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Title : Shri Arjun Charan Sethi called the attention of the Minister of Commerce and Industry to the situation arising due to export of non-Basmati Rice to certain countries in violation of Government Guidelines and steps taken by the Government in regard thereto.

MADAM SPEAKER: Shri Arjun Charan Sethi.

...(Interruptions)

श्री शरद यादव (मधेपुरा): अध्यक्ष महोदया, इसके बारे में शुक्रवार को सबसे पहले हमने आपको नोटिस सबमिट किया था। इसमें चार पार्टीज के लोग हैं, जिनमें श्रीमती सुषमा स्वराज, श्री गुरुदास दासगुप्त और श्री रेवती रमन सिंह जी हैं। हम सबकी तरफ से सबसे पहले नोटिस दिया गया था। लेकिन जो लाटरी की प्रक्रिया है, उसमें आपको कोई रास्ता निकालना चाहिए। इस मामले को 21 तारीख को जीरो ऑवर में मैंने उठाया था। लेकिन जो लाटरी निकली है, उसमें हमें छोड़कर सबके नाम हैं। यानी छः सदस्य थे, उनमें से अकेले हम छंट गये हैं।

अध्यक्ष महोदया : श्री शरद यादव जी, मैं देखती हूँ कि इसमें क्या हुआ। लेकिन श्री अर्जुन चरण सेठी जी के बाद आप बोलियेगा।

SHRI ARJUN CHARAN SETHI (BHADRAK): Madam Speaker, I call the attention of the Minister of Commerce and Industry to the following matter of urgent public importance and request that he may make a statement thereon:

"Situation arising due to export of non-Basmati rice to certain countries in violation of Government guidelines and steps taken by the Government in regard thereto."

MADAM SPEAKER: Hon. Minister to speak. You may lay the statement.

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI ANAND SHARMA): Madam Speaker, I am grateful to the hon. Member for having raised this matter and drawing the Government's attention to this issue. Madam Speaker, I would like to inform, through you, the hon. Member and the House that the non-basmati rice is one of our important agricultural exports. India had exported 3.7 million tonnes of non-basmati rice in the year 2006-07 and 5.28 million tonnes in 2007-08.

MADAM SPEAKER: Hon. Minister, you may lay it on the Table and in your reply you can elaborate on this.

SHRI ANAND SHARMA: I can do that....(Interruptions)

SHRI L.K. ADVANI (GANDHINAGAR): On the Calling Attention Notices, Ministers always read fully and only on that basis questions are raised. ...(Interruptions) It is not merely laying on the Table.

MADAM SPEAKER: It is being distributed.

SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ (VIDISHA): No, it has not been distributed.

SHRI L.K. ADVANI : It may be distributed to the Members who have raised it. That will be a new practice.

MADAM SPEAKER: All right. You read it, hon. Minister.

SHRI L.K. ADVANI : The practice is that the Minister reads out the whole statement.

MADAM SPEAKER: All right, he is reading it.

SHRI ANAND SHARMA: I will continue, Madam.

The Government does review the availability of food grains within the country on a continuing basis. There was a general rise in food grain prices in the latter half of the year 2007. On 15th October, 2007, the Government imposed a ban on the export of non-basmati rice. This decision was occasioned by the general rise in food grain prices and an overall assessment of the domestic supply position.

The global prices of all types of rice continued to rise steeply over the next few months peaking in April-May 2008. Prices of rice nearly doubled in the international market in a space of less than six months.

Escalating food prices created situations of extreme distress in many parts of the world especially in the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and some poor African countries. The Governments of these African countries approached the Government of India with a request to sell them limited quantities of non-basmati rice. And that was, I may add here, a hundred per cent broken rice. Keeping in view our close international ties with these countries and the delicate supply position they were facing, it was decided on diplomatic considerations to authorize the export of limited quantities of non-basmati rice in relaxation of the ban. This was a Government decision.

In pursuance of this decision, the Director-General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) had issued a notification on 24th January 2008 authorising the export of non-basmati rice of 50,000 Metric Tonnes (MT) to Madagascar through the State Trading Corporation of India (STC) and 25,000 MT to Comoros and 9,000 Metric tonnes to Mauritius through the MMTC Limited.

On 26th March 2008, another notification was issued by the DGFT to export 40,000 Metric tonnes of non-basmati rice to Sierra Leone through the PEC Limited. This decision was taken by the Government again on specific requests from that Government and diplomatic considerations.

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All through the first half of 2008, international supplies of food grains remained very tight. The Government of India continued to receive requests for release of limited quantities of non-basmati rice from various African countries. On 5th August 2008, the Government decided to permit export of 2,25,000 MT of broken rice to various African countries. These exports were to be made through the Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs) under the administrative control of the Department of Commerce.

On 13th of October 2008, the DGFT issued a notification permitting the export of non-basmati rice of 15,000 MT each to Nigeria, Senegal and Ghana and 10,000 MT to Cameroon. This rice was to be exported through STC. STC was expected to procure the rice from mills which had surplus rice in their stocks and also to ensure that STC's entry into the market did not affect the overall domestic prices of rice.

