

(c) if not, the reason therefor ?

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI KASHIRAM RANA) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) The Government looks after the development and promotion of the handicrafts sector through schemes which include areas like training, design development, domestic and international marketing etc.

[English]

Setting up of Spinning Mills

1634. SHRI TATHAGAT SATPATHY : Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government provide grants for setting up of spinning mills in States;

(b) if so, the number of spinning mills set up in the country with Central assistance, State-wise; and

(c) the details of amount provided by the Union Government for the purpose State-wise, particularly to Orissa?

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI KASHIRAM RANA) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Setting up of Hotels at Puri, Konark and Bhubaneswar

1635. SHRI RANJIB BISWAL : Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government propose to set up some luxury hotels at Puri, Konark and Bhubaneswar during the Ninth Plan;

(b) whether some hotels/guests houses are also proposed to be set up for the middle class tourists visiting these places; and

(c) if so, the details thereof and the steps taken in that direction?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF TOURISM (SHRI MADAN LAL KHURANA) : (a) ITDC is a public sector undertaking under the administrative control of Ministry of Tourism. ITDC's Ninth Five Year Plan (1997-2002) does not envisage any scheme/provision for construction of new hotels at Puri, Konark and Bhubaneswar. Presently ITDC is operating and managing the following two 3 Star Category hotels in the state of Orissa :-

1. Hotel Kalinga Ashok, Bhubaneswar.

2. Hotel Nilachal Ashok, Puri (Joint Venture in collaboration with the Orissa Tourism Development Corporation Ltd.)

(b) and (c) No, Sir. The Ministry of Tourism, Government of India provides financial assistance to State/U.T. Governments based on project proposals received from them for the construction of accommodation facilities like Yatri Niwases, tourist bungalows, tourist complexes etc. for the benefit of budget and middle class tourists. The Projects/Schemes for which Central Financial Assistance has been sanctioned by Govt. of India, Ministry of Tourism to State Govt. of Orissa for the year 1997-98, do not contain any hotel/guest house project.

Singareni Collieries Company Ltd.

1636. SHRI M. RAJIAH : Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) the present status of industrial relations with the Singareni Collieries Company Ltd., Kothagudem;

(b) the financial status of the company for the last three years;

(c) the mines from where the coal is being excavated by the company at present;

(d) whether the company has any coal deposits in Warangal district; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRI DILIP RAY) : (a) In view of the multiplicity of Trade Unions and the influence of extremist activities in Singareni Collieries Company Ltd., the industrial relations are not satisfactory. The 5 Trade Unions affiliated to National Trade Unions having membership on Joint Bipartite Committee for Coal Industry (JBCCI) and another Federation of Craft Association viz. Singareni. All Associations Joint Action Committee (SAJAC) have given separate notices over several demands proposing to go on strike on or after 25.5.98. In spite of so many conciliation proceedings held during the month of April/May '98, intervention by the Chief Minister, Andhra Pradesh and Labour Commissioner (C), Hyderabad until end of May, 98 no understanding could be reached. The workers' unions are presently on strike, though three open cast mines are working partially.

(b) SCCL have incurred a loss of Rs. 190.81 Crores. and Rs. 246.95 crores in 1995-96 and 1996-97 respectively, and the company could earn a profit of Rs. 102.76 crores (Provisional) during 1997-98.

(c) SCCL is exploiting coal from 4 districts in Andhra Pradesh, viz., Khammam, Karimnagar, Adilabad and Warangal. As on 1.06.1998, SCCL had 61 underground Mines and 12 Opencast Mines.

(d) and (e) SCCL has got proved coal deposits as well as working mines Warangal district, known as Mulugu coal belt. As on 1.1.98, 10 blocks have been explored covering 49 Sq. Kms. having 584 million tonnes of proved coal reserves. Out of the proved blocks KTK-1, 1A, 2A, 5 and 5A inclines have already been opened in the Geological blocks of Bhoopalapalli Block-I and III.

[Translation]

Pay Packages to Central Silk Board Scientists

1637. SHRI K.C. KONDAIAH : Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) the total number of scientists working in the Central Silk Board throughout the Country;

(b) whether the scientists of Central Silk Board have been requesting for pay package at par with terms offered by the ICAR; and

(c) if so, the details thereof and the reaction of the Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI KASHIRAM RANA) : (a) A total number of 839 scientists are working in the Central Silk Board throughout the Country.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) The matter is under active consideration of the Government.

[English]

Trade Relations with Latin American Countries

1638. SHRI A. C. JOS : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether India and Latin American Countries have signed any trade agreement regarding trade relations among these countries; and

(b) if, so, the details thereof?

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

(b) Trade agreements have been signed by India with the following Latin American countries.

| Country | Date of Signing |
|-------------------|-----------------|
| Brazil | 3rd Feb. 1968 |
| Colombia | 14th July 1970 |
| Peru | 4th Nov. 1971 |
| Cuba | 9th July 1979 |
| Guatemala | 23rd April 1981 |
| Argentina | 28th July 1981 |
| Trinidad & Tobago | 24th Jan. 1997 |

The trade agreement are signed with a view to enhance bilateral trade relations between the two countries.

Restructuring the Patent System

1639. SHRI K.S. RAO : Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have any proposal for restructuring the patent system in the Country;

(b) if so, the details thereof indicating inter-alia the objectives to be achieved thereby;

(c) whether any Expert Committee has been appointed to consider the problem thread-bare;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the time by which the restructured Patent System is likely to start functioning in the Country?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI SIKANDER BAKHT) : (a) to (e) The government has been taking steps to modernise the patents system in the country. Steps are now underway to modernise and strengthen the patent office through a plan which would provide the required qualified personnel, infrastructural facilities, optimisation of available resources through reorientation of functions between offices, computerisation of procedures and elimination of backlog of patent applications. The plan, which is proposed to be implemented in a period of five years, has been prepared after intensive consultations with the Ministries/Departments/ Organisations concerned of the Government and other national/international consultants.

World Heritage City-Agra

1640. SHRI BENI PRASAD VERMA : Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have finally drawn a scheme for making Agra 'World Heritage City';

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the time by which this scheme is likely to be accomplished;