

initiatives taken/action plan worked out to step up production of washed coal substantially during 1997-98 onwards ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRIMATI KANTI SINGH): (a) No new coal washing capacity has been added during the last three years.

(b) and (c) Yes, Sir. The main reasons for near stagnancy in washed coal production are as under :-

- (i) Most of the washeries are old and are designed to process better quality coals. Due to depletion of these reserves over the years, the ash content in the raw coal feed has increased affecting the performance of washeries considerably.
- (ii) Inadequate raw coal feed to washeries.
- (iii) Frequent power failures.

(d) Demand for washed coal (including direct feed coal) on Coal India Limited for the steel sector as assessed by the Planning Commission for 1997-98 is 11.36 million tonnes and for the terminal year of Ninth Five Year Plan (2001-02) the projected demand is 12.26 million tonnes.

Steps taken/proposed to be taken to step up indigenous availability of coking coal are as under :-

- (i) Two new washeries under advanced stage of construction at Madhuband (BCCL) and Kedla (CCL) are likely to be commissioned during 1997-98.
- (ii) Increasing raw coking coal availability by reorganising existing mines and development of new mines.
- (iii) Modification of the existing coking coal washeries to improve the capacity utilisation as well as the quality of washed coking coal.
- (iv) Increasing raw coal feed to washeries by supplying low volatile medium coking coals of suitable quality.
- (v) Exploitation of coking coal by Steel Authority of India Ltd. (SAIL) from captive mining block offered by CIL.

Export of Cashew Kernel

6680. SHRI P.C. CHACKO : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the export of cashew kernel is undertaken by private agents;

(b) if so, whether the cashew kernel exporters are ignoring the request of Kerala State Cashew Development Corporation;

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

(d) the total quantum and value of cashew kernel exported to erstwhile Russia during the last three years, year-wise;

(e) the details of exporters to whom the permission to export cashew kernels have been given by the Government during the said period;

(f) whether the Government of Kerala has also recommended the export of cashew kernels through KSCDC; and

(g) if so, the reaction of the Union Government thereto ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH) : (a) to (c) As per the current Export Import Policy, export of cashew are allowed freely without any restriction. It is the policy of the Government to encourage export of cashew kernels through both public and private sector companies without any discrimination.

(d) and (e) The total quantity and value of cashew kernels exported from India to Russia during the last three years are as under :-

Year	Qty. (In Mts.)	Value (in Rs. Crores)
1994-95	5531	92.10
1995-96	14905	263.30
1996-97	405	5.70
(April '96 to Feb. '97)		

During 1995-96, a ceiling of 6000 Mts for export of cashew kernels to Russia under the Rupee Escrow/Debt Repayment Mechanism was released subject to registration of contracts with Cashew Export Promotion Council.

(f) and (g) Yes, Sir. Government of Kerala was advised to encourage exports of cashew kernels through Kerala State Cashew Development Corporation as the items was freely exportable.