

LOK SABHA

SYNOPSIS OF DEBATES
(Proceedings other than Questions & Answers)

Wednesday, November 27, 2019 / Agrahayana 6, 1941 (Saka)

JAMMU AND KASHMIR RESERVATION (SECOND AMENDMENT)

BILL, 2019

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI G. KISHAN REDDY) moved the motion that leave be granted to withdraw a Bill further to amend the Jammu and Kashmir Reservation Act, 2004, as passed by Rajya Sabha.

PROF. SOUGATA RAY *opposing the motion for withdrawal of the Bill, said:* Under Rule 111 of the Rules and procedure, I oppose the withdrawal of the Bill. There is a provision for withdrawal of a Bill under Rule 110 of the Rules and Procedure. This Bill was giving reservation to economically backward sections. There is nothing wrong with the Bill. We have not got any of the reasons for withdrawal of the Bill. The Minister should state under Rule 110, what the reasons are for which he is withdrawing the Bill.

Thereafter, the Speaker gave ruling of Direction 36 about pending of the Bill.

HON. SPEAKER: Hon. Member, Direction 36 is generally for those Bill which are introduced in Lok Sabha and are pending in the House. The present Bill has been passed by the Rajya Sabha.

I would also like to inform the hon. Member that the hon. Minister of Home Affairs had informed this House on August 6, 2019 as to why he wanted to withdraw this Bill.

The Bill was withdrawn.

FELICITATION BY THE SPEAKER

HON. SPEAKER: I am happy to inform the House that today the ISRO has successfully launched the PSLV rocket carrying indigenous CARTOSAT-3 satellite and over a dozen nano satellites of the USA into their orbits. The CARTOSAT -3 will augment our high resolution imaging capacity. This successful launch has once again enhanced the glory of the country. I, on behalf of the House, congratulate the ISRO and the entire team of the Department of Space for their achievement. Besides, I express my faith that ISRO and Department of Space will keep contributing in the direction of peaceful use of space and in the development of the country with their initiatives.

SUBMISSION BY MEMBER

Re: Recent militant attacks in Kashmir

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI RAJ NATH SINGH)

responding to the issue raised by an hon. Member, said: During the last five and a half years, there has not been any major terrorist incident except in Jammu and Kashmir. After abrogation of Article 370, terrorist incidents have been negligible as compared to earlier. If any terrorist incident has taken place, everyone has condemned it. Army, Para Military Forces and local police are working in perfect coordination to deal with terrorist activities. I want to say that normalcy is taking place rapidly in Kashmir.

***MATTERS UNDER RULE 377**

1. **DR. SUBHAS SARKAR** laid a statement regarding need to convert NH-60 in Bankura Parliamentary Constituency in West Bengal into a four-lane road.
2. **SHRI RAJA AMARESHWARA NAIK** laid a statement regarding environmental problems caused by Thermal Power Plants in Raichur Parliamentary Constituency of Karnataka.

* Laid on the Table as directed by the Chair.

3. **SHRI VINOD LAKHAMSHI CHAVDA** laid a statement regarding need to upgrade Bhuj Airport as International Airport and also operate Air India Flight service between Bhuj and Mumbai on daily basis and also introduce a direct flight between Bhuj and Delhi.
4. **SHRI TEJASVI SURYA** laid a statement regarding problems faced by patients affected by diabetes.
5. **SHRI G. S. BASAVARAJ** laid a statement regarding need to review Free Trade Agreements.
6. **SHRI KIRTI VARDHAN SINGH** laid a statement regarding need to develop 'Shravan Pakar', a place of mythological importance in Gonda Parliamentary Constituency, Uttar Pradesh as a tourist place.
7. **SHRI TIRATH SINGH RAWAT** laid a statement regarding need to ease the process for issuance of birth-death certificate and copy of 'Parivar register' in Uttarakhand.
8. **SHRI RAMDAS TADAS** laid a statement regarding need to set up a Aakashwani FM Radio Station in Wardha district, Maharashtra.
9. **SHRI MUKESH RAJPUT** laid a statement regarding need to set up a Para Medical College in Farrukhabad city, Uttar Pradesh.
10. **SHRI JUAL ORAM** laid a statement regarding completion of work on Rimuli to Rajamunda stretch of National Highway No. 215 in Odisha.

