improving the quality of Coir and Coir products. Accordingly, Coir Board has provided training to 2498 women artisans during the last three years besides conducting 24 EDP/Seminar/ workshop/Exposure tours. Coir Board has also attended 27 exhibitions/fairs in Assam during the same period for popularization of Coir and allied products.

(b) Coir Board has no scheme for coconut plantations in the State of Assam or elsewhere in the country.

Credit for micro sub-sector

860. SHRI PYARIMOHAN MOHAPATRA: Will the Minister of MICRO, SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES be pleased to state:

(a) the details of decision regarding reserving a certain minimum percentage of credit for the micro sub-sector out of the MSME priority sector; and

(b) the manner in which Government intends to enforce this percentage and whether any steps have been devised to obtain the willing cooperation of banks?

THE MINISTER OF MICRO, SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES (SHRI VIRBHADRA SINGH): (a) and (b) In terms of the recommendations of the Task Force on Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) under the chairmanship of the Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has advised the banks in June, 2010 to achieve a 20 per cent year-on-year growth in credit to micro and small enterprises (MSEs) and a 10 per cent annual growth in the number of micro enterprise accounts. Further, banks have been advised to allocate 60 per cent of the MSE advances to the micro enterprises, to be achieved in stages *viz.*, 50 per cent in the year 2010-11, 55 per cent in the year 2011-12 and 60 per cent in the year 2012-13.

Empowered Committees on MSMEs constituted under the chairmanship of the Regional Directors of RBI review periodically the progress in MSME financing and coordinate with banks/financial institutions and the State Governments to ensure smooth flow of credit to the sector. In addition, Standing Advisory Committee under the chairmanship of Deputy Governor, RBI looks into issues relating to flow of credit to the MSME sector.

Iron-ore mining in Jharkhand

861. SHRI DHIRAJ PRASAD SAHU: Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether several proposals have been received from the State Government of Jharkhand seeking approval for allocation of iron-ore mines during each of the last three years and the current year;

(b) if so, the details and status thereof including the number of such proposals pending with Government alongwith the reasons therefor;

(c) whether Government has formulated any plan for exploration and exploitation of iron-ore available in Jharkhand; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and the steps taken in this direction?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF MINES (SHRI DINSHA J. PATEL): (a) Yes, Sir

(b) Details of mineral concession proposals for iron ore received from the Government of Jharkhand during the period 2008 to 2011 (upto 2nd August, 2011) for prior approval of the Central Government, and their present status are as under:

Year	Received	Approved	Rejected	Under process in the Ministry	Referred to the State Govt. with query
2008	06	04	01	01	00
2009	04	01	02	00	01
2010	01	00	00	00	01
2011 (upto 2.8.2011)	03	00	00	00	03
TOTAL	14	05	03	01	05

The mineral concession proposals recommended by the State Governments are examined in the light of the provisions of the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957 and the Rules and guidelines framed thereunder, and where necessary in consultation with the State Governments and other agencies concerned. This takes time in disposal of the proposals.

(c) Yes. Sir.

(d) As a policy measure, the Government has lowered the cut-off limit of threshold values for iron ore from 55% to 45% Fe., which is likely to increase the availability of useable grades of iron ore. Further, the Government has issued directions to all State Governments to impose a special condition under Mineral Concession Rules, 1960 in all mining leases for timely completion of prospecting in the entire deposit in the mining lease areas as per revised threshold values in the interest of scientific and systematic mining.

The Government of Jharkhand has informed that it has formulated a detailed exploration programme of iron ore during the Twelfth Five Year Plan. During this Plan period, about 600 sq.km. area will be taken up for detailed iron ore exploration, in which assessment of old and previously explored area as well as new unexplored area will be taken up. At present, the

Directorate of Geology of the State Government is carrying out joint exploration work of iron ore with the National Mineral Development Corporation in Silpunji-Kantoriya area of West Singhbhum District.

The Geological Survey of India (GSI) has identified obvious geological potential domain of 300 sq.km. for iron ore in Jharkhand, and has taken up iron ore prospecting in Silpunji-Kantoria area, West Singhbhum. The work of the said investigation is in progress. Tentative action plan has been formulated in the ensuing Twelfth Five Year Plan for Jharkhand for both the baseline data generation and regional resource assessment in the identified geological potential area. Baseline data generation for mineral prognostication is planned in Jamda-Koira belt of iron-ore group in West Singhbhum with special emphasis for locating favourable new areas for taking up any future iron ore exploration programmes. Regional resource assessment and reassessment is planned to be taken up mostly in Bonai iron ore belt, which is within the obvious geological potential domain of 300 sq.kms.

The Mineral Exploration Corporation Limited (MECL) has signed an MoU with M/s. Steel Authority of India Ltd. for taking up exploration in their mine areas. During last 3 years (2008-09 to 2010-11), MECL has carried out 7519 metres of drilling through 124 boreholes along with associated geological activities in Gua, Kiriburu and Meghatuburu mining areas in Singhbhum District. Presently, exploration in Kiriburu area is in progress.

Transparent and competitive process for awarding mining lease

862. SHRI K.E. ISMAIL: Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the manner in which present mining leases are allocated and utilized has led to serious violations of forest and environment laws of the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is also a fact that the Ministry of Law and Justice has also opined against the present manner;

(d) if so, whether the Ministry is going to evolve a transparent and competitive process for awarding mining leases for mining blocks;

(e) if so, the details thereof; and

(f) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF MINES (SHRI DINSHA J. PATEL): (a) and (b) All the mining leases allotted in terms of the provisions of the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957 and Rules framed thereunder have to comply with Forest and Environment laws of the country. However, Central Empowered Committee of the Supreme Court in its Report on mining in Orissa had pointed out that 215 mines were working on deemed extension basis in terms of Rule 24A(9) of the Mineral Concession Rules, 1960, pending