

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
COAL  
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3557  
ANSWERED ON:19.08.2003  
ALLOTMENT OF FOREST LAND TO WCL  
NARESH KUMAR PUGLIA

**Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:**

- (a) whether Western Coalfields Limited (WCL) had been allotted 338.85 hectares of forest land, for Durgapur open cast mines with the directives that 125.5 hectares of the allotted land should be spared as safety zone;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether the WCL has restarted to mining activities on this banned area also and spared only 7.5 hectares of land;
- (d) if so, whether a survey earlier made for assessing the coal deposits in the area showed that the ratio of overburden coal seam was very high and that the excavation of coal is not at all economical;
- (e) if so, the details thereof;
- (f) whether the mining work in the banned area was continued and a loss of crores of rupees was suffered;
- (g) if so, the details thereof;
- (h) whether an enquiry has been conducted in the matter;
- (i) if so, details thereof; and
- (j) the action has so far been taken/proposed to be taken against the erring officials of the WCL?

**Answer**

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRI PRAHLAD SINGH PATEL) :

- (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. 338.85 ha. of forest land was acquired by the Government of India under Coal Bearing Area (CBA) Act in the year 1979, out of which 40.47 ha. of forest land was handed over to WCL by government of Maharashtra in the year 1980 before the Forest Conservation Act came into force. Out of the balance forest land, proposal for diversion of 172.54 ha. of forest land was approved by the Government of India in June, 2002 and remaining 125.85 ha. of forest land was left as safety zone area.
- (c) No, Sir. 7.5 ha. of forest land spared is a part of 172,54 ha of forest land approved by the Government for diversion.
- (d) and (e) No such survey had been made. However, the Project Report of Durgapur Opencast Project indicates that with the available ratio of overburden and coal seam, the excavation of coal is economical.
- (f) and (g) No, Sir. The project is running in profit since beginning.
- (h) and (i) Yes, Sir. An enquiry done by the Forest Department, Government of Maharashtra established that no encroachment was done in the banned area.
- (j) Question does not arise.