

Fourteenth Loksabha**Session : 4****Date : 22-03-2005****Participants : Radhakrishnan Shri Varkala, Acharia Shri Basudeb, Nandy Shri Amitava, Basu Shri Anil, Dasgupta Shri Gurudas, Baxla Shri Joachim, Chakraborty Shri Ajay, Geete Shri Anant Gangaram**

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Title: Nationwide strike by Bank employees on 22.3.2005.

SHRI AMITAVA NANDY (DUMDUM): I am ready, Sir.

Sir, I stand here to draw the attention of the Government, and the hon. Minister of Finance, in particular, to the nation-wide strike being observed by the bank officers and bank employees. Today, the officers and the employees of the banking sector are on strike to protest against the unwarranted merger of public sector banks and attempt to privatise the banks by allowing 74 per cent foreign direct investment in the private sector banks.

The present policy of the Government of India is to allow the foreign players to play freely in the Indian market. While supporting the strike, I demand immediate review of the policies of the Union Government towards the banking sector. Thank you.

SHRI SUNIL KHAN (DURGAPUR): We should not allow the merger with the commercial banks...
(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: It is very strange. Please sit down. Nothing is being recorded Mr. Khan. Nothing will go on record.

(Interruptions) ...*

MR. SPEAKER: Please sit down. You have made your statement, Mr. Nandy, and you sat down also. But suddenly, you have been energised by your friends.

Just wait, please. Let me conduct. Mr. Dasgupta, you also sit down, please. Because of the importance of the subject, I would allow you. Otherwise, I would have said 'associate yourself'. But you do not cooperate, I am sorry. I would not allow anybody else then.

SHRI VARKALA RADHAKRISHNAN (CHIRAYINKIL): Sir, the bank employees, throughout India, are on strike today.

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Radhakrishnan, you have already raised one matter this week. Now, briefly, you can associate yourself.

... (Interruptions)

श्री प्रहलाद जोशी (धारवाड़ उत्तर) : अध्यक्ष महोदय, मैं भी बोलना चाहता हूँ। कृपया मुझे भी बोलने का अवसर प्रदान करें। ... (व्यवधान)

*Not Recorded.

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. Members, if you do not cooperate, you would not get any chance from me, rest assured.

... (*Interruptions*)

SHRI VARKALA RADHAKRISHNAN : Sir, the economic activity of the country is at standstill. In spite of efforts, they could not come to a settlement. So, I would request the Central Government to intervene in the matter... (*Interruptions*)

चौधरी विजेन्द्र सिंह (अलीगढ़) : अध्यक्ष महोदय, मैं भी बोलना चाहता हूँ। मुझे भी समय देने की कृपा करें। ... (ब्यवधान)

MR. SPEAKER: You cannot speak at the same time. Can you? That is not the way to disturb the proceedings. Please sit down. I am trying to give opportunity to every section of the House on important issues.

SHRI VARKALA RADHAKRISHNAN : Sir, the strike should not be prolonged at any cost. The Government should take the initiative to see that normalcy is restored in the banking sector. I hope that the Government would rise to the occasion because the entire public is put to so much difficulty. I do not want to go into the merits of the case, but it is for the Government to intervene at this stage to see that normalcy is restored, and the grievances of the bank employees are addressed. It is for the Government to see that an early settlement is arrived at, maybe within 24 hours.

SHRI AJOY CHAKRABORTY (BASIRHAT): Sir, I rise to raise a very important matter of public importance. It is regarding the nation-wide strike called by all the bank employees' associations... (*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: Anybody interrupting me would not get any chance to speak, I can tell you. This is not the way to draw the attention of the Chair.

SHRI AJOY CHAKRABORTY : Today, the employees of the public sector banks of our country are observing strike throughout the country, which is supported by the Central Trade Unions. It is not only the demand of the bank employees, but I think, it is the demand of the workers, the demand of the public

at large that no merger should take place. Their demands are that there should be no merger of the public sector banks into a few big banks; there should be no unlisted and unlimited entry of the FDI in our banking sector; there should be no reduction of the Government equity capital in the public sector banks; and stringent measures should be taken for recovery of the NPA, the debt loans, which are taken by the big monopoly houses.

There are so many demands of the bank employees, and these demands are just and cogent ones. The public sector banks should be used for the welfare of the country.

Therefore, Sir, I would urge upon the Government of India to respond to the strike of the bank employees' associations, mitigate their demands, and take action to meet their demands, which is for the welfare of the whole country[k16].

