

**L. A. BILL No. VIII OF 2023.**

*A BILL*

*to provide for the maintenance of certain essential services and the normal life  
of the community; and to provide for the matters connected therewith or  
5 incidental thereto.*

WHEREAS it is expedient to provide for the maintenance of certain essential services and the normal life of the community; and to provide for the matters connected therewith or incidental thereto; it is hereby enacted in the Seventy-fourth Year of the Republic of India, as follows :—

10 **1. (1)** This Act may be called the Maharashtra Essential Services Maintenance Act, 2023.

Short title,  
extent,  
commencement  
and duration.

(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 and shall cease to have effect on the expiry of the five years from the said date except as respects things done or omitted to be done before such cesser of operation of this Act ; and section 7 of 5 the Maharashtra General Clauses Act, shall apply upon such cesser of operation of this Act, as if it had then been repealed by a Maharashtra Act. I of 1904.

Definitions.

2. In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires, —

(a) “essential service” means,—

(i) any transport service for the carriage of passengers or goods, by 10 land or water, with respect to which the State Legislature has power to make laws;

(ii) any service connected with the supply of gas or milk or water or electricity with respect to which the State Legislature has power to make laws ; 15

(iii) any service connected with the maintenance of public health and sanitation including hospitals and dispensaries;

(iv) any public service, post and employment in connection with the affairs of the State and also persons appointed to the secretarial staff of both Houses of the State Legislature, and the officers and 20 employees of the High Court;

(v) any service or post in connection with the affairs of the local authorities;

(vi) any other service, post, employment or class thereof, connected with matters in respect of which the State Legislature has power to 25 make laws and when the State Government is of opinion that strike in such service, post, employment or class thereof would prejudicially affect the public safety or the maintenance of the supplies or services essential to the life of the community or would result in the infliction of grave hardships on the community, and which the State Government by 30 notification in the *Official Gazette*, declares to be an essential service for the purpose of this Act;

(b) “strike” means the cessation of work by a body of persons employed in any essential service acting in combination or a concerted refusal or a refusal under a common understanding of any number of persons who are or 35 have been so employed, to continue to work or to accept employment, and includes,—

(i) refusal to work overtime, where such work is necessary for the maintenance of any essential service;

(ii) any other conduct, which is likely to result in, or results in, 40 cessation or substantial retardation of work in any essential service;

(c) words and expressions used in sections 5 and 6 and not defined herein but defined in the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947, shall have the 14 of 1947. meanings respectively assigned to them in that Act.

3. (1) Every notification issued under sub-clause (vi) of clause (a) of section 2 shall be laid before each House of the State Legislature, immediately after it is made, if it is in session, and on the first day of the commencement of the next session of the House if it is not in session and shall cease to operate at the expiration of forty days from the date of its being so laid or from the re-assembly of the State Legislature, as the case may be, unless before the expiration of that period, a resolution approving the issue of the notification is passed by both Houses of the State Legislature.

Laying of notification before each House of State Legislature.

(2) Where any notification ceases to operate by or under sub-section (1), the cesser shall be without prejudice to anything done or omitted to be done before such cesser.

*Explanation.*—Where the Houses of the State Legislature are summoned to re-assemble on different dates, the period of forty days shall be reckoned from the later of those dates.

4. (1) If the State Government is satisfied that in the public interest, it is necessary or expedient so to do, it may subject to the provisions of sub-section (5), by general or special order, prohibit strike in such essential service from such date as may be specified in the order.

Power to prohibit strike in certain employments.

(2) An order made under sub-section (1) shall be published in such manner, as the State Government considers best calculated to bring it to the notice of the persons affected by the order.

(3) An order made under sub-section (1) shall be in force only for six months only, from the date specified therein, but the State Government may, by a like order published in like manner, and subject to the provisions of sub-section (5), extend it for a further period not exceeding six months, if it is satisfied that in the public interest it is necessary or expedient so to do.

(4) Upon the issue of an order under sub-section (1) or sub-section (3),—

(a) no person employed in any essential service to which the order relates shall go or remain on strike ;

(b) any strike declared or commenced whether before or after the issue of the order, by persons employed in any such service shall be illegal.

(5) No order under sub-section (1) or sub-section (3) shall be made in respect of—

(a) persons appointed to the secretarial staff of the Houses of the State Legislature, except at the request of the Chairman of the Legislative Council and the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly;

(b) officers and employees of the High Court, except at the request of the Chief Justice of the High Court.

