



CURRENT AFFAIRS



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RAILWAY PROTECTION FORCE (RPF)

This article covers "Daily Current Affairs" and the topic details "Railway Protection Force (RPF)". The topic "Railway Protection Force (RPF)" has relevance in the "Internal Security" section of the UPSC CSE exam.

For Prelims:

What is Railway Protection Force (RPF)?

What is Government Railway Police?

For Mains:

GS3: Various Security Forces and their Mandates

Why in the news?

A Railway Protection Force (RPF) constable reportedly fired shots, resulting in the deaths of four individuals on a Mumbai-bound train on Monday morning, July 31st.

Railway Protection Force (RPF)

- The Railway Protection Force (RPF) is an armed entity that falls under the operational and administrative jurisdiction of the Union Ministry of Railways.
- Its primary responsibility is to safeguard and ensure the security of railway assets, passenger areas, and the well-being of passengers themselves.
- The RPF was established through the enactment of the Railway Protection Force Act in 1957 by the Parliament.
- This act was formulated to create and regulate an armed force dedicated to enhancing the protection and security of railway property, along with related matters.
- Subsequent to significant amendments made through the Railway Protection Force (Amendment) Act of 1985 (Act No. 60 of 1985), the act was enforced. The rules pertaining to this act were formally declared in 1987.
- The head of the RPF is designated as the Director-General.

Origins and Reasons for the creation of the RPF

- RPF's roots date back to the 'Watch and Ward' system of private railway companies during the British colonial era.
- By the mid-1940s, existing Watch and Ward staff controlled by private railways fell short in preventing thefts and safeguarding assets.
- A 1954 committee, overseen by the Director of Intelligence Bureau, proposed transforming Watch and Ward into an officially established entity.
- An influential committee addressing railway security emphasized passenger safety, belongings protection, and potential threats.
- Consequently, the RPF Act of 1957 was enacted, gaining strength through 1985 amendments.
- Post 1985 amendments, RPF began collaborating with other security forces and increasingly supported State Police Forces.

- In 2003, RPF's responsibilities expanded to encompass escorting passenger trains and regulating station access.

Role of the RPF and its operational scope

- At present, the RPF comprises a robust workforce of over 74,000 individuals deployed across the vast expanse of the nation.
- Its operational domain is extensive, and its tasks are significant. The RPF is tasked with safeguarding more than 6,800 railway stations, managing over 7,000 passenger trains and 4,000 goods trains daily.

Government Railway Police (GRP)

- The Government Railway Police (GRP) functions as a component of the district police force and operates under the purview of the state government.
- While the GRP collaborates with the RPF, its main focus is on crime prevention and detection within the railway environment.
- Notably, the GRP's responsibilities do not extend to safeguarding railway property, a role that falls under the jurisdiction of the Railway Protection Force.

Specific duties of the GRP

The duties of the Government Railway Police are akin to those of the District Police within their respective areas of jurisdiction.

- Maintaining order within railway stations and trains, encompassing the control of passenger traffic on platforms, in booking offices, waiting halls, entrance and exit gates, and other related areas.
- This extends to regulating vehicular and other traffic within station precincts, ensuring order in halted passenger trains, preventing overcrowding in carriages, and addressing nuisances.
- Additionally, the GRP is obligated to assist railway officers and the traveling public in alignment with their duties as police officers.
- According to the Railways website, the recent amendments in the RPF and Railways Act bring about significant implications for the GRP:
 - The GRP personnel will be able to direct their efforts towards addressing severe crimes, particularly instances of rape on trains and other offenses against women.
 - While the GRP will continue its policing responsibilities within the railway context, it will now have more dedicated time to focus on the investigation of grave criminal incidents.
 - The GRP's scope of involvement can extend to track patrolling and conducting thorough investigations in cases of sabotage, as outlined in sections 150, 151, and 152 of The Railways Act.

Aspect	Railway Protection Force (RPF)	Government Railway Police (GRP)
Administrative Jurisdiction	Falls under the operational and administrative jurisdiction of the Union Ministry of Railways.	Operates under the purview of the state government and is a component of the district police force.
Primary Responsibility	Safeguarding railway assets, passenger areas, and passenger well-being.	Focusing on crime prevention and detection within the railway environment.
Legal Establishment	Established through the Railway Protection Force Act of 1957.	Functions under the provisions of the district police and state government.
Role and Duties	Ensures security of railway property and passengers; manages station access; escorting passenger trains.	Maintains order in railway stations and trains; controls passenger and vehicular traffic; assists railway officers and public.
Involvement in Investigations	May be involved in investigations related to railway security.	Primarily focuses on crime-related investigations within railway jurisdiction.
Scope of Involvement	Extensive operational domain: safeguarding stations, managing	Akin to District Police duties within railway premises.

