

Title: Notices of Adjournment Motion regarding sharp increase in prices of commodities like LPG, Kerosene, Diesel, Urea and items distributed through the Public Distribution System (PDS). Mr. Speaker withhold his consent, and notices of Adjournment Motion regarding killing of innocent Sikhs in Jammu & Kashmir and Police action on the students in the campus of Jamia Millia Islamia University. Mr. Speaker disallowed these other two notices.

12.05 hrs.

NOTICE OF MOTION FOR ADJOURNMENT

MR. SPEAKER: Now the House will take up Zero Hour.

SHRIMATI SONIA GANDHI (AMETHI): Our nation is passing through an extremely serious crisis caused by the anti-poor policies of the NDA Government. In a most insensitive manner, the Government has sharply increased the prices of rice, wheat, sugar, kerosene and LPG gas, diesel and urea. This will badly affect our agriculture which has been showing a decline in the past for quite some time now. It is at such a time that a responsible and concerned Government ought to extend its hand of help to lighten the burden of the farmers. Instead of doing so, this Government has increased the price of urea by 15 per cent. The fall in the farmer's income coupled by the rise in the cost of production is causing tremendous hardship thereby pushing our small and medium farmers into desperation. There have been reports of cases of farmers committing suicides. These cases have been reported even from richer farming belts like Punjab and Andhra Pradesh. As if this was not enough, the Government has recently hiked the prices of wheat, rice, and sugar distributed through PDS to those below the poverty line. This increase in the case of wheat and rice, I believe, is 60 per cent....(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. Members, please take your seats.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. Members, please take your seats.

...(Interruptions)

SHRIMATI SONIA GANDHI : The increase in wheat and rice is a staggering 60 per cent and we can well imagine the effect that it will have on the poor people of our country. The increases in the prices of cooking gas and kerosene are also putting tremendous pressure on the middle and lower middle classes.

I believe that the sharp increase in prices has greatly affected those living below the poverty line, the farming community, the middle and the lower middle classes. This, I believe, is an issue of great importance and of great urgency. We believe that it is only through an adjournment motion that we can focus the attention of Government, of the country and of the people on the disastrous effect that these measures will have on the economically weaker sections.

It is for these reasons that I request you, Sir, to admit our Motion for Adjournment so that the matter is discussed threadbare. I do hope that through this Adjournment Motion we can awaken the consciousness of the Government on the folly of its way.

SHRI N.N. KRISHNADAS (PALGHAT): Sir, it is a very serious matter. The entire country is agitated over the tremendous increase in prices of essential commodities, like wheat, rice, kerosene and LPG. ...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: In spite of directions, hon. members continue to bring cellular phones in the chamber. This is a very serious matter.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE (BOLPUR): Please confiscate them.

श्री मुलायम सिंह यादव (सम्मल) : जूबल कर लिया जाए। ₹ (व्यवधान)

MR. SPEAKER: That means, they do not have any seriousness in the House. What is this?

...(Interruptions)

SHRI N.N. KRISHNADAS : Sir, the Government of India, through an executive order has increased the prices of essential commodities, like rice and kerosene, which are given through the Public Distribution System in our country. Today, the people are agitated over this and are struggling against the executive order issued by the Government of India. This step is against the people who are living below the poverty line. I do not know whether the Government is aware of this fact or not. The people who are living below the poverty line are struggling to fulfil

the day-to-day necessities. So, the entire country demand that the Government should withdraw the increase in prices of essential commodities, like kerosene, LPG, fertilizers and especially the foodgrains.

SHRI VARKALA RADHAKRISHNAN (CHIRAYINKIL): Sir, thank you for allowing me to raise an important matter concerning the millions of people of this country. Since Independence we have not faced such a crisis in our day-to-day life. This crisis has affected people who are below the poverty line and it has as well affected the people who are above the poverty line. As you know, Kerala is my home State and it is facing problems in the matter of food grains. During the formation of State of Kerala, that State had an agreement with the Centre, according to which the Central Government would give top priority to supply food grains to Kerala, especially rice. Due to geographical and historical reasons, Kerala is one of the States, which produces cash crops, such as rubber, coconut and cardamom. The land is suited for growing plantation crops. We are producing only forty per cent of our needs....(*Interruptions*) I am not speaking only for the State of Kerala. I am speaking for all the Southern States and other States where the Public Distribution System is in existence. The Public Distribution System has been affected by the recent order of the Central Government. We cannot blame the Public Distribution System. It was efficient and it was appreciated by almost all concerned that it was functioning in a fair manner. The Public Distribution System in Kerala is known as a model for others throughout the country. This was functioning for the last five decades. There have been no complaints with regard to Public Distribution System. Now, the entire system is jeopardised. The entire State of Kerala is facing very very difficult situation.

