

DAILY PT POINTERS

26th June, 2024



The Hindu : GS 3-Defense –Page 10

Will the Agnipath scheme be revamped?

Will the formation of a new government lead to a more detailed discussion on the recruitment of soldiers as Agniveers? How have the NDA allies reacted? What is the government's stance?

Dinakar Peri

The story so far:

The recruitment of soldiers into the armed forces as Agniveers under the Agnipath scheme has been a major issue in the recent general election. After the election results, NDA allies, the Janata Dal (United) and Lok Janshakti Party (Ram Vilas), raised the issue of Agnipath and called for a discussion on it. The government is open to changes and discussions are on, officials in the know said.

What is the Agnipath scheme?

The Agnipath scheme for recruitment of soldiers, sailors and airmen into the three services was announced on June 14, 2022 doing away with the earlier process of permanent recruitment. Under the new scheme, Agniveers are recruited for four years on the completion of which, up to 25% would be selected into the regular ranks on a permanent basis. The age

bracket for new recruits was fixed at 17 and a half to 21 years of age and till 2026 the overall intake has been capped at 1.75 lakh. Subsequently, the Army is inducting 40,000 Agniveers per year and the Navy and Air Force are recruiting around 3,000 Agniveers each. Agniveers during their tenure can get class 12 certificates or a Bachelor's degree in addition to other skill certificates and when leaving after four years will get a lumpsum amount but are not eligible for pension. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh had termed it a transformative initiative and a win-win situation for all.

The government has stated that the Agnipath scheme would bring down the average age of the armed forces from 32 to 26 years in line with the age profile of major armies worldwide. And that when Agniveers return to society, they will contribute to nation-building.

What are the concerns?

One of the biggest concerns for the armed

forces, especially the Army, is the accentuating shortage of personnel in the 'below the officer's rank' cadres. There was no recruitment during the COVID-19 period for over two and half years which created a deficiency. For context, around 60,000 soldiers retire from the Army every year, while 40,000 are being recruited every year. So effectively the shortage is adding on year by year. Additionally, the low conversion rate of 25% from Agniveers to regular soldiers is going to further accentuate the shortfall. Given the short duration of four years, the training schedules have also been compressed accordingly.

With the huge demand for recruitment into the Army in some parts of the country, the scheme became a political issue as well as a campaign issue during the election. The country was rocked by violent protests when the scheme was announced. Several parties have demanded that it either be scrapped or the concerns addressed.

There is anger among "certain sections" on the Agnipath scheme, said JD(U) leader K.C. Tyagi amidst talks within the NDA on government formation. "The Agnipath scheme should be reviewed clause by clause," he said.

What is the current status?

As reported by *The Hindu* earlier, as the Agnipath scheme completes two years of implementation, the Department of Military Affairs (DMA) in the Defence Ministry headed by the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) has sought feedback from the forces on the scheme. This, officials said, is in line with the regular practice in the armed forces of reviewing any major scheme introduced or any weapon platform inducted to make required changes based on a detailed assessment.

Broadly, recommendation for enhancing intake numbers, increasing the permanent recruitment from 25% to at least 50% are among the suggestions. Also, there is a proposal to increase the age limit for entry though the technical route from 21 to 23 years to attract enough technically qualified individuals. This is not a new proposal but also existed in the recruitment process earlier.

Defence officials have stated that Navy and Air Force have compiled the feedback to be sent to the DMA. However, the Army is still in the process of compilation and will take some more time, multiple officials confirmed. The DMA will compile all the recommendations and send it to the Defence Ministry.