In its meeting of 5th March 2009, the Empowered Group of Ministers on Food grains & Edible Oils (EGoM) considered another proposal for permission to export non-basmati rice to various countries on diplomatic considerations. The EGoM approved the proposal to export no more than 20 lakh MT of non-basmati rice on a diplomatic basis to some African countries. The Ministry of External Affairs advised the Department of Food & Public Distribution (DFPD) on 20th April 2009 about the allocation to various countries. On the 6th of May 2009, DGFT issued a notification allocating the export of non-basmati rice across 20 countries totalling 10 lakh MT.

In respect of the country allocations covered by the notification of 6th May 2009, no transaction has been completed as yet. One contract for 25,000 MT to South Africa, allocated by DGFT through their notification dated 18th June 2009, has been signed but execution of the contract has not begun. In this instance, the domestic supplier has been recommended by the Consulate General of India, Durban, based on a certificate from the Department of Trade & Industry of the Government of South Africa.

The actual export of non-basmati rice has been completed only in respect of transactions with five countries, namely, Madagascar, Comoros, Mauritius, Sierra Leone and Ghana. The total quantity exported is 1,21,500 MTs. The rice was procured from domestically available stocks and the approximate procurement value of the non-basmati rice was about Rs. 170 crore.

This export was not out of the stocks procured by FCI/other Government agencies for the Public Distribution System (PDS).

No other non-basmati rice has been exported even though authorisation for the release of such rice in relaxation of the ban is available. In all, the Government had authorised the release of up to 13.49 lakh MT; of this amount only 9% has actually been exported.

In one transaction, MMTC concluded the transaction with Mauritius for the sale of 8000 MT of rice by nominating a domestic supplier. The counter-party was the State Trading Corporation of Mauritius. In the four other transactions that were concluded, the Minister/Ministries of the recipient African countries nominated suppliers based in India. They also nominated the importing agency in the recipient African country. The transactions were completed through the PSUs in the Department of Commerce with the nominated domestic supplier providing the non-basmati rice to be exported. In all cases, the exporter was

one of the PSUs under the Department of Commerce. All export documents were executed by the said PSUs.

The transactions completed were always intended to be concluded on a commercial basis. The Governments of the African countries had not requested the Government of India for release of non-basmati rice as aid or grant; it was always a request for an outright sale. Since all were commercial transactions, the PSUs and the domestic suppliers booked profits.

While examining the transactions that have been concluded it has been noticed that in some cases PSUs have infringed certain conditions contained in the DGFT notifications for the export of non-basmati rice. This matter is being looked into. Enquiries will be held, responsibility will be fixed and remedial action shall be taken.

Reports in the print media suggested, as has been raised, that this was a "Rs. 2500 crore rice export scam". The press report alleged that "greedy exporters used needy African countries to circumvent the ban on rice exports". The factual position is at serious variance with these allegations. As brought out, the total procurement value of rice actually exported was about Rs. 170 crore only. Moreover, the fact of the matter is that the export of non-basmati rice in relaxation of the ban was fully authorised by the Government keeping in view close ties with the African countries, their pressing needs, and diplomatic considerations. And, even though the Government had authorised the release of about 13.5 lakh MT, a mere 1.22 lakh MT has actually been exported.

SHRI ARJUN CHARAN SETHI : The hon. Minister in his statement now has mentioned that non-basmati broken rice has been exported to different countries as per their request. He has admitted that. We know that in our country, there are 360 million people under the BPL list, who need food, especially this kind of rice for their survival, for meeting their requirements.

Hon. Minister must know and also the House knows that many State Governments are providing this kind of non-basmati broken rice to the BPL families at subsidized rates. For example, in Orissa, it is being provided at Rs.1 a k.g. Similarly, it is being done in Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and in other States also.

He has said that we have enough rice. Does he know that the subsidized rice is being provided to the people in different States of the country? If he knows, what is the need of exporting when a ban on this non-basmati broken rice at all? I suppose that when food situation or the stock position in our country is not good and that is why, they have put a ban.

But the hon. Minister has now said that we have enough rice and we generally export rice to different countries. But there must be certain guidelines for exports. He has also admitted towards the end of his statement that 'it has been noticed that in some cases PSUs have infringed certain conditions contained in the DGFT notification for the export of non-basmati rice'. He has admitted that.

I want to know specifically from the hon. Minister – he has given the details as to what are the exports that have been made to different countries – why much of this kind of rice has been exported through PSUs like MMTC, STC, etc. the government agencies.

I would also like to know how much rice is exported through private parties. The hon. Minister has admitted that there are infringements in the export which means that there is something wrong with the process involved in exporting rice to different countries. He may tell not only to me but also to the entire House as to the countries which have asked for such type of rice and how much rice has been exported to them through PSUs.

Is DGFT a Government agency which authorises the export of rice and other commodities to different countries? It is alleged in the newspapers that DGFT has authorised certain selected private parties to export rice. How far is it correct? At the same time, some of the foreign countries have named some private parties through which this type of rice should be exported. Is it correct; if so, can we consider their proposal violating our own guidelines and procedure? A number of such things are being widely published in different newspapers and magazines. If it is correct, how so much of publicity is being given to this particular issue? It has also been reported that these countries ask for the broken non-basmati rice at the concessional rates on humanitarian grounds. Is it also a fact and if so, how much have we lost by way of exporting rice at a concessional rate to these countries? How far is it correct, on the part of a recipient country, to name a private party through which it wants to import rice or for that matter any commodity? I would like to be clarified on these points. I would be glad to know all the facts of the matter and therefore, would request the hon. Minister to reply to my queries on this.

