

SHRI VASANT SATHE: We are trying to use modern technology and that is why I said that we are now collaborating with the best known people in this field in the world. I have mentioned the French company with whom we are collaborating, BRGM of France, and we are also utilising satellite sources to discover by remote sensing methods in order to locate the minerals in the country and we will be using all possible modern systems and methodology to reduce the costs and more efficiently discover this source.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Next question.

PIG IRON and Steel Supplied to Punjab

*83. **SHRI N. E. BALARAM:** Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to refer to the answer to Starred Question 156 given in the Rajya Sabha on the 3rd March, 1989 and state what steps are being taken for the allocation of adequate raw material for the Small Scale foundries in Punjab which are facing a threat of closure for want of adequate allocations of pig iron and steel quota?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINES AND THE MINISTER OF ENERGY (SHRI VASANT SATHE): Pig Iron production within the country is proposed to be increased during 1989-90. Efforts are also underway to import pig iron from Rupee payment area.

SHRI N. E. BALARAM: Sir, in my question, apart from the general problem of scarcity of pig iron, I raised a specific point of Punjab where foundries are facing a very serious threat due to lack of pig iron. According to the press reports, I find that the Punjab Governor has already sent a telex message to the Union Minister of Steel asking for immediate help in respect of pig iron for the foundries functioning in different parts of Punjab specially the area of Batala where 400 units are functioning and where also the terrorists are operating in a big way...

SHRI A. G. KULKARNI: This problem is there in the whole country.

SHRI N. E. BALARAM: The Governor has already sent a telex message that appeared in the newspapers. So, to this specific question, answer has not been given. The answer is very vague. Of course, I will come to that in my supplementary question. I would like to know from the Minister what steps have been taken to supply pig iron to Punjab where there are large number of foundries functioning.

SHRI VASANT SATHE: As far as pig iron to Punjab is concerned, we did receive a telex from the Governor. We also got representations from the small-scale industries in Batala and we are despatching a rake immediately to meet the emergent needs. But I would like to stress that it has so happened that the production of pig iron went down because in the integrated steel plant of SAIL, it was more economical and advantageous in the national interest to convert the hot metal into steel rather than pig iron and that is why they produced more steel and less of pig iron. Pig iron production was aimed at 13 lakh tonnes or so; against that only 10 lakh tonnes were produced and this created a situation of shortage not only in Punjab where there is concentration of these foundries etc, but in other parts of the country also. We are conscious of it and we tried to do two things. One was to import pig iron. It was decided to import two lakh tonnes of pig iron at reduced duty. More than 1,35,000 tonnes have already come. The rest is coming. Some more we are trying to bring in. About one lakh tonnes of pig iron is in the pipeline for import this year. We are taking steps to meet the present shortage particularly in States like Punjab. We will do our best to see that the difficulties faced by the foundries are ameliorated.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Have you any idea of permitting the private sector to put up pig iron plants?

SHRI VASANT SATHE: Yes, Sir, That is a very good idea. Actually, making of pig iron is de-licensed. But this will take some time, two or three years, before any units come up. It does not solve the immediate problem. Immediately, the

only solution is, we must import, whether from the rupee payment areas or other areas, to help these people. This is the only thing we can do.

SHRI N. E. BALARAM: I am glad that the hon. Minister has given a more clear answer now. He has said that it has been decided to import some quantity of pig iron from other countries. But what about production by the SAIL? Last time, when there was a big scarcity of pig iron, the Government of India decided to import a large quantity of pig iron from outside through the MMTC. Subsequently, the SAIL announced that they are prepared to supply pig iron. They requested the owners of foundries to register their names and demanded advance payment from them, Rs. 200 per tonne. They collected a huge amount. Suddenly, they came out saying that they were not able to supply sufficient quantity of pig iron and that they would be able to supply only 40-45 per cent of the quantity asked for. As a result of this, the foundry industry in West Bengal, in Tamil Nadu and in Kerala is in a crisis. They are not supplying. The SAIL is not supplying pig iron. Therefore, when do you expect the import to come because the foundries are not working now?

SHRI VASANT SATHE: I agree with the hon. Member. The difficulty has arisen mainly because the SAIL which has expected to produce about 13 lakh tonnes produced, instead, only 10.09 lakh tonnes. This has created the problem. I entirely agree that the main responsibility in the country for meeting the requirement of pig iron for both the small-scale and other units lies with the SAIL. But as I mentioned, it was more profitable in the national interest to convert hot metal into steel than into pig iron. Of course, I agree that the ultimate responsibility is that of the Government. Therefore, we decided to import. As I said, we decided to import two lakh tonnes. One lakh tonnes is in the pipeline. This will be imported in a few months this year. We will ensure supply to the foundries, particularly to those in the small-scale sector. This is our present

objective not only in Punjab but in other areas as well. This is the best that we can do.

