

Title: Regarding increase in prices of certain petroleum products.

15.07 hours

The Lok Sabha re-assembled after Lunch at seven minutes

past Fifteen of the Clock.

(Shri P.H. Pandiyan *in the Chair*)

STATEMENT BY MINISTER

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI RAM NAIK): Mr. Chairman Sir, hon. Members would be aware of the steep increase in the prices of crude oil that were being witnessed for the last one year. International prices of crude oil which were around Rs.3,210 per tonne in February, 1999 rose to around Rs.7,906 per tonne in March, 2000, an increase of over 146 per cent. Consequently, the oil import bill has also increased and is estimated to go up from Rs.27,000 crore in 1998-99 to around Rs.57,000 crore in 1999-2000.

Based on the decision taken during the Government led by Shri P.V. Narasimha Rao, an Expert Technical Group (ETG) was appointed on 25th June, 1996 to make recommendations on reforms in the hydrocarbon sector. The ETG submitted its two reports while the Government led by Shri H.D. Deve Gowda was in power. The second report of ETG was accepted by the Government led by Shri I.K. Gujral on 20th November, 1997, when it was decided to dismantle the Administered Pricing Mechanism (APM) in a phased manner and to switch over to

full deregulation by the end of March, 2002. The following decisions were taken:

1. That subsidy on kerosene oil for Public Distribution System (PDS) would be brought down to 33.33 per cent of the import parity price by the year 2001-02.
2. That subsidy on LPG (Packed-Domestic) would be brought down to 15 per cent during the year 2000-01.
3. That selling prices of Motor Spirit (MS) and Aviation Turbine Fuel (ATF) would be moved towards import parity, and
4. That price of diesel would continue to be moved in line with international prices as per the earlier Cabinet decision dated 1st September, 1997.

Hon. Members would be aware that the Oil Pool Account is balanced by cross subsidisation of PDS kerosene and LPG (Packed-Domestic) prices from revenues earned through Motor Spirit and Aviation Turbine Fuel. Prices of diesel are required to be at import parity and are Oil Pool Account neutral. The steep increase in international crude oil prices has increased the differential between the import parity prices and the prices of the subsidised products thus placing a great burden on the deficit in the Oil Pool Account.

The annual subsidy in the preceding year i.e. in 1999-2000 for PDS kerosene at the pre-revised prices was expected to be approximately Rs.8,100 crore and for LPG (Packed-Domestic) approximately Rs.4,700 crore. At March, 2000 prices, this deficit would have been increasingly larger and would have reached the order of Rs.11,000 crore for PDS kerosene and Rs.7,000 crore for LPG (Packed-Domestic) for 2000-01. This level of deficit in the Oil Pool Account cannot be sustained since there would be no money with the oil companies either to import and process crude oil or market products.

The basic price of PDS kerosene has remained unchanged since 25th July, 1991. The differential between prices of diesel and PDS kerosene has been widening continuously over the last two decades. The difference between the price of diesel and PDS kerosene was only one paise in 1975; 66 paise in 1980; Rs.1.19 in 1985; Rs.2.09 in 1990 and Rs.3.72 in the year 1995. Earlier Governments spoke of reduction of subsidy and market mechanisms but made hardly any attempt to increase the prices of PDS kerosene. As on 22nd March, 2000, the difference between the diesel and PDS kerosene retail price in Delhi was Rs.11.37. When we look at our neighbouring countries, the differential is Rs.3.61 per litre in Sri Lanka and Rs.1.30 per litre in Pakistan. In Bangladesh, diesel and kerosene are priced at the same level.

डॉ. रघुवंश प्रसाद सिंह (वैशाली) : अमेरिका में पेट्रोल का क्या भाव है वह बताइए। वहां एक डॉलर में एक गैलन है और यहां क्या रेट है?

श्री राम नाईक : आप अमेरिका में रहने जाइए। पहले सुनिये।

डॉ. रघुवंश प्रसाद सिंह : यहां हमें पढ़ा रहे हैं। मिट्टी तेल का दोगुना दाम कर दिया है। सात रुपये के हिसाब से मिल रहा है। गरीब मर रहा है। इसको छोड़ा नहीं जाएगा यह कह रहे हैं।

श्री राम नाईक : यह फैसला आपकी सरकार ने किया था।

This differential in prices is also contributing significantly to adulteration and black-marketing. In a study carried out by Tata Economic Consultancy Services during the year 1994, it revealed that around 30 per cent of PDS kerosene was being diverted towards other uses including black-marketing and adulteration of diesel....(*Interruptions*) Since the price differential has widened manifold, it can only be interred that such diversion would be of a much higher order at present.

In my interactions with the public, media and also discussion on various fora, I have been speaking of the need for raising the prices of PDS kerosene and other products in tune with the realities of the market. There had also been broad consensus on this issue in the meetings of Petroleum Ministry Consultative Committee and Minister of Food and Civil Supplies of various States.