11. **SHRI ASHOK KUMAR RAWAT** laid a statement regarding need to construct a dam in Misrikh Parliamentary Constituency, Uttar Pradesh.
12. **SHRI GOPAL JEE THAKUR** laid a statement regarding need to develop and include religious places of historical importance in Bihar under Swadesh Darshan Scheme.
13. **SHRIMATI DARSHANA VIKRAM JARDOSH** laid a statement regarding installing solar and water recharging system in buildings.
14. **SHRI ARJUNLAL MEENA** laid a statement regarding need to launch awareness programme about malnutrition among tribal people in the country.
15. **SHRI KODIKUNNIL SURESH** laid a statement regarding primary Agriculture Credit Societies in Kerala.
16. **SHRI VINCENT H. PALA** laid a statement regarding trade route between India and Bangladesh through Meghalaya.
17. **ADV. ADOOR PRAKASH** laid a statement regarding need to address problems faced by nurses working in private hospitals.
18. **SHRI MAGUNTA SREENIVASULU REDDY** laid a statement regarding drinking water problem in Ongole Parliamentary Constituency, Andhra Pradesh.

19. **SHRI TALARI RANGAIAH** laid a statement regarding need to implement Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana in proper and expeditious manner.
20. **SHRI SHRIRANG APPA BARNE** laid a statement regarding need to enact necessary laws to curb air pollution.
21. **SHRI DINESH CHANDRA YADAV** laid a statement regarding need to provide stoppage of Vaishali Express (Train No. 12553/12554) and Bandra Terminal Express (Train No. 22913/22914) at Simri Bakhtiyarpur railway station in Saharsa district, Bihar.
22. **SHRI SHYAM SINGH YADAV** laid a statement regarding need to construct flyover on Allahabad-Mirzapur road in Uttar Pradesh.
23. **SHRI RAMULU POTHUGANTI** laid a statement regarding opening of Jawahar Navodaya Schools in Nagarkurnool Parliamentary Constituency, Telangana.
24. **ADV. A. M. ARIFF** laid a statement regarding need to provide financial assistance to Kerala to rebuild the infrastructure and provide relief and rehabilitation to people affected due to floods in recent years.
25. **SHRI E. T. MOHAMMED BASHEER** laid a statement regarding recommendations of Sachar Committee.

26. **SHRI HANUMAN BENIWAL** laid a statement regarding need to provide employment on priority basis to local people in heavy industries in Barmer and Jaisalmer districts.

STATUTORY RESOLUTION

Re: Disapproval of the prohibition of Electronic Cigarettes (Production, Manufacture, Import, Export, Transport, Sale, Distribution, Storage and Advertisement) Ordinance, 2019 (No. 14 of 2019).

AND

THE PROHIBITION OF ELECTRONIC CIGARETTES (PRODUCTION, MANUFACTURE, IMPORT, EXPORT, TRANSPORT, SALE, DISTRIBUTION, STORAGE AND ADVERTISEMENT) BILL, 2019 – Contd.

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE; MINISTER OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, AND MINISTER OF EARTH SCIENCES (DR. HARSH VARDHAN) *replying said:* I must express my gratitude to all those Members who participated in the discussion for the fact that all of them were unanimous in supporting the Bill although they had different views. We all know that all forms of intoxicants or *nasha* are harmful for health. This Bill seeks to prohibit all commercial operations for the trade of e-cigarettes.

There is a very strong, definite evidence to suggest that e-cigarettes are harmful for health. Let me tell you as to why we have actually brought this Ordinance. In August, 2018, a PIL was filed in the hon. Delhi High Court wherein the court had directed the Ministry to state its policies regarding measures to be taken regarding the emerging threat of e-cigarettes. There was an announced entry of a leading company towards the end of this year in India. This leading company is the manufacturer of e-cigarettes. This global giant would have taken up the Indian market by storm. The need of the hour was preventive action and immediately, the Ordinance was promulgated on 18th of September, 2019. I felt very sad when members attributed motives to the intention of the Government saying that the Government wants to help the tobacco companies and all that. These e-cigarettes affect all organs of the system of the body. Their use can lead to heart attacks, hypertension, diabetes, strokes and plethora of diseases of lungs. It was rightly mentioned that the use of e-cigarettes in India was found in only 0.02 per cent of the population. However, during surprise inspections by the school management, we found 150 vaping devices in the schools bags of children in a school in Delhi itself. We cannot assume that the problem is not growing. Regulation is not enough. A complete ban was absolutely necessary. Use of these products does not leave any foul odour generally associated with cigarette or *bidi* smoking. The tobacco industry has a huge adverse economic impact. We cannot afford the new

