

THE EDITORIAL

Issue 1.0



Farmer's Bill

New Parliament Building

COVID-19

BREXIT

Editor's Message

It gives me immense pleasure to introduce you all to our very first edition of the editorial of the Official Debate Society of PICT. Being the Editor in Chief for the first time, it has been an amazing experience and a learning opportunity for me. I feel that this endeavor has given a new dimension to my personality.

The purpose behind starting the editorial was to inform, engage and inspire a diverse readership by presenting articles on current affairs. I believe that every individual should be well informed and have adequate knowledge of the happenings in our nation as well as around the globe. Therefore, we present to you
“The Editorial “.

The topics covered in this edition of the editorial are the Farmer's Bill, BREXIT, New Parliament Building and COVID-19. We all are aware of these issues, but it is hard to gather the knowledge of different perspectives on these subjects. Thus, in order to inform people about the propositions as well as the oppositions on every topic, we have curated these articles for you. The editorial will surely provide its readers an insight and help them understand these issues better. The readers will be able to think rationally after knowing both sides of the coin after reading the articles. It will help the readers to develop their own opinions and views. The unbiased nature of the articles will not influence the judgement of the readers in any sort.

I would also like to thank the entire editorial team who have made this editorial a grand success. Every member has been working tenaciously right from the research stage till its completion. Their support, response and team-spirit reduced my burden a lot. It has been a great journey till now and I hope to see the same enthusiasm for the upcoming editions as well.

Yash Patwardhan
(Editor in Chief)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1

Farmer's Bill

3

New Parliament Building

5

COVID 19

7

BREXIT

FARMERS' BILLS

IN a country where millions of people struggle to make ends meet daily, agriculture remains the primary source of income in rural India. Post-independence, India was struggling to find its feet and feed its population. Farmers were the beacons of hope who kept striving to ensure a better future. Recently, the Government of India brought about new reforms in agriculture, popularly known as the Farmers' Bills. The bills have been passed to allow farmers to sell their products anywhere in the country, without any restrictions. However, these reforms weren't received well by many farmers which led to protests that have lasted for the past six months. The situation continues to aggravate and worsen with every passing day. More than sixty protesters have lost their lives. Here is a synopsis of the history of the Farm Bills and the current state of affairs in the country.

- After India gained Independence in 1947, farmers used to sell their products directly to the consumers. But due to the prevalent system of Zamindars or money lenders, they used to get trapped in perpetual debt.

- Farmers need to buy seeds, fertilizers, and other things required for growing a crop. All this requires money, so they used to take loans from the Zamindars, who used to

charge a very high-interest rate on the principal amount. This process was very exploitative. To help the farmers and end this system, the Government of India introduced APMC (Agriculture Produce Market Committee) Act.

- The Act was introduced in the 1960s when the Green revolution had started in India. APMCs set up Mandis (markets) across India where farmers' produce was sold. This system was good during the 1960s, but with time, not much was improved in APMCs and some problems popped up. Middlemen started exploiting farmers by forming cartels among themselves and started buying the produce at MSP only and sold it to traders at an exorbitant rate.

- The Indian agriculture acts of 2020, often referred to as the Farm Bills, are three acts that were initiated by the Parliament of India in September 2020.

The three Acts are as follows:

Act 1- APMC Act: The Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Act, 2020

This Bill aims to create an ecosystem where the farmers and traders will enjoy the freedom of

