Chances of finding hidden wealth were just 0.4 percent not deterred people from taking up treasure hunt

It’s almost like one of those Steven Spielberg’s Indiana Jones series. A man and a few schoolchildren accidentally stumble on a door in a bamboo thick and see gold through the keyhole. Then, the archeologist possesses him into the action for the treasure.

Last month a treasure hunt was launched by a few enterprising citizens of society and was executed by the National Mineral Development Corporation (NMDC) on Vidyaranya School premises, opposite the Audhra Pradesh State Secretariat. The search might not have yielded any tangible results but it confirmed the presence of a maze of tunnels and underground structures in the vicinity of Nizamuddin Palas, a hill on which Birla Mandir was built.

Treasure hunting was not new to Nizam’s Decan, as almost every grave yard, temple complex, dismantled mosque and palaces and also public buildings in Hyderabad have become targets of treasure hunters in the last 50 years.

However, this time the bounty season advanced a bit with massive treasure hunt in the heart of Hyderabad. Excavators were summoned to dig in search of much forgotten bunkers built by the British Nizam Mahbub Ali Pasha during World War II to stash his wealth and secure himself from air attacks of Japan. The last ruler of the erstwhile Hyderabad state was the richest man of his time.

The latest attempt to unravel the Nizam’s hidden wealth in his underground bunkers began with expectations of finding huge quantities of gold, biscuits and diamonds. It may be recalled that the Nizam had shipped 3,000 kg gold to the newly formed Pakistan. A local historian, hinting that the underground cache could yield precious metal.

The present search is one of the complexes which was the palace of one of the principal states under Nizam, now a public school. Ironically a descendent of the princely family of Vizianagaram, P Ananda Reddy, is the district’s acting chief executive officer and heads the state unit of the Indian National Trust For Art and Cultural Heritage. “I am surprised to hear about treasure in the ground I played around as a child,” he says.

The National Mineral Development Corporation (NMDC), the Geological Survey of India and other agencies have also procured satellite maps and other scientific data about the underground bunkers and hope to unravel the secret treasures of Quba Shahi and Mogul dynasties of last five centuries. We are certain about the tunnels, but can’t say what they contain,” says Prof Channa Reddy, Director of NMDC, All India Institute of Archaeology.

The 25km radius around Charminar, Golconda Fort and the Nizam Palace had been the eye of bounty hunters since last three decades. The explorations in the minuscule, Home Science College and the famous Birla Mandir complex have been hot of diggers. Some of the ancient grave yards like old city near Mecca Mosque, the royal grave yard near Purani Haveli, King Koti Palaces, Kissan Palace and also the Hakimnama Palaces have been dug up on several occasions.

According to Channa Reddy, who is also the State Treasurer, who is also the State Treasurer, six offices in the city are located in areas where treasure hunters have been active in search of diamonds and gold on river beds and also biddihis. Treasure hunters dig up almost everything that had even the remotest association with treasure, from graves to old trees, palaces to temples, abandoned houses to forest tracks, ancient tombs and underground bunkers filled with gold and other valuable objects where. The search for treasure is not entirely without reason. Historically and geologically, Andhra Pradesh has the second largest mineral resource in India and the State can boast of producing seven of the world’s top 10 diamonds, including the “Kotha” and the “Kundal.” The family of the Nizam are still searching for the missing diamond estimated to be $650 million in the international market and last seen in the Nizam’s state treasury 60 years ago.

A treasure hunt is often triggered by a folk tale. There have been hundreds of cases of vandalism in the areas around the old buildings. A continuous search of treasure-seekers digging up ancient graves. Unlike other states, Andhra Pradesh site on a treasure trove of natural resources and these left by its rich rulers. Several palaces had special vaults where treasure was stored. Unfortunately, most of the treasures were stolen by family members and servants after the death of the ruler.” says Hyderabad city historian Dr Narendra Luther.

The national studies carried out by the NMDC on the premises of Vidyaranya School here revealed that a “treasure” indeed exists at depth of about 30 feet. Every monsoon, hundreds of people in Kurnool, Krishna and Vizianagaram districts search riverbeds and hill slopes for diamonds and precious mines that the rains may have washed down. The NMDC has set up offices in Kurnool and Amrabad districts and operated some excavation for diamonds and gold on river beds and also biddihis.

