

withstood the pulls and pressures of a democratic society. Its basic structure has remained the same as envisaged by our founding fathers. Our Constitution remains the most important document in our nation's life, which guides, and encourages us to rise to its hoary ideals. As inheritors of a great legacy, it is for us to translate the founding fathers' vision into reality. To that end, let us re-dedicate ourselves.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

MR. CHAIRMAN: Now, we will have the questions. Question No. 1 (*Interruption*).

SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: Sir, Question No. 5 can also be clubbed with this.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes, I am clubbing Question No. 5 also with this question. Shri Abani Roy. Not present. Shri Ramachandraiah Rumandla. Not present.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Prem Chand Gupta.

SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: Question No. 5, Sir.

Import Price of Steel Items

†*1. SHRI ABANI ROY:

SHRI RAMACHANDRAIAH RUMANDLA:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have recently reduced minimum import price of some steel items;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the domestic steel producers have been affected adversely due to Government's step to reduce minimum import price on steel items; and

(d) if so, the steps Government propose to take to save the domestic steel producers?

†Starred Question Nos. 1 and 5 were taken together.

THE MINISTERS OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI OMAR ABDULLAH): (a) to (d) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

In December 1998 Government of India notified minimum import prices for certain steel items based on the average export prices of these items from the European Union and Japan as reported in the London Metal Bulletin with a view to protecting the Indian Steel Industry against cheap imports. These were considered by the Government and the Indian steel industry as fair import prices as opposed to the lower prices of imports coming in from South East Asian and CIS countries due to adverse developments in the economies and currencies of the countries in these regions. These minimum import prices were recently reviewed in the context of the fresh trade data reported in the London Metal Bulletin. Based on these changes in the average export prices from the European Union and Japan, Government of India has revised the minimum import prices vide Notification No. 31 dated 1st November, 1999. The revised prices are as follows:

Price of Prime Steel Items

<i>Sl. No.</i>	<i>ITC (HS) Code</i>	<i>Item Description</i>	<i>Price Per M.T. (U.S.\$) (December '98)</i>	<i>Price Per M.T. (U.S.\$) (November 99)</i>
1.	72.08	H.R. Coils	302	254
2.	72.08	H.R. Sheets	317	269
3.	72.09	CR Coils/Sheets	392	351
4.	72.10	Tinplates	720	620
5.	72.25/72.26	Electrical Sheets (CRNO)	763	657
6.	72.08/72.11	Plates	409	370
7.	72.27.90	Alloy Steel Bars & Rods (Hot rolled in Coils)	740	580

Price of Second / Defectives of Steel Items

<i>Sl. No.</i>	<i>ITC (HS) Code</i>	<i>Item Description</i>	<i>Price Per M.T. (U.S.\$) (December '98)</i>	<i>Price Per M.T. (U.S.\$) (November 99)</i>
1.	72.08	H.R. Coils	232	190.5
2.	72.08	H.R. Sheets	243	201.75
3.	72.09	CR Coils/Sheets	299	263
4.	72.10	Tinplates Waste/Waste/Tin-plate Misprints	545	465
5.	72.25/72.26	Electrical Sheets (CRNO)	577	493
6.	72.08/72.11	Plates	311	278
7.	72.27.90	Alloy Steel Bars & Rods (Hot rolled in Coils)	560	435

Since the revised prices have been fixed on the same basis as was adopted in December, 1998, the indigenous steel industry is unlikely to be seriously affected.

Floor price for import of steel

†*5. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:-

(a) whether it is a fact that the Indian Steel industry was not taken into confidence while fixing the floor price for import of steel;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) whether it will not harm the indigenous Steel industry?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI OMAR ABDULLAH): A Statement is laid on the table of the House regarding (a) to (c) above.

Statement

In December 1998 Government of India notified minimum import prices for certain steel items based on the average export prices of these items from

†Starred Question Nos. 1 and 5 were taken together.