Monthly Policy Review

December 2022

Highlights of this Issue

Winter Session 2022 concludes; seven Bills passed; two Bills referred to JPC (p. 2)

Parliament sat for 13 days, and adjourned four days ahead of schedule. The Multi-State Co-operative Societies Bill, 2022, and the Jan Vishwas Bill, 2022 were introduced and referred to Joint Committees.

Repo rate increased to 6.25%, standing deposit facility rate increased to 6% (p. 2)

The Monetary Policy Committee revised its projection for real GDP growth in 2022-23 from 7% to 6.8%. Retail inflation in 2022-23 is projected to be 6.7%.

First Supplementary Demands for Grants for 2022-23 passed by Parliament (p. 3)

The supplementary demands propose an incremental cash outgo of Rs 3.26 lakh crore. The fertilizer and food subsidy are proposed to be financed through this incremental cash outgo.

Parliament passes the Energy Conservation (Amendment) Bill, 2022 (p. 6)

The Bill regulates the energy consumed by equipment, appliances, and industries. It empowers the central government to specify a carbon credit trading scheme, and specifies an energy conservation code for buildings.

Anti-Maritime Piracy Bill, 2019 passed by Parliament (p. 6)

The Bill enables prosecution of maritime piracy on the high seas. It provides for life imprisonment for piracy and death penalty if the act of piracy causes death.

Standing Committee tables report on the Competition (Amendment) Bill, 2022 (p. 3)

The Committee recommended that the Bill should provide for the manner of calculation of deal value, for regulation of combinations, through regulations.

Committees submit reports on various issues and implementation of schemes

Reports submitted include an examination of anti-competitive practices by big tech, coal imports, national institutes for different disabilities, and welfare measures for war widows.

Current account deficit at 4.4% of GDP in the second quarter of 2022-23 (p. 2)

The current account deficit was USD 9.7 billion (1.3% of GDP) in the second quarter of 2021-22. The current account deficit increased on account of an increase in merchandise trade deficit and outgo of investment income.

Cabinet approves free distribution of foodgrains under NFSA (p. 9)

Free food grains will be provided until December 2023. It is expected to benefit around 81 crore people and incur an expenditure of more than two lakh crore rupees.

22nd Law Commission invites comments on simultaneous elections (p. 9)

The 21st Commission in its draft report recommended that no-confidence motion be replaced with a constructive vote of no confidence, i.e., government may only be removed if there is confidence in an alternate government.

Comments invited on Draft Bill to protect geoheritage sites and geo-relics (p. 11)

The draft Bill empowers the central government to declare a site as a geoheritage site of national importance. It penalises offences such as destruction or misuse of a geoheritage site, or illegally moving a geo-relic.

Guidelines issued to make sport facilities accessible to persons with disabilities (p. 13)

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.

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Parliament

Winter Session 2022 concludes; seven Bills passed, two Bills referred to JPC

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The Winter Session of Parliament was held from December 7, 2022 to December 23, 2022. Parliament sat for 13 days, and adjourned sine die four working days ahead of the planned schedule.

Seven Bills were introduced during the session. The Multi-State Co-operative Societies Bill, 2022, and the Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Bill, 2022 were introduced and subsequently referred to Joint Committees. Four Bills were introduced to amend the Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order, 1950. Two of these were passed. Five Bills introduced in earlier sessions were also passed. These include: (i) the Wild Life (Protection) Amendment Bill, 2021, (ii) the Energy Conservation (Amendment) Bill, 2022, (iii) the New Delhi International Arbitration Centre (Amendment) Bill, 2022, (iv) the Anti-Maritime Piracy Bill, 2019, and (v) the Constitution (Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes) Orders (Second Amendment) Bill, 2022.

For more details on legislative business transacted during the Winter Session 2022, see here.

For details on the functioning of Parliament during the session, see here.

Standing Committees identify subjects for examination during 2022-23

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Two of the 24 Departmentally Related Standing Committees of Parliament identified subjects for detailed examination during the year 2022-23. These are listed in the Annexure. The Standing Committee on Defence identified an additional subject 'A Review of Sainik Schools' for examination.

So far 19 of the Committees have identified their subjects for 2022-23. The list is available in the Monthly Policy Reviews for October 2022 and November 2022.

Macroeconomic Development

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Repo rate and standing deposit facility rate increased to 6.25% and 6%, respectively

The Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) increased the policy repo rate (the rate at which RBI lends money to banks) from 5.9% to 6.25%.[1] Other decisions of the Committee include:

- The standing deposit facility rate (the rate at which the RBI borrows from the banks without giving collateral) has been increased from 5.65% to 6%.
- The marginal standing facility rate (the rate at which banks can borrow additional money from RBI), and the bank rate (the rate at which RBI buys bills of exchange) have both been increased from 6.15% to 6.5%.
- The MPC decided to remain focused on the withdrawal of accommodation to ensure that inflation remains within the target going forward, while supporting growth.

The Committee revised its projection for real GDP growth in 2022-23 from 7% to 6.8%.[1,2] Retail inflation in 2022-23 is projected to be 6.7%.

Current account deficit at 4.4% of GDP in the second quarter of 2022-23

India recorded a current account deficit of USD 36.4 billion (4.4% of GDP) in the second quarter (July-September) of 2022-23, as compared to a deficit of USD 9.7 billion (1.3% of GDP) in the corresponding quarter of 2021-22.[3] The current account deficit increased on account of an increase in merchandise trade deficit and an increase in net outgo of investment income. In the first quarter (April-June) of 2022-23, current account deficit was USD 18.2 billion (2.2% of GDP).

The capital account registered a net inflow of USD 6.9 billion in the second quarter of 2022-23 as compared to a net inflow of USD 39.6 billion in the second quarter of 2021-22. Foreign exchange reserves decreased by USD 30.4 billion in the second quarter of 2022-23 as compared to an increase of USD 31.2 billion in the corresponding quarter of 2021-22.

