

LOK SABHA
SYNOPSIS OF DEBATES
(Proceedings other than Questions & Answers)

Thursday, August 8, 2024 / Sravana 17, 1946 (Saka)

THE WAQF (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2024

MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS; AND MINISTER OF MINORITY AFFAIRS (SHRI KIREN RIJJU): *moved* that leave be granted to introduce a Bill further to amend the Waqf Act, 1995.

SHRI K. C. VENUGOPAL: *opposing the motion for introduction of the Bill, said:* The provision that non-Muslims can also be a part of the Waqf Council is directly an attack on the faith and freedom of religion. This is a fundamental attack on the Constitution. This Bill is taking away the rights with regard to the data collection from the States and now the rights are coming to the Centre. That is an attack on the Freedom of Religion and the federal system as well. This amendment is also going to create a dispute with regard to each and every mosque, where there is no deed. Therefore, we are totally objecting to the Bill.

SHRI MOHIBBULLAH: When any Muslim cannot be part of any Hindu-related institution and the Gurudwara Management Committee consists of only Sikhs, then why is this sort of injustice being meted out to Muslims? Waqf manages the religious affairs of Muslims. Through this amendment, the Collector is being empowered to take decisions in the matters of the Waqf Board. It does not augur well that someone else is going to make decisions in matters related to our religion. Through this, the Government is meddling in the matters of our religion. Such legislation will cast a shadow over the reputation of the country. It will destroy the spirit of the Constitution. If this happens, then no minority will feel safe in India.

SHRI SUDIP BANDYOPADHYAY: This Bill is violative of Article 14 which is equality before law. It is unconstitutional due to a violation of Articles 25

and 26 of the Constitution which talks about the Right to Freedom of Religion. It is against federalism as land is stated in the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution. It is a State subject. Therefore, I strongly object to the introduction of this Bill.

SHRIMATI KANIMOZHI KARUNANIDHI: This Bill violates Article 25 and Article 26 of the Constitution, which say that we have a right to follow a religion and manage our own religious affairs. This Bill allows non-Muslims to be a part of the Waqf Board. It is a direct violation of Article 30 of the Constitution which deals with the minorities to administer their own institutions. The District Collector and a committee above the Waqf Board will now be deciding to whom the land or the property belongs. So, this Bill is completely against the Muslims and the minorities.

SHRIMATI SUPRIYA SULE: No detailed consultations have been done with the people who, actually, are running Waqf Board today. So, I request to this Government to either withdraw it or if they do not want to withdraw it, at least, send it to a Standing Committee. I request the Government to make a committee after having an all-party meeting. In Section 3C, the issue related to the Collector is very, very worrying. A Collector cannot make these decisions unilaterally. We vehemently object to that. You have deleted Section 40. If you are really bringing in transparency into a system, why are you deleting Section 40? The Waqf Tribunal is completely weakened. The Tribunal has no power. If anybody can challenge and go to the High Court, then what is the role of the Tribunal? Section 108B says that the rules will be made by the Central Government. If it is so, then what will be the role of the States? So, my request is that in Section 108B, the States need to have their powers. Please do not take their powers away. Please withdraw this Bill. Let us have a more detailed discussion and only then, bring in a Bill. Once this Bill is passed, the evacuation of the encroached properties will become impossible.

SHRI E. T. MOHAMMED BASHEER: I vehemently oppose the very presentation of this Bill. It is a violation of the Fundamental Rights enshrined in our Constitution under Articles 14, 15, 25, 26 and 30. If this Bill is passed, the entire Waqf system will collapse and various bodies like the Waqf Board, and the Waqf Councils, will have no existence. This Bill will spoil the secular nature of this country. As per this Bill, the Collector will be superior to the Chairman of the Waqf Board.

SHRI K. RADHAKRISHNAN: I strongly oppose the Wakf (Amendment) Bill. This Bill is against our motto 'Unity in Diversity'. This Bill has violated Articles 25, 26, 27, 28 and 30 of the Constitution. As per the Bill, the Wakf Board will become a nominated body. Before bringing this Bill, no consultation has been done by the Government with any State or with any Muslim or other organisations. I would request the Government either to withdraw this Bill or send it to the Standing Committee for wider consultations.

SHRI N. K. PREMACHANDRAN: I very strongly oppose this Wakf (Amendment) Bill, 2024. First, the provisions of the Bill violate Fundamental Rights envisaged in Articles 25 to 28 of the Constitution. Second, it violates Article 13(2) of the Constitution. Third, the Bill is against the basic feature of secularism enshrined in our Constitution. They are disempowering the Wakf Board as well as the Council. They are removing Section 104. Then, removing Section 40 means that there is no need for the Wakf Board. The Wakf Board becomes totally powerless. It is a total dismantling of the system. So, it is absolutely against the principles of the Constitution and it lacks *bona fides* also. Hence, I appeal to the Government to withdraw the Bill or kindly send it to some Committee for close scrutiny of the Bill and let us discuss it with the stakeholders.

