

# NEWS TODAY

## SUPREME COURT (SC) UPHOLDS 27% OBC QUOTA IN NEET

- SC upheld the **constitutional validity of quota for Other Backward Classes candidates** within **NEET-PG and NEET-UG All India Quota seats for 2021-22 admissions**.
  - SC held that '**reservation is not at odds with merit** but furthers its distributive consequences'
  - Distributive justice is **concerned with the fair distribution of the burdens and benefits of social cooperation among diverse persons** with competing needs and claims.
- SC gave following reasons to approve 27% OBC reservation:
  - **Articles 15(4) and 15 (5) are not an exception to Article 15 (1) of Constitution of India**, which itself sets out the principle of substantive equality (including the recognition of existing inequalities).
  - **Merit cannot be reduced to narrow definitions of performance** in an open competitive examination which only provides formal equality of opportunity.
  - High scores in an examination are not a proxy for merit. Merit should be **socially contextualized and reconceptualized** as an instrument that advances social goods like equality.
- SC also accepted the recommendation of the Ajay Bhushan Pandey Committee to stick to the **prescribed Rs 8 lakh income limit for EWS quota** for the current admission cycle.
  - NEET has been the **uniform entrance test for medical courses across the country**. Though the same examination is held across the country, a chunk of the seats in state medical/dental colleges is reserved for students domiciled in their respective states. The remaining seats — **15% in UG and 50% in PG** — are surrendered by the states to the **All-India Quota (AIQ)**.
    - **Reservation for the OBC and EWS categories within the AIQ** will be offered in medical colleges from the current academic year.



## REVISED RURAL AREA DEVELOPMENT PLAN FORMULATION AND IMPLEMENTATION (RADPFI) GUIDELINES RELEASED

- **Released by:** Ministry of Panchayati Raj.
- **RADPFI guidelines** aim is to have **planned spatial development** for overall integrated development of villages.
- **Need of Spatial Planning**
  - **Unplanned spatial development in Gram Panchayats**
  - Extended Urbanisation Area,
  - Emergence of Census Towns,
  - Improve the Quality of Life & Sustainability of Gram Panchayats,
  - Integration of Reforms/programs (SVAMITVA, RURBAN, New changes in State Acts & Amendments, re-emphasis on Disaster, Climate Change, Resilience Codes, etc.)
  - Need to be linked to Agro-Climatic Regions/zones linked to SDGs
- **New Guideline (2021) is Focused on**
  - To prepare the spatial development plan, focus on **Typology of villages** i.e population, agro-climatic zones, Hill areas, disaster occurrence etc;
  - **Village Town Planning Scheme (VPS)** – through community based on Collaborative Planning.
  - **Linking 15th Finance Commission with State Finance commission** with respect to village level planning.
  - Integrating/Consolidation of GP Development with RURBAN CLUSTERS/Block/District Plan, as per the 73rd and 74th CAA and GPDP.
  - Improving the **E-Governance through Spatial Data Infrastructure**.
  - **Use of SVAMITVA** (and other digital tools) for the Abadi area (linking to land records).
  - **Planning for environmental benefit** and disaster preparedness.

## STATES OPPOSE RULE CHANGE ON CENTRAL POSTING OF IAS OFFICERS

- Centre has proposed **amendments to the IAS (Cadre) Rules 1954** in order to exercise greater control in central deputation of IAS officials.
  - **At present, a cadre officer may, with the concurrence of the State Governments** concerned and the Central Government, be deputed for service under Central Government or another State Government etc.
- **What amendments propose?**
  - Each **State Government shall make available for deputation**, such number of eligible officers of various levels, **adjusted proportionately by the number of officers available with State Government** vis-à-vis total authorized strength of State cadre at a given point of time.
  - In case State does not give effect to Central government's decision **within specified time**, "officer shall stand relieved from cadre from date as may be specified by Central government."
  - In specific situation where services of cadre officers are required by Central **government in "public interest"** State shall give effect to its decisions within a **specified time**.
- **Why do states oppose?**
  - States are arguing that the amendment is **against spirit of cooperative federalism and state's power to veto an IAS or IPS officer's central deputation**, or issue an objection or no objection notice, stands 'defunct'.

○ Rules have been brought as Centre has been facing a **huge crunch of IAS and IPS officers** as the states do not want to release their cadre officers easily.

