

What is this happening with the Government, whether it is the previous Government or the present Government? If the Government is honest, say it honestly to the people that we have to raise the railway passenger fares and freight charges and it is part of the Budget. Why do you do it as a pre-Budget exercise? In what way are you different from the previous Government? They did the same thing and you are following the same thing. Therefore, the Government should be transparent.

SHRI D.V. SADANANDA GOWDA: Mr. Chairman, Sir, we don't have any hesitation in saying that we have raised the fares. We don't have any hesitation in saying that because it was the need of the hour. There are various factors that made us to hike the prices. I had said it on an earlier occasion that my friends in the UPA, at this stage, can't say that there is a price hike and all that. Already, it has been dealt in detail by Shri Arun Jaitley the other day how it was done by the previous Government and all that. I don't want to go into that. I do not want to politicise this issue. My friend, Shri D. Raja, has asked the right question. I don't have any hesitation in saying that this hike was done by my Government as it was the need of the hour.

श्री प्रेम चन्द गुप्ता : श्रीमान जी, भारतीय रेलवे देश के करोड़ों लोगों के साथ उनके जनजीवन से जुड़ी हुई है। माननीय मंत्री जी ने कहा कि चूंकि और कोई साधन नहीं था, तभी यह माल भाड़ा और पैसेंजर फेयर बढ़ाया गया, नहीं तो इसके बगैर भारतीय रेलवे तकलीफ में आ जाती। लेकिन मैं याद दिलाना चाहूंगा कि यू.पी.ए. वन में जब डा. मनमोहन सिंह जी की सरकार थी और उसमें लालू प्रसाद जी रेल मंत्री थे, तो आपको ध्यान होगा कि पैसेंजर फेयर कम किया गया और रेलवे को गोल्डन हार्ट्स तक पहुंचाया गया। श्रीमान् जी, मैं माननीय मंत्री जी से जानना चाहूंगा कि is it not an insufficiency of the railway system which forces you to increase the passenger fares and freight charges? श्रीमान जी, फ्रेट चार्ज बढ़ाने का मतलब...

श्री सभापति : प्रश्न पूछिए।

श्री प्रेम चन्द गुप्ता : महोदय, मैं माननीय मंत्री जी से जानना चाहूंगा कि ऐसी कौन-सी इमरजेंसी थी कि बजट से 15 दिन पहले...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Question hour is over.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO STARRED QUESTIONS

Making farming a profitable activity

*67. SHRI P. BHATTACHARYA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government proposes to take steps to make farming a profitable activity through scientific practices and agro-technology;

(b) if so, the details of such scientific practices and agro-technology in this regard; and

(c) how far the small and marginal farmers would be benefited by these improved practices?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI RADHA MOHAN SINGH): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The Government promotes proven scientific practices and agro-technologies, namely improved cultivars/ planting material/breeds, crop diversification, resource conservation technologies [zero tillage, laser levelling, bed planting, System of Rice Intensification (SRI), Direct Seeded Rice], integrated water management, participatory watershed management for rainfed agriculture, micro-irrigation, soil test based balanced and integrated nutrient management, enriched/vermicomposting, biofertilizers, Leaf Colour Chart (LCC), integrated pest management, organic farming, cost effective reclamation technologies, climate resilient agriculture, agro-advisories, contingent crop planning, low cost farm implements and machinery, post-harvest management and value addition to make farming a profitable activity. Implementation of these technologies/practices in integrated farming system mode encompassing crops, including agroforestry, horticulture, livestock, fisheries etc. is suggested for enhancing farm productivity, profitability and livelihood security of farming community.

(c) These improved practices benefit the small and marginal farmers in terms of reduction in cost of farming through savings on fertilizers, pesticides, water, labour, energy besides improving soil health and crop productivity. For instance, zero tillage reduces cost of cultivation by about half over conventional tillage; laser land levelling saves irrigation water by about 25% and reduces labor requirements by nearly 35%; SRI saves about 22-35% of water, 14% labour; self-propelled rice transplanter saves labour and energy by 80% and 60% respectively; LCC can save about 15-20% of nitrogen (N) fertiliser, biofertilizers can supplement costly chemical fertilizers (N, phosphorus) by nearly 20-25%, micro irrigation can save water by 30-50%, labour 50% and fertilizer 30-40%).

Delhi-Dibrugarh Rajdhani train accident

†*68. SHRI ISHWARLAL SHANKARLAL JAIN: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Delhi-Dibrugarh Rajdhani Express has fallen prey to a naxal attack near Chapra in Bihar recently;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.