

The government on Friday introduced four Bills that seek to modify the Scheduled Tribes (ST) list in the four States of Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Himachal Pradesh, and Chhattisgarh in Lok Sabha, via amendments proposed in the Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order, 1950. Union Minister of Tribal Affairs Arjun Munda introduced these Bills in the first half of the day's proceedings in the Lower House. The Bill seeks to add the Narikoravan and Kuruvikkaran hill tribes to the ST list of Tamil Nadu. The demand for their inclusion dates to before 1965 and even the Lokur Committee had in its report of that year recommended its inclusion.

The 17th Asia and the Pacific Regional Meeting of the International Labour Organisation (APRM of ILO) set ten point priorities of national action for the member countries to deal with the issue of dwindling wages of workers, inflation and unemployment. The "Singapore Declaration", which was adopted here on Friday agreed that social dialogue was essential to address labour market challenges and finding solutions in crisis situations.

Almost half of the rural youth who participated in a pan India study aspire to become entrepreneurs, while 9 out of 10 rural businesses surveyed were found to be first-generation enterprises. As many as 2,041 rural businesses and 1,906 young enterprise aspirants in the age group of 16-29 years were part of the 'Insights into Rural Entrepreneurship' study conducted by the Development Alternatives Group, a social enterprise and global think tank in collaboration with the Development Intelligence Unit.

Cyclone Mandous began landfall at the Mamallapuram coast near Chennai on Friday, bringing more intense rain to coastal areas of Tamil Nadu. The cyclone moved at a speed of 14 kmph. Squally winds gusting up to 85 kmph may blow along Tamil Nadu, Puducherry and southern Andhra Pradesh coast till Saturday morning and decrease gradually.

The Supreme Court on Friday held that only the final decisions of the top court Collegium need to be published in the public domain. A "final decision" of the Collegium would mean a resolution drawn and signed by all the Collegium members after due deliberations among them, and post consultations among the other Supreme Court judges, a Bench led by Justice M.R. Shah laid down in a judgment. The Collegium is composed of the Chief Justice of India and the next four senior most judges. It unanimously recommends names for Supreme Court and High Court judgeships to the government.

The trade deficit, difference between import and exports, between India and China has touched \$51.5 billion during

#### FIELD TRIALS OF GM MUSTARD DMH-11 SHOWED HIGH YIELD

- Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) Science & Technology stated in Rajya Sabha that Dhara Mustard Hybrid-11 (DMH-11) showed approximately 28% more yield than national check (Varuna) and 37% more than zonal checks (RL1359).** 'Checks' refer to reference varieties of mustard in a region and usually, new varieties must prove themselves superior to be considered for commercial release.
- It was also stated that Studies carried out on toxicity, allergenicity, field trials, environmental safety etc have provided evidence that they are safe for cultivation and for food and feed use. Visitation of bees to the transgenic lines is similar to non-transgenic counterparts.
- GM Mustard** has not been classified as an Herbicide Tolerant crop variety. Recently, Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee (GEAC) has recommended the environmental release of DMH-11. GEAC is the apex biotech regulatory body under Ministry of Environment, Forests & Climate Change (MoEFCC).
- Concerns raised against GM mustard**-Possible health concerns introduced in the food system. May impact occupation of bee keepers, farmers and will also have implications on Indian Systems of Medicine in which mustard is widely used. Supreme Court expressed concern over loss of livelihood of women agricultural labourers.
- About DMH-11**-It has been developed by Delhi University's Centre for Genetic Manipulation of Crop Plants (CGMCP) containing two alien genes isolated from a soil bacterium called *Bacillus amyloliquefaciens*. It has been developed by crossing a Indian mustard variety 'Varuna' (the barnase line) with an East European 'Early Heera-2' mutant (barstar).

#### "GRASSROOT SOLDIERS: ROLE OF ASHAS IN THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC MANAGEMENT IN INDIA" REPORT RELEASED

- Report encapsulates the experience and key role of ASHAs in India's pandemic response strategy, and their critical role in delivering routine health care services to the remotest corners of the country. Report is a collaborative endeavour by Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, National Health Systems Resource Center, and Institute for Competitiveness.
- Role and responsibilities of ASHA during COVID-19 Pandemic- Conducting community-level surveillance, contact tracing, encouraging behaviour change, monitoring of isolations and quarantine norms etc. Providing non-COVID-19 essential health services by giving doorstep delivery of TB, HIV, and NCD medicines, enabling access to institutional delivery etc.
- Role in vaccination drive extended right from spreading awareness to getting eligible beneficiaries vaccinated.
- Recommendations**-Universalisation of ASHAs to all areas as presently ASHA are selected in slum/slum-like areas, pockets of vulnerable population only. Leveraging technology to ease job of ASHA. Enhance security of community health functionaries in responding to a crisis as highlighted by WHO. Facilitate a whole of government approach by improving community's literacy, physical infrastructure, and access to basic services at the grassroots level.
- About Accredited Social Health Activist (ASHA) Workers**-ASHA workers are female community health workers instituted as community-based health functionaries under National Rural Health Mission (NRHM) launched in 2005. According to the guidelines laid down by the National Health Mission, these women are preferably between 25 and 45 years of age and preference is given to candidates who have qualified up to tenth standard.

