

[6 August, 2003]

RAJYA SABHA

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRI PRAHLAD SINGH PATEL): (a) to (c) It is estimated that persons residing in 65,300 houses located over critically endangered areas arising out of fire and subsidence in Jharia coalfield are to be shifted for their safety. These include some houses located in and around Jharia town.

A Master Plan has been prepared which envisages shifting of these affected families to new rehabilitation sites in non-coal bearing area.

A demonstration scheme involving shifting of 4600 houses located over critically endangered areas of Jharia coalfield has been approved by the Government and is under implementation.

Private sector participation in coal mining

1800. SHRI RAJU PARMAR: Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to enact legislation to allow private sector participation in coal mining; and

(b) if so, the details in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRI PRAHLAD SINGH PATEL): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The Coal Mines (Nationalisation) Amendment Bill, 2000, which was introduced in the Rajya Sabha on 24.4.2000, seeks to amend the Coal Mines (Nationalisation) Act, 1973, *inter alia*, for the following purposes:—

To allow the Indian companies to (i) mine coal and lignite without the existing restriction of captive consumption; (ii) engage in exploration of coal and lignite resources in the country.

Development work undertaken by WCL

1801. SHRI R.S. GAVAI: Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Western Coalfields Ltd. has undertaken any community development and labour welfare work in its coal producing areas;