Taking into account the international prices, the prevailing subsidy level, the differential between diesel and PDS kerosene prices and the prices of kerosene in the neighbouring countries and in conformity with implementation of the decision taken by the Gujral Government on 20th November, 1997 for the dismantling of the administered price mechanism, the Government decided to increase the ex-storage point price of PDS kerosene from Rs.2.00 per litre to Rs.4.50 per litre with effect from midnight of 22nd-23rd March, 2000.

LPG (Packed-Domestic) is a common fuel not only for the middle class and the urban housewives but indeed for all sections of the people. We have decided that the waiting list for LPG (Packed-Domestic) aspirants be cleared by 31st December, 2000.

It means a sanction of around one crore additional LPG (Packed-Domestic) connections. At March, 2000 level of prices of LPG, each cylinder sold by the oil companies had a subsidy of Rs.162 per cylinder. The subsidy is partly paid from the Oil Pool Account and to some extent absorbed by the oil companies. If we have to ensure that LPG (Packed-Domestic) reaches every household, we have to make the selling prices realistic to ensure that the oil companies do not suffer huge losses in providing LPG (Packed-Domestic) connections. I realise that it is not possible for the ordinary housewife to bear the burden of the total removal of subsidy at one go. In order to provide a balance between reduction of subsidy and burden on the housewives, the Government decided to increase the ex-storage point price of LPG (Packed-Domestic) cylinder by Rs.30 per cylinder with effect from midnight of 22nd-23rd March, 2000.

As I mentioned earlier, ATF price cross subsidises LPG (Packed-Domestic) and PDS kerosene. However, with the increase in the international prices of products, ATF, as on 22nd March, 2000, was being priced at Rs.1.06 less than its import parity price. It was, therefore, decided to increase the price of ATF also at the ex-storage point level by Rs.2.00 per litre with effect from midnight of 22nd-23rd March, 2000. The increases in the prices that I have just now mentioned would bring to the oil pool Rs.3,440 crore per annum from PDS kerosene, Rs.1,660 crore per annum from LPG (Packed-Domestic) and Rs.320 crore per annum from ATF.

As per the Cabinet decision of September 1, 1997, selling price of diesel is required to be fixed on the principle of import parity. The retail prices of diesel in the country are already high. Considering the current level of prices of diesel and also because of abnormally high differential between the selling prices of diesel and PDS kerosene, it has been decided not to increase the diesel prices for the present. This has been done to protect the interest of diesel consumers which, *inter alia*, include farmers and passengers, goods transport, etc.

MS is currently priced higher than its import parity price to cross subsidise PDS kerosene and LPG (Packed-Domestic). As per the Cabinet decision of November, 1997, selling price of petrol is to be moved towards import parity. For the present, selling price of MS is not being touched.

The recent OPEC decision to increase their oil production by 1.45 million barrels per day (excluding increase by Iran) has resulted in some decline in oil prices in the international market, which has to be viewed against the backdrop of the OPEC Statement to review its decision by June, 2000. However, the large deficits which have already accumulated in the Oil Pool Account will have to be tackled only through price adjustments. ...(*Interruptions*)

MR. CHAIRMAN : Mr. Minister has made a statement. What do you want?

...(*Interruptions*)

कुंवर अखिलेश सिंह (महाराजगंज, उ.प्र.) : सरकार ने डीजल का दाम बढ़ाया, मिट्टी के तेल का दाम बढ़ाया, पेट्रोल का दाम बढ़ाया। रसोई गैस का दाम बढ़ाया। (व्यवधान) केवल दाम बढ़ाना ही इनका काम है। (व्यवधान) गरीबों की झोंपड़ी की रेशनी को इन्होंने छीन लिया है। (व्यवधान) इस सरकार को

गरीबों की कोई चिन्ता नहीं है। अर्ज (व्यवधान) उन्हें बर्बाद करना चाहती है। अर्ज (व्यवधान) गरीबों की झोंपड़ी में मिट्टी के तेल से रोशनी होती थी, उस रोशनी को भी आपने छीन लिया है। अर्ज (व्यवधान) आज गरीब अंधेरे में जीने को मजबूर है।

MR. CHAIRMAN : According to rules, after the statement of the Minister, Members are not entitled to seek any clarification.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI RAJESH PILOT (DAUSA): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I am not talking about the rule. I am only seeking your special permission because this is a special occasion and this increase is putting a heavy burden on the farmers....(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN : The rule does not permit it. Since the matter is concerning the nation, I will allow one hon. Member to ask clarification, not everybody. You choose among yourselves. But this will not be a precedent.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI S. BANGARAPPA (SHIMOGA): Mr. Chairman, Sir, how can you allow only one Member? You should allow two or three Members....(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: I will allow three Members. That is all.

