

महाराष्ट्र शासन राजपत्र

असाधारण भाग आठ

वर्ष ६, अंक ४५(८)

सोमवार, डिसेंबर १४, २०२०/अग्रहायण २३, शके १९४२ [पृष्ठे १६, किंमत : रुपये २७.००

असाधारण क्रमांक ९४ प्राधिकृत प्रकाशन

महाराष्ट्र विधानमंडळाचे अधिनियम व राज्यपालांनी प्रख्यापित केलेले अध्यादेश व केलेले विनियम आणि विधि व न्याय विभागाकडून आलेली विधेयके (इंग्रजी अनुवाद).

In pursuance of clause (*3*) of article 348 of the Constitution of India, the following translation in English of *SHAKTI* Criminal Laws (Maharashtra Amendment) Bill, 2020 (L. A. Bill No. LI of 2020), introduced in the Maharashtra Legislative Assembly on the 14th December 2020, is hereby published under the authority of the Governor.

By order and in the name of the Governor of Maharashtra,

BHUPENDRA M. GURAO, I/c. Secretary (Legislation) to Government, Law and Judiciary Department.

L. A. BILL No. LI OF 2020

A BILL

further to amend the Indian Penal Code, the Code of Criminal
Procedure, 1973 and the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012,
in their application to the State of Maharashtra.

WHEREAS it is expedient further to amend the Indian Penal Code, the 45 of 1860. Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 and the Protection of Children from 2 of 1974. Sexual Offences Act, 2012, in its application to the State of Maharashtra, 32 of 2012. for the purposes hereinafter appearing; it is hereby enacted in the Seventy-first Year of the Republic of India as follows:—

CHAPTER I

PRELIMINARY

Short title, extent and commencement.

- 1. (1) This Act may be called the SHAKTI Criminal Laws (Maharashtra Amendment) Act, 2020.
 - (2) It extends to the whole of the State of Maharashtra.
- (3) It shall come into force on such date as the State Government may, by notification, in the Official Gazette, appoint.

CHAPTER II

AMENDMENTS TO THE INDIAN PENAL CODE.

Amendment of section 166A of

- 2. In section 166A of the Indian Penal Code, in its application to the 45 of $^{
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 m 45~of~1860.}$ State of Maharashtra (hereinafter, in this Chapter, referred to as "the Penal Code"),—
 - (1) in clause (c), after the word and figures "section 509" the word "or" shall be added;
 - (2) after clause (c), the following clause shall be added, namely:-
 - "(d) deliberately fails to obey the specific directions given by the police officer in the investigation of offences punishable under section 326A, section 326B, section 376, section 376A, section 376AB, section 376B, section 376C, section 376D, section 376DA, section 376DB or section 376E, as required under section 100 of the Criminal Procedure Code, 1973,".

2 of 1974.

Insertion of section 175A in 45 of 1860.

Failure to. share data for police investigation.

- **3.** After section 175 of the Penal Code, the following section shall be inserted, namely:
 - "175A. Notwithstanding anything contained in any law for time being in force, any social media platform or internet or mobile telephony data provider including any intermediary or custodian who fails to share any data including document or electronic record with the Investigation Officer as requested, for the purpose of investigation of offence punishable under section 326A, section 326B, section 354, section 354A, section 354B, section 354C, section 354D, section 354E, section 376, section 376A, section 376AB, section 376B, section 376C, section 376D, section 376DA, section 376DB or section 376E, within a period of seven working days from receiving request shall be punished with simple imprisonment for a term which may extend to one month or a fine of five lakh rupees, or with both.".

After section 182 of the Penal Code, the following section shall be inserted, namely:--

Insertion of section 182A in 45 of 1860.

"182A. Any person, who makes false complaint or provides false Punishment information against any person, in respect of an offence punishable under section 326A, section 326B, section 354, section 354A, section false 354B, section 354C, section 354D, section 354E, section 376, section 376A, section 376AB, section 376B, section 376C, section 376D, section servant of 376DA, section 376DB or section 376E, solely with the intention to humiliate, extort, threaten, defame or harass, shall be punished with simple imprisonment for a term which may extend to one year or with fine, or with both.".

for false complaint or information to publice certain offences.

