

sion on BEL's proposal, taking into account all relevant factors.

Proposal for Sponge Iron Plant in West Bengal

384. SHRI SAMAR MUKHERJEE: Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government are considering to set up a sponge iron plant in West Bengal;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI KARIA MUNDA): (a) No, Sir.

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

Setting up of a Coastal-Based Steel Plant at Haldia

385. SHRI SAMAR MUKHERJEE: Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the State Government of West Bengal had requested for setting up a coastal-based steel plant at Haldia which offers ready infrastructure facilities with highly mechanised port for handling charges for coal and iron ores; and

(b) if so, the reaction of the Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI KARIA MUNDA): (a) Yes, Sir. Chief Minister of West Bengal had some time back written to the Union Minister of Steel and Mines about the possibility of a steel plant at Haldia.

(b) Location of future steel plants is to be based on techno-economic considerations. Steel Authority of India Limited have commissioned a study on the input costs at various port-sites including Haldia.

Extraction of Quality Coal from High Sulphur Coal

386. SHRI SAMAR MUKHERJEE: Will the Minister of ENERGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the attention of Government has been drawn to the recent findings by a group of scientists which will now help miners to extract quality coal from high sulphur coal which is abundantly found in the north-eastern region of the country; and

(b) if so, the reaction of Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENERGY (SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Indian School of Mines, Dhanbad and the Bose Institute, Calcutta are undertaking a sponsored project of Central Mine, Planning and Design Institute Ltd. for desulphurisation of high sulphur Assam coals by bacterial means. The researches so far carried out has enabled them to identify a strain of bacteria which can remove organic sulphur from coal. Presently work is in progress on optimising the conditions of desulphurisation and identification of more effective strains. However, it is too early to plan the commercial application of the technique.

Cases pending in High Courts

387. PROF. SAMAR GUHA: Will the Minister of LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether a large number of cases are pending with various High Courts in different States;

(b) if so, latest facts about such pending cases and the break-up of the cases lying with each High Court;

(c) facts about the number of cases lying with the High Courts for over three years;

(d) whether Government have made any fresh assessment about the

causes behind the delay in disposal of the cases lying with the High Courts;

(e) if so, facts thereabout;

(f) whether Government have given any fresh attention to reasonably reduce the period of disposal of such cases by the various High Courts; and

(g) if so, facts thereabout?

THE MINISTER OF LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI SHANTI BHUSHAN). (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c). The number of cases pending as on 31-12-1978 and cases pending for more than three years on that date in various High Courts is given in the attached Statement I.

(d) and (e). The Law Commission of India were requested to examine the question and suggest measures for expeditious disposal of cases in the High Courts. They have submitted a Report in this respect very recently.

(f) and (g). Recent steps taken to expedite the disposal of cases are given in the attached Statement II.

Statement-I

Name of the High Court	Number of cases pending on 31-12-78	Number of cases pending for more than 3 years as on 31-12-1978
Allahabad	1,25,852	46,248
Andhra Pradesh	20,050	343
Bombay	54,872	20,680
Calcutta	77,127	26,058
Delhi	30,190	12,654
Gauhati	7,125	2,540
Gujarat	12,990	1,810
Himachal Pradesh	5,281	1,498
Jammu and Kashmir	6,340	692*
Karnataka	44,106	6,387*
Kerala	34,552	1,401
Madhya Pradesh	43,206	12,431
Madras	50,156	4,510
Orissa	7,908	950
Patna	35,814*	10,463*
Punjab and Haryana	98,278	16,745
Rajasthan	22,050	8,509*
Sikkim	12	..
TOTAL	6,13,799	1,81,319

*Main Cases only.

Statement-II

The following steps have been taken during recent years to expedite the disposal of cases, namely:--

(i) On 1-4-1977 as against the total number of 349 sanctioned posts of High Court Judges only 285 Judges were in position. The States and the Chief Justices have been asked to adhere to specified time schedule for sending their proposals and the Central Government takes the initiative in asking them to submit their proposals for vacancies existing or about to occur. The result is that on 4-7-1979 the total number of High Court Judges had gone up to 347. Besides 4 *ad hoc* Judges have been appointed under article 224A.

(ii) Since 1-4-1977, the sanctioned strength of Judges has been increased in the High Courts in respect of which proposals were received. This increase has been made in the following High Courts from the dates the posts are filled up:—

Name of the High Court	Number of posts increased	Number of appointments made against new posts.
Allahabad	9	7
Delhi	6	2
Gauhati	1	
Himachal Pradesh	2	2
Karnataka	6	6
Madhya Pradesh	6	1
Madras	4	3
Patna	3	
Rajasthan	2	1
	38	22

(iii) Cases involving a common question are being grouped together by several High Courts so that with one judgment the whole group would be disposed of.

(iv) The Law Commission as well as the Chief Justice of India were asked to make suggestions. The recommendations of the Law Commission and the Supreme Court have been received.

Appointment of Class II and Class III officers

388. SHRI SHIV NARAIN SARSONIA: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) how many class II and III officers from Scheduled Castes and Tribes are there in his Ministry and A.I.R.;

(b) how apprenticeships for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes have been drawn training in his various departments, and

(c) how many non-regularised employees are in the Radio Station and how many permanent Harijans are working in the Radio Stations?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI L. K. ADVANI): (a) to (c). The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Grant of Petrol Pumps and Gas Agencies to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes

389 SHRI SHIV NARAIN SARSONIA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM, CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS, be pleased to state the number of Scheduled Castes and Tribes granted Petrol Pumps and Gas agencies in accordance with the policy declared and where; figures may be given from 1960 to 1976 and 1977 to May 1979?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM, CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI H. N. BAHUGUNA): The requisite information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.