

provided therein. The concerned Railways give their advertisement regarding these activities.

The one fourth free space is covered regarding the activities of the concerned Railways. I have decided about that half of the one fourth i.e. in 1/8th page, the Zonal Railway will give their information and at the level of Railway Board, the required information would be provided to the people. Please cite an example, or any information, we will take action immediately. This amount is reducing, the rates of D.A.V.P. have increased about 20 to 30 percent. Have a glance at the expenditure amount after that time period and have a glance at the transparency.

Closure of Mini Steel Plants

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*166. SHRI BIKASH CHOWDHURY :
SHRI SUNIL KHAN :

Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) the number of mini-steel plants closed during the last three years and in current financial year alongwith the reasons therefor;

(b) the total number of workers rendered jobless due to closures;

(c) total production affected by the closure of above plants; and

(d) the steps taken by the Government for their revival?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI RAMESH BAIS) : (a) to (d) A Statement is laid on the Table of the Lok Sabha.

Statement

Closure of Mini Steel Plants

(a) As per available information, details of Electric Arc Furnace (Mini-Steel Plants) units closed during the last three years and in current financial year are as under :

Year	No. of Units Closed
1995-96	4
1996-97	15
1997-98	25
1998-99	7

(Total number of closed Electric Arc Furnace units as on 31.10.98 is reportedly 143).

The performance of these units has been adversely affected due to various reasons such as high power tariffs, poor quality; rising input costs; uneconomic production capacities; outdated technology; labour; financial and managerial problems; and demand slow down.

(b) The total number of workers rendered jobless due to closures is estimated to be around 34,000.

(c) The closed units represent on aggregate capacity of nearly 5.3 million tonnes per annum.

(d) Under the extant industrial policy, the Iron & Steel Industry has been completely liberalized. Market conditions therefore determine the viability of any unit. In case of sickness, Government provides the institutional mechanism of BIFR for considering revival option.

SHRI BIKASH CHOWDHURY : I want to know from the hon. Minister whether the Government has come forward to revive all these sick mini-steel industries through the BIFR or from the its end. I also wanted to know whether the Government has any intention to give subsidy to these industries to compete in the Indian market economy.

[Translation]

SHRI RAMESH BAIS : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the electric arc furnace units have been installed long ago. These units were installed in 1991 under Free licencing policy. The present government have a clear cut policy in this regard. At present, the govt. do not have the latest figures regarding the closed units so that an appropriate action may be taken in this regard . . . (Interruptions)

The Government do not have the latest figures of those units which have been installed after the declaration of the free licencing policy. As per the information available with us, the number of units closed in 1995-96 were 4, 15 in 1996-97 and 7 in 1998-99.

In all 143 units were closed till date. The factors responsible for the closure of these units are increase in power tariff, increase in production cost for maintaing the quality. Incapability of economic production, unskilled industrial labour, problems relating to financial mismanagement and frequent strikes in support of labour demands etc.

SHRI BIKASH CHOWDHURY : Hon'ble Minister, Sir, you have mentioned the reasons about the increase in power tariff, I would like to mention that mini-steel industries are like small scale industry which should be given subsidy from the Government. Whether the Government have any intention to provide subsidy to these industries so that these units can start production and the workers employed in these units continued to work there

and whether the Ministry would consider to provide relief to these units which have been threatened due to adverse market economy?

SHRI RAMESH BAIS : This is a state matter and we cannot take any action until those states reduce the power tariff.

[English]

SHRI SUNIL KHAN : May I know from the hon. Minister whether any plan has been made by the Government to expand the infrastructure for gearing up the industrial development?

[Translation]

SHRI RAMESH BAIS : No infrastructure have been framed for electric arc furnace . . . (Interruptions)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : Shri Khan, you have only one supplementary. Please take your seat.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Shri Basu Deb Acharia.

(Interruptions)

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA : Sir, many mini-steel plants of our country are facing crisis. This is not only because of the recession in the steel sector . . . (Interruptions)

[Translation]

SHRI SUNIL KHAN : No reply has been given to my question. Reply must be given to my question. . . . (Interruptions)

11.33 hrs.

(At this stage, Shri Sunil Khan came and stood on the floor near the Table)

SHRI SUNIL KHAN : I want answer to my question . . . (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : This is not good.

(Interruptions)

11.34 hrs.

(At this stage, Shri Sunil Khan went back to his seat)

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA : Sir, many mini-steel plants of our country are facing crisis for the last three or four years. The recession which is already there in the steel sector is not the reason for the crisis in the mini-steel industries. There are a number of factors. Mini-steel

industries were contributing to the extent of 5.3 million tonne per annum.

Our total steel production is to the extent of only 20 million tonnes per annum and due to the closure of 143 mini steel plants, 34,000 workers have been rendered jobless and we are incurring losses. There are a number of reasons for closure of steel plants. One reason is due to the earth furnace which is an old, outdated technology. May I know from the Minister whether the Government of India will take steps to revive, restart and reopen all these closed mini steel plants where thousands of workers are engaged?

MR. SPEAKER : Shri Basu Deb Acharia, please ask your supplementary.

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA : Sir, may I know from the Minister whether the Government will formulate any programme in order to revive, restart and reopen the closed mini steel plants?

[Translation]

SHRI RAMESH BAIS : Sir, presently 34000 employees have been rendered jobless due to the closure of private sector units. A few units are being closed in private sector whereas 6-7 industries are being installed there. There is no plan to give benefit to those employees who have been affected due to closure of these units of private sector, and the Government is not responsible. These employees are getting employment in the newly set up units.

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA : Where these units have been opened and who is getting employment, whether the government is taking any initiative and who is establishing these industries? Please clarify the position in this regard? . . . (Interruptions)

SHRI RAMESH BAIS : Those industries, which have been closed due to old technique and mismanagement and reopened, are Indian Seamless, Essar, Jindal, Prakash etc. The employees are being absorbed in the newly set up industries.

[English]

FDI for Housing Sector

*167. SHRI KRISHAN LAL SHARMA :
SHRI K.P. MOHAN :

Will the Minister of URBAN AFFAIRS AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have permitted 100% foreign direct investment for housing sector in the country;