

Thirteenth Lok Sabha**Session : 11****Date : 10-12-2002****Participants : Dasmunsi Shri Priya Ranjan, Chatterjee Shri Somnath, Malhotra Prof. Vijay Kumar, Speaker, Shri Manohar Joshi Mr., Chandra Shekhar Shri****12.18 hrs.****Title: Regarding disinvestment of Centaur Hotel.**

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI (RAIGANJ): Mr. Speaker, Sir, on behalf of our Party, I would like to draw the attention of the Government to a very serious matter. The other day, during Question Hour, a question was asked by a distinguished Member of the House from Shiv Sena, Shri Chandrakant Khaire regarding disinvestment proceeds pertaining to Centaur Hotel. At that stage, we did demand a comprehensive CBI inquiry. In his reply, the Minister is on record saying that he did only the job of disinvestment but the entire negotiation was done by the Ministry of Civil Aviation. Therefore, he did not own the responsibility.

The story of Centaur Hotel is not a secret story now. In Mumbai, the land cost at the market price -- I am not talking about the entire property -- is very high. The land cost which has been assessed is not even one-third of the sale proceeds which is available. The Minister admitted that the Batra Group did not agree to the reserve price bid. That is why, it was rejected. Later on, again, they were brought into the picture without any *de novo* exercise of the entire process of the disinvestment. Thereafter, within a short span of time, it was re-transferred to Sahara Group.

The property of the nation cannot be treated in this manner which in my view is a loot and a plunder. This is not only a scandal but also rocking of the nation. The Joint Committee of Parliament is investigating the entire matter relating to UTI and the stock exchange scam. Its report is expected shortly. This particular deal of Centaur Hotel is not the only one of its type. The cost of the per acre land in Khajuraho -- the Member of Parliament from that Constituency, Shri Satyavrat Chaturvedi is here -- is Rs.2 crore,

and 12 acres of land have been disposed of at Rs.2.5 crore. The land cost in Udaipur is equally high. It was again disposed of very cheaply...

(Interruptions)

डॉ. विजय कुमार मल्होत्रा (दक्षिण दिल्ली) : अध्यक्ष महोदय, इस विषय को जीरो आवर में उठाने की बजाय इस पर बहस करा लीजिए। ...(व्यवधान)

डॉ. रघुवंश प्रसाद सिंह (वैशाली) : आप देश को बेचने में लगे हैं। क्या ऐसे समय भी हम चुपचाप बैठे रहेंगे? ...(व्यवधान)

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI: It is not my contention that all the hotels are earning profit. My contention is that the evaluation of property including the land has not been done properly. If these are disposed of in this fashion and below the market price even, then what conclusion shall we draw? The Parliament is kept in the dark.

The other day, we heard that the Cabinet is divided on the issue of public sector oil companies' disinvestment. Now, we understand that they have come to the conclusion to disinvest these public sector companies in total disregard to the Act of Parliament.

This Act of Parliament, while nationalising companies like Caltex and Burma Shell, made it clear that if any property is further invested anywhere, the entire assets and everything should be disposed of to the Central Government and none else. The Central Government can then form another company where this property should belong. Now Shri Arun Shourie, who is a distinguished Minister of this Government, is interpreting things in his own imaginary way, ignoring the very Act of Parliament, which is an insult to the Parliament.

Therefore, we from the Congress Party demand – of course other Opposition Parties would have their say – that unless and until the Government convinces the Parliament as to how the Act of Parliament can be changed on the sweet will of an individual Minister or a strategic partner and unless the Government comes up with a clear policy to the Parliament and get clarification from the Parliament, the Government is not allowed to encourage this loot and plunder in the name of

disinvestment of the public sector oil companies. The issue of Centaur Hotel and other hotels of the public sector, which have already been disposed of, should be brought to the House Committee – or whichever Committee you appoint – which shall look into the matter as to how the plunder took place and who are the beneficiaries of the loot. This is my submission.

