

Shri Randeep Singh Surjewala, In-charge Communication Department of AICC addressed the Media today.

Shri Surjewala said disregard of Constitution, mockery of democracy and disdain for federalism has become the hallmarks of Modi Government. Manner in which first an elected Congress Government in Arunachal Pradesh was sought to be destabilized and then on the eve of Republic Day, all norms were flagrantly violated to recommend President's Rule by Union Cabinet are reflective of the character of Modi Government. What is most shocking is that the when the matter came up for hearing before a Constitution Bench of Hon'ble Supreme Court yesterday, the Counsel for Governor Shri J.P. Rajkhowa as also Counsel for Union Government including Hon'ble Attorney General said that they do not have a copy of the Governor's report which founded the basis for imposition of President's Rule.

Hon'ble Supreme Court accordingly directed and they took time for placing the report. However, in a completely sinister move, in a move meant to undermine all Constitutional modes as also the basic fundamentals on which our Constitution and the Idea of India is founded, the report was selectively leaked in Media yesterday night itself. Copy of the report is available with only two people either with Home Ministry, Government of India or with Governor Shri J.P. Rajkhowa. It is obvious that the report has been leaked either by the Government of India's Home Ministry or by the Governor of Arunachal Pradesh.

The Congress Party demands that Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi gives an explanation to the Nation and we want to ask him whether he will take action either against Home Ministry officials if they have leaked the report or against the Governor of Arunachal Pradesh Shri Rajkhowa if he has leaked the report. It is an affront to the Constitution Bench of the Hon'ble Supreme Court. It is also an affront to the Constitutional modes and it is an affront to the basic tenets of federalism and democracy.

We demand that Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi comes forward and gives a comprehensive answer on the leakage of the report and why report is being selectively leaked in order to plant a particular set of stories.

Shri Surjewala said there is a very important issue that National Capital today facing is a serious health and civic crisis. All the Safaikaramcharis and other employees of Municipal Corporation of Delhi are on strike now demanding that they have not been paid salary for three months. The game of political oneupmanship, the politics of confrontation and the politics of arrogance between AAP Party on one side and BJP on the other side, is responsible for this mess in National Capital. There are heaps of garbage everywhere, employees are on strike but no one is paying the salaries and a blame game is happening.

Only as recently as on 7th January 2016, Chief Justice of Delhi High Court had ordered implementation of 3rd Finance Commission and complete payment thereof according to which 5.6% share of taxes had to go to three Municipal Corporations. The Bench had also ordered implementation of 4th Finance Commission according to which 12% share of taxes had to go to three MCDs. MCD says they have not received the money, Delhi Dy. CM says they have paid the money, MCD employees say they have not received the salary and people

of Delhi say the garbage and heaps of garbage are affecting their life as also can lead to spread of diseases in the National Capital.

The Congress Party demands that Modi Ji as also Kejriwal Ji shed their arrogance, shed their politics of confrontation, shed their game of political oneupmanship and ensure payment of salary to Safaikaramcharis as also to other MCD employees. Last time, Congress Vice President Shri Rahul Gandhi had to intervene. Shri Rahul Ji will continue to intervene. We demand that both the Governments i.e. Kejriwal Government and Modi Government see reason and find a solution to the problems being faced by people of Delhi, problems of civic mess that is being caused in Delhi and pay salary of MCD employees.

On the question of situation prevalent in Kerala, Shri Surjewala said this is a election time in Kerala and mischievous and malicious allegations will continue to fly. Such allegations have not come for the first time. Yesterday also, we have comprehensively answered.

In the Solar-scam, on the demand of the entire opposition as also all interested parties, the Congress-led Government of Kerala had ordered constitution of a judicial Commission. We had acceded to the demand. Terms of Reference of the Commission were based on all the sets of allegations leveled on the floor of the Assembly as also by our friends of the Opposition outside the Assembly. Hon'ble Chief Minister and all the Ministers of the coalition Government have respected the proceedings of the Judicial Commission so much so that chief Minister himself submitted willingly to the jurisdiction of the Judicial Commission and answered questions put by both the Left Parties as also by Counsels for all the accused in Solar-scam for hours together.

Three things, we have made very clear – and let me reiterate

1. Not a Rupee of benefit was given by the Congress Party Government in Kerala to any Member of the so-called team Solar-scam.
2. Not a Rupee of loss has been caused, proved or even alleged as having been caused to the exchequer of Kerala by any benefit that has been granted because no such benefit was granted.
3. There has been no wrong doing on part of either the Hon'ble Chief Minister Shri Oomen Chandy or on part of any other Minister and we have said, we are open to conduct of, unlike the BJP and many other political parties, any enquiry.

Having said all these, same accused who is now leveling these frivolous allegations, not so long ago, in fact in the recent past, as early as April 4, 2014, had also said that she was being offered Rupees Ten Crore in bribe for leveling allegations against Shri Oomen Chandy as also Congress Government which she refuses to do and she gave elaborate interviews in this regard. We have discussed the matter in detail.

