

peaceful and far away from extremism. But now the young men and women and these regions also have become prone to extremist thinking, feeling that the Government comes to the help of extremists prone areas only and not peaceful States.

I therefore urge upon the Central Government that Himachal Pradesh which has Punjab on one side and Jammu & Kashmir on the other, should be provided with the same kind of package as given to the eastern States, Punjab and Jammu & Kashmir.

14.25 hrs.

DISCUSSION UNDER RULE 193

(i) Rise in Prices of Essential Commodities

[English]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : Now, we shall take up Item No. 9- Discussion under rule 193. I request the hon. Minister, Shri Devendra Prasad Yadav to reply to the discussion.

[Translation]

THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTIONS (SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I rise to reply to the discussion held on the motion put forward by hon. member Shri Chitta Basu regarding rise in the prices of essential commodities. About 21 hon. Members expressed their views by participating in the discussion. I want to thank all of them because this House discussed this very important issue which is related to the life of the common man. Whether it is the question of prices of wheat or flour, all these are related to the human life. I have considered the points raised during this discussion.

First of all, I would like to give details of the prices of wheat, rice, soft coke, kerosene oil, sold under the Public Distribution System. These commodities are made available by the Central Government under PDS. The price of none of these commodities has increased under the Public Distribution System. You may say that these prices relate to the commodities sold under the Public Distribution System, we want to hold a discussion on the steep rise in the prices of these commodities in the open market. I will come to that also.

Flour has to do much with the common man. Under the PDS, we provide wheat to the States at the rate of Rs.402 per quintal. The States distribute the same through the Fair Price Shops by adding purchasing, transportation and other duties thereon. The price of sugar throughout India is Rs.9.05 per Kg. This is the only commodity whose consumer price is fixed by the Central Government, rest of the commodities are

provided to the public by the State Government after calculating their own margins on these commodities. The rates of Palmoline oil and soft coke are Rs.24/- per Kg (Bulk) and Rs 175/- per tonne respectively, these items are provided to West Bengal and Bihar only. The Government on its part has neither increase these commodities sold under PDS nor decreased the allocation of any State.

Since I have assumed charge of this Department, I have made allotments to States under the PDS on the basis offtake against the demands of the States made on the basis of their population. As far as prices in the open market are concerned the prices of wheat and flour have registered an increase on which there has been so much discussion here. There are certain circumstances responsible for it which I do not want to mention because whatever natural increase has been registered is due to a different factor and which ought not have taken place. I had referred to it in my statement in which I said that I believe in transparency. Therefore I do not want to conceal anything from the House. One of the reasons for the price rise is that we have raised the support prices for the farmers. It was necessary also as it had the consensus of the hon. Members of all parties as also the whole House. If we do not provide remunerative prices to the farmers for their produce, it will indirectly affects the production. The production will be adversely affected. It is necessary to increase the M.S.P. in order to encourage the grower. The specialists have estimated a 5.5 percent increase in prices if continues like this. The 5.5 percent increase registered in the prices of wheat was due to M.S.P. To increase the sell and considering the wider interests of the farmers we can go to any extent.

Petroleum products are inclusive of everything. The increase to the extent of 4 percent. The C.I.P. of wheat has not registered an increase as compared to the last year, it has been stable and it is responsible for the price rise to the extent of 5 percent. So far as production is concerned, production and procurement of wheat was low during the last year. Production depends on rain fall, last year the production was less by 31 lakh tonnes and the procurements which the Government of India makes were less by 41 lakh tonnes, this is responsible for the price rise to the extent of 8 per cent. But the increase in prices registered thereafter has been due to very unfortunate factors. Hoarding and blackmarketing have been responsible for the price rise to the extent of 8 per cent.

Due to slump in the Share-market people desisted from investing there. They had estimated that the prices will increase because the production was low. Some hon. members have also raised this question that the Government did not take effective steps timely. What steps have been taken by the Government, I will give details thereof lateron. With the slump going on in the share market people have encouraged hoarding and black-marketing by investing their money in it. There

are some vested interests in this country who have a nexus with hoarders and black-marketers due to which artificial scarcity is being created by raising the prices of flour because the son of the soil that is Prime Minister Shri Deve Gowda is a great sympathiser of the farmers and the United Front Government has vowed to eradicate scarcity and shortage...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI THAWAR CHAND GEHLOT (Shajapur) : Mr. Speaker Sir. Whether he has descended from the sky, all are sons of the soil...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV : Accept the reality. A bogey is being raised against the United Front Government by hoarders and blackmarketeers by raising the prices of flour. I have referred to the reality in my statement. The bogey and price rise is being created to malign the Government. But the Government is determine to take strong action against hoarders and black-marketeers. We have come down heavily upon them which has resulted in a declining trend in the prices. I have sent for reports from all places.

SHRI SATYA PAL JAIN : Wheat is selling at Rs.10 per kg. in Chandigarh...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV : Please listen to me first.

SHRI PRABHU DAYAL KATHERIA (Ferozabad) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, the hon. Minister is saying that all these things are in his knowledge. why then starvation deaths are taking place...*(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : Let him have his say.

SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV : Let me complete first.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : You go ahead with your submission. Prabhu Dayal ji, you take your seat.

SHRI PRABHU DAYAL KATHERIA : The hon. Minister wants to say that he knew the entire conspiracy. If that is so...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV : I am telling as to where the prices have gone down...*(Interruptions)* I am bringing forward a bill in this regard...*(Interruptions)*

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA) : Listen to him before you Speak. You may speak later on.

