

WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

❖ **Women get command roles in the Indian Army**

➤ **CONTEXT:** As many as 108 women officers in the Army are set to be cleared for the rank of Colonel (selection grade) by January 22 by a special selection board, which will make them eligible to command units and troops in their respective arms and services for the first time.

- A total of 244 women officers are being considered for promotion against the vacancies (from the batch of 1992 to 2006) in arms and services including Engineers, Signals, Army Air Defence, Intelligence Corps, Army Service Corps, Army Ordnance Corps and Electrical and Mechanical Engineers.
- 80 women officers had been cleared for the rank of Colonel from Lieutenant Colonel by the Special No. 3 Selection Board whose proceedings began on January 9.
- Unlike other promotion boards, this one is being held every day for a particular batch, starting with the 1992 batch, and the results are being declared on the same day.
- Every officer gets three chances for promotion and thus the reviews, too, are being held within three days of the declaration of the result.

➤ **Why is this significant?**

- Most importantly, it grants women officers parity with their male counterparts. Earlier, with a limited period career in the force, there were no promotion avenues for women officers to become a Colonel and command a unit like male Army officers.



- It is not that women officers did not reach the rank of Colonel or beyond in the past, but they were only in two branches (the Judge Advocate General (JAG) branch and the Army Education Corps) where they were granted permanent commission in 2008.

- However, these were staff appointments (which are more administrative in nature) and not purely command appointments in which an officer commands troops on ground.

- The Supreme Court's order to grant permanent commission to women Army officers in February 2020 opened the doors for promotion to women officers across all streams of the Army, except pure combat arms. With a longer career in the Army, women officers will be considered for promotions, including to the rank of Colonel and beyond.

➤ **Women were inducted in the Army as early as 1992. Why did their Colonel promotions come so late?**

- An officer in the Army is promoted to the rank of Colonel only after serving between 16 and 18 years, based on certain criteria such as annual confidential reports and various courses.

- Women officers who were inducted into the Army were inducted as Short Service Commission (SSC) officers in 1992 and in the years after did not have the choice to opt for permanent commission. JAG and Army Education Corps were exceptions, where a permanent commission was opened for them in 2008.

- For other arms and services, women could not become permanent cadre, and had to retire much before they completed the service period that is mandatory to become a Colonel.

➤ **What did the Supreme Court order in 2020?**

- In 2019, the Army changed its rules allowing SSC women officers to opt for permanent commission who would have otherwise retired after 14 years of service. However, this was not retrospective, and applied only to the batches of women officers starting their career in the Army in 2020.

- With the landmark Supreme Court judgment of February 2020, permanent commission was granted to women officers with retrospective effect. This opened the doors for their further growth and promotions in the Army, which has been of late opening leadership and higher management courses for women.

➤ **What exactly does commanding a unit mean?**

- Once promoted to a Colonel, an officer is eligible to command troops directly in the Army, which is an acknowledgment of the leadership qualities of the officer. It is considered a coveted appointment because in no other rank (including higher ranks like Brigadier or Major General) does an officer interact directly with troops on the ground.

- ✓ Multiple women officers told that for them it was a dream to reach this point in their career. Despite working at the grassroots level as junior officers, women officers hitherto did not get an opportunity to prove their leadership skills as they were not eligible to command a unit. For a woman officer, this is an empowering move.

