

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
STEEL
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3033
ANSWERED ON:10.02.2014
CLEARANCES FROM OTHER MINISTRIES
Pathak Shri Harin

Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Ministry of Environment and Forests has refused to accord green clearances for the Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL) three key iron ore mining projects in West Singhbhum district of Jharkhand;
- (b) if so, the details thereof along with the details of the objections raised by the aforesaid Ministry;
- (c) whether the Government has taken up the issue with the Ministry of Environment and Forests and if so, the details thereof along with their reaction thereon;
- (d) the time likely to be taken in according approvals to these mining projects; and
- (e) the action plan being contemplated by the Government to meet the iron ore requirements for the steel sector?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STEEL (SHRI BENI PRASAD VERMA)

(a)&(b): For issuance of terms of references (TORs) for preparation of Environment Impact Assessment (EIA)/ Environment Management Plan (EMP) reports, Expert Appraisal Committee (EAC) of Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) had considered the proposals of Jhillingburu-I, Jhillingburu-II and Topailore leases of Gua Iron Ore Mines of SAIL in West Singhbhum district of Jharkhand on 24.01.2012. EAC observed that the leases are located in the West Singhbhum District, an identified severely polluted area where Respirable Suspended Particulate Matter (RSPM) level is higher than the prescribed standards. In view of this, EAC deferred prescribing of TORs to these leases till appropriate pollution control measures were effectively implemented in the area and the air quality results improved. The proposals were kept in abeyance till the pollution level were controlled and were within permissible limits.

(c) Measures were taken to control the Ambient Air Quality (AAQ) norms of SAIL, Gua mine area to within the prescribed limits by improving the road conditions and undertaking water sprinkling on the mineral transportation route. As a result RSPM levels for the period of March-April, 2012 came down as per the Jharkhand State Pollution Control Board (JSPCB) data. For Jhillingburu-II & Topailore leases of Gua mines, TOR for preparation of EIA/EMP Reports were issued by MoEF on 23.7.2012. Regarding Jhillingburu-I lease, MoEF made some observations about violation of Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 on 8th May, 2013. As per procedure in this regard, the violation of Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 has been acknowledged by the SAIL Board and a copy of the Board resolution has been submitted to MoEF on 28.05.2013 to liquidate the violation.

(d) On the basis of approved TOR, EIA/EMP reports for Topailore and Jhillingburu-II leases of SAIL, Gua have been prepared. Public hearings for these leases have been successfully conducted by Jharkhand State Pollution Control Board on 31.01.2014. The environment clearances for these leases may be granted in another 3-4 months time after the Expert Appraisal Committee of MoEF considers the proposal incorporating the Public Hearing details.

(e) To ensure long term availability of iron ore to domestic steel industry, the Government has decided that although conservation of iron ore resources is of the paramount importance, the same may not be achieved by banning or capping the export of iron ore but by taking recourse to appropriate fiscal measures. Presently, an ad valorem duty of 30% is levied with effect from 30.12.2011 on export of all grades of iron ore other than pellets. An export duty of 5% has been imposed on exports of iron ore pellets with effect from 27.01.2014.