



C.A DATED ON 01 AUG 2018

General Studies-2

Food Security Law

Why in News?

Department of Food and Public Distribution is implementing a scheme on 'End-to-End Computerization of TPDS Operations'.

- Component-I of the scheme comprises digitization of ration cards/beneficiary other database, online allocation, computerization of supply chain management, setting up of transparency portal and grievance redressal mechanisms.
- Under the scheme, ration cards/beneficiaries database have been completely digitized in all States/UTs, transparency portal and online grievance redressal facility/Toll-free number have been implemented in all States/UTs, online allocation has been implemented in 30 States/UTs and supply chain management has been computerized in 21 States/UTs.
- Component-II of scheme comprises automation of Fair Price Shops (FPSs), which involves installation of electronic Point of Sale (ePoS) devices at FPSs for authentication of beneficiaries and electronic recording of sale transactions.

About PDS:

Indian food security system, established by the Government of India under Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution is to distribute subsidized food and non-food items to India's poor.

This scheme was first launched in February 1944, during the Second World War and was launched in the current form in June 1947.

Major commodities distributed include staple food grains, such as wheat, rice, sugar and kerosene, through a network of fair price shops (also known as ration shops) established in several states across the country.

Food Corporation of India, a Government-owned corporation, procures and maintains the PDS.

Opening of generic drug stores in rural areas

The Department of Pharmaceuticals is implementing a countrywide campaign in the name of 'Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana' (PMBJP)



C.A DATED ON 01 AUG 2018

under which quality generic medicines are made available at affordable prices to all through specific outlets i.e. PMBJP Kendras.

As per the guidelines of PMBJP, a PMBJP Kendra may be opened in any part of the country.

PMBJP:

Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana (PMBJP) is a campaign launched by the Department of Pharmaceuticals to provide quality medicines at affordable prices to the masses.

PMBJP stores have been set up to provide generic drugs, which are available at lesser prices but are equivalent in quality and efficacy as expensive branded drugs.

It was launched by the Department of Pharmaceuticals in November 2008 under the name Jan Aushadi Campaign. Bureau of Pharma PSUs of India (BPPI) is the implementation agency for PMBJP.

Vision, Mission and Objective

Vision

To bring down the healthcare budget of every citizen of India through providing Quality generic Medicines at Affordable Prices.

Mission

- Create awareness among the public regarding generic medicines.
- Create demand for generic medicines through medical practitioners.
- Create awareness through education and awareness program that high price need not be synonymous with high quality.
- Provide all the commonly used generic medicines covering all the therapeutic groups.
- Provide all the related health care products too under the scheme.

Objective



C.A DATED ON 01 AUG 2018

Making quality medicines available at affordable prices for all, particularly the poor and disadvantaged, through exclusive outlets "Jan Aushadhi Medical Store", so as to reduce out of pocket expenses in healthcare.

General Studies- 3

Banning of Unregulated Deposit Schemes Bill, 2018.

Why in News?

During the Union Budget 2016-17, the then Finance Minister Arun Jaitley had promised "a comprehensive central legislation" to tackle illicit deposit schemes.

Following this, the Union government has come up with two bills to tackle the menace of non-regulated deposit schemes.

The Chit Funds (Amendment) Bill, 2018 was introduced in the Lok Sabha during the second leg of the Budget Session. The second Bill is Banning of Unregulated Deposit Schemes Bill, 2018.

"The bill is aimed at tackling the menace of illicit deposit taking activities in the country.

Companies/ institutions running such schemes exploit existing regulatory gaps and lack of strict administrative measures to dupe poor and gullible people of their hard-earned savings.

Details of Bills:

The proposed Bill aims to provide a comprehensive legislation to tackle illicit deposit schemes by completely prohibiting such activities.

Nine regulators including the RBI, SEBI, the Ministry of Corporate Affairs, and the State governments regulate financial activities.



C.A DATED ON 01 AUG 2018

According to the Bill, all deposit-taking schemes are required to be registered with the relevant regulator, failing which the "Deposit Takers" will be considered "unregulated" and hence be banned.

According to the Bill, "Deposit Takers" include all possible entities (including individuals) receiving or soliciting deposits, except specific entities such as those incorporated by legislation.

"Deposit" is defined in such a manner that deposit takers are restricted from camouflaging public deposits as receipts, and at the same time not to curb or hinder acceptance of money by an establishment in the ordinary course of its business.

The Bill creates three different types of offences, namely:

- running of Unregulated Deposit Schemes,
- fraudulent default in Regulated Deposit Schemes, and
- wrongful inducement in relation to Unregulated Deposit Schemes.