Table 1: Balance of payments, Q2 2022-23 (USD billion)

	Q2 2021-22	Q1 2022-23	Q2 2022-23
Current Account	-9.7	-18.2	-36.4
Capital Account	39.6	22.1	6.9
Errors and Omissions	1.3	0.7	-0.9
Change in reserves	31.2	4.6	-30.4

Sources: RBI; PRS.

Finance

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First Supplementary Demands for Grants for 2022-23 passed by Parliament

Parliament passed the first Supplementary Demands for Grants (DFG) for 2022-23.[4] The first Supplementary DFG propose an incremental cash outgo of Rs 3.26 lakh crore, an increase of 8.3% in expenditure over the budget estimate of Rs 39.45 lakh crore.

Table 2: Net cash outgo proposed across key ministries under the first Supplementary DFG 2022-23 (Rs crore)

Ministry	Net Cash outgo proposed
Total Expenditure	3,25,757
of which:	
Chemicals and Fertilisers	1,09,313
Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution	80,348
Rural Development	45,177
Petroleum and Natural Gas	24,944
Road Transport and Highways	17,919
Home Affairs	12,236

Sources: First Supplementary DFG 2022-23, Ministry of Finance; PRS.

The expenditure items proposed to be financed through the incremental cash outgo of Rs 3.26 lakh crore include the following:

- **Fertiliser subsidy:** The government sought approval of Rs 86,165 crore for payment of indigenous and imported urea subsidy. This is an increase of 136% over the budget allocation of Rs 63,222 crore for urea subsidy in 2022-23. In November 2022, the central government increased the subsidy rates for nutrient based fertilisers for the Rabi season 2022-23 (October 1, 2022 to March 31, 2023).[5]
- **Food subsidy:** The government sought approval of Rs 60,110 crore towards food subsidy under National Food Security Act, 2013 and Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY). The government had allocated Rs 2.07 lakh crore for food subsidy in the budget for 2022-23. The proposed additional cash outgo on food subsidy is 29% of the budget allocation. In September 2022, the central government extended the PMGKAY till December 2022.[6]

Report of the Standing Committee on the Competition (Amendment) Bill, 2022 submitted

The Standing Committee on Finance (Chair: Mr. Jayant Sinha) submitted its report on the Competition (Amendment) Bill, 2022.[7] The Bill seeks to amend the Competition Act, 2002. The Act establishes the Competition Commission of India (CCI) for regulating market competition. Key observations and recommendations of the Committee include:

- **Deal value threshold:** The Act prohibits any person or enterprise from entering into a combination which may cause an appreciable adverse effect on competition. Combinations imply mergers, acquisitions, or amalgamation of enterprises. The prohibition applies based on certain thresholds on cumulative assets and cumulative turnover. The Bill expands the definition of combinations to include transactions with a value above Rs 2,000 crore. The Committee noted that the Bill does not provide guidance on how the deal value will be calculated. This can potentially bring transactions which are unlikely to cause an appreciable adverse effect on competition under CCI's scrutiny. It recommended that the Bill should provide for the manner of calculation of transaction value to be determined by regulations.
- The Bill further provides that for the application of the deal value threshold, an enterprise which is a party to the transaction should have substantial business operations in India. The Committee recommended that the criterion should be applied only to the enterprises that are being acquired.
- **Time limit for approval of combinations**: The Bill proposes to reduce the timeline for the CCI to pass an order on approval of combinations from 210 days to 150 days. It also seeks to fix a timeline of 20 days for the CCI to form a prima facie opinion on whether a combination would cause an appreciable adverse effect on competition. The Committee observed that the proposed timelines will put undue burden on the CCI. It recommended against changing the existing timelines.

For a PRS summary of the report, see here and for a PRS analysis of the Bill, see here.

Standing Committee submits report on anti-competitive practices by big tech companies

The Standing Committee on Finance (Chair: Mr. Jayant Sinha) submitted its report on 'Anti-Competitive Practices by Big Tech Companies'.[8] Key observations and recommendations of the Committee include:

- **Regulating digital markets:** Digital markets comprise of internet based (digital) companies with millions of interacting participants. The Committee noted that, unlike physical markets, digital markets have increasing returns to size (returns of business increasing with size of the firm) driven by learning and network effects (utility of users growing with number of users on the platform). As a result, such markets may be dominated with a few leading players emerging in a short period. This happens even before policies can be formulated and anti-competitive practices are adjudicated. The Committee recommended that competitive behaviour needs to be evaluated before markets end up monopolised instead of the ex-post evaluation done presently.

- **Digital Gatekeepers:** The Committee recommended that India must identify the leading players in digital markets that can negatively influence competitive conduct. They should be categorised as Systemically Important Digital Intermediaries (SIDIs) based on their revenue, market capitalisation, and the number of active businesses and end users. SIDIs should annually submit a report to the Competition Commission of India (CCI) detailing the measures taken to comply with various mandatory obligations.
- **Digital Competition Act:** The Committee observed that India needs to enhance its competition law to address the needs of the digital market. Economic drivers of this market facilitate a few players in dominating the ecosystem. The Committee recommended that the government should introduce a Digital Competition Act to ensure a fair and transparent digital ecosystem.

For a PRS summary of the report, see here.

IRDAI notifies regulation for registration of Indian insurance companies

The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) notified the IRDAI (Registration of Indian Insurance Companies) Regulations, 2022.[9] 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.[10,11] Key features of the 2022 Regulations are:

- **Permissible insurance business:** The Regulations prescribe certain classes of insurance business for which an application of registration must be made. These include: (i) life insurance, (ii) general insurance, (iii) health insurance, and (iv) reinsurance. An applicant shall not be eligible to apply for registration if: (i) the registration application has been rejected by IRDAI or withdrawn by the applicant during the last two financial years, (ii) the certificate of registration has been cancelled by IRDAI during the last two financial years, or (iii) 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.