...(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: This is an extraordinary situation. So, I am allowing three Members to seek clarifications from the Minister. Shri Rajesh Pilot.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI S. BANGARAPPA : Sir, how can you protect the interests of only one Member from a party? ...(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: You all belong to one party. Let him speak.

...(Interruptions)

कुंवर अखिलेश सिंह : आज गरीब मर रहा है। ये गांव में जाकर देखें कि क्या हालत है ? अर्ज (व्यवधान) आज गरीब आदमी बढी हुई दर पर तेल नहीं खरीद पा रहा है।

SHRI S. BANGARAPPA : Sir, you know the seriousness of the matter. ...(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: I know the seriousness of the issue. That is why I have allowed three Members to seek clarifications, even though it is against Rule 372. But it will not be a precedent in future. Shri Rajesh Pilot will ask clarification now.

कुंवर अखिलेश सिंह : यह गंभीर सवाल है। अर्ज (व्यवधान) आप नियमों को शिथिल कीजिए। अर्ज (व्यवधान)

SHRI S. BANGARAPPA : Sir, I should also be allowed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I will call you.

I am once again making it clear to the House that this is only a special permission I am giving and it will not be a precedent in future.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI KIRIT SOMAIYA (MUMBAI NORTH EAST): Mr. Chairman, Sir, are they going to ask only clarifications or are they going to make speeches?

MR. CHAIRMAN: They will not make speeches. Shri Rajesh Pilot.

...(Interruptions)

कुंवर अखिलेश सिंह : इस सवाल पर राष्ट्रीय जनतांत्रिक गठबंधन में ही मतभेद है। **â€œ**(व्यवधान) राष्ट्रीय जनतांत्रिक गठबंधन के तेलगुदेशम, जनता दल यूनाईटेड विरोध कर रहा है।

श्री राजेश पायलट : मैं इस बात से सहमत हूँ कि लोक सभा में मंत्री की स्टेटमेंट के बाद क्लेरीफिकेशन नहीं होता। **â€œ**(व्यवधान)

MR. CHAIRMAN: I am conducting the House. Please take your seat.

SHRIMATI MARGARET ALVA (CANARA): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I am on a point of order. The House was adjourned on the 17th of last month. It was not prorogued. Technically, the Budget Session was on and this Government has chosen to increase the rates, during the Budget Session which was still on, outside the House, five days after the Parliament was adjourned. I want to ask whether this is in keeping with the conventions of the Budget Session that whatever increase has to be made should be made on the floor of the House and not outside, that too when the Budget Session is, technically, still going on. So, I want a ruling from you whether this is permissible as per the rules of this House.

SHRI RAM NAIK: Mr. Chairman, Sir, on this issue, I would like to say that I have got the statistics of all the price increases of petrol, kerosene and other products right from 1989 to 1999....(Interruptions)

SHRI RAJESH PILOT : No; this is not the answer....(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Let him complete.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI RAM NAIK: Sir, the information given to me is that at no time such a statement was made in the House. All the increases have been made from the midnight when the Budget Session was going on. I have got all the statistics about that. So, from 1989 to this time, no such statement has been made in the House and I am the first person to make a *suo motu* statement in the House. So far, no Minister has made any *suo motu* statement also....(Interruptions)

श्री राजेश पायलट : मैं इस बात से सहमत हूँ कि मंत्री जी की स्टेटमेंट के बाद लोक सभा में क्लेरीफिकेशन नहीं होता लेकिन स्पेशल केसेस में पहले भी हुआ है और हमेशा होता रहा है। जहां आवश्यक महत्वपूर्ण विषय हो, वहां सांसद अपना ब्यु दे सकते हैं।

पहली बात तो मार्गरेट जी ने कही, मैं उठाना चाह रहा था कि परम्पराएं तोड़ी गई हैं। पहले भी टूटी हों **â€œ**(व्यवधान)

श्री राम नाईक : पहले भी परम्पराएं टूटी हैं।

श्री राजेश पायलट : लेकिन यह सरकार का जवाब ठीक नहीं है कि पहले परम्पराएं तोड़ी हैं तो अब भी तोड़ रहे हैं।

श्री राम नाईक : नहीं-नहीं, परम्पराएं तब तोड़ी जाती हैं, जब बनाई जाती हैं। इन लोगों ने कभी परम्पराएं बनाई ही नहीं।

श्री राजेश पायलट : हमने परम्पराएं बनाई हैं, हमारी सरकार में कभी बजट के दौरान ऐसे नहीं बड़े।

संसदीय कार्य मंत्री तथा सूचना प्रौद्योगिकी मंत्री (श्री प्रमोद महाजन) : आपने तोड़ने की परम्परा बनाई है।

