

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ENVIRONMENT, FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:901
ANSWERED ON:16.07.2014
IMPACT OF MINING ON WILD LIFE
Choudhary Shri Ram Tahal;Devi Smt. Rama

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

- (a) whether wild life habitats are being destroyed due to mining activities in the country;
- (b) if so, the details thereof along with the existing laws to compensate the loss of forests and wild animal habitats as a result thereof;
- (c) whether the mining companies are not complying with the laws framed for the purpose; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof and the action taken by the Government against the erring companies, company-wise?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) FOR ENVIRONMENT, FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE (SHRI PRAKASH JAVADEKAR)

(a) and (b) As mining activity involves breaking up of lands in the mining areas, it has the potential to cause damage, when such activity and the ancillary infrastructure for collection, storage and transport are located in forests and wild life habitats.

Specific details of particular wildlife habitats facing destruction or damage on account of mining activities are recorded and appraised at the time of appraisal of the proposals for mining as and when required for environmental clearance, forest clearance and consideration by the Standing Committee of National Board for Wildlife, as per the statutory requirement.

The Government has taken the following measures to regulate mining including in forest and wildlife habitats and for minimizing the environmental impacts:

(i) Mining activities are subject to the environmental clearance process under the Environment Impact Assessment Notification, 2006. For environmental appraisal of mining projects including coal mining, Expert Appraisal Committees are in place, which inter alia seek relevant information on impact of wild life habitats, and propose appropriate conditions in this respect.

(ii) In case the proposed mining is located within forest area, the activity is also subject to appraisal by the Forest Advisory Committee set up under the Forest (Conservation) Act 1980.

(iii) In case the proposed mining area is located within a National Park or Wild Life Sanctuary, the proposal is also required to be considered by the National Board for Wild Life (NBWL)/through its Standing Committee as per the provisions of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972.

(iv) For ensuring a safety zone around the National Parks and Sanctuaries, Government has also introduced a system of notification of ecologically important area around National Parks and Sanctuaries as Ecologically Sensitive Zones (ESZ), in which activities impacting the wild life habitats can be further appraised and regulated. The ESZs are notified under section 3 of Environment (Protection) Act, 1986.

(c) and (d) The Regional Offices of the Ministry of Environment, Forests, and Climate Change, regularly monitors the status of compliance to conditions stipulated in the approvals accorded under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 and the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986, so as to ensure that conditions stipulated in these approvals are complied with.

During the last three years, a total of 696 mining projects in forest areas were inspected by the Regional Offices to assess compliance to conditions stipulated in the Forest clearance. The following are the important deficiencies/non-compliance observed:

- i. Poor reclamation of the mined area;
- ii. Non-declaration of non-forest area identified for Compensatory Afforestation as Reserved Forests/Protected Forests;
- iii. Poor maintenance of safety zone around the mining lease area;
- iv. Poor demarcation of mining lease area on the ground by using four feet high reinforced cement concrete pillars;

v. Overburden dumps not properly reclaimed.

Non compliance to stipulated conditions have been brought to notice of the State Government concerned for taking appropriate actions to ensure compliance to stipulated conditions.