Turmoil during discussion on mining in Lok Sabha

NEW DELHI, 16 MARCH: The discussion in the Lok Sabha on the demands for grants of the ministry of mines today led to a brief turmoil as a Congress member spoke about alleged illegal mining in BJP-ruled Karnataka. The remarks by Sanjay Nirupam saw BJP members spring to their feet in protest, maintaining that the Congress member was raising an issue irrelevant to the discussion.

However, Mr Nirupam would not be cowed down and said there was an urgent need for a thorough inquiry into the entire issue of illegal mining that is taking place in Karnataka. This has led to losses to the tune of several thousand crores to the national exchequer, he alleged.

In a clear taunt aimed at the BJP in particular and NDA members in general, Mr Nirupam said, "The parties which raked up the 2G scam issue had remained silent on the issue of illegal mining in Karnataka."

Even as the Congress member was making these allegations, the former Prime Minister, Mr H D Deve Gowda, a virulent critic of the Karnataka government, entered the House, causing a brief flutter.

The Deputy Speaker, Mr Karla Munda, who was conducting the proceedings, had a tough time restoring order as the BJP members went on disrupting the speech of Mr Nirupam.

The Karnataka government had given a sanction for the export of iron ore to the extent of slightly over 4 crore tonnes while the actual export was around 7 crore tonnes, Mr Nirupam said. This led to a loss of around Rs 11,433 crore, he said. This was found in the report of the Karnataka Lokayukta, he said. The discussion remained inconclusive. SNS
Reddy wants to quit mining

BANGALORE: Bringing smiles on the faces of optimists and drawing frowns from sceptics, Minister for Tourism and Mining magnate from Bellary, Jnandhan Reddy, on Tuesday claimed that he would give up his life as an industrialist for good.

He said he was inspired by the speech and deliberation of M C Nanaiah of the JD (S) over issues related to iron ore in the Legislative Council. Reddy stood up to retort on the issue of ban on iron ore export, but instead said: “I am impressed by the life of Nanaiah, a veteran politician, and wish to express that henceforth, I will lead the life of only a public servant. I will renounce my life as a businessman and industrialist,” said Reddy.

The cabinet minister from Bellary said that he was taking this step after being charged by the opposition, time and again, for his interests in the mining industry. Earlier, taking on his nemesis from the Opposition, K C Kondaiah, who is also from Bellary, Reddy alleged that the Congressman was instrumental in the shutdown of a steel and an allied industry in his hometown.

“The company in question was shutdown recently and auctioned in the last few weeks. The person behind its closure was Kondaiah who is speaking on iron ore mining. The company was supposed to be taken over by Jindal and revived. But due to the interference, Jindals are now in a tussle with another steel company for the same firm,” said Reddy.

Earlier, Reddy defended Jindal Steels for its contribution to the society wherein, they had taken up 27 parks in Bellary for development.

DH News Service
Copper Advances on Japan Rebuilding Demand

LONDON Copper climbed for the first time in six days on expectation that reconstruction needs after Japan’s largest quake on record will boost demand in three to six months. All six metals on the London Metal Exchange rose. The metal for three-month delivery rose as much as 2.1% to £9.306 a metric tonne on the London Metal Exchange, and traded at £9.281 at 3:04 p.m. Shanghai time. The contract tumbled to a three-month low of £8,944.50 on Tuesday.

June-deliver copper on the Shanghai Futures Exchange gained 2.9% to close at 70,580 yuan ($10,740) a tonne. “Following the steep losses in the last few days, the price now looks attractive to some buyers,” Li Peiying, an analyst at Essence Futures, said by telephone from Beijing. “People have started to shift their attention to the rebuilding that will boost demand in the next few months.”

Copper and lead are likely to benefit due to power line and transformer replacements and the need for generators and batteries in light of power problems. Gayle Berry, an analyst with Barclays Capital, said in a report on Tuesday.
Documents reveal infighting between ministers

Debate, don’t squabble

Recently revealed documents indicate that the business of governance, which depends on those in government putting their heads together, is being undermined by squabbling. The differences between environment minister Jairam Ramesh and several ministers whose concerns are voiced by home minister P Chidambaram, aren’t being resolved through thought out and reasoned debate. Rather, what is happening is quite the opposite and is illustrated by Chidambaram’s scathing attack on Ramesh. Speaking analogically, Chidambaram asked Ramesh, would he stop all car production because cars pollute?

