

(a) the reasons that the prices of foodgrains, oil and other edibles remain more than the prices fixed by Government; and

(b) the steps, if any, being taken or are likely to be taken to see that the shopkeepers do not charge more than the reasonable margin of profit on such commodities?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI ANNASAHAB P. SHINDE): (a). Prices of foodgrains, oil and other edibles are not fixed by the Government except in case of Vanaspati and or rice in two or three States.

(b) Government are keeping a constant watch on the prices. In case of commodities like foodgrains, sugar, vanaspati etc., action is taken to arrange for additional supplies through public/open market channels in order to control prices. The State Government will also utilise the powers available to them under the Essential Commodities Act to check undue profiteering by traders in respect of essential commodities.

**Steel for Travancore Titanium Factory,
Kerala**

***265. SHRI A. K. GOPALAN:** Will the Minister of STEEL & MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to supply necessary quantity of Steel for the expansion of Travancore Titanium Factory in Kerala; and

(b) If so, what quantity?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL & MINES: (SHRI MOHAN KUMARAMANGALAM) (a) and (b). In February, 1971 a request was received from the Kerala Government for allotment of about 1,800 tonnes of various categories of steel for expansion of the Travancore Titanium Factory, Kerala. The procedure for obtaining

priority for supply of this steel was explained to the State Government. As and when the priority Requisitions are received, they will be given full consideration by the Steel Priority committee in the context of the availability and the total demands from all priority sectors.

**Visit by the Ispat aur Khan Mantri to
Durgapur Steel Plant.**

***266. SHRI TRIDIB CHAUDHURY.** Will the Minister of STEEL & MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether he visited Durgapur and inspected the Durgapur Steel Plant factories on the 8th and 9th of May, 1971 and also held discussions with the management and Labour Union representatives about raising the level of steel production in Durgapur Steel Plant, and

(b) the specific new measures initiated since then on the basis of these discussions for improving production and utilising the productive capacity of the Plant in full?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI MOHAN KUMARAMANGALAM): (a) Yes, Sir. During my visit to Durgapur Steel Plant on 8th May, 1971, I had discussions with the management and Labour union representatives on measures to raise the production of Steel in that plant.

(b) The need for concentrating attention on increasing production, on preventive maintenance and creating a congenial atmosphere for work by co-operative effort was recognised during the discussions held with the employees and it is hoped that better results may now be expected.

**Central Assistance for Famine Areas
and Scarcity areas of Bihar**

***267. SHRI H.M. PATEL:** Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government of Bihar have declared 11 blocks as "famine areas" and