

a fact that a large number of skilled workers and technicians from Kerala are working in Gulf countries. The NRIs from Kerala are basically skilled workers, like technicians, carpenters, nurses, etc. They would rather look for places where they can deposit their money safely, rather than venture into setting up of industries and taking risk. As far as the Government of India is concerned, we have generally laid down policy guidelines and provided necessary support system to facilitate NRI investment, particularly in industry and in banks, etc. The State Government should take up a special programme for the rehabilitation of NRIs. At the State level, the State Government has designated as a nodal agency to provide all types of assistance required by the NRIs.

PROF. P.J. KURIEN : Sir, the hon. Minister has said that a large number of skilled workers are working in Gulf countries. Not only skilled workers, there are a number of others who can invest money in industries. But the fact is that even though a large number of such people are working outside India, they are not coming forward to invest in Kerala, even though Kerala is the most backward industry-wise. I think there is a preference in investing in other areas. I would like to know what is the reason that even Keralites do not prefer to invest in Kerala.

SHRI M. ARUNACHALAM : Sir, our friend has to work for creating a good industrial climate in the State. As I said a little earlier, the State Government should take up a special programme for NRIs to invest their money in that State.

Technical Workshop on Open Cast Mining

817. **SHRIMATI MADHUREE SINGH† :**
DR. G.S. RAJHANS :

Will the Minister of ENERGY be pleased to state :

(a) whether a national level technical workshop on open cast mining at the Central Mine Planning and Design Institute was held recently at Ranchi;

(b) if so, the details of the discussions held during the workshop and the outcome thereof; and

(c) the extent to which the open cast

mining method is considered better than other methods in the field of coal.

THE MINISTER OF ENERGY AND MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI VASANT SATHE) : (a) to (c). A statement is given below.

Statement

(a) and (b). A technical workshop on 'Optimal fragmentation in opencast mines—parameters of drilling and blasting' was held on 3.4.1988 at the Central Mine Planning and Design Institute Ltd., Ranchi.

The discussions and the recommendations made covered optimising sizing, improvement of the performance of drilling and blasting crews, formation of a separate cell for drilling and blasting in each project, corporate level monitoring, improving the quality of drills, measures for cost control and research and development.

(c) The method of mining to be adopted, whether opencast or underground, is guided by factors like disposition of the coal seams, their thickness and the depth at which they occur. Broadly speaking, opencast mining has the advantages of higher volumes of production, better coal recovery, higher productivity through mechanisation, lower production costs and greater workers' safety and health.

[*Translation*]

SHRIMATI MADHUREE SINGH : I want to know from the hon. Minister whether the experts also think that open-cast mining has adverse effects on environment? If it is true, then what steps is the Government taking to solve the environmental problems arising out of it?

SHRI VASANT SATHE : In fact, the open cast mining system has positive effects on environment instead of having negative effects.

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA : How?

SHRI VASANT SATHE : I am coming to that. If coal is a shallow seam, the open cast system can enable us to recover maximum quantity of coal and particularly in States like Bihar where fire broke out in the mines. The adoption of the open-cast system can ensure safety from such hazards.

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA : But fire is still raging.

SHRI VASANT SATHE : It can be prevented by adopting the open cast mining Technology.

[English]

AN HON. MEMBER : Sir, why does Minister not say in both the languages ?

SHRI VASANT SATHE : I will say in both the languages. Sir it is also true that by adopting open cast system all the advantages, *viz.* higher volume of production, better coal recovery, higher productivity through mechanisation, lower production cost, and greater workers' safety and health are there. What is the whole purpose of coal mining ? The purpose is to get the best coal at the minimum cost in the best way, in the safest way. If it is a shallow seam, the better technology now is open cast, but when it is deeper, you cannot go by opencast because what is done by open cast is you virtually creat a through, you create a valley sort of a thing by excavating first the over-burden and then the coal. So, you get the entire coal. In the underground mining, you go by boring into the whole ground and try to go to the seam and get the coal.

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA : What about pollution in this regard ?

SHRI VASANT SATHE : I am telling you that there is no pollution. But on the contrary pollution is minimised in open-cast mining.

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA : How ?

SHRI VASANT SATHE : I told you just now how to save the fire and other things.

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA : You tell us how the production is increased.

SHRI VASANT SHATHE : Sir, pollution is caused by coal fuels of other items or something going into there. That is how it is happening. But open cast system is not going to cause pollution at all.

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA : Because it is open.

SHRI VASANT SATHE : That is why no pollution.

[Translation]

SHRIMATI MADHUREE SINGH : Is open-cast mining technology being adopted under the Indo-Soviet agreement in the Murkunda Coal project ? Is it true that adoption of this technology results in low returns ? If so, what is the Government doing to make this project more economically viable ?

