

LS passes Consumer Protection Bill, minister says 1986 law needs change

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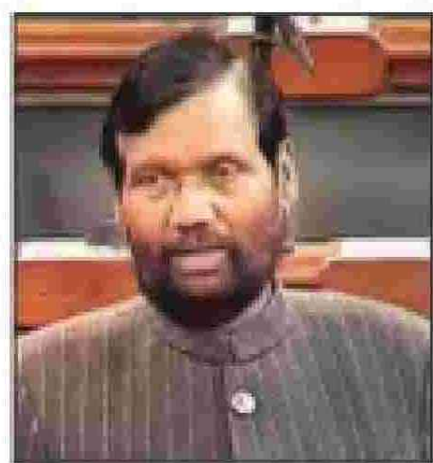
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 20

THE LOK Sabha on Thursday passed the Consumer Protection Bill, 2018, amid protests by Congress and Telugu Desam Party (TDP) members.

The Bill will now go to Rajya Sabha for consideration and passage. Once adopted, it will replace the Consumer Protection Act, 1986.

The new measure provides for protection of consumers' interests and proposes to establish a Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission and forums at the district, state and national levels for adjudicating consumer complaints.

Eleven members participated in the discussion, which was marked by slogan-shout-



Consumer Affairs Minister Ram Vilas Paswan in the Lok Sabha on Thursday. PTI

ing and conduct of parallel mock proceedings by Congress members Sunil Jakhar and Sushmita Deb.

Responding to the discussion, Consumer Affairs Minister Ram Vilas Paswan said the legislation had not been amended for 32 years, and needs changes to strengthen the consumer rights. He sought support for the legislation by pointing out to members that it is non-controversial and is only aimed at

strengthening the rights of consumers.

RSP member NK Premachandran moved several amendments, but did not press for a division before being rejected by the House.

IUML member E T Mohammed Basheer said the Bill is "not sufficient to meet challenges", and that "even though we call the consumer the king, he is exploited...cheated in many ways".

P K Biju of the CPI(M) said, "The volume of online trading is increasing every year. What steps have been proposed to control this market?... No such provision... is visible in this Bill."

Tathagata Satpathy (BJD) said the Bill gives excessive power to the bureaucracy and should have sunset provisions under which the Bill can come to Parliament for amendments. He said the Bill has provisions that are against the federal structure.