

13.22 hrs.

MATTER UNDER RULE 377
in Delhi to starve Capital of wheat

**REPORTED CONSPIRACY OF GRAIN
DEALERS IN DELHI TO STARVE THE
CAPITAL OF WHEAT**

SHRI S. M. BANERJEE (Kanpur):
Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to raise this most important matter, which is in regard to the alarming news item as it appeared in *Patriot* of today, under the heading 'CONSPIRACY TO STARVE CAPITAL OF WHEAT'

Sir, perhaps, you are aware that from yesterday not a grain of wheat or an ounce of atta is readily available in any shop. One has to pay through his nose to get one kilo of wheat and that also, he cannot purchase from the open market. He gets it in the night by some agencies who are minting money at the cost of the people. Sir, the news item says:

"A grand conspiracy seems to have been hatched by big grain dealers to deny wheat to the people of Delhi and to use their cries of protest to force the authorities into raising the free sale price of wheat.

Mandi sources say that licensed wheat dealers are refusing to lift wheat stocks. Farmers are learnt to have been paid gratuities, to keep the wheat with them. As a result a large tonnage has rotted and has been fed to animals."

It also says:

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"The black market rates jumped to a high of Rs. 275 a quintal in the early days of August."

[MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER in the Chair]

Then, Sir, the price of Kalyan, a special Desi variety of wheat is ranging between Rs. 250 to 270 per quintal. You know, Sir, the price has been fixed at Rs. 161 per quintal. Nobody is get-

ting at the fixed rate. Wheat is not available to the ordinary people. I can say with all confidence and with all sincerity that even in North Avenue and South Avenue markets where there are ration shops, wheat has not been given; atta has not been given; even rice is not available there. When Members of Parliament are facing such a situation, it can be imagined, what is happening to the common people in Delhi and near about places. This is a deliberate attempt and a conspiracy by the grain dealers, in connivance with some of the agencies, which may be political or non-political.

I may say for the information of the House that in Alipur, which is a place on the border of Rajasthan, people are getting the grain. It is also coming from Haryana in Camel back trucks and shuttle trains. The attendant risks of penal action and confiscation at the border points is another factor in the sky high black market rates. Even though during the day there is restriction on the movement there is no such restriction in the night. People can come and go by paying money to the people who man the checkpost. This is happening daily and I am surprised that no action is being taken. When this could happen in Delhi itself, can we imagine what is happening in other places?

Another important point is the sharp increase in the prices of essential items. Coarse grains have moved up by Rs. 15 to 20, pulses by Rs. 10 to 27, edible oils by Rs. 45 to Rs. 100 and sugar by Rs. 50 a quintal. This is happening when there is all this talk here about checking inflation. We are being told that after taking all these anti-inflationary measures there will be no rise in the prices of essential commodities. Yet, we are finding that the prices are going up by 10, 20, 30 or even 40 per cent. Further, grain is not available. So, in the name of all those who are being starved, ordinary workers who are getting only one chapati a day. I would request the hon. Minister to attend to this problem. I have myself visited most of the shops

incognito, without telling them that I am a Member of Parliament, and I could not get a grain of wheat or an ounce of atta. This is a conspiracy by the grain dealers to get a higher price for wheat. Those who are hatching this conspiracy should be arrested under the MISA like the striking railway employees have been arrested. What has happened to the DIR? Has it become blunted? Let them be arrested and paraded in the streets of Delhi. I would like to know what action has been taken. I would request the Minister to make a statement and allay the fears in the minds of the people of Delhi. At the same time Sir I request you to allow a discussion on this problem.

श्री मधु लिमये (बांका) अध्यक्ष महोदय

उपाध्यक्ष महोदय: आपका तो नाम ही नहीं है।

श्री मधु लिमये सात घाठ दिन पहले नोटिस दिया गया था। आप जब मदारत कर रहे थे तो कई मामले इस सदन के सामने रखे गये थे। मुझे खुशी है कि मंत्री महोदय व्हीट और व्हीट प्रोडक्ट्स के बारे में वक्तव्य देने जा रहे हैं। वह एक बात का खुलासा अपने वक्तव्य में करे। क्या यह सही नहीं कि पंजाब हरियाणा, राजस्थान आदि जो सरपलस स्टेट्स हैं वहां से 190 और 200 रुपये फी क्विंटल के हिसाब . .

