



News Analysis (24 Mar, 2020)

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Finance Bill, 2020 Passed

Why in News

Recently, the Lok Sabha passed the **Finance Bill, 2020** without any debate due to the situation arising out of the **Coronavirus** pandemic.

Finance Bill

- A Finance Bill is a Bill that, as the name suggests, concerns the country's finances — it could be about taxes, government expenditures, government borrowings, revenues, etc. Since the Union Budget deals with these things, it is passed as a Finance Bill.
- **Rule 219 of the Rules of Procedure of Lok Sabha** states: 'Finance Bill' means the Bill ordinarily introduced in each year to give effect to the financial proposals of the Government of India for the following financial year and includes a Bill to give effect to supplementary financial proposals for any period.
- It is introduced in Lok Sabha after the presentation of the annual Budget is passed by the House. It is also certified as a Money Bill.
- The Constitution defines financial legislation into two categories: Money Bills and Financial Bills.
 - **Money Bills** –Article 110
 - **Financial Bills (I)**– Article 117 (1)
 - **Financial Bills (II)**– Article 117 (3)
- **All Money bills are Financial bills but all Financial bills are not Money bills.**
 - Only those financial bills are Money bills which contain exclusively those matters which are mentioned in Article 110 of the Constitution.
 - Money bills are **certified by the Speaker of Lok Sabha**.

Financial Bills (I)

- A financial bill (I) contains not only any or **all the matters mentioned in the Money Bill, but also other matters of general legislation.** It is dealt under Article 117 (1) of the Constitution.
- It is **similar to a money bill in two respects-**
 - Both of them can be introduced only in the Lok Sabha and not in the Rajya Sabha.
 - Both of them can be introduced only on the recommendation of the President.
- In all other respects, a financial bill (I) is treated as an ordinary bill. ie.
 - it can be either rejected or amended by the Rajya Sabha.
 - In case of a disagreement between the two Houses over such a bill, the President can summon a joint sitting of the two Houses to resolve the deadlock.
 - When the bill is presented to the President, he can either give his assent to the bill or withhold his assent to the bill or return the bill for reconsideration of the Houses.

Financial Bills (II)

- A financial bill (II) contains provisions involving **expenditure from the Consolidated Fund of India**, but does not include any of the matters mentioned in Article 110. It is dealt under Article 117 (3) of the Constitution.
- It is governed by the **same legislative procedure which is applicable to an ordinary bill.**
- Such Bills can be introduced in either House of Parliament. However, recommendation of the President is essential for consideration of these Bills by either House and unless such recommendation is received, neither House can pass the Bill.
In other words, the recommendation of the President is not required at the introduction stage but is required at the consideration stage.

Source: TH

ICMR Recommends Use of Hydroxy-Chloroquine

Why in News

The National Task force for **COVID-19**, constituted by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), has suggested the **use of hydroxy-chloroquine** to contain the spread of SARS-CoV-2 (Coronavirus) for restricted populations.

Key Points

- **Hydroxy-chloroquine :**

Hydroxy-chloroquine is an **oral drug** used in the treatment of **autoimmune diseases such as rheumatoid arthritis**.

- Autoimmune diseases are in which the body's immune system attacks healthy cells.
- Rheumatoid arthritis is a chronic inflammatory disorder affecting many joints, including those in the hands and feet.

- **Hydroxy-chloroquine against COVID-19:**

- The drug shows antiviral activity **in vitro** against coronaviruses, and specifically, SARS-CoV-2 [the virus that causes COVID-19].
- Further, the study suggests that prophylaxis (treatment given to prevent disease) with hydroxy-chloroquine at approved doses could prevent SARS-CoV-2 infection and may help to improve viral shedding.
- Clinical trials are under way in China to know whether the drug can be used for treatment.

- **ICMR Recommended Use of Hydroxy-chloroquine:**

- The restricted population for usage of hydroxy-chloroquine include, namely, **'Asymptomatic (showing no symptoms) Healthcare Workers'** and **'Asymptomatic household contacts'** of laboratory-confirmed cases.
- The above mentioned population have been advised to use the hydroxy-chloroquine to **contain further spread of the pandemic**.
- However, the drug is **not recommended** as a preventive healthcare in children under **15 years of age**.
- ICMR also advised that placing healthcare workers under hydroxy-chloroquine treatment **should not instill a sense of false security** and they **need to follow all prescribed public health measures** such as frequent washing of hands, respiratory etiquettes, keeping a distance of minimum one metre and use of personal protective equipment, etc.
- It has been also advised that the drug **should only be given on the prescription** of a registered medical practitioner.