***DR. THOL THIRUMAAVALAVAN:**

SHRI ASADUDDIN OWAISI: I oppose the introduction of the Bill under Rule 72(2) on the grounds that this House does not have the competence to make these amendments. This Bill patently violates the principles provided in Articles 14, 15, and 25. It is a grave attack on the basic structure of the Constitution as it violates the principle of judicial independence and separation of powers. The waqf management of a property is an essential religious practice for Muslims. The existing law protected the status of the registered waqf properties and it has been replaced. By empowering the Collector to determine the title, you are violating the principles of natural justice. This Bill excludes the tribunals' decisions from being final. In Section 107, it has been made more difficult to recover the encroached waqf properties. Section 37 removes protection to waqf properties.

SHRI IMRAN MASOOD: I oppose the Waqf (Amendment) Bill, 2024. Article 15 states that there should be no discrimination on the basis of religion,

* Please see Supplement

race, caste, gender, or place of birth. The Waqf Board manages mosques. All mosques come under it. By depleting the powers of the Waqf Board and bringing DM Raj, you are conspiring to destroy all the properties, which are about 8 lakh acres under the Waqf Board across the country.

SHRI AKHILESH YADAV: This Bill is being introduced as a part of a very well-thought-out politics. When the process of democratic election is already in place then why is the provision for nomination being made? In other religious issues or religious bodies, no one from other community is included in them. Then, what is the justification for including non-Muslims in the Waqf Board? I oppose this Bill.

SHRI KALYAN BANERJEE: I am opposed to the introduction of this legislation. This is beyond the legislative competence of the Central Government to make the amendment with respect to land title which falls under the Seventh Schedule. Property is the subject which can be decided by the civil courts, and not by any other authority. This Bill is completely contrary to Constitutional morality. It is malicious legislation because this Bill is targeting the Muslims of this country.

SHRI MIAN ALTAF AHMAD: India is globally recognized for its secularism. I urge the Government to avoid distorting the country's image by introducing such a Bill.

SHRI P. V. MIDHUN REDDY: I rise to oppose the introduction of this Bill. I want that wide consultations may be held with the representatives of the Muslim community before the passage of the Bill.

***SHRI SUBBARAYAN K.:**

SHRI GAURAV GOGOI: I urge the Government to consider Articles 15, 25, 26, 29, and 30 of the Constitution, as this law pertains directly to religion and faith. We should approach this matter with sensitivity towards the Islamic community, as Waqf is a significant aspect of their beliefs. This Bill lacks trustworthiness, and therefore, we oppose it.

* Please see Supplement

The following Members made submission on the Bill:-

MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ; AND MINISTER OF FISHERIES, ANIMAL HUSBANDRY AND DAIRYING (SHRI RAJIV RANJAN SINGH ALIAS LALAN SINGH): This amendment does not aim at tampering with the matters related to mosque. This law is being enacted to bring about transparency in the institution formed under the law. The Waqf Board has been formed by law and if any institution formed by law becomes autocratic, then the Government has the right to formulate legislation to bring about transparency in it. This Bill is not divisive in the name of religion. It should be introduced to ensure that the institution functions in a transparent manner.

SHRI G. M. HARISH BALAYOGI: We appreciate the concern with which the Government has brought this Bill. The purpose of the donors needs to be protected. But, when the purpose and the power get misused, it becomes the responsibility of the Government to bring in reforms and introduce transparency in the system. We believe that the registration of the property as proposed in this Bill is going to help the poor Muslims and women in the country by bringing transparency. However, if a wider consultation is required to remove the misconception, we have no problem sending it to the Select Committee.

DR. SHRIKANT EKNATH SHINDE: The purpose of this Bill is to ensure transparency and accountability. The Government has included provisions to represent Muslim women within this Bill. The Waqf Board, which is the third largest landholder, is currently involved in over 85,000 cases related to Waqf land nationwide, with more than 165 cases pending in the Supreme Court and High Courts. This Bill aims to introduce necessary reforms to the Waqf system and promote development. I support this Bill.

