



Daily Current Affairs

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National Commission for Safai Karmacharis

Why in news?

The Union Cabinet has approved the proposal for Extension of tenure of the National Commission for Safai Karmacharis (NCSK) beyond 31.3.2019 for three years.

About National Commission for Safai Karmacharis (NCSK)

- The NCSK was established in the year 1993 as per the provisions of the NCSK Act 1993 initially for the period upto 31.3.1997.
- Later the validity of the Act was initially extended upto 31.3.2002 and thereafter upto 29.2.2004. The NCSK Act ceased to have effect from 29.2.2004.
- After that the tenure of the NCSK has been extended as a non-statutory body from time to time. The tenure of the present Commission is upto 31.3.2019.

The mandate of the National Commission for Safai Karmacharis:

1. The NCSK has been giving its recommendations to the Government regarding specific programmes for welfare of Safai Karmacharis, study and evaluate the existing welfare programmes for Safai Karmacharis, investigate cases of specific grievances etc.
2. Study and evaluate the implementation of the programmes and schemes relating to the social and economic rehabilitation of Safai Karmacharis; and scavengers, in particular.

3. Investigate specific grievances and take suo-motu notice of matters relating to non-implementation of: -
- a. programmes or schemes in respect of any group of Safai Karamcharis
 - b. decisions, guidelines or instructions, aimed at mitigating the hardships of Safai Karamcharis
 - c. measures for the social and economic upliftment of Safai Karamcharis
 - d. the provisions of any law in its application to Safai Karamcharis; and take up such matters with the concerned authorities or with the Central or State Governments
 - e. To study and monitor the working conditions, including those relating to health, safety and wages of Safai Karamcharis working under various kinds of employers including Government, Municipalities and Panchayats, and to make recommendations in this regard.
 - f. Make reports to the Central or State Governments on any matter concerning Safai Karamcharis, taking into account any difficulties or disabilities being encountered by Safai Karamcharis
 - g. Any other matter which may be referred to it by the Central Government.

Functions:

- To monitor the implementation of the Act.
- To enquire into complaints regarding contravention of the provisions of the Act, and to convey its findings to the concerned authorities with recommendations requiring further action.
- To advise the Central and the State Governments for effective implementation of the provisions of the Act.
- To take suo motu notice of matter relating to non-implementation of the Act.

WORKING OF THE COMMISSION

- The Chairperson and Members of the Commission undertake

extensive touring of the country to study the socio-economic and living conditions of Safai Karamcharis and their dependents.

- During their visits, the members of the Commission interact with the Safai Karamcharis- both individually as well as through their representative associations.
 - The grievances of the Safai Karamcharis are then taken up by the Commission with the concerned local civil and police authorities.
 - The Commission also receives complaints/petitions from Safai Karamcharis from all over the Country. The Commission calls for the factual reports in connection with these complaints/petitions from the concerned authorities and impress upon them to redress the grievances of the affected Safai Karamcharis.
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Registration of Marriage of NRI Bill 2019

Why in news?

The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister has approved the introduction of Registration of Marriage of Non-Resident Indian (NRI) Bill, 2019, for creating more accountability and offering more protection against exploitation of Indian citizens, mostly women by their NRI spouses.

Why this bill?

- Against the backdrop of cases of Indian women being trapped in fraudulent marriages with non-resident Indians (NRI), a bill was introduced in Rajya Sabha on Monday to make it compulsory to register such marriages within 30 days.
- The Bill provides for amendment of the legal framework to act as a deterrent to the erring NRI spouses and creating more accountability and offer protection against exploitation of Indian Citizens married to NRIs.

Highlights of the bill:

- Once the Bill is passed, marriages performed by NRIs would be registered in India or Indian Missions & Posts abroad, and necessary changes would be carried out in the:
 - Passports Act, 1967; and
 - Code of Criminal Procedure 1973 by insertion of Section 86A.
- If an NRI man fails to register his marriage within 30 days of date of marriage, his passport can be impounded or revoked.
- Also, it allows courts to attach properties, movable and immovable, of "proclaimed offenders" or people who fail to appear before courts despite warrants being issued against them.
- The 'Registration of Marriage of Non-Resident Indian Bill, 2019' empowers passport authorities to impound or revoke passport or travel documents of NRIs who fail to register their marriage within 30 days of getting married.
- The proposed law will be applicable to NRIs marrying Indian women within or even outside India, the bill states.

