

[17 May, 2006]

RAJYA SABHA

(d) whether it is also a fact that some Government officers are in collusion with the defaulting firms, and if so, Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI K. CHANDRASEKHAR RAO): (a) and (b) As on 31.3.2005, the number of establishments covered under the Employees' Provident Fund & Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 1952, was 4.08 lakhs. The number of complaints filed and pending with poli-e authorities against such defaulters, who were deducting the employees' share but not remitting to EPFO was 6493 as on 31.3.2005. The cumulative amount outstanding from the defaulting establishments, including employees' share was Rs. 2144.82 crore as on 31.3.2005.

(c) Recovery of dues is made in accordance with the provisions of the Employees' Provident Funds & Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 1952. This includes prosecution under section 14 of the Act, filing of complaints under section 406/409 of IPC, attachment of properties/bank accounts and arrest of defaulters.

(d) No, Sir. No such incidence has been reported.

#### **Review of Indo-Singapore Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement**

\*475. SHRI VIJAY J. DARDA:

SHRIMATI SHOBHANA BHARTIA:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether India and Singapore reviewed the Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement to identify the areas in which the two countries can improve bilateral trade and investment flow;

(b) if so, the points discussed during the meeting held on March 4, 2006;

(c) whether all issues have been settled; and

(d) to what extent Indo-Singapore agreement relating to trade in goods, services and investment has been finalized?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) India and Singapore met on March 30-31 and May 8-9, 2006. The two sides reviewed the implementation of the India-Singapore Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA).

(c) and (d) India-Singapore CECA, comprising of, *interalia*, Agreement relating to Trade in Goods, Services and Investment, is already in force from 1st August, 2005.

#### **Hike in cement prices**

476. SHRI SURENDRA LATH: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that during the last three months cement prices hiked upto 40 per cent;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether any regulatory authority or any institution is there to control the prices/rates of cement;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) and (b) Cement prices have increased since December, 2005 at varying rates across the country. The cement manufacturers have cited an increase in the input costs as the reason for the price increase.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

(e) Cement is not a controlled commodity under the Essential Commodities Act, 1955 and its prices are not regulated.

#### **Funds under SGRY**

†\*477. SHRI KANJIBHAI MAGANBHAI PATEL: Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the fact that the funds provided in

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† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.