

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: What else can be done? ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN: Sir, the House is setting a wrong precedent. ...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: He has withdrawn his remark and regretted. Leave it at that. He has got up and said that if he has hurt the Member, he is sorry and he has withdrawn it. ...*(Interruptions)*...

GOVERNMENT BILL

The Marriage Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2010

THE MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI M. VEERAPPA MOILY): Sir, I beg to move for leave to introduce a Bill further to amend the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955 and the Special Marriage Act, 1954.

The question was put and the motion was adopted.

SHRI M. VEERAPPA MOILY: Sir, I introduce the Bill.

MOTION

Inflationary pressure on the economy and its adverse impact on common man

THE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION (SHRI ARUN JAITLEY) : Sir, I beg to move:

That this House do consider the inflationary pressure on the economy and its adverse impact on the common man.

...*(Interruptions)*...

श्री रामविलास पासवान (बिहार) : सर, हमने परसों बिहार में 12 हजार करोड़ रुपए के भ्रष्टाचार का मामला उठाया था। ...*(व्यवधान)*...

SHRI S.S. AHLUWALIA (Jharkhand): Sir, the motion is moved. You have identified the LoP. ...*(Interruptions)*... How are you allowing them? ...*(Interruptions)*... What is this? ...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: A Member has got up. Let me explain. ...*(Interruptions)*...

श्री रामविलास पासवान : सर, ...*(व्यवधान)*...

SHRI S.S. AHLUWALIA: What is this? They want to disturb the House. ...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Don't come to the conclusion. ...*(Interruptions)*... I will handle it. ...*(Interruptions)*... Please. आप बैठिए ...*(व्यवधान)*...

SHRI S.S. AHLUWALIA: How can you allow them? ...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I am not allowing. ...*(Interruptions)*... Why do you say that I am allowing? ...*(Interruptions)*... I am explaining. The hon. Member got up. ...*(Interruptions)*...

श्री साबिर अली : सर ...*(व्यवधान)*...

श्री उपसभापति : मि. साबिर अली, कृपया आप बैठिए ...*(व्यवधान)*...

श्री एस.एस. अहलुवालिया : सर, आप कैसे allow कर रहे हैं। ...*(व्यवधान)*...

श्री उपसभापति : मैं कहां allow कर रहा हूँ ...*(व्यवधान)*... Mr. Ahluwalia, I am not allowing. ...*(Interruptions)*... A Member has got up just like you have got up. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI S. S. AHLUWALIA: How can you allow? ...*(Interruptions)*...

श्री उपसभापति : देखिए पासवान जी, मीटिंग में यह discussion हुआ है कि price rise पर जो motion move हुआ है, बगैर कोई दूसरे issues को लिए इसे importance देते हुए पहले इस पर चर्चा होगी, क्योंकि यह बहुत ही important है ...*(व्यवधान)*... I request you that taking the seriousness of the issue and the entire House. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN: So, will you hear us tomorrow? ...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: We will discuss. You give notice. We will re-admit it. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN: I have given notice earlier. ...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: You have to renew it. Please renew it. ...*(Interruptions)*...

श्री एस.एस. अहलुवालिया : सर, इस विषय को लेकर एक सप्ताह तक सदन नहीं चला ...(व्यवधान)...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Ahluwaliaji, I have requested the Members. They are cooperating. Please sit down. ...(Interruptions)...

SHRI S. S. AHLUWALIA: What is this? Are you succumbing to their pressure? ...(Interruptions)...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: We will discuss. ...(Interruptions)...

श्री रामविलास पासवान : सर, बिहार सरकार 12 हजार करोड़ रुपया खा गई ...(व्यवधान)...

SHRI S.S. AHLUWALIA: You can't allow them to speak like this.

श्री उपसभापति : आप इसको renew कर दीजिए ...(व्यवधान).... We will look into it. ...(Interruptions)...

श्री रामविलास पासवान : सर, इतना बड़ा corruption का मुद्दा है ...(व्यवधान)...

श्री एस.एस. अहलुवालिया : सर, ...(व्यवधान)...

श्रीमती मोहसिना किदवई (छत्तीसगढ़) : सर, मेरा Zero Hour का नोटिस है ...(व्यवधान)...

[محترمہ محسنہ فدوانی : سر، میرا زیرو اور کا نوٹس ہے ... (مداخلت) ...]

श्री उपसभापति : आपका Zero Hour लिया जाएगा ...(व्यवधान).... We will take it up, but not today. आज तक decision हुआ है कि आज बगैर Zero Hour या Special Mention के हम price rise पर discussion करेंगे ...(व्यवधान).... कल Zero Hour लेंगे ...(व्यवधान).... Please renew your notices. It will be taken up. ...(Interruptions).... आप बैठिए ...(व्यवधान)....

SHRI KUMAR DEEPAK DAS (Assam): Will it be taken up tomorrow? ...(Interruptions)...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: It will be taken up. You renew your notices. ...(Interruptions).... Now, Mr. Arun Jaitley. ...(Interruptions)....

डा. प्रभा ठाकुर (राजस्थान) : सर, छत्तीसगढ़ में जिस तरह से शिव सेना के लोग ...(व्यवधान)...

†Transliteration in Urdu Script.

SHRI S. S. AHLUWALIA: What is this? The ruling party Members ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI M. VENKAIAH NAIDU (Karnataka): They want to divert the attention of the House. ...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: No, Please. They have given notices and they have every right to ask the Chair. ...*(Interruptions)*... Please sit down. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI M. VENKAIAH NAIDU: We also want to discuss issues relating to the Commonwealth Games.

SHRI ARUN JAITLEY: Mr. Deputy Chairman, Sir, in the last 14 months of UPA-II, we have discussed the issue of price rise and inflation in almost every Session of Parliament and during each debate, this Government has held out assurances in this House and outside this House that it expects prices to moderate very soon.

Sir, I recently came across a tabulation which a national daily prepared. Way back on 8th November 2009, the Deputy Chairperson of the Planning Commission said that by the end of this financial year, food inflation will come down. It went up by the end of the year to almost 20 per cent. On 18th February 2010, the Finance Minister said that the country would see a moderate rate of inflation in the next two months. The general inflation has gone into double digit. The Agriculture Minister again in February said that food prices have already started falling down. I think, it is safe to presume that he does not visit the grocery shops or the vegetable shops. I have a list of the Prime Ministerial statements. On 6th February, it was said that the worst is over as far as inflation is concerned. In May, we are told that now it will slow down and reach 5-6 per cent by December.

Sir, I must say, with all my personal admiration for the Prime Minister who is here, we seem to be losing faith as far as the assurances of this Government are concerned. There is a certain kind of paralysis, a drift, which has hurt this Government. Why we insisted on a voting motion and not a

debating motion? Because voting motions are also intended to be undertaken in this House. We wanted the Government to be bound by a voting mandate of this House. After all, in a democracy, vote best reflects what the opinion of the people or their representatives is. And, it's not only on price rise that this is happening. Look around the whole country. What is going on? The Valley in Kashmir is going out of control and the Government is completely clueless. There is not even a sign of what a possible roadmap or line of action would be. You have a civil war going on within the Government and the ruling alliance as to how to deal with the Maoist violence. You start a dialogue with Pakistan and suddenly you realise at the end of the dialogue that it ended in a misadventure.

On the economic front and the price rise situation, we only find these tall assurances for the last 1-1/2 years that prices would soon start to moderate. In fact, the very credibility of the economists who administer the economy of this Government is at stake. They cannot foresee what's really going to happen. And what are the positives as far as this Government is concerned? Just now, Members were mentioning about the Commonwealth Games and we saw that it's a great global event which is going to take place. We hope for a positive. All we are seeing is generation of private wealth in the name of common wealth. That's all that is happening till date. Let there be no doubt that it's not the stadiums which are leaking, the very coffers of this Government continue to leak by the day as far as this event is concerned. And we find that your other actions are that you start misusing governmental institutions, institutions like the investigative agencies of this Government. We were hoping to be educated through your CBI and your investigative agencies as to what went wrong in the 2G spectrum. But, for the last one year, we haven't got a single statement of truth. We were hoping to be told that some of the worst things have been happening in the allocation of National Highways. Even the culprits are not being allowed to be interrogated. But, your only positive is that you use the agency against Opposition-ruled Governments and Opposition leaders.

What is the kind of drift in this Government that we expect them to really solve the problem of price rise and inflation? We earlier used to speak in terms of alternative power centres within the UPA. Well that was a criticism which is now becoming an old one. Almost every ally is becoming a power centre. Somebody sits in Kolkata and you can't discipline them. Somebody sits in Chennai

and, therefore, that is an island of governance itself. You can't interfere in those Ministries. If this is what is happening to this Government, in debate after debate, do we seriously expect the Government to come and make a resolution as far as price rise is concerned? The Minister responsible for building highways is at war with the Planning Commission. The rest of the Government is busy giving a drubbing to the Home Minister. The Environment Minister is stalling projects of every other Ministry. And we all become silent spectators. The Prime Minister is a spectator when this is going on. What do we really expect this Government to do? Sir, containing inflation or reducing the prices for this Government is like a mirage, is like a drive through a desert. They tell you that in just two more months prices will moderate, but then you see at the end of your drive the distance gets further and further down. When the debates go on, what are we told? Well, we had a bad season last year; there was a drought in some parts of the country; the foodgrain production itself went down and, therefore, prices of foodgrain itself got affected. Then we are told the global prices have skyrocketed; the international oil prices have gone out of control. Look at the rest of the world what seems to be happening. It is a Government of alibi. But no alibi is a substitute really for the tears and hunger of the common man, of the poor people.

You had buffer stocks, as far as your shortages are concerned. You had a huge amount of buffer stock. In fact, your buffer stock, as per your Economic Survey earlier this year, was far more than your normal requirement. How did you manage it? Was it this kind of callousness as far as the Government is concerned, that you had a buffer stock, you had a shortage in production, and yet you have foodgrains rotting? One figure the Government mentioned was 61,000 metric tones. It is an understatement of what is rotting outside. Now the foodgrain is rotting. But people are going hungry and because of shortage the foodgrain prices are moving up. It is a kind of a callousness and irresponsibility almost unmatched in history. For a Government which wants and we are all anxiously awaiting for the Food Security Act, is this the kind of food management today that we expect from this Government? Let us come to the first reason. What is the global trend in inflation today? The global trend in inflation is that prior to 2008 several countries saw before the slowdown a double-digit inflation. At that time we were comfortably placed at about 7 and 7.2 per cent. Today, if you look at the figures of food inflation in similarly placed economies, Brazil is now down to 6 per cent; Sri Lanka - 2 per cent; China - 1 per cent and we went up climbing to almost 23 per cent and now coming

down. That is as far as the global figures are concerned. In a situation of this kind, as far as the inflation figures are concerned, if you look at the similar placed economies, the only satisfaction we may get is Pakistan has higher inflation than us. But except that, Bangladesh is lesser.

It is 1.61 per cent in the case of Malaysia. Look at the Asian countries: It 3.34 per cent for Thailand, 5.05 per cent for Indonesia, 4.28 per cent for Philippines and 3.10 per cent for China. Aren't these countries affected by the global process? The same factors that apply to them continue to apply to us.

Then, we are being told that the world situation is bad and, therefore, the food prices in India are in this kind of a situation. Well, the global oil prices went up. This whole issue of oil prices has been raised repeatedly. In the last one year, oil prices have been between 70 to 79 dollars per barrel. Now, the variation, as far as global prices are concerned, is two to three dollars; they go up and down. But you have had a huge increase. And every time we are told, either we make the oil companies sick, or the Government continues to subsidise them because the Government cannot continue to bleed the oil companies. But the truth of the matter is that a very large part that the Indian consumer is today paying is really taxes to various Governments. You have customs duty. You have excise duty. You have State level taxes. If you look around, what kinds of prices are similar countries paying? China pays a little over Rs.31 a litre for petroleum, Malaysia, Rs.25 and Pakistan, Rs.44. Their levels of taxation are entirely different. Your oil companies have all made profit. Now, the argument given is that they have made profit because the Government subsidized them. Yes, the Government subsidized them, but if the total taxation, that of the Centre and States, is between 50 and 55 per cent, depending on what the taxes in a given State are, then the volume of what you are collecting from the consumer today is almost as much as what you are subsidizing the oil company itself. If your subsidy to the oil companies is Rs.53,000 crores, then what are you collecting from the consumer by way of taxes in these three categories? Last year, it was between Rs.84,000 and Rs.90,000 crores; this year it is likely to be Rs.1,20,000 crores. So, you collect Rs.1,20,000 crores from the companies, you subsidize them to the extent of Rs. 53,000 crores and you say they are surviving only on account of your subsidy. What would any country have done under these circumstances.

Your entire fiscal policy and taxation policy with regard to petroleum products, whether it is diesel or other products, is that you have an *ad valorem* rate of duty. So, every time the prices go up,

the quantum of taxation also goes up. If you are collecting 51 per cent from a consumer in a given State, that 51 per cent would also go up, depending on the value of the crude oil going up. Therefore, while the value of crude oil itself is only Rs. 20 to 23 a litre, the rest of it we are paying as taxes. Now, India pays 51 per cent; let us look at what happens with our neighbours; Pakistan pays 30 per cent of the total tax on petrol; Sri Lanka pays 37 per cent. On diesel, we, in India, pay 30 per cent taxes. There are countries which are paying only 15 per cent. Pakistan charges only 15 per cent. Therefore, you charge higher taxes. The prices in the last one year have not risen to the extent that you thought they would rise; they have remained in that 75 to 80 dollar bracket. Then, if there is any increase in prices, at least, have a revenue-neutral policy as far as your taxes are concerned. Therefore, irrespective of the oscillating prices, our revenue would remain as far as oil is concerned, and the burden on the common man will be offset against that. But we don't do it.

Therefore, you have a situation where prices across the world in most similarly placed economies are not to the extent of what we think that they are. This year, we hope because of a good monsoon we will have a bumper harvest. But, the problem will be where to store this. We are now told, and that is a routine explanation being given, 'Well, we have increased the minimum support price as far as the farmer is concerned. The moment we increase the minimum support price, the effect of that increase in the minimum support price is that the prices to the consumers are naturally bound to go up.' Sir, this is half true. This is half true for the reason that one of the rationales for increasing the minimum support price is that the farmer gets more. The moment the farmer is incentivised for a particular crop, the farmer then starts producing more of that crop. अगर पिछले साल गन्ने की कीमत ज्यादा थी और उसका दाम ज्यादा मिल रहा था तो किसान ज्यादा गन्ना प्रोड्यूस करेगा।

The rationale behind the increase of the minimum support price is to see to it that the farmer gets more, production increases because that crop is incentivised and, in the long run, that takes care and levels the prices down. So, you refer to the first part of your argument relating that the long-term effect of the minimum support price increase should be, that the production in that crop has to increase and the prices have to level out.

Now, what seems to be happening is a new problem. Instead of using your buffer stocks for the consumers so that you can flatten the market a little, your buffer stocks are today lying; the FCI, I am told has a limited capacity; there is a pucca capacity, there are also areas where they cover with plastic and the third category is what is today lying in playgrounds, it is lying in the fields, it is lying in schools, it is lying along the railway tracks and it is rotting. So, the irony of India's economy is that you have a huge starvation amongst the particular sections and you also have the largest destruction of foodgrains because of bad management of the foodgrains economy. This is what seems to be happening as far as the foodgrains economy is concerned.

I have, Sir, recently come across reports which have not been contradicted that in some places; and they showed the visuals on television; that in an FCI godown in Jaipur, they found liquor stocks and the foodgrains outside! In Kanpur, I am sure, my friends from U.P. would try, verify and confirm and see that if this is there set right this wrong. In Kanpur, amongst the State warehousing corporation, the foodgrain is outside and the godowns have been let out to Pepsi and ITC because they give a higher rent! If this is how we are going to manage the foodgrain economy, then certainly we will have a situation where the two principal contributors, the food prices as also the oil prices, are enough to harass the consumers. Both require adequate and proper management so that the consumer himself does not get burdened to the extent that he has been burdened today.

Has the farmer been hugely burdened? I recently came across a document, which is available on the net; it was the Department of Consumer Affairs presentation to the Core Group Meeting of the Government. Between the farmer, the farm gate as they call it, and the retailer; I can understand the cost moving up because there is marketing cost, there is some profit which the middle man will have, there is a transportation cost; so, it cannot be identical. But, between even the wholesale *mandis* and the retailer, what is the management that we are having? This is also a responsibility of the State Governments, I concede.

There have been products where their own figures for the Core Group are that between the *mandis* and the retailer, the mark-up, because the vegetable costs are going up recently, in potato was as high as 88 per cent; in onion, it was 126 per cent. And amongst the vegetables, these are the two most valuable vegetables, as far as the common consumer is concerned.

Sir, I think the Government needs to have a little compassion, as far as the consumer is concerned, as far as the ordinary citizen is concerned. After all, what is this unprecedented price-rise of general inflation over 10 per cent, moving up; food inflation going up to 23 per cent and then coming down, and our sense of satisfaction is, now it is only 12 per cent. Sir, 12 per cent is a very high rate of inflation. And, therefore, the net effect of it is, it becomes like an unlegislated tax, as far as the common man is concerned. A part of his pocket, and what is there in gets chipped, as far as the common citizen is concerned. The moment it is 15 per cent or 20 per cent or anything more than 10 per cent, his purchasing power to that extent is eroded. If he has to buy dal, it is less; if he has to buy roti, it is less. In fact, when food prices grow up by 10 to 20 per cent, in Indian culture and society the sense of satisfaction used to be that I have my first income in the family, at least, the *dal*, *roti* is taken care of. This dal, roti also gets snatched when inflation and price-rise is of this kind. The entire purchasing capacity of the consumer gets completely eroded, and disturbed by this. For those, the pensioners, the salaried people, the lower-middle class people who may have some savings for bad time, for old age, the interest that they get is today much lower than the value of inflation, the rise of inflation. Their savings are getting eroded. The effect of all this is that it affects every citizen.

As far as the larger economy is concerned, the Prime Minister knows better than anyone of us. An inflationary expectation leads to a situation where you don't want to spend more at this time. You want to save for your bad day. Therefore, this affects in the long run your entire growth rates. The other countries in the world do not have that level of inflation which we have. That is why I did not read United States or Western European countries' inflation. When we compare our products with the countries we are competing with, which are similarly placed, our products in an inflationary economy are going to cost more than their products. It is entirely going to affect each and every aspect, as far as our economy is concerned. Then, Sir, the wealthier can always hedge inflation. They know how to get resources. The poor man's ability to even avoid it does not exist. Inequity and inequalities in society therefore go up. They are affected much worse than this. What do we, Sir, do under these circumstances?

The Governmental statistics are not giving us much satisfaction. We are still in the Government depending on the old concept of the Wholesale Price Index. And, this ten per cent plus inflation

today, 10 to 11 per cent, is the Wholesale Price Index. Most countries in the world have done away with this Wholesale Price Index. It is not a true and honest reflection of the prices at which you get products in the market. The Consumer Price Index of various categories, whether for the industrial workers or for others, is closer to truth, if not the entire truth. But, this WPI figure that we are regularly releasing is no representative of what the exact position of price-rise is. We have urged the Finance Minister earlier; I am again urging him that, at least, this is one change he wants to bring about, at least, the country must know the truth of where we stand.

People with meager or inadequate money in their pockets must know whether they are in a position to spend. Sir, as I said in the beginning, each and every alibi that the Government has been giving, seems inadequate. You have buffer. It is not food shortage that has caused this price rise; it is your management which has caused this price rise. The international oil prices went up to 142 dollar at one stage. In the last 14 months of this UPA-II, they are in this 75 dollar range. They have not risen abnormally. So, don't blame the oil prices. Your taxes on the oil prices are going up and that is what is hurting the consumer. If you say that there is global inflation, the global figures do not seem to suggest that. Therefore, these poor alibis are not a substitute, as I said, to the tears and hunger of the common man. Sir, what is at stake today is a lot more. When this Government was voted to power we had expectations that this would be a more stable Government and, therefore, more decisive Government. Your Government also said with a sense of smile, "We do not have to depend on the crutches of the Left now, and, therefore, we can independently take decisions." But what has happened in the last 14 months? The Left has gone out, the country seems to be getting taken over by the 'extreme' Left and the Government is watching helplessly.

So far since 11th of June, we have not heard a single positive statement about what is your roadmap or thinking and how do you intend to tackling the situation in the Valley. Day after day a scandal or scam comes out. The arrogance of power may only give you only one weapon in your hand that 'we will teach the Opposition by misusing this Governmental authority or these Governmental authorities.' But these eventually become counterproductive. You can continue to punish us, but do not punish the common man. At the end of the day please realize this. The hon.

Prime Minister is here, with my utmost respect and affection for him, let me conclude by saying that the credibility of the economist, who administers the economy of this country, is today at stake. We want that credibility to remain and I hope the Government will take some decisive step and come out of the kind of paralysis that has struck this Government in various fields in the last 14 months. Thank you very much.

SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN (Tamil Nadu): Thank you, Sir. Sir, this is a very important resolution which has been moved in the House by the hon. the leader of the Opposition, perhaps, even more important, Sir, because during the whole of last week the Parliament was not able to function. We were in a deadlock over this very issue. Sir, there are various estimates of how much public money was wasted over the deadlock in Parliament that happened last week. Some say it is Rs.40 crores, some say it is Rs.70 crores. Whatever be the matter, Sir, this is such an important issue that it would have been far more to our credit if we had arrived at this solution one week ago because, Sir, I would like to straightaway begin by placing on record that this is a Resolution to which we too subscribe. How can anybody not express concern over inflationary pressure, for the pressure being faced by the common man, for the sufferings of the ordinary people as a result of inflationary pressure and as a result of the rising prices? Sir, I was expecting from the Leader of the Opposition a roadmap, some ideas, how to deal with it. With the vast experience in public life, with whatever experience that there is in the Opposition ranks, but all I heard, Sir, was about the CBI, was about the Maoist menace, was about various other political issues which had little bearing upon price rise which is symptomatic of the fact, - I only mention this to say, Sir, that unfortunately, the issue of prices, the sufferings of the masses have become a political tool in the hands of the Opposition rather than offering constructive support and advice to the Government at this important time. This has deteriorated into political one-upmanship, which is unfortunate.

