

[13 December, 2002]

RAJYA SABHA

जा रहे थे, एम.एल.ए. जा रहे थे, एम.पी. जा रहे थे, उनको बाराबंकी की सीमा पर गिरफ्तार कर लिया गया।

मैडम, वहां हजारों लोग घायल हैं, अस्पतालों में उन्हें दवा नहीं दी जा रही और कोई उनसे मिलने जाना चाहता है तो उसे वहां जाने नहीं दिया जा रहा है। इतनी गंभीर स्थिति है।

उपसभापति : अब कालिंग अटेंशन शुरू कर लें।

प्रो० रामगोपाल यादव : मैडम, यह गन्ना किसानों का मामला है, लोग मारे जा रहे हैं, गवर्नमेंट की तरफ से कोई मदद नहीं हो रही है और जो लोग मदद करने जा रहे हैं, उनको रोका जा रहा है। इसलिए मैं मांग करता हूँ कि इस संबंध में सरकार की तरफ से कोई बयान आए और उस पर चर्चा हो।

श्री नीलोत्पल बसु(पश्चिमी बंगाल) : मैडम, इस पर कम से कम बयान तो आ सकता है।

उपसभापति : अभी कालिंग अटेंशन कर लें, रामगोपाल जी ने सुन लिया है।

प्रो० रामगोपाल यादव : मैडम, आप डायरेक्शन दे दीजिए, बहुत गंभीर मामला है, वहां स्थिति बहुत तनावपूर्ण है। अगर यहां से भी कुछ नहीं होगा तो स्थिति और खराब हो सकती है। (व्यवधान)...

श्री रमा शंकर कौशिक (उत्तर प्रदेश) : मैडम आपकी तरफ से डायरेक्शन जो दी जा सकती है।

श्रीमती सरोज दूबे (बिहार) : आप डायरेक्शन दीजिए।....(व्यवधान)...

उपसभापति : अभी आप चुप बैठ जाइए, मैं जब डायरेक्शन दे रही हूँ तो आपको भी डायरेक्शन दे रही हूँ। रामगोपाल जी, जरा देख लीजिएगा।(व्यवधान).... You please ask the Government about the happenings over there because the hon. Members are very worried and tense about it. Now, we have the Calling-Attention. Shri Santosh Bagrodia.

CALLING ATTENTION TO A MATTER OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

Poisonous effect on food items packaged in plastic bags

SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA (Rajasthan): I call the attention of the Minister of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution to the poisonous

effect on wheat, rice, sugar and other food items on being packed in plastic bags.

उपसभापति : मंत्री जी, आप इतना बड़ा स्टेटमेंट लाते हैं। I am sorry to comment. What will happen, if you bring a two-page statement typed in single space? We get only one hour for the Calling- Attention. If you read It, it will take about ten minutes. Can you lay the statement on the Table of the House? ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI NILOTPAL BASU (West Bengal) : Madam, I have a point to make. This is a very serious issue. This is a Calling-Attention Motion and the Cabinet Minister is not present. This is very unfortunate. ...*(Interruptions)*... I don't know whether the Cabinet Minister ...*(Interruptions)*...

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: He may be coming from the Lok Sabha.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI U.V. KRISHNAM RAJU): He is in the Lok Sabha.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: If he is in Lok Sabha, he may take some time to cross the Central Hall. ...*(Interruptions)*...Now we can start the Calling-Attention. ...*(Interruptions)*...Now, we can start the Calling-Attention. It is important, everything is important, the Minister is also important. He is competent enough. If hon. Members are very keen on the Cabinet Minister, he is in Lok Sabha.

SHRI B.P. SINGHAL (Uttar Pradesh) : It is not a question of confidence ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI NILOTPAL BASU: I don't share Singhalji's sense of humour. It is a question of dignity of this House. ...*(Interruptions)*...

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Now, let us start. Mr. Minister, you may say that a statement is laid on the Table of the House and circulated so that we can start straightaway the discussion.

श्री रमा शंकर कौशिक (उत्तर प्रदेश) : स्टेटमेंट तो पढ़ा जाता है।

उपसभापति : सारा टाइम स्टेटमेंट पढ़ने में ही निकल जाएगा और कालिंग अटेंशन होगा ही नहीं।

SHRI U.V. KRISHNAM RAJU: Sir, concerns have been raised by hon. Members in regard to the poisonous effects on wheat, rice, sugar and other food items on being packed in plastic bags for a long duration of time.

It may be recalled that the Government of India have approved the road map for dilution of the compulsory packaging norms laid down under the Jute Packaging Materials (Compulsory Use in Packing Commodities) Act, 1987 in respect of foodgrains in July 2002. This has been done with a view to enabling the jute industry to become cost and quality competitive in domestic and international markets. The cumulative percentages of dilution for foodgrains for the Jute Year (July to June) 2002-2003 and 2003-2004 are 20% and 40% respectively. The percentages of reservation for packaging in jute bags will, therefore, be 80% and 60% for foodgrains for the 1st and 2nd year respectively. The position will be reviewed in the 3rd year.

The Indian Grain Storage Management and Research Institute (IGSMRI), Hapur, a research and development institution of the Department of Food and Public Distribution has conducted a scientific study to evaluate the suitability of PP/HDPE bags for the storage of foodgrains under field conditions. The study was conducted in different agro-climatic zones at Food Storage Depots (FSD) of the Food Corporation of India (FCI) situated at Delhi, Shahjahanpur (UP), Cherlapally & Samalkot (AP), Kollam (Kerala), Bhubaneswar (Orissa), Jalandhar (Punjab), Una (HP), Rampur (MP) and Jorhat (Assam) for different commodities like wheat and rice.

On the basis of the study, the IGSMRI has found that:

- (i) PP/ HDPE bags are light in weight as compared to jute bags.
- (ii) PP/ HDPE bags are cheaper as compared to jute bags.
- (iii) Prophylactic and curative treatment against stored grain insect pests is effective.

