

RAJYA SABHA

*SYNOPSIS OF DEBATE

(Proceedings other than Questions and Answers)

Thursday, December 18, 2025/ Agrahayana 27, 1947 (Saka)

MOTION FOR NOMINATION TO JOINT COMMITTEE ON VIKSIT BHARAT SHIKSHA ADHISHTHAN BILL, 2025

THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION (SHRI DHARMENDRA PRADHAN): I move that this House concurs in the recommendation of the Lok Sabha to join in the Joint Committee of the Houses on the Bill to enable and empower the Universities and other higher educational institutions to achieve excellence in teaching, learning, research and innovation, through co-ordination and determination of standards in institutions for higher education or research and scientific and technical institutions, and for that purpose to constitute a Viksit Bharat Shiksha Adhishthan, to facilitate the Universities and other higher educational institutions to become independent self-governing institutions and to promote excellence through a robust and transparent system of accreditation and autonomy, and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto and resolves that ten members of the Rajya Sabha be nominated by the Chairman to serve on the said Joint Committee.

The motion was adopted.

MATTERS RAISED WITH THE PERMISSION OF THE CHAIR

1. Concern over Rising Human-Wildlife Conflict and Increasing Wildlife Mortality in Maharashtra

***SHRIMATI MEDHA VISHRAM KULKARNI:** I wish to draw attention to the alarming rise in human-wildlife conflict in Maharashtra, where wild animals are increasingly entering residential areas and agricultural fields, causing heavy crop losses and threatening human lives. In 2023–24 alone, tens of thousands of complaints were registered, with economic losses running into thousands of crores. Human casualties and serious injuries have also risen sharply, forcing people in several districts to restrict movement and even shut down schools. Wildlife deaths have increased too, particularly along railway tracks passing through forest corridors. I believe deforestation, habitat destruction, broken food chains and rapid urbanisation are the root causes. I strongly urge the Government to implement preventive infrastructure, compensation mechanisms, quick-response systems and a special package to urgently address this grave human-wildlife crisis.

2. Demand for Early Commencement of Scientific Coal Mining Following the NGT Ban in Meghalaya

DR. WANWEIROY KHARLUKHI: I strongly feel that the ban on coal mining severely disrupted the livelihoods of thousands of families in my state and effectively deprived them of their fundamental right to earn a livelihood. Coal has traditionally been the backbone of the local economy, especially in the Garo Hills and Jaintia Hills, and the ban caused serious revenue losses to the District Councils. As a result, employees went without salaries for months and education-related cess collections, which used to exceed ₹600 crore annually, came to a complete halt. While I welcome the

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

***Spoke in Marathi.**

Government's decision to permit scientific mining, I urge that the process be expedited without further delay. Prolonged uncertainty has also contributed to rising social concerns, including the risk of drug trafficking in coal belt areas. I, therefore, request urgent intervention, speedy clearances and necessary amendments to strengthen Sixth Schedule institutions so that livelihoods, governance and social stability are restored.

3. Demand for Construction of Overbridges or Underpasses at Critical Railway Crossings in Uttar Pradesh

DR. SANGEETA BALWANT: I thank you for giving me the opportunity to raise an important issue concerning my district, Ghazipur, in Uttar Pradesh. On the Delhi–Patna–Howrah railway route, stations such as Zamania, Dildarnagar and Bhadoura have busy railway crossings where thousands of people face severe traffic jams every day due to frequent gate closures. Similarly, several crossings on the Varanasi–Ghazipur City–Ballia route and the Varanasi–Dullahpur–Mau route regularly disrupt daily movement and cause great inconvenience to the public. I strongly feel that construction of overbridges or underpasses at all these locations is urgently required to ensure smooth traffic flow and public safety.

I would also like to highlight that the historic Dildarnagar–Tarighat rail line in Ghazipur was built during the British period around 1880, and earlier governments had proposed its extension up to Ghazipur City and Mau along with a bridge over the river Ganga, but these plans were never completed. After 2014, the foundation stone for the rail line extension and the double-decker rail-cum-road bridge over the Ganga was laid, and the Tarighat–Ghazipur City section was completed. However, the proposed Ghazipur City–Mau rail link has now been discontinued. Through this House, I urge the Government to restart this project and construct overbridges or underpasses at critical crossings, as these measures will significantly contribute to the development of Purvanchal.

4. Need for Protection of Fair Use and Livelihood Security of Digital Content Creators in the Country

SHRI RAGHAV CHADHA: I wish to highlight that millions of Indians today earn their livelihood as digital content creators, working as educators, reviewers, satirists, entertainers, musicians and influencers. Their YouTube channels and Instagram pages are not just platforms of expression but their primary economic assets, built through years of hard work. However, they are deeply affected by arbitrary copyright strikes and the absence of a clear fair-use framework. Even a few seconds of copyrighted content used for commentary, criticism, parody, education or news reporting often leads to entire channels being taken down by automated algorithms, destroying livelihoods overnight.

I firmly believe that livelihoods must be governed by law and due process, not by opaque digital systems. Respecting copyright holders does not mean denying fair use, because fair use is not piracy. Our Copyright Act, 1957 was enacted in a pre-digital era and does not even define digital creators or modern fair use. Therefore, I demand amendments to clearly define digital fair use, including transformative, incidental, educational, public-interest and non-commercial use. I also seek the introduction of proportionality in enforcement and a mandatory due process before any takedown, so that creativity and innovation can thrive without fear.

5. Demand to Publish Keezhadi Excavation Report

SHRI TIRUCHI SIVA: I wish to underline the immense cultural and historical significance of the archaeological excavations that have yielded nearly 15,000 artefacts, including Tamil-Brahmi inscriptions dating back to the 5th century BCE. These findings scientifically establish the antiquity and maturity of Tamil culture and were validated through international carbon testing. Despite the submission of a comprehensive excavation report and assurances given before the Madras High Court, the Union Government has not yet published the report. This unexplained delay is deeply painful, as it deprives the Tamil people and the nation of the opportunity to understand, celebrate and academically engage with this heritage. I firmly urge the Government to publish the report immediately, along with details of expert consultations, to ensure transparency, promote tourism and uphold cultural truth.

