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Raj Malhotra's IAS Academy

RODRA

Due to lack of digitisation and non-availability of latest address and contact details of Indian army veterans, connecting with veteran officers/family pensioners and addressing their grievances was a major challenge.

Details -

To overcome the same a website Retired Officers Digital Records Archive (RODRA, <https://rodra.gov.in>) was launched.

Aim -

The aim was to establish an interface between the custodian of officers' Records i.e AG/MP 5&6 and veteran officers/Next of Kin (NOK) and to create a digital data repository in order to address documentation/pension related grievances and update on relevant policies.

Amendment to SEZ Act, 2019

The Union Cabinet, chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, has approved to introduce a Bill, namely, the Special Economic Zones (Amendment) Bill, 2019 that is the Bill to replace the Special Economic Zones (Amendment) Ordinance, 2019 (12 of 2019).

The amendment -

After the amendment of sub-section (v) of section 2 of the Special Economic Zones Act, 2005, a trust or any entity notified by the Central Government will be eligible to be considered for grant of permission to set up a unit in Special Economic Zones.

Dentists (Amendment) Bill, 2019

In order to make the Dental Council of India more effective, the Union Cabinet, chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, has approved the introduction of a Bill to amend the Dentists Act, 1948 (16 of 1948).

Changes -

The decision also gives effect, with certain modifications, to the provisions of the Dentists Act, 1948 with regard to the membership of the Dental Council of India and membership of State and Joint State Dental Councils.

Impact -

The amendment will help restructure the Dental Councils and the representation of Central Government members and elected members would no longer be made mandatory in the Dental Councils. In the process it will reduce the redundancy.

Details -

To amend the following clauses of the Dentists Act, 1948 -

- Membership of the Dental Council of India under clause (f) of section 3 and
- Membership of State and Joint State Dental Councils under clause (b) of section 21 and clause (b) of section 23 of the said Act.

Background -

The representation of dentists registered in Part B as Central Government nominees in the Dental Council of India and the election of four/ two members from Part B to the State / Joint State Dental Councils under the respective clauses in the Act have lost relevance. With a view to reducing the redundancy of the provisions of their representation, the Central Government has decided to delete these provisions so that their representation does not remain mandatory any more.

New Delhi International Arbitration Centre Bill, **2019**

Making India as the hub of International Arbitration has been one of the pioneering initiatives of the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi led NDA Government. Setting up of an independent and autonomous regime for institutionalized domestic and international arbitration are a step in this direction.

The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi approved today the Bill New Delhi International Arbitration Centre (NDIAC) Bill, 2019 for introduction in the ensuing session of Parliament.

Impact -

- The benefits of institutionalized arbitration will be manifold for the Government and its agency and to the parties to a dispute.

- This will result in quality experts being available in India and also an advantage in terms of cost incurred.
- It will facilitate India becoming a hub for institutional arbitration.

Implications -

The Bill provides for setting up of an independent autonomous body for institutional arbitration and to acquire and transfer the undertakings of International Centre For Alternative Dispute Resolution (ICADR) to New Delhi International Arbitration Centre (NDIAC) w.e.f a specified date 2nd march, 2019.

Aims and objectives of NDIAC -

- bring targeted reforms to develop itself as a flagship institution for conducting international and domestic arbitration;
- provide facilities and administrative assistance for conciliation, mediation and arbitral proceedings;
- maintain panels of accredited arbitrators, conciliators and mediators both at national and international level or specialists such as surveyors and investigators;
- facilitate conducting of international and domestic arbitrations and conciliation in the most professional manner;
- provide cost effective and timely services for the conduct of arbitrations and conciliations at Domestic and International level;
- promote studies in the field of alternative dispute resolution and related matters, and to promote reforms in the system of settlement of disputes; and
- cooperate with other societies, institutions and organisations, national or international for promoting alternative dispute resolution.

Aadhaar Amendment Bill, 2019

In a major move aimed at making Aadhaar making people friendly, the Union Cabinet, chaired by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi has approved “The Aadhaar and Other Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2019” to replace the Aadhaar and Other Laws (Amendment) Ordinance, 2019.

Impact -

- The decision would enable UIDAI to have a more robust mechanism to serve the public interest and restrain the misuse of Aadhar.
- Subsequent to this amendment, no individual shall be compelled to provide proof of possession of Aadhaar number or undergo authentication for the purpose of establishing his identity unless it is so provided by a law made by Parliament.

