

RAJYA SABHA

*SYNOPSIS OF DEBATE

(Proceedings other than Questions and Answers)

Tuesday, April 01, 2025/ Chaitra 11, 1947 (Saka)

BIRTHDAY GREETINGS

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon'ble Members, I am extremely pleased to extend birthday greetings to hon'ble Members of Parliament, Shri Bhubaneswar Kalita and Shri Damodar Rao Divakonda.

SHRI BHUBANESWAR KALITA, currently, the Chairman of the Committee on Science and Technology, Environment, Forests and Climate Change is serving his fifth term since April, 2020, representing the State of Assam in the Rajya Sabha. Shri Kalita, an advocate by profession has a distinguished political career having previously served for four terms in this august House, (1984-1990, 1990-1996, 2008-2014, and 2014 to 2019). He has been a Cabinet Minister in the Government of Assam from 2002 to 2004 during his tenure in the Assam Legislative Assembly, 2001 to 2006.

Hon'ble Members, I had the great privilege and honour to be guided by him when I got into Parliament in 1989 and shared that period along with him though he was in the other House. A seasoned parliamentarian, Shri Kalita, and ever smiling, full of positivity, has contributed significantly through his effective participation in debates, deliberations and discussions in the House. He is widely travelled and has represented India in many global fora. He is married to Shrimati Rwiticka Kalita, an ex-IAS officer, who has served in various capacities in Assam as well as in Delhi. Their son, Shri Siddhartha Kalita is also an advocate by profession.

SHRI DAMODAR RAO DIVAKONDA, a distinguished Member of this House since June, 2022, is currently serving his first term representing the State of Telangana. He founded the renowned newspapers 'Namaste Telangana' and 'Telangana Today', and was a key founding member of the T-News channel, which played a pivotal role in the Telangana statehood movement. Shri Damodar Rao Divakonda is married to Smt. Swarupa Rani and the couple is blessed with son, Raghav, and daughter, Goutami. Hon'ble Members, on my own and on your behalf, I wish the hon'ble Members a long, healthy and happy life and extend greetings to their family members and friends.

*This Synopsis is not an authoritative record of the proceedings of the Rajya Sabha.

MATTERS RAISED WITH THE PERMISSION OF THE CHAIR

1. Concern Over Delay in Conducting the Decennial Census

SHRI MALLIKARJUN KHARGE: Mr. Chairman, the census began in 1881 and continued despite emergencies, wars, and various crises. The 1931 census also included a caste-based enumeration. Mahatma Gandhi considered it an essential national assessment. The census provides crucial data on population, employment, family structures, and socio-economic conditions. Even during World War II and the 1971 India-Pakistan war, the census was conducted, but for the first time in history, the government has caused an unprecedented delay. Since SC/ST data is already collected, caste enumeration is also possible, yet the government remains silent on this matter. While 81 percent of countries worldwide have successfully completed their census despite the pandemic, there is no clarity on when India's census will take place. This year, only ₹575 crore has been allocated in the budget, indicating the government's reluctance. Delays in the census affect multiple welfare schemes, leaving policymakers without reliable data for decision-making. Without up-to-date and accurate information, no new initiatives can be effectively implemented. Therefore, I urge the government to immediately begin the census and caste-based census.

2. Request regarding Unique Disability ID Certification Camps for Autistic Children and Young Adults

SHRI SUJEET KUMAR: April is Autism Awareness Month, and tomorrow, April 2nd, is Autism Awareness Day. Autism, or ASD, affects about 1.5 percent of children in India, and is a significant concern for parents. I salute all parents of autistic children and stand in solidarity with them. In 2016, the Prime Minister launched the UDID (Unique Disability ID) scheme to provide recognized proof of disability and help create a national database. While various government programs support individuals with ASD, many parents find the six-stage process to obtain a UDID card cumbersome. Autistic children, unlike others with disabilities, often cannot tolerate crowds, different environments, or hospitals, which makes completing the process difficult. This deprives them of benefits and adds to their stress. I humbly request the Government to set up UDID certification camps at Anganwadis, schools, NHM, and MCH centers to ease the process for parents, publicize the process on government websites for wider awareness, and expand support services for easier access to benefits.

3. Need to Improve the Nutrition Quality of Food Under Mid-Day Meal Program

DR. RADHA MOHAN DAS AGRAWAL: The Mid Day Meal Scheme has been a very important and a commendable campaign and children have benefited greatly from it. In September 2021, 24 lakh Anganwadi workers, Asha workers, Madrasas and Maktabas were also included in this scheme. Under this, the central government bears the entire cost of grains, logistics, transportation and kitchen preparation. Even 60 percent of the cooking cost is also borne by the Government of India. This scheme has brought about a significant change in the health of children. It is clear from the data collected by doctors that there is a lot of malnutrition among children in different cities of different states of the country. When this Mid Day Meal Scheme would have started, this scheme must have been very effective. The Government of India supports this scheme under a central sector scheme and the work of implementing it has to be done by the machinery of different states. This scheme is slowly losing its effect and is not able to bring about the effective reduction in the rate of malnutrition among children that should have happened. If these children are malnourished today, then the older citizens of this country will be malnourished. Therefore, I expect the government to talk to all the state governments in this context, call a collective meeting of

them to decide how this scheme can be implemented in a better way and if the machinery is not able to deliver food properly, then what alternative arrangements should be made for it.

