

HOUSE MATTERS: THE HINDU EDITORIAL ON THE LOGJAM IN PARLIAMENT

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The second leg of the Budget session of [Parliament is in a deadlock](#). The ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) [wants Congress leader Rahul Gandhi to apologise](#) for [remarks that he made in London](#) recently about democratic backsliding in India; the [Congress is insisting on the constitution of a Joint Parliamentary Committee \(JPC\)](#) to probe [allegations of dubious financial transactions](#) and dishonest business practices against the Adani Group of companies. Available evidence suggests that Mr. Gandhi had categorically stated that the challenges to Indian democracy had to be sorted out domestically, and ruled out any role for foreign forces. With the Indian diaspora expanding, the ripple effects of politics in India are inevitable beyond the country's geographical boundaries. In fact, the BJP has for long believed in cultural nationalism which is not contained within the geography of India. Mr. Modi has discussed national politics before audiences around the world. A democracy that does not allow criticism, including of democracy itself, is a contradiction in terms. Mr. Gandhi has not been able to speak in Parliament and explain his remarks; meanwhile, a BJP Member has initiated a process to terminate Mr. Gandhi's Lok Sabha membership. It is an ill-advised move, and if carried out, will further amplify the fears of a democratic deficit in India.

In their clamour for an apology by Mr. Gandhi, BJP Ministers are also evading questions regarding government patronage of the Adani Group. The Congress has been seeking answers from the government on the links between the public sector Life Insurance Corporation of India and the State Bank of India with the Adani Group. The BJP and the government have been silent on this serious issue of governance that spans the government and the public and private sectors. Arbitrariness in decision making, followed by a lack of accountability, amounts to governance failure, if not collusion. The government, the Rajya Sabha chairman and the Lok Sabha Speaker should work with the Opposition for a discussion on the issues arising out of the Adani controversy. Coming clean is essential in maintaining the government's credibility, the regulatory environment and the private sector. There have been precedents of a JPC in cases of financial scandals. The BJP has the numbers to get away with any disregard for parliamentary norms, but it should rise above that temptation and evolve as a true party of governance. Parliament has a role to play in fixing accountability, and the BJP should not avoid it and betray a new level of executive impunity.

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