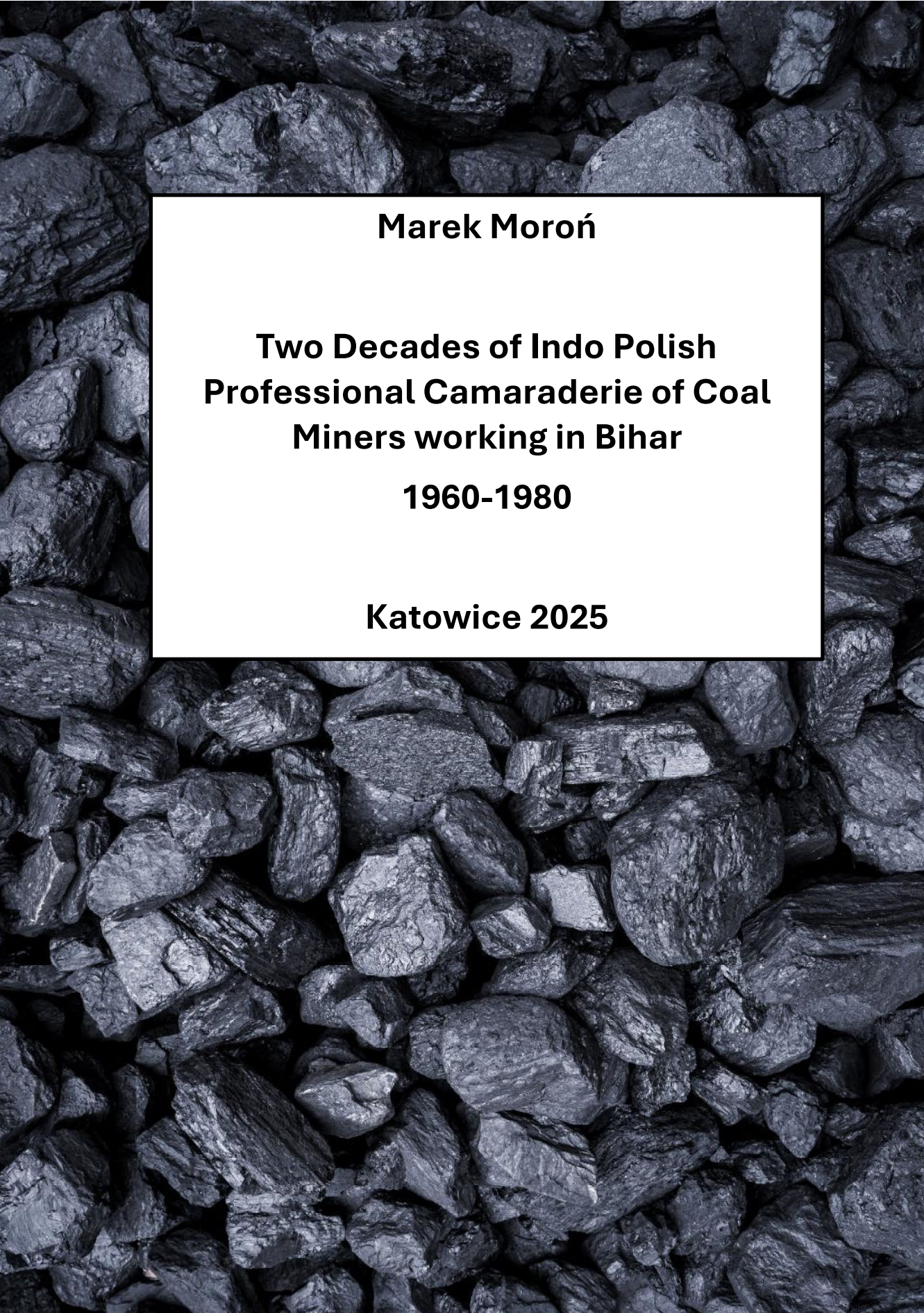

Marek Moroń

Two Decades of Indo Polish Professional Camaraderie of Coal Miners working in Bihar

1960-1980

Katowice 2025

Index

Preface and letters

Dear Readers

I invite you to read this publication. It is for the first time that we make an attempt to bring forward memories of professional solidarity and friendly camaraderie of Indian and Polish mining experts who worked together on many coal mining projects in Bihar in the 60. and 70. of XX century.

It is interesting to note, how in the process of implementing formal long term business contacts for developing modern collieries in India, specific qualities of miners' work ethos, like solidarity, mutual loyalty in the face of natural hazards and awareness of permanent dangers in their job, have developed into a camaraderie and personal closeness of Indian and Polish mine experts.

This book presents not only texts but also many photographs from private collections never published earlier.

It also brings interviews with people who remember those times as well as interviews with family members of these experts.

The idea of this book is not to let the memories of that special time fade away.

We want the Indo Polish relations to have good future. So, we must remember those times when not only our states were close partners but people to people relations were characterized by emotions of camaraderie.

And the mining experts of Poland and India working in Bihar in the 60. and 70. of XX century are the best example of this phenomenon.

I hope you will like this publication.

Marek Moroń

2025

Shantanu Chakrabarti
Professor, Dept of History
University of Calcutta,
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Kolkata- 700027
11th July 2025

To Whom It May Concern

It is my great pleasure to introduce the volume titled 'Two decades of Indo-Polish Professional Camaraderie of Coal Miners working in Bihar 1960-1980' edited by Prof Marek Moron and two other Polish scholars. While Poland's connectivity with India, in terms of economic partnerships and technology transfer, particularly in the field of coal mining and energy extraction process, is known, there exist several socio-cultural gaps concerning the life story and experiences of Polish scientists and engineers coming to India and their settled life. Fulfilling this would add an important missing page in the evolving social and industrial history of post independent India. The concerned volume planned by Marek Moron and his team, in this connection, would make an important contribution in this regard. I congratulate Prof Moron, a good old friend of mine, and his team members in advance and eagerly look forward to the publication of this volume.

Shantanu Chakrabarti
(Shantanu Chakrabarti)

I am glad to have the opportunity to be a part of efforts for preparing this valuable publication. There are two main reasons why I feel emotionally close to the subject of this book. The first one is that for many years I took active part in developing commercial relations between India and Poland in the field of coal mining.

Even though it was in the 80. and 90. of XX century, that means in a later period than the one described in this book, but I had many opportunities to listen in India to many good and interesting stories and memories of relations between Indian and Polish miners working in Bihar in the 60. and 70.

It was my honor and indeed luck to have many discussions with Mr. Ryszard Biesek, both during our visits to India in the 80. as well as in Poland. It was not only his vast knowledge about coal mining and India but there was something else also.

His years in India were not just duties performed as per contracts. His contribution towards creating professional emotions of friendship between Indian and Polish mining experts is as valuable as his professional knowledge which I think was so very helpful in constructing beginnings of modern coal mining facilities in India. The case of his serving in the saving actions of Sudamdih colliery may be one of the examples.

The title of this book is a very good reflection of relations and emotions of that Indo Polish miners' fraternity.

There is another reason why I am glad to contribute to this publication.

Relations between nations and states are built upon memories of how they evolved in history. If this will be forgotten then there will be nothing to build upon except short term profits.

This book brings recollections, texts, words of witnesses of those times and sometimes of children of witnesses who still remember. It

brings so many photographs from 60. and 70. of XX century, when for many years this process of camaraderie was a living phenomenon.

All these cannot be forgotten. In present days my industrial company works with Polish mines. It will be a good thing that the present generation working in the coal mining industry of India and Poland would have knowledge about our common past of warm professional relations.

Thank you for this opportunity of being part of this project.

Janusz Urbaniec

(proprietor of SUBOPOL industrial company -Poland)

Date 14/07/25 Janusz Urbaniec

Acknowledgements

The original concept of writing about the professional camaraderie of Indian and Polish coal miners working in Bihar mines in the 60 and 70 of XX century should be found in my discussions with Mr. Ryszard Biesek (1934 -2016) in 2013.

He was the executive director in charge of introducing and developing design mining projects within bilateral state agreements between India and Poland. That work was done within commercial contracts between respective companies of both countries.

What drew my attention in the stories of Mr. Biesek was that in time of working together of experts and miners of both countries a specific camaraderie developed between them. Something between friendship or mutual sympathy and professional solidarity in the face of hazards of nature.

During my service in the Consulate of Poland in Kolkata (1988-1992) I had many opportunities to see the traces of that special relationship which by that time was diminishing, as were the contracts in coal mining between India and Poland.

Whenever there is a talk about people-to-people relations between India and Poland, the subject of Polish refugees in the years 1942 – 1947(8) is mentioned. And quite correctly so. This is indeed a good example of friendship when Polish war refugees were accommodated and safely lived on Indian soil in the number of about 6000 in two settlements. This is true.

Still, one has to remember that the structure of that situation of Poles being relocated from Iran to India was established by external actor that is Great Britain. Naturally one has to emphasize great volume of good will and help from the princely States of Jamnagar and Kolhapur.

But in case of coal miners of India and Poland entering into social relations which took the shape of camaraderie and solidarity, the framework for that situation to develop was constructed jointly by authorities of India and Poland.

The professional camaraderie of our miners was in a way a byproduct of executing contracts aimed at modernization of Indian coal mining, since Poland at that time was a pioneer in that field.

The ethos of miners of India and Poland of working in the constant presence of natural deadly hazards, as well as mutual openness and curiosity to know each other as comrades in the same destiny, were the foundation of that camaraderie.

Mr. Ryszard Biesek prepared for me in 2013 and left at my disposal about 2 hours of recording of him narrating the history and character of relations between experts of two states.

I am greatly indebted and grateful to Ms. Ewa Biesek- Leśniewska (the daughter of Mr. Ryszard Biesek), who provided me with documentary photographs and arranged interviews with two of the living executive experts who worked in her father's team in India in the period of 60. and 70. of the XX century.

These interviews as well as the interview with Ms. Ewa Biesek-Leśniewska are part of this publication. Ms. Ewa Biesek- Lesniewska has been of great assistance also in setting the whole material into one unit. Her enthusiasm and professionalism must be strongly emphasized.

Let me express also word of thanks to Mr. Janusz Urbaniec who has supported enermously our publoication project with his good will.

My words of gratitude go also to Professor Shantanu Chakrabarti of The University of Calcutta who found the subject interesting and supported me in pursuing the objective of preparing this publication.

I would like to express my words of thanks to Mr. Artur Zięba who, with his IT knowledge, helped me greatly in preparing and shaping out the whole material.

I hope that this publication supported with many photographs from 60 and 70 of XX century will bring back memories of facts and phenomena of our Indo-Polish relations which should not be forgotten.

Marek Moroń

2025

Professional friendship and emotions that could have lasted longer.

I.

The purpose of this work is to present documentary evidence and inside view into the unique period of Indo- Polish relations of cooperation and joint work of teams of Indian and Polish coal miners, designers, machinery experts, managers, safety experts and administration officers.

I hope to focus on the developed camaraderie among them which grew with years of professional joint challenging of technical problems and indeed the forces of nature as is the case with coal mining.

It is not a sentimental story like the bright chapter of Polish refugees from Soviet Russia who found safe haven in India in the years 1942-1948. This naturally is a page of Indo Polish relations to be remembered forever.

The story of Indians and Poles working in newly developing modern Indian coal mines in the 60. and 70. of XX century, is about joint implementation of projects when teams from both countries worked with dedication and strong sense of common target of modernization of freshly nationalized coal mining in India by means of employing Polish technologies and machinery to the satisfaction of Indian colleagues.

I am not aiming at conclusions of emphasizing the role and value of efforts of Polish miners. This is for the Indian partners to evaluate.

I am however convinced that it is worth bringing out of oblivion the spirit of joint professional efforts in the atmosphere of camaraderie of Indian and Polish mining experts together.

It will be useful to support this statement with examples of projects sometimes with extremely difficult challenges like Sudamdih, Moonidih, Satgram and others.

The documents and publications which are part of this text constitute a valid element of bringing to life, memory of these people, Indians and Poles; how in extreme conditions of deep mining environment they have established relations far deeper than required by the letter of contracts which were the basis of their presence in India.

It is justified to pose a question why do we seek some special characteristics and emotional depth in the implementation of business service contracts of Polish mining companies in India?

There is a significant and unique characteristic about the case which is the subject of this text.

Mining and underground mining especially contains a strong element of permanent challenges and hazards of nature. Miners more than most if not all other professionals are exposed in their work to unpredictable activities of forces of environment. So, whether they are Indian or Polish, they know about it.

They know that in their work there is little space for individual spectacular actions. It is solidarity and camaraderie which is miners' way of countering and containing the hazards of their daily work.

When we will review situations in that Indo-Polish cooperation in underground coal mining, we will see that this camaraderie and spontaneous solidarity even though never spoken, nor much talked about, was the specific, unique feature which viewed from a time distance may be called miners friendship.

I think I am the right person to attempt a description of the subject in question. In the period of 1988 till 1992 I was working with the Consulate of Poland in Kolkata (3b Albert Road). My responsibilities included all aspects of commercial relations between Poland and India in the coal mining industry.

The timing of my service pertains to the last years of this Indo - Polish “romance” in coal mining.

Still, not only the memories of such projects like establishing the Design Office for coal mining (first in Dhanbad, later moved to Ranchi), Sudamdih colliery, Moonidih colliery, MAMC machinery etc. were very fresh but also it was the period of implementing such projects like

Satgram shafts, Pootkee-Balihari services, Madhuband-Phularithand master design, Moonidih project and various contracts with MAMC.

My duties required frequent visits to BCCL (Bharat Coking Coal Limited) in Dhanbad, Sanctoria (Eastern Coalfields Limited headquarters), Ranchi (CMPDIL) and the very mine sites of Pootkee-Balihari and Satgram. The period of my life in Kolkata did not come in the years of most intensive cooperation in coal mining. However, with efforts to preserve as much documents as possible and preparing materials very valuable to fulfill the task of this writing, such as recording of stories and narrations of the experts who were engaged in the Indo Polish work since the beginning of 60, of XX century, we may get the view of the tapestry of these relations.

If one tries to look for information in available sources about those years of cooperation between Indian and Polish miners on projects carried out in Bihar, one is likely to be much disappointed.

Some general statements about the cooperation in coal mining are always included in the rituals of enthusiastic rhetorics, that "possibilities (of Indo Polish cooperation) are tremendous". These words that sound nice but do not mean anything are accompanied always by recalling two decades of working together in coal mining. Polish institutions which were the contractual partners in the cooperation mostly do not exist and their history appears to be non-existent, as if they never did anything.

It is only on the website of CMPDI (https://www.cmpdi.co.in/en) where we can read that "In 1972 CMPDI was originally conceived and proposed by a joint study group with Polish experts(..)[1]

It is possible that in some archives of now non- existent institutions in Poland there are documents which somehow could be found. But knowledge which I will try to include in my text is not at all available and with the tempo of life would hardly be considered as useful.

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[1] https://www.cmpdi.co.in/en 13.10.2024

Yet, useful it is.

Thus, with documents, photographs, recorded narrations and my own experiences I am trying to relate the forgotten story of Indian and Polish coal miners, their camaraderie, joint physical struggle with hazards of nature, sharing dangers and successes in distant 60, 70, of XX century. All this forgotten now.

II.

Poland regained its independence in 1918 after 123 years of non-existence as a state, divided among its neighbors Russia, Prussia (Germany) and Austria.

During the interwar period as well as during the II WW itself Poland and its government (from 1939 till 1945 government in exile; first in Paris, then in London)[2] relations with India were considered as part of relations with Great Britain. I am dealing with this issue in my book "Visit of Subhas Chandra Bose to Poland in July 1933"[3]. Even in 1944 and 1945 the Polish Government in Exile (in London) did not consider even the scenario of India becoming an independent state in foreseeable future. That Anglocentric policy of the Government in Exile did not change even when Great Britain has openly abandoned all relations with this institution and opted completely for cooperation with the newly established Soviet sponsored Polish government.

The first years after the WWII were dedicated in Poland to domestic issues and attempts to raise from ruins its economy. In foreign policy however, whenever new ideologically friendly countries appeared, Poland (already a Soviet satellite state) was quick to recognize them

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[2] In many sources in Poland the time of existence of the Government in Exile is stated as 1939 till 1990. Without debating the subject it may be said that this Polish Government in Exile ceased to be recognized by other states in about mid. 1945.

[3] "Visit of Subhas Chandra Bose to Poland in July 1933" Marek Moroń IFPS Occasional Paper series No 5 University of Calcutta, Kalvana Shukla KV Publishers 2015 India

and established relations. This was the case of People's Republic of China founded in 1949 and almost immediately Ambassadors were exchanged.

As time passed it appeared that India and Poland both have good relations with Soviet Union (although India never was any kind of satellite state of Moscow). India was already at that time trying to pursue the politics of wise balance between the growing enmity of cold war adversaries.

Thus, India's good relations with Moscow made her a welcome partner for Soviet satellite states including Poland.

Poland was slowly coming out of the tragedies of WWII and with Stalin dead in March 1953 things began to change.

Poland after regaining her independence in 1918 and also after 1945 soon (in less than a decade) started making efforts to reach out and establish contacts (business especially) with Asian states. As said earlier India was considered by Poland between 1918 and 1944 as an entity with which any relations have to be consulted and agreed with London.

Soon after 1953 the process of preparing formal structures of relations between India and Poland began. In 1954 both countries exchanged Ambassadors. In June 1955 Jawaharlal Nehru the Prime Minister of India visited Poland (with his daughter Indira)[4].

Prime Minister J. Nehru was greeted at Warsaw airport by the top representatives of institutions of power in Poland. The first secretary of the PZPR (the Communist party), Prime Minister, Chairman of the Council of the State and even the Minister of Defense. One may say that the welcome was far beyond the demands of protocol. Poland

[4] Jakub Zajączkowski Unia Europejska w Polityce zagranicznej Indii na początku XXI w. – Studia Europejskie 2008 nr. 4 (48) Warszawa

was willing and longing to reach out to the world as much as it was possible within the Soviet grip. And India was a very promising choice.

In return the Polish Prime Minister Joseph Cyrankiewicz visited India in 1957.[5] These were not just courtesy visits. India had plans for nationalization of some of key heavy industry branches. One of them was coal mining. Poland already at the end of 50, of XX century was known for its advanced technologies and concepts of coal mine designing, shaft sinking and equipping the mines with efficient machinery.

The process of nationalization of coal mining industry was being prepared for some years from mid-60. XX century onwards to reach its culmination at the beginning of 70 of XX century (with Coal Mines Nationalization Act 1973 as concluding act). Majority of coal mining became nationalized.

While this text emphasizes the cooperation with Poland in the coal mining sector from the 60.XX century it was not the only country that India worked with in that field.

Maybe the relation between miners from other countries and Indian miners are also worth a separate paper. This paper is an attempt to be a tribute to Indo Polish miners' camaraderie in their joint dealing with hazards of natural environment. Another words, cooperation and professional friendship which was not stipulated in the articles of contracts but was the demand of circumstances and time.

There was a natural tradition of working with the British companies both in the Bihar-West Bengal region as well as in the Singareni coalfields of Andhra Pradesh (Talengana). Later other countries joined.

Emphasis on Poland is presented as it was for the first time ever that governments of both states have agreed to cooperate in the field of significant importance to Indian economy. The contracts covered professional services of designers, shaft sinking experts, safety

[5] Ibidem 18.10.2024

specialists and miners. This opened large scope for groups of Polish professional personnel to come to India and stay for longer period from few months to few years. Such interaction was again new to the Poles, as well to Indians who were to host experts from country which was hardly known in India.

Contracts were signed by respective Indian and Polish companies but the whole arrangement of bilateral trade was based on intergovernmental agreements.

These were:

1. Agreement between Government of India and Government of Poland on Economic

Cooperation Signed 07.05.1960

2. Agreement between Government of India and Government of Poland on Economic Cooperation Signed 16.11.1962
3. Agreement between Government of India and Government of Poland on Economic Cooperation Signed 25.01.1965

Later there were consecutive agreements but these were the first frames of establishing joint work also in coal mining.

From the mid 60. of XX century the leading role from the Polish end in the Indian coal mining engagements was assigned to GBSiPG (Chief Mining Study and Design Office) located in the town of Katowice in South Poland. This town was the center of Polish coal mining region – Upper Silesia. This institution, GBSiPG, does not exist anymore. It has its Wikipedia page only as a building being of interest to the real estate agencies [6]. That's all.

As if almost it did not exist. Same statement may apply to the Coal Preparation Design Office "Separator "whose experts were for about fifteen years part of Indo Polish cooperation in coal mining industry.

Thus, as written earlier this text is not presented to recall commercial or technical successes of Design Offices or mining companies from

[6] https://pl.wikipedia.org>wiki>Gmach_Biuro_Studiow 20.10.2024

Poland. Nor is it meant to elaborate on business and financial aspects of Indo Polish cooperation in coal mining.

The decisions of our Governments have created foundation upon which not only businesses were made but also fates of peoples' lives were shaped.

III.

There were dozens of Polish miners and professional mining experts who worked in India (In Bihar and West Bengal collieries) from the end of 60, till beginning 90. of XX century.

Performing contractual services is just a duty of the company which has signed the contract.

Yet, in case of mining especially underground mining, where man is confronting nature with its unpredictable hazards there are situations which put the cooperating partners to great tests of professional camaraderie and solidarity.

There were no contract clauses to apply and no set procedures to confront nature's hazards.

IV.

It is not possible to elaborate on all the cases of Indo Polish camaraderie of miners from Bihar and Upper Silesia. We have to concentrate on cases which were especially demanding and dangerous in their confrontation with the forces of nature.

Let us look into the example of Sudamdih colliery.

For information about it, it is possible to refer to the respective website of the mine.[7]

Coal mining activities at the Sudamdih site date back to first decades of XX. century. This mine always had a prime quality of coking coal but

[7] https://en.wikipedia/org/wiki/Sudamdih seen 20.12.2024

at the same time it is located in very difficult geological conditions thus making it a challenge for the miners to safely extract it.

The decision to develop the existing mining facilities into a modern mine as part of the Jharia Coal Basin was taken by the Indian authorities in 1962. It took some more time for Indian authorities to select the technical partner to carry on with the initiative.

Poland was selected as partner for this job. First team of Polish miners arrived in Bihar in 1965. Please recall that at that time as mentioned earlier the State of Bihar included also the territory of future state of Jharkhand.

It was the beginning of Indo-Polish economic and technical relations which soon became also a space of personal, people to people relations and which lasted for more than 20 years.

It was not a novelty for Indians to deal with Europeans but these were usually, almost always British experts and businessmen. Polish engineers and designers coming from Central Europe were as exotic for their Indian partners as India was for them. In the 60. of XX century Poland was still a politically closed state slowly coming out of the Stalinist night, which till 1956 virtually kept cut off all relations with noncommunist states.

We can understand that for those engineers and miners deputation to India was like going to visit another world. Poles did not have practically any world exposure. Bearing these in mind it is worth noting how the people-to-people relations developed.

It may be added that Poles did not have any kind of feeling of being any kind of “sahibs” or superior. Naturally differences of culture were to be mutually learned.

The targets set for the Sudamdih Colliery and Polish advisers were named as constructing two shafts and one incline. The works which were initially conducted under the trademark of Polish foreign trade company “Centrozap”, were taken over in 1970 by a newly established company “Kopex” whose main purpose was to operate in India.

Both above-mentioned foreign trade companies have ceased to exist some time ago. Polish experts have encountered not only very difficult

geological conditions of mining but also climatic conditions (monsoon) never occurring in Europe. Underground mining in the proximity of large river was not common in Poland. In the Sudamdih area there was Damodar River which during monsoon could reach 250m width. Initial decisions on how to jointly proceed with cooperation were taken in Ranchi in the NCDC offices (National Coal Development Corporation).

One of the first such decisions was to establish modern Design Office for new coal mining projects. Eventually this design office was placed in Dhanbad under the name: "Bharat Coking Coal Ltd.-Planning and Design Division – Mine Design Office-With Polish Collaboration." (Shanti Bhawan).

It has to be stated that India was familiar with coal mining since at least late decades of XIX century. There were institutions in place supporting mining industry but the whole sector did not present itself as latest technological branch of industry in the 60. or 70. of XX century. The reason for selecting Poland by India for cooperating in modernizing of its coal mining industry (soon to be nationalized in 1970-1972) was that Poland constructed new underground coking coal mines in the 60. and 70, of XX century and had a solid institutional and academic background supporting these initiatives. These institutions were also established in most cases in the 50.and 60 of XX century.

The institutions established with Polish cooperation in Dhanbad have grown into significant research and design centers and were later moved to Ranchi. Presently this institution is very well known worldwide as CMPDiL - Central Mine Planning and Design Institute Limited.[8]

The story of professional friendship of experts and miners of Bihar and Upper Silesia will emphasize the role of one person of the Polish

[8] https://www.cmpdi.co.in seen 22.12.2024

teams. He is Mr. Ryszard Biesek[9], mining engineer, chief designer and for many years leader of the Polish team of experts in India.

I had many discussions with Mr. Biesek both in Poland and in India where he also paid short visits at the end of the 80. of XX century, when I served in the Consulate of Poland in Kolkata. I also accompanied him in his perhaps last visit to Sudamdih colliery in 1990.

Even though it was almost two decades after the years of Mr. Biesek and his team worked with their Indian partners at Sudamdih it was interesting for me to find that some Polish mining terms were still in use by the colliery staff. Words like "komora" meaning chamber "Radzionkow system" or "Jankowice system" which is a very special method of coal extraction, were part of the miners vocabulary even at the beginning of 90. of XX century.

Working in coal mining and especially in underground coal mining is likely to present miners with challenges of natural environmental hazards, like perhaps no other branch of industry will do.

I would like to describe two particular situations which took place at the Sudamdih colliery in 1976 and in 1977. These cases present

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[9] Ryszard Biesek; Polish mining engineer, designer and director was born in 1934 and lived till 2016.He worked from 1955 till 1993 both as expert, chief designer and Deputy Director General of Chief Mining Study and Design Office as well as senior lecturer at the Silesian Polytechnics in Gliwice (in Upper Silesia ;coal mining region of Poland).He worked nine years in India developing with Indian partners modern technologies of mine excavations and establishing institutions of coal mine designing and planning.

He also worked in Egypt Argentina, China South Korea Venezuela and Russia. These jobs, though important as they were, lasted for a much shorter time and their scope cannot be compared to his works in India.

Naturally bulk of his achievements was in Poland; being i.a. the General Designer and Coordinator of "Anna", Katowice" "Jankowice", " Debiensko", "Swierklany" and "Suszec" coal mines constructions.

situations when Polish and Indian teams of experts had to decide if they are to follow the letter of bilateral contracts negotiated by both parties or they follow the spirit which is neither written in the clauses of documents nor presented as orders by Indian or Polish authorities.

Sudamdih coal field in the Jharia area had highest quality of coking coal deposits. Since India was on the threshold of building its own steel industry, such coal was of great importance for the technological processes of steel production.

The Sudamdih coal was rich but its deposits were located in very difficult geological conditions. Coal seams were thick (up to 24 m) but inclined up to 80 degrees. The proximity of Damodar River, which in monsoon time, could reach 250m width and almost 15 m depth, was also a difficulty. It was also for the first time that the Indian authorities gave consent to work out coal seams which ran under the railway tracks. The exploitation was developed employing the backfill system. The exploited volumes were filled by pumping from surface mixture of sand and water (backfill). Both water and sand were from Damodar River.

Following the advice of Polish experts the Sudamdih colliery was the first one to be constructed in the system of “mining stone skeleton” whereas all earlier mines were structured in the coal skeleton. Stone skeleton meant that no coal was lost in the supporting pillars and stone pillars and walls were not prone to catching fire.

On 4.10.1976 at 8.50am there was an explosion in Sudamdih mine. For three days earlier the mine was not working as it was the time of the Durga Puja festival. Of course the whole system of installations was adequately prepared for such interval and every day all the works were checked for presence of gas; especially the seam 15 which was very gassy seam, where potentially methane could concentrate. The explosion occurred. Without going into detailed technical description, it must be stated that there were two Indian authorities commissions investigating the case.

Polish engineers participated in the rescue activities to the extent possible.

At the level of mine management and Polish experts it was decided to fill the whole cavity of the explosion with sand leaving all the machines and tools at the pit site.

Later the Government of India Commission turned that decision over and ordered retrieving of all the machinery and tools left under the sand. The reason was to check every piece of tools and machines to see whether it had some failure, which could have caused the tragedy.

These were done jointly by Indians and Poles and the Commission after thorough check up and control, concluded that the accident was a case of force majeure, probably a falling rock causing a spark which ignited methane.

There were 53 miners killed immediately or as a result of this explosions.

But from that time on Sudamdih was under especially rigid safety procedure in all the aspects of activities, which was approved by all the parties working at the mine.

No wonder that when after 6 months from the date of methane explosion tragedy, on 13th of March 1977 at 7.00pm, dense black smoke appeared at the roofs of the mine building, both Indian and Polish miners were immediately alerted and first of all started to search for the source of this heavy black smoke.

The attitude of coal miners in any place, towards their mine is very emotional. It was, of course, a place of work where money was earned for sustaining life of miners' families but there was more to it.

Going down the shaft to their coal cutting face was a risk taken every day in a much bigger manner than was the case with other jobs. So the mine was a place of work and source of income, but at the same time it appeared to be a kind of unpredictable power to be respected like no other workshops or place of work.

The miners literally risked their life daily when going to their coal extraction workplace and the probability of accident or disaster was very real.

In that manner the mine was a place where all the miners were equal in the face of hazards but also considered it natural to rely upon their colleagues and care about that powerful mine which could give but also could take. It was on such a ground that the camaraderie grew in a natural way. This had nothing to do with being Indian or Polish. Neither was it related to any kind of declared friendship between states etc.

It was something that was there, but no one had any desire to talk about it.

Often these unspoken feelings or attitudes are essential.

They show themselves in daily work but get exposed in times of emergency.

