

# Monthly Policy Review

October 2020

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## Highlights of this Issue

### [Parliamentary Standing Committees identify subjects for examination in 2020-21 \(p. 2\)](#)

Some of the subjects for this year include status of COVID-19 vaccine production in India, management of COVID-19 pandemic, various central government schemes, and social security and welfare measures for migrant workers.

### [Ordinance issued to set up a commission for air quality management in NCR \(p. 8\)](#)

The Commission will aim at better co-ordination, research, identification, and resolution of problems related to air quality in National Capital Region and adjoining areas in states of Haryana, Punjab, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh.

### [National lockdown extended till November 30 with additional relaxations \(p. 2\)](#)

Most rules have been extended. Standard operating procedures for cinema halls and business exhibitions include staggered timings and distancing norms. Requirements for international travel for OCIs/ PIOs have been relaxed.

### [Measures to increase consumer spending and capital expenditure were announced \(p. 2\)](#)

Government employees will be given cash vouchers in lieu of their leave travel benefits. To increase capital expenditure, the government will spend Rs 25,000 crore and lend Rs 12,000 crore to states as interest-free loan.

### [RBI announces additional measures to increase liquidity and credit flow \(p. 3\)](#)

RBI will conduct open market operations in state government bonds to improve liquidity for these bonds. RBI revised norms to reduce the cost of credit for banks for exposures to individuals and small businesses.

### [Consumer Price Index inflation was 6.9% in the second quarter of 2020-21 \(p. 5\)](#)

CPI inflation increased from 6.7% in July to 7.3% in September 2020. Food inflation increased from 9.3% to 10.7% between July and September. WPI inflation increased from -0.2% to 1.3% in this period.

### [Central government revises its borrowing plan to meet GST compensation shortfall \(p. 6\)](#)

The central government will borrow Rs 1.1 lakh crore in 2020-21 to meet the shortfall in GST compensation cess collections. This amount will be passed on to states as back-to-back loans in lieu of their GST compensation grants.

### [Notifications issued to apply certain central and state laws to Jammu and Kashmir \(p. 10\)](#)

The central laws include application of various labour laws (such as the Factories Act, 1948 and Industrial Disputes Act, 1947). The state laws include amendments which allow non-residents to purchase land in Jammu and Kashmir.

### [Draft Model Tenancy Act, 2020 released for public comments \(p. 11\)](#)

The draft states that a written tenancy agreement must be delivered to the Rent Authority. It caps security deposit for non-commercial use at two months' rent and places restrictions on sub-letting.

### [Draft Rules under Industrial Relations Code, 2020 released for public comments \(p. 9\)](#)

The draft Rules will apply to all central sphere establishments. It sets out the notice period for applying to the government for permission to lay off or retrench workers. It also sets up a re-skilling fund for retrenched workers.

### [Amendments to Central Motor Vehicle Rules, 1989 released \(p. 12\)](#)

The rules detail protection for a good samaritan, i.e., a person who helps an accident victim. They also require incorporation of ownership category in vehicle registration documents.

### [Strengthening Teaching-Learning and Results for States project approved \(p. 17\)](#)

The Union Cabinet approved the STARS project which aims to improve the quality of education in the country. It will focus on six states, namely Himachal Pradesh, Kerala, Odisha, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, and Rajasthan.

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November 2, 2020

## Parliament

*Suyash Tiwari (suyash@prsindia.org)*

### Standing Committees identify subjects for examination during 2020-21

Fourteen of the 24 Departmentally Related Standing Committees of Parliament have identified subjects for detailed examination during the year 2020-21. The subjects chosen by these Committees are listed in the [Annexure](#).

## COVID-19

As of November 1, 2020, there were 81,84,082 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in India.<sup>1</sup> Of these, 74,91,513 had been cured/ discharged and 1,22,111 persons had died.<sup>1</sup> For details on the number of daily cases in the country and across states, please see [here](#).

The central government has announced several policy decisions to contain the spread of the disease, and financial measures to support citizens and businesses who would get affected. For details on the major notifications released by the centre and the states, please see [here](#). Key announcements made in this regard in October 2020 are as follows.

### Lockdown extended till November 30 with additional relaxations

*Anya Bharat Ram (anya@prsindia.org)*

To contain the spread of COVID-19, the National Disaster Management Authority had imposed a national lockdown in March. Since then, the lockdown has been extended nine times, with the latest extension till November 30, 2020. Key aspects of the extension include:<sup>2</sup>

- **Containment zones:** The lockdown will continue to remain in force in containment zones. In such zones, movement will only be permitted for medical emergencies and supply of essential goods and services. States and union territories may not institute any lockdown outside the containment zones without adequate consultation with the central government.
- **Domestic travel:** There will be no restrictions on inter-state and intra-state movements such as requirements for additional permits or approvals.
- **Restrictions on activities:** In areas outside containment zones, most activities have resumed. Activities that continue to operate

with restrictions include metro rail, shopping malls, hotels and restaurants, religious places, gymnasiums, and cinemas. Other restrictions include: (i) swimming pools may only be used for training sportspersons, (ii) exhibition halls may only be used for business to business purposes, (iii) cinemas and theatres may only function at 50% capacity, and (iv) congregations in closed spaces for social, religious, political, and other purposes must not exceed 50% hall capacity with a ceiling of 200 persons.

- **International travel:**<sup>3</sup> Overseas Citizenship of India and Person of Indian Origin card holders, and all other foreign nationals can enter India through authorized airports and seaports, except on a tourist visa. Further, all existing visas (except electronic visa, tourist visa, and medical visa) will be restored. If such visas have expired, new visas can be obtained from the concerned Indian missions and posts.

### Measures to increase consumer spending and capital expenditure were announced

*Madhunika Iyer (madhunika@prsindia.org)*

The Finance Minister, Ms. Nirmala Sitharaman, announced certain stimulus measures to increase consumer spending and capital expenditure in the year 2020-21.<sup>4</sup> These measures are:

#### Consumer spending

- **LTC cash voucher scheme:** Under the scheme, government employees will be provided cash voucher in lieu of their Leave Travel Concession (LTC) benefits. Under LTC, government employees can claim: (i) reimbursement of the air or rail fare and (ii) leave encashment for up to 10 days. They can claim LTC twice in a period of four years (current period ends on December 31, 2021).

Under this scheme, employees will be given cash voucher against one LTC (out of the two available for 2018-21) even when they are not travelling, provided they fulfil certain conditions. These include: (i) voucher is used to buy goods or services worth the amount of the 10-day leave encashment plus three times the fare allowed to the employee, (ii) such spending is done before March 31, 2021, and (iii) the money is used to buy goods or services attracting a GST rate of 12% or more, using digital payment.

- The scheme is available for central and state government employees and employees of public sector banks and undertakings. The government estimates this scheme to create a

demand of Rs 28,000 crore. Private sector may offer the scheme where employees are eligible for LTC. All employees will be eligible to claim income tax exemption on the amount received in the form of LTC fare through the cash voucher.<sup>5</sup>

- **Festival advance scheme:** All central government employees will be eligible for an interest-free festival advance of Rs 10,000 in 2020-21, which can be repaid in up to 10 instalments. This is estimated to generate a demand of Rs 8,000 crore (assuming half of the state governments also give the advance).

### Capital expenditure

- **Additional budgetary allocation:** The central government will increase spending for capital expenditure by Rs 25,000 crore (6.1% of the 2020-21 budget allocation for capital expenditure). This amount will be spent on sectors such as roads, water supply, urban development and defence.
- **Interest-free loan to states:** The government will provide an interest-free loan to states for their capital expenditure in 2020-21. The loan can be repaid after 50 years and requires no intermediate debt servicing. This loan will be in addition to the borrowing limits approved for states for the year 2020-21.
- The government will provide Rs 10,000 crore to states through interest-free loans. The share of different states will be as follows: (i) the eight north-eastern states will receive Rs 200 crore each, (ii) Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand will receive Rs 450 crore each, (iii) Rs 7,500 crore will be distributed among the remaining states as per their devolution share, as recommended by the 15<sup>th</sup> Finance Commission. In addition, Rs 2,000 crore will be distributed as loans among states that implement at least three out of the four reforms specified under the Aatma Nirbhar Bharat Economic Package (i.e. one nation one ration card, ease of doing business, urban local body revenue, and power distribution).

### RBI announces additional measures to increase liquidity and credit flow

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The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) announced measures to enhance liquidity support for financial markets and increase credit flow to ease stress caused by COVID-19.<sup>6</sup> The measures announced by RBI include:

- **Liquidity:** RBI will conduct on tap TLTRO (targeted long-term repurchase operations)

for up to one lakh crore rupees, up to March 31, 2021. Under the scheme, banks can borrow money for a period of three years at a floating interest rate linked to the repo rate. Money availed under this scheme may either be (i) invested in bonds and other financial instruments, or (ii) used to extend loans to entities operating in certain sectors. These sectors include agriculture, MSMEs (micro, small and medium enterprises), and drugs, pharmaceuticals, and healthcare.<sup>7</sup> Investment in financial instruments must be incremental to the amount outstanding as on September 30, 2020.

- RBI will conduct open market operations (OMOs) in state development loans (SDLs) as a special case for the financial year 2020-21. SDLs are securities issued by the state governments.<sup>8</sup> The OMO will be conducted for a basket of SDLs issued by various states.
- **Support for exports:** In 2016, RBI introduced automated caution/ de-caution listing of exporters.<sup>9</sup> Exporters would be caution listed if any shipping bill against them remains outstanding for more than two years. Exporters on the caution list lose further access to certain kinds of credit.<sup>10</sup> Once bills are realised, exporters will be automatically de-caution listed. RBI may also caution/ de-caution list on recommendation by banks. RBI will now discontinue automatic caution/ de-caution listing though such listing will continue on recommendation by banks. This is expected to provide exporters flexibility in realisation of export proceeds, as caution listing will be done on a case by case basis.
- **Lower risk weight for retail exposures:** Exposures (loans) usually carry a risk-weight of 100%, which indicates the extent of capital to be maintained. A higher risk weight results in higher capital requirement, and hence higher cost of credit. Exposures to individuals and small businesses of up to Rs 5 crore are eligible to be included in the regulatory retail portfolio, with a risk weight of 75%.<sup>11</sup> RBI has increased the limit to Rs 7.5 crore. This is expected to reduce the cost of credit for banks for such exposures.