4. Demand to Repeal Mahabodhi Vihar Act, 1949

SHRI MUKUL BALKRISHNA WASNIK: From 12th February, 2024, Buddhist Bhikshu Mahasangh started a protest in Bodhgaya demanding that Mahabodhi Mahavihara should be handed over to Buddhists. Bodhgaya is a very sacred place. Two and a half thousand years ago, Siddhartha Gautam attained enlightenment here. A center of attraction for Buddhists in the world, Bodhgaya is visited by a large number of citizens from India and abroad every year. The dynamic land of Buddha-enlightenment, Bodhgaya Mahabodhi Mahavihara has been under the control of non-Buddhists for many years, so the Bodhgaya Mukti Andolan is getting support not only in India but all over the world. Under the Bodh Gaya Temple Act, 1949, there are 9 members in the Bodhgaya Temple Management Committee. Out of these 9 members, only 4 are Buddhists and 5 are non-Buddhists. Religious places like temples, mosques, churches, gurudwaras are managed by the same religious community whose place of worship it is, so why is Mahabodhi an exception to this? For the past 100 years, there has been a struggle to free Bodh Gaya from non-Buddhists. This law was amended in 2013, but that is not enough. Today, here in the House, I would like to demand from the Central Government that this BT Act of 1949 should be repealed as soon as possible. In its place, keeping in mind the demands of the Buddhists, a new law needs to be enacted as soon as possible.

5. Need to Review the Recent Guidelines Issued by RBI on Repayment terms of Jewel Loans, to Mitigate the Significant Impact on Vulnerable Sections of Society

SHRI VAIKO: It has become essential for people to take jewel loans from banks, cooperative banks and non-banking financial companies for their emergency cash needs. The poor people, farmers and small businessmen in Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises depend heavily on jewel loans for their immediate needs. If you pledge your jewel with pawn broker or commission agent, you will have to pay higher interest. Due to this, many people get jewel loans from banks, as the interest is reasonable and risk is not involved. However, because of the new guidelines issued by the RBI, with stringent guidelines for re-mortgage by jewel borrowers, the borrowers are deeply worried. The present norm is that at the end of the tenure of jewel-loan period, the borrower can pay interest only and re-mortgage the jewels for further period without paying the principal amount. The new notification issued by the RBI says that the jewels pledged in the bank can be returned after full payment, both principal and interest. So the poor people and farmers have to turn over the entire amount, which is putting lot of financial and mental strain on the borrowers. The option to re-pledge the jewels for loan by paying interest only was more beneficial to the poor people. Now the compliance of these conditions would create a situation of informal credit or borrowing from private individuals commission agents at higher rate of interest at the exploitation of farmers and other borrowers. I would, therefore, urge upon the hon. Finance Minister to intervene in the matter and ensure that new guidelines for jewel loans are withdrawn and the old norms are followed.

6. Concern over Sale of 400 Acres of Land Belonging to Hyderabad University

DR. K. LAXMAN: The Congress Government in Telangana has decided to auction 400 acres of land claimed by the University of Hyderabad, a prestigious Central University. The University of Hyderabad was established in 1974 and was allotted 2,300 acres of land but till now no demarcation has taken place. The move not only undermines the rights of Central Institutions but also raises serious questions about environmental conservation and

governance. The land, put to auction, includes ecologically sensitive areas, such as mushroom rock and other biodiversity-rich zones near the University's East Campus. Bulldozers with heavy police *bandobast* have ravaged the forests, lakes and habitats. There is unrest in the student community and campus. The Congress Government claims sustainable development, but how can destroying Hyderabad's green lungs and educational institutions be sustainable development? Is this how democracy functions under the Congress Rule? I urge the House to take cognizance of this issue. The auction must be stopped immediately. The ownership should be clear.

7. Demand to Release Outstanding MGNREGS Funds to the State of Tamil Nadu

SHRI K.R.N. RAJESHKUMAR: The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme, MGNREGS, has been a lifeline for over 91 lakh workers in the State. It is to be noted that 86 per cent of employment is provided to women workers and nearly 29 per cent of workers belong to SC/ST households. However, Tamil Nadu has been facing severe challenges due to delay in the release of outstanding wages due to this vital scheme. Funds amounting to nearly Rs. 4,000 crore are pending with the Union Government as wages for workers under MGNREGS for the past four-and-a-half months, as on 1st April, 2025. This delay has caused a huge financial distress to lakhs of poor rural households who depend on timely payments under this scheme. The Tamil Nadu State Finance Minister has already met the Union Finance Minister and submitted a representation, requesting for immediate release of these dues. This delay in releasing funds not only disrupts the livelihood of rural workers but also affects the implementation of this flagship programme in Tamil Nadu. The situation demands urgent attention and action from the Union Government. Therefore, I urge the Union Government to release pending MGNREGS dues of Rs. 4,000 crore to Tamil Nadu.

