

Title: Need to check the rising prices of Steel -Laid.

SHRI KINJARAPU YERRANNAIDU (SRIKAKULAM): Sir, I would like to draw the attention of the Hon'ble Minister of Steel to the persistent rise in prices of steel and raw material. Iron and steel prices have shot up 27 percent. Hike in iron ore prices announced by National Mineral Development Corporation (NDMC) have raised iron ore prices by 47.5 per cent since 1 October, 2007. Steel companies have increased the prices of steel thrice by 20-24 per cent since December, 2007. The wholesale prices index-based inflation rate has touched an all time high of 7.28 per cent, despite efforts by the Government to bring it down to a comfortable level.

The cost of construction has risen by about 20 per cent due to rise in cement and steel prices. The price hike of TMT bars has affected construction work considerably. Currently, the cement price is hovering around Rs. 270 for a 50 Kg bag and it is likely to go up further. Increase in price of steel, cement and iron ores would have very adverse impact on the common man in the entire country.

Under the circumstances, I strongly urge and demand the Government to include steel under Essential Commodities, lower the import duty and excise duty and impose export duty on steel immediately which would pave way for the availability of steel for all. The Central Government should also make efforts to suspend 'future trading' in steel to tame rising prices.

I, therefore, plead with the Central Government that it should set up a regulatory mechanism to ensure and facilitate regulation of prices of steel in the country, and initiate measures to contain exorbitant hike in prices of steel and raw material.