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Daily News Analysis

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General studies-2

1. Taxation Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2019

Why in News?

The RajyaSabha approved the Taxation Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2019, replacing an ordinance that was promulgated to cut corporate tax rates to boost growth rate in a slowing economy. Since it deals with taxes, the bill was introduced as a money bill in the LokSabha earlier.

Key Points

- The Taxation Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2019 replaces an ordinance that reduced the tax rate for domestic companies from 30% and 25% (for those with an annual turnover of over ₹400 crores) to 22%.
- Corporate tax is a tax imposed on the net income of the company
- These rates are applicable for companies if they don't claim certain exemptions under the Income Tax Act.
- The rate for new domestic manufacturing companies set up after October 1 was lowered to 15%.
- The new effective tax rate inclusive of surcharge and cess for domestic companies would be 25.17% and for new domestic manufacturing companies would be 17.01%.

Money Bill

- A Bill is said to be a Money Bill if it only contains provisions related to taxation, borrowing of money by the government, expenditure from or receipt to the Consolidated Fund of India. Bills that only contain provisions that are incidental to these matters would also be regarded as Money Bills.
- A Money Bill may only be introduced in LokSabha, on the recommendation of the President. It must be passed in the LokSabha by a simple majority of all members present and voting.
- The RajyaSabha cannot amend money bills but can recommend amendments. A money bill, that solely concerns taxation or government spending, must be returned to the LokSabha within 14 days, or the bill is deemed to have passed both houses in the form it was originally passed by the LokSabha.

2. Private Member's bill introduced in parliament

Why in News?

- A Private Member's bill was introduced in the Parliament which intends to do away with the cap on election spending by candidates.

Key points:

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- The Bill has been introduced on the ground that the ceiling on election expenses ends up being counterproductive and encourages candidates to under-report their expenditure.
- Also, the ceiling currently prescribed by the Election Commission of India (ECI) is meant for legitimate expenditure. A lot of money in elections is being spent for illegitimate purposes.

Private Member's Bill

- Any Member of Parliament (MP) who is not a minister is referred to as a private member.
- The purpose of private member's bill is to draw the government's attention to what individual MPs see as issues and gaps in the existing legal framework, which require legislative intervention.
- Thus it reflects the stand of the opposition party on public matters.
- Its drafting is the responsibility of the member concerned.
- Its introduction in the House requires one month's notice.
- The government bills can be introduced and discussed on any day, private member's bills can be introduced and discussed only on Fridays.
- Its rejection by the House has no implication on the parliamentary confidence in the government or its resignation.
- Upon conclusion of the discussion, the member piloting the bill can either withdraw it on the request of the minister concerned, or he may choose to press ahead with its passage.

General studies-3

White dwarf star

Why in News

- For the first time ever, astronomers have found an indirect evidence of a giant planet orbiting a white dwarf star (WDJ0914+1914). The system was found in the Cancer constellation. The planet was not seen directly but evidence of its presence was in the form of a disc of gas (hydrogen, oxygen and sulphur) formed due to its evaporating atmosphere.
- Spikes of gas were detected by the Very Large Telescope of the European Southern Observatory in Chile.

Significance

- This is the first evidence of an actual planet revolving around a white dwarf star. Prior to this discovery, only smaller objects such as asteroids had been detected.
- WDJ0914+1914 is providing us with a glimpse into the very distant future of our own solar system. In about 4.5 billion years from now, the Sun will become a white dwarf evaporating all the planets.

White Dwarfs

- Stars like our sun fuse hydrogen in their cores into helium through nuclear fusion reactions. White dwarfs are stars that have burned up all of the hydrogen they once used as nuclear



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fuel. Such stars have very high density.

- Fusion in a star's core produces heat and outward pressure (they bloat up as enormous red giants), but this pressure is kept in balance by the inward push of gravity generated by a star's mass.
- When the hydrogen, used as fuel, vanishes and fusion slows, gravity causes the star to collapse in on itself into white dwarfs.
- Black Dwarf: Eventually—over tens or even hundreds of billions of years—a white dwarf cools until it becomes a black dwarf, which emits no energy. Because the universe's oldest stars are only 10 billion to 20 billion years old there are no known black dwarfs
- It must be noted that not all white dwarfs cool and transform into black dwarfs. Those white dwarfs which have enough mass reach a level called the Chandrasekhar Limit. At this point the pressure at its center becomes so great that the star will detonate in a thermonuclear supernova.

Chandrasekhar Limit

- Chandrasekhar Limit is the maximum mass theoretically possible for a stable white dwarf star. A limit which mandates that no white dwarf (a collapsed, degenerate star) can be more massive than about 1.4 times the mass of the Sun. Any degenerate object more massive must inevitably collapse into a neutron star or black hole.
- The limit is named after the Nobel laureate Subrahmanyan Chandrasekhar, who first proposed the idea in 1931. He was awarded the Nobel Prize in Physics in 1983 for his work on the physical processes involved in the structure and evolution of stars.

