# DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS ANALYSIS

## 20 FEBRUARY 2024

# 1 - Suggestions Made by the Vijay Raghavan Panel:

# GS II

# Government Policies and Interventions:

- **Context:**

- The government-appointed nine-member Vijay Raghavan panel has just turned in a thorough report that addresses issues with the way the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) is run.

- **Which are the Vijay Raghavan Committee's principal recommendations?**

- According to a recent Parliamentary Standing Committee (PSC) on Defence report, there are serious delays in 23 of the 55 DRDO mission mode programmes.
- According to the CAG Report (December 2022), 119 out of 178, or 67% of the projects analysed, did not follow the suggested timetables.
- Many extensions were reported, mostly because of changes in the design, delays in the user trial, and problems with the supply order.

- **Principal Suggestions Made by the Vijay Raghavan Committee:**

- Refocusing on R&D: It was proposed that the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) should go back to its initial objective of concentrating on R&D for defence.
- advised not to get involved in activities considered better suited for the private sector, such as product management, manufacturing cycles, and productization.
- Narrowing Focus and Expertise: Stressed that instead of experimenting with a variety of technologies, DRDO should pinpoint particular areas of expertise.
- questioned if DRDO's participation in drone development was necessary, arguing that knowledge should be recognised both locally and globally.
- Function of the Defence Technology Council (DTC): Promoted the crucial role of the Prime Minister-chaired DTC in selecting appropriate partners for certain defence technology.
- Defence technology development should be steered in a path determined by DTC.
- Department Creation: It was suggested that the Ministry of Defence create the Department of Defence Science, Technology, and Innovation.
- It is suggested that the proposed department serve as the Defence Technology Council secretariat.

- The goal of DRDO, the Ministry of Defence's research and development arm, is to enable India to become self-sufficient in vital defence technology while also providing it with state-of-the-art defence capabilities. It was founded in 1958 through the merger of the Directorate of Technical Development & Production and the Indian Army.

- **Which are the Principal Concerns Regarding DRDO?**

- Project Schedules and Cost Overruns: DRDO projects have a history of significantly going beyond their projected schedules and budgets.
- Important defence capabilities are delayed as a result, and questions regarding effectiveness and cost allocation are raised.
- Tejas, a light combat aircraft that took more than 30 years to construct, is one example.
- Insufficient Coherence with Armed Forces: The internal decision-making procedures of DRDO impede creativity and flexibility.
- Furthermore, it is stated that there has been difficulty in establishing requirements and implementing comments during engagement with the Armed Forces, which has left technology short of fully satisfying operational needs.
- Technology Transfer and Private Sector Integration: It is still difficult to effectively transfer DRDO-developed technologies to private sectors for mass production.
- This makes domestic defensive technology less quickly deployed and commercialised, increasing reliance on imports.
- Transparency and Public Perception: The public's limited knowledge of and perception of DRDO's accomplishments and activities results in unfavourable opinions and criticism.

- **The Way Ahead:**

- More stringent project management techniques, such as defined milestones, resource allocation, and accountability procedures, should be implemented by DRDO.
- Improved Cooperation with Armed Forces: Create specific channels for feedback and contact with Armed Forces personnel during the development phase.
- Simplified knowledge Transfer: To promote stronger public-private cooperation, establish explicit guidelines and incentives for knowledge transfer to private businesses.
- Encourage an environment that values experimentation and open innovation. To gain access to cutting-edge technology and a variety of specialised knowledge, DRDO should work with foreign partners, entrepreneurs, and academic institutions.
- Boost Public knowledge: To increase public knowledge of DRDO's contributions to national security, DRDO must proactively interact with the media, plan public outreach programmes, and share success stories.

*Source → The Hindu*

# 2 - Unruly Passenger Behaviour While in Flight:

## GS I

## Social issues:

- **Context:**

- Indian airline IndiGo has initiated the process of adding a passenger to the no-fly list. The person attacked a pilot because of erratic behaviour after the flight experienced lengthy delays because of dense fog in Delhi.
- The passenger was deemed "unruly" by the airline, and any subsequent actions will be in accordance with the Civil Aviation Regulations (CAR) on "Handling of unruly passengers," which were released by the aviation watchdog, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA).