Enforcement Mechanism:

A 'Competent Authority' will be appointed which has the powers similar to a civil court, including powers to attach properties of the deposit takers.

It also empowers police to search and seize any property believed to be connected with an offence under the Bill, with or without a warrant.

The Bill also approves creating designated courts to tackle such cases.

The Bill enables creation of an online central database, for collection and sharing of information on deposit taking activities in the country.

Unearthing of Benami Properties worth Rs. 4,300 crore

Due to intensive efforts undertaken by the Income-tax Department, provisional attachment has been made in more than 1600 cases of properties under the Benami Transactions (Prohibition) Act, 1988.

These include plots of land, flats, shops, vehicles, deposits in bank accounts, fixed deposits etc.



C.A DATED ON 01 AUG 2018

The value of properties under attachment is more than Rs. 4,300 crore including immovable properties of more than Rs. 3400 crore.

Suitable action under the Benami Transactions (Prohibition) Act, 1988, *inter alia*, against the benamidars and the beneficial owners has been taken by the Income-tax Department.

About Benami Transactions (Prohibition) Amendment Bill, 2015

The Benami Transactions (Prohibition) Amendment Bill, 2015 was introduced in Lok Sabha on May 13, 2015. The Bill seeks to amend the Benami Transactions Act, 1988. The Act prohibits benami transactions and provides for confiscating benami properties.

The Bill seeks to:

- (i) amend the definition of benami transactions,
- (ii) establish adjudicating authorities and an Appellate Tribunal to deal with benami transactions, and (
- iii) specify the penalty for entering into benami transactions.

The Act defines a benami transaction as a transaction where a property is held by or transferred to a person, but has been provided for or paid by another person.

The Bill amends this definition to add other transactions which qualify as benami, such as property transactions where: (i) the transaction is made in a fictitious name, (ii) the owner is not aware of denies knowledge of the ownership of the property, or (iii) the person providing the consideration for the property is not traceable.

3.49 Crore New Entrepreneurs Benefited Through Mudra Yojana

Employment generation coupled with improving employability is the priority of the Government.



C.A DATED ON 01 AUG 2018

The Government is implementing various programs in this direction like encouraging private sector of economy, fast tracking various projects involving substantial investment and increasing public expenditure on schemes like Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP), Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS), Pt. Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushalya Yojana (DDU-GKY) and Deendayal Antodaya Yojana-National Urban Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NULM).

About PMMY:

Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana (PMMY) is a scheme to extend collateral free loans by Banks, Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFCs) and Micro Finance Institutions (MFIs) to:

- Small/Micro business enterprises and individuals in the non-agricultural sector to enable them to setup or expand their business activities and to generate self employment.

Under PMMY, the number of accounts/ number of loans sanctioned during 2015-16 to 2017-18 were 12.27 crore, out of which 3.49 crore were new entrepreneurs.

Besides this, Government has been taking various steps to boost industrial development, capital formation and employment generation in the country like Make in India, Startup India and Ease of Doing Business initiatives.

Ministry of Labour & Employment is also implementing National Career Service (NCS) Project for transforming the employment services in the country using technology to bring more employment opportunities to jobseekers.

Ocean Exploration: Deep Ocean Mission (DOM)

Why in News?

Looking to emulate the success of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) in designing and launching satellites, the Centre has drawn up a five-year, ₹8,000 crore plan to explore the deep recesses of the ocean.

The Union Earth Sciences Ministry — tasked with coordinating the exercise — unveiled a blueprint of the 'Deep Ocean Mission (DOM)' on Friday.

Objectives:



C.A DATED ON 01 AUG 2018

Among the key deliverables to achieve these goals are an offshore desalination plant that will work with tidal energy, and developing a submersible vehicle that can go to a depth of at least 6,000 metres with three people on board.

The mission proposes to explore the deep ocean similar to the space exploration started by ISRO about 35 years ago.

The focus will be on technologies for deep-sea mining, underwater vehicles, underwater robotics and ocean climate change advisory services, among other aspects.

India's share:

India has been allotted a site of 75,000 square kilometres in the Central Indian Ocean Basin (CIOB) by the UN International Sea Bed Authority for exploitation of polymetallic nodules (PMN).

These are rocks scattered on the seabed containing iron, manganese, nickel and cobalt.

It is envisaged that 10% of recovery of that large reserve can meet the energy requirement of India for the next 100 years.

It has been estimated that 380 million metric tonnes of polymetallic nodules are available at the bottom of the seas in the Central Indian Ocean.

India's Exclusive Economic Zone spreads over 2.2 million square kilometres and in the deep sea, lies "unexplored and unutilised."