Obviously car production, like mining, cannot be stopped and engaging in such exchanges is not what ministers should be doing. For one, it detracts from the seriousness of their jobs. For another, it is the duty of the government to function rather than get bogged down in internal squabbles. And that requires navigating a path through what are often completely opposing points of view. Ramesh and Chidambaram are a case in point as they have differing points of view on what the criteria for granting mining permits should be. Yet, Ramesh’s environmental concerns are legitimate, as are Chidambaram’s about growth. Both ministers should present their differing, and compelling, concerns and resolve them through debate. It is their responsibility to ultimately resolve their differences on the basis of detailed studies about what the costs and benefits of various policies will be. After all, they have bureaucracies to assist them in doing this.

All of these various inputs, processes and debates require privacy. Ministers are however squandering the privacy reserved for decision-making by engaging in public squabbles. Instead, they should focus on resolving complex issues. The positions of the various ministers and their concerns are well known. It is now up to UPA-II to demonstrate that it can rise above them and govern.

Free for all is good

The recent disagreement between home minister P Chidambaram and environment minister Jairam Ramesh, over automobiles that both transport and pollute, highlights the desirability of such public arguments. Purists may yearn for an old school ‘stiff upper lip’ approach, where no matter how bitterly opposed citizens make better choices.

Srijana Mitra Das ministers’ views may be, in public they stand united, mouth platitudes and remain largely uncommunicative on important issues, giving rise instead to gossipy speculation. Instead of that, the Chidambaram-Ramesh disagreement indicates a fresh new school of politics.

The public airing of ministerial differences is a much less starchy, more real way of communicating different stands. As India proceeds down the tricky path of economic liberalisation with social responsibility, it is natural that ministers will often find their plans at odds with each other. The healthiest way forward is highlighting differing positions publicly, thereby pointing people towards information offered by each side. This democratisation of facts, information proceeding beyond cabinet or Parliament, into a much wider public sphere helps citizens make better choices.

Public disputes in UPA-II have erupted over the government’s Naxal policy (Chidambaram facing fire from Digvijay Singh), planning models (sniping occurring between then roads and highways minister Kamal Nath and Planning Commission chairman Montek Singh Ahluwalia) and development versus environmental priorities (Jairam Ramesh embroiled in several arguments). These are issues with powerful ramifications for India’s present and future. Political spats help citizens keep track of what is happening, promised or refuted, improving accountability and generating further debate.
Illegal mining: Cong targets BJP on ‘tainted’ Karnataka ministers

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, MARCH 16

CORNERED by the BJP over the issue of corruption, the ruling Congress on Wednesday hit back at the Opposition party over the issue of illegal mining in the BJP-ruled Karnataka, asking Leader of Opposition Sushma Swaraj to exert pressure and remove two Karnataka ministers allegedly involved in illegal mining activities.

“Illegal mining is going on in several mines in Bellary... One of the companies involved is owned by a person who is a minister in Karnataka government. There are nine non-bailable warrants issued against that minister. But there have been photographs of our sister (Swaraj) blessing them,” Congress MP Sanjay Nirupam said in the Lok Sabha.

Nirupam presented details claiming to prove alleged illegal mining in Bellary and charged the BJP of maintaining double standards on the issue of corruption. “They call SushmaJI their elder sister, sometimes their mother... There has been a complete silence on this issue, because this minister, who is believed to have become a man worth Rs 1 lakh crore overnight, had openly stated that they would continue this loot in the state till their tai (elder sister) becomes the PM,” Nirupam charged amid protests from the BJP benches.

“This double standard should not continue. If you want to uproot corruption in this country then at least remove the two ministers,” Nirupam told the BJP. BJP MP Hansraj Ahir, who rose to speak on the demand for grants for the Mines Ministry, appeared unfazed and went on to attack the government on issues related to the coal ministry.

“The Honourable MP has made a speech on me (Coal Ministry) while the subject pertains to Ministry of Mines. I fail to understand whom is he targeting... Advaniji is sitting here... At least he should have told him that the discussion was on Ministry of Mines and not Coal Ministry,” Coal Minister Shriprakash Jaiswal said.
Nirupam attacks
Sushma on mining

March 16: In an attack that can be described as both searing and scathing, the Congress tore into the BJP and its leader Sushma Swaraj on the issue of illegal mining in Karnataka and Ms Swaraj’s association with the Bellary brothers who stand accused of indulging in it.

