

CURRENT AFFAIRS

प्रधान मंत्री
आवास योजना-शहरी

Inheritance
Tax



22 TO 27 APRIL

Table of Contents



Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana - Urban (PMAY-U) scheme	3
--	----------

Supreme Court Allows Abortion for 14-Year-Old Rape Survivor	5
---	----------

Inheritance Tax	7
-----------------	----------

RBI Proposes Enhanced Regulation for Offline Payment Aggregators	9
--	----------

Glacial Lakes in the Himalayas Using Satellite Remote Sensing	11
---	-----------

PRADHAN MANTRI AWAS YOJANA - URBAN (PMAY-U) SCHEME



22/04/2024

What PMAY-U is?

PMAY-U is a centrally sponsored scheme. It targets providing affordable housing for urban and rural populations. This scheme was launched in 2015 through the flagship program. It was titled "Housing For All" and set sights on 2022.

Objectives:

The program partners with private developers to rehabilitate slum dwellers. It seeks to promote affordable housing. This is done through Credit Linked Subsidy Schemes (CLSS). This is for self-construction projects undertaken by eligible beneficiaries.

Eligibility Criteria:

To meet the requirements for Economically Weaker Section (EWS), households having an annual income of up to ₹3 lakh and the area of dwelling is 30 square meters. Low Income Group (LIG) households earning between ₹3 lakh and ₹6 lakh annually and having a maximum carpet space of 60 square meters. Middle-Income Group (MIG): MIG-I category includes households with a range of incomes between ₹6 lakh and ₹12 lakh per annum and dwelling area is up to 120 square meters. MIG-II households earning ₹12 lakh to ₹18 lakh annually are approved for a house having maximum carpet area of 150 square meters.

They or family members cannot own a pucca house anywhere in India. The urban areas are the only applicable locations. If the beneficiary is a woman or she shares ownership with another female, priority is given. Age does not restrict eligibility.

Challenges and Shortcomings:

While in operation for several years, the aim of "Housing For All" remains elusive. Presently, there's a shortage of nearly 20 million houses in rural regions. There's also a 3 million house shortage in urban areas. In-situ slum redevelopment, ISSR, is crucial for urban housing needs. Yet, it has not performed as planned. It shows a shortfall of nearly 40 lakh houses. If the remaining approved houses are constructed by 2024's end, it will address only 37% of actual needs. This leaves an estimated 2.4 crore households without adequate housing.

In a nutshell, the PMAY-U program has shown some advancement. There are immense hurdles remaining. These hinder any realization of the lofty goal.



Supreme Court Allows Abortion for 14-Year-Old Rape Survivor

A 14-year-old girl who was raped in Maharashtra has been given the permission by the Supreme Court of India to terminate her pregnancy in her 30th week of pregnancy, in accordance with Article 142 (which gives it the power to pass any decree or order that will ensure complete justice).

Indian Abortion Legislation

A woman can only have an abortion if her life is under threat with the unborn baby inside her as per Section 312 of Indian Penal Code. There is also IPC 313 which deals with causing miscarriage without a woman's consent, IPC 314 on causing miscarriage resulting in death of woman, and IPC 315 for child murder or infanticide while section IPC 316 applies to acts resulting into culpable homicide.

The Medical Termination of Pregnancy (MTP) Act, 1971 made abortion legal under certain circumstances. The Shantilal Shah Committee was formed in 1964 due to high maternal mortality and morbidity associated with unsafe abortion and advocated for its legalization. Legal abortion cases include risks to life or physical health, extensive risk of terrible handicaps on babies, pregnancies resulted from contraception failure or rape.

Key Features of the MTP Amendment Act, 2021:

- 1. Increased Upper Gestation Limit:** The upper gestation limit has been raised from 20 to 24 weeks for special categories of women.
- 2. No Upper Gestation Limit for Foetal Abnormalities** diagnosed by a Medical Board.
- 3. Opinion Requirements:** In case of termination between 20-24 weeks, one medical practitioner's opinion is required prior to that, while two are needed after that.
- 4. Confidentiality:** The identity of any woman who undergoes an abortion must be kept confidential and only revealed to those who may lawfully receive such information.
- 5. Inclusion Of Marital Status And Age:** Unmarried females can avail themselves of the MTP Act 2021. However, a guardian has to give consent if it concerns minors.

Women Who Can Terminate 20 to 24 Weeks of Pregnancy include sexual assault survivors, minors, physically disabled persons, foetal risk cases, mentally challenged individuals, at-risk children, as well as emergency cases.



INHERITANCE TAX

24/04/2024



Inheritance tax, also known as estate tax or death duty, is a tax levied on the transfer of assets from a deceased person to their heirs. The primary objective of inheritance tax is to address income inequality by redistributing wealth.

