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Title: Further discussion on price rise raised by Shri Prabodh Panda on 15.05.2007 (Concluded).

श्री अनंत गंगाराम गीते (रत्नागिरि): महोदय, महंगाई पर मेरा भाषण अधूरा रह गया था। जहां से मैंने खत्म किया था, वहीं से शुरू करता हूँ। मैंने इस बात की तरफ वित्त मंत्री जी का ध्यान आकर्षित किया था कि हर बजट स्पीच में वे कई बातों की घोषणा करते हैं, लेकिन अपने बजट भाषण में उन्होंने महंगाई पर कुछ नहीं कहा, यह बात मैंने अपने भाषण में भी कही थी। यदि मैं गलत बात कहता हूँ तो उसे सुधारने का काम वित्त मंत्री जी कर सकते हैं।

महोदय, आज हमारे देश की जो स्थिति है, उसके तहत एक विषम दृश्य पूरे देश में दिखाई देता है। नई-नई कारें सड़कों पर आ रही हैं। दस लाख से लेकर पांच करोड़ रुपये तक की कारें सड़कों पर दौड़ रही हैं। इसके साथ ही यह भी सच है कि दो वक्त की रोटी के लिए हमारे देश के लोग मोहताज़ हैं और भुखमरी से मर रहे हैं। इसका कारण है - बढ़ती हुई महंगाई। बढ़ती हुई महंगाई को रोकने के लिए मुझे नहीं लगता कि सरकार द्वारा कोई प्रयास किए जा रहे हैं। बजट आने से पूर्व मैंने वित्त मंत्री जी को छोटे किसानों के संदर्भ में एक स्कीम प्रपोज़ की थी, जिसका नाम मैंने 'किसान जीवन योजना' दिया था। इस योजना के तहत हमने चाहा था कि वित्त मंत्री जी इसकी घोषणा अपने अर्थसंकल्पीय भाषण में करें।

महोदय, आज भी देश की 60 प्रतिशत से अधिक आबादी गांवों में रहती है और कृषि पर निर्भर है। उसमें से 50 प्रतिशत छोटे किसान हैं। जिन्हें मार्जिनल अथवा मिनी मार्जिनल किसान कहते हैं। जिनके पास जमीन नहीं है अथवा एक हेक्टेयर से भी कम जमीन है, उसमें से भी कुछ जमीन बंजर होती है। ऐसी स्थिति हमारे देश के हर राज्य में है। ऐसे छोटे किसानों के लिए हमने इस सदन में राष्ट्रीय ग्रामीण योजना का बिल पारित किया। जिसका जिक्र वित्त मंत्री जी ने सदन में किया था और कहा था कि इसके तहत रोजगार की गारंटी दी जाएगी। गरीबी रेखा से नीचे रहने वाले लोगों को हमने रोजगार की गारंटी दी है। किसान अपने खेत में साल भर मेहनत करता है, लेकिन उसे जो कुछ मिलता है, वह मेहनत और लागत से कम होता है। उससे वह अपने परिवार का पालन पोषण नहीं कर पाता है। वह बैंकों से लोन लेता है, लेकिन ऋण इतना बढ़ जाता है कि वह उसे चुका नहीं पाता है और आत्महत्या कर लेता है। मैंने यह सुझाव दिया था कि चूंकि छोटे किसान के पास अपनी जमीन होती है, इस कारण उस पर रोजगार गारंटी योजना लागू नहीं होती है। इसलिए उसके रोजगार को, जो श्रम वह खेत में करता है, उसको राष्ट्रीय रोजगार मानकर, उसके परिवार के किसी एक व्यक्ति को सौ दिन के रोजगार की गारंटी दी जाए।[\[30\]](#)

मैंने लिखित रूप में भी वित्त मंत्री के पास वह योजना भेजी है। वित्त मंत्री उस पर दोबारा विचार करें। यदि सौ दिन की गारंटी दी जाती है तो महंगाई से लड़ने की ताकत उस किसान में आ जाएगी।

मैं एक और सुझाव दूंगा। महंगाई हर साल बढ़ रही है और उसके खिलाफ हर बार नारे भी लगते हैं, उसे रोकने की घोषणा भी की जाती है। जब महाराष्ट्र में शिव सेना और बीजेपी की सरकार थी, तब श्री मनोहर जोशी वहां के मुख्यमंत्री थे, उन्होंने महंगाई को रोकने के लिए और गरीबों को राहत देने के लिए एक योजना शुरू की थी। पीडीएस योजना जो बहुत लोकप्रिय योजना है, उसके तहत गरीबों और गरीबी रेखा से नीचे रहने वाले लोगों, अनुसूचित जाति एवं अनुसूचित जन जाति, आदिम जाति के लोगों को सरती दर पर अनाज मिलता है। यह एक अच्छी योजना है जिस के माध्यम से गरीबों को अनाज मिलता है। शिव सेना-बीजेपी सरकार ने महंगाई के खिलाफ लड़ने के लिए एक निर्णय किया कि जब तक हमारी सरकार रहेगी, पांच साल तक पांच चीजें गेहूं, चावल, एक दाल, एक खाद्य तेल और चीनी के दाम एक ही निर्धारित रहेंगे। हमने पांच साल तक उनके दामों को बढ़ने नहीं दिया। इसके वहां अच्छे नतीजे प्राप्त हुए। सरकार को इसके लिए जो भी सबसिडी देनी पड़ी, वह सरकार ने अपनी तिजोरी से दी लेकिन पांच साल तक पीडीएस में देने वाली चीजों के दाम जो पहले दिन थे, वही पांचवें साल के आखिरी दिन तक रहे। यदि यह सरकार सचमुच महंगाई के खिलाफ लड़ना चाहती है तो केन्द्र सरकार हमारी सरकार द्वारा लिए गए निर्णय के मुताबिक ऐसा निर्णय ले। इसके लिए चाहे जितने साल पांच या दस निर्धारित करें। हमारी सरकार ने उस बीच में पीडीएस में देने वाली पांच चीजें गेहूं, चावल, एक दाल, एक खाद्य तेल, चीनी यानी पांच चीजों के दाम बढ़ने नहीं दिए...[\(व्यवधान\)](#) यह भी कहा कि कैरोसिन जो अनाज पकाने के लिए लगता है, उनके दाम बढ़ने से रोकेंगे।

सभापति महोदय : छ: आइटम्स हो गए।

श्री अनंत गंगाराम गीते : कैरोसिन मिला कर छ: हो गए।

सभापति महोदय: अब आप समाप्त करें वरना सात आइटम्स हो जाएंगे।

श्री अनंत गंगाराम गीते : सात तक बढ़ने की आवश्यकता नहीं है।

सभापति जी, यदि यह योजना शुरू नहीं करेंगे तो हम महंगाई के खिलाफ लड़ नहीं सकते और उसे रोक नहीं सकते हैं। गरीबों पर महंगाई की सबसे अधिक मार पड़ती है और भुखमरी के कारण उनके

पास आत्महत्या के सिवाय कोई चारा नहीं रहता। उसे कम से कम इस बात की गारंटी मिल जाए कि एक-दो-तीन या कम से कम पांच साल के लिए पीडीएस में एक ही दाम पर ये सारी चीजें मिलेंगी। मैं चाहूंगा कि केन्द्र सरकार इस प्रकार की योजना की यहां घोषणा करे तभी हम उन्हें महंगाई से राहत दिला सकते हैं अन्यथा नारेबाजी के अलावा महंगाई पर रोक लगाना किसी के हाथ नहीं है।

SHRIMATI ARCHANA NAYAK (KENDRAPARA): Sir, I may be permitted to speak in Oriya.

