

an>

Title: The Speaker made an announcement regarding constitution of a Committee to probe into serious breach of security of Parliament House by improper conduct of an Hon'ble Member.

HON. SPEAKER: Hon. Members, as you are aware on 22nd July, 2016 several Members of the House raised the matter of the serious breach of security of the Parliament House by the improper conduct of Shri Bhagwant Mann, MP by videographing and posting critical footage of Parliament House Complex on a social media. I had also expressed my serious concerns in this regard. The Parliament is the *sanctum sanctorum* of democracy. Our Parliament was attacked in 2001 and thirteen security men and parliamentary personnel had sacrificed their lives to protect us. After the attack, the security arrangements for the Parliament were reviewed and the complete security apparatus, security systems and procedures have been completely overhauled to secure the Parliament. The act of the Member of audio visual recording of the Parliament and posting it on the social media puts the security of the Parliament in peril. In the light of the serious security implications and consequences of these actions, I had given an assurance to the House that I will look into the matter. In view of the extreme gravity of the matter, I have discussed it with the Leaders of political parties in Lok Sabha and all of them have unanimously agreed to the course of action I propose to take.

I have decided to constitute a nine Member Inquiry Committee to probe this incident and submit its Report. The Inquiry Committee shall inquire into the serious security implications and related aspects germane to and arising out of the conduct of audio visual recording around Parliament House Estate and in the installations situated within the Parliament House by Shri Bhagwant Mann, MP on 21st July, 2016 and subsequent uploading of the said audio visual recording by him on social media, suggest suitable remedial measures to avoid recurrence of such incidents in future, and, recommend appropriate action in the matter. The concerned Member will be asked to submit his statement or explanation regarding the matter by 10:30 am on 26th July, 2016 before the Inquiry Committee.

The Inquiry Committee will consist of the following hon. Members: Dr. Kirit Somaiya, Chairperson; Shri Anandrao Adsul, Member; Shrimati Meenakashi Lekhi, Member; Shri Bhartruhari Mahtab, Member; Dr. Ratna De (Nag), Member; Shri Thota Narasimham, Member; Dr. Satya Pal Singh, Member; Shri K.C. Venugopal, Member; and Dr. P. Venugopal, Member.

The Committee is requested to examine the matter expeditiously and submit its Report not later than 3rd August 2016. The Committee is authorized to follow its own procedure. The Report of the Committee will be presented to the House for its consideration. In view of the seriousness of the matter, Shri Bhagwant Mann, MP is advised not to attend the sittings of the House until a decision is taken in the matter.

...(Interruptions)

HON. SPEAKER: I will allow in Zero Hour. I know price rise is also there; your matter is also there.

...(Interruptions)

11.05 hours

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

HON. SPEAKER: Now the Question Hour. Question No. 101. Shri S. Rajendran.

...(Interruptions)

(Q. 101)

SHRI S. RAJENDRAN: Madam Speaker, recently, as you are aware, 40 students out of 60 Indian students at Western Kentucky University in the US did not meet the requirements of their admission; 25 students who lack coding skills have been asked by the University to return home or find some other university. While the students of other countries were able to do well, our Indian students were unable to perform. To the best of my knowledge, most of the engineering colleges are not teaching the software programme in detail.

So, I would like to know whether the Government has any action plan to improve the teaching system in the current year to avoid such incidences in future.

SHRI PRAKASH JAVADEKAR: Madam, this is a very important question as far as higher education centres are concerned. The quality of higher education is an issue, importantly, and teaching also. So, we have already taken up a new initiative of teaching improvement and for teachers,

professors, continuous education updation and then filling up of all the vacancies. Even in private colleges, I now regularly monitor. Therefore, quality improvement is continuously done by AICTE because that is the body which oversees all the quality aspects of the higher education and there is a continuous endeavour to improve the quality.

SHRI S. RAJENDRAN: In the reply, the hon. Minister has said that improving the quality of education is a continuous and ongoing process. He has mentioned about several central schemes only. I would like to know whether there is any action plan within the given period of two or three years that can show the quality of education in the country.

SHRI PRAKASH JAVADEKAR: This is again an important issue. We have taken several steps, and particularly, our Prime Minister is very much concerned about how to improve the quality at higher education level because that is the final product we get. Therefore, there is a Scheme called IMPRINT. In IMPRINT, we can go up to Rs. 1,000 crore in 10 sectors of health, energy security, rural-urban housing, nano technology, water/river system, advanced materials and all other 10 important themes. We received more than 2,000 research proposals and already final evaluation of 483 projects is being done. We will give them the grants. It will continue for the next two-three years.

There is the *Uchhatar Avishkar Abhiyan*, that is, in IITs there has been an industry and education interaction. Therefore, those industries who want some research to be done to improve their own productivity, we are asking them to give their requirements. The students from IITs and the research scholars, under the guidance of faculties, will do it. So, industry will contribute 25 per cent; HRD will contribute 50 per cent, and 25 per cent of the research projects so taken will be done by the Department concerned.

There is a start-up initiative also. The incubation centre initiative is also there. There is a gap. The world is one now. Therefore, good faculties from our country go to foreign universities to teach and similarly, we welcome foreign university faculties, if they are interested to come. We have already 643 faculties approved to carry out courses right from four weeks to eight weeks and 200 faculties have come and have completed the courses under the GIAN Scheme and that has become more popular now and we have also recorded their classes so that they will always available to other students also.

Last but not least, we are doing now the ranking framework. The original question was about ranking. So, world ranking is one thing. But we are also doing ranking on our own and national ranking has got good appreciation from all corners and that will guide the students to go abroad for quality education. Some new initiatives like I am using television, online courses, anytime education, anywhere education, open learning systems - all these will be scaled up to a level matching the world quality requirements. Therefore, all these efforts are in the direction of improving quality.