अध्यक्ष महोदय : श्री शरद यादव, आपका नोटिस आया था, लेकिन बैलेट पर आपका नाम नहीं आया था, इसकी आपको जानकारी है। मैं फिर भी अपने विशेषाधिकार के अंतर्गत आपको बोलने की अनुमति देती हूँ। लेकिन भविष्य में इसका उल्लेख करके परम्परा न स्थापित की जाए, यही मैं कहना चाहती हूँ।

श्री शरद यादव : अध्यक्ष महोदया, मैं आपका बहुत आभार मानता हूँ कि आपने मुझे बोलने का समय दिया। मैं अभी कॉमर्स मिनिस्टर का बयान सुन रहा था। यह जो राइस स्केम या राइस घोटाला है, इसमें मैं यह निवेदन करना चाहता हूँ कि आपने सन् 2006-07 में 3.7 मिलियन टन एक्सपोर्ट किया। आपके ही वक्तव्य में लिखा हुआ है कि आपने सन् 2007-08 में 5.28 मिलियन टन दिया। आपने शुरुआत में ही श्री अर्जुन चरण सेठी जी को जवाब दिया है कि सन् 2006-07 में 3.7 मिलियन मीट्रिक टन और सन् 2007-08 में 5.28 मिलियन टन दिया।

अध्यक्ष महोदया, मैं आपके माध्यम से एक बात कहना चाहता हूँ कि आप नये मंत्री बने हैं, दक्षिण अफ्रीका में जहां भूख एवं दिक्कत थी, देश की डिप्लोमेसी कहती है कि वहां मदद करनी चाहिए, लेकिन यह मदद भारत के कानून के अंतर्गत होगी। घाना की सरकार यहां यह निवेदन करती है कि फलां-फलां आदमी से, एक तरफ आपका डीजीएफटी कहता है कि ये एसटीसी, एमएमटीसी, पीईसी सरकार के जरिए एक्सपोर्ट किया जाएगा। फिर घाना की सरकार की तरफ से यह आता है कि यहां दिल्ली या भारत में जो अमीराफूड कम्पनी है, मैं उसका नाम नहीं लूंगा, क्योंकि यहां नहीं है, अमीराफूड और शिवनाथ हरिनारायण, सियारालिओन और घाना, इन दो कम्पनियों के नाम उन्होंने पहुंचाए।...(व्यवधान)

अध्यक्ष महोदया : कृपया संक्षेप में अपनी बात रखिए।

श्री शरद यादव : आपने कहा कि यह सौदा हमने इसलिए किया, क्योंकि देश में, दुनिया के अंदर दक्षिण अफ्रीका में भुखमरी थी, उन भूखे लोगों की मदद करने के लिए, वहां के विदेश मंत्रालय, वहां की सरकारों से मांग आई। वहां उसना चावल खाया जाता है, अरबा चावल नहीं खाया जाता। फिर उनके निवेदन पर यदि आपने यह राइस भेजा तो इस देश के कानून के बाहर एसटीसी, एमएमटीसी और पीईसी से यह नहीं गया, यह अमीराफूड, शिवनाथ हरिनारायण कम्पनी से गया। आपका जो एलसी है, वह स्विटजरलैंड और अमेरिका से आया। भारत का जो कानून है, आपने पब्लिक सैक्टर से कहा था कि एक्सपोर्ट करेंगे और यह एक्सपोर्ट पब्लिक सैक्टर ने नहीं किया, प्राइवेट लोगों ने किया। यह कहां से किया और कितने दाम में लिया? 280 डालर में लिया और कितने में बेचा?...(व्यवधान)

अध्यक्ष महोदया : शरद जी, कृपया अब आप समाप्त करिए।

श्री शरद यादव : अध्यक्ष महोदय, मैं आपके माध्यम से बताना चाहता हूँ कि भारत में घाना और सियारालिओन को दक्षिण अफ्रीका में जो आपके पास रिक्वेस्ट, निवेदन आया है, वह वहां की राज्य सरकार के जरिए आया है, सरकार के जरिए नहीं आया।...(व्यवधान) वहां उसना चावल खाया जाता है।...(व्यवधान)

अध्यक्ष महोदया : अब आप समाप्त करिए।

श्री शरद यादव : आपने जो राइस पहुंचाया है, अध्यक्ष महोदया, मैं आपके माध्यम से तीन-चार बातें पूछना चाहता हूँ।...(व्यवधान)

अध्यक्ष महोदया, मैं कन्क्लूड कर रहा हूँ।

How did the private companies come into the Government to Government transaction? Secondly, why was no tendering process followed? यदि यहां प्राइवेट लोगों को देना भी था, तो आपने टेंडर प्रोसेस क्यों नहीं किया, टेंडर क्यों नहीं निकाला? सी.पी.सी. की गाइड लाइन्स हैं, फिर आपने क्यों टेंडर नहीं निकाला? Thirdly, on what basis was an allocation of 1,70,000 tonnes of rice made to Nigeria? वह उन्होंने क्यों कैंसिल किया, आपने दिया, उनके यहां से क्या रिक्वेस्ट आई और वह नकली है, या फर्जी है। उन्होंने 1 लाख 70 हजार टन कैंसिल किया और आपने उसे दक्षिण अफ्रीका को दिया।...(व्यवधान)

