



PRS Capsule - September 2024

Key Highlights of PRS

▪ Polity and Governance

- SC clarifies that browsing or storing child pornography is an offence
- Bombay HC strikes down IT Rules establishing fact check unit
- 23rd Law Commission constituted
- Cabinet expands Ayushman Bharat to include all senior citizens
- Uniform Code for Marketing Practices in medical devices released
- Finance Ministry launches pension scheme for minors
- Cabinet approves Tribal development scheme

▪ Economy

- SEBI approves various decisions at board meeting
- Cabinet approves PM E-DRIVE scheme to promote electric mobility
- Cabinet approves implementation of Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana - IV
- Cabinet approves Nutrient Based Subsidy rates on fertilisers for Rabi season 2024
- Cabinet approves continuation of schemes to prevent volatility in prices

▪ Environment & Science and Technology

- Cabinet approves Mission Mausam to enhance weather research and services
- Cabinet approves continuation of Bio-RIDE scheme to promote R&D in Biotechnology

Polity and Governance

SC Clarifies that Browsing or Storing Child Pornography is an Offence

- The [Protection of Children from Sexual Offences \(POCSO\) Act, 2012](#) criminalises the **storage or possession** of pornographic material under these conditions:
 - With the intention to share or transmit.
 - For displaying (unless for the purpose of reporting).
 - For commercial purposes.
- The [Supreme Court](#) **overruled the Madras High Court judgement** which had held that mere possession was not an offence, as there is no intent to share.
 - It said that **possession was the first step** before sharing. Failure to delete or report it signalled **intention**.
 - The **Court** further provided certain suggestions to the Parliament and the central government. These include:
 - Substituting the term 'child pornography' with '**child sexual exploitation and abuse material**' in the POCSO Act, 2012.
 - Constituting a committee to devise a comprehensive programme for **health and sex education**.
 - Creating an online portal for registering complaints under the POCSO Act, 2012.

Bombay HC Strikes Down IT's Rules Establishing Fact Check Unit (FCU)

- The Bombay High Court struck down a 2023 amendment to the [Information Technology \(Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code\) Rules, 2021](#).

- The Court held that the amended Rules **violated the [right to freedom of speech](#)** and expression under **Article 19** of the Constitution.
- Any restriction placed on this right must be reasonable and conform to the restrictions provided under the Constitution.
- The Court further held that as the **FCU** will be appointed by the executive, the Centre will become the final arbiter of what constitutes false or misleading, violating the **[principle of natural justice](#)**.
- In addition, the Court found the terms 'false or misleading' to be **vague** and overbroad in the absence of any guidelines to identify such items.
- The Court also noted that the amendment was beyond the scope of the **[Information Technology Act, 2000](#)** and therefore could not be a part of the Rules under this Act.

23rd Law Commission Constituted

- The Ministry of Law and Justice constituted the **[23rd Law Commission of India](#)**.
- The tenure of the 23rd Law Commission will last from 1 September 2024 to 31 August 2027.
 - However, the Chairperson and Members have not been appointed yet.

Cabinet Expands Ayushman Bharat to Include All Senior Citizens

- The Union Cabinet approved the expansion of **[Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana \(AB PMJAY\)](#)** to all citizens aged **70 years and above**.
- **Senior citizens** already covered under the scheme will individually receive an extra five lakh rupees as health insurance.
- Expansion of the scheme will **extend insurance coverage** to 4.5 crore families (six crore senior citizens).
 - This will also include senior citizens who are already availing benefits of other public and private insurance schemes.

