

Sixteenth Lok Sabha

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Title: Need to take action against elements affecting pluralistic and democratic ethos of the country

DR. SHASHI THAROOR (THIRUVANANTHAPURAM): Mr. Deputy-Speaker, thank you. I am sorry to raise before this House the attack on my constituency office in Thiruvananthapuram and the death threats that I received from members of the ruling party in response to my criticism of far right extremism. This is not just an attack on constitutionally-sanctioned MP's office but also a larger attempt by incendiary elements and their digital equivalents to destroy the idea of India as a pluralistic and accepting democracy. Their victims, in recent months, have included intellectuals, minorities, and various citizens of the country. Yesterday, even Swami Agvinesh was attacked. These are people who have expressed dissent against rising intolerance in today's India and they are being attacked physically.

In doing so, they are disregarding the singular principle of our historic democratic consensus which is that in a diverse democracy like ours, you do not need to agree all the time, so long as you will agree on the ground rules of how you will disagree. That is what we have seen today with the No Confidence Motion. But it is not what we are seeing in the streets where the ground rules of our democracy are being betrayed by those who have been elected by the people of India as a ruling party and they are betraying this basic ground rule.

I want to say Mr. Deputy-Speaker, we cannot and should not stand by as communal violence, mob-lynching and hooliganism replace rule of law and rights guaranteed by our Constitution.

I strongly urge the Prime Minister to break his silence on the behaviour of his own party men and take action against these anti-national elements and anti-Indian elements who seek

to abridge the freedom of speech in our democracy. Thank you Mr. Deputy-Speaker. ...

*(Interruptions)*

HON. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Shri Rabindra Kumar Jena, Dr. Kulamani Samal, Dr. A. Sampath, Shri P. Karunakaran, Shri P.K. Biju, Shri Md. Badaruddoza Khan, Shri Sankar Prasad Datta and Shri M.B.Rajesh are allowed to associate with the matter raised by Dr. Shashi Tharoor.

THE MINISTER OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS AND MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI ANANTHKUMAR): Sir, it is very unfortunate. A very senior Member like Dr. Shashi Tharoor cannot make unfounded and baseless allegation on political party workers and Leaders of Parties like the ... \*

SHRI MALLIKARJUN KHARGE : He is a very senior Member of this House. ... *(Interruptions)*  
He has been insulted like this. ... *(Interruptions)* There was an attack on his office. ...  
*(Interruptions)*

SHRI ANANTHKUMAR : If something has happened in Kerala, then he should go for investigation. The whole of Kerala knows as to who has done it. ... *(Interruptions)*

SHRI K.C. VENUGOPAL (ALAPPUZHA): There is videographic evidence of the attack. ...  
*(Interruptions)*

SHRI ANANTHKUMAR : There is a State-organised terror by ... \* in Kerala, and for whatever ... \* does, Dr. Shashi Tharoor should not put the blame on the ... \* and other political parties. ...  
*(Interruptions)*

SHRI K.C. VENUGOPAL : No, those were the ... \* workers only. ... *(Interruptions)*

SHRI ANANTHKUMAR : Therefore, let him say that it is from ... \* My only request to you, Sir, is to expunge the mention of ... \* workers and men in the case of lynching, which is totally baseless and it is far from the truth. ... (*Interruptions*)

SHRI M. B. RAJESH (PALAKKAD): Sir, why is he mentioning about ... \* here? ... (*Interruptions*)

SHRI MALLIKARJUN KHARGE : Sir, he is the hon. Minister. They have got Intelligence; they have got IB; and they have got so many other agencies. They are already investigating or following the case. Why is he not giving correct information as to who has done it? ... (*Interruptions*) Why is he misleading the House? ... (*Interruptions*)

SHRI ANANTHKUMAR: There is no question of misleading the House. Shri Mallikarjun Kharge is a very senior leader of the Congress Party. He is the Leader of the Opposition. He should know that 'law and order' is the subject matter of Kerala. A dastardly incident has happened in Kerala. Dr. Shashi Tharoor very well knows that it has been done by ... \* not by . ... .. \*

SHRI K.C. VENUGOPAL (ALAPPUZHA): Sir, the House should condemn it. ... (*Interruptions*)

**12 31 hrs**

*(At this stage, Shri K.C. Venugopal and some other hon. Members came and stood on the floor near the Table.)*

HON. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Members, please go back to your seats.

... (*Interruptions*)

**12 33 hrs**

*(At this stage, Shri K.C. Venugopal and some other hon. Members*

*went back to their seats.)*

HON. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Members, I am very sorry to hear as to what has happened to the hon. Member, Dr. Shashi Tharoor. It is very unfortunate. His rights have to be protected. There has been a mention of the names of the political parties, either ... [\\*](#). Those names would be expunged.

*... (Interruptions)*

HON. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I am making a request to the hon. Parliamentary Affairs Minister. It is the duty of the House to protect the rights of the hon. Members. Investigations would find out as to what has happened. Whatever has happened is unfortunate. I am accepting that. At the same time, whatever names have been mentioned by both the parties are expunged.

*... (Interruptions)*

DR. SHASHI THAROOR (THIRUVANANTHAPURAM): Sir, I have no objection to your ruling. We don't need to mention the parties. ... *(Interruptions)*

HON. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The whole House is concerned about what has happened about the rights of the hon. Members.

*... (Interruptions)*

DR. SHASHI THAROOR : The reason why there is a threat to freedom of express is because freedom of express has led to violence and they are defending their acts of violence. ... *(Interruptions)*

HON. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Shri M.B. Rajesh, Shrimati Supriya Sule and Prof. Saugata Roy are allowed to associate with the issue raised by Dr. Shashi Tharoor.

SHRI MOHAMMAD SALIM (RAIGANJ): The Government should respond. ... (*Interruptions*)

HON. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: You cannot force the Government to respond.

... (*Interruptions*)

HON. DEPUTY SPEAKER: No, I cannot force them for it.

... (*Interruptions*)

SHRIMATI MEENAKASHI LEKHI (NEW DELHI): Sir, there has been lynching in Kerala. ...  
(*Interruptions*)

HON. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Shri Laxman Giluwa – not present.

... (*Interruptions*)

HON. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Shri Shailesh Kumar – not present.

... (*Interruptions*)

HON. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Shrimati Kirron Kher.

... (*Interruptions*)