The no-holds barred attack was made by Congress MP Sanjay Nirupam in the Lok Sabha on Tuesday afternoon as he spoke on his party’s behalf on the demand for grants for the ministry of mines. Ms Swaraj, who is also Leader of the Opposition in the LS, walked into the House shortly after Mr Nirupam began speaking, sat listening to Mr Nirupam taking pot-shots at her for her association with the Bellary brothers, but chose not to respond. While the few BJP MPs present in the House did try and rebut Mr Nirupam’s charges and spring to the defence of the Karnataka government, it appeared to be of little avail.

Instead, the BJP benches found themselves on the back-foot as Mr Nirupam spoke with relish about illegal mining in Karnataka and repeatedly said how a minister in the Karnataka government who owned merely ₹1 lakh in 2001 was now the malik (owner) of ₹3,000 crores. Wondering how this minister had made such swift progress in such a short span of time, he wondered if this was possible in a legal way. He also claimed that this minister has nine non-bailable warrants issued against him.

Taking swipes as Ms Swaraj sat alone in the front row of the BJP benches, Mr Nirupam said that the Bellary brothers addressed her as “amma” and “Tai” and then drew reference to a photograph showing the BJP leader blessing the duo. He also said that she herself should have raised the issue of illegal mining in the House and that if she believes in transparency, she should sacrifice this minister.
अच्छे विश्वविद्यालयों को मिलेगा नवरत्न का दर्जा

नई दिल्ली (एमएसएलबी)। फैल सरकार उन मिलिए क्षेत्रों को नवरत्न का दर्जा देने के लिए निर्देश दिए हैं जिनका उपयोग बहुत अधिक है। विद्यालयों क्षेत्र में विश्वविद्यालयों को नवरत्न प्रदान कर सकते। चुनाव को लोकसभा में एक अच्छा अंतर्गत में भारत सरकार ने प्रवर्तित नियमसंशोधन राजनीति में ही पुरस्कार प्रदान किए हैं। इस कार्यक्रम को रिपोर्ट आयोजित किया जाएगा।

सोरेंटो से चली गई मोटराइल टाबर: सरकार ने मोटराइल टाबर को क्रेडिट का ब्रांड सधिक से चलाए की थी। लेकिन इस फूल प्रशंसकों को राजनीति में सहायता पक्ष के लोकसभा में प्रस्ताव के दौरान दासता कि देश में इस समय साध्य पर लख न्यायालय टाबर है किसी ने से चलाए टाबर आलोचनाएं हैं। मिलेगा अभियान के द्वारा जीते जाए है जिससे आरोपण के

स्थानक के प्रमुख से परेशान फोर्स ने भाजपा पर निर्देशन साधा: गोदाम पर विवाद के लागू करार से परेशान कोर्ट ने नया कार्यक्रम ने मुबारक को महाकाश पर निर्देश करार के लागू करार पर भाजपा करार के लागू करार, उन्नत और इंडिया आ रही है। लोकसभा में चला रहा 2011-12 के दौरान सभा को अद्वैत ब्रांड पर नामक सुरु आया। करार के लागू करार पर भाजपा केंद्र को निर्देशन ने कहा कि इस में भाजपा, उन्नतियों और हरिकृति आ रही है। लोकसभा में देश की स्थायी पर लख इंडिया आया, चोर्स के दौरान उन्नत लघु को बदल उन्नत टाबर में कहा। उन्नति का कहा कि राष्ट्र की भारत सरकार निर्देशक मार्ग की है, लेकिन उसकी समाधान भूमिका रहती है।
Cairn-Vedanta
NEW DELHI, 16 MARCH: Running against time for concluding its landmark deal with mining group Vedanta Resources, UK’s Cairn Energy today sought clarity from the oil ministry as to when the government will approve the $9.6-billion deal. Chief executive of Cairn Energy, Mr Bill Gammell, which is selling most of its stake in its Indian unit to London-listed Vedanta, met the oil secretary, Mr S Sundareshan to press for an early decision so that the transaction can conclude by the 15 April deadline. pli
A stake for stakeholders