अध्यक्ष महोदया : अब आप समाप्त कीजिए।

श्री शरद यादव : Fourthly, on what basis was an allocation of rice made to South Africa? इसलिए मैं आपके माध्यम से कहना चाहता हूँ कि भारत का कानून सरकार ने नहीं माना। इस देश के भीतर इस देश का और उस देश के भीतर उस देश का कानून चलता है, लेकिन आपने अपने देश के भीतर अपना कानून नहीं माना। आपने सब तरह के नॉर्म्स फ्लोट किए हैं और छिपाने का प्रयास किया है। आपने जो कार्रवाई करने का काम किया है वह बहुत माइल्ड होकर किया है। इस तरह से काम मत करिए। आप तो मंत्री अभी बने हैं। हम ऐसे नहीं छोड़ेंगे। हमारे पास बहुत मैटर है।...(व्यवधान)

अध्यक्ष महोदया : अब आप शान्त हो जाइए। अब आप अपना स्थान ग्रहण कीजिए। श्री बी. महताब।

श्री शरद यादव : आपकी डी.जी.एफ.सी. ने 11 नोटिफिकेशन किए। क्या सिर्फ प्राइवेट पार्टिज को फायदा पहुंचाने के लिए ऐसा किया गया है।...(व्यवधान)

अध्यक्ष महोदया : कृपया बैठ जाइए।

SHRI B. MAHTAB (CUTTACK): Madam, Speaker, the Statement of the Minister hides many things than reveals the actual facts. I would like to refer to two paragraphs, namely paragraphs 15 and 16, of the Minister's Statement. In paragraph 15, the hon. Minister has stated that 'transactions completed were always intended to be concluded on a commercial basis'. Sierra Leone and Ghana wrote to the Ministry of External Affairs. This was a separate letter. I think, it was the second letter. The first letter that was written by 21 African countries had come to the Ministry of External Affairs. The Minister can explain this...*(Interruptions)* They had asked for concessional and preferential rates.

In paragraph 16, the hon. Minister has agreed that in certain cases PSUs have infringed certain conditions contained in DGFT notification for the export of non-Basmati rice. Responsibility will be fixed; enquiries will be held -- these are all in future tense -- and remedial actions shall be taken. The letter that had first come to the Ministry of External Affairs was forwarded to the Ministry of Food mentioning that Sierra Leone and Ghana had asked for concessional and preferential rates and clearance was given to DGFT for notification of quantity of rice. The rice was supposed to be purchased from amongst different States. I would like to ask if the Government will find out and let this House know whether this rice was purchased from only one State and that is Andhra Pradesh.

Madam, Speaker, this contravenes the guidelines of purchase of rice. I need not go into the details. It has already been mentioned. Earlier it was 3 lakh tonnes, then it was 5 lakh tonnes and this time it was 13 lakh tonnes.

MADAM SPEAKER: You may please conclude now.

SHRI B. MAHTAB : I would like to know if the Government is aware that the Ghana Government is conducting an enquiry and this enquiry is going on for the last three to six months. The Government of India has also been informed and the former Minister of External Affairs of Ghana has been summoned to appear before their investigating agency -- as we have here the CBI -- the Ghana Bureau of National Investigation.

MADAM SPEAKER: You have asked your question. You may conclude now.

SHRI B. MAHTAB : What is the response of the Government?...*(Interruptions)*

MADAM SPEAKER: The discussion has been going on for a very long time. Be brief now.

SHRI B. MAHTAB : Madam, this is a serious matter....*(Interruptions)*

SHRI L.K. ADVANI : Madam Speaker, there is a difference between a Calling Attention in this House and a Calling Attention in the other House. I have been in the other House also. Very often, on important issues, a Calling Attention would become a discussion for the whole day. In this House, the limit is that only five Members whose names are balloted are alone entitled to ask questions and I think, the hon. Member just speaking was only asking questions. You cannot curb that. Otherwise, the Calling Attention would become meaningless. They were very relevant questions put by him. My submission would be that the practice that we have in this House should be followed strictly and that his questions should be allowed as they are very relevant.

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL): Madam, with utmost respect to the hon. Leader of Opposition, I would like to say that rule 197(2) is not to the effect of what he has said. It says that there shall be no debate on this and only clarificatory questions can be asked. It says "only clarificatory questions" which mean that the Member has to ask only pointed questions. But what we have felt from the hon. Member before him is that he has taken it to be a debate. ...*(Interruptions)*

MADAM SPEAKER: The rule says "ask a clarificatory question". The word 'a' is very important. In spite of that, I have allowed you to speak for a very long time. Shri Mahtab, you may now conclude so that the next Member gets a chance. It is one question that has to be put.

SHRI ANANT KUMAR (BANGALORE SOUTH): Madam, it cannot be a single clarificatory question.

