

RESERVATION – 2014

January to December - 2014

Compiled By
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LPG dealers threaten nationwide strike (25)

NEW DELHI: LPG dealers on Monday threatened to go on an indefinite nationwide strike from January 19 if the state-owned oil firms did not stop appointing new distributors. Their demand also included making direct benefit transfer for LPG scheme more practical and not pressure the distributors to take Aadhaar card forcibly from the customers against the direction of the Supreme Court. "We will stop the sale of all products other than domestic cylinders from January 15 and if our demands are not addressed we will be going on an indefinite strike from January 19," said the LPG Distributors Federation. The federation wants the government to cancel an advertisement issued by state-owned oil companies for the appointment of new distributors all over the country. "The oil marketing companies have increased the reservation of the open category at the cost of SC/ST and OBC in most of the states, which is in gross violation with the reservation policy approved by the government," the federation said in a statement. The federation claimed the move was "based on anti-poor and pro-rich policies benefiting only the creamy layer of society and advertised arbitrarily without complying with the directions/approvals given by the Petroleum Ministry." (Deccan Herald 6/1/14)

Jammu Kashmir Gujjars demand OBC status for Jats in state (25)

A Gujjar organisation in Jammu and Kashmir on Sunday supported the demand by the Jats community in the state for their inclusion in the Other Backward Classes (OBC) category. We have written to Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and Home Minister Sushilkumar Shinde supporting the demand of Jats in the state to include them in the OBC category, said Javaid Rahi, Secretary, Tribal Research and Cultural Foundation. The union government had recently recommended the inclusion of Jats in the state list of OBCs in nine states excluding Jammu & Kashmir. The inclusion of Jats would enable them to avail the benefits of reservation to OBCs, he added. (CNN IBN 6/1/14)

Kharge Bats for 18 pc Quota in Govt Jobs for SC/STs (25)

BANGALORE: Railway Minister Mallikarjun Kharge on Monday said reservation in government jobs for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes is not commensurate with their population. He appealed to Chief Minister Siddaramaiah to set it right on priority basis. At a convention of the KPCC's SC/ST wing here, he said at present, reservation in government jobs for SC/STs is 15 per cent. The government should fill all backlog for SC/STs and ensure 18 per cent reservation in state government jobs, he said. Such neglect is also there in the Union government. There are 16 railway zones, five production facilities and 63 divisional railway managers, but not even a single person from SC/ST community is heading any one of these. Of the 20 Principal Secretaries to various departments at the Centre, there is none from the reserved category, he regretted. He said compared to other states, the situation is somewhat better in Karnataka. The SC/ST community stood behind the Congress solidly right from the days of Independence. He said the downtrodden should remain united to assert their rights. He said partymen should first be proud of being Congressmen rather than identifying with caste or community. AICC general secretary and party in-charge of Karnataka Digvijay Singh promised that the state government would take all steps to address issues of the SC/STs on priority basis. He urged the Chief Minister to

* This is a collection of previously published news and views from the print as well as the electronic media, whose reference marked at the end of each news items. Department of Documentation and Library (DDL) of the Indian Social Institute, New Delhi neither claims to the veracity of the facts in the news nor subscribes to the views expressed.

constitute a Cabinet sub-committee to look into the problems being faced by the SC/STs. Singh said the Congress owes largely to the downtrodden for their continued support. He lauded the state government's decision of waiving all outstanding loans availed from various state-owned corporations by SC/STs and minorities. AICC SC/ST wing national president Raju, Union Minister of State for MSMEs K H Muniyappa, Revenue Minister V Srinivas Prasad, PWD Minister H C Mahadevappa and Social Welfare Minister H Anjaneya also spoke. (New Indian Express 7/1/14)

Maharashtra plans 10% quota for Marathas, 4% for Muslims (25)

Mumbai: The Congress-Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) government in Maharashtra is close to take a decision to provide 10 per cent reservation to politically significant Maratha community and four per cent to Muslims in education and jobs in the run-up to the Lok Sabha elections. The government has already clarified there was no move to give political reservation to Marathas and Muslims. The proposed reservation for Marathas, who constitute about 15 per cent, and Muslims (about 12.5 per cent), will not touch the existing 52 per cent reservation for other backward classes (OBCs) and other categories, including scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, nomadic and other backward castes. Congress and NCP leaders admitted the government's move would help tackle anti-incumbency. The government wants to adopt the Tamil Nadu model whereby the caste-based reservation stands at 69 per cent and the same is applicable to about 87 per cent of the population. A Supreme Court order mandates such quotas cannot exceed 50 per cent. A NCP leader said the quota would increase by another 14 per cent in Maharashtra. He hoped the move would not face legal trouble as the apex court had upheld the Tamil Nadu quota model. He referred to the statement recently made by NCP President Sharad Pawar that the party would openly oppose if the government was trying to carve out quota for the Maratha community in particular from the existing quota. At present, OBCs, which constitute 52 per cent, enjoy 30 per cent reservation in jobs in the state. Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar has confirmed the government's move. He, however, said the cabinet would give its approval after a committee led by industry Minister Narayan Rane submitted its report. On the other hand, a Congress MP, who did not want to be named, referred to the Justice Sachar Committee report that was accepted by both the central and state governments. The report has recommended that a mechanism be put in place to ensure equity and equality of opportunity and eliminate discrimination. "The proposed 4 per cent reservation will be one of the many initiatives in that direction," he said. (Business Standard 9/1/14)

'Govt help needed for uplift of Muslims' (25)

HYDERABAD: Justice B Prakash Rao, former acting chief justice of AP high court, on Thursday underscored the need to bring the socially and economically backward Muslim community on a par with developed sections of society. Speaking at the 16th foundation day of Maulana Azad National Urdu University (Manuu), the jurist said that the Muslim community needed government support in the form of reservation, scholarships, etc., to help it emerge from backwardness and reach the levels of development that other sections of society had reached. Appreciating the efforts of Manuu to impart education in Urdu language, Justice Rao said the students, however, should also keep in mind the importance of learning English in today's globalised world. Prof Mohammed Miyan, Manuu vice-chancellor, revealed that the university will be starting courses at undergraduate level in social sciences from next academic year. He also informed that the university was ready to set up five Teachers Training Colleges across the country to help fill in the requirement for Urdu teachers at various levels. N N Maldar, vice-chancellor of University of Sholapur, said he was impressed by the progress made by Manuu and said that his institute was ready to collaborate with it. Khwaja Mohammad Shahid, Manuu pro vice-chancellor, welcomed the guests at the event. (Times of India 10/1/14)

CM supports reservation for OBCs in LS, Assembly elections (25)

Bangalore: Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Sunday called upon all backward classes to fight for reservation in Lok Sabha and Legislative Assembly. "Just like what has been reserved for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in Lok Sabha and Assembly elections, Other Backward Classes (OBCs) also need reservation," he said in his address to the decennial celebrations of the Karnataka State Backward Castes' Federation. "Without making a struggle, nobody (sic) will provide any facilities to the OBCs." The chief minister, who himself belongs to the backward Kuruba community, promised that more funds would be allocated in the next State budget for the welfare of backward classes. Siddaramaiah blamed the caste system for the social and economic imbalance in the State. He said such conventions might not necessarily bring unity among backward classes. "But what they can do is create awareness among backward classes." The chief minister also attacked the Opposition parties. The JD(S), he went on, was only meant to serve H D Deve Gowda and his sons. That party had "twice scuttled" his chances to become the chief minister, Siddaramaiah claimed. (Deccan Herald 13/1/14)

SC declines to review reservation policy (25)

NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court on Thursday left it to the Union government to decide if there should be reservations for lower caste candidates to faculty positions in the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) and other institutes, which offer speciality and super-speciality courses. However, the court said its door will be open to examine the matter, if and when the government takes a decision on it. A five-judge bench presided over by Justice H L Dattu disposed of a review petition filed by the Centre challenging a July 18 decision of the court. A five-judge constitutional bench led by then Chief Justice Altamas Kabir had endorsed the views expressed in 1992 by a nine-judge bench in the Indra Sawhney versus Union of India case, popularly known as the Mandal case, and said there had to be certain scenarios where merit alone would count for selecting candidates. The verdict emphasised that "the very concept of reservation implies mediocrity". The Centre questioned the recent decision by arguing that it went against the Mandal judgment, which did not prohibit reservation to posts in any particular service. Additional Solicitor General L N Rao tried to convince the bench of the Centre's stand. The court, however, said the judgment made clear that the government had to follow the ruling in the Indra Sawhney case. "That's all and nothing more than that," said the court, further explaining that "we have not added a word other than what has been said in the Indra Sawhney judgment." "It is open for the Central government to take a decision whether there can be a reservation in speciality and super speciality posts," said the bench, which also comprised justices S S Nijjar, Ranjan Gogoi, M Y Eqbal and Vikramajit Sen. The Centre wanted a review of the verdict and cited the ruling of the nine-judge bench, which had held that reservation in promotions was not permissible, but reservation in direct recruitment was permissible at every level. (Deccan Herald 16/1/14)

Rahul bats for Women's Reservation Bill (25)

BHOPAL: Batting for early passage of Women's Reservation Bill, Rahul Gandhi on Monday vowed to work for larger representation to them in Parliament, government and Congress and noted that the party and the country cannot ignore the views of half of the population. Interacting with women from across the country as part of Congress' exercise of seeking direct inputs from stakeholders for its 2014 Lok Sabha election manifesto, Gandhi said he wanted "maximum possible" women in leadership positions and on a personal note added that even in Gandhi household, "Grandmother (Indira Gandhi) was the boss ... ""Empowering women is a big battle that we have to fight and win," he said and expressed confidence that not only the Women Reservation Bill that seeks to provide 33 per cent quota to them in legislatures will be passed but in next five to ten years, nearly half of Congress ministers will be women. "Every woman is an asset for the country ... India can not become a superpower without the empowerment of 50 per cent population of women ... We have to bring your views in our manifesto," Gandhi said during the interaction as the women put forth their views frankly to the Congress Vice President, at times critical and demanding specific solutions. Among the women present were sex workers, Anganwadi workers, besides

members of Gulabi Gang, a group of women vigilantes and activists originally from Bundelkhand. "Women Reservation Bill is in Parliament. I assure that we will not let it go ... We have to do this 33 percent reservation women in Parliament and Assemblies. Political parties also have a responsibility. "My thinking is that there should maximum possible number of women in leadership positions. I want that among the ministers of Congress that you see now, there should be 50 percent women in next five to ten years," Gandhi said. He said that there is a need to be aggressive and get going to ensure that women are empowered. In his interaction laced with anecdotes, Gandhi also said, "I want to tell you my perspective ... In my house, there was papa (Rajiv Gandhi), there was uncle (Sanjay Gandhi) but the boss of the house was my grandmother. There was no doubt about that that. Grandma was the boss," he said with a chuckle. Noting that there is no difference between the capacity of a man and a woman, he said, "Women do not need any protection. If you give them their rights, they can protect themselves." "Unless the bill was passed it will not be possible to empower women in all spheres," Gandhi, who is leading the Lok Sabha polls campaign for Congress, said. The Women's Reservation Bill was passed in the Rajya Sabha but not in the Lok Sabha and ensuring its passage before the elections is said to be on the priority list of Sonia Gandhi. The bill is facing opposition from Samajwadi Party, the Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) and from some section of the Congress. Rahul said it was sad that even today women were subjected to all kinds of violence in the country. Narrating an incident during a visit to his parliamentary seat Amethi, he said that he saw a man was dragging a woman by her hair because she had not cooked food. (Times of India 20/1/14)

Jat reservation: NCBC to conduct public hearing in nine states (25)

Reservation for Jats in Central Government jobs has moved a step forward with the National Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC) deciding to conduct public hearing in nine States before arriving at a conclusion. This move by the commission comes a month after the government asked it to take an early decision on providing reservation for the community in central government jobs. It is widely believed that inclusion of Jat community members in the central list of OBCs would benefit the Congress electorally, at a time when general elections are round the corner. "We have written to the Governments in nine States on public hearing. The Chairman and other members of the Commission would be present in the hearing, which is meant to elicit the views of the general public," said NCBC sources. An approximate number of nine crore Jats are living in nine States such as Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Delhi, Uttarakhand and Bihar. Besides, the Commission has also asked the Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR) to conduct a study on the status of Jats, for which, it has provided the required materials. ICSSR is expected to return to the backward classes commission with its report in the next two weeks, sources said. "Meanwhile, the commission would also prepare the report based on the public hearing. Both the reports would be collaborated and sent to the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment before February end," the sources added. Thereafter, the ministry would in turn place the report in the Union Cabinet, an official said. (CNN IBN 21/1/14)

Notification enhancing OBC quota issued (25)

PANAJI: Goa government on Thursday issued a notification enhancing reservation for other backward classes (OBC) from 19.5% to 27%.The reservation will be applicable for direct recruitment to services under state government and state undertakings and for admission in the government/government-aided educational institutions. The reservation will not be applicable to the persons falling within "creamy layer" limit notified by the government from time to time, the notification said. The notification will come into force with immediate effect from the date of publication in the official gazette, director of social welfare Meena Naik Goltekar said. (Times of India 24/1/14)

Nitish on overdrive in Bihar to counter Modi appeal (25)

Patna: As the latest mood of the nation surveys paint a grim picture of his party, the JD(U)'s electoral prospects in Bihar, chief minister Nitish Kumar has rushed to cover his flanks. He has gone on an overdrive to consolidate his hold on the extremely backward classes (EBCs), a grouping of about 100 castes that constitute over 27% of Bihar's population. Addressing a function held here on Friday to mark the birth anniversary of former Bihar chief minister and EBC icon Karpoori Thakur, Kumar demanded the implementation at the national level of the 'Bihar formula' of reservation. He also told his audience that two of the three Rajya Sabha poll nominees selected by the JD(U) — subsequently identified as Karpoori's son Ramnath Thakur and Shagufta Parveen, were from the EBC category. The announcements and Kumar's renewed thrust to woo the EBCs, acquired its immediate significance from BJP's bid to project its prime ministerial nominee Narendra Modi as an EBC leader, who once served as a tea vendor. The 'Bihar reservation formula', which has its genesis in one put in place by Karpoori, as chief minister, 1978, is significant in that it provides for separate categories of reservation for OBCs and EBCs, giving the latter a distinct identity of their own. In the original scheme, the EBC quota was fixed as 12% to 8% of OBCs (other backward classes). After Jharkhand separated from Bihar in November 2000, the EBC quota in Bihar was raised to 18% and OBCs' to 13%. Nitish has argued to give EBCs a separate identity in job reservation at the national level, be it within the OBC pie or without it. This makes for power pitch with potential to pay dividends in states other than Bihar, as well. As the latest mood of the nation surveys paint a grim picture of his party, the JD(U)'s electoral prospects in Bihar, chief minister Nitish Kumar has rushed to cover his flanks. He also told his audience that two of the three Rajya Sabha poll nominees selected by the JD(U) — subsequently identified as Karpoori's son Ramnath Thakur and Shagufta Parveen, were from the EBC category. The announcements and Kumar's renewed thrust to woo the EBCs, acquired its immediate significance from BJP's bid to project its prime ministerial nominee Narendra Modi as an EBC leader, who once served as a tea vendor. The 'Bihar reservation formula', which has its genesis in one put in place by Karpoori, as chief minister, 1978, is significant in that it provides for separate categories of reservation for OBCs and EBCs, giving the latter a distinct identity of their own. In the original scheme, the EBC quota was fixed as 12% to 8% of OBCs (other backward classes). After Jharkhand separated from Bihar in November 2000, the EBC quota in Bihar was raised to 18% and OBCs' to 13%. Nitish has argued to give EBCs a separate identity in job reservation at the national level, be it within the OBC pie or without it. This makes for power pitch with potential to pay dividends in states other than Bihar, as well. (Hindustan Times 27/1/14)

OBC creamy layer cut-off raised to Rs 8LPA (25)

LUCKNOW: The Uttar Pradesh cabinet on Tuesday cleared proposal to increase maximum income ceiling for the creamy layer seeking reservation under Other Backward Castes (OBCs) from Rs 5 lakh per annum to Rs 8 lakh per annum. The cabinet also passed the proposal for demolishing unoccupied bungalows near the Allahabad High Court to make room for 30 additional new courtrooms and 20 chambers, said chief secretary Jawed Usmani. As per existing provisions, the state government is authorised to raise the ceiling for maximum income under creamy layer once every three years. The income ceiling in 1995 was fixed as Rs 1 lakh. In 2002, it was increased to Rs 3 lakh per annum which was further increased to Rs 5 lakh in 2008. After the maximum income limit increased to Rs 8 lakh per annum on Tuesday, the chairman of the State Backward Castes Commission Ram Asrey Vishwakarma welcomed the move claiming that it will help cover more families which will now be entitled to reservation and education opportunities. Briefing the media about the agenda of the cabinet meeting held on Tuesday morning, Usmani said the unoccupied bungalows will be demolished according to recommendations of a committee constituted by the high court. "In all, there are nine old bungalows which will be razed to the ground. The area occupied by six of these bungalows will be utilised to bring up 30 new courtrooms and 20 chambers. The rest of the space will be utilised as per the recommendations of the HC committee which is looking into the entire process," Usmani said. About details like the construction work of the new courtroom Usmani said: "Today, the cabinet has cleared the proposal for demolition of the bungalows

which will be done by the Public Works Department (PWD)." Usmani said the next step will be initiated as per the directions and recommendations of the High Court." The cabinet also cleared Jhansi as a B-2 City from its existing status of C class city. As many as 15 other districts that have been carved out in the last few years will be sanctioned a level C city status. This will entitle the service class in Jhansi to draw additional allowance under the house rent allowance (HRA) head which is fixed as per the status of the city of posting. The cabinet also cleared part amendment of UP Higher Judiciary Service Rules 1975. This was the ninth amendment. The Amendment has increased the quota of promoted officers of UP Judicial Services from 50 to 65%. But the quota for civil judge (senior division) after 5 years of service has been reduced to 10 per cent instead of the existing 25 per cent. The 25 per cent reservation for direct appointment has been left unaltered. The proposal for beautification of the banks of river Gomti was also cleared by the cabinet. In the first phase, the 1.7 kilometer long stretch of Gomti banks starting from Hanuman Setu and ending at Daliganj bridge will be attended by the Lucknow Development Authority while the sanitation facilities of this stretch will be attended by District Urban Development Authority (Duda). (Times of India 29/1/14)

115 amendments to OBC list approved (25)

NEW DELHI: The Union Cabinet on Thursday approved amendments to the Central List of Other Backward Classes (OBCs) to include or delete 115 castes in the List from 13 States and three Union Territories. Amendments have been approved from proposals received by Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Goa, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Punjab, Tamil Nadu, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal and three Union Territories — Chandigarh, Delhi and Puducherry. The changes in the List by way of inclusion / correction / deletion of castes/communities have been approved as per the advices received from the National Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC). The amendments will notify 115 changes recommended by the NCBC. The proposed changes will enable persons belonging to these castes/communities to avail benefits of reservation in government services and posts as well as in central educational institutions according to existing policy. They will also become eligible for benefit under various welfare schemes, and scholarships, being administered by the Central Government, which are at present available to persons belonging to the OBCs. The NCBC was set up in pursuance to the Supreme Court judgement in the Indira Sawhney case. As per the NCBC Act 1993, Section 9, the Commission is mandated to examine requests for inclusion of any class of citizens as a backward class in the lists and hear complaints of over-inclusion or under-inclusion of any backward class in such lists and tender such advice to the Central Government as it deems appropriate and the advice of the Commission is ordinarily be binding upon the Central Government. The NCBC has been tendering advice to the Central government from time to time. A total of 30 Notifications have been issued so far and a total of 2343 "entries" (an "entry" means a caste, including its synonyms, sub-castes) have been notified in the Central list of OBCs for 24 States and six Union Territories. The last such notification was issued on 08.12.2011. Since then, many more advices for inclusion/ deletion of castes/ communities and correction in the existing list of OBCs, have been received from the NCBC. (The Hindu 30/1/14)

Balkrishna Renke welcomes Rahul's suggestion on nomadic tribes (25)

NAGPUR: Balkrishna Renke, who headed the three-member national commission for identifying nomadic and denotified tribes in the country, has welcomed the move to set up a permanent commission for welfare of these communities. The Renke Commission had submitted its report to the Union government six years ago recommending a slew of measures needed to assimilate these communities living on the fringes for ages. "Setting up the permanent commission on the lines of that for the scheduled castes and OBC was one of our demands. We are now happy that Congress vice president Rahul Gandhi has taken a favourable view and referred the matter to the UPA government," Renke told TOI on Saturday. "Though late, it's a step in the right direction. But now much depends on the terms of reference and mandate given to the new commission," he said. Gandhi had given the assurance earlier this week when a delegation of

nomadic tribes from across the country met him. Nomadic tribes have been demanding job reservation and other facilities so to get socially on par. Because of the poverty, lack of opportunities and discrimination, the nomads have suffered a lot since the British era when they were branded as criminals and habitual offenders. Only last month during his visit here, Renke had expressed anguish over the Union government's failure to take action on the report he submitted in July 2008. He had also warned of public agitations and hinted of election boycott. "The report is in a limbo. The government has neither rejected nor accepted it. It has, however, only indicated that some of the recommendations are implementable. But the affected tribes are losing patience," said Renke. The permanent commission that could take a call on finalizing the list committees entitled to benefits under government schemes. "We did not get adequate time and our hurried report could suggest 800 tribes as nomadic and denotified," said Renke adding that the new commission can now take a final call. The Commission was first set up in November 2003 but reconstituted in March 2005 as the earlier commission could not make much headway. Its report made several recommendations, which include that same reservations as available to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes be extended to around 11 crore people of denotified and nomadic or seminomadic tribes in India. It also recommended that the provisions of the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989 be applicable to these tribes as well. (Times of India 2/2/14)

Dwivedi's pitch against quota stirs anger in Congress (25)

New Delhi: The Congress swung into damage control mode on Wednesday after general secretary Janardan Dwivedi's call to end the caste-based reservation caused anger within the party and drew sharp criticism across the political spectrum. In a strongly worded statement, party president Sonia Gandhi did not just rule out such a possibility, she took full ownership of the caste-based reservation, stressing that "they were introduced by the Congress, they have been strengthened by the Congress and they will continue to be championed by the Congress." Her intervention came, senior party sources told The Hindu, after several party leaders conveyed their unhappiness with Mr. Dwivedi's statement. Indeed, her statement is being read in party circles as a snub to the senior general secretary who was, till recently, the party's communication chief. If Ms. Gandhi's statement came in the evening, both the Congress and the government distanced themselves earlier in the day from Mr. Dwivedi's statement, saying it was his "personal" view. Mr. Dwivedi is a "seasoned and experienced" politician, party spokesperson Randeep Surjewala said, but "his statement is his personal opinion. The Congress continues to adhere to, subscribe to and support the existing reservation policy. There is no change in our stand." And in the Rajya Sabha, after the Opposition raised the issue, Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs Rajiv Shukla said: "The government is not considering any proposal to provide reservation based on economic criteria. The reservation as it stands today will continue as per constitutional provisions." Mr. Dwivedi, a member of the Upper House, was present when Mr. Shukla gave the government's clarification. "There should be no doubt on the stand of the Congress on the system of reservation for the Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes and the OBCs," Ms. Gandhi said, pointing out that the empowerment of these sections was "an article of faith" for the party. Ms. Gandhi underscored the fact that the Congress introduced reservation for the SCs/ STs in government jobs and educational institutions in the 1950s, and for the OBCs in the 1990s. The party was "of the firm opinion" that this must continue as it was "essential to deal with the discrimination imposed by centuries of subjugation and oppression." The Congress, she said, had introduced two Bills to strengthen the framework for reservation — one to create a legal framework to ensure effective implementation, and the other to provide for reservation in promotions for the SCs/STs. She also listed the party's other initiatives: scholarships for the SCs/STs and the OBCs; policies to encourage procurement of goods and services by government agencies from enterprises promoted by the SCs/STs; and a dialogue to ensure affirmative action for the SCs/STs in the private sector. (The Hindu 5/2/14)

NCP not in favour of change in caste-based reservation policy (25)

New Delhi: Senior NCP leader Praful Patel on Thursday said his party was not in favour of changing the caste-based reservation policy. "Our stand is clear. The current system of reservation is fine. There is no need to change it. SC/ST/OBCs etc have benefited due to reservation and we should continue it," Heavy Industries and Public Enterprises Minister Praful Patel said at a CII-ACMA event here. The government and Congress President Sonia Gandhi yesterday clarified that there was no move to change the policy on reservation in government jobs. The clarifications came a day after senior Congress leader Janardan Dwivedi advocated a relook into caste-based reservations, leading to an outcry in the Rajya Sabha. Dwivedi had in an interview to PTI called an end to reservation on caste lines and asked party vice-president Rahul Gandhi to introduce quota for financially weaker sections, bringing all communities under its ambit. (Zee News 6/2/14)

MPs, dalit bodies thank Sonia Gandhi for clearing air on quotas (25)

NEW DELHI: The rumblings over Congress leader Janardan Dwivedi's "end caste reservation" call continued, with MPs and dalit organizations meeting Sonia Gandhi and thanking her for clearing the confusion over the party's policy on caste quotas. In a surprise move, Sonia issued a detailed statement reiterating the importance of reservation for backward classes and said it was required to fight the oppression and prejudice of caste system. The statement came in the wake of Dwivedi's statement that Congress should end caste-based reservations and replace it with quota for the poor across communities. Leaders within Congress and the opposition slammed Dwivedi's demand, putting the ruling camp in the dock because the views of a senior leader like him were seen as indicative of a possible policy move to end the quota system. Sonia's statement was aimed at quelling the day-long speculation. A group of dalit organizations met Sonia and thanked her for reiterating the party's faith in reservations. That the issue had raised fears of political costs was evident from the way senior dalit MPs complimented the party chief. Eight MPs -- Selja, P L Punia, B L Mungekar, Mohinder Singh Kaype, Union ministers Panabaka Lakshmi and J D Seelam, Ishwar Singh and Vijaylakshmi - visited her. K Raju, chairman of the Scheduled Castes department of Congress, said Sonia told the visiting leaders that the party was committed to passing a bunch of legislations for dalit welfare like the amendments to Prevention of Atrocities Act, reservation in promotions, law to provide statutory framework for reservations, and the proposed bill to ensure that central ministries earmark funds for dalit welfare in proportion to their population. Senior Congress leaders said Dwivedi's statement, though a personal opinion, in its short life, resulted in misgivings among dalits and could be exploited by the opposition to campaign against the party among the marginalized classes. They said the party chief's decision to intervene and put an end to the debate was an astute move. (Times of India 7/2/14)

Govt moves bill on raising quota for disabled in jobs (25)

NEW DELHI: The government on Friday introduced the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Bill in Rajya Sabha, seeking to increase reservation for disabled persons in public sector jobs from the existing 3% to 5% and reserve seats for them in higher education institutions. Persons with disabilities under the proposed legislation -- which also seeks to broaden the ambit of disability from seven to 19 sub-categories -- will, however, not get such relief soon as members in the Upper House insisted on sending it to a standing committee of Parliament for detailed examination before putting it up for discussion and passage. If Chairman Hamid Ansari agrees to send the bill to the parliamentary panel, it can't be passed during the current session - the last one during the present government. At present, reservation for the disabled is 3% in the ratio of 1% each for physically, visually and hearing-impaired persons. The new bill, if passed, will extend the quota by 2%, covering two additional categories -- mentally disabled and people with multiple disabilities. The proposed legislation divides the broad categories into various sub-categories, seeking to include as many types of disabilities as possible. It includes sickle cell disease, thalassemia and muscular dystrophy besides autism, spectrum disorder, blindness, cerebral palsy,

chronic neurological conditions, mental illness and multiple disabilities. The bill, introduced by minister for social justice and empowerment Mallikarjun Kharge, also provides for setting up National Commission for Persons with Disabilities, which will have statutory powers besides establishing a dedicated National Fund for Persons with Disabilities. The proposed legislation is expected to bring more clarity in defining disability. Anyone suffering 40% disability or more will continue to be defined as a 'person with disability'. Besides making provisions to prevent people with disabilities from harassment while getting disability certificates, the proposal legislation also provides for stringent punitive measures under which anyone violating the provisions could face from six months to five years of imprisonment and a fine from Rs 10,000 to five lakh. Demand to send the bill to standing committee came from CPM members in the House. As soon as Kharge introduced the bill, party member Sitaram Yechury rose to his feet demanding that the bill should be referred to a standing committee. Deputy chairman P J Kurien, however, said that Ansari would take a decision on this. The government had in December last year decided to replace the Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunity Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act of 1995 with the new bill. It maintained that the proposed legislation was in consonance with the United Nations Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which India had signed in 2007. Various disabled rights groups had, however, protested against the bill in its current form, saying the provisions were not in tune with norms of the UN convention. The groups had identified 20 shortcomings and suggested amendments in the bill. Besides introduction of this much awaited bill, the Upper House could not transact any other business for the third consecutive day on Friday. Member raised various issues including Telangana, corruption and plight of Tamil Nadu fishermen as soon as Rajya Sabha assembled. As the din continued, the House was adjourned for the day after two adjournments during the first half. (Times of India 8/2/14)

BJP woos OBCs by attacking 'Muslim Quota' (25)

NEW DELHI: BJP has stepped up its efforts to woo "other backward castes" in politically crucial Uttar Pradesh with an aggressive campaign against its "secular" rivals on Muslim quota. Party general secretary and, more important, Narendra Modi's trusted associate Amit Shah spelt out the party's stand on the controversial issue by saying the support of SP, BSP and Congress for "Muslim quota" was unconstitutional. Talking to TOI, he said the proposed 18% quota for Muslims could be promulgated only at the cost of "backwards" because of the Supreme Court order capping the quantum of quotas in jobs and educational institutions at 50%. Shah's statement comes amid reports from Uttar Pradesh about "apolitical" campaigns against Muslim quota, seeking to organize resistance to what they call a "serious threat to OBC quota". OBCs make up about 35% of the population in UP which with 80 Lok Sabha seats is vital for BJP's plan to retake the reins at the Centre. Of these, Yadavs, who account for 12% of the population, are staunchly aligned with Samajwadi Party. BJP hopes to corner the bulk of the rest of the bloc by upping the ante over Muslim quota. Though the plan did not work during the assembly polls, party strategists don't seem to be fazed. They feel the plan failed last time because of the overwhelming resentment against the Mayawati government and the realization that Akhilesh Yadav-led SP was the most effective vehicle for achieving the objective. They are optimistic that the resentment against the advocacy for Muslim quota will result into votes for BJP because of the popular ire against UPA at the Centre and the preference for the Modi-led BJP as the alternative. Shah, however, denied that BJP was opposing minority quota because of its alleged hostility to Muslims. He said the Constitution did not recognize religion as a basis for reservations, and emphasized that BJP was not opposed to the quota that "backwards" among Muslims enjoy under the overall OBC quota. (Times of India 11/2/14)

Rajasthan HC seeks explanation on creamy layer concept (25)

Jaipur: The Rajasthan High Court has asked the state government to explain as to why the concept of creamy layer cannot be made applicable in benefits extended under reservation to Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe categories. A bench of Justice Gopal Krishan Vyas in Jodhpur sought the explanation

from the Advocate General on a petition filed by one Anil Barupal and others seeking a direction to the state government to determine correct quota of SC and ST for appointment on the posts of physical teacher Grade-II. It was argued that like OBCs the creamy layer candidates in SC and ST category should also not get benefit of reservation. In the opinion of this court the provision for reservation extended to SC and ST is a constitutional mandate and cannot be questioned before this forum," Justice Vyas said. "However, there is substance in the argument that benefit of reservation is in fact reaped by the well to do and economically sound strata in the reservation category of SC and ST and the actual benefit is not reaching members of these categories who are downtrodden, backward and struggle for basic survival as such the Advocate General is required to assist as to why the creamy layer concept be not introduced in reservation of SC and ST also," the court said. The creamy layer is a term so far used to refer to relatively wealthier and better educated members of the Other Backward Classes (OBCs) who are not eligible for government sponsored educational and professional benefit programs. The term was introduced by the Sattanathan Commission in 1971, which directed that the "creamy layer" be excluded from reservations of civil posts and services granted to OBCs. (Zee News 13/2/14)

