

19 Nov 2019: Comprehensive News Analysis

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Category: POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

1. RBI had warned of the pitfalls of electoral bonds

Context:

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) had advised the government that the electoral bonds it proposed in 2017 would not solve the problem of unaccounted-for money since the donor's identity will never be known.

Background:

- Former Finance Minister Arun Jaitley first announced the idea of electoral bonds in his Budget (2017-18) speech and the scheme was notified by the government in January 2018.
- A person can buy these bonds from a know your customer compliant account from designated branches of the State Bank of India. These bonds are valid for 15 days.

Concerns:

- According to central banking sources, the problem with these instruments is that, while the information of the person who is buying the bond is known (to the bank), the donors' identity is not known. This is because these are bearer bonds.
- A person who buys the bond, can give to it to another person who actually donates it to a political party, and there is no record of the person who takes it from the person who buys it.
- One hesitation RBI had was that it almost becomes currency. Because it is a bearer bond.

Read more about Electoral Bonds. [Click here.](#)

C. GS 3 Related

Category: SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**1. ISRO gets set for launch of Cartosat-3 next week****Context:**

ISRO has announced that Cartosat-3 will be flown on the PSLV-C47 vehicle, subject to weather conditions.

Cartosat-3:

- It is an advanced earth imaging and mapping satellite. It would also boost the military's space surveillance.
- The satellite will be placed in an orbit of 509 km at an inclination of 97.5 degrees.
- Cartosat-3, with an ISRO-best resolution of 25 cm, will be the first of a series of high resolution, third generation satellites planned for observing the Earth.
- The satellite will be able to pick up objects of that size (25 cm) from its orbital perch about 509 km away. This will make Cartosat-3 among the few sharpest, if not the best, civil earth imagers worldwide.
- Cartosat-3 will also have multi-spectral (captures light from across the electromagnetic spectrum) capabilities, which will help the military zoom in on enemy hideouts and terror hubs.

Details:

- ISRO's rocket PSLV-XL will put into orbit Cartosat-3 and 13 commercial Nano satellites from the US.
- The 13 small U.S. customer satellites riding as secondary passengers will be placed in a polar orbit.

Category: ECONOMY

1. Panel for 'softer' penalty under company law

Context:

A government-appointed high-level panel has recommended amendments to 46 provisions under the company law to further de-clog the criminal justice system in the country.

Background:

- The government had set up the Company Law Committee under the chairmanship of Corporate Affairs Secretary to further decriminalise the provisions of the Companies Act, 2013, based on the gravity of the offences and to take other measures to provide further Ease of Living for corporates in the country.
- The government had earlier, through the Companies (Amendment) Act 2019, decriminalised 16 minor procedural or technical lapses and had categorised them as civil wrongs.

Details:

- The Committee has proposed amendments in 46 penal provisions, so as to either remove criminality, or to restrict the punishment to only fine, or to allow rectification of defaults through alternative methods. The main recommendations of the Committee are as follows:
 1. Re-categorising 23 offences out of the 66 remaining compoundable offences under the Act, to be dealt with in the in-house adjudication framework wherein these defaults would be subject to a penalty levied by an adjudicating officer. In addition, the quantum of penalties recommended is lower than the quantum of fines presently provided in the Act.
 - Compoundable offences are those offences where, the complainant (one who has filed the case, i.e. the victim), enters into a compromise, and agrees to have the charges dropped against the accused.
 2. Omitting 7 compoundable offences; limiting punishment for 11 compoundable offences to only fine by removing provision for imprisonment and recommending that 5 offences be dealt under alternative frameworks.
 3. Reducing the quantum of penalties in respect of 6 provisions, which were shifted to the in-house adjudication framework. The quantum of penalties overall recommended by the committee is also lower than their current levels.
 4. Retention of status-quo in case of the non-compoundable offences.
- The Committee has made recommendations targeted towards providing further ease of living, for law-abiding corporates:
 1. Power to exclude certain class of companies from the definition of 'listed company', mainly for listing of debt securities, in consultation with SEBI.
 2. Clarifying the trial court's jurisdiction on the basis of place of commission of offence under Section 452, for wrongful withholding of property of a company by its officers/employees.
 3. Including the provisions of Part IXA (Producer Companies) of the Companies Act, 1956 in the Companies Act, 2013;
 4. Proposing benches of the [National Company Law Appellate Tribunal](#);
 5. Provisions for allowing payment of adequate remuneration to non-executive directors in case of inadequacy of profits, by aligning the same with the provisions for remuneration to executive directors in such cases;
 6. Extending applicability of Section 446B (lower penalties for small companies and one person companies) to all provisions which attract monetary penalties and extending the benefit to producer companies and start-ups also;
 7. Excluding certain companies/bodies corporate from applicability of Section 89 (declaration of beneficial interest in shares) and Chapter XXII (companies incorporated outside India);
 8. Reducing timelines so as to speed up rights issues under Section 62;

