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Institute of Research Based Learning & Competition

Current Affairs - 07 July 2025

NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR MINORITIES (NCM)



- It is a **statutory body** under the **Ministry of Minority Affairs**.
- **Origin:**
 - In January 1978, the government set up the Minorities Commission to safeguard the interests of minorities.
 - With the enactment of the **National Commission for Minorities Act, 1992**, the Minorities Commission became a statutory body and was renamed as the National Commission for Minorities.
- It is entrusted with the responsibility to **safeguard the interests of the minority communities** in India. Besides the role, the Commission is also to **undertake confidence-building measures** in light of the new and emerging challenges.
- NCM is responsible for **advising the central and state governments** on matters related to the welfare and development of minority communities in India.
 - **Initially, five religious communities-Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists, and Zoroastrians (Parsis)**-were notified as minority communities by the Union Government.
 - Further, with the **2014 notification**, **Jains** were also notified as another **minority community**.
 - As per the 2011 Census, the six religious minority communities constitute around 20% of the country's population.
- The commission consists of a **chairperson, a vice chairperson, and five members** to be **nominated by the central government** from amongst persons of eminence, ability, and integrity.
- The **members, including the chairperson**, are required to be **from amongst the minority communities**.

- In accordance with Section 4(1) of the NCM Act, 1992, **each member**, including the chairperson, **holds office for a period of three years** from the date of assumption of office.
- The **main functions** of the Commission are:
 - **Evaluate the progress** of the development of minorities under the Union and states.
 - **Monitor the working of the safeguards** for minorities provided in the Constitution and in laws enacted by Parliament and the state legislatures.
 - **Make recommendations** for the effective implementation of safeguards for the protection of the interests of minorities by the central government or state governments.
 - **Look into specific complaints** regarding deprivation of rights and safeguards of the minorities and take up such matters with the appropriate authorities.
 - **Cause studies to be undertaken** into the problems arising out of any discrimination against minorities and recommend measures for their removal.
 - **Conduct studies, research, and analysis** on the issues relating to the socio-economic and educational development of minorities.
 - **Suggest appropriate measures** in respect of any minority to be undertaken by the central government or state government.
 - **Make periodical or special reports to the central government** on any matter pertaining to minorities and, in particular, difficulties confronted by them.
 - Any other matter which may be referred to by the central government.

ATOMIC ENERGY REGULATORY BOARD (AERB)



- AERB stands as **India's premier regulatory authority for nuclear and radiation safety**.

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- The AERB was constituted on November 15, 1983, by the President of India by exercising the powers conferred by the **Atomic Energy Act, 1962** to carry out certain regulatory and safety functions under the Act.
- The **regulatory authority of AERB is derived from the rules and notifications promulgated under the Atomic Energy Act and the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986.**
- The **Mission of the AERB is to ensure the use of ionizing radiation and nuclear energy in India does not cause undue risk to the health of people and the environment.**
- The AERB shall have **authority to administer the provisions of the Factories Act, 1948, the industrial safety for the units of Department of Atomic Energy (DAE)** as per Section 23 of the Atomic Energy Act, 1962.
- Its **headquarters** is situated in **Mumbai**.
- **Members:**
 - The **Board** comprises **six members** of which **two are whole time members including the chairman.**
 - The **other whole-time member is the executive director of the AERB Secretariat** who is an ex-officio member of the Board.
 - The **other four members are eminent experts** from various disciplines relevant to the mandate of the board.
 - The **executive functions** of the AERB shall be vested in **Chairman,**
- The **Board** shall be **responsible to the Atomic Energy Commission.**
- **Regional Regulatory Centres (RRCs)** of AERB set up at **Kolkata, Chennai and New Delhi** carry out regular surveillance of the radiation facilities in eastern, southern and northern zones respectively.
- AERB has a **Safety Research Institute (SRI)** located at **Kalpakkam, Tamil Nadu**, which carries out research in safety related topics.
- **AERB license is a mandatory certification for entities involved in the use of ionizing radiation and nuclear energy in India.**

