

LOK SABHA DEBATES

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LOK SABHA

Wednesday, March 12, 1980/Phalguna
22, 1901 (Saka).

The Lok Sabha met at Eleven of
the Clock.

[MR. SPEAKER in the Chair]

MEMBER SWORN

Shri Martand Singh (Rewa—Ma-
dhya Pradesh).

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Building Activity hampered by Cement Shortage

*21. SHRI T. R. SHAMANNA: Will
the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleas-
ed to state:

(a) whether he is aware that there
is acute scarcity of cement hampering
house building activities and also the
construction of industrial and commer-
cial buildings; and

(b) whether Government propose
to take steps to give additional
power to step up production and start
new factories for production of ce-
ment, etc.?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Where is
the Minister of Industry?

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: He came to me.

SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES: Is
this the way they are going to treat
the House? (Interruptions).

MR. SPEAKER: I will see to it.

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SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES: This
is an insult to the House: this is an
insult to the Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: I will look to it.
I will take care of it.

THE PRIME MINISTER (SHRI-
MATI INDIRA GANDHI): I am sorry
the Minister is not here. He was
here a little while ago. I do not know
what has happened.

MR. SPEAKER: He came to me.
I do not know what has happened.

SHRIMATI INDIRA GANDHI: I
shall give the reply. I think, he has
gone to see the Speaker.

(a) and (b). A statement is laid
on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) Yes, Sir, the availability of
cement in the country is less than
the demand.

(b) State Governments who had
imposed power-cuts on the cement
industry were requested to exempt
the industry from this power-cut.
Accordingly, the State Governments
of Gujarat and Orissa have exempt-
ed the cement industry from power-
cuts. Power-cuts have been reduced
in the States of Andhra Pradesh,
Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka and Ut-
tar Pradesh. Additional Power for
the cement industry is being made
available in the State of Tamil Nadu
and arrangements for the supply of
additional power to Haryana by the
Government of Punjab, for produc-
tion of cement, has also been made

In addition the Government are en-
couraging the setting up of new capa-
cities for cement production in the
country. Letters of intent/licences
for an additional capacity of 27.52
million tonnes have been issued

श्री मनी राम बागड़ी: आपको पहले पता दे दिया था क्या उद्योग मंत्री ने वह यहाँ क्यों नहीं आये?

श्रीमती इन्दिरा गांधी: जी नहीं वह यहाँ थे ...

(व्यवधान)

MR. SPEAKER: I know that I have to safeguard the interests of the House. It will be looked after.

SHRIMATI INDIRA GANDHI: I entirely agree with the hon. Members on the other side that the Ministers should be in their places on time.

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI R. VENKATARAMAN): I beg your pardon. My colleague who has to answer this question, unfortunately, is held up somewhere.

MR. SPEAKER: He was here.

SHRI R. VENKATARAMAN: I will answer the question.

SHRI T. R. SHAMANNA: Now a days cement has become a very scarce commodity. At the same time, large quantity of cement is available at Rs. 40 or Rs. 45. Even though permits have been given, for days and weeks cement is not available. May I know how this difficulty has arisen? What steps will the Government take to see that cement is made available in the required quantity especially when cement has become a very important commodity now a days? What steps are being taken to see that cement production is increased and distribution is made more regular?

MR. SPEAKER: Will he please repeat the question? I am just helping the House.

SHRI T. R. SHAMANNA: An important commodity like cement has become a very scarce commodity nowadays. But a large quantity of cement is available in the black market at Rs. 40 or 45. Even though permits

are issued, cement is not available now. To avoid shortage of cement, its production has to be increased to a considerable extent. Further more we find that they are not trying to find any alternatives to cement. Even though construction work has started on many essential buildings, they are not in a position to complete them for want of cement, which has become a very important commodity indeed. What effective steps have been taken to see that the consumers get cement without difficulty?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF INDUSTRY (DR. GHARANJIT CHANANA): We inherited the cement industry, besides other things, in a very damaged condition. We are already doing repair work for the damage done to the whole industry. So far as the distribution part is concerned, excluding the three States of Punjab, Jammu and Kashmir and Orissa, the rest of the States have undertaken the control and distribution. We have fixed up the priorities in between them. The main handicap is that from 1977-78 onwards the gap in cement production has been increasing as compared to the demand. In 1977-78 the gap was 29.4 lakh tonnes; in 1978-79 the gap went up to 45.8 lakh tonnes and in 1979-80 it has further increased and touched 70 lakh tonnes. Now if we see the latest figures, there is definitely an increase in shortage from January 1979 onwards. The capacity of the cement plants was not fully utilized at all. From January 1979 the utilisation of capacity has fallen down. There was no full utilisation. In January 1979 it fell down to 84 per cent, which means 16 per cent remained unutilized. In November 1979 it came down to 62 per cent which meant that the unutilized capacity was 38 per cent.