Combination of Hydroxy-chloroquine with Other Drugs

- **Hydroxy-chloroquine and Chloroquine:**

A study suggests that **both hydroxy-chloroquine and chloroquine** have in vitro activity against SARS-CoV, SARS-CoV-2, and other coronaviruses, with hydroxy-chloroquine having higher potency against SARS-CoV-2.

- **Hydroxy-chloroquine with Azithromycin:**

- The combination is hydroxy-chloroquine with azithromycin, a commonly used antibiotic.
- The combination is expected to be efficient for virus elimination.

NOTE:

- **In vitro studies** are performed with microorganisms, cells, or biological molecules outside their normal biological context (such as in a test tube).
- In contrast to in vitro experiments, **in vivo studies** are those conducted in living organisms, including humans, and whole plants.

Indian Council of Medical Research

- Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) is the apex body in India for the formulation, coordination and promotion of biomedical research.
- Its mandate is to conduct, coordinate and implement medical research for the benefit of the Society; translating medical innovations into products/processes and introducing them into the public health system.
- It is funded by the Government of India through the Department of Health Research, **Ministry of Health & Family Welfare.**

Source:IE

COVID-19 Hits NRI Deposits

Why in News

Major private sector banks are refusing foreign currency deposits by Non Resident Indians (NRIs) over fears that transmission of **COVID-19** could occur via foreign currency notes.

NRI Deposits

- A '**Non-Resident Indian (NRI)**' is an Indian citizen resident outside India for the purpose of employment, etc.
- NRIs have been parking funds in Indian banks largely due to the wide interest rate differential between their country of residence and country of origin, enjoying the rate advantage.
- They have the option of parking money in:

Foreign Currency Non-Resident Accounts

- These accept any permitted foreign currency.
- FCNR Accounts are **Term Deposit Accounts** and **not Saving Accounts.**
- The currency risk (change in price of one currency in relation to another) is **borne by the bank.**
- They are **fully repatriable** (ability to move money abroad).

Non Resident External-Rupee (NRE) Accounts

- The NRE account is an **Indian rupee-denominated account**, offering complete security.
- These accounts can be in the form of savings, current, recurring, or fixed deposits.
- The **currency risk is on the depositor**.
- They are **fully repatriable**.

Non-Resident Ordinary (NRO) Account

- It is for NRIs to manage their deposits or income earned in India such as dividends, pension, rent, etc.
- This account allows NRIs to receive funds in **either Indian or foreign currency**.
- However, **only Indian currency can be withdrawn** as NRO Accounts are kept in Indian currency and **are not freely repatriable**.
- There are **no currency risks involved**.
- **Taxation on NRI deposits**
 - Interest earned on NRE and FCNR accounts is tax-free in India.
 - The tax rate for interest income from NRO accounts is 30%. However, NRIs living in countries with which India has a **Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement (DTAA)** can avail of lower tax rates.

Source : TH

Aircraft Amendment Bill, 2020

Why in News

Recently, the Lok Sabha has passed the **Aircraft (Amendment) Bill, 2020** which seeks to amend the **Aircraft Act, 1934**.

The **Act regulates** the manufacture, possession, use, operation, sale, import and export of civil aircrafts and licensing of aerodromes.

Key Features

- The Bill will provide **statutory status to regulatory institutions** like the **Directorate General of Civil Aviation** (DGCA), the **Bureau of Civil Aviation Security** (BCAS) and the **Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau** (AAIB).
 - **DGCA** will carry out oversight and regulatory functions with respect to matters under the Bill.
 - **BCAS** carries out regulatory oversight functions related to civil aviation security.
 - **AAIB** carries out investigations related to aircraft accidents and incidents.
 - The statutory status to these regulatory institutions would **improve India's aviation safety ranking** as suggested by the **International Civil Aviation Organization** (ICAO).
- The Bill proposes to **increase the fine amount for violations of rules** from ₹10 lakh to ₹1 crore for aviation industry players.

Under the Bill, the central government may cancel the licences, certificates or approvals granted to a person under the Act if the person contravenes any provision of the Act.
- The **Act exempted aircrafts** belonging to the **naval, military, or air forces** of the Union.

The Bill **expands this exemption** to include aircrafts belonging to any **other armed forces other than these three**.

Challenges

- The civil aviation sector had been **deregulated** with little role for the government to set air fare.
- There has been a **drop in demand** and airline companies are under stress due to the **COVID-19** outbreak.
- Air India is having huge losses (₹26 crore daily) due to its **disinvestment** and it is likely to get worse in the wake of the **pandemic**.
- The aviation sector faces the **shortage of Air-Traffic Controllers** (ATCs).
- The cases of **"near miss"** in the skies have **increased**.