Uniform Code for Marketing Practices in Medical Devices Released

- The **Department of Pharmaceuticals** released the **[Uniform Code for Marketing Practices in Medical Devices, 2024](#)**.
- The Code regulates the branding and promotion of medical devices in the country.
- **Key Features:**
 - **Claims:** Claims made by medical device companies regarding the **usefulness of a medical device** must be based on the latest evidence.
 - **Promotion:** Any promotional material must contain details including:
 - **Generic/brand name** of the medical device.
 - Name/address of the manufacturer/importer and the business name/address of the marketer.
 - **Ethics Committee:** An Ethics Committee for marketing practices in medical devices must be established in **all Indian medical device associations**.
 - It will address grievances regarding compliance with the Code. The Committee should pass an **order within 90 days** of receiving a complaint.
 - The Committee's decision can be appealed before the **Apex Committee**, headed by the Secretary of the Department of Pharmaceuticals within 15 days.

Finance Ministry Launches Pension Scheme for Minors

- The Ministry of Finance announced the **[National Pension System \(NPS\) Vatsalya scheme](#)** for minors.
- **Key Features:**
 - It will be regulated and administered by the **[Pension Fund Regulatory Authority of India \(PFRA\)](#)**.
 - All minor citizens up to the age of 18 years can open an account.
 - A minimum contribution of Rs 1,000 will be needed to open the account.
 - Thereafter, a minimum annual contribution of Rs 1,000 can be deposited in the account.

- The account will be opened in the **name of the minor** and managed by their guardian till adulthood.
- On completing 18 years of age, the NPS Vatsalya account will **transition to a regular account under NPS**.

Cabinet Approves Tribal Development Scheme

- The Union Cabinet approved the [Pradhan Mantri Janjatiya Unnat Gram Abhiyan](#).
 - The programme aims to **uplift tribal communities** by addressing gaps in key sectors such as **social infrastructure, health, education, and livelihood**.
- It comprises **25 interventions** that will be implemented by ministries governing relevant sectors.
- The programme will **cover about 63,000 villages** and aims to benefit about five crore tribal people.
- The goals are:
 - Building enabling **infrastructure**.
 - Promoting skill development and **self-employment**.
 - Improving access to quality **education** and affordable **healthcare**.
- Certain initiatives under the programme include **1000 tribal home stays, sustainable livelihood for 22 lakh forest rights holders**, improvement of infrastructure in tribal and government residential schools, affordable management of [sickle cell disease](#), and 100 multipurpose marketing centres for promoting tribal products.

Economy

SEBI Approves Various Decisions at Board Meeting

- The [Securities and Exchange Board of India \(SEBI\)](#) approved various decisions at its meeting.
 - **Same-Day Settlement:** SEBI increased the scope of the optional same-day settlement cycle for securities. The same-day settlement will co-exist with the current next-day [\(T+1\) settlement cycle](#).
 - **Approval for New Mutual Fund Product:** It seeks to bridge the gap between [mutual funds](#) and portfolio management services by offering greater flexibility in portfolio construction.
 - It will have a minimum investment limit of Rs 10 lakh per investor across products offered by a single asset management company.
 - **Regulatory Framework for Passive Mutual Funds:** SEBI also approved a **new regulatory framework** for passively managed mutual funds.
 - **Funds for Sustainable Finance:** SEBI decided to expand the scope of instruments that can be used by corporates to raise funds for sustainable finance.
 - It will specify frameworks for issuing [social bonds](#), sustainability bonds, and **sustainability-linked bonds**.

Cabinet Approves PM E-DRIVE Scheme to Promote Electric Mobility

- The Union Cabinet approved the [‘PM Electric Drive Revolution in Innovative Vehicle Enhancement’ scheme \(PM E-DRIVE\)](#) for the promotion of electric mobility in the country.
- **Key Features:**
 - **E-vouchers:** Consumers will be provided with e-vouchers at the time of purchase of the electric vehicle.
 - These vouchers can be used to avail subsidies on the purchase price of the vehicle from the dealership.
 - **Allocation for Electric Ambulances, Trucks, and Buses:** Funds have been allocated under the scheme for deploying **electric ambulances and trucks**.
 - Priority will be given to states that procure electric buses after scrapping existing buses at authorised scrapping centres.
 - **Installation of Public Charging Stations:** Public charging stations will be installed in

cities with high EV usage.

