

RAJYA SABHA

*SYNOPSIS OF DEBATE

(Proceedings other than Questions and Answers)

Monday, July 21, 2025/ Ashadha 30, 1947 (Saka)

BIRTHDAY GREETINGS

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon'ble Members, I am extremely pleased to extend birthday greetings to Hon'ble Members of Parliament, **Dr. Laxmikant Bajpayee, Shri Rajeev Shukla** and **Shrimati Sangeeta Yadav**, whose birthdays were yesterday.

Hon'ble Members, the day belongs to the Leader of the Opposition. On behalf of this House and myself, warmest greetings and heartfelt wishes to **Shri Mallikarjun Kharge**, Leader of the Opposition in Rajya Sabha. Over five-decades of his political journey powerfully demonstrates unwavering commitment to democratic values and tireless national service. From nine consecutive Karnataka Assembly victories (1972-2009) and serving as Leader of Opposition in Karnataka Legislative Assembly to holding key portfolios -- Railways, Labour and Employment -- in the Union Government, your leadership has been consistent, inclusive and exemplary. As National President of the Indian National Congress and the Leader of Opposition in the Rajya Sabha, you embody trust and respect transcending political lines. Your steadfast convictions, constitutional understanding, and statesmanlike conduct inspire parliamentarians across generations. A remarkable polyglot, your fluency in English, Hindi, Urdu, Kannada, Telugu and Marathi reflects deep cultural rootedness and enables connections across diverse regions. I have benefited from your guidance on several occasions. Your wisdom, humility and respect for democratic institutions have profoundly shaped my understanding of governance. Your simplicity and accessibility exemplify public life's highest ideals. Equally inspiring is your family's strength. Shri Kharge is married to Shrimati Radhabai Kharge and the couple is blessed with sons, Priyank, who is a Cabinet Minister in the Government of Karnataka, Rahul and Milind, and daughters, Priyadarshini and Dr. Jayashree. Dr. Jayashree is married to Sri Radhakrishna Doddamani, Member of Parliament, Lok Sabha. As you enter another distinguished year, may the Almighty bless you with robust health, renewed energy and continued wisdom to serve the nation with the grace and dignity that have always defined you.

Hon'ble members, on my own and your behalf, I wish the Hon'ble Members a long, healthy and happy life and extend greetings to their family members and friends.

OBITUARY REFERENCES

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon'ble Members, it is with profound sorrow that I refer to passing away of former Members of this august House - **Shri C. Perumal, Dr. K. Kasturirangan, Shri Ronald Sapa Tlau, Shri Nepaldev Bhattacharjee, Sardar Sukhdev Singh Dhindsa, Shri Thennala G. Balakrishna Pillai, and Shri Vijaykumar Rupani.**

Shri C. Perumal (1957-2025), Member of Rajya Sabha from Tamil Nadu (2002-2008), was known for his deep connections with the people of Krishangiri district and tireless efforts for their welfare. He also served as Vice President of Tamil Nadu Palm Project Development Board. In his passing away, the country has lost a sincere parliamentarian and a devoted social worker.

Dr. K. Kasturirangan (1940-2025), a Nominated Member of Rajya Sabha (2003-2009), was among India's foremost space scientists. As ISRO Chairman, he led numerous path-breaking missions. He also chaired the Committee that drafted the National Education Policy 2020. He was a recipient of Padam Vibhushan and international honours. He brought scientific depth to parliamentary proceedings. His demise is a sad loss to the nation's scientific and educational advancement.

Shri Ronald Sapa Tlau (1954-2025), a Member of Rajya Sabha from Mizoram (2014-2020), was a media pioneer, social communicator and a distinguished parliamentarian. He played a seminal role in using mass communication as a tool for public awareness and education in Mizoram. As a pioneer of television-based educational content, he produced impactful documentaries and programmes on national integration, insurgency in the North-East, youth empowerment and ecological preservation. Shri Tlau was also a prolific writer and a passionate advocate for indigenous rights and regional development. He served as Chairman of Zoram Electronics Development Corporation Limited and was Founder-Chairman of Turini Integrated Farming Society, promoting sustainable farming practices. His demise marks the loss of a visionary communicator, a devoted representative of Mizoram and a tireless champion of inclusive progress.

Shri Nepaldev Bhattacharjee (1950-2025), a Rajya Sabha Member from West Bengal (1981-1988), was a respected trade unionist who played a significant role in student and labour movements. He brought deep understanding of workers' concerns into Parliament. His death is a loss to the cause of social justice and labour rights.

Sardar Sukhdev Singh Dhindsa (1936-2025), representing Punjab in Rajya Sabha across three terms, had a distinguished public career including service in the Lok Sabha and as Union Minister (1999-2004). Renowned for his leadership and grassroots engagement, he was a stalwart advocate of agrarian and social justice issues. The nation remembers him as a venerable statesman.

Shri Thennala G. Balakrishna Pillai (1931- 2025), a three-term Rajya Sabha member from Kerala, was a veteran political figure known for his oratory and organisational acumen; and, a committed democrat and inclusive leader. He also served in the Kerala Legislative Assembly. His demise is a significant loss to people and public life in Kerala.

Shri Vijaykumar Rupani (1956–2025), Rajya Sabha Member (2006–2012) and later Chief Minister of Gujarat (2016–2021), Shri Rupani tragically lost his life in the Air India Flight 171 crash. He played a vital role in Gujarat's infrastructural and industrial development and remained active in social initiatives. His untimely demise ends a vibrant political journey marked by public service and dedication.