Historical Context in India:

India did have an inheritance tax, which was known as estate duty. Estate duty was introduced in 1953 during the tenure of PM Jawaharlal Nehru. It applied to the estates of individuals who passed away, with rates varying based on the value of the estate. However, in 1985, the government of PM Rajiv Gandhi abolished estate duty.

Wealth Tax:

Wealth tax was levied on the net wealth of individuals, including assets such as real estate, jewelry, and financial investments. In 2015, the Indian government decided to abolish wealth tax due to administrative challenges and low revenue collection.

Gift Tax:

Gift tax applied to the transfer of assets during an individual's lifetime. However, in 1998, the government abolished gift tax, citing similar reasons as for wealth tax.

Current Scenario:

As of now, there is no specific inheritance tax in India. Calls for reintroducing inheritance tax have surfaced periodically, especially during election cycles. However, no concrete steps have been taken to reintroduce it.

Global Trends:

Some countries have proposed measures such as a global minimum corporate tax rate and higher taxes on the super-rich. For instance, the Biden Administration in the United States has proposed a Billionaire Minimum Income Tax of at least 25% on their full income, including unrealized gains.





26/04/2024

RBI PROPOSES ENHANCED REGULATION FOR OFFLINE PAYMENT AGGREGATORS

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has recently proposed comprehensive guidelines to regulate payment aggregators (PAs) operating in offline spaces. These recommendations aim to enhance safety, compliance, and transparency in proximity or face-to-face transactions.

Background:

In June 2022, the RBI announced its intention to improve the regulation of offline PAs. The RBI has now released two consultation papers: The first paper focuses on the activities of offline PAs. The second paper aims to strengthen safety measures by expanding instructions related to Know Your Customer (KYC), due diligence for onboarded merchants, and operations in Escrow accounts. Stakeholders are invited to provide feedback by May 31.

Scope of Regulations:

Payment aggregators facilitate transactions between customers and merchants, relieving merchants from creating their own payment integration systems. Existing guidelines cover PAs operating in e-commerce and online platforms. The proposed draft guidelines extend these regulations to offline spaces, including proximity or face-to-face transactions. The RBI emphasizes the need for synergy in regulation across both online and offline PAs, ensuring consistent standards for data collection and storage.

Lessons from Past Incidents:

The RBI's move comes after the Paytm Payments Bank (PPBL) crisis, which highlighted irregularities in KYC adherence. PPBL faced penalties for engaging in illegal activities, including facilitating online gambling. The proposed norms aim to prevent opacity and strengthen the ecosystem against such risks.

Compulsory Registration:

Non-bank PAs, especially those operating offline, will be subject to the new regulations. Banks providing physical PA services within their normal banking relationships won't need separate authorization. However, they must comply with revised instructions within three months of issuance.

Overall, the RBI's recommendations seek to create a robust regulatory framework for offline payment aggregators, ensuring transparency, security, and adherence to best practices.



Glacial Lakes in the Himalayas Using Satellite Remote Sensing

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) recently conducted an extensive analysis of glacial lakes in the catchments of Indian Himalayan river basins. Leveraging satellite remote sensing technology, ISRO's study sheds light on the expansion of these lakes and the associated risks.



Key Findings:

Expansion of Glacial Lakes: ISRO examined satellite data archives spanning four decades (1984 to 2023) to assess changes in the glaciated environment. Among the 2,431 lakes larger than 10 hectares identified during 2016-17, 676 glacial lakes had significantly expanded since 1984. Glacial lakes are expanding due to the retreat of glaciers, which is accelerating due to global warming.

Geographical Distribution: 130 of the 676 lakes are situated in India, specifically in the: Indus basin (65 lakes), Ganga basin (7 lakes), Brahmaputra basin (58 lakes).

Formation of Glacial Lakes: The movement of glaciers causes erosion, creating depressions in the surrounding topography. As glaciers retreat, meltwater accumulates in these depressions, giving rise to glacial lakes.

ISRO categorized glacial lakes into four types:

- Moraine-dammed: Formed when water is dammed by moraine (debris left during glacier movement).
- Ice-dammed: Formed when water is dammed by ice.
- Erosion-based: Formed when water is dammed by erosion-created depressions.
- Others: Additional categories based on formation mechanisms.

Risks and Impacts: While glacial lakes serve as crucial freshwater sources for rivers, they also pose significant risks. Glacial Lake Outburst Floods (GLOFs) occur when these lakes release large volumes of meltwater due to natural dam failure. GLOFs can lead to sudden and severe flooding downstream, impacting infrastructure and settlements.

ISRO's satellite-based analysis provides valuable insights into glacial lake dynamics, glacier retreat rates, and the risks associated with GLOFs.