



## PLUTUS IAS

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### 1. Assam-Mizoram Boundary Issue.

The residents of Assam and Mizoram have clashed twice over territory recently. The recent clash was in the backdrop of the long-standing inter-state boundary issues between the two states. The states have deployed security personnel in the areas near the Vairengte village, Mizoram and Lailapur, Assam.

#### Highlights

- Vairengte in Kolasib district is the northern fringe of Mizoram. National Highway 306 (formerly 54) passes through the area that connects Mizoram to Assam.
- Mizoram shares a 164.6-km border with Assam out of which most of the areas are disputed between two states.
- Dialogues are being held since 1995 to resolve the issue but have not yielded results.

#### Recent Issue

The recent dispute is over the land claimed by Assam. That land has been cultivated by residents of Mizoram since long time. Assam claimed that the land comes within the Singla Forest Reserve which is under the jurisdiction of Assam government. On the other hand, Mizoram claims the land comes under the inner-line reserve forest notified in 1875. Mizoram also blamed illegal migrants coming from Bangladesh on the Assam side. However, the agreement between the governments of Assam and Mizoram states that both sides have to maintain status quo in no man's land in the border area.

#### Background

The background of the dispute lies in the notification of 1875 and Notification of 1933 . The 1857 notification had differentiated Lushai Hills from the plains of Cachar while 1933 notification demarcated a boundary between Lushai Hills and Manipur. Mizoram claims the boundary should be demarcated on the basis of the 1875 notification that has been derived from the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation (BEFR) Act, 1873. On the other hand, The Assam government followed the 1933 notification.

## **2.India-Indonesia ‘5th Joint Working Group on Coal’ Meeting**

India and Indonesia will be holding the fifth joint working group on coal meeting virtually on November 5, 2020. The meeting will throw light on Indian Coal policy reforms including the coal exploration, commercial coal mining, research and development.

### **Key Facts**

- Both the countries will discuss to bring Industries from both sides on a common platform to discuss the issues affecting the coal production.
- They would also be discussing the opportunities of regulatory framework on the coal production.
- They will explore the areas of business opportunities in coal sector.
- They will also discuss the potential of the India- Indonesia business cooperation on coal in the post covid-19 era.

### **Coal production in Indonesia**

Indonesia is one among the major coal producer on the world. Indonesia exported 450 8.8 million tons of coal in 2019 alone. One good quality of the Indonesian coal is that it has less Sulphur content and produces less Ash. Thus, emits less pollutants.

### **India – Indonesia coal cooperation**

India is looking for the opportunities to import more coal from Indonesia. Indonesian coal prices are declining due to COVID-19 in the world market. So, India plans to replace coal import destinations with Indonesia. India will replace some other country with Indonesia so that its overall coal imports do not increase. Indonesia is currently the top supplier of coal to India in Southeast Asia Region.

### **Coal Import**

South Africa is the largest supplier of coal to India. India imports 3 million tonnes of coal from South Africa monthly. It is followed by Australia. Coal imports of India has increased by 12.6 % in 2019. India has imported 128.7 million tonnes of coal as of September 2020. Out of these, 50.4 million tons of coal were imported from Indonesia.

### **3. Gas Marketing Freedom Guidelines- Government bans sale of gas & CBM**

The government has notified the Natural Gas Marketing Reforms on October 15, 2020. The guidelines have banned the natural gas and coal-bed methane (CBM) producers from buying their own produce in the newly notified gas marketing freedom guidelines.

#### **Highlights**

- The notification was approved by the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs.
- The Natural Gas Marketing Reforms provides the freedom to discover the market price of gas to the producers. The producers can discover the market through a standard e-bidding process.
- It also gives producers the liberty to market or sell the gas produced to anyone including affiliates.
- The guidelines say that the producer or any member of its gas field consortium cannot bid and buy the fuel
- However, the Sale to affiliates will be allowed if it affiliates to participate in the open competitive process. Though, the contractor or its constituents will not be eligible to participate in the bidding process.
- Under the new guidelines, Seller and buyer will not be the same entity.
- The new guideline provides the contractor to sell the natural gas through e-bidding. The bidding will be conducted by a panel maintained by the Directorate General of Hydrocarbons (DGH).

#### **Background**

Reliance Industries had bid and bought all the gas it was producing from its Sohagpur East and West CBM blocks in Madhya Pradesh in 2017. The company then used the gas at its petrochemical plants in Patalganga, Maharashtra; Nagothane, Maharashtra; Vadodara, Gujarat and Jamnagar, Gujarat. Reliance also outbid the gas utility GAIL India Ltd for gas from Sohagpur till March 2021. So, the GAIL criticized the move and highlighted the fact that Reliance had a 14% tax advantage in the bid since stock transfer within the company is not subject to VAT.

### **4. Covid-19: Health Minister Launches Website ‘CUREd’.**

Union Health Minister Dr. Harsh Vardhan launched an online portal on October 20, 2020. The portal will provide comprehensive information about the numerous COVID-19 clinical trials that the Council of Scientific & Industrial Research (CSIR) is engaged in collaboration with the Industry, ministries and other government departments. The website has been named as 'CSIR Ushered Repurposed Drugs' or 'CUREd'.

### **CSIR Ushered Repurposed Drugs or 'CUREd'.**

The website provides the information about the drugs, diagnostics and devices. It also includes the current stage of the trials, partnering institutions and their role in the trials.

### **Role of CSIR in fighting the Pandemic**

CSIR's have been putting all its efforts and have been at the forefront of the fight against COVID-19. The organisation is giving preference to clinical trials, has been generating data for their regulatory approval and is supporting the launch drugs and diagnostics in the market. CSIR is also exploring various combinations of clinical trials of anti-virals. Further, CSIR is working with the AYUSH Ministry to conduct clinical trials of AYUSH drugs. It has undertaken safety and efficacy trials of AYUSH prophylactics and therapeutics on the basis of individual plant-based compounds.

### **5.NASA's OSIRIS-REx spacecraft successfully touches Asteroid to samples.**

The United States based National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) had launched the OSIRIS-Rex spacecraft to the Asteroid Bennu in 2016. The Spacecraft has now touched the Asteroid After two years of circling. This mission is aimed at studying the Asteroid Bennu and return with at least 60 grams of the sample The spacecraft comprises three bottles of nitrogen that can make the spacecraft to touch down the asteroid thrice.

### **Asteroid Bennu**

The asteroid Bennu is a hazardous object that has a 1 in 2700 chance of hitting the Earth in the year 2175 and 2199. It has a mean diameter of 492 meters and has a roughly round shape. The asteroid is under observation by the various observatories of the Earth. The Asteroid Bennu, if it hits the Earth, has a huge potential to cause widespread death and cause huge destruction all over the Earth. It might lead to human-extinction.

### **How Asteroids Can Impact Life on Earth?**

**An asteroid has the potential to create large amounts of dust that can block out the Sunlight from reaching the Earth's surface. This will thus wipe out most of the life on Earth. However, for creating such huge destructions Asteroid need to survive the release of its own Kinetic energy.**

### **OSIRIS-REx probe**

**The Origins, Spectral Interpretation, Resource Identification, Security, Regolith Explorer (OSIRIS-Rex) spacecraft has been launched by NASA on the Atlas V rocket. The mission was launched in 2016 to study the Bennu asteroid and it reached Bennu in 2018. It has an aim to return to Earth with its cargo in 2023 carrying 60 grams of samples from the Asteroid.**