### Guidelines issued to provide relief to borrowers from compounding of interest

*Suyash Tiwari (suyash@prsindia.org)*

The Ministry of Finance issued guidelines to provide relief to borrowers from compounding of interest on their loans during the moratorium period, following the directions of the Supreme

Court in this regard.<sup>12,13</sup> RBI had allowed lending institutions to grant a six-month moratorium (during March-August 2020) to borrowers on all payments due against their term loans, including interest payment.<sup>14,15</sup> Borrowers who opted for the moratorium and deferred payment of interest are required to pay an interest on the deferred interest payment. To provide relief to borrowers from payment of 'interest on interest', in view of the COVID-19 pandemic, the government will make an ex-gratia payment to loan accounts of eligible borrowers through lending institutions. The amount of payment will be equivalent to the difference between the compound interest and simple interest payable for the period March-August 2020 (interests to be calculated based on the loan amount outstanding as on February 29, 2020). This payment will also be made to those borrowers who did not opt for the moratorium.

Borrowers having an aggregate outstanding amount of up to Rs 2 crore (across all loans and lending institutions) are eligible for the scheme. The following kinds of loans will be taken into consideration for the scheme: (i) housing loans, (ii) education loans, (iii) consumer durable loans, (iv) automobile loans, (v) consumption loans, (vi) personal loans to professionals, (vii) loans to MSMEs (including cash credit and overdraft facilities), and (viii) credit card dues. Loans that were Non-Performing Assets, as on February 29, 2020, will not be considered under the scheme.

### Guidelines released for reopening of schools and coaching institutes

*Anya Bharat Ram (anya@prsindia.org)*

The Ministry of Education issued guidelines for reopening of schools and coaching institutes.<sup>16</sup> As per the guidelines, states and union territories (UTs) may decide on the reopening of schools and coaching institutes after October 15, 2020 in a graded manner. States and UTs should consult the respective school or institution management and decide based on the local situation. Key aspects of the guidelines include:

- **Health and safety:** Health and safety precautions include: (i) disinfecting of all areas, (ii) schools to make their own standard operating procedures based on state guidelines, (iii) social distancing, (iv) wearing of masks at all times, and (v) flexible attendance and sick leave policy.
- **Delivery of education:** States and UTs should facilitate learning while ensuring social distancing by: (i) requiring creation of an updated academic calendar, (ii) reintegrating students into schools, (iii)

sensitising students to the pandemic, and (iv) using diverse teaching techniques that promote social distancing, such as peer teaching and learning, technology, and empowering family members to teach.

### SOPs issued for exhibition of films

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The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting issued Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for exhibition of films to prevent the spread of COVID-19.<sup>17</sup> The SOPs include physical distancing and mandatory wearing of masks, thermal screening of staff and visitors on entry, staggered row exit, maximum occupancy of 50%, and staggering the show timings of different screens in multiplexes. States may specify additional measures as per their field assessment. Exhibition of films is not allowed in containment zones.

### SOP issued for holding B2B trade exhibitions during COVID-19

*Madhunika Iyer (madhunika@prsindia.org)*

The Ministry of Commerce and Industry issued the SOP for holding business to business (B2B) trade exhibitions during COVID-19.<sup>18</sup> Trade exhibitions are allowed to be held outside containment zones. The SOP requires physical distancing, wearing masks, and mandatory use of Aarogya Setu app for attendees with smartphones. The venue provider must ensure thermal screening and create an isolation centre. The exhibition organizer must stagger the hours of exhibition, manage pre-registration, and keep a record of participants, and transfer suspected COVID-19 patients to the isolation centre.

### Ministry of Commerce revises export policy for masks, sanitisers, and gloves

*Madhunika Iyer (madhunika@prsindia.org)*

The Ministry of Commerce and Industry revised the export policy for N95 masks, alcohol-based hand sanitisers, and gloves:<sup>19,20,21</sup>

- In January 2020, the export of N95 masks was prohibited.<sup>22</sup> This restriction was partly eased in August 2020, allowing total export of up to 50 lakh units of N95 masks per month.<sup>23</sup> The latest notification provides that N95 masks can be freely exported.
- In March 2020, the export of all types of sanitisers was prohibited.<sup>24</sup> The restrictions were partly eased in May and June 2020, making all, except alcohol-based sanitisers in

disposer pumps, freely exportable.<sup>25,26</sup> The latest notification removes this restriction, making all sanitisers freely exportable.

- In January 2020, the export of Nitrile gloves was prohibited.<sup>22</sup> The latest notification revises the export policy for Nitrile gloves from prohibited to restricted.

### Domestic air travel guidelines updated

*Aditya Kumar (aditya@prsindia.org)*

The Ministry of Civil Aviation issued updated guidelines for domestic air travel.<sup>27</sup> Domestic civil flight operations were partially resumed with certain limitations in May 2020.<sup>28</sup> Earlier, only those who did not test COVID-19 positive in the three weeks before the date of travel were allowed for domestic air travel. The updated guidelines allow persons to travel as soon as they have recovered or tested COVID-19 negative.

Further, only one-third of the operations are presently permitted and airlines have to adhere to the fare limits prescribed by the Ministry. These limitations were valid till November 24, 2020.<sup>29,30</sup> They have now been extended by three months till February 24, 2021.<sup>31</sup>

### Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) notification 2006 amended

*Aditya Kumar (aditya@prsindia.org)*

The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change amended the EIA Notification 2006 to extend the tenure of the State Environment Impact Assessment Authorities (SEIAA) and appraisal committees constituted for giving out prior environmental clearances under the Notification.<sup>32</sup> The Notification is aimed at regulation of social and environment impact of various projects such as dams, mines, airports, and highways. Certain specified categories of projects require prior environmental clearances from SEIAA on the recommendation of the appraisal committee. SEIAA and appraisal committees are constituted by the central government for a fixed term of three years. In May 2020, considering COVID-19 as an exceptional circumstance, the Ministry amended the EIA notification 2006 to allow six months extension in the tenure of the existing SEIAA and appraisal committees. The amendments increase the period of extension in the tenure of SEIAA and appraisal committees from six months to twelve months.

## Macroeconomic Development

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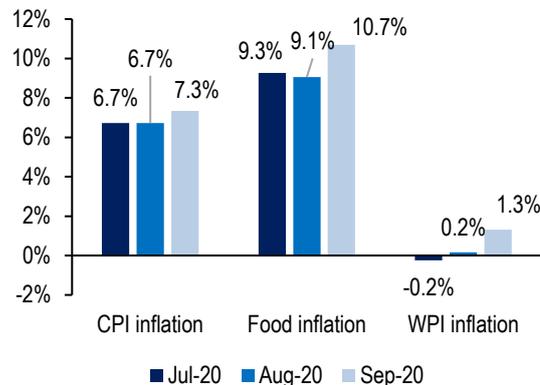
### Consumer Price Index inflation was 6.9% in the second quarter of 2020-21

Consumer Price Index (CPI) inflation (base year 2011-12) was 6.9% in second quarter of 2020-21 (July to September 2020) over the corresponding period in 2019.<sup>33</sup> Inflation was 3.4% in the second quarter of 2019-20 (corresponding quarter of the previous year) and 6.6% in the first quarter of 2020-21 (previous quarter).

Food inflation increased from 9.3% in July to 10.7% in September 2020, recording 9.7% for the second quarter of 2020-21. This is higher than the inflation of 3.5% in the second quarter of 2019-20 and the inflation of 9.2% in the first quarter of 2020-21.

Wholesale Price Index (WPI) inflation was 0.4% in the second quarter of 2020-21, lower than the inflation of 0.9% in the second quarter of 2019-20 and higher than the inflation of -2.2% in the first quarter of 2020-21.<sup>34</sup>

**Figure 1: Monthly inflation in Q2 of 2020-21 (% change, year-on-year)**



Sources: Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation; Ministry of Commerce and Industry; PRS.

### Repo and reverse repo rates remain unchanged at 4% and 3.35% respectively

The Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) released the bi-monthly Monetary Policy Statement.<sup>35</sup> The policy repo rate (the rate at which RBI lends money to banks) remained unchanged at 4%. Other decisions of the MPC include the following:

- The reverse repo rate (the rate at which RBI borrows money from banks) remained unchanged at 3.35%.
- The marginal standing facility rate (the rate at which banks can borrow additional money) and the bank rate (the rate at which

the RBI buys bills of exchange) also remained unchanged at 4.25%.

- The MPC decided to maintain an accommodative stance of monetary policy to revive economic growth and mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on the economy.

