

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:4872

ANSWERED ON:23.12.2014

ILLEGAL MINING IN EASTERN AND WESTERN GHATS

Chowdhury Shri Adhir Ranjan;Shetti Shri Raju alias Devappa Anna

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

(a) whether illegal mining is rampant in the Eastern Ghats and the world heritage site of Western Ghats and if so, the details thereof, State-wise including West Bengal and Maharashtra;

(b) whether various organizations including the public representatives have represented to the Government in this regard and if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether any action has been taken against mine owners involved in illegal mining in the said areas and if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the other steps taken/proposed to be taken by the Government to save these sites from illegal mining operations?

Answer

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

(a) and (b): As per section 23C of the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) (MMDR) Act, 1957, State Governments have been empowered to make rules for preventing illegal mining, transportation and storage of minerals. State Governments deal with cases of illegal mining; therefore specific details on illegal mining are not centrally maintained.

Based on the quarterly returns on illegal mining submitted by various State Governments to Indian Bureau of Mines (IBM) (a subordinate office of the Ministry of Mines), details of instances of illegal mining reported in various parts of the Country and the action taken by State Governments, for the last four years and the current year (till the quarter ending June, 2014), State-Wise, are given in ANNEXURE.

(c) and (d): The projects relating to mining of minerals require prior environment clearance under the provisions of the Environment Impact Assessment Notification, 2006, as amended. Further, with a view to providing protection to Western Ghats and maintaining its environmental integrity, this Ministry has issued directions under Section 5 of the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 on 13.11.2013 stating therein the categories of new and / or expansion projects/ activities, including mining, quarrying and sand mining, which would not be considered for granting environment clearance in the ecologically sensitive area, as identified in the Report of the High Level Working Group on Western Ghats submitted to the Ministry in April, 2013.

In addition, following steps have been taken by the Central Government, in the Ministry of Mines, to curb and check illegal mining in the Country:

(i) Regular monitoring of framing of rules by the State Governments to control illegal mining as per Section 23C of MMDR Act (so far 20 States have framed rules under section 23C of MMDR Act, 1957 to curb illegal mining);

(ii) Regular monitoring of setting up of Task Forces at State and District level to control illegal mining since the year 2005 (so far 22 States have reported to have constituted the Task Forces);

(iii) Regular monitoring of setting up of State Coordination-cum-Empowered Committee (SCEC) to coordinate efforts to control illegal mining by including representatives of Railways, Customs and Port authorities (13 State Governments have set up a Coordination-cum-Empowered Committee);

(iv) Regular follow up with State Governments to adopt an Action Plan with specific measures to detect and control illegal mining including, use of remote sensing, control on traffic, gathering market intelligence, registration of end-users and setting up of special cells etc;

(v) A Central Coordination-cum-Empowered Committee set up under the Chairmanship of Secretary (Mines) on 4.3.2009 and reconstituted on 20.10.2011 holds quarterly meetings to consider all mining related issues, including matters relating to coordination of activities to combat illegal mining;

(vi) Ministry of Railways have instituted a mechanism on 16.4.2010 to allow transportation of iron ore only against permits issued rake-wise and verified by State Government, apart from taking measures to fence and set up check post at the railway sidings;

(vii) Department of Revenue (Customs) has issued instructions to all its field units to share information on iron ore exports with the State Governments;

(viii) Ministry of Shipping has directed all major Ports in the country to streamline the verification procedures for movement of iron ore, and to check whether royalty has been paid for the consignment;

(ix) Government has notified amendment in Rule 45 of Mineral Conservation and Development Rules, 1988, on 9.2.2011 making it mandatory for all miners, traders, stockists, exporters and end-users to register with IBM and report their transaction in minerals on monthly basis for a proper end-to-end accounting of minerals; and

(x) Indian Bureau Mines has constituted Special Task Forces for inspection of mines in endemic areas by taking the help of Sate- llite imageries.