

[8 December, 2005]

RAJYA SABHA

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Please, go back ...*(Interruptions)* शर्मा जी आप सीट पर जाइए! ...*(व्यवधान)*... Nothing will go on record ...*(Interruptions)*... Nothing will go on record...*(Interruptions)*...] have not allowed, Mr. Yashwant Sinha. Why are you saying that? ...*(Interruptions)*...*Why* are you saying it again and again ... *(Interruptions)* प्लीज, आप बैठिए! ...*(Interruptions)*... Nothing will go on record...*(Interruptions)*...

The House stands adjourned till 3.00 p.m.

The House then adjourned at twenty minutes past two of the clock.

The House reassembled at three of the clock,

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN in the Chair.

CALLING ATTENTION TO MATTER OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

Shortage of LPG and black-marketing of kerosene in the country - (Contd.)

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Now, the hon. Minister to make a brief statement.

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRIMANI SHANKARAIYAR): Mr. Deputy Chairman, Sir, I have circulated a detailed statement. So, instead of attempting to read it, I will very briefly sum up the major issues, and, at the time of reply, I hope, I will have the opportunity of explaining anything that remains unsaid.

Basically, I think it needs to be understood that we obtain one-third of our domestic output of LPG from a private sector refiner and a quarter of our domestic demand is met from imports. So, it was the combination of the close down of that refinery, that is, FCC units, along with the problems that arose on the import front just at that time, that brought about the sudden crisis just on the eve of the festive season but we did take matters in hand and by a combination of import management and inventory management, we succeeded first in substantially solving the problem here in the National Capital Territory of Delhi before Dussehra, and, in much of the rest of the country before Diwali.

Basically, the physical shortages through the month of November were no more than one to one and a half per cent of our monthly average turnover. If, therefore, there was a problem beyond the dealer, then that had a great deal to do with the fact that LPG is getting diverted to

uses to which subsidised domestic LPG is not being made available. And, because the price difference between the cylinder that is subsidised and the cylinder that is supposed to be purchased at the market price for commercial uses, remains as extraordinarily high as it is just now, in the month of November, it averaged close to two hundred rupees, and, if you take the whole of this financial year, it is averaged around one hundred and fifty rupees. So, in effect, our oil market companies are handing over a cheque of something between 150 and 200 rupees with every single cylinder that they are making available to the housewife for domestic cooking.

And, this is what gives the temptation to transfer it, divert it to commercial uses like *dhabas*, restaurants, auto rickshaw and even motorcars and taxis. Now, in these circumstances, we have to rely upon the other hand that has to clap, which is the State Government. It is only if we have the total cooperation of the State Governments in implementing the kerosene — there is an order that has been issued — we will be able to effectively tackle this problem. So, we have written to all the State Governments, and, we are convening a meeting of the Secretaries from the States concerned in a day or two. If you look at the list of those who have moved this motion, all legions of the country and all parties in this House are represented. Therefore, I am hoping that as a result of this discussion in this House, perhaps they could urge upon the State Governments to be much more proactive in dealing with the law and order aspects of the question of distribution of LPG. As for kerosene, Sir, we have had a study made by the National Council of Applied Economic Research. It is the first ever scientific study of what happens with kerosene in this country and what is the genuine demand and requirement, that has ever been done, and, on the basis of that, we are able to estimate that about 18 per cent of the kerosene that is being made available to the PDS system gets diverted into adulteration. And, the record of different States in this regard is not even. There are some States in which diversion appears to be very, very much more. Basically, we seem to have a situation where the rural populace and BPL cardholders there tend to receive a substantial amount of their entitlements. But, there is a diversion taking place from urban allocations as well as from quantities that are purchased by APL cardholders. Let us see how we can rectify that situation. But, when we have a difference which is as wide as it currently is between kerosene that is used for the PDS system for lighting and cooking and kerosene that is available in the open market, partly for household use, but also for substantial non-household use, then, the price mechanisms can only be ignored if there is a proper system of law and order. We have seen the consequences of the mafias being involved in the distribution system in

the killing of Shri Manjunath. Therefore, altogether, Sir, I welcome this opportunity to discuss both LPG and kerosene and indeed, to discuss them together because there are interlinkages. I look forward to the interventions of the hon. Members and I hope they look forward to the reply that I will be making at the end of the discussion. Thank you.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Hon. Members, I would like to remind that as per the rules governing the Calling Attention Motion, time limit is seven minutes for the first speaker and five minutes for each of the speakers. I request all the hon. Members to adhere to the rules. It is only ...{Interruptions}... Okay, if you can finish it in five seconds, then, finish it. So, Mr. Dipankar Mukherjee.

SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE (West Bengal): Thank you, Sir. I understand the time limitation. But, at least, we have been able to discuss this issue, because this is an issue which has been bothering this nation for the last few months. The situation has eased to some extent. But, this problem still stands. I will not call it a crisis, but it was a crisis-like situation in the month of October when the hon. Minister had to intervene, especially, when he used the expression 'sensitive fuels' — very correct words — and that housewives all over the nation were so worried. My first question is, Sir, how is it that it is only in the month of October, just before the Diwali, the Minister had to intervene, when the problem was there right from the month of July onwards? What types of actions were taken by the public sector companies? The information which has been given now, why this information was not made available to the consumers earlier? And, it was the distribution of the oil companies. Rightly here, it has been said, in the first page, 'shortage of LPG', basically, the reason was — it was no pricing business — shortage of supply. Then, the second point is diversion. So far as shortage of supply is concerned, right from July, the first thing what we should do as an oil marketing company, is, we should inform the consumers. The thing with which the Minister has come out with a statement here, this should have been given by the oil companies to all the consumers. They could have told that these are the issues and these are the problems in supplying. My second query is a major one. Why is it that the public sector oil companies had shut downs? Why are they so apologetic, and, as a matter of fact, silent on talking about the two-and-a-half-month shut down which had been taken during the peak period, not in the off peak period. They planned it in the month of April. The whole planning is done in the month of April — how much to import and all that. But, a shut down should have always been taken place in the off peak season. How is it that because of some problem of

the company this was taken when the prices were most grave? After that, what do you call, Katrina and all that, and outside import, every thing was unplanned. How was it that no one came out with an explanation? And, as a matter of fact, I can share with you, Sir, I had to telephonically ask some people why you are not telling that it is not-your problem; the problem is of private companies. You people cannot say that this shortage of supply has happened because of a shut down which has been taken by some private company whose supply caters to 25 per cent of requirement. Even you will not find it. The situation in the country is even the media is silent about it. Had it been a public sector company, for which 25 per cent supply has been affected, the whole of this country would have said क्या हो गया, क्या हो गया। But this side, everyone is silent, including the public sector oil companies. They could have pointed it out specifically that they are taking a shut down for two months and that is why this problem is there. This should have been told to all the dealers and all the consumers everywhere. This never came out, and it is only now that the hon. Minister is coming out with such a statement. I would like the hon. Minister to find out what exactly the steps the OMCs had taken.

My third point is this, the day before yesterday, there was a reply to a question in the House when the hon. Minister said that the Government did not have any such powers so far as shut-down of refinery was concerned. But is it so? If it is really something like that, then something has to be thought about it. Two-and-a-half months of shut-down were there in Reliance during the peak season, not in the off-peak, and the Government found itself unable to intervene. It could not say, "this is not a proper time and if they want to take a shut-down, take it in the off-peak period." That has landed us in major problems in this issue. Till now, the problem of LPG shortage is there. It takes four or five days to get a cylinder filled up. Earlier, within one day's notice, they were getting it. Can we have something in the Government's hands to control, so that the same thing does not happen in future?

My next point is regarding diversion also. Sir, we know the pricing, business. Let me share with you one experience when this shortage was there. Someone who suffered this problem of shortage of LPG gave me a ring and told me about some dealer or company official who told him this. He told him, "You tell the Left fellows. They don't allow us to increase the price. Why should I supply a cylinder when there is a loss?" That is not the correct way of putting things. Last time, when some pressure

price rise was not given, all the stress was given on the price. Adulteration issue is also there. If the price difference is there, how can adulteration be checked? Sir, no one talks about that with regard to mineral water. If the price difference is the cause, and ordinary water is available at much cheaper price, mineral water will be allowed to be polluted. What can be done? Is it the price? The pricing mechanism is such that is why adulteration is taking place. Sir, we are putting it in a wrong way. I can tell it from my experience. I have not been in the positions like Mr. Jairam Ramesh or the hon. Minister are. I have worked with middle level officers. If this type of signal goes with the distribution management as it is, then you have an escape route for adulteration. Sir, if price difference is the only reason for adulteration, then why is there black-marketing when shortage of supply is there? Sir, the price difference is there. What is to be done? We should not give such signals. So long as the objective is the distribution management so far as this public distribution system is concerned, so far as kerosene and LPG for those who are the disadvantaged section of the people are concerned, so long as this is the responsibility which has been taken over by the Government, then this type of escape route should not be given to the oil marketing companies or private companies, that is, the price difference due to which the adulteration goes on. On this point, I think, we would also like to reassert it.

Sir, regarding diversion of LPG cylinder to the industrial one, I would like to say that adulteration is found not only in kerosene, adulteration is also being found in some other fuels. We had a petition on adulteration of fuels in the Petition Committee of this House. The Chairman of the Committee, Mr. Jana Krishnamurthy, is also here. We had given a Report on adulteration issue. As per our Report, it comes out that the adulteration is to the tune of Rs. 8000 crores or something. It is really a fact. As you have correctly pointed out, in spite of the fact that we have people like late Manjunath, there is a nexus among the dealer, the oil company official, the local politician, mafia, and everywhere. This nexus has to be broken. And with a Minister like you, I think, we will be able to solve this problem. The Anti-adulteratin Cell has been dismantled. One of the recommendations of this Petition Committee is that you should have some monitoring body in whatever way you want, whether you want to involve all the people or not. But there has to be some kind of monitoring, and some zeal has to be given to see that this adulteration business is checked. That is not there at present.

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I welcome this idea of calling all the State Government Secretaries. Even you can have some consumers, representatives. It would be better if you can have some consumers' representatives, especially women. Their organisations can be called and they can tell you their genuine problem.

Sir, my last point is regarding what he has now introduced the Jan Kerosene Pariyojana. My suggestion to the hon. Minister is that in the late 70's also, there was a decision of setting up of the Taluka Kerosene Depots (TKDs). That did not work out because of certain vested interests. Now, when you do this system, kindly do check up how this Taluka Kerosene Depots which were introduced in 1970s and had to be stopped after some time, how it failed? Why it failed? We will have to see that the same reasons should not come in the way of making your Jan Kerosene Pariyojana also successful. And lastly, Sir, BPL and APL. I am getting a lot of letters. There are people who are not in BPL; they use LPG for cooking, but they require kerosene for lighting. Lot of people in this country, in many places, use kerosene. Power shortage is there. They cannot buy it. So, they are using LPG. BPL has not been identified properly. So, by talking only about BPL, a large section of the people is also getting affected because of the shortage

Sir, my last point— I would say my suggestion — to the hon. Minister is, the crisis may be over, the problem still persists. If necessary, can we have certain State level committees through you and under your supervision to get certain grievance redressal system for the consumers area-wise? We have told the public sector companies a number of times in the committees that instead of having this — the feedback is very poor — why can't we have some sort of grievance redressal system for consumers, area-wise or zone-wise, in different cities and places? We can form it. That grievance has to be accepted by the concerned officers. We must remember people like late Manjunath. Many people say Government servants and oil company officials are corrupt and all that. But there are Manju naths and there are many Manjunaths in these companies and in the Government itself who can do the monitoring. I hope if the system is strengthened up for this distribution management, we can catch the problem at the correct root and not at Ivory Towers talking about pricing, subsidy and all the theoretical business and no study. Our study can be done by our companies through some grievance redressal system or grievance receipt section. No one takes the grievances seriously. I know many of the companies. Let us have it in a number of places. If you get those grievances, have a monitoring or governing body

and look at the recommendation made by the Petition Committee. I think we may be in a position to address this issue. Thank you very much.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Now, Shri Kalraj Mishraji.

