

[English]

SHRI RUPCHAND PAL (Hooghly) : Sir, I would like to draw the attention of this House to a very serious matter. It pertains to the American Ambassador calling on the I&B Secretary at his office, on his own, and making suggestions about a Bill, which has yet to come to this House for consideration. It must be viewed as a very serious matter.

As you know Sir, the draft Broadcasting Bill has been discussed, although this House had not got the opportunity to go through the contents of the Bill. In a section of the Press, it has been widely publicised that the American Ambassador met the I&B Secretary and said that before finalisation of the draft, he should be consulted. He also said that the American Business Council and the American Channels Committee would like to see, in particular, the equity structure, the cross media restrictions and also the mandatory provisions for uplinking. He felt that they should not be there and the Americans' interests must be upheld in the proposed Broadcasting Bill.

This is something unprecedented and extraordinary. It involves the dignity and honour of this House, and also the sovereignty of this country.

I request the hon. Prime Minister and also the Government that whatever transpired in the discussions should be made public, and the hon. Prime Minister should make a statement in this House regarding this because it involves the dignity and honour of this House.

13.04 hrs.

RE: DELHI RENT CONTROL ACT

[Translation]

SHRI VIJAY GOEL (Sadar - Delhi) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, today the markets of Delhi have been closed. Traders, especially the tenants have launched a movement. I would like to draw the attention of the House towards the facts that Delhi Rent control Act was passed unanimously in this House in 1995. I do not know the circumstances in which it was passed ? But today not a single political party is in its favour. An elected Government was functioning in Delhi when this Bill was passed but representatives of this Government were not consulted for it. Later on it was felt that this Bill will increase disputes and court cases between tenants and owners of the buildings and a movement was

launched. It was stated that this Bill is partial. Delhi Government had set up a committee for it which included Member from all the political parties like CPI, CPI (M), BJP, Janata Dal and congress. They had submitted a report and a copy of it is with me. Suggestions have been given to make some amendments in this Bill in the interest of tenants as well as the owners of the House. At that time, the then Prime Minister Narsimha Rao did not implemented it because he wanted to include the points suggested by the representatives of the Delhi Government. The, then Minister of Urban Affairs had given an assurance that this Bill would not passed or implemented without making amendments in it. The another Government under the leadership of Prime Minister Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee also did not implement it, Devegowda Government also did not implement it. Now Gujral Government is there but for tenants the threat of Delhi Control Act is still looms at large and they have a fear that their shops and houses can be vacated at any time under this Act. It Bill also provides that at time of death of a tenant his children have to vacate the house immediately. There is also a provision to increase the rent since 1949 and on presenting an affidavit by the owner the house could be vacated. The house can also be vacated if a dispute between two neighbours is reported. I am not talking for tenants only but these suggestions were given by representatives of all the political parties so before implementation of this Bill these amendments should be debated here in this House. The Government is there and political parties can have their say if they want to implement this Act but the Government should make a statement here because unanimous opinion has been drawn for it and traders and tenants should not be compelled to agitate for it.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, Delhi markets have been closed down for three days. Tenants are in uncertainty as to whether he would be able to live in the house or shop occupied by him. In such a situation how can business will go on ? I demand that Shri Ram Vilas Paswan should make a statement on it so that people could get assurance that this Act will not be implement without making the required amendments into it.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, I seek your protection that instructions should be given to the Government that statement on it should be gives. Today thousands of traders are compelled to court arrest. Traders never take to agitation due to lack of time but they come to know that they will had nothing tomorrow if the same situation prevails for long.

SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ (South Delhi) : Mr. Chairman, the issue raised by Shri Goelji is quite important for Delhiites. The whole Delhi people have been divided into two groups on this issue. One of them wants to implement it in its present form and second party is protesting against it. In such circumstances the then Chief Minister of Delhi Shri Madan Lai Khurana convened an all-party meeting and constituted a committee. This committee had representatives of all the parties i.e. BJP, Congress, Janata Dal, CPI(M), CPI etc. They tried to draft a balanced Bill, while keeping in mind the views expressed by all the representatives. There can be a satisfactory solution to this problem if there is no hundred percent solution to it. I have the report of this committee with me and representatives of all the political parties have put their signature on it.

This report was submitted to the Minister of Urban Affairs and Employment which was followed by several meetings with him. I myself was present in those meetings. The assurance given by the Minister was sufficient enough to convince us that he would find an amicable solution in the form of some amendments in the Bill and later he would bring the Bill in its amended form in the Parliament. It seems to as if certain problem did arise before the Government and a PIL was filed in which the Government has been asked to give an affidavit.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, I, through you, want to submit that in case the Government, referring to the recommendations made by the Committee consisting of all Party, says in their affidavit that they are bring the Bill in its amended form, we may find some easy way out. In case, the Bill in its amended form is passed by both the Houses of Parliament, it would satisfy both the sections. I would like that Shri Ram Vilas Paswan ji, who is also the Leader of the House, should come and say something in this regard. Right now he is not available there but year is collective responsibility also.

MR. CHAIRMAN : He would say later on.

SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ : Any Minister, at least can stand up and say that there was all party consensus on this score. Or else you can give some direction to include all these suggestions in the Bill on which all parties were unanimous. Only then the Government should bring this Bill. If that amended form of Bill is passed, it would resolve the present problem . . .(Interruptions).

