



AIR Discussions (September 3rd Week)

ALL INDIA RADIO SUMMARY (14 September -20 September, 2020)

SPOTLIGHT (18 September, 2020)

GS-III: Agriculture

FARM bill 2020

Introduction: Recently Farm Bill 2020 launched, under it three bills have been passed by the Indian Parliament aiming at introducing reforms in the agricultural sector.

Need of this bill:

- Agriculture reforms are needed as over 60% of the population works in the agriculture industry. This sector alone contributes to about 18% of the country's GDP.
- These bills currently face extreme objection and protests by farmers in states like Punjab, Haryana, and Madhya Pradesh despite COVID-19.
- The laws aim to bring farmers closer to the market by changing where they can sell, the ability to store produce, and whether they can enter into contracts.

Three Bills that were introduced in Farm Bill 2020

1. 'Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Bill', 2020
2. 'Farmers' (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement of Price Assurance and Farm Services Bill', 2020
3. 'Essential Commodities (Amendment) Bill', 2020

1. 'Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Bill', 2020

- This law allows farmers to sell anywhere within the country under the 'One Nation- One Market' concept.
- This is aimed at facilitating remunerative prices through competitive alternative trading channels.
- The ECA initially restricted farmers from selling anywhere other than government-approved mandis'.
- These government-approved mandis' are called 'Agriculture Product Market committees' [APMC].
 - An APMC is a state-operated market where farmers are allowed to sell their produce to traders or middlemen. These middlemen then sell their produce to consumers throughout the country.
 - APMCs were initially set up to protect farmers from big retailers and ensure that prices do not get too high.
 - APMC's also provide farmers with information regarding prices. This is done through MSP's.
 - MSP (Minimum Support Price) is the minimum price that farmers can be sold.
 - The MSP's are set by the government. Such price flooring ensures that farmers do not receive rates that are too low.
- Some states had earlier criminalized farmers selling their produce anywhere other than these mandis'.
- But unfortunately for farmers, the prices in APMC's although above MSP, are controlled by the middlemen cartels. These cartels come into an agreement over the price set beforehand.



The new bill aim to reform this by

- limiting the operation of APMC laws by states to the market yards;
- Allows private parties to set up online trading platforms for trading in agricultural commodities
- Sets up a dispute-resolution mechanism for buyers and farmers to be operated by a sub-divisional magistrate.
- ✓ The new bill however does not do away with APMC's. If the farmers still want to, they can go ahead and sell their produce at APMC's and avail the MSP support.
- ✓ But they have the freedom to sell elsewhere and receive higher prices but are at the risk of not having MSP's.

Why farmers are opposing this bill?

- Farmer who may lose the bargaining leverage.
- This bill lead to the entry of private corporates that can exploit the farmers.
- India has huge connectivity issues and the cost of transit might far exceed that paid to APMC's. As APMC have roads connecting most of the villages making it easier for farmers to get to mandis.
- Farmers of Punjab, Haryana, M.P. are opposing it as they rely on MSP and have strong market systems based on APMC's.
- Whereas, farmers of Bihar, Kerala, and Manipur do not follow the APMC system at all.
- In India, the state governments have the power to regulate agricultural markets and fairs. Hence different states have different approaches towards this.

Benefits:

- It will open more choices for farmers, reduce marketing costs, and help them get better prices.
- It will also help farmers of regions with surplus produce to get better prices and consumers in areas with shortages at lower prices.
- Farmers will not be charged any cess or levy for sale of their produce under this Act.

Negatives:

- States will lose revenue as they will not be able to collect 'mandi fees' if farmers sell their produce outside registered Agricultural Produce Market Committee (APMC) markets.
- Also, commission agents stand to lose if the entire farm trade moves out of mandis.
- But, more importantly, farmers and opposition parties fear it may eventually lead to the end of the minimum support price (MSP) -based procurement system and may lead to exploitation by private companies.

2. 'Farmers' (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement of Price Assurance and Farm Services Bill', 2020

- This ensures that farmers are allowed to enter into contracts with buyers.
 - Contract ming is carried out on the basis of the agreement between the buyers and the producers.
- Main advantages of this bill is farmers receive price assurance even before sowing his crops.
- The scope of contract farming is huge as MNC's regularly get into contracts with farmers in order to ensure they receive specified types of produce. For eg., Mcdonalds uses only a specified kind of potatoes for their Fries and gets them grown accordingly.

The downside

- Over 86% of the country's farmers are marginal farmers who own very little land.



- There is a possibility that corporations can exploit the farmers through unbalanced contracts is high.
- These contracts include the dangers of turning farmers into slaves.