श्री कलराज मिश्र (उत्तर प्रदेश): माननीय उपसभापति जी, आपने मुझे LPG की शोर्टेज और कैरोसीन की ब्लैक मार्केटिंग के कारण जो स्थिति पैदा हुई है, उस पर ध्यानाकर्षित करने के लिए कहा है, मैं इसके लिए आपको धन्यवाद देता हूँ। अभी श्री दीपांकर मुखर्जी ने सारे बिन्दुओं पर ध्यान दिलाने का प्रयत्न किया है। हमारे मंत्री जी बड़े कुशल, योग्य और तर्कसिद्ध मंत्री हैं और वे तर्कों के आधार पर सारी चीजों को यवस्थित करने की कोशिश करते हैं। लेकिन व्यवहारिक क्षेत्र में जो इतनी घटनाएं घटित हो रही हैं, वे कुछ भिन्न प्रकार की हैं और इसलिए मैं इस बात को कहने के लिए बाध्य हुआ हूँ कि LPG की जो शोर्टेज है, यह सब दूर हो गई है, कहीं ऐसा नहीं है कि हर जगह उसको ढंग से उपलब्ध कराया जाता है, इसलिए उसके बारे में विचार करना आवश्यक है। पिछली बार आपने यह तर्क दिया था कि मुम्बई हाई में आग लगने के कारण जितना उसका उत्पादन होना चाहिए था, उतना उत्पादन तो नहीं है, लेकिन हम एक महीने के अंदर 75 फीसदी ज्यादा उत्पादन कर लेंगे। वह उत्पादन होता तो शायद हमें यह कमी झेलनी नहीं पड़ती। घरेलू उत्पादन को बढ़ाने के लिए क्या और कोई व्यवस्था की गई है कि जिसके आधार पर जितनी मांग है, उतनी हम उसकी पूर्ति कर सकें। मान्यवर, दूसरी बात यह कही गई है कि यह भी कठिनाई पैदा हो गई है कि रिलायंस ने अपने मेंटिनेंस की दृष्टि से बंद कर दिया है, इसलिए उसके बंद कर देने के कारण कठिनाई पैदा हो रही है। क्या इसकी पूर्व सूचना नहीं थी कि इस समय जब LPG की ज्यादा आवश्यकता है, क्योंकि अनेक प्रकार के उत्सव व अनेक प्रकार के बहुत से कार्यक्रमों में LPG की मांग ज्यादा होती है। ऐसी स्थिति में उसे बंद कर देना, यह उचित नहीं था। यदि पूर्व में आपको कल्पना रहती कि इसकी समस्या खड़ी हो सकती है, तो शायद वार्ता करने के पश्चात् इसे कुछ दिन के लिए स्थगित किया जा सकता था। साथ ही साथ मान्यवर, इस समय जिस स्थिति का निर्माण हो गया है, वह यह है कि एलपीजी काला बाजारी में काफी दामों में बेचा जा रहा है, पांच सौ, छह सौ रुपये के हिसाब से बेचा जा रहा है। इसके बड़े लोग शिकार हो रहे हैं। अगर आप आज लेने के लिए अप्लाई भी करते हैं, बुक भी कराते हैं तो उन्हें पंद्रह — बीस दिन नहीं, बल्कि महीनों इंतजार करना पड़ता है और उसके पश्चात भी वह उन्हें मिल नहीं पाता है। हालत ऐसी हो गई है कि कहीं-कहीं तो किस तरीके से अपने सारे पकवानों की व्यवस्था की जाए, भोजन की व्यवस्था की जाए, लोगों के सामने यह भी समस्या खड़ी हो जाती है। क्या आप इस दृष्टि से विचार करेंगे कि यह जो एक आदेश दिया है कि चालीस दिन से पहले प्राप्त नहीं हो सकेगी, वह खत्म किया जाए ताकि लोग सुलभता का अनुभव कर सकें। यह भी कहा जा रहा है कि जो घरेलू गैस है, सब्सिडाइज रेट पर है, उसका व्यवसायी भी उपयोग कर रहे हैं और काफी मात्रा में उपयोग कर रहे हैं। मैंने एक बार पढ़ा था, एशियन ऐज की तरफ से एक रेन्डेम सर्वे हुआ था, उन्होंने शहर से बाहर जाकर जो सर्वे किया, उसमें पाया कि जो रेस्टोरेंट हैं ढाबे हैं बाकी और जगहें हैं, वे ज्यादातर घरेलू गैस का ही उपयोग कर रहे हैं। वे उसका इस ढंग से दुरुपयोग कर रहे हैं, जिसके कारण लोगों को

बहुत दिक्कत हो रही है। वे सारा का सारा ले जा रहे हैं और ज्यादा दाम पर लोग ब्लैक में खरीदने के लिए मजबूर हो रहे हैं। इसके बारे में किस प्रकार का कदम उठाया जा रहा है? अभी इसे पढ़ा है, अभी माननीय मंत्री जी ने प्रारम्भ में कहा है कि राज्य सरकार भी इसके लिए काफी उत्तरदायी हैं। मैं मानता हूँ कि वह कुछ हद तक उत्तरदायी है, लेकिन अगर जानकारी में यह बात आ गई, विभिन्न सर्वेज या सूचनाओं के माध्यम से भी आपको जानकारी प्राप्त हुई होगी, तो आपने इस संबंध में क्या कदम उठाए हैं, जिससे ऐसे लोग पकड़ जा सकें? यदि आप इसके बारे में भी जानकारी देंगे तो अच्छा होगा। मान्यवर, अभी एलपीजी पैरालल गैस फेडरेशन के प्रेसीडेंट की तरफ से, मि. पोद्दार की तरफ से एक सूचना दी गई। उन्होंने कहा कि लगभग 3.50 करोड़ ऐसे कनैक्शन हैं, जो गैर कानूनी हैं। इस आधार पर, उनको पकड़ने की जो व्यवस्था करनी चाहिए, वह व्यवस्था यहां से नहीं हो पा रही है। इसके कारण भी इस दुर्दशा का निर्माण हुआ है। कैरोसीन के मायने में यह कहना चाहूंगा कि लगभग 36 फिसदी कैरोसीन ऐसा है जो ब्लैक में ही जाता है। सिर्फ 18 फीसदी के बारे में आपने स्वीकार किया है। पेट्रोल पंप में, डीजल में उसका उपयोग होता रहता है, यह लोगों को मिल नहीं पाता। इसका उपयोग गरीब लोग करते हैं, ग्रामीण क्षेत्रों में इसका उपयोग करते हैं, यह वहां भी बिक रहा है तो बुरी तरह से ब्लैक में बिक रहा है। आपने अपनी स्टेटमेंट में भी इसे स्वीकार किया है कि ब्लैक मार्केटिंग हो रही है, लेकिन इसे किस तरीके से ठीक किया जाए, इसकी जो प्रभावी व्यवस्था होनी चाहिए, आपने इसकी चर्चा नहीं की है। आपने इतना जरूर कहा है कि जो बीपीएल के लोग हैं, उनको जिस सब्सिडाइज रेट पर दिया जाता है, वह देना चाहिए, बाकी दूसरे लोग मार्केट से खरीदें, आपने इस तरह की बात कही है। आपने यह जो "जन कैरोसीन परियोजना" की व्यवस्था बनाई है, इस "जन कैरोसीन परियोजना" के माध्यम से भी जो कैरोसीन बाकी स्थानों पर उपलब्ध होनी चाहिए, वह उपलब्ध नहीं हो पा रहा है। इसका ज्यादातर उपयोग डीजल और पेट्रोल में मिलावट की दृष्टि से हो रहा है। इसके लिए आपने कौन-सी प्रभावी व्यवस्था की है? सब मिलाकर चाहे एलपीजी गैस की शॉर्टेज हो, चाहे कैरोसीन की ब्लैक मार्केटिंग हो, दोनों तरफ से क्या सरकार की तरफ से कोई ऐसी प्रभावी कार्रवाई की गई है, जिससे यह बताया जा सके कि हां अमुक-अमुक, जिन लोगों ने इस प्रकार की गड़बड़ी करने की कोशिश की है उन्हें पकड़ा गया है और उनके विरुद्ध इस प्रकार की कार्रवाई हुई है? अगर ऐसा कुछ हुआ हो तो इसकी भी जानकारी देने का कष्ट करेंगे तो बड़ी कृपा होगी। बहुत बहुत धन्यवाद।

DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY (Andhra Pradesh): Thank you very much, Sir, for calling me to participate on the Calling Attention on a very important subject. It is a burning issue for the people particularly the poor people, who are living in the rural areas, and also in the slums. I would like to seek certain clarifications from the hon. Minister who is a good friend of mine. In the month of August—he says — "There is no problem. There is no shortage of LPG. Only some administrative problems might be there

for 2—5 days. Due to floods and strikes in some States, there is a shortage." He also says this on 7th October—"No crisis of LPG, says Mr. Aiyar." I would like to seek a clarification from him as to how he has given these two statements in the months of August and October. Then, Sir, on 6th October, according to the information available, "LPG crisis hits the country. Supplies have been controlled. Each house will get one cylinder within 40 days. No shortage of cooking gas during the festival season. Crisis a boon for black marketeers," a statement like this has come. Here, I would also like to seek a clarification from him why this shortage has occurred. What I could find from all the information available is, number one, the public sector undertakings, the oil producing companies are losing Rs. 100/- on each cylinder. They have not much interest in this business if there is, really, any shortage. Had there been a profit, they would have jumped into imports. They are not doing that also. They did not do that at that time also. And there is already a lack of interest in this business. That is one thing. And secondly, as Mr. Mukherjee pointed out, when there was going to be a total shut down of a Reliance unit due to repairs or other reasons, they could have planned that in the month of August itself. Three months earlier, without the knowledge of the Government, they cannot shut down. That is such an important company. That is a major supplier actually they could have planned in such a way that the people would not have faced much problem. One or two months before shutting down, had there been any shortage, they would have imported; they would have asked some other oil-producing units. Now, simply saying "No, no; because of the Reliance Company's shutting down its FCC unit for some repair or overall maintenance work, they could not produce, therefore, there is a shortage," is not proper. That is not feasible.

Sir, one of the major reasons why this crisis has occurred is, the people are misusing the gas cylinders, which are given for domestic use, for commercial purposes. Either the distributors are not giving cylinders to the poor people who are using cylinders for domestic use or somebody may be selling the cylinders at a higher price for commercial purposes. To cite an example, roadside *dhabhas* or food kiosks are illegally and comfortably using domestic LPG cylinders. They are saying very boldly, "Why should we bother? We will pay Rs. 1,000/- more. We will get domestic connections for our shops and hotels. We can easily, happily manage." This is the attitude. So, I would like to know from the Minister what efforts he is going to make to see that domestic connection is not given to hoteliers for commercial purposes and such an opportunity is not provided to them.

One more thing is, harassment is going on for the consumers. How? Why do they say? "Gas dealers do not pick up the phones for booking cylinders"? I am drawing the attention of the hon. Minister towards it. What efforts is he going to make? Gas dealers do not pick up the phones. Long delays occur in the supply of cylinders after booking. These two things are very serious. What will happen to the poor man, to the common man if the dealer, when he phones him, does not respond and if he does not supply it in time? What mechanism is the Minister going to have to have control over such distributors?

Sir, as on today, the Capital of India, Delhi, is suffering miserably due to an acute shortage of cooking gas. On the one side, they plan to import two lakh tonnes of gas. And they also plan to import cylinders. Till now, nothing has happened. I am told that some portion has been imported. Again, there is a problem due to higher shipping charges. There is a transport shortage. They may be again making money. Therefore, I am now categorically asking, number one, what efforts he is going to make to see that if, in future, any supplier shuts down his unit, he must plan in advance. Secondly, the Minister must assure the House that import would be planned in such a way that even when a probable contingency like shortage arises, the common man would not suffer.

Then comes kerosene. Regarding gas I have already spoken. On kerosene I would like to speak just two minutes. The mafia makes kerosene to disappear into the air. Out of ten million tonnes of kerosene, if five million tonnes are diverted every year, it results in a loss of Rs. 10 crores to the exchequer. This is the statement given by the newspapers. Here also kerosene is misused instead of diesel. It is a very costly affair. The price of kerosene is less. So, they want to substitute diesel with kerosene. Instead of giving to the poor man, they are taking it away. In rural areas, in the villages, majority of the people are affected. They say that 77 per cent of the rural areas are electrified. It is not so. More than 65 per cent of the villages are still using kerosene for lighting lamps. So, they are all suffering now for want of kerosene and they are living without lights. (*Time-bell*). I would like to know from the hon. Minister what steps he is going to take to control the mafia. The All India Democratic Women's Association has expressed concern over the reduction of kerosene supply resulting in severe shortage in most of the villages. What assurance has he given to the All India Democratic Women's Association? I would like to know from the hon. Minister how he is going to do it.

The last point is about the burning issue of public distribution of kerosene. I would like to say one point on this. The 55th Round of the Sample Survey Organisation, June and July, reported that around 51 per cent of the rural households corresponding to 17-18 million families burn kerosene in latrines and for lighting lamps. Although 77 per cent of the villages have been declared electrified, barely 45 per cent of the rural households actually have power connections. Therefore, they say it is a burning issue for common man in the villages.

In conclusion, what I would like to say is that as against the requirement of 5.5 crores LPG connections, they are only giving up to 2.35 crores LPG connections. When are they going to have the full 5.5 crores LPG connections? When are they going to remove the shortage completely? What assurance is he going to give to the House and the nation that in future such a contingency will not arise? What mechanisms are they going to set up to ensure that the oil companies, the manufacturing companies, would not hesitate to give priority to manufacturing LPG and kerosene? Thank you.

SHRIMATI VANGAGEETHA(Andhra Pradesh): Mr. Deputy Chairman, Sir, I will seek a few clarifications, after briefly narrating the problems faced by the people.

Sir, LPG and kerosene are very much essential for the day-to-day life of every individual, more particularly, kerosene in rural areas. The subsidy extended to these items may be causing some problem to the Government. But I would like to mention here that the subsidy on LPG and kerosene is not at all a burden to the Government, on the other, it is helpful to the promotion of environment and forest. The felling of trees for the purpose of cooking fuel has come down as compared to the past. As far as LPG is concerned, the then Government of Andhra Pradesh had provided 25 lakh connections to the rural women through the Self Help Groups, under the Deepam Scheme, by extending the subsidy towards deposit. It has resulted in helping the women not only to save time but also to avoid health problems. It has also helped the areas, as far as the environmental aspect is concerned. It was also freely available during the regime of the previous Government. Previously, coupons provided to the MPs were also not utilised and the supply of coupons to the MPs was also disbanded as there were no takers and the cylinders were available without any delay.

Now, since last year, again the problem of availability of LPG cylinders has arisen and the people are forced to remain in wait-list and stand in

the queue. There are requests from the people for providing coupons to them due to shortage of LPG in the open market. Sir, I would like to bring to the notice of the hon. Minister that there is a feeling among the people that since the Government is concentrating on reducing subsidy on LPG and kerosene, thereby they are creating shortage in order to reduce subsidy.

The failure of refineries and bottling-units was also there during the previous regime, but there was no shortage of LPG, at that time. The people have faced a lot of problems during the festivals like Dussehra, Diwali and Ramzan. The hon. Minister went on promising the people regarding proper supply, but the scarcity has not been checked and the problem has not been solved.

