

NEWS TODAY

LOK SABHA PASSES BILLS ON AGRICULTURE REFORMS

Bill	Key Provisions	Concerns/Issues raised against provisions of the bill
The Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Bill, 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It allows intra-state and inter-state trade of farmers' produce beyond the physical premises of APMC markets. State governments are prohibited from levying any market fee, cess or levy outside APMC areas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> States will lose revenue as they won't be able to collect mandi fees if farmers sell their produce outside APMC yards. Relevance of Commission agents in states if farm trade moves out of mandis.
The Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement of Price Assurance and Farm Services Bill, 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It creates a framework for contract farming through an agreement between a farmer and a buyer prior to the production or rearing of any farm produce. It provides for a three-level dispute settlement mechanism: the conciliation board, Sub-Divisional Magistrate and Appellate Authority 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Farmers will be the weaker player in contract farming arrangement in terms of their ability to negotiate. Corporate sponsors may not deal with multitude of small and marginal farmers. Being big private companies, exporters and processors, the sponsors will have edge in disputes.
The Essential Commodities (Amendment) Bill, 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It aims to "deregulate" agricultural commodities like cereals, pulses, oilseeds, onions and potatoes. It will do away with the imposition of stockholding limits on such items except under extraordinary situations like war etc Stock limits may be imposed on agricultural produce only if there is a steep price rise. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Price limits set for imposing stockholding limits are very high. Big companies will have freedom to stock commodities that means they can dictate term to farmers. Recent decision on export ban on onions creates doubts on its implementation.

PRIVATE SECTOR PARTICIPATION IN SPACE SECTOR

- In a written reply to Rajya Sabha, government highlighted recent **initiatives taken to allow more private participation in space activities.**
 - There are more than 500 companies that partner with ISRO** in sectors like- providing materials, mechanical fabrication, electronic fabrication, system development, integration, etc.
- Initiatives taken**
 - Creation of **Indian National Space Promotion and Authorization Centre (IN-SPACe):** It will allow private companies to use Indian space infrastructure and will also hand-hold, promote and guide them through encouraging policies and a friendly regulatory environment.
 - New role for New Space India Limited (NSIL) that would include** building launch vehicles, providing launch services, build satellites, providing space based services, technology transfers, etc.
 - **NSIL aims to bridge gap between ISRO and private sector** and facilitate transfer of ISRO technologies to the industry.
- Benefits:**
 - It will **enhance socio-economic use of space assets and activities.**
 - It will allow **ISRO to focus more on research and development activities**, new technologies, exploration missions and human spaceflight programme.
 - Job creation**, enhanced global competitiveness.

ASSESSMENT OF ASPIRATIONAL DISTRICTS PROGRAMME (ADP) RELEASED

- Study was conducted by US based **Social Progress Imperative**, set up by Professors from Harvard Business School and Massachusetts Institute of Technology and the Institute for Competitiveness, India.
- Key findings**
 - Most districts are 40-90% away from their targets** and there are no clear achiever or laggard districts.
 - **ADP Covers 5 Sectors** - Health and nutrition, education, agriculture and water resources, financial inclusion and skill development, and basic infrastructure
 - In Health and Education **districts have shown maximum progress.**
 - Agriculture and Financial Inclusion are the main areas of concern** for most districts.
 - Three key areas of best practice have emerged-** awareness campaigns, collaboration between different stakeholders- government, private and civil society sectors; data driven governance.
- ADP was launched in 2018 **to accelerate improvement in socio-economic indicators of most underdeveloped districts** of the country. Currently, programme has been implemented in **117 districts spread across the country.**
- Broad contours of the programme are **Convergence** (of Central & State Schemes), **Collaboration** (of Central, State & District), and **Competition among districts** driven by a mass Movement.

INDIA-BRAZIL-SOUTH AFRICA (IBSA) FOREIGN MINISTERS VIRTUAL MEETING

- Key Issues discussed**
 - Ministers called for accelerated and comprehensive **reform of UN Security Council** to create **more inclusive, responsive and participatory international governance architecture.**
 - They reiterated that **existing international governance structure is obsolete and ineffective** in addressing current peace and security challenges.
 - Ways to further IBSA cooperation and exchanged views on global issues** such as security, countering terror, climate change, sustainable development, South-South cooperation etc.
 - Experiences in **countering COVID-19 pandemic** and appreciated the work done by the **IBSA Fund for Alleviation of Poverty and Hunger.**
- About IBSA**
 - It was **formed in 2003 by the Brasilia declaration** and is purely a **South-South grouping of like-minded countries.**
 - Cooperation is on 3 fronts** - reform of global institutions of political and economic governance; Collaboration on projects for the common benefit of countries; IBSA Fund.
 - **IBSA Fund** provides financial support for South-owned, South-led, demand-driven and transformational projects across developing world, with a focus on Least Developed Countries