5. In section 228A of the Penal Code, in sub-section (1), for the portion Amendment of beginning with the words, figures and letter "section 376, section 376A" and ending with the word, figures and letter "section 376E", the following shall be substituted, namely:-

section 228A of 45 of 1860.

"section 326A, section 326B, section 354, section 354A, section 354B, section 354C, section 354D, section 354E, section 376, section 376A, section 376AB, section 376B, section 376C, section 376D, section 376DA, section 376DB or section 376E".

In section 326A of the Penal Code,—

Amendment of section 326A of 45 of 1860.

section 326B

of 45 of 1860.

(a) for the portion beginning with the words "shall be punished with imprisonment" and ending with the words "and with fine", the following shall be substituted, namely :-

"shall be punished,—

- (a) with imprisonment for a term which shall not be less than ten years but which may extend to the remainder of the natural life of such person and with fine; or
- (b) in cases which have the characteristic of the offence is heinous in nature and where adequate conclusive evidence is there and the circumstances warrant exemplary punishment, with death":
- (b) in the first proviso, after the words "medical expenses" the words "including expenses for plastic surgery and face reconstruction" shall be added.
- 7. In section 326B of the Penal Code, for the portion beginning with Amendment of the words "shall be punished with imprisonment" and ending with the words "extend to seven years,", the following shall be substituted, namely :-

"shall be punished with imprisonment for a term which shall not be less than seven years but which may extend to ten years,".

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Insertion of section 354E

After section 354D of the Penal Code, the following section shall in 45 of 1860, be inserted, namely:

Intimidating woman by any mode communication, in addition to insulting her modesty.

- "354E. Whoever intentionally does any act to create a sense of danger, intimidation or fear to a woman, in addition to insulting her modesty, by any act, deed or words including,-
 - (a) offensive communication by telephone, email, social media platform or through any other electronic or digital mode of communication in a manner which is of lascivious or lewd nature; or
 - (b) threat to upload or disseminates any sound or video file including a real or fabricated depiction of any part of the body of that woman including the involvement of that woman in any sexual act through electronic or any other form of media; or
 - (c) use of social electronic media or any other media in any form to defame or cause disrepute to that woman; or
 - (d) use of that woman's name, particulars, photographs or any other means of identification to directly or indirectly outrage her modesty or violate her privacy,

shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to two years and with fine which may extend up to one lakh rupees.".

Amendment of section 376 of 45 of 1860.

- **9.** In section 376 of the Penal Code.
- (a) in sub-section (1), after the words "shall also be liable to fine" the words "or in cases which have the characteristic of offence is heinous in nature and where adequate conclusive evidence is there and the circumstances warrant exemplary punishment, with death" shall be added:
 - (b) in sub-section (2),—
 - (i) after clause (f), the following clause shall be inserted, namely:-
 - "(f-1) being on the management or employed by the management including staff or contractual employee for the purpose of providing security and maintenance of building or any public utility service inside building or within building complex whether regulated by law or otherwise, commits rape on a woman in such area; or";
 - (ii) after the words "shall also be liable to fine" the words "or in cases which have the characteristic of offence is heinous in nature and where adequate conclusive evidence is there and the circumstances warrant exemplary punishment, with death" shall be added:

(c) in sub-section (3), after the words "shall also be liable to fine" the words "or in cases which have the characteristic of offence is heinous in nature and where adequate conclusive evidence is there and the circumstances warrant exemplary punishment, with death" shall be added.

10. In section 376D of the Penal Code, after the words "and with fine" Amendment of the words "or in cases which have the characteristic of offence is heinous $_{
m of~45~of~1860.}^{
m section~376D}$ in nature and where adequate conclusive evidence is there and the circumstances warrant exemplary punishment, with death" shall be added.

11. In section 376DA of the Penal Code, after the words "and with Amendment of fine" the words "or in cases which have the characteristic of offence is $\frac{\text{section } 376DA}{\text{of } 45 \text{ of } 1860}$ heinous in nature and where adequate conclusive evidence is there and the circumstances warrant exemplary punishment, with death" shall be added.