The IGSMRI conducted its research study for one year storage period and has recommended that:

"PP/HDPE antislip bags can be used for storage of foodgrains by State procuring agencies in a phased manner, preferably to begin with the operational stocks in covered godowns at safe moisture level".

The Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), New Delhi has also conducted studies on the use of PP/HDPE bags for packaging of foodgrains and other items and found that Plastic Woven Sacks (PWS) made of HDPE or PP outperform their traditional counterparts (jute and paper bags) due to superiority exhibited in the following key functional areas :

Low seepage loss, yet option of breathing requirement not sacrificed.

Moisture resistant: hence most suitable packaging for hygroscopic substances like, fertilizer and sugar.

Water and insect resistant, thus allowing the PP-HDPE bags to be stored in warehouses and godowns without fear of deterioration and subsequent wastage.

The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) on the basis of a study conducted by the National Institute of Nutrition (NIN), Hyderabad has indicated that, as per available information, food items like grains and flours can be safely stored in plastic bags. However, conditions like initial moisture content, inoculum potential of biological agents like insects and fungi, conditions of storage including temperature and humidity, surrounding hygiene, and frequency of fumigation have considerable bearing on the stability of the product and these vary according to the type of agricultural commodity.

The Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) has standardised the specifications of PP / HDPE woven sacks for packaging of foodgrains and sugar. The BIS have indicated that the standards on HDPE/PP bags for packing of foodgrains and sugar have been issued after due consideration of health and safety aspects. The packaging of cereals and sugar is governed by the various BIS specifications, wherein the requirement of the overall migration limit (combination of all those constituents which adversely affect health) has been prescribed. It has, *inter alia*, been prescribed that foodgrains and sugar should be packed only in woven sacks made of

specific materials, which are reasonably safe for personal health. The BIS specifications of textiles - High Density Poly Ethylene (HDPE) / Poly Propylene (PP) woven sacks for packaging foodgrains and sugar (No. IS 14887 : 2000 & 14968 : 2001) prescribes that the raw material for the tape shall be manufactured from virgin High Density Poly Ethylene (HDPE) / Poly Propylene (PP) conforming to requirements specified in IS: 10146 or IS: 10910 respectively. The BIS have stated that the aforesaid Indian Standards on plastic raw materials for use in contact with food items are based on internationally accepted requirements such as European Norms, US PDA Regulations, British Plastic Federation Report, London etc. on the subject. The BIS have further informed that for ensuring quality of bags in terms of long term stability to prevent degradation during use, the use of UV stabilized raw materials has been specified in the standards listed in the above specifications.

As per available information, PP bags for packing of sugar are being used in Indonesia, Malaysia, Middle East, Brazil, Cuba, and E.U. countries.

The Directorate General of Health Services have intimated that plastic bags manufactured out of the plastic packaging materials enlisted under Rule 49(5)(v) of Prevention of Food Adulteration (PFA) Rules, 1955 are safe to pack foodgrains and sugar if the material used for manufacturing HDPE / PP bags conforms to the specifications prescribed by BIS.

It may be mentioned that PP/HDPE woven sacks are produced from the same raw materials which are used in items of daily human consumption (in India as well as in other countries) such as milk, edible oils, consumer packs of rice, sugar, wheat, tea, coffee, flour, salt, spices and pulses. The items most sensitive to human health, such as medicines, life saving drugs, blood and plasma pouches are all packed in articles of PP/HDPE and other plastic raw materials. No report or incidence of poisonous effect of PP/HDPE bags during storage of foodgrains has so far come to Government's notice.

In the light of the facts mentioned above, health hazards do not appear to be involved in the use of PP/HDPE bags for packing of foodgrains and sugar. The Food Corporation of India (FCI) is yet to take decision on the procurement of PP/HDPE bags for the storage of

foodgrains. All the safety aspects in use of these bags for storage of foodgrains will be considered carefully before decision on the use of *PP* / HDPE bags is reached in the FCI.

उपसभापति : बागड़ोदिया जी को बोलने तो दीजिए। बागड़ोदिया जी, दस मिनट बोलिएगा। because we have to finish in one hour.

श्री संतोष बागड़ोदिया : मैडम, आप मेरी बात सुन लेंगी तो आप मुझे दस मिनट की जगह दस दिन भी बोलने का मौका देंगी। I understand from the hon. Minister's statement itself, Madam, that Government of India has recently recommended packing of wheat and rice in 50 kg. Plastic bags for storage and transportation. I am strongly of the view that even if the so-called biodegradable plastic is used, the cereals, namely, wheat and rice, if packed in such plastic bags, can finally become poisonous and not suitable for human consumption.

Before accepting such bags, please consider the following serious points:-

1. Bureau of Indian Standards have mentioned *vide* their letter TXD 23/T-19, dated 17th August, 2001, "The standards for HDPE/PP woven sacks for packing foodgrains and sugar have been formulated very recently and the sacks conforming to these standards have not been used so far anywhere. This means that they have no information from the field after actual test use. Now, I come to point no. 2. I had taken up the matter with the Bureau of Indian Standards, and they have themselves mentioned, *vide* the same letter, as under: -

"The standards specify requirements for sacks for packaging foodgrains and sugar for transportation, and the committee responsible for formulation of standards, has not--I would like to underline the words 'has not'-- undertaken any study regarding the effect of storage in these bags of shelf-life and other characteristics."

They have only checked from the point of view of strength, and that also for transportation.

There is another letter of 16th September, 2002 which states:

"Concerned departments of the Central and the State Governments, whenever they are purchasing HDPE/PP woven sacks for packing of foodgrains and sugar, should be certainly utilising the services of an independent third party agency, like the DGS&D etc. who will carry out various tests, as per the relevant Indian standards to ascertain their conformity, including the safety of personal health, and in doing so, utilise the testing facilities available at the National Institutes, like the CFTRI, ITRI etc."

