

suggest necessary changes for effecting quantitative and qualitative improvement in production

Smuggled Ball Bearings

738. SHRI AJAY KUMAR S. SARNAIK:
SHRI RAMESH C. JIGAJINAGI:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether a very large quantity of smuggled ball bearings from neighbouring countries like Nepal and Bangladesh are flooding the Indian market, especially in eastern and northern region, causing revenue losses to the Government;

(b) whether the seizures of illegal ball bearings across Indo-Nepal border every year is of a fraction of the total inflow; and

(c) if so, the remedial steps taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (BANKING, REVENUE AND INSURANCE) (SHRI KADAMBUR M.R. JANARTHANAN): (a) The intelligence and available reports do indicate ball bearings as one of the items being smuggled into the country mainly from Nepal the goods enter illegally across the vast Indo-Nepal border and get marketed in the eastern and the northern regions of the country.

(b) Seizures of smuggled bearings of considerable value are effected by Customs as a result of its anti-smuggling measures every year. Smuggling being a clandestine activity, it is not possible to give the exact quantum of illegal ball bearings which enter into country across Indo-Nepal border and the percentage thereof which is seized.

(c) All attempts are being made and measures taken by the field formations under the Department of Revenue including its Revenue Intelligence Agency to detect, prevent and minimise smuggling of ball bearings into the

country. Certain changes effected in the new Indo-Nepal Treaty of Transit, and greater vigil by the Preventive and Intelligence Agencies of the Department of Revenue, specially on the Indo-Nepal border in coordination with the State Police and other concerned authorities are also expected to help in this regard.

Production of Mini-Steel Plants

739. SHRI AJIT JOGI: Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) the installed capacity and the annual steel production of mini-steel plants in the country during the last three years, capacity-wise and State-wise:

(b) whether production of steel by the mini-steel plants is well below their capacity;

(c) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(d) the measures taken/proposed to be taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI RAMESH BAIS): (a) State-wise details of capacity & production of electric arc furnace based steel plants are given in the attached statement.

(b) and (c) The production of steel by these plants is below their aggregate capacity due to various reasons such as high power tariffs, rising input costs, technological constraints etc. The recent slow-down in demand for steel has further contributed to less than full capacity utilisation.

(d) To reduce raw materials cost, Government has recently waived special import duty on several items such as non-coking coal, ferro nickel, charge nickel, nickel oxide sinter, low silica lime-stone, graphite electrodes etc. Concerned State Governments have also been requested to consider providing uninterrupted power supply and rationalise power tariffs. Besides, increased investment on infrastructural projects being facilitated by the Government is expected to boost the demand for steel which in turn will positively impact capacity utilisation of the steel producing units.