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Panel finalising its report on OBC sub-categorisation

Abhinav Lakshman
NEW DELHI

After more than five years of its formation, the commission for the sub-categorisation of the Other Backward Classes (OBC) is now in the final stages of finishing its task of coming up with a formula to further classify the nearly 3,000 caste groups and preparing a report on it, according to multiple officials aware of the developments.

The five-member commission, headed by Justice G. Rohini (ret'd), was constituted in October 2017 and was initially given 12 weeks to submit its report to the President of India. Since then, the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment has extended the deadline more than 10 times, first citing the additional time required by the commission to gather information and data and then the pandemic.

The latest deadline for the commission has been set for January 31, 2023.

Distributing quotas

The commission has been having a back-and-forth with the Union government over the past few years and is finalising the "sensitive work" of distributing quotas within the OBC groups, multiple

It is tasked with coming up with a formula to further classify nearly 3,000 caste groups

members told *The Hindu*. "We have had to undertake a monumental task over the past few years and expect to submit the entire report before the next deadline expires," one of them added. In addition to recommending a formula that distributed the quota available to OBCs equitably among the caste groups, the commission was also tasked with identifying which caste groups would get what share of the 27% reservation pie.

For this, the commission has undertaken a large-scale exercise to determine which of the caste groups are the dominant ones and which are routinely pushed out of getting benefits.

According to the sources, the considerations made by the commission included dividing up the nearly 3,000 caste groups into four broad categories, with the maximum share available to those that are historically crowded out by the dominant groups. Officials have expressed concerns over how this report should be made public.

ROHINI COMMISSION

(Syllabus: GS Paper 2 - Polity & Governance)

Context: After more than five years of its formation, the Rohini commission for the sub-categorisation of the Other Backward Classes (OBC) is now in the final stages of finishing its task.

Rohini commission

- **About:** Constituted under article 340 of the Indian constitution to check on the issue of Sub Categorization within Other Backward Classes (OBCs) in the Central List.
- **Origin:** The **five-member commission**, headed by Justice G. Rohini (ret'd), was constituted in October 2017 and was initially given 12 weeks to submit its report to the President of India.
 - Union Government has **extended the term of the Justice Rohini Commission until January 31, 2023**, to submit its report on the Sub-Categorization of OBCs. This is the 13th extension in a row.
- **Objectives:** It was appointed to examine the issues on sub-categorization of Other Backward Castes with reference to the following aspects:
 - To **study the extent of inequitable distribution of benefits** of reservation among the castes listed in the broad category of OBC with reference to such classes included in the Central list.
 - To **devise the parameters, criteria, norms, and mechanisms** in a scientific approach for sub-categorization within Other Backward Classes.
 - To **initiate the task of identifying respective classes, communities, sub-castes, or synonyms** from the Central List of Other Backward Classes and categorizing them into respective sub-categories.
- **Findings and Recommendations:** The Commission has **proposed a four-category formula for the equitable redistribution** of the 27% quota for Other Backward Classes.
 - It has proposed a division of 2, 633 OBC castes in the Central list into four subcategories 1,2,3, and 4 to split the 27% OBC quota reservation.
 - **Category 1:** Category 1 includes 1,674 groups, largely the most disadvantaged groups to receive 2% reservation.
 - **Category 2:** consists of 534 caste groups with a 6% quota reservation
 - **Category 3:** includes 328 caste groups and 9% reservation
 - **Category 4:** comprises 97 caste groups with 10 % reservation
 - The sub-categorization **would ensure that though Category 4 receives the major share**, that is, 10 percent of reservation, other categories will also be guaranteed a share.
 - It also **recommended complete digitisation** of all OBC records and a standardised system of issuing OBC certificates.

'Infra recognition key point in FBIL dispute'

RBI in talks, can find solution, says deputy governor

BHASKAR DUTTA

Mumbai, 5 December

After having recently said the gaze of developed economies is now on Financial Benchmarks of India (FBIL), Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Deputy Governor T Rabi Sankar has said the issue is recognising the financial infrastructure of the domestic agency. This comes after the derecognition by the European Securities and Markets Authority (ESMA) of Clearing Corporation of India (CCIL).