8. Demand for Legal Protection to Stop any Fund Diversion of Scheduled Caste Sub Plan (SCSP) and Tribal Sub Plan (TSP)

SHRI IRANNA KADADI: I want to draw the attention of the Government and the country towards the administrative failures and unconstitutional ideology of the Congress Government in Karnataka. The Congress Party contested and came to power in 2023 elections in Karnataka on the promise of 5 guarantees, but now those same 5 guarantees have become a burden of Rs 52,000 crore on the State budget. It is clear that the State Government does not have the financial resources to bear this huge expenditure. The Government is diverting the funds of SCSP and TSP to meet this burden. In the SCSP and TSP Fund Budget for the year 25-2024, out of a total of Rs 37,648 crore, Rs 14,730 crore, i.e. about 28 percent of the amount has been spent on guarantee schemes. This is not just economic injustice, but it is also a direct violation of the principles of social justice of the Constitution of India and the law brought by the Congress government itself in 2013, according to which 24 percent of the budget is mandatory to be spent only on the welfare of Dalits and Adivasis. I request the central government to pay attention to the misuse of the funds set aside for SC-ST communities by the Congress government in Karnataka .

9. Need for Judicial Reforms in the Country

SHRI RAGHAV CHADHA: We Indians call the court the temple of justice. When a common man goes to the doorstep of this court, he is confident that he will definitely get justice. From time to time, the judiciary has also strengthened its trust and faith. But the country is concerned about some recent incidents and attention has been focused on judicial reforms. Just as there have been election reforms, police reforms, education and healthcare reforms in this country, judicial reforms are also necessary. Such reforms will strengthen

judicial independence and end judicial corruption. As far as the appointment of judges is concerned, the flaws of the collegium system have come to the fore from time to time through the reports of the Law Commission and the statements of legal luminaries. Perhaps this is why there was a need to bring a law like NJAC. But now the time has come for the collegium to reform itself, reinvent itself, so that the two main issues - lack of transparency, lack of public scrutiny - which cause criticism of the collegium system, can be removed. There should be an independent transparent process in which seniority, merit and integrity should be the basis. There is a trend in the country that government judges are appointed in executive or administrative roles after retirement. This raises many questions like conflict of interest, interference of the executive in the judiciary and influence on pre-retirement decisions. If a complete ban is not possible, then there should be a mandatory cooling off period of at least two years, in which a judge should not be appointed by the central or state government for at least two years after retirement.

10. Concern over Rising Cost of Children's Education in India

SHRIMATI RAJANI ASHOKRAO PATIL: Education is a Fundamental Right, yet for many, it is becoming increasingly inaccessible. Recent surveys reveal that Indian parents spend an average of Rs.40,000 to Rs.2 lakhs annually at LKG and nursery level with costs going up to Rs.2 lakh in tier-I cities. Additionally, families spend an average of Rs.16,000 per year on after-school education like tuition, coaching, etc. These costs put an immense financial burden on middle class and lower-middle class making quality education a privilege rather than a right. While private education costs soar, the Government schools, which are meant to provide affordable education, are failing in their purpose. Enrolment in Government schools for children aged 6 to 14 years has dropped from 72.9 per cent in 2022 to 66.8 per cent in 2024. This suggests that parents, even those struggling financially, prefer private schools over Government institutions due to poor infrastructure, lack of trained teachers and inadequate resources. The Right to Education (RTE) Act was enacted in 2009. But in many States, implementation remains weak due to poor monitoring and lack of awareness among parents. Schools often resist admitting EWS students, and financial reimbursements from the Government are delayed. Strengthening the enforcement of this provision is crucial to making education more inclusive and reducing inequality.

11. Concern over Alarming Rise in Hate Crimes and Need to Strengthen Law Enforcement Mechanisms

SHRI MANOJ KUMAR JHA: It is a matter of concern that due to hate speech and hate based acts, relatively small influential people are turning into bigger influential people. Small officials are turning into big officials and such an atmosphere has been created all around that hatred has been naturalized. All our regulatory mechanisms like National Minority Commission, National Human Rights Commission are inadequate. Nowadays when festivals come, there are new clothes, new sweets. The thought is that somehow the festivals should pass. They should pass with all good wishes, no accident should happen. We have made this our reality.

OBSERVATIONS BY THE CHAIR

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon'ble Members, I had the painful duty, on the last occasion, to indicate that when, in the burst of emotion, an hon'ble Member exceeds decorum, there is a mechanism of rectification. The observations made by the hon. Member were expunged. They were hurtful to the chivalry and patriotism of a great son of the soil.

Now, the observations having been expunged, the minimum respect a Member can pay is not to reiterate the same. The reiteration of what has taken place is something which hon. Members need to think about.

Secondly, I am sure, security of every citizen as well as a Member is important and those concerned will take all steps in that direction and there is no doubt about it. But these are issues where we need to moderate the temperature and make the climate little more wholesome so that the societal dysfunction is contained.

