

ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ವಿಧಾನ ಸಭೆ, ಸಂಶೋಧನಾ ಹಾಗೂ ಉಲ್ಲೇಖನಾ ಶಾಖೆ
KARNATAKA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY, RESEARCH AND REFERENCE BRANCH

ಪತ್ರಿಕಾ ತುಣುಕುಗಳು
PAPER CLIPPINGS

ಇಲಾಖೆ / ವಿಷಯ : DEPARTMENT / SUBJECT: ¹⁸ Parliament Session

ಪತ್ರಿಕೆಯ ಹೆಸರು : NAME OF THE NEWS PAPER: The Hindustan ದಿನಾಂಕ : DATE : 11/2/21

'States, Centre responsible for fuel prices'

Pradhan says it's wrong to campaign that the rates are at an all-time high

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
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Union Petroleum Minister Dharmendra Pradhan said on Wednesday it was wrong to campaign that fuel prices are at an all-time high as petrol and diesel prices are governed by an international price mechanism.

K.C. Venugopal of the Congress said petrol price was about ₹100 a litre in his village, and asked why the prices were at an all-time high when the international crude price was not so. Responding to this, Mr. Pradhan said, "Today, the price of crude oil is \$61 a barrel. He belongs to Kerala where a lot of people stay in Gulf area. Before coming to the House, he should at least check with some of his close friends from that area what the price is... States are responsible;



the Union government is also responsible for this tax issue. He has asked me how many times we have raised the price and the excise duty. The States too have raised the VAT. So, both the States and the Central government are raising taxes according to their developmental needs."

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Union Petroleum Minister

so. In the last 300 days, the increase in the price was for 60 days. For around seven days in respect of petrol and for 21 days in respect of diesel, we have decreased the price. Almost for 250 days, we have neither increased nor decreased the price. So, it is a misnomer to campaign that prices are all-time high."

Asked by Vishambhar Prasad Nishad of the Samajwadi Party why the petrol price was high in Ram's India when it was low in Sita's Ne-

pal, the Minister said India could not be compared to countries where petrol was not for the consumption of the masses.

"Do we compare ourselves with big economies or such small economy. Let me give you an example of kerosene that is priced at ₹32 in India but there [Nepal, Bangladesh] it is priced at ₹57-59. Kerosene is an item of mass consumption in those countries," he said.

He said to give relief to the consumers, the Centre reduced the excise duty on both petrol and diesel by ₹2 a litre with effect from October 4, 2017. It reduced the excise duty on both by ₹1.5 a litre with effect from October 5, 2018 and the public sector oil marketing companies also reduced ₹1 a litre to bring down overall prices.