

(Interruptions)

[English]

SHRI EDUARDO FALEIRO : I have given the notice because it is the intelligence agencies who have interfered with the freedom of communication of Members of Parliament. Therefore, they have committed a breach of privilege.....(Interruptions) I make two demands. Firstly, that the Government, in keeping with the previous precedents, should lay on the Table of the House the names of all the Members of Parliament and other political leaders whose phones are tapped. Secondly, in line with the leader of the Janata Party, the Chief Minister Mr. Rama Krishna Hegde who unilaterally, on his own, tendered his resignation from his office, the Home Minister should also resign on this issue of breach of privilege. (Interruptions)

SHRI NIRMAL KANTI CHATTERJEE (Dumdum) : If what has come out in the papers is true, there is no doubt that it is something which is regrettable and unpardonable. There are no two opinions that such an act should be condemned. And it is unfortunate that even after 100 days of the new Government, they have not been able to discontinue such practices which were there.

We want a statement from the Government as to what are the names under such lists and since when this tapping is going on and why it is continuing. All this information should be laid before the House. (Interruptions)

SHRI SAMARENDRA KUNDU (Balasore) : I entirely agree with the proposition that this is a very important matter. It not only concerns the Opposition members, now it concerns all of us. But at the same time with great dismay I would like to submit that I do not approve of the conduct of the Opposition.....(Interruptions)..... During the

Congress (I) regime, Ministers' telephones were bugged. Even their RAX phones were bugged. (Interruptions)

It is a tragedy in our political life that black cannot change its hue, coal cannot change its hue. They would not learn any lesson from history. They should not utilise this forum to brow-beat you Sir. When you had already asked the Minister Shri Upendra to answer, they did not allow him to speak. They should refrain from taking political mileage from such things. If the telephone of Shri Chandra Shekhar is being tapped, I am the first man to ask the Government to make a full enquiry into it.

MR. SPEAKER : I think the House will agree that the Minister should make a statement now.

(Interruptions)

15.07 hrs.

STATEMENT BY MINISTER

Alleged tapping of Telephones and Bugging of premises of Politicians

[English]

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI P. UPENDRA): Some hon. Members have referred in the House this morning to the news report in a section of the Press that Shri Chandra Shekhar, an hon. Member of the House, as alleged in an interview to the Illustrated Weekly of India that his telephones are being tapped as well as the phones of 27 politicians. The telephonic communications of Shri Chandra Shekhar or any other political leader are not being intercepted (Interruptions)

[Sh. P. Upendra]

Sir I repeat, the telephonic communications of Shri Chandra Shekhar or any other political leader are not being intercepted. Neither are the premises of Shri Chandra Shekhar or any other political leader being bugged. However, I may point out that under special circumstances telephone interceptions have been conducted under the provisions of Section 5(2) of the Indian Telegraph Act.

Under the provisions of this Section, the Central Government have authorised the Director, Intelligence Bureau to exercise this power. A number of safeguards have been provided to ensure that this power is not misused and is exercised for the purpose for which it is intended.

SHRI EDUARDO FALEIRO (Mormugao) : What is the purpose?

SHRI P. UPENDRA : You know it better. You were in the Government for 40 years. Don't you know that?

A CBI enquiry has been ordered by the Prime Minister to enquire into all these allegations. (Interruptions) Let me complete first. A CBI enquiry has been ordered by the Prime Minister to enquire into all these allegations. And also into earlier activities that may have been conducted in this connection. (Interruptions)

SHRI VASANT SATHE (Wardha) : This will not do. (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Sir, it was told, in your Chamber by hon. Shri Upendra that.....(Interruptions)

[Translation]

SHRI NATHU SINGH (Dausa) : Are you

going to allow a discussion on it? (Interruptions)

[English]

SHRI VASANT SATHE: The understanding was, Mr. Upendra has given a word, that he would verify—Mr. Kundu was also there—from hon. Shri Chandra Shekhar, leader of the Janata Dal, whether the statement alleged to have been made by him is correct or not. This is what he has said. Hon. Shri Chandra Shekhar was here in the Central Hall in the afternoon for more than an hour. Sir, I would like to know from Shri Upendra whether he has enquired from hon. Shri Chandra Shekhar about the veracity. (Interruptions) It will not do if Shri Upendra makes a statement that Mr. Chandra Shekhar's telephone was not tapped. So far as the allegation made by Shri Chandra Shekhar is concerned, the only person who could contradict it is Mr. Chandra Shekhar himself. (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Please take your seats. Let me hear Shri Basudeb Acharia.

