

THE BHARAT OCEANIC HABITATION AND BLUE ECONOMY HABITAT ACT

Scarcity is a Policy Choice

PARLIAMENT OF INDIA, 18TH LOK SABHA, SECOND SESSION

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PARLIAMENT OF INDIA

18th Lok Sabha, Second Session

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BILL No. ____ OF 2026

INTRODUCED BY THE MINISTER FOR _____ (or, alternatively, as a Private Member's Bill under Rule 65 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha)

CONCERNING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A NATIONAL MISSION FOR AFFORDABLE HUMAN HABITATION ON AND IN THE WATERS OF INDIA, TO BE ORGANISED BY THE BHARAT PRODUCTIVE CAPACITY AUTHORITY AS A NEW ACTIVITY OF INDIA'S BLUE ECONOMY; TO DIRECT THE AUTHORITY TO BUILD AND OPERATE, THROUGH REPEATABLE MARINE MOULDS, WATER LIVING SYSTEMS IN EVERY AFFORDABLE FORM FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE CITIZENS OF INDIA, AND IN PARTICULAR THE COASTAL, ISLAND, AND RIVERINE POPULATIONS MOST EXPOSED TO A RISING AND WARMING OCEAN; TO BIND THAT HABITATION TO NET ECOLOGICAL GAIN AND TO THE COASTAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL LAW OF INDIA; AND FOR MATTERS CONNECTED THEREWITH OR INCIDENTAL THERETO.

A BILL FOR AN ACT

LONG TITLE

AN ACT to provide for a national mission to bring affordable human habitation on, under, across the edge of, and afloat upon the waters of India within the reach of every citizen; to constitute that habitation as a new activity of India's blue economy on the framework of the Draft National Policy on Blue Economy prepared by the Ministry of Earth Sciences; to direct the Bharat Productive Capacity Authority to build and operate a mission for water living systems in every form that high automation can reasonably make affordable, marine, submarine, trans-marine, flotation, and boat-flotation, through the repeatable marine moulds the Indian shipping and boatbuilding industry already uses; to serve in particular the coastal communities, the island territories of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands and Lakshadweep, and the riverine populations most exposed to sea-level rise, cyclone, and erosion; to bind the mission to a duty of net ecological gain and to the Coastal Regulation Zone Notification, 2019 issued under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986, the coastal-zone management framework, and the law governing tidelands and the sea; to coordinate the mission with the Sagarmala Programme of the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways and with the marine-industry and port ecosystem it has built; to direct that the mission draw upon and enlarge India's marine scientific and medical knowledge, honouring India's establishment of a Department of Ocean Development in 1981 among the first nations to do so; to fund the mission through the layered Union-State-Local architecture of the Bharat Productive Capacity Authority Act; to provide for the mission's compliance with the doctrine of Antyodaya as articulated in Integral Humanism (Ekatma Manav Darshan); and to provide for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

LEGISLATIVE ROUTING NOTE

FILING PROCEDURE: This Bill, being an Ordinary Bill within the meaning of the Rules of Procedure of either House of Parliament, may be introduced in either the Lok Sabha or the Rajya Sabha. The Bill is not a Money Bill within the meaning of Article 110 of the Constitution of India. After introduction and First Reading, the Bill will, in the ordinary course, be referred to the relevant Department-related Parliamentary Standing Committees for examination, public consultation, and report, and shall come into force on receiving the assent of the President.

COMMITTEE REFERENCES:

- Standing Committee on Science and Technology, Environment, Forests and Climate Change (blue economy, Coastal Regulation Zone, marine science)
- Standing Committee on Transport, Tourism and Culture (Sagarmala, ports, shipping, coastal shipping)
- Standing Committee on Housing and Urban Affairs (affordable habitation)

FISCAL IMPACT: The Comptroller and Auditor General of India shall, in accordance with Article 148 of the Constitution of India, prepare an independent fiscal impact statement on the Bill's provisions. This Bill draws upon the funding architecture of the Bharat Productive Capacity Authority Act and requires no separate appropriation beyond a Union grant under Article 282 of the Constitution of India for the mission's start-up, with continuing finance from the Authority's operating revenue and the statutory industry levy of that Act, which levy shall not at any time exceed two per cent of the assessed industry revenue base in any quarter.

