

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
COAL
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2405

ANSWERED ON:24.11.2010

FOREST CLEARANCE

Majhi Shri Pradeep Kumar;Patel Shri Kishanbhai Vestabhai

Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government proposes to enhance the borehole density for coal exploration without seeking forest clearance;
- (b) if so, the details in this regard and the reasons therefor;
- (c) whether the issue has been taken up with the Ministry of Environment & Forests; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof and the reaction of the Ministry- thereto?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) IN THE MINISTRY OF COAL & MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) IN THE MINISTRY OF STATISTICS AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRI SRIPRAKASH JAISWAL)

(a) & (b): In December, 2008 Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) revised the existing provisions for survey and investigation for prospecting of ores. The revised guidelines state that prospecting of any mineral, which requires collection/ removal of samples from forest land, would be a stage between survey and investigation and grant of mining lease and as such permission under Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 would be required. However, in case of coal and lignite, test drilling of 15 boreholes per 10 square kilometer (sq.km.) for opencast mining and 20 boreholes for underground mining for prospecting /exploration, without felling of trees, shall not attract the provisions of the Act. Exemptions granted through these revised guidelines are inadequate and Ministry of Coal requested Ministry of Environment and Forests to further liberalise the rules to 15/20 boreholes per 1 sq.km. in place of 10 sq.km.

(c) & (d): Yes, Sir. Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) has conveyed approval of the Central Government for enhanced exploratory drilling on trial basis in three blocks. Permission for trial drilling has allowed average drilling of 17 to 20 boreholes per sq.km. as proposed for revision in the guidelines.