6. Concern Over Unequal Central Assistance Under Pradhan Mantri Surakshit Matritva Abhiyan (PMSMA) and Maternal Health Neglect in States like Jharkhand

SRIMATI MAHUA MAJI: I wish to emphasise that the objective of PMSMA is to identify high-risk pregnancies in time and reduce maternal mortality, which makes it critically important for states like Jharkhand with high tribal populations and weak health infrastructure. Unfortunately, specialist doctors, advanced diagnostics and digital health support appear to be unevenly distributed, with need-based states receiving comparatively less assistance. The absence of publicly available, state-wise data on Central funding over the last five years raises serious concerns regarding transparency, equity and justice. I therefore urge the Government to place detailed information before the House, provide special packages and additional resources to backward and tribal-dominated States, and treat maternal health not as a political issue but as a humanitarian and constitutional responsibility.

7. Need for Complete Eradication of Manual Scavenging

DR. ASHOK KUMAR MITTAL: I wish to draw the attention of the House to a bitter truth that raises a serious question mark over our dream of a 'Developed India'. We proudly celebrate the success of the 'Swachh Bharat Mission', but even today we treat sanitation workers—the very backbone of that mission—as untouchables. Through this House, I wish to raise the suffering of those unsung heroes who risk their lives to clean the filth of our society. Inspired by a film, I realized that the practice of manual scavenging even today is a blatant violation of the individual dignity guaranteed by our Constitution. Government data shows that every year many sanitation workers lose their lives due to poisonous gases because they are made to work without proper safety equipment, even though this practice has been declared a criminal offence by law. Despite this, thousands of workers are still forced to work in inhuman conditions. I urge the Government to declare sanitation work as a hazardous occupation, make regular health check-ups mandatory, and protect human lives through the use of technology, so that a Clean India truly becomes a Humane India.

8. Demand for Creation of a Dedicated Renovation and Modernisation Fund for Old Hostels Under the PM-AJAY Scheme

SHRIMATI SUMITRA BALMIK: I wish to draw the attention of the Government during Zero Hour to the Scheduled Caste students who are compelled to live in old and dilapidated Ambedkar and Social Welfare hostels. Although the construction of new hostels under the PM-AJAY Scheme is commendable, hostels that are more than 20 years old are today in a highly pitiable condition. Broken windows, damp walls, and the lack of modern facilities are becoming obstacles to the education of our talented children. Inspired by the thoughts of Babasaheb Ambedkar, I urge the Government to launch a special drive under the PM-AJAY Scheme for the early renovation of these hostels and to provide facilities such as digital libraries and internet so that education can truly become a means of empowerment.

9. Need for Incentivising Domestic Manufacturing of Air Purifiers

SHRI ASHOK SINGH: I wish to raise in this House the serious issue of rising air pollution in the country, which has made even breathing difficult for citizens. Polluted air is causing severe damage to the lungs, heart, brain, and kidneys, and is leading to deadly diseases such as cancer. The situation has become so alarming that foreign countries have been compelled to issue travel advisories, while clean air has today become a luxury for the common citizen. I urge the Government to implement a National Mission for Clean Air on a war footing, ensure strict year-round control over all sources of pollution, translate green belts and smog towers from plans into reality on the ground, and promote domestic manufacturing of air purifiers. This issue should not be treated as a seasonal problem, but addressed through coordinated action as a national public health emergency.

10. Need for a National System for Mandatory Testing of Pesticide and Biological Residues in Imported Fruits, Vegetables and Grains

DR. AJIT MADHAVRAO GOPCHADE: Through this House, I wish to draw the attention of the Government to the serious health risks arising from pesticide and biological residues present in imported fruits, vegetables, and grains. With the growth of international agricultural trade, the volume

of imported food items in the country has increased; however, there is no effective and coordinated system at the Central and State levels for their scientific and mandatory testing.

Consumption of such food items without proper testing is leading to a rapid increase in hormonal disorders among young girls, thyroid and neurological diseases, premature ageing, and reproductive health problems. I urge the Government to develop a national, scientific, and mandatory testing system to be implemented at both the Central and State levels, so as to safeguard public health and strengthen India's food safety framework and global credibility.

11. Demand for Resumption of Kalaburagi–Delhi and Kalaburagi–Bengaluru Air Services under UDAN Scheme

DR. SYED NASEER HUSSAIN: I wish to raise an issue of urgent public importance regarding the discontinuation of air connectivity to Kalburgi, a backward and aspirational district of Karnataka. The Kalburgi–Delhi and Kalburgi–Bengaluru flights under the UDAN Scheme were stopped despite good passenger demand and even after completion of the viability gap funding period. Kalburgi is a major educational, medical, judicial, and administrative centre for the Kalyana Karnataka region, and the withdrawal of these flights has caused serious hardship to students, patients, officials, businesspersons, and the general public, who are now forced to undertake long and unreliable road and rail journeys over a distance of more than 600 km. I submit that regional connectivity cannot be left entirely to market forces when the objective of UDAN is balanced regional development. I therefore urge the Government to take immediate steps to resume the Kalburgi–Delhi and Kalburgi–Bengaluru air services, either through fresh bidding or alternative policy support, and to announce a clear timeline for restoration. Regional air connectivity is a necessity, not a luxury, and Kalburgi must not be allowed to slip back into isolation.

12. Concern over Crisis of Inefficient Solid Waste Management in Indian Metropolitan and Urban Cities

SHRI ABDUL WAHAB: I wish to highlight the serious crisis of inefficient solid waste management in our metropolitan and urban cities. Although a large quantity of waste is generated every day, only a small fraction is scientifically processed, while the rest is dumped in open landfills and low-lying areas. Major cities such as Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru, Chennai, and Cochin are facing severe problems due to overburdened and hazardous landfill sites, which have led to groundwater contamination, frequent landfill fires, and toxic air pollution. I submit that poor segregation at source, inadequate door-to-door collection, and limited waste processing facilities are directly harming public health, especially affecting sanitation workers and communities living near landfill sites. Despite the existence of the Solid Waste Management Rules, 2016, their implementation remains extremely weak due to lack of technical capacity, funding, and accountability in urban local bodies. I therefore urge the Ministry to ensure strict and effective implementation of the Rules. While policies and schemes like Swachh Bharat exist, the ground reality in our cities shows that waste and sewage disposal systems are failing and require urgent corrective action.