CHAPTER III

AMENDMENTS TO THE CODE OF CRIMINAL PROCEDURE, 1973.

2 of 1974. 12. After section 37 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973, in its Insertion application to the State of Maharashtra (hereinafter, in this Chapter, referred to as "the Code of Criminal Procedure"), the following section shall 1974. be inserted, namely:

of section37A

"37A. Every social media platform or internet or mobile telephony Providing data provider, including any intermediary or custodian shall be bound to share any data, including the document or electronic record to the investigation Investigation Officer on demand, for the purpose of investigation of offence, punishable under section 326A, section 326B, section 354, section 354A, section 354B, section 354C, section 354D, section 354E, section 376, section 376A, section 376AB, section 376B, section 376C, section 376D, section 376DA, section 376DB or section 376E of the Indian Penal Code, or any offence punishable under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012.".

45 of 1860. 32 of 2012.

> 13. In section 39 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, in sub-Amendment section (1),—

of section 39 of 2 of 1974.

- (1) after clause (v), the following clauses shall be inserted, namely:-
- "(v-l) sections 326A and 326B (that is to say, offences related causing grievous hurt by use of acid and attempting to throw acid, etc);
- (v-2) sections 354, 354A, 354B, 354C, 354D and 354E (that is to say, offences related to assault to outrage modesty, sexual harassment, disrobe, voyeurism, stalking, harassment of woman by any mode of communication, etc.);";

(2) after clause (va), the following clause shall be inserted, namely:

"(vb) sections 376, 376A, 376AB, 376B, 376C, 376D, 376DA, 376DB and 376E, both inclusive (that is to say, offences related to rape and gang rape, etc.);".

Amendment of section 100 of 2 of 1974.

14. In section 100 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, in sub-section (4), the following proviso shall be added, namely:

"Provided that, in case of offences under section 326A, section 326B, section 376, section 376A, section 376AB, section 376C, section 376D, section 376DA, section 376DB or section 376E of the Indian Penal Code and the offences under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences 45 of 1860. Act, 2012, the person conducting the search shall call upon two public servants or two social workers recognized by the Women and Child Development Department of Government of Maharashtra, who are available in the locality in which the place to be searched is situated. Where, such public servants are not available despite diligent efforts, the person conducting the search shall, after recording in writing the same, follow the procedure provided in this sub-section.".

32 of 2012.

Amendment of section 164

15. In section 164 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, in sub-section of 2 of 1974. (5A), in clause (a), after the words "punishable under" the words, figures and letters "section 326A, section 326B," shall be inserted.

Amendment of section 173 of 2 of 1974.

- **16.** In section 173 of the Code of Criminal Procedure,—
- (i) in sub-section (1A), for the word,, figures and letters "sections 376, 376A, 376AB, 376B, 376C, 376D, 376DA, 376DB or 376E "the word, figures and letters "section 376B or 376C" shall be substituted;
- (ii) after sub-section (1A), the following sub-section shall be inserted, namely:—

"(1B) In relation to offences under section 326A, section 326B, section 376, section 376A, section 376AB, section 376D, section 376DA, section 376DB or section 376E of the Indian Penal Code, the 45 of 1860. investigation shall be completed within a period of fifteen working days from the date on which the information was recorded by the officer-incharge of the police station:

Provided that, if it is not possible to complete the investigation within the period of fifteen working days from the date on which the information was recorded, then the reasons for the same shall be recorded in writing by the concerned investigating officer; such instances may include the inability to identify the accused; whereupon the said period can be further extended by seven working days by the concerned Special Inspector General of Police or Commissioner of Police:

Provided further that, nothing contained in this section shall be deemed to have any effect on the various provisions of bail specified in this Code.".

17. In section 309 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, in sub-section Amendment (1), for the proviso, the following proviso shall be substituted, namely:

of section 309 of 2 of 1974.

"Provided that, when the inquiry or trial relates to an offence under section 326A, section 326B, section 376, section 376A, section 376AB, section 376B, section 376C, section 376D, section 376DA, section 45 of 1860. 376DB or section 376E, of the Indian Penal Code, the inquiry or trial shall be conducted on the day to day basis and completed within a period of thirty working days from the date of filing of the charge sheet.".