I would like to know from the hon. Minister regarding the action plan for regular supply of LPG and kerosene. The present Andhra Pradesh Government has also promised to give subsidy of Rs. 100/- on every cylinder, but they have not yet implemented it. People now understand that it was only an election promise which will never be implemented.

The price of LPG and kerosene is already high and it has got its own implications on lower and middle income groups.

The other aspect is adulteration of kerosene. In the name of adulteration, the Government wants to hike the price of kerosene. Kerosene is mostly used by the rural people not only for cooking purpose but also for lighting, as thousands of villages in our country have not been electrified and there are regular power cuts in rural areas.

Hence I request the hon. Minister not to reduce the subsidy on LPG and kerosene. Adulteration can be checked by adopting new technologies, as private companies like the Reliance has done it. Thank you.

श्री कृपाल परमार (हिमाचल प्रदेश): धन्यवाद, उपसभापति महोदय। मैं माननीय मंत्री जी द्वारा दिए गए जवाब से सहमत भी हूँ और असहमत भी हूँ। सहमत इसलिए हूँ कि माननीय मंत्री जी ने बड़ी फिराकदिली से अपनी कमियों को स्वीकार किया है और जब तक कोई कमी स्वीकार न करे, उसे दूर करने का प्रयास नहीं कर सकता है।

माननीय मंत्री जी ने कहा कि "टेंपरेरी शार्टेज" है। यह टेंपरेरी शार्टेज जब जुलाई के महीने में शुरू हुई तब सरकार क्यों नहीं जागी? अगर किसी कंपनी का शट-डाउन था तो उस को त्यौहारों के महीने में ऐसा क्यों करने दिया गया? महोदय, अगर सरकार वक्त रहते हुए इस बारे में कार्यवाही करती तो इस कमी से बचा जा सकता था। मैं माननीय मंत्री जी से पूछना चाहता हूँ कि

यह टैंपरेरी शार्टेज है या सेल्फ क्रिएटेड आर्टीफिसियल शार्टेज है? महोदय, कांग्रेस की सरकारों का इतिहास ऐसा रहा है कि 90 के दशक में सीमेंट की कमी, चीनी की कमी, वनस्पति की कमी, मिट्टी के तेल की कमी और एल.पी.जी. की कमी और एन.डी.ए. की सरकार आने के बाद ये सारी कमियां दूर हुईं। मैं माननीय मंत्री जी से पूछना चाहता हूँ कि क्या कारण है कि जब कांग्रेस की सरकारें होती हैं तब वस्तुओं की कमी होती है और जब भा.ज.पी. नीति की एन.डी.ए. की सरकारें आती हैं तो कीमतों की कमी होती है? कृपया इस बारे में मंत्री जी प्रकाश डालें।

माननीय मंत्री जी देश में 5.5 करोड़ सिलेंडरों की हर महीने जरूरत पड़ती है और आप के द्वारा लोक सभा में दिए गए जवाब के मुताबिक पिछले दिनों ऐसे मामले ध्यान में आए जब बॉटलिंग प्लांट पर एक से तीन किलो कम गैस भरते हुए लोगों को पकड़ा गया। अब अगर एवरेज एक सिलेंडर में इसे एक किलो माना जाय तो 5 करोड़ सिलेंडरों में यह पूरे सालभर का 1200 करोड़ रुपए का घोटाला बनता है। महोदय, 1200 करोड़ रुपए की चपत तो लोगों की बॉटलिंग प्लांट पर ही लग गयी। फिर जब तक घरेलू गैस के व्यावसायिक उपयोग को नहीं रोका जाता तब तक यह समस्या पूरे देश में बनी रहेगी। आज भी स्थिति यह है कि अगर आपको घर के लिए रसोई गैस चाहिए तो नहीं मिलेगी, लेकिन होटलों में, ढाबों में, वैलिंग की दुकानों पर और कार में इस्तेमाल के लिए कालाबाजारी में आपको 500 से 600 रुपए तक में सिलेंडर उपलब्ध हो रहे हैं। माननीय मंत्री जी, इस चीज को रोकने के लिए जहां आपको घरेलू उत्पादन बढ़ाना पड़ेगा, वहीं पर आपकी सरकार का जो सपना "ईरान-पाकिस्तान-इंडिया गैस पाईप-लाइन" है, उसको भी पूरा करने के लिए आपको जल्दी से काम करना चाहिए।

मैं एक सुझाव देना चाहता हूँ कि क्या घरेलू गैस और व्यावसायिक गैस के सिलेंडरों का आकार और रंग अलग-अलग किया जा सकता है? अगर ऐसा कर दिया जाए तो घरेलू गैस के व्यावसायीकरण को एकदम रोका जा सकता है। इसलिए मैं मंत्री जी से निवेदन करता हूँ कि दोनों सिलेंडरों के रंगों को अगर अलग-अलग कर दिया जाए, तो इसको आइडेंटिफाई करने में आसानी होगी कि कहीं किसी कॉमर्शियल परिसर में इसका इस्तेमाल हो रहा है, ताकि इसको आसानी से पकड़ा जा सके।

मान्यवर, जहां तक मिट्टी के तेल का प्रश्न है, तो मिट्टी के तेल ने तो हिन्दुस्तान को मिट्टी में मिला दिया। जिन लोगों को यह सस्ता मिट्टी का तेल मिलना चाहिए, जिनके लिए सब्सिडी दी जाती है, उन तक यह सस्ता मिट्टी का तेल पहुंच ही नहीं पाता। हकीकत तो यह है कि उनको कालाबाजारी में भी उतने दाम पर यह नहीं मिल पाता, जिनको यह मिलना चाहिए था। मैं माननीय मंत्री जी को इसके लिए एक सुझाव देना चाहता हूँ। गरीबों को मिट्टी का तेल खाना बनाने के लिए और अपने घरों में दिए जलाने के लिए दिया जाता है। क्या सरकार कोई ऐसा प्रावधान कर सकती है कि अगर उनको मिट्टी के तेल के बदले गैस दी जाए तो मिट्टी के तेल का जो व्यावसायिक इस्तेमाल हो रहा है, जो पेट्रोल-पम्पों पर जाकर धड़ल्ले से बिक रहा है, हमारी

गाड़ियों के इंजन खराब हो रहे हैं, तो उन लोगों को गैस के लालटेन और चूल्हे मिलें और पेट्रोल-पम्पो पर मिट्टी के तेल की बिक्री बन्द हो, तो मुझे लगता है कि इससे दोनों समस्याओं का समाधान हो सकता है। मैं इन्हीं शब्दों के साथ, माननीय मंत्री जी का ध्यान आकर्षित करते हुए अपनी वाणी को विराम देता हूँ। धन्यवाद।

SHRI SANJAY RAUT (Maharashtra): Sir, I shall put specific questions. I will not take more than two or three minutes.

The hon. Minister has mentioned several things in his statement. There was less production by the PSU and also by Reliance Industries. The Minister has also stated that in the private refinery at Jam Nagar, there was shut-down of a unit for maintenance work from October 4, 2005. Shutting-down of units in the past was allowed only during lean periods and not during peak periods. It was allowed only from February to April. Why was such a shut-down and reduction in production allowed when the demand was growing? The hon. Minister has mentioned in his statement that black-marketeers will be dealt with firmly. So, during this period, how many such cases have been recorded in his department? Secondly, there have been a lot of complaints that consumers are not getting the weight per cylinder that they are supposed to get. There is a big racket being carried on by some people. What action is the Government going to take against such people? It has become common practice that LPG distributors give gas cylinders illegally to hotels and automobile owners and, ultimately, the household consumers suffer. I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether this has come to his notice and whether any action has been taken against those LPG distributors who have been doing this illegally.

SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH (Andhra Pradesh): Mr. Deputy Chairman, Sir, I want to raise three issues for the hon. Minister's consideration that come out of his statement and also on the subject matter of this discussion which is basically black marketing in kerosene and LPG. Sir, the first point I would like to make is on kerosene; second, I will make a few remarks on the LPG consumption; and thirdly, the whole policy of distributorship, as far as kerosene and LPG are concerned. Sir, on kerosene, I would like to invite the hon. Minister's attention to two issues. The first issue, to use a favourite word of the Minister, his favourite word is 'humongous'; he will not have an occasion to use the word 'humongous' today, but the other favourite word he uses is 'conundrum'. I want to draw

[8 December, 2005]

RAJYA SABHA

his attention to the consumption 'conundrum' that governs kerosene use in this country. Sir, I have here before me a publication of the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, called 'Indian Petroleum and Natural Gas Statistics - 2003-04', and on page 60, there is a time series of consumption of petroleum products going for the last decade or so. And, what really stands out, Sir, is we are all led to believe that kerosene-use is a poor man's fuel. Kerosene is being used in the rural areas of this country, and that, as the economy commercialises, people will move from the use of firewood to the use of kerosene. Actually, Sir, if you look at the pattern of kerosene use, I don't know whether the Minister has been struck by the oddity that in the 10 years, there has been virtually no increase in kerosene use in this country. In 1994-95, kerosene consumption in this country was about 9.7 million tonnes; in 2004-2005, it is barely 9.8 million tonnes. So, the first question that I want to ask the Minister is that when LPG use is growing; when motor spirit use is growing, when ATF use is growing, when high-speed diesel use is growing, why is it that kerosene is the only major petroleum product which does not show any increase in consumption? What does this mean Doesn't this appear to be an oddity, as far as consumption pattern is concerned because after all, petroleum use is a sign of growing prosperity, petroleum product use is a sign that people are coming in from a non-commercial economy to a commercial economy, more particularly, from the use of firewood to the use of a petroleum fuel. In the last 10 years, there has been no significant increase in the use of kerosene, to my mind, Sir, this is an oddity that defies any logical explanation. I hope that the Minister will shed some light on this.

The second point I want to draw attention to on kerosene is the whole issue of adulteration. Sir, you can have all the law and order machinery; you can have all as disciplined, patriotic indians working in all the oil marketing companies, like my friend, Mr. Dipankar Mukherjee, and you will not be able to address the problem of adulteration, as long as the present pricing distortion in the oil sector continues. I know when the Minister was out of power, he had a different point of view, and now that he is in power, enlightenment would have dawned on him that twenty-five-rupees a litre price differential between diesel and kerosene is the, single most important factor causing the growth of adulteration mafia.

Sir, for 20 years, we had a gold-smuggling racket in this country. We had a big hawala market in gold. We set up departments; we set up directorates; we set up huge bureaucracies to deal with gold smuggling. But, they were all unsuccessful. But, in the nineties; between 1991 and 1996, you knocked the bottom out of gold smuggling in this country by

reducing import duty on gold, by liberalising the import duty on gold, and, today, nobody talks about the smuggling of gold in this country. This is not because you set up directorates, or, you set up big huge corporations, or, you, suddenly, had an increase in law and order machinery in the coastal States. It is because the economic... *(Interruptions)*... Kerosene is called 'black gold'. So, my request to the Minister is, please educate us on the economic foundations of this adulteration mafia. The adulteration mafia is not because law and order has broken down in UP; the adulteration *mafia* is not because law and order does not exist in Bihar. The adulteration *mafia* is because the pricing distortion that has continued and is, in fact, increased over the last few year...today, it is about Rs. 25-26 a litre...is a powerful invitation for adulteration. In the absence of attacking the economic routes of adulteration, Sir, I don't think that you are going to be able to address this issue by bureaucratic or organisational means, however, impassioned a plea, the Members like Mr. Dipankar Mukherjee, might make ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE: Sir, he is not putting questions.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: You can get some questions out of it. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE: Sir, my question was there. ...*(Interruptions)*... If drinking water is cheaper, can adulteration be justified for mineral water? Let me see how the rich people can stand it?

SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH: Sir, on LPG, I have two issue. Now, the consumption of LPG...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Issues or questions?

SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH: Two questions-issues/questions. Sir, on LPG, today, if you look at the consumption pattern of LPG-Sir, I know what I am saying is unpalatable to some of my friends in the Left, but occasionally, I hope they do see the writing on the wall as the Minister has seen because he was left of them, when he was out of power and now that he is in power, he is certainly bearing veering towards the Centre as his reply would undoubtedly testify. Sir, on LPG, I would raise two questions. Now, we have about 80 million LPG consumers in this country, give or take a few millions, between 80 or 85 million LPG customers. The bulk of the LPG consumption is still urban consumption. About 75 or 80 per cent of the consumption is still basically the urban consumption of the LPG. So, whom are we shedding tears for as far as the LPG consumption is

concerned? It is certainly not a rural area phenomenon. It is certainly not a rural fuel. The use of LPG in rural areas must be promoted. There is no doubt about it. My question to the Minister is, what are the steps that the oil marketing companies have taken in the last few years to accelerate the penetration of LPG in the rural areas? Now, Sir, one of the things that have been done some years ago was the introduction of the 5 kg cylinders. Now, when I look at some of the figures given out by his own Ministry, I find that out of 84 million LPG customers-his own Ministry's website gives the figure that the number of 5 kg LPG cylinder customers is less than three lakhs. So, in other words, neither the innovation of reducing the size of the 14.5 kg. cylinder to 5 kg. nor the marketing efforts of the oil marketing companies have resulted in a situation where this imbalance between urban consumption of LPG and rural consumption of LPG has been rectified. So, I would request the hon. Minister to enlighten us on the steps that he is taking to ensure that the LPG consumption increases in the rural areas. And, there is no doubt in my mind, Sir, that we must, as a policy, promote the use of LPG in rural areas as well, because it is a fuel that is convenient, that is easy to use and that would reduce the deforestation that is taking place in many parts of the country. So, I think, the rural use of LPG is a major area of priority on which I hope that he will shed some light.