13. Demand for Ensuring Fee Parity for OBC Students in Government Funded Institutions

SHRI RYAGA KRISHNAIAH: I wish to highlight the injustice being faced by OBC students in higher educational institutions, particularly in centrally funded institutions, where full fee reimbursement is not being provided to them, while EWS students and other reserved categories receive complete fee reimbursement. This discriminatory practice is discouraging many meritorious OBC students from taking admission in prestigious institutions like IITs, IIMs, and other central institutes due to the high fee structure. I submit that many OBC communities include extremely poor sections such as the most backward classes, nomadic and denotified tribes, and beggars, who are unable to afford these fees even after securing admission. Drawing from the experience of the Telugu States, where full fee reimbursement along with scholarships has enabled poor students to pursue higher education and prevented child labour, I strongly believe that fee reimbursement and financial assistance are integral to the policy of reservation. Reservation alone is not sufficient; it must be supported by fee reimbursement, financial assistance, and scholarships. Only then will higher

education become truly accessible to the weaker sections, leading to social upliftment and the building of a stronger India.

14. Demand for Creation of Bengal Regiment in the Indian Army

♦**SHRIMATI MAMATA THAKUR:** I wish to draw the attention of this House to the long-standing and deeply felt demand for the creation of a Bengali Regiment in the Indian Army. Bengali revolutionaries played a decisive role in India's freedom struggle, with leaders like Rash Behari Bose and Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose forming the Indian National Army to overthrow British rule. The Cellular Jail in the Andamans stands as a powerful symbol of this sacrifice, as a majority of its prisoners were Bengali revolutionaries. Despite this historic contribution, it is deeply disappointing that independent India has no Bengali Regiment, even though such a regiment existed during British rule in the First World War. Thousands of Bengalis are currently serving in the Indian Army, yet Bengali youth continue to face linguistic and institutional barriers. I submit that just as new regiments like the Naga Regiment, Ladakh Scouts, and Sikkim Scouts have been created after Independence, there is a strong and justified case for a Bengali Regiment. Such a step would honour the legacy of Netaji and countless freedom fighters, provide opportunities to lakhs of Bengali youth, and strengthen national unity and defence.

15. Demand for Introduction of a Superfast Train Service from Gorakhpur to Delhi via Balrampur–Gonda Loop Line.

SHRI BRIJ LAL: I wish to raise, through this House, the urgent demand for the introduction of a superfast train service from Gorakhpur to Delhi via the Balrampur–Gonda loop line. Gorakhpur is the headquarters of the North Eastern Railway, and this loop line is of great strategic, social, and international importance, as it runs close to the Nepal border and is widely used by Nepalese citizens, families of Gorkha soldiers, migrant workers, and a large number of Buddhist tourists. Due to its proximity to Kapilvastu, the birthplace of Lord Buddha, and Lumbini, this route experiences very heavy passenger traffic. At present, there is only one superfast train on this route—the 12571 Humsafar Express—which operates merely four days a week and is wholly inadequate to meet the needs of passengers. I request that this train be operated on all seven days of the week and that an additional superfast train be introduced from Gorakhpur to Delhi via the loop line through Lucknow. This will provide significant relief to the people of the backward districts of Purvanchal, migrant workers, and passengers travelling to and from Nepal.

16. Demand for Providing World-class Facilities in 1000 ITIs across the Country to Accelerate Skill Development through PM SETU Scheme

SHRI MASTHAN RAO YADAV BEEDHA: I wish to raise a matter of urgent public importance regarding the PM SETU Scheme, which aims to upgrade 1,000 ITIs across the country with world-class skill development facilities. While this flagship initiative has the potential to transform India's skilling ecosystem by modernising infrastructure, introducing advanced technology, and enhancing industry linkages, there is a lack of clarity on key aspects of its implementation. I seek clarification on the criteria for selecting ITIs, the implementation timeline across States, the extent of Central funding and State participation, curriculum and infrastructure upgrades, faculty training mechanisms, and the monitoring framework to ensure quality and accountability. I urge the Government to outline a clear roadmap to ensure timely execution, industry relevance, and improved employability outcomes for India's youth.

(Several hon'ble Members associated.)

17. Need for Comprehensive Planning and Environmental Safeguards for Nashik Kumbh Mela, 2027

SHRIMATI SUNETRA AJIT PAWAR: I wish to raise, through this House, the urgent need for comprehensive planning and environmental safeguards for the Nashik Simhastha Kumbh Mela

♦Spoke in Bengali.

2027. This event is not merely religious in nature but represents the faith of crores of devotees and our rich cultural heritage. On the lines of the Prayagraj Mahakumbh 2025, effective crowd management, cleanliness, and safety must be ensured at the Nashik Kumbh as well. I urge the Central Government and the Government of Maharashtra to immediately initiate work on three key areas—first, a Green Kumbh, with large-scale tree plantation and a robust mechanism to ensure their protection and survival; second, modern purification of the waters of the Godavari and Ramkund using advanced technology; and third, a zero-waste system, making the Kumbh plastic-free. Further, a technology-driven and environmentally sustainable master plan should be prepared to ensure the safety, convenience, and overall well-being of the devotees.

(Several hon'ble Members associated.)

18. Concern over Huge Volumes of Natural Rubber Imports in the Name of Compound Rubber and its Impact on Indian Rubber Farmers

SHRI JOSE K. MANI: I wish to highlight the serious crisis faced by Indian natural rubber farmers due to large-scale imports of natural rubber in the name of compound rubber. The price of rubber is driven by Government policy, not by farmers, and nearly 90 per cent of production comes from Kerala. A few major tyre companies dominate the market, and even the Competition Commission of India has found evidence of cartelisation. Taking advantage of policy loopholes and lower duties under the ASEAN Trade Agreement, these companies are importing natural rubber through subsidiaries abroad. Imports of compound rubber have increased almost tenfold—from about 25,000 tonnes in 2012–13 to nearly 2,45,000 tonnes in 2024–25. This unchecked import is not fair trade but systematic market manipulation, severely impacting domestic rubber farmers and their livelihoods.

GOVERNMENT BILLS

(i) The Sustainable Harnessing and Advancement of Nuclear Energy for Transforming India Bill, 2025, - as passed by Lok Sabha

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY; THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF EARTH SCIENCES; THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE; THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS; THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF ATOMIC ENERGY; AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF SPACE (DR. JITENDRA SINGH), moving the motion for consideration of the Bill, said: that the Bill to provide for the promotion and development of nuclear energy and ionizing radiation for nuclear power generation, application in healthcare, food, water agriculture, industry, research, environment, innovation in nuclear science and technology, for the welfare of the people of India, and for robust regulatory framework for its safe and secure utilization and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto, as passed by Lok Sabha, be taken into consideration.