"The legal requirements of recognition of infrastructure—financial infrastructure—extend to FBIL because it is doing benchmarks. A similar sort of exercise (similar to the ESMA's de-recognition of CCIL) is going on in FBIL as well. Which is why the point has been raised," Rabi Sankar said on the sidelines of an event organised by the Indian Banks' Association on Saturday. CCIL hosts the trading platform for government bonds and overnight indexed swaps (OIS). The move by the European regulators likely came after the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) declined to permit the rights of audit and inspection over CCIL.

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WHAT IS FBIL?

- In June 2013, RBI set up a committee on financial benchmarks
- In 2014, RBI identified FIMMDA, FEDAI as benchmark administrators for interest rate and forex
- FIMMDA, FEDAI & IBA formed a separate entity to administer benchmarks, leading to formation of FBIL in Dec 2014
- FBIL develops and administers benchmarks for money markets, G-Secs and foreign exchange
- Benchmarks include MIBOR, MIFOR, and rupee's reference rate versus 4 currencies
- FBIL reference rate is used for rupee offshore settlements
- Overseas regulators' over-reach on FBIL stands to severely affect India's foreign exchange market



FINANCIAL BENCHMARKS OF INDIA

(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 - Economy)

Context: After having recently said the gaze of developed economies is now on **Financial Benchmarks of India (FBIL)**, Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Deputy Governor has said the issue is recognising the financial infrastructure of the domestic agency.

Financial Benchmarks of India (FBIL)

- **About:** FBIL, owned by the **Fixed Income Money Markets and Derivatives Association**, the Foreign Exchange Dealers' Association of India, and the Indian Banks' Association, was formed in December 2014.
- **Origin:** In June 2013, RBI set up **Vijaya Bhaskar committee** on financial benchmarks.
 - In 2014, **RBI identified Fixed Income Money Market and Derivatives Association of India (FIMMDA)**, Foreign Exchange Dealers Association Of India as benchmark administrators for interest rate and forex.
 - FIMMDA, FEDAI & IBA **formed a separate entity to administer benchmarks**, leading to formation of FBIL in Dec 2014.
- **Functions:** FBIL develops and administers **benchmarks for money markets, G-Secs and foreign exchange**.
 - It also **values government securities** as well as benchmark rates for certificates of deposits issued by banks.
 - FBIL's benchmarks include the **Mumbai Interbank Offered Rate (MIBOR)**, the **Market Repo Overnight Rate**, and the **Mumbai Interbank Forward Offer Rate (MIFOR)**, and the reference rate for the rupee versus four currencies - the dollar, the pound, the euro and the yen.
 - The MIBOR is the reference rate for overnight indexed swaps, which are the key tool for hedging interest rate risk in India.
 - In the foreign exchange market, **FBIL's reference rate is used for settling non-deliverable forward (NDF)** and exchange-traded futures.

For better communication, police to design, adopt high-frequency radio system

JIGNASA SINHA
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 5

THE DELHI Police will soon move to a more efficient internal communication system, aimed at faster exchange of information and bigger networks. The force is set to design, install and supply the 'Open Standard Digital Trunking Radio System' (OS-DTRS) and will phase out the current tetranet wireless network services. The project will cost close to Rs 100 crore, tenders for which were issued on December 2.

The trunking system pro-

vides multiple channels and common groups for policemen. This way, they are communicating with more personnel using fewer groups, officials said. Groups are formed based on geographical area and function.

It will also have a voice logger system, which can be used to describe a crime scene, interrogation details and evidence. The logs are saved in the system.

The project's master site will be at the Delhi Police HQ. Police are looking for private companies to run the system on 800 MHz frequency band and microwave links. "There will be a tower that

can withstand wind speeds of up to 160 kmph. Around 15,000 concurrent radio sets will be made first and later expanded to 30,000 over time," said an officer.

As per documents released by police, the master site will have OS-DTRS control and switching equipment, a network management system, 90 IP-based logger systems, 50-inch or bigger LED monitors, an antenna system and maintenance systems. Equipment and services are expected to run for at least 10 years and fix network issues faced by personnel on the ground. The documents read: "The system should

be equipped to support multi-channel operation for meeting current traffic requirements and should be expandable by 100% in future... Number of frequency spots required for meeting 15,000 radios operation as per traffic norms... should be projected."

The system will have talk groups, in which members have the same functions/role, and each radio system will have a unique ID. "The system should support at least 250 talk groups, with the capability to expand... number of unique individual radio IDs...," reads the document. At present, police have 120 talk groups.

