

**March 22<sup>nd</sup> news:**

**International:**

**EU unveils new plans to make big tech companies pay more taxes**

European Union has unveiled new plans to make big tech companies pay more taxes. The move, if endorsed, would hit big online US firms like Google and Facebook.

The European Commission said that EU member countries should be able to tax firms that make profits on their territory even if they aren't physically present.

It would concern any country where a firm's annual revenue exceeds 7 million euros, or which has more than 100,000 users or more than 3,000 digital service business contracts in a tax year.

The European Commission estimates that up to 150 companies could be affected, around half of them from the US.

A potential trade war is already looming over President Donald Trump's new tariffs on steel and aluminum imports, while his unclear tax plans have left the EU mulling counter measures.

**National:**

**Cabinet approves launch of Ayushman Bharat**

The Union Cabinet has approved the launch of Ayushman Bharat -National Health Protection mission. The decision was taken at a cabinet meeting chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in New Delhi on 21<sup>st</sup> March

The Scheme has the benefit cover of 5 lakh rupees per family per year. The target beneficiaries under the scheme will be over 10 crore poor and vulnerable families. The benefits of the scheme are portable across the country.

A beneficiary will be allowed to take cashless benefits from any public and private empanelled hospitals across the country.

The scheme will subsume the ongoing centrally sponsored schemes- Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana and senior citizen health insurance scheme.

**Health Ministry grants approval for admission under Disabilities Quota**

In accordance with the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, the percentage of seats for admission to PG medical courses to be filled up by persons with disabilities has been increased from 3% to 5%.

The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has granted approval to amend the regulation in order to expand the scope of persons with disabilities getting benefit of reservation.

The benefit will accrue to all 21 benchmark disabilities as per the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016. Accordingly, the software used by DGHS for central counseling has also been amended to allow registration of all such candidates.

Registration/allotment of seats would be followed by a medical examination to ascertain the level of Disability before finally granting admission to candidates selected under the reserved quota.

### **Cabinet approves inclusion of Parivara & Talawara communities in list of STs in Karnataka**

Union Cabinet has given in principle approval to the inclusion of two communities in Karnataka in the list of Scheduled Tribes. Parivara and Talawara will be synonyms of "Nayaka" in the list of STs in Karnataka.

An official statement said, the decision will fulfill a long-term demand of the Parivara and Talawara communities for Scheduled Tribe status in Karnataka.

Cabinet also approved the second and final extension of the term of the Commission constituted to examine the issue of Sub-categorization of Other Backward Classes in the Central List, beyond 27th of March this year for a period of twelve weeks to 20th June.

Keeping in view the voluminous data obtained by the Commission from all quarters and the time required for a scientific analysis of the data to prepare a comprehensive report, it has sought extension of its term.

Cabinet approved the continuation of the National Health Mission (NHM) with effect from 1st April 2017 to 31st of March 2020 with a budgetary support of over 85 thousand crore rupees as Central Share over this period.

It will boost the health infrastructure. The NHM will continue to strengthen the public health systems, particularly in high priority districts that include aspirational districts.

Cabinet approved moving of official amendments in the Surrogacy (Regulation) Bill, 2016. The bill, proposes to regulate surrogacy in India by establishing National Surrogacy Board at the central level and State Surrogacy Boards and Appropriate Authorities in the States and Union Territories.

The proposed legislation ensures effective regulation of surrogacy, prohibit commercial surrogacy and allow altruistic surrogacy to the needy Indian infertile couples.

Cabinet also approved continuation of the Prime Minister's Development Package for Jammu and Kashmir 2015 - "Stepping up of support under creation of Infrastructure in District Hospitals, Sub-district Hospitals and Primary Health Centers over 5 years with budgetary support of over 625 crore rupees. It will be effective from 1st April 2017 to 31st March 2020.

Cabinet approved the North East Industrial Development Scheme (NEIDS) 2017 with financial outlay of 3,000 crore rupees upto March, 2020.

Government will provide necessary allocations for remaining period of scheme after assessment before March 2020.

NEIDS is a combination of the incentives covered under the earlier two schemes with a much larger outlay.

In order to promote employment in the North East States, Government is incentivising primarily the MSME Sector through this scheme and is also providing specific incentive through it to generate employment.

Cabinet also approved revision of double taxation avoidance agreement between India and Qatar. The existing Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement (DTAA) with Qatar was signed on April 7, 1999, and came into force on January 15, 2000.

The revised DTAA updates the provisions for exchange of information to latest standard, includes Limitation of Benefits provision to prevent treaty shopping and aligns other provisions with India's recent treaties.

Cabinet also approved the opening of 18 new Indian Missions in Africa over a four year period from 2018 to 2021. The decision will enhance India's diplomatic outreach in the African continent and allow India to engage with Indian diaspora in African countries.

With this, the number of Resident Indian Missions in Africa will go up from 29 to 47. Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) approved a scheme called Integrated Scheme for Development of Silk Industry from 2017-18 to 2019-20 at a cost of over 2,161 crore rupees.

The scheme has four major components which includes Research and Development, Seed Organizations and farmers extension centres, Coordination and Market Development for seed, yarn and silk products.

The scheme will be implemented by Ministry of Textiles through the Central Silk Board. The scheme will promote Women Empowerment and livelihood opportunities to SC, ST and other weaker sections of the society.

The CCEA also gave its approval for continuation of Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA) from 1st of April 2017 to 31st of March 2020.

The Abhiyan seeks to increase the gross enrollment ratio of the country to 30 per cent by 2020. It also seeks to increase the spending on higher education by the State governments.

The scheme, in its 2nd phase, aims at creating 70 new model degree colleges and 8 new professional colleges.

### **Economy:**

#### **Task force to review I-T Act**

Government has constituted a task force to review the Income-tax Act, 1961 and to draft a new Direct Tax Law in consonance with the economic needs of the country.

Finance Ministry, in a release said, in this endeavour of drafting the new tax law, it is imperative to engage with stakeholders and general public.

The Ministry has sought suggestions and feedback from stakeholders and general public in the format provided on the departmental website.

It said, the format can be downloaded from the website and suggestions may be sent through e-mail at [rewriting-itact@gov.in](mailto:rewriting-itact@gov.in), latest by 2nd of next month.

#### **Persons in news:**

**Htin Kyaw:** Myanmar's President Htin Kyaw, one of the most loyal allies of the country's leader Aung San Suu Kyi, has resigned due to ill health

Htin Kyaw, was sworn in as Myanmar's official president in 2016 after Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy party won landmark elections.

During his two years in office he's essentially acted as a proxy for Suu Kyi, who is constitutionally barred from holding the presidency because her children are foreign nationals. A new position, State Counselor, was created to enable the long-time opposition politician to take a leading role in government.

Htin Kyaw's resignation comes as international pressure increases on Nobel Laureate Suu Kyi to do something to ease the suffering of the country's minority Rohingya population.

Almost 700,000 of the Muslim ethnic minority have crossed the Bangladesh border in the last six months, fleeing what the UN has described as a "textbook example of ethnic cleansing" by Myanmar troops.

The Myanmar military, which shares power with Suu Kyi, has denied the allegations, blaming the violence on members of the Rohingya militant group Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ASRA).