

17 Sep 2020: PIB Summary & Analysis

1. Two agricultural bills passed by the Lok Sabha

Context:

Lok Sabha passes the Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Bill, 2020 and the Farmers' (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement of Price Assurance and Farm Services Bill, 2020.

Details:

- The two bills were introduced in the House to replace the ordinances that were promulgated in June 2020. For more on the ordinances, check [CNA dated June 4, 2020](#).

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

- This bill seeks to provide:
 - For the creation of an ecosystem where the farmers and traders enjoy the freedom of choice relating to the sale and purchase of farmers' produce which facilitates remunerative prices through competitive alternative trading channels to promote efficient, transparent and barrier-free inter-State and intra-State trade and commerce of farmers' produce outside physical premises of markets or deemed markets notified under various State agricultural produce market legislations.
 - A facilitative framework for electronic trading and related matters.
- The Bill basically aims at creating additional trading opportunities outside the [APMC](#) market yards to help farmers get remunerative prices due to additional competition.
- This will **supplement the existing MSP procurement system** which is providing stable income to farmers.
- It is expected to pave the way for the creation of a '**One India, One Agriculture Market**'.
- **Background:**
 - Farmers faced many restrictions in marketing their produce.
 - There were restrictions in selling agri-produce outside the notified APMC market yards.
 - The farmers were also restricted to sell the produce only to registered licensees of the State Governments.
 - Further, barriers existed in the free flow of agriculture produce between various States owing to the prevalence of various APMC legislations enacted by the State Governments.
 - **Expected benefits of the new bill:**
 - Freedom of choice of sale and purchase of agri-produce.
 - Promote barrier-free inter-state and intra-state trade.
 - Promote commerce outside the physical premises of markets notified under State Agricultural Produce Marketing legislations.
 - Help farmers in getting a better price for their produce because of more choices of markets.
 - Help farmers of regions with surplus produce to get better prices and consumers of regions with shortages, lower prices.
 - The Bill also proposes electronic trading in transaction platform for ensuring a seamless trade electronically.
 - The farmers will not be charged any cess or levy for sale of their produce under this Act.
 - There will also be a separate dispute resolution mechanism for the farmers.

The Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement of Price Assurance and Farm Services Bill, 2020

- This bill seeks to provide for a national framework on farming agreements that protects and empowers farmers to engage with agri-business firms, processors, wholesalers, exporters or large retailers for farm services and sale of future farming produce at a mutually agreed remunerative price framework in a fair and transparent manner.
- **Background:**
 - Indian agriculture is characterized by fragmentation due to smallholding sizes and has certain weaknesses such as weather dependence, production uncertainties and market unpredictability.
 - This makes agriculture risky and inefficient in respect of both input & output management.
- **Expected benefits of the bill:**
 - Empower farmers for engaging with processors, wholesalers, aggregators, wholesalers, large retailers, exporters, etc., on a level playing field without any fear of exploitation.
 - Transfer the risk of market unpredictability from the farmer to the sponsor.
 - Enable the farmer to access modern technology and better inputs.
 - Reduce the cost of marketing and improve the income of farmers.
 - Help attract private sector investment for building supply chains for the supply of Indian farm produce to national and global markets, and in agricultural infrastructure.
 - Farmers will engage in direct marketing thereby eliminating intermediaries resulting in full realization of price.
 - Farmers have been provided with adequate protection.
 - Sale, lease or mortgage of farmers' land is totally prohibited and farmers' land is also protected against any recovery.
 - An effective dispute resolution mechanism has been provided with clear timelines for redressal.

2. Air Bubble Agreements

Context:

India has Air Bubble Agreements with 10 countries.

What are Air Bubble Agreements?

- The air bubble agreement is a bilateral agreement between two countries in which airlines from both countries can operate international flights with a set of rules and restrictions.
- They are reciprocal in nature, meaning airlines from both countries enjoy similar benefits.
- India has air bubble agreements with the USA, Canada, France, Germany, UK, Maldives, UAE, Qatar, Afghanistan and Bahrain, till 13.09.2020.

3. World Patient Safety Day

Context:

World Patient Safety Day is observed annually on September 17.

About the Day:

- Initiated by the World Health Organisation, the World Patient Safety Day was first observed in 2019.
- World Patient Safety Day calls for global solidarity and concerted action by all countries and international partners to improve patient safety.
- **World Patient Safety Day 2020 theme: Health Worker Safety: A Priority for Patient Safety**

4. Income Tax Appellate Tribunal (ITAT)

Context:

ITAT makes innovative and aggressive use of IT techniques to dispense faster justice in the field of direct taxes.

Know more about ITAT in [PIB dated 6 April 2020](#).

5. Vishwakarma Awards

Context:

Union Education Minister virtually confers the second Utkrisht Sansthan Vishwakarma Award on Vishwakarma Divas Celebration.

About the Utkrisht Sansthan Vishwakarma Award:

- The Utkrisht Sansthan Vishwakarma Award is being organized by the All India Council for Technical Education ([AICTE](#)) since 2019.
- The award aims to motivate, recognize and honour the AICTE approved institutions to raise their performance in the specific domain leading to a significant contribution to the growth and development of the society.
- The AICTE has also been conducting the AICTE Chhatra Vishwakarma Awards since 2017 for promoting the innovative spirit and scientific temperament for the holistic development of society through the stakeholders of its approved institutes.
 - By means of this competition, the innovations and achievements of individuals are recognized and applauded.

6. Project DigniTEA

Context:

Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) distributed 6 innovative cycle-mounted Tea/Coffee Selling units under Project DigniTEA in New Delhi.

About Project DigniTEA:

- Under this KVIC project, each cycle-mounted Tea/Coffee Selling unit costs Rs 18,000 and has the provision for gas stove, gas cylinder, an umbrella, utensils and separate containers to keep tea, sugar, cups and snacks properly.
- The cycle-mounted Tea/Coffee Selling unit is an innovative and cost-effective way of creating sustainable self-employment.
- The distribution of these units aims at extending the benefit of welfare schemes to the poorest of the poor.

7. Scheme for Integrated Textile Park (SITP)

About the SITP:

- The Government of India launched the SITP in 2005.
- The chief aim of the scheme is to provide the industry with state of the art world-class infrastructure facilities for setting up their textile units.
- **Important features:**
 - It will help textile units to meet global, social and environmental standards.
 - SITP would create new parks of international standards at potential growth centres. This scheme envisages engaging a panel of professional agencies for project identification and execution.
 - Each Integrated Textile Park (ITP) under the scheme would normally have 50 units. The number of entrepreneurs and the resultant investments in each ITP could vary from project to project.
- The scheme targets industrial clusters/locations with high growth potential, which require strategic interventions by way of providing world-class infrastructure support.

Context:

The Union Minister for Textiles mentioned the above scheme in the Rajya Sabha.