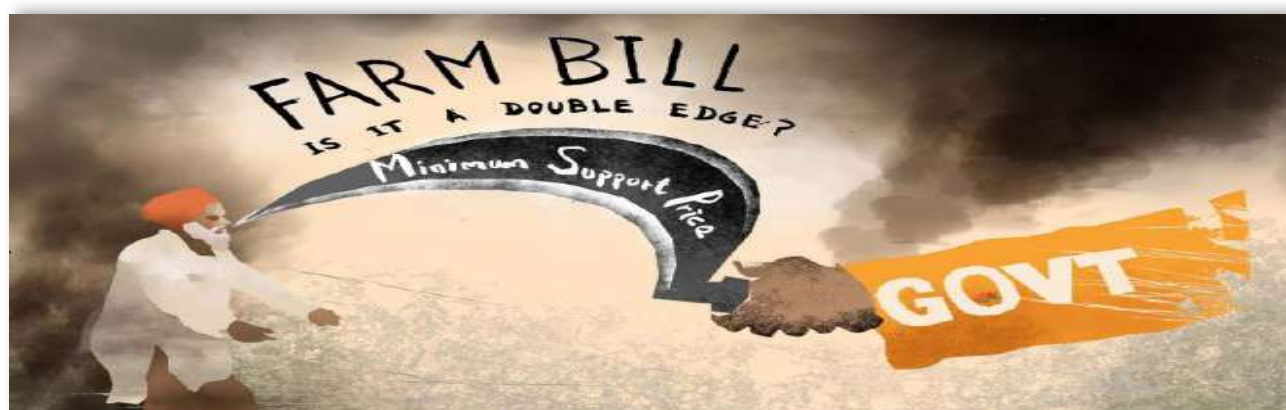
choice of sale and purchase of agricultural products. It would provide separate alternatives to APMC to end its monopoly and would also create a separate dispute resolution mechanism for farmers.

Act 2- MSP Act: The Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Act, 2020

This Bill seeks to provide a national legal framework on farming agreements that protects and empowers farmers to engage with various businesses at a mutually agreed remunerative price. It would enable farmers to access modern technology and better inputs. It would improve their income and will reduce the cost of marketing.

Act 3- The Essential Commodities (Amendment) Act, 2020

This Bill will encourage the investment in cold storage and modernization of the food supply chain. It would not apply to the Public Distribution System (PDS) or the Targeted PDS. It would create a competitive market and will prevent the wastage of agricultural produce due to a lack of storage facilities.



PROPOSITIONS:

- Selling and purchasing farm produce outside registered mandis
- Promoting barrier-free interstate & intrastate electronic trading
- Bringing stability in prices and modernizing the food chain
- Reduction in marketing/transportation costs
- Transferring the risk of market unpredictability from farmers to sponsors
- The gain by small-scale farmers

OPPOSITIONS:

- Big companies will dictate terms to farmers which may lead to less prices for them
- Commission agents will lose their jobs
- Sponsors have an edge in disputes
- Big companies will have the right to stock commodities
- The sponsors may not want to deal with small or marginal farmers
- The decision on export ban on onion would create doubt on its implementation
- States will lose revenue (mandi fees)

CONCLUSION:

Thus, this article highlights the pros and cons of the Farmers' Bill. There might be disagreements and disputes amongst the farming community, but the Government's call still seems to be testing the patience of the protesters. Even if the end of these protests is unforeseeable, this article must have provided a rational outlook on the same.

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NEW PARLIAMENT BUILDING

INDIA'S Parliament House is a matter of national pride and importance, an iconic piece of architecture that has witnessed some of the most defining moments of Indian history. Built during the British Era, the 93-year-old circular Parliament House was designed by architects Edwin Lutyens and Herbert Baker in 1912-13 and inaugurated in 1927.

Over the years, three new buildings were added because of the workload burden faced by the Parliament. The Parliament House Annexe came up in 1975; the Parliament Library Building in 2002, and the extension to Parliament House Annexe was done in 2017.

It came as no doubt, then, as eyebrows were raised when it was decided that the time had finally come to move on from this monumental structure; a sanctum of Indian democracy. After Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid the foundation stone on December 10 for an ultra-modern triangular Parliament building, a lot of debate has centered on the need for a new structure and whether public money should be spent by the Government now.



The new building is expected to be completed before Winter Session 2022, in accordance with the Prime Minister's desire for a grand celebration when India turns 75.

Proposition:

- **Increase in workload on Parliament**

Due to an increase in population, which has almost gone up four times since independence, an increase in the number of Lok Sabha constituencies through delimitation cannot be avoided. The new Parliament Building will have a seating capacity of 1,224 MPs.

- **Minimal Cost of the Project**

The cost of the new Parliament building is only Rs 970 crore. In fact, it is a part of the Rs 20,000 crore Central Vista project. The Vista project is intended to re-generate the economy. More than 2,000 people will be directly provided employment due to this project and another 9,000 will be indirectly involved.

