

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE) : (a) to (e) Pursuant to Article 4 of the Understanding on Rules and Procedures Governing the Settlement of Disputes (DSU) in the World Trade Organisation (WTO), on 15th July 1997, the United States requested consultations with India on restrictions maintained by India in the Importation of agricultural, textile and Industrial products. However, the consultations failed to settle the dispute. On 3rd October 1997, the United States requested the establishment of a panel by the Dispute Settlement Body (DSB) at its meeting scheduled for 16th October, 1997. At this meeting, the DSB noted that the consultations were at a crucial stage which could result in a mutually agreed satisfactory solution and that therefore it might not be in the interest of either party to establish a panel. However, the United States on 6th November, 1997 once again re-introduced its request for a panel to examine its allegation of violation of the WTO Agreement by India. This request was considered at the meeting of the DSB held on 18th November 1997, and since this was the second consecutive meeting of the DSB in which the United States had requested for the establishment of a panel, under the provisions of the DSU, the panel was established automatically at this meeting.

Rationalisation of Coal Regulations

603. SHRI RAMKRISHNA BABA PATIL : Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government propose to rationalise coal regulations;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government have short-listed foreign firms in this regard; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRI DILIP RAY) : (a) The regulations exclusively applicable to coal mining operations is the Coal Mines Regulations, 1957. There is no proposal in the Ministry of Coal to rationalise or amend the Coal Mines Regulations, 1957.

(b) to (d) Do not arise in view of answer to part (a) of the question.

[Translation]

Number of NTC Branches

604. SHRI JAGDAMBI PRASAD YADAV: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) the number of branches of National Textiles Corporation opened in the country during the last three years;

(b) the names of Institutions from which the National Textiles Corporation have made purchases during the last three years, the names of those items and cost thereof; and

(c) number of such branches proposed to be opened in Bihar by the Government during the Ninth Five Year Plan?

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI KASHIRAM RANA) : (a) The NTC has not opened any new branches (retail outlets) in the country during the last three years.

(b) The names of the institutions from where the NTC has made most of its purchases during the last three year are indicated in the enclosed statement-I. The names of the often purchased items and their unit cost are indicated in the enclosed statement-II.

(c) The NTC does not propose to open any new show room in Bihar in the Ninth Five Year Plan period.

Statement-I

Names of Institutions from where the NTC have made most of their purchases during the last three years

1. All India Handlooms Marketing Coop Society Ltd., New Delhi.
2. Himachal Emporium
3. The "Weaver" (State Govt. Emporium of Haryana)
4. K.H.D.C. (Karnataka Handloom Development Coporation)
5. New Egerton Woollen Mills
6. Cannpore Woollen Mills
7. Shri Markendeya Yantra Audhyogik Cooperative Society Ltd.
8. Prabhat Powerloom Owners Industries Co-op. Society Ltd.
9. KAPCO Society, Karur.
10. Balarampuram Mktg. Co-op. Society, Balarampuram
11. Arvind Co-op Powerloom Industries Society Ltd.
12. Madhusudan Powerloom Co-op. Society Ltd.,
13. Bhavani Powerloom Co-op. Society Ltd., Surat
14. Phulkari (State Govt. Emporium of Punjab)
15. J&K State Govt. Handloom Corporation.
16. U.P. Handloom (State Govt. Emporium)
17. Mrignayani (State Govt. Emporium of MP)
18. Maharashtra State Govt. Emporium.