

UPSC Daily Current Affairs 15 Jul 2021

Sub-categorization of Other Backward Classes (OBCs)

(Topic- GS Paper II- Governance, Source- The Hindu)

Why in the news?

- Recently, the Centre has extended the tenure of the Commission to Examine Sub-categorisation of Other Backward Classes (OBCs) headed by **Justice G Rohini, former Chief Justice of Delhi High Court.**

More on the news

- **It is the Eleventh Extension of the commission.**
- The Order of extension of the term of the “Commission” by 6 months beyond beyond 31st July 2021 and upto 31st January 2022.

Benefit

- The proposed extension of tenure and addition in its terms of reference shall enable the “Commission” to submit a comprehensive report on the issue of sub-categorization of OBCs, after consultation with various stake holders.

What is sub-categorisation of OBCs?

All For 27%

Commission to be appointed under Article 340



Commission has to submit report within 12 weeks of its formation



Sub-categorisation recommended by now-defunct NCBC in 2011; parliamentary panels recommended it in 2012 and 2013

11 states introducing sub-categorisation in state services: Andhra, Telangana, Puducherry, Karnataka, Haryana, Jharkhand, Bengal, Bihar, Maharashtra, J&K and Tamil Nadu

- OBCs are granted 27% reservation in jobs and education under the central government.

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- In September 2021, a Constitution Bench of the **Supreme Court reopened the legal debate on sub-categorisation of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes for reservations.**
- The debate arises out of the perception that only a few affluent communities among the over 2,600 included in the Central List of OBCs have secured a major part of this 27% reservation.
- The argument for sub-categorisation — or creating categories within OBCs for reservation — is that it would ensure “equitable distribution” of representation among all OBC communities.

About the G Rohini Commission

- The Commission constituted under Article 340 of the Constitution to examine the issue of Sub-categorization within Other Backward Classes (OBCs) in the Central List.
- It is headed by retired **Delhi High Court Chief Justice G Rohini**, includes Centre for Policy Studies director Dr J K Bajaj as member, and has two other ex-officio members.

Commission’s terms of reference

It was originally set up with three terms of reference:

- To examine the extent of inequitable distribution of benefits of reservation among the castes or communities included in the broad category of OBCs with reference to such classes included in the Central List;
- To work out the mechanism, criteria, norms and parameters in a scientific approach for sub-categorisation within such OBCs;
- To take up the exercise of identifying the respective castes or communities or sub-castes or synonyms in the Central List of OBCs and classifying them into their respective sub-categories.

A fourth term of reference was added on January 22, 2020, when the Cabinet granted it an extension:

- To study the various entries in the Central List of OBCs and recommend correction of any repetitions, ambiguities, inconsistencies and errors of spelling or transcription.

What have its findings been so far?

- In 2018, the Commission analysed the data of 1.3 lakh central jobs given under OBC quota over the preceding five years and OBC admissions to central higher education institutions, including universities, IITs, NITs, IIMs and AIIMS, over the preceding three years.

The findings were:

- 97% of all jobs and educational seats have gone to just 25% of all sub-castes classified as OBCs;
- 24.95% of these jobs and seats have gone to just 10 OBC communities;

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- 983 OBC communities — 37% of the total — have zero representation in jobs and educational institutions;
- 994 OBC sub-castes have a total representation of only 2.68% in recruitment and admissions

Related Information

National Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC)

- National Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC) established on 14th August 1993 as a statutory body.
- But now, **102nd Constitution Amendment Act, 2018** provides **constitutional status** to the National **Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC)**.
- This Commission was formed as an initiative for investigating the conditions and difficulties of the socially and educationally backward classes and thus making appropriate recommendations.

Background

- The National Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC) was an outcome of the **Indra Sawhney case (Mandal Commission) of 1992**.
- **In Indra Sawhney case of 1992**, Supreme Court had directed the government to create a permanent body to entertain, examine and recommend the inclusion and exclusion of various Backward Classes for the purpose of benefits and protection.
- Previously the two Backward Class Commissions were appointed in 1950s and 1970s under Kaka Kalelkar and B.P. Mandal respectively.

Constitutional Provision

- **102nd** Constitution Amendment Act inserted new Articles 338 B and 342 A.
- The amendment also brings about changes in Article 366.
- **Article 338B** provides authority to NCBC to examine complaints and welfare measures regarding socially and educationally backward classes.
- **Article 342(A)** introduces greater transparency as it is made mandatory to take the concurrence of Parliament for adding or deleting any community in the backward list.

