

INSIDE



It's a pandemic, P4



Happiness talk, P6-7

AMITe poll

Are you in favour of the Supreme Court's decision to sanction the central vista project?

a) Yes
 b) No
 c) Can't say

To vote, log on to
 www.theglobaltimes.in

POLL RESULT
 for GT issue January 4, 2021

Do you think a ban on flights from UK will be effective in sheltering India from the new COVID-19 variant?

Response	Percentage
Yes	70%
No	28%
Can't say	2%

Results as on January 8, 2021

Coming Next
 TEDx

Toil in the soil

A Lowdown On Farm Bills 2020 And The Uproar That Followed

Yashika Aneja, GT Network

As the Indian President gave an affirmative nod to the new farm bills on the evening of September 27, 2020, protests against the same picked up in the various farming states of the country, especially Punjab and Haryana. Within no time the scattered protests turned into a collective rallying call of "Dilli chalo", wherein thousands of Indian farmers footslogged towards the national capital demanding a complete rescindment of the new reforms. What followed next was ideological contestation coupled with on-road conflicts between the protesters and the constabulary. As the protesting farmers seated themselves on the outskirts of Delhi fixated still, the outcry managed to create a flutter across borders too. Regardless, not many of us are au courant with what the three bills entail. Here's a primer on the same.

Bill I: Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce Bill

What does the bill entail? Also known as the APMC Bypass Bill, it allows farmers to sell their produce outside the government-regulated Agricultural Produce Market Committee (APMC) market yards,

more commonly referred to as *mandis*; they can now trade at farm gates, cold storages, silos, warehouses and so on, as per their will. Prior to the 2020 legislation, agri-trade was allowed only within the state-notified *mandis* and any transaction outside made the farmers liable to pay a heavy cess or fee.

Why is it beneficial?

1 Farmers will get more choice on who they want to trade with and thus, will be able to secure lucrative prices for their farm produce.

2 It proscribes state governments or APMCs from taxing farmers for trading their crops anywhere they want to.

3 It permits online trading of produce that would enable a direct and unimpeded interstate and intrastate trading.

4 Farmers will no longer have to deal with *mandis* that have of late become oppressive and monopolistic, fixing low prices on produce and forcing distress sales.

Why the protests?

1 The new set-up, according to the farmers, would include fragmented markets with different regulatory structures, creating an uneven playing field for them.

2 Farmers fear that due to this shift from the "regulated" *mandis* to unregulated trade areas, government would have no

oversight of the key players, types of transactions taking place or prices offered in the market and hence, would cite it as an excuse to not intervene.

3 It is also believed that the bill assumes that farmers, especially those marginal and uninitiated, would be able to get the basic paperwork from buyers done on their own.

4 If trade moves out of *mandis*, farmers feel their relationship with commission agents or middlemen, who provide them with financial loans and ensure adequate prices for their crops, would get soured.

Bill II: Essential Commodities Bill

What does the bill entail? As an amendment to the Essential Commodities Act, 1955, this 2020 bill curtails the powers of the government over the production, supply and distribution of certain key foodstuffs including cereals, pulses, edible oils, onion, potatoes, and oilseeds, except under extraordinary circumstances such as exceptional price rise (stock limits will only be imposed when there is a 100% upsurge in the price of horticulture produce or 50% upsurge in that of non-perishable agricultural produce), war, natural calamity or famine.

Why is it beneficial?

1 It would eradicate the fear of the private sector by doing away with excessive interference on the part of government, attracting more investments.

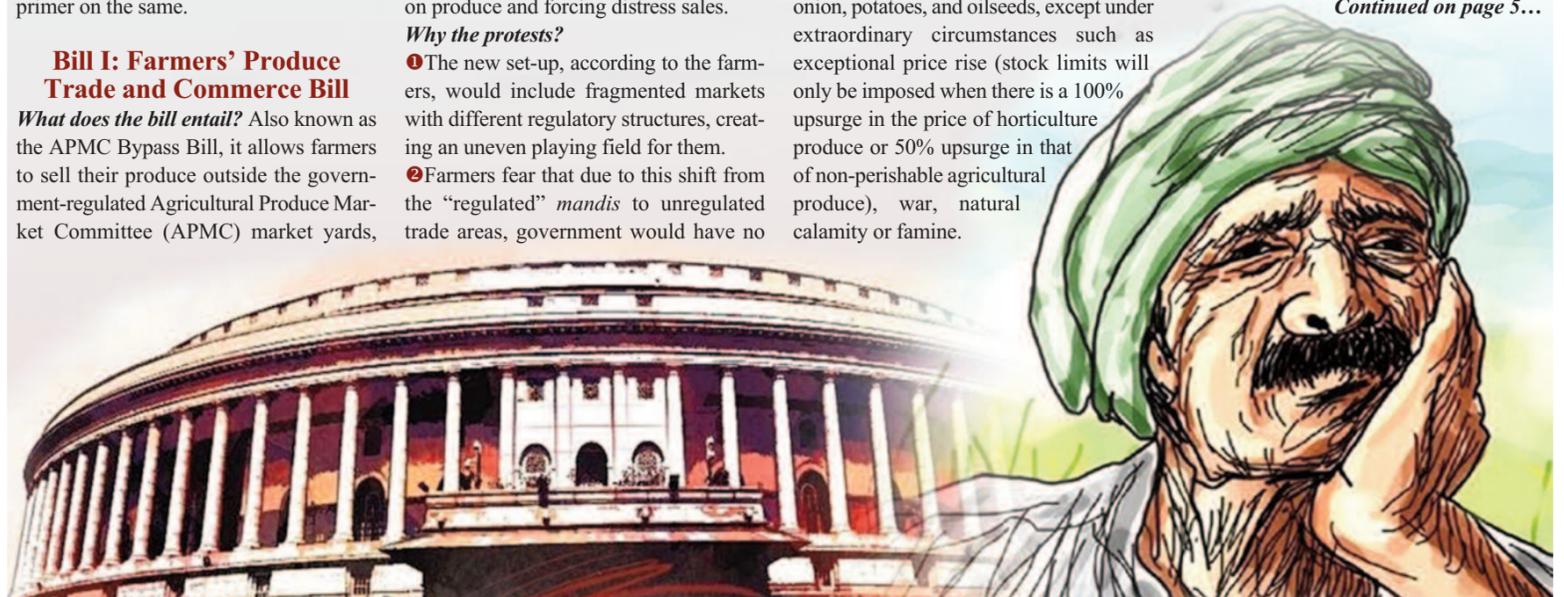
2 More private sector investments/FDI would mean more infrastructural investments like better storages etc., which would, as a result, create more storage capacity, reduce wastage of farm produce and double the income of farmers.

