

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS

RAJYA SABHA
STARRED QUESTION NO. 63
ANSWERED ON 29/07/2024

Revision of dealer margin

63 SHRI K.R.N. RAJESHKUMAR:

Will the Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government is planning to revise the dealer margin to account for inflation and the operational costs of petroleum dealers nationwide, if so, details thereof and if not, reasons therefor;
- (b) whether Government has received any grievances from any stakeholders regarding the issue of stagnant dealer margins;
- (c) the measures taken by Government to ensure the sustainability of petroleum retail outlets and the quality of their services to customers; and
- (d) whether Government is considering to form a committee to conduct a study of issues faced by petroleum dealers across the country, if so, details thereof and if not, reasons therefor?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS
(SHRI HARDEEP SINGH PURI)

- (a) to (d): A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) TO (d) IN RESPECT OF RAJYA SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 63 FOR REPLY ON 29.07.2024 REGARDING REVISION OF DEALER MARGIN ASKED BY SHRI K.R.N. RAJESHKUMAR:

(a) to (d): Petrol and diesel are marketed at retail outlets run by Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) in both public and private sector. As of 01.07.2024, there were 90,639 retail outlets in the country of which about 90% belong to public sector companies and rest to the private sector companies.

Retail marketing of petrol and diesel is deregulated and decisions regarding their prices, including dealer margins, are taken by respective companies themselves.

For PSU OMCs, Dealer margins on retail sale of petrol and diesel primarily include operating costs, manpower costs / wages of employees, business returns, etc. Dealer margins were revised by PSU OMCs in August 2017. This revision had factored in a higher rate of wages to RO staff by dealers, which was based on Minimum Wages notified by the Central Government. Subsequent to the revision, OMCs advised the RO dealers to pay these prescribed wages to RO staff. To ensure implementation of revised wages by RO dealers, OMCs introduced appropriate clauses in Marketing Discipline Guidelines (MDG)– 2012.

However, while the revised dealer margins were implemented, several dealer federations challenged the MDG amendments relating to inter-alia payment of higher wages in various courts. While deciding the petitions filed by one dealer association, in January 2022, Hon'ble Delhi High Court upheld the amendments in the MDG. However, dealer associations filed Special Leave Petition (SLP) before the Hon'ble Supreme Court challenging the order passed by Hon'ble Delhi High Court and the matter is currently sub-judice.

Discussions and Negotiations regarding revision of dealer commission are held bilaterally between PSU OMCs and RO dealers' federations. Government is aware of these discussions and has been supportive of such engagements to resolve pending issues affecting revision. Government has also received several representations regarding revision of dealer margin from dealer federations, which are forwarded to public sector OMCs for necessary action.

To ensure the sustainability of petroleum retail outlets and the quality of their services to customers, OMCs have added new generation fuels viz. premium MS/HSD, alternate fuels like Compressed Natural Gas (CNG), Compressed Bio Gas (CBG), Electric Vehicle Charging Stations (EVCS) and have been encouraging non-fuel businesses like Pollution Under Control (PUC) check, Insurance, Courier service, Service center for vehicle, Grocery stores, Convenience stores, Food & Beverages outlets etc.

To improve the quality of services at Retail Outlets, OMCs have formulated Marketing Discipline Guidelines 2012 and encourage the dealers to provide excellent customer services at

the ROs with highest standards of business ethics. System of Citizen charter has also been implemented and hosted on OMCs website.

Universal Service Obligations (USOs) have been prescribed so that authorized entities provide quality and uninterrupted fuel supply services to the consumers. These USOs, inter alia, require:-

- Maintaining supplies of MS and HSD to retail consumers throughout the specified working hours and of specified quality and quantity.
- Ensuring availability of minimum facilities as specified by the Government, to all the retail consumers at the retail outlet.
- Maintaining minimum inventory levels of MS and HSD as specified by the Government from time to time.
- Providing service to any person on demand within a reasonable period of time and on non-discriminatory basis.
- Availability of fuel to the customers at reasonable prices all the time.