If the Government is straightforward, has the capacity and strength to accept this challenge, they should concede to our demand or else we draw our own conclusion.... (*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: Dr. Vijay Kumar Malhotra, what do you want to say?

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE (BOLPUR): After getting a Cabinet rank berth, he can reply for the Government; we do not mind it. Probably, he is more articulate than many others.

MR. SPEAKER: He is appreciating you!

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE : I am appreciating him. He is a very old friend of us.

What I have been feeling is that these are very important matters agitating all sections of the House. Members of that side are also very much agitated on this issue. I am told that a very distinguished member of Shiv Sena in the other House is giving a privilege notice. Therefore, this should not be treated as a mere routine matter. On such a matter where the House is agitated, should the House not be taken into confidence? As the Speaker of this great institution, I am appealing to you. Should this matter not be fully discussed in this House at least before such important decisions are taken? These are very valuable assets of the Government of India and the people of India. The people of India are the owners of these properties and assets. They are being sold for a song. Private people are getting the benefits; outsiders are getting the benefit and a new private monopoly is being created in this country in place of the public sector. I would appeal to you that the House should assert itself. We cannot be mere mute spectators

when all these things are being done. We come to know of them through newspapers. How can this happen? We oppose this. ... (*Interruptions*)

SHRI TARIT BARAN TOPDAR (BARRACKPORE): I want to say just one sentence, Sir.

MR. SPEAKER: I will allow you one sentence after Dr. Vijay Kumar Malhotra completes his submission.

... (*Interruptions*)

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI: This Act of Parliament which was made during the time of Shrimati Indira Gandhi, cannot be denied, assaulted, and questioned publicly by Minister Shri Arun Shourie. Any change to the Act of Parliament should be first explained in Parliament.

डॉ. विजय कुमार मल्होत्रा : अध्यक्ष जी, कोई एक्ट ऑफ पार्लियामेंट के खिलाफ नहीं जा सकता, कोई इल्लिगल काम नहीं कर सकता, कोई अनकांस्टीट्यूशनल काम नहीं कर सकता और यह कहना कि यह सब किया जा रहा है, यह निहायत गलत और बेबुनियाद चीज है।... (व्यवधान)

अध्यक्ष महोदय : यह उनकी ओपीनियन है।

डॉ. विजय कुमार मल्होत्रा : अध्यक्ष जी, इस मामले पर कई बार कहा गया कि आप जैसी बहस चाहते हैं वैसी बहस करा लें, बजाय इसके कि हर रोज एक सवाल उठाना, एक गलत इल्जाम लगा देना, लूट की बात करना... (व्यवधान)

श्री प्रियरंजन दासमुंशी : हर रोज आप ऐसा करते रहेंगे तो क्या हम लोग देखते रहेंगे। यह लूट है, यह एन्टायर लूट है।... (व्यवधान)

डॉ. विजय कुमार मल्होत्रा : कांग्रेस पार्टी ने... (व्यवधान)

MR. SPEAKER: Let him complete, please. Please sit down.

श्री प्रियरंजन दासमुंशी : कांग्रेस पार्टी ने क्या किया। कांग्रेस पार्टी ने बनाया और यह बेच रहे हैं। कांग्रेस पार्टी ने तैयार किया और आप लोग लूट रहे हैं।... (व्यवधान)

डॉ. रघुवंश प्रसाद सिंह : यह रोज-रोज बेच रहे हैं। देश की अमूल्य सम्पत्ति को ये बेच रहे हैं।... (व्यवधान)

डॉ. विजय कुमार मल्होत्रा : अध्यक्ष महोदय, कांग्रेस और कम्युनिस्ट, सबको खुले तौर पर यह कहा गया था कि जो विाय डिसकशन हेतु चाहिए उन्हें बता दीजिए, उन पर बहस करा ली जाएगी, लेकिन इन्होंने डिसइनवैस्टमेंट का इश्यू नहीं चुना। ... (व्यवधान) इन्होंने उस पर बहस नहीं मांगी और यह गलत बात यहां पर कही जा रही है।... (व्यवधान)

