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27 September 2018**Daily News Pedia****Boost To SC/ST Quota In Promotions**

A Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court on Wednesday modified a 2006 judgment requiring the State to show quantifiable data to prove the “backwardness” of a Scheduled Caste/Scheduled Tribe community in order to provide quota in promotion in public employment.

It gives a huge fillip for the government’s efforts to provide “accelerated promotion with consequential seniority” for Scheduled Castes/ Scheduled Tribes (SC/ST) members in government services.

*Directly contrary:*The portion of the Nagaraj judgment of another five-judge Constitution Bench in 2006 was directly contrary to the nine-judge Bench verdict in the Indra Sawhney case. In the Indra Sawhney case, the Supreme Court had held that the “test or requirement of social and educational backwardness cannot be applied to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, who indubitably fall within the expression ‘backward class of citizens’.”The Presidential List for Scheduled Castes contains only those castes or groups or parts as “untouchables.”Similarly, the Presidential List of Scheduled Tribes only refers to those tribes in remote backward areas who are socially extremely backward.

Source: The Hindu.

New Telecom Policy Aims To Provide Broadband Access To All Citizens By 2022

The Union Cabinet approved the draft new telecom policy, known as National Digital Communications Policy (NDCP) 2018.

Emerging technologies like 5G and Internet of Things warrant the need for consumer-centric and application-centric policy.To restore financial health of the telecom sector as the sector is reeling under a debt of around Rs 7.8 lakh crore.

*Aims of the new policy:*Universal broadband connectivity at 50 Mbps to every citizen, 1 Gbps connectivity to all gram Panchayat. Attract \$100billion investments into the communication sector. Create 40 lakh new jobs in the next four years. Expanding the (Internet of Things) IoT ecosystem to 5 billion connected devices. Create globally recognized (Intellectual Property Rights) IPRs in India. Create a fund for R&D in new technologies. Leverage Artificial intelligence and Big Data to enhance quality of services. Spectrum management and network security.Establish India as a global hub for cloud computing.

The policy proposes to establish a comprehensive data protection regime for digital communications

*Outcome of the Policy:*Help the debt-laden telecom sector to attract low-cost financing. Ensuring sustainable and affordable access to digital communication. To increase contribution of the telecom sector to 8% of the GDP from the current 6%.

Telecom sector will be accorded the status of “critical and essential infrastructure and optic fibre cables as a “public utility”.

Source: The Hindu.

Aadhaar Gets Thumbs Up From Supreme Court

SC uphold the passage of Aadhaar Act as a Money Bill.

SC says the Bills is a reasonable restriction on individual privacy that fulfils the government’s aim to provide dignity to a large and marginalized population is valid. In its judgement SC has made clear distinction where Aadhaar will be Mandatory and where it is not necessary.

Application where Aadhaar linking is not necessary: To link mobile phone numbers with Aadhaar. Bank accounts to Aadhaar numbers. Schools have been barred from making the submission of the Aadhaar number mandatory. Not necessary for children aged between six and 14 under the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan as right to education. Statutory bodies like CBSE and UGC cannot ask students to produce their Aadhaar cards for examinations like NEET and JEE.

Aadhaar Link is Necessary for: To plug leakages in subsidy schemes and to have better targeting of welfare benefits. PAN Card for filing Income tax return.

Not a Money Bill: Law about an identity proof, Aadhaar, cannot be possibly passed as Money Bill. A Money Bill must deal with the declaring of any expenditure charged on the Consolidated Fund of India. Section 7 of the Act does not declare the expenditure incurred to be a charge on the Consolidated Fund. Rajya Sabha’s Authority has been superseded and that this constitutes a fraud on the Constitution.

Supreme Court observation: It is Vital to ensure that government aid reached the targeted beneficiaries which may be extended with the support of the Consolidated Fund of India under the scope of Article 110.

Breach of Privacy: It violates the right to Privacy. Grand project to harvest personal data for commercial exploitation by private parties and profiling by the state.

Act will create Surveillance State: Aadhaar regime would facilitate the birth of a “surveillance state”, thereby allowing the creation of a comprehensive profile of an individual.

Supreme Court observation: It is very difficult to create a profile of a person simply on the basis of biometric and demographic information.

Benefits sought by the Supreme Court in its judgement: To plug leakages in subsidy schemes and to have better targeting of welfare benefits. To prevent denial of rights and legal entitlements to marginalized section of society who are dependent on the government schemes and benefits. To bring in regulations for an effective mechanism for delivery of public oriented services.

Supreme Court allows live streaming of cases

As per the court’s order, the project must be implemented in a progressive, structured and phased manner, with certain safeguards to ensure that the purpose of live-streaming of proceedings is achieved holistically and that it does not interfere with the administration of justice or the dignity and majesty of the court hearing the matter and/or impinge upon any rights of the litigants or witnesses.

As a pilot project, only cases of constitutional and national importance being argued for final hearing before the Constitution Bench be live-streamed initially. For this, it said, permission of the court concerned will have to be sought in writing in advance.

Consent of parties to the proceedings must be insisted upon, and if there is no unanimity between them, the court concerned can take the appropriate decision in the matter. The court concerned will also have the power to revoke permission at any stage of the proceedings.

Significance of the move: Live streaming will deal head on with the problem of distance. Given that the court is located in New Delhi, many people cannot afford to be present physically in Supreme Court to follow the arguments, even if the case directly affects them in some way. In fact, even litigants are often unable to travel to court because of the cost and distance involved, leaving it entirely to their lawyers to run the case.

A live telecast of proceedings also has the potential to reduce unwarranted delays in the cases caused by the occasionally cavalier attitude of lawyers. With the client's eye firmly on them, lawyers are likely to expedite cases. Further, this will provide an opportunity to young lawyers to showcase their talents to the world and has the potential to break the stranglehold of a select few over the legal profession.

