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**Science
Reporter**



MK Yadav Sir

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Education Ministry asks T.N. to sign PM-SHRI MoU to get Samagra Shiksha funds

After repeated requests State responded with a modified MoU, where a key paragraph referring to the implementation of the NEP-2020 has been dropped in its entirety, says Dharmendra Pradhan

Maitri Porecha
NEW DELHI

Responding to Chief Minister M.K. Stalin's letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi seeking the release of funds under the Samagra Shiksha scheme for FY 2024-25, Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan has said that Tamil Nadu is required to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for the PM-SHRI scheme aimed at developing exemplar schools that would offer leadership to other schools in the neighbourhood.

Fund release
Mr. Pradhan said in his letter that the Centre had released all the four instalments for 2023-24,



Tamil Nadu gave an undertaking on March 15, 2024, indicating willingness to sign the PM SHRI MoU in 2024-25. After receiving the undertaking, the Ministry sent a draft MoU to Tamil Nadu.

DHARMENDRA PRADHAN,
Union Education Minister

amounting to ₹1,876 crore, under Samagra Shiksha, an integrated scheme that envisages education as a continuum from pre-school to Class XII. Further, for 2024-25, ₹4,305.66 crore had been approved for Tamil Nadu, he said.

"In September 2022, PM-SHRI was launched

with an aim to develop more than 14,500 selected schools as exemplar schools that offer leadership to other schools in the neighbourhood, showcasing all the initiatives of the National Education Policy (NEP)-2020. Every State/ Union Territory is required to sign an MoU with the Mi-

nistry of Education, and so far, 32 States/Union Territories have signed [the MoU] and have been onboarded on the scheme's platform," he said.

He said that the Ministry had made repeated requests to Tamil Nadu to sign the MoU since September 2022. "Tamil Nadu gave an undertaking on March 15, 2024, indicating willingness to sign the PM-SHRI MoU in 2024-25. After receiving the undertaking, the Ministry of Education sent a draft MoU to Tamil Nadu. However, I was surprised to see that the State responded with a modified MoU, vide letter dated July 6, where a key paragraph referring to the implementation of the NEP-2020 has been dropped in its entirety," he said.

Samagra Shiksha Scheme

- **About:** It is an integrated scheme aimed at providing education from pre-primary to senior secondary (up to class 12th) levels.
- **Funding:** It operates as a Centrally Sponsored Scheme.
- **Aim:** To universalize access to school education across India, ensuring no child is left out of the education system.
 - It seeks to promote equity by including disadvantaged groups and weaker sections, ensuring educational opportunities are accessible to all.

Context: In response to Tamil Nadu Chief Minister's request for the release of Samagra Shiksha Scheme funds for 2024-25, Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan stated that Tamil Nadu must sign an MoU for the PM-SHRI scheme, which focuses on developing model schools to lead neighboring institutions.

PM SHRI Scheme

- **Aim:** To transform existing government schools into model schools that offer high-quality education within an inclusive, equitable, catering to the diverse backgrounds, multilingual needs, and varying academic abilities of children.
- **Launched:** September 2022
- **Duration:** From 2022-23 to 2026-27
- **Funding:** The scheme is structured as a Centrally sponsored program.
- **Objective:** This funding will facilitate the transformation of nearly 14,500 schools nationwide, aligning them with the components outlined in the National Education Policy of 2020.
- **Five States:** Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Delhi, Punjab and West Bengal are yet to sign the MoU.
- These schools will also serve as role models and provide mentorship to neighboring educational institutions.
- **Monitoring Progress:** A 'School Quality Assessment Framework' is currently under development to assess and monitor the progress and performance of these schools.

TN TO NATIONALISE KARUNANIDHI'S WORKS: WHAT THIS MEANS

AJOY SINHA KARPURAM
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 30

THE TAMIL Nadu government, last week, announced that the collected works of former Chief Minister M Karunanidhi would be "nationalised" — making them freely available for the public to publish, translate and adapt. Here is how this works.

Copyright laws

Under the Copyright Act, 1957, an author has a bundle of legal rights including the right to reproduce, issue copies, perform, adapt, or translate the work in question. Upon the death of the author, the ownership of the copyright falls to her legal heirs.