Composition

- The National Commission for Backward Classes consists of five regulatory members which include the Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson and three other members with a tenure period of three years.
- The conditions of service and tenure of office of the Chairperson, Vice- Chairperson and other Members is determined by President.

Cabinet nod to continue Ayush Mission

(Topic- GS Paper II- Governance, Source- The Hindu)

Why in the news?

- The Union Cabinet has recently approved the continuation of the National Ayush Mission for another five years till 2026.
- The scheme would continue from April 1, 2021, to March 31, 2026, with a financial implication of ₹4,607.30 crore to be spent during the period.

About the National Ayush Mission

- It has been launched during 12th Plan for im-plementing through States/UTs.

Vision

- To provide cost effective and equitable AYUSH health care throughout the country by improving access to the services.
- To revitalize and strengthen the AYUSH systems making them as prominent medical streams in addressing the health care of the society.
- To improve educational institutions capable of imparting quality AYUSH education
- To promote the adoption of Quality standards of AYUSH drugs and making available the sustained supply of AYUSH raw-materials.

Objectives

- The basic objective of NAM is to promote AYUSH medical systems through cost effective AYUSH services, strengthening of educational systems, facilitate the enforcement of quality control of Ayurveda, Siddha and Unani & Homoeopathy (ASU &H) drugs and sustainable availability of ASU & H raw-materials.
- To provide cost effective AYUSH Services, with a universal access through upgrading AYUSH Hospitals and Dispensaries, co-location of AYUSH facilities at Primary Health Centres (PHCs), Community Health Centres (CHCs) and District Hospitals (DHs).
- To strengthen institutional capacity at the state level through upgrading AYUSH educational institutions, State Govt. ASU&H Pharmacies, Drug Testing Laboratories and ASU & H enforcement mechanism.
- It help to support cultivation of medicinal plants by adopting Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs) so as to provide sustained supply of quality raw-materials and support certification mechanism for quality standards, Good Agricultural/Collection/Storage Practices.
- Support setting up of clusters through convergence of cultivation, warehousing, value addition and marketing and development of infrastructure for entrepreneurs.

Components of the Mission

Mandatory Components

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- AYUSH Services
- AYUSH Educational Institutions
- Quality Control of ASU &H Drugs
- Medicinal Plants

Flexible Components

- AYUSH Wellness Centres including Yoga & Naturopathy
- Tele-medicine
- Crop Insurance for Medicinal Plants

Cabo Delgado

(Topic- GS Paper I + II- Geography + IR, Source- AIR)

Why in the news ?

- Recently, the European Union has approved a Military Training Mission in Mozambique to support armed forces there to protect the civilian population.

About the Mission

- It aims to train and support the military in restoring security to northern Cabo Delgado, which has been plagued by extreme violence amid Jihadist attacks since 2017.
- The mission will involve military training, including operational preparation, specialised training in counter-terrorism and training and education in the protection of civilians.
- Its mandate will initially last for two years.

About Cabo Delgado

- It is the northernmost province of Mozambique.



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Capital

- **Pemba** is the capital of the province.
- The region is an ethnic stronghold of the Makonde tribe, with the Makua and Mwani as leading ethnic minorities.

India, Russia to hold 2+2 Ministerial meet

(Topic- GS Paper II- IR, Source- The Hindu)

Why in the news?

- India and Russia will hold the first 2+2 Ministerial meeting later this year before a summit between Prime Minister and Russian President.

More on the news

- On the lines of 2+2 dialogue with the United States, India and Russia have decided to establish dialogue on the same pattern, to add further momentum to the strategic partnership between the two countries
- India holds similar dialogues with US, Australia and Japan.
- **Russia is the first non-QUAD member with which India is to hold the dialogue.**

About '2+2' Dialogue

- 2+2 Ministerial is the highest-level institutional mechanism between the two countries.
- It is a format of dialogue where the defence/foreign ministers or secretaries meet with their counterparts from another country.

