

Odisha MP Calls for National Ban on Cattle Slaughter



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Bhartruhari Mahtab, a veteran Lok Sabha MP from Odisha's Cuttack, has called for a nationwide ban on cattle slaughter to boost India's milk production. In an interview, Mahtab, who recently joined the BJP, stated that he plans to introduce a private member's bill to prohibit cattle slaughter across India, asserting that the preservation of cattle is vital for enhancing the country's dairy wealth.

Mahtab's proposal comes amid a long-standing debate over the legality and economic impact of cattle slaughter in India. He argued that, despite many states having laws against cow slaughter since the late 1950s and 1960s, a uniform national law is necessary to stop the illegal trading of cattle from states where slaughter is banned to those where it is not. He specifically mentioned that a large number of cattle are traded from Odisha to other states, a practice he believes must be stopped to protect the bovine population.

Addressing concerns about the potential for an increase in stray cattle if slaughter is banned, Mahtab suggested that society, with government support, must take responsibility. He advocated for the construction of a large number of "gaushalas" (cow shelters) and providing them with adequate funding. He stated, "Stray cows, which have been abandoned by owners or are left to fend for themselves, need shelter. They have to be looked after through the construction of gaushalas... We need better cows, but the stray cow menace has to be stopped. It is only by taking care of them that we can stop this, and not by killing them."

While the subject of cattle slaughter falls under the State List in the Constitution, Mahtab believes that a constitutional amendment is not necessary for a national law, citing that a majority of states have already legislated on the matter. He aims to bring uniformity to the law across the country to prevent illegal activities.

The call for a national ban on cattle slaughter is rooted in the belief that the preservation of cattle, particularly milch and draught animals, is essential for India's agricultural and dairy sectors. With India being the world's largest milk producer, the debate over how to sustain and grow this industry while addressing animal welfare and economic concerns continues to be a central topic in national discourse.