SHRI PRABHU DAYAL KATHERIA : It means that you too are involved in the conspiracy?

SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, during the last 3-4 days...*(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : Please make it a point not to look towards the press while making your submission.

(Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : I am telling all of you.

SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV : Sir, the wholesale price of wheat has registered a decline. The price of Dada Wheat has come down. The fall in price is in the wholesale rate. As per yesterday and today's reports, the minimum price of wheat was Rs.755 and maximum Rs.775 per quintal and the rates have fallen...*(Interruptions)*

AN HON. MEMBER : I am talking of retail prices.

SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV : I am coming to retail prices. If you are not able to comprehend, what can I do? The minimum and maximum wholesale price has come down to Rs.635 and Rs.645 per quintal respectively. Thus the price has fallen by Rs.120 per quintal. Today, in Mumbai and Hapur...

SHRI PRABHU DAYAL KATHERIA : Can you imagine the agonies of the people living below poverty line.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : Once in a while, intervention is desirable but not always.

SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV : Sir, when these people were speaking I was listening to them patiently. Hapur is a major grain market of north India. In that market the minimum and maximum price of wheat was Rs.730 and Rs.750 per quintal respectively which fell to Rs.610 and Rs.620. Thus, the fall in price is Rs.120 per quintal.

AN HON. MEMBER : Can you name the places where you have conducted raids?

SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV : I am coming to that. I have mentioned these things well in time. The Government is alert from the very day I assumed charge of this Ministry. The result is that the prices have risen to the extent of 31 per cent, otherwise, rise would have been more...*(Interruptions)* on 25th June, it was reported on behalf of the Ministry of Agriculture that the production of wheat this year has fallen by 31 lakh tonnes as compared to last year. On that very day, I took a decision that not even a chhatank (50 gram approx.) of wheat would be exported and I stuck to that decision. The FCI has totally stopped export of wheat. Then on July 5-6 a conference of Chief Ministers was held in which it was said that the foodgrains meant for distribution through the PDS in the States were being diverted. I drew the attention of the Chief Ministers and the administrators and Governors of the UTs to stop this diversion.

AN HON. MEMBER : What do you mean by diversion?

SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV : Diversion means to divert the foodgrains to other channels. The foodgrains are sent for the fair price shops but the supplies find their way to the traders and then to the black market...*(Interruptions)* Thereafter, on 22nd July, I wrote to the Chief Ministers that if they want to amend the Essential Act and the Consumer Protection Act,

the centre was prepared for that. We told them that based on their suggestions, decision in this regard would be taken. This was clearly written in the letter. But now it appears that some traders and unscrupulous elements are once again indulging in hoarding of essential commodities. I told the Chief Ministers through this letter that this fact should be brought to the notice of the officials and field workers and they should be told to stop this tendency of hoarding. Not only this, I told them that this tendency should be checked well in time and I may be informed about the action taken in this regard from time to time as well as the suggestions they might like to give. Some people say that the timely action was not taken. This letter was written on 22nd July. Is it not a timely action? I am conscious and alert about my responsibility from the day when I came to know about the fall in production. The open sale by FCI started in 1994. Before 1994 open sale was not there. This was introduced to bring a balance in the market price. Supplying foodgrains to the PDS is the responsibility of the Central Government. When my attention was drawn to the open sale, I said that we would consider to make amendments in it also. The hon. lady Member who was speaking at the pitch of her voice on that day is not present today. Some people make a mountain out of a mole hill. I do not have that habit. Since Smt. Sushma Swaraj is not present here, I would not say that. I have clearly said that we have to streamline the open sale. To streamline it, we sent a directive from the Ministry of the FCI to constitute a three member committee. Directors of Food of all states would be members of that committee so as to protect the interest of their respective states and to apprise the committee of their PDS requirements vis-a-vis open sale. One member would be from the accounts and the other would be the R.M. of the FCI. The proposed committee would examine whether proper registration of roller flour mills is being done; whether the mill is running or whether the application for allotment of wheat is genuine or not. The limit for open sale of wheat would be 200 metric tonnes. The committee has been given instructions to the effect that no flour mill should be allotted more than 200 MT of wheat. Priority would be given to small flour mills. If they want to avail of the facility of wheat quota, they too should be given concession. Previously, small flour mills were facing difficulties as they had to go to the big flour mills. That difficulty has not been removed. They are supposed to apply between 1st to 7th of the month and their applications are disposed to between 7th and 14th. The responsibility to do this job has been given to this committee. If any complaints are received on this account, the three-member committee would be answerable for it. The Government is prepared to enquire into the complaints, if there are any, about allotment of wheat to those who are not registered for the open sale or complaints about supply of wheat prior to the application or supply of wheat to someone under pressure. Of the complaints that came to me, I have

handed over two cases to the CBI after thorough enquiry
...(Interruptions)

Some people say that the Government was not alert from the beginning. I would like to say that we have been alert from the very beginning and we took all possible steps when we came to know about the fall in production. First, I raised the question of diversion of foodgrains in the Chief Ministers' Conference. It was followed by the State Food Ministers' conference on 7th August in which I explicitly told them to stop diversion of foodgrains in their respective states. A general complaint which we hear in the Lok Sabha as well as in the Rajya Sabha is that the Foodgrains supplied by the Centre do not reach the fair price shops. This has been the complaint of the people earlier also. We too have been elected to this House by the poor people and are aware of this complaint. With these complaints in view, we have made PDS poor-oriented. I do not want to mention the project which we are formulating in this regard as it is in the final stage. We have also taken up the question of supplying foodgrains to those living below poverty line. I have gone into the complaints received at the state-level about diversion, black marketing, hoarding and corruption in the supply of foodgrains. Not only that, we have withdrawn the rescinding order of Foodgrains control and Licensing order dated 30th September, 1994. Under the provision of this order, there was no limit on stock of wheat and the traders associated with the trade wheat, flour and other wheat products were free to stock any quantity of these commodities. But we have rescinded that order.