*Mr. Chairman, Sir, 'Price Rise' is a problem of the common man. The common man expects the Government to control the prices of essential commodities and to protect his interest. But the escalation of prices today has hit him hard. And the worst affected are the poor, the farming community, the labourers and the workers who are in the unorganized sector. These are the people who live life on very uncertain terms. They have nothing to fall back upon. They face natural calamities, an unregulated market system, the loan-burden of the local money-lender and several other problems. Out of desperation they commit suicide. They have no social security measure to protect them. The Government claims to have taken steps to give social security to the workers in the unorganized sector. But the tangible impact is yet to be seen.

The Government takes pride by claiming that the economic growth rate is very satisfactory. Both our Prime Minister and Finance Minister are learned economists. Even then they fail to see the ground realities. The economic growth has resulted in making the rich more richer and the millions below the poverty line poorer. We need to do self-introspection as to why even after 60 years of independence starvation deaths still take place, bonded labourers still toil hard and helpless farmers still commit suicide. Prices of essential commodities are sky-rocketing, but the primary producers of these commodities are not getting their due. The unregulated market system has failed to give the farmers any sense of security. The market today is being controlled by a small minority. That is why the farmer is not even getting back his input cost in terms of investment. The

* English translation of the speech originally delivered in Oriya.

Government takes credit that it has flooded the economy with loan-facilities, for the farmers. But the reality is, when a farmer approaches a nationalized bank for loan, he gets nothing but harassment. He gets frightened by all those complicated terms and conditions of the bank. He then runs to the local money-lender to borrow money on a hefty interest rate.

Agriculture in our country depends mostly on the vagaries of nature. Sometimes nature plays havoc. Natural calamities destroy crops and the quantum of return gets adversely affected. Farmer fails to pay back the loan and the burden pushes him to commit suicide. In this context the crop insurance provision should come to the rescue of the hapless farmer. But that does not happen. The reason being administrative bottlenecks. The administrative unit to disperse insurance amount till now remains the block. Many a times political parties have demanded in this House that Panchayats and not blocks should be taken as the unit. But that has not happened. The Government is yet to come out with a concrete policy in this regard. For many agricultural products the Government has not fixed a price. I would like to cite the example of 'Turmeric'. A few days ago turmeric producers had sat on a 'Dharna' at Jantar Mantar. In the absence of a pricing policy the turmeric cultivators are selling turmeric at Rs. 20 per Kg. to the middlemen. Whereas we, the consumers are buying the attractively packaged turmeric at Rs. 100/- per Kg. So you can well guess how severely the farmer's interest is affected. The Government should announce a minimum support price for turmeric and there should be more number of Government depots to sell the produce at a fixed price. In the absence of a fixed price the farmer is indulging in distress sale. The middlemen are snatching away the profits of the farmers and controlling the markets. The Government has no authority or control over these market forces. Since the farmer is not getting his expected return from agriculture, he is giving up his age-old profession. As a result, quantum of production is on a decline. Once upon a time we as a nation were self-sufficient in foodgrains. Now we are importing the same from outside. In the name of industrialization cultivable lands are being handed over to private players. Recently the Government has given permission to private companies to open retail chain of stores on agricultural lands. Gradually our market will go to the hands of the Multi National Corporations and the Government will have no control over them.

The impact of price-rise can be known from the recently held Assembly election results of different states. The debacle of the ruling elite in this election is certainly due to price-rise. Even the Government has acknowledged the fact. Unless something is done quickly the Government will bear the consequences. Thus I urge the Government to be cautious and mend its ways. The price of essential goods should be controlled. The PDS system should be more efficient and people-oriented. The market should be freed from the clutches of black-marketeers and profit-seeking unscrupulous elements. The people should get protection and their interest should be the foremost priority of the Government.

15.00 hrs.

श्री राम कृपाल यादव (पटना) : सभापति महोदय, मैं आपके प्रति आभार व्यक्त करता हूँ कि आपने इतनी महत्वपूर्ण चर्चा पर मुझे चर्चा करने की अनुमति प्रदान की है। मैं समझता हूँ कि पिछले कई सत्रों में, शायद ही कोई ऐसा सत्र होगा, जबकि हम सभी लोगों ने महंगाई पर चर्चा न की हो। मगर सरकार कोई ठोस उपाय नहीं निकाल पा रही है। मूल्यों पर नियंत्रण नहीं हो रहा है। हम आम लोगों को परेशानियों से बाहर नहीं निकाल पा रहे हैं। आज हम सत्तापक्ष में इधर बैठे हैं, जब हम उस तरफ प्रतिपक्ष में थे तो हमारा जनता के बीच में जाने का सबसे महत्वपूर्ण मकसद या कोई समस्या अथवा संघर्ष था तो वह संघर्ष महंगाई के विरुद्ध था। महंगाई का मुद्दा लेकर हम अराम के बीच में गये थे, लेकिन क्या हो रहा है? क्या महंगाई कम हुई है? इस पर हमें आत्म-मंथन करना चाहिए। हमें अपने अंदर झांकना चाहिए कि हम जो वायदा जनता से करके आये थे, क्या हम उस वायदे पर खरे उतर पाये हैं? मैं समझता हूँ कि हम उस वायदे पर खरे नहीं उतर पाये हैं।