Before going ahead to talk about the exact steps that the Government has taken, before going ahead to talk how this Government has dealt with inflation, with inflationary pressures, I would like to make one more important issue. On the 5th of July, the Bharat bandh was called. The hon. Members of the Opposition said that it was an unprecedented success. It was, Sir, an unprecedented

success. It was called in order to protest against price rise. In order to highlight, they said how the sufferings of the common man and inflationary pressures were affecting the aam admi. But, Sir, as a result of this Bharat bandh, according to FICCI, Rs. 13000 crores of public money, of your money, mine, of the ordinary man's money was lost. According to ASSOCHAM, Sir, Rs. 10,000 crores of public money was lost. According to CII, Sir, Rs. 30,000 crores of public money was lost. ...*(Interruptions)*... I have a right to say what I want to say. I am sure you will agree with me that I have a right to express my reservation about a bandh which was held. Sir, when we talk about inflationary pressures and the sufferings of the common man, we have every right to criticize the Government. I myself have issues which I am going to raise in this House about the FCI which in my view is one of the important issues regarding inequitable distribution of food which arises out of lack of storage of food. But before that, Sir, it is my duty to place on record also how frustrated we feel by what we believe is unnecessary wastage of public money by bandhs like these. All right, Sir, let us take the example of Maharashtra. Sir, in Maharashtra, and I have taken this from The Hindustan Times, 'public and private hospitals reported a sharp drop in the number of out patients.

On the day of the bandh, 175 BEST buses were vandalized, 47 departures and 46 landings of the aircraft were cancelled, vegetable and fruit markets were affected, not even 122 trucks arrived and not even 56 tempos. I have already mentioned about the estimated GDP loss to India. Sir, the loss of public money by vandalizing a BEST bus was conducted by some friends in the Opposition. How does this help the common man? How was this bandh a success? Should they not reflect on it, Sir? Therefore, I think, that it is very important to focus upon the most important issues at hand which is how to deal with inflationary pressures, which first of all is a joint effort by the Central and State Governments, by the people at large, by every single one of us and unless we recognize that this has to be a national effort, Sir, I am very afraid that very little will be achieved. Mr. Jaitley was saying that steps have not been taken. He was first talking about oil prices. Sir, first let me deal with what Mr. Jaitley said about inflation. Sir, in the last week of November the weekly food price inflation stood at 21 per cent. In February, when the Budget was presented, food price inflation was close to 18 per cent and today food price inflation stands at 12.47 per cent. Not a happy figure but he is wrong when he says that there is no change at all, that the steps taken by Government have not yielded fruit. He is totally wrong when he says that.

Therefore, it is beginning to come down and before I go any further I would like to deal with what Mr. Jaitley said about whole sale price index. I agree that it is not a correct estimate. I agree that the retail price index should be considered and that is the real figure and therein lies the problem. The problem is the gap between the whole sale price and the retail price, the money that is carried away by the middleman is something that this nation can scarcely afford to lose. That is what places the real burden upon the common man. Therefore, the Essential Commodities Act should have been tightened.

Therefore, we all protested when your Government, Mr. hon. Leader of the Opposition, diluted the Essential Commodities Act. We had said that you have not given enough importance to the Essential Commodities Act and you are not taking action against the hoarders and black-marketers. Yes, the Wholesale Price Index is not a correct reflection. But, I think, that focuses our attention more on the importance of eliminating the middlemen and ensuring, when foodgrains come from market to shop, the middlemen and profits is reduced and the proper action is taken if anything goes wrong. Sir, the average price of food, when measured in the food index, stood at 296 at the end of November, 2009, and it stands at 296 again at the beginning of July. So, I really not understood from which particular index the hon. Leader of the Opposition has got his figures. According to our figures, on the 3rd of July, 2010, the food inflation index stands at 296, whereas, in 2009, on 26th June, it was 263. What was the reason for the sharp increase in the food price from June to November? He may say that it is an alibi. It is your duty to say. It is your job to say that it is an alibi. But, it is the duty of the Government to manage food economy properly. I freely concede this.

But the fact remains that the South West Monsoon was 23 per cent below the long-run average in 2009. Sir, out of 36 meteorological districts, over 28 were drought-affected, Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra had floods. Various parts of the country suffered in various different ways. And, Sir, this year the total foodgrain production was 218.19 million tones whereas in 2008-09, it was 234.47 million tones. When such a decline occurs, the prices are bound to rise and the Government have taken all steps necessary. We have the record foodgrain production. We have a huge buffer stocks. Sir, the Opposition may declare 100 bundhs or if the entire world declares a bundh against India, our

people will not starve, because food is there. We have to distribute it properly. I am not denying the fact that there is inequitable distribution. We look forward to the Food Security Act and the fact that the PDS has to be streamlined.

I go back and I agree that inflation is a complex problem and the Government has taken various steps to control. You go straightaway to the price of petroleum products. Hon. Mr. Jaitley was talking about the under-recovery, the cost in the oil market, etc. Sir, even our colleagues in the Left have issued various press statements which I have gone into. The first issue was: While the international crude prices were risen by over 70 paise per litre, why is the Government raised the price of petrol many times? It is my duty to state, at the outset, technically, the prices were not increased. The system of Administered Price Mechanism was dismantled and it was linked to the international market. This again was something that was done by the NDA Government which is being repeated by this Government. The average crude purchase price in May, 2009, at the start of the UPA-II, was US \$ 52 per barrel. It has now increased to US \$ 72 per barrel. So, the increase in crude oil price worked out to Rs. 5.15 a liter. And the under-recoveries, in May, 2009, have increased from Rs. 3.11 per liter for petrol which is 34 per cent to Rs. 261 per LPG cylinder which stands at 78 per cent. Despite this, the prices were not increased for over 11 months. Sir, over 11 months, the prices were not increased.

The Government held on for the sole purpose of helping the common man or making sure that the Aam Aadmi does not suffer. Sir, people say that in spite of this, when international prices have gone down, why have you raised the prices. If you take cumulatively in 2009 and this year, I would say that last year, it was Rs. 21,833 crores and this year, it is Rs. 97,247 crores. It only means that the losses are less. The losses still remain. Sir, let me please read some figures with your indulgence regarding the cost, tax pattern, etc. I want to raise a very important issue and I don't want to take too much time of this hon. House.

This Government has taken a step, which is transparent, honest and forthright, by announcing a price rise in the Budget. Mr. Jaitely, talked about tax structure - the tax pattern of petrol and diesel, in India, as a percentage to retail price. But he has forgotten to add that the State Governments also have as much as 25 per cent. And, Mr. Jaitley, correct me, if I am wrong, I think,

it is not correct to say that the taxes imposed by the Centre are *ad valorem*. It is the sales tax, imposed by the States, which is *ad valorem*. What is introduced by the Centre is a specific component, which is not *ad valorem*. The customs on crude oil was 10 per cent in August 2004, and has been reduced by this Government by 50 per cent to 5 per cent presently. The customs on diesel and petrol, which was 20 per cent in August 2004, has been reduced by 63 per cent to 7.5 per cent, presently. And, in respect of petrol and diesel, the Central Government has converted it from *ad valorem* to a specific component. The domestic LPG is under the declared goods category, where the Sales Tax cannot be levied at higher than 4 per cent. But what happens in the States? In the States, the sales tax on petrol and diesel is as high as 33.36 and 26 per cent respectively. I would like, if any one of my respective colleagues in the Opposition has reduced, in the Opposition-ruled States, one rupee of sales tax on one litre of petrol or kerosene or diesel. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI SITARAM YECHURY (West Bengal): We have done it twice in West Bengal.

SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN: We have done it in Delhi. ...*(Interruptions)*... Sir, the fact of the matter is that the revenue is equally shared. I can read out the percentage, but I don't want to take up the time of the House. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI BALBIR PUNJ (Orissa): You had reduced in Delhi because people were going to Noida. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN: Sir, Mr. Jaitely made a passing reference about under recovery. According to the actual figures, which we have for us, it is true, number one, that the OMCs are under serious under-recovery. The allegation made against us is that the OMCs are declaring profits, year after year, and the Government is favouring the OMCs and making the common suffer. But, as he himself pointed out, the net profit by the OMCs could only be achieved because of the issuance of bonds and cash subsidy by the Government and by compensation from upstream companies. Look at the Government support for OMCs - Rs. 1,03,292 crores in 2008-09; Rs. 40,430 crores in 2010-11, without which OMCs would have incurred a loss of Rs. 97,247 crores in 2008-09; and Rs. 21,833 crores in 2009-10. So, the profitability of the OMCs is only after accounting

the compensation, which is received from the upstream companies and from the Government. Even after receiving the compensation, they have only made a meager profit of 0.80 per cent, during 2008-09, and 2.55 per cent in 2009-10, as against an industry average of 4 to 5 per cent. Where does this money come from? The public sector OMCs are the backbone of the country's energy security. And, whatever money is used from this subsidy is diverted towards social security funds, which are required for the most underprivileged people in our country. And, this is a balance, which the Government constantly keeps in mind and ensures that the balance between what goes into the social security network and whatever is used for the compensation is always kept in mind while ensuring growth and ensuring that the net is always protected.

Sir, if you look at the import parity, basis which becomes the cost price of the OMCs, the difference between the cost price and the realized price, it represents total under recovery. He was talking about the prices in other countries. I too have my figures, Sir.

SHRIMATI BRINDA KARAT (West Bengal) : Don't use Mr. Deora's figures; they are always wrong.

SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN: No, they are not Mr. Deora's figures. I have taken them from ...*(Interruptions)*... I think you are not being fair to me. These are public figures. They are not figures that I have taken from Mr. Deora. And even if I did, I would not agree that Mr. Deora's figures are wrong. It is your job ...*(Interruptions)*...

Sir, since Brindaji has raised this issue, I would like to draw your attention to an article which appeared in The Telegraph on July 5th. This is what it says. It is purely because of intervention that I am quoting this. Please bear with me; I have only two more points to make. The article says, "The Left has two prescriptions for bringing relief to the common man, one for Delhi and a different one for Kolkata. It wants the Centre to sacrifice a part of its revenues by slashing tax on petroleum products. But in Bengal, its own Government prefers to inflict a shut down on the common man instead of providing tax relief on petrol and diesel".

SHRI SITARAM YECHURY: Who is the writer?

SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN: It is Mr. Anandya Sengupta. It is still an article. You are welcome when your turn comes ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR (Nominated): You can quote from the people's democracy. Allow us to quote from a respectable journal. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN: Sir, I am only responding. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD (Bihar): It is surprising to see that Shri Mani Shankar Aiyar is defending the Government. ...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: No interventions, please.

SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN: Please allow me to complete. I am just reading from my. ...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Mr. Ravi Shankar Prasad, please. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI SITARAM YECHURY: Sir, even we spoke of people's democracy when we talked about the Commonwealth Games and the misuse of funds meant for the Games. She must quote that.

SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN: That is another issue; that is not the issue today.

SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR: Please take that issue up. But we are talking about petroleum prices here. We are talking about The Telegraph and the West Bengal Government here, and the Communist. ...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Mr. Mani Shankar Aiyar, please.

SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN: Sir, I plead for protection from the Commonwealth Games.

SHRI BALBIR PUNJ: Sir, what she is. ...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Some limited intervention is all right but this is too much. ...*(Interruptions)*... There is no point in speaking now. You may speak when your turn comes.

SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN: Sir, let me complete.

Sir, it further says, "if the West Bengal Government lowers sales tax on the two fuels by five percentage points, it would lose Rs.460 crores in revenue. The nationwide 12-hour bandh and shut down called by the Left on July 5th will cost Bengal's economy around Rs.970 crores, more than double the amount. The general strike is meant to protest the Centre's decision to raise the prices of petrol and diesel and..." -- I am skipping some portion, Sir -- "...where the West Bengal Government levies a 25 per cent sales tax on petrol and 17 per cent sales tax on diesel, and it also collects one rupee cess from every litre of petroleum and diesel sold in the State for the past 15 years, and based on last week's revised fuel prices, these levies will bring the State Rs.1950 crores in revenue, Rs.550 crores from petrol and Rs.1150 crores from diesel. But this new price revision has raised the prices in Kolkata by Rs.3.65 and Rs.1.95, respectively. If the State slashed the fuel sales tax by five percentage points, from 25 to 20 per cent for petrol and 17 to 12 per cent for diesel, the retail price of petrol would fall by two rupees and the price of diesel by 1.75 rupees, and over Rs.10,500 crores would be the benefit, whereas the cost of shut down. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRIMATI BRINDA KARAT: This is completely wrong.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: She is within her right to read from her notes.

SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN: While they are questioning Mr. Murli Deora figures, which I totally believe in and subscribe to, and which are shown in reality as having an effect, I would like to say that food inflation now has come down to a single digit figure. I suggest that they look at. ...*(Interruptions)*... Sir, now they are saying some more things. ...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: No, you don't take into cognisance what they talk while sitting.

SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN: Now that they are mentioning, let me mention Kerala. Kerala is a very special case. In Kerala, the ruling CPI(M) Government had one *bandh* in the beginning. Then, they realised that there was a national *bandh* on the 5th and they had a second *bandh*. So, there was double loss in Kerala. This is the attitude of the Left and I suggest that they don't question Mr. Deora, at least, when I am speaking because I am not likely to agree with their point of view. ...*(Interruptions)*... Yes, you are welcome to say whatever you want to say when your turn comes. ...*(Interruptions)*...

Sir, I have a final point and this is very important point. It is, I think, of concern to all of us. The fact is that it is absolutely abhorrent to any civilised mind that we should have such huge surplus of food and allow it to rot. This is a classic scenario as defined by Amartya Sen of a famine, where it is not just the scarcity of food but the inequitable distribution of food also which causes famine. And, when we have such a massive foodgrain stock, I don't think it speaks well of us as a democracy if we are not able to keep that stock carefully. Of course, it is a different matter. I am really not making a political point. I found figures from the Minister's answer in Lok Sabha during last week's questions and answers that about 11,700 metric tons of damaged foodgrains are there as a result of inadequate and improper storage.

But, there was also a similar foodgrain loss in the FCI godowns, much more, in fact, under the NDA regime. But, that is neither here nor there. That does not excuse the rotting foodgrain stock over here. In 2002-2003, there were 13,000 metric tons of grains which had rotted under the FCI. Therefore, this is a systematic problem. There is a storage gap. We now understand from the Minister's own answer in the Parliament that there is, even officially, a gap of 6.5 million metric tons of wheat held by FCI in terms of storage. And, there is a reported storage gap of 1.2 million metric tons in Punjab alone for the coming year's harvest. We really need to ask as to what is this deep systematic problem. With all the high-tech methods, with all the expertise, with all the intelligence, the science, the technology, the ideas at our command, are we not, as a country, capable of finding adequate storage for our grains? This is an absolutely bottomline issue that the Government needs to address and there is no political issue involved in this at all. It is shocking to a civilised conscience that foodgrains should be allowed to rot while our poor people are suffering. That is the issue, and whichever Government is there, has to address it. This is a gap which is simply not acceptable. And, I am not even going into the issue of properly covered space versus tarpaulin space. All this is including tarpaulin space. Tarpaulin space, which is covered by plastic, is not proper space at all. In the first rain, it will start rotting. And, aberrant issues like he raised where it could be stored inside, I think, stringent action should be taken against people; public action should be taken against these people so that the country sees and gets a message that we are serious about protecting our foodgrain, that we are serious about making sure that our Public Distribution System is strengthened.

Since the Food Minister is here, I would like to add another issue. This foodgrain storage is not something which is merely FCI, that only the Government has to store, only the FCI has to store.

Sir, the small farmer also needs a capacity to store. When he stores his grains, it is an asset for him. Normally, the farmer is not able to store his grain. So, when you don't advance funds to the farmer to store his grains, he sometimes sells it before or after the harvest at a very low price because he does not have storage. Whereas if the farmer is provided with adequate storage, if funds are made available by the Government, if this is spread, if this continues, the small farmer will be able to store his grain and it will become a major asset in the hands of the farmer who can sell it at a proper time.

So, my point is that this Government has taken major steps to ensure moderate inflation to see that inclusive growth is attained to boost agriculture. It is a matter of great pride to us that the Central Issue Price under the Public Distribution System for rice and wheat, especially under the Antyodaya Scheme has not been raised at all. The Government has pegged it and kept it at that level. This is our commitment to the '*aam aadmi*', and, I would like to challenge anybody to say that this is not so.

On the contrary, the off-take of the grain that has been set aside, and, the Minister will correct me if I am wrong, has been less than what was desired. The off-take by the States to be put into the Public Distribution System has not been as high as it should be, and, that remains in the Central pool. This is unfortunate, Sir.

Finally, Sir, I would like to say something on the action against hoarders and black-marketers. I know my colleagues will again protest but I have some figures with regard to action taken by some States. For example, in Bihar, there were 4 raids, 2 arrests and zero prosecution. In Delhi, there were 70 raids, 45 arrests and 49 prosecutions. Sir, in Gujarat, there were 18,000 raids, 18 arrests and 71 prosecutions. As far as Tamil Nadu is concerned, I am proud to say that it has performed very well. There were 11,535 raids under the Essential Commodities Act, 3,532 arrests were made, and, 1079 prosecutions and convictions were made. Contrast it with Bengal where there were 56 raids, 58 arrests and one prosecution. I am saying, this is a cooperative. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI SITARAM YECHURY: It is a more honest State. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN: I have a report card for Bengal. I can read it but I don't have the time to do so. ...*(Interruptions)*... No, no. Maybe there is no hoarding. But these are the figures. ...*(Interruptions)*...

श्री ब्रजेश पाठक (उत्तर प्रदेश) : सर, ये लोग आंकड़े से देश को चला रहे हैं ...*(व्यवधान)*...

SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN: Let me read the report card. ...*(Interruptions)*... Then, why is India's poorest District in West Bengal? Why is it? ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRIMATI BRINDA KARAT: Your party has ruled for fifty years. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN: Sir, I am concluding. ...*(Interruptions)*... There are some pillars. The Government has taken fiscal and administrative measures. Forward trading has been banned. Import duty has been cut. ...*(Interruptions)*... Future trading. ...*(Interruptions)*... Let me complete my sentence. It is on some essential commodities. I can read out those commodities. I have the list here. Fiscal measures have been taken. Administrative measures have been taken by the Government. The prices are, in fact, coming down. Nobody can deny it. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI BALBIR PUNJ: Prices are coming down! Who will believe this? ...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: That is her statement. Why do you intervene? ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN: I have already said what I had to say. ...*(Interruptions)*... We have come to a single-digit inflation. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI BALBIR PUNJ: Sir, when the rate of inflation comes down, it does not mean that prices are coming down. ...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Please sit down, Mr. Punj. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN: Therefore, Sir, I would conclude by saying that this is a cooperative effort. Issues like one upmanship, bandh politics, or, making a vote out of it, will not help to solve the problem. I look forward to constructive suggestions from my colleagues on the other

side, and, I congratulate the Government for taking such effective steps to control inflation and inflationary pressures and help the common man. Thank you.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The House is adjourned for one hour for lunch.

The House then adjourned for lunch at nine minutes past one of the clock.

The House re-assembled after lunch at fourteen minutes past two of the clock,

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN in the Chair.

श्री ब्रजेश पाठक : माननीय उपसभापति महोदय, महंगाई जैसे गंभीर और अति संवेदनशील मुद्दे पर आपने मुझे बोलने का मौका दिया, इसके लिए मैं आपका हृदय से आभार व्यक्त करता हूँ। सदन में काफी जद्दोजहद के बाद, एक सप्ताह गुजारने के बाद आज हम लोग महंगाई पर चर्चा करने के लिए तैयार हुए हैं। संपूर्ण विपक्ष की राय थी कि सदन में महंगाई पर चर्चा के दौरान यह दिखना चाहिए कि महंगाई के समर्थक सांसद कौन से हैं और महंगाई के विरोध में खड़े सांसद कौन से हैं। लेकिन सरकार को यह गंवारा नहीं था, सरकार इसके लिए कतई तैयार नहीं थी कि महंगाई के पक्ष और विपक्ष में खड़े सांसदों को अलग-अलग देखा जा सके। गतिरोध बना रहा। हम लोग चाहते थे कि देश की जनता यह न समझे कि विपक्ष के सांसद, विपक्ष की पार्टियां महंगाई पर बहस नहीं चाहती हैं। हम लोगों ने बहस के लिए लॉबी डिवीजन की मांग इसलिए की थी कि जब से मैं लोक सभा में रहा और फिर राज्य सभा में आया, तब से हर सत्र में महंगाई पर बड़ी गंभीर चर्चा हुई लेकिन उसका परिणाम शून्य रहा। रिज़ल्ट न आने की दिशा में, हमारे हिन्दुस्तान के लोग, जिन्होंने हमें इधर जिम्मेदारी देकर भेजा है, उस जिम्मेदारी का हम ठीक से निर्वहन नहीं कर सके। इसी कारण हम सब लोगों ने यह तय किया था कि लॉबी डिवीजन करके महंगाई पर चर्चा कराई जाए। लेकिन मुझे खेद के साथ कहना पड़ रहा है कि आज एक विशेष नियम के तहत, कभी भी ऐसे नियम के तहत देश के सबसे उच्च सदन में चर्चा नहीं हुई, आज यह चर्चा हो रही है और हम नई परिपाटी को जन्म दे रहे हैं, जिसमें सत्ता पक्ष की इज्जत को बचाने का काम किया गया है।

माननीय उपसभापति महोदय, अगर हम देश की आज़ादी के इतिहास पर नज़र डालें तो देखेंगे कि तब से लेकर आज तक देश में कांग्रेस पार्टी और उनके सहयोगी दलों की सरकार सर्वाधिक रही है। कुछ समय के लिए हमारी दाहिनी तरफ बैठे साथी आए और कुछ समय के लिए जनता पार्टी के शासनकाल में मिली-जुली सरकारें रही हैं। जिसके पास देश को चलाने की सर्वाधिक जिम्मेदारी रही है, जिसके पास सर्वाधिक देश के खजाने की चाबी रही है, वही लोग जिम्मेदार हैं और देश की गरीबी को मिटाने के लिए उनको कुछ न कुछ कार्य करने चाहिए थे। लेकिन जब से मैंने होश संभाला है, तब से लेकर आज तक कहीं न कहीं चुनाव के दौरान यह बात जरूर कानों में