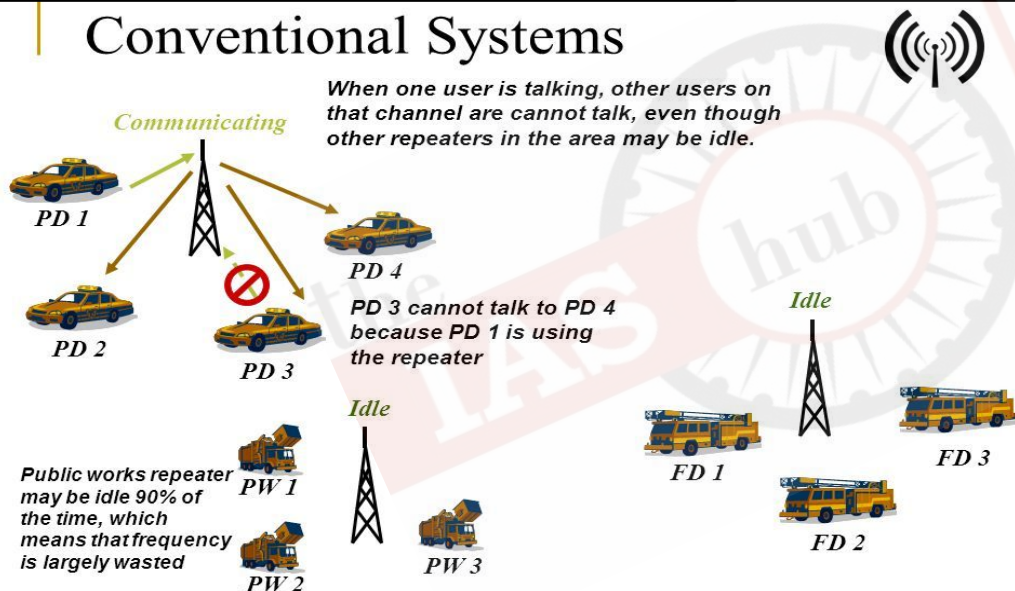
TRUNKED RADIO SYSTEM (Syllabus: GS Paper 3 - Sci & Tech)

Context: The Delhi Police is set to design, install and supply the 'Open Standard Digital Trunking Radio System' (OS-DTRS) and will phase out the current tetranet wireless network services.

Trunked radio system

- **About:** A trunked radio system is a **two-way radio system** that uses a control channel to automatically assign frequency channels to groups of user radios.
 - In a traditional half-duplex land mobile radio system, a **group of users (a talkgroup) with mobile and portable two-way radios communicate over a single shared radio channel**, with one user at a time talking.
 - These systems typically have **access to multiple channels**, up to 40-60, so multiple groups in the same area can communicate simultaneously.
- **Differences from conventional two-way radio:** 'Trunked' radio systems differ from 'conventional' radio systems in that a conventional radio system uses a **dedicated channel (frequency) for each individual group of users**, while 'trunking' radio systems use a pool of channels which are available for a great many different groups of users.
 - This is an **inefficient use of scarce radio channel resources** because the user group must have exclusive use of their channel regardless of how much or how little they are transmitting.
 - There is also **nothing to prevent multiple groups** in the same area from choosing the same channel, causing conflicts and 'cross-talk'.
 - A trunked radio system is an **advanced alternative** in which the channel selection process is done automatically by a central controller (computer).
- **Benefits:** The primary purpose of this type of system is efficiency; **many people can carry many conversations over only a few distinct frequencies**.
 - Trunking is **used by many government entities** to provide two-way communication for fire departments, police and other municipal services, who all share spectrum allocated to a city, county, or other entity.
 - A secondary benefit of a trunking radio system is the **ease with which it can accommodate radio interoperability** and with proper planning, add authorized user agencies to the system post-implementation.

Conventional Systems



No FCRA scrutiny on flows from 117 entities

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NEW DELHI

The Union home ministry has released a list of 117 United Nations bodies and other international organisations whose contribution to Indian entities will not be covered under the stringent Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act 2010, officials said.

Indian organizations receiving foreign funds are mandatorily registered under the FCRA 2010 and they must have a special account at a designated branch of the State Bank of India in New Delhi. According to a home ministry document, the UN agencies and other international bodies and organizations "to be not covered" by the definition of "foreign source" under the FCRA include the UN System's Secretariat, Office of Internal Oversight Services, Department of Political Affairs, Department of Peacekeeping Operations, Department for General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services.