#### ENERGY CONSERVATION (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2022 INTRODUCED IN RAJYA SABHA

- Bill was later passed by Lok Sabha and seeks to amend Energy Conservation Act, 2001 and will help to: Facilitate achievement of COP-26 goals. Promote renewable energy and development of domestic Carbon market to fight climate change. Introduce concepts such as carbon credit trading to ensure faster decarbonisation of the Indian economy.
- Key provisions of the Bill**-Carbon trading: Bill empowers the central government to specify a carbon credit trading scheme. Carbon credit implies a tradeable permit to produce a specified amount of carbon dioxide or other greenhouse emissions. Obligation to use non-fossil sources of energy: Government may require designated consumers to meet a minimum share of energy consumption from non-fossil sources.

**April-October this fiscal, Parliament was informed on Friday.**

The introduction of a private member Bill by a Bharatiya Janta Party (BJP) member on implementation of Uniform Civil Code (UCC) across the country witnessed vociferous protest from the Opposition members in Rajya Sabha on Friday. The Opposition members requested the BJP member Kirodi Lal Meena to withdraw the Bill and also asked Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar to not accept the legislation as it will destroy the secular fabric of the country.

The government on Friday said it was planning to promote internationally, traditional Indian games like Mallakhamb, Thang Ta, Yogasana, Gatka and Kalpetta. Union Youth Affairs and Sports Minister Anurag Thakur said the government was also focusing on identifying sporting talent from rural areas and training them for global meets.

The Supreme Court on Friday said religious festivals should not always be portrayed as a “source of communal riots” and urged a petitioner to also look at the “good things that happen in the country”. A Bench led by Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud was hearing a petition filed by NGO Citizens for Justice and Peace. It highlighted how processions held during religious festivals were “weaponised”, with participants brandishing instruments of death in public.

The controversial Multistate Cooperative Societies (Amendment) Bill, which allegedly infringes on the right of the State governments, is headed to a standing committee of the Parliament.

Although it appears that India is decoupled in the short term from the global economic recession, it is still on a relatively sticky path as far as inflationary trends are concerned unless inflation drops to 4% levels, a panel of economists noted. Observing that India’s growth had outpaced global growth mostly because its base was small, Shubhada M. Rao, Founder, QuantEco Research said the country’s ‘macros were still far better compared with the rest of the world’.

3. Energy conservation and sustainable building code for green buildings. While 2001 Act confined applicability of code to commercial buildings (meeting certain criteria), bill extends this to office and residential buildings.
4. **Standards for vehicles and vessels:** Bill expands the scope to include vehicles (as defined under Motor Vehicles Act, 1988), and vessels (includes ships and boats). Increase members in Governing Council of Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE), a statutory body under Ministry of Power.

**LOK SABHA TAKES UP DEBATE ON ANTI-MARITIME PIRACY BILL**

1. Government has reintroduced the Bill after incorporating some amendments as advised by the Standing Committee. Bill was first introduced in 2019 and was referred to standing committee.
2. **Need for the Bill:** Presently, India does not have a separate domestic legislation on piracy. Once enacted, Bill will bring into law UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), ratified by India. UNCLOS is a set of rules to govern the oceans and use of their resources. Securing sea lanes for trade between Asia and Europe/East coast of Africa as piracy/kidnapping attacks in Gulf of Guinea, Malacca, Red Sea, Somalian waters etc. are becoming more violent.
3. **Key highlights of the bill:** It will apply to all parts of the sea adjacent to and beyond Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of India, i.e., beyond 200 nautical miles from the coastline. Defines piracy in accordance with UNCLOS. Central government to make Rules on subjects such as powers of arrest, investigation and prosecution, designated court and its jurisdiction, and trial of the offences by designated court.

**SUPREME COURT (SC) QUESTIONS DELAY IN CENTRE’S RESPONSE TO PLEA SEEKING NATIONAL HERITAGE STATUS FOR RAM SETU**

1. Ram Setu, also known as Adam’s bridge, is a chain of limestone shoals between Pamban Island or Rameswaram Island, off the southeastern coast of Tamil Nadu, and Mannar Island, off the north western coast of Sri Lanka. National heritage status is sought in the backdrop of Sethusamudram Ship Channel project (SSCP) that envisages dredging of a ship channel across the Palk Straits between India and Sri Lanka.
2. **Two channels were suggested** - one across Adam's Bridge and another through Palk Bay. SC, in 2007, had stayed the work for the project and centre government was also willing to explore another route to SSCP without damaging Ram Setu.
3. **Significance of SSCP:** Reduce steaming distances between east and west coasts of India. Strengthen national security by improving navigation for Indian coast guards and naval ships.
4. **Concerns raised against SSCP:** Would destroy the natural barrier between Bay of Bengal and Palk Bay. Oil and marine pollution associated with shipping traffic will aggravate the ecological stress in the region. Threats to coral reef platforms in the Gulf of the Mannar.

**SPECIAL WINDOW FOR AFFORDABLE & MID-INCOME HOUSING(SWAMIH) FUND**

1. Union government has infused about ₹5,000 crore in SWAMIH Investment Fund. SWAMIH Fund aims to provide priority debt financing to complete stressed, brownfield and RERA-registered residential projects.
2. It is a category II Alternative Investment Fund (AIF) which was announced in 2019. AIF refers to any privately pooled investment fund, (whether from Indian or foreign sources), in the form of a trust or a company or a body corporate or a Limited Liability Partnership (LLP).
3. Sponsored by Ministry of Finance and managed by SBICAP Ventures, a unit of State Bank of India.



*“Difficulties are transitory while triumphs - FOREVER”*

**DR. KHAN**  
(KSG)