

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINES
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:4447

ANSWERED ON:07.12.2010

MINING OF SPONGE IRON

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Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

- (a) whether mining of sponge iron is not in operation in the country;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor;
- (c) whether certain cases of illegal mining of the said iron have been reported in the country; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof alongwith the steps taken by the Government in this regard?

Answer

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

(a)&(b): Sponge iron is the intermediate metallurgical product in steel making and is produced by direct reduction of high-grade iron ore or pellets to metallic iron ore in solid state by using coal or natural gas as reductant. Hence, the question of mining of sponge iron does not arise. As per available information, there are 324 sponge iron units in the country, with installed capacity of 26.39 million tonnes as on 2007-08.

(c)&(d): Does not arise in view of (a)&(b) above. However, certain cases of illegal mining have come to the notice to the Central Government. The details of illegal mining and action taken is given at ANNEXURE. The Central Government has taken following steps, which includes inspection of public and private sector mines by special Task Force of Indian Bureau of Mines:-

The State Governments have been advised to set up State Coordination-cum-Empowered Committee (SCEC) to coordinate efforts to control illegal mining by including representatives of Railways, Customs and Port authorities. Separately the State Governments have also been advised to prepare and adopt an Action Plan with specific measures to detect and control illegal mining including, use of remote sensing, control on traffic, gather market intelligence, registration of end-users and setting up of special cells etc.

Mainly because of the proactive stance taken by the Central Government on the issue, the following developments have been reported:

Eighteen States (Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chattisgarh, Gujarat, Goa, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Jammu and Kashmir, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Nagaland, Orissa, Rajasthan, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal) have framed Rules under Section 23C of the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957 to control illegal mining.

Twenty one States (Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Chattisgarh, Gujarat, Goa, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Manipur, Mizoram, Nagaland, Orissa, Punjab, Rajasthan, Tamilnadu, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal) have set up Task Force at State and/or District level to check illegal mining as per the instruction of Central Government.

Thirteen State Governments (Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Goa, Haryana, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Mizoram, Orissa, Rajasthan and West Bengal) have set up a Coordination-cum-Empowered Committee.

Five States (Gujarat, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Jharkhand and Uttarakhand) have digitized the total mining area.

State Government of Tamilnadu has digitized 100 cadastral maps.

State Governments of Rajasthan and Orissa have reported to have commenced using satellite imagery. Rajasthan has digitized mining area in GIS environment and superimposed on digital toposheets supplied by Survey of India.

State Governments of Gujarat, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Orissa have reported to have started use of holograms/ bar codes in the transport permits.

During the first half of year 2010, the State Governments detected 35136 cases of illegal mining of minor and major minerals as compared to 41578 cases detected in the full year 2009.