

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
HOME AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:788
ANSWERED ON:14.08.2012
SECURITY TO MINING PROJECTS
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Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Ministry of Steel has drawn attention towards the possible closure of steel plants in case of inadequate security to the mining projects in naxal affected regions; and

(b) if so, the reaction of the Government thereto?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI JITENDRA SINGH)

(a) & (b): The present captive iron- ore mines of Bhilai Steel Plant (BSP) at Dalli-Rajhara in Chhattisgarh are on the verge of depletion and are likely to last only for about 4-5 years. The Rowghat iron-ore mine is the proposed future captive iron-ore mine of BSP, for which all statutory clearances have been obtained.

The BSP has an iconic status since it is a symbol of India's self-reliance since the early years of our nation-building process. To maintain the iron ore supply to BSP, it is necessary to start operations at Rowghat as early as possible. There are two issues connected to the development of Rowghat mines. The first issue is preparing an area of around 2030 hectares in Kanker and Narayanpur Districts of Chhattisgarh for extraction of iron ore. Further, to transport the iron ore from Rowghat, construction of a railway line of around 90 kms passing through Balod-Kanker-Narayanpur- Kondagaon-Jagdarpur is necessary. Both these projects are located in areas considered to be strongholds of the CPI (Maoist). These projects have to be completed simultaneously to ensure supply of iron ore to the BSP. An attractive compensation package has been put in place for people likely to be affected by this project.

However, the CPI (Maoist), its front organizations and some activists are vehemently opposing this project. The CPI (Maoist) have threatened violent reprisals if work on this project is carried out. Their main fear stems from the fact that this area, once opened up for development, will cease to provide them with cadres and hideouts to carry on their so-called 'protracted peoples war' against the Indian State. A systematic disinformation campaign has also been launched that this mining activity has corporate linkages, which is completely untrue.

The construction of railway line and other related activities in this remote and till now inaccessible area, is likely to change the development dynamics of this backward region and also generate employment to the local people. Since this is a public sector project, a number of activities connected with corporate social responsibility are also proposed to be undertaken in this area. However, due to the threat of CPI (Maoist) and its front organizations, the work at present is running behind schedule and the contractors are facing serious danger to their lives. This is just one instance of the myriad ways in which the Maoist insurgency has emerged as a serious impediment to the nation-building process, wherein they are obstructing even public sector projects.

In view of the above, the Ministry of Home Affairs has held meetings with the Ministry of Steel and the Ministry of Railways and decided to enhance the level of security for this project. However, it is also necessary to create public opinion against the disruptive activities of CPI (Maoist) and counter their disinformation and propaganda campaign against this project.