form of nicotine and psychoactive substances addiction. The Government has been continuously working to ensure that we are fighting against tobacco. We are creating awareness about tobacco. I myself signed an order on 15th October, 2014 to increase the pictorial warnings from 40 per cent to 86 per cent. The capacities of the Quit-line services have been expanded again in September, 2018. The Quit-line services are now available in 16 languages and in other dialects from four centers. We have also regulated the depiction of tobacco use in films and television programmes. The Ministry has issued revised guidelines for tobacco free educational institutions and it is working towards making all the institutions tobacco free. Similarly, special drives are undertaken for enforcement of COTPA on a periodic basis. For Tobacco Control-II, we have set an ambitious target of reducing tobacco use by 30 per cent by 2025. However, despite sustained efforts, about 28.6 per cent of population is still using the tobacco which is a grave public health challenge for all of us. In India, 16 States and UTs have already banned it. About 14 countries across the world have completely banned it. We also invited consultations and comments from the general public for this purpose. I may inform this House that out of the 12,504 representations that we received, 10,566 have favoured the ban in no uncertain terms. India has a young demography and we are concerned with the impact of e-cigarettes on the younger generation. It is possible only now to ban e-cigarettes before they become too popular. Some hon. Members

of Parliament said why we do not regulate it under COTPA and why there is a need for a separate law. In this regard, I would say that COTPA, 2003 is applicable to smoking and only smokeless forms of tobacco products. E-Cigarettes do not contain tobacco as ingredient and hence, are not covered under COTPA. Again, the intent of the legislation is not to criminalise citizens who are themselves the sufferers of such products. The intent of the legislation is to ban any kind of trade in e-cigarettes in the interest of public health. Our prime objective is to protect the health of our children and citizens. Apart from that, Ministry of Agriculture is also taking steps in this regard so that tobacco growers may opt for alternative farming. The Bill has been drafted in consultation with the Ministry of Law and Justice in great detail in the interest of protecting and promoting public health. The provision for imprisonment and fine is up to a specified extent. Only for the repeat offence, it is imprisonment and fine. I would like to state that there are scientifically-proven and tested nicotine replacement therapy products. In addition, evidence-based cessation counseling services are provided through Tobacco Cessation Centres, Quit-line Services and mCessation Programme. We must go to the extreme to actually ensure that we curb, eliminate and eradicate this tobacco menace in our country, and help the whole world by strengthening the fight against the tobacco companies. With these few words, I would request the hon. Members of Parliament to please pass this Bill.

The Resolution was negatived.

The Bill was passed.

THE SPECIAL PROTECTION GROUP (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2019

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI AMIT SHAH) *moving the motion for consideration of the Bill, said:* The Birbal Nath Committee was appointed in 1985 in order to consider all the aspects of security cover to be provided to the Prime Ministers. The SPG was formed on the basis of its recommendations. Initially, the SPG was working under the executive orders from 1985 to 1988. This law was enacted in 1988 and since then the special protection group started functioning thereunder. It started its working in order to provide security cover to the Prime Minister and his immediate family members. Subsequently, the Special Protection Group Act, 1988 underwent various amendments in 1991, 1994 and 1999. With the passage of the proposed amendment the security cover provided by the SPG will be available only to the Prime Minister and the members of his immediate family residing with him at his official residence. Secondly, the SPG protection will be made available for a period of five years only to the former Prime Ministers and his immediate family members who reside at the residence allotted by the Government. SPG security

