

Minister of Karnataka drew the Prime Minister's attention to the delay in the implementation of the Vijaynagar Steel Plant Project. The Prime Minister agreed to have the matter looked into.

As regards the present status of the project, the examination in SAIL of the Detailed Project Report in respect of Vijaynagar Steel Plant Project has been completed and the matter was placed before the SAIL Board. The Board has constituted a Committee to examine the Project Report and the Estimates.

Further action will be taken after the aforesaid Committee's report is received and considered by SAIL Board. Meanwhile, preliminary works like land acquisition for the plant, soil investigation, raw materials testing, etc., have been completed.

**Increase/Decrease in Wholesale price Index**

676. SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) the rate of increase or decrease in whole sale price Index between 1st April, 1979 and January 20, 1980; and between January 20, 1980 and May 15, 1980; and

(b) outcome of Government's anti-price rise drive in physical terms?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI MAGANBHAI BAROT): (a) The rate of increase in the wholesale price index works out to 18.0 per cent between March 31, 1979 and January 19, 1980 and 6.1 per cent between January 19, 1980 and May 17, 1980.

(b) As a result of the various anti-inflationary measures taken by the present Government the rate of increase in wholesale prices has been moderated it amounted to 5.2 per cent between 12th January 1980 and 24th May 1980 as against the rise of 7.2

per cent in the corresponding period of 1979.

**Alleged involvement of Embassy staff in Smuggling Activities**

677. SHRI CHIRANJI LAL: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that some of the Diplomats' wives and other embassy staff are involved in smuggling activities, especially in gold, silver and watches etc.; and

(b) if so, steps taken or proposed to be taken for checking it?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI MAGANBHAI BAROT): (a) Yes, Sir. Several cases of smuggling of gold, silver, watches, etc., involving persons holding diplomatic passports have been detected by the Customs authorities.

(b) Government has taken appropriate action with the cooperation of the Governments of the countries concerned and remains in confidential touch with these Governments with a view to prevent any recurrence of such abuses. In view of the friendly relations and continuing cooperation with the countries concerned, it would not be appropriate to disclose the details.

**Security Arrangements in ITDC Hotels**

678. DR. VASANT KUMAR PANDIT: Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) what is the figure of loss due to pilferage, theft etc. of (i) silverware, (ii) consumers' articles (iii) Linen (iv) other articles etc. in the ITDC hotels for the last two years;

(b) what are the arrangements of watch and ward shift in each of the hotels; and