Ever since our Government has taken over, in fact we have already started a trend towards higher utilisation. In fact, the time is too short to work out the exact impact, but the

trends are already there in the market in spite of the fact that we had inherited the major handicaps in the industrial growth like power cuts up to the extent of even 100 per cent in Rajasthan which you have seen. We are, in fact, working towards self-sufficiency and the distribution would definitely be better than what we inherited.

SHRI T. R. SHAMANNA: Sir, the hon. Minister has not answered as to how cement is available in the black market and why it is not available in the regular supply. Furthermore, what are the steps taken for increasing the production and regulating the distribution.

MR. SPEAKER: He has answered already.

DR. CHARANJIT CHANANA: The hon. Member has asked question No. 1: Steps taken for increasing the production. In fact, he has talked of distribution.

SEVERAL HON. MEMBERS: No, no.

(Interruptions)

DR. CHARANJIT CHANANA: Mr. Speaker, his first question was about distribution and the second was about increasing the capacity. I am taking the other way because, first of all... *(Interruptions)* I would reply to your question.

MR. SPEAKER: He has asked you about blackmarketing. It is available in the black market. Why it is so?

DR. CHARANJIT CHANANA: The distribution pattern evolved by the Janata Party Government....

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Order, order.

DR. CHARANJIT CHANANA: The distribution pattern evolved by the Janata Party Government was such as it could feed the blackmarket only.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: You can put your question, but not like that. It is not the way. Let him answer. *(Interruptions)* Well, you had your say and he will have his say. We have got very important questions on the agenda and if you try to waste your time....

(Interruptions)

DR. CHARANJIT CHANANA: I am referring to that only. I am telling you that for the money supply and the black money generated by the Janata Party Government there is no switch. Unfortunately, there is no electronic switch will put off and that disappears. So, the black market was in fact promoted and generated. We have seen to it. If you have seen today's newspapers, you will see that in Delhi itself....

(Interruptions)

SHRI SATYASADHAN CHAKRABORTY: Since you claim that you are the ablest of the leaders, what is being done now?

DR. CHARANJIT CHANANA: If you see the newspapers today, what we are doing is—actually we have streamlined the distribution pattern and we are discouraging the hoarders. You have seen that hoarding is also being discouraged. It is the optimum pattern of distribution which would ensure the availability of cement to the ultimate consumers including your kisans also.

श्री चन्द्रपाल शैलानी: अध्यक्ष महोदय, गांवों में पीने के पानी के कुओं के लिए सीमेंट नहीं है। किसान के ट्यूबवैल की नालियों के लिए सीमेंट नहीं है। गरीब की टूटी हुई छत की मरम्मत के लिए भी सीमेंट नहीं है। मैं जानना चाहता हूँ कि क्या सरकार की जानकारी में यह बात है कि सीमेंट दो प्रकार से आता है: ट्रक से और रेलवे वैन से। सरकारी कर्मचारियों, सप्लाई आफिस और ट्रक मालिकों की मिली-भगत से वैन से आये हुए सीमेंट को ट्रक से आया हुआ दिखाया जाता है और उसकी

कीमत ज्यादा दिखाई जाती है। जब तक इस तरह की व्यवस्था है मैं सरकार से केवल यह जानना चाहता हूँ कि इस में सरकार क्या सुधार करना चाहती है और गरीबों की, किसानों की जरूरत की चीजों के लिए क्या सरकार सीमेंट उपलब्ध करेगी ? साथ ही मैं यह जानना चाहता हूँ कि क्या निकट भविष्य में सरकार का इरादा सीमेंट की कीमत बढ़ाने का है ?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI R. VENKATARAMAN): Sir, I agree with the hon. Member that there is blackmarketing in the country. We cannot wipe out the realities....

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU: In this system.

SHRI R. VENKATARAMAN:... in the existing conditions. (*Interruptions*). If you are interested in hearing the explanation, please allow me to say that. As far as the black-market is concerned, certain people who are eligible to get this quota, are not utilising it for their own and they are selling it at a higher price because of the shortage in the country. The way in which it can be solved is only by increasing the supplies and no amount of mere regulation can solve this problem. So far as increasing the supplies are concerned, the Government are trying to increase the capacity utilisation, which unfortunately has been affected by shortage of power. The cement plants in our country are today working very well below capacity primarily due to shortage of power and next due to non-availability of coal in various areas. As I said yesterday, the Cabinet Committee is trying to rush coal to those areas on a priority basis. Secondly, we are trying to improve the thermal efficiency and the generation of thermal power to effect the low production or low generation of Power in the hydro areas. Therefore, if the thermal power generation improves in the next week or in the next few weeks, the cement produc-

tion also will improve. In addition to that we are going to import two million tonnes of cement to ease the situation and we hope that the import will go a long way to ease the shortage in the country.

