

(ii) REPORTED CONFLICTING STATEMENTS  
BY MINISTERS ABOUT USE OF AND  
REPEAL OF MISA

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU (Diamond Harbour): Sir, As directed by you I raise the following under rule 377:—

It is reported that the Union Commerce Minister, Shri Mohan Dharia, told a meeting of the ruling Janata Party today that the government would have to think whether or not they should take recourse to some of the measures like MISA and DIR against the anti-social elements to check the rise in prices. In this context, Shri Dharia said that some elements are taking advantage of the liberal attitude of the government with regard to the use of the Preventive Detention Act and MISA. He also said that the government will not hesitate to take strong measures in this regard.

On the one hand, the above was said by the minister of the government; on the other hand Shri L. K. Advani, Minister for Information & Broadcasting, said in Rajya Sabha that the government stood by its commitment to repeal the MISA and the special committee of the Home Ministry was seized on the matter. This, Shri Advani stated 26-7-77.

The Janata Party is committed to repeal all preventive detention acts and in its election manifesto in page 9 para 3 it says "As a party wedded to the ideals of freedom and democracy, it believes that fearlessness is of the essence. It will therefore, take immediate steps to free the people from the bondage of fear. It will restore to the citizen his fundamental freedoms and to the judiciary its rightful role."

"To generate fearlessness and to revive democracy the Janata Party will:

- (3) Repeal MISA, release all political detainees, and review all other unjust laws;"

This we expect that, after a lapse of 4 months now, there is no hesitation in the minds of Janata government that it is under obligation to repeal the MISA which is long overdue.

At the same time, we are also mindful of the fact that blackmarketeers, hoarders, speculators, economic offenders and other anti social elements should be dealt with firmly. For this the government should enact suitable laws to deal with such persons who are enemies of the country and the people. We do not want that any detention without trial should be allowed to continue under any circumstances.

The Home Minister is here, Sir, and I have drawn his attention.

MR. SPEAKER : He is not getting up.

12.53 hrs.

STATEMENT RE. AVAILABILITY  
OF CEMENT

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES) : Sir, there have been innumerable complaints of non-availability of cement and also of blackmarketing in cement by the dealers. During the last few days, I have talked to many people in the cement industry and asked them to discipline the dealers. I have publicly asked the dealers not to indulge in black-marketing taking advantage of the shortage in cement supplies. I have told them that cement should be sold at the statutory price and when stocks run out, they should have a sign board to that effect.

The final answer to the present situation is more production of cement. But more production is not a short term solution, though I am trying my best to see that the industry improves its efficiency and performance and some more cement is produced. With the improvement in the power situation, there will be some more production in the normal course. The cement units that have perennial power problem are being allowed to put up small captive diesel power plants immediately.

While some of our export commitments on cement have to be fulfilled for more than one reason, I am looking into the possibility of deferring a few of our programmed exports. In this way, there can be some additional stocks available for domestic consumption.

There is one area where I need and seek your immediate help. There are about 50,000 stockists of cement in the country. While many of them are honest traders, some of them are obviously finding it difficult to unlearn their habit of black-marketing. It is these recalcitrant elements who are not only fleecing the people but also giving a bad name to the vast community of honest traders. I have asked the cement industry to issue immediate directions to the stockists to associate people's representatives with the distribution of cement. In precise terms, I have asked them to have their stockists to (1) display daily stock position; (2) to display the price of cement; and (3) to associate a committee of people's representatives of the locality with the distribution of cement.