

08 July 2025

1. Tri-Service Theatre Command Structure Finalized; Implementation by 2026

Source: Indian Express

Context: The Department of Military Affairs (DMA) has finalized the foundational structure for India's long-awaited military theatre commands, marking the most significant defense reform in decades. Sources in the Ministry of Defence confirmed that the plan, which has now received in-principle approval from the government, envisages the creation of three integrated theatre commands: a Western Theatre Command (facing Pakistan), a Northern Theatre Command (facing China), and a Maritime Theatre Command.



Analysis

- This move aims to foster synergy among the Army, Navy, and Air Force, enabling unified command and control for cohesive joint operations.
- Each command will be led by a four-star or three-star officer from any of the three services on a rotational basis, reporting directly to the Chiefs of Staff Committee, which includes the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS).
- The existing Andaman and Nicobar Command will be absorbed into the Maritime Theatre Command. While the broader structure is finalized, intricate details regarding asset allocation and operational command chains are being worked out.
- The implementation is planned in a phased manner, with the commands expected to be fully operational by the end of 2026, fundamentally enhancing India's war-fighting capabilities.

UPSC Syllabus Correlation:

GS Paper 3: Security challenges and their management in border areas; Various Security forces and agencies and their mandate.

08 July 2025

2. Centre Launches 'PM-SURYA 2.0' to Solarize 1 Crore More Rural Households

Source: PIB (Press Information Bureau)

Context: Building on the success of the Pradhan Mantri Suryodaya Yojana, the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) today launched the second phase of the scheme, dubbed 'PM-SURYA 2.0'. The new phase aims to install rooftop solar systems on an additional 1 crore rural and semi-urban households over the next three years. The scheme expands its scope to include enhanced central financial assistance (CFA) and introduces innovative financing models through a dedicated 'National Solar Fund'.



Analysis

- Under PM-SURYA 2.0, the subsidy structure has been tiered to encourage the adoption of higher-capacity systems (above 3 kW).
- A key new feature is the 'rent-to-own' model, allowing households to install solar panels with minimal upfront cost and pay for them through monthly installments that are offset by savings on their electricity bills.
- The scheme will be implemented through a revamped National Portal, which will connect consumers with approved vendors, financing institutions, and DISCOMs for seamless net-metering.
- The Minister for Power and New & Renewable Energy stated, "PM-SURYA 2.0 is not just an energy scheme; it is an economic empowerment tool that will reduce electricity bills, generate income from surplus power, and create green jobs in rural India."

UPSC Syllabus Correlation:

GS Paper 2: Government Policies and Interventions for development in various sectors.

GS Paper 3: Infrastructure: Energy. Conservation, environmental pollution, and degradation.

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3. Government Notifies National Framework for Single-Use Plastic Alternatives

Source: Hindustan Times

Context: The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has notified a comprehensive 'National Framework for Promotion of Alternatives to Single-Use Plastics (SUPs)'. This comes three years after the ban on several SUP items was first implemented in July 2022. The new framework aims to create a circular economy by systematically promoting the research, development, and mass adoption of eco-friendly alternatives like bamboo, bagasse, and compostable polymers.



Analysis

- The framework establishes a 'Green Alternatives Fund' to provide financial incentives and viability gap funding for startups and MSMEs manufacturing these alternatives.
- It mandates Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) obligations not just for plastic producers but also for large-scale producers of alternative materials to ensure their responsible disposal and composting.
- Furthermore, it proposes a 'Green Star' rating system for alternatives based on their lifecycle environmental impact, helping consumers make informed choices.
- A key component is the collaboration with State Urban Development Departments to establish dedicated collection and composting infrastructure for these new materials in major cities.
- This policy shifts the focus from merely banning plastic to actively building a viable and sustainable market for its alternatives.

UPSC Syllabus Correlation:

GS Paper 3: Conservation, environmental pollution, and degradation.

GS Paper 2: Government policies and interventions.

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4. 48th GST Council Meeting: Rate Rationalisation Deferred, Green Tax on Commercial Vehicles Discussed, Source: The Economic Times

Context: The 48th GST Council meeting, chaired by Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, concluded today with the decision to defer the much-anticipated rate rationalisation exercise. The Group of Ministers (GoM) on rate rationalisation has been given a three-month extension to submit its final report, citing the need for further study on the inflationary impact of potential rate changes. However, the Council made headway on several other fronts.



