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Motor vehicle bill passed, traffic rules get tougher

Higher penalties for violations, protection for good samaritans

Ajith Athrady

NEW DELHI, DHNS: Parliament on Wednesday approved the Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Bill, 2019, which seeks to improve the road safety, imposing a hefty fine against traffic rule breakers and using technology to weed out corruption in the system.

The amended bill was passed in Rajya Sabha with 108 votes in favour and 13 against. The bill was approved by Lok Sabha last week.

Though the NDA does not have the majority in the Upper House, the government ensured smooth sailing of the bill by taking several Opposition parties on board. The government rejected some of the Opposition parties' demand to send the bill to the Select Committee.

The bill was passed in the previous Lok Sabha but could not get approval from the Rajya Sabha. With this, the government reintroduced the bill and it was passed in Lok Sabha last week.

The Opposition parties demanded that bill should be sent for the Select Committee for detailed deliberation as it encroaches the state's rights in

terms of collection of taxes. They said the provisions of the bill give power to corporates and taking away rights of the regional transport authorities.

However, rejecting the charges Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari said the legislation will not occupy the state domain in the transport sector.

The bill proposes a National Transportation Policy for ushering guidelines on the transportation of goods and passengers. The minister said it will be framed only after holding consultation with the states.

Massive reform

The bill seeks to increase penalties for violations, facilitate grant of online learning licence, simplified provisions for insurance to provide expeditious help to accident victims and their families, and protection of good samaritans.

As per the Statement of Objects and Reasons of the bill, the period for renewal of transport licence would be increased to five years from three years and enable licensing authority to grant a licence to differently-abled persons.

Another provision proposed is to raise the time limit for renewal of driving licence from one month to one year.