SHRI A. G. KULKARNI: I am happy that the hon. Minister has assured that he would ensure the supply of pig iron to the small-scale units. He himself is an experienced person in the small-scale sector. He knows the difficulties of the pig iron foundries. Mr. Balaram mentioned about the telex message from the Governor of Punjab. Here is another telegram from Kolhapur. It was sent to Mr. Fotedar and a copy was sent to me. It says: 'kindly refer to your visit to Sangli 13th and assurance to arrange pig iron rake to Kolhapur; no intimation so far'. This was on the 13th March. We are now at the end of April. So, whatever has been promised should at least be rushed, this is what I want. Secondly, Sir, the hon. Minister himself is aware of the pig iron foundries and castings. When you are importing, the grade of pig iron has to be of a larger quantum. We are pig iron users but what they import may go into the electrical furnaces. That is not required because the requirement of a small scale sector is of a different nature. So, for that purpose would you assure that the foundry grade pig iron will be imported and distributed to all State Industrial Corporations?

SHRI VASANT SATHE: Sir, I agree that the grade that has to be imported should be the grade that is required mainly by the foundry users in the country. That is what we will try to do.

As far as Kolhapur is concerned, the hon. Member will be glad to know that our Department anticipated his difficulty and the difficulty of his area. Two rakes were already supplied to Kolhapur and before you asked this question one additional rake has also been despatched for Kolhapur.

SHRI A. G. KULKARNI: Thank you very much.

SHRI S. VIDUTHALAI VIRUMBI: Hon. Chairman, Sir, due to short supply of pig iron, small scale industries in Tamil

Nadu are actually facing the danger of closure. That may also lead to retrenchment. Actually the foundries and small scale industries are getting less than 25 per cent of the pig iron that is required by them. Therefore, will our hon. Minister assure that he will allot more quota to Tamil Nadu to sustain the industries, from the grave situation in which they are actually working? Otherwise, most of the workers may have to face the retrenchment. Categorically I want some sort of assurance from the hon. Minister that they would allot more pig iron to Tamil Nadu.

SHRI VASANT SATHE: Sir, the fact is that as far as Tamil Nadu is concerned, in all the years up till now, from 1986 onwards, Tamil Nadu has been getting more than the allocated quota. The hon. Member will be happy to know the figures. In 1986-87 Tamil Nadu got 123 per cent more than their requirement. In 1987-88 they got 129 per cent and in 1988-89 also they got 129 per cent. Therefore, we have not been unfair to Tamil Nadu in regard to the supply of pig iron. From November to January 40,000 tonnes of pig iron has been sent to Tamil Nadu. Also, whatever our imported quota will be, we shall try to see that it is fairly distributed to all the States where there are foundries and where mainly pig iron is used. We have instructed SAIL to take special steps to augment the production of pig iron of the foundry grade variety.

SHRI S. VIDUTHALAI VIRUMBI: Sir,...

MR. CHAIRMAN: No, no, you put the question and got the answer. Yes, Mr. Shanti Tyagi.

श्री शान्ति त्यागी : माननीय सभापति जी, जो हाल पंजाब के बटाला में है और कोल्हापुर में है, वही हाल गाजियाबाद और आगरा में है।... (व्यवधान)... नहीं, वह पंजाब की बात आप कह रहे हैं। माननीय मंत्री जी, जितनी बरी दशा आगरा की फाउण्ड्रीज की है और गाजियाबाद की फाउण्ड्रीज की है, मैं उसे बयान नहीं कर सकता। मैं माननीय मंत्री जी से यह जानना चाहता हूँ कि चालू वित्त वर्ष में आगरा

में और गाजियाबाद की फाउण्ड्रीज में अनुमानतः आप कितनी स्टील और कच्चे लोहे की सप्लाय कर सकेंगे? और आपकी आज्ञा से यह और कि विशाखापत्तनम का जो हमारा स्टील प्लांट है, वह पिग आयरन का प्रोडक्शन कब तक चालू कर देगा, यह भी आप बताएं।

श्री वसंत साठे : यह विशाखापत्तनम का स्टील प्लांट ... (व्यवधान)...