We deeply mourn the loss of these eminent leaders who served this House and the nation with distinction.

(One Minute's silence was observed as a mark of respect to the memory of the departed.)

OPENING REMARKS BY THE CHAIRMAN

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon'ble Members, as we convene for the 268th Session of the Rajya Sabha, I extend my warm greetings to each of you.

Since our last Session, the tragic and cowardly terrorist attack in Pahalgam on 22nd April took innocent lives, deeply wounding our collective conscience.

In response, our nation stood united, rallying behind Operation Sindoor to neutralize terrorist hideouts across the border.

The resolute bravery of our armed forces, combined with the steadfast solidarity of our people, powerfully reaffirmed our unwavering commitment to protecting the unity and integrity of our Republic.

Hon'ble Members, with deep sorrow, I refer to the tragic crash of Air India Flight 171 on 12th June, claiming 240 lives. This heartbreaking tragedy has brought immense grief nationwide. While investigations continue, we mourn this profound loss. On behalf of the House, I offer heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families and to all affected by this tragedy.

This Session, comprising 21 sittings, includes a recess from 12th to 17th August for Independence Day celebrations.

A number of important legislative proposals are scheduled for consideration, and four days have been allocated for Private Members' Business, offering a platform for individual Members to raise vital issues and introduce legislative initiatives.

A thriving democracy cannot sustain constant acrimony. Political tension must be reduced, as confrontation is not the essence of politics. While political parties may pursue the same goals through different approaches, no one in India opposes the nation's interests.

I urge all political parties to foster bonhomie and mutual respect, avoiding unbecoming language or personal attacks against leaders on television or elsewhere. Such behaviour contradicts our civilizational essence.

Dialogue and discussion, not conflict, are the way forward.

Internal fighting strengthens our enemies and provides material to divide us.

India's historical strength lies in discourse, dialogue, and deliberation, which should guide our Parliament.

I urge all political parties, ruling and opposition, to engage in constructive politics for Bharat's greater progress.

With your cooperation and active participation, I am confident that this Monsoon Session will be productive and meaningful.

GOVERNMENT BILL

THE BILLS OF LADING BILL, 2025

THE MINISTER OF PORTS, SHIPPING AND WATERWAYS (SHRI SARBANANDA SONOWAL), moving the motion for consideration of the Bill, said: It gives me immense pride and satisfaction to stand before this esteemed House today to present the Bills of Lading Bill, 2025. Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi has articulated a profound vision for our nation: to transform India into a developed country, or Viksit Bharat, by the year 2047. This vision is not merely aspirational; it is a call for action, urging us to align our efforts and aspirations with the promise of a new and prosperous Bharat. In this context, we must recognize that the 21st century is destined to be the century of Bharat. To achieve the ambitious goal of a 'Swarnim Bharat', we need to undertake comprehensive development across all sectors, particularly in ports, shipping and waterways. This sector is not just vital for trade; it is a cornerstone of our economic growth and prosperity. To this end, legal reform stands as one of the most important and urgent steps we must take. Our Ministry has already laid down the groundwork through policy documents such as Maritime India Vision 2030 and Amrit Kal Vision 2047. These initiatives serve as our roadmap towards achieving our objectives and ensuring that our maritime capabilities become a robust engine for national development. Swarnim Bharat needs a statute that is contemporary, crafted by our own people, and capable of addressing the challenges of the modern era. As of now, the Bills of Lading is being regulated based on pre-independence law, that is, the Indian Bills of Lading Act, 1856 which consists of only three sections. While the outgoing Act continues to be relevant in substance and it is pre-independence legislation, the language therein requires some simplification without changing the substance of provisions in order to facilitate ease of understanding of the legislation in line with drafting practices followed in recent Indian statutes. This simplification will help in ease of doing business for the stakeholders. The Bills of Lading Bill, 2025 is a small Bill consisting of only six Clauses. A Bill of Lading serves three critical functions. Firstly, it is a receipt of goods by a carrier; secondly, it serves as evidence of a contract of carriage; and, thirdly, it acts as a document of title, enabling the transfer of ownership of goods. The Bill aims to simplify the language of the provisions. We will rearrange Sub-Sections and divide long sections into manageable parts to enhance understanding, all while maintaining the essence and spirit of the original Act. This aligns with the Central Government's ongoing efforts to simplify laws for the benefit of the public. This Bill introduces a new enabling Clause which empowers the Central Government to issue directions for carrying out the provisions of the Bill. It will ensure that the provisions are easily and effectively implemented. This will lead to ease of understanding and better implementation of laws. The Bill incorporates a standard repeal and saving Clause, which will repeal the 1856 Act while also legitimizing any actions taken under the provisions of the old statute. By doing away with the pre-independence legacy of the 1856 Act, we pave the way for a modern legal framework that reflects our current realities and aspirations. While these are standard provisions found in all modern laws drafted in India, they will ensure smooth enforcement of the new laws. It can be stated that the Bill is in line with the constitutional ethos of our country and will certainly facilitate the growth and smooth functioning of India's maritime trade, which, because of its significant contribution to the Indian economy, is a harbinger of our economic growth and prosperity as a nation. As the maritime sector continues to grow at an unprecedented pace, we must adopt reformative and straightforward legislation. An easily - comprehensible law will not only promote ease of doing business, but will also mitigate the potential for litigation between carrier shippers and lawful holders of the bill of lading. In conclusion, I would like to reiterate the importance of

this Bill as the saying goes 'whoever rules the waves, rules the world'. It is time for us to take decisive steps that will bolster India's position in the global maritime arena.