श्री ओम विरला: माननीय अध्यक्ष जी, मैं आपके माध्यम से माननीय मंत्री महोदय से कहना चाहता हूँ कि इंडिया इकोनामिक फोरम ने लक्ष्य रखा था कि भारत में कम से कम दस विश्वविद्यालय निजी और सार्वजनिक क्षेत्र में विश्वस्तरीय बनाने का प्रयास करेंगे। हमने यह भी लक्ष्य रखा था कि इफ्रास्ट्रक्चर और वित्तीय सहायता निर्बाध रूप से उपलब्ध करवाकर विश्वस्तरीय संस्थाएं बनाने में कामयाब होंगे। माननीय प्रधानमंत्री जी का भी यही मत है।

मैं माननीय मंत्री जी से पूछना चाहता हूँ कि इस दिशा में अभी सरकार ने क्या प्रगति की है? अगर विश्वविद्यालयों, संस्थाओं, निजी या सार्वजनिक क्षेत्रों में तयन किया गया है तो इस बारे में अवगत कराने का कक्षा करें। अभी तक जो भी प्रगति की है, उसके बारे में भी बताने का कक्षा करें।

श्री प्रकाश जावड़ेकर: माननीय अध्यक्ष जी, 20 विश्वस्तरीय इंस्टीट्यूट्स तैयार हैं। आज भी आईआईटीज़, एनआईआईटीज़, आईआईएसआईआर और सेंट्रल यूनिवर्सिटीज़ प्लेस आफ फाइंड हैं। हमारे देश के वृत्तम आफ द वृत्तम स्ट्रुक्चर्स विदेश में जाकर पढ़ते हैं और वहीं काम करते हैं। उन्हें यहीं अवसर मिले, इसके लिए हमने यह तय किया है और इसका पूरा खाका बन गया है। इसके बारे में कैबिनेट की अंतिम मंजूरी के बाद सबको बताया जाएगा। इस पर काम बहुत हुआ है, दस निजी और सरकारी संस्थान ऐसे बनेंगे, जो विश्व स्तर के हों और इनमें भारतीय छात्रों को बहुत अच्छी शिक्षा मिले, यह सेंट्रल आफ एवसीटीएसिस तैयार करने की प्रक्रिया का ही एक भाग है।

PROF. SUGATA BOSE: It is sad to read the Annexure that has been provided by the hon. Minister as a part of his reply. There are no institutions of higher education in India that figure in the top 250 of the list and there are no Universities that figure in the top 500 of the list that he has provided. It is a matter of only small satisfaction for me that the University that figures at the top as it were is the Jadavpur University from West Bengal which is in the 500 to 600 range of the world rankings of the Times higher education supplement.

Of course, it will not be right only to bemoan the fact that we do not figure on this list but we have to devise a proper strategy to make sure that our institutions of higher education are globally competitive. I want to ask a very specific question. Five months ago, in his Budget Speech, the Finance Minister had declared that the Government was going to set up an enabling regulatory architecture for the emergence of 10 public and 10 private institutions as world class centres of excellence in teaching and research. What specific progress has been made to set up such an enabling architecture and what criteria will the Government use to select these 20 institutions? Will they pay attention to State universities which are poorly funded and yet they do better than many Central universities? We have Jadavpur University and University of Calcutta in the top 800 institutions of the list that you have provided. They are State universities and not Central universities. So, will you pay special attention to State universities when you select these top 20 institutions for global competitiveness?

SHRI PRAKASH JAVADEKAR: Prof. Sugata Bose has raised the very important issue of world class institutes. This is a new initiative to create new centres of excellence, and we have already prepared for it because the central question again is, whether you make them part of the UGC regulation or you give that freedom what makes the institute the best. Therefore, we have deliberated on that. We have now created our own proposal. After the Inter-Ministerial consultation, it is now on the way to the Cabinet. So, once that is approved, we will give all the details to you also. But as you rightly said, the State universities are also there. As you said, there is Jadavpur University, Panjab University, Aligarh Muslim University, Amrita University, Andhra University, University of Calcutta, University of Delhi, and Savitribai Phule Pune University. They are all in these 800 institutes. But we want them to be on the top rank. So, my answer to the original question is that we will take the help of those who have taught in foreign universities also because, as you rightly said, we have to strategize. However, the universities perform the best in many fields but not so in perception because perception carries a lot of weightage in ranking at the international THE World University Rankings or other rankings, QS. They have to find out a place in perception also, and there we need to strategize. We have so much of big Diaspora. We have so many avenues available. We are thinking out of the box solution to increase our perception of how far our universities are able to get their due recognition in international rankings also.

SHRI B. VINOD KUMAR: Madam, very recently I have read it in a newspaper that the HRD Ministry is framing a 'Brain Gain' policy to lure academics

back. Is the Government planning or has it designed any policy by relaxing the conditions and regulations for recruitment of these professionals who are now teaching abroad?

SHRI PRAKASH JAVADEKAR: First, as I have narrated earlier that GIAN is a very good initiative to bring good foreign teachers, and particularly the Indian teachers who are teaching abroad. We can bring them for this course here. We have succeeded. More than 600 proposals are sanctioned and 200 have already come. They gave the lectures, completed the course and the students are very happy. That is the real gain. But, as you are asking, this morning only I have discussed this with my officials as to how we can bring back the talented youngsters as Assistant Professors in our top universities, and on how to attach them. We have some ideas and we are working on those ideas after completing the structure of how we will gain. But we certainly approve this idea of the 'Brain Gain' policy. The Chinese have done it successfully. We will also do it successfully.