- The Agnipath scheme for recruitment of soldiers, sailors and airmen into the three services was announced on June 14, 2022 doing away with the earlier process of permanent recruitment.
- Candidates between the age group of 17.5 to 21 years are eligible to apply for the scheme. These Agniveers would undergo optimised basic military training and specialised trade training followed by up-skilling courses, as required.
- Agniveers on completion of four years will get an opportunity to join regular cadre and up to 25% would be selected through another recruitment process.
- Agniveers during their tenure can get class 12 certificates or a Bachelor's degree in addition to other skill certificates and when leaving after four years will get a lumpsum amount but are not eligible for pension
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Cost of future wars is enormous, resources should be optimised: Chief of Defence Staff

Dinakar Peri
NEW DELHI

Saying that the cost of future wars would be “enormous”, Chief of Defence Staff General Anil Chauhan on Tuesday stressed the need to optimise resources and manpower and bring in efficiencies to afford weapons and systems of the future.

Before talks of fusion between civil and military resources, there should be fusion within the Army, the Navy, and the Air Force, General Chauhan said.

“We have taken that up (service integration) and at last count, we had almost

work together in an integrated manner. In these processes, we will be able to optimise time, resources, processes, infrastructure and manpower,” General Chauhan said at the Air Force capstone seminar which marked the culmination of the third Warfare & Aerospace Strategy Program (WASP) course.

Strategic programme
WASP is a strategic education programme of 15 weeks that was started in 2022 to provide participants with a deep understanding of geopolitics, grand strategy and comprehensive national power,



General Anil Chauhan

of Air Warfare and Centre for Air Power Studies.

General Chauhan said that after integration within the three Services, the logical step would be to take the approach forward to other Services. For instance, the Navy and Coast

pair and overhaul together. “We can also involve the Central Armed Police Forces into whatever logistics and infrastructure (need to be) created,” he said.

Alternate ways

He added that there are “hundreds of things where we can actually help the government to reduce costs”. “Because the cost of future wars is enormous, weapon systems and platforms are going to be very costly,” he said.

Noting that civil aviation is expanding, General Chauhan asked if it could have a military payoff. “We need to think on alterna-

and time bound,” he said. Addressing the seminar, IAF chief Air Chief Marshal V. R. Chaudhari said WASP has refined the definition of scholar warriors.

“A scholar warrior is a military professional who combines intellectual acumen with combat prowess in today’s increasingly complex and dynamic security environment,” he said.

Talking of India’s strategic culture, the Air Force chief said it is shaped by historical experiences and the ever-evolving geopolitical environment. “It emphasises strategic autonomy, caution and a strong

Warfare & Aerospace Strategy Program (WASP) course.

Strategic programme

WASP is a strategic education programme of 15 weeks that was started in 2022 to provide participants with a deep understanding of geopolitics, grand strategy and comprehensive national power, and is conducted by the IAF along with the College of Air Warfare and Centre for Air Power Studies.

This edition of WASP saw tri-services participation for the first time

Indian Express- GS 2/Governance –Page -12

Ahead of roll-out of the new criminal laws, Union Home Ministry tests eSakshya App

Vijaita Singh
NEW DELHI

Days ahead of the implementation of the three criminal laws, the Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) is testing eSakshya (e-evidence), a mobile-phone application to help police record scene of crime, search and seizure in a criminal case and upload the file on the cloud-based platform. The police official will have to upload a selfie after the procedure is complete. Each recording could be maximum four minutes long and several such files could be uploaded for each First Information Report (FIR), according to the details shared with State police departments.

The Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) that replaces the Indian Penal Code, 1860; the Bharatiya Sakshya (BS) which replaces the Indian Evidence Act, 1872; and the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS) that replaces the Code of

The mobile application will be available to all police stations to download and register

are all set to come into force from July 1.

Conviction rate

The BNSS mandates compulsory audiovisual recording of search and seizure in each criminal case and mandatory forensic examination in all cases where an offence attracts punishment of seven years or more. Procuring hardware and cloud space is an expensive affair and many States do not have enough resources, said an official, adding that it will also help uniformity in investigations, thereby increasing the conviction rate.

