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A statement circulated by Shri Ram Naik, former Petroleum Minister & BJP leader in a Press Conference held in Mumbai on 28th January 2013.

Diesel Price Hike is Tsunami for coastal fishermen - Ram Naik

Mumbai, Monday : The continuous price hike in LPG cooking gas, diesel and petrol in the last two - three months is taking the country on brink of financial anarchy. The recent classification of diesel sale in bulk purchase and Oil Companies' retail outlet sale from 18th January would increase the price of diesel per litre from Rs. 53.21 to Rs. 64.11 i.e. increase of Rs. 10.90. It would be a tsunami for coastal fishermen creating havoc for them. The decision by Petroleum Minister Shri Veerappa Moily is manifestation of intellectual bankruptcy, comparable with historical Mohomed TughlucK," said Shri Ram Naik, former Petroleum Minister and Bharatiya Janata Party leader. He was addressing media persons to-day in Mumbai.

Explaining the problem, Shri Ram Naik said, "During the last week, the Petroleum Ministry divided diesel purchasers into two categories i.e. Bulk Purchasers and Retail Outlet Purchasers. While diesel price was increased by 54 paise per litre for Retail Outlets, the bulk purchase price was increased unpreccedently high by Rs. 10.90. Together with Railways, State Transport undertakings (STU) and Defence, the fishermen are also classified as bulk purchasers. While it is true that Railways, STUs or Defence are one organisation owning several vehicles, the fishermen own individual fishing boats. Fishermen are supplied diesel through their co-operative societies, but they cannot be classified as bulk purchaser, e.g. in Maharashtra State, there are 10,330 fishing boats in six coastal districts, but their owners are individuals. It is injustice to call them as bulk purchasers Moreover, the fishermen are already getting reduced fish-catch due to sea-pollution. They are therefore required to go in deep sea for fishing which means extra consumption of diesel. It is therefore necessary to change the classification of fishermen as bulk purchase and supply them diesel as per previous practice. As a protest, the fishermen's organisations have stopped purchase of diesel. BJP supports their agitation. However if they are forced to continue their agitation, they will face starvation and the fish eating consumers will loose their high-protein food".

"The Congress government's policy for dual pricing is not only impractical but will also breed corruption. e.g. if a bus of STU goes to Retail Outlet, diesel cannot be denied. It will be available at usual price and not at bulk purchase price. As it is most of the STUs run in loss, this decision will further increase their losses. At the same time, private luxury buses will get diesel at the Retail Outlet price and will have upper hand in competing with STU buses. Diesel available at Sugar Mills' pumps will also cost more as they are also classified as bulk purchaser." added Shri Ram Naik.

Stating that this decision will also have impact on railways, Shri Ram Naik said, "Railway Minister Shri Pawan Kumar Bansal announced a steep hike in passenger fare on 9th January 2013 which came into implementation from 21st January. While announcing the hike, he assured that there would not be any hike in the February budget. He should now explain to the country as to how he would honour his word when the diesel price is increased by Rs. 10.90 per litre".

"In short, the dual pricing system is dichotomy and would lead to financial anarchy. It must therefore be withdrawn," asserted Shri Naik at the end.

(Office Secretary)