- **More space and hence more capacity**

Without a new building, the strength of the Lok Sabha cannot be increased. The Lok Sabha hall in the Parliament House has only 552 seats, with no scope for adding any new seats.

Opposition:

- **Is the project propitious?**

The world is facing a pandemic, with economies throughout the world suffering as a result of it. India is no exception to this. Thus, some people think that the money for this project could be diverted to social welfare.

- **Reducing Public Space**

By building this project, 80 acres of public space is being reduced in the Central Vista. The new residences and the building for the government

officials would deprive the citizens of the space that they used for walking.

- **Central Hall can be repurposed as the Lok Sabha Hall**

A preliminary study of our Parliament House has shown that the Central Hall of the present structure can be repurposed as the Lok Sabha Hall and with reconfiguration of the interior layout, it can accommodate up to 800 members.

- **Population will stabilize**

As per reports, the population is set to stabilize by 2061 and is projected to decline thereafter. This would mean that the increased strength of the Parliament, if at all, would be only for 40 years. Surely a new Parliament House for this short duration is totally unnecessary.

Conclusion :

A three-judge Supreme Court bench by two to one majority, green signaled the Central Vista and New parliament Building projects of high political significance. It would create a larger working space for the efficient functioning of the country's highest legislative wing and integrated administrative block for ministries and departments of the Union Government in the heart of New Delhi.

According to a release by the Prime Minister's Office (PMO), the new building is an intrinsic part of the vision of 'AtmaNirbhar Bharat' and will be a landmark opportunity to build peoples' Parliament for the first time after independence, one which will match the needs and aspirants of 'New India' in the 75th anniversary of independence in 2022.

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COVID 19

IN 2020, the entire world came to a standstill. The COVID-19 pandemic has shaken the entire world and had a fair share of impact on India as well. On the 24th of March 2020, under Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the Government of India ordered a nationwide lockdown, limiting the movement of the entire 1.3 billion population of India as a preventive measure against the COVID-19 pandemic, which was further extended till the 8th of June 2020. The people of India and the economy experienced some major impacts of the lockdown.

The Indian economy suffered a major setback due to the pandemic. India's growth in the fourth quarter of the fiscal year 2020 went down to 3.1% according to the Ministry of Statistics. India had also been witnessing a pre-pandemic slowdown, and according to the World Bank, the pandemic has "magnified pre-existing risks to India's economic outlook". The rollout of the Covid-19 vaccine around the world brings hope of restoring normalcy to human life.

COVID-19 Vaccination Drive in India

On 16th January 2020, the entire world witnessed what is likely the world's largest Covid-19 Vaccination Campaign with over 2 lakh people vaccinated across the country over a day in 3350 sessions. India's immediate plan, as has been announced, is to inoculate 3 crore frontline health workers, sanitation workers, police, and later 27 crores of the most vulnerable to the disease by July 2021.

Different types of vaccines available in India:-

Covaxin:

- Covaxin is India's first indigenous COVID vaccine.
- It is developed by the corona vaccine manufacturer Bharat Biotech.
- It has been developed based on an inactivated

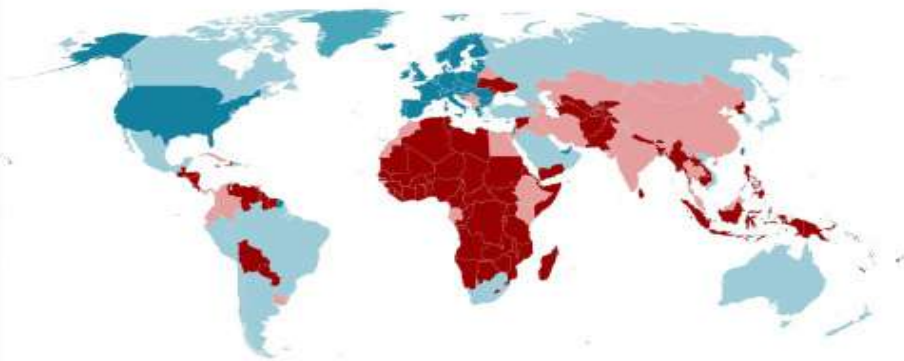
SARS-CoV-2 strain cultured at the National Institute of Virology, an ICMR body.