I made a fervent appeal on that day also but the reiteration was in a very aggravating form. I would urge the hon. Member to contemplate and appeal to Prof. Ram Gopal Yadav to bring his good influence as a veteran Parliamentarian to bring quietus to this issue, and, quietus can be brought about only by respecting the Chair and the Chair had found those observations unacceptable. I leave it to your wisdom.

As regards security, every Member's security is important. We need to function on that principle. Let us not expand the debate now.

GOVERNMENT BILLS

(i) The Protection of Interests in Aircraft Objects Bill, 2025 – *as passed by Lok Sabha - Contd.*

SHRI SANJAY KUMAR JHA: The Protection of Interests in Aircraft Objects Bill, 2025, is crucial because most Indian airlines lease aircraft rather than purchasing them outright- about 90% of their fleets come from leasing companies in places like Ireland, Hong Kong, Dubai, and Singapore. Given the massive investment required to buy an aircraft, leasing provides a practical solution. India has been working to develop its own aircraft leasing ecosystem, particularly through GIFT City in Gujarat, which offers tax exemptions to lessors. While some progress has been made since 2019, actual leasing transactions remain limited. This Bill addresses a major concern for lessors- the difficulty in reclaiming aircraft when airlines go bankrupt. Past cases like Kingfisher, Jet Airways, and Go First saw aircraft grounded indefinitely due to prolonged legal battles. Now, with this legislation, lessors can reclaim their planes within two months if an airline defaults, bypassing tribunals and approaching High Courts directly. This move aligns India with global leasing norms and has already led to an upgrade in India's rating by the Aviation Working Group, reducing leasing costs for airlines. I want to highlight aviation concerns in Bihar. The announcement of a Greenfield International Airport near Patna is welcome, but work on its location and development must begin promptly. Bihar currently lacks a fully functional international airport- Gaya has one, but it is not fully operational. Considering Darbhanga's growing traffic, upgrading it to an international airport would be highly beneficial.

SHRI SADANAND MHALU SHET TANAVADE: I stand in full support of the Protection of Interests in Aircraft Objects Bill, 2025, which is a significant step for India's aviation sector. This Bill will formally enact the Cape Town Convention, which India signed in 2008 but never ratified. With India's aviation market expanding rapidly-expected to grow from \$13.89 billion in 2024 to \$26.8 billion by 2030. Here, Aircraft leasing plays a crucial role. However, due to a lack of clear legal provisions, lessors face high risks, leading to expensive leasing costs that ultimately raise airfares. This Bill will secure lessors' rights, allowing them to repossess aircraft in case of airline defaults, reducing costs, and making air travel more affordable. The Bill's financial transparency measures will also ensure proper

record-keeping and prevent disputes over unpaid dues, fostering trust among lessors and creditors. Since 2014, airports have increased from 74 to 159, aircraft from 400 to 836, and schemes like *UDAN* have connected 88 airports, benefiting over 148 lakh people. Innovations like *Digi Yatra* and expansion in cargo operations further highlight this progress. This Bill will eliminate legal obstacles in airline insolvencies, improve contract enforcement, and strengthen India's aviation leasing framework. It is a much-needed reform, and I wholeheartedly support it.

SHRI SANDOSH KUMAR P: As a signatory to an important international convention, India must uphold its commitments while ensuring the protection of passengers, creditors, and industry stakeholders. I have a few pressing concerns. First, do we have data on the total credit exposure of Indian investors, particularly banks and financial institutions? While fulfilling international obligations is essential, we cannot overlook domestic financial accountability. Cases like Vijay Mallya's remind us of the heavy losses suffered by our banks due to mismanagement. Are we taking steps to recover these liabilities while prioritizing international creditors? Granting airline licenses without thoroughly assessing financial capacity could have dire consequences. Secondly, the Civil Aviation Ministry operates on a limited budget compared to other ministries. The Directorate General of Civil Aviation has been assigned enhanced responsibilities. It can not function effectively with such financial constraints. The aviation sector is heavily dominated by private players, leaving the ministry as a mere spectator. This imbalance affects passengers, who already face seat selection charges. In the absence of any regulation, airlines may charge for washroom use in the future. The government must intervene to prevent such exploitation. Lastly, I urge the Minister to address the longstanding issue of Kannur International Airport. It was built with public funds, and politics should not hinder its growth. Granting it Point-of-Call status is not a favor but a rightful necessity. I hope the government takes due consideration.

SHRI A.A. RAHIM: While this Bill aims to secure aircraft leasing and financing, its impact on common citizens, particularly with rising airfares, cannot be ignored. The 43% increase in fares is alarming, especially for NRIs who wish to travel home for festivals and special occasions but are unable to do so due to exorbitant ticket prices. The government must clarify how this Bill will benefit ordinary passengers. Will it help in reducing airfares, or will it primarily serve airline companies and leasing firms? You also referred to the 356th Report of the Standing Committee on Transport, Tourism, and Culture, which recommended measures to regulate airfare and make air travel affordable. It is crucial that the government should take concrete steps in this direction. The issue of Kannur International Airport not being granted Point-of-Call status is also significant. Given that Mopa Airport in Goa, a non-metro airport, has received this status, it raises questions about policy inconsistencies. The government must address these concerns. It must be ensured how this law will benefit passengers. Its sole aim should not be attracting corporate investment in the aviation sector.

