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Title : Regarding rise in prices of coal due to 'E' auction and its adverse impact on small and cottage industries.

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA (BANKURA): Sir, the Ministry of Coal has introduced E-auction in all subsidiaries of Coal India and because of E-auction, the price of coal has been increased by 150 per cent. Due to this, the small-scale industries, small-scale units, cottage industries, big manufacturers are facing a lot of difficulties.

Previously, there was a system of linkages and thousands and thousands of small units, which are there in our country, used to get coal from a particular coal mine. After the introduction of E-auction, this coal linkage of the small units, tiny units, cottage industries has been snapped. Thousands and thousands of small, tiny and cottage units are today on the verge of closer.

In my constituency, there is a large number of brass and bell metal units. They are dependent on the coal for the production of brass and bell metal materials. Due to abnormal increase in the price of coal by 150 per cent, thousands of units will be ultimately closed down. Thus, there will be unemployment. Thousands of people who are engaged in these units will be rendered unemployed, and will be rendered jobless.

Sir, the reason given by the Ministry was that Mafia used to control the price of coal because there was open cell system as well as linkage system. But with the introduction of E-auction, a few Mafia are now controlling it sitting at one place<sup>[R4]</sup>.

In the rural areas, people depend on coal even for cooking food. They cannot now use firewood and they are also facing a crisis today. The tribal people, poor people living in the rural areas, in addition to small and cottage industries are facing a crisis today.

Sir, I urge upon the Government that the system which was there before the introduction of E-auction in non-coal sector should be restored. Linkages with the small units which were there earlier should be restored. Twenty-five million tonnes of coal should be earmarked for the domestic use and for use by the small-scale units, cottage industries so that thousands of small-scale, cottage and tiny units do not face any crisis and they are not closed down. I would urge upon the Government to restore the earlier system and save thousands and thousands of small units of our country.

SHRI PRASANNA ACHARYA (SAMBALPUR): Sir, I would like to associate myself with his statement.

DR. PRASANNA KUMAR PATASANI (BHUBANESWAR): Sir, I also associate myself with his statement.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you very much. We need this cooperation. Prof. Malhotra, I have been informed by the hon. Home Minister that the report would be filed on Monday.