

Decision taken by the Union Cabinet

- **Cabinet apprised of an Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between India and Fiji on Cooperation in Renewable Energy**

The Union Cabinet chaired by Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has been apprised of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Cooperation in Renewable Energy between India and Fiji. Both sides aim to establish the basis for a cooperative institutional relationship to encourage and promote technical bilateral cooperation on new and renewable issues on the basis of mutual benefit equality and reciprocity. The MoU envisages establishing a Joint Working Committee to review, monitor and discuss matters relation to areas of cooperation. It provides for exchange of expertise and networking of information. The Memorandum of Understanding will help in strengthening bilateral cooperation between the two countries.

- **Cabinet approves MoU between India and Macedonia on cooperation in the field of Health**

The Union Cabinet chaired by Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has approved signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between India and Macedonia on cooperation in the field of Health. The MoU covers the following areas of cooperation:-

- I. Capacity building and short term training of human resources in health;
- II. Exchange & training of medical doctors, officials, other health professionals and experts;
- III. Assistance in development of human resources and setting up of health care facilities;
- IV. Any other area of cooperation as may be mutually decided upon.

A Working Group will be set up to further elaborate the details of cooperation and to oversee the implementation.

- **Cabinet approves signing of MoU between India and Jordan on Cooperation in Health Sector**

The Union Cabinet chaired by Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has approved the proposal for signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between India and Jordan on cooperation in the field of Health & Medical Science. The MoU covers the following areas of cooperation:

- (i) Universal Health Coverage (UHC);
- (ii) Health System Governance;
- (iii) Services and Information Technology in Health;
- (iv) Health Research;
- (v) National Health Statistics;
- (vi) Health Finance and Health Economy;
- (vii) Chronic Disease Control;
- (viii) Tobacco Control;
- (ix) Diagnosis, Treatment and Medication in Tuberculosis;
- (x) Regulation of Pharmaceuticals and Medical Devices; and
- (xi) Any other area of cooperation as may be mutually decided upon.

A Working Group will be set up to further elaborate the details of cooperation and to oversee the implementation of this Memorandum of Understanding (MoU).

- **Cabinet approves signing of MoU between India and Jordan on Cooperation in the Field of Manpower**

The Union Cabinet chaired by Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has approved the proposal for signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between India and Jordan on Cooperation in the Field of Manpower. The MoU aims at enhancing collaboration between the two sides in promoting best practices in the administration of contractual employment, reflects the latest reforms in recruitment processes and enhances the protection and welfare of Indian workers in Jordan. Collaboration between the two sides in use of online portal for recruitment of Indian manpower is expected to usher in greater transparency and curb malpractices in the recruitment process. The MoU will be valid for a period of five years, incorporates provision of automatic renewal and a monitoring mechanism through a Joint Technical Committee.

- **Cabinet approves Action Plan for Champion Sectors in Services**

The Union Cabinet chaired by Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has approved the proposal of the Department of Commerce to give focused attention to 12 identified Champion Services Sectors for promoting their development, and realizing their potential. These include Information Technology & Information Technology enabled Services (IT & ITeS), Tourism and Hospitality Services, Medical Value Travel, Transport and Logistics Services, Accounting and Finance Services, Audio Visual Services, Legal Services, Communication Services, Construction and Related Engineering Services, Environmental Services, Financial Services and Education Services.

The Cabinet has also directed the Ministries/Departments concerned with these sectors to utilize the available draft sectoral plans to finalize and implement the Action Plans for the identified Champion Services Sectors. The respective line Ministries/Departments shall finalize the Action Plans and the implementation timelines along with a monitoring mechanism to monitor implementation under the overall guidance of the Committee of Secretaries (CoS) under Cabinet Secretary. A dedicated fund of Rs. 5000 crores has been proposed to be established to support initiatives for sectoral Action Plans of the Champion Sectors.

- **Cabinet approves Agreement between India and Jordan on Cooperation and Mutual Administrative Assistance in Customs Matters**

The Union Cabinet chaired by Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has approved the signing and ratifying an Agreement between India and Jordan on Cooperation and Mutual Administrative Assistance in Customs Matter. The Agreement will help in the availability of relevant information for the prevention and investigation of Customs offences. The Agreement is also expected to facilitate trade and ensure efficient clearance of goods traded between the countries.