Live streaming could act as a welcome check on the judiciary. With the public watching, there is every chance that there will be a reduction in the sometimes unnecessary oral comments that cause much controversy but have no judicial bearing.

Sources: the Hindu.



G-4 For UN Security Council Reform, Multilateralism

G-4 countries have reaffirmed their commitment to multilateralism and called for the early reform of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC).

The group consists of four countries *India, Brazil, Germany and Japan*. These countries support each other's bid for permanent seats on the United Nations Security Council (UNSC).

The G-4 foreign ministers met at the side-lines of 73rd session of United Nations General Assembly (UNGA).

Outcome of the meeting of G-4 members: They stressed on the importance of reforms at the UNSC according to the contemporary needs of 21st. They called to initiate text-based negotiations to safeguard the legitimacy and credibility of the UNSC. The ministers reiterated their support for Africa's representation in a reformed and expanded Security Council. They stressed that substantial progress has not yet been achieved at the Intergovernmental Negotiations (IGN) for the reforms.

Source: The Hindu.

EDITORIAL

To Read.

Biofuels are a sensible option for India

They are practical, given India's agricultural scenario, efficient in terms of cost and good for the environment.

The Narendra Modi administration has set a target to increase energy efficiency in transport and, at the same time, abating the impact of energy on the environment. This is an objective shared by many other countries around the world. At MOVE, the first Global Mobility Summit held in New Delhi during the first week of September, discussions concentrated on the best ways to achieve this goal.

The logical and immediate solution was to invest intensively in mass public transport, shared vehicles and general habit changes. Beyond that, it was widely recognized by the scientific community that electrification was the way forward to reach higher efficiency levels. However, there are at least three forms of electrification: With electric power stored in batteries, with hydrogen, and with high-density, low-carbon liquid fuels.

Batteries have an intrinsic limitation related to their low energy density, currently less than 200 Wh per kg. The industry goal is to reach 330 Wh, and in the future, with new material, it is believed that it could reach 700-800 Wh. The low energy density restrains the range and determines the cost of this option.

Batteries require the use of power, and are environmentally sound only if the source of power is clean. There is still the issue of availability and sourcing of metals used in their manufacturing, their limited lifespan, and the economic and environmental costs of discard. A new infrastructure for power distribution is also needed and India must make massive investments in new forms of power generation, as 75.1% of its current generation is derived from coal, and another 4.2% from other fossil-based fuels such as gas and diesel.

Electrification with hydrogen is costly and risky to produce, store and distribute.

Electrification with low-carbon liquid and gaseous fuels, such as bioethanol and bio-CNG (compressed natural gas), takes advantage of their high energy density, 6,200 Wh per kg in the case of ethanol. Actually, biofuels must be perceived as high-density solar energy, or hydrogen, captured, stored and distributed in an efficient, economical and reliable manner.

Domestic support policies for sugarcane farmers have increased its production by over 30% in the past two years and stocks of sugar are mounting in large excess of demand—10.4 million tonnes in 2018 alone—bringing instability in the economic relationship between mills and farmers. There is ample example of the feasibility and success of this route. In 2018, Brazil is substituting 42% of its petrol with ethanol and, in the US, which uses nearly half of the world's petrol, the level of substitution is 10%. Ethanol is economically competitive and its cost today is about \$1.3 per gallon, while petrol has a wholesale price of \$2.1 per gallon. Therefore, it helps alleviate the price pressure on consumers. But ethanol should be valued for its blend octane number of 116, compared to petrol's 87 AKI. When this factor is considered, ethanol is valued as a substitute of toluene, or aromatics in general, which are around 30% higher than petrol prices.

The advantages of this route are the possibility of its immediate implementation as a blend component to petrol using the current distribution infrastructure, with a sizeable positive impact on agriculture, increasing farm income, providing diversification and greater price stability.

In the past 40 years, Brazil has saved more than 700 million tonnes of CO₂ emissions from ethanol used and over \$420 billion in avoided petrol imports.

Ethanol and bio-CNG can be the source of energy for electrification adopted in hybrid, e-electric and fuel cell vehicles.

In urban areas, ethanol reduces emissions of carbon monoxide, reactive hydrocarbons, nitrogen oxides, formaldehydes and particulate matter. As a substitute to aromatics, it greatly contributes to reduction of cancer-related toxic emissions. On a global scale, its very low carbon intensity provides a very efficient solution to mitigate global warming.

At COP-23 in Bonn last November, 19 nations comprising over 50% of the world's population issued a Declaration of Vision supported by the International Energy Agency, and the International Renewable Energy Agency, indicating a mandate that the proportion of bioenergy in world energy demand doubles and that the proportion of biofuels in transport fuels triples until 2030, in order to reach the target of limiting global warming to 2 degrees Celsius.

By 2030, India's urban population will grow to more than 600 million people. Urgent policies must be implemented now to increase the efficiency of energy in transport, mitigate environmental impact at local and global scale, and control migration to large cities with a sensible farming strategy.

India has enormous potential for electricity generation with bioethanol and biogas. The same holds true when it comes to bio-CNG or bio methane from farming and agrindustrial residues for substitution of diesel fuel. With an annual expenditure of \$105 billion in oil and oil product imports, it is a natural solution for India to produce and use more ethanol as the economy continues to grow 7% a year. In addition to affecting the economy, air pollution remains on the rise. Electrification with biofuels is the sensible, modern and long-term strategy for India and many other countries in similar circumstances.

MAINS QUESTION

Q: Discuss the political developments in Maldives in the last two years. Should they be of any cause of concern to India?