



PRS Capsule - December 2022

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Governance

Energy Conservation (Amendment) Bill, 2022

- [Energy Conservation \(Amendment\) Bill, 2022](#) that amends the [Energy Conservation Act, 2001](#) was passed by Parliament.
 - The Act **promotes energy efficiency and conservation**, and provides for the **regulation of energy consumption** by equipment, appliances, buildings, and industries.

What are the Key Features of the Bill?

- **Obligation to Use Non-Fossil Sources of Energy:**
 - The Act empowers the **central government to specify energy consumption standards. The Bill adds** that the government may require the **designated consumers to meet a minimum share of energy consumption** from [non-fossil sources](#).
 - **Different consumption thresholds** may be **specified for different non-fossil sources and consumer categories.**
 - **Designated consumers** include:
 - **industries** such as mining, steel, cement, textile, chemicals, and petrochemicals,
 - **transport sector** including Railways, and
 - **commercial buildings**, as specified in the schedule.
 - **Failure to meet the obligation** for use of energy from non-fossil sources will be punishable with a penalty of up to Rs 10 lakh.
 - It will also **attract an additional penalty of up to twice the price of oil equivalent of energy consumed** above the prescribed norm.
- **Carbon Trading:**
 - The Bill empowers the central government to **specify a carbon credit trading scheme.**
 - **Carbon credit implies a tradeable permit** to produce a **specified amount of**

carbon emissions.

- The central government or any authorised agency **may issue carbon credit certificates to entities registered** under and compliant with the scheme.
 - The entities will be **entitled to purchase or sell the certificate.**
 - Any other person may **also purchase a carbon credit certificate on a voluntary basis.**
- **Energy Conservation Code for Buildings:**
 - The Act empowers the central government to **specify [energy conservation code for buildings](#)** that prescribes energy consumption standards in terms of area.
 - The Bill amends this to provide for an **'energy conservation and sustainable building code'**.
 - This new code will **provide norms for energy efficiency and conservation, use of renewable energy**, and other requirements for green buildings.

Anti-Maritime Piracy Bill, 2019

- The **[Anti-Maritime Piracy Bill, 2019](#)** was passed by Parliament.
 - The Bill enables the **prosecution of maritime piracy and serves to ratify the 1982 [United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea \(UNCLOS\)](#)**, to which India is a signatory.

What are the Key Provisions of the Bill?

- **Territorial Jurisdiction:**
 - The Bill will **apply to high seas**, which refers to the **area outside India's territorial waters.**
 - **Territorial waters extend to 12 nautical miles** from India's coastline.
 - The **high seas include India's [Exclusive Economic Zone \(EEZ\)](#)**, which is the area in which India has exclusive rights to economic activities, i.e., up to **200 nautical miles from the coastline.**
- **Piracy:**
 - The Bill defines piracy as any **illegal act of violence, detention, or destruction committed for private ends**, committed on the high seas.
 - The definition covers acts of piracy committed **by any person or the crew or passengers of a private ship.**
 - Victims of piracy include **any other ship or any person or property on board such ship.**
 - It also includes **voluntary participation in the operation of a ship** that is being **used for piracy.**
- **Offences and Penalties:**
 - Committing piracy will be punishable with:
 - **imprisonment** which may extend to **imprisonment for life, or fine, or both**, or
 - **death or imprisonment for life**, if the act or attempt of piracy **includes attempted murder, or causes death.**

IRDAI (Registration of Indian Insurance Companies) Regulations, 2022.

- **[Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India \(IRDAI\)](#)** notified the **IRDAI (Registration of Indian Insurance Companies) Regulations, 2022.**
 - The Regulations seek to **simplify the process of registration of Indian insurance companies** and promote ease of doing business.
 - They **repeal the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority (Registration of Indian Insurance Companies) Regulations, 2000**, and the **Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority (Transfer of Equity Shares of Insurance Companies) Regulations, 2015.**

What are the Key Features of the Regulations?

- **Permissible Insurance Business:**

- The Regulations prescribe **certain classes of insurance business** for which an application of registration must be made. These include:
 - **Life insurance**
 - **General insurance**
 - **Health insurance**
 - **Reinsurance**
- An applicant **shall not be eligible to apply** for registration if
 - The **registration application has been rejected by IRDAI or withdrawn by the applicant** during the last two financial years,
 - The **certificate of registration has been cancelled by IRDAI** during the last two financial years, or
 - The **name of the applicant does not contain the words** insurance, assurance, or reinsurance.
- **Foreign Investment:**
 - If an Indian insurance company has foreign investment, a majority of its directors and key management persons and at least one among its chairperson, managing director, or chief executive officer must be resident Indian citizens.
 - If the **foreign investment exceeds 49%, at least 50% of the net profit shall be retained** in a general reserve.
 - This **must be done in a financial year when dividend is paid on equity shares** or the **solvency margin** (excess of assets over liabilities) is **less than 1.2 times the control level** of solvency (prescribed by IRDAI).
 - For insurance companies with **more than 49% foreign investment, at least half of the board** must have **independent directors**.
 - In case the **chairman is an independent director, then at least one-third of the remaining directors** must be independent.