MADAM SPEAKER: Please be seated....*(Interruptions)*

SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL: With the permission of the Speaker, you can ask a clarificatory question....*(Interruptions)*

SHRI B. MAHTAB : Madam, I respect whatever decision you take. But as far as I understand, all these questions are related to

the matter under discussion though you have allowed five Members and also allowed Shri Sharad Yadav to put questions.

MADAM SPEAKER: I have allowed him and that is all right. But that does not mean that we completely do away with the rule. Please do not argue with me.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI B. MAHTAB : I do not challenge your decision. I am only seeking your permission.

I want to know whether the Government had also, in principle, agreed to provide 1.17 lakh metric tones of rice to Nigeria which ultimately Nigeria declined to take for whatever reason which I am not aware of. I would like to know from the Government on it. When Nigeria had sought 1.17 lakh metric tonnes of rice and the government had agreed to provide it, what happened then? It is not that suddenly the rice procurement in Nigeria had increased and hence they declined. What actually had happened? Is it true that they had asked for a private party to export, it did not occur or something else happened? We want to know the details of it.

श्री शैलेन्द्र कुमार (कौशाम्बी): माननीय अध्यक्ष जी, इस सदन में जो ध्यानाकर्षण प्रस्ताव आया है, यह इस देश के लिए एक बहुत गम्भीर और बहुत बड़ा घोटाला है। माननीय मंत्री जी ने अपने वक्तव्य में, अपने जवाब में जो बातें लिखी हैं, उसमें बहुत कुछ तथ्यों को छिपाया गया है, जैसा पढ़ने में आया है।

नॉन बासमती चावल हमारे देश के निर्यात का एक मद है, हम इसको मानते हैं, लेकिन जैसा कि अभी वक्तव्य हम लोगों ने पढ़ा कि विभिन्न वर्षों में अलग-अलग जो निर्यात किया गया है, अगर टोटल देखा जाये तो कम से कम मेरे ख्याल से 9.7 प्रतिशत, करीब 10 लाख मीट्रिक टन निर्यात किया गया है और खासकर हमारे सम्मानित सदस्यों ने जो यहां पर सवाल उठाया है कि एक व्यक्तिगत कम्पनी, चाहे विश्वनाथ-हरिनारायण हो, अमीरा फूड हो या एल.एन.जे. कम्पनी, कोलकाता की हो, इनको विशेष तौर से निर्यात करने के लिए दिया गया है।

यह सभी समाचार-पत्रों में प्रमुखता से छपा है। जैसा कि मंत्री जी ने अपने वक्तव्य में भी कहा है, पूरे को अगर जोड़ा जाए तो करीब ढाई हजार करोड़ रूपए का घोटाला है। डीजीएफटी की यहां जो चर्चा की गयी कि इस शर्त के आधार पर हम निर्यात करते हैं, लेकिन उसका घोर उल्लंघन किया गया। जैसा कि मंत्री जी ने कहा कि हम जांच करा रहे हैं, इसकी पूछताछ की जाएगी, जिम्मेदारी तय की जाएगी और बाकी चीजें की जाएंगी। मैं आपके माध्यम से पूछना चाहूंगा कि यह बहुत बड़ा घोटाला है, इसकी जांच आप तक पूरी कर लेंगे और उन लोगों को क्या पनिशमेंट देंगे? इसके लिए आप एक तिथि बताने का कष्ट करें और यह समयबद्ध तरीके से होना चाहिए। मैं आपके माध्यम से यह पूछना चाहता हूं।

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA : Madam Speaker, it is a very serious issue. It was raised here by Shri Sharad Yadav and we all associated with what he said in regard to the scam relating to export of rice to Ghana. Several questions have arisen out of this deal in the export of rice. When the deal or the export of rice was from one Government to another, how did the private companies come into the picture? Three private companies were involved in the export of rice. The hon. Minister has stated that the amount involved is Rs. 170 crore, and that it is not Rs. 2,500 crore. The procurement price is Rs. 170 crore. How was the procurement price fixed? The Minister has stated that all these have been done under the public sector trading companies, the MMT, the STC and the PEC. ...(Interruptions)

MADAM SPEAKER: The hon. Member does not need prompting. Let him speak.

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA : They have also violated the guidelines. When it was done under their guidance and under their control, how were these three companies allowed to procure directly – I would like to know at what price – and then export it to Ghana? If the matter was so simple, why had the Government of Ghana decided to go for an inquiry into this? Six months back, an inquiry was conducted, or still being conducted, by their agency. If there was no irregularity, how was the procurement price fixed? Why was the public sector trading companies not entrusted with the task of procurement of rice as well as its export? Why was no tender floated? ...(Interruptions)

MADAM SPEAKER: Ask the question and conclude.

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA : Madam Speaker, I am only asking questions.

I would like to know whether the Government will appoint an independent inquiry or a Joint Parliamentary Committee to inquire into this matter. The matter is so serious, involving crores of rupees. There is a need for a Joint Parliamentary Committee to inquire into this matter. Considering the seriousness of the matter, I would like to know from the Minister, whether the Government will constitute a JPC to inquire into the whole scam and the whole matter.

MADAM SPEAKER: Shri Basu Deb Acharia, I would thank you so much. Shri Gopinath Munde.

