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Second reading of the land transport and related matters bill – Speech by Ms Sim Ann, Senior Minist...

Parliamentary Speeches

Second reading of the land transport and related matters bill – Speech by Ms Sim Ann, Senior Minister of State for Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Ministry of Home Affairs

3 February 2026

Introduction

1. Mr Speaker, allow me to outline the amendments proposed by the Ministry of Home Affairs ("MHA") to the Road Traffic Act ("RTA") and the Road Vehicles (Special Powers) Act ("RVSPA") under this Bill.
2. MHA will be making two key amendments. First, to strengthen the regulatory framework around speed limiters to better deter and detect non-compliance. Second, to clarify that the mandatory disqualification periods prescribed for certain offences under the RTA are minimum periods, and that the courts can impose longer disqualification periods.
3. I will focus my remarks on these two amendments, before briefly touching on the other amendments.

New Speed Limiter Offences and Increased Penalties

4. Members will recall that in 2024, we commenced the mandatory installation of speed limiters in lorries. This is to mitigate the risks posed by heavy vehicles, which can cause more severe consequences in the event of an accident. We have adopted a phased implementation approach, depending on the weight and registration date of the vehicle. As of 5 January 2026, around 72% of lorries required to have speed limiters installed by the various deadlines have done so.
5. We have reviewed the existing speed limiter offences and found them to be inadequate in deterring non-compliance, and there are also gaps in accountability. To close these gaps, clause 56 of the Bill introduces several new offences and raises the penalties for existing offences.

New Speed Limiter Offences

6. **First, we will hold owners and drivers liable for knowingly causing or permitting the use of non-compliant speed limiter-required lorries, and for tampering with installed speed limiters.**
7. Under the current speed limiter rules, only the driver commits an offence for driving a non-compliant lorry. However, there may be situations where such non-compliance occurs under the instruction of the owner of the lorry, who is not liable under existing rules. The proposed amendment closes this gap by extending the scope of the offence to



anyone who knowingly causes or permits the use of a non-compliant lorry, including the owner.

8. In addition, while tampering with a speed limiter is already an offence, currently, only the person who tampered with it is liable. The current law does not expressly make liable, persons who instructed or caused another person to do so, nor persons who offer to alter speed limiters. Our proposed amendment ensures that all parties who are involved in speed limiter tampering can be held accountable.

9. Second, we will impose a duty on Authorised Agents to report suspected tampering of a speed limiter.

10. Currently, only Authorised Agents of the Traffic Police (“TP”) may install or service speed limiters. With this amendment, such agents will be required to notify TP if they know or have reason to believe that a speed limiter has been tampered with or is non-compliant. This will enable prompt investigation and removal of non-compliant lorries from the roads.

11. Third, we will prohibit the advertising of speed limiter services by unauthorised parties. This deters the supply of illegal tampering services and reduces opportunities for tampering.

Higher Penalties

12. The Bill will also raise the penalties for existing speed limiter-related offences. Currently, first-time offenders face a fine of up to \$1,000 or imprisonment of up to 3 months, while repeat offenders face a fine of up to \$2,000 or imprisonment of up to 6 months.

13. These penalties have not been updated since 1999. The Bill updates the penalty framework by increasing the maximum fines to \$10,000 for a first conviction and \$20,000 for subsequent convictions. The imprisonment terms will be retained. This ensures that the penalties are a credible deterrent and are commensurate with the potential harm posed by speeding heavy vehicles.

Clarification that Mandatory Disqualification Periods are Minimum Periods

14. Next, clauses 69 to 73, 75 and 77 of the Bill clarify that the mandatory disqualification periods prescribed for certain offences under the RTA are minimum disqualification periods, and that no special reasons are required for a court to order a longer disqualification period. The disqualification period that the court may impose can be any period equal to or above the prescribed minimum disqualification period, including a lifetime disqualification period if it thinks fit.

15. These amendments seek to address the observations in the recent High Court judgment of *Ng En You Jeremiah v Public Prosecutor*. The High Court, in considering a sentencing framework for the relevant driving offence, noted that the offence already imposed a mandatory 12-year disqualification period, “unless the court for special reasons thinks fit to not order or to order otherwise”. The High Court also held that “special reasons” had to be exceptional, and that the 12-year disqualification period should apply regardless of the applicable sentencing band for that particular driving offence. The High Court’s judgment thus appears to suggest that special reasons must be present before a court may impose a disqualification period that is longer than the prescribed minimum period.

16. For serious road traffic offences such as driving under the influence of drink, and car racing, a mandatory minimum disqualification period is prescribed because such conduct poses a serious risk to public safety. The amendments make it clear that there is no need for special reasons before a court may impose a disqualification period that is longer than the prescribed minimum period.

Miscellaneous Amendments



17. Sir, I will now briefly run through several other miscellaneous amendments. Clauses 68, 74, and 79 will enhance the operational efficiency of the Singapore Armed Forces (“SAF”) and TP.

18. Clause 68 addresses an ambiguity under section 49 of the RTA. Currently, the SAF contracts commercial bus companies to ferry soldiers to various locations. In view of the shortage of bus drivers, SAF intends for its personnel to drive the commercial buses it leases. However, section 49 may be interpreted to limit SAF personnel holding military driving licences to driving only vehicles owned by the SAF. The amendment makes it clear that the exemption applies to vehicles owned or leased by the SAF.

19. Currently, Police officers are required to manually review, themselves, images and footages captured by Police cameras, and manually issue, themselves, the traffic notices, even for straightforward violations such as red-light beating and speeding. Clauses 74 and 79 amend the RTA to allow processing of such violations to be carried out by authorised civilians, including service providers, subject to appropriate safeguards. This would free up TP officers to focus on enforcement and complex cases.

20. Clause 82 amends section 4 of the RVSPA, relating to the forfeiture of road vehicles used to commit any offence prescribed in the Schedule of the Act. Forfeiture is currently mandatory if the court is satisfied that a road vehicle has been used to commit any scheduled offence, or to convey persons to the scene or facilitate escape of any person from the scene where a scheduled offence has been committed. The amendment will make the forfeiture of road vehicles *discretionary* in all scenarios if it is proved to the court’s satisfaction that the person who committed the scheduled offence involving the vehicle is not the vehicle owner and had used the vehicle without the consent of its owner.

Conclusion

21. Mr Speaker, in summary, the amendments proposed by MHA in this Bill will update, clarify and strengthen our road traffic laws. But these moves alone are not enough. MHA remains concerned by the road safety situation and has plans to further tighten our laws and regulatory framework. We will share more at the upcoming Committee of Supply debate. We also call upon all road users to exercise responsibility, patience and graciousness. It is possible to achieve zero road injuries and fatalities, but only if we all do our part.

22. Mr Speaker, I beg to move.

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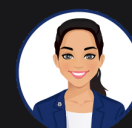
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