SHRI HARIS BEERAN: It's important to understand that this legislation has come about not due to foresight but because of the crisis caused by the insolvency of several airlines, with Go First Airlines being the latest. This situation, along with the global downgrade of India's aviation leasing environment, has led to this legislation. I want to point out two key concerns for the hon'ble Minister. First, Section 9 of the Bill states that in case of any inconsistency between this Act and other existing laws, this Act shall prevail. However, there is a potential conflict with the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC). Section 238 of the IBC states that the provisions of the IBC will prevail over any other law, while Section 9 of this Bill states that the provisions of this Bill will take precedence. This creates an inconsistency. My suggestion is to amend Section 9 of this Bill to specifically address this conflict with the IBC, ensuring that both laws can work together. Second, Section 9(3)

preserves India's sovereign right to detain or arrest aircraft. But I urge the government to clarify how this will be implemented when faced with aggressive international enforcement by lessors. Will Indian public sector dues and claims from airport operators and employees be treated with the same priority, or will they be overlooked as aircraft are quickly deregistered and removed from India? Finally, for the airline industry to thrive, our airports must also prosper. In Kerala, we have two airports—Calicut and Kannur. Kannur Airport has not been given Point-of-Call status. For the airline industry to succeed, these issues need to be addressed.

©**SHRI RAVI CHANDRA VADDIRAJU:** I believe the Protection of Interests in Aircraft Objects Bill, 2025 represents a significant legal reform with the potential to transform India's aviation sector. It is not merely a legal change; it is a decisive step toward positioning India as a leader in the international aviation industry. The Bill aims to secure the future of India's aviation sector, enhance international investors' confidence, and make air travel more accessible to Indians. However, I would like to highlight an important issue concerning Telangana. Rajiv Gandhi International Airport in Hyderabad is one of the major airports in the country, yet there are currently no direct flights from Hyderabad to the United States. Chicago-Hyderabad route has been cancelled. Therefore, I urge the Hon'ble Minister to restore direct flight services from Hyderabad to cities such as New York, Chicago, etc. Furthermore, I would like to highlight that most students traveling to the United States are from Hyderabad and Andhra Pradesh. Therefore, I urge the Minister to restore direct flight services from Hyderabad to the U.S. I also request for the other airports in Telangana.

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI KINJARAPU RAMMOHAN NAIDU), replying to the debate, said: Around 16 Members have participated in the discussion on this very important Bill, namely, the Protection of Interests in Aircraft Objects Bill, 2025. I would like to put on record that the kind of progress that we have achieved in civil aviation sector in the last ten years was definitely not an easy task. We are the third-largest domestic civil aviation market in the whole world. There has been more than double growth in the domestic passenger market since 2014. If you add international passengers, this number was 43 million in 2014 while we are now at 66.8 million in 2024. The number of aircrafts that were operating in the country in 2014 was around 359 whereas today, we have 840 aircrafts operating in the country, making 4,000 journeys across the world every single day.

It was in 2001 when aircraft leasing business was also growing. That was when the international leasing industries, airlines and Governments came together to do something more to harmonise the whole industry across countries. This was an issue which was majorly faced by the leasing industries because the lessor was sitting in one country; the banks, who were trying to facilitate the lease, were sitting in another country; and the airlines which want to operate were sitting in another country. That became a challenge internationally for the airlines, the industry and the banking sector. It was in 2001 when the Cape Town Convention happened. One of the reasons for this was just how to facilitate the leasing industry and bring all the countries on board and create a uniform legislation which everyone can follow. And the other one was regarding the aircraft objects industry. But India initially was not a signatory of this. By 2005, pressure was building up on India that it also had to assent to this Protocol and Convention because the leasing business was growing at that time. We all want more planes to come into the industry and more planes to fly in our skies. But every plane is very, very expensive. India at that time was thinking how to bring the Cape Town Convention into effect in India also. In 2007, the Cabinet ratified it. But we did not have

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any legislation yet. We were just a signatory to the Cape Town Convention and the Aircraft Protocol. At that time, the easiest thing to do was to change the Aircraft Rules. Through the Aircraft Rules, the DGCA was given the power to invoke IDERA and a temporary solution was formulated at that time. After that in 2019, Jet Airways went bankrupt. But when Jet Airways went bankrupt and the NCLT wanted to put the moratorium, the lessors invoked IDERA and took all the planes. They deregistered them through the DGCA and took them back.