SHRI SHAMBHU SHARAN PATEL: Today the country is celebrating Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav. After the passage of this Bill of Lading Bill, 2025 in the Rajya Sabha today, it will bring a new energy to the shipping industry of independent India and will work to bring a revolution. On the one hand, where we are working to go paperless, Parliament has also become almost paperless, on the other hand, when we import and export, even today the work for LC is done on paper. Sir, India is the fastest growing economy in the world. Our GDP has reached the fourth place in the world. Maximum trade in the world is done through sea route, as sea route is easy to connect and cheap. India is the biggest market in the world. After the introduction of this bill, there will be transparency and all the information about export and import will be available on the digital portal. Black money is a serious issue. But when billing becomes digital, then it will be very difficult to convert black money into white. There were many flaws in the old laws, due to which containers used to remain stuck at the ports, which increased the cost and logistics charges. The cost of operation also increased in this, due to which the exporter and importer had to face financial loss. In Bangladesh and African countries, the LC of companies cannot be insured. After the introduction of this bill, our digitalization will happen, so it will be easy to get LC. It will also be easy to open LC and the trade loss will also be reduced for traders. The specialty of the new bill is that it will provide for immediate transfer of ownership and quick release of goods. Custom clearance will be done on time, digital verification will provide protection from fraud, cost, delay and manual handling will be reduced. There will be scope for improvement in India's 'Ease of Doing Business' ranking. It is no longer possible for a trading nation like India to run on the old paper system. Even a backward state like Bihar will benefit greatly after the introduction of this bill. This law is beneficial not only for maritime states but also for landlocked states like Bihar. Bihar's agriculture and cottage industry based goods like makhana, litchi, handicrafts etc. will be able to reach the global market quickly through digital documentation. This will save time, which will benefit us in trade, promote containerised shipping through river waterways and generate employment and investment opportunities. Faster payments and quicker clearance of goods will be possible.

SHRI MEDA RAGHUNADHA REDDY : This Bill is a welcome step to modernize India's maritime trade laws and align them with global standards. India's ports handle 95 per cent of trade by volume. A robust legal framework is essential for efficiency and competitiveness. Smaller ports need support. A phased implementation and financial assistance would ensure inclusivity. Include waterways like Andhra Pradesh's Buckingham Canal vital for coastal transport and disaster mitigation. About digital adoption, recognizing electronic Bills of Ladings is critical to reduce costs and delays. About dispute resolution, establish a clear arbitration mechanism for faster resolution of maritime disputes like Singapore. Andhra Pradesh, handling 11 per cent of India's cargo traffic, plays a pivotal role in maritime trade. Strengthening port infrastructure and capacity building would be vital for this Bill's success

DR. M. THAMBIDURAI: I appreciate that Narendra Modi has brought so many reforms in the Bills. Chennai in Tamil Nadu has become the centre for narcotic drugs The present Government – the DMK Government – is encouraging this kind of drug menace in that State. Most of the consignments come from other countries. It is affecting the State's law and order. Many people, especially, the youth are accustomed to take these drugs. It is affecting the new generation. The law and order problem is there. Custodial deaths are also

taking place because of that. Even police people are giving these narcotics to the people in the Tamil Nadu and making arrests and killing them while in custody. I am requesting them to see as to how to control drugs that are coming into Tamil Nadu to create a peaceful atmosphere.

SHRI ARUN SINGH: Today we have become the fifth economy from the eleventh economy in the world, then from the fifth to the fourth and now by 2027 we are definitely going to become the third economy. This is why these reforms have been brought and work is being done on infrastructure. Old and unnecessary laws are being abolished and compliances are being eliminated. As a result, today we are moving ahead economically. In today's era, maritime trade is an important trade and our volume is also increasing in it. Keeping this in mind, this bill has been brought today. In this bill, the role of the receiver and the sender of the goods has been determined in a way. This will ensure clarity between the buyer and the seller. For this reason, all stakeholders will welcome it. We have moved from 142nd to 63rd position in the ease of doing business ranking. Through 'PM Gati Shakti', special attention has been given to our 7 infrastructure engines, such as rail, road, ports, waterways, airports, public transport and logistics infrastructure. In Railways, 136 Vande Bharat trains, Namo trains were run. Prime Minister Modi is working to convert 1,337 railway stations into Amrit stations by giving them funds. Waterways are being developed by giving more resources. Rivers are being linked. This government has allocated more resources for this work. Now our waterways have increased to 29. In this way, infrastructure has been built. The number of airports has increased from 74 to 157. All states were connected in logistics infrastructure. In this area, we have moved from 54th position to 38th position. If the vision of a 'developed India' is to be realised, then only when there is a revolutionary change in ports and shipping, in waterways, can we realise the resolution of a 'Developed Bharat'. There is a 2023 report of CPPI, in which it has said that out of the 100 ports in the world, not one, but 10 ports that come to notice are from India. Big ports are being built in Kerala as well as Nicobar. On the basis of that, we can say that in the coming times when India will become the world's leading country in terms of ports, then if the maximum cargo will be transported anywhere, it will be in India. In this, we have come from 44th position earlier, to 22nd position now. In terms of ports, our turnaround time is also much less than many developed countries of the world. This is our efficiency. The capacity of ports has almost doubled. The government is bringing new rules as per need of the hour, in which the rights of all have been taken care of. Today we have Kandla, Paradip and Tuticorin ports, we are generating surplus renewable energy in these three ports. We are now moving towards hydrogen energy mission. Work is also going on very well on green transmission program, inland waterways vessel. When India will achieve the goal of developed India in 2047, shipping and ports are going to have a huge contribution in it.