श्री गोपीनाथ मुंडे (बीड): अध्यक्ष महोदया, मंत्री महोदय ने जो स्टेटमेंट सदन के सामने रखा है, उसमें सच्चाई नहीं है, क्योंकि उन्होंने कहा है कि मंत्री समूह ने तीन कम्पनियों को गवर्नमेंट के...(व्यवधान)

SHRI ANAND SHARMA: Madam Speaker, at the outset, I would like to object to these words uttered by the hon. Member. ...*(Interruptions)*

श्री गोपीनाथ मुंडे : आप क्यों औब्जेक्ट करेंगे, मैं सच्चाई सामने लाना चाहता हूं।...(व्यवधान)

MADAM SPEAKER: Let the hon. Minister say what he wants to say.

...*(Interruptions)*

श्री आनन्द शर्मा: मैं आपके प्रश्न का उत्तर दूंगा।...(व्यवधान) आप आरोप लगा रहे हैं, इस पर मुझे आपत्ति है।...(व्यवधान) आप प्रश्न पूछेंगे तो उसका उत्तर मिलेगा।...(व्यवधान) आप आरोप नहीं लगाएंगे।...(व्यवधान)

श्री गोपीनाथ मुंडे : अध्यक्ष महोदया, मैं पूव करने के लिए तैयार हूं कि इसमें सच्चाई नहीं है। उस समय आप मंत्री नहीं थे।...(व्यवधान)

अध्यक्ष महोदया : आप प्रश्न पूछिए।

⋈(व्यवधान)

श्री गोपीनाथ मुंडे : मैं प्रश्न पूछ रहा हूं।...(व्यवधान)

अध्यक्ष महोदया : इसमें स्पष्टीकरण के लिए प्रश्न पूछना है, वह आप पूछिए।

⋈(व्यवधान)

श्री गोपीनाथ मुंडे : एमएमटीसी, एसटीसी और पीईसी ने एक्सपोर्ट नहीं किया है। उन्होंने चार प्राइवेट कम्पनियों द्वारा एक्सपोर्ट किया है। चावल का एलसी इन कम्पनियों को नहीं, स्विटजरलैंड की नोबल कमोडिटीज को दिया गया है। आपने इसे क्यों छुपाया? नोबल कमोडिटीज को नॉन एलसी खोला है।...(व्यवधान) वह चावल ह्यूमैनिटी ग्रांड्स पर जिन देशों के लिए दिया गया था, वह वहां नहीं पहुंचा। वह बीच में कहां गया? इसलिए मैं कहना चाहता हूं कि एक पत्रिका है जो कभी सरकार के खिलाफ नहीं लिखती, उन्होंने पत्रिका के दो ईशूज निकालकर कहा है कि यह ढाई हजार करोड़ रुपये का घोटाला है। इसलिए मैं सदन में मांग करता हूं कि इसकी जांच सीबीआई द्वारा होनी चाहिए। मंत्री जी इसका जवाब दें। उन्होंने कहा है कि इसमें एमएमटीसी, एसटीसी और पीईसी दोषी हैं। इसमें एमएमटीसी, एसटीसी और पीईसी दोषी नहीं हैं बल्कि मंत्री समूह दोषी है। चुनाव से समय मीटिंग लेकर एक्सपोर्ट करने का फैसला क्यों लिया गया? इससे संदेह उत्पन्न होता है। * ...*(व्यवधान)*

MADAM SPEAKER: This is an allegation. This will not go on record.

(Interruptions) ⋈*

श्री गोपीनाथ मुंडे : मेरी मांग है कि सदन और देश की जनता में ट्रांसपेरेंसी रखने के लिए इसकी सीबीआई द्वारा जांच करायी जाये। ...*(व्यवधान)* आप क्यों डर रहे हैं? ...*(व्यवधान)*

अध्यक्ष महोदया : आप शांत हो जाइये। आपने अपना प्रश्न पूछ लिया है इसलिए अब आप माननीय मंत्री जी को बोलने दीजिए।

⋈(व्यवधान)

अध्यक्ष महोदया : आप प्रश्न पूछ चुके हैं, इसलिए आप उसे मत दोहराइये।

⋈(व्यवधान)

* Not recorded.

अध्यक्ष महोदया : आप बैठ जायें।

⋈(व्यवधान)

MADAM SPEAKER: Now, the hon. Minister has to reply.

...(Interruptions)

MADAM SPEAKER: What the hon. Member is saying will not go on record.

(Interruptions) â€¹*

अध्यक्ष महोदया : आप बैठ जाइये और मंत्री जी को बोलने दीजिए।

â€¹(व्यवधान)

SHRI ANAND SHARMA: Madam Speaker, many questions have been asked by the hon. Members. I have taken note of all those questions and I will try to clarify some of the doubts which have been raised. At the same time, I would submit with all sincerity that the Statement which has been given, after the Calling Attention notice was received, has been an exhaustive one. We have tried to place on record the sequence and the facts.

One issue which has been raised by Shri Arjun Charan Sethi is about the availability of broken rice. Particularly, he was referring to the PDS.

