

LOK SABHA DEBATE

LOK SABHA

Wednesday, March 11, 1992/ Phalgun
21, 1913 (Saka)

The Lok Sabha met at Eleven of the Clock

[MR. SPEAKER in the Chair]

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

[English]

Coking Coal

*205. SHRIMATI GIRIJA DEVI: Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) the quantity of coking coal imported

during the last three years, year-wise;

(b) the cost thereof, year-wise;

(c) whether sufficient reserves of coking coal are available in Bihar;

(d) whether these reserves are being fully exploited;

(e) if not, the reasons therefor;

(f) the steps being taken to end the scarcity of coking coal in the country; and

(g) if so, the time likely to be taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE
MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRI P. A.
SANGMA): (a) to (g). A statement is laid on
the Table of the House.

STATEMENT

(a) and (b). The information is given below :-

Year	Quantity of coking coal imported by steel plants	Approximate Value (on the basis of FOB Price)
1988-89	4.49 million tonnes	US \$ 227 million
1989-90	4.66 million tonnes	US \$ 243 million
1990-91	5.72 million tonnes	US \$ 310 million

(c) to (g). The Geological Survey of India has estimated (as on 1.1.92) the reserves of coking coal of different varieties in Bihar as 29,289 million tonnes and Jharia coalfield in Bihar is the only source of prime coking coal. While the geological reserves of coking coal are quite substantial, there are serious geo-mining, technological and infra-

structure problems like old partially worked underground mines, presence of fire and water-logged workings in adjoining areas, villages, townships and other built-up structures and railways and rivulets requiring shifting or protection that are coming in the way of speedy development of coking coal mines in Jharia coalfield. These problems have

resulted in sub-optimal exploitation of coking coal reserves.

Some of the important steps being taken to augment indigenous availability of coking coal, inter alia, include :-

- (i) increase in raw coking coal availability by reorganising existing mines and development of new mines ;
- (ii) restoration of coking coal sources which were delinked in 1984-85 from washeries on account of quality consideration;
- (iii) commissioning of two new washeries, one each at Madhuband & Kedia for increasing the existing washing capacity;
- (iv) modification of the existing coking coal washeries by implementation of recommendations of the Altekar Committee to improve the capacity utilisation as well as the quality of washed coking coal;
- (v) coking coal mines in Meghalaya & Assam are being identified to make available increased quantities of low ash coking coal.

With implementation of these steps, the import of coking coal by steel plants is likely to come down progressively.

[*Translation*]

SHRIMATI GIRIJA DEVI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, in part (C) of the question I had asked whether sufficient reserves of coking coal were available in Bihar and whether these reserves were being fully exploited. In the reply, the hon. Minister did agree that reserves were there and also told that about 26,289 million tonnes of coal was available in Jharia coal mines and Jharia coal field was the only source of prime coking coal. Some coal, of course, is extracted in West Bengal also, but I feel that the Government have been adopting laxity in exploiting the mines

there. Altekar Committee had recommended that keeping in view the importance of coking coal, it should be extracted wherever it is possible and its quality be improved through washeries and it should be utilised to the maximum extent.

MR. SPEAKER: Look, you have to ask your question, it won't do in this manner. Restrict yourself only to question.

SHRIMATI GIRIJA DEVI: I am coming to the question itself. As per the recommendations of the Altekar Committee, several washeries had to be installed in Bihar. How many of these have already been set up and how many are still to be set up. If they have not been set up so far, then how long it will take to do the same. Besides, I would also like to know as to what action has been taken to increase the capacity of the existing washeries.

[*English*]

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRIP. A. SANGMA): Sir, it is not a fact that we are not taking adequate interest in production of coking coal. As of now, we have got 41 coking coal projects in the country with an estimated investment of almost Rs. 900 crores. But it is true that we have not been able to exploit the amount of coking coal reserves that we have in our country to the fullest extent because of the problems that we have been facing. One of the main problems has been the underground fire in Jharia which we are trying to tackle. Our team had gone to the United States to study this and to find out the technology. They have come back and we have also set up a separate organisation to find out the cause of the Jharia underground fire. American experts and also the World Bank team have visited the site. So, we are working on that.

As far as washeries are concerned, we have got, at the moment, 15 washeries with a capacity of about 30 million tonnes. But that is not enough because the capacity is not fully utilised. We are also trying to set up

more washeries. But in the immediate future, we will be setting up only two more washeries.

[*Translation*]

SHRIMATI GIRIJA DEVI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I had asked as to how long it would take to set up new washeries, because Atekar Committee had made its recommendations long back. Washeries with a capacity of 30 million tonnes have been set up, but undue delay is being made to set up more washeries. For quite a long time, foreign exchange is being wasted in spite of the fact that we do have the equipments in Bihar itself. But no attention is being paid. I would like to know by when the Government would accomplish this task.