CONSTITUTIONAL BASIS: This Act is enacted pursuant to Article 246 read with the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution of India, including List I Entry 21 (works, lands, and buildings), Entry 25 (maritime shipping and navigation), Entry 57 (fishing and fisheries beyond territorial waters), and Entry 97 (any matter not enumerated in List II or List III); the Union's power over the territorial waters, continental shelf, and exclusive economic zone under the Territorial Waters, Continental Shelf, Exclusive Economic Zone and other Maritime Zones Act, 1976; List III to the extent of economic and social planning and the environmental power exercised through the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986; and Article 282, authorising Union grants for any public purpose. This Act gives effect to, and is in furtherance of, the Directive Principles of State Policy under Part IV of the Constitution of India, including Article 39 (equitable access to the material resources of the community), Article 47 (raising the standard of living), and Article 48A (protection and improvement of the environment and safeguarding of coastal and marine ecology); and it extends the paramount right to a personal productive asset established by the Bharat Productive Capacity Authority Act.

LEGISLATIVE DECLARATION

BE IT ENACTED by Parliament in the Seventy-Seventh Year of the Republic of India as follows.

THE PARAMOUNT DECLARATION OF THIS ACT

(I) THE OCEAN IS INDIA'S FRONTIER AND INDIA'S EXPOSURE AT ONCE.

The Congress of this Parliament finds that India holds a coastline of thousands of kilometres, two island territories, and a vast exclusive economic zone, and that the same waters that carry India's trade and feed its coastal millions now rise and warm against them. The Ministry of Earth Sciences has prepared a Draft National Policy on Blue Economy, and India was among the first nations of the world to establish a Department of Ocean Development, in the year 1981. This Act finds that the blue economy of India must include not only the harvest of the sea, its fisheries, its shipping, its offshore energy, and its marine biotechnology, but also the housing of the people who live at the edge of the sea and the shelter of those the sea now threatens. The ocean is India's frontier and India's exposure at once, and this Act answers both.

(II) THE PARAMOUNT RIGHT OF SHELTER ON THE WATER.

This Parliament finds that where high automation can build affordable dwelling on and in the water, the coastal, island, and riverine citizen who is exposed to the rising sea holds a paramount claim to that shelter. The mission established by this Act exists to effectuate that claim. The citizen most exposed to the water is served first, and no citizen is excluded by income, by community, or by the absence of a land title. This right is the citizen's to claim, and this Act directs the Authority to honour it under the doctrine of Antyodaya, the rise of the last person first.

(III) THIS ACT ENLARGES THE BLUE ECONOMY PAST EXTRACTION TO HABITATION.

This Parliament finds that the blue economy, as the international community and the Ministry of Earth Sciences describe it, is the sustainable use of the ocean and its resources for economic growth, improved livelihoods, and employment, while preserving the health of the ocean. Its recognised activities draw value out of the sea. This Act carries that framework one step further and places affordable human habitation on and in the water as a new blue economy activity of India, bound by Section 8 of this Act to a duty of net ecological gain, so that the water economy this Act builds shelters the people of the coast and improves the water it occupies rather than only harvesting from it.

SECTION 1. Legislative findings.

This Parliament finds and declares as follows.

FINDINGS RELATING TO THE INDIAN COMPETENCE TO UNDERTAKE THIS MISSION:

(a) **INDIA POST AND THE UNION'S UNIVERSAL-SERVICE COMPETENCE.** On the establishment of the Imperial Post Office in 1854 and its continued operation through the Indian Post Office Act, 1898 and successor legislation, the Union of India and its predecessor have maintained an uninterrupted universal-service public undertaking for one hundred and seventy-two years, operating more than one hundred and fifty-six thousand post offices, the largest postal network in the world. This demonstrates that the Union has the institutional competence to operate public infrastructure at the scale of the entire population, and to carry a service to every citizen without distinction.

(b) **THE INDIAN SPACE RESEARCH ORGANISATION AND THE UNION'S FRONTIER-SCIENCE COMPETENCE.** The Indian Space Research Organisation, established on 15 August 1969 under the Department of Space, has operated continuously across every government of the Union since 1969, developed indigenous capability across the launch vehicle, satellite, and ground-station value chains, and delivered services on a commercial basis. This demonstrates that a Union-chartered scientific agency can operate at the technological frontier and sustain decades of self-financing commercial operation without loss of Union ownership, the same competence the National Water Habitation Mission requires.

(c) **THE NATIONAL FOOD SECURITY ACT AND THE UNION'S POPULATION-SCALE DELIVERY COMPETENCE.** The National Food Security Act, 2013 established a legal right to foodgrain delivery to eighty-one point three five crore beneficiaries through the Targeted Public Distribution System, the largest food-security programme in the recorded history of any nation, delivered free with effect from 1 January 2023 under the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana. This demonstrates that a

Union-chartered public distribution mechanism operates at the scale of two-thirds of the population, and that the public provision of a basic necessity is, in India, an established public function.