Since BIS themselves have not undertaken any study of such storage in such plastic bags, how can any other agency conduct study for their surtability? The DGS&D or any other institute does not have the infrastructure to even test check the consignments of plastic bags from time to time. Therefore, the Indian standards already decided, are incomplete and defective on this basis. Plastic bags are not procured through the DGS&D. The entire basis itself is wrong.

I also refer to a letter of 27th September, 2002 which states:

"It would be seen that in the specifications for HDPE and PP, the requirement of overall migration limit, combination of all those constituents which adversely affect health, has been prescribed. This ensures that the woven sacks for foodgrains are made of specific materials which are reasonably safe-- I would like to underline the word "reasonably safe"-- for personal health."

I do not know why we should not have completely safe. "They specify themselves that the proposed plastic sacks of food-grains are reasonably safe." They are not completely safe.

The same letter further states:

"There lies a scope for undertaking a detailed further study about the extent of migration of elements hazardous to health under varying conditions of storage and transportation."

If that is so, how can we start using such plastic bags before such a study is made? I have checked up with the Indian Institute of Packaging, Mumbai, and they have given their following opinion *vide* their letter dated 17th September 2002.

"Concerns raised by you on storage conditions and storage period leading to grain spoilage are quite pertinent. Product can get spoilt even if the package material is safe. Shelf-life studies determine the best before date of the product. For understanding the optimization study, it is necessary to fix the quality parameters of the product at the time of packaging, accepted degradation, time of storage etc."

This clearly says that the products can get spoilt even if the packaging material is safe. A great deal of study is required on this aspect.

I have also checked up with the Central Institute of Plastics Engineering and Technology, Chennai, and they have advised vide their letter dated 12th September, 2002:

"However, the oxygen permeability and moisture permeability of the material for long duration of storage could be checked by conducting tests."

A comparative study was done by the Food and Marine Resources Research Center, Karachi, Pakistan, which in conclusion mentions, " The breaking of WPP bags and mixing of small pieces of polypropylene with wheat was observed. This leads to the breaking of WPP bags and mixing of small pieces of polypropylene with wheat. Usually, low cost WPP bags fabric contains certain additives, which are carcinogenic and can cause health problems."

Madam, you will notice that pieces of plastic will be mixed either with wheat or rice. These can never be segregated at the time of final consumption and this will be a big health hazard. Similarly, it is also reported that the WPP bags fibre contains certain additives, which are carcinogenic and can cause health problems. The conditions in our country for such packaging are similar, if not worse, because our stocks are kept in open and also for long periods extending up to even six years. Madam, there was an Unstarred Question on the 21st of November, Question No. 247, directed to this Ministry only, and the answer states that there has been no study conducted by the Government on the shelf-life of wheat, rice and sugar, if packed in plastic bags. It is the answer from the Ministry itself. I understand the Ministry of Textiles is convinced that the grains packed in

plastic bags can develop into sprouts due to heat and moisture after a few months. There is no law for the mandatory use of only ISI marked plastic materials for manufacturing these bags. I am sure that a responsible Minister like him would not like to risk the health of crores of people by using plastic bags as the packaging material for wheat and rice. Madam, I know this particular decision was taken even before the hon. Minister had taken up this department, he has done that only recently. But if you are seriously against it, you may decide within your own Ministry that plastic bag should not be used. It is only allowed by another Ministry that you can use it, but it is not essential to be used by your Ministry. It is only a recommendation; and at this point, Madam, I would also like to mention about a recommendation by..... If you ask me to stop, I shall stop right now. But, please, listen to me because it is a health issue.....

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : I am not looking at you to stop you. But I am looking at the number of papers you are holding.

SHRI SANGH PRIYA GAUTAM (Uttaranchal) : He is reading from the papers. He has not yet made the statement.

SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA : All right. Dr. S. P. Agarwal, who is the Director General of Health Services, had written on 9th December, 2002, that is, only three days back, that the use of plastic bags to pack food-grains and sugar is being examined in his directorate. And the Ministry has already informed him in one of the Questions that the DGHS has already cleared it. Madam, I have got all the papers with me. I personally visited BIS also on this subject, and asked them to let us know as to how they have made this law and how they have met these standards. You will be surprised, Madam, that they did appreciate it and told me that I will be invited in the next meeting; it is more than one month and they have not yet invited me. But the Chief of this sub-committee to decide the BIS standards, is a plastic manufacturer himself. If that is how these specifications are decided, only God can help our country. Recently on 12th December, the BIS had again invited me and the letter says that they are going to have another technical committee. In the meantime, details of the various studies carried out are being collected ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI SANGH PRIYA GAUTAM : You are reading from the papers. You have got many papers. Please, speak extempore. You have been reading since long.

SHRI B. P. SINGHAL : Will you authenticate it?

SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA : I am quoting. I don't have the capacity to quote from memory. I am quoting from this letter dated 12th December. These are all- quotations and these are all authenticated. If you want, I can give it in writing. It says, "we will carry out further in our country" Why can't international studies be made? At this point I would also like to tell the hon. Minister that you can probably fight terrorism, you can probably fight AIDS, you can fight even the civil war, but you will not be able to fight this chemical and plastic war when you will see cancer patients all over the country, on the streets. Will you take such a responsibility? Or, would the House, would the Deputy Chairman, ask him to be more careful before taking this decision finally; and ask him to stop this completely for the time being, till the final study is made? As I have already mentioned, Question No. 247 itself says that no such study to assess the shelf-life has been done. The Ministry itself says, "This is a very serious matter. Discouraging the use of WPP bags for wheat storage in the interest of the consumers, NHFE has recommended complete avoidance of such bags. NFHE is a Pakistani organization. The study has been substantiated by a similar exercise done by the Pakistan Council of Scientific and Industrial Research". ...*(Interruptions)*...

