"Tribals’ rights at the core of Maoist conflict"

States have allowed exploitation of mineral-rich regions without locals’ consent

Mohammad Ali

NEW DELHI: The conflict between the government and the Maoists in the tribal areas didn’t start with the abduction of Sukma Collector Alex Paul Menon and it would not end with his release, observed B.D. Sharma, the mediator who secured Mr. Menon’s freedom after two weeks in captivity.

Addressing a press conference here over the weekend, Mr. Sharma said: “At the core of the clash between the governments and the Maoists lies the question of ownership of jal, jangal and zameen of the tribals, who used to be the owners of the mineral-rich region, and the model of development which the governments, State as well as the Union, are thrusting upon them.”

Referring to the “understanding” reached between the Chhattisgarh government and Maoists, he hoped the temporary ceasefire in Operation Green Hunt will lead to an era of peace. However, he added: “Only astrologers can predict the longevity of the current ‘ceasefire.’”

The former District Magistrate of Bastar talked about the situation prevailing in the tribal region while highlighting the government’s failure in protecting the rights of tribals.

“When I asked a local tribal in Bastar about the difference the Maoists’ presence has made to his life, he replied that the tribals don’t get troubled by the patwari and the daroga,” Mr. Sharma said.

Talking about the “inherent contradiction” in the government’s policy on tribals, Mr. Sharma said instead of resolving core issues like rights over forests, forest produce, people’s rights over land and resources, and the trader-contractor-politician nexus, governments have signed hundreds of memoranda of understanding with foreign and domestic companies for exploitation of minerals without the consent of the local people.

“Our Prime Minister calls the tribal people poor! How can you call the community poor which historically and naturally used to own and cultivate the mineral-rich region and its resources?” he said.

Mr. Sharma regretted that the Bhuria Committee’s 1996 recommendation regarding community ownership of industry had not been adopted still. He said tribals had not been given any stake in the present model of development despite the Centre having envisaged carving out a zone to ensure the partnership of tribals in development.

He highlighted the “open violation” of the provisions of the Panchayat (Extension to Schedule Areas) Act, 1996 (PESA) — the PESA had envisaged that “every Gram Sabha shall be competent to safeguard and preserve the tradition and customs of the people, their cultural identity, community resources and the customary mode of the dispute resolution.”

QUESTION OF OWNERSHIP: Social activist B.D. Sharma addressing a news conference in New Delhi over the weekend. – PHOTO: SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR
एनएमडीसी स्टील प्लांट के लिए विदेश में करेगी कोयला ब्लॉक का अधिग्रहण

सार्वजनिक क्षेत्र की नेतृत्व मिश्रित डिवीजन महाराष्ट्र (एनएमडीसी) छत्तीसगढ़ में स्थापित होने वाले अपने स्टील प्लांट के लिए आंतरराष्ट्रीय और वाणिज्यिक में कोयला खदान का अधिग्रहण कर सकती है। एनएमडीसी का यह स्टील प्लांट वर्ष 2014-15 तक स्थापित होने की उम्मीद है।

एनएमडीसी के एक वर्तमान अधिकारी के गुरुवार, स्टील प्लांट को कोयले की कमी को देखते हुए कंपनी ने विदेश में कोयला खदान अधिग्रहण करने का फैसला किया है। अधिग्रहण के लिए वैश्विक बाजार बढ़ती जा रही है और इसे देखते हुए खदान का अधिग्रहण ज्यादा पसंद मिल रहा है। एनएमडीसी ने अपने स्टील प्लांट पर 3,000 करोड़ रुपये का निवेश कर रही है, जिससे नवीनता 30 लाख टन मैटेल उत्पादन का अनुमान है। स्टील प्लांट के लिए तैनात-अभ्यास की आपूर्ति कंपनियों की बेहतरियां स्थित खदान से की जाएगी।

एनएमडीसी विदेश में कम लागत वाले अधिग्रहण की संभावना तालाब रही है।
Imfa Q4 net down 10% to ₹22 cr
Indian Metals and Ferro Alloys (Imfa), one of the largest integrated producers of ferro alloys in the country, reported a 10 per cent decline in net profit to ₹22 crore for the fourth quarter of FY12. The company had posted a net profit of ₹24.5 crore in the January-March quarter of 2011, Imfa said in a filing to the Bombay Stock Exchange.
Bolivia–India iron mine deal in peril

The Bolivian government has accused India’s Jindal Steel of failing to meet the terms of a contract under which the latter was to have invested $2 billion for iron ore extraction.
Govt yet to fix disinvestment target in HCL

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
Kolkata

THE government, which has revived its decision to disinvest in Hindustan Copper in the current financial year, has not yet fixed the quantum of stake to be offloaded.

“The government has not yet decided on the quantum of disinvestment in Hindustan Copper,” a government official said.

“It will depend on which route the disinvestment will be carried through - institutional private placement or public offer. Consultation is going on in this regard,” the official said.

