

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:80

ANSWERED ON:01.08.2011

VIOLATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL NORMS BY VEDANTA COMPANY

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Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Vedanta Company has violated the forest and environmental norms for its project in Odisha;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) the action taken by the Government against the company;
- (d) whether the Government has set up any expert group recently to study the violation by Vedanta Company for its mining project in the State; and
- (e) if so, the details thereof and the action taken by the Government in this regard?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) FOR ENVIRONMENT & FORESTS (SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN)

(a) to (e) On receipt of reports on certain violations in respect of diversion of 660.749 ha of forest land located in Kalahandi and Rayagada districts of Odisha, in favour of M/s. Orissa Mining Corporation Limited (OMCL) to undertake bauxite mining to feed Alumina Refinery plant of M/s Vedanta Aluminium Limited (VAL), the Central Government on 29th June 2010 constituted a Committee consisting of Dr. Naresh Saxena, Dr. Amita Baviskar, Dr. Promode Kant and Dr. S. Parasuraman. The Committee submitted its report to the Central Government on 16th August 2010.

Details of the violations indicated in the report submitted by the Committee are as below:

- (i) M/s. VAL has occupied 26.123 ha of village forest land within the factory premises at Lanjigarh in Kalahandi district of Orissa without obtaining approval under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980;
- (ii) For construction of a road running parallel to the conveyor corridor, M/s VAL has illegally occupied plot number 157(p) measuring 1.0 acre and plot number 133 measuring 0.11 acres of village forest land;
- (iii) M/s VAL had already proceeded with construction activity for its expansion project that would increase its capacity six fold from 1.0 million ton per annum (Mtpa) to 6.0 Mtpa without obtaining environmental clearance as per provisions of EIA Notification 2006 under the Environment (Protection) Act, 2006;
- (iv) M/s VAL was accorded clearance under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986, on the condition that no forest land would be used for establishment of refinery. However, M/s VAL has occupied 26.123 ha. village forest land within its factory premises at Lanjigarh; and
- (v) There has been a failure to implement the Section 3 (l) (e) of the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006, to protect the culture, livelihood and rights, "including community tenure of habitat and habitation" as specified in the said section, of people belonging to the Dongaria Kondh and Kutia Kondh tribes which are both primitive tribal groups.

The Central Government after examination of the matter took following actions:

- (i) Rejected Stage-II forest clearance for diversion of 660.749 ha forest land in favour of M/s. Orissa Mining Corporation Ltd. for mining of bauxite ore in Lanjigarh Bauxite Reserve in Kalahandi and Rayagada districts in Odisha;
- (ii) Withdrawn the environment clearance granted to the said mine;
- (iii) Issued final direction under Section-5 of the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 stipulating additional environmental safeguards to be complied for 1 MTPA Alumina Refinery and 75 MW Captive Power Plant (CPP) at Lanjigarh in District Kalahandi in Orissa by M/s. VAL; and
- (iv) Withdrawn the TOR issued on 12th March 2009, for expansion of Alumina Refinery from 1 MTPA to 6 MTPA and 75 MW CPP to

300 MW CPP. Consequent to the withdrawal of the TOR, the public hearing conducted on 25th April, 2009 also stands rejected. Process to obtain Environment Clearance for expansion of Alumina Refinery therefore, needs to be started de-novo.