cover is required to be provided to the Hon. Prime Minister also because the Government and the entire Government machinery work for the protection of the country under his leadership. Sometimes, he has to take tough decisions in order to bring about social reforms and sometimes he has to take decisions with regard to internal and external security of the country. At that time, SPG security cover needs to be provided to him in order to minimize the threat to his security to zero level or to neutralize it totally. The Birbal Nath Committee appointed against the backdrop of the assassination of Shrimati Indira Gandhi ji recommended that a highly modernise and trained Special Force should be formed in order to provide security cover to the Prime Minister. The term 'protection' is not restricted only to his physical security. The Special Protection Group takes care of the security aspects of the Hon. Prime Minister, his dignity, his office, his healthcare facilities and his communication as well. A number of the countries of the world have their own specific protection groups to provide security cover to their Heads of the Government. All these groups are meant only for the security of the Heads of the Government. At last, I would like to request all the hon. Members to express their views on this Bill and pass it.

SHRI MANISH TEWARI *initiating said:* History has been a witness to the fact that this country has suffered a lot whenever negative steps have been taken. A person is provided security cover of different categories i.e. X, X-plus, Y, Y-plus,

Z, Z-plus and SPG according to the threat assessment made by the intelligence agencies and police. Today, I would like to ask a question as to whether the threat assessment is a perfect science. I feel that the threat assessment is no longer a scientific and objective procedure but has become a political procedure in its entirety. The formation of the Special Protection Group was intended to provide a full proof security arrangements to the Prime Minister so that no one can cause any sort of harm to him as he takes sensitive decisions having far reaching ramifications at national and international level. At this stage, I would like to ask a question as to whether the threat to the security of Prime Minister and the members of his family comes to an end just after he ceases to be the Prime Minister. The reply is that the security threat doesn't come to an end, rather the people desirous of killing him await the moment when his security cover is withdrawn or undermined so that they may serve their intention. This is a very important aspect which the august House needs to take into cognizance. The Hon. Minister of Home Affairs has rightly said that the SPG Act of 1988 was meant to provide SPG security cover only to the Prime Minister and the members of his family. It was found after the assassination of Shri Rajiv Gandhi ji that it was imperative to provide SPG security cover even to the former Prime Ministers and hence it was incorporated into section 4 of this Act through amendment in 1991. This Bill provides for stripping the ex-Prime Ministers or members of their family of security based on threat

assessment. The proposition put forward is that the number of individuals to be provided with a SPG cover can potentially become quite large. This was the proposition under which SPG security cover available to the Late Prime Minister Shri Rajiv Gandhi had been withdrawn. The fact remains that the persons to whom SPG security has been extended, were being intimated on regular basis that their threat perception is soaring and were kept from visiting a number of places. This has been in currency till as late as June 2019. I would like to know from the Government what transpired between June,2019 and November 2019 that prompted the Government to withdraw security cover from Shri Rahul Gandhi, Smt. Sonia Gandhi and Dr. Manmohan Singhji or from their family members even without an Amendment to the Act. The House has reasons to know how come there became such palpable change of threat perception within such a brief duration of time which led to such a decision. I demand from the Government to continue to provide all the Ex Prime Ministers of India and their members of family security till their life time.

DR. SATYA PAL SINGH: I have risen to speak in support of Special Protection Group (Amendment) Bill, 2019. The substratum of SPG dates back to the year 1988 close on the heels of the assassination of our former Prime Minister Late Smt Indira Gandhi in the year 1984. The object of bringing in this Act was to make the PM security foolproof. This was constituted by taking personnel from

the Central Armed Forces in certain percentage. In toto as many as 100 SPG groups had been constituted and their strength was in the region of 3000. A rigorous training course was prescribed for them and they were equipped with special weapons. What merits attention here is that it was meant exclusively for the PM security and not for the Ex ones. In course of time, certain amendments were made to the SPG Act in the year 1991, 1994, 1999 and in 2003 respectively. In the first amendment, provisions were made to provide SPG security to the ex-Prime Minister as well as his immediate family members for a period of five years which got extended to 10 years through an amendment in the year 1994. Yet again, in 1999 it was provided that in case the former Prime Minister is reported in the annual threat perception assessment to be exposed to serious threat from any militant or terrorist organization, they may continue to enjoy SPG cover. I appreciate the fact that the assessment of threat perception is at times subjective which calls for rectification. Having said that, it is also equally true that even those who don't have any security threat do enjoy police protection. A few of them even tend to violate SPG protocol and the security norms. Security cover must be withdrawn from them. I am of the view that only those who abide by the norms should be equipped with security. To conclude, I would like to submit that SPG protection should be available solely for the Prime Minister and not to the ex-Prime Ministers.