Government holding in Hind Copper is 99.5 per cent. The copper major first proposed a follow-on equity offer of 10 per cent in 2010-11 along with divestment.
IMFA Q4 net declines 10%

Indian Metals and Ferro Alloys (IMFA), one of the largest integrated producers of ferro alloys, has reported 9.96 per cent decline in net profit at Rs 22.04 crore for the fourth quarter of FY12.
BOLIVIA-INDIA MINE DEAL IN JEOPARDY

BOLIVIA'S BIGGEST mining investment under President Evo Morales is in peril as his government accuses India's Jindal Steel of failing to meet terms of a contract under which it was to have invested $2 billion for iron ore extraction.

Both sides claim breach of contract. Bolivia fined Jindal $18 million on Friday for allegedly failing to keep an investment schedule.

Jindal on Saturday issued a statement accusing Bolivia of failing to honour an agreement to guarantee natural gas shipments for the Mutun mine and a planned smelter. Mining minister Mario Virreira said last week it would be best if Jindal quit the project near the Brazilian border so the country can find another investor. Jindal signed an investment deal in 2007 but never launched the project. — AP
IMFA Q4 NET DOWN 10% AT ₹22CR

Mumbai: Indian Metals and Ferro Alloys (IMFA), one of the largest integrated producers of ferro alloys in the country, has reported 9.96 per cent decline in net profit at ₹22.04 crore for the fourth quarter of FY12. The company had posted a net profit of ₹24.48 crore in January-March quarter of 2011. IMFA said in a filing to the Bombay Stock Exchange.
‘Land acquisition, fuel top concerns in power sector’

SANDEEP SINGH
MUMBAI, MAY 6

EVEN as Budget 2012-13 threw in some positives for the power sector, there is still a lot that needs to be done to address the growing concerns of power producers, both with respect to their feedstock as well as downstream reforms in the power distribution and land acquisition sectors.

S Padmanabhan, executive director-operations at Tata Power told Indian Express that while reforms are a must, allocation of coal blocks in transparent manner is equally important.

There should also be a policy direction to address, how to deal with imported coal and what should be the solution to that, especially for companies that have already invested money on the ground,” said Padmanabhan.

The cumulative capacity of power plants in India stands at slightly over 200,000 MW and fuel for these is not fully available, especially for thermal stations that form the bulk of this capacity. Domestic coal meets 70 per cent of the requisite fuel needs, while remaining projects will have to fall back on imported coal.

“Imported coal puts pressure on power plant because the price of domestic coal is roughly 25-30 per cent of the imported coal. Also there are companies who have assets built on gas, and gas is not available because of which those companies have stranded assets,” said Padmanabhan.

While India imports a lot of coal from Indonesia, a change in its coal pricing law in September 2010 increased the price of imported coal by 140 per cent.

“Since there is some risk there, we are looking at alternate coal sources in South Africa,” said Padmanabhan adding that if the PPP mode were to be adopted for power distribution, Tata Power was ready for it. “The end consumer is willing to pay and distribution reform will help. For any new circle, investment will amount to Rs 200-300 crore per year and we can manage that.”
Reserve mineral areas for PSUs: Steel Min

PRIVADARSHI SIDDHANTA
NEW DELHI, MAY 6

THE steel ministry has sought the intervention of a Parliamentary Committee in ensuring that the new mining Bill is revised to enable accordance of due priority to state-run companies for mineral concessions.

In a recent note to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Coal and Steel, the ministry has strongly pitched for reserving mineral-bearing areas for the central PSUs and observed that state-run companies have an bigger role in the socio-economic development of the country.

A number of them have become increasingly competent, but are functioning under innumerable constraints and procedural requirements in areas of purchases, tenders, pricing, manpower, vigilance and other issues, which are not encountered by their private counterparts.

Accordingly, there is a need to incorporate a provision in the Mines and Minerals (Development & Regulation) Bill 2011 to this effect," the steel ministry told the Parliamentary panel.

Acknowledging the concerns of the mines ministry that reservations of mineralised areas for PSUs may be misutilised by the private sector through backdoor entry by entering into joint ventures with the state-owned companies, the ministry pitched for inserting suitable safeguards in the Bill that no JVs by PSUs with private parties will be allowed in respect of a mineral concession allocated through the process of reservation. Such central PSUs can be allowed JVs with their counterparts in the states.

The ministry has suggested that mines can be reserved for the central PSUs under the government dispensation route for major minerals like iron ore, manganese ore and chrome ore as is being done in the case of coal.
इंडियन मेटल्स का शुद्ध लाभ 10 प्रतिशत घटा

यूनॉव है। इंडियन मेटल्स एंड पेट्रो प्रोड्यूसर का शुद्ध लाभ 31 मार्च 2012 को समाप्त हुई थी। लाभ में 9.96 प्रतिशत घटकर 22.04 करोड़ रुपए बढ़ गए। कंपनी ने इससे पिछले साल की तुलना में 24.48 करोड़ रुपए का शुद्ध लाभ कम कर दिया था। कंपनी ने बेंबोर बाजार को बताया कि इसी तिमाही में उसकी कुल आय होलीक के लिए 318.49 करोड़ रुपए पहुंच गई जो 2010-11 की तुलना में 285.68 करोड़ रुपए थी।