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PM Paridhan Rozgar Protsahan Yojana

Why in news?

Pradhan Mantri Paridhan Rozgar Protsahan Yojana (PMRPY) was a labour reform initiative under which Government was bearing the entire 12% of the employers' contribution to the Employees Provident Fund Scheme for new employees of garment and made-ups sectors for the first three years of their employment.

What has changed?

- Earlier, 8.33% of employer's contribution was being provided by Government under Pradhan Mantri Rozgar Protsahan Yojana (PMRPY) and additional 3.67% of employers' contribution was made available under PMRPY to garment and made-ups segments to new workers with wage up to Rs. 15,000/- per month.
- With effect from 1.4.2018, Government has started paying full employer's share i.e. 12% (EPS+EPF) for employees in all sectors (including textiles) for three years to new employees and to existing beneficiaries for their remaining period of three years under PMRPY.

The Protection of Human Rights (Amendment) Bill, 2019

Parliament should come together to support Government's step to make NHRC more inclusive and efficient, said Union Minister of State for Home Affairs, Shri Nityanand Rai, while moving the Protection of Human Rights (Amendment) Bill, 2019 for consideration and passing in Lok Sabha today.

Why amendment in the bill:



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- The Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993 was enacted to provide for the constitution of a National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), the State Human Rights Commission (SHRC) and the Human Rights Courts for protection of human rights.
- The NHRC has proposed certain amendments to the Act to address the concerns raised at certain global platforms.
- Besides this, certain State Governments have also proposed for amendment of the Act, as they have been facing difficulties in finding suitable candidates to the post of Chairperson of the respective State Commissions owing to the existing eligibility criteria to the said post.
- In view of the above, it has become necessary to amend certain provisions of the said Act.

- The proposed amendments will enable both the Commission as well as the State Commissions to be more compliant with the Paris Principles concerning its autonomy, independence, pluralism and wide-ranging functions in order to effectively protect and promote human rights.

The Protection of Human Rights (Amendment) Bill, 2019, inter alia, provides

- that a person who has been a Judge of the Supreme Court is also made eligible to be appointed as Chairperson of the Commission in addition to the person who has been the Chief Justice of India;
- to increase the Members of the Commission from two to three of which, one shall be a woman;
- to include Chairperson of the National Commission for Backward Classes, Chairperson of the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights and the Chief Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities as deemed Members of the Commission;
- to reduce the term of the Chairperson and Members of the Commission and the State Commissions from five to three years and shall be eligible for re-appointment;
- to provide that a person who has been a Judge of a High Court is also made eligible to be appointed as Chairperson of the State Commission in addition to the person who has been the Chief Justice of the High Court; and,
- to confer upon State Commissions, the functions relating to human rights being discharged by the Union territories, other than the Union territory of Delhi, which will be dealt with by the Commission.



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One Stop Crisis Centre

One Stop Centre (OSC) at the district level maintains the record of complaints received from women affected by violence. Ministry of Women and Child Development reviews the functioning of OSCs from time to time.

About the OSC

- As per the guidelines, OSCs are required to have the facility for temporary stay up to 5 days with 5 beds.
- To address the complaints of aggrieved women, the Scheme of One Stop Centre is to provide for a range of services for violence affected women including police facilitation, legal counselling, psycho-social counselling, medical aid and temporary shelter in an integrated manner under one roof.
- Under the scheme, OSCs are required to have a centre administrator, case workers, medical personnel, police facilitation officer, psycho-social counsellor, legal counsellor, security guard, IT staff and multi-purpose workers.
- Capacity building of OSC functionaries are undertaken through National, Regional and State trainings and workshops to improve the responsiveness of OSC staff.
- OSCs are also integrated with Women Helpline to improve the functioning and responsiveness of OSC staff.
- Media and publicity campaigns are undertaken to increase awareness about OSCs at district level.

National Medical Commission (NMC) Bill

On Monday, Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan introduced the National Medical Commission (NMC) Bill in Lok Sabha. **Background**

An earlier version of this Bill was introduced in the 16th Lok Sabha, and had passed the scrutiny of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Health and Family Welfare.

However, that Bill lapsed at the end of the term of the last Lok Sabha.

Once the NMC Bill is enacted, the Indian Medical Council Act, 1956, will stand repealed.



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The existing Act provides for the Medical Council of India (MCI), the medical education regulator in India.

Why is Medical Council of India being replaced?