I would like to raise another issue before this august House. That issue relates to increase in the prices of petroleum products. Is it fair on the part of the Government to do this? The Budget Session is in progress and we were looking into the Demands for Grants of various Ministries.

When the House is seized of this matter, the Minister at the back of the House, even though he promised that he would not raise the price without the concurrence of this House and though he has made a public declaration, has raised the price. The price of petroleum products has been raised to an enormous extent. Our Southern States have been put to a great difficulty. The transport of food materials has become very difficult. The position has become very serious. Never in the history of our country such a situation has arisen. This is due to the wrong policy being followed by this Government in the name of liberalisation, globalisation and privatisation. All these have led to a catastrophe and the poor people are put to starvation. It is impossible for us to proceed.

I understand, the Kerala Ministers are here. The Kerala Chief Minister is here. Tomorrow he is sitting on a *dharna* before the Parliament House. It is for the first time in the history that the Ministers and the Chief Minister of a State have come to the Centre asking for revision of the price of diesel. The Government has created such a bad history. Out State is a federal State. Our Chief Minister, with all our political force, is forced to sit on a *dharna* before this House. The Government has created such a situation and they speak of federalism....(*Interruptions*)

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE : Sir, all of them are supporting us. This is a matter which cuts across even NDA. Therefore, it has to be looked into seriously. They are all supporting it. It is not only the case of the Opposition but also of the ruling party. Therefore, this is a matter which should be seriously looked into. The country is tremendously affected by this.

SHRI P.H. PANDIYAN (TIRUNELVELI): I would like to raise a matter of public importance. I would request you to adjourn the House and discuss the matter which concerns the whole nation, particularly the poor section of our country. We, the Members of Parliament, have been elected by the poor sections of our society. So, we should reflect their views, their aspirations and their expectations. No electoral promise is enforceable in law and that is why though the NDA during its election campaign said that it would not raise the price, even before counting had begun they hiked the price of diesel. Before coming to power, as the care-taker Government, they raised the prices of petrol and diesel. Now, during this inter-Session they have hiked the prices of LPG. They have not even taken the House into confidence. The Parliament should not be the hand-maid of the Executive.

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI (RAIGANJ): They have also by-passed the NDA allies.

SHRI P.H. PANDIYAN : This act of the Government is the negation of livelihood for the poor section of the society. LPG cylinder is being used by the middle class and the poor section of the society daily. I would urge the Government to withdraw the price hike on it.

As far as fertilisers' price hike is concerned, the Government has not been able to classify the gas-based plants and the Naphtha-based plants. They have not been able to distinguish the two scientifically. I would like to ask the

Government whether the capacity utilisation for the initial year in both the gas-based plants and the Naphtha-based plants is 80 per cent.

If the Government is able to classify these fertilizer plants based on the raw material - whether it is gas, naphtha, fuel oil or coal based - and if the reimbursement of the retention price is made by the Government, there cannot be any hike in the price of fertilizer. The Government is not able to follow this procedure scientifically. So, I appeal to the Government to withdraw the hike in the price of fertilizer. I demand and call upon the Government to withdraw the hike in the price of LPG cylinder.

On behalf of the AIADMK Party, we are staging a demonstration before the Collectorate on the 20th of this month on this issue. The whole party is staging a demonstration in Tamil Nadu on this issue.

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA (BANKURA): The hike in the prices of fertilizer, foodgrains and petroleum products is unprecedented. The subsidy on fertilizer was also reduced by the Finance Minister.

श्री प्रमुनाथ सिंह (महाराजगंज, बिहार) : अध्यक्ष महोदय, हमें भी मौका दें।

MR. SPEAKER: You have not given any notice on the Adjournment Motion.

SHRI RAJESH PILOT (DAUSA): The NDA partners also want to speak on this issue, Sir. Let them also be given a chance. We want to hear them.

MR. SPEAKER: What about the hon. Members who have given notices?

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA : The price of urea and DAP has already been increased and it has gone beyond the purchasing power of the farmers. As a result of this what will happen is that there will be less and less consumption of fertilizer and this will affect the agricultural production. Already, last year there was less production by 55 lakh tonnes of foodgrains. This will cause a food crisis. In future we will have to depend on import of foodgrains. Increase in the prices of wheat and rice meant for supply to the people below poverty line has hit them hard.

