



The Waqf Bill

Why in News?

Recently, at the **'Budget Pe Charcha'** event in **Srinagar**, the **Union Minister of Parliamentary Affairs** stated that the proposed amendments in [the Waqf Bill](#) aimed to **benefit poor Muslims** rather than seize Waqf property.

Key Points

- **Support for the Waqf Bill:**
 - He mentioned that several Muslim MPs have also backed the Bill, with many expressing private approval.
 - Despite opposition from certain political parties, he highlighted that his ministry had received feedback from the Muslim community, including women.
 - The amendments **aim to enhance transparency in Waqf property management**, ultimately serving the best interests of the community.
- **Visit to Dargah Hazratbal Shrine:**
 - The Minister visited [the Dargah Hazratbal shrine](#) in Srinagar and reviewed ongoing development works.
 - The Minister praised the J&K Waqf Board's development initiatives, calling them a model for religious site management across India.
- **Discussion on Union Budget 2025:**
 - He also chaired a discussion on [the Union Budget 2025](#), engaging with local business leaders, industry representatives, and community members.
 - The discussion saw participation from stakeholders across various sectors, including the Hotel Association, Houseboat Owners Association, Industries & Commerce Association, Tour & Travel Association, [Saffron Growers Association](#), Shawl Weavers Association, Fruit Growers Association, and Farmers Association.
 - The issues discussed included the implementation of [the Minimum Wages Act](#), the revival of [Public Sector Undertakings \(PSUs\)](#), rehabilitation of houseboat owners, and conservation of Kashmir's wetlands.
- **Commitment to J&K's Economy:**
 - He acknowledged the significance of [tourism and handicrafts in J&K's economy](#) and assured policy support for these sectors.
 - He emphasized [sustainable tourism and environmental conservation](#), particularly in preserving [wetlands](#) and rehabilitating houseboats.
 - He reiterated the government's commitment to promoting **eco-friendly tourism** while safeguarding local livelihoods.

Waqf Act, 1995

- **Background:**
 - The Waqf act was first passed by Parliament in **1954**.
 - It was later repealed, and a **new Waqf Act** was passed in **1995**, which gave more powers to Waqf Boards.
 - In **2013**, the Act was further amended to grant the Waqf Board **extensive powers** to

designate property as '**Waqf Property.**'

▪ **Waqf:**

- It is the permanent dedication of **movable or immovable properties for religious, pious or charitable** purposes as recognised by Muslim law.
- It implies the **endowment of property**, whether movable or immovable, tangible or intangible, to God by a Muslim, under the premise that the **transfer will benefit the needy.**
- The proceeds from a Waqf typically fund **educational institutions, graveyards, mosques and shelter homes.**
- Waqfs in India are **regulated by the Waqf act, 1995.**

▪ **Waqf Board:**

- A Waqf board is a **legal entity** capable of **acquiring, holding and transferring** property. It can **sue and be sued in court.**
- It **administers** Waqf properties, **recovers** lost properties and **sanctions** the transfer of immovable Waqf properties through sale, gift, mortgage, exchange, or lease, with at least two-thirds of the board members voting in favour of the transaction.
- The **Central Waqf Council (CWC)**, established in **1964**, oversees and advises state level Waqf Boards across India.

▪ **Waqf Properties:**

- The Waqf board is said to be **the third-largest landholder** in India after the Railways and the Defence department.
 - Currently, there are 8,72,292 registered Waqf properties spread across 8 lakh acres. These properties generate Rs 200 crore in revenue.
 - Once a property is designated as a Waqf, it becomes **non-transferable** and is **detained perpetually** as a charitable act toward God, essentially transferring ownership to God.

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