Digital Health Incentive Scheme

- In order to promote the [Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission \(ABDM\)](#), the [National Health Authority \(NHA\)](#) has announced the **Digital Health Incentive Scheme**.
 - ABDM provides for **every citizen to have their health records stored digitally in a consolidated database**, to facilitate easier access when receiving medical treatment.

What are the Key Provisions of the Scheme?

- **About:**
 - Under this scheme, **incentives will be provided to eligible health facilities and health solutions** based on the number of health records that they create and link to an **Ayushman Bharat Health Account (ABHA)**.
 - An ABHA number **uniquely identifies a person's medical records**.
- **Eligibility:**
 - **Hospitals and diagnostic labs and facilities** are eligible for this scheme.
- **Incentives:**
 - Under the scheme there will be a **monthly threshold for the number of ABHA-linked transactions**, above which hospitals or diagnostic facilities would receive a financial incentive.
 - For example, hospitals would receive Rs 20 per transaction above a base level of 50 transactions per bed per month.
 - Diagnostic facilities and labs are subject to a **base level of 500 ABHA-linked transactions per month, above which** they would receive **Rs 15 per additional transaction**.
 - The **maximum incentive** that a healthcare facility can receive under this scheme is **four crore rupees**.
- **Financial Outlay:**
 - The estimated initial financial outlay for this scheme is **50 crore rupees**.

Amrit Bharat Station Scheme

- The Ministry of Railways announced the **Amrit Bharat Station Scheme for modernising railway stations**.

What are the Key Features of the Scheme?

- **About:**
 - The scheme will provide for the **introduction of new amenities as well as the upgradation and replacement of existing amenities** at the selected stations.
 - It will be **based on master planning for long term**.
 - The elements of the master plan will be **implemented on need basis**.
- **Scope of Work:**
 - **Improving station approaches** by widening roads and removing unwanted structures.
 - **Relocating railway offices** at accessible locations to release space for passenger-related activities and future development.
 - Creating **good quality waiting rooms**.
 - **Improving drainage** of platform areas.
 - Building spaces for **executive lounges and business meetings**.
 - **Creation of roof plaza and city centres** at the station in the long run.

Standing Committee's Report on India's Soft Power and Cultural Diplomacy

- The **Standing Committee on External Affairs** submitted its **report on India's Soft Power and Cultural Diplomacy: Prospects and Limitations**.
 - **Soft power** is defined as the **ability to influence others through appeal and attraction**, using non-coercive means.

What are the Key Observations and Recommendations of the Committee?

- **Coordination Committee:**
 - The Committee noted that there have been **no substantive steps taken to establish an institutionalised coordination mechanism** between the **Ministry or the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) and other line ministries** as per the Committee's earlier recommendation.
 - The Committee **recommended constituting a Coordination Committee** under the monitoring of the Ministry to **ensure better coordination between ministries/departments responsible** for India's soft power and cultural diplomacy.
- **Restructuring of ICCR:**
 - The Committee observed **the need for a complete remodelling of the structure, mandate and functioning of the ICCR** to better project Indian culture and recommended that the **Ministry of External Affairs should finalise the restructuring of the ICCR**.
 - ICCR is an **autonomous body under the Ministry of External Affairs** that has a **mandate to engage in policy and programme formulation and implementation** pertaining to **India's external cultural relations**.
 - Restructuring of the ICCR was **delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic**.
 - It also recommended that **a blueprint of the restructuring may be submitted to the Committee within three months**.
 - The Committee observed that the **ICCR would require Rs 500 crore to accommodate current demand** from embassies and cultural centres, thereby, recommended that the **central government should increase ICCR's budgetary allocation by 20%**.
 - It will help **promote India's soft power and cultural diplomacy in a robust manner**.

Draft Bill to Protect Geoheritage Sites and Geo-Relics, 2022

- **Ministry of Mines** has released the draft **Geoheritage Sites and Geo-relics (Preservation and Maintenance) Bill, 2022**.

What are the Key Provisions of the Bill?

- **Declaration of Geoh heritage Sites:**
 - The central government may **declare a site as a geoh heritage site of national importance.**
 - Geoh heritage sites must **contain features of geological significance, such as geo-relics or natural rock sculptures.**
 - Geo-relics are **movable relics such as fossils or meteorites.**
- **Protection of Geoh heritage Sites:**
 - The draft Bill empowers the central government to **acquire, preserve, and maintain geoh heritage sites.**
 - The **Director General of the [Geological Survey of India](#)** will be given **powers for this purpose, such as surveying and excavation.**
 - **Construction** on these sites will be **prohibited.**
 - However, it may be **authorised by the Director General to preserve the site or to repair a structure** that predates the declaration of the site.
- **Protection of Geo-Relics:**
 - The central government may declare that a **geo-relic cannot be moved from its site, by notification, unless permitted by the Director General.**
 - The Director General may **direct the acquisition of a geo-relic to protect it.**
- **Offences and Penalties:**
 - **Offences under the Bill include:**
 - Destruction or misuse of a geoh heritage site,
 - Illegal construction, and
 - Damaging/illegally moving a geo-relic.
 - These offences are **punishable with a fine of up to 5 lakh rupees or imprisonment of up to 6 months, or both.**

Social Issues

Free Distribution of Foodgrains under NFSA, 2013

- The Union Cabinet approved the [free distribution of foodgrains for one year under the National Food Security Act \(NFSA\), 2013.](#)
 - The free provision of foodgrains will be applicable **till December 31, 2023.**

What is NFSA, 2013?

