

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
COAL
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3010
ANSWERED ON:31.07.2014
CLEARANCES FOR BLOCKS IN FOREST AREAS
Datta Shri Sankar Prasad

Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Ministry has sought any direction from the Cabinet Committee on Infrastructure for clearance by the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change to all the blocks in forest areas meant for power and steel plants irrespective of whether they are in the "go" or "no go" areas;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether the Government is aware that ninety per cent of underground mines are not properly filled up with sand after extracting coal thereby leaving the entire coal belt, disaster prone;
- (d) if so, whether the Government has taken any steps in this regard; and
- (e) if so, the details thereof?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) IN THE MINISTRY OF COAL, POWER AND NEW AND RENEWABLE ENERGY
(SHRI PIYUSH GOYAL)

(a) & (b): Related to the issue of "Go" and "No-Go" forests areas a Note for CCI containing the proposal that all the Forest Clearance (FC) proposals should be considered for approval by MoEF without reference to Go and No-Go areas, as per the current status and stipulations for according forest clearances unless there are insurmountable issues on the grounds of wildlife forest reserves, was sent on 26.11.2010 for consideration of CCI.

The CCI considered the proposal of Ministry of Coal in its meeting held on 13.01.2011 and directed that all pertinent issues may in the first instance be considered by a Group of Ministers and thereafter the matter be brought before CCI. Accordingly, a GoM was constituted on 03.02.2011 under the Chairmanship of the then Finance Minister and other Ministers as members. GoM in turn constituted a committee under the Chairmanship of the then Member (Energy) Planning Commission to look into the efficacy and legality of existing forest clearance norms and procedures being followed; environment clearance in respect of projects located in areas with high Comprehensive Environmental Pollution Index; and the steps to be taken to ensure that better quality forests are regenerated in a time-bound manner after mining operations get over. The Committee submitted its report to the GoM on 22.07.2011. The recommendations of the Committee were considered by GoM in its 5th Meeting held on 13.02.2011. Accordingly, the GoM recommended to do away with the "Go/No-Go" concept. MoEF has agreed to revert to the original practice of examining the project by Forest Advisory Council (FAC) on case by case on merit including the projects rejected earlier based on the "Go/No-Go" approach.

(c) to (e): Coal extraction from underground mines is carried out in two stages viz "Development" and "Depillaring". Depillaring operations are carried out either by caving method i.e. allowing the strata above coal seams to collapse in the de-coaled area or by stowing, where de-coaled area is filled with sand stowing. This method is particularly used to protect surface features wherever required. However, measures are taken to monitor surface subsidence in either case