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BIOTECH AUTHORITY BILL INTRODUCED IN HOUSE

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The National Biotechnology Regulatory Authority (NBRA) Bill was introduced in Parliament on Tuesday even as it kicked up much storm across the country.

The Bill seeks to establish a Biotechnology Regulatory Authority of India replacing the Genetic Engineering Approval Committee under the Ministry of Environment and Forest. BRAI will regulate the research, transport, import, manufacture and use of organisms and products of modern biotechnology to promote its safe use.

Scientists and environmentalists are furious at the clause to form a new regulatory authority. They said the Department of Biotechnology had thrown open initial drafts for a series of public consultations since 2008. But the latest version, which was drafted last year and not introduced into the public domain, contains a clause to the effect that people who criticise a genetically-modified product without sufficient scientific proof could face penalties, including a fine and jail.

Govt and Regulatory.