

Title: Regarding new uplinking policy.

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THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI ARUN JAITLEY) : Earlier, the satellite TV channels were not permitted to uplink their programmes from India. However, as the hon. Members would recollect, satellite based TV channels have started beaming their programmes into India by uplinking their channel from hubs abroad since early nineties, as the satellite technology has become available. As a result they have remained outside the jurisdiction of Indian laws. In order to bring them back under the purview of the Indian laws, the uplinking policy was relaxed for the first time on 09-06-1998 and the Indian broadcasting companies with a minimum of 80 per cent Indian share holding and Indian management control were permitted to uplink their channels from India but only through VSNL. This permission was restricted to only those Indian companies, which were being released foreign exchange for uplinking from abroad. The policy was further liberalised on 26-03-1999 and all Indian companies which were broadcasters, with a minimum of 80 per cent Indian share holding and Indian management control were permitted to uplink their channels through their own earth station as well.

The Cabinet in its meeting on 25-07-2000 has decided to further liberalise the uplinking policy. As per the new policy, an Indian company, which need not be a broadcaster, will be permitted, subject to necessary security clearance, to set up uplinking hub or teleport facilities for purposes of hiring it out to broadcasters. Permissible foreign equity in such companies will be the same as in the case of telecom sector, which is presently 49 per cent, inclusive of NRI/OCB investments with Indian management control. These companies will be permitted to uplink only those TV channels which would be specifically approved or permitted by the Government. All TV channels irrespective of their equity holding, ownership or management control will be permitted to uplink their programmes from India, subject to necessary security clearance, provided they undertake to comply with our broadcasting codes. This new policy will not only bring a large number of TV channels within the discipline of our broadcasting codes but also generate substantial employment opportunities as India becomes an important hub offering state of the art facilities for uplinking.

Our news agencies have been seriously handicapped vis-à-vis their foreign counterparts as they have been deprived the use of the latest technology of Satellite News Gathering (SNG) for purposes of news gathering and their further distribution. Because of this handicap, the news disseminated by Indian News Agencies reaches the electronic and print media late and in the intervening period contrary point of view remains unchallenged in the world media. The new uplinking policy of the Government would remove this handicap and permit uplinking facility to the Indian News Agencies for news gathering and their further distribution to other news agencies/broadcasters. For this purpose, the Indian news agencies would mean those incorporated in India and accredited by the Press Information Bureau and 100 per cent owned by Indians with Indian management control. This will give the Indian news agencies the much desired competitive edge over the foreign news agencies.

As in the case of earlier policy, such uplinking facilities will be permitted with both Indian and foreign satellites. However, proposals envisaging Indian satellites will be accorded preferential treatment.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Shri P.A. Sangma.

SHRI G.M. BANATWALLA (PONNANI): It is a breach of propriety. It is not a breach of privilege, I will concede. But then this matter has already appeared in the media, both electronic and the print media. The hon. Minister may or may not have made a statement to the Press or the media but the leakage has been there. There must be a direction from you to the Minister to see that such leakages on policy matters do not take place when Parliament is in Session. Please take note of this breach of propriety.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: I heard.

SHRI G.M. BANATWALLA : Let us know what you think about this. I have clearly stated that there is no breach of privilege. But at least what about the breach of propriety?

SHRI KODIKUNNIL SURESH (ADOOR): That also boils down to breach of privilege.

SHRI G.M. BANATWALLA: Sir, do not hesitate. Say that this is a breach of propriety. Why do you hesitate? Uphold the dignity and decorum of the House. Are we to get such stale news from the Minister? ये बासी खबरें लेकर यहां पर आते हैं।
â€((व्यवधान)

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE (BOLPUR): At least it should have been done at twelve o' clock.

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI (RAIGANJ): It has appeared in the news media. That way the breach of propriety is definitely there.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: He has not briefed the newsmen. Hon. Members, the hon. Minister or his Ministry has not given it to the media.

SHRI G.M. BANATWALLA : Parliament is in Session and it is a leaking Government. There is a leaking Government sitting over here. Let them look into the matter.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: He has not given it to the media. I cannot hold him responsible.

Shri Sangma.

SHRI G.M. BANATWALLA : Let the hon. Minister look into the whole matter.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Let us not waste the time of the House.

श्री राजीव प्रताप रूडी (छपरा) : उपाध्यक्ष महोदय, मंत्री महोदय ने यह स्पष्ट किया है कि अखबारों से **â€**(व्यवधान) अगर ये स्टेटमेंट में कुछ चीजों को जानते हैं तो **â€**(व्यवधान)

MAJ. GEN. (RETD.) B.C. KHANDURI (GARHWAL): Nothing official has been given.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Hon. Members, many things appear in the media but we cannot attribute them to the Cabinet Ministers.

...(Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Will you please give me a hearing?

Shri Sangma. Now let us not waste the time of the House.

SHRI PURNO A. SANGMA (TURA): Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, **â€**

...(Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Order please.

SHRI G.M. BANATWALLA : There is no order here. This is what we are seeing!

श्री सोमनाथ चटर्जी: यह 12 बजे आना चाहिए था। **â€**(व्यवधान)