SHRI ANIL BASU (ARAMBAGH): Sir, it is reported in the Press that by allowing 74 per cent foreign equity in 31 private sector banks, with around Rs.3,000 crore of capital as on March 31, 2004 and Rs.3 lakh crore of

deposits, the control of these huge savings of the countrymen, the Indians will be passed on to the foreign hands. So, today one million bank employees and officers are observing strike and the whole banking operations have been paralyzed. There are two contradictory statements from the Government – one from the PMO which says that it is opposing such a move and the other saying that they are pushing through this. Through you, Sir, I demand that the Government should come to this House, take this House into confidence and make a statement on this whole issue.

SHRI GURUDAS DASGUPTA (PANSKURA): Sir, the issue is not just a one-day strike by the bank employees. Let the Parliament know that there has been a complete and a total strike throughout the country and all the unions, irrespective of political parties and irrespective of their different affiliations, have joined the strike. The bank employees have taken a decision – let me inform the House – that if the Government persists with privatising the banks, if the Government persists

with disinvesting all the profitable public sector banks and if the Government persists with bringing about a merger of the public sector banks, there is going to be a prolonged strike in the country. I can tell you, on behalf of the trade unions of the country – I am representing a Central Trade Union - that all the central trade unions will be with the banks and with the bank employees.

May I ask the Government at this critical hour, why they are inviting a confrontation with the bank employees? Why are they inviting a confrontation with the trade unions of the country?

Let me give you another information. From tomorrow, there is going to be a two-day strike in the general insurance sector of the country. Only today, thousands of different employees are there in the Parliament Street. I do not understand the policy of the UPA Government. If you are following the footsteps of the earlier Government, you can be rest assured that we shall confront you not within the Parliament only, but we shall confront you in the streets also. There will be a number of strikes in the country. ... (*Interruptions*)

The Government always responds to the demand by making a statement in the House. If they were responding to the Opposition, I do not have any grudge. The Leader of the House is not present in the House now.

MR. SPEAKER: You have made your point.

SHRI GURUDAS DASGUPTA : On this whole issue, may I know, why the Government is keeping silent? Why does the Government prefer not to make a statement in the House? This is a serious dereliction of duty on the part of the Government. Let the Government not take some of their supporting parties for granted. We have not signed a blank paper for supporting the Government. It is not the way in which they ought to act.

MR. SPEAKER: Okay. Now, Shri Joachim Baxla.

... (ब्यवधान)

प्रो. विजय कुमार मल्होत्रा : अध्यक्ष महोदय, यह बड़ा महत्वपूर्ण इश्यु है।... (ब्यवधान)

MR. SPEAKER: No. This is not the way.

Shri Baxla.

... (Interruptions)

प्रो. विजय कुमार मल्होत्रा : कांग्रेस पार्टी और सीपीएम क्या कर रही है, ये बताएं?... (ब्यवधान)

MR. SPEAKER: Nothing more will be recorded now.

(Interruptions)* ...

MR. SPEAKER: This is the problem. You are always doing this.

... (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Prof. Malhotra, nothing is being recorded. You have made your protest. Now, please sit down.

(Interruptions)* ...

MR. SPEAKER: It is because of the importance of the issue, I have allowed others to speak. Otherwise, I would have asked you to only associate with the issue raised. So, please do not make it like this.

... (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Why are you unnecessarily creating complications? You have made your point.

Now, Shri Baxla.

... (ब्यवधान)

प्रो. विजय कुमार मल्होत्रा : अध्यक्ष महोदय, सारे हिन्दुस्तान में लगभग दस लाख बैंक कर्मचारियों की हड़ताल हो रही है।... (ब्यवधान)

MR. SPEAKER: Please sit down. No[R17].

... (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Mere provocation does not help.

... (Interruptions)

अध्यक्ष महोदय : आप बैठ जाइये। मल्होत्रा साहब, आप बोल चुके हैं।

... (ब्यवधान)

* Not Recorded.

MR. SPEAKER: Only the speech of Shri Baxla will go on record and nothing else.

(Interruptions) ...*

MR. SPEAKER: Please take your seats. Do you think it is your duty to control the House? Then, you dispense with this place. Please sit down. Nothing will be recorded. I have allowed six to seven hon. Members to make submissions.

(Interruptions) ...*

MR. SPEAKER: No clarification is allowed. Nothing is being recorded, except the speech of Shri Baxla.

