

Title: Regarding Government decision relating to the up-linking of foreign channels from India.

MR. SPEAKER: I have already called the name of Shri Jaipal Reddy.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY (MIRYALGUDA): I have been invited by the hon. Speaker to speak. Would I be allowed to speak now? ...(Interruptions)

SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY (KHAMMAM): Only Shri Jaipal Reddy is allowed; women are not allowed ...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Please take your seat.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY (MIRYALGUDA): Sir, I would like to invite the attention of the whole House and the hon. Minister to a very important decision taken by the Government last night which has been published in all the newspapers today.

Sir, the decision relates to the up-linking of foreign channels from India. This is a very very important policy decision. Shri Pramod Mahajan, who was the Minister for Information and Broadcasting, would surely appreciate the importance of this decision. I am not *per se* opposed to up-linking of foreign channels. But this decision seeks to bye-pass many important policy questions.

Sir, we have been pleading for setting up of a Regulatory Authority, a Regulatory Authority relating to broadcasting. When I was the Minister I had the opportunity to introduce the Bill in the House. There was Joint Select Committee under the Chairmanship of Shri Sharad Pawar. That Joint Select Committee had the occasion to look into all these questions.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, there is an important matter relating to fixing a cap on foreign equity in regard to foreign channels. Let me remind Shri Pramod Mahajan of the agenda of the NDA. The NDA agenda says that foreign cap must be fixed at 20 per cent. When Shrimati Sushma Swaraj was the Minister for Information and Broadcasting the up-linking was given to all channels which are of Indian origin. Why do you not take a decision in regard to the fixation of cap on foreign equity? Why do you not take a decision in regard to the need for setting up a quasi-judicial Regulatory Broadcasting Authority? Why do you want to avoid all these decisions? Why do you want to rush in for letting the foreign channels be up-linked from India?

Sir, I am not opposed to up-linking. I want these decisions to be taken first as a prelude to the up-linking and you want to bye-pass these decisions. I am charging you, with all sense of responsibility, that you want to avoid all these questions. You want to confront the country with *fait-accomplis* in regard to this matter. This is a very bad way of taking policy decisions.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Parliament is in Session now. Government takes a decision and Government tells the Press about the decisions.

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN): No.

Sir, I should be given an opportunity to speak after him.

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY: What is the Parliament worth for? I am not raising the usual question of breach of privilege. There is a breach of etiquette. The Minister must make a statement and the Government should not deceive its own partners and its own sister organisations and its own, the Swadeshi Jagran Manch which pleaded for fixing the foreign equity at 20 per cent. I am not saying that it should be at 20 per cent. The point is, whether it is 20 per cent, or 50 per cent or 100 per cent, the House and the country must know about it.

We must take a conscious decision about this. We must not be taken for granted. That is the point I am trying to make.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE : Sir, I will take half a minute.

डा.विजय कुमार मल्होत्रा (दक्षिण दिल्ली) : सर, यह एक बहुत गंभीर मामला है। पहले इन्होंने शुरू किया था, अब यह खड़े हो गये, फिर तीसरे खड़े हो जायेंगे। जब हमारे मैम्बर्स बोलने लगते हैं तो उनमें से किसी को बोलने नहीं दिया जाता कि (व्यवधान) बंधोपध्यय जी बोलना चाहते थे, आपने उन्हें बोलने के लिए अलाऊ

भी किया। लेकिन जब यह बोलने लगे तो उस तरफ के मैम्बर्स ने उन्हें बोलने नहीं दिया

â€œ(व्यवधान) हमने रेड्डी साहब को आराम से सुना, इन्हें आराम से सुनाâ€œ(व्यवधान)

SHRI SUDIP BANDYOPADHYAY : Sir, you called my name and when I was about to speak, they did not allow me.

डा.विजय कुमार मल्होत्रा : मैम्बर्स रिस्पॉन्सिबिली बिहेव नहीं कर रहे हैं। अचानक खड़े होकर बोलने लग जाते हैं।â€œ(व्यवधान)

MR. SPEAKER: We have to respect the leaders. Whenever there is an important subject, we have to give a chance to the leaders to speak.

