

setting up of a Central Workshop for the manufacture of certain medium and heavy range of vital spare parts common to the steel plants. The Steel Authority of India Ltd. are taking action for the preparation of a Feasibility Report for the project.

Ferro-Vanadium Plant for Orissa

660. SHRI RABI RAY : Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that the Chairman, Steel Authority of India Ltd., visited recently Bhubaneswar;

(b) if so, whether he discussed with the State Government officials about the setting up of a Ferro-Vanadium plant in Orissa; and

(c) whether it is also a fact that feasibility studies for the plant are already over and, if so, by when the plant is likely to be set up and at what place ?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI SUKHDEV PRASAD): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir.

(c) The Feasibility Report in respect of the proposed Ferro Vanadium Project received from the Government of Orissa is under examination. The project is likely to be located at Rairangpur and is proposed to be taken up during the Fifth Five Year Plan.

Reported involvement of Indian Deputy High Commissioner in Sri Lanka in Controversy over Sai Baba

661. SHRI RABI RAI : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the press reports to the effect that the Deputy High Commissioner of India in Sri Lanka, Shri H. D. Bhalla and his wife, have got involved in a controversy over the Indian mystic Sai Baba; and

(b) if so, what are the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI SURENDRA PAL SINGH) : (a) and (b) Government have seen the press reports on this matter. The background is that our Deputy High Commissioner, Shri H. D. Bhalla and his wife, Shrimati M. Bhalla, shortly after their arrival in Sri Lanka, were interviewed by a social columnist of a Sri Lanka paper

and were asked about their opinion on the mystic Sai Baba. They replied that from the information available to them from books and other sources, Sai Baba seemed to be a man of God. On the publication of this interview, the President of a body called the Rationalist Association of Sri Lanka contested this opinion in a letter to the Deputy High Commissioner, challenging Sai Baba to come to Sri Lanka and perform a miracle. There was no further exchange on the subject and the matter can hardly be considered in the dimensions of a controversy.

Inadequate medical facilities provided during Haj Pilgrimage

662. SHRI KHURSHED ALAM KHAN : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that the medical facilities provided by the Government of India at the time of the Haj pilgrimage during Haj season in Saudi Arabia are inadequate and unsatisfactory;

(b) whether it is also a fact that the doctors deputed by the Government of India for this purpose are not conversant with the medicines generally available in Saudi Arabia and their diagnosis also suffers due to non-availability of laboratory facilities; and

(c) what steps Government propose to take in this regard to improve the medical facilities for the Indian pilgrims visiting Mecca Medina and Minah at the time of Haj pilgrims ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI SURENDRA PAL SINGH) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) The Medical Officer Incharge of the Government of India's Permanent Dispensary at Mecca, who is posted there on a regular basis for a term of 2 to 3 years, is fully conversant with the medicines generally available in that country. The doctors sent to Saudi Arabia on 4 to 5 months deputation with the Government of India's Medical Mission to Saudi Arabia during the Haj Season are, however, not required to be conversant with all the medicines available in the local market. The medicines prescribed by our doctors are supplied free of cost to our pilgrims from our own stocks of medicines supplied by the Government from its stores in India. However, all the members of our Medical Mission are fully