

# Headlines at a Glance

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## **Parliament passes several important Bills including Essential Commodities (Amendment) Bill & Companies (Amendment) Bill**

The Rajya Sabha today passed seven key bills including the crucial Essential Commodities (Amendment) Bill. In one of its most productive days, the House passed the bills after a number of opposition parties staged a walkout and decided to boycott proceedings of the House till the suspension of eight members was revoked. The government, however, insisted that the suspended members first apologise and then the government would consider the request for revoking their suspension. The parties that boycotted the proceedings of the House included the Congress, CPI-M, CPI, TMC, NCP, SP, Shiv Sena, RJD, DMK, TRS and AAP. The Bills passed today are 'The Indian Institutes of Information Technology Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2020', 'The Essential Commodities (Amendment) Bill, 2020', 'The Banking Regulation (Amendment) Bill, 2020', 'The Companies (Amendment) Bill, 2020', 'The National Forensic Sciences University Bill, 2020', 'The Rashtriya Raksha University Bill, 2020' and 'The Taxation and Other Laws (Relaxation and Amendment of Certain Provisions) Bill, 2020'. When the bills were passed, only a few members were present in the house which included those from the ruling BJP and its ally JD-U and those of parties like AIADMK, BJD, YSR-Congress and TDP, and participated in the debates on the bills.

**SOURCE:** *The Hindu*

## **NASA outlines plan for first woman on Moon by 2024**

The US space agency (Nasa) has formally outlined its \$28bn (£22bn) plan to return to the Moon by 2024. As part of a programme called Artemis, Nasa will send a man and a woman to the lunar surface in the first landing with humans since 1972.

But the agency's timeline is contingent on Congress releasing \$3.2bn for building a landing system. Astronauts will travel in an Apollo-like capsule called Orion that will launch on a powerful rocket called SLS. Speaking on Monday afternoon (US time), Nasa administrator Jim Bridenstine said: "The \$28bn represents the costs associated for the next four years in the Artemis programme to land on the Moon. SLS funding, Orion funding, the human landing system and of course the spacesuits – all of those things that are part of the Artemis programme are included." But he explained: "The budget request that we have before the House and the Senate right now includes \$3.2bn for 2021 for the human landing system. It is critically important that we get that \$3.2bn."

**SOURCE:** *BBC News*

## **India conducts successful flight test of ABHYAS from Odisha test range**

India on Tuesday successfully conducted the flight test of ABHYAS – High-speed Expendable Aerial Target (HEAT) vehicles from a test range in Odisha, defence sources said. The trial, carried out by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) from the Integrated Test Range (ITR) at Chandipur near here, was tracked by various radars and electro-optic systems, the sources said. Congratulating DRDO on its achievement, defence minister Rajnath Singh said ABHYAS can be used as a target for evaluation of missile systems. During the trial on Tuesday, two demonstrator vehicles were successfully test-flown, DRDO sources said. ABHYAS has been designed and developed by the Aeronautical Development Establishment (ADE) of the DRDO. The air vehicle is launched using twin underslung boosters. It is powered by a small gas turbine engine and has an Inertial Navigation System (INS) along with a Flight Control Computer (FCC) for guidance and control. The vehicle has been programmed for fully autonomous flight. The check out of the vehicle is done using laptop-based Ground Control Station (GCS), a defence statement said. During the test campaign, the user requirement of 5 km flying altitude, vehicle speed of 0.5 mach, endurance of 30 minutes and 2g turn capability of the test vehicle were successfully achieved, it said.

**SOURCE:** *Hindustan Times*

## Labour reform gets a leg up, Lok Sabha passes three labour codes

The Lok Sabha Tuesday passed three important labour codes that shall cheer industries and allow them flexibility in hiring and retrenchment, make industrial strikes difficult besides, facilitate ease of doing business and help expand the social security net for informal workers. Labour Minister Santosh Gangwar said the changes in the labour Codes have been made keeping in mind the transformation India has undergone in past decades in terms of technology, work methodologies, work-sphere facilities and the nature of works. He said changes in labour laws have been envisaged by recognizing the changes global scenario and for meeting future work requirements. While initiating discussion on the three bills – Code on Industrial Relation, Social Security, and Occupational Safety and Health (OSH), the labour minister said industries and workers are two sides of the same coin and the three bills have tried to balance their rights.

In the Industrial Relation Code, the government has allowed companies having up to 300 workers to fire people or close units without prior approval of the government. And companies having more than 300 workers need to apply for approval, but if authorities do not respond to their request then it will be deemed approved.

**SOURCE:** *Livemint*

## Prototype Fast Breeder Reactor to be commissioned in 2022

The Prototype Fast Breeder Reactor (PFBR), which is being constructed by the Bharatiya Nabhikiya Vidyut Nigam Limited, is expected to be commissioned by October 2022, Union minister Jitendra Singh said on Tuesday. In a written reply to a question in the Rajya Sabha, Jitendra Singh, Minister of State in the Prime Minister's Office, said presently there are technical issues which have resulted in delay in commissioning of the PFBR. In the last three years, while commissioning activities of the various systems, structures and equipment of PFBR are progressing, a large number of technical challenges as well as design inadequacies (owing to the first-of-a-kind status of the PFBR) are being encountered at each stage, thereby resulting in delay in commissioning. These issues are being attended in close coordination with designers and experts within the Department of Atomic Energy (DAE), he added.

"The Prototype Fast Breeder Reactor (PFBR) being constructed by Bharatiya Nabhikiya Vidyut Nigam Limited (BHAVINI) is expected to get commissioned by October 2022," he said. BHAVINI is a PSU under the DAE. On completion of commissioning, PFBR will add 500 MW of electrical power to the national grid, he added.

**SOURCE:** *Financial Express*