

(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;