

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2663
ANSWERED ON:26.08.2013
CLEARANCE TO COAL MINES
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Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) the procedure being adopted by the Ministry to clear the 100 years old coal mines in States like Jharkhand when the State Government/Jharkhand State Pollution Control Board had issued closure orders for all such mines stating that these were operative without the environmental clearance and no approved plans to mitigate adverse impacts;

(b) the rehabilitation obligations and legal processes approved by the Government to ensure the delivery of social justice to originally displaced inhabitants in the areas of old coal mining zones and the obligations of the coal companies, railways and other agencies; and

(c) the present status in this regard?

Answer

MINISTER OF THE STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN)

(a) to (c) M/s Bharat Coking Coal Limited (BCCL) had inherited a number of coal mines from the erstwhile private mine owners at the time of nationalization during 1971-73. Before nationalization of coal mines, the mining activity in Jharia coalfield was done in unscientific manner which resulted in environmental degradation and mine fire problems. The Expert Appraisal Committee (EAC) constituted under the Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) Notification, 2006, with the view that the Cluster Concept will ensure environmental benefits, address the issues of abandoned mines and their reclamation through an integrated action plan so as to speed up the process of obtaining Environmental Clearance, had approved Cluster Concept for obtaining environmental clearance to 103 BCCL mines (65 operating, 34 closed/abandoned and 4 proposed mines) grouped into 17 Clusters. Jharkhand State Pollution Control Board (JSPCB) had issued closure orders for the mines of BCCL which were operating without the Environmental Clearance. BCCL had filed Writ Petition in the Hon'ble High Court of Jharkhand against the closure of mines by JSPCB stating that it had already initiated the process of Environmental Clearance. The High Court has passed interim order for maintaining status quo. The ECs for cluster of mines of BCCL have been granted after following the due procedure and only after a Board's Resolution has been passed by BCCL for compliance of environmental regulations and the State Government has initiated action for violations.

The rehabilitation obligations and social justice to the displaced inhabitants in the areas of coal mining of BCCL include the following:

i. BCCL is undertaking its responsibilities for dealing with fire and rehabilitation of BCCL families and the Jharia Rehabilitation Development Authority (JRDA) has the responsibilities for rehabilitation of non-BCCL families from 595 affected areas, as per the approved Master plan for dealing with fires and subsidence and rehabilitation in the leasehold of BCCL.

ii. The Rehabilitation & Resettlement package under the approved Master Plan includes resettlement in satellite townships located on non-coal bearing areas identified as per Master Plan.

iii. JRDA has taken action for construction of houses under the Master plan.

iv. Payment of compensation to head of each family as appropriate.

v. Inclusion of community facilities such as primary schools, community centre, small dispensary, shopping centre etc.