Major Impact:

- Serving Judicial summons for Court proceedings in India is a major problem, which would be taken care of by this Bill by amending the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973.
- Thus, the Bill would offer great protection to Indian citizens married to NRIs and serve as a deterrent to NRIs against harassment of their spouses. This Bill would benefit Indian women married to NRIs worldwide.

Memorandum of Understanding between India and Saudi Arabia in the field of tourism

Why in news?

The Union Cabinet, chaired by the Prime Minister has approved the

signing of Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Tourism, Government of the India and the Saudi Commission for Tourism and National Heritage of the Saudi Arabia for strengthening cooperation in the field of Tourism.

The **main objectives** of the Memorandum of Understanding are:

- a. Exchanging information and expertise in Legislations in the tourism development, Hotels, resorts and tourist accommodation facilities, Tourism data and statistics, Exhibition events and other tourism activities in States of the Parties, Tourism development, planning and investment; Licensing, operating and marketing tourism facilities, Agricultural Tourism, Desert tourism etc.
- b. Exchanging media publications, tourism related films, and encourage exchanging of visits between experts and tourism media representatives in the States of the Parties.
- c. Introducing tourism investment opportunities available in the States of the Parties; encourage mutual tourism investment in tourism projects.
- d. Encouraging organizing joint tourism events; participate in exhibitions, conferences and seminars held in the States of the Parties thus contributing to tourism development and crystalizing a joint tourism vision.
- e. Encouraging public and private education facilities working the tourism education and training field in the States of the Parties.
- f. Exchanging innovative experience and technologies in the tourism field, and consultation services.
- g. Cooperation and coordinating in international forums and organizations concerned with tourism affairs.

Benefits:

- India and Saudi Arabia have enjoyed a strong diplomatic and long economic relationship. The two parties now desiring to strengthen and further develop the established relationship have signed a Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Tourism,

Government of India and the Saudi Commission for Tourism and National Heritage of Saudi Arabia for strengthening cooperation in the field of Tourism.

- Saudi Arabia is one of the potential tourist generating market for India from Middle East. The signing of Memorandum of Understanding with Saudi Arabia will be instrumental in increasing arrival from this source market.
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Umbrella programme for development of Scheduled Tribes

Why in news?

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs chaired by the Prime Minister has given its approval for continuation of sub-schemes under “Umbrella programme for development of Scheduled Tribes” from 1.4.2017 to 31.3.2020.

Background:

- The ongoing schemes have been rationalised by the Government and have been brought under Umbrella programme for development of Scheduled Tribes as its sub-schemes.
- These sub-schemes need continuation for delivering development related services to the intended ST beneficiaries.

The **aims** of these schemes are as under:

- To reduce the gap in the education achievement of ST children compared to the other population groups
- To fill in the critical gaps in existing efforts of access, retention and quality of education of ST children
- Research studies in the field of tribal development
- To promote effectiveness in delivery of service and also enhance the reach of welfare schemes of Government in service deficient tribal

areas in the sectors such as livelihood, health, education etc. through efforts of Voluntary Organisations (VOs)

- Planning the socio-economic development of the Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) in a holistic manner by adopting habitat development approach
- To establish a system to ensure fair monetary returns to Minor Forest Produce (MFP) gatherers for their efforts in collection, primary processing, storage, packaging, transportation etc.
- To enhance quality of life by providing basic amenities in tribal areas / localities including housing, link road, last mile connectivity, drinking water, sanitation etc.

Impact:

The sub-schemes will help to fill critical gaps in institutions and programmes for the welfare of Scheduled Tribes with focus on specific interventions.

Beneficiaries:

More than 10 crore Scheduled Tribe population will be benefitted through this scheme.

Details about Major Schemes:

1. Special Central Assistance to Tribal Sub-Scheme (SCA to TSS):

- It is a 100% grant from Government of India. It is charged to Consolidated Fund of India (except grants for North Eastern States, a voted item) and is an additive to State Plan funds and efforts for Tribal Development.
- This grant is utilized for economic development of Integrated Tribal Development Project (ITDP), Integrated Tribal Development Agency (ITDA), Modified Area Development Approach (MADA), Clusters, Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) and dispersed tribal population.

