



Current Affairs of the Day

GS Paper II

- Lok Sabha passes two key Bills without debate
- Average of 7 minutes spent on each Bill
- Governor's pardon power overrides 433A: SC
- 'Improve social security for workers'



Lok Sabha passes two key Bills without debate

The Lok Sabha passed two key Bills without a debate, as the House once again witnessed protests by the Opposition over the Pegasus snooping controversy and farmers' issues.

Highlights:

1. The Essential Defence Services Bill, 2021 and The Tribunals Reforms Bill, 2021 were passed separately by voice vote before the House was adjourned for the day as Opposition continued with their sloganeering.
2. The Essential Defence Services Bill, 2021, seeks to prohibit any agitation and strike by anyone engaged in essential defence services.
3. On reconvening, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman moved the Tribunals Reforms Bill, 2021 for passage. The Bill seeks to abolish tribunals or authorities under various laws by amending the Cinematograph Act, 1952; the Copyrights Act, 1957; the Customs Act, 1962; the Patents Act, 1970; the Airport Authority of India Act, 1994; the Trade Marks Act, 1999; and the Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act.

Average of 7 minutes spent on each Bill

Twelve Bills were passed in the first 10 days of the monsoon session, with an average of seven minutes spent on each Bill.

Highlights:

1. All the Bills were passed amid the din, with neither the comments from the Minister or clarifications sought by members audible to others. All the Bills were passed by voice vote. The Opposition said division asked by them on important Bills were ignored by the Chair in both Houses of Parliament.
2. A tweet detailing the speed of passing these Bills by Trinamool Congress leader Derek O'Brien has created a huge uproar.



Governor's pardon power overrides 433A: SC

It is applicable even if the prisoner has not undergone 14 years of imprisonment
Legal Correspondent

Highlights:

1. The Supreme Court held that the Governor of a State can pardon prisoners, including those on death row, even before they have served a minimum of 14 years of a prison sentence.
2. In fact, the Governor's power to pardon overrides a provision in the Code of Criminal Procedure — Section 433A — which mandates that a prisoner's sentence can be remitted only after 14 years of jail.
3. Section 433A of the Code cannot and does not in any way affect the constitutional power conferred on the President/Governor to grant pardon under Articles 72 or 161 of the Constitution.
4. If the prisoner has not undergone 14 years or more of actual imprisonment, the Governor has the power to grant pardon dehors the restrictions imposed under Section 433A.
5. Such power is in the exercise of the power of the sovereign, though the Governor is bound to act on the aid and advice of the State Government. In fact, the court noted that the sovereign power of a Governor to pardon a prisoner under Article 161 is actually exercised by the State government and not the Governor on his own.

'Improve social security for workers'

Pandemic has made matters worse for women, the young, self-employed, and migrants: panel

Highlights:

1. The direct transfer of money into bank accounts of informal workers and an urban employment guarantee scheme were among the recommendations of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Labour in its report on the impact of the pandemic on rising unemployment.
2. The report, which was presented in the Lok Sabha and tabled in the Rajya Sabha on Tuesday, said, The pandemic has devastated the labour market,



denting the employment scenario and threatening the survival of millions of workers and their families.

3. Citing the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS), the report said 90% of workers were in the informal sector, which is 419 million of the 465 million workers.
4. The PLFS quarterly bulletin for April-June 2020 showed the unemployment rate in urban areas for those above 15 years at 20.8%, an increase from 9.1% in January-March 2020.
5. The committee noted that the PLFS data for years prior to the pandemic were available and the real impact of COVID-19 would only be seen when the PLFS for 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 are available.
6. Although no survey data are available as yet on the impact of the second wave which has undisputedly been more severe than the first, anecdotal evidence as well as the situation experienced during the first wave suggest that there would have been significant income losses particularly in the informal sector, pushing the vulnerable deeper into crisis, the report said.

WayForward:

1. The panel said it was of the studied opinion that the COVID-19 crisis in India has come against the backdrop of pre-existing high and rising unemployment.
2. Therefore, a comprehensive plan and roadmap are required to address the deteriorating condition of employment much aggravated by the pandemic, and widening disparities in the job market in the organised sector.
3. Offering another round of income support to the poor to compensate for the loss of jobs/employment incurred due to the two lockdowns imposed would go a long way in mitigating their woes.
4. Among the suggestions were the strengthening of social security measures and the possibility of putting money in the bank accounts of the informal workers during adverse conditions like COVID-19.
5. The panel noted that like in most countries, in India too the pandemic had made matters worse for women, the young, self-employed, migrants and workers with low and medium skills.



6. The government, therefore, should strive to support a recovery that is robust, broad-based and women-centric and based on social dialogues with all the stakeholders concerned so as to promote and ensure a seamless transition, it said.
7. The panel said universal healthcare should be made a legal obligation of the government and the budgetary allocation for MGNREGA should be increased. It said an urban jobs guarantee scheme on the lines of the MGNREGA should be implemented.