

so far, approximately Rs. 21 crores have been spent on Pakistani prisoners of war as well as civilians under protective custody upto 31st May, 1973.

(b) The prisoners are provided with food, clothing, accommodation, advance of pay and medical and recreational facilities in accordance with Geneva Conventions.

Proposed Import of Steel During 1973-74.

*79. **SHRI ARVIND M. PATEL:**
SHRI BISWANATH JHUN-
JHUNWALA:

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

(a) the quantity of steel imported during the laost three years, year-wise;

(b) the quantity of steel likely to be imported during the year 1973-74; and

(c) the mode of its distribution amongst the States?

THE MINISTER OF HEAVY INDUSTRIES AND STEEL AND MINES (SHRI T. A. PAI): (a) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

(b) About one million tonnes.

(c) Imported steel is not distributed state-wise Imports are regulated according to the import trade control policy for 1973-74 as announced by the Government of India, Ministry of Commerce, in the Gazette of India (Extraordinary) dated 2nd April, 1973.

Statement

Imports of Mild Steel

(in lakh tonnes)

1969-70	3.45
1970-71	5.51
1971-72	10.86
1973-74 (April-Dec.)	7.26

Explosion in the Kirkee Ammunition Factory

*71. **SHRI VIKRAM MAHAJAN:**
SHRI SAMAR MUKHERJEE:

Will the Minister of **DEFENCE** be pleased to state:

(a) whether there has been an explosion in the Kirkee Ammunition Factory on the 20th June, 1973 in which four workers were killed; and

(b) the particulars of the accident, the cause thereof and the compensation paid to the next of kin of workers who were killed as a result thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE (DEFENCE PRODUCTION) IN HE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI VIDYA CHARAN SHUKLA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The explosion took place in F-1 Section of Building number 555 at 1355 hours on 20th June, 1973. Detonators were stored in this building. A Board of Enquiry has been ordered to investigate the causes of the explosion and their proceedings are awaited. Rs. 3,100 were paid to each of the family of the deceased. Detailed statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

Financial assistance given to each of the family of the deceased workers is as under.—

(i) Rs. 2,000 each to the family of the deceased from the Shaney Memorial Fund;

(ii) Rs. 1,000 each to the family of the deceased by Ammunition Factory Cooperative Credit Society and

(iii) Rs. 100 from Labour Welfare fund.

Sanction has also been issued on 6th July, 1973 for payment of compensation as admissible under the Workmens' Compensation Act to the legal heirs of the deceased.

In addition to the above financial assistance, employment to one member each of the family of the deceased has been afforded.

Setting up of U.S. Naval Air-Force Servicing Station in Diego Garcia Island

*72. SHRI D K PANDA

SHRI SHRIKRISHAN AGRA-
WAL

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state.

(a) whether U S A has set up a naval and Air-Force Servicing Station in the Diego Garcia Island, and

(b) if so Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI SURENDRA PAL SINGH)

(a) In 1966 the United States and the United Kingdom Governments entered into an agreement to set up in Diego Garcia a naval, air and communications facility including an air strip. On June 18 1973 the Defence Department of the US announced that the 'communications station' at Diego Garcia was operative from March 23 1973.

(b) Since 1965 the Government of India has repeatedly deplored both to the US and the UK Governments their decision to set up a base in Diego Garcia as it could lead to great Power military rivalry in the Indian Ocean. India's view that the Indian Ocean should be an area of peace, free from great Power rivalries, tensions and presence is well known.

Effect of poor Condition of Coke oven Batteries on Production in Durgapur Steel plant

*73. SHRI ROBIN SEN Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state
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(a) whether production of Durgapur Steel Plant is affected due to poor condition of coke oven batteries,

(b) if so, the reasons for the deterioration in the condition of these batteries so soon, and

(c) the steps taken by Government to remedy the situation?

THE MINISTER OF HEAVY INDUSTRY AND STEEL AND MINES (SHRI T A PAI) (a) It is true that production in the Durgapur Steel Plant has been adversely affected due to the poor condition of the coke oven batteries.

(b) The first coke oven battery at Durgapur was commissioned in December, 1959, the second in December, 1960, the third in May, 1962 and the fourth in August, 1967. The condition of the first three batteries deteriorated due to poor maintenance in the initial stage, and subsequently due to frequent thermal shocks suffered by the batteries due to labour indiscipline and poor condition of the battery machines leading to frequent break-downs, and consequent irregular pushing of ovens. Owing to frequent thermal shocks in the past battery No 4 had also started showing signs of strain. The battery has recently developed fault due to what are believed to be design defects.

(c) Battery No 1 was shut down in November 1968 for reconstruction as the usual type of repairs were found to be neither adequate nor economical. One half of the battery is expected to be commissioned by August 1973 and the other half by October 1973. Major repairs to batteries No 2 and No 3 are already in hand. A plan has been drawn up for the phased rebuilding of these two batteries also after putting up an additional half coke oven battery. In regard to battery No 4, the faults developed by the battery are being examined by experts with a view to finding out the exact nature of the defects and the remedial action to be taken. Meanwhile, temporary measures have been taken to minimise the