महोदय, मैं एक छोटा सा उदाहरण देना चाहता हूँ। माननीय वित्त मंत्री जी जी.डी.पी. की बात कहते हैं, विकास दर की बात कहते हैं और कई तरह की तकनीकी भाषाएं बोलते हैं, जो आम लोग नहीं जानते हैं, जो गांवों में रहते हैं। इस देश की 75-80 फिसदी आबादी जी.डी.पी. और विकास दर के बारे में नहीं जानती है। आम आदमी को बस भूख मिटाने के लिए रोटी मिले, नमक मिले, वह इसका ख्याल कर रहा है। हम अपने हृदय पर हाथ रखकर कहें कि क्या हम उनकी भूख मिटा पा रहे हैं। क्या उन्हें रोटी और नमक भी दे पा रहे हैं। हम अपने आपसे पूछना चाहते हैं। आपका जी.डी.पी. और विकास दर बढ़ रहे हैं, यह अच्छी बात है। हम इसके लिए माननीय वित्त मंत्री जी को धन्यवाद देना चाहते हैं। लेकिन मैं महसूस करता हूँ कि इससे आम लोगों को कोई फायदा नहीं हो रहा है और यह आप भी महसूस करते होंगे। मैं आपको बताना चाहता हूँ कि पिछले तीन वर्षों से हमारा शासन है और इन तीन वर्षों में हम लोगों ने जो वायदे किए थे कि आम लोगों को राहत देने का काम करेंगे, महंगी चीजों के दाम घटाएंगे। लेकिन वे घट नहीं पाये। मैं आपकी इजाजत से महंगाई की एक झलक प्रस्तुत करना चाहता हूँ। हमारे जीवन के लिए आवश्यक वस्तुओं में गेहूँ, चावल और दाल मिनिमम नीड है। मैं आपको इसके रेट में बता रहा हूँ। वर्ष 2004 में हम इन लोगों को हटाकर सत्ता में आये थे। वर्ष 2004 में गेहूँ 950 रुपये प्रति विन्टल था, लेकिन आज वर्ष 2007 में हम यह 1700 रुपये प्रति विन्टल गेहूँ ले रहे हैं। ... (व्यवधान) आपको मिलता होगा। चावल 940 रुपये प्रति विन्टल था, अब 1090 रुपये मिल रहा है। चावल बासमती 2900 रुपये था, वह अब 4400 से 4600 रुपये में मिल रहा है। दाल अरहर 2300 रुपये बढ़कर 3200 रुपये प्रति विन्टल मिल रही है। दाल उड़द 1600 रुपये थी, अब 4000 प्रति विन्टल मिल रही है। चीनी 1225 रुपये से बढ़कर 1700 रुपये प्रति विन्टल मिल रही है। सरसों का तेल 810 रुपये था, अब यह 910 रुपये में 15 लीटर मिल रहा है। इसके अलावा आम लोगों के उपयोग की चीजों में चाहे सब्जियां हों, फल हों या अन्य चीजें हों, उन सबकी कीमतें भी आसमान छू रही हैं। आखिर इसकी क्या वजह है? क्या हमने इसकी तह में जाने का काम किया है? क्या जीडीपी से हमारा पेट भर रहा है? कभी संसेवस के बारे में और न जाने क्या-क्या बातें होती रहती हैं, जो हमारे जैसे साधारण आदमी की समझ में नहीं आती हैं। मैं समझता हूँ कि इसे माननीय वित्त मंत्री जी जरूर समझाएंगे। मैं आपको बताना चाहता हूँ कि महंगाई बेलगाम बढ़ रही है। आखिर इसका कारण क्या है? हम इसकी तह में नहीं जा रहे हैं। आज बीस करोड़ लोगों की रोटी का सवाल है। इन लोगों को नमक और रोटी भी मिल जाए तो ठीक है। लेकिन शिवशे और ठेले वाले, खेत खलिहान में काम करने वाले, पान वाले, बीड़ी वाले आदि लोगों की तरफ हम शायद ध्यान नहीं दे रहे हैं। इस देश में दो तरह की व्यवस्था रही है। यह आज कोई नई बात नहीं है, एक बड़े लोगों का भारत है और दूसरा आम लोगों का भारत है, जो गांवों में बसते हैं। हो सकता है कि हम प्रयास कर रहे हों और जो इस देश के सुविधाभोगी लोग हैं, जिनकी आबादी तीन से चार परसेंट है, उनके लिए हर सुविधा देने का काम कर रहे हैं। [b31]

मगर खेत और खलिहान में काम करने वाले 75 प्रतिशत लोग आज परेशानी और बदहाली की हालत में हैं। जब तक इस देश के 75 प्रतिशत लोग परेशानी और बदहाली में रहेंगे तब तक आने वाला दिन शुभ संकेत देने वाला नहीं है। मध्यम परिवार के लोग आज तूटि-तूटि कर रहे हैं। वे महंगाई की मार झेल रहे हैं और बहुत ही बदहाली में हैं। जब आप जनता के बीच में जा रहे होंगे और आप स्वयं जनता का प्रतिनिधित्व पिछले कई वर्षों से कर रहे हैं। आपको खुद एहसास होता होगा कि हम क्या कर रहे हैं? क्या कहकर आए थे और क्या करने का काम हम लोग कर रहे हैं। स्थिति बहुत ही भयावह है। अगर हमने अपने आपको नियंत्रित करने का काम नहीं किया, मैं माननीय वित्त मंत्री जी से कहना चाहता हूँ कि अगर हमने कोई ठोस उपाय करने का काम नहीं किया तो जनता हमें माफ नहीं करेगी। मैं आपके माध्यम से बताना चाहता हूँ कि कुछ काम किये जा सकते हैं।

बुनियादी जरूरतों को हम पूरा नहीं कर पा रहे हैं। किसान आज परेशानी और बदहाली में हैं। माननीय सदस्य आज चर्चा कर रहे थे कि किसानों का उत्साह खेत के प्रति कम हो रहा है और शहर के प्रति ज्यादा लगाव हो रहा है। वे अपना खून-पसीना एक करके जो उत्पादन कर रहे हैं, उन उत्पादित वस्तुओं की कीमत हम उन्हें नहीं दे पा रहे हैं। उस उत्पादित सामान का सही मूल्य भी हम नहीं दे पा रहे हैं। उनका खेती के प्रति आकर्षण कम हुआ है और हम उसके उपाय भी नहीं कर रहे हैं। हम किसानों की कितनी मदद कर रहे हैं? जो किसान अपना खून-पसीना एक करके हमें खिलाने का काम कर रहे हैं, हम उनकी कितनी मदद कर रहे हैं? उनके प्रति हमारा क्या बजट गया है? इसकी तरफ हम गौर करने का काम नहीं कर रहे हैं। उनका अगर खेती के प्रति उत्साह घटेगा और खेती के प्रति उनका रुझान अगर खत्म हो जाएगा क्योंकि इस देश की व्यवस्था खेत और खलिहान पर निर्भर करती है। इसलिए मैं आपके माध्यम से सरकार से निवेदन करके बताना चाहता हूँ कि आज हमारी उत्पादन क्षमता घट रही है क्योंकि हम उनको सुविधा नहीं दे रहे हैं।... (व्यवधान)

सभापति महोदय : आपको दिया गया समय समाप्त हो गया है।

श्री राम कृपाल यादव : सर, आप कहेंगे तो मैं बैठ जाऊंगा।

सभापति महोदय : आपके पांच मिनट हो गये हैं। एक प्वाइंट और कह दीजिए।

श्री राम कृपाल यादव : महोदय, जो मैं बोल रहा हूँ। मैं सत्ता पक्ष का हूँ और इस सरकार के प्रति हमारा कर्तव्य है। लेकिन मैं पीढ़ा में बोल रहा हूँ। इसमें कोई राजनीति नहीं है। अगर आप ठीक हो जाएंगे तो आने वाले दिनों में हम भी ठीक हो जाएंगे।... (व्यवधान) इसलिए ये लोग हंस रहे हैं। आप लोगों का ही किया करारा सब कुछ है। आपने जमाखोरों और कालाबाजारियों को प्रोत्साहित करने का काम किया है।... (व्यवधान) इनके कार्यकाल में ही जमाखोर और मुनाफाखोरों की संख्या में बढ़त हुई है। पूरे सदन को इस महंगाई को कम करने पर विचार करना पड़ेगा। इस मुद्दे पर एक होना पड़ेगा तभी महंगाई कम हो सकती है। जिस कमिटीमेंट के साथ हम सब को हमारी जनता ने, सौ करोड़ से अधिक

लोगों का जनप्रतिनिधित्व करने के लिए यहां पार्लियामेंट में भेजा है, उस जनता के लिए कुछ करिए। आपस में लोग लड़ रहे हैं। सदन का समय जाया कर रहे हैं, ... (व्यवधान) गांठी-गलौज कर रहे हैं और एक दूसरे को नीचा दिखा रहे हैं। लेकिन जिस देश की जनता ने हमें इतना बड़ा सम्मान दिया, इतने बड़े सदन में हम लोगों को भेजने का काम किया, उसके प्रति हम अपने दायित्वों का निर्वहन करने का काम नहीं कर रहे हैं। इसलिए प्रतिपक्ष के साथियों के लिए अब सोचने का समय आ गया है। माननीय आडवाणी जी बैठे हैं, अटल जी बैठे हैं, हमारी मैडम सोनिया गांधी जी बैठी हैं, पूणव मुखर्जी जी बैठे हैं, गुरुदास जी तथा सदन में अन्य महत्वपूर्ण साथी बैठे हैं। मैं कहना चाहता हूँ कि सब लोगों को विचार करना पड़ेगा और विचार करके महंगाई को नियंत्रित करना पड़ेगा।

