

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
COAL
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:4263

ANSWERED ON:18.12.2014

FIRES IN CIL

Reddy Shri Midhun;Senthilnathan Shri PR.

Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government has any details of the coal lost due to fire at pitheads as well as in underground fires in Coal India Limited and its subsidiaries during the last three year;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor;
- (c) whether the Government has taken steps to contain such losses;
- (d) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor;
- (e) the losses approximately expected to be incurred this year due to such fires; and
- (f) the steps being taken/proposed to be taken to save the coal reserves from such fires?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) IN THE MINISTRY OF COAL, POWER AND NEW AND RENEWABLE ENERGY
(SHRI PIYUSH GOYAL)

(a) & (b): Subsidiary-company wise details of the coal lost due to fire at pitheads as well as in underground fires in CIL are as under:

ECL / CCL / NCL / SECL / MCL / NEC: No loss of coal due to fires in last three years.

BCCL: There is no coal lost due to fire at pitheads as well as underground fires in BCCL during last three financial years. However, Jharia coalfield (JCF) within the leasehold of Bharat Coking Coal Limited (BCCL) has been affected by fire and subsidence because of the unscientific mining carried out by the erstwhile private mine owners over more than 200 years of coal mining operations prior to nationalization of coal mines. The Government of India has approved Master Plans for dealing with fire, subsidence, rehabilitation of persons living in unsafe areas and diversion of surface infrastructure of the Jharia coalfield (JCF) within the leasehold of Bharat Coking Coal Limited (BCCL). As per the approved Master plan, approximately 37.00 MT of coal had been blocked due to fire in the past.

WCL: The year-wise list of such incidences of spontaneous heating / mine fire that occurred in the mines of WCL during the last three years and current year along with the reason of occurrence is enclosed in Annexure "A".

As spontaneous heating / underground mine fires in the mines of WCL are localized in nature, even if the part of the mine is temporarily sealed-off for some period for safety reasons, such sealed-off panels are reopened after heating / fire is controlled. Thereafter coal is extracted from these panels.

(c) & (d): Details regarding BCCL and WCL are as under:

BCCL: Master plan was prepared by CMPDIL in 2009 for dealing with fire, subsidence and rehabilitation has been approved by the Govt. of India. In this plan comprehensive Action for dealing with fire has been planned. BCCL, as per the Master plan, had made efforts for controlling the fires by various methods like (1) Excavation the fiery coal seam. (2) At other places sand flushing, blanketing, trench cutting, liquid nitrogen flushing etc. has also been used.

WCL: On detection of mine fire / spontaneous heating, the affected part of the mine is isolated / sealed-off. As spontaneous heating / underground mine fires in the mines of WCL are localized in nature, even if the entire mine is temporarily sealed-off for some period of time for safety reasons, such sealed-off panels are reopened after heating/ fire is controlled. Thereafter coal is extracted from these panels.

(e): Details regarding BCCL and WCL are as under:

BCCL: Since, the existing fires in Jharia Coalfield of BCCL are being dealt systematically in scientific manner in form of different fire projects formulated under the approved Master Plan, there is no loss expected during current financial year.

WCL: As spontaneous heating / underground mine fires in the mines of WCL are localized in nature, even if the entire mine is temporarily sealed-off for some period of time for safety reasons, such sealed-off panels are reopened after heating / fire is controlled. There after temporarily locked coal due to such fires / spontaneous heating is extracted from these panels. Though these could be delays in the project, no loss is expected during the current financial year.

(f): The following steps being taken / proposed to be taken to save the coal reserves from such fires in BCCL and WCL.

BCCL: As per the Master Plan, BCCL adopted a Strategic Plan in 2008 in which it was decided to excavate out fire affected areas by Open Cast Mining. This strategy of digging out fiery coal was implemented with remarkable success. As per latest report of NRSC, ISRO, Deptt. of Space, Hyderabad., the fire area has reduced to 2.18 sq.km. from 9.00 sq.km.

WCL: The following important measures are taken in the mines of WCL to prevent incidents of underground spontaneous heating / mine fire:

(i) Spot sampling of air and analysis of the same is being done in all the underground mines as per statute.

Tele-monitoring System is installed in six underground mines of Western Coalfields Limited (viz. BC 3&4, DRC, NMC-III, Mahakali UG, HLC-1 and Sasti UG) for continuous monitoring of mine environment.

(ii) Mines are operated strictly as per approved Mining Plan prepared with scientific methods of mining and technologies.

(iii) Risk assessment based Safety Management Plans have been prepared for all mines of CIL where all hazards including that of mine fire are being identified scientifically and appropriate control measures are recommended and implemented.

(iv) Proper stacking of coal in coal dump to prevent heating.