

बाम भाषा हो वहाँ के लिये अलजत्ता सैटेलाइटों के द्वारा टेलीविजन प्रसारण व्यवस्था ज्यादा उपयोगी साबित हो सकती है। क्या मंत्री महोदय इस बात से सहमत हैं कि कम से कम भारतवर्ष में जहाँ अभी तक हम करोड़ों लोगों को रोज़ो रोटी नहीं दे सके हैं वहाँ सैटेलाइट सिस्टम से टेलीविजन के कार्यक्रमों को प्रसारण एक निर्दय मजाक है। ऐसी लज़ूरियस चीज़ के लिये हमारे यहाँ अभी कोई जगह नहीं होनी चाहिये ? यदि हाँ तो क्या जो ग्राउन्ड वेस सिस्टम है और जिस पर कुल 112 करोड़ का खर्चा है, उसी में अभी काम चलाने की व्यवस्था करेंगे ?

**SHRI I. K. GUJRAL:** I would like to clarify one thing for the benefit of my hon. friend. When we are thinking of expanding the TV system, we are not thinking of expanding it for entertainment purposes; we are thinking, it as a limb of development as an easier means for development of education, agriculture and of family planning. Therefore, Kindly keep it in mind that it is not a question of entertainment but developmental activity. On the question whether we should do it *viz.* earth station for viasatellite the comparative merits are under examination. It is not a question of this or that but getting the maximum benefit out of both the systems.

#### Rise in Price of Rice in West Bengal

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\*95. **SHRI J. M. BISWAS:**

**DR. RANEN SEN:**

**SHRI H. N. MUKERJEE:**

**SHRI K. HALDER:**

**SHRI B. K. MODAK:**

Will the Minister of FOOD AND AGRICULTURE be pleased to State :

(a) whether rice prices in West Bengal, especially in the country side, have recorded a steady rise in recent months;

(b) if so, the reasons therefore ; and

(c) what steps have been taken to curb

the rise in rice prices ?

**THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD, AGRICULTURE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND CO-OPERATION (SHRI ANNASAHIB SHINDE):** (a) There has been a rise in the prices of rice in West Bengal during April-June 1970. However, in July the prices have either declined or remained steady.

(b) The increase in price is mainly due to the shortfall in the production of Aman crop owing to a long spell of drought and lesser market arrivals.

(c) Arrangements have been made to increase the supply of foodgrains for distribution in the State. Imports of wheat and coarse grains on trade account, into the non-rationed areas are being encouraged by the State Government.

**SHRI J. M. BISWAS:** What the hon. Minister has stated is correct. Due to the shortfall in production the price of rice has gone high and my area is the worst victim of this drought. When Prime Minister visited Purulea district, people came for food but they were *lathi charged* by the CRP and, so far as our information goes, about 100 people have died because of starvation in Purulea and Bankura districts. The requirement of that district is 4 lakhs maunds of rice per annum.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Let him come to his question. It is the making of speeches that deprives other members of their questions.

**SHRI J. M. BISWAS:** I am coming to the question. For the information of the hon. Members of this House, it is necessary to submit that already 100 people have died because of starvation. Our requirement is 4 lakhs maunds of rice and every year there is shortage of rice. The hon. Minister has rightly stated that it is due to shortfall in production that the price of rice is going up. So, I would like to know whether there was any demand from the State Government to the Centre for rice and, if so, how much supply has been made to the State Government ?

**SHRI ANNASAHIB SHINDE:** Before

I go into the details may I assure the hon. House that the food situation in West Bengal is well under control? We have assured the West Bengal authorities that all reasonable supplies of rice, wheat and other foodgrains would be made. In the case of wheat we have told them that we are prepared to supply as much as they want. Because of some rise in the prices during the last few months the State Government is attending to the various aspects of this problem. Calcutta, Asansol and some other areas are under rationing and there is no problem so far as those areas are concerned. In other areas there are fair price shops about 15,000. The hon. Member wanted to know the precise figure of the requirement indicated by the State Government. These figures have been indicated from time to time. At the last Chief Ministers' Conference, the representative of West Bengal—at that time it was the Chief Minister himself—indicated a figure of 22 lakhs tonnes of rice and wheat put together. As far as the reasonable requirements are concerned, there should not be any fear in this House. We shall be able to supply all the reasonable requirements of West Bengal.

**SHRI J. M. BISWAS :** Just now I spoke about some drought-affected areas, particularly, purulia and Bankura Districts. I want to know from the hon. Minister whether the Central Government is considering to remedy the worse situation in these two districts of West Bengal. Are they going to take some special measures, particularly after the visit of the Prime Minister to these areas?

**SHRI ANNASAHIB SHINDE :** Already the matter is being attended to by the State administration. As far as supplies and the local stock position are concerned, they are quite satisfactory. As to relief measures for a particular district, it is for the State administration to take the necessary steps but if there are any specific suggestions that the hon. Member has to give, I am prepared to welcome and look into them.