SHRI PINAKI MISHRA (Puri) : When did you issue this order?

SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV : This order was issued on 8th. Mr. Pinaki Mishra, excuse me, I had written to the States on 22nd July telling them that they should take it seriously. In democracy, we have to take the opinion of the States. We believe in giving more powers to the State.

SHRI NITISH KUMAR : When did you receive the opinion of the States?

SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV : Some States responded on 8th and some in the last week of October. I do not want to mention about some of the states or else they would stand exposed...(Interruptions) The order regarding hoarding limit has been issued to all the States and it is for the States to fix the limit to give this order a practical shape. All should display the stock position in their shops. Under this order of the Central Government all shopkeepers having licence for stocking and sale of wheat are supposed to display their stock position. Not only that, they should display information regarding the sale price of wheat products as well. Wheat products such as flour, maida, suji which were in the OGL earlier have now been put in the restricted list. Now onwards, these items cannot be exported freely. Another decision which we have taken is that all

cooperatives under the control of the Central Government, such as Super Bazar or Kendriya Bhandar would be issued as much wheat as they require. But the condition in their case would be that they would not sell it at more than Rs. 6.40 per kg. The hon. Members who live in North Avenue can go and see for themselves how much wheat and wheat products are being sold through Super Bazar. There are 218 such outlets in Delhi. Although, this is a state subject, yet we have taken initiative in this direction in Delhi because the Government have taken the rise in prices as a challenge and have made alternative arrangement in Delhi...*(Interruptions)* I invite any of the hon. Members to come to the Super Bazar and they will get it at Rs.6.40 per kg...*(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : Do not ask these things as yet, you may ask them later on.

SHRI GULAM RASOOL KAR (Baramulla) : It is the local Government that is responsible in Delhi and not the Central Government.

SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV : Then I would like to tell you about the position in Super Bazar...*(Interruptions)* Whatever you are saying is incorrect. Do not go by the news reports. I can say it with challenge. First you listen about the steps which I have taken. According to the report of Super Bazar, 4000-5000 bags (10 kgs. each) of wheat flour are selling at Rs.64 per bag daily. As per my information, mobile vans are going to the colonies in Delhi for selling wheat flour...*(Interruptions)* In addition to 218 branches of Super Bazar, 31 mobile vans have also been pressed into service. This initiative is being taken only in Delhi because here the Central Government has the infrastructure.

SHRI JAI PRAKASH AGARWAL (Chandni Chowk, Delhi) : The trucks which you sent to the colonies do not stay there even for an hour...*(Interruptions)* Just listen to me...*(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : You can put your questions later. Let the hon. Minister reply first.

SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV : I have myself visited Madangir, Dakshinpur and Ambedkar Nagar colonies of Delhi to make an inspection there. Since the Super Bazar shop is located at a distant place there, three of our mobile vans had gone there. The people were standing in a queue and were buying wheat flour at the rate of Rs.6.40 per kg. The sign board to this effect was displayed there...*(Interruptions)* Being a colony of poor people, queue was unavoidable. We have issued instructions to accorded priority to jhuggi-jhonpri colonies and slum areas. As soon as we are able to mobilise more resources, we shall be giving attention to other colonies as well, but in the first phase, we are giving priority to slums and jhuggi-jhonpri colonies.

Thereafter, I visited Rajiv Camp in Lodhi Road. There too, I saw a long queue of people buying wheat flour. There are many clusters of jhuggis over there inhabited by poor people. I have personally made on the spot inspection and I promise that after the House rises for the day I shall visit the colonies after 7.00 p.m. and make on the spot inspections. So we are certainly taking initiative. To start with, we have done it in Delhi...*(Interruptions)*

SHRIMATI RAJANI PATIL (Beed) : I am on a point of order.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : You may raise it later. Let the Minister complete his reply.

SHRIMATI RAJANI PATIL : I have with me the cash memo. I bought 5 kgs. of flour at Rs.83 from Super Bazar...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV : I am not yielding.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : Let the hon. Minister complete his reply first. I will allow you later on. You can ask whatever you want at that time.

SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV : I have told you about the special arrangements that have been made in Delhi. If other states want...*(Interruptions)* I am coming to that...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI JAI PRAKASH AGARWAL : What you are saying is not fully correct. I invite you to come with me...*(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : Let him complete the reply first. I shall allow you later on...*(Interruptions)* What is the point of order in it. Under what rule do you want to raise the point of order? I shall allow you later.

SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV : Not only that, we have started a special scheme for Delhi State, but if a State Government request us...*(Interruptions)* I invite you with a challenge to give me in writing if wheat flour is being sold at a price more than Rs.6.40 per kg. in any of the branches of Super Bazar. If any such complaint comes to me, I shall order inquiry into it.