HON. SPEAKER: Q. 102, Shri Vijaysinh Shankarro Mohite Patil – Not present.

Shri M.B. Rajesh.

(Q. 102)

SHRI M.B. RAJESH: Madam Speaker, the Indian Labour Conference is the highest tripartite body in the country as far as labour is concerned. The 15th Indian Labour Conference held in 1957 had taken a unanimous decision to accept Aykroyd's formula based on caloric norms in fixing the minimum wages of employees. Madam Speaker, the hon. Supreme Court in the famous Reptakas Brett case had ruled that the final minimum wages should be 25 per cent higher than the minimum wage fixed on caloric norms.

Today, based on the said criteria – both the Aykroyd Formula which came after the unanimous decision taken by Indian Labour Conference (ILC) in 1957 and the Supreme Court judgement based on the ILC decision – the minimum wage will come around Rs.26,000 per month. Even demand of the trade unions is only Rs.18,000 per month. My question is – will the Central Government implement the decision of ILC and the Supreme Court judgement in fixing the minimum wage?

SHRI BANDARU DATTATREYA: Madam, the hon. Member has said that the Indian Labour Conference, which was held in 1957, had given some guidelines in respect of minimum wages. He also referred to the historic Supreme Court judgement of 1991. I would like to say that in the Minimum Wages Act itself neither there is any major definition nor any recommendation in this regard. But in spite of that we have taken into consideration the ILC norms as well as the historic judgement of the Supreme Court, and we are working on it.

As per the norms, in a family of three members, the consumption units, that is, minimum food requirement is 27,000 calories; clothing requirement is 72 yards per annum; and for housing, rent is corresponding to the minimum area and similarly there are norms for fuel and other things. The Supreme Court has also added a few more items like children education, medical requirement, recreation and festivals in the list.

Recently, we have had a meeting with the Minimum Wage Advisory Board. We have taken into consideration all the suggestions given by them and we are positively moving in that direction. But, as the hon. Member has given his calculation, I would like to say that the Government has its own calculation for the same which is based on some scientific norms. The amount which he mentioned is not nearing to the fact.

SHRI M.B. RAJESH: Madam, my question is very straight and simple. My question is, whether the Government will fix the minimum wages based on the Supreme Court Judgement and the unanimous decision of ILC taken in 1957. There may be some dispute over the amount. But the question is, will the Supreme Court judgement be accepted and implemented, and, in the same manner, will the ILC decision be accepted and implemented?

Despite having these discussions and arriving at a formula, why are you again consulting only the employers? In the reply itself, the hon. Minister has stated about variable Dearness Allowances (DAs). But in most of the States, the variable DA is not implemented. So, I will again repeat my question. Can the hon. Minister assure this House that the minimum wages will be fixed on the basis of the Supreme Court judgement and the ILC decision?

SHRI BANDARU DATTATREYA: Madam, the Government will definitely fix the minimum wages. We are positively going in the same direction.

As far as the fixation of minimum wages is concerned, there is a variation in the Dearness Allowance and the Consumer Price Index. These are two very important elements. Now, 28 State Government have already agreed at this variable DA system. The Central Government with this sole objective is going to bring an amendment in the Act itself.

As I said in the beginning, there is no clear definition and there are no norms in this regard. The Government is going to amend this Act and we will come with new provisions.

श्री हरीशचन्द्र उर्फ हरीश द्विवेदी: माननीय अध्यक्ष जी, मैं माननीय मंत्री जी से जानना चाहता हूँ कि क्या सरकार यह मानती है कि अन्य विकासशील देशों की अपेक्षा भारत में न्यूनतम मजदूरी की दरें कम हैं? क्या अन्तर्-राष्ट्रीय श्रम संगठन ने सरकार से न्यूनतम मजदूरी की दरों की समीक्षा करने का आग्रह किया है?

श्री बंडारू दत्तात्रेय: माननीय अध्यक्ष जी, इस विषय पर बार-बार इंटरनेशनल फोरम में भी चर्चा होती है और जैसा मैंने पहले बताया कि हर बार यहाँ की परिस्थिति के अनुसार पहले वर्ष 2005 में मिनिमम वेजेज फिक्स किये गये थे और फिर बाद में वर्ष 2009 में फिक्स किये गये थे। इसके बाद हमारी सरकार मिनिमम वेजेज फिक्स करने पर विचार रही है, लेकिन यहाँ चर्चा होती रहती है।

SHRI ADHIR RANJAN CHOWDHURY: Madam, I would like to ask one question with respect to EPFO because for the last couple of years, there has been no increase in the number of EPFO beneficiaries. Why is it stuck up?

Each and every year, more than one crore people are getting inducted into the queue of job-seekers in various organisations. In comparison to this, the EPFO entitlements have not increased. Why is it so.

My second question isâ€¦.

HON. SPEAKER: No, you can ask only one supplementary. That is all.

SHRI BANDARU DATTATREYA: Madam, the hon. Member has asked a question which is outside the main Question.

SHRI ADHIR RANJAN CHOWDHURY : It is not outside the Question.

HON. SPEAKER: It is outside the periphery of the Question.

SHRI BANDARU DATTATREYA: I am telling you that it is not within the scope of this Question.

Secondly, EPFO has taken many initiatives. After the coming of this Government led by Shri Narendra Modi, we have given the social security much importance due to which for the first time in the country, 4.70 crore construction workers have been taken into the fold of ESI and EPFO.

(Q. 103)

SHRI PRATAP SIMHA: Madam, the hon. Minister has given a detailed reply, but I would like to ask her a different question because she understands our problem.

