MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 21st FEBRUARY, 2014 WITH JOINT SECRETARY(ADMN.) OF ALL THE CENTRAL MINISTRIES/DEPARTMENTS TO DEMONSTRATE THE SOFTWARE FOR ONLINE FILING OF PAR

A meeting under the Chairmanship of EO &AS was held on 21st February, 2014 with the Joint Secretary(Admn.) of all Central Ministries/Departments to demonstrate the software for online filing of PAR by IAS officers.

2.   At the outset, E.O. welcomed the delegates and informed that the decision to introduce online filing of PAR was taken a couple of months back in a meeting taken by Cabinet Secretary. He stated that States have already been taken on board through a series of meetings as more than 80% of the IAS officers were posted there. Thereafter, he made the following observations:

- The Digital Signature Certificate was a pre-requisite for online filing of PAR and it was expected that by now all the officers must have been issued DSC. If any officer was still left out, the Departments needed to expedite the process of issuing DSCs so that officers could test its compatibility with the system before using it in April, 2014.

- The role of JS(Admn.) would be very important in so far as implementation of this system was concerned. Every JS(Admn.) needed to be provided DSC so that he could access the portal for sending the blank PAR form; monitoring the movement of PARs; forwarding the PARs to EO office after the completion of PAR, etc. JS(Admn.) could delegate his privileges as PAR Custodian to one or two officers who also needed to be provided DSC.

- The Ministries would also have to ensure that an alternate officer, having the same privileges as that of JS(Admn.) in case the latter was on leave or training, was nominated and issued DSC so that he could handle the responsibilities related to PARs.

- For the present, the political executives were being kept out of the online process and JS(Admn.) would be required to obtain their comments/gradings, scan and upload them. The system had the flexibility of having manual PAR also in case any of the reporting authorities was not able to record it online for any reason. JS(Admn.) would have the option to decide the level at which the PAR was to be converted into manual mode.

- The officers would have the option to delegate the recording of the PAR to their PA/PS by giving dictation to them who would then record the same in the PAR after accessing the system through their e-mail ID which too could be generated immediately. The privilege of sending the PAR to the next reporting authority, however, would only be with the officer himself after authentication with his DSC.

- The documents viz., appreciation letters, medical report, etc. could be uploaded by MoS only at the beginning of the year while filing his self-appraisal. Subsequently, if he desired to get any document uploaded in the middle of the year or separately, he would have to send the document manually to the JS(Admn.) who would screen and take a call on whether to upload it.

- The arrangement of recording PARs exactly mirrored the system currently in practice.

- DSC shall remain valid till 3 months after the retirement of the officer.

- An officer can have only one DSC and if that DSC was issued on the basis of tweaked values it would remain with the officer even after his transfer throughout his life subject to biennial renewals.

3.   Thereafter, Ms. Suchitra Pyarelal, Sr. Tech. Director, NIC, DeitY explained the main features of the online system. She demonstrated the software and explained the requirements of the system. While reiterating that an NIC e-mail would be required which would be the primary authentication, she explained that before launch of software, following was required:

(i)   NIC email IDs and DSCs would have to be made available to all IAS officers posted at Centre by 25th February, 2014. The officers also be advised to verify with the logins to ensure that the NIC mail is activated.

(ii)   All officers in the Ministry should enroll their DSCs at the earliest possible.

(iii)   Each Ministry/Department was required to designate a Central PAR Custodian/Nodal Officer by 28th February, 2014. Alternate functionary also to be designated and notified.

(iv)   Similarly Ministry/Department was required to designate a PAR Manager for workflow creation and for online generation. Alternate functionary also to be designated and notified simultaneously.

(v)   Each Ministry/Department was required to designate the officer to perform the role of updating the data of IAS officers on transfer/posting, etc. (including non-IAS who happens to be in the flow of reporting, if any).

(vi)   Workshops would be organized to familiarize its officers on the functioning and operation of software for which technical support would be provided by NIC attached to each Ministry/Department between 3rd and 14th March, 2014.

(vii)   Following data migration from intra-IAS by the NIC team, the EMD Managers(to be designated by the Ministries/Departments) to verify the details and do necessary corrections by 13th March, 2014.

(viii) PAR Managers in respective Ministries/Departments to create the workflow for each officer by 15th March, 2014.

(ix) DSC registration to be completed for all officers posted in the Ministry/Department in ePAR application.

(x) Any issue relating to software to be reported to the EO office/e-Office Team of NIC.

4. She further stated that the URL for all IAS officers would be opened by NIC at the Centre for trial run from 17th March, 2014. Application would be opened to PAR Managers in respective Ministries/Departments for updating the workflow between 29th to 31st March, 2014. Then PAR forms would have to be forwarded to the officers for filing the self-appraisal by the PAR Mangers in respective Ministries/Departments by 1st April, 2014.

5. After demonstration, she informed that to facilitate the Ministries/Departments in implementing the online software system, NIC would provide the following help resources:

(a) User Manuals on 'ePAR' and DSC Installation and Troubleshooting Guide;
(b) On line Interactive Tutorials; and
(c) Support Portal

6. During the course of demonstration, the following suggestions/clarifications were made:

- Check needed to be introduced in the system for J.S.(Admn.) to reconfirm while delegating his privileges to alternate or other officers so that 'complete delegation' would not happen inadvertently.

- The DSC would have to be got registered by the officer within 3 weeks of receiving on the respective site.

- In case the DSC dongle was lost by the officer or got broken, the officer would have to approach the concerned authority of NIC to get a new dongle.

- DSC was to be registered on the same system by the officer where he had enrolled it.

- The DSC could work on any Operating System as well as on any browser.

- The officer needed to check the compatibility of the DSC with the system on which he intended to function.

- It was suggested that the officer could be given the option of recording the information embedded on his DSC dongle on his PC also so that while recording the PAR he would not be required to carry the dongle as it would be used once or twice in an year and as such, the possibility of getting it lost would be high. The representative from CCA, NIC opined that such an exercise could compromise the security of DSC.

- On a query whether System Manager(NIC) can modify the remarks or gradings etc., it was clarified that the software has inbuilt security mechanism to ensure that nobody can tamper with the data.

- If access was provided through an open website to everyone through the barcode number etc. for verification, the possibility of system getting hacked could not be ruled out.

7.   E.O. observed that some of the above issues especially related to security aspects needed to be looked into carefully by the NIC team to ensure that no security breach is possible in the system.

The meeting ended with a note of thanks to the Chair.

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