- **Cabinet approves Amendments to Housing and Telephone Facilities Rules, Constituency Allowance Rules and Office Expense Allowance Rules for MPs**

The Union Cabinet chaired by Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has approved Amendment to (i) The Housing and Telephone Facilities (Members of Parliament) Rules, 1956 (ii) The Members of Parliament (Constituency Allowance) Rules, 1986, (iii) The Members of Parliament (Office Expense Allowance) Rules, 1988. The details are:

- i. Increase in the monetary ceiling of furniture at residence of Members of Parliament from Rs. 75,000/- (Rs. 60,000/- for durable and Rs. 15,000/- for nondurable) to Rs. 1,00,000/- (Rs. 80,000/- for durable and Rs. 20,000/- for nondurable) w.e.f. 01.04.2018 which shall be increased after every five years commencing from 01.04.2023 on the basis of Cost Inflation Index provided under clause (v) of Explanation to section 48 of the Income-tax Act, 1961.
- ii. Broadband internet facility may be provided to Members of Parliament w.e.f. August 2006 against 10,000

surrendered call units per annum on land line connection. The facility of broadband internet to Members of Parliament is already in practice since August, 2006 and it will now be incorporated in 'the Housing and Telephone Facilities (Members of Parliament) Rules, 1956' for its regularization through its amendment with retrospective effect by inserting a new rule.

- iii. Wi-fi zone with monthly tariff plan of Rs. 1700/- from 1.9.2015 to 31.12.2016 and Rs. 2200/- from 1.1.2017 onwards may be created in the Members' residential areas for providing high speed internet connection (FTTH connection). This facility will be in addition to the existing broadband facility. For this purpose, three new sub-rules are to be inserted in 'the Housing and Telephone Facilities (Members of Parliament) Rules, 1956'.
- iv. Increase in the Constituency Allowance for Members of Parliament from Rs. 45,000/- per month to Rs. 70,000/- per month w.e.f. 1.4.2018 which shall be increased after every five years commencing from 01.04.2023 on the basis of Cost Inflation Index provided under clause (v) of Explanation to section 48 of the Income-tax Act, 1961.
- v. Increase in the Office Expense Allowance for Members of Parliament from Rs. 45,000/- per month (Rs. 15,000/- for expenses on stationary items and postage plus Rs. 30,000/- for a computer literate person engaged by Member of Parliament for obtaining secretarial assistance) to Rs. 60,000/- per month (Rs. 20,000/- for expenses on stationary items and postage plus Rs. 40,000/- for a computer literate person engaged by Member of Parliament for obtaining secretarial assistance) w.e.f. 01.04.2018 which shall be increased after every five years commencing from 01.04.2023 on the basis of Cost Inflation Index provided under clause (v) of Explanation to section 48 of the Income -tax Act, 1961.

The decision of the Cabinet shall be conveyed to the Joint Committee on Salaries and Allowances of Members of Parliament for making amendments in the relevant rules which shall be get approved and confirmed by the Chairman of the Council of States and the Speaker of House of the People and will be published in the Official Gazette.

Additional financial implication on account of the decision taken by the Cabinet would be Rupees 39,22,72,800/- (Rupees Thirty nine crores, twenty two lakhs, seventy two thousand & eight hundred) approximately of recurring expenditure and Rupees 6,64,05,400/- (Rupees Six crores, sixty four lakhs five thousand & four hundred) approximately of non-recurring expenditure.

- **Cabinet approves the Trafficking of Persons (Prevention, Protection and Rehabilitation) Bill, 2018**

The Union Cabinet chaired by Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has approved the Trafficking of Persons (Prevention, Protection and Rehabilitation) Bill, 2018 for introduction in the Parliament. The Bill broadly has the following features:-

1. Addresses the issue of trafficking from the point of view of prevention, rescue and rehabilitation.
2. Aggravated forms of trafficking, which includes trafficking for the purpose of forced labour, begging, trafficking by administering chemical substance or hormones on a person for the purpose of early sexual maturity, trafficking of a woman or child for the purpose of marriage or under the pretext of marriage or after marriage etc.
3. Punishment for promoting or facilitating trafficking of person which includes producing, printing, issuing or distributing unissued, tampered or fake certificates, registration or stickers as proof of compliance with Government requirements; or commits fraud for procuring or facilitating the acquisition of clearances and necessary documents from Government agencies.
4. The confidentiality of victims/ witnesses and complainants by not disclosing their identity. Further the confidentiality of the victims is maintained by recording their statement through video conferencing (this also helps in trans-border and inter-State crimes).
5. Time bound trial and repatriation of the victims - within a period of one year from taking into cognizance.
6. Immediate protection of rescued victims and their rehabilitation. The Victims are entitled to interim relief immediately within 30 days to address their physical, mental trauma etc. and further appropriate relief within 60 days from the date of filing of charge sheet.

