

## Current Affairs of the Day

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## Govt. suspends FCRA clearance of four Christian groups

- Of the six NGOs whose licence under the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA) was suspended by the Union Home Ministry this year, four are Christian associations. An FCRA licence is mandatory for a non-profit organization to receive foreign funds.
- At least two U.S.-based Christian donors are also under the Ministry's scanner for funding NGOs and groups here, a senior government official said.
- The four groups whose licence was suspended are Ecreosoculis North Western Gossner Evangelical in Jharkhand, the Evangelical Churches Association in Manipur, the Northern Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jharkhand and the New Life Fellowship Association (NLFA) in Mumbai. The reasons for the suspension or violation was not specified.
- The Bajrang Dal, the youth wing of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad, had obstructed prayer meetings organized by the NLFA in Mumbai in April and September last year. It alleged that the meeting was a pretext for religious conversion, and later submitted a complaint to the police.

### Value Added Information

#### What is FCRA?

- It is a law enacted by Parliament to regulate foreign contribution (especially monetary donation) provided by certain individuals or associations to NGOs and others within India.
- FCRA Act was originally passed in 1976 and majorly modified in 2010.
- The government has used the act over the years to freeze bank accounts of certain NGOs who it found were affecting India's national interest for wrong purposes.
- As per the FCRA Act 2010, all NGOs are required to be registered under the Act to receive foreign funding.
- According to terms stipulated in the FCRA, an organisation cannot receive foreign funding unless it is registered under the 2010 Act, except when it gets government approval for a specific project.



- Under the FCRA Act, registered NGOs can receive foreign contribution for five purposes — social, educational, religious, economic and cultural.

## NGOs:

- The term 'NGO' is used to describe a body that is neither part of a government nor a conventional for-profit business organisations
- Groups of ordinary citizens that are involved in a wide range of activities that may have charitable, social, political, religious or other interests.
- Helpful in implementing government schemes at the grassroots.
- In India, NGOs can be registered under Indian Societies Registration Act, 1860, Religious Endowments Act, 1863, Indian Trusts Act, etc.
- India has the largest number of active NGOs in the world.
- NGOs receive funds from abroad, if they are registered with the Home Ministry under the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act (FCRA).

## India, Iran discuss Afghan peace process

- The Defence Ministers of India and Iran discussed ways to take forward bilateral cooperation and exchanged views on regional security issues, including peace and stability in Afghanistan, during their meeting in Tehran, the Defence Ministry said on Sunday. In a departure from protocol for defence meetings, the Iranian side raised the issue of recent reports citing the safety of minorities in India, it is learnt.
- Defence Minister Rajnath Singh held a bilateral meeting with Iran's Minister of Defence and Armed Forces Logistics Brigadier General Amir Hatami at the latter's request on September 5.
- Mr. Singh was on a transit halt in Tehran en route from Moscow to New Delhi where he attended the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Defence Ministers meeting. Iran is an observer at the SCO.
- Both leaders emphasised upon the age-old cultural, linguistic and civilisational ties between India and Iran.



## 'Moplah rioters' not freedom fighters: report

- A report submitted to the **Indian Council of Historical Research (ICHR)** in 2016 had recommended the removal of the **Wagon Tragedy victims and Malabar Rebellion** leaders Ali Musliyar and Variamkunnath Ahmad Haji, and Haji's two brothers from a book on martyrs of India's freedom struggle. The report sought the removal of names of 387 'Moplah rioters' from the list of martyrs.
- The book, **Dictionary of Martyrs: India's Freedom Struggle 1857-1947**, was released by Prime Minister Narendra Modi last week.

