

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3765
ANSWERED ON:17.12.2012
MINING RESERVES IN WESTERN GHATS .
Gaddigoudar Shri P.C.

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

- (a) whether the Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education's (ICFRE) has given any suggestion to exploit mining reserves in the Western Ghats of the country;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether the Central Empowered Committee (CEC) has accepted the suggestion in its report submitted to the Court;
- (d) if not, the reasons therefor; and
- (e) the steps taken/being taken by the Government in this regard?

Answer

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

(a) & (b) The Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education (ICFRE), Dehradun in the Macro level Environmental Impact Assessment Study Report of Bellary, Tumkur and Chitradurga districts, Karnataka submitted before the Hon'ble Supreme Court inter alia recommended as below:

"There is a need to commission a feasibility study in order to bring in superior underground mining technology which is more environmental friendly in the Western Ghats to extract 10 billion tonnes of Magnetite (iron ore) available in the country. Out of this 8 billion ton is in Karnataka."

(c) to (e) The Central Empowered Committee in their report dated 3rd February 2012 submitted before the Hon'ble Supreme Court inter alia recommended as below:

"After considering that (a) the Western Ghats is one of the identified biodiversity hot spot of the world and wherein mining operation is presently not being permitted and (b) the above said observation of the ICFRE is totally out of context and beyond its TOR, the CEC is of the view that it would be appropriate that the above said observation of the ICFRE should be treated as "deleted" from the EIA-Study Report so as to avoid any possibility in the future of opening of mining operation in the areas falling in the ecologically sensitive and fragile Western Ghats."