

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : When it is referred to the Ethics Committee, then, it can be looked into.

SHRI RAJEEV SHUKLA : Sir, this thing comes purely under the domain of the Election Commission, but if you direct, I can definitely bring to the notice of the Home Minister the feelings of the members of the House.

SHRI SUKHENDU SEKHAR ROY : Yes.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : Let us take up the Zero Hour mentions. Now, Smt. Jharna Das Baidya - absent. Shri Bandyopadhyay.

Nation-wide strike by goldsmiths

SHRI D. BANDYOPADHYAY (West Bengal) : Sir, I rise to bring to the notice of this House a very serious situation arising due to strike by goldsmiths and artisans in the country. Roughly, Sri, 1.5 crore people are involved. They are basically workmen; I am not talking of big business people. These workmen, unfortunately, have to resort to strike, because there is a problem.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : We had discussed this issue in the House.

SHRI D. BANDYOPADHYAY : Sir, let me say and finish, it. Then you can say yours comments.

There is an excise hike of 4 per cent which will adversely affect this particular group of people. Moreover, Sir, with the impact of increase of taxes with the effect of the rise of customs and excise duty, the price of gold in India would go up. Thus, there would be difference in the price with the international gold price which would encourage smuggling. In view of this, I feel, the Government has not been able to intercede or pro-actively intervene to create a situation in which the problem can be resolved.

We know that the hon. Finance Minister did make some concession in his reply to budget. But the fact is, in spite of that, the situation continues to be grim. Therefore, the hon. Finance Minister's concessions are too little and too late to resolve the issue. Under the circumstance, I request, through you, the Government that it should immediately intercede, call the representatives of the workmen and try to find a solution so that the penury of penury of these people does not increase. Thank you.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : The Minister wants to respond.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI RAJEEV SHUKLA) : Sir, I have heard what the hon. Member has said.

[SHRI RAJEEV SHUKLA]

I would like to bring to the notice of the House that the other day, while replying to the General Discussion on the Budget, the hon. Finance Minister had assured that he is finding a legislative route and working out on modalities as to how to do it. So, we should wait for the Finance Bill to come. He had assured the House that he would definitely do something. The cases up to Rs. 5 crores have already been exempted. So, let us wait for the Finance Bill to come, because he had already assured the House ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI TAPAN KUMAR SEN (West Bengal) : Sir, the workers are on strike ...*(Interruptions)*... There is a loss of Rs. 20,000 crores ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI SUKHENDU SEKHAR ROY (West Bengal) : Sir, there is a loss of Rs. 20,000 crores ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI TAPAN KUMAR SEN : Sir, there is no doubt that this would be considered at the time of the Finance Bill ...*(Interruptions)*... I am saying that don't wait till that time. Do now something for these workers immediately ...*(Interruptions)*... Don't keep quite ...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : Mr. Tapan Sen ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI TAPAN KUMAR SEN : We have come to you. You go and talk to them ...*(Interruptions)*... The strike is going on ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI RAJEEV SHUKLA : Sir, let him wait for the Finance Bill ...*(Interruptions)*... That is the only route through which it can be done ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI SUKHENDU SEKHAR ROY : You discuss it with the workers ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI RAJEEV SHUKLA : Sir, we can only bring an amendment to the Finance Bill ...*(Interruptions)*... You cannot announce it in between ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI SUKHENDU SEKHAR ROY : Sir, the Government must protect the workers ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI RAJEEV SHUKLA : Sir, there is a legal procedure to be followed ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI PYARIMOHAN MOHAPATRA (Odisha) : Sir, while associating with the hon. Member, let me clarify this. What the hon. Finance Minister said and the Parliamentary Affairs Minister repeating now is this. Sir, the goldsmiths are going to suffer, because they don't know how to fill-up forms if excise duty is imposed on them. Imposing excise duty on jewellers is a different thing and imposing excise duty on goldsmiths is altogether is a different thing. Hon. Finance Minister did not give any assurance on that count.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : Mr. Mohapatraji, you go through the record—I was sitting on the Chair—of what the hon. Finance Minister said. He said that this is a matter to be considered at the time of passing of the Finance Bill. He said that he has consideration for this. He also mentioned that he would address all these issues at the time of taking up of the Finance Bill. He assured that ...(*Interruptions*)... One minute.