Sharing 26 per cent profit can be 100 per cent misery

The hare-brained provision in the proposed Mines and Minerals (Development & Regulation) Bill, 2010, binding companies to share 26 per cent of net profit with the local population, is only one of the many serious problems with the proposed bill. The idea of such profit sharing is inherently uncertain, unfair, and cannot be easily monitored by the community. There are many other ways through which a community of stakeholders can be benefited that would be easier to implement and would be fairer too. The principle problem with the proposal is that there are many ways by which companies can fudge net profits. These methods are not necessarily illegal. Two, profitability is impacted by many factors, product prices, changing technologies, efficiency of management being some well-known ones; and beneficiaries from the local community could be adversely impacted by these factors. Three, there are large variations in annual profits, which bring in unnecessary uncertainty in the benefits to the community. It is not clear how such an abominable idea could go through the many layers of consideration in government. Especially when there are so many better alternatives that are more fair to the community, investors, and are easier to implement.

Take royalties for instance. The current problem with royalties shared with the state governments is that the basis for putting a rupee value to the output is highly flawed. But this can be corrected. A long-term average international price is available for all types of commodities. Such a system would be more transparent, be less affected by the efficiency of the firm, be more easily monitored by the community, and one can have more frequent transfers to the community (monthly or even weekly based on mining output) rather than waiting for annual audited profit calculations. But sharing royalties, though far better than profits, is still not ideal. Such sharing schemes are impacted by the number of beneficiaries in the local community. High population concentration areas would have lower benefits per person covered and those with lower concentrations would have higher benefits.

Across India and the world, there are instances of mining firms not only minimising negative externalities but having a positive impact on the environment, local economy and the community. Refilling of mined land and making it agriculture friendly, providing infrastructure and infrastructure-related services such as electricity to the community, improving the irrigation systems, funding or providing educational, healthcare, and water supply services are only some examples; vocational training and employment, hand-holding and encouraging small business set-ups from within the community are few of the numerous other examples. It would be difficult to envisage an Act that can force firms to do all these — but the general framework that is easy to monitor and implement can be laid out. First, aptly compensate the land owner whose land is being taken over. Monitor this compensation and enforce fairness and timelessness. Second, ensure that those who live in the vicinity do not lose out. Pollution control measures need to be monitored and enforced, and the local community has to play a role in it. Third, credibly provide corrective infrastructure and services to the local community — irrigation, health and education services, safety and security, and electricity. Fourth, improve the local economy — source labour, other inputs such as food for labour from the locals. And fifth, ensure mine closure norms are adequately structured and land with good quality topsoil is returned to the community at the end of its life. Each of these can be monitored by the community and the state, and therefore fairly enforced.
Cong attacks BJP over mining scam, says sack 2 ministers

HT Correspondent

NEW DELHI: Attacking BJP-ruled Karnataka for openly indulging in illegal mining of iron ore, the Congress on Wednesday alleged the involvement of two ministers in the BS Yeddyurappa government in such activities and demanded that they be sacked.

Speaking during the demand for grants of the mines ministry, Congress MP Sanjay Nirupam made a frontal attack against the controversial Karnataka CM, charging that ₹27 crore had been deposited in a trust floated by his family.

Referring to the powerful Reddy brothers from Bellary, Nirupam told the BJP leadership: "You could not remove the chief minister, but if you want to uproot corruption in the country at least remove the two ministers."

SANJAY NIRUPAM
to the BJP leadership

Without naming anyone, Nirupam said: "The two brothers had been openly saying they would continue their loot in the state until their 'didi' or sister (referring to senior BJP leader Sushma Swaraj) becomes the Prime Minister."

Neither of the brothers have appeared before court despite issuance of nine non-bailable warrants against them, he said.

He called upon the BJP leadership to ask the Karnataka government to initiate a transparent probe into the matter for the safeguard of natural resources as "illegal mining is a very serious issue."

Earlier in the day, the issue was raised by former PM and JD(S) member HD Dewe Gowda and Congress member Jaglambika Pal.

During zero hour, Gowda alleged that the Prerna Education Trust — floated by Yeddyurappa's family members — had got donations worth ₹27 crore from various companies whose paid up capital was only ₹1 crore.

Saying that a 'quid-pro-quo' was involved in the matter, Gowda said he had documents in his possession to establish this.