पड़ती है कि गरीबी हटाओ। 1970 से लेकर आज तक जब-जब चुनाव हुए, "गरीबी हटाओ" का नारा देकर सत्ता मिलती रही। मैं 2004 से लेकर अब तक के यूपीए के शासनकाल पर चर्चा करना चाहूंगा। यूपीए की गवर्नमेंट जब-जब सत्ता में रही, उन्होंने लगातार महंगाई में इजाफा करने का काम किया। महोदय, मैं खाद्य पदार्थों की कीमतों पर बाद में चर्चा करना चाहूंगा, लेकिन जो ताजा मामला पेट्रोलियम पदार्थों में मूल्य वृद्धि से महंगाई का है, उसके लिए सदन चिंतित था। माननीय मनमोहन सिंह जी ने जब से सत्ता संभाली, पेट्रोलियम पदार्थों के दामों में बेतहाशा वृद्धि हुई है। 2004 से लेकर आज तक रसोई गैस के दाम 27 प्रतिशत बढ़े हैं, मिट्टी के तेल के दाम 56 प्रतिशत बढ़े हैं, डीजल के दाम 64 प्रतिशत बढ़े हैं, पेट्रोल के दाम 60 प्रतिशत बढ़े हैं। माननीय उपसभापति महोदय, हमें अच्छी तरह पता है, पूरे सदन को अच्छी तरह पता है, सरकार में बैठे लोगों को अच्छी तरह पता है कि यह देश गरीबों का देश है, किसानों का देश है, दबाए गए, कुचले गए, पछाड़े गए लोगों का देश है। इस देश पर जुल्म और ज्यादतियां होती रही हैं, 200 साल लगातार अंग्रेजों ने इस देश को चूसा। हमें आज़ादी मिल और आज़ादी मिलने के बाद आम लोगों को भरसा था कि देश में वास्तव में लोगों की सरकार बनेगी। संविधान के तहत सरकार बनी, लेकिन आम आदमी वहां भी ठगा गया। मैं साफ तौर पर कहना चाहता हूँ कि हिन्दुस्तान के लोगों ने जिस दिली इच्छा से मन की बात करके लोगों की सरकार को बनाने का काम किया था।

आम आदमी तो दूर वहीं झोंपड़ी में रह गया और सत्ता पर काबिज वही पेज श्री के लोग हो गए, जिनको मैं आज टेलीविजन पर देखता और अखबारों में पढ़ता हूँ। पांच सितारा संस्कृति के लोग, होटलों में नीतियां तय करने वाले लोग सरकार की अगुवाई करने लगे और गरीब की बात वहीं की वहीं रह गई। आज जब भी नीतियां बनती हैं तो केवल चुनाव में हमें गरीबों की बात याद आती है। "कांग्रेस का हाथ गरीबों के साथ" का नारा लेकर, "गरीबी हटाओ" का नारा लेकर जब चुनाव जीत गए तो फिर गरीबी हटाने के बजाए इस देश से गरीबों को ही समाप्त करने में लग गए, यानी गरीबों के साथ जितना भी अनाचार या अत्याचार हो सकता था, वह करने लग गए। कल हमारे साथी चर्चा कर रहे थे कि केवल शारीरिक अत्याचार ही आपराधिक श्रेणी में नहीं आता, आर्थिक अनाचार, आर्थिक अत्याचार भी आता है। उपसभापति महोदय, मैं साफ तौर पर कहना चाहता हूँ कि रूलिंग पार्टी ने लगातार दबाए गए, कुचले गए, पिछड़े हुए लोगों पर अत्याचार, अनाचार करने का काम किया है और आर्थिक रूप से उन्हें और कमजोर करने का काम किया है। आम आदमी, गरीब आदमी और गरीब होता चला गया और अमीर आदमी की बेलेंस शीट की जो गिनती है इकाई से दहाई और दहाई से सैंकड़ा, लाख, दस लाख और कहां उनकी बेलेंस शीट गई है, यह सब को पता है।

माननीय उपसभापति महोदय, देश की भोली-भाली जनता को कांग्रेस पार्टी ने लगातार * का काम किया। उसका उदाहरण मैं देना चाहता हूँ। गत लोक सभा चुनाव की घोषणा होने से पहले रूलिंग पार्टी, यू.पी.ए. वन की

*Expunged as ordered by the Chair.

सरकार ने पेट्रोलियम पदार्थों के दामों में वृद्धि की। लेकिन जब 2009 का लोक सभा चुनाव डिक्लेयर होने वाला था, हम लोग उस सदन में बैठा करते थे, उन्होंने चुनाव से पहले तेल के दामों में भारी कमी की घोषणा की, हम लोगों ने सोचा कि हो सकता है कि यह सरकार वास्तव में लोगों की बात समझ गई है, लोगों के दिलों की आवाज इन तक पहुंच गई है और यह गरीबों की बात करने लगी है और फिर लोगों ने भी भरोसा कर लिया। भारत के आम लोगों ने इन्हें सत्ता सौंपी और सत्ता में आने के बाद ही, इन्होंने सत्र का भी इंतजार नहीं किया और तेल के दामों में बेतहाशा वृद्धि कर दी। आम आदमी अपने आपको ठगा महसूस करने लगा और उसे महसूस हुआ, मैं उदाहरण के तौर पर कहावत कहना चाहता हूँ कि यू.पी.ए.-टू की सरकार ने तेल के दाम बढ़ाकर हिन्दुस्तान की जनता की पीठ में छुरा घोंपने का काम किया।

माननीय उपसभापति महोदय, बड़ा गंभीर सवाल है, मैं गांव से आता हूँ। जब गांव में दोपहर में जून की छुट्टियां होती हैं, बच्चों के एंटरटेनमेंट का कोई साधन नहीं होता तो उधर मदारी लोग आते हैं। वे अपना मजमा लगाते हैं, डमरू बजाते हैं, नगाड़ा बजाते हैं तथा इस तरह भीड़ को इकट्ठा करते हैं। वहां एक छोटे से बच्चे पर एक सफेद चादर ओढ़ा दी जाती है और कहा जाता है कि इसका हम सिर काटेंगे। वह बच्चा ट्रेंड होता है और गुब्बारे को, ब्लाइंडर को मुंह से फुलाता है और लाल रंग की स्याही या इंक चादर पर गिराने का काम करता है। तब वह मदारी डमरू बजाकर कहता है कि साथियों, अपनी मुट्ठी खोल दो और जो पैसा है चादर पर गिरा दो, अन्यथा यह बच्चा बचेगा नहीं। गांव की गरीब भोली-भाली जनता यह सोचती है कि बच्चे की जिंदगी का सवाल है इसलिए वह सारा का सारा पैसा चादर पर डालने का काम करती है। जैसे ही पैसा चादर पर गिरता है मदारी डमरू को बंद करके पैसे को इकट्ठा करके वहां से रफूचक्कर हो जाता है। मुझे चुनाव के दौरान ऐसा ही महसूस हुआ, यह जो हमारी बायीं तरफ साथी बैठे हैं, जब-जब चुनाव आया तो गरीबों की बात की गई और कहा कि गरीबों के लिए संवेदनशील सरकार है, हम गरीबी हटा देंगे, और तो एक और एक "नरेगा" जैसा आइटम लेकर आए। इसकी पूरे देश में चर्चा ली कि "नरेगा", राष्ट्रीय ग्रामीण गारंटी रोजगार योजना है, जिसमें गारंटी के साथ उनको मजदूरी देने का काम करेंगे।

महात्मा तो इस बार जोड़ा गया है। वह इसलिए जोड़ा गया कि महसूस हो कि अपने खाते से पैसा दे रहे हैं, जब से दे रहे हैं, इसलिए महात्मा जोड़ा गया। इनको उस समय बाबा साहेब अम्बेडकर का ख्याल नहीं आया, जिन्होंने संविधान की रचना की, उस समय भी गड़बड़ की। मैं उसकी चर्चा बाद में करूंगा। ...**(व्यवधान)**... माननीय उपसभापति महोदय, देश की आम जनता ने अपने आपको ठगा महसूस किया। चुनाव बीत गए, तेल के दाम बेतहाशा बढ़े। हमारी माताएं, बहनें जिस दिन रसोई गैस के सिलेंडर का दाम बढ़ा, हमारी पत्नी, हमारी मां और गांव

में रहने वाला माध्यम वर्ग कराह उठा। सब लोगों ने कहा कि भाई अब क्या होगा? पहले चाय दिन में तीन बार बनती थी, अब दो बार बनेगी, उसको थर्मस में भरकर रखो, ज्यादा गैस जलाने की जरूरत नहीं है। ऐसी चर्चाएं गृहणियों में हुई हैं, मैं इसलिए आप सब से इसको शेर करना चाहता हूं। जहां डीजल के दाम बढ़े, डीजल के दाम बढ़ने से ट्रकों का भाड़ा बढ़ा, खाद्यान्न पदार्थों के दाम अचानक आसमान की तरफ बढ़े। वर्ष 2004 से अब तक जो खाद्यान्न के दाम बढ़े हैं, उनका एक तुलनात्मक अध्ययन मैं आपके सामने रखना चाहता हूं। वर्ष 2004 में आटा जहां साढ़े आठ रुपये किलो था, वह आज 15.00 रुपये से अधिक की कीमत पर बिक रहा है। मोटा चावल साढ़े आठ रुपये किलो था आज सोलह रुपये से अधिक के भाव में बिक रहा है। अरहर की दाल 28 रुपये किलो थी, वह 63 रुपये से लेकर सौ रुपये तक बिक गई, आज उसकी कीमत 63 रुपये किलो है। चना रुपये 16.60 प्रति किलो था, आज 32 रुपये से 41 रुपये किलो बिक रहा है। सरसों का तेल 50 रुपये से लेकर 80 रुपये प्रति किलो तक बिक रहा है। चीनी रुपये 15.60 प्रति किलो के भाव से बिकती थी, आज चीनी को 30 से 35 रुपये प्रति किलो के भाव से आम उपभोक्ता खरीद रहा है। गुड़ जिसको गरीब जनता खाती है, वह वर्ष 2004 में रुपये 10.50 प्रति किलो था, आज इस देश में 37 रुपये किलो गुड़ बिक रहा है।

माननीय उपसभापति महोदय, ढेर सारे आईटम हैं, डबल रोटी जो गरीबों का निवाला है, डबल रोटी जिससे गरीब लोग नाश्ता करते हैं, पहले उसका रुपये 7.60 का पैकेट था आज डबल रोटी का सबसे सस्ता पैकेट 12 रुपये से लेकर 15 रुपये तक है। आयोडीन नमक रुपये 6.80 के भाव से था, आज उसका भाव 12 रुपये किलो है। चाय 140 रुपये किलो थी, आज चाय 300 रुपये किलो है। आलू रुपये 3.60 के भाव में था, आज 12 रुपए से लेकर 15 रुपए किला तक बिक रहा है। प्याज रुपए 3.30 के भाव में था। आज प्याज के दाम 20 रुपये किलो से ज्यादा है। ये चंद आईटम हैं, जो मैंने आपके सामने रखी हैं।

माननीय उपसभापति महोदय, सरकार देश को कहां ले जाना चाहती हैं। आप स्पष्ट करिए कि गरीब आपकी सरकार की तरफ देखना बंद कर दे, आप अमीरों के लिए सरकार बनाएंगे। दूसरी तरफ उन लोगों की बैलेंस शीट के बारे में, उन लोगों की आर्थिक स्थिति के बारे में, मैं चर्चा नहीं करूंगा जिनको आपने मोटी-मोटी रकमों किसी न किसी रूप में प्रदान की हैं। मैं उनकी चर्चा इसलिए नहीं करूंगा कि मैं उनको चर्चा में लाना नहीं चाहता हूं। मैं गरीब आदमी की, आम आदमी की बात आपके समक्ष रखना चाहता हूं। आपको भी उन लोगों के बारे में कुछ न कुछ...।

श्री उपसभापति : ब्रजेश जी, एक मिनट। आपकी पार्टी का बीस मिनट का समय है। आप 13 मिनट ले चुके हैं। आपकी पार्टी के दो वक्ता और बोलने वाले हैं।...(व्यवधान)...

श्री ब्रजेश पाठक : उपसभापति महोदय, हमें बताया गया कि इस डिबेट में कोई समय तय नहीं है और जो जितना बोल सके, वह बोले।...(व्यवधान)...

श्री उपसभापति : आप मेरी बात सुनिए। ऐसा नहीं है।...(व्यवधान).... देखिए, ऐसा कहीं नहीं कहा गया था।...(व्यवधान).... आप बैठ जाइए। मैं बात कर रहा हूं।...(व्यवधान)...

श्री अवतार सिंह करीमपुरी (उत्तर प्रदेश) : सर, मंत्री जी को कहिए कि वह डिबेट को ध्यान से सुन लें।
...(व्यवधान)...

श्री उपसभापति : देखिए, यह डिबेट आज खत्म होनी है। हाउस सात बजे तक ...(व्यवधान)... मैं बात कर रहा हूँ कि कोई बात सुनने को तैयार नहीं है।...(व्यवधान)...

श्री ब्रजेश पाठक : उपसभापति महोदय, आप मेरी बात सुन लीजिए।...(व्यवधान)... हम इस शर्त पर तैयार हैं कि सब लिखित में दाखिल कर दो और सबको किनारे कर दो।...(व्यवधान)...

श्री उपसभापति : नहीं, नहीं। आप मेरी बात तो सुनिए। आज इस डिबेट को खत्म करना है। हाउस ने सात बजे तक बैठने का डिस्मिशन लिया है। इसलिए सात बजे तक सभी पार्टीज को बोलने का मौका देना चाहिए। इस हिसाब से हमने टाइम अलोकेट किया है।...(व्यवधान)...

श्री ब्रजेश पाठक : सर, मेरी पार्टी इस सदन में तीसरा सबसे बड़ा दल है।

श्री उपसभापति : उसी हिसाब से टाइम अलोकेट किया गया है।...(व्यवधान)...

श्री ब्रजेश पाठक : सर, हमारा अनुरोध आपसे यह है कि अभी मैं पहला स्पीकर हूँ। दूसरा कोई बोला नहीं है और अगर आप टोकेंगे, तो मेरी बात अधूरी रह जाएगी।

श्री उपसभापति : मैं आपको टोक नहीं रहा हूँ। मैं आपको रिमाइंड करा रहा हूँ कि आपकी पार्टी के दो सदस्य और बोलने वाले हैं। आप पूरा समय लीजिए, इसमें मुझे कोई आपत्ति नहीं है।

श्री ब्रजेश पाठक : माननीय उपसभापति महोदय, ...(व्यवधान)...

श्री राजनीति प्रसाद (बिहार) : महोदय, इस विषय पर आठ दिन तक हाउस एडजोर्न हुआ।...(व्यवधान)... एक मिनट, जरा सुन लीजिए, इसलिए लोगों को थोड़ा समय ज्यादा दिया जाए।...(व्यवधान)...

श्री उपसभापति : आप लोग दस बजे तक बैठिए, मुझे कोई परेशानी नहीं है।...(व्यवधान)...

श्री राजनीति प्रसाद : हम लोग दस बजे तक बैठेंगे, क्या दिक्कत है?

श्री उपसभापति : बैठिए।...(व्यवधान)... पूरे हाउस की सेंस लेंगे, सात बजे के बाद।

श्री ब्रजेश पाठक : माननीय उपसभापति महोदय, मैं अपनी बात को आगे बढ़ाता हूँ। हमारे गांव में एक कहावत है, "जाके पांव न फटी बिवाई, वो क्या जाने पीर पराई"। आपने ऐसे लोगों को जिम्मेदारी दी है, जिन्होंने भूख और गरीबी या तो अखबार में या फिर किताबों में पढ़ी है। ये लोग अंग्रेजी में भूख का मतलब hungry जानते हैं

और गरीबी का मतलब poor जानते हैं, इसके सिवाय इनको कुछ नहीं आता है। मैं वास्तव में आपके सामने सच्ची तस्वीर रखता हूँ कि आज हमारे उत्तर प्रदेश के गांवों में, बिहार के गांवों में और उड़ीसा के गांवों में जाकर अगर आप किसी बड़े आदमी की बारात अटेंड करेंगे, तो रात को दो बजे टेंट के पीछे जहां थाली की जूठन रोटी, चावल और सब्जी फेंकी जाती है, एक तरफ सूअर और कुत्ते तथा दूसरी तरफ इंसान, हमारे देश के गरीब भाई, वहां खाना खाने का काम करते हैं। दूसरी तरफ माननीय मंत्रीगण, जिनको आपने हिन्दुस्तान के संविधान की शपथ दिला रखी है, उनको पांच तारा होटलों में मीटिंग करने देते हैं, उनमें रहने देते हैं। इस देश के भाग्य की यह कैसी विडम्बना है। मैं तो यह कहूंगा कि जब भारत ने जन्म लिया, भारत स्वतंत्र हुआ तो कहीं न कहीं कोई गड़बड़ी जरूर हुई है। इस देश की आम जनता जिसको सत्ता संभालनी चाहिए थी, सत्ता संभालने के बाद वह पीछे खदेड़ दी गई। उसकी दिबरी में मिट्टी का तेल डालने के लिए नहीं है। आपने मिट्टी का तेल का दाम 40 रुपये लीटर कर दिया, वह मिट्टी का तेल भी उसको नहीं मिलता है।

माननीय उपसभापति महोदय, आप चाहते हैं कि मैं पूरी तरह से बात न रखूं या शार्ट में रखूं, तो मैं अपने को आप से सम्बद्ध करता हूँ और कहीं न कहीं आपके दिल की भी यही आवाज होगी, क्योंकि जब आप इस देश की सबसे बड़ी पंचायत में जीतकर आए, तो मुझे आपको देखकर यह लगता है कि आप किसी उद्योग घराने से नहीं बल्कि गरीब जनता की आवाज को लेकर ही इधर आए होंगे। महोदय, सत्तापक्ष के लोग जो अगली बेंचों पर बैठे हैं, इन्होंने महंगाई बढ़ाने का काम किया है। यह कैसे बढ़ाई? जब सरकार बनी तो एक बहुत जिम्मेदार मंत्री कहने लगे कि इस वर्ष चीनी का उत्पादन 1.7 करोड़ टन ही होगा, जबकि जरूरत 2.25 करोड़ टन की होगी।

माननीय उपसभापति महोदय, एक जिम्मेदार मंत्री अगर यह कहे कि चीनी का उत्पादन कम होगा, हमारे देश में चीनी की कमी है, तो हमारे देश में जो बिचौलिये या आढ़तिये थे, उन लोगों ने चीनी के दाम ऊपर चढ़ा दिए। दूसरे दिन ही चीनी का दाम 20 रुपये से बढ़कर 32 रुपये और 40 रुपये हो गया। यह रिकार्ड है, यह आपके सरकारी आंकड़े कहते हैं। कुछ दिन बाद फिर साहब का बयान आया, अखबार में बयान छपा, टेलीविजन में दिखाया गया कि चीनी के दाम कम नहीं होंगे, अगर इसकी कमी के बारे में कुछ कहना है या कुछ सोचना है, तो जब अगले साल गन्ने की फसल होगी, उस फसल को देखकर ही हम कह पाएंगे। इनका बयान आने के बाद चीनी के दाम 40 रुपए से बढ़कर 50 रुपए तक पहुंच गए। महोदय, क्या हम यह उम्मीद करते हैं कि 50 रुपये किलो चीनी बिके, 80 रुपये किलो तेल बिके, आटा 16 रुपये से 20 रुपये प्रति किलो बिके, आलू 20 रुपये किलो बिके, प्याज 30 रुपये किलो बिके और टमाटर 50 रुपये किलो बिके। आप नरेगा में 100 रुपये देंगे, तो आप हमें बताइए इससे कितने

आदमी रोटी खा पाएंगे? गरीब आदमी का तो परिवार भी बड़ा होता है तथा उसके पास कोई मनोरंजन का साधन भी नहीं होता है। उसको अन्य साधन मिले, मैं इसकी विस्तृत जानकारी में नहीं जाना चाहूंगा, क्योंकि हमारी बात दूसरी तरफ डायवर्ट हो जाएगी। गरीब आदमी का परिवार बड़ा होता है तथा जो लोग दिल्ली, मुंबई और कोलकाता में रहते हैं, उनका परिवार छोटा होता है। मजदूर के परिवार में हमेशा पांच से आठ तक आदमी रहते हैं। कैसे 100 रुपये में रोटी बनेगी और कैसे खाएंगी अम्मा और कैसे खाए बिटुवा? अगर यथार्थ में कोई इंसान है, हिन्दुस्तान की सरजमीं पर रहता है यदि हिन्दुस्तान के बारे में सोचेगा, तो ऐसी दशा देखकर वह वास्तव में खून के आंसू रोएगा।

गेहूं की बात हो गई, चावल के बारे में माननीय मंत्री जी का बयान आया, कहा कि इस बार हमारे देश में एक करोड़ टन चावल कम होने की आशंका है। उपसभापति महोदय, जब जिम्मेदार लोग इधर से बैठकर कह रहे हैं कि एक करोड़ टन चावल कम होगा, तब इसका परिणाम क्या होगा? जो मोटा चावल बारह रुपये किलो बिक रहा था, वह चावल बीस रुपये किलो पहुंच गया। गरीब की कमर टूटी थी, उस पर एक मुक्का और लगा दिया, यानी खाज में कोढ़, अपाहिज बनाने का काम किया। जब चावल का दाम बढ़ गया, चीनी का दाम बढ़ गया तो इन सबका असर अन्य खाद्यान्न सामग्रियों पर पड़ा। गरीब आदमी लगातार कराह उठा, रो उठा। गांव में जाइए, तो माताएं, बहनें हमें घेरती हैं कि भैया, का हुई, कइसे हम अपने बिटुवा को साम का रोटी देई दें। इस सबके लिए जिम्मेदार कांग्रेस पार्टी की सरकार, यूपीए-2 की सरकार की त्रुटिपूर्ण नीतियां रहीं, जिन्होंने नीतियां तो बनाईं, लेकिन खास आदमी के लिए कुछ और बाकी आम आदमी के लिए कुछ और। उपसभापति महोदय, वे त्रुटिपूर्ण नीतियां कौन सी हैं, मैं आपको बताना चाहता हूं। अपने देश में जो चीनी उत्पादित हुई, उसको हमने बाहर, विदेश बारह रुपये किलो में भेजा और जब देश में कमी हुई, तो हमने पच्चीस रुपये किलो के हिसाब से चीनी को आयात किया। इसका असर इधर बैठे लोगों पर नहीं पड़ने वाला है। अगर असर पड़ेगा, तो गरीब आदमी, जो कराह रहा है कि भैया, शाम को हम कैसे रोटी खाएंगे, उन पर पड़ेगा। दालों की भी ऐसी हालत रही। पिछले सदन में हमारे साथी श्री मिश्रा जी ने उसकी बात उठाई थी। दालों की हालत यह रही कि दालों का भाव पच्चीस रुपए से सौ रुपए किलो पहुंच गया और वहीं हमारी विदेशों से आयात की हुई तीन लाख टन से अधिक दाल बंदरगाहों पर सड़ गई। और तो और माननीय उपसभापति महोदय, दूध, जो बच्चों का निवाला है, हमारे नौनिहाल बच्चे, जिनके लिए पैदा होते ही दूध सबसे बड़ी आवश्यकता है, दूध के बगैर बच्चे जिंदा नहीं रह सकते हैं, दूध के बारे में भी बड़े दमदारी से बयान आया। इन्होंने कहा कि दूध की मांग और पूर्ति में अठारह लाख टन का अंतर रहेगा, जिससे भविष्य में दूध महंगा हो जाएगा और दूध के दाम छब्बीस रुपए से लेकर तीस रुपए किलो तक पहुंच गया। माननीय उपसभापति महोदय, मैं अपनी बात समाप्त करने की ओर चलूं या आप घंटी बजाकर कहना चाहते हैं कि मैं अपनी आवाज बंद करूं?