The mobile application developed by the National Informatics Centre (NIC) will be available to all police stations which register and download the app.

official said the app was under final stages of trial and the police were given two options. "If there is connectivity issue, the police can record the crime scene on their own device such as personal mobile phones and generate a hash value, come back to the police station and upload the file. The other method is they can directly upload through eSakshya for which good Internet speed is required," explained the official.

Another police officer cautioned that the sanctity of the chain of evidence submission will have to be adhered to, else, it could benefit an accused.

"Many accused escape the clutches of law due to procedural infirmities. The new laws make everything digital; if there is slightest of issue in procuring digital evidence, it could lead to criminals walking free. Forensic evidence is not always challenged on the grounds of quality but on the chain of command,"

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The Hindu-Governance (GSII)/Economy(GSIII) –Page
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Urban Affairs Ministry to revamp affordable housing scheme

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Urban), a scheme to enable affordable housing for urban poor, would be revamped with new features based on learning from the past nine years since when it has been operational, the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs said on Tuesday.

The PMAY (Urban), launched in 2015, has been given an extension till December 2024. The mission aims to address urban housing shortage among the poor and middle in-

come groups, including the slum dwellers, by ensuring a *pucca* house to all eligible urban households.

A senior official of the Housing and Urban Affairs Ministry said that the revamp would focus on ensuring that there are no delays on reaching out to beneficiaries who have signed up for the scheme.

The Ministry had also announced a scheme for Special Assistance to States for Capital Investment 2023-24 and 2022-23 and for improving and speeding up basic urban planning ecosystem in cities by incentivising the States.

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Do you know ?

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The Hindu –Defense(GSIII)-Page 14

Defence Ministry signs 350th contract under iDEX for ‘miniaturised satellite’

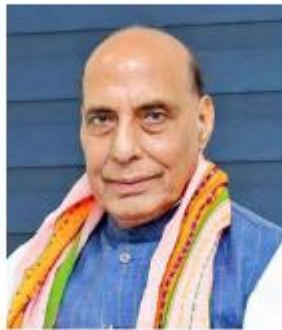
The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The 350th contract under the Innovations for Defence Excellence (iDEX), the flagship initiative of the Defence Ministry, was signed with SpacePixxel Technologies for the design and development of a “miniaturised satellite capable of carrying electro-optical, infrared, synthetic aperture radar, and hyperspectral payloads up to 150 kg”, the Defence Ministry announced on Tuesday.

This challenge is being led by the Indian Air Force.

Pros of the satellite

“This 350th iDEX contract enables innovation in space electronics, wherein many payloads earlier deployed on dedicated large



Rajnath Singh

niaturised,” the Ministry said.

The modular small satellite will integrate multiple miniaturised payloads as per requirement, providing advantages such as faster and economical deployment, ease of manufacturing, scalability, adaptability, and less environmental impact, it stated.

changed between Anurag Bajpai, Additional Secretary (Defence Production) & CEO, Defence Innovation Organisation (DIO), and Awais Ahmed Nadeem Alduri, founder and CEO of the SpacePixxel Technologies.

SpacePixxel has been actively working to build and launch high-resolution hyperspectral imaging satellites to provide detailed earth observation data, the statement said.

Established by the DIO under the Department of Defence Production, iDEX has launched II editions of the Defence India Start-up Challenge and recently unveiled the Acing Development of Innovative Technologies with iDEX (ADIT) scheme to promote innovations in critical and stra

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- s 350th iDEX contract enables innovation in space electronics, wherein many payloads earlier deployed on dedicated large satellites are now being miniaturised, Do you know ?

Innovations for Defence Excellence (iDEX) framework was launched by the Government with the aim to foster innovation and technology development in Defence and Aerospace Sector by engaging Industries including MSMEs, start-ups, individual innovators, R&D institutes and academia and promote self-reliance. The Government has approved a central sector scheme for iDEX with budgetary support of Rs. 498.78 crore for the next 5 years from 2021-22 to 2025-26.