> 18. In section 320 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, in sub-section Amendment (2), in the table, after entry relating to section 338, the following entry shall $_{\text{of 2 of 1974.}}^{\text{of section 320}}$ be inserted, namely:—

"Intimidating woman 354E The woman to whom sense of danger. by any mode of communication, intimidation or in addition to insulting fear is created.". her modesty

19. In section 327 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, in sub-section (2),— Amendment of section 327

- (1) after the words "offence under" the words, figures and letters of 2 of 1974. "section 326A, section 326B," shall be inserted;
- (2) after the second proviso, the following proviso shall be added, namely:

"Provided also that, in camera proceedings shall be held in the chamber of the Presiding Officer recording the evidence and every effort shall be made by such Presiding Officer to make the victim or vulnerable witnesses feel comfortable and this shall be recorded in the evidence.".

20. In section 374 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, in sub-section (4),— Amendment

- (1) after the words "passed under" the words, figures and letters of 2 of 1974. "section 326A, section 326B," shall be inserted;
- (2) for the words "six months" the words "forty-five days" shall be substituted.
- **21.** In section 377 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, in sub-section (4),— Amendment of section 377
- (1) after the words "passed under" the words, figures and letters of 2 of 1974. "section 326A, section 326B," shall be inserted;
- (2) for the words "six months" the words "forty-five days" shall be substituted.

Amendment of section 438 of 2 of 1974.

22. In section 438 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, as amended by the Code of Criminal Procedure (Maharashtra Amendment) Act, 1993, after Mah. 24 of sub-section (2), the following sub-section shall be inserted, namely:—

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"(2A) Nothing in this section shall apply to any case involving the arrest of any person on accusation of having committed an offence under section 326A or section 326B or section 376 or section 376A or section 376AB or section 376D or section 376DA or section 376DB or section 376E of the Indian Penal Code.".

45 of 1860.

Amendment of section 439 of 2 of 1974.

23. In section 439 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, in sub-section (IA), for the portion beginning with the words "the person under" and ending with the words "Indian Penal Code", the following shall be substituted, 45 of 1860. namely:--

"the person under section 326A or section 326B or sub-section (3) of section 376 or section 376AB or section 376DA or section 376DB or section 376E of the Indian Penal Code".

45 of 1860.

Amendment of FIRST of 2 of 1974.

- 24. In the FIRST SCHEDULE to the Code of Criminal Procedure, $_{
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 m oi\ FIRS1}$ under the heading "I- OFFENCES UNDER THE INDIAN PENAL CODE",-
 - (a) after entry relating to section 175, the following entry shall be inserted, namely:-
 - "175A Failure to share Simple imprisonm- Cognizable Bailable Magistrate data by social ent upto 1 of the first media platforms month or fine class"; and internet or of 5,00,000 mobile telephony rupees or data providers, both. etc.
 - (b) after entry relating to section 182, the following entry shall be inserted, namely :--
 - "182A Punishment for false Simple Cognizable Bailable Magistrate of the first complaint or false imprisonment information to public upto 1 year class": servant of certain or fine or both. offences.
 - (c) for entries relating to sections 326A and 326B, the following entries shall be substituted, namely :--

"326A Voluntarily **Imprisonment** Cognizable Non-Court of bailable Session. causing for not less than 10 years but grievous hurt by use which may extend of acid. to the remainder of the natural life etc.

of such person, and with fine to be paid to the victim or in case of heinous offences with conclusive evidence, with death.

326B Voluntarily Imprisonment Cognizable Non- Court of throwing for not less than bailable Session.";

or 7 years but attempting which may to throw extend to 10

acid. years and with fine.

(d) after entry relating to section 354D, the following entry shall be inserted, namely :--

"354E Intimidating Imprisonment Cognizable Bailable Any

woman by any of either Magistrate.";

mode of description communication, for a term upto in addition to 2 years and insulting her with fine which modesty. may extend to

1,00,000 rupees.