Now, she represents Karnataka. I represent Mysore and Coorg. Mine is a unique constituency. I represent both the world-class coffee growers and tobacco growers. India produces three lakh metric tonnes of coffee every year, out of which two lakh metric tonnes of coffee is produced in Karnataka, and out of this two lakh metric tonnes of coffee, more than 50 per cent is produced in my constituency, Coorg.

Sadly, Madam, for last three or four years, we have been facing a series of problems like high wages of labourers, havoc created by rains and high prices of fertilisers. On top of it, the river Cauvery takes her birth in Coorg and it is the main catchment area of the Cauvery. So, our farmers and growers are suffering a lot. For the last two years, we have been demanding from the Government to give some kind of a loan waiver or interest subsidy, but we have not yet found any positive reply from the Government. I would like to know from the hon. Minister, through you Madam, whether we can expect any positive reply from the Government at least this year.

SHRIMATI NIRMALA SITHARAMAN: Madam Speaker, the Member is quite right that the coffee industry, in spite of doing very well in terms of production, in terms of the quantum which is getting exported from India and the foreign exchange that it earns, is doing very well. However, this year again, unfortunately because of the lack of timely rain during the blossoming season of coffee, we expect that there will be a fall in the total output in the coming year. I understand, we have had a meeting of the Coffee Board once in 2014 and early 2015. I will be going again to hold a meeting to understand if there are any specifics that we can work on. The 12th Plan which comes to an end in 2017, has had quite a few provisions with which coffee sector can be given some kind of assuaging steps. Similarly, as and when there is an issue of rainfall based difficulties – say, the shortfall in rain or excessive rain – we have had some kind of an insurance extended for the coffee growers. I can only say that the Coffee Board will certainly be going back to the field, work with the teams there and understand what specific action can give them some relief.

SHRI PRATAP SIMHA: Madam, the Government is all set to repeal the Coffee Act, 1942 and enact a new legislation. It is a welcome move. But I would like to know from the hon. Minister, through you, whether we are going to have political appointment for the post of Chairman of the Board. The reason as to why I am asking is that for many years, we are not getting any support or encouragement from the Board because of the officials becoming the Chairman of the Board. For them, it is just an appointment or just a post. Why do we not have a political appointment or a grower as the Chairman of the Coffee Board so that he understands our problem? Coffee is facing white stem borer and berry blotch problem. A political person can understand the problem.

SHRIMATI NIRMALA SITHARAMAN: Madam, the Member has raised two issues. One relates to the Coffee Act, which is fairly old. The coffee sector has gone through quite a few changes subsequently. The coffee pooling system itself was brought to an end by 1994-96. Subsequently, the basic activity of the Coffee Board has gone into increasing the production, per acreage productivity, looking at research, looking at marketing, better access of markets and so on. However, yes, the Coffee Board similarly placed as the other Boards, the Tea Board, the Rubber Board, have all had certain disconnect with those who are in the field. This has come through a lot of stakeholders meeting that I held. ...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI K.C. VENUGOPAL: The disconnect has been there for the last two years. ...(*Interruptions*)

HON. SPEAKER: Not like this. You are not supposed to answer something like this.

SHRIMATI NIRMALA SITHARAMAN: Madam, the disconnect has been largely perceived because the people in the field – the growers, the traders and the exporters – felt that their voice has not been adequately heard in spite of nominated members being in these Boards. Since the Member asked a very pointed question, yes, there is a move to discuss, if it will make much more sense to have an appointed Chairman together with the nominated members, who already exist by State, by category – producers, farmers – in each category and in each State. There is a discussion going on. Nothing has concluded as yet. But the Coffee Act, itself is something about which the stakeholders' discussion has been held for more than four, five years now. There is a feeling that the old Act is no longer serving the purpose. We might want to withdraw that and come up with a new Bill, on which discussions have been held for the last three years. We are continuing the discussion. We hope to conclude and come with a new Bill.

SHRI M.I. SHANAVAS: Madam Speaker, there are two types of coffee growers - one is those with huge landholdings and huge estates and the other

is small growers. In my Constituency Wayanad there are 50,000 small coffee growers. The Coffee Board is showing step-motherly attitude to these small coffee growers. Nothing is being done for them. Their production is very low. So, my request to the hon. Minister is to declare a support price for coffee at Rs.150 per kg and to give interest free help for small irrigation facilities entirely for small growers. They are all in dire situations now. Some urgent steps may be taken to help the small growers.

SHRIMATI NIRMALA SITHARAMAN: Madam Speaker, the issues of coffee growers, particularly of small growers, are being taken up. We are extending a lot of facilities to the small growers. I would only assure the Member that there is no step-motherly treatment being shown by the Board. We want the coffee to be grown, more coffee to be grown, more good quality coffee to be grown so that India exports as much as we can because for both Robusta and Arabica, the two varieties that are grown in India, there is definitely a very good market and the market outside fetches a very good rate.

Today the coffee export in this country is earning nearly Rs.5,000 crore. So, I would like to assure the Member that there is no such differentiation between small and big growers. In fact today there are lot more smaller growers contributing to the coffee production of this country. If the Member is desirous of any particular thing that he wants to highlight, certainly he can. But I would certainly say that in terms of help extended to smaller coffee growers, we give re-plantation subsidy, water augmentation, quality operation, and upgradation subsidy.

The hon. Member referred to the issue of irrigation and other things. There is a discussion going on to see if the *Pradhan Mantri Sinchayi Yojana* can also be extended to plantation growers such as coffee and tea growers. So, that negotiation is going on. If that materializes, we will be able to extend that to the small growers too for irrigation.