Finally, Sir, I would say a few words on the whole issue of kerosene and LPG dealerships and distributorships. Sir, this is an issue even as far as PDS is concerned. And, I know what I will say, at last, Mr. Dipankar Mukherjee will agree with what I have to say. Some years ago, when reform of the PDS started, the whole, TPDS, the APL, the BPL, there may be some controversies over it, but the fact of the matter is that it was recognised at that time that the poorer States were not getting the bulk of the subsidy, and that the better-off States were getting the bulk of the food subsidy. Uttar Pradesh with 18 per cent of India's poor was drawing less than eight per cent of the food subsidy, whereas Kerala with three per cent of India's poor was drawing about 10-12 per cent of the subsidy.

Now, it was in recognition of that fact that the PDS.....(*Interruptions*)...
No; I am not against Kerala's food subsidy, but..... (*Interruptions*)... May I finish, please? ...(*Interruptions*)...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Let him finish.

SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH: Sir, the whole recognition was that if you are going to subsidise, you must subsidise those who are poor, those who are really in need. ...(*Interruptions*)...

PROF. P.J. KURIAN (Kerala) : Sir, it is because Kerala has a very good PDS system. ...*(Interruptions)*... We deserve it. ...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Please, let him complete. ...*(Interruptions)*... Let him complete. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH: Sir, if you look at the data on distributorships of kerosene and LPG, the same story repeats itself. The same Kerala, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra are getting the bulk of the distributorships. Where are the distributorships in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, North-East, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan?

So, I would request the hon. Minister that if we are going to promote kerosene and LPG as national fuels, the distributorship of these fuels must bear some relation to population distribution as well. Today, this is the sad fact about the distribution of kerosene and LPG. Maybe, it reflects the efficiency of South Indian States, but it should also reflect the poverty and needs of a part of India, which account for the bulk of India's population. I do hope that this is a fact that the hon. Minister would appreciate and respond to.

Thank you Sir.

SHRIMATI PREMA CARIAPPA (Karnataka): Sir, this is an important and burning issue, mainly suffered by the ladies. The main sufferers are the women.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: You may seek clarification.

SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE: No, Sir. I will do that later on. She has to counter whatever Shri Jairam Ramesh has said!

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Who has to counter?

SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE: Sir, I said that she has to counter whatever Shri Jairam Ramesh has said ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRIMATI PREMA CHARIAPPA: Sir, this is an important and a burning issue. The main sufferers are women in the households. Whether she is a housewife or an office-goer, or a coolie worker, she has to suffer the most. In the morning, she has to get up and see to it that her children go to school. Her husband goes to work. She has to do the cooking. She herself may be going to office or for some other work. When there is no kerosene, when there is no gas, she has to suffer, as it is her duty to see that everybody in the house is satisfied.

[8 December, 2005]

RAJYA SABHA

Sir, there are so many poor people; they are the poorest of the poor. Hardly ten to fifteen per cent of them get the yellow cards, where they are eligible to get ten litres of kerosene for a week. When the poorest of the poor wish to get a ration card, or a yellow card, they are asked for so many documents. They have to have either the receipt of electricity bill, or water bill or a house rent receipt. The house owner has to prove that they are the tenants in that house. Usually the owner does not give the letter of proof to the tenant as he wishes the tenant to vacate the house for the sake of more rent. Also, they are forced to do with ten litres of kerosene. A family of five needs, at least, twenty to twenty-five litres per month. They have to cook and boil water using the same kerosene. It becomes very difficult for them. Hence, they are forced to go and buy it in the black market. The coolie earns hardly Rs. 65 to 70 and he has to pay Rs. 30 to 35 per litre of kerosene in the black market. It is very sad that the poorest of the poor are getting poorer; they hardly get one time's meal to eat.

[THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P.J. KURIAN) In the chair]

Sir, as far as LPG is concerned, one cylinder lasts hardly for twenty-five days. When you go for booking gas, they ask to get it booked thirty days in advance. They ask you to book it thirty days before, and when there is no kerosene, and no cylinder, it becomes very difficult in the household.

Therefore, I request the hon. Minister to curb this black marketing of kerosene and help the poor people. Also, restore the gas connections and LPG cylinders to make them easily available to everybody in the country so as to help the poor people, particularly, the women folk.

Thank you, Sir.

SHRI MANOJ BHATTACHARYA(West Bengal): Thank you, Sir. I am grateful to the hon. Minister for Petroleum for this detailed statement. I am going to ask him specific questions. I could have responded to certain points raised by some intellectuals living in the ivory towers. I could have done that. But I am not going to take up that because my time is very limited. I am told that I will be getting only five minutes' time. So, I would like to address some core issues and raise some questions on the issues that have been experienced by the nation for quite some time. Even now, this is being experienced.

4.00 P.M.

Sir, is it being recognized as a temporary phenomenon, or does it have a background? Sir, I doubt that during the last six years, during the NDA regime, to demonstrate that India is shining, artificially some commercial organizations, traders, and even in the domestic field, some unplanned, *euphoric* supplies of LPG connections were given. I doubt that because of that, to artificially show that India is shining, this sort of situation might have precipitated. Whether you have made some inquiry that these sorts of incidents have taken place during the last six years during the regime of the NDA, when your predecessor was in power—and it is well spelt out now that so many sorts of corruptions were involved during that period — we have also raised this issue. Some have been accepted and some have not been accepted. Are you instituting some inquiry to find out that LPG connections were given for the commercial organisations, for the traders whom they represent particularly without thinking about the supply of the LPG, internationally and also nationally? This is the first point. Secondly, Sir, the Minister's statement gives me to understand that the combination of IOC or a public sector company and the Reliance has made a synergy. But my experience is that instead of synergy, it has de-synergised the entire supply position. I would like to ask the hon. Minister a specific question. Has the Reliance Industries sought the permission, because they have to work to fulfil the needs of the people, from the public sector company or, at least, from the hon. Minister that they will be shutting down at the peak period or when the demand is at the peak? Have they sought some permission? If not, then what measures the Government is going to take against this sort of industries which are ruling the roost to control them and to make them understand that they must also function in the interest of the nation? Today the euphoria is that privatisation is everything; privatisation is the only panacea, deregulation is the only panacea. We are trying to contain those intellectuals who are perverting this but, of course, with limited success because they are very strong. Unfortunately or fortunately, the experience or the ground reality is altogether different than the professed remarks of theirs. However, I am not going into details because of paucity of time. I would like to ask another question because it is a very serious matter. The IOC's Sales Officer, Manju Nath Shanmugham has been killed. It is not the first incident by mafias. They are in the construction industry; they are in the oil industry. Mafias are everywhere. Mafias cannot operate without the political connections. Unfortunately, these mafias are operating with political connections, and after the murder or very sad demise of Manju Nath, it has been revealed by Press, and I have many

references, where it has been alleged that these mafias or dealers are very-well connected with different political parties. I don't like to name them because I also don't know the exact names of parties whether it is this party or that party But the political nexus is there. Sir. I am reminded of N. Vohra Report revealing the very bad nexus of the unprincipled bureaucracy, greedy politicians and over-zealous businessmen that is existing even today. Sir, this is a very sensitive sector whether it is kerosene, LPG, diesel or petrol. The hon. Minister is handling it. I must compliment him that he is handling it to his possible acumen. If gold and kerosene are equated together, then the nation does not stand anywhere. How was the gold price contained by deliberating it; by importing it? This logic can also be applied to kerosene. Kerosene is poor man's issue. It is accepted; it is not to be contested, and I am sure the hon. Minister while replying will reply ...*{Interruptions}*... I am not taking any note. I am sure that he will not be guided by those interests sully in the ivory tower because he has to contest elections and he knows what the common people are ...*{Interruptions}*... one doesn't have to ...*{Interruptions}*...

SHRI JAI RAM RAMESH: The United Front Government ...*{Interruptions}*...

SHRI MANOJ BHATTACHARYA: The United Front Government did not pursue any other philosophy than he professes ... *{Interruptions}*...The United Front Government did not pursue any economic philosophy than he professes ...*{Interruptions}*...

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P.J. KURIAN): Please address the Chair.

SHRI MANOJ BHATTACHARYA: Finally, Sir, I would like to seek one more clarification. Earlier, by an Order of 2002, the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe applicants seeking permissions or license to carry LPG were given 180 days to produce the tankers for the purpose of supply. Now, the new Tender Notice, 2005 provides no grace period to Scheduled Caste or Scheduled Tribe applicants. There are very few SC/STs who are capable to possess a tanker, and, if at all, they are doing this business. I would like the hon. Minister to clarify whether the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas has altered the order and has removed the grace period. Earlier, it was being given to the SC/STs thereby bringing them at par with the mainstream.

In the end, I would like to thank you for having given me the opportunity ' to speak on this issue.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P.J KURIAN): Okay, thank you, Mr. BHattacharya. Next speaker is Mr. P.G. Narayannan.

SHRI P.G. NARAYANAN (Tamil Nadu): Mr. Vice Chairman, Sir, the people are already overburdened by enormous increase in the price of LPG. Now, they are facing acute shortage of LPG for the past five months. I want to ask the Minister as to what action the Government is contemplating to bring normalcy in this regard. Sir, the Government of India wants the subsidy on LPG to be reduced. But the Left Parties, supporting the Government from outside, are opposed to the reduction in subsidy. Is the Government deliberately creating an artificial scarcity to achieve its goal of reducing the subsidy? Sir, the price of crude oil in the international market has come down \$57 per barrel. When the Government can reduce the prices of aviation turbine fuel twice in the last 15 days, why is the Government dragging its feet in reducing the prices of LPG and diesel? This only reveals the class character of the Government.

Sir, the Minister is suggesting that ladies should stop buying sarees and skip going to movies in order to pay more for the LPG. This is the statement of the Minister. What atrocious logic is this?

Sir, mostly, poor people are using the kerosene for cooking and other purposes. Now, the people are facing kerosene shortage also. Sir, the kerosene requirement of Tamil Nadu is 1,20,000 kiloliters per month but the Government was providing only 75,000 kilolitres per months. It has further been reduced to 56,000 kilolitres per month. Sir, this is drastic reduction of 50 per cent of the total requirement.

Further, the State of Tamil Nadu has been denied permission to import kerosene. Either the Centre should provide the required quantity of kerosene to Tamil Nadu or it should permit the State Government to import the kerosene. But you cannot deny both of them. Sir, I charge the Government of being anti-poor and pro-rich because the Government has substantially reduced the quota of PDS kerosene, which is meant for the poor people.

Sir, will the Government take suitable steps to ensure that the kerosene quota of Tamil Nadu is fully met? Sir, the Centre should not play politics with kerosene quota, especially in view of the impending Assembly

elections, I hope the Minister is aware that Tamil Nadu is the most affected State by recent floods. The Tamil Nadu Chief Minister demanded, by requesting the hon Prime Minister, to supply 43,000 kiloliters of kerosene immediately to meet the demands of the poor people. Will the Government respond to this very important demand, at least, considering the urgent situation in Tamil Nadu? Thank you, Sir.

SHRIMATI S.G. INDIRA (Tamil Nadu): Thank, you, very much, Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir. Already our leader, Mr. P G. Narayanan has mentioned all the things. I would like to make only a few points here. There is an issue that domestic consumption of LPG fell by 2.5 per cent this year. Still, there is such a shortage because of hoarding, resorted by the PSUs and dealers. Over half of such dealers are appointed by a non-transparent quota based selection process. The selection of dealers has not been done in a transparent manner. This is the main charge that we are making here. The hon. Minister is well aware that in this heavy rain, Tamil Nadu has suffered heavy losses. The hon. Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu has given two liters of kerosene free of cost to every affected family member. She has also asked every cardholder to have three extra liters of kerosene by showing the family ration card. For the reasons only, she has asked that we need extra allocation of kerosene for three months. But, there is no reply from the Central Government. We need an immediate reply and allocation from the Centre, because the Minister is also from the highly affected district.

I would also like to mention here, in this August House, that in a press report, before the press people, the hon. Minister has said, in reply to a question regarding the increase in prices of LPG and kerosene, "the women should restrict the purchase of sarees and they should restrict themselves from going to Cinema theatres". I would like to mention here, when we buy the kerosene or LPG, we cannot catch and hold that LPG or kerosene for us. We are preparing food for everybody else. Male section is also utilising those food and the women section is suffering a lot. He simply mentioned that in the press like that I request the hon. Minister that this should not be repeated because it is affecting not only the women section of Tamil Nadu, it is affecting and hurting the whole women section in our country also So, this should not have been the answer of the hon. Minister when press is asking such questions. He could have said that we are going to increase or we will make some proper arrangement or something like that. But, he simply said like that and it was reported in the newspapers. So, in this august House, I would say that this is not fair

on his part to give such statements in the press and it is highly affecting the women section. That is why I asked for time and participated in this debate. Thank You.