- **Upgradation of Test Agencies:** The electric vehicle testing agencies under the **Ministry of Heavy Industries**, will be modernised under the scheme.

Cabinet Approves Implementation of Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana - IV

- The Union Cabinet approved the implementation of the [Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana - IV](#) (PMGSY - IV) between 2024-25 and 2028-29.
- Under this phase, financial assistance will be provided for constructing 62,500 km of **all-weather roads** that will connect 25,000 unconnected habitations.
- This will cover habitations with a population exceeding:
 - 500 in plain areas
 - 250 in North Eastern and hilly states
 - 100 in districts affected by left-wing extremism
- PMGSY-IV will receive a total outlay of Rs 70,125 crore for five years, which will be **borne between the centre and states in a 70:30 ratio**.

Cabinet Approves Nutrient-Based Subsidy Rates on Fertilisers for Rabi Season 2024

- The Union Cabinet approved [Nutrient Based Subsidy rates for phosphatic and potassic \(P&K\)](#) fertilisers for the [Rabi season 2024](#) (October 2024 to March 2025).
- The budgetary requirement for the subsidy is estimated to be around Rs 24,476 crore.

Cabinet Approves Continuation of Schemes to Prevent Volatility in Prices

- The Union Cabinet approved the continuation of schemes under the [Pradhan Mantri Annadata Aay Sanrakshan Abhiyan \(PM-AASHA\)](#).
- These schemes include:
 - [Price Support Scheme](#)
 - [Price Stabilisation Fund](#)
 - [Price Deficit Payment Scheme](#)
 - [Market Intervention Scheme](#)
- The objective of these schemes is to **provide remunerative prices** to farmers and control the price volatility of essential commodities for consumers.
- Under the Price Support Scheme for **notified pulses, oilseeds, and copra**, the Centre has decided to **procure 25% of national production** at [minimum support price](#) from 2024-25 onwards.
- To encourage states to implement the Price Deficit Payment Scheme for notified oilseeds, the Centre has increased support by **enhancing coverage** of the scheme from 25% to 40% of state production of oilseeds.
- Under the Market Intervention Scheme, the support has been **increased from 20% to 25% of production** for perishable horticulture crops such as onions and tomatoes.

Environment

Cabinet Approves Mission Mausam to Enhance Weather Research and Services

- The Union Cabinet approved [Mission Mausam](#) to improve weather and climate-related research and services in the country.
 - It aims to **support research and development** in weather surveillance, modelling, forecasting, and management.
 - It will help **deal with extreme weather** events and the impact of climate change.
 - The programme will **facilitate the use of technologies** in weather research and forecasting. These will include use of:
 - [Artificial intelligence](#) and [machine learning](#)

- Next-generation [radars](#) and [satellite systems](#)
- High-performance [supercomputers](#).
- Three institutes under the **Ministry of Earth Sciences** will be responsible for implementing the Mission. These are:
 - The India Meteorological Department
 - The Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology
 - The National Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasting

Cabinet Approves Continuation of Bio-RIDE Scheme to Promote R&D in Biotechnology

- The Union Cabinet approved the continuation of the two umbrella schemes of the Department of Biotechnology, merged as one scheme, namely [‘Biotechnology Research Innovation and Entrepreneurship Development’ \(Bio-RIDE\)](#).
- The scheme aims to **promote bio-entrepreneurship** and advanced research through:
 - Grants and incentives
 - Academia-industry collaborations
 - Extra-mural funding
 - Capacity building
- A new component of the scheme will also focus on **Biomanufacturing and Biofoundry**.
 - Under this component, **Indigenous solutions** will be promoted to enhance:
 - Healthcare outcomes
 - Agriculture productivity
 - The state of the bioeconomy
 - The commercialisation of bio-based products like biofuels, pharmaceuticals, and bio-plastics

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