वादा बाजार से आप आवश्यक वस्तुओं को क्यों नहीं निकाल रहे हैं? आपने पिछली दफा किसी एक चीज को निकाल दिया। काम खत्म हो गया। पीडीएस को आप क्यों नहीं स्ट्रैथन कर रहे हैं? पीडीएस के माध्यम से गरीब लोगों को अनाज देने का काम हम लोग करते थे। आज पीडीएस की हालत बहुत खराब है। वादा बाजार के अन्तर्गत अन्य दूसरी सामग्री को आप क्यों नहीं ला रहे हैं ताकि आप मूल्य पर नियंत्रण कर सकें और महंगाई कम करने का काम कर सकें? आप ऐसा नहीं करेंगे। मुझे पता नहीं कि आपकी क्या मजबूती है, क्या कारण है? मैं नहीं जानता कि आपकी क्या मजबूती है कि क्यों नहीं आप महंगाई कम कर पा रहे हैं? लेकिन मैं आपको बताना चाहता हूँ कि यदि महंगाई पर नियंत्रण नहीं किया गया तो उसके बहुत ही दुष्परिणाम भुगतने पड़ेंगे। उत्पादन और आपूर्ति में संतुलन करना पड़ेगा। ... (व्यवधान)

सभापति महोदय : अब आप अपनी बात समाप्त करिए।

श्री राम कृपाल यादव : सर, आवश्यक वस्तुओं के भंडारण और वितरण की व्यवस्था भी आपको ठीक करनी होगी। आवश्यक वस्तुओं की जमाखोरी और कालाबाजारी पर नियंत्रण करना होगा। मैं माननीय प्रधान मंत्री जी का धन्यवाद करना चाहूंगा जिन्होंने राज्य के दूसरे मुख्य मंत्रियों से अपील की थी। अधिकांश तौर पर जहां हमारे प्रदेश के दूसरे मुख्य मंत्री आपको सहयोग नहीं करेंगे। लेकिन मैं कहना चाहूंगा कि सत्ता, शासन आपके हाथ में है। आप नियम बनाइए और यहां से नियंत्रित करने का काम कीजिए। आपके पास विजिलेंस है। आपके पास जानकारी प्राप्त करने के अन्य संतु उपलब्ध हैं। [s32] आप सीधे जमाखोरी को जेल भेजिये, जो जमाखोरी करके गरीबों का हक मारने का काम कर रहे हैं, महंगाई बढ़ाने का काम कर रहे हैं। ये सामने बैठे हुए लोग जमाखोरों और कालाबाजारियों के बल पर हैं। आज इनके कारण यह स्थिति हुई है। मैं अंत में महंगाई रोकने के कुछ पाइंट्स बताना चाहता हूँ।

सभापति महोदय, खायान्न, खाय तेल, दालें और अन्य आवश्यक वस्तुयें वायदा बाजार के दायरे से बाहर रखी जायें। आवश्यक वस्तु कानून और उपभोक्ता कानून की फिर से समीक्षा की जाये और उसके लिये सख्त कानून बनाया जाये ताकि जमाखोरों और कालाबाजारियों के खिलाफ दंडात्मक कार्यवाही हो सके जो सरकार नहीं कर रही है। केवल मुख्यमंत्रियों को लिखने से काम चलने वाला नहीं है। सरकार निर्देश दें और कानून में सख्ती लाये। दालों के निर्यात पर पूर्ण प्रतिबंध नहीं है जिसकी वजह से बहुत मुश्किल हो रही है। मेरा सरकार से आग्रह है कि वह पीडीएस को और मजबूत बनाये। यदि इसका दायरा कम हो तो इसके दायरे को और बढ़ाया जाये। आवश्यक वस्तुओं की आपूर्ति की जाये ताकि गरीब लोगों को सस्ते दामों पर वस्तुयें मिल सकें।

15.11 hrs. (Mr. Speaker in the Chair)

कृषि उत्पादन को बढ़ाने के लिये सरकार किसानों को सिंचाई, उन्नत बीज, कृषि उपकरण और कीटनाशक दवायें सब्सिडाइज्ड दामों पर दिलायें। किसान उपजा रहे हैं और हम लोग खा रहे हैं। सरकार को कृषि उत्पादन के लिये प्रोत्साहन देना चाहिये। मैं सरकार से पूछना चाहता हूँ कि वह क्यों नहीं किसानों को प्रोत्साहित कर रही है? मूल्य नियंत्रण करके बाजार में वस्तुयें उपलब्ध करानी चाहिये। अगर इन चीजों पर लगाम नहीं लगाया तो महंगाई पर नियंत्रण नहीं हो सकेगा, इससे हमारा भविष्य अंधकारमय हो सकता है। हम आज भी इस नारे के समर्थक हैं - दाम बांधो नीति सरकार की ओर से लागू होनी चाहिये। हमारे गुरु डा. लोहिया जी ने नारा दिया था जिसे मैं रिकार्ड पर लाना चाहता हूँ - "महंगाई रोकने, बांधो दाम, नहीं तो होगा चक्का जाम।" अगर महंगाई नहीं रुकी, गरीबों को राहत नहीं मिली तो हम जैसे लाखों-करोड़ों कार्यकर्ताओं को मजबूर होकर सड़क जाम करना होगा। हम लोगों को सरकार को बाध्य करना होगा। हमारे प्रति जनता और गरीब लोगों की आस्था है, विश्वास है, उसका प्रतिनिधित्व हम लोग करते आये हैं, इस सरकार को चुपचाप समर्थन देने के लिये हम लोग नहीं आये। हम सरकार को समर्थन जरूर देंगे लेकिन उसके गलत कामों की ओर उसका ध्यान भी दिलायेंगे। अगर आप सुधरेगे तो महंगाई पर नियंत्रण हो पायेगा। मेरा निवेदन है कि गरीब लोगों को राहत देने का काम कीजिये, हम चुप बैठने वाले नहीं हैं। ... (व्यवधान)

अध्यक्ष महोदय : क्या चक्का जाम करने से भाव कम होगा?