श्री उपसभापति : मैं क्या करूँ? मैं दूसरों को भी opportunity देना चाहता हूँ।

श्री ब्रजेश पाठक : बी.पी.एल. यानी बिलो पावर्टी लाइन के नीचे, गरीबी रेखा के नीचे रहने वाले लोगों की चिंता संवैधानिक रूप से चुनी गई सरकार की होनी चाहिए और सरकार ने यह चिंता की भी। सरकार ने क्या किया? 2002 में बी.पी.एल. पात्रता की जांच कराई। उत्तर प्रदेश के अंदर - मैं इस संबंध में, विशेष रूप से उत्तर प्रदेश का जिक्र करना चाहूँगा, 1.06 करोड़ लोगों को बी.पी.एल. के अंतर्गत पात्रता मानते हुए, उसी के तहत उन्हें सुविधा मुहैया कराने का ढोंग रचा। जबकि वास्तविकता यह थी कि उत्तर प्रदेश इस देश का सर्वाधिक जनसंख्या के हिसाब से सबसे बड़ा राज्य है। इस देश की आबादी का बड़ा हिस्सा 1/5 से अधिक हिस्सा उधर रहता है। बी.पी.एल. की संख्या बहुत भारी थी, केंद्र सरकार ने समय-समय पर समितियाँ गठित कीं ताकि बी.पी.एल. लोग कितने हैं, गरीबी की रेखा के नीचे कितने लोग रहते हैं, उनका वास्तविक पता चल सके। तेंदुलकर तथा सक्सेना समिति का गठन किया गया। समिति ने अपनी सिफारिशें भी दाखिल कीं। समिति की सिफारिश के अनुसार, तेंदुलकर साहब ने जो सिफारिश की, उसके अनुसार 42.7% तथा सक्सेना साहब की जो रिपोर्ट थी, उसके अनुसार 58.9% बी.पी.एल. हैं, लेकिन केंद्र की सरकार ने अपने ही द्वारा गठित कमेटियों की रिपोर्ट को ठंडे बस्ते में डालने का काम किया है, इसको आज तक लागू करने का काम नहीं किया है। हमारी नेता, बहिन कुमारी मायावती जी ने, इस बार जब से उन्होंने उत्तर प्रदेश की सत्ता संभाली, केंद्र सरकार को दो पत्र लिखे। उन्होंने एक पत्र 22-10-2008 को लिखा तथा दूसरा 11-6-2009 को लिखा कि बी.पी.एल. की पात्रता बढ़ाने का काम करें, जिससे वास्तव में हम गरीबों को उनका हक दे सकें।

लेकिन केन्द्र की सरकार ने अभी तक इस पर कोई सकारात्मक कदम नहीं उठाया। हमारी नेता बहन कुमारी मायावती जी चाहती हैं कि, चूंकि उत्तर प्रदेश जनसंख्या के लिहाज से सबसे बड़ा राज्य है, गरीबों को उनका हक मिले, हम उनको जीने के लायक व्यवस्था दे पाएं, तो माननीय बहन जी ने बजटीय प्रावधान करते हुए उत्तर प्रदेश सरकार द्वारा एक योजना शुरू की, जिसका नाम रखा "उत्तर प्रदेश मुख्य मंत्री महामाया गरीब आर्थिक मदद योजना"। पूरे उत्तर प्रदेश के गरीबों को चिन्हित कराया गया। गरीबों की जो प्रथम सूची आई, उसमें 30 लाख से अधिक वे निर्धन परिवार हैं, जिन्हें बी.पी.एल. सूची में आना चाहिए। उनके लिए बजटीय प्रावधान करते हुए प्रति गरीब परिवार 300 रुपए महीना देने का काम हमारी नेता बहन कुमारी मायावती जी करने जा रही हैं। ऐसे ही गरीबों को प्रत्येक जिला मुख्यालय पर निःशुल्क मकान "मान्यवर कांशी राम योजना" के माध्यम से उत्तर प्रदेश सरकार देने जा रही है। उत्तर प्रदेश सरकार गरीबों के कल्याण के लिए ऐसी ढेर सारी योजनाएं चला रही है।

माननीय उपसभापति महोदय, अभी कांग्रेस की तरफ से जयन्ती नटराजन जी बोल रही थीं। वे कह रही थीं कि राज्य सरकारों को चाहिए कि वे 3/7 की कार्रवाई करें, बिचौलियों पर छापे डालें, उनको पकड़ने का काम करें। उस सम्बन्ध में भी आपको बताना चाहता हूँ, अगर आपकी अनुमति हो।

श्री उपसभापति : आप जल्दी समाप्त कीजिए।

श्री ब्रजेश पाठक : हमारी उत्तर प्रदेश की सरकार ने 22 जनवरी, 2010 को पूरे उत्तर प्रदेश के पैमाने पर जिला मजिस्ट्रेट की अध्यक्षता में कालाबाजारी और जमाखोरी रोकने के लिए अभियान चलाया। उसके तहत हमने उत्तर प्रदेश में गाजियाबाद में 19 जनवरी, 2010 को बृजनाल शुगर मिल में 1 लाख 20 हजार किंक्टल चीनी बरामद की, जिसमें हमने 3/7, 406 और 418, सारी क्रिमिनल कार्रवाई भी की। जनपद हरदोई में ऐसे ही 4 हजार किंक्टल 195 किंक्टलचीनी बरामद की गई। मैं समझ रहा हूँ कि यह आपको अच्छा नहीं लग रहा होगा। मैं अपनी बात समाप्त करने की ओर बढ़ रहा हूँ।

श्री उपसभापति : आप समय की तरफ भी देखें तो ठीक है।

श्री ब्रजेश पाठक : ऐसे ही पूरे उत्तर प्रदेश में प्रत्येक जिले में जो जमाखोरी थी, उसको control करने का काम हमारी नेता बहन कुमारी मायावती जी ने किया।

अन्त में हम आपसे अनुरोध करना चाहते हैं कि केन्द्र सरकार को हमारी तरफ से आप दरखास्त करें, अनुरोध करें, निवेदन करें, आदेश दें कि वह महंगाई पर control करने के लिए सार्थक कड़े कदम उठाए। डीजल, मिट्टी के तेल तथा रसोई गैस के दाम, जो बहुराष्ट्रीय कंपनियों और बड़ी कंपनियों को फायदा देने के लिए जरूरत से ज्यादा बढ़ाए गए हैं, उन्हें कम किया जाए। हमारे किसान भाईयों को, जो साहूकारों के कर्ज के बोझ से दब रहे हैं, महाराष्ट्र के साथी हंस रहे हैं, क्योंकि वे किसानों के नेता रहे हैं, किसानों को 4 प्रतिशत से भी कम पर ऋण उपलब्ध कराया जाए और बीज पर 20 प्रतिशत सब्सिडी दी जाए। आप जो 'मनरेगा' स्कीम चला रहे हैं, उसमें आपने 100 दिन की जो सीमा लगा रखी है, उसको बढ़ाइए। गरीब आदमी जब तक काम करना चाहे, उसको मजदूरी मिलनी चाहिए, काम मिलना चाहिए।

मैं इन्हीं बातों के साथ अपनी बात समाप्त करना चाहता हूँ, लेकिन दो लाइनें कह कर।

"हो चुकी पीड़ पर्वत सी अब पिघलनी चाहिए

इस हिमालय से एक नई गंगा निकलनी चाहिए।"

जय भीम, जय भारत।

SHRI SITARAM YECHURY: Sir, after such a very emotional speech by my colleague here, I think I will choose to speak in English.

Sir, I remember, in almost every Session in this House we have been having a discussion on inflation and price rise. This time, we had insisted that such a discussion should take place under a rule which entails voting with the express purpose of using that vote as a pressure on the Government to take effective steps. On the need for taking effective steps, Sir, I need not reiterate, but when this UPA-II Government had assumed office, the hon. President of India in her Joint Address to both the Houses had outlined what the Government would do in the first 100 days. The hon. President had said, and I quote, "My Government is firmly committed to maintaining high growth with low inflation, particularly in relation to prices of essential agricultural and industrial commodities".

Subsequently, in this Budget Session, as is the normal practice, when the hon. President addresses both the Houses, she said in para 7, "There has been an unhappy pressure on the prices of foodgrains and food products. Higher prices were inevitable given the shortfall in domestic production and prevailing high prices of rice, cereals, edible oils globally." Further, she says, Sir, in para 8, "My Government continues to accord the highest importance to ensuring relief to the *aam aadmi* on food prices. Then, she goes on to say, "A core group consisting of senior ministers of the Union Government and some Chief Ministers has been constituted to examine a wide range of related policy measures."

After these two references by the President of India telling the country and the Parliament, what does her Government intend to do as far as this higher prices and inflation is concerned? The very fact that we are today discussing this under a special provision of a unanimous resolution that we have all agreed together is itself a reprimand on this Government that it has not been able to contain this price rise. The very fact that this discussion is going on is something that has been established but we are all here today to urge upon the Government to take effective measures which I would outline, I think, need to be taken to contain price rise but, to recognize the fact now that yes, we have failed, the Government has failed in containing the price rise, now the effective measures need to be taken, that is a fact that has been established when this debate has started.

We have heard this earlier, Sir, that there is a global phenomenon of price rise, there is a mismatch between demand and supply; yes, there is a mismatch between supply and demand. What has been the production of our foodgrains and pulses during the last year, Sir? I will give you

the figures which the hon. Minister has given in reply to a question in the other House where it says that in 2006-07, we had produced 9.3 crore tonnes of foodgrains and pulses; in 2007-08, it was 9.6 crore tonnes; it had grown. In 2008-09, 9.9 crore tonnes. In 2009-10, this has fallen drastically to 8.7 crore tonnes. Now, this drastic fall in the production of foodgrains and pulses, we can attribute like the Congress spokesperson and my colleague who initiated this discussion from the Ruling Benches had said that it is because of a deficit in the monsoons. But, are we going to depend only on the monsoons even 60 years after Independence? What has the Government done in order to invest in agriculture? In the last ten years, the average rate of investment in agriculture is less than 2 per cent of our GDP. If this is the rate of investment in agriculture, how are you actually going to increase your supply?

I am talking of a supply-demand mismatch and the problem does not get solved unless you are able to tackle how you are going to improve on the supply-side. That has been woefully inadequate. And, that is a point that we need to understand. That is why we hear about the extension of the green revolution to the rest of the country. We hear about high-yielding varieties but many of the issues that had been raised by the Swaminathan Commission are still not being implemented and I will come to some of the points subsequently.

But, in this background, the Government must immediately assure this House and the country that in the coming days and in the subsequent Budgets, proper earmarking of public investment in agriculture, particularly in expanding the irrigation, so that we are not dependent upon monsoons will be undertaken. This will be a perennial problem that we cannot resolve if we do not do that.

Secondly, Sir, we have heard discussions on the quantum of foodgrains that are lying with the Government. The Economic Survey presented this year before the Budget informs the country that as against the statutory norm of 200 lakh tonnes of rice and wheat, the Government had in its godowns then nearly 475 lakh tonnes of rice and wheat. After that, we have heard the reports which were discussed this morning of at least 3 million tonnes of wheat rotting because there is no space in the Central godowns. We have heard descriptions of the photographs and visuals shown on TV

channels on how this wheat is rotting. We have heard the hon. Supreme Court chiding the Government saying that if you cannot store your grains properly, why do not you give it to the hungry?

In that situation, why is this food grain not being distributed? We heard our hon. colleague from the ruling benches saying that the States are not off-taking or taking the food grains. Why are the States not taking the food grains? Sir, let me give you an example of Kerala. They were given food grains earlier. It has been cut by about 90 per cent of the grains that were supplied to the State of Kerala. They were given at the rate of the BPL prices. When you cut nearly 90,000 tonnes, and say, "Now you take them at the market price, which works out at Rs.17". Which State is going to take from the Centre at the market price of Rs.17, and distribute it through the Public Distribution System? You are making a mockery of this entire situation. If you have to control prices, there is no other way than universalizing the PDS, and distributing all essential commodities through the PDS. That is the only way in which you can provide relief to the people. And, that, we believe through media reports, is being discussed in the National Advisory Council, that advises this Government about the Food Security Legislation. But the point of this discussion is, a year has gone by after the UPA-II Government has come, unless you have food security in terms of universal Public Distribution System for everybody, you cannot ensure that there won't be nobody going hungry in our country. Therefore, the other steps that this Government must take is to universalize the PDS and distribute all essential commodities through the PDS.

Sir, another factor that has been contributing to this price-rise has been speculation in the trading of essential commodities. A point we have all along been making, but which has been contested by the Government. And, this morning, we heard the ruling benches, the colleague who spoke saying, that there has been a ban on futures trading on essential commodities. That was not correct.

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND THE MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): It was on some of them.

SHRI SITARAM YECHURY: No, no; that was after correction. After we corrected, she said, 'some of the items'. But, Sir, I just want to give you a startling figure before this House. Between

April 1 and June 30, 2009, the total value traded in the commodity exchange in these three months was Rs.15,64,114.96 crores. In this year, for the same three months, April 1st to June 30th, the total value traded shot up to Rs.24,55,987.26 crores. Now, why is this leap, Sir? Everybody knows that in futures trading and forward trading profits can only be made when the prices rise. If I trade, let us say for the next January 30th, so and so item at so and so price, if the price on that day in the market is higher than that, only then I make a profit. If the values have increased so much, it is obvious because profits are there, and the profits are there that is because you have this rise in prices. And, as far as some items that have been banned are concerned, I have before me, Sir, what the Commodity Exchange has released, saying trading permission granted for commodities during 2010. And what are these, Sir? "Fibres, spices, edible oils and oil, pulses" - I am not reading other things, I am reading the essential commodities - "Vegetables, raw jute, cardamom, coriander, *dhania*, turmeric, pepper, red chilly, crude palm oil, palmolen, rape and mustard seed oil, soya bean, coconut oil." All these things which are needed as essential commodities have been granted permission for your forward trading in the speculative market. And, unless this is banned, and completely banned, you cannot really control these prices.

Why is the Government so reluctant to take this step? It is because statistics show that this is impacting on prices Internationally, UN agencies have said that when globally oil and the food prices were rising, that nearly 70 per cent of that rise was due to speculation in commodity exchanges. Now, when all this is happening, why don't you, at least, for some time, at least, suspend it, and give relief to the people, and then from your own experience take the decision whether to continue it or not. But, that does not happen, and there is a reason for that. The reason for that is this. This is connected, therefore, with the larger economic trajectory that this Government is pursuing, which is not confined only to price rise and inflation.

The larger economic trajectory that it is pursuing is the entire manner in which it is seeking to emerge from this global economic crisis and to take India into a higher growth path that is through actually giving stimulus to those who have already enough resources at their command. This is - I shall come back to this point again - also reflected in what the hon. Finance Minister presented in his

Budget documents a very interesting new booklet which is called Tax Forgone. If you look at those figures of Tax Forgone, it will tell you how much of money that could legally have been collected by the Government has not been collected. I will come back to that. But as a result of this, rich are getting richer and poor getting poorer in our country. Okay, you have one phenomenon that the number of billionaires in our country double from 26 to 52. In India we have the habit of counting billionaires not in rupees; we count them in US dollars. Anyway, may the trend continue, may the tribe increase! I have no objection. As Abu Bin Adam said, may the tribe increase! But these 52 individuals today their combined asset today is equal to 25 per cent of our GDP. 25 per cent of our GDP! You have an hon. colleague, who headed the Committee, which the Prime Minister appointed, Mr. Arjun Sengupta, who tells you 77 per cent of Indians live on less than twenty rupees a day.

You have an IPL India and you have a BPL India. These are the two India's in the making. I am not making any reference to your cricket chairmanship, Pawar Sahab, do not misunderstand. But you have an IPL India and BPL India. If this is the thing that is happening, if money is going to those who already have money, what will they do with it? If they invest in production, you have to have people who have money to buy what they produce. But the bulk of your people do not have purchasing power in their hands. If 77 per cent people are living on less than Rs.20 a day, what can they buy, Sir? My esteemed colleague from the BSP has now pointed out and told you all the figures of all the essential commodities and their prices. So, if they cannot buy, then what will those who have the money do? They will only speculate. It is this economic trajectory that is leading to speculation and that is why the reluctance of the Government, they do not want to ban this speculation. But unless you ban the speculative trading in essential commodities, you cannot control the prices. The third point which concretely the Government must do is to immediately reverse or rollback the hike in the petrol products announced in the Budget. We have gone through this discussion earlier. At that time the petroleum prices were not deregulated. Now that they are deregulated, why continue this hike in the petroleum products that was announced in the Budget? What has been announced in the Budget, Sir, at the same time, we are also being given figures how

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much the Government is collecting through revenue on the taxes on petroleum products. I will come to that point subsequently, but I want to raise an important point for the Government to consider. We import crude oil because that is the lifeline of our economy. Crude oil and petroleum imports in our country are like importing foodgrains when there is a famine. When people are dying of hunger, you import food in order to make them live. Do you impose taxes on those imports of foodgrains? Crude oil is like that for our economy. It is essential for our economy to run.

[THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P.J. KURIEN) in the Chair]

Do you impose taxes on something which is essential without which your economy cannot run? This is something which the Government will have to seriously consider that these sort of taxes that are imposed upon the imports of petroleum products is something that should be reconsidered. The Government now says, 'if I do not impose these taxes, where do I get the revenue from? Where do I get revenue from for my Bharat Nirman programmes?' That is where I go back to the Tax Foregone statistics that were provided by the Finance Minister where it has shown that 5,18,000 crores of rupees tax has been forgone in the last fiscal year. Okay, even if the Excise and other Duties, if I remove that, even if I grant that they were used for economic stimulus, the direct tax concessions that were given nearly Rs.80,000 crores to the corporate sector and Rs.40,000 crores to the high end income tax sector. Rs.1,20,000 crores of tax is forgone through tax concessions. If you had not given those concessions, what your earning from the petroleum sector, that is, Rs.1,20,000 crores, that Rs.1,20,000 crores was totally unnecessary to tax this sector.

So, there are alternatives and that is where the Government has to choose. The alternatives are burdening the people through taxes on petroleum products or not give concessions to the rich and don't have this tax foregone and collect your legitimate taxes from them and give relief to the poor. This is the class orientation, Sir, which we must clearly understand that you have on the one hand concessions of such nature given to the rich and this is something that cannot be acceptable

and this has to be reversed if you want to contain these prices. Secondly, Sir, we have heard a lot of discussion and some hon. Members from the ruling benches had raised on the question of the under-recoveries or the losses of the oil companies. The hon. Minister for Petroleum is here and I think, he was saved yesterday because his question did not get answered but I have the printed copy of what he supplied us as the answer and in that printed copy, Sir, he tells you that the per barrel cost of production of crude oil produced by ONGC during the last five years is given below and for the last year it is 35.94 US dollars per barrel. ONGC sells this to your oil marketing companies for 55.94 dollars. It is making 20 dollars per barrel. After producing, it is selling to your own oil companies. In his own statement this is said. This is yesterday's answer and ONGC sells for 55.94 dollars. Twenty dollars already hiked up and then, after that -- I am not coming to the profits yet -- okay, even if you say that the production cost is 36 dollars, even if you take one dollar as Rs. 50 which is not so -- it may be 46 or 47 -- but even if you take Rs. 50 it is Rs. 1800. Now, after all the discounting you are selling. Okay, 55 dollars you have already hiked but even at 55 -- you take it as 56 -- your cost will be Rs. 2800 per barrel. A barrel normally has about 160 litres.

So, per litre how much does it work out? It works out to Rs. 17.50 per litre. This is what ONGC produces and then, Sir, if you add Re. 1 for your refining cost, it is Rs. 18.50. What are you selling it at Delhi? You are selling it at Rs. 53. This is the cost of production according to the Minister's own statistics. That it is not going to cost more than Rs. 18.50 but your sale price is Rs. 53. Okay, you can blame the Finance Ministry and you take out the taxes that the Finance Ministry has put which is 50 per cent of this. Even then you are selling it at Rs. 26 or Rs. 27 or Rs. 28 when the production is only Rs. 18. Whom are we fooling? This is the reality. Whom are we fooling? Now, coming to this import parity price, if my cost of production is much less than the international cost of production, why should my consumer pay the international price of that product? We have given you an example. Italian shoes are very famous all over the world. I am not wearing one and I don't know how many of our hon. Members are, but, Italian shoes are very famous. Suppose I import Italian leather and make the shoe in India, making that shoe in India, using that leather will cost me say, Rs. 100. In Italy it may

cost you Rs. 1000 and the brand market may be another Rs. 10,000. They may be selling that shoe for Rs. 12,000. Why should I sell it for Rs. 12000 here to my customer? That difference is what is called under-recovery. That is under-recovery. There are no losses. 'There are absolutely no losses that are there and in spite of so called losses what is the profit that ONGC made last year? The Minister's reply is: 'The profit that they had made last year in crores is Rs. 16,768 net profit after tax.' So, what is this under-recovery? Why are we fooling ourselves? Why are we going by the international prices? It is costing you so much, so you collect that much from the people. Yes, put up a profit margin as well but don't go by this penchant for counting everything in US dollars.

