

NEWS TODAY

PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON LABOUR SUBMITS REPORT ON 'CODE ON SOCIAL SECURITY (CSS), 2019

- Code was introduced in Lok Sabha in 2019 and then referred to the Standing Committee by the Speaker.
- CSS replaces nine laws related to social security, including Employees' Provident Fund Act, 1952, Maternity Benefit Act, 1961, and Unorganised Workers' Social Security Act, 2008.
 - > Social security refers to measures to ensure access to health care and provision of income security to workers.
- It is one of the four codes that amalgamates 44 Acts pertaining to labour issues. Others are Code on Wages; Code on Occupation Safety, health & working conditions and Code on Industrial Relations.

Key Suggestions by panel

- Definition of social security be modified to make it in line with ILO Convention on Social Security (minimum standards) 1952.
- Expand the definition of employee so as to encompass all sorts of workers such as 'Anganwadi' and 'Asha' workers.
- Clearly mention the status of the gig workers and platform workers.
- Determine wage thresholds through an automatic process of wages indexation with Consumer Price Index periodically.
- Specify the source of funding for running social security schemes enshrined in the Code.

US, EUROPEAN UNION, OTHERS QUESTION INDIA ON USING WTO PEACE CLAUSE

- India's minimum support programme (MSP) for rice is under scrutiny at the WTO with the US and the EU challenging the increase in subsidies beyond ceiling limits.
 - > Earlier, India had invoked peace clause as it informed WTO that it had exceeded the ceiling on support it can offer farmers for rice for the marketing year 2018-2019.
- Under WTO Agreement on Agriculture, developing countries can spend up to 'de minimis' level i.e. 10% of the total value of agricultural production on price support measures (minimum support price) and input subsidies taken together.
 - > India had provided subsidies worth \$5 billion to rice farmers against rice production worth \$43.67 billion which is around 11.4% of the value of production, hence exceeding the limit.
- Peace clause protects a developing country's food procurement programmes against action from WTO members in case subsidy ceilings are breached.
 - > At 2013 Bali Ministerial Conference, members agreed that, on an interim basis, public stockholding programmes would not be challenged legally even if a country's agreed limits for trade-distorting domestic support were breached.
 - > India is the first country that has invoked peace clause.

15TH FINANCE COMMISSION'S HIGH-LEVEL GROUP (HLEG) ON AGRICULTURAL EXPORTS SUBMITS REPORT

- HLEG was set up to recommend measurable performance incentives for States to encourage agricultural exports and to promote crops to enable high import substitution.
- Key Findings of HLEG
 - > Agricultural export has potential to grow from USD 40 billion in FY19 to USD 70 billion in a few years.
 - It will create an estimated 7-10 million jobs and enhance farmer income
 - > Estimated investment of around USD 8-10 billion across inputs, infrastructure, processing and demand enablers.
- Major recommendations:
 - > Focus on 22 crop value chains – demand driven approach
 - > Solve Value Chain Clusters holistically with focus on value addition.
 - > Create State led export plan with participation from stakeholders. Centre should enable state-led plans.
 - > Private sector should play an anchor role in driving outcomes and execution.
 - > Robust institutional mechanism to fund and support implementation.
 - Funding through convergence of existing schemes, Finance Commission allocation and private sector investment.
- Centre introduced an Agriculture Export Policy in 2018 with an aim to double exports (\$30 billion to 60 billion by 2022), Diversify export basket, pursuing market access, integration with global value chain etc.

BAL GANGADHAR TILAK 100TH DEATH ANNIVERSARY (23 JULY 1856 - 1 AUGUST 1920)

- Keshav Gangadhar Tilak, popularly known as Lokmanya Tilak, was among the first leaders of the Indian independence movement.
 - > He belonged to extremist faction of Indian National Congress, supported by Bipin Chandra Pal in Bengal and Lala Lajpat Rai in Punjab. Tilak was called father of the Indian unrest by British colonial rulers.
 - > He advocated for Swaraj or self-rule and was a proponent of boycott and Swadeshi movements.
 - > He organised festivals such as Ganesh Chaturthi and Shiv Jayanti to create unity and a national spirit among the people.
 - > While Jawaharlal Nehru called him the father of Indian revolution, Mahatma Gandhi described Tilak as the maker of modern India.
- Organisations associated
 - > He was one of the founders of the All India Home Rule League (1916), along with Annie Besant.
 - > He was founding fathers of the Deccan Education Society created in 1884 with an aim to educate common people in English.
- Literary work
 - > Weekly newspapers namely Kesari (in Marathi) and Mahratta (in English).
 - > Book: Gita Rahasya, Arctic Home of the Vedas.

