

GOVERNANCE**Progress Report of Commission for Sub-categorisation of OBCs**

Recently, the Centre has extended the tenure of the Rohini Commission until 31st July, 2021 to submit its report on Sub-categorisation of Other Backward Classes (OBCs).

- The Rohini Commission was constituted in October 2017 under Article 340 of the Constitution. At that time, it was given 12 weeks to submit its report, but has been given several extensions since, the latest one being the 10th.
- Article 340 deals with the appointment of a commission to investigate the conditions of backward classes.

Key Points**Need for Committee for Sub-categorisation of OBCs:****Ensuring Equality:**

- It had been constituted to complete the task of sub-categorising 5000-odd castes in the central OBC.
- OBCs are granted 27% reservation in jobs and education under the central government.
- The need for sub-categorisation 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.
- Sub-categorisation would ensure more equitable distribution of opportunities in central government jobs and educational institutions.

Recommended by NCBC:

- In 2015, the National Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC) had recommended that OBCs should be categorised into extremely backward classes, more backward classes and backward classes.
- The benefits of the reservation in OBCs are being cornered mostly by the dominant OBC groups over the years so there is a need to recognise sub-quotas for the extremely backward classes within the OBCs.
- NCBC has the authority to examine complaints and welfare measures regarding socially and educationally backward classes.

Commission's Terms of Reference (ToR):

- **Examining Inequality:** 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.
- **Determining Parameters:** To work out the mechanism, criteria, norms and parameters in a scientific approach for sub-categorisation within such OBCs.
- **Classification:** 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.
- **Eliminating Errors:** 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.

Findings of the Commission Until Now:

- In 2018, the Commission analysed the data of 1.3 lakh central jobs given under OBC quota over the preceding five years.
- It also analysed 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.
- 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.
- In mid- 2019, the Commission informed that it is ready with the draft report (on sub-categorisation). It is widely understood that the report could have huge political consequences and face a judicial review so it's still not released.

OBC Recruitment in the Central Government Jobs (as per the Report submitted by the Department of Personnel and Training to NCBC in 2020):

From the data of 42 ministries/departments, OBC representation in Central government jobs was found out to be:

- 16.51 % in Group-A central government services.
- 13.38 % in Group-B central government services.
- 21.25 % in Group-C (excluding safai karamcharis).
- 17.72 % in Group-C (safai karamcharis).

Regarding NFS:

- NCBC also found out that a number of posts reserved for OBCs were being filled by people of general category as OBC candidates were declared “NFS” (None Found Suitable).

Revision of Creamy Layer:

- Even the revision of the income limit for the creamy layer for the OBCs is under consideration.

INDIAN ECONOMY**Direct Access to G-Sec Market for Retail Investors: RBI**

Recently, the Reserve Bank of India has proposed to allow retail investors to open gilt accounts with the central bank to invest in Government securities (G-secs) directly and without the help of intermediaries.

- Retail Investor is a non-professional investor who buys and sells securities or funds that contain a basket of securities such as mutual funds and Exchange Traded Funds (ETFs).

Government Security

- A G-Sec is a tradable instrument issued by the Central Government or the State Governments.
- It acknowledges the Government’s debt obligation. Such securities are short term (usually called treasury bills, with original maturities of less than one year- presently issued in three tenors, namely, 91 day, 182 day and 364 day) or long term (usually called Government bonds or dated securities with original maturity of one year or more).
- In India, the Central Government issues both treasury bills and bonds or dated securities while the State Governments issue only bonds or dated securities, which are called the State Development Loans (SDLs).

Key Points

- The g-sec market is dominated by institutional investors such as banks, mutual funds, and insurance companies. These entities trade in lot sizes of Rs. 5 crore or more.
- So, there is no liquidity in the secondary market for small investors who would want to trade in smaller lot sizes.

About the Proposal:

- Retail investors will get online access to the government securities market – both primary and secondary – directly through the Reserve Bank.
- The primary market is where securities are created, while the secondary market is where those securities are traded by investors.
- Retail investors will be allowed to open gilt investment accounts directly with RBI. The account will be called RBI retail direct.
- Gilt Account can be compared with a bank account, except that the account is debited or credited with treasury bills or government securities instead of money.
- The direct participation of retail investors in the bidding process will be enabled through the core banking solution of Reserve Bank of India- E-kuber.

Significance:

Broaden Investor Base: Allowing direct retail investment in G-secs will broaden the investor base and provide retail investors with enhanced access to participate in the government securities market.