SHRI A. RAJA: The SPG has been rated as one of the topmost personal security forces for the Head of the State and the Head of the Government. The moot question is what vital difference is between the erstwhile Act and the present one. The objective assessment of security threat of a person, who is availing the security coverage, is missing in this Bill. If it is being resorted to maintain efficiency in the functioning of the SPG, there is nothing wrong in it. However, the larger question is what will be the case with those currently having this facility and what about the assessment of security threat. I hope that the hon. Minister will disclose the threat assessment that has been done while bringing this Amendment. When a person is killed for different policy, the threat does not vanish with the person. The threat, therefore, should be assessed properly. I believe that this Legislation is not based on a reasonable classification but it is a class legislation, it should be avoided.

SHRI SUDIP BANDYOPADHYAY: The Government should remain alert so that precious lives are not taken by any person. I request the hon. Minister to kindly let us know as to how many SPG personnel are employed now, what is the yearly expenditure, how many non-elected people are being offered the CRPF protection, what type of protection is going to be given to the persons who were under the SPG protection. It has been mentioned that threat perception is no more implied to these persons who are allotted SPG protection. In this regard, I

would like to remind the hon. Minister that threat perception report is not always objective. The hon. Home Minister should assure the House that the Government is fully concerned about the safety of the people from whom the SPG is withdrawn.

SHRI KURUVA GORANTLA MADHAV: We support this Bill because its intent is to safeguard the effectiveness of the SPG by maintaining its specialized focus on minimal number of people facing high threat facing individuals. Also, considering the resource crunch that a huge protectee base will create for our country and our common people, the support for the Bill should be our answer to the conscience of the country. Now-a-days, the SPG has become a social status. I hope, this Bill will prevent its misuses. However, we maintain that based on the threat perception, SPG protection may be provided to families or people who fit into the criteria.

SHRI RAJIV RANJAN SINGH 'LALAN': The Special Protection Group Act, 1988 was enacted for the security of the Prime Minister. But, later on, the scope of the Act was extended. We understand that it was unfair. The concern for security is justifiable but one should not insist on having a particular kind of security arrangement. The security should not become a symbol of social status. This Bill is a welcome amendment Bill. It would have been far better if the scope of the SPG protection should have been restricted to the security of Prime Minister.

SHRI P.R. NATARAJAN: I request the Government not to use the law-making body to settle personal scores. I request the hon. Home Minister to withdraw this Bill.

SHRI JAGDAMBIKA PAL: I understand that this Special Protection Group (Amendment) Bill, 2019 has restored the soul of the Special Protection Group Act, 1988. The SPG cover is meant for the security of the Prime Minister only because he is in the highest Office of the country and represents India on the world forum. This decision is in consonant with the welfare of the common people. This Government has tried to do away with the VIP culture in the country. SPG cover is being provided for five years on the basis of threat perception. The security of Prime Minister is serious issue because he is a symbol of 130 crore people of the country. I welcome this Bill. Whether it is the current Prime Minister or former Prime Minister, security should be provided only to those who live in officially allotted bungalow of the Prime Minister or former Prime Minister and not at separate places. Today, we are bringing this amendment in 2019 after the last amendment in the year 2003. There is an immediate need for the security of the Prime Minister and that security should be professional and effective. There are several important things due to which such security is needed like the situation with the neighbouring countries and the multi dimensional threats. The House should support this Bill unanimously. I support this Bill.

SHRI N.K. PREMACHANDRAN : If you see the last Amendment of 2003, it is only for a period of one year that SPG coverage will be given to the former Prime Ministers and their immediate family members. If you want to extend the SPG coverage, then periodical assessment of the threat has to be taken into account and subsequent security or SPG coverage is given only if there is a threat perception. If there is no threat, the Government can very well withdraw the security SPG coverage. So, what is the necessity of this legislation? We are not seeking SPG coverage for any particular individual. If any particular former Prime Minister or his immediate family members have a security threat, they should be protected. I would like to urge upon the hon. Minister as well as the Government not to play politics in these issues. The amount which is being spent is very meagre. I urge upon the Government to please withdraw the Bill.