And such emergency arose in Sudamdih colliery on13th of March 1977 which was Sunday.

Chief of Polish team (Mr.Ryszard Biesek) arrived at site immediately, as the smoke was visible from the bungalow colony where Poles lived. Within two hours the rescue teams were at site. The whole action was conducted by Indian rescue team with Polish engineers as advisers.

But where was the smoke coming out from?

Outflow continued for the whole 13th and 14th of March. In the meantime, it was found out that most probably the smoke is coming out from seam 300m. Also, all the equipment was switched off.

The delegation of directors of Coal India Limited arrived and stated that the best solution was to flood the whole mine.

One can understand such precaution bearing in mind that some six months earlier there was a gas explosion at Sudamdih killing 53 people. Nobody wanted to see the repetition of the tragedy.

But the Polish experts did not agree with that decision and prepared a technical proposal how to save the mine.

The line of argument was that the colliery has been constructed, as per Polish plan upon the rock skeleton (the underground supporting walls and roadways protection were all cut in rock ergo much stronger than

if they would have been in coal.) That was true but still the decision was to switch big pumps (4 of them) and start pumping water from Damodar to the shafts.

The Poles have agreed with their Indian colleagues to disable and immobilize other pumps.

Otherwise Sudamdih would have been flooded in a short time. There was a quickly organized Indo Polish lobbying group which was making efforts to gain time to convince everyone to keep the mine and not to destroy it by flooding.

The team of Mr. Biesek argued that the stone skeleton of colliery and knowledge that seams 500m and 400m are not affected by fire, allows for constructing dams which would extinguish the fire as there would be no room for fire expansion and no oxygen incoming.

Significant group of Indian directors, bearing in mind a tragedy that took place at this mine six months earlier, supported firmly flooding of the mine thus taking no chances that any further troubles may occur.

The Poles with their concept of building dams on level 400 and 500, cutting off air inflow to level 300 and closing the outflow of smokes at level 200 were supported by the miners' trade unions organization and what was perhaps of great importance-by the Secretary to the Ministry of Coal, Shree K.S.R. Chari.

There was a decisive discussion with crowds of miners waiting for the decision regarding their mine. The voting over the Polish plan brought a majority agreeing for Polish proposal.

For the first day all the works were done by the Polish experts only, as it was their idea. But after some hours Indian miners declared their participation and all the works were done jointly. These works aimed at saving Sudamdih, lasted for 4 days.

Not only miners but also managerial personnel like manager Shree S.K.Sen contributed great efforts.

After these four days the fire was over.

During the works the Indian managers idea of pressing nitrogen into pipelines to strengthen the extinguishing power, was also employed.

Finally, the commission of respective Indian authorities declared that this fire was a case of force majeure as no technical explanation could have been concluded.

After the whole action the director of Sudamdih (former Director in NCDC and in CMPDI) approached Mr. Biesek and said:

- Do you know how much you have been risking?

Mr. Biesek answered:

- The risk was there. Not because of doubting in the concept of saving the mine but because we had to act immediately with very limited specialized equipment and safety experts.

The success of saving Sudamdih colliery from drowning was a result of joint analyzing the situation and action by Polish and Indian experts and Indian authorities.

The stone skeleton of the mine, as designed by Polish experts was crucial in preventing the fire from expanding into other seams.

Another essential factor in the whole action was the same attitude, same care, presented by Indian experts and Polish advisers.

Part of the Indian side were the miners and their trade unions who faced the option of losing their jobs if the mine was to be flooded. The prime criterion for the authorities was the safety of people if the mine was to continue. The authorities remembered well the tragedies which took place in recent past in Sudamdih and Chasnala. Nobody wanted to see another one.

The Polish experts had to prove with their plan and proposals that it was possible to have both the operating mine without any compromise on safety of the people.

These professional camaraderie of Indian and Polish miners created also personal relations between experts of both countries and their families.

The photographs, interviews and texts both from Poland and India bear witness to this extraordinary phenomenon of contacts, relations if not friendship which lasted for decades.

Interviews

Interview with Ms. Ewa Biesek Leśniewska - daughter of Mr. Ryszard Biesek

Q.

Your Father Mr. Ryszard Biesek worked for many years in India as coal mining executive director. You have spent with him also many years on the subcontinent. What were your impressions as a very young person and how do you evaluate your childhood years in India, now?

A.

I have very fond memories from the period spent in India, not only from school. I attended the Mount Carmel School, Digwadih graduating with an ICSE (Indian Certificate of Secondary Education) examination certificate, but also from everyday life spent in the Coalfield among very friendly people. This was a unique opportunity. I felt there at home and till today I have warm feelings.

The thing that moved me deeply was at the time of publication of the results of ICSE exams 1977. On the very day when the results reached my school, there were very many friends, colleagues coming to my Father's office with congratulations, as my results ranked second at school. We realized that we had become true members of the society, like in a big family. It was very sweet.

Awards received at School

Q.

What are your memories about your Father's work?

A.

My Father was very much dedicated to his work, he had a vast knowledge and experience, and-as I heard often-an intuition.

His motto was: if you do something, do it well or not at all and- if you start something, bring it to an end. This was implemented by him in his work, and I think that is why he was greatly respected by his colleagues.

Sudamdih Project- both the underground mine as well as Incline had had a special place in his heart. Similarly, the Reconstruction of Jharia Coalfield prepared at Shanti Bhawan Mine Design Office, BCCL Dhanbad in 1977 was something he had been truly proud of.

What had been frequently underlined by my Father was, that though he and his team of Polish experts came to India to teach the Indian friends modern mining, this could have never become a success without their eagerness to learn, cooperation and hard work.

Q.

Did you and your Father had Indian friends? That is people who were working with your Father that you would visit each other as private meetings?

A.

Yes, of course! The friendly relationships lasted for many years long after our return to Poland. Our family had been invited over on numerous occasions by my Father's Indian colleagues. Not only on official occasions, but we had also attended many family parties and get-togethers, wedding functions and even celebrations on the occasion of baby-birth.

I remember many pleasant dinners at homes of the Indian friends-

R.G.Mahendru, S.K.Chowdhary, A.K.Gulati, S.K.Sen, S.P.Sinha, Mr.Banerjee, M.Bhattacharya, Mr.Solanki and many others. As a child, I was very fond of the Bengali sweet-rosogolla. One of the ladies, Mrs.

Solanki was famous for making the best rosogolla and I recall several dinners, which ended with serving rosogolla - with an extra big bowl of sweets just for me!

I used to call my Father's Indian friends-uncles, as it is customary in India. I have been in touch with Mr. S.K.Chowdhary (Coal India Chairman 1991-1994), one of my "Uncles" for many years. When he had attended the World Mining Congress in Poland in 2008, along with his wife-my "Auntie", we had a family get- together with my Parents, my husband and children.

At school, I got along well with my classmates, we had birthday parties together. Upon leaving India, my friends offered me a beautiful sari, which I treasure to this day.

Q.

This book is about camaraderie of Polish and Indian miners, that including executive officers. Do you remember events or situations which you would call examples of such professional friendly relations?

A.

The friendly private relationships could not have developed without professional friendly relations in the first place. I think that the outstanding examples of these were the tragic events that occurred at the Sudamdih mine in 1976 and 1977, i.e. explosion and fire. Both the teams, Polish and Indian worked together, irrespective of danger. When the tragic fire broke out and the mining authorities resolved to flood-and destroy the mine, the perseverance of Polish designers made the decision-makers change their mind and permit the implementation of a plan to save the mine, which turned out to be successful. This would not have happened without professional friendly relations and trust - on all the levels, from the Ministerial one down to simple miners. I recall many people saying then, that Polish friends saved the mine, their workplace.

Q.

Do you think that such publication as this recalling old times camaraderie may be useful for contemporary and future generation?

A.

I believe so. Friendship, trust are timeless values and need to be appreciated by all generations. The modern world is becoming more and more busy, focused on profits and new challenges. Such publication as this gives insight into the background of past achievements and it is evident that cooperation and mutual support in the face of challenges lie at the bottom of success. AI, digitalization of the world around are of course inevitable and of great importance.

Questions posed by Mr. Marek Moroń.

Ms. Ewa Biesek- Leśniewska

Interview with Mr. Jerzy Manka – retired director of mining projects in Poland and in India - 06.03 2025

Q.

We are preparing a publication “Professional Camaraderie of Indian and Polish Miners in the 60.and 70. of XX century during their work in Bihar

” Do you think that it is justified to use such term “professional camaraderie” when talking about Indian and Polish miners working together at that time?

A.

Yes. I think it is the right term to describe the relations and atmosphere of joint work of our miners. This special professional fraternity which miners have in Poland has definitely been planted and developed into Indo- Polish camaraderie of miners working in Bihar.

Q.

What events relating to those times and Indo- Polish miners relations, do you still remember?

A.

I remember when at the beginning of October 1976, there was a religious festival and the group of Polish managers was in Kolkata (at that time Calcutta) for few free days. We got the message about gas explosion at Sudamdih.

We were all as designers and managers on work contract and there was no obligation really for us to cut short our free time because of the events at the mine. But it was not even the subject of any talks among us. Mr. Biesek, myself and some other Polish colleagues immediately rushed from Calcutta to the mine to join the rescue activities. It had no meaning at all that this was out of our lines of duty.

We felt the same way as we would have felt about such situation in Poland.

Q.

Do you think that nowadays in the 3rd decade of the XXI century such close and emotional professional relations still exist in the coal miners community?

A.

I can only speak about Polish miners. The answer is yes. Even though coal mining is considered as declining industry in Poland, but the miners' community cultivates all the traditions which in the past were important events for the whole region.

There were big functions on the 4th of December (a Miners Day in Poland) called "The Beer Tavern" during which there was a ceremony of initiating into the miners brotherhood, giving and bestowing the "mining ranks". All these in the atmosphere of singing, entertainment events, joy.

In fact, we have submitted the proposal to UNESCO to have "Barbórka* and mining traditions" included in UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

*The name of Polish Miners Day

Maybe this one thing which Polish miners forgot to leave in India and that is the Polish tradition of "The Beer Tavern" celebrations?

Q.

Is there a purpose or sense in bringing back now the memories of that camaraderie of half a century ago, to Indian and Polish readers?

A.

We should always remember our past and our history.

And that period of 60. and 70. of XX century in Bihar was a period of close relations not only in mining business but in relation, exactly this camaraderie among miners of our both countries.

This must be remembered by new generations.

Questions were posed by Mr. Marek Moroń

The meeting with Mr. Jerzy Manka was kindly arranged by Ms. Ewa Biesek- Leśniewska; daughter of Mr. Ryszard Biesek.

06.03.2025.

Mr. Jerzy Mańka (Center) – former mine director and expert working in Sudamdih with Mr. Biesek. Ms. Ewa Biesek- Leśniewska (Right) and Mr. Marek Moroń (Left) are also on the photo.

Interview with Mr. Zenon Raczkowski - retired executive of coal ming projects in Poland. Member of the Polish team of experts in India. Worked as a member of Director R. Biesek team 1978-1979 in BCCL and 1981-1982 in IISCO Mine.

26.03 2025.

Q.

We are preparing a publication “Professional Camaraderie of Indian and Polish Miners in the 60.and 70. of XX century during their work in Bihar

Do you think that it is justified to use such term “professional camaraderie” when talking about Indian and Polish miners working together at that time?

A.

Yes. By all means I think that this is the right term. The atmosphere and spirit of professional solidarity was in a natural way extended into our free time in projects in Bihar. I remember very well that we had our monthly friendly gatherings; one in Shanti Bhawan (Dhanbad) where we were guests of our Indian colleagues and the following month in the River Side Colony where we, the Polish experts lived. The name River Side was due to the proximity of Damodar River. These were friendly meetings but even in such meetings we used to debate about our work problems. This was our life.

Q.

What events relating to of those times and Indo -Polish miners relations, you still remember?

A.

I was mainly involved in the work of Polish experts at Jitpur Colliery where I worked as deputy of Mr. R Biesek. Jitpur colliery belonged to

Indian Iron and Steel Co. Polish first activity with IISCO was after the tragedy of Chasnala (also IISCO mine) in 1975. Poland did not have any contact with IISCO, but Polish team arranged for instant delivery of large size pumps from Poland to help with dewatering.

That tragedy (375 miners killed) had a significant influence on decisions on other mines. At Jitpur the management of mine noticed deformation of arch support in the underground roadways and wanted as a precaution to close the mine. The conditions were evaluated as safe for work. That evaluation was elaborated by Mr. R Biesek, myself and our team in 1978-1979. I don't think there was any contract for that work. Later however I remember that we did work on the contract of designing the development of Jitpur. The concluding positive decision that Jitpur is safe for work was taken by Indian authorities in 1981.

Both the cases of assistance in Chasnala dewatering and Jitpur evaluation Polish experts working on these important and urgent matters did not wait for formalities, signed contracts etc. Work and assistance were needed now. Miners, comrades were in need.

Q.

Do you think that nowadays in the 3rd decade of XXI century such close and emotional professional relations still exist in the coal miners' community?

A.

I think so. Certainly in Poland this is the case. I don't know how things are nowadays in Indian mining. It is that permanent facing of remorseless and destroying forces of nature in miners' work that makes their mutual relations much different than in other professions. Additionally I must add to this the spontaneous readiness to help the comrade in need.

Q

Is there a purpose or sense in bringing back now the memories of that camaraderie of half a century ago, to Indian and Polish readers?

A.

If we do not leave narrations of these professional friendship of Indian and Polish Miners then it will be forgotten. It will disappear.

And we should remember these times where we were invited by our Indian colleagues to their family functions. weddings, birthdays, even religious festivals. I must mention here especially the Holi festival which we and our families enjoyed immensely. We remember this and we want our Indian friends to remember also.

Questions were posed by Mr. Marek Moroń

The meeting with Mr. Zenon Raczkowski was kindly arranged by Ms. Ewa Biesek - Leśniewska; daughter of Mr. Ryszard Biesek.

Remark:

IISCO, mentioned in the interview, was incorporated into Steel Authority of India (SAIL) in 2006

Marek Moroń

26.03.2025

Mister Zenon Raczkowski (Right) - Polish Mining Expert who worked with Mr. Biesek in Jitpur Mine and other places in Bihar. Ms. Ewa Biesek- Leśniewska (Center) and Mr. Marek Moroń (Left) are also on the photo.

Personal remarks and Memoirs of Ms. Lolita Chattoraj Sengupta (Daughter of late Mr. Biman Chattoraj,

Chief Engineer IISCO, later General Manager, Raw Material Division of SAIL (Steel Authority of India)

After the quite horrendous mining disaster in December 1975 in Chasnala, in what used to be Bihar and now is Jharkhand, we had people from many nationalities coming over. I imagine the company (IISCO – Indian Iron and Steel Company) was collaborating with foreign nations to decide on next steps, because there was still a lot of coal to be mined, and fossil fuels were not yet considered a thing impacting the environment. These people would sometimes stay in colonies with their entire families, or some of them stayed in our guest houses. I was about nine years old then, trying to make sense of the enormity of the changed lives of so many of our neighbours.

Our schools started having international students among them, mainly Polish. We saw this girl called Ewa, extremely attractive and quiet and, as we found out, incredibly intelligent too. One of the happy happenstances of my life was I got to know Ewa much later, through her father, my silver- coloured Uncle Biesek, (I used to wonder how a grey-haired man's hair could actually shine like silver, - this became our joke) who worked with Kopex.

Ewa now is my Polish sister from another mother and her family is mine too, and wherever I am in Europe, I try to go and meet her at least for a day.

As I travelled down memory lane and placed some memories in our respective school groups, we got some interesting facts and pictures of others who had the years of their lives in Sudamdih. It is not with just a little pride that I was given names and details of people in the pictures.

This is a picture of a shaft in Sudamdih.

I remember there also was an inclined mine in Sudamdih.

The picture below is the decorated gate of Sudamdih, when it was done to welcome the Deputy Prime Minister of Poland (Dr Eng Jan Mitręga) during his visit to Sudamdih in January 1972. You can also see the throngs of people who are keenly waiting for the visit. In those days of no social media and scant mainstream media either, these were the sorts of excitements one waited for:

And here is now a meeting where we can see many present. I dare say one can find some Polish folks here too. The person on the extreme left is B.R.Sengupta, Head of Electrical and Mechanical Departments in Sudamdih and Moonidih, also that of central Jharia area of NCDC. We can also see Mr S.K Chowdhury, who went on to become Chairman of Coal India in 1991. Sudamdih and Moonidih, being the crème de la crème projects of NCDC, was almost fully built up with about twenty years of Polish collaboration. They later merged into BCCL. Through all those years, the connections made can never be forgotten. We had little or no devices to hold our memories in, but our memories are that much stronger, depending not on anything electronic to remember something by.

Our Guest House, in Chasnala, was the building diagonally from our house, and there lived these two gentlemen, Mr Ryszard Biesek – roughly my father's age, and a much younger but incredibly handsome Zenon Raczkowski. But when I did ask his name, he said it was Zenek. My father had huge respect for their mining knowledge and sagacity, but they were so much more, as we found out. They both saw my brothers playing badminton in our lawn court and walked in, intending to play. They did, and that started a friendship/kinship that has stood the test of time. They would come over many evenings in the week, play, and then sit and chat with us, have dinner. I think both of them missed their families sorely, and our family gave some semblance of that connection to them. Biesek uncle would talk about his daughter, and it was then that I learnt his daughter was Ewa!

I could write reams about our relationship, especially mine, with the two gentlemen; it was complex and it was beautiful. We had not interacted with any Polish people before that. We treaded carefully at first, not sure of how to negotiate that space. Those relationships from 1980 or so, led to later, and sometimes stronger, relationships with their families, always evoking strong emotions, reminding us how

distance and skin colour or culture are nothing in deep friendships and families. We sat so many evenings, sharing meals and engaging in a variety of conversations, from the future of the mining industry to the political situation unraveling in Poland.

Issues around us sparked conversations and deepened our connection. We gained a deeper understanding of each other's perspectives and experiences, political ideas, a sense of almost belonging, and what came across was how similar thoughts can exist in disparate people. They missed their family, and we were, albeit a poor one, a substitute in an alien land. Somehow, in all of these, I got closer to them than the rest of my family did. To this day, almost a lifetime later, I cherish the little moments we shared then and though one gets caught up in daily routines and sometimes are a bit lazy about connecting, I do remember to slow down and prioritise my relationship with them and remind myself of the shared laughter, the warmth of what we have for each other. I reminisce about the past with them and dream of a future time when we can meet. It is such a pity, isn't it, that of all the advances science is making, they haven't figured out teleportation yet? Why do families have to stay worlds apart?

Why can I not go and see my grand-nephew because the airfares are prohibitive? Why do boundaries exist?

Biesek Uncle spoke a lot about Ewa and Auntie, and Zenek uncle about his young family. My conversations with them made the families seem real to me. I learnt a bit of Polish from them, so I would be able to ask you "Jak się masz" if I saw you and if you told me "mam się dobrze, dziękuję" I would know what you meant.

Remember, it was a world without the internet, digital photography was still decades away, and conjuring up pictures had a lot to do with how we wanted our families to know each other, although we were conscious of the possibility of us never meeting beyond our time then.

Suddenly, almost overnight, the Polish crisis of 1980-81 happened, and I learnt that they would leave, naturally, to be with their families back home. I still remember the feeling I had then, thinking, this is it, now I will never see them again – the deep pain, nostalgia for a future

that wasn't to happen. Early one morning, I hugged the two gentlemen in what I thought was the final goodbye, and they were gone. But they both wrote regularly and sent gifts via anyone who came to India. I still have the Amber bracelets, necklaces, vinyl records of Polish music, little folk dolls etc they sent me over the years. Biesek uncle's ease with English was remarkable – he also knew where to throw in odd Hindi words to impress everyone: Zenek uncle's not quite as much, and he struggles a bit, but that didn't matter. Our relationships were not predicated on external factors; we had deep abiding affection and respect for each other and that came through subliminally through the mails we exchanged. It is through pictures and letters sent by them that I developed my kinship with their families, and through the years, got to know Ewa, Auntie Biesek, Zenek Uncle and his wife, his son and daughter.

Much later, I got to know all of them in person when I travelled to Poland with my own family – my husband and one year old child – leaving Europe forever (we had lived in UK for around 9 years where my husband trained as a specialist doctor) could not happen without me meeting my Polish family.

The time was January, 2001, and Poland was freezing cold. But the warmth of the hospitality we got there from Biesek Uncle and his daughter, and also from Zenek uncle's family, was phenomenal and I can challenge any reader who can top that. My son started calling Biesek uncle "Dadu", which is the Bengali word for grandfather, and uncle responded with all the love one could give a grandson. My husband and I were inundated with gifts, were introduced to Polish food (our favorite now, I go looking for borscht anytime I go anywhere I think I can find them, I look down on all vodkas that are not Chopin vodka. We did not know, till we went to Katowice to Biesek uncle's house, that vodka could be had neat. We didn't have any great idea about Polish food, but was amazed at how much we ate and drank. Our subsequent visits have made me the sort of person people avoid because I was so full of knowledge about Polish food and drinks. They gave us their bedroom and I found it out only accidently. I don't know too any people who would do that. The few halcyon days we spent there, we were treated like royalty, taken to various places in Krakow and around.

Auntie made amazing food for us – I think she was just cooking for us the whole day, if the quantity and variety of food was anything to go by. Our suitcases were full of gifts as we returned to England.

It was odd, and it did not strike us then, but when we shared our pictures with friends and family, they saw the living room and said it looked like the living room of an Indian person. And on recalling, it really was. Uncle had told us how he got the Kashmiri wood carving furniture sent to him from Kashmir, and the ornaments and decorations around the house made it a perfect picture of how two cultures and nations can have more in common than we think. When strife and intolerance of difference is ripping the world apart now, I wish people would remember this. I know I do.

On the 3rd of May, when both my dad's died, I always put this for my cover photo on social media.

Mr. Ryszard Biesek and Mr.Biman Chattoraj.

That time in 2014 when we went to Poland to visit them for the second time, Ewa's young son did not know much English and my son knew no Polish. But as we were chatting away, we wondered what the two boys were doing in Michal's room. Google translate was already a thing, so they were communicating wonderfully as they played their computer games.

Again, we were taken around wherever we wanted to go, but by then we were mostly just interested in sitting around and catching up on our lives, and of course, swigging vodka shots at regular intervals. I went and saw uncle again in 2015, managing time from my work visits in other countries in Europe.

Biesek uncle and Zenek uncle, the aunties and their wonderful families are people I remember with utmost fondness, and I am very glad my husband and son got to know this part of my family too. There is an abiding bond and fondness which transcends the miles that part us or the years we have not seen them. Thank God for platforms like WhatsApp that help us remain connected all the time, so I get to know my little grand-nephew, see pictures of Marta and Michal all grown up.

As though to make the connection deeper, right down to the very end, was this. My father passed away on 3rd May, 2016. After cremating him we came back home, and I could look at my phone only around 10.00 pm, our time. There was a message from Ewa telling me Biesek uncle too passed away the same day. I still get goosebumps when I think of it.

Now we are truly bound in eternal sisterhood.

Ms Lolita Chattoraj Sengupta

Kolkata, India 2025

Ms. Lolita Chattoraj Sengupta

Historical photos

The Beginning of friendly relations between independent India and Poland

"Przekrój" (Polish socio-cultural magazine) nr 534 (27/1955) –

Title: „NEHRU IN POLAND"

First visit of Prime Minister of India to Poland ever. (1955).
J. Nehru was welcome by all the top people of Polish government as reported by "Przekrój" magazine.

This was the first step to create an almost 30 years Indo Polish romance in economic cooperation. Coal Mining was a number one line of working together.

In 1955 Polish press was widely informing and commenting on the visit of Prime Minister of India J. Nehru to Poland.

DZIENNIK BAŁTYCKI

ROK XI, NR 149 (3424) PIĄTEK, 24 CZERWCA 1955 R. Cena 20 g

Wielki syn Indii

premier Jawaharlal Nehru

przybył do Polski

"Dziennik Bałtycki" (Newspaper 24.06.1955) Nr 149 (3424) - Fot. CAF

The title of the article in this Polish paper is:
"The Great son of India Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru has arrived in Poland."

kop. „Zabrze-Wschód"

zyśpieszymy

anu rocznego

icy kop. „Piast"

TRYBUNA ROBOTNICZA

Nr 149 (3565)
24. VI. 1955 r.
PIĄTEK
4 strony
CENA 15 gr

STALINOGRÓD
CZĘSTOCHOWA
SOSNOWIEC
BYTOM
RYBNIK
GLIWICE

ORGAN KW POLSKIEJ ZJEDNOCZONEJ PARTII ROBOTNICZEJ

Premier Republiki Indii

Jawaharlal Nehru

przybył do Polski

Uroczyste i serdeczne powitanie na lotnisku w Warszawie

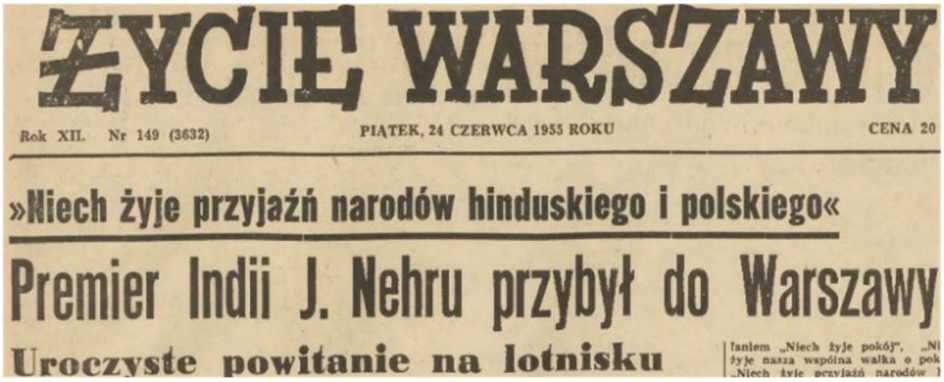
Przemówienie Premiera Nehru

PANIE PREMIERZE, SZANOWNI PAŃSTWO!

"Trybuna Robotnicza" (Newspaper 24.06.1955) Nr 149 (3565)

"India Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru came to Poland. A solemn and warm welcome at the airport in Warsaw."

Article includes speeches by the Prime Ministers of India and Poland and mentions also a visit to Warsaw and few cities in Silesia coal mining region.



ŻYCIE WARSZAWY

Rok XII. Nr 149 (3632) PIĄTEK, 24 CZERWCA 1955 ROKU CENA 20

»Niech żyje przyjaźń narodów hinduskiego i polskiego«

Premier Indii J. Nehru przybył do Warszawy

Uroczyste powitanie na lotnisku

"Życie Warszawy" (Newspaper 24.06.1955) Nr 149 (3632)

Headline:
"Long live the friendship of Indian and Polish nations.
Indian Prime Minister J. Nehru arrived in Warsaw.
Official welcome at the airport".

Głos Koszaliński

ORGAN KW POLSKIEJ ZJEDNOCZONEJ PARTII ROBOTNICZEJ

Cena 20 gr. Piątek, 24 czerwca 1955 roku Rok IV. Nr 149 (850)

Z wizytą przyjaźni

Premier Indii Nehru
przybył do Polski

Gościa witali na lotnisku I Sekretarz KC PZPR tow. B. Bierut, Przewodniczący Rady Państwa tow. Aleksander Zawadzki i Prezes Rady Ministrów tow. Józef Cyrankiewicz

"Głos Koszaliński" (Newspaper 24.06.1955) Nr 149 (850)

Headline:
"A visit from friends. Indian Prime Minister Nehru arrived in Poland. Guests were greeted at airport by Polish government officials."

Gazeta Krakowska

Wyd. A
Cena 20 gr

Organ KW Polskiej Zjednoczonej Partii Robotniczej

Rok VII. Kraków, piątek 24 czerwca 1955 r. Nr 149 (2109)

Naród polski wita dostojnego gościa

Premier i minister spraw zagranicznych Republiki Indii

Jawaharlal Nehru

przybył do Polski

WARSZAWA

Dnia 23 bm. w godzinach przedpołudniowych przybył do Polski na zaproszenie rządu Polskiej Rzeczypospolitej Ludowej premier i minister spraw zagranicznych Republiki Indii Jawaharlal Nehru.

Premier Nehru odwiedzi Kraków

"Gazeta Krakowska" (Newspaper 24.06.1955) Nr 149 (2109)

„The Polish nation welcomes its distinguished guest.
The Prime Minister of the Republic of India, Jawaharlal Nehru, arrived in Poland."

He was also visiting city of Kraków.