Madam, I have just read out what the hon. Minister has mentioned. ...*(Interruptions)*... When he became a Member and was making a speech, he said to other Members, "Don't interrupt." But, today, every now and then, he interrupts me! ...*(Interruptions)*... Madam, after ten months, it was also seen in the sample...*(Interruptions)*... Madam, can I have your protection? Am I abusing? Am I doing something wrong? ...*(Interruptions)*... Why are you getting excited? ...*(Interruptions)*... Madam, he gets excited by looking at me; I don't know why. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI B.P. SINGHAL: Madam, my point is this. When I became a Member of the House, the moment I started reading out my speech, the entire Opposition pounced upon me and said, "No, no; you can't read it."

SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA: I am not reading; I am only quoting.

SHRI SANGH PRIYA GAUTAM: How long are you going to quote?
...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA: I am announcing, I am quoting, I am quoting. I quote:

"After ten months, there were fungi in the samples, besides the increase in fat acidity content."

These are all newspaper reports I am quoting. ...(*Interruptions*)...Madam, Recently, there was a news-item by...(*Interruptbns*)...

श्री भारतेन्दु प्रकाश सिंहल : मैडम, इतने सीनियर मेम्बर पढ़ेंगे तो कैसे चलेगा।

उपसभापति : अभी आप उनको पढ़ लेने दीजिए। इतनी लंबी क्वोटेशन मेमोरी से क्वोट नहीं कर सकते।

SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA: Madam, I am again going to quote:

"Take the scary discovery of the oceanographic research vessel ORV Alguita which discovered that the Pacific Ocean is becoming a synthetic sea contaminated with 'deadly' plastic particles.

But cheer up. Communities all over India who have been fighting toxic pollution are now going to find their voices magnified. Greenpeace will take out a 'Thousand Bhopals Jatra' through 25 toxic hotspots in India seeks to bring together diverse people with common concerns"

I would request all the people who are standing for no *prime facie* reason, to join this peacemarch to help the country, instead of disturbing me. ...(*Interruptions*)... I am only trying to...(*Interruptions*)...

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: It is over now.

SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA: Madam, this statement has been just laid on the Table. I would like to only make a point, because I can't read out the whole statement.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I allowed it to be laid on the Table for the benefit of the Members. The Minister was willing to read it out.

SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA: Madam, I know that. I am not blaming anybody. I am only telling this to you because the statement has been laid on the Table. I want to make my last point. I want to refer to para 2. He has said this in the beginning: "...packing norms laid down under the Jute Packaging Materials Act." It is a wrong conception with all these people that I am trying to support the jute bags. I am not supporting the jute bags. ...*(Interruptions)*...Madam, all over the world, its transportation is done in bulk. Nowhere in the world, plastic is used; nowhere. It has been confirmed by the Ministry that plastic is not used for these cereals. Why are you trying to use it here? They use the bulk transportation. In Silos, they put it. In the third-world countries, it is not being used. They can use cotton, they can use paper, they can use jute, they can use even bulk transportation; I am not against them. Madam, my Calling Attention, today, is limited to pleading that plastics should not be used. I do not know why the statement of the hon. Minister mentions about the jute packing materials. Nowhere I have mentioned about jute packaging. He wants to misguide the House, to confuse the people of the country by making this kind of a statement.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I have no brief from the hon. Minister. But, it may be because, originally, jute was used for packing purposes, and the jute industry is in doldrums. Many times, it has been mentioned by the Members in the House that the jute industry is in doldrums. But how can one trust it? I would definitely object to the use of papers. That means, we will have to cut more trees, and there will be more hazards. Paper is out of question. Cotton; I do not know how cotton can be used. Okay. There are thirteen names. Tell me whether it is humanly possible to finish it before lunch. It will be only possible if Mr. Jibon Roy and other Members put only questions, and not discuss the entire jute industry or the packaging process. Then, I think, we can finish it; otherwise, it will remain inconclusive. Mr. Jibon Roy, please put questions only. All of us know the story.

SHRI JIBON ROY (West Bengal): The thing is that the industry, which emerged as a sunrise industry during the 80's, is now proving to be a poisonous and hazardous industry. This plastic industry has caused a lot of damage to steel, jute and many other industries. Now, it is affecting the workers of both the jute and the plastic industry. In the plastic industry, they are paying only Rs. 35-40. In Tamil Nadu itself, they claim, there are

5,000 plastic industries. So, you can understand, how many will be there in the entire country. Nobody knows how this plastics are being recycled, what are the materials being used, how it is being done, but they are being paid only Rs. 35-40. It is emerging as the most dangerous thing in all respects. Now, it has been proved, beyond doubt, that all kinds of plastics are poisonous and hazardous. For example, we have the PVC, polyvinyl chloride. This is toxic, during its making, its disposal and during its use. Who knows how those are being used. Take, for example, a tumbler, in which we put water. It is made of cadmium, mercury and lead; then there is the germ of carcinoma in the pot that we use for drinking water. We are told that plastics made of propylene and polyethylene are safe. But who knows whether all these sacks and bags are made only out of these two plastic materials? No inspection system is there. Nobody knows how it is being made. But it is being used, and the order has come that sugar and foodgrains will be packed in such polythene bags and sacks. Now, we do not know what really it is. Our Environment Ministry, Government of India, had formulated a Task Force in the year 1996. After 12 years, in early 2002, they decided to ban all plastics. But in the end, elephant has produced a mouse. In the end, they said that only plastics with a thickness of 20 micron were degradable and others were not. It shows some kind of helplessness. What should we do? I do not say that, overnight, you change the thing. But, today, the entire world is paying attention to this aspect, including Third World nations. The Government should rise to the occasion; they should not succumb to the pressures of the industry. Madam, when I entered the school of Communism, the first lesson that I got was that capital or investment in a market economy flows into softer areas where there is profit, high profit. If they find that cultivation of grape is profitable, they will cultivate grape. This is the law of capitalism. Therefore, money is flowing in that direction. That is why some Government intervention is necessary.