Tribal group withdraws strike (25)

Kokrajhar, Feb. 15: The All Assam Tribal Sangha has withdrawn its 12-hour statewide strike called on Monday to protest Dispur's anti-reservation policy. The strike was withdrawn after Dispur invited the Sangha for talks, its general secretary Aditya Khakhlari told reporters here today. He said welfare of plains tribes and backward classes minister (except BTAD) Rajib Lochan Pegu and minister for the same department in BTAD Chandan Brahma had invited them for talks on Monday. "We have temporarily withdrawn the strike call, respecting the government's invitation for talks. But if we are not satisfied with the outcome of the discussion, we will continue with our agitation," he said. Khakhlari alleged that SC and ST employees of different departments were deprived of promotions despite meeting the eligibility criteria. He demanded implementation of the Assam Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Reservation of Vacancies in Services and Post) (Amendment) Act, 2012. Several tribal groups have alleged violation of the legislation on reservation of government posts by the PWD, public health engineering, irrigation, sericulture, water resources and agriculture departments, among others. These groups include the Sangha, All Assam Tribal Youth League, All Assam Scheduled Caste Students' Union, Assam Anuchita Jati Yuva-Chatra Santha, Karbi Students' Union, Takam Mising Porin Kebang, Assam Anuchita Jati Parishad, All Tiwa Students' Union and the All Assam Sarania Kachari Students' Union. Khakhlari alleged that the PWD had promoted 27 assistant executive engineers to executive engineers in violation of reservation rules. "Though 17 posts were reserved for SC and ST employees, the department de-reserved them and promoted other employees. Of the 17 posts, nine were reserved for ST (plains), five for ST (hills) and three for general SC candidates," he alleged. The All Bodo Students' Union has slammed the government on its anti-tribal stand and supported the Sangha's demand. Absu president Pramod Boro said the government has suppressed, oppressed and discriminated against indigenous people for a long time. "The tribal people are being deliberately deprived of their rights by the government. We will not tolerate such discrimination. Dispur has to implement the act on reservation in vacancies and services at the earliest." (The Telegraph 15/2/14)

Tribal groups meet Pegu (25)

Kokrajhar, Feb. 17: A delegation of tribal organisations today met Assam minister for welfare of plains tribes and backward classes Rajib Lochan Pegu on non-promotion of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe candidates in state government departments. The organisations, led by All Assam Tribal Sangha, alleged that the SC and ST employees were deprived of promotions despite meeting the eligibility criteria. They demanded implementation of the Assam SC & ST (Reservation of Vacancies in Services and Post) (Amendment) Act, 2012. They had given a 12-hour statewide strike call for today to protest Dispur's anti-reservation policy but withdrew it on Saturday after the government invited them for talks. During the

talks, Pegu assured the 25-member delegation that his department would circulate an office memorandum to all state government departments to follow the act. He also agreed to issue instructions to all the departments not to process any promotion till the final judgment of PIL No. 2/2011 comes up. The Tribal Sangha had filed the PIL in January 2011 against deprivation of tribal employees on promotion. The court had directed the WPT&BC department to probe the matter, which constituted a commission in August 2012 for the purpose. The Tribal Sangha alleged that the commission was supposed to file its report last year but had not done so yet. Its general secretary Aditya Khakhlari, however, said today that the minister had assured them that the one-man Harish Sonowal Commission would submit its report on Wednesday. Senior government officials of WPT&BC department, including commissioner & secretary Biswaranjan Samal, director R.K. Bargohain and deputy secretary Binita Pegu were present in the meeting. The delegates represented the Tribal Sangha, All Assam Tribal Youth League, All Assam Scheduled Caste Students' Union, Assam Anuchita Jati Yuva-Chatra Santha, Karbi Students' Union, Takam Mising Porin Kebang, Assam Anuchita Jati Parishad, All Tiwa Students' Union and the All Assam Sarania Kachari Students' Union. The organisations have alleged violation of the legislation by the PWD, public health engineering, irrigation, sericulture, water resources and agriculture departments, among others. Khakhlari alleged that the PWD had promoted 27 assistant executive engineers to executive engineers in violation of reservation rules. "Though 17 posts were reserved for SC and ST employees, the department de-reserved them and promoted other employees. Of the 17 posts, nine were reserved for ST (plains), five for ST (hills) and three for general SC candidates," he alleged. (The Telegraph 18/2/14)

Govt offer on women's bill (25)

New Delhi, Feb. 19: The Centre today expressed readiness to extend the current Parliament session to pass the women's reservation bill after MP Jaya Prada raised the issue and contrasted the delay on it with the government's resolve on Telangana. "If the government can make so much effort to get the Telangana bill passed, why can't it show the same commitment to the women's reservation bill? What is the government's intention," the actress-turned-MP, an unattached member, said in the Lok Sabha. Her demand was supported by members of the Left, Trinamul, Biju Janata Dal and some from the Congress. Jaya, a Samajwadi MP from Uttar Pradesh, was expelled from the party along with Amar Singh. The Mulayam Singh Yadav-led party opposes the bill, which seeks to reserve a third of the seats for women in legislatures, in its current form and says there should be separate quotas for Dalits and other weaker sections in the legislation. Without naming her former party, Jaya said "some parties don't want this bill to be passed". "But the government can make efforts." This prompted parliamentary affairs minister Kamal Nath to declare that the government was ready to extend the current session, the last of the 15th Lok Sabha, to pass the bill. The session ends on Friday. "The government is ready to extend the session if the House agrees and pass the bill," Nath said. The bill was introduced by UPA I in May 2008 and passed by the Rajya Sabha in March 2010. It has not been brought to the Lok Sabha yet despite pledges of support from the Congress and the BJP. It was listed on the agenda of this session too but, given the lack of time and divisions in parties, it has little chance of being pushed if the House winds up on schedule on Friday. Today, Janata Dal (United) leader Sharad Yadav, who is also opposed to the legislation, pitched another issue — reservation for OBCs, SCs and STs in the faculty of super-speciality hospitals — to counter the clamour for the women's bill. He accused the Centre of having failed to bring a constitutional amendment to annul a Supreme Court order on hospitals. "It is pain to stand up and raise the same issue again. We (backward castes) are more in number than you (upper castes). You did the same thing on the issue of caste census," Sharad said, adding the women's quota cry was ploy to deprive women from the weaker sections. Sharad's demand drew support from several members cutting across party lines, including the Congress, BJP, Samajwadis, BSP and the DMK. (Telegraph 20/2/14)

SC candidates can be appointed under OC category: Madras High Court (25)

MADURAI: The Madurai Bench held that a single judge of the High Court too had "erred" in holding that a Scheduled Caste candidate could not be appointed in OC category. Vacancies for government jobs under Open Category (OC) should be filled with meritorious candidates irrespective of their caste, and there is no bar in appointing a Scheduled Caste or other such candidate under the OC category, the Madras High Court Bench here has held. A Division Bench comprising Justice R. Sudhakar and Justice S. Vaidyanathan passed the ruling while allowing a 2012 writ appeal filed by a Scheduled Caste candidate who was denied the job of a watchman on the grounds that it fell under the OC category as per communal roster. The Bench held that a single judge of the High Court too had "erred" in holding that a Scheduled Caste candidate could not be appointed in OC category. "There is no reservation in the Open Category. All eligible persons can be considered. The approach of the learned single judge is not correct," it said. Writing the judgement for the Bench, Mr. Justice Vaidyanathan said the single judge was right in holding that OC category was meant only for meritorious candidates but wrong in stating that candidates belonging to socially backward classes could not be considered under the category. The judges directed the Commissioner of Agricultural Marketing and Agricultural Business to appoint the appellant, P. Rajkumar, as a watchman in Tiruchi Marketing Committee, forthwith. The appellant's counsel K. Vellaiswamy pointed out that his client was selected for the post of watchman in 2011 after his name was sponsored by the Employment Exchange in 2010. But the officials, suddenly, refused to issue an appointment order since he belonged to a Scheduled Caste. When he filed a writ petition challenging their refusal, the Commissioner submitted that the Employment Exchange had wrongly sponsored the name of a Scheduled Caste candidate for a post earmarked under the OC category. Accepting the submission, the single judge dismissed the writ petition on October 3, 2012, and hence the present writ appeal. (The Hindu 21/2/14)

Demand for inclusion of Meetei in ST resurfaces (25)

Imphal, February 23 2014 : The demand for inclusion of Meetei in the Scheduled Tribe list should be discussed in the State Assembly Session failing which the Scheduled Tribe Demand Committee of Manipur will launch intense agitation including hunger strike, rally etc, cautioned L Lokendra Singh, retd Lt Col and general secretary of Scheduled Tribe Demand Committee of Manipur. Addressing a press meet at Manipur Press Club here today, Lokendra said the demand for inclusion of Meetei in the ST list is legitimate and constitutional one under Article 342 though some tribal communities in the State are against it and pointed out that recommendation by the State Government is very much required for materializing the demand. Noting that the demand is not an attempt to intrude or interfere into the quotas of other scheduled tribe communities, he maintained that the committee has been demanding the rights which Meeteis deserved. (E-Pao 23/2/14)

'Caste Bias Rampant in Country' (25)

MYSORE: SC/STs, OBCs and minorities across the country are still treated as untouchables and discriminated on the basis of their caste, said R N Chandolia, national president of All India Federation of SC/STs, Backward Classes and Minorities Employees' Welfare Association, New Delhi. He told reporters here on Sunday that with privatisation, these communities are deprived of jobs in private as well as government sectors. "Most of the employed persons are harassed in their offices over caste. The government must make reservation mandatory in the private sector and fill the 1.87 lakh vacant posts," he said. As only 30 per cent of the funds earmarked in the budget for the weaker sections are utilised, he demanded utilisation of the remaining amount within a set time. "The funds allocated under different schemes are not reaching the real beneficiaries. They are either diverted or misappropriated. The officials who misuse the funds should be fined and punished severely," he added. "Money and muscle power play a major role in the elections and a candidate comes to power by spending crores of rupees. Politics has become a commercial activity. Merchants and rice mill owners are minting money by selling Anna Bhagya rice in the black market," he said. (New Indian Express 24/2/14)

'Reservation for Brahmins and Vysyas Soon' (25)

CHITRADURGA: Minister of Social Welfare H Anjaneya on Sunday announced that the government will make arrangements to provide reservation for both Brahmin and Vysya communities and bring them to the mainstream. At the 5th Karnataka State Vysya Sahitya Sammelan, he said both communities that once occupied a prime position are now in crisis and are slowly moving out of the social axis. The department has made arrangements for providing Vidyashree scholarship, fee concession and other monetary benefits from the current academic year and the order will come out in a day or two, he said. He promised to backward class tag for both the communities after getting recommendation from the chairman of the backward classes commission. A letter has already been written to the commission. Anjaneya also said the government has taken up a mammoth task of caste-based census, eyeing inclusive growth of the state. "These days protests are not undertaken for public welfare but propaganda. After getting mileage in the media, the protest ends," he said. He regretted that the Vysya community failed to demand reservation and other benefits. (New Indian Express 24/2/14)

Marathas demand 25% reservation (25)

Mumbai: As the Lok Sabha polls inch closer, ruling party MLC Vinayak Mete led a protest march demanding 25 per cent reservation to Maratha community in the city on Monday. Interestingly, the protest took place in the backdrop of the state government's announcement to bring the report on the Maratha reservation in the ongoing session of the Legislature. Interestingly, the demand was made before the 2009 state Assembly elections and the Congress-NCP in their election manifesto had included the Maratha reservation. "The Maratha community should be given the status of the (Other Backward Classes) OBC and a separate reservation of 25 per cent," Mr Mete, the leader of Shiv Sangram said while speaking to the reporters in Mumbai on Monday. The protest started from Byculla and ended at Azad Maidan. However, Mr Mete was not happy with the kind of treatment given to the agitators. "We were not allowed to enter the Assembly initially. Chief minister Prithviraj Chavan and deputy chief minister Ajit Pawar did not meet us, as we wanted an assurance from them," Mr Mete said. He also demanded that the statue of Shivaji in the Arabian Sea should be completed as early as possible. He met state home minister R.R. Patil who assured him that he would look into the matter. The state government has already appointed a committee led by the industry minister Narayan Rane to give recommendations on the Maratha reservation issue. The committee has studied the legal aspects of the reservation. A sample survey was also conducted in all the districts of the state and compilation work is on, one of the officials from the committee said. "The report is expected to be submitted in the ongoing session of the Legislature," the officer added. Mr Rane had already made it clear that the Maratha community will get reservation on the lines of the reservation given in Tamil Nadu. The Marathas will get separate reservation without touching the existing quota for the OBC. The issue was important, as the OBCs were not happy to share their quota with the Marathas. (Asian Age 25/2/14)

Govt. to remove income ceiling for Yadava children to get quota (25)

Bangalore: Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Sunday said the government would remove the income ceiling for Yadava community children to get reservation in education. Addressing a State-level convention organised by the Karnataka State Yadava Sangha here, the Chief Minister said a notification would be issued soon. The Chief Minister said the intention was to provide more opportunities to children to get education. Yadava children are not getting reservation in education if they fall under the creamy layer category. Mr. Siddaramaiah agreed to the community's demand for converting lands on which traditional Yadava residential areas were located in villages as revenue lands. He also accepted the demand that Sri Krishna Jayanti be an official festival of the State government. But he made it clear that there was no question of declaring a holiday on that day as the government was against increasing the

number of holidays. Earlier, writer Banjagere Jayaprakash urged the government to include Yadavas in the list of Scheduled Tribes. Recalling the history of Yadavas, he said this community had a strong presence right from 5th BC. They even had links with foreign traders then, he said. Speaking on the occasion, Social Welfare Minister H. Anjaneya said that though the Yadavas had a sizeable population in the State, they were not represented in the Legislative Assembly. Ministers K.J. George, T. B. Jayachandra and Krishna Byre Gowda; legislators M. Krishnappa and M.R. Seetharam; Yadava Maha Samsthana seer Krishna Yadavananda, and the former Vice-Chancellor of University of Agricultural Sciences-Bangalore R. Dwarakinath were present. (The Hindu 2/3/14)

Jats in nine states to get reservation benefit (25)

New Delhi: Ahead of the Lok Sabha polls, the government tonight decided to include the Jat community in the central list of OBCs in nine states, a move that is expected to benefit about nine crore people from the community. The decision would pave the way for the community members to avail benefits of reservation in central government jobs and central education institutions as per the existing norms. "Union Cabinet today approved the inclusion of the Jat community in the Central list of OBCs for the states of Bihar, Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh and the National capital territory of Delhi," I&B Minister Manish Tewari told reporters. An approximate number of nine crore Jats are living in nine states -- Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Delhi, Uttarakhand and Bihar. It is widely believed that inclusion of Jats in the central list of OBCs would benefit the Congress electorally, at a time when general elections are round the corner. The Cabinet had earlier asked the National Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC) to expeditiously take a call on the issue, following which it had conducted public hearing in the nine states. NCBC had in 2011 rejected demands for reservation to the community at the central level, following which the Cabinet had asked to reconsider its decision. Union minister Ajit Singh welcomed the government's decision while Olympian Krishna Punia said the move will specially be beneficial to the community members living in the rural areas. (Business Standard 3/3/14)

SC Declines to Entertain PIL Against Reservation Policy (25)

New Delhi: The Supreme Court today declined to entertain a PIL seeking to quash the reservation policy based on caste and religion and to implement it on the basis of economic condition. A bench of Chief Justice P Sathasivam and Justice Ranjan Gogoi said it cannot directly interfere with the policy on the ground that it has achieved its purpose. The bench told the PIL petitioner that if he feels it was time to do away with the reservation policy, he can make a representation to the government with the data to buttress his contention. "Before coming to this court for direction, make representation to the elected government that there is no purpose of such representation. Better you wait for the new government to come," the bench observed orally. The petition filed by Manjit Singh Sachdeva had sought to declare and hold the reservation based on caste as violative of the fundamental right to equality. The PIL also sought to declare the "reservation on its continued availability without any qualification restricting its benefit to those who have already been benefited in the family or who do not deserve it due to their higher economical status is violative of basic feature of Constitution enshrined in Article 14 of Constitution as right to equality". It said that reservation policy is meant to uplift people from these caste and communities who need help but "it is more benefiting persons who are already helped and are being further helped". "The State through the correct scheme of helping certain caste and community to grow, reserves constituencies meant exclusively for SC/ST/OBC, but through this only a limited number of persons continues to take the said seat, how can we call the said seat a reserved seat, if the same person were to continue enjoying the position again and again, without giving opportunity to other SC/ST?" it contended. The petition challenged certain provisions of the Constitution which enable the "Vote hankering politician to perpetuate the reservation policy in an endemic manner which has totally corrosive effect on the fabric

of Indian society by dividing it in an artificial manner and stints its growth beyond relieve". (Outlook 3/3/14)

Denied OBC quota, Jat outfit says SAD leaders backstabbed community (25)

FEROZEPUR: Upset over Jats of Punjab not being included in the other backward classes (OBC) category for reservation in central government jobs and state-run educational institutes, Karnail Singh Bhawra, chief of state unit of Sarv Hind Jat Rakhwakaran Sangarsh Committee, held a demonstration in front of office of Ferozepur deputy commissioner (DC) on Tuesday. Bhawra slammed SAD-BJP government for not making recommendation to the Centre to add Jats of Punjab in OBC category, saying that the community was deprived of quota benefits. He said that the state government's lapse would cost poor members of Jat community dearly. He alleged, "SAD has backstabbed us as during a rally in Chandigarh on March 12, 2010, a delegation of its leaders, including Prem Singh Chandumajra, Balwinder Singh Bhunder, Tota Singh and Sikander Singh Maluka, had assured that the state government would recommend reservation for the community. Jat Sikhs of Punjab supported SAD wholeheartedly in the assembly elections in 2012, but see what we get in return - a total betrayal." Bhawra said that SAD-BJP government still had a chance to rectify its blunder by passing a resolution for inclusion of Jat community of Punjab under the OBC category during the ongoing assembly session. "In case the state government fails to do so, Jats will leave no stone unturned to defeat SAD-BJP candidates in the coming Lok Sabha elections," he affirmed. (Times of India 5/3/14)

Quota for Jats has hurt Muslim sentiments, says Alvi (25)

New Delhi: The former Congress spokesperson, Rashid Alvi, shot off a letter to party president Sonia Gandhi on Thursday, expressing his unhappiness with the UPA government's recent decision to extend reservation to Jats. He said it had sent a "wrong signal" to Muslims, who had been at the receiving end of violence, perpetrated by the Jats during the Muzaffarnagar riots last year, resulting in a massive exodus. Officially, the Congress said an entire community could not be blamed for the acts of a few rioters. "To award reservation to a particular community after massive riots in Muzaffarnagar has given a wrong signal to the people at large and the Muslim community in particular," Mr. Alvi wrote in his letter. He stressed that Muslims believed the Jats were the "perpetrators" of the violence. The Muslims, he underscored, had not only lost their family members but also their livelihoods and land, with more than 50,000 of them forced to live in camps after the riots. Answering a question at a briefing on Thursday, party spokesperson and Minister of State for Human Resource Development Shashi Tharoor said: "We do not believe that crimes are committed by an entire community or caste. I do not think you can ascribe such conduct to an entire community." Expanding on this, he said: "We cannot blame all Jats or all Hindus for what happened in Muzaffarnagar just as we do not blame all Gujaratis for the 2002 riots." Mr. Alvi, who is from western Uttar Pradesh, pointed out that the State is "highly polarised...at this juncture. The decision to award reservation to Jats not only hurts the sentiments of the Muslims but also other backward castes." He, however, clarified that he was not opposed to reservation for any community per se. He was also critical of the party's failure to legislate the Prevention of Communal Violence Bill. "Passage of the Bill would have showcased our commitment to our core values." If Mr. Alvi has openly criticised the Cabinet's approval on Monday for the inclusion of Jats in the Central list of OBCs in nine States, including Uttar Pradesh — a decision the party hopes will benefit about nine crore people from the community — other Uttar Pradesh Muslims in the Congress, too, are disturbed by the decision. However, the fact that Mr. Alvi, who was dropped as party spokesperson last year and was not re-nominated to the Rajya Sabha, has chosen to go public with his criticism is being read as a prelude to his departure from the Congress at a time when some others have left — or are in the process of — leaving the party. He joined the Congress in April 2004, when he was expelled from the Bahujan Samaj Party for accusing its president Mayawati of working under BJP pressure and taking bribes for ticket allotment. Earlier in the day, the issue of reservation came up at meeting of the National Students' Union of India (NSUI),

affiliated to the Congress, when a member asked why reservation should not be based on economic criteria. Coming as this does in the wake of party general secretary Janardan Dwivedi making a similar proposal — which was rejected by Ms. Gandhi, who described the current policy as “an article of faith” for the Congress — a question on it was posed to Mr. Tharoor. Mr. Tharoor clarified that though the issue was interesting, it was not possible to rethink or discuss it “in the heat and dust of elections” and that the Congress had no intention of re-opening this issue at this stage. It had been “raised too late in the political calendar,” he said. However, “if these are important issues for the young people, there is a legitimate ground for discussing this, after the elections, inside party forums. There is a political constituency behind this, and if the issue is to be reopened, the time will come after the elections for calm reflection within the party.” (The Hindu 7/3/14)

Government notifies Jat reservation, but OBC Commission raises red flag (25)

New Delhi: Even after facing vociferous opposition from Congress party’s Muslim leaders for extending poll eve reservations to Jats, the government on Friday went ahead notifying their inclusion in the central OBC list. The cabinet at a special meeting on Sunday had extended reservation facilities to Jats in nine states. The notification mentions that Muslim Jats in Gujarat are also included in the central list, but in other states of Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Delhi, there is no mention of communal identity. The poll eve sop extended to Jat community has also run into controversy, with the statutory National Commission of Backward Classes (NCBC) rubbishing the government’s claim that the Cabinet decision was based on the advice of the commission. On December 19, the Cabinet had approached the Commission to seek its advice on extending reservation to Jats. The NCBC has put its 138-page report on its website <ncbc.nic.in> to clarify that it did not advise any such reservation and in fact “rejected” the Jats’ case “as they are not socially and educationally backward communities.” The government clearly took the decision to woo the Jat voters who matter in Haryana, western Uttar Pradesh and some other states, influencing the results in some 70 Lok Sabha constituencies. Though, the BJP has welcomed the government move, but the party managers are worried that it will upset their plans in at least 30 seats -- 10 in Haryana, 14 in western Uttar Pradesh and six in Rajasthan. In its unanimous advice rendered on February 26, the NCBC headed by Justice Vangala Eswaraiah, a former acting chief justice of Andhra Pradesh High Court, held it has no doubt that Jats as a class cannot be treated as a backward class. Other commission members, who too were unanimous, on the advice are S K Kharventhan, A K Saini and A K Mangotra. “Ethnically they are at a higher level; they are of Indo Aryan descent, their educational level is high; and the social status they command is far higher than the ordinary Shurdas....Even in the absence of reservation in the central services, Jats are adequately represented in the Armed Services, Government services and educational institutions and their literacy rate is also good,” the NCBC advisory said. Pointing out that only Jats of Rajasthan (except two districts of Bharatpur and Dhaulpur) were notified in the list of the central OBCs in October 1999, the NCBC underlined that the Jats of the state “are cornering all the central services of other backward classes and for example it is sated that in 2012, Jats of Rajasthan have cornered majority of central services, mainly IAS and other important services” showing that they are not socially and educationally backward. Meanwhile, despite Jats being the domineering community and the land owners in Punjab, the Punjab Cabinet too decided before the model code to include them in the list of the state OBCs. The move was to silence former Congress chief minister Capt. Amarinder Singh trying to take political advantage by accusing the Parkash Singh Badal government of betraying the state’s Jats by not pursuing their case for inclusion in the central OBC list. In Lukhnow, just minutes before the elections were announced and the model code of conduct came into force, Uttar Pradesh chief minister Akhilesh Yadav on Wednesday announced reservation to 17 most backward castes (MBCs) in the development, accusing the Centre sitting on the list sent for their inclusion in the central list of Scheduled Castes. The castes which will get the benefit in the state include Nishad, Malhar, Bhar, Batham, Turha, Kashyap, Kewat, Kumhar, Rajbhar, Prajapati, Deedar, Dheemar, Bind, Majhi, Gaund and Machhua. In Haryana, Chief

Minister Bhupinder Singh Hooda got 16 Bills passed by the Haryana Assembly last Tuesday in just one hour and 45 minutes in the last session before the elections in what was dubbed by the Opposition as the "sop opera" to beat the anti-incumbency ahead of the Lok Sabha polls. (DNA 8/3/14)

BEO issues notice to school on RTE quota seat fee (25)

Bangalore: The Block Education Officer (BEO) issued a notice to East West Academy in Rajajinagar seeking explanation for allegedly asking parents of wards, who had obtained admission under RTE quota, to pay for the seat. A group of parents staged a protest on Friday in front of the office of the BEO North Range 1. One of the protesters said that each of the parents, whose ward had got a seat under the RTE quota, was being called to the school individually and was being asked to pay Rs. 25,000 for the seat. Nagasimha G. Rao, convenor of the RTE task force, said parents "were being exploited and forced" to pay. Mala Prakash, RTE officer of East West Academy, claimed that the school was charging for extra activities. "We are only charging for courses in language lab, keyboard, music, dance, accent lab, yoga, music, dance. If parents want additional facilities for their children, they will have to pay." She rubbished the parents' claim that payment of Rs. 25,000 was made compulsory. Gopalkrishna M., BEO North Range 1, said action would be taken against the school after it responded to the BEO's notice. (The Hindu 9/3/14)

30 pc quota for women in central jobs: DMK (25)

Chennai: In a bid to improve living standards of the marginalised and minorities, the DMK made several promises in its manifesto, including 30 per cent reservation for women in central government jobs, proper implementation of reservation in PSUs for differently-abled, recognition of transgenders as the third gender and boost to self-respect (inter-caste) marriages across the country. In its election manifesto released by party chief M Karunanidhi on Tuesday, the DMK promised to include the fishing community in the Scheduled Tribe (ST) list and create a separate ministry at the Centre to protect their interests in relation to other countries. Promising to espouse the cause of Tamils living across the globe, the DMK promised to press the Centre to take steps for conducting a referendum among the Tamils in Sri Lanka and appoint only Tamil envoys to nations which have a sizeable diaspora. While vowing to redeem Katchatheevu, an islet off Tamil Nadu coast ceded to Sri Lanka by India in 1976, the DMK also promised to work for resettlement of Lankan refugees in India, after ascertaining their willingness. Sticking to its demand for implementation of the contentious Sethusamudram project, which it claimed would promote economic development in southern Tamil Nadu, the DMK said it would create a congenial atmosphere to again begin work by expediting disposal of cases pending before the apex court. The party also promised to seek waiver of farm loans, necessary laws to ensure construction of a second spaceport at Kulasekarapatnam in Tuticorin district of Tamil Nadu, institutionalise Tamil as the official court language and additional language in central government institutions, appointment of 10 lakh women across the country as people welfare workers and a Constitutional amendment to abolish death penalty. (Deccan Herald 11/3/14)

OBCs, minorities encroaching on SC, ST quota (25)

LUCKNOW: Over 50% police stations in the state have station officers hailing from other backward classes and minorities, whereas number of officers from scheduled cast and tribe are less than 40%, reveals a Right to Information query. These appointments, applicant claims, violates government order on posting of officers and Supreme Court slab on reservation. The government order dated June 7, 2002 says clearly that 21% station officers in each district shall belong to Scheduled Caste (SC) and 2% to Scheduled Tribes (ST) category persons. As per the RTI information obtained by RTI activist Dr Nutan Thakur from the DGP office, however, UP has a total of 1,447 police stations. Thus, as per the GO, a minimum of 303 station officers should have belonged to SC category and 30 to ST category. Against this, only 120 SC officers and one ST office have been posted as station officers. Further, the GO

prescribes for 27% reservation for other backward classes, including minority communities which makes it 420 police stations. Against this, actually 614 station officers are from backward castes and 102 are from minority community, taking the total to 734. This, she said, makes up for more than 50% reservations and is clearly against the upper slab for reservation by the Supreme Court. (Times of India 14/3/14)

Karnataka has highest number of OBCs in police (25)

New Delhi: Southern states have the highest number of people belonging to Other Backward Classes (OBCs) in their police forces, with Karnataka topping the list. Over 55 per cent of the state's police personnel come from these communities, according to the latest data on police organisations released by the government think-tank Bureau of Police Research and Development. Karnataka had 50,333 OBC personnel out of a total of 91,169 as on January 1, 2013. The state had sanctioned 33 per cent reservation for OBCs in the force, but the presence of such personnel in Karnataka Police is 55.21 per cent. "The Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Classes, the traditional weaker sections, in India have been covered by affirmative action to accelerate the process of their socio-economic upliftment," said the document. Tamil Nadu follows Karnataka with 48.86 per cent of its personnel coming from OBCs, followed by Kerala at 33.86 per cent and Andhra Pradesh at 23.63 per cent. At the pan-India level, there are 3,74,303 policemen from OBCs, constituting 16.94 per cent of the total of over 22 lakh personnel. (Deccan Herald 15/3/14)

43 women among 318 candidates fielded by Congress (25)

Delhi: For all the claims of giving greater say to women this election, of the total 318 candidates announced so far by the Congress party just about 14 per cent happen to be women. The party has so far announced 43 women candidates. The party announced its third list late last night. The first list had 194 names while the second and third list announced featured 71 and 58 candidates respectively. Of 28 women candidates announced earlier in the first list, the party later brought it down to 26. Further, in the second and third list, the party selected 11 and six women candidates respectively for the polls. A month ago, while addressing an all-women rally in Tumkur, Congress vice-president stated that the opposition party, BJP did not support women. Further, he charged then that BJP didn't want to give either positions or share its administration with women. Gandhi reiterated the view that the country can be transformed into a super power by giving more representation to the 'fair sex'. Key highlights: 1) So far, the Congress party has announced 43 women candidates for the upcoming polls. 2) Till now, the party has offered less than 14 per cent seats to women. 3) Maximum 11 candidates have been fielded from Uttar Pradesh (UP) followed by Rajasthan (6), Madhya Pradesh (3), Bihar (3) etc. 4) The party has listed its first preference to enact the women's reservation bill. This explains that why women remain grossly under-represented at the Indian Parliament. Just 11 per cent of seats were held by women in 15th Lok Sabha as against the global average of nearly 21 per cent. As per state-wise list of Cong women candidates so far, maximum 11 candidates have been fielded from Uttar Pradesh (UP) followed by Rajasthan (6), Madhya Pradesh (3), Bihar (3), Chhattisgarh (3) etc. Not ignoring the importance of UP which represents 80 out of the 543 members of Lok Sabha, the party has fielded some prominent women candidates from there. For instance, former Uttar Pradesh PCC chief Rita Bahuguna Joshi has been made the candidate from Lucknow. Similarly, senior party leader Begum Noor Bano has been fielded from Moradabad, a Muslim-majority seat. Further, actress Nagma has received a ticket from Meerut. Other prominent women who are given tickets by the party include: Atal Bihari Vajpayee's niece Karuna Shukla (from Chhatisgarh), actress Aparajita Mohanty (Odisha), and journalist Sucharita Mohanty (Odisha). Lok Sabha speaker Meira Kumar (Bihar) and sitting MP from Madhya Pradesh, Meenakshi Natrajan got selected to fight the upcoming general polls in the state. Likewise, Priya Sunil Dutt (Maharashtra), Girija Vyas (Rajasthan), Chandresh Kumari (Rajasthan), Jyoti Mirdha (Rajasthan), Rajesh Nandini Singh (Madhya Pradesh), Raneer Narah (Assam), Divya Spandana Ramya (Karnataka), Deepa Dashmunshi (West Bengal), and Mausam Noor (West Bengal) are some other sitting MPs who got re-nominated for the big event.