Note:

A near miss is when two aircraft come so close that their safety is compromised. The safe distance between two planes flying in opposite directions is 40 seconds depending on their speed. Similarly, the vertical distance of 1,000 feet is considered safe.

Way Forward

- Airfares need to remain **affordable** and airlines also need to remain **viable**.

- The **strength of ATCs needs to be increased** to avoid any possibility of mid-air collisions.

India has 3,500 ATCs and 250 more will be hired next year.

Source: TH

World Tuberculosis Day

Why in News

World Tuberculosis (TB) Day is observed on **24th March** every year to raise public awareness about the devastating health, social and economic consequences of TB and to step up efforts to end the global TB epidemic.

The date 24th March is chosen to commemorate the anniversary of **Dr. Robert Koch's discovery of the cause of Tuberculosis (Mycobacterium Tuberculosis) in 1882.**

Key Points

- TB remains the **world's deadliest infectious killer**.
Each day, over 4000 people lose their lives to TB and close to 30,000 people fall ill with this **preventable and curable disease**.
- **Theme for 2020: 'It's time'**. It puts the accent on the **urgency to act on the commitments** made by global leaders to:
 - scale up access to prevention and treatment.
 - build accountability.
 - ensure sufficient and sustainable financing including for research.
 - promote an end to stigma and discrimination.
 - promote an equitable, rights-based and people-centered TB response.
- **Global Efforts:**
 - The **World Health Organization** (WHO) has launched a **joint initiative "Find. Treat. All. #EndTB"** with the **Global Fund and Stop TB Partnership**.
It aims to accelerate the TB response and ensure access to care, in line with WHO's overall drive towards **Universal Health Coverage**.
 - WHO also releases the **Global Tuberculosis Report**.

- **India's Efforts:**
 - The Government of India has committed to **eliminate the prevalence of TB by 2025**, with commensurate resources to rapidly reduce TB incidence prevalence and mortality in India.
 - The **Ministry of Health and Family Welfare** is implementing the **National Strategic Plan** (NSP) for Tuberculosis Elimination (**2017-2025**).
 - The President of India had appealed to all the stakeholders to come together to reinforce the efforts in **"TB Harega Desh Jeetega Campaign"** to make it a true people's movement.

Tuberculosis

- TB is caused by **bacteria (Mycobacterium tuberculosis)** that most often affect the lungs.
- **Transmission:** TB is spread from **person to person through the air**. When people with TB cough, sneeze or spit, they propel the TB germs into the air.
- **Symptoms:** Cough with sputum and blood at times, chest pains, weakness, weight loss, fever and night sweats.
- **Treatment:** TB is a treatable and curable disease. It is treated with a **standard 6 month course of 4 antimicrobial drugs** that are provided with information, supervision and support to the patient by a health worker or trained volunteer.
- Anti-TB medicines have been used for decades and strains that are resistant to 1 or more of the medicines have been documented in every country surveyed.
 - **Multidrug-resistant tuberculosis (MDR-TB)** is a form of TB caused by bacteria that do not respond to isoniazid and rifampicin, the 2 most powerful, first-line anti-TB drugs. MDR-TB is treatable and curable by using second-line drugs.
 - **Extensively drug-resistant TB (XDR-TB)** is a more serious form of MDR-TB caused by bacteria that do not respond to the most effective second-line anti-TB drugs, often leaving patients without any further treatment options.

Source: PIB

Innovations for Defence Excellence (iDEX) Initiative

- iDEX is an initiative taken by the government to contribute towards **modernization of the Defence Industry**.
- It was launched by the Government in April 2018.

- iDEX aims to promote **innovation** and **technology development** in **Defence and Aerospace** by engaging Industries (which includes **MSMEs**, start-ups, individual innovators, R&D institutes & academia).
iDEX will provide the engaging industries with funding and other support to carry out Research & Development.
- iDEX will be funded and managed by **Defence Innovation Organization (DIO)**, and will function as the **executive arm of DIO**.

Other Initiatives to Modernize Defence Industry

- **Strategic Partnership (SP) Model**- It identifies a few Indian private companies who would initially tie up with global Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs) to seek technology transfers to set up domestic manufacturing infrastructure and supply chains.
- **Artificial Intelligence in Defence**
 - **N Chadrsekharan Task Force** was set up in 2018 to study implications of AI in national security.
 - **Defence Artificial Intelligence Project Agency (DAIPA)** was created in March, 2019.
DAIPA aims for greater thrust on Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Defence, formulation of an AI roadmap for each Defence PSU and Ordnance Factory Board to develop AI-enable products.

Defence Innovation Organization (DIO)

DIO is a '**not for profit**' company registered under Section 8 of the Companies Act 2013. Its two **founding members are Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) & Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL)** - Defence Public Sector Undertakings (DPSUs). **HAL and BEL are navratna companies**.