In the end, Madam, I would like to draw your attention to paragraph 7 of the statement. The first part of the para says, "food items like grains and flours can be safely stored in plastic bags". In the second part, it is qualified by another sentence, "However, conditions like initial moisture content, inoculum potential of biological agents like insects and fungi, conditions of storage, including temperature and humidity, surrounding hygiene, and frequency of fumigation have considerable bearing on the suitability of the product and these vary according to the type of agriculture

commodity". It is agreed that it is dangerous. After the notice for this Calling Attention was given, I have gone through a number of periodicals which say that when packaging is done and stored, some packages get destroyed. Something is mixed with the fluid and it goes into the body and they have the germ of carcinoma. Therefore, I request the Government, through you, Madam, to constitute a Parliamentary Committee. Don't leave it to the bureaucrats. Let us go into all aspects of it in detail and have an action plan, say, for six years, ten years, or twelve years, so that we can get rid of that situation. Thank you.

SHRI DINESH TRIVEDI (West Bengal): Madam, I will be very brief. The issue involves three broad areas; the first is concerning health, the second is concerning employment and the third is concerning environment. I may not be wrong, I *am* subject to correction, if I say that most of the plastics are made of petroleum products and chemicals, which are otherwise hazardous. I don't have to say anything more on this point. It has been proved the world over.

Madam, I come straight to the point of health. Recently I had an opportunity to go to Nilgiri Hills where, as you climb up, you can see huge boards which state, "plastics banned, limit starts from here". If we are banning plastics in certain areas, obviously, there are reasons for that. All over the world, plastics are getting banned. We are talking about jute. West Bengal has a flourishing jute industry. It gives so much of employment. Suddenly, we just wanted to ape some other country, maybe, western countries. Now, even the western countries have realised it. They are going back to orthodox packaging. But we want to use plastics, ignoring all the signals given, by and large, by the so-called western world, which is supposed to be scientifically more advanced.

Madam, here comes the question of employment. We are doing certain things, which are creating more unemployment. I am glad, by the way, the hon. Minister has mentioned about jute. There is nothing wrong in it. Why should a flourishing industry be stopped? Why should an alternative material, which is otherwise dangerous and hazardous to health, be used? What I want to say is that we are not getting anywhere in terms of improving the quality. On the contrary, we are creating more health hazards by using plastics.

Madam, now, I come to the last point, that is, environment. Today, the world over, we are talking about environment, and I am not adding anything new by saying that plastics are not biodegradable. They are used and reused and their life goes on for a hundred or two hundred years. If we go out and look at our gutters, we find there full of plastics. They are getting choked. The indirect result of using plastics for packaging, starting from small to bulk, is choking of our entire sanitation system. Besides that, if you look around, especially, in the open area, you find there full of plastic waste. We have become so conscious about environment the world over. Recently there was a summit on environment. It is an important point that if we want to save this planet, the time has come that we create an awareness among the people. Madam, I am glad that the Chair has made an observation that we must come up with something. As you rightly said, paper is not really an alternative because then we have to cut the trees, and again, we talk about environment. I am very glad that the Chair has made this observation. Madam, if there is some fire in some godown, the first thing which we hear is, "Oh, because it had plastic". Madam, because of plastic, so many hazards are being created and the utility value in terms of health is negative.

The statement given by the hon. Minister states that countries like Indonesia, Malaysia, Middle East, Brazil and Cuba are using plastic. These are very few countries and, even if, they are using plastic, it does not justify the use of plastic. In conclusion, I would urge, through you, Madam, to the hon. Minister to give it a serious thought. Our scientists in India have set values for us by coming up with new research. We must go back to our orthodox packaging system, whether it is jute or something else which gives a lot of employment also. thank you very much for giving me this opportunity.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : Now, Mr. Chitharanjan and Mr. Kalraj Mishra are not here. I will call those other Members. Mr. Manoj Bhattacharya, Mr. Rama Shanker Kaushik, Mr. Lalit Suri, Mr. Perumal, Mr. Rama Muni Reddy, Smt. Shabana Azmi all are not here. Mr. Harendra Singh आप सवाल पूछ लीजिए क्योंकि यह खत्म करना है। बोलिए।

श्री हरेन्द्र सिंह मलिक (हरियाणा) : महोदया, यह जीवन से जुड़ा हुआ सामान है। क्या, सवाल पूछना है?

उपसभापति : हां, और क्या? कार्लिंग अटैन्शन में जो प्रक्रिया है उसके अनुसार जो काल अटैन्शन करता है, वह तो 10 मिनट बोलता है बाकी सब लोग सवाल पूछ लेते हैं।

श्री हरेन्द्र सिंह मलिक : माननीय उपसभापति महोदय, मैं आपके माध्यम से सरकार से यह जानना चाहता हूँ कि जो प्लास्टिक बोरे में खाद्यान्नों की ढुलाई का मामला है, इसमें डीजी हैल्थ और जो हमारे परीक्षण संस्थान हैं, उनसे क्या रिपोर्ट आई है? क्या उनके मुताबिक इसमें भरा जाने वाला सामान स्वास्थ्य के लिए हानिकारक है या नहीं?

उपसभापति : बस, वैरी गुड क्वेश्चन।

DR. A.K. PATEL (Gujarat) : Madam, I was in Lok Sabha for five terms and I am here for the first term. This subject is being discussed repeatedly. Previously, it was discussed in 1987. It was brought, keeping in view the interest of the farmers and jute growers. But today, it has only benefited some jute industries. And this matter has been brought before the House only due to the pressure from jute industries. Madam, I am very sorry to say this.

Madam, I would like to know whether the Government has got this thing studied by IGMRI or IIT and, if so, what are the reports? And, if the reports are correct, then, there should not be any problem for using the bags.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : I think, the first thing we should ban is the plastic bottles in which we drink water. If dry material is hazardous for health, then, why do we drink water from those plastic bottles? So, why should we ban plastic bags only? Plastic bottles and polythene bags, in which we pack things in our refrigerators, should be banned. The use of plastic has to be discussed.