But, still, things were moving according to the rules. Then, GoAir also went bankrupt. From all these examples that I have mentioned, what was observed by the industry, the airlines, the banks and everyone else was that there was no proper legislation in the country. There were a lot of inconsistencies happening. And this whole thing led to a drop in the Cape Town Convention Compliance Index. That is why, the whole reason we are bringing this Bill is to give force of law to the Cape Town Convention and the protocol. If you see the majority of the Bill also, other than giving it the force of law, it contains the Cape Town Convention, the aircraft protocol, and the declaration which we are signing and abiding ourselves to both the Convention and the protocol as a signatory to International Civil Aviation Organization. Air India has said that, upon enactment of this legislation, we improve India's compliance score in AWG's outlook, making Indian airlines eligible for CTC discount, which will significantly reduce leasing costs by approximately 8 to 10 per cent. These are the costs which are going to trickle down to the passengers and also the airfares. Akasa Air has said that in the absence of legislation, lease rates may increase by an additional USD 15,000 per month. So, they all are indicating that if you don't have the legislation, you are basically paying high rates, and you are at a disadvantage compared to other countries. You need to have proper legislations in place so that we can bring in more planes into the country. One of the Members asked as to how the industry is reacting and how the airlines are reacting to this legislation. They are very eagerly waiting that after this Bill becomes an Act, they will be getting the advantage, through which, they can trickle down the advantage to the passengers of this country.

We also have specific incentives which were given so that we can have the leasing industry in the country itself. Some countries like Dubai, Singapore, etc. have a very good leasing industry hub in the whole world. Now, our hon'ble Prime Minister has come to the thought that why should we not have our own leasing industry. We are leasing so many planes every year. But, everywhere, when we talk about leasing in the Indian landscape, everyone requested that when are we going to have the legislation. Therefore, this is what we aim to bring through this Bill.

We are not differentiating between Indian and foreign leasing companies but this is definitely going to give a boost for the Indian leasing companies. The Securitization and Asset Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Instructions Act, 2002 does not apply to aircraft. Again, there was a need for some Act to give that backing so that the banking industry feels that they can be a little more profitable in entering into the aircraft business. So, there are multiple benefits that we are getting just by giving legal force of law to the whole Cape Town Convention. Definitely, this is going to give a lot of push to the whole civil aviation sector in the country. We hope this Bill is going to give a lot of push for the leasing industry, which is the need of the hour. I will come to some of the States. Bihar has a very peculiar situation. In the capital city, there are two airports at present. One is the Patna Airport and also Bihta Airport which we are trying to develop as it is a civil enclave. Even though both will be operating, we can't do international planes because of the fixed runway length there. We are looking at all the possible locations and we will choose one of the best locations near Patna and from where international planes can fly from the city of

Patna. We are developing Darbhanga Airport with a cost of more than Rs.1400 crores. Purnia Airport also we are developing. In Telangana, we have taken a historical decision of granting in-principle approval including site clearance, for airport in Warangal. We plan to build one of the best airports in the country in Warangal. Kerala is the only State where they have three airports which already have Point-of-Call. They are: Trivandrum, Kochi and Calicut and international flights are operating properly and some domestic flights also are flying from Kannur Airport. We need to have a balanced approach for all the other States. We want to have our own Indian airports to function as hubs. In the Gulf, Singapore, Turkey and all these countries, they are trying to grow their own airports at the cost of our Indian airports, because they are trying to take the passenger traffic from here, take them to their own countries and from there, they are trying to connect to the whole world. What we want to see is India to have its own hubs in the country itself, so that they can also flourish. We are at a strategical location for the East and the West where people from the West can use India as the hub. We have an obligation to improve the competitiveness of Indian carriers as well. It is with these two considerations in mind that we need to take a balanced approach when thinking about adding a Point of Call for a new destination. We are going to see what best we can do. We have done a lot for the State of Kerala also and we will continuously keep doing so. We want all the airports to grow.

For the Haj, every year there is a tender by the Ministry of Minority Affairs for all the airports on how many people need to be carried to the Haj. The bidding, which happens at that level, is a very transparent and accountable way of handling Haj-related logistics. One interesting thing about Calicut is that we are trying to extend the runway. Once the runway is extended, wide-body aircraft will also be able to operate from there. Today, we have come to that stage where all the metropolitan cities are getting saturated and require new airports. In Mumbai, the existing airport is at Santa Cruz. Now, we are building Navi Mumbai Airport. Delhi is having the IGI Airport. And, another airport is going to come up. Bhubaneswar is also trying to have an additional airport in Puri. In Chennai also, the Parandur Airport is coming up. So far as West Bengal is concerned, Kolkata Airport also needs another one right now. We are with the idea that in the next five years, we can build 50 more airports. The UDAAN scheme has been extended for another 10 years from 2026 to 2036. We want to make 4 crore people travel under the UDAAN scheme, which is going to give much more access to the citizens of this country. We have grand plans coming in the future also. And, to achieve this, we also require the support of the State Governments in providing land and also in trying to acquire the land. We just want the country to thrive. We just want the country to become number one in civil aviation, not just in terms of hub and connectivity but also in giving accessible, comfortable and convenient travel to the passengers. We have started one initiative under the UDAN scheme, where we have connected the unserved and underserved airports of this country. After UDAN Scheme, we have started more than 642 routes in this country where no planes were operating earlier. Through the Viability Gap Funding under UDAN Scheme, development of those airports and by creating such infrastructure that people and planes can move from that area, we have been able to start 600 more routes in those areas. Taking inspiration from the UDAN Scheme, we have started Udaan Yatri Cafe at the airports also, where we are providing water bottle for 10 rupees, tea, coffee for 20 rupees and samosa for 20 rupees. This is the first kind of initiative. It is important for us to think on a long term and try to see how collectively we can grow so that the airfares are also reasonable, the air travel continuously grows, and also the industry creates a lot of job creation for the youth who are very passionate about civil aviation in the country. I would like to ask for each and everyone's support in this Bill. This is a very important Bill which the industry needs today; this is going to change the aviation landscape in the country.