In my answer itself I have clarified first that whatever procurement was there, being a commercial transaction, the procurement, it was clear, had to be from the mills which had surplus rice in their stocks and also to ensure that the STC's entry into the market or the PSU's entry did not affect the overall domestic price. ...(Interruptions)

Secondly, I have also clarified that non-Basmati rice is one of our important agricultural exports. India has been exporting non-Basmati rice and that is purely commercial export which has been going on. It was only in the year 2007-08 when there was a surge in the global prices, the availability was also tight. So, a decision was taken by the Government of India on the 15th of October, 2007 to impose a

* Not recorded.

ban. Once the ban was imposed, naturally no private parties or State undertakings could have exported the non-Basmati rice.

Now, what has happened? As there was a ban, there was lack of availability in the global market. The Governments of these African countries, individually, had written to the Government of India and, to the best of my knowledge, every request was received at the level of the Head of State or Head of Government for India to relax the ban and permit them to purchase. This was not a humanitarian assistance given by India. Therefore, there was no Government procurement or Government tender. I have also mentioned clearly that the concerned countries had identified the suppliers. This is true and I have mentioned it in my statement. ...(Interruptions) I cannot speak for them. You have asked a question. I am going to give you the answer. â€¹ (Interruptions) शरद यादव जी, आपने प्रश्न पूछ था। अब आप उत्तर सुन लीजिए। ... (व्यवधान) इसका उत्तर मैं दूंगा। ... (व्यवधान)

MADAM SPEAKER: Sharad Yadavji, please do not interrupt him.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI ANAND SHARMA: I am not yielding. ...(Interruptions)

MADAM SPEAKER: Hon. Minister, you address the Chair.

...(Interruptions)

अध्यक्ष महोदया : शरद यादव जी, आप स्थान ग्रहण कीजिए। आप उनको उत्तर देने दीजिए।

â€¹(व्यवधान)

SHRI ANAND SHARMA: Madam Speaker, I would like to, once again, reaffirm that these were transactions which were purely commercial. Requests were to allow these countries to purchase and the export to take place. It was not in violation of the rules of the ban. It was a conscious decision taken by the Empowered Group of Ministers.

Without causing any offence, I would also like to clarify here to Shri Gopinath Munde because what he said was something

very serious; whether it was *bona fide*, I leave it to the Members of this House to judge after I have completed. These requests have been received post-2007 and my statement clearly indicates the various dates when the notifications were issued. It did not happen, as he said, at the time of the election. That is not correct. It started from 2008 onwards to various countries and the EGoM decision was taken in 2009. My statement clearly states that not even one grain of rice had gone against that decision. None of the earlier transactions, but for the ones which I have named, have been completed. I have also mentioned that out of 14 lakh tonnes (Interruptions)

SHRI ANAND SHARMA: Please allow me to complete. I have come to the House to share the details, and I have come to this House to apprise the Members as to what the initial inquiries have revealed. It is on record that out of 13.5 lakh metric tonnes, which was sanctioned by the EGoM for relaxation of ban to be sent to these countries, it was only 1.22 lakh metric tonnes. Of the total sanctions if you see as I have mentioned in my reply, only nine per cent actually has been exported.

They are looking at the quantities which were authorised to be exported and based on that volume and value...(Interruptions) I know what I am saying...(Interruptions)

MADAM SPEAKER: Please, let him complete.

SHRI ANAND SHARMA: First of all, this is not the Government of India procurement, I would like to submit. The hon. Member is very wise and intelligent. If there is Government procurement then the price is fixed. These were commercial transactions. The ban was relaxed not on humanitarian assistance or a grant. As I have clarified, it is borne out of the reply which I am giving.

Mr. Sethi was referring about the PDS. Let me tell him that for PDS the releases are close to 240 lakh tones. There is no question of that. The PDS must not be mixed up with that. Neither, it was taken from that...(Interruptions) Let me reply please. शरद यादव जी, आपने जो बताया कि 37 लाख टन और 52 लाख टन पहले गया, वह इससे सम्बन्धित नहीं है। पाबन्दी लगाने से पहले भारत की तरफ से जो निर्यात होता था, मैंने वह आंकड़ा आपको दिया है। उसके बाद अक्टूबर, 2007 में पाबन्दी लगी थी, पाबन्दी से पहले निर्यात होता था। ...(व्यवधान) पाबन्दी के बाद यह नहीं है, उसकी संख्या मैंने आपको दी है। मुझे इतना कहा है कि आपके मन में कुछ शंकाएं हैं, समाचार पत्रों के छपा हैं, उस पर आपने सरकार का ध्यान आकर्षण आपने किया। मैं आप सभी माननीय सदस्यों को धन्यवाद देना चाहता हूँ कि आपने यह विषय उठाया, सरकार को अवसर दिया कि इसकी तरफ देखे, इसकी जांच करे, तथ्यों को सामने लाए। जैसा मैंने पहले कहा, केवल उन्हीं ट्रांज़ैक्शन्स की मैं जानकारी दे सकता हूँ जो पूरी हुई हैं, बाकी जो नहीं हुई, जिन पर कोई कार्रवाई नहीं हुई, उनके बारे में कहना संभव नहीं है।

श्री रेवती रमन सिंह (इलाहाबाद): इसमें घपला हुआ है या नहीं?...(व्यवधान)

अध्यक्ष महोदया : कृपया आप लोग शान्त रहिए।

SHRI ANAND SHARMA: We are all hon. Members. I respect all the hon. Members. They may be eager to get all the information. I am equally eager and the Government is also equally eager to get to the bottom of it. We will have every transaction, those which have been complete, examined, enquired into and wherever the infringement has taken place, responsibility will be fixed and action will be taken. But I cannot give you...(Interruptions)