SEBI invites comments on strengthening investor grievance redressal mechanism

The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) released a consultation paper on using online dispute resolution mechanisms for complaints resolution in the securities market.[12] Currently, market infrastructure institutions (MIIs) (stock and commodity exchanges) have a three-step process for resolving disputes: (i) mediation/conciliation by Investor Grievance Redressal Committee, (ii) arbitration, and (iii) appellate arbitration. SEBI noted that there is scope to make grievance redressal more efficient and accessible. MIIs would now be required to conduct dispute resolution proceedings online. This proposal has been driven based on the report of an internal working group. Key features include:

- **Hybrid approach for mediation:** SEBI noted that MII administered online mediation/conciliation enable time and cost savings for the parties involved. SEBI has proposed that investors should also have the option to participate physically if they are not comfortable with online proceedings. This would address concerns of the digital divide such as low internet speed and low digital literacy.
- **Panel of mediators:** Investor Grievance Redressal Committee is constituted by the MIIs for mediating/conciliating disputes or grievances between parties. SEBI has proposed to rename the committee as a Panel of Mediators and/or Conciliators. The dispute should be resolved within 21 days as against the current time limit of 15 days. If the dispute is not resolved within the proposed time limit, it will be referred for an online arbitration.
- **Arbitration:** In MII-administered arbitration for matters involving claims up to Rs 25 lakh, single arbitrator is appointed. For claims greater than Rs 25 lakh, a panel of three arbitrators is appointed. SEBI has proposed to do away with the requirement of more than one arbitrator irrespective of the claim amount. This measure is expected to: (i) reduce costs for the parties and ease coordination issues in forming a panel, and (ii) ensure availability of arbitrators for other cases.
- **Appellate arbitration:** Currently, parties aggrieved by the arbitral award can file an appeal with an appellate panel of arbitrators. The

appellate panel has three arbitrators who are different from the ones who passed the initial award. SEBI has proposed to discontinue the appellate arbitration system.

Comments are invited until January 9, 2023.

SEBI Board approves several measures

The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) approved the following key measures:[13]

- **Governance in MIIs:** SEBI reviewed the governance framework of Market Infrastructure Institutions (MIIs). MIIs include stock exchanges, clearing corporations, and depositories. Their functions will be categorised into: (i) critical operations, (ii) regulatory, compliance, and risk management, and (iii) other functions. MIIs must give higher priority to the first two verticals in terms of resource allocation. MIIs will be required to appoint public interest (independent) directors with expertise in areas of technology, law and regulatory, finance and accounts, and capital markets. MIIs will appoint a separate Chief Risk Officer who would be responsible for handling risks associated with the MII. Appointment and removal of all key managerial personnel (such as Chief Executive Officer) will be done by Nomination and Remuneration Committee.
- **Share buy-back:** The Board approved amendments to the SEBI (Buy-Back of Securities) Regulations, 2018.[14] Buy-back involves the purchase of securities by a company from its investors. Buy-back can be done either through the stock-exchange route or the tender offer route. Under tender offer, the company buys back its securities through an offer letter from the investors. According to the amendments, buy-back through stock exchange route will be gradually phased out.

Comments invited on regulatory framework for index providers

The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) issued a consultation paper on regulatory framework for index providers.[15] An index is made of a group of securities and measures the change in the value of those securities. It helps investors in understanding the health of the market and to study the market sentiment. SEBI noted that various financial products are linked to indices. Indices are also used to gauge the performance of mutual funds. In addition, certain customised indices are created at the request of fund managers and tracked by them. Over the past few years, there has been a proliferation of index providers due to certain schemes allocating money to assets that are part of an index. Currently, benchmarks and indices are owned and managed by entities that are either subsidiaries of stock exchanges or joint ventures between a stock exchange and an index provider. SEBI noted that there was a possibility of conflict of interest in the governance and administration of indices/benchmarks.

Based on the recommendations of a working group and the Secondary Market Advisory Committee, SEBI has proposed a regulatory framework for index providers. It will apply to domestic and foreign index providers if the users of their products are based in India. Index providers offering indices for use in India will be registered with SEBI. Only incorporated entities and not independent professionals will be eligible to function as index providers. They must have a minimum net worth of Rs 25 crore and a track record of at least five years in index administration. Index providers will be required to form an oversight committee for reviewing the index design. The committee would also review any proposed changes to the benchmarking method.

Comments are invited until January 27, 2023.

RBI revises regulatory framework for urban co-operative banks

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) revised the regulatory framework for urban co-operative banks.[16,17] RBI has introduced a four-tiered regulatory framework for urban co-operative banks (UCBs). Earlier, tier 1 UCBs included banks with a single branch or banks having multiple branches in a single district with deposits up to Rs 100 crore. All other UCBs were classified under tier 2.[18] Details of the revised framework are:

Table 3: Revised regulatory framework for UCBs

Category	Deposit Size	Minimum Net Worth	Capital Adequacy
Tier 1	Unit UCBs and salary earners' UCBs of any deposit size; other UCBs with deposits up to Rs 100 crore	Two crore rupees for UCBs in a single district; five crore rupees for other UCBs	9% of risk weighted assets
Tier 2	More than Rs 100 crore and up to Rs 1,000 crore	Five crore rupees	12% of risk weighted assets
Tier 3	More than Rs 1,000 crore and up to Rs 10,000 crore		
Tier 4	More than Rs 10,000 crore		

Sources: RBI; PRS.