Section 18 of the Act allows a copyright owner to "assign" the copyright "wholly or partially" to anyone she pleases, in return for compensation. A copyright for any literary, dramatic, musical or artistic work remains in place until 60 years after the original author's death. After this, the work enters the "public domain", meaning can be used freely without permission from the former copyright owners.

Nationalisation of copyright

In 2001, the Tamil Nadu government established the Tamil Virtual Academy (TVA) to provide online education in Tamil language. The TVA has a scheme in which it collaborates with legal heirs of original copyrights to make them assign the rights to specific works to the state government.

According to the TVA, all books nationalised by the Tamil Nadu government would be released in the public domain under a CCO 1.0 Universal Public Domain Dedication license. According to the creative commons website, this means "You



Kalaingar Karunanidhi was a prolific poetic. Express

can copy, modify, distribute and perform the work, even for commercial purposes, all without asking permission".

The Tamil Nadu government has, till date, nationalised the works of 179 Tamil scholars, and has paid Rs 1442 crore in royalties to their heirs, the government said.

Case of Ambedkar's works

Prakash Ambedkar, the grandson of Dr B R Ambedkar, granted the copyright for Dr Ambedkar's works to the Maharashtra government in the 1960s. In 1976, the state government established the Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar Source Material Publication Committee which published the first volume of Dr Ambedkar's works in 1979. As of today, 23 volumes containing the collected works of Dr Ambedkar are available in the public domain.

In 2016, Prakash refused to give permission for republishing these works to the Centre. He claimed that the copyright had not lapsed as the first volume of Dr Ambedkar's works was only published in 1979. The Centre countered saying since 60 years had passed since Dr Ambedkar's death, the copyright had indeed lapsed. The Centre published Dr Ambedkar's works in 2018, ignoring his grandson's claims.

COPYRIGHT LAWS (Syllabus GS Paper 3 – S&T)

Context: The Tamil Nadu government announced the "nationalization" of former Chief Minister M. Karunanidhi's collected works, making them freely available for public publication, translation, and adaptation. Here's how this initiative will be implemented.

Copyright Laws

- **Copyright meaning:** Copyright is the legal right given to an intellectual property owner. Copyright law grants the original creators of the product an exclusive right to use it further or duplicate the product for a specific time.
 - The Indian Copyright Act protects the creator's work by law until 60 years.
- **Copyright Act, 1957:** Under this act, an author has a bundle of legal rights including the right to reproduce, issue copies, perform, adapt, or translate the work in question.
- **Copyright Ownership:** Upon the author's death, the ownership of the copyright passes to the legal heirs.
- **Section 18 of the Copyright Act:** It allows a copyright owner to assign the copyright, wholly or partially, to any person in exchange for compensation.
- **Duration of Copyright Protection:** Copyright for literary, dramatic, musical, or artistic works remains effective for 60 years after the original author's death. After this period, the work enters the public domain.

Nationalisation of Copyright

- **Establishment of Tamil Virtual Academy (TVA):** The Tamil Nadu government established the Tamil Virtual Academy (TVA) in 2001 to provide online education in Tamil language.
- **TVA's Collaboration:** It collaborates with the legal heirs of original copyright owners to facilitate the assignment of rights to specific works to the state government.
- **Public Domain:** The Tamil Nadu government releases nationalized works into the public domain under a CCO 1.0 Universal Public Domain Dedication license, allowing unrestricted use of the works.
- **Nationalization of Tamil Scholars' Works:** To date, the Tamil Nadu government has nationalized the works of 179 Tamil scholars and paid Rs 14.42 crore in royalties to their heirs.

Vulture Count 2024: WWF–India launches tracking initiative to take stock of nature's 'sanitation workers'

Context: WWF-India has launched an initiative "Vulture Count 2024" that involves counting of vultures and raising awareness on the critically endangered bird species.