Today, we are fortunate to be discussing a historic and landmark bill in the history of Parliament. India's nuclear program began six or seven decades ago. At that time, there was an atmosphere of global suspicion, as the events of Hiroshima and Nagasaki had recently occurred. It was then that Dr. Homi Bhabha, the father of our nuclear program, clarified to the international community that India's nuclear program would be dedicated solely to peaceful purposes. Today, I am pleased to say that this commitment is being fully vindicated, and this historic moment is being realized under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The Atomic Energy Act was introduced in 1962, followed by the establishment of the Atomic Energy Regulatory Board, and in 2010, the Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage Act came into existence. Now, it is necessary to briefly

explain the spirit and need behind this new bill. In the last 10-11 years, India has continuously strengthened its role on the global stage. Today, India is no longer merely a follower, but a nation that sets the direction. Whether it is space science or technology—the discovery of water on the moon through the Chandrayaan mission is a clear example. Today, India is moving forward in line with global standards and strategies. Since 2014, India has given top priority to global issues such as climate change, energy security, and clean energy. Prime Minister Modi's commitment to 'Net Zero 2070' is a decisive step in this direction. As the world moves towards clean and sustainable energy, India also needs to take concrete and far-sighted decisions in the same direction. This is the fundamental spirit and objective of this bill.

This subject is extremely important for fully achieving the goal of a self-reliant India, so that we can reduce our dependence on petroleum and fossil fuels and increase the share of clean and alternative energy sources. Today, artificial intelligence, data processing, and related new fields demand a continuous, reliable, and 24/7 energy supply, which is not possible solely through renewable sources. Nuclear energy is the only source that can effectively meet this need. Several decisive steps have been taken to strengthen this sector over the past ten years. While the budget of the Department of Atomic Energy was ₹13,879 crore in 2013-14, it has now been increased to ₹37,483 crore. In 2015, joint ventures were permitted through public sector undertakings, and in 2017, ten reactors were approved in a single cabinet decision. Recently, the foundation stone was laid for four new nuclear reactors in Mahi Banswara, Rajasthan, and a new plant is also being established in Gorakhpur, Haryana. In 2014, our nuclear capacity was approximately 4.7 gigawatts, which has now increased to about 8.9 gigawatts, but its contribution to total electricity generation is still only about three percent. With the objective of increasing this to at least ten percent by 2047, the Nuclear Energy Mission has been launched in this budget. This includes involving the private sector with limited security provisions and advancing the development of small and modular reactors in a mission mode. The target is to establish at least five such reactors by 2033. It is clear that necessary amendments to existing laws were essential to achieve the net-zero target and ensure India's energy security. This is the fundamental objective of this bill.

Previously, we had three main frameworks: the Atomic Energy Act of 1962, the Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage Act of 2010, and the Atomic Energy Regulatory Board. Instead of repealing these three or introducing separate new laws, we decided to review them comprehensively and have presented a comprehensive and consolidated bill, which is being referred to as the Peace Bill. This bill is in line with the fundamental spirit of the peaceful uses of India's nuclear program. This Government has significantly expanded the use of nuclear technology in areas such as cancer treatment, nuclear medicine, and healthcare. Simultaneously, it has also opened the way for private participation in research and other sectors, with necessary safety provisions in place. Through this bill, the Atomic Energy Regulatory Board is being given statutory status, which will make the regulatory framework more robust and transparent. I want to clearly assure everyone that there will be no compromise on safety standards. The concerns among investors regarding the inclusion of suppliers in the liability framework under the 2010 Liability Act have also been addressed in a balanced manner in this bill. Only necessary amendments have been made while maintaining the structure of the Act, so as to encourage investment while simultaneously ensuring both accountability and safety. At the end, I will reply on all these points in detail.

Amendments for reference of the Bill to a Select Committee of Rajya Sabha

(Dr. V. Sivadasan, Shri A.A. Rahim, Dr. John Brittas and Shri Tiruchi Siva moved amendments for reference of the Bill to the Select Committee of Rajya Sabha.)

SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH: I acknowledge that the Modi Government has a special knack for coining acronyms and giving attractive names to bills. We are seeing another example of this today. I disagree with these names, but I will set that aside for now. I want to raise three issues before the House. First, the history before 2014. The impression is repeatedly created that everything

in the fields of nuclear energy, space, and science and technology began only after 2014, whereas the reality is that a strong foundation for these programs had already been laid.

I would like to briefly present some important historical facts to the House. I also want to highlight three key points of this bill and the potential concerns associated with it, so that the Minister can take them into account while framing the rules and during further discussions. It is important to clarify that the first Atomic Energy Act of independent India was not passed in 1962, but on April 6, 1948, by the Constituent Assembly. At that time, the resolution was introduced by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and was extensively debated. Immediately afterwards, on May 22, 1948, Prime Minister Nehru presented the first note on India's nuclear policy and strategy to the Cabinet, which was considered by the entire Cabinet, including Sardar Patel, Dr. Ambedkar, and Shyama Prasad Mukherjee. On August 15, 1948, exactly one year after independence, the Government of India established the Atomic Energy Commission, with Dr. Homi Bhabha as its first chairman. This was followed by the establishment of Indian Rare Earths Limited in 1950 and the creation of the Department of Atomic Energy on August 3, 1954. All these facts demonstrate that India's nuclear program was established on a strong foundation in the early years of independence, and not after 2014.

India's nuclear energy program has been steadily progressing not just since 2014, but since the early years of independence. In 1954, a national-level discussion was held on the peaceful uses of atomic energy, chaired by the Prime Minister and including Members of Parliament, scientists, and the chiefs of the three armed forces. It was at this forum that Dr. Homi Bhabha announced his famous three-stage program. In 1956, the first reactor, 'Apsara', was commissioned, and since then, reactors have been continuously established across the country. The first nuclear power reactor was commissioned at Tarapur in 1969, followed by centers at Rawatbhata, Kalpakkam, Narora, Kaiga, Kakrapar, and Kudankulam. Even before 2014, India had already achieved a nuclear capacity of approximately 8 gigawatts. I would also like to remind everyone that the foundations of India's electronics, space, and engineering programs were laid by the atomic energy establishments. The book "*50 Years of Atomic Energy Research*," published under the leadership of Atal Bihari Vajpayee, itself testifies to the significant achievements made in this field over the past decades. Therefore, it is incorrect to say that India's nuclear success story began only after 2014.