In addition, select UCBs will be categorised as Financially Sound and Well Managed if they fulfil certain criteria [19] These criteria include: (i) capital adequacy of at least one percentage point higher than the prescribed minimum, (ii) net non-performing asset ratio not more than 3%, and (iii) net profit for at least three of the preceding four years.

Power

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Energy Conservation (Amendment) Bill, 2022 passed by Parliament

The Energy Conservation (Amendment) Bill, 2022 was passed by Parliament.[20] The Bill amends the Energy Conservation Act, 2001.[21] The Act promotes energy efficiency and conservation. It provides for the regulation of energy consumption by equipment, appliances, buildings, and industries. Key features of the Bill are:

- **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: (i) industries such as mining, steel, cement, textile, chemicals, and petrochemicals, (ii) transport sector including Railways, and (iii) 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. The code 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.

For a PRS analysis of the Bill, please see here.

Floor price for Energy Savings Certificates notified

The Central Electricity Regulatory Commission (CERC) notified amendments to the CERC (Terms and Conditions for Dealing in Energy Savings Certificates) Regulations, 2016.[22,23] The regulations provide a framework for trading Energy Savings Certificates. These certificates are tradable instruments issued by the Bureau of Energy Efficiency to those notified industries which have overachieved their energy-savings targets under the Perform, Achieve, and Trade (PAT) scheme. Under this scheme, reductions in specific energy-saving targets are assigned to designated consumers for a three-year cycle. Certificates may be traded with underachievers at power exchanges. The amendments add that these certificates must be traded above a floor price. The floor price will be fixed at 10% of the price of one metric tonne of oil equivalent of energy consumed. The central government will notify this price for every three-year PAT cycle.

External Affairs

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Anti-Maritime Piracy Bill, 2019 passed by Parliament

The Anti-Maritime Piracy Bill, 2019 was passed by Parliament.[24] 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.[25] The Bill, as passed, included recommendations made by the Standing Committee on External Affairs, which had examined it.[26] The key features of the Bill, as passed, include:

- **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, 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 (i) imprisonment which may extend to imprisonment for life, or fine, or both, or (ii) death or imprisonment for life, if the act or attempt of piracy includes attempted murder, or causes death.

- **Designated Court:** The central government may notify certain Sessions Courts to be Designated Courts under the Bill. It may also notify the territorial jurisdiction of each Designated Court. Such courts will try offences committed by: (i) a person of any nationality in the custody of the Indian Navy or Coast Guard, (ii) a citizen of India, a resident foreign national in India, or a stateless person. As introduced, the Bill allowed the Court to try a person who is not physically present, but this provision was amended following the Standing Committee's recommendations.

For more details on the Bill, see here.

Standing Committee submits its report on India's soft power and cultural diplomacy

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The Standing Committee on External Affairs (Chair: Mr. P.P. Chaudhary) submitted its report on 'India's Soft Power and Cultural Diplomacy: Prospects and Limitations", on December 12, 2022.[27] The Ministry of External Affairs defines soft power as the ability to influence others through appeal and attraction, using non-coercive means. Key observations and recommendations of the Committee are as follows:

- **Coordination committee:** According to the Ministry, there is an overlapping mandate between different ministries such as the Ministry of Culture and Ministry of Education. This limits India's pursuit of soft power and cultural diplomacy. The Committee had earlier recommended the establishment of an institutionalised coordination mechanism between the Ministry or the Indian Council of Cultural Relations (ICCR) and other line ministries. The Committee noted that there have been no substantive steps taken to establish such a mechanism. It 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 ICCR:** ICCR is an autonomous body under the Ministry of External Affairs. It has a mandate to engage in policy and programme formulation and implementation pertaining to India's external cultural relations. The MEA stated that the restructuring of the ICCR was delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Committee observed the need for a complete remodelling of the structure, mandate and functioning of the ICCR to better project Indian culture. The Committee recommended that the MEA finalise the restructuring of the ICCR. It also recommended that a blueprint of the restructuring may be submitted to the Committee within three months.
- The MEA submitted that the budgetary allocation of the ICCR was inadequate. The Committee observed that the ICCR would require Rs 500 crore to accommodate current demand from embassies and cultural centres. The Committee recommended that the central government should increase ICCR's budgetary allocation by 20% so that it can conduct India's soft power and cultural diplomacy in a robust manner.

For a PRS summary of the Report, please see here.

Tribal Affairs

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Parliament passes two Bills to amend the Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order, 1950

Parliament passed the Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order (Second Amendment) Bill, 2022, and the Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order (Fourth Amendment) Bill, 2022.[28,29] These Bills amend the Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order, 1950, with respect to its application to Tamil Nadu and Karnataka, respectively.[30] The Second Amendment Bill includes the Narikoravan and Kurivikkaran communities in the list of Scheduled Tribes in Tamil Nadu.[28] The Fourth Amendment Bill includes Betta-Kuruba as a synonym for the Kadu Kuruba community in the list of Scheduled Tribes in Karnataka.[29]

For PRS summary of the amendments related to Tamil Nadu and Karnataka, please see here and here.

Lok Sabha passes two Bills to amend the Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order, 1950

Lok Sabha passed the Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order (Third Amendment) Bill, 2022, and the Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order (Fifth Amendment) Bill, 2022.[31,32] The Bills amend the Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order, 1950, with respect to its application in Himachal Pradesh and Chhattisgarh, respectively.[30] As per the Third Amendment Bill, the Hattee community of Trans Giri area of Sirmour district is included in the list of Scheduled Tribes in Himachal Pradesh.[31] The Fifth Amendment Bill, includes the Dhanuhar, Dhanuwar, Kisan, Saunra, Saonra, and Binjhia communities in the list of Scheduled Tribes in Chhattisgarh.[32] The Bill also substitutes names of certain tribal communities in the Constitution Order with corresponding names in the Hindi version of the Madhya Pradesh Reorganisation Act, 2000.[33]

For PRS summary of amendments related to Himachal Pradesh and Chhattisgarh, please see here and here.