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भारत सरकार
पेट्रोलियम और प्राकृतिक गैस मंत्रालय

राज्य सभा
तारांकित प्रश्न संख्या: 63
दिनांक 29 जुलाई, 2024

डीलरों के मुनाफे में संशोधन

*63 श्री के.आर.एन. राजेश कुमार:

क्या पेट्रोलियम और प्राकृतिक गैस मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि:

- (क) क्या सरकार मुद्रास्फीति और पेट्रोलियम डीलरों की परिचालन लागत को ध्यान में रखते हुए देश भर में डीलरों के मुनाफे को संशोधित करने की योजना बना रही है, यदि हां, तो तत्संबंधी ब्यौरा क्या है और यदि नहीं, तो इसके क्या कारण हैं;
- (ख) क्या सरकार को डीलरों के मुनाफे के स्थिर बने रहने के मुद्दे पर किसी हितधारक से कोई शिकायत मिली है;
- (ग) पेट्रोलियम खुदरा बिक्री केन्द्रों की वहनीयता और उनके द्वारा ग्राहकों को गुणवत्तापूर्ण सेवाएं दिया जाना सुनिश्चित करने के लिए सरकार द्वारा क्या उपाय किए गए हैं; और
- (घ) क्या सरकार देश भर में पेट्रोलियम डीलरों के समक्ष आने वाले मुद्दों का अध्ययन करने के लिए एक समिति बनाने पर विचार कर रही है, यदि हां, तो तत्संबंधी ब्यौरा क्या है और यदि नहीं, तो इसके क्या कारण हैं?

उत्तर
पेट्रोलियम और प्राकृतिक गैस मंत्री
(श्री हरदीप सिंह पुरी)

(क) से (घ): एक विवरण सदन के पटल पर रख दिया गया है।

“डीलरों के मुनाफे में संशोधन” के संबंध में संसद सदस्य श्री के. आर.एन. राजेश कुमार द्वारा दिनांक 29.07.2024 को पूछे गए राज्य सभा तारांकित प्रश्न संख्या 63 के भाग (क) से (घ) के उत्तर में उल्लिखित विवरण।

(क) से (घ) सार्वजनिक और निजी दोनों क्षेत्रों में पेट्रोल और डीजल का विपणन तेल विपणन कंपनियों (ओएमसीज) द्वारा चलाए जा रहे खुदरा बिक्री केन्द्रों पर किया जाता है। दिनांक 01.07.2024 की स्थिति के अनुसार देश में 90,639 खुदरा बिक्री केन्द्र थे जिनमें से लगभग 90 प्रतिशत सार्वजनिक क्षेत्र की कंपनियों के हैं और शेष निजी क्षेत्र की कंपनियों के हैं।

पेट्रोल और डीजल का खुदरा विपणन नियंत्रण मुक्त है तथा डीलर मार्जिन सहित उनके मूल्यों के संबंध में निर्णय संबंधित कंपनियों द्वारा स्वयं लिए जाते हैं।

पीएसयू ओएमसीज के लिए, पेट्रोल और डीजल की खुदरा बिक्री पर डीलर मार्जिन में बुनियादी तौर पर प्रचालन लागत, जनशक्ति लागत/कर्मचारियों का वेतन, कारोबारी प्रतिफल आदि शामिल होते हैं। पीएसयू ओएमसीज द्वारा अगस्त, 2017 में डीलर मार्जिन को संशोधित किया गया था। इस संशोधन से डीलरों द्वारा आरओ स्टाफ को दिए जाने वाले वेतन की दर बढ़ गई, जो केन्द्र सरकार द्वारा अधिसूचित न्यूनतम वेतन पर आधारित थी। संशोधन के बाद ओएमसीज ने आरओ डीलरों को आरओ स्टाफ को इस निर्धारित वेतन का भुगतान करने की सलाह दी। आरओ डीलरों द्वारा संशोधित वेतन का कार्यान्वयन सुनिश्चित करने के लिए, ओएमसीज ने विपणन अनुशासन दिशानिर्देश (एमडीजी) – 2012 में उपयुक्त शर्तें शामिल कीं।

