringent sedition.
- In most of the cases innocents were being framed.
- If one looks at the recent cases where the sedition charges have been invoked, then most of them are fairly covered under other law and order provisions.

Arguments in Support of Section 124A:

- Section 124A of the IPC has its utility in combating anti-national, secessionist and terrorist elements.

- It protects the elected government from attempts to overthrow the government with violence and illegal means. The continued existence of the government established by law is an essential condition of the stability of the State.
- If contempt of court invites penal action, contempt of government should also attract punishment.
- Many districts in different states face a maoist insurgency and rebel groups virtually run a parallel administration. These groups openly advocate the overthrow of the state government by revolution.

Against this backdrop, the abolition of Section 124A would be ill-advised merely because it has been wrongly invoked in some highly publicized cases.

What is sedition?

Section 124A of the IPC states, "Whoever, by words, either spoken or written, or by signs, or by visible representation, or otherwise, brings or attempts to bring into hatred or contempt, or excites or attempts to excite disaffection towards, the government established by law in shall be punished with imprisonment for life, to which fine may be added, or with imprisonment which may extend to three years, to which fine may be added, or with fine."

Need for a proper definition?

The sedition law has been in controversy for far too long. Often the governments are criticized for using the law – Section 124-A of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) – against vocal critics of their policies.

- Therefore, this Section is seen as a restriction of individuals' freedom of expression and falls short of the provisions of reasonable restrictions on freedom of speech under Article 19 of the Constitution.

The law has been in debate ever since it was brought into force by the colonial British rulers in 1860s. Several top freedom movement leaders including Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru were booked under the sedition law.

1. Mahatma Gandhi described it as the "prince among the political sections of the Indian Penal Code designed to suppress the liberty of the citizen."
2. Nehru had described it as "highly objectionable and obnoxious" which "should have no place in any body of laws that we might pass". Nehru said, "The sooner we get rid of it the better."

Relevant Supreme Court judgements:

1. The Kedar Nath Singh vs State of Bihar case (1962):

While dealing with offences under Section 124A of the IPC, a five-judge Supreme Court constitutional bench had, in the Kedar Nath Singh vs State of Bihar case (1962), laid down some guiding principles.

- The court ruled that comments-however strongly worded-expressing disapprobation of the actions of the government without causing public disorder by acts of violence would not be penal.

1. The Balwant Singh vs State of Punjab (1995) case:

In this case, the Supreme Court had clarified that merely shouting slogans, in this case Khalistan Zindabad, does not amount to sedition. Evidently, the sedition law is being both misunderstood and misused to muzzle dissent.

Recent views of Supreme Court:

The Supreme Court, in June 2021, said “it is time to define the limits of sedition”.

- The observation was made while dealing with the writ petitions filed by two news channels seeking the quashing of FIR and contempt petitions.

General observations made by the Court on Sedition:

- It is time we define the limits of sedition.
- Provisions of 124A (sedition) and 153 (promoting enmity between classes) of the IPC require interpretation, particularly on the issue of the rights of press and free speech.

Sources: the Hindu

5G service roll-out likely in Aug.-Sept:

Context:

Union Minister of Communications, Shri Ashwini Vaishnaw, recently said that the commercial rollout of 5G services could be expected from August-September 2022 onwards.

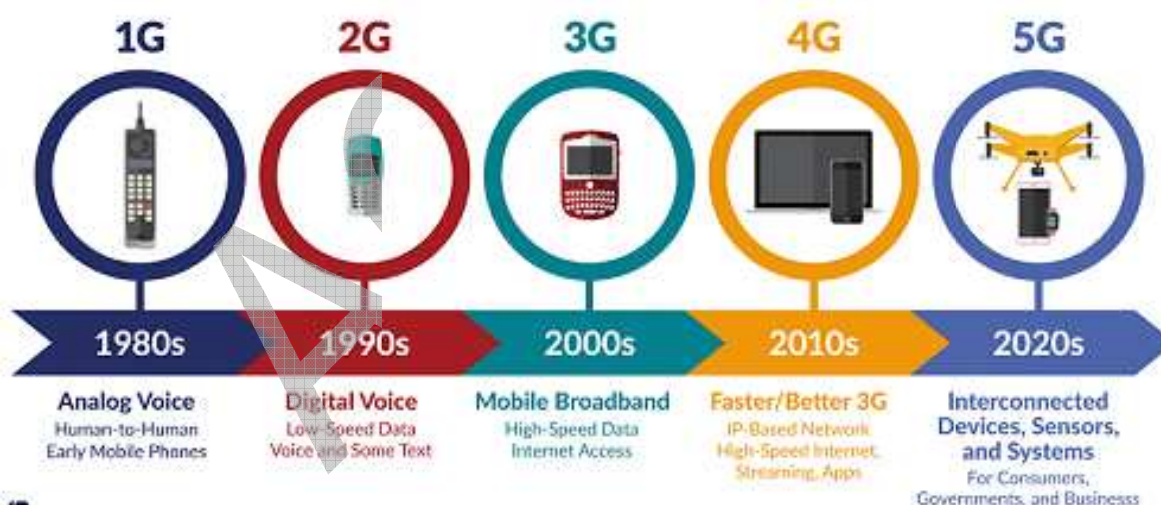
- The government is confident of resolving issues related to high spectrum pricing with the industry.