The scheme to supply ten kilograms of foodgrains to the people below poverty line was started by the UF Government in 1997 at 50 per cent price. This Government has doubled the prices of wheat and rice to be supplied to the people below poverty line through Public Distribution System. If the prices of wheat and rice are doubled - they have already been increased - the people below poverty line will not be able to purchase the foodgrains meant for them. The Government's main purpose is to dismantle the Public Distribution System.

MR. SPEAKER: Please understand that we are not discussing the issue. You may briefly speak on the admissibility of the notice.

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA : The Public Distribution System was started in our country to supply foodgrains and other essential commodities to the poor people and the middle-class people at a lower rate or at subsidised price. But the Government is out to dismantle the Public Distribution System. As a result of this, the prices of all the essential commodities have been increased.

They have increased the price just after the first phase of this Budget Session was over. Bypassing the Parliament, the Government has increased the price of kerosene. Thirty to thirty-five per cent of villages have no electricity. The poor people are using kerosene. Now the price of kerosene has been increased by 151 per cent. This has never been done since Independence.

The price of LPG per cylinder has been increased by Rs.51. Thus, the people below the poverty line and the middle class people have been attacked by the Government by their wrong policy and I demand that our Adjournment Motion should be accepted and we should today discuss the unprecedented rise in the prices of all essential commodities affecting our poor and middle class people.

सरदार बूटा सिंह (जालौर) : अध्यक्ष महोदय, इस मुद्दे पर जो विपक्ष की नेता ने उठायी है, सदन में युनेनिमिटी हो गई है। (व्यवधान)

श्री सुबोध राय (भागलपुर) : अध्यक्ष महोदय, इस सरकार की नीतियों से ऐसा लगता है कि इसने गरीबों के खिलाफ बड़ी बेरहमी से जंग छेड़ने का काम किया है। सरकार आधी रात में यह फैसला करती है कि किस तरह से चीजों की कीमतों में वृद्धि की जाए। जिस तरह से चीजों की कीमतों में वृद्धि की गई है उससे र्शन के सामान की कीमतों में भी वृद्धि हो गई है। आज गांवों में हाहाकार मचा हुआ है। गरीब तबाह हो रहे हैं, छात्र तबाह हो रहे हैं और बड़े पैमाने पर लोग महंगाई की मार से भीषण तबाही के शिकार हो रहे हैं। सरकार ने जिस तरह से मुनाफाखोरों और जमाखोरों को खुली छूट दे दी है आम लोगों की जिंदगी के साथ खिल्वाड़ करने के लिए और उनको लूटने के लिए, मैं यह मांग करता हूँ कि इस महंगाई को बढ़ाने के लिए जो कदम उठायी गयी है उसको तत्काल वापस लिया जाओ और गरीबों को राहत देने का काम किया जाए।

SHRI E. AHAMED (MANJERI): Sir, while supporting the views expressed by the Leader of Opposition and other

leaders to admit the Adjournment Motion for a threadbare discussion, may I submit before this House that this Government has betrayed the hopes and aspirations of the people of this country, mainly the people below the poverty line? There is no increase in the income of the common man. There is no wage increase so far as the labourers are concerned. There is no source of increasing the income of the common man or the poor people in this country whereas the Government has increased their expenditure. The hike in prices of essential commodities, particularly urea and rice, has crippled the entire system in this country.

As regards the public distribution system of a State like Kerala where it has been functioning efficiently, the decision of the Government has jeopardised the entire system. I would like to ask the Government as to why they have taken this stand at the back of this Parliament. This Government takes every decision at the back of the Parliament, whether it is the constitution of the Review Commission to review the Constitution or the price hike of the essential commodities. Everything is taking place at the back of this Parliament. Is it democracy? Is it the functioning of the National Democratic Alliance? The only thing which the Government could do now is to withdraw this price hike forthwith. If not, we request you that we may be given an opportunity to discuss the matter threadbare by our Adjournment Motion.

SHRI RUPCHAND PAL (HOOGLY): Sir, the conscious and cruel decision of this Government to hike the prices of essential commodities, particularly the items of the PDS like rice and sugar, has its inevitable consequences and is a burden being faced by millions of the poorer sections of the people. Throughout the country, demonstrations are being held today. Some of the NDA partners are publicly saying that they are opposed to this hike but they have been a party to this cruel decision. I would request them to come out openly and oppose this decision of this Government and force this Government to withdraw the hike which they have deliberately, consciously and cruelly caused to the people. The whole country is agitated and demonstrations are taking place.

