

Indian Airlines, including termination of services.

Coal Fines in Kathara Coal Washeries

*402. SHRI A.K. ROY: Will the Minister of ENERGY be pleased to state:

(a) the estimated quantity of coal fines lying in the tanks and coal washeries of Kathara in the Central Coalfields Limited as on 1 March, 1990 and the approximate sale value thereof;

(b) since when it is lying there;

(c) whether the accumulation of coal fines is on the increase;

(d) if so, the reasons therefor;

(e) whether the slurry is now flowing out in the Damodar river, polluting the water; and

(f) if so, the steps taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF ENERGY AND MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI ARIF MOHAMMAD KHAN): (a) The total quantity of coal fines lying in the tanks of Kathara Washery as on 1.3.1990 has been estimated at about 3,75,000 M.T. of sale value of Rs. 11 crores approx.

(b) to (d). Kathara washery was commissioned in the year 1970. Coal fines are by-products of any washery system. Hence, coal fines have been accumulating in slurry ponds of Kathara washery ever since 1970. Initially there was no demand for this item, but later on it was found useful as middlings and for manufacture of briquettes. The company has been floating tenders for sale of coal slurry since 1981-82. The quantity of coal fines in the slurry ponds varies from time to time depending upon the washery operations and off-take of the slurry. It is, however, a fact that there has been an increase in the accumulation of coal fines since August '89 because of a dispute between the contractor engaged in the recovery of coal fines and his workmen.

(e) and (f). Since the coal fine accumulation at present is 3.75 lakhs M.T. only and the slurry pond of Kathara washery has a capacity of about 7 lakh M.T., there is ordinarily no over-flow of coal slurry into the Damodar river. There were, however, occasions in the past when the slurry pond bounds were breached leading to overflow of coal fines in the adjacent fields and on to the natural river drainage, but in such cases action was taken by the coal company to repair the bunds immediately.

Solar Energy System

*403. SHRI BHAGEY GOBARDHAN: Will the Minister of ENERGY be pleased to state:

(a) the future prospects of solar energy system in the country; and

(b) the steps taken or proposed to be taken by Government to encourage the development of solar energy system?

THE MINISTER OF ENERGY AND MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI ARIF MOHAMMAD KHAN): (a) There is a large potential for solar energy systems in India.

(b) The measures taken to encourage the development of solar energy systems include promotion of research and development, setting up demonstration and extension programmes, provision of incentives to users and manufacturers of solar energy systems and products, and training of personnel in the use of such systems.

Hiring of Helicopters from Foreign Countries

*404. SHRI ANADI CHARANDAS: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are hiring helicopters from foreign countries for different purposes within the countries and abroad; and