श्री राम कृपाल यादव : अध्यक्ष महोदय, हमारे पास चक्का जाम करने के अलावा कोई हथियार नहीं है और लोकतंत्र में यही हमारा एक हथियार है। अगर सरकार काम नहीं करेगी तो उसका खमियाजा उसे भुगतना होगा और हम लोगों की नाराजगी का खमियाजा भुगतने के लिए सरकार को तैयार रहना चाहिये।

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): Mr. Speaker, Sir, we are discussing a sensitive and important subject. On the side of the treasury benches as well as on the side of the opposition, there is a common concern about price rise, which we call inflation, and how it affects the common man. Like my good friend Shri Ram Kirpal Yadav, who spoke last mentioned, this debate occurs from time to time, in fact in every session. Price rise occurs because of a variety of factors. In fact I saw some smiling faces from the other side when Shri Yadav compared the prices of today with the prices that existed three years ago. Likewise, we can compare the prices that existed three years ago with the prices that existed nine years ago; and we can compare prices that existed nine years ago with the prices that existed ninety years ago. [MSOffice33]

[a34] What we must understand is, I say with respect, not trying to tell anyone what he or she does not know that prices rise because incomes rise, because wages rise and because demand rises. ... (Interruptions) Please listen to me, I may be right or I may be wrong. Prices of commodities, prices of gold, prices of wheat, prices of rice, say 15 years ago, are not the same as today. What we are trying to moderate is the increase in the rate of the rise which is what we measure as inflation. In no country

the prices do not rise. Even in most developed countries, prices rise by two per cent. The Maastrich limit is that prices should not rise beyond three per cent a year. The Reserve Bank of India says in India, given our economic situations, prices should not rise beyond 4.5 per cent to 5 per cent a year. The Government has said and I say this - it is our goal to keep the inflation to around 4 per cent to 4.5 per cent a year. So prices will rise. What we are collectively debating is as to how to moderate the price rise, keep it within limits so that as wages and incomes rise, people will not be burdened with the price rise. That is the core of the issue before us and, therefore, I want to take a few minutes to explain why there has been a spurt in prices today and why is it different from the spurt in prices say four or five years ago and what measures the Government is taking to moderate the price rise.

Sir, while the WPI which is the usual measure to measure inflation is around 5.6 per cent today, two weeks ago it was close to 6.7 per cent. There has been a moderation in the last two weeks. It is too early to say whether that moderation will continue, but I am hopeful that it will continue. The primary reason behind this inflation rate is what we call the Primary Articles Group. The Primary Articles Group consists of food articles as well as other primary non-food articles. In this Group, price rise has been 10.84 per cent on April 28, 2007.

Sir, I want to take this opportunity to briefly list the causes behind this and I also wish to place the present inflation in context. Broadly speaking, there are five reasons behind the present inflation. Firstly, the world-wide increase in the commodity prices, particularly crude oil. Now crude oil this morning was at 67 dollar a barrel. You will recall that some months ago, it moderated to about 50 dollar a barrel. The Government reduced prices twice by two rupees and one rupee a litre on petrol and diesel. But crude oil prices have climbed back to 67 dollars a barrel. The metal prices have hardened year on year by about 57 per cent in the year 2006. In recent times, in no calendar year has metal prices increased by 57 per cent. In India, the metal prices have increased by 11 per cent as on April 28, 2007. Let me illustrate with a few examples. The international price of the Indian basket of crude oil increased from 47 dollars US per barrel in May 2005 to a peak of 71.29 dollars in July, 2006. It came down to about 52 dollar a barrel in January, but since then it is climbed back to 67 dollars a barrel. The price of US red hard wheat which was 152 dollars per metric tonne in calendar 2005, went up to 212 dollars per barrel in October, 2006. Similarly, the price of palm oil which we import in large quantities, per metric tonne went up from 422 dollars in 2005 to 707 dollars in April, 2007.

The prices of copper per metric tonne went up from \$ 2866 in the calendar year 2004 to \$ 7766 in April, 2007. There is a three-fold increase. Iron ore during the same period went up from \$ 38 to \$ 77. In metals, there was a large increase in prices of lead, nickel, tin and virtually every metal. All this clearly impacts the Indian Industry, the Indian Manufacturing and all the downstream activities. We have no control over these prices. Some metals are produced in India. But most of the metals, and a large quantity of metals, are imported by the Indian Industry. We import palm oil. We import crude oil....(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: What is this? This is very improper. This is very unfair. The Minister is replying to a very important debate. If he is interrupted like this, how will he reply? If you have anything to say, you can say later on. I cannot allow this. This is very unfair.

...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: He cannot go on replying to your running commentaries.

...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: All of you are very knowledgeable. I am sure, you have made your contribution. Let him reply. You are passing a judgment on every sentence. This is not the way of conducting a debate.

...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: I am trying to point out why there is price rise. ...(*Interruptions*) I would ask the hon. Members to kindly extend the courtesy of allowing me to give you the reasons behind this price rise.

I will come to wheat, paddy and sugar-cane in a moment. At the moment, I am talking about the primary articles group which is triggering inflation. The primary articles group is growing by over 10 per cent. These prices have an impact upon the Indian Industry, have an impact upon the Indian consumption because palm oil is one of the primary articles. Wheat prices are decided by wheat prices the world over. Wheat prices have hardened in India as he has just now pointed out. The world over, wheat prices are hardening. The farmers in India expect a much higher price when they find that international prices are growing, international prices are increasing. Palm oil does impact prices here because edible oil prices the world over harden. It has impact upon the farmer here. He expects a higher price. The point is that we are talking about primary articles group in which all articles have showed a very high price the world over thanks to a variety of reasons. The main reason is that there is a huge demand in some countries, especially China and India.

I come to the second reason. The second reason is the supply-demand mismatch. I have said this before. I want to say this again. It has nothing to do with last year or the last two years. Look at what has happened. The supply-demand mismatch in essential articles started with sugar. I am coming to the very points that you want to know. It started in the middle of 2005....(Interruptions) It started in the end of 2005 with sugar. When the new crop of sugar-cane came and sugar prices moderated, sugar prices have moderated by almost Rs.3 to Rs. 4 a kilo. It extended to wheat. Now it has extended to pulses. We must understand why the supply-demand mismatch is there and for how long the supply-demand mismatch will be there.

The area under food-grains has stagnated between 120 million hectares and 125 million hectares for the last ten years....(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Unless he yields, I cannot allow you. I am sorry. I cannot allow you. Nothing is to be recorded.

*(Interruptions)**

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Prabhunath Singh, I beg of you to sit down. This is not the way of doing things.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: What are you doing? I do not know. Do you want to dictate how the Minister should reply? Then, what are you doing? This is very unfortunate. I can only say it is very unfortunate.

...(Interruptions)

* Not recorded

MR. SPEAKER: In this important forum, a very important issue is being discussed. You are not allowing the Minister to reply.

*(Interruptions)**

MR. SPEAKER: Nothing is heard by anybody in this world.[\[R35\]](#)

I am appealing to all the leaders to control their Members. A Minister is replying to a debate on a very important matter concerning the common people and you are not listening to him. Is this the way for the House to function? I will not allow this.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: I am sorry, I cannot allow this. Please do not record anything.

*(Interruptions)**

MR. SPEAKER: If you do not want to hear him, I will conclude the debate.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI RAJIV RANJAN SINGH 'LALAN' (BEGUSARAI): He is defending price rise. *...(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: What are you talking?

...(Interruptions)

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: Sir, if I give the reasons why there is price rise, they are saying I am justifying price rise. Let them understand what I am saying. They wanted to know why there is price rise. I am trying to tell them why there is price rise and what steps we are taking to control it. *...(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: I find that Members are not willing to listen to the Minister. This has become a disease with us.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: If he yields I will allow. You know how parliamentary debate is conducted.

...(Interruptions)

* Not recorded

श्री प्रभुनाथ सिंह (महाराजगंज, बिहार): अध्यक्ष महोदय, माननीय मंत्री जी के इस प्रकार के उत्तर से तो प्राइस राइज को और बढ़ावा मिलेगा। इसलिए हम लोग सदन से बहिर्गमन करते हैं।

15.26 hrs.

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(At this stage Shri Prabhunath Singh, Shri Rajiv Ranjan Singh 'Lalan' and some other hon. Members left the House.)

