

**REFERENCE TO THE CRASH IN  
JUTE PRICES LEADING TO DIS-  
TRESS SALE BY JUTE GROWERS-**

SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA  
(West Bengal): Madam, Deputy  
Chairman, we have been discussing  
jute on a number of occasions during  
the last two Sessions and not only the  
opposition, a number of Congress  
members also have been briefing the  
Minister that there will be a crush  
in the jute price causing distress to  
the jute growers and farmers. Unfor-  
tunately, despite the assurance given  
by the Minister in the Parliament and  
outside, the situation is gradually  
slipping out of our hands. Let me  
quote Madam, from Anand Bazar  
Patrika—12th of this month. They  
described

"that seven police-men were  
injured in Manauri Thana  
of Jalpaiguri District by enraged Jute  
growers because they were being forced to  
sell raw jute at line price even below the  
statutory minimum declared by the  
Government."

Let me quote Madam from The "Indian  
Nation" of Sunday published from Patna.  
The heading is there:

"Jute price-has crashed. It caused  
distress sale by poor farmers."

Let me quote from "Business Standard" :

"The Chief Minister of West Bengal tells  
the Centre: JCI should start buying jute  
right now and immediately".

Madam, on Saturday and Sunday. I had  
been to Jalpaiguri and Darjeeling. I visited  
some places where jute was being sold. I saw  
with my own eyes, jute being sold at a price  
around Rs. 200 per quintal. Government  
had announced: the minimum price for  
W-5 in West Bengal and the Minister has  
been very much gracious to assure that he  
will not fail in purchasing jute even 25  
rupees above the minimum price. That is  
why he should have pur-

chased it even before the price 'had' reach-  
ed to Rs. 248 per quintal. Not a single  
ounce of jute has yet been lifted by  
the JCI officials till now. At least, in  
the North Bengal District, the arrivals  
have been very much large during the  
past over a fortnight. Madam my simple  
question is whether the Government is  
going back from its promise because we  
are alarmed by the statement made by  
Mr. Battacharjee, the Chairman of  
Jute Corporation of India, appearing  
in THE STATESMAN. He says, "that  
they will purchase jute only from  
September—no before that." May he  
be referring to commercial transac-  
tion but the Minister has told us and  
the Minister is present in the House  
that he will purchase jute Rs. 25  
above the minimum price fixed.  
Therefore, why have the commercial  
transactions not started? Madam,  
we have been telling here in the  
House, we have been warning the  
Government that we had a bumper  
crop. About 30 to 35 bales of jute  
would be in excess. There is bound  
to be smuggling from Bangla Desh.  
There is a stock excess carried over  
from the last year and about 13 to 14  
jute mills are closed. Therefore, the  
situation is that lakhs of jute growers  
are being forced to sell their products  
at a very low price. They are in  
deep distress. Shall the Government  
stand aloof? Shall the Government  
not intervene? Shall the Government  
not execute its assurance? Shall  
the Government not compel the JCI  
to start purchases just now? If the  
jute is not required immediately for  
the NJMC mills, let them purchase  
jute as stock for the next year: If we

can have a stock of foodgrains, why can't we have a stock of raw jute also? Madam, this is not a simple Special Mention, you will understand. This is a question of bread and hunger of millions of people not in West Bengal alone but in Bihar and Orissa also. In a large part of the country, Jute is the principal crop. Jute is an important component in India's economy. The fortunes of lakhs of people are involved, and the jute industry as a whole is involved. Therefore, I expect you, Madam, not to treat this as simply a Special Mention. Since the Minister is present in the House, he should be called upon at least to clarify some of the points that I have raised. Jute is being sold in distress.- Distress sale has started. The JCI is not purchasing and the Government is going back on its promise. Madam, my request to you is to ask the Minister who is present in the house to speak at least a few words in response to our request.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Shri Kapil Verma.

SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA: You may request the hon. Minister....

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: It is never done on Special Mentions. We are not going to deviate from it now.

SHRI N. E. BALARAM (Kerala): He can make a statement. (Interruptions)

SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA: The Minister is present in the House.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: N: Mr. Kapil Verma.

(Interruptions)

SHRI M. S. GURUPADASWAMY (Karnataka): He can make a statement later.

SHRI SUKOMAL SEN (West Bengal): He is present here.....

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Mr. Sukomal Sen, will you please sit down? It is never done in Special Mentions that the Minister replies immediately. We are not going to deviate from our policy or whatever position we took in the House. Your matter is being noted. Fortunately the Minister is here. So directly he must have heard it. He must have heard it definitely and you will get the answer in due course. (Interruptions)- You cannot just ask anybody to give an answer immediately. Please don't ask for such a thing which is not done.

SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA: Madam.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Don't waste the time of the House. Let Mr. Verma go on-

SHRI KAPIL VERMA (Uttar Pradesh): Madam, I wish to draw the attention of the Government to a very serious matter... (Interruptions)

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Mr. Gupta, when you were speaking, everybody listened to you with pin-drop silence. Now you should have

some courtesy for the Member who is making a Special- Mention for the Member, if not for anybody else.

**REFERENCE TO THE EMISSION OF  
POISONOUS' GAS BY A FACTORY IN  
KANPUR**

SHRI KAPIL. VERMA (Uttar Pradesh):  
Madam Deputy Chairman, I wish to draw the attention of the Government to a very serious matter involving a grave threat to thousands of people in the industrial metropolis of Kanpur. Unless checked in time, there is a real apprehension of a repetition of the Bhopal gas tragedy at Kanpur.

As we learn today, thick sulphur dioxide fumes started emanating from " a sulphuric acid factory near Zari Chowk in a thickly populated locality of Kanpur on Sunday night affecting thousands of people. These victims experienced suffocation, nausea

a-re  
suing coughing and vomiting. According to the reports, several people have been admitted to hospital after they had inhaled the poisonous gas. The district authorities immediately rushed to the site and had to order the closure of the plant. Air pollution experts have been summoned to study the environmental danger called by the fumes. The accident caused so much agitation that an irate mob blocked traffic for several hours, demanding immediate shifting of the factory. Unfortunately, instead of the management people being arrested, five persons from the demonstrators were arrested, it is

very strange that such a situation was allowed to arise. The factory was asked as far back as in September 1983 to install a treatment plant, but it appears not much was done. The factory had reopened on Sunday itself after a 17-day closure, but obviously without adequate safeguards. Madam, I demand a detailed statement from the Government about the entire incident and the causes. A thorough enquiry must be made into, the whole matter particularly as to how it happened and why adequate safety measures were not taken by the factory despite warnings. Government must take adequate steps to prevent recurrence of such a leak and prevent a repetition of the Bhopal gas tragedy at Kanpur as is very much apprehended now. The Centre should send its own team of experts to Kanpur. Deterrent action must be taken against the factory management for the lapse and the factory should be shifted outside the city as demanded by the local people. An old case is already pending in court against the factory management but the management is neglecting its responsibility and its duty. Government should also ensure that adequate relief is given to the affected people and proper treatment extended to the victims. I hope you will ask the Government to make a statement in view of the very serious nature of this problem. Thank you.

• SHRI P. N. SUKUL. (Uttar Pradesh) :  
Madam, I wholeheartedly support the demand made by my learned colleague, Shri Kapil Verma.