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# Complaint against TMC MP sent to House panel

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**NEW DELHI:** Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla has referred to the parliamentary privileges committee a complaint from BJP lawmaker Nishikant Dubey alleging Trinamool Congress (TMC) MP Mahua Moitra accepted cash and gifts from a member of the Hiranandani family to ask questions, senior officials said on Monday, even as the Hiranandani Group denied the allegations.

Referring to a complaint by a Delhi-based lawyer on the basis of which Dubey shot off his complaint, the Adani Group, the target of many of Moitra's comments and speeches inside and outside Parliament, jumped into the fray and said it proved that "some groups" were "working overtime to harm our name, goodwill and market standing".

Escalating the issue, Dubey shot off a letter to IT minister Ashwani Vaishnav and minister of state for IT Rajeev Chandrasekhar to probe if Moitra had given access to her login credentials for the Lok Sabha website to Hiranandani and his real-estate conglomerate, so that they could "utilise it for their own personal gain".

Moitra hit back and tweeted, "All parliamentary work of MPs done by PAs, assistants, interns, large teams. Respected @ashwinivaishnav please release details of location & login details of ALL MPs with CDRs. Please release info on training given to staff to login."

Referring to the allegations, Chandrasekhar, in a post on X, said he was not privy to the full facts on this, but if it is true then it is a "terrible travesty and misuse of PQs (parliament questions)".

The minister said he learnt from news reports that a parliamentary question was "likely asked by a MP at the behest of a data centre company. If true this is indeed shocking and shameful." And went on to say, "...It is true that this company was actively and aggressively lobbying for data localization. Language used in PQ is very similar (linking need for data localization to data breaches) to that used when the head of this company met me."

The Adani statement mentioned that "a Supreme Court lawyer Mr. Jai Anant Dehadrai, filed a complaint with the CBI in the



Mahua Moitra

form of a sworn affidavit bringing on record "the commission of an elaborate criminal conspiracy" by Hon'ble MP Ms. Mahua Moitra and Mr. Darshan Hiranandani, CEO of Hiranandani Group, for specifically targeting, inter alia, Mr. Gautam Adani and his group of companies through parliamentary questions."

The Hiranandani Group is a conglomerate with interests in several industries including real estate, IT, and energy.

Moitra, who had earlier demanded probe into the Adani Group, launched an attack on "Mr A" and "A Company" on X, formerly Twitter. "3 questions jittery A Company need to answer in next press statement: 1- Where is the national interest when you used a Chinese national and a UAE national and 3 offshore companies to over invoice ₹ 13000 crores of coal?" she posted.

"Where is the national interest in you manipulating IOCL and GAIL in Dhamra LNG contract of ₹46500 crores without a tender? What is your national interest in getting coal mines in Rajasthan without a tender?" Where is the national interest in SEBI letting your benami FPI holdings manipulate lakhs of crores in the market," Moitra posted.

Dubey in his letter to the ministers claimed Moitra gave Darshan Hiranandani and the Hiranandani Conglomerate access to her login credentials for the LS website so that they could utilise it for their own personal gain is "possibly the most damning and grave of all the charges that are being made against her." "If the claims made above are found to be accurate, this constitutes a serious criminal breach of trust as well as a violation of India's national security because it would give unauthorised individuals access to government websites that may contain classified information," he said.

The BJP MP said the unauthorised access "risks exposure of

strategic data that could be exploited to undermine India's policy decisions or strategic interests."

In his complaint on Sunday, he said 50 of 61 questions asked by Moitra in LS were intended at "protecting or perpetuating business interests of Darshan Hiranandani and his firm". "Any attempt by a Member of Parliament to compromise the sanctity of our democratic temple by accepting monetary or other types of remunerative benefits in exchange for asking questions for the benefit of a business house ought to be thwarted as quickly as possible..." he said in the letter.

In her reply on X on Sunday, Moitra had said she "welcomes any move against her after the Lok Sabha Speaker is finished dealing with pending charges against him (Dubey)". The MP also urged Birla to "Finish the enquiries against him for false affidavits & then set up my enquiry committee."

In a legal notice filed through Panag & Babu Law Offices on Sunday, Moitra vehemently denied the allegations. "In such tweets, videos and News Reports being carried by Notice Nos. 3 to 21 (media houses) contain and propagate the defamatory allegations levelled our clients which are ex facie false, misconceived and designed to curry political mileage and extract personal vendetta and do not have a iota of truth to the same," the notice said, as quoted by legal website Bar and Bench. Moitra also said she had a falling out after sharing a personal friendship with Dehadrai for several years, after which he sent her "vile, malicious and vulgar messages" and trespassed into her government residence, said the notice, as quoted by Bar and Bench.

The last "cash for query" scandal had erupted in 2005. A sting operation by online news site Cobrapost that aired on a private TV channel on December 12, 2005, showed the 11 MPs accepting cash in exchange for raising questions in the Parliament.

On December 24, 2005, Parliament voted to expel the 11 MPs in a historic vote. Pranab Mukherjee, the leader of LS at the time, introduced a resolution asking for expulsion of the members while then PM Manmohan Singh did the same in RS.