‘Floods and mining are linked’

TUMkur: There is a direct link between unabated mining and the floods which devastated the North Karnataka region in 2009, said environmentalist and High Court Lok Adalat member Y N Yellappa Reddy.

Speaking with mediapersons here on Friday, he said mining activities in the Western Ghats region - the main source of rivers and lakes - has led to the deterioration of environment.

Constant mining activities had led to the destruction of grassland.

And rainwater, instead of soaking into the grounds, flowed towards rivers and lakes, leading to erosion of the upper layer of soil. This in turn, had reduced the water-storing capacity of the dams.

He said the water storage capacity at the Tungabhadra dam in Hospet had been reduced to 38.40 per cent. Inadequate rainfall marked the monsoons of late.

Since the land lost its ability to absorb rain, the rainwater flowed into the rivers. The muddy-floods in Mantragalaya only substantiates this, he explained.

Even amid environmentalists crying hoarse about mining activities, among the total 49,000 mining proposals awaiting the Union government’s nod, 39,000 proposals have been forwarded by the Karnataka government alone.

It is unfortunate to note that we are yet to realise the importance of soil, he rued.

Uninterrupted limestone mining to meet the requirements of cement factories and unabated mining of ores to meet the global demand for iron ore have led to widespread destruction.

There will be nothing left for the future generation, Reddy expressed his fears.

DH News Service
Bring mine workers under ESI scheme: Parliamentary panel

Our Bureau

New Delhi, May 5

A Parliamentary panel has proposed the inclusion of mine workers under the Employees' State Insurance (ESI) scheme. Since mining takes place mostly in tribal areas or in inaccessible regions, a feasibility study should be done for the opening of ESI hospitals or dispensaries. If need be, the ESI Act should be amended, the Standing Committee on Labour, headed by Mr. Hemnand Biswal, has said.

The Labour Ministry, too, seems open to the idea. It told the Committee that ESI “looks like a good scheme” for those who work in the mines. However, it said a lot depended on the Mines Ministry’s approach to worker welfare.

“We will examine... and will submit a report on that,” the Ministry told the panel.

The Standing Committee report was critical of the Labour Ministry’s move to set up an ESI hospital in Bhubaneswar, which already had many hospitals. Instead, it recommended an ESI hospital in Rourkela.

The panel pulled up the Labour Ministry for not submitting a feasibility report on setting up an ESI hospital in Ferozabad, Uttar Pradesh, despite saying that it would be done. The area has a large number of bangle and glass industry workers with poor access to medical facilities, it added.

According to an estimate, there are about 1.25 million workers in the mining industry, with lakhs more involved in illegal mining.

The contribution of the labour-intensive mining and quarrying sector to the GDP in 2010-11 was estimated at Rs 182,278 crore, an increase of 18.2 per cent over the last year, according to the Mines Ministry’s annual report.

MINES SAFETY

The Parliamentary panel also pulled up the Directorate General of Mines and Safety (DGMS), responsible for ensuring safety, for not spending the grants allotted to it for two schemes involving the modernising of its database and e-governance.

Up to March 19, 2012, the DGMS had spent only Rs 182.48 lakh against the budget estimate of Rs 500 lakh on modernising the mines accidents database.

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Clean up act on land, power & mines

Ask any industrialist about the roadblocks in setting up projects in the country and the answer is likely to be difficulty in acquiring land. Land acquisition has emerged as a prominent problem area, since farmers and other stakeholders have demanded higher compensation for their plots. Government studies have shown how hundreds of projects have been delayed due to this reason. According to a recent government statement, 95 projects implemented by the National Highways Authority of India and 126 projects of other state public works departments and border roads organisations have been delayed due to land acquisition and law and order problems across the country. Delay in environmental clearances and issues of higher compensation and rehabilitation have also stalled projects in the mines and mineral sectors. The power sector, too, has had its share of problems with issues related to financing, land acquisition, clearances and lack of policy clarity. While the government has moved to tackle the problem by bringing bills on land acquisition and mining issue in Parliament, the progress has been limited. The process of thrashing out a consensus and taking the states into confidence has further delayed progress.