➤ **In which arms and services will women officers command units?**

- Women officers in many streams of the Army, including the Army Air Defence, Signals, Engineers, Army Aviation, Electronics and Mechanical Engineers, Army Service Corps, Army Ordnance Corps, and Intelligence Corps will be commanding units.
- They are still not eligible in core combat arms such as Infantry, Mechanised Infantry and Armoured Corps, as the Army is not open to women fighting wars at the borders as foot soldiers. Much of this resistance stems from past instances of male soldiers being taken as prisoners of war and tortured by the enemy.
- However, the Army has recently decided to open the Corps of Artillery, a combat support arm, to women.
- **What about the Indian Navy and the Indian Air Force?**
- Women officers have been inducted into all branches of the Navy, and they will be eligible for permanent commission in the future. Women officers can command shore-based units and, as they join the service and become eligible for permanent commission, they would be able to command ships and air squadrons.
- The IAF has opened all branches for women officers, including the fighter stream and the new weapon systems branch. As they are granted permanent commission based on eligibility and vacancies, they will be eligible to command units in the future.
- **How many women serve in the Indian armed forces?**
- According to the data which was submitted by the government to Parliament in recently the Army, being the largest of the three services, has the largest number of women officers at 1,705, followed by 1,640 women officers in the IAF, and 559 in the Navy.
- **Which other armies allow women to serve or command units?**
- All major countries including the United States, United Kingdom, Russia, and Israel, allow women in command positions of their national armed forces.

GEOGRAPHY

❖ Joshimath crisis: A brief history of India's seismic zone maps

➤ **CONTEXT:** Joshimath, a small town in Uttarakhand's Chamoli district, is in the midst of a crisis as 723 houses in all nine of the town's wards have developed major or minor cracks on the floors, ceilings and walls. Beams have also been dislodged in many houses.

- Joshimath is located in Zone V of India's seismic zonation scheme, which denotes a high-risk area.
- The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) said in a report that the town in Uttarakhand sank 5.4 cm between December 27, 2022, and January 8, 2023. However, the report and the satellite images were later withdrawn from the ISRO website.
- The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) has directed all departments and organisations associated with survey and data collection in Joshimath not to interact with the media or share any data on social media.

➤ **What are seismic zones?**

- A seismic zone is an area where there is a high probability of earthquakes due to the area's geology.
- Seismic zonation, which involves dividing areas based on expected ground motion, assesses the hazards related to earthquakes in such areas to provide inputs for safer constructions and other practices.

➤ **India's seismic zone maps**

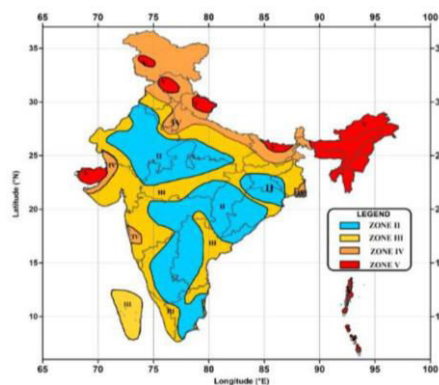
- A published in the "Journal of the International Society for the Prevention and Mitigation of Natural Hazards" said that almost 65% of India falls in high to very high seismic zones.
- According to the 2002 version of India's seismic zone map, earthquake-prone regions in the country are divided into four zones – zone II, III, IV, and V – based on intensity levels during past earthquakes. However, this is not the version of the map that has always been in use.

➤ **1935**

- The first national seismic zoning map of India was compiled by the Geological Survey of India in 1935, after the 1934 Nepal-India earthquake that measured over 8.0 on the Richter scale and destroyed Kathmandu, Bhaktapur and Patan in Nepal.
- It consisted of three zones – severe, light, and minor hazard, "based on the broad concept of space-time earthquake statistics and the prevailing understanding of geotectonic" movements.

➤ **1962**

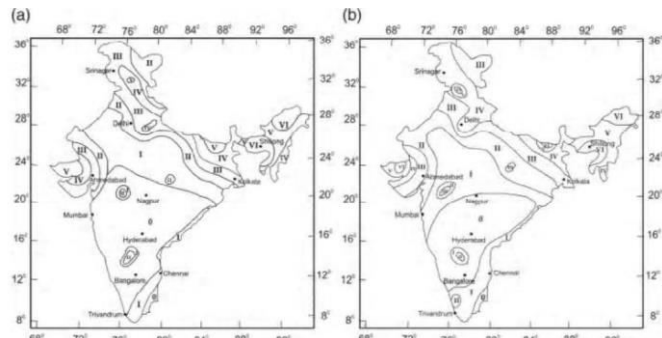
- In 1962, the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) published a seismic zonation map of India. This map marked earthquake epicentres in the country and built on the isoseismic map published by the GSI in 1935.