श्री मोतिउर रहमान (बिहार): सभापति जी, आज बहुत महत्वपूर्ण विषय पर इस सदन में वाद-विवाद चल रहा है, स्पष्टीकरण चल रहा है। देश के उन सुदूर देहाती क्षेत्रों से लेकर शहरों तक जुड़ा यह बहुत महत्वपूर्ण विषय है। पहले जब मैं बिहार विधान सभा का सदस्य था, अभी जो मंत्री जी हैं, तब इनके बारे में सुना करता था। जब इनको पेट्रोलियम मंत्री बनाया गया तो हम लोगों ने प्रधान मंत्री जी को बधाई का पत्र दिया था और मैं आज भी गौरवान्वित हूँ कि माननीय मंत्री जी, जब से इस विभाग के मंत्री हुए हैं, वे काफी कर्मठता के साथ इस काम को कर रहे हैं। लेकिन मुझे इस बात को कहने में जरा भी हिचक नहीं है कि इस देश में, खास तौर से बिहार में एल.पी. जी. की जो व्यवस्था है, वह बहुत ही कमजोर है। शहरों में जिन आदमियों को एल.पी.जी. की कमी नहीं होती है, वह होटलों या दूसरी जगहों पर एल.पी.जी. की व्यवस्था में बहुत कमी नहीं होती है, जब अधिक पैसे मिलते हैं तो उसे दे दिया जाता है। लेकिन सुदूर देहातों में, जहां एल.पी.जी. की व्यवस्था होनी चाहिए, वहां व्यवस्था नहीं है। मैं माननीय मंत्री जी, से आग्रह करना चाहता हूँ कि इसकी व्यवस्था को सुदृढ़ करने का प्रयास किया जाए, ताकि, यू.पी.ए. से लोगों को जो आशा है, उम्मीद है, वह पूरी हो सके।

इसके वेट में भी कमी है, इसमें माप-तौल की सही व्यवस्था होनी चाहिए। यह लोगों तक सुविधाजनक रूप से पहुंच जाए। हमारे जिले, मोतिहारी और बेतिया, जो नेपाल के बार्डर पर है, रक्सौल के माध्यम से, सारे गैस को नेपाल में भेज दिया जाता है। उस पर कंट्रोल होना चाहिए। लोगों को सुविधाजनक, सही रेट पर सामान नहीं मिल पाता है। यह दुर्भाग्य की बात है कि माननीय मंत्री जी कोशिशों के बावजूद भी यह नहीं हो पा रहा है। मैं समझता हूँ कि इस पर निगरानी होनी चाहिए। जिले से लेकर प्रदेश स्तर पर कमेटियां बननी चाहिए, जो पता लगाए कि क्या कमी है। रघुवंश बाबू के विभाग में जो कमेटियां, निगरानी समितियां हैं, उसी तरह इसमें भी बननी चाहिए और लोगों के दुख-दर्द के समझने की कोशिश करनी चाहिए। जहां तक मिट्टी के तेल का सवाल है, यह दुख की बात है कि पच्चीस रुपये से लेकर तीस रुपये तक मिट्टी का तेल मिलता है। सारा मिट्टी का तेल नेपाल भेज दिया जाता है। बिहार के लिए पहले जो कोटा था, उस कोटे में कमी भी कर दी गई है। दुख की बात है। गरीबों के, दलितों के घर में हफ्ते में दो या तीन दिन तक चिराग जलते हैं। इससे बड़ी दुःखद बात और कुछ नहीं हो सकती है। माननीय मंत्री जी, मैं आपसे आग्रह करना चाहता हूँ कि यू.पी.ए. के घोषणा पत्र में हर घर में चिराग जलाने की व्यवस्था है, लेकिन चिराग जलाने का जो अंदाज है, वह सही नहीं है। जो लोग अधिक पैसे देते हैं, उनको मिट्टी का तेल मिल जाता है। उन्हें आखिर कहां से मिलता है? उन गरीबों के घर में चिराग नहीं जल पाता है। दस करोड़, हजार करोड़ का मार्किटिंग के जरिए कार्य चल रहा है।

बड़े-बड़े व्यवसायी, बड़े मार्केटियर मिट्टी के तेल पर हावी है। मोदिहारी और बेतिया में, बिहार में दूसरे जिलों में मिट्टी के तेल की इतनी बड़ी कालाबाजारी कहीं नहीं है। आखिर इसका क्या कारण है? छापामारी क्यों नहीं होती है? आपने व्यवस्था रखी है कि हर ब्लॉक में मिट्टी के तेल का एजेंट बहाल होना चाहिए।

लेकिन दुःख की बात है कि बिहार में मोतिहारी जिले के ढाका, पताही, चिररिया और बहुत सारे ब्लॉक ऐसे हैं, जहां पर 20 किलोमीटर, 30 किलोमीटर, 40 किलोमीटर से डीलर्स को मिट्टी का तेल ले जाना पड़ता है और वे रास्ते में ही इसे बेच देते हैं। आखिर इसको कौन माई-बाप देखने वाला है? यदि आज के मंत्री जी, जो इतने ईमानदार हैं, इनके जमाने में भी इस पर कंट्रोल नहीं हुआ तो फिर कौन कौन से मंत्री के जमाने में इस पर कंट्रोल हो सकता है? मैं आग्रह करना चाहता हूं कि आप शीघ्रातिशीघ्र हर ब्लॉक में मिट्टी के तेल का एजेंट बहाल की जाए और मिट्टी के तेल में जो मिलावाट हो रही है, उसको रोकने की व्यवस्था करिए।

उपसभाध्यक्ष महोदय, आखिरी बात मैं डीजल के बारे में कहना चाहता हूं। लोगों को जो डीजल मिल रहा है, आप उसकी जांच करवाइए। मैं समझता हूं कि बिहार में डीजल की जो व्यवस्था है, चाहे वह भारत पेट्रोलियम की तरफ से हो, चाहे हिंदुस्तान पेट्रोलियम की तरफ से हो, 90 परसेंट उसमें मिलावट है। आखिर क्या कारण है? आप इसको चैक करके जेल में क्यों नहीं बंद करते हैं? आप कानून बनाइए ऐसा कानून बनाइए जिसके डर से किसी की हिम्मत ही न हो कि वह मिलावट कर सके। आज मनमोहन सिंह जी की सरकार के समय में माननीय सोनिया जी के नेतृत्व में जो सरकार चल रही है, अगर उस सरकार के समय में भी इस पर कंट्रोल नहीं हुआ, तो यह दुख की बात होगी। **NDA** वालों ने तो सब बरबाद ही कर दिया, अब तो आपने बनाने की जिम्मेदारी ली है, आप इसको बनाइए। मैं समझता हूं कि अय्यर साहब के जमाने में इस पर निश्चित रूप से काम होगा। मुझे आशा है कि वे निश्चित रूप से इन बातों का जवाब देंगे। मैं श्री जय राम रमेश जी की बातों से अपने को सम्बद्ध करता हूं उन्होंने जो सुझाव दिए हैं, उन पर कार्यवाही करनी चाहिए। इन शब्दों के साथ मैं आपकी बात समाप्त करता हूं। धन्यवाद।

उपसभाध्यक्ष (प्रो.पी.जे. कुरियन): धन्यवाद, रहमान जी. Now, Mr. Lekhraj Bachani. He is absent. Prof^r R.B.S. Varma.

प्रो. रामबख्श सिंह वर्मा (उत्तर प्रदेश): उपसभाध्यक्ष महोदय, इस महत्वपूर्ण ध्यानाकर्षण प्रस्ताव पर बोलने के लिए आपने मुझे अवसर दिया है, इसके लिए मैं आपको धन्यवाद, देता हूं. मैं माननीय मंत्री जी से एक सीधा-सीधा प्रश्न करना चाहता हूं कि आपने जो कारण गिनाए हैं जिनकी वजह से देश के उपभोक्ताओं को पिछले दिनों में **LPG Gas** की आपूर्ति ठीक से नहीं हो पाई, वे कारण अपने आप में ठीक होते हुए भी, क्या उनके साथ एक और कारण यह नहीं है कि एक सिलेंडर पर 190-195 रूपए की सब्सिडी आपको देनी पड़ती है। इधर अंतर्राष्ट्रीय बाजार में जो भाव बढ़ रहा है, उसको देखते हुए और तेल कंपनियों के लगातार घाटे की स्थिति को देखते

हुए, क्या जान बूझकर ऑयल-कम्पनीज ने कम आपूर्ति की है, जिससे कि वे घाटे सा उभर सकें और उनका घाटा कम हो, क्योंकि यदि मान लिया जाए कि 8 करोड़ लोगों के पास LPG कनेक्शंस हैं और यदि 10 फीसदी आपूर्ति कम होगी, तो एक महीने में इस तरह से करीब 200 करोड़ रुपए बचाए जा सकते हैं। क्या यह भी कारण है, जिसकी वजह से आपूर्ति कम हुई है?

दूसरी बात मैं यह पूछना चाहता हूँ कि ये जो कंपनियाँ हैं, चाहे वे पब्लिक सेक्टर की कंपनियाँ हों, चाहे वे प्राइवेट सेक्टर की कंपनियाँ हों। shut-down वे जब लेती है, तो shut-down लेने के लिए काय कोई प्रणाली बनी है, कोई सिस्टम बना है? क्या कोई ऐसा सिस्टम है कि वह सरकार को इतना पहले बताएगी कि उन्हें कब शट-डाउन लेना है, जिससे कि सरकार उस समय में उचित प्रबंधन कर सके। जहाँ तक आपने रिलायंस कंपनी के शट-डाउन के बारे में इस माननीय सदन को अवगत कराया है। जहाँ तक मैं समझता हूँ कि रिलायंस कम्पनी का यह शट-डाउन पहले अप्रैल में होने वाला था, अप्रैल के बाद मई, जून, फिर जुलाई मैं, यह निरंतर बढ़ता चला गया और अक्टूबर में शट-डाउन हुआ है। क्या कारण है कि शट-डाउन लगातार स्थगित होता रहा और इस तरह से सरकार इसकी उचित व्यवस्था नहीं कर पाई। अगर ऐसी कोई प्रणाली नहीं है, तो क्या सरकार इस पर विचार करेगी कि कोई ऐसी प्रणाली बने, जिससे समय रहते सरकार को मालूम हो जाए और ऐसी परिस्थितियों में सरकार की तरफ से और ऑयल मार्केटिंग कंपनीज की तरफ से उचित प्रबंध किया जा सके?

माननीय मंत्री जी. तीसरी बात मैं आपसे यह जानना चाहता हूँ कि जहाँ तक मुझे मालूम है कि ऑयल कंपनीज प्रति उपभोक्ता 40 दिन में एक सिलिंडर आपूर्ति करने का काम करती है। यह व्यवस्था गर्मी के दिनों में तो ठीक हो सकती है, लेकिन सर्दी के दिनों में जब पानी को भी गर्म करना होता है, कई बार चाय भी बनानी होती है और गैस का कंजप्शन जहाँ सर्दी में बढ़ जाता है, उस समय क्या वे इस समय सीमा को घटाएंगे, 40 दिन की जगह 25 दिन 20 दिन या कम-से-कम 30 तक घटा कर लाने का काम करेंगे? क्योंकि 40 दिन की गर्मी की व्यवस्था और 40 दिन की व्यवस्था सर्दी की, दोनों में सीजनल इफेक्ट को ध्यान में रखना चाहिए। जहाँ तक मुझे मालूम है, पिछले वर्षों में ऐसा होता रहा है कि गर्मी के दिनों की अपेक्षा सर्दी के दिनों में आपूर्ति बढ़ा दी जाती थी, लेकिन इस वर्ष ऐसा नहीं हुआ है। तो कृपया यह बताइए कि यह जो सीजनल चैज हैं, इसे ध्यान में रखा जाएगा या नहीं रखा जाएगा।

एक तथ्य जो माननीय जय राम रमेश जी ने कहा है, उसे मैं भी उठाना चाहता हूँ। यह वास्तव में बड़े आश्चर्य की बात है कि पिछले 10 वर्षों से किरोसीन ऑयल की आपूर्ति में कोई परिवर्तन नहीं हुआ है। इस बीच 10 वर्षों में, मैं समझता हूँ कि देश की आबादी 15 से 18 करोड़ बढ़ गई होगी। इतनी 15 से 18 करोड़ आबादी बढ़ गई है और किरोसीन ऑयल की डिमांड में कोई परिवर्तन नहीं हुआ है, लेकिन जो कीमतों का गैप है, वह काफी बढ़ गया है, 25 रुपए 24 रुपए प्रति लीटर बढ़ गया है। माननीय मंत्री जी, यह खोज का विषय है। अगर आप इस संबंध में इस माननीय सदन को कुछ सूचना देने की कृपा करेंगे, तो अच्छा होगा। मैं समझता हूँ कि इसी में

कहीं-न-कहीं इसका उत्तर निश्चित है कि आखिर इस किरोसीन का डायवर्जन इतना क्यों हो रहा है? आप स्वयं मान रहे हैं कि 18 फीसदी किरोसीन ऑयल का डायवर्जन हो रहा है। वास्तव में यह जो आपकी ऑयल कंपनीज ने आपको बताया है कि इतना डायवर्जन हो रहा है, इसे कहीं बहुत अधिक मात्रा में किरोसीन ऑयल का डायवर्जन हो रहा है। जो उसके पात्र लोग हैं, उन्हें किरोसीन ऑयल नहीं मिल रहा है। मैंने आपको पहले भी बताया था, जो हमारे माननीय सदस्यों ने बताया, उसके अतिरिक्त ग्रामीण क्षेत्रों में जो डिजल इंजन है, उसमें डीजल की जगह उस किरोसीन ऑयल का इस्तेमाल हो रहा है। डीजल में मिलावट की बात तो सबने बताई है, लेकिन जो डीजल पम्पिंग सेट हैं, जिससे पानी निकाला जाना है, वह डिजल द्वारा चालित नहीं है, वह किरोसीन ऑयल के द्वारा चालित है। इसलिए गरीब कों भी किरोसीन ऑयल जलाने के लिए मिलना चाहिए, भोजन बनाने के लिए जो किरोसीन ऑयल मिलना चाहिए वहां यह उपलब्ध नहीं है। इसमें बहुत बड़ा काफ़िया काम कर रहा है, इसमें चाहें आपके ऑयल कंपनीज के अधिकारी हों, चाहे स्टेट गवर्नमेंट के आफिसर्स जो इसके लिए लगाए गए हैं कि वे नियंत्रण करें और देखें और उन की भी मिलीभगत है।

अन्तिम बात मैं आपसे यह पूछना चाहता हूं माननीय मंत्री जी, कि आपने कहा था कि। दिसम्बर से नए कनेक्शन खोल दिए जाएंगे और आपने अपने स्टेटमेंट में भी बताया है कि नए कनेक्शन खोल दिए गए हैं। लेकिन मुझे मालूम हुआ है कि सारी की सारी ऑयल कंपनीज ने कनेक्शन नहीं खोले हैं। कृपया इसकी जांच करा लें और जांच कराने के बाद आप देखें कि किन ऑयल कंपनीज ने ये कनेक्शन खोल दिए हैं और किसने नहीं खोले हैं और कृपया इसे सदन में बताने की कृपा करें। धन्यवाद।

SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR: Mr Chairman, Sir, I am, indeed, most grateful to all the hon. Members representing, virtually, all the parties in the House as well as many of the different regions of the country for having participated in this discussion. It has been enlightening for me, and I trust that after I have given clarifications sought, we will be able to concentrate our minds constructively on what more, perhaps, needs to be done, I shall start appropriately with comrade Dipankar Mukherjee who initiated the discussion, and, his primary question, his initial question to me was: "How is it that the shot down was taken by a private refiner, precisely, at the time when the festival season was on? Sir, all I can say is that we were notified, as long ago as last year, that because that hadn't taken a shutdown, particularly, in their FCC unit, since the commissioning of the plant, they would have to do so, and they indicated a period to us which was outside of the festive season. Since the notification had come to us well in time, arrangements were made for effecting imports to be able to make up for the gap that was anticipated at that time. But, there

were repeated postponements, in consequence of which some of the imports that had come in, the oil marketing companies had some difficulty in disposing of. And, finally, when it was notified to us without any ambiguity on the 16th of August, 2005 that the shutdown would be taken in the month of October, there was, of course, considerable concern among our oil marketing companies as well as in Government. I have with me, here, the entire block of correspondence that took place between the Reliance on the one hand, and the oil industry leaders, IOC and others, on the other hand. And it is clear from that that was an attempt made to persuade reliance not to take the shutdown at the time when it was notified for being finally taken. Our Ministry too entered into conversation with them to try to get it postponed, but, we were advised — and I have the entire text here that for technical reasons there simply was no way in which they could postpone taking the shutdown at the time they did it. There are, at the present, no legal means by which we can insist with a Refiner that he should not take down the shutdown when he is technically advised to take it down. And, we believed, I think, in the month of July, August, when the House was in session, the Monsoon Session, that we would be able to make alternative arrangements. But, even then, it was becoming clear that with the fire at Mumbai High, certain other unplanned shutdowns that were taking place in the public sector refinery, the import arrangements would have to be geared up to a higher level than had been initially expected, particularly because the shutdown was in the festive season and because there were these other public sector disruptions that I have already mentioned. What nobody could anticipate, what I, certainly, didn't anticipate, was that there would be a series of hurricanes in the Gulf of Mexico, which would shut down as many as 14 refineries in the United States of America. And the United States demand for LPG is very considerable and it was more profitable, I suspect, for even producers in the Gulf to market their LPG in the United States of America than on the kind of prices at which we were making purchases. So, a series of tenders which our oil marketing companies floated in the month of August did not even receive a response. It was not till September that in some tentative way, the response started emerging. And it is just at the time that the response started emerging, we found ourselves with a major shutdown owing to a strike of LPG bottling units around Delhi. That was when we stepped in, in a big measure, to take matters in hand and tried to sort things out. I think, hon. Mukherjee has an absolutely valid point when he says that our oil marketing companies should have publicised to the general public as to what it is that was causing shortages and what

steps that they were taking to meet the shortages. Had they done so, perhaps, we would not have the kind of panic rumours that were floated in the market leading to an even greater demand than was actually required on the part of the consumers. I am afraid, however, that unless and until we change the law, there is no way by which we can advise a company to continue to work when its technical consultants say that it must take a shut down. We can't order them. We can only do our best by cajoling, persuasion and alternative methodologies, but frankly speaking, though I am an Aiyar, I am not a pandit, or, a jyotish and, therefore, I could not have anticipated that this entire series of coincidences would arise in such a manner that would aggravate the situation, which was serious but not critical, when the House met for its monsoon session.

Sir, I have been asked as to why the PSUs should suffer a loss on each cylinder. I have been asked: Is it true that because the PSUs are suffering a loss on every cylinder, they are reluctant to effect supplies?

Now, the fact of the matter is that no commercial company is going to be enthusiastic about adding to its losses. But what we have to ask ourselves is: Can we solve this problem without, at any rate, increasing the magnitude of the losses? After all, this year, though we have so strictly controlled the prices of all these four sensitive petroleum products, including petrol and diesel, the under-recoveries, which our companies are suffering, could be of the order or more than Rs. 30,000 crores this year and could even touch somewhere near Rs.40,000 crores. We need our Navaratnas to be healthy and if we are going to place upon them the bulk of the burden of taking subsidies, not only for LPG and kerosene but also for petrol and diesel, as has been happening most of this year, it is inevitable that they would like to cut some corners to save themselves some expenses. But there were no orders from the Government. I want to make this categorically clear that there were no orders from the Government to them not to give new connections. In the month of September, yes, they did stop giving new connections. When they were not in a position to meet the demands of new customers? Now, the shortage has been substantially tackled and from 1st December they have started giving new connections. It takes a certain amount of time to overcome the backlog. So, I would like to assure Shir Verma that, perhaps, by the end of this month the sense of not being able to get a connection immediately would get substantially eased, unless unforeseen factors were to overcome us. We are trying to meet the demand. I am not sure who it was, somebody raised an extremely important point as to whether

the demand that rose during the period when the LPG connections were being freely given had something to do with the crisis that has now come up. The fact is that there is a normal increase in demand which we can quite easily estimate and meet. That normal increase in demand is not too difficult a problem. But when, towards the last quarter of 2003, the international prices of crude oil as well as LPG began to rise, we saw a sudden and inexplicable increase in the demand of LPG cylinders. Sir, the growth rate went up in the month of May-June, 2004 to nearly 18 per cent which simply did not make sense in terms of the purposes for which the subsidy was being given, which is, LPG for domestic use. It became clear that the route that had been opened was being used by those who needed LPG for commercial purposes to smuggle themselves on to customer lists and obtain vast quantities of domestic LPG for non-domestic use. This is being confirmed by statements made by all sections of the House. You do see a very large number of the kind of cylinders that should only be in households, in *dhabas*, in restaurants, in hotels, on auto-rickshaws, on motorcars and dangerously on taxis. Now when there is such a widespread practice, the question arises as to who is responsible for preventing this abuse. Up to a point, it is our oil marketing companies. But please remember that oil marketing company is not a criminal investigative agency. It is not a police force. It cannot register FIRs. Where we need full support in managing the situation is that of those who are in charge of law and order. I don't think there has been adequate cooperation from the law and order authorities. I am rather hoping that as a result of the Manjunath killing, there will be greater sensitivity and awareness on the part of the State Governments as to what their responsibilities are. We have written to the State Governments and we are calling a meeting later this week to early next week of the State Secretaries concerned so as to be able to deal with this dimension of the problem as well. As far as our own companies are concerned, the record of inspections and discovered diversions is not overwhelming, but fairly impressive. Thus, between April-October, 2004 and April-October, 2005, the number of inspections carried out has increased by about 2,500; the number of irregularities detected has increased from 163 to 508; the total number cases of diversion identified has been more than doubled from 122 to 271. But much more significantly the number of cylinders found diverted, which was only 4,417 in April-October, 2004, has risen to 53,687 in April-October, 2005 and the action that we have taken in terms of the marketing discipline guidelines in that taking cautions, fines and terminations together, where action was taken in 155 cases in April-

[8 December, 2005]

RAJ YA SAB HA

October, 2004, the number of cases in which action has been taken in April-October, 2005 is 454, a three-fold increase. But clearly, this is not enough. It is not enough because we can act against our officers if they are found culpable, but there is a long drawn out process which is protected by the contracts they enter into at the time of recruitment. I am sure, our friends, the Comrades, would not wish us to dilute those contractual arrangements. So it takes a very long time to actually get action done. Very often, the management prefers to pursue a lenient course compared to even what is recommended by the CVC. But as for criminal action against a user and, therefore, to establish the nexus with the dealer who has made those supplies, we need, we desperately need, the cooperation of State Governments. They are the ones on whom the Constitution endows the responsibility for law and order. Here, I am not talking of a State Government of any particular colour. There are Congress Governments whose assistance we need. There are other UPA Governments whose assistance we need. There are the Governments of the Left Front whose assistance we need. And there are the Governments of those parties which are in Opposition in Parliament but in office in the States, and we need their assistance also. But, I don't think, you should be knocking at the wrong door. The right door to knock at, in order to ensure that there is the kind of cooperation between the oil marketing companies and the State Governments to get over these problems of law and order, is the door of the State Governments. All the hon. Members of this House are very influential with their respective State Governments. I really appeal to all my colleagues here to come to my assistance because what we are trying to get together is for the common man, for every body's benefit. So, let us try and do that.

Then, a question has been raised of whether under the Jan Kerosene Pariyojana, we have taken into account the Taluka Kerosene Depot experience of the past. I can only say that I did not know about that because, perhaps, it is thirty years' old. But, certainly, we will look into what lessons are to be learnt there. We are hoping that, with progressive improvements and the progressive spreading of our Jan Kerosene Pariyojana, we will be able to find administrative means of running the system better. I had the opportunity in the House of explaining what the component elements of the Jan Kerosene Pariyojana were, when answering questions. So, I won't go back to that. But the fact is that the Jan Kerosene Pariyojana is what I regard as the single most important initiative that I have taken since becoming the Minister. And I am grateful

for the good wishes of the Members to refer to this Pariyojana. And I hope we will succeed.

As regards the distinction between the BPL and the APL, when it comes to questions of Kerosene, I need to draw upon this extremely important and the first-ever scientific study done of the demand for kerosene in our country. It was done by the National Council of Applied Economic Research and it was given to us a little over a month ago. I am not going to waste the time of the House with figures. But some of the findings are very, very interesting. One is that BPL families, especially in rural areas, have a much greater awareness of their entitlements for kerosene than APL families. This is because the BPL families need kerosene much more than the APL families do. The second very important finding that comes out is that, probably, diversion of various kinds is greater in the urban areas than it is in the rural areas and greater still in the metropolitan areas than it is in the mofussil areas I think we need to draw policy decisions out of this. So, we have brought all these conclusions to the attention of State Governments. We are interacting with them. And we hope that we can produce a policy eventually which will actually tackle the sources from which this diversion, one, to adulteration and, two, to the black market for resale takes place so as to be able more to focus the availability of PDS kerosene to those who are really in need of it. In this connection, I would like to respond to Shri Jairam Ramesh's point about the demand for kerosene having remained almost steady over the last ten years. He is surprised; I am not; the reason being that, as rural electrification increases, while rural electrification does not meet the entire demand for lighting our rural areas or even of the rural poor, it does decrease progressively the need for kerosene. In deed, we find that there are a lot of APL families who also keep kerosene because although electricity is made available, its reliability factor is somewhat limited. So, people wish to have a back-up facility. Nobody who can actually use the electricity would really prefer to use the kerosene. But, if the electricity facility is there, but electricity itself is not actually delivered, then, they do need to have kerosene as a back-up facility. Similarly, there has been a spread, a very weak spread, I agree with Shri Jairam Ramesh, of LPG to rural areas. But, to the extent to which it has taken place, it is replacing the need for kerosene. So, the increase in population is leading to an increase in demand for kerosene. But, at the same time, the replacement of kerosene by rural electrification and LPG is diminishing the extent to which a given family is in need of kerosene, and the trade-off between

the two is resulting in a kind of stable feel of demand in the country for this, the NCAER projections into the future also seem to indicate that there is not going to be any significant increase in the demand for kerosene in the country. We have arrived at a point of considerable equilibrium. So, the issue here is really one of having more effective distribution. All that the Central Government does is to allocate, thus far on a historical basis, the available kerosene in the country among the different States on the basis of very objective criteria. But, the allocations from the State capitals to urban and rural areas, to metropolitan and *mofussil* areas, and, then, the decision as to whether to restrict it to the BPL families or make it available to everyone and his brother, is one that is taken by the State Governments. So, while I am sure, the Tamil Nadu Government and it is not alone, several other Governments want to have much more kerosene sent from the Centre, there has been almost no action taken by any of our State Governments, whether it be of Tamil Nadu or any other State to see whether there can be a greater rationalisation in their internal distribution of kerosene as between those who need it more and those who need it less, and places where the diversion is taking place more and places where the diversion is taking place less. .. (*Interruptions*)...

SHRI N. JOTHI (Tamil Nadu): This is your answer for our demand.

SHRI P.G. NARAYANAN: We are supplying...

SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR: I have not referred to your State, except as one of many others

SHRI P.G. NARAYANAN: You have referred to Tamil Nadu.

SHRI N. JOTHI: This is your answer for our demand. ...(*Interruptions*)...

SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR: I will give you the answer for Tamil Nadu. I am not answering Tamil Nadu just now.

SHRI N. JOTHI: This is your answer for all our demands ...(*Interruptions*)...

SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR: I am not saying for Tamil Nadu just now

SHRI N. JOTHI: "I am also not saying on behalf of Tamil Nadu, I am saying for all the States" ...(*Interruptions*)... This is the answer you are giving

SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR: I am giving you the answer.
...(Interruptions)...

Sir, I seek your protection ...*(Interruptions)*...

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P.J. KURIAN): Mr. Jothi, he is not yielding.
...*(Interruptions)*... Mr. Jothi, Please sit down.

SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR: I do not think the May elections in Tamil Nadu should start in this ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI N. JOTHI: Don't worry about that. You will also contribute for that election. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR: Will you please sit down?
...*(Interruptions)*... I am not yielding. *(Interruptions)* I have not yielded.
...*(Interruptions)*...

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P.J. KURIAN): Mr. Jothi, please sit down.
...*(Interruptions)*... Mr. Jothi, don't make it a controversial issue. If you want to put a question, I will give you the time after the Minister finishes his reply. But, now, please take your seat. The Minister is not yielding....*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR: Sir, he has already put questions; I mean, not he but his leader and the lady Member of his party, and I propose to come to the specific issues...