WILDLIFE INSTITUTE OF INDIA



- It is an **autonomous institution** established in 1982 under the **Ministry of Environment, Forests, and Climate Change, Government of India**, for nurturing the growth of wildlife science in the country.
- **Location:** It is located in Dehradun, Uttarakhand.
- It is an internationally acclaimed institution, which offers training programs, academic courses, and advisory in wildlife research and management.
- It is actively engaged in research across the breadth of the country on biodiversity related issues.
- **Objectives of Wildlife Institute of India**
 - Build up scientific knowledge on wildlife resources.
 - Train personnel at various levels for conservation and management of wildlife.
 - Carry out research relevant to management including the development of techniques appropriate to Indian conditions.
 - Provide information and advice on specific wildlife management problems.
 - Collaborate with international organizations on wildlife research, management, and training.
 - Develop as a regional centre of international importance on wildlife and natural resource conservation.
- The institute carries out research work in the fields of study, which include Biodiversity, policy related to wildlife, Endangered Species, Wildlife management, forensic Wildlife research work, Eco-development, Spatial Modelling, and studies related to changing climatic conditions.
- The board is **chaired by the Union Minister** and has representatives from the centre and state governments as well as institutions and academia.

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INTERNATIONAL TREATY ON PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE



- It was adopted by the Thirty-First Session of the Conference of the **Food and Agriculture Organization** of the United Nations on **3 November 2001**.
- **The Treaty aims at:**
 - Recognizing the enormous contribution of **farmers to the diversity of crops** that feed the world;
 - Establishing a global system to provide farmers, plant breeders and scientists with access to plant genetic materials;
 - Ensuring that recipients share benefits they derive from the use of these genetic materials.
- It is the major international agreement between member countries **to conserve, use and manage plant genetic resources** for food and agriculture around the world for the benefit of people everywhere.
- The Treaty ensures that **farmers and plant breeders access**, easily, the raw genetic material needed to develop new crop varieties, including those with higher yields and those that are resilient to climate change.
- The International Treaty makes it possible to share plant genetic resources across borders through a unique **Multilateral System of Access and Benefit-sharing (MLS)**.
- This treaty established and operates a special initiative operated for the benefit of developing countries – the **Benefit-sharing Fund (BSF)**.
- This **Fund supports agricultural projects for farmers**, public institutions and others in developing countries to conserve and use PGRFA to improve food crop production, fight plant pests and adapt to the effects of climate change.

NATIONAL BIOBANK



- It will serve as the backbone of a **nationwide cohort study**, collecting comprehensive genomic, lifestyle, and clinical data from 10,000 individuals across India.
- It is tailored to **capture the country's unique diversity**—across geography, ethnicity, and socio-economic backgrounds.
- It is designed to be a long-term, data-rich study tracking the health trajectories of individuals over several years.
- It will help scientists uncover disease patterns, gene-environment interactions, and response to therapies—all within the Indian context.
- It is launched under the **Phenome India Project**.
- Researchers believe the initiative will aid **early diagnosis**, **improve therapeutic targeting**, and bolster the fight against complex diseases such as diabetes, cancer, cardiovascular ailments, and rare genetic disorders.

Key Facts about Phenome India Project:

- It is officially named **Phenome India-CSIR Health Cohort Knowledgebase (PI-CheCK)** is an initiative launched by the **Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR)** on December 7, 2023.
- **Objective:** The main objective of the project is to **develop India-specific risk prediction models for cardio-metabolic diseases** including diabetes, liver diseases, and cardiac diseases.
- It is **India's first-ever pan-India longitudinal health monitoring** study focused specifically on cardio-metabolic health.
- Participants include around 10,000 individuals—primarily CSIR employees, pensioners, and their spouses—from across 17 states and 24 cities.