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI : Sir, I want your protection. We gave notices on all the subjects and they are taken up by the BAC. How can he refer to Parties? This is highly objectionable. This is not fair..... (Interruptions)

डॉ. विजय कुमार मल्होत्रा : अध्यक्ष महोदय, इंटरनल सिक्योरिटी की बात कही और दूसरी बातें कहीं, लेकिन डिसइनवैस्टमेंट की बात नहीं कही। ... (व्यवधान)

श्री प्रियरंजन दासमुंशी : इंटरनल सिक्योरिटी भी देश के इंटरैस्ट की बात है और डिसइनवैस्टमेंट भी देश के इंटरैस्ट की बात है। ... (व्यवधान)

डॉ. विजय कुमार मल्होत्रा : अध्यक्ष जी, जितनी लूट और गलत काम पब्लिक अंडरटेकिंग्स में कांग्रेस की सरकारों के टाइम में और वैस्ट बंगाल में हुए हैं, उतने किसी और सरकारों के समय में नहीं हुए। ... (व्यवधान)

श्री प्रियरंजन दासमुंशी : अध्यक्ष महोदय, जितने अच्छे पब्लिक सैक्टर के इंस्टीट्यूशन्स जवाहर लाल नेहरू जी और इंदिरा गांधी जी के समय में बनाए गए, उन सब इंस्टीट्यूशन्स की ये लूट करा रहे हैं।

... (व्यवधान)

MR. SPEAKER: The matter is very simple. It need not be made complicated. There is no reason to make this matter more complicated. It is a very easy matter. The Opposition desires that the issue of disinvestment

should be discussed in detail. They also want that, whenever any disinvestment is done, it should be brought to the House and thereafter, it should be disinvested. That is what Shri Somnath Chatterjee has said. In such matters, the House can sit together, discuss it and take a decision.

In the Business Advisory Committee, priorities of subjects are decided unanimously when all of us are sitting together. The ruling party has no objection for taking up this subject. If the entire Opposition and the ruling party agree that the subject of disinvestment is so important that it should be given priority, I am prepared to take it up immediately. I have absolutely no objection. Let the issue be discussed.

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI : Sir, I shall abide by your ruling. But what will happen to the deal of Centaur Hotel which has already been made?

MR. SPEAKER: You may raise that also during the discussion. Now, Dr. Malhotra has got something to say.

डॉ. विजय कुमार मल्होत्रा : अध्यक्ष महोदय, दिल्ली में बिजली को प्राइवेटाइज करने में 4 हजार करोड़ रुपए की लूट हुई। ...(व्यवधान)

अध्यक्ष महोदय : आपको जो कुछ भी आरोप लगाने हैं, जब चर्चा हो, बहस हो, तब लगाइए।

...(व्यवधान)

डॉ. विजय कुमार मल्होत्रा : अध्यक्ष महोदय, यदि मैं असत्य कह रहा हूं, तो इसकी सी.बी.आई. जांच करा ली जाए। ...(व्यवधान)

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI : Sir, the Centaur Hotel deal has already been made..... *(Interruptions)*

अध्यक्ष महोदय : मैंने इस विषय को चर्चा की अनुमति देने हेतु मान लिया है। मैं इस पर चर्चा की अनुमति दूंगा।

...(व्यवधान)

श्री प्रियरंजन दासमुंशी : सर डिसइन्वेस्टमेंट की जांच के लिए एक जाइंट कमेटी बनी थी, लेकिन उसे इन्होंने समाप्त किया है। ... (व्यवधान)

अध्यक्ष महोदय : बहस के दौरान बोलिए और जो भी आरोप लगाने हैं उस समय लगाइए।

...(व्यवधान)

डॉ. विजय कुमार मल्होत्रा : अध्यक्ष महोदय, दिल्ली में बिजली को प्राइवेटाइज करने के मामले की यदि ये चाहें, तो सी.बी.आई. की जांच करा सकते हैं।... (व्यवधान)

MR. SPEAKER: Please sit down. I have received a number of notices from several hon. Members. Shri Naval Kishore Rai is waiting for a long time to speak on his notice.