तथापि, जब संशोधित डीलर मार्जिन को कार्यान्वित किया गया तब अनेक डीलर एसोसिएशनों ने उच्चतर वेतन के भुगतान से संबंधित एमडीजी संशोधनों को विभिन्न न्यायालयों में चुनौती दी। एक डीलर एसोसिएशन द्वारा दायर की गई याचिकाओं पर निर्णय देते हुए जनवरी, 2022 में माननीय दिल्ली उच्च न्यायालय ने एमडीजी में संशोधनों का समर्थन किया। तथापि, डीलर एसोसिएशनों ने माननीय दिल्ली उच्च न्यायालय द्वारा दिए गए आदेश को चुनौती देते हुए माननीय उच्चतम न्यायालय के समक्ष एक विशेष अनुमति याचिका (एसएलपी) दायर की और वर्तमान में यह मामला न्यायाधीन है।

डीलर कमीशन में संशोधन के संबंध में पीएसयू ओएमसीज तथा आरओ डीलरों के संघ के बीच द्विपक्षीय विचार-विमर्श और बातचीत होती रहती है। सरकार को ऐसे विचार-विमर्श की जानकारी है और संशोधन को प्रभावित करने वाले लंबित मुद्दों का समाधान करने के लिए सरकार ऐसी व्यवस्थाओं का समर्थन करती रही है। सरकार को डीलर मार्जिन के संशोधन के संबंध में डीलर संघों से अनेक अभ्यावेदन भी प्राप्त हुए हैं जिन्हें सार्वजनिक क्षेत्र की ओएमसीज को आवश्यक कार्रवाई के लिए अग्रेषित किया गया है।

पेट्रोलियम खुदरा बिक्री केन्द्रों की दीर्घकालिकता और ग्राहकों को उनकी सेवाओं की गुणवत्ता सुनिश्चित करने के लिए ओएमसीज ने नई पीढ़ी के ईंधन अर्थात् प्रीमियम एमएस/एचएसडी, संपीड़ित प्राकृतिक गैस (सीएनजी), संपीड़ित जैव गैस (सीबीजी) जैसे वैकल्पिक ईंधन, इलैक्ट्रिक वाहन चार्जिंग स्टेशन (ईवीसीएस)

शुरू किए हैं और ये प्रदूषण नियंत्रण (पीयूसी) संबंधी जांच, बीमा, कुरियर सेवा, वाहन के लिए सर्विस सेंटर, ग्रासरी स्टोर, कन्विनिएस स्टोर, खाद्य और पेय पदार्थों का केन्द्र आदि जैसे गैर-ईंधन कारोबारों को प्रोत्साहित कर रही हैं।

खुदरा बिक्री केन्द्रों पर सेवाओं की गुणवत्ता में सुधार करने के लिए ओएमसीज ने विपणन अनुशासन दिशानिर्देश 2012 तैयार किए हैं और ये कारोबारी नीतियों के उच्चतम मानकों के साथ खुदरा बिक्री केन्द्रों पर उत्कृष्ट ग्राहक सेवाएं उपलब्ध कराने के लिए डीलरों को प्रोत्साहित करती हैं। नागरिक चार्टर प्रणाली को भी कार्यान्वित किया है और इसे ओएमसीज की वेबसाइट पर होस्ट किया गया है।

सार्वभौमिक सेवा दायित्व (यूएसओज) निर्धारित किए गए हैं ताकि प्राधिकृत कंपनियां उपभोक्ताओं को गुणवत्तायुक्त तथा अबाधित ईंधन आपूर्ति सेवाएं उपलब्ध करवाएं। इन यूएसओज में अन्य बातों के साथ-साथ निम्नलिखित अपेक्षित हैं:-