KURIER szczeciński

ROK XI SOBOTA 25 CZERWCA 1955 R. NR 150 (3227)

Serdecznie witany przez społeczeństwo

premier i minister spraw zagranicznych Republiki Indii

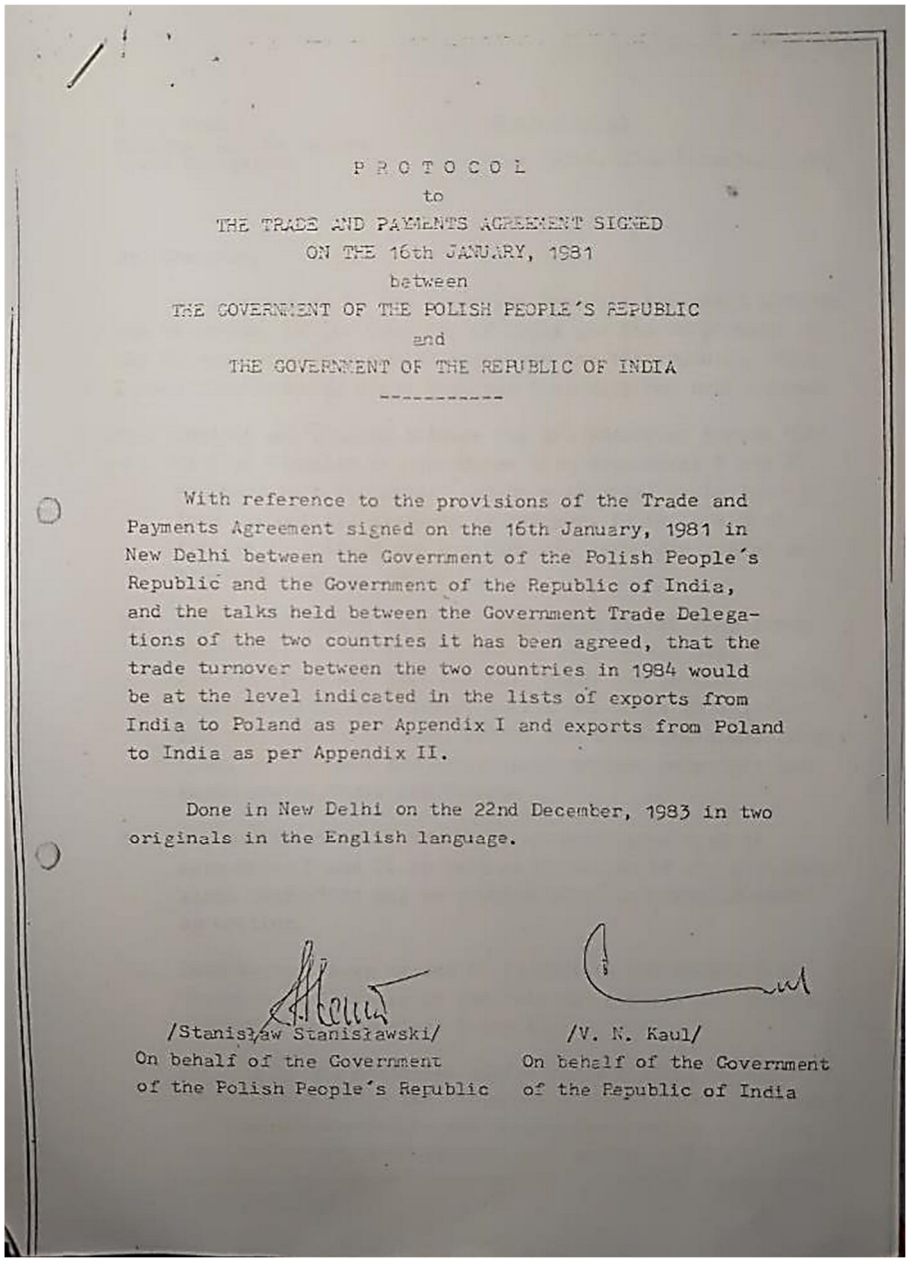
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

zwiedził Warszawę i Śląsk

"Kurier Szczeciński" (Newspaper 25.06.1955) Nr 150 (3227)

Headline:
Jawaharlal Nehru, Prime Minister of the Republic of India, was warmly welcome by the public. He visited Warsaw and Silesia.

Archive state documents on establishing commercial contracts between India and Poland



P R O T O C O L
to
THE TRADE AND PAYMENTS AGREEMENT SIGNED
ON THE 16th JANUARY, 1981
between
THE GOVERNMENT OF THE POLISH PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC
and
THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF INDIA

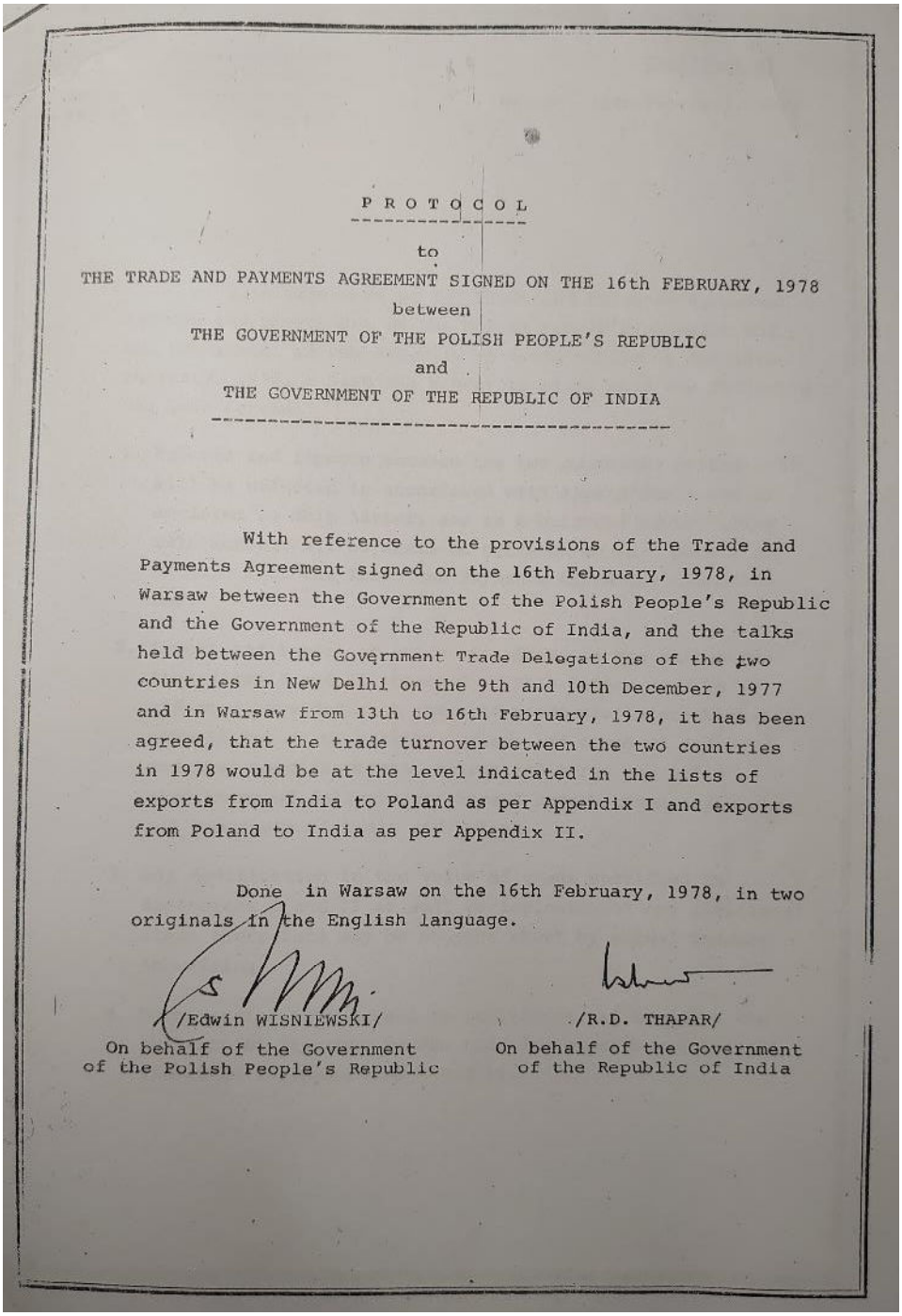
With reference to the provisions of the Trade and Payments Agreement signed on the 16th January, 1981 in New Delhi between the Government of the Polish People's Republic and the Government of the Republic of India, and the talks held between the Government Trade Delegations of the two countries it has been agreed, that the trade turnover between the two countries in 1984 would be at the level indicated in the lists of exports from India to Poland as per Appendix I and exports from Poland to India as per Appendix II.

Done in New Delhi on the 22nd December, 1983 in two originals in the English language.

/Stanisław Stanisławski/
On behalf of the Government
of the Polish People's Republic

/V. N. Kaul/
On behalf of the Government
of the Republic of India

Example of documents shaping bilateral business relations.



PROTOCOL

to

THE TRADE AND PAYMENTS AGREEMENT SIGNED ON THE 16th FEBRUARY, 1978

between

THE GOVERNMENT OF THE POLISH PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC

and

THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF INDIA

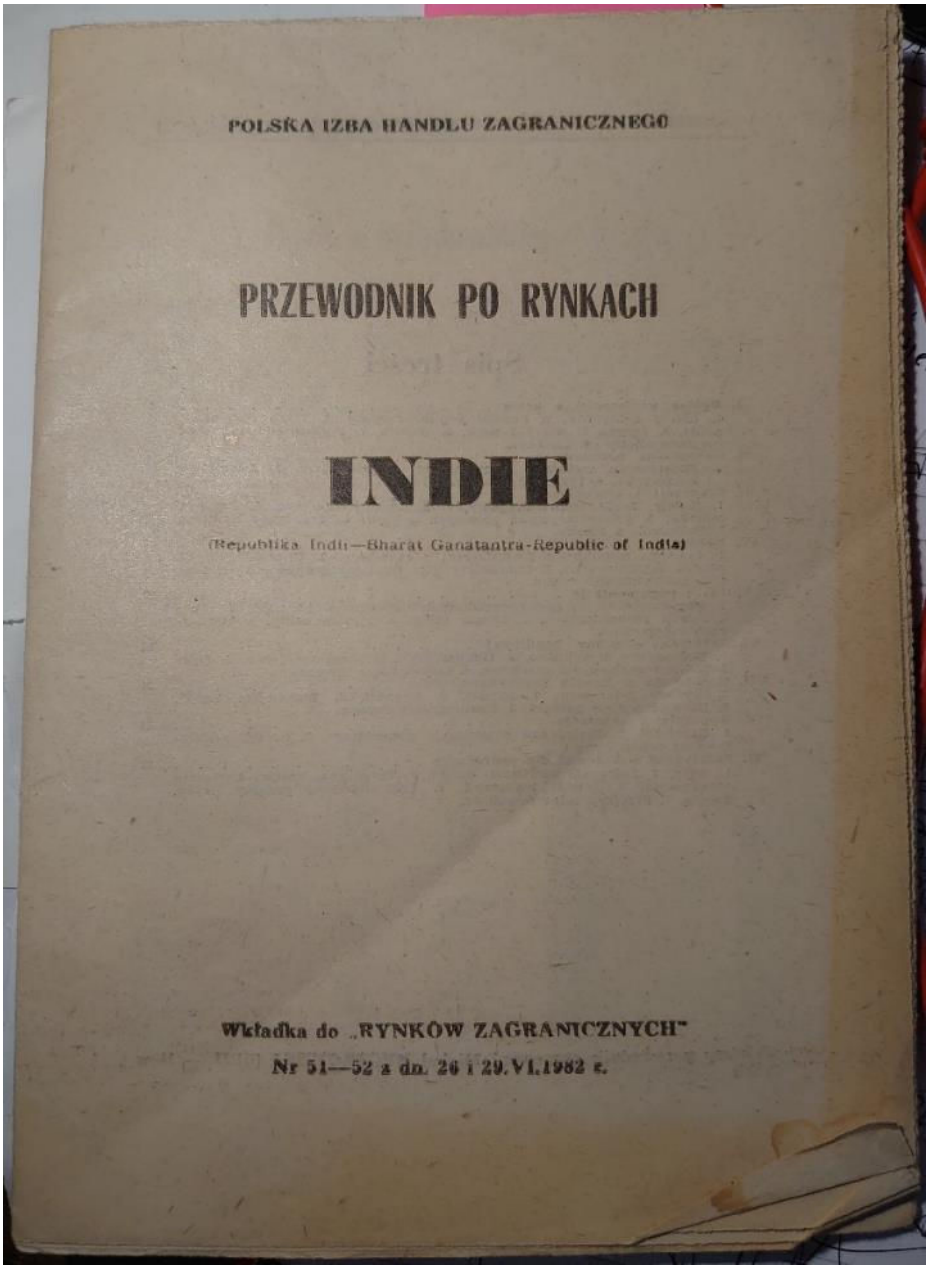
With reference to the provisions of the Trade and Payments Agreement signed on the 16th February, 1978, in Warsaw between the Government of the Polish People's Republic and the Government of the Republic of India, and the talks held between the Government Trade Delegations of the two countries in New Delhi on the 9th and 10th December, 1977 and in Warsaw from 13th to 16th February, 1978, it has been agreed, that the trade turnover between the two countries in 1978 would be at the level indicated in the lists of exports from India to Poland as per Appendix I and exports from Poland to India as per Appendix II.

Done in Warsaw on the 16th February, 1978, in two originals in the English language.

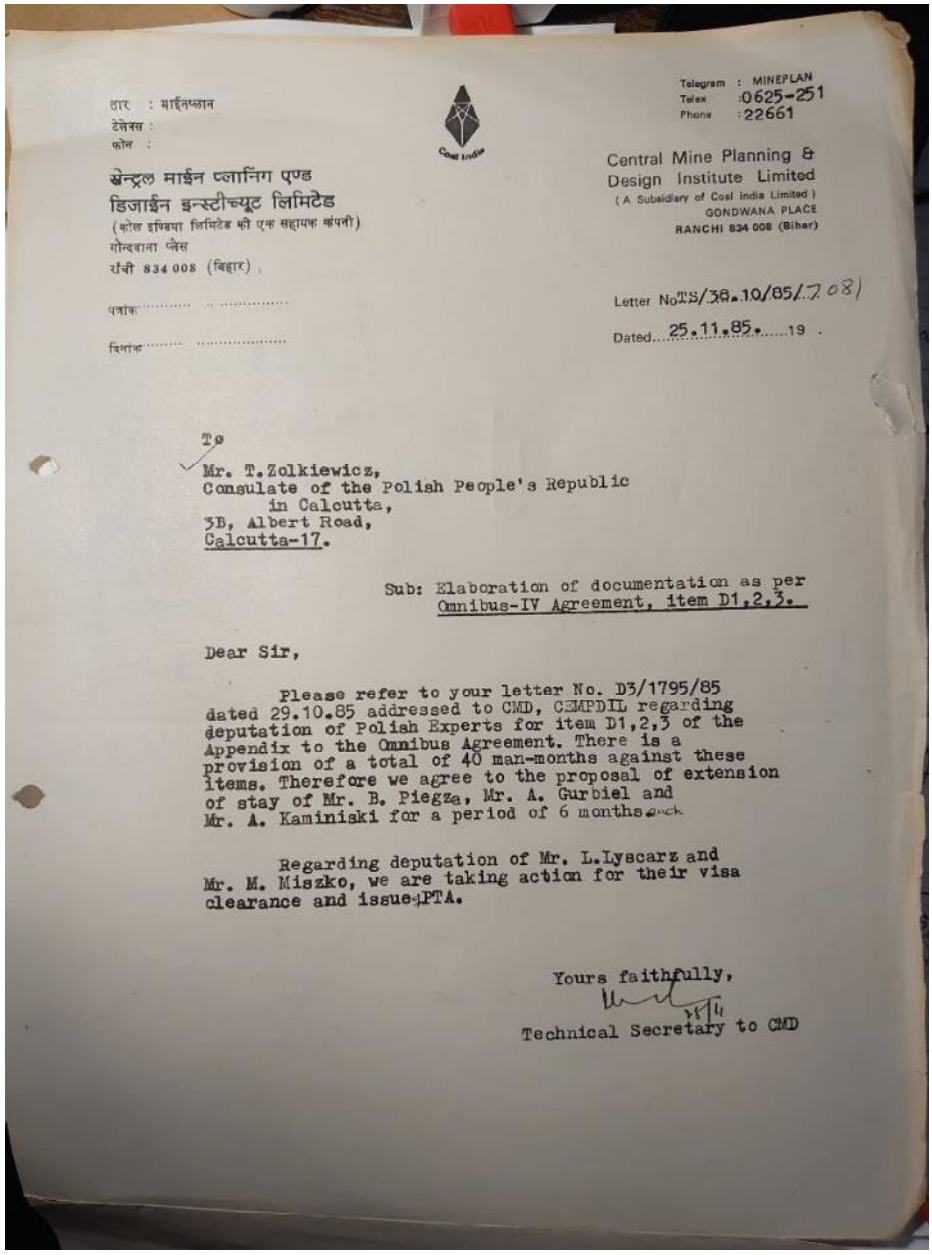
/Edwin WISNIEWSKI/
On behalf of the Government
of the Polish People's Republic

/R.D. THAPAR/
On behalf of the Government
of the Republic of India

Example of documents shaping bilateral business relations.



Guidelines for Polish companies (at that time these were all state companies) on how to prepare for business with India.



तार : माईनप्लान
टेलेक्स :
फोन :

सेन्ट्रल माईन प्लानिंग एण्ड
डिजाईन इन्स्टीच्यूट लिमिटेड
(कोल इण्डिया लिमिटेड की एक सहायक कंपनी)
गोन्दवाना प्लेस
रांची 834 008 (बिहार)

पत्रांक .....
दिनांक .....

Telegram : MINEPLAN
Telex : 0625-251
Phone : 22661

Central Mine Planning &
Design Institute Limited
(A Subsidiary of Coal India Limited)
GONDWANA PLACE
RANCHI 834 008 (Bihar)

Letter No TS/38.10/85/7081
Dated 25.11.85 19

To
Mr. T.Zolkiewicz,
Consulate of the Polish People's Republic
in Calcutta,
3B, Albert Road,
Calcutta-17.

Sub: Elaboration of documentation as per
Omnibus-IV Agreement, item D1,2,3.

Dear Sir,

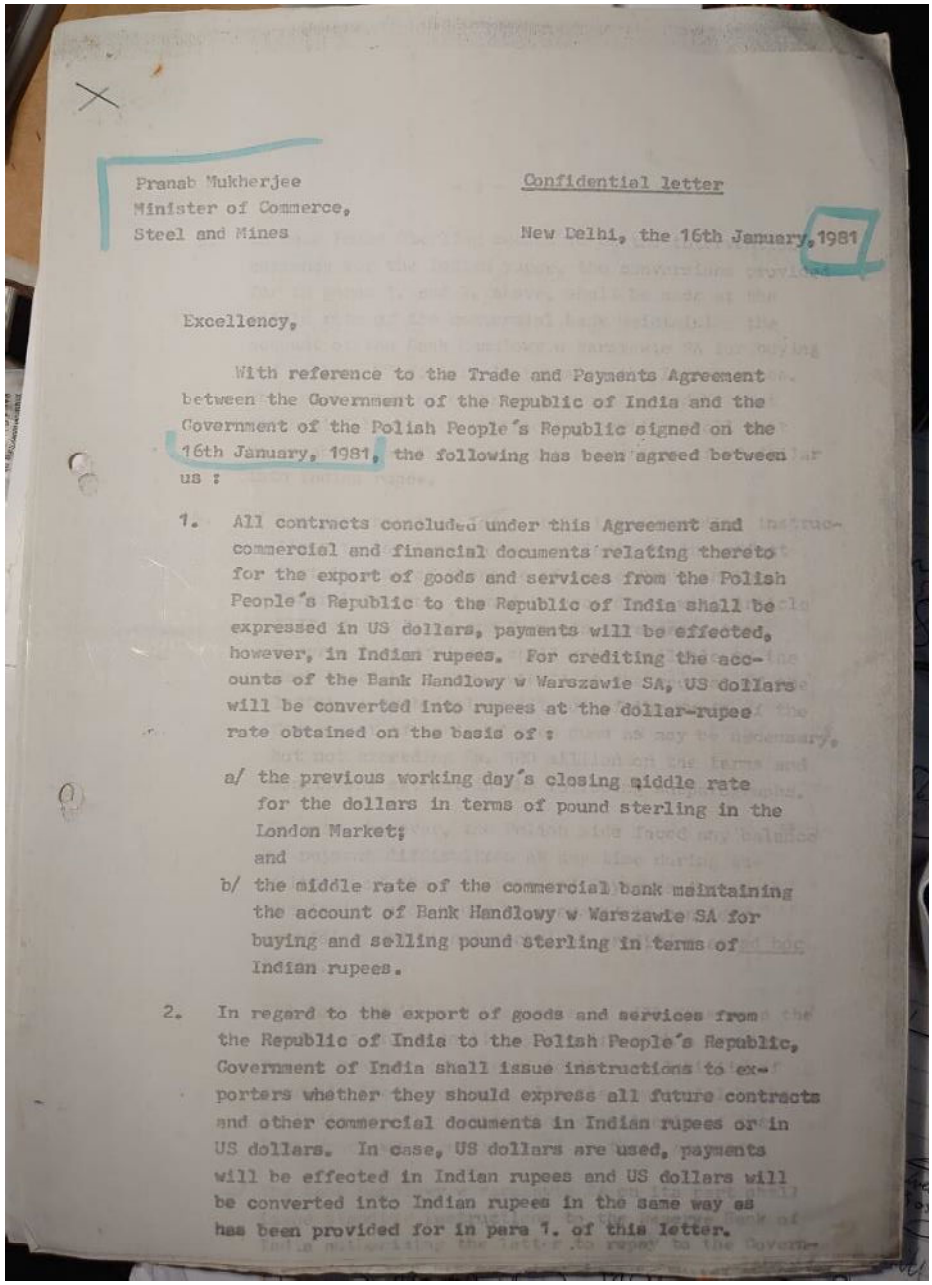
Please refer to your letter No. D3/1795/85 dated 29.10.85 addressed to CMD, CEMPDIL regarding deputation of Polish Experts for item D1,2,3 of the Appendix to the Omnibus Agreement. There is a provision of a total of 40 man-months against these items. Therefore we agree to the proposal of extension of stay of Mr. B. Piegza, Mr. A. Gurbiel and Mr. A. Kaminiski for a period of 6 months each.

Regarding deputation of Mr. L.Lyscarz and Mr. M. Miszko, we are taking action for their visa clearance and issue of PTA.

Yours faithfully,

Technical Secretary to CMD

Documents about implementing the Omnibus Agreement for various experts services in coal mining.



Pranab Mukherjee
Minister of Commerce,
Steel and Mines

Confidential letter

New Delhi, the 16th January, 1981

Excellency,

With reference to the Trade and Payments Agreement between the Government of the Republic of India and the Government of the Polish People's Republic signed on the 16th January, 1981, the following has been agreed between us :

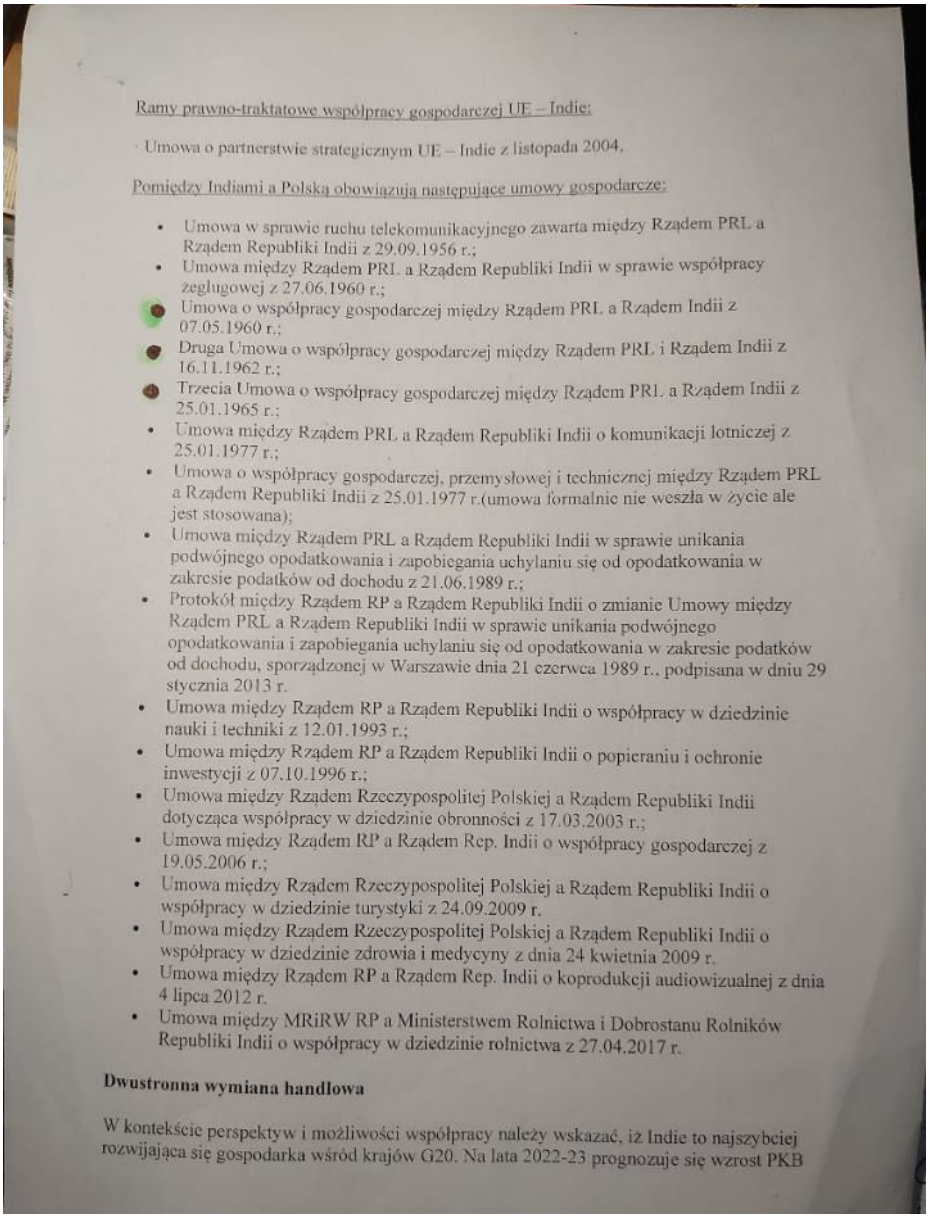
1. All contracts concluded under this Agreement and commercial and financial documents relating thereto for the export of goods and services from the Polish People's Republic to the Republic of India shall be expressed in US dollars, payments will be effected, however, in Indian rupees. For crediting the accounts of the Bank Handlowy w Warszawie SA, US dollars will be converted into rupees at the dollar-rupee rate obtained on the basis of :

   a/ the previous working day's closing middle rate for the dollars in terms of pound sterling in the London Market; and

   b/ the middle rate of the commercial bank maintaining the account of Bank Handlowy w Warszawie SA for buying and selling pound sterling in terms of Indian rupees.

2. In regard to the export of goods and services from the Republic of India to the Polish People's Republic, Government of India shall issue instructions to exporters whether they should express all future contracts and other commercial documents in Indian rupees or in US dollars. In case, US dollars are used, payments will be effected in Indian rupees and US dollars will be converted into Indian rupees in the same way as has been provided for in para 1. of this letter.

First page of another document from the Indian side on commercial relations between India and Poland.



Ramy prawno-traktatowe współpracy gospodarczej UE – Indie:

Umowa o partnerstwie strategicznym UE – Indie z listopada 2004.

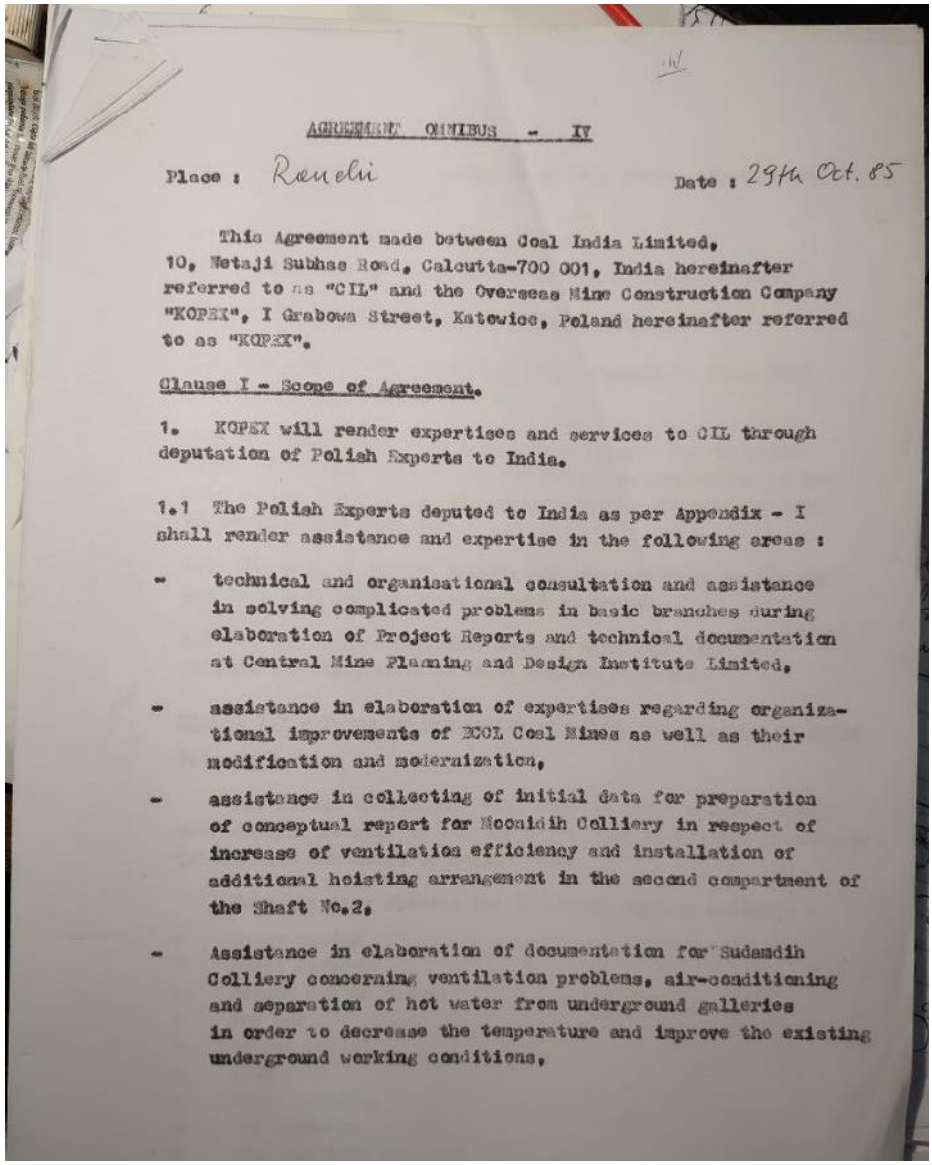
Pomiędzy Indiami a Polską obowiązują następujące umowy gospodarcze:

- Umowa w sprawie ruchu telekomunikacyjnego zawarta między Rządem PRL a Rządem Republiki Indii z 29.09.1956 r.;
- Umowa między Rządem PRL a Rządem Republiki Indii w sprawie współpracy żeglugowej z 27.06.1960 r.;
- Umowa o współpracy gospodarczej między Rządem PRL a Rządem Indii z 07.05.1960 r.;
- Druga Umowa o współpracy gospodarczej między Rządem PRL i Rządem Indii z 16.11.1962 r.;
- Trzecia Umowa o współpracy gospodarczej między Rządem PRL a Rządem Indii z 25.01.1965 r.;
- Umowa między Rządem PRL a Rządem Republiki Indii o komunikacji lotniczej z 25.01.1977 r.;
- Umowa o współpracy gospodarczej, przemysłowej i technicznej między Rządem PRL a Rządem Republiki Indii z 25.01.1977 r.(umowa formalnie nie weszła w życie ale jest stosowana);
- Umowa między Rządem PRL a Rządem Republiki Indii w sprawie unikania podwójnego opodatkowania i zapobiegania uchylaniu się od opodatkowania w zakresie podatków od dochodu z 21.06.1989 r.;
- Protokół między Rządem RP a Rządem Republiki Indii o zmianie Umowy między Rządem PRL a Rządem Republiki Indii w sprawie unikania podwójnego opodatkowania i zapobiegania uchylaniu się od opodatkowania w zakresie podatków od dochodu, sporządzonej w Warszawie dnia 21 czerwca 1989 r., podpisana w dniu 29 stycznia 2013 r.
- Umowa między Rządem RP a Rządem Republiki Indii o współpracy w dziedzinie nauki i techniki z 12.01.1993 r.;
- Umowa między Rządem RP a Rządem Republiki Indii o popieraniu i ochronie inwestycji z 07.10.1996 r.;
- Umowa między Rządem Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej a Rządem Republiki Indii dotycząca współpracy w dziedzinie obronności z 17.03.2003 r.;
- Umowa między Rządem RP a Rządem Rep. Indii o współpracy gospodarczej z 19.05.2006 r.;
- Umowa między Rządem Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej a Rządem Republiki Indii o współpracy w dziedzinie turystyki z 24.09.2009 r.
- Umowa między Rządem Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej a Rządem Republiki Indii o współpracy w dziedzinie zdrowia i medycyny z dnia 24 kwietnia 2009 r.
- Umowa między Rządem RP a Rządem Rep. Indii o koprodukcji audiowizualnej z dnia 4 lipca 2012 r.
- Umowa między MRiRW RP a Ministerstwem Rolnictwa i Dobrostanu Rolników Republiki Indii o współpracy w dziedzinie rolnictwa z 27.04.2017 r.