Vulture Count 2024

- **About:** It represents a significant opportunity for citizen scientists, bird enthusiasts and local communities to contribute to vulture conservation and to increase awareness about them
- **Aim:** To address this crisis by systematically monitoring vulture populations. Gathering comprehensive baseline data will help track population trends, identify critical habitats, and assess the impact of environmental changes.
- It follows the success of similar counts conducted in previous years.
- **Continuity and Growth:** Builds on the success of previous vulture counts, enhancing data collection and conservation efforts.
- **International Awareness Alignment:** Timed to coincide with International Vulture Awareness Day, raising global consciousness about vulture conservation.
- **Diverse Focus:** Covers multiple vulture species, including the white-rumped, red-headed, and Indian vultures, among others.
- **Public Participation:** WWF-India has suggested several accessible locations for public involvement, encouraging broader community engagement.

Vultures in India

- **9 species:** India is home to 9 species of Vulture namely the Oriental white-backed, Long-billed, Slender-billed, Himalayan, Red-headed, Egyptian, Bearded, Cinereous and the Eurasian Griffon.
- **Conservation status:** Bearded, Long-billed, Slender-billed, Oriental white-backed are protected in the Schedule-1 of the Wildlife Protection Act 1972.
 - Rest are protected under 'Schedule IV'.
- **IUCN Status**
 - **Critically Endangered:** Oriental White-backed Vulture, Long-billed Vulture, Slender-billed Vulture and Red-headed Vulture.
 - **Endangered:** Egyptian Vulture.
 - **Near Threatened:** Himalayan Vulture, Cinereous Vulture and Bearded Vulture.
 - **Least Concern:** Eurasian Griffon.
 - **Threats:** Poisoning from diclofenac, Loss of Natural Habitats, Food Dearth and Contamination and Electrocution by Power lines.

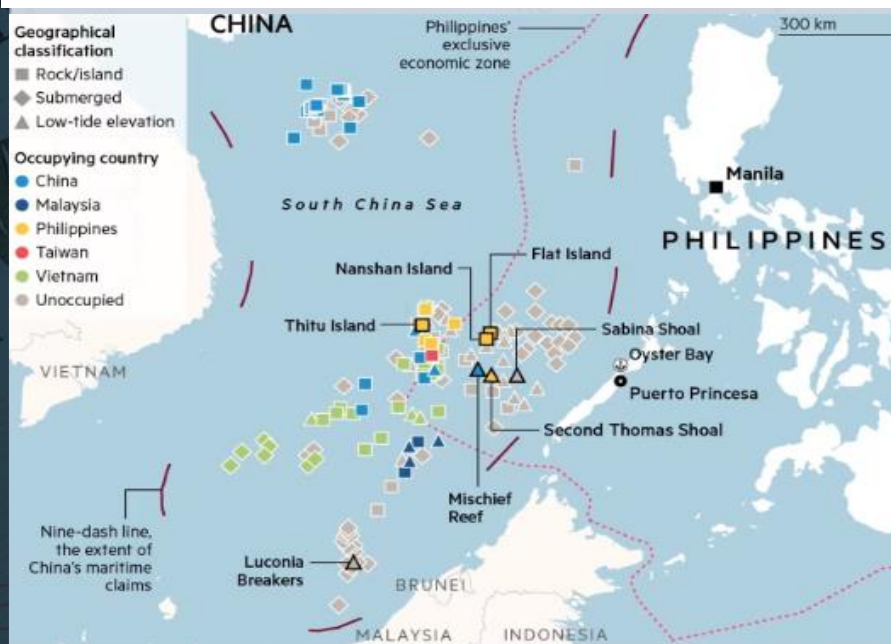
Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya Launches Retired Sportsperson Empowerment Training (RESET) Programme

Context: On National Sports Day in New Delhi, the Union Minister of Youth Affairs & Sports and Labour & Employment launched the "Retired Sportsperson Empowerment Training" (RESET) Programme.

