

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,

**MINES AND COAL** be pleased to state :

(a) whether attention of Union Government has been drawn to the reports of gold deposits in the Chaliyar River near Nilambur in Kerala;

(b) whether deposits are of feasible quantity to be exploited;

(c) whether Government of Kerala have approached the Union Government for approving a project of mining of gold; and

(d) the action initiated by the Union Government in the matter ?

**THE MINISTER OF STEEL, MINES AND COAL (SHRI VASANT SATHE) :**

(a) and (b). Government is aware that gold bearing gravels are found in the Chaliyar river terraces near Nilambur, Kerala. The commercial viability of these deposits has not yet been established.

(c) and (d). The State Government proposes to take up pilot scale mining to establish the feasibility of mining of alluvial gold deposits and is in contact with the Government of India regarding the financing of this project, for which UNDP assistance has been provided earlier.

**SHRI K. P. UNNIKRISHANAN :**

For decades people have been collecting gold from the river bed Nilambur. In between it had been stopped for a while and in the last few years it has been revived again. There are many stories on both sides of the river how people became rich by mining gold in this Chaliyar river. But unfortunately it has not been possible for the Government of India or the Government of Kerala to take up those project very seriously. I am also told that the extraction methods that we have now, the level of technology that we have, are not conducive for extracting gold

from alluvial gold deposits. As the Minister has explained, Bharat Gold Mines is losing. Many major deposits like KGF are drying up. So we are faced with the problem where we have a large number of deposits, some of them in difficult mining areas as in the gold-bearing gravel terraces of this river. Therefore, I want to know whether the Geological Survey of India is involved seriously in this project and whether they are going to get the latest technology so that they can pursue these deposits with some vigour.

**SHRI VASANT SATHE :** That is precisely the idea. That is why in the pilot plant we have in mind we are going to utilise the latest technology with UNDP's assistance to see how best we can exploit the gravel and extract gold because that is the real problem. Although we are aware that large areas extending many kilometres, say 50 to 60 km on the bank of the river, have these blazer deposits as they are called and they could be exploited, but because of the extensive stretch, unless we have the correct technology, we will not be able to economically exploit these sands and that is why we are also taking the assistance of the Australian government because they have some expertise in this. So, wherever we can get the latest technology and the know-how we want to utilise because we are keen to see that the gold deposits which are found in the Nilambur river are utilised.

**SHRI K. P. UNNIKRISHANAN :** I am grateful to the Minister that he is taking some interest in this because as I said, for decades it has been lost. I want to know how much assistance he is going to give in specific monetary terms—for this project, how much he is going to allot and what kind of assistance he is going to take and what is the time-frame in which this project would be taken up seriously.

**SHRI VASANT SATHE :** The project has been taken up seriously. As far as seriousness is concerned...

SHRI K. P. UNNIKRISHNAN : It is not lacking.

SHRI VASANT SATHE : As far as resources are concerned...

MR. SPEAKER : They are lacking.

SHRI VASANT SATHE : There also I want to say that we will ensure availability of adequate resources. For this purpose at present we do not have any project report showing the requirements of the resources. Unless these experts are able to tell us how much resources would be needed for capital equipment, for exploration and all that—both Australian and UNDP experts are involved—this is a pilot project and the viability report is yet to be obtained. Once that is done, there will be no shortage of resources. Time limit, of course—it is very difficult to give, but I can assure you that we are as keen as anybody else to find gold. Who does not want gold?

[*Translation*]

**Promotion of Export of 'Gawar' Based Products**

\*797. SHRI VIRDHI CHANDER JAIN : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether desert districts of Rajasthan, Mehsena and Banaskantha district of Gujarat and also Haryana and Punjab State received good crop of 'Gawar';

(b) if so, whether there are many Gawar-based factories in these States which are producing 'Gawargum' and 'Gawar Powder' and exporting the same to foreign countries; and

(c) if so, whether Government propose to take concrete steps to deal with the situation created as a result of stiff competition from Pakistan and help in promoting the exports in 'Gawar' based products?

[*English*]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE

MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. A. SANGMA) : (a) to (c). A statement is laid on the Table on the House.

**Statement**

(a) Guar is grown generally in arid and semi-arid areas. Certain districts of Rajasthan, Gujarat, Haryana and Punjab produce good crop of Guar.

(b) Guar Gum processing units are located mainly in Rajasthan, Gujarat and Haryana. These units are producing Guar Gum and Guar Powder which are being exported to foreign countries also.

(c) Government have already initiated a number of measures to promote export of Guar Gum and its products. These include extension of adequate cash compensatory support and import replenishment facilities, conducting market surveys of major importing countries, etc. A comprehensive study has also been commissioned to investigate the market, pricing policy, competition from other countries and possibility of developing new end-uses, particularly in the food industry.

[*Translation*]

SHRI VIRDHI CHANDER JAIN : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Government of India are giving incentive to the exporters of Guar Gum and Guar powder. We welcome it. The question is that Pakistan is also in competition with us for Guar powder. Will the Central Government endeavour to forge ahead of Pakistan in competition by increasing the incentives and by taking some concrete steps?

[*English*]

SHRI P.A. SANGMA : There is a general feeling that whatever incentives or assistance we are giving now are not adequate. There has been a demand that it should be increased. Government are examining it.

[*Translation*]

SHRI VIRDHI CHANDER JAIN : My second question is this. What is the