

Fire in Bihar Coal Mines

973. SHRI MENTAY FADMANA-BHAM: Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have any idea as to by when an end will be put on fire in Bihar Coal Mines;

(b) whether it is a fact that BCCL has not made serious efforts in this direction;

(c) whether these fires in coal mines have created an environmental hazard and financial loss; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRI S. B. NYAMAGAUDAR): (a) 70 fires were existing in Jharia Coalfield of BCCL, covering an area of 17.32 Sq. K.M., since long time before nationalisation of coking coal mines in 1971. The first fire in this area was reported in the year 1916. As there are number of complex technical problems involved in dealing with these fires, it is not possible to indicate any definite time limit when all the existing fires will be completely extinguished.

(b) No, Sir. Prior to nationalisation of coal mines no effective steps were taken by the erstwhile owners to deal with these fires in a concerted manner. After nationalisation of the coking coal mines in 1971, BCCL have formulated 22 schemes for dealing with major fires in the Jharia Coalfield. Total amount sanctioned for these schemes is Rs. 114.57 crores and these are under different stages of implementation. As a result of these efforts, 5 fires have been fully extinguished. In addition, at 3 sites the protective measures required to deal with the fires have been completed and it will take some more time before these fires are completely extinguished. At another 13 sites also fires have been contained and further work to completely extinguish these fires is in progress. Further work has also started at 6 more fire sites in

Mukunda Block with the help of Soviet experts. It is expected that many more existing fires would be controlled by end of 8th Plan period.

(c) and (d) Yes, Sir. Active fires in Jharia Coalfield are causing environmental pollution due to smoke emanating from these fires. The coal company is taking steps to control these fires and once these fires are brought under control, the ecology of the area would also improve. Although, it is difficult to make precise estimates of loss of coal reserves caused by these fires, however, the coal company has estimated that a coal reserve to the tune of about 37 m.t. have been damaged in these fires.

Gas based Power Station at Rajamundry

974. DR. YELAMANCHILI SIVAJI: Will the Minister of POWER AND NON-CONVENTIONAL ENERGY SOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that permission was accorded for setting up of a 400 MW. capacity gas based power station at Rajamundry in Andhra Pradesh;

(b) if so, when the permission was accorded; and

(c) what is the stage of implementation of the project?

THE MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) IN THE MINISTRY OF POWER AND NON-CONVENTIONAL ENERGY SOURCES (SHRI KALPNATH RAI): (a) to (c) The proposal of Andhra Pradesh State Electricity Board (APSEB) for setting up of a 400 MW capacity gas based combined cycle power station at Jegurupadu near Rajamundry (East Godavari District) in Andhra Pradesh has been cleared 'in principle' by the Central Electricity Authority (CEA) on 14-3-1991 subject to certain conditions. CEA has requested APSEB to indicate their proposal for funding and whether this is to be taken up in