

environment to further their knowledge in the field of telecommunications. Their progress is also continuously monitored to take care of their career development.

Engineers are also given plenty of opportunities for participation in seminars and conferences with a view to post them with the latest developments of the state-of-the-art. They are also sponsored for invention promotion and other awards.

Soviet offer to set up 1,000 MW Thermal Plant during Prime Minister's visit

2647. SHRI BALASAHEB VIKHE PATIL: Will the Minister of ENERGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Soviet Union during the Prime Minister's visit offered to set up a 1000 MW thermal plant in India;

(b) whether the offer has been accepted and if so, the details thereof; and

(c) where the new plant is likely to be located?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENERGY (SHRI VIKRAM MAHAJAN): (a) to (c). During the recent visit of the Prime Minister to U.S.S.R. the possibilities of installing new Power projects in India with the help of Soviet assistance were considered. No decision has been reached as the feasibility and the technical details of the projects are yet to be discussed at the expert level.

Theft of Coal from Coal India Collieries

2648. SHRI BALASAHEB VIKHE PATIL:
SHRI RANJIT SINGH:

Will the Minister of ENERGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a large scale theft of coal continues to take

place from the Coal India Collieries and they are being sold in black market both in India and neighbouring countries;

(b) whether it is a fact that the Ministry have recently issued some guidelines/instructions to Coal India to prevent such thefts; and

(c) whether any assessment has been made about the normal loss that is taking place as a result of such thefts and whether there has been any patronage from any political quarter to the underworld who are indulging in such matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENERGY (SHRI GARGI SHANKAR MISHRA): (a) There is no large scale pilferage of coal from the Coal India collieries.

(b) A number of measures including the following have been taken to prevent the pilferage:—

(i) Regular physical checking of coal stocks by teams of the coal companies and also from Coal India Limited.

(ii) Surprise visits by Vigilance Teams from the coal companies and Coal India Limited.

(iii) The number of private coal depots is being reduced.

(iv) Boundary walls and fencing are being constructed/done at various places where coal stocks are being kept on a regular basis.

(v) Road transportation of coal, coke and sand is being departmentalised.

(vi) Security arrangements are being tightened.

(c) As stated at (a) above, the loss of coal is not on large scale. Patronage from any political quarter to those who are indulging in such matters, if any, is not known.