Source:PIB

Mission Raksha Gyan Shakti

- It was launched in **2018** by the **Ministry of Defence** with the objective of **creating greater Intellectual Property (IP) in Defence Production Ecosystem**.
- The **Directorate General of Quality Assurance (DGQA)** has been entrusted with the **responsibility of coordinating and implementing** the programme.
 - The Directorate General of Quality Assurance (DGQA) is under the Department Of Defence Production , Ministry of Defence.
 - The organisation provides Quality Assurance (QA) cover for the entire range of Arms, Ammunitions, Equipments and Stores supplied to Armed Forces.

- It **aims to achieve the goal of self-reliance** in the defense sector to generate Intellectual Property in India and marks a departure from the culture of seeking **Transfer of Technology (ToT)** from foreign sources.

Source: PIB

Digitised Scripts of Yakshagana

Why in News

Recently, the **voluntary community effort** by the trust named **Yakshavahini** has made more than 900 **Yakshagana scripts digitised and available online for free.**



Yakshagana

- Yakshagana is a traditional theatre form of **Karnataka**.
- It is a **temple art form** that depicts **mythological stories and Puranas**.
- It is performed with massive headgears, elaborate facial make-up and vibrant costumes and ornaments.
- Usually recited in **Kannada**, it is also performed in **Malayalam** as well as **Tulu (the dialect of south Karnataka)**.
- It is performed with percussion instruments like chenda, maddalam, jagatta or chengila (cymbals) and chakratala or elathalam (small cymbals).

Government's Initiative: National Mission for Manuscripts

- The National Mission for Manuscripts (NMM) was launched by the **Ministry of Culture** in **2003**.
- The Mission has the mandate of identifying, documenting, conserving and making accessible the manuscript heritage of India.

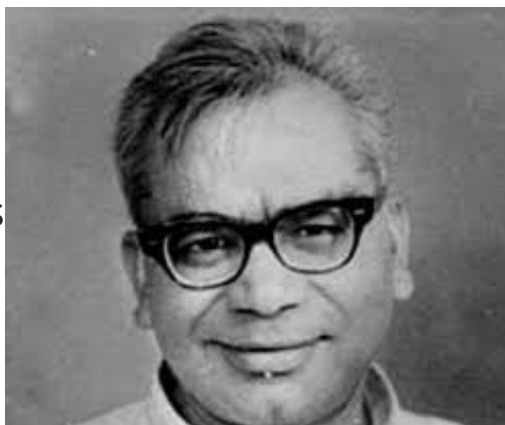
- The ultimate objective of the Mission is **to establish a Digital Manuscripts Repository** at Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA) in which researchers and scholars can view and consult the manuscripts.
 - IGNCA is an autonomous institution under the Union Ministry of Culture. It was established in 1987 as a centre for research, academic pursuit and dissemination in the field of the arts.
 - Its motto is 'conserving the past for the future'.
- National Mission for Manuscripts (NMM) is also developing an app to make around 3 lakh manuscripts accessible.

Source:TH

Dr Ram Manohar Lohia

Why in News

The Prime Minister paid tribute to Dr Ram Manohar Lohia on his birth anniversary.



Key Points

- Ram Manohar Lohia, (born March 23, 1910) was a prominent figure in **socialist politics** and in the movement towards **Indian independence**.
- In 1934, Lohia became actively involved in the **Congress Socialist Party (CSP)**, a left-wing group within the Indian National Congress; he served on the CSP executive committee and edited its weekly journal.
- He **opposed the Indian participation on the side of Great Britain in World War II** and was arrested for anti-British remarks in 1939 and 1940.
- Lohia along with other CSP leaders mobilized support for **the Quit India movement** (a campaign initiated by Mohandas K. Gandhi to urge the withdrawal of British authorities from India) in 1942. He was jailed again in 1944–46 for such resistance activities.
- Lohia and other CSP members **left the Congress in 1948**.

- He became a member of the **Praja Socialist Party** upon its formation in 1952 and served as general secretary for a brief period, but conflicts within the party led to his resignation in 1955.
- Later that year Lohia established a new Socialist Party, for which he became chairman as well as the editor of its journal, **Mankind**.
- He advocated for various **socio-political reforms** in his capacity as party leader, including the abolition of the caste system, the adoption of Hindi as India's national language, and stronger protection of civil liberties.
- Some of **his works** include: 'Marx, Gandhi and Socialism', 'Guilty Men of India's Partition', etc.
- In 1963, Lohia was elected to the Lok Sabha.
- He passed away in 1967.

Source : PIB