I would like to draw the House's attention to an important fact. In 2008, a nuclear agreement was signed between India and the United States, which was formally opposed by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) at the time. The BJP's own official document from August 2008 shows that questions were raised at that time regarding the future of nuclear energy. However, that same 2008 nuclear agreement subsequently opened up many new avenues, and the bill we are discussing today was made possible because of it. Now I come to the main provisions of the bill. This bill has three main elements: private sector participation, civil liability for nuclear damage, and the Atomic Energy Regulatory Board. Granting statutory status to the Atomic Energy Regulatory Board is a positive step, as it incorporates the key provisions of the Atomic Safety Regulatory Authority Bill introduced in 2011. Regarding civil liability for nuclear damage, I would like to remind the House that Mr. Arun Jaitley and Mr. Jaswant Singh played a significant role in the drafting of the 2010 Act. The amendments being introduced today appear to contradict the views they expressed at that time. Therefore, I want a clear answer from the Government as to why these changes are being made to a law that was formulated with the contributions of their own leaders. We want to know the reasons of this deviation.

It seems that this Amendment is introduced under pressure from private companies. The Government should take the House into confidence regarding why this change has suddenly become necessary after fifteen years. The Government should also clarify the respective shares of the public and private sectors in the proposed 100 gigawatts of nuclear capacity under the goal of a developed India. This bill appears to have been introduced primarily to benefit private companies, even though the country already possesses the necessary technical capabilities in nuclear energy. We have successfully established indigenous plants of 220 megawatts, 540 megawatts, and 700 megawatts. The 700-megawatt plant, in particular, should be standardized and used as the basis for expansion, instead of complicating the system by importing different technologies from various countries. India is self-reliant in every stage of the nuclear fuel cycle. If the private sector wants to invest, it should be

encouraged to set up plants based on indigenous technology. Instead of coining new terminology in the name of 'Small Modular Reactors,' our indigenous 220-megawatt reactors should be standardized and further developed. This is the true path to self-reliance. The private sector can bring capital, but not technology; the technology, knowledge, and expertise reside with the country's scientists. Therefore, private investment should also be directed in a manner consistent with the national interest and indigenous technology.

I reiterate the vision of Homi J. Bhabha, the architect of India's nuclear programme, who envisaged a three-stage nuclear strategy—moving from uranium to plutonium-thorium and finally to thorium-uranium. While we have mastered the first stage, progress in the second stage has been delayed, particularly the commissioning of fast breeder reactors. Given that India is uranium-deficient but thorium-rich, with nearly 25 per cent of the world's thorium reserves, I strongly believe that our ultimate energy security lies in thorium. Eminent nuclear scientist Dr. Anil Kakodkar has rightly argued that it is time to use thorium even in the first stage, enabling us to leapfrog directly to the third stage rather than remain dependent on imported uranium. I urge the Government to trust India's own scientific capability and public institutions instead of over-relying on private or foreign players. Our public sector, especially NPCIL, must remain the engine of the nuclear programme, as seen in countries like France where nuclear power remains under government control. I support private investment, but only in a secondary and supportive role. Ignoring the public sector and reversing this balance would damage the original vision of Bhabha and other pioneers who built India's nuclear strength through public institutions and national self-reliance.

SHRIMATI KIRAN CHOUDHRY: SHANTI Bill, 2025 is not merely a legal reform but a historic and landmark step towards strengthening India's energy security. By ending decades of fragmentation and policy paralysis, this Bill establishes a unified, modern nuclear framework covering safety, licensing, liability and compensation. While India's nuclear journey began long ago, earlier indecision stalled progress; Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee ji laid a strong foundation, and under the decisive leadership of our hon. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi ji, that vision is now being carried forward with confidence. The Bill permits only limited and strictly regulated private participation, while critical areas such as fuel enrichment, reprocessing and spent fuel management remain fully under Government control, ensuring that national security and sovereignty are never compromised. India cannot achieve de-carbonization without a firm non-fossil base load, as coal still dominates our power mix. The SHANTI Bill strengthens nuclear capacity, including safer Small Modular Reactors, ensuring grid stability, clean growth and fulfillment of our climate commitments. As the daughter of a Brigadier, I am deeply hurt when national security is questioned, especially when this Government has transformed hesitation into strategic confidence. Unlike the past, when nuclear expansion suffered due to apathy and liability confusion, the present Government has revived stalled projects, expanded capacity, and earned global trust through collaborations like Kudankulam and Jaitapur. This Bill represents clarity over confusion, progress over paralysis, and confidence over fear, and I urge all Members to support it in the national interest.

SHRIMATI SAGARIKA GHOSE: I oppose the SHANTI Bill, 2025, because I believe it brings not peace or security, but grave danger disguised as development. We are not questioning India's long-standing commitment to responsible nuclear energy; rather, I question whether this Government is now willing to abdicate sovereign responsibility, compromise public safety, and place a highly sensitive strategic sector in the hands of crony capitalists and foreign pressures. This Bill, in my view, is not reform but recklessness, driven by profit and surrender rather than public interest. The Government's target of 100 GW of nuclear capacity by 2047 is being pursued through privatization that risks turning into oligarchization. By allowing any entity authorised by the Centre to establish and operate nuclear installations, the Bill ends seven decades of State exclusivity and favours a few powerful corporate players. Nuclear energy is not a routine commercial activity; it is a strategic national asset with catastrophic risks, where even a single failure can devastate land, water, and lives for generations. Profit maximisation and cost-cutting cannot guide such a sector. I am particularly alarmed by the diluted liability regime under this Bill, which repeals the CLND Act, 2010, and caps operator liability at an absurdly low level. This weakens the doctrine of absolute liability upheld after the Bhopal Gas Disaster and makes Government compensation discretionary, leaving victims and communities vulnerable. Global disasters like Chernobyl and Fukushima show that nuclear accidents

cause damage far exceeding these caps. In my view, this Bill undermines safety, accountability, and sovereignty, and therefore must be opposed. I strongly question why this Bill imposes a cap on nuclear liability when sites like Tarapur and Kudankulam are located near densely populated urban areas. The 2010 Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage Act clearly defined the operator as a Government or Government company and guaranteed the *right of recourse* against suppliers under Section 17. The SHANTI Bill fundamentally alters this by redefining the operator to include any company and shifting liability and recourse from statute to private contracts, where suppliers can shield themselves through fine print negotiated from unequal bargaining positions. This makes supplier liability voluntary and leaves victims uncertain and unprotected. I believe removing the right of recourse is an anti-people move that favours oligarchs over citizens. Profit and nuclear safety cannot coexist. Nuclear accidents are not hypothetical fears—Chernobyl and Bhopal stand as tragic reminders that weak oversight and prioritizing output over safety destroy lives for generations. Nuclear radiation does not negotiate, forgive, or respect corporate contracts. This Bill further weakens safety by allowing exemptions for facilities deemed “low risk” and by ignoring long-term radiation injury, in violation of international conventions. Energy security cannot come at the cost of human security. I am deeply concerned that this rush to open the nuclear sector coincides with foreign pressure, particularly from the United States, and enables foreign investment in atomic energy by removing the “Government company only” clause. This raises serious questions about sovereignty and whether India’s nuclear law is being rewritten to suit foreign commercial interests rather than protect its people.