7. Rehabilitation of the victim which is not contingent upon criminal proceedings being initiated against the accused or the outcome thereof.
8. Rehabilitation Fund created for the first time. To be used for the physical, psychological and social well-being of the victim including education, skill development, health care/psychological support, legal aid, safe accommodation, etc.
9. Designated courts in each district for the speedy trial of the cases.
10. The Bill creates dedicated institutional mechanisms at District, State and Central Level. These will be responsible for prevention, protection, investigation and rehabilitation work related to trafficking. National Investigation Agency (NIA) will perform the tasks of Anti-Trafficking Bureau at the national level present under the MHA.
11. Punishment ranges from rigorous minimum 10 years to life and fine not less than Rs. 1 lakh.
12. In order to break the organized nexus, both at the national and international level, the Bill provides for the attachment & forfeiture of property and also the proceeds for crime.
13. The Bill comprehensively addresses the transnational nature of the crime. The National Anti-Trafficking Bureau will perform the functions of international coordination with authorities in foreign countries and international organizations; international assistance in investigation; facilitate inter-State and trans-border transfer of evidence and materials, witnesses and others for expediting prosecution; facilitate inter-state and international video conferencing in judicial proceedings etc.

- **Cabinet approves MoU between India and Jordan for mining and beneficiation of Rock Phosphate & MOP and setting up production facility in Jordan for Phosphoric Acid/DAP/NPK Fertilizers**

The Union Cabinet chaired by Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, has approved the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between India and Jordan for mining and beneficiation of Rock Phosphate & MOP and setting up production facility in Jordan for Phosphoric Acid/DAP/NPK Fertilizers with a long term agreement for 100% off-take to India. The MoU would ensure consistent supply of raw material, intermediaries and finish P&K fertilizers to cater to the needs of the country at a reasonable price.

- **Cabinet approves MoU between India and Vietnam on Economic and Trade Cooperation**

The Union Cabinet chaired by Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has approved the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between India and Vietnam on Economic and Trade Cooperation. The MoU would expand more bilateral trade and economic cooperation between India and Vietnam.

- **Cabinet approves doubling of Government guarantee from Rs 9,500 crore to Rs.19,000 crore for procurements of pulses and oilseeds at MSP under Price Support Scheme by NAFED**

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, chaired by Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, has approved the regularization and extension of Govt. Guarantee provided to lender Bank for providing credit limit to National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India (NAFED) Rs.19,000 crore from earlier Rs.9,500 crore for undertaking procurement operation of pulses and oilseeds under Price Support Scheme (PSS) and to Small Farmers Agri-Business Consortium (SFAC) for Rs. 45 crore for meeting their existing liability and settlement of extant claims. These Government Guarantees are provided for a period of five years i.e. till 2021-22 by Govt. of India and with waiver of 1% Government Guarantee fee.

As the market price of almost all pulses and oilseeds are ruling below Minimum Support Price (MSP) as notified by Govt. of India, provision of Govt. Guarantee will help in protecting the farmers producing these commodities from making distress sales during the peak arrival period and to provide remunerative prices with a view to encourage higher investment and production and also to safeguard the interest of consumer by making available supplies at reasonable price with low cost of intermediation.

- **Cabinet approves continuation of Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP) beyond 12th**

Plan for three years from 2017-18 to 2019-20

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs chaired by Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has approved the continuation of Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP) beyond 12th Plan for three years from 2017-18 to 2019-20 with a total outlay of Rs.5,500 crore. Scheme will create sustainable estimated employment opportunities for 15 lakh persons in three financial years.

Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) is the nodal implementation agency at the national level. At the State/district level, State offices of KVIC, Khadi and Village Industries Boards (KVIBs) and District Industry Centres (DIC) are the implementing agencies. Applications are invited and processed on-line on PMEGP-e-portal. Targets are fixed taking into account:

- i. Extent of backwardness of State;
- ii. Extent of unemployment;
- iii. Extent of fulfillment of previous year targets;
- iv. Population of State/Union Territory; and
- v. Availability of traditional skills and raw material.

A minimum target of 75 project/district is awarded to all districts of the country to achieve Inclusive Growth. Higher rate of subsidy (25% to 35%) will be applicable for women, SC/ST, OBC, Physically Disabled, NER applicants in rural areas. The entire process of application flow and fund flow right from receipt of application, processing, sanction by banks, transfer of margin money subsidy till creation of Term Deposit Receipt (TDR) in the name of applicant has been made online. The portal can be accessed at <https://www.kviconline.gov.in/pmegpeportal/prneqphome/index.jsp>.

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Warm regards,

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