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1. EWS Quota : Supreme Court Upholds 10% reservation For Economically Weaker Sections (Nov. 7, 2022)

Economically Weaker Sections

In a significant judgement on November 7, the **Supreme Court** validated the **10 per cent** quota in colleges and government jobs for the poor or **EWS (economically weaker sections)** introduced just before the 2019 general elections.

Important facts

- By amending the constitution, the central government had made a provision of 10 percent reservation for the economically weaker sections of the general category.
- **The 103rd Constitutional Amendment** providing for reservation was challenged in the Supreme Court.
- A five-judge bench of the Supreme Court upheld the validity of the 103rd Amendment to the Constitution, which provides for 10% reservation for Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) in admissions and government jobs.
- **Three judges** (Justices Dinesh Maheshwari, Bela Trivedi, and JB Pardiwala) upheld the Constitution Amendment Act and two judges disagreed.
- **Justice S Ravindra Bhat** disagreed, terming the law discriminatory and violation of basic structure.
- **Chief Justice U U Lalit** also concurred with the view of Justice S Ravindra Bhat.
- The petitioners had questioned several aspects of the EWS quota, including how it could exceed the national limit of 50 per cent on reservation set by the Supreme Court in 1992 and whether it changed the "basic structure" of the Constitution.

Observation of the court

- Justice Trivedi ruled that the EWS quota law is not discriminatory.
- Justice Maheshwari observed that the EWS quota law does not violate basic structure or equity, keeping in view the economic parameters.
- It does not harm any essential facility by exceeding the 50 per cent limit for the quota as the limit itself is flexible.

103rd Constitution Amendment Act

- In the year **2019**, **Article 15 and Article 16** of the Indian Constitution were amended through the 103rd Constitutional Amendment.
- Through the amendment, **Article 15 (6)** and **Article 16 (6)** were inserted in the Constitution of India, so that the economically backward people (**EWS**) of the unreserved class could be provided the benefit of **reservation**.

- The amendment empowered the state governments to provide reservation on the basis of economic backwardness.

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3. G-7 Foreign ministers meet held in the historic town of Muenster , Germany (Nov. 5, 2022)

G-7 Foreign ministers meet

The Group of 7 (G7) Foreign Minister's meeting was held at the German town of **Muenster** on 4th and 5th November 2022. The historic Treaty of Westphalia was signed in 1648 in the city, which not only ended the 30 years' war in Europe but also laid the foundation of the modern nation - state system.

German foreign minister **Annalena Baerbock**, hosted the foreign ministers of, United States, France, the United Kingdom, Japan, Italy and Canada. Germany is currently the President of the G-7 group.

Germany invited Ghana, Kenya and the African Union to join the G7 meeting for discussions on climate change, infrastructure, democracy and addressing conflict and humanitarian crises.

At the end of the meeting the foreign ministers agreed to provide aid to **Ukraine** so that it can deal with the harsh winter climate. Around 30% of Ukraine's electricity grid has been destroyed due to the Russian Invasion of the country since 24 February 2022.

They also urged **China** to abstain from issuing "threats, coercion, intimidation, or the use of force," in the Taiwan straits. The United States considers China as a serious rival and wants the G7 countries to take a tough stand against China's policy on Taiwan and its trade policy.

Interestingly the German Chancellor **Olaf Scholz** was on a one day visit to China to meet the Chinese leader **Xi Jinping**, the day the G-7 foreign minister's meeting started in Germany. He is the first G7 leader to visit China since the covid-19 pandemic.

G-7 or Group of Seven countries

The G7 (Group of Seven) is an organisation of the world's seven largest advanced economies, which dominate global trade and the international financial system.

- They are Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States.
- Russia joined in 1998, creating the G8, but was excluded in 2014 for its annexation of the Crimea region of Ukraine.
- It has no permanent secretariat.
- The 2021 summit meeting was held in England
- The 2022 summit meeting was held in Germany.
- The 2023 summit will be held in Japan .

4. Indian Army approves five Make-II projects to promote 'self-reliance' (Nov. 5, 2022)

five Make-II projects to promote 'self-reliance'

The **Indian Army** on November 4 has given approval for development of **five Make-II Projects niche technology** by Indian industry under the **Make-II route of defence procurement**.

What are Make-Category Projects?

- The provision of '**Make**' category of capital acquisition in the **Defense Procurement Procedure (DPP)** is an important pillar for realising the vision of '**Make in India**' initiative.
- It aims to promote indigenous capabilities through design and development of defence equipment/products/systems/sub-systems/components/parts required by both public and private sectors within a fast time frame.

Sub-categories of 'Make' Project

1. Make-I (Government Funded)

- Make-I refers to the projects funded by the government.
- This includes the development of big-ticket platforms such as light tanks and communication equipment with Indian security protocols.

1. Make-II (Industry Funded)

- Industry-funded programs are covered under 'Make-II'.
- The Make-II category includes the development of prototypes of military hardware or its up-gradation for import substitution, for which no government funding is provided.
- The Army is already working on 43 projects under the Make II process of capital acquisition.