9. Extending exemptions from filing of certain resolutions to certain classes of non-banking financial companies under Section 117 in consultation with RBI;
10. Providing power to enhance the thresholds which trigger applicability of Corporate Social Responsibility provisions;
11. Non-levy of penalties for delay in filing the annual returns and financial statements in certain cases.

2. 'RBI surplus transfer will be as per panel norms'

Context:

Finance Minister said that the transfer of surplus reserves from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to the government in future would depend on net income and other financial parameters of the central bank besides the recommendations of the expert committee on excess capital.

Details:

- RBI transfers its surplus annually to the government, the owner of the institution, after making adequate provisions for contingencies or potential losses.
- The amount that is transferred is not called “dividends” and is called “transfers” because the RBI is not a commercial organisation like banks and other companies owned or controlled by the government to pay a dividend to the owner out of the profit generated. Though it was promoted as a private shareholders’ bank in 1935 with a paid-up capital of Rs 5 crore, the government nationalised it in January 1949, making the sovereign the “owner”. What the RBI does is transfer the surplus — excess of income over expenditure — to the government.
- Under Section 47 of the RBI Act, “after making provision for bad and doubtful debts, depreciation in assets, contributions to staff and superannuation funds and for all other matters for which provision is to be made by or under this Act or which are usually provided for by bankers, the balance of the profits shall be paid to the Central government”.
- The finance minister has made it clear that the transfer of reserves, the ministry said, shall be governed by the legal provisions of the RBI Act, 1934, read with the recommendations of the Jalan Committee as accepted by the RBI.
- The surplus distribution policy of the RBI is determined in accordance with Section 47 of the RBI Act, 1934.

The transfer of surplus to the government for the year 2018-19, ending June 30, 2019, was made in accordance with the recommendations of the committee and accordingly a sum of Rs 1,75,987 crore was transferred by RBI to the Government of India.

The recommendations of the Bimal Jalan Committee have been covered in the 27th August Comprehensive News Analysis. [Click here](#) to read.

D. GS 4 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

Category: ECONOMY

1. A precedent

Context:

Supreme Court verdict in the ArcelorMittal and Essar steel case.

Details:

- The Supreme Court's judgment in the matter of Essar Steel's bankruptcy is a landmark one in the short history of **insolvency and bankruptcy resolution** in India.
- Apart from clearing the way for the eventual sale of Essar Steel to ArcelorMittal, the verdict has clarified on important aspects of insolvency resolution that had been interpreted variously by the **National Company Law Tribunal and the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT)**.

Court's Observations:

- The apex court has upheld the **primacy of financial creditors over operational creditors** in the repayments list.
 - The financial creditors provide capital to an enterprise and their interests are secured in the form of collaterals on the firm's assets.
 - Operational creditors, who are mostly suppliers of goods and services, are unsecured creditors and they cannot claim equality or precedence over financial creditors.
- The Supreme Court has upheld that the ultimate discretion on distribution of funds is with the **Committee of Creditors** and has upheld its commercial wisdom.
- The apex court has also held that the 330-day limit for resolution is not sacrosanct.

Significance:

- The court's major clarifications regarding the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC) should alone help in quickening a number of other cases, big and small, that are stuck in the insolvency courts across the country.
- The SC verdict in the case will serve as a useful precedent when it comes to deciding on future bankruptcy cases.
- The ruling to **not make the 330-day limit mandatory** will ensure that creditors are not pressured to accept a below-par deal due to paucity of time.
- With critical aspects of the IBC law clarified, there may also not be a reason to fear that entrenched promoter-defaulters can misuse the unlimited time now available to them.
- The SC has given the go-ahead to the sale of Essar Steel, with this it is expected that banks will recover over 90% of the over ₹40,000 crores that the company owes them. This should clearly help **improve the financial position of weak public sector banks** and bolster profitability as the Essar dues were fully written off by them. Shares of banks such as State Bank of India and Punjab National Bank rallied following the verdict.
- Operational creditors are set to receive close to ₹1,200 crores.