Congress party's has listed its first preference to enact the women's reservation bill giving 33 per cent reservation to women in the Lok Sabha and assemblies. (Zee News 20/3/14)

Tribal Sangha demands rights (25)

Kokrajhar, March 23: The All-Assam Tribal Sangha has demanded reservation of majority seats for indigenous people in the Assam Assembly. The Sangha adopted some important resolutions during its three-day 36th triennial general conference which concluded today after three days of colourful programmes at Mancotta in Dibrugarh. The Sangha said majority seats should be reserved for indigenous people of Assam in the state Assembly so that their rights and interests are protected and the minority indigenous communities have representatives in the Assembly. It also demanded that the rights and interests of the indigenous communities should be looked after for good, protection of tribal belts and blocks, eviction of illegal encroachers of tribal land, inquiry into the illegal mutation cases in tribal belts and blocks areas, land rights for the scheduled tribal forest dweller according to the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006. Sangha general secretary Aditya Kakhlyar said they would discuss with the government and the BTC authorities on forest rights issue. "There is an urgent need to safeguard the tribal belts and blocks and protection of tribal lands from illegal encroachers," he said. The Sangha also demanded enhancement of reservation for ST (plains) from 10 per cent to 15 per cent as per the 2011 census and inclusion of five more communities in list of ST (plains) in 2002. It criticised the state government for working against rights of tribal people saying the government and its machinery are not at all interested in proper implementation of reservation policy and rights of tribal people. Kakhlyar said land issues are of foremost importance. "There is an internal strategy to grab tribal land and drive away the tribal people from their land," he said. The apex tribal organisation criticised the Assam government for oppression and discrimination against the aboriginal people. "The tribal people are deliberately deprived of their rights by the state government," Kakhlyar said. He warned Dispur that this kind of discriminatory role and anti-tribal policy will not be tolerated and demanded implementation of the Assam Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Reservation of Vacancies in Services and Post Amendment Act, 2012, in the state. (The Telegraph 24/3/14)

Congress seeks to woo upper caste with quota (25)

New Delhi: In a bid to lure the upper caste, the Congress manifesto promises of looking at the option giving reservation on economic ground without distorting the current facilities provided to Other Backward Classes (OBCs), Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs). In its manifesto for the 2014 elections, which was released here on Wednesday, the party said, "The Congress is committed to finding a way forward for introducing reservation in education and employment for economically weaker sections of all communities without in any way affecting existing reservations for SCs, STs and OBCs." It is now generally believed that this promise is a clear indication of the Congress' attempt to bring back to its fold the traditional upper caste support base, as except for a few in the upper caste population, most of the Hindu castes are benefiting from the current reservation policy. "Undoubtedly, the BJP has played the OBC card in this election by projecting Narendra Modi (an OBC) as its prime ministerial candidate. The BJP has also for long been a favourite of upper castes among Hindus. Thus, the Congress had no option to play its upper castes card," said an analyst. However, in a bid to balance out its overtures to upper castes, the party in its manifesto also expressed its commitment "to create national consensus on affirmative action for SCs and STs in the private sector". Taking the caste card further to ensure that the present equilibrium does not get disturbed, the manifesto also promises to establish "special commission for SCs, STs and OBCs to identify communities within each group, which have not benefited so far". It also promises to ensure that the existing Rajiv Gandhi National Fellowship for SC and ST candidates will be extended to students belonging to Other Backward Classes" (Asian Age 27/3/14)

SC notice to govt on Jats in OBC list, to hear Apr 9 (25)

New Delhi: In a setback to the UPA-2 government on the eve of the Lok Sabha polls, the Supreme Court Tuesday asked the Centre for an explanation over its decision to include Jats in the OBC category even though a statutory body had allegedly advised against it. "This seems to be a serious matter and we want to know if serious application of mind went into it," said a bench headed by Chief Justice P. Sathasivam. The bench asked the ministry of social justice and empowerment to place before it all files and records on the decision to extend reservation benefits to Jats by a March 4 notification. The bench, that included Justices Ranjan Gogoi and N.V. Ramana, also sought attorney-general G.E. Vahanvati's assistance and will hear the matter April 9. The orders came on two petitions challenging the notification to include Jats in the OBC list and seeking a stay on it. The notification included Jats in the OBC list in Bihar, Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Delhi, Rajasthan (Bharatpur and Dholpur districts), Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand. Senior advocate K.K. Venugopal, appearing for OBC Reservation Raksha Samiti, alleged it was an "outrageous notification" issued in haste with "votebank" politics in mind. "Before the election, largesse is given by the party in power to purchase votes," Mr Venugopal said. (Asian Age 2/4/14)

With growing SC population, more reserved seats in Rajasthan likely (25)

JAIPUR: Rajasthan has four Scheduled Caste (SC) and three Scheduled Tribe (ST) reserved seats for the upcoming Lok Sabha election. The SC reserved seats are located in eastern and northern Rajasthan while two of the ST seats are located in the southern part and one is in eastern Rajasthan. Barring the Bikaner SC seat, which was bagged by BJP's Arjun Ram Meghwal, a former IAS officer who has a record number of questions asked in the current Lok Sabha, all other seats - Bharatpur, Dholpur-Karauli, and Ganganagar - were in Congress' kitty. The SC has the highest individual population comprising almost 18% of the state's total population enjoys reservation in 34 out of the 200 Assembly constituencies. Their estimated population in the state is over 1.20 crore. Apart from Udaipur, Dungarpur, Banswara and Rajsamand, the SC has reserved Assembly seats in all the districts. In each district, the number of reserved seats for the SC is either one or a maximum of two. But in Ganganagar and Hanumangarh districts, the percentage of SC voters are quite high and their percentage is above 26. In the Ganganagar reserved constituency of which Hanumangarh is a part has about 34% SC electors. Common SC communities settled across the state are Meghwal, Berwa, Raigar, Koli, Jatav, Khatik, Harijans, Naik, Dhobhi, Dhanuk, Mochhi, Jeengar, Dome, Dholi, Mehaar, Mehra, Nat, Bedi, Mogia and Sansi. Percentagewise, the Meghwals are about five, Berwas and Raigar about four each, and other castes collectively are 5.16%. The highest percentage of SC in an Assembly segment is in Ajmer's Lok Sabha constituency Ajmer(South) where their percentage is above 33 followed by Dholpur-Karauli's Assembly segment Hindaun (SC) 29.71%, Bharatpur's (SC Reserved) Weir (SC) 27.33%, Bayana (SC) 26.29%, Kota Lok Sabha constituency's Assembly segment Ramganjmandi (SC) 24.76%, Tonk's Khandar (SC) 24.56% and Jaipur (rural) Bagru (SC) 23.61%. Altogether, 13 Assembly segments have the percentage of the SCs between 20 and 23. Interestingly, the highest number of SCs in a single constituency is Ganganagar; however, the highest SC voters in one single constituency is Raisingnagar where their number is over 1.30 lakh, closely followed by Anupgarh at 1.26 lakh and both are SC reserved Assembly segments. Even in the Assembly segment of Karanpur, the number of SC electors is over a lakh and in Sadulshahar it is 95,000. Pilibanga, which is also a reserved Assembly segment in Ganganagar, the number of SC electors is 1.1 lakh. Suratgarh constituency in Ganganagar has 86,000 SC electors while Sangaria has over 85,000. Hanumangarh constituency has also over 85,000 SC electors. Thus, in Ganganagar and Hanumangarh districts, if the population of the SCs grows further, in all likelihood they will follow suit of Banwara, Dungarpur and Pratapgarh which are all reserved for ST. Both the districts may have to be reserved for SC where their presence is more than 50,000 and there will not be a single general seat left. (Times of India 3/4/14)

JD(U) promises job reservation for pvt sector (25)

Patna: The Janata Dal (United) on Saturday promised job reservation in private sector and a special law for protection of migrant labourers. Releasing its manifesto for the Lok Sabha elections, the party also promised 50 per cent reservation for women in elections to the panchayati raj organisations along with special status for "states like Bihar". The party manifesto said if it came to power at the Centre, it would introduce reservation for scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and other backward classes in the private sector. It has also pledged "zero tolerance" against corruption and communal violence. Attacking his bête noire Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)'s prime ministerial candidate Narendra Modi, Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar said if Modi comes to power at the Centre, Bihar's development would take a beating. "Anything can happen," said Kumar. Kumar said his party's manifesto offered an "alternative vision" for development and pledged to replicate Bihar's model of "inclusive growth" on a pan-India basis. He said, "Good governance, inclusive growth, communal harmony, revamped state-centre relations and rule of law are our five basic pillars of this alternative vision for the future of the country. We want bring development to every section of the society. Therefore, we have promised a commission to study the socio-economic condition of the economically weak section of upper castes at the national level." "Given the rising attacks on migrant labourers, we want a special law against that. These attacks endanger the very notion of our right to freedom. Therefore, we will seek a new and tough law, making it mandatory for the state governments to guarantee security of life and property of all migrants." The chief minister said central schemes should be abolished. "It is a complete wastage of our scarce resources. They formulate schemes without even consulting us and then want us to finance those schemes. Shoes of particular kind cannot fit every person," said Kumar. He also harped on redefining Centre-State ties. Meanwhile, party leaders also launched a scathing attack on both the Congress and the BJP on this occasion. Party President Sharad Yadav said his party had fulfilled Dr Ram Manohar Lohia's dreams and attacked the saffron party, saying the tie-up between corporate and communal forces is complete. "The BJP has purchased all the choppers. It is shamelessly flaunting its money power." Meanwhile, Kumar also took on the corporate sector and said, "Earlier capitalists used to help in the election, now they are investing. Corporate houses are pumping in money in elections." Kumar also slammed the Congress. He said, "Nowadays the Congress is busy distributing certificates of secularism. It must look its own track record. Who was responsible for the 1984 riots, who opened the locks in Ayodhya Ram Janmabhoomi temple and who was responsible for the 1989 Bhagalpur riots? It becomes secular only during the elections." (Business Standard 5/4/14)

BJP will end quota for SC/STs if it comes to power, warns Mayawati (25)

LUCKNOW: Launching a blistering attack on BJP's prime ministerial candidate Narendra Modi, BSP chief Mayawati on Sunday said if he became the PM, the country would become vulnerable to communal riots. "If Modi becomes the Prime Minister, communal riots will take place in the country any day. The country will be destroyed," Mayawati said while addressing a rally for Meerut and Bijnor parliamentary seats on Hapur Road. She said it was in the interest of the people and the country to stop BJP from coming to power. "And for this, it is important that Muslim votes are not divided," Mayawati reiterated. She said all Muslims should vote for only one party. The former UP CM said if BJP came to power, it would end the reservation being given to the SC/ST. "When BJP came to power at the Centre for the first time, it formed a panel to review the Indian Constitution for ending the reservation in education and services being given to Dalits," she said. Taking on Congress, Mayawati said it should also be stopped from coming to power, as during its 50 years of rule, the party had done nothing for the welfare of the people. The BSP chief raked up the Muzaffarnagar riots to attack SP. "Apart from Hindus, Muslims also suffered losses. The Supreme Court has blamed the SP government for failures during the communal violence," she said. Later, while addressing a rally in Baghpat, Mayawati attacked Rashtriya Lok Dal chief Ajit Singh. Mayawati said she hardly considered RLD a political outfit. She alleged that Ajit Singh hardly did anything for the farmers in the region despite being a Union minister. THE BSP chief said it was during her government that the farmers, especially of sugarcane, were given their dues. (Times of India 7/4/14)

No quota, only equal opportunity (25)

New Delhi: In a discernible difference in the way it proposes to address the aspirations of the reserved categories (SCs, STs, OBCs), the BJP has moved away from endorsing caste-based reservation to pushing for an ecosystem of equal opportunity in its manifesto released on Monday. Manifestos of all parties make explicit reference to quotas, but the BJP has restricted itself to empowerment and opportunity through widening the platform. This is in sharp contrast to the party's 2009 manifesto, which stated that the BJP would "introduce education and job quotas on the basis of economic criteria for all economically weaker sections of society other than Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Classes, who will continue to enjoy quota benefits." BJP spokesperson Nirmala Sitharaman said: "Our idea of affirmative action is now being dealt with on a wider platform. We are talking of identifying 100 most backward districts for bringing them on a par with other districts." The party in its manifesto talks of an enabling environment and equal opportunities. "Instead of pursuing identity politics and tokenisms, we will focus on empowering the deprived sections of society. Steps will be taken to create an enabling ecosystem of equal opportunity — for education, health and livelihood." As evidence of its concern for the minorities, the BJP in its manifesto has outlined madrasa modernisation, empowerment of Waqf Boards and preservation of cultural heritage. "It is unfortunate that even after several decades of Independence, a large section of the minorities, especially the Muslim community, continues to be stymied in poverty. Modern India must be a nation of equal opportunity." (The Hindu 8/4/14)

Supreme Court declines stay on inclusion of 'Jats' in OBC list (25)

New Delhi: In what may be music to the UPA government's ears, the Supreme Court on Wednesday declined to stay the inclusion of 'Jats' in the central list of Other Backward Classes (OBC) category in eight states and Delhi, observing that the Centre had sufficient material to take such a decision even on the eve of polls. The apex court, however, said that all appointments and admissions made under the reservation would be subject to its final order. The decision by the UPA-II government to give benefit of reservation to 'Jats' was seen as a major election gambit just before the elections as the community had a strong social and political base in western Uttar Pradesh and its bordering areas of Uttarakhand, Delhi, Haryana and Rajasthan. Taking up a petition against the move, a bench presided over by Chief Justice P Sathasivam said that the court was prima facie satisfied that the government had material to rely upon for inclusion of Jats in the OBC category. "We have gone through the documents produced by them. We cannot say that the government had no material. They have sufficient material, in fact. Prima facie there are materials to make this decision," the bench said. The court brushed aside an argument made by senior advocate K K Venugopal, appearing for the petitioner, raising a question mark over the government including 'Jats' in the OBC list merely a day before the model code of conduct was to be enforced in view of the general elections. "The government is a government. We can't say, you cannot do it only because one day is left for the model code of conduct. If they want to take a decision, they are certainly entitled to do so even till one day before," the bench also comprising Justices Ranjan Gogoi and N V Ramana, said. The court also said that it could not stay at this stage the decision merely because the National Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC) had recommended against the inclusion of Jats. "After all, the government is government and these institutions are to aid and advise them," it added. The court, however, asked the government to file a comprehensive stand within three weeks, stating the rationale of the decision. While admitting a bunch of other petitions, the court listed those for hearing on May 1. The court had on April 1 asked the government to produce the original records with regard to the March 4 decision, acting on a petition filed by OBC Reservation Raksha Samiti, an organisation of members of communities that are included in the Central List of Backward Classes. (Deccan Herald 10/4/14)

Most converts to Islam are backward; they need quotas (25)

CHENNAI: In Tamil Nadu, the government grouped Muslims by caste names such as marakaiyar and rowther and provided them reservation by stating that these were the backward Muslims. Though social, educational and economic backwardness is widespread among Muslims, the government did not want to treat the whole community as backward due to legal obstacles. Unfortunately, the method adopted by the government sustains and perpetuates the caste-like system among Muslims. But, till the basis of this reservation is changed, Muslims have no other way except to say they belong to one of the groups enumerated by the government as backward. When a person embraces Islam, he loses his previous caste and comes to a casteless society. But he mingles with people who are socially, economically and educationally backward. It is a known fact that most of the converts to Islam are dalits and backward class people. After their conversion, their educational and economic backwardness continues. Such a convert, if he has to avail the benefits available from the government to backward class Muslims, has to say that he belongs to a particular caste-like group among Muslims. The recent judgment of Justice Hari Paranthaman of the Madras high court paves the way for such converts to enjoy the benefits provided to backward class Muslims. (Times of India 12/4/14)

SC Nod to Transgenders a Call for Social Justice (25)

The Supreme Court's decision to treat eunuchs as the third gender is most welcome. So far, the law has recognised only two genders—the male and the female. While declaring transgenders as the third gender, the apex court has clarified that gays and bisexuals will not be included in this category. The implications of the verdict are that eunuchs will now be eligible to get voters' identity card, passports, driving licences, etc. What's more, they will also be entitled to get admission to educational institutions and jobs in public and private sectors. In other words, they will be entitled to all the benefits of citizenship. So far, eunuchs had to declare themselves as either male or female to avail of any of the services of the state. The court's decision is unlikely to affect the ongoing elections in any manner as its beneficiaries constitute an almost negligible segment of the population. However, the significance of the decision lies in the fact that it seeks to undo an injustice eunuchs have been suffering for centuries, though they enjoyed a special position in society during and after the Vedic period. As of now, they are one of the most backward groups in the country depending mostly on alms to make a living. While some of them are victims of castration at a young age, many are born as transgenders. Because they do not get any social status, they are forced to form their own ghettos where they lead their own lives. They are often harassed by the police and sexual perverts. The verdict will help them lead a better life as their special status has for the first time been recognised. With the court declaring them socially, educationally and economically backward, they will be entitled to reservation in government services. This marks a sea-change in the attitude of the government that has so far considered caste as the only criterion for reservation. The Mandal Commission-approved reservation was solely for the "educationally and socially backward". Social justice has been advanced by making eunuchs eligible for government's affirmative action. (New Indian Express 16/4/14)

UPA Government Failed to Walk the Talk on Group A OBC Quota (25)

COIMBATORE: The Congress-led UPA-I and II governments appear to have not travelled much beyond politically appeasing the vast majority of Other Backward Classes (OBCs) in the country by providing reservation for them. While the UPA-I government introduced 27 per cent reservation for OBCs in Central educational institutions and UPA-II belatedly brought Jats under the OBC ambit, "affirmative action" appeared missing when it came to recruiting government employees as per Mandal Commission recommendations. Data provided by the Union Ministry of Personnel under the Right to Information (RTI) Act reveals that as of January 1, 2013, only 5,794 Group A officers belonging to the OBCs were employed in 55 Central government agencies. This constitutes just 9.41 per cent of the 61,566 Group A officers. In contrast, the percentage of non-quota or Open Competition Group A officers is a significant 72.15 per cent. While Scheduled Castes (SC) make up 12.82 per cent of the employees, the

representation of Scheduled Tribes (ST) was 5.63 per cent. "This is the poor state of the estimated 75 crore OBCs today, though as per the Mandal Commission report 27 per cent reservation was being implemented from as early as September 8, 1993," says Chennai-based activist E Muralidharan, who obtained the data. Data available with Express as of January 1, 2008 (when UPA-I was in power), shows that the strength of the Group A officers in all government departments then was only 5,031. So, there has been only a marginal increase in the numbers of OBC Group A officers during the 5-year span. The Union Ministry of Personnel has said that it has yet to receive information on the community-wise representation of Group A, B and C employees from ministries, including HRD, Finance, Civil Aviation, Corporate Affairs and Culture. When it comes to Group B employees, OBCs constitute only 11.6 per cent of the total 1,41,195 employees. SCs account for 16.22 per cent, STs 6.66 per cent and others 65.52 per cent. The representation of OBCs among Group C safai karamcharis (sanitary workers) is higher at 20.2 per cent, while among non-quota staff it is 43.22 per cent. In an indication that it is still the vast majority of Dalits who are taking to sanitary work, the data shows that 29.52 per cent of safai karamcharis are SCs and 6.96 per cent are STs. Among Group C employees (excluding safai karamcharis), OBCs constitute 18.38 per cent, while SCs make up 17.12 per cent, STs 7.88 per cent, with the remaining 56.61 per cent being non-quota employees. (New Indian Express 21/4/14)

Paswan slams BJP over anti-reservation remarks (25)

PATNA: Lok Janshakti Party (LJP) president Ram Vilas Paswan has taken umbrage at senior BJP leader C P Thakur's assertion that provisions of reservation for Dalits in jobs and educational institutions should end. Mincing no words in slamming the former Union health minister, who worked with him in the Vajpayee Cabinet, Paswan said, "Those who favour putting an end to reservation for Dalits are either ignorant of the ground realities or are in a hurry to display their anti-Dalit mindset. Reservation is the right of Dalits and weaker sections, and it should continue." Paswan, the new-found ally of the BJP, who quit the UPA and joined the NDA in February, is seething with rage because such statements by BJP leaders against weaker sections of society could upset his appellation in Hajipur, a reserved constituency, where polling is due on May 7. In 2009, he had lost from his fiefdom. The Bihar unit of the BJP immediately got into fire-fighting mode, distancing itself from the statement of Thakur, who had said, "The provisions for quota were made in the Constitution initially for 10 years. After more than 60 years of Independence, reservation for Dalits are no more required, either in jobs or educational institutions." Bihar BJP president Mangal Pandey, trying to douse the fire after Paswan slammed Thakur, an upper-caste Bhumihar leader, said, "The BJP completely disagrees and disassociates itself with Thakur's observations." Though Thakur later modified his statement, saying the issue needs to be discussed in Parliament, it evoked angry reactions from the Congress and the Janata Dal (United), or the JD(U), who slammed the saffron party for such "outrageous remarks". "We have been saying from Day One that the BJP is a pro-rich and anti-Dalit party. It cares only for capitalists, and does little for the weaker and oppressed sections," said senior Congress leader and in-charge of Bihar affairs Satyavrat Chaturvedi. "Thakur's statement reflects the BJP's anti-Constitutional approach and the self-destructive path it has chosen," said Bihar JD(U) president Bashistha Narayan Singh. (DECCAN Herald 27/4/14)

Jat Maha Sabha holds Badal responsible for denial of reservation (25)

Amritsar, Apr 27 : All India Jat Maha Sabha today held Punjab Chief Minister Parkash Singh Badal responsible for the denial of the benefits of reservation under OBC category to Jats of Punjab. Addressing a news conference here today, the Secretary General of the Maha Sabha Yudhvir Singh and vice president Harpal Singh said, Badal deliberately delayed the matter as he feared that the Congress will get the advantage for it. They said, for this petty political interest Badal denied the reservation benefits to the educated Jat youth of Punjab, who include both Hindu and Sikh Jats. "Had Badal not delayed the process today the Jat youth would be entitled to reservation in Indian Civil Services, other government of India services and higher education institutions under OBC category", they said. Yudhvir Singh said, the

president of the Jat Maha Sabha, Capt Amarinder Singh had continuously been reminding Badal about the urgency of submitting the proposal to the government of India so that the reservation benefits could be extended to Punjab also. "But Badal thought that if he did so the Congress might get the benefit in elections so he delayed the matter", the Jat leader said. (New Kerala 28/4/14)

Reply on Muslim Quota: HC to Govt (25)

MADURAI: The Madras High Court (Madurai Bench) has issued notice to the State Backward Classes and Minorities Department on a petition challenging the constitutional validity of the 3.5 per cent reservation given to OBCs belonging to the Muslim community in educational institutions. In a public interest litigation petition, a Madurai-based functionary of a Hindu outfit submitted that the Tamil Nadu Backward Classes, Schedule Castes and Schedule Tribes (Reservation of Seats in Educational Institutions and of Appointments or Posts in the service under the State) Act was enacted in 1993. This Act provides for 30 per cent reservation of seats for BCs, 20 per cent for Most Backward Classes and De-notified communities, 18 per cent for Schedule Castes and 1 per cent for Schedule Tribes in educational institutions. The Schedule of the said Act contained 143 Backward Classes including the denominations of Muslim communities like Ansar, Dekkani Muslims, Dudekula, Labbais including Rowther and Marakayar, Mappilla, Sheik and Syed. While so in 2007, the State promulgated an ordinance providing 3.5 per cent reservation each for BC Christians and BC Muslims within the 30 per cent reservation for BCs. Subsequently, at the request of the Christians, the quota for BC Christians was repealed. Quota for BC Muslims continues to be in vogue. The petitioner contended that the Act, which has been in force for the past seven years, has immensely affected the rights and prospects of the OBCs in Tamil Nadu as only 26.5 per cent reservation was available for them. (New Indian Express 30/4/14)

Minority colleges move High Court against reservation for HK students (25)

Bangalore: A few religious and linguistic minority professional colleges on Wednesday moved the Karnataka High Court questioning the Government Order on reserving seats for students from Gulbarga, Bidar, Raichur, Koppal, Yadgir and Bellary districts in view of the special status given to the Hyderabad Karnataka region under Article 371 (J). The petitioners — Al-Ameen Medical and Dental Colleges, MVJ Medical College, and others — questioned the Karnataka Private Unaided Educational Institutions (Regulations of Admission in the Hyderabad Karnataka Region) Order, 2013, issued in November 2013 and the February 1, 2014, notification earmarking certain percentage of seats in these institutions for persons hailing from the six districts. The notification says that regional institutes, including government, private, private unaided and deemed universities, shall reserve 70 per cent of the available seats for local persons every year after deducting the seats allocated to all-India quota/NRI quota in every course of study, and State-wide institutions shall reserve 8 per cent of available seats for local persons every year after deducting the seats allocated to all-India quota/NRI quota. The petitioners claimed that when the reservation provided under the Constitution for socially and economically backward classes such as Scheduled Class and Scheduled Tribes, and Other Backward Classes were not made applicable for minority institutions, reservation for the HK region too could not be applied to them. They claimed that the notifications were contrary to the law declared by the Supreme Court on minority professional colleges. Pointing out that the order on the reservation for the HK region could not be enforced on minority institutions in view of Article 30(1) of the Constitution, the petitioners contended that the notification ought to have restricted the reservation only to non-minority educational institutions. Justice B.S. Patil, before whom the petition came up for hearing, referred the case to a Division Bench as it required greater consideration on constitutional issues while refusing to stay the operation of the notification. (The Hindu 1/5/14)

Quota issue raises head at AIIMS, teachers to protest on Saturday (25)

NEW DELHI: A section of AIIMS faculty will stage a protest at Jantar Mantar on Saturday against the denial of reservations in various medical institutions and other institutions of higher education across the country. The protesting doctors are demanding that those responsible for denial of reservation should face criminal prosecution. They will submit a memorandum to the President. "The gross under-representation of SC, ST and OBC in the advertisements from other medical institutes clearly suggests that infraction of reservation roster is not only confined to AIIMS," said Dr L R Murmu, professor at AIIMS. Members of Forum for Rights and Equality and Progressive Medicos and Scientists Forum of AIIMS said those responsible for undermining the policy of reservation have developed a kind of immunity to action against them. It is imperative that a system is put in place wherein infraction of the due rights of SC, ST and OBC is treated as a crime that would attract penal punishment, they said. Times of India 2/5/14)

Delhi govt to stick to current policy, follow quota fixed by Centre (25)

The Delhi government will continue to adhere to the reservation policy as fixed by the central government allowing 15 per cent quota for Scheduled Castes and 7.5 per cent for Scheduled Tribes, keeping aside the principle of nativity of the beneficiaries. In an affidavit to the Supreme Court, the Delhi government said that till the issue – if providing reservations as per direction issued by the President under Article 341 (1) or Article 342 (1) would have any bearing on the state government's action – is settled by a larger bench, it will stick to the present quota policy in jobs and education. The city government sought dismissal of an appeal that challenged a 2010 ruling of the Delhi High Court. The Constitution under Article 341 and 342 provides separate list of SCs and STs respectively for the states and Union Territories. For Delhi, 36 castes have been notified through Presidential notification as SCs and no list of ST was notified for Delhi. In June 2005, a circular was issued stating that the Delhi government should follow the central government's pattern of reservation for SC/ST irrespective of nativity. This was based on the apex court's ruling in S Pushpa case in 2005, where it was held that there would be no legal infirmity if the Union Territory of Pondicherry followed the central government's reservation policy. But in the 2009 case of Sarv Rural, a two-judge bench held that the ruling in the S Pushpa case was a mere "obiter dicta" and hence not binding. It further ruled that reservation in jobs and education could be given to only those SC/ST who figure in the list of that state or UT. "This will mean depriving all categories of STs from the benefit of reservation in Delhi in the absence of Presidential notification under Article 342 and also depriving migrant SCs from the benefit of reservation in civil jobs there," the Delhi government said. In another judgment in 2010 titled 'State of Uttaranchal Vs Sandeep Kumar Singh', the apex court said that the two-judge bench in Sarv Rural's case could not have declared the three-judge bench decision in the S Pushpa case as "obiter and per incuriam". Accordingly, the matter was referred to the Chief Justice of India for setting up a larger bench for considering the question of law, "whether any Presidential order has any bearing on the state's action in making provision for reservation in appointments of posts in favour of any backward classes of citizens, which in the opinion of the state is not adequately represented in the services under the state." However, a PIL was filed in 2010 in the Delhi HC for implementation of the Sarv Rural case, seeking direction that only those SCs who were listed in Delhi should be granted the benefit of reservation and no such treatment to any ST in absence of any Presidential notification. The HC dismissed the petition, saying that the ruling in the S Pushpa case was binding as it was rendered by a three-judge bench. Responding to an appeal filed against the HC's verdict, the Delhi government sought its dismissal saying that the Union Home Ministry re-examined the matter in consultation with the Law Ministry and also sought opinion of the Attorney General, who concurred with the HC's view that till the matter is resolved by the larger bench, the decision in S Pushpa case will prevail. This means the UT government can adopt the central government's reservation policy. (Deccan Herald 4/5/14)

CPM Demands PU to Give 25 Percent Seats for local Students (25)

PUDUCHERRY: The CPM staged a demonstration in front of the Pondicherry University gates on Tuesday, demanding 25 per cent reservation for local students in all courses. V Perumal, CPM State secretary said the university offers 56 courses, out of which quota is provided only for 18 courses. He demanded that reservation be extended to the rest of the courses also. Stressing that the Pondicherry University is not serving the larger interest of the people of the UT, he said the existing reservation for the local students is not applicable to employment-oriented courses, as a result of which they are deprived of the prospects of employment. Perumal also put forth several other demands. He reiterated his demand for setting up a committee, headed by a retired High Court judge, to probe the detention of a Tamil Department student and his torture by two professors and two security officials of the university. He demanded that the professors and officials be suspended and an inquiry be conducted. He demanded the cancellation of a retired district judge as the advisor to the university and setting up of a committee to probe the irregularities in removing red sand from the university campus. The CPM leader demanded that the university drop action against two girl students, who complained about ragging, and form a panel to investigate complaints of ragging in future. Perumal urged the university to reduce the fees for various courses and ensure hostel accommodation for those who needed it in the coming academic year. CPM leaders Rajangam, Nilavazhagan and Students Federation of India leader Anand were among those who participated in the demonstration. (New Indian Express 7/5/14)

Backward Commission recommends transgenders for reservation (25)

New Delhi: Transgenders on Tuesday moved closer to getting reservation in employment and education in public sector with the National Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC) recommending their inclusion in the central list of the OBCs. The NCBC's decision comes against the backdrop of a Supreme Court order, which has directed the Centre and state Governments to treat the transgenders as socially and educationally backward classes to extend reservation in admission in educational institutions and for public appointments. The matter will now go to the Union Cabinet which will be required to approve the recommendation to enable the 'Third Gender' to avail of the benefits. "The Commission today unanimously passed a resolution to accept the verdict of the Supreme Court and decided to recommend to the Centre to include transgenders in the OBC list. Irrespective of their community background, all transgenders can avail benefits under the OBC list," NCBC member S K Kharventhan told PTI. Though the actual number of transgenders in the country is not available, electoral roll date of the Election Commission of India states that a total number of 23,019 people have registered themselves under "Others" category. NCBC, functioning under the aegis of Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, received a letter from the ministry seeking to look into the directions of the apex court. The Commission's role comes into play since NCBC advice is necessary to include a community in the OBC list. Invoking articles 15(4) and 16(4) of the Constitution, NCBC sources said that the communities set-out in the Supreme Court judgement are entitled to be added in the OBC list. The SC on April 15 had held that the rights of transgenders, also known as Hijras, Eunuchs, Kothis, Aravanis, Jogappas, Shiv-Shakthis etc, have to be protected as they are citizens of the country and having all rights under the Constitution like the male or the female have. (Zee News 13/5/14)