## Finance

### Central government revises its borrowing plan to meet GST compensation shortfall

*Suyash Tiwari (suyash@prsindia.org)*

The central government revised its borrowing plan for 2020-21 to meet the shortfall arising in GST compensation cess collections during the year.<sup>36</sup> Under the GST (Compensation to States) Act, 2017, the central government is required to pay compensation to states if their GST revenue growth is less than 14% in any year during the period July 2017-June 2022. To generate funds for this purpose, the Act provides for the levy of GST compensation cess on certain luxury and sin goods, such as cigarettes, tobacco products, pan masala, coal, and certain passenger vehicles and beverages. In 2020-21, the cess collection is expected to be lower than the compensation requirement of states for the year, resulting in a shortfall of nearly Rs 2.3 lakh crore.<sup>37</sup> Of the total shortfall, the central government has proposed an additional borrowing of Rs 1.1 lakh crore in 2020-21 to meet the shortfall related to ‘GST implementation’. The remaining shortfall will be paid to states after June 2022 from future cess collections. The repayment of Rs 1.1 lakh crore borrowing and the interest payment on it will also be through future cess collections. To enable this, the GST Council has recommended the central government to extend the levy of the compensation cess beyond June 2022 for such period as may be required to meet the shortfall.<sup>38</sup>

The borrowing of Rs 1.1 lakh crore done by the central government will be passed on to states (which agree to borrow through this mechanism) as back-to-back loans in lieu of their GST compensation grants. The amount borrowed by states will increase their fiscal deficit, but will not be counted within the fiscal deficit limit of 5% of GSDP approved for states for 2020-21.

The borrowing of Rs 1.1 lakh crore increases the central government’s gross market borrowing target for 2020-21 by 9.2% to Rs 13.1 lakh crore. The central government has stated that this additional borrowing will not have any impact on its fiscal deficit or the debt of the general government (i.e. central and state governments).

### Report of the Committee on Standalone Microinsurance Company was submitted

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The Committee on Standalone Microinsurance Company (Chair: Ms. Mirai Chatterjee) submitted its report to the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI).<sup>39</sup> Microinsurance is a mechanism to protect low-income individuals against risks such as death, accident, illness, and natural disasters. Key recommendations include:

- **Standalone microinsurance company:** The Committee noted the inadequacy of existing insurance companies to undertake microinsurance business effectively due to high transaction cost and low average premium. It recommended that standalone microinsurance companies should be set up.
- **Regulatory framework:** Insurance business is regulated under the Insurance Act, 1938. The Committee recommended that the Act be amended to include a chapter on microinsurance and define related terms. The Committee noted that this can also create an enabling regulatory environment for growth of NGOs and co-operatives currently offering microinsurance products.
- **Minimum capital requirement:** The Insurance Act, 1938 provides for a minimum capital of Rs 100 crore to operate an insurance business. The Committee recommended reducing this limit to Rs 20 crore or less for microinsurance companies.
- **Scope of business:** The Committee recommended that microinsurance companies should be allowed to offer both life and non-life insurance products.
- **Risk-based capital framework:** The Committee recommended that microinsurance companies should implement a risk-based capital framework. Insurers will have to maintain capital based on the size and risk profile of their business. Currently, insurers follow the factor-based solvency system where capital maintained is a fixed multiple of total liabilities.
- **Microinsurance development fund:** The Committee recommended a fund be set-up with initial corpus of fifty crore rupees. The fund may assist development of technical infrastructure, human resource training, and product development, among other functions, for microinsurance companies.

Comments on the Report are invited till November 9, 2020.

## IRDAI constituted a Working Group to study Cyber Liability Insurance

*Madhunika Iyer (madhunika@prsindia.org)*

IRDAI constituted a Working Group to study the need for a standard Cyber Liability Insurance product.<sup>40</sup> Cyber liability insurance could provide cover against cyber-attacks and data breaches for individuals and establishments. These may include identity theft, unauthorised transactions, malware intrusions, or cyber extortions. These events are not covered by general liability insurance which covers bodily injury and property damage.

The Working Group will be headed by Mr. P. Umesh and will include eight other members. The Terms of Reference for the Group include: (i) study statutory provisions on information and cyber security, (ii) evaluate critical legal issues in transactions in the cyber space, (iii) examine incidents involving cyber security and possible insurance coverage for those incidents, (iv) examine cyber liability insurance products currently available, and (v) recommend scope of cyber liability insurance.

The Group is required to submit its Report by December 19, 2020.

## IFSCA introduces a framework for regulatory sandbox

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The International Financial Services Centres Authority (IFSCA) released a framework for a regulatory sandbox.<sup>41</sup> A regulatory sandbox provides an environment that allows market participants to test new FinTech solutions (products, services, or business models) with customers in a controlled manner during a limited testing period. Key features of the framework include:

- **Participation:** Entities eligible to participate in the regulatory sandbox include: (i) entities registered with RBI, IRDAI, the Securities and Exchange Board of India, and the Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority, (ii) startups registered with Startup India, (iii) companies incorporated and registered in India, and (iv) companies incorporated and registered in jurisdictions compliant with the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) with operations based out of the International Financial Service Centre in India (GIFT City). FATF is an inter-governmental body that sets standards to tackle money laundering and terror financing.

- **Project eligibility:** Applications to participate in the sandbox must demonstrate: (i) need for live testing, (ii) identifiable benefits to investors, entities, or the capital markets, (iii) safeguards against risk from testing the solution, and (iv) intention to deploy the solution on a broader scale.
- **Exemption from regulations:** Entities participating in the sandbox may be granted exemptions from compliance with certain regulations. These could be a comprehensive exemption or on a case-by-case basis. No exemptions would be granted from Know Your Customer (KYC) and Anti-Money Laundering rules.
- **Testing:** The entity must obtain informed consent from the user before inclusion in the testing. Maximum duration of the testing will be 12 months, which may be extended upon request. IFSCA may revoke approval to participate in the sandbox before the end of the testing period in certain situations. These situations include: (i) the entity fails to implement methods to mitigate risk, and (ii) it undergoes liquidation, among others.

## RBI issues directions for interoperability of QR code

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RBI issued directions for interoperability of the Quick Response (QR) code infrastructure for facilitating digital payments.<sup>42</sup> This measure is among the recommendations from the Committee on the Analysis of QR Code which submitted its report in July 2020.<sup>43</sup> QR code is a two-dimensional bar code that can be read by imaging devices such as smartphones.<sup>43</sup> It facilitates digital payments without the need for point of sale terminals. An interoperable QR code enables consumers to make payments using any payment app. Without interoperability, QR codes of particular payment system operators (PSOs) can each be scanned only by an associated payment app.

As per RBI's notification, two interoperable QR codes that are currently in existence, UPI QR and Bharat QR, will continue to operate.<sup>42</sup> PSOs, such as certain mobile wallet providers, that use proprietary (non-interoperable) QR codes must shift to interoperable QR codes by March 31, 2022. PSOs are not allowed to launch new proprietary (non-interoperable) QR codes.

## Environment

Aditya Kumar ([aditya@prsindia.org](mailto:aditya@prsindia.org))

### Ordinance issued to set up a commission for air quality management in NCR

The Commission for Air Quality Management in National Capital Region and Adjoining Areas Ordinance, 2020 was promulgated.<sup>44</sup> The Ordinance establishes a Commission for better co-ordination, research, identification, and resolution of problems related to air quality in the national capital region (NCR) and adjoining areas. Adjoining areas refers to areas in the states of Haryana, Punjab, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh where any source of pollution may cause adverse impact on air quality in the NCR. The key provisions of the Ordinance include:

- **Functions:** Functions of the Commission include: (i) coordinating actions taken under the Ordinance by the concerned state governments (Delhi, Haryana, Punjab, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh), (ii) planning and executing plans to prevent and control air pollution in the region, (iii) conducting research and development through networking with technical institutions, (iv) training and creating a special work force to deal with issues related to air pollution, and (v) preparing various action plans such as increasing plantation and addressing stubble burning.
- **Powers:** Powers of the Commission include: (i) restricting activities influencing air quality, (ii) investigating and conducting research on air pollution, (iii) preparing codes and guidelines to prevent and control air pollution, and (iv) issuing directions which will be bounding on the concerned person or authority. In case of any conflict, the orders of the Commission will prevail over the orders of the concerned state governments, the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), or any other state-level statutory body.
- **Composition:** The Commission will consist of: (i) a Chairperson, (ii) two Joint Secretaries from the central government, (iii) three persons with knowledge and expertise related to air pollution, and (iv) three members from non-government organisations. Further, the Commission will include ex-officio members: (i) as members from the central government and concerned state governments, and (ii) as technical members from CPCB, the Indian Space Research Organisation, and NITI Aayog. The Chairperson and members will

have a tenure of three years or till the age of seventy years, whichever is earlier.

- **Penalties:** Non-compliance with or violation of the Ordinance, and orders and directions of the Commission is punishable with imprisonment of up to five years or fine of up to one crore rupees or both. All appeals against the orders of the Commission will be heard by the National Green Tribunal.

For a summary of the Ordinance, see [here](#).

### Environment (Protection) Amendment Rules, 2020 notified

The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change notified the Environment (Protection) Amendment Rules, 2020.<sup>45</sup> The Rules amend the Environment (Protection) Rules, 1986, which is aimed at regulating the environmental pollutants and emission standards.<sup>46</sup> The 2020 Amendment Rules increase the particulate matter emission standard threshold of oxides of nitrogen (NOx) for thermal power plants (installed between January 1, 2003 and December 31, 2016) from 300 mg per normal cubic metre to 450 mg per normal cubic metre.

### Hazardous and Other Wastes Amendment Rules, 2020 notified

The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change notified the Hazardous and Other Wastes (Management and Transboundary Movement) Amendment Rules, 2020.<sup>47</sup> It amends the 2016 Rules which provide a framework for hazardous waste management.<sup>48</sup> Hazardous waste refers to any waste which may be dangerous for health or environment. As per the 2016 Rules, workers involved in recycling, pre-processing, and other utilisation activities related to hazardous wastes were entitled to certain benefits including: (i) recognition and registration of workers, (ii) industrial skill development, and (iii) annual health and safety monitoring. The 2020 Amendment Rules extend the scope of these benefits to include workers involved in generation, handling, collection, reception, treatment, transport, storage, reuse, disposal, and recovery of hazardous wastes.