This is not a peace-oriented Bill but a dangerous proposal that is being rushed without adequate debate, stakeholder consultation, or legislative scrutiny. With barely a few hours’ notice and discussion, it is unacceptable to deliberate on a law that carries serious nuclear risks and consequences for humanity itself. Nuclear radiation poses grave dangers, and the lives of Indian citizens are directly at stake. Many nuclear installations and uranium mining operations in India are located in tribal regions, where indigenous communities have already suffered severe health and environmental damage. I urge the Government to pause and reconsider this legislation. Such a critical Bill demands deeper discussion, wider consultation, and a more responsible process. In its present form and rushed manner, this Bill must not be passed, as the safety and lives of citizens remain at risk.

SHRI P. WILSON: I oppose this Bill as a dangerous and reckless move to privatize the nuclear energy sector, which is a core sovereign function of the State. There is nothing peaceful or transformative about this legislation; instead, it weakens government oversight and threatens national security. I am particularly concerned that the Bill allows private entities to control multiple stages of the nuclear fuel cycle, from mining to waste management, driven primarily by profit rather than public safety. Such provisions pose serious risks to the country and must not be accepted in their present form. This Bill creates a dangerous concentration of power by allowing private monopolies to control the entire nuclear fuel cycle, greatly increasing systemic risk. A single technical, financial, or ethical failure could trigger catastrophic national consequences. Nuclear energy is unlike any other infrastructure sector; it involves fissile material, radioactive waste, and technologies capable of devastating regions for generations, and therefore cannot be subordinated to corporate profit motives. History—from Chernobyl to Fukushima—shows that nuclear disasters result from failures of regulation and oversight. This Bill weakens accountability by diluting liability and shifting risks onto the public, while private operators stand to benefit. At a time of worsening climate risks and unresolved radioactive waste disposal challenges, expanding nuclear power under private control is irresponsible. By capping operator liability and transferring excess costs to taxpayers, this legislation privatizes profits while socializing risk, endangering public safety, national security, and energy sovereignty. The Chernobyl disaster cost up to \$700 billion (about Rs. 58 lakh crores), showing the catastrophic potential of nuclear accidents. In contrast, this Bill caps private operator liability at just Rs. 3,000 crores, leaving farmers, workers, future generations, and taxpayers to bear the rest. This is an unacceptable risk. This Bill is draconian, prioritizing corporate interests over public safety and environmental security. If we truly value “Shanti,” we should invest in energy that is safe, sustainable, and democratic. I urge the Government to reject the SHANTI Bill, 2025 in its current form or refer it to a Select or Joint Parliamentary Committee for proper scrutiny.

DR. SANDEEP KUMAR PATHAK: This Bill is one of the important laws that will determine the direction of the country. In 10–20 years, we will look back and question whether including private companies in our nuclear energy sector was the right decision. I want to thank and honor Dr. Homi Bhabha, Dr. Kakodkar, and all the scientists who laid the foundation of this field and made it self-reliant. This Bill amends the Atomic Energy Act of 1962 and the Liability Act of 2010 to allow private and foreign investment. Before proceeding, we must clarify whether the country should advance in nuclear energy or focus more on renewable energy sectors such as solar, wind, hydro, and hydrogen. If nuclear energy is pursued, we must carefully consider its expensive, complex, and risky nature, particularly regarding the lifecycle and safe disposal of nuclear waste. A thorough study of all these aspects is essential before involving private companies. Our scientists have made remarkable progress in the field of nuclear energy while maintaining high safety standards. However, the fundamental question before us today is whether we should move towards renewable energy or expand nuclear energy. Technologically advanced countries such as Germany, Italy, Japan, Spain, and Belgium have decided to phase out nuclear energy, while some other countries continue to invest in it. When Dr. Manmohan Singh introduced the Bill related to the nuclear agreement in 2005, was the opposition to foreign involvement political or ideological? Today, when our indigenous technology has matured and we can expand on our own under the ‘Make in India’ initiative, why is there a need to bring in private companies? We are adopting foreign models without bringing in equally strong regulatory frameworks. In our country, there are serious examples of health and environmental damage around uranium mining areas, where conditions remain worrying even under government control. The Bhopal gas tragedy and rising uranium contamination clearly show that unless regulatory institutions and institutional discipline are strengthened, private participation will only increase the risks. We have capable engineers and scientists in the field of nuclear energy, but the main question today is whether our regulatory institutions are sufficiently independent and strong. Even in coal-based thermal power plants, we have not established institutional discipline and environmental monitoring, so why bring in private companies for nuclear energy? The new ‘Shanti Bill, 2025’ should include a fully independent, statutory regulatory body, transparent licensing, public disclosure of safety documents, and a clear liability framework. Currently, the operator, promoter, and regulator are the same, which is unacceptable. Like in the USA, UK, and Canada, the regulator should report to Parliament. Additionally, the bill should provide clarity regarding thorium mining and the potential involvement of private companies, so that environmental and safety risks can be effectively controlled.

SHRI AYODHYA RAMI REDDY ALLA: I support the broader vision of clean energy and energy security reflected in this Bill and welcome provisions that retain Central Government control over sensitive nuclear activities, strengthen the AERB, and regulate radiation facilities beyond power generation. However, I am concerned about permitting private operators in nuclear power and strongly oppose capping their liability. I also point out serious gaps in community consultation, transparency, emergency preparedness, and long-term nuclear waste responsibility. Without addressing these governance and environmental concerns, public confidence will remain weak and future generations may bear unresolved risks. Host States allowing nuclear facilities must receive assured and tangible benefits, as the Bill centralizes authority without strengthening State and district preparedness. If private operators are involved, there must be clear provisions for local employment, community development, and transparent compensation mechanisms. I also call for a long-term national atomic energy strategy, stronger Centre–State coordination, and a significantly empowered AERB. Mandatory State-level consultations, integrated disaster preparedness, and a clear benefit-sharing framework should be built into the system. With these safeguards, my party supports the Bill.