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS; AND MINISTER OF MINORITY AFFAIRS (SHRI KIREN RIJJU) *replying said:* I am confident that, once fully informed about this Bill, all members of this House will support it. The Bill does not infringe upon the freedoms guaranteed to religious bodies under Articles 25 to 30 of the Constitution, nor does it violate any constitutional provisions. Its purpose is to provide opportunities and empowerment to women, children, and marginalized individuals within Muslim society. The Waqf Amendment Act of 1995 has been completely ineffective and the purpose for

which this Act was brought was not being fulfilled. Many mistakes have been found in it. Some steps have been taken for that. In the 1976 Waqf Inquiry Report, it has been said that the entire Waqf Board has come under the control of *Mutawallis*, and appropriate steps should be taken to discipline it. The second recommendation of the 1976 Waqf Inquiry Report is that there are so many litigations and differences among them that a tribunal system should be formed to simplify them. These were the recommendations of that time. The third point is about audits and accounts. The method of audit and accounts in the Waqf Board is not proper, there should be complete management of it. This has been said in the report of that time. Lastly, it recommends improvement in the category of *Waqf-Alal-Aulad*. There should be improvement in the Waqf that we give to children. There are a total of 8 lakh 72 thousand 320 Waqf properties and our WAMSI portal cannot determine the complete value. But its market value is likely to be many folds more than what the Sachar Committee has said. The committee's recommendation said that the existing Waqf Board should be broad-based. There should be two women in the Central Waqf Council and State Waqf Board. This is also a recommendation of the Sachar Committee. The Sachar Committee has clearly said that priority should be given to women and children. The JPC has clearly said about the Waqf Board that there is no proper infrastructure. The workforce there is completely ineffective and inefficient and the funds are so low that they are not managed properly. The Waqf Board cannot run in this manner. All the existing Waqf Boards across the country should be surveyed again. For poor Muslims, whether it is legal matters or something else, the right things need to be done inside the Waqf Board and for that expert lawyers etc. need to be brought on the board, so that it can be more efficient. The entire Waqf Board should be computerized, the database should be centralized and the mutation should be in the revenue records. In our country, no law, no special law can be super law. No law can be above the Constitution. It is the responsibility of this House that if there is any deficiency in providing justice to a poor woman, whoever she may be, be it a Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, Christian, Buddhist, Parsi, Jain or anyone else, then it is the responsibility of this House to fulfil it. Through this Bill, we are removing the Law of Limitation. The Waqf Act, of 1995 had also overridden the Law of Limitation. By raising a one-sided voice, some people are raising the voice of a few people in the name of the entire Muslim community here in this House today. As far as discussions are concerned, we have had discussions at many levels. We have had very extensive discussions across the country at the official

level, at the political level, with representatives of state governments and also at the personal level. We have spoken to the chairmen, CEOs and other official representatives of the Waqf Boards of 19 States and Union Territories. About the Wakf Board, many people have approached me and said that all the State Wakf Boards in the country have been captured by the mafia. The Government has conducted extensive consultations at the official level, and political level, with representatives of State Governments and at the individual level across the country. Everyone has also identified the problems very closely. The Government has not suddenly brought this Waqf Board Amendment Bill in the year 2024. I would like to tell you after how much extensive consultation exercise, I am presenting this Bill before you today. We have held consultations with Waqf Board Chairman, CEOs and other official representatives of 19 states and Union Territories, including members of different communities such as Ahmadiyyas, Bohras, Pasmandas, Agakhanis, women representatives and all the backward Muslims. In this regard, discussions were held with the general public and common Muslims. Suggestions were received regarding what steps should be taken to improve the State Waqf Board. Recommendations have been made about the property of the Waqf Board as to how it should be utilized, and how it should be maintained, so there is a need for amendment in it. A meeting was held in Delhi under the chairmanship of the Chairperson of the Central Waqf Council. The meeting was attended by Sunnis and Shiyas Muslims of various states. You have no idea as to how much resentment is there among the Muslim people against the Waqf Board. I would like to put some individual cases in front of you. First of all, many representations from Ahmadiyyas have come to me. These include representations from the State Waqf Board, Karnataka, Kerala, Telangana and Tamil Nadu. A case has also been registered in the Central Waqf Council and this case has also been filed in the National Commission for Minorities. One individual case is that of the Bohra community. There is a trust in Mumbai. In the year 1944, the High Court settled the said case. The biggest cluster development scheme for Maharashtra was launched at the same place under NDA Government. At such a time, one person in Gujarat registered a complaint against this property and the Waqf Board notified this thing. He is a resident of somewhere else and he created disturbance by complaining about a developmental project and interfering through the Waqf Board. The 1500-year-old Sri Sundareswarar Temple existed in Tiruchirapalli district in Tamil Nadu. A person living in the village there went to sell his 1.5 acres of land. He was told that the village is Waqf land. The entire village has been

