

12.59 hrs.

(i) Alleged collection of telephone bills of BSNL through private Agencies

Title: Regarding alleged misuse of the name of BSNL in Kolkata, West Bengal.

अध्यक्ष महोदय : यह विषय तो पूरा हो गया। मैं ज़ीरो ऑवर पूरे टाइम के लिए नहीं लेना चाहता हूँ। ज़ीरो ऑवर के लिए मेरे सामने बहुत महत्वपूर्ण विषय रामजीलाल सुमन जी ने आज नोटिस दिया है। हज़ कमेटी के बारे में लोगों को प्रश्न की अर्जेंसी है और इसलिए वह प्रश्न मैं लेना चाहता हूँ। लेकिन उसके पहले केवल एक मिनट में नई दासमुंशी जी अपना प्रश्न पूरा करेंगे। I have started 'Zero Hour' now. Shri Priya Ranjan Dasmunsi.

13.00 hrs.

SHRI K. YERRANNAIDU (SRIKAKULAM): Mr. Speaker, Sir, I want to raise a very alarming issue and you promised me to give me a chance to speak on that.

MR. SPEAKER: I have promised Shri Priya Ranjan Dasmunsi also to give him a chance for two minutes and you can speak after he completes his submission.

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI (RAIGANJ): Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to bring an important matter to the notice of the House. Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited is doing a great job and we all feel proud of BSNL. But some people are misusing the name of BSNL in the city of Kolkata. *â€¦ (Interruptions)*

श्री लाल बिहारी तिवारी (पूर्वी दिल्ली) : कुछ लोग रोज बोलते हैं, लेकिन हम लोगों को समय नहीं मिलता है।

श्री प्रियरंजन दासमुंशी : हम कुछ लोग नहीं हैं। I am the Chief Whip of the Principal Opposition Party. You should understand that. समझ नहीं पाते हैं।

Sir, BSNL is a pride for all of us and I congratulate the Minister for running BSNL in a most efficient manner. But a group in Kolkata – all those who come from West Bengal know it – in the name of West Bengal UI STD/ISD Owners' Association has started collecting money for the last two years from young people saying that they would give agency to them to collect telephone bills of BSNL. The amount involved is huge and it might run into crores of rupees also. They told the people that if they give donation to the BJP, they would get agency for them and top functionaries of the BJP have been named several times in this connection in newspapers. The party said that they are enquiring into it and a leader called Shri Rahul Sinha was involved. He claimed along with one Shri Amul Roy that he wrote a letter to Shri Arun Shourie and said that he did not mind recommending names of NGOs to give jobs to 3,000 people. This news report was published on 24th November in *The Asian Age*. I am told that BSNL is taking action in this matter, to institute a CBI inquiry.

Sir, since the Prime Minister said that on matters of corruption everybody should stand above board, how can a party conduct the enquiry in a matter where its functionaries are involved and all receipts of collection of money are there. The membership drive of the party has been conducted in such a manner cheating thousands of people. I appeal to the Minister to take cognisance of the news report appeared in *The Asian Age* of 24th November. *...(Interruptions)*

SHRI KIRIT SOMAIYA (MUMBAI NORTH EAST): Mr. Speaker, Sir, he has named the leader of our party, but he has not given any notice to name anybody. He has mentioned the name of Shri Rahul Sinha. He has mentioned the name of the BJP. This is not correct. So, it should be expunged from the record. *...(Interruptions)*

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI : Sir, I did not name anybody and I am not making any allegation against the BJP. He should try to understand that. *...(Interruptions)*

SHRI KIRIT SOMAIYA : No, Sir, he has named Shri Rahul Sinha. So, I request you to remove it from the record. *...(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: I will go through the record and if any name is mentioned I will remove it.

Shri Priya Ranjan Dasmunsi, you have to complete your submission in two minutes.

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI : Sir, I will complete it in half-a-minute.

I am not making any allegation against any party. The President of the BJP is a good man. The news report in *The Asian Age* of 24th November stated that Shri Amul Roy said that he would take action and enquire into the matter. *...(Interruptions)* Sir, he should listen to me first. *...(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: If there is anything allegatory in nature against any member of the party, I will remove it from the

record. I have already said that. Please take your seat.

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI : Sir, Shri Amul Roy claimed, as per this news report, that he is a BJP activist. It may be true or it may be untrue. The BJP President said that he would enquire into it and I am praising him. But this group which is running a racket by collecting money by misusing the name of BSNL should be stopped from doing that in order to save the unemployed youth who are being cheated. I would request the hon. Minister that he should take cognisance of the news report, institute a CBI inquiry into the matter and book all those people who are involved in this racket.

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND MINISTER OF DISINVESTMENT (SHRI ARUN SHOURIE): Mr. Speaker, Sir, I think the matter which Shri Priya Ranjan Dasmunsi has brought before the House is a very important one. If you will just give me two minutes, I will locate all the facts. There have been several proposals from time to time, as you know, also for persons to collect bills of BSNL have handicapped persons from Maharashtra. From Mumbai, it was there. For unemployed youth from Maharashtra, there were proposals. There was also – I have seen the records – a proposal addressed to the MOS in March, 20033 for collecting BSNL's bills through private persons. In July, a letter of this kind was sent to me also.

Now you have taken the name of Shri Amul Roy.

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI : Shri Amul Roy and Shri Sinha.

SHRI ARUN SHOURIE: Actually, a letter was sent to him. By coincidence it so happened because the letter had come from him. It had been sent from BSNL itself. It clearly stated:

"The proposal has been examined in detail after taking into consideration inputs from the field, that is, from the Kolkata office. As per BSNL's policy in this regard, bill delivery/collection work cannot be entrusted to any private organisation except courier agencies and that too against open competitive bidding."

The letter was clarified.

The second point is that BSNL sent the proposal to BSNL. They have given me several reasons on account of which they would not like to give the collection to private parties. ...(*Interruptions*) I am coming to the point of inquiry.

The experiments of this kind have been tried in two or three Circles, including Haryana. It was found that it was not right because the BSNL then had to chase the private parties which had taken the money or taken the authorisation to collect the bills. For that reason and for several other reasons, for instance, they are quite satisfied with the Department of Posts which is collecting the bills. Then, in many places like Andhra Pradesh, very good facilities have been provided under 'e-sewa' for direct payment of the bills.

BSNL is now trying and MTNL are trying that we should be able to pay the bills directly by Internet or through the banks or through cheque drop facilities. So, this proposal is not going to be considered at all.

May I please clarify three things. It is not being given to private parties. Secondly, there is absolutely no question of anybody collecting money on my name or BSNL's name or anyone else's name. Anyone who is paying for this is doing something completely wrong.

Thirdly, because you have brought this matter to my attention and because I now notice from the BSNL's Kolkata office that query has been received there by e-mail and from other parties also, I will have the announcement published in the newspapers in Kolkata that there is no scheme of this kind at all.

As far as the inquiry is concerned, I learn from the Kolkata office of BSNL that actually a CBI officer visited the BSNL office for preliminary investigations. I assure the House that we will give every assistance for this kind of inquiry by CBI that is already there. ...(*Interruptions*)