MR DEPUTY-SPEAKER I have allowed Shri Banerjee to have his full say. But you must realise that I have to conduct the proceedings under the rules.

SHRI MADHU LIMAYE I want to make only one submission

MR DEPUTY-SPEAKER Under rule 377 your name is not here

श्री मधु लिमये सात घाठ दिन पहले जो नोटिस दिया था उसका क्या हुआ ?

MR DEPUTY-SPEAKER When I am speaking why do you speak simultaneously?

श्री मधु लिमये एक मिनट में मैं खलम कर रहा हूँ।

MR DEPUTY-SPEAKER I am prepared to give all the opportunities within the ambit of the rules. But why do you want me to commit an irregularity by breaking the rules? This is what I do not like. (Interruptions)

Order please. Let me dispose of Limaye's point. He has asked me about certain notices that he has given. I am not in the know. I come to the Chair and I find this Order paper on which Mr Banerjee's name is mentioned. How can you expect me to answer that? The Speaker may have decided about it. You may meet him.

Now the Minister is here. Let us hear the Minister. (Interruptions) I am not able to follow anything.

SHRI DINEN BATTACHARYYA (Serampore) * * (Interruptions)

MR DEPUTY-SPEAKER This will not go on record.

The Minister

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI ANNASAHEB P SHINDE) Sir I wish the allegations were made on the floor of the House on the basis of verified information.

[Shri Annasaheb P. Shinde]

As far as Delhi's wheat supply position is concerned, we are aware that there have been some problems of availability and prices. But I would like to dispel the impression of the hon. Member. Delhi's population, according to the Census of 1971, was 40,65,000 and now, according to the estimate, it is 46,81,000. We are supplying 35,000 tonnes of wheat and 4,000 tonnes of rice monthly. In addition to that, the movement of rice—that is, of course, non-levy rice which is dependent on market availability—is free because Delhi forms a part of Punjab—Haryana zone area. There is no restriction on the movement of coarse grains. This naturally helps the availability of foodgrains in Delhi.

Recently, there has been some difficulty about availability of wheat on trade account. The Delhi Administration has secured 36,000 tonnes of wheat from Punjab and Haryana and they propose to move 12,000 tonnes out of it to Delhi with the help of NAFED. In addition to that, they also propose to bring in 23,000 to 24,000 tonnes from Punjab and Haryana on trade account. So, the quantity of wheat and rice supplied through the public distribution system to Delhi amounts almost to eight kilos per day. Therefore, the story of scarcity would not be a correct thing. (*Interruptions*).

SHRI S. M. BANERJEE: May I tell you with all honesty and in all humility that it is not available in Delhi? I can show you people standing from 5 o' Clock in the morning with the entire family asking for a bowl of rice. They are not getting. What is the use of having these tall talks?

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE (Gwalior): What about those who do not have ration cards? They are facing difficulty. Wheat is not available in the free market.

SHRI ANNASAHAB P. SHINDE: They can apply for ration cards if they are citizens of Delhi. There should be

no difficulty in getting ration cards. If the hon. Member brings the cases to our notice, I am prepared to take up the matter with the Delhi Administration. There will not be any lack sympathy as far as this aspect is concerned. The number of units for which ration cards have been issued in Delhi is 58 lakhs. Obviously there are some bogus cards also.

There seems to be some difficulty about the quality of foodgrains. We have received some complaints about that and I have taken up this matter with the Delhi Administration.

We have assured the Delhi Administration that, even in the months to come, we shall make every effort to see that the Delhi area is taken care of. As compared to many other parts of India, Delhi is really receiving a very substantial quantity of foodgrains.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: Delhi is not a wheat-growing area. Why don't you allow free flow of wheat from Haryana and Punjab? What is the difficulty?

SHRI ANNASAHAB P. SHINDE: This is policy matter.

SHRI S. M. BANERJEE: There is a conspiracy by the grain dealers; they are not lifting the grains and this is creating scarcity conditions. What action are you taking against those grain dealers?

SHRI ANNASAHAB P. SHINDE: More than 1900 raids have been carried out in Delhi during the last few weeks. Therefore, there has been no lack of vigilance on the part of the administration. A number of cases have been filed.

SHRI K. S. CHAVDA (Patan): Sir, I have given notice to raise a matter under rule 377. That is before you.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: It is not before me.