SHRI MUZIBULLA KHAN: I would like to draw the attention of the Government to the historical fact that India’s nuclear energy programme was initiated in 1954 during the leadership of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, under the guidance of Dr. Homi Jehangir Bhabha. Our country adopted nuclear energy with the objective of peace and future development. In keeping with this vision, India conducted its first nuclear test on 18 May 1974, under the leadership of the then Hon’ble Prime Minister, Smt. Indira Gandhi.

When India conducted its first nuclear test, it created a stir across the world, but our objective was not a display of power; it was peace. On 11 and 13 May 1998, under the leadership of Shri Atal

Bihari Vajpayee, these tests were conducted again. Dr. Kalam not only gave the nation nuclear capability but also proved through missile technology that India can ensure its own security. The Bill being introduced today will provide opportunities to private companies, but along with that, safety must be given the highest priority. Nuclear energy is as useful as it is dangerous. If any accident occurs, it must be clearly defined who will take responsibility and how the affected people will be compensated. Tragedies such as the Bhopal gas disaster, Chernobyl, and Fukushima warn us that there is no room for negligence. Safe disposal of nuclear waste and strong regulations are essential, especially when private companies are involved. I want the Government to put in place clear mechanisms so that the safety of the environment, fishermen, farmers, and ordinary citizens is ensured, and people are not forced to run from court to court for years in search of justice. I come from the State of Odisha, where there are fishermen, farmers, dense forests, and wildlife, and the same situation exists in many other States of the country as well. God forbid that any accident should occur, but if such an accident happens in the nuclear sector, who will provide compensation—that is the most serious question. This Bill must clearly provide that whichever private companies are involved will bear the responsibility of compensation. The Government's target is to generate 100 gigawatts of electricity by 2047, and we are not opposed to development. However, if this Bill is passed in haste, it could pose a serious threat in the future to human life, the environment, and even the lives of animals and birds. Therefore, I urge that this Bill be sent to a Joint Parliamentary Committee so that it can be examined thoroughly and its shortcomings can be addressed in time.

PROF. MANOJ KUMAR JHA: Looking at this Bill, I feel as if some invisible force is making everyone chant “Shanti–Om Shanti.” Our nuclear programme has historically been based on certain principles, and one of the most important among them was that wherever there is a possibility of catastrophic risk, the State should not be absent. However, in this Bill, I see a document reflecting the absence of the State. If we look at global experience, countries like China, France, and Russia—which contribute significantly to global nuclear power generation—have a dominant role of State ownership. The only exception is the United States of America, where most of the nuclear sector is in private hands. I would clearly say that the American model cannot be considered the best example for my country. I am clearly concerned that while this Bill is privatizing the benefits on one hand and on the other it is simultaneously making risk to public, which is not appropriate for the people of India and the interests of the states. It is necessary to seriously consider the geopolitical consequences, its impact on the federal structure, and critical issues such as safety and transparency. The risks are local, but the decisions will be made in the Delhi corridors of power, which creates a clear discrepancy. I am not opposed to privatization, but the country's sovereign authority, standards, and destiny should not be surrendered to a few selected economic interests. It is the duty of this Parliament to ensure balance, safety, and transparency in this Bill so that, in the name of ‘Shanti’ (peace), it does not become an ‘Om Shanti’ moment for the states and the people.

DR. M. THAMBIDURAI: AIADMK has always stood firmly in support of scientific progress, clean energy initiatives, and national self-reliance. I would also like to place on record our deep appreciation for India's nuclear scientists, engineers, and researchers, whose tireless efforts, often under international constraints, have strengthened India's position as a responsible nuclear power. AIADMK salutes their dedication and service to the nation. States like Tamil Nadu host major nuclear installations such as Kalpakkam and Kudankulam, and continued engagement between the Centre and the host States is essential to address public concerns and build confidence in nuclear energy. In Kudankulam, people are still agitating, and their concerns must be respected. The Central Government must take care of their interests, and AIADMK has always insisted on this while standing firmly with the people of Kudankulam. At the same time, I welcome the Government's emphasis on cooperative federalism. Although nuclear energy is a highly specialised sector requiring strong central coordination, the Union Government has consistently worked with State Governments on safety, emergency preparedness, and local development, and this approach must continue.

SHRIMATI SUDHA MURTY: I want to say that for *Viksit Bharat 2047*, energy independence is absolutely essential. Without energy, nothing is possible. The sun is one source of energy, but as of today, solar energy cannot be stored for long periods, and after a few decades, it may not even work efficiently. Hydro energy was easier in the olden days, but today, with changing geopolitics and climate, building dams and managing water is not simple. Coal energy can be used,

but it emits a lot of pollution, which is not good for the environment. Wind energy is intermittent, and transmission is also a problem. Considering all these points, nuclear energy, while not perfect, is the most acceptable option in today's circumstances. I also want to refer to history, as my colleague mentioned the East India Company. Yes, it came in 1630 and established a small shop in Surat, but India was not what it is today. Today, India is completely different, united, and no one can just come and occupy or trade in India so easily. Even though we argue and debate on many things, on the lighter side, we are all Indians, irrespective of our states, and this unity makes our energy and progress decisions even more significant. I firmly believe that privatization is not a bad word. In fact, it creates wealth, improves quality, and ultimately reduces poverty. With proper control, privatization can work alongside the Government, not against it. The public sector alone cannot bear the huge financial burden required for nuclear power expansion, which is why controlled privatization is necessary. Like many of my generation, I grew up associating nuclear power only with destruction, but we often forget its immense positive role in medicine, agriculture, and modern life. For me, nuclear energy is like a modern Kalpavriksha—it brings hope, peace, and a better future. That is why calling this the *Shanti Bill* is so appropriate. If we truly want to realize the Prime Minister's vision of *Viksit Bharat by 2047*, we need power. Today, nuclear energy contributes only 8.8 GW, but our goal is 100 GW. This cannot happen overnight. We must begin now, with planning, technology, and long-term commitment, and this Bill is the first essential step. There is nothing wrong in learning from global best practices while remaining rooted in our values. Countries like France, Korea, the UK, Japan, and the USA offer valuable lessons—from waste reuse to modular reactors and privatized models—which we can adapt to India's needs. Above all, safety must remain paramount. With a strong regulatory framework and innovations like Small Modular Reactors, we can ensure efficiency, safety, and sustainability. If we move forward with optimism, discipline, and care—like a mother's affection guided by a scientist's rigor—I am confident this Bill will help India grow, innovate, and become truly self-reliant.