Home Affairs

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Multi-State Cooperative Societies (Amendment) Bill, 2022 introduced in Lok Sabha

The Multi-State Co-operative Societies (Amendment) Bill, 2022, was introduced in Lok Sabha on December 7, 2022.[34] It amends the Multi-State Co-operative Societies Act, 2002.[35] Multi state co-operative societies operate in more than one state. The Bill was subsequently referred to a Joint Parliamentary Committee for scrutiny. Key provisions of the Bill include the following:

- **Election of board members:** Under the Act, elections to the board of a multi-state co-operative society are conducted by its existing board. The Bill amends this to specify that the central government will establish the Co-operative Election Authority to: (i) conduct such elections, (ii) supervise, direct and control the preparation of electoral rolls, and (iii) perform other prescribed functions. The Authority will consist of a chairperson, vice-chairperson, and up to three members appointed by the central government on the recommendations of a selection committee.
- Further, only active members will be eligible to be elected as a board member or office bearer of the co-operative society. Active members are those who are availing a minimum level of products or services of the society, or attending at least three consecutive general meetings.
- **Redressal of complaints:** As per the Bill, the central government will appoint one or more Co-operative Ombudsman with territorial jurisdiction. The Ombudsman shall inquire into complaints made by members of co-operative societies regarding: (i) their deposits, (ii) equitable benefits of the society's functioning, or (iii) issues affecting the individual rights of the members. The Ombudsman shall complete the process of inquiry and adjudication within three months from the receipt of the complaint. Appeals against the directions of the Ombudsman may be filed with the Central Registrar (who is appointed by the central government) within a month.
- **Amalgamation of co-operative societies:** The Act provides for the amalgamation and division of multi-state co-operative societies. This can be done by passing a resolution at a general assembly. It requires at least two-thirds of the members, present and voting. The Bill allows co-operative societies (registered under state laws) to merge into an existing multi-state co-operative society. At least two-thirds of the members of the co-operative society present and voting at a general meeting must pass a resolution to allow such a merger.

For a PRS summary of the Bill, see here.

Commerce and Industry

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Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Bill, 2022 introduced in Lok Sabha

Lok Sabha introduced the Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Bill, 2022, on December 22, 2022.[36] It amends 42 Acts to reduce the compliance burden on individuals and businesses and ensure ease of doing business. Some Acts that are amended by the Bill include: the Indian Post Office Act, 1898, the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986, the Public Liability Insurance Act, 1991, and the Information Technology Act, 2000. The Bill has been referred to a Joint Parliamentary Committee. Key provisions of the Bill include:

- **Decriminalising certain offences:** Under the Bill, several offences with an imprisonment term in certain Acts have been decriminalised by imposing only a monetary penalty. For example, under the Agricultural Produce (Grading and Marking) Act, 1937, counterfeiting grade designation marks is punishable with imprisonment of up to three years and a fine of up to five thousand rupees.[37] The Bill replaces this with a penalty of eight lakh rupees. Grade designation mark indicates the quality of an article under the 1937 Act. Under the Information Technology Act, 2000, disclosing personal information in breach of a lawful contract is punishable with imprisonment of up to three years, or a fine of up to five lakh rupees, or both.[38] The Bill replaces this with a penalty of upto Rs 25 lakh.
- In certain Acts, offences have been decriminalised by imposing a penalty instead of a fine. For instance, under the Patents Act, 1970, a person selling a falsely represented article as patented in India is subject to a fine of up to one lakh rupees.[39] The Bill replaces the fine with a penalty, which may be up to ten lakh rupees. In case of a continuing claim, there shall be an additional penalty of one thousand rupees per day.
- **Revision of fines and penalties:** The Bill increases the fines and penalties for various offences in the specified Acts. Further, these fines and penalties will be increased by 10% of the minimum amount every three years.

For a PRS summary of the Bill, please see here.

Scheme for refund of taxes on exports expanded to include chemicals, pharmaceuticals, iron and steel articles

Tushar Chakrabarty (tushar@prsindia.org)

The Ministry of Commerce and Industry has expanded the sectors covered under the Remission of Duties and Taxes on Exported Products (RoDTEP) scheme.[40] The scheme will now cover exported goods from chemicals, pharmaceuticals, and iron and steel sectors. Under RoDTEP, central, state, and local taxes/duties on exports are rebated or refunded.

Law and Justice

Repealing and Amending Bill, 2022 introduced in Lok Sabha

Siddharth Mandrekar Rao (siddharth@prsindia.org)

The Repealing and Amending Bill, 2022, was introduced in the Lok Sabha.[41] It seeks to repeal 65 laws that are obsolete or that have been made redundant by other laws. It also corrects a minor drafting error in the Factoring Regulation Act, 2011.[42] Key features of the Bill include the following:

- **Repeal of laws:** The First Schedule of the Bill lists 24 laws that would be repealed. Of these, 16 are amending Acts, and two are from before 1947.
- **Repeal of Appropriation Acts:** The Second Schedule of the Bill lists 41 Appropriation Acts that would be repealed. These Acts span the years from 2013 to 2017.

For a PRS summary of the Bill, see here.

Comments invited on simultaneous elections

Tanvi Vipra (tanvi@prsindia.org)

The 22nd Law Commission of India has invited comments on conducting simultaneous elections.[43] The 21st Commission had prepared a draft report on simultaneous elections and made recommendations such as advancing or postponing election timings of certain states and replacing the no-confidence motion with a constructive vote of no confidence, i.e., the government may only be removed if there is confidence in an alternate government.[44]

The current Commission (22nd) has invited comments on the following questions: (i) whether holding simultaneous elections would affect the basic structure of the Constitution or federal polity, (ii) in cases where no political party has majority to form government, whether the Prime Minister or Chief Minister can be appointed in the same manner as the Speaker of the House or Assembly, and whether it would require an amendment to the Tenth Schedule, (iii) whether any recommendations in the draft report violate the Constitution, (iv) whether any additional Articles in the Constitution (other than those in the draft report) must be amended, and (v) if there are any additional issues that require elaborate study.

