

MINISTRY OF MINES MAJOR ACTIVITIES MARCH – 2020

The highlights of the achievements and activities of the Ministry of Mines for the month of March, 2020 are as under

➤ **Major activities of the month:**

- Two mining blocks were auctioned in March, 2020. Since the amendment to MMDR Act, 1957, a total of 97 mineral blocks across 9 States have been auctioned with estimated revenues of Rs.7,40,939 Cr accruing over fifty years based on current prices. A total of 12 auctioned mines have now been operationalized. Further, 18 mineral blocks are presently under auction in Jharkhand, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Karnataka.
- 46 working mining leases got expired on 31.03.2020 under Section 8A(6) of the MMDR Act, 1957. The major impact on production of minerals is from the mines whose leases are expiring in Odisha (24) & Karnataka (7). 2 mines were auctioned in Odisha in March, 2020. Thus, auction process has now been completed for 27 mining blocks (23 in Odisha and 4 in Karnataka) out of 46. Against anticipated disruption of 60.94 MT iron ore, the production from these 27 expiring mining leases will cover 58.56 MT (96%). One mining block auction has been deferred due to litigation. Exploration is being carried out in remaining 18 mining blocks for preparing these mines for auction for grant of mining lease.
- Mineral Laws (Amendment) Act, 2020 (No. 2 of 2020) was notified on 13th March, 2020 for replacing Mineral Laws (Amendment) Ordinance, 2020. In order to implement the amended provisions of the MMDR Act, the Mineral Auction (Amendment) Rules, 2020 and Minerals (Other than Atomic and Hydrocarbon Energy Minerals) Concession (Amendment) Rules, 2020 were notified on 20.02.2020. These amendments will help in early operationalisation of the mineral blocks auctioned & also facilitate transfer of all the valid clearances of the old lessee to new lessee up to a period of two years for mining leases expiring under the provisions of the Section 8 A (5) and (6) of the Act. In

effect, all the brownfield mining blocks will benefit through this amendment. Further, MoEF&CC has also issued notification for Environment Clearance (EC) dt. 28.03.2020 & guidelines for Forest Clearance (FC(dt. 31.03.2020) in line with the Mineral (Auction) Amendment Rules, 2020 after detailed discussions with the PMO, MoEF&CC and other stakeholders

- Hon'ble Finance Minister made an announcement on 26.03.2020 for the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana with Rs.1.7 Lakh crore outlay. One of the components of the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana is the utilization of the funds for combating COVID-19 pandemic. Accordingly, the Ministry of Mines issued suitable instructions vide DO No.7/2/2020-MIV dt. 28.03.2020 to Chief Secretaries/State Governments for use of DMF funds for supplementing and augmenting facilities of medical testing, screening and other requirements in connection with preventing the spread of COVID-19 pandemic as well as for treating the patients affected with this pandemic. As on 31.03.2020, Rs.39.47 Cr has been spent by States out of balance available in DMF of Rs.13,418 Cr (as on 28.03.2020). Daily report is being shared with Deptt. of Economic Affairs and I have been attending Empowered Group meetings.
 - National Mineral Exploration Trust (NMET) has approved 184 exploration projects with total cost of approved projects Rs.807.52 Crore up to 31.03.2020. A total of 69 projects have already been completed and 115 projects are ongoing. An amount of Rs.236.66 Crore has been incurred from year 2017-18 to 2019-20 (up to 31.03.2020).
 - A nationwide 21 days lock down was announced on 24.03.2020 by Hon'ble PM to control the spread of COVID-19. Ministry has taken number to steps to protect operations of the mining sector. Details are elaborated in **Annexure-1**.
- **Monthly Status of Auction/PMKKKY-DMF:**
- Pradhan Mantri Khanij Kshetra Kalyan Yojana (PMKKKY) is being implemented through the funds collected under District Mineral Foundation (DMF) and as on February, 2020, of Rs.36,832 Cr. collected, Rs.31,062 Cr stands allocated and

