

very higher rate and also from this source. That has increased the cost very much and makes it really prohibitive to work out. But it is not shortage of power. It is heavy increase in the cost of power that is affecting the working of the mines. As it is, it is becoming costly. This has been an additional straw on the camel's back.

SHRI E. AYYAPU REDDY : What is the total investment that has been made on the Yeppamana Gold Mines in Andhra Pradesh? It is reported that it has yielded only 25.7 kg of gold. What was the production in the year, 1983-84?

Nearby there are Vajra Kareer mines where diamonds are proverbially recovered from ancient times. Will the hon. Minister also say whether any survey is being made at Vajra Kareer and Anantapur districts?

SHRI VASANT SATHE : I need notice for this. This is a specific question about a specific area and I do not want to give a general reply.

SHRI E. AYYAPU REDDY : You have said 25.7 kg have been produced by Yeppamana Gold Mines, of Andhra Pradesh. What is the total investment that has been made on that?

SHRI VASANT SATHE : I will collect the figures and send them to you. I do not have them readily with me.

Closure of Iron ore Mines in Gorumahishani-Badam-Pahar Sector in Mayurbhanj District (Orissa)

*795. **SHRIMATI JAYANTI PATNAIK :** Will the Minister of STEEL, MINES AND COAL be pleased to state :

(a) whether some iron-ore mines have been closed down in Gorumahishani-Badam-Pahar sector in Mayurbhanj district, Orissa ;

(b) if so, the reasons that led to the

closure of these mines ;

(c) since when these mines have been closed down; and

(d) the efforts made to re-start the mining operation in these mines ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF STEEL (SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH) : (a) to (d). A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) and (b). 6 mines on an average used to be worked in the district in the last 3 years. At present, only 3 mines are being worked in this District. Notices of closure have not been received from the other mines. In the notice received from one mine for temporary discontinuance of operation, the reason cited was low off-take of iron ore from Badam Pahar. This is reported to be the general reason for discontinuance of iron ore production in this area.

(c) Since notices for closure from other mines have not been received, nor have production returns been filed by these mines since 1981-82, it is not possible to indicate when these mines have ceased producing.

(d) MMTC procured 1.88 lakh tonnes of iron ore in 1984-85 from this District, which is more than the quantity annually procured from this District in 1981-82, 1982-83 and 1983-84. For the year 1985-86, MMTC plans to procure a larger quantity than the 1984-85 level to meet its increased export commitments. The increase in procurement by MMTC is expected to act as a stimulant to increase production of iron ore in this District.

SHRIMATI JAYANTI PATNAIK : The hon. Minister has replied that at present three mines are being worked in this sector, this Gorumahishani-Badam-Pahar sector in Mayurbhanj district. He has already stated that six

mines on an average used to be worked in this district.

The hon. Minister may kindly give the figures of the number of mines which were operated ten years back and also the off-take of the present year.

I am glad the hon. Minister has replied in Part 'd' of the Question that in 1985-86, MMTC plans to procure a larger quantity than the 1984-85 level. I am glad to learn that we are very much committed to the welfare of the tribal community and it is our moral responsibility to see that they are gainfully employed.

I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether the Steel Ministry and the Commerce Ministry will increase the off-take of another 15,000 tonnes per month to the present level during 1985-86 and in order to do this, whether the mines which have been closed down would be opened by a directive of the Ministry.

I would also like to know whether the mines which have been given temporary discontinuance notice would be opened.

SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH : The operation of the mines is dependent entirely on the requirements of the industry. In the past few years, with regard to iron ore, it has been a buyers' market and we have been having problems with exporting it, particularly from Paradeep Port because it can take only ships of the size of 55,000 DWT whereas Brazil and Australia, the other two suppliers of iron ore, can take upto 200,000 DWT. I am glad to inform the hon. Member that the MMTC have succeeded in persuading the Japanese steel mills to take about five lakh tonnes of iron ore from Paradeep Port and increasing the exports to other countries, particularly to South Korea, Czechoslovakia and G.D.R. The MMTC is expected to export 23 lakh tonnes through Paradeep Port in 1985-86. This will naturally mean more work for

the mines that are operating. I do not have the figures for the mines that were in operation ten years ago. But I do know that there were about 15-16 areas where mining was done. Out of these, three closed down in 1981-82.

SHRIMATI JAYANTI PATNAIK : As one of the policies of the Government of India is to disperse establishment of industries in backward areas, may I know whether the Steel Ministry will also examine the feasibility of setting up a pig iron plant in the region which would ensure utilisation of iron ore on a long term basis ?

SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH : We will certainly bear this in mind.

SHRI SOMNATH RATH : I want to know from the hon. Minister how many workers lost their employment on account of the temporary closure or temporary discontinuance of the operation of these mines and what steps are being taken to give them employment.

SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH : I have not got this particular information. I will collect it and have it sent to him. We will find out; in any case, we will ameliorate the difficulties of the local people.

SHRI DIGVIJAY SINH : Is the Minister aware that the railway line which used to transport this iron ore from Taband to Bangriposi and from Bangriposi to Baripada and then to Rupsa is now closed down. If that railway line is reopened, these mines could be exploited better.

SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH : It would depend entirely on the demand for iron ore. If demand increases and if the Government feels that opening of the railway line will be economical and feasible, we will do so.

Gold Deposits in Chaliyar River near Nilambur in Kerala

*796. **SHRI K. P. UNNIKRISHNAN :** Will the Minister of STEEL,