

(b) if so, the action taken or proposed to be taken by the Government of India in this regard ; and

(c) by when the meeting of External Affairs Ministers of Commonwealth is expected to discuss this matter ?

**THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI SURENDRA PAL SINGH)** : (a) and (b). No Sir. The Commonwealth Secretariat has, however, informed the Government of India of the willingness of Bangla desh to become a Member of the Commonwealth. Government have confirmed their support for the admission of Bangla desh to the Commonwealth and this support has been made known both to the Commonwealth Sectt, and other member-countries.

(c) Government of India is not aware of any proposal to hold a formal meeting of the External Affairs Ministers of Commonwealth countries for this purpose. The matter is expected to be decided on the basis of a consensus of the members of the Commonwealth, possibly by circulation.

**Closure of Factories, Mills and Establishments**

375. **SHRI AJIT KUMAR SAHA :**  
**SHRI R. P DAS :**

Will the Minister of **LABOUR AND REHABILITATION** be pleased to state :

(a) the number of closed factories/mills/and establishments all over India closed during the period of last three years, state-wise ;

(b) the total number of factories which remained closed ; and

(c) the action taken by Government to reopen them ?

**THE MINISTER OF LABOUR AND REHABILITATION (SHRI R. K. KHADILKAR)** : (a) and (b). The attached statement which summarises the readily available information, shows the number of factories, state-wise, which had closed down during the period April 1, 1969 to March 31, 1971 and

the number of factories which remained closed as on March 31, 1971. Similar information for the year 1971-72 is being collected.

(c) Closures may be due to shortage of raw materials, financial difficulties, mis-management, labour trouble, etc. In case of shortage of raw materials, Government issue, where necessary, advance import licence. Requests for financial assistance are considered by the appropriate agencies in terms of the rules governing such assistance. As for closures due to mis-management, necessary action is taken by Government under the Industries (Development and Regulation) Act. Where closures are due to labour trouble, the Industrial Relations Machinery makes efforts to secure the re-opening of the closed units by persuasion. According to available information, the number of factories which had re-opened during April 1, 1969 to March 31, 1971 in West Bengal, Mysore, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Gujrat, Orissa, Tamil Nadu, Delhi and Jammu & Kashmir was respectively 195, 268, 109, 88, 20, 11, 9, 8, 7, 6, 6 and 1.

*Statement*

S. No.	Name of the State/Union Territory	No. of factories closed during the last 2 years (period from 1.4.69 to 31.3.71)	No. of factories which remained closed (as on 31.3.71)
1	2	3	4
1.	Andhra Pradesh	647	559
2.	Assam	226	215
3.	Bihar	168	159
4.	Gujrat	202	194
5.	Himachal Pradesh	4	4
6.	Jammu & Kashmir	6	5
7.	Kerala	293	184
8.	Madhya Pradesh	23	23
9.	Mysore	871	603
10.	Manipur	Nil	Nil
11.	Nagaland	Nil	Nil

1	2	3	4
12.	Orissa	66	59
13.	Punjab	19	19
14.	Rajasthan	121*	121**
15.	Tamilnadu	22	16
16.	Tripura	3	3
17.	Uttar Pradesh	76	56
18.	West Bengal	531	336
19.	Andaman & Nicobar	Nil	Nil
20.	Delhi Admn.	21	15
21.	Dadra & Nagat Haveli	15	8
22.	Goa, Daman & Diu	23	23
23.	Laccadives, Minicoy & Amin-devi Islands	Nil	Nil
24.	Pondicherry	3	Nil

\*In the case of Rajasthan, information in Col. (3) relates to Calendar Years 1969 & 1970.

\*\*Position indicated as on December 31, 1970.

**U. S. Protest to India against Ambassadorial Relations with North Vietnam**

376. SHRI H. N. MUKHERJEE :  
SHRI C. JANARDHANAN :

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the U. S. Government had protested against India's action in raising her Consulate in Hanoi to Embassy status ; and

(b) if so, Government's reaction thereto ?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI SURENDRA PAL SINGH) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) We have indicated to the U. S. Government our surprise at the attitude taken by them. As a sovereign country, we take decisions in such matters in the light of our own

views and interests, and of the recognition of the realities of the situation, and will not be dictated to by other Governments, big or small.

**Setting up of Sponge Iron Pilot Project at Jamshedpur**

377. SHRI HARI SINGH : Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government have decided to set up a sponge iron pilot project at Jamshedpur, and

(b) if so, the time by which the project is expected to be commissioned ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI SHAH NAWAZ KHAN) : (a) Yes, Sir. The Sponge Iron Pilot Plant would be set up at the National Metallurgical Laboratory, Jamshedpur.

(b) This Project is expected to be completed in 1973-74,

**Setting up of a Steel Bank**

378. SHRI HARI SINGH : Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government have decided to set up a "Steel Bank" ; and

(b) if so, the main features thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI SHAH NAWAZ KHAN) : (a) and (b). Yes, Sir. Government have decided to set up a Raw Material Bank to be run by the Hindustan Steel Limited. The Bank would be charged with the responsibility of physically maintaining stocks of critical categories of steel so that priority users could be supplied such material ex-stock against surrendered/debited import licences. The stock of the Bank will be sustained by imports made judiciously on the basis of anticipated requirements. The Bank will have an initial imprest of Rs. 15 crores, and is expected to have an initial stock of about 50,000 tonnes of various