KALIA-Scheme:

Why in News?

- The Odisha government has decided to merge its flagship scheme- Kalia with the Centre's PradhanMantriKisanSammanNidhi (PM-Kisan) yojana, apparently due to financial constraint.

Key features of Krushak Assistance for Livelihood and Income Augmentation or KALIA Scheme:

- Involves payments to encourage cultivation and associated activities.
- Primary targets are small farmers, cultivators and landless agricultural labourers.
- All farmers will be provided Rs 10,000 per family as assistance for cultivation.
- Each family will get Rs 5,000 separately in the kharif and rabi seasons, for five cropping seasons between 2018-19 and 2021-22.
- Targets 10 lakh landless households, and specifically SC and ST families. They will be supported with a unit cost of Rs 12,500 for activities like goat rearing, mushroom cultivation, beekeeping, poultry farming and fishery.
- Exception: A critical trade, dairy production, has deliberately been kept out because keeping a cow is more expensive, while milk production needs to have a collection route or agency that



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processes and refines this low shelf-life product.

- It will assist the elderly, sick and differently-abled population who are unable to take up cultivation, by providing Rs 10,000 per household per year.
- The scheme includes a life insurance cover of Rs 2 lakh and additional personal accident coverage of the same amount for 57 lakh households.
- Crop loans up to Rs 50,000 are interest-free.
- This is also going to be an area-specific scheme in the sense that an input support for a particular trade, say mushroom cultivation, will be provided if it is prevalent throughout that locality so that there is aggregation of produce.

About PradhanMantriKisanSammanNidhi:

- It is a Central Sector Scheme.
- Under this programme, landholding farmer families, having cultivable land up to 2 hectares, will be provided direct income support at the rate of Rs. 6,000 per year.
- This income support will be transferred directly into the bank accounts of beneficiary farmers, in three equal installments of Rs. 2,000 each.

Carbon Markets

Why in News?

- Carbon Markets' has become a contentious issue at the Conference of Parties 25 (CoP 25), being held in Madrid (Spain) from 2nd-13th December, 2019.
- Carbon markets allow for buying and selling of carbon emissions with the objective of reducing global emissions.
- Carbon markets existed under the Kyoto Protocol, which is being replaced by the Paris Agreement in 2020.

Carbon Markets

- Carbon Markets can potentially deliver emissions reductions over and above what countries are doing on their own.
- For example, technology upgradation and emission reduction of a brick kiln in India can be achieved in two ways:
 - A developed country which is unable to meet its reduction target can provide money or technology to the brick kiln in India, and thus claim the reduction of emission as its own.
 - Alternatively, the kiln can make the investment, and then offer on sale the emission reduction, called carbon credits. Another party, struggling to meet its own targets, can buy these credits and show these as their own.

Carbon Markets under the Paris Agreement

- The provisions relating to setting up a new carbon market are described in Article 6 of the



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Paris Agreement.

- Article 6.2 enables bilateral arrangements for transfer of emissions reductions.
- Article 6.4 talks about a wider carbon market in which reductions can be bought and sold by anyone.
- Article 6.8 provides for making 'non-market approaches' available to countries to achieve targets.

Ekal School Abhiyan

Why in News?

- Recently, the Prime Minister admired the role of EkalVidyalayaSangathan for leading the 'Ekal School Abhiyan' and in nation-building by imparting education and awareness to more than 2.8 million rural and tribal children who reside in the remotest locations across India and Nepal.

Key Points

- Ekal School Abhiyan' aims to promote education among rural and tribal children.
- The Sangathan has remarkably promoted the education amongst rural and tribals through the 'Panchatantra Model of Education' that include:
 - Promotion of nutrition through PoshanVatikas,
 - Training for bio-fertilizers use in farming,
 - Imparting skills for using medicinal qualities of herbs,
 - Training for employment, and
 - Generation of Social Awareness.
- This helps in realizing Gandhi's ideals of 'Gram Swaraj', 'Social Justice' of Baba Saheb, 'Antyodaya' of DeenDayalUpadhyay, and Swami Vivekanand's 'dream of a Glorious India'.

Prelims facts:

1. Sattriya

- Sattriya originated in Sattri, monastery, as a part of neo-Vaishnavite movement started by SrimantaSankardev in Assam, in the 15th Century. He propagated the "eksharannaama dharma" (chanting the name of one God devotedly).
- Classical Dance: Sattriya was given the status of a classical dance in the year 2000 by the SangeetNatakAkademi. Other classical dances of India are :Bharatnatyam (Tamil Nadu), Kathakali (Kerala), Kuchipudi (Andhra Pradesh), Kathak (North India), Mohiniyattam (Kerala), Manipuri (Manipur) and Odissi (Odisha).