SHRI JAI PRAKASH (Hissar) : The hon. lady Member has the cash memo of Super Bazar...*(Interruptions)* it is just possible that you may not be having this information in your record...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV : If the hon. lady Member gives such complaints to me, I shall welcome it. I shall order an enquiry into it and take action thereon.

We have told the States also that if a cooperative society in the State comes forward to sell flour at the fixed price of Rs.6.40 per kg., orders may be issued to supply them the required quantity of wheat. So, this special scheme can be extended to other States also if they so desire because for us the entire country is equal. All cooperative consumers societies in the States

who come forward for this work will be allotted wheat provided they give an undertaking that they will not sell wheat flour at a price exceeding the fixed price.

SHRI SYED MASUDAL HOSSAIN (Murshidabad) : What about the sales tax?

SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV : I am referring to the sale on 'no profit no loss' basis.

Before, I tell Shri Agarwal about the position regarding fair price shops in Delhi. I would like to tell the House about some of the important decisions which we have taken in this regard. We have decided to import 20 lakh tonnes of wheat. The decision to import wheat has been taken in the wake of fall in wheat production.

I would like to assure the House that we have sufficient quantities of wheat for the PDS, 'Mid-day-Meal' programme and other such welfare schemes.

SHRI NITISH KUMAR : Mr. Minister, where is this 'Mid-day-Meal' scheme running?

SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV : This scheme is run by the HRD Ministry and not by our ministry ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI LALMUNI CHAUBEY (Buxer) : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, one of our lady Member is on her legs quite sometime now and she has been repeatedly saying that she has bought wheat flour at the rate of Rs.10.30 per kg. the day before yesterday whereas the hon. Minister is saying some thing different here ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV : I would request the hon. Member to listen to my point first. The Government has decided to import 20 lakh tonnes of wheat so that the prices could be brought under control, and food sufficiency is maintained and supply of food grains is continued. I would like to make it clear that there was no shortage of wheat for the PDS. Last year wheat was sold at a lower price in the open market than this year. The reason being that last year we supplied 11-12 lakh tonnes of wheat whereas this year it was 5-6 lakh tonnes only. This year's production was low. That is why lesser quantity of wheat was produced this year. In order to maintain a balance between the production and supply of wheat, we decided to make import of 20 lakh tonnes of wheat. At the same time we have authorised the flour or roller mills to make import.

14.59 hrs.

(Shri Chitta Basu in the Chair)

SHRI NITISH KUMAR : Mr. Minister, I would advise you not to make the import. Whatever might be the hardships, the Government should not take recourse to import...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI RAM KRIPAL YADAV : Hon. Nitish Kumarji, you are a farmers' son-and you are opposing import. If import is not made, how to control the profiteers.

SHRI NITISH KUMAR : Only because I am a farmer's son, I am opposing the move to make import.

SHRI RAM KRIPAL YADAV : If import is not made, hoarders will benefit.

15.00 hrs.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, I am talking of Uttar Pradesh ...*(Interruptions)*

AN HON. MEMBER : Wheat cannot go one of Uttar Pradesh...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV : Today is the 16th instant. In the raids conducted on 13th and 14th ...*(Interruptions)* Under the holding limits given to various States raids were conducted in as many as 2271 places in Uttar Pradesh and FIRs registered in these there days...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR GANGWAR (Bareilly) : Mr Chairman, Sir, it is on paper only Not a single raid was conducted ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV : Alongwith this we have since intensified our campaign against black-marketing and hoarding. As Many as 28 cases have been registered ...*(Interruptions)* Gradually we will bring all guilty person to book. ...*(Interruptions)* Licences of 62 shops have been suspended. The compensation amount accounts for Rs. 38,850. The cost of wheat seized is Rs.6,350/-. Similarly, the Government of U.P. ...*(Interruptions)*

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN : The hon. Member should know that the Minister is not yielding. You cannot speak, unless he yields.

[Translation]

SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV : The outcome of the decision taken by the Government has since come.

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN : The Minister is not yielding. Unless he yields, how can you speak? Let him complete his reply and then other things could be taken up.

[Translation]

SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV ...*(Interruptions)* We will check blackmarketing very soon. We will effect control with other will power. Action has since been initiated in that direction...*(Interruptions)* we request all the State, be it Delhi, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Haryana or Punjab, to initiate similar action. If this is done there can be no artificial rise of price of flour on any account.

SHRI JAI PRAKASH AGARWAL : Mr. Chairman, Sir, What the hon. Minister said is correct, but the entire distribution system in Delhi is totally disarranged ...*(Interruptions)* The Public Distribution come under the Government of Delhi...*(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN : Please allow the hon. Minister given reply

(Interruptions)

SHRI JAI PRAKASH AGARWAL : What the hon. Minister say is correct but the Central Government has no control over the distribution system in Delhi.

SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV : Mr. Chairman, Sir, I would like to reply to points raised by Shri Agarwal *... (Interruptions)* It is the responsibility of the State Government to transport foodgrains to F.P.S. The Central Government on its part allots foodgrains to various States. The Central Government has no control over transportation of foodgrains to F.P.S. *... (Interruptions)* The Government allotted 60,000 tonnes of wheat to Delhi last month *... (Interruptions)* Just listen, please *... (Interruptions)* We seek co-operation from hon. Members to detect blackmarketing. They have their Government in Delhi. They should talk to their Government.

VAIDYA DAU DAYAL JOSHI (Kota) : The Prices of wheat have not come down in the market *... (Interruptions)*

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN : Shri Joshi ji, you should understand what I said

(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN : Mr. Minister why are you inviting questions from them?