- The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Health and Family Welfare examined the functioning of the MCI in its 92nd report (in 2016) and was scathing in its criticism:
- “The Medical Council of India, when tested on the above touchstone (of producing competent doctors, ensure adherence to quality standards etc) has repeatedly been found short of fulfilling its mandated responsibilities.
- Quality of medical education is at its lowest ebb; the current model of medical education is not producing the right type of health professionals that meet the basic health needs of the country because medical education and curricula are not integrated with the needs of our health system;
- many of the products coming out of medical colleges are ill-prepared to serve in poor resource settings like Primary Health Centre and even at the district level;
- medical graduates lack competence in performing basic health care tasks like conducting normal deliveries;
- instances of unethical practice continue to grow due to which respect for the profession has dwindled.”
- Such state of affairs are also symptomatic of the rot within and point to a deep systemic malice”.

How will the proposed National Medical Commission (NMC) function?

- The NMC Bill provides for the constitution of a 25-member NMC selected by a search committee, headed by the Cabinet Secretary, to replace the MCI.
- The Bill provides for just one medical entrance test across the country, single exit exam (the final MBBS exam, which will work as a licentiate examination), a screening test for foreign medical graduates, and an entrance test for admission in postgraduate programmes.
- The Bill proposes to regulate the fees and other charges of 50 per cent of the total seats in private medical colleges and deemed universities.
- A medical advisory council — which will include one member representing each state and Union Territory (vice-chancellors in both cases), chairman of the University Grants Commission, and the director of the National Accreditation and Assessment Council — will advise and make recommendations to the NMC.



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- Four boards — dealing with undergraduate and postgraduate medical education, medical assessment and rating board, and the ethics and medical registration board — will regulate the sector.
- The structure is in accordance with the recommendations of the Group of Experts headed by Ranjit Roy Chaudhury, set up by the Union Health Ministry to study the norms for the establishment of medical colleges.

Significance

The Bill marks a radical change in regulatory philosophy; under the NMC regime, medical colleges will need permission only once — for establishment and recognition.

There will be no need for annual renewal, and colleges would be free to increase the number of seats on their own, subject to the present cap of 250.

They would also be able start postgraduate courses on their own. Fines for violations, however, are steep — 1.5 times to 10 times the total annual fee charged.

What are the changes in the 2019 Bill?

- There are two crucial changes, following the recommendations of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Health and Family Welfare (109th report in 2018).
- One, it has dropped a separate exit examination.
- Two, it has dropped the provision that allowed practitioners of homoeopathy and Indian systems of medicine to prescribe allopathy medicines after a bridge course.

What did the panel say about exit exam?

On the National Licentiate Examination, the Committee (in 2018) recommended that the relevant clause be redrafted “so as to make the final year MBBS examination as the licentiate examination”.

Ban on colistin



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Why in news?

The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has issued an order prohibiting the manufacture, sale and distribution of colistin and its formulations for food-producing animals, poultry, aqua farming and animal feed supplements.

Significance

- Intensivists across the country are rejoicing as the move is a “massive victory” for the movement against anti-microbial resistance.
- Colistin is a valuable, last-resort antibiotic that saves lives in critical care units and in recent years, medical professionals have been alarmed by the number of patients who have exhibited resistance to the drug.
- Therefore, any move to ensure that arbitrary use of colistin in the food industry, particularly as growth supplements used in animals, poultry, aqua farms, would likely reduce the antimicrobial resistance within the country.

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Impact of Climate Change on Agriculture

Context

Agriculture sector in India is vulnerable to climate change.

Higher temperatures tend to reduce crop yields and favour weed and pest proliferation.

Climate change can have negative effects on irrigated crop yields across agro-ecological regions both due to temperature rise and changes in water availability.

Rainfed agriculture will be primarily impacted due to rainfall variability and reduction in number of rainy days.

Analysis of impact of climate change under National Innovations in Climate Resilient Agriculture (NICRA) project has found that climate change is expected to affect yields, particularly in crops like rice, wheat and maize.

Government of India has initiated various actions to mitigate affects of climate change:



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Varieties and cultivars tolerant to abiotic stresses are developed under strategic research component of NICRA.

The technology demonstrations aim at enhancing the adaptive capacity of the farmers and also to cope with climate variability in the vulnerable districts to achieve climate resilient agriculture.

Under NICRA, climate resilient technology demonstrations are implemented in 151 climatically vulnerable districts of the country.

District Agriculture Contingency Plans have been prepared by ICAR-CRIDA, Hyderabad for 648 districts in the country to address the adverse weather conditions.