- **What Is Disorderly Conduct?**

- Unruly behaviour encompasses a variety of behaviours, such as using drugs or alcohol and acting out, smoking, disobeying pilot instructions, utilising abusive or threatening language, acting in a physically threatening or abusive manner, purposefully interfering with crew duties, and posing a risk to aircraft safety.

- **Degrees of Unruly/Disruptive Behaviour:**

- Level 1: Rude words, aggressive body language, and disorderly intoxication.
- Level 2: Inappropriate touching, shoving, kicking, hitting, and sexual harassment are examples of physically abusive behaviour.
- Level 3: Behaviour that poses a threat to life, such as physically abusing someone or trying to enter the flight crew compartment.

- **How Do Airline Companies Handle Unruly Conduct?**

- **Reaction to Disorderly Conduct:**

- Per guidelines, the airline should advise customers that disruptive activity may result in arrest.
- The captain must evaluate the situation and, if required, make an emergency landing at the closest airport if the cabin crew is unable to manage a belligerent passenger while in flight.
- The rowdy passenger should be turned over to the relevant security agency upon landing and a FIR (First Information Report) filed with them.

- **Steps Taken Following the Incident:**

- The airline is required to report the disruptive behaviour allegation to an internal committee consisting of a retired district and sessions judge, an airline representative, and a passenger association representative.
- The internal committee will have to make a decision in less than 30 days, assign a severity to the occurrence, and decide how long the rowdy passenger will be prohibited from travelling.
- Penalties for Disorderly Conduct:
- An immediate ban of up to 30 days may be enforced by the airline.
- The DGCA keeps an up-to-date No-Fly List using information provided by airlines.
- Other airlines may also impose different-length passenger bans depending on the severity of the violation.

- **How big is the civil aviation market in India?**

- **Growth in Passenger Traffic:**

- After the US and China, India has the third-largest aviation market in the world.
- India's domestic air passenger traffic surpassed pre-pandemic levels (14.4 crore passengers in 2019) and reached a new high of 15.2 crore passengers in 2023.
- Possibility of Development:
- India's unexplored population presents a considerable growth potential for the civil aviation business. The demand for flights is anticipated to increase as more people enter the middle class and air travel becomes more widely available.

- **Governmental Programmes:**

- The UDAN (Ude Desh Ka Aam Nagrik) project, which attempts to improve regional connectivity by making air travel affordable and accessible to a wider population, is one of the measures the Indian government has taken to promote the aviation sector.
- Anticipated Growth
- The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) projects that domestic aviation traffic will increase by 5% to 15% in 2024 compared to 2023, indicating that the industry will likely continue to thrive.

- **What Are the Regulations Controlling the Disorderly Conduct?**

- **The 1937 Aircraft Rules:**

- The 1934 Aircraft Act led to the creation of the 1937 Aircraft Rules. This Act and the Indian Penal Code, 1860 were both applied to the disruptive passengers.
- This law establishes the standards for acceptable passenger behaviour.

- **The DGCA, or Directorate General of Civil Aviation:**

- The main regulatory agency that oversees civil aviation in India is the Directorate General of Civil Aviation. It is in charge of handling matters pertaining to safety, controlling air transportation services, upholding civil aviation laws, and performing other related duties.
- Additionally, it works with the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) to coordinate its operations. This body's primary responsibility is to uphold airworthiness and safety regulations.

- **Montreal Protocol 2014:**

- The Tokyo Convention of 1963 was amended by the 2014 Montreal Protocol. It focuses on the problem of disruptive behaviour aboard aeroplanes.
- By enhancing the legal framework, the treaty addresses offences and other activities that are committed on board aeroplanes.
- It establishes the jurisdiction of the state where the aircraft is registered and grants that state the power to prosecute the violators.

- **Tokyo Convention:**

- Adopted in 1963, the Tokyo Convention focuses on Offences and Certain Other Acts Committed on Board Aircraft.
- It is a global agreement that deals with illegal activity aboard commercial aircraft.
- The convention gives the aircraft commander and other pertinent authorities specific authority to handle violations that occur on board, particularly while the aircraft is in flight.

- **What Actions Are Required to Stop Unruly Behaviour?**

- **Both the 2014 Montreal Protocol and the Tokyo Convention:**

- Give ratification of international agreements, including the 2014 Montreal Protocol amending the 1963 Tokyo Convention, top priority.
- Ratification ensures consistency in legal responses by establishing a defined legal framework for handling infractions and disruptive behaviour aboard aircraft.