Since the Narendra Modi government came to power in 2014, rules related to the FCRA have been tightened. The government has also cancelled FCRA registration of nearly 2,000 NGOs for violating various provisions of law in last few years. There were 22,762 FCRA-registered organizations till December-end 2021.

Context: The Union Home Ministry has released a list of 117 United Nations bodies and other international organisations whose contribution to Indian entities will not be covered under the stringent Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act, 2010.

Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act, 2010

- **About:** An act passed for **regulating and prohibiting the acceptance and utilization of foreign contribution or foreign hospitality** by companies, associations or individuals for such activities that could prove to be detrimental to the national interest and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.
- **Origin:** The FCRA was **enacted in 1976** in order to maintain strict control over voluntary organisations and political associations that received foreign fundings.
 - In 2010, the **act was repealed** and a new act with strict provisions was enacted.
 - The law was **amended again by the current government in 2020**, giving the government tighter control and scrutiny over the receipt and utilisation of foreign funds by NGOs.
- **Nodal Ministry:** Since the Act is internal security legislation, despite being a law related to financial legislation, it **falls into the purview of the Home Ministry** and not the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).
- **Salient features:**
 - A provision was made for the cancellation of registrations of NGOs if the **Home Ministry believes that the organisation is political and not neutral**.
 - The **registration certificate granted** to the NGOs under the 2010 act came with five-year validity.
 - A provision was inserted stating that the **assets of the person who has become defunct** needs to be disposed of in a manner stated by the government.
 - A **separate account** needs to be maintained by the organisations to deposit the Foreign Contributions received and no other funds except for Foreign Contributions shall be deposited in that account.
 - Every bank would be **obligated to report to the prescribed authority**, the amount of foreign remittances received and other related details such as the source, manner of receipt etc.
- **Key provisions of Amendment 2020:**
 - **Prohibits the public servants** from receiving foreign contributions.
 - **Prohibits the transfer of foreign contribution** to any other person.
 - **Mandatory Aadhaar number** for registration for all office bearers, directors or key functionaries of a person receiving foreign contribution, as an identification document.
 - Foreign contribution must be received only in an account **designated by the bank as FCRA account** in such branches of the **State Bank of India, New Delhi**.
 - Allowed the government to **restrict usage of unutilised foreign contribution**.
 - Organisations receiving foreign funds will not be able to use more than **20 % of such funds for administrative purposes**. This limit was 50 % before 2020.

Decriminalisation of GST Law on Council's Agenda

Our Bureau

New Delhi: The Goods and Services Tax (GST) Council is likely to take up decriminalisation of the GST law, including raising the threshold limits for multiple offences, at its next meeting, scheduled to be held on December 17.

The council will also take up reports of the group of ministers (GoM) on online gaming and appellate tribunals for discus-



sion, said a government official familiar with the development. As per the decriminalisation exercise, the government is considering removing the penal offences from the GST Act.

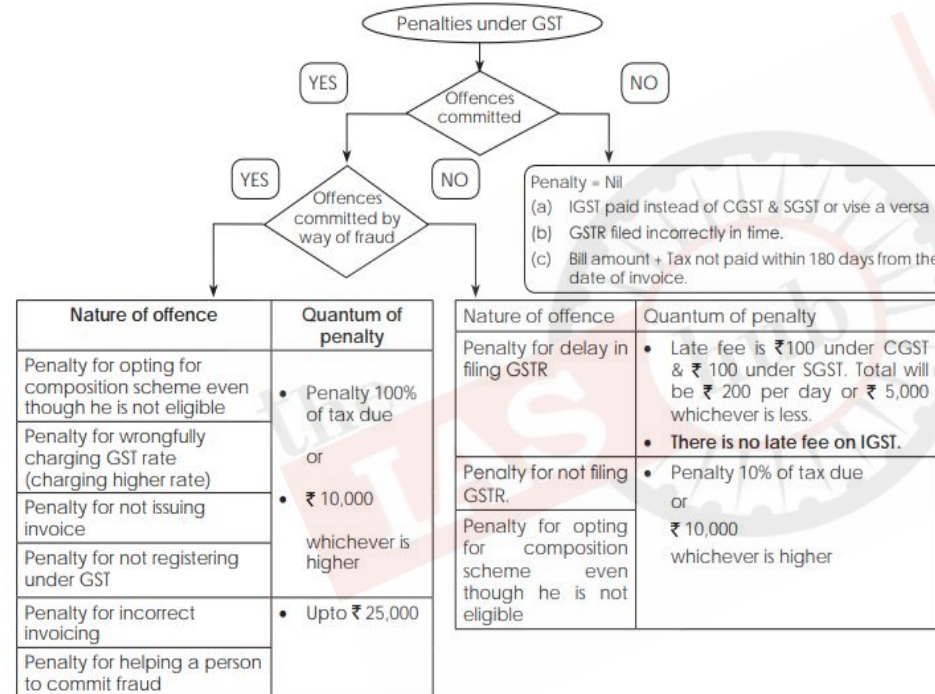
The law committee of the Council has finalised the changes in Section 132 of the GST Act and the proposed changes to the law will be discussed by the council.