SHRI ANANTH KUMAR (BANGALORE SOUTH): He is defending the price rise. ...(Interruptions)

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: Nobody is defending the price rise. ...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Please do not record anything.

(Interruptions)* “

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: Sir, at the risk of repetition, let me say nobody is defending the price rise. If hon. Members wish to appreciate the steps which the Government is taking and if they wish to suggest what steps the Government should take, I respectfully submit that first we must try to understand – and I am trying to explain to the best of my ability – why this price rise has taken place and then I will tell them what measures we are taking. ...(Interruptions) I am sorry, that is not correct. ...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: If you have delivered the judgement that it was due to the wrong policies, then the Minister need not reply.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: Sir, it seems they do not want to know why it is happening. ...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Please do not record anything.

(Interruptions)* “

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Finance Minister, unless you yield, I will not allow anybody.

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: I am not yielding.

* Not recorded

MR. SPEAKER: Please go on with your reply.

श्री. रासा सिंह रावत (अजमेर): अध्यक्ष महोदय, ...(ब्यवधान)

अध्यक्ष महोदय : यह बहुत दुःख की बात है कि इतने सीनियर मॅम्बर भी बैठे-बैठे इंटरप्ट करते हैं।

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: Sir, if we shut our eyes to these facts, we will not be able to find an answer. These are facts which stare at our face. We cannot shut our eyes to these facts. These are underlying causes. We must address the underlying causes, not the superficial wounds. I am trying to explain what are the underlying causes and what steps we are taking to address the underlying causes.

The first is – and I say this with respect, please bear with me – that the area under foodgrains has stagnated between 120 million and 125 million hectares. Of this, the area under wheat has stagnated between 25 million and 27.5 million hectares and

the area under paddy has stagnated between 41 million and 45 million hectares. This is the position for the last 10 years. Leaving the outlier years, the production of wheat has stagnated between 68 million and 73 million tonnes and the production of rice has stagnated between 85 million and 91 million tonnes. ...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI GURUDAS DASGUPTA (PANSKURA): Who has to take responsibility for this? ...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: I will answer that. ...(*Interruptions*) Sir, I am grateful to them that now they are asking me why there is stagnation. But, at least, first let me lay the ground work. I will now deal with why there is stagnation.

Sir, productivity has also stagnated. In the case of wheat, the productivity has stagnated for the last 10 years at 2700 kg. per hectare and in the case of rice it is approximately 1,950 kg. per hectare. These are structural issues in agriculture. ...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Minister, please do not respond to this. I once again appeal to hon. Members not to disturb the Minister. If I find that Members are not willing to listen to him, I will close the debate.

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: The structural issues in agriculture can be addressed only if we increase the irrigated area of land, only when we increase irrigation facilities, introduce new seeds, rationalize the use of fertilizers, provide storage and post-harvest facilities, improve production and productivity. There are no short-term answers to the problems that afflict our agriculture. Agriculture requires long-term answers. Given these structural deficiencies and structural difficulties, what are the steps we are taking to address the price rise, I am coming to that in a moment.[\[R36\]](#)

[T\[r37\]](#)he third reason, it may surprise you, is public expenditure is on the rise and justifiably so because of the flagship programmes of the UPA Government, because of the NCMP commitment to increase expenditure in the social sector, especially, education and health. Public expenditure has doubled or trebled in many sectors.

As expenditure increases, demand increases. When there is a certain amount of stagnation in the supply side, when demand increases, it has an effect on prices. We must recognize that this public expenditure is something which Parliament has consciously voted upon. We have not taken counter cyclical measures of reducing public expenditure because it will affect the poor people, because education will be neglected, because health will be neglected, because the road building programme will be neglected.

Year after year, this House has voted larger public expenditure. I have come to this House with larger outlays. I defend those outlays. They are necessary, they are justified. Let us recognize that they will have an impact on prices.

Under the third reason, let us take, for example, Minimum Support Price of wheat. Should the Minimum Support Price of wheat be increased or not? It should be increased. When you increase the Minimum Support Price of wheat, as we have done and increased it to Rs.850 per quintal – in fact, in three years we have increased...(*Interruptions*)

श्री. विजय कुमार मल्होत्रा (दक्षिण दिल्ली) : 700 रुपये से 1400 सौ रुपये हो रहा है...([व्यवधान](#))

MR. SPEAKER: No please, unless he yields, I will not allow.

...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: Do not record a word.

(*Interruptions*)* â€¦

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: I would request Md. Salim to please try to understand the reasons...(*Interruptions*) Nobody is blaming him...(*Interruptions*) All that we are trying to say is that these are the reasons...(*Interruptions*)

Sir, just now you heard...(*Interruptions*)

MD. SALIM (CALCUTTA – NORTH EAST): Sir, we are walking out in protest.

15.32 hrs.

(*At this stage, Md. Salim and some other hon. Members left the House.*)

श्री मोहन सिंह (देवरिया) : महंगाई को मंत्री जी जस्टीफाई कर रहे हैं। 1200 रुपये वर्कौटल पर बाहर से अनाज मंगवा रहे हैं, इससे महंगाई तो बढ़ेगी ही...([व्यवधान](#))

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: Nobody is justifying it! (Interruptions)

SHRI GURUDAS DASGUPTA (PANSKURA): Sir, we are not satisfied with the reply, so we are walking out.

MR. SPEAKER: He is stating all the facts.

15.33 hrs.

(At this stage, Shri Gurudas Dasgupta, Shri Anant Gangaram Geete
and some other hon. Members left the House.)

MR. SPEAKER: Let there be peace after they walked out.

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: Sir, they should listen to me, after all I have listened to all of them...(Interruptions)

* Not recorded

MR. SPEAKER: Nothing is being recorded.

(Interruptions) * !

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: Sir, I will answer them. If they want the figures for six years, I will give them those figures...(Interruptions) Please have patience for five minutes...(Interruptions)

प्रो. विजय कुमार मल्होत्रा : जब आप जानते थे तो आपने कॉमन मिनीमम प्रोग्राम में क्यों लिखा?...(व्यवधान)

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: Sir, if Shri Malhotra will be patient, I am going to refer to the figures in their Government...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: I think, enough is enough.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: No, I do not allow. Senior Members are behaving in this fashion.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI KINJARAPU YERRANNAIDU (SRIKAKULAM): Is he happy with the price rise?

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: Is he happy? I am not happy, he is not happy.

MR. SPEAKER: Please do not record a word.

(Interruptions)* !

MR. SPEAKER: No questions please. Mr. Finance Minister, do not respond to any unauthorized question.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: Sir, take, for example, the Minimum Support Price of wheat. We are proud, we are happy that we have been able to give Rs.850 per quintal. This was Rs.620 per quintal and we have increased it to Rs.850 per quintal...(Interruptions)

प्रो. विजय कुमार मल्होत्रा : उसके साथ जोड़ने का कोई मतलब नहीं है...(व्यवधान)

* Not recorded

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Malhotra, this does not behove your status. यह अच्छा नहीं लगता है। You are opposing every sentence.

...(Interruptions)

PROF. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA : Sir, we are not satisfied with the reply, so we walk out.

15.34 hrs.

(At this stage, Prof. Vijay Kumar Malhotra, Shri Braja Kishore Tripathy
and some other hon. Members left the House.)