- खुदरा उपभोक्ताओं को विनिर्दिष्ट पूरे कार्य घंटों में तथा विनिर्दिष्ट गुणवत्ता और मात्रा की एमएस और एचएसडी की आपूर्ति बनाए रखना।
- खुदरा बिक्री केन्द्र पर सभी खुदरा उपभोक्ताओं को सरकार द्वारा यथा विनिर्दिष्ट न्यूनतम सुविधाओं की उपलब्धता सुनिश्चित करना।
- सरकार द्वारा समय-समय पर यथा विनिर्दिष्ट एमएस और एचएसडी के न्यूनतम माल सूची स्तरों को बनाए रखना।
- किसी भी व्यक्ति को मांग किए जाने पर उपयुक्त समयावधि के भीतर और बगैर पक्षपात के सेवा उपलब्ध करवाना।
- हर समय ग्राहकों को उचित मूल्य पर ईंधन की उपलब्धता।

SHRI K.R.N. RAJESHKUMAR: Sir, is the Government planning to mandate the blending of ethanol with diesel? If so, what percentage of ethanol is proposed to be blended with diesel and what is the timeline for implementing this policy?

SHRI HARDEEP SINGH PURI: Sir, the issue of blending ethanol with diesel is still at an experimental stage and I can say categorically that at present, there is no plan to mandate. The reason is that oil marketing companies have tested up to seven per cent of ethanol in diesel in collaboration with the Automotive Research Association of India and selected OEMs; OEMs are the original equipment manufacturers. Sir, the initial tests have shown that there would be a reduction of flash point to 15 degree Celsius with 5 per cent ethanol blend and we require material compatibility, equally fuel stability and oxidation stability. There would be formation of deposits in fuel tank and there are series of other implications that follow. When you are running an automobile, we have now very successfully gone to up to 20 per cent blending. We started in 2014 with 1.4 per cent of ethanol blending in petrol. Today, we have reached a figure of 15 per cent. We are blending 400 crore litres of ethanol. Now, if we have to go down the diesel and we are planning to take it up to 1,000 crore litres by end of the ethanol blending year, 2025, to do this in case of diesel, we have to be very careful that it does not raise vulnerability on safety, on compatibility with the equipment, etc. I would at this stage, therefore, say that the way forward is to do further conducting or further tests, issue some stability of ED blend which need to address and several other steps, which we are presently undertaking.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Second supplementary: Shri K.R.N. Rajeshkumar.

SHRI K.R.N. RAJESHKUMAR: Sir, on the 4th December, 2023, a crude oil spill from the Chennai Petroleum Corporation Limited polluted the Kosasthalaiyar river, Ennore Creek and the Bay of Bengal. This incident affected 2,301 fisher families and damaged 787 boats and harmed the mangroves. The frequent oil leaks are causing a significant damage to the marine ecosystem. I request the hon. Minister to elaborate the long-term strategy available to prevent future oil spills and how to mitigate their impact. How will the Government address the ecological damage, especially, to the mangroves and marine ecosystem? Does the Government have any plans to review and enhance the compensation for the affected community?

SHRI HARDEEP SINGH PURI: Sir, the hon. Member has referred to cyclone Michaung, which brought 36 hours of incessant rains starting from the 3rd of

December, 2023. This resulted in water levels increasing everywhere, including in the establishment there. When the flood receded, waters escaped into the nearby Canal. There are 25 big industries in this area and 100 small-scale units in the Manali industrial area which handle oil and lubricants in various forms. I can state categorically, Sir, with the benefit of all the evidence available, there was no pipeline leak in the CPCL refinery. The accumulated floating oil from the area, which has come there, may have been from the industrial units. In any case, Sir, a study was carried out by the Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board, through National Institute of Oceanography, Goa, and the damage was assessed at Rs. 7.53 crores. Even though the CPCL, the Chennai Petroleum Corporation Limited establishment had nothing to do with this, they promptly deposited Rs. 7.53 crores as relief amount. Other actions which the hon. Member inquired about, what we can take in order to deal with future situations of this kind, if they might arise, these include rainwater collection capacity, which has been increased from 54,000 m³ to 84,000 m³. The depth of the ponds' handling rainwater collection has been increased by 2 to 3 feet. Six more oil catchers have been installed. Online analyzers were provided at outlets of stormwater channel and there are several others. Sir, in short, the damage caused by this came because 36 hours of incessant rain went into the industrial areas, whether large and small industrial units. The damage was not caused by the CPCL refinery, but since the damage was assessed by the State Government at Rs. 7.53 crores, they promptly deposited.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You said so!