What is 5G?

- 5G is the next generation of mobile broadband that will eventually replace, or at least augment 4G LTE connection.

Features and benefits of the 5G technology:

1. Operate in the millimeter wave spectrum (30-300 GHz) which have the advantage of sending large amounts of data at very high speeds.
2. Operates in 3 bands, namely low, mid and high frequency spectrum.
3. Reduced latency will support new applications that leverage the power of 5G, the Internet of Things (IoT), and artificial intelligence.
4. Increased capacity on 5G networks can minimize the impact of load spikes, like those that take place during sporting events and news events.



Significance of the technology:

India's National Digital Communications Policy 2018 highlights the importance of 5G when it states that the convergence of a cluster of revolutionary technologies including 5G, the cloud, Internet of Things (IoT) and data analytics, along with a growing start-up community, promise to accelerate and deepen its digital engagement, opening up a new horizon of opportunities.

Challenges for 5G Roll-out in India:

Procedural Delays: India's telecom sector is greatly affected by the procedural delays and their multiple issues.

Affordability of Spectrum: Many countries around the world may already roll out 5G connectivity to its users but, in India, the 5G spectrum is yet to be allocated.

Last-mile Connectivity: Catering to last-mile broadband connectivity in Tier-II, Tier-III cities and rural homes are challenging since India lacks optical fiber infrastructure and Greenfield deployment which has immensely affected last-mile connectivity.

Affordable 5G Devices: On the consumer front, affordable 5G devices are yet to take their place in the market.

Sources: Indian Express.

What is NASA's new communications system LCRD?

Context:

NASA recently demonstrated its Laser Communications Relay Demonstration (LCRD). It was launched in December 2021.

- It is the agency's first-ever laser communications system.
- The LCRD will help the agency test optical communication in space.

About LCRD:

LCRD is a technology demonstration that will pave the way for future optical communications missions.

- The LCRD payload is hosted onboard the US Department of Defense's Space Test Program Satellite 6 (STPSat-6).
- It will be in a geosynchronous orbit, over 35,000km above Earth.

Advantages of optical communications systems:

Optical communications systems are smaller in size, weight, and require less power compared with radio instruments.

- A smaller size means more room for science instruments.
- Less weight means a less expensive launch.
- Less power means less drain on the spacecraft's batteries.

- With optical communications supplementing radio, missions will have unparalleled communications capabilities.

Laser VS radio:

Laser communications and radio waves use different wavelengths of light.

- Laser uses infrared light and has a shorter wavelength than radio waves. This will help the transmission of more data in a short time.

Sources: Indian Express.

National Curriculum Framework (NCF):

Context:

The 'Mandate Document: Guidelines for the Development of the NCF' was recently released.

Background:

The National Education Policy (NEP), 2020 recommends the development of National Curriculum Frameworks (NCF) in four areas- School Education, Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE), Teacher Education and Adult Education.

About the NCF:

The NCF includes the National Curriculum Framework for School Education (NCFSE), the National Curriculum Framework for Early Childhood Care & Education (NCFECCE), the National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education (NCFTE), and the National Curriculum Framework for Adult Education (NCFAE).

Significance:

The mandate document will bring about a paradigm shift with focus on holistic development of children, emphasis on skilling, vital role of teachers, learning in mother tongue, cultural rootedness. It is also a step towards decolonisation of the Indian education system.

Highlights of the National Education policy:

1. Public spending on education by states, Centre to be raised to 6% of the GDP.

2. Ministry of Human Resource Development to be renamed Minister of Education.

Digital Education- related:

1. An autonomous body, the national educational technology forum, will be created for the exchange of ideas on use of technology to enhance learning, assessment, planning and administration.
2. Separate technology unit to develop digital education resources. The new unit will coordinate digital infrastructure, content and capacity building.