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: Sir, Mr. Ananth Kumar made some very interesting and controversial points. He said that the period...(Interruptions) He should listen to this now...(Interruptions) He says, 'in 1979-80, presumably referring to the rule of Janata Party, we witnessed the lowest inflation'. I wish to remind him that in 1979-80, the WPI inflation was 17.12 per cent, one of the highest in the decade...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Only the Finance Minister's statement will be recorded.

(Interruptions)*

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: Sir, Vajpayeeji and Advaniji will bear me out, in 1979-80, the inflation was 17.12 per cent and coupled with that there was a negative GDP growth. The GDP growth was minus 5.2 per cent...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Please carry on, Mr. Finance Minister.[\[r38\]](#)

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: Sir, he provoked me to point this out. Mrs. Indira Gandhi led the Congress Party to a resounding victory in March 1980. She took two years to moderate the inflation and put the country back on the growth path. It took two years. Go back to the figures. ...(Interruptions) You asked for the figures and you are getting them. I will talk about NDA Government now....(Interruptions)

* Not recorded

MR. SPEAKER: Do not write. Nothing will go on record.

(Interruptions)*

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: Likewise, there is a myth that the period of the NDA Government witnessed low inflation. I am not justifying it; I am not scoring debating points; it is not my intention to say this. But if I am taunted again and again, before I outline measures, I have to give these figures. I have pointed out more than one occasion, in three out of six years the average inflation was more than 5.4 per cent. It was 5.9 per cent in 1998-99; 7.2 per cent in 2000-01; 5.5 per cent in 2003-04. This will interest Shri Ananth Kumar if he is listening to it somewhere. The year 2000-01, in 48 out of 52 weeks, inflation was over 6 per cent; in 22 of those weeks, it was over 7 per cent; during 12 of those weeks, it was over 8 per cent, hardly a record to be proud of. As the NDA Government was laying down office on 1st June 2004, inflation had once again touched 6 per cent. These inflation figures must also be correlated to growth figures. The average GDP growth in the first five years of the NDA Government was 5.32 per cent. Even if we add the sixth year, which witnessed high growth on the back of very low growth in the previous year, the average comes to only 5.85 per cent. Hence the NDA Government can be characterized as a period of low growth together with moderate to high inflation. What is the record that he is proud of? I admit that last year, average inflation was 5.4 per cent. I said it in my Budget Speech. But in three out of the six years it was over 5.4 per cent. Nobody asked at that time why is inflation over 5.4 per cent; nobody asked what are the reasons for that inflation. Did you not say that inflation is high because of the demand being high? Did you not say that inflation is high because commodity prices are high? Did you not say that inflation is high because production is low and supply is low?

* Not recorded

How do the economic reasons change from regime to regime? How do the economic causes change from Prime Minister to Prime Minister? We are trying to understand as to what is happening to the economy in India, in the world. We are trying to understand the reasons and I am trying to explain how each of these reasons is being addressed.

Sir, I take no comfort from the facts that I pointed out about 1977-80 or 1998-2004. I take no comfort at all. Let me assure Vajpayeeji and Advaniji, I take no comfort at all. All I am pointing out is that we must try to understand what the underlying causes are. Unless we address the underlying causes, we cannot moderate price rise to a level which is accepted as tolerable today, which is about 4 per cent to 4 ½ per cent.

After the UPA Government took over in May 2004, we succeeded in moderating inflation to below 4.5 per cent by June 2005. For most of the next 12 months, it remained around 4.5 per cent. In fact it touched a low of 3.3 per cent in August 2005. I concede that beginning June 2006, there has been an upward movement of WPI. We are here to discuss the reasons for rise in prices and I shall do my best to explain the steps taken by the Government to moderate inflation. I may add that WPI we touched a high of 6.5 per cent in February-March appears to be moderating. For the week ending 28th April, WPI was 5.66 per cent. This is still above the range indicated by the RBI; it is still above what I would call the tolerance level of the people of India. Every effort is being made to moderate inflation to below 5 per cent and brings it close to 4.5 per cent. At the same time, I wish to point out to the hon. Members that the growth in the three years of UPA Government has averaged 8.6 per cent, a full three percentage points higher than the average growth in the NDA Government or in any decade in the past since Independence.

I have given three reasons. I will very quickly say that the fourth reason is this. The higher rate of growth of GDP has stimulated higher demands for goods and services. This is reflected in high growth of credit as well as in the fact that many industries are working in near-full capacity. Take for example cement. As a result, pricing power has returned to manufacturers and sellers.

Finally, I come to the large capital flows. I am sure, Vajpayeeji and Advaniji will understand, as many do, if they only will shed their masks and understand the real reason. Look at the capital flows into the country.

[R39] FDI net increased from 2.4 billion in 2003-04 to 3.7 billion in 2004-05 and 4.7 billion in 2005-06. On a balance of payment basis, FDI, in the first nine months of 2006-07, increased by 5.8 billion, and the year has ended with FDI of 16 billion. Strong flows under the different items of the Capital Account resulted a large capital flow. Take, for example, remittances. Remittances, last year, are estimated to be 26 billion dollars to 28 billion dollars; FDI is 16 billion dollars; export earnings come in; ECB comes in; and as a result, foreign currency assets of RBI grew by unprecedented 46.8 billion dollars in 2006-07, of which the valuation gain is 10.8 billion.

These are the five reasons why there is pressure in prices, high demand, high capital flows, and high commodity prices. The fact that public expenditure is high especially in the flagship programmes in respect of education and health, justifiably so. We justify this expenditure. These are the reasons why prices have been under pressure.

What are we doing to deal with this? There are only three broad sets of measures that can be taken to moderate prices. The first is fiscal measures. Now, a number of fiscal measures have been taken. As against the normal applicable duty of 50 per cent, we allowed private import of wheat at five per cent, we made it zero duty; customs duty import of pulses has been brought to zero; import duty on palm oil has been cut twice, first by 10 points and again by 12.5 points. We are maintaining the tariff value. Customs duty on cement has been made zero. Peak rate of basic customs duty of non-agricultural products has been reduced to 10 per cent, selected raw materials and capital goods have been reduced to 5 per cent to 7.5 per cent. Additional customs duty and counter-veiling duty on edible oils has been removed. Customs duty on sun flower has been reduced by 10 percentage points and again by 15 percentage points. Excise duty on petrol and diesel has been reduced. Excise duty on a large number of food products has been reduced. Therefore, on the fiscal side, whatever steps can be taken in customs and excise have been taken, and we are willing to take more fiscal steps if the hon. Members have any suggestions.

Now, I come to the monetary measures. RBI has taken a number of monetary measures. The Cash Reserve Ratio has been increased by 25 basis points each on six occasions – on December 23, January 6, February 17, March 3, April 14 and April 28 – to reach 6.5 per cent. The repo rate has been revised upward five times in 2006-07 by 25 basis points on each occasion to reach 7.75 per cent.

RBI has also increased the risk rate for several sectors. Year after year, credit is growing by 30 per cent; non-food credit is

growing by 30 per cent. RBI has moderated it because we do not want overheating in some sectors. RBI is moderating it without affecting growth.

