

(c) and (d) Yes, Sir. The Working Group on Coal and Lignite for the Seventh Five Year Plan set up by the Planning Commission have recommended adequate investment during the Seventh Plan period, for the development of various projects of CIL including, coking coal projects.

Shortage of coking coal during Seventh Plan period

310. SHRI K. VASUDEVA PANICKER. Will the Minister of STEEL, MINES AND COAL be pleased to state;

(a) whether an acute shortage of coking coal is anticipated during the Seventh Plan period; and

(b) if so, what steps are proposed to be taken by Government to meet the situation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF STEEL (SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH): (a) and (b) It has been estimated that during the Seventh Plan period the availability of coking coal from domestic sources may be marginally short of the requirements of the steel industry. SAIL will import adequate quantities to cover the shortfall.

The following steps are being taken to increase the indigenous availability of coking coal: —

1. Reconstruction of the existing mines and the opening of new coking coal mines. A detailed Master Plan for the reconstruction of the Jharia coalfield, the only source of prime coking coal in the country, has been prepared. Its implementation is being expedited.
2. Modification and better maintenance and operation of existing washeries and setting up of new washeries with modern technology. Appropriate steps have been taken in respect of Dugda I and II

washerries and the modernisation of the Patherdih washery is being taken up. A number of new washeries have been planned to be commissioned in the Seventh Plan period to wash prime, medium and blendable coking coal.

3. Persistent shortage of power supply in Jharia coalfield has been coming in the way of increasing the production of coking coal and better performance of washeries. There is a proposal to set up coal based captive thermal power stations in the coalfield areas to provide additional power for ensuring better performance of mines and washeries.

4. A number of steps like augmenting the infrastructural facilities, setting up of workshops and other supporting services are being taken to increase the production from the Jharia coalfield.

5. As a short-term measures, Bharat Coking Coal Limited has launched a project for dewatering of submerged mines by installing special borehole pumps. This will provide some extra working areas, which will be immediately available for mining.

Price increase of steel

319. SHRI INDRADEEP SINHA: SHRI SURAJ PRASAD:

Will the Minister of STEEL, MINES AND COAL be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news item which appeared in the 'Economic Times' of the 22nd February, 1985 captioned 'Surprise over steel price increase';

(b) whether it is a fact that the Federation of Engineering Industry of India, the Tamil Nadu Small Scale Industries Associations and others