Dwustronna wymiana handlowa

W kontekście perspektyw i możliwości współpracy należy wskazać, iż Indie to najszybciej rozwijająca się gospodarka wśród krajów G20. Na lata 2022-23 prognozuje się wzrost PKB

List of legal regulations which were the basis of commercial relations between India and Poland.



AGREEMENT OMNIBUS - IV

Place : Ranchi Date : 29th Oct. 85

This Agreement made between Coal India Limited, 10, Netaji Subhas Road, Calcutta-700 001, India hereinafter referred to as "CIL" and the Overseas Mine Construction Company "KOPEX", I Grabowa Street, Katowice, Poland hereinafter referred to as "KOPEX".

Clause I - Scope of Agreement.

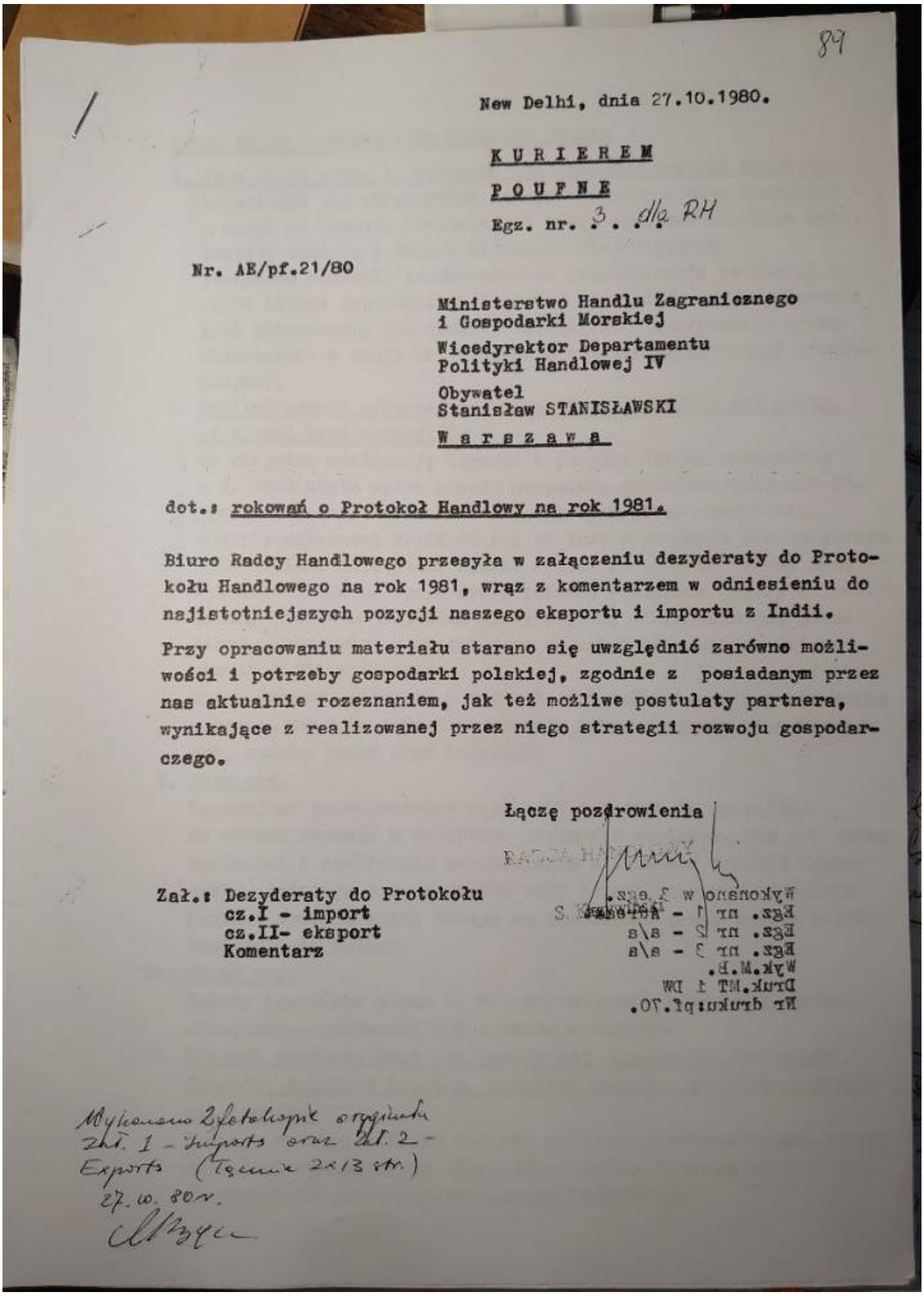
1. KOPEX will render expertises and services to CIL through deputation of Polish Experts to India.

1.1 The Polish Experts deputed to India as per Appendix - I shall render assistance and expertise in the following areas :

- technical and organisational consultation and assistance in solving complicated problems in basic branches during elaboration of Project Reports and technical documentation at Central Mine Planning and Design Institute Limited,
- assistance in elaboration of expertises regarding organizational improvements of ECL Coal Mines as well as their modification and modernization,
- assistance in collecting of initial data for preparation of conceptual report for Moonidih Colliery in respect of increase of ventilation efficiency and installation of additional hoisting arrangement in the second compartment of the Shaft No.2,
- Assistance in elaboration of documentation for Sudamdih Colliery concerning ventilation problems, air-conditioning and separation of hot water from underground galleries in order to decrease the temperature and improve the existing underground working conditions,

Example of contract for experts services. This type of contract was called Omnibus.

There was a list of available experts from Poland. The rates for their services were agreed and the Indian partner informed Poland in advance whom and when particular indicated experts are needed.



89

New Delhi, dnia 27.10.1980.

KURIEREM

POUFNE

Egz. nr. 3. dla RH

Nr. AE/pf.21/80

Ministerstwo Handlu Zagranicznego
i Gospodarki Morskiej
Wicedyrektor Departamentu
Polityki Handlowej IV
Obywatel
Stanisław STANISŁAWSKI
Warszawa

dot.: rokowań o Protokoł Handlowy na rok 1981.

Biuro Radcy Handlowego przesyła w załączeniu dezyderaty do Protokołu Handlowego na rok 1981, wrąz z komentarzem w odniesieniu do najistotniejszych pozycji naszego eksportu i importu z Indii.

Przy opracowaniu materiału starano się uwzględnić zarówno możliwości i potrzeby gospodarki polskiej, zgodnie z posiadanym przez nas aktualnie rozeznaniem, jak też możliwe postulaty partnera, wynikające z realizowanej przez niego strategii rozwoju gospodarczego.

Łączę pozdrowienia

RADCA HANDLOWY

Zał.: Dezyderaty do Protokołu
cz.I - import
cz.II- eksport
Komentarz

Wykonano 2 fotokopie oryginału Zał. 1 - Imports oraz Zał. 2 - Exports (łącznie 2x13 str.)
27.10.80r.

Ministerial correspondence on agreeing annual commercial agreement.

Sudamdih colliery and other Bihar coal mines – where Indian and Polish miners worked together

"Sudamdih was supposed to be flooded..."

Interesting article by Mr. Jerzy Chociołowski (Text, photographs), about "Indian Silesia" in Bihar and rescuing Sudamdih mine by Polish miners.

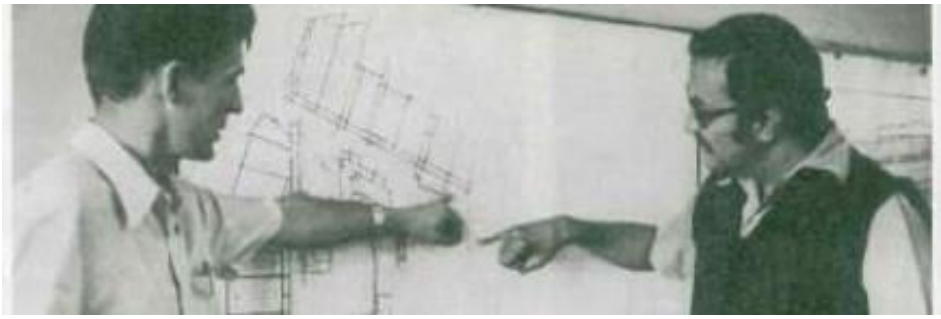
It was published in "Kontynenty" – 9/1978 (178).

This article is one of very few press articles of the Polish Indian, Coal mining cooperation period.

Kontynenty - was a very popular Polish journal (1964 -1989).

From 2012 its publication was resumed.

(https://magazynkontynenty.pl)

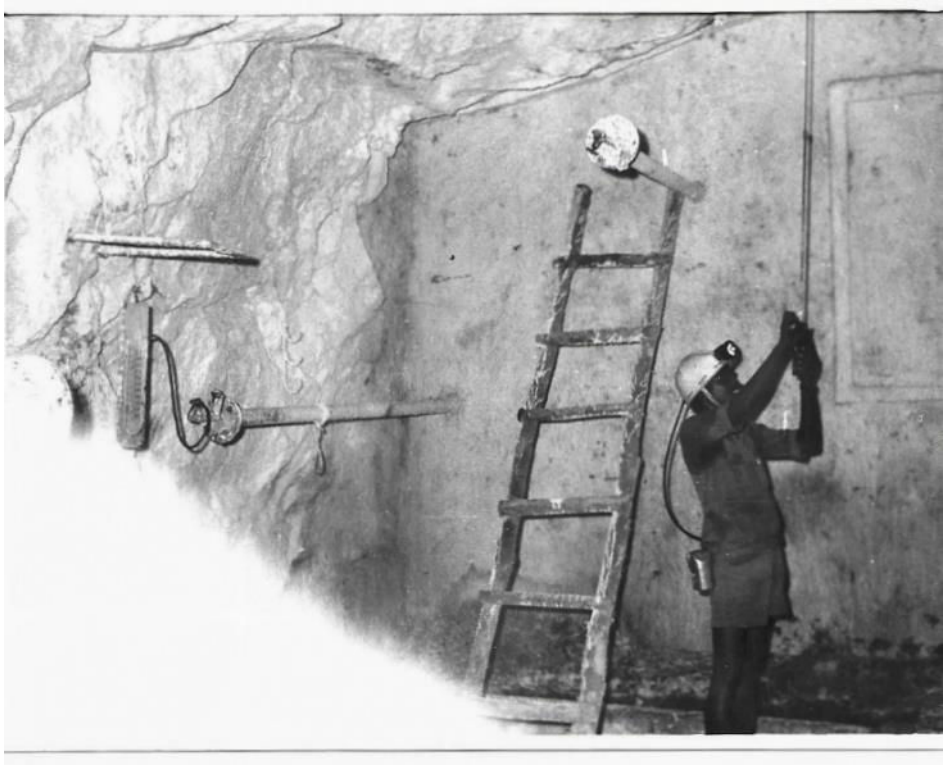


Mr. Jerzy Manka and Mr. A.K Gulati are discussing the issues of daily work at Moonidih mine. (Kontynenty, 9/1978, Fot. Jerzy Chociołowski)

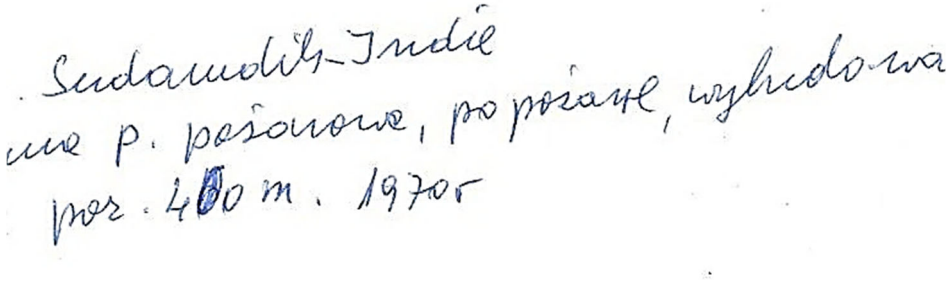
„Professional camaraderie" of the 60 and 70 of XX century on the Mr. Jerzy Mańka is first from the left.
(Kontynenty, 9/1978, Fot. Jerzy Chociołowski)

As described in earlier part of publication, the photos above are examples of Indian and Polish experts working together.

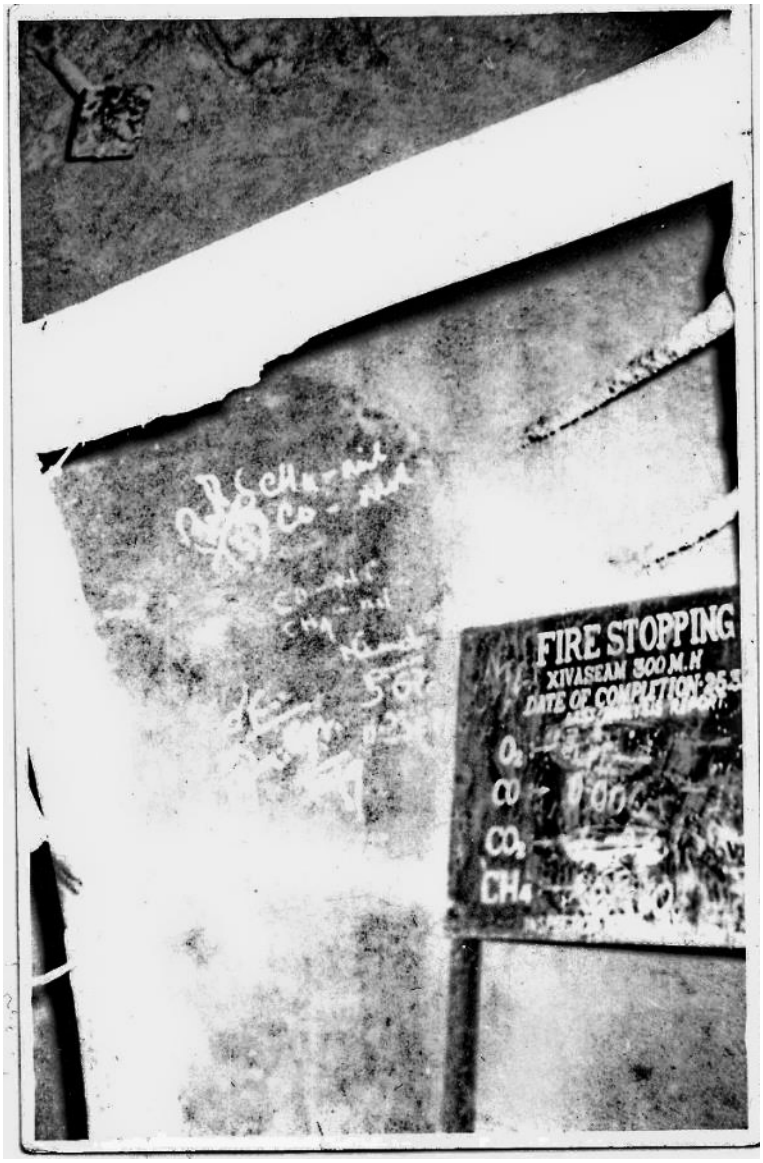
Black smoke started to come out at Sudamdih from somewhere. It was of paramount importance to find the source of that smoke.



A photo of fire stopping dam constructed at level 400m.

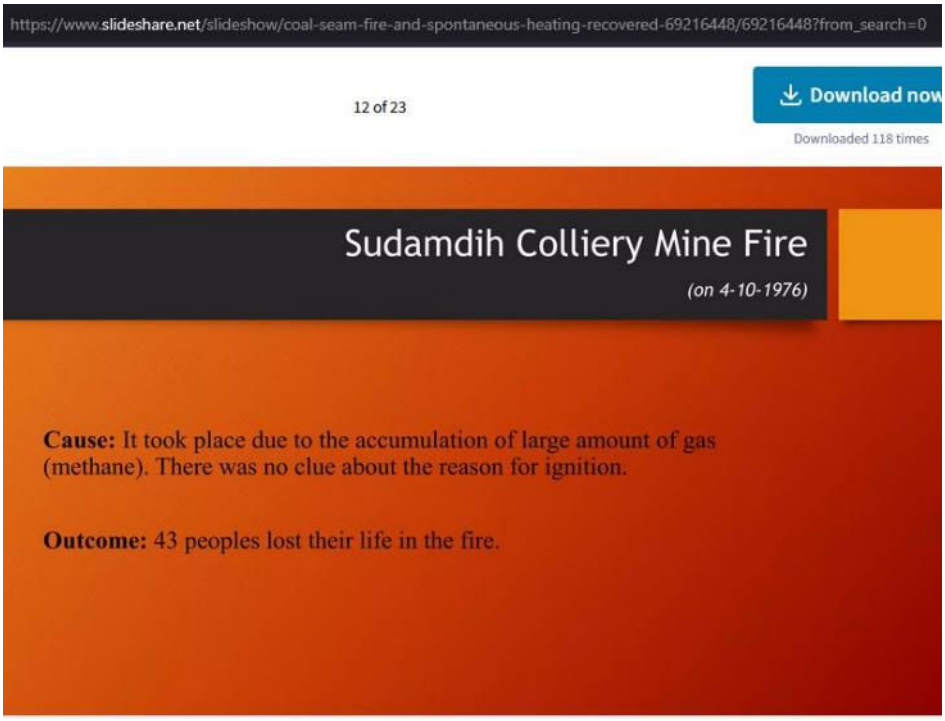


Description on the backside



kop. Sudamdih-Indie
tama p. pożarowe, po pożarze, wybudowane
na poz. 400 m. 1970r

Description: Sudamdih mine, India.
Fire stopping dam, which was constructed at level 400m.



Presentation: “Coal Seam and Spontaneous Heating” by Abhishek Kumar Pandey - (www.slideshare.net)

A page of one of the reports about the Sudamdih gas explosion.

Therefore, when some half a year later (in 1976) there was a fire in the Sudamdih mine there were many voices not to risk any action to save the mine lest another tragedy could take place.

Finally, however the rescue took place and the role of Polish experts and Mr. Ryszard Biesek was very important.

COAL

Continuing Violation of Safety Rules

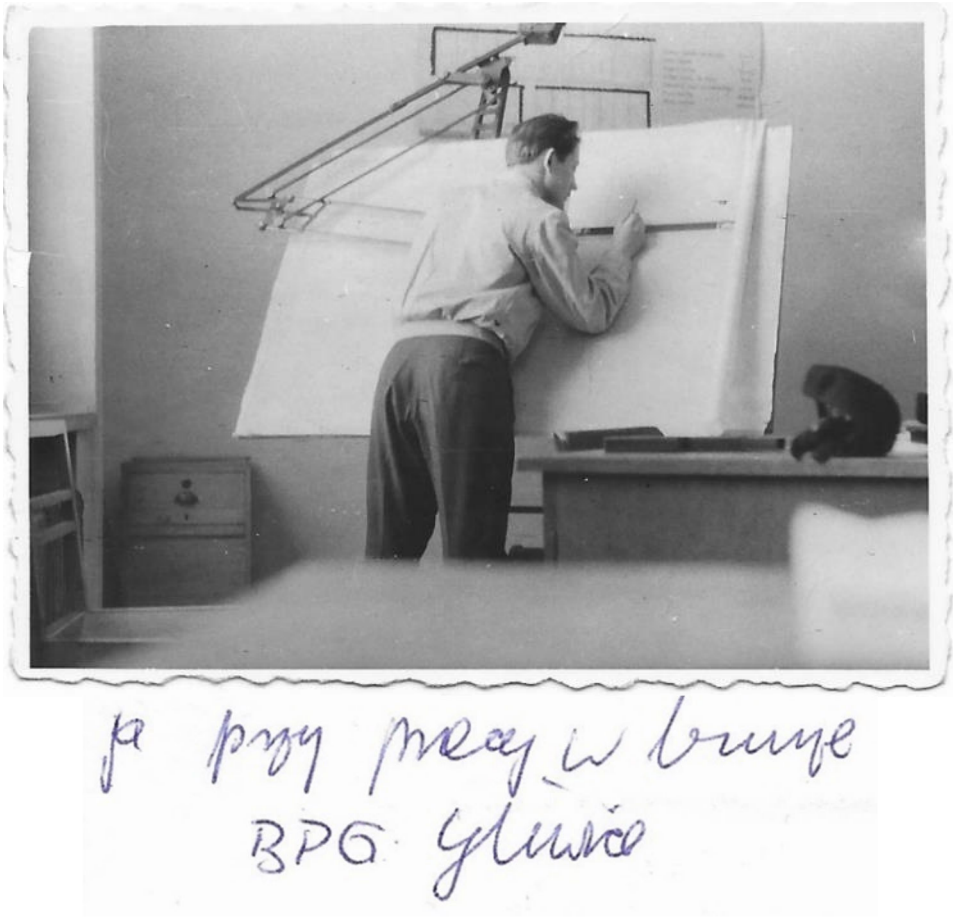
Arun Sinha

ONE of the principal reasons advanced for the nationalisation of coalmines was the constant violation of safety rules by the private owners, who were only concerned with profits. The conditions then were undoubtedly awful, even with government safety inspectors; Mohan Kumaramangalam, in his book "Coal Industry in India", has quoted a number of early reports highlighting those unfair mining practices wherein the miners didn't even have such primary requirements as footwear, helmets and safety lamps. After nationalisation (coking coalmines, October 1971; and non-coking coalmines, January 1973), the problem of coalminers' safety was at last supposed to have received proper attention. (The fatality rate per thousand persons employed in the post-nationalisation years has been 0.60 in 1971, 0.66 in 1972, 0.65 in 1973, 0.42 in

ness in accordance with Coal Mines Regulations, 1957. This classification was forced by some disasters in the mines which had not been considered gassy. In fact, most of the safety measures enforced after nationalisation have had their origin in disasters. Especially after the Chasnala disaster in December 1975, a study group was formed to examine the problems of accidents in coalmines, giving particular attention to 'accident prone' mines. A survey cell was set up in the directorate-general of mines safety (DGMS) to locate the places where accidents might happen due to collapse of roof and sides, inundation and explosion. The frequency of inspections of mines was increased and in order to facilitate this, the staff strength of DGMS was augmented by 13 per cent. Besides these regular inspections, there was also a drive for surprise inspections of

Economic and Political Weekly (academic journal) - Vol. 11, No. 44 (Oct. 30, 1976), https://www.jstor.org/stable/4365051

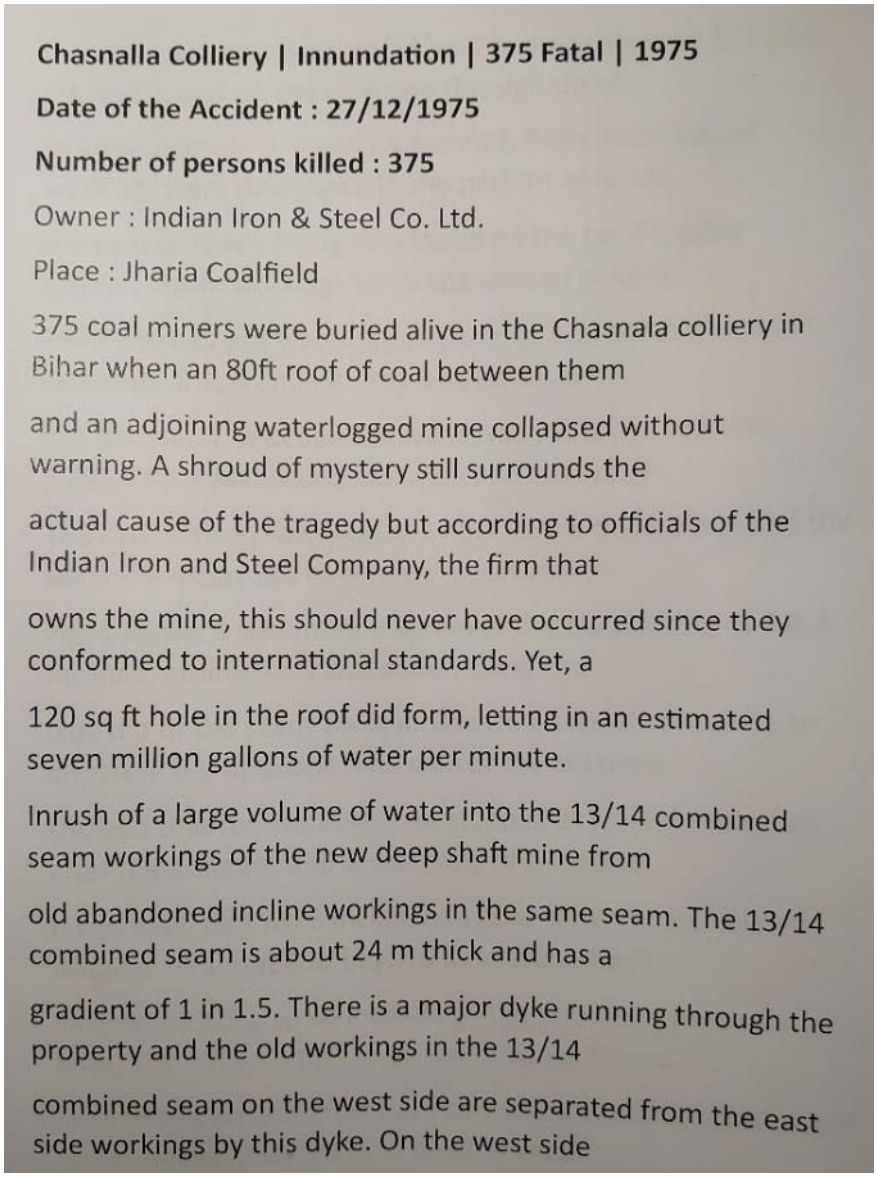
One of many articles in the mining Indian journals on how to prevent disasters like the gas catastrophe at Sudamdih.



Mr. Ryszard Biesek - working on drawing board at Chief Mining Study and Design.

In the 60s of XX century all the drawings and designs were hand drawn on paper boards.

This is a real exotic scene for the XXI century designers.



Chasnalla Colliery | Innundation | 375 Fatal | 1975

Date of the Accident : 27/12/1975

Number of persons killed : 375

Owner : Indian Iron & Steel Co. Ltd.

Place : Jharia Coalfield

375 coal miners were buried alive in the Chasnala colliery in Bihar when an 80ft roof of coal between them

and an adjoining waterlogged mine collapsed without warning. A shroud of mystery still surrounds the

actual cause of the tragedy but according to officials of the Indian Iron and Steel Company, the firm that

owns the mine, this should never have occurred since they conformed to international standards. Yet, a

120 sq ft hole in the roof did form, letting in an estimated seven million gallons of water per minute.