MINISTRY OF HOUSING AND URBAN AFFAIRS (MoHUA) RELEASES GUIDELINES FOR AFFORDABLE RENTAL HOUSING COMPLEXES (ARHC)

- ARHC scheme was recently launched as a sub scheme under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana – Urban (PMAY-U).
 - > PMAY-U, launched in 2015, intends to provide housing for all in urban areas by year 2022.
- ARHCs aims to **provide ease of living to urban migrants/ poor** to get access to dignified affordable rental housing close to their workplace.
- **Guidelines**
 - > **Target beneficiary:** Economically Weaker Section (EWS)/ Low Income Group (LIG) who are urban migrants/poor
 - » It includes labour, industrial workers, street vendors, rickshaw pullers, students etc.
 - > **Implementation through two models:**
 - » Utilizing existing Government funded vacant houses to convert into ARHCs through Public Private Partnership or by Public Agencies
 - » Construction, Operation and Maintenance of ARHCs by Public/ Private Entities on their own vacant land.
 - > Central government will provide **concessional project finance under Affordable Housing Fund (AHF) and Priority Sector Lending (PSL)**, Exemption in Income Tax and GST and Technology Innovation Grant for promotion of innovative technologies in ARHCs.
 - > This scheme will be **implemented in all Statutory towns**, Notified Planning Areas, and areas of Development/ Special Area Development/ Industrial Development Authorities.

ALSO IN NEWS

<p>Indian Depository Receipt (IDR)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An IDR is an instrument denominated in Indian Rupees in the form of a depository receipt created by a Domestic Depository (DD) against the underlying equity of issuing company. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > DD is a custodian of securities registered with the Securities and Exchange Board of India. • It enables foreign companies to raise funds from the Indian securities Markets. • First IDR was introduced in 2010. • Recently, Standard Chartered Bank (the only Domestic Depository) decided to delist its IDRs from Indian bourses.
<p>Municipal Bonds</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These are fixed income instruments issued by local bodies like municipal corporations. • They are issued to raise money for public projects, such as to construct roads, bridges or other infrastructure, and are repaid from returns generated by such projects or tax revenue. • These are regulated by SEBI • Bangalore Municipal Corporation was the first urban local body (ULB) to issue Municipal Bond in India in 1997.
<p>Gramodyog Vikas Yojana</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was recently approved by Ministry of Micro Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME). • It aims to the benefit of artisans involved in manufacturing of Agarbatti and to develop village industry under the scheme. • Khadi and Village Industries Commission will provide training, and assist artisans working in this area, with Agarbatti manufacturing machines. • Recently, Government had placed the 'Agarbatti' item under Restricted trade in the import policy and enhanced the import duty from 10% to 25% on 'round bamboo sticks'.
<p>Restricted category</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recently, Govt have put television sets in restriction category with an aim to cut inbound shipments of non-essential items. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > This is expected to give boost to domestic manufacturing and assembling done with value engineering. • Putting an item under restricted category of imports means that the importer of that commodity would have to seek a licence from the Ministry of Commerce's Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) for the imports. • China is the largest exporter of TV sets in India followed by countries like Vietnam, Malaysia, Hong Kong etc.
<p>Green-Ag Project</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is a pilot project recently launched by Union Government in Mizoram, to reduce emissions from agriculture and ensure sustainable agricultural practices. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Other states where it will be implemented are Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha and Uttarakhand. • It aims to bring at least 104,070ha of farms under sustainable land and water management. • It is funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF), while the Department of Agriculture, Cooperation, and Farmers' Welfare is the national executing agency.
<p>Polar bears</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A new study has found that polar bears could become extinct by 2100 unless greenhouse gas emissions are reduced. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Rising global temperatures, due to carbon emissions, have caused large amounts of Arctic sea ice to melt, leaving polar bears with smaller habitats to sustain themselves on. • Polar bears rely on Arctic sea ice to hunt for seals and have long been a symbol of the impacts of the climate crisis. • IUCN Status: Vulnerable
<p>BeiDou</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is China's navigation satellite system to provide global services which became operational recently. • BeiDou provides positioning accuracy of up to 10cm. Global Positioning System (GPS), owned by the US is accurate to about 30cm. • More than 100 countries including Pakistan and countries part of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) are already using the system. • Other Navigation Satellite Systems: GLONASS (Russia), Galileo (EU), GPS (US), QZSS (Japan) and IRNSS (India).

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