The Hindu –Economy(GSIII)-Page 15

K-shaped recovery fuelling similar trend in inflation: HSBC

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

An uneven K-shaped recovery in economic growth is also fuelling a similar trajectory for inflation dynamics, with food and rural price rise outpacing the inflation in other goods and services, and that faced by urban consumers, respectively, HSBC researchers said on Tuesday.

There has been much debate over India's post-pandemic recovery being driven by demand for higher-end goods and services. Apart from the dichotomy

between rural and urban inflation, and food prices compared with other goods, HSBC pointed to goods inflation being higher than that for services.

"Perhaps inflation and growth dynamics were never meant to differ," HSBC's chief economist for India and Indonesia Pranjul Bhandari wrote. "The same shocks that are driving the variance in growth, like the pandemic and climate change, hurting some groups more than others, are also likely driving the variance in prices," Ms. Bhandari added.

- 'K-shaped recovery' refers to a situation where some sectors of the economy revive after slowdown or recession while others don't.
- It means not all sectors/parts of the economy are recovering.
- It is being widely debated that the post-pandemic recovery in India has been K-shaped. The debate over K-shaped recovery is also intimately linked to widening inequality in the country

The Hindu –Species (GSIII)

T.N. to allow regulated culling of wild boars in fields close to forest

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

The Tamil Nadu government has decided to allow culling of wild boars that cause distress to farmers in farmland close to forest areas.

Minister for Forests M. Mathiventhan said in the Assembly on Friday that the decision was taken based on a report by the Farmers' Conflict Resolution Committee, which was constituted to study the impact of raids by elephants and wild pigs on agricultural crops. The committee comprises representatives from the Departments of Forest, Revenue, Agriculture, and Horticulture, scientific experts and wildlife



Shooting of wild boars will not be allowed within 5 km from the reserve forest, says Minister

Zone C (beyond five kilometres). Shooting of wild pigs will not be allowed within five kilometres from the reserve forest, he added.

While farmers have been requesting the State government to allow culling of wild boars, experts

- It has one of the widest geographic distributions of all terrestrial mammals
- The species now occurs in pure wild or barely modified feral form on all continents excepting Antarctica, and on many oceanic islands.
- It occupies a wide variety of temperate and tropical habitats
- Least Concern.

Indian Express –Health (GSII) –Page 9

Nearly 50% Indians less active than recommended: WHO

More Indian women (57%) than men (42%) fail to meet WHO norms, as per findings published in Lancet

ANURADHA
MASCARENHAS
PUNE, JUNE 25

ALMOST HALF of the adult Indian population does not meet the World Health Organization's (WHO) guidelines on sufficient physical activity, according to new data published in the Lancet Global Health.

More women (57%) than men (42%) are physically inactive in India, says the study. Most alarmingly, the prevalence of insufficient physical activity among Indian adults has risen sharply from 22.3% in 2000 to 49.4% in 2022. If this remains unchecked, 60% of our population would be unfit by 2030 and at risk of diseases linked to inadequate physical activities, according to the study. Estimates indicate that India has the 12th highest prevalence of

insufficient physical activity among 195 countries. Worldwide, nearly one-third (31%) of adults – approximately 1.8 billion people – did not meet the recommended levels of physical activity in 2022.

The WHO recommends at least 150 to 300 minutes of moderate aerobic activity per week (or equivalent vigorous activity) for all adults. Insufficient physical activity is defined as not doing 150 minutes of moderate-intensity activity, 75 minutes of vigorous-intensity activity, or an equivalent combination per week. According to the WHO, lack of physical activity puts adults at greater risk of cardiovascular diseases such as heart attacks and strokes, Type 2 diabetes, dementia and cancers of the breast and colon.

