

Fire in Durgapur Steel Plant

675. SHRI J. P. GOYAL: SHRI
RAMCHANDRA
BHARADWAJ:

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

(a) whether it is a fact that a big fire broke out in the stores of the captive power plant of the Durgapur Steel Plant in the third week of March, 1985;

(b) if so, what was the extent of loss suffered as a result thereof;

(c) whether investigation has since been made as to the causes of the fire; if so, what are the findings thereof;

(d) what safety measures have been taken to check recurrence of such incidents in future;

(e) whether the responsibility for the fire and the loss sustained as a result thereof has since been fixed; and

(f) if so, what are the details in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF STEEL (SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH): (a) On 16th March 1985 a fire broke out in the storage-yard of M/s. Elektrim—M/s. Desein and M/s. Crompton Greaves Ltd. —contractors engaged in the construction of the 2 x 60 MW Captive Power Plant at Durgapur Steel Plant. The open storage yard of the contractors near the construction site was affected by the fire.

(b) All the Plant and equipment for the captive power plant are under the custody and direct responsibility of the contractors and are insured till erection and handing over to Durgapur Steel Plant. The contractor* stated that their preliminary/provisional assessment of damage is Rs. 4.87 crores to M/s. Elektrim—M/s. Desein and Rs. 6 crores to M/s. Crompton Greaves. However a final assessment of damage would be known only after they submit their claims to the Insurance Companies.

(c) Yes, Sir. An Enquiry Committee was set up by the Durgapur Steel Plant but it was unable to establish any definite cause of the fire.

(d) The Enquiry Committee has made the following recommendations to prevent recurrence of fire in future:—

(i) All stores materials should be handled and stacked with due regard to the combustion characteristics of the materials ensuring that the hazardous materials are segregated from each other as also from other non-hazardous storage, as per the Code of Practice for Fire Safety (IS: 3594 of 1976) and fire fighting arrangements provided accordingly for safe storage of the materials.

(ii) Stores Yard areas must be kept free from dry vegetation, empty wooden and packing materials.

(iii) A static tank with a minimum capacity of 150,000 litres of water should be constructed nearby for use in fire-fighting in time of emergency.

(iv) Present watch and ward should be strengthened and adequate number of watchmen shall be deployed to patrol the area fully and they shall be trained in the use of fire-extinguishers-

(vi) Elevated watch tower to be provided at vantage points to enable the watchmen to keep a watch on both inside and outside the stores for timely detection of fire theft etc.

These recommendations have been communicated to the contractors for implementation. For the time being one underground tank and a cooling pond both situated nearby, have been filled up for use in an emergency.

(e) and (f) Yes, Sir. The contractors have been held responsible by the Committee for the outbreak of the fire. The Committee has held that they have failed in not providing fire points in the store-yard and have failed to maintain the initial fire fighting equipment in working condition. Further, the firms had not stacked the materials according to their combustion characteristics. They have also failed in disposing of empty packing cases from the storage yard.