Analysis

- A key proposal discussed was the introduction of a 'Green Cess' or a higher GST rate on the sale of new commercial vehicles that do not meet the latest BS-VII emission norms, which are set to become mandatory in 2027.
- The revenue generated would be used to fund a scrappage policy and subsidize electric commercial vehicles.
- The proposal, however, met with resistance from several states and has been sent to a GoM for further deliberation.
- The Council did approve the clarification on GST applicability for various services, including corporate guarantees and online gaming, bringing more clarity to the industry.
- The decision to maintain the status quo on rates provides temporary relief to consumers but keeps the long-term issue of a complex, multi-rate structure unresolved.

UPSC Syllabus Correlation:

GS Paper 3: Government Budgeting. Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization of resources, growth, development, and employment.

GS Paper 2: Functions and responsibilities of the Union and the States, issues and challenges pertaining to the federal structure.

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5. India and Nepal Inaugurate Cross-Border Digital Payment Corridor

Source: Indian Express

Context: In a major boost to bilateral ties and regional economic integration, the Prime Ministers of India and Nepal virtually inaugurated the India-Nepal Digital Payment Corridor. This groundbreaking initiative allows for seamless cross-border financial transactions using India's Unified Payments Interface (UPI) and Nepal's National Payments Interface (NPI). Indian citizens traveling in Nepal and Nepali citizens in India can now make instant, low-cost payments to merchants and individuals using their respective mobile payment apps.



Analysis

- The corridor is expected to be a game-changer for tourism, trade, and the millions of Nepali migrant workers in India who send remittances home.
- It bypasses the traditional, often cumbersome and expensive, banking channels.
- Speaking at the launch, the Indian Prime Minister hailed it as a "symbol of our deep-rooted 'Roti-Beti' relationship, now powered by digital connectivity."
- The project was jointly developed by the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) and its Nepali counterpart, Nepal Clearing House Ltd (NCHL).
- This is a significant expansion of UPI's international footprint and reinforces India's 'Neighbourhood First' policy by leveraging its digital public infrastructure for regional benefit.

UPSC Syllabus Correlation:

GS Paper 2: India and its neighborhood- relations. Bilateral agreements involving India.

GS Paper 3: Awareness in the fields of IT and computers.

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6. Parliamentary Panel on Home Affairs Recommends National Policy on Urban Policing, Source: The Hindu

Context: The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Home Affairs, in its report tabled in the Rajya Sabha today, has strongly recommended the formulation of a 'National Policy on Urban Policing'. The committee highlighted that rapid urbanization has thrown up unique law and order challenges—such as organized crime, cyber-fraud, and traffic congestion—which the existing police structures, largely based on the Police Act of 1861, are ill-equipped to handle.



Analysis

- The report suggests creating specialized cadres within state police forces for metropolitan areas, with a focus on community policing, intelligence gathering using modern technology, and cyber forensics.
- It calls for a statutory basis for the Police Commissionerate system in all cities with a population of over one million.
- The panel also emphasized the need for better infrastructure, housing, and mental health support for police personnel in high-pressure urban environments.
- Citing 'Police' as a State List subject, the committee recommended that the Ministry of Home Affairs should draft a model policy to guide states in modernizing their urban police forces.
- The report underscores the urgent need to reform policing to keep pace with India's demographic and social transformation.

UPSC Syllabus Correlation:

GS Paper 2: Role of civil services in a democracy.

GS Paper 3: Role of external state and non-state actors in creating challenges to internal security. Linkages between development and the spread of extremism.

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7. National Medical Commission Drafts New Regulations for Telemedicine 2.0

Source: Hindustan Times

Context: The National Medical Commission (NMC) has released draft regulations for "Telemedicine 2.0," aiming to build a more advanced, integrated, and secure framework for remote healthcare in India. The new guidelines are an update to the initial Telemedicine Practice Guidelines issued during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. The draft proposes a three-tiered telemedicine system: basic tele-consultation (as practiced now), advanced tele-consultation (involving remote examination using connected diagnostic devices), and tele-ICU services.