Section 132 of the Central GST Act deals with punishment for offences including

falsification of documents for obtaining refunds, dealing in confiscated goods, abetting in commission of offences and obstructing officers from discharging their duties. All these four offences are cognisable and non-bailable.

The next GST Council meeting is scheduled to be held through videoconferencing.

GST on online gaming is another contentious issue on which a GoM, headed by Meghalaya chief minister Conrad Sangma, is expected to submit its report.



OFFENSES UNDER GST ACT (Syllabus: GS Paper 3 - Economy)

Context: The law committee of the Council has finalised the changes in **Section 132 of the GST Act** and the proposed changes to the law will be discussed by the council.

Offenses under GST act

- About:** Section 132 of the Central GST Act **deals with punishment for offences** including falsification of documents for obtaining refunds, dealing in confiscated goods, abetting in commission of offences and obstructing officers from discharging their duties.
 - All these four offences are **cognisable and non-bailable**.
 - Cognizable offenses are those where the **police can arrest a person without any arrest warrant**. They are serious crimes like murder robbery, counterfeiting.
 - Non-cognizable offenses are those, **where a police officer cannot arrest a person without a warrant issued by competent authority**. They are less serious crimes like public nuisance, assault.
- Offenses under section 132 where arrest provisions become applicable:**
 - A taxable person supplies any goods/services **without any invoice or issues a false invoice**.
 - He issues any invoice or bill **without supply of goods/services in violation of the provisions of GST**.
 - He **collects any GST but does not submit** it to the government within 3 months.
 - Even if he collects any GST in contravention of provisions, he **still has to deposit** it to the government within 3 months. Failure to do so will be an offense under GST.
 - He has **already been convicted of an earlier under section 132** i.e., this is his 2nd offense.
 - On reading section 132 with arrest provisions, it essentially stands that a person can be arrested only where the tax evasion is more than 100 lakhs rupees (1 crore) or where a person has earlier been convicted of an offence u/s 132.
- Power to arrest:** If the Commissioner of CGST/SGST believes a person has **committed an offence under section 132**, he can be arrested by any **authorised CGST/SGST officer**.
 - The arrested person will be informed about the grounds of his arrest.
 - He will **appear before the magistrate within 24 hours** in case of cognizable offence.

Ahead of India missile test, Chinese spy vessel in IOR

It's The Same Ship That Had Docked In Lanka, Triggering Row

Rajat.Pandit@timesgroup.com

New Delhi: The cat-and-mouse game continues in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR), while the rival armies are ranged against each other in eastern Ladakh. Another Chinese spy vessel has now entered the IOR ahead of another long-range ballistic missile test planned by India next week.

Chinese research and space-tracking vessel Yuan Wang-5, the docking of which at Hambantota in August had led to a diplomatic spat between India and Sri Lanka, is being closely tracked by Indian Navy after she entered the IOR through the Sunda Strait of Indonesia on Monday morning, defence sources told TOI.

The presence of the 20,000-tonne Yuan Wang-5, which is packed with large antennae, advanced sen-



Chinese research and space-tracking vessel Yuan Wang-5 at Hambantota port in this August 16 photo. It has again been spotted in the region after India issued a NOTAM (notice to airmen) with a long expanded 'no-fly zone' over the Bay of Bengal for a missile test from the Abdul Kalam Island off Odisha coast on December 15-16

sors and electronic equipment with a crew of around 400, comes after India recently issued a NOTAM (notice to airmen) with a long expanded 'no-fly zone' over the Bay of Bengal for a missile test from the Abdul Kalam Island off Odisha coast on December 15-16.

