

SHRI D. RAJA (Tamil Nadu): Sir, I associate myself with the Zero Hour Mention made by the hon. Member.

SHRI SITARAM YECHURY (West Bengal): Sir, I also associate myself with it.

SHRIMATI BRINDA KARAT (West Bengal): Sir, I would also like to associate myself with it.

SHRI TAPAN KUMAR SEN (West Bengal): Sir, I also associate myself with it.

श्री भगवती सिंह (उत्तर प्रदेश) : महोदय, मैं अपने को इससे सम्बद्ध करता हूँ।

SHRI M.P. ACHUTHAN (Kerala): Sir, I also associate myself with it.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: All associate.

Reported scam in rice import

SHRI D. RAJA (Tamil Nadu): Sir, I am raising an issue which is very important. The Outlook journal and some other journals have reported a newsitem regarding the export of rice to the African countries which appears to be a very big scam. The Government of India banned the export of non-basmati rice in 2007. Subsequently, we witnessed a steep rise in the rice prices in the international market. More than 20 African nations have been exempted from the ban. On their requests, some of these countries named some private traders such as a Delhi-based company, Amira Foods (India) Limited and another Delhi-based rice-exporting company Shivrath Rai Harnarain (India) Ltd. They were allowed to procure foodgrains at lower prices and to sell at higher prices, thereby making huge profits. Government did not procure it through the Food Corporation of India, and it did not transport it through the Shipping Corporation of India. These private traders were responsible for hoarding in the country, even hiking prices of food grains in the domestic market and weakening the public distribution system in the country. I think, both the Ministry of Food and Public Distribution and the Ministry of Commerce must be held responsible for such a situation. Now, there is an enquiry in Ghana, one of the African nations. The deal with another African nation, Sierra Leone, is shocking. Instead of the Letter of Credit coming from its Government, it came from a Switzerland based company called Novel Commodities. Going by the reports, it appears that the scam would run to the tune of Rs. 2500 crores. That is what the journals are reporting. Therefore, I would urge upon the Government to order a thorough enquiry and this loot must be exposed. Those who are responsible for such a scam and loot must be prosecuted and punished because at the time when our Government, the Congress-led UPA Government, has been talking about food security and bringing a legislation on food security, you cannot allow these private traders to loot not only India, but also other countries. It is a shame on India. Such scams should not happen. I appeal to the entire House to demand from the Government, in one voice, to order an enquiry.

SHRI SITARAM YECHURY (West Bengal): Sir, I associate myself with what the hon. Member has said.

DR. CHANDAN MITRA (Nominated): Sir, I associate myself with what the hon. Member has said.

SHRIMATI BRINDA KARAT (West Bengal): Sir, I also associate myself with what the hon. Member has mentioned.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Just a minute. Shri Balbir Punj.

SHRI BALBIR PUNJ (Orissa): Mr. Deputy Chairman Sir, I am grateful to you for having allowed us to raise this very important issue. The issue has been raised at two levels. First, the latest issue of a very prestigious magazine of India, Outlook, which Mr. Raja has referred to, has detailed the entire issue, to the last comma. Secondly, the scam, as it happened in the case of Bofors, did not break in India. The story first broke out in Ghana, one of the countries involved, where the earlier regime had been the beneficiary of the loot which originated in this country. And after the earlier Government demitted office, the subsequent Government conducted an inquiry and when the then Deputy Prime Minister of Ghana was investigating, it turned out that he got involved with an export house called Amira Exports of India, and made a request to the Government of India for the import of rice at concessional price. Rice export was banned in India; but a loophole was kept. Prices were allowed to increase in India from three hundred and odd dollars to almost one thousand dollars in the international market. Now, two things happened. One, after the export was banned, prices in India got depressed and prices in the international market sky-rocketed. The Ghana Government placed an order on Amira Exports. The three public sector undertakings, the STC, the PEC and the MMTC, which are governed by the Commerce Ministry and were under the charge of Mr. Kamal Nath at that point of time, were asked not to get into this and to, instead, just nominate Amira Exports and this entire shipment was made. But it never reached Ghana. And, it is not only Ghana, similar deals were made with twenty other countries also. The foodgrains and the rice never reached the target countries and, instead, those foodgrains and rice were sold on the high seas at a very high price. Two consequences followed. One, unscrupulous traders in India, the highest levels in the Government, of bureaucracy – and I am not hinting at the political bosses – made a killing and the amount, as has been mentioned by Shri Raja and estimated by the Outlook magazine, is Rs.2,500 crores.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: All right.

SHRI BALBIR PUNJ: Point number two, Sir.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Your time is over. ...*(Interruptions)*... It will not be recorded. ...*(Interruptions)*... It will not be recorded. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI BALBIR PUNJ: *

SHRIMATI BRINDA KARAT: I am associating with him. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI S.S. AHLUWALIA (Jharkhand): Sir, it is very important. ...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Both the hon. Members have clearly made their points. ...*(Interruptions)*... Now, it is for the Government to take note of it. ...*(Interruptions)*... Please associate. ...*(Interruptions)*... You have made your points. ...*(Interruptions)*...

*Not recorded.