Reservation cannot be allowed to exceed limit: High Court (25)

MADURAI: Reservation in government employment cannot be allowed to exceed the percentage prescribed for various categories. Otherwise, it will result in injustice to candidates not falling within its purview, the Madras High Court Bench here has observed. "It is an everlasting principle of law that reservation cannot be allowed to exceed the percentage prescribed for reservation, and it would result in injustice to candidates falling outside the reservation category," the Bench observed. Justices A. Selvam and V.S. Ravi made the observation, dismissing writ appeals filed by two aspirants for the post of District Educational Officer (DEO). The appellants were aggrieved at the implementation of the 200-point, and not

100-point, roster system while reservation was decided for the post. Stating that they belonged to the Scheduled Caste and the Backward Class, the litigants claimed that they would have got selected for the post by the Tamil Nadu Public Service Commission (TNPSC) in 2009, had the government followed a 100-point roster system. But the Bench rejected their contention and held that the candidates could not question the roster system after having participated in the selection process, knowing that only the 200-point system would be implemented for the post as per a Government Order issued on September 15, 2007. The judges also recorded the submission of Advocate-General A.L. Somayaji that the TNPSC had issued a notification on January 23, 2009, calling for applications to fill six vacancies for the post of DEO, and on that date, the 200-point roster system alone was in effect. The Bench refused to accept the appellants' contention that their participation in the selection process could not act as a bar on questioning the methodology adopted by the government especially when it had infringed their fundamental rights. Holding that it did not find infringement of any fundamental right of the appellants, the Bench said they had been given sufficient opportunity to take part in the written examination as well as the interview. "But unfortunately, they were not selected in view of the 200-point roster system." (The Hindu 13/5/14)

Third gender awaits admission in universities, colleges (25)

LUCKNOW: Even after the Supreme Court on April 15 recognised transgender people as the third gender, they are yet to avail opportunities in education. Despite the formal recognition, neither Lucknow University nor the two prominent colleges - National PG and Isabella Thoburn (IT) are liberal to the third gender when it comes to pursuing higher education. Speaking to TOI, LU admission coordinator for UG courses, Prof Praveen Naggar said, Discussions were held whether to offer transgender as a third option for applicants. It was finally turned down in the absence of a government notification." Any transgender seeking admission in LU will have to choose male or female as their gender. According to the judgment, the third gender can now be admitted to campuses and work places under the third category and will be given reservation as OBCs. Similarly, National PG College that kicked off its admission process on May 6 too didn't offer the third gender as an option. We had a detailed talk on the topic. We had almost finalized to include it but there was no formal notification from the government. The government should initiate action," said Rakesh Jain, admission coordinator, NPGC. IT College, however, showed no interest to include the third gender option. College principal Vinita Prakash said, We did not think about it. At least this year, we are not including it. May be from the next academic session, the third gender option will appear in the application form."The exclusion of transgender in the campuses has come as a disappointment for the community. The transgender community has been marginalized for a very long. I feel some advocacy needs to be done. Community based organizations will approach as a consortium to the government and seek inclusion in universities and colleges," said Arif Jafar of Bharosa trust that closely works with LGBT community. Jafar added that there are quite a number of third gender who are eager to study. The society is opening up. Earlier, transgender people were not considered part of mainstream society. There has been discrimination in early school and so there was no question of higher studies till now."(Times of India 20/5/14)

'Riots, reservation and ration cards cost Samajwadi Party dear' (25)

BAREILLY: For Samajwadi Party, it's time to introspect. An outfit which did exceptionally well in 2012 (during assembly elections) had to face the wrath of the same people two years later. Apart from the "Modi factor", three 'R's: riots, reservation and ration cards contributed immensely in the party's debacle in the Lok Sabha elections, feel senior leaders. The youth, in particular the educated ones, who voted overwhelmingly for a new SP leadership under the foreign-educated Akhilesh Yadav, became its worst critic when the state public service commission introduced the policy of three-tier reservation for OBCs in government jobs. A scenario like the anti-Mandal movement of the 90s gripped the entire state with eastern part being worst affected. At this moment, support for the disgruntled sections of the student

community came only from the saffron party, whose leaders even went to jail during the anti-reservation movement in 2013. Talking to TOI, BJP leader Yogesh Shukla, who went to jail after sharing platform with anti-reservationists, said, "For youth who had been lured into the SP fold with doles of laptops, tablets and unemployment allowances, it was the worst nightmare come true. Thanks to the court which intervened and forced the state government to withdraw the controversial decision." But it wasn't just the general category which drifted away from the SP. Even the OBCs blamed the government for failing to live up to its promise, said Shukla. Commenting on the development, sociologist Ashish Joshi said, "Reservation in government jobs turns best friends into bitter rivals. This time, it was the state government which earned the wrath of the student community from both reserved and general category." The SP's failure to implement the Food Security Act and its decision to clamp down on preparation of ration cards in the state till the conclusion of parliamentary elections hurt the middle class and poorer sections of the society. This was the period from 2013 onwards when public distribution system of the state came to a grinding halt with no new ration cards being prepared. While talking to TOI, SP's national general secretary Rewati Raman Singh hesitatingly accepted, "There was a yearning for change among the masses and Modi occupied the centre-stage in this paradigm shift in the mind of voters. But this does not mean that our government faltered on any front." As regards to the three 'R's, he said, "It was the saffron party and its frontal organizations which fomented communal trouble and we acted with alacrity in controlling it. On the issue of preparation of ration cards and implementation of Food Security Act, the central government was not willing to shoulder the responsibility of providing funds. Moreover, there was no categorization of people living below poverty line. But one must also realize that we were the first to waive the irrigation tax on farmers in the state and provided them uninterrupted supply of fertilizers and manure round-the-year from 2012.".. (Times of India 23/5/14)

Court annuls ZP member's caste certificate (25)

Madikeri: Complainant K J Dundappa demands ZP membership suspension and withdrawal of facilities provided under ST quota. The Madikeri AC Court has annulled the caste certificate (Marata, ST) of Kodagu Zilla Panchayat Member S N Rajarao. Based on the report submitted by Civil Rights Enforcement Directorate Additional Director General of Police, AC Abhiram G Shankar has passed the order suspending the caste certificate on May 17. The copy of the order is with the Deccan Herald. Questioning the caste certificate produced by Rajarao, Meda/Gauriga Kshemabhivridi Sangha President K J Dundappa had approached the court and had urged to suspend the membership of Rajarao. Bhagamandala constituency was reserved for ST during ZP election in 2010. The BJP had fielded Rajarao. K J Dundappa from Meda/Gauriga community was his opponent. During the election Rajarao had submitted a caste certificate stating that he belongs to Marata community in Kodagu. Objecting to the caste certificate, Dundappa had claimed that Marata community comes under ST in Kodagu. Maharashtra Kshatriya community comes under 3B category. In spite of belonging to Maharashtra Kshatriya community, Rajarao had submitted a false caste certificate. Following the writ in the High Court, the court had directed the Civil Rights Enforcement Directorate Additional Director General of Police to probe into it. Based on the report, the court had directed the committee under Deputy Commissioner to look into the issue. Following the direction, Mysore ADGP had visited the district and submitted a report on May 17. Complainant K J Dundappa said "my son Suresh had contested from Koodige ZP constituency in 2005. Rajarao had contested as a Congress candidate. (From 2010, Rajarao is in BJP). He had submitted ST caste certificate. I have been fighting since then. Criminal case should be filed for submitting false caste certificate. The facilities enjoyed in the name of ST should be withdrawn and ZP membership should be suspended." (Deccan Herald 25/5/14)

Forum Smells Corruption in G'barga Varsity Recruitment (25)

GULBARGA: The Hyderabad Karnataka Pradeshada Horatagala Samanvaya Samiti has alleged that Gulbarga University Vice-Chancellor E T Puttaiah passed an order for recruitment of 53 teaching posts

without following reservation rules under Article 371(J) of the Constitution. However, Puttaiah refuted the allegation saying all norms have been followed. As per the Article, 80 per cent of the posts should be reserved for candidates of Hyderabad Karnataka. Samiti president Lakshman Dasti told reporters here on Sunday that the Samiti members will stage an indefinite dharna at the university from May 29 till Puttaiah withdraws the order and passes a fresh one to recruit as per the provisions of the article. Dasti alleged that the V-C, whose term ends in a month, passed the recruitment order illegally and encouraged corruption. As per a government order, a Vice-Chancellor whose term ends in three months cannot pass a recruitment order, he said. Dasti alleged that Puttaiah did not follow the reservation criteria properly since most of the seats have been allotted to SC/STs, the other categories did not get jobs. He also alleged that of the 388 vacant teaching and non-teaching posts, the university is filling up only 53 teaching posts. Puttaiah on the other hand refuted the allegations and said no rule was violated in the recruitment drive. When Express asked him about the 53 recruitments without following the reservation criteria, Puttaiah said that when he took over as V-C in 2010, he found that not many were recruited in the past 25 years. So, he asked the officials concerned to list out the vacant posts and he wrote to the state government to fill 143 teaching posts and about 200 non-teaching posts. The Finance Department of the state government, Puttaiah said, informed the Higher Education Department in February 2013 that it would permit the recruitment of only teaching staff, and that too just 53 out of the 143 posts. The university was then informed and the recruitment order was passed. Puttaiah said that as per the State Universities Act, V-Cs can pass recruitment orders even on the last day of their term. On allegation of not following the reservation rule, he said each department was allotted only one or two posts and hence local SC or ST candidates were given priority as per the government rules. Local people of other castes will be given priority for the remaining posts, he said. (New Indian Express 26/5/14)

Minorities 4.5% sub-quota as good as dead? (25)

NEW DELHI: With the advent of Narendra Modi, it may well be the end of 'Muslim quota' promulgated by the Congress. Social justice minister Thavarchand Gehlot told TOI that the BJP government was opposed to 4.5% sub-quota for minorities because it was reservation based on religion which was "unconstitutional". Minority affairs minister Najma Heptullah also said she was opposed to minority reservation because quota killed the "spirit of competition". The strident calls may end the Centre's aggressive stance to fight the quota case in the Supreme Court where it is awaiting review. The sub-quota was struck down by the Andhra Pradesh High Court and the Centre had filed a review in the apex court. If the upfront opposition from the newly-appointed BJP ministers is any indication, the Centre may reverse its stance or even withdraw the review petition from the apex court. The comments from Gehlot and Heptullah indicate that both ministries, which powered the sub-quota, appear set to renege on the stance taken by them under the UPA. In December 2011, the Centre carved out 4.5% quota within the 27% reservation available to OBCs. The sub-quota was earmarked for backward communities belonging to religious minorities who form part of the OBC list. While the sub-quota caters to all minorities like Sikhs, Parsis, Christians and Buddhists, it has come to be known as 'Muslim quota' because Congress planned to bait the largest minority community through the policy. It was announced just ahead of assembly elections in Uttar Pradesh and Rahul Gandhi made it the principal campaign plank in his speeches, flagging it as evidence of Congress's concern for Muslims. While Heptullah decried reservation as being "no solution to deprivation", social justice minister Gehlot was combative, telling TOI that 4.5% sub-quota smacked of reservation based on religion. "It is not allowed by the Constitution and BJP is against it," he said. Gehlot said the sub-quota for "minorities" was "unnecessary" because backward communities among all religious groups were part of the OBC list and availed the 27% reservation in jobs and education. In fact, indicating that this could be the end of the sub-quota, Gehlot said giving benefits based on Sachar Commission and Rangnath Mishra Commission, the key reference points under UPA, was a bad idea. "They are not required," he said. (Times of India 28/5/14)

Najma Heptullah rules out reservation for Muslims (7)

New Delhi: Minority affairs minister Najma Heptullah, the senior-most members of the newly sworn-in council of ministers, has said the minorities needed a "level playing field" in society, but reservation was not the answer. "The minorities are more backward than other backward (groups). But their development needs are the same as that of the majority (communities). Therefore, they need a level playing field," Heptullah told HT. Heptullah, the grand-niece of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, a prominent freedom fighter who became the country's first education minister, said the new government would like to continue many existing welfare programmes for minorities as possible, but virtually ruled out reservation, a dogmatic demand of Muslims, India's largest minority community. "Reservation on the basis of religion is not permissible under the Constitution. Nor is it the solution. It kills the spirit of competition," she said. Azad is known for his contribution in setting up key academic institutions such as the University Grants Commission, Sangeet Natak Akademi and the elite Indian Institutes of Technology. Heptullah said education was still one of the main needs of the community. She however said these were her preliminary views and her ministry would formulate a policy of robust development of the minorities once she is able to sit down with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and discuss matters pertaining to her ministry. The previous UPA government had announced a share for disadvantaged Muslims in jobs and education within the larger quota for Other Backward Classes, but could not implement it because of legal hurdles. The matter is now before the Supreme Court. (Hindustan Times 28/5/14)

Four Minority Institutions in Delhi Exempted from OBC Quota (25)

NEW DELHI: The Delhi High Court Friday exempted four minority colleges of Delhi University from reserving 27 percent seats for students from Other Backward Classes (OBCs) for the 2014-15 academic year. Justice Manmohan passed the order while hearing a plea filed by Mata Sundari College seeking exemption from the OBC quota as it was minority-run institution. The order will benefit four DU colleges run by Delhi Sikh Gurdwara Management Committee (DSGMC), constituted under the Delhi Sikh Gurdwaras Act. Apart from Mata Sundari College, these are Guru Tegh Bahadur Khalsa College, Guru Gobind Singh College, and Guru Nanak Dev Khalsa College -- all declared minority institutes. Passing the order, the court also said that these colleges shall provide reservation in admission for Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes as per the Delhi University's norms, but they will not be obliged to give reservation to OBCs for this academic session. Mata Sundari College, during the hearing, contended that the reservation policy was not applicable to these institutions in view of a Supreme Court verdict on OBC reservations. The apex court had held that minority educational institutions (MEI), whether they were aided by the government or unaided, were exempted from reserving seats for OBCs, the college added. However, DU maintained that reservation rule of DU for OBC should be followed by these colleges also. (New Indian Express 31/5/14)

Centre revises OBC caste certificate format (25)

New Delhi: With government job seekers from Other Backward Class (OBC) facing difficulty in getting reservation benefit due to faulty caste certificates, the government has now revised the format to include a number of castes and communities that were added to the list over the years. The move by the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) comes as the government found that intended beneficiaries were facing trouble in availing the benefits as the form prescribed 21 years ago had not updated the fresh inclusions. A set of instructions was issued in September 1993 for providing OBC reservation in services and posts under the government. A format for the caste certificate was prescribed in November 1993 along with the list of castes and communities treated as OBC till that time. Since then, a large number of castes and communities have been added to the central list of OBCs through various resolutions of Union Social Justice and Empowerment Ministry. The format also prescribes that the certificate issuing authority should certify that the candidate does not belong to creamy layer. However,

the details of the resolutions subsequent to the September 1993 resolution do not find mention in the existing format, which led to discrepancies. A senior official said the DoPT has been receiving complaints from candidates belonging to OBC about the problems they were facing. The officials cannot issue accurate caste certificates in the absence of later additions under relevant rules and regulations. In order to clear this anomaly, the official said fresh guidelines have been issued, including the fresh additions. The DoPT consulted the National Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC) before deciding on revising the existing format. "The caste certificate issued by district authorities concerned mention the name of the caste and community of the applicant but the specific resolution under which the said caste or community was added on in the central list of OBCs is not indicated," the official said. This led to procedural problems, he added. "All the certificate issuing authorities are requested to mandatorily mention the details of the Resolution (Number and Date) by which the caste/community of the candidate has been included in the central list of OBCs and also to ensure that he or she does not belong to creamy layer as amended from time to time," the official said. The DoPT has also asked state governments to advise the issuing authorities on the revised format. (Deccan Herald 1/6/14)

DU admissions: Confusion on 'Jats' in OBC quota (25)

New Delhi: Students applying for admission to various courses in Delhi University are unsure whether the 'Jat category' is included under the OBC quota this academic year. The National Commission for Backward Classes had included 'Jats' in the National Capital Territory of Delhi by amending the central list of OBC's vide a circular dating back to March 4, 2014. Dr. Dinesh Varshney, Deputy Dean (South Campus) confirmed to The Hindu that applications of such students falling under the 27 per cent OBC quota shall be entertained. "Students applying for statutory admission can apply by producing relevant documents. We have clarified this earlier. In case of confusion, the information centres can be approached," he said. Though Delhi University has undertaken various steps to keep the aspirants informed about the admission process, the student welfare helplines have been flooded with calls in the last few days. "Since Friday, we have been receiving about 450-500 calls a day but on Monday we have answered more than 1,500 calls in just 6-7 hours on multiple lines," said the Deputy Dean, Students' Welfare. (The Hindu 3/6/14)

Persons with disabilities get 1 pc reservation in teaching posts (25)

Chandigarh, Jun 5 : The Punjab Government has issued instructions to all departments to reserve 1 per cent of the identified teaching posts in the faculties and colleges of various Universities for people with disabilities. An official spokesperson for the Social Security Department today said the state government was fully committed to implement the provisions of Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act 1995 (For short 1995 Act) and take all necessary steps in this direction. He said instructions to identify such posts have been issued to all departments and they have been directed to comply with 1 per cent reservation for Persons with Disabilities as defined in Act. He said it has been reiterated to the departments that denial of appointment to the visually disabled persons in the faculties and colleges of various Universities in the identified posts would be considered as violation of their fundamental rights guaranteed under Article 14 and 15 read with Article 41 of the Constitution. They have been also apprised about the directions of the Supreme Court. (New Kerala 6/6/14)

UP Muslims to get 25% quota in new pension scheme (25)

LUCKNOW: The Samajwadi Party government is set to launch yet another populist scheme - Samajwadi Party Pension Yojana, earmarking a quota of 25 per cent for Muslim families. The scheme will aim at providing financial assistance of Rs 500 per month for the extremely poor. In the second year, this amount would be enhanced to Rs 750 per month. The new scheme will entail an annual expenditure of Rs 2,400 crore, said the director of the social welfare department. He said applications have been sought

from the potential beneficiaries to complete the required formalities. Chief minister Akhilesh Yadav had highlighted his government's new pension scheme aggressively in the election campaign and had also promised he would implement it soon. The government machinery started implementation of the scheme after the Lok Sabha elections when the model code of conduct provisions were lifted. The government order (GO) for the scheme states that 30 per cent beneficiaries would be from the SC/ST category, 25 per cent from the Muslim community and 45 per cent from OBC and General categories. The ruling party's other populist schemes include free laptops for students, financial assistance of Rs 20,000 to every Muslim girl which runs by the slogan - 'Humari beti uska kal', the Kanya Vidya Dhan scheme and unemployment allowance etc. The Samajwadi Party had promised 18 per cent job reservation to Muslims, who constitute around 18 per cent of the population, but it has so far not been able to implement the plan. The government, however, is giving reservations to Muslims in other schemes. (Times of India 7/6/14)

Minority status for Piramalai Kallars sought (7)

MADURAI: A demand to accord minority status for Piramalai Kallars was made at a denotified tribes upheaval conference organised by Seermarabinar Nala Sangam at Keezhakuyilkudi near here on Saturday. The conference was organised to mark the centenary of the Criminal Tribes Act 1911. Claiming to be the earliest tribe in India, the participants also passed a resolution seeking Scheduled Tribe status. All the benefits enjoyed by minorities and STs should be extended to Piramalai Kallars, a resolution said. The meet wanted the government to issue community certificates for Piramalai Kallar students as belonging to de-notified tribes (DNT) as was done in some States. Ten per cent reservation should be provided to the DNT in education and employment. Their other demands included enhancement of basic facilities to Kallar reclamation schools, setting up premium institutions such as IIT, IIM in places populated by Piramalai Kallar community, provision of agricultural lands to landless people of the community and recognition of the "battle" waged by Piramalai Kallars against the British in 1920 as a freedom movement. D. Pandian, State secretary, CPI, spoke. Minister for Cooperation 'Sellur' K. Raju, MLAs M. Muthuramalingam and P.V. Kathiravan spoke. (The Hindu 8/6/14)

Varsity Posts' Quota: Assembly Passes Bill (25)

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: The Assembly on Wednesday passed a bill, seeking to amend laws governing two universities, in order to evolve uniformity in reservation and communal rotation in teaching and non-teaching posts. The University Laws (Second Amendment) Bill, 2013, makes amendments to the Cochin University of Science and Technology (Cusat) Act, 1986 and Thunchath Ezhuthachan Malayalam University Act, 2013, so as to ensure category-wise communal rotation in jobs, treating all departments under these universities as one unit. The amendment bill was drafted after the government found that the provisions relating to reservation pattern - for appointment to the teaching and non-teaching posts - in the two universities were not clear and may invite different interpretations. Since the Kannur University Act of 1996 was more specific in this respect, the government decided to amend the acts governing Cusat and Malayalam University in tune with that of the Kannur University Act. Participating in the discussion, most of Opposition members spared no chance in targeting the government for appointing "under-qualified persons" as Vice-Chancellors in various universities "on the basis of religion, caste and political considerations". T V Rajesh of the CPM alleged that most of the Vice-Chancellors of universities in the state did not have qualifications prescribed by the University Grants Commission (UGC). He sought to know the reason why people who did not have the prescribed qualifications and against whom vigilance cases were registered, were selected to the Vice-Chancellor posts. "The government, which closed down 418 sub-standard bars, should take action against such sub-standard Vice-Chancellors also," Rajesh said in a lighter vein. K T Jaleel from the Opposition camp warned that giving the Chancellor (Governor) the mandate to nominate more members to the Senate and the Syndicate is "fraught with dangers", especially after a BJP Government had assumed power at the Centre. "How can we ensure that Governors appointed by the BJP Government will follow the State Government's advice while nominating

members to administer affairs of the University?" Jaleel asked. He warned that those with "Sangh Parivar affiliations" would soon make their way to top administrative bodies of universities. G Sudhakaran of the CPM criticised the government for favouring academic autonomy to select colleges. "The government should take steps to ensure that all appointments to autonomous colleges are done by the Public Service Commission," he said. Quoting statistics, the MLA from Ambalapuzha said that aided schools had not appointed persons from the SC/ST communities as teachers even though their salaries were being paid by the government. However, the Opposition members thanked Education Minister P K Abdu Rabb for incorporating suggestions put up by them in their dissenting note to the bill. (New Indian Express 12/6/14)

Congress seeks speedy implementation of ST, minority reservations (25)

HYDERABAD: The Telangana government has been put on notice for implementing the 12 per cent reservation for Scheduled Tribes and minorities before June 29 to enable students of those communities to avail the benefit before Eamcet counselling commenced. Opposition leader in the Legislative Council, D. Srinivas, sought to know if the TRS had any road map for implementing its promises made in its manifesto. He was speaking after Mr. Paturi Sudhakar Reddy, TRS MLC, moved a motion to thank the Governor for his address. "Let the Ministers speak on the vital issue. If clarity on promised reservation for minorities and STs is not given, the students will not get any benefit this year," Mr. Srinivas argued. Congress member Shabbir Ali said the reservation notification should be sent to the Eamcet convener before June 29 and said he was also writing to the Chief Minister. Responding to the issue, Agriculture Minister Pocharam Srinivas Reddy explained that the Governor's address only gave a policy directive and the government would give a detailed explanation on the implementation of schemes for various groups. He said the government would consult the Centre on removing the 50 per cent cap on reservations as it did in the case of Tamil Nadu. Independent member K. Nageshwar said the government should be prepared to face legal and constitutional hurdles going by the Supreme Court's judgements. He said that instead of extending reservation on the basis of religion, it should be given to the Backward Classes among minorities. MIM member Syed Amin Jaffrey advised the government to proceed cautiously on Muslim reservation and carry out a survey to determine the educational backwardness of Muslims in all districts. (The Hindu 13/6/14)

Maharashtra govt. okays 20 per cent quota for Marathas (25)

MUMBAI: Playing the quota card in the run-up to the State Assembly polls, the Congress-NCP government in Maharashtra declared on Friday that it will clear 20 per cent reservations for the Maratha community. An announcement is expected after June 20. At present, the community has 52 per cent reservation in jobs and education. This will raise the quota limit to 72 per cent. "We have decided to give 20 per reservations to the Maratha caste. This will be cleared by the State Cabinet after June 20th when the Code of Conduct for State council elections ends," said Industries Minister Narayan Rane. The Marathas are a dominant caste in the State, comprising roughly 30 per cent of the population. The community wields massive political clout. The majority of the State's Cabinet Ministers and sugar barons are Marathas. In fact, most of Maharashtra's Chief Ministers have been Marathas, among them current Chief Minister Prithviraj Chavan and Nationalist Congress Party chief Sharad Pawar. However, the government said a substantial number of Marathas depend on agriculture and are economically deprived. Mr. Rane headed a committee, which conducted a survey of 5 lakh Maratha families before recommending a quota. The Supreme Court had earlier capped quotas at 50 per cent, a reason why the Opposition is questioning whether the Maratha quota will stand legal ground. However, Mr. Rane said: "Our survey proved the economic backwardness of the community, so the court's ruling will not come in the way." Sources said OBC leaders within the government, including Cabinet Minister Chhagan Bhujbal, are unhappy with the government's move. "I am surprised this was announced without being discussed in the Cabinet," Mr. Bhujbal told The Hindu. A section of Marathas from the Kunbi agricultural community

avail of quotas for the OBC category. Mr. Rane clarified that the Maratha reservation would not impact those already in the OBC category. (The Hindu 13/6/14)

JD(U) demands sub-quota for SCs/STs, OBCs in women's bill (25)

New Delhi: JD(U) on Saturday joined BJP ally Apna Dal in demanding a sub quota for SCs/STs and OBCs in the proposed 33 per cent reservation for women in Parliament and Assemblies as the issue is back in focus with NDA government pledging to ensure passage of the women reservation bill. "JD(U) fully supports the statement of BJP ally Apna Dal's MP Anupriya Patel in which she had made a demand for a separate quota for OBC," party general KC Tyagi said in a statement. He said the demand that the bill for 33 per cent reservation to women, which is being brought, should have OBC and SC/ST sub quotas in it is justified. His remarks came after Apna Dal MP Anupriya Patel said in a newspaper interview that her party is in favour of separate sub quota for OBCs and SCs/STs in the bill that is being brought to provide 33 per cent reservation to women in Parliament and Assemblies. Patel is an MP from Mirzapur in Uttar Pradesh and her party Apna Dal was an alliance partner of BJP in the Lok Sabha polls. While the bill was passed in the Rajya Sabha in March 2010 amid pandemonium after the use of marshals to evict the protesting MPs, it could not see light of the day in Lok Sabha. The BJP-led NDA government affirmed its commitment to the Bill in President Pranab Mukherjee's address to the joint sitting of Parliament on June 9. Talking to PTI, Tyagi said Anupriya Patel's demand shows that even the NDA is not unanimous on the issue. "In the past also, BJP leader Uma Bharti had supported such a demand while BJP leader Gopinath Munde had also demanded quota within quota on the floor of Lok Sabha." He said BSP chief Mayawati, SP chief Mulayam Singh Yadav and others have also made similar demands in past. "Government should pay heed to them." Interestingly, the JD(U) had supported the UPA in ensuring passage of the the bill in Rajya Sabha in 2010. While JD (U) President Sharad Yadav had his reservations, the party backed it as Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar had taken a stand to support the bill. Seeking to explain the contradiction, Tyagi said that JD(U) had then supported the bill brought by UPA in Rajya Sabha on the assurance that the concerns and needs of the deprived sections will be included. (Zee News 14/6/14)

Muslims and Christians shouldn't ask for reservation, says Subramanian Swamy (7)

New Delhi: Reacting to Congress MP Hussain Dalwai's demand for reservation for Muslims in Maharashtra, Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader Subramanian Swamy said Muslims and Christians shouldn't ask for reservation, as they have ruled our country in the past. "Muslim rulers have ruled India for hundreds of years and have also destroyed it, and I find it surprising that now Muslims demand reservation claiming that they have been oppressed. When the Indian Constitution was being made, it was decided that the communities which had been oppressed and tortured will be given reservation, which is why SC/ST have reservation in our country," said Swamy. He further said "Later, under VP Singh's governance, whoever was poor or backward was given a reservation. Now, Yadavs, Jats and others have ruled the country, but I feel they shouldn't be given reservation too. We have poor Brahmins in our country as well, and 50 percent of them are below poverty line, but they will never ask for reservations." Swamy added, "I feel that only those who have been oppressed by the society and have been forced to live a backward life should given reservations. If Muslims want to study, then should be given scholarships, good schools, But Muslims and Christians can't have reservation as they have ruled our country." Dalwai had earlier made a strong pitch for reservation for Muslims in Mumbai at the time when the Maharashtra government is set to announce its decision on the Rane Committee's recommendation for 20 per cent quota for Marathas. (DNA 16/6/14)

Just 384 engineering seats for general category (25)

PANAJI: Only 384 engineering seats, of the available 1,230 in Goa, are now open for students under the general category. They are down by 59 from last year after the state government raised the reservation

quota in the state for other backward classes (OBC) from the earlier 19.5% to 27%. The seat reservation chart for professional degree courses in Goa for the academic session 2014-15 has been revised by the directorate of technical education and post the revision, engineering seat aspirants from the general category have now been left with only 31% seats to vie for. Supreme Court norms require that general category quota should account for at least 51%. What is striking about the revised seat reservation chart is that medicine, dentistry and pharmacy seats in Goa meet the requirement of 51% seats in the general category, despite increase in the OBC reservation quota. This is because different formulas have been applied to calculate the reservation quotas in case of medicine and engineering. In medicine, the all India quota of 15% or approximately 22 to 23 seats have been set aside before calculating seats available to reserved categories like scheduled tribe (ST), scheduled caste (SC) etc. In case of engineering, the 425 seats under the management quota have not been subtracted from the total seats available before the reserved seats are calculated. Management quota seats have been taken into account while calculating the reserved seats even though seats under this quota are not available to the directorate of technical education to fill up through its process of drawing of merit list. These seats are filled up at the discretion of the respective managements of the engineering colleges. Goa offers reservations to children of central service personnel transferred to the state, children of NRIs and those of Goan natives or students whose parents or grandparents were born in Goa. The state has opted to reserve these seats, which further eat into the general category seats, even though Goa is not duty bound by the Constitution to provide for these quotas. Goa is among the rare states that offers reservation under the central service personnel category. This year, the state has wandered away from the universally accepted pattern of seat reservation by providing for sub-reservations in the general, ST and SC quotas for categories of physically handicapped, children of freedom fighters and Goan natives. Seats reserved for these categories are usually independent and not treated as sub-reservations within a category of reservation. This has reduced seats available under the general category by 21 for physically handicapped, 6 for children of freedom fighters and 14 for Goan natives. The sub-reservation has taken up the seat count under physically handicapped by two and one each under the children of freedom fighters and Goan native categories. (Times of India 17/6/14)

Cannot deny quota if person is married in upper caste: HC (25)

Shimla: The Himachal Pradesh High Court on Friday ruled that reservation benefits for underprivileged classes cannot be denied if a person is married in upper caste. A division bench of Chief Justice Mansoor Ahmed Mir and Justice Trilok Singh Chauhan slapped a fine of Rs 2 lakh on respondents for not issuing OBC (Other Backward Classes) certificate to the petitioner who belonged to OBC category. The bench observed, "For the last five years the petitioner (Neetu) has been dragged from pillar to post by the respondents without any reason." "The only fault of the petitioner is that she was born in a reserved category and married in an upper caste family." The court ordered that out of the total costs imposed, Rs 50,000 should be recovered from the Sub-Divisional Magistrate of Mandi, who denied her the certificate and an equal amount from the chairman of the Himachal Pradesh Public Service Commission. The petitioner had cleared the examination for the post of lecturer (college cadre) Class-I conducted by the State Public Service Commission. She appeared in the interview on August 28, 2009, but was asked to produce the latest OBC certificate. However, she was denied the certificate because she got married into an upper class Rajput family. During the trial, she was issued the certificate. The bench also directed the government to give the petitioner seniority according to merit from the date other people have been appointed but without monetary benefits. Of the total costs imposed, Rs one lakh is to be paid to the petitioner and the remainder to be deposited with the state High Court Bar Association Welfare fund. (Zee News 21/6/14)