- It divided India into seven zones – from 0 (no damage) to VI (extensive damage). It was reviewed in 1966, using geological and tectonic features to modify the zones.

➤ **1970**

- Until 1967, seismologists were under the impression that most of the Deccan plateau and peninsular India were free from seismic activity. However, in 1967, a 6.3-magnitude earthquake struck the Koyna hydroelectric project, killing hundreds of people and injuring thousands. This led to major revisions in the 1970 seismic zone map of India.



Seismic Zonation Map of India Prepared in (a) 1962 (BIS, 1962) and (b) 1966 (BIS, 1966)

- The 1970 map consisted of five zones – I, II, III, IV, and V – based on the Modified Mercalli Intensity (MMI) scale with a Comprehensive Intensity Scale (CIS-64). The MMI scale takes into account the effect of earthquakes on people, objects, and buildings, and estimates the shaking intensity from an earthquake at a specific location.
- Zero was removed as a zone since it was deemed scientifically inappropriate to consider a region completely safe from earthquakes. Another major change in the 1970 version of the map was the merging of zones V and VI.

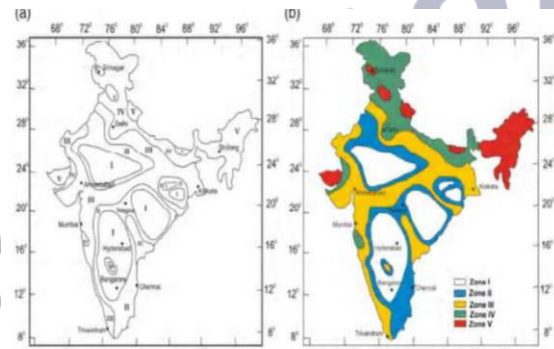
➤ **1984**

- A new update to India's seismic zone map was released in 1984. This map identified the seismic potential of regions based on past earthquakes as well as its tectonic features.

➤ **Seismic zone maps after 1984**

- Till 1984, IS 1893 was the main seismic code of India, and all seismic zone maps were based on it. This code was revised in 1966, 1970, 1975, and 1984. In 1991, it was decided that IS 1893 would be split into parts.

- Latur in Maharashtra was struck by an earthquake of intensity IX (on MMI-CIS-64 scales) in 1993. The 6.3-magnitude earthquake killed thousands of people and occurred in a region that was placed in zone I — an area at low risk. This led to further revisions in the seismic zonation map of India.



Seismic Zonation Map of India Prepared in (a) 1970 (BIS, 1970) and (b) 1984 (BIS, 1984)

➤ **What do India's seismic zones signify?**

- The latest seismic zone map of India was released in 2002 with only four zones – II, III, IV, and V. Approximately 11% area of the country falls in zone V, 18% in zone IV, 30% in zone III and the remaining in zone II.
- Seismic zones signify the intensity of earthquakes which are most likely in those classified areas. According to the revised IS 1983-2002 seismic code, zones are mapped to a modified CIS-64 scale, an alternative to the MMI scale for seismic zoning. The revised seismic code classifies areas under zone II to coincide with an intensity of VI and below on the modified CIS-64 scale. Zone III includes areas that are prone to earthquakes mapped to intensity VII on the scale, zone IV to intensity VIII, and zone V to intensity IX and above.
- **Zone II**, which was made by combining areas under zone I and II, indicate areas of under intensity. Some examples of areas under zone II are Chitradurga, Kota, Hyderabad, Rourkela, Thanjavur, and Visakhapatnam.
- **Zone III** is the next classification and includes areas that are prone to earthquakes of moderate intensity. Killari, believed to be the epicentre of the 1993 Latur earthquake that killed thousands, lies in zone III. The revised seismic code also includes parts of the eastern coast of India, that show similar hazard levels to that of the Killari area, in zone III. Some notable places in this zone are Chennai, Lucknow, Agra, Belgaum, Bokaro, Jabalpur, and Mumbai.
- **Zone IV** includes areas prone to earthquakes of severe intensity, and include Patna, Pilibhit, Ludhiana, Roorkee, Gorakhpur, and Amritsar.

