

obligations. The total liability of the Company is estimated around Rs. 36 crores as on 31.1.1997. The Corporation is presently engaged with the following three options:—

- (i) Out right sale of the shares of Corporation;
- (ii) Bifurcation of the existing Company in case (i) is not found possible; and
- (iii) STC to initiate liquidation proceedings in case options (i) & (ii) above are not found practicable.

Export of Raw Skins and Hides

610. SHRI AJAY KUMAR S. SARNAIK: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether a delegation representing the All India Skins and Hides Manufacturers Association met the Hon'ble Minister and demanded free trade in raw skins and hides;

(b) if so, the details of the demands raised by the Leather Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association; and

(c) the reaction of the Union Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE): (a) The All India Skin and Hide Tanners and Merchants Association had represented to the Hon'ble Minister to allow exports of semifinished leather with an export levy.

(b) The All India Leather Garments Manufacturers Association has demanded that the existing policy in the export of semi-processed hides and skins, EI tanned and Wet Blue hides and skins and crust leather may be continued, in the interest of value added products industry.

(c) In view of the constraints in domestic production of raw skins and hides, the demand for free trade in export of semi-processed hides and skins has not been favoured.

Coal Mines in Jammu and Kashmir

611. SHRI BIKASH CHOWDHURY: Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) the number and names of coal mines which are under operation in Jammu and Kashmir presently;

(b) the total coal production achieved in these mines in the year 1997-98;

(c) whether any exploration for the vergin coal reserve has been carried out by the Geological Survey of India or any other agency; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRI DILIP RAY): (a) and (b) The number, names and addresses of three coal mines presently under operation in Jammu and Kashmir and the total coal production achieved in such mines in the year 1997-98 are given below:—

Sl.	Name of the coal mine with address	Production in 1997-98 (in metric tonnes)
1.	Metka Mine (Underground), P.O. Kalakot, Dist. Rajouri	939
2.	New Moghla Mine (Underground), PO Moghla, Dist. Rajouri	3348
3.	Tatapani Mine (Opencast), P.O. Kalakot, Dist. Rajouri.	902
Total production in 1997-98		5189

(c) and (d) During 1961-1968 Geological Survey of India (GSI) had carried out exploration of coal reserves in Jammu & Kashmir. However, on account of highly disturbed coal seams in the State, it has not been possible for the GSI to assess the coal reserves there with any degree of accuracy. No other agency has so far carried out any exploration of coal reserves in Jammu & Kashmir.

Bilateral Trade with Croatia

612. SHRI MOHAN RAWALE: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether a memorandum of understanding was signed on November 16, 1998 at New Delhi between Confederation of Indian Industry and Chamber of Economy of Croatia to promote bilateral trade; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) & Croatian Chamber of Economy (HGK) states that CII and HGK, *inter alia*, would endeavour to undertake study to determine the support for the benefit of their respective members. Both sides agree to exchange professional experience for the benefit of their members as also to exchange information about product and industrial processes, industrial training, source of financing, offers and requests for joint ventures and licensing and identification of possible partners. Both sides also agreed to exchange information on economic and commercial matters with regard to their respective countries. CII and HGK further agreed to support activities like seminars, courses and conferences in both the countries and to provide full cooperation to each other in the promotion of Trade Fairs and Exhibitions in both the countries.

Hike in Duty for Import

613. SHRI RAMESH C. JIGAJINAGI: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have imposed high duty charges on import of agricultural products, particularly from Pakistan, Afghanistan and other neighbouring countries;

(b) if so, whether the Government have made any assessment regarding the loss of revenue as our Indian agricultural products cost cheaper as compared to other countries; and

(c) if so, the details alongwith reasons regarding the policy of the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (BANKING, REVENUE AND INSURANCE) (SHRI KADAMBUR M.R. JANARTHANAN): (a) In general, agricultural products imported from Pakistan, Afghanistan and other neighbouring countries attract the same rate of import duty as is applicable to the import of these products from other countries. In a few cases, preferential rates lower than the general effective rates have also been prescribed for imports from SAARC countries.

(b) and (c) Does not arise.

Technical Education in Coal Sector

614. SHRI PUNNU LAL MOHALE: Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) whether the adequate arrangements have been made for the technical education keeping in view the increasing number of coal mines;

(b) whether any proposal of assistance from Coal India Limited for establishing any educational institute like 'Indian School of Mines' in Bilaspur, Madhya Pradesh is under consideration;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(e) whether there is any plan to avoid the non-obtainment of the locals of high level employment in lack of any such educational institute?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRI DILIP RAY): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise in view of reply given to (b) above.

(d) A number of Institutes exist in Madhya Pradesh which offer higher technical education.

(e) As reported by Coal India Limited, any person who has obtained requisite qualifications as prescribed for the job becomes eligible for high level employment.