	passenger and goods trains.	
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Challenges to Collaboration

- **Challenges of Division:** The division of responsibilities between RPF and GRP has, at times, led to practical challenges and inconsistencies, largely stemming from the demarcation of jurisdictional boundaries and the presence of diverse police forces.
- **Jurisdictional Discontinuity:** The organization of GRP on a provincial basis can lead to disruptions in jurisdictional continuity. As a consequence, passengers might find themselves under the oversight of multiple GRP units over a short distance, introducing complexities in effective oversight.
- **Hindered Chain of Command:** The existence of state borders and the corresponding police forces creates obstacles in establishing a seamless chain of command and coordination between different security agencies operating in the railway context.
- **Coordination Challenges:** The presence of multiple security agencies, including RPF, GRP, and District Police, can potentially result in coordination challenges. These complexities may impede swift and efficient responses to railway-related crimes and incidents.
- **Passenger Predicament:** For passengers, the multiplicity of security agencies can be perplexing. The presence of various authorities raises questions about whom to approach in case of railway-related offenses, contributing to confusion and uncertainty.

Sources:

RPF man held for killing 4 on train: What is this force, and how is it different from the GRP? | Explained News – The Indian Express

Q1. With reference to Railway Protection Force (RPF), consider the following statements:

1. The Railway Protection Force (RPF) is responsible for safeguarding railway assets, passenger areas, and passenger well-being.
2. The RPF was established through the executive order of the Central Government.
3. The RPF's responsibilities expanded in 2003 to include escorting passenger trains and regulating station access.

Which of the statements given above is/are NOT correct?

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 2 only
- (d) 3 only

Answer: (c)

Q2. Consider the following:

1. The Government Railway Police (GRP) functions as a component of the district police force and operates under the purview of the state government.
2. The GRP is responsible for safeguarding railway property, which is also a role of the Railway Protection Force.
3. The GRP's scope can extend to track patrolling and conducting thorough investigations in cases of sabotage, as defined in The Railways Act.

How many of the abovementioned statements are correct ?

- (a) Only one
- (b) Only two
- (c) All three
- (d) None

Answer: (b)

Q3. Discuss the role and responsibilities of the Railway Protection Force (RPF) in safeguarding railway assets, passengers, juxtaposing with the role of Government Railway Police (GRP).

Gaurav Nikumbh

SELF-RELIANT INDIA (SRI) FUND

This article covers "Daily Current Affairs" and the topic details "Self-Reliant India (SRI) Fund". The topic "Self-Reliant India (SRI) Fund" has relevance in the Economy section of the UPSC CSE exam.

For Prelims:

About Self-Reliant India (SRI) Fund?

Status of the MSME Sector in India?

For Mains:

GS 3: Economy

Government Initiatives for the MSME Sector?

Way Forward?

Why in the news: The Self-Reliant India (SRI) Fund, amounting to Rs. 50,000 crores and overseen by the State Bank of India's private equity arm SBICAP Ventures (SVL), has made investments totaling Rs. 4,885 crores in Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) to date.

Self-Reliant India (SRI) Fund:

- The SRI Fund is a part of the Atmanirbhar Bharat package announced by the Indian government.
- It involves an allocation of Rs. 50,000 crores for equity infusion in Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs).
- The SRI Fund functions using a two-tier structure involving a mother-fund and daughter-fund arrangement for making equity or quasi-equity investments.
- The National Small Industries Corporation (NSIC) Venture Capital Fund Limited (NVCFL) is designated as the Mother Fund for implementing the SRI Fund.
- It is registered as a Category-II Alternative Investment Fund (AIF) with SEBI (Securities and Exchange Board of India).
- Objectives of the SRI Fund include providing equity funding to viable and high-potential MSMEs, fostering their growth, promoting innovation, entrepreneurship, and competitiveness, and creating an environment conducive to technological upgradation and research.



FEATURES

- Ensures availability of growth capital to the MSMEs, through equity/ equity like structured instruments
- Supports faster growth of MSME businesses, thereby igniting the economy & creating several employment opportunities.
- Encourages MSMEs in moving towards listing on the Stock Exchanges, and growing beyond the bracket of MSME.
- Supports enterprises which have the potential to graduate beyond the MSME bracket and become National/International champions.

SRI Fund contributes towards achieving India's \$5 trillion GDP target by creating a vibrant MSME ecosystem, and making Atmanirbhar Bharat

Composition of the SRI Fund:

- The SRI Fund comprises Rs. 10,000 Crore from the Government of India for equity infusion in select MSMEs.
- Additionally, Rs. 40,000 Crore is sourced through Private Equity (PE) and Venture Capital (VC) funds, leveraging private sector expertise and investment.

