

Title: Regarding procurement of rice by the Food Corporation of India (FCI) in Andhra Pradesh.

MR. SPEAKER: No more clarification. Please take your seat. Now, Prof. Ummareddy Venkateshwarlu.

* Not Recorded.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Nothing should go on record except the speech of Prof. Ummareddy Venkateshwarlu.

(Interruptions) *

PROF. UMMAREDDY VENKATESHWARLU (TENALI): Sir, the rice movement in Andhra Pradesh is at a very alarmingly slow pace, rather it has come to a standstill. We do not know the reasons. As far as rice is concerned, the Food Corporation of India has stopped procurement operations in Andhra Pradesh. The Food Corporation of India is coming forward with two reasons, that it has already over-achieved its procurement operation in regard to rice in Andhra Pradesh, and also it is facing shortage of storage place, that is, godown. (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: This is Zero Hour. I cannot compel the Minister and the Government to give an answer to your satisfaction. Whatever you ask from the Minister, he will give reply. What is this?

PROF. UMMAREDDY VENKATESHWARLU: Forty-six lakh tonnes of rice is normally procured by them. The FCI has procured up to 51 lakh tonnes of rice. This year, there is a tremendous crop in Andhra Pradesh....(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Minister, this is a serious problem in the Southern States.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: What is this? You are not allowing me.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Thomas, you are shouting too much. What is this?

SHRI P.C. THOMAS : I was only suggesting.

MR. SPEAKER: Please take your seat. I am also asking the Minister. Please take your seat first. What is this?

* Not Recorded

SHRI P.C. THOMAS :...(Interruptions) I am asking for a meeting.

MR. SPEAKER: Please take your seat first. I am also asking the Minister. Why are you unnecessarily interrupting?

Mr. Minister, this is a serious problem in the Southern States, including in my constituency. You can have a meeting with the Members, particularly, some selected Members, and sort out the issue.

SHRI NITISH KUMAR: I am willing to do that.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: He has agreed.

SHRI NITISH KUMAR: I will call all the Members of all coconut growing areas....(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Please take your seats.

SHRI NITISH KUMAR: I will suggest that the meeting may be held in your Chamber.

MR. SPEAKER: All right, at your convenience. There is no problem.

PROF. UMMAREDDY VENKATESHWARLU : Sir, the Food Corporation of India has stopped its procurement operation in Andhra Pradesh. Regarding rice procurement, the Food Corporation of India is coming forward with two

dimensions of the problem. It says, it has already over-achieved the target of 46 lakh tonnes it normally does. It seems it has procured to the extent of 51 lakh tonnes. But it has earlier promised that it will procure up to 56 lakh tonnes. But after procuring 51 lakh tonnes, it has stopped further procurement. The problem has multiplied and virtually the paddy and rice movement in Andhra Pradesh has come to a standstill. Now, there are as much as 35 lakh tonnes of paddy and rice available with the farmers and also with the millers in Andhra Pradesh. Unless this is disposed of immediately, further investment in agriculture for the present Khariff crop is going to be difficult. So, looking at the plight of this particular situation, the Government of Andhra Pradesh has already come forward to relax the restrictions which it is having at present.

For the exports of the rice to the other States it has already issued the permit. Unfortunately, in the neighbouring States also like Kerala the movement of paddy, that is parboiled rice, is not up to the mark as it was expected in Andhra Pradesh. So, in the present circumstances unless another 10 lakh tonnes of paddy or rice is procured by the FCI, the farmers will not be rescued in Andhra Pradesh.

The other aspect that the Food Corporation of India telling is that they are short of storage facilities. So, if the godowns, which are available with the FCI are full, they can even take the godowns of the Central Warehousing Corporation of India or even those of the Agricultural Marketing Committees. There are plenty of storage facilities that are available. The State Government of Andhra Pradesh is coming forward to place these godown facilities at the disposal of the FCI. It can hand over them to the FCI. ...*(Interruptions)*

I urge upon the Government to go in for procurement for at least another 10 lakh tonnes of rice to help the farmers immediately and also the rice millers. They have also stopped further procurement and the farmers of Andhra Pradesh as far as rice is concerned, want that the FCI should procure more rice. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: On the same subject, Shri S. Jaipal Reddy, Shri Chari, Shri K. Yerrannaidu, and Shri Gutha Sukender Reddy have given notices. All of you can associate with him. ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI K. YERRANNAIDU: Never in the past has the FCI stopped procurement of levy rice. It is an alarming problem. The farmers are in distress. Thirty lakh tonnes of paddy are lying with the millers. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: He has already said it.

SHRI K. YERRANNAIDU : On copra the Minister has reacted. Some reply should come from the Minister of Parliamentary Affairs.

MR. SPEAKER: This matter does not belong to the Minister of Parliamentary Affairs, I think!

SHRI K. YERRANNAIDU : What about this? This is a State issue.

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI PRAMOD MAHJAN): I am on a different point. It was decided in the BAC meeting that in Zero Hour only the prime mover should be allowed to speak and the rest only should be allowed to associate. Otherwise again it becomes a discussion and the other people will lose the chance of making their points.

SHRI K. YERRANNAIDU: We are asking for the intervention of the Minister.

SHRI PRAMOD MAHJAN: I can only say that I have heard very carefully what was said. I will take up this issue with the concerned Minister.

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY (MIRYALGUDA): I represent Miriyalguda Lok Sabha constituency. The largest foodstocks to be lifted are in my constituency, Miriyalguda in Andhra Pradesh. This is a problem that afflicts my constituency to a very severe and unprecedented degree.

The FCI, as has been mentioned already, has taken the unprecedented step of stopping procurement altogether. The Minister must be directed to make a statement on this today. The point is, the Government of Andhra Pradesh has represented but the Government of India is still not responding. We are feeling frustrated and this is not a partisan issue.