Comments are invited until January 15, 2023.

For a PRS summary of the draft Report, see here.

Food and Public Distribution

Tushar Chakrabarty (tushar@prsindia.org)

Cabinet approves free distribution of foodgrains under NFSA

The Union Cabinet approved the free distribution of foodgrains for one year under the National Food Security Act (NFSA), 2013.[45,46] Under the NFSA, the government provides rice at three rupees per kg, wheat at two rupees per kg, and coarse grains at one rupee per kg to eligible beneficiaries. The free provision of foodgrains will be applicable till December 31, 2023. As per the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, it is expected to benefit around 81 crore people and will entail an expenditure of more than two lakh crore rupees for the central government.

Women and Child Development

Alaya Purewal (alaya@prsindia.org)

Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana Rules, 2022 notified

The Ministry of Women and Child Development notified the Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMY) Rules, 2022, under the National Food Security Act, 2013.[47,48] They replace the Indira Gandhi Matritva Sahyog Rules, 2016.[49] The 2022 Rules provide a framework for extending maternity benefits to eligible beneficiaries. Key features include:

- **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: (i) belong to scheduled castes or scheduled tribes, (ii) are partially disabled (40%) or fully disabled, (iii) are holders of BPL ration card/E-shram card/MNREGA job cards, (iv) are beneficiaries under Pradhan Mantri Jan Aarogya Yojana, or (v) have a net family income of less than eight lakh rupees per annum.[50] 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: (i) an anganwadi centre set up under the Integrated Child Developed Services, (ii) an approved health facility of Health and Family Welfare Department of their respective state government or union territory, or (iii) 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: (i) registers the pregnancy, and (ii) 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.

Social Justice and Empowerment

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Standing Committee submits report on National Institutes for different disabilities

The Standing Committee on Social Justice and Empowerment (Chair: Ms. Rama Devi) submitted its report on 'Review of the functioning of National Institutes established for different types of disabilities'.[51] The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment has set up nine national institutes for different disabilities under the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities. Key observations and recommendations of the Committee are as follows:

- **Review of institutes and composite regional centres:** 11 Regional Centres (RCs) of five National Institutes have been set up. Additionally, some National Institutes have Composite Regional Centres (CRCs) for skill development, rehabilitation, and empowerment. The Committee observed that the infrastructure of many RCs and CRCs is inadequate. Several centres are being run in temporary/rental buildings and many CRCs are under construction. The Committee recommended the Department develop a mechanism to ensure the establishment of approved CRCs in a time bound manner. It further recommended that the performance of the institutes and CRCs be periodically reviewed.
- **Underutilisation of funds:** The Committee observed that the Department had failed to spend the grant-in-aid to institutes and CRCs from 2018-19 to 2021-22. It further observed that the number of beneficiaries had decreased from 2017-18 to 2020-21, despite the opening of two institutes. The Committee observed that there was a need to take effective measures to fully utilise budgetary allocation/grant-in-aid by all institutes/RCs/CRCs. It also recommended that the Department allocate 10% of its budget to the North-Eastern states.
- **Appointment of heads of National Institutes:** The Committee noted that a director level officer heads seven National Institutes, while the remaining two are headed by a Joint Secretary level officer. Further, a two-tier governing structure comprising of the General Council and Executive Council, oversees the functioning of these Institutes. The Committee noted that the appointment of heads of the institutes and their councils are not uniform. The Committee recommended that academicians/experts in different fields of disabilities should be appointed as heads of the National Institutes.

Petroleum

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Standing Committee submits report on implementation of CBG (SATAT)

The Standing Committee on Petroleum and Natural Gas (Chair: Mr. Ramesh Bidhuri) submitted its report on 'Review of Implementation of CBG (SATAT)'.[52] The Sustainable Alternative Towards Affordable Transportation (SATAT) initiative was launched by the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas (MoPNG) in October 2018. It seeks to promote the use of compressed bio gas (CBG) in transport and domestic sectors. CBG is produced from sources like agricultural residue, cattle dung, and municipal solid waste. Key observations and recommendations of the Committee include:

- **Setting up CBG plants:** The Committee noted that against a target of installing 5,000 CBG plants by 2023-24, only 40 plants have been set up so far. The scheme has not been able to encourage investors/ entrepreneurs to establish CBG plants. The Committee suggested that MoPNG should approach the scheme as an initiative to produce natural gas domestically and in a green and clean form, instead of the current approach of a waste to energy initiative.
- The Committee noted that as on June 1, 2022, 3,263 letters of intent have been issued by oil and

gas marketing companies (OGMCs) to entrepreneurs for setting up of CBG plants. However, only 35 CBG plants have been commissioned so far. Multiple letters of intent have been issued to the same entrepreneur/investor. However, banks are not extending loans for more than one project to entrepreneurs with multiple letters of intent. The Committee noted that multiple letters were issued to show that targets under the scheme will be met. It found the practice to be deceptive on part of MoPNG/OGMCs. It recommended setting up a committee to review the letters issued and frame guidelines for issue of fresh letters.

- **Financial assistance:** The Ministry of New and Renewable Energy implemented a Central Financial Assistance scheme for extending support to new and renewable energy projects including CBG projects. The scheme has been discontinued since April 2021. The Committee recommended that the scheme be reintroduced. It also suggested providing generation-based incentives instead of capex-based incentives for CBG plants. This would provide incentives for producing gas and keeping the plants operational instead of only setting it up. It also recommended that oil PSUs which have healthy balance sheets and are profit making should setup a financial institution to finance bio-fuel and clean energy projects. The Committee recommended creating a Bio Fuel Infrastructure Fund under MoPNG for development of the sector.

