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The 'racial profiling' of the Chakmas and Hajongs

Context:

Recently, a letter was issued for a "special census" to be conducted in all the Chakma- and Hajong-inhabited areas.

Relevance:

GS I- Indian Society, GS II- Vulnerable Sections

Dimensions of the Article:

1. About Chakmas
 2. About Hajongs
 3. Special census of the two communities planned in Changlang
 4. Can the Chakma-Hajongs be relocated outside Arunachal Pradesh?
 5. Citizenship status of the Chakma-Hajongs in Arunachal Pradesh
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About Chakmas

- The Chakma people, are a native group from the eastern-most regions of the Indian subcontinent.
- They are the largest ethnic group in the Chittagong Hill Tracts region in southeastern Bangladesh, and in Mizoram.
- They are the second largest ethnic group, and in Tripura, India.
- After the Kaptai dam tragedy, 40-50 thousand Chakmas migrated to Arunachal Pradesh in 1964 and 20-30 thousand Chakmas in Assam.
- The Chakma language (written in the Chakma script) is part of the Indo-Aryan language family of the Indian subcontinent.
- Most Chakma people are adherents of Theravada Buddhism
- The community is headed by the Chakma Raja, whose status as a tribal head has been historically recognized by the Government of British India and the Government of Bangladesh.

About Hajongs

- The Hajong are a tribal group native to the Indian subcontinent, notably in the northeast Indian states and Bangladesh.
- Majority of them are settled in India.
- Hajongs are predominantly rice farmers.
- Hajong have the status of a Scheduled Tribe in India.
- The Hajongs are Hindus and observe Hindu rites and customs.

Special census of the two communities planned in Changlang

- On November 26, 2021, a letter was issued to the officials in Miao, Bordumsa, Kharsang and Diyun circles of the Changlang district for a “special census” to be conducted in all the Chakma- and Hajong-inhabited areas from December 11 to 31.
- Chakma organisations said the census was nothing but racial profiling of the two communities because of their ethnic origin and violated Article 14 of the Indian Constitution and Article 1 of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, ratified by India.
- The census plan was dropped after the Chakma Development Foundation of India petitioned the Prime Minister’s Office and Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh chief Mohan



Can the Chakma-Hajongs be relocated outside Arunachal Pradesh?

- Organisations such as the All Arunachal Pradesh Students' Union say the Centre did not consult the local communities before settling the Chakma-Hajongs and that the State has been carrying their "burden" for too long.
- Members of the two communities have allegedly been victims of hate crime, police atrocities and denial of rights and beneficiary programmes.
- Based on a complaint lodged with the National Human Rights Commission, the Supreme Court had in January 1996 prohibited any move to evict or expel the Chakma-Hajongs and directed the Central and State governments to process their citizenship.
- The Supreme Court pronounced a similar judgment in September 2015 after a Chakma organisation sought implementation of the 1996 order.
- It was also pointed out that Arunachal Pradesh cannot expect other States to share its burden of migrants.

Citizenship status of the Chakma-Hajongs in Arunachal Pradesh

- Members of the two communities had been settled in Arunachal Pradesh six decades ago with a rehabilitation plan, allotted land and provided with financial aid depending on the size of their families.
- Although local tribes claim the population of the migrants has increased alarmingly, the 2011 census says there are 47,471 Chakmas and Hajongs in the State.
- According to the New Delhi-based Chakma Development Foundation of India, the migrants are about 65,000 today and 60,500 of them are citizens by birth under Section 3 of the Citizenship Act, 1955, after having been born before July 1, 1987, or as descendants of those who were born before this date.
- The applications of the remaining 4,500 surviving migrants following the 1996 Supreme Court order have not been processed to date.
 - **Citizenship (Amendment) Act of 2019:** Organisations of the migrants said the Citizenship (Amendment) Act of 2019, which amended two sections of the 1955 Act, has nothing to do with the Chakma-Hajongs since they were permanently settled by the Union of India in the 1960s.
 - **Inner Line Permit:** Since 95% of the migrants were born in the North-East Frontier Agency or Arunachal Pradesh, the Inner Line Permit mandatory under the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation of 1873, for outsiders seeking to visit the State, also does not apply to them.



Padma Awards

Context:

As many as 128 people ranging from veteran politicians, businessmen, scientists and doctors to artists and ordinary people engaged in public service were announced to have been selected for conferment of Padma awards this year. While most accepted the awards gracefully, former West Bengal CM Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee refused to accept it.

Relevance:

GS-II Polity and Governance

Dimensions of the Article:

- About Padma Awards
- About Bharat Ratna
- Eligibility for Padma awards:
- Nominations of the awardees:
- Selection of the awardees

About Padma Awards

- The Padma awards are the highest civilian honour of India after the Bharat Ratna.
- They are announced annually on the eve of Republic Day (26th January).
- They were first instituted in 1954 along with Bharat Ratna.
- At that time only Padma Vibhushan existed with three sub-categories – Pahela Varg, Dusra Varg and Tisra Varg.
- These were subsequently renamed as
 - Padma Vibhushan,



- Padma Bhushan
- Padma Shri
- During the years 1978 and 1979 and 1993 to 1997, Padma awards were not announced.
- The awardees do not get any cash reward but a certificate signed by the President apart from a medallion which they can wear at public and government functions.
- The Awards are given in various disciplines/ fields of activities, viz.- art, social work, public affairs, science and engineering, trade and industry, medicine, literature and education, sports, civil service, etc.
- The total number of awards to be given in a year (excluding posthumous awards and to NRI/foreigners/OCIs) should not be more than 120.