Why the protests?

1 Farmers see this move as the legalisation of hoarding or stockpiling by big companies (without the government actually knowing what stocks are hoarded with who, when and where) that would ultimately result in less earnings for farmers and a rise in prices for the end consumers.

2 As per the farmers, price limits for extraordinary circumstances are too high to be triggered, ever.

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Everyone has a voice

...Is What The Prime Time Anchor, Padmaja Joshi, Firmly Believes



Padmaja Joshi, Times Now

A voice that stands distinct in the field of reporting and journalism is that of Padmaja Joshi, a seasoned journalist currently associated with Times Now as the face of their prime-time news, who has established herself as a fearless voice for the people. Having more than a decade's experience, she has proven herself to be an excellent reporter, producer and prime time news anchor.

Presiding as a chief guest at the GT Awards 2019, she

shared a glimpse of her life as a journalist with the audience. We bring you excerpts.

The struggle

When I first decided to pursue journalism, I had to run away from my home because my parents wanted me to give the civil services exam. But, that was not what I wanted to do. My parents said that they would stop paying my rent if I don't go back home, so I thought why not just pick up a job and become financially independent. Along with my studies, I decided to work at EXL call center as a voice and accent trainer to pay the rent and pursue my passion.

Always in the know

Being a prime-time journalist, you are the first to know a lot of things. I get to see beforehand what you will see on Twitter an hour later. It's a very vicarious pleasure that you are always in the know of what is happening around you. Also, in this line of work, you get to meet and interact with a lot of people and are exposed to a lot of views, and that's another perk of this field.

Confronting the challenge

When the news is diverse, the challenge is to be on top of everything. It is, of course, not possible to know all the facts and sometimes you can really get caught unawares. It is difficult to know about situations that are

happening all over the world, but you have to do it. If you know that there's a situation building up in, say, Maldives, then you must read up on it and must not be caught off guard. It's a challenge but it's also what makes it interesting.

Putting up a brave face

I remember when Sarojini Nagar Market blasts took place in Delhi in 2005, I was a newbie in reporting. The blasts took place a week before Diwali and my job was to keep a track of the unclaimed bodies. I used to go to Safdarjung hospital mortuary every morning to find out whether all the bodies have been claimed or not. Even on the day of Diwali, I visited the mortuary to take a status and wanted to return home early. So, instead of waiting outside, I walked into the place where postmortems were happening. What I saw in that room, affected me deeply and it was evident on my face even when I was on air. At that point, one of my seniors told me that when you are reporting a story, you don't have to become that story. You've to toughen up and not let what you report affect your job in any manner.

Changing facets of journalism

Media, right now, is in a stir. There is a lot of content being thrown at you and no one is a gatekeeper of this information. Some people say that they miss Doordarshan be-

cause they were given news and not opinions. But, I feel opinions are important. When someone is giving news along with their opinion but not at the cost of hiding facts, you get to hear different opinions and then make up your own mind. In today's times, everyone has a voice and opinion because everyone has a platform.

The social media problem

Social media, especially Facebook and WhatsApp, is responsible for a lot of misinformation and proliferation of opinion. So many people don't even read the newspaper in the morning; they just skim through their Twitter or Facebook feed, glance at a few headlines and make up their minds. That's the problem now. People are making up their minds way too quickly and not bothering to fact-check. Hence, it becomes our responsibility to be cautious here and shape our opinions based on facts.

A note for budding journalists

I would like to tell all the aspiring young journalists that the road is difficult. It's going to be crazy hours, you would have to go to unknown places, at times in dangerous situations, but it's exciting, unlike a 9-5 job. You will go to places no one has been to and you will know things first-hand. It's a very exciting field, provided you're ready to tackle challenges that come along. 🇮🇳