- For the convenience of the general public in opening of bank accounts, the proposed amendments would allow the use of Aadhaar number for authentication on voluntary basis as acceptable KYC document under the Telegraph Act, 1885 and the Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002.

Details -

The salient features of the amendments are as follows—

- Provides for voluntary use of Aadhaar number in physical or electronic form by authentication or offline verification with the consent of Aadhaar number holder;
- Provides for use of twelve-digit Aadhaar number and its alternative virtual identity to conceal the actual Aadhaar number of an individual;
- Gives an option to children who are Aadhaar number holders to cancel their Aadhaar number on attaining the age of eighteen years;
- Permits entities to perform authentication only when they are compliant with the standards of privacy and security specified by the Authority; and the authentication is permitted under any law made by Parliament or is prescribed to be in the interest of State by the Central Government;
- Allows the use of Aadhaar number for authentication on voluntary basis as acceptable KYC document under the Telegraph Act, 1885 and the Prevention of Money-laundering Act, 2002;
- Proposes deletion of section 57 of the Aadhaar Act relating to use of Aadhaar by private entities;
- Prevents denial of services for refusing to, or being unable to, undergo authentication;
- Provides for establishment of Unique Identification Authority of India Fund;
- Provides for civil penalties, its adjudication, appeal thereof in regard to violations of Aadhaar Act and provisions by entities in the Aadhaar ecosystem.

Kimberley Process

The Intersessional meeting of the Kimberley Process (KP) is being hosted by India from 17th to 21st June, 2019 in Mumbai. Besides meetings of different Working Groups and Committees of the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme (KPCS), two special forums regarding Diamond Terminology and Artisanal Mining – Small Steps to Larger Outcomes, will be held during the Intersessional. Around 300 delegates from the Government of India and other participating countries, industry and civil society will be attending the five-day Meeting.

India and the KPCS -

- India is one of the founder members of Kimberley Process Certification Scheme and is the Chair of Kimberley Process for the year 2019 with Russian Federation as Vice Chair.

- At present, KPCS has 55 members representing 82 countries including EU with 28 members. The Kimberley Process is chaired, on a rotating basis, by participating countries. KP Vice-Chair is generally elected by KP Plenary each year, who becomes the Chair in the next year.

About Kimberley Process -

The Kimberley Process is a joint initiative involving Government, international diamond industry and civil society to stem the flow of Conflict Diamonds. Conflict Diamonds means rough diamonds used by rebel movements or their allies to finance conflict aimed at undermining legitimate governments. It is also described in United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Resolutions.

Dispute Resolution Mechanism for Solar/Wind Sector

In a major decision to facilitate the solar and wind energy projects, the Union Ministry of State for Power and New & Renewable Energy has approved a proposal to set up a Dispute Resolution Committee to consider the unforeseen disputes between solar/wind power developers and SECI/NTPC, beyond contractual agreement.

Details -

- A three member Dispute Resolution Committee (DRC) will be set up with the approval of Hon'ble Minister (NRE), consisting of eminent persons of impeccable integrity.
- The mechanism of Dispute Resolution Committee (DRC) will be applicable for all solar/wind Schemes/ Programmes/ Projects being implemented through/ by SECI/ NTPC.
- The recommendations of the 'Dispute Resolution Committee' (DRC) along with MNRE's observations, will be placed before Hon'ble Minister (NRE) for final decision.
- To arrive at any decision, Committee will be free to interact with the relevant parties of the case and shall record their views. For presenting the case before the DRC, no lawyers shall be permitted.

Samagra Shiksha

Department of School Education and Literacy has launched an Integrated Scheme for School Education-Samagra Shiksha, subsuming three erstwhile Centrally Sponsored Schemes of

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan(SSA), Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan(RMSA) and Teacher education (TE) with effect from 1st April, 2018.

Details -

- The new integrated scheme envisages school education as a continuum from pre-school to senior secondary level and aims to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education at all levels.
- The scheme includes the Sports and Physical Education component under which provision for grants for sports equipment for indoor and outdoor games in all government schools has been made.

Committee on Trade and Policy

High Level Advisory Group (HLAG) headed by **Dr. Surjit S. Bhalla** has been constituted by the Department of Commerce.

Details -

The HLAG has made several recommendations for boosting India's share and importance in global merchandise and services trade. Among other things, the Report identifies tax reforms also to boost export and investment channels for exports.