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6. Union Minister Piyush Goel calls for deepening of economic ties with Kyrgyzstan (Nov. 5, 2022)

economic ties with Kyrgyzstan

Union Minister for Commerce and Industry **Piyush Goel** called for boosting bilateral trade and deepening cultural relations between India and Kyrgyzstan .He was speaking at the **10th Session** of the India-Kyrgyz Republic Inter-Governmental Commission on Trade, Economic, Scientific and Technological Cooperation (IKIGC).

The 10th session of IKIGC was held in a virtual format. It was co-Chaired by Piyush Goyal and Imanov Talantbek Oruskulovich, Minister of Digital Development of the Kyrgyz Republic.

Both sides discussed mutual cooperation and steps to further enhance them in the fields of Trade & Economy, Development Partnership, Investment, Digitalization, Intellectual Property, Agriculture, Healthcare & Pharmaceuticals, Textiles, Education, Environment, Standardization & Metrology, Banking, Transport, Labour, Mining and Power sectors. Emphasis was given to increase the bilateral trade and investment opportunities.he sides agreed to take necessary measures to increase the interaction of exporters and importers of the two countries and expand the trading basket.

India- Kyrgyzstan relations

Kyrgyzstan which was part of the Soviet Union declared its Independence on 31 August 1991 and India was one of the first countries to establish diplomatic relations on 18 March 1992.

The India- Kyrgyz Republic Inter Governmental Commission on Trade, Economic, Scientific and Technological Cooperation **was set up in 1992.**

According to the Ministry of External Affairs the bilateral trade between India and Kyrgyz Republic in 2017-18 was about USD 59.53 million. India's exports to Kyrgyzstan was USD 28.59 million and imports were at USD 30.94 million.

India and Kyrgyzstan conduct an annual military exercise' **Khanjar'**, where the special forces of both the countries take part. The 9th Khanjar exercise 2022 was held at **Bakloh**, Himachal Pradesh in March-April 2022 .

Kyrgyzstan

It is an Central Asian country

Capital : **Bishkek**

Currency :**Kyrgyzstan som**

President :**Sadyr Japarov**

7. Army Commanders' Conference to take place from November 7 in New Delhi (Nov. 5, 2022)

Army Commanders' Conference

The **Army Commanders' Conference** will be held in **New Delhi** from 7-11 November to deliberate on the current and emerging security and administrative aspects and to chart the future for the Indian Army.

Important facts

- During the conference, the top leadership of the Indian Army will deliberate on current/ emerging security and administrative aspects to chart the future for the Indian Army.
- Other activities planned during the conference will also include talks by eminent subject matter experts on "**Contemporary India-China Relations**" as well as "**Technical Challenges to National Security**".
- During the conference, Defense Minister **Rajnath Singh** will address and interact with Army Commanders on 10 November 2022.
- The Chief of Defense Staff and the Chiefs of the Indian Navy and Indian Air Force will also address the senior leadership of the Indian Army to promote tri-services synergy.

About Army Commanders' Conference

- It is an apex level biennial event which is an institutional forum for ideological level discussions and helps in taking important policy decisions for the Indian Army.

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9. Guyana President Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali to be chief guest at 17th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas Convention at Indore (Nov. 5, 2022)

chief guest at the 17th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas Convention

Guyana President **Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali** will be the **chief guest** at the **17th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas Convention**. It will be held from **8th to 10th January** 2023 in **Indore, Madhya Pradesh**.

Important facts

- **Zaneta Mascarenhas**, Member of Parliament of **Australia**, will be the **guest of honour** at the **Youth Pravasi Bharatiya Divas** which will be held on **8th January** 2023.
- Last year, the **16th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas** conference was organised on 9 January despite the Covid pandemic. The convention was held in virtual format.
- The theme of the 16th Convention 2021 was “**Contributing to Aatmanirbhar Bharat**”.
- The Young Pravasi Bharatiya Sammelan was celebrated on January 8, 2021 with the theme "**Bringing together Young Achievers from India and the Indian Diaspora**".

17th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas Convention

- The 17th PBD Convention is being organized from 08-10 January 2023 at Indore, Madhya Pradesh, in collaboration with the Government of Madhya Pradesh.
- The 17th PBD Convention will be held in a physical format after a gap of four years.
- The last PBD Convention in 2021 was held virtually during the Covid pandemic.
- The theme of PBD Convention 2023 is "**Diaspora: Reliable partners for India's progress in Amrit Kaal**".
- The PBD Convention 2023 will be inaugurated by Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** on 09 January 2023.
- The Youth PBD will be held on 08 January 2023, in partnership with the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports.
- On 10 January 2023, President **Droupadi Murmu** will confer Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Awards and preside over the Valedictory Session.

Organiser of the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas

- The Pravasi Bharatiya Divas is organised by the **Ministry of External Affairs** in partnership with a **state government** and an Industry body, either **Confederation of Indian Industry (CII)** or Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (**FICCI**) . It is normally organised on 9 January.

Significance of 9 January

- On this day in **1915** the greatest pravasi of India , **Mahatma Gandhi** returned from **South Africa** in 1915 from South Africa to India .

- His ship SS Arabia docked in Bombay (now Mumbai) on 9 January 1915. To honour and celebrate the occasion the government of India decided to start Pravasi Bharatiya Divas in 2003.

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