

has requested Government for reduction in the import duty from 220 per cent to 180 per cent in the stainless sheets imported by the MMTC;

(b) whether the Northern India Stainless Steel Industries Association has further requested Government for import of 15000—20000 tonnes of stainless sheets so that the price-line may be maintained; and

(c) if so, what action Government have taken on the pleas of the Association?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND STEEL AND MINES (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) The Association has requested for reduction in the import duty on stainless steel sheets by about 50 percent or, in the alternative, to impose duty on per tonne basis instead of advalorem.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) A suggestion for reduction in import duty on stainless steel was examined earlier and was not agreed to. The fresh suggestion since received will also be examined on merits.

Investment and production of Steel in Paradeep Steel Plant

*403. SHRI BRAJIMOHAN MOHANTY:

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

(a) total investment involved in proposed Paradeep Steel Plant and total production potentiality of different varieties of steel; and

(b) what steps Government have taken to implement the project and when it is anticipated to start production?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND STEEL AND MINES (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) and (b). With a view to augmenting the steel-making capacity in the country, Gov-

ernment have been exploring the possibilities of setting up a new steel plant with a capacity of 3.0 million tonnes per annum with technical and financial assistance from some of the developed countries. Paradeep is being considered as one of the possible sites.

Offers of technical and financial assistance for this purpose have been received from certain parties in West Germany, U.K., etc. These proposals including the question of final location of the plant as well as other terms and conditions are presently in various stages of detailed technical and financial evaluation and will have to be negotiated further with the parties concerned before a final decision can be taken. It is, therefore, not possible at this stage to indicate the total investment involved, the details of production capacity and the date by which the plant will go into production.

Landing facilities for Air Bus/Boeing Aircraft at Airports of North East India

*404. SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV:

Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Airports of North Eastern India are going to be developed for landing facilities of Air Bus and Boeing aircraft;

(b) if so, whether Silchar (Kumbirgram) Airport is included in that Scheme; and

(c) from which date Boeing service to Silchar will commence, which is a long outstanding commitment of the Ministry?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI A. P. SHARMA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) Boeing 737 operations will commence as soon as the development works which are proposed to be taken

up during the current year are completed. These works are expected to be completed by middle of 1982.

Memorandum from Tobacco Growers for withdrawal of Central Excise Dues

*405. SHRI SAMAR MUKHERJEE: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether he has received a memorandum from the Co-ordination Committee of Tobacco Growers and Small Dealers (Andhra Pradesh) asking for withdrawal of Central Excise dues, due from the Tobacco Growers of Andhra Pradesh for the period prior to 1-3-79 i.e. the date from which Central Excise duty on unmanufactured tobacco was withdrawn; and

(b) if so, whether Government have considered their request in view of the losses suffered by the tobacco growers as a result of cyclones and floods between 1977 and 1979?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI R. VENKATARAMAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Government have considered the matter but they have not found it possible to withdraw the demands for central excise duty outstanding against the growers.

Sale of Smuggled Goods in Agartala

*406. SHRI H. N. NANJE GOWDA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that in Agartala smuggled goods such as, watches, T.V. sets, tape recorders and synthetic goods are sold openly in plenty;

(b) whether these goods are being smuggled from Bangladesh into Agartala through 900 km. long international border; and

(c) if so, what preventive actions Government propose to take in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI R. VENKATARAMAN): (a) and (b). Reports received by Government do not indicate any large scale and open sale of smuggled items such as T.V. sets, Tape-recorders etc. in Agartala. However, the Customs authorities have effected seizures of smuggled goods such as readymade garments, synthetic fabrics, transistors and calculators at Agartala. The value of the goods seized during the years 1978 to 1980 is given below:—

Year	Value in Rupees
1978	60,300
1979	37,245
1980	11,215
(upto May)	

Enquiries show that these goods had been mainly smuggled across the Indo-Bangladesh border.

(c) Anti-smuggling measures have been intensified along the Indo-Bangladesh border and Customs field formations and the Border Security Force have been alerted to prevent any attempts at smuggling across the border.

Import of Trawlers

2916. SHRI S. M. KRISHNA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of trawlers imported by each of the Industrial houses and concerns engaged in fisheries and the cost thereof; and

(b) whether India has recently lost some world markets for the export of their 'fisheries'; if so, the reasons therefor?