The motion for consideration of the Bill was adopted.

Clauses etc, were adopted.

The Bill was passed.

(ii) The “Tribhuvan” Sahkari University Bill, 2025

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COOPERATION; AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI MURLIDHAR MOHOL): I beg to move that the Bill to establish the Institute of Rural Management Anand, as a University to be known as the “Tribhuvan” Sahkari University and to declare the same as an institution of national importance; to impart technical and management education and training in co-operative sector: to promote co-operative research and development and to attain standards of global excellence therein in order to realise the vision of “Sahkar Se Samriddhi” and to strengthen the co-operative movement in the country through a network of institutions, and also to declare the Institute as one of the Schools of the University and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto, as passed by Lok Sabha, be taken into consideration.

SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH, initiating debate on the Bill, said: The “Tribhuvan” Sahkari University Bill has been named after a senior worker of the then Congress in the cooperative sector, Shri Tribhuvandas Patel ji, who led the White Revolution in this country with the inspiration of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and the support of V. Kurien. In a democracy, the intention of the government is reflected in its policies, rules and laws. Milk producers protested in Kaira village of Gujarat. At that time milk was taken from there for Polson butter. Farmers protested that you buy milk at a low price and sell it at a high price to Mumbai Milk Scheme. They came to Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel said that form a milk cooperative society and asked Morarji Bhai Desai to support them. Amul cooperative society was started in the year 1946. Amul is such an institution, 80 percent of which comes from consumers and goes to the farmers. This is the power of cooperation. Sardar Patel had said that cooperation is not just an economic activity, but it is a different kind of lifestyle of unity, justice and harmony. About this cooperation, he had said that it will make India powerful and will remain united and will take it forward through economic and social development. The cooperative movements in India and globally have always had a socialist ideology. This has been a worker-centric movement and is led by workers. This is the difference between capitalism, corporations and cooperatives. In capitalism, corporations hire workers from capital and in cooperatives, capital is collected from workers and workers are given their rights. According to our Constitution, elections should be held in cooperative societies every fifth year. It is necessary to hold elections for them after an extension of 6 months at any cost. There are 4,536 PACS, i.e. Primary Agricultural Credit Societies in Madhya Pradesh. Out of them, 3,800, i.e. 80 percent Primary Agricultural Credit Societies, are completely overdue today, are in huge losses and elections are not even being held there. In many cooperative institutions, cooperative society elections have not been held for 20 years and administrators have been appointed there. Kurien sahab completely managed AMUL and gave it status. He formed IRMA because there was a need for such workers, employees and officers who understand the interests of farmers and labourers and develop the ability to organise farmers. NDDDB, Gujarat government and others formed it with joint efforts. Today this cooperative university bill has been brought to usurp an organisation like IRMA. Today no corporate is sharing profits with workers and employees. I would like to request you that at least while appointing its faculty, care should be taken as to whom you are going to appoint there. The courses that are there and the faculty that is appointed should be those whose thinking and ideology is in the interest of farmers, who are in favour of

cooperation and who are in favour of labourers. The co-operative movement which is envisioned all over the world was always carried forward by Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and he has been its great leader. But there should be a separate selection process for IRMA, there should be a separate admission test, so that only those students get admission who have the mindset to work among the poor, farmers, laborers, in slums. Who want to spend their future in their service. Today it is very important to maintain the autonomy of IRMA. We support the establishment of the new university and also appreciate the fact that you named it after a great leader of our Congress, Tribhuvandas Patel ji, but there was no need for this. You can make a separate cooperative university, run separate cooperative courses, but at least you should not ruin IRMA.

‡**SHRI NARHARI AMIN:** (*Spoke in Gujarati.*)

♦**MS. DOLA SEN:** (*Spoke in Bangla.*)

‡**SHRI K.R.N. RAJESHKUMAR:** (*Spoke in Tamil.*)

DR. ASHOK KUMAR MITTAL: This is a commendable initiative and a good effort to connect the cooperative sector with education. Cooperation fosters economic collaboration, and the tradition of cooperatives in India is quite old. 'Amul,' which emerged from this cooperative movement, has become not only India's but also the world's largest dairy brand. Verghese Kurien made a significant contribution to advancing the cooperative movement in India. The United Nations has also declared 2025 as the International Year of Cooperatives. Hopefully, this bill will do for the cooperative sector what IITs have done for engineering and IIMs have done for management education. Under clause 4 of the Bill, there is a provision to develop the Institution of Rural Management as a university. The Government has also announced a fund of Rs 500 crore for this. The purpose of the university is to prepare trained manpower for the cooperative sector, train employees and board members of cooperative societies, promote research and development and take necessary steps for startups, innovation and entrepreneurship in this sector. I request the Government to make a provision for special reservation within this Bill for those who are associated with cooperatives. I demand from the Government that the campus of this university should be opened in Punjab. Sector-specific courses should be started in this university, so that every part of the supply chain of the cooperative sector is strengthened and India's cooperatives can be strengthened from the ground level to the global level. In many central universities, a Member of Parliament is given a seat in the executive body, but this provision is missing in this Bill. At least one MP should be included so that the institution can benefit from the expertise of parliamentarians.