Conclusion:

- **The IBC, 2016** is the bankruptcy law of India which seeks to consolidate the existing framework by creating a single law for insolvency and bankruptcy. The insolvency and bankruptcy code is often hailed as a significant reform in the Indian context for resolving insolvencies which previously was a long process that did not offer an economically viable arrangement.
- The code aims to protect the interests of small investors and make the process of doing business less cumbersome. Though there have been a few positive results in its short history given that the recovery rates have improved considerably compared to the time period before its implementation, there is still scope for improving the recovery percentages.
- Although the Essar Steel resolution is a welcome relief to the IBC law and its implementational challenges, still the overall recovery in cases that have been adjudicated is less than 50%.
- The recovery percentages have to improve along with lowering of the time taken for resolution because significant capital is locked up in bankrupt companies in case of delays in resolution.

For more information on IBC: [Click here](#)

For more information on the SC verdict and its significance: [Click Here](#)

Category:HEALTH

1. The mother of non-issues

Context:

Maternity benefit in India.

Significance of Maternity Benefits in India:

- Maternity benefits could help to relieve the hardships faced by pregnant women and give babies a chance of good health.
- The announcement assumes significance as India accounts for 17% of all maternal deaths in the world. The country's **maternal mortality rate is pegged at 130 per 100,000 live births**, whereas **infant mortality is estimated at 43 per 1,000 live births**. Among the primary causes of high maternal and infant mortality are poor nutrition and inadequate medical care during pregnancy and childbirth.
- **Undernutrition** continues to adversely affect the majority of women in India. In India, every third woman is undernourished and every second woman is anaemic. An undernourished mother almost inevitably gives birth to a low birth weight baby. When poor nutrition starts in - utero, it extends throughout the life cycle since the changes are largely irreversible.
- Owing to economic and social distress many women continue to work to earn a living for their family right up to the last days of their pregnancy. Furthermore, they resume working soon after childbirth, even though their bodies might not permit it, thus preventing their bodies from fully recovering on one hand, and also impeding their ability to exclusively breastfeed their young infant in the first six months.

Maternity benefit provisions in India:

- Under the **National Food Security Act, 2013**, (NFSA) all pregnant women (except those already receiving similar benefits under other laws) are entitled to **maternity benefits of ₹6,000 per child**.
- In pursuance of the government's announcement that pregnant women nationwide would be getting maternity benefits of ₹6,000 this announcement, a maternity benefit scheme was rolled out in 2017: the **Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY)**.

- PMMVY, previously Indira Gandhi Matritva Sahyog Yojana (IGMSY), is a maternity benefit program run by the Government of India. It is implemented by the Ministry of Women and Child Development. It is a **conditional cash transfer scheme** for pregnant and lactating women of 19 years of age or above for the first live birth, transferred upon meeting certain conditions including early registration of pregnancy, having at least one ante-natal check-up and registration of childbirth.
 - It is aimed at providing partial compensation for the wage loss in terms of cash incentives so that the woman can take adequate rest before and after delivery of the first living child.
 - The cash incentive provided would lead to improved health-seeking behaviour amongst **Pregnant Women and Lactating Mothers (PW& LM)**.

Jaccha-Bachcha Survey:

- Jaccha-Bachcha Survey (JABS) conducted in six States of north India — Chhattisgarh, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, and Uttar Pradesh has revealed the hardships faced by pregnant women.
 - For lack of knowledge or power, most of the sample households were unable to take care of the special needs of pregnancy, whether it was food, rest or health care.
 - Among women who had delivered a baby in the preceding six months, only 31% said that they had eaten more nutritious food than usual during their pregnancy.
 - Their average weight gain during pregnancy was just seven kg on average, compared with a norm of 13 kg to 18 kg for women with a low body-mass index.
 - In Uttar Pradesh, 39% of the respondents had no clue whether they had gained weight during pregnancy, and 36% had gone through it without a health check-up.
 - It is only in Himachal Pradesh, where rural women are relatively well-off, well-educated and self-confident, that the special needs of pregnancy received significant attention.