Dr Rüdiger Krech, director of health promotion at WHO, said, "The findings point to a worrying trend of physical inactivity among



Estimates indicate that India has 12th highest prevalence of insufficient physical activity among 195 countries.

adults, which has increased by about five percentage points between 2010 and 2022." The highest rates of physical inactivity were observed in the high-income Asia-Pacific region (48%) and South Asia (45%). In other regions, it ranged from 28% in high-income Western countries to 14% in Oceania. The status sheet is of

particular concern in India, as people here are genetically more prone to developing non-communicable diseases such as heart problems and diabetes at least a decade earlier than others. "Lack of physical activity means that you are just aggravating your risk factors," said Dr K Srinath Reddy, public health expert and top cardiologist. "The goal to increase levels of physical activity in populations across the world was set with the expectation of many health benefits: reduced risk of heart disease, diabetes, obesity and some types of cancer; improved mental health and a stronger immune system," he said. Dr Reddy said he fears that increasing levels of global warming, manifesting as extreme weather, would pose greater challenges to outdoor physical activities of people. "Though the estimates of physical activity in 2022 may have

been affected by Covid in many parts of the world, the trend of reduced physical activity is likely to persist, unless effective interventions are made by urban planners to create space for physical activity and people are willing to make behavioural changes," he said. He said that several studies in India had shown low levels of physical activity at the population level, particularly women, who wrongly believe that household chores are a good form of physical exercise.

Insufficient physical activity among women in India, Pakistan, Afghanistan is a worry as they lag behind men by over 14-20 percentage points. However, women in Bangladesh, Bhutan and Nepal are more active and on track for achieving the global target – 15% between 2010 and 2030 – of prevalence of women with insufficient physical activity.

- Half the adult Indian population does not meet the World Health Organisation's (WHO) guidelines on sufficient physical activity, according to new data published in the Lancet Global Health. More women (57 per cent) than men (42 per cent men) are physically inactive. Most alarmingly, the prevalence of insufficient physical activity among Indian adults has risen sharply from 22.3 per cent in 2000 to 49.4 per cent in 2022.
- This means unchecked, 60 per cent of our population would be unfit by 2030 and at risk of disease from **not doing enough physical activity.**
- **Why is this study significant?**
- WHO recommends at least 150 to 300 minutes of moderate aerobic activity per week (or equivalent vigorous activity) for all adults.
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HEADLINES OF THE DAY

Indian Express –Places(GSI)

WHY IS JULIAN ASSANGE FLYING TO THE PACIFIC ISLAND OF SAIPAN?

BETTER KNOWN for its sandy beaches and World War II wrecks, the tropical Pacific island of Saipan will soon host the final act of Julian Assange's 14-year legal odyssey.

Assange is en route to a courtroom on the island, where he is expected to plead guilty on Wednesday to a single criminal charge in a plea deal that will see him walk free and return home to Australia.

Where is Saipan?

Saipan is the capital of the Northern Mariana Islands (NMI), a US commonwealth in the western Pacific, which begins roughly 70 km north of Guam and stretches across 14 islands.

Like territories such as Guam or Puerto Rico, the Northern Mariana Islands are part of the US without the full status of a state.

The roughly 51,000 residents are US citizens but cannot vote in presidential elections. Crucially, some, like Saipan, also host US district courts.

The US took control of Saipan during World War II. After decades under US control, residents in 1975 voted to join the US as a territory. The territory has a permanent delegate in the US House of Representative.

Tourism is the mainstay of Saipan's economy — the island and its surroundings are dotted with World War II memorials and wrecks popular with divers. Saipan, which is home to most of the Northern Mariana's residents, is popular with Korean and Chinese tourists. It is the



WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange on Tuesday. Reuters

have been brought under US law," said Emily Crawford, a professor at the

the tropical Pacific island of Saipan will soon host the final act of Julian Assange's 14-year legal odyssey.

- Saipan is the capital of the Northern Mariana Islands (NMI), a US commonwealth in the western Pacific which begins roughly 70 km (44 miles) north of Guam and stretches across 14 islands.
- Like territories such as Guam or Puerto Rico, the Northern Mariana Islands are part of the US without the full status of a state.
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Indian Express –Governance (GSII)-Page 14

Post of the Deputy Speaker

This constitutional post was vacant from 2019 to 2024. Opposition wants it now – election is scheduled to be held after the Speaker is elected today. How often has an Opposition leader been Deputy Speaker?