2. Grants-in-Aid under Article 275(1) of the Constitution:

- It is a 100% annual grant from Government of India to States. It is charged to Consolidated Fund of India (except grants for North Eastern States, a voted item) and is an additive to State Plan funds and efforts for Tribal Development.
- Under the programme of Proviso to Article 275(1) of Constitution of India, Grants are released to 27 States for raising the level of Administration in Scheduled Areas and for the welfare of tribal people.
- Funds are released to States based on proposals received from the State Governments based upon the needs of ST population, to bridge the gap in sectors like education, health and agriculture, etc.

3. Scholarships schemes for ST Students:

A. Pre-Matric Scholarships to ST Students

- Applicable to students who are studying in Classes IX - X. Priority is given to girls.
- Parental income from all sources should be less than Rs.2.00 lakhs per annum.
- Scholarship of Rs.150/- per month for day scholars and Rs.350/- per month for hostellers is given for a period of 10 months in a year.
- Scholarship is distributed through the State Government/UT Administration.

B. Post Matric Scholarships to ST Students

- Applicable to students who are studying in any recognized course from a recognized institution for which qualification is Matriculation/Class X or above. Priority is given to girls.
- Parental income from all sources should be less than Rs.2.50 lakhs per annum.
- Compulsory fees charged by educational institutions are reimbursed subject to the limit fixed by the concerned State Fee fixation committee and scholarship amount of Rs.230 to Rs.1200 per month, depending upon the course of study is paid.

- Scholarship is distributed through the State Government/UT Administration.
- Remedial and special coaching is provided to ST students in Classes IX to XII.

4. National Overseas Scholarships

- Provides financial assistance to selected students to pursue Post Graduation, Ph.D & Post-Doctoral study abroad.
- A total of 20 awards are given every year. Of these, 17 awards are for STs and 3 awards for students belonging to Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups.
- Parental/family income from all sources does not exceed Rs.6.00 lakhs per annum.
- Disbursement of scholarships through the Ministry of External Affairs/ Indian Missions abroad.

5. National fellowship & scholarship for higher education of ST students:

- Scholarship for Higher Education (earlier known as Top Class Education for ST Students)
- Scholarship is given to ST students for pursuing studies in prescribed courses in any of the 158 institutions of excellence across the country like IITs, AIIMS, IIMs, NIITs, etc., identified by the Ministry. Priority is given to girls.
- Total number of scholarships is 1000 per year.
- Family income from all sources should not exceed Rs.6.00 lakhs per annum.
- Scholarship amount includes tuition fees, living expenses and allowances for books and computer.
- Fellowship (earlier known as Rajiv Gandhi National Fellowship Scheme for ST Students).
- 750 fellowships are provided to ST students each year for pursuing higher studies in India for MPhil and PhD.
- Fellowship is granted as per University Grants Commission norms. (Presently, @ Rs.25,000/- for Junior Research Fellowship and

@Rs.28,000/- for Senior Research Fellowship).

6. Development of Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs)

- It is a 100% Central Sector Scheme.
 - There are certain groups among Scheduled Tribes who have declining or stagnant population, low level of literacy, pre-agricultural level of technology and are economically backward.
 - These groups are among the most vulnerable sections of our society as they are few in numbers, have not attained any significant level of social and economic development and generally inhabit remote localities having poor infrastructure and administrative support.
 - 75 such groups in 18 States and one UT have been identified and categorized as Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs).
 - The scheme is implemented in accordance with CCD (Conservative-cum-Development) / Annual Plans prepared by the State / UT through various agencies of the State Government/UT Admn like Integrated Tribal Development Projects (ITDPs) / Integrated Tribal Development Agencies (ITDAs) and Tribal Research Institutes (TRIs).
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Credit Linked Capital Subsidy and Technology Up-gradation Scheme

Why in news?

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, has approved the Credit Linked Capital Subsidy and Technology Up-gradation Scheme (CLCS-TUS) with a total outlay of Rs.2900 crore.