... (*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: On the issue of disinvestment, I have already given my ruling. So, nothing can be said on that issue now.

SHRI K. YERRANNAIDU : Sir, I have an important point to make.....
(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: I am sorry, Shri Yerrannaidu.

... (*Interruptions*)

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI (RAIGANJ): Sir, he has made an allegation of Rs. 4000 crore against the Congress Party.... (*Interruptions*)

The responsible Chief Whip of the ruling party made an allegation against the Congress Party that it has swindled Rs. 4,000 crore. He will have to substantiate with proof or he has to withdraw the allegation. ...

(*Interruptions*) It is on record. ... (*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: I may request Members of both the sides that allegations which cannot be substantiated need not be made by them.

... (*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: Please listen to me.

... (*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: I will go through the records. If there are any objections, which are allegatory in nature, will be removed.

... (*Interruptions*)

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI : Mr. Speaker, Sir, it should be removed from the record. ... (*Interruptions*)

SHRI SATYAVRAT CHATURVEDI (KHAJURAHO): Sir, Dr. Malhotra should either substantiate his allegations or apologise for it. ... (*Interruptions*)

SHRI CHANDRA SHEKHAR (BALIA, U.P.): Sir, Shri Priya Ranjan Dasmunsi raised an important question that concerns the whole nation. He was raising the matter of policy. The Government, run by the majority, cannot take a decision to sell away the property of this nation. Even the House has to respond to people's rights and aspirations in doing this thing. If one Minister says that he has every right to sell away the property even without the sanction of Parliament, then Shri Priya Ranjan Dasmunsi is very much entitled to make this allegation or whatever you may say. ... (*Interruptions*)

डॉ. विजय कुमार मल्होत्रा : उन्होंने कहा कि उसमें बहुत लूट हुई है, बहुत पैसा खाया गया। ... (व्यवधान) He made all these allegations. ... (*Interruptions*)

अध्यक्ष महोदय : कृपया आप चन्द्रशेखर जी को सुनिये। वे क्या कह रहे हैं, वे तो आप मुझे सुनने दीजिए।

... (*Interruptions*)

SHRI CHANDRASHEKHAR : I know how to help myself.

He has raised a matter of policy. He has said that it should be inquired into or it should be investigated or discussed in Parliament. Dr. Malhotra has said that in a particular case the Government of Delhi has taken Rs. 4,000 crore. ... (*Interruptions*)

DR. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA : Sir, Rs. 4,000 crore were given to the private parties.

... (व्यवधान)

उसके अंदर करप्शन हुआ है। मैंने यह कहा कि चार हजार करोड़ रुपये उन्होंने प्राइवेट पार्टियों को दिया। ... (व्यवधान) बिजली का प्राइवेटाइज कर रहे हैं। ... (व्यवधान)

SHRI CHANDRA SHEKHAR : I am not hard of hearing. He said that Rs. 4,000 crore was taken by the Congress Party. ... (*Interruptions*) I have heard it. ... (*Interruptions*)

डॉ. विजय कुमार मल्होत्रा : चार हजार करोड़ रुपया प्राइवेट पार्टियों को दिया। बिजली का प्राइवेटाइज करने के लिए चार हजार करोड़ रुपये दिल्ली गवर्नमेंट ने दिये, उसके अंदर भारी लूट हुई है। ...(व्यवधान)

SHRI CHANDRA SHEKHAR : Mr. Speaker, Sir, you should go into the record. Dr. Malhotra is guilty of changing his statement. Such frivolous statements should not be made in the House in defence of something which is against the interest of the nation. You are selling away the future of the nation and you are guilty of it. ... *(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Yerrannaidu, I have not permitted you. Please sit down. I have already announced as to who will speak next.

... *(Interruptions)*

अध्यक्ष महोदय : मल्होत्रा जी, आपको हर प्रश्न का उत्तर देने की जरूरत नहीं है। आप बैठिये।

...(व्यवधान)
