News: Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray will cochair the next meeting of the Western Zonal Council (WZC), which will have, among other issues, women safety on top of the agenda.

Other details

- The 25th meet of the council will be held this month under the chairmanship of Union Home Minister Amit Shah.
- Maharashtra, the lead coordinator this time, will present a roadmap for the safety of women online and ways to curb cyber bullying as its priority agenda, called the ‘Cyber Safe Women’ programme.

Western Zonal Council

- The council, functioning under the aegis of the Ministry of Home Affairs’ Inter-State Council Secretariat, comprises Goa, Gujarat, Maharashtra, the Union Territories of Daman and Diu, and Dadra and Nagar Haveli.

About Zonal councils

- These are statutory bodies established under the States Reorganisation Act 1956 and not constitutional bodies. They are only deliberative and advisory bodies.

- Aim: to promote interstate cooperation and coordination.

There are 5 Zonal councils namely:

1. The Northern Zonal Council, comprising the States of Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Punjab, Rajasthan, National Capital Territory of...
Delhi and Union Territory of Chandigarh.

2. The Central Zonal Council, comprising the States of Chhattisgarh, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh.

2. The Eastern Zonal Council, comprising the States of Bihar, Jharkhand, Orissa, and West Bengal.

2. The Western Zonal Council, comprising the States of Goa, Gujarat, Maharashtra and the Union Territories of Daman & Diu and Dadra & Nagar Haveli.

2. The Southern Zonal Council, comprising the States of Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and the Union Territory of Puducherry.

The North Eastern States i.e. (i) Assam (ii) Arunachal Pradesh (iii) Manipur (iv) Tripura (v) Mizoram (vi) Meghalaya (vii) Sikkim and (viii) Nagaland are not included in the Zonal Councils and their special problems are looked after by the North Eastern Council, set up under the North Eastern Council Act, 1972.

Organisational structure of Zonal Councils

- **Chairman** – The Union Home Minister is the Chairman of each of these Councils.
- **Vice Chairman** – The Chief Ministers of the States included in each zone act as Vice-Chairman of the Zonal Council for that zone by rotation, each holding office for a period of one year at a time.
- **Members** – Chief Minister and two other Ministers as nominated by the Governor from each of the States and two members from Union Territories included in the zone.
- **Advisers** – One person nominated by the Planning Commission (which has been replaced by NITI Ayog now) for each of the Zonal Councils, Chief Secretaries and another officer/Development Commissioner nominated by each of the States included in the Zone.
- **Union Ministers** are also invited to participate in the meetings of Zonal Councils depending upon necessity.
The main objectives of setting up of Zonal Councils are:

- Bringing out national integration.
- Arresting the growth of acute State consciousness, regionalism, linguism and particularistic tendencies.
- Enabling the Centre and the States to co-operate and exchange ideas and experiences.
- Establishing a climate of co-operation amongst the States for successful and speedy execution of development projects.

Functions

In particular, a Zonal Council may discuss, and make recommendations with regard to:

- any matter of common interest in the field of economic and social planning;
- any matter concerning border disputes, linguistic minorities or inter-State transport;
- any matter connected with or arising out of, the re-organization of the States under the States Reorganisation Act, 1956.