

Title: Demand clarifications regarding sugar and wheat imports.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Now, 'Zero Hour' will have to be confined up to 1 o'clock.

... (Interruptions)

SHRI N.N. KRISHNADAS (PALGHAT): Sir, I have given a notice... (Interruptions)

SHRI VARKALA RADHAKRISHNAN (CHIRAYINKIL): Sir, I have also given a notice ... (Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Yes, that is true. But does that matter that I call you first? Shri Dasmunsi has given a notice and his name is first in the list. Am I not to call him first?

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI (RAIGANJ): Mr. Deputy-Speaker Sir, on 13th of October, the day hon. Prime Minister Shri Vajpayee assumed the office, I wrote him a letter first congratulating him followed by asking him, 'Hon. Prime Minister may kindly provide the information since the name of PMO has been dragged in some news reports pertaining to sugar import from Pakistan.'

Unfortunately, I was not favoured with a reply. Immediately after that, on 9th November, I wrote a further letter to hon. Prime Minister asking, 'kindly apprise me the position involving the name of PMO and involving the name of ISI on sugar import.' I am grateful to the Prime Minister that at least he has acknowledged it on November 16th saying, 'I have received your letter dated November 9 regarding sugar import.'

Mr. Deputy-Speaker Sir, two days before, most of the leading dailies of Pakistan, I quote 'Din', which was reproduced in The Times of India, India on the 8th December, 'that the sugar import issue is now becoming a major issue not in India, but also in Pakistan.'

1228 hours (Mr. Speaker in the Chair)

There are two contradictory reports. Report one is that there is a confessional statement by the son of the then Prime Minister of Pakistan, Nawaz Sharief, 'Yes, he did this and he did it with India.' The other is, his daughter says, 'that it is not true'. I am not going to cast aspersions on those people who are much more sufferings in Pakistan, I am not at all on that subject.

I am on the issue whether on such a serious matter which has been debated and reported in print and electronic media for a number of months for which I have drawn the attention of the hon. Leader of this House and who has acknowledged the document, but not replied in negative or positive manner, the Government does not consider it important Government to spell it out? I would like to place it on record that the then Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh, Shri Kalyan Singh, led a deputation, as Chief Minister, to the hon. Prime Minister that such kind of sugar import might cost heavily to the farmers of this country. He had reiterated his view, while he was in the Office of Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh. I do not know whether he would agree to this now.

In that situation, throughout the country, not only the farming community but also the people in general are feeling that something wrong was there in this whole deal. The name of ISI was taken; the name of PMO was taken; and this deal was made in such a scandalous manner as reported in the media. ... (Interruptions) This is not my allegation. Sir, I am very much within my rights to demand from this Government ... (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Your notice is with regard to import of wheat.

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI: Sir, I am coming to that.

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN): Sir, I have a serious objection. ... (Interruptions)

">SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI: Sir, I am on my legs. Let him reply after I complete. I am not making any allegation. ... (Interruptions)

">SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN: I am not replying. I am talking to the Speaker. ... (Interruptions) Sir, what is the use of giving a notice? He has to raise the subject which you have permitted. He has to raise the issue about wheat import and not sugar import. ... (Interruptions)

">SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, how can he reply before I have completed? This is not proper. Sir, you have to protect me and allow me to express my views ... (Interruptions) I am not levelling any allegation against the Prime Minister or against PMO or against the Government. I want to ascertain the facts from the Government. ... (Interruptions)

">SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN: Sir, I only want him to submit what he has written in his notice. ... (Interruptions)

">SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI: I have written that. ... (Interruptions)

">SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN: He cannot speak on sugar or textiles or whatever he wants. This should not be allowed. Otherwise, Members will give a notice on one subject and speak on another. ... (Interruptions)

">SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI: If I discuss about sugar, is it objectionable? If I discuss about import of sugar, is it unparliamentary? ... (Interruptions)

">MR. SPEAKER: Shri Dasmunsi, please confine to wheat import.

">SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI : Sir, I am confining to that. I may be allowed to speak. My contention is that such a serious matter has been reported both in the Indian media and Pakistan media. ... (Interruptions)

">PROF. RASA SINGH RAWAT (AJMER): Sir, it is highly objectionable. ... (Interruptions)

">SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI : What is objectionable that I am talking? When the very Office of the Prime Minister has been dragged by the print media both in Pakistan and in our country, I wrote a letter to the hon. Prime Minister asking for the information, under what circumstances sugar had been imported and through whom; ... (Interruptions) Is it unfair on my part?

">MR. SPEAKER: Shri Dasmunsi, you have to speak about wheat import and not about sugar import.

">SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI : Sir, I have mentioned about sugar and wheat in my notice. I do not understand why this is being done. I read my notice. It says:

">"The sugar import by the previous Government and the wheat import caused lot of concerns to our countrymen. Several media have reported gross amount of irregularities in such deals. It would be most appropriate that the Government make a statement in this regard immediately; the matter had been taken up twice by our Deputy Leader, Shri Madhavrao Scindia but there was no response. In so far as import of sugar is concerned, we are equally anxious to know about the position in this regard."

">Am I wrong? What wrong have I done? I wanted to know the Government's position in this regard. I asked the Government to clarify under what circumstances they had imported sugar. Who were the importers? Who exported it from Pakistan? All these details can be placed on the Table of the House in order to take the House into confidence. That is what I have demanded. Is it unfair on my part to do that?

">The Prime Minister acknowledged my letter on the 16th November. Today it is 10th December. I have not been favoured with response. So, I take this course to raise it in the House, through you, Sir. If the Government has the sincerity of purpose, let it come out on Monday with a statement and say whether what has been reported in the media of Pakistan and India is totally false and also whether the apprehension expressed by Shri Kalyan Singh, the then Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh, is correct or not. That is all.

">Sir, let the Government respond to this. Sir, yesterday also, they did not respond to the matter pertaining to Mattoo but in the newspaper I find that Shri Advani has gone through the judgement and said something. Today also they are not responding. How do they run the House in this manner? What kind of cooperation do they expect from us if they keep quiet when the vital issues are taken up by the Opposition?

">Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Government must respond and make a statement in this regard. ... (Interruptions)

">SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN: Sir, the Government has already imposed import duty on wheat. It will come before the House ... (Interruptions) Do you not want me to complete? ... (Interruptions)

">SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI : I have not said about that.

">MR. SPEAKER: No disturbance, please.

">SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN: Sir, through the Office, I have got only a notice on wheat. I do not have a notice on sugar.

">About wheat, the Government has already imposed 50 per cent duty, which will come for the sanction of this House in a week or two; the Members can discuss that and the Finance Minister will reply. ... (Interruptions)

">MR. SPEAKER: Now, Shri Krishnadas.

">SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI : Mr. Speaker, Sir, you have to protect me. The Government should say whether they are prepared to make a statement on sugar import in this House.

">Mr. Speaker, Sir, how can they keep quiet? Mr. Speaker, Sir, there is the Prime Minister's acknowledgment. The Prime Minister has acknowledged. Now, you have to come with the facts.

">MR. SPEAKER: Shri Pramod Mahajan, there are two things also - sugar and wheat.

">THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN): I can only give reply on things which have been supplied to me. I do not know about sugar. How can I, on the spot, answer that?

">MR. SPEAKER: In the letter, he has mentioned both sugar and wheat.

">SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN: No letter has been sent to me.

">SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI : I cannot send letter to him. I can send a letter to you, Mr. Speaker, Sir, by way of notice. How can I send letter to the Parliamentary Affairs Minister?..(Interruptions)

">SHRI SHYAMACHARAN SHUKLA (MAHASAMUND): Mr. Speaker, Sir, the House will have to come to some conclusion that all the allegations in the newspapers have been accepted by the Government unless they come out with the facts. (Interruptions)

">SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI : If they take time to verify the files, I can wait. But let them come out with this that they will make a statement in the House on sugar import. (Interruptions) No, Mr. Speaker, Sir, on such matters, this kind of ominous silence of the Government provokes me. I do not want to yield. The Government must react whether they are going to make a statement in the House

or not.

">SHRI SHYAMACHARAN SHUKLA : If they do not deny it, then it is a matter of accepting all the allegations that they are correct.

">SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI : This is not my allegation.

">MR. SPEAKER: The Parliamentary Affairs Minister has already replied. I think the Finance Minister is going to reply. He has already said that.

">SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI : The Parliamentary Affairs Minister has replied on wheat import only. Mr. Speaker, Sir, we deserve at least this much minimum protection from the Chair.

">MR. SPEAKER: What he has said is that the House is going to discuss the import of wheat also. At that time, you can raise it.

">SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI : No, Mr. Speaker, Sir, if they discuss, let us discuss about sugar also.

">MR. SPEAKER: Shri Dasmunsi, at that time, you can mention that.

">SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI : How can I mention? The Government should make a statement.

">MR. SPEAKER: At present, he has agreed that the Finance Minister is going to reply on the import of wheat and he has already said that.

">SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI : It should be both wheat and sugar together. Mr. Speaker, Sir, let it go on record.

">MR. SPEAKER: He has already answered.

">SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI : No.

">MR. SPEAKER: There are 40 Members in the List. What is this?

">SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI : My question is very specific, whether, on such allegations, the Government should clarify their position through a statement on sugar or not. I have demanded nothing more. Why is the Government keeping quiet? (Interruptions)

">THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI L.K. ADVANI): Sir, when this debate comes up, it will be wheat, sugar and everything. Everything will be answered.