Objective:

- The objective of the Scheme is to facilitate technology up-gradation in

MSEs by providing an upfront capital subsidy of 15 per cent (on institutional finance of upto Rs 1 crore availed by them) for induction of well-established and improved technology in the specified 51 sub-sectors/products approved.

- In other words the major objective is to upgrade their plant & machinery with state-of-the-art technology, with or without expansion and also for new MSEs which have set up their facilities with appropriate eligible and proven technology duly approved under scheme guidelines.

Highlights:

- This scheme aims at improving the competitiveness of MSMEs by integrating various ongoing schematic interventions aimed at upgrading technology through Credit Linked Capital Subsidy (CLCS), hand holding for zero defect zero effect manufacturing (ZED), increasing productivity through waste reduction (Lean), design intervention (Design), cloud computing (Digital MSMEs), facilitation of intellectual property (IPR) and nurturing new ideas (Incubation).
- Special provisions have been made in this scheme to promote entrepreneurship for SC/STs, women NER, Hill States (Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh & Uttarakhand) Island Territories (Andaman & Nicobar and Lakshadweep) and the Aspirational Districts/ LWE Districts, as in these cases the subsidy shall be admissible also for investment in acquisition /replacement of plant & machinery / equipment & technology up-gradation of any kind. The scheme would be demand driven. But its coverage has been made more inclusive.
- In addition, the scheme through Zero Defect & Zero Effect, component will promote reduction in emission level of green house gases and improve the competitiveness through reduction in defect / wastage during the manufacturing process of the products. It will also promote the innovation, digital empowerment of MSMEs, design interventions and support the protection of intellectual property of MSMEs.
- The scheme will facilitate technology up-gradation to MSEs, improvement in Quality of products by MSMEs, enhancement in productivity, reduction in waste and shall promote a culture of

continuous improvement.

e-AUSHADHI portal

Why in news?

Recently Minister of State (IC) for AYUSH launched the e-AUSHADHI portal, for online licensing of Ayurveda, Siddha, Unani and Homoeopathy drugs and related matters.

Highlights:

- e-Aushadhi is a web based application which deals with the management of stocks of various drugs, sutures and surgical items required by different district drug warehouses of Rajasthan state.
 - The prime objective of a District Drug Warehouse is to supply drugs to the various medical institutes that are associated with the given district drug warehouse
 - e-AUSHADHI portal is intended for increased transparency, improved information management facility, improved data usability and increased accountability.
 - Timelines will be fixed for processing of application through this portal with SMS and e-mail status updates at each step of the process.
 - Portal will not only aid the licensing authority , manufactures and consumers, as it will provide real time information of the licensed manufactures and their products, cancelled and spurious drugs, contact details of the concerned authority for specific grievances.
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Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, 2019

Why in news?

In recent days, there is huge furore in Parliament and North East India against contentious bill Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, 2019.

What is the purpose of the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, 2016?

- The Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, 2016 aims to provide citizenship to those who had been forced to seek shelter in India because of religious persecution or fear of persecution in their home countries.
- They are primarily Hindus, Sikhs, Jains, Buddhists, Parsis and Christians from Afghanistan, Pakistan and Bangladesh. This is a drastic change from the provisions of the Citizenship Act of 1955 that label a person an "illegal immigrant" if he or she has entered India without travel documents or has overstayed the date specified in the documents.
- The Bill is not state-specific. The Bill will apply to all States and Union Territories of the country.
- The beneficiaries of Citizenship Amendment Bill can reside in any state of the country.
- The burden of these persecuted migrants will be shared by the whole country. Assam alone would not have to bear the entire burden.

Why has the bill caused a controversy?

- The citizenship amendment bill, which was passed by the Lok Sabha, has led to political backlash in Assam and caused unrest in the rest of the North-east, with protests by ethnic Assamese groups.
- Assamese organizations say that as a result of the bill the burden of illegal migrants will be passed on to the state alone.
- The bill drew flak from opposition parties in the Rajya Sabha for excluding Muslims from countries such as Nepal and Sri Lanka.
- These parties are likely to push for the citizenship amendment bill to be referred to a select committee before it is discussed in the Rajya Sabha.



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