Let it not reach to such an extent that you are actually pricing your product not on the basis of cost of production in India but on the cost of production is abroad and then you say you are making losses. Sir, as per the audited financial results for the year ending 31.3.2010 Indian Oil Corporation's net profit has been shown as Rs. 10,998 crores with cash surplus and reserves of Rs. 49,472 crores. These are the audited accounts and you are saying that they are making losses! What are we doing? And, what profit is that the HPCL and the BPCL earned? Sir, HPCL earned a profit of Rs. 544 crores in 2009 and the BPCL Rs. 834 crores. Whom are we fooling? This is what on which I need a reply from the Government as to why are we fooling ourselves? This is something that we have to tell our country very clearly to stop this fixation with international price. That was the fixation before Mrs. Indira Gandhi nationalized the oil sector. That was when you had ESSO, CALTEX and all that in India when we were growing up as children. They were international companies and MNCs. So, they were pricing it according to the international price. But, after you nationalized everything, you have Indian companies. So, why are we going by international pricing? Unless you change this attitude, you cannot stop fleecing the people in the name of import parity pricing and this has to be completely reversed. If this is not done, no relief to the people can be provided.

Then comes the question of what the hon. Finance Minister has stated earlier and what has been stated now that taxation is the common burden between the Centre and the States. Now, Sir, there is a very interesting sleight of hand in this. The hon. Finance Minister's calculation says that Rs. 1,08,000 crores is what is going to be collected from petroleum sector this year. My calculation shows, it should be anywhere beyond Rs. 1,20,000 crores. Of course, that will become clear after the Revised Estimates.

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): That was 2009-10. You are talking of 2010-11 Budget proposal. I am talking of what was done last year.

SHRI SITARAM YECHURY: Even if you go by that, it was Rs. 1,08,000 last year. This year, my estimation is, it will be more than Rs. 1,20,000 crores and the final figure will come after the Revised Estimates. Out of Rs. 1,08,000 crores, the hon. Finance Minister says, Rs. 24,000 crores will be transferred to all the States put together. That leaves Rs. 84,000 crores with the Centre. Then, he claims that all States together - collectively have State-level taxes which stand at Rs. 72,000 crores. So, Rs. 72,000 + Rs. 24,000 crores which are transferred from the Centre will make the States get together Rs. 96,000 crores, while the Centre gets Rs. 84,000 crores. Am I correct, Pranabda?

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: Correct.

SHRI SITARAM YECHURY: Now, the point is, since the States get Rs. 96,000 crores, we are being told, the country being told, that the major burden of the price rise is because of the taxation of the States. But, Sir, this Rs. 84,000 crores of the Centre directly goes into the price that goes up. Sir, Rs. 96,000 crores is collected by the 28 States. If you take it State-wise, on an average, each State is collecting less than Rs. 3,500 crores. So, the burden on the people...

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: It is the impact on the economy.

SHRI SITARAM YECHURY: No, no. Pranabda, bear with me.

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: It is not the question which State is getting what...

SHRI SITARAM YECHURY: No, no. Pranabda, bear with me for a minute. The burden on the people, because of taxes loading to higher price, is Rs. 84,000 crores at the Centre plus Rs. 3,428.57 crores at the States. That is the point. So, one State is getting only Rs. 3,428.57 crores. So, don't blame the States.

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: One second. The impact is Rs. 1,80,000 crores on the economy. It is not Rs. 3,000 crores of State A or State B or State C. The impact on the economy is

Rs. 1,80,000 crores. Of that, Rs. 96,000 crores are coming from the State sector and Rs. 84,000 crores are coming from the Centre. That is the point.

SHRI SITARAM YECHURY: Pranabda, I accept the impact is Rs. 1,80,000 crores on the economy. I am talking of the impact on the Aam Aadmi.

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: That spreads.

SHRI SITARAM YECHURY: Sir, Aam Aadmi is paying, because of the tax, a higher price of Rs. 84,000 crores plus what is collected in one State! He is not paying for what is collected in some other State.

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: You can be happy with this logic. I have no problem. You can be happy with this argument. You can be happy with this logic. I have no problem. You can be happy. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI SITARAM YECHURY: No, it is not the question of being happy or not. You explain to me, while sitting in Delhi, how is the highest tax rate, which is there in Maharashtra, is impacting my price in Delhi? How is that impacting on me, in Delhi? Please explain if to me, if that is not the case, why the rates of petrol are different in different States. They are different because different States have different sales tax. So, different States have different impact on the people living there. So, Rs. 84,000 is a burden because of the Central taxes and Rs. 3,400 is a burden because of the State taxes, on an average. There are some States, where it is more, and some States have less. Therefore, the States are not doing this. It is not correct to say that bulk of it is happening because of the States. Bulk of it is happening because of the Centre. And, in this context, the Congress spokesman said that the West Bengal is not doing anything. And, then, she said that the bandh, which was called, was an unprecedented success, and the discussion was more on bandh than on the price rise, when she participated.

And, then, she quoted some fantastic figures and she also quoted some newspapers. When I asked as to which newspaper she was quoting, she said that she had the right to quote a newspaper. ...*(Interruptions)*... And, she claimed that the Opposition parties had imposed a loss of Rs. 13,000 crores on the country because of the bandh. I am reading a newspaper, which is a

representative of that very corporate world, that is, the Times of India. It says, on the seventh of July, that the real figure of the cost of the bandh would be a tiny fraction of the FICCI estimates. The Times of India had done this study. According to the FICCI estimates, it was Rs. 13,000 crore. Rs. 13,000 a day, at 8.4 per cent growth rate, is the GDP for our country in one day. Rs. 13,000 crores is exactly the GDP of our country of one day. According to FICCI, India lost everything on that day, nothing happened. Seventy per cent of our people are in rural India, who are connected with agriculture. Its contribution to the GDP may be 17 or 18 per cent, but that had not been touched; also nothing happened in the unorganized sector. Nothing of those calculations had actually gone into it. But they say that this is the loss. Anyway, that is not the issue. But the fact of the matter is that she also admits that the bandh was a grand success. Why? Why was it a grand success when none of us are really a big enough force, like in Maharashtra? Why was it a grand success? It was because the same aam aadmi had come out in the streets in protest. Please recognize this. The aam aadmi had come out in the streets in protests and, then, we are asked why we were not doing anything in our State; why we were not reducing taxes in our States. Let me read out to you what the Chief Minister of Bengal, on 29th June, had put out in an official statement. I quote, "The Government of West Bengal has taken a decision to provide a subsidy of one rupee per litre for all diesel driven mini buses and taxis in the State, and also provide adequate subsidy so that the effective tax rate on kerosene, through PDS, becomes zero from the present level of 4 per cent. The total requirement of funds for these subsidies on diesel and kerosene has been estimated approximately at Rs. 160 crore, per year, which is equal to the additional revenue of Rs. 160 crores that the State Government would have earned from higher prices of petroleum products.

You hike them here in the Centre, but we have given relief to the people to that exact amount of the hike that you have made here. And, this is not for the first time. I read out a PTI dispatch of 5th June, 2008, when the prices were raised in 2008, we had reduced the duties even then; we have done it for the second time now, it says, "The two of the Left-ruled States, West Bengal and Kerala, have decided to reduce the sales tax on petrol and diesel to marginally reduce the impact of the price hike. The West Bengal Government today said that it would reduce the sales-tax on petrol from 25

per cent to 20 per cent and on diesel from 17 per cent to 12.5 per cent. The State has said that it would lose Rs. 500 crores annually because of this." Yes, the State was losing Rs. 500 crores annually because of this. But we provided relief to the people. Therefore, now, to make this charge that we are not doing anything and only Delhi Government has done is not fair. I don't want to go into those reasons why the Government of Delhi had done this. It would not be fair at this moment. But it was done to avoid the mismatch of tax rates in neighbouring States of Uttar Pradesh and Haryana.

Therefore, Sir, what I am saying is, I want this Government to seriously consider and let me know, or let us know, let the House know, let the people know, let the country know that there are other avenues for raising revenues. One is, don't give these tax concessions and tax foregone, which last year was 4.10 lakh crores. In this Budget, it is 5.18 lakh crores. Instead of giving these sorts of tax concessions, collect the tax and spend it on the people; that is when the aam aadmi will get some relief. Secondly, you tell me, Sir, if one is able to spend more than a crore of rupees to buy a luxury car that runs on diesel, will you give subsidised diesel for them? Okay, I know, dual pricing is a problem. Administering dual prices is a problem. But you can have a one-time cess on these luxury diesel cars. Somebody who is paying Rs.1 crore for a Mercedes Benz which runs on diesel can easily pay Rs.10 lakhs as a one-time charge on buying that car. You are now saying that something like 1,50,000 luxury cars are being bought or sold in our country every year. If Rs. 10 lakh as a one-time charge is put on those 1,50,000 luxury cars, what is the revenue that the Government will earn? Why don't you consider this? Then, you have private generators that run on diesel. Why should the subsidy on diesel meant for the Indian farmers go to these sections? Think of something else from where you can, actually, tax those who can afford rather than raising prices in this manner, which is causing immense harm to the livelihood of our people.

Therefore, Sir, it is perfectly and completely possible to arrest this price rise. What is required is: Number one, immediately roll back your budgetary hikes. Number two, immediately universalise the PDS system and release your extra food stocks and distribute to the people. Number three, Ban Futures Trading and speculative trading on all essential commodities. Number four, stop giving these concessions to the rich. Instead, collect that money, increase public investment, give jobs to the

people, so that the salaries they earn will increase domestic demand in our economy and that will spur the growth. All this is perfectly possible. But if you do not do this, Sir, let me warn you, if you do not do this, if you do not do this, then other things will happen because those who have money are getting more money and what will they do with it? It will only be the growth of crony capitalism. You have an IPL and BPL India that I spoke of earlier. Now, we heard about the Commonwealth Games scam that is happening here. Then, you have illegal mining that is going on. You will have growth of this sort of activities which will further impose burdens on the common man and increase and fatten the profits of the rich. That is why, Sir, this process of crony capitalism is also distorting our democratic process. I am not going into that. I am concluding, Sir. It is distorting our democratic process. Putting a ceiling by Election Commission for election expenses is a mockery of what amount is being spent. As a result of crony capitalism in elections, democracy itself is being destroyed. Forget socialism, democracy itself is being distorted under this process.

Therefore, finally, I am saying, the entire question of controlling price rise is not a technical question of containing inflation. You have to seriously rethink the economic trajectory that we are pursuing. Otherwise, crony capitalism will affect our democracy. What we pride ourselves as the biggest achievement in the process of decolonisation anywhere in the world is granting of adult suffrage in India through our Constitution. In that entire process and that experiment of this idea of India, that in itself will come under great threat.

Therefore, I would only like to end by the warning that Babasaheb Ambedkar gave when he presented the present draft of the Constitution to the Constituent Assembly. I am not giving any warning from the barrel of a gun or from any Mao's recipes but we all have to keep this warning in mind, otherwise, those sorts of grave threats that are going on will mount. What did Babasaheb Ambedkar say on 25th November, 1949, when he presented this draft of the Constitution to the Constituent Assembly? He said, " On the 26th of January, 1950, we are going to enter into a life of contradictions. In politics, we will have equality and in social and economic life, we will have inequality. In politics, we will be recognizing the principle of one man, one vote and one vote, one value. In our social and economic life, we shall be by reason of our social and economic structure

continue to deny the principle of one man, one value. How long shall we continue to live this life of contradictions?

How long shall we continue to deny equality in our social and economic life? If we continue to deny it for long, we will do so only by putting our political democracy in peril. We must remove this contradiction at the earliest possible moment or else those who suffer from inequality will blow up the structure of political democracy which this Assembly has so laboriously built up."

So, please understand what you are dealing with. It is not merely a technical question of reducing price by a certain quantity or a certain percentage. You are dealing with a warning that Babasaheb gave more than 60 years ago. Sir, our country has completed 60 years. In your culture, in my culture, in most of Indian cultures, 60 years is very valuable in the sense that we call it Shashtipoorthi, if you remember; and when an individual completes Shashtipoorthi, he begins a new life. If you are really talking of the aam aadmi, then that Shashtipoorthi must be utilized to start a new life and therefore the time has come to reverse these policies. Otherwise, the warning of Ambedkar will come true, and, therefore, what I am saying is, do not allow the country to say what it said when India Gandhiji announced 'गरीबी हटाओ.' After few years, all of us were shouting as students 'गरीबी लौटाओ', return back what we were because our situation had become worse.

Now, in the name of aam aadmi, please do not inflict all these burdens on aam aadmi. Otherwise, there will be rebels, there will be agitations, there will be struggles but to gain the respect that we want to build for India as a modern independent India, reverse these policies and accept these concrete suggestions that I have given. Thank you.

SHRI N.K. SINGH (Bihar): Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, considering the somewhat limited time which I have, I have four comments to make and six suggestions to give for the consideration of the Government. My first comment is that in a general equilibrium model, it doesn't take too much understanding of economics to realize that prices generally tend to equilibrate between demand and supply. Of course, it doesn't automatically happen, given market distortions, given leads and lags and given deficiencies in transmission system of prices. But nonetheless management of both the demand side and the supply side of the economics is greatly relevant for the overall management of short-term and medium-term price behaviour. I will come to this a little later.

My second broad point is, to compliment the Finance Minister that it was his understanding perhaps in economics and his sagacity on the difference of the word 'inflation' with the word 'prices' of why he preferred the wording of this Resolution to be 'inflation' than 'prices'. This is because he recognizes that prices have a accepted ratchet effect. They only go up; they never come down. What we are talking therefore today is not bringing down prices; what we are talking about is slowing the pace of change and to moderate the extent to which the prices have risen in the past.

This, Sir, has serious implications for planning, which, I am sure, he will realize. I am not going into the question of the cost and time overruns which the general inflation will bring to the overall strategy of his economic planning. I am talking, Sir, of two very specific things. First and foremost, given the proportionality of food in the average family budget of at least 350 million people — perhaps by my reckoning that figure is more than 350 million people — what this really will do, this change in prices -- and notwithstanding the fact that issue prices have been kept constant but given other kinds of distortions will do is that we will have to rethink on the definition of poverty itself. Because prices, in absolute terms, Mr. Finance Minister, will not come down. Perhaps your best and most optimistic hope is that you will moderate the pace of change.

Second, Sir, back-of-the-envelope calculations suggest that given this kind of a price rise, food prices now translating into higher headline inflation, at least, 15 to 20 million new people have been pushed back into poverty. Therefore, the Finance Minister will have to consider what kind of special programme he has to deal with the vulnerability of these 15-20 million people who have been pushed back into poverty given the kind of inflation which we have encountered.

My third general point is a point which the Leader of Opposition had raised in his remarks, namely, the enigma in explaining the asymmetry between the behaviour of international prices and the behaviour of prices in India. To just give you an example, Sir, the international market price in June 2010 for white rice in Thailand was 2168; it is significantly higher here. The price of wheat in the United States was 743.5 while it was 1225 here. In terms of international comparisons the prices of

sugar here have been double the international price. So, I think that the Minister in charge of prices must explain the asymmetric behaviour and the enigma of falling international prices and unabated continued increase of prices in India. Let me offer you a back-of-the-envelope type explanation for this. The explanation is, the flawed coordination in the agriculture operations policy. On the one hand, you have no storage space; foodgrain is rotting; on the other hand, you went on procuring far more than you genuinely needed for which you have no space for storage. Therefore, you created an artificial situation in the market where you distorted the demand-supply equilibrium, putting an upward pressure on the movement of prices which led to this kind of an asymmetric behaviour of falling international prices and rising national prices. You may wish to examine this kind of an un-coordinated policy of pushing yourself on procurements for which you have no space and for which you have no ability to distribute on the one hand and, on the other hand, creating this kind of an artificial distortion. I have, therefore, in the context of this, six suggestions to offer for the consideration of the Government.

First and foremost -- and this is not a point that I am making for the first time -- it is the multiplicity of agencies and entities within Government and the fact that many Ministers in the Government do not devote adequate time -- and I am not alluding to your interest in cricket, Mr. Minister; it is welcome and we are proud of that. But we cannot afford to have half-times when you deal with complicated issues such as that of prices. We have a Cabinet Committee on Prices; hopefully it meets regularly. We have a Finance Minister who is in charge of prices in the Rules of Allocation of Business and Prices is a subject of the Ministry of Finance. We have the Department of Food and Public Distribution, a department which is directly in charge of it. We have a Committee under the Cabinet Secretary which weekly monitors the behaviour of prices. You have, Sir, on an average, about 12 entities that deal with prices, not one of them working in tandem with each other. Please, Sir, look for a more unified arrangement in handling this sensitive and critical national priority.

Then, I go on to suggest that we had about the worst quality of food intelligence. That is why, when we look at the Economic Survey, we get one type of statistics, one type of projection. The cell which is under the Ministry of Consumer Distribution has a cell which monitors behaviour of international prices, again coming up with a different kind of projections. The result is, we effect

decisions on imports which are untimely and we effect them at costs far more than we would be really in a position to pay/ What can we do to improve the quality of food intelligence to get advance intelligence? If international prices are falling, that is the time to go into the market.

Other countries do it more subtly. We do it in a manner where we become a trigger to the behaviour of international prices due to a failure of the quality food intelligence and an actionable programme which follows. Third, Sir, is directly to the Finance Minister. I think the speaker before me has given an explanation about the dismantling of administered price regime. I do not fully share that view. I have myself, Mr. Finance Minister, written several times why an administered price regime in the petroleum sector is a clear distortion and that, if anything we delayed getting rid of the administered price regime. Having said that, Sir, and this is something which is really what I said earlier please the Petroleum Minister who would have wanted to get rid of the administered price regime much earlier than he was successful in doing so. Having said so, however, Sir, clearly there is a case to rejig fiscal policies and taxation policies. This is something which your predecessor in his first incarnation as the Finance Minister had tried to attempt in 1997-98. We are getting a very high proportion of entire indirect tax revenues just coming from the petroleum sector. I am not right now going into the question of the distribution between the Centre and States.

Let me also say that when it has come to the new GST it is a pity that you are still leaving petroleum free for very variable action by States and we were not able to persuade the States to apply the same yardstick when it comes to the GST by bringing petroleum within the orbit of the GST. This will leave an area of uncertainty wide open. But in a broader sense, Sir, please have a look on what would be appropriate on the overall revenues that Government wishes to garner from just one sector. You cannot have it both ways; you cannot dismantle the administered price regime and not look at the overall fiscal strategy for garnering your revenues just from one sector. I think the broader point also remains the distribution between direct and indirect taxes -- the point obliquely raised by my preceding speaker. The fact remains that India, unlike other countries, has made significant progress in increasing the proportionality of direct taxes in the overall revenues, nonetheless the ratio between direct and indirect taxes remains skewed up and within the indirect

taxes remains greatly skewed up by too high a proportionality and a too high a dependence on just the petroleum sector.

My fourth point, Sir, is the point which was made by the Leader of the Opposition. If we look at the kind of statistics which we have on the behaviour of prices, should we not move away? What has been said about WPI and CPI, I fully endorse that point of view. But within the WPI, Sir, if you look at the annual inflation figures from 1991 to 2009 and 2010 and if you look at one element of that which is the CPI Industrial Workers Index which is even more critical because food there has been given a weightage of 40 per cent in the computation of that index, you come to a strange conclusion. And that strange conclusion is: 1991, CPI (iw) 11 per cent, next year 13.5 per cent, next year 10 per cent, next year 10.1 per cent and next year 10.2 per cent, and you go down that trajectory. When you come to the years 1999-2000 and subsequently, it comes down to 3.8 per cent, 4.2 per cent, 3.8 per cent, 4.4 per cent and 6.4 per cent except in the last two years when it has again shot up to 12.4 per cent and 9.1 per cent. Is it, Sir, part of some economic strategy? High rates of growth cannot be balanced with keeping inflation at moderate level. Why is it that we are having a skewed pattern? If you look at time series data of the last 15 years where in some particular years there has been a very high spike which is asymmetrical to what has happened in the previous 4-5 years of the Government which was in power.

Now, I move on to the next point. I have mentioned that I would deal with the supply side. On the supply side, I think, directly, this is to the Agriculture Minister that the area which was under cultivation has shrunk, agriculture productivity has plateaued and that the rising pace of demand of an economy growing at 8-9 per cent has not been able to improve agricultural production and productivity in a manner which would moderate the prices. We had, with great acclaim, heard the Agriculture Minister when he presented the Special Agriculture Action Plan as part of the Eleventh Five Year Plan. We do not know how much of that Action Plan has been implemented. What have been the real gains on improving agricultural productivity trends, at least, to some extent mirror what productivity trends are, say, in Thailand, in China, in reducing our dependence on monsoon, in

moving over to allied agriculture and rainbow allied bone activity which can enhance farm incomes? We are not satisfied with the implementation of the overall agricultural strategy. Also, what kind of a programme, crash programme, we can do for improving linkages and better kind of outlays, improving food chains and cold chains to bring down the wastage, particularly for fruits and vegetables which have a short shelf life? The Finance Minister was generous enough in his Budget to offer a very special package on cold chains. I do not know how much of that package we have been able to aggressively implement.

On the demand side, the Reserve Bank, while raising repo and reverse repo rates, clearly said that there was a period when the push came from the supply side pressures; the time has now come to moderate the demand side pressures. I put it to the Finance Minister whether the action was too late and too little, if the demand side pressures were an important contributory factor to the build up of inflation and to the generalisation of moving over from limited food price rise to a more generalised price rise with headline inflation being totally misaligned.

I come to two more points, Sir, and I will finish. This deals clearly with the improvements in the Public Distribution System and the distortions which are inherent in it. Nothing, which you have heard so far, gives us any degree of confidence that the Government has a sanguine plan to revamp the Public Distribution System. What happened to the Wadhwa Committee Report? It is gathering dust. It was under the Supreme Court direction that the Wadhwa Committee Report gave far-reaching recommendations. My own former colleague in the Planning Commission, Shri N.C. Saxena, made important suggestions to improve the Public Distribution System. It is again gathering dust. We need to look out to more innovating solutions instead of passing the burden on the States. How to really have a revamped Public Distribution System which is expected to also meet the challenge of the Food Security Bill which, hopefully, is on the anvil? Would you not think, therefore, of a combination of measures which have three components - a revamped Public Distribution System in line with the recommendations of the Wadhwa and the Saxena Committee reports, as well as repeated suggestions, both on conditional cash transfers and in terms of a coupon system? Would you look to experimentation and an innovation which can make a deep dent in improving the pace and improving the quality and efficacy?

And, finally, there is one short-term measure which the Minister could have easily taken. Instead of allowing the grains to rot, could you have not resorted to open market operations more

aggressively at a time when the disequilibrium between demand and supply had become so exasperated? That would have certainly aligned our prices to what would have been global trends that have had a significant impact, instead of the foodgrains rotting, an open market operation conducted more aggressively could have yielded quick and short-term outcomes. I entirely agree with some of the earlier interventions made both by the Leader of the Opposition and Mr. Yechury that the management of food prices is central to the success of our economic strategy; it is central to our ability to achieve a growth rate of 9-10 per cent on which we hope the Government, and we hope equally that we will succeed. Thank you.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P.J. KURIEN): Thank you very much, N.K. Singh ji. Now, Shri T. M. Selvaganpathi.