[Translation]

VAIDYA DAU DAYAL JOSHI : Delhi is not getting wheat *... (Interruptions)* Prices have not receded *... (Interruptions)*

SHRI JAI PRAKASH AGARWAL : The entire system is disturbed in Delhi.

SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV : I am taking it seriously what Shri Agarwal has said. The point raised by Shri Agarwal *... (Interruptions)* Just listen please *... (Interruptions)* It will be done.

VAIDYA DAU DAYAL JOSHI : When will it start?

SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV : It will be done in 7 days *... (Interruptions)* Just wait and watch *... (Interruptions)*

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN : Hon. Minister, you please address the Chair. You should not invite questions from them. You say whatever you have got to say.

[Translation]

SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV : As regard complaints made by the Agarwal against F.P.S.

VAIDYA DAU DAYAL JOSHI (Kota) : Please tell me if prices of wheat have gone down in West Bengal? *... (Interruptions)* The entire responsibility is that of the Food Corporation of India *... (Interruptions)*

SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV : I take seriously when wheat does not reach F.P.S. That is why I have all along requested the States in this regard *... (Interruptions)* It under the control of the State Governments *... (Interruptions)*

VAIDYA DAU DAYAL JOSHI : The hon. Minister said that he would conduct an inquiry within 2 days and show result. Instead of 2 days, six days have since elapsed. What happened to that.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Let the hon. Minister give his reply. Thereafter, you seek any clarification you want *... (Interruptions)*

[English]

You address the Chair and make the points which you want to.

[Translation]

SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV : When Joshiji raised this point I am reminded of a proverb often used in villages *... (Interruptions)* I also come from a village. The proverb is that :

Chalni Dushlakhya Barani Ke.

Jinaka Swayam Sahasra Chhed.

Joshiji, you may not be knowing. Reports of the probe have since been received. The report was completed the day before yesterday i.e. on the 7th day. I assured the House that I will give full information to the House. I also said that I shall conduct an inquiry and ensure accountability by guilty officers. The Government of the United Front would not make any compromise on corruption front, come what may. Since I assumed charge, three access of the FCI were brought to my notice. Many senior Members are sitting here. In no case, a Minister has ever sent a case to the CBI concerning his department. But in my case-concerning my department I referred a case relating to shortage of foodgrains in a FCI godown to C.B.I. The CBI is conducting the investigation. I am not going to say anything more in this regard. The Second case was of Karnal about which Jai Prakashji made a point every day. He has been a friend of mine since the days of Lok Dal. I referred the Karnal case also to the offence cell of the CBI on the contrary, I am being charged to be lenient. Office is not a big thing for me. As a Government, we need confidence and co-operation of the people. I appreciate the sentiments of the hon. Members. If any hon. Member notices any case of corruption in the FCI he should let me know *... (Interruptions)*

There was some lacunae in his information.

SHRI NITISH KUMAR : Please reply the points raised by 'Shri Joshi.'

SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV : I am replying the same thing. So far as the point raised by Shri Joshi *... (Interruptions)*

SHRI SATYA PAL JAIN (Chandigarh) : It is not his case. He has raised this matter.

AN HON. MEMBER : ...

VAIDYA DAU DAYAL JOSHI : ...

MR. CHAIRMAN : Mr. Yadav, you have to give the reply, so please do that. If the hon. Members seek any clarification, you can give your clarification thereafter.

SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV : I obey your orders...(Interruptions)

SHRI THAWAR CHAND GEHLOT : I am on a point of order...(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN : Under what rule are you raising the point of order?

(Interruptions)

[Translation]

SHRI THAWAR CHAND GEHLOT : Unparliamentary word has been used against an hon. M.P. It should be expunged from the proceedings.

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN : There is no point of order as the Hon. Member is not saying under which rule he is raising the point of order.

(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN : Hon. Members I am not to be guided by you. You should maintain the decorum of the House.

(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN : What is the point of order?

(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN : You please sit. The hon. Minister is on his legs. Please sit. I am on my legs.

[Translation]

SHRI HANNAN MOLLAH (Uluberia) : I am coming from Jaipur. The Government of Rajasthan had passed orders for keeping 500 tonnes of wheat in the godown.

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN : The hon. Minister has to reply.

(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN : Under which rule are you raising the point of order?

(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN : You have not quoted the rule under which rule you are raising the point of order. So, there is no point of order.

* Expunged as ordered by the Chair.

[Translation]

DR. LAXMINARAYAN PANDEY (Mandsaur) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, in this House no Member can make personal accusation against any other hon. Member. It is there in the Rule. An accusation was made against the hon. Member, Shri Joshi. It should be expunged from the proceedings.

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN : The Chair will examine the proceedings and it will expunged if it is found it is not proper. I have given my ruling.

(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN : How is that? I have given my ruling. The Chair has already given its ruling that if anything improper is there, it will be expunged after examination.

[Translation]

SHRI THAWAR CHAND GEHLOT : I am raising a point of order under Rule-371.

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN : Mr. Minister, you reply whatever you have got to say.

(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN : That point has been taken up. Resume your seat, please.

[Translation]

SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV : As regards the point made by hon. Shri Joshi...(Interruptions)

VAIDYA DAU DAYAL JOSHI : Rajasthan's quota of 60,000 tonnes have been sold...(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN : Mr. Minister, you should always address the Chair. You are not required to mention the names of the Members and then reply to them.

