



PRS Capsule - June 2022

Key Highlights of PRS

- **Governance:**
 - [Cabinet approves Agnipath scheme for recruitment to armed forces.](#)
 - [Criteria for appointment of Chief of Defence Staff changed.](#)
 - [Cabinet approves auction of 5G spectrum.](#)
 - [National Air Sports Policy released.](#)
 - [Bharat New Car Assessment Programme for assessing crash safety of cars released.](#)
- **Social Justice and Empowerment:**
 - [Emergency use authorisation granted to mRNA COVID-19 vaccine, Gemcovac.](#)
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Governance

Approval of Agnipath Scheme

The Union Cabinet **approved the [Agnipath Scheme](#) for recruitment to the armed forces.** Candidates recruited under the scheme will serve for four years and be known as [Agniveers](#).

What are the Key Features of Agnipath Scheme?

- **Eligibility:**
 - Candidates between the ages of **17.5 to 21 years will be eligible to apply.**
 - Enrolment under the scheme will be through an **online centralised system for all three services (army, navy, and air force).**
 - Specialised rallies and campus interviews from recognised technical institutes will be conducted for recruitment.
 - **For 2022 recruitments, candidates between the age of 17.5-23 years will be eligible to apply.**
- **Permanent enrolment:**
 - **After completion of four years of service, Agniveers can apply for permanent enrolment** in the armed forces.
 - From each batch of Agniveers, up to **25% of the personnel will be enrolled in regular cadre of the armed forces.**
 - Individuals selected for enrolment in regular cadre will be **required to serve a minimum period of 15 years.**
- **Benefits:**
 - Agniveers will be given a **monthly package** during the four years of service. This package will be **exempted from income tax.**
 - After completing four years of service, they will be paid a one-time '**Seva Nidhi**' package of **Rs 11.7 lakh.**

- Further, Agniveers will be provided a **non-contributory life insurance cover of Rs 48 lakh during their tenure.**
- Gratuity and pensionary benefits will not be provided.
- **Reservations:**
 - **10% of job vacancies** in the Defence Ministry will be reserved for Agniveers.
 - The reservation will be implemented **in defence civilian posts, the Indian Coast Guard, and 16 Defence Public Sector Undertakings such as Hindustan Aeronautics Limited, Mazgaon Dock Shipbuilders, and Munitions India Limited.**

Change in the Criteria for the Appointment of the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS)

The central government **changed the criteria for the appointment of the [Chief of Defence Staff \(CDS\)](#) by amending the Air Force Regulations, 1964, Naval Ceremonial, the Conditions of Service and Miscellaneous Regulations, 1963, and the Army Rules, 1954.**

What is the Role of the CDS?

- **About:**
 - The CDS is a four-star General/Officer who acts as the Principal Military Advisor to the Defence Minister on all tri-services (Army, Navy and Indian Air Force) matters.
- **Role and Responsibilities:**
 - CDS acts as the **permanent Chairman of the Chiefs of Staff Committee** which will also have three service chiefs as members.
 - His core function will be to foster greater **operational synergy between the three service branches of the Indian military** and keep inter-service frictions to a minimum.
 - He also **heads the newly created Department of Military Affairs (DMA)** in the Ministry of Defence.
 - The CDS will be the **single-point military adviser to the Defence Minister** on matters involving all three services and the service chiefs will be obliged to confine their counsel to issues pertaining to their respective services.
 - As the head of DMA, CDS is vested with **the authority in prioritising inter-service procurement decisions** as Permanent Chairman-Chiefs of Staff Committee.
 - The CDS is also vested with the **authority to provide directives to the three chiefs.**
 - However, he **does not enjoy any command authority over any of the forces.**
 - CDS is first among equals, **he enjoys the rank of Secretary within the DoD (Department of Defence)** and his powers will be confined to only the revenue budget.
 - He will also perform **an advisory role in the [Nuclear Command Authority \(NCA\)](#).**

What are the Changed Criteria for the Appointment?

- According to the amended Regulations, the government may appoint **any serving or retired Air Marshal or Air Chief Marshal from the air force, Vice Admiral or Admiral from the navy, and Lieutenant General or General from the army as the CDS.**
 - Earlier, only the chiefs of the three armed services could be appointed as the CDS.
- For appointment of **retired officers, the respective individuals should be less than 62 years of age.**
 - The term of the CDS can be **extended until 65 years of age.**

Proposal for 5G Spectrum Auction Approved

The Union Cabinet approved the proposal to **conduct the [5G Spectrum Auctions](#).**

What is the 5G Technology?