RESET Programme

- **Purpose:** It is designed to empower retired athletes who have brought national recognition to the country by providing career development support.
- **Objective:** This initiative aims to support and empower retired athletes through specialized training.
- **Career Development:** The programme aims to equip retired athletes with knowledge and skills to enhance their employability and career prospects.
- **Recognition of Expertise:** RESET represents a significant effort to acknowledge and leverage the experience and expertise of retired athletes.
- **Athlete Requirements:** Applicants must be retired athletes aged 20-50, who have earned International Medals, participated in international events, or achieved National/State-level recognition in sports.
- **Programme Levels:** Courses will be available at two levels based on educational qualifications: Class 12th and above, and Class 11th and below.
- **Pilot Phase:** The Lakshmibai National Institute of Physical Education (LNIPE) will lead the implementation of the RESET Programme during its pilot phase.
- **Learning Mode:** The programme will be delivered in a hybrid mode, combining self-paced learning through a dedicated portal with on-ground training and internships.
- **Practical Experience:** Internships will be provided in sports organizations, training camps, and leagues, with additional placement assistance and entrepreneurial guidance offered upon course completion.

China publishes first survey report of disputed South China Sea's Sabina Shoal



Context: China's natural resource ministry has just released its inaugural survey report on the Sabina Shoal, a disputed area in the South China Sea. This marks the first official assessment of the region's natural resources.

Sabina Shoal

- **About:** Sabina Shoal, also known as Xianbin Reef, is an oceanic coral atoll on a seamount in the eastern Spratlys Islands in the South China Sea.
- **Geographic Location:** It is situated approximately 75 nautical miles from Palawan, Philippines.
- **Territorial Claims:**
 - **Philippine EEZ:** Under the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, Sabina Shoal falls within the Philippines' 200-nautical mile exclusive economic zone (EEZ).
 - **Chinese Claims:** China claims the shoal and much of the South China Sea as its sovereign territory, maintaining a continuous presence there. It is 630 nautical miles from China.
- **Physical Characteristics:**
 - **Dimensions:** The shoal extends about 23 km along its northwest-southeast axis.
 - **Particulars:** It consists of two main parts connected by a narrow section: the larger western part is 13 km long and 6 km wide, while the eastern part measures 10 km by 3 km.
 - **Lagoon and Coral Ring:** Both parts feature a central lagoon surrounded by a coral ring with discontinuous shallow sections.

South China Sea

- **About:** It is one of the world's busiest waterways and plays a crucial role in global trade and merchant shipping.
- **Location:** The South China Sea is a marginal sea of the Western Pacific Ocean.

WWA study links devastating typhoon Gaemi to climate change, warns of future storm intensification

Context: A new study by World Weather Attribution (WWA) has linked the devastating Typhoon Gaemi, which swept through the Philippines, Taiwan and China in July 2024, to global climate change.

World Weather Attribution (WWA) Group

- **About:** It is a global alliance of climate researchers who swiftly assess extreme weather incidents to ascertain climate change's potential influence.
- **Founded:** It was formed in 2015 by Dr Geert Jan van Oldenborgh and Dr Friederike Otto.
- **Objective:** To offer timely and scientifically rigorous data regarding the correlation between extreme weather events and climate change.
- **Partnership of:** Environmental Change Institute, University of Oxford (ECI) Royal Netherlands Meteorological Institute (KNMI) Laboratoire des Sciences du Climat et de l'Environnement (LSCE).

Key Points of Study

- **Temperature Rise:** Fossil fuel combustion has increased global temperatures by 1.2°C, contributing to climate change effects like extreme rainfall.
- **Regional Changes:** Rainfall in Hunan and Taiwan has increased by 9% and 14% respectively due to climate change.
- **Probability Increase:** The chance of heavy rainfall in Hunan and Taiwan has risen by 60% due to rising global temperatures.
- **Projected Frequency:** A 2°C rise in global temperatures could make devastating typhoon rainfall events 30-50% more frequent in these regions.
- **Severe Effects:** Typhoon Gaemi brought high wind speeds and extreme rainfall, leading to widespread damage and significant loss of life.

Sex Ratio Dips, But Cases Under Sex Determination Act Also Low

Major Genetic Labs Only Collect Samples, Strict Norm Enforcement Sought

Amrita Jainwal@timesofindia.com

New Delhi: Despite the worrying trend of a declining sex ratio at birth in Delhi from 929 females in 2022 to 922 in 2023, for every 1,000 males, only 19 cases were registered under the "Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (Regulation and Prevention of Misuse) Act, 1994" in the past three years. The capital's sex ratio is below the national average of 940 females for 1,000 men as per the latest census.