declared Waqf property. We are MPs of this House and we should have a natural concern about these things. Take the case of Surat Municipal Corporation. This is not private land. The entire headquarters of Surat Municipal Corporation was declared a Waqf property. This is one case of a lady from Lucknow. If the system of the Waqf Board is not amended, then she and her children will not be able to get this property. In this Bill, we have changed the title. Now the nomenclature of this Bill will be – United Waqf Act Management Empowerment and Development Act, 1995. Therefore, I hope that you will understand the provisions of this Bill and strongly support it. We have made another provision in this Bill. The tribunals that have been formed will have one judicial and one technical member. Today, a total of 12,792 cases of the Waqf Board are pending. 19,207 cases are pending in tribunals. Justice should be given, but justice should be given on time. Therefore, the Bill provides that whatever filing takes place, the appeal should be made within 90 days and disposal of the cases should be within six months. Technological induction is mandatory in the Waqf Board. The technology will be used to run the Waqf Board in a scientific and transparent manner. There is a portal of the Central Government. It will have the format of the entire account. Now representation of women has become mandatory in the Central Waqf Council and State Waqf Board. It has been decided to give representation to Bohras, Aga khans and Backward Classes. We have taken great care of children and women. After the Act is passed, no Muslim child or woman should remain deprived of justice. We have made concrete provisions for this. The proceeds and income from Waqf properties will be dedicated to the welfare of the Muslim community, particularly benefiting poor and marginalized Muslim women.

Additionally, I propose that a Joint Parliamentary Committee be constituted and the Waqf (Amendment) Bill, 2024 may be referred to it.

The Bill was introduced.

THE MUSSALMANN WAKF (REPEAL) BILL, 2024

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS; AND MINISTER OF MINORITY AFFAIRS (SHRI KIREN RIJJU) *moved* that leave be granted to introduce a Bill to repeal the Mussalman Wakf Act, 1923.

PROF. SOUGATA RAY *opposing the introduction of the Bill said:* It is a

matter of apprehension that the Government wants to seize the Mussalman Wakf property. The estimated value of the same is 1.2 lakh crore rupees. The Government wants two Muslim Women and two Non-Muslim members to become members of the Board. If a Non-Muslim Member comes to the Board, then the sanctity of the Wakf Board shall be tarnished. It is a Muslim property gifted by a Muslim for the benefit of Muslims. I vehemently oppose the efforts being made to withdraw the Bill on Mussalman Wakf Act. It is a very sensitive Bill. There should be no haste or compulsion in introducing the same. All these things should not be under the control of the Government.

SHRI KIREN RIJJU *replying said:* I would like to inform the Honorable Members that the Mussalman Wakf Act, which came into force on August 5, 1923, was applicable to the entirety of British India at that time. Since its enactment, this Act has become redundant and is no longer applicable. Therefore, I have introduced this amendment to repeal it.

The Bill was introduced.

***MATTERS UNDER RULE 377**

- (1) **SHRI KRIPANATH MALLAH** laid a statement regarding the need to include the Bishnupriya Manipuri community of Assam in the list of Other Backward Classes (OBCs).
- (2) **SHRI ALOK SHARMA** laid a statement regarding violation of terms of lease agreement of land of BHEL, Bhopal leased out to industrialists.
- (3) **SHRI AJAY BHATT** laid a statement regarding the need to re-establish Indian Veterinary Research Institute in Mukteshwar, Nainital district, Uttarakhand.
- (4) **SHRI BRIJMOHAN AGRAWAL** laid a statement regarding a special package for people who suffered economic loss due to flooding from dam in Raipur Parliamentary Constituency, Chhattisgarh.
- (5) **SHRIMATI DAGGUBATI PURANDESWARI** laid a statement regarding the need to acknowledge Rajahmundry in Andhra Pradesh as a heritage city and include the same under HRIDAY Scheme.

* Laid on the Table as directed by the Chair.

- (6) **SHRI RAMESH AWASTHI** laid a statement regarding the need to make operational two shifts of the Air Traffic Control system in Kanpur airport.
- (7) **SHRI RAJPALSINH MAHENDRASINH JADAV** laid a statement regarding development of Lunavada Railway station in Panchmahal Parliamentary Constituency, Gujarat.
- (8) **SHRI SHASHANK MANI** laid a statement regarding development of temples in small districts and promotion of Sanskrit language.
- (9) **SHRI HARIBHAI PATEL** laid a statement regarding the need to start a scheme for free treatment of children with type – 1 diabetes.
- (10) **SHRI ARVIND DHARMAPURI** laid a statement regarding the need to expedite completion of railway projects in Nizamabad Parliamentary Constituency and reinstatement of Nizamabad-bound discontinued trains.
- (11) **SHRIMATI MAHIMA KUMARI MEWAR** laid a statement regarding the need to establish a Kendriya Vidyalaya in Rajasmand District Headquarters, Rajasthan.
- (12) **DR. MOHAMMAD JAWED** laid a statement regarding the need for establishment of a health and research institute like AIIMS in Kishanganj, Bihar.
- (13) **ADV. DEAN KURIAKOSE** laid a statement regarding the need for amendment of Wildlife Act alongwith comprehensive measures to protect the life and property of farmers from menace of wild animals.
- (14) **DR. MALLU RAVI** laid a statement regarding the need to provide financial assistance for development of various infrastructure projects in Ranga Reddy district, Telangana.
- (15) **SHRI GURJEET SINGH AUJLA** laid a statement regarding the need to review the decision to impose 200% duty on Indo-Pak trade through Wagah Border.
- (16) **SUSHRI IQRA CHOUDHARY** laid a statement regarding the need to set up a trauma centre in Shamli district, Uttar Pradesh.
- (17) **SHRI DHARMENDRA YADAV** laid a statement regarding the need to repair the roads excavated during laying of pipelines under ‘Har Ghar Nal Se Jal’ Scheme in Azamgarh Parliamentary Constituency, Uttar Pradesh.