Pioneer in Asia: This structural reform will place India in the select league of nations such as the USA and Brazil which have such facilities.

- India will possibly be the first in Asia to allow direct retail investment in G-secs to open up an additional investment avenue.

Facilitate Government Borrowings: This measure together with relaxation in mandatory Hold To Maturity (securities that are purchased to be owned until maturity) provisions will facilitate smooth completion of the government borrowing programme in 2021-22.

Financialise Domestic Savings: Allowing direct retail participation in the G-Sec market will promote financialisation of a vast pool of domestic savings and could be a game-changer in India’s investment market.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**Square Kilometre Array Telescope**

Recently, the Square Kilometre Array Observatory (SKAO) Council held its inaugural meeting and approved the establishment of the world's largest radio telescope.

- SKAO is a new intergovernmental organisation dedicated to radio astronomy and is headquartered in the UK.
- At the moment, organisations from ten countries are a part of the SKAO.
- These include **Australia, Canada, China, India, Italy, New Zealand, South Africa, Sweden, the Netherlands and the UK.**

Key Points**Radio Telescopes:**

- Radio telescope, astronomical instrument consisting of a radio receiver and an antenna system that is used to detect radio-frequency radiation between wavelengths of about 10 metres (30 megahertz [MHz]) and 1 mm (300 gigahertz [GHz]) emitted by extraterrestrial sources, such as stars, galaxies, and quasars.
- Unlike optical telescopes, radio telescopes can detect invisible gas and, therefore, they can reveal areas of space that may be obscured by cosmic dust.
- Cosmic dust consists of tiny particles of solid material floating around in the space between the stars.
- Since the first radio signals were detected in the 1930s, astronomers have used radio telescopes to detect radio waves emitted by different objects in the universe and explore it.

The Arecibo Telescope:

- The Arecibo telescope in Puerto Rico, which was the second-largest single-dish radio telescope in the world, collapsed in December 2020.
- China's **Sky Eye** is the world's largest single-dish radio telescope.
- The telescope was built in 1963.
- Because of its powerful radar, scientists employed it to observe planets, asteroids and the ionosphere, making several discoveries over the decades, including finding prebiotic molecules in distant galaxies, the first exoplanets, and the first-millisecond pulsar.

Square Kilometer Array (SKA) Telescope:

The telescope, proposed to be the largest radio telescope in the world, will be located in **Africa** and **Australia**.

Development:

- The development of SKA will use the results of various surveys undertaken using another powerful telescope called the Australian Square Kilometre Array Pathfinder (ASKAP).
- ASKAP is developed and operated by the Australia's science agency Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO).
- This telescope, which has been fully operational since February 2019 mapped over three million galaxies in a record 300 hours during its first all-sky survey conducted late last year.
- ASKAP surveys are designed to map the structure and evolution of the Universe, which it does by observing galaxies and the hydrogen gas that they contain.

Maintenance:

- Its operation, maintenance and construction will be overseen by SKAO.

Cost and Completion:

- The completion is expected to take nearly a decade at a cost of over 1.8 billion pounds.

Significance:**Some of the questions that scientists hope to address using this telescope:**

- The beginning of the universe.
- How and when the first stars were born.
- The life-cycle of a galaxy.
- Exploring the possibility of detecting technologically-active civilisations elsewhere in our galaxy.
- Understanding where gravitational waves come from.

Function:

As per NASA, the telescope will accomplish its scientific goals by measuring neutral hydrogen over cosmic time, accurately timing the signals from pulsars in the Milky Way, and detecting millions of galaxies out to high redshifts.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1st India-Bahrain Joint Working Group meeting in the field of Renewable Energy

The 1st meeting of the Joint Working Group in the field of Renewable Energy between India and the Kingdom of Bahrain was held recently.

Key Points

- A Memorandum of Understanding between India and Bahrain was signed in July 2018 for promoting bilateral cooperation in the field of Renewable Energy.
- Now, both sides have underscored the importance of renewable energy to meet climate change goals.
- They presented the initiatives taken, progress made and future targets set by their respective governments and opportunities available in this sector.
- They agreed on sharing experience, expertise, and best practices.
- Both sides agreed to forge deeper engagement in capacity building and focused cooperation between concerned agencies and the private sector of the two countries in this sector, particularly in the field of solar, wind, and clean hydrogen.

NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Three New Fighter Jets

According to the Ministry of Defence, three new fighter jets will be flying by 2026, of which two will be for the Air Force and one for the Navy.

This includes a new LCA (the Mk-2 version) and AMCA (Advanced Medium Combat Aircraft) for the Air Force and the TEDBF (Twin-Engine Deck-Based Fighter) for the Navy.

Key Points

Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) Mk-2:

THE NEW TEJAS
The long-awaited indigenous fighter Tejas Mk II, which will be manufactured by HAL, will go into production by 2025-2026

17.5 ton
Tejas Mark II will be the same weight as the Mirage, Jaguar and Gripen

ADDITIONS THE NEW GEN

- Heavier stand-off weapon capacity
- State-of-the-art AESA radar
- Indigenously developed air-to-air missile Astra (with a range of 70km)

WHEN: Set to go into production after the Tejas LCA order of 123 aircraft to replace the IAF's ageing MiG-21s is completed

ALSO IN THE WORKS
Advanced medium combat aircraft (AMCA) given a go-ahead by IAF late last year

25-ton fighter will be powered by two engines capable of super-cruise speeds

Will have advanced tech to ensure minimum radar signatures

- It is a 4.5 generation aircraft which will be used by the Indian Air Force.
- It is a replacement for the Mirage 2000 class of aircraft.
- It has got a bigger engine and can carry 6.5 tonnes of payload.
- The technology is already developed in Light Combat Aircraft (LCA).
- The Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) programme began in the 1980s to replace India's ageing MiG-21 fighters.

Following the Mk-1A is the Mk-2 which will provide a high degree of manoeuvrability.

Production:

The roll-out is planned for 2022 and first flight by 2023 and production of the Mk-2 version by 2026.

AMCA (Advanced Medium Combat Aircraft):

- It is a **fifth generation** aircraft. And will be used by the Indian Air Force.
- It is a **stealth aircraft**, i.e. designed for stealth and unlike the LCA, which is designed for maneuverability.
- It has a unique shape to achieve low radar cross-section and has got internal carriage of weapons.
- When the external weapons are removed, this aircraft has enough fuel and weapons inside to do a very capable operational role in stealth mode.
- It will have a range from over **1,000 km up to 3,000 km** in different modes.

Production:

The first flight is expected in 2024-25, followed by trials and tests. It will be in full production by 2029.

Twin-Engine Deck-Based Fighter (TEDBF):



- This fighter will be manufactured for the Navy.
- It will replace the Navy's MiG-29K.
- It will be the first twin engine aircraft project in India that too for dedicated carrier based operations.
- It will operate from the INS Vikramaditya and the upcoming indigenous aircraft carrier.

Induction:

- It will be induced in the Navy by 2030.

SOCIAL WELFARE

Rashtriya Yuva Sashaktikaran Karyakram

Minister of State for Youth Affairs & Sports informed Lok Sabha about Rashtriya Yuva Sashaktikaran Karyakram.

Important value additions

Rashtriya Yuva Sashaktikaran Karyakram (RYSK)

- The Scheme Rashtriya Yuva Sashaktikaran Karyakram (RYSK) is an ongoing Central Sector Scheme.
- The budget allocation of the scheme RYSK for the year 2020-21 is Rs.486.48 Crores.
- It is an umbrella scheme.

The 7 sub-schemes under scheme RYSK are:

- Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan.
- National Youth Corps.
- National Programme for Youth and Adolescent Development.
- International Cooperation.
- Youth Hostels.
- Assistance to Scouting and Guiding Organisations.
- National Young Leaders Programme.

IMPORTANT FACTS FOR PRELIM

Unified Portal of Gobardhan

Recently, a Unified Portal of Gobardhan has been launched to ensure smooth implementation of Biogas schemes/initiatives and their real time tracking.

Key Points

Ensure close coordination with various Departments/Ministries for smooth implementation of Biogas schemes/initiatives and its real time tracking.

Coordinated by:

The Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation under the Swachh Bharat Mission – Grameen (SBMG).

Benefits:

Economy: Strengthen the rural economy through a convergent approach for various Biogas projects/models and initiatives.

ODF Plus Goals: The ODF Plus goals (solid waste management in villages, along with the collection and transportation of biodegradable and non-biodegradable waste) outlined in the Phase 2 of SBMG will depend on the performance of Gobardhan scheme to a great extent.