For a PRS summary of the report, see here.

Mining

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Comments invited on Draft Bill to protect geoheritage sites and geo-relics

The Ministry of Mines has released the draft Geoheritage Sites and Geo-relics (Preservation and Maintenance) Bill, 2022.[53] The Ministry noted that in the absence of a legislation for the protection of geoheritage sites, they are threatened with destruction due to decay, population pressure, and changing social and economic conditions. Key features include:

- **Declaration of geoheritage sites:** The central government may declare a site as a geoheritage site of national importance. Geoheritage 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 geoheritage sites:** The draft Bill empowers the central government to acquire, preserve, and maintain geoheritage 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 (i) destruction or misuse of a geoheritage site, (ii) illegal construction, and (iii) damaging or illegally moving a geo-relic. These offences are punishable with a fine of up to five lakh rupees or imprisonment of up to six months, or both.

Comments are invited until January 14, 2023.

Standing Committee submits report on import of coal

The Standing Committee on Coal, Mines, and Steel (Chair: Mr Rakesh Singh) presented its report on 'Import of Coal—Trends and Issue of Self-reliance'.[54] The Committee observed that the demand is expected to grow by 4-5% in 2022-23. However, domestic supply of high-quality coal, including coking coal used by steel and iron industries, is limited. The production of prime coking coal is also limited, which makes coking coal and prime coking coal non-substitutable. Coking coal is coal which has been heated to remove non-combustible impurities. The Committee noted measures taken by Coal India Limited (CIL) to reduce import dependence. These include: (i) increasing the minimum assured level of supply to consumers from 75% of the Annual Contracted Quantity to 80%, and (ii) enabling coal consumers to purchase coal through letters of credit. The Committee recommended exploring new mining sites and increasing efforts to open mines in these areas. It also noted that more coal washeries are required to reduce import dependence. Other recommendations to reduce import dependence include the following:

- **Auctioning mines on a revenue-sharing basis:** The Committee recommended that the Ministry of Mines auction more mines on a revenue-sharing basis to encourage public or private players to enter mining.
- **Mechanisation of mining:** It also recommended increased mechanisation of mining processes, as this would increase productivity and safety.
- **Rationalisation of transport costs:** It recommended that the central government pursue the rationalisation of railway freight charges and port handling charges, with the relevant ministries

or departments.

- **Acquisition of overseas coal blocks:** The Committee also recommended that the Ministry of Coal and CIL continue to explore the possibility of acquiring coal mines in other countries to secure supplies of high-quality coking coal.

For a PRS summary of the report, please see here.

Defence

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Standing Committee submits report on welfare measures for war widows

The Standing Committee on Defence (Chair: Mr. Jual Oram) submitted its report on 'Assessment of Welfare Measures Available to War Widows/Families in Armed Forces'.[55] War widows or 'Veer-Naris' are the women who have lost their husbands in war/military operation. Key recommendations include:

- **Department for welfare of war widows**: The Committee noted that various schemes for the welfare of veer-nari/next of kins are currently administered by the Department of Ex-Servicemen Welfare and its attached offices. There is no exclusive department in the Ministry of Defence to oversee the welfare measures of the families of martyred soldiers. It recommended creating a dedicated department in the Ministry responsible for the welfare of veer nari/next of kins to enable a close examination of their issues and an efficient delivery of welfare benefits.
- **Ex-gratia benefits**: Ex-gratia compensation of death is paid to the eligible family member of martyred soldier. This amount varies depending on the cause of death of the soldier and ranges between Rs 25 lakh to Rs 45 lakh. The Committee recommended that the government should consider increasing this by Rs 10 lakh across all categories of cases of death. It also recommended that family pension should be increased from 60% of emoluments to 75% of emoluments in cases of death/disability due to causes attributed to or aggravated by military service. States also give additional ex-gratia benefits to the families of martyred soldiers. However, this has wide inter-state variations. The Committee recommended sensitising state governments to bring in uniformity in granting ex-gratia payment benefits.

Health and Family Welfare

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"INCOVACC" Intra-nasal COVID-19 vaccine to be rolled out on CoWIN platform

The "INCOVACC" intra-nasal COVID-19 vaccine, developed by Bharat Biotech, will be rolled out on the CoWIN platform in January 2023.[56] The vaccine was previously approved for emergency use by the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation on September 6, 2022.[57,58] The vaccine is priced at Rs 325 for government supplies, and Rs 800 for private markets, excluding GST.[56]

National Health Authority announces Digital Health Incentive Scheme

In order to promote the Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission (ABDM), the National Health Authority has announced the Digital Health Incentive Scheme.[59] ABDM provides for every citizen to have their health records stored digitally in a consolidated database, to facilitate easier access when receiving medical treatment.[60] 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.[60]

Hospitals and diagnostic labs and facilities are eligible for this scheme. 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.[59] For example, hospitals would receive Rs 20 per transaction above a base level of 50 transactions per bed per month.[59] 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.[59] The maximum incentive that a healthcare facility can receive under this scheme is four crore rupees.[59] The estimated initial financial outlay for this scheme is 50 crore rupees.[61]

Civil Aviation

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DGCA proposes requirement for airlines to compensate passengers for downgraded tickets

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has proposed to amend the Civil Aviation Requirements, that are standards and rules formulated by the DGCA.[62] The amendments require airlines to compensate a passenger for the full value of their ticket when it is downgraded.[63] Further, the passenger must be carried in the next available class free of cost.[63] Downgrading is defined as a change in the booked class of the ticket to a lower class.