SHRI K.R. SURESH REDDY: This is an important piece of legislation for a rapidly developing nation like ours with growing electricity needs. On behalf of my Party and myself, I appreciate the efforts of our nuclear scientists and their staff, whose work has enabled India to proudly stand as one of the strong nuclear nations. The Bill aims to add substantial electricity to meet rising demand and has raised hopes, particularly in rural and far-flung areas. As an agriculture-based country, access to power is essential to prevent the wastage of river and rainwater, much of which flows into the sea due to the lack of electricity required for pumping.

If this Bill can ensure power access to deprived areas that have natural resources, it will help India reach greater heights and strengthen food security. Industrialisation is key to the vision of *Viksit Bharat*, and power is the backbone of industrial growth, especially for small enterprises in towns and district levels. The Bill also supports emerging technologies like data centres and Artificial Intelligence, which require a huge quantum of power, and contributes to our low-carbon climate commitments. However, there are serious concerns regarding safety, particularly the absence of environmental liability, which contradicts our international commitments and raises questions about the right to a clean and healthy environment. Since nuclear mining occurs largely in tribal areas with existing health concerns, I urge that the Bill be referred to a Select Committee or be continuously monitored by the Committee on Environment, Science and Technology.

SHRI A. A. RAHIM: I strongly oppose this Bill as it goes against humanity, the interests of my country, future generations and the entire planet. It clearly protects private players, especially suppliers. The most critical issue is the liability cap. The present cap is inadequate and must be enhanced. This is the clear demand of my Party. Section 4(1)(b) of the Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage Act, 2010 clearly fixes liability on operators for nuclear damage arising from their installations. However, the most dangerous aspect of this Bill is that it selectively omits the liability of suppliers, which is highly objectionable. Section 13 again fixes the liability limit at 300 million Special Drawing Rights, the same approach adopted earlier. Section 14 further states that the Central Government will bear the excess liability, which means public money is being used to shield private operators. I recall the words of Shri Arun Jaitley, spoken in this very House when he was Leader of the Opposition, questioning why the Government should bear liabilities created by third parties. I ask the Treasury Benches whether they still stand by that position. I also recall Comrade

Sitaram Yechury, who reminded us that even decades after the Bhopal tragedy, victims were denied justice due to weak liability laws. The Left has consistently demanded strong liability provisions. Finally, Clause 81 bars the jurisdiction of civil courts, which raises serious concerns. I urge the Government not to undermine world peace and the future of coming generations. I strongly oppose this Bill and request that it be referred to a Select Committee.

PROF. RAM GOPAL YADAV: I oppose this bill because the Liability Act of 2010 was sent to the Standing Committee, and this bill, which has been introduced today, is equally important. Therefore, it should also be sent to the Standing Committee. At that time, as a member of the Standing Committee, I had said that we need uranium all the time – whether for peaceful purposes or other uses. Our country has such a large reserve of thorium that if we build fast breeder reactors and proceed with nuclear uranium-233 and its related technologies, we will not need to import uranium from others in the future. We will continue to import enriched uranium-235 or plutonium-239, which are used to make atomic bombs or weapons – but we have not progressed in that direction. Nuclear energy accounts for no more than two to three percent of our total energy production. But the risks associated with it are enormous. In this bill, you are removing the provision for supplier liability, without which the bill becomes meaningless. This means you are putting the people of the country at risk to benefit a few individuals. This arrangement ensures that even if the supplier is at fault, the public will bear the consequences, and the supplier will not be held responsible for providing adequate compensation. This bill is against the interests of the public. This will, sooner or later, create a monopoly in the nuclear sector for one or two individuals, over whom the government will have no control. Therefore, there is still time to amend this bill by sending it to the select committee. I urge the government to reconsider this and send this bill to the Select Committee.

SHRI RAMJI: Although nuclear power is considered a modern and powerful energy source, its risks and negative consequences far outweigh any benefits. There are dangers at every stage, from mining and transportation to operating the reactors. Extracting one kilogram of uranium produces 1,750 kilograms of radioactive waste. In Jadugora, Jharkhand, the population surrounding the uranium mines has already suffered from radiation exposure and is battling serious illnesses. We should learn from the numerous nuclear accidents that have occurred both domestically and internationally. These incidents happened when the government had complete control over the nuclear sector. If this sector falls into private hands and similar incidents occur, who will be held responsible? Our current nuclear power capacity is 8 gigawatts, and there are plans to increase it to 100 gigawatts. Another problem is that we can only install these reactors in low-risk seismic zones, which are often densely populated. Any accident in such an area would lead to a major catastrophe. Therefore, I request that this bill be sent to a standing committee after thorough discussion, and after consulting with experts of defense, geography department, and environment, as well as leading nuclear scientists.

SHRI JAGGESH: With a deep sense of responsibility towards the nation's future, I rise to strongly support the SHANTI Bill, 2025. This progressive legislation reflects the decisive leadership and clear vision of our Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, under whom India has moved from energy shortage to self-reliance. I also acknowledge the strong foundation laid by Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee through the Pokhran nuclear tests of 1998, which strengthened national security and established the importance of nuclear energy for both defence and development. Unfortunately, successive Congress Governments failed to carry this vision forward. Before 2013, frequent power cuts were common. Rural areas received only limited electricity and even cities suffered regular outages. After 2014, under the NDA Government every village was electrified. Rural India now receives nearly round-the-clock power, while urban areas enjoy uninterrupted electricity, transforming education, healthcare and industry. While renewable energy is important, it cannot alone meet round-the-clock baseload demand. Nuclear energy remains essential. The SHANTI Bill modernises outdated laws and allows limited private participation, while the Government retains full control over sensitive areas, ensuring safety and security. Under this Government, nuclear capacity has nearly doubled, new reactors have been approved, and small modular reactors are being promoted for safer and faster deployment. This reflects strategic confidence and global trust in India's leadership. Our leader is trying to make India developed by 2047 and I don't know why there is huge opposition even when good things happen in the country.

SHRIMATI PRIYANKA CHATURVEDI: I oppose this Bill. Those praising it for ease of doing business should state whether they would accept nuclear reactors within a 30-kilometre radius of their own constituencies. There is no independent regulatory body today that can fearlessly question the Government. When private players are being invited, there is no credible mechanism to hold them accountable. The Bhopal gas tragedy shows what happens in the absence of regulation and accountability, where victims still suffer and no one was punished. This Bill was rushed through both Houses without adequate discussion. By removing supplier liability and capping liability at ₹3,000 crore, we are ignoring the lessons of disasters like Fukushima and Chernobyl. Diluting RTI and capping operator liability allows private players to profit without responsibility. Strong accountability of the Atomic Energy Regulatory Board and wide consultations are essential.

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Secretary-General.

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