SHRI VIJAY GOEL : Whether the Government would like to make statement on it ? . . .(Interruptions)

[English]

SHRI G.M. BANATWALLA (Ponnani) : Sir, the Government must be asked to react on this important matter. We fully support it. They have declared a strike for three days over here. So much of inconvenience to the public is caused. The Government must react on this important matter. We support this particular point . . .(Interruptions). Please give a direction to the Government to come forward and assure the public about it . . .(Interruptions)

[Translation]

SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ : Mr. Chairman, Sir, I want to say only one thing that a call has been given for three days 'Delhi Band'. The Government knew that the matter was likely to be raised. After all the representatives of Delhi can not sit quietly. It is also quiet surprising that when a call for three days 'Delhi Band' has been given, there is no Minister available here to react on this issue. What kind of role the Government is going to play by opting not to react on this issue ? What should we Presume about the insensitive administration ? Therefore, I request you to ask the Government to give their reaction on this issue.

MR. CHAIRMAN : O.K. they will reach later

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN : They have taken note of this. Tomorrow or day after tomorrow, they will come before the House. They will make a statement.

SHRI G.M. BANATWALLA : It is not merely a question of taking note of it but there must be some reaction from the Government. There is so much of a discontent among the traders. Immediate reaction from the Government is wanted. There must be some amendment to the Delhi Rent Control Act.

[Translation]

SHRI VIJAY GOEL : Mr. Chairman, Sir, you have asked them to let the House know by tomorrow itself as to what is their reaction on this issue ?

MR. CHAIRMAN : They would make a statement either tomorrow or day after tomorrow.

(Interruptions)

SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ : Delhi will remain closed for two days. If an assurance comes, the call may be with drawn . . .(Interruptions)

[English]

SHRI RAJESH PILOT (Dausa) : Sir, I want to know from the BJP Members whether the present Government has concurred with this report . . . (Interruptions). I want a clarification from the BJP colleagues whether the present Government headed by Shri Sahib Singh Verma has cleared this report.

SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ : Yes, The Minister was the Convenor. Shri Rajinder Gupta, a Minister of this Government, was the Convenor. They have adopted this report.

SHRI RAJESH PILOT : My point is that the farmers were sitting on an agitation three months back. Shri Sahib Singh Verma had gone there and he assured them that justice would be done to them. Has this Report, which she is showing, been concurred by present Government headed by Shri Sahib Singh Verma and has it become valid ?

[Translation]

SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ : We all are with this report.

[English]

SHRI G.M. BANATWALLA : Sir, please see the consensus from the BJP to the Muslim League . . . (Interruptions). The Government must come forward and do the needful. There is so much of discontent. The Government must assure everybody . . . (Interruptions).

MR. CHAIRMAN : Shri Chandra Shekhar, last time, you made your point clear when that issue was raised in the last Lok Sabha.

SHRI CHANDRA SHEKHAR (Ballia) : Sir, I do not want to say anything now. This is not so simple a matter. The farmers, whose lands have been taken, whose shops have been taken, are living a miserable life and these traders are enjoying at their cost. So, the feelings of those peasants also should be taken into consideration. I do not know what is the consensus that has emerged among the different groups. I have not seen that report. But it is not a one-sided affair that the Government or the Parliament should be hustled into taking any decision.

[Translation]

SHRI MOHAMMAD ALI ASHRAF FATMI : We also want to say something in this regard . . . (Interruptions).

MR. CHAIRMAN : You will speak only sometime later on. Fatmi ji you have already taken so much time.

SHRI MOHAMMAD ALI ASHRAF FATMI : The Delhi Rent Control Act was passed unanimously that was concurred by all the political parties. But today due to some pressure from certain quarter, they are saying like this . . . (Interruptions).

SHRI VIJAY GOEL : How can the members of your party realise the pain of Delhi if they do not live in Delhi?

SHRI MOHAMMAD ALI ASHRAF FATMI : That was agreed to by all parties . . . (Interruptions).

MR. CHAIRMAN : I have allowed Shri Thovat . . . (Interruptions).

[English]

SHRI SANDIPAN THORAT (Pandharpur) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, I would like to bring to notice of the House a most important problem facing the people in my Sholapur district. The Sholapur District Industrial Cooperative Bank is diverting its funds towards other things. It has reported in daily Lokmat Sholapur that this bank comes within the purview of Non-Performing Assets category of banks. Crores and crores of rupees have been diverted to other things outside jurisdiction, of the banks. The depositors are agitating there. So, I would like the request the Government to make arrangements to inquire into the matter.

The Reserve Bank of India should be directed to go thoroughly into the investigation about this Bank and report this matter to the House.

[Translation]

SHRI RAMASHRASAYA PRASAD SINGH (Jahanabad) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, I have given notice to you . . . (Interruptions) kindly listen to me. You people are creating anarchism by not allowing anybody to speak. If ten members are standing at the same time they how will this work ? It is not proper. The Scheduled Caste/Scheduled Tribe Commission is meant to stop the exploitation, injustice and atrocities on the people of these castes.

But today the Commission has derailed from its path. Today instead of protecting the people of SC/ST, It is encouraging the exploitation and suppression of these castes. 90 percent of the people working in this commission are anti - SC/ST people and its example is that when a