[*English*]

MR. SPEAKER: Can you give the time? By what time, will you do it?

SHRI P.A. SANGMA: the Atekar Committee has given three types of recommendations. One is about the immediate steps that are to be taken, namely short-term measures. The second relates to medium term measures and the third is the long-term measures. As far as the short-term and medium term measures that are recommended by the Atekar Committee are concerned, we have taken action. But the third part of the recommendations includes the setting up of washeries and it will be very difficult for me to say by what time these washeries will be set up.

SHRI GANGADHARA SANIPALLI: I want to know from the hon. Minister the names of countries from where coking coal is imported. Have any Central Asian Republics been approached other than our traditional suppliers, viz. the Australians?

[*Translation*]

SHRIMATI GIRIJA DEVI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, you are not allowing me even to raise the second supplementary question. It concerns

a significant matter related to Bihar. Therefore, I may kindly be allowed to ask the question.

[*English*]

MR. SPEAKER: Please let us understand that there are 542 Members in the House. Just one hour is available and there are only 60 minutes in one hour. Even if I give one minute to one Member, only 60 Members can ask the questions. You shall have to be very selective. All of you cannot force your questions on the House in 60 minutes time.

SHRI P.A. SANGMA: Sir, we import coal from Germany, Norway, UK, Japan, Australia, Indonesia, Poland, China and the USSR. But the major quantity of coking coal is imported from Australia.

[*Translation*]

SHRI BRISHIN PATEL: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether it is a fact that new coking coal reserves have been identified in Bihar, if so, the location there of and when the Government will start work on them?

SHRI SURAJ MANDAL: Let me tell you.

[*English*]

MR. SPEAKER. Shri Suraj Mandal wants to give some specific information in a question form!

SHRI P.A. SANGMA: I have already stated that out of 29 billion tonnes of coking coal reserves in our country, 26 billion tonnes are in Bihar. This is mainly confined to Jharia area which extends over 17 Kms.

[*Translation*]

MR. SPEAKER. Mandai ji wants to give some specific information to you.

SHRI SURAJ MANDAL: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to submit to the hon. Minister

that the cost of the coking coal being imported from Australia and China comes to about Rs. Two thousand to Rs. Three thousand per tonne. And as per the survey conducted by BCCL, if coal is extracted from Jharia and Jaridih block, it will cost not more than Rs. one thousand per metric tonne. Hence if coal is extracted from there, we can manage to save the foreign exchange. He, at present, is referring to 1988-89.

MR. SPEAKER: Mandal ji, I have given you permission to ask question. You are taking time of others, therefore, please ask your question.

SHRI SURAJ MANDAL: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am asking the question only. My submission is that we have been importing coal since 1985; while we can extract indigenous coal at the rate of Rs. 1000/- per tonne. Coking Coal is available in the second layer and it costs merely Rs. 1000/- per tonne. My question is what are the reasons for importing the coking coal at the rate of Rs. 3000/- per tonne when we can produce it on cheaper rates. My other submission is that BCCL and CCL have set the target of 18,000 and 9000 tonnes of coal per day respectively.

But this target is not being achieved and the money is being wasted on the officers. In the circumstances, I would like to ask from the hon. Minister whether the Government propose to start production of Coking Coal in Jharia and Jaridih to save the foreign exchange.

[*English*]

SHRI P.A. SANGMA: Sir, the reason for our resorting to import is very simple and that is because we cannot produce as per our requirement so we have to import it from other countries. I do agree with the hon. Member that every effort should be made to make our country self sufficient in the production of coking coal and that is our aim.

As I have already stated, we have about 41 on going projects costing about Rs. 900 crores. We hope that the production of cok-

ing coal will improve substantially during the 8th Five Year Plan. We are going to make special efforts to increase the production of coking coal in the North-eastern States. Though we have huge resources of coking coal in Meghalya, Assam and Arunachal Pradesh, so far we did not have a thrust in the North-eastern regions. Now, we are taking up three projects in the north-eastern regions. One is in Assam which is Borgolai and another one is Nanchik in Arunachal Pradesh.

During the 8th Five Year Plan we will make every effort to see that our production of coking coal is stepped up substantially as a result of which our import will come down to a great extent.

[*Translation*]

Industrial Pollutants

*206. SHRIMATI SHEELA
GAUTM:
SHRI RAJESH KUMAR:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether any survey has been conducted about the mill workers who suffer due to the ill-effects of cotton dust, smoke and acids emitted by industries in big cities;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the remedial steps taken by the Government in this regard?

[*English*]

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE
MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRI P.A. SANGMA):
(a) to (c). A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT

Cotton dust, mists and fumes of acids and certain constituents of smoke such as Carbon Monoxide, Nitrogen-Dioxide, Nitric