

# EXECUTIVE FIAT: THE HINDU EDITORIAL ON RAHUL GANDHI'S LOK SABHA SPEECH ON ADANI-PM MODI TIES AND BREACH OF PRIVILEGE

Relevant for: Indian Polity | Topic: Parliament - structure, functioning, conduct of business, powers & privileges and issues arising out of these

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February 18, 2023 12:10 am | Updated 10:44 am IST

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Congress leader [Rahul Gandhi has stood by his statements](#) made during [his speech in the Lok Sabha on February 7](#), in his response to [a charge of breach of privilege of the House](#) that was raised by a Bharatiya Janata Party member and a Union Minister. It is strange that a Member of Parliament, whose duty it is to hold the executive accountable to Parliament, is being accused of breach of privilege of the House for seeking answers on crucial issues. Portions of Mr. Gandhi's speech, made during a discussion on the 'Motion of Thanks on the President's Address', that referred to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's ties with industrialist Gautam Adani were expunged from the record of the House. When a member's own rights are being curtailed in the name of parliamentary privilege, the very concept is being reduced to an instrument of executive fiat. Mr. Gandhi raised pertinent questions regarding the political patronage received by the Adani Group, which is in the eye of a storm after a short seller based in the United States brought to light dubious patterns in the group's transactions and ownership. The government has not provided any answers. And, on top of it, the sword of privilege is being wielded against the Opposition leader. The expectations from the Speaker of the Lok Sabha and the Chairman of the Rajya Sabha are to protect the majesty of Parliament, particularly in its interactions with other branches of the state, rather than disciplining the members.

The parliamentary discussions on the Adani controversy, which were vitiated by the unreasonable restrictions on Opposition leaders, follow a devious trend of executive imperium over the legislative branch in some States too. Chief Ministers of many States command supreme powers — they control their parties, dominate over the Opposition, and take Assemblies for granted. Assembly sittings have become fewer and debates shallow. The argument that popular leaders now make is that they are answerable to the people directly — [Mr. Modi also invoked the 'blessing of 140 crore people.'](#) while speaking in Parliament on February 8, but the range of questions arising out of the [Hindenburg report on the Adani Group](#) remained unanswered. People seek accountability from the elected government through their elected representatives, and the legislature is mandated to mediate that interaction. Mr. Gandhi asked questions as he should. Asking him to adhere to parliamentary norms in doing so is par for the course. But more critically, the government should be required to respond to the allegations. It is [a sign of erosion of parliamentary authority](#) that it is not happening.

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