

12 aircraft from USSR. There are no problems regarding spare parts and engine overhauling and the serviceability of the aircraft is satisfactory. The normal steps for maintenance are being taken which are keeping the aircraft serviceable.

**Price of Coal before and after Nationalisation**

5021. SHRI BIJOY SINGH NAHAR: Will the Minister of ENERGY be please to state:

(a) the price of coal before and after nationalisation of coal mines in India; and

(b) steps Government propose to take to reduce the price of coal?

THE MINISTER OF ENERGY (SHRI P. RAMACHANDRAN): (a) The average coal price before nationalisation was Rs. 37.42 per tonne. The average price during the period 1-4-74 to 30-6-75 was Rs. 47.42 per tonne. Since 1-7-75 the average price is Rs. 64.92 per tonne.

(b) The price of coal is fixed by Government after taking into account the cost of inputs such as labour wages, materials, equipments and overheads. The Coal Companies have been advised to observe maximum economy in expenditure and to achieve higher levels of productivity to lower costs of production.

**Conditions governing the declaration of a district as Backward District**

5022. SHRI V. S. ELAN CHEZHIAN: Will the Minister of PLANNING be pleased to state:

(a) the conditions governing the declaration of a district as backward district for entitlement to Central assistance;

(b) whether Government propose to treat Pudukotiah district to Tamil Nadu as backward district; and

(c) if so, particulars of the assistance proposed to be rendered for development of the District?

THE PRIME MINISTER (SHRI MORARJI DESAI): (a) to (c). There is no scheme for declaring a district as "backward" for entitlement to Central assistance. Certain incentives are, however, being offered for promotion of industries in selected "industrially backward" districts. The following criteria were recommended as guidelines to the State Governments and the Administrations of Union Territories for the identification of industrially backward districts to qualify for concessional finance from the all-India term-lending institutions:

(i) *Per capita* foodgrains/commercial crops production depending on whether the district is predominantly a producer of foodgrains/cash crops. (For inter-district comparisons conversion rates between foodgrains and commercial crops may be determined by the State Government on a pre-determined basis where necessary).

(ii) Ratio of population to agricultural workers.

(iii) *Per capita* industrial output (gross).

(iv) Number of factory employees per lakh of population or alternatively number of persons engaged in secondary and tertiary activities per lakh of population.

(v) *Per capita* consumption of electricity.

(vi) Length of surfaced roads in relation to population or railway mileage in relation to population.

2. On this basis 247 districts have been selected as "industrially backward" and are eligible for concessional finance. Industries in these districts are also eligible for certain income-tax reliefs for a specified period.