- **Putting CAT III-Enabled Runways into Service:**

- Airport runways equipped with Category III CAT III technology should be operationalized as soon as possible to improve their capacity to manage low visibility situations.
- Ascertain that the necessary tools and infrastructure are available to enable CAT III operations.

- **SOP issuing by DGCA:**

- Give the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) instructions to release a thorough Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) to improve passenger facilitation and communication in inclement weather.
- The SOP should include precise instructions for airlines, airports, and ground handling organisations in order to minimise passenger suffering in the case of aircraft cancellations and delays.

- **Better Protocols for Communication:**

- To ensure that passengers receive accurate and timely information on flight status and delays, airlines, airports, and passengers should establish effective communication mechanisms.
- Use contemporary means of communication to inform travellers, such as social media, SMS, and mobile apps.

- **Employee Education on Managing Unruly Passengers:**

- Provide specific training to airline employees so they can efficiently manage rowdy customers and diffuse possible confrontations.
- Educate the crew on legal guidelines and protocols for reporting and handling disruptive behaviour.

*Source → The Hindu*

# 3 - Iran, Baloch Militancy, and Pakistan:

# GS II

# International issues:

- **Context:**

- The recent use of Iranian drones and missiles against two purported bases of the Jaish al-Adl (JAA), a militant group that is anti-Iran Baloch, in Pakistan's Balochistan province has severely damaged relations between Iran and Pakistan.

- In response to the "blatant breach" of its sovereignty, Pakistan launched cross-border missile strikes against what it claimed to be terrorist havens in Iran.

- After Kulbhushan Jadhav, an Indian, was abducted, Indian security officials began to scrutinise the JAA. Jadhav is said to have been traded by the group to Pakistan's Inter Services Intelligence (ISI).

- **About Jaish al-Adl?**

- A Sunni militant organisation called Jaish al-Adl, often known as the Army of Justice, was founded in 2012. The ethnic Baluch community, who live on both sides of the Iran-Pakistan border, makes up the majority of its members.
- The group is thought to be a spinoff of Jundullah, an organisation that lost some of its clout after Iran detained numerous of its members.
- Seeking independence for Pakistan's southwest Baluchistan region and Iran's eastern Sistan province are among Jaish al-Adl's principal goals. Because of these objectives—promoting the rights of the Baluch people—the Iranian and Pakistani governments have an interest in targeting this community.
- Both in Pakistan and Iran, the ethnic Baluch group is subjected to prejudice, and there are worries about an unequal distribution of income and resources in each province. Baluch separatists and nationalists frequently turn to insurgency as a way to vent their frustrations and demand a more fair share.
- Tensions between Iran and Pakistan have arisen from the group's presence in Balochistan, especially in the border areas.
- There has long been mistrust and suspicions between the two nations about one another's sponsorship of extremist causes.

- **What is the status of the relationship between Iran and Pakistan?**

- **Prior to 1979 Alliance:**

- Before the 1979 Islamic Revolution in Iran, both countries were closely aligned to the United States and had, in 1955, joined the Baghdad Pact, subsequently known as the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO), a military alliance modeled on NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization).
- Iran gave material and weaponry support to Pakistan throughout its wars against India in 1965 and 1971.
- The Shah of Iran expressed alarm over the "disintegration" of Pakistan after the Liberation of Bangladesh.

- **Post-1979 Shift:**

- The Islamic Revolution in Iran led to the creation of an ultra-conservative Shiite dictatorship under Ayatollah Khomeini. This was concomitant with Pakistan's own Islamization under military dictator General Zia-ul-Haq.
- The two countries found themselves on opposite extremes of the sectarian divide.

- **Geopolitical Differences:**

- Iran changed from being an ally to a sworn enemy of the United States practically overnight, the Americans welcomed Pakistan closer.
- Since 1979, has been a primary basis for the Iranian suspicion of Pakistan, which increased after 09/11 when Islamabad gave unconditional support to the US "War on Terror".
- Iran's post-1979 foreign policy, which concentrated on exporting the revolution, made its Arab neighbours anxious.
- Each of these oil-rich kingdoms was essentially controlled by a small handful of families, not unlike the Shah's rule in pre-revolution Iran. Pakistan's sustained strategic links with these Arab monarchies added rough edges to its relationship with Iran.