डॉ. संजय जायसवाल: अध्यक्ष जी, मैं मंत्री जी को बधाई देना चाहता हूँ, क्योंकि उन्होंने बताया है कि हम कॉफी के बहुत बड़े एक्सपोर्टर हैं और एक्सपोर्ट से पांच हजार करोड़ रुपया प्रतिवर्ष अर्ज करते हैं। दूसरी तरफ देश के हर शहर में इंटरनेशनल कॉफी आउटलेट्स खुल रहे हैं और वे बाकायदा प्रचार करके कहते हैं कि हम साथ अमरीका से कॉफी मंगाते हैं, कोई कहता है कि हम अफ्रीका से कॉफी मंगाते हैं। जिस तरह से हमने आलू के विप्ल के लिए किया है कि इंटरनेशनल कम्पनीज़ भारत में आई और आलू के विप्ल बनाने के लिए जिस तरह का आलू उन्हें चाहिए था वैसे आलू का भारत के किसानों से उत्पादन कराया।

मैं मंत्री जी से पूछना चाहता हूँ कि क्या सरकार की ऐसी कोई प्लानिंग है कि कॉफी का उत्पादन करने वाले हमारे जो किसान डिस्ट्रेस्ट हैं, इनकी कॉफी को इंटरनेशनल आउटलेट्स खरीदें। अगर कॉफी की ववालिटि में डिफरेंस है तो वह ववालिटि हम बनाएं, जिससे कि भारतीय कॉफी उत्पादकों को इंटरनेशनल आउटलेट्स द्वारा पूरे विश्व में एक्सपोर्ट करने में मदद मिले?

श्रीमती निर्मला सीतारमण : महोदय, मैं माननीय सदस्य के पूछन का उत्तर देने से पहले एक जानकारी सदन को देना चाहती हूँ। पूरे विश्व के कॉफी ग्रोइंग एरियाज़ से अगर हम कम्पेयर करें तो भारत में सिर्फ दो फीसदी कॉफी ग्रोइंग एरिया है। Only two per cent of the world coffee growing area is in India, but we produce four per cent of coffee in this country in that two per cent land area. And five per cent of the total coffee exports are from India. So, our coffee producers are doing very well and nearly 90 per cent of all that is growing in the country is being exported. About 3.4 lakh metric tonnes of coffee was grown in the country in the year 2015-16 of which three lakh metric tonnes of coffee was exported. Only 0.48 lakh metric tonne of coffee grown is being used in the country. So, exports occupy a very big market. Whatever is left over is being utilized in a very good way in the country. If there are overseas coffee outlets coming and setting up business in our country, they are also necessarily buying Indian coffee.

In fact, consumption of Indian varieties of coffee has gone up because many Indian brands themselves are setting up outlets, particularly in the north India where coffee drinking habit is far lesser than in South India. You have private coffee outlets coming and setting up business in north India. So, I am not averse to the idea of telling anybody to buy more of Indian coffee. But as it is, more than 90 per cent of all that we are producing is going out. We are also doing a lot of branding of coffee in this country. We go and participate in the international exhibitions. We are already able to send a majority of our coffee outside. Coffee outlets are coming and setting up business and they can also be asked to do so. But I think the position of the entrepreneurs in the coffee growing areas is absolutely remarkable, if I can say so.

माननीय अध्यक्ष : अब थोड़ी चाय पी लें।

Question No. 104. Shri R.K. Bharathi Mohan.

SHRIMATI NIRMALA SITHARAMAN: Madam, this one relates to tea.

HON. SPEAKER: That is why, I have said it.

(Q. 104)

SHRI R.K. BHARATHI MOHAN: Hon. Speaker Madam, the Government of Tamil Nadu headed by the hon. Chief Minister Dr. Puratchi Thalaivi Amma has extended various concessions not only to small tea growers but also to tea industries and launched Amma Tea to benefit the tea industry in Tamil Nadu. With a view to providing permanent solution to the recurring crisis in the tea market, the Government of Tamil Nadu created a Price Stabilization Fund with an initial corpus of Rs 12 crore. This Price Stabilization Fund will be a permanent one. From July 2004 to June 2016, a total of Rs 1,870 crore has been disbursed under this Scheme benefitting more than 70,000 members across 15 industrial cooperative tea factories. In view of frequent fluctuation in the tea market, the small tea growers are suffering due to low rates of green leaves received by them. Will the Government of India extend subsidy or grant to the small tea growers during such crisis period?

SHRIMATI NIRMALA SITHARAMAN: Madam, may I ask him to repeat his question?

HON. SPEAKER: Yes. I also could not get it. Shri Bharathi Mohan, what is your specific question? You are reading the whole page.

SHRI R.K. BHARATHI MOHAN: Madam, during the 11th Plan period, the Tea Board of India was extending subsidy to the tea factories at the rate of 25 per cent of machinery cost under the modernization scheme whereas during the 12th Plan period, this scheme was stopped by the Tea Board. Will it be restarted?

SHRIMATI NIRMALA SITHARAMAN: Since the hon. Member is specifically asking about the Plan related expenditure, I would like to say that the subsidy of 25 per cent of unit cost for tea machinery is still there under the Tea Quality Upgradation and Product Diversification Scheme. So, I am not sure if the Member is misquoting it. It is still there in the 12th Plan among the various things that we do in terms of the Tea Quality Upgradation and Product Diversification Scheme for which a total of Rs 350 crore have been allocated. One of the things that we do is for giving subsidy for machinery and that is the question that the Member has asked – providing subsidy of 25 per cent of unit cost for tea machinery and 50 per cent of the consultancy cost for ISO Certification and so on. We are still giving it.

HON. SPEAKER: Have you got any second supplementary?