Benefits:

- It seeks to transfer the risk of market unpredictability from farmers to sponsors.
- Besides giving them access to modern tech and better inputs, it also seeks to boost farmer income by reducing the cost of marketing.

Negatives:

- Farmer bodies and opposition parties say the law is framed to suit “big corporates who seek to dominate the Indian food and agriculture business”.
- It will weaken the negotiating power of farmers. Also, big private companies, exporters, wholesalers, and processors may get an edge.

3. 'Essential Commodities (Amendment) Bill', 2020

- The ECA has its roots in WW2 where laws were implemented by the British to exploit the supply within the country.
- The bill places restrictions on the storage of essential commodities like pulses, oilseeds, onions, etc
- The amended ECA reduces the power that states and the center have.

Closing Thoughts

- One of the reasons of protest is the unconstitutional way in which the laws were passed as it is the state governments that regulate these aspects.
- The government should have included the opposition and also taken into account the voice of farmers in order to plug the loopholes in the bills.
- Big companies will have the freedom to stock commodities, helping them dictate terms to farmers.

Benefits:

- It is aimed at attracting private investment/FDI into the farm sector as well as bringing price stability.

Government Stand:

- MSP mechanism for farmers will continue. Also, the proposed laws would not encroach upon the Agriculture Produce Marketing Committee (APMC) Acts of the states.
- These Bills are to ensure that farmers get better prices for their produce without being subject to the regulations of mandis,
- Acts will increase competition and promote private investment, which will help in the development of farm infrastructure and generate employment.

Conclusion:

Unfortunately, the bills due to not being communicated appropriately have created an air of mistrust between the ruling, opposition, and the farmers.

Reference: <https://tradebrains.in/farm-bill-2020-explained/>



<https://www.financialexpress.com/economy/explained-what-the-new-farm-bills-are-all-about-and-why-being-opposed/2086681/>

<https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/quiplained-what-are-farm-reform-bills-and-why-are-the-farmers-worried-6609378/>

<https://www.prsindia.org/billtrack/farmers-empowerment-and-protection-agreement-price-assurance-and-farm-services-bill-2020>

President Ram Nath Kovind to confer NSS Awards for 2018-19

Context: The NSS Award for the year 2018-19 will be given to 42 awardees in 3 different categories like University or 2 Council, NSS Units and their Programme Officers and NSS Volunteers.

- Department of Youth Affairs confers every year the National Service Scheme Award to recognize and reward outstanding contributions towards voluntary community service made by the Universities or Colleges, (2) Councils, Senior Secondary, NSS Units or Programme Officers and NSS Volunteers, with a view to further promote NSS in the country.

National Service Scheme

- NSS is a Centrally Sector Scheme, which was launched in the year 1969.
- Its primary objective is developing the personality and character of the student youth through voluntary community service.
- The ideological orientation of the NSS is inspired by the ideals of Mahatma Gandhi. Very appropriately, the motto of NSS is "NOT ME, BUT YOU" in Hindi its नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय
- NSS volunteers work on issues of social relevance, which keep evolving in response to the needs of the community, through regular and special camping activities.
- Issues include literacy and education, health, family welfare and nutrition, environment conservation, social service programmes, programmes for empowerment of women, programmes connected with economic development activities, rescue and relief during calamities.

<http://newsonair.com/Main-News-Details.aspx?id=400507>

DRDO conducts successful flight test of ABHYAS

Context: The successful flight test of ABHYAS - High-speed Expendable Aerial Target was conducted by Defence Research and Development Organisation.

ABHYAS

- Abhyas is designed and developed by Aeronautical Development Establishment of DRDO.
- The air vehicle is launched using twin underslung booster.
- It is powered by a small gas turbine engine and has MEMS based Inertial Navigation System for navigation along with the Flight Control Computer for guidance and control.



- The vehicle is programmed for fully autonomous flight.

<http://newsonair.com/News?title=DRDO-conducts-successful-flight-test-of-ABHYAS&id=400502#:~:text=The%20successful%20flight%20test%20of,vehicles%20were%20successfully%20test%20flown.>

National Forensic Sciences University Bill 2020 passed in parliament

Context: Parliament has passed the National Forensic Sciences University Bill 2020.

Highlights of the bill:

- It seeks to establish the Gujarat Forensic Sciences University, Gandhinagar and the Lok Nayak Jayaprakash Narayan National Institute of Criminology and Forensic Sciences, New Delhi, as a National Forensic Sciences University, Gujarat.
- It declares the University to be an institution of national importance.
- These university will work for the capacity building in the field of forensic science and promote research.