FINDINGS RELATING TO THE OCEAN MISSION OF THIS ACT:

(1) INDIA'S BLUE ECONOMY POLICY IS THE FRAMEWORK THIS ACT ENLARGES. The Ministry of Earth Sciences, Government of India, prepared and released for consultation a Draft National Policy on Blue Economy, which identifies the sustainable use of ocean resources for growth, livelihood, and employment, and provides for a national accounting framework for the ocean economy. India was among the first nations to establish a Department of Ocean Development, in 1981, now within the Ministry of Earth Sciences. This Act is drawn to operate as an activity within that national blue economy policy, adding affordable water habitation to its recognised activities.

(2) SAGARMALA HAS BUILT THE COASTAL AND MARINE INDUSTRY THIS MISSION USES. The Sagarmala Programme of the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways, launched in the year 2015, has advanced port-led development, coastal community development, and the modernisation of India's ports and coastal logistics. This Act finds that the ports, boatyards, shipbuilders, and marine fabricators developed under and alongside Sagarmala are the same industry that can build affordable water dwellings in repeatable moulds, and it directs the Authority to coordinate the mission with the Sagarmala ecosystem so that the mission grows the Indian marine industry rather than displacing it.

(3) THE COASTAL AND ISLAND POPULATIONS ARE THE MOST EXPOSED. This Parliament finds that the coastal districts of India, the island territories of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands and of Lakshadweep, and the low-lying deltaic and riverine populations, face sea-level rise, intensifying cyclones, saltwater intrusion, and coastal erosion. These are the citizens the mission of this Act serves first. The Lakshadweep atolls and the Sundarbans delta stand among the most exposed inhabited coasts in the world, and affordable, resilient water-adapted dwelling is a direct answer to that exposure.

(4) HUMAN WATER HABITATION IS ANCIENT AND PROVEN IN INDIA AND ITS REGION.

This Parliament finds that living on and over the water is neither novel nor foreign to India. The houseboats of the Dal Lake in Kashmir and the backwaters of Kerala, the stilt dwellings of the coastal and deltaic villages, and the floating and over-water settlements of the wider region are proven human habitation on the water. The mission builds upon a living tradition, not a speculation.

(5) THE MOULD IS THE AFFORDABLE METHOD. This Parliament finds that the affordable method of production is the repeatable large mould, and that the Indian shipping and boatbuilding industry already produces watertight, corrosion-resistant, and buoyant hulls and floating structures in moulds at scale. The water dwelling is therefore the form of habitation best matched to affordable mass production by the Authority's self-replicating capacity.

(6) THE MISSION RESTORES THE WATER IT INHABITS. This Parliament finds that a structure placed in the water may be built to draw marine life to it, to shelter and filter the water around it, and to strengthen the coast against erosion, on the model of eco-engineered seawalls and living shorelines. This Act directs that the certified models be built as habitat for the sea as well as for the citizen, so that the mission meets a standard of net ecological gain and qualifies for the streamlined coastal path reserved for works that improve the coast.

(7) THE NON-COMPETITION FINDING. This Parliament finds that the market in land housing is not entered by this Act. The mission is confined to the water and to the coast, an affordability and resilience gap the private market has not filled, and it does not compete with the builders of land dwellings.

SECTION 2. Definitions.

In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires,

(a) "Authority" means the Bharat Productive Capacity Authority constituted under the Bharat Productive Capacity Authority Act.

(b) "blue economy" means the sustainable use of the ocean and water resources of India for economic growth, improved livelihoods, and employment, while preserving the health of the water ecosystem, as described in the Draft National Policy on Blue Economy of the Ministry of Earth Sciences.

(c) "water living systems" means the housing, life-support, safety, and management systems required for human habitation on, under, across the edge of, or afloat upon the water, in any of the forms defined in clause (e).

(d) "State Mission" means a State-level Productive Capacity Mission constituted under the Bharat Productive Capacity Authority Act.

(e) "forms of water habitation" means, each to the extent high automation can reasonably make it affordable,

(i) "marine" habitation, a dwelling on the sea or coastal water surface;

(ii) "submarine" habitation, a dwelling under the water, on the model of the proven shallow one-atmosphere undersea dwelling;

(iii) "trans-marine" habitation, a dwelling spanning the shore and the water, including stilt-borne, piling-supported, and partly submerged dwellings;

(iv) "flotation" habitation, a dwelling held by its own buoyancy; and

(v) "boat-flotation" habitation, a dwelling aboard a floating hull, on the model of the houseboat.