(e) for entry relating to section 376, the following entries shall be substituted, namely :--

"376(1) Rape by persons Rigorous Cognizable Non- Court of other than persons imprisonment bailable Session.

covered under sub-section (2).

of not less than 10 years which may extend to imprisonment for life and with fine. In case of heinous offences with conclusive evidence, with death. 376(2) Rape by persons in authority or trust, etc.

Rigorous Cognizable Nonimprisonment of not less than 10 years which may extend to imprisonment for life which shall mean the remainder of that person's natural life and with fine. In case of heinous

offences with conclusive evidence, with death.

376(3) Persons committing offence of rape on a woman under 16 years of age.

Rigorous imprisonment of not less than 20 years which may extend to imprisonment for life which shall mean the remainder of that person's natural life and with fine. In case

of heinous offences with conclusive evidence. with death. Cognizable Non-Court of bailable Session.".

bailable

Court of

Session.

(f) for entries relating to sections 376D and 376DA, the following entries shall be substituted, namely:-

"376D Gang rape

Rigorous imprisonment Cognizable Non-Court of bailable Session.

Cognizable Non-

Court of

bailable Session.".

for not less

than 20

years but

which may

extend to

imprisonment

for life which

shall mean the

remainder of that

person's natural

life and with fine.

to be

paid to the

victim. In

case of

heinous

offences

with

conclusive

evidence.

with death.

376DA Gang rape on Imprisonment

a woman under 16

for life which shall mean the

years of age remainder of that

person's natural

life and with fine.

In case of heinous

offences with

conclusive

evidence, with

death.

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CHAPTER IV

AMENDMENTS TO THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN FROM SEXUAL OFFENCES ACT. 2012.

Amendment of section 2 of 32

- **25.** In section 2 of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences 32 of 2012. of 2012. Act, 2012, in its application to the State of Maharashtra (hereinafter, in this Chapter, referred to as "the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act"), after clause (m), the following clause shall be added, namely:—
 - "(n) "staff" means any person appointed as regular, temporary, contractual employee or worker and includes any person provided by an outsourced agency that renders assistance of any kind.".

Amendment of section 4 of 32

26. In section 4 of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences of 2012. Act, in sub-section (2), after the words "shall also be liable to fine" the words "which shall not be less than five lakh rupees or in case which have the characteristic of offence is heinous in nature and where adequate conclusive evidence is there and the circumstances warrant exemplary punishment, with death" shall be added.

Amendment of section 5 of 32 of 2012.

- **27.** In section 5 of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act,—
- (a) in clause (d), after the words "being inmate" the words "or resident" shall be inserted:
- (b) in clause (h), for the words "corrosive substance; or" the words "corrosive substance or intoxicant; or" shall be substituted;
- (c) in clause (j), in sub-clause (i), for the words, brackets, letter and figures "become mentally ill as defined under clause (b) of section 2 of the Mental Health Act, 1987" the words, brackets, letter and figures 14 of 1987. "have mental illness as defined under clause (s) of section 2 of the 10 of 2017. Mental Healthcare Act, 2017" shall be substituted.

Amendment of section 8 of 32

28. In section 8 of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, of 2012. for the words "shall not be less than three years but which may extend to five years" the words "shall not be less than five years but which may extend to seven years" shall be substituted.

Amendment of section 9 of 32 of 2012.

- **29.** In section 9 of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act,
- (a) in clause (d), after the words "being inmate" the words "or resident" shall be inserted;
- (b) in clause (h), for the words "corrosive substance; or" the words "corrosive substance or intoxicant; or" shall be substituted;
- (c) in clause (j), in sub-clause (i), for the words, brackets, letter and figures "become mentally ill asdefined under clause (b) of section 2 of the Mental Health Act, 1987" the words, brackets, letter and figures "have mental 14 of 1987. illness as defined under clause (s) of section 2 of the Mental Healthcare Act, 10 of 2017. 2017" shall be substituted.

30. In section 10 of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Amendment of Act, for the words "shall not be less than five years but which may extend 32 of 2012." to seven years" the words "shall not be less than seven years but which may extend to ten years" shall be substituted.