Quotas: Why not for us? (25)

The government that is contemplating granting reservations to upper-caste Marathas, seems to have touched a raw nerve with other social/caste groups also raising similar demands. While the govt has indicated that Muslims too might be given reservations before the assembly polls, communities like Dhangars, Lingayats, Wadars, Kolis and Matangs too are seeking quota benefits. After its severe drubbing in Lok Sabha polls, the Cong-NCP govt is under immense pressure to ensure that these decisions come through before polls. However, some of these demands are being opposed by other caste groups as well as sections within the beneficiaries. For instance, while tribal legislators across party lines have threatened to resign en masse if Dhangars and other 'non-tribals' are included in the ST category; OBC Muslim leaders are against they being granted quota on religious grounds, as this, they feel, will largely benefit upper-caste Ashraf Muslims. Various classes among Muslims fall in categories like OBC, VJNT (vimukta jati and nomadic tribes), SC and ST. OBCs also resent granting Marathas reservation. "Many communities are seeking downward mobility in the caste pyramid for more benefits. While those in the open category want to be included in OBC list, OBCs want themselves to be categorised as VJNTs, and those in VJNT want to be in ST list. This is almost competitive," said a veteran OBC activist. This amounts to turning on its head the Sanskritisation theory put forth by eminent sociologist MN Srinivas, where lower castes seek upward mobility. The Dhangar (shepherd) community (VJNT), wants to be part of ST. "Dhangars and Dhangads are one," said community leader Mahadeo Jankar of Rashtriya Samaj Paksha (RSP). Dhangads (corrupt form of the community's name) were included in STs, he added. According to him, Dhangars would get more benefits if classified as STs instead of the present VJNT, and attacked NCP for not meeting their demand. Dhangars, who are said to rank only next to Maratha-Kunbis, had significant share of votes in 89 of the 288 assembly segments and nine parliamentary constituencies in Maharashtra, Jankar said, lamenting that despite this they hadn't been able to get a single Dhangar elected as MP so far. Writer and activist Sanjay Sonawani pointed out that many other states had included Dhangars in ST list. He, however, noted that politicians had created an impression that reservation was the panacea for social ills and backwardness. Wadars (VJNT) and Kolis (special backward classes-SBC) also want to be in ST list. The Matang community has also demanded separate quota as benefits under the SC category are being appropriated by others. The Shiva Akhil Bhartiya Veershaiva Yuvak Sanghatana led by Manohar Dhonde has demanded that various Veershaiva Lingayat communities be given quota benefits. Presently, only a miniscule number of 153 Lingayat castes have this benefit. Dhonde said though they were covered largely in the SC, OBC, VJNT and SBC categories, Lingayats were not provided benefits unless they dropped the term 'Lingayat' from most caste names. For instance, Lingayat Sutars, Lingayat Guravs, Lingayat Phularis and Lingayat Kumbhars can get quotas only if they call themselves Sutars, Guravs, Phularis and Kumbhars, respectively, he added. The organisation has been seeking to be classified as minorities since 1999. "This is related to identity politics. Reservation is seen as complementary for upward social mobility," said Surendra Jondhale, professor, department of civics and politics, University of Mumbai, adding that the reference point was the progress of Dalits in social, economic and educational sectors. (DNA 22/6/14)

33% police jobs in Gujarat reserved for women (25)

AHMEDABAD: Gujarat's first woman chief minister Anandiben Patel delivered a blow for women empowerment on Tuesday when she declared recruitment norms would be revised and relaxed for women to ensure 33% jobs in the khaki force for the fair sex. Gujarat will become the first state in the country to implement such a provision, a senior police officer said. Currently, women constitute less than 7% of the state's law enforcement agencies including police and state reserve police. The announcement came after the CM presided over the passing out parade of 134 police officers including 96 armed police sub-inspectors and 38 intelligence officers at Gujarat Police Academy, Karai. The officers included 25 women: 15 sub-inspectors and 10 intelligence officers. The function was attended by police and administrative top brass of the state. "It is necessary to empower women for their uplift in society. We

have decided to provide 33% reservation to women in the police recruitments," Patel told reporters. (Times of India 25/6/14)

'Congress-NCP playing communal card in Maharashtra' (25)

New Delhi: The Maharashtra BJP on Tuesday charged the Congress-NCP alliance government with playing the "communal" card ahead of state Assembly polls. While the party opposed plans to grant reservation for Muslims in government jobs and education, it said reservation for Marathas should not affect the existing reservation for OBCs directly or indirectly. The Prithviraj Chavan government has decided to play the reservation card in a bid to check damage to the ruling combine, which won merely six of the total 48 Lok Sabha seats in Maharashtra. BJP leader and Leader of the Opposition in the Maharashtra Legislative Council Vinod Tawde on Tuesday said, "We do not support reservation on the lines of religion and the Constitution also does not permit this." On reservation of Marathas, he said, "In case of Maratha reservation, we do not mind if it is extended to the community as it will help poor students. But the move should not hurt the existing reservation for OBCs. (Asian Age 25/6/14)

Now, Christians too demand reservations (25)

MUMBAI: Christian leaders have demanded reservations for Christian Dalits, most of whom are poor, as Muslim leaders welcomed 5% reservations for their community in education and jobs. Abraham Mathai of the Indian Christian Voice said, "The government should give reservations to Christians too as most of them in the state are poor and tribals. Marginalized Christians should not be ignored as they are a small minority." Dolphy D'Souza of Save Our Land (SOUL) complained that Christians have been ignored by successive governments as they "are not a big votebank". She said that the 1950 Presidential order excluded Christian Dalits and Muslim Dalits from the purview of quotas, as given to scheduled castes. Muslim leaders demanded immediate implementation of the state cabinet's decision and said the government must strongly defend it if challenged in the Supreme Court. Congress MLA Amin Patel, who had demanded quotas for Muslims in the last monsoon session, said, "Reservations have been a long-standing demand of the community, as panels headed by Justice Rajinder Sachar, Ranganath Mishra and Mahmoodur Rahman had also recommended quotas to empower Muslims. This will help mainstream the community, which has felt alienated due to backwardness." Signs of Muslims getting reservations were evident when, replying to Patel's questions, minister Fauzia Khan had said, "You will soon get good news." But M A Khalid of the All-India Milli Council said the government should have announced it earlier, as it seems like a sop before the assembly elections. Many said the state government should not flinch from defending the decision in the apex court, if challenged. Minority affairs minister Arif Naseem Khan said, "This is not the first time Muslims have been given reservations in India. Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh had provided reservations to economically poor Muslims, and Muslims in Maharashtra too needed it." (Times of India 27/6/14)

Maharashtra quota not taken up seriously (25)

New Delhi: The issue of granting reservation for the Maratha and Muslim communities in education and government jobs in Maharashtra was not discussed "seriously" at the AICC level before the Prithviraj Chavan government took a formal decision in this regard recently. Well-placed sources in the AICC said "Ab jaane dijiye (Let it be). Reservation has always been a sensitive issue for the Congress for different reasons. Moreover, it does not want to be seen as aggressive as some of the regional parties whose politics have been based on caste." Although the Congress high command had backed reservation for OBCs in higher education brought by Arjun Singh when he was HRD minister in UPA-1, it did not appreciate it. If insiders are to be believed, the reservation issue was relevant before the Mandal Commission's report. Politics in India changed after economic reforms were introduced. "You cannot get electoral mileage from the issue twice," they felt. A prominent dalit (Ambedkarite) leader from Maharashtra on Friday said caste cannot influence voters in urban areas like Mumbai, Pune, Thane, or

even in Nagpur. The Congress-NCP government in Maharashtra has announced 16 per cent reservation for the Maratha community and five per cent reservation for Muslims in government jobs and education on the grounds of their economic and educational backwardness. But it was taken at a time when the ruling combine got just six of the total 48 Lok Sabha seats in Maharashtra and ahead of the state Assembly polls. The population of Marathas in the state is said to be over 30 per cent while Muslims are 10 to 12 per cent. Marathas have been the ruling community of the state for the last 50 years. They not only have the highest representation in the Cabinet, irrespective of which party or parties are in power, but control cooperative banks, sugar factories and educational institutions. Marathas are seen as an upper caste in Maharashtra and are equated with Thakurs elsewhere. (Asian Age 28/6/14)

Will you table Bapat committee report, asks Bombay HC (25)

MUMBAI: The issue of Maratha reservation has refused to die down in Maharashtra. The Bombay High Court on Tuesday asked Maharashtra government if it was inclined to table a July 2008 report which had not favoured Maratha reservation in the State. The court was hearing a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) filed in 2009, opposing reservation to the community. It had sought the tabling of the 22nd report of the Maharashtra State Backward Class Commission headed by retired Judge R M Bapat. The report had opposed granting OBC status to Marathas. The government neither accepted nor rejected the report. It was not tabled in the legislature. The court asked the government on Tuesday why it had failed to take any decision on the tabling of the report, six years after it was submitted. The government has been directed to reply in three weeks' time. Recently, the government had also announced a cabinet decision granting 16 per cent reservation to the community. This cabinet decision too has been challenged in the Bombay High Court on the grounds that the Maratha community has been traditionally wealthy and powerful. The court was told by the State government on Monday that there was no question of implementing it immediately as it was not turned into legislation. On Tuesday, advocate Sangharaj Rupwate appearing for petitioner Rajaram Kharat, said the government should soon table the Bapat committee report. The petition has said that the Marathas are not backward, and cannot be included in the Other Backward Classes category. It further claimed that instead of tabling the Bapat committee report, the government set up a new committee under Justice (retired) B P Saraf. Four of the six members of Bapat committee had voted against including Marathas in the OBC classification. (The Hindu 1/7/14)

PIL in Bombay HC seeks 5 percent reservation for Christians too (25)

Beed: Close on the heels of Maharashtra government providing 16 per cent reservation for Marathas and 5 per cent for Muslims in jobs and educational institutions, a PIL in the Bombay High Court has sought similar facility for the Christian community. The PIL, filed by city-based Alpha Omega Christian Community in the Aurangabad bench of the Bombay High Court, said it was demanding five per cent reservation for Christians on the basis of recommendations made by the Justice Ranganath Mishra Commission constituted by National Commission for Religious and Linguistic Minorities. According to the PIL, Maharashtra government had, on the basis of the Ranganath Commission report, appointed a seven-member committee headed by Dr Mehmoodur Rehman to study the socio-economic and educational status of the Muslim community in the state. Thereafter, on the basis of the Mehmoodur Rehman Committee report, the Maharashtra cabinet approved 5 per cent reservation to Muslims on June 25. On the same lines, 5 per cent reservation should also be provided to the Christian community which the PIL said had not been considered on the basis of recommendation of Ranganath Commission report. The President of Alpha Omega, Ashish Shinde said "we have been demanding 5 per cent reservation to the Christian community. The government has only given verbal assurance in the past. Now that reservation has been approved for Muslim community, we strongly demand for Christians." (Zee News 5/7/14)

Gujjar and Bakerwal tribes file petition against 10 J&K institutions (25)

Jammu: An organisation representing Gujjar and Bakerwal tribes has filed a petition before the National Commission for Schedule Tribes in New Delhi against 10 institutions of Jammu & Kashmir accusing them of violating Constitutional guarantees by denying reservation to members of the tribes in recruitment and promotions. The petition was filed by the Tribal Research and Cultural Foundation (TRCF). It requests the commission to issue direction to the State for grant of 10 per cent reservation to STs in all the 10 institutions and provide constitutional safeguards to nomadic and tribal communities of Jammu & Kashmir, Secretary of TRCF Javaid Rahi said here on Sunday. The petition states that as per the Constitution of India and laws of the State, the ST communities including Gujjars and Bakerwals are entitled to 10 per cent reservation in recruitment and promotions in all government and autonomous bodies, but these organisations have violated the provisions, he said. The petition states that since 1991 when ST status was granted to Gujjar-Bakerwals these institutions have filled up thousands of posts at various levels, but no reservation was provided to the reserve categories, especially STs, and the rights of downtrodden communities were suppressed openly. It claims that there is a negligible representation of the STs, especially Gujjars and Bakerwals, in the 10 organisations. PTI (The Hindu 7/7/14)

Govt revises format of OBC caste certificate (25)

New Delhi: The format of caste certificate for Other Backward Class (OBC) has been revised to make it easier for them to get the benefit of the reservation, the Government said on Wednesday. Representations were being received from candidates belonging to OBC citing difficulty in getting the benefit of reservation, Minister of State for Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions Jitendra Singh told Lok Sabha in a written reply. Difficulties were being faced as in the caste certificate there was space for mentioning the name of the caste or community but no space was provided for indicating the specific resolution by which the said caste or community has been included in the central list of OBC, he said. "The issue was examined in consultation with National Commission for Backward Classes and the format of OBC certificate has since been revised," the Minister said. (Zee News 9/7/14)

Governor approves ordinance for Maratha, Muslim reservation (25)

MUMBAI: Maharashtra Governor K. Sankaranarayan on Wednesday approved the ordinance granting reservation to Maratha and Muslim communities in Maharashtra. Marathas will get a 16 per cent quota and Muslims five per cent in government jobs and educational institutions. Sources in Mr. Sankaranarayan's office said the file had been approved and returned to the government. Once promulgated, the ordinance will raise quota in the State to 73 per cent. The Supreme Court had earlier capped quota at 50 per cent. The reservation was cleared by the government a fortnight ago. The decision has already been challenged in the Bombay High Court, with petitioners arguing that it is unconstitutional and has crossed the quota limit. Reservation for the Maratha community had triggered opposition from Other Backward Class (OBC) groups which pointed out that the Marathas were dominant and politically influential and could not be classified as backward. (The Hindu 10/7/14)

Women's Reservation can be Potential Game Changer: UN Official (25)

NEW DELHI: Thirty-three per cent reservation to women in Parliament has the potential to be a "game changer" as not only will such a step change patriarchal mindsets but also boost pro-women legislation, feels senior UN official Lakshmi Puri. "The perception of the girl child will change. When you have empowered women out there in Parliament, and in such great numbers, you are representative of the people more and more. You change that whole mindset about women being a burden... the way Union minister Smriti Irani said that such comments were made when she was born," the Deputy Executive Director of UN Women said. More women in Parliament will help change that "patriarchal mindset", she said, adding that the experience in several other countries which have reservation for women has been very positive. Speaking to PTI here, Puri, who is also Assistant Secretary General with the UN, said that if

there are 33 per cent women in Parliament, they will move aggressively across party lines to advance the interests and needs of women. "It's not only symbolic but effectively it has the potential to really change the game. It can be a game changer for gender responsive legislation and a change in prioritisation of women and girls issues, in the planning and budgeting process," she said. Puri, who is a former Indian Foreign Service (IFS) officer, however, added 33 per cent is just the critical mass and the real objective should be parity. Speaking further, she emphasised that there is a need to push towards making the whole system more gender responsive and gender sensitive and all public institutions and not just the Parliament. She hoped that the Women's Reservation Bill is passed. The BJP, which is the leading party in the ruling NDA, had in its pre-election manifesto said that it is committed to 33 per cent reservation in parliamentary and state assemblies. (New Indian Express 13/7/14)

Transgenders voice fears (25)

Transgenders on Tuesday voiced concern over the Supreme Court verdict labelling them as "third gender" and the proposal to club them with OBCs. About 30 representatives of the transgender community expressed their opinion on the issues at an interactive session hosted by the state government to find ways to implement the apex court's recommendations on transgenders. Social welfare minister Shashi Panja and officials of her department interacted with the transgenders at the session held at a Salt Lake hotel. The Supreme Court, in a landmark verdict in April, recognised "the third gender" and ruled that they were entitled to all fundamental rights, reservation in jobs and education, and separate public toilets. The state government is mulling options to form a transgender welfare board to implement the court's order. "Even after the verdict we have faced rude behaviour from police. A transgender couple went to a city police station on May 15 after they were harassed by local youths. What they faced at the police station amounted to a second round of torture," said Anindita Dutta, a transgender. The couple approached the Association for Transgender/Hijra, an NGO working for transgenders, that persuaded the officers to lodge a complaint. "When we approach the protector of law, this is the behaviour we get. The Supreme Court order is three months old but nothing has changed," said another transgender. Panja as well as police officers present admitted to the problem. Members of the transgender community urged the minister to ensure the government did not use the term "third gender" as it was "humiliating". "We are proud to be transgender and the government should use that term," said Aparna Banerjee, after Panja said she was unsure of the correct word to use. The community members also expressed apprehension about being clubbed with OBCs for reservations. "If the government is serious, they must create a separate quota for us," said Dutta. Creating public toilets, separate wards in hospitals and facilities were also discussed but government officials said it would take time to tackle the sensitive issues. The transgenders said they should be represented in all committees formed to implement the Supreme Court order. (The Telegraph 16/7/14)

Quota norm must for pvt units getting govt aid (25)

Mumbai: The Maharashtra government on Wednesday clarified that it won't be mandatory for the private sector as a whole to reserve 16 per cent seats for Maratha and five per cent for Muslim communities in education and employment. However, the new quota plan will be applicable in those private sector units and educational institutes receiving the state government's aid in the form of concessions on land prices or grants. The state government's quota plan will be applicable to all government undertakings and semi-government organisations. The government has already promulgated an ordinance and issued directives in this regard. With the additional 21 per cent quota for Marathas and Muslims, reservation in government jobs and educational institutions in the state has gone up to 73 per cent — way beyond the 50 per cent limit set by the Supreme Court. At present, the Bombay High Court is currently hearing a public interest litigation, challenging the government's decision. Minister for Minority Welfare Naseem Khan told Business Standard: "The government decision will not be applicable for all private sector units. However, government-aided private educational institutes will have to provide quota for members of the Maratha

and Muslim communities. Besides, it will also be applicable to those private sector units which have received government aid." Khan reiterated that all government and semi-government organisations will have to strictly implement the quota decision. An NCP minister, who did not want to be named, said there has been a demand from various organisations representing Maratha and Muslim communities for quota in all private sector undertakings. The Indian Merchants' Chamber said it is concerned about the manner in which the reservation issue is being handled and promoted. IMC President Prabodh Thakker said the new mechanism seems more political rather than having socio, economic content. "IMC is not appreciative of the current announcement of reservation in Maharashtra, we support the stance that weaker section should be given a helping hand in skill development. IMC will lead from the front as an enabler," he added. (Business Standard 17/7/14)

Six-month Deadline to Fill up SC/ST Vacancies (25)

CHENNAI: The Madras High Court directed the TN government to fill up the vacancies in SCs/STs categories in the State, within six months. The first bench of Acting Chief Justice SK Agnihotri and Justice MM Sundresh gave the direction on Friday while disposing of a PIL from S Karuppiah, founder of Central & State Government SC/ST Employees Federation in Perungalathur. Earlier, the government submitted that to make sure that 18 per cent reservation for SC and 1 per cent for ST candidates in employment, a high-level committee had been constituted to review and ensure shortfall vacancies. The committee will finalise the programme and have discussions with secretaries of each departments. Thereafter, the report will be sent to the government for issuing orders, it added. In view of the specific stand taken by the government, the bench said it was directing the high-level committee to finalise the programme and arrive at the shortfall vacancies for SCs and STs. Thereafter, the committee will have to send the report to government. (New Indian Express 19/7/14)

Apex court upholds validity of reservation for SC/ST in promotions (25)

NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court has upheld the Constitutional validity of the provision allowing the government to make reservation in promotion for SC/ST candidates by quashing a 1997 notification omitting such a relief. A five-judge Constitution bench presided by Chief Justice R M Lodha held the 1996 apex court verdict in S Vinod Kumar vs Union of India case as per incuriam (not good law), which had prompted the government to issue such an memorandum. "In S Vinod Kumar, this court relying upon Indra Sawhney (judgment) held that provision for lower qualifying marks/standard of evaluation was not permissible under Article 16(4) of the Constitution of India in view of Article 335. Though Article 16(4A) had been brought into Constitution by the Constitution (Seventy-seventh Amendment) Act, 1995, with effect from 17.6.1995, S Vinod Kumar did not take into consideration this constitutional provision. In our view, S Vinod Kumar is per incuriam," the apex court bench said. Article 16 (4A) stated that nothing in this article shall prevent the state from making any provision for the reservation (in matters of promotion, with consequential seniority, to any class) or classes of posts in the services under the state in favour of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes which, in the opinion of the state, are not adequately represented in the services under the state. (Deccan Herald 20/7/14)

Hike in Quota Demanded (25)

BHUBANESWAR: The members of Samajika Nyaya Abhijan Mancha (SNAM), a platform for dalits and tribals, presented a memorandum to Governor SC Jamir seeking increase in reservation for SC/ST, OBC and minority communities in Government jobs and education sector. They urged the Governor to direct the State Government to implement the Mandal Commission recommendations and increase reservation for OBC up to 27 per cent in the above mentioned sectors. Similarly, reservation for SC/ST communities in these sectors has been limited to 20 per cent which should be extended to 38 per cent, stated the charter of demands. The minority community does not have an apt representation in Government jobs.

An appropriate reservation policy should be formulated so that members of these communities are represented adequately, said president of SNAM Akshay Kumar Mallick. (New Indian Express 22/7/14)

Minister says state govt never discriminated on basis of caste (25)

CHENNAI: Refuting charges of Puthiya Thamizhagam legislator Krishnasamy, TN ministers on Tuesday said the AIADMK government had never discriminated in respect of any caste. Minister for Adi dravidar and tribal welfare N Subramanian and higher education minister P Palanisamy said CM J Jayalalithaa had been taking many initiatives for dalit welfare. Speaking on the demands for Adi dravidar and tribal welfare department, Krishnasamy alleged that the government had not appointed a single dalit as vice-chancellor of any university or as member of the Tamil Nadu Public Service Commission. In reply, higher education minister P Palaniappan said the selection of VCs was done by a search committee and the reservation policy would not apply to VC postings. "For the posts like vice-chancellor, only the search committee will select eminent and experienced candidates. If there is a qualified candidate in the community he or she will be elected," Palaniappan said. Finance minister O Panneerselvam pointed out that Jayalalithaa has allotted a medical seat for Krishnasamy's daughter. When Krishnasamy alleged that the pass percentage in Adi Dravidar Welfare Board schools was lesser than other government schools, minister Subramanian said the pass percentage in Adi dravidar schools has increased in the past three years of AIADMK government. The minister also refuted Krishnasamy's allegation that the government has not appointed any dalit as Assistant Public Relations Officer (APRO). (Times of India 23/7/14)

SC notice to Centre on Muslim quota (25)

NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court on Friday sought the response of the Union government on a plea for transfer from Delhi High Court to itself a PIL which challenged the Rajinder Sachar committee report advocating reservation for Muslims. A bench headed by Chief Justice R M Lodha issued notice after the petitioner said this was an important constitutional issue which needed an authoritative pronouncement from the Supreme Court. It said the Sachar committee had shut out the views that were politically inconvenient. The petitioner 'Patriots Forum' traced the history of India from the period of Muslim rule to British rule and presented a stand that was quite apart from the general view. "The committee has deliberately downplayed the huge advantage accruing to the Muslim community by virtue of their degree of urbanization, the community has a whopping advantage of 10% over the Hindus, the respective averages of the two communities being 36% for Muslims and 26% for Hindus." The forum said it had done extensive research on the subject but its repeated representations were ignored by the Sachar committee. It requested the court to declare the report submitted by Sachar committee to the prime minister on November 17, 2006 as "illegal, arbitrary and violative of Constitution". It sought a direction from the court to the government not to act on the Sachar committee recommendations saying it was impermissible under the Constitution to single out a religious community for reservation. (Times of India 26/7/14)

Gujjars remind BJP of their promise to 5% reservation (25)

JAIPUR: Demanding to implement the poll promise of granting 5% reservation to Gujjars in the state, Rajasthan Gujjar Arakshan Sangarsh Samiti (RGASS) has presented its 13-point demand to chief minister Vasundhara Raje. Reiterating its position on the reservation issue, RGASS urged the state government to expedite the process of giving promised reservation to Gujjars. Until the reservation is not granted, the samiti has asked for proper compliance with the existing 1% reservation to the community. "We will strongly protest if our demands that BJP government promised to fulfill are not met. We want that budget of Dev Narayan Board package to be increased from Rs 500 crore to Rs 2,000 crore. The government must monitor its expenditure and should spend on time," said Himat Singh Gujjar, spokesperson of RGASS. Among other demands, the samiti has also asked for quick disposal of the cases against those who participated in the Gujjar agitation. A demand of compensation of Rs 5 lakh and

government job for a family member of 70 Gujjars, who died in the agitation has also been put forth. Meanwhile the samiti accused both Congress and BJP of playing politics over the reservation issue. "No positive step has been taken so far for our demands. Both parties have made false promises to garner votes," said the spokesperson. He added that both BJP and Congress have made the matter so complex that it is stuck in court. Pointing at the Gujjar's support to the BJP in the assembly polls and Lok Sabha elections, Singh mentioned that 8 months have passed after Rajasthan elections but no concrete steps have been taken by the present government. (Times of India 28/7/14)

Community to protest at Azad Maidan on August 1 (25)

Mumbai: After a week-long agitation to grant Scheduled Tribe (ST) status to Dhangars turned violent, members of the community will hold a protest march on August 1. While a State Transport bus was burnt during the agitation, the protest at Azad Maidan will be peaceful. Dressed in the traditional attire of the community, its members will come to Mumbai with their goats and sheep for the event. The march will begin from Byculla and culminate at Azad Maidan, a release from the Dhanagar Arakshan Kruti Samiti said. "We have decided to vote for the party which ensures us the ST status," Lalit Bandgar, the Samiti leader, said. Dhangars from various walks of life will participate in the protest. BJP core committee members state president Devendra Fadnavis, leader of Opposition in the Council Vinod Tawade, senior leader Madhav Bhandari and MLA Pankaja Munde have visited the protest site to extend their support. The government also has a sympathetic view of the backward community; however, the tribal leaders are opposing the demand. The Dhangar community claims a significant presence in 78 of 288 Assembly seats, including Baramati and Madha. The community's demand for inclusion under STs was intensified after the government sanctioned 16 and five per cent reservation for Marathas and Muslims respectively in government jobs and educational institutions. Maharashtra's Dhangars now get reservation benefits under VJNT (Vimukta Jati and Nomadic Tribes), which they say, is not enough. The chief minister recently said that the state government would have to consider the views of all community leaders before taking a call. Tribal legislators under the leadership of NCP minister Madhukar Pichad have threatened to resign en masse if the Dhanagars are included in the ST category. (Asian Age 30/7/14)

Remove 'Creamy Layer' Concept, Suggests BJP MP (25)

NEW DELHI: A strong plea for removing the concept of 'creamy layer' while giving reservation to Other Backward Classes was made by a BJP member in the Lok Sabha Friday contending that such a course of action would help backwards. Raising the issue during Zero Hour, Rajen Gohain wondered as to why "a division was created between 'creamy layer' and non-creamy layer". He wanted to know on what basis this concept had come into existence and wanted to do away with this "injustice" at once. It was instantly supported by his party colleague Hansraj Ahir, who also wanted direction from the Centre to Maharashtra to give a fair deal to students belonging to OBC communities on the issue of fees and scholarships. He said "injustice" is being done in this regard to students in Yavatmal, Gadchiroli and Chandrapur districts. (New Indian Express 1/8/14)

SC notice to centre, states on extending SC/ST legislative quota (25)

New Delhi: The Supreme Court Tuesday issued notice to the central and state governments on a petition challenging the constitution's 95th amendment extending the period of reservation of seats for scheduled castes and scheduled tribes in Lok Sabha and state assemblies by another 10 years upto Jan 26, 2020. By the said amendment, the representation of Anglo-Indians too was extended by the same period. A constitution bench of Chief Justice R.M. Lodha, Justice Dipak Misra, Justice Madan B. Lokur, Justice Kurian Joseph and Justice S.A. Bobde issued notice after it was told that 79th amendment extending this period of reservation has been over-ridden by the 95th amendment that has increased the period till January 26th 2020. The constitution bench Tuesday took up for hearing petition filed in 2000, 2001, 2006

and 2007, challenging the earlier extension of period by 79th amendment. Senior counsel Rajiv Dhawan, who appeared for a number of petitioners, urged that notice may be issued to the political parties but it did not find favour with the court. He said that political parties may be permitted to implead themselves if they so intended. The 95th amendment of the constitution that was passed by the parliament in 2009 was given presidential assent on Jan 19, 2010. Originally the reservation for seats in scheduled castes and scheduled tribes in Lok Sabha and State assemblies was upto 1960. But it was successively amended by 8th, 23rd, 45th, 62th and 79th amendment of the constitution's article 334 to extend this period of reservation. Article 334 of the constitution provides for reservation of seats for scheduled castes and scheduled tribes and Anglo-Indian community in the Lok Sabha and legislative assemblies. (Business Standard 5/8/14)

Muslims urged to take part in survey (25)

HYDERABAD: The AP State Minorities Commission (APSMC) on Wednesday sent letters to district collectors in Telangana urging them to spread awareness about the Integrated Household Survey to be taken up on August 19. "We have urged the collectors to hold awareness programmes from August 10 to August 18. This survey will be significant for all minorities as it will help them avail various benefits and reservations in education and other fields. We urge members of these communities to actively participate in the survey," APSMC chairman Abid Rasool Khan said. The commission has written to chief minister K Chandrasekhar Rao, urging him to set the wheels in motion for setting up a Muslim university on the lines of Aligarh Muslim University in the state. It can be located on the land endowed to Dargah Hazrat Maqdoom Biyabani in Ranga Reddy district, it suggested. According to APSMC officials, around 1,264 acres are endowed to the dargah. "The Telangana government has said that it is serious about protecting wakf properties. By setting up the university, the issues of protection of wakf land as well as giving impetus to education of Muslims would be addressed," Khan said. Meanwhile, after obtaining a joint survey report of revenue and wakf officials in the murky dealing of land endowed to Dargah Hazrat Shah Ali Abbas in Kukatpally, the APSMC has recommended that the Rs 1.84 crore handed over to one Syed Arifuddin Qadri be retrieved. It was in June last year that the then chairman of the AP State Wakf Board Syed Ghulam Afzal Biyabani initiated criminal proceedings against Qadri for embezzling the money. (Times of India 7/8/14)

Punjab wants Centre to relax MBBS admission criterion (25)

Chandigarh: The Punjab government has urged the union government to relax the admission criterion for MBBS course for the Scheduled Caste (SC) students. Punjab State Scheduled Castes Commission chairman Rajesh Bagha Thursday said 71 seats of SC quota in medical colleges in Punjab were still vacant. The Punjab government wants the central government to lower the admission cut off marks from 40 percent to 30 percent for SC students to secure admission in medical colleges of the state. "It has come to the notice of SC commission that 71 seats of SC quota are still vacant, which could not be filled due to the strict admission norms of the union government. Many SC organizations have also given representations in this regard," Bagha said. He said the cut-off percentage was reduced to 26 percent in the 2013-14 admission session to fill up the medical seats. (Zee News 8/8/14)

'Form committee to identify genuine tribals' (25)