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Now sand mining mafia attack govt. officials

Mahim Pratap Singh

Bhopal: After the alleged murder of IPS officer Narendra Kumar in Madhya Pradesh's Morena district by the mining mafia on Thursday and the attack on another IPS officer by liquor mafia the same day, government officials in Panna district came under attack on Saturday from the sand mining mafia while probing illegal mining.

Sub-Divisional Magistrate (SDM) N.A. Gaud, along with a Sub-divisional Officer of Police (SDOP), were fired upon by persons involved in illegal sand mining in the Chandipati village, Ajaygarh block, of Panna district.

While the officials escaped unharmed, they suspected the hand of former dacoit Kuber Singh, who illegally quarries sand to cross-border areas in Uttar Pradesh, in the attack.

This is the third such attack on government officials by organised criminals in Madhya Pradesh within a week.

The officials escaped unhurt in attack

The Congress alleges involvement of CM

On Thursday, IPS officer Narendra Kumar was allegedly murdered by the mining mafia active in the Chambal region. On the same day, another IPS officer Jaidevan was attacked by goons associated with the liquor mafia.

The goons, alleged supporters of former BJP MLA Narendra Singh, attacked the officer when he tried to stop the sale of liquor on Holli day, observed as an official dry day in Madhya Pradesh.

The events of the week have turned the spotlight on the rampant illegal mining in the State, with the Opposition Congress alleging the direct involvement of Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, along with almost his entire Cabinet.

"We demand an independent judicial enquiry into illegal mining, including the ten years of the Congress government, led by me. Only that will bring out the truth," ACC general secretary Digvijay Singh told The Hindu.

"We do not have faith in the State Lokayukt, who was appointed by the CM when the CM himself was being investigated by the Lokayukt in the dumper scam. The appointment was a quid pro quo for letting Mr. Chauhan and his wife go scot free in the scam, which eventually happened when the Lokayukt police filed its closure report," Mr. Singh alleged.

Mr. Singh also pointed out the "mutually beneficial" relationship of the Chattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh governments.

"It is also obvious that the Raman Singh-led BJP government in Chhattisgarh is in cahoots with the Madhya Pradesh government, and both are scratching each other's backs," he alleged.

Following Narendra Kumar's murder on Thursday, the police initially claimed that "prima facie it appeared the mining mafia were behind the incident." However, within 24 hours, the police denied having ever made that link.

Talking to The Hindu, Madhya Pradesh Director General of Police Nandan Dubey categorically denied the role of mining mafia in the incident.

However, Madhya Pradesh Congress Committee president Kantilal Bhuria and Leader of Opposition in the State Assembly Ajay Singh claim otherwise.

Mr. Bhuria alleged the involvement of BJP leaders in illegal mining.

A delegation of the State Congress will be meeting Union Home Minister P. Chidambaram to bring the matter to his notice.
विदेशी कंपनियां टटोलेंगी
छत्तीसगढ़ की धरती

रायपुर (आशीष सभार): खानिज जआया। पहले भी छत्तीसगढ़ में हीरे संपदा से भरी छत्तीसगढ़ की धरती के अलावा अन्य खानिज संसाधनों में विदेशी कंपनियां टोह लेंगी। के पूर्ववर्ती के नाम राष्ट्रीय कंपनियों दक्षिण अफ्रीका की कंपनियों के पीछे ने राज्य के बहुमूल्य संसाधनों को हटने के बाद केन्द्रीय खानिज उद्योग की हो की है। पूर्ववर्ती लाइसेंस दान लेने ने अल्ट्रेडेक्विन की एक कंपनी को तिकानेक्स परिचालन जारी कर दिया है। रायपुर जिले के लिए अल्ट्रेडेक्विन की कंपनी ने डिप्टी ने ही रायपुर को, फार्म में विदेशी एस्कोवर्ल लिमिटेड को टोर्क कंपनियों को डिटेक्ट कर दिया। राज्य परिचालन वे ही नई है। राज्य की के रायपुर जिले में पहले ही हीरे रानगार्ड धरती में अब फिर से अवैध के लिए छत्तीसगढ़ की कंपनी विदेशी कंपनियों का राज करते हैं का मामला उठाया हृदयी।
Sand mafia attacks team probing MP mining

BHOPAL

Madhya Pradesh is in the grip of mining mafia. This has become the open truth as barely two days after a young IPS officer was killed, allegedly by the mining mafia of Madhya Pradesh, a police team was fired upon on Saturday by men suspected to be involved in illegal sand mining in Panna district.