- **Afghanistan Conflict:**

- Iran and Pakistan found themselves on different sides in Afghanistan after the Soviet exit.
- Iran helped the Northern Alliance against the Taliban, an organisation previously supported by Pakistan.
- Tensions increased after the Taliban slaughtered Persian-speaking Shia Hazaras and Iranian diplomats in Mazar-i-Sharif in 1998.

- **Attempts at Reconciliation:**

- Despite previous difficulties, both countries made measures to repair ties. Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto voiced remorse over strengthening U.S. sanctions against Iran in 1995, and Pakistan imported gas from Iran during her term.
- However, ties worsened after General Pervez Musharraf gained office in 1999.

- **What is the Balochistan Dynamics between Iran and Pakistan?**

- **Geographical and Demographic Context:**

- The Iran-Pakistan border, known as the Goldsmith Line, covers approximately 909 km from a tripoint with Afghanistan to the northern Arabian Sea.
- Roughly 9 million ethnic Baloch people live both sides of the border, residing in the Pakistani province of Balochistan, the Iranian province of Sistan and Baluchestan, and nearby portions of Afghanistan.

- **Shared Baloch Identity:**

- Baloch people possess a similar cultural, ethnic, linguistic, and religious identity that transcends the current borders imposed on the territory.
- Despite living in separate nations, the Balochs maintain deep links based on historical and cultural connections.

- **Marginalisation and Grievances:**

- The Baloch in both Iran and Pakistan have endured marginalization, feeling politically and economically remote from the dominating governments in both country.
- In Pakistan, the Baloch suffer obstacles as an ethnic minority inside a Punjabi-dominated governmental structure.
- In Iran, they are not only an ethnic minority but also a religious minority, with the majority being Sunni in a predominately Shia country.

- **Economic Disparities:**

- The Baloch homeland is rich in natural resources, but economic inequities persist. In Iran, a considerable share of the Baloch population lives under the poverty line.
- In Pakistan, despite significant expenditures in projects like China's Belt and Road Initiative, improvements in their lives have been modest.

- **Nationalist Movements:**

- Baloch nationalism has historical origins reaching back to the early 20th century when new international borders were formed in the region.
- The marginalisation of the Baloch people in both Iran and Pakistan has fostered separatist movements wanting a "Greater Balochistan" nation-state.

- **Insurgency and Cross-Border Movements:**

- Baloch insurgents operate on both sides of the Iran-Pakistan border, assaulting military and occasionally civilian objectives.
- Insurgents, connected with groups like the Baloch Liberation Army (BLA) and the Baloch Liberation Front (BLF), have been involved in military struggles against the respective states.

- **What are the Implications of Escalating Tensions Between Pakistan and Iran?**

- **Regional Stability:**

- Escalating tensions between Pakistan and Iran could add to regional instability, especially given the complicated geopolitical landscape of the Middle East and South Asia.
- The relationship between Pakistan and Iran may further fracture, damaging diplomatic, economic, and cultural connections.

- **Proxy Dynamics:**

- Both Pakistan and Iran have been accused of sponsoring proxies in regional crises. Escalations may heighten proxy dynamics, with each country trying to exert influence in the other's domestic affairs or supporting certain factions in ongoing regional wars.

- **Impact on Balochistan:**

- Balochistan could face increasing unrest. The Baloch nationalism movements might acquire pace, and there could be ramifications for the local inhabitants.
- The situation might draw in other regional actors, such as India, the United States, Saudi Arabia, or Israel, further complicating the geopolitical scene and potentially leading to a broader regional confrontation.

- **Security Concerns:**

- Escalating hostilities may heighten security concerns for nearby nations, particularly Afghanistan. The region is already suffering with security issues, and heightened tensions could exacerbate the situation.

- **Implications for India:**

- The tensions may influence India's relations with Iran, especially considering India's engagement in projects like the Chabahar port. India may find itself in a precarious diplomatic situation, balancing its connections with both Iran and the United States.

- **What is India's Stance Regarding the Faceoff Between Pakistan and Iran?**

- **Zero Tolerance Towards Terrorism:**

- India highlighted its "uncompromising position of zero tolerance towards Terrorism." This statement emphasises India's persistent stance against terrorism, aligning with its long-standing worries regarding cross-border terrorism emanating from Pakistan.

