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10% forward quota to kick in from Feb 1, with zero tweaks

Govt Sticks To Original Specs Despite Gehlot Statement

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: The economically weaker sections (EWS) in the general category will be eligible for 10% quota in central government jobs notified on or after February 1. An office memorandum issued by the department of personnel and training has stuck to the eligibility criteria for EWS quota approved by the Union Cabinet and Parliament and signed into law by the President.

As per the office memorandum of January 19, persons not covered under the existing scheme of reservations for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and the Socially and Educationally Backward and whose family has gross annual income below Rs 8 lakh are to be identified as EWS to be eligible for the quota.

"Family" for this purpose would include the person who seeks the quota, his/her parents and siblings aged under 18 as also his/her spouse and minor children. "Income" would include income from all sources, i.e. salary, agriculture, business, profession etc and pertain to the financial year prior to the year of the application.

As approved by the Cabinet, all persons whose families own any of these assets—5 acres of agricultural land and above; residential flat of 1000 sq ft or above; residential plot of 100 sq yards and above in notified municipalities or residential plot of 200 sq yards



Social justice minister Thawar Chand Gehlot (in maroon cap) after the Rajya Sabha passed the Bill on 10% forward on January 9. Gehlot had said the original criteria to qualify for the quota could be altered

Nitish wants population-based quota, bats for caste census

Bihar CM Nitish Kumar said on Monday he was in favour of reservation for all castes in proportion to their respective share in the population while demanding that the 2021 census be made caste-based. He also said the 10% quota for economically weaker sections in the general category would be implemented by his government at the state level.



Nitish Kumar

"I have no objection if certain other backward castes are demanding increase in the percentage of their quota from the existing 27%. I also favour quota for all castes in proportion to their share in the population," Nitish said while responding to a media query at his weekly 'Lok Samvad' programme in Patna. Nitish said the last caste census was conducted during the British Raj in 1931. "The next census is going to be held in 2021. The country should conduct a fresh census of all castes, like we do in the case of the castes under the SC/ST category," Nitish said, adding that proper counting of all castes would help in taking policy decisions. Nitish's statement assumes significance ahead of the Lok Sabha election as the opposition BJP has been repeatedly demanding the publication of caste-wise data of the socio-economic and caste census-2011 (SECC-2011).

Madan Kumar | TNN

and above in areas other than the notified municipalities—would be excluded from being identified as EWS, irrespective of family income.

Incidentally, adherence to the original EWS criteria approved by the government runs contrary to social justice minister Thawar Chand Gehlot's indication earlier that such criteria could be revisited as

and when they were notified.

As per the DoPT memorandum, income and assets of families of persons seeking to avail 10% EWS quota would have to be certified by an officer not below the rank of tehsildar in states/UTs. The memorandum said the quota would be available for direct recruitment vacancies notified/advised starting February 1, 2019.

HC notice to Centre on DMK plea against forward quota

Chennai: The Madras high court issued a notice to the Centre on Monday to reply before February 18 on a petition by DMK challenging the 10% quota for general category.

A division bench comprising Justices S Manikumar and Subramonium Prasad rejected the contention by additional solicitor general G Rajagopalan that the petition filed by DMK was a "political interest litigation", and not a public interest litigation, and had been moved to push its agenda.

Earlier, the counsel for the petitioner—DMK organising secretary R S Bharathi—submitted that reservations were not poverty alleviation programmes but more in the nature of social justice to uplift communities which have not had access to education or employment for centuries.

The ASG, who appeared for the Centre, argued that DMK was ideologically against certain communities and was opposing the 10% EWS quota only to push its personal agenda. Rajagopalan said the petitioner, who lost opposing the amendment in one constitutional forum (Parliament), was now trying to misuse another (HC).

The Parliament earlier this month passed the amendment bill providing for 10% reservation in government jobs and education for economically weaker sections in the general category. Gujarat and Uttar Pradesh have already implemented the law.

2G case in-charge among 20 SPs, ASPs shunted by acting CBI chief

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Just three days before the PM Modi-led selection committee is to decide on the next CBI chief, the agency's interim director M Nageswara Rao on Monday transferred 20 officers, including 13 superintendents of police (SPs) and 7 additional SPs (ASPs).

Among the transferred officers are SP Vivek Priyadarshi, who was handling the crucial ACB Delhi unit probing the 2G spectrum scam, and SP Nirbhay Kumar who has been given additional charge of ACB Jodhpur along with SP Economic Offences-II wing.

Some other SPs who were shifted by Rao are—AT Durai Kumar (moved from EO Chennai to ACB Chennai), Prem Gautam (SP EO-III New Delhi will hold additional charge of deputy director administration) and Mohit Gupta, who has been moved from ACB Ghaziabad to bank securities and fraud cell (BS&FC) in Delhi.

Interestingly, Mohit Gupta was recently brought to the Delhi anti-corruption unit by Alok Verma when he briefly took charge before his unceremonious exit, and was made in-charge of the case against Rakesh Asthana who has since been moved out of the CBI.

However, as soon as Verma was removed by the selection panel, Rao overturned all the transfers ordered by him.



M Nageswara Rao

Bassi moves SC over transfer to Port Blair

CBI DSP Ajay Kumar Bassi moved the SC afresh on Monday challenging his transfer back to Port Blair within days of its revocation by then CBI chief Alok Verma during his two-day stint following reinstatement by the SC. The petition accused interim CBI chief M Nageswara Rao of victimising Bassi.

In his petition, Bassi said he was being victimised because he had fairly probed the FIR lodged against then CBI special director Rakesh Asthana.