### Chemicals listed as hazardous under the Stockholm Convention banned

The Union Cabinet ratified ban of seven persistent organic pollutants (POPs) listed under the Stockholm Convention as chemicals hazardous to health and environment.<sup>49</sup> The Stockholm Convention is a global treaty to

protect human health and environment from POPs. The exposure to POPs may: (i) lead to cancer, (ii) damage nervous system, (iii) harm immune system, (iv) cause reproductive disorders, and (v) impact child development.<sup>49</sup>

## Labour and Employment

Roshni Sinha (*roshni@prsindia.org*)

### Draft Rules under Industrial Relations Code, 2020 released for comments

The Ministry of Labour and Employment released the draft central rules under the Industrial Relations Code, 2020.<sup>50,51</sup> The draft Rules will apply to establishments which are under the control of the central government and will replace the previous central rules on these matters. Key features of the draft Rules include:

- **Layoffs, retrenchment and closure:** Factories, mines, and plantations with 300 or more workers need to apply for prior permission before laying off or retrenching workers, or before closing an establishment. The draft Rules provide that the application to the government must be made at least 15 days before the intended date of layoff, 60 days before the intended date of retrenchment, and 90 days before the intended date of closure.
- **National Tribunal:** The Code provides for the constitution of National Industrial Tribunals (consisting of a judicial and administrative member) for settling disputes which: (i) involve questions of national importance, or (ii) could impact establishments situated in more than one state. The Rules specify the composition of the Selection Committees which will recommend members to the Tribunals.
- The Committees will include: (i) the Chief Justice of India or a Supreme Court Judge nominated by him (as Chairperson), (ii) a sitting member of the other National Industrial Tribunal (which will either be a judicial or administrative member, depending on who is being appointed), and (iii) Secretaries in the Ministry of Labour and Employment and the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade.
- **Re-skilling fund:** The Code proposed a re-skilling fund which will consist of contributions, from employers, equal to 15 days (or as specified by the central government) of the last drawn wages of every retrenched worker. The Rules provide

that within 10 days of retrenchment, employers will be required to transfer 15 days' wages into an account maintained by the government. These funds will be transferred to workers within 45 days of receiving the amount from the employer.

- **Constitution of Works Committee:** The Code provides for the constitution of Works Committees in establishments with more than 100 employees to resolve conflicts between workers and employers. The draft Rules state that the Works Committee will consist of up to 20 members.

Comments on the draft Rules are invited within 30 days of notification (from October 29, 2020).

### Supreme Court strikes down exemption notification issued by the government of Gujarat under Factories Act, 1948

The Factories Act, 1948 regulates the safety, health, and welfare of workers in factories with at least 10 or 20 workers (based on use of power). The Act enables the government to exempt any factory or class of factories from its provisions in the case of a 'public emergency'. 'Public emergency' is defined to include a 'grave emergency' which threatens the security of the state by way of war, external aggression, or internal disturbance.

In April 2020, the government of Gujarat issued notifications under the Act to exempt factories in the state from several provisions of the Act in view of the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>52</sup> These included: (i) increase in maximum weekly work hours from 48 hours to 72 hours, (ii) increase in maximum daily work hours from 9 hours to 12 hours, (iii) change in the mandatory rest periods from once every five hours to once every six hours, and (iv) revision in the formula for calculating overtime wages from twice the rate of wages to a rate which is proportionate to existing wages. The notifications were valid from April 20, 2020 to October 19, 2020.

These notifications were challenged before the Supreme Court. The question before the Court was whether the COVID-19 pandemic and the consequent lockdown created a 'public emergency' as defined in the Act. The Court noted the state's argument that the pandemic created an economic slowdown and that the situation was on the "brink of an internal disturbance". However, the Court concluded that the slowdown did not affect the security of India or any part of its territory in a way that disturbed its peace and integrity. Therefore, the Court struck down the notifications because the economic slowdown created by the pandemic

did not qualify as an ‘internal disturbance’ that posed a ‘grave emergency’ and which threatened the security of the state.<sup>53</sup>

The Court also observed that the denial of humane working conditions and payment of overtime wages as provided by law constituted an affront to Articles 21 (right to life) and Article 23 (prohibition against forced labour) of the Constitution of India. The Court further directed that overtime wages be paid to all workers who have been working since the date of the issuance of the notifications, at the original rate of double the ordinary wages.

### CAG submitted performance audit report on the National Pension Scheme

The Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) submitted its performance audit report on the National Pension Scheme (NPS).<sup>54</sup> The NPS is a contributions-based pension scheme mandatory for central government employees and their autonomous bodies (except armed forces). State governments and their autonomous bodies also adopt the NPS architecture on different occasions for their employees. The NPS is regulated by the Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA). Key findings and recommendations of CAG include:

- **Planning:** CAG noted that: (i) the rules on service conditions and retirement benefits for employees covered by the NPS were still not finalised, and (ii) a Minimum Assured Returns Scheme was still not framed, to ensure that NPS subscribers receive minimum returns, in violation of the PFRDA Act, 2013. CAG recommended taking remedial measures to finalise service rules and to provide a minimum assured returns scheme. Further, it noted that there was no indication that actuarial evaluation of the fund/ scheme was conducted once in two years (recommended by a High-Level Expert Group) or that any other mechanism was adopted to assess its viability.
- **Implementation:** CAG noted that during the formulation of the scheme, no controls were established to ensure that 100% of employees were covered. It recommended that a system be put in place to ensure that all nodal officers and eligible employees are registered under NPS. Further, it noted non-remittances or delayed remittances of contributions by the nodal officers to trustee banks in certain cases. Trustee banks are responsible for day-to-day fund flows and banking facilities under the scheme. It recommended amendments to the PFRDA Act to clearly define the responsibility,

accountability, and penalty for delay at each level to ensure that contributions are remitted to the bank and credited to subscribers’ accounts in time.

- **Monitoring:** CAG noted that in 2009, it was decided that all central government ministries/ departments would constitute committees comprising the Joint Secretary and other officials to oversee the implementation of the NPS in their respective ministries. It noted that out of 66-68 ministries/ departments between 2012-13 and 2018-19, not all had constituted these committees.

## Home Affairs

*Roshni Sinha (roshni@prsindia.org)*

### Notifications to apply certain central and state laws in Jammu and Kashmir issued

The central government issued a notification to apply 14 central laws to the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K), with certain amendments.<sup>55,56</sup> These laws include the Trade Unions Act, 1926, the Factories Act, 1948, and the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947. The amendments include: (i) allowing women to work between 6 AM and 7 PM with their consent under the Factories Act, and (ii) provisions for compounding (settling) of offences under the Industrial Disputes Act.

Additionally, 37 laws (which were applicable in the former state of J&K) have been applied to the union territory, with amendments, or have been repealed in some cases.<sup>55,56,57</sup> The effect of some of these amendments and repealed laws is to remove the provisions which only allowed permanent residents of J&K to purchase property in the territory. Some other amended laws include those which cover the levy of goods and service tax, agrarian reforms, and salaries and allowances of members of the legislature. The government also amended the Jammu and Kashmir Panchayati Raj Act, 1989 to create provisions for setting up elected bodies called District Development Councils in every district in the union territory (except for those territories which are included in a municipality or municipal corporation).

## Law and Justice

Anurag Vaishnav (*anurag@prsindia.org*)

### NITI Aayog Expert Committee on online dispute resolution submits its draft report

The NITI Aayog Expert Committee constituted to build a framework for online dispute resolution in India submitted a draft report for discussion.<sup>58</sup> Online Dispute Resolution (ODR) refers to use of information and communication technology for resolution of disputes (for instance, through use of video-conferencing and digital circulation of files for resolution). The Committee noted the need for an implementation framework for ODR by facilitating adoption and amending existing regulations, especially in view of the COVID-19 induced lockdown.

ODR offers several potential benefits, such as: (i) reduction in costs (does not require parties to travel, reduced legal fees), (ii) faster dispute resolution, and (iii) reduction in unconsciousness bias that may arise from physical presence while resolving disputes. However, there are several challenges in the adoption of ODR. These include: (i) lack of digital infrastructure and digital literacy, (ii) lack of awareness and trust in ODR services, (iii) archaic legal processes which require physical presence, and (iv) concerns on privacy. In this regard, the Committee held:

- **Access to digital infrastructure:** The Committee observed that further development of ODR in the country is contingent on successful implementation of initiatives such as Digital India and National Broadband Mission to create digital infrastructure, PM Gramin Digital Saksharta Abhiyaan for digital literacy, and the eCourts project by the judiciary.
- **Improving adoption and trust in ODR:** Currently, the SAMADHAAN portal, operated by the Ministry of MSMEs is used for facilitating online disputes related to MSMEs. However, it only covers issues related to delay in payment to MSMEs. The Committee recommended that the portal can be scaled up to cover all MSME related disputes. Noting that the government is the largest party to litigation (46% of litigation in the country), it recommended that ODR can be mandated for certain categories of government litigation disputes.
- **Phased implementation:** The Committee recommended that ODR should be adopted in a phased manner. In the first phase, focus should be on using ODR for COVID-19 related disputes. In the second phase, ODR

should be made more mainstream by deploying digital infrastructure, building trust in ODR, and modifying legislations to enable ODR. In the third and final phase, the government and judiciary should focus towards making ODR the primary mode of dispute resolution.

Comments on the draft report are invited till November 11, 2020.

