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25th Western Zonal Council Meeting

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Why in News

The 25th meeting of the western zonal council will be held in January 2020, under the chairmanship of Union Home Minister.

- **Maharashtra** will be the lead coordinator this time with the **Chief Minister of the state co-chairing** the meeting.
- It will present a **roadmap for the safety of women online** and ways to **curb cyberbullying**.
- The **24th meeting** of the council was held in **Goa in August 2019**.
- **Western Zonal Council** comprises of **Goa, Gujarat, Maharashtra, the Union Territories of Daman and Diu, and Dadra and Nagar Haveli**.

Key Points

- The Maharashtra government has been directed to hold awareness campaigns in districts on **cyberbullying of women, cyber frauds and internet child pornography**, etc.
- It seeks participation from the entire state in the drive which will be named '**Cyber Safe Women**', to make the **internet safe** for women and children and to **prevent online crimes** against them.

Zonal Councils

- The **Zonal Councils** are the **statutory (and not the constitutional) bodies**. They are established by an **Act of the Parliament**, that is, **States Reorganisation Act of 1956**.

- The act divided the country into **five zones- Northern, Central, Eastern, Western and Southern** and provided a zonal council for each zone.

While forming these zones, several **factors have been taken into account** which include: the natural divisions of the country, the river systems and means of communication, the cultural and linguistic affinity and the requirements of economic development, security and law and order.
- Each zonal council consists of the following members:
 - Home Minister of Central government.
 - Chief Ministers of all the States in the zone.
 - Two other ministers from each state in the zone.
 - Administrator of each union territory in the zone
- In addition to the above mentioned Zonal Councils, a **North-Eastern Council** was created by a separate Act of Parliament, **the North-Eastern Council Act of 1971**.

Its members include **Assam, Manipur, Mizoram, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Meghalaya, Tripura and Sikkim**.
- These are **advisory bodies** that **make recommendations** with regard to any matter of common interest in the field of economic and social planning between the Centre and States border disputes, linguistic minorities, inter-State transport or matters connected with the reorganisation of States.

Source: TH