- (18) **SHRI K. E. PRAKASH** laid a statement regarding the need to take steps to eliminate Water Hyacinth from river Cauvery along with measures to make the river pollution- free including construction of embankment along the said river in Tamil Nadu.
- (19) **SHRI G. M. HARISH BALAYOGI** laid a statement regarding the need to setup a National Coir Training and Design Centre in Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Konaseema district of Andhra Pradesh.
- (20) **SHRI SUNIL KUMAR** laid a statement regarding the need to establish a ‘Champan Sangrahalay’ in Lauria in Valmikinagar Parliamentary Constituency, Bihar.
- (21) **SHRI DILESHWAR KAMAIT** laid a statement regarding establishment of Kendriya Vidyalaya at SSB Camp at Birpur in Supaul Parliamentary Constituency, Bihar.
- (22) **SHRI OMPRAKASH BHUPALSINH ALIAS PAVAN RAJENIMBALKAR** laid a statement regarding the need to expedite construction of NH 65 in Osmanabad Parliamentary Constituency, Maharashtra.
- (23) **SHRIMATI SUPRIYA SULE** laid a statement regarding the need to expedite approval of applications of pensioners who opted for enhanced coverage under Employees’ Provident Fund Organization (EPFO) Pension.
- (24) **SHRI SUDAMA PRASAD** laid a statement regarding refund of money to investors who invested in various schemes of Sahara Company.
- (25) **SHRI. SELVARAJ V.** laid a statement regarding the need to expedite the process of acquisition of land in Karuvadikuppam village in Puducherry acquired for establishment and expansion of Coast Guard Unit by Indian navy.

THE BHARATIYA VAYUYAN VIDHEYAK, 2024

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI KINJARAPU RAMMOHAN NAIDU) *moved* that the Bill to provide for regulation and control of the design, manufacture, maintenance, possession, use, operation, sale, export and import of aircraft and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto be taken into consideration.

The Bill being taken for discussion has been in existence since pre-Independence era and it was called the Aircraft Act. The Indian Aircraft Act which was brought in 1934 undergone under several changes over the years. In fact, 21 amendments were made in total thereunder. The whole structuring of the Act itself has consequently led to a lot of ambiguity and contradictions and because of this, there was a dire need to structuralise the whole Bill once again.

ADV. ADOOR PRAKASH *initiating said:* It has to be pointed out that the aviation sector of the country is facing many issues and safety challenges today. The increasing cases of near-collision incidents, flight delays and cancellations, frequent schedule cuts, and airfare without any regulation, are a matter of concern. The Government has not given any consideration to the issue of climate change. We must make our commitments to climate change clear. It is the responsibility of this House and this Government to ensure that the national policy towards sustainability stands resolute. It is the need of the hour to address the skyrocketing number of cyber threats while drafting this Bill. Analysing Section 3, sub-section 2 and Section 5, sub-section 2 of the new Bill, both the Directorate General of Civil Aviation and the Bureau of Civil Aviation Security have been charged with the oversight functions related to civil aviation without any clear segregation of the functions of both the institutions. It is to be noted that alongside these two institutions, the CISF and the Airport Authority of India also have roles to play in this ambivalent mechanism which can prove to be lethal in emergency situations. No provisions have been made to redeem the difficulties of Central Industrial Security Forces in this new Bill. It is high time that similar to the American Transport Security Agency, an Indian counterpart must be established to ensure proper security administration. Recently, we witnessed many infrastructure failures in the aviation sector, and it is a testimony of corruption and criminal negligence over the last 10 years. Another issue is the soaring airfares, without any regulation and cap on higher fares. The airlines are charging fares more than five times the basic tariff for various destinations in Kerala. Even though the issue of overcharging by the Budget carriers has been highlighted on many occasions, no action has been taken by the Government. This should be considered and corrective measures should be taken on priority. The steep hike in tariffs recently will be an additional burden on passengers who are already under the pressure of high airfares. I request an intervention from the Government to review the tariff hike, which is against the interest of passengers.

SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDY: The Aircraft Act, enacted by the British in 1934, has undergone more than twenty amendments. I request that the Government consider renaming the Act from 'The Bharatiya Vayuyan Vidheyak' to 'The Bharatiya Vimanan Vidheyak,' as the latter term more accurately reflects its focus on aviation. Our Government formulates comprehensive policies, and with approximately 700 aircraft currently operating in India—of which around 80 percent are leased—there is a pressing need for a suitable leasing law. Today, there are about 22 to 23 thousand licensed pilots in India. Earlier, these pilots had to appear in an exam conducted by the Ministry of Telecommunications. Today, the Government has taken a historic decision for the country's pilot youth and now they will not have to go to the Ministry of Telecommunications to appear in the RT exam. Now, they will need to appear only in the exam to be conducted by the DGCA under the Ministry of Aviation. It is a very important decision. In India, several aviation companies like Sahara Airlines, Indian Airlines, Deccan Airlines, Kingfisher Airlines, Go First Airlines, etc. have closed down. There are many such examples in other countries of the world too. British Airways and Japan Airlines closed down in 1987, Air France Airlines closed down in 1979 and Malaysia Airlines closed down in 2012. Actually, the operation of aviation companies is very complicated. There is no low-cost airline in India anymore. Today, there is also a need to look at the expenses being incurred by aviation companies. 40 percent of the amount received from the sale of tickets is spent on fuel. From the remaining 60 percent amount they receive, a considerable amount is spent on state tax, PSF, user development fee, etc. The longer the plane travels, the more they have to pay. When demand increases, there is a rise in ticket prices too. In Bihar, with a population of 140 million, there is insufficient infrastructure for large aircraft. Despite a ₹1600 crore investment in Patna airport, no expansion has been made to the runway, which remains one of the most hazardous airports in the country. I have been advocating for a new airport in Bihar for the past 14 years. It is crucial to consider the development of Greenfield airports in smaller states to address these issues.

SHRI RAJEEV RAI: With the increased powers granted to the DGCA and the separation of the BCS, a key issue is whether the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau will operate as an independent body or remain under the DGCA's purview. If it remains under the DGCA, it is essential to establish a clear framework for assigning responsibility. I recommend modernizing BCS and airport

security infrastructure. This includes equipping airports with the necessary technical equipment and installing screening machines to conduct physical checks on passengers efficiently. Screening should be targeted based on specific concerns to save time and enhance security. Additionally, the distance between airports and cities should be considered, as inefficient security processes can create undue burdens on passengers. It is also important to address the employment practices at airports, where large companies often use bonded labour from porters to pilots. The Government should oversee these practices to ensure fair treatment. Currently, passengers undergo multiple security checks, first at domestic airports and again when connecting to international flights. Streamlining this process would improve convenience for travellers. Airfares are a significant concern, and while it is often stated that the Government cannot control airfare rates, there needs to be a more proactive approach to addressing this issue. I am strongly opposed to privatizing airports, as our focus should be on creating and maintaining public assets rather than selling them. Furthermore, with the removal of CISF from many security checkpoints in favour of private security personnel, the Government must remain vigilant about security standards. Dynamic airfares should also be regulated to prevent excessive fluctuations. By considering these suggestions, the Government can better achieve its goal of making air travel accessible to all.

PROF. SOUGATA RAY: I would like to pose a question to the Minister of Civil Aviation. Is it efficacious to open more and more airports and start more and more airlines? Airlines and airports have become a status symbol. But most of the airlines do not run. Deccan, Go Air and Kingfisher have closed down. So, running airlines is not a profitable business. When these airlines closed down, all the employees came to me. When Tata was taking over Air India, all these people used to come to me. Tata initially said that they would not change any employees for the first year. Then, slowly it has started getting rid of employees. The Government says that planes will go to small towns. It is not profitable. The Government should have a Civil Aviation Policy. In the 90s, the Open Sky Policy was introduced. Before that, there was only one airline operating, that is, Indian Airlines. Thereafter many airlines came into. But most of them closed down. We do not want this mortality of airlines. New airlines are not for employing pilots. They are really for being profitable institutions. In Raebareli, there is a pilot training school. There is an airport as well. Does an aircraft go there? So, we have to take a practical view, not a status symbol or view of things. Several Members

have talked about airfare. The government has no say in it. So, unless the Government has any say or any control over airfares, what is the point of having a Civil Aviation Ministry? It will take the Government 50 years to manufacture an aircraft like Boeing or Airbus in India. We are end users. I would like the Government to come out with a transparent policy. The Government can't go on selling the airports to one company. The Government has not introduced anything new in the Bill. I would like the Government to strengthen the Airports Authority of India, the DGCA and BCAS. The CISF people are hitting passengers and MPs too. What security is there for other people?