SHRI BALBIR PUNJ: *

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

SHRI SITARAM YECHURY: I am associating with it. ...*(Interruptions)*...

श्री प्रकाश जावडेकर (महाराष्ट्र) : सर, मैं इस विषय से अपने आपको सम्बद्ध करता हूँ।

श्री विक्रम वर्मा (मध्य प्रदेश) : सर, मैं इस विषय से अपने आपको सम्बद्ध करता हूँ।

डा. सी.पी. ठाकुर (बिहार) : सर, मैं इस विषय से अपने आपको सम्बद्ध करता हूँ।

श्री शान्ता कुमार (हिमाचल प्रदेश) : सर, मैं इस विषय से अपने आपको सम्बद्ध करता हूँ।

श्री रुद्रनारायण पाणि (उड़ीसा) : सर, मैं इस विषय से अपने आपको सम्बद्ध करता हूँ। मैं तो आगे जाकर कहता हूँ ...*(व्यवधान)*... यह दूसरा बोफोर्स कांड है। ...*(व्यवधान)*...

SHRIMATI BRINDA KARAT: I just want to make one point. ...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: You just associate. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRIMATI BRINDA KARAT: I am associating. The main point is that the Government gave grains at PDS prices. ...*(Interruptions)*... That is the issue. They gave it at PDS prices. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI TAPAN KUMAR SEN: Sir, we associate. ...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: There are other ways of raising it and seeking the Government's response. ...*(Interruptions)*... Please do it. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRIMATI BRINDA KARAT: They gave it at subsidised prices. ...*(Interruptions)*... Can you imagine? ...*(Interruptions)*... It is given at PDS prices. ...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: It has been said. ...*(Interruptions)*... There is no point in saying it again. ...*(Interruptions)*... Now we are taking up Special Mentions. The legislative business will be taken up at 2 o'clock. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI S.S. AHLUWALIA: We want a statement from the Government. It is very serious. ...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Mr. Ahluwalia, the Government ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI S.S. AHLUWALIA: It is a serious issue. ...*(Interruptions)*... The Government should come out with a statement. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRIMATI BRINDA KARAT: They gave it at PDS prices. ...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: What is this? ...*(Interruptions)*... There is a procedure for Zero Hour. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI S.S. AHLUWALIA: Sir, it is a serious issue. ...*(Interruptions)*... Let the Minister respond. ...*(Interruptions)*... Let the Minister respond. ...*(Interruptions)*...

श्री उपसभापति : आप बैठिए। आप सब के उठ कर खड़े हो जाने से क्या रिस्पांस मिलेगा? ...*(व्यवधान)*... आपकी तरफ से आपके डिप्टी लीडर बोल रहे हैं। अगर आप सब उठ कर खड़े हो जाएंगे तो क्या होगा?

*Not recorded.

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY; THE MINISTER OF THE STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF EARTH SCIENCES; THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE; THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS; AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI PRITHVIRAJ CHAVAN): Sir, there is an agreement that we don't respond immediately to Zero Hour mentions. I have taken note of the issues raised by the hon. Members. I will bring it to the attention of the Government.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Now, we are taking up Special Mentions, as a special case, because there is still time left. The legislative business will be taken up at 2 o'clock.

श्री राजनीति प्रसाद (बिहार) : सर, ...(व्यवधान)...

श्री उपसभापति : दो बजे से ...(व्यवधान)... मंत्री तैयार थे, मगर ...(व्यवधान)...

श्री राजनीति प्रसाद : सर, ...(व्यवधान)...

श्री उपसभापति : आप बैठिए ना इसमें विवाद किस बात का है? ...(व्यवधान)...

SPECIAL MENTIONS

Demand to resolve the plight of Indians working in Spain

SHRI AVTAR SINGH KARIMPURI (Uttar Pradesh): Mr. Deputy Chairman, Sir, I want to draw the attention of the House to an issue of public importance concerning the plight of over 5000 Indians, majority of them from Punjab, who are earning their livelihood by working in Spain in the hotel industry, agricultural and piggery farms. But their livelihood is at stake due to the changes made by the Spanish Government in the immigration rules by stipulating that the immigrants have to produce Police Clearance Certificate (PCC) issued by the Union Government of the country of the immigrant for permanent immigration purposes.

But this long pending demand of the immigrants for getting the PCC from the Union Home Ministry in New Delhi was not heeded to and they had to stage a protest *dharna* outside the Indian Consulate in Barcelona on Monday. They have also been compelled to launch a hunger strike in front of Indian Embassy in Madrid.

I request the Union Home Ministry to immediately address the needs of Indians working in Spain by issuing the said Police Clearance Certificate immediately by amending its rules. I also request the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) to intervene in this matter and direct the Indian High Commission in Spain to liaison with the Spanish Government through diplomatic channel to protect the rights of Indians working there immediately.

सरदार तरलोचन सिंह (हरियाणा) : सर, मैं इस विषय से अपने आपको संबद्ध करता हूँ।

Demand to give fertilizer subsidy to farmers directly

श्री मोती लाल बोरा : उपसभापति महोदय, मेरे विशेष उल्लेख का विषय है - खाद सब्सिडी सीधे किसानों को दिया जाना।