Inrush of a large volume of water into the 13/14 combined seam workings of the new deep shaft mine from

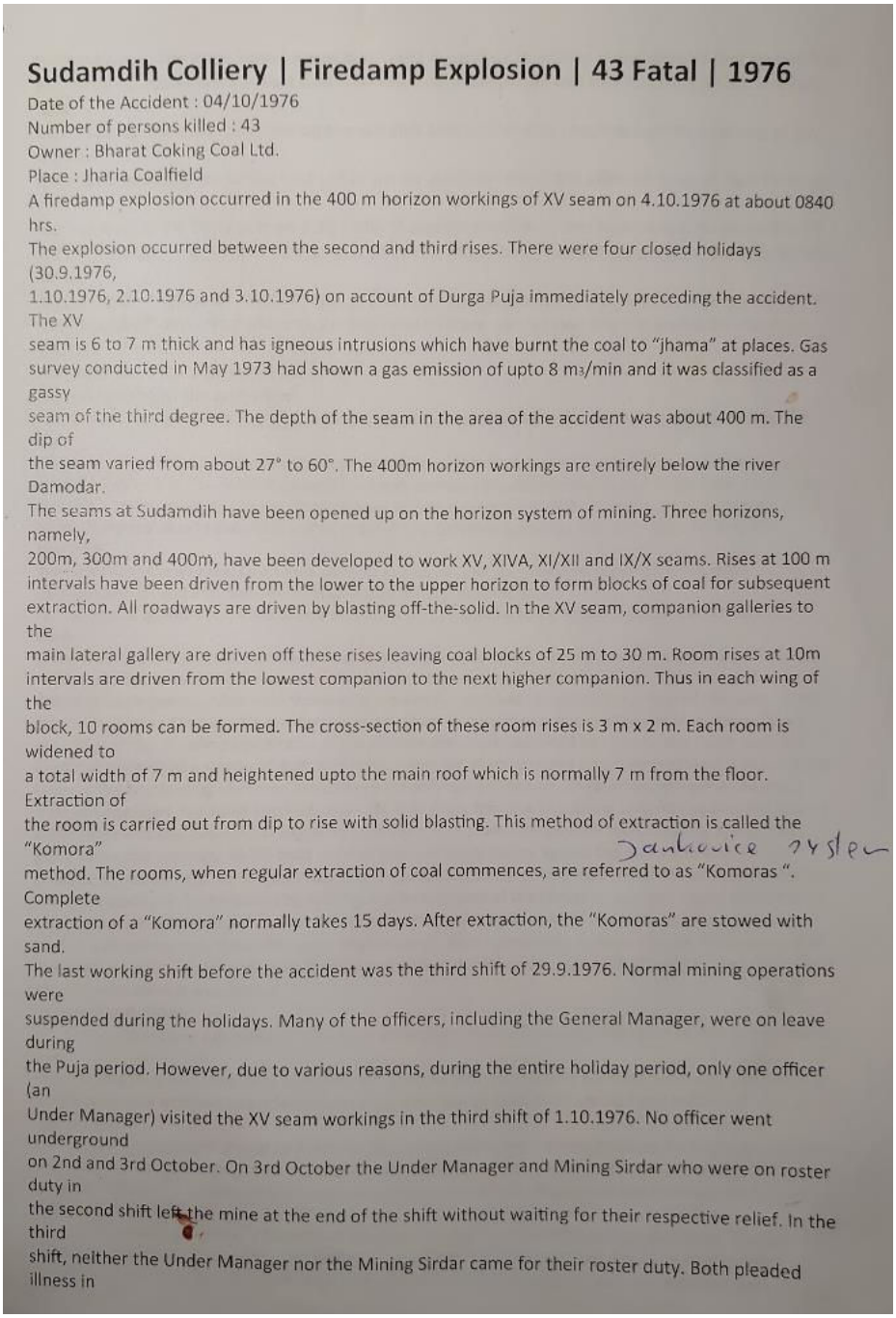
old abandoned incline workings in the same seam. The 13/14 combined seam is about 24 m thick and has a

gradient of 1 in 1.5. There is a major dyke running through the property and the old workings in the 13/14

combined seam on the west side are separated from the east side workings by this dyke. On the west side

The tragedies of gas explosion and fire at Sudamdih were not the only ones.

Unfortunately, this is what coal mining is whether in India, Poland or other countries. These hazards and daily risking of life contribute largely to creating that silent yet ever present camaraderie and solidarity of miners. Polish experts were instrumental in arranging large pumps for dewatering of Chasnala.



Sudamdih Colliery | Firedamp Explosion | 43 Fatal | 1976

Date of the Accident : 04/10/1976
Number of persons killed : 43
Owner : Bharat Coking Coal Ltd.
Place : Jharia Coalfield

A firedamp explosion occurred in the 400 m horizon workings of XV seam on 4.10.1976 at about 0840 hrs.

The explosion occurred between the second and third rises. There were four closed holidays (30.9.1976, 1.10.1976, 2.10.1976 and 3.10.1976) on account of Durga Puja immediately preceding the accident. The XV seam is 6 to 7 m thick and has igneous intrusions which have burnt the coal to "jhama" at places. Gas survey conducted in May 1973 had shown a gas emission of upto 8 m³/min and it was classified as a gassy seam of the third degree. The depth of the seam in the area of the accident was about 400 m. The dip of the seam varied from about 27° to 60°. The 400m horizon workings are entirely below the river Damodar.

The seams at Sudamdih have been opened up on the horizon system of mining. Three horizons, namely, 200m, 300m and 400m, have been developed to work XV, XIVA, XI/XII and IX/X seams. Rises at 100 m intervals have been driven from the lower to the upper horizon to form blocks of coal for subsequent extraction. All roadways are driven by blasting off-the-solid. In the XV seam, companion galleries to the main lateral gallery are driven off these rises leaving coal blocks of 25 m to 30 m. Room rises at 10m intervals are driven from the lowest companion to the next higher companion. Thus in each wing of the block, 10 rooms can be formed. The cross-section of these room rises is 3 m x 2 m. Each room is widened to a total width of 7 m and heightened upto the main roof which is normally 7 m from the floor. Extraction of the room is carried out from dip to rise with solid blasting. This method of extraction is called the "Komora" Jankovice system method. The rooms, when regular extraction of coal commences, are referred to as "Komoras ". Complete extraction of a "Komora" normally takes 15 days. After extraction, the "Komoras" are stowed with sand.

The last working shift before the accident was the third shift of 29.9.1976. Normal mining operations were suspended during the holidays. Many of the officers, including the General Manager, were on leave during the Puja period. However, due to various reasons, during the entire holiday period, only one officer (an Under Manager) visited the XV seam workings in the third shift of 1.10.1976. No officer went underground on 2nd and 3rd October. On 3rd October the Under Manager and Mining Sirdar who were on roster duty in the second shift left the mine at the end of the shift without waiting for their respective relief. In the third shift, neither the Under Manager nor the Mining Sirdar came for their roster duty. Both pleaded illness in

One of Indian reports on Sudamdih explosion.

their evidence. The mine Time-keeper also failed in his duty to inform senior officers that no one had turned up for roster work in that shift. The result of these lapses was that no check on the auxiliary fans was made by anyone at least during the last shift before the mine reopened on the morning of 4th October.

It was subsequently found out that out of the six auxiliary fans in the affected area; at least three did not work at least in the third shift on 3.10.1976. Stoppage of auxiliary fans had caused accumulation of inflammable gas in a number of places. On 4th morning, either the working places were not checked for gas before employing the workers or, even if they were checked and gas was detected, persons were not evacuated before starting the fans. An explosive mixture was formed and the explosion occurred within a few minutes of the starting of the fans.

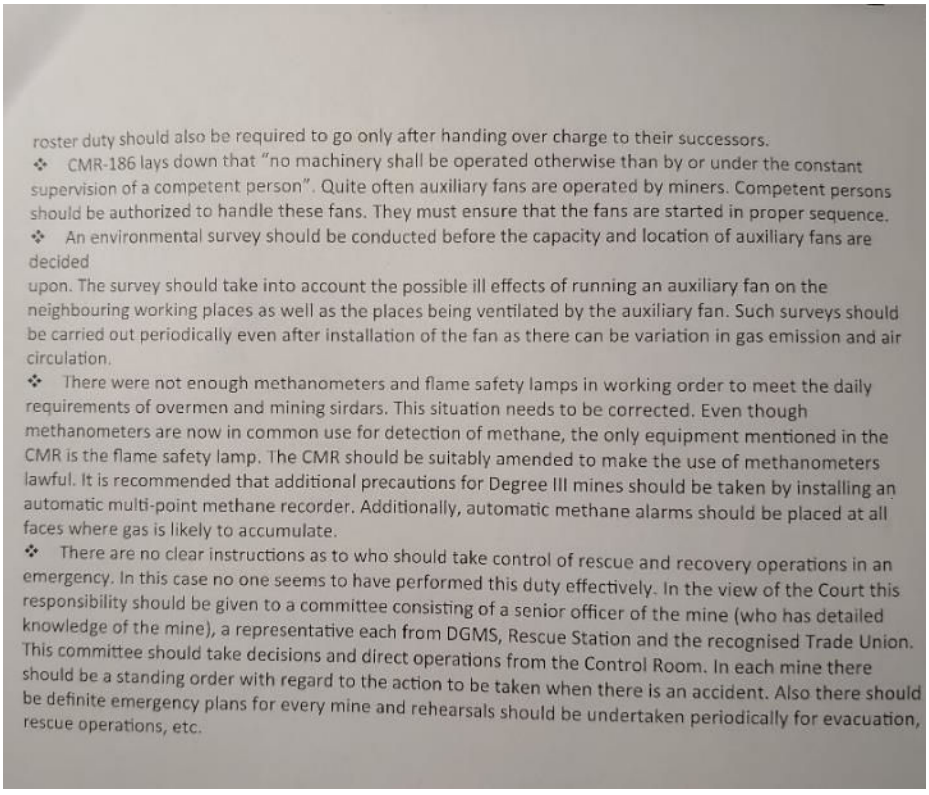
Factors leading to the explosion

- Gas accumulation: The likely places of gas accumulations were identified as: 400 m lateral, 4th rise, 3rd rise, 6th room-rise and 3rd companion. The faces of 3rd rise and 3rd companion had been blasted in the last shift of 29.9.1976 before closure for Puja holidays. Fresh exposure of coal and broken coal would have contributed to some increase in gas emission in these places. There was also a possibility of some gas accumulation in the three "Komoras" due to the construction of barricades for stowing and the 4th , 5th , 6th , 7th and 8th roomrise due to inadequate air flow. Court thus came to conclusion that the explosion occurred in the zone between the 1st and 2nd companion bounded by the 2nd and 3rd rises.
- Source of ignition: It is unfortunate that the source of ignition could not be pin-pointed. No explosives were taken underground and locomotives did not travel in the affected area on the day of the accident. No flame safety lamp was taken to 400m horizon. Contrabands like matches or other sources of lighting were not detected underground. Men were thoroughly checked for contrabands before they entered the cage. There was no evidence of any sparking or flashing in any of the damaged cap lamps recovered from the accident site. After all the electrical equipments in the affected area were examined by experts, the Court ruled out electrical sparking as a source of ignition. Sparks arising out of compressed air equipment were also ruled out because the two loading machines, which were the only compressed air operated equipment in the area, were not operated. Frictional sparking produced in auxiliary fans due to rubbing of blades against the liner or guide vanes was also ruled out firstly because in none of the fans, blades were found rubbing against the guide vanes and secondly, CMRS tests showed that rubbing of blades against the aluminum liner did not produce an incendive spark. DGMS suggested the possibility of fall of roof stone from the sill in 6th room-rise. The spark could also be produced by rubbing of a metallic part of the conveyor against a stone. One witness had heard a casualty saying that, "he was at the loading point at the time of the blast. Some machine was started and immediately thereafter came the big bang". After considering all the evidence, the Court was of the opinion that in all probability the ignition was caused due to rubbing of stone against the metallic parts of the conveyor when it was started.

Recommendations

- Some officers and supervisors of the mine showed good leadership and dedication to their duty towards their men. Risking their own lives, they went into the affected area immediately after the explosion, even without a methanometer or flame safety lamp, and saved a number of lives. Their conduct and behaviour deserve the highest praise.
- Proper arrangement should be made for supervision of the mine during holidays. At least in gassy seams of the third degree, all working faces should be inspected by an officer in each shift even on holiday. On the first working shift after a holiday, an officer should be deputed to check for gas in all parts of the mine before workers are allowed in.
- CMR-44(8) requires that a Sirdar shall not leave his district unless relieved by a successor. This provision regarding handing over charge by the Sirdars in the district (i.e. belowground) should be strictly enforced. Overmen should also be enjoined to wait until they are relieved. During rest days and holidays, persons on

Continued



roster duty should also be required to go only after handing over charge to their successors.

- CMR-186 lays down that "no machinery shall be operated otherwise than by or under the constant supervision of a competent person". Quite often auxiliary fans are operated by miners. Competent persons should be authorized to handle these fans. They must ensure that the fans are started in proper sequence.
- An environmental survey should be conducted before the capacity and location of auxiliary fans are decided upon. The survey should take into account the possible ill effects of running an auxiliary fan on the neighbouring working places as well as the places being ventilated by the auxiliary fan. Such surveys should be carried out periodically even after installation of the fan as there can be variation in gas emission and air circulation.
- There were not enough methanometers and flame safety lamps in working order to meet the daily requirements of overmen and mining sirdars. This situation needs to be corrected. Even though methanometers are now in common use for detection of methane, the only equipment mentioned in the CMR is the flame safety lamp. The CMR should be suitably amended to make the use of methanometers lawful. It is recommended that additional precautions for Degree III mines should be taken by installing an automatic multi-point methane recorder. Additionally, automatic methane alarms should be placed at all faces where gas is likely to accumulate.
- There are no clear instructions as to who should take control of rescue and recovery operations in an emergency. In this case no one seems to have performed this duty effectively. In the view of the Court this responsibility should be given to a committee consisting of a senior officer of the mine (who has detailed knowledge of the mine), a representative each from DGMS, Rescue Station and the recognised Trade Union. This committee should take decisions and direct operations from the Control Room. In each mine there should be a standing order with regard to the action to be taken when there is an accident. Also there should be definite emergency plans for every mine and rehearsals should be undertaken periodically for evacuation, rescue operations, etc.

Continued

Sudamdih fire turns serious

DHANBAD, March 17: The fire in number 15 seam, 300 metres below the horizon of the mine at Sudamdih colliery of the Bharat Coking Coal Ltd is officially stated to have as-

The location of the fire was almost in the same area where ignition had taken place during the last explosion at the colliery.

ed installations which might be damaged if the mine was flooded with water from the Damodar river to put out the fire.

It was felt that an attempt

gaseous coal mine—would have to be flooded and closed for 5 to 6 months.

All arrangements for flooding the mine have been kept

surcharged with methane gas (3 per cent) and carbon monoxide (0.1 per cent). It is feared that if the percentage of methane rises above five, there might be an explosion

THE INDIAN NATION 18th March 1977

Sudamdih Mine To Be Flooded

From Our Correspondent

DHANBAD, March 15.—The senior officials of Bharat Coking Coal and the Directorate General of Mines Safety decided, after prolonged deliberations here yesterday, to flood the Sudamdih mine by pumping water from the adjoining Damodar river to avoid chances of explosions in the mine where there is a fire since Sunday. According to a Press Note issued by Bharat Coking Coal management, the main shaft which employs 4,000 workers to produce 1,220 tonnes of prime cooking coal every day will have to be left idle because of the measures taken.

It is expected that by pumping water in the mine, the fire will be extinguished and the affected area will be cooled off. Round-the-clock operations are therefore being carried out at the mine to install pumps and lay pipe lines. The method is being introduced in view of the highly gaseous nature of the mine and other difficulties. Earlier, trained rescue workers went inside the mine to locate the source of the fire but because of a heavy pall of smoke, visibility was poor.

Fire in Sudamdih coal mine

DHANBAD, March 17 (Samachar).

The fire in number 15 seam, 300 metres below the horizon of the mine at Sudamdih colliery of the Bharat Coking Coal Ltd. is officially stated to have assumed "serious proportions."

Investigation squads with the apparatus today went down to find out atmospheric conditions of the mine and the feasibility of sealing the affected area, raging since Sunday last.

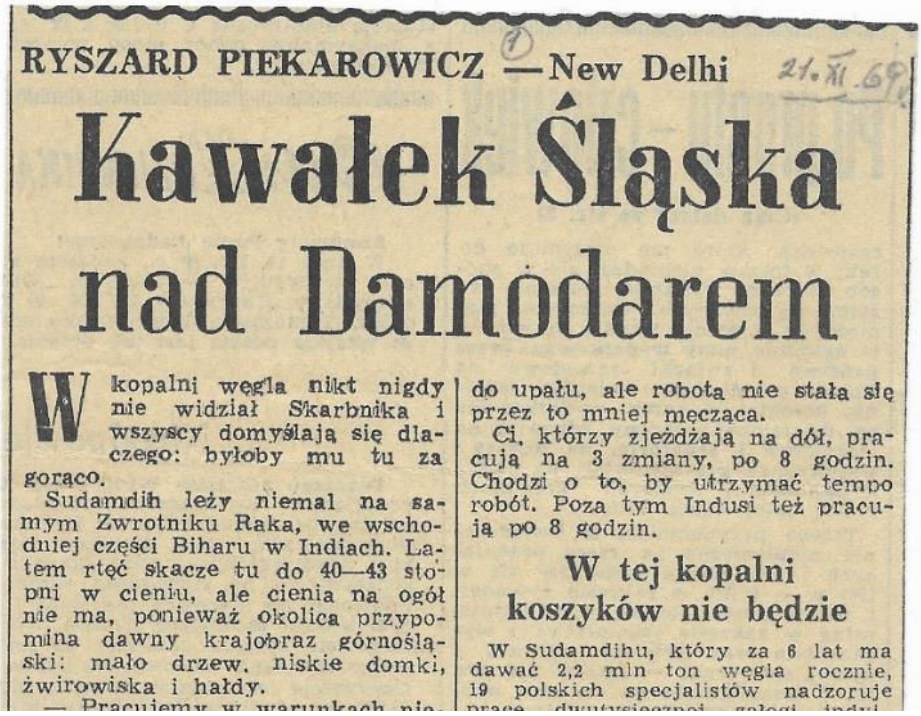
The location of the fire was almost in the same area where ignition had taken place during the last explosion at the colliery.

The decision on sealing the area on an experimental basis for 24 hours was taken at a meeting of top mining experts, the coal secretary, Mr K. S. R. Chari and Mr Biesek, chief of the Polish team said here yesterday.

This decision was taken in view of costly and sophisticated installations which might be damaged if the mine was flooded with water from the Damodar river to put out the fire.

Amrita Bazar Amrita Bazar Patrika newspaper – 15 and 17 March 1977
Indian Press on fire at Sudamdih.

Indian authorities and Polish experts were aware that the existence of Sudamdih was at stake.



RYSZARD PIEKAROWICZ — New Delhi 21.XI.69

Kawałek Śląska nad Damodarem

W kopalni węgla nikt nigdy nie widział Skarbnika i wszyscy domyślają się dlaczego: byłoby mu tu za gorąco.

Sudamdih leży niemal na samym Zwrotniku Raka, we wschodniej części Biharu w Indiach. Latem rtęć skacze tu do 40—43 stopni w cieniu, ale cienia na ogół nie ma, ponieważ okolica przypomina dawny krajobraz górnośląski: mało drzew, niskie domki, żwirowiska i hałdy.

— Pracujemy w warunkach nie-

do upału, ale robota nie stała się przez to mniej męcząca.

Ci, którzy zjeżdżają na dół, pracują na 3 zmiany, po 8 godzin. Chodzi o to, by utrzymać tempo robót. Poza tym Indusi też pracują po 8 godzin.

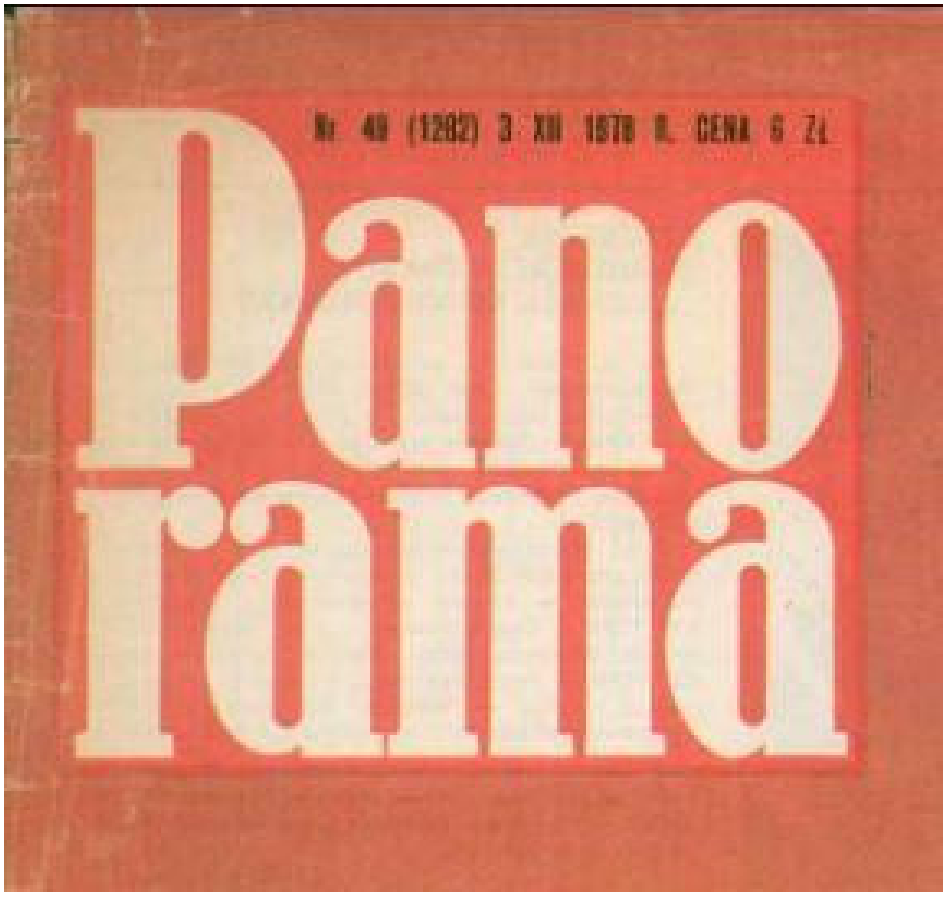
W tej kopalni koszyków nie będzie

W Sudamdihu, który za 6 lat ma dawać 2,2 mln ton węgla rocznie, 19 polskich specjalistów nadzoruje

“A piece of Silesia over the Damodar River.”

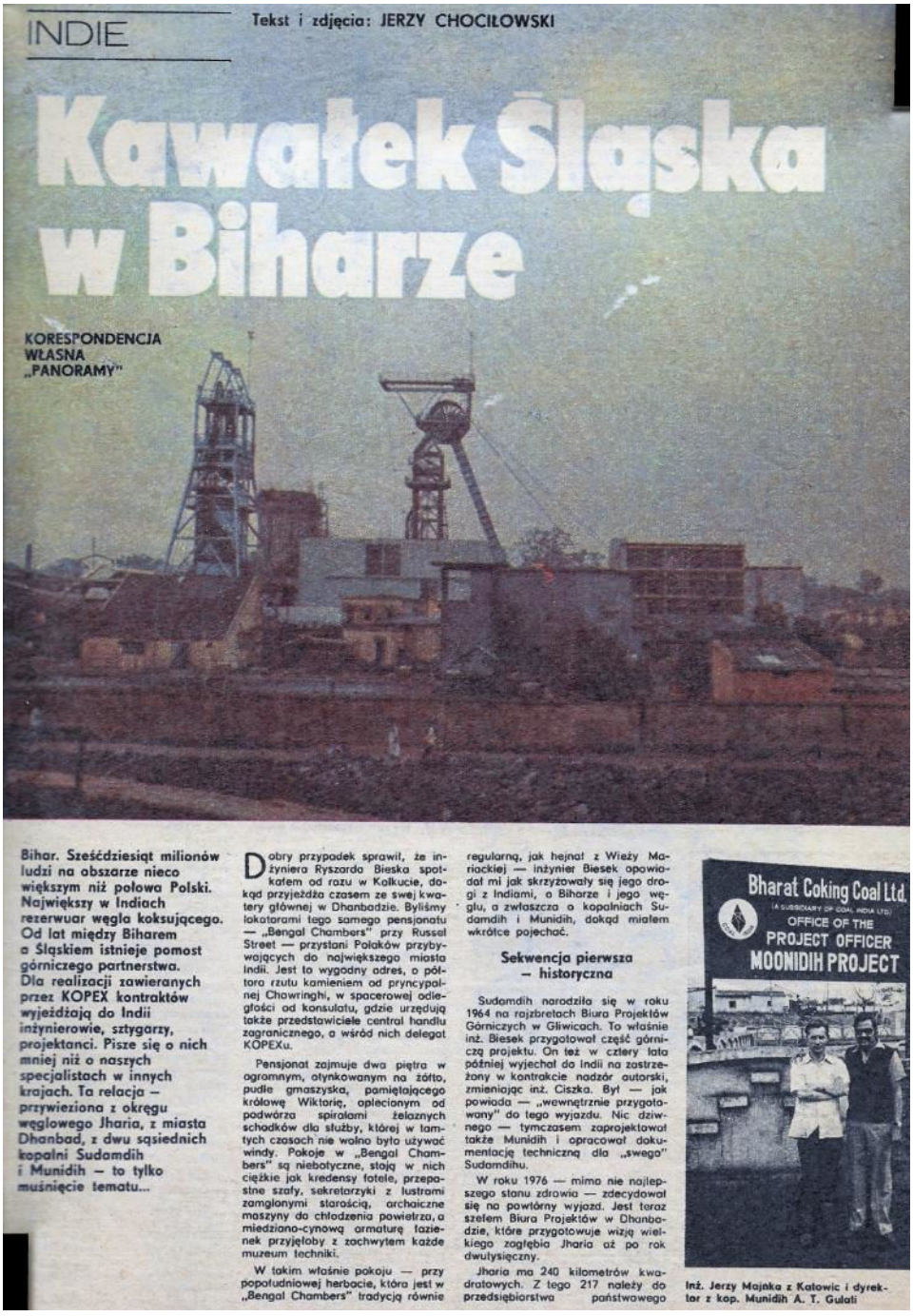
Article by Ryszard Piekarowicz – Polish Press Agency correspondent (newspaper unknown) - 21.11.1969

The article describes the work and life of Polish miners in Bihar.



This was the Polish weekly, publisher from 1954, which was most active in informing about Polish miners' work and life in Bihar.

There were two articles about Bihar. published in “Panorama”.by Mr. Jerzy Chociołowski.



INDIE

Tekst i zdjęcia: JERZY CHOCIŁOWSKI

Kawałek Śląska w Biharze

KORESPONDENCJA WŁASNA „PANORAMY"

Bihar. Sześćdziesiąt milionów ludzi na obszarze nieco większym niż połowa Polski. Największy w Indiach rezerwuar węgla koksującego. Od lat między Biharem a Śląskiem istnieje pomost górniczego partnerstwa. Dla realizacji zawieranych przez KOPEX kontraktów wyjeżdżają do Indii inżynierowie, sztygarzy, projektanci. Pisze się o nich mniej niż o naszych specjalistach w innych krajach. Ta relacja — przywieziona z okręgu węglowego Jharia, z miasta Dhanbad, z dwu sąsiednich kopalni Sudamdih i Munidih — to tylko muśnięcie tematu...

Dobry przypadek sprawił, że inżyniera Ryszarda Bieska spotkałem od razu w Kalkucie, dokąd przyjeżdża czasem ze swej kwatery głównej w Dhanbadzie. Byliśmy lokatorami tego samego pensjonatu — „Bengal Chambers" przy Russel Street — przystani Polaków przybywających do największego miasta Indii. Jest to wygodny adres, o półtora rzutu kamieniem od pryncypalnej Chawringhi, w spacerowej odległości od konsulatu, gdzie urzędują także przedstawiciele central handlu zagranicznego, a wśród nich delegat KOPEXu.

Pensjonat zajmuje dwa piętra w ogromnym, otynkowanym na żółto, pudle gmaszyska, pamiętającego królowę Wiktorię, oplecionym od podwórza spiralami żelaznych schodków dla służby, której w tamtych czasach nie wolno było używać windy. Pokoje w „Bengal Chambers" są niebotyczne, stoją w nich ciężkie jak kredensy fotele, przepastne szafy, sekretarzyki z lustrami zamglonymi starością, archaiczne maszyny do chłodzenia powietrza, a miedziano-cynowa armatura łazienek przyjęłoby z zachwytem każde muzeum techniki.

W takim właśnie pokoju — przy popołudniowej herbacie, która jest w „Bengal Chambers" tradycją równie regularną, jak hejnał z Wieży Mariackiej — inżynier Biesek opowiadał mi jak skrzyżowały się jego drogi z Indiami, o Biharze i jego węglu, a zwłaszcza o kopalniach Sudamdih i Munidih, dokąd miałem wkrótce pojechać.

