

- (iii) Introduction of high production technologies viz blasting gallery, cable bolting, continuous miner etc.
- (iv) Opening of new mines and upgrading of existing open-cast mines with high capacity excavation and Transport equipments.

It may not be necessary to wash superior grade of non-coking coal.

Coal India Limited have however installed two non-coking coal washeries one at Piparwar and other at Bina for beneficiating non-coking coal. Both the washeries are new and as such modernisation is not necessary. Another washery at Gidi has been converted from coking coal to non-coking coal. Modernisation work in this washery (Replacement of Baum jigs) is in progress.

Package for Essar Steel

2732. SHRI V.V. RAGHAVAN : Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have announced a Rs. 2500 crore additional bailout package for ESSAR steel which envisages investment of Rs.1700 crore by domestic financial institutions; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI RAMESH BAIS) : (a) and (b) Department of Steel has not made any such announcement.

Minar Project of PSUs

2733. SHRIMATI GEETA MUKHERJEE :
SHRI SURENDRAN CHENGARA :

Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state :

(a) whether attention of the Government has been drawn to the news-item captioned "A Minar of Shame: How PSUs drained 150 crore." appearing in "The Hindustan Times" dated February 4, 1999;

(b) if so, the facts of the matter reported therein; and

(c) the reaction of the Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF INDUSTRY (SHRI SUKHBIR SINGH BADAL) : (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. SCOPE is a Registered society under the Registration of Society Act. No budgetary support or grants-in-aid are provided to SCOPE by the Government. SCOPE accounts were got audited by the Comptroller and Auditor General of India. In their report (No. 4 of 1998) C & AG of India for the year ended March 31, 1997 has pointed out that the project cost had scaled up more than three times from the initial estimates of Rs. 50 crores. C & AG has also observed several irregularities like irregular

payment of establishment charges, inadmissible payment on escalation in delayed civil work and payment of revision on labour escalation formula. Other observations made, include use of spurious fire fighting material, over payment to contractors and non-recovery of amount spent on watch and ward of site.

The C & AG Report is now under the examination by the Public Accounts Committee.

Advisory Committee on International Trade

2734. SHRI JAYARAMA I.M. SHETTY :
SHRI U.V. KRISHNAMRAJU :
SHRI NADENDLA BHASKAR RAO :

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have set up an Advisory Committee on International Trade;

(b) if so, whether the Committee has advised the Government for formulation of international trade policy;

(c) if so, the terms of reference of the Committee; and

(d) the extent to which the recommendations of the Committee likely to boost the export of Indian goods in the international market and also remove tariff barriers?

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

(b) The first meeting of the Committee was held at Delhi on 29th January 1999 and the next meeting is scheduled to be held on 30th March, 1999. Discussions in such meetings will help Government evolve appropriate policy responses to multilateral trade policy issues.

(c) The terms of reference of the Committee are as follows: (i) to discuss periodically ongoing negotiations in multilateral trade bodies as well as other bodies in respect of trade related issues, with special emphasis on discussions and negotiations in the WTO; (ii) to review the status of legislation/administrative action on international obligations in the sphere of trade; (iii) to examine, from time to time, non-tariff barriers and tariff barriers against Indian goods and the action being pursued for dismantling such barriers; (iv) to recommend strategies for increasing market access for Indian goods; (v) to analyze the implications of various changes in the global commercial scenario with the intention of recommending suitable policy changes; and (vi) any other policy issues that the Minister of Commerce may wish to place for consideration.

(d) The Committee would be advising Government on a continuous basis. However, any policy initiatives in the complex field of international trade would necessarily have a long gestation period before a perceptible outcome could be estimated. As such, a long term view would have to

be taken of the impact of the Committee's recommendations on India's external trade.

Coal Mines of WCL

2735. SHRI ANANT KUMAR HEGDE : Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state :

(a) the total estimated coal available in different coal mines being operated by Western Coalfields Limited and the expected time till all the Coal reserve can be extracted; and

(b) the details of new coalfields being developed by Western Coalfields Ltd?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRI DILIP RAY) : (a) It has been reported by Coal India Limited that the total extractable reserves of coal in the different coal mines of WCL as on 1.4.98 are estimated at 762.06 million tonnes. It is expected that these reserves can be extracted till 2036-37.

(b) The following new coalfields are being developed by Western Coalfields Limited:-

- (i) Kamptee
- (ii) Pathakheda
- (iii) Wardha Valley
- (iv) Pench Kanhan
- (v) Umrer

Exclusive Marketing Rights under Patent Law

2736. SHRI K.P. MUNUSAMY :
SHRI MAHBOOB ZAHEDI

Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government are aware that exclusive marketing rights to be given under new Patent Law will hike the prices of drugs due to heavy imports and consequently lead to drain on foreign exchange;

(b) if so, the steps taken by the Government to solve the impending crisis arising out of patents;

(c) whether any study has been undertaken to ascertain the effect of exclusive marketing rights in case of drugs;

(d) if so, the details thereof, and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor ?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI SIKANDER BAKHT) : (a) and (b) Exclusive Marketing Rights (EMR) under the new patent law will only be applicable to pharmaceutical based on new molecules patented after 1st January, 1995. Since substitutes based on off patent

molecules would be available in the country, it will not lead to general hike in prices of drugs.

(c) to (e) Actual effect of grant of EMR would be known only after introduction of such products in the Indian market and would be dependent upon comparative merits and demerits of these products vis-a-vis existing products.

Critical Infrastructure Balance Scheme

2737. SHRI MADHAV RAO PATIL :
SHRI D.S. AHIRE :

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government propose to finance Mormugao Port Trust Project under Critical Infrastructure Balance Scheme;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the cost involved on the said project ?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE) : (a) to (c) A project of Mormugao Port Trust (MPT) pertaining to construction of a by-pass road from Mormugao Port to National Highway-17 has been sanctioned under the Critical Infrastructure Balance (C.I.B.) scheme. The approved cost of the project is Rs. 30.00 crores. The allocation under the C.I.B. scheme is Rs. 7.50 crores, out of which Rs. 4.50 crores has been released to MPT in March 1998. The project is being implemented by the Border Roads Organisation. MPT have requested the Ministry of Surface Transport for a revision of the cost of the project to Rs. 62.00 crores.

Short Supply of Food and Non-food Items

2738. SHRI BALASAHEB VIKHE PATIL : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether attention of the Government has been drawn to the news-item captioned "Supply constraints fueled-price rise" appearing in the "Business Standard" dated February 8, 1999;

(b) if so, the reasons for shortfall in the supply of primary food articles and primary non-food articles; and

(c) the steps taken/proposed to be taken to improve the supply level of these articles ?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI YASHWANT SINHA) : (a) Yes Sir.

(b) Price rise recorded last year in some essential commodities, especially pulses, fruits and vegetables was due to their lower production. Production of potato was lower by 60 lakh tonnes (28 percent) and onion by 7 lakh tonnes (16.9 percent). Pulses production had declined by 11 lakh tonnes (7.7 %) and production of oilseeds declined by 24 lakh tonnes.