(Interruptions)

SHRI NATHU SINGH : Sir, are you going to allow a discussion on this?

(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : Yes, Mr. Acharia.

[Translation]

SHRI K. MANVENDRA SINGH (Mathura) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to tell all those who are taking initiative here today that it were they who tapped the telephone of the then President.....(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : The Minister has already made a statement. I have called Mr. Acharia.

(Interruptions)

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA (Bankura) : Sir, a few days back, Mr. Janardhana Poojary and Mr. Ajit Panja, on the basis of a report in the Birlas' newspaper, had made a false allegation in this House that Communist Party of India (Marxist) amassed Rs. 200 crore. (Interruptions) The Chief Minister of West Bengal wrote to Finance Minister, Prof. Madhu Dandavate. Prof. Dandavate had categorically denied that there was any such report from the Intelligence Department. (Interruptions) Sir, I demand that the allegation made by Mr. Janardhana Poojary and Mr. Ajit Panja should be withdrawn.

MR. SPEAKER : Mr. Bhagat.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Please take your seat.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : I have called Mr. Bhagat. Please sit down, Mr. Banatwalla.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Yes, Mr. Bhagat.

SHRI H.K.L. BHAGAT (East Delhi) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am grateful to you. (Interruptions) Mr. Dinesh Singh put a very straightforward question about this, namely, irrespective of what Mr. Chandra Shekhar said or not said, whether the telephones are being tapped or not.

Without denying that, he has made an

admission a confession that under certain provisions of the law, a number of telephones have been intercepted. I would like to know whether he would tell us those names and place them on the Table of the House or not.....(Interruptions).....Since all of you also have asked for them, will he place them on the Table of the House? (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Mr. Vijay Kumar Malhotra.

(Interruptions)

SHRI VASANT SATHE : You should have had a conversation with Mr. Chandra Shekhar. You have failed to do that. So, we want a discussion under Rule 193 on Monday.

MR. SPEAKER: You give a notice on this matter under Rule 193. I will place it before the Business Advisory Committee and a decision will be taken.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Please give the notice under Rule 193. No further discussion on this. Now, let me proceed with the next item on the agenda.

(Interruptions)

[Translation]

SHRI VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA (Delhi Sadar) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I think, the issue that has been raised is very serious one and you allowed many hon. Members from the Congress Party to speak on it. But when you had allowed them it was not appropriate to allow only those to speak, who threatened to stall the proceedings of the House. This is a very serious matter. Therefore, I would like to say that it is wrong and shameful to tap the telephones of political

[Sh. Vijay Kumar Malhotra]

people. This should not happen. The Government should ensure that the telephones of people in political, social and cultural fields are not tapped. There is no sense in tapping the telephones of persons other than those of the terrorists and anti-national elements. If you want to order a C.B.I. enquiry into it, the case of tapping of telephones of Giani Zail Singh, when he was President of India and the tapping of telephones of the entire Opposition, may also be included in the enquiry and the same punishment should be meted out to the offenders as will be given to those who tapped the telephones without permission in the present case.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to say that it is today that they have recalled these democratic institutions.....(*Interruptions*)

They had forgotten them when Shri Chandra Shekhar was imprisoned during Emergency without any charge.....(*Interruptions*)

Mr. Speaker, Sir, not only mine but the mail of the whole opposition was being censored till three months back. We wish the National Front Government not to repeat the mistakes of the Congress regime. This Government should ensure that neither the telephones of a political person should be tapped nor their mail censored.

