

surveillance of telephone
14.20 hrs.

*The Lok Sabha then adjourned for Lunch
till Fifteen of the Clock.*

*The Lok Sabha re assembled after Lunch
at four minutes past Fifteen of the Clock.*

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

[*English*]

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Home Minister, would you like to make the statement?

15.041/4 hrs.

STATEMENT BY MINISTER

Electronic Susurveillance of the telephone of the Minister of Human Résource Development

[*English*]

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI S.B. CHAVAN): On 23rd March 1993, during the Zero Hour, Hon. Members raised the alleged issue of electronic surveillance of the telephone of Minister of HRD. In this connection Hon Members demanded a clarification on the statement of Minister HRD "circumstances exist which require a conclusive enquiry."

Minister of State (IS) in the Ministry of Home Affairs had assured the Hon Members that Government does not wish to hide anything and is prepared to examine this matter from all angles. Government is willing to place all the information available to it before the House.

The Minister for HRD had, on February 9th 1993, drawn the attention of the Prime Minister towards a news item that the appeared in a language daily published from Calcutta the Prime Minister had directed the

"Central Intelligence Department" to watch the activities of some Central Ministers. The News item had also alleged that the Intelligence department had also started eavesdropping on the telephones of the Ministers. In this connection, the news item further mentioned that a surveillance is being kept on the persons who were meeting the Minister for HRD.

In his letter of 9th February, 1993 the Minister for HRD brought to the notice of the Prime Minister that a Private Agency engaged by him had in fact confirmed that "two of my Telephones are indeed being subjected to illegal surveillance." The Minister for HRD requested for the immediate intervention of the Prime Minister

The Prime Minister on the very day of receipt of the letter of Minister for HRD made enquiries to ascertain if surveillance of the sort mentioned by Minister HRD has been carried out in any manner and was categorically assured by the agency mentioned in the news report that they have neither authorised such an action, nor 'indeed would it remotely occur to them to do so'. The result of this enquiry was communicated on the 9th February 1993.

Through another letter the Minister HRD emphasized the need for a thorough investigation since issues of fundamental nature were involved. The concerned agency officials met the Minister HRD and conducted electronic sweeping of the premises and the telephones in question. After a thorough technical enquiry the Agency came to the conclusion that the enquiry could not elicit any evidence to support that electronic surveillance was taking place as alleged. A copy of the report of the sweeping operations was sent to the Minister HRD. The Minister in early March 1993 informed that the private agency that conducted an enquiry earlier stands by its conclusions. The Minister suggested that to get to the truth the

association of the private agency that conducted the enquiry would be useful. This suggestion of the Minister HRD was readily agreed to and the Minister has been requested to furnish the name of the private agency so that intelligence Agency could associate with them and get to the root of the problem.

Mr. Speaker Sir, as mentioned in this august house on Tuesday the policy of the Government on this issue is very clear and open. No agency of the government are authorised to conduct any surveillance on anyone for political purposes. Government would do everything in its power to establish the facts. This is possible on receipt of the name of the private agency and gaining access to such evidence the agency has, which enabled it to reach a conclusion contrary to that of the intelligence Agency.

SHRI RAM NAIK (Bombay North): He should resign now.

[Translation]

SHRI MADAN LAL KHURANA (South Delhi): Mr. Speaker, Sir, if contrary to the facts serious charges are being levelled against the Government by a senior hon. Minister, then the Minister should be dropped from the council of Ministers. (*Interruptions*)

15.00 hrs.

MATTERS UNDER RULE 377

- (i) **Need to provide telecommunications link to all administrative headquarters of Arunachal Pradesh**

[English]

SHRI LAETA UMBREY (Arunachal East) Sir, Arunachal Pradesh, the Land of rising sun, has the worst communication

system in the country. The State has no airways, no railways and no waterways. It is linked with only road communication and telecommunication. But both the communication systems are available to the foothills, adjoining Assam only. It is understood that there is Government policy to link all the panchyats of the country by 1995. Whereas only two years are left, even the district and sub-divisional headquarters are not linked by telecommunication.

Therefore, I urge upon the Central Government to link all the administrative headquarters of Arunachal Pradesh by the end of this year.

- (ii) **Need for renovation of Jharsuguda aerodrome and extension of air services to Western Orissa**

SHRI SRIBALLAV PANIGRAHI (Deogarh). Sir, there is an aerodrome at Jharsuguda in Orissa constructed during the Second World War. Due to lack of maintenance, this aerodrome is now in a bad shape. It is situated at the centre of fast growing industrial areas of Sambalpur and Sundargarh districts having Rourkela Steel Plant, Orissa Cement Limited, Rajangpur, Ib Thermal Power Plant and Ib Valley Coal Mines, etc. There is legitimate demand for renovation of this aerodrome and introduction of Vayudoot services between Bhubaneswar and Jharsuguda and also providing a stoppage of Delhi Bhubaneswar flight at Jharsuguda at least two days a week to start with. But it is a matter of regret that instead of taking necessary steps to provide air services to Western Orissa Companies of five districts with a population of more than one crore, the concerned authorities are thinking of closing this aerodrome.

Considering the backwardness of the area and the immense potentiality of development and also the genuine demand to provide air-link to this region, I urge upon the Union Government to intervene in the