- **About:**
 - 5G is the **5th generation mobile network.**

- It is a **new global wireless standard after 1G, 2G, 3G, and 4G networks.**
- It enables a new kind of network that is designed to **connect virtually everyone and everything together including machines, objects, and devices.**
- **Significance:**
 - Useful across 3 main connected services, including **enhanced mobile broadband, mission-critical communications, and the massive Internet of Things (IoT).**
 - Combined with the [Internet of Things \(IoT\)](#), [cloud](#), [big data](#), [Artificial Intelligence](#), and [edge computing](#), **5G could be a critical enabler of the [fourth industrial revolution](#).**
 - 5G technology would also bring **positive changes in the governance of the country, ease of living and ease of doing business.**
 - This will also **increase convenience and create many employment opportunities.**

What are the Key Features of the Proposal?

- A total of **72,098 megahertz (MHz) of spectrum in the following frequency bands will be up for auction:**
 - **Low frequency:** 600 MHz, 700 MHz, 800 MHz, 900 MHz, 1800 MHz, 2100 MHz, and 2300 MHz.
 - **Mid-frequency:** 3300 MHz.
 - **High-frequency:** 26 GHz.
- **Key terms and conditions for allocation are:**
 - **The allocation period will be 20 years.**
 - Upfront payment of bid amount is not required, **payment can be in 20 equal annual instalments**
 - Recurring spectrum **usage charges will not be applicable.**
 - Spectrum **may be surrendered after 10 years** with no future liability for balance instalments.

National Air Sports Policy Released

The **Ministry of Civil Aviation** released the [National Air Sports Policy, 2022](#). The draft Policy was released in January 2022.

- Air sports includes various sports activities **which involve the medium of air such as parachuting and hang gliding.** The Policy covers eleven such air sports.
- The Policy envisions **India as one of the top air sports nations by 2030.**

What is the National Air Sports Policy 2022?

- **Objectives:**
 - Promote an air sports culture in the country.
 - Enable adoption of international good practices in safety including but not limited to, air sports infrastructure, equipment, operations, maintenance and training.
 - Develop a simple, stakeholder-friendly and effective governance structure.
 - Enhance participation and success of Indian sportspersons in global air sports events.
 - Promote design, development and manufacturing of air sports equipment in India in line with the Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan.
- **4-tier Governance structure:**
 - [Air Sports Federation of India](#) (ASFI) (Apex governing body)
 - ASFI will be an autonomous body under the Ministry of Civil Aviation and provide governance over all aspects of air sports such as regulation, certification, and penalties.
 - It will be chaired by the Secretary of the Ministry of Civil Aviation.
 - National associations for individual air sports or set of air sports
 - Regional or state-level air sports associations
 - District-level air sports association.
- **Sports Covered:**

- Aerobatics, Aero modeling and model rocketry, Amateur-built and experimental aircraft, Ballooning, Drones, Gliding and powered gliding, Hang gliding and powered hang gliding, Parachuting (including skydiving, BASE jumping and wing suits etc.), Paragliding and paramotoring (including powered parachute trikes etc.), Powered aircraft (including ultra-light, micro light and light sports aircraft etc.), Rotorcraft (including autogyro).

Bharat New Car Assessment Programme

The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways released the **Draft Central Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Rules, 2022**.

- The draft Rules have been published under the **Motor Vehicles Act, 1988** and seek to amend the **Central Motor Vehicles Rules, 1989**.
- The draft Rules seek to **introduce the [Bharat New Car Assessment Programme \(BNCAP\)](#) for assessing crash safety performance of cars.**

What are the Key Features of the BNCAP?

- Cars that weigh up to **3.5 tonnes** and can carry up to **eight passengers** (excluding the driver) will be eligible for the assessment.
 - The cars may be **manufactured in the country or be imported**.
- Testing agencies that are **accredited by the Ministry and have testing infrastructure, skilled workforce, and proven testing records** will be authorised to assess the cars and provide them with a star rating.
- The **star rating will be awarded on the basis of the car's performance** in three areas:
 - Adult occupation protection.
 - Child occupation protection.
 - Safety assist technologies.
- BNCAP will be a **voluntary programme monitored by the BNCAP authority**.
- The draft Rules are proposed **to be enforced from April 1, 2023**.
 - As per the draft Rules, car manufacturers may **send an application to the BNCAP authority for a star rating**.
 - The testing agency will then **conduct the test, and the BNCAP authority will publish the results on a designated portal**.