SHRI T. M. SELVAGANPATHI (Tamil Nadu): Hon. Vice-Chairman, Sir, I am glad that ultimately a serious discussion is taking place in this august House, a much wanted discussion on price-rise.

Sir, I thank you very much for giving me the opportunity to express my views in this august House. At this juncture, I profoundly thank our evergreen octogenarian leader, a great Statesman, a greater visionary, an able administrator, an astute political leader, an incisive thinker, none other than our hon. Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, my leader, Dr. Kalaignar, for having given me a place in this presitirious House. I would also like to express my sincere gratitude to the rising star and the future of Tamil Nadu, hon. Deputy Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, M.K. Stalin, and many of our senior leaders of the party for reposing faith and confidence in me in discharging my duty as a Member of Parliament.

Sir, it is an indisputable fact that the country is passing through an unprecedented price rise. No doubt, the common man is affected to a large extent due to the rise in the prices of the essential commodities. Can the present Government be blamed for this? Is it because of the wrong policies that have been pursued by this Government, or, is it the bad governance that caused this alarming situation? My answer is emphatic 'no'. It is purely because of the supply constraint. One would agree with me that it is due to the increase in demand and lower levels of productivity in the country. Is it not a fact that there was a severe drought situation due to the failure of monsoon? Is it not a fact

that some of the States experienced a heavy flood situation? Is it not a fact that the domestic production is terribly low? Is it not a fact that the international markets played havoc? Is it not a fact that the Government has raised the Minimum Support Price for the farmers? Is it not a fact that the purchasing power of the common man has gone up to a little extent? What we used to earn twenty years ago has gone three, four, five times up. Even a daily wage earner who was earning Rs. 50/- per day is getting a wage of Rs. 150/-, Rs. 200/- per day. This is the case in Tamil Nadu. Sir, is it not a fact that there is a tremendous mismatch between supply and demand? There could be many reasons that one can attribute but under these circumstances, whether it is UPA, NDA or any other Government, it would have to face this situation, like the UPA Government is facing today.

The Government cannot have a magic wand. The Opposition, who is bouncing on the Government in order to score a political point, could deliberate in this august House, in the Parliament instead of going to the streets and wasting public money to the tune of several thousand crores by way of a bandh, which was, of course, not successful in the State of Tamil Nadu because it is ruled by a great leader, Dr. Kalaignar. Millions of people who have faith and confidence in him have not supported the bandh, which was called by the Opposition.

Sir, there is no doubt that the Government is monitoring the situation. The Government is serious about price rise. They are equally worried; they are equally serious about it.

Therefore, we welcome the initiatives, both fiscal and administrative, taken by the Government of India for curtailing or managing the price rise. Sir, many measures have been taken which we cannot deny or dispute. The hon. Agriculture Minister and the hon. Finance Minister are here. He reduced import duties to zero level. What for? He allowed import of sugar at zero duty. What for? He banned export of all essential commodities. Is it not a measure that could contain the price rise? There was a total imposition of stock holding limits in the case of essential commodities. More so, he maintained central issue prices to the level which was in existence in the year 2002. There was no rise in the minimum price and the central issue price. There was suspension of future trading in some of

the items. As a medium term measure, we welcome the measure taken by the Government to improve the production and productivity in the agricultural front. Sir, the National Food Security Mission, the Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana, Rs. 20,000 crores have been earmarked for increasing the production and productivity. After tremendous rise to double digit, the food prices are, no doubt, showing a descending trend. They have come to a single digit now which I would believe would stabilize after the outcome of Kharif production where the cultivable area of paddy, rice and other pulses has been increased. The monsoon is showing an anticipated support. Therefore, we expect that the prices are going to come down much more.

Sir, most of the time, the State Governments are targeted for not tackling the price rise. Many have spoken about it. This may be true with respect to some of the States in the country, but certainly not in the case of Tamil Nadu. Even the hon. Prime Minister gone on record and expressed his dissatisfaction that the States are not taking adequate action. But, Sir, I assure you, through this House, that Tamil Nadu is second to none in tackling the price situation. Under the able and dynamic leadership of Dr. Kalaignar, we are the forerunner and example for all other State Governments in the country in seeing that essential commodities are available to Aam Aadmi, the common man, at an affordable rate in the State. In fact, we are the trend-setter in every field that you touch. The Government headed by Dr. Kalaignar is following the system of universal public distribution system the best, I am proud to say, in the whole of the country. We, in the State, have about 30,000 public distribution system fair price shops, spreading over every nook and corner of the State, catering to nearly two crore households which are mostly poor and vulnerable section.

Sir, our founder leader of the DMK, Dr. Anna, who adorned this august House once in the 1960s, used to say, and with your permission I quote, "Eiyin sirippil iravanai kanbom". He said, "We should behold the divine in the smile of the poor". Yes, in order to behold the divine in the smile of the poor, our Chief Minister, Dr. Kalaignar, following the footsteps of the great leader, Dr. Anna, is implementing the scheme called 'one rupee one kilo rice scheme'. Today, in our State, one crore ninety six lakh and nine thousand card holders are distributed with one kilo of rice for one rupee. You would not find it anywhere in the country. It is a forerunner. Our adversaries may say that rice alone is

sufficient. Rice alone is not sufficient. What about other commodities, essential commodities? Yes, we have.

In our State, in order to insulate poor people from the ill effects of price rise, we have introduced a system called Special Public Distribution System under which every cardholder can get tur dal for Rs.40 per kg. Imagine, in Delhi, it is sold at more than Rs.80 per kg! We distribute black gram at Rs.40 per kg; palm oil at Rs.30 per litre; and fortified atta at Rs.11 per kg, whereas it is sold at Rs.18 per kg in the market. As you are all aware, all these items are sold in the open market at double, triple the rate.

Sir, it is interesting to note that we have the best universal Public Distribution System in the country where we distribute masala packets. These masala packets consist of turmeric powder, coriander powder, Bengal Gram dal, Fenugreek, mustard, urid dal (split one), pepper, zeera, and garam masala. All these essential items are sold at an affordable rate of Rs.50 in packets. We are going to reduce its cost further. It will cost Rs.25 with effect from August 15. We are proud to say that you don't find this system anywhere in the country.

At sugar front, the Central Government has allotted only 10,832 metric ton per month whereas the State's requirement is more and it is procuring 35,000 metric ton per month from the open market. It is distributing it to the common man at the rate of Rs.13.50 by incurring a huge expenditure of nearly Rs.500 crore per annum on sugar alone.

Likewise, we distribute three litres of kerosene at a cost of Rs.8.40 to almost all the rural households. We are also implementing a scheme called Free LPG Connection With Gas Stove to the common man. This scheme was launched in the State of Tamil Nadu much before the Rajiv Gandhi Gramin LPG Vitrak Yojana was launched at the Centre.

Also, by providing all these essential items to the common man at the cheapest possible price, food security is being ensured uninterruptedly in the State of Tamil Nadu. The common man does not feel the pinch of price rise in the State of Tamil Nadu.

Sir, we are a true and faithful ally of the UPA-I and the UPA-II. We also feel proud that the Chairperson of the UPA, Madam Soniaji, is of the view that Dr. Kalam is the guiding force in every

step that is taken to march the country forward. But, unfortunately, the Centre is hesitant in accepting some of our genuine demands. In the State, we are serving the people with utmost sincerity and dedication with enormous financial crunch. Therefore, Sir, I would say in carrying out the PDS effectively, the Centre must come forward with a helping hand. If the Public Distribution System is weakened, the common man is weakened, the country is weakened.

Tamil Nadu is not a surplus State. As against rice requirement of 3.1 lakh metric ton per month, the Central allocation is only 2.96 lakh metric ton per month. It is a shortfall of 21,000 metric ton. The hon. Agriculture Minister is here. For this 21,000 metric ton per month, we are going in for open market purchase at a rate of Rs.17,000 quintal. It comes to Rs.17 per kg.

Sir, you may say that because of the universal system that you adopt and the rice distributed to the APL families, we are not entitled for this additional requirement. Sir, this theory is misconstrued because you know that there is already a mismatch between demand and supply. If APL is not served with the provisions of getting rice in the PDS, they are going to demand it in the market. When they march to the market with tremendous demand, due to non-availability or supply constraints, the prices are bound to go up. Prices are maintained in the State because of the reason that we follow the Universal PDS and we also supply for APL. Therefore, you may consider that 21,000 metric tonnes of rice may be made available to the State of Tamil Nadu.

Sir, as against the kerosene requirement of about 59,798 kilolitres in the State, we do not know why this quantity was reduced to 52,804 kilolitres since April. Sir, in fact, to reduce the consumption of kerosene, our greater leader, Dr. Kalaignar, has announced a scheme called free gas and free LPG connections to all the rural households. We are thankful to the hon. Petroleum Minister who was kind enough to allot six lakh LPG connections. But, Sir, I would say that oil corporations, which were bound to supply these six lakh cylinders, are inordinately delaying the supply of regulators meant for these cylinders. Sir, you may take note of it and see that these regulators are available in the State. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI S.S. AHLUWALIA: Sir, I am not interrupting.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P.J. KURIEN): It is his maiden speech.

SHRI S.S. AHLUWALIA: I know. Sir, I have to go for a meeting. Sir, I would just like to know from the Chair that in the other House, at 5 o'clock, the Home Minister is making a statement on the situation in Kashmir. Whether that statement is going to be made in this House or not? The convention and Parliamentary system demand that whenever a statement is made in the other House, the same should be simultaneously or just immediately made in this House also. So, today, if it is made in that House, he should come and make the statement in-between here also and we can take up the supplementary and other things tomorrow.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P.J. KURIEN): I will come back to you. Please find out.

SHRI T.M. SELVAGAN PATHI: Sir, the hon. Petroleum Minister, Mr. Deora is here. He may consider our demand that shortage of 7000 kilolitres of Kerosene can be made available to the State of Tamil Nadu which is absolutely essential. Also, Sir, six lakh LPG cylinders which were allotted to the Government of Tamil Nadu can be supplied under Rajiv Gandhi Grameen LPG Vitarak Yojana. If it is not taken care of, for each supply, the State has to pay a sum of Rs.2000 per connection whereas in the Rajiv Gandhi Grameen LPG Vitarak Yojana, it is supposed to pay only Rs.1400 which would fall short by about Rs.30 crore or more. Therefore, I want the Government to intervene in this issue.

Sir, the other important factor is, total food subsidy of the State has substantially increased from Rs.2800 crores to Rs.4000 crores. It is our endeavour to combat price rise. It is because of the effective tackling of the situation there that it has risen from Rs.2800 crores to Rs.4000 crores. Therefore, the Government of India is duty-bound to bear 50 per cent of the expenditure incurred by the States towards the food subsidy. Sir, this is a situation where the State is already reeling in financial crunch. Why have oil prices been regulated? The price control was de-regulated. It is because of the reason that the oil corporations and the Government of India are running at a loss. And, this subsidy of Rs.1,20,000 crores could otherwise be available for the development purposes.

4.00 P.M.

System and the food subsidy. If the State is incurring a loss of nearly Rs.4,000 crores and is already reeling under a financial crisis, where would be the money available for development purposes? Therefore, Sir, it is the duty of the Government of India to bear 50 per cent of the expenditure incurred on this Public Distribution and the food subsidy.

As far as the case of hoarding and blackmarketing is concerned, no doubt, the power is vested with the Government in the State, and, in fact, as Mrs. Jayanthi Natarajan was saying in the morning, a record detention was made in Tamil Nadu. It is not because the hoarding was more or the blackmarketing was more. It was because of an effective Government which went in for nearly 1,7000 raids, detaining nearly 13,632 people who were all arrested under the Essential Commodities Act. In the Prevention of Black Marketing and Maintenance of Supplies of Essential Commodities Act alone, and the Goondas Act, we have detained about 435 people so far, which is a record in the country. That shows how well effectively the State Government is putting an iron hand on the hoarders and black marketeers. Sir, thereby, smuggling is absolutely nil compared to the previous regime. But for small pockets that they transport, through the train, to the neighbouring State of Kerala, the smuggling is totally nil ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI N. BALAGANGA (Tamil Nadu): Smuggling is still going on. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI T.M. SELVAGAN PATHI: If you want, I could prove because Balaganga is expressing certain views that smuggling is going on. I hope, he would explain this thing, when his turn comes up, to his party. Sir, there are statistics available here. This is an answer to my esteemed friend sitting on the other side. The raids which had taken place in 2004 and 2005 were 1,251. ...*(Interruptions)*...

DR. V. MAITREYAN (Tamil Nadu): Sir, what he is saying is ...*(Interruptions)*...

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P.J. KURIEN): Please don't interfere. This is his maiden speech. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRIMATI KANIMOZHI (Tamil Nadu): What is this, Sir? This is not proper. It is his maiden speech. ...*(Interruptions)*... Please, Mr. Maitreyan, don't you accept that? ...*(Interruptions)*...

DR. V. MAITREYAN: Sir, I know it is his maiden speech. I have been very silent. But since he is stating ...*(Interruptions)*...

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P.J. KURIEN): Please don't intervene. It is his maiden speech. ...*(Interruptions)*...

DR. V. MAITREYAN: Otherwise, I will be forced to interrupt, Sir. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRIMATI KANIMOZHI: Sir, it is his maiden speech. Please ask him not to intervene.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P.J. KURIEN): I am saying. ...*(Interruptions)*... A maiden speech. A maiden speech. Please don't interfere. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRIMATI KANIMOZHI: This is not proper, Sir. ...*(Interruptions)*... It is his maiden speech. Please, Mr. Maitreyan, don't interrupt. ...*(Interruptions)*...

AN HON. MEMBER: it is his maiden speech. That is why he is not interrupting. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI T.M. SELVAGANAPATHI: Sir, I am not yielding. ...*(Interruptions)*... Don't get up and interrupt like this. ...*(Interruptions)*...

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P.J. KURIEN): This is his maiden speech. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRIMATI VASANTHI STANLEY (Tamil Nadu) : Please, Mr. Maitreyan, this is his maiden speech. Don't you accept that at least? You are not to interrupt a Member during his maiden speech? ...*(Interruptions)*... Sir, please ask him not to interrupt. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI T.M. SELVAGANAPATHI: Sir, when his turn comes up, he can very well answer. ...*(Interruptions)*...

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P.J. KURIEN): No, no; you please address the Chair. Please address the Chair.

SHRI T.M. SELVAGANAPATHI: Sir, my point is this. ...*(Interruptions)*... When you make an allegation that there is a large-scale smuggling, can you prove it?

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P.J. KURIEN): No, no, no. ...(*Interruptions*)...

SHRI T.M. SELVAGANAPATHI: Then you can't make a sweeping statement on the floor of the House. We say with all sincerity.....

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P.J. KURIEN): You address the Chair. Please ignore the Member. You address the Chair.

SHRI T.M. SELVAGANAPATHI :that there are about 17,000 raids; because of that, smuggling is nil. And you know the Food Minister of the State is facing a life-threat for which he has been given a special security because of more raids. And 465 goondas have been detained in the jail. This is the case. An incompetent Government which does not care for the poor of the State may sleep over, but not Dr. Kalam Government. Sir, in fact, the law-breakers are dealt with iron hands, and even in the Government fair price shops, we have booked about 574 cases against the employees who are violating the rules in the PDS shops.

Sir, as a fiscal measure, our State is not levying a VAT on the essential commodities of rice, pulses, edible oils, to check the price-rise. At the same time, friends were echoing on a different line that there is a vast difference between the farm gate and the retail price, and in order to avoid that, our Government has introduced a system called "Farmer Market System" in which we have opened about 153 farmers' chandy throughout the State, in which the farmers, agriculturists are given identity cards and they are allotted shops, every morning, in the market. The allotment is done on a lot, and they can have a direct access to the consumers.

Sir, you may give a little more time. I don't want to bargain.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P.J. KURIEN): I am not stopping you. How much more time will you take? I am not stopping you.

SHRI T. M. SELVAGANAPATHI: Sir, I will take ten more minutes. I will be able to finish in ten minutes, I hope. I have more materials to produce before this august House.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P.J. KURIEN): Now, you please proceed.

SHRI T. M. SELVAGANAPATHI: How is the Government functioning there? In this farmers' chandai alone, out of 153 markets, 22 markets were provided with cold storage facilities where the

farmers can directly interact with the consumers and sell the products at the existing market rates. No middleman is permitted. Middlemen or intermediaries are completely eradicated or eliminated. Thus, in this market we get every day 2,121 metric tons of fruits and vegetables worth Rs.3,42,00,000. This is catering to the needs of nearly four lakh consumers every day in the State of Tamil Nadu. In order to mitigate the ill-effects of the price rise and with a view to increasing the purchasing power of the common man, the Rural Development Department of the State headed by our hon. Deputy Chief Minister, my beloved leader, with his able and dynamic administration, has created and established 4,00,000 Self-Help Groups throughout the State in these four years alone with a membership of 68,00,000 women advancing a loan of Rs.7,700 crores. ...*(Interruptions)*...

Sir, you may stop the running commentary coming from the other side.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P.J. KURIEN): You don't mind that. You don't listen to that. You proceed.

SHRI T. M. SELVAGANAPATHI: We have given Rs.7,700 crores to the women folk. Nearly 1,47,000 were provided with a revolving fund directly by the Deputy Chief Minister who travelled the length and breadth of the State and met each individual woman and handed over the revolving fund. They almost saved Rs.400 crores which happened nowhere in the country.

At the same time, I would like to draw the attention of this august House to the observations of the Supreme Court where a public interest litigation was filed by an NGO in New Delhi in relation to the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme. His Lordship, the Chief Justice of India, has observed that the system that has been followed by the State of Tamil Nadu has to be emulated and followed by other parts of the country also. This is the observation made. He observed that it is the best system, as far as MGNREGS (Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme) is concerned, and the other States can scrupulously follow the method that has been followed by Tamil Nadu. Sir, there can't be two opinions on that.

Now, the public sector oil companies are incurring a huge loss. There may be a difference of opinion. Whether the NDA is in power or another Government is in power, the high subsidy of

Rs.1,20,000 crores under the Administered Price Control System could otherwise be utilised for the developmental purposes. It is only with that spirit we have accepted the deregulation and, at the same time, there is the issue of price of fuels, the petroleum products. What is the way out? The Centre is levying Central excise duty on the oil products. The State is levying sales-tax. In fact, as a result of the recent hike, the Transport Department of the State alone is going to have an additional burden of Rs.150 crores. I should inform the House that it is only at the behest of the truthful allies that, in fact, the rise or hike in the price of fuels was a little low. I must say that it is because of the intervention of our leader the price was hiked a little lower level. Therefore, probably, in order to have better benefits tomorrow we have to pay a small price today.

As far as Tamil Nadu is concerned, the fuel price hike leaves an additional burden of Rs. 150 crores on public transport system. But our Chief Minister has made it clear in the State that the bus fare would not be raised. The hike in fuel price is going to have a cascading effect. There is no doubt about it. But we have to take it one way or the other. Deregulation has to take place. Now the question is: how can this effect be reduced? The only way is, the Centre and the State Governments can withdraw some duty levied on oil. As far as the State of Tamil Nadu is concerned, the sales tax has been reduced twice in 2006 and 2008. We have brought it down from 25 per cent to 21.43 per cent, which is the lowest in the country. It was reduced twice. Karnataka is levying 23 per cent; Andhra Pradesh is levying 22.25; Kerala, which is ruled by the Comrades, is levying 25.69 per cent; Madhya Pradesh is levying 24 per cent; Chhattisgarh is levying 25 per cent. It is our State Government which has brought it down to 21.43 per cent with a view that it does not have a cascading effect. Therefore, it remains to be seen how best the Government of India is going to tackle the situation. Even if the worst comes, we are sure the UPA Government would not hesitate to reduce the excise duty levied on fuel.

Sir, I urge upon the Government that before the elections there must be increase in the agriculture investment, as everybody is echoing in this august House. Of course, in this regime, under the stewardship of hon. Pawraji, the budget allocation is more as compared to the previous

regime. But still it is inadequate. Therefore, we must focus more on agriculture production and productivity. As my esteemed colleague and learned sister, Shrimati Kanimozhi, pointed out the other day, the storage facility is very poor in this country. Even the Supreme Court has also pointed out about foodgrains rotting on roads and on railway tracks. We should have better storage facilities. We need to augment our storage facilities. We also need to strengthen the Public Distribution System by making it universal so that foodgrains are available at cheaper price. There were some newspaper reports that the Government was contemplating universal Public Distribution System in only 150 districts of the country which, I think, is inadequate. It is high time you strengthened the PDS. We should also contemplate prohibiting forward trading and speculative activities such as online trading.

The important point is the Essential Commodities (Special Provisions) Act has been diluted. We all know who was responsible and which regime was responsible for this. There is need for having more teeth to handle the hoarders and black marketeers for the simple reason that they are not allowed to get away. Therefore, an amendment is sought in the Essential Commodities Act. Under Section 3 (a) of the Essential Commodities Act, we can contemplate imposing a limit on the upper ceiling of retail prices of essential commodities. If a cap is fixed, if an upper ceiling is put on retail prices, that would go a long way.

With these words, Sir, I thank you for giving me this opportunity to speak. Thank you.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P.J. KURIEN): Thank you very much for the maiden speech. It was a good Tamil Nadu feeling. Before I call the next speaker, I would request the hon. Members to kindly stick to their time. Otherwise, it will be very difficult, as there are a lot of speakers to speak on this. Now, Shri Ishwarlal Shankarlal Jain. It is his maiden speech.

