

Lok Sabha passes Co-op Societies Bill

Our Bureau

New Delhi

The Lok Sabha on Tuesday passed the Multi-State Co-operative Societies (Amendment) Bill by voice vote amid din as Opposition Members were demanding discussion on Manipur issue. The Bill seeks to strengthen governance, reform the electoral process, improve the monitoring mechanism, and ensure ease of doing business in multi-state cooperative societies.

The Bill was referred to a Joint Committee of Parliament in December last year. Piloting the Bill, Cooperation Minister Amit Shah said the provisions in the Bill will initiate a new era for the sector which has been ignored by the previous governments. The Bill was approved after a short discussion during which only three members participated.

Listing out several measures in the co-operative sec-

tor taken by the government after creation of a separate ministry, Shah said the Centre has been focusing on poverty eradication through the help of co-operative sector.

PROVISIONS

The Bill also aims to improve the composition of boards and ensure financial discipline, besides enabling the raising of funds in the multi state cooperative societies. Currently, India has over 1,500 multi-state cooperative societies, many of which in recent years have been plagued by issues regarding trust, with financial scams shaking the depositors' trust.

Besides proposing 'concurrent audit', the Bill seeks to reform the composition of the board of MSCS; proposes establishment of a Cooperative Election Authority to bring electoral reforms in the sector, and establishment of the 'Cooperative Rehabilitation, Reconstruction and Development Fund'.