Relation with Russia

- Russia has been a longstanding time tested partner of India.
- Both countries signed “Declaration on the India-Russia Strategic Partnership” in October 2000.
- Traditionally, the Indo-Russian strategic partnership has been built on five major components:
 - a. Politics,
 - b. Defence,
 - c. Civil nuclear energy,
 - d. Anti-terrorism co-operation
 - e. Space

Modi meeting with Maldivian president

(Topic- GS Paper II- IR, Source- The Hindu)

Why in the news?

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Maldivian President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih have recently, “took stock” of bilateral cooperation in a telephone conversation.

More on the news

- **Prime Minister Modi noted that Maldives is a central pillar in India’s ‘Neighbourhood First’ policy and its maritime vision of Security and Growth for All in the Region (SAGAR)**

Close cooperation between India and Maldives

- Recently, India has voted in support of Maldives’ Foreign Minister in the election of the President of the United Nations General Assembly.
- Maldives is in discussions with the Indian mission for India’s deputy Permanent Representative at the UN to officiate as Shahid’s Chef de Cabinet. Recent Development

Member of SAARC countries

- India and Maldives both are the members of South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation.

Defence

- India and the Maldives had signed a defence Line of Credit agreement worth \$50 million.
- The Line of Credit is not a grant but a ‘soft loan’ provided on concessional interest rates to developing countries, which has to be repaid by the borrowing government.

Ex EKUVERIN

- It is India-Maldives joint military exercise.
- The Exercise Ekuverin, meaning 'friends' in the Maldivian language since 2009.

Setup coastal radar network

- India is planning to setup the coastal radar network in the Maldives, Myanmar and Bangladesh.
- It will help to enable real-time monitoring of the high seas for threats.

Taliban seize border crossing with Pakistan

(Topic- GS Paper II- IR, Source- The Hindu)

Why in the news ?

- Recently, the Taliban captured the strategic border crossing of Spin Boldak on the frontier with Pakistan, continuing sweeping gains made since foreign forces stepped up their withdrawal from Afghanistan.

Strategic value



- The border crossing is one of the most strategically valuable for the Taliban.
- It provides direct access to Pakistan's Balochistan province - where the insurgents' top leadership has been based for decades - along with an unknown number of reserve fighters who regularly enter Afghanistan to help bolster their ranks.
- Balochistan is a favoured destination for fighters regularly heading for medical treatment and hosts many of their families.
- A major highway leading from the border connects to Pakistan's commercial capital Karachi and its sprawling port on the Arabian Sea, which is considered a linchpin for Afghanistan's billion-dollar heroin trade that has provided a crucial source of revenue for the Taliban's war chest over the years.

Development of Infrastructure Facilities for Judiciary scheme

(Topic- GS Paper II- Governance, Source- The Hindu)

Why in the news ?

- The Union Cabinet has approved continuation of the Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS) for Development of Infrastructure Facilities for Judiciary for further five years from 1st April 2021 to 31st March 2026.
- The total cost of Rs.9000 crore, out of which Central share will be Rs.5357 crore including Rs.50 crore for the Gram Nyayalayas Scheme and their implementation in a Mission Mode through National Mission for Justice Delivery and Legal Reforms.

About the Development of Infrastructure Facilities for Judiciary scheme

- It is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS) for Development of Infrastructure Facilities for Judiciary has been in operation since 1993-94.

Monitoring of the Scheme

- An on-line monitoring system has been set up by the Department of Justice enabling data collection on progress, completion of court halls and residential units under construction as well as better asset management.
- Department of Justice has developed an online monitoring system with technical assistance from ISRO.
- The upgraded “Nyaya Vikas-2.0” web portal and mobile application is used for monitoring physical and financial progress of CSS judicial infrastructure projects by geo-tagging completed and ongoing projects.
- The Gram Nyayalaya Portal helps online monitoring of working of the Gram Nyayalayas by the implementing states.

Benefits from the Scheme

- It will increase the availability of well-equipped Court Halls and Residential Accommodations for Judges / Judicial Officers of District and Subordinate Courts all over the country.
- The courts are also being provided with better amenities enabling win-win situation for both the judiciary and the lawyers and also to ease of living of common man.
- Setting up of digital computer rooms will also improve digital capabilities and give impetus to the digitization initiation being pursued as a part of India’s Digital India vision.
- This will help in improving the overall functioning and performance of the Judiciary.
- Continued assistance to the Gram Nyayalayas will also give impetus to providing speedy, substantial and affordable justice to the common man at his door step.