Sources said India's most formidable missile, the over 5,000-km range Agni-V, which is in the process of being inducted into the tri-service Strategic Forces Command (SFC), is slated for a test at that time.

The first "user trial" of the three-stage Agni-V,

which brings even the northernmost part of China within its strike envelope, in its "full operational configuration" was conducted in October 2021.

It now remains to be seen whether the missile test will actually be conducted as scheduled or be deferred. India can't object to the frequent forays of such Chinese spy ships, which are under the command of the Strategic Support Force of PLA. All countries have freedom of navigation in international waters.

Chinese survey vessels come regularly to the IOR to map oceanographic and other data useful for navigation and submarine operations.

The bigger strategic concern for India is that China may use Hambantota for logistical replenishments of its warships and submarines in the future.

YUAN WANG-5

(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 - Internal Security)

Context: Chinese research and space-tracking vessel Yuan Wang-5, the docking of which at Hambantota in August had led to a diplomatic spat between India and Sri Lanka, is being closely tracked by Indian Navy after she entered the IOR through the Sunda Strait of Indonesia.

Yuan Wang-5

- **About:** A **third-generation vessel** of the Yuan Wang series that entered service in 2007.
 - Yuan Wang 5 was described by the Sri Lankan government as a "scientific research ship".
- **Key Features:** This series of ships include "space tracking ships involved in **supporting the manned space programme**".
 - It has the ability to **track satellites and intercontinental missiles**.
- **India's Concern:** Sri Lanka has chosen to create a **new economic commission, to be funded by China**, and a Special Economic Zone surrounding the port city of Colombo.
 - It is almost inevitable that the Chinese navy would have a **permanent presence in the Indian Ocean** as a result of the leasing of Hambantota and the Colombo Port City project, which will be **concerning for India's national security**.



International Cheetah Day and Wildlife Conservation Day celebrated at National Zoological Park

Context: The National Zoological Park, New Delhi (Delhi Zoo) celebrated “**International Cheetah Day**” and “**Wildlife Conservation Day**” in collaboration with **Central Zoo Authority**.

Key Points

- The purpose behind the celebration of “International Cheetah Day” and “Wildlife Conservation Day” is to **spread awareness among present generation** about the Wildlife Conservation.
- **International Cheetah Day** is celebrated on December 4 to raise awareness about the need for helping cheetahs fight extinction.
- On December 4, the world dedicates a special day towards **wildlife conservation**.
 - **World Wildlife Conservation Day** aims to raise awareness, conserve and provide protection for endangered species such as elephants, rhinos, and tigers.

Central Zoo Authority

- **About:** The body of the government of India responsible for oversight of zoos. It is an **affiliate member of the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums (WAZA)**.
 - WAZA is the **"umbrella" organization for the world zoo and aquarium community**.
 - Its mission is to provide leadership and support for zoos, aquariums, and partner organizations of the world in animal care and welfare, conservation of biodiversity, environmental education and global sustainability.
- **Origin:** The Central Zoo Authority has been constituted under the section **38A of Wild Life (Protection) Act 1972 in 1992**.
- **Nodal Ministry:** Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.
- **Members:** The Authority consists of a Chairman, ten members and a Member Secretary.
 - It is **chaired by the Union Environment Minister**.
- **Functions:**
 - Provides recognition to zoos.
 - Regulate the zoos across the country.
 - Lays down guidelines and prescribes rules under which animals may be transferred among zoos nationally and internationally.
 - Coordinates and implements programmes on capacity building of zoo personnel, planned breeding programmes and ex-situ research.

SHE STEM 2022 encourages students to 'Unleash their imagination' as part of the Sweden India Nobel Memorial Week

Context: As part of the **Sweden India Nobel Memorial Week**, SHE STEM, the annual event to celebrate women in the fields of science, technology, engineering, mathematics, and sustainability, was successfully held for the third year in a row.

- The annual event is **organised by the Embassy of Sweden in India** in partnership with the Atal Innovation Mission, NITI Aayog, Government of India and the German Centre of Innovation and Research (DWIH New Delhi).

