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OBC Reservation in Medical Admissions

- The Madras High Court ruled that there was no constitutional or legal impediment to extending the benefit of reservation to Other Backward Classes (OBCs) in college admissions.
- The ruling claims that reservation to OBCs can be extended in admissions to medical and dental seats contributed to the All India Quota (AIQ) by State government-run medical and dental colleges.
- The judges directed the Centre to constitute a committee to fix the percentage and other terms for OBC reservation from next year.
- Madras high court didn't find any reason for denying such reservation for OBCs in non-central institutions alone, as the issue of merit had now been taken care of with the introduction of the NEET Exam.
- Nevertheless, the dispute was whether the State law, providing as much as 69% of the overall quantum of reservation, could be applied to seats contributed to the AIQ, especially when the Centre had insisted that overall reservation should not exceed 50% of total seats.
- Further, the Centre's inclination to grant reservation for OBCs had not crystalized into a legal right.

All India Quota

- AIQ was basically a creation of the Supreme Court judgment passed in September 1986.
- Till then, all seats in State government medical and dental colleges were filled up only with local residents of the respective States.
- Disagreeing with such practice, the Supreme Court had ordered creation of AIQ.
- Medical Council of India's AIQ in non-central institutions was created at the instance of the Supreme Court case in 1986.
- The objective behind SC's 1986 order was that there should be a national pool of medical seats filled purely on the basis of merit, instead of every State admitting students to medical colleges on the basis of domicile.

- Accordingly, State governments began surrendering 15% of medical and dental seats in undergraduate studies and 50% of postgraduate seats to the AIQ, every year, so that candidates across the country could compete for them.

Istanbul Convention

- Istanbul convention (AKA) Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence.
- The treaty is the world's first binding instrument to prevent and tackle violence against women.
- It is the most comprehensive legal framework that exists to tackle violence against women and girls, covering domestic violence, rape, sexual assault, female genital mutilation (FGM), so-called honour-based violence, and forced marriage.
- The Convention sets minimum standards for governments to meet when tackling violence against women.
- When a government ratifies the Convention, they are legally bound to follow it.
- Recently, Poland announced that it would withdraw from the convention citing that it requires schools to teach children about gender.
- Also, it says, the treaty tries to construct a "socio-cultural gender against the biological gender" (e.g. like forming homosexual families).

New Investment Policy

- In April 2020, Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) notified the new FDI policy.
- It made mandatory for countries which share a land border with India get prior government approval for FDI.
- India shares land borders with Pakistan, Afghanistan, China, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh and Myanmar.
- These countries can invest only under the Government route after obtaining approval from Ministry of Home Affairs.
- Investors from countries that are not covered by revised FDI new policy only have to inform the RBI after the completion of a transaction rather than seek prior clearance from the administrative ministry.
- Earlier, FDI was allowed in non-critical sectors through the automatic route without the MHA's nod.
- Prior government approval or security clearance from MHA was required for investments in critical sectors such as defence, media, telecommunication, satellites, private security agencies, civil aviation and mining and any investments from Pakistan and Bangladesh.

- About 200 investment proposals from China are awaiting security clearance from the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA).

Nagarjunasagar Srisaïlam Tiger Reserve (NSTR)

- NSTR is the largest tiger reserve in India.
- It was notified in the year of 1978 and came under the protection of Project Tiger in 1983.
- In 1992, it was retitled as Rajiv Gandhi Wildlife Sanctuary.
- The Tiger reserve is spread over 5 districts in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana.
- The area consists mostly of the Nallamala Hills, Krishna River cuts the basin of this reserve.
- The multipurpose reservoirs Srisaïlam and Nagarjunasagar are located in the reserve.
- Of the 3,980 tigers left in the world, India, with 2,226, accounts for 75% the tiger population.
- The number of tigers in the Nagarjunasagar Srisaïlam Tiger Reserve (NSTR) in Andhra Pradesh has gone up, reversing the steady decline in their number over a period
- A massive conservation effort spearheaded by the Forest Department and many global NGOs has started showing results as is evident from the tangible increase in the population of tigers.

Blue poppy

- Blue poppy, *Meconopsis aculeata*, is considered the Queen of Himalayan Flowers.
- It is found from Kumaon to Kashmir at elevations of 3,000 to 5,000 meters.
- High alpine rock screes, small, loose stones, rock fragments and lateral periglacial moraines seem to be the core occupancy zone of the species.
- However, a recent comparative study of abundance of the species in alpine moraines at different elevations indicated that it is slowly depleting at lower altitudes and rocky moraines.
- Not only the Blue Poppy but several other flowering plants, found at very high altitudes, are facing the “climb higher or die” situation due to climate change.



Tsirkon Hypersonic N-Missile

- Russian administration announced on Russian Navy would be equipped with hypersonic nuclear strike weapons and underwater nuclear drones.
- Tsirkon hypersonic cruise missile is designed to be carried on surface ships, it is under final phase of testing.
- The combination of maneuverability, speed, and altitude of the hypersonic missiles makes them capable of traveling at more than five times the speed of sound and therefore difficult to track and intercept.
- Poseidon underwater nuclear drone is intended to be carried by submarines is another weapon under testing.

Source: The Hindu



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