

Parliament passes several important Bills including Essential Commodities (Amendment) Bill

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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parties staged a walkout and decided to boycott proceedings of the House till the suspension of eight members was revoked.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.

Key Highlights

- 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'.
- First, it passed a bill to declare five newly-established Indian Institutes of Information Technology (IIITs) as institutions of national importance.
- The crucial Essential Commodities (Amendment) Bill, which removes cereals, pulses, oilseeds, edible oils, onion and potatoes from the list of essential commodities and

removes stock holding limits on them, was passed next.

- This bill is part of the agriculture reforms bills that the government is pushing to raise farm incomes.
- The bills passed on Sunday gave farmers the freedom to sell produce anywhere in the country and enter into forward contracts with companies. Rajya Sabha also passed amendments to the Bank Regulation Act to bring cooperative banks under the supervision of the RBI in a bid to protect the interest of depositors.
- Thereafter the Companies (Amendment) Bill, 2020, which removes the penalty for certain offences, was passed.
- The National Forensic Sciences University Bill, 2020 and the Rashtriya Rakash University Bill were also passed in quick succession. Thereafter, the Taxation and Other Laws (Relaxation and Amendment of Certain Provisions) Bill, 2020 to relax time limit on compliance with tax laws, GST payment and filing in view of the coronavirus pandemic.
- The Essential Commodities (Amendment) Bill, 2020 as well as the Taxation and Other Laws (Relaxation and Amendment of Certain Provisions) Bill, 2020 replace emergency ordinances.
- Eight members of Rajya Sabha were suspended on Monday over their unruly behaviour during the passage of the two key farm related bills on Sunday. Azad also said members should get more time to speak and time constraint has become a major issue of discontent among opposition parties.
- Former Prime Minister and JD-S leader H D Deve Gowda said the government and Opposition should sit together to run the House. Prof. Ram Gopal Yadav of the Samajwadi Party said, a mistake has taken place by opposition members, but elders should be large hearted. He said that he would apologise on their behalf.

SOURCE: *The Hindu*