- **Understanding Actions in Self-Defense:**

- India acknowledged and expressed an awareness of "actions that countries take in their self-defence." It implies a grasp of the complex security dynamics in the region and a cautious approach to the activities taken by countries to resolve their security concerns.

- The ramifications of rising tensions between Pakistan and Iran are varied and extend beyond bilateral relations.

- The scenario has the potential to impact regional stability, security dynamics, and the broader geopolitical environment in the Middle East and South Asia.
- Diplomatic efforts and de-escalation measures will be important to manage the risks and prevent further development of the situation.
- Indians should raise the subject of Terrorism at international forums such as the United Nations (UN) and give evidence of Pakistan's participation in supporting or trading with militant groups like JAA, who captured Kulsbhushan Jadhav and dealt with the Pakistan Government.

*Source → The Hindu*

# 4 - States' Startup Ranking 2022:

# GS II

# Government Policies and Interventions:

- **Context:**

- The Ministry of Commerce and Industry finally revealed the results of the fourth edition of the Ranking of States on Support to Startup Ecosystems.

- 33 States and UTs participated in this edition of the ranking exercise, marking the greatest participation to date.
- The spirit of entrepreneurship in India was celebrated with the launch of a "National Report" that covered the entire exercise, a "Compendium of Best Practices," and unique "State Reports" for each of the participating states. 31 States and Union Territories have created State Startup Policies.

- **What is the Startup Ranking of States?**

- The government of India's Start-up India project aims to create a strong startup ecosystem in the nation to foster innovation and offer chances to aspiring business owners.
- Since 2018, the States' Start-up Ranking Exercise has been carried out by the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), which is a division of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.
- The activity is essential in helping to improve the nation's business climate for startups.

- **Goals:**

- Assist in highlighting the States' and UTs' efforts to promote the startup environment.
- Encourage competition and push the States and UTs to take initiative in their work.
- Help States and UTs find, adopt, and implement effective practices.
- Five categories are used to classify states and union territories:

- **Current state of the Indian startup scene:**

- As of October 2023, there were over a lakh recognised startups, having grown at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 120% over the previous seven years.
- In the past seven years, the number of startups has increased sixfold, and they are now present in nearly 670 districts nationwide.
- Approximately half of the acknowledged startups are situated in Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities.

- **What Steps Are Being Done to Support Startup?**

- **Scheme for Funds of Funds (FoF):**

- Established in June 2016 with a corpus of Rs. 10,000 Cr, the FoF for Startups Scheme seeks to strengthen the Indian startup ecosystem through the facilitation of access to domestic capital by distributing contributions over the 14th and 15th cycles of the Finance Commission based on implementation progress.

- **Seed Fund Scheme for Startups in India (SISF):**

- SISF offers financial assistance to startups for proof of concept, prototype development, product trials, market entry, and commercialization. It was approved for a four-year period from 2021 to 22 with a corpus of Rs. 945 Cr.

- **Startup India Investor Link:**

- Startup India Investor Connect streamlines the process for entrepreneurs to pitch their ideas to multiple investors with a single application by facilitating AI-based matchmaking to connect startups with investors.

- **Startup20: Startup India's Multilateral Partnerships:**

- Launched in 2023 during the G20 India Presidency, Startup20 is a global platform exclusively for startups, similar to B20 for large enterprises. India's Startup20 enhances its reputation as a startup hub and is currently the world's third-largest ecosystem.
- It functions as a dialogue forum where the Startup20 secretariat and G20 India Sherpa assist in interacting with G20 leaders on macroeconomic issues.

- **Additional Measures Taken in the Startup India Initiative:**

- **Startup India Innovation Week:**

- The main objective of DPIIT's Startup India Innovation Week, which is held in conjunction with National Startup Day on January 16th, is to celebrate and foster innovation by bringing together the nation's leading startups, investors, incubators, funding organisations, banks, policymakers, and other national and international stakeholders.

- **Providing guidance in the context of National Startup Awards (NSA):**

- Startup India launched this initiative to identify and honour startups and ecosystem facilitators who are developing ground-breaking products and scalable businesses with significant potential to create wealth or jobs and exhibit quantifiable social impact.

- **MAARG Online:**

- Startup India's MAARG Portal is a one-stop platform for mentorship that helps startups from a variety of backgrounds, industries, stages, and locations get help from mentors.

*Source → The Hindu*