[Translation]

SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV : A probe by the secretariat has been ordered into the third case that has come to my notice...(Interruptions)

AN HON. MEMBER : What the hon. Member sitting behind the hon. Minister is talking about. Can he not dissuade the hon. Member from talking?

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN : I have not permitted you.

(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN : That has already been expunged. Nothing is to be recorded.

(Interruptions)*

* Not Recorded.

[Translation]

SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV : I deputed an officer to probe the case. The out come of the probe will be given within 2-3 days' time...*(Interruptions)* There are laud talks at one Delhi. There are 36204 tonnes of wheat in our godown located in Mayapuri, C.T.O Okhla, Narela, Devra, R.P. Bagh any Shakti Nagar in Delhi. Besides, we have a stock of 36204 tonnes of rice. We allotted 60,000 tonnes of foodgrains to Delhi in a month. But Delhi lifts only 46-47 thousand tonnes of wheat at a time. This time they lifted 40,000 tonnes. They lift a lesser quantity because they have no godown facility. They cannot arrange trucks. We told them that we will provide them as much wheat as the number of trucks they make available. They say that they cannot lift more than 2,000 tonnes. Actually, they lift only 1.5 thousand tonnes.

MR. CHAIRMAN : How much more time you want.

SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV : I need another 5 minutes. We are capable of providing as much wheat as the Government of Delhi can lift.

SHRI KRISHAN LAL SHARMA (Outer Delhi) : Is the Government prepared to provide as much of wheat to the Government of Delhi as they have demanded in their letter.

SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV : Yes, we are prepared. The hon. Member raised this point on the 28th. I held meetings with the Food Minister of Delhi on 3rd and 4th instant. I asked them to lift 3,000 tonnes of wheat everyday. They said that they do not have sufficient trucks, nor they have godowns, then where to store the stock. They said that they cannot lift more than 2,000 tonnes. As such we decided to give 2,000 tonnes per day.

Even that much wheat they are not able to lift. I, therefore, request the hon. Member to see that wheat allocated by the Centre reaches the F.P.S. in full. Shri Agarwal rightly said that it is the responsibility of the Centre Government to reach wheat but it is for the State Government to distribute the same to F.P.S. through their network. Monitoring is also their responsibility...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI KRISHAN LAL SHARMA : Does this decision apply to all the states or to Delhi only...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV : Finally, I would like to make a submission.

MR. CHAIRMAN : This is not a question answer session. What you want to say you say.

SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV : Mr. Chairman, Sir, the Central Government allocates foodgrains to all the States for the P.D.S.

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN : He is not yielding.

[Translation]

You are a senior leader. You should know, there is some rule.

SHRI GANGA CHARAN RAJPUT (Hamirpur) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, in Uttar Pradesh...

SHRI NITISH KUMAR : Mr. Chairman, Sir, you say that there should be same rule. We do agree to that.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Please take your seat, let the hon. Minister conclude.

SHRI GANGA CHARAN RAJPUT : ...*(Interruptions)*

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN : Mr. Rajput, your remarks are not going on record. Nothing goes on record, except the Hon. Minister's speech.

[Translation]

SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV : Mr. Chairman Sir, be it Uttar Pradesh or any other State of the country the wheat quota for the P.D.S. has not been reduced and demand of various States has been fulfilled after due consideration I seek the co-operation of hon. Members for further strengthening the P.D.S. From among the States, Delhi was given 40 thousand tonnes. Accordingly each household should have got 16 kilograms. But it has not been given as has been rightly pointed out by Shri Agarwal. I also admit it. I expect the State Government to discharge its responsibility. I sent a departmental team and ascertained the situation I am unfolding the mystery that only 33 per cent people were given foodgrains from the F.P.S. I do not want to hide this fact.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Please complete.

SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV : I am concluding in 5 minutes. The State Government is responsible for blackmarketing because only 33 per cent people got wheat from the F.P.S.

MR. CHAIRMAN : As you said, 5 minutes have since been over.

SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV : I am concluding in a minute. Mr. Chairman, Sir, not only that a subsidy of Rs. 10,000 crore is being given for the F.P.S. The Government of India gives a subsidy of Rs.6000 crore to the Department of Food and Rs.4000/- crore to kerosene. A total of Rs. 10,000 crore is spent on subsidy. But the needy are the poor do not get as much quantity of foodgrains as they ought to get. I would, therefore, request the hon. Members to initiate action in this direction in their respective States. I have issued directives for constituting a monitoring committee. Guidelines have been issued to all the State to take selected persons from Panchayats and blocks in the committee. Monitoring should be intensified by forming committees comprising villages Pradhans, social workers

Not Recorded.

and block officials at the block, district and State levels so that more and more needy people than the present 33 per cent get foodgrains.

Before concluding, I would like to take up the point raised by Shri Pinaki Mishra about norms of buffer stock. He said that norms of buffer stock are a decade old. Hon. Member is a very vigilant member. The norms for buffer stock were prepared in 1989-90. There are the guidelines for buffer stock to be followed at the beginning to each Five Year Plan. A task force which will remain valid from 1997 to 2002 has been constituted. The continuous growth of population has been taken into account in its recommendations. The new structure of the buffer stock is in its final stage.

SHRI PINAKI MISHRA (Puri) : The hon. Minister should yield for 30 seconds. Does the Minister recognise that 2 millions tonnes of wheat were imported this year? Last year 2 million tonnes of wheat were imported. Four years ago we exported sugar and 2 year ago we imported sugar. Is it not system failure. Is buffer stock not a system failure. Then what is it? Six months ago the Government knew that there will be a shortage of two million tonnes. Now the Government is going to make import. Nitish Kumar ji has rightly said this.

