

Gujarat House passes Aadhaar bill in absence of Congress MLAs

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The Gujarat Assembly on Monday passed a bill which will empower the state government to use Aadhaar number as the sole identifier for the delivery of various subsidies and benefits in an effective and targeted manner. (Representational Image)

The Gujarat Assembly on Monday passed a bill which will empower the state government to use Aadhaar number as the sole identifier for the delivery of various subsidies and benefits in an effective and targeted manner. The Gujarat Aadhaar (Targeted Delivery of Financial and Other Subsidies, Benefits and Services) Bill, 2017 was passed in the absence of nearly 48 MLAs of the Congress who were suspended from the House by the Speaker for creating ruckus.

While presenting the bill, the deputy Chief Minister Nitin Patel stated that linking the Aadhaar number with various schemes will help the government create a credible system to authenticate the identity of actual beneficiaries.

Patel told the Assembly the Central Aadhaar Act, passed by the central government last year, empowers the state governments to introduce similar laws for targeted delivery of subsidies and benefits by linking Aadhaar number of each beneficiary.

“As of now, the Gujarat government provides various subsidies and financial assistance to the citizens under 119 schemes. We pay them using RTGS or through cheques. We have brought this bill for more accurate, targeted and efficient delivery of such disbursements using Aadhaar number,” said Patel, who handles Finance portfolio.

He said while all the residents of Gujarat above 18 years have been issued Aadhaar cards, 85 per cent citizens in the age group of 5 to 18 have been issued such cards having unique identification number.

Apart from the Aadhaar Bill, the BJP government also tabled three other bills, which were also passed unopposed.

All these bills have replaced ordinances issued by the state government earlier.

As per the “Gujarat Salaries and Allowances of Members, Speaker and Deputy Speaker of the Gujarat Legislative Assembly, Ministers and Leader of Opposition Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2017” the government has sought to introduce a uniform law to provide medical facilities to these dignitaries, as several laws are in place to regulate such facilities extended to them.

Further, the legislation also sought to extend the medical facilities to former MLAs for who there was no law in place. Under the bill, all the dignitaries and former members of the House will get medical facilities at par with the government employees as covered under the “Gujarat State Services (Medical Treatment) Rules, 2015”

Two other bills – the Gujarat Panchayats (Amendment) Bill and the Gujarat Town Planning and Urban Development (Amendment) Bill – were passed on Monday.