श्री राजेश पायलट : कभी भी जब बजट सेशन चल रहा हो तो ऐसा रैयरली हुआ होगा, मुझे याद नहीं है कि कभी हुआ हो तो मैं कहूँ। ऐसा कभी नहीं हुआ कि बजट सेशन के दौरान कीमतें बजट एनाउंसमेंट से पहले बढ़ाई हों, ऐसा नहीं हुआ है।

दूसरा मेरा सवाल यह है, जो मैं माननीय मंत्री जी से पूछना चाहूँगा कि सरकार की तकलीफ हम समझते हैं, हम सरकार की परेशानी भी समझते हैं। हमारी सरकार के जमाने में भी कीमतें बढ़ी हैं। हम यह नहीं कहते कि कीमतें नहीं बढ़ीं, लेकिन हमने कोशिश की है कि डीजल और कैरोसीन जैसे दो आइटम्स पर जो आम आदमी से जुड़ी बात है, जो गरीब किसान और गरीब परिवारों से जुड़ी बात है, उस पर हमने हमेशा सब्सिडी देकर उसको बेलेंस किया है। आज सरकार उससे दूर क्यों भाग रही है और कोट कर रही है? हमारी सरकार में फैसला हुआ था, उसके बावजूद हमने कैरोसीन और डीजल की कीमत नहीं बढ़ने दी थी, उस मात्रा में, जिसमें आपने बढ़ाई है। मैं मंत्री महोदय से प्रार्थना करना चाहूँगा कि क्या आप इसे विचाराधीन करेंगे कि डीजल और कैरोसीन, ये दो ऐसे आइटम्स हैं, जो आम आदमी को तड़फड़ा रहे हैं। मंत्री जी, आज मैं अभी किसानों के एजीटेशन से चलकर आ रहा हूँ, उनकी भावनाएं उछल-उछल कर बोल रही हैं कि डीजल के भाव जो आपने एकदम 15 पर्सेंट बढ़ा दिये, खाद पर बढ़ा दिये, उससे किसान आज बिल्कुल तंग है। अभी हमारे साथी जस्वन्त जी बोल रहे थे कि किसान के गेहूँ की कीमत 580 रुपये है, क्यों नहीं बोल रहे हो और पी.डी.एस. की 900 रुपये है तो किसान की नीति इस सरकार ने बिल्कुल दबा दी है। मेरी मंत्री जी से प्रार्थना है कि आप इसको विचाराधीन रखेंगे, डीजल और कैरोसीन पर कुछ कमी लाएंगे या नहीं लाएंगे ?

श्री राम नाईक : सभापति जी, हमारी सरकार ऐसी है जो विचारपूर्वक फैसले करती है, उनको हम अमल में लाते हैं। यह जो सितम्बर, 1997 का फैसला है, यह यूनाइटेड फ्रण्ट की सरकार ने किया है, जिसे आपने उस समय पर समर्थन भी दिया था और इसलिए मैं मानता हूँ कि यह पैट्रोलियम प्राइस इन्फ्लेक्शन जो हुई **â€œ**(व्यवधान)

श्री प्रियरंजन दासमुंशी (रायगंज) : हमने उसे लागू नहीं करने दिया। फैसला किया, लेकिन कांग्रेस ने उसे लागू नहीं करने दिया। आपने इसे जबरदस्ती लागू किया। **â€œ**(व्यवधान)

श्री राम नाईक : इसलिए पेट्रोलियम प्राइस इन्क्रीज में बियॉड पार्टी पोलिटिक्स लाये, आपने उसमें सहमति दी थी, उसको अमल में लाने का काम हम कर रहे हैं, इसलिए एक भी मत कम होने की संभावना नहीं है। (व्यवधान)

श्री राजेश पायलट : कौरोसीन और डीजल निकालकर ?

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA (BANKURA): For six months, the United Front Government was not allowed to increase the prices of petrol, diesel and kerosene.

MR. CHAIRMAN : I have not permitted you.

...(Interruptions)

MR CHAIRMAN: You have to follow the rules.

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA : You have permitted me.

MR. CHAIRMAN: No; I have not permitted you.

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA : Now, you are permitting me.

MR. CHAIRMAN: No.

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA : Our point is that he has referred to some of the announcements in the past.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You must obtain prior permission.

...(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Let us follow rules.

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA : I am following the rules.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Under Rule 372, no Member can debate that statement of the Minister. As a special case, because the matter concerns the nation, I have permitted Shri Rajesh Pilot.

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA : You permit me also. I will take half-a-minute.

SHRI S. BANGARAPPA : It will be with your kind permission.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I have not granted him permission. Did you obtain the permission?

...(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Did I give you the permission?

...(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: It is not going to be a precedent in future.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI KIRIT SOMAIYA (MUMBAI NORTH EAST): You allowed him to ask one or two clarifications. ...(Interruptions)
They are taking undue advantage. ...(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: I have not granted the permission.