Currently, Delhi has 1,777 health facilities registered under the Act. In an effort to strengthen the law's implementation, the health department is considering expanding the registration to include pathological laboratories offering non-invasive prenatal testing (NIFT) and other genetic tests. NIFT is a screening test performed during pregnancy to assess the risk of chromosomal disorders like Down syndrome in the fetus, and it can also determine the fetus's sex.

Officials noted that Delhi lacks a clinical establishment act under which pathological labs are regulated. Pathological labs conducting NIFT are now required to register under the PCPNDT Act; otherwise, they will be prohibited

WORRYING TREND

Sex ratio of females in Delhi (per 1,000 males)

Year	Sex Ratio
2021	932
2022	929
2023	922

National average as per latest census (940)

Court cases registered under PCPNDT Act (last 3 years)

Year	Cases
2021	19
2022	19
2023	100

Ultrasonography machines sealed/seized

Year	Machines
2021-22	51
2022-23	19
2023-24	23

Total health facilities registered under the Act

Year	Facilities
2021-22	1,777
2022-23	1,777
2023-24	1,777

from performing the test. "We have registered an FIR against one lab which was conducting this test without registration in the financial year 2021-22," stated an official.

Though genetic labs that detect genetic abnormalities or disorders must register under the PCPNDT Act, the issue lies in the fact that major genetic labs are located outside Delhi, with only their sample collection centres within the city.

To address this, the health department issued a circular last year requiring these labs to establish their centres within Delhi's jurisdiction to facilitate the monitoring of sex determination practices.

Dr Jugal Kishore, head of the community medicine department at Safdarjung Hospital, has raised serious concerns regarding the decline in number of females against males. He suggested that after the Covid pandemic, while labourers returned homes, females might not have accompanied males due to uncertainty about potential causes of increased selective female foeticides and sex detection followed by abortion could be the laxity of the implementation agency of the PNDT Act.

According to Dr (Prof) Nee-

lan Roy, head of community medicine at Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital, multiple factors contribute to the declining sex ratio. Despite being an educated city, there is still a cultural preference for male children over female ones, possibly influenced by traditional beliefs that value sons for carrying on the family name and providing economic support. Furthermore, there is a growing trend of single-child families due to late marriages and other reasons.

Although laws and acts exist to address this issue, there is a need for strict implementation and enforcement to prohibit sex-selective abortion and the misuse of sex-determination technologies. It is crucial to ensure that these measures are effectively put into practice to combat the declining sex ratio in the population.

He further said that on Aug 24, a training session was held at Delhi Judicial Academy for judicial officers, prosecutors and investigation officers to familiarise them with the various provisions of the PCPNDT Act, enabling effective trials, proper disposal and timely convictions of the accused. To raise community awareness about the importance of the girl child, various programmes are held annually, with plans for more such activities in the future.

TIMES Special

PC & PNDT ACT 1994

(Syllabus: GS Paper 2 – Social Issue)

Context: Despite Delhi's sex ratio at birth declining from 929 females per 1,000 males in 2022 to 922 in 2023, only 19 cases were registered under the "Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (Regulation and Prevention of Misuse) Act, 1994" in the past three years.

Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (Regulation and Prevention of Misuse) Act, 1994

- **About:** It is a law for the prohibition of sex selection leading to female foeticide.
- It aimed at stopping female foeticides and improving the declining sex ratio by banning prenatal sex determination.
- **Objectives:** The act seeks to prohibit sex selection before and after conception and to prevent the misuse of prenatal diagnostic techniques for sex-selective abortions.
- **Provisions:**
 - **Regulation of Techniques:** The act regulates the use of pre-natal diagnostic techniques, such as ultrasound, restricting their use to detecting genetic and congenital disorders.
 - **Sex Determination Ban:** No laboratory, clinic, or center can conduct tests, including ultrasonography, for determining the sex of the fetus.
 - **Communication Restrictions:** No one, including those conducting procedures as per the law, can communicate the fetus's sex to the pregnant woman or her relatives by any means.
 - **Advertising Restrictions:** Advertisements promoting pre-natal and pre-conception sex determination are punishable with up to three years of imprisonment and a fine of Rs. 10,000.