Analysis

- A key proposal is the creation of a 'National Telemedicine Registry', where all doctors practicing telemedicine must be registered.
- The regulations mandate stringent data privacy and security protocols, in line with the DPDP Act, and lay down clear guidelines for issuing e-prescriptions, especially for controlled substances.
- They also introduce provisions for using Artificial Intelligence (AI) as a diagnostic aid under the supervision of a registered medical practitioner.
- The NMC has invited public feedback on the draft, which, once finalized, is expected to standardize and scale up the quality of telemedicine, making healthcare more accessible in remote and underserved areas of the country.

UPSC Syllabus Correlation:

GS Paper 2: Issues relating to the development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health.

GS Paper 3: Science and Technology- developments and their applications and effects in everyday life.

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8. India-Japan Joint Naval Exercise 'JIMEX 25' Commences in the South China Sea **Source: The Hindu**

Context: The annual India-Japan Maritime Exercise, 'JIMEX 25', commenced today in the South China Sea, sending a strong signal of growing strategic convergence between the two Quad partners. The Indian Navy has deployed its indigenous stealth destroyer INS Visakhapatnam, a P-8I long-range maritime patrol aircraft, and a Kalvari-class submarine for the week-long exercise. The Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force (JMSDF) is represented by its helicopter carrier JS Izumo and a destroyer.



Analysis

- A Defence Ministry statement said the exercise will focus on advanced anti-submarine warfare (ASW), air defence drills, and interoperability in joint command and control procedures.
- The choice of the South China Sea as the venue is significant, underscoring both nations' commitment to a "Free and Open Indo-Pacific" (FOIP) and the principles of freedom of navigation and international law.
- An official stated that these exercises are "not directed against any country but are aimed at enhancing our collective capability to ensure security and stability in the maritime domain."
- The exercise reinforces the deepening defense cooperation between New Delhi and Tokyo, a cornerstone of the Quad's security architecture in the region.

UPSC Syllabus Correlation:

GS Paper 2: Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests.

GS Paper 3: Various Security forces and agencies and their mandate.

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9. Ministry of Culture Announces Digitization of 1 Million Unpublished Manuscripts under NMM, Source: PIB (Press Information Bureau)

Context: The Ministry of Culture today announced a significant achievement under the National Mission for Manuscripts (NMM), having completed the digitization of one million unpublished manuscripts from across the country. Launched in 2003, the NMM is tasked with locating, documenting, conserving, and digitizing India's vast and invaluable manuscript wealth. This milestone represents a monumental effort to preserve and provide access to ancient knowledge spanning philosophy, science, literature, and art.



Analysis

- The digitized manuscripts are in various languages and scripts, including Sanskrit, Pali, Prakrit, and various regional languages, written on materials like palm leaf, birch bark, and paper.
- The Union Minister for Culture stated, "These manuscripts are the DNA of our civilization. By digitizing them, we are creating a 'Knowledge Commons' for future generations of scholars and researchers worldwide."
- The next phase of the mission will involve using AI and Machine Learning tools for a more accurate transcription, cataloging, and translation of these texts.
- The digitized collection will be made accessible through the 'Bharat Vidya' national portal, democratizing access to India's rich intellectual heritage.

UPSC Syllabus Correlation:

GS Paper 1: Indian culture will cover the salient aspects of Art Forms, literature, and Architecture from ancient to modern times.

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10. Rising Bond Yields Pose Challenge for Government's Borrowing Program

Source: The Economic Times

Context: The yield on India's benchmark 10-year government bond surged by 12 basis points today to close at 7.35%, its highest level in over eight months. The spike is being driven by a combination of persistent domestic inflation concerns and rising US Treasury yields following recent hawkish commentary from the Federal Reserve. This sharp increase in bond yields poses a significant challenge to the government's massive borrowing program for the fiscal year 2025-26.



Analysis

- Higher yields mean the government will have to pay a higher interest rate on the money it borrows from the market, directly increasing its debt servicing costs and potentially straining the fiscal deficit target of 4.5% of GDP.
- Market analysts believe that if this trend continues, the Reserve Bank of India may have to intervene through Open Market Operations (OMOs) to purchase government securities and cap the rise in yields.
- An economist at a leading bank commented, "The bond market is signaling its concern about the inflation trajectory and the global interest rate environment."
- This will be a tightrope walk for both the government and the RBI in managing the borrowing calendar without stoking further volatility."

UPSC Syllabus Correlation:

GS Paper 3: Government Budgeting. Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization of resources, growth, development, and employment.