SHRI R.K. BHARATHI MOHAN: Will the Government of India extend the subsidy or grant to the small tea growers during such crisis period?

SHRIMATI NIRMALA SITHARAMAN: We will provide it. There is no change at all.

SHRI RAMEN DEKA: I would like to know whether the Government has any proposal or plan to address the grievances of the tea growers of north bank of River Brahmaputra who are facing difficulty in selling their leaves as there is lack of infrastructure and facilities; they are at the whims of the big fish.

SHRIMATI NIRMALA SITHARAMAN: Madam Speaker, for the issue of lack of infrastructure and lack of aggregation centres we have in fact proposed – and that has been made a part of my answer too – that the Directorate under the Tea Board, headquartered at Dibrugarh extends facilities. If that is insufficient – I will be soon visiting Assam for tea-related matters – the Member and the tea-growers are very welcome to point out where the deficiencies are. We are willing to address it. Certainly, we will take up the issues of the small tea growers. In this context, I would like to add that we are trying to make sure that the tea control order will come up with a clear statement of what mini and micro tea processing units would be; and these factories could be established by the SHGs. So, if they find that there are tea manufacturing centres inadequately placed and they do not have enough of them, we are willing to have micro and mini factories set up in places of difficult access where tea aggregation is becoming an issue; provisions are being made for this.

PROF. SAUGATA ROY: West Bengal is the second biggest tea producing State after Assam. We have a large number of gardens in the districts of Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri. We are facing a peculiar phenomenon where gardens belonging to large groups are closing down but new small tea gardens are coming up in places like Islampur in North Dinajpur district. I want to ask the Minister specifically what is the policy vis-à-vis small gardens and big gardens that the Government is adopting. Just before elections, the Commerce Minister went to West Bengal and said they were taking over seven sick gardens of the Duncans Group which are lying closed and Tea Board will look after them. May I inform the hon. Minister that four months after her announcement not one garden has opened, not one garden has been taken over. So, what is the policy of the Government with regard to opening of the closed tea gardens of the Duncans Group which she had announced in West Bengal just before the elections?

SHRIMATI NIRMALA SITHARAMAN: Madam Speaker, I wish to inform the Member. Probably, he is only partly informed of what has happened in the ground there. ...*(Interruptions)*

PROF. SAUGATA ROY: I am fully informed. ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRIMATI NIRMALA SITHARAMAN: We did take over, as was announced. This was in consultation with the State Government. After consulting and having a meeting – I personally had a meeting with the owners of the Duncan tea gardens – which we took over the gardens, not all of them. In the process, I would like to say that there was also a litigation in which the Duncans took us to the court, saying, 'You cannot take it over'. I have been in constant touch with the State Government. My officials are in discussion with the Chief Secretary. We have even very openly said to the State Government that we are even willing to go to the extent of extending the Central Government schemes for those workers who are in deep hardship. They are not getting electricity; they are not getting food; there are no medicines. I have gone there. ...*(Interruptions)*

PROF. SAUGATA ROY: The State Government is giving them food and ration. ...*(Interruptions)*

HON. SPEAKER: Prof. Saugata Roy, this is not the proper way. Do not interrupt like this.

...*(Interruptions)*

SHRIMATI NIRMALA SITHARAMAN: Hon. Member, with due respect, you have asked me a question and with the permission of the Chair, I am giving an answer. I wish you hear me out fully. ...*(Interruptions)*

I have been there and I have seen it. After that, I am asking the State Government to see if the Central Government's schemes could be routed to these people who are suffering. That discussion is going on with the State Government. ...*(Interruptions)*

HON. SPEAKER: No such interruptions please.

...*(Interruptions)*

HON. SPEAKER: Please complete your statement.

...*(Interruptions)*

HON. SPEAKER: Only the Minister's reply will go on record.

â€¦*(Interruptions)*â€¦ *

HON. SPEAKER: Only the Minister's reply will go on record. Please do not interrupt like this.

â€(Interruptions)â€ *

SHRIMATI NIRMALA SITHARAMAN: I wish the hon. Members listen to my answer. If they do not have the willingness to hear my answer, I wish they do not even ask me the question. Kindly hear me out....(Interruptions)

HON. SPEAKER: Do not do like that. You have to listen her.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI KALYAN BANERJEE: The Minister is not giving the answer....(Interruptions)

SHRIMATI NIRMALA SITHARAMAN: I am not giving the answer, Madam!(Interruptions)

HON. SPEAKER: You have asked a question and now you have to listen her.

...(Interruptions)

HON. SPEAKER: Yes, Minister. You may complete your reply. Do not listen to them.

SHRIMATI NIRMALA SITHARAMAN: Madam Speaker, there are discussions with the State Government and, particularly for the Duncans, we are in the process of identifying new agencies who can be handed over the management, just the management, to run these gardens and take over the management control alone, not anything else just so that the workers are not affected and just so that the total output of high quality tea which comes from that area does not go down. I would like to say that the consultations are done along with the State Government in the matter. So, yes, it is taking time, but it is because we are in the process of consulting the State Government and finding out agencies which can run these gardens.