PAKISTAN PLANS TO ELEVATE GILGIT-BALTISTAN (G-B) TO FULL-FLEDGED PROVINCE WITH ALL CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS

- In 2018 **Pakistan government passed the G-B order which aimed at incorporating G-B as its fifth province** and integrating it with rest of federal structure of Pakistan.
- Earlier, India said that **the entire UT of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) and Ladakh, including areas of G-B, are integral part of India** and Pakistan or its judiciary has no locus standi on territories illegally and forcibly occupied by it.
 - India's **parliamentary resolution of 1994** reaffirmed that this region is a part of State of J&K, which is an integral part of India by virtue of its accession to it in 1947.
- G-B was a **part of the erstwhile princely state of J&K**, but has been under Pakistan's control since end of 1947, following invasion of Kashmir by tribal militias and Pakistan army.
- **Significance of G-B:**
 - **Strategic Location:** GB lies at intersection of Indian Subcontinent, Central Asia and China. China-Pakistan Economic Corridor passes through G-B.
 - **Water and energy resources:** Important glaciers like Siachen Glacier are located in G-B. Also, Indus river passes through G-B.

ALSO IN NEWS

Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement for Geo-Spatial cooperation (BECA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • U.S. is keen that India signs the last foundational agreement, BECA, at the next India-U.S. 2+2 ministerial dialogue. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ BECA will allow India and US militaries to share geospatial and satellite data with each other. • India has signed three foundational agreements so far: the Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA), the Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement (COMCASA) and General Security of Military Information Agreement (GSOMIA).
Air Bubble Agreements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These are temporary agreements between two countries aimed at restarting commercial passenger services when regular international flights are suspended due to COVID-19 pandemic. • They are reciprocal in nature i.e. airlines from both countries enjoy similar benefits. • India has entered into Air Bubble agreements with 10 countries- USA, Canada, France, Germany, UK, Maldives, UAE, Qatar, Afghanistan and Bahrain.
Member of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme (MPLADS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opposition parties in Lok Sabha demand restoration of MPLADS funds which was suspended by government for 2020-21 and 2021-22. • MPLAD is a central government scheme, under which MPs can recommend development programmes of Rs 5 crore, every year, in their respective constituencies. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Rajya Sabha MP can recommend works in one or more districts in State from where he has been elected. ➤ Nominated members may select any one or more districts from any one state in the country.
Development Council for Footwear and Leather Industry (DCFLI)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recently, Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade has issued a notification, constituting a 25 member DCFLI. • DCFLI has been established for the formulation and implementation of promotional and developmental measures for the growth of labour intensive footwear and leather sectors in India. • It will help to boost domestic production and encourage exports by preparing a futuristic vision for development, designing and manufacturing of high quality world-class footwear and leather products in India.
AICTE-SPICES (Scheme for Promoting Interests, Creativity and Ethics among Students)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was launched by Ministry of Education to promote healthy co-curricular activity amongst the students. • Scheme provides financial support to institutions for developing students club for well-rounded development of students by promoting their interests, creativity and ethics. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ This club should serve as a model for other clubs in the institution and also those in other institutions.
Central Institute of Indian Languages (CIIL)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CIIL is a subordinate office of the Ministry of Education. • CIIL was set up in 1969 to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Coordinate the development of Indian Languages. ➤ Protects and Documents Minor, Minority and Tribal Languages. ➤ Promotes Linguistic harmony by teaching 15 Indian languages to non-native learners. ➤ Advices and Assists Central as well as State Governments in the matters of language. ➤ CIIL organises a number of programmes such as -Development of Indian Languages, Regional Language Centres, National Testing Service etc.
Bagh Print	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bagh Print is a traditional hand block print with natural colours practised in Bagh (Dhar district) in Madhya Pradesh (MP). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Bagh print has its roots in Sindh, which is now a part of Pakistan. • The dyes used in Bagh printing are vegetable based and the main colors are red and black. • Fabric is printed with replicated geometric and floral compositions. • TRIFED is organizing a training program, in Barwani (MP) to train local tribal population in the Bagh, Maheshwari and Chanderi textile crafts.

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