## Housing and Urban Affairs

Prachi Kaur (*prachi@prsindia.org*)

### Draft Model Tenancy Act, 2020 released for public comments

The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs released the draft Model Tenancy Act, 2020, to be enacted by state and union territory legislatures, for public comments.<sup>59</sup> Key features of the draft Act include:

- **Tenancy agreement:** The draft Act provides that a written agreement will be required by the landlord and the tenant to let or take any premises on rent. The rent payable and the time period for the tenancy will be agreed upon between the landlord and the tenant and specified in the tenancy agreement. This has to be informed to the Rent Authority within two months from the date of the agreement.
- **Security deposit:** The draft Act provides that the security deposit for the residential premises shall not exceed two months' rent. In case of non-residential premises, it shall be as per the terms of tenancy agreement subject to a maximum of six-months' rent. Further, the security deposit shall be refunded by the landlord at the time of taking over vacant possession of the premises, after making due deductions.
- **Tenancy period:** The draft Act provides that the tenant may request the landlord for renewal or extension of the tenancy period. If a tenancy for a fixed term ends and has not been renewed and if the tenant fails to vacate the premises, then such tenant will be liable to pay an enhanced rent to the landlord. Further, the landlord is entitled for double the monthly rent for the first two months and then, four times of the monthly rent in case of default by tenant to vacate the premises after termination of tenancy.
- The draft Act also provides that if the term of tenancy ends at the time when the locality

(where the rented premises is situated) experiences any disastrous event, the landlord shall allow the tenant to continue possession of the premises for one month from the cessation of such event. The draft Act defines such an event to include flood, drought, war, fire, cyclone, and earthquake.

- **Rent Authority:** The District Collector, with prior approval of the state/ union territory government, will appoint the Rent Authority (at the rank of Deputy Collector). The Rent Authority, on receiving information on a tenancy agreement, must upload details of the agreement on its website. The Authority may also, on application by the landowner or tenant, fix or revise the rent, and the date from which the revised rent will apply. Appeals against the Authority's orders will lie with the Rent Court, and must be made within 30 days from the date of the order.

Comments on the draft Act are invited till November 28, 2020.

## Transport

### Various amendments to the Central Motor Vehicles Rules, 1989 released

*Prachee Mishra (prachee@prsindia.org)*

The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways released several amendments to the Central Motor Vehicles Rules, 1989.<sup>60,61,62</sup> These include the following:

#### Protection of good Samaritans

The Motor Vehicles Act, 1988 defines a good Samaritan as a person who renders emergency medical or non-medical assistance to a victim at the scene of an accident. The assistance must have been (i) in good faith, (ii) voluntary, and (iii) without the expectation of any reward. Such a person will not be liable for any civil or criminal action for any injury to or death of an accident victim, caused due to their negligence in providing assistance to the victim. The amended Rules provide for the following:<sup>60</sup>

- A good Samaritan who has informed the police of a motor accident, or has transported an accident victim to the hospital, will not be subjected to any further requirements by the police or the hospital, and will be permitted to leave immediately.<sup>60</sup> No police officer or any other person should compel them to disclose their personal details. The good Samaritan

may voluntarily choose to disclose these details to the police officer. They will also not be required to fulfil any admission related procedures for the victim at the hospital or bear any costs for treatment.

- If a good Samaritan agrees to become a witness, they will be questioned at a time and place of their convenience. They may choose to have the questioning done at the police station. They must be permitted to give evidence on an affidavit as per the Code of Criminal Procedure.

#### Ownership in vehicle registration documents:

The Ministry notified amendments to the 1989 Rules incorporating ownership in motor vehicle registration documents.<sup>61</sup> The amended Rules add a new section which provides for ownership type. Categories under this include: (i) autonomous body, (ii) central government, (iii) driving school, (iv) Divyangjan, (v) firm, (vi) individual, (vii) police department, and (viii) multiple owners, among others.

In addition, the Ministry also released draft amendments to the Central Motor Vehicles Rules, 1989 amending the requirements to obtain an international driving permit.<sup>62</sup> The proposed amendments include:

- **Documents required:** Currently an application for an International Driving Permit (IDP) must include several documents such as valid driving license, medical certificate, valid proof of Indian nationality, valid proof of passport, and valid visa proof, among others. The draft amendments remove the requirement of the medical certificate and the visa proof.
- **Fee:** Currently, the application for an IDP has to be accompanied with a fee of Rs 500. The draft amendments increase this fee to Rs 1,000.
- **Application form details:** Currently, an applicant has to specify in their application form if he has been disqualified for obtaining a driving license, and the reasons for such disqualification. The draft amendments add that the applicant also has to specify if he has been barred by the current country to drive in that country, along with the relevant reasons.

## Draft Coastal Shipping Bill, 2020 released for public comments

*Shruti Gupta (shruti@prsindia.org)*

The Ministry of Shipping released the draft Coastal Shipping Bill, 2020 for public comments.<sup>63</sup> Coastal shipping refers to the transport of goods and passengers by sea. Coastal shipping is currently regulated under the Merchant Shipping Act, 1958. The draft Bill seeks to provide a standalone framework for the sector.<sup>64,65</sup> Only registered or licenced vehicles may engage in trade, exploration, or research in the coastal waters of India.

The Bill states that a strategic plan to improve and manage existing water networks must be developed within two years. It should include: (i) an assessment of shipping routes, (ii) identification of operational improvements required, (iii) long-term forecasts on water networks, and (iv) best practices to improve overall performance.

Comments are invited on the draft Bill till November 6, 2020.

## Draft amendments to Merchant Shipping (Maritime Labour) Rules, 2016 released

*Prachee Mishra (prachee@prsindia.org)*

The Directorate General of Shipping has invited comments on amendments to the Merchant Shipping (Maritime Labour) Rules, 2016.<sup>66</sup> Key amendments proposed include:

A seafarer's employment agreement will continue to have effect while the seafarer is held captive on or off the ship due to an act of piracy or armed robbery against the ship. This will be regardless of whether the employment agreement is set to expire or either party has given a notice to terminate it. Piracy includes any acts of violence, detention, or destruction committed for private ends against persons or property on board a ship on the high seas or outside the jurisdiction of a state.<sup>67</sup>

Further, when a seafarer is held captive under an act of piracy or armed robbery, wages and other entitlements including repatriation (under the employment agreement) will continue to be paid to him. The ship-owner must ensure that these are paid throughout the period of captivity and until: (i) the seafarer is released and duly repatriated, or (ii) the date of death, if the seafarer dies in captivity.

## Ministry of Shipping amends Right of First Refusal licensing conditions

*Prachee Mishra (prachee@prsindia.org)*

The Ministry of Shipping has reviewed the Right of First Refusal licensing conditions for chartering of ships through tender process for all types of requirements.<sup>68</sup> As per the amended guidelines, priority in chartering of vessels will be as follows:

- Indian built, Indian flagged (registered in India), and Indian owned;
- Foreign built, Indian flagged, and Indian owned vessels;
- Indian built, foreign flagged, and foreign owned vessels.

All ships registered in India up to the date of issue of new circular by the Director General of Shipping will be deemed to be Indian built and will fall in the first category.

The duration of licence to such chartered ships will be limited to the period of building of the ship, as mentioned in the shipbuilding contract. The revised guidelines seek to give a boost to the domestic shipbuilding and shipping industries.

## Directorate General of Shipping notified as National Authority for Ships Recycling

*Prachee Mishra (prachee@prsindia.org)*

The Directorate General of Shipping has been notified as the National Authority for Recycling of Ships under the Recycling of Ships Act, 2019.<sup>69</sup> The National Authority will administer, supervise, and monitor all activities relating to ship recycling under the Act.

As per the Act, ships should not use prohibited hazardous materials as notified. The National Authority will carry out periodic surveys to verify the prescribed requirements. The owner of every new ship must apply to the National Authority to obtain a certificate on the inventory of hazardous materials. Further, a ship owner must apply to the National Authority for a ready for recycling certificate before recycling his ship. Decisions of the National Authority may be appealed with the central government within 30 days of receiving such decision.

## Railways

*Saket Surya (saket@prsindia.org)*

### Policy on development of goods-sheds at small stations through private investment

The Ministry of Railways issued a policy on the development of goods-sheds at small/ road-side stations through private investment.<sup>70</sup> The policy seeks to promote setting up of new goods-shed facilities as well as the development of existing goods-sheds. Key features include:

- **Types of facilities:** The policy covers the development of goods wharf, loading/unloading facilities, resting space for workers, approach road, covered shed, and other related infrastructure. The facilities will be developed by the private party through its own investment. Responsibility for maintenance of assets and facilities will be vested with the developer during the agreement period. Railways will not levy any charges for the construction. These facilities will be used as a common user facility. No preference or priority will be granted in access to these facilities.
- **Bid parameter:** The developer will be selected through a competitive bidding process. The bidding parameter will be a share in the terminal charges and terminal access charges to be levied on the traffic at the goods-sheds for a period of five years.
- **Additional source of revenue:** The developer will be allowed to earn additional revenue through the utilisation of available space for establishing canteen, tea shops, and advertisements.

## Power

*Aditya Kumar (aditya@prsindia.org)*

### Draft Electricity (Change in Law, Must-run status, and other Matters) Rules, 2020 released

The Ministry of Power released the draft Electricity (Change in Law, Must-run status, and other Matters) Rules, 2020.<sup>71</sup> The draft Rules, issued under the Electricity Act, 2003, are aimed at facilitating pass through and compensating renewable energy generators for lack of demand from buyers. Pass through refers to the mechanism in which any additional expenditure is accounted in the cost and is charged to the consumer. Key features of the draft Rules are:

- **Tariff adjustment on change in law:** In case of any change in law event, the tariff will be adjusted to compensate the affected party. The change of law often results in additional capital expenditure which impacts tariff. The compensation will be aimed at restoring the economic status of the affected party to the position as if the change in the law had not occurred. The pass-through will be allowed on per unit basis of electricity and will come into effect automatically after 30 days of the change in law event. The formula for determining the pass-through should be mentioned in the bidding document or the Power Purchase Agreement (PPA). Otherwise, the formula prescribed in the government guidelines may be used to determine the pass-through. The state electricity regulatory commission will have to complete the claim verification process within 60 days of the pass-through coming into effect. The verification will be based on the documents submitted by generators and buyers.
- **Must-run power plants:** All renewable energy power plants (such as wind, wind-solar, and hydro) with PPA to sell power will be treated as a must-run power plant. A must-run power plant will be subjected to curtailment or regulation only in case of any technical constraints in the electricity grid or for reasons related to the security of the grid. In case of curtailment due to any other reasons, the buyers will have to compensate the generators. The rate of compensation should be mentioned in the PPA, else the compensation will be at the rate of 75% of the PPA rate per unit.
- **Trading license to procure power for distribution companies:** Intermediary buyer will be allowed to procure power for distribution companies through a bidding process. In case of multiple suppliers at different rates, the weighted average of all bids will be the resultant bid rate.