About Bharat Ratna

- Bharat Ratna is the highest civilian award of the country.
- Bharat Ratna is awarded in recognition of exceptional service/performance of the highest order in any field of human endeavour.
 - Recommendations for Bharat Ratna are made by the Prime Minister to the President of India.
 - Only 3 Bharat Ratna Awards can be given in a year.

Therefore:

- Bharat Ratna- 1st degree of honour
- Padma Vibhushan- 2nd degree of honour
- Padma Bhushan- 3rd degree of honour
- Padma Shri- 4th degree of honour

Is it a title?

- The award does not amount to a title and cannot be used as a suffix or prefix to the awardees' name.
- Article 18 clause 1- Abolishes titles and makes four provisions in that regard: It prohibits the state from conferring any title (except a military or academic distinction) on anybody, whether a citizen or a foreigner.



Is the recipient's consent sought?

- There is no provision for seeking a written or formal consent of the recipient before announcement of the award.
- However, before the announcement, every recipient receives a call from the Ministry of Home Affairs informing him or her about the selection.
- In case the recipient expresses a desire to be excluded from the award list, the name is removed.

Eligibility for Padma awards:

- All persons without distinction of race, occupation, position or sex are eligible for these awards. However, government servants including those working with PSUs, except doctors and scientists, are not eligible for these awards.
- The award seeks to recognise works of distinction and is given for distinguished and exceptional achievements or service in all fields of activities and disciplines.
- According to Padma awards selection criteria, the award is given for “special services” and not just for “long service”. “It should not be merely excellence in a particular field, but the criteria has to be ‘excellence plus’.

Nominations of the awardees:

- Any citizen of India can nominate a potential recipient.
- One can even nominate one's own self.
- All nominations are to be done online where a form is to be filled along with details of the person or the organisation being nominated.
- An 800-word essay detailing the work done by the potential awardee is also to be submitted for the nomination to be considered.
- The government opens the Padma awards portal for nominations between May 1 and September 15 every year.
- It also writes to various state governments, governors, Union territories, central ministries and various departments to send nominations.
- There is also no rigid criteria or trenchant formula for selection, according to MHA. However, the lifetime achievement of an individual is among the main considerations.

Selection of the awardees



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- All nominations received for Padma awards are placed before the Padma Awards Committee, which is constituted by the Prime Minister every year.
 - The Padma Awards Committee is headed by the Cabinet Secretary and includes Home Secretary, Secretary to the President and four to six eminent persons as members.
 - The recommendations of the committee are submitted to the Prime Minister and the President of India for approval.
 - Sources said once a preliminary selection is made, the antecedents of the selected awardees are verified using the services of central agencies to ensure nothing untoward has been reported or come on record about them. A final list is then prepared and announced.
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ISRO's new SSLV programme

Context:

ISRO's indigenous new launch rockets, called the Small Satellite Launch Vehicle (SSLV), is likely to have much-delayed.

Relevance:

GS III- Science and Technology

Dimensions of the Article:

1. About Small Satellite Launch Vehicle (SSLV)
2. About New Space India Limited (NSIL)

About Small Satellite Launch Vehicle (SSLV)



- The SSLV is intended to cater to a market for the launch of small satellites into low earth orbits which has emerged in recent years on account of the need for developing countries, private corporations, and universities for small satellites.
- The launch of small satellites has until now been dependent on 'piggy-back' rides with big satellite launches on ISRO's work-horse – the Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle which has had over 50 successful launches so far.
- The launch of small satellites as a consequence has been dependent on the finalising of launch contracts for the larger satellites by ISRO.
- The launch of the maiden flight of the SSLV was scheduled for July 2019 but has been delayed due to setbacks from the Covid 19 crisis and other issues.
- The SSLV can carry satellites weighing up to 500 kg to a low earth orbit while the tried and tested PSLV can launch satellites weighing in the range of 1000 kg.
- The SSLV is the smallest vehicle at 110-ton mass at ISRO.
- It will take only 72 hours to integrate, unlike the 70 days taken now for a launch vehicle.
- Only six people will be required to do the job, instead of 60 people.
- The entire job will be done in a very short time and the cost will be only around Rs 30 crore.
- SSLV is perfectly suited for launching multiple microsattellites at a time and supports multiple orbital drop-offs. The development and manufacture of the SSLV are expected to create greater synergy between the space sector and private Indian industries – a key aim of the space ministry.
- One of the aims of the newly-created ISRO commercial arm, New Space India Limited (NSIL), is to use research and development carried out by ISRO over the years for commercial purposes through Indian industry partners.

About New Space India Limited (NSIL)

- The establishment of NSIL was announced in Budget 2019.
- One of the mandates of NSIL is to mass-produce and manufacture the SSLV and the more powerful PSLV in partnership with the private sector in India through technology transfers.
- Its aim is to use research and development carried out by ISRO over the years for commercial purposes through Indian industry partners.
- It differs from ISRO's existing commercial arm Antrix Corporation:
- Antrix will handle ISRO's commercial deals for satellites and launch vehicles with foreign customers.
- NSIL will deal with capacity building of local industry for space manufacturing.



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