

## 1. On the sub-categorisation within castes

### Why in news?

In an election rally in Telangana, Prime Minister Narendra Modi promised to look into the sub-categorisation of Scheduled Castes (SCs) to identify and help the most backward among them — a move that has been read as an attempt by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) to woo the Madiga community. The Madigas are the most populous of all SC communities in the State but have claimed that their share of representation was being taken up by another SC community, the Malas.

### Is sub-categorising legal?

In the last two decades, multiple States like Punjab, Bihar, and Tamil Nadu have tried to bring in reservation laws at the State level in a bid to sub-categorise SCs and decide on a separate quantum of reservation for these subcategories within the umbrella of Scheduled Castes. However, all plans are held up in courts as the Supreme Court forms its larger Constitution Bench to decide the matter.

The issue first reached the courts when the Andhra Pradesh government in 1996 formed a one-man Commission of Justice Ramachandra Raju, which recommended sub-categorisation of SCs in the State based on evidence that some communities were more backward and had less representation than others. When the State government tried to implement this recommendation, the matter went to the judiciary, eventually making its way to the Supreme Court, which in 2004, held that the State did not have the power to unilaterally sub-categorise communities in the list of SCs or Scheduled Tribes (STs). The Constitution has provided that these lists can only be made by Parliament and notified by the President.

However, while hearing a challenge to Punjab's attempt at doing the same, a five-judge Bench headed by Justice Arun Mishra had held in a 2020 judgment, that deciding on the quantum of benefits in the lists of SCs/STs already notified would not amount to "tinkering" with it and that States could do it. Given the contradiction, the 2020 judgment has also been referred to the larger Bench.

### How close have governments come?

Even as the question of whether SC sub-categorisation can be done is pending with the Supreme Court, the 2004 judgment had pushed the Union government to explore legal options for the same. It initiated dialogue with the Law Ministry and in 2005, the Attorney-General of India (AGI) had opined that it was possible to sub-categorise SCs. The AGI, at the time, had said that any such classification could be allowed only if there was "unimpeachable evidence to indicate a necessity" for it. The AGI had added that a

constitutional amendment could be brought in to facilitate this. Based on this, the Union government formed a National Commission to look into the question of sub-categorising SCs in Andhra Pradesh and the then Cabinet recommended an amendment to Article 341 of the Constitution of India to allow for it. But both the National Commission for Scheduled Castes (NCSC) and the National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (NCST) had opined that a constitutional amendment was not necessary. They said that Article 16(4) of the Constitution already provided for States to create special laws for any backward classes it felt was under-represented.

Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains Paper II; Governance

Source: The Hindu

## 2. BDS movement - led by Palestinian groups against Israel

### Why in news?

Amid the ongoing Israel-Hamas war, Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement has urged the boycott of some of the biggest and most visible multinational companies, including McDonald's, Puma, Google, Disney, and Amazon.

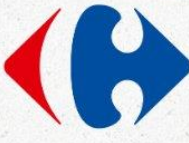




**The BDS movement encourages the continued pressure on those who support Israel's genocidal war against Palestinians in Gaza.**



**But at the same time, let us strengthen our targeted campaigns and boycott the most complicit companies in order to maximize our impact!**



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### **So what is the BDS Movement?**

The movement was launched in 2005 by more than 170 Palestinian groups to garner international support for Palestinian people's rights. On its website, it describes itself as an "inclusive, anti-racist human rights movement that is opposed on principle to all forms of discrimination, including anti-semitism and Islamophobia."

It draws inspiration from the South African anti-apartheid movement. BDS urges "nonviolent pressure on Israel until it complies with international law" to meet three demands on Israel:

1. Ending its occupation and colonization of all Arab lands and dismantling the Wall. Here, "the Wall" refers to the structure separating Israeli and Palestinian settlements in the West Bank.
2. Recognizing the fundamental rights of the Arab-Palestinian citizens of Israel to full equality.

3. Respecting, protecting and promoting the rights of Palestinian refugees to return to their homes and properties as stipulated in UN Resolution 194.”

### **How does BDS aim to achieve these goals?**

BDS says boycotts involve withdrawing support from Israel’s government, the sporting, cultural and academic institutions associated with it, and “from all Israeli and international companies engaged in violations of Palestinian human rights.”

For example, it says “Puma sponsors the Israel Football Association, which includes teams in Israel’s illegal settlements on occupied Palestinian land,” urging the company’s boycott.

On these lines, the divestment campaigns “urge banks, local councils, churches, pension funds and universities to withdraw investments” from Israel. Sanctions campaigns “pressure governments to fulfil their legal obligations to end Israeli apartheid”, and for suspending Israel’s membership in international forums such as UN bodies and FIFA.

Strategically, it aims to focus on a “smaller number of carefully selected companies and products for maximum impact”. “Many of the prohibitively long lists going viral on social media do the exact opposite of this strategic and impactful approach,” it says, adding that these lists could risk being ineffective.

Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains Paper II; International Relations

Source: The Hindu

## **3. Sam Altman’s replaced by Mira Murati as head of OpenAI**

### **Why in news?**

Sam Altman was fired as CEO of OpenAI, the maker of the popular chatbot ChatGPT, by the company’s board of directors. OpenAI’s Chief Technology Officer Mira Murati was named interim chief executive officer.

Launched in 2015, OpenAI kickstarted the generative AI craze last November by unveiling ChatGPT. The chatbot became one of the world’s fastest-growing software applications.

### **Who is Sam Altman?**

Born in 1985 in Chicago, Altman learned to program and disassemble computers by the age of 8, according to the New Yorker. He went to Stanford University to study computer science but dropped out after a year as he wanted to build a startup with a couple of his classmates.

After his social media app, Loopt, failed to take off, Altman joined a venture capitalist firm known as Y Combinator that focused on funding startups. He became the head of the firm in 2014. It was during his tenure that Y Combinator funded well-known startups like Airbnb and Dropbox.

In 2019, Altman decided to step down and focus full-time on OpenAI, an organisation which he had co-founded five years ago, as CEO.

### **Who is Mira Murati?**

Born in Albania and educated in Canada, Murati, 34, is a mechanical engineer, who joined OpenAI in 2018 after working at Tesla. She played an essential role in the development of the Model X car, and Leap Motion, a startup that developed a computing system to track hand and finger motions.

At OpenAI, she has overseen the development and launch of ground-breaking products like ChatGPT and DALL-E. Although Murati became chief technology officer of the company last year, current and former employees told the NYT that she had been working as the company's head of operations.

Relevance: GS Prelims; Miscellaneous

Source: The Indian Express