

(b) whether Pakistan has since changed its attitude as it appears from Shri Bhutto's speech in Sri Lanka recently; and

(c) the reaction of our Government and the steps the Government propose to take in the matter?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI BIPINPAL DAS): (a) and (b) While the Pakistan Government tries to impress third countries that it is sincere in its desire to normalise relations with India in accordance with the Simla Agreement, statements by Pakistan leaders and continuing propaganda against India contradict this assertion.

(c) India has made it clear in recent communications sent to Pakistan that negative propaganda against India is likely to cause a set-back to the process of normalisation and that the atmosphere should therefore be made conducive to the holding of further talks.

Commemorative stamp of Begum Akhtar

304 SHRI S. M. BANERJEE Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether request has been made by individuals and organisations to have commemorative stamp of late lamented Begum Akhtar, the famous musician; and

(b) if so, the reaction of the Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (DR SHANKER DAYAL SHARMA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The proposal was placed before the Philatelic Advisory Committee on 21-11-74 and again on 16-12-75 but the same was not recommended.

Aluminium factory at Ratnagiri

305. SHRI SHANKERRAO SAVANT: Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) the progress made in the construction of the Aluminium Factory at Ratnagiri during 1974-75;

(b) whether the Government propose to abandon the Project or complete it; and

(c) if the Government propose to complete it, the time schedule therefor and the reasons for slowing down the work on this project?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI SUKHDEV PRASAD) (a) to (c). In April, 1974, Government approved the Ratnagiri (Maharashtra) Aluminium Project, the estimated cost of which then was Rs 73 825 crores. However, due to budgetary constraints, a financial provision of Rs. 1 crore only was made in 1974-75 and Rs 50 lakhs in 1975-76. The detailed implementation of the project will be taken up and the annual phasing thereof determined only after full financial resources for the project have been earmarked.

Accumulation of Steel Rods

306. SHRI C. H. MOHAMED KOYA:
SHRI P. M. SAYEED:

Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether he is aware of the accumulation of steel rods and the resultant lay off in steel Rolling Mills; and

(b) if so, the remedies contemplated?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI SUKHDEV PRASAD): (a) and (b). In view of the increased production and streamlining of distribution, there is a surplus in the availability

of steel rods in the country. SAIL International Limited have taken measures to step up the export of bars. Government have no information about lay-off in steel re-rolling mills.

Employment of technicians and skilled Labourers in Saudi Arabia and Gulf countries

307. SHRI C. H. MOHAMED KOYA: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether he is aware that a large number of technicians and skilled labourers are unemployed in Kerala State;

(b) whether employment is available for them in Saudi Arabia and Gulf countries; and

(c) the steps taken by Government to find employment for them?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (SHRI RAGHUNATHA REDDY): (a) Precise estimates in this regard are not available. Available information relates to work seekers (all of whom are not necessarily unemployed) registered as "Craftsmen and Production Process Workers" with the Employment Exchanges in Kerala State. Their number was 39,290 as on 30th June, 1975.

(b) In recent years certain opportunities have come up in these countries for those Indian nationals whose experience and qualifications match the requirements.

(c) Government processes all the requests received from the Government, semi-Government and private undertakings from these countries expeditiously and renders all necessary and adequate assistance to them in the recruitment while at the same time safeguarding the interests of those recruited.

Ferro-Vanadium Plant in Orissa

308. SHRI ARJUN SETHI: Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) the further steps taken to commission Ferro-Vanadium Plant in the District Mayurbhanj of Orissa State;

(b) the total investment in the aforesaid Plant; and

(c) the preliminaries completed till to-date?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI SUKHDEV PRASAD): (a) The proposal for setting up a Ferro-Vanadium Plant in the District of Mayurbhanj of Orissa State was approved by the Board of Directors of Steel Authority of India Ltd. on 10th November, 1975. The proposal is now under consideration of the Government for an investment decision.

(b) The total investment envisaged in the aforesaid Plant is about Rs. 16 crores.

(c) A feasibility report has been made by M/s. M.N. Dastur & Co. An Expert Group constituted by the Steel Authority of India Ltd. has examined the geological prospecting data establishing a mineable ore reserve of Vanadi-ferrous ore in the Mayurbhanj District and the adjoining regions of Orissa State.

Number of Mini Steel Plants in the country

309. SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU: Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) how many mini steel plants have been set up in the country, State-wise total investment; in these plants to-date and state-wise installed capacity of the plants;

(b) how many plants, State-wise, have been closed down to-date;