### Draft Electricity (Late Payment Surcharge) Rules, 2020 released

The Ministry of Power released the draft Electricity (Late Payment Surcharge) Rules, 2020.<sup>72</sup> The Rules, issued under the Electricity Act, 2003, are aimed at regulating the late payment surcharge payable by (i) a distribution licensee to a generating company, or (ii) a transmission system user to a transmission licensee. Late payment surcharge refers to the charge payable for delay beyond the due date in payment of monthly charges of power purchased

or to use the transmission system. It will apply to all payments outstanding after the due date.

The rate of the surcharge will be as per the applicable bank rate or the rate provided in the agreement of supply or transmission of power, whichever is lower. The bank rate refers to the State Bank of India's rate of marginal cost of funds-based lending for one year plus 500 basis points. If the applicable rate is less than the rate provided in the agreement, the rate will increase by 50 basis points per month after one month from the due date. The maximum limit of the late payment surcharge will be at applicable bank rate plus 200 basis points.

All payments by a distribution licensee to a generating company or by a transmission system user to a transmission licensee will be first adjusted towards the late payment surcharge.

## New and Renewable Energy

*Aditya Kumar (aditya@prsindia.org)*

### Guidelines released for bidding process for procurement of power from grid-connected wind-solar hybrid projects

The Ministry of New and Renewable Energy released guidelines to provide for a framework based on competitive and transparent tariff-based bidding process for procurement of power from grid-connected wind-solar hybrid projects.<sup>73</sup> This is in accordance with the Wind-Solar Hybrid Policy issued in May 2018.<sup>74</sup> The policy is aimed at providing a framework for the promotion of grid-connected wind-solar hybrid projects for achieving better grid stability. Some of the key features of the guidelines are:

- **Applicability:** The guidelines will be applicable on the long-term procurement of electricity from hybrid projects with capacity of more than 50 MW at one site, where the rated capacity of one of the resources (wind or solar) must be at least 33% of total contracted capacity.
- **Bid structure and process:** A bidder will be allowed to bid for a minimum of 50 MW of project capacity at one site. The maximum capacity for allotment to a bidder may be decided by the distribution licensee. The maximum limit for allotment will be decided based on economies of scale, land availability, expected competition, and need for the development of the market. The tariff quoted by the bidder will be the bidding parameter for the process. The bidder will provide either of the following kinds of tariff-based bidding: (i) fixed tariff in Rs/ kWh for 25 years or more, (ii) escalating tariff in Rs/ kWh with pre-defined annual escalation, and the number of years from which such escalation will be provided. The procurer (distribution company) may also opt for e-reverse auction for final selection.
- **Power purchase agreement:** A power purchase agreement (PPA) will be signed by the selected bidder. The minimum duration of PPA should be 25 years from the scheduled commissioning date. If the selected bidder is a single company, its shareholding in the project company, without prior approval, must not decrease below 51% in the first year after the commercial operation date.

### Draft policy framework released for DRE livelihood applications in rural areas

The Ministry of New and Renewable Energy invited comments on the draft policy framework for developing and promoting decentralised renewable energy (DRE) livelihood applications in rural areas.<sup>75</sup> DRE livelihood applications refers to the applications of renewable energy to earn livelihoods (such as solar dryer and solar powered cold storage). Key features include:

- **Assessment of demand:** Demand potential for DRE livelihood applications will be assessed across rural areas in various regions of the country. The Ministry will prepare a list of the livelihood applications of DRE and map needs of the beneficiaries.
- **Research and development:** Research and development activities related to DRE technologies will be encouraged to promote efficiency. These activities will be conducted in collaboration with the civil society and organisations such as NGOs.
- **Skill development and capacity building:** Skill development programs will be facilitated in the areas of operation and maintenance, installation, and fabrication of DRE livelihood applications. Various community level platforms (such as self-help groups and farmer producer organisations) will be developed for capacity building of potential buyers.
- **Public awareness and implementation agency:** The central and state government ministries/ departments under their existing programmes may take up public awareness campaigns to push adoption of DRE livelihood applications. The state nodal agencies with expertise in the renewable

energy sector will be responsible for implementation and providing technical support in rural areas.

## Agriculture

*Saket Surya (saket@prsindia.org)*

### Cabinet approves revised mechanism for procurement of ethanol by oil companies

The Union Cabinet approved a revised mechanism for procurement of ethanol by public sector Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs), under the Ethanol Blended Petrol Programme launched in 2013.<sup>76</sup> Under the programme, OMCs procure ethanol from distilleries at administered prices and sell petrol blended with ethanol up to 10%. The programme also seeks to promote ethanol production from sugarcane-based raw materials, with the aim of reducing sugar production in the country. The earlier mechanism required the OMCs to prioritise procurement of ethanol made from sources using higher sugar content (sugarcane juice followed by various kinds of molasses). The approved mechanism seeks to provide a fair opportunity to the localised industry and reduce the haphazard movement of ethanol across states. Under this mechanism, OMCs will decide the criteria for determining the priority of ethanol procurement from various sources. The criteria would account for factors such as transportation cost and availability, and will apply within the state boundaries.

The Cabinet also approved an increase in the prices of ethanol for the supply year 2020-21 (December 2020-November 2021). The increase in price is as follows:

- for ethanol from sugarcane juice, sugar, or sugar syrup, from Rs 59.48 per litre to Rs 62.65 per litre,
- for ethanol from B heavy molasses (used for sugar production, but still contains some sugar content), from Rs 54.27 per litre to Rs 57.61 per litre, and
- for ethanol from C heavy molasses (end product left after sugar processing), from Rs 43.75 per litre to Rs 45.69 per litre.

## Water Resources

*Prachi Kaur (prachi@prsindia.org)*

### Campaign launched for safe piped water supply in schools and anganwadi centres

The Ministry of Jal Shakti launched a 100 days campaign to ensure safe piped water supply in schools and anganwadi centres across the country.<sup>77</sup> This campaign comes under the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) which aims to provide universal coverage of tap water connection to every rural household by 2024. Key features of the campaign include the following:<sup>77,78</sup>

- **Components:** Key components of the campaign include: (i) provision of piped water supply for anganwadi centres, schools, tribal hostels, health and wellness centres, and community toilets, (ii) greywater treatment and reuse to ensure improved environmental sanitation, (iii) water quality monitoring at delivery points, and (iv) human resource development for operations and maintenance.
- **Administration:** The Public Health Engineering Department of states will be the nodal department to head the campaign. It will involve the Gram Panchayats and its sub-committees, along with other departments such as education, women and child welfare, panchayati raj, rural development, and tribal welfare.
- Facilities to provide safe drinking water will be operated and maintained by the Gram Panchayat and its sub-committee, i.e. Village Water and Sanitation Committee.
- **Implementation:** Implementation strategies for various situations include: (i) institutions with functional tap water connections: provide adequate and safe water for long term, (ii) institutions with defunct piped water supply: water supply to be improved, (iii) institutions with no proposed piped water supply: provision of standalone water supply schemes such as tubewell with required purification be made permanent piped water supply, along with planning for 100% functional tap water connections.

## Education

Anya Bharat Ram (*anya@prsindia.org*)

### Strengthening Teaching-Learning and Results for States project approved

The Union Cabinet approved the Strengthening Teaching-Learning and Results for States (STARS) project.<sup>79</sup> The project aims to improve the quality of education in the country.

At the national level, the scheme aims to (i) strengthen data collected on retention, transition, and completion rates of students, (ii) set up a National Assessment Centre to facilitate inter-state communication, and (iii) set up a Contingency Emergency Response Component to facilitate education during natural and man-made disasters, amongst others. At the state-level, the scheme will focus on matters such as (i) strengthening early childhood education and foundational learning, (ii) improving learning assessment systems, and (iii) strengthening vocational education and classroom instruction.

It will focus on the following six states: Himachal Pradesh, Kerala, Odisha, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, and Rajasthan.

The total cost of the project will be Rs 5,718 crore. A financial assistance of Rs 3,700 crore will be provided by the World Bank for the project. It will be implemented as a new scheme sponsored by the central government.

## Annexure

The subjects identified by various Parliamentary Standing Committees for examination during the year 2020-21 are given in Table 1.

**Table 1: Subjects identified by the Standing Committees for examination during 2020-21**

Agriculture
<b>Department of Agriculture, Co-operation and Farmers' Welfare</b>
1. Production and Availability of Certified Seeds in the Country.
2. Implementation of Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayi Yojana (PMKSY) – A Review.
3. Functioning of Agricultural Credit System in the Country.
4. Role of Primary Agriculture Cooperative Societies in Comprehensive Development of Agriculture in the Country – An Evaluation.
5. Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana – An Evaluation.
6. Production and Availability of Oil Seeds and Pulses in the Country.

7. National Bamboo Mission – A Review.
8. Zero-Budget Natural Farming – Prospects and Challenges.

### Department of Agricultural Research and Education

1. ICAR-Central Coastal Agricultural Research Institute, Goa – A Performance Review.
2. Contribution of ICAR in Agricultural Research for Tribal and Hilly Regions.
3. Research and Development in Farm Mechanisation for Small and Marginal Farmers in the Country.

### Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying

1. Status of Veterinary Services and Availability of Animal Vaccine in the Country.
2. Evaluation of Livestock Insurance Schemes.
3. Gender Perspective in Animal Husbandry and Dairying Sector.
4. National Livestock Mission – An Appraisal.
5. Status and Promotion of Poultry Sector in the Country.
6. National Bovine Genomic Centre for Indigenous Breeds (NBGC-IB) – A Performance Review.

### Department of Fisheries

1. Employment Generation and Revenue Earning Potential of Fisheries Sector.
2. Role of National Fisheries Development Board (NFDB) in Training and Extension Facilities to Fishermen in view of Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana.
3. Development of Deep-Sea Fishing.
4. Infrastructure and Post-Harvest Management in Fisheries Sector – An Overview.

### Ministry of Food Processing Industries

1. Scheme for Creation/ Expansion of Food Processing and Preservative Capacities – An Evaluation.
2. Skill Development and Employment Generation in Food Processing Sector.
3. Initiatives taken in the Food Processing Sector under 'Make in India' Program.

## Chemicals and Fertilizers

### Department of Fertilizers

1. Revival of Closed and Sick Fertilizer Units.
2. Excessive Use of Fertilizers, its Effect on Soil/ Environment/ Health and Slow Growth of Use of Organic Fertilizers.
3. Tax Structure on Fertilizer Sector in terms of GST and Import Duties – Analysis of the Tax Structure of Raw Material and Final Products and its Impact on Self-Sufficiency and Use of Fertilizers.

### Department of Chemicals and Petrochemicals

1. Demand and Availability of Petrochemicals including Imports and Exports.
2. Vision 2024 – To Establish India as a Leading Manufacturer of Chemicals and Petrochemicals.
3. Insecticides – Promotion and Development including Safe Usage – Licensing Regime for Insecticides.

**Department of Pharmaceuticals**

1. Review of Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana (PMBJP).
2. Promotion of Medical Device Industry.
3. Status of COVID-19 Vaccine Production in India.

**Coal and Steel****Ministry of Coal**

1. Land Acquisition and Issues of Rehabilitation and Resettlement in Coal/ Lignite Mining Areas.
2. R&D in Coal Sector.
3. Future of Coal in India's Energy Mix.
4. Review of Coal Mines Workers Welfare Programme.
5. Safety in Coal Mines.
6. Production of Coal and Lignite – Projection and Planning.
7. Skill Development in Coal Sector.
8. Performance of Coal Controller's Office.
9. Implementation of Information Technology and Vigilance Activities to Curb Illegal Coal Mining and Theft of Coal in the Country.
10. Compliance of Environmental Norms by Coal/ Lignite Companies.
11. Import of Coal – Trends and Issue of Self Reliance.
12. Coal Handling Infrastructure at Ports.
13. Coal Conservation and Development of Infrastructure for Transportation of Coal Across the Country.

**Ministry of Mines**

1. New Auction Mechanism and Self Reliance in Minerals and Mineral Based Products.
2. Mineral Exploration Activities in North Eastern States and its Overall Impact on Development of the Region.
3. Development of Aluminium and Copper Industries in India.
4. Measures to Curb Illegal Mining of Iron Ore, Manganese and Bauxite in the Country.
5. Organisational Structure and Performance of Geological Survey of India (GSI) – A Review.
6. Organisational Structure and Performance of Indian Bureau of Mines (IBM) – A Review.
7. Expediting and Simplifying the Environment and Forest Clearance Process for Mining Projects.
8. Measures for Abatement of Pollution due to Mining Activities and Environmental Protection.

**Ministry of Steel**

1. Development of Leased Out Iron Ore Mines and Optimum Capacity Utilisation.
2. Review of Steel Policy and its Impact on Development of Steel Sector.
3. Major Policy Changes Assisting Secondary Steel Sector.
4. Management of Energy Efficiency by Steel Plants and Environmental Issues related to Iron Ore Mining.
5. Safety Management and Practices in Steel PSUs.

6. Development of Manganese Ore Industry in India.
7. Skill Development in Steel Sector.
8. Promotion of Steel Usage.
9. Status of Greenfield and Brownfield Projects of Steel PSUs.

**Energy****Ministry of Power**

1. Role of Regulators in Electricity Sector – An Evaluation.
2. Energy Audit – An Evaluation.
3. Integrated Power Development Scheme – An Evaluation.
4. Functioning of Power System Operation Corporation Limited in Grid Management.
5. Development of Power Sector.
6. Evaluation of Power Transmission System – Performance Efficiency in Matching Evacuation Demands.
7. Review of Power Tariff Policy – Need for Uniformity in Tariff Structure Across the Country.
8. Contribution of Central Electricity Authority in Balanced Development of Electricity Sector.
9. Operations of Load Dispatch Centres and Power Exchanges.
10. Performance of Power Plants of Thermal and Hydro Sectors.
11. Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Gram Jyoti Yojana.
12. Saubhagya – Pradhan Mantri Sahaj Bijli Har Ghar Yojana.
13. Role and Significance of Ujwal DISCOM Assurance Yojana (UDAY) in Financial Turnaround of DISCOMs.
14. Carbon Footprints of Power Generation in India.
15. Delay in Execution/ Completion of Power Projects by Power Sector Companies.
16. Development of Coal Blocks Allocated to Power Sector Companies.

**Ministry of New and Renewable Energy**

1. Role of PSUs/ Institutions under Ministry of New and Renewable Energy in Development of Renewable Energy Schemes.
2. Grid Connectivity – Grid Connection for Renewable Energy including Captive Renewable Power Plants.
3. Action Plan for Achievement of 175 Giga Watt (GW) Renewable Energy Target.
4. Measures to Make Distribution/ Marketing of Renewable Energy Affordable and Effective.
5. Need for Long Term Renewable Energy Policy and Legal Reforms.
6. Research, Design and Development in Renewable Energy Sector.
7. Tidal Power Development in India.
8. Renewable Energy – Potential and Harnessing.
9. Evaluation of the Role of Renewable Energy in Electricity Sector.
10. Reasons for Lack of Manufacturing Base for Renewable Components/ Equipment.

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11. Financial Constraints in Renewable Energy Sector.
  12. Evaluation of Solar and Wind Energy in India.
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#### **External Affairs**

1. COVID-19 Pandemic – Global Response, India's Contribution and the Way Forward.
  2. India's Soft Power and Cultural Diplomacy – Prospects and Limitations.
  3. India and International Law, including its Extradition Treaties with Foreign Countries, Asylum Issues, International Cyber-Security and Issues of Financial Crimes.
  4. India's Neighbourhood First Policy.
  5. India and Bilateral Investment Treaties.
  6. India-USA Relations – A Critical Review.
  7. India's Position in the Ongoing Climate Change Negotiations.
  8. Welfare of Indian Diaspora – Policies/ Schemes.
  9. Performance of Passport Issuance System including Issuance of E-Passports.
  10. India's Extended Neighbourhood – From Look East to Act East.
  11. The European Union and India.
  12. Functioning of Missions Abroad including Critical Evaluation of Political/ Economic/ Cultural and Consular Responsibilities.
  13. India and Indo-Pacific Region – Strategies for Engagement and Cooperation.
  14. Progress in Restructuring and Strengthening of IFS Cadre.
  15. India's Engagement with the African Countries.
  16. Reforming the United Nations – Imperatives and Challenges.
  17. Potential for Developing Relations with Latin America.
  18. India's West Asia Policy – An Overview/ India's Foreign Policy in West Asia.
  19. Countering Global Terrorism at Regional and International Level.
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#### **Home Affairs**

1. Atrocities and Crime Against Women.
  2. Human Trafficking in the Country.
  3. National Security, Intelligence Coordination and Counter Terrorism.
  4. Police – Training, Modernisation and Reforms.
  5. Prison – Conditions, Infrastructure and Reforms.
  6. Administration, Development and People's Welfare in the Union Territories of: (i) Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh, and (ii) Andaman and Nicobar Islands.
  7. Coastal Security.
  8. Management of COVID-19 Pandemic and Related Issues.
  9. Rising Crime in Delhi and NCR.
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#### **Information Technology**

##### **Ministry of Information and Broadcasting**

1. Review of Functioning of Prasar Bharati Organisation.
  2. Ethical Standards in Media Coverage.
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3. Film Industry – Problems and Challenges.
4. Review of Functioning of Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC).
5. Review of Functioning and Outreach of Doordarshan Channels.

##### **Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology**

1. Citizens' Data Security and Privacy.
2. Digital Payment and Online Security Measures for Data Protection.
3. Review of Functioning of Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI).
4. Safeguarding Citizens' Rights and Prevention of Misuse of Social/ Online News Media Platforms including Special Emphasis on Women Security in the Digital Space.
5. Promotion of Electronics/ IT Hardware Manufacturing Sector and Measures for Reduction of Imports.
6. Policy Issues in Information Technology including Cross Border Data Flows, Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Internet of Things (IoT), etc.
7. Technology Initiatives taken by MEITY in the wake of COVID-19 Pandemic.
8. Review of Cyber Security Scenario in India.

