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Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989 (SC/ST Act)

Recently, the Punjab & Haryana High Court has rejected the FIR under the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989 that didn't mention accused persons was aware of his caste.

- The Act prevent the commission of offences of atrocities against the members of the Scheduled Castes (SC) and the Scheduled Tribes (ST).
- **Aim** - To **deliver justice to the scheduled communities** through preventive and proactive efforts.
- It is popularly known as the SC/ST Act, Prevention of Atrocities (POA) or the Atrocities Act.
- **Enacted on** - 11 September 1989 and came into force on 30 January 1990.
- **Last amendment** - It was amended on 2019 by replacing the Untouchability (Offences) Act, 1955 and the Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955.
- The provisions are rooted in **Articles 15 and 17** of the Indian Constitution.

Article 15 prohibits discrimination on the basis of caste.

Article 17 of the Constitution of India states that 'Untouchability is abolished and its practice in any form is forbidden.

- **Listed offences** - There are 37 offences listed in this act, all offences are cognizable, allowing police to initiate investigations without a warrant.
- **Investigating Officer Rank** - Only officers of the rank of Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) or above can investigate cases under this Act.
- The investigation must be completed within **30 days**.
- **Speedy Trials** - For ensuring prompt trials, special courts are designated to handle cases related to atrocities against SCs and STs.
- For every Special Court, a Public Prosecutor or an advocate who has been in practice as an advocate for not less than 7 years.
- **Punishment** - The Act prescribes a range of punishments for offenders, including:
 - Imprisonment for a minimum of 6 months and
 - A maximum of life imprisonment or even death sentence in severe cases.
- **Duty Neglect Penalty** - Public servants who deliberately neglect their duties under the Act can be punished with imprisonment up to 6 months.
- **Immediate Relief** - Victims of atrocities under the Act are entitled to immediate

relief, which can be provided in cash or kind by the District Magistrate or Sub-Divisional Magistrate.

References

1. [Live Law| SC/ST Case](#)
2. [CVMC| About SC/ST Act](#)

Anna Chakra

Recently, the Union Minister of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution has launched the Anna Chakra and SCAN portal for saving Rs.250 crore annually.

- Anna Chakra is a tool for optimizing the supply chain of food-grains under the Public Distribution System (PDS) across states.
- It is a step towards modernizing the PDS and subsidy claim mechanisms of the States.
- **Developed by** - In collaboration with World Food Programme (WFP) and the Foundation for Innovation and Technology Transfer (FITT), IIT-Delhi.
- **Ministry** - Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution.
- **Objective** - To enhance the efficiency of the Public Distribution System (PDS) logistics network across the country.
- The project leverages advanced algorithms to identify optimal routes and ensure seamless movement of food grains across supply chain nodes.
- It estimates to save the annual cost of transporting free wheat and rice for the poor people.
- **Interstate route optimization tool** - Developed for optimization of the PDS movement between the states.
- It is integrated with the FOIS (Freight Operations Information System) portal of the Railways through Unified Logistics Interface Platform (ULIP).
- **Benefits** - It enhances the efficiency of the PDS logistics network across the country.
- PDS aid in improving efficiency, reducing costs, and ensuring timely delivery of essential commodities.
- It provides food safety net to 81 Crore beneficiaries.
- It uses technology for plugging leakage and saving public exchequer to get direct benefit transfer by opening more bank accounts.
- It also provides environmental benefits by lowering carbon footprint due to reduced transportation-related emissions.

Subsidy Claim Application for NFSA (SCAN) Portal

- **Aim** - To provide for a single window submission of subsidy claims by states and claim scrutiny.
- It will ensure end-to-end workflow automation of all the processes for release and settlement of food subsidy using rule-based processing.
- It facilitates the expeditious settlement processes.

