

(c) whether India has been invited to participate in the meeting;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor and the reaction of the Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) and (b). Yes, Sir. The Asia-EU Meeting is scheduled to take place in Thailand in the first quarter of 1996. On the Asian side, the participation is confined to ten East Asian countries (seven ASEAN members-Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam-and China, Japan and Republic of Korea). From the European side, the participation will be by the 15 members of the European Union (Austria, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and United Kingdom).

(c) to (e). India has not been invited to participate in the Meeting. ASEAN countries were to decide on the Asian participation. They have decided to restrict participation at the First Asia-EU Meeting to the above named ten Asian countries on grounds of keeping the Summit gathering small and manageable. India has made clear to participating countries that in any representative summit involving Asia, Indian participation would be natural and logical. Subsequent Meetings with expanded participation are a possibility.

#### **Privatisation of Iron Ore Mines in Orissa and Karnataka**

1280. SHRI RABI RAY:

SHRI HARADHAN ROY:

Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether attention of the Government has been drawn to the press newsitem published in Statesman dated November 2, 1995 under the caption "Iron Ore Mines in Orissa, Karnataka may be privatised".

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor;

(c) whether the NMDC has commenced mining operation in Orissa's Malangtoli range; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) National Mineral Development Corporation Ltd. (NMDC) does not have any iron ore mine in Orissa. NMDC was granted the mining lease for Malangtoli Iron Ore Deposit by Government of Orissa on 5.5.1977. NMDC did not, however, execute the lease because of infrastructure constraints in the area and lack of domestic demand. The

State Government, therefore, revoked the mining lease on 31.1.1992. An application submitted by M/s. Orissa Mining Corporation Ltd. (OMC), a Government of Orissa Undertaking, for mining lease of Malangtoli Iron Ore Deposit is presently under consideration.

NMDC holds mining lease for Blocks 'H' and 'C' of Kumaraswamy in Karnataka. A proposal has been received from the Government of Karnataka for advising NMDC to surrender Block 'C' to enable the State Government to lease it to a private company which is setting up a steel plant in that area.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise, in view of (c).

#### **Committee on Road Projects**

1281. SHRI M. V. V. S. MURTHY:

SHRI MANIKRAO HODLYA GAVIT:

PROF. PREM DHUMAL:

Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether a high powered committee has been set up by the Government to expedite clearances in respect of road projects to be constructed by the private sector;

(b) if so, the details including composition thereof;

(c) the projects cleared so far and still under consideration separately; and

(d) the projects on which work has been started and the time by which they are likely to be completed?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI M. RAJASEKARA MURTHY): The Ministry is primarily concerned with the development and maintenance of National Highways only. As regards National Highways, the information is as under:-

(a) No, Sir.

(b) to (d). Do not arise.

[Translation]

#### **Mineral Based Units in Gujarat**

1282. SHRI N. J. RATHVA: Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government proposed to set up some mineral based new units in the country, specially in the backward/rural/tribal areas of Gujarat; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and the names of the places, State-wise and place-wise, where such units will be set up?