The State government will work towards identifying genuine tribal communities in the State, so as to provide them with reservation and other facilities accordingly, said Revenue Minister V Sreenivas Prasad, here on Saturday. He was speaking during the World Tribal Day celebrations, jointly organised by Karnataka Adivasi Rakshana Parishat, Department of Kannada and Culture, and Karnataka Janapada Academy. He said that needy sections among tribal communities had not benefitted from the reservation meant for Scheduled Tribes. "The scope of reservation meant for tribals has been weakened, to reap electoral benefits. Communities who are not Adivasis are benefitting from the reservation meant for STs,"

he said. The list of Scheduled Tribes has continued to grow since independence. The Central government should form a commission to identify genuine tribals and provide reservation and other facilities for them accordingly, he said. He said that the State would write to the Centre seeking the formation of such a Committee. "Day by day, the objectives of tribal welfare programmes is being weakened, and tribals continue to remain backward," he said. Cooperative minister H S Mahadeva Prasad said that Project Tiger and other similar schemes had adversely affected tribal communities. Collection of forest produce and visiting places of religious importance of tribals inside the reserves had become difficult. Apart from this, tribals continue to be harassed in various forms, he added. An attractive rally, which saw the participation of several tribal art groups, was taken out in the city, as part of the celebrations. More than 10 tribal teams from various parts of the State, displayed their dance and other cultural forms during the rally. The rally, which commenced at Kote Anjaneya temple, concluded at Exhibition Grounds in the city. Teams of tribals from Jenu Kuruba, Soliga, Malekudiya, Betta Kuruba, Siddi, Yerava and others took part in the rally. MP R Dhruvanarayan said that Soliga tribe should be included under 'Original Inhabitants' list for getting more funds from both the Central and State governments. He was speaking after inaugurating the World Tribal Day celebrations, organised by Jilla Budakattu Girijana Abhivrudhi Sangha, at Pete Government Primary School, in Chamarajanagar, on Saturday. He urged the researchers to recommend to the government about bringing Soligas under 'Original Inhabitants' for their benefit. (Deccan Herald 10/8/14)

OBC quota for Jats not with eye on polls: Govt

New Delhi: Ahead of the Haryana assembly elections, the BJP-led NDA government on Monday told the Supreme Court that including the Jat community in the central OBC list was not a politically motivated act. In an affidavit, the Centre supported the UPA regime's decision to provide reservations to Jats. The SC would hear the petition challenging Jat reservation on Tuesday. The apex court had on April 9 rejected a plea to stay the Centre's poll-eve notification to include Jats in the OBC list. "It is respectfully submitted that the central government has acted bonafide and in public interest," the 28-page affidavit said. The Centre said it rejected the view of National Commission for Backward Classes and took into account the findings of a report of Expert Committee constituted by Indian Council for Social Science Research (ICSSR) before taking the decision. It added that nine states have already included Jats in their lists of OBCs. "Cabinet was of the view that the Commission has not adequately taken into account the ground realities and therefore...decided to include Jat community in the central list of OBCs for the nine states namely Bihar, Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan (Bharatpur and Dhaulpur), Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh and Delhi," it said. (Hindustan Times 12/8/14)

UGC schemes for empowerment of SCs, STs, minorities

New Delhi: The University Grants Commission (UGC) is implementing a number of schemes for educational empowerment of SCs, STs and minorities that include setting up of equal opportunity cells and scholarships. HRD Minister Smriti Irani informed Lok Sabha today that educational empowerment schemes like setting up of residential coaching academies for minorities, SC, ST and women in central universities, deemed to be universities, establishment of equal opportunity cells for SC, ST and minorities are being implemented by the UGC. Other UGC sponsored schemes are post-doctoral fellowships for SC, ST, Rajiv Gandhi national fellowships for SC, ST, setting up of Centre for Studies in Social Exclusion and Inclusive Policy, remedial coaching schemes for SCs, STs, OBC and minorities, scheme of career oriented courses in universities and colleges, construction of women's hostels for colleges. Irani said during Question Hour that Central Educational Institutions (Reservation in Admission Act) 2006, which came into force with effect from January 4, 2007, provides for 15 percent, 7.5 percent and 27 percent reservation in admission of students belonging to SCs, STs and OBCs respectively in central educational institutions established, maintained or aided by the central government. The HRD Minister said the gross enrollment ratio in higher education of SCs and STs in 2009-10 were 11.1 percent and 10.3 percent in

comparison to 15 percent of all category. In 2010-11, the gross enrollment ratio in higher education of SCs and STs were 13.5 percent and 12.9 percent in comparison to 19.4 percent of general category students and in 2011-12, the gross enrollment ratio in higher education of SCs and STs were 14.5 percent and 10.8 percent in comparison to 20.4 percent of general category students. Irani said in order to expand educational opportunities in 374 educationally backward districts, the central government had in 2009 launched the scheme of setting up of 374 model degree colleges in districts having Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) for higher education less than national average. "The Centre has recently launched Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA) which intends to incentivise the states for developing higher education with equity and inclusion. The MDCs scheme has now been subsumed in RUSA. There is a special component of equity in RUSA," she said. (Zee News 13/8/14)

NCP backs reservation for Dhangar community under ST category

Pune: NCP president Sharad Pawar on Saturday announced his party's support to the demand of Dhangar community for reservation under Scheduled Tribes (ST) category. "The demand of Dhangar community is justified and we support it," he told reporters here. Stating that there appeared a "misunderstanding" regarding NCP's stand on the issue, Pawar sought to clarify that the party wanted reservation for Dhangar community without compromising on existing reservation quota meant for the Adivasis. Maharashtra has been witnessing a sustained agitation launched by Dhangar (shepherd) community to press for their demand. A "chakka jam" protest stir was organised this week at various places in the state subsequent to a hunger strike undertaken by their leaders at Baramati recently. Mahadeo Jankar, one of the leaders spearheading the agitation, had alleged that Congress-NCP coalition government in the state was apathetic to their demand for reservation under ST list. In reply to a question, Pawar said, "Decision on giving the Assembly (elections) tickets to the candidates who lost the recent Lok Sabha elections in the state would be taken after fixing a criterion by the party's Parliamentary Board. This issue is yet to be considered." (Business Standard 16/8/14)

Centre urged to pursue 4.5 p.c. quota for minorities in SC

HYDERABAD: Deputy Leader of the Congress in Legislative Council Md. Ali Shabbir has urged Centre to pursue the 4.5 per cent minorities sub-quota case in the Supreme Court. At a press conference here on Sunday, Mr. Shabbir said he had received a letter from Union Minister for Minority Affairs Najma Heptullah where in she expressed happiness over the successful implementation of Muslim quota in Andhra Pradesh since 2004. He said Ms. Heptullah had assured that the Centre would take a view on the Muslim reservation policy after the judgement of the Supreme Court. Welcoming Centre's stand on the quota, he urged the Union Minister to direct Attorney General of India to follow up the case in the apex court with regard to 4.5 per cent sub-quota for minorities announced by Centre in 2013. The Congress MLC said minorities sub-quota by Centre and separate reservation by the States would ensure educational, social and economical development of Muslim community across the country. (The Hindu 17/8/14)

All UT Scheduled Castes Entitled for Quota: SC

PUDUCHERRY: The Supreme Court has set aside two orders passed by the Puducherry Government extending benefits of reservation in promotion, employment and professional courses only to Scheduled Castes (origins) of the Union Territory, on the grounds that it was not in conformity and consonance with the Presidential Order, 1964, and cannot be sustained in law. The order was delivered by a three-member bench including Chief Justice R M Lodha and Justices Madan B Lokur and Kurian Joseph on August 7. The two government orders passed on Nov 2005 and Dec 2005 are with regard to extension of reservation benefits in promotion and employment to Group C and D posts and in professional courses, to SC families living in Puducherry prior to 1964 and their descendants. Those who had come to Puducherry after 1964 or living here after 1964, and their descendants are denied the benefits of

reservation. "It is important to bear in mind that it is by virtue of the notification of the President under Article 341(1) that the Scheduled Castes came into being. The members of Scheduled Castes are drawn from castes, races or tribes, attain a new status by virtue of Presidential Order. Clause (2) of Article 341 empowers Parliament alone by law to include or exclude from the list of Scheduled Castes specified in a notification issued under Clause (1) by the President. By no executive power, the amendment, modification, alteration or variance in the Presidential Order is permissible. It is not open to the Executive to do anything directly or indirectly which may lead to any change in the Presidential Order. Once Presidential Order has been issued under Article 341(1) or Article 342(1), any amendment can only be made by Parliament by law as provided in Article 341(2) or Article 342(2), as the case may be, and in no other manner. The interpretation of 'resident' in the Presidential Order as 'of origin' amounts to altering the Presidential Order," the Bench observed in its order. "The 15 castes listed in the schedule of the Presidential Order on castes, races or tribes or parts of groups within castes, and races are deemed to be Scheduled Castes for the purposes of the Constitution in relation to the UT of Pondicherry so far as regards members thereof are residents in the UT," the bench observed. The Puducherry Scheduled Caste People Welfare Association moved the Supreme Court against the UT Government after two writ petitions against the Puducherry Government's order was dismissed by the Madras High Court on July 21, 2008. (New Indian Express 20/8/14)

'Courts sure to nix quota as it violates equality law' (25)

MUMBAI: After reservations for Marathas and Muslims in education and jobs, the Congress-NCP-ruled cabinet is aiming to win more hearts by taking such populist decisions but may fall flat in legally securing them. Secretaries in Mantralaya had refused to even present the proposal for a 5% policemen's quota before the cabinet, dubbing it unconstitutional. But on Wednesday, the entire cabinet, including home minister R R Patil and CM Prithviraj Chavan, disregarded the absence of legal backing for their decision. "Such desperation indicates defeated minds," said a Mantralaya source while pointing out that the reservation was sure to be shot down in the courts. "The police department too know that the proposal will not stand legally. Such proposals have been refused by the HC and the SC as they violated the law of equality. Home, law and general administration secretaries besides the chief secretary have already termed it legally untenable," a Mantralaya official said. While chief secretary Swadheen Kshatriya refused to comment on the issue, Patil was not available for his views. The proposal offered 3% reservation for policemen's wards in general, and 2% for children of those who meet sudden deaths. "Such a reservation during the 2011 police recruitment was challenged with the Maharashtra Administration Tribunal rejecting it outright. Later, even the HC refused to sustain it. Ditto with the SC," said sources. Meanwhile, the home ministry has decided to distribute Rs 1 crore cash among 82,000 cops so that they can themselves purchase quality uniforms instead of buying poor quality uniforms in bulk at the office-level. (Times of India 21/8/14)

Dhangars plea to be included in ST community

MARGAO: The 25,000 strong Dhangar community in Goa have appealed to the state government to include their community in the list of Scheduled Tribe communities. The Gomantak Dhangar Samaj mandal will be celebrating its anniversary on August 24 and they will be passing a resolution that the Dhangar community needs this reservation given their socio-economic condition. While addressing mediapersons on Friday, Quepem MLA Chandrakant 'Babu' Kavlekar added that chief minister Manohar Parrikar will be attending their anniversary function on Sunday where the delegation will put forward their demands before Parrikar. Kavlekar added that the community is grateful to the chief minister Manohar Parrikar for extending all facilities enjoyed by the ST communities to the Dhangar community by way of government schemes. He added that they were also hoping that the benefits would be extended in terms of reservation of jobs and seats in educational institutions to the Dhangar community. "The community does not want to indulge in politics over the issue. Our only demand is justice to the community by

including it in the ST list," said Kavlekar. Kavlekar said a professor of Dharward university has even replied back to the Registrar General of India on why Dhangars from Goa deserve inclusion in the ST list. The community does not want to indulge in politics over the issue. Our only demand is justice to the community by including it in the ST list (Times of India 23/8/14)

KVS meeting put off following differences over reservation

DHARWAD: The special general body meeting of the Karnatak Vidyavardhak Sangha (KVS) was put off following heated arguments between members over providing caste-based reservation in its administrative body, here on Sunday. The meeting was convened to discuss the amendments to the bylaw. A section of members contended that as KVS received government grants, reservation should be provided for those belonging to the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and women in the executive committee. Another section demanded reservation for the backward classes and minorities. However, some others opposed caste-based reservation. KVS president Patil Puttappa said the sangha was launched to work for the cause of land, language and culture. It was not correct to bring in casteism here. Religious maths, the Kannada Sahitya Parishat and the Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi, too received government grants. But, they do not provide reservation in their administrative bodies. This issue could be considered if the State government issued specific directions, he added. Member Satish Turamuri said KVS was not launched with government funding. After several years of its inception, the government on its own sanctioned grants. "If we need to provide reservation just because we receive government grants, let us give it up. Kannadigas will take care of the organisation," he said. However, members Mahadev Doddamani, Lakshman Bakkai, Vishwantah Chintamani and others continued arguing for reservation. There was a hue and cry over this issue for nearly an hour. When efforts to calm down the members failed, Mr. Puttappa put off the meeting. Earlier, the meeting approved amendment to membership norms that fixed minimum educational qualification to SSLC and enhanced membership fee to Rs. 750. But these norms can be relaxed in special cases, the amended rules said. (The Hindu 25/8/14)

Govt. urged to give retrospective effect for extending SC benefits

PUDUCHERRY: Bolstered by Supreme Court ruling, the scheduled caste community is now demanding that the Puducherry government not show any discrimination while extending reservation benefits. They want the government to extend reservation benefits to around 85,000 persons with retrospective effect. Last week, the Supreme Court struck down orders of Puducherry government extending reservation benefits only to those who settled on or before 1964. In 2005, the government issued two orders extending reservation benefits only to the scheduled community people who settled on or before 1964 while others were excluded to enjoy those benefits. The Puducherry government orders stated that the reservation benefits in promotion, employment to Group 'C' and 'D' posts, education and welfare should be extended only to the Scheduled Caste 'origins' of the Union Territory as notified in the Constitution (Pondicherry) Scheduled Castes Order 1964. From 2005, the authorities insisted to produce a proof of origin to substantiate. Those who submitted such proofs were given SC certificates and allowed to enjoy reservation benefits while others were categorised as 'SC Migrants' and denied such benefits. Under those circumstances, Puducherry SC People's Welfare Association challenged the government orders in the Madras High Court initially and later before the Supreme Court. Quashing the Puducherry government's orders, the apex court pointed out that orders were not being in conformity and consonance with Presidential order issued in 1964. The Bench also said "the interpretation of 'resident' in the Presidential Order as 'of origin' amounts to altering it." It also said such order could not be altered by Puducherry government and the Parliament alone has the power to alter it. Representatives of the Puducherry SC People's Welfare Association met Chief Minister N. Rangasamy at his office on Monday and urged him to extend reservation benefits with retrospective effect. M. Panchatcharam, president of the association told The Hindu , "We submitted a memorandum to the Chief Minister who assured us of looking into it and do the needful. We request the government to give retrospective effect as several

thousand people will benefit from such a gesture." P. Veeramani, general secretary of the association said around 85,000 SC community persons were deprived of reservation benefits after government issued orders in 2005. About 40,000 were not able to produce any document even though they were origins of the Union Territory of Puducherry. Meanwhile AIADMK MLA A. Anbalagan asked the government to spell out its stand. He said the government should find out a solution to the issue as expeditiously as possible. (The Hindu 27/8/14)

Dhangars stage protest to push ST status demand (25)

NASHIK: Members of the Dhangar Samaj Aarakshan Kruti Samiti staged a protest at the district collectorate on Monday to push their demand for inclusion of the community in the Scheduled Tribe (ST) category. Members sported black ribbons and submitted the requisition to the district collector. The members alleged that the state government was deliberately delaying decision regarding their demand, which has hurt the sentiments of the people in the community. Members of Dhangar, a shepherd community, have been consistently seeking their inclusion in ST category claiming that the community was already listed in the Centre's ST list. They were only seeking implementation of the same in the state. They have threatened to boycott polls if the demand is not met. The Dhangar community has reservation under Nomadic Tribes in the state and is the only caste under the banner enjoying 3.5% of reservation. The ST category, however, has 47 different tribes with reservation of 7% and the SC category has 59 castes with reservation of 13% in the 52% reservation in the state. Bhaulal Tambde of the Samiti said that the issue has not been resolved since 1980, when the state government took back its recommendation to the central government that the community should be included in the ST category for reservations. "The Centre has included 'Dhangad' in ST category and even the state government in the year 1976 had sent a letter to the central government saying that the 'Dhangar' in Maharashtra was same and 'Dhangad' and hence it be included in ST-fold. The government, however, withdrew its letter in 1980," he added. (Times of India 2/9/14)

Gujjars plan a 'final showdown' with govt on quota demand (25)

JAIPUR: The Rajasthan Gurjar Aarakshan Sangharsh Samiti has declared to launch a "final agitation" from September 28 to get 5% quota in government jobs for the special backward classes (SBC). The decision was taken at a meeting presided by the Samiti leader Kirori Singh Bainsla at his village near Hindaun late Tuesday night. "The state government has ignored two ultimatums of 15 days each to act on our demand. In the month-long period the government made no attempts to talk to us or make its stand known in any way, thereby letting us believe that it was not interested in a peaceful resolution of the issue. We, therefore, have no option but to launch an agitation," Samiti spokesperson Himmat Singh told TOI on Wednesday. Singh added, "But this would be our final agitation; this time we will take our quota at any cost." The SBC quota of 5% was currently stuck in Rajasthan high court as it was on contravention of the Supreme Court guidelines. The guidelines mandate that the total quota for socially backward communities in government jobs and educational institutes should not exceed 50%. Rajasthan already had a quota of 49% (21% for OBC, 16% for SC and 12% for ST), before the previous Vasundhara Raje government (2003-2008) passed an Act to add 5% quota for the SBC too. The Raje government did so following violent agitations by the Gujjars in 2007 and 2008 wherein around 70 people from the community were killed in police firing. "BJP's manifesto for the 2013 assembly elections clearly mentioned that our demand will be fulfilled by getting the reservation Act covered by Constitution's Schedule IX to take it out of the courts' purview. After becoming the chief minister, Vasundhara Raje repeated the promise during Lok Sabha elections. Yet, in past nine months nothing has moved in the matter," the Samiti spokesperson said. "Chief whip Kalu Lal Gurjar and MLA Prahlad Gunjal (both from the Gujjar community) are now misleading people that the matter was sub-judice so they cannot speak about it. If it were so, why did the BJP include it in its manifesto?" Singh pointed out. The Samiti also targeted

education minister Kalicharan Sarraf and minister of state for social justice and empowerment Arun Chaturvedi for two recent government decisions. As per the Samiti, the government failed to give admissions to 800 SBC students under the Dev Narayan Gurukul Yojana. Further, the Samiti said, the government was allowing 50% seats in the schools exclusively meant for SBC children to be filled with students from SC and ST categories. "This is treachery with us and we are going to oppose BJP in the assembly bypolls on this matter," spokesperson Singh said. The Samiti would launch the agitation from village Katara-Ajji, which is 4 km from Bainsla's village Mundia and 8 km from Hindaun in the heart of "Jagroti"?the region of 84 villages of Gujjar dominance in north-eastern Rajasthan. "For next 15-20 days we will hold small community panchayats across the state to prepare Gujjars for a final battle with the state government," said Singh. The Samiti was bitter about the alleged phone calls being made by the police to their leaders to demand personal details like names and addresses of their relatives, their properties and occupations. (Times of India 4/9/14)

Kerala BJP Seeks Discontinuation of Ranganath Report on Dalits (25)

NEW DELHI: Kerala BJP Sunday sought discontinuation of the Ranganath Mishra Commission report which has recommended inclusion of convert Dalit Christians and Dalit Muslims in the list of Scheduled Castes. Kerala BJP chief V Muraleedharan expressed hope that Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who will take part in the 152nd birth anniversary celebrations of Kerala Dalit icon Ayyankali here tomorrow, would articulate the government's view on the report. He said that any move to implement the Ranganatha Mishra Commission report would "jeopardise the interests of Scheduled Castes". "Ranganatha Mishra Commission report should discontinue. That view (of BJP) is well known. I hope on this occasion, Prime Minister may make some reference on this aspect," Muraleedharan said, amid demands from a significant section of the society that the converted Dalits should be granted reservation under SC quota. Noting that Scheduled Caste status in the country was decided on the basis of untouchability which prevailed only in the Hindu society, he said no religious follower other than a Hindu should be granted any reservation as Scheduled Castes in the community. "We are not demanding that their (convert Dalit Christians and Dalit Muslims) backward status should not be considered. If at all there is backwardness still existing after embracing other faiths, let them be given some other reservations. Not as part of the existing SC reservation," he said. BJP has said that educational level of Scheduled Castes children remains much lower than that of convert Dalit Christians and Muslims and if they are granted reservation under SC Quota, the children of converts would grab major share of reservation in government jobs. The party also says that the convert Dalit Christians and Muslims would become eligible to contest election on seats reserved for Scheduled Castes, if the Ranganatha Mishra Commission report is implemented. The Kerala BJP also fears that implementation of report would encourage conversion and destroy the fabric of Indian society. Ayyankali's birth anniversary celebrations are being jointly organised by the National Scheduled Caste Morcha of BJP and Kerala Pulayar Mahasabha, a Dalit organisation once close to CPI(M) in Kerala. (New Indian Express 7/9/14)

Appeal to extend reservation to all SCs without discrimination (25)

PUDUCHERRY: The Puducherry Scheduled Caste (SC) People's Welfare Association has appealed to Government to extend reservation to all SC people without showing any discrimination among them. The office bearers of the association led by its president M.Panchatchram submitted a memorandum to the Chief Secretary Chetan B.Sanghi on Wednesday. In the memorandum they said, the government had been conferring reservation benefits upon SC people living in the Union Territory from 1964 to 1995 without any discrimination. Such reservation had been abruptly denied to section of SC people who were treated as SC migrant from 1995 onwards. In 1998, the Supreme Court had asserted the right of SC people in the Union territory to avail reservation- without any discrimination against 'migrants'. The association said in disregard to directions of the Supreme Court, the government issued two orders in 2005 which deprived the fundamental rights of reservation to SC people. By its latest judgement, the apex

court has once again bailed out SCs. "As per 2011 census, the SC population is 1,96,325 which constitutes 15.73 per cent of the total population. The government should provide for 16 per cent reservation to all without showing any discrimination between them, said Mr.Panchatcharam. (The Hindu 8/9/14)

Transgenders to be part of RTE quota in private schools (25)

CHENNAI: D. Sabitha, secretary, School Education, recently said the State will include the transgender community in the 25 per cent reservation in private schools for economically backward sections, children from the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes and orphaned children. Under the adult and continuing education programme, a pilot project in Salem, Erode, Dharmapuri and Villupuram has been started. "Rather than starting a separate programme for transgender people, we decided to include them in the regular education programme, promoting inclusive education," said V. Balaji, director of the State Resource Centre for Adult and Continuing Education. Mr. Balaji said the adult education programme deploys transgender activists in each of the districts. "Since the transgender association has a census of the number of persons and the literacy levels of the people in their community, it makes things easier for us. We have also trained transgenders to be resource persons," he said. Activists say these are all positive steps, but more needs to be done. Though their inclusion has been mandated by law, transgenders still face practical problems when it comes to enrolling in schools and colleges. In spite of the notification for the inclusive education of transgenders under the Right to Education Act in 2011, so far, not a single transgender has been enrolled in schools through the scheme. Problems such as having to use the common toilet with others or even the general lack of sensitivity are among the stumbling blocks being cited by transgender activists. "Tamil Nadu has always been ahead when it comes to promoting transgender rights. This year, both Anna University and Madras University have allotted seats for transgenders. Encouraging the transgender population to study will help," transgender activist Stella Mary from Dharmapuri said. R. Jeeva from the We Community Action Network (We CAN) said, while there were a number of very useful schemes in place, there was a need to make transgender rights part of policy decisions. "So far, there have been no budgetary allocations in educational institutions for transgenders or a separate policy on what happens if they are sexually harassed or ragged," she said. Others feel that there is a need for a gender counselling centre. According to transgender activist Priya Babu, "Many transgender students go through harassment including sexual abuse and ragging. With a gender counselling centre, these students will be able to access help readily. Also, if the institution appoints one transgender teaching or non-teaching staff member, the stigma associated with them will also come down." Another serious problem that transgender students face is the lack of toilets. "When they are young, transgender students are confused about which toilet they should use, which creates a lot of psychological issues. There has to be a separate toilet for transgender in schools and colleges," she said. (The Hindu 9/9/14)

Third gender cabinet nod (25)

Patna, Sept. 9: The cabinet today decided to recognise kinnar/kothi/hijra/transgender (eunuch) as "third gender". The cabinet gave its nod to the general administration department's proposal to declare them (kinnar/ kothi/ hijra/ transgender) as backward class annexure II category, cabinet secretariat department's principal secretary Brajesh Mehrotra told reporters here. The state government's move to put them in back-ward class annexure II category would provide them quota benefit for availing or getting government jobs, he said. In a judgment delivered on April 14, the Supreme Court created the "third gender" status for hijras or transgender. The court had asked the Centre to treat transgender as socially and economically backward. The apex court said the transgender would be allowed admission to educational institutions and given employment on the basis that they belonged to the third gender category. They would be considered as OBCs, the judgment said. While passing the order on a PIL filed by National Legal Services Authority (Nalsa) urging the court to give separate identity to transgender by

recognising them as third category of gender, the apex court, in its judgement, said absence of law recognising hijras as third gender could not be continued as a ground to discriminate them in availing equal opportunities in education and employment. In another decision, the cabinet gave its nod to increase the stipend for persons doing internship in all the disciplines in government medical, dental, ayurvedic, homoeopathic, unani colleges. The health department's proposal to increase scholarships for interns would incur an additional annual financial burden of Rs 4.15 crore on the state's exchequer. The amount of scholarship would be increased from Rs 7,000 to Rs 12,000 per month for persons doing intern-ship in all the disciplines in government medical, dental, ayurvedic, homoeopathic, unani colleges, Mehrotra said. "We have been demanding for Rs 17,000 as stipend for interns as neighbouring Bengal and other states are giving the same amount (as stipend)," said a Patna Medical College and Hospital (PMCH) MBBS intern wishing anonymity. Health department official sources put the number of MMBS interns around 450. This excludes the number of interns of dental, ayurvedic, homoeopathic, unani colleges. The cabinet also gave its nod to home (special) department's proposal to extend the term of judicial commission making an inquiry into the Bhagalpur Communal Riot cases of 1989 for another six months. It also decided to extend all the benefits and facilities to the Jain community as minorities. (The Telegraph 10/9/14)

CM strongly advocated continuation of reservation for dalits (25)

MYSORE: Chief minister Siddaramaiah on Sunday said that reservations should continue to exist as long as caste system prevails in the country and Dr B R Ambedker also professed this principle of reservations. Speaking after inaugurating the fifth all India conference of Dalit Sahitya parishat a self styled organization of dalit litterateurs on the lines of Kannada Sahitya parishat, he said the caste system can be eliminated only if there is social, economical and political equality among the masses. "I strongly advocate the reservations for the downtrodden in the society," he reiterated, adding that mere slogans or mantras will not eradicate caste system. Siddaramaiah said development of dalits and other downtrodden social groups had not taken place on the expected lines despite people aspired for a faster development of the dalits and other low caste people. He said there is lot of difference between literature created by the caste Hindus and the dalit litterateurs. Not once the caste Hindu litterateurs tried to highlight the sufferings of the dalits in their writings. "Only people who have experienced and suppressed know the sufferings of the dalits and how the other can know it?" he asked and said only dalit litterateurs who have seen and experienced the hardships of life can create a literature on dalits. Referring to Dr Ambedker, he said Ambedker stands apart when it comes to fighting the ills of the society. "Even Ambedker was castigated by the unclean minds and these minds even dubbed Ambedker as anti-India" he opined and said they even alleged Ambedker of conniving with colonial rulers. "Arun Shourie's book worshipping false gods reflects the rotten mind of the casteist forces," he said. Chief minister said not only people by caste are dalits, even the people who are not empowered are also dalits. "Even women in the society are dalits," he added. Caste system in the society is deep rooted and it gets shaken only when there is some stimuli from the movements and settles down after these pressures die down" he said. He said there are people in the society who question the relevance of such conferences, but how people will know the real sufferings of the dalits. "Now you have sought funds for such conferences and I will provide funds," he said. Revenue minister Srinivasa Prasad said still his blood starts boiling when dalits are subjected to problems and are exploited. Even after 68 years of independence untouchability has not vanished, one can tolerate the hunger but not this discrimination, he said governments should take a serious note of the situation on this front. (Times of India 14/9/14)

Maha govt justifies reservations for Marathas, Muslims (25)

Mumbai: The Maharashtra government on Wednesday justified in the Bombay High Court its decision to provide reservations for Muslims and Marathas in jobs and educational institutions, saying that these communities are socially and economically backward. The division bench headed by Chief Justice Mohit

Shah is hearing a bunch of public interest litigation challenging the recent government notification announcing reservations. "Maratha community was socially and economically backward and the decision to provide 16 per cent reservation for it was absolutely justified," said advocate general Darius Khambata. The decision was based on the report of Narayan Rane committee, said Khambata. Regarding Muslims, he said they too were socially and economically backward. While providing five per cent reservations to them, the government had taken into consideration recommendations of Rajinder Sachhar committee and Mahmoodur Rahman committee, both of which had sought reservations for the community, the advocate general said. Khambata also clarified that those Muslims who are eligible for reservations under Other Backward Class category shall not get the benefit of reservations under the new quota. (Zee News 17/9/14)

Caste census to commence in November (25)

MYSORE: H. Kantharaj, Chairman of the State Backward Classes Commission, said the Commission would take up the caste census in Karnataka for the first time since 1931 and it would commence from November. Over 1,25,000 personnel — including enumerators and supervisors. The government has allocated Rs. 117 crore for the census work and has given the commission three years to submit the report, he said. Addressing a presspersons here on Wednesday, Mr. Kantharaj said that there were over 1,076 castes in the State apart from Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. He said there are over 101 SC sub-castes and over 49 ST sub-castes. Mr. Kantharaj said many more castes may come to light during the census. The government has provided 27 per cent reservation for backward classes in panchayats, apart from benefits in various other departments in order to provide them social justice, Mr. Kantharaj said, adding that the survey would enable the government reach those in need. Such a census had not been conducted since independence, he said, adding that a nine-member Bench of the Supreme Court had recommended such a census on November 16, 1992. Mr. Kantharaj said teams have been formed at the district-level headed by Deputy Commissioners of the respective district and the census personnel would visit all the villages in their respective area. He said there was a provision for those who do not like to be identified on the basis of caste as well. The survey would also help to analyse the socio-economic progress of each caste. To a question, he said the commission would not avail the services of teachers as the government had stopped utilising teachers for survey work. Anganawadi workers, unemployed youth who have experience in conducting the survey work would be involved in the census, he said. (The Hindu 18/9/14)

Punjab warns officials against de-reserving posts (25)

Chandigarh: The Punjab government has issued strict directives against de-reserving posts of reserved categories and converting these to other categories, an official spokesman said Sunday. All departments in the state government have been directed not to do this without securing prior approval from the welfare department's reservation cell. In a communique to all heads of departments (HoDs), divisional commissioners, deputy commissioners, registrar of Punjab and Haryana High Court, all sessions' judges and sub-divisional magistrates, the state government has clarified that the filling of vacant posts of reserved categories from other categories without approval would lead to a strict disciplinary action. "If the posts reserved for SCs/BCs (Scheduled Castes/Backward Classes) were lying vacant due to non-availability of qualified SC/BC category candidates, then the posts could not be de-reserved without getting prior approval from reservation cell of welfare department," the letter said. Punjab Welfare Minister Gulzar Singh Ranike said impartial and proper implementation of the reservation policy was constitutional responsibility of all departments and erring officers would have to face action if they failed to do this. The departments have been told that if there was non-availability of eligible candidates from reserved categories, the department concerned would send a detailed dossier of proposed conversion of posts explaining that why these posts could not be filled from reserved categories, despite efforts. "It has been observed that some departments were violating the reservation laws and taking decisions in this regard at

their own level without getting permission from reservation cell. The state government has taken a serious note in this regard as it affects the interests of Scheduled Castes and Backward Classes," the spokesman said. He added that in case of any violation of the instructions, strict action would be initiated against the erring officers who failed to implement the state's reservation policy in true spirit. (Business Standard 21/9/14)

Eunuch leaves MBBS midway, begs (25)