SHRI SUBHASISH KHUNTIA: This Bill deals with two important pillars of our economy, education and cooperatives. At first glance, this Bill appears to be about strengthening cooperative education. But in reality, it is an attempt to bring cooperative institutions under the control of the Centre in the name of education. Clause 2 of the Bill declares this newly-established university as an institution of national importance, thereby ensuring central control. Clause 9 empowers the Central Government to review and issue directions, threatening control. The Government talks of cooperative federalism, but in reality it is cooperative-hijacking. The co-operatives function according to local needs and regulations and their operations vary from State to State. These involve local techniques, technicians and different styles of working. This Bill fails to recognize this variation and

‡ Synopsis of speech delivered by Hon'ble Member in Gujarati will be published separately as supplement.

♦ Synopsis of speech delivered by Hon'ble Member in Bangla will be published separately as supplement.

‡ Synopsis of speech delivered by Hon'ble Member in Tamil will be published separately as supplement.

forces all cooperatives to work under a central framework, thereby defeating the very essence of decentralization. IRMA was set up with state participation and works independently, but this Bill takes the opposite approach of complete central control. If the Government really wants to strengthen cooperatives, it should empower the people. Odisha has already empowered 70 lakh women through Mission Shakti by giving them direct control over Self-Help groups. This bill does not favour cooperation, empowerment and local industries. Centralization has been promoted in it. Odisha is home to some of the largest and most-vibrant cooperative movements in the country. Skill Development University should be established in Odisha. If Government wants to strengthen co-operative education, it should be the same in Odisha. The tribals are not getting benefit of resources of Odisha. The Government should establish a Skill Development University for Tribal Cooperative Mining. They need empowerment. The Bill should ensure decentralize cooperative education model. The benefit of this Bill should reach the farthest parts of our country.

SHRI AYODHYA RAMI REDDY ALLA: The Bill aims to establish IRMA as a university focused on education, training, and research in the cooperative sector. It will offer postgraduate degrees, e-learning programs, and courses on cooperative excellence while establishing campuses across India and abroad. IRMA will become an autonomous school within the university, enhancing rural management education. The Bill supports cooperative institutions and benefits weavers, artisans, and marketers, promoting democratic wealth creation. However, challenges persist in the cooperative sector. Linked targets in agriculture, fertilizers, and dairy remain unmet. Sectoral disparities persist, particularly in handloom, agro-processing, and women's welfare. The Andhra Pradesh handloom sector is in crisis. Addressing these financial and structural issues is crucial for ensuring the sustainability and success of the cooperative movement in India. The Andhra Pradesh cooperative sector faces major challenges, including lack of formal banking credit, working capital aid, and welfare benefits. Key demands include removing GST on handlooms, and establishing a handloom welfare fund board. The removal of English as a medium of instruction may hinder students' global competitiveness. While supporting the Tribhuvan Sahakari University Bill, the government must ensure effective implementation and sustainable reforms in both the cooperative and education sectors.

SHRI SANJAY YADAV: Institutional autonomy has been ignored in this bill. States have not been given attention in the formation of governing bodies. Dalits and backward classes of the society have not been given reservation and concessions. Reservation policy is not implemented even in recruitments and adequate representation is not given. There is no control on fees. Children of reserved category should be given concession. Real cooperation will come only when farmers are encouraged. Apart from this, cooperative institutions have to be modernized. All states should be given equal importance.

DR. M. THAMBIDURAI: The University aims to provide education, training, and capacity building in the cooperative sector, emphasizing research over mere degree distribution. Many private and deemed universities in India focus on degrees rather than research, which is a concern. The absence of Vice-Chancellors disrupts university functions, including convocations. The UGC's 2025 guidelines propose appointing Vice-Chancellors without State Government nominations, which is seen as a violation of federal principles. Education is a subject in concurrent list. In many universities of Tamil Nadu, there is no Vice-Chancellor.

SHRI ABDUL WAHAB: I proposed about this university last year. My main concern is the name and location of the proposed university. I have no objection to Tribhuvandas, but Verghese Kurien is a more recognized figure. I regret that the university is

being established in Gujarat instead of Kerala, which has successful cooperative models like ULCC and Kudumbashree. Kerala is also missing out on national institutions like AIIMS. I also propose setting up a skill university in Kerala. Additionally, I seek clarity on reservation policies, especially for differently-abled individuals. The lack of cooperation between the State and Central Governments is a serious issue. I urge the Government to ensure fair representation and greater cooperation in national policies.

* * * * *

P. C. MODY,
Secretary-General.

rssynop@sansad.nic.in

****Supplement covering rest of the proceedings is being issued separately.