

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Okay. That's all. ...(Interruptions)...

SHRI MUKHTAR ABBAS NAQVI: Sir, I want your ruling on my point of order. ...(Interruptions)... Rule 238 is a very clear rule. अगर कोई मैटर *sub judice* हैं, डिस्मिशन पेंडिंग है तो कोई भी ऑनरेबल मेम्बर उसका जिक्र नहीं कर सकता। इसलिए जो भी उन्होंने कहा है उसे एक्सपंज किया जाए, रिकार्ड से निकाला जाए। ...(व्यवधान)...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Mr. Minister, it is already permitted by hon. Chairman. ...(Interruptions)... What is happening here? ...(Interruptions)... You sit down. Your time is over. ...(Interruptions)... See, it is already permitted by hon. Chairman. That is the issue. So, it has to be allowed. That's all. ...(Interruptions)...

SHRI MUKHTAR ABBAS NAQVI: My submission is not that. ...(Interruptions)... My point of order is very clear.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Do you want a ruling? I will give a ruling.

SHRI TAPAN KUMAR SEN: In Zero Hour, there cannot be any point of order. This is my point of order.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: There can be a point of order any time if there is a violation. ...(Interruptions)... But I will give a ruling on that. Now, Shri K. K. Ragesh. ...(Interruptions)... Shri K. K. Ragesh...(Interruptions)...

SHRI ANAND SHARMA: Sir, as I conclude...(Interruptions)... I am going to conclude. ...(Interruptions)...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Now, Shri K. K. Ragesh...(Interruptions)... Nothing else will go on record. ...(Interruptions)... Shri K. K. Ragesh is a new Member. Don't disturb him. ...(Interruptions)... Mr. Anand Sharma, you have said what you wanted to say. Now, sit down. Shri K. K. Ragesh, you start.

SHRI K. K. RAGESH (Kerala): Sir, please ask them to sit. My time has already started.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I know that. You start.

**Concern over huge hike in prices of drugs and need to restore powers
of National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority**

SHRI K. K. RAGESH (Kerala): Sir, through you, I appeal the Government to restore the powers of the National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority of India to regulate all the drugs outside the National List of Essential Medicines. The National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority of India decided to regulate 108 drugs in 2004. It had that power. When the prices of essential medicines increase in a big manner,

[Shri K. K. Ragesh]

the Government has the power to regulate such medicines also. But, unfortunately, succumbing to the pressures of the pharma giants, the Central Government had withdrawn that power to regulate those medicines that are outside the National List of Essential Medicines. What is the outcome, Sir? It has resulted in sky-rocketing of prices of the essential medicines and it has broken all previous records.

Last year, the Government had allowed an increase in the prices of 509 essential medicines which are enlisted in the National List of Essential Medicines. As per the DPCO, 2013, drug prices are decided on the basis of the demand in the market. Earlier, it was calculated on the basis of production cost plus some reasonable surplus. In fact, it is the present method of deciding the prices, DPCO, 2013 that results in the price rise of medicines year after year. Adding fuel to the fire, the Central Government again withdrew the customs duty exemption on 74 drugs which are being used for treating cancer and HIV; these are medicines used for chemotherapy, radiotherapy, diabetics, Parkinson disease, kidney stones etc., etc. The prices of all these medicines are going to be increased in a big manner. Why is the Government doing so? The Government is saying that it is to protect the pharma industry. Why is the same logic not applied when the cottage and small-scale industries are being closed down in our country? I request the Central Government to immediately provide duty-exemption to these medicines. ...(*Time-bell rings*)...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Time is over. ...(*Interruptions*)...

SHRI TAPAN KUMAR SEN (West Bengal): Sir, it is a serious issue, and, if, instead of going in for cost-based pricing, you are going in for market-based pricing, it means that you are playing in the hands of pharma MNCs. ...(*Interruptions*)...

SHRI ANANDA BHASKAR RAPOLU (Telangana): Sir, I associate myself with the issue raised by the hon. Member.

SHRI RITABRATA BANERJEE (West Bengal): Sir, I also associate myself with the issue raised by the hon. Member.

SHRI D. RAJA (Tamil Nadu): Sir, I also associate myself with the issue raised by the hon. Member.

डा. अनिल कुमार साहनी (बिहार): महोदय, मैं स्वयं को इस विषय से सम्बद्ध करता हूँ।

SHRI C. P. NARAYANAN (Kerala): Sir, I also associate myself with the issue raised by the hon. Member.

श्री नीरज शेखर (उत्तर प्रदेश): महोदय, मैं स्वयं को इस विषय से सम्बद्ध करता हूँ।

SHRI TAPAN KUMAR SEN (West Bengal): Sir, I also associate myself with the issue raised by the hon. Member.

SHRI K. N. BALAGOPAL (Kerala): Sir, I also associate myself with the issue raised by the hon. Member.

श्रीमती झरना दास बैद्य (त्रिपुरा): महोदय, मैं स्वयं को इस विषय से सम्बद्ध करती हूँ।

श्रीमती कहकशां परवीन (बिहार): महोदय, मैं स्वयं को इस विषय से सम्बद्ध करती हूँ।

श्री राम नाथ ठाकुर (बिहार): महोदय, मैं स्वयं को इस विषय से सम्बद्ध करता हूँ।

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Now, Zero Hour submission by Mr. K. N. Balagopal.

Exorbitant Airfares charged by Airline Companies from NRIs

SHRI K.N. BALAGOPAL (Kerala): Mr. Deputy Chairman, Sir, I would like to raise a very serious matter connected to the exorbitant airfares being charged by the airline companies.

Sir, this is mainly charged from the passengers travelling to Middle East. There are many poor people who are going to the Gulf countries as workers and they are working there. Now the airline companies are charging these prices according to the seasons. Now, as the mid-summer vacations are approaching, either children reach their homes after their vacations, or, their parents come to India for vacations, these companies are charging this much money. Sir, differential pricing is there. From Calicut to Gulf countries, the air fare is three times as compared to the other airports in the same State. Sir, for going to Dammam from Calicut, the airfare is ₹ 27,900 while, at the same time, from Cochin, it is ₹ 12,000. All the foreign airline companies are ruling the market. Sir, compared to the Gulf countries, the airfares are much lesser if you go to USA or UK. So, these companies, on these occasions, are taking huge money from the poor and NRI workers who are going from this country to other places. It is a very huge amount. Sir, I come from a State where a lot of NRIs are there. Sir, we give the maximum remittances by NRIs back to India. Both Punjab and Kerala are doing that. It is not a matter of Kerala alone. It is a matter of all the people working in Gulf countries who are going there from different parts of the country. So, this issue needs to be discussed, Sir. ...(Interruptions)... They are looting actually. ...(Interruptions)...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Okay. Thank you. ...(Interruptions)...

श्री नीरज शेखर (उत्तर प्रदेश): महोदय, मैं स्वयं को इस विषय से सम्बद्ध करता हूँ।

श्री मधुसूदन मिस्त्री (गुजरात): महोदय, मैं स्वयं को इस विषय से सम्बद्ध करता हूँ।

श्री हुसैन दलवाई (महाराष्ट्र): महोदय, मैं स्वयं को इस विषय से सम्बद्ध करता हूँ।