Science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM)

- **About:** A broad term **used to group together several academic disciplines**.
 - This term is typically **used to address an education policy** or curriculum choices in schools.
 - It has implications for workforce development, national security concerns (as a shortage of STEM-educated citizens can reduce effectiveness in this area) and immigration policy.
- **No universal agreement:** There is **no universal agreement on which disciplines are included in STEM**; in particular whether or not the science in STEM includes social sciences, such as psychology, sociology, economics, and political science.
- **Participation of Women in STEM:** About 43% of STEM graduates in India are women, which is the highest in the world, but their **share in STEM jobs in India is a mere 14%**.
- **Initiatives to Promote Women Participation:**
 - **Vigyan Jyoti Scheme:** To create a **level-playing field** for the meritorious girls in high school to pursue Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) in their higher education.
 - **Gender Advancement for Transforming Institutions (GATI) Scheme:** Develop a **comprehensive Charter and a framework** for assessing Gender Equality in STEM.
 - **Knowledge Involvement Research Advancement through Nurturing (KIRAN):** Provides **opportunities for women scientists** in moving up the academic and administrative ladder.
 - **Women Scientist Scheme:** Provides career **opportunities to unemployed women scientists** and technologists, especially those who had a break in their career.

LOCAL ADAPTATION CHAMPIONS AWARD

(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 - Env & Eco)

This Pune non-profit led by women bagged an award at COP27 for climate adaptation

Swayam Shikshan Prayog promotes water-efficient irrigation models by creating awareness of water conservation for farms, households and communities



NEXT NEWS >

By Seema Prasad
Published: Monday 05 December 2022



- **Promotes water-efficient irrigation models:** Swayam Shikshan Prayog promotes water-efficient irrigation models by creating awareness of water conservation for farms, households and communities and increasing access to water-efficient irrigation techniques through government subsidies.
- **Promotes the formation of agro-allied enterprises:** Swayam Shikshan Prayog also promotes the formation of agro-allied enterprises in dairy, poultry, vermicomposts and local seeds. It helps women farmers to sell their farm produce through these agro enterprises.
- **Funding:** The organisation receives funding from Azim Premji Philanthropic Initiatives and Sir Ratan Tata Trust, among other philanthropic organisations.
 - They claim to have helped 41,000 women acquire 30,000 acres of land and increase 25 percent of their average yield in food crops.

Context: Pune-based non-profit Swayam Shikshan Prayog was recognised for its efforts in helping women farmers in the Marathwada region adopt **climate-resilient agricultural practices** for over two decades at the 27th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP27).

- The non-profit bagged the **Local Adaptation Champions Award** in the capacity and knowledge category at Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt.
- The award was **organised by The Global Center on Adaptation**, an international organisation that provides awareness and resources on adaptive climate solutions through public and private sector collaborations.

Key points

- **Promotes sustainable agricultural practices:** Swayam Shikshan Prayog helps shift the **focus of women farmers** from cash crops such as cotton and sugarcane, which require massive amounts of water in poor monsoon seasons, to more sustainable agricultural practices.
- **Water-resilient practices:** The non-profit **educates women about water-resilient practices** that are devoid of chemical fertilisers and pesticides to increase agricultural productivity in Osmanabad, Latur, Nanded and Beed districts in Maharashtra that are drought-prone areas known for farmer suicides.
- **Krishi Samvad Sahayaks (KSS):** On the ground, Krishi Samvad Sahayaks (KSS), as they call themselves, **disseminate information about cultivating food crops** such as millets, cereals, pulses and vegetables in mixed cropping patterns.
 - The organisation partners with the government and agro-tech companies, but the KSS women are the educators on the ground.
- **Mahila Kisan Sashaktikaran Paryojana:** In 2015, they collaborated with the **Government of Maharashtra** to scale up Mahila Kisan Sashaktikaran Paryojana (MKSP) to 21,000 farmers.
 - MKSP, a sub-component of the **National Livelihood Rural Mission**, seeks to improve women's present status in agriculture.
 - NRLM is a **poverty alleviation project** implemented by the Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India.
- **Women-led resilient farming model:** The non-profit **encourages women farmers from marginalised communities** to diversify and increase crop cycles on small land holdings - six-eight crops per season.
 - **Women make all the decisions** on the choice of crops to cultivate and sell, thus having more control over income and saving.
 - The model also **encourages women to get title rights** from their families on a small piece of land to implement their learnings. The NGO calls this the **one-acre model**.
- **Targets women:** Swayam Shikshan Prayog **targets women farmers as they believe that men are inclined towards increasing earnings** for their families. However, women are more concerned with food security, health and their family's nutrition, therefore being more receptive to the message.