...(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: I granted permission to Shri Bangarappa.

...(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Kindly cooperate.

...(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN : You started it, what can I do?

...(Interruptions)

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA : Sir, after Shri Bangarappa, please give me a chance...(Interruptions)

SHRI RUPCHAND PAL (HOOGLY): Sir, you assured me also...(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: No, I have not assured anyone.

...(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Let us follow the rules. Under Rule 372, there cannot be a debate, but because it is an extraordinary problem, I have permitted three Members to speak.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI KIRIT SOMAIYA : Sir, already, four Members have spoken...(Interruptions)

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN): Sir, you have permitted three Members. Two have already spoken. Then Shrimati Margaret Alva and Shri Rajesh Pilot also spoke and again you have permitted one more Member to speak...(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Shri Bangarappa, please conclude now.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA : Allow me also to speak...(Interruptions)

SHRI KIRIT SOMAIYA : Sir, how can you allow so many Members to speak under Rule 372?...(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Under the residuary powers I have allowed.

SHRI V.P. SINGH BADNORE (BHILWARA): Sir, after the hon. Minister's statement, either you allow or you do not allow...(Interruptions)

SHRI S. BANGARAPPA : Sir, I understand that no debate is allowed under Rule 372...(Interruptions)

SHRI KHARABELA SWAIN (BALASORE): Sir, once you did not allow me to speak in the same situation and now you are allowing them to speak. This is not fair...(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: I have allowed them because it is concerning the nation, it is concerning the common man.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI KHARABELA SWAIN : Sir, I also wanted to raise a very important matter concerning the nation and the common man, but you did not allow me at that time...(Interruptions)

SHRI S. BANGARAPPA : Sir, I do agree that no debate is allowed...(Interruptions)

SHRI KHARABELA SWAIN : Sir, if the rules do not permit, then you do not allow anyone to speak. This is not fair...(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: I have allowed him especially because LPG and Kerosene prices are concerning the nation and the common man.

...(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Shri Bangarappa, please conclude now.

SHRI S. BANGARAPPA : Sir, with your kind permission, I would like to raise some points. I am not making any speech because I know that under the rules neither any discussion nor any debate is allowed...(Interruptions) There is no second opinion about it. But the point is, as you have rightly said, the matter is so serious and important that it is concerning the poor people and common man in the society in whole of India. It is not a small matter.

We do concede that even in the past also hike in the prices of consumer commodities, including petroleum products, has been done. But the question with which we are concerned is what exactly is the percentage of such a hike and at a time when the international prices have come down. A few days back it was reported in the Press that the rates in the international market have fallen down. We are very much concerned about the rates of petroleum products to maintain it with the international level. So it leaves some impact on the price rise even in our country whenever such petroleum products are imported from petroleum producing countries. We agree to this, as far as this part is concerned.

But this price hike is too much. For example, take the case of kerosene oil which is used by the common man. Earlier its price was Rs.2 per litre.

Now, it has gone up by six or seven rupees. In our area, it has gone up by six and odd rupees per litre. In the rural area, it has gone up by Rs.6.67 per litre. I have come back from my constituency two days back. Kindly think about the poor man. Our point is that this kind of increase in price, by six rupees a litre is unheard of in the annals of the past history. Kindly go through the facts and figures of all these price increase. This is one thing.

We would like to know ...(*Interruptions*)

MR. CHAIRMAN : Do you want me to allow a debate again? This issue has already been raised in the morning during the Zero Hour.

...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI S. BANGARAPPA : Please take up this matter again at your level. It can be through a Cabinet discussion. We are not saying about those details but you please come back with a statement again. You will have to take a decision to bring down the prices of not only Kerosene but also cooking gas and of course, urea. ...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI RAJESH PILOT : You take the support of TDP also. ...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI S. BANGARAPPA : I have seen in the Press that TDP and other allies have raised this issue....(*Interruptions*)

SHRI K. YERRANNAIDU (SRIKAKULAM): My party's view on this issue has already been recorded. Everybody knows about it. The whole country knows about it....(*Interruptions*)

SHRI S. BANGARAPPA : Therefore, I appeal to the Government to call a meeting of the leaders of all the political parties and then come to a decision. You can not only allow a discussion on this in the House but you can also discuss it by calling a meeting on this informally. This is my suggestion.