- **zone V** , The entire northeast India, parts of northwestern Bihar, Kangra Valley in Himachal Pradesh, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, eastern part of Uttarakhand, Rann of Kutch in Gujarat, and Srinagar area in Jammu and Kashmir were all placed in it– the most seismically active zone.

PRELIMS

1. Project RE-HAB

- **Shri Manoj Kumar, Chairman, KVIC distributed live Bee Colonies, Bee-keeping equipment and 200 Bee-Boxes to the trained beneficiaries at Sulia at Dakshina Kannada, Karnataka under the RE-HAB Project, an initiative under the Honey Mission Programme of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi.**
- Under Project RE-HAB, “Bee-fences” are created by setting up bee boxes in the passageways of elephants to block their entrance to human territories.
- The boxes are connected with a string so that when elephants attempt to pass through, a tug or pull causes the bees to swarm the elephant herds and dissuade them from progressing further. It is scientifically recorded that elephants are annoyed by the honey bees.
- Project RE-HAB is a sub-mission of KVIC’s National Honey Mission. The Honey Mission is a programme to increase the bee population, honey production and beekeepers’ income by setting up apiaries.
- Achievement: Project RE-HAB has been a great success in Karnataka and so it has been launched in Assam with greater efficiency and better technological know-how. In just 6 months, this project has reduced elephant attacks by over 70%.
- **Benefits**
- ✓ It will thwart elephant attacks in human habitations using honeybees and thus reducing the loss of lives of both humans as well as elephants.
- ✓ It will also help in maintaining a balance in nature, along with the conservation of biodiversity.
- ✓ It is being extremely cost-effective as compared to various other measures such as digging trenches or erecting fences without causing any harm to the animals.
- **National Honey Mission:**
- Launched by Khadi and Village Industries Commission(KVIC)
- To provide sustainable employment and income to rural and urban unemployed youth.
- To conserve the honeybee habitat and tap untapped natural resources.
- Promote beekeeping for increasing crop productivity and pollination Services Avenue for beekeepers and farmers.
- **Khadi and Village Industries Commission:**
- The Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) is a statutory body established by an Act of Parliament -the Khadi and Village Industries Commission Act of 1956.
- In 1957, it took over the work of the former All India Khadi and Village Industries Board.
- Functions:
- ✓ It is an apex organization under the Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, with regard to khadi and village industries within India
- ✓ It seeks to promote and assist in the establishment and development of khadi and village industries in rural areas.

2. Exercise Cyclone - I

- **CONTEXT: The first ever joint exercise between the special forces of the Indian Army and the Egyptian Army named “Exercise Cyclone-I” is in progress at Jaisalmer in Rajasthan since 14 January 2023.**
- The exercise aims to bolster defence co-operation between the two nations and focus on sharing professional skills and interoperability of Special Forces in desert terrain while undertaking counter terrorism, reconnaissance, raids and other special operations.
- Exercise “Cyclone - I” is the first exercise of its kind bringing the special forces of both the nations on a common platform.
- The 14 days long exercise which is being carried out in the deserts of Rajasthan engages both the contingents to advance special forces skills such as Sniping, Combat Free Fall, Reconnaissance, Surveillance & Target Designation, sharing of information on weapons, equipment, innovations, tactics, techniques & procedures.
- The participants would also undertake joint planning and drills for Special Forces operations in a mechanised warfare setting as well as surgical strikes on terrorist camps / hideouts to include sniping of High Value Targets.
- The joint exercise would provide an insight into the culture and ethos of both armies thereby fostering military cooperation and interoperability to further strengthen the diplomatic relations between India and Egypt.