DR. AJEET MADHAVRAO GOPCHADE: Our Hindustan was once a golden land and the reason for this was our maritime trade, our Hindustan used to lead the world through maritime trade. Through guerilla warfare tactics on both land and water, our maritime armour and trade were very powerful in the world in the times of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj. Similarly, since ancient times, many rulers have used the sea route for various purposes and spread India's cultural and economic influence across the seas. Now, after 2014, a leader came with a vision of 2047, whose name is Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi. This government started "Sagarmala" to make the old golden land of our Hindustan a developed Bharat again. We are also leading in the capacity of our ports, our digital transformation. Green shipping and waterways development are new concepts. Through green shipping and waterways development, the Modi government has made the shipping and maritime sector

green in a new way and has made our country a leader in the whole world at the global level. This law is modern, as well as indigenous. The maritime sector, which is important for trade and economic development, is going to benefit from a clear and updated legal framework for bills of lading. Sagarmala was launched in March 2015. This led to the development of modern ports. The shipping route was developed. We have a total of 802 projects in this - 194 of which are complete, 218 are under construction and we are moving ahead in 29 PPP models. Our 13 major ports are smart ports. In our Maharashtra, the Government has built the Vadhavan port, which is going to be the largest port not only in Asia but in the world. Our state government has also actively cooperated in this. We have also increased the connectivity of Africa with the port of Kerala. Our ranking in container ports has jumped in this. Visakhapatnam is at 19th place and Mundra at 27th place. This is the result of the successful operation of our Sagarmala. NBFC Sagarmala Finance Corporation was established. Recently, in June 2025, Maritime NBFC was also formed. The target is to complete 150 projects in the next 6 months. Also, targets for green ship building have been set. The concept of green sea, green boat includes moving ports and ships towards zero carbon, this is called green sea and green boat.

DR. ASHOK KUMAR MITTAL: This bill repeals 170 years old colonial era of Indian Bills of Lading Act, 1856, which aims to give the consignee and endorsee the right to transfer the property as well as the right of suit and liabilities in the goods mentioned in the Bill of Lading. I support the intent of this Bill as it is a step towards doing away with the old colonial law. Section 5 gives unlimited powers to the Government to give any direction it wants. This means that now the Central Government will have complete control over maritime shipping. Section 4(1) says that whether the goods have been shipped or not, forget it, but if it is written in the bill, then it will be considered that they have been shipped. This means that we are opening the doors for smuggling, black marketing etc. This will especially affect small exporters or importers as they will not have any legal remedy against fraud. Section 2 provides that all legal and financial responsibility for any dispute or breach of contract will be of the consignee and not of the consignor, even if the fault is of the consignor, the shipping company or the seller. This will be very painful for small businessmen, SME exporters, importers. The government should look into this again. There is no provision in this bill to regulate shipping companies' freight, punish them or impose fines on them. Not only the name and language but the essence of the Bill should also be changed.

SHRI MASTHAN RAO YADAV BEEDHA: This Bill replaces the colonial-era Indian Bills of Lading Act of 1856. Through this bill, the digital documentation of cargo rights will enhance traceability and reduce fraud. Legal predictability will boost investor confidence in Indian ports and exporters and the Ease of Doing Business. As nearly 95 per cent of India's international trade by volume is carried on ships, this will boost trade efficiency. The Bill will empower our Indian exporters, ship-owners and logistics providers, and facilitate the Government's ambition to make India a global shipping and logistics hub. I urge the Ministry to ensure that under this new law and subsequent legislations, exporters are protected from arbitrary practices, and that shipping liners adopt transparent and reasonable processes for the issuance of duplicate Bills of Lading when genuine loss occurs.

***SHRI RAVI CHANDRA VADDIRAJU:** I believe the Amendments in this Bill will benefit both Telangana and the country as a whole. Clause 2 ensures that consignees or endorsees, to whom goods' property passes, inherit all rights of suit and liabilities as if the contract were made directly with them, simplifying trade transactions. Clause 4 strengthens trust by treating bills of lading in the hands of bona fide holders as conclusive evidence of shipment, unless fraud is proven, protecting traders and financiers. Clause 5 empowers the Central Government to issue directions for effective implementation, while Clause 6 repeals the 1856 Act, preserving existing rights and obligations. I have a few concerns. The electronic bills of lading (e-BLs), which are used in over 20% of global trade, according to the International Chamber of Commerce. Telangana's IT hub in Hyderabad could leverage e-BLs for faster, secure trade, but their absence risks lagging behind global trends. So, this Bill should have a provision for e-BLs. Clause 4's reliance on ship masters to prove fraud in misrepresentation cases could burden small exporters with legal complexities. The Bills of Lading Bill, 2025, is a vital step toward modernising India's trade framework, with far-reaching benefits for Telangana's export-driven economy. This Bill will further support MSMEs, create more job opportunities, and trust in trade documents will be further increased. With these enhancements, I, on behalf of the BRS Party, wholeheartedly support the Bill.