Social Justice and Empowerment

Covid-19 Vaccine, Gemcovac for Emergency Use

The [Drugs Controller General of India \(DCGI\)](#) granted **emergency use authorisation to Gemcovac for restricted use in adults**.

- Gemcovac is **India's first indigenous [mRNA COVID-19 vaccine](#)**.
- It has been developed by **Genova Biopharmaceuticals**.

What is mRNA Vaccine Technology?

- **About:**
 - mRNA vaccines **use mRNA to teach our cells how to make a protein or a protein that triggers an immune response inside our bodies**.
 - That immune response, which **produces antibodies, is what protects us from getting infected if the real virus enters our bodies**.
- **Significance:**
 - The indigenous **grown mRNA vaccine platform holds promise to deal with other infectious diseases such as Tuberculosis, Dengue fever, Malaria, Chickungunya, [Rare Genetic diseases](#) and others**.
 - The vaccines can be used for covering a **pan-[Covid-19](#) vaccine with different variants**.

- With that, vaccines can be developed for other diseases.

What are the Other Vaccines Authorized for Emergency Use?

- Apart from Gemcovac, **nine COVID-19 vaccines have been granted emergency use authorisation in India:**
 - [Covishield](#)
 - [Covaxin](#)
 - [Sputnik-V](#)
 - **mRNA-1273 (Moderna vaccine)**
 - **Janssen**
 - **ZyCov-D**
 - **Covovax**
 - [Corbevax](#)
 - **Sputnik light.**
- These vaccines may be **administered to all persons aged 18 years and above.**
- **Covaxin and Corbevax may be administered to children aged between 12-18 years as well.**

Assisted Reproductive Technology Rules Notified

The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare notified the **Assisted Reproductive Technology Rules, 2022** under the [Assisted Reproductive Technology \(ART\) Act, 2021](#).

What is the Assisted Reproductive Technology (ART) Act, 2021?

- The Assisted Reproductive Technology (ART) Act, 2021 seeks to provide for the **regulation of Assisted Reproductive Technology services** in the country.
- The Act defines ART to include all techniques that seek to obtain a pregnancy by handling the **sperm or the oocyte (immature egg cell) outside the human body and transferring the gamete or the embryo into the reproductive system of a woman.**
 - Examples include **gamete donation, [in-vitro fertilisation](#) and gestational surrogacy.**
- ART services are **provided through ART clinics** that offer ART-related treatments & procedures **and ART banks** that store and supply gametes.
- Under the Act, every ART clinic and bank must be registered in the **National Assisted Reproductive Technology and Surrogacy Registry.**

What are the Key Features of the Assisted Reproductive Technology (ART) Rules, 2022?

- **Two level of clinics:**
 - **Level 1 ART clinics**, where only preliminary investigations and intrauterine insemination procedures (where sperm are directly placed in the uterus for fertilisation) may be carried out.
 - **Level 2 ART clinics**, where all investigations and diagnostic and therapeutic procedures in ART may be carried out. This includes advanced procedures like in-vitro fertilisation, where an oocyte is combined with sperm outside the human body.
- **Responsibilities of ART banks:**
 - **Screening, collection and registration** of semen donors and oocyte donors.
 - **Cryopreservation of sperm.**
 - **Maintaining records of all donors** and updating the National Registry with such information.
- **Responsibilities of ART clinics:**
 - **All unused gametes or embryos are preserved** and used for the same recipients and not any other couple.
 - **Genetic testing is done before implantation for embryos** that have a known pre-existing heritable or genetic disease or when it is medically indicated.
 - **No genetic testing is done before implantation for the purpose of sex selection**

- **or for selection** of particular traits due to personal preferences of prospective parents.
- **Consent forms are signed by prospective parents** as specified under the Rules.
- The **commissioning couple/woman have purchased insurance coverage** for the oocyte donor for a period of twelve months.

Rules to Regulate Surrogacy Notified

The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare notified the **Surrogacy (Regulation) Rules, 2022 under the [Surrogacy \(Regulation\) Act, 2021](#)**.

What is the Surrogacy (Regulation) Act, 2021?

