

Cabinet okays leasing option in land Bill

The Cabinet approved two amendments on Thursday in the land acquisition Bill to accommodate changes demanded by the Bharatiya Janata Party, the main Opposition.

One change would provide states with a lease option in place of acquisition. This was a key demand of BJP, as the rural development ministry strove for a consensus with opposition parties. The second change would provide for original owners of the land getting a share in the compensation. The BJP had said land mafias were on a buying spree after the Bill had been introduced, hoping to reap the benefits. It wanted at least half the increased benefits shared with the original owners.

The Lok Sabha had started discussion on the Bill in the Budget session; it has to be passed there and then go to the Rajya Sabha. Basudev Acharia of the CPI(M) said the Bill had many lacunae and his party had made several suggestions which were not accepted.

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