Green hydrogen mobility project

(Topic- GS Paper III–Environment, Source- The Hindu)

Why in the news?

- NTPC Renewable Energy Ltd a 100% subsidiary of NTPC signed a MoU with Union Territory of Ladakh and the Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council (LAHDC) to setup the country's first Green Hydrogen Mobility project.

About Green hydrogen mobility project



- The Green Hydrogen Mobility Project will enable NTPC to help Ladakh in developing a carbon-free economy based on renewable sources and green hydrogen.
- **This would be zero emission mobility.**

Significance

- This project will put Leh as the first city in the country to implement a green hydrogen-based mobility project.

Kármán line

(Topic- GS Paper III- Science and Technology, Source- The Hindu)

Why in the news?

- Recently, British businessman Richard Branson beat rival Jeff Bezos to reach the edge of space, giving space tourism an official kickstart.
- But experts and space enthusiasts are in doubt whether the height to which he travelled can be termed 'space'.

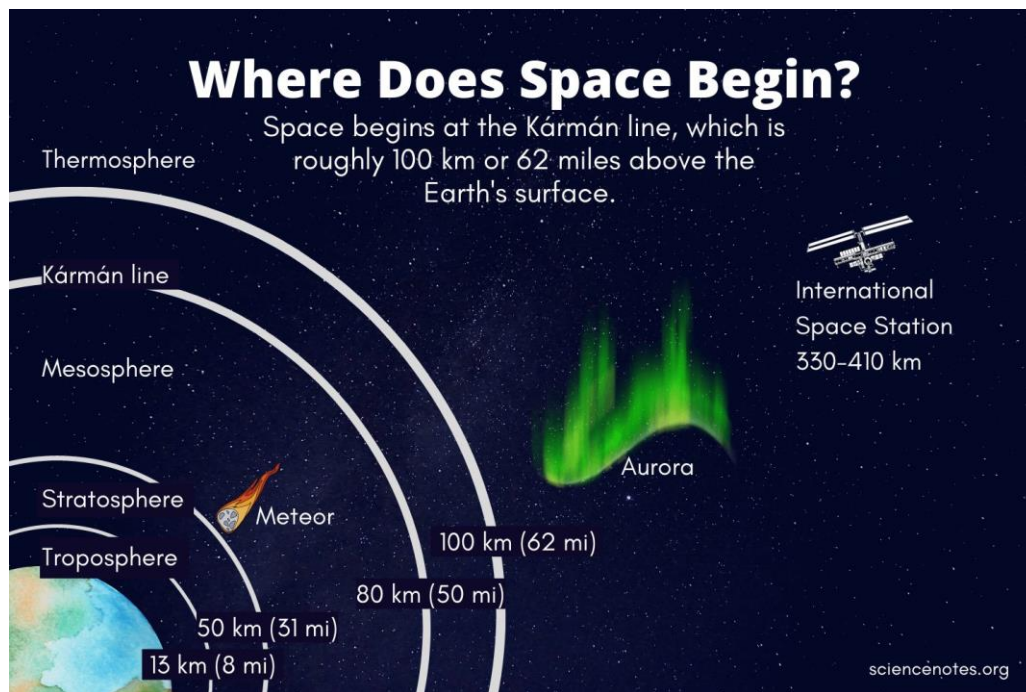
Boundary of Space

- The most widely accepted boundary of space is known as the Kármán line.

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- The most widely accepted boundary of space is known as the Kármán line, 100km above mean sea level.
- But the United States uses 80km as the cutoff point. Branson's Virgin Galactic flight reached a height of 86km while Jeff Bezos' Blue Origin flight is expected to go about 106km high.

About The Kármán line



- It is at 100km above mean sea level.
- It has been compared to international waters, as there are no national boundaries and human laws in force beyond the line.
- Above this level, there would be free space.
- The Kármán line is named after Theodore von Kármán (1881–1963), a Hungarian American engineer and physicist who was active in aeronautics and astronautics.
- In 1957, he was the first person to attempt to derive such an altitude limit, which Kármán calculated as 275,000 ft (84 kilometres).

Why do we need a Kármán line?

- The 1967 Outer Space Treaty says that space should be accessible to all countries and can be freely and scientifically investigated.
- Defining a legal boundary of what and where space is can help avoid disputes and keep track of space activities and human space travel.