- The Act defines **surrogacy** as a **practice where a woman gives birth to a child for an intending couple/woman and agrees to hand over the child** to them after the birth.
- An intending couple is one that has a **medical indication necessitating surrogacy**.
- **An intending woman (Indian citizen, and a widow or divorcee between the age of 35 to 45 years)** can also commission surrogacy.

What are the Key Features of Surrogacy (Regulation) Rules, 2022?

- **Medical Indications Necessitating Surrogacy:**
 - The woman has **no uterus, a missing uterus, an abnormal uterus** or if the uterus has been surgically removed due to a medical condition.
 - The couple/woman has repeatedly **failed to conceive after multiple attempts for [in-vitro fertilisation](#) or intracytoplasmic sperm injection** (sperm is directly injected into the egg).
 - The woman has suffered from **multiple pregnancy losses** due to an unexplained medical reason or unexplained graft rejection due to immune response.
 - Pregnancy **is life-threatening**.
 - The woman suffers from any **illness that makes it impossible to carry a pregnancy** to viability.
- **Modalities of the Surrogacy Procedure:**
 - As per the rules, the surrogacy **procedure shall not be attempted more than three times on the surrogate mother**.
 - Further, the gynaecologist shall **transfer only one embryo in the uterus of a surrogate mother** during a treatment cycle.
 - **In special circumstances**, the gynaecologist may transfer **up to three embryos**.
- **Personnel:**
 - Every surrogacy clinic shall have at least **one gynaecologist, one anaesthetist, one embryologist, and one counsellor**.
 - The gynaecologist must be a:
 - Medical **post-graduate in gynaecology and obstetrics**.
 - should have a **record of performing 50 ovum (mature egg) retrieval processes**.
 - have three years of **working experience in an assisted reproductive technology clinic**.
- **Insurance:**
 - The intending woman or couple must purchase **general health insurance coverage in favour of the surrogate mother for a period of thirty-six months**.
 - The insurance amount must adequately cover expenses arising out of pregnancy and post-partum complications.

Economy

Standing Committee on Commerce's Report

The **Standing Committee on Commerce** (Chair: Mr. V.V. Reddy) presented its report on '**Promotion and Regulation of [E-Commerce](#) in India**'.

What are the Key Observations of the Committee?

- **Competition issues in e-commerce entities:**
 - **Lack of platform neutrality**, i.e., platforms providing preferential treatment to selected sellers.
 - **Deep discounting**, i.e., discounts of preferred sellers are selectively funded by the platform.
 - **Non-transparent search rankings.**
 - **Misuse of data.**
- **FDI Policy:**
 - **FDI policy** on e-Commerce **allows FDI-backed e-commerce entities to operate only as a marketplace.**
 - The Committee observed that the **policy is limited in addressing anti-competitive practices in e-marketplace.**

What are the Key Recommendations of the Committee?

- The Committee recommended **formulating a policy which clearly defines marketplace and inventory-based models of e-commerce.**
- It recommended that marketplace-commerce entities should:
 - **not sell goods** that it owns or controls
 - **not have any direct or indirect relationship with sellers** who sell on the platform
 - **be prohibited from licensing their brand to third party sellers** on the platform.
- The Committee also recommended **prohibition of selective discounts and arbitrary classification of buyers and sellers** on e-commerce platforms.
- To improve transparency in data handling and search rankings, it recommended that the government should to **formulate a clear policy regulating the collection of data on the platform, its use and sharing of such data with third parties.**
- In addition, e-commerce platforms should **publish their criteria for determining rankings, and disclose terms and conditions required to become a seller** on the platform such as platform fee, commissions, and levies.
 - **Unilateral revision of these terms and conditions**, which can be detrimental to any stakeholder, **must be prohibited.**
- The Committee noted that there should be a **framework to address the FDI policy-related issues for both foreign and domestic funded marketplaces.**
 - It recommended including such a **framework in the National E-Commerce Policy.**

RBI Increases Housing Loan Limits for Co-operative Banks

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has recently **increased the limit for individual housing loans that can be extended by [Urban Co-operative Banks \(UCBs\)](#), [State Co-operative Banks \(SCBs\)](#), and [District Central Co-operative Banks \(DCCBs\)](#).**

What are the Key Highlights?

- The limits have been **revised for the first time since 2011** to reflect increase in housing prices.
- **State co-operative banks and district central co-operative banks have been allowed to extend finance** to residential housing for commercial real estate.
- This consists of **loans to builders/developers** for residential housing projects.
- These loans should be **within the current total housing finance limit of 5% of total assets.**