<http://newsonair.com/News?title=National-Forensic-Sciences-University-Bill-2020-passed-in-parliament&id=400483>

India is home to largest number of Greater One-Horned Rhinoceros: Prakash Javadekar

Context: India is home to the largest number of Greater One-Horned Rhinoceros in the world with population in the range of 3000 animals in Assam, West Bengal and UP.

More about news:

- On the occasion of World Rhino Day, Environment Ministry has launched a National Conservation Strategy for Indian One-Horned Rhino.
- The conservation initiatives for rhino along with the grassland management, helped in reducing the negative impacts of climate change through carbon sequestration.

National Rhino Conservation Strategy

- The National Rhino Conservation Strategy for India was launched last year to conserve the greater one-horned rhinoceros.
- This is a first of its kind for the species in India, which aims to work for the conservation of the species under five objectives.
- The objectives include
 - strengthening protection,
 - expanding the distribution range,
 - research and monitoring, and
 - adequate and sustained funding.

One horned rhino

- One horned rhino was close to extinction with a population of less than 200 in the beginning of the 20th century.



- It is the only large mammal species in Asia to be down-listed from endangered to vulnerable in the International Union for Conservation of Nature, IUCN Red list in 2008

<http://newsonair.com/News?title=India-is-home-to-largest-number-of-Greater-One-Horned-Rhinoceros%3a--Prakash-Javadekar&id=400467>

Direct cargo ferry service between India & Maldives jointly e- launched

Context: Shipping Minister and Minister of Transport and Civil Aviation of Maldives, jointly e- launched a direct cargo ferry service between India and Maldives.

- A vessel with a capacity of 200 TEU and 3000 MT of break bulk cargo sailed from Tuticorin to Kochi to proceed to Kulhudhuffushi port in North Maldives and then to Male port.
- This ferry service being operated by the Shipping Corporation of India will run twice a month and will provide a cost effective direct and alternate means of transportation of goods between India and Maldives.
- This service is another milestone in the comprehensive bilateral relations between India and Maldives.
- This direct cargo service will further cement the close ties between India and Maldives by enhancing people-to-people contact and boosting bilateral trade.

<http://newsonair.com/News?title=Direct-cargo-ferry-service-between-India-%26-Maldives-jointly-e--launched&id=400403>

Lok Sabha passes Homoeopathy Central Council (Amendment) Bill 2020

Context: The Lok Sabha passed the Homoeopathy Central Council (Amendment) Bill, 2020 and the Indian Medicine Central Council (Amendment) Bill, 2020.

Homoeopathy Central Council (Amendment) Bill

- It amended the Homoeopathy Central Council Act, 1973.
- The Act sets up the Central Council of Homoeopathy which regulates homoeopathic education and practice.
- It replaces the Homoeopathy Central Council (Amendment) Ordinance, 2020 which was promulgated in April this year.
- The legislation amends the 1973 Act to increase the period for the supersession of the Central Council from two years to three years.

The Indian Medicine Central Council (Amendment) Bill

- It amended the Indian Medicine Central Council Act, 1970.
- The Act provides for the constitution of a Central Council which regulates the education and practice of the Indian medicine system including Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturopathy.
- It replaces the Indian Medicine Central Council (Amendment) Ordinance, 2020 which was promulgated in April this year.
- Homeopathy, Yoga and Naturopathy are the ancient medicine systems and these have the scientific basis.

[http://newsonair.com/News?title=Lok-Sabha-passes-Homoeopathy-Central-Council-\(Amendment\)-Bill-2020&id=400432](http://newsonair.com/News?title=Lok-Sabha-passes-Homoeopathy-Central-Council-(Amendment)-Bill-2020&id=400432)



Parliament passes Epidemic Diseases (Amendment) Bill

Context: Parliament gave its assent to the Epidemic Diseases (Amendment) Bill, 2020.

More about news:

- It amended the Epidemic Diseases Act, 1897 to include protections for health care service personnel combating epidemic diseases and expands the powers of the Central Government to prevent the spread of such diseases.
- It repealed the Epidemic Diseases (Amendment) Ordinance that was promulgated in April this year.
- The legislation makes harm, injury, hurt or danger to the life of health care service personnel as a cognizable and non-bailable offence.
- It has provisions of imprisonment from three months to five years and a fine between 50 thousand rupees to two lakh rupees.
- Persons convicted of offences under the bill will also be liable to pay compensation to the health care service personnel whom they have hurt.