Police said that according to preliminary reports, the team escaped unhurt. The firing took place when a group led by Sub-Divisional Officer of Police (SDOP) JS Markam had gone to Ajaygarh, 40 km from Panna, on Saturday afternoon after it received reports of illegal sand mining there.

Miners opened fire, police said, adding that additional forces from the district headquarters had been deployed to avoid any more untoward incidents.

Madhya Pradesh Home Minister Uma Shankar Gupta claimed that the fresh attack on police officers was the outcome of stern action being taken against the mining mafia. People associated with mining were turning on the police under pressure, he added.

On Thursday, in a horrific incident that sparked national outrage, 30-year-old IPS officer Narendra Kumar Singh was crushed under a tractor-trolley driven by an alleged member of the mining mafia while trying to stop the vehicle carrying illegally-quarried stones in Morena district.

Leader of Opposition in MP Assembly Ajay Singh charged the BJP Government in the State of giving protection to mining and liquor mafia. "Illegal mining is at its peak in many districts in Madhya Pradesh. There is no doubt that illegal mining and liquor mafia cannot flourish without the protection of the State Government," said Singh after visiting the spot where Kumar was crushed to death.

In another incident on the day Kumar was killed, another young IPS officer and his team were attacked — allegedly by liquor barons, including supporters of former BJP MLA Narendra Singh — in Bhind district when they tried to check illegal sale of liquor.

The incident occurred near some liquor shops, located on the Bawal and Lahar Road. They were selling liquor illegally despite the administration declaring a 'dry day' on the occasion of Holi, according to the police.

When this was brought to the notice of IPS officer Jaidevan, posted as Additional Superintendent of Police (ASP) in Bhind, he immediately rushed to the spot along with the force to question them, police sources said.

However, members of the local liquor mafia attacked them with lathis and stones, forcing the police to retreat from the spot.
Steel ministry for key changes in mining Bill

Against auctions for concessions, wants PSU reservation to stay and Centre’s veto on mining rights to remain

SUDHEER PAL SINGH
New Delhi, 10 March

The Supreme Court might have made a case for auctioning of natural resources, but voices within the government do not seem in conformity with the apex court directive.

The Union steel ministry has raised serious objections over the auctioning route proposed as the key reform measure in the new mining legislation. The Bill is being examined by a standing committee of Parliament.

The steel ministry has opposed auctioning of mineral concessions, doing away with a public sector undertaking (PSU) reservation and eliminating prior approval of the central government for acquiring mining rights. The ministry’s objections carry weight as it monitors output in a sector that consumes a major chunk of the country’s mineral output.

“The ministry, in its submission to the standing committee, has raised objections over the clause proposing competitive bidding for mineral concessions in the mining Bill. The ministry is worried that even mines allocated to central PSUs would be auctioned once their current leases expire,” an official familiar with the development told Business Standard.

The Mines and Minerals Development and Regulation (MMDR) Bill, 2011, states that state governments, the owners of the minerals, would conduct bidding for grant of Prospecting Licence (PL) and Mining Lease (ML) for areas where the value of mineralisation is known. However, for the initial two stages of granting a Reconnaissance Licence and Large Area Prospecting Licence, a first-come, first-served method is proposed.

A 10-member Group of Ministers (GoM) headed by finance minister Pranab Mukherjee had approved the Bill in July last year. The cabinet had approved the draft in September, after which it was tabled in Parliament and later sent to the committee.

The ministry is also miffed at the Bill’s proposal to end the reservations currently available for PSUs in allocation of mines. The proposal is aimed at creating equal opportunities for the private sector to compete with state-owned companies in grant of concessions and to push private investment in mining. Owning a captive mine allows PSUs to get the ore at transfer price, much less than the market price. India produces 1,123 million tonnes of minerals worth Rs 2 lakh crore annually and PSUs account for about three-fourth of this production.

The other provision of the Bill that has not gone down well with the ministry is the proposal to lift the Centre’s power to approve the award of concessions for critical minerals, including iron ore. Currently, state governments award concessions for all minerals, except for some major minerals like iron ore, limestone and chromite and minerals of strategic importance like uranium, where the Centre’s prior approval is mandatory. The government has removed the provision from the new legislation, saying it is inconsistent with the idea of auctioning. The steel ministry argues the proposal would trigger serious trouble for the mining sector, as mineral-rich states would then be free to grant concessions on their own.