SHRI NIRANJAN BISHI: Clause 4(1) of the Bill allows a Bill of Lading to be treated as valid even when goods have not been shipped. This opens the door to fake bills, fraudulent trading and hawala-type transactions. Further, the sub-clause (2) puts the entire liability on the consignee even when the fault lies with the shipper or the carrier. This is highly unjust, especially, to MSMEs and exporters. Clause 5 gives the Central Government sweeping powers to issue directions for carrying out the purpose of this Act. The Bill is silent on freight pricing mechanism, allowing large shipping companies to arbitrarily inflate freight charges. I would like to demand inclusion of regional digital infrastructure support provision for regional maritime documentation hub in relation to the State of Odisha and inclusion of a clause for mandatory training programme for small exporters, freight providers and port workers in a State like Odisha. It should be mandated that the electronic bill of lading platform supports regional language, especially Odia, to ensure inclusivity and create a statutory port logistic digital monitoring cell at Paradeep Port and Dhamra Port to track implementation, redressal and compliance of e-bill provision. This Bill protects both national interest and our exporters, especially the small and medium business. I support this Bill.

The Hon'ble Minister, replying to the debate, said: During the discussion on the Bills of Lading Bill, 2025, I discovered that most of the hon. Members of Parliament extended their support. Data reveals how this Ministry has been developing its vision plan since 2014. Sagarmala Programme was undertaken in consultation with all the stakeholders -- Coastal States and Union territories -- and more than 805 projects have been identified. The target is to implement it within a span of 20 years by spending more than Rs.5.5 lakh crore. In the last ten years, various verticals were created to bring freshness and energy to this Ministry and its activities and approach. Under Sagarmala Programme, first of all, the target was to modernise all the ports. Modernisation, mechanisation and digitalisation are important to develop ports' capacity and also for sustainable and quality operation of ports. These are

* Spoke in Telugu.

necessary to make a world-class port. As you all know, we handle more than 90 per cent of EXIM cargo by volume and 70 per cent by value. We have a huge responsibility. We, being the largest transporter of the country, we have to perform effectively and within a timeframe. That is why modernisation was the most demanding part to get the entire operational procedure qualitative and also satisfactory to global operators. Next is port-led connectivity enhancement. Earlier there was no connectivity. Without railway network and road network, it was impossible. With the presence of all the concerned Ministries, particularly the Ministry of Finance, Customs, Immigration, etc., it is being properly synchronized. It is being operated in a very, very integrated manner. It has been done effectively. Ultimately, all the major ports of the countries are being connected with railways and roadways and with other relevant agencies and offices available within the premises of ports. Next is port-led industrialisation. This means that the items meant for global markets would be manufactured close to the ports. This will develop connectivity and can save time as destination can be reached within a stipulated timeframe. Next is coastal community development. Issues pertaining to coastal communities' employment, their entrepreneurship, their skill development and also fishermen's interest are being effectively addressed. Coastal shipping and inland waterways are very, very important areas where you need to pay a lot of attention. It is important to be well connected with coastal as well as inland areas. Then cargo from both the sectors can be transported to global markets. In the last ten years, all these programmes have been effectively implemented, and we could develop our cargo handling capacity. I want to cite some examples. In 2013-14, our cargo handling capacity was 5 MMT during the UPA regime. In 2013-14, coastal shipping was limited to 87 million metric tonnes. Now, because of modernization and by developing the efficiency of ports, it went up to 165 million metric tonnes. The Government has already set a target for us that by 2047, we should become one of the top five ship-building nations in the world. India is now positioned as the fourth largest economy in the world and by 2029, of course, we are going to become the third largest economy in the world. It must be understood that e-Bill of Lading is not simply an electronic form of paper Bill of Lading. Since transactions involving e-Bill of Lading use electronic platform, they have greater implications. Our Ministry is also working day and night on how we can deliver the best results in different verticals in the world in the coming days. This legal reform was very important because it was enacted during the British regime. We are independent India. We should have our own set of laws. We have our legal wisdom, legal knowledge and legal skills. I believe, this particular repeal definitely is going to give us a fresh boost and also fresh vision.

The motion for consideration of the Bill was adopted.

Clauses etc., as amended, were adopted.

The Bill, as amended, was passed.

SPECIAL MENTIONS

1. Demand for Framing of Necessary Rules to Regulate Matrimonial Websites

DR. AJEET MADHAVRAO GOPCHADE: Matrimonial websites have gained success in India. These platforms help people find a partner. But a person from Bilaspur has been arrested by the Bhopal Cyber Crime Branch as the mastermind of a matrimonial fraud that has duped around 500 people across the country. The Hon'ble Madras High Court has expressed its concern over the lack of regulations regarding monitoring of matrimonial

websites and directed the Government to formulate necessary rules to regulate these websites. To control the fraudsters, strict punitive measures also need to be implemented for hiding important facts like previous marriage or divorce. This will not only increase the credibility of the platforms but will also create a positive environment in the society where people can search for their life partner without any fear.

2. Need for Strengthening Cooperative Sugar Mills in Eastern Uttar Pradesh and North Bihar

SHRIMATI SANGEETA YADAV: I appreciate the Ministry of Cooperation for the steps taken to strengthen the cooperative sector, especially sugar mills. In the last five years, efforts have been made to connect more than 1100 cooperative sugar mills to ethanol production, provide financial assistance and digitization under the ERP system. I appeal to the Government that more concrete and targeted efforts are needed in this direction in eastern Uttar Pradesh and North Bihar, where a large number of sugarcane producing farmers are dependent on cooperative mills. I urge that special schemes and financial packages be ensured for these areas.

