

Blocks for captive mining operations

132. SHRI AMAR SINGH: Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that out of the 47 blocks for captive mining operation, 15 blocks were offered to power sector and 9 to steel and other sectors in 1994;

(b) whether Government are aware that except for some premining activities in the three to four blocks, there has been no significant activity and even captive mines linked to the supposedly fast track thermal projects have not yet got off the ground; and

(c) if so, the reasons therefor and the remedial steps proposed to be taken in this regard?

(d) whether the Government have since considered the recommendations of the report; and

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRIMATI KANTI SINGH): (a) Out of 47 non-coking coal blocks identified for captive mining operation upto 1994, 8 blocks were offered to power sector by the Screening Committee constituted on the Ministry of Coal. No coal blocks were offered to steel and other sector in 1994.

(b) Only few parties have submitted their mining plan. Out of the plans four plans have been approved so far.

(c) The reasons causing delay, among others are in getting techno-economic and environmental clearance, negotiation with Railway for feasibility of coal transportation from the mining block to power station and getting the mining lease from the State Governments for the captive blocks.

The Screening Committee monitors the progress made by the company in its meetings held periodically. Help is provided to the company on overcoming obstacles.

Danger to towns due to indiscriminate coal mining

133. SHRIMATI JAYANTI PATNAIK: Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) whether some coal towns in the country are facing danger due to indiscriminate coal mining and violation of environment norms by the respective coal companies;

(b) if so, the details of those coal towns;

(c) whether those towns have been declared unsafe;

(d) if so, the steps taken to save those towns from collapse; and

(e) the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRIMATI KANTI SINGH): (a) to (c) Danger to some portion of Jharia, Katras, Kirkend, Kendual and parts of Raniganj, Asansol, Barakar, Jamuria, Bahula and Haripur Townships exists due to the presence of old and unstable working of coal mining operations carried out in the pre-nationalisation era. The Apex Monitoring Committee (AMC) constituted for examining the environment of Raniganj Coalfield had examined 49 unsafe localities and observed that out these there is no apparent danger to 11 localities.

Based on a recent scientific study carried out by Central Mining Research Institute (CMRI), Dhanbad, portion of Katras, Jharia, Kirkend and Kendua towns are standing on old workings made prior to Nationalisation, are also considered to be unsafe.

(d) and (e) Parts of Raniganj, Asansol, Barakar, Jamuria, Bahula and Haripur townships are in the list of localities declared unsafe. Due to enormity of problem of shifting inhabitants from the unstable localities Hydro-Pneumatic Stowing of sand is being carried out at 5 locations in Raniganj Coalfield for