Teacher Education- related:

1. By 2030, the minimum degree qualification for teaching will be a four year integrated B.Ed. degree.
2. Teachers will also be given training in online educational methods relevant to the Indian situation in order to help bridge the digital divide.

School Education- related:

1. Universalise the pre-primary education (age range of 3-6 years) by 2025.
2. Universalization of Education from pre-school to secondary level with 100 % GER in school education by 2030.
3. A new school curriculum with coding and vocational studies from class 6 will be introduced.
4. A child's mother tongue will be used as the medium of instruction till class 5.
5. A new curricular framework is to be introduced, including the preschool and Anganwadi years.
6. A National Mission on Foundational Literacy and Numeracy will ensure basic skills at the class 3 level by 2025.
7. Board exams to be easier, redesigned. Exams will test core competencies rather than memorising facts, with all students allowed to take the exam twice.
8. School governance is set to change, with a new accreditation framework and an independent authority to regulate both public and private schools.

Higher Education- related:

1. Four year undergraduate degrees with multiple entry and exit options will be introduced.
2. The M.Phil degree will be abolished.
3. New umbrella regulator for all higher education except medical, legal courses.
4. An Academic Bank of Credit will be set up to make it easier to transfer between institutions.
5. College affiliation system to be phased out in 15 years, so that every college develops into either an autonomous degree-granting institution, or a constituent college of a university.
6. It also aims to double the Gross Enrolment Ratio in higher education, including vocational education, from 26.3% in 2018 to 50% by 2035, with an additional 3.5 crore new seats.

Traditional knowledge- related:

1. Indian knowledge systems, including tribal and indigenous knowledge, will be incorporated into the curriculum in an accurate and scientific manner.

Special focus:

1. Regions such as aspirational districts, which have large number of students facing economic, social or caste barriers will be designated as 'Special Educational Zones'.
2. The Centre will also set up a Gender Inclusion Fund to build the country's capacity to provide equitable quality education to all girls and transgender students.

Financial support:

Meritorious students belonging to SC, ST, OBC and other socially and economically disadvantaged groups will be given incentives.

New Curricular and Pedagogical Structure:

The NEP proposes changing the existing 10+2 Curricular and Pedagogical Structure with 5+3+3+4 design covering the children in the age group 3-18 years. Under this –

1. Five years of the Foundational Stage: 3 years of pre-primary school and Grades 1, 2;
2. Three years of the Preparatory (or Latter Primary) Stage: Grades 3, 4, 5;

3. Three years of the Middle (or Upper Primary) Stage: Grades 6, 7, 8;
4. Four years of the High (or Secondary) Stage: Grades 9, 10, 11, 12.

Challenges ahead:

Since education is a concurrent subject most states have their own school boards. Therefore, state governments would have to be brought on board for actual implementation of this decision.

Sources: the Hindu.

ADIGRAMS:

The Ministry of Tribal Affairs (MoTA) had recently organised a workshop in Jharkhand on ADIGRAMS (Adivasi Grants Management System).

- ADIGRAMS Portal will provide a central database for Ministry of Tribal Affairs and the State Tribal Development/ Welfare Department to access, interact and analyse up-to-date scheme wise Physical and financial information and progress.N
- The portal will enable the officials/stakeholders at Central, State, District, Block and village level to access, monitor and measure performance in a real-time basis and take decisions accordingly.

Global military expenditure:

Total global military expenditure increased by 0.7 per cent in real terms in 2021, to reach \$2113 billion, according to new data on global military spending published today by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI).

- The five largest spenders in 2021 were the United States, China, India, the United Kingdom and Russia, together accounting for 62 per cent of expenditure.
- India's military spending of \$76.6 billion ranked third highest in the world. This was up by 0.9 per cent from 2020 and by 33 per cent from 2012.
- The USA and China alone accounted for 52 per cent. China, the world's second largest spender.

Anang Tal:

- Anang Tal is a mini lake located in Mehrauli, New Delhi.
- Created in 1052 A.D by the founder king of Delhi Maharaja Anang Pal Tomar.
- The millennium old Anang Tal signifies the beginning of Delhi.
- Anang Tal has a strong Rajasthan connection as Maharaja Anang Pal is known as nana (maternal grandfather) of Prithviraj Chauhan whose fort Rai Pithora is on the list of ASI

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