3. III Effects of Increasing Digital Education on Health of Eyes of School Going Children

DR. KALPANA SAINI: In the last few years, while online education has made technological access easier, on the other hand, its adverse effect on the eyesight of small children is clearly visible. Children are forced to study for hours on mobile, tablet or laptop screens. This is not only affecting their eye health, but also their mental state, sleep quality, concentration and physical development. I appeal that regular eye tests should be ensured in schools, time limits should be set for digital homework, offline alternative study material should be made available to every child. I urge the Government to take concrete steps in this direction through a national policy, so that we can protect the eyesight and overall health of our children – the future of our country.

4. Demand for Conferring Bharat Ratna to the National Heroes - Veer Savarkar, Swami Sahajanand Saraswati and Field Marshal Sam Manekshaw

DR. BHIM SINGH: I want to draw attention to those three great personalities of the country, who gave a new direction to the nation in their respective fields, gave self-confidence and brought pride. Damodar Savarkar is a name that reminds us of the pinnacle of revolution, thought and struggle. He suffered the torture of two life imprisonments, but never wavered from his patriotism. Swami Sahajanand Saraswati, did not see God in the caves of the Himalayas but in the fields of the village, in the tears of the farmers and in the pain of the exploited. He organized the farmers, gave direction to the movement for the abolition of Zamindari and made “Jai Kisan” a mission beyond the slogan. Field Marshal Sam Manekshaw not only achieved a decisive military victory but also played a key role in the creation of a new nation, Bangladesh. His leadership, foresight and strategic skills have inscribed India in golden letters in military history. I urge the Government to honour these national heroes - Veer Savarkar, Swami Sahajanand Saraswati and Field Marshal Sam Manekshaw with Bharat Ratna.

5. Demand for Strengthening the Mechanism of Cyber Security in the Country

DR. K. LAXMAN: I rise to draw the attention to the alarming rise in cyber frauds and digital financial crimes across our country. As we move towards a robust Digital India, our citizens are increasingly adopting online banking, UPI, and other digital payment modes. It has also opened new avenues for sophisticated fraudsters to target innocent people, especially senior citizens. I would urge the Government to issue timely advisories to banks and payment operators for continuously strengthening our cyber security framework. Considering the evolving nature of cyber threats, there is a pressing need to further tighten enforcement mechanisms and promote widespread digital literacy at the grassroot level. I urge the Government to intensify the efforts so that our citizens can continue to trust and benefit from our digital revolution without fear or vulnerability.

6. Need for Cancer Prevention and Treatment Measures in Rural Areas of Maharashtra

DR. MEDHA VISHRAM KULKARNI: I rise to draw the attention to an alarming public health concern emerging from Hingoli district in Maharashtra. During recent Sanjivani Health Screening Campaign, over 14,500 women were found with symptoms suggestive of Cancer out of approximately 2.93 lakh women screened. While such mass screening campaigns are laudable, they must be strengthened with robust follow-up mechanisms and medical infrastructure. I urge the Government to Establish and upgrade diagnostic facilities at local health centers for mammography, cervical screening and biopsy services. Maharashtra reported the second highest number of Cancer cases in India in 2023. These numbers reflect a growing cancer burden in the State, particularly among the women in rural areas. Government should ensure that early detection leads to timely care and positive outcomes for every woman affected.

7. Concern over Poor Health Infrastructure for Elderly Population Particularly in Rural Areas in the Country

SHRI A.D. SINGH: A recent study has highlighted significant healthcare access challenges for India's elderly population. The older adults travel an average of 14.5 km for routine outpatient care and nearly 44 km for inpatient hospitalization. The findings emphasize a stark urban-rural divide and pinpoint distance as a critical barrier to both routine and emergency care for India's rapidly ageing demography. When facilities lie within 10 Km, 73 per cent of seniors attend outpatient appointments and 40 per cent proceed with inpatient care; beyond 30 Kms, outpatient attendance falls to 10 per cent. Urban seniors typically find healthcare within 10 Km, whereas rural elders travel about 28 Km for the same outpatient services. These insights call for targeted interventions to bridge geographic gaps by strengthening local health infrastructure, community transport and empowering community health workers. I urge upon the Government to re-evaluate the healthcare infrastructure and policies to better accommodate the needs of the aging population.

8. Demand to Frame Policy for Giving Annual Rent or Compensation to Farmers Affected by the Oil or Gas Pipeline

SHRI MAYANKKUMAR NAYAK: Oil and gas pipelines pass through the land of farmers across the country including Gujarat. These farmers are given only one-time compensation, while the pipeline remains on their land for years. When oil or gas wells are on the land of farmers, they are given annual rent or royalty, but there is no such arrangement

for pipelines. I urge the Government to make a policy to give annual rent or compensation to the farmers affected by the pipeline, so that justice can be done to the farmers.

9. Concern over Increasing Number of Cancer Patients in the Country

SHRI BABUBHAI JESANGBHAI DESAI: The increasing number of cancer patients in the country has become a serious public health crisis today. Every year around 14 lakh new cancer cases are reported in India. The main reasons for this are unhealthy lifestyle, smoking, alcohol consumption, air pollution, irregular eating habits, mental stress and lack of timely checkups. Cancer treatment facilities are still unevenly distributed, and many government hospitals are severely lacking in resources. I urge the Government to set up special centres for cancer treatment in government hospitals across the country; make chemotherapy, radiotherapy and counselling services affordable and accessible; and make special provisions in the budget for cancer research and treatment.

