

Headlines at a Glance

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Parliament Passes Jammu And Kashmir Official Languages Bill, 2020

Parliament today passed a Bill for inclusion of Kashmiri, Dogri and Hindi in the list of official languages in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, in addition to the existing Urdu and English. The Jammu and Kashmir Official Languages Bill, 2020 was passed by Rajya Sabha through voice vote. Lok Sabha had cleared the legislation on Tuesday. Replying to a debate on the Bill, Minister of State for Home G Kishan Reddy said it was a long-standing demand of the people of Jammu and Kashmir that the language they speak should be included in the list of official languages.

The minister pointed out that around 74 per cent people in the Union Territory spoke Kashmiri and Dogri languages. He said that according to the 2011 census, only 0.16 per cent population in Jammu and Kashmir spoke Urdu, while 2.3 per cent spoke Hindi.

Mr Reddy said the government would also take steps to encourage other local languages like Punjabi, Gurjari and Pahari in the region. Participating in the debate on the Bill, Naresh Gujral (SAD) termed it “unfortunate” that Punjabi was not included in the Bill and urged the government to reconsider it.

SOURCE: *The Hindu*

LS passes the Major Port Authorities Bill 2020

The Lok Sabha on Wednesday passed the Major Port Authorities Bill, 2020 that looks to reorient the governance model in central ports to landlord model, whereby port infrastructure is leased to private operators. The bill aims at decentralizing decision making and to infuse professionalism in governance of major ports. The landlord model of port operation is widely followed globally. Of the 204 ports in the country, 12 are major ports, including Deendayal (erstwhile Kandla), Mumbai, JNPT and Cochin. The role of Tariff Authority for Major Ports (TAMP) has been redefined in the bill. The port authority has now been given powers to fix tariffs which will act as a reference tariff for purposes of bidding for PPP projects. PPP operators will be free to fix tariffs based on market conditions. The Board of each major port shall be entitled to create a specific master plan in respect of any development or infrastructure established or proposed to be established within the port limits and such master plan shall be independent of any local or state government regulations of any authority whatsoever.

SOURCE: *Economic Times*

DRDO successfully test-fires Laser-Guided Anti Tank Missile

In a step towards enhancing India's armoured warfare capabilities, the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) on Tuesday successfully test-fired the indigenously-developed Laser-Guided Anti Tank Guided Missile (ATGM) from the Main Battle Tank (MBT) Arjun at KK Ranges in Ahmednagar in Maharashtra. Dr G Satheesh Reddy, secretary of the Department of Defence Research and Development and chairman of DRDO, also congratulated DRDO personnel and industry on the successful test firing. KK Ranges is the firing range of the Armoured Corps Centre and School of the Indian Army (ACC&S) located on the outskirts of Ahmednagar. While some parameters of the Laser Guided ATGM have been tested in prior tests, on Tuesday, all parameters were successfully tested and the missile engaged with the target with 'more than desired accuracy', sources said. More tests of the weapon system are expected to take place over a period of time. The missile uses a warhead that has the capability to neutralise armoured vehicles which have reactive armours, which are specially-designed protective armours used in military vehicles.

SOURCE: *The Indian Express*

India, Australia to kick off naval exercise in eastern Indian Ocean

Navies of India and Australia will carry out a two-day mega exercise in the Indian Ocean Region beginning Wednesday that will involve a range of complex naval manoeuvres, anti-

aircraft drills and helicopter operations, officials said. The exercise comes in the midst of India's tense border row with China and in the backdrop of growing activities by the Chinese navy in the Indian Ocean Region. It will be the fourth major military drill by the Indian Navy since June. It has already carried out similar exercises with the navies of the US, Japan and Russia. HMAS Hobart, the lead ship of the Hobart-class air warfare destroyers, will be among the assets to be deployed in the exercise by the Royal Australian Navy, officials said, adding Indian Navy ships Sahyadri and Karmuk will be part of Indian platforms. In July, the Indian Navy carried out a military exercise with a US Navy carrier strike group led by the nuclear-powered aircraft carrier USS Nimitz off the coast of Andaman and Nicobar Islands. The USS Nimitz is the world's largest warship. In the exercise with the US Navy, four frontline warships of the Indian Navy participated. The US carrier strike group was transiting through the Indian Ocean Region on its way from the South China Sea. The US Navy carrier strike group comprises USS Nimitz, Ticonderoga-class guided-missile cruiser USS Princeton and Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyers USS Sterett and USS Ralph Johnson.

SOURCE: *Times of India*

RS passes Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Amendment Bill, 2020

The Rajya Sabha on Wednesday through a voice vote passed the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Amendment Bill, 2020. The bill amends the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act 2010, which regulates the use and acceptance of foreign contribution by individuals and organizations. The Act prohibits foreign contribution for any activities that pose a danger to national interest. The bill was passed by the Lok Sabha on Monday and will now be sent to President Ram Nath Kovind for his assent.

Minister of state (MoS), home affairs, Nityanand Rai moved the bill for passage in the Upper House. During the discussion on the bill, Rai said that the FCRA is a law for national and internal security, aimed to ensure that foreign funds do not dominate the political and social discourse in India. The minister pointed out that the bill provides for reduction in administrative expenses of any NGO receiving foreign funding, from 50 per cent to 20 per cent of annual funds. The bill also proposes to enable the Centre to allow an NGO or association to surrender its FCRA certificate.

SOURCE: *Hindustan Times*