SHRI M. RAM GOPAL REDDY: When Madam Gandhi handed over the Government to Janata Party, there was plenty of cement. I would like to know, how they have converted this into scarcity in three years and also the state-wise break-up of the additional capacity of 27.52 million tonnes.

DR. CHARANJIT CHANANA: As far as the mismanagement by the Janata Party Government, that is all before us and I have already talked about what we have inherited. (*Interruptions*) I am replying to the hon. Member's question as to what happened to the surplus we gave to the Janata Party when they took over. Now, what they did, how they did, is known to the public.

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU: I will give you the figures. You are misleading the House.

DR. CHARANJIT CHANANA: I will give you the figures. The second part of the question is about the break-up of the additional capacities generated by us. I will give you the break-up of 27.52 million tonnes of additional projects approved in public sector and private sector Statewise. It is a long list, I will read it out. I will first give you the number of units in the private sector—5 units in Rajasthan, 1 unit in Himachal Pradesh, 8 units in Madhya Pradesh, 3 units in Maharashtra, 5 units in Gujarat, 1 in Bihar, 2 in Karnataka, one in Tamil Nadu and 8 in Andhra Pradesh. These are the cement projects approved in the private sector, large houses.

AN HON. MEMBER: For what consideration?

DR. CHARANJIT CHANANA: About the public sector, the Cement Corporation of India has been given 6 units, the J & K Minerals Ltd.—2 units, the U.P. State Cement Corporation—2 units, the Meghalaya Industrial Development Corporation—2 units, the Tamil Nadu Industrial Development Corporation—1 unit and, like that, we have given 24 units in the public sector.

The sector-wise break up is as follows. Out of 27.52 million tonnes, 9.17 million tonnes is in the public sector, 14.02 million tonnes in the private sector and, in addition to this, we have been also encouraging the mini-cement plants to come up all over the country according to the economic viability and technical feasibility.

श्रीमती प्रीमला बण्डवते: अध्यक्ष महोदय, बम्बई में सिविल कारपोरेशन में पब्लिक वर्क्स का काम बिल्कुल ठप्प हो गया है क्योंकि वहां पर सीमेंट नहीं मिलता है। मैं यह जानना चाहती हूँ कि जो सीमेंट आप इम्पोर्ट करने वाले हैं, बहुत बड़ी तादाद में, वह सीमेंट पब्लिक वर्क्स के लिए होगा, प्राइवेट हाउसिंग के लिए होगा या फिर ब्लैक-मार्केटिंग में चला जायेगा ?

दूसरी बात मैं यह जानना चाहती हूँ कि प्रिवेंटिव डिंटेशन लागू करने के बाद एक महीने में कितनी सीमेंट पब्लिक वर्क्स के लिए एवलेबल कर दिया गया है जिससे कि ब्लैक-मार्केटिंग में जो सीमेंट की कीमत बढ़ गई थी वह कम हो सकेगी?

SHRI R. VENKATARAMAN: The cement distribution will be according to our priority and, if the public works require cement urgently, certainly, it will be given the priority.

AN HON. MEMBER: What is the priority?

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU: The priority is Birlaji.

MR. SPEAKER: You carry on with your answer.

SHRI R. VENKATARAMAN: I have stated that the priority will be given for the public works and this priority will come not only from locally produced cement but also imported cement. If the hon. Member has any specific case in which the priority has not been observed, it may be brought to our notice. She may also write to the local Government which observes the priority. The question is that so long as there is shortage, we are to distribute the available quantity in accordance with the relative priority.

सैनिक अभ्यास और सड़कों की क्षति

*22. श्री विरधी चन्द्र जैन : क्या रक्षा मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि :

(क) क्या थल सेना जिसमें भारी वाहन और ट्रैक प्रयुक्त होते हैं, प्रति वर्ष राजस्थान के भारत-पाकिस्तान सीमावर्ती क्षेत्रों में अभ्यास और प्रशिक्षण कार्यक्रम आयोजित करती है;

(ख) क्या इस अभ्यास और प्रशिक्षण कार्यक्रमों के कारण सीमावर्ती क्षेत्रों की सड़कों, जो राज्य सरकार द्वारा निर्मित की जाती हैं, पर्याप्त क्षतिग्रस्त हो जाती हैं;

(ग) क्या सरकार इन क्षतिग्रस्त सड़कों की मरम्मत के लिए कोई मुआवजा नहीं देती है और यदि हां, तो उसके क्या कारण हैं; और

(घ) क्या सरकार का विचार प्रति वर्ष किये जाने वाले इस अभ्यास के परिणामस्वरूप इन क्षतिग्रस्त सड़कों के लिए उपयुक्त मुआवजा देने का है?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI C. P. N. SINGH): (a) Army Units, located in different stations carry out routine training and exercises every year. Such exercises are also conducted in Rajasthan.

(b) During these exercises, the main movement of military traffic and all movement of tanks are generally made cross-country to avoid damage to roads. The maintenance of roads in the border areas are primarily under the Border