Making a counter attack, BJP members stormed the well of the house, demanding the sacking of a tainted Delhi minister.
एमडी पर टिकी सीबीआई की निगाहें, छापेमारी

दिसंबर वर्ष

नागरी योजना की बारे में प्रश्न तथा मामलों में सीबीआई की निगाहें भारत सरकार के एमडी तथा एक अन्य विभागों के अधिकारियों पर ध्यान दिखाया है। केवल में निर्देश अंश पर लेखक उनके अधिकारों से ताकत नहीं दिला दी। यह पुस्तक का उद्देश्य है कि सीबीआई के इन दोनों को बेहतर संसाधन या सुचना कार्यक्षेत्र में ताकत नहीं दिला। केवल में निर्देश अंश पर लेखक उनके अधिकारों से ताकत नहीं दिला दी।

इस पुस्तक के निर्देशक अंश पर लेखक उनके अधिकारों से ताकत नहीं दिला दी। केवल में निर्देश अंश पर लेखक उनके अधिकारों से ताकत नहीं दिला दी।
Mine profit-sharing clause to be diluted?

Abantika Ghosh

New Delhi: Caught between Congress and some sections within the government, the mining ministry is willing to dilute the 56% compulsory profit-sharing clause. Planning Commission deputy chairman Montek Singh Ahluwalia had written a letter last December, opposing the clause. While Congress leaders say there has to be some mechanism for benefitting locals in the areas where mines operate.

The ministry, in its revised draft of Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation Act), 2010, has introduced a provision where individual industries can approach the government for a revision in the 26% figure. The ministry would consider proposals on a case-by-case basis, and issue a relevant notification. The draft has already been approved by GoM, headed by finance minister Pranab Mukherjee, on February 15.

"The basic profit-sharing structure will remain ad valorem. Now, we are putting in an option of the percentage of profit sharing that will vary depending on the economics of the mineral," said a source.
Congress on Wednesday launched a scathing attack on leader of opposition in the Lok Sabha, Sushma Swaraj, accusing her of having links to those behind illegal mining in Karnataka.

Sanjay Nirupam of the Congress claimed that a minister in the BS Yeddyurappa government, having extensive interests in illegal mining, was a staunch Swaraj backer.
Hind Zinc Pays ₹995 Crore as Advance Tax

OUR BUREAU, MUMBAI

Hindustan Zinc Ltd (HZL), the world's largest integrated producer of zinc, has paid ₹995 crore as advance tax in the current fiscal year, which is 35% higher than that last year. In its statement, HZL said its advance tax last year was ₹738 crore.

Typically, an advance tax is an indicator of a company's financial performance as such payments give an indication about profit projections of the company. HZL posted a 13.3% rise in its fiscal third quarter net profit mainly due to higher volumes, better operations and higher prices. Analysts say improving market for zinc and higher production of silver is also likely to improve earnings.

According to HZL chief operating officer Akhilesh Joshi, “The 1.5 million tonnes mill at Sundargarh Khurda has commenced production and with the accelerated capacity ramp up, we are poised to end fiscal year 2012 with a silver production capacity of 500 tonnes. We will become one of the world's top silver producers,” he added.

The fourth quarter advance tax payments for the 2011-12 fiscal recorded the highest growth since the liquidity crisis triggered by the collapse of large financial majors. By March 15, the I-T department collected more than two-thirds of the total advance tax payments for the fourth quarter. “Even if the remaining one-third shows a different trend, we would record an increase of around 30% over the last quarter of the last fiscal year,” said a senior I-T official.
CEC to govt:
Have you acted against Dharam?

Shamsheer Yousaf

BANGALORE: The Central
Empowered Committee
(CEC) of the Supreme Court
has asked the State govern-
ment what action it had taken
against former chief minister
Dharam Singh, who was in-
dicted by the Lokayukta report
of 2008 for causing financial
loss to the State.

The Committee, set to visit
Karnataka between March 25
and 28, following a writ peti-
tion filed by Sanjaya Parivar-
tana Samudaya, has sought de-
tails of the specific action
initiated against the then chief
minister and other officers, the
present status of the action
taken against them and
whether any money had been
recovered from the concerned
officers and public servants.

The CEC has also asked the
State government to spell out
its stance if it disagreed with
the observations made by the
Lokayukta. The 2008 report
of the Lokayukta had indicted
Dharam Singh and other offi-
cials for allowing illegal mining
on 'patta' land. The Lokayukta
had said the decision had cost
an estimated loss of Rs 23.22
crore to the State.