Offences Under the Act Include:

- **Aiding Prenatal Diagnostic Techniques:** Operating or assisting in prenatal diagnostic techniques in unregistered facilities is an offense under the act.
- **Prohibition of Sex-Selection:** Sex selection for either gender is considered a punishable offense.
- **Sex-Detection Equipment:** The sale, distribution, or use of equipment that facilitates sex-detection of the fetus, such as ultrasound machines, is prohibited and punishable under the act.

India's second nuclear sub

Induction of *INS Arighat*, India's second nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarine of the Arihant class, significantly boosts India's nuclear deterrence capabilities, and strengthens its nuclear triad

AMRITANAYAK DUTTA
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 30

INDIA'S SECOND nuclear submarine, the *Arihant*, was commissioned into the Indian Navy on Thursday at Visakhapatnam. The submarine has undergone extensive trials over the last few months.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said at the commissioning ceremony that the *Arihant*-class submarine will "further strengthen India's nuclear triad, enhance nuclear deterrence, help in establishing strategic balance and peace in the region, and play a decisive role in the security of the country."

Meet *Arihant*...

The 6,000-tonne *INS Arighat* will join its predecessor, the nuclear submarine *INS Arihant*, as a key component of the India's nuclear triad, which refers to a country's ability to launch nuclear missiles from platforms in the air, land, and at sea.

India is part of a select group of countries with nuclear triad capabilities. These include the United States, Russia, China, and France. The induction of *INS Arighat* into the Navy in 2016 provided India with maritime strike capability for the first time.

The commissioning of *INS Arighat* will enhance the Navy's nuclear strike capability. The nuclear-capable Agni-2, Agni-4, and Agni-5 missiles can be launched from land, and fighter aircraft of the Indian Air Force such as the Rafale, Su-30MKI, and Mirage 2000s can deliver nuclear warheads.

The nuclear-propelled *Arihant* will be armed with indigenously built K-15 missiles, with a range of more than 700 km. Like *Arihant*, *Arighat* is powered by 83 MW pressurised light-water nuclear reactors, which allow it to remain submerged and undetected for much longer than conventional diesel-electric submarines.

Under its "No first-use" policy, India is committed to using nuclear weapons only for deterrence and retaliation. With its ability to survive a nuclear attack and then launch retaliatory strike, nuclear subs are as very strong deterrent.

INS Arihant

- **About:** It is the lead ship of India's *Arihant* class of nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarines.
 - The 6,000 tonne vessel was built under the Advanced Technology Vessel (ATV) project at the Ship Building Centre in the port city of Visakhapatnam.
- **Commissioned:** It was commissioned in August 2016, and deployed operationally in 2018.



Note: The specifications of India's Arihant class submarines are classified. This conceptual drawing is an approximation. Wikimedia Commons

The *Arihant* is significantly more technologically advanced than the *Arihant*, the Ministry of Defence said in a statement. The construction of *Arighat* involved advanced design and manufacturing technology, detailed research and development, utilisation of special materials, complex engineering, and highly skilled workmanship, the statement said.

It has the distinction of having the indigenous systems and equipment which were conceptualised, designed, manufactured and integrated by Indian scientists, industry, and naval personnel," it said.

launched ballistic missile (SLBM) in the Bay of Bengal by *Arihant*.

Navy's submarines

Two nuclear ballistic submarines (SSBNs) larger than *Arihant* and *Arighat*, of around 7,000-tonne displacement, are currently being built. The first of these two subs is said to have been launched in 2021, and is awaiting commissioning pending trials and tests; the second is in the works as part of a separate classified project.

In comparison, the United States has 14 Ohio-class SSBNs and 53 fast-attack submarines. China has 12 nuclear submarines, of which six are nuclear-powered attack submarines.

The Indian Navy also has 16 conventional submarines in service — seven Kilo (Sindhughosh) class, four Shishumar class, and five French Scorpene (Kalar) class attack submarines.

India procured the USSR-developed, diesel electric Kilo-class submarines from the mid-1980s onward. These boats have a lifespan of around 30 years and can serve for somewhat longer after retrofitting with modern devices.