So, monetary steps have been taken. We are willing to take further monetary steps, and we will take more monetary steps. But fiscal and monetary steps work in the medium to the long-term. The immediate problem is how to augment the supply side. Unless the supply of wheat, the supply of sugar, the supply of pulses, the supply of milk and the supply of rice are enhanced or augmented immediately, there will not be any moderation in inflation. Take, for example, sugar. It is a classical example. We had poor sugarcane crop and, therefore, the output of sugar was low and the sugar price was high. But what happened last year? We had a bumper sugarcane crop. Now, the farmers are saying that sugarcane is not being taken by the factory. One or two farmers are reported to have committed suicide because sugarcane is not being taken by the factory. There is a glut of sugarcane and the price of sugar has collapsed. The price of sugar has reduced by four rupees a kilo. In many parts of India, today, the retail price of sugar is less than the price which is paid for levy sugar, and the sugar mills are now saying: "We are going to suffer losses. We would not be able to pay the sugarcane farmer." Be that as it may, that is a separate issue, which the Ministry of Agriculture is addressing.

It is supply alone, which will moderate prices of essential food articles. We must augment the supply of wheat, we must augment the supply of pulses, and we must augment the supply of edible oil. What have we done?[\[R40\]](#)

The STC imported 55 lakh tonnes of wheat last year and this year also the Ministry of Agriculture has made it very clear that we will import wheat to augment the supply. The decision was taken to release up to four lakh tonnes of wheat under open market sales scheme in February-March. There is ban on the export of pulses with effect from June, 22, 2006, ban on the export of wheat and skimmed milk powder from February 9, 2007. NAFED has executed a contract for import of 49,300 tonnes of pulses. The entire quantity was received in July-October period. To increase availability of pulses, NAFED has executed a new contract in December, 2006 for import of 30,000 tonnes of pulses out of which 26,837 tonnes have been shipped up to April 26, 2007 and in 2007-2008, the current year, the public sector agencies are expected to import an additional 15 lakh tonnes of pulses.

For a sustained improvement in agricultural production and productivity, the Budget has proposed a number of measures to increase irrigation, availability of improved seeds, institutional credit and fertilizers and measures to accelerate the adoption of new technologies through a revamped training and visit system.

We are taking every step to augment the supply. Take the example of pulses. There are not too many countries which grow pulses that India consumes. There is only Myanmar, Turkey and some chickpea in Canada and some pulses in Australia. These countries themselves can only spare us a certain quantity. We have taken every step to augment supply of pulses, edible oil and wheat. As the new crop of wheat has come in and will come and the new pulses crop comes in, I am confident that the prices of these essential food articles will moderate.

There was some question about PDS and food subsidy. Let me quickly answer it. Hon. Members raised the issue about the PDS. I want you to kindly look at these figures. I have with me figures showing the allocation of rice and wheat to all the States for BPL, APL and Antyodaya Anna Yojana and off-take against the allocation for five years from 2002-2003 to 2006-2007. I implore you to please carefully look at these figures. The off-take of both rice and wheat as a percentage of allocation beginning 2002-2003 was 27.2 per cent, 33.8 per cent, 41.1 per cent, 43.6 per cent and in the last year 54.6 per cent. Hon. Members will note that the percentage has been rising every year, especially in the three years of the UPA Government. Nevertheless the highest off-take is only 54.6 per cent of the allocation. I hope I am making myself clear. We allocate food grains but they lift only a part. The highest lifting has been 54.6 per cent last year. The highest off-take was in 2006-2007 and this amounted to 434 lakh tonnes of rice was allocated and only 212 lakh tonnes of rice was lifted and 146 lakh tonnes of wheat was allocated and only 104 lakh tonnes of wheat was lifted. There is, therefore, no question of not allocating adequate quantities to the PDS. The problem is at the other end. The States must take more of the allocations and distribute the foodgrains more efficiently.

Sir, you will recall that a demand was made – why are you not taking de-hoarding action. We wrote to all the Chief Ministers saying – please take de-hoarding action. Only seven States have responded. Which are those States? Three States – Himachal Pradesh, Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh responded and they have taken de-hoarding action. Two States – West Bengal and Kerala – have responded and they have taken de-hoarding action. Delhi has taken de-hoarding action and Gujarat has taken de-hoarding action. I am not trying to give a political flavour. The political flavour is very clear. Four States, two States and one State have taken de-hoarding action. What about the other States? Why are they not taking de-hoarding action? The same power is available to the States. The same Act applies. But they are not taking de-hoarding action. We can only ask the State Governments to take de-hoarding action. The machinery is with them, the powers are with them.

Therefore, there is no question of not allocating enough to the PDS. ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI ADHIR CHOWDHURY (BERHAMPURE, WEST BENGAL): What are the details of off-take of PDS? ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM : I have given you the figures. â€¦ (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : He has not yielded.

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM : I will give it to you later.

Then the question was – what are we doing to PDS prices. Let me say this loud and clear. The last time PDS prices were revised was on July 1, 2002. [\[MSOffice41\]](#)

Today, the economic cost of rice is Rs. 13.95 per kilogram. We are issuing it to APL at Rs. 7.95, to BPL at Rs. 5.65 and to Antyodaya at Rs. 3 per kilogram. The economic cost of wheat is Rs. 11.64 per kilogram. We are issuing it to APL at Rs. 6.10, to BPL at Rs. 4.15 and to Antyodaya at Rs. 2 per kilogram. Why are we doing this? We are doing this to restrain prices so that the PDS wheat and PDS rice is available at a price which was last revised in July, 2002. We are not increasing the prices. If only they had lifted more quantities and distributed more quantities at this price, it will have a moderating effect on prices. So, what is it that the Government at the Centre is not doing to help the State Governments to moderate prices?

Then, there were some questions that subsidy bill has come down. That is a very superficial reading. The subsidy has been around Rs. 25,000 crore a year. While the quantity lifted under PDS has increased every year, I just gave out the figures, it may appear that the food subsidy bill has remained more or less constant. The reason is that food subsidy bill includes the carrying cost of food stocks. Since the stock of food in the public stocks has declined over the last two years, the carrying cost has come down and therefore, the subsidy bill has remained constant. It is not because we have reduced the subsidy to the consumer. The subsidy to the consumer is the figures which I have just read out. The subsidy to the consumer is intact. In fact the subsidy has increased; the food stocks have come down and the carrying cost has come down. That is the first reason.

The second reason is that Food Corporation of India is financing its operations today more efficiently. Therefore, it is able to show savings on the head 'interest'.

Sir, there were some questions about leakages and diversions in the PDS. To get an independent feedback, the Government commissioned two Evaluation Studies, one by the PEO of the Planning Commission and the other by ORG-MARG. These studies were received in March and September 2005 respectively. The reports of the studies were sent to all the State and UT Governments. Four regional Conferences and one national Conference of State Food Secretaries and State Food Ministers were held. Based on the discussions and feedback in these Conferences, a 9-point action plan was jointly formulated. Action taken is regularly reviewed by the Department of Food to minimise scope for diversion. The Department has rationalised allocations and off-takes of wheat and rice. The Secretary, Food and PDS, Government of India has written to all the Chief Secretaries in March 2007 impressing upon them the need to strengthen and expand the PDS.

Sir, I would say that while some of the causes behind price rise are beyond our control, we have taken monetary measures and we have taken fiscal measures. The inflation is 5.4 per cent. It will moderate as these measures take effect. In the short-term, the Government is taking all the measures within its power to augment supply and supplies were augmented of wheat, paddy, rice, sugar, milk, palm oil and edible oils. Prices will moderate as we have done before. As we had moderated prices in 1980 and as we moderated prices in 2004-05, I am confident that the prices of essential articles will also moderate as these measures take effect.