5. (1) If the State Government is satisfied that in the public interest, it is necessary or expedient so to do, it may, by general or special order, prohibit lock-out in any establishment pertaining to any essential service specified in the order.

Power to prohibit lock-out in certain establishments.

(2) An order made under sub-section (1) shall be published in such manner as the State Government considers best calculated to bring it to the notice of the persons affected by the order.

(3) An order made under sub-section (1) shall be in force for six months only, but the State Government may, by a like order, extend it for a further period not exceeding six months, if it is satisfied that in the public interest, it is necessary or expedient so to do.

(4) Upon the issue of an order under sub-section (1) or sub-section (3),— 5

(a) no employer in relation to an establishment to which the order applies shall declare or commence any lock-out;

(b) any lock-out declared or commenced whether before or after the issue of the order, by any employer in relation to an establishment to which the order applies, shall be illegal. 10

(5) Any employer in relation to an establishment who commences, continues or otherwise acts in furtherance of a lock-out which is illegal under this section, shall, on conviction, be punished with imprisonment for a term which may extend to six months, or with fine which may extend to three thousand rupees, or with both. 15

Power to prohibit lay-off in certain establishments.

6. (1) If the State Government is satisfied that in the public interest it is necessary or expedient so to do, it may, by general or special order, prohibit lay-off, on any ground other than shortage of power or natural calamity, of any workman (other than a *badli* workman or a casual workman) whose name is borne on the muster roll of any establishment pertaining to any essential service 20 specified in the order.

(2) An order made under sub-section (1) shall be published in such manner, as the State Government considers best calculated to bring it to the notice of the persons affected by the order.

(3) An order made under sub-section (1) shall be in force for six months 25 only but the State Government may, by a like order, extend it for a further period not exceeding six months if it is satisfied that in the public interest it is necessary or expedient so to do.

(4) Upon the issue of an order under sub-section (1) or sub-section (3),—

(a) no employer, in relation to an establishment to which the order 30 applies, shall lay-off or continue the lay-off of any workman (other than a *badli* workman or a casual workman) whose name is borne on the muster roll of such establishment, unless such lay-off is due to shortage of power or natural calamity; and any laying off or continuation of laying off shall, unless such laying off or continuation of laying off is due to shortage of power or 35 natural calamity, be illegal;

(b) a workman whose laying off is illegal under clause (a) shall be entitled to all the benefits under any law for the time being in force as if he had not been laid-off.

(5) Any employer in relation to an establishment who lays-off or continues 40 the laying off of any workman shall, if such laying off or continuation of laying off is illegal under this section, on conviction, be punished with imprisonment for a term which may extend to six months, or with fine which may extend to three thousand rupees, or with both.

Penalty for illegal strike.

7. Any person who commences a strike which is illegal under this Act or 45 goes or remains on, or otherwise takes part in, any such strike shall, on conviction, be punished with imprisonment for a term which may extend to one year, or with fine which may extend to three thousand rupees, or with both.

Penalty for instigation.

8. Any person who instigates or incites other persons to take part in or 50 otherwise acts in furtherance of, a strike which is illegal under this Act, shall, on

conviction, be punished with imprisonment for a term which may extend to one year, or with fine which may extend to three thousand rupees, or with both.

**9.** Any person who knowingly expends or supplies any money in furtherance or support of a strike which is illegal under this Act, shall, on conviction, be punished with imprisonment for a term which may extend to one year, or with fine which may extend to three thousand rupees, or with both.

Penalty for giving financial aid to illegal strike.

**10.** Any action taken under section 7, 8 or 9 shall not affect, and shall be in addition to, any action of a disciplinary nature or any consequence which may ensue, and to which any person may be liable by the terms and conditions of his service or employment.

Action under section 7, 8 or 9 in addition to disciplinary action.

**11.** (1) Notwithstanding anything contained in the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973, any Police Officer may arrest without a warrant any person who is reasonably suspected of having committed any offence under this Act.

Power to arrest without warrant and offences to be non-bailable.

(2) All offences under this Act shall be non-bailable.

**12.** The provisions of this Act or any order issued thereunder shall have effect notwithstanding anything inconsistent therewith contained in the Maharashtra Industrial Relations Act, the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947 or any other law for the time being in force.

Act to override other laws.

**13.** (1) The Maharashtra Essential Services Maintenance Act, 2017 (hereinafter referred to as “the principal Act”) is hereby repealed.

Repeal of Mah. XVIII of 2018 and saving.