The problem is now showing up in data as well. Industrial growth has remained sluggish for a significant period, which in turn has hurt overall economic growth and contributed to inflation. Experts say the government now needs to confront these issues head on to protect growth. “Reforms in the land, mining, minerals and power sector are very very crucial. Tackling them urgently will help soften the supply side bottlenecks and ease inflation,” says DK Joshi, chief economist at ratings agency Crisil. “Absence of these reforms will mean that inflation will continue to remain high. Bold moves to go ahead with reforms in these sectors will ensure higher growth with low inflation.”
K’taka mines department comes under CAG watch

SHIVAKUMAR G. MALAGI
BELLARY, MAY 5

Already under close scrutiny by the Karnataka Lokayukta and Supreme Court-constituted Central Empowered Committee, the performance of the department of mines and geology in the state is now being thoroughly scanned by the Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG).

CAG, which last month blew the lid on illegal mining in Himachal Pradesh and Orissa, has begun a similar performance audit of the mines and geology department in the state, particularly in relation to the mining scam that Karnataka is still coming to grips with.

"The CAG team has verified the current procedures for issuing fresh mining licences, notices to defaulting miners, collecting of royalty and penalty, remittance of funds and so on. On completion, it is likely to suggest guidelines and measures to improve the system," says Dr. B.N. Shankar, deputy director of mines and geology, Hospet circle.

A special CAG team has also embarked on a field study to review the impact of mining on the environment and people’s lives in the ore and granite mining districts of Bellary, Chitradurga, Tumkur and Ramanagara, among others, reveals a senior officer of the auditor-general’s office, Bengaluru, who is heading a team studying the socio-economic impact of mining in the Sandur-Hospet region.

The CAG team has already spoken to NGO, Samaj Parivartan Samuday (SPS), which brought illegal mining in the state to the attention of the Supreme Court. “We conveyed to CAG officials that mining is a destructive activity and requires to be monitored,” says SPS project officer Iqbal Khan Pulli.
इंडिया इंक देंगी विदेशी कंपनियों को चुनौती
सेल, नालको, हिंदुस्तान कॉपर की होड़ कई विदेशी बुराहादी घरानों से

कोलकाता। अफगानिस्तान के खनन उद्योग में जल्द ही भारतीय कंपनियों दलबक देने वाली है। भारत सरकार की चार महारानी कंपनियों के कॉर्पोरेटियम समेत चार देशी औद्योगिक घरानों के नाम वान को खोना और पांडा खाद्य के लीज के लिए साइंटिस्ट किया गया है। स्टील अर्थरिटी अफ्रीड, हिंदुस्तान कॉपर और मिलर एक्सप्लोरेशन कोर्टिसेशन कॉर्पोरेटियम बनाकर कर अनाथ बनाई हुई है।

भारत की दो कंपनियाँ- मनेट इंस्टीट एंड एनजी और बिजल स्टील इंस्टीट और रिश्व के लिए साइंटिस्ट किया गया है। स्टील अर्थरिटी अफ्रीड, हिंदुस्तान कॉपर और मिलर एक्सप्लोरेशन कोर्टिसेशन कॉर्पोरेटियम बनाकर कर अनाथ बनाई हुई है।

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सूज के अनुसार, भारतीय कॉर्पोरेटियम की पैट मानुषीकरण के बंटन से हटकर फिर हो गई है। निवेश का प्रताप (पीएफआई) तैयार करने के लिए टेक्स्ट का अवधारण किया जा रहा है। सोर्स की खाद्य के बादशाहत इतिहास के वर्गक्षेत्र और गठन क्षेत्र में और तंत्र की खाद्य धीरे धीरे निश्चित के हेराग और भारतीय खाद्य है। मई में खनन क्षेत्र के दौर की संभावना है। उसके बाद वह ऐसे विदेश को फिर प्रोजेक्ट (आरएफआई) तैयार किया जा रहा है।

इन खाद्यों के टैक्स किए गए भारतीय इंडस्ट्रियल कंपनियों को अफगानिस्तान में रोड-रस्सी निर्माण करने और भी कम मिलने के आसार है। भारतीय कंपनियाँ मानक चल नहीं हैं कि कोई खाद्य का अद्वैत मंडरा है। अफगानिस्तान को आर्थिक रूप से उन्नत करने में वे पहले काम आ सकते हैं। भारतीय कंपनियाँ को अफगानिस्तान से करीब रहने का लाभ मिल सकता है। अभी हाल के नेंद्रीय स्थान भर्ती नेन्द्रीय वर्दा का काम करता है और वहाँ की खाद्य संस्था के दौरान में भारतीय युद्ध का भरोसा दिलाया गया।