Rs.13,549 Cr are spent. Total 1,51,959 projects have been sanctioned under the scheme

➤ **Conferences Workshops/Seminars/Meetings and other activities:**

- An Inter-Ministerial Group (IMG) meeting was held on 03.03.2020 under the chairmanship of Secretary (Mines) to discuss the recent developments in the International Arbitration filed by Ras-Al-Khaimah Investment Authority (RAKIA), Government of UAE under the India-UAE Bilateral Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement (BIPA). The Ministry took the matter with the Govt. of A.P. to safeguard India's interests and the final reply in the matter along with the witness statements and expert reports will be filed by Government of India in the month of April 2020.
- A team of officers from Ministry of Mines along with officials from GSI and IBM visited Bhaskaracharya Institute for Space Applications and Geo-Informatics (BISAG), Gandhinagar, Gujarat on 16&17.03.2020 to discuss collaboration on National Geoscience Data Repository (NGDR), upgradation of data structure, developing analytical tools for utilization of BHUKOSH & upgradation of Mining Surveillance System (MSS). A collaborative agreement has been finalised for future course of action.
- The annual Field Season Program 2020-21 of GSI comprising of about 950 projects was approved by the Chairman, Central Geological Programming Board (CGPB). FSP 2020-21 on 30.03.2020 after teleconference and online discussions.

Annexure – 1

Steps taken by Ministry of Mines to address operational and other issues relating to Mining sector during lock down period.

1. Since declaration of the lockdown on 24 March 2020, Ministry of Mines is in constant communication with Industry associations like FICCI, FIMI, Aluminum Association of India etc. Aluminum Association of India approached the Ministry for resolving issues viz. constant running of their smelter, trucks being stopped, stoppage of unloading of imports at ports, custom clearances etc. After review by the Hon'ble

Minister, the matter was taken up with the MHA and the mineral industry was included in the essential services through notification of the MHA dated 24.03.2020. The matter was taken up with Ministry of Shipping on priority basis even before the lock-down declaration. As a result, Ministry of Shipping through DG/Shipping issued suitable instructions on 29.03.2020 for non-charging of container detention charges. FIMI also raised similar issues and their concerns were also taken into account.

2. This Ministry has already written to Chief Secretaries for continuation of mineral production as an essential activity based on the instructions issued by Ministry of Home affairs dt. 24.03.2020. This matter stands resolved as no business associations has complained since issue of the orders.

3. Details of CSR funds expenditure of CPSEs working under Ministry has been already shared with Dept. of Public Enterprises. HCL has contributed Rs. 22 lakhs to PM Cares fund, MECL will contribute Rs. 2 Cr to PM Cares fund. NALCO has committed Rs.5 Cr in PMCARES fund.

4. On the issue raised by FIMI and other bodies on delay in approval of mining plans expiring on 31.03.2020 due to national level lockdown, Ministry has advised IBM to expedite approvals to continue mining operations with skeletal staff through roster or work from home mechanisms. IBM under guidance of Ministry has approved all pending mining plans amidst this lockdown. There is no mining plan which is expiring up to 30th April 2020 pending with IBM for approval as on date.

5. Ministry of Mines have 5 hospitals under NALCO & HCL and the information has been shared with Ministry of Health. Both CPSEs has been advised to offer their hospital facilities to State govt for assistance in fighting the COVID-19 pandemic. NALCO has also adopted a hospital in Jeypore town on the request of District collector/Koraput. Executive Director, M&R complex, Damanjodi/NALCO has been advised to sign the tripartite agreement with the District Collector for adoption of the proposed hospital.

6. Ministry of Mines including its CPSE's and attached and subordinate offices has decided to donate one day salary of officials/staff to Prime Minister Relief fund (PMCARES). Approximate figure Rs. 4.63 Cr.

7. Ministry officials are keeping a close coordination with industry and State Govt. on incoming E-mails/Phone calls to resolve any issue arising out of this lock down due to COVID-19. Due to lockdown no urgent activity is being hampered and all steps are being taken by Ministry to keep the operations going without any disturbance.