The Shishumar class submarines, developed by the German yard Howaldtswerke-Deutsche Werft (HDW) and subsequently built in India, were commissioned from the 1980s onward.

The Kalar class submarines were built at India's Mazagon Dock in partnership with France's Naval Group. The first of these submarines, *INS Kalar*, was commissioned in 2017, followed by several others.

To carry out its full spectrum of operations, the Navy has authorised to have 18 submarines, a milestone that has been achieved with the commissioning of *INS Arighat*. However, at any time, around 10 per cent of the fleet is under refit (repair and renovation), which brings down the strength of operational submarines.

The Navy has gone for medium refit and life certification, which includes all major repairs and replacements on a ship. This has been done to extend the lives of some of the aging subs until the new boats come in.

INS ARIGHAAT

(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 – Sci and Tech)

Context: The country's second nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarine, *INS Arighat*, was inducted into the Indian Navy.

INS Arighaat

- **About:** It is India's **second indigenously** built nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarine, following **INS Arihant, commissioned in 2018.**
- **Features:**
 - **More advanced:** The *INS Arighat* is "**significantly more advanced**" than its predecessor, *INS Arihant*, due to the indigenous technological advancements incorporated into it.
 - **Indigenous systems and equipment:** *INS Arighat*'s construction involved advanced design and manufacturing technology, extensive research and development, the use of specialised materials, complex engineering, and highly skilled workmanship.
 - **Secret ship-building centre:** The commissioning of the nearly 112-metre-long submarine reportedly took place at the highly secretive ship-building centre in Visakhapatnam.
 - **Enhanced endurance:** Both the *INS Arihant* and the *INS Arighat* are powered by 83 MW pressurised light-water nuclear reactors, enabling them to remain submerged for longer durations compared to conventional diesel-electric submarines, which need to surface regularly to charge their batteries.
 - **Armed with nuclear-tipped missiles:** Like its predecessor, the *INS Arighat* has four launch tubes in its hump. It can carry up to 12 K-15 Sagarika submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs), each with a range of 750 kilometres (km), or four K-4 SLBMs with a range of 3,500 km.
 - **Speed and size:** The *INS Arighat*, with a displacement of around 6,000 tonnes, is reportedly capable of achieving a maximum speed of 12-15 knots (22-28 km/h) on the surface and up to 24 knots (44 km/h) when submerged.
 - **'Destroyer of the Enemy':** Although more advanced than its predecessor, the *INS Arighat* belongs to the *Arihant* class of submarines, with the name of the class derived from the Sanskrit term meaning 'Destroyer of the Enemy'.
 - **Role in Nuclear Triad:** It is a critical component of India's nuclear triad, allowing nuclear missile launches from land, air, and sea.

LGBTQIA+ couples can open joint bank accounts: Centre

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Persons from the LGBTQIA+ community cannot be prevented from opening joint bank accounts with their partners, the Union government said in an advisory this week, making it clear that they can also nominate each other as beneficiaries.

This comes nearly a year after the Supreme Court asked the Union government to consider providing equal entitlements to LGBTQIA+ couples, in a judgement that refused to recognise same-sex marriage. The top court, in the October 2023 judgment, directed the government to consider enabling LGBTQIA+ couples to be able to open joint bank accounts and nominate each other in case of death.

The August 28 advisory was issued by the Department of Financial Services as a "clarification" in connection with judgment. "There are no restrictions for persons of the Queer community to open a joint bank account and also to nominate a person in queer relationship as a nominee to receive the balance in the account, in the event of death of the account holder," it said, adding that the Reserve Bank

This comes nearly a year after the SC asked the Centre to consider providing equal entitlements to LGBTQIA+ couples

of India had also issued a clarification on this matter to all scheduled commercial banks on August 21.

Some private banks had already been enabling LGBTQIA+ couples to open joint bank accounts, even before the judgment. In a statement, Axis Bank welcomed the advisory, saying it "seamlessly aligned" with its inclusive banking initiative, which has let LGBTQIA+ persons in same-sex relationships nominate each other as beneficiaries and open joint bank accounts since September 2021.