**SHRI K. HALDER :** We saw during the administration of the United Front Government that when the prices of foodgrains were rising higher and higher, the then Government supplied food to rural

areas and also took gratuitous relief measures. But after the present rule came, all those facilities have stopped. May I ask the Government whether the present Government will give those facilities which were given at the time of the United Front Ministry?

**SHRI ANNASAHIB SHINDE :** I would like to find out the position from the State Government.

**SHRI B. K. MODAK :** The hon. Minister has admitted that there has been a rise in the price of rice in the rural areas of Bengal. I want the Minister to state the actual increase in the quota of ration to the rural areas of Bengal during the period April to July 1970.

**SHRI ANNASAHIB SHINDE :** I have got the figures of the statutory rationing areas. As far as the quantum of distribution being followed in rural areas is concerned, I will require notice.

**SHRI S. M. BANERJEE :** Apart from the rising prices in West Bengal, a news item came from the Finance Ministry saying that there had been a rise in foodgrain prices throughout the country in the last six months and that the rise was of 8 points. I want to know from the hon. Minister, apart from supply of rice to West Bengal, what positive steps have been taken to see that prices do not rise and that blackmarketing in rice and essential commodities stopped.

**SHRI ANNASAHIB SHINDE :** It is true that there was a general price rise during the months of January, April and May but the hon. Member would be happy to know that recently the trend of prices is very satisfactory and in the month of July the price level of foodgrains is lower than in last July. If I may mention the precise figure, the All India index number of wholesale prices of foodgrains on 18th July last year was 207.6 while this year it is 205.7; so, it is lower than last year.

**SHRI SAMAR GUHA :** May I know whether it is a fact that the shortfall in production of rice was also due to the fact that last year there had been a lot of law and

order problem in West Bengal and that the quantum of the share of the *Bargadars* was usurped by political parties for enriching their political coffers? Has the Government agreed to give the necessary supply to West Bengal as regards rice and wheat? As an immediate measure are they going to open modified rationing shops in all the rural areas where there is a short fall? Secondly, I would like to know whether the Government is going to help the West Bengal Government to implement its plan for attaining self-sufficiency in rice production by 1971, that is, the plan that was prepared at the time of the first Presidential rule.

**SHRI ANNASAHIB SHINDE :** The West Bengal Government has specifically reported to us with reference to the general problem of law and order that it did affect the administration of Food laws to some extent. Because of law and order position not being satisfactory, the enforcement of Food laws and the administration was adversely affected. That has been the report of the West Bengal Government.

As far as the opening of additional fair price shops is concerned, the West Bengal Government can take a decision and if any assistance from us is required, we shall be glad to extend it.

**MR. SPEAKER :** Next Question, Shri Deven Sen.

**SHRI SAMAR GUHA :** What about implementing the plan to attain self-sufficiency by 1971? That depends on the Central aid.

**MR. SPEAKER :** I have gone to the next Question. Shri Deven Sen.

#### Application of Scheme of Gratuity to Coal Mine Workers

\*96. **SHRI DEVEN SEN :** Will the Minister of LABOUR AND REHABILITATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government have taken any decision as to the date from which the scheme of gratuity recommended by the Coal Wage Board and accepted by Govern-

ment will be made applicable to the mine workers of India;

(b) whether it is a fact that the Employers have been terminating the services of the workers in various places without paying them any retrenchment benefits as the workmen are not technically retrenched; and

(c) whether it is a fact that as a result, the number of coal mine workers is registering a fall?

**THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR, EMPLOYMENT AND REHABILITATION (SHRI BISHWANATH ROY) :** (a) No, Sir. The matter is still being processed in consultation with the Ministries/Departments concerned.

(b) and (c). The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the Sabha.

**श्री देवेन सेन :** क्या यह सच है कि कोल वेज बोर्ड ने 1967 में सर्वसम्मति से ग्रेट्टुटी स्कीम पास कर दी थी और सरकार ने भी उस को मान प्रिंसिपल मंजूर कर लिया था। मैं यह जानना चाहता हूँ कि क्या कारण है कि कि तीन वर्ष के बाद भी उस स्कीम को लागू नहीं किया गया है—इस सम्बन्ध में विलम्ब का क्या कारण है।

**अम, रोजगार तथा पुनर्वास मंत्रालय में राज्य मंत्री (श्री भागवत आजाद) :** यह सही है कि 1967 में वेज बोर्ड ने इस की सिफारिश की थी और नवम्बर, 1969 में इण्डस्ट्रियल कमेटी में सरकार ने इस की सिद्धान्ततः स्वीकार कर लिया था। जैसा कि आप को मालूम है, वेज बोर्ड ने कहा है कि कोल के डेस्पैच पर सैस लगा कर ग्रेट्टुटी दी जाये, अर्थात् वह उपभोक्ताओं को देनी पड़ेगी। इस लिये सरकार इस बात पर विचार कर रही है कि जो ग्रेट्टुटी साधारणतः एम्प्लायर्स को देनी चाहिये, क्या उपभोक्ताओं को वह सैस के रूप में देने के लिए मंजूर