### Martyrs from the south:

- C.I. Issac, an ICHR member, submitted the 2016 report to the Council, recommending the deletion of the names when the fifth volume, covering martyrs of the freedom struggle from south India, came up for review.
- The report, describes Haji as the "notorious Moplah Riot leader" and a "hardcore criminal," who "killed innumerable innocent Hindu men, women, and children during the 1921 Moplah Riot, and deposited their bodies in a well, locally known as Thoovoor Kinar".
- Haji was arrested by the army, tried by an army court and shot dead on January 20, 1922.
- The ICHR recently constituted a three-member committee, including Mr. Issac, to review the entries in the dictionary, including those of Haji and Ali Musliyar.
- The review report said, "Almost all the Moplah outrages were communal. They were against Hindu society and done out of sheer intolerance. Thus, the following names should be deleted from the yet-to-be published project." Mr. Issac is also the vice-president of the Bharatiya Vichara Kendram.

### For taking part in riots:

- "None of those who died in the Wagon Tragedy were freedom fighters of India as they hoisted the Khilafat flag and established Khilafat and Khilafat courts for a brief period. They were arrested by the army for participating in



riots. Around 10 Hindus who participated in the riots too are on the list of persons to be removed from the dictionary,” said Mr. Issac.

- The British convicted the rioters after proper trial. While some were hanged to death, some died in jail and some others in hospitals. These dead were never recognised as freedom fighters elsewhere, he added.

### Value Added Information

#### About Indian Council of Historical Research:

- The ICHR is an autonomous body of the HRD Ministry, which had been established by an Administrative Order of the then Ministry of Education.
- The body has provided financial assistance to the historians and direction to the research scholars in their multifarious topics of historical research through established historians and scholars of the country.
- ICHR disburses funds for carrying out research to Indian as well as foreign scholars on their applications for fellowships, grants, and symposia.

#### Objectives:

- The objectives of the ICHR, as enunciated in the initial pamphlet published by the Department of Education, Government of India in 1972 are as under:
  - to bring historians together and provide a forum for exchange of views between them;
  - to give a national direction to an objective and scientific writing of history and to have rational presentation and interpretation of history;
  - to promote, accelerate and coordinate research in history with special emphasis on areas which have not received adequate attention so far;
  - to promote and coordinated a balanced distribution of research effort over different areas; and
  - to elicit support and recognition for historical research from all concerned and ensure the necessary dissemination and use of results.



## Composition:

- An eminent historian nominated by the Government of India shall be Chairman of the Council;
- Eighteen historians nominated by the Government of India;
- A Representative of the U.G.C;
- Director-General of Archaeology;
- Director, National Archives;
- Four persons to represent Government who shall be nominated by the Government of India and which shall include one representative each of the Ministry of Education, the Department of Culture and the Ministry of Finance; and Member Secretary.

## ‘Close old power plants, save ₹53,000 crore’

- Shutting down thermal power plants older than 20 years in 11 key States can save the exchequer ₹53,000 crore over five years, says an analysis by Climate Research Horizon.
- The savings will accrue from not having to spend on retrofitting these plants to reduce the toxicity of their emissions, as well as switching to renewable energy, the authors estimate.
- These projections also come at a time when India has announced plans to auction 41 coal mining blocks in an ostensible bid to be less reliant on imported coal.

## Surplus capacity:

- Several of the power distribution companies (discoms) are financially stressed though India has surplus power generation capacity. While free power for agriculture and power theft are one reason, the authors opine, another is that several States have installed capacity based on projections that are far in excess of actual requirements.
- This has resulted in huge over capacity in the electricity system, and disproportionate fixed cost obligations for many discoms. In conjunction with delayed payments from cash-strapped government entities and the



requirement to provide free and subsidized power to significant segments of their customer base, this has been a recipe for disaster.

- In her Budget speech in February, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced that utilities would be urged to shut down old and polluting power plants to meet air emission norms.
- The States analyzed were Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal. They together account for nearly half of discom dues.
- The surplus generation capacity notwithstanding, an additional 60,000 MW thermal power is officially under construction across the country, with another 29,000 MW in the proposal/permitting stage. Of this, 17,235 MW is likely to be completed by 2022 in these States.