LALMANI VERMA
NEW DELHI, JUNE 25

WITH THE Opposition's increased strength in Lok Sabha, its members are hoping to get the post of Deputy Speaker. There was no Deputy Speaker for the 17th Lok Sabha (2019-24). M Thambi Durai of the AIADMK, a BJP ally at the time, was Deputy Speaker of the 16th Lok Sabha (2014-19).

Congress MP Rahul Gandhi said on Tuesday that the Opposition was willing to support the NDA's candidate for Speaker provided the government followed parliamentary convention and gave the Deputy Speaker's post to the Opposition. The Opposition had the post of Deputy Speaker continuously from 1990 through 2014.

The government has sought support from the Opposition for Om Birla, its candidate for Speaker, but has been unwilling to extend any assurances on the post of Deputy Speaker. The INDIA bloc has, therefore, forced a contest by nominating K Suresh of the Congress as its candidate for Speaker. It is unclear, however, whether the Trinamool Congress will support Suresh.

What does the Constitution say about the Deputy Speaker?



(Left) BJP's Munda was Dy Speaker during UPA II; P M Sayeed held post when Vajpayee was PM. file

DEPUTY SPEAKERS SINCE THE FIRST LOK SABHA

| Deputy Speaker | Tenure | DY Speaker's party | Status in LS |
|---------------------------|-----------|--------------------|--------------|
| M Ananthasayanam Ayyangar | 1952-1956 | Congress | Ruling |
| Hukam Singh | 1956-1957 | Congress | Ruling |
| Hukam Singh | 1957-1962 | Congress | Ruling |
| S V Kishanmoorthy Rao | 1962-1967 | Congress | Ruling |
| RK Khadikar | 1967-1969 | Congress | Ruling |
| G G Swell | 1969-1970 | APHLC* | Opposition |
| G G Swell | 1971-1977 | APHLC* | Opposition |
| Goodey Murahari | 1977-1979 | Congress | Opposition |
| G Lakshminan | 1980-1984 | DMK | Ruling |
| M Thambi Durai | 1985-1989 | AIADMK | Ruling |
| Shivraj V Patil | 1990-1991 | Congress | Opposition |

Speaker M Ananthasayanam Ayyangar filled in for the remaining tenure of Lok Sabha from 1956 to 1957. Ayyangar was later elected as Speaker of the second Lok Sabha.

Again, after G M C Balayogi of the Telugu Desam Party, the Speaker in the 13th Lok Sabha, passed away in 2002, Deputy Speaker and Congress MP P M Sayeed became acting Speaker for two months until Manohar Joshi of the Shiv Sena was elected Speaker.

How often has the Opposition had the post of Deputy Speaker of Lok Sabha?

During the Congress-led UPA-I (2004-09) and UPA-II (2009-14) governments, the

- According to Article 95(1), the Deputy Speaker performs the duties of the Speaker if the post is vacant. The Deputy Speaker has the same general powers as the Speaker when presiding over the House. All references to the “Speaker” in the Rules are deemed to be references to the Deputy Speaker as well for the times when he or she presides.
- Both the Speaker and Deputy Speaker must be appointed “as soon as may be”. Article 93 states that “The House of the People shall, as soon as may be, choose two members of the House to be respectively Speaker and Deputy Speaker”.
- Article 178 contains the corresponding provision for the Speakers and Deputy Speakers in the state Assemblies.
- Under Article 94 (and Article 179 for state Assemblies), the Speaker or Deputy Speaker “shall vacate his office if he ceases to be a member of the House of the People”. They may also resign (to each other), or “may be removed from office by a resolution of the House of the People passed by a majority of all the then members of the House”.