श्री शैलेन्द्र कुमार : कब तक कराएंगे? यह टाइम-बाउण्ड होना चाहिए!...(व्यवधान)

अध्यक्ष महोदया : आप बैठ जाइए।

â€¦(व्यवधान)

अध्यक्ष महोदया : कृपया आप बैठ जाइए। उत्तर देने दीजिए।

â€¦(व्यवधान)

श्री मुलायम सिंह यादव (मैनपुरी): कितने समय में जांच कराएंगे?...(व्यवधान)

अध्यक्ष महोदया : मुलायम सिंह जी, आप शान्त रहिए। कृपया अपना स्थान ग्रहण कीजिए।

â€¦(व्यवधान)

श्री आनन्द शर्मा: अध्यक्ष महोदया, मैं आपके माध्यम से श्री मुलायम सिंह यादव जी से कहना चाहता हूँ कि वह मुख्यमंत्री रहे हैं, केन्द्रीय मंत्री रहे हैं। इन्हें सरकार, शासन व प्रशासन का अनुभव और ज्ञान है। यह कॉलेजिग अटेंशन आज उठा है। जो मालूमत हमें मिली है, 24 घण्टे के अंदर वह जानकारी हासिल करके मैं सदन के सामने लाया हूँ।

13.00 hrs.

आपको यह आश्वासन देता हूँ कि हम इसकी पूरी जांच कराकर जिम्मेदारी तय करेंगे और अगर कोई दोषी पाया जाएगा किसी कंडीशन को तोड़ने का, तो उसे सजा देंगे, लेकिन इसमें राजनीति नहीं होनी चाहिए...(व्यवधान)

श्री हरिन पाठक (अहमदाबाद पूर्व): क्या इस पर जेपीसी बनाएंगे...(व्यवधान)

श्री लाल कृष्ण आडवाणी : अध्यक्ष महोदया, हमने यह नहीं कि यह विभाग से सम्बन्धित है इसलिए इस तरह का सवाल नहीं पूछा गया कि जो कम्पनीज थीं, उनके कौन-कौन लोग थे, किन्-किन् के साथ रिश्तेदारी थी, यह सवाल किसी ने नहीं उठाया और उचित भी है। मैं समझता हूँ कि यह इतना गम्भीर मामला है कि या जैसे मैंने और शरद यादव जी ने जेपीसी गठित करने की मांग की है, वह नहीं, तो हम चाहते हैं कि कम से कम इसकी सीबीआई द्वारा जांच जरूर हो।...(व्यवधान) It is not merely violation of certain guidelines or rules; there is suspicion of a scam behind the whole thing. Therefore, either a JPC, as suggested by Sharad Yadav or an inquiry by the CBI should be established. ...(Interruptions)

SHRI ANAND SHARMA: Madam Speaker, I would like to inform, through you, to the hon. Leader of the Opposition that this issue has come in the public domain. We must also remember that our responsibility both to our people and to the country demands that the facts are brought out. We must avoid the tendency to sensationalize and exaggerate. ...(Interruptions) I have clearly mentioned...(Interruptions) Please allow me to speak. ...(Interruptions)

MADAM SPEAKER: Let the Minister speak.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI ANAND SHARMA: I am submitting with all humility; I do not mean any offence or disrespect. What I am saying is that the volume and the value which have come out in the media, in my statement I have said that the transaction is not of Rs. 2500 crore, it is only of Rs. 170 crore as per the prices of the private procurement. I am not talking of the Government procurement prices. I have also said that only nine per cent of the authorized quantities were exported; allow us to examine each transaction. Then I have said that wherever there is infringement of the DGFT's Guidelines, when this ban was relaxed, nobody will be spared. If there is infringement proven, responsibility will be fixed. Whatever details come out after the inquiry, I will come back to the House and share it. Thank you...(Interruptions)

SHRI L.K. ADVANI : We are not satisfied with the statement. We do not want to sensationalize it. But, I would plead with the Government not to trivialize it also. Therefore, dissatisfied with your reply, we are walking out.

13.04 hrs

At this stage, Shri L.K. Advani, Shri Sharad Yadav,

Shri Arjun Charan Sethi and some other hon. Members left the House.

MADAM SPEAKER: Before the hon. Parliamentary Affairs Minister gives the statement, I would bring it to the notice of the House that if the House agrees, we will skip the Lunch Hour.

SEVERAL HON. MEMBERS: Yes.

MADAM SPEAKER: Okay.

SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL: Madam Speaker, I would like to make only one submission to you that in the List of Business we have fixed the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Bill for consideration and passing before the Discussion under Rule 193. Since that could not be concluded yesterday, I would request that the Discussion under Rule 193, which was started yesterday, we may begin with that immediately, and the Minister may reply to that latest by 3 p.m. As such, the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Bill may be taken up tomorrow.

MADAM SPEAKER: Does the House agree?

SEVERAL HON. MEMBERS: Yes.

MADAM SPEAKER: Now the House will take up matters of urgent public importance in 'Zero Hour'.

Shri Ravindra Kumar Pandeyâ€™Not present.