(2) The repeal of the principal Act shall not affect-

(a) anything done or any action taken (including any notification or order issued) under the provisions of the principal Act, or

(b) any right, privilege or obligation or liability acquired, accrued or incurred under the principal Act, or

(c) any penalty or punishment incurred in respect of any offence under the principal Act, or

(d) any investigation, legal proceeding or remedy in respect of any such right, privilege, obligation, liability, penalty or punishment as aforesaid, and any such investigation, legal proceeding or remedy may be instituted, continued or enforced and any such penalty or punishment may be imposed as if the principal Act had not been repealed.

## STATEMENT OF OBJECTS AND REASONS.

The Government of Maharashtra has always had a realistic and sympathetic approach while dealing with the legitimate demands, problems and grievances of its employees and the employees of the Local Authorities and the employees in the essential services, and has always endeavoured to solve them amicably and promptly, as far as possible. There have, however, been certain occasions in the past and there could be some occasions in the future, when it may not be possible for the Government to agree to all the demands of such employees, some of them sometimes being impracticable and even unreasonable. At such times, the Government has to face the threat of such employees or of the employees of such employers who are connected with the maintenance of essential services, going on an indefinite strike which could have the effect of virtually crippling the normal life of the community by disturbing the maintenance of supplies and services essential to the normal life of the community.

2. After the expiry of the Maharashtra Essential Services Maintenance Act, 1970 (Mah. IV of 1971) and the Essential Services Maintenance Act, 1981 (40 of 1981) of the Parliament, there was no law which could have enabled the State Government to meet any situation which might have been created by any kind of strike by such employees connected with the maintenance of essential services. Therefore, with a view to meet effectively any such situation and to ensure that the normal life of the community was not affected or disturbed by employees concerned with the production and supply of essential services going on strike or any such employers declaring “lock-out” or “lay-off”, as the case may be, the Maharashtra Essential Services Maintenance Act, 1994 (Mah. LIII of 1994) was enacted, on the lines of the Essential Services Maintenance Act, 1981 (40 of 1981), then enacted by the Parliament, to provide for the maintenance of certain essential services and securing the normal life of the community. After expiry of the said Act of 1994, the Maharashtra Essential Services Maintenance Acts were enacted by the Maharashtra State Legislature, from time to time. The Maharashtra Essential Services Maintenance Act, 2017 (Mah. XVIII of 2018) was enacted which was in force for a period of five years from the date of its commencement i.e. the 1st March 2018 and has expired on the 28th February 2023. Therefore, after 28th February 2023, there is no law which would enable the Government to meet such situation, if it arises.

The Government is of the opinion that circumstances may continue to exist justifying the continuation of the said provisions. It is, therefore, considered expedient to re-enact the provisions of the said Maharashtra Essential Services Maintenance Act, 2017, to ensure the maintenance of certain essential services and securing the normal life of the community.

3. Such law would only be an enabling measure. Besides enumerating certain essential services in which “strikes” or “lock-outs” or “lay-offs” are prohibited and would be illegal, power is also being taken to the State Government to declare, by notification in the *Official Gazette*, any other service, post or employment, etc., with respect to which the State Legislature has power to make laws and the State Government is of the opinion that strike in such service, post or employment, etc., would prejudicially affect the public life or the maintenance of the supplies or services essential to the life of the community, as an essential service for the purposes of such law.

4. The Bill seeks to achieve the above objectives.

Mumbai,

EKNATH SHINDE,

Dated 6th March, 2023.

Chief Minister.

## MEMORANDUM REGARDING DELEGATED LEGISLATION

The Bill involves the following proposals for delegation of legislative power, namely :—

*Clause 1 (3).*—Under this clause, power is taken to the State Government to appoint, by notification in the *Official Gazette*, the date on which the Act shall come into force.

*Clause 2 (a)(vi).*—Under this clause, power is taken to the State Government to declare, by notification in the *Official Gazette*, any service, post, employment or class thereof in respect of which the State Legislature has power to make laws, to be an essential service for the purposes of the Act.

*Clause 4.*—Under this clause, power is taken to the State Government to prohibit, by order, strike in any essential service from the date as may be specified therein.

*Clause 5.*—Under this clause, power is taken to the State Government to prohibit, by order, lock-out in any establishment pertaining to any essential service specified therein.

*Clause 6.*—Under this clause, power is taken to the State Government to prohibit, by order, lay-off of any workman of any establishment pertaining to any essential service specified therein.

2. The above-mentioned proposals for delegation of legislative power are of a normal character.

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**[SHRI EKNATH SHINDE,  
Chief Minister.]**

**RAJENDRA BHAGWAT,  
Principal Secretary,  
Maharashtra Legislative Assembly.**