

[English]

Production and Exploration of Coal

5446. DR. M. JAGANNATH: Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is a proposal to set up a single window independent body to clear proposals for coal exploration and production;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps taken to protect the work undertaken by the public sector companies and also by the Geological Survey of India?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRIMATI KANTI SINGH): (a) to (c) The Government have decided, subject to legislative changes, to set up an independent body to monitor detailed and regional exploration of coal and lignite blocks and also to allot new coal blocks to Indian Companies in the Public & Private Sector for coal mining on the basis of competitive bidding.

[Translation]

Irregularities in Importing Gold by STC

5447. SHRI PAWAN DIWAN: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have received any complaints regarding irregularities and violations of the prescribed directions and procedures for import of Gold by State Trading Corporation;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the action taken or being taken by the Government in this regard; and

(d) the steps taken or proposed to be taken by the Government to check such irregularities in future?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH): (a) No, Sir.

(b) to (d) Does not arise.

[English]

Recognition to Private Coal Mines

5448. SHRI SUNIL KHAN: Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) whether the private collieries like Gopal Krishna and Jay Guru of P.S. Saitore in West Bengal are running by the order of the Calcutta High Court;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government propose to recognise the private collieries;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRIMATI KANTI SINGH): (a) Yes, Sir. The private mine Gopal Krishna was reportedly being run by the order of the High Court of Calcutta. However, Government is not aware of running of any Joy Guru Colliery under the order of any Court of law.

(b) The owner of Gopal Krishna Colliery was running the colliery under certain conditions by an order of the High Court of Calcutta passed in September'96 to this effect. However Eastern Coalfields Ltd. (ECL) was not made a party to the case. When it came to the notice of ECL, it filed various applications before the division bench of the High Court praying for its impleadment in the appeal filed by the West Bengal Government against the order of the High Court passed in September'96. It also prayed for a stay on the operation of the colliery by the owner. The division bench, hearing the petition of ECL, passed an interim order to stop mining in Gopal Krishna Colliery. These applications have now been taken up by the Hon'ble Court for regular hearing.

(c) to (e) No, Sir. As per the Coal Mines (Nationalisation) Act, 1973 as amended in 1976, all the leases for mining of coal, held by the private parties except for those engaged in iron and steel production, were terminated. Subsequently by an amendment made to the Coal Mines (Nationalisation) Act, 1973 in June, 1993, coal mining to private companies have been allowed only for power generation and washing of coal obtained from a mine in addition to the continuing provisions for iron and steel production. Cement production has also been notified as an end use for the purpose. The above statutory position is still continuing.

[Translation]

Export of Edible Oil

5449. DR. LAXMINARAYAN PANDEY: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government propose to export edible oils during the current financial year;

(b) whether all varieties of edible oil have been included in the proposal;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor and the details of the edible oil which have not been considered in the proposal?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH): (a) The export projections for the Ninth Five Year Plan including the year 1997-98 have not been formulated. The exports of edible oils will depend upon the varieties, traded, prices, consumer preferences and International demand and supply position.

(b) to (d) As per the current Export-Import Policy, export of edible oils is as follows:

Restricted Items:

(Export Permitted Under Licence)

(i) Vegetable oils in consumer packs above 5 kgs., namely:-

Coconut oil; cotton seed oil; corn oil; kardi oil; linseed oil; mustard oil; niger seed oil; palm oil; palm kernel oil; rape seed oil; rice bran oil; salad oil; sunflower oil; sesame seed oil; soyabean oil.

(ii) Groundnut Oil.

*[English]***Agreement for Procurement & Processing of Rice by MMTC**

5450. SHRI UTTAMSINGH PAWAR: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Minerals and Metals Trading Corporation of India Ltd. had entered into an agreement for procurement of Basmati rice and process it;

(b) if so, the details of the agreements thereof;

(c) whether MMTC has suffered a loss of about four crores in this transaction;

(d) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor;

(e) whether the Government had instituted any enquiry into this deal and fixed up any responsibility on the officers who signed that agreements; and

(f) if so, the details thereof;

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULLA RAMAIAH): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. MMTC entered into an agreement with M/s. K J International for procurement of paddy for Basmati rice and processing it into finished rice for export. A quantity of 3784.45 MT valued at Rs. 3.97 crores was procured. They were required to give 1740.85 MT 'A' grade superior Basmati rice. Out of this they gave 273 Mt of 'A' Grade rice which was sold locally for Rs. 53 lakh. They also informed that they have exported 1000 MT 'A' Grade rice valued at Rs. 1.95 crores to Saudi Arabia.

(c) and (d) The matter has been referred to Arbitration. The quantum of loss, if any, would be known only after the Arbitration proceedings are completed.

(e) and (f) Yes, Sir. An inquiry has been instituted and investigations into the transaction are under process.

Winding up of MSTC

5451. SHRI RAM NAIK: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government are aware that the Board of Industrial and Financial Reconstruction (BIFR) has issued notice, to wind up Maharashtra State Textile Corporation (MSTC);

(b) the reasons for winding up these mills;

(c) if so, whether the Government have agreed to the above proposal of the BIFR; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI R.L. JALAPPA): (a) to (d) Having considered all the relevant facts and circumstances of the case, the Board for Industrial & Financial Reconstruction (BIFR), is of the prima facie opinion that it is just and equitable that the Maharashtra State Textile Corporation Ltd (MSTC) should be wound up. Accordingly, the BIFR has issued notice to MSTC and all concerned to make their suggestions/objections, if any.

Finance for Voluntary Retirement Schemes

5452. SHRI MOHAN RAWALE: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Reserve Bank of India has allowed some all India lending institutions to finance Voluntary Retirement Schemes in cotton mills;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the terms and conditions agreed upon with these financial institutions for financing Voluntary Retirement Schemes in cotton mills;

(d) whether these cotton mills also include National Textile Corporation mills;

(e) if so, the details thereof; and

(f) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI R.L. JALAPPA): (a) to (c) Reserve Bank of India has issued instructions in Nov. 96 to term lending institutions namely, IDBI, ICICI, IFCI, IRBI and SCICI to the effect that the Financial Institutions may while determining the quantum of financial assistance for modernisation plan of cotton mills, take into account the outgo on account of Voluntary Retirement Scheme (VRS) and gratuity. However, Financial Institutions should be satisfied about the viability of the proposed modernisation plan and they should also ensure enduse of the funds. Voluntary Retirement Scheme and gratuity outside the modernisation plan will not come under the purview of these instructions.

(d) to (f) In the case NTC, VRS has been funded out of National Renewal Fund.

*[Translation]***Rehabilitation of Textile Workers**

5453. DR. SATYANARAYAN JATIA: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) the steps taken for the rehabilitation of the workers of the closed textile mills in Madhya Pradesh; and

(b) the details of the present Government's "textile