The recent move of the state government to bring eunuchs under Other Backward Classes (OBCs) may not turn their lives around wholly so long as the social stigma remains. Naina, a eunuch now in her mid-40s, had to drop out of an MBBS course. Begging with her on the city's streets are a research scholar and a commerce graduate. They all accompany some eunuchs living in a rented house in Patna City's Alamganj area. Naina's peers — Saloni and Chandani — claimed that the former had enrolled into a medical college in Delhi. "But she left midway as students began teasing her once they got to know she was a eunuch. She left the institute and joined a group of eunuchs before moving to Patna a decade ago. Naina speaks English fluently as her basic education took place at a Delhi-based convent school. But she is shy and introvert now," said Saloni. Naina was hesitant. She opened up after much prodding. "I come from an affluent family. My father is a doctor and my mother a teacher. I did a BCom from Kirorimal College, Delhi, after my dreams to become a doctor were shattered. I don't want to recall the trauma I underwent while pursuing MBBS in Delhi in 1997-98," she said. It is difficult for her to survive outside her community. "We are looked down upon. The very thought of a public sector job makes me nervous. For eunuchs, it would be difficult to continue in a job anywhere," she said. Naina's peer Reshma from Kaimur district is doing her PhD in chemistry from Patna University. "She is a bright student and wants to pursue higher studies. We do not want her to beg," said Raj Kumari alias Lalan, a senior leader of eunuchs. Suman, Gautam and Abina are equally qualified. Suman graduated in history from Indira Gandhi National Open University and Gautam in commerce from Magadh University, Bodhgaya. Abina is doing her postgraduation through distance learning. "We want to lead a normal life. But that's a dream," Abina said. Chandani, a Darbhanga resident, left her ancestral home four decades ago but gets to meet her parents. "My father is with the Bihar Homeguards and my mother a government school teacher. They live in Patna. At times I go to meet them. But I'm not welcome at the home of my brothers — one a doctor and the other an engineer," she said. A social welfare department survey said there were over 4,000 eunuchs in Bihar. Dinesh Rai, who works for their welfare, said it could be 10 times more. On September 9 this year, the Bihar government brought eunuchs and transgenders under the third gender and decided to include them in Annexure II, giving them the benefits of reservation in government jobs. Raj Kumari said the government's recent decision has kindled hope among eunuchs. "At least the qualified ones will get jobs," she said. A Supreme Court judgment in April 2014 recognised eunuchs and transgenders as a third gender and said they should get admission into educational institutions, be treated as OBCs and given jobs. Kali Hijra would have benefited from the order. Though elected ward councillor from Gardanibagh area, Kali was debarred from contesting the election a second time for being a transgender. Kali died about four months ago. Raj Kumari, who unsuccessfully contested local body elections from ward No. 85 in Patna, said she raised the issue of providing accommodation to eunuchs at a meeting convened by social welfare department principal secretary Amarjeet Sinha on August 25. (The Telegraph 22/9/14)

Higher education Bill to be withdrawn from Parliament (25)

NEW DELHI: The Union Cabinet on Wednesday decided to withdraw the Higher Education and Research Bill, 2011, from Parliament in view of the reservations expressed by the Parliamentary Standing Committee on certain provisions of the draft legislation. The Bill — which was pending in the Rajya Sabha — sought to determine, coordinate, maintain and promote standards of higher education and research, and subsume existing regulatory bodies in higher education including the University Grants Commission, the All India Council for Technical Education, the National Council for Teaching Education and the

Distance Education Council (DEC) The Cabinet cleared a number of agreements to be signed during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's U.S. visit. One of them is a Joint Declaration of Intent between the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) and the U.S. Department of State for cooperation in the field of higher education for Study Webs of Active-Learning for Young Aspiring Minds (SWAYAM), a programme for online education. The SWAYAM platform server will be based in India and U.S. universities will be invited to offer postgraduate academic programmes with certification on the SWAYAM platform. Besides, the Cabinet approved signing of a Joint Declaration between the HRD Ministry and the National Science Foundation (NSF) of the U.S. to launch the Global Initiative of Academic Networks (GIAN) in Higher Education. It aims at tapping the talent pool of scientists and entrepreneurs to engage with the institutes of higher education in India to augment the country's existing academic resources, accelerate the pace of quality reforms, and further strengthen India's scientific and technological capabilities. (The Hindu 25/9/14)

BJP: 10% quota to dalit allies in government (25)

NAGPUR: BJP has promised to give 10% share in power to dalit parties that have allied with BJP. State BJP president Devendra Fadnavis told the media that Ramdas Athawale would also be given a share of power wherever possible. Sulekha Kumbhare, president of Bahujan Republican Ekta Manch (BREM) and Gondwana Gantantra Party (GGP), a tribal party, have extended support to BJP candidates. Union transport minister, Nitin Gadkari, brought Kumbhare to BJP camp after she was ditched by Congress. BJP is supporting GGP candidate from Ramtek DM Reddy. Reddy is contesting on the lotus symbol. The two leaders claimed that if any person inducted into the party was found guilty then he or she would have to face the law. "The party won't come to their defence," Fadnavis said. Maintaining BJP's policy of not criticizing its former ally Shiv Sena, Fadnavis said that BJP's enemies were only Congress and NCP and Sena was not its target. "We don't have time to reply to Sena's criticism. People will decide who was at fault," he said. Earlier, Sulekha Kumbhare slammed Congress for backstabbing her. "We supported the party in Lok Sabha and their leaders promised to support us in Vidhan Sabha. I had demanded five seats but agreed for two. Even as I was given Kamptee and Umred seats, Congress had already decided its candidates from the two seats. "I came to know on Friday that Kamptee seat had been given to Rajendra Mulak, who could not be accommodated in Nagpur West. Congress conveyed to me through media that I should contest from Umred. However, I learnt on Saturday that it had decided to field Sanjay Meshram from there," an angry Kumbhare said. Kumbhare claimed she decided to join hands with BJP as it was pro-Vidarbha and pro-development. (Times of India 29/9/14)

"Implement Sachar Panel recommendations in toto" (25)

NAGERCOIL: The Tamil Nadu Minority Peoples' Welfare Organisation (TNMPWO) has demanded the implementation of the recommendations of Justices Sachar and Ranganath Misra panels, which recommended reservation for minorities in admission to higher educational institutions such as IIT and IIM and in employment in government jobs. A charter of 10 resolutions, including the implementation of Sachar Committee and Ranganath Misra Committee recommendations, was passed at the TNMPWO's first district conference here on Sunday. The other resolutions included a demand for increasing the quota for Muslims in Tamil Nadu; extension of full subsidy for Muslim women self-help groups; payment of educational scholarships to minority students without any delay; recognition of Dalit Christians as Scheduled Castes and separate department for minority welfare. The conference also wanted the police not to arrest innocent Muslims and called for the release of innocent undertrials. Moosa, State deputy convenor, TNMPWO, inaugurated the conference. S. Noor Mohamed, State convenor, addressed the gathering. Mariya Vincent welcomed the gathering and R. Chellasamy, district panchayat chairman, presided. Rev. Peter Remigues, Bishop of Kottar, and Devakadatcham, Bishop, CSI Diocese, offered felicitations. M.S. Salam proposed a vote of thanks. (The Hindu 1/10/14)

BJP is not against any community, says Nitin Gadkari (25)

Chandrapur: Union Minister for Transport and Rural Development Nitin Gadkari today said the BJP is for development with true national spirit and is not against any community as projected by rival political parties. Gadkari was in the city to campaign for BJP candidates Sudhir Mungatiwar and Nana Shamkule who are contesting Maharashtra assembly polls. He said that his party is opposed to terrorism and it is Pakistan, who after humiliating defeats in three wars, has waged proxy war against India as well as fueling hatred among Hindus and Muslims in India. Addressing the poll rally here, he said that the BJP has never ever indulged in the politics of caste, creed and religion and is not against Muslims. He also alleged that it is the Congress and the NCP which fuels hatred among Marathas and OBCs as well as Dhangars and Dalits through petty politics, in the name of reservation. "If you consider us as communal, then do not vote for us, but before doing so, remove the spectacles (eyeglasses) of secularism, given by the Congress and judge us through open eyes," Gadkari said. Gadkari pointed out that if BJP was anti-Muslim, then Prime Minister Narendra Modi would have not sanctioned relief worth Rs 1,000 crore to flood-hit Kashmir. "I had personally inspected the calamity that hit Kashmir and sanctioned Rs 250 crore through my ministry for construction of damaged roads and bridges," he said. Gadkari lauded the development works and grants for the area by BJP MLAs Sudhir Mungatiwar and Nana Shamkule and sought votes for them from the people. Earlier, ex-MLC and senior Congress leader, Jainuddin Zaweri and former District Youth Congress President Matin Sheikh, along with several of their followers entered the BJP during the programme. Earlier during the day, Gadkari also addressed a poll rally in Nagbhid and sought votes for Kirtikumar Bhangadiya, the BJP candidate from Chimur. (Zee News 3/10/14)

Gujjars make a U-turn, suspend stir over quota (25)

JAIPUR: The Gujjars led by Kirori Singh Bainsla took a U-turn on Thursday and suspended their five-day-old sit-in near Hindaun on the quota demand. The state government, on its part, once again invited them for talks on October 5. A day earlier, the Gujjars had declined to let up their protest and the government had reacted by declaring to keep them out of the talks on October 5. Parliamentary affairs minister Rajendra Rathore, however, was believed to have reached out to the Gujjars again on Thursday, seeking time for the government to show commitment on the quota demand. "Minister Rathore called up our leader Bainsla and assured sincere efforts on the quota demand also. Considering the government request and the ongoing festive season, we have suspended the protest till October 5," said Himmat Singh Gurjar, spokesperson of the Rajasthan Gurjar Aarakshan Sangharsh Samiti that was leading the protest under the leadership of Bainsla. The government and the Gujjars leaders were scheduled to meet here on October 5 in the presence of legal experts to discuss constitutional ways to get the quota matter cleared by the Rajasthan high court. The reservation Act, 2008, that promises 5% quota in jobs and educational institutes to special backwards classes (SBC), which includes Gujjars, was currently stayed by the high court since it violates the Supreme Court guidelines to keep total reservation in the state up to 50%. During their two rounds of talks with the government on Tuesday and Wednesday, the Gujjar leaders demanded that the 2008 Act be withdrawn and redrafted to maintain overall reservation within the 50% limit, while keeping the 5% SBC quota intact. Sources said the government declined to withdraw the Act. Another option to place the SBC quota under Constitution's Schedule-IX too was ruled out for the time being since the state assembly's resolution for the same passed in 2008 was said to have lapsed. "The BJP leadership knew that the resolution had lapsed, yet it made a fake promise in its election manifestos of 2013 and 2014 that the SBC quota would be placed under Schedule-IX," the Sangharsh Samiti spokesperson said. He emphasised, "We will watch the government approach on the quota demand on October 5 and accordingly decide our next move when the Gujjar leaders meet again on October 6." (Times of India 3/10/14)

Karnataka Reveals Plan to Give More Reservation for SC/ST (25)

BANGALORE: After allocating funds in proportion to their population, the Karnataka Government is now considering increasing reservation for the SC/ST community on the same lines. Chief Minister Siddaramaiah announced this at the Valmiki Jayanti celebrations organised by the Social Welfare Department here on Wednesday. Currently, the community gets an 18 per cent reservation - 15 per cent for SCs and three per cent for STs. The OBC category gets a reservation of 25 per cent, while Lingayats and Vokkaligas get 7 per cent. The remaining 50 per cent is for the general category. From this fiscal, the government will be allocating development funds according to the population per community. SCs and STs make up around 24 per cent of the total population and the government is considering increasing the reservation by 7 percentage point to 25. However, the proposed increase will mean that the reservation quota will breach the 50 per cent mark stipulated by the Supreme Court. Tamil Nadu has a reservation quota of 60 per cent. "Inclusive growth cannot be achieved sans equitable distribution of the state's resources," Siddaramaiah said, asking officials to lay out an acceptable revision after the caste census. He also said the Congress is the only party in the country with a strong commitment to ensuring social justice. He said the only way to eradicate the caste system is to empower caste groups through constitutional guarantees. Paying rich tribute to Maharshi Valmiki, Siddaramaiah said even Mahatma Gandhi was inspired by him to develop the country on the "Rama Rajya model". (New Indian Express 9/10/14)

Constitutional changes sought for betterment of disabled persons (25)

HYDERABAD: Castigating the successive Central governments for discarding welfare of people with disability, the city-based activists for the disabled community on Friday demanded constitutional amendments to improve their living conditions. Activists rued that Parliament is seeking to enact a law for safeguarding rights of persons with disabilities without giving it a constitutional status. "We need legal protection, which is guaranteed to SC and ST community. We also demand political representations at all levels. That apart, amendments should be made to the constitution to include the disabled in various articles which would ensure welfare," said V. Rajashekar, deputy coordinator for the Cell for Disabled at The English and Foreign Languages University (Eflu). Another activist K. Srinivas said they have demanded an increase in job reservation from three per cent to five per cent before a parliamentary standing committee. "The reservation should also be given to us in promotions and not just direct recruitment. This should be guaranteed by the constitution," he said. The activists were representing the Hyderabad Alliance for Disability Rights, an umbrella organisation of five other organisations. (The Hindu 11/10/14)

Scrap Quota for Wards of Freedom Fighters in Medical Education: HC (25)

CHENNAI: The Madras High Court on Friday directed the State government to strike down the quota for children of freedom fighters in medical education. V G Sunramaniyan, son of a freedom fighter filed a petition seeking directions to the Health and Family Department, Directorate of Medical Education, and the Medical Council of India to allot MBBS seat to his daughter under the Freedom Fighters Quota. Justice V Ramasubramanian observed that the quota for freedom fighters' children was only a special category for reservation and such reservation was not a Constitutional guarantee. The petitioner claimed that his daughter passed higher secondary in 2013-14 securing 1,159 marks. She applied for admission to MBBS course in the academic year 2014-15 under the quota. But the Selection Committee refused to consider her application, stating that it applied only to children of freedom fighters and not grand children. He further contended that if the decision of the committee was allowed, no seat could be filled up under the quota since children of freedom fighters will be of more than 50 years of age now. Meanwhile, the Health and Family Welfare department of TN and the Directorate of Medical Education stated in their counter affidavit that for the past 15 years no candidate was admitted under the special category. They further stated that every year if no eligible candidate was available for the three seats under the category, they would be reverted to the general category. Questioning the rationale for the existence of the

category, if no one had applied under the category for the past 15 years, the judge directed the department to remove the category for children of the freedom fighters to avoid any more confusion in future. (New Indian Express 12/10/14)

Only parents income be considered for deciding creamy layer:SC (25)

New Delhi: The Supreme Court has held that an individual candidate's income was not required to be clubbed with the income of the parents for the purpose of determining "creamy layer" to exclude a person of backward class from the benefits of reservation. Referring to the Centre's Office Memorandum of 1993 on the issue and judgements of the apex court, a bench comprising justices J S Khehar and Arun Mishra set aside the decision of the Punjab and Haryana High Court which took consideration of the income of the candidate, a chartered accountant, to declare that the family belonged to the "creamy layer". "The aforesaid determination was rendered by reading down the policy instructions issued by the state government, on the basis whereof, the backwardness of a candidate had to be adjudged. "The aforesaid policy instructions were read down, to include the income of the person concerned, along with the income of the parents of the person, contemplated by the policy instructions," the bench said. "It is not possible for us to accept, that the individual's own income could have been taken into consideration," the bench said after analysing the Centre's office memorandum of September 8, 1993 issued by the Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances & Pension (Department of Personnel & Training). The apex court noted that even with reference to category IV, which includes professional's (like CA), the income of the professional, has not been included. "Thus viewed, we are satisfied, that on the plain reading of category VI of the office memorandum of September 8, 1993, that it was not the income of the individual concerned, but that of his parents, that would determine whether he would fall within the creamy layer or not," the bench said while allowing the appeal of a candidate filed through advocate R K Kapoor. (Deccan Herald 13/10/14)

Maharashtra child rights commission seeks to cancel quota exemption for minority schools (25)

MUMBAI: With several schools in the state applying for the minority tag to avoid reserving 25% of their seats for children from the weaker sections, the state child rights commission has asked the Centre to consider cancelling the exemption for minority institutes. While the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009, requires schools to reserve 25% of their seats for students from economically weaker sections, on May 6, the Supreme Court exempted aided and unaided minority institutes from doing so. The Maharashtra State Commission of Protection of Child Rights has written to the department of school education and literacy, Government of India, requesting it to file a review petition against the SC order. "In Maharashtra, particularly in Mumbai, where a majority of quality schools have the minority tag (linguistic and religious)...[they] are not admitting children falling under the category of weaker section on the basis of the SC order, under the 25% quota," said the commission's secretary, A N Tripathi, in the letter dated October 7. According to the commission, almost 80% of the private schools in the state have acquired a minority tag and several others have applied for the same. "We have got several complaints where students have been denied admission, but on most occasions we cannot resolve the case as the schools are minority institutions. Hence, we feel there is a need to cancel the exemption given by either filing a review petition or by way of a constitutional amendment," Tripathi told TOI. "Government-run schools neither have the resources nor the discipline, while privately-owned schools are completely commercialized...thus, a majority of urban and rural children who fall under the category of weaker section are being deprived from education," read the letter. Activists agree that schools are misusing the privilege and hence, this practice needs to be curbed. "After the SC order, schools have started applying for the minority status just to avoid admitting students from the weaker sections," said K Narayan of the Anudanit Shikshan Bachao Samiti. In the recent RTE admission process, only 312 unaided schools participated, of which five got the minority status during the admission round. (Times of India 16/10/14)

Protest over regional quota under Article 371-J (25)

Bidar: The Karnataka State Government Employees Association members staged a dharna against the State government for delay in providing them regional reservation as per the provisions of Article 371-J. They went on leave and sat in front of the zilla panchayat where Umashree, district in charge Minister, was holding the Karnataka Development Programme review meeting. She met the employees and promised to carry their concerns to Chief Minister Siddaramaiah. Their demands included cancellation of all promotions and recruitments done without invoking the provisions of the Constitutional Amendment, identifying regional and State cadre among all groups of employees, taking up steps to vacate the stay on the rules, ensuring eight per cent State cadre reservation to employees in the Hyderabad Karnataka region, publishing the seniority lists of State cadre and HK regional cadre employees and transfer of important departments, boards and corporations to HK district (The Hindu 18/10/14)

Reservation in urban bodies to clear air over mayoral candidates (25)

INDORE : Reservation for post of mayors in municipal corporations of state is scheduled to take place in the state capital on Tuesday. With this suspense over possible candidates for mayor in Indore will be clear. State has 14 municipal corporations and as per rule 50% seats of mayors seat will be reserved for women and 5% for SC, ST and OBCs. For last three terms Indore is having a mayor from general category. Only after reservation process will it be clear as to who would be among front runners for the post. Last three mayors of Indore were from general category. They were Kailash Vijayvargia (1999-2004), Umashashi Sharma (2004-2009) and incumbent Krishanmurari Moghe (2009-2014). BJP MLA from Indore II, who had won assembly election by record margin of votes is said to be front runner for mayor candidate of BJP if Indore's mayor will be from general category, while Congress may field former MLA Satnarayan Patel. In case Indore's mayor is reserved for OBC then former IDA chairman Madhu Verma may get BJP ticket for mayor post. "There are many strong candidates in the party, picture will be clear after reservation process is complete," said a BJP leader. Similarly, reservation process for panch and sarpanch of Indore district would be conducted on Wednesday at respective panchayats. Indore district has 309 gram panchayats with 4360 panch and 309 sarpanch. Along with district will elect 100 janpad members and 17 jila panchayat members and 4 janpad president in the ensuing civic election. Reservation of seats for janpad members, jila panchayat members and janpad president would be held on October 24 at collectorate. (Times of India 21/10/14)

Caste Quotas Soon for All Outsourced Government Jobs (25)

BANGALORE: The state government will insist on caste quotas for private agency workers who provide services for its departments. Social Welfare Minister H Anjaneya told reporters on Tuesday that the decision was taken at a Cabinet sub-committee meeting earlier in the day. More than a lakh jobs are outsourced by government departments and state-owned boards and corporations. "An amendment will be brought in to enforce reservation," the minister said. He said an amendment to the SC/ST and OBC Recruitment Act of 1990 will be tabled in the next Assembly session. He also said he would insist on the roster system in the Social Welfare Department without waiting for the legislation. The roster stipulates 18 per cent of all jobs for the SC and ST categories, 32 per cent for OBCs, including 5 per cent for minorities. The remaining is open for general merit. Anjaneya said the sub-committee has also decided to conduct a survey to identify post-2001 backlog posts reserved for SC and ST candidates. The last survey was done for 1984-2001 and more than 19,115 posts had been identified. It has come to light that 3,220 such posts are yet to be filled, he said. "This time, the survey will also cover backlog promotions from 1978 to date." (New Indian Express 22/10/14)

College union, DUTA lock horns over appointments (25)

New Delhi: The DUTA's opposition to the ongoing interviews for filling up 73 permanent teaching positions at Deshbandhu College on Friday infuriated the college teachers' association. While the Delhi University Teachers' Association claimed that the college is conducting interviews on the basis of a public advertisement, which is opposed to the government's reservation policy, the college association accused the former of disrupting the selection process for three hours. "Out of the 73 posts advertised, only nine are reserved for SC and four for ST categories. This amounts to only 12.3 per cent of posts reserved for Scheduled Castes, and 5.5 per cent for Scheduled Tribes, which fall far short of the mandated requirement of 15 per cent and 7.5 per cent respectively," the teachers' body said in a statement. "Further, the two posts reserved for persons with disabilities have not been earmarked for specific subjects, which is in violation of the standing court order," it said. The college association, however, said the recruitment process has the university's approval. While slamming the DUTA leadership for holding up appointments, Ashwini Shankar of Deshbandhu College said, "Instead of working tirelessly for regularisation of teachers, she (DUTA president Nandita Narain) sought to perpetuate ad hocism in Delhi University and play havoc with the career of thousands." As per the directions of the Delhi High Court to fill up 4,500 teaching positions in the university, Shankar said the interviews for 13 teaching positions, six of them unreserved and seven reserved ones, were conducted by the Department of Chemistry on Friday. DUTA said their intervention came after two other groups of the same college – Deshbandhu College Teachers' Welfare Association and the SC/ST Teachers' Forum – approached them. "Responding to the teachers' appeal, a DUTA delegation went to the college today and tried to meet the principal. But the principal refused to meet the delegation," said the teachers' group, adding the reservation roster was not placed for approval before the staff council or the college governing body. A complaint has been lodged with the SC/ST Commission, the group said. (Deccan Herald 25/10/14)

Petition against quota benefits for Arunthathiars (25)

CHENNAI : Legality of a quota within quota, providing 3% reservation for Arunthathiars within the 16% reserved for scheduled caste members, has been questioned by an advocate who says the sub-quota has robbed educational and job opportunities of many SC communities. Advocate G Saravana Kumar, an SC member, said the opportunities of other SCs are being taken away by Arunthathiars who enjoy 3% exclusive reservation and then compete for remaining posts within the remaining 13% meant for other SCs. A division bench of Justice Satish K Agnihotri and Justice K K Sasidharan, before which the matter came up on Monday, have issued notices to the state and the TNPSC, besides the registrar-general of the Madras high court. Tnn (Times of India 28/10/14)

'Respond positively to grievances' (25)

Mandya: State SC/ST Commission Chairman E Ashwath Narayan said, action will be initiated against officials who do not help solve problems of people belonging to Scheduled Caste and Tribes. He was chairing a meeting, held to discuss the problems faced by people belonging to Scheduled Caste and Tribes, in the city, at the ZP Hall, on Wednesday. "All officials have been asked to respond positively to the grievances of the people of the communities. So, the people should make use of the benefits extended by the governments, shedding differences either as sub-castes or separate groups," he said. Dalit leaders, who attended the meeting, aired several problems faced by the communities. They demanded filling of backlog job vacancies in the governments, severe punishment for those availing benefits by producing fake caste certificates, reservation in issuing contracts in government departments, regularisation of services of civic workers (pourakarmikas), and speedy issuance of compensation to atrocity victims. Venkatagiriiah said, people belonging to backward castes should not be included under Scheduled Castes. "An authority should be constituted to protect Buddhist places of worship. Steps should be taken to check atrocity against Dalits," he said. M B Sreenivas said, at least 25 per cent of the works issued on contract by various government departments should be earmarked for Dalits. "Contract civic workers should be made permanent. Reservation should be provided in promotions in government

institutions. Job reservation should be provided to Dalits in APMC and other cooperative organisations,” he said. Guruprasad Keragodu said, reservations had not been provided for Dalits in the recruitment for Mandya Institute of Medical Science. M Krishnamurthy said, the change in rules for provision of compensation to atrocity victims was not proper. “Earlier relief was provided as soon as a case was filed, now, it is paid only after the charge sheet is filed,” he pointed out. (Deccan Herald 30/10/14)

Political reservation demanded for Muslims (25)

Bangalore: The All India Sunni Jameyatul Ulema general secretary Sheikh Aboobacker Ahmed Musliyar has demanded political reservation for Muslims in Karnataka. Musliyar told reporters here on Friday that he would submit a memorandum in this regard to Chief Minister Siddaramaiah in Mangalore on Sunday. Siddaramaiah and Kerala Chief Minister Oommen Chandy are said to attend a mega rally being organised by the Sunni Management Association (SMA) and the Sunni Students' Federation (SSF) in the port city. Congress leader and deputy chairman of the State Planning Board C M Ibrahim, who also spoke to the media on the occasion, said that providing reservation to Muslims was yet to be discussed within the government. “If the government agrees to the demand, we will never say no,” he said. SSF leaders assert that Muslims are underrepresented in the political sphere and hence should be granted reservation. According to Ibrahim, SMA will also submit a memorandum to the chief minister demanding a ban on the sale of liquor in Karnataka, on the lines of Kerala. (Deccan Herald 1/11/14)

RTE quota mooted for transgender persons (25)

BENGALURU: If all goes as per the Department of Public Instruction's (DPI) plan, from the next academic year, transgender persons can avail themselves of seats under the RTE reservation quota in private schools. The DPI will send a proposal to the government to include transgender persons under the disadvantaged group so that they can be granted admission under the 25 per cent reservation quota at the first instance. At present, only orphans, children living with HIV, special-needs children, and migrant or street children can avail themselves of the benefit. The move has been mooted by the department after the Supreme Court judgment in April 2014 recognised transgender as the third gender and directed the Centre and States to initiate steps to treat transgender persons as socially and educationally backward classes, and extend reservation for admission in educational institutions and for public appointments. Commissioner for Public Instruction Mohammad Mohsin said the department would also amend the Karnataka Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Rules to make sure that transgender persons between the ages of 6 and 14 can avail themselves of education in all schools. “We do not want to restrict the rights of transgenders to just the 25 per cent reservation quota. We want to extend it in all schools,” Mr. Mohsin said. However, sources in the department said that as the amendment of rules may take time, the department was planning to modify the Government Order which specifies who are eligible to avail themselves of reservation under the quota. (The Hindu 3/11/14)

69% quota: SC notice to Tamil Nadu (25)

NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court on Wednesday issued notice to the Tamil Nadu government on a petition filed by two aspiring medical students challenging the State's 69 per cent reservation policy in educational institutions and government jobs, saying it violated their fundamental right to education. The petition questioned the State legislature's competence to pass the Tamil Nadu Backward Classes, Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes (Reservation of seats in educational institutions and appointments or posts in the service under the state) Act, 1993 (Act 45 of 1994). The students, Sahitya K and Ganapathinarayanan L, told the Supreme Court that, had it not been for the 69 per cent reservation, they would have secured seats in a medical college in Chennai with their high marks. “It is a question of the lives and careers of two young students,” G. Sivabalamurugan, their counsel, submitted before a Bench led by Justice Dipak Misra. The Bench listed the case for hearing on November 14. In their

petition, the students questioned the competence of the Tamil Nadu legislature to venture beyond the 50 per cent reservation prescribed by the Supreme Court in the Indira Sawhney majority judgment of 1992. "The petitioners had secured very high marks. They could have been selected and admitted to the Government Medical College if the State had followed 50 per cent reservation," the petition said. It said that the State legislature went on to increase the reservation quota to 69 per cent though there was no preceding constitutional amendment. The petition said the 1994 statute has been amended twice — in the year 2007 to provide exclusive reservation for backward class Muslims and in 2009 for the Arunthathiyar community. The petition further contended that the Tamil Nadu Backward Classes Commission's report dated July 8, 2011 justifying 69 per cent reservation on the basis of data of the year 1985, provided in the report of the previous backward class commission, (Amba Shankar), is "unsustainable and a constitutional fraud." "In any event, a meritorious candidate coming within the cut-off mark of 50 per cent reservation cannot be denied her right of admission under Articles 14 and 15," the petition contended. (The Hindu 6/11/14)

Supreme Court junks HC order on caste-based census (25)

NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court on Friday rescued the Centre from the prospect of carrying out a caste-based census — an exercise that could have led to a controversial reworking of quotas for other backward classes (OBCs). The HC had two years ago in a service matter ordered fresh caste-based census, more than 80 years after it was last conducted in 1931. The SC set aside that order, terming it "exceptionally cryptic" and a "colossal transgression of power of judicial review". Given the potential for social strife in a caste-based census, the Centre had rushed to the SC challenging the HC order. A bench of Justices Dipak Misra, R F Nariman and U U Lalit upheld its contention and said the central census notification mandated collection of information only relating to SCs and STs and not other castes. Appearing for the Centre, senior advocate R S Suri had argued that "policy stipulates for carrying out the census which includes SC and ST, but not other castes". He had said other HCs had dismissed similar petitions and that even the SC had declined to interfere in census modalities. As of now, the census quantifies the population of only SC and ST communities. Justice Misra, writing the judgment for the bench, said, "In such a situation, it is extremely difficult to visualize that the high court, without having a 'lis' (subject matter) before it, could even have thought of issuing a command to the census department to take all such measures towards conducting caste-wise census in the country so that social justice in its true sense...could be achieved," This was clearly beyond the HC's jurisdiction, the SC ruled. "The HC had not only travelled beyond the list in the first round of litigation, but had really yielded to some kind of emotional perspective, possibly paving the adventurous path to innovate. It is legally impermissible," it said... (Times of India 8/11/14)

SC categorisation: Naidu, KCR urged to write to PM (25)

VIJAYAWADA: Madiga Reservation Porata Samiti (MRPS) founder president Manda Krishna Madiga said on Sunday that the Chief Ministers of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana should write separate letters to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, seeking introduction of a Bill in the Parliament on the Scheduled Caste categorisation. "We request the two Chief Ministers to look into the issue seriously as they have already gave their consent over the issue," he said while participating in the national conference organised by the Madiga Employees Federation (MEF) here, adding that MRPS was organising a State-level meeting on November 14 and 15 in Eluru to discuss its future course of action, he said. He reminded that the BJP had already extended its support for SC categorization. Social Welfare Minister Ravela Kishore Babu said the employees should play a key role to fight in support of the community, adding that the TDP government would work for the welfare of the people in the State. Hundreds of employees from Andhra Pradesh and Telangana participated in the meeting. (The Hindu 9/11/14)

'Recruitment of sweepers subject to final verdict' (25)

JAIPUR: The Rajasthan High Court on Monday said the appointment of safai karmacharis in the state would be subject to the final disposal of a writ petition challenging the recruitment process initiated by the department of local bodies as it has not followed the reservation policy in these appointments. Justice Mohammad Rafiq issued the order on a petition filed by one Bhajanlal Saini. The director of local bodies had announced the recruitment of 30,000 safai karmacharis in May last year and it has initiated the selection process. However, mid way through the recruitment process, the director, via a corrigendum, said the recruitment would be held in two phases. In the first phase, vacancy of 20,000 candidates would be filled from general category and Scheduled Castes only. In the second phase, vacancy of 10,000 candidates would be filled from the remaining castes (ST and OBC). The petitioner's counsel R K Gautam argued that his client, who neither belonged to the general nor the Scheduled Caste category, had been ousted from the competition in the first phase due to the directive. He said the action of the director of local bodies in changing the pattern and criteria of the exam after initiating of the selection process is apparently bad, illegal and unreasonable. (Times of India 11/11/14)