SHRI HARDEEP SINGH PURI: Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Now, supplementary number 3, Sri Rajeev Shukla.

SHRI RAJEEV SHUKLA: Thank you, Chairman, Sir. The hon. Minister has given a very elaborate reply. In the last part of his reply, he has said under the USO's, Universal Service Obligations, the petrol and diesel will be provided at the reasonable rates to consumers. What does he mean by reasonable rates? What is the criteria for reasonable rates? Because in world market, prices have gone down, but we are still giving consumers at the higher rate, both petroleum and diesel. This is a very serious problem, Sir. So, you please define reasonable rates...

MR. CHAIRMAN: You have asked it. Now, hon. Minister

SHRI HARDEEP SINGH PURI: I am deeply grateful to the hon. Member for having asked this question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. Minister, every time, I get very suspicious when the Minister is grateful to the Member.

SHRI HARDEEP SINGH PURI: Yes, when full tosses are thrown in a cricket match.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Oh, okay, this is a full toss!

SHRI HARDEEP SINGH PURI: Yes, Sir. This was an absolute full toss. I would like to remind the hon. Member that petrol and diesel were deregulated when the then Government was in office between 2004 and 2014. De-regulation means that the prices of the commodity in the market are not set by the Government. So, we have an interesting situation on our hands and I will come to the second part of the hon. Member's question of prices here being higher and elsewhere being low. It is exactly the opposite. In India, today the prices are the lowest and this is the only country where prices have actually come down. Thanks to the very bold and ambitious and far-sighted decisions taken by the hon. Prime Minister. When the Government of 2004 and 2014 was in office, we had a very learned Finance Minister, who decided, in order to maintain that the price is at a level, he floated something called oil bond. Oil-bonds were floated for Rs.1,41,000 crores and as they say in my language, Punjabi 'कर्जा लए नाना, ते भुगते पोता'. Today, we are having to pay back Rs.3,20,000 crores for that kind of a far-sighted decision.

Sir, today, it is the Government's intention, it is the Government's resolve and the Government is doing all that it can to ensure, but, we are not in a position to because it is a deregulated sector. So, what happens is the following:-

The last time the Government could direct was in the year 2011-12 just after the petrol had been deregulated and diesel still had to be deregulated. Today, the determination of dealer's margin which is what the thrust of the question is all about, it is not about oil leak somewhere or something else. The question is: can the dealer's margin be increased? Now, this is a commercial contractual situation between the OMC, i.e., the public sector petrol and diesel selling companies and the dealers whom they employ as part of that contract.

Sir, currently, we have about 90,639 Retail Outlets in the country, out of which about 81,800 are in the public sector and the other 9000 are in the private sector