श्री सभापति : सवाल पिग आयरन का है।... (व्यवधान)...

श्री वसंत साठे : पिग आयरन का, हम उम्मीद करते हैं कि जल्द से जल्द वह शुरू होगा, पर तारीख देना मुश्किल है। यू.पी. के रिक्वायरमेंट के लिए, खासकर आगरा और उस एरिया में जहां फाउण्ड्रीज ज्यादा हैं और गाजियाबाद के लिए भी, हमने एक रैंक भेजा है।

which is on the way. You can announce that to your people there. But, Sir, I can tell you that even to UP we have not been unfair: 90 per cent of its requirement has been up till now supplied. So we shall try to be fair.

PROF. C. LAKSHMANNA: Sir, the Minister has stated that SAIL changed its policy of producing pig iron, as a result of which there has been a shortfall. I would like to know when this decision was taken and what was the time-lag that was available for Government of India to think in terms of—either importing or increasing production of pig iron in the country. Why is it that Government of India did not think it fit to import it so far and still they are in the negotiations stage? Because there will be a time-lag before that steel is available from imports.

SHRI VASANT SATHE: There is no time-lag. Actually it was last year, when we knew that pig iron production in the country would fall short, that we decided and we did two things. We decided to import 2 lakh tonnes. That was before August.

PROF. C. LAKSHMANNA: Why did you do it when 3 lakh tonnes was the demand?

SHRI VASANT SATHE: No, no, demand is not 3 lakh tonnes.

PROF. C. LAKSHMANNA: No, it was the difference in production.

SHRI VASANT SATHE: The shortfall is 3 lakh tonnes. The short fall in demand would be about 5 lakh tonnes because of the general gap between production and demand in the country. I am talking only of SAIL production. In SAIL, the gap in production of pig iron was 3 lakh tonnes. Therefore we decided two things: to import and lower the duty because merely allowing import would not do. Earlier the duty was 85 per cent. Nobody would accept the imported pig iron. That was why we decided to do two things. We requested the Finance Ministry to reduce the duty. It reduced it to 35 per cent and two lakh tonnes were imported. Out of that two lakh tonnes, 1.35 lakh tonnes has already come. The rest is in the pipeline and will be coming in these four months. Our idea is that as far as Vizag is concerned, 1.9 lakh tonnes of pig iron is expected in this financial year. So all these measures we have taken. We have asked the SAIL also to improve its pig iron production. Thus, we hope that in the months to come the position of pig iron, which has suddenly become rather difficult, will ease.

PROF. C. LAKSHMANNA: What about the percentage of foundries?

SHRI VASANT SATHE: I do not know the percentage. I will supply it to you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Question No. 84.

Setting up of a TV Tower at Fazilka

*84. SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to refer to answer to Unstarred Question 2633 given in the Rajya Sabha on the 2nd December, 1988 and state:

(a) whether pending installation of a high power TV transmitter, Government had decided to set up a Low Power TV transmitter at Fazilka;

(b) whether the Station Engineer, Doordarshan Kendra, Bhatinda, vide his letter No. HPTV/BTI/2(9)88-E dated the 15th November, 1988, had asked the

Administrator, Municipal Committee for renting out of a part of the Municipal Committee Building, alongwith the attached open ground for this purpose whereupon the Executive Officer of the Committee conveyed consent to make available the said site; if so, what further action has been taken in the matter and if no action has been taken, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether some peoples' organisations of the area have represented to Government against shifting of the site; if so, what has been the Government's response thereto; and

(d) by when the alternate Low Power TV transmitter is likely to be set up at Fazilka?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI H.K.L. BHAGAT): (a) to (d) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

Over and above the approved Seventh Plan schemes of Doordarshan, a new scheme for the establishment of some additional low power TV transmitters at certain selected places in the country has been formulated and submitted for the formal approval of the Government. The scheme *inter alia* includes the establishment of a low power TV transmitter at Fazilka. The proposed low power TV transmitter at Fazilka is expected to be installed and commissioned into service during 1989-90 if the aforesaid scheme is approved by the Government and adequate funds are made available for its implementation.

The District Administration has agreed to make available a part of the Municipal Committee building for establishment of the proposed low power TV transmitter at Fazilka. Action to acquire the site can be taken after the scheme is approved. However, no representation appears to have been received against installation of the transmitter at the proposed site.

SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL: Sir, my question seems to have been slightly misunderstood. I had asked whether there was any representation against the