Concerns:

- Maternity benefits in India are a non-issue given that the political class, be it the governments or the opposition parties, is clueless about their legal, financial and political aspects.
- Maternity benefits in India though are reasonably generous as compared to international standards in the domain of paid maternity leaves, this benefit is available for a small minority of Indian women employed in the formal sector and covered under the **Maternity Benefit Act**. The vast majority of pregnant women, working in the informal sector are not covered.
- The modalities of the PMMVY, violate the provisions of the NFSA.
 - Benefits are restricted to the first living child only.
 - The conditional grants are ₹5,000 per woman as against ₹6,000 as mandated by the NFSA. Previously the pregnant women were given ₹6000 but in PMMVY they receive ₹5000 in three installments.
- The budget allocated for PMMVY is less than the required amount for the scheme. The budget provision of ₹2,700 crores made for PMMVY in the 2017-18 budget is a fraction of the ₹15,000 crores required for the full-fledged implementation of maternity benefits as per NFSA norms. The allocation has reduced to ₹1,200 crores in the revised Budget of 2018-19.
- The actual expenditure is far lesser than the allocated amount pointing at underutilization of the funds. The actual expenditure was barely ₹2,000 crore as against the allocated ₹2,700 crores.
- The **number of beneficiaries is very low**. Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY) has been able to reach less than a third of the eligible beneficiaries. Based on an estimated population of 134 crores and a birth rate of 20.2 per thousand (2017 estimates), the annual number of births in India would be around 270 lakh. Of these, a little less than half would be first births. However, the number of beneficiaries is around 60 lakh and 37.5 lakh partial and full beneficiaries respectively in the Financial Year 2018-2019.

The issues:

The JABS survey suggests that PMMVY has been ruined in three steps.

- First, the coverage and benefits were reduced compared with NFSA norms. This defused public demand for PMMVY. Had the benefits been higher and universal, the scheme would have been more successful.
- Second, the application process is tedious. Aside from filling a long form for each installment, women have to submit a series of documents, including their ‘mother-and-child protection’ card, bank passbook, Aadhaar card, and husband’s Aadhaar card. Essential details in different documents have to match, and the bank account needs to be linked with Aadhaar.
- Third, there are frequent technical glitches in the online application and payment process. Grievance redressal facilities are virtually non-existent.

Successful examples:

- State governments of Tamil Nadu and Odisha have put in place effective maternity benefit schemes of their own.
- One notable example is **Tamil Nadu**, where under the **Dr. Muthulakshmi Reddy Maternity Benefit Scheme**, pregnant women in Tamil Nadu receive financial assistance of ₹18,000 per child for the first two births, including a nutrition kit.
- **Odisha’s Mamata Scheme** also covers two births, albeit with lower entitlements — ₹5,000 per child, as with the PMMVY. The JABS survey suggests that the Mamata scheme is working reasonably well: among women who had delivered in the last six months, 88% of those eligible for Mamata benefits had applied, and 75% had received at least one of the two installments.

Way forward:

- The templates of the successful state schemes need to be extended and consolidated on a national basis.
- The Maternity entitlements need the political attention it deserves given the wide impact their successful implementation can have.

2. Odisha’s strides in nutrition

Context:

Odisha's improvement in health and nutrition outcomes.

Details:

- Odisha, one of the **Empowered Action Group States**, or eight socioeconomically backward States of India, has done remarkably well in health and nutrition outcomes over the past two decades.
 - Odisha’s infant mortality rate has significantly declined.
 - The under-five mortality rate almost halved in the National Family Health Survey (NFHS)-4 from NFHS-3.
 - Odisha has seen a steep decline in stunting in children under five.
 - Anaemia in children and pregnant women has also decreased since NFHS-3.
 - Antenatal care and institutional deliveries have shown good improvement.
- The impressive improvement in these health indicators has been possible with financing, policy support, robust leadership, and innovations in the delivery of services.

Nutritional interventions:

- Nutrition has a strong correlation to health and is integral to growth and development.
- Timely nutritional interventions of breastfeeding, age-appropriate complementary feeding, Vitamin A supplementation, and full immunization are effective in improving nutrition outcomes in children.
- Odisha has performed better than other Empowered Action Group States in reducing undernutrition and sets an example with its **nutrition action plan calling for convergence with health, nutrition, and WASH (water, sanitation, and hygiene) programmes.**
- Odisha has taken a decisive step in decentralizing the procurement of supplementary nutrition under the Integrated Child Development Services programme. This has led to fair access of services under the Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS) by all beneficiaries. This is evident from the rise in the utilization of services under the ICDS.
- There has been a marked improvement in supplementary nutrition received by pregnant and lactating women in **the National Family Health Survey (NFHS)-4** compared to NFHS-3.