Sir, it is not the question of Public Distribution System only. Even the technically called APL people are also poorer sections of people. So also, there are the middle class people, the lower middle class people. They are all suffering due to increase in the prices of foodgrains, kerosene, LPG, Fertilizer and everything. So, the Government should withdraw the increase in prices. Here is a test before the NDA partners who have been saying publicly that they are opposing it. Let them come out openly and force the Government to withdraw it...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: Those who have given the notices have been allowed. Please understand it. This is a notice of an Adjournment Motion. Please understand the procedure.

...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI RAJESH PILOT : Sir, they have a right to speak during 'Zero Hour'. This is not correct. This is 'Zero hour'. You cannot stop them. You can take the consensus...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: They have not given any notice. How can I take the consensus of the House?

...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI RAJESH PILOT : This is 'Zero Hour'. You cannot stop them.

MR. SPEAKER: This is a notice of an Adjournment Motion. Please understand the procedure. You are a senior Member. You know the procedure also. I have called the names of the hon. Members who have given notice of an Adjournment Motion.

SHRI RAJESH PILOT : I agree with you. They want to share our views. You must allow them. It is a Parliamentary Democracy. Please allow them to speak. They want to speak...(*Interruptions*) The Telugu Desam Party wants to speak. He wants to speak. Let him speak....(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: I have to make my observation. Please understand it.

डा. रघुवंश प्रसाद सिंह (वैशाली) : सर, हमने भी नोटिस दिया है। *(व्यवधान)*

विपक्ष के नेता ने एडजर्नमेंट मोशन का स्वाल उठ्या था। *(व्यवधान)*

MR. SPEAKER: They have not given any notice. Shri Raghuvansh Prasad Singh, you have given notice on another subject and not on this. Please understand it.

...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. Members, Shrimati Sonia Gandhi, Sarvashri N.N. Krishnadas, Varkala Radhakrishnan, P.H.

Pandian, Basu Deb Acharia, Kamal Nath, Madhavrao Scindia, Subodh Roy, Rupchand Pal and E.Ahamed, Members of Parliament, have tabled notices of an Adjournment Motion on the following subject:

"The Government decisions taken recently, causing immense hardship to the people, in particular the economically weaker sections, those below the poverty line and the farmers, which is a direct consequence of the sharp increase in prices of commodities like LPG, Kerosene, Diesel, Urea and the items for those below the poverty line, distributed through the PDS. "

I have heard the hon. Leader of the Opposition Shrimati Sonia Gandhi, and the other hon. Leaders. The matter, of course, is an important one.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: This subject can be raised during the discussion on Motion of Thanks on the President's Address which is listed in the List of Business for today. The matter, of course, is important but it can be raised today itself during the discussion on the Motion of Thanks on the President's Address.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Please hear me.

SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV (SILCHAR): You have taken a decision to hear us. Please hear everybody....(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: This matter can also be raised during the discussion on the Finance Bill also. Therefore, you need not disturb the listed business today.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: I am, therefore, withholding my consent to the raising of the matter by way of an Adjournment Motion.

Similarly, there are other notices of Adjournment Motion from Shri Mulayam Singh Yadav and Shri Raghuvansh Prasad Singh regarding the killing of innocent Sikhs in Jammu and Kashmir, and the notice given by Shri G.M. Banatwalla regarding the police action on the students in the campus of Jamia Milia Islamia University. They can also be raised during the discussion on the Motion of Thanks on the President's Address. Therefore, I am disallowing these notices also.

12.34 hours

(At this stage, Shrimati Sonia Gandhi and some other

hon. Members left the House.)

SHRI P.H. PANDIYAN : This measure of the NDA Government is anti-people. Since the Government has not come forward to the House to withdraw the price hike in respect of LPG, Kerosene and Fertilizer, on behalf of the AIADMK, we are walking out of the House.

12.35 hours

(At this stage, Shri P.H. Pandiyan and some other

hon. Members left the House.)

श्री मुलायम सिंह यादव (सम्भल) : अध्यक्ष महोदय, आपने मुझे मौका और समय भी नहीं दिया.... मैंने (व्यवधान) सरकार के इस कदम से महंगाई बढ़ेगी और विदेशी कंपनियों को बढ़ावा मिलेगा।

इसलिए हमें आपके निर्णय से संतोह नहीं है। सरकार ने बढ़ी हुई कीमतों को वापस नहीं लिया इसलिए हम इसके विरोध में सदन का बहिर्गमन करते हैं।

12.35 बजे

(तत्पश्चात् श्री मुलायम सिंह यादव तथा कुछ अन्य माननीय सदस्यों ने सदन से बहिर्गमन किया।)