SHRI RUPCHAND PAL : Mr. Chairman, Sir, we may discuss the issue of price rise on the occasion of the discussion on the Motion of Thanks on the President's Address and also during the Budget discussion. My query is that the Government has broken a well-tested convention and a well-practised convention. Even while the Budget Session is on, on the back of Parliament they have taken this decision. What was the urgency? They should explain it. ...(*Interruptions*)

डा. रघुवंश प्रसाद सिंह (वैशाली) : सभापति महोदय, जब से देश में सरकारें चल रही हैं, तब से आयल-पूल में बराबर घाटा होता ही रहा है। उसके बाद भी जो लोकप्रिय और गरीबप्रिय सरकार होती थी, वह गरीबों के इस्तेमाल की चीजों के ऊपर किसी-न-किसी तरह से सब्सिडी देकर आयल-पूल का घाटा सहन करती थी। मिट्टी का तेल देश के करोड़ों गरीब लोग इस्तेमाल करते हैं, स्टोव जला कर रोटी बनाते हैं, कारण यह कि इन लोगों को बिजली नहीं मिलती है। सरकार द्वारा उन सूखी गरीबों को सस्ते दामों पर सामान मिले, यह प्रबन्ध होता था, लेकिन इस सरकार ने दाम बढ़ा दिया और कहा कि माननीय राम नाईक जी पुनर्विचार करेंगे और पुनर्विचार करने में घटाने का काम नहीं किया, बल्कि बढ़ाने का काम किया तथा साथ ही देश को गुमराह करने का काम किया। दुनिया भर में पेट्रोलियम प्रोडक्ट के दाम घटे हैं, लेकिन हमारे यहां दुगुने दाम पर तेल मिल रहा है। गरीब आदमी आठ रुपए से दस रुपए प्रति लिटर मिट्टी का तेल नहीं खरीद रहा है, बल्कि 14-15 रुपए प्रति लिटर मिट्टी का तेल खरीद रहा है। इसलिए गरीबों के प्रति इनके रुख को हम देख रहे हैं।

इसी प्रकार रसोई गैस का दाम आठ आना या चार आना बढ़ता, तो गरीब सहन कर लेता, लेकिन उसका दाम भी बढ़ा दिया है। अन्तरराष्ट्रीय बाजार में दाम गिरा है और अमरीका में एक गैलन पेट्रोल का दाम एक डालर है, मतलब कि छः-सात रुपए लिटर, लेकिन यहां ये दाम बढ़ा रहे हैं। विदेशों में दाम घट रहा है, लेकिन यहां दाम दुगुने हो रहे हैं। हम यह कहते हैं, चूंकि मिट्टी का तेल और डीजल देश के 35 करोड़ गरीब लोग इस्तेमाल करते हैं, इसलिए सरकार सब्सिडी देती थी, लेकिन आप सब्सिडी कम्यूटर पर बढ़ा रहे हैं, सब्सिडी सैल्युलर फोन पर बढ़ा रहे हैं, जिनको अमीर आदमी इस्तेमाल करते हैं। यह सरकार अमीर के इस्तेमाल में आने वाली चीजों के दाम घटा रही है और गरीब के इस्तेमाल में आने वाली चीजों के दाम बढ़ा रही है। यह सरकार गरीबों की दुश्मन है, दुश्मन है और गरीबों के खिलाफ काम कर रही है। सरकार इस बारे में जवाब दे ?

SHRI SURESH KURUP (KOTTAYAM): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I would like to know one thing. ...(*Interruptions*)

MR. CHAIRMAN: There should be an end for everything.

SHRI SURESH KURUP : I would like to know whether it is the policy of this Government to increase the prices of

petroleum products whenever their prices vary in the international market.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I have not granted you permission.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI SURESH KURUP : Is it their policy?

MR. CHAIRMAN : How can you say it when I have not permitted you?

SHRI SURESH KURUP : If they are going to throw the common people of this country to the mercy of the vagaries of international market, then there is no need of the code....(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: It will not go on record.

SHRI SURESH KURUP : Sir, you should allow me.

MR. CHAIRMAN: There is a procedure. In the morning, everybody was allowed.

SHRI SURESH KURUP : This is such an important thing.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That is why, I allowed three Members.

SHRI SURESH KURUP : You should allow me also. What I would like to know is, whether it is their policy to increase the prices.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Now, the hon. Minister please.

SHRI SURESH KURUP : It is very important. You have allowed the other Members. I am seeking your permission. You should allow me also.

श्री राम नाईक : स्भापति महोदय, यहां जो तीन-चार सवाल माननीय सदस्यों द्वारा पूछे गए हैं, उनमें से एक बात यह आई कि हमने जो सब्सिडी कम की, वह इतनी कम नहीं करनी चाहिए। मैं माननीय सदस्यों को बताना चाहता हूँ कि इस समय कैरोसिन पर सब्सिडी पर- लीटर 7 रुपए 86 पैसे है। उसमें से हमने एक-तिहाई, मतलब 2 रुपए 50 पैसे सब्सिडी कम की है, यह सब्सिडी सन् 2002 तक समाप्त करनी चाहिए, ऐसा सितम्बर, 97 का युनाइटेड फ्रंट सरकार का निर्णय है। दूसरा, जहां तक एल.पी.जी. सिलेंडर का सवाल है,....(व्यवधान)

SHRI SURESH KURUP : Are you following the decision of the United Front?