Concerns:

- Despite progress in child and maternal indicators, Odisha continues to be plagued by a high level of **malnutrition which manifests itself in the form of stunting and wasting.**
- Though supplementary food given under the ICDS programme has shown a significant increase, recent data show that less of such food is given as children grow older. There is also a decline in children receiving timely complementary feeding.
- Less than 10% of children receive a minimum acceptable diet. This can be attributed to a possible lack of understanding and awareness about nutrition due to illiteracy.
- The improvement in the health indicators has not been equitable. There are noticeable differences between the well-to-do coastal districts and the relatively poorer districts.
- While health outcomes have greatly improved, tribal communities still lag behind.
- The biggest challenge for Odisha has been in reaching out to remote and particularly vulnerable tribal groups. This could be the reason why tribal women and children are lagging behind the national average on nutrition and health indicators. Almost half of the under-five children from tribal communities in Odisha are underweight, and 46% are stunted. The infant mortality rate among tribals is the fourth highest in Odisha, after Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Chhattisgarh.

Way forward:

- **Targeted Approach:** Underweight children should also be identified precisely so that the monitoring mechanism for improving service delivery can be strengthened. **The National Nutrition Mission** sets an example with its inter-ministerial convergence and real-time monitoring mechanism for tracking each beneficiary and tackling malnutrition.
- **Increasing the reach:** It is essential to improve the implementation of schemes and ensure the last-mile delivery of nutrition services. A part of the solution lies in setting up **mini Anganwadi centers catering to far-flung tribal hamlets.**
- **Increasing awareness of Nutrition:** Raising awareness through community campaigns on the need for good nutrition would help improve the utilisation of services by beneficiaries.
- **Integrated approach:** The International Food Policy Research Institute, in its research, called for inter-departmental engagements to accelerate the nutrition outcome in Odisha. There is a need to improve sanitation, women's education, and underlying poverty, to be able to tackle undernutrition. An integrated effort will result in increasing the effectiveness of such efforts.

For more information on nutritional challenges in India: [Click here](#)

Category:INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1. BRICS on the ball?

Context:

11th BRICS Summit recently concluded in Brasilia.

Details:

- Pitted as a counterweight to G7, the combine of developed economies, BRICS represents the world's top emerging economies and claims to serve as a bridge between the developed and developing world.
- During Brazil's chairmanship, the BRICS grouping reported 30 new outcomes, initiatives, and documents. **The Brasilia Declaration** at the end of the summit spells out the leaders' shared worldview and spectrum of their work.

Concerns:

- It is difficult to identify new elements in the BRICS's endeavour to strengthen and reform the multilateral system. Most of the themes in the Brasilia Declaration seem repetitive of the previous commitments.
- There are questions raised on the current concerns and priorities of BRICS. Questions are also being raised about the efficacy and impact of BRICS as a whole.
- The "urgent need" to reform the UN, the World Trade Organization, the International Monetary Fund, and other international organizations was stressed once again, even as little progress has occurred on this score.
- Interest in open and free trade was reiterated, despite growing protectionist tendencies.
- On the expansion of the UN Security Council, BRICS exposed its disunity yet again by sticking to the formulation that refuses to go beyond China and Russia supporting the "aspiration" of Brazil, India and South Africa "to play a greater role in the UN".

Positives:

- Much to India's satisfaction, the commitment of BRICS to counterterrorism seems to be getting strengthened. Its **working group on countering terrorism** has expanded its activities through five thematic subgroups that deal with terrorist financing, use of the Internet for terrorist purposes, countering radicalization, issue of foreign terrorist fighters, and capacity building. This is welcome given the growing threat of terrorism.
- The group has systematically increased the density of humanitarian exchanges. Cooperation in the areas of culture, arts, media, education, and sport and youth policy is gaining momentum and the much needed people-to-people contacts are developing which can go a long way in strengthening the ties between the member countries.
- The BRICS has shown signs of **advancing in the economic domain**.
- New Development Bank
 - The **New Development Bank (NDB)**, the grouping's flagship achievement, has 44 projects with its lending touching \$12.4 billion, in just five years.
 - The NDB, recognizing the need to grow as a global development finance institution, is preparing to open its membership selectively. There has been consensus among the member countries on the criteria and probably on a list of nations as possible new members, although a formal decision has been left to the bank's board of governors.
 - NDB has opened its regional centers in South Africa and Brazil and will do so in Russia and India in 2020.
- Contingent Reserve Arrangement