SHRI V.V. RAGHAVAN (Kerala) : Madam, I would like to put only two queries. One of the reasons given for choosing plastic bags is, it is cheaper than jute bags. The whole House should object to this kind of an attitude because we are dealing with foodgrains. There is a criminal negligence on the part of the FCI in protecting foodgrain stocks from getting contaminated. It is a criminal negligence. Recently, foodgrains were supplied to the Peerumed Plantation in Kerala. These foodgrains were found unfit for human consumption. Recently, in Kerala, one sheep ate the foodgrains lying around a godown in Cochin. The sheep fell ill and

died on the spot. Madam, you can understand how much contaminated are the foodgrains that are being stocked. My first question is this. Would the hon. Minister inspect the entire foodgrain stocks throughout the country and certify that the stocks are fit for human consumption? Lakhs of tonnes of foodgrains got rotten and perished. It is going on. But they are not worried about it. They are looking for cheaper packaging. Secondly, instead of the targeted Public Distribution System, if we adopt a universal public distribution system, these huge stocks could be utilised for the needy people. Why are they hesitant to do it? These stocks are getting rotten, and the people are starving. If instead of the targeted Public Distribution System, a universal public distribution system is adopted, we will be able to solve this problem. Do not go for cheaper things as you are dealing with human beings. Thank you.

डा. रमेन्द्र कुमार यादव “रवि” (बिहार) : माननीय महोदया, मैं आपके माध्यम से सरकार से कहना चाहता हूँ कि माननीय सदस्य श्री संतोष बागड़ोदिया जी जो ध्यानाकर्षण प्रस्ताव लाए हैं यह जीवन की हिफाजत के लिए है। मैं तर्कों में नहीं पड़ना चाहता। सरकार मानती है कि उस पर गहन अनुसंधान अब तक नहीं किया गया है। स्वयं केंद्र सरकार ने दिल्ली उच्च न्यायालय को सूचित किया है कि प्लास्टिक की पुनर्निर्मित थैलियों पर रोक लगा दी गयी है। मैं अखबार में पढ़ता हूँ कि यह अनहाइजीनिक तो है ही, डाइजेस्टिव भी नहीं है। उसको पचाया भी नहीं जा सकता है। गाए खा रही हैं और हम गायों का दूध पीते हैं।

अभी दिनेश जी और जीवन राय जी ने बहुत बहुमूल्य सुझाव दिए हैं कि पर्यावरण पर उसका क्या प्रभाव पड़ रहा है, असर पड़ रहा है। इससे वाटर फ्लो भी बाधित हो रहा है जहां सीवर वगैरह में फंस जाता है। महोदया, स्वयं सरकार ने कहा है, मैं दसवां पैरा पढ़ना चाहता हूँ-

“स्वास्थ्य सेवा महानिदेशालय ने सूचित किया है कि खाद्य अपमिश्रण निवारण नियम, 1955 के नियम 49(5) के अधीन सूचीबद्ध प्लास्टिक पैकिंग सामग्री से निर्मित प्लास्टिक बोरिया खाद्यान्नों और चीनी की पैकिंग के लिए तभी सुरक्षित हैं....। जब एच.डी. पी.ई. बोरियों का उत्पादन करने के लिए उपयोग की गयी सामग्री भारतीय मानक ब्यूरो द्वारा विहित विनिर्दिष्टियों के अनुरूप हो”।

सरकार ने श्री बागड़ोदिया द्वारा उठाए गए प्रश्नों के जवाब में स्पष्ट उत्तर दिया है कि अभी तक इस पर गहन अनुसंधान और जांच की प्रक्रिया नहीं अपनाई गई है। जूट भी अनुपलब्ध है और यह अभी कहा गया है कि तीसरा विश्व भी इसको नहीं मानता है। फिर कराची की बात आई और इस देश में भी यह चर्चा हो रही है। अगर वह स्वास्थ्य के अनुरूप नहीं है, अगर गेहूँ, हम चावल जो उसे खाते हैं, उसमें बंद करने से स्वास्थ्य पर उस का बुरा प्रभाव पड़ता है और रंगीन थैलियों में खाद्य सामग्री लाने से अगर कैंसर होता है तो सरकार महज उपलब्धता और अनुपलब्धता के आधार पर यह स्लो-पोइजनिंग फैलाने का काम क्यों कर रही है? सरकार इसे बंद क्यों नहीं करती? मैडम, इस देश

मैं वैकल्पिक व्यवस्था का प्रावधान है जैसे कि आप चेयर पर हैं तो हैं और अगर नहीं है तो गौतम जी या अन्य उपसभाध्यक्ष चेयर पर बैठते हैं। इसलिए अगर सही मायने में इस के जीवन का संहार होता है और दीर्घकाल में इस का बुरा प्रभाव होता है, तो इसे तुरंत रोका जाना चाहिए। मैडम, जैसे कहा जाता है, यह प्लास्टिक वार है तो एक बार तो हम देख रहे हैं और बहुत से वार का हम ने सामना किया है, लेकिन यह एक साइलेंट वार है। इस में हम कत्ल हो रहे हैं, लेकिन खून का कतरा नहीं बहता है। अगर रंगीन पोलीथीन में सामान लाने से हमारा जीवन बरबाद होता है, आने वाली पीढ़ी प्रभावित होती है तो इस पर पुनः विचार किया जाना चाहिए। इस में “हां” पक्ष या “न” पक्ष के विवाद का विषय नहीं है और न इसे सियासती विवाद का कारण बनाया जाना चाहिए। यह नहीं कि यह इधर से लाया गया है या उधर से लाया गया है। मैं संघ प्रिय जी को बहुत प्यार करता हूं, लेकिन गौतम के प्रति प्यार नहीं बल्कि पूजा की भावना रखता हूं। उन्होंने कहा कि जब आप इधर थे, यह इधर-उधर की बात नहीं है। आप का और हमारा, संसार भर के लोगों का जीवन उतना ही कीमती है।....(व्यवधान).. दो टांग वाला ही नहीं, चार टांग वाला भी जिसे पचा नहीं सकता है, ऐसी चीजों पर प्रतिबंध लगना चाहिए। धन्यवाद।

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Shri S.S.Chandran.