Covishield:

- Covishield has been developed by the pharmaceutical giant UK's AstraZeneca and the University of Oxford.
- The Pune-based Serum Institute of India (SII) has collaborated with the University of Oxford and AstraZeneca to manufacture the Covishield vaccine.
- SII is the world's largest vaccine manufacturer.

When will countries be fully covered?

■ Late 2021 ■ Mid 2022 ■ Late 2022 ■ From early 2023



Source: The Economist Intelligence Unit, 27 Jan 2021

BBC

Propositions:

- Getting a COVID-19 vaccine can keep you from contracting the disease by creating an antibody response in your body without you having to become infected with the novel coronavirus.
- Also, a COVID-19 vaccine might help protect people around you from the disease - especially those at increased risk of severe illness from the SARS-CoV-2 virus infection.
- Millions of people in the United States have received COVID-19 vaccines, and these vaccines will undergo intensive safety monitoring in U.S. history. CDC recommends that you get a COVID-19 vaccine as soon as you are eligible.
- Mathematical calculations indicate that Covaxin may provide immunity against Covid-19 for 9 to 12 months, and there may be a booster shot after this period elapses.

Oppositions:

- The World Health Organization says “It’s too early to know if COVID-19 vaccines will provide long-term protection. Additional research is needed to answer this question. Most scientists anticipate that, like most other vaccines, COVID-19 vaccines will not be 100% effective and is working to help ensure that any approved vaccines are as effective as possible, so can have the greatest impact on the pandemic.”
- India currently has two vaccines, Covaxin and Covishield but neither of them has completed the crucial Phase-3 trials, under which a vaccine is administered to volunteers at multiple locations across the country. However, the vaccine, as of now, is not for everybody and is being given under restricted conditions.
- WHO advises people with some medical condition to not get vaccinated or to consult a medical practitioner before getting vaccinated.
- Not everyone is fortunate enough to be vaccinated due to several economic, social, ethical, geographical, and health reasons leading to vaccine-preventable deaths. Also, there are many things to learn about the sustainability of the COVID-19 vaccine, which may have several complications. Every scientific discovery takes time, rushing the process might have catastrophic outcomes.
- Adverse events due to COVID-19 vaccination have been reported to the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS).

Conclusion:

Covid-19 has posed various challenges in our lives and persists to grow and evolve as an unprecedented evil. But, with all that has been going on around us, we are still moving forward with a purpose in our mind, which is, to see a better tomorrow. From working on the vaccines tirelessly to providing support to people in such times and helping them cope up, our frontline warriors have done it all. The responsibility to overcome this situation, however, lies in the hands of every individual. Every small contribution matters and is necessary to ensure that we emerge successful in this battle against COVID-19. The article sums up the efforts that are being taken all around the globe to find a conclusive and proficient cure.

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BREXIT



THE UK joined the European Economic Community (a regional organization that aimed to bring about economic integration among its member states) in 1973, which then became part of the European Union when it was created in 1993. However, the UK had always maintained a distance from the proceedings of the EU. Immigration of migrants from poorer EU states and the fear of immigration of refugees from Syria, Africa, and the Middle East further intensified skepticism among voters and politicians.

A referendum was conducted in 2016 regarding the decision to leave the EU, wherein 52% voted for BREXIT. Britain officially exited from the EU on the 1st of February 2020. Great Britain (UK) constituted of four countries initially- England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland. With BREXIT, three of them excluding Scotland left the EU.

What are the advantages of being a member of the EU?

1. There aren't any border checks between these 28 countries if you are a citizen of any EU member nation.
2. Transactions can be carried out in Euro in all countries, thus maintaining a uniform exchange rate throughout.
3. The EU has its parliament, where the problems and issues of its member nations can be looked into and solved, thus providing additional support to the member countries.
4. There are numerous advantages in business and trade, and citizens are provided a flexible way to migrate for education and jobs.

