

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINES
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:6212

ANSWERED ON:04.05.2010

ILLEGAL MINING

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Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

- (a) the total amount paid/likely to be paid to the Indian Space Research Organisation and other remote sensing organisation engaged for detecting illegal mining;
- (b) whether there are reports that some companies involved earlier in illegal mining and violating Supreme Court orders in various parts of the country are given fresh approval by the State Governments and clearance from the Union Government;
- (c) if so, the details thereof and the reasons for giving clearance by the Union Government, State-wise;
- (d) whether any status report has been sought by the Union Government from some States about the illegal mining; and
- (e) if so, the details thereof, State-wise including Haryana alongwith the action taken by the Union Government in this regard?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF MINES AND MINISTER OF DEVELOPMENT OF NORTH EASTERN REGION (SHRI B. K. HANDIQUE)

(a) to (e) : The assistance of Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and other remote sensing agencies have been sought to obtain satellite imagery on areas of mining in some States like Orissa, Chhattisgarh, Karnataka, etc. In a particular instance in Orissa, the Indian Bureau of Mines detected illegal mining in Keonjhar district using the satellite imagery and based on this, the State Government was able to initiate action against illegal miners. The Central Government has also advised the State Governments to use satellite imagery for detection of illegal mining as part of comprehensive strategy to curb illegal mining. The likely cost of satellite imagery is estimated at Rs.50-60 lakhs per district.

State Governments as the owners of minerals grant mineral concessions. However, in case of First Schedule minerals, prior approval of Central Government is necessary before grant of mineral concession. A list of prior approvals given by the Central Government is available on website of Ministry of Mines (<http://www.mines.gov.in>) and so far it has not come to the notice of Central Government that companies involved in illegal mining operations have been given prior approval.

Some instances of illegal mining of minerals have come to the notice of the Government in various parts of the country. The Central Government has amended the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957, to empower the state Governments to take action against illegal mining by giving them powers to enter and inspect any mine, penalize transportation and storage of illegal mined materials, confiscate illegally mined minerals, tools, equipment and vehicles, and frame separate Rules under the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957 for curbing illegal mining. This was followed by regular monitoring by Central Government of the action taken by the State Governments. Recently, all the State Governments have been requested to prepare an Action Plan using modern technology to curb illegal mining. Further, a Coordination-cum-Empowered Committee has been set up to ensure elimination of delays in grant of mineral concessions. A draft State Mineral Policy has also been circulated to all the State Governments.

As per available information, Indian Bureau of Mines (IBM) conducted a total of 1978 inspections (till February 2010) in the year 2009-10 and prosecution cases launched in 23 cases and six mines suspended. Further a Task Force was constituted in the IBM which conducted inspection in 106 mines in Orissa, Gujarat, Jharkhand, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh, and has suspended mining operations in 60 mines for deviation in approved Mining Plan in respect of production, location of pit, overburden production and non-submission of Mining Plan/Mining Scheme, and violation notices have been issued to 28 mines. The State Governments have stopped issuing transport permit (royalty pass) for suspended mines.