श्री प्रमुनाथ सिंह (महाराजगंज, बिहार) : सर, यह सबसे महत्वपूर्ण सवाल है।â€œ(व्यवधान)

SHRI SUDIP BANDYOPADHYAY: Sir, my subject is also very important.

अध्यक्ष महोदय : आपको भी बुलायेंगे, पहले लीडर्स को बोलने का चान्स देना है।

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE: I will take half a minute....(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: There is a system and there are precedents. Whenever there is an important issue, leaders are allowed to speak first.

SHRI SUDIP BANDYOPADHYAY : My name was called by you, Sir, but I was not allowed to speak.

श्री राशिद अल्वी : जब हम बोल रहे थे तब आपने हमारी बात कम्पलीट नहीं होने दी

â€œ(व्यवधान)

श्री प्रमुनाथ सिंह : सर, हम लोग भी इस हाउस के मैम्बर हैं, हम लोग भी नोटिस देते हैं।

SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, we totally agree with you that when senior leaders want to intervene, with or without notice, they must be permitted. I am not saying that they should not be permitted. Our only request to all those great senior leaders is that when their followers do not allow other Members to speak, they should also see that other Members also get a chance. They should also control their Members. That is the only request we are making. We are not stopping anybody from speaking here. â€œ(Interruptions)

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE (BOLPUR): Sir, I can hardly say anything in this regard because everybody is giving sermons now. I am not going to say anything except that this is a very important issue. There are matters relating to this Ministry in regard to which decisions are not being taken. Standing Committee's reports are not being looked into. This is a matter which should not be ignored just by saying that they are not informed to the press. Every newspaper has reported it. How have they come to know about it without the Parliament knowing about it? This is not a routine matter.

Regarding the request of the Minister, I hope he will also look at his Members.

SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN: I do that always.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE : He should look at his people also. Nowadays we can hardly function in the House in a proper manner. ...(Interruptions) It seems that Members can speak here without the permission of the Chair. ...(Interruptions) Chair is being made irrelevant today! Therefore, fingers should not be pointed at us alone. ...(Interruptions) What is happening here? How is this House running! ...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: The Minister is here, he can reply.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Prabhunath Singh, what is this cross talk?

श्री प्रमुनाथ सिंह : हम कुछ नहीं कह रहे हैं। हम तो सुन रहे हैं।

अध्यक्ष महोदय : आप क्या सुन रहे हैं? This is too much. Nobody bothers about the Chair's directions!

SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN: Sir, I will come to the basic issue. It is true that the Government has yesterday night

cleared the uplinking policy. The Minister for Information and Broadcasting has already written to the Presiding Officers of both the Houses to give him time to make a statement in both the Houses about the policy. I, having performed the role of Cabinet spokesperson yesterday, can prove it amply that we did not release any policy decision to the Press. Two policy decisions were taken yesterday – one was in regard to uplinking and the other was the agricultural policy. Both the Ministers are writing to the Presiding Officers. When they are given time, it will be placed before the House.

If the House wants, and Sir, if you permit, under any rule at the proper time, one can discuss both the policies....(*Interruptions*)

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA : Who leaked it to Press? The Press has covered all this....(*Interruptions*)

SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN: Secondly, Sir, I can only say that a few of the issues raised by Shri Jaipal Reddy, are important, say, about the Regulatory Authority. So, We do not dispute them at all. But here I want to add only one thing. It is really strange if you do not understand the science behind it. The down-linking is free in this country. You cannot stop any channel from coming to your house.

If we are permitting up-linking, that is the only way to control these channels as to what they send into satellites. So, if the Government is permitting up-linking when down-linking is free in this country, I really find it strange what is objectionable in that....(*Interruptions*)

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY: Shri Pramod Mahajan, you will have to take a decision about the foreign equity. You will have to keep in view your own agenda. You are neglecting your own agenda. That is the charge I am hurling at you....(*Interruptions*)

SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN: About my agenda and my *Parivar* I think, it is better if you leave it to me how to deal with this subject and caring about it....(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: The House stands adjourned to meet again at 14.20 hours.

1316 hours

The Lok Sabha then adjourned till twenty minutes past Fourteen of the Clock.