- **Objective:**
 - To provide for [food and nutritional security](#) in the human life cycle approach, **by ensuring access to adequate quantities of quality food at affordable prices to people** to live a life with dignity.
- **Coverage:**
 - 75% of the rural population and upto 50% of the urban population for **receiving subsidised foodgrains under the [Targeted Public Distribution System \(TPDS\).](#)**
 - Overall, **NFSA covers about 81.35 crore citizens.**
- **Eligibility:**
 - Priority Households are to be covered under TPDS, **according to guidelines by the State government.**
 - Households are covered under the **Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY).**
- **Provisions:**
 - 5 Kgs of foodgrains per person per month at Rs. 3/2/1 per Kg for rice/wheat/coarse grains.
 - The existing AAY household will continue to **receive 35 Kgs of foodgrains per household per month.**
 - **Meal and maternity** benefits of not less than Rs. 6,000 to pregnant women and lactating mothers during pregnancy and six months after child birth.
 - **Meals for children** upto 14 years of age.
 - [Food security allowance](#) to beneficiaries in case of non-supply of entitled foodgrains or

- meals.
- **Setting up grievance redressal mechanisms** at the district and state level.

Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana Rules, 2022

- The Ministry of Women and Child Development notified the [Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana \(PMMY\) Rules, 2022](#), under the **National Food Security Act, 2013 (NFSA)** replacing the **Indira Gandhi Matritva Sahyog Rules, 2016**.
 - The 2022 Rules provide a framework for extending maternity benefits to eligible beneficiaries.

What are the Key Features of the Rules?

- **Eligibility of Maternity Benefit:**
 - Under the 2016 Rules, every pregnant woman and lactating mother of age 19 years and/or above was entitled to maternity benefit. As per the 2022 Rules, the **criteria to identify eligible beneficiaries include women who:**
 - belong to scheduled castes or scheduled tribes,
 - are partially disabled (40%) or fully disabled,
 - are holders of [Below Poverty Line \(BPL\)](#) ration card/[E-Shram](#) card/ [Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act \(MGNREGA\)](#) job cards,
 - are beneficiaries under [Pradhan Mantri Jan Aarogya Yojana \(PM-JAY\)](#), or
 - have a net family income of less than eight lakh rupees per annum.
 - Maternity benefits will be given to **all eligible pregnant women and lactating mothers after registration**.
 - Pregnant women and lactating mothers **employed by the central or state government or public sector undertaking will not be entitled** to these benefits.
- **Registration of Beneficiaries:**
 - Under the 2022 Rules, beneficiaries must register themselves at:
 - an [anganwadi](#) centre set up under the [Integrated Child Developed Services \(ICDS\)](#),
 - an approved **health facility of Health and Family Welfare Department** of their respective state government or union territory, or
 - **online** on their own.
- **Conditions to Receive Maternity Benefit:**
 - Under the 2022 Rules, beneficiaries will **receive Rs 5,000 on the birth of the first child and Rs 6,000 on the birth of the second child if the child is a girl**.
 - The maternity benefit for the first living child shall be **provided in two instalments if the beneficiary:**
 - registers the pregnancy, and
 - goes for at least one antenatal check-up within six months from her last menstruation cycle.
 - The **second instalment will be payable on registering the childbirth** and with the child receiving all due vaccines till the age of 14 weeks.
 - Incentives on the **birth of the second child will be paid in a single instalment** on registering the birth and the child receiving all due vaccines till the age of 14 weeks.

Guidelines on Accessible Sports Complex and Residential Facilities for Sports Persons with Disabilities.

- The Department of Sports, Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, notified **Guidelines on Accessible Sports Complex and Residential Facilities for Sports [Persons with Disabilities](#)**.

What are the Key Provisions of the Guidelines?

- The guidelines give effect to the [Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016](#), which **mandates the Central Government to formulate rules for standards of**

accessibility for public facilities.

- The guidelines cover **structural elements of sports facilities that must be made accessible.**
 - These include **entrances that are easy to locate, uniform and clearly identified staircases,** and the **inclusion of lifts in multi-storied buildings,** which must be **capable of accommodating wheelchair users.**
 - The guidelines also provide **standards for features such as signage for people with visual impairments,** and **specially adapted sports equipment** such as lightweight wheelchairs designed for sports use.

PDF Refernece URL: <https://www.drishtias.com/printpdf/prs-capsule-December-2022>