which is mainly Reliance, Nayara, and a few others. These are companies of the private sector. We have been monitoring this, there are discussions going on between the OMCs and the dealers. Last time, the dealers' margin were increased in the year 2017. But, at that point of time, they went to court and why did they go to court? I can read out the amounts to you as to what is the dealers' margin today. Sir, both in terms of petrol and diesel, still, I think, the OMC dealer margin is higher than the private sector unit. They went to court because they sought some of the conditions in the guidelines which had been stipulated that they were somewhat stringent. Sir, when the dealer margin is raised, one of the conditions that the dealer has to comply with is to ensure that the wages to their employees are paid according to the Minimum Wages Act or such acts which are related to their payments. So, the OMCs won the case in the High Court and then the dealers went up to the Supreme Court, in 2022. It is sub judice, but, we are encouraging dialogue between the OMCs and the dealers and we would like them to come to a conclusion so that as what my hon. Member has said, a reasonable return can be given. But, on global prices, I would suggest a fact check. Sir, we are in a situation where we were able to control prices because the hon. Prime Minister reduced excise on two occasions which brought down the price per litre by Rs. 13 and Rs. 16 on Petrol and Diesel, respectively. Sir, VAT reduction in BJP States was even more. Unfortunately, not all the other States complied. In one of the States, recently, they raised the prices. I am referring to a particular State in the South. I am not taking any name. So, I thank you for the question, it gave me an opportunity to reply in a more wholesome manner.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Now, fourth supplementary, Ms. Dola Sen. ...*(Interruptions)*... Mr. Rajiv, if you are not satisfied, take recourse to rules. Ms. Dola Sen, nothing else will go on record. ...*(Interruptions)*... Madam, put your supplementary. ...*(Interruptions)*... Nothing else will go on record.

MS. DOLA SEN: Sir, we all know that when internationally the cost of crude oil and natural gas decreases a lot, then the cost over here, in our country, of petrol, diesel and natural gas is increasing day-by-day in the last ten years. Is it not the Union Government, कम दाम में खरीदते हैं और ज्यादा कीमत में बेचते हैं। Sir, how it will be justified by the Union Government? प्रधान मंत्री जी की गारंटी को, तो हम रेफरेंस देना चाहते हैं, जैसे मिनिस्टर साहब ने बताया, हम रेफरेंस देना चाहते हैं कि 2013 में इंटरनेशनली पर यूनिट कूड ऑयल की कीमत 3.73 यू.एस. डॉलर थी और 2023 में 2.53 यू.एस. डॉलर हो गई है। यह बहुत कम हो गई है। सर, 2013 में एक गैस सिलेंडर का दाम 410 रुपये था और अभी...*(व्यवधान)*...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please put your supplementary.

सुश्री दोला सेन: अब यह होता है कि कभी सिलेंडर की कीमत 803 रुपये, 703 रुपये और कभी-कभी 1,000 रुपये भी होती है।...(व्यवधान)... वर्ष 2013 में कूड ऑयल के इम्पोर्ट की वैल्यूएशन 105 यू.एस. डॉलर थी और अभी कम होकर 77 यू.एस. डॉलर हुई। यह बहुत कम हो गई है। लेकिन जब पेट्रोल का दाम 74 था 2013 में, अभी 2023 में 100 हो गया।

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. Member, what is your supplementary?

सुश्री दोला सेन: और डीज़ल जब 52 था, वह बढ़कर 100 हो गया।

MR. CHAIRMAN: Your supplementary question, please.

सुश्री दोला सेन: कैसे माननीय मंत्री जी इसको जस्टिफाई करेंगे?

SHRI HARDEEP SINGH PURI: Sir, I would also like to thank the hon. Member for this question. Before I give a specific response to her, let me say that the price of crude, internationally, is not something we determine. We consume something like 5.33 million barrels a day.

MR. CHAIRMAN: No. Hon. Minister, she says that price of crude 10 years ago was low. That is her question. I don't know what the correct situation is.

SHRI HARDEEP SINGH PURI: I am coming precisely to that. Please indulge me. I will come precisely to that. Sir, the price at the retail point is determined by, first, international price, the cost of insurance, the cost of freight, then we have dealer's margin, refining cost, etc. I am giving you two years reference period between November, 2021 and April, 2024. Why I am doing this is because we have prices available. In India, the price of petrol came down by 13.65 per cent and on diesel it came down by 10.97 per cent.

