

(a) whether Government propose to set up Food Processing Units on co-operative basis in rural areas of the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof, including joint venture, if any;

(c) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(d) whether any such units on co-operative basis are likely to be set up in Maharashtra State?

THE MINISTER FOR TEXTILES AND MINISTER OF FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES (SHRI SHARAD YADAV): (a) to (d). While some schemes have been formulated for providing support to the setting up of Food Processing Units in the co-operative sector, the Ministry of Food Processing Industries has no proposal to directly set up any such unit in the co-operative sector in any State.

Mahabir Colliery Disaster

*319. SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government had conducted an inquiry into the disaster at Mahabir Colliery of the Eastern Coalfields on 12 November, 1989;

(b) if so, the outcome thereof;

(c) whether the management of the Colliery had complied with the recommendations of the Gugnani Committee and permission was obtained from Internal Safety organisation, Eastern Coalfields Ltd. or the Director General of Mines Safety to work in the Colliery; and

(d) if not, the action taken against the guilty officials?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR AND WELFARE (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN): (a) to (d). An inquiry was conducted by the Directorate General of Mines Safety under Section 23 of the Mines Act, 1952 into an accident which occurred at Mahabir Colliery of the Eastern Coalfields Limited on 13-11-1989. The inquiry revealed that the accident had occurred as a result of inrush of water from an abandoned shaft connected to an upper seam, both of which were water-logged, into a seam where development work was in progress. The area attracted the provisions of Regulation 127 (3) of the Coal Mines Regulations, 1957 which lays down that the management shall obtain permission from the Directorate General of Mines Safety for working within 60 metres of disused or abandoned water-logged working. The inquiry revealed that the management had not obtained permission from the Directorate General of Mines Safety for working in the area. The inquiry also indicated that the management had not also complied with the provisions of regulation 127(6) which requires drilling of advance bore-holes while working within 60 metres of water-logged workings.

The Central Government have decided to appoint a Court of Inquiry under section 24 of the Mines Act, 1952 to undertake a comprehensive inquiry into the causes of and the circumstances attending the accident. The Court of Inquiry would, inter alia, examine the role and the functioning of the Internal Safety Organisation as well as compliance with other recommendations of the Gugnani Committee relevant to the causes and the circumstances in respect of the accident. The question of taking action against any person will be examined on receipt of the report of the Court of Inquiry.