

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
COAL
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1480
ANSWERED ON:30.11.2011
VIOLATION OF MINING RULES
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Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

- (a) whether a river is being blocked in contravention of the environmental laws in course of coal mining activity in the Rajhara area of the Central Coalfields Limited (CCL), an ancillary unit of Coal India Ltd.;
- (b) whether acute drinking water crisis and unavailability of water for irrigation has occurred in the area as a result of the damage to the underground water source while mining of Coal;
- (c) if so, the details thereof;
- (d) whether adequate water reserve is available in the mines from where coal has already been extracted; and
- (e) if so, the details thereof?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRI PRATIK PRAKASHBAPU PATIL)

(a): Presently, there is no blockage of a river in course of coal mining activities in Central Coalfields Limited. However, during the operation of Rajhara OC mine in Rajhara area of CCL, an embankment was being constructed, as part of the quarry edge so that the water from the river can not enter the mine during monsoon. During this construction of the embankment, part of the OB inadvertently spilled out to the bed of the river, partially blocking it.

However, CCL has already initiated actions to remove the OB materials from the river bed and till date, around 12000 Mm³ of OB materials has been removed. The action of OB removal is in progress.

(b) to (e) Due to the mining operations, no adverse impact on ground water regime has been reported so far in any of the coal mines of Coal India Limited. Adequate water reserve is available in the mines from where coal is being/has been extracted. Generally the decoaled voids get filled up with accumulated strata water except in cases where further expansion of the mine/mineral dumping is resorted to.

During mine expansion, with the increase in secondary porosity, the storage and permeability of the hydro geological units close to the mine working face improve. Due to this, there is possibility of some impact on groundwater levels, mainly in the unconfined aquifers which may subsequently cause lowering of ground water levels marginally.

After coal has been extracted or after the cessation of mining, with considerable reclamation, the ground water levels recoup and attain normalcy. The back-filled area with high permeability increases the groundwater recharge in many folds. So also, a water reservoir is developed in the left out mine area which will provide a reliable water source to the local people and improve the groundwater system. Thus the impact on ground water system is a temporary phenomenon. In addition to natural phenomenon, some remedial measures like rainwater harvesting and ground water recharge are being taken on regular basis in all the mines of CIL.

Further, as per Environmental Clearance conditions, regular monitoring of ground water level and quality is carried out by establishing a network of existing wells and construction of piezometers. The monitoring for quantity is done four times a year in pre-monsoon (May), monsoon (August), post monsoon (November) and winter (January) seasons in the villages covering the buffer zone (10 km radius) of the project/mine. The monitoring of quality of water is done once a year in the month of May.

Environmental Clearance stipulations, the rainwater harvesting structures including check dams for recharge of ground water are erected within and around the mine leasehold as a mitigatory measure, in case monitoring of ground water indicates a declining trend.