World Food Programme (WFP)

- It is an international organization within the United Nations.
- It is the world's largest humanitarian organization that aims to **eradicate hunger and malnutrition**.
- **Established On** - 1961.
- **Headquarters** - Rome, Italy.
- **Mission** - To deliver food assistance in emergencies and build the resilience of communities and people who are food insecure.
- **Operations** - The WFP operates in more than 120 countries and territories, helping around 80 million people each year.
- **Goals** - Saving lives, Improving nutrition and Achieving Zero Hunger.
- Saving lives during emergencies and providing food assistance to help communities become self-sufficient and resilient to shocks.
- It is fully committed to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

References

1. [The Times of India| Anna Chakra](#)
2. [PIB| Anna Chakra and SCAN Portal](#)

Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH)

Recently, the Supreme Court added the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) and UNESCO's Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH) for the restoration of two heritage buildings in Mysore.

- Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH) is an autonomous non-profit organization that seeks to preserve Indian culture and heritage.
- **Aim** - To conserve the heritage based on the belief that living in harmony with heritage enhances the quality of life.
- **Vision** - To spearhead heritage awareness and conservation in India.
- **Established on** - January 27 1984 under the Societies Registration Act, 1860.
- **Ministry** - Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA).
- **FCRA** - It is authorized to receive contributions from abroad under Section 6 (1) of the **Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act, 1976**.
- **Chapters** - Are forums formed with the authority and directions granted by INTACH and are constituted with about 25 members.
- It is recognized as one of the world's largest heritage organizations, with over 228 Chapters across the Country.
- **Membership** - Voluntary in Nature.
- **Unprotected architectural heritage** - It institutionalises the conservation of the unprotected architectural heritage.
- It recognizes the need for identifying and documenting the cultural heritage throughout the country.
- **Listing** - They undertake the listing of Natural Heritage, Built Heritage, Art (Material) Heritage and Intangible (Living) Heritage.
- **Criteria for Listing** - It includes 3 key concepts to determine whether a property is worthy of listing that include:
 1. Historic significance
 2. Historic integrity

3. Historic context

- This information effectively used for creating awareness about the local heritage.
- It can also facilitate action for providing legal protection to heritage assets.

About 54,000 heritage resources in 150 cities/towns have been listed by INTACH till now.

References

1. [Live Law| Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage \(INTACH\)](#)
2. [INTACH| About us](#)

Global Strategy for Resilient Drylands (GSRD) 2030

Recently, the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) has launched the CGIAR 2030 Global Strategy for Resilient Drylands (GSRD) at COP16 summit in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

- **Drylands** – Are areas with a scarcity of water that cover more than 40% of the Earth's land surface.
- **Global drylands** – It makes up 46% of the world's land area.
- It supports nearly half of the livestock and 44% of food systems are present in this region.
- It is home to some of the world's poorest and most climate vulnerable communities.
- It warms at a rate of 20-40% higher than other regions.
- The factors leading to dryness in this regions are:
 - Rising temperatures,
 - Soil degradation,
 - Unpredictable rainfall patterns and
 - Exacerbate food insecurity.
- **Global Strategy for Resilient Drylands (GSRD)** – Aims to revolutionize dryland agriculture and nurture resilient livelihoods in dryland communities globally.
- It provides a roadmap to enhance food security, conserve biodiversity and build resilient livelihoods for the 2.7 billion people inhabiting drylands, particularly in Asia and Africa.
- It commits to a thriving and resilient future for the millions of people who depend on drylands for their food and livelihoods.
- **Launched by** – Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR).
- **Spearheaded by** – International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA) of CGIAR and International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT).
- The 5 key areas of focus by the strategy are:
 1. Adapting agro-food systems to climate change
 2. conserving biodiversity
 3. sustainably managing soil and water resources
 4. promoting healthy diets

5. fostering inclusive development

Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR)

- It is a global research partnership for a food-secure future dedicated to transforming food, land, and water systems in a climate crisis.
- It is the world's largest public global agricultural innovation network.
- **Founded** - 1971.
- **Headquarters** - France.
- It works with partners in *6 major regions*.
- It is dedicated to reducing poverty, enhancing food and nutrition security, and improving natural resources.

References

1. [Down to Earth| Global Strategy for Resilient Drylands \(GSRD\)](#)
2. [CGIAR| GSRD 2030](#)