3. Export Promotion Capital Goods (EPCG) scheme

➤ **CONTEXT:** The Indian government has announced a one-time relaxation from maintaining average export obligation and an option to extend the export obligation period for certain sectors under the Export Promotion Capital Goods (EPCG) Scheme.

➤ **About**

- The Zero duty EPCG Scheme is available to exporters of electronic products.
- It allows import of capital goods for pre-production, production and post-production (including CKD/SKD thereof as well as computer software systems) at zero% customs duty, subject to an export obligation equivalent to 6 times of duty saved on capital goods imported under EPCG scheme, to be fulfilled in 6 years reckoned from Authorization issue-date.

➤ **Features**

- The concessional 3% duty EPCG Scheme allows import of capital goods for pre-production, production and post-production (including CKD/SKD thereof as well as computer software systems) at 3% customs duty, subject to an export obligation equivalent to 8 times of duty saved on capital goods imported under EPCG scheme, to be fulfilled in 8 years reckoned from Authorization issue-date.
- The capital goods shall include spares (including refurbished/reconditioned spares), tools, jigs, fixtures, dies and moulds. Second hand capital goods, without any restriction on age, may also be imported under the EPCG Scheme. The export obligation can also be fulfilled by the supply of ITA-1 items to the DTA, provided the realisation is in free foreign exchange.
- **Aims:** It aims to facilitate import of capital goods for producing quality goods and services and enhance India's manufacturing competitiveness.

ANSWER WRITING

Q. The scourge of terrorism is a grave challenge to national security. What are the various sources of terror funding; also suggest measures to curb terrorism.

Terrorism refers to the use of criminal violence to provoke a state of terror or fear, mostly with the intention to achieve political or religious aims. Terrorist financing involves the solicitation, collection or provision of funds with the intention that they may be used to support terrorist acts or organisations.

➤ **Sources of Terror Financing:**

- **State funding of terrorism:** This is a situation where terrorist groups rely on state funding. Although this form of terrorism has declined since the 1990s, organisations such as Hezbollah and Hamas are heavily dependent on state support.
- **Criminal proceeds:** There is a symbiotic dynamic link between transnational crime and terrorist organisations. Terrorist involvement in criminal activities involves drug trafficking, trafficking of human beings, fraud, robbery, extortion, smuggling, oil theft, money laundering etc.
- **Cybernetic financing:** Terrorists are increasingly becoming involved in cyber-crimes such as identity theft, credit card fraud, etc., to raise funds. The other aspect of cyber funding that is rapidly expanding, is the cleaning and moving of money online using money transfer and new technology payments, as banks and other financial institutions are offering their customers online services.
- **Money laundering:** Money laundering is the process by which revenues derived from criminal activity are disguised in an attempt to hide their origin and legitimize their use in the future. It is a two-dimensional source for terrorist organisations. It is also a tool to raise money and also a tool to move them.
- **Use of virtual currencies:** As virtual currencies such as bitcoins facilitate the anonymous transfer of funds, they are attracting the attention of terrorists.

➤ **Measures to curb terrorism:**

- Creating a mechanism for cyber defence by conducting cyber search operations and adopting other countermeasures for tackling cyber-attacks.
- Preventing the diversion from legal financial instruments by fighting anonymity in financial networks. Also restricting the use of proceeds of other crimes for terrorist activities, for example, the use of illegal channels, cash couriers, and hawala by terror networks.
- Preventing the use of new financial technologies such as virtual assets like crypto-currencies, wallets etc., for terror activities.
- Continuous capacity building for counter-terror activities and collaboration between financial intelligence agencies of all countries.
- Exposure of youth to terrorism should be reduced by preventing the use of Non-Profit organisations (NPOs) and social media platforms to spread terror ideology. Also, measures should be taken to resolve issues of livelihood and unemployment in order to deter youth from moving towards radicalisation.
- Timely and actionable intelligence sharing among the countries is critical for preventing and minimising terror attacks.
- There is also a need to accept the universal definition of terrorism as well as global sanctions against the nations who are engaged in state-sponsored terrorism activities.