What are the disadvantages of being a member of the EU?

1. There could be disagreements on the laws and policies passed by the EU, as every member nation would have to abide by them.
2. Usage of the same currency could lead to economic disadvantages at the individual level, which many countries won't agree upon.

Proposition

- According to the EU's refugee policy, every country must keep a fixed number of refugees in proportion to their population. However, this decision would cause adverse effects on the living situation of the low-income groups and the unemployed ones. But BREXIT ensured that this crisis was averted.
- Also, the rates of Pound versus Euro are quite high, thus giving the UK a stimulus in their economic growth, if they would make the Pound a uniform currency throughout. Thus, leaving the EU was indeed an advantage.

Opposition

- UK imports 1/3 of its goods from the member countries of the EU. Leaving the EU has resulted in the prices of the goods soaring a bit, as the trade options have reduced.
- UK-based companies can no longer access the EU market, neither can they access the public contracts and employ the EU workers in their companies.
- BREXIT has cost Britain nearly 2.5% of its GDP. Investments dropped by 6% and unemployment increased by 1.5% in 2018.

Effects of BREXIT on India:

1. Although it is premature to assess the gains for India from the agreement between the European Union (EU) and the UK, Indian goods would not get many benefits from this pact. However, India can explore opportunities in service sectors like IT, architecture, research and development, and engineering in both the markets as the EU-UK pact does not cover services.
2. According to experts, India's services sector is likely to make gains from the curbs on the free movement of professionals between the two markets. According to the BREXIT trade and security deal, UK nationals will no longer have unrestricted freedom to work, study, start a business or live in the EU and vice versa, although both sides will have tariff-free and quota-free access to each other's market.
3. Sectors such as IT, R&D, architecture, and financial services are likely to shine for India.
4. BREXIT might give a boost to trade ties between India and the UK.
5. Britain will now be free to discuss a bilateral trade pact with India.
6. Due to the fall in the value of the Pound sterling, those who import from the UK will gain. Indian export companies operating in the UK may also gain.
7. More Indian tourists can afford to visit Britain in the coming days as the currency value has fallen.
8. More Indian students can afford to study in Britain (for higher education) as the fees may seem cheaper.

CONCLUSION:

While Europe regrets the separation and looks forward to a new beginning with Britain, British Prime Minister Boris Johnson claims a major political victory in regaining British sovereignty to make its own laws and freedom to engage the world on its own terms.

Johnson's success should end the prolonged political divisions in Britain on the nature of its relationship with Europe after the second world war.

“Although we have left the EU”, Johnson said, “Britain will remain culturally, emotionally, historically, strategically and geologically attached to Europe.”

Though a recent affair, BREXIT poses its effects on the historical as well as futuristic worldly affairs. Entwined are the strings of a new era when such important countries make their moves. We can all, but hope it to prove fruitful for most of the international on-goings.

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Dear readers and Contributors of the Editorial,

We are thrilled to present our first issue of The Editorial - the magazine of PICT DEB-SOC.

The main purpose of the Editorial is to publish articles about current incidents taking place in our country and across the globe. Articles are intended to be succinct reports of research works, theoretical ideas, policies, or program recommendations that would be useful in practice. The magazine focuses on an authentic source for facts and provides a forum for those interested in strengthening their administrative knowledge.

I wish to thank my colleagues for their contribution for the Editorial.

I am indebted to the Editor-in-Chief, for his constant support since the very beginning. I sincerely thank the research team for conducting a detailed survey and outline of every single article. I am grateful to the content team members who strived hard to create every article with utmost precision. I thank our copyholders for their wonderful inputs and contribution. I thank the Director of Content, for his timely advice and the experiences that he shared during the entire process. I thank the entire Design Team for enhancing all articles and making them presentable.

Finally, as every process has its steps and procedures, so has our Editorial travelled a long journey. It has left us with wonderful memories and has given all our contributors a wide exposure. I am thankful to our authorities for helping and guiding us during the entire process.

We hope that reading the first edition of the Editorial would be a worthwhile experience for our readers and would prove to be a valuable resource indeed.

Shalaka Alkute
Editorial Executive Officer

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