MR. CHAIRMAN: You are directly involving in a dialogue.

SHRI SURESH KURUP : What is the policy of this Government?

MR. CHAIRMAN: When the Minister is replying, you allow him to reply.

SHRI SURESH KURUP : What is their policy? He is not here to say the policy of the United Front. What is their policy?

SHRI RAM NAIK: Why do you not listen? Kindly sit and listen.

SHRI SURESH KURUP : You are always talking about the policies of the previous Governments.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please sit down.

SHRI SURESH KURUP : You should allow me also to seek a clarification.

श्री राम नाईक : जहां तक एल.पी.जी सिलेंडर का सवाल है, उसमें इस समय 162 रुपए सब्सिडी है।....(व्यवधान) उसमें से हमने केवल 30 रुपए कम की है। यह सब्सिडी पहले के निर्णय से सन् 2001 में पूरी की पूरी समाप्त करनी चाहिए। अब मैं केवल यह बता रहा हूँ क्योंकि बार-बार यह पूछा जा रहा है कि हम युनाइटेड फ्रंट सरकार के सभी निर्णय करेंगे। जब लिब्रलाइजेशन और ग्लोबलाइजेशन का सवाल आया, उस समय जो इंटरनेशनल सेक्टर में निर्णय लिए गए और हम जब अपना 70 प्रतिशत आयात इम्पोर्ट करते हैं तब हमें विदेशों की कीमतों का ख्याल करना पड़ता है। यद्यपि यह बोझ सामान्य आदमी पर है लेकिन हमने मजबूरी में यह काम किया है। जहां तक ओपेक प्राइसेस का सवाल है, इसमें मैं एक बार फिर स्पष्ट करता हूँ कि ओपेक की प्राइस कम हुई है, वह दो महीने के बाद जून में सारी रिव्यू करने वाले हैं। इस समय हमारा जो आयात पूल एकाउंट का घाटा है वह बहुत बड़ा है।

We will review the prices when the month of June comes.

SHRI RAJESH PILOT : This is not correct. When you are following the international price, then you reduce the price now. Why should you review it in June?

SHRI RAM NAIK: The third issue is about the back of the Parliament. I have explained it once. Nothing has been done at the back of the Parliament. I am the first Minister to come with a *suo motu* statement before Parliament. That is what I have to tell you.

SHRI SURESH KURUP : So, you are showing such a consideration. ...(*Interruptions*) It is very good. We are thankful to you....(*Interruptions*)

SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA (GUNA): In the interim period, you must come with a *suo motu* statement. At least that is the least that you can do.

SHRI RAM NAIK: That is what you have never done.

SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA :You have backed out from Parliament. You have bypassed the Parliament. You are frightened of Parliament. You are worried about facing the Parliament. That is why, you waited for the recess period.

SHRI RAM NAIK: That is what you have been doing....(*Interruptions*)

SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA : We have always brought it. We never avoided facing the floor of the House.

श्री राम नाईक : अंत में मेरा यह कहना है कि हमें गरीबों की चिन्ता है, लेकिन दुनिया में जो कीमतें बढ़ रही हैं, इसमें मैं एक छोटी सी बात बता कर समाप्त करूंगा। हमारे बाजू में तीन देश हैं- बंगलादेश, पाकिस्तान और श्रीलंका।

SHRI SURESH KURUP : Why are you comparing it to Bangladesh and Pakistan?....(*Interruptions*)

SHRI RAM NAIK: Let me have my say.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Allow the Minister to reply.

SHRI SURESH KURUP : They are comparing this country to Pakistan.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I have given you enough time.

...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI RAJESH PILOT : He is talking again the policy....(*Interruptions*)

SHRI RAM NAIK: Let me have my say.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please sit down. Let the Minister first answer.

...(*Interruptions*)

श्री राम नाईक : हमारे बाजू में जो नेबरिंग कंट्रीज़ हैं,

वे देश अपने से गरीब हैं, कम विकसित हैं। मैं दाम बढ़ाने के बाद कैरोसीन की स्थिति बताना चाहता हूँ। MR.CHAIRMAN : This is not the way to disturb the proceedings.

...(*Interruptions*)

MR. CHAIRMAN: You are disturbing the proceedings. I have allowed four persons. I have been so lenient. Let the hon. Minister reply.

...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI VAIKO (SIVAKASI): Let us hear the hon. Minister. ...(*Interruptions*)

MR. CHAIRMAN: If you are not satisfied with the reply what can we do? You cannot do anything. It is up to him. It is the highest forum.

...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI VAIKO : You may not agree. But let us listen.

MR. CHAIRMAN: They have to answer properly. If the answer is not to your satisfaction, you cannot do anything. I cannot compel the Minister to satisfy you.