SHRI P. RAVEENDRANATH KUMAR: This Bill intends to make two key changes. Firstly, the SPG will provide security only to hon. Prime Minister of the day and his immediate family members residing with him or her. Secondly, the former Prime Ministers will be guarded by SPG commandos only for a period of five years after demitting office. The decision to amend this Bill is being taken duly after appropriate review meetings, involving the Cabinet Secretariat and inputs from various intelligence agencies. Hence, it would be wrong to say that the security cover to those VVIPs was just taken away by the Government without

proper analysis. An annual review of the coverage is done based on the guidelines of the SPG Act. The expenses for providing SPG have ballooned over the last decade. By implementation of this Amendment Bill, the Union Government shall divert the available funds to some other public welfare schemes. I support this Amendment Bill.

SHRI HANUMAN BENIWAL: This Government is taking wonderful decisions, one after the other, continuously since the last five-six months. SPG security is not the only concern of the country. The biggest concern of the country is how to keep our borders secure and how to maintain the internal security in the country. An Act was enacted for the creation of Special Protection Group the sole purpose of which was the security of the Prime Minister. The Security of the Prime Minister should be above all. Nobody becomes a VIP after taking SPG protection, we also want protection from the Government. It is also the responsibility of the Government to provide security to the leaders of the Central Government, MPs, Ministers in the States where we don't have Government. Attention should be paid in this direction also. The z-plus and other security covers and SPG cover being provided should be reviewed from time to time. People are using such security covers for 20-30 years. A review should be made after every 2 years to assess if there is threat perception to the protectee or not.

SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDY: Special Protection Group was created after the assassination of Shrimati Gandhi in 1984. Not a single incident has occurred, neither with any Prime Minister nor with the members of his family from the time the SPG took charge of the security of the Prime Minister of the country. The House should felicitate the SPG force because it is performing such a big responsibility towards the security of the country. Prime Minister is the symbol of the democracy. Prime Minister is the symbol of 130 crore people of this country. This Bill is significant today because the geopolitical context of our nation is changing. We have a hostile neighbourhood with whom we have been fighting since the last 70 years. In addition to this there are multi dimensional threats like the cyber-threat or missile-threat. It is an international threat because India is emerging as a global power. If a country is emerging as a global power, certainly we have to protect our Prime Minister. Some Members have mentioned about status and symbol but it is a separate matter. This matter should not have come up in the House because it is related to the security of the Prime Minister of the country.

SHRI GAURAV GOGOI: This Bill is nothing but a political vendetta camouflaged in legislation. It is ironical that this Bill was born out of assassination of a former Prime Minister and it was later amended by the assassination of another former Prime Minister. This Bill is completely laughable when it says that

due to lack of resources, this Bill is being brought. Is the financial status of this Government so poor? The BJP takes examples of how current SPG protectees do not respect the protocols of the SPG. But, the SPG's protocols are being violated by this Government, by the hon. Prime Minister. In Gujarat elections, the hon. Prime Minister took a tour on a sea plane with a foreign pilot and with no SPG. Where was the respect for SPG then? This is a very serious issue. During the Karnataka election, one black big box was taken out of the hon. Prime Minister's chopper and was rushed to a private vehicle. What was there in the box? When an official of the Election Commission went to inspect the chopper he was suspended. Why? He was doing his job. This Bill is purely political, narrow and petty. We oppose it. You should withdraw it.