SHRI S.S.CHANDRAN (Tamil Nadu): Madam, I will speak in Tamil.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Why don't you speak in English today?

SHRI S.S.CHANDRAN: Madam, because I love to speak in my mother- tongue.

SHRI SANGH PRIYA GAUTAM: I think, you can speak in English also very well.

SHRI S.S.CHANDRAN: You also know English, but you generally speak in Hindi only.

* Madam, Deputy Chairman, whenever I rise to speak your good self are in the Chair. That itself gives me immense happiness. Because you like humour and appreciate humour. I thank you Madam, for giving me this opportunity to speak on this Calling Attention on the poisonous effect on wheat, rice, sugar and other food items on being packaged in plastic bags. I wish to make a few points on behalf of

* English translation of original speech delivered in Tamil.

AIADMK. Plastic found its way into India in 1940s for the first time. It seems, after some time we will have even plastic man and plastic woman. Such is the growth of plastic industry in the country. It is said that poisonous substances such as dioxin and furans present in plastic damage our immune system and affect our reproductive health. That is why we have to be very cautious in the use of plastics. In plastic also there is virgin and recycled plastics. We have seen this only in matrimonial ads. There we would find virgin, spinster, divorce etc. That has come to be applied to plastics also now. The recycled plastic is said to be very harmful. In India recycled plastic is mostly used.

The production of virgin polythene bags in India is only 31,000 tons a year. The rest are recycled polythene bags. During the Seventh Five Year Plan, between 1986-1990, petrochemical complex was set up at a cost of Rs. 30,000 crore to meet the domestic requirement of plastics. But today the use of plastic has grown so much that it has reached mythic proportion. Of the total packaging industry in the country about 40 per cent is occupied by the plastic packaging industry.

Madam, according to a study, in the year 1995-96 the packaging industry used 9.76 lakh tons of plastic. This has gone up to 22.72 lakh tons in 2001-2002 and is estimated to reach 40.37 lakh tons in 2006-2007 if the present trend is not checked. The Centre has enacted various laws for controlling pollution. But no Government at the Centre ever seemed to have realised the gravity of the situation. Madam, I wish to cite an example. Reliance group of industries produces about 56 per cent of the country's total plastic production. The proprietors of such a company producing pollutants were invited for the swearing - in - ceremony of the President of India in the Central Hall of Parliament. But the Hon. Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, Dr. Puratchi Thalaivi Amma, who has contained the use of plastic items in Tamil Nadu through legislation and Government orders was not invited for the swearing - in - ceremony. I do not want to go into that matter. I say this because when the producers of plastics are close to the Centre, how is it possible to contain the use of plastics. Madam, I feel the Ministry of Environment should also have been involved in this Calling Attention. The Government should have farsightedness and concentrate on reducing plastic production rather than talking about the use of plastics and polythene. *(Time bell)*.

Madam, I will conclude in a minute. The plastic bags are harmful not only for the users but also others. The littered polythene bags clog the drainage systems and make cities float on water during monsoon. Therefore, this matter needs the serious attention of the Government.

Before I conclude, I appeal to the Hon. Minister to direct the Departments under his control not to use plastic packaging. They should be asked to switch over to jute or cloth packaging. The poisonous effects of plastic packaging should be made known to the people through TV, and print media. I hope the Hon. Minister will do the needful. I once again thank you, Madam, for giving me this opportunity to speak.

उपभोक्ता मामले, खाद्य और सार्वजनिक वितरण मंत्री (श्री शरद यादव) : मैडम, श्री संतोष बागड़ोदिया जी ने, जीपन राय जी ने, दिनेश जी ने, हरेन्द्र सिंह जी ने, ए0के0 पटेल जी ने, डा0 रमेश कुमार यादव "रवि" जी ने इस कॉलिंग अटेंशन पर अपने विचार व्यक्त किए हैं। मैडम, मैं आपसे विनती करना चाहूंगा कि जब मैं टैक्सटाइल मिनिस्टर था 1989 में, तब से यह विवाद चला हुआ है और हमारे जमाने में यह नहीं हो पाया। जब यह मिनिस्ट्री हमको मिली, उससे पहले कैबिनेट में फैसला हुआ कि प्लास्टिक का 2002-2003 में सिर्फ 20 परसेंट। माननीय सदस्यों ने जो कहा कि इसकी स्टडी नहीं कराई गई है, मैं उन्हें बताना चाहता हूं कि इसकी बाकायदा स्टडी हुई है लेकिन सरकार ने माना है कि इसकी स्टडी लम्बे समय के लिए नहीं हो पाई। कुछ इंस्टिट्यूट ऐसे हैं जिन्होंने लम्बे समय के लिए भी की है और कहा है कि इसमें कोई दिक्कत नहीं है, लेकिन मैं आपके माध्यम से सदन से कहना चाहता हूं कि इस सवाल को अकेले जो एफ.सी.आई.के गोदमों में बैग्स आने वाले हैं, इस तक ही कन्फाइन नहीं किया जा सकता क्योंकि देशभर में जितने बड़े पैमाने पर प्लास्टिक है या इसका मेटरियल है, वह हर चीज में इस्तेमाल होता है, वह चीज किस में इस्तेमाल नहीं होता है? सुबह से लेकर शाम तक हर चीज में उसका इस्तेमाल होता है। दूध जैसी चीज में इसका इस्तेमाल होता है, दवाई जिसकी ऐक्सपाइरी डेट चार-चार, पांच-पांच, दस-दस साल रहती है, उसमें भी इसका इस्तेमाल है और इसका इस्तेमाल दुनियाभर में बड़े पैमाने पर एक्स्पेंड हुआ है। हां, इन्वायरमेंट मूवमेंट के चलते इसमें कुछ कमी हुई है और लोग इस दृष्टि से चिंतित हो रहे हैं और उस लिहाज से यह एक आन्दोलन का हिस्सा हो सकता है। लेकिन जैसा बागड़ोदिया जी ने कहा, वे मेरे से मिले भी थे, उन्होंने यह सवाल उठाया भी था, उन्होंने पाकिस्तान की स्टडी का हवाला दिया और कहा कि पाकिस्तान में इस पर कोई स्टडी आई है, मैं उनको ऐसोसिएट करता हूं और इस मामले में मैंने बयान में ही लिखा है कि आई.आई.टी. दिल्ली ने नेशनल इंस्टिट्यूट ऑफ न्यूट्रिशन हैदाराबाद ने और बी.आई.एस. जो हमारे डिपार्टमेंट में है, उसने थॉरो स्टडी करके यह कहा है वर्जिन होना चाहिए, रिसाइकिलिंग नहीं होनी चाहिए और उन्होंने बाकायदा कहा कि नॉट इंजुरियस फार हेल्थ है। मैं इससे ज्यादा विस्तार में नहीं जाना चाहता क्योंकि अभी तो यह शुरू भी नहीं हुआ है, यह 2003 में आने वाला है और इसमें लम्बा समय लगने वाला नहीं है, जब तक हमारे पास कंज्यूमर अफेयर डिपार्टमेंट है। बी.आई.एस. देश की बहुत अच्छी संस्था है, जिसकी रेपुटेशन देशभर में है और देशभर के लोग उससे वाकिफ हैं। मैडम, मैं इतना ही