- According to DoPT, number of **central deputation reserve of IAS officers has gone down from 309 in 2011 to 223 presently**.

## INDIA LAUNCHES SLEW OF INFRA & DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS IN MAURITIUS

- India inaugurated the **Social Housing Project**, and laid the foundation stones for a **Civil Service College and an 8 MWt Solar PV Farm project**.
  - Two agreements were also exchanged, **one for extension of US\$ 190 million Line of Credit to Mauritius for the Metro Express and other infrastructure projects and MoU on the Implementation of Small Development Projects**.

### ● India Mauritius relations

- Indian origin people comprise **nearly 70% of Mauritius's population**.

- Both signed **Comprehensive Economic Cooperation and Partnership Agreement (CECPA)**, in 2021.

- Both **signed agreements in security realm including transfer** of a Dornier aircraft and an Advanced Light Helicopter, Dhruv.

- Earlier, India in 2016 had extended a **grant of US\$ 353 mn as Special Economic Package** to execute priority projects.

- Mauritius occupies a special place in India's vision of '**SAGAR**' (**Security and Growth for All in the Region**) for building a secured regional architecture.

- Mauritius' proximity to important Sea lines of communications to West Asian oil fields.

- **Challenges for India- Mauritius relations:** China's growing presence and influence in the Indian Ocean region, round-trip of investments in India through Mauritius, etc.



## CENTRE TO RANK STATES ON FASTER GREEN NODS

- Environment ministry plans to **rank State environment impact assessment authorities (SEIAAs)**, on the **speed with which they accord environmental clearances (EC)** to development projects.

- SEIAAs are **responsible for providing environmental clearance for a bulk of the infrastructure, developmental and industrial projects**.

- This is intended as a **mode of recognition and encouragement** and for **prompting improvements** where needed.







### ● Parameters

- **Average number of days** taken to accept proposals seeking either EC or terms of reference (ToR) for projects;
- **Number of complaints** addressed;
- **Percentage of cases for which site visits** are carried out;
- **Percentage of cases** in which **additional information is sought** from project proponents more than once;
- Disposal percentage of proposals **seeking fresh or amended ToRs** that are older than 30 days; and the disposal percentage of proposals seeking fresh or amended EC that **are older than 120 days**

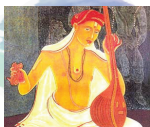
### ● Concerns:

- **May weaken the authority of the SEIAAs** by imposing time limits on their functioning.
- Rating system is in **violation of the Constitutional responsibility of the Central Government to protect the environment**.
- The process **undermines scientific rigour** in the decision making process.