माननीय अध्यक्ष : अब गाड़ी में पेट्रोल डाल दो। पूरा संख्या 105।

(Q. 105)

श्री भैरो प्रसाद मिश्र: अध्यक्ष महोदया, मैं सर्वप्रथम अपनी सरकार को बधाई देना चाहता हूँ कि जब हमने सत्ता संभाली थी, तब पेट्रोल 71-72 रुपये लीटर था, आज वह घटकर 62-63 रुपये लीटर हो गया है। वहीं डीजल जहाँ पहले 58-59 रुपये लीटर था, वह घटकर 54 रुपये लीटर हो गया है। लेकिन इस बीच में कीमतों में जितनी कमी हुई है, उसका लाभ उपभोक्ताओं तक नहीं पहुंच पाया है। उसके प्रमुख कारण मैंने मंत्री जी के जवाब में और पहले भी देखे हैं कि राज्यों ने कर बढ़ाने का काम किया है, जैसे मैं उत्तर प्रदेश से आता हूँ। वहाँ पहले 25 प्रतिशत कर था, उसे बढ़ाकर उन्होंने 35-36 प्रतिशत करने का काम किया है। यही हाल उत्तराखंड में है, वहाँ भी इसे बढ़ाकर 25 से 36 प्रतिशत किया गया है, यानी 10-12 परसेंट बढ़ाने का काम किया है। अगर यह इतनी बड़ी मात्रा में न बढ़ाया जाता तो उपभोक्ताओं को इसका और लाभ मिलता।

इसी तरह हमारे यहां उत्पादन कर में भी बढ़ोतरी एक बड़ी मात्रा में की गई है। जैसे पहले पेट्रोल पर लगभग यह 11 रुपये था, वह अब 21 रुपये हो गया है। डीजल पर पांच प्रतिशत था, वह बढ़कर 17 परसेंट हो गया है। मेरा यह कहना है कि जैसे अब हम जी.एस.टी. लागू करने जा रहे हैं, उसमें भी पेट्रोल को अलग कर रहे हैं तो क्या आप कोई एक सीमा निर्धारित करेंगे? जैसे उत्तर प्रदेश में लगभग एक-तिहाई कर है तो क्या कोई सीमा निर्धारित करने का काम करेंगे, ताकि उत्पादन कर में और राज्य के जो कर हैं, उनमें जो भी घट-बढ़ हो, उसका सीधा लाभ उपभोक्ता को मिल सके?

श्री धर्मेन्द्र प्रधान : अध्यक्ष महोदया, करों का आधार क्या होगा, संघीय व्यवस्था में हम जी.एस.टी. में एक रास्ता निकालने की कोशिश कर रहे हैं और पेट्रोलियम प्रोडक्ट जी.एस.टी. में आएंगे, इस पर केन्द्र सरकार और राज्य सरकार सैद्धांतिक रूप में सहमत हुए हैं। लेकिन यह कब आयेगा, यह राज्यों को हम जबरन नहीं कह सकते, क्योंकि पेट्रोलियम प्रोडक्ट की बिक्री का राज्य की आमदनी में एक बहुत बड़ा हिस्सा रहता है। एक संघीय व्यवस्था में हम सबको साथ लेकर चलना चाहते हैं। जब तक राज्य और केन्द्र दोनों की सहमति नहीं बनती है, ये जी.एस.टी. में आ नहीं सकते हैं, इसलिए उसके ऊपर एक यूनिफॉर्म टैक्स पैटर्न नहीं हो सकता है। माननीय सदस्य ने सही कहा कि कंप्यूटर को कुछ लाभ मिला है, केन्द्रीय कर बढ़े हैं और राज्यों के कर भी बढ़े हैं। तमिलनाडु, मिजोरम और कुछ केन्द्र शासित इलाकों को छोड़कर बाकी सभी राज्यों ने पिछले दो सालों में कर बढ़ाये हैं। केन्द्र सरकार ने भी कर बढ़ाये हैं, कल्याणकारी योजनाओं के लिए हम 42 प्रतिशत केन्द्रीय देय राज्यों को तौलते हैं, इसलिए यह बात सही है कि आगे चलकर एक यूनिफॉर्म टैक्स पैटर्न बन पायेगा, देश एक मार्केट हो पायेगा और जी.एस.टी. में जो एक रास्ता निकला है, उसमें राज्यों को अपनी स्वीकृति देनी पड़ेगी।

श्री भैरो प्रसाद मिश्र: माननीय अध्यक्ष जी, इसी तरह से मिट्टी के तेल और पेट्रोलियम पदार्थों में बड़ी मात्रा में मिलावट भी होती है, यह अवसर देखने में आता है। मैं माननीय मंत्री जी से कहना चाहता हूँ कि एक तो इसकी जो सब्सिडी सहायता दी जा रही है, वह भी उपभोक्ताओं तक नहीं पहुंच रही है। खैर, यह तो दूसरे मंत्रालय से संबंधित विषय है कि क्या उसको सीधे खातों में भेजने की व्यवस्था करेंगे। दूसरा, जो बड़ी मात्रा में मिट्टी के तेल की मिलावट हो रही है, उसको रोकने के लिए माननीय मंत्री जी ने क्या इंतजाम किया है और आगे क्या कार्रवाई करेंगे?