श्री ईश्वरलाल शंकरलाल जैन (महाराष्ट्र) : उपसभाध्यक्ष महोदय, आज पहली बार इस अगस्ट हाउस के अंदर अपने विचार व्यक्त करने के लिए मैं खड़ा हुआ हूँ। जो विषय हमारे सामने चर्चा के लिए आया है, वह देश के दृष्टिकोण से बहुत ही महत्वपूर्ण है। परन्तु उस पर विचार करने के लिए जो एक सप्ताह बर्बाद हुआ, उसके लिए हमारे पास किसी प्रकार का उत्तर नहीं था जब पिछले शनिवार और इतवार को मैं अपनी कान्सिट्यूअन्सी की तरफ

गया, मुझसे कई लोगों ने पूछा कि आपका पहला सप्ताह राज्य सभा के अंदर कैसा गया? मैं उनको क्या कहता कि वहां पर बिजनेस ही नहीं हुआ, वहां पर हंगामा हो रहा था और कोई चर्चा नहीं हुई।

उपसभाध्यक्ष महोदय, लोग हमसे अपेक्षा करते हैं, वे हमारी तरफ देखते हैं कि इस देश को चलाने के लिए सरकार तो है, सरकार की कहीं गलती होगी, तो विपक्ष उसको करेक्ट करने के लिए है, परन्तु बिजनेस होना चाहिए, डिस्कशन होना चाहिए, वे नहीं हुए, मैं बड़ा निरुत्तर रहा। परन्तु आज आपने मुझे बोलने का मौका दिया, इसके लिए मैं आपको बहुत-बहुत धन्यवाद देता हूं।

उपसभाध्यक्ष महोदय, इस विषय के ऊपर कई विचार रखे गए। क्या सचमुच महंगाई का असर इतना ज्यादा आज के दिन है? महंगाई के ऊपर, महंगाई का सपोर्ट लेते हुए, जो पेट्रोलियम प्रोडक्ट्स के अंदर राइज हुई, उसके ऊपर बोल सकते थे, परन्तु उसको साथ में लेते हुए, महंगाई के ऊपर, जब आज महंगाई कम होती जा रही है, हमें उसके ऊपर बोलना पड़ रहा है। महंगाई नहीं हुई है, ऐसा मैं नहीं कह रहा हूं। महंगाई हुई है, उसका असर पूरे देश के ऊपर हुआ है, गरीबों के ऊपर भी इसका प्रभाव पड़ा है। अनेकों योजनाएं सरकार की गरीबों के लिए हैं। अंत्योदय कार्ड से हम आदिवासियों को कम दाम पर अनाज देते हैं, बीपीएल कार्ड से गरीबों को भी कम दाम पर अनाज देते हैं, जो बिलो पावर्टी लाइन हैं, उसको पीडीएस के द्वारा बाकी के लोगों को भी अनाज मिलता है। फिर भी, महंगाई का असर उनके ऊपर पड़ रहा है, इसमें कोई शक नहीं है। क्या महंगाई को घटाने के लिए सरकार ने प्रयास नहीं किए? अगर प्रयास किए हैं और उनमें कहीं न कहीं खामी हुई हो, तो उसके बारे में सजेशन देना अधिक महत्वपूर्ण होता, बजाय उनकी खामियां दिखाने के और यह कहने के लिए कि क्या आप ऐसा नहीं करें।

उपसभापति महोदय, ऑयल प्रोडक्ट्स की वजह से जो महंगाई हुई है, क्या दो रुपये लीटर, ढाई रुपये लीटर बढ़ा देने से इतना बोझा बढ़ जाएगा कि जनता उसको सहन नहीं कर पाएगी। सर्वसाधारण आदमी को दो रुपये, ढाई रुपये लीटर दाम बढ़ाने से फर्क नहीं पड़ेगा, अगर उसकी इन्कम बढ़ जाए। हमारे देश में 60 प्रतिशत से अधिक किसान हैं और हमारा देश उन पर निर्भर करता है, खेती के ऊपर निर्भर करता है और किसानों की माली हालत के लिए जो कदम उठाए गए हैं, उनसे हमारा रूरल इंडिया वाकई में खुशहाल होता जा रहा है। हमारे रूरल इंडिया के अंदर, अगर हम देश की इकनॉमिक कंडिशन देखें, अगर वह अच्छी नहीं होती, तो जब पूरे वर्ल्ड के अंदर इकनॉमिक क्राइसेस हो रहा था, हमारे देश में उसका सबसे कम असर दिखाई दे रहा था और वह केवल रूरल इंडिया की वजह से था, क्योंकि वहां के किसानों के पास पैसा था, वे खरीददारी कर रहे थे, उनमें खरीददारी करने की क्षमता थी और इसीलिए हमें उसका असर कम दिखाई दिया।

महोदय, किसान जो प्रोड्यूस करता है, अगर उसको उसका सही प्राइस नहीं मिलेगा, अगर उसको उसके पसीने का दाम नहीं मिलेगा, तो क्या वह प्रोड्यूस करेगा, हरगिज़ नहीं करेगा। किसानों को remunerative price मिलना चाहिए, उसके पसीने का दाम मिलना चाहिए। क्या शासन ने किसानों को यह सब देने की कोशिश की? यदि उसको अधिक दाम देंगे, तो थोड़ा दाम दूसरों को भी देना पड़ेगा। ऐसा नहीं है कि सरकार ने उनकी तरफ ध्यान नहीं दिया। जो शासन की नौकरी में हैं, उनको 6th पे-कमीशन मिल गया। जिनकी इनकम लोअर इनकम ग्रुप की है, इनकम टैक्स के अंदर उनको भी बेनिफिट्स दिए हैं। शासन ने किसी न किसी तरह से उनको सहायता देने की कोशिश की है। अगर हम किसानों को remunerative price नहीं देंगे, तो किसान वे चीजें नहीं लगाएंगे, उनकी बुवाई कम होगी और उनका उत्पादन कम होगा। पिछले साल भी यही हुआ था कि जब यहां पर ज्यादा शक्कर पैदा हो रही थी, तो जो किसान ने लागत लगाई थी, जब उसका खर्चा भी नहीं निकला था, तो उसकी बुवाई कम हुई और शक्कर का प्रोडक्शन कम हुआ। यह जो डिमांड और सप्लाई है, यह यूनिवर्सल है, इसको कोई बदल नहीं सकता, लेकिन जब डिमांड होगी, तो उसकी सप्लाई करने के लिए उसका प्रोडक्शन भी सही होना चाहिए। इस दृष्टिकोण से शासन ने दोनों में समन्वय बैठाने का प्रयास भी किया। इससे महंगाई का असर दूसरों को थोड़ा जरूर दिखा होगा। यदि हम दुनिया के देशों की ओर देखें, तो उनके दृष्टिकोण में हमारा देश एक सुदृढ़ स्थिति में रहा है, लेकिन कुछ प्वाइंट्स ऐसे जरूर हैं, जिनके ऊपर शासन ने प्रयास किया है और वह आगे भी करना चाहता है। शासन फूड सिक्युरिटी एक्ट लाना चाहता है। यह बहुत ही अच्छी बात है। हमारे देश के अंदर कोई भी आदमी भूखा न रहे, इसके लिए हमारा शासन फूड सिक्युरिटी की जिम्मेवारी लेना चाहता है। वह एक अच्छा कदम लेकर आ रहा है। इसके साथ ही हमें और भी कई स्टेप्स उठाने पड़ेंगे, जैसे कि स्टोरेज का स्टेप है। आज हमारे पास फूड काफी बड़ी मात्रा में उपलब्ध है, परन्तु स्टोरेज ठीक नहीं होने से वह सड़ रहा है। इसके लिए हमें स्टोरेज के उपकरणों के बारे में सोचना होगा और उनको बढ़ाना होगा यदि हम यह नहीं करेंगे और केवल अपना उत्पादन बढ़ाएंगे तथा उसका ठीक से रख-रखाव करने के बारे में नहीं सोचेंगे, तो हमारा लॉस काफी बड़ी मात्रा में होगा और हमें उसका परिणाम भुगतना पड़ेगा। इसलिए हमें स्टोरेज के लिए प्रमोट करना होगा तथा अनेक मार्गों से लोगों को प्रभावित करना होगा कि स्टोरेज की ओर बढ़ें, ताकि फूड को नुकसान होने से बचाया जाए।

उपसभाध्यक्ष महोदय, इतना ही नहीं इम्पोर्ट के लिए भी कई चीजें हैं। मैं आपके माध्यम से माननीय कृषि मंत्री जी का ध्यान इस ओर खींचना चाहूंगा कि हमारे देश के अंदर दालों की कमी है। यह कही आम से नहीं है, यदि हम पिछले 25 वर्षों में देखें तो हमारे देश को दाल इम्पोर्ट करनी पड़ रही है तथा एडिबल ऑयल इम्पोर्ट करना पड़ रहा है, क्योंकि हमारे यहां उसका उत्पादन कम है। जब हमारी जनसंख्या बढ़ती जा रही है, तो उसकी डिमांड तो बढ़ती ही जाएगी। हमने एक्सपोर्ट के लिए इम्पोर्ट बन्द कर दिया है। मैं जहां से आता हूं, वहां पर करीब 125 दाल मिलें हैं। वे

दालें इम्पोर्ट करते थे और एक्सपोर्ट भी करते थे। चूंकि हमारे यहां पर दालों की शॉर्टेज है, हमने एक्सपोर्ट पर बैन कर दिया। हमने कई बार रिप्रजेंटेशन दिया कि हमें इम्पोर्ट करने दीजिए, क्योंकि दाल मिलें बंद करनी पड़ेगी और मजदूरों की मजदूरी भी बंद हो जायेगी। जो हमारे देश से एक्सपोर्ट हो रहा है, यदि दूसरे देशों के अंदर दाल नहीं मिलेगी, तो वे वहां पर प्लांट लगाने की कोशिश करेंगे और हमारे यहां से एक्सपोर्ट कम हो जाएंगे। आप एक्सपोर्ट बंद मत कीजिए, एक्सपोर्ट के एग्सेट कुछ लिमिट डालकर इम्पोर्ट एलाऊ कीजिए ताकि आप जितना इम्पोर्ट करोगे, उसका 50 परसेंट एक्सपोर्ट कर सकोगे। आपको फिपटी परसेंट देश में ही देना होगा, इससे कोई फर्क नहीं पड़ता था। इससे देश के लोगों को दाल मिल सकती थी और एक्सपोर्ट भी हो सकता था, ताकि लोगों को दूसरी आउटसोर्सिंग न करनी पड़े। इससे हमारे देश के अंदर जो फैक्ट्रीज लगी हुई हैं, जिनके अंदर मजदूर काम करते हैं, उनको मजदूरी भी मिलेगी और फैक्ट्रीज को रन करने में भी सुविधा होगी, यानी जिस चीज से हमारे देश का नुकसान नहीं है, हमें ऐसी पॉलिसीज को अडॉप्ट करना होगा। हम एक्सपोर्ट नहीं करने देंगे और केवल इम्पोर्ट ही करेंगे, तो इम्पोर्ट तो हमारी जरूरत के मुताबिक हो जाएगा, परंतु वे मिलें, जो बंद पड़ी हुई हैं, वहां जो काम करने वाले मजदूर हैं, उनको इसका खामियाजा भुगतना पड़ सकता है, अतः इसके बारे में भी सोचना होगा।

उपसभाध्यक्ष महोदय, इतना ही नहीं, हमारे प्रॉडक्शन को बढ़ाने के लिए, जैसे हमारे यहां दाल की शॉर्टेज है या ऑयल सीड्स की शॉर्टेज है, यह बढ़ाने के लिए हमारा स्वास्थ्य मंत्रालय कोशिश कर रहा है, हमारी गवर्नमेंट उसके ऊपर बहुत पैसा भी खर्च कर रही है। नए सीड्स, अच्छे सीड्स पैदा हों, जिससे कि प्रॉडक्शन बढ़े, यह प्रॉडक्शन बढ़ाने के लिए अगर कुछ समय लगने वाला होगा, तो Instead of हम बड़ी मात्रा में इम्पोर्ट करें, उसका हमारे देश में प्रॉडक्शन करने के लिए यदि कुछ समय के लिए अच्छे सीड्स का इम्पोर्ट भी करना पड़ा, तो कम मात्रा में इम्पोर्ट करना होगा। इससे हमारे देश में ही प्रोडक्शन बढ़ सकेगा, यानी अगर हम अच्छी सीड्स इम्पोर्ट करके प्रॉडक्शन बढ़ा सकें, तो पूरा इम्पोर्ट करने की जरूरत नहीं होगी और हम हमारे यहां की जरूरत पूरी करने की कोशिश कर सकेंगे। हम उन्हें अच्छा सीड देंगे। मेरे एक सम्माननीय सदस्य यहां बोल रहे थे कि उनकी लागत कम करने के लिए हमें चार परसेंट ब्याज पर उन्हें कर्ज उपलब्ध कराना चाहिए। उपसभाध्यक्ष महोदय, मुझे यह कहने में बड़ी खुशी है कि मेरी स्टेट, जहां से मैं आया हूँ, महाराष्ट्र में गवर्नमेंट ने ऑलरेडी डिसेजन ले लिया है कि पचास हजार रुपये तक का जो ऋण दिया जाएगा, उस पर किसी प्रकार का ब्याज नहीं लगेगा, यानी पचास हजार रुपये तक का ऋण ब्याज फ्री दिया जाएगा और तीन लाख रुपये तक का जो ऋण दिया जाएगा, उस पर सिर्फ दो परसेंट का इंटररेस्ट लगेगा। हम यह स्कीम इसी साल इम्प्लिमेंट कर रहे हैं। यदि शासन के दिल में ऐसी भावना रही, उसकी इच्छाशक्ति रही तो वह ऐसा कर सकता है। यह मार्गदर्शन देने के लिए, हमारे नेता, जो पवार साहब हैं,

उन्होंने हमें प्रोत्साहित किया है, हमारे शासन को प्रोत्साहित किया है। आज हम वहां पर यह स्कीम इम्प्लीमेंट कर रहे हैं और किसानों की लागत कम करने की कोशिश कर रहे हैं।

उपसभाध्यक्ष जी, एक तरफ प्रॉडक्शन बढ़ाएं, दूसरी तरफ उनकी लागत कम करें, तो अच्छा होगा। जब हम एक तरफ प्रॉडक्शन और उसकी स्टोरेज का ध्यान रखेंगे, तो हमारे देश के अंदर किसी प्रकार की कमतरता नहीं हो सकेगी। हमारा देश स्वयं में पूर्ण हो सकेगा। इतना ही नहीं, हम एक्सपोर्ट करके और अधिक अर्निंग कर सकेंगे। उपसभाध्यक्ष जी, मैं जिस जगह से आता हूँ, वहां पर केला बहुत बड़ी मात्रा में होता है। एक समय तो ऐसा था कि जब पूरे देश की सप्लाई का करीब फिफ्टी परसेंट केला केवल मेरे जिले से पैदा होता था, अब तो और जगह भी पैदा होने लग गया है, परंतु फिर भी मैं आपके माध्यम से शासन से पूछना चाहता हूँ कि क्या केला फ्रूट नहीं है? अगर वह फ्रूट नहीं है तो उस केले को हॉर्टिकल्चर का दर्जा क्यों नहीं दिया जा रहा है? उसके फायदे किसानों को क्यों नहीं दिए जा रहे हैं? वह मेहनत करता है, फिर भी उसके साथ अन्याय हो रहा है। इस प्रकार की कहीं anomalies हों, पॉलिसीज के अंदर कहीं डिफेक्ट्स हों, तो वे दूर होने चाहिए। किसानों को उसका फायदा देना चाहिए। अगर वह फ्रूट है तो उसको फ्रूट का दर्जा दीजिए। उसके जो भी फायदे होंगे, वे फायदे हमारे किसानों के पल्ले में डलने देनी चाहिए, किसानों को न्याय देना चाहिए। उपसभाध्यक्ष महोदय, इस प्रकार से एक तरफ प्रॉडक्शन, दूसरी तरफ उसकी सेप्टी, उसकी स्टोरेज, उसका कॉस्ट ऑफ प्रोडक्शन कम करेंगे तो प्रॉडक्शन बढ़ेगा, डिमांड एंड सप्लाई का रूल मीट आउट होगा और हमारे देश के अंदर किसी प्रकार से इसकी कमतरता नहीं होगी। यह करने के लिए शासन अनेकानेक प्रयास कर रहा है। शासन आगे और भी प्रयास करे और लोगों को प्रोत्साहित करे, मैं इस प्रकार की अपेक्षा रखता हूँ। इसी भावना के साथ, जो विचार मैंने आपके सामने रखे हैं और उन्हें रखने का आपने मुझे जो अवसर दिया, उसके लिए आपका धन्यवाद अदा करते हुए अपने शब्द पूर्ण करता हूँ।

श्री मोहन सिंह (उत्तर प्रदेश) : उपसभाध्यक्ष महोदय, मैं बहुत संक्षेप में अपनी बात कहना चाहता हूँ। सरकार की नीतियां, सरकार की मानसिकता और सरकार का प्रबन्ध, इन तीनों ने मिल कर जीवन आवश्यक वस्तुओं का दाम पिछले डेढ़ वर्ष में आसमान तक पहुंचाया है। यह खुशी की बात है कि जिस समस्या का सीधा सम्बन्ध भारत की आम जनता से है, उस पर जनता के दुख और दर्द का आइना, भारत के लोकतंत्र की सबसे बड़ी संस्था, संसद के भीतर हम बहस कर रहे हैं।

यह कहने की बात नहीं कि पिछले इलेक्शन के समय ही महंगाई आसमान छू रही थी, लेकिन दो कारणों से इस सरकार को बहुमत जुटाने में आसानी हुई। एक तो छोटे वेतन आयोग की संस्तुतियों को लागू कर एक खास तबके के वेतन और सुविधा में भारी बढ़ोत्तरी की गई और दूसरा, जो गांव में बसने वाला किसान था, उसके कर्ज की

माफी, बैंकों के कर्ज की माफी सरकार ने करके अपने समर्थन में बहुमत जुटाने का काम किया। लेकिन क्या सरकार बार-बार कर्ज काफ़ी कर सकती है? क्या सरकार का एक्सचेकर इस बात की छूट देगा कि सरकार इतने बड़े पैमाने पर ऊंची तन्ख्वाह वालों की सुख-सुविधा और वेतन हर वर्ष बढ़ाती रहे? जिनके वेतन में सरकार ने वृद्धि की थी, वोट लेने के बाद सरकार ने उनकी जेब से पैसा निकालने का इंतजाम बढ़ी हुई वस्तुओं के दाम के साथ किया। हमको यह कहते हुए अफसोस हो रहा है कि पिछले डेढ़ वर्ष में सरकार ने दाम वृद्धि को रोकने के लिए क्या कार्यक्रम बनाए और क्या कदम उठाए, इसके बारे में हमने समाचार पत्रों के जरिए कोई खबर नहीं पढ़ी, सिवाय इसके कि सरकार ने टाइम टेबल घोषित किया। आने वाली खरीफ सीज़न में जब बम्पर क्रॉप हो जाएगी, तो खाद्यान्न के दाम घट जाएंगे। लेकिन इसका उल्टा हुआ। फिर कहा गया कि आने वाले अप्रैल महीने में जब रबी की फसल आ जाएगी, तो अपने आप इस देश में खाद्यान्न के दाम घट जाएंगे।

प्रधान मंत्री जी ने फिर से टाइम टेबल घोषित किया है कि आने वाले दिसम्बर महीने में, उसका निहितार्थ है कि जब खरीफ की फसल आ जाएगी, तो अपने आप खाद्यान्नों के दाम घट जाएंगे, यानी सरकार को कुछ नहीं करना है। भगवान के भरोसे जरूरी चीजों के दाम घटेंगे, यह सरकार का भरोसा रहता है। सरकार को भी कुछ करना चाहिए, इस पर सरकार गम्भीर नहीं होगी, इस पर मुझे दुख होता है। यह कितने आश्चर्य की बात है कि पिछले साल जो खाद्यान्न के दाम बढ़े, उसके बारे में कहा गया कि पश्चिमी मानसून ठीक से नहीं आया, बारिश नहीं हुई, बहुत सारे हिस्से में सूखा पड़ गया, पश्चिमी-उत्तरी हिन्दुस्तान में, जिसके चलते हमारी फसल कम हुई और उसके कारण चीजों के दाम बढ़ गए। इस साल अभी बारिश आई नहीं, मानसून आया नहीं, तभी हमारे कृषि मंत्री जी ने खुशफहमी में कहा कि इतना शानदार मानसून कभी नहीं आया था और इस साल खरीफ की फसल बम्पर होने वाली है। उनकी ओर से भविष्यवाणी हो गई है। लेकिन दुख इस बात का है कि इस वर्ष पूर्वी मानसून ने दस्तक ही नहीं दिया। दो महीने बीत गए। बंगाल का बहुत सारा इलाका, पूरा झारखंड, पूरा बिहार, उत्तर प्रदेश का आधे से अधिक हिस्सा इस वर्ष सूखे की चपेट में है। बिहार की सरकार ने अभी 26 जिलों को सूखाग्रस्त घोषित कर दिया। जमीनी हकीकत और मंत्रियों के बयान के बीच में कितना बड़ा अंतराल है। आप इसी से सोच सकते हैं कि यह सरकार जमीन से वास्ता नहीं रखती। यही कारण है कि जो महंगाई है, वह आसमान छू रही है।

कहा जाता है कि इन्फ्लेशन रेट बढ़ रहा है और 10 के करीब हो गया है। फिर कहा जाता है कि अब धीरे-धीरे खाद्यान्न की कीमत घटेगी, क्योंकि इन्फ्लेशन रेट 17 से घट कर 12 हो गया। यह भी एक विडम्बना है कि इन्फ्लेशन रेट के बढ़ने की जो गति है, फुटकर दाम उसकी दुगुनी रफ्तार से बढ़ने लगते हैं, लेकिन उसके ऊपर सरकार का कोई नियंत्रण नहीं है। कृषि मंत्री जैसे जिम्मेवार आदमी, जो अनुभवी हैं, पुराने हैं और लम्बे समय से इस विभाग को

संभाल रहे हैं, उनके द्वारा यह बयान दिया गया कि इस साल चीनी की कमी पड़ेगी, क्योंकि उत्पादन 1 करोड़ 25 लाख टन ही होगा, और इसलिए चीनी के बढ़ते हुए दाम को हम घटा नहीं सकते हैं। उसके छः महीने के बाद वही कृषि मंत्री जी यह बयान देते हैं कि हमको अधिकारियों ने गुमराह कर दिया था, दरसल इस देश में चीनी 1 करोड़ 80 लाख टन पैदा हो गई और अगर हमारे पास उपलब्ध बफर स्टॉक को भी मिला दिया जाए तो कुल मिला कर 2 करोड़ 30 लाख टन हो गई है, यानी हमारी जरूरत भर का स्टॉक है, इसलिए चिन्ता की कोई बात नहीं है।

छः महीने में जब चीनी के दाम बढ़ गए, तो कृषि मंत्री जी की ओर से यह स्वीकारोक्ति आई कि हमको अधिकारियों ने गुमराह किया। क्या इससे अधिक खराब बात और कोई हो सकती है कि इस देश के एक जिम्मेवार कृषि मंत्री, समझदार कृषि मंत्री और अनुभव वाले कृषि मंत्री यह कहें कि हमको अधिकारियों ने गुमराह किया? मैं समझता हूँ कि महंगाई बढ़ने के ये सब बहुत सारे कारण हैं।

भारत के वित्त मंत्री जी ने कहा कि सप्लाई और डिमांड का अंतराल काफी है, जिसके चलते जरूरी चीजों के दाम बढ़ रहे हैं, लेकिन उन्हीं के दूसरे मंत्रियों के बयान पढ़िए तो वे कहते हैं कि देश में खाद्यान्न की कोई कमी नहीं है। हम बाजार में भी देखते हैं कि आप बढ़ा हुआ पैसा लेकर जाइए, बाजार से कोई चीज़ गायब नहीं है, वह उसी रेट में मिलती है। चीनी के दाम इतने क्यों बढ़ गए? अगर मंत्री जी के पुराने बयान को भी स्वीकार कर लिया जाए तो हमने मान लिया कि चीनी का उत्पादन कम हुआ या उसके दाम 30 रुपये या 35 रुपये हो गए अथवा यदि चीनी 30 या 50 रुपये भी हो गई, तब भी बाजार में मिठाई की कीमत 450 रुपये किलो होने का क्या मतलब है? क्या इसका कोई औचित्य है कि जो फिनिशड गुड़स हैं और जो राँ मैटीरियल है, उसके बीच का जो लूट का अंतराल है, उसके बारे में सरकार के पास कोई मैकेनिज्म नहीं है। मैं निजी अनुभव से कह सकता हूँ कि हमारे इलाके से व्यापारी लाल मिर्च दो रुपये किलो खरीद कर ले जाते हैं और कोलकाता के बाजार में उसको 20 रुपये किलो बेचते हैं। एक तरफ उत्पादक है और एक तरफ उपभोक्ता। दो रुपये की मिर्च उपभोक्ता को 20 रुपये में मिलती है, यह 18 रुपये की जो लूट है, उसका जिम्मेवार कौन है?