- With a successful **Contingent Reserve Arrangement** in the bag, BRICS governments are set to establish a local currency Bond Fund. But the earlier proposal to launch a credit rating agency remains shelved due to internal differences.
- Boost to Inter-country Business
 - Business promotion among member-states has been accorded a new salience.
 - **The BRICS Business Council** held a substantive dialogue to foster cooperation in areas ranging from infrastructure and energy to financial services, regional aviation, and digital economy. Its cooperation with the NDB is being encouraged.
 - The national trade promotion agencies signed an MoU on cooperation among themselves.
 - A BRICS Women Business Alliance was created, both as a women empowerment measure and as a tool to bring “a distinctive perspective on issues of interest for the business community.”
- Industrial co-operation
 - Following up on the decisions taken at the previous summit, the operationalization of the **Partnership on New Industrial Revolution** is underway.
 - The partnership is focused on cooperation in digitalization, industrialization, innovation, inclusiveness, and investment. This partnership will be concretized by establishing industrial and science parks, innovation centers and business incubators.

Way forward:

- The contribution of BRICS to project the perspectives of developing economies is laudable. By hosting outreach meetings with countries in its neighbouring and broader region, each chair has given the impression that BRICS would do more for them and it needs to fulfill this hope.
- The NDB provides an opportunity to increase the sphere of influence of BRICS. NDB needs to start extending loans for projects in non-BRICS countries to create a solid constituency of supporters.
- BRICS should in the short term focus on fulfilling existing commitments instead of taking on new ones.

For more information on BRICS:

1. [A partnership for stability, security, and growth](#)
2. [Five-in-one](#)

F. Tidbits

1. Pak. successfully tests nuclear-capable missile

- Pakistan has successfully test-fired a nuclear-capable surface-to-surface ballistic missile which can strike targets up to 650 km.
- According to a press release issued by the media wing of the Pakistani military, the launch of the Shaheen-I missile was held as part of a training exercise aimed at testing the operational readiness of Army Strategic Forces Command.

2. Vodafone Idea, Airtel to hike tariffs

- Reeling under the impact of the Supreme Court's ruling on adjusted gross revenue (AGR), Vodafone Idea and Bharti Airtel have announced that they will be increasing tariffs.
- Vodafone Idea Limited (VIL), India's second-largest telco by number of subscribers, has decided to increase the tariff, due to the acute financial stress in the telecom sector.
- A Committee of Secretaries headed by the Cabinet Secretary is examining the financial stress in the sector, and is likely to soon recommend measures to mitigate it.
- The telecom sector is highly capital intensive with fast-changing technology cycles that require continuing investments. It is, therefore, extremely important that the industry remains viable to support the vision of Digital India.

3. Citizenship Bill still in draft stage

What's in News?

The Citizenship Amendment Bill that seeks to grant citizenship to non-Muslims from Bangladesh, Afghanistan and Pakistan without proper documents is still in the draft stage and yet to be cleared by the Union Cabinet.

- The Bill also seeks to introduce a provision to “empower the Central government to cancel the registration of Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) card in case of any violation.”
- The Bill introduced in the previous session of the Lok Sabha lapsed after it could not be cleared in the Rajya Sabha.

Citizenship Amendment Bill, its provisions, concerns and criticisms have been covered in 28th September 2019 Comprehensive News Analysis. [Click here](#) to read.

4. No more waiver, Bhutan to levy charges on Indian tourists

- In a major shift in policy, Bhutan plans to levy charges on tourists from regional countries, including India, Bangladesh and the Maldives, who at present are exempted from any charges.
- The new draft tourism policy is likely to be finalised by the Bhutanese Cabinet in December 2019.
- In contrast to other international tourists, who pay \$250 (Approx. INR. 18,000) as a minimum charge per day per person, which includes a \$65 a day “Sustainable Development Fee”, as well as a \$40 visa charge.
- Tourists from India, Bangladesh and the Maldives had so far paid no fees, and were able to cross over without visas.
- The sharp increase in the number of tourists from the region was cited for the move.