Status of the MSME Sector in India:

- The MSME sector contributes around 33% of India's total GDP and is predicted to contribute USD 1 trillion to India's total exports by 2028.
- It provides about 110 million jobs, accounting for 22-23% of total employment in India.
- The sector promotes entrepreneurship and innovation, fosters rural development, and supports inclusive growth and poverty reduction.
- Challenges faced by the MSME sector include outdated infrastructure, limited access to modern technology, complex regulatory environment, inadequate working capital management, and vulnerability to economic fluctuations.

Government Initiatives for the MSME Sector:

- **MSME Champions Scheme:** Comprising MSME-Sustainable (ZED), MSME-Competitive (Lean), and MSME-Innovative, this scheme provides financial assistance to enhance MSME competitiveness and innovation capabilities.
- **Infusion in Credit Guarantee Fund:** The government announced an infusion of Rs. 9,000 crore in the Credit Guarantee Fund Trust for Micro & Small Enterprises.
- **Raising and Accelerating MSME Performance (RAMP):** This initiative aims to enhance the institutions and governance of MSME programs at both the central and state levels. This initiative seeks to strengthen the existing MSME ecosystem by implementing measures that promote better governance and efficiency in supporting the growth and development of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs).
- **Amendment in Income Tax Act:** The Finance Act 2023 amended Section 43B of the Income Tax Act, 1961, to offer more favorable tax provisions for MSMEs.

Way Forward for the MSME Sector:

- **Improving Ease of Doing Business:** Continuously working towards reducing bureaucratic red tape and simplifying regulatory compliance for MSMEs.
- **Mobile Innovation Labs:** Setting up mobile innovation labs in rural areas to provide access to cutting-edge technologies, training, and mentorship to bridge the technology gap.
- **Government-Private Sector Co-Innovation Funds:** Creating co-investment funds where the government partners with private sector companies to invest in promising MSME innovations.
- **Innovation Impact Assessment:** Developing a standardized impact assessment framework to measure the societal and environmental benefits of MSME innovations and provide additional recognition and support to businesses demonstrating positive impact.
- **Access to Finance:** Facilitate easier access to formal credit and financial services for MSMEs. This can be achieved through the expansion of credit guarantee schemes, lowering collateral requirements, and promoting digital lending platforms.
- **Market Access:** Create platforms and opportunities for MSMEs to access larger markets, both domestically and internationally. This can involve supporting e-commerce platforms and facilitating participation in trade fairs and exhibitions.
- **Ease of Doing Business:** Continue to streamline regulations and compliance processes to reduce the burden on MSMEs. Simplified tax structures, faster licensing procedures, and single-window clearances can improve the ease of doing business.
- **Cluster Development:** Foster the development of MSME clusters or industrial parks, where similar businesses can co-locate and benefit from shared infrastructure, resources, and knowledge exchange.
- **Supply Chain Integration:** Encourage MSMEs to become a part of larger supply chains by partnering with larger companies and multinational corporations. This can provide access to steady demand and stable revenue streams.

According to SEBI (AIF) Regulations, 2012, Alternative Investment Funds (AIFs) are required to seek registration in one of the following three categories:

Category	Type of AIF	Investment Focus	Incentives/Concessions from Government/Regulators
Category I	Start-ups, SMEs, Government-approved sectors	Economically and socially viable sectors	May receive incentives from the government
Category II	Private Equity Funds, Debt Funds	No specific incentives or concessions	No incentives or concessions
Category III	Hedge Funds, Short-term return-focused funds	Short-term returns, Open-ended funds	No incentives or concessions

SOURCE:

<https://www.financialexpress.com/industry/sme/self-reliant-india-sri-fund-equity-infusion-in-msmes-nears-rs-5000-crore/3190674/>

Q.1 Consider the following statements

- All loans provided to Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) qualify for the priority sector.
- The MSME sector contributes approximately 40% to India's exports market.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- 1 only
- 2 only
- Both 1 and 2
- Neither 1 nor 2

ANSWER: A

Q.2 Consider the following statements regarding MSME sector in India:

- The turnover criteria for the medium-sized enterprise is up to Rs. 50 crore.
- MSMEs contribute approximately 8% of India's GDP.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- 1 only
- 2 only
- Both 1 and 2
- Neither 1 nor 2

ANSWER: A

Q.3 Discuss the major challenges faced by the MSME sector in India and suggest policy measures that the government can undertake to address these challenges and promote the sustainable growth of MSMEs.

Rishabh