Sekwencja pierwsza — historyczna

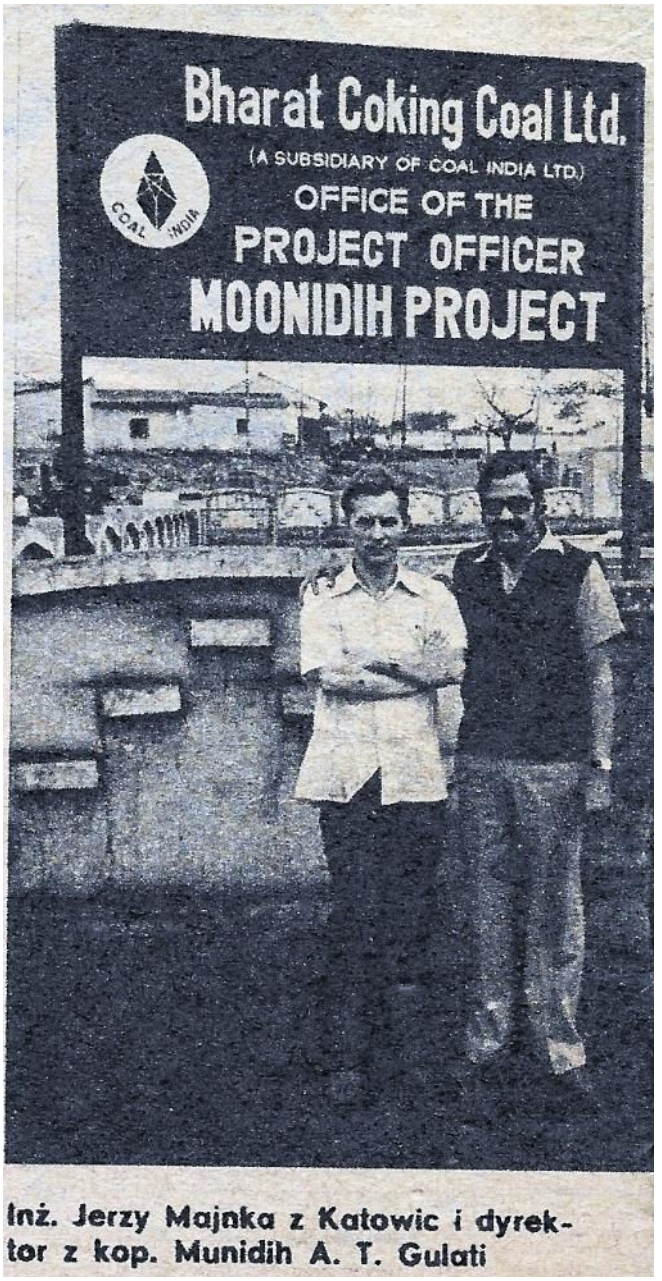
Sudamdih narodziła się w roku 1964 na rajzbretach Biura Projektów Górniczych w Gliwicach. To właśnie inż. Biesek przygotował część górniczą projektu. On też w cztery lata później wyjechał do Indii na zastrzeżony w kontrakcie nadzór autorski, zmieniając inż. Ciszka. Był — jak powiada — „wewnętrznie przygotowany" do tego wyjazdu. Nic dziwnego — tymczasem zaprojektował także Munidih i opracował dokumentację techniczną dla „swego" Sudamdihu.

W roku 1976 — mimo nie najlepszego stanu zdrowia — zdecydował się na powtórny wyjazd. Jest teraz szefem Biura Projektów w Dhanbadzie, które przygotowuje wizję wielkiego zagłębia Jharia aż po rok dwutysięczny.

Jharia ma 240 kilometrów kwadratowych. Z tego 217 należy do przedsiębiorstwa państwowego

Inż. Jerzy Majnka z Katowic i dyrektor z kop. Munidih A. T. Gulati

“A piece of Silesia in Bihar” - Panorama from August 1978.
Article about Moonidih and Sudamdih mines in Bihar.



We have on this photo Mr. Jerzy Mańka and mine director A T. Gulati.

Moonidih colliery was another Indo Polish coal mining project executed in the 60 and 70 of XX century.

“Panorama” weekly reporting on Indo Polish cooperation in coal mining.

Kawałek Śląska w Biharze

DOKOŃCZENIE ZE STR. 15

raz był tu w latach 1970—1972). Nie dziwię się więc zbytnio, słysząc jak swobodnie dogaduje się ze swymi indyjskimi kolegami mieszanką trzech języków.

Obwał wygląda paskudnie i będzie wymagał wielu ostrożnych i czasochłonnych wysiłków, zanim będzie można podjąć normalną pracę.

— Eksploatacja tych grubych (20—24 m) i stromych pokładów, to nasz główny problem — powiada inż. Majnka.

Munidih jest dużo łatwiejsza. Ale mimo to Munidih także nie wykorzystuje swej mocy produkcyjnej. Przyczyna? Przede wszystkim tzw. czynnik ludzki — mówi menadżer A. T. Gulati.

Połowa z ponad dwu tysięcy pracowników to właściwie okoliczni wieśniacy. Nie stosuje się akordu, wynagrodzenie jest dniówkowe. Na pierwszej szychcie frekwencja wynosi zwykle 650—700 ludzi, na drugiej i trzeciej — już tylko 350.

Dyrektor A. T. Gulati dwa lata temu spędził na Śląsku trzy miesiące i przyznaje, że wyjeżdżał z żalem, bo polubił Polaków, ceni ich za gościnność i serdeczność. Był także we Francji i porównanie tego pobytu wypadło w jego oczach wyraźnie na korzyść Polski. W Indiach o Polsce krążą różne opinie, często całkiem mylne, bo informacji jest za mało, wymiana kulturalna stanowczo za uboga.

Nie odniosłem wrażenia, by te pochwały, które tu raz po raz wiernie odnotowuję, wynikały z kurtuazji gospodarzy. Po prostu nasi górnicy to solidni fachowcy.

JERZY CHOCIŁOWSKI

Zdjęcie autora

Typowa dla zagłębia Jharia mała kopalnia upadowa

Continued.

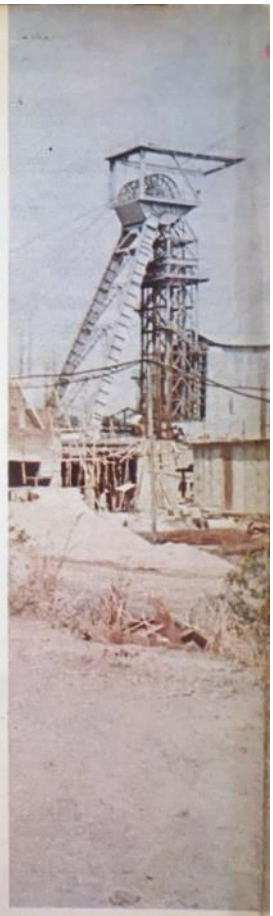
INDIE

Tekst i zdjęcia: JERZY CHOCIŁOWSKI

Wyrwać człowieka z paszczy tygrysa

KORESPONDENCJA WŁASNA „PANORAMY"

W pierwszym odcinku tego reportażu („Kawałek Śląska w Biharze" PANORAMA nr 37) była mowa o dwu indyjskich kopalniach — Sudamdih i Munidih w Biharze — które noszą nasz autorski stempel. Jedną z tych kopalń można by nazwać „podwójnie polską", gdyż tylko dzięki Polakom nie poszła na zagładę i jej ekipy nadal wyciągają urobek.



W Dhanbadzie jest budynek nazwany Shanti Bhavan, co znaczy Spokojny Dom, ale to, co się przygotowuje w jego ścianach będzie dla całej okolicy małą rewolucją. Kilkudziesięciu inżynierów (w tym dziewięciu projektantów z Polski) opracowuje tam kompleksowy plan zagospodarowania zagłębia węglowego Jharia i eksploatacji jego zasobów w naukowy, racjonalny sposób.

Zagłębie — mimo że już niemal w całości od sześciu lat znacjonalizowane — jest właściwie dalej w stanie chaosu, w jakim było dawniej. Znajduje się w nim aż ponad 80 zespołów wydobywczych, 190 szybów, w tym produkcyjnych — 138, ze średnią wydajnością 200 ton dziennie i 260 kopalń upadowych (234 produkcyjne), dających przeciętnie około stu ton na dobę.

Infrastruktury technicznej prawie nie ma, socjalnej — z wyjątkiem klubów i ambulatoriów — również nie. Osiedla i miasteczka rosną żywiołowo, pod powierzchnią zalegają w filarach setki milionów ton węgla — spadek po starym nieekonomicznym górnictwie. Tlą się także w porzuconych wyrobiskach dziesiątki niewygaszonych pól pożarowych. Toteż na drogach między kopalniami stoją tablice ostrzegające kierowców, że przejeżdżają tamtędy na własne ryzyko.

Inż. Jerzy Majnka — wskazując na ten posępny, zaniedbany krajobraz z rzadkimi wieżyczkami szybów powiedział, że tak chyba sto lat temu wyglądać musiał Śląsk.

Dalekosiężna idea, jaka wykluwa się w dhanbadzkim biurze projektowym pod kierunkiem inż. Ryszarda Bieska — rozszczepiona została na dwie fazy. W pierwszej — wszystkie kopalnie skomasuje się w 40 bloków, mających łącznie 30 szybów wydobywczych (o średniej produkcji dziennej 3,5 tys. ton) i 10 „upadówek". W następnej fazie — w roku dwutysięcznym — koncentracja postąpi jeszcze dalej. Bloków będzie 20 i tylez szybów, dających przeciętnie 10 tys. ton na dobę. Tak więc zdolność produkcyjna całej Jharii wyniesie wówczas około 40 mln ton rocznie.

Pod kierownictwem inż. Ryszarda Bieska powstał projekt zagospodarowania zagłębia węglowego Jharia

Wizja z rozmachem

Ale to nie wszystko. W naszej koncepcji mieści się także konieczna przy takim przedsięwzięciu infrastruktura. Powstaną więc: obwodnica kolejowa i drogowa, 15 nowych płuczek, stacje ratownictwa, zdawczo-odbiorcze stacje kolejowe, masty, przepusty, sztuczne jezioro etc., a także sieć szkolnictwa zawodowego.

Wyrosną również nowe miasta, wyrzucone poza obręb działalności czysto górniczej. Nowa Jharia będzie miała milion mieszkańców, Kumaramangalam City — pół miliona, Barlacola — 300 tys., Munidih — 200 tys. Jest też propozycja ze strony indyjskiej, by planowane na pół miliona ludzi miasto New Mohada przemianować na Polonia City lub Katowice!

Przedstawiony przez nas w końcu 1976 r. kompletny już obraz przyszłości Jharii, zaskoczył gospodarzy swoim rozmachem. Uwzględniał przecież znacznie więcej, niżli tylko eksploatację złóż. Przewidywał rekonstrukcję tego wszystkiego, co górnictwo niszczy, dostrzegał ochronę środowiska, której wagę w Indiach dopiero zaczyna się rozumieć.

Oczywiście, dyskusja obracała się przede wszystkim wokół dużych, ale nieuniknionych kosztów. Z tego właśnie powodu Hindusi mieli m. in. zastrzeżenia do kopalń głębinowych, woleli mieć tańsze — odkrywkowe, kuszące ze względu na dość płytkie zaleganie złóż. Ostatecznie przyjęto rozwiązanie kompromisowe. Nowy, zmodyfikowany wariant planu bierze pod uwagę większe odkrywki i tylko tam, gdzie będą one całkowicie niepraktyczne, zastosuje się wydobycie głębinowe. Ale i tak przeciętna głębokość kopalni zwiększy się w Jharii do 300 metrów (obecnie 160 m).

Mimo takich czy innych różnic zdań, wymownym rezultatem naszych działań były dalsze kontrakty KOPEXu: dla projektantów, dla eksperta od szkolnictwa zawodowego i na kompleks ścianek zmechanizowanych wraz z obsługą instalacyjną. Inż. Biesek powiedział mi również, że nasi partnerzy spodziewają się od KOPEXu oferty na przedłużenie nadzoru nad Sudamdihem i Munidihem oraz dla naszego zespołu w dhanbadzkim biurze projektów.

Wszystko to otwiera przed nami zachęcające perspektywy dalszej współpracy. Jesteśmy na miejscu, mamy wiadomości z pierwszej ręki — jak wchodzić na indyjski rynek, jak wyprzedzać życzenia klientów, a także konkurencji. Nie mamy przecież w Indiach monopolu. Przyjeżdżają tam fachowcy z innych krajów, Amerykanie, Niemcy z RFN, Anglicy i kombinują jak nas „wyciąć" — wedle określenia inż. Majnki. Rzecz w tym, by nie wypuszczać z ręki dobrej szansy. Wykorzystywać szybko zebrane już doświadczenia i w odpowiednim czasie wychodzić z inicjatywą.

Jest o co walczyć, albowiem węgiel ma w Indiach przyszłość, zwłaszcza po wielkim kryzysie naftowym. Indie zarabiają sporo na sprzedaży węgla do państw EWG, do Japonii, na Tajwan i zamierzają ten eksport znacznie rozszerzyć. Przedsiębiorstwo Coal India Ltd., którego filią jest BCCL — Bharat Coking Coal Ltd. w Jharii, chce zwiększyć krajowe wydobycie ze 100 mln ton obecnie, do przeszło 180 mln w połowie lat 80., i to głównie dzięki mechanizacji i modernizacji swych kopalń.

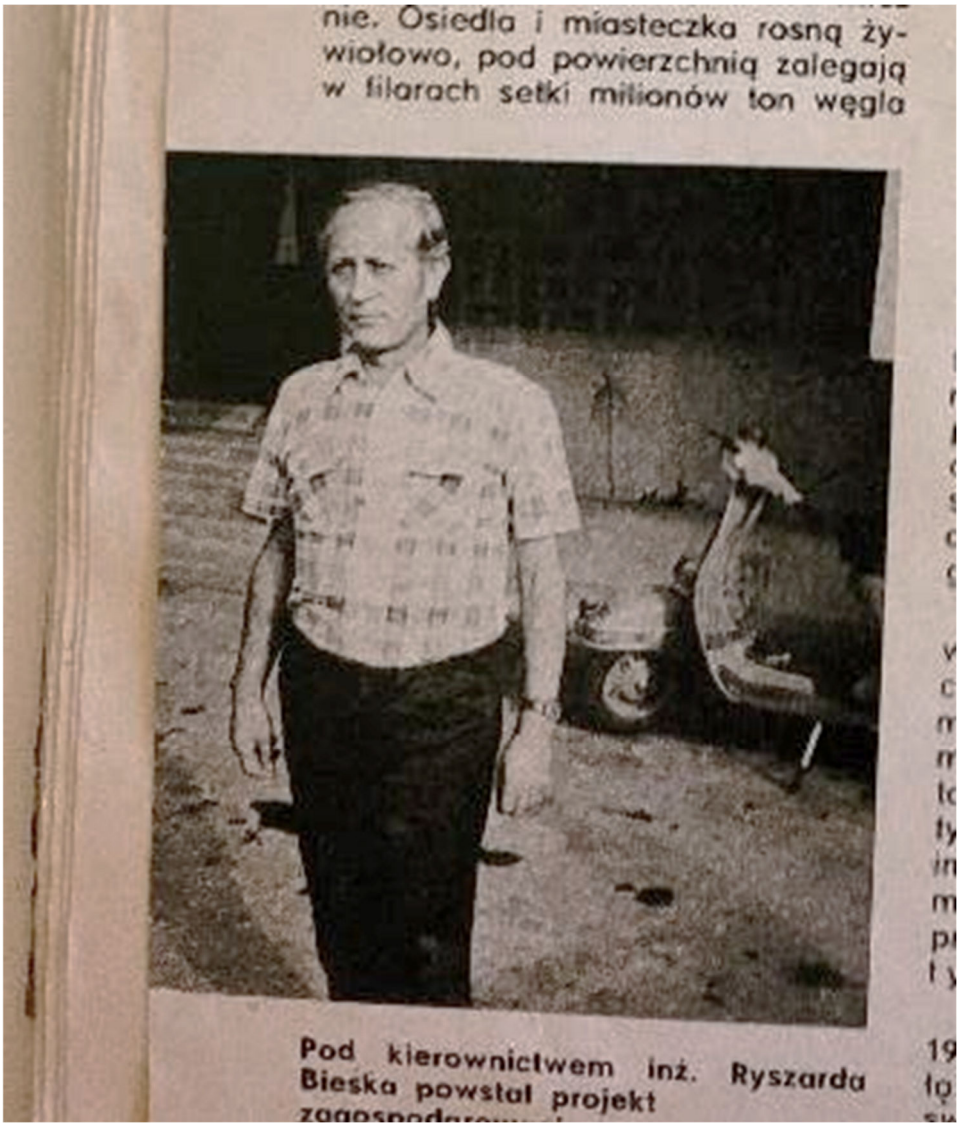
Możemy i my przy tym ogniu upiec swoje kasztany. I to zarówno przez włączenie się do tych inwestycji, gdzie już mamy otwarte konta, jak i próbując szczęścia w takich nowych dla indyjskiego kopalnictwa węglowego dziedzinach, jak dla przykładu ratownictwo czy telemetria.

„Nie kryli twarzy..."

Jeśli tak się stanie, to kolejne grupy naszych specjalistów wpiszą w swe biografie miesiące, czy lata pobytu w Indiach. Ci, którzy tam już byli i ci, którzy są tam teraz — wiedzą, że jest to nowa szkoła życia. I wcale niełatwa. Daje się mocno we znaki okropny klimat, oddalenie od kraju, a z biegiem czasu może najbardziej monotonia.

The title speaks for itself:
"To snatch a man from the tigers jaw".

Second article in "Panorama" weekly (1978 nr49) about fire disaster in Sudamdih mine.


nie. Osiedla i miasteczka rosną żywiołowo, pod powierzchnią zalegają w filarach setki milionów ton węgla

Pod kierownictwem inż. Ryszarda Bieska powstał projekt

Mr. Ryszard Biesek - the most important figure of the Polish team.

He is the personification not only of promoting modern technologies from Poland in Indian mining in the 60 and 70 of XX century but first of all he was one of the creators of that professional camaraderie of Indian and Polish miners.

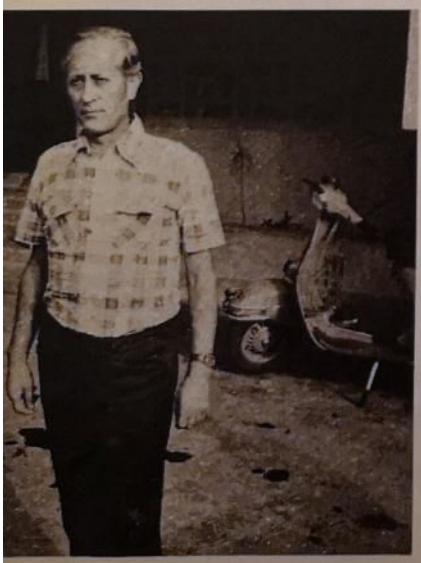
W Dhanbadzie jest budynek nazwany *Shanti Bhavan*, co znaczy Spokojny Dom, ale to, co się przygotowuje w jego ścianach będzie dla całej okolicy małą rewolucję. Kilkudziesięciu inżynierów (w tym dziewięciu projektantów z Polski) opracowuje tam kompleksowy plan zagospodarowania zagłębia węglowego Jharia i eksploatacji jego zasobów w naukowy, racjonalny sposób.

Zagłębie — mimo że już niemal w całości od sześciu lat znacjonalizowane — jest właściwie dalej w stanie chaosu, w jakim było dawniej. Znajduje się w nim aż ponad 80 zespołów wydobywczych, 190 szybów, w tym produkcyjnych — 138, ze średnią wydajnością 200 ton dziennie i 260 kopalń upadowych (234 produkcyjne), dających przeciętnie około stu ton na dobę.

Infrastruktury technicznej prawie nie ma, socjalnej — z wyjątkiem klubów i ambulatoriów — również nie. Osiedla i miasteczka rosną żywiołowo, pod powierzchnią zalegają w filarach setki milionów ton węgla — spadek po starym nieekonomicznym górnictwie. Tlą się także w porzuconych wyrobiskach dziesiątki niewygaszonych pól pożarowych. Toteż na drogach między kopalniami stoją tablice ostrzegające kierowców, że przejeżdżają tamtędy na własne ryzyko.

Inż. Jerzy Majnka — wskazując na ten posępny, zaniedbany krajobraz z rzadkimi wieżyczkami szybów powiedział, że tak chyba sto lat temu wyglądać musiał Śląsk.

Dalekosiężna idea, jaka wykluwa się w dhanbadzkim biurze projektowym pod kierunkiem inż. Ryszarda Bieska — rozszczepiona została na dwie fazy. W pierwszej — wszystkie kopalnie skomasuje się w 40 bloków, mających łącznie 30 szybów wydobywczych (o średniej produkcji dziennej 3,5 tys. ton) i 10 „upadówek". W następnej fazie — w roku dwutysięcznym — koncentracja postąpi jeszcze dalej. Bloków będzie 20 i tyleż szybów, dających przeciętnie 10 tys. ton na dobę. Tak więc zdolność produkcyjna całej Jharii wyniesie wówczas około 40 mln ton rocznie.



Pod kierownictwem inż. Ryszarda Bieska powstał projekt zagospodarowania zagłębia węglowego Jharia

Wizja z rozmachem

Ale to nie wszystko. W naszej koncepcji mieści się także konieczna przy takim przedsięwzięciu infrastruktura. Powstaną więc: obwodnica kolejowa i drogowa, 15 nowych płuczek, stacje ratownictwa, zdawczo-odbiorcze stacje kolejowe, mosty, przepusty, sztuczne jezioro etc., a także sieć szkolnictwa zawodowego.

Wyrosną również nowe miasta, wyrzucone poza obręb działalności czysto górniczej. New Jharia będzie miała milion mieszkańców, Kumaramangalam City — pół miliona, Bartacola — 300 tys., Munidih — 200 tys. Jest też propozycja ze strony indyjskiej, by planowane na pół miliona ludzi miasto New Mohada przemianować na Polonia City lub Katowice!

Przedstawiony przez nas w końcu 1976 r. kompletny już obraz przyszłości Jharii, zaskoczył gospodarzy swoim rozmachem. Uwzględniał przecież znacznie więcej, niźli tylko eksploatację złóż. Przewidywał re-

Continued

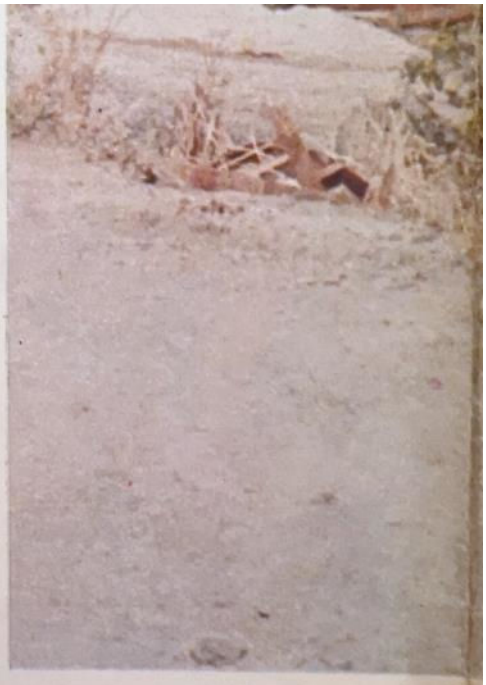
konstrukcję tego wszystkiego, co górnictwo niszczy, dostrzegał ochronę środowiska, której wagę w Indiach dopiero zaczyna się rozumieć.

Oczywiście, dyskusja obracała się przede wszystkim wokół dużych, ale nieuniknionych kosztów. Z tego właśnie powodu Hindusi mieli m. in. zastrzeżenia do kopalń głębinowych, woleli mieć tańsze — odkrywkowe, kuszące ze względu na dość płytkie zaleganie złóż. Ostatecznie przyjęło rozwiązanie kompromisowe. Nowy, zmodyfikowany wariant planu bierze pod uwagę większe odkrywki i tylko tam, gdzie będą one całkowicie niepraktyczne, zastosuje się wydobycie głębinowe. Ale i tak przeciętna głębokość kopalni zwiększy się w Jharii do 300 metrów (obecnie 160 m).

Mimo takich czy innych różnic zdań, wymownym rezultatem naszych działań były dalsze kontrakty KOPEXu: dla projektantów, dla eksperta od szkolnictwa zawodowego i na kompleks ścianek zmechanizowanych wraz z obsługą instalacyjną. Inż. Biesek powiedział mi również, że nasi partnerzy spodziewają się od KOPEXu oferty na przedłużenie nadzoru nad Sudamdihem i Munidihem oraz dla naszego zespołu w dhanbadzkim biurze projektów.

Wszystko to otwiera przed nami zachęcające perspektywy dalszej współpracy. Jesteśmy na miejscu, mamy wiadomości z pierwszej ręki — jak wchodzić na indyjski rynek, jak wyprzedzać życzenia klientów, a także konkurencji. Nie mamy przecież w Indiach monopolu. Przyjeżdżają tam fachowcy z innych krajów, Amerykanie, Niemcy z RFN, Anglicy i kombinują jak nas „wyciąć" — wedle określenia inż. Majnki. Rzecz w tym, by nie wypuszczać z ręki dobrej szansy. Wykorzystywać szybko zebrane już doświadczenia i w odpowiednim czasie wychodzić z inicjatywą.

Jest o co walczyć, albowiem węgiel ma w Indiach przyszłość, zwłaszcza po wielkim kryzysie naftowym. Indie zarabiają sporo na sprzedaży węgla do państw EWG, do Japonii, na Tajwan i zamierzają ten eksport znacznie rozszerzyć. Przedsiębiorstwo *Coal India Ltd.*, którego filią jest BCCL — *Bharat Coking Coal Ltd.* w Jharii, chce zwiększyć krajowe wydobycie ze 100 mln ton obecnie, do przeszło 180 mln w połowie lat 80., i to głównie dzięki mechanizacji i modernizacji swych kopalń.



Możemy i my przy tym ogniu upiec swoje kasztany. I to zarówno przez włączenie się do tych inwestycji, gdzie już mamy otwarte konta, jak i próbując szczęścia w takich nowych dla indyjskiego kopalnictwa węglowego dziedzinach, jak dla przykładu ratownictwo czy telemetria.

„Nie kryli twarzy..."

Jeśli tak się stanie, to kolejne grupy naszych specjalistów wpiszą w swe biografie miesiące czy lata pobytu w Indiach. Ci, którzy tam już byli i ci, którzy są tam teraz — wiedzą, że jest to nowa szkoła życia. I wcale niełatwa. Daje się mocno we znaki okropny klimat, oddalenie od kraju, a z biegiem czasu może najbardziej monotonia.

Continued

Kopalnia Sudamdih tylko dzięki Polakom nie została skazana na zagładę

w przyszłości będzie dawało dywidendy.

Kapitał, jaki włożono w kopalnię zamortyzuje się, choć nie zawsze będą to wartości, które da wyrazić się w sumach pieniężnych. Jest to niewątpliwie najtrudniejszy teren, jaki polskie górnictwo mogło sobie wybrać do kooperacji. Mimo to zdaliśmy doskonale egzamin partnerski, co widoczne jest wyraźnie z perspektywy lat, które minęły.

„Można bowiem udawać — konkluduje pan Chowdhary — prowadzić podwójną grę przez pewien czas, ale nie ciągle, w końcu fałsz, wyjdzie na jaw. Polacy nie kryli twarzy pod maskami i dlatego uważani są za przyjaciół".

„To było fantastyczne"

Los zresztą chciał, że przyjaźń ta sprawdziła się nie tylko w codziennej pracy, ale i w okolicznościach dramatycznych i to dwukrotnie. Najpierw w październiku 1976 roku na poziomie 400 metrów wybuchł w Sudamdih metan. Było akurat święto bogini Durgi i przez trzy dni nikt nie zjeżdżał na dół i nie pracowały wentylatory. W poniedziałek rano, gdy sztygar wszedł z załogą na przodek, nagromadzony metan eksplodował. Na szczęście absencja była z powodu święta duża (60 proc.), lecz mimo to zginęło od razu 57 ludzi, a sześciu zmarło w szpitalu wskutek poparzeń.

Pierwsi w rejonie wybuchu byli Polacy, (inż. Majnka oraz inż. Kotarba). Odnaleźli 18 zwłok i jednego górnika, który jeszcze żył. Podług opinii indyjskiego Wyższego Urzędu Górniczego tylko polska technologia wybierania pokładu nie pozwoliła na rozprzestrzenianie się wybuchu, ponieważ zatamowały go zapory pyłowe i nie było obwałów. Przy każdym innym modelu nastąpiłoby zawalenie i — co za tym idzie — zamknięcie kopalni.

Po dwu miesiącach minął szok i wznowiono normalne wydobycie. Ale w niedzielę 13 marca 1977 roku o sto metrów wyżej, na poziomie 300, wybuchł pożar. Bardzo prędko szyby w pełnym przekroju zaczęły snuć czarne chmury. W powietrzu było już 3 proc. metanu i gdyby procent ten wzrósł do pięciu, groziłoby to eksplozją. Postanowiono zatem zalać kopalnię wodą przepompowaną z rzeki Damodar. Była to decyzja bolesna. Miała zginąć najbardziej prestiżowa kopalnia Indii, gdyż jej ponowne uruchomienie było praktycznie mało prawdopodobne, teoretycznie zaś wymagałoby kilku lat. Natomiast wszystkie urządzenia uległyby bezpowrotnemu zniszczeniu, co oznaczało stratę — lekko licząc — stu milionów rupii.

Wtedy właśnie Polacy z inżynierami Bieskim i Kotarbą na czele zaiożyli veto oświadczając, że jest szansa ocalenia kopalni poprzez odizolowanie pola pożarowego od innych wyrobisk. Po ośmiu godzinach zaciętej wymiany zdań z ministrem górnictwa Charim, inż. Biesek postawił na swoim. Ale na wykonanie swego pomysłu otrzymał 12 godzin — od 16.00 do 4 rano. Robotnicy miejscowi odmówili zjazdu, ale cały zespół polski (z projektantami włącznie), zjechał i pracując bez chwili odpoczynku zrobił w terminie zapory przeciwpożarowe. Sudamdih nie zatonęło.

Był to pierwszy przypadek w historii górnictwa indyjskiego zduszenia pożaru bez wody. Bez precedensu był również fakt, że wydobycie kontynuowano później przy czynnym polu pożarowym. Teraz jest już ono martwe (nie ma tlenku ani dwutlenku węgla, prawie wcale tlenu i tylko 60 proc. metanu) i być może będzie otwarte. I znowu: akcja taka nie byłaby możliwa, gdyby kopalnia miała inny, niepolski model.

„To było wspaniałe, fantastyczne, niesłychane — nie szczędzi superlatywów dyr. Chowdhary. — Mamy takie powiedzenie w Indiach: »Wyrwać człowieka z paszczy tygrysa« i wyczyn Polaków, którzy uratowali Sudamdih od niechybnej — zdawałoby się — zguby, to było właśnie to".

Milczenie...

Inż. Biesek pokazał mi list, jaki z datą 9 kwietnia 1977 roku wystosował doń dyr. Chowdhary. Przytaczam go (z niewielkimi skrótami), gdyż dokument ten znany jest tylko nielicznej grupce osób.