श्री धर्मेन्द्र प्रधान : अध्यक्ष महोदया, हम लोग मिट्टी का तेल थोक में सीधे राज्यों को देते हैं। राज्य सरकारें उसको अपनी पीडीएस पूर्णाली के माध्यम से उपभोक्ता तक पहुंचाती हैं। इन दिनों एक अच्छी बात हुई है कि हमारे विभाग ने सभी राज्यों के साथ चर्चा की है। अभी जब राज्यों को प्रधान मंत्री जी ने बुलाया था और इंटर स्टेट काउंसिल में चर्चा हुई तो मिट्टी के तेल को एजेंडा में रखा गया था। मिट्टी के तेल में मिलावट हो रही है, यह सब जानते हैं, राज्य सरकारें भी जानती हैं और हम लोग भी जानते हैं। इसके आगे, वे फॉरवर्ड क्या हैं? हमने एक रास्ता निकाला है कि मिट्टी का तेल जन वितरण पूर्णाली में डी.बी.टी. स्कीम में कंवर्ट हो, जैसा कि हमने एलपीजी में सफलता के साथ किया है। कई राज्यों ने उसमें स्वीकृति दी है। अपनी संघीय व्यवस्था की यही सौंदर्यता है कि कर्नाटक ने स्वीकृति दी है, हिमाचल प्रदेश ने स्वीकृति दी है, हरियाणा ने स्वीकृति दी है, झारखण्ड ने स्वीकृति दी है, मध्य प्रदेश ने स्वीकृति दी है, गुजरात ने स्वीकृति दी है और उड़ीसा ने भी स्वीकृति दी है। कई राज्यों ने 33 जिलों में इसी आर्थिक वर्ष में पायलट स्कीम चलाने के लिए स्वीकृति दी है। हमने भी केन्द्र सरकार की ओर से ऑफर किया है कि मिट्टी के तेल की सब्सिडी घटाने में डी.बी.टी. स्कीम में जो लाभ होगा, उसका लाभ केन्द्र सरकार नहीं रखेगी, उसके लाभ का 75% हिस्सा राज्यों को दे दिया जाएगा। उसमें एक सहमति बनती दिख रही है, क्योंकि मिट्टी के तेल में मिलावट होने से उस राज्य की पेट्रोल डीजल की सेल घटती है, दूसरा प्रदूषण होता है, तीसरा, पेट्रोल-डीजल की जो नैट बिक्री घटती है, उसमें राज्यों के टैक्स का नुकसान होता है, इसलिए राज्यों में भी एक सहमति बनती दिख रही है। मैं आशावादी हूँ कि इसी आर्थिक वर्ष में काफी जिलों में यह व्यवस्था चालू हो जाएगी।

अध्यक्ष महोदया, दो-तीन राज्यों ने तो अपने समूचे राज्य को कैरोसिन मुक्त करने का ऑफर भी दिया है, जिसमें हरियाणा सबसे आगे है। चंद दिनों में हम हरियाणा को कैरोसिन फ्री हरियाणा बनाएंगे। जैसे कुछ साल पहले माननीय मोडली जी के समय में दिल्ली को भी कैरोसिन फ्री बनाया गया था। अभी हरियाणा उसी रास्ते पर जा रहा है। इसमें राज्य और केन्द्र दोनों मिलकर सहमति बना रहे हैं।

माननीय अध्यक्ष : श्री गजानन कीर्तिकर - उपस्थित नहीं।

डॉ. शशि थरूर

DR. SHASHI THAROOR: Thank you very much Madam Speaker.

Madam, we all know that India is one of the largest oil importers in the world. We are importing almost 80 per cent of our total needs and this is, obviously, having a severe impact on our fiscal deficit and everything else.

Madam, when this Government assumed office, Brent oil prices were 105 dollars a barrel. Today, they stand at 44.07 dollars. In the first 18 months of their tenure, crude oil prices plunged to their 13 year low at 27.10 dollars a barrel and yet we have seen a spike in retail prices. The petrol prices recently rose by Rs.4.47 a litre and diesel prices by Rs.6.46 a litre.

Mr. Minister, I would like to know whether you are aware that providing consumers the benefit of lower oil prices would benefit the country as their savings on oil prices would increase their own spending capacity, therefore, acting as a stimulus to boost the economy at a time when your colleague, the Finance Minister, has been talking about the need for a stimulus. So, have you, as Minister, undertaken consultations with the Finance Minister to reduce the high taxes on petroleum products to boost the spending capacity of citizens, consequently improve domestic consumption and stimulate the economy? Are you in dialogue with the Finance Minister?

SHRI DHARMENDRA PRADHAN: Madam, already I have answered the question in Hindi but let me improve my English by answering Mr. Tharoor, the learned Member of this House. Let me put the answer again.

12.00 hours

Madam, there is no direct relation between the international crude price and the price of product that we are selling in the Indian market. Consciously, various Governments, when the UPA was in power, also chose this path. ...*(Interruptions)* India is governed by the International Price Mechanism...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI K.C. VENUGOPAL: Madam, he is misleading the House...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI DHARMENDRA PRADHAN: My friend Shri Venugopal has all the privileges to discuss this matter in detail in a special discussion. I am ready to answer him. But let me be permitted to answer this question. I am agreeable to answering any question.

In this country, we have consciously taken a decision, since long and for so many decades that we will be governed by the International Price Mechanism. We are not pricing our product on the crude price but on international product price because refining charge is the same; transportation charge is not reducing. That apart, the hon. Member raised an issue as to why there are so many taxes. I agree and I have already answered that question. We have passed on some of the benefits of reduction to the consumers in the last one and a half years. Some amount has been collected as a Central Tax...*(Interruptions)*

HON. SPEAKER: Only the reply of the hon. Minister will go on record.

â€¦*(Interruptions)*â€¦*

SHRI DHARMENDRA PRADHAN: Madam, in the last one and a half years we have reduced the price of petrol 27 times and 21 times in diesel. If I only quote the figures of only the month of July, there has been a reduction of Rs. 3.14 in petrol and 86 paise in diesel.

The other issue that has been raised by the hon. Member is this. How do you create a stimulus in the economy? Are they -- building good roads, creating rural marketing infrastructure, spending more in rural sector, spending more in agricultural sector -- not going to compliment the overall economy of the country? Passing on the benefits to the consumer in this type of a society is the first priority of this Government. My Government, my Prime Minister is very focused on that. Simultaneously we want to create a market, we want to pump in money in agriculture, we want to irrigate our lands and we want to subsidise our agriculture. These are our priorities. This is the fiscal management policy of this Government.

HON. SPEAKER: Now, Question Hour is over.

12.03 hours