

THE MINISTER OF MINES (SHRI SIS RAM OLA): (a) to (c) There has been a slow down in the growth of mineral sector. The index of mineral production has a weightage of 33% for Coal & Lignite, 53% for Petroleum and Natural Gas and 14% for other non-fuel and non-atomic minerals. Due to temporary closure of mines, discontinuation of mining operations because of heavy rain falls and labour problems in the year 2005-06, the value of index for mineral production for non-fuel and non-atomic minerals, under the Ministry of Mines, recorded a growth of 3.5% only.

Iron Ore deposits in the country

39. SHRI M.V. MYSURA REDDY: Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

- (a) the total estimated quantity of iron ore deposits in the country;
- (b) The total requirement of iron ore within the country and the quantity being exported;
- (c) how many years the deposits of iron-ore will last at current level of consumption and export;
- (d) the criteria for issuing mining licences of iron ore to private people; and
- (e) whether there is any proposal to restrict issuing of mining licences to private people in order to avoid fast depletion of iron ore deposits?

THE MINISTER OF MINES (SHRI SIS RAM OLA): (a) As per information available, the total iron ore resources are estimated at 23.60 billion tonnes as on 1.4.2005.

(b) and (c) The consumption of iron ore in the country during 2004-05 was 54 million tonnes and exports of iron ore was about 83.1 million tonnes during the same period and at the current level of consumption and export, the iron ore resources will last for approximately 172 years.

(d) As per provisions of mines and Mineral (Development & Regulation) Act, 1957 a mining lease can be granted to Indian National or a Company as defined in Sub-section (1) of Section 3 of the Companies Act 1957.

(e) In view of (c) and (d) above, there is no such proposal.