Piasek podsadzkowy dla kopalń w Sudamdihu wydobywany jest z rzeki unikatową metodą hydrologiczną

„Szanowny panie Biesek — pisał menedżer — nie mam dość słów, by wyrazić podziękowanie za nadzwyczajne dzieło dokonane pod pańskim kierownictwem dla ocalenia kopalni (...) To dzięki pańskiej inteligencji i nieustannej zachęcie w tych najtrudniejszych dniach — kopalnia została uratowana. Pan i członkowie polskiego zespołu zasługują na naszą wdzięczność i uznanie".

Inż. Biesek i ludzie, którzy z nim pracowali i pracują, mają więc rzetelny powód do dumy, chociaż się z nią nie obnoszą. Jednak najgłębsza nawet satysfakcja osobista zostawia gorzki osad, gdy przechodzi niedostrzeżona. Trochę to dziwne, że nikt, ani w Indiach, ani przynajmniej w Polsce nie ocenił należycie z jak szlachetnego kruszca była nasza zostuga dla Sudamdihu i jak wielostronne wynikają z niej pożytki.

Tymczasem, poza cytowanym wyżej listem, znikąd nie nadeszły słowa nawet choćby najbardziej zdawkowych gratulacji. Nic poza milczeniem... ■

Tak jest przynajmniej w Sudamdihu, gdzie lista atrakcji jest króciutko i nie ma na niej nawet kina — słowem niczego, co w każdym innym, najbardziej prowincjonalnym zakątku pomaga zabić wolny czas.

Większość polonii mieszka tuż obok siebie w ośmiu jednakowych domkach na okolonej murem hektarowej działce.

Od czasu do czasu, a ściślej w porze jesienno-zimowej, wieczory przynoszą rzeski chłodek, odbywają się w Sudamdihu spotkania przy ognisku. Zaproszono mnie na jedno z nich, stąd wiem, że je się wtedy ziemniaki prosto z żaru, trochę gawędzi, a trochę śpiewa, przeważnie na nutkę nostalgiczną. Zresztą atmosfera nie była pozbawiona owej powagi, jaką zauważyć można zwykle, gdy zbierają się ludzie zamknięci hermetycznie w małym światku; błoha nawet rozrywka nasyca się podówczas pewną ceremonialnością, której nie należy jednakowoż utożsamiać ze sztywnością.

Zbliżone wrażenie odniosłem wcześniej, tegoż popołudnia, patrząc z trybuniki sudamdihskiego stadionu na uroczyste rozdanie nagród w międzykopalnianych zawodach sportowych. Wyniki były mizerne, ale unosił się nad nimi duch barona de Coubertin, a zwycięzców honorowano tak, jakby ustanowili wspaniałe rekordy. W loży honorowej obecny był oczywiście pan S. K. Chowdhary, dyrektor generalny Sudamdihu i Munidihu, który zaprosił mnie nazajutrz do swego gabinetu na rozmowę: „Jam wolny — proszę bardzo" — mówi, popisując się żartobliwie zwrotami polskimi, jakich nauczył się m.in. podczas trzykrotnego pobytu na Śląsku, w tym raz aż pół roku.

Dyrektor narzekał na kiepską dyscyplinę swojej załogi, na braki w kwalifikacjach, na to, że wszystko trwa znacznie dłużej niż powinno, co odbija się niedobrze na wydajności. Niemniej, Sudamdih należy uważać za kopalnię pionierską, gdzie odkłada się na bok zużyte szablony, a to w sposobie zarządzania, a to na polu opieki socjalnej i szkolenia kadr, a to wreszcie w sferze bezpieczeństwa pracy. Wszystko to

Photos and description of rescue action in Sudamdih in Polish press.

Rescuers, ambulance vans and relatives outside the pithead of the Sudamdih mine, near Chas Nala, where 38 miners were killed in an explosion on Monday.

MINE DISASTER TOLL RISES TO 38

From Our Correspondent

DHANBAD, Oct. 5.—The death toll in yesterday's mine explosion at Sudamdih rose to 38 today. left benind a family of 13. One of his sons is employed in this mine. Dhuri Rawani (30), a piece-rated worker who lost his life in

Amrita Bazar Patrika (Newspaper) – 6 October 1976.

This is Indian press reporting on gas explosion disaster at Chas Nala mine.

From Our Correspondent

DHANBAD, Oct. 5.—The death toll in yesterday's mine explosion at Sudamdih rose to 38 today. Rescue teams found 36 bodies till today and two of those who were seriously injured succumbed to their wounds in hospital. While nine people are still lying in a precarious condition, another 12 are being treated in hospital. Only six people have been discharged from the hospital so far.

The Union Energy Minister, Mr K. C. Pant, who flew in here with Mr K. S. R. Chari, steel secretary in the Department of Coal, told reporters this evening that normal mining operations would be resumed from tomorrow in the areas where the impact of the blast had not been felt.

Immediately on his arrival, Mr Pant held discussions with senior officials of Coal India Limited and its subsidiaries, and also trade union leaders. He was happy that everybody had been cooperating with the management in conducting smooth rescue operations. Mr Pant said that a rescue team had gone down in the evening.

Most of the victims of the Sudamdih disaster were between 30 and 40 years of age. Shishridhar Baury, who died in the explosion, had married only last year.

The wife of at least one of the victims seems to have intuitively anticipated the accident. She had told her husband, Tirath Raj Gareri, that gas might have accumulated in the mine during the days of closure and had tried to dissuade him from going. The widow of Gareri, in an advance stage of pregnancy, now has no one except a five-year-old daughter in her family. Tirath Raj had joined work even though he was not well.

Another widow, Shakina Banu, tears rolling down her cheeks, narrated how she and other members of the family had tried to prevent her 55-year-old senior overman husband, Ali Hussain, from going to the colliery after the Puja holidays they were enjoying at Giridih. Death had dragged him, she said, for in spite of all persuasion, Hussain hired a taxi to reach the mine. He has left benind a family of 13. One of his sons is employed in this mine.

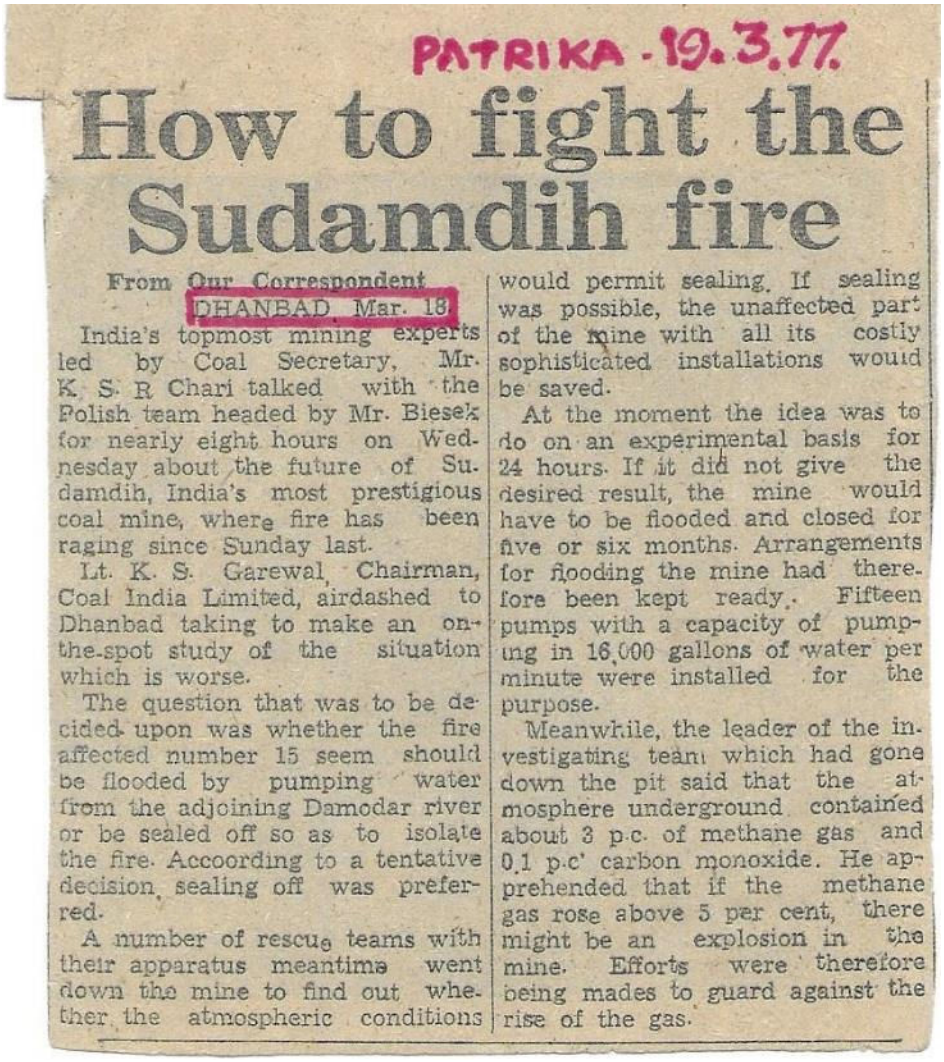
Dhuri Rawani (30), a piecerated worker who lost his life in the disaster could not meet his old father who came all the way from Mongnyr to bless his only son after Vijoya Dashami. His body had been identified when his father reached the colliery.

Kameshwar Singh (28) was no longer alive when a telegram arrived from his wife stating that he had been blessed with a son.

There was some confusion about the casualty figures. The control room set up at the mine maintained that 37 people had died, but police sources stated that 38 lives were lost.

A case under section 304(A) IPC (rash and negligent act causing loss of lives) has been instituted against the management by the Jorapokhar police station.

Continuation



PATRIKA - 19.3.77.

How to fight the Sudamdih fire

From Our Correspondent

DHANBAD, Mar. 18

India's topmost mining experts led by Coal Secretary, Mr. K. S. R Chari talked with the Polish team headed by Mr. Biesek for nearly eight hours on Wednesday about the future of Sudamdih, India's most prestigious coal mine, where fire has been raging since Sunday last.

Lt. K. S. Garewal, Chairman, Coal India Limited, airdashed to Dhanbad taking to make an on-the-spot study of the situation which is worse.

The question that was to be decided upon was whether the fire affected number 15 seem should be flooded by pumping water from the adjoining Damodar river or be sealed off so as to isolate the fire. Accoording to a tentative decision, sealing off was preferred.

A number of rescue teams with their apparatus meantime went down the mine to find out whether the atmospheric conditions would permit sealing. If sealing was possible, the unaffected part of the mine with all its costly sophisticated installations would be saved.

At the moment the idea was to do on an experimental basis for 24 hours. If it did not give the desired result, the mine would have to be flooded and closed for five or six months. Arrangements for flooding the mine had therefore been kept ready. Fifteen pumps with a capacity of pumping in 16,000 gallons of water per minute were installed for the purpose.

Meanwhile, the leader of the investigating team which had gone down the pit said that the atmosphere underground contained about 3 p.c. of methane gas and 0.1 p.c' carbon monoxide. He apprehended that if the methane gas rose above 5 per cent, there might be an explosion in the mine. Efforts were therefore being mades to guard against the rise of the gas.

Amrita Bazar Patrika (Newspaper) – 19 March 1976.

The Sudamdih fire disaster was a subject of keen interest and debate in Indian press. This is Amrita Bazar Amrita Bazar Patrika of 19.3.1977 informing on the subject.

R PATRIKA MARCH 20, 1977 3

Sudamdih mines' fire controlled

NEW DELHI, Mar. 19.

Indian and Polish engineers have succeeded in controlling the mines' fire in Sudamdih coal mines by pumping in inert gases into the burning areas of the mine seams, reports Samachar.

This is the first time that this method of controlling mine fires is being used.

By pumping in inert nitrogen and carbon di-oxide gases, the fire districts of the mine are rendered inert and resistant to fires.

A fire broke out in 15th seam of the Sudamdih coal mines of the Bharat Coking Coal Limited on March 13 in an area between 200 and 300 metres deep levels. This resulted in smoke coming out of the mine fan outlet.

According to latest reports reaching here, on the advice of top mining engineers of the country it has been possible to avoid explosion hazards by isolating the fresh air that went into the mines.

An official expert who participated in the deliberations on containing the fire in a grassy mine like Sudamdih said that the fire had been contained by "physical isolation" without flooding the mines.

The expert said that commendable work, though risky, had been performed by Indian and Polish engineers in conducting such isolation work.

A dozen senior mining engineers under the leadership of coal department secretary, Mr. K. S. R. Chari participated in the deliberations on controlling the fire and restarting the mines to production.

A team from Oil and Natural Gas Commission (ONGC) was also kept ready for advice and help.

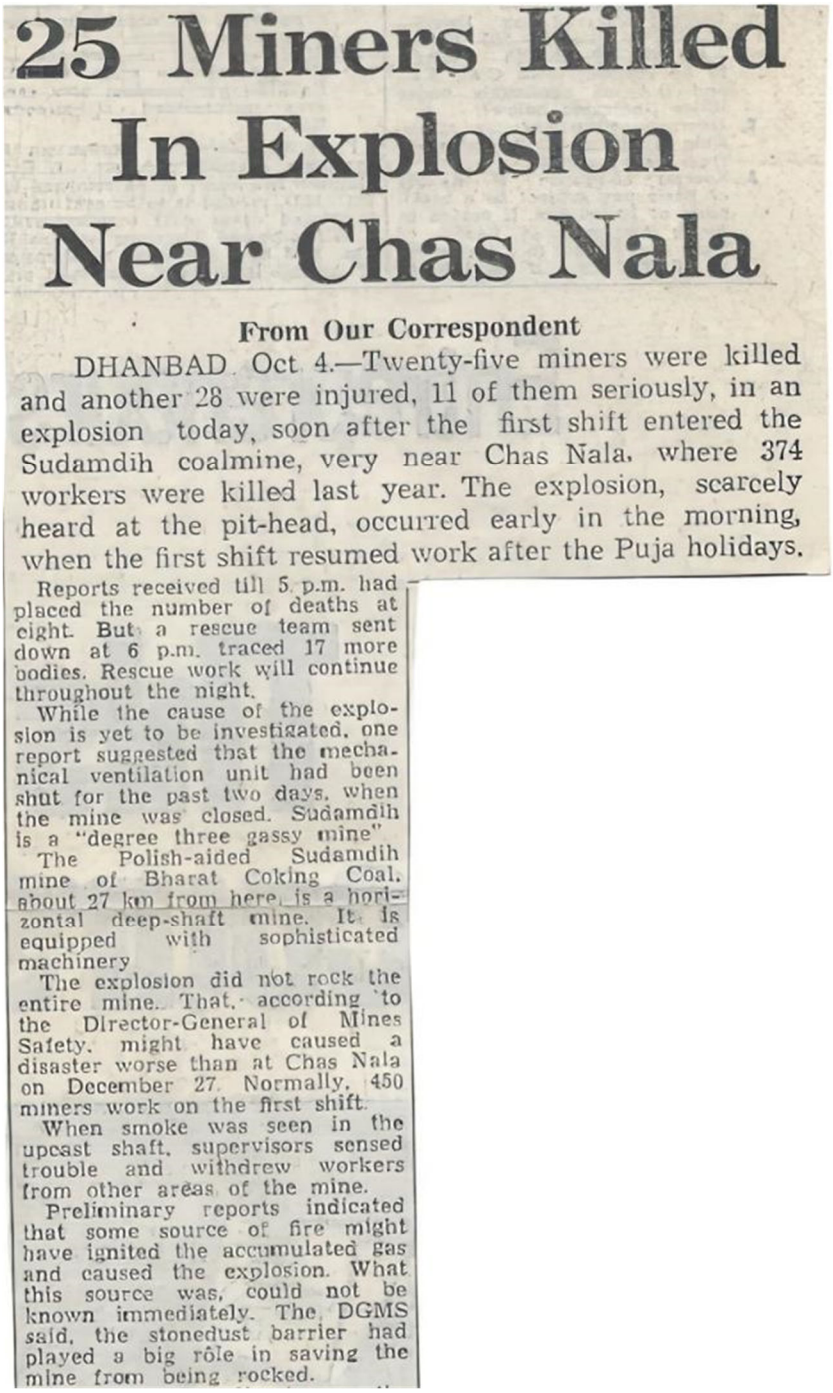
As a result of physical isolation of fresh air, three seams had already been sealed temporarily. As a result of sealing, fire inside the seams would die out due to lack of oxygen, the expert said.

As a result of this fire, about 10 to 20 per cent of the Sudamdih mines would have to be closed for production for about six months. Production in other areas would be resumed soon.

The expert could not identify the cause of the Sunday fire. When the fire was detected there were about 154 persons in the area. They were immediately brought out of the mines inflicting no casualty, the expert said.

Amrita Bazar Patrika (Newspaper) – 20 March 1976.

The subject was followed by Indian press practically day after day.



25 Miners Killed In Explosion Near Chas Nala

From Our Correspondent

DHANBAD Oct 4.—Twenty-five miners were killed and another 28 were injured, 11 of them seriously, in an explosion today, soon after the first shift entered the Sudamdih coalmine, very near Chas Nala, where 374 workers were killed last year. The explosion, scarcely heard at the pit-head, occurred early in the morning, when the first shift resumed work after the Puja holidays.

Reports received till 5 p.m. had placed the number of deaths at eight. But a rescue team sent down at 6 p.m. traced 17 more bodies. Rescue work will continue throughout the night.

While the cause of the explosion is yet to be investigated, one report suggested that the mechanical ventilation unit had been shut for the past two days, when the mine was closed. Sudamdih is a "degree three gassy mine".

The Polish-aided Sudamdih mine of Bharat Coking Coal, about 27 km from here, is a horizontal deep-shaft mine. It is equipped with sophisticated machinery.

The explosion did not rock the entire mine. That, according to the Director-General of Mines Safety, might have caused a disaster worse than at Chas Nala on December 27. Normally, 450 miners work on the first shift.

When smoke was seen in the upcast shaft, supervisors sensed trouble and withdrew workers from other areas of the mine.

Preliminary reports indicated that some source of fire might have ignited the accumulated gas and caused the explosion. What this source was, could not be known immediately. The DGMS said, the stonedust barrier had played a big rôle in saving the mine from being rocked.

Amrita Bazar Patrika (Newspaper) – 5 October 1976.

Another article on the topic.

The managing director of the BCCL, Mr R. N. Sharma, told reporters that the explosion had not left any trace of "violence" underground. "All other areas, excepting one of the galleries in number 15 seam, the seat the of explosion, are safe" Mr Sharma said. He said that "as soon as we ascertain that there is no further danger to the mine", normal mining operations would start.

The victims suffered either severe burns or shock. They have been removed to hospitals here.

"DON'T ASK QUESTIONS"

The overman, Mr A. K. Vidya, came out safely, his body covered with coaldust. He had minor injuries and was visibly shocked. He could only tell reporters: "My brain is not working. Please don't ask me anything".

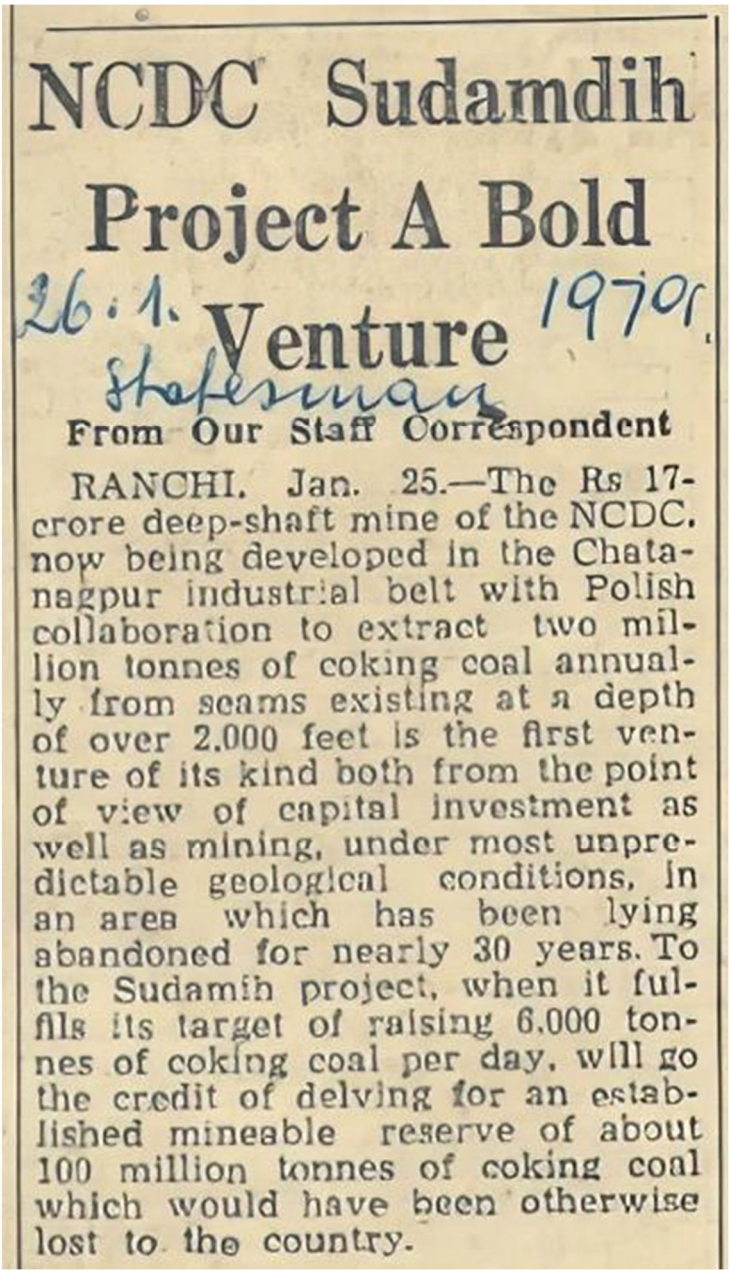
Among those killed was a mining sardar, identified as Idrish Mia.

Samachar adds: The Bihar Government has decided to give Rs 1,000 to each bereaved family as ex-gratia, the Chief Minister, Dr Jagannath Mishra, told reporters today. Dr Mishra expressed his "shock" over the incident and directed the Deputy Commissioner of Dhanbad to mobilize all resources to provide relief to these families.

The chairman of Coal India Ltd., Lt-Gen. K. S. Garewal, will be in Dhanbad tomorrow morning.

Mr K. V. Raghunatha Reddy, Union Labour Minister, has expressed his deep sympathy and sent his condolences to the bereaved families.

Continuation



NCDC Sudamdih Project A Bold Venture

26.1.1970
Statesman

From Our Staff Correspondent

RANCHI. Jan. 25.—The Rs 17-crore deep-shaft mine of the NCDC. now being developed in the Chatanagpur industrial belt with Polish collaboration to extract two million tonnes of coking coal annually from seams existing at a depth of over 2,000 feet is the first venture of its kind both from the point of view of capital investment as well as mining, under most unpredictable geological conditions, in an area which has been lying abandoned for nearly 30 years. To the Sudamih project, when it fulfils its target of raising 6,000 tonnes of coking coal per day, will go the credit of delving for an established mineable reserve of about 100 million tonnes of coking coal which would have been otherwise lost to the country.

This article in "The Statesman" of 26.01.1970.

The article describes how the Sudamdih mine successfully recovered from tragic and difficult times. The Polish miners collaboration is mentioned.

The project assumes added significance in view of the fact that India's estimated reserves of metallurgical coal (3,000 million tonnes) are not likely to last more than 100 years. Sudamdih's contribution of two million tonnes against an estimated shortfall of 13.5 million tonnes of coking coal by the end of the Fourth Plan will be eagerly awaited by the blast furnaces of steel mills now being planned to produce 13.87 million tonnes of hot-metal in 1973-74. It will raise the NCDC's current output of 3.5 million tonnes to 5.5 million tonnes.

The present performance of the project, is, however, disconcerting. There has already been a three-year delay so that the production schedule of two million tonnes has been deferred to the end of 1974. The delay has substantially upset earlier optimistic calculations of a Rs 1.46 profit per tonne and a 5.54% return on capital investment.

The delay has, however, proved to be a blessing in disguise. With Bokaro's 1.7 million tonnes commissioning already delayed by a year and the Hindustan Steel's plants at Rourkela, Durgapur and Bhilai officially estimated to produce only 2.8 million tonnes of finished steel during the current year, it would have been difficult to sell the output from Sudamdih.

Continuation

Project officials explain that the delay was due to hazardous mining conditions. This reporter was taken 1,400 feet below the surface of the mine to be shown a "bubbling, burning" hot-water spring which had been encountered and the measures taken to pump out the water. Cutting across the bed of the mine are also the icy-cold waters of the Damodar

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Several resolutions demanding inclusion of homoeopathic practitioners in the ESI scheme and Family Planning programme were adopted at the two-day annual convention of the West Bengal Homoeo Medical Club which began at Serampore on Saturday, says our Correspondent.

The office of the Deputy High Commissioner for Pakistan, Calcutta, will be closed on Republic Day.

Continuation

Meetings with Indian Officials and social functions of Indian and Polish miners

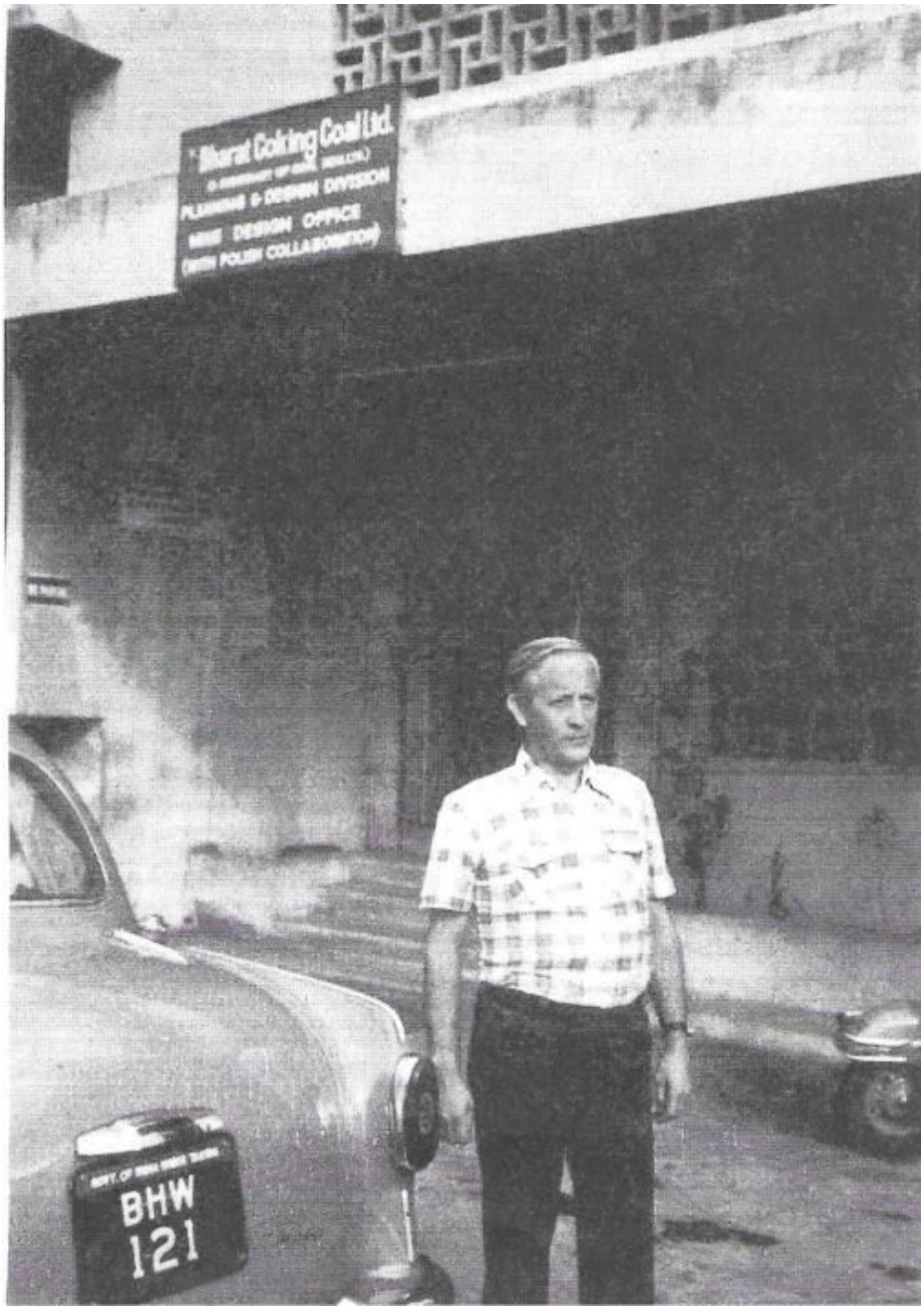
Prime Minister of India Shree Morarji Desai shaking hand of Mr. Ryszard Biesek. (1979).

A friendly handshake with Mr. K.S.R.Chari - Secretary of Coal. (1978)

Meetings of friends. Indian and Polish colleagues during functions.

Friendly meeting.

