Rapid Fire Current Affairs

Procedure for Inclusion of Communities in Scheduled Tribes List

The Tribal Affairs Ministry has insisted in Parliament that the criteria set out by the Lokur **Committee** for inclusion of communities in scheduled tribes list was appropriate and there is no need for revision.

The **process to include tribes in the ST list** begins with the **recommendation from the respective State governments,** which are then sent to the **Tribal Affairs Ministry,** which reviews and sends them to **the Registrar General of India** for approval. This is followed by the **National Commission for Scheduled Tribes'** approval before the list is sent to the Cabinet to bring in the appropriate amendment to **Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order, 1950.**

The criteria given by Lokur Committee include: **primitive traits, distinct culture, geographical isolation, shyness of contact with the community at large, and backwardness.**

Previously, a **government task force** formed in 2014, **criticized the inclusion criteria and procedure for being outdated** and contradictory to affirmative action stating that it leads to exclusion and delays in inclusion of communities. The proposal to amend it, after being in the pipeline for nearly eight years, was put on hold.

Parliamentary Standing Committee Flags cut in MGNREGS Budget

A Parliamentary Standing Committee has expressed concerns over reduction of Rs 29,400 crore in the budget for **the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme**(MGNREGS) for financial year 2023-24.

The committee report questions the reasoning behind the reduction in funds for MGNREGA and recommends a reconsideration to ensure effective implementation.

On the issue of mandatory attendance through the **National Mobile Monitoring System** App, the committee while conceding the need of a real-time attendance capturing app, noted that **unavailability of smart-phones, proper internet connectivity** and the presence of MGNREGA workers for **both 'in' and 'out' attendance** pose challenges for beneficiaries.

The committee has recommended that the government should **increase wage rates under MGNREGA by linking it to a suitable pricing index and to increase guaranteed work days from 100 days.**

Read More: MGNREGA.

IMD launched 7 Services on UMANG Mobile App

Recently, IMD has launched seven of its services (Current Weather, Nowcast, City Forecast, Rainfall Information, Tourism Forecast, Warnings and Cyclone) with **'UMANG' mobile** App for use by public. Earlier in 2020, IMD had developed mobile App **'MAUSAM'** for weather forecasting, **'Meghdoot'** for Agromet advisory dissemination and **'Damini'** for lightning alert.

IMD follows a **seamless forecasting strategy.** The **long range forecasts** (for the whole season)

followed by **extended range forecast** issued on every Thursday with a validity period of four weeks, followed by **short to medium range forecast** and warnings daily valid up to next five days with an outlook for subsequent two days, followed by **very short range forecast of severe weather** up to three hours (**nowcast:** updated every 3 hours).

Initiatives in recent years include **dissemination of information to users by e-mail, WhatsApp groups and social media** on regular basis **and Nowcast about severe weather to registered users through SMS.**

O-SMART Scheme

Government allocated an amount of Rs. 2177 crore for implementation of **'Ocean Services, Modelling, Application, Resources and Technology (O-SMART)' Scheme** during a period of 5 years i.e 2021-22 to 2025-26. Further, to achieve the objectives of the scheme, following steps are being taken by the Ministry of Earth Sciences:

Various ocean observational platforms including **Argo floats, XBT/XCTDs, Wave Rider Buoys, Automatic Weather Stations, Drifters, Moored Buoys, Tide Gauges, Acoustic Doppler Current Profilers,** were deployed.

Operational services on **Tsunami Early Warnings, Storm Surges, Potential Fishing Zones, Ocean State Forecast,** Harmful Algal Blooms**,** Coral Reefs**, Multi Hazard Vulnerability,** Coastal Vulnerability Indices**, High Wave Alerts,** Oil Spill, **Search and Rescue operations** etc were generated using the data and models operational in house and was provided on day-to-day basis to various stake holders and end users.

Coastal surveys and deep-sea cruises and Public awareness campaign and related activities are conducted on regular basis to disseminate technology and policies.

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