Comments are invited until January 23, 2023.

Sports

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Guidelines issued to make sports facilities accessible to sportspersons 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.[64] 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.[64,65] 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.[64]

Railways

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Ministry of Railways announces the Amrit Bharat Station Scheme

The Ministry of Railways announced the Amrit Bharat Station Scheme for modernising railway stations.[66] 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. Broad scope of work will include: (i) improving station approaches by widening roads and removing unwanted structures, (ii) relocating railway offices at accessible locations to release space for passenger-related activities and future development, (iii) creating good quality waiting rooms, (iv) improving drainage of platform areas, (v) building spaces for executive lounges and business meetings, and (v) creation of roof plaza and city centres at the station in the long run.

Road Transport

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BH-series vehicle registration rules amended

The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways has amended the Central Motor Vehicle Rules, 1989, under the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988. [67,68,69] The 1989 Rules provide for the registration of all motor vehicles.[70] Under the Rules, non-transport vehicles with the Bharat (BH) series registration mark are allowed to have a number plate that is valid across the country. Persons eligible for a BH registration include government employees and private employees whose offices are in at least four states.[70] Key features of the amendments are as follows:

- **Transfer of BH registration**: The amendments specify that if a BH-registered vehicle is transferred to a person eligible for a BH registration, the registration will remain valid. However, if the other person is not eligible, they will be required to obtain a new registration mark (number plate with a state-specific number such as MH or TN) from the regular registration series. The vehicle will also be liable for a motor vehicle tax as per the state's rules. Additionally, if the owner of a BH-series registered vehicle owner ceases to be eligible for the registration, then the vehicle's registration will remain valid for the period for which tax has been paid.
- **Application for registration:** The amendments add that an application for the BH registration may be made to any registration authority in the state where the specified vehicle owner permanently resides or works.

EV batteries added to list of vehicle components required to conform to safety standards

The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways has amended the Central Motor Vehicle Rules, 1989 under the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988, to require traction batteries for electric vehicles to conform to prescribed safety standards.[68,69,71] Traction batteries are batteries used in the power train of an electric vehicle.

Media and Broadcasting

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Report of the Task Force on the promotion of the AVGC sector released

The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting released the report of the Animation, Visual Effects, Gaming, and Comics (AVGC) Promotion Task Force.[72] The task force was chaired by the Secretary of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. Key recommendations of the Task Force include:

- **National Policy**: National and state policies for the promotion of the sector should be formulated. The drafts of these policies have been released as part of the report.[73,74] The Draft National Policy identifies the following as key focus areas for developing the sector in India: (i) market access and development, (ii) access to technology, (iii) skilling, (iv) integration with education curriculum, (v) promotion of research and development, and (vi) enhanced government outlay. The Draft National Policy proposes setting up: (i) a national mission, (ii) a dedicated fund, and (iii) a national centre of excellence. The fund may be utilised for: (i) modernisation of infrastructure in the industry and academia, (ii) starting a startup seed fund for the sector, (iii) viability gap funding, and (iv) promoting research and development.
- **Education-related interventions:** A holistic framework for AVGC education should be drafted. UGC-recognised curriculum for undergraduate and postgraduate degrees should be formulated. Vocational education in schools must be expanded to include courses from the AVGC sector.
- **Online skill gaming**: A national framework for online skill gaming should be formulated. Separate regulatory and market development support may be provided for casual games, real money games, and e-sports.

Annexure

The subjects identified by various Parliamentary Standing Committees for examination during the year 2022-23 are given in Table 4.

Table 4: Subjects identified by the Standing Committees for examination during 2022-23

Personnel, Public Grievances, Law and Justice

1. Review of Personal Laws
2. Functioning of Recruitment organizations
3. Specific aspects of Election Processes and its reform
4. Functioning of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) mechanisms
5. Legislation and Legislative Impact Assessment – Status in India and way forward
6. Review of functioning of Tribunal System in the Country
7. Review of Judicial Infrastructure
8. Strengthening Legal Education in view of emerging challenges before the Legal Profession
9. Review of the working of Legal Aid under the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987
10. Civil Services Reforms and Capacity Building
11. Review of Right to Information Act, 2005 and Working of the Central Information Commission
12. Effectiveness of vigilance administration
13. Judicial Processes and its reform
14. Strengthening the Process of Legislative Drafting
15. Review of Obsolete & Redundant Laws
16. Effective redressal of Grievances by Strengthening of Public Grievances System
17. Review of provisions for Disciplinary Proceedings
18. Appointment of Notaries and Oath Commissioners

Chemicals and Fertilisers

Department of Fertilisers

1. Nano-fertilizers for sustainable crop production and maintaining soil health.
2. Planning for fertilizers production and Import Policy on fertilizers including GST and import duty thereon.
3. Fertilizer Subsidy Policy and Pricing matters including need to continue Urea Subsidy Scheme.
4. Availability and distribution of Fertilizers

Department of Chemicals and Petrochemicals

1. Vision 2024 - To establish India as a leading manufacturer of chemicals and petrochemicals by initiating measures including, inter-alia, revival of sick units
2. Insecticides & Pesticides – promotion and development including safe usage - licensing regime for insecticides
3. Factors impacting Dye-stuffs and dye intermediates industry.
4. Disposal of toxic waste from Bhopal Gas Leak site.
5. Setting up of Plastic Waste Management Centres

Department of Pharmaceuticals

1. Promotion of Medical Device Industry.
2. Establishing uninterrupted growth of the Pharmaceutical Industry while ensuring quality control and safety standards.
3. Self-sufficiency in production and availability of Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients (API) through various initiatives including Production Linked Incentive Scheme (PLI).
4. Construction of Campuses for National Institute of Pharmaceuticals Education and Research (NIPER)

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