From left: Mr. Ryszard Biesek, Shree R.N.Sharma (Chairman BCCL and later Chairman of Coal India Ltd. – he passed away at the age of 101 in 2025), Shree C.S.Jha (Director Technical BCCL)



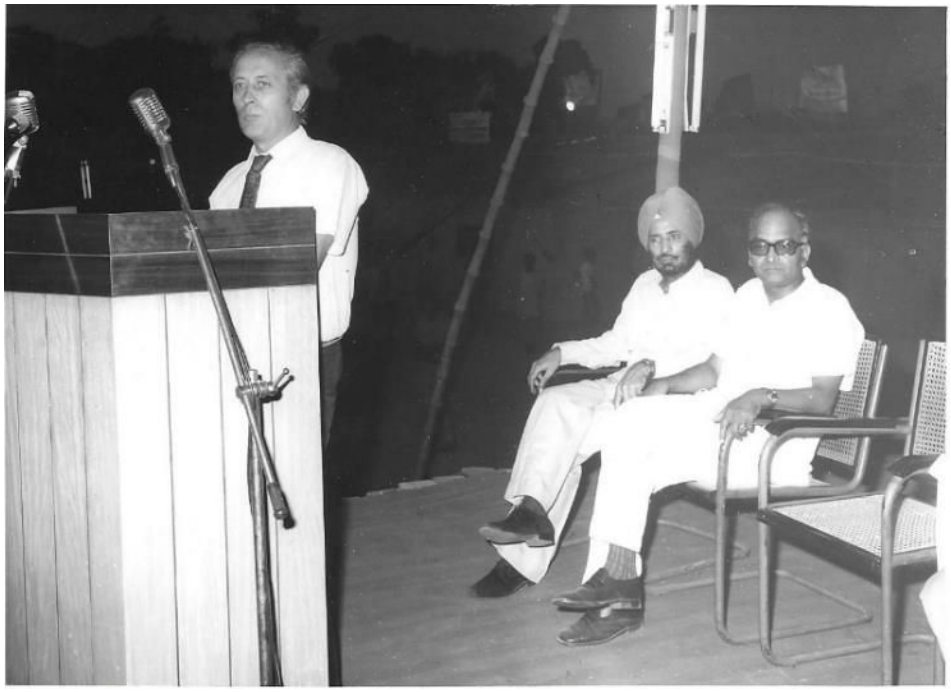
Mr. Ryszard Biesek in front of Shanti Bhawan-BCCL Mine Design Office in Dhanbad with Polish collaboration

If we are to talk about the Indo Polish miners camaraderie, then his name comes as central from the Polish side.

This important institution was founded with Polish collaboration.

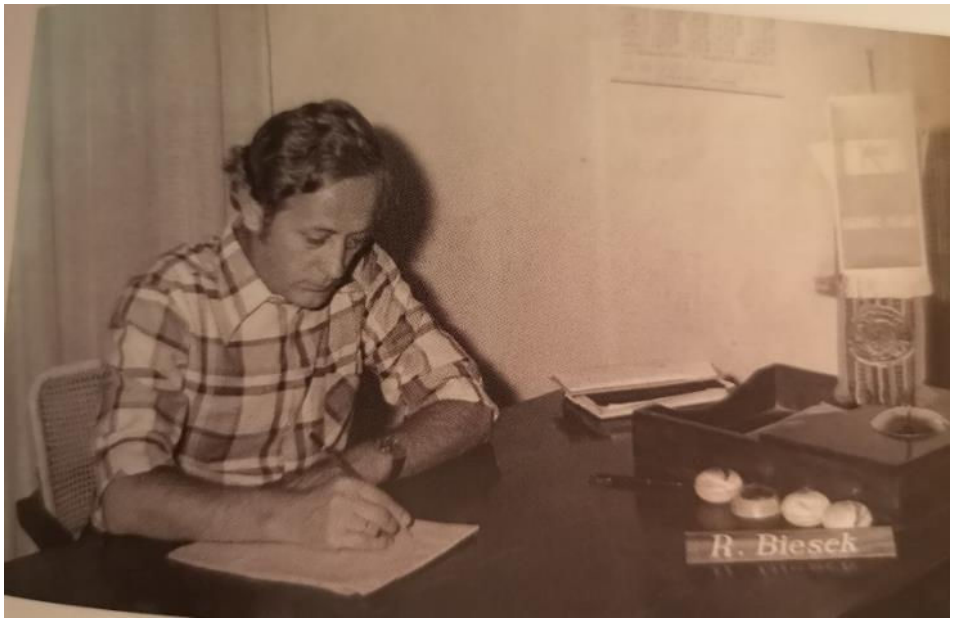
Later this planning and design division has developed into great prestigious CMPDI - known and respected worldwide.

There was always time to jointly discuss the actions at our joint Indo-Polish projects.



Mr. Ryszard Biesek shares his views with Indian Colleagues.

Office and paperwork were also part of duties.



Mr.R.Biesek at his desk at Shanti Bhawan Mine Design Office, BCCL Dhanbad.

Meeting officials from Indian Government and Polish Embassy.

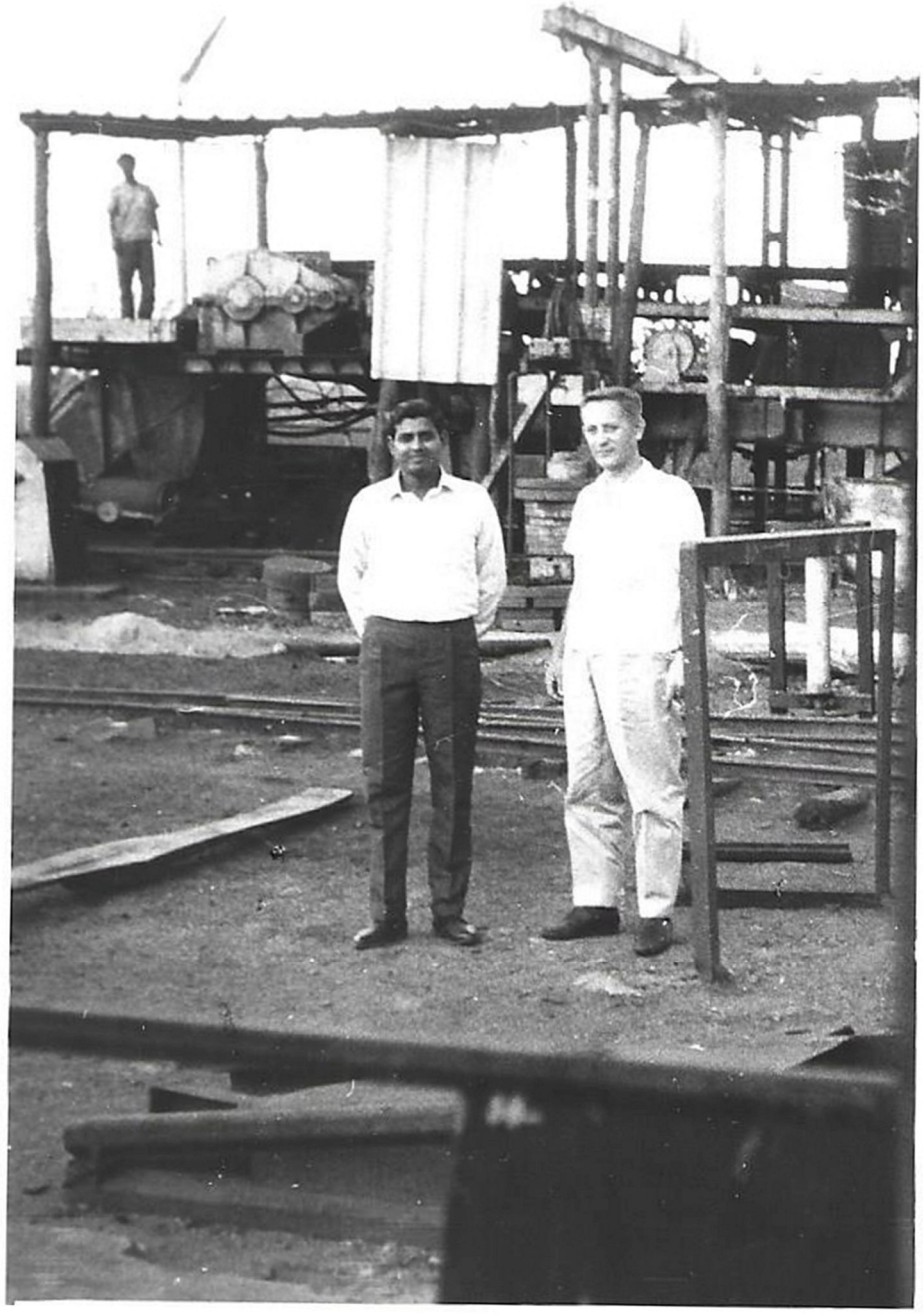
Shree R.G. Mahendru and Mr. R. Biesek

These were important persons both in developing Indian coal mining and Indo - Polish miners' camaraderie.

4 December 1978 - Polish Miners Day.

A function held at the" Polish Hotel" in Sudamdih. Mr. R. Biesek is in the center and second from left is Shree R.G. Mahendru - Chairman of CMPDI (i.e. 1978-1979).

Shafts of Sudamdih colliery. They look the same as coal mines in Poland.



During work hours.

The celebrations of 5 years of cooperation between Indian BCCL and Polish company Kopex which was an official contractor of all services and equipment for India.

The celebrations of 5 years of cooperation between Indian BCCL and Polish company Kopex.

With Chairman Shree R.N. Sharma and Shree Kalyan Sen. Plans of Jharia Coalfield in the background.

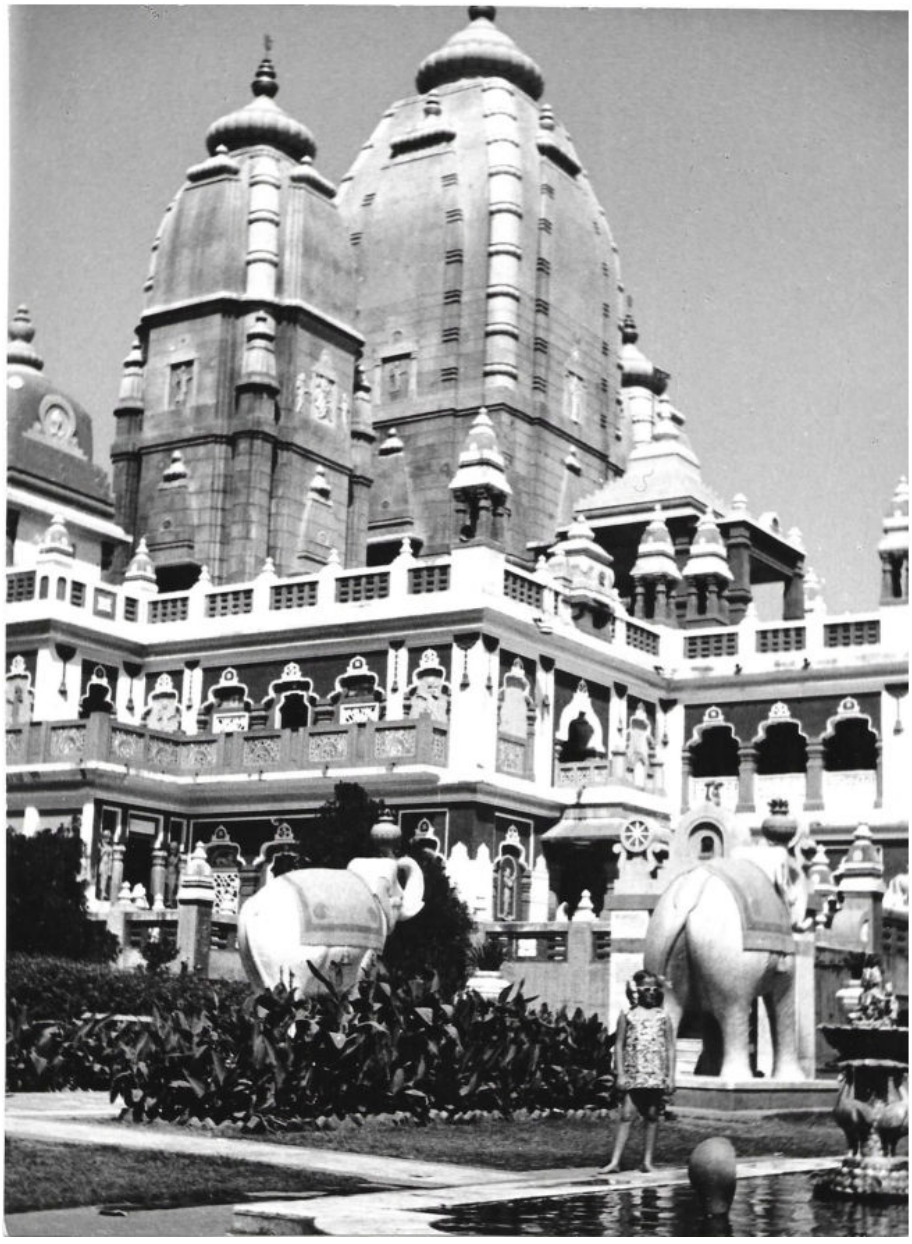
Sports Day Sudamdih

Both Indian and Polish colleagues not only worked together but also enjoyed one another's company during their leisure time. Mr. Biesek is visible in the foreground.

Indian and Polish friends at the residence of Shree R.G. Mahendru at Sudamdih.

Young Ms. Ewa Biesek - Leśniewska (on the picture 1971).
Spent many years in India.

Reverse of the photo.



But it was not only work for the Polish experts. To work in India for few years and not visiting her monuments of civilization was unthinkable.

This photo was taken at the Birla Temple. (By R. Biesek)
The girl in the front plan is Ms. Ewa Biesek- Leśniewska - daughter of Mr. Ryszard Biesek.

Nowiny Gliwickie (Local Polish newspaper) – Nr 7 (954), 17 February 1974


ku. Nie czuje również potrzeby Rozpoczęliśmy właśnie eksploata-

Hinduskie fascynacje

oszczędzania czy lepszego urzą- cję systemem jankowickim. Wy-

"Indian fascinations" – from articles series "Gliwiczanie abroad"

An article by Edmund Całka with Mr. Ryszard Biesek describing his daily life and work in Sudamdih.

GLIWICZANIE ZA GRANICĄ

Jedno z dziwów współczesnych Indii — zbudowany przez najbogatszego człowieka tego kraju, Birlę, olbrzymi komplet świątyń dla wszystkich wyznań. Na pierwszym planie córeczka autora zdjęcia.
Foto: Ryszard Biesek

"One of the wonders of modern India, Brila temple complex"

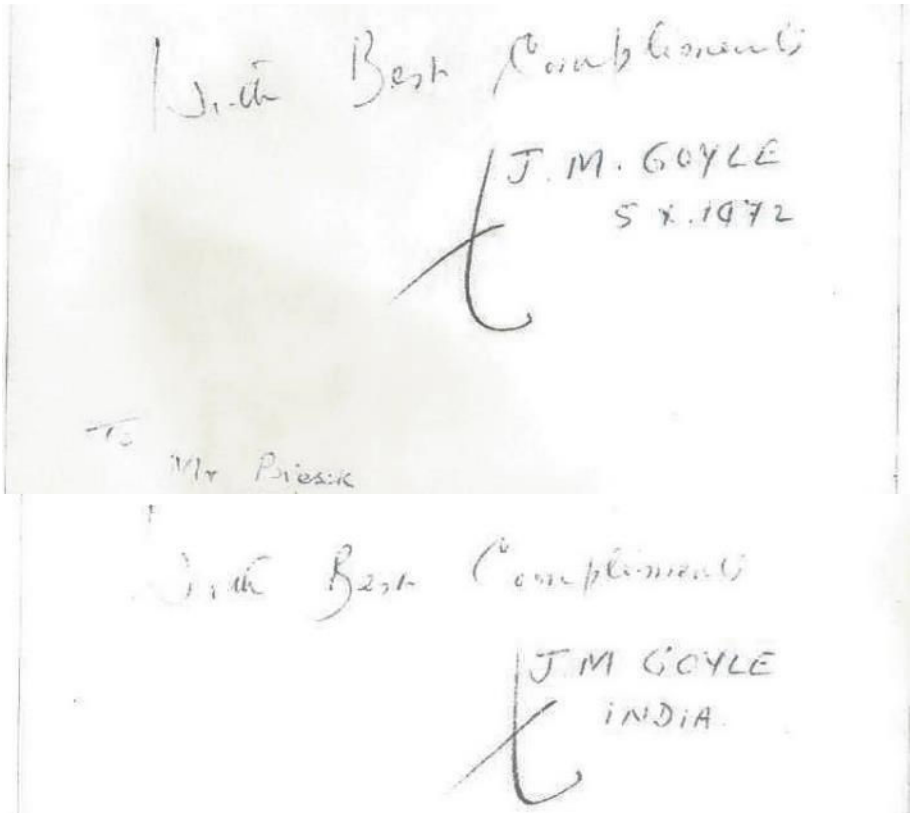
Photo published in Nowiny Gliwickie was taken among many others by Mr. Ryszard Biesek.

There was no travel office in Poland at that time to take people to visit India. So, description and information of the Polish experts who were in India were eagerly published by press. People were really very interested to read it.

Mr. J M. Goyle of BCCL visiting and enjoying Poland.

There were also many visits of Indian experts to Poland. Some of these friendly, almost familiar relations last till now (2025).

More photos of visit to Poland.



Reverse of the photos: “With best complements”
J M. Goyle to Mr. Biesek

Ms. Ewa Biesek- Lesniewska, Shree A.K Gulati - former Chairman BCCL, Shree S.P.Sinha – former Director in BCCL.

Friendly meeting after many years at World Mining Congress 2003 in New Delhi.

Joint Celebrations of Holi 1969-1971 and 1976-1978 at Sudamdih in Bihar

Mr. Ryszard Biesek

Indian authorities expressing gratitude

S. K. Chowdhary,
General Manager

Coal India

BHARAT COKING COAL LTD.
(A Subsidiary of Coal India Ltd.)
P.O.—SUDAMDIH
Dist.—DHANBAD

D.O.No.GM(CJ)/PA/F-8/77/10915

9 APRIL, 1977

My dear Mr. Biesek,

I do not find adequate words to write to you to thank you for the great work, which was carried out under your leadership in saving Sudamdih Shaft Mine from temporary closure. It was due to your intelligence and constant encouragement in those most difficult days of Sudamdih that the mine could be saved from a great embarrassment.

2. You and members of your Polish Team deserve appreciation and congratulation from our side. I shall be grateful if you kindly convey my personal appreciation for this good work done to all members of your team.

With regards,

Yours sincerely,

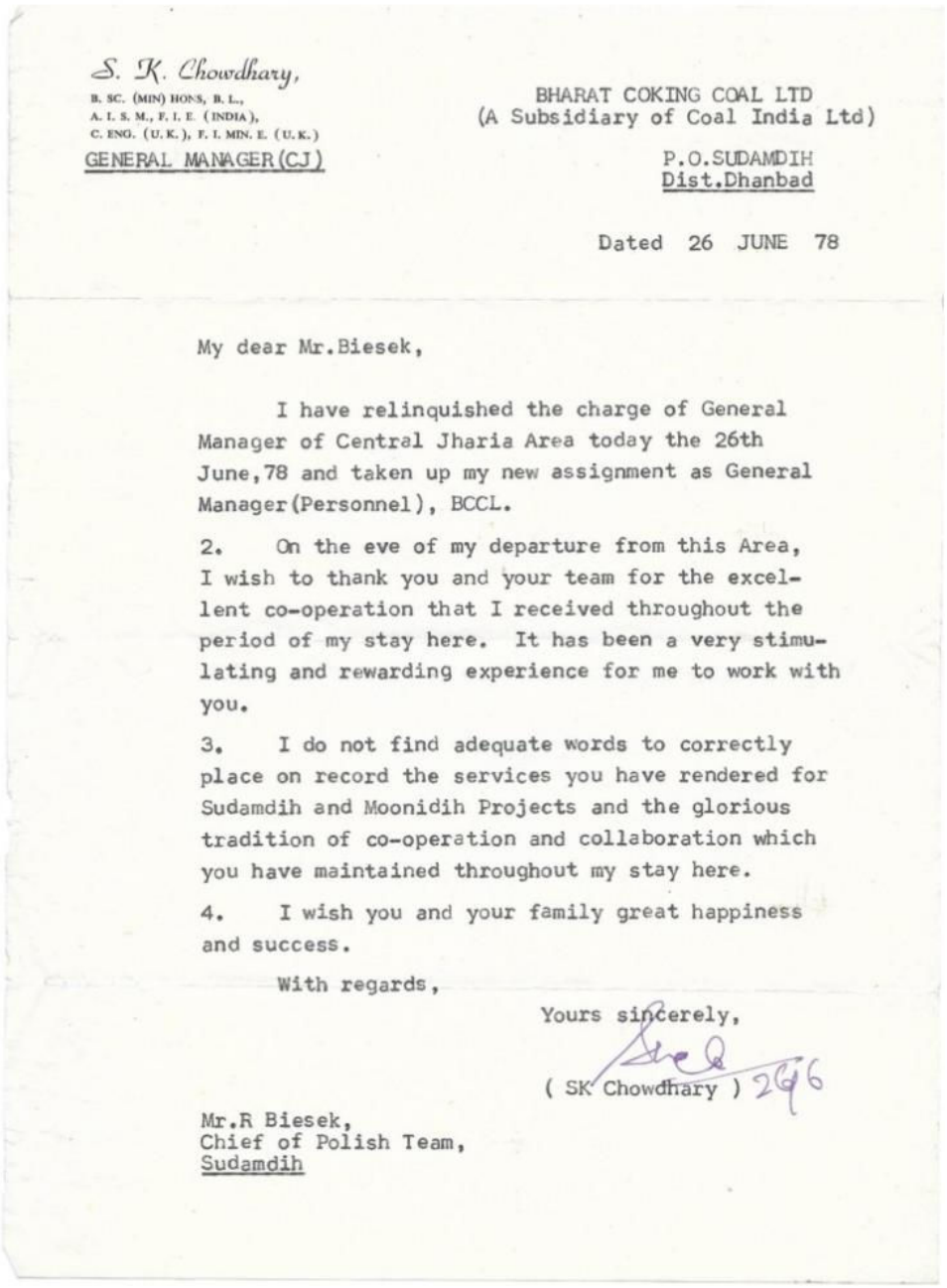
(S. K. CHOWDHARY)

Mr. R. Biesek,
Chief of Polish Team(Design),
Bharat Coking Coal Ltd.
Shanti Bhawan,
DHANBAD.

Telegram : COLPRO
PATHERDIH
DHANBAD

Phone : Office : 61398
Resi. : 61412
PBX : 60745
61245

Instead of praising Mr. R. Biesek let me just present this letter of S.K Chowdhury of BCCL (General Manager).



S. K. Chowdhary,
B. SC. (MIN) HONS, B. L.,
A. I. S. M., F. I. E. (INDIA),
C. ENG. (U. K.), F. I. MIN. E. (U. K.)
GENERAL MANAGER (CJ)

BHARAT COKING COAL LTD
(A Subsidiary of Coal India Ltd)
P.O.SUDAMDIH
Dist.Dhanbad

Dated 26 JUNE 78

My dear Mr.Biesek,

I have relinquished the charge of General Manager of Central Jharia Area today the 26th June,78 and taken up my new assignment as General Manager(Personnel), BCCL.

2. On the eve of my departure from this Area, I wish to thank you and your team for the excellent co-operation that I received throughout the period of my stay here. It has been a very stimulating and rewarding experience for me to work with you.

3. I do not find adequate words to correctly place on record the services you have rendered for Sudamdih and Moonidih Projects and the glorious tradition of co-operation and collaboration which you have maintained throughout my stay here.

4. I wish you and your family great happiness and success.

With regards,

Yours sincerely,

(SK Chowdhary) 26/6

Mr.R Biesek,
Chief of Polish Team,
Sudamdih

This is another letter of Indian authorities.

That Indo - Polish professional camaraderie was clearly seen by respective institutions in India.

This memento was presented by Indian authorities to Mr. Jerzy Mańka in recognition of distinguished service in fighting explosion and fire in Sudamdih – 1976-1977.

This memento was also presented by Indian authorities to Mr. Ryszard Biesek in recognition of distinguished service in fighting explosion and fire in Sudamdih – 1976-1977.

Inscription: “mgr inż. R. BIESEK

DISTINGUISHED SERVICE

EXPLOSION AND FIRE

SUDAMDIH PROJECT"

Gift presented by Sudamdih Incline Mine Staff

Concluding words

The relations between India and Poland in the period of 50s, 60s, 70s and 80s of XX century are remembered as the time of strong economic ties and export of Polish technical capabilities in many fields of heavy industry.

If we look at earlier period for example 1942 till 1948, we will find much emphasis on documenting and remembering the life of about 6000 Polish refugees (from Soviet Union) who found safe haven in Indian soil mainly in the lands of princely states of Kolhapur and Jamnagar. These indeed are very interesting events of history.

Yet, we have to remember that the strong economic relations initiated by the state authorities of both India and Poland created as kind of "by product", the space for people-to-people relations. This was especially true in the case of the coal mining industry.

Coal is a very specific branch of industrial activity as it involves permanent, direct and unpredictable interaction with nature and its many hazards.

Going a few hundred meters down the shaft every day into the coal excavating area constitutes a direct risk and threat to the life of miner.

In the 60s. and 70s, of XX century Poland was still a very much closed country. People rarely travelled abroad and that mainly on official visits sent by industrial companies. India for Polish people in the 60 and 70 of last century was a mysterious exotic land.

One could read about it, sometimes see some films but going to India was beyond any imaginable possibility.

India of course had a long history of relations with Europe. But Europe was in a natural way identified with England, maybe France. Since as said earlier there were groups of Poles; refugees staying in India for few years, people of India living nearby their camps knew that such nation -Poles – is also European. We have to remember even though it is not much emphasized in historical descriptions, that these camps

where Poles lived were quite tightly protected against Polish people interacting with Indian population.

These I know from my discussions with a few of the former refugees. The Poles were not encouraged to meet Indian people. No wonder that when the WWII ended, practically all of them left India for various destinations worldwide. But they remembered their time on hospitable Indian soil.

No written memories have I found about a much longer period of 60 and 70 of XX century when hundreds of Polish experts and miners were working together in the coal mines of Bihar.

The purpose of this publication is i.a. drawing attention to the unique relation between miners of Poland and India which combined the characteristics of spontaneous feeling of solidarity, when faced with daily hazards of unpredictable nature with mutual loyalty.

This needs to be emphasized as a specific feature much different than relations among workers in other fields. After all the economic relations and investments contracts between India and Poland were also established in power plant construction, ship building, foundry shops etc.

It is only with the Indo Polish community of coal miners in Bihar in the said period that we also find families staying in touch and visiting even during years after the projects were completed.

On so many photographs in this publication we can see Indian miners and Polish miners together celebrating Holi festival. Certainly, the meaning and religious context of Holi was not known to Polish experts, but they just enjoyed the festivities together with their Indian friends.

These things were not included in the contracts.

Neither, the natural and immediate joining the Indian colleagues in saving the mine in case of Sudamdih. It was not just assistance or helping. Polish experts were elaborating plans supported by their mining experience to save the mine, not to flood it.

It was not a Polish mine, and the Polish miners would not work there beyond the contract limit. The fact is that it never really becomes a common knowledge in Poland and that Polish experts never boasted about these events shows that it was considered as something natural, something that is part of the coal miners camaraderie. So no need to announce one's own praises.

Neither this publication is meant to raise glorifications and present discoveries of unusual great behavior.

The author and contributors of this book want to establish a firm long-term memory, remembering of the relations between Indians and Poles when for years they were working together in Bihar collieries.

These relations have grown upon the intergovernmental commercial agreements between India and Poland.

I visualize these agreements as instruments which enabled miners of both countries to expose their "miners" ethos" of work and specific camaraderie.

I am glad that it was possible to have interviews with two of the Polish experts who worked in India

The personality of Mr. Ryszard Biesek is mentioned in the text and on the photos on numerous occasions. His role as an expert and leader of projects including saving Sudamdih is in itself worth emphasizing.

But in case of this publication I would like to state that it was Mr. Biesek's attitude, his natural openness towards Indian colleagues that made a huge contribution to creating the professional camaraderie which lasted for about two decades. Of this camaraderie personal and family contacts have grown up. I think that such value of friendship of coal miners almost half a century ago needs to be remembered and, in a way, protected as knowledge to be passed on to future generations.

It may be interesting and worthwhile to promote this book and knowledge about Indo - Polish miners camaraderie in Coal India Limited.

We in Poland have our Miners day on 4th December. In India you celebrate Miners Day on 4th May.

Maybe we could try to introduce the idea of Polish miners organization presenting every year on 4th May to their Indian colleagues a decorative miner's hammer (which coal miners here call "pyrlik") as a memento of years of working together and of that unique camaraderie among them.

Marek Moroń

2025

Post scriptum

There is a film (5.22 min) on the YouTube channel - Coalkatha.

It was put by the late Mr. Bhubaneshwar Ram Tripathi in 2024 (as per the information available)

The title of this short film is “1977 Sudamdih Mine Fire”.

It is a voice of praise for heroism and courage of miners, which all of us wholeheartedly agree with.

Yet the comments in the film lack presenting the facts and when they are mentioned, they do not really correspond with the documents and the participants descriptions.

It may be interesting to elaborate jointly with the team of Coalkatha channel a fractography.

We all should be grateful to the Author of the film for recalling the “spirit of Sudamdih”.

We in Poland would like to share our knowledge and documents about Sudamdih 1977 with as many Indian friends as possible and maybe successfully work on another film.

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3. Page 37, 41 - Mr. Marek Moroń.

4. Page 42, 43, 44, 45, 48 - Ms. Lolita Chattoraj Sengupta.

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Taken by Ms. Ewa Leśniewska Biesek.

Affiliation and Short Bio Note

Marek Moroń institutional affiliation

Lecturer and researcher in the Center for Comparative Studies of Civilizations; Jagiellonian University (est.1364 ce); Krakow; Poland.

Marek Moroń Short Bio Note

The main academic lines of interests of dr M. Moroń are culture religion and politics of South Asia and problems of European Islam (Muslims of Central, South and East Europe living here for 600 years). Dr Moroń is the author of many books and papers on the above subjects published in Poland, USA, Georgia, Ukraine, India. He lectured in academic centers in Ukraine, Jordan, Qatar, India, Turkiye, Poland etc.

He is a former Polish diplomat, having served in Tehran (1982-1986), Kolkata (1988-1992) and Bombay (Mumbai) as Consul General in 2001-2007.

Dr Moroń is the representative of the Muslim Religious Union of Poland (est. 1925) for the Krakow region.