SECTION 3. The National Water Habitation Mission.

(a) **ESTABLISHMENT.** The Authority shall establish and operate a National Water Habitation Mission to design, certify, build, and deliver water living systems in every form defined in Section 2, at a fair and affordable price, for the benefit of the citizens of India.

(b) **PRIORITY OF SERVICE.** The Mission shall serve first the coastal, island, and riverine citizens most exposed to sea-level rise, cyclone, saltwater intrusion, and erosion, and shall coordinate with the Union Territory administrations of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands and of Lakshadweep and with the coastal States.

(c) **COORDINATION WITH SAGARMALA.** The Mission shall coordinate with the Sagarmala Programme and with the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways, and shall commission the Indian boatyards, shipbuilders, marine engineers, and composite and acrylic fabricators who build in moulds at scale.

(d) **EXPERT HABITAT COUNCIL.** The Authority shall convene an Expert Habitat Council to reduce each form of water habitation to a certified, repeatable model, each dwelling certified fit for human occupation by a licensed engineer of record.

SECTION 4. Design, Certification, and the Repeatable Mould.

(a) **THE MOULD.** The Mission shall build each certified model through repeatable moulds, so that unit cost falls with scale on the model of a production run rather than a bespoke build.

(b) **ACQUISITION OF DORMANT DESIGN.** The Authority may acquire or license existing water-dwelling designs held dormant by firms that never built at an affordable price, and may commission the builders who have completed working underwater, floating, and hull-borne structures.

(c) **CERTIFICATION.** Each model shall be certified for structural integrity, watertightness, buoyancy where applicable, cyclone and flood resilience, and fitness for human occupation, by a licensed engineer of record, before delivery.

SECTION 5. Coastal and Environmental Compliance.

(a) **COASTAL REGULATION ZONE.** The Mission shall site and permit each dwelling in accordance with the Coastal Regulation Zone Notification, 2019 issued under Section 3 of the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986, and the coastal zone management plans of the coastal States and Union Territories.

(b) **STREAMLINED PATH FOR NET-GAIN WORKS.** Where a certified model meets the net ecological gain standard of Section 8, the Authority shall seek the streamlined coastal clearance path reserved for works that protect and improve the coast, on the model of living shorelines.

(c) **MARITIME ZONES.** The Mission shall operate within the territorial waters, contiguous zone, continental shelf, and exclusive economic zone of India as governed by the Territorial Waters, Continental Shelf, Exclusive Economic Zone and other Maritime Zones Act, 1976.

SECTION 6. Funding.

(a) INHERITANCE OF THE AUTHORITY'S ARCHITECTURE. The Mission is financed through the layered Union-State-Local funding architecture of the Bharat Productive Capacity Authority Act, comprising the statutory industry levy on the Digital Bharat Nidhi model, Union grants under Article 282 of the Constitution of India, Sixteenth Finance Commission devolution, State co-financing, and Panchayati-Raj-Institution delivery.

(b) START-UP GRANT. A Union grant under Article 282 shall provide the Mission's start-up capital, with continuing finance from the Authority's operating revenue and the statutory levy.

SECTION 7. The Marine Science and Medicine Dividend.

This Parliament finds that the sea has already lengthened human life through marine-derived medicine, and directs that the Mission enlarge India's marine scientific and medical knowledge, in coordination with the National Institute of Ocean Technology and the marine research institutions of India, and direct its discoveries to public benefit under environmental stewardship and the law of the sea.

SECTION 8. Net Ecological Gain.

(a) THE DUTY. Each certified model shall be designed and built so that its presence in the water improves the water it occupies, drawing and sheltering marine life, filtering the water, and strengthening the coast against erosion, to a standard of net ecological gain and not merely of no net harm.

(b) REPORTING. The Authority shall report annually to Parliament on the ecological performance of the deployed models.

SECTION 9. Non-Personhood and the Human Beneficiary.

The water living systems and any system that operates them are property and tools of the Authority and of the citizen who holds a dwelling. They are not legal persons and hold no right of their own. The citizen of India is the beneficiary of the Mission, and the Mission exists to shelter that citizen.

SECTION 10. Effective date.

This Act shall come into force on such date as the Central Government may, by notification in the Official Gazette, appoint, and different dates may be appointed for different provisions.

END OF ACT TEXT