

I, therefore, urge upon the Government to appoint, immediately, the Sixth Central Pay Commission for reviewing and revising the wage structures of the Central Government employees. Thank you, Sir.

Unreasonable hike in cement prices

SHRI M. V. MYSURA REDDY (Andhra Pradesh): Sir, cement is one of the key elements in creating infrastructure in the country. Of late, the prices of cement are going up without any rhyme or reason. In fact, in the last six months, the price-increase is up to 40 per cent, which is not justified at all. It is not that all of a sudden, the demand has surpassed the supply. Moreover, the price-rise is not due to the increase in the cost of inputs that go in the manufacture of cement. But it is due to the fact that the major players have formed a cartel and on one pretext or the other they will stop production in the name of dispatch holiday or shut down the plants in the name of repairs. In this way, they create artificial scarcity in the market for limitless profiteering by pegging prices of cement.

As per newspaper reports the hon. Minister has held two meetings with the cement manufacturers and directed them to reduce this unreasonable hike in cement prices by 15th of this month. I do not know whether the cement manufacturers have paid any heed to the warning given by the Government. But there is no perceptible decline in the prices of cement at the market level.

Therefore, I request the hon. Minister of Commerce and Industry to take stern steps against cement manufacturers for hiking the prices of cement in an unjustified and unacceptable manner, and thus save the consumers from this unreasonable hike in cement prices. Thank you.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The House stands adjourned to meet at 11.00 A.M. tomorrow.

The House then adjourned at twenty-one minutes past seven of the clock till eleven of the clock on Friday, the 19th May, 2006