## ALSO IN NEWS

 <p><b>'Agri Nutri Garden Week' under Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana – National Rural Livelihood Mission (DAY-NRLM)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It aims <b>establishment of 'Agri Nutri Gardens'</b> in the rural households through awareness campaign and encouraging.</li> <li>It's agenda is to support rural poor household to have Agri Nutri Garden to <b>fulfill the need of the family's nutrition and any excess production can also be sold for income generation.</b></li> <li>It also aims <b>promoting nutritional awareness</b>, education and behavioural change, <b>harnessing traditional knowledge</b> and implementing nutrition-sensitive agriculture through homestead agriculture and nutri-garden.</li> <li>DAY-NRLM is flagship program for <b>promoting poverty reduction through building strong institutions</b> of the poor, particularly women.</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Sherpa</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>First BRICS Sherpas meeting of 2022 was held virtually.</li> <li><b>About Sherpas:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A Sherpa is a <b>personal representative</b> of the leader of a member country at an international Summit such as the G8, G20 etc.</li> <li>The term is derived from the Nepalese Sherpa people, who serve as guides for mountaineers in the Himalayas.</li> <li>They <b>coordinate the agenda, seek consensus, and participate in a series of pre-Summit consultations</b> to help negotiate their leaders' positions.</li> <li>There is only one Sherpa per Summit for each member country.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
 <p><b>Operation Sard Hawa</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Border Security Force (BSF) launched operation 'Sard Hawa' at the international border of Rajasthan, under which vigil will be beefed-up to <b>check the instances of infiltration due to the dense fog in the area.</b></li> <li>The operation will be carried out from January 23 to 28.</li> <li>BSF conducts <b>"Operation Garam Hawa" in summer and "Operation Sard Hawa" in winter</b> every year.</li> <li>BSF is a <b>central armed police force (CAPF)</b> that functions under the Union government. It was <b>raised in 1965.</b></li> <li>BSF is deployed <b>along the Pakistan and Bangladesh borders.</b> It is also deployed in areas affected by Left Wing Extremism etc.</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Moisture content</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Centre may reduce the moisture content (MC) limit for wheat, paddy, hence more tightening of MC limits.           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MC is the weight of water contained in a product expressed in percent.</li> <li><b>Reason for high moisture in Crop:</b> Untimely rain, lack of storages, overirrigation.</li> </ul> </li> <li>At present, farmers have to take a price cut on MSP when selling wheat stocks above the 12% limit to FCI.           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stocks with <b>above 14% moisture are rejected.</b></li> </ul> </li> <li>According to the proposal <b>wheat stocks with moisture content above 12% will not be procured even with a price cut.</b></li> </ul>
 <p><b>I-LAB</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I-LAB is <b>first of its kind Mobile Diagnostic Laboratory (I-LAB)</b> is capable of performing both RT-PCR and ELISA.</li> <li>I-LAB is dedicated to provide COVID <b>testing access to rural and remote parts of the North Eastern Region.</b></li> <li>It is a biosafety facility and can also be utilised for testing of other infectious diseases like TB, HIV, and therefore will remain relevant even in post-COVID times.</li> </ul>
 <p><b>BrahMos</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>BrahMos, <b>supersonic cruise missile</b>, with increased indigenous content and improved performance, was successfully test-fired.</li> <li><b>BrahMos missile (Indo-Russian joint venture)</b> variants can be launched from land, air, sea and under water.           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The range of the missile was <b>originally capped at 290 km as per obligations of the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR).</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Following India's entry in MTCR in 2016, it was decided to extend the range to 450 km and to 600 km at a later stage.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>Recently, <b>Philippines has approved a \$374.96 million contract for the purchase of shore based anti-ship variant of the missile from India.</b></li> </ul>





**Personalities  
in News**

### Tyagaraja (4 May 1767 – 6 January 1847)

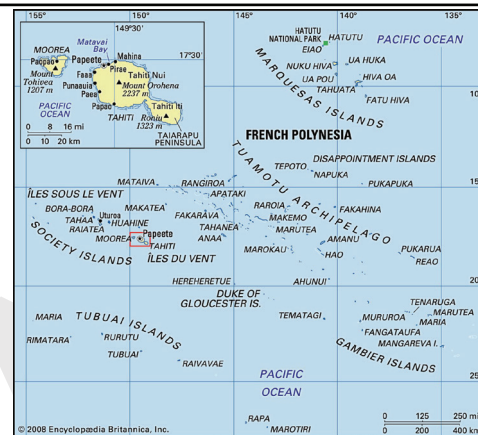
- **A great saint and music composer**, he was born in the village of Thiruvayaru in the Thanjavur district of Tamil Nadu.
- Tyagaraja is considered the **most legendary Carnatic music composer** of all time, who played a very significant role in the development of this music genre.
  - He saw music as a means to **experience the love of god and as such, his sole intention was purely devotional while performing.**
- **He is the largest composer of Telugu Carnatic music.**
- **Values:** Rama bhakti, Devotion, commitment, spirituality



**Places in news**

### Tahiti

- Scientists have discovered a pristine, **3-km long reef of giant rose-shaped corals off the coast of Tahiti.**
  - Discovery suggests that there may be many more unknown large reefs in our oceans, given that only about 20% of the entire seabed is mapped.
- The **island of Tahiti is the largest island in French Polynesia.** Papeete, on Tahiti's northwestern coast, is the capital and administrative centre of French Polynesia.
- French Polynesia is **overseas collectivity of France consisting of five archipelagos in the south-central Pacific Ocean.**



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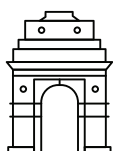
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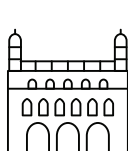
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DELHI



LUCKNOW



JAIPUR



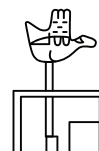
HYDERABAD



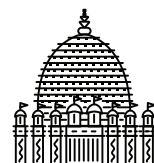
PUNE



AHMEDABAD



CHANDIGARH



GUWAHATI