

Lok Sabha Passes the Admiralty Bill,2016

The Admiralty (Jurisdiction and Settlement of Maritime Claims) Bill, 2016 was passed by the Lok Sabha yesterday. The Bill aims to establish a legal framework to consolidate the existing laws relating to admiralty jurisdiction of courts, admiralty proceedings on maritime claims, arrest of vessels and related issues. It also aims to replace archaic laws which are hindering efficient governance. The Bill confers admiralty jurisdiction on High Courts located in coastal states of India and this jurisdiction extends upto territorial waters.

Introduced during the winter session of Parliament, the Bill came up for discussion in the Lok Sabha yesterday. The Minister of State (RT&H, S, C&F), Shri Mansukh Mandaviya, presented an overview of the Bill in the House, highlighting the need for repealing five obsolete British statutes on admiralty jurisdiction in civil matters, which are 126 to 177 years old. The Bill provides for prioritization of maritime claims and maritime liens while providing protection to owners, charterers, operators, crew members and seafarers at the same time. During the course of discussion, thirteen members presented their views and raised various questions which were replied to by Shri Mandaviya. The Bill was then passed by the House.

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