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THE 'KHELO BHARAT NITI' AS A BEACON FOR INDIAN FOOTBALL

- The Khelo Bharat Niti 2025, approved by the Union Cabinet in July 2025, is a significant policy step aimed at positioning sports as a key pillar in India's development.
- **Five-Pillar Approach to Football Development**
 - The policy outlines a comprehensive framework for football through five strategic pillars:
 - **Sports Excellence:** Enhancing the global standing of India's national football team.
 - **Sports for Social Development:** Promoting inclusion and development through football.
 - **Sports for Economic Growth:** Leveraging football to generate events, jobs, and industry growth.
 - **Sports as a People's Movement:** Strengthening community participation.
 - **Sports in Education:** Integrating football into school curricula.
- **Tapping the Indian Diaspora for Talent**
 - The policy also emphasizes utilizing football talent from the Indian diaspora, a move actively pursued by the All India Football Federation (AIFF).
- **Continued Collaboration for National Team Growth**
 - The AIFF, in coordination with Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) and the government, will continue efforts to boost the national team's performance, aligning with the policy's goals.

OCI Talent and Indian Football: Navigating Opportunity and Law

- There has been growing public support for allowing Overseas Citizens of India (OCI) to play for the national team.
- This has been inspired by practices in countries like Bangladesh, Malaysia, and several European and Middle Eastern nations that utilize naturalised or dual-citizen players.
- **FIFA Eligibility vs. Indian Law**

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- FIFA requires a player to hold a valid passport of the country they represent.
- However, OCI cards do not equate to Indian passports, and India currently does not permit dual citizenship, posing a legal challenge.
- Despite the legal limitations, the Indian government and football authorities are now exploring ways—within the framework of FIFA rules and Indian citizenship law—to harness the potential of diaspora talent.
- **A New Policy Direction**
 - The inclusion of this issue in the Khelo Bharat Niti 2025 signals a positive intent, offering hope for structured progress toward integrating OCI talent into the national team.

THE NEW BATTLE CHALLENGE OF CHINA-PAKISTAN COLLUSION

- **Operation Sindoor (May 7–10)** has brought to the fore a troubling evolution in regional geopolitics, one marked by unprecedented battlefield collusion between **China and Pakistan**.
- Confirmed publicly by the Deputy Chief of Army Staff, **Lieutenant-General Rahul R. Singh**, the conflict has underscored the transformation of the **China-Pakistan strategic nexus from traditional partnership to real-time operational cooperation**.
- Now it is **imperative to explore the scope, nature, and consequences of this collaboration, analysing its implications for India's military posture, diplomatic strategy, and long-term security environment**.

The Nature of China-Pakistan Collusion

- **A Strategic Shift: From Tacit Support to Tactical Partnership**
 - Historically, **China's role in India-Pakistan military conflicts**, in 1965, 1971, and 1999, remained limited to diplomatic backing and symbolic gestures in support of Pakistan.
 - However, Operation Sindoor revealed a **more active and layered involvement**.

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- Rather than merely supporting Pakistan in principle, China provided **tangible operational support**, leveraging its **defence-industrial base**, **real-time ISR (Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance) capabilities**, and **tactical interoperability**.
- This marks a major departure from earlier strategies and represents a sophisticated form of **grey-zone warfare**, enabling Pakistan without triggering direct confrontation with India.
- China's **diplomatic posture**, especially after the April 22 Pahalgam terrorist attack, was openly aligned with Pakistan.
- **Digital and Informational Collusion: Crafting the Narrative**
 - Chinese state media and affiliated digital influencers **amplified Pakistani propaganda**, including **exaggerated claims of Indian military losses**.
 - **Social media operations** were synchronized with Pakistan's Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) **psychological warfare**, seeking to shape global perceptions and frame India's military actions as disproportionate responses.
 - The goal was clear: to **delegitimise India's punitive actions**, obscure the terrorist origins of the conflict, and portray India as the aggressor.

Conclusion

- The events of Operation Sindoor and the attendant China-Pakistan collusion mark a **strategic inflection point** for India.
- No longer can collusion be viewed as a hypothetical worst-case scenario; it is now a **lived reality**.
- As India faces this increasingly **complex and contested battlespace**, it must respond with a blend of **hard power**, **diplomatic clarity**, and **strategic imagination**.
- The **choices made now will determine whether India can preserve strategic stability in the region** or remain reactive to the initiatives of a deeply integrated adversarial axis.