

merit to the people through programmes of agricultural development, rural industries etc. The Sixth Five Year Plan would be formulated in this light. Since three years of the Fifth Plan are already over, only marginal changes to reflect the new policy of Government might be made in the last two years of the Plan.

*117. [Transferred to the 22nd June, 1977.]

SHORTAGE OF CEMENT IN THE COUNTRY

*118. SHRI LAKSHMANA MAHA-
PATRO

SHRI S. KUMARAN :

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA :

SHRIMATI PRATIBHA SINGH:

SHRI KRISHNARAO NARAYAN
DHULAP:

Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government are aware that there is an acute shortage of cement in the country resulting in sale of cement in the black market at prices ranging between Rs. 28/- and Rs. 35/- per bag;

(b) if so, whether the causes of such shortage have been ascertained; if so, what are the details thereof; and

(c) what action Government propose to take to meet the shortage and to bring to book the hoarders and traders responsible for this state of affairs ?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI BRIJ LAL VERMA) : (a) to (c) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT

'(a) to (c) With the production of cement during 1976 at 18.76 million tonnes and at 4.95 million tonnes during the first quarter of 1977 (*i.e.* January to March), the highest achieved so far, it will not be correct to hold that there is any general shortage of cement in the country. However, reports of non-availability of cement in the open market were received from various parts of the country in April 1977, primarily due to a heavy export in the month of March, 1977; power cuts imposed by the

State Governments in major cement producing States like Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka etc. ranging 30 to 50%; and an increase in the Government demand, from 34% in 1976 to 50% in first quarter of 1977. The reports of nonavailability of cement in certain parts of the country are, therefore, not as a result of the lifting of emergency.

Reports of sale of cement at prices higher than those fixed by the Government by certain unsocial elements have been received. It has been impressed upon the cement manufacturers that they have a moral responsibility to ensure that the dealers and stockists at the retail level do not resort to sale of cement at prices higher than those fixed by the State Government concerned. The manufacturers have also been requested to exercise a close scrutiny on the sale of cement by the dealers and stockists in this regard. The State Government have been requested de facto to keep a close watch on the cement price within the State and take suitable action on the unsocial elements by random check etc. under the Essential Commodities Act, and ensure that cement is not sold at the retail level by the dealers and stockists at prices higher than those fixed by the State Government. The attention of the State Governments have also been drawn to the various provisions of the licensing and Control Orders issued under the Essential Commodities Act by which they have power to fix the sale price, take possession, or sell stock, power of entry, search, seizure etc. The Cement Manufacturers Association have also assured full co-operation on their part on the Government's directives for observing the code of conduct. Wherever specific instances are brought to the notice of the Government, these are also investigated and suitable action as required under law is taken.

Efforts have been made to maintain optimum production by persuading the State Government to give more power to the Cement factories in Tamil Nadu who have been subjected to maximum amount of power cut. The State Government

of Kerala have been persuaded to give the maximum power to the State of Tamil Nadu. The Government indentors have been requested to stagger their off-take or not to draw any quantities of cement for building up stocks in the current quarter and to build up stocks only in the next quarter (*i.e.* July to September) when the production is expected to improve with the expected withdrawal of power cuts. The tempo of the construction activity by the general public is also expected to come down after June as a result of on-set of monsoon. The State Trading Corporation through whom the export of cement is canalised has also been advised to export only the minimum quantity necessary to fulfil their irrevocable contractual obligations during the current quarter.

COAL INDIA LIMITED

-119. SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA :
SHRI LAKSHMANA MAHAPATRO :
SHRI SANAT KUMAR RAHA: Will the Minister of ENERGY be pleased to state :

(a) whether there is a proposal under Government's consideration to convert the Coal India Limited into a joint sector corporation;

(b) whether it is a fact that Government have invited private investment in the nationalised coal industry; and

(c) if the answer to parts (a) and (b) above be in the affirmative, what are the details in this regard ?

THE MINISTER OF ENERGY (SHRI P. RAMACHANDRAN) : (a) No, Sir

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise.

VICTIMISATION OF COCHIN PORT EMPLOYEES

: 120. SHRI VISWANATHA MENON : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to State :

(a) whether it is a fact that many employees of the Cochin Port were compulsorily retired or otherwise victimised during the emergency;

(b) whether Government have received a mass petition signed by the Cochin Port workers urging the re-instatement of employees and review of the cases of victimisation; and

(c) if so, what action Government have taken therein ?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI JAGJIVAN RAM) : (a) No, Sir. Only three employees were compulsorily retired during emergency in accordance with FR 56 (J), adopted by the Port, which provides for review at the age of 50/55 years and empowers the appropriate authority to retire any employee if it is of the opinion that it is in public interest to do so.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) The cases of the three employees retired compulsorily are being reviewed.

ADVERTISEMENT RELEASED BY GOVERNMENT TO DAILY NEWSPAPERS

197. SHRI SANAT KUMAR RAHA : Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state :

(a) the current circulation figures of ten top daily newspapers in the country;

(b) the amount paid for advertisements by Government to these dailies in 1975, 1976 and so far in 1977?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI LAL K. ADVANI) : (a) The statement is laid on the Table of the House.

(b) Approximate amounts paid for advertisements released by Directorate of Advertising and Visual Publicity to these dailies are as under:—

Year	Amount in Rs.
1975-76	36,40,314
1976-77	45,10,105
1977-78	8,71,114
upto 31-5-1977	