SHRI VASANT SATHE : We shall take whatever steps are required for making this project viable.

[English]

DR. G.S. RAJHANS : Sir, is it a fact that mafia operation becomes easier in open cast mine because the gangsters quietly come and load their trucks and leave the scene and there is nobody to check them ? Is it a fact ?

SHRI VASANT SATHE : As far as mafia and gangsters are concerned, whether it is underground or open cast, actually my feeling is that they are the under-world people. So, it is easier for them to operate when it is under cover. When it is open, it will be difficult for any such undesirable element to operate. But because it is a question of coal removal, we are now taking measures to ensure that these undesirable elements are controlled I can tell this House through you, sir, that we are succeeding in that effort.

MR. SPEAKER : And do you think that they are more dangerous when they are under-ground ?

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE : If it is open, the Government can do the job

SHRI DINESH GOSWAMI : Sir, the hon. Minister has stated that it has not affected the topography and environment. But is he aware that in the Patkai range in Assam, the open cast mining has affected the topography and the environment and the environmentalists and the scientists have strongly protested. In fact, I had occasion to send the notes both to the Energy Minister and to the Prime Minister from the students of Science, that this has very seriously affected the entire Patkai range. Therefore, has he examined that particular aspect of Patkai range or not ? If not, has he examined those notes and the reports

given by the scientists and the environmentalists, and if not, will he assure me now that the documents that are with him, he will examine through an independent enquiry and give his own findings ?

SHRI VASANT SATHE : As far as Assam is concerned, if it is a case of experts who have opined that because of the removal of the super-structure surface its fertility or in any way ecological imbalance takes place by open cast mining, we will definitely look into it because we do not want in any way the environment to be adversely affected by any system of mining.

[Translation]

SHRI RAMSWAROOP RAM : Mr. Speaker Sir, the hon. Minister has stated that the open cast mining system increases the volume of production and minimises pollution. Fire has also broken out in the open cast mines of Khelasi-IIai North Karampura area of the district of Ranchi. The Jharia coalfields under B.C.C. is a thickly populated area and fire has broken out in mines under ground. Will the hon. Minister kindly enlighten us as to whether a scheme has been formulated to put off this fire so that this area which is densely populated can be saved. An explosion can occur at any time here causing immense damage to life and property. What steps is the hon. Minister going to take in this regard ?

SHRI VASANT SATHE : Mr. Speaker, Sir, fire breaks out in two ways. One is because of internal combustion *i.e.* when coal is heaped at one place after mining, it catches fire. Second is in areas where coal is deposited in the shallow seams like in Jharia—which has been just mentioned—where fire has been raging for quite a number of years. Here the coal deposits are in the shallow seams and have not been exploited so far. It catches fires when it comes in contact with oxygen from the air above. In order to extinguish the fire, the scientists have suggested that the entire deposit of coal should be recovered by opening the mine. Areas like Jharia can be saved only by open cast system. We are making such efforts but for doing so the whole population has to be evacuated from there. Their lives are in danger and this technology is being considered for saving their lives. I would like to get everyone's cooperation

in this regard and we are also making all out efforts.

SHRI NARAYAN CHOUBEY : Will you make efforts after the entire area is destroyed by fire.

SHRI VASANT SATHE : We will do before that happens. You create trouble at both ends. We have some friends like Shri Narayan Choubey who would agitate, if we evacuate the people of that area and if we do not evacuate them then they would agitate. Our endeavour would be to ensure that fire does not spread.

MR. SPEAKER : The person who are too clever would incite the thieves to steal and tell the owners to keep vigilant.

SHRI VASANT SATHE : We expect to extinguish this fire and recover larger quantities of coal.

SHRI G. BHOOPATHY : Mr. Speaker, Sir, a new machine called the 'Dredge line' is being used in the open cast system. Its cost is about Rs. 20 to 30 crores, and Commission has also been paid in its purchase. Such Commissions are between 10 to 25 per cent. This machine can do the work of 1000 labourers and consequently, they are being rendered jobless. They are not able to get any work. In this connection, what steps are being taken for the welfare of those labourers ?

SHRI VASANT SATHE : Mr. Speaker, Sir, modern technology has to be used for ensuring higher volumes of production at lower costs. Machines like shovels, dumper, dredge lines etc. have to be utilised for this purpose. To urge that this industry should be labour intensive, would result in loss of production. Consequently, neither the cost of coal will be low nor will it be of a good quality and, therefore, we will have to give a thought to it.

[English]

Setting up of High Power TV Relay Centres

*818. **SHRI K. RAMCHANDRA REDDY :** Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government have decided