SHRI PYARIMOHAN MOHAPATRA : Sir, he addressed the issue of reduction in the excise duty. He did not address as to what would be its impact on the goldsmiths.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : He said it. You go through the record. In fact, the hon. Members who have raised the issue welcomed the statement of the hon. Finance Minister. So, please wait for the Finance Bill ...(*Interruptions*)...

SHRI PYARIMOHAN MOHAPATRA : Sir, we request the hon. Minister to please take note of this ...(*Interruptions*)...

SHRI D. BANDYOPADHYAY : Sir, I have only a point to make ...(*Interruptions*)...

SHRI TAPAN KUMAR SEN : Sir, we understand that before the Finance Bill this issue cannot be finalized. We understand that.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : This issue is raised in the Zero Hour.

SHRI TAPAN KUMAR SEN : The strike is going on. Please understand the gravity of the situation. I want you to appreciate the issue and ask the Government to act on this immediately ...(*Interruptions*)...

SHRI SUKHENDU SEKHAR ROY : Sir, make the Government to act on this ...(*Interruptions*)...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : It relates to the Zero Hour submission. Whatever you wanted to say, you have already said. That has gone on record and the Government has also responded. ...(*Interruptions*)... Now, Mr. Gujral. ...(*Interruptions*)... The Minister has responded ...(*Interruptions*)... Usually, in the Zero Hour, the Ministers do not respond, but he has responded. ...(*Interruptions*)...

SHRI S.S. AHLUWALIA (Jharkhand) : Sir, the *Saraf Bazar* is closed everywhere, in Delhi, Mumbai, Jaipur, Kolkata. Entire country is suffering. Gold, in our country, means security. Even the lower middle class families, in India, purchase gold for their future security. ...(*Interruptions*)...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : You have raised this in Zero Hour. The hon. Minister has also responded. ...(*Interruptions*)... He, during the reply, has referred to the assurance of the hon. Finance Minister, ...(*Interruptions*)...

SHRI S.S. AHLUWALIA : What has he responded? ...(*Interruptions*)... An assurance should come from the Government. ...(*Interruptions*)...

श्री प्रकाश जावडेकर (महाराष्ट्र) : सर, सरकार को कहिए कि वह इसका कोई रास्ता निकाले। ...(*व्यवधान*)...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : It is not for me ...(*Interruptions*)...

श्री सतीश चन्द्र मिश्रा (उत्तर प्रदेश) : सर, पूरे देश में हड़ताल चल रही है, पूरे उत्तर प्रदेश में हड़ताल चल रही है, उत्तर प्रदेश के हर जिले में हड़ताल चल रही है और इसके कारण हजारों करोड़ का बिजनेस ठप्प है। ...(*व्यवधान*)...

श्री प्रकाश जावडेकर : सर ...(*व्यवधान*)...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : The scope is limited ...(*Interruptions*)... You have raised it. Wait for the response from the Government. ...(*Interruptions*)... What can I do. ...(*Interruptions*)...

SHRI PYARIMOHAN MOHAPATRA : Sir, I appeal to the Minister to ...(*Interruptions*)...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : He has responded. ...(*Interruptions*)... The Government is here. They are listening to whatever you are saying. ...(*Interruptions*)...

SHRI RAJEEV SHUKLA : Sir, The Finance Bill is the only option by which it can be ...(*Interruptions*)... How can anything be done in between? ...(*Interruptions*)... What I will be doing is ...(*Interruptions*)...

SHRI S. S. AHLUWALIA : Sir, the Government should bring an amendment in the Finance Bill. ...(*Interruptions*)... They should bring an amendment in the Finance Bill. ...(*Interruptions*)...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : I have asked the Parliamentary Affairs Minister to bring the sentiments of the House to the notice of the Finance Minister. ...(*Interruptions*)... He cannot answer. ...(*Interruptions*)...

SHRI RAJEEV SHUKLA : I will convey your feelings. ...(*Interruptions*)...

SHRI TAPAN KUMAR SEN : Sir, it is their job. But they are not doing it. ...(*Interruptions*)...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : Now, Mr. Naresh Gujral. ...(*Interruptions*)... Sit down please. ...(*Interruptions*)... कृपया आप बैठिए। ...(*व्यवधान*)...

Need to abolish capital punishment

SHRI NARESH GUJRAL (Punjab) : Sir, the civilized world is rapidly abolishing the barbaric practice of capital punishment. As of May, 2001, ninety-six countries had banned it entirely. The Amnesty International regarded another 34 countries to be *de facto* abolishing it.