SHRI AMIT SHAH *replying said:* Several hon. Members of the ruling party as well as the opposition parties have participated in the discussion on this important Bill. I have heard the speeches of hon. Members with full attention. An impression is being created in the country that the SPG Act is being amended to withdraw the security cover of a family in particular. However, this is not true. The change in security cover has been made on the basis of yearly professional threat assessment as per the provisions of the earlier Act. The present Act will come into existence only after it is passed by the House. An attempt has also been made to create an impression that the government does not care for the security of

the one family in particular. They have been given Z-plus CRPF cover with advance security liaison (ASL) with ambulance in the whole country. ASL means some security personnel will go to the venue and undertake threat assessment at the spot together with the threat assessment of the programme and will also coordinate with the State Governments. The State Governments have not been given the responsibility of providing security cover, as alleged by one hon. Member. The CRPF is a central agency and is present in the whole of the country. Therefore, they have been given the Z-plus CRPF cover. The SPG has been created by inducting personnel from various security forces. The Special Protection Group not only takes care of personnel security of the hon. Prime Minister but it also provides security cover to his office, his communication system, the camp office at his residence and also his health. I have no hesitation in saying that the SPG Act was amended five times earlier to ensure continued SPG cover to one family. The security cover of many former Prime Ministers was withdrawn but no political worker of any political party raised any issue. The hon. Members of the Opposition should make it clear as to whom they care for, do they care for the VIPs or the leadership of the country or for a family only. In fact, they are expressing their concern for the security of one family alone. I would like to assure that the Government of India cares for the security of all citizens. They are also citizens of this country, I would therefore, like to assure that the adequate

security arrangements have been made for them. The Verma Commission Report was also referred to saying that the commission had opined that the SPG cover was withdrawn without making alternative security arrangements which led to that tragic incident. This is okay and we have also learnt from the Verma Commission Report. Therefore, the government has made advance security arrangements. Some hon. Members alleged that the letter of the former Prime Minister was not responded to. I never wanted to make certain things public but since they have decided to politicize this matter then I cannot do anything, I will have to respond. Replying to his letter does not arise because when his security cover was changed, the IB Director visited the former Prime Minister and his family members personally. He explained to them that their threat assessment has been undertaken and now they don't need SPG security cover and they will be provided new security cover which will provide them security in a manner explained to them. But when the threat assessment of Gandhi family was carried out, then the same procedure was also adopted and the Director, SPG requested them for a personal visit to them but he was conveyed that he could do whatever was decided for them and he does not need to come to them. Now, what IB Director can do about it. Still, he took a joint meeting of the officers of the SPG and the CRPF and thereafter handover and takeover was conducted. Alleging that there was no communication, such things do not happen in our government. One hon. Member

said that all the parties should get the security cover. The Government intends to provide security to all the parties and it is also being given. However, all the parties cannot be given the security cover of the level of security cover of the Prime Minister. That is exclusively meant for the Prime Minister. Another hon. Member said that if the threat perception exists then the security cover should also continue. I would like to say that threat perception is a dynamic process and the security cover has been changed on the basis of the threat perception also. His saying that all the Chief Ministers are getting Z-plus security cover is not correct. The Z-plus security is provided on the basis of threat assessment. The change in security cover has not been done on the basis of any vendetta. On the basis of evidence, reports and records, I feel that the workers of the Bharatiya Janata Party need security in Bengal. The leaders of Communist party and the Congress party have also been given security cover there. Some hon. Members have also raised the issue as to how the SPG is compromised by this. But here, concern has been expressed only for three protectees. They went to attend their programmes without giving any intimation on as many as 600 occasions. They did not use even the SPG bullet proof car. Today, I take this opportunity to request these leaders to keep the CRPF with them as it is very necessary for their protection and they should also give prior intimation with sufficient time to the security people. When we enter the public life then we ought to observe certain ethics. I would like to

give an example of our hon. Prime Minister. He has the security cover for more than last 20 years. But there is not a single foul on his part in terms of his security cover. He has even limited the number of his staff and their facilities accompanying him on his foreign trips. It's a matter of great pride that the nation has got such a leadership today who strictly abides by the norms of the public life. One hon. Member alleged that the rules and regulations of SPG were flouted by him. The plane, the hon. Prime Minister used was thoroughly checked by the SPG. In fact, he had taken a personal risk in view of potential for terrorism and water sports there. It is therefore requested that all the hon. Members should vote in support of this Bill and pass it.

The Bill was passed.

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SNEHLATA SHRIVASTAVA
Secretary General

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

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NOTE: It is the verbatim Debate of the Lok Sabha and not the Synopsis that should be considered authoritative.

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