##### **Department of Posts**

1. Real Estate Management in the Department of Posts.
2. Department of Posts – Initiatives and Challenges.

##### **Department of Telecommunications**

1. Review of Functioning of BSNL and MTNL and Plan for Enhancing their Performance.
  2. Review of Functioning of TRAI.
  3. Review of the Performance of Schemes under Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF) with Special Emphasis on North East and LWE Affected Areas.
  4. India's Preparedness for 5G.
  5. Suspension of Telecom Services/ Internet and its Impact.
  6. Issues Confronting Telecom Sector including Telecom Service Providers (TSPs).
  7. Review of Functioning of Centre for Development of Telematics (C-DOT).
  8. Inter-Sectoral Review of Challenges of Emerging and Converging Technologies, Entities and Practices.
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#### **Labour**

##### **Ministry of Labour and Employment**

1. Measures for Implementing the ILO Conventions Binding on India – An Appraisal.
  2. Working Conditions and Welfare of Mine Workers, and Assessment of Working of Directorate General of Mines Safety (DGMS).
  3. Deployment of Contract/ Casual/ Sanitation Workers for Jobs of Perennial Nature in Government/ PSU Offices/ Establishments.
  4. Status of and Welfare Measures for Workers Deployed by Outsourced Agencies/ Companies.
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5. Welfare of Plantation Workers.
6. Functioning of the Employees Provident Fund Organisation with Special Reference to EPF Pension Scheme.
7. The Employees' State Insurance Corporation – Applicability and Benefits under ESI Scheme and Management of Corpus Fund.
8. Functioning of Central Board for Workers Education.
9. Implementation of Centrally Sponsored Schemes.
10. National Policy on Child Labour – An Assessment.
11. Identification and Rehabilitation of Bonded Labour.
12. Assessment of Present Categories of Scheduled Employment.
13. Implementation of Labour Laws concerning the Welfare of Contract/ Casual Labour.
14. Social Security Measures for Workers in IT and Telecommunication Sectors like BPOs/ Call Centres.
15. Implementation of Prescribed Minimum Wages in Scheduled Employment Sector.
16. Social Security and Welfare Measures for Inter-State Migrant Workers.
17. Social Security and Welfare Measures for Unorganised/ Informal Sector Workers including Scheme Workers, Street Vendors and Fishermen.
18. Safeguards and Measures for Protecting the Interest of Overseas Contract Workers and the Returnees, Particularly in the Middle East Region.

#### **Ministry of Textiles**

1. Development and Promotion of Jute Industry.
2. Skill Development vis-à-vis Manufacturing and Upgradation in Textiles Sector.
3. Welfare Schemes of the Ministry of Textiles – An Appraisal.
4. Challenges/ Opportunities in Indian Textile Industry.
5. Development of Cotton Sector.
6. Schemes/ Programmes of Central Silk Board for Development and Promotion of Silk Industry.
7. Status/ Performance of Handloom Sector.
8. Status and Reforming of Powerloom Sector.
9. Performance of Marketing Agencies of Handlooms and Handicrafts.
10. Functioning of National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT).
11. Development of Manmade Fibre.
12. Functioning of National Textile Corporation.

#### **Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship**

1. Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana.
2. National Skills Qualifications Framework – An Assessment.
3. Functioning of Directorate General of Training.
4. Functioning of National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC).

5. Implementation of National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme (NAPS).
6. Implementation of Skill Acquisition and Knowledge Awareness for Livelihood Promotion (SANKALP) Project.

#### **Petroleum and Natural Gas**

1. Allotment of Retail Outlets and LPG Distributorships.
2. Pricing, Marketing and Supply of Petroleum Products including Natural Gas.
3. Litigations involving Oil PSUs.
4. Contract Management and Transparency in Procurement Procedures in Oil PSUs.
5. Energy Security with Specific Reference to Hydrocarbon Resources and Electric Vehicles.
6. Oil Refineries – A Review.
7. CSR Activities of Oil PSUs.
8. National Gas Grid including PNG and CNG.
9. Review of Performance of Oil PSUs with Specific Reference to Financial Performance and Investments in Other Sectors.
10. Human Resource Policy of Oil PSUs.
11. Disinvestment, Mergers and Acquisitions in Petroleum Sector.
12. International Cooperation in Petroleum Sector.
13. Review of Progress in Production of Non-Conventional Fuels.
14. Review of LNG Infrastructure.
15. The Challenges and Opportunities for Public Sector Oil Companies.
16. Strategic Petroleum Reserves in India.
17. Safety and Security of Oil Installations of Public Sector Oil Companies.
18. Review of Ongoing Projects of Oil PSUs.
19. Exploration and Production Activities of Public Sector Oil Companies.
20. Reservation Policy in Allotment, Marketing and Distribution of Petroleum Products.
21. Alternate Sources of Energy.

#### **Railways**

1. Expansion of Rail Network.
2. Passenger Amenities including Modernisation of Railway Stations.
3. Protection and Usage of Surplus Railway Land.
4. Last Mile Port Connectivity with Indian Railways.
5. Dedicated Freight Corridor Projects of Indian Railways.
6. Introduction of High-Speed Trains.
7. Passenger Reservation System of Indian Railways.
8. Recruitment in Indian Railways.
9. National Projects and Strategic Lines of Indian Railways.
10. Digitalisation in Indian Railways.
11. Corporate Social Responsibilities (CSR) related Activities of PSUs of Indian Railways.
12. Sub-Urban Train Services of Indian Railways.
13. Performance of Production Units of Indian Railways.

14. Safety Measures in Railway Operations.
15. Reconstitution and Restructuring of Railway Zones.
16. Modernisation and Capacity Utilisation of Workshops in Indian Railways.
17. Rashtriya Rail Sanraksha Kosh (RRSK).
18. Requirement, Procurement and Utilisation of Wagons by Indian Railways.
19. Staff Welfare Measures in Rail PSUs.
20. Kisan Rail Train Services.
21. Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on Railway Operations.

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#### **Rural Development**

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##### **Department of Rural Development**

1. Shyama Prasad Mukherji Rurban Mission.
2. Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY).
3. Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana – Gramin.
4. Critical Evaluation of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA).
5. Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana – National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM).
6. Realisation of the Vision 'Make in India' under Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushalya Yojana (DDU-GKY).
7. Role of Banks in the Financial Inclusion of Rural Population.
8. Impact of National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP) on the Poor and Destitute in the Villages.
9. Creation of Adarsh Grams under Saansad Adarsh Gram Yojana (SAGY).
10. Status and Utilisation of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Fund among PSUs in the Area of Rural Development.

##### **Department of Land Resources**

1. Implementation of Digital India Land Records Modernisation Programme (DILRMP).

##### **Ministry of Panchayati Raj**

1. Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan (RGSA).

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#### **Social Justice and Empowerment**

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1. Priority Sector Lending by Banks to SCs, STs, OBCs, Differently Abled Persons and the Minorities.
2. Grants-in-Aid to NGOs Working for Social Welfare and Evaluation of their Functioning and Performance.

##### **Department of Social Justice and Empowerment**

1. Babu Jagjivan Ram Chhatrawas Yojana for SC Boys and Girls.
  2. Pre-Matric Scholarship Scheme for the Children of those Engaged in Hazardous and Unclean Occupations.
  3. Free Coaching Scheme for Scheduled Castes and Other Backward Classes.
  4. Grants-in-Aid to Voluntary and Other Organisations working for Scheduled Castes.
  5. Schemes/ Programmes Implemented for the Welfare of SCs/ OBCs under Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR).
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#### **Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities**

1. Review/ Functioning of Rehabilitation Council of India (RCI).
2. Assessment of Scheme for Implementation of Persons with Disabilities Act (SIPDA).
3. Review of the Functioning of National Institutes Established for Different Types of Disabilities.
4. Assessment of Deendayal Disabled Rehabilitation Scheme (DDRS).
5. Schemes/ Programmes Implemented for the Welfare of Divyangjan under Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR).

##### **Ministry of Tribal Affairs**

1. Development of Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs).
2. Implementation of Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006 vis-à-vis Displacement of Tribals.
3. Review of the Functioning of the National Scheduled Tribes Finance and Development Corporation (NSTFDC).
4. Review of the Functioning of the Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India Limited (TRIFED).
5. Review of the Functioning of Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRS).
6. Schemes/ Programmes Implemented for the Welfare of Tribals under Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR).

##### **Ministry of Minority Affairs**

1. Review of the Functioning of the National Minorities Development and Finance Corporation (NMDFC).
2. Promotion of Education Amongst the Weaker Sections of Minorities by Minority Educational Institutions with Particular Reference to Maulana Azad Education Foundation (MAEF).
3. Implementation of Prime Minister's New 15-Point Programme for the Welfare of Minorities.
4. Scholarship Schemes for Minority Students.
5. Schemes/ Programmes Implemented for the Welfare of Minorities under Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR).

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#### **Transport, Tourism and Culture**

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1. Role of Highways in Nation Building.
2. Promotion of Infrastructure in India's Maritime Sector.
3. Potential of Tourist Spots in the Country – Connectivity and Outreach.
4. Development and Conservation of Museums and Archaeological Sites – Challenges and Opportunities.
5. Functioning of Airports Authority of India.
6. Status of Aviation Connectivity in the Country.

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#### **Urban Development**

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7. Smart Cities Mission – An Evaluation.
  8. Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Urban) and Related Issues.
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9. Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT).
10. Finding Solution to Air Pollution in Urban Areas including Delhi NCR.
11. Management and Planning of Urban Transport Services and Infrastructure.
12. Implementation of Various Metro Projects and Available Alternatives.
13. Water Conservation, Restoration and Recharge of Ground Water and Re-Use of Water in Urban Areas – Evaluation of Jal Shakti Abhiyan in Urban Areas.
14. Re-Evaluation of Progress and Impact of Swachh Bharat Mission (Urban) in Improving the Overall Sanitation Coverage in Urban Areas including Solid Waste Management.

15. Poverty Alleviation and Creation of Employment Opportunities in Urban Areas – Deen Dayal Antyodaya Yojana – NULM.
16. Need for Formulating Master Plans for Every City in the Country for Holistic Development.
17. Reviewing Functioning of CPWD.
18. Implementation of Street Vendors Act (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of Street Vending Act, 2014).
19. Implementation of National Building Code in Urban Areas.
20. Improving the Quality of Living in Urban Cities, Sewage Treatment, Proper Drainage System.

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