Congress Party is of the opinion that there is no need for Kerala Chief Minister Shri Oomen Chandy to resign at this stage. Shri Oomen Chandy has also made a detailed statement. He has said that he is going to discuss the entire controversy and all issues with all coalition partners as also with all his colleagues, Leaders of the Congress Party. A detailed report will also be submitted to the Congress Party Leadership in this regard. Shri Oomen Chandy as also Kerala Government is consulting not only the Counsels but all other consultations is taking place and we will seek appropriate legal remedies whenever the need arises.

On the question if CM Kerala has nothing to hide, why can't he face investigation, Shri Surjewala said Shri Oomen Chandy more than once and Congress Party have said that they are ready for any kind of investigation and you would recollect and May I recapitulate after all kind of allegations were leveled, Shri Oomen Chandy as Chief Minister on the floor of Kerala Legislative Assembly had said that let an investigation be ordered. The demand of the United Opposition opposing us at that point of time was - let us order a Judicial Commission - Terms of Reference, which will be decided by the Ruling and Opposition Parties together and all allegations of Opposition party should be included.

Consequently, Judicial Commission has been appointed. That Judicial Commission is today examining the entire matter. All parties including the Left Parties and all opposition parties are represented before that Judicial Commission. Hon'ble Chief Minister has subjected himself to the Judicial Commission. He has been interrogated for over a dozen hours before the Judicial Commission by Counsels for the Opposition. Whatever the Judicial Commission will decide, we will accept its verdict. All that I am pointing out to you that the same accused was also present before the Commission. Not a single question or suggestion was put to Shri Oomen Chandy even when he appeared there when the Counsel for the same accused was present and same accused who used to claim that Shri Oomen Chandy is like her father and no wrong doing has ever been done has leveled allegations in the past on tape as also on video as on interview given to various National and Kerala based publications saying that the Opposition parties had offered her a Rupees Ten Crore bribe to level false allegations against Shri Oomen Chandy and her Lawyer was offered bribe separately. So, the credibility of the person leveling the allegations can be judged from the allegations leveled by her in the past but I am even not questioning that, I am only saying that the Commission is looking in to the matter, we will take recourse to all legal remedies and having discussed the matter with all Leaders of our Party, there is no need for Shri Oomen Chandy to resign at this stage and all Leaders and coalition partners will be consulted and a full report will be submitted. We will seek all our legal remedies wherever required.

On the question that Opposition in Kerala have been alleging that the Congress Party has been tutoring the accused, Shri Surjewala said as I have pointed out to you that tutoring her or not tutoring her becomes irrelevant after the allegations that the accused in question who is herself an accused has leveled. So, I think the issue becomes completely moot to be discussed at this juncture.

On the question that a Court in Kerala has ordered for FIR against CM of Kerala and another Minister and they will be asked to resign, Shri Surjewala said answer is extremely simple. Today an order has come from a Thrissur Court. Copy of the Order will be available hopefully by late evening. We will study the order in detail and give detailed comments about it by tomorrow. However, prima-facie, Congress Party is of the opinion that there is no need for Shri Oomen Chandy to resign now. The context of the allegations and the specificity of the allegations are being examined by the Judicial Commission. In that Judicial Commission, every person including the accused leveling the allegations is present. Similar allegations have been leveled by the accused before the Judicial Commission also. Shri Oomen Chandy as also all others has submitted themselves to cross-examination by all Parties in that Commission. We shall like to wait for the report of the Judicial Commission since that would be fair and appropriate and proper.

On the question that Shri K Babu and Shri K Mani have already resigned, Shri Surjewala said I think this is not an appropriate time to discuss those two cases. Since you are asking for a specific case but I want to point out two facts for you.

Firstly, I think the order of the Vigilance Court in case of Shri K Babu, if you check, has been stayed by the Hon'ble High court. So, there is no order to register an FIR against Shri K Babu and in case of Shri K Mani, our Hon'ble colleague, there was an observation from the Hon'ble High Court. Based on that observation, he himself had decided to maintain the highest traditions to tender his resignation.

On another question that 50 Corporators of Mumbai have gone on study trip to Andaman and Nicobar Island wasting the exchequer's money, Shri Surjewala said as far as Corporators going on study tour are concerned, I have not seen the full facts but one thing is very-very clear – I do not know how Corporators from Mumbai will study the drainage system in Andaman and Nicobar. I can understand Corporators from Andaman coming to study the drainage system of Mumbai but how will they gain vice-versa other than the trip becoming merely a travel junket and a way to appease certain Corporators of a political party. It can perhaps be nothing more, nothing less. However, we shall like to know the detailed facts, the subject they wanted to go and study before making an elaborate comment.

On another question that prosecution is sought for Shri Ashok Chavan, Shri Surjewala said these are also again reports leaked by Central Bureau of Investigation to Media. No statement has been made by CBI so far. We all know the manner and fashion in which this Government has been misusing CBI against Congress Leaders right from Shri SS Vaghela, Shri Ashok Gehlot, Shri Sachin Pilot, Shri BS Hooda, Shri P. Chidambaram and Shri Virbhadra Singh, there is a long list of Leaders against whom false cases are being heaped upon and it is not restricted to Congress Leaders, it is now extending to all Opposition Leaders one by one. Actually, once upon a time, it used to be called the 'Caged Parrot', I think CBI has now become a 'Captive of BJP' and that is what is happening.

Sd/-
(S.V. Ramani)
Secretary
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