अतः हम सरकार से यह कहना चाहते हैं कि सरकार जरा गंभीर हो और महंगाई को मज्जाक का विषय न समझे। इसके ऊपर सरकार गंभीरतापूर्वक सोच कर कुछ कड़े कदम उठाने का काम करे। कड़े कदम उठाने के संबंध में हम यह कह सकते हैं कि खाद्यान्न के व्यापार को निजी व्यापारियों के हाथ में पूरे तौर पर छोड़ देना, मैं समझता हूँ कि आम जनता के हितों के साथ सबसे बड़ा मज्जाक है।

आप बाजार में जाकर देखिए, सरकार के सामने भंडारण की समस्या है। कृषि मंत्री जी ने अपने बयान में कहा कि भंडारण से हमारा जो नुकसान हुआ है, वह हमारे संपूर्ण भंडार का 0.03 प्रतिशत है। सवाल परसेंटेज का नहीं है, सवाल यह है कि इस गरीब देश में यदि एक किलो राशन का भी सरकार अथवा भंडारण की कमी से नुकसान होता है, तो उसकी जिम्मेवारी सरकार के ऊपर आती है। बार-बार बयान दिया जाता है कि चूंकि पंजाब में जमीन इतनी महंगी है, उस महंगी जमीन का भंडारण करने के लिए भंडारगृह बनाना हमको बड़ा महंगा पड़ेगा। माना कि पंजाब में जमीन महंगी है, लेकिन बुंदेलखंड में तो सस्ती है। इधर उत्तर की जो सारी स्टेट्स हैं, वे गेहूं के सरप्लस की आपूर्ति दक्षिण में करती हैं। यदि बीच में गोदाम बंट जाएं तो वहां पर उसका भंडारण करने के बाद उसके वितरण में हमको थोड़ी आसानी हो जाएगी, लेकिन इसके बारे में कभी सोचा नहीं जाता है।

पिछले ही वर्ष एफसीआई ने सड़े हुए गेहूं की सफाई के ऊपर 250 रुपया खर्च किया। ऐसा क्यों हुआ? यदि इसके बारे में सरकार गम्भीर नहीं होगी तो मैं समझता हूं कि यह बड़ी विचित्र बात होगी। अभी जो आंकड़े आए हैं, वे आंकड़े क्या आए हैं? यही कि "अफ्रीका के 26 देशों के मुकाबले, जिनकी आबादी 41 करोड़ है, हिन्दुस्तान के 8 राज्यों में गरीबों की संख्या उससे एक करोड़ अधिक यानी 42 करोड़ के आसपास है।" क्या हम उन गरीबों के बारे में नहीं सोच सकते? फिगर्स आ रही हैं कि आने वाले 20 वर्षों में हिन्दुस्तान आबादी के लिहाज से दुनिया का सबसे बड़ा देश हो जाएगा। हम कम-से-कम आबादी के मामले में चीन को भी मात दे देंगे। उस बड़ी हुई आबादी के लिए हमारी क्या तैयारी है? क्या भारत सरकार इस पर कुछ गम्भीर है, क्योंकि इस देश में जमीन सिकुड़ रही है? इस देश के अन्दर जो छोटे काश्तकार हैं वे अपनी जमीन बेच कर भूमिहीनों की कोटि में चले जा रहे हैं और जमीन कृषि के अलावा दूसरे कार्यों में लग रही है। यदि सरकार सावधान नहीं हुई तो कृषि लायक जमीन सिकुड़ कर इतनी सीमित हो जाएगी कि हम अपने देश की बढ़ी हुई आबादी को खाना खिलाने की स्थिति में भी नहीं रहेंगे। इसलिए जब खाने की कमी हो जाएगी तो इस देश में अराजकता के अलावा कुछ नहीं बचेगा। जरूरी चीजों के बढ़े हुए दाम इस देश में अराजकता के बहुत बड़े कारण हैं और कानून-व्यवस्था को नियंत्रित करने के सबसे बड़े कारक हैं।

इसलिए भारत सरकार को ईमानदारी के साथ एक सर्वदलीय बैठक बुलाकर इसके सभी रास्तों पर विचार करके कि कैसे महंगाई रोकी जाए, ठोस कदम उठाने की घोषणा करनी चाहिए और अपने मंत्रियों के जो गैरजिम्मेदाराना वक्तव्य हैं उन वक्तव्यों के ऊपर थोड़ा अंकुश लगाकर कोशिश करनी चाहिए कि इस तरह के बयान न दिए जाएं जिनसे इस देश के तस्करों, इस देश के मुनाफाखोरों और इस देश के जमाखोरों का मनोबल बढ़े और उनको आम आदमी के साथ खिलवाड़ करने का मौका मिले। इन्हीं शब्दों के साथ मैं अपनी बात खत्म करता हूं।

DR. ASHOK S. GANGULY (Nominated) : I think, learned Members have given a lot of data, lot of explanation as to why we are facing this problem. As a matter of fact, I am not as familiar as they are with what is happening in rural India. So, I am very grateful for the feedback we have got from the various Members from the rural parts of the country. Every household is facing the problem of prices. But, at the same time, we must remember that a significant amount of money is going into the rural sector. The Minimum Support Price, which has been increasing significantly, is absolutely justified. It is a great incentive to the farmers and our growth is being driven by consumption. Whether the product is in short supply or large supply, it is being driven by consumption.

So, the problem is that the people wish to consume but the supply is not there. Therefore, prices are going up. Economists understand the problem better than I do. We also know the fact that significant amount of grains, vegetables, fruits, sugarcane etc. is being produced but the stranglehold of the chain from the producers to the consumers is one of the biggest curses in this country. The agricultural produce, marketing rules in various States remain in complete control and the price jump from one sector to the other till it reaches the retail point is just unacceptable. Something has to be done about it. We need to bring in modern methods of taking the production and bringing it to the consumers. We always talk about rotting of wheat but we do not realize that 30 to 40 per cent of the vegetables and fruits that are produced in this country rot and do not reach the market because of absence of storage, cold storage, cold chain and supply chain. Our outlets are not equipped to handle storage. Therefore, if we go to the market in the late evening, fruits and vegetables are sold because there is no cold storage available to the retailers.

And, yet, we will not allow modernization! It has been proved, again and again, that modernization of food chain, large supermarkets, etc., will, in no way, harm the traditional retail shops that are abundant in the country. We keep on protesting about it. The issue that we have to deal with – we don't talk about it—is this. We have had liberalization, reforms. But, we continue, no matter which salary bracket or pay packet you are in, to expect, generation-after-generation, for the

Government to subsidize our lives and our lifestyles. Nobody comes and say that the days of subsidies or reduction of subsidies are here, especially for the better off people. We continue to subsidize. Unless we have a balance between subsidy and pricing, what is paid to the farmer and what the consumer has to pay, this imbalance will continue. This is not a problem which is going to be solved overnight. We are not short of products that we produce. We are short of our ability to deliver. Unless that is dealt with, as a part of a larger picture, we will continue to meet in this House, again and again, and keep on complaining about the rising prices. This is not going to go away.

I particularly take the case of edible oils and pulses. If we continue to produce pulses and edible oils the way we are producing, we will never be self-sufficient. As a matter of fact, the other countries which are producing pulses and edible oils, in the not too long distant future, will ask for extortionist prices to fulfill our vegetarian protein needs and our edible oil needs. It is a very major issue. Yet, we refuse to acknowledge the modern scientific techniques in order to improve our farm productivity. Biotechnology is being held out as a ghost and there is a debate, without any scientific basis, that we must not use genetically modified seeds, which is the fundamental way of increasing productivity world-over. Nobody has said that this should be done in a mindless fashion. Nobody is saying that safety should not be tested.

(MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN in the Chair)

But, is it beyond our capacity to set up safety techniques, safety laboratories, modern technologies in order to introduce genetically modified oil seeds, genetically modified cereal, genetically modified vegetables and increase production significantly which is a sure way, in the short term, bring down prices and, in certain case, net exporters of many of our fruits and vegetables. We are one of the largest producers in the world. And, yet, we have to pay huge prices in order to consume the same.

Sir, I also want to mention about a point. A lot of reference has been made about energy cost and petroleum products. I do not see any reason for us to continue to subsidize people with 2 or 3 cars, people who drive Mercedes Benz and BMWs in the city. I do not accept the fact that differential prices between the consumers cannot be made. It need not be made in the product price itself. Some speakers have already spoken that the duty structure on expensive vehicles would a major

source of revenue and, at the same time, compensate the poor if you want to drive the expensive cars.

Secondly, even if you take the kerosene prices, the price has gone up to a level where kerosene consumption per family per day works out to 50 paise. I think, we, sometimes, in our rhetoric, take things out of context. Similarly, for gas, those who can afford to buy gas, the increase in gas price is absolutely legitimate. How long are we going to continue to subsidize the middle classes? Therefore, the whole price rise issue that we are debating today was debated in the past and we are going to debate it in the future. We must accept the fact that we are not short of foodgrains, we are not short of vegetables, but we are short of edible oils and pulses. We are not short of fruits. But, we cannot continue to have 19th and 20th Century ways of transferring products the way we do. If we continue do that, the prices will continue to rise, because people earning is going up. They will have more disposable income. They will want to consume more and there is no way that prices are going to come down.

I strongly believe that our dependence on our weather is so huge, and, yet, our ability to forecast the weather is so poor that unless you upgrade our weather forecasting systems, unless we upgrade our method of communicating that to the farmers, I don't think we will bring about a change. I strongly urge upon the Minister concerned to please upgrade – the technology is available all over the world – the weather-forecasting the technology. We have the best airports; we have modern airlines; we do everything in a very modern way; we drive modern cars, then, why can we not have a modern weather forecasting system.

Finally, Sir, this country must be crisscrossed with grain-storage grids. Instead of having the old system of having large warehouses at different points and transporting grains by train, where half of it being wasted, I think, investment has to be made. This cannot entirely be made by the Government. Do not put all the burden on the Government alone. This has to be public private partnership. India has reached a state of maturity and self-confidence where public-private partnership must take precedence, it must be made a commercial preposition, and, then only the prices of what we consume day-in-and-day-out will be within affordable limit. It will reflect the real condition of the growing economy and stature of this country.

I thank you, Sir, for having given me this opportunity to speak here.

SHRI BAISHNAB PARIDA (Orissa): Mr. Deputy Chairman, Sir, thank you very much for giving me this opportunity to speak in this august House before the learned and experienced leaders of India and prominent intellectuals. This is my maiden speech.

The motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition is very important one. The unprecedented price rise and unbridled inflation has created an alarming situation throughout the country because it seriously affects the lives of not only the toiling people of this country, but various stratas and classes. The party that promised, in their last manifesto, to control the price rise and inflation has failed miserably after coming to power at the Centre. The party, which proclaimed काँग्रेस का हाथ, जनता के साथ, आम आदमी के साथ has turned its hand to make the life of the people more miserable. I know the promise of the ruling party is an unbroken record of broken promises in the independent India. Even then, I think, at this juncture, the ruling party and the Government, in power, should heed to the warnings of the people and realize the feelings and the miseries of the people. Recently, in the past few months, two bharat bandhs, sometimes we call it hartal, were observed. People widely expressed their wrath and anger these hartals.

The people spontaneously joined these *hartals* irrespective of party politics. It was really a strong warning for the ruling party to think about changing its economic policy and its strategy, not to make the lives of the people more miserable.

Sir, this august House is the highest forum to discuss the problems that the people of this country are facing. But I am surprised to hear the speech of one of the esteemed Members of the Ruling Party who also happens to be their spokesperson. I have a lot of respect for her. In her address, she criticized this All India *Hartal* and gave the figures regarding how much money the country has lost, how many working days are lost and how much of property lost. But I think this is a negative attitude. Tell us how those people who are suffering from the misrule of the ruling party will protest. It may be any party, it may be any class or may be an individual. How will these suffering masses express their resentment against a wrong policy? There are three ways. One is, they have to

obey like obedient servants and suffer without any resistance. That is one way. The second way is to raise arms, adopt violent methods to protest like the Maoists or any other Extremist group. I am not talking of the extremist group or religious group or about those who are coming across the borders. No; I am not talking of this. I am talking of the groups or organizations which are inside our country. The third way is to resist peacefully and democratically.

Sir, the concept of *hartal* was given by our Father of the Nation during our freedom days, during our freedom on struggle days. The people observed *hartals* not only by "closing the offices and shops but even by observing fasting also. They observed fasting to express their protest against the British Rule. That is the democratic method. Of course, some people think that *hartals* or *bandhs* cannot be observed without violence. This is a wrong concept, a false notion. In these *hartals* during our freedom struggle days, there was no violence. People were not destroying the property when the *hartals* were observed. When some violent incident took place in 1921 in Chauri Chaura, Gandhiji withdrew the movement immediately. He did not allow it to proceed further. He trained the Indian people to fight in a non-violent way in a peaceful manner. He did it successfully. Sir, I was one of the organizers of the last *hartal* from the Biju Janta Dal and there was a strict instruction from our Chief Minister that it should be a hartal only and not a bandh and this hartal must be very peaceful.

And peace was maintained. My friends from other political parties are here. They had also observed this. So, we must organize hartals to protest against wrong policies and misdeeds of the Government, but we should organize them peacefully. That is what we can do and that is the way to do it. So, I request the respected leaders of the ruling party that they should not misunderstand me and take it in a negative way. All the political parties should try to run in this country in a democratic manner; we have to strengthen democracy in our country; we do not have any other alternative. And we should give opportunity to full participation of our masses. So, the people must exercise their right to express their protest through democratic and peaceful ways.

Sir, I want to mention one thing here. This price rise is not a new phenomenon. It has been there since this ruling party came into power. And, very often, people have organized movements

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against price rise. But the prices have been rising very high and making life difficult for common people. That is why the political parties also are forced to organize movements.

But the question is: why have prices been rising? On this issue, many of our learned Members have expressed their views, how does this price rise affect the common people? How does it affect the poverty-stricken people? When we talk of growth in this country, we know that if was during our first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru's time that growth was given the top priority. It was growth-oriented development at that time. But the growth that took place served only a particular section of people. This growth was not achieved with the concept of equal distribution of wealth. So, a majority of the sections of our people were not benefited by this process of growth. In the whole planning process at that time, due consideration to regional demands, aspirations and grievances was not given.

Then, problems and aspirations of the vulnerable sections of our society, the dalits, the adivasis, the backward communities, even of the minorities, had not been taken into consideration. So, as a consequence, uneven development took place. Now, this globalization and liberalization policy that we have adopted since 1992 has led us to a situation of more and more disparities, more poverty, more unemployment. These policies have been creating more and more social tensions, social conflicts like the Maoist movement. Those people who believe in violence are taking advantage of the negative effect of these policies. The social development plans which are adopted by the the Government are very good. Social development plans have been formulated by this Government and many previous Governments. At the State level also, so many plans and programmes have been formulated. But the economic policy at the Centre is such that this price control mechanism is not effective enough to control the rise in prices. The common man is badly hit by it.

By one way we are giving something to poor people and the other way, through price rise and inflation, we are taking it away, that profit is not going to poor people, but it is going to upper class people. That has been going on since Independence. How to change this? Our learned Prime

Minister and learned Finance Minister promised a growth with a human face and inclusive growth. Where is the human face? Are those who are living in jungles, those who are living in villages and Dalits not human beings? Is their faces reflected in this process of growth? Human face is not there. Everyday and every time disparities are growing; poverty is growing; number of unemployed people is growing; the difference between village and city is growing and the disparity between backward regions and developed regions is growing. So, it is a serious thing. Now we have reached a situation where we have to re-think. I am not talking of some political gains or some political jugglery. We are responsible for this; this House is responsible and those who are in the leadership are more responsible. So, we must reconsider our policy. Price rise depends on the economic policy of the Government and price mechanism of the Central Government. The Central Government is mainly responsible for this. There is shortage of food and prices of food, vegetables, fish, meat, milk and everything are growing. But the purchasing power of common people is not growing. How will they afford to maintain their standard of living? They are unable to give a piece of clothe to their children and they are unable to provide them proper food. Our learned friends were talking of sugar. A spoonful of sugar has become a luxury for those people who are living in villages and jungles. Do we think about them? My State is a very poor and backward State where 24 per cent of the population is *Adivasis*, 14 per cent are *dalits* and most of the people are backward. So, the Central Government should not neglect the State. When we talk of inclusive growth, we want to minimize the disparities and remove the regional imbalances. More attention should be given to this poor State.

I request the veteran Finance Minister whom I know since 1964 and I have worked with him on many occasions. He knows Orissa more than any other Minister of this Cabinet. Orissa must be given proper funds so that poverty in the State is alleviated. These States should get more opportunities to come at par with other developed States. Then, Sir, some special package should be given to Orissa. My party always demanded that special package should be given. It is not a question as to which party is ruling Orissa. The point is that Orissa is a part of the entire country. If naxal movement develops in my State, it affects the entire country. When poverty-stricken people die due to hunger, it also damages the image of the country. So, we should take timely steps so that the situation does not get deteriorated in future. Mr. Deputy Chairman, Sir, then, I will speak about

agriculture. My State is predominantly an agriculture State. But, I think, since 70s, development of agriculture has declined. Proper attention, which was necessary to be given for its development, was not given by the Central Government. It is not only the case of Orissa; situation is same in Bihar also. Land reforms and agricultural reforms have not taken place properly. Fragmentation of land is there. Without any consolidation of land, how could they adopt this modern method of farming? That is the case with Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Orissa and eastern region. Our respected Finance Minister, in the last Budget, had allotted Rs.400 crores for the agricultural development of those States.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Mr. Parida, how much time do you require?

SHRI BAISHNAB PARIDA: Sir, I am just completing. Sir, the Agriculture Minister is also a very experienced political leader. But, the way the Agriculture Ministry is functioning sometimes creates doubts in the minds of the people that something wrong is going on. Proper attention was not given to several issues like rotting of foodgrains, negligence to agriculture sector and necessary arrangements not being made for storage of foodgrains. I was in Russia for one-and-a-half decades. Russia was backward in agriculture and one of the reasons was lack of proper storage system. Vegetables and fruits used to rot before they came to the market. In Orissa and some other States, I think, the Central Government should encourage, subsidise and provide help in every possible way for providing better storage facilities.

Then, sharecropping is also a big obstacle for the development of agriculture. In many States, the sharecropping system is still prevalent though it was abolished in West Bengal and other States. I will request the Agriculture Minister to convene meetings with the Agriculture Ministers and Chief Ministers of those backward States to find out some solution to develop agriculture sector also.

Sir, the Public Distribution System is ruined. If, in the liberal economy, everything is left to the mercy of the open market, how will the poor people compete? How will the poor people get justice? How will they survive? So, the PDS should be developed immediately, spread throughout the country, and, it should be given more importance. This is my request to you.

Sir, regarding oil price, many of our learned Members have shown the picture. It is affecting not only the people but also every branch of our economy, and, it is making the lives of the poor people hell. So, my request is that the price increase in petroleum products should be withdrawn.

Sir, some of the Members of the Ruling Party also prescribed that the States should reduce the tax levied on the petroleum products. I can tell you about my own State. It imposes lowest tax on petroleum goods. It is 18 per cent, which comes to about 12 rupees. So, Sir, my State is trying to do that.

Regarding PDS, hoarding and other things, in Orissa, we also tried to prevent this unnecessary price rise of foodgrains, vegetables, fish and other things, and, raided the stores of the hoarders. Hundreds of these dishonest business people have been arrested.

So, through this opportunity that has been given to me, I appeal to the leaders of the Ruling Party, hon. Prime Minister, hon. Finance Minister, hon. Agriculture Minister. ...*(Interruptions)*... Surely, when I will speak on naxal problem, definitely, I will express my views to the Home Minister also. So, I request all of them to take preventive measures immediately so that the price rise of petroleum goods do not make the lives of the people more miserable, and, I also request them to act according to their promise made in the manifesto for the *aam aadmi*. इतना कहकर मैं आपको बहुत-बहुत धन्यवाद देता हूँ। With these words, I express my thanks for having given me the opportunity to speak on this important subject. Thank you.

STATEMENT BY MINISTER

Situation in the State of Jammu and Kashmir

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Hon. Home Minister to make a statement.

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): Sir, the situation in the State of Jammu and Kashmir continues to be a cause for concern. It has taken a serious turn in recent days. Beginning June 11, 2010, there has been a cycle of violence threatening law and order and public peace. The violence in the State has followed a certain pattern. Usually, the violence is triggered by stone pelting by large crowds and their targets of attack are police stations, police outposts and other public property.