

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND STEEL AND MINES (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) Only the Government of Romania has evinced interest in setting up a Pelletisation Plant at Mangalore based on Kudremukh concentrate. As offer has been received in this regard from a Romanian State Organisation by the Kudremukh Iron Ore Co. Ltd.

(b) and (c). Only one out of the four production lines has been commissioning and testing of the equipment of personnel required for commissioning and testing of the equipment has been engaged. The Plant has not yet gone into commercial production.

The question of the machinery and components becoming rusty and the project incurring loss does not, therefore, arise at present.

(d) and (e). No offer has been made by the Government of Romania for setting up an integrated steel Plant in India based on Kudremukh Iron Ore concentrate.

Refusal of State Bank in Delhi to convert Gulf money into Indian currency

743. **SHRI R. Y. GHORPADE:** Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether State Bank Authorities at Delhi Airport refused to convert Gulf money into Indian currency when 600 passengers arriving from Gulf countries on 20th October requested for it;

(b) were the passengers put to great difficulties and they were unable to go to their homes in various parts of Northern India; and

(c) what action has been taken and what steps ensured for elimination of such situations arising in future?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI MAGANBHAI BAROT): (a) to (c). State Bank of India has reported that it had to stop converting certain currencies into Indian currency temporarily but in order to avoid hardship to repatriates specially from the Middle East, the SBI has resumed purchasing quantities of some of these currencies. Above certain amounts the bank is prepared to accept these notes on collection basis and pay the proceeds on realisation from abroad without any restriction.

Tourist bookings on Indian Airlines

744. **SHRI R. Y. GHORPADE:** Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) what were the tourist bookings on Indian Airlines this winter season as compared to previous two seasons;

(b) has there been a sharp decline in the tourist bookings on Indian Airlines this year resulting in a drop of about 10 per cent and promoting Indian Airlines to cancel some of its flights,

(c) have efforts been made to find out the reasons; and

(d) if so, what are those and remedial measures proposed?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI A. P. SHARMA): (a) to (d). The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the Sabha.

Excise duty on beedies

745. **SHRI E. K. IMBICHICHAVA:**
SHRI K. A. RAJAN:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the hardship to the Kerala Dinesh

Beedies running in the Cooperative Sector which employs over 25,000 people due to the imposition of the excise duty on beedies; and

(b) whether Government propose to exempt the beedi industry in the cooperative sector from excise duty?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI SAWAI SINGH SISODIA (a) and (b). Government have received a representation wherein it has, *inter alia* been stated that the Kera Dinesh Beedies Cooperative Society are facing competition from unbranded biri manufacturers and that branded biris produced in the cooperative sector should be exempted from the levy of excise duty. The representation is being examined by the Government.

Completion of enquiry into Crash of Aircraft in June, 1980 in Delhi

746. SHRI N. K. SHEJWALKAR:

SHRI SATISH AGARWAL:

DR. VASANT KUMAR
PANDIT:

Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Enquiry instituted by the DGCA into the circumstances leading to the crash of the acrobatic aircraft resulting in leading to the death of Shri Sanjay Gandhi has been completed;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) whether Government are considering to provide flying Clubs in India acrobatic aircraft and if so, whether the enquiry report has made any reference about the precautionary steps to be taken in regard to such aircraft and whether Government propose to abide by them before making such aircraft available to the flying clubs?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI A. P. SHARMA): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c): Do not arise.

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Rise in Wholesale Price Index

747. SHRI N. K. SHEJWALKAR:

SHRI G. M. BANATWALA:

SHRI CHANDRAJIT YADAV:

SHRI SATISH AGARWAL:

SHRI PIUS TIRKEY:

SHRI CHITTA BASU:

SHRI SUDHIR GIRI:

DR. VASANT KUMAR
PANDIT:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the wholesale price index has been steadily rising since the presentation of the budget;

(b) if so, what has been month to month increase in price rise;

(c) what are the reasons for the continued increase in prices; and

(d) what steps have been taken to control the phenomenon?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI MAGANBHAI BAROT): (a) to (d). The monthly rate of increase in wholesale price index (1970-71=100) since the presentation of the budget was: 4.1 per cent in July 1980, 1 per cent in August, 1.7 per cent in September and 0.6 per cent in October 1980. The rate of increase in the index has therefore come down. Indeed, in the two successive weeks ended 25th October 1980 and 1st November 1980 the Index has fallen sharply by 1.2 per cent and 1.7 per cent, respectively. The reasons for the continued increase in prices are: supply constraints caused by failure of the infrastructure, international factors, increase in the administered prices of certain commodities and the severe drought during 1979-80. Government has taken several anti-inflationary measures which include: (i) strengthening the public distribution system; (ii) augmenting internal supplies