HC 'no' to quota in state judicial services (25)

PATNA: The Patna high court has quashed the government notification that provided for reservation to backward classes in judicial services in the state. Passing the order, a division bench of Justice Rekha M Doshit and Justice Ashwini Kumar Singh on Monday opined reservation system gives an opening to "substandard candidates" in the administration. "Reservation in public services is more a political manifesto than a necessity, and the effort is to appease the masses by including more and more castes and communities in one or another reserved category without reference to necessary criteria such as normal profession of the community concerned or educational level," observed the bench and added the impact of reservation on the efficiency of administration is one factor that is totally overlooked. In June 2009, the state government had amended the 'Bihar Civil Service (Judicial Branch) (Recruitment) Rules, 1955'. The amendment introduced 'rule 3A' according to which "The Bihar Reservation of Vacancies in Post and Services (for SCs, STs and OBCs) Act 1991' (as amended from time to time) shall also apply to direct recruitment to the post of Civil Judge (Junior Division)." This led to 50% reservation in the service. A similar amendment was made to the 'Bihar Superior Judicial Service Rules, 1951' by introducing rule 4A. This was applicable in case of direct recruitment to the post of additional district and sessions judge. The HC order came on a writ petition filed by one Dayanand Singh and others. The order reads, "Although the state is empowered to provide reservation to SCs, STs and OBCs, the Constitution does not compel the state to provide such reservation nor does it restrict the extent to which such reservation can be provided. Probably, the Constitution makers relied on the wisdom of the state to provide reservation only to the extent it is necessary, maintaining efficiency in the administration." As provided under the 1991 Act, if candidates in reserved categories are able to secure general standard of selection, they are accommodated on general category posts. Commenting on the quality of reserved category candidates, the court observed, "Those reserved category candidates who are appointed on reserved posts are necessarily candidates of below general standard of selection. In other words, they are necessarily below average or below par, though it sounds derogatory, substandard candidates." The number of sanctioned judicial posts is not more than 1,500 in Bihar. If 50% officers of such a small cadre are selected on the basis of reservation, who are below general standard of selection, it would certainly impair the dispensation of justice, the court said and added it was satisfied with adequate representation of backward classes at all levels in the state judiciary and, as such, reservation for them was not required. Principal additional advocate general Lalit Kishore told TOI the state government would soon challenge the high court's judgment in the apex court. "I personally don't agree with the notion that reservation would adversely affect quality of judicial services." (Times of India 13/11/14)

'Reservation decision taken in hurry' (25)

Mumbai: After making an entry into the Maharashtra state Assembly for the first time with two MLAs, All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM) chief Asaduddin Owaisi has alleged that the erstwhile Congress-NCP government took the decision of providing reservation to the Maratha and Muslim communities in haste ahead of the elections. He added that the reservation issue wasn't properly advocated in the Bombay high court that led the court into giving a ruling against the reservation decision. Mr Owaisi was in Ahmednagar to meet the family of the Dalits killed in Javkheda. "Reservation to Maratha and Muslim communities was given keeping the polls in mind and thus haste was shown in taking the decision by the previous government," Mr Owaisi told reporters. Commenting on the issue of Dalit killings, he blamed Congress for failing to provide justice in similar cases. "If the Congress government would have punished the convicts of the previous cases, then such incidents would not have been repeated," he stressed. He also protested against the statement of Solapur Congress MLA Praniti Shinde for terming AIMIM anti-national. He said that at the time of taking support to save its government at the Centre AIMIM wasn't anti-national. Alleging it was anti-national, Ms Shinde had recently asked for a ban on AIMIM for which a defamation notice has also been served to her. Mr Owaisi also indicated that his party would field its candidate in the next Lok Sabha elections against Sushilkumar Shinde, former Union home minister in Solapur. "The secular 'burkha' of Congress has been torn apart. Is Congress a stamp paper to certify people as secular?" he asked. Taking potshots at another Congress and former minister MLA Abdul Sattar, Mr Owaisi called him a 'joker'. "We are determined towards developmental works and to provide basic facilities to the people," he said. (Asian Age 17/11/14)

Government Promises 12 pc Quota for STs (25)

HYDERABAD: The State government proposes to provide 12 per cent reservation to Scheduled Tribes. Replying to a question raised by T Venkateswarlu and others, Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao said the government has constituted the Telangana State Tribal Advisory Council by issuing a GO in August this year and is in the process of constituting a Telangana State Commission for STs. On implementation of the quota, the Chief Minister said it is under the active consideration of the government and the proposed enhancement of reservation would be implemented at the earliest. For the benefit of farmers, the government is implementing the Rythu Bandhu scheme. Orders were issued in July for enhancement of pledge loan from Rs 1 lakh to Rs 2 lakh or 75 per cent of value of the pledge stock. Replying to a question raised by Divakar Rao and others, Minister for Irrigation T Harish Rao said that as many as 10,416 farmers have been benefited. They include Warangal (344), Khammam (2,522), Nalgonda (4,481), Adilabad (41), Karimnagar (81), Mahbubnagar (74), Nizamabad (2,971), Rangareddy (49), Medak (4) and Hyderabad (29). The government will constitute a special tribunal with judicial powers to protect and safeguard Wakf properties. In reply to a question, the Chief Minister said thousands of acres of Wakf land worth crores of rupees had been encroached in the last several years. The government proposes to develop a garden on the lines of Brindavan Gardens in Mysuru near Lower Manair Dam in Karimnagar district. The Chief Minister said based on a request from the State government, the Union Ministry of Tourism has prioritised a project in 2014-15 to develop Karimnagar and surrounding places as a tourism destination. Under phase-1 of the project, a detailed project report with an outlay of Rs 502.36 lakh was submitted to the Central government. Work will begin after the release of funds from the Central government. (New Indian Express 19/11/14)

State-specific reservations don't apply to UoH (25)

HYDERABAD: Reservations specific to neither Telangana nor Andhra Pradesh exist at the University of Hyderabad (UoH), where seats are open to students from across the country, insist university officials. Only two supernumerary seats are reserved for students from Jammu & Kashmir and the North Eastern States to encourage students from those regions, officials said in response to news reports that efforts were onto keep the UoH in the jurisdiction of Andhra Pradesh, despite bifurcation of the State. The issue of the university's jurisdiction was raised by the Union Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD)

in 2007, when it asked UoH why its jurisdiction was confined to AP in its Act – when other central varsities did not have the specific mention. Senior teachers said UoH had come into being as part of a six-point formula during the 1969 Telangana and 1971 Andhra agitations, and the sixth point was the creation of a central university. However, seats were always open to students from across the country. Moreover, the jurisdiction of the State had become necessary to ensure that associate and external institutes that offer research courses to students on behalf of UoH have legality. The university allows top institutes like the Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology to admit Ph.D students, while the degree is awarded by UoH. Similarly, the UoH selects a few research students who get to work under researchers in top institutions. To ensure that only institutes within the erstwhile AP were eligible, the AP jurisdiction part was adopted by the Executive Council two years ago, officials argue. Meanwhile, a senior UoH teacher said the court meeting had to take place on Friday, November 21, as they received a letter from the MHRD to send an audited report for 2013-14 and for the annual report to be placed in the Parliament session that begins November 24. The reports have to be cleared by the court meeting consisting of all UoH professors and five appointed Parliament members. Among the five, three are no more MPs – including K. Chandrasekhar Rao, Anjan Kumar Yadav and Nama Nageshwar Rao – while the term of Y. Sujana Chowdary and V. Hanumanth Rao will expire soon. Officials say some employees whose appointments were questioned by the MHRD committee were raking up these issues to save themselves. (The Hindu 20/11/14)

Reservation policy failed to provide succor to dalits (25)

MYSORE: Karnataka Dalit Vedike convenor Shivakumar Swamy on Sunday revealed that more than 60,000 employees in the state's various departments have got employment by producing fake caste certificates and said SC and ST leaders have failed to tackle this menace . Speaking at an interaction sessions on "declining reservations" he said the new amendment brought to reservation policy on SC and ST is detrimental to the interests of the poor and the politicians and bureaucrats have failed to take note of it's anti-dalit intent. Lack of awareness and determination on the part of SC and ST job seekers to get employment has diluted the reservation policy, besides denying jobs to these communities in government departments, he felt and said caste Hindus and their leaders are increasingly questioning the reservation facility. They have started questioning the reservation policy itself and seeking its end, he added. Shivakumara Swamy said instead of questioning the reservations, one should think and analyze whether the purpose of providing reservations has yielded results and achieved goals. Meanwhile in contrast the people who have been benefitted by reservations should introspect on what they have given in return to the society by getting jobs through this facility, he said and stressed the need for relaunching an agitation on this issue. Academician and rationalist K S Bhagwan in his speech said reservation benefits have failed to reach the large section of deserving people. Reservations in proportionate to the population should resolve the issue, he said. Another academician from Krishna Devaraya University, Hampi J Somashekar said this is the time for planners and politicians to review the impact of reservations in these last 64 years and why the reservation facilities have been not extended to Judiciary and army. "No body is questioning why reservation facility has been not been extended to army and judiciary" he criticized questioning the sincerity of promises made by the politicians on the eve of election on extending reservation facility to private sector jobs. "Most surprising is that the government which extended a red carpet welcome to the private corporate bodies and allotted them lands have failed to give a piece of land to dalits for burying the dead" he said urging the dalit activists and leaders to work out an action plan on this issue and how to wage a war against the government to get the benefits. (Times of India 23/11/14)

Quota in play schools: HC slams Delhi govt for non-compliance (25)

New Delhi: The Delhi High Court on Monday termed as "unfortunate" and slammed the Delhi government for failing to devise any mechanism to ensure 25 per cent reservation to poor children in play schools running on land allotted at concessional rates. Hearing a plea filed by NGO Justice for All seeking

implementation of Right to Education Act in play schools and nurseries, saying they are allotted land by Delhi Development Authority (DDA) at concessional rates, a bench of Chief Justice G Rohini and Justice Rajiv Sahai Endlaw also directed the Directorate of Education (DoE) to ensure that all schools, which have been allotted land, abide by the provision. It further ordered DoE that if any such school is found in breach of the above then DDA should be immediately intimated. The persons affected by such an attitude of the respondents are most in need of education and for providing which the aforesaid scheme was devised. Such persons have very little access to justice too. "We do not expect the weaker sections of the society, for whose benefit the aforesaid scheme of allotment of prime land at concessional rates on the condition aforesaid was devised, to be in the know of the said condition or to claim enforcement thereof. "It is also not as if the respondents have taken any steps, year after year at the time of admission to schools, to advertise the said scheme so as to make the citizens belonging to the weaker sections of the society aware thereof, to be able to approach the schools who are bound by the said condition," the court said. It said that instead of achieving the purpose, the scheme "benefitted the allottees of such land who on one hand have been able to acquire prime land at rates much below the prevalent market rate... "... And on the other hand owing to the respondents not enforcing the condition subject to which such concession was given, being relieved thereof and resultantly being able to also admit students to the said 25 per cent of the seats which were meant for weaker sections of the society, on paid basis." The court requested Delhi's Lieutenant Governor, who is also the chairman of DDA, to look into the issue and file an affidavit in this regard before March 31, 2015. RTE Act, 2009 mandates every recognised school imparting elementary education to admit to the extent of at least 25 per cent of the strength, children belonging to weaker sections and disadvantaged group in the neighbourhood and provide free and compulsory education to them. (Zee News 25/11/14)

Gujjars seek intervention of PM on 5 pc quota (25)

Jaipur: Upset over the deadlock with the state government on five per cent special backward classes (SBC) reservation, the Gujjar community of Rajasthan will seek the intervention of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and block two national highways in protest. Community leaders and members will march to New Delhi to meet PM and demand categorisation of Other Backward Classes (OBC) quota in government jobs the state. The community has declared plans to start fresh agitations and block two national highways, NH-11 and NH-8, in the state. "Around one lakh Gujjars will march down to Delhi and a delegation of our leaders will meet the PM to demand categorisation of the OBC quota," said Himmat Singh, a Gujjar leader. "We will soon take an appointment to meet him," said Singh. "If we are not allowed to meet Modi, we will hold protest outside Parliament," he added. Members of rgw Gujjar community have been agitating for five per cent SBC quota, but now they are demanding categorisation of OBC quota. As per Supreme Court directives, state government cannot exceed 50 per cent total reservations 50 under normal conditions. Earlier, governments had given five per cent SBC reservation to Gujjars, which exceeded the prescribed limit of 50 per cent, and this was challenged in the court. Now Gujjars are of the view that categorisation of OBC reservation will ensure reservation to them without exceeding the limit set by the SC. "Around 82 castes in Rajasthan, including Gujjars, come under OBC category. For the last many years, very few castes have been taking all the benefits of OBC reservation. We demand categorisation of the OBC quota," said Singh. "Gujjars and four other nomadic castes should be given five per cent reservation within the overall 21 per cent of the OBC quota," added Singh. (Deccan Herald 26/11/14)

MRPS presses for SC Categorisation Bill (25)

ONGOLE: Activists of Madiga Reservation Porata Samiti (MRPS) on Wednesday laid siege to the District Collectorate demanding that the Union government ensure the passage of the Constitution Amendment Bill for Scheduled Caste categorisation during the winter session of Parliament. Leading the protest, MRPS general secretary T. Babu Rao said there should be no issues in getting the bill passed when the

TDP, BJP and other parties had committed themselves in their poll manifestos to micro-classification of SCs for reservation in educational institutions and government jobs. Social justice could be ensured to sub-castes only through categorisation of SCs, said MRPS State secretary P. Prabhudas. Madigas got over 22,000 additional jobs when categorisation of SCs was in vogue in the State for four years, said Samiti Prakasam district convenor P. Narendra. "We cannot tolerate any further delay on the issue of micro classification of SCs, said MRPS city president A Venkateswar. (The Hindu 27/11/14)

Dalit activists to hold rally to raise reservation demands (25)

New Delhi: Dalit activists will participate in a rally on December 8 to raise their demands before the government for reservations in promotions and passing of certain pending bills aimed at their betterment. "The main demands raised by us are reservation in promotions, redressal of SC/ST grievances, passing of Bill to strengthen the SC/ST Prevention of Atrocities Act 1989, allocation of budget under Special Component Plan and Tribal Sub Plan as per population ratio," Lok Sabha MP Udit Raj told reporters today. Raj, who is the national chairman of All India Confederation of SC/ST organisations, which is hosting the rally, also said that he is hopeful of the new government and they should be given more time. "Dalits and tribals are very hopeful from the new government that they will get opportunity to participate in all walks of life. But since no developments can happen in miraculously overnight, they need to be given time but at the same time its important to let them know of the issues and demands," the Dalit leader said. The confederation, which came into existence in 1997 has been raising demands for the dignity and rights of Dalits. This would be the organisation's 17 rally, which is scheduled to be held at Ramlila Maidan in the capital. The other demands raised by them include recognition of caste certificate of one state in other state, ban on contract system in 'safai' work, regularising them and ensuring their time-bound promotion, equal education for all and recognition to SC/ST organisations by government departments. Raj also clarified that the motive of the rally is not a dharna aimed at gaining 'political mileage'. "If we break the sequence of our rallies, our rank and file will get disillusioned and divided. We are gathering so that the government may feel our pulse and power," he said. (Zee News 29/11/14)

17 caste groups in Samajwadi Party, BSP crossfire plan stir (25)

Lucknow: Seventeen caste groups belonging to the most backward category (MBC) have been caught in crossfire between the Samajwadi Party and the Bahujan Samaj Party and, as a result, have been deprived of the entitlements in both, OBC and SC categories. The Samajwadi Party is keen to include the 17 MBCs in the SC category in the hope of earning their support and making a dent in the BSP's dalit vote base but the BSP wants the SC quota to be increased before these groups are included in the SC category. The 17 MBC caste groups are now in the process of forming an umbrella organisation and then plan to stage a demonstration and dharna in Delhi to seek the Centre's intervention in the matter. A BSP functionary said, "We cannot make dalits suffer without any reason. If these 17 MBCs are included in the SC list, the share of pie will get smaller and this will be unfair for the SCs. We have asked the centre to increase the SC quota by about 8 per cent and then include these 17 caste groups in the SC list." The controversy over these 17 caste groups, that include Nishad, Kewat, Kashyap, Kahar, Bind, Rajbhar, Prajapati, Bhar, Mallah, Majhi, Tura, Gaur, Batham, Machua, Dheemar and Kumhar, began unfolding in 2005 when the then Mulayam Singh government issued a government order saying that these 17 MBCs would receive the same entitlements as SCs. This move was stayed by the Allahabad high court following a writ filed by the BSP. Later, when Ms Mayawati came to power in 2007, she quashed the GO and also asked the Centre to increase the Scheduled Caste reservation quota by another eight per cent before these 17 castes could be included. "Our purpose has been served. We have proved to dalits that we want them to get the facilities and even include those that have remained deprived for decades. It is the BSP that has set up hurdles because its interests are limited to particular sub-castes among dalits," said a Samajwadi minister. UP chief minister Akhilesh Yadav has also renewed his interest in the issue and has

promised to take the issue to its logical conclusion. He has also raised the issue in a meeting with the Prime Minister earlier this year. (Asian Age 2/12/14)

Parliament passes bill for amending SC list (25)

New Delhi: Parliament Monday passed a constitutional amendment bill to add more communities to the existing list of Scheduled Castes in many states. The Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Orders (Amendment) Bill, 2014, which was earlier approved by the Lok Sabha, was passed by the Rajya Sabha Monday. The bill adds more communities in the list of Scheduled Castes in the states of Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha and Tripura. It removes the Majhi community from the list in Sikkim. Urging the members to pass the bill, Social Justice and Empowerment Minister Thawar Chand Gehlot said the amendment was necessary for betterment of lives of many people belonging to Scheduled Castes. The minister also said the government was not in favour of reservation for Dalit Christians and Muslims. (Business Standard 8/12/14)

Not in Favour to Give SC Reservation to Christian and Muslim Dalits: Centre (25)

NEW DELHI: The Government today said it is not in favour of bringing Dalits of Christian and Muslim communities under the ambit of reservation for the Scheduled Castes. Union Minister for Social Justice and Empowerment Thawar Chand Gehlot said this during a discussion on a Bill to include more castes under SC category in four states and exclude one from it in Sikkim which was passed by the Parliament today. "We are not agreeable to it," Gehlot said referring to a demand by some members in the Upper House to include Dalit Christians and Dalit Muslims in reservation for SCs. Citing a case in the Supreme Court in this regard, the Minister said that discussions can happen based on its outcome. Responding to demands from several parties on extending reservation in the private sector, Gehlot said this demand has been there for the last 15 years and it would be looked into. Gehlot was replying to matters raised by members during the discussion on the Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Orders (Amendment) Bill, 2014 which has been passed by the Lok Sabha earlier. Rajya Sabha also passed the Bill by a voice vote with most parties supporting it. The Bill was first tabled in 2012 but lapsed after the previous Lok Sabha was dissolved and the BJP government introduced it August in Lok Sabha. (New Indian Express 9/12/14)

OBCs to get 27% of govt petrol pumps (25)

NEW DELHI: The oil ministry has for the first time implemented a 27% quota for OBCs (other backward castes) in allotment of petrol pumps, even as it has decided to auction outlets on 'premium sites' and distribute others through lottery with a view to ensuring transparency. The latest round of reforms by the ministry, under the watch of Dharmendra Pradhan, displays a fine blend of welfare politics and sound commercial sense. The reservation will impact power equations in rural areas, while the auction will help maximize revenue and attract serious players. The OBC quota will also apply in the allotment of cooking gas dealerships. Over the last 2-3 months, state-run fuel retailers have advertised 35,668 locations for setting up petrol pumps and 7,000 cooking gas dealerships, both under regular and low-cost rural categories. The allotment policy also provides for 22.5% reservation for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. After the OBC quota, the general category will come down to 49.5%. Reservation for other groups such as sportsmen, former defence personnel and family of martyrs will be accommodated under these three categories. The UPA had decided on the quota in July 2012 but it remained unimplemented. There are more than 40,000 petrol pumps in the country. The ministry has now asked fuel retailers to auction outlets on what it calls 'A Sites'. These are pumps where the retailers spend a minimum of Rs 50-60 lakh for setting up all infrastructure and facilities, even purchase or lease the land. The dealer is then chosen to operate the pumps. Sources said the suggestion for introducing the auction method came from Pradhan during one of his marketing review meetings with oil company executives. "Why should companies spend money for dealers? Let those who mean business bid for a pump," an executive from one of the companies quoted the minister as saying. Scrapping of interview of candidates

from the dealer selection process removes one of the major sources of allegations of favouritism and nepotism. The 'A Sites' will have a reserve price of Rs 30-35 lakh, depending upon the location. Those interested in becoming operators will have to bid above this price as per their understanding of the business prospects of a location. In case there is tie with more than one bidder quoting similar price, the selection of the winner will be through lottery. All remaining sites will be allotted through lottery, which has so far been the practice for awarding cooking gas dealerships. (Times of India 10/12/14)

VHP to Oppose Telangana Government's Move to Give 12 Per Cent Reservations to Muslims (25)

SANGAREDDY: Senior VHP leader Praveen Togadia today said his organisation will oppose any move by the K Chandrasekhar Rao-led Telangana government in providing 12 per cent reservations to Muslims. Addressing a 'Virat Hindu Sammelan' here on the eve of the golden jubilee celebrations of VHP, Togadia, who is international president of the organisation, said the party will take legal recourse if the state government comes up with any such move. "VHP will oppose any move by the state government for providing 12 per cent reservations to Muslims and will take legal recourse if needed," Togadia said. Providing of reservations to Muslims was one of the promises made by Rao's Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS) in its poll manifesto in April. Togadia also appealed to Hindus to eradicate untouchability and maintain unity "to save the religion". "Each and every Hindu should maintain cordial relations with SC/ST's and upper and lower castes should share common kitchens," he said. Raking up the issue of "love jihad", Togadia said VHP was not against "pure love". "Love jihad is not pure because Hindu girls are converted to Islam after their marriage but in no case any Muslim boy gets converted to Hinduism.. This is clearly the 'love jihad' and we are against it," Togadia said. He said that construction of the temple of Lord Ram in Ayodhya is the matter of "self respect" to Hindus. VHP national president G Raghava Reddy and regional president Rama Raju also spoke on the occasion. (New Indian Express 11/12/14)

ST quota sparks row among tribal communities in WG (25)

ELURU: The notification for recruitment of 40 teacher posts in Agency school has sparked a row among the tribal community in West Godavari district, with the Koyas and Kondreddies at odds with their ST brethren of Banjaras (Lambadas) over the ST status. Reservations in government jobs in the Agency mandals of Buttayagudem, Polavaram and Jeelugumilli for STs have been pitting these ST sub-castes against each other for a long time. The issue of government's notification for recruitment of school teachers through District Selection Committee (DSC), scheduled to take place in February next year, has set off a fresh row within the STs. The DSC-2015 is set to recruit 40 teachers in the Agency schools. During DSC-213, nearly 70 teacher posts found no takers from the STs for want of TET (Teacher Eligibility Test) qualification. Against this backdrop, a massive demonstration was held at the Integrated Tribal Development Agency (ITDA) office at Kota Ramachandrapuram in Buttayagudem mandal under the aegis of the Adivasi Sankshema Parishad, Adivasi Sena and the Adivasi Teachers Federation on Wednesday, opposing recruitment of Lambadas in government jobs in the Agency under the ST quota. The STs, with their family history of residing in the Agency since 1950s, are only eligible for jobs, admissions in educational institutions and the other government entitlements under the ST quota as per the GO No. 3. The Revenue Department has been flooded with applications from ST candidates, seeking nativity certificates in a bid to conform to the GO 3. Meanwhile, Joint Collector T. Baburao Naidu, a tribal himself, was caught in the crossfire after he negated the claims of two Lambada candidates whose nativity was challenged by Koyas after their selection for the VRO posts in Buttayagudem mandal. Later, Bhanjara Hakkula Sangham protested in the city, seeking transfer of the Joint Collector for his alleged bias in favour of non-Banjara sub-groups. The Banjaras, a tribe inhabiting in the plains, were accorded ST status during Jalagam Vengal Rao's government in 1976. Mudiya Gangaraju, a Koya, of the Adivasi Teachers Federation, said Banjaras with a population around 20,000 had migrated from the neighbouring Telangana districts after 1950s. (The Hindu 12/12/14)

Uttarakhand wants quota in employment, education for its people (25)

NEW DELHI: Uttarakhand wants Centre to treat people of the state as a special category like scheduled tribes and give them reservation in employment and education. It will also ask the Centre to provide "green bonus" to the state for preserving forests in the country. At the same time, cognizant of its status as political rival to BJP, Congress is using Prime Minister Narendra Modi's priority to rejuvenate Ganga and "clean India" to seek clearance for pending projects recommended by Uttarakhand. The state argues that its financial status has dwindled after the Kedarnath floods and the Centre should help it tide over the trouble by financing key projects. Threatening to flex its muscles on these tricky demands, the state Congress will hold a big day-long demonstration in the capital on Thursday, to be led by state chief Kishore Upadhyaya, civil society groups and concerned citizens. In what may put another polarizing issue on the table like the statehood demand of the 1990s, Upadhyaya said the state has specific cultural features and social practices like the northeastern states whose people are considered tribal. "The people of Uttarakhand should have been considered for the same affirmative action long back. It was also one of the demands of the statehood movement," he argued. The state wants that its green efforts as the "lungs of the country" be rewarded with a 'green bonus', a cash reward that should be linked to development projects. The demand is seen as important in view of rising debate on climate change and mitigation efforts. Sources said the state will also press the Centre for a metro project from Dehradun to Haridwar, railway projects in the hill regions and renewal of the 'industrial package'. Upadhyaya said while the PM has expressed his sentiments for "Holy Ganga", he should also give special treatment to the land of the river's origin. "We appeal that the proposal sent by the state government for conservation and cleaning of Ganga be cleared," he added, also seeking Rs 10 crore to make "clean India" a success. (Times of India 18/12/14)

Maharashtra may quit AIPMT to free 15% 'other state' quota (25)

NAGPUR: The Maharashtra government is contemplating withdrawing from the All India Pre-Medical Test (AIPMT), so that it can utilize the 15% seats reserved for students from other states for local students. Higher and technical education minister Vinod Tawde made a statement in this regard in the legislative assembly on Thursday while replying to a discussion under Rule 293 moved by Yogesh Sagar, Madhuri Misal, Sanjay Kute, Shashikant Khedekar and others. This would make Maharashtra the fourth state, after Andhra Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, and Telangana, to not have the 15% quota for outside students. "Maharashtra has good facilities in medical education with its government-run colleges considered among the top in the country. As the state had agreed to be a part of AIPMT, 15% seats in our colleges are reserved for students from other states, and vice versa. This means, out of 2,000 odd seats in the colleges, about 330 are occupied by students from other states, which is a big percentage," he said. Higher and technical education minister Vinod Tawde pointed out that in the last six years hardly 22-30 students from Maharashtra had preferred seats in medical colleges in other states, while some 330 students from outside used our seats every year. "It's a big disparity, and our students, particularly those who can't afford the fees of private colleges, are at the loss. We will approach the Supreme Court to exclude the state from AIPMT, which will be conducted on May 3 next year. If the court agrees, we will get 300 extra MBBS seats for state students," he said. The former leader of opposition in council said that Maharashtra was part of the national entrance examination for many years and students from many states pursue medical education from the state under 15% All India quota. Former lecturer and now senior PMT trainer Sameer Phale said the decision would surely benefit the state students, as they would get additional 300 seats. However, it would be against the democratic set up of the country. "What about students from other states who want to take admission in Maharashtra colleges? At national level, such things shouldn't be considered. States like AP and J&K had rejected the 15% quota since the very beginning of AIPMT." He added that even the Armed Forces Medical College had stopped its own entrance exam following SC directives to start National Entrance-cum- Eligibility Test (NEET). "But after it was stopped by the SC, they admit students through AIPMT. Even MP and Chhattisgarh use AIPMT

score for admissions. Now, if Maharashtra students want to take admission in AFMC or other colleges, they have to appear in AIPMT," he said. (Times of India 19/12/14)

'We converted for quota benefits' (25)

ALAPPUZHA: Forty-four-year-old Joy, who led his family at the 'Ghar Vapsi' ceremony at Cheppad in Alappuzha district on Sunday, says he converted to Hinduism three years ago. He has done it once again to ensure that he and his family are officially accepted as Hindu Pulayas, which will make them eligible for reservation benefits. A daily wage labourer, Joy lives with his wife and two daughters in a decrepit hut in Kanichanallor at Cheppad, near Haripad. His parents, George and Janamma of the Palatharayil house, converted from Hinduism to become Pentecostal Christians several years ago. According to official records, they are Christian Cheramar. However, since the community did not come under the Scheduled Castes, they were unable to avail themselves of any benefits that their relatives enjoyed. "We had converted back to Hinduism three years ago through a ritual held at the temple at Chettikulangara. However, we were told by the Cheppad village authorities that the certificate provided by the Travancore Devaswom Board was not sufficient to be formally registered as Hindus." His family then approached the Chengannur unit of the VHP seeking its assistance. "We were not offered any financial assistance to convert... They have offered to take up our issue," he said. (The Hindu 23/12/14)

Social activists slam government's withdrawal of Muslim reservation (25)

Mumbai: Social activists and academicians have slammed the state government for withdrawing Muslim reservation and pushing its Hindutva agenda by approving reservation only for the Maratha community. Pointing at the high court's interim order upholding Muslim reservation, they have raised doubt over the government's intention behind taking such a hasty decision. Activist-Dalit poet J.V. Pawar said that the Maratha reservation decision was obviously to net Hindu votes and the BJP government did not need Muslim votes. "The BJP knows that Muslims are not going to vote for it and therefore, their reservation has been withdrawn despite the earlier government having introduced it." Professor Fakruddin Bennur raised objections to the government's excuse that reservation could not be given on the basis of religion. "This has remained the argument of the right wing since the 1950s. But articles 23 and 24 of the Constitution permit concessions to linguistic, cultural and religious minorities. When there is reservation for Buddhists, Jains and Sikhs in various forms, why deny it to Muslims? Is the BJP government marginalising Muslims to make them secondary citizens?" he asked. Stressing that there was greater need for Muslim reservation, head of the politics department, Mumbai University, Dr Jose George said that Muslims were more deprived as compared to Marathas. "The decision shows complete bias towards Hindus. We all know that Muslims are more backward socially and economically compared to Marathas," he said. Dr George rubbished the BJP's Constitution-related defence, saying that if laws could be amended for Maratha reservation, then why not for Muslims (Asian Age 25/12/14)

Maharashtra Council passes Maratha reservation Bill (25)

NAGPUR: The Maharashtra Legislative Council approved the Maratha reservation Bill on Wednesday, a day after the Assembly passed the legislation. The new law provides 16 per cent reservation to Marathas in admission to educational institutions and government jobs. "We consulted senior legal experts, including the Attorney-General, after the Bombay High Court granted an interim stay on the ordinance [issued by the previous Congress-NCP government to provide a 16 per cent quota to Marathas]. We received a partial relief from the Supreme Court, but, as advised by legal experts, we have passed the Bill in both Houses of the State legislature," Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis said. Mr. Fadnavis had earlier said that his government would field the Attorney-General and senior lawyer P.P. Rao to represent the State in the High Court, which stayed the ordinance. The court stayed the 5 per cent reservation in government employment for Muslims, but allowed a similar quota in education for the community. The Opposition continued its protest against the government decision not to table the Muslim reservation Bill

and not to issue an ordinance to save the five per cent quota for the community provided by the previous government though an ordinance that lapsed on Wednesday. (The Hindu 26/2/14)