2. Red Tourism

- China has stepped up efforts to promote "red tourism" which features visits to sites with significance of revolutionary history of China.



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- The 'Red tourism' focuses on the historical heritage of the Chinese Communist Party for tourism development.

Significance of the glorification of the Chinese revolution are:

- It aims to improve the education of the party's revolutionary traditions, promote patriotism especially among youth, and stimulate economic development in revolutionary areas.
- The elimination of rural poverty, along with promoting the legitimacy of the Communist Party of China (CPC).
- At the heart of China's flourishing red tourism is the Long March. It includes locations and the choreographed stories of how the founding father of Red China, Mao Zedong, and his comrades battled for the communist revolution in 1949.

Long March

- The Long March was a military retreat undertaken by the Red Army of the Communist Party of China to evade the pursuit of the Kuomintang (KMT or Chinese Nationalist Party) army during the Chinese Civil War (1934-35).
- There was not one Long March, but a series of marches, as various Communist armies in the south escaped to the north and west.
- It was a key moment in the civil war, and also in the development of communism in China. Mao Zedong emerged as the leader of communist forces from the long march. He led the communist to victory over the nationalists.

3. Head on Generation (HOG) technology

- The system runs the train's 'hotel load' (the load of air conditioning, lights, fans, and pantry, etc.) by drawing electricity from the overhead electric lines through the pantograph.
- The power supply from the overhead cable is 750 volts at single-phase, and a transformer with a winding of 945 kVA converts it to a 750 Volts 50 Hz output at 3-phase. This energy is then provided to the compartments.
- In the End on Generation (EOG) system, the 'hotel load' is provided with electricity from two large diesel generator sets.
- The generator cars are attached to either end of the train, giving the system its name.

Benefits of HOG over EOG:

- HOG-fitted trains do not require power from diesel generators and need only one emergency generator car attached, instead of two regular generator cars.
- HOG system is free of air and noise pollution: It would bring down yearly CO₂ and NO_x emissions, which are currently at 1724.6 tonnes/annum and 7.48 tonnes/annum respectively, to zero.



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- The reduction in emissions could also help the Railways accrue carbon credits, and trade them on the international market.
- With the noise-emitting generator sets gone, noise pollution would also drop.

4. Supreme Court judge calls for early legal aid to the poor

- National Legal Services Authority of India (NALSA) was formed on 9th November 1995 under the authority of the Legal Services Authorities Act 1987.
- Its purpose is to provide free legal services to eligible candidates and to organize LokAdalats for the speedy resolution of cases.
- The NALSA was constituted to promote an inclusive legal system to ensure fair and meaningful justice to the marginalized through effective representation and awareness of their rights.
- The Chief Justice of India (CJI) is patron-in-chief of NALSA while second senior most judge of Supreme Court of India is the Executive-Chairman.
- There is a provision for similar mechanism at state and district level also headed by Chief Justice of High Courts and Chief Judges of District courts respectively.
- The prime objective of NALSA is speedy disposal of cases and reducing the burden of the judiciary.
- The recently released vision document for 2020 of the NALSA focuses on strengthening and digitalising the basic units of legal aid like legal services clinics, strengthening legal services clinics in jails, preparing basic legal aid texts and booklets in regional languages in an attempt to empower the marginalised sections with the knowledge of their rights.

5. No Indian study links pollution to mortality

- The India State-Level Disease Burden Initiative (ISLDBI) reported that one in eight deaths in India were attributable to air pollution and that the average life expectancy in India would have been 1.7 years higher, had the air pollution levels been less than the minimal level causing health loss.
- The ISLDBI studies are funded by the Union Health Ministry and involves the Public Health Foundation of India.

6. Police must be proactive on women's safety

- Union Home Secretary Ajay Kumar Bhalla wrote to all States and Union Territories stating that it is “imperative that the police be easily accessible” and “able to deal with any complaint of crime against women in a timely and pro-active manner”.
- Bhalla also asked the States to set up autonomous forensic units, adding that “forensic evidence is critical to the delivery of justice”.
- The letter reiterated the Ministry's earlier directive to ensure “strict compliance” with the



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provision of “zero FIR” in the event of a cognizable offence like sexual assault.

- A zero FIR can be filed at any police station, irrespective of the jurisdiction where the crime occurred, and later transferred to the police station concerned.
- States were also asked to “monitor the completion of investigation in serious sexual offences cases in the prescribed two-month period”.