



## Current Affairs of the Day

### GS Paper - II

- Rajasthan brings private medical colleges within the RTI Act's purview
- Plea against a challenge to the Places of Worship Act
- Why stop at quota, asks SC judge

### GS Paper - III

- U.P., M.P. sign agreement on Ken-Betwa interlinking work
- Centre readies draft plan for district-wise export promotion



## Rajasthan brings private medical colleges within the RTI Act's purview

The private medical colleges in Rajasthan have been brought within the purview of the Right to Information (RTI) Act, 2005, following an order of the State Information Commission, which has imposed a fine of ₹25,000 on the principal of Geetanjali Medical College in Udaipur for flouting the transparency law and refusing to provide information.

### Highlights:

1. Allowing an appeal against the medical college, the Information Commission held in its recent order that the State government had allotted land to the institution at concessional rates and the college was established under a law passed by the State Legislature.
2. "Based on these facts, the college falls within the purview of the RTI Act. The college is governed by the rules and regulations framed by the State government," Information Commissioner said.

### First-of-its-kind order

The Commission's first-of-its-kind order has paved the way for citizens to seek information under the RTI Act from the educational institutions which have obtained land for their buildings and campuses at concessional rates from the State government.

## Plea against a challenge to the Places of Worship Act

The trustee of a 350-year-old mosque in Lucknow has questioned a "mischievous" petition filed by a Supreme Court advocate which claims that "fundamentalist barbarians" invaded India and destroyed places of worship.

### Highlights:

1. The petition filed had also challenged a special law — Places of Worship (Special Provisions) Act of 1991 — which freezes the status of places of worship as it was on August 15, 1947.
2. This mischievous petition intends to isolate the Muslim community from other religious communities in the country. The petition tries to create an allegedly



factual case of fundamentalist barbarians coming to India and destroying places of worship.

3. The mosque trustee urged the apex court to allow him to intervene and prove that petition “creates a false narrative that Muslims and Christians are invaders and less a part of India than other communities.”

## Why stop at quota, asks SC judge

Affirmative action, not just reservation, he says while hearing 50% ceiling limit case.

### Highlights:

1. Justice Ravindra Bhat, one of the judges on the Constitution Bench hearing the question of 50% ceiling limit on the reservation, asked why welfare should be dependent on caste quota benefits alone.
2. Why stop at reservation? Why can't other things also be done? Why not promote education, establish more institutes? Somewhere this matrix has to move beyond the reservation. Affirmative action is not just reservation. There has to be something more.
3. The court was hearing submissions by senior advocate Kapil Sibal on the circumstances which led to the 50% limit in the Indira Sawhney judgment of 1992.

### SEBC Act examined

1. The court is primarily examining whether the Maharashtra State Reservation for Socially and Educationally Backward Classes (SEBC) Act of 2018, which provides 12% to 13% quota benefits for the Maratha community and thus, taking the reservation percentage in the State across the 50% mark, was enacted under “extraordinary circumstances”.
2. Over the years, several states like Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu have crossed the Rubicon and passed laws that allow a reservation to over 60%.



## U.P., M.P. sign agreement on Ken-Betwa interlinking work

The governments of Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh have signed an agreement that nudges forward a long-stalled multi-crore, a controversial project to link the Ken and the Betwa rivers and irrigate the water-deficient Bundelkhand region, spread over both States, and provide electricity.

### Obstacles

1. Several obstacles have dogged the project. For one, the project will partly submerge the Panna Tiger Reserve in M.P. and affect the habitat of vultures and jackals. After years of protests, however, it was finally cleared by the apex wildlife regulator, the National Board for Wildlife, in 2016.
2. Monsoon blues: Then, the States were unable to come to an agreement on how water would be shared, particularly in the non-monsoon months.
3. The project involves transferring surplus water from the Ken river in Madhya Pradesh to the Betwa in Uttar Pradesh and irrigating 3.64 lakh hectares in the Bundelkhand region of both States. The project involves building a 77-metre-tall and a 2-km-wide Dhaudhan dam and a 230-km canal.

## Centre readies draft plan for district-wise export promotion

Government eyes double-digit export growth in 500 districts in 3-5 years.

### Exporting Districts

1. The government has readied a draft district-wise export promotion plan for 451 districts in the country after identifying products and services with export potential in 725 districts.
2. Aiming for double-digit export growth from 500 districts over 3-5 years, the Commerce Ministry has asked States to prepare an annual 'export ranking index' of districts on export competitiveness with the assistance of the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT).
3. While foreign trade constitutes 45% of India's GDP, most export promotion efforts are driven by the Centre.
4. The district-specific approach that perforce involves the States in identifying potential export sectors and the logistics bottlenecks to be fixed.



5. In the initial phase, products and services with export potential in each district have been identified and an institutional mechanism of State and District Export Promotion Committees (SEPC) is being created, with an action plan to grow exports from each district. Draft District Export Action Plans have been prepared by regional DGFT authorities in 451 districts.
6. Products/services with export potential have been identified in 725 districts across the country (including Agricultural & Toy clusters and GI products in these Districts. District Export Promotion Committees have been notified in the districts of all the States except West Bengal.