

Aadhaar amendment Bill gets LS nod

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THE LOK Sabha on Friday passed the Aadhaar and Other Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2018, which amends the Aadhaar Act 2016. It had been introduced by Union Law Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad two days ago.

The Bill seeks to amend the Aadhaar Act, 2016, and provide for voluntary sharing of the 12-digit identification number for obtaining new mobile phone connections and opening bank accounts. The government move comes in the light of the Supreme Court's judgment, Prasad told the House. The apex court had in September struck down Section 57 of Aadhaar Act that made seeding of the biometric ID with SIMs and bank accounts mandatory.

"Today, the poor people are feeling empowered. Aadhaar is an identity," Prasad said while calling upon the members of the House to support it. He said out of 130 crore people in the country, 123 crore had Aadhaar today. "The Aadhaar technology is indigenous, low-cost and safe," Prasad said, adding that it had been lauded by the World Bank, IMF and other countries. The Bill was backed by BJP members Sharad Tripathi and Bhairon Singh Mishra.

Tathagata Satpathy of the BJD said people were facing inconvenience because schools insisted on an Aadhaar identity.

He said: "Where is the data kept? Is it kept in Bengaluru? Is it kept in Texas? Who knows it? At the age of 18, you are supposed to get a time limit of six months. Once you cross six months or once your processing takes longer than six months, you cannot get out of this evil clutch. There are so many sections like that which the government is completely turning a blind eye to."

"Aadhaar is an evil, Aadhaar is something that is going to harm this country," he added.

Prasad said in his reply: "Today, Aadhaar is accepted; Aadhaar is recognised; and Aadhaar is serving its utility."

Satpathy staged a walkout when the House took up the Bill. "In protest, I walk out. It is because spiritually and morally I oppose Aadhaar," he said.

The Lok Sabha also passed a Bill to set up a new international arbitration centre here.

The New Delhi International Arbitration Centre Bill seeks to establish an independent and autonomous regime for institutionalised arbitration and for the acquisition and transfer of undertakings of the International Centre of Alternative Resolution.