Sir, in France, Germany, Italy, Spain, UK, Canada and the USA, the increase has been like this — France 22.19 per cent in petrol; Germany 15.28 per cent; Italy 14.82 per cent; Spain 16.58 per cent. Sir, these are published international figures of prices. ...*(Interruptions)*... Now, what happens, Sir, is that selectively or at random some figure is taken from the past to misrepresent the reality. ...*(Interruptions)*... Let me tell you, in the last two years, in the year 2021-22 when there was economic lockdown, because there was no economic activity, the price of crude came down to

US\$ 19.56 per barrel. After the economic activity resumed, it went up to US\$ 128. Now, the issue is: The Oil Marketing Companies, as good corporate citizens, were taking losses. That is why we had a situation. ...*(Interruptions)*... Sir, the question is on petrol and diesel. But, she had also asked a question on Ujjwala. I am very happy to reply that question also. Sir, the issue is this. Today, we have 32.5 crore connections of domestic LPG. Out of it, 10.38 crores connections are under Ujjwala. You look at what we had in 2014 and where we have reached. ...*(Interruptions)*... Sir, due to **high import price of LPG**, our OMCs took a loss of Rs. 28,000 crores. We compensated them Rs. 22,000 crores. I am very happy, if the figures you have in front of you are not the correct ones, we are ready to supply them. But, Sir, these are the global figures. These are not the figures that we have concocted.

श्री मिथलेश कुमार: सभापति महोदय, आपने मुझे पूरक प्रश्न पूछने का अवसर दिया, इसके लिए मैं आपका बहुत-बहुत आभारी हूँ। महोदय, मैं सदन के माध्यम से माननीय पेट्रोलियम एवं प्राकृतिक गैस मंत्री जी से जानना चाहता हूँ कि क्या यह सच है कि भारत में पेट्रोलियम उत्पादों, पेट्रोल और डीजल की कीमतें पड़ोसी देशों और विभिन्न पश्चिमी देशों की तुलना में सस्ती हैं?

MR. CHAIRMAN: It is same as Ms. Dola Sen's question.

SHRI HARDEEP SINGH PURI: Sir, I am always looking at you for indication. I thought you were giving me less time. So, I will answer it now.

MR. CHAIRMAN: No, hon. Minister. When the House is in order, you look at the other side. When the House is slightly agitated, you look at me.

SHRI HARDEEP SINGH PURI: Sir, when the House is in order, look at the other side also. Sir, the hon. Member has again asked a very pertinent question on prices. The prices of petrol and diesel in our immediate neighbourhood are significantly different from what they are in India. I will take the case of Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Nepal. And, I will take, as a reference period, again November, 2021. It is because that is the date when hon. Prime Minister reduced Cess. And, he did so again in May, 2022. The price in Delhi, for the sake of India, came down, in this three-year period, by 13.65 percent. On diesel, it came down by 10.97 percent. In Pakistan, the price has gone up by 44.98 per cent on petrol and 43.65 per cent on diesel. In Bangladesh, 22 per cent in petrol and 40 per cent in diesel; in Sri Lanka, 75.5 per cent in petrol and 142.91 per cent in diesel; in Nepal, 31.08 per cent in petrol and 35.7 per cent in diesel. These are percentage increases in prices. Now, anyone familiar

with the situation in the immediate neighbourhood of India -- I don't want to name it; they are on western front -- they have to close the electricity supply at 8 o'clock in the evening because there is shortage of energy supply. So, in our period, during the last ten years of hon. Prime Minister's regime, we have ensured total availability; there has never been any shortage. There may be local factors somewhere on account of floods, etc. We have ensured affordability. The prices have actually come down during this period. We also ensure sustainability. Our bio fuel blending has gone up from 1.4 per cent to 15 per cent. We want it 20 per cent. And, we want it 25 per cent by 2030. So, Sir, this is the situation on the ground. I think, we can draw some satisfaction from the fact that we have been able to navigate global uncertainty and turbulence. We are reasonably confident that going forward we will do the same.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Question No. 64 — Shri Vikramjit Singh Sahney.