1.00 p.m.

निवेदन करना चाहता हूँ कि जो आंशका सदस्यों ने रखी है कि लम्बे समय के लिए भी हमको इसकी जांच करानी चाहिए, वह काम हम करेंगे, हम निश्चित तौर पर उसको देख लेंगे और जो अन्य चिंताएं आपने कहीं हैं, उनको भी हम देखेंगे। ऐम्प्लॉयमेंट के सवाल के बारे में जो चिंता व्यक्त की गई है, उस बारे में मैं कहना चाहता हूँ कि ऐम्प्लॉयमेंट प्लास्टिक बैग बनाने वाली संस्थाओं में भी कम नहीं है। मैंने आपसे पहले ही निवेदन किया है कि मैं जब टेक्सटाइल मिनिस्टर था, तब से यह विवाद चल रहा है और यह केस कलकत्ता हाई कोर्ट में भी था, जूट लॉबी के लोगों ने वहां केस दायर किया था, लेकिन वे वहां भी सफल नहीं हुए और यह बहस आज यहां आ गई है। मैं इसमें यह मानता हूँ कि जो चिंता की जा रही है, जिस चिंता को माननीय सदस्यों ने व्यक्त किया है, हम उस चिंता को स्वीकार करते हैं और लम्बे समय के लिए भी इसकी जांच कराने का हम काम कर लेंगे। हमने पूरी तरह से, साइंटिफिक तरीके से, सारे इंस्टिट्यूट्स से एक साल के लिए जांच कराई है, तो एक साल के लिए इसमें किसी तरह की हेल्थ को नुकसान पहुंचाने वाली कोई चीज नहीं है। इसलिए माननीय सदस्यों ने जो चिंता व्यक्त की है, उसका कोई ज्यादा अर्थ नहीं है। इन्हीं शब्दों के साथ मैं बागड़ोदिया जी से कहना चाहता हूँ कि विशेष तौर पर वे इसके लिए बहुत चिंतित हैं लेकिन उनकी चिंता इस फैसले के पहले भी थी, और आज भी है और इसमें उन्होंने एक नया फैक्टर जोड़ा है। वे एक नया मुद्दा लेकर आए हैं, उस मुद्दे को हम देख लेंगे और निश्चित तौर पर हम इस तरह का कोई काम नहीं करेंगे जिससे देश के लोगों को किसी तरह का नुकसान हो।

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: That is over. ... (Interruptions)...

श्री संतोष बागड़ोदिया : मैडम, मैं एक सवाल पूछना चाहता हूँ।

उपसभापति : आपने इतना लंबा भाषण तो कर दिया, अब कोई क्वेश्चन नहीं।

श्री संतोष बागड़ोदिया : मैडम, मैंने अभी यह स्टेटमेंट पढ़ा है।

उपसभापति : आपको पहले स्टेटमेंट पढ़ना चाहिए था लेकिन आप बाहर चले गए थे ... (व्यवधान) ..

SHRI SANGH PRIYA GAUTAM: Madam, he spoke for more than half-an-hour. ... (Interruptions)...

श्री संतोष बागड़ोदिया : मैडम, खाली एक प्वाइंट बोलने दीजिए।

उपसभापति : क्या प्वाइंट है?

श्री संतोष बागाड़ोदिया : पैरा नम्बर 9 में इन्होंने खुद कहा है कि शूगर यहां पैक होती हैं लेकिन पूरी स्टेटमेंट में राईस, व्हीट का कुछ नहीं लिखा है।

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Messages from Lok Sabha. Secretary-General.

MESSAGES FROM THE LOK SABHA

(i) The Appropriation (No. 6) Bill, 2002 .

(ii) The Representation of The People (Amendment) Bill, 2002.

SECRETARY-GENERAL: Madam, I have to report to the House the following messages received from the Lok Sabha, signed by the Secretary-General of the Lok Sabha:

(i)

"In accordance with the provisions of rule 96 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha, I am directed to enclose the Appropriation (No. 6) Bill, 2002, as passed by Lok Sabha at its sitting held on the 11th December, 2002.

The Speaker has certified that this Bill is a Money Bill within the meaning of article 110 of the Constitution of India."

(ii)

"In accordance with the provisions of rule 96 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha, I am directed to enclose the Representation of the People (Amendment) Bill, 2002, as passed by Lok Sabha at its sitting held on the 12th December, 2002."

Madam, I lay a copy each of the Bills on the Table.