

[English]

Modification of Mining Act

915. SHRI BIR SINGH MAHATO : Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government propose to modify the Mining Act;

(b) if so, the reasons therefore;

(c) whether any steps have been taken in this regard; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINISTER OF MINES (SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA) : (a) to (d) As per the National Mineral Policy, 1993, the provisions of the Act and the Rules are subject to review from time to time for harmonising them with the policies governing industrial and socio economic development in the country. Amendments to the Mines and Minerals (Regulation & Development) Act, 1957 and the Rules made thereunder were made in this context earlier in 1994. Various State Governments have been demanding further delegation of powers under the Mines and Minerals (Regulation & Development) Act, 1957. In this context, a Committee has been constituted recently under the Chairmanship of the Secretary (Mines) with Secretaries of Mining and Geology of major mineral producing States etc. as Members to review inter-alia the existing laws and procedures governing regulation and development of minerals and to suggest steps to make them further compatible with the changed policies.

Production of Copper

916. SHRI VISHVESHWAR BHAGAT :
SHRI K. PRADHANI :

Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state :

(a) the copper reserves areas in the country, Statewise;

(b) the different private/public sector Companies dealing with the copper mining and processing;

(c) whether the Government have recently received proposals from the private sector for production of copper;

(d) if so, the details thereof and the decision taken thereon;

(e) whether the Government have formulated a scheme to cut down the import of copper and increase its production; and

(f) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINISTER OF MINES (SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA) : (a) The total recoverable reserves position of copper ore in the country as on 1.4.94 are placed at 431 million tonnes.

The Statewise breakup of recoverable reserves are given below :

	<i>Unit 1000 tonnes</i>
Andhra Pradesh	12028.60
Bihar	116627.00
Gujarat	8124.20
Karnataka	5856.10
Madhya Pradesh	192704.00
Maharashtra	606.40
Meghalaya	616.00
Orissa	3226.50
Rajasthan	89335.70
Sikkim	722.00
Uttar Pradesh	1120.00
West Bengal	79.00

(b) Hindustan Copper Limited (HCL) a Public Sector Undertaking is the only unit in the country which is engaged in mining and processing of copper.

(c) and (d) Industrial Policy announced in 1991 envisages that no Industrial Licence is required for production of copper in the country. The National Mineral Policy of 1993 throws open mining of copper to private sector which was reserved exclusively for public sector. In the wake of liberalised policy following new/additional production capacities are under implementation/being planned :-

Sterlite Industries (I) Ltd.	60,000 TPA
Indo Gulf Fertilisers & Chemicals Corpn. Ltd.	100,000 TPA
Metdist Ltd.	150,000 TPA
SWIL Ltd.	50,000 TPA
Hindustan Copper Ltd. (Khetri Expansion)	70,000 TPA
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430,000 TPA	

(e) and (f) Consequent to adoption of liberalised policy, import of copper was decanalised so as to make it freely available to domestic industry.

Gauge Conversion

917. SHRI K. PRADHANI : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that the proposal for the conversion of some narrow-gauge lines in Orissa into broad-gauge have been pending since long;

(b) if so, the reasons for the delay in implementing those proposals;

(c) whether these projects are likely to be completed during the Ninth Five Year Plan period; and

(d) if so, the steps taken by the Government in that direction?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) No, Sir. There are two narrow gauge lines in Orissa.

1. Rupsa-Bangriposi is already sanctioned for conversion.
2. Naupada-Gunupur has been included in the budget 1997-98.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Yes Sir, subject to availability of resources.

(d) Necessary funds would be provided in the coming years.

Waiting List for Telephone Connections

918. SHRI KODIKUNNIL SURESH :
SHRI N.S.V. CHITTHAN :

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) the number of applications pending for grant of telephone connections as on date, State-wise and category-wise;

(b) the steps taken/proposed to be taken to clear them expeditiously;

(c) whether the telephone operations are also proposed to be privatised; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA) : (a) Details of applications pending for grant of telephone connections State-wise and category-wise as on 31.1.1997 are as per the enclosed *Statement*.

(b) It is proposed to provide 24.5 lakh telephone connections during 1996-97 and 29 lakh telephone connections during 1997-98.

(c) and (d) The Government do not propose to privatise telephone operations. However, private sector has been permitted to provide Basic telephone services in the country in competition with DoT/MTNL.

Statement

Number of applications pending for grant of telephone connections, State-wise and Category-wise as on 31.1.97.

S.No.	Name of State	QYT	N-OYT
1	2	3	4
1.	Andhra Pradesh	367	2,22,244
2.	Assam	180	28,856
3.	Bihar	79	61,041

1	2	3	4
4.	Gujarat (including Dadar, Diu, Daman & Nagar Haveli)	2,784	2,89,821
5.	Haryana	326	1,02,059
6.	Himachal Pradesh	8	46,710
7.	J&K	828	29,616
8.	Karnataka	1,299	2,10,690
9.	Kerala (including Lakshadweep (U.T.))	32,178	6,01,996
10.	Madhya Pradesh	29	64,367
11.	Maharashtra (including Goa and Mumbai)	2,104	3,43,483
12.	North-East (including Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland and Tripura)	38	16,074
13.	Orissa	42	25,184
14.	Punjab (including Chandigarh)	1,199	2,27,351
15.	Rajasthan	945	1,92,265
16.	Tamilnadu (including Madras and Pondicherry (U.T.))	9,238	4,28,647
17.	Uttar Pradesh	442	1,71,212
18.	West Bengal (including Sikkim, Andaman & Nicobar, Islands & Calcutta)	295	1,59,370
19.	Delhi	69	38,872
All India		52,450	32,59,858

Merger of AI and IA

919. SHRI V. PRADEEP DEV : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that the Board of Directors of Air India have made a representation to him on August 13, 1996 for merger of Air India and Indian Airlines;

(b) whether it is also a fact that the Board passed a unanimous resolution recommending this merger;

(c) if so, the policy of Government in this regard;

(d) whether Government have accepted the recommendation of the Board; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Board of Air India in its meeting held in September, 1996 unanimously resolved in favour of merger of Air India and Indian Airlines.