"While there were some purported reasons for transfer of Verma as director CBI, there are absolutely no allegations whatsoever against the petitioner to warrant such extreme action," he added. TNN

CJI recuses self from hearing PIL on Rao

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi, who had recused from the selection committee meeting to decide then CBI director Alok Verma's fate, on Monday said he would participate in the January 24 meeting of the panel to select a new director.

A day after the SC quashed the Centre's order divesting Verma of his powers and ordered a fresh decision on his fate by the selection committee, CJI Gogoi on January 9 nominated Justice A K Sikri to take part in the meeting of the panel also comprising PM Modi and leader of Congress in Lok Sabha Mallikarjun Kharge. The Congressman had moved the SC in support of Verma and challenged divestment of the CBI chief's power, terming it illegal as the selection panel's consent was not taken.

The committee, by a 2-1 majority, upheld divestment of Verma's powers after going through the preliminary inquiry report of CVC on alleged corruption charges against him.



CJI Ranjan Gogoi

inst him. Verma refused to accept his transfer as DG Fire Services and quit. The Centre appointed M Nageswara Rao as interim CBI director.

On Monday, a PIL by NGO 'Common Cause' seeking quashing of Rao's appointment came up for hearing before a bench of CJI Gogoi and Justice Sanjiv Khanna. The NGO said no provision of Delhi Special Police Establishment Act or CVC Act permitted appointment of an interim CBI chief.

But the CJI said he was recusing from the hearing as he would take part in the selection panel meeting on January 24 to pick the new CBI director. He adjourned the hearing, saying the PIL would now be listed before a bench led by Justice Sikri on January 24.

Frenchman who worked for lepers dies of swine flu

Shivani Azad | TNN

Dehradun: A 72-year-old French national, Pierre Reyniers, who dedicated his life to serving lepers in Uttarakhand, died at a private hospital on Sunday after contracting swine flu. On Monday, his sister flew to Dehradun from France to perform his last rites.

Reyniers first visited Dehradun when he was 21 and decided to make the Doon valley his permanent abode. Those who knew him well said that he was particularly taken back by the way lepers were abandoned by families and forced to live on the fringes of society. To ensure they could also live dignified lives, he opened four self-sustainable handloom centres in Dehradun and Rishikesh that employed lepers.



Reyniers had lived in Dehradun since he was 21. Taken aback by the poor living conditions of lepers, he decided to set up handloom centres to help them lead dignified lives

A pall of gloom descended upon these handloom centres as news of the Frenchman's death spread.

The centres have as many as 100 people, all lepers, engaged in making handloom products and handicraft items. "He was a messiah for us. My family had shunned me but he accepted me and so many others like me," one of the employees said.

The septuagenarian was admitted to the hospital and put on ventilator on January 7 when his lungs, liver and heart started malfunctioning. Such was the gratitude that people felt for him that

Rs 9 lakh was raised within a week to fund his treatment.

Manju Lawrence, a family friend, told TOI, "He was determined to help the needy. He opened these centres to preserve the handicraft of the state while providing employment to people at the same time."

Lawrence added that according to Pierre's wish, part of his ashes were immersed in Ganga and the rest were kept in a graveyard. "Pierre did not believe in boundaries of caste, religion and race. In his last rites, too, we respected his beliefs," she said.

Loyola college exhibit sparks 'anti-Hindu' row

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Chennai: An art exhibition organised by Chennai's Loyola College over the weekend has triggered a storm on social media after right-wing groups and members of the BJP termed some of the paintings "anti-Hindu" and "anti-India". The college management issued an apology on Monday, also assuring that the paintings were removed soon after they were brought to notice.

In a one-page apology, Loyola College's art and literary unit coordinator Kaleswaran "acknowledged the lapse and apologised for the insurmountable hurt this has caused". The college does not advocate or support anything that is tantamount to disturbing peace and tranquillity of the society, the statement added.

Earlier, BJP national secretary H Raja called for action against the college for offending Hindu sentiments.

Yogi to roll out pension scheme for seers

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Lucknow: The Yogi Adityanath government is all set to announce a pension scheme for seers at its historic cabinet meeting at Kumbh later this month. The move stirred opposition ranks on Monday with Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav taking a jibe at Hindutva icon Yogi while playing his own soft Hindutva card.

The Yogi government, at a recent high-level meeting, decided to organise special camps to enroll seers under a government pension scheme, which will include homeless and nomadic sadhus. "It was also decided at the meeting to create a special category to include elderly seers," UP BJP spokesperson Rakesh Tripathi. The stipend under the scheme will be raised from Rs 400 to Rs 500 per month.

Sharply reacting to the government dole for seers, SP chief and former CM Akhilesh Yadav said, "The govern-



Yogi feeding birds on the banks of Ganga during Kumbh Mela

ment must give a monthly pension of Rs 20,000 to seers and re-introduce the Samajwadi pension scheme and honorarium of Rs 50,000 to those awarded the Yash Bharti under the SP regime. The government should also announce pension for those who recite Ramayan in villages and artists who portray the role of Lord Ram, Bharat and Sita. And if they still have funds, a portion could be given to those who portray Ravana too," he said.

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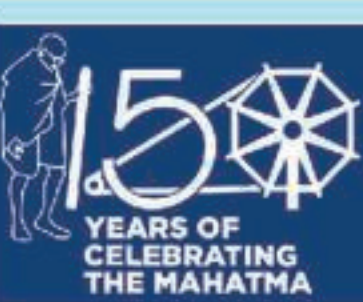
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