BHOPAL GAS TRAGEDY

(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 - Sci & Tech and Disaster management)

Bhopal: 38 years later, fungal diseases rise among survivors in telling sign of flawed healthcare

Over the last 20 years, 1,175 cases were recorded, of which 670 were from the last five years alone, per the records of Sambhavna Clinic



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By Seema Prasad
Published: Saturday 03 December 2022



MAJOR GAS LEAKS IN INDIA IN THE PAST

	When did it happen	Where did it happen	What caused the disaster	Number of deaths/casualties
Bhopal gas tragedy	December 2-3, 1984	Union Carbide India pesticide plant, Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh	Methyl isocyanate (MIC) gas leak	Nearly 5,000 were killed and more than 5,00,000 were affected
GAIL pipeline blast	June 27, 2014	GAIL plant, Nagaram, East Godavari, AP	Underground natural gas pipeline rupture	Over 18 people were killed, over 40 injured
Bhilai Steel Plant gas leak	June 12, 2014	Bhilai Steel Plant, Durg, Chhattisgarh	Methane gas leak	6 people were killed, over 40 were injured
Tughlakabad gas leak	May 6, 2017	Container depot, Tughlakabad, S-E Delhi	Chemical gas leakage from a container truck	Over 400 school children were hospitalised
Kanpur ammonia gas leak	March 15, 2017	A cold storage facility at Shivrajpur, Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh	Ammonia gas leak	5 people were killed, 9 injured
Belur chlorine gas leak	May 16, 2017	A water treatment plant at Gandehalli in Belur, South Karnataka	Chlorine gas leak	More than 10 people fell sick
Bhilai Steel Plant blast	Oct 9, 2018	Bhilai Steel Plant, Durg, Chhattisgarh	Explosion in a gas pipeline connected to the coke-oven section	9 people were killed, 14 were injured

WHAT HAPPENED IN VISAKHAPATNAM

Compiled by Annapurani V

WHAT LEAKED	WHAT IS IT	HOW DANGEROUS IS IT	WHAT IS IT USED FOR
Styrene	It is also called ethenylbenzene, vinylbenzene and phenylethene. It is an organic compound derived from benzene	Sustained exposure affects the central nervous system. Studies have shown that it causes cancer	Manufacturing polystyrene plastics, fibreglass, rubber and latex

Context: The leakage of 27 tonnes of deadly **methyl isocyanate (MIC) gas** from the pesticide plant owned by Union Carbide Corporation in Bhopal 38 years ago is still wreaking havoc on the city.

- The latest is the **spike in incidences of fungal infection** among survivors, according to the Sambhavna Trust.
- The Sambhavna Trust is one of the primary organisations that assists Bhopal gas survivors with medical treatment and research.

Key Points

- **Ringworm disease:** caused by a fungus called **tinea**, is on the rise.
 - Red itchy **patches occur in the groin**, on the head or in different places of the body.
 - The **rash spreads** if left untreated.
 - Different doctors treat those suffering from tinea with **antifungal creams, ointments and tablets** such as Itraconazole, Clotrimazole, and Fluconazole indiscriminately.
 - Yeast infection **candida albicans** is also being reported to the Sambhavna Clinic by female survivors.
- **Gynaecological diseases:** Gas-exposed women were two or three times more likely to suffer from infectious gynaecological diseases such as **pelvic inflammatory disease and cervicitis** as compared to unexposed patients who came for treatment between January and August 2022.
- **Causes:** The illnesses are **due to the accumulation of toxic material in the soil and groundwater** over the years after the leakage that had instantly killed over 3,000 people.

Bhopal Gas Tragedy

- **About:** On the night of 2 December 1984, a **gas leak at the Union Carbide India Limited (UCIL) pesticide plant** in Bhopal led to the deaths of about 4000 people and adversely affected the health of lakhs of people.
- **UCIL:** It was a pesticide plant which **manufactured the pesticide carbaryl** (chemical name: 1-naphthyl methylcarbamate) under the brand name Sevin.
 - UCIL manufactured carbaryl using **methyl isocyanate (MIC)** as an intermediate. Although there are other methods to produce the end-product, they cost more.
 - MIC is a **highly toxic chemical and extremely dangerous** to human health.

THANK YOU!



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