10. Need for Revision in the Salary Eligibility Limit of Employees' State Insurance Scheme (ESIC)

Shri Dhananjay Bhimrao Mahadik: I would like to draw the attention of the Government to the need for revision of the salary eligibility limit of the Employees State Insurance Scheme . The maximum salary eligibility limit under this scheme is only Rs. 21,000 per month and Rs. 25,000 under certain circumstances, which is extremely inadequate in today's economic situation and inflation rate. I urge the Government to increase this salary limit to at least Rs. 35,000 per month, so that more and more workers can avail the benefits under ESIC.

11. Demand for Development of Basic Infrastructure in Sikkim

Shri Dorjee Tshering Lepcha :Sikkim is celebrating 50 years of statehood. Sikkim is a landlocked state bordering Tibet, Bhutan and Nepal. Due to geographical conditions and mountainous terrain, infrastructure development is not at the desired level. Sikkim joined the great India only in 1975, so it is natural that latecomers do not get all the facilities in the limited time. I would like to draw the attention of the Government to promote the motto of our Hon'ble Prime Minister "Sabka Sath, Sabka Vikas" so that small states like ours with less population can also contribute and participate equally in the developed nation of 2047.

12. Need to Address Traffic Bottleneck at Mahipalpur on NH-48 Through Alternate Route Development

SHRIMATI KIRAN CHOUDHRY :I rise to draw the attention of the Government to the fact that there is recurring and severe traffic congestion on NH-48, especially on the stretch between Dhaula Kuan and Gurugram, with the Mahipalpur junction being the primary bottleneck. I urge the Government to prioritise the development and promotion of alternative routes, such as, strengthening and widening the Vasant Kunj-Andheria-mor-Gurugram road as an effective parallel corridor, improving the Palam-Bijwasan-Kapashera route to divert traffic from NH-48; implementing grade-separated interchanges and underpasses at key junctions near Mahipalpur; and, enhancing last-mile connectivity to the airport via elevated roads or express corridors.

13. Demand of Legal Right for Annual Health Check-up for Every Indian

SHRI RAGHAV CHADHA : I want to raise an important issue related to the health of 140 crore countrymen. Annual health check-up has become a luxury in India, which only rich people can get done. According to National Family Health Survey (NFHS) 5, only 2 percent women of the country are able to get cancer checkup done. I request the government to make annual health check-up a right of every citizen, so that cheap, simple and regular checkup facility is provided in every corner of the country.

14. Concern over Increasing Drug Addiction in Youth and its Impact

DR. SIKANDER KUMAR: The challenges related to the problem of drug addiction is constantly increasing in many states including Himachal Pradesh. The increasing consumption of narcotic substances and drug trafficking among the youth of our country has become a major serious problem, which is having a very negative impact on our society and many families. This addiction does not refer to the commonly used paraphernalia like alcohol, but to many strong mixtures made from complex processes of ganja, heroin, opium, hashish and chemicals, whose prevalence has increased rapidly among the youth. Many types of drugs including cannabis, cocaine, heroin and methamphetamine are traded under criminal networks. The money earned from this is used for disruptive activities and purposes, which also poses a great threat to national security. To solve this problem, the provision of strict policy and stringent law need to be reviewed.

15. Demand for Shifting from Water-Intensive Crops in Uttar Pradesh and Making Strategies for Sustainable Agriculture

SHRI BRIJ LAL: Agricultural in Uttar Pradesh is heavily dependent on two highly water-intensive crops - sugarcane and paddy. To reduce the stress on water resources, there is need for alternatives and to cultivate less water-intensive crops like - pulses, millets, oilseeds, crops like beans, peas, and leafy greens which need less water and provide higher profits per acre. Shifting away from water-guzzling crops in UP requires major policy changes like fair prices, subsidies and incentives, expanding crop diversification programmes, positioning UP as a hub for drought-resistant crops in national and international markets, phased reduction of sugarcane and rice cultivation and supporting agro-based industries, dairy and horticulture to supplement farmers' incomes.

16. Demand to Ensure Open and Safe Playgrounds for Children

MS. SWATI MALIWAL: Be it Delhi or any other city in the country, childhood is shrinking everywhere. Earlier, children used to save a few rupees to buy a ball with their friends, now they play virtual cricket on the screen with their thumbs. Childhood is no longer outside the window, but is confined to the mobile screen. An AIIMS report shows that the obesity rate among children aged 5 to 19 in India has doubled in the last 10 years. According to the World Health Organization, 1 out of every 5 children is suffering from mental stress or depression. This is directly related to increasing screen time and decreasing physical activity. I appeal to the government to ensure an open, safe and free playground for children in every ward and colony. This is not just infrastructure, it is an investment in the future of the country.

17. Demand for Conferring Bharat Ratna Posthumously to Shaheed Bhagat Singh, Shaheed Udham Singh and Shaheed Madanlal Dhingra

***SHRI SATNAM SINGH SANDHU:** I request the Central Government to honour Shaheed Bhagat Singh, Shaheed Udham Singh and Shaheed Madanlal Dhingra with Bharat Ratna posthumously. These three martyrs are not only the heroes of Punjab but also the heroes of India's revolution and independence. The idea and sacrifice that Bhagat Singh made at the young age of 23 still ignites the youth consciousness of the country. Udham Singh killed General Dyer and gave justice to the souls of thousands of martyrs of Jallianwala Bagh. Madanlal Dhingra shot Curzon Wylie on foreign land and bowed down the pride of British power.

