

(b) The gold grade in these prospects is generally around 3 to 5 grammes per tonne.

(c) The estimated quantity of gold which will be available from these new prospects after purification has not been established.

Exploitation of Precious Stones in Orissa

2999. SHRI BALGOPAL MISHRA: Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) the estimated deposit of gems, diamonds and other precious stones in Western Orissa;

(b) the steps taken for exploitation of these deposits;

(c) whether there is a proposal to set up a gems and diamond park in Sambalpur or Bolangir district of Orissa for that purpose; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE & TOURISM (SHRI ARUN KUMAR NEHRU):

(a) It is difficult to assess the reserve deposits because of the irregular nature of occurrences.

(b) Exploration is being done by the Directorate of Mining and Geology of Orissa Government. The Orissa Mining Corporation (OMC) has engaged foreign consultants to obtain guidance in exploration work.

(c) and (d). There is a proposal to set up a gem park in Orissa. The Orissa Mining Corporation is getting a feasibility report prepared.

Gandhamardan Bauxite Project

3000. SHRI BALGOPAL MISHRA: Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have taken a final decision to abandon the Gandhamardan Bauxite Project in Orissa;

(b) if so, the instruction given to BALCO in that regard; and

(c) the steps taken by BALCO thereon so far?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE & TOURISM (SHRI ARUN KUMAR NEHRU):

(a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c). Does not arise.

Financial Stability of Nationalised Banks

3001. SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether over-extension of credits beyond bank resources, including "mega issues", is threatening the financial stability of several nationalised banks; and

(b) if so, the steps being taken to reduce the proportion of sticky loans, bad debts and other risky liabilities incurred by leading banks?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE): (a) While the banks have been advised to continue extending appropriate credit support for all productive activities, they have been asked by Reserve Bank of India to exercise caution in expanding credit and ensure that their incremental non-food credit deposit ratio does not exceed 60%. Prudential norms have been prescribed for banks in regard to their risk