SHRI S.S. AHLUWALIA (Jharkhand): Sir, how can a Minister tell an honourable Member, 'You please sit down'? ...*(Interruptions)*...

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P.J. KURIAN): Please sit down.
...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR: He is the master of disruptions.
...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI S.S. AHLUWALIA: Sir, how can a Minister tell a Member, 'You please sit down'? ...*(Interruptions)*... He is doing this because he belongs to Tamil Nadu.

SHRI N. JOTHI: Sir, the hon. Minister is giving advices and sermons for Tamil Nadu. ...*(Interruptions)*... Hew can he give sermons to all? That is all he can give.

SHRI S.S. AHLUWALIA: This is an insult of a Member. ...*(Interruptions)*...

[8 December, 2005]

RAJYA SABHA

SHRI B.K. HARIPRASAD (Karnataka): Sir, only Mr. Ahluwalia has got the right to disrupt the House. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI S.S. AHLUWALIA: Sir, you can say, 'sit down' from the Chair, but not the Minister. ...*(Interruptions)*... How can a Minister command like this?

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P.J. KURIAN): Mr. Ahluwalia, please take your seat. ...*(Interruptions)*...

AN HON. MEMBER: Sir, both of them belong to Tamil Nadu. -

SHRI N. JOTHI: Unfortunately, he belongs to Tamil Nadu. ...*(Interruptions)*... Unfortunately, he belongs to Tamil Nadu.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P.J. KURIAN): Mr. Jothi, if you want to put any question, I will allow you to do so after the Minister finishes his reply, but right now, please keep quiet. Yes. Mr. Minister.

SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR: So, Sir, irrespective of the interruptions that have taken place, there is a major responsibility for the State Governments with regard to distribution that takes place beyond the State capital, to their rural areas, their urban areas, their metropolitan areas, their mofussil areas, and the sections of the society to which they will make it available. And, all these must be factored in, instead of focussing exclusively on the quantities that are made available from the Centre to the States.

[MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN in the Chair]

Sir, a suggestion was made that we should put in place a grievance redressal mechanism. I am fully in agreement with that. In the Jan Kerosene Pariyojana, we have started, in 10 per cent of the blocks in the rural areas of India, a system of grievance redressal that begins at the gram sabha and continues through the intermediate panchayat and the district panchayat to the State level. And, I think, the experience, we have of running this grievance redressal machinery, should contribute considerably to our improving the system for the whole country, when, as I hope, we will be able to spread the Jan Kerosene Pariyojana mechanism to the country, as a whole. A number of questions raised by the hon. Member, Shri Kalraj Mishra, had already succeeded in answering. But specifically with regard to the Mumbai High North fire, we did actually, more or less, succeeded in restoring output, as per the schedule that I have indicated to the House. But, the fact is that that fire took place in the

month of July. Our shortages were aggravated in the months of August and September, when the Reliance shutdown was coming. And, that was exactly the period when making arrangements for imports became particularly difficult owing to the hurricane in the Gulf of Mexico. So, there is no contradiction, really, between the position that I took then and what happened now. He has referred to having to wait for a long time for bookings. Now that when we have succeeded in dealing with the temporary physical shortage, I repeat, it is down to less than one-and-a-half per cent today. An, we will be able to overcome whatever little remains, by the end of the month, unless something unforeseen happens. But we, in the Ministry of Petroleum, are only responsible for getting it from the refinery or from the port, out up to the distributor or dealer. From there, we require the cooperation of the State Governments to be able to take an administrative check on diversion, whether it is to adulteration, or, it is to the open market. And, here, I cannot help but agree with my friend, Shri Jairam Ramesh, that at the price widens between the administered price and the market price, the temptation to indulge in diversion becomes greater and greater and greater. As of today, when you are virtually giving a cheque of Rs. 198/- with every cylinder, that is given by a dealer, there are many who would wish to take advantage of the situation. And, it is important that all sections of this House give consideration to the manner in which we are running our subsidy system. I cannot go along with my friend, Shri Jairman Ramesh, all the way in what he seems to be saying about eliminating the difference altogether. But I do think it is necessary for us to reflect upon the need to narrow this because that is the economic foundation of the mafia, or, as he said, you cant' throw the baby out with the bath water. Our poor are in need of subsidised sensitive products. Two of these sensitive products are LPG and kerosene. But, is there an intermediate stage possible for food grains? It was the previous Government that introduced the system of the APL supplies, made at economic cost; and the BPL supplies, made at subsidised cost. I was a critic of that. But, here, in the context of kerosene, which is not quite in the same sense, a product required for human survival, may be there is some scope for that. All these are issues that are being considered by the Rangarajan Committee. It was constituted on the 26th October, which is not long ago. They have been given six months to prepare their Report and reply to that. In the course of doing that, perhaps, we will be able to come to some kind of a conclusion. It was also Shri Kalraj Mishra who pointed to someone having said that three-and-half crore connections are illegal, in the sense, that they have been taken by the people who

[8 December, 2005]

RAJYA SABHA

5.00 P.M.

make commercial use of it. That is exactly my point. During the period when there was no kind of control kept over the number of connections given, unscrupulous elements took advantage of the situation and collected connections to which they were not entitled. But, if, as the says, you do find them allover the place, then, I think, it is for State Governments > to help us catch the illegal user and enable us, thus, to establish the nexus between the illegal user and the illegal supplier. That is the only way in which we can move forward. Dr. Subbarami Reddy asked me to prepare imports well in advance. We did make the arrangements for the period when we thought that there would be shortages, what we had not anticipated were the unforeseen factors that are mentioned in my statemefft. Then, two or three people have referred, to it, so, let me come back to it. Yes, I did say that if you reduce the number of sarees you purchase, or the number of movies you go to, it is possible to overcome the difference in pnces....(Interruptions)...

SHRI N. JOTHI: Would you yield for a minute, Sir?...{Interruptions}...

SHRI MANI SHANKARAIYAR: Yes, certainly ...(Interruptions)...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: No, why are you taking so ...{Interruptions}...

SHRI N. JOTHI: Would you yield for a minute, Sir? ...(Interruptions)...

SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR: Yes certainly ...(Interruptions)...

SHRI DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: No, why are you taking so... (Interruptions)...

SHRI N. JOTHI: Sir, he has yielded.

SHRIMATI S.G. INDIRA: Sir, I made a request that the hon. Minister should not say like this. I just made a request. It is hurting the woman folk. He mentioned before the Press theat women should reduce and restrict purchase of sarees and they should restrict going to movies. How can he say like that? In his reply, he admits, 'yes' I said like that and he also stands by his words, this is highly objectionable.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: No, no, there is nothing objectionable... (Interruptions)...

SHRI N. JOTHI: Sir, he has yielding to me, I will ...(Interruptions)...

SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR: But I yielding to you, she took advantage. You both are going to repeat the same statement.

SHRIMATI S.G. INDIRA: I give the way to my ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI N. JOTHI: The Deputy Chairman will decide. ...*(Interruptions)*... Mr. Deputy Chairman, Sir, the hon. Minister has admitted that he did say so. Now, through the Chair, I would like to ask the hon. Minister—already, people are reeling under the high price of LPG. He is now...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I have never seen ...*(Interruptions)*... The hon. Minister has yielded ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR: Sir, I know them, that is why, I yielded ...*(Interruptions)*... I see that they are wanting to repeat the same thing, let them have another say ...*(Interruptions)*... At least, then, I will be able to have my say; otherwise, they will interrupt.

SHRI N. JOTHI: Yes, yes *(Interruptions)*... Already, they are reeling under price-rice. He comes to the State and says that as if women are purchasing sarees daily, as if woman are watching movies daily. It is liked rubbing salt on the wounds. They have no other work. They have no other alternatives. ...*(Interruptions)*... They are enjoying in the world ...*(Interruptions)*... He is talking about the ...*(Interruptions)*... individuals at home. ...*(Interruptions)*... not Tamil Nadu people ...*(Interruptions)*...

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

SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR: Yes, Sir, but I can't ..*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI N. JOTHI: Please don't say like that ...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Mr. Jothi, ...*(Interruptions)*...in the larger -interest of the country, let us keep Tamil Nadu issues ..*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI N. JOTHI: How can he say that, Sir, as if Tamil Nadu woman are daily purchasing sarees..... *(Interruptions)*...

SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH: Sir, we are having seriously discussion. ...*(Interruptions)*... The hon. Minister is giving a very learned and serous reply... *(Interruptions)*...

SHRI N. JOTHI: I am sorry, Sir. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH: Let us not to get Tamil Nadu politics into... *(Interruptions)*...

[8 December, 2005]

RAJYA SABHA

SHRI N. JOTHI: It is not Tamil Nadu politics. ...*(Interruptions)*... an sorry. ...*(Interruptions)*..

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: No, no; it doesn't look nice. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRIMATI S.G. INDIRA: Every matter is serious. ... *(Interruptions)*.. Don't repeat like that. ...*(Interruptions)*... We are not making any politics here. ...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: No, no. please sit down. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRIMATI S.G. INDIRA: We are having ..*(Interruptions)*... politics in our Tamil Nadu. ...*(Interruptions)*... We are not making any politics here. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI N. JOTHI: He has hurt the feelings of Tamil Nadu woman. ...*(Interruptions)*...You must know that.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Mr. Aiyar, you can continue.

SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR: Sir, thank you very much for giving me the opportunity to continue my statement. I was explaining the context in which I made the remark..... *(Interruptions)*...

उपसभापति: आप कृपया खामोश रहिये।

SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR: ...because I still believe, I still believe, that all of us need to reflect upon it. In the case of kerosene, the average availability is five litres, with a cost difference of ten rupees normally between the PDS price and the market price, which may increase to fifteen or twenty in exceptional circumstances. But if we take ten rupees as the difference and five litres, it amount to fifty rupees a month. Now, what we have to ask ourselves on that fifty rupees a month is, can we make this fifty rupees a month available in a different way? Can we either reduce the differences between the market price and PDS price, or, perhaps, go into income support, rather than subsidising the price of the product? These are...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI N. JOTHI: What about foreign visits that.....*(Interruptions)*...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Mr. Jothi; this is not the way. ...*(Interruptions)*... No; no; Nothing will go on record*(Interruptions)*... No; no; Mr. Jothi, this is not the way how a debate should go on ...*(Interruptions)*... Please, sit down....*(Interruptions)*...You are a senior Member. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI N. JOTHI: The Tamil Nadu woman ...*(Interruptions)*...

^MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Why are you bringing that into this?...*(Interruptions)*...This is a Calling Attention Motion.The Minister has made a statement on which certain members have sought some clarifications. Now, the Ministers is replying to those clarifications. There is no room for such type of exchanges between you and the Minister. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR: Sir, I seek your protection. ...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: You don't take notice of this.

SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR: Sir, I seek your protection to be able to answer this question which, I think, has a very serious dimention, and that is why I am raising it. In the case of kerosene, the gap is about ten rupees and the number of litres purchased is five, making it a question of where do we get fifty rupees a months for the consumer. In the case of LPG..... *(Interruptions)*...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Mr. Minister, you can continue. ...*(Interruptions)*... Please continue. Please continue. ...*(Interruptions)*... Don't take notice of these things. ...*(Interruptions)*... Please sit down ...*(Interruptions)*... Don't take notice of all these. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR: In the case of LPG, on a cylinder which lasts for approximately a months, as of today, we are paying out nearly Rs. 200 as the differences, and that two hundred rupees differences is going largely to urban areas for the reasons that Shri jairam Ramesh pointed out that the number of connection given in the urban areas is disproportionate to the number of connections given in the rural areas. And, secondly, we don't make any distinction between the APL and the BPL, with the result that every consumer, however rich he my be, is also receiving this Rs. 200 subsidy on a cylinder. If you multiply Rs.200 by 12, it comes to Rs. 2,400. And, I was trying to say that for that very large section of LPG consumers who have an income which is considerable where they could redistribute the income that they could redistribute the income that they have, one of the ways of doing so might be to just check on what is the price of sari compared to the price that we are subsidising on the, LPG and on monthly basis — we looked it on a monthly basis — to see whether a five or ten rupee increase in this price of a cylinder over a period of time could not, perhaps, be compensated for by reducing a

certain amount of entertainment that we have. I was appealing to a much larger national point. And, if it was Shri P.G. Narayanan who would have asked me, I would have just suggested that, perhaps, if he had kept his veshti on right through the winter, instead of putting on an expensive trouser, it could have contributed to the same purpose. I think, we need to have a certain sense of humour about these things. The point that I am making is that at two hundred rupees a cylinder to Mrs. Mukesh Ambani and to the poorest person in this country, there needs to be some reflection on how we can rationalise this system. That is all that I was attempting to say in this regard.

Sir, as regards weights and measures, a significant point was brought up by Shri Kripal of the BJP. The Delhi State Government has shown the way. They conducted a raid at the end of September and discovered a large number of shortages. I think, State Governments, using the Weights and Measures Act and the powers that they have under it, ought to increase the number of inspections they make. We, on our part, have provided that it is the right of the consumer to demand that the cylinder be properly weighed before taking delivery. But, we need everybody's cooperation to be able to succeed. I am grateful to Shri Kripal also for having extending his support to me for the Iran-Pakistan-India pipeline. That support from the BJP will be extremely valuable.

Sir, as regards the suggestion that in some ways, we should have different colours and sizes for domestic and non domestic cylinders, may I offer the following clarifications? At present, domestic cylinders are made either in 14.2 kg cylinders or 5 kg cylinders. The colour is the same, red, as advised to us by the Chief Controller of Explosives. We have made all the non-domestic cylinders 19 kg cylinders. So, if any cylinder that does not weigh 19 kg. is found in a commercial establishment, the law and order authorities should be able to catch that person immediately. But, we have thought that to increase the visibility of illegality, to help the law and order authorities, may be we should have different colours. We have suggested black, yellow or blue for commercial use, as distinct from red for domestic use, and the Chief Controller of Explosives is looking into this proposal. I hope that it works out.