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE CHAIRMAN

MR. CHAIRMAN: (i) Hon. Members, I need to inform you that I have received notice of motion under Article 217(1)(b) read with Article 218 and Article 124, sub-Article 4 of the Constitution of India, along with Section 3(1B) of the Judges (Inquiry) Act, 1968, to constitute a Statutory Committee for removal of Justice Yashwant Verma, Judge of the High Court of Judicature at Allahabad. This has been received by me today. It is signed by more than 50 Members of the Council of States and thus it meets the numerical requirement of signing by Members of Parliament for setting in motion a process for removal of a High Court Judge. I direct the Secretary-General to find out whether a similar motion has been moved in the House of People, the Lok Sabha, and this is being done for the purpose that, under the Judges (Inquiry) Act, 1968, the procedure is different if a motion is presented in one House or if the motion is presented, on the same day, in both the Houses. If the motion is presented in the two Houses on different dates, then the motion which is presented in the House first, that alone is taken into consideration and the second motion gets non-judicial. But, if the motion is presented in both the Houses on the same day, then the provisions are different. If the motion is presented only in one House, then the Presiding Officer of that House has the competence to consider the motion and either admit or reject it.

But, if a motion is presented on the same day in both the Houses, then the provisions are different. Then the right of the Speaker or the Chairman to admit or reject the motion is not there. Then, the motions become property of the House. I would invite your attention in that behalf to Section 3, sub-section (2) of the Judges Inquiry Act, 1968 – “(2) If the motion referred to in sub-section (1) is admitted, the Speaker or, as the case may be, the Chairman shall keep the motion pending and constitute, as soon as may be, for the purpose of making an investigation into the grounds on which the removal of a Judge is prayed for, a Committee consisting of three members of whom--

- (a) one shall be chosen from among the Chief Justice and other Judges of the Supreme Court;
- (b) one shall be chosen from among the Chief Justices of the High Courts, and

* Spoke in Punjabi.

- (c) one shall be a person who is, in the opinion of the Speaker or, as the case may be, the Chairman, a distinguished jurist.”

Before that, it has been given, “(1) If notice is given of a motion for presenting an address to the President praying for the removal of a Judge signed--

- (a) in the case of a notice given in the House of the People, by not less than one hundred members of that House;
- (b) in the case of a notice given in the Council of States, by not less than fifty members of that Council;

then, the Speaker or, as the case may be, the Chairman may, after consulting such persons, if any, as he thinks fit and after considering such materials, if any, as may be available to him, either admit the motion or refuse to admit the same.”

Coming to a motion that has been presented in both the Houses on the same day, it says, “Provided that where notices of a motion referred to in sub-section (1) are given on the same day in both Houses of Parliament, no Committee shall be constituted unless the motion has been admitted in both Houses and where such motion has been admitted in both Houses, the Committee shall be constituted jointly by the Speaker and the Chairman.”

So, since the provisions are different, I have directed the Secretary-General to update whether such a motion has also been moved in the House of the People.

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In that case, since the Hon'ble Law Minister is present here and has so indicated that a similar motion has come to be presented by requisite number of Members of Parliament of Lok Sabha, more than 100 xxx xxx xxx xxx to the Hon'ble Speaker, Lok Sabha, the provisions of Section 3, sub-section (2) will come into effect and the Secretary-General will take necessary steps in this direction.

(ii) Hon. Members, I need to inform you that in December, a Motion under Article 124 was submitted for my consideration for removal of a Judge of the High Court of Allahabad. That Motion was purportedly from 55 Members. I examined that and found that one particular Member had signed it at two places. The result was that the representation of the motion indicated there are 55 Members seeking removal, but actually it was not 55, it was only 54. So, obviously, an enquiry was conducted to find out from the Member who had signed twice, allegedly. The hon. Member declined his second signature and that made the matter a little more serious because it was required of me, then, to get to the bottom of the issue and find out whether the representation was meriting consideration and the process was initiated for verification of signatures and authentication. That process is under progress. I will get an update and come back to the House. I have already indicated to this august House on an earlier occasion that if the requisite number of Members who verify their signatures and the number goes above 50 or more, I would proceed and deal with the issue of a signature that has been twice there and not owned by the Member in a different manner because if a Motion carries two signatures of the same Member and the hon. Member declines that he has not signed it at two places but he has signed it only at one place, the matter becomes serious and culpable. This august House has to set very high standards. If we

do not live up to the highest expectations of the people, then we will be putting things under the carpet and not subjecting them to deep investigation. I will discuss with the floor leaders as to what steps this House needs to take with respect to such kinds of transgressions.

(iii) I must also indicate to this august House that there was an occasion in this House where on seat No. 222, a pad of Rs.500 notes was found. What is more surprising and deeply concerning is not that a pad of notes was found, but no one has owned it; no one has claimed it. This is quite serious. I had asked the authorities to get into the matter seriously, but it appears, now, that the matter will have to be dealt with and that too I will put before the floor leaders for further consideration and guidance.

P. C. MODY,
Secretary-General.

rssynop@sansad.nic.in