Synchronisation with other Schemes: The portal will further help in achieving objectives of SATAT (Sustainable Alternative towards Affordable Transportation) aimed at setting up of Compressed Biogas (CBG) production plants and ensuring market linkage for use of biofuel in automotive fuels.

Better Environment & Public Health: Rural India generates enormous quantities of bio-waste which can be efficiently utilized and lead to better environment and public health.

Employment Generation & Savings: Bio-waste processing especially cattle dung into Biogas & organic manure leads to generation of opportunities for employment and household savings.

DAILY ANSWER WRITING PRACTICE

Qns. Public service must evolve to a level where probity becomes a way of life and honesty is a routine expectation. Comment. (150 words)

Ans:

Probity stands for impeccable standards of morality in public life. It goes beyond financial honesty or non-corrupt behaviour. Probity means that public servants will take no undue advantage of any sort from their office.

Honesty is being truthful and open. Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.

Probity and honesty in Governance seeks to fulfil the following purposes:

- Probity in Governance additionally elucidates that rather than the conventional civil service values of performance, integrity and patriotism, it's vital for civil officials to adopt as well as undertake ethical and integrity values, which includes respect for human rights, morality in public life and compassion for the downtrodden and dedication to their welfare.
- The two values preserve public confidence in Government processes, maintain integrity in public services, ensure accountability in governance, ensure compliance with processes, and seek to avoid the potential for misconduct, fraud and corruption.
- Creating credibility (Building trust): It helps a public servant to be trustworthy and get lots of respect in the career because honest people are really trusted by others.
- Building trust and confidence requires an environment where there is a premium on honesty, transparency, openness, boldness, fairness and justice.
- Leadership: If a leader is honest, sincere and committed to the task assigned to him, the vibes created percolate down the hierarchy cleansing the system that he controls.

How to inculcate the probity among the public servants:

- Lack of probity in governance has become one of the biggest menaces to society. To inculcate probity & adherence to ethical practices among them certain strides could be taken:
- A dedicated unit to oversee violations of Code of ethics & Code of conduct by government officials be set up both at state and centre level.
- Information must be made accessible to the common public through websites.
- Mandatory declaration of assets and liabilities of government employees, accompanied by proper auditing.
- Establishment of Independent Anti-Corruption Agency
- Citizens Advisory Boards to incorporate ideas of the common public in improving governance.
- Mandatory Social Audit of all government programs, for example: Meghalaya has passed a law for social audit of government programs.
- An important requisite for ensuring probity in governance is absence of corruption. The other requirements are effective laws, rules and regulations governing every aspect of public life and, more important, an effective and fair implementation of those laws, etc
- Apart from laws and policies, the government should also focus on bringing behavioural change in government employees so that they can easily empathize with the problem of masses.

Conclusion

Probity and honesty in governance are essential and vital requirements for an efficient and effective system of governance and for socio-economic development.

Thus, it is an urgent need of the time that not only the public servants but the whole society adopts such values in their day to day life.

DAILY QUIZ

1. Consider the following statements:

1. The Rohini Commission was constituted to submit its report on Sub-categorisation of Other Backward Classes (OBCs).

2. Article 340 deals with the appointment of a commission to investigate the conditions of backward classes.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 only
b) 2 only
c) **Both 1 and 2**
d) Neither 1 nor 2

2. Consider the following statements:

1. The Square Kilometre Array Observatory (SKAO) is an intergovernmental organisation dedicated to radio astronomy.
2. India is not a member of SKAO
3. SKAO is headquartered in the United Kingdom.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 and 2 only
b) 3 only
c) **1 and 3 only**
d) 1, 2 and 3

3. Consider the following statements about Advanced Medium Combat Aircraft:

1. It is a fifth generation aircraft designed for stealth purposes.
2. It will be India's first twin engine aircraft project.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) **1 only**
b) 2 only
c) Both 1 and 2
d) Neither 1 nor 2

4. Consider the following statements about GOBAR-Dhan Scheme:

1. It is launched by the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy.
2. The is implemented as a part of Swachh Bharat Mission (Grameen and Urban).

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 only
b) 2 only
c) Both 1 and 2
d) **Neither 1 nor 2**

5. Which of the following are correct about Government securities (G-secs)?

1. G-secs can be issued by the Central Government only.
2. The Central Government can issue both treasury bills and bonds while the State Governments can issue only bonds.
3. G-secs are risk-free gilt-edged instruments.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- a) 1 and 3 only
b) **2 and 3 only**
c) 1 and 2 only
d) 1, 2 and 3