

19.53 hrs

BUSINESS ADVISORY COMMITTEE**Twenty- first Report***[English]*

MR. CHAIRMAN: Before we come back to the subject, Shri Saifuddin Choudhury will present the Report of the Business Advisory Committee.

SHRI SAIFUDDIN CHOUDHURY (Katwa): Sir, I beg to present the Twenty-first Report of the Business Advisory Committee.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Now we come back to the subject. Shri Haradhan Roy.

19.54 hrs

HALF-AN-HOUR DISCUSSION**Fires In Coalfields***[Translation]*

*SHRI HARADHAN ROY (Asansol): Mr. Chairman, Sir, fires in the coal mines of Raniganj, Jharia, East West Bokharo (18289 hectare land) are continuing 43 monzas and 4 towns in Raniganji have been declared unsafe and more than 10 to 12 lakhs people live in that area. There is a proposal from West Bengal Government for the formation of a Statutory Body and introduction of a Bill in Parliament. This Bill should seek to form the proposed Statutory Authority. It should be the obligation of Department of Coal to provide necessary finance and the said Statutory Body shall have the sole responsibility to Plan and Design all aspects of the project and for restoration of environment

and ecological balance to pre-mining days. The Statute shall also provide for rehabilitation of all affected or displaced persons as per the provisions Rehabilitation package accepted for Sonepur Bazar Package. Since the Government has not come out with any plan of action, the task of their rehabilitation is to be included into the provision of the Bill.

The scheme of rehabilitation is there in Sonepur Bazar Package. This should be passed as an Act so that the displaced people are rehabilitated. Further provision for environmental measures and subsidence control should be included in the VIIIth Five Year Plan. CMPDI a unit of the Apex Body of West Bengal has submitted a report that Rs. 806 crores are needed for Raniganj Coal Field only for stabilization and rehabilitation.

Out of 850 hectare land in Raniganj town 90 hectares are affected by fire and subsidence. Rs. 806 crores were to be sanctioned. But only 54 lakhs have been spent so far since 1990. If this is the pace of progress then the fires in the vast area cannot be extinguished even in 100 years resulting in the destruction of huge reserves of coal. I can provide the estimate of loss of coal in Bihar itself. After the controlling of fire huge reserves of coal were saved.

Now I would like to know explicitly from the Hon'ble Minister what measures the Government are going to take for the subsidence controlling of fire and atmospheric pollution, whether the Government intends to introduce a Bill and pass an Act for this purpose. My suggestion is that there should be an authority for planning, implementing and overseeing environmental and subsidence control measures.

Financial input may be collected through a cess or provided by the Central Government through its agencies like CIL, ECL etc. There is no reason why the constitution of the

* Translation of the speech originally delivered in Bengali