I was asked specifically about allocation to Tamil Nadu. If I am given a moment of peace, I would be happy to give clarification in this regard.

Sir, in the year 2004-05, Tamil Nadu's allocation was something over 5.45 lakh tonnes. This year, we have increased the allocation to

5.58 lakh tonnes. I don't see why we should be accused of attempting to decrease it! Now, the system ...*(Interruptions)*... Please, let me finish. Please, let me finish. I will just quote the figures. I am trying to tell you the truth, and then, if you still disagree, we could disagree on that.

Sir, the system in operation is that the previous year's allocation is taken, then, the number of the new LPG connections is taken into account and accordingly, it gets reduced. It is after I took office that in the case of Tamil Nadu and every other State, I said—'Please, let us freeze the allocations at where they are, because I don't think the historical basis is a sufficiently scientific basis.' I had this study prepared. On the basis of this study, and in consultation with the State Governments, we are looking into seeing what could be done.

As regards the heavy rains, which have caused considerable damage, leading to a Central team rushing to Tamil Nadu, as the hon. Home Minister clarified in the Lok Sabha yesterday, making an allocation of Rs. 500 crores for immediate relief—he was very careful to stress, 'an allocation of Rs. 500 crores for immediate relief—which is far, far beyond what would normally have been obtained from the Calamity Relief Fund. In addition to those Rs. 500 crores for relief, he has said that we have received a memorandum from the Government of Tamil Nadu, asking for about Rs. 13,000 crores rupees, which is for rehabilitation and reconstruction. He explained in the House that rehabilitation and reconstruction could not be done on the basis merely of a letter or a memorandum submitted to us. It has to be translated into plans. And, as these plans become available, he assured the House, there would be more support available to the Tamil Nadu Government. In so far as my Ministry is concerned, as against the demand for an additional 43,000 kilo liters, to meet this particular emergent requirement, we have released 10,000 kilo liters so far. It is still to be fully lifted. When the 10,000 kilo litre is fully lifted, then depending upon the need assessment, we will release more. There is no politics involved in this on our side. I trust that there will be no politics involved in this in Fort St. George either.

श्री दीपांकर मुखर्जी: उपसभापति जी इसको तमिलनाडु इश्यू मत बनने दीजिएde-rail हो रहा है।

SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR: It has got derailed. I am sorry.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: You come back to the country.

SHRI N. JOTHI: Tamil Nadu is also in the country..... *(Interruptions)*...

[8 December, 2005]

RAJYA SABHA

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Tamil Nadu is covered, but other parts of the country should also be covered.

SHRI MANI SHANKARAIYAR: The figures that we have for availability and reliability of both kerosene and LPG supplies, on an all-India basis, are indeed differential when it comes to different parts of India, and it is worrying that there are these regional disparities. We would like to enter into a dialogue with all the State Governments to see how these anomalies can be removed. To this end, we are giving specific attention to dealerships in the rural areas, in the semi-urban areas and that is going to result, I hope, in an increase where population is even larger. We do appreciate the need to have greater availabilities of diesel and LPG in those areas of the country where the population is large and the current availability is less than that and practical steps would have to be taken in this direction, we will do so in cooperation with the State Governments. Thank you. ...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: He has covered everything in detail. ...*(Interruptions)*... ओर क्या पूछना है ? Ask one by one. Put pointed questions. There is also other business.

SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE: I know, Sir. Otherwise, the whole issue is getting derailed. The issue is only on shortage of LPG and black marketing. We did not want to discuss pricing and subsidy. That part is being done by the Finance Minister, in such a way, everywhere that I thought this time I will be spared of that. Unfortunately, prompted by Mr. Jairam Ramesh, the Minister had to intrude. We are not talking about pricing and subsidy. We are talking about shortage and we are talking about black marketing. I have two suggestions. The wrong signal should not go from this House that it is the pricing which is only responsible for adulteration and giving a free hand to all the adulterators. So, my two suggestions to the hon. Minister are: Whether you will strengthen the complaints and grievance redressal system in all the companies. They must be given the pressure on that. This is one. Secondly, if he wants and I am sure that he will seek, the way you are trying to reduce the power theft in some of the States including mine one, whether you would like to have organisations, if you are really serious about it, like people's organisations, consumers bodies, trade unions, women organisations to check the adulteration. They can do it. Unless you have participation of people, you cannot administer it better. If these two calls you give from here, that will be better. Otherwise, it will be free for all again.

SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR: Can I answer it?

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: First you take all the clarifications, and then answer them ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI N. JOTHI: I will give the figures only. I am speaking in people's interest. There is no politics in this. Sir, our State was receiving an allocation of 77,180 kilo litre of kerosene per month during 1999-2000 and 2000-01. Four years ago, we were receiving 77,180 kilo litre of kerosene. Now, after the hon. Minister took over the office, what is the allocation? It has been reduced drastically. In 2004-05, it was 58,392 kilo litre. So, there was the reduction of about 20,000 kilo litre in 2004-05. Now, there is only a little increase. It is increased to 59,852 kilo litre only. So, 77,180 kilo litre was given, when 1,00,039 card holders were there. Now, the card holders are 169 lakhs. Now, our demand is about one lakh and half, and he is giving less than half of it. How can we survive? What the hon. Minister has got... *(Interruptions)*...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: You said that you would tell only figures.

SHRI N. JOTHI: This is the position.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Shri Kalraj Mishra.

SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR: Sir, shall I respond to this now?

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: No, no. Not now. Only one more clarification is there.

श्री कलराज मिश्र: उपसभापति जी, माननीय मंत्री जी ने बड़े विस्तार से उत्तर दिया है और जो प्रश्न उठाए गए थे। उसे इस ढंग से बताने का प्रयत्न किया है कि लोग संतुष्ट रहें। मैं उनसे केवल एक प्रश्न करना चाहूंगा कि किरोसीन की डिज़ल में और पेट्रोल में जो मिलावट हो रही है, उसे रोकने के लिए पूर्व की सरकार ने एक एंटी-एडल्टरेशन सेल बनाया था और उसके माध्यम से काफी सफलता भी प्राप्त हो रही थी, लेकिन उसे समाप्त कर दिया गया। उसी क्रम में जो मंजू नाथ की हत्या हुई, पेट्रोल पम्प पर जो अधिकारी जाते हैं वहां प्रभावी लोग रहते हैं, उन्हें किसी भी प्रकार से प्रभावित कर सकते हैं। मंजू नाथ की हत्या हम इसी श्रृंखला के अन्तर्गत ही मानते हैं। क्या फिर से उस सेल को वापस लाने की बात आप सोच सकते हैं, क्योंकि इसके माध्यम से निश्चित रूप से मिलावट में कमी आएगी, ऐसा मैं विश्वास करता हूं।

श्री उपसभापति: ऐसों क्लैरिफिकेशंस होंगे, if there are clarifications on clarifications, then there is no end to it.

[8 December, 2005]

RAJYA SABHA

SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH: Sir, may I ...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: No, no. I am worried that if you raise something, the hon. Minister will reply in detail.. *(Interruptions)*... That would be a problem...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH: Sir, I want the hon. Minister to ...*(Interruptions)*...

श्री मूल चन्द मीणा: डेढ़ घंटे तक जवाब हुआ, उसके बाद भी...*(व्यवधान)*...

SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH: Sir, I want the hon. Minister to kindly disabuse everybody of the dangerous notion propagated by Mr. Dipankar Mukherjee that! have some influence over him.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Okay, there is no need to reply. ...*(Interruptions)*... क्या बाकी है?...*(व्यवधान)*...

प्रो.रामबख्श सिंह वर्मा: एक और क्लैरिफिकेशन है, सर।

श्री उपसभापति: आपने पहले भी एक क्लैरिफिकेशन पूछा था।

प्रो.रामबख्श सिंह वर्मा: मैं आधा मिनट भी नहीं लूँगा, सर।

सर मैं माननीय मंत्री जी से अपनी बात रखना चाहता था कि यह जो डिज़ल की कीमत और किरोसीन ऑयल की कीमत में बहुत अधिक अन्तर है, जिसके कारण किरोसीन ऑयल का डायवर्जन होता है, क्या कृपया आप किरोसीन ऑयल की कीमत को कुछ बढ़ाएंगे और इससे जितना पैसा आएगा, उत्तरी सब्सिडी डीज़ल में देने की कृपा करेंगे, जिससे वास्तव में किसानों को फायदा होगा और डायवर्जन कम हो जाएगा?

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Now, the hon. Minister to please reply just in short.

SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR: I will reply very briefly, Sir. As far as my response to comrade Dipankar Mukherjee's questions are concerned, it is 'Yes' to his first question, and, 'Yes' to his second question.

In so far as the clarification from my dear friend from Tamil Nadu is concerned, I only wish to draw his attention to the following facts. He said in 1999-2000, their allocation was 7.7 lakh tonnes, and, after this Minister took over, and, I quote him, "It suddenly got drastically cut." The fact is that on the basis of formula that applies to the whole of the country, as LPG connections are increased, SKO connections will be decreased. In the last year of the NDA Government, 2003-04, from 7.7 lakh tonnes, it has already been brought down to 5.6 lakh tonnes. So, it is simply untrue to say that I did something which did not happen before, and, if you take

into account the additional allocations that we are making, we are, in fact, trying to do all we can to meet Tamil Nadu's genuine requirements. But, I cannot make up for illegal diversions. It is the job of the Tamil Nadu Government to cooperate ...{Interruptions}.

SHRI N. JOTHI: Sir, what is this sound of ...{Interruptions}... Sir, is this the way that a Minister should reply?

श्री मणि शंकर अय्यर: जहां तक कि...(व्यवधान)...

SHRI N. JOTHI: Why did he say 'genuine' in such a way. ...{Interruptions}... What is the genuineness?

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Please sit down. ...{Interruptions}...

श्री मणि शंकर अय्यर: जहां तक कि...(व्यवधान)...

SHRI PG. NARAYANAN: Sir, this is not the way that a Minister should ...{Interruptions}...

श्री मणि शंकर अय्यर: जहां तक कि...(व्यवधान)...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: No, no. Please sit down. Please take your seats. ...{Interruptions}...

SHRIMATI S.G. INDIRA: Sir, it is objectionable ...{Interruptions}...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: No, no. Mr. Minister, you reply to ...{Interruptions}...

SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR: Sir, my reply to the question ...{Interruptions}...

SHRI N. JOTHI: What is the genuineness? ...{Interruptions}...

श्री मणि शंकर अय्यर: जहां तक कि श्री कलराज मिश्र जी का सुझाव था।...(व्यवधान).... जहां तक कि...(व्यवधान)...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Mr. Jothi, please sit down. Please take your seat. {Interruptions} Neither you will object to what he wants to say, nor you will... {Interruptions} It is not the work of the ...{Interruptions}...

SHRI S.S. CHANDRAN (Tamil Nadu): But, Sir, the word 'genuine' ...{Interruptions}...

श्री मणि शंकर अय्यर: जहां तक श्री कलराज मिश्र जी का सुझाव था कि हम एंटी एडल्टरेशन सेल को पुनर्जीवित करें, मुझे नहीं लगता है कि यह सही पथ होगा, क्योंकि उस सेल के अफसरान पकड़े गए थे। इसलिए हमें लगा कि जो काम वे कर रहे हैं, वह वह काम नहीं है जिस लक्ष्य से

[8 December, 2005]

RAJYA SABHA

उसे स्थपित किया गया था। लेकिन हम बहुत ही चुस्ती से कोशिश कर रहे हैं कि मार्केटिंग डिस्सीप्लीन गाइडलाइंस को ज्यादा सशक्त बनाएं और अनुशासन को बढ़ाएं।

SHRI N. JOTHI: He is suddenly switching over to Hindi because we cannot ...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Translation is there ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI N. JOTHI: Why is he suddenly switching over to Hindi? ...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: He is giving reply to Shri Kalraj Mishra's question. The question was put in Hindi. He knows Hindi, so, he is replying in Hindi.

श्री मणि शंकर अय्यर: महोदय, वर्मा जी कृपया अपना सुझाव दोहरा दें।

श्री उपसभापति: उन्होंने डीजल और केरोसिन की प्राइस में अंतर के बारे में पूछा था।

श्री मणि शंकर अय्यर: सॉरी, मुझे याद आया। माननीय वर्मा जी का जो सुझाव था उसे हम रंगराजन कमेटी तक पहुंचाएंगे। वह उस पर विचार करेंगे। मैं वर्मा जी से अनुरोध करता हूँ कि आप भी इस बारे में जरा तफसील से लिखकर डा. रंगराजन जी को भेजें तो वह उस पर विचार करेंगे।

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The Calling Attention is over. Now, we will take up the Prevention of Insults to National Honour (Amendment) Bill, 2005 and the State Emblem of India (Prohibition of Improper Use) Bill, 2005. The Minister to move.

SHRI N. JOTHI: Sir, I have one genuine question. ...*(Interruptions)*... Only one genuine question, Sir. ...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: No, no, that is over

GOVERNMENT BILLS—Contd.

**The Prevention of Insults to National Honour (Amendment) Bill,
2005**

And

The State Emblem of India (Prohibition of Improper Use) Bill, 2005

गृह मंत्रालय में राज्य मंत्री (श्री मणिक राव गावित): महोदय, मैं प्रस्ताव करता हूँ— "कि राष्ट्र गौरव अपमान निवारण अधिनियम, 1971 का और संशोधन करने वाले विधेयक पर, लोकसभा द्वारा पारित रूप में विचार किया जाए।"