

Major importers of Indian tea are Russia and CIS countries, U.K., Germany, Poland, U.A.E. Iran, Arab Republic of Egypt, Japan, Saudi Arabia etc.

(b) to (d) Overall imports of tea by various importing countries depend upon their requirements and contracts for imports are entered into by the importing companies/ organisations in different countries with their counter-part Indian exporters, details of which would be available only with the individual buyers/sellers. However, Tea Board is in constant touch with various importing countries including Poland to promote import of Indian tea.

(e) The target proposed by the Tea Board for export of tea in the terminal year of 9th Plan viz. 2001-2002 is 265 million kg.

MNCs in India

4389. SHRI VIJAY PATEL : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government are aware that multi-national companies are more interested about their market in India than to make the industrial base of the country strong; end

(b) if so, the steps taken to safeguard the interest of the country ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI M.P. VEERENDRA KUMAR) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) The endeavour of the Government is to invite more foreign direct investment particularly in priority/ core sectors including infrastructure and export oriented projects. The policy initiatives are intended to promote modernisation and technological upgradation, productivity, efficiency and to bring about reduction in costs with a view to boost industrial production and enhance the competitiveness of the industry to boost exports.

[Translation]

Deregulation of Coal Prices

4390. SHRI SURENDRA YADAV :
DR. MAHADEEPAK SINGH SHAKYA :
SHRI NITISH KUMAR :
SHRI NAWAL KISHORE RAI :
SHRI SANAT KUMAR MANDAL :

Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have recently decided to deregularise the price fixation in coal industry;

(b) if so, the categories of coal for which prices are proposed to be deregularised;

(c) whether prices of certain categories of coal has fallen under decontrolled area whereas a future date has been fixed for decontrol of the price fixation of certain categories of coal;

(d) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor;

(e) the average annual production of coal of 'D' 'E' 'F' and 'G' grade in the country during last three years;

(f) whether prices of all types of coal have been increased after the deregulation;

(g) if so, the details thereof; and

(h) the likely impact of such decision on the prices of cement, power and steel ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRIMATI KANTI SINGH) : (a) to (d) In February 1997, the Government have decided to deregulate the prices of D grade of non-coking coal, hard coke and soft coke. Earlier in February, 1996, the Government decided to deregulate the prices of Coking Coal and A, B & C grades of non-coking coal.

Further, the Government have also decided in February, 1997 to :-

(i) allow Coal India Limited (CIL) and Singareni Collieries Company Limited (SCCL) to review the price of E, F and G grades of non-coking coal till 1st January 2000, once every six months by updating the cost indices as per the escalation formula contained in the 1987 report of the Bureau of Industrial Costs & Prices.

(ii) allow CIL and SCCL to fix the prices of E, F and G grades of non-coking coal in relation to the market forces after 1st January 2000.

The reasons for the above decisions taken in February 1997 are :

(i) The Government budgetary support to CIL and SCCL have been reduced very sharply in the recent years. The phase-wise deregulation of coal prices will improve their profitability and enable them to generate additional internal resources needed for stepping up production as well as undertaking new coal projects which are presently unviable.

(ii) In February 1997, the Government have also decided to offer new coal blocks to Indian companies on the basis of competitive bidding. The phase-wise deregulation of coal prices will allow adequate time for strengthening the market forces, induction of competition