5. Indian pharma can gain from U.S.-China trade war

- Chairman of CII National Committee on Pharmaceuticals and Dr. Reddy's Laboratories co-chairman and managing director has said that the U.S.-China trade war was an opportunity opening up for the pharma industry of India.
- It was said that the trade war was making companies in the West take a re-look at the tariff structure as well as worried about the security of supply from China.
- Other factors emerging as window of opportunity are:

- China's stress on shutting high polluting industries
- China's stress on moving away from low-end, low-value add products to more innovation.
- Additionally, China is a big market for Indian pharma.
- The need for Indian pharma firms to give shape to their backward and forward integration projects was highlighted.
- On the regulatory concerns for the Indian pharma industry, in the wake of the increased scrutiny by the US Food and Drug Administration, it was said that, a lot of companies have approvals stalled because of warning letters [from the USFDA] and that was affecting new product introduction and growth.

G. Prelims Facts

Nothing here for today!!!

H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

Q1. Bhutan shares border with which of the following Indian States?

1. Assam
2. Arunachal Pradesh
3. West Bengal
4. Sikkim

Choose the correct option:

- a. 1, 2 and 4 only
- b. 1, 3 and 4 only
- c. 1, 2, 3 and 4
- d. 1, 2 and 3 only

Answer: c

Explanation:

The Bhutan–India border is the international border separating Bhutan and India. The border is 699 km long, with the Indian states of Assam (267 km), Arunachal Pradesh (217 km), West Bengal (183 km), and Sikkim (32 km).

Q2. Which of the following is/are included in the list of UNESCO World Heritage Sites:

1. Rani ki Vav
2. Modhera Sun Temple
3. Champaner-Pavagadh Archaeological Park

Choose the correct option:

- a. 1 and 2 only
- b. 1 only

- c. 1 and 3 only
- d. 2 only

Answer: c

Explanation:

Champaner-Pavagadh Archaeological Park, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, is located in Panchmahal district in Gujarat. Located on the banks of the historical and mythical river Saraswati in Patan, Rani ni Vav is the latest addition to the list from Gujarat. Built in the 11th Century, the step-well was originally a memorial to the king, and slowly took up the name of the queen.

Q3. Which of the following is/are the applications of Cartosat-2?

1. Detailed mapping
2. Geographical Information System (GIS) applications
3. Land Information System (LIS) applications

Choose the correct option:

- a. 1 only
- b. 1 and 2 only
- c. 1 and 3 only
- d. 1, 2 and 3

Answer: d

Explanation:

Cartosat-2 is an Earth Observation satellite launched on PSLV-C40/Cartosat-2 Series Satellite Mission. The imagery sent by Cartosat-2 satellite has the following applications. It is useful for cartographic applications (detailed mapping), urban and rural applications, coastal land use and regulation, utility management like road network monitoring, water distribution, creation of land use maps, change detection to bring out geographical and manmade features and various other Land Information System (LIS) as well as Geographical Information System (GIS) applications.

Q4. Consider the following statements with respect to Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana:

1. It is a centrally sponsored scheme being executed by the Ministry of Women and Child Development.
2. Under the programme, eligible pregnant women are entitled for cash assistance irrespective of the age of mother and number of children.

Choose the correct option:

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 only
- c. Both 1 and 2
- d. Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: a

Explanation:

Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana is a centrally sponsored scheme being executed by the Ministry of Women and Child Development.

Target beneficiaries for the scheme are:

1. All Pregnant Women and Lactating Mothers, excluding those who are in regular employment with the Central Government or the State Governments or PSUs or those who are in receipt of similar benefits under any law for the time being in force.
2. All eligible Pregnant Women and Lactating Mothers who have their pregnancy on or after 01.01.2017 for the **first child** only.

I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. The formulation and implementation of maternity benefits and entitlements need the attention it deserves, given the wide impact their successful implementation can have in India. Comment. Also, discuss the current provisions in India and the concerns associated with it. (250 words, 15 marks).
2. Discuss the Framework of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code for resolution of insolvencies. The recent Supreme Court verdict in the Essar steel case is seen as a welcome relief to the Insolvency and Bankruptcy code and its implementational challenges. Comment. (250 words, 15 marks)