[http://newsonair.com/News?title=Parliament-passes-Epidemic-Diseases-\(Amendment\)-Bill&id=400433](http://newsonair.com/News?title=Parliament-passes-Epidemic-Diseases-(Amendment)-Bill&id=400433)

Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Amendment Bill, 2020 introduced in Lok Sabha

Context: The Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Amendment Bill, 2020 was introduced in Lok Sabha.

- It seeks to streamline the provisions of the FCRA by strengthening the compliance mechanism, enhancing transparency and accountability in the receipt and utilisation of foreign contribution worth thousands of crores of rupees every year.
- The amendments seek to bar public servants from receiving foreign funding.
- The amendments seek to make Aadhar mandatory for all office bearers of NGOs and other organisations which are seeking foreign contributions.

[http://newsonair.com/News?title=Foreign-Contribution-\(Regulation\)-Amendment-Bill%2c-2020-introduced-in-Lok-Sabha&id=400321](http://newsonair.com/News?title=Foreign-Contribution-(Regulation)-Amendment-Bill%2c-2020-introduced-in-Lok-Sabha&id=400321)

J&K: LG Manoj Sinha launches National Generic Document Registration System

Context: In the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, Lieutenant Governor launched the National Generic Document Registration System (NGDRS).

National Generic Document Registration System (NGDRS)

- NGDRS represents a major shift from the existing manual registration system to online registration of all transactions in sale-purchase and transfer of land.
- Stamp papers have been replaced by e-stamps, which have been incorporated in coordination with Stockholding Corporation of India.
- J&K will be the 10th among States and UTs to become part of NGDRS.
- It marks another step of the government towards the establishment of an accountable and transparent governing system where the welfare of common citizen is at the core.



- It aims to ensure hassle-free service delivery and transparency in the registration process by online uploading of the document, appointment with the registration office, e-stamp, and a one-time visit to the Registration office.
- The entire process has been reduced to 15 minutes which earlier would take several days in view of multiple steps involved. Now all 5 steps are under the digital process.
- The launching of NGDRS is a big step towards National Integration and a leap towards '**One Nation One Software**'.

<http://newsonair.com/News?title=J%26K%3a-LG-Manoj-Sinha-launches-National-Generic-Document-Registration-System&id=400184>

Ministry of MSME announces new guidelines to support artisans including Pottery & Beekeeping activity

Context: Ministry of Micro Small and Medium Enterprises, MSME, had announced expanding and doubling the support to Artisans who might be interested in making Agarbatti.

- Ministry has come out with new guidelines for two more schemes which include Pottery Activity and Beekeeping Activity.
- These new initiatives of the Ministry with beneficiary oriented Self-Employment schemes, are aimed at rejuvenating the grass root economy contributing to Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan.
- For Pottery Activity Government will provide assistance of pottery wheel, Clay Blunger, Granulator etc.
- It will also provide Wheel Pottery Training for traditional pottery artisans and Press Pottery training for pottery as well as non-pottery artisans in Self- Help Groups.
- There is also provision to provide Jigger-Jolly training programme for pottery as well as non-pottery artisan in Self-Help Groups.
- A total of 6,075 Traditional and others non-traditional pottery artisans, Rural Un-employed youth, Migrant Labourers will get benefitted from this Scheme.
- Additional amount of 50 crore rupees has been provisioned for setting up of clusters in Terracotta, Red clay pottery under 'SFURTI' scheme of the Ministry.
- For Scheme for Beekeeping Activity, Government will provide assistance of Bee boxes and Tool kits. Under this scheme, Bee boxes, with Bee colonies, will also be distributed to Migrant workers in Prime Minister Gareeb Kalyan Rozgar Abhiyaan districts.
- All this is being done in order to create sustainable employment and to provide supplementary income for the beekeepers or farmers.

<http://newsonair.com/News?title=Ministry-of-MSME-announces-new-guidelines-to-support-artisans-including-Pottery-%26-Beekeeping-activity&id=400076>

PM Modi to dedicate Kosi Rail Mahasetu to nation through video-conference tomorrow

Context: PM dedicated the historic Kosi Rail Mahasetu (mega bridge) to the nation.

- The Kosi Rail Mahasetu is 1.9 KM long and its construction cost is Rs. 516 crores that will improve connectivity in Bihar and North eastern states.
- A new railway bridge on the Kiul River, two new railway lines, five electrification projects, one electric locomotive shed and 3rd line project between Barh-Bakhtiyarpur are also inaugurated.



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<http://newsonair.com/News?title=PM-Modi-to-dedicate-historic-Kosi-Rail-Mahasetu-to-the-nation-on-Friday&id=400024>