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Title: Regarding reported strike in bottling plants in Kerala.

SHRI ANTO ANTONY (PATHANAMTHITTA): Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, thank you for giving me this opportunity. This is to invite the attention of the Government to the fact that supply of cooking gas in Kerala has been interrupted for the last two weeks due to the indefinite strike launched by contract workers at the Indian Oil Corporation's Udayamperoor bottling plant. It is to be noted that almost every month there has been a strike in any of these bottling plants in Kerala. Prior to the strike in IOC plant, gas supply was crippled by lorry drivers' strike at the BPCL's Irumbanam bottling plant. Udayamperoor plant distributes more than fifty thousand gas cylinders every day.

In addition to regular strikes by the workers at the bottling and supply chain, lack of transportation facilities also adversely affect the availability of gas cylinders. For instance, Indane LPG distribution in southern part of Kerala has been interrupted due to the lack of transportation facilities. There are not enough trucks to transport cylinders from the bottling plant in Kollam. At present only 30 trucks are in service. It requires the services of 130 trucks to normalize the supply. It is learnt that the laxity on the part of the authorities in renewing the contracts of the trucks is the major reason behind the shortage of transportation facilities at the Kollam Plant of Indane. As a result customers have to wait for forty to sixty days to get their cylinders refilled.

Therefore, I would like to request the Government to redress the grievances of the customers by declaring the supply of LPG cylinders as an essential service and apply the provisions of the Essential Services Maintenance Act whenever the supply of LPG cylinders is interrupted by strike.

Thank you.