In April, the government set up a six-member committee to define and elucidate "the scope of the entitlements of queer couples who are in unions", in accordance with its submission to the top court.

The panel held its first meeting on May 21, the Social Justice Ministry told Parliament. A sub-committee meeting was held on May 31, and the first round of stakeholder consultations was held on July 25.

Context: The Union government has clarified in a recent advisory that individuals from the LGBTQIA+ community and those in queer relationships are permitted to open joint bank accounts and nominate each other as beneficiaries.

LGBTQIA+ COMMUNITY (Syllabus: GS Paper 1 – Indian Society)

LGBTIQ+ Community

- **About:** LGBTIQ+ is an acronym for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Intersex and Queer.
- They are the individuals who do not identify with the cisgender heterosexual "ideals".
- **Protection Under The Constitution:**
 - **Article 14, 15, and 16:** Prohibit discrimination on grounds of sex, which the Supreme Court has extended to include sexual orientation, protecting LGBT individuals from discrimination based on their sexual orientation.
 - **Article 21:** Guarantees rights to life, dignity, and privacy, including the right to choose one's gender and practice one's sexual orientation, as interpreted by the Supreme Court.
- **Transgender Rights In India**
 - **Right to Vote:** Recognized since 1996, allowing transgender individuals to participate in elections.
 - **National Legal Services Authority (NLSA) v. Union of India (2014):** A landmark Supreme Court ruling that recognized transgender persons as the 'third gender,' entitling them to reservations in government jobs and education, and affirmed their fundamental right to gender change.
 - **The Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019:** Defines a "Transgender person" as one whose gender identity does not align with their gender assigned at birth, including various identities such as trans-man, trans-woman, intersex, genderqueer, and others, without requiring sex reassignment surgery or hormone therapy.
 - **Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Rules, 2020:** Formulated to ensure equality in education, employment, and access to public spaces for transgender persons.

Schemes for LGBTQ

- **SMILE (Support for Marginalized Individuals for Livelihood and Enterprise):** Focus on rehabilitation, access to medical facilities, counselling services, assistance with basic documentation, educational opportunities, and skill development programs.
- **Garima Greh Scheme:** The establishment of shelter homes specifically designed to support destitute and vulnerable transgender persons.
- **SWEEKRUTI:** To ensure equitable justice for transgender persons and create an enabling environment for equal opportunities, social justice, and empowerment of transgender persons.

Centre launches portal to register and monitor sexual harassment complaints of women at workplace

Context: The centre government launched a centralized platform She-Box portal for registering and monitoring complaints of sexual harassment of women at the workplace.

She-Box Portal

- **About:** It serves as a centralized repository of information related to Internal Committees (ICs) and Local Committees (LCs) formed across the country, encompassing both the government and private sectors.
- **Launched by:** Women and Child Development Minister
- **Features:**
 - **Common Platform for Complaints:** It offers a common platform to file complaints, track their status, and ensure time-bound processing of complaints by ICs, said the WCD ministry.
 - **Real-Time Monitoring:** The platform provides assured redressal of complaints and a streamlined process for all stakeholders. Through a designated nodal officer, it enables real-time monitoring of complaints.
 - **Women's Workforce Participation:** The step was taken to enhance women's participation in the workforce and ensure that workplaces are safe and secure, enabling women to thrive and succeed.
 - **Critical Initiative for Workplace Safety:** This initiative is a critical step forward in providing a more efficient and secure platform for addressing workplace-related sexual harassment complaints. It furthers the government's commitment to creating a safer and more inclusive working environment for women across India.
 - **Protection Under Sexual Harassment Act 2013:** The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition, and Redressal) Act, 2013, serves to protect women from sexual harassment in the workplace and address their grievances.
 - **She-Box Portal Development:** In line with this commitment, the new She-Box portal represents a significant step forward in addressing and managing complaints of workplace sexual harassment.
 - **Enhancing Digital Brand Presence:** The website aims to establish a cohesive visual identity across digital platforms, enhancing the government's engagement with national and global audiences.
 - **Importance of Digital Presence:** As digital platforms become the primary point of contact for citizens, maintaining a strong and compelling brand presence is essential.

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