...(Interruptions)

श्री राम नाईक : सभापति महोदय, मैं कह रहा था कि हमारे तीन पड़ोसी देश हमसे गरीब हैं, कम विकसित हैं। मैं कैरोसीन की स्थिति बताना चाहता हूँ। दिल्ली में इस समय कैरोसीन 5.46 रुपये प्रति लीटर मिल रहा है। (व्यवधान)

श्री रूपचन्द पाल : गांव में तो 8-10 रुपये लीटर मिल रहा है।

श्री राम नाईक : मैं पी.डी.एस. के बारे में बता रहा हूँ। श्रीलंका में 9.12 रुपये लीटर है, पाकिस्तान में 9.46 रुपये और बंगला देश में 11.05 रुपये प्रति लीटर है। These four countries, and we, are paying more price because it is internationally necessary. ...(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please sit down. How to remedy this situation? You have to accept his answer. He is the Minister and you are the Member. You have to accept the statement of the Minister. This is the highest constitutional forum. You cannot compel him to satisfy you.

SHRI RUPCHAND PAL : The Minister has no right to mislead the House.

SHRI S. BANGARAPPA : Sir, you allow a discussion on this issue.

SHRI RAM NAIK: That can be allowed. ...(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please sit down. You cannot compel him to answer to your satisfaction. He is the Minister. When a statement is made before the House, that is final. This is the highest constitutional forum. This is the sovereign forum. Please sit down. I have understood your sentiments. I would have advised the Minister had it been brought before this Parliament, nothing would have happened. That is why, they raised a question on constitutional convention. The Government, during the recess, have hiked the price. Had it been brought before the Parliament before this hike, it would have solved the problem. But it is up to the Government. You cannot compel him.

SHRI VAIKO : You should be unbiased.

MR. CHAIRMAN: No, I am standing from the Chair to advise the Government that the constitutional convention should be followed.

SHRI VAIKO : It is not correct. ...(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: It is not correct.

SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA : He is the custodian of Parliament. They cannot run Parliament like this. ...(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: During the recess, Parliament is not prorogued. The House should have been taken into confidence. They have not taken the House into confidence. That is why, there is a hue and cry. You have to accept the sentiment, but the statement of the Minister is final. We cannot challenge the Minister's statement.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDY (CHHAPRA): It is very unfortunate. We regret your presentation. We regret your stand. If you have to speak like this, then you should come to your seat and speak. ...(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: When I say constitutional position do you mean to say that it was not proper? It is the constitutional convention. Please sit down. If the Chair's ruling is favourable to you, you will appreciate the Chair and if the Chair's ruling is not favourable to you, then you say that it is not correct. This is not the way.

From the Chair, I rule that during recess, during intermission, the House should have been taken into confidence. That is the constitutional position. If it is otherwise, tell me.

SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDY : Sir, you are welcome to speak from here. The traditions of this House are being broken...(Interruptions) I regret to state that without the motion being moved, you have passed the judgement...(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: If the ruling is not in consonance with the Constitutional convention, tell me. I will revise it immediately. If the ruling is not proper, you tell me.

...(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: From the Chair, we can advise the Government.

...(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Now I take up Matters under Rule 377. Dr. Ashok Patel.

...(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: You want the Chair to withdraw. It is not proper.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI KHARABELA SWAIN : How can you say so, Sir?...(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: That is the constitutional position. I have apprised the House of the constitutional position. Am I going to gain anything from this?

...(Interruptions)

SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA : Sir, you have protected the dignity of the House and we would like to congratulate you....(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: What am I going to gain from this? Am I going to gain anything?

...(Interruptions)

SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDY : The traditions of the House are being destroyed. I regret to say that....(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: What is this? Mr. Minister, please tell me if my ruling is constitutionally wrong. If it is constitutionally wrong, I will immediately revise it. Tell me. There is a constitutional convention.

...(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: I apprised the House about the constitutional convention. I have myself been a Speaker. We have taken action against those Ministers in Tamil Nadu who met the Press outside the House. That is the constitutional convention.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI RAM NAIK: Sir, let me respond. You have given your ruling....(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: I am not going to gain anything from this ruling. I have told the constitutional position. Is it a sin? Is it a crime? Tell me. I am not going to gain anything from this ruling. I am not on this side or that side.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI KHARABELA SWAIN : How can you give a ruling like that?...(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: You cannot say like that. This is the red day for Speaker's Chair.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI RAM NAIK: Sir, you wanted my response. We are not disputing your ruling. The only thing is that it is an unusual ruling, so the Members are agitated. You can also look and revise it if you find it necessary.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Definitely.

SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDY : Sir, we deeply regret your ruling...(Interruptions)

SHRI RASHID ALVI (AMROHA): We congratulate, Sir.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Now Matters under rule 377. Dr. Ashok Patel.