SHRI C. N. ANNADURAI: The Bhartiya Vayuyan Vidheyak, 2024 must incorporate indigenous aspects of manufacturing and maintenance of the aircraft. Its design, operation and use should be managed by Indians and efforts should be made to ensure that the sale, export, and import of the aircraft is guided by Indians in the national interest and keeping in view the balance of payment in the international trade. The Bill does not clearly spell out clearly airworthiness of aircraft and the capability of the flight crew that stands against the safety and security of the passengers. The proposed law does not clearly specify aircraft accidents, time-bound investigation, and mechanisms for compensation thereafter. High-density ToF camera sensors may be fitted in all aircraft for smooth landing and take-off during foggy season. The proposed Bill must incorporate provisions for a regulated air eco-system to monitor and prevent the tendency of profit-making and monopoly of the private airlines. I request the hon. Union Minister for Civil Aviation to consider laying out an air network in Tamil Nadu with the latest infrastructure and to increase the frequency of national and international flights. I also urge the Minister to consider an airport around Tiruvannamalai to facilitate domestic pilgrims, especially the Andhra Pradesh pilgrims and the international pilgrims to get darshan of Lord Arunachala in Shiva Temple and perform parikrama.

SHRI MAGUNTA SREENIVASULU REDDY: The Bill has been introduced now to create some more activity in the Civil Aviation industry. This industry at present has 150 airports in the country whereas in 2014 there were only 74 airports. So, it has been doubled in this 10-year period, which is a big achievement and many more airports also have to come up in the near future. More airports are required and more airlines are required. The monopoly is going into

the hands of only 2-3 people now. Nearly, 75 per cent of the total passenger traffic is with three companies. This has to be widened and this has to be looked into. The Government of India has to look into the airfares. The common people should also be able to travel in it. Moreover, in all the States the VAT charges will also be different for the Aviation Turbine Fuel. They have to be regularised. Our hon. Prime Minister started the Udaan Scheme a few years ago. That is an excellent scheme for small routes. There are a lot of Centrally Sponsored Schemes which have the provision of 60 per cent and 40 per cent cost sharing. Why can we not build new airports under this Scheme? I request the Civil Aviation Minister to make use of such schemes so that new airports can be built which will help in passenger traffic management. Under the Udaan Scheme, the provision of Viable Gap Funding should remain there so that everybody can enjoy the services. It is very important for building an airport in my Parliamentary constituency of Ongole. I want an airport to be built in Ongole. I would like to conclude by saying that new airports should be built with minimum airfare.

SHRI DILESHWAR KAMAT: This Bill has been piloted in order to facilitate passengers with easy and hassle-free Air Services. It is aimed at the modernization of the regulatory framework in the Indian Aviation Sector and is designed to make India self-reliant through the Make in India programme. This Bill shall go a long way in enabling the Government of the day to raise appropriate steps from time to time in the International Aviation Sector as well. This Bill shall now contain the provisions to cater to the requirements pertaining to the regulation of Civil Aviation Sector in easy and comprehensible language that will enable the common man to avail of the services offered by the Aviation Sector in India and abroad both. The Indian aviation sector is pregnant with potentialities. It is expected that Indian Aviation Sector shall move ahead of its American and Chinese counterparts by the year 2030 leading to the Indian airline sector becoming an attractive market. This will give a fillip to the tourism sector as well. There shall be robust infrastructure in place to support air services resulting in huge employment generation that will possibly make an immense contribution to the economic progress of the country. Moving on, I would like to place some key demands relating to my Parliamentary constituency Supaul and the Koshi area. To put it in perspective, it is submitted that an Airport is essentially called for at Birpur from the security point of view as it is a bordering area. It is requested that Passengers' flight services should be introduced therefrom by setting up an Airport

over there. Alongside, Saharsa Airport should also be extended. Further, Sabeya Airport located in Gopalganj district of Bihar has been covered under the Udaan scheme, given that air services should be started from there at the earliest possible having undertaken the bidding of Airlines.

SHRI SHRI RANG APPA CHANDU BARNE: With the passage of time a need was felt to enhance flight services, technological upgradation and bring about certain changes in the safety standards in the Aviation Sector which has prompted the government to come up with this Bill. In view of the vast and diverse needs of the country, the number of airports calls for further addition. I would like to apprise the Hon. Minister that in case of flights being cancelled by Private Airlines, Passengers are literally left in the lurch as they don't get refunds. This merits deserved attention. The employees serving at the Airports and in the Airlines need to be equipped with soft skills and proper training to serve the passengers on and off Board. Pune-based Defence Airport has its own limitations, therefore, joint initiatives ought to be undertaken by the Union Government and the State Government to build a new Airport in Pune. Only one runway is operational at the Mumbai Airport. There arise issues in taking up so many Airlines and for other allied reasons. Secondly, A new Airport is under construction in my parliamentary constituency at Panvel in Navi Mumbai. Air services should be commenced therefrom at the earliest possible. Now the crowd at the Airports is akin to the one at the Railway Stations which is why the passengers are asked to report to the Airports two to three hours ahead of the Schedule but the passengers' amenities are not available there. This also merits attention. I support the Bill.