Last year, Chief Minister B S
Yeddyurappa said the State
government could not take any
action against Singh as former
governor Rameshwar Thakur
had absolved him of all
charges.

Illegal mining at BHS
The CEC has also sought de-
tails and follow up action tak-
en on the Lokayukta report
that said 1081.40 hectares of
forest area was encroached in
the Bellary-Hospet-Sanjhar re-
gions by various mining lease
holders.

Details of the leases such as
area approved under Mines
Act, forest area included in
the mining lease, forest area
clearance sought under For-
est Conservation Act and
lease sketches have been
sought.

Another issue that the CEC is
looking into is the MoUs en-
tered by State-owned Mysore
Minerals Limited, and what
action the government has
taken with regard to the vari-
ous irregularities pointed out
by the Lokayukta.

DH News Service
SC panel to probe Ramgad case

BANGALORE: The Central Empowered Committee of the Supreme Court has sought details on the de-reservation of forest land in the Ramgad area of Bellary district, allegedly done to favour mining firms in the area.

In April 2010, the Forest Settlement Officer (FSO) had passed an order for the denotification of 265 acres of forest land falling in Ramgad reserved forest. Perversely, the denotification was effected under a provision in the Karnataka Forest Act meant to restore the rights of forest dwellers.

The petitioners, Samaja Parivarana Samudaya, have submitted to the CEC that rampant illegal mining was taking place at Ramgad without the mandatory forest clearances. A Deccan Herald report earlier this month pointed out that survey numbers 5-35 submitted for conversion were forged by mining firms, and several of them had produced fictitious documents to make their claim.

In its 10-page communique to the State government, the CEC has specifically asked if the government obtained the approval of the Supreme Court for deletion of the areas from the reserved forest.

"Before implementing the decision taken by the FSO (irrespective of the validity or otherwise of the decision), the State of Karnataka is required to take (a) permission from the Hon’ble Supreme Court and (b) approval under the Forest Conservation Act," it reminded the government.

The CEC has also sought whether the mining leases were sanctioned without the approval under the Forest (Conservation) Act.

Interestingly, the Committee has also sought information on whether there was any difference of opinion between the departments of forest, mining and revenue over the area being a forest land for the purpose of the Forest (Conservation) Act.

MSPL responds

In response to the Deccan Herald report on denotification of forest land, MSPL Limited, whose subsidiary Ramgad Mines and Minerals Limited, was named, says:"We have two existing leases in the Ramgad area and they have been with us for the last 40 years. In response to a notice by the FSO in October 2009, we have responded that our area should not be considered for conversion to reserve forest as we have existing leases there".

DH News Service
Probe demanded into illegal mining by cement cos

RAJU DAS

SHILLONG, March 14 – The Meghalaya Opposition today demanded an independent inquiry to probe into the illegal mining activities of cement plants in forested areas of the State.

Leader of the Opposition, Conrad K Sangma said in the Assembly, cement plants were violating the Forest Conservation Act, 1980 and carrying out illegal mining in forested areas. “The government should immediately close down these illegal cement plants and institute an independent inquiry,” Sangma demanded.

Several companies, including French cement giant Lafarge have been accused of encroaching forested areas to carry out their mining activity. Recently, the State Government received a complaint from the Central Government that eight cement companies have encroached forest area to set up their plant in Jaintia Hills district.

It’s also been alleged that a cement plant encroached a graveyard belonging to the Presbyterian Church in Jaintia Hills to carry out its mining activity.

Congress legislator, Ronnie V Lyngdoh joining the condemnation said Topcem Cement Company set up its plant without getting prior approval from the Union Ministry of Forest and Environment.

He added, the Principal Chief Conservator of Forest had written to the Union Ministry stating, limestone for the cement companies were not from forest sites. “How can the PCCF mislead the government when there is a violation of the Forest Conservation Act, 1980,” he asked.

Chief Minister, Mukul Sangma said, the government would ensure that the environment was protected and all steps to check violation of the Forest Conservation Act would be taken up.

Meanwhile, Minister in-charge Mining and Geology, Biindo M Lanong said, coal mining in the State was being undertaken as per the direction of the Central Government.

