

SHRIMATI LEELA DAMODARA MENON : No, it has not been settled. Sir, the point raised was not settled and that is why I raised the question again and I am not getting the answer.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : The answer has been given that it is settled.

SHRIMATI LEELA DAMODARA MENON : Should we take it up again because the matter has not been settled? Will the assurance be given that it will be settled? Sir, the particular case that I am raising relates to one Shrimati Virenwali, which we had taken up with the Home Ministry but that has not yet been settled.

SHRI CHARAN SINGH : Sir, the question simply relates to the number of cases which are still pending.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : Part (c) of the Question . . .

SHRI CHARAN SINGH : Part (c) of the Question asks whether Government have received any representations from some Members of Parliament in this regard and my answer is "No, Sir. However, Government had received communications from some M.Ps. in regard to another case which has long since been settled".

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : To this the hon. Member is saying that it has not been settled. If you could kindly look into this matter again.

SHRI CHARAN SINGH : Well, according to my information, the Commissioner had taken a final decision in the matter of Shrimati Virenwali in October 1976. That is my information.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : The hon. Minister can re-check whether the information given by the hon. Member is correct. You may kindly re-check in the light of the observations made by the hon. Member whether it has been settled or not.

SHRI CHARAN SINGH: Lest I be accused of unparliamentary behaviour, I accept your suggestion.

*97. [The questioners (Shri Deorao Patil, Shri Jagjit Singh Anand, Shri Bhupesh Gupta and Dr. Z. A. Ahmed) were absent. For answer vide cols, *infra*. 34-35..]

SALE OF CEMENT IN BLACKMARKET

*98. SHRI SARDAR AMJAD ALI : SHRI HARSH DEO MALAVIYA : DR. V. B. SINGH : SHRI HIMMAT SINGH :

Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the press report which appeared in the 'Patriot' dated the 19th May, 1977, alleging that 'Janata Leaders' had allowed unauthorised rise in the price of cement to fill up the party coffers; and

(b) if so, what action Government have taken to counter this allegation ?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI BRIJ LAL VERMA) : (a) and (b) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House. [See Appendix CI, Annexure No. 12].

SHRI SARDAR AMJAD ALI : I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether he is aware of the fact that the Commerce Minister had made a statement that cement price had gone up and that he was in confusion as to whether the subject will be dealt with by the Industry Minister or by the Minister in charge of Civil Supplies. Has he entered into any correspondence or deliberations with the Minister of Civil Supplies so as to check the price of cement ?

SHRI BRIJ LAL VERMA : Cement price has not gone up when there is some type of scarcity which is because of powercut and other things and also because of natural calamity that we suffer. So, there was some type of scarcity only resulting in non-availability of cement.

DR. V. B. SINGH : Sir . . .

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : Please be quick to respond.

†The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri Sardar Amjad Ali.

DR. V. B. SINGH : ... it is strange than the Minister admits that there is scarcity but the prices have not gone up. It is a strange argument. Scarcity leads to rise in prices. The elementary economics should be understood by a common citizen, not to talk of the hon. Minister. So, my question will be, what type of economy are you creating in which scarcity is not leading to higher prices ?

SHRI BRIJ LAL VERMA : If there will be no power cut and if there will be full production of cement, then there would not be any scarcity.

SHRI U. K. LAKSHMANA GOWDA : I am not referring to the statement which appeared in the *Patriot* about shortage of cement. There is another question No. 118 which refers to the shortage of cement in the country. There might have been temporary shortages. I know that a statement was made by the Commerce Minister sometime back but the situation now is that wherever cement is available, even though the normal price should be about Rs. 23 or Rs. 24, it is never available for less than Rs. 35 anywhere with any dealer, whether it is here or even in place like Karnataka where cement is being produced. That is the situation. I would like to know what action Government is going to take to see that cement will be made available. Sir, in this regard, I would like to make one suggestion. Export of cement seems to be continuing. At least, in the statement which has been laid on the Table, it has been said that after the monsoon, supply of electricity might improve and production might improve and it might bring down the scarcity. I would like to know what immediate action they are going to take and whether they would restrict the export for the next one or two months and see that more cement is available in the country so that the scarcity will be reduced and cement will be available to the people, to the consumers, at a reasonable price.

SHRI BRIJ LAL VERMA : We are looking into it. We will ensure that there is 10 scarcity.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : It is a specific question whether exports would be stopped so that the scarcity ceases.

SHRI BRIJ LAL VERMA : We will examine it and see whether this could be done.

SHRI V. B. RAJU : It is not a question of examining. The domestic market is suffering from scarcity and the foreign exchange reserves have accumulated here. Will the hon. Minister assure this House that immediately the exports will be stopped ? Secondly, I would also like to know whether there is any hoarding of cement by stockists in a clandestine manner. Government have not allowed any increase in price. What about the free market price ? I do not think there is any control over cement now. What is the free market price ? Is the hon. Minister aware of the difference between the Government price and the free market price ? Will he take these two steps immediately, to stop exports and see that the stockists and other anti-social elements do not hoard cement ? Will the Government take these steps ?

SHRI BRIJ LAL VERMA : There are certain commitments to some nations and we have to honour them. As regards the suggestion put forward by my friend, we will see that the anti-social elements do not take advantage of it. We will look into it.

SHRI D. P. SINGH : Will the hon. Minister appreciate that it is not a question of transportation between the factory and the dealer? The question that is raised here is in regard to distribution and supply from the dealer to the consumer. In this regard, what steps have so far been taken? Have any searches and raids been carried out to recover the hoarded goods ? This is the main allegation against you that you have permitted hoarding to allow profiteering by people who have helped you in your election campaign with large funds.

SHRI BRIJ LAL VERMA : There are no such instances. We have not come across any instance of this type.