31. After section 23 of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Insertion of Act, the following section shall be inserted, namely:

section 23A in 32 of 2012.

"23A. Notwithstanding anything contained in any law for time Failure to share being in force, any social media platorm or internet or mobile telephony investigation. data provider including any intermediary or custodian who fails to share any data with the Investigation Officer as requested, for the purpose of investigation of offence, punishable under this Act, within a period of seven working days from receiving request, shall be punished with to imprisonment for a term which may extend to one month or a fine of five lakh rupees, or with both.".

data for police

STATEMENT OF OBJECTS AND REASONS

Sections 326A, 326B, 354, 354A, 354B, 354C, 354D, 376, 376A, 376AB, 376B, 376C, 376D, 376DA, 376DB and 376E of the Indian Penal Code, (45 of 1860) provides for offences against women regarding heinous and sexual offences. The Parliament has enacted the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012 (32 of 2012) to protect the children from offences of sexual assault, sexual harassment and pornography and for establishment of Special Courts for trial of such offences. The offences against women and children, specially sexual offences have been increased many fold in the State. The perpetrators continue their inhuman acts on innocent and helpless women and children despite the penal provisions in the said Acts. Recently, such numerous inhuman acts have been taken place in the State where the women were subjected to rape, burning alive and murder. Such incidents are shocking to the social conscience.

2. In order to effectively control the heinous and sexual offence against women and children, the Government had appointed a Committee to make suggestions for stringent punishment and other related matters to amend the said Acts. The Committee has submitted its report to the Government. The Committee suggested amendments in the Indian Penal Code, the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012 and Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 (2 of 1974) to provide for heavy fines and penalty upto death to the accused and speedy investigation and speedy trials of the said offences.

The Government has considered the said report and decided to make more stringent punishment for such heinous and sexual crimes against women and children and therefore, proposes to make suitable amendments in sections relating to heinous and sexual offences against women and children in the Indian Penal Code, the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012 and the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973.

- 3. The salient features of the proposed law are as follows:—
 - (1) Amendments are proposed in the Indian Penal Code,—
 - (i) to provide for life imprisonment for the remainder of natural life of such person and heavy fines for heinous and sexual offences;
 - (ii) to provide for death punishment for such grave offences;
 - (iii) to provide for punishment for failure to share any data with investigating officer relating to such offences by social media platform, internet or mobile telephony data providers, etc.;
 - (iv) to provide for punishment for not furnishing information or assistance for investigation of offences;
 - (v) to provide for punishment for intimidating women by any mode of communication;

- (vi) to provide for punishment for false complaints or false information.
- (2) Amendments are proposed in the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973,—
- (i) to make compulsory for media platform, internet or mobile telephony data providers, etc, to share data including any document or electronic record relating to such offences to the investigation officer;
- (ii) to call public servant or two social workers while making search of places by investigation officer;
- (iii) to complete the investigation within the period of fifteen working days from the date on which the information was recorded by the officer incharge of police station;
- (iv) to complete the inquiry and trial within the period of thirty working days from the date of filing of charge sheet;
- (v) to held *in camera* proceedings in the chamber of Presiding Officer for recording of evidence of victims and witnesses;
- (vi) to reduce the period for disposal of appeal by any person or by the State Government from six months to forty-five days ;
- (vii) to make stringent provisions for anticipatory bail to the accused persons for the said offences.
- (3) Amendments are proposed in the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012,
 - (i) to provide for life imprisonment for the remainder of natural life of such person and heavy fines for the offences under sections 4, 8 and 10 of Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2010;
 - (ii) to provide for death punishment for certain grave offences.
 - 4. The Bill is intended to achieve the above objectives.

Mumbai,

ANIL DESHMUKH,

dated the 13th December 2020.

Minister for Home.

MEMORANDUM REGARDING DELEGATED LEGISLATION.

The Bill involves the following proposal for delegation of legislative power, namely.

Clause 1(2).—Under this clause, power is taken to the State Government to bring the Act into force on such date as the State Government may, by notification in the Official Gazette, appoint.

2. The above-mentioned proposal for delegation of legislative power is of a normal character.