[*English*]

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA (Midnapore) : Not much purpose will be served by all this. I only want to point out that all of us in this House, irrespective of which side we are sitting, are agitated. This is an extremely serious matter and we will all demand a thorough inquiry since this matter has now been brought into limelight by the statement of Mr. Chandra Shekhar outside the House. Since this matter has come to the notice of

the entire country, there must be a thorough probe into it and the Government, after ascertaining the full facts, will certainly come before the House—I am sure—and make a full statement. I fully agree with my friend, Raja Dinesh Singh who said that their main issue is not what Mr. Chandra Shekhar may or may not have said but the main issue is whether such tapping and bugging is going on or not.

But that is not Mr. Sathe's point.

SHRI VASANT SATHE : That is my point.....(*Interruptions*)

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA : No, Shri Sathe's point is that you must verify whether Shri Chandra Shekhar.....(*Interruptions*) You have spoken twenty times, I have not interrupted you. Let my Congress friends make up their mind. The issues raised by Raja Dinesh Singh is perfectly correct in my opinion.....(*Interruptions*) and Shri Sathe's insistence that the main thing is to verify from Shri Chandra Shekhar whether he has said that or not is irrelevant.....(*Interruptions*) You should have consulted before you came here.....(*Interruptions*)

SHRI VASANT SATHE : Do not advise us what we should do. We know what we should do.....(*Interruptions*)

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA : Sometimes you should take some advice also. Do not get angry.....(*Interruptions*)

I am not interested in what went on in Speaker's chamber. You are referring to something that happened there.....(*Interruptions*)

SHRI VASANT SATHE : It is immaterial whether Shri Chandra Shekhar said that or not.....(*Interruptions*). We want the names; and we want the facts. That is what I said this morning also.....(*Interruptions*)

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA : I want to know what are the grounds for Shri Sathe to assume that Shri Upendra has made this statement on behalf of the Government without verifying any facts. How does he know that? He mentioned about some agreement for verification. How does he know that he has made this statement without any verification?.....(*Interruptions*) You can make fifty statements outside the House.....(*Interruptions*)

SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY (Mangalore) : We want a Parliamentary Committee to go into this.....(*Interruptions*)

SHRI P. UPENDRA : I do not know whether hon. Shri Indrajit Gupta was there when I made the statement. I categorically said that no telephone of any political leader is being tapped. I made it very clear.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA : You said that after verifying the facts.

SHRI P. UPENDRA : I also want to add that this Government recognizes the sanctity of freedom of the citizens and their right to privacy and does not believe in resorting to illegal activities. At the same time, we also attach the utmost importance to the privileges of the hon. Members of Parliament as well as the legislators. I have made it very clear.....(*Interruptions*)

As regards statement of Shri Chandra Shekhar, CBI enquiry has been ordered.....(*Interruptions*)

SHRI EDUARDO FALEIRO : We want an independent enquiry by Parliament, not by CBI.....(*Interruptions*)

SHRI P. UPENDRA : Let me complete. Please sit down. (*Interruptions*)

Sir, a CBI Inquiry has been ordered and the inquiry cannot be conducted without the

statement of Shri Chandra Shekhar. CBI will definitely contact Shri Chandra Shekhar and take his statement. And what I talked to one of our respected leader of National Front, I am not obliged to tell them. (*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER : Shri Dinesh Singh, I think you will not be intruding upon the time allotted for the Private Members' Business. It is already 3.30 Let us proceed with the Private Member's Business.

(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER : We are taking up Private Members' Business. Please take your seat.

15.31 hrs.

RESOLUTION RE: POLL REFORMS—
CONTD.

[*English*]

MR. SPEAKER : Now, we will take up further discussion of the following Resolution moved by Shri L.K. Advani on the 29th December, 1989 :

"This House is of opinion that against the background of the Ninth General Elections, poll reforms should be urgently undertaken, more particularly to curb the influence of money-power and muscle power, and to ensure that future elections held in this largest democracy of the world are completely free and fair."

Shri Mandhata Singh, please resume your speech.

SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV (Silchar) : Sir, kindly tell us whether after the Private Members' Business you will be taking up 193 or not.