

Parliamentarians demand for early passage of the Motor Vehicle (Amendment) Bill, 2016

New Delhi, November 16, 2016:

Parliamentarians cutting across party lines urged for early passage of Motor Vehicle (Amendment) Bill 2016 at a meeting organized today in New Delhi by CUTS International.

The Members of Parliament were speaking at the meeting of Parliamentarians' Forum on Economic Policy Issues (PARFORE), a non-partisan forum conceived and promoted by CUTS International, an Indian origin international advocacy organisation.

In the meeting, parliamentarians discussed about various issues and proposed amendments and suggested for improvements in driver licensing system and provisions for effective electronic enforcement etc. Parliamentarians strongly put forward the need for scientific investigation of road crashes and omitting the limit on Insurer's liability in third party motor accidents in the MVA Bill, 2016.

CUTS is advocating to the Parliamentary Standing Committee (PSC) on Transport, Tourism and Culture and parliamentarians across party line for passage of Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Bill 2016 in the winter session itself.

G.K Pillai, former Home Secretary and Member, Board of Trustees, Save Life Foundation gave a detailed presentation about the MVA Bill and its key proposed amendments. He also gave a set of suggestions which can be part of the proposed bill to make it more strong and useful.

Jose K Mani, MP said that the provision of speed governing system shall be made compulsory since most of the road accidents happens because of speeding on National Highways and Expressways.

Dinesh Trivedi, MP and former Railway Minister opined that Indian Road scenario is very scary, so there must be some deterrence and at the same time there has to be introduction of new technology and strict monitoring of the traffic violations like air traffic control, then only Indian roads can be made safer. He also added that the proposed bill does not give much hope to him.

Harish Chandra Meena, a member of Parliamentary Standing Committee on Transport and former DGP of Rajasthan said that before thinking about the road safety we need to define the road user since on road we can see all the marriage processions, demonstrations, kiosks, Dhabas, domestic animals and bullock carts, so who's safety we are looking for? He also talked about the designs of the roads being such that it divides the village in two parts, so all the time people keep crossing the road by which road safety is affected.

In the meeting several MPs, both from Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha, Rangasayee Ramakrishna, La Ganesan, N.K. Premchandran, D. Bhattacharya and Tiruchi Siva were present, actively participated in the round table discussions and raised several issues such as lowering the Blood Alcohol Content (BHC) level for new drivers, setting up motor vehicle accident fund, grant of stage carriage permit,

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Safety of children during commute, mandatory use of child restraint systems and ensuring appropriate headgears for children to protect millions of children.

There was a consensus that keeping in mind the fact that over 13 lakh people have been killed in road accidents in India in the past decade, this Bill with key provisions need to be passed with strong measures. The Bill, introduced in the Parliament on August 9, 2016, by Union Transport Minister Nitin Gadkari, ambitiously aims to fill the gaps in the road safety legal framework in the country by amending the much older Motor Vehicles Act, 1988 (MVA).

“The importance of the Bill is evident from the active participation of the honorable members of Parliament in such forums. As a road safety advocate, we at CUTS welcome the participation of the wide range of MPs in the PARFORE to give comments and suggestions on it. The Bill addresses various crucial safety elements and risk factors, which are globally recognised, should further be strengthened in the bill. CUTS will capture all these gaps and submit its report to the Government” as said by George Cheriyan, Director, CUTS International.

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