India has been playing a proactive role in its fight against terrorism through measures such as the comprehensive Convention on International terrorism (CCIT), the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Amendment Act 2019 and National Intelligence Grid (NATGRID). Terrorism is a complex and dynamic phenomenon and therefore global cooperation in combating terrorism is of paramount importance.

MCQs

1. "ABCD Campaign" often mentioned in news is related to
 - a) Provide basic health care facilities to Tribal people
 - b) Expansion of Forest Right Act
 - c) Implementation of PESA Act
 - d) Provide basic document to Tribal people**
2. With reference to "Exercise Cyclone – I" consider the following
 1. It is the first exercise of its kind bringing Navy forces of India and Egypt on a common platform.
 2. The exercise aims to bolster defence co-operation between the two nations and focus on sharing professional skills and interoperability Navy in mid sea while undertaking counter piracy.
 Which of the above statement/s is/are correct?
 - a) 1 only
 - b) 2 only
 - c) Both 1 and 2
 - d) Neither 1 nor 2**
3. Which of the following district became first in the country to provide basic document to all tribal people?
 - a) Khargone, Madhya Pradesh
 - b) Keonjhar , Odisha
 - c) Wayanad, Kerala**
 - d) Dhanbad, Chhattisgarh
4. With reference to Seismic Hazard Map of India, consider the following statements:
 1. India has been divided into eight seismic zones and majority of India lies in Zone I.
 2. Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) is the official agency in India for publishing the seismic hazard maps and codes.
 3. Deccan plateau region does not fall any of the category of seismic zone as this region never face any seismic activity
 Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
 - a) 1 and 2 only
 - b) 2 only**
 - c) 2 and 3 only
 - d) 3 only
5. With reference to Project Re-Hab, Consider the following statements:
 1. It is intended to create bee fences to reduce elephant attacks in human habitations using honeybees
 2. The project is launched Ministry of Environment, Forest & climate Change
 Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
 - a) 1 only**
 - b) 2 only
 - c) Both 1 and 2
 - d) Neither 1 nor 2
6. Consider the following statements with respect to National Beekeeping and Honey Mission (NBHM)
 1. It is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme that aims for overall promotion and development of scientific beekeeping and production of quality honey and other beehive products.
 2. The scheme is being implemented through Ministry of Agriculture.
 Which of the statement/s given above is/are not correct?
 - a) 1 only
 - b) 2 only
 - c) Both 1 and 2**
 - d) Neither 1 nor 2
7. With reference to Export Promotion Capital Goods (EPCG) scheme, consider the following statements:
 1. It allows duty-free imports of capital goods subject to an export obligation.
 2. Second-hand capital goods, without any restriction on age, may also be imported under this scheme.
 Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
 - a) 1 only
 - b) 2 only
 - c) Both 1 and 2**
 - d) Neither 1 not 2
8. National Museum of Natural History (NMNH) is administered under which of the following ministry?
 - a) Ministry of Environment, Forest, and Climate Change**
 - b) Ministry of Education
 - c) Ministry of Culture
 - d) Ministry of Home Affairs
9. With reference to IPCC consider the following statements
 1. It was created by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)
 2. The objective of the IPCC is to provide governments at all levels with scientific information that they can use to develop climate policies.
 Which of the above statement/s is/are correct?
 - a) 1 only
 - b) 2 only
 - c) Both 1 and 2**
 - d) Neither 1 nor 2
10. With reference to SAMARTH Udyog Bharat 4.0 consider the following statements:
 1. The project is initiated by Ministry of Heavy Industries.
 2. It's objective is to facilitate and create eco system for propagation of Industry 4.0 set of technologies in every Indian manufacturing by 2025.
 Which of the above statements is/are correct?
 - a) 1 only
 - b) 2 only
 - c) Both 1 and 2**
 - d) Neither 1 nor 2