

MESSAGE FROM LOK SABHA**The Prasar Bharati (Broadcasting Corporation of India) Amendment Bill, 2008**

SECRETARY-GENERAL: Sir, I have to report to the House the following message received from Lok Sabha, signed by the Secretary-General of Lok Sabha:—

"In accordance with the provisions of rule 96 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha, I am directed to enclose the Prasar Bharati (Broadcasting Corporation of India) Amendment Bill, 2008, as passed by Lok Sabha at its sitting held on the 17th March, 2008.

Sir, I lay a copy of the Bill on the Table.

Report of the Committee on the Welfare of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes

SHRI SHARADANANTRAO JOSHI (MAHARASHTRA): Sir, I lay on the Table a copy (in English and Hindi) of the Twenty-eighth Report of the Committee on the Welfare of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes on 'Reservation for and Employment of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in Southern Railway'.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Now, Report of the Department-related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Finance, Shri S.S. Ahluwalia, not present. Shri Santosh Bagrodia, not present.

Now, Zero Hour mentions, Shri Sitaram Yechury.

MATTERS RAISED WITH PERMISSION OF CHAIR**Re.: Persistent rise in prices of Essential Commodities**

SHRI SITARAM YECHURY (West Bengal): Sir, I am raising a very important issue which is today burdening and creating a very difficult situation for crores of Indian people and that is the relentless price rise and the rising prices of essential commodities. Now, on this matter, we heard the Finance Minister yesterday. His diagnosis of why the prices are rising is wrong. Therefore, his prescription is wrong. What we are saying is that this price rise is essentially because of speculation that is taking place in forward trading and the first demand that we are asking for from this Government is to ban forward and futures, trading in all the 24 commodities identified by the Commission of Agriculture Prices and Costs, and that is the first step that is required to stop this price rise. Secondly, when this price rise is actually eating into the vitals of existence of our people, the Central Government has mysteriously decided to reduce the release of foodgrains to the States under the Public Distribution System. During the last year, 139 lakh tonnes of foodgrains was reduced for distribution under the Public Distribution System. The plea, that was taken by the Finance Minister yesterday in his reply to the Budget, was that it is because states are not lifting the stocks. That may be true in respect of some States, but for the Left-ruled States, we are saying it very clearly — in Kerala, the reduction has been to the tune of 82 per cent. In West Bengal, the reduction has been to the tune of 44 per cent — to restore the earlier levels immediately. If the Central Government does not do that, then they cannot control this price

rise. Thirdly, the Public Distribution System must be strengthened. But, instead of doing that, the Government is actually crippling the Public Distribution System... *(Interruptions)*.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Mr. Narayanasamy, please don't interrupt. ...*(Interruptions)*... please don't interrupt. ...*(Interruptions)*... We have agreed not to interrupt during the Zero Hour. ...*(Interruptions)*... Please sit down, Mr. Narayanasamy. ...*(Interruptions)*... Mr. Narayanasamy, please. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI SITARAM YECHURY: Let me complete. ...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Please, ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI SITARAM YECHURY: Sir, You cut out this time from my quota. ...*(Interruptions)*... Please don't add this disturbance in my quota of time. ...*(Interruptions)*... Sir, the third demand that I have, Sir, is universalisation of the Public Distribution System. The Government, in the name of removing the APL from the Public Distribution System, is completely crippling the Public Distribution System. Therefore, these three will have to be done. One, ban forward trading in 24 commodities. Two, restore back the supplies to the States which have been reduced. Three, universalise the Public Distribution System.

And, to the Finance Minister, all that I would like to say is that please let it be record, because there were some disturbances -- I will take only 20 seconds -- his diagnosis is wrong. His prescription is wrong. If he thinks his surgery is successful, I would only like to tell him that surgery may be successful but the patient is dying. So, you immediately reverse this. ...*(Interruptions)*... Sir, I would like to inform that I am joining comrades in a demonstration outside. We are all going to join them. ...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Most of the House can associate itself with it. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI SITARAM YECHURY: We are just informing ...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: This is not a walkout ...*(Interruptions)*...

श्रीमती सुषमा स्वराज (मध्य प्रदेश): सर, ... (व्यवधान) दाल-गेहूँ खाने वाला नहीं हैं? ...*(व्यवधान)*

श्री उपसभापति: आप एसोसिएट कर लीजिए ...*(व्यवधान)* Shri D. Raja. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY (Puducherry) Sir, it is being misused in the States in the name of Public Distribution System. ...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: It is not a walkout. ...*(Interruptions)*...

Deployment of sea-mines in Palk Strait and Gulf of Mannar

SHRI D. RAJA (Tamil Nadu): Sir, I am raising an issue which is very important for the security of our country, and for the standing of our nation in the world. We are all aware of the situation that is prevalent in Sri Lanka. According to the reports, the military offensive in Sri Lanka has been gradually turning to be a war against the Tamils in Sri Lanka. All sorts of human rights violations are taking place in Sri Lanka. In this context, the Sri Lankan Government has deployed sea-mines in the Palk Straits between India and Sri Lanka, and the Government of India has not uttered a word against the deployment of sea-mines by the Sri Lankan Government. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI R. SHUNMUGASUNDARAM (Tamil Nadu): Sir, this is a very serious issue.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Please. We have agreed not to disturb in the Zero Hour.