(Interruptions) ...*

श्री जोवाकिम बखला (अलीपुरद्वार) : अध्यक्ष महोदय, आज जो हड़ताल हुई है, वह बैंकों के प्रस्तावित विलय के विरोध में की जा रही है। हड़ताल का एलान बैंक कर्मचारियों के संगठन यूनाइटेड फोरम ऑफ बैंक यूनियंस ने किया है।...(व्यवधान)

MR. SPEAKER: Please allow the hon. Member to raise a very important matter.

... (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Topdar, please sit down.

...(व्यवधान)

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Udai Singh, you please sit down. This is not the way.

... (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Dasgupta, please do not answer. This is very unfortunate. What is going on here? What are you trying to do?

... (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Chakraborty, it is unfortunate. You are a senior Member. You are standing in the aisle and you are shouting here. I gave opportunity to eight hon. Members.

... (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Basu, please sit down. Nothing is being recorded.

(Interruptions)* ...

MR. SPEAKER: I have been more close with him than you are.

* Not Recorded.

... (Interruptions)

अध्यक्ष महोदय : हम देखेंगे, सब काट देंगे। हमने काट दिया है। आप जाकर बैठ जाइये, कट जायेगा। क्या यहां मजाक चल रहा है?

...(व्यवधान)

श्री जोवाकिम बखला : अध्यक्ष महोदय, आज देश भर के सार्वजनिक बैंकों के कर्मचारी एवं अधिकारी हड़ताल पर हैं। यह हड़ताल बैंकों के प्रत्यक्ष विदेशी निवेश की सीमा बढ़ाकर 74 प्रतिशत करने और बैंकों के प्रस्तावित विलय के फैसले के विरोध में की जा रही है। हड़ताल का ऐलान बैंक कर्मचारियों के शिखर संगठन यूनाइटेड फोरम ऑफ बैंक यूनियंस ने किया है। सरकारी और गैर सरकारी बैंक इसमें शामिल हैं और इस हड़ताल में अंश ग्रहण करने वाले सार्वजनिक बैंकों के कर्मचारी एवं अधिकारी, जिनकी संख्या 10 लाख से भी ज्यादा है, आज चिन्तित हैं। सार्वजनिक बैंकों का और दूसरे बैंकों का विलय करने का जो फैसला सरकार लेने वाली है, उस फैसले का विरोध करने के लिए आज बैंक कर्मचारी एवं उनके अधिकारी हड़ताल पर उतरे हुए हैं। सरकार का 74 परसेंट डायरेक्ट फॉरेन इन्वेस्टमेंट बैंक में चालू करने के बाद बैंकों का विलय करने का जो फैसला आने वाला है, इसका विरोध पूरे हिन्दुस्तान में आज बैंक कर्मचारी और अधिकारी कर रहे हैं।

मैं आपके माध्यम से वित्त मंत्री जी एवं सरकार से मांग करना चाहता हूँ कि इस विषय पर जो कर्मचारी एवं अधिकारी आज हड़ताल पर उतरे हुए हैं, उनकी मांग पर पुनर्विचार करते हुए सरकार को सहानुभूतिपूर्वक उनकी मांग को स्वीकार करने का काम करना चाहिए। धन्यवाद।...

(व्यवधान)

MR. SPEAKER: I will not allow this. Is this the way you are emphasising the importance of the subject by interrupting each other? It is such an important issue and you are trying to dilute it by your irresponsible behaviour. It applies to all the sides.

...(व्यवधान)

श्री अनंत गंगाराम गीते (रत्नागिरि) : अध्यक्ष जी, जनरल इन्श्योरेंस कम्पनियों के कर्मचारियों के संगठन ने भी हड़ताल का नोटिस दे दिया है। जनरल इन्श्योरेंस कम्पनियों के 80 हजार कर्मचारी सारे देश में आन्दोलित हो चुके हैं, सड़कों पर उतरने जा रहे हैं।...(व्यवधान)

अध्यक्ष महोदय : आप थोड़ा धीरज रखिये, हम देखेंगे। आपका नाम आयेगा तो आपको बुलाएंगे।

...(व्यवधान)

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA (BANKURA): Sir, there should be some statement from the Government.

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Acharia, you know that I cannot compel the Government to make a statement. You can persuade them outside.

... (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Nothing is being recorded.

(Interruptions) ...*

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Chakraborty, please go back to your seat if you want to speak.

... (Interruptions)