***SHRI BAJRANG MANOHAR SONWANE:**

SHRI KISHORI LAL SHARMA: My parliamentary constituency is home to Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Udaan Academy (IGRUA), Rajeev Gandhi National Aviation University and Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd. IGRUA holds the distinction of producing as many as 1570 pilots so far and all of them are rendering their services in various Airlines. The pilots of the various wings of the Indian Army have had received training from this very institute. Regrettably, where on the one hand we are talking of training, let me highlight the fact that this University had been set up way back on Sept 7, 1985, as a dream project of the then Prime

* Please see Supplement

Minister, all the same, this institute was kept devoid of the grants despite the recommendations of the Parliamentary committee. One had a better first focus on the existing Training centres before conceiving the setting up of new training centres. By implication, the existing institutes should be given proper grants for their smooth functioning. Rajiv Gandhi National Aviation University had also been set up in my constituency under the Act, 2013 enacted by Parliament. The fact remains that it was after 6 years of interregnum that the first course viz PG Diploma in Airport Operations was launched in the year 2019. This ambitious University had been established by an Act of Parliament. It is a Central University. So the Hon. Minister must take it into cognizance. A course in Fire Safety has been introduced here. Proper infrastructure is yet to be in place there and the course was introduced being unmindful of the lack of infrastructure. A student had to lose his life attributed to the lack of proper infrastructure facilities in the university. In fact no ambulance or any sort of medical facility was available there that led to the loss of life. When we talk of safety three things come to our mind, these factors should also be incorporated in the Aircraft Act. Besides, Hindustan Aeronautical Limited is in a rough patch and currently, it is in shambles. Since it is a Public Sector Undertaking, it should also be given some work. Adampur, a Punjab-based Airport has its ultra significance in the sense that Adampur happens to have a huge concentration of NRIs. Given its significance, it would be better to commence operation of National and International flights from this Airport. The construction of the Airport at Fursat Ganj is in progress but it is moving at a snail's pace and needs to be expedited. The completion of this work shall turn out to be of huge benefit to the people hailing from a good number of districts like Amethi, Rae Bareilly, Pratapgarh etc.

SHRI GANESH SINGH: The Aviation Sector has open-ended potential. This Bill contains several important provisions relating to Aircraft design, Manufacturing, maintenance, use, operation, sales, regulation of export-import etc. This Bill comprises amendments to make the provisions of international agreements effective. The Bill seeks to make the provisions of international conferences like the International Civil Aviation Conference (Chicago convention) and International Telecommunication Union (ITU) all the more efficacious. It is aimed at ensuring better safety and monitoring in line with the recent audit recommendations of ICAO and FAA. Until 2014 we had 74 Airports which have now exponentially risen to 147 in the year 2022. In the year 2024-25, our

Government has taken a resolve to make 220 Airports available for the people. The construction of 21 greenfield airports is underway. This in itself will be a mega achievement. My parliamentary constituency Satna has been covered among 100 Airports under Desi Hawaii Udaan Seva. Satna is an industrial city. People make frequent visits to this place for tourism purposes. The first phase of work has been completed and a 19-seater plane can be operated from here. Licence is awaited. I would like to demand that Satna may be connected with Indore, Bhopal and Delhi through Air Services. Khajuraho International Airport is based in our State Madhya Pradesh and only one Spice Jet aircraft is operated from there. This flight service is for Delhi and this too is quite often riddled with the element of uncertainty. I demand that Khajuraho should be connected to Metro cities like Mumbai, Bengaluru, Kolkata through Air Services. Chitrakoot, Karvi Airstrip is ready but no flight is in operation there. The Airports covered under Desi Hawaii Udaan Seva were supposed to receive an allocation of Rs 100 crore each but Satna Airport has received a mere 40 crore rupees so far. I demand that the outstanding due amount may be released. Rewa Airport is also ready awaiting the commencement of the operation of flights. The way Air Services are growing with an accelerated momentum in India at the global level, we don't have a sufficient number of aeroplanes to cater to the demand. Given that I would like to suggest that domestic air services should be commenced there The Government has started domestic connectivity and has already made a tie-up with the Department of Tourism. I want that the Ministry of Civil Aviation under the Government of India should take notice of it. The other Airports that have been ready for operation, should be connected with air services.

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UTPAL KUMAR SINGH
Secretary General

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

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