[English]

Now we are heading for wheat scam.

[Translation]

The multinationals of... (Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN : There should be some rules to run the House. Please give a chance to the hon. Minister to given his reply. After he concludes you can seek clarification. Please help me. If you get up in the middle and seek clarifications.

[English]

The he goes on to another point. In this way there cannot be a fruitful discussion or a debate in the House.

SHRI PINAKI MISHRA : But he has yielded.

MR. CHAIRMAN : That does not mean that I should also yield to you... (Interruptions) Hon. Minister may kindly complete the reply within the time that he has promised. After that, some hon. Members may be allowed to put some questions by way of clarifications... (Interruptions) Let him complete... (Interruptions) Please take the House seriously.

[Translation]

SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV : Mr. Chairman, Sir, the apprehensions of the hon. Member will be removed. Perhaps he does not have any idea about us. I have already mentioned earlier that this United Front Government will not make any compromise with any matter of corruption. I have already initiated action in this regard. So far as the matter of export and import is concerned I would like to say that when there is shortage

of foodgrains, then it is imported and if we have surplus we export it. Therefore, the apprehensions of the hon. Member are baseless and I would like to tell him that it is our first duty to provide sufficient foodgrains to people of our country by all means. For this thing we can go to any extent. Our Government can go to any extent to make available foodgrains to poor people.

VAIDYA DAU DAYAL JOSHI (Kota) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, the hon. Minister of Food has given a detailed statement. I would like to add one more thing for investigation that the FCI officials, who sold wheat from Medaka, Swai Madhopur in Rajasthan, have charges Rs.15 per quintal as premium. The hon. Minister should also inquire into it as to what for this premium has been charged. In addition to it, I would like to say that at present wheat is being sold to the traders, so traders from Rajasthan should be given wheat in Rajasthan... (Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN : You are senior Members.

VAIDYA DAU DAYAL JOSHI : When wheat is available in local FCI godowns then this Government should direct FCI that traders of Maharashtra should get wheat in Maharashtra and traders of Punjab should get in Punjab. It is not justified that traders of Rajasthan should go to Punjab for purchase of wheat.

SHRI NITISH KUMAR : Mr. Chairman, Sir, we have been listening to lengthy reply of the hon. Minister but his reply is not satisfactory. His reply has given rise to many apprehensions. It has been stated by the Minister that there is shortage of wheat... (Interruptions) You can also deliver a lecture, who forbids you.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Mr. Nitish Kumar ji, you are a senior member.

SHRI NITISH KUMAR : Sir, the hon. Minister has stated in his reply that the Government is going to import 20 lakh tonnes of wheat. From his reply the gravity of crisis cannot be estimated. In spite of these facts the Government is going to control the prices of wheat. I do not know under what circumstances the Government has decided to import wheat. Now the Prices of wheat have increased in the international market and our Government is going to import at this juncture. I have cautioned the Government to be very careful. If the production of wheat has decreased then the production of rice has increased. Therefore, the Government should take people into confidence and make proper distribution from the existing stock. I would remind the hon. Minister that when he was an MP, we, under the leadership of Shri V.P. Singh, went to Bombay Port for Satyagrah against the import of wheat. At that time we warned the Government that if it imports wheat, we would not allow the ship to unload it at Bombay Port. And now the present Government is taking a similar decision. Mr. Chairman, Sir, this scarcity has been created by the hoarders. The hon. Minister has admitted that it is an artificial scarcity, so he should deal with this artificial scarcity by taking some administrative

measures. Instead of doing it he is going to import wheat by spending our precious foreign exchange reserve. This will ultimately affect our farmers during the next season of wheat. Therefore, in the end, I would like to caution the hon. Minister that he should be very careful so that in the days to come, there may not be any wheat scam which may put him in trouble.

SHRI JAI PRAKASH AGARWAL : Mr. Chairman, Sir, it is good thing that the hon. Minister has made everything clear in the House. It is true that State Government of Delhi is not responsible for this scarcity. This Government is allocating wheat and also providing wheat flour to the people of Delhi through Super Bazar...*(Interruptions)* I would like to know that if the State Government of Delhi fails to provide wheat and wheat flour to the poor people, will the Central Government make available essential items to the poor people through its distribution centres or through its mobile outlets? Are you going to take such steps?

MR. CHAIRMAN : All right, Please sit down...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI AMAR PAL SINGH (Meerut) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, I will take only one minute. My question has not replied...*(Interruptions)*

15.36 hrs.

(At this stage Shri Amar Pal Singh stood on the floor near the Table)

MR. CHAIRMAN : Please go to your seat.

15.36 hrs.

(At this stage Shri Amar Pal Singh went back to his seat).

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN : Mr. Amar Pal Singh, you speak for one or two minutes.

(Interruptions)

[Translation]

SHRI AMAR PAL SINGH : Sir, I will take only one minute to make submission.

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN : Hon. Minister, please be brief and specific.

[Translation]

SHRI AMAR PAL SINGH : Sir, in my submission, I had stated the plight of sugarcane growers in Uttar Pradesh. Mill owners are not paying their dues and growers have gone to the High Court. I had suggested that with a view to check arbitrary behaviour of mill owners, the khandsari units should be made licence free and they should be allowed the crushing capacity upto five thousand quintals. I would like to know as to what the hon. Minister is going to do about it?

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN : Mr. Minister, you please continue to reply.

[Translation]

SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR GANGWAR (Bareilly) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, the hon. Minister has told about Delhi but he has not said anything about Uttar Pradesh. What arrangement has been made for 15 crore people of Uttar Pradesh. We have been drawing your attention towards the situation in Uttar Pradesh...*(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN : Mr. Minister, you please continue to reply.

SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV : Just now, one hon. Member raised a matter of premium...*(Interruptions)* The wheat, that is sold in open market...*(Interruptions)* Earlier it was given to the rate of Rs. 415 per quintal...*(Interruptions)*

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN : He is replying.

(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN : I think, one or two senior Members from the opposition party should also make it clear to their Members.

[Translation]

SHRI CHAMAN LAL GUPTA (Udhampur) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, just now it was said from the Chair that every one would be given chance...*(Interruptions)* It is not a good thing...*(Interruptions)*

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN : Either you yourself regulate the business of the House or your will have to rely on the decision of the Chair. I cannot allow everybody to stand up and ask questions. Therefore, excuse me. The hon. Minister may kindly reply.

[Translation]

SHRI RAM KRIPAL YADAV (Patna) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, I will take one second only. My question is very important...*(Interruptions)* The prices of wheat are very high in the open market so I would like to ask the hon. Minister whether he would make some arrangement to provide wheat to the poor people through PDS in reduced rates?

SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV : Mr. Chairman, Sir, just now one hon. Member has asked about premium. I will conclude in one minute. Earlier what was sold by FCI at Rs. 415 per quintal in the open market which was later on raised to Rs. 441 and now it is being sold at Rs. 490 per quintal. Since we are selling it in the open market, so we have reduced the subsidy on it.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Mr. Minister, I have allowed Shri Joshiji, Shri Nitish Kumar and Shri Agarwal, so their points should be replied.

SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV : Mr. Chairman, Sir, I have just now replied to the point raised by Shri Joshiji that there is no question of premium. No earnest money would be charged from the cooperative establishment but other institutions would have to pay 10 per cent earnest money...*(Interruptions)*

DR. LAXMINARAYAN PANDEY : Mr. Chairman, Sir, the hon. Minister is not giving satisfactory reply to questions of hon. Members. Some hon. Members asked question regarding the price of wheat and availability of wheat but the hon. Minister could not give a satisfactory reply. Under such circumstances there is no use of sitting in the House. Therefore, I would request the hon. Minister that either he should give proper oral reply or give a written reply to the questions raised by hon. Members...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI THAWAR CHAND GEHLOT (Shajapur) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, no clear reply is being given by the hon. Minister. Position regarding wheat stock in the country is not good. People are not getting wheat...*(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN : Mr. Minister, I think, you noted the points raised by the Ministers. I would suggest that you should send written replies to them.

SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV : All right, Sir.

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN : Shri Joshi, I want to draw your attention. Please ask your Members to sit down.

(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN : Shri Nitish Kumar, you know the procedure of this House. The Minister has agreed and I have also asked him. The Minister would or might have taken down all the points that have been raised.

(Interruptions)

[Translation]

SHRI NITISH KUMAR : Mr. Chairman, Sir, I have raised matter regarding import of wheat. It is an important point...*(Interruptions)*

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN : Shri Nitish Kumar, please sit down.

DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI (Allahabad) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, since we are not satisfied with the answer of the hon. Minister we are walking out.

15.44 hrs.

At this stage, Dr. Murl Manohar Joshi and some other hon. Members left the House.

15.44¼

MULANA AZAD NATIONAL URDU UNIVERSITY BILL

MR. CHAIRMAN : Now, the House will take up further consideration and passing of the Maulana Azad National Urdu University Bill, 1996.

[Translation]

SHRI JAI PRAKASH AGARWAL (Chandni Chowk-Delhi) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, all this has been done by the Delhi Government.

MR. CHAIRMAN : We are on the other topic.

[Translation]

SHRI JAI PRAKASH AGARWAL : If it is all right, but those who were raising slogans...*(Interruptions)*

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN : Mr. Sivaprakasam is on his legs.

*SHRI D.S.A. SIVAPRAKASHAM (Tirunelveli) : Hon'ble Chairman, I would like to extend my support to the Bill to form Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Urdu University which has been introduced by Hon'ble Minister for Human Resource Development. It will be a welcome move to start Universities for all the Indian languages especially the ancient and classic languages.

Some of us have got a tendency to ignore English as a foreign language. But we must not forget that it was English that united this country to what it is today. Prior to English, much before Britishers could come to this country, it was Urdu that united the major parts of this country.

Urdu language and its cherished traditions of arts and culture have pervaded into the Indian society. Urdu literature definitely has its welcome impact on other Indian language literature. For instance, in Tamil we have an epic poem called 'Seera Puranam' written by Umaru Pulavar. Probably it is the only epic poem of its kind in any of the Indian languages about one of the Prophets. 'Seera Puranam' means 'great epic'. It is found only in Tamil language.

I am of the view that the setting up of a Urdu University can definitely pave way for the nation's unity and strengthen national integration. This would enable us to have researches on comparative literature. Interaction with other language literature would be possible then. This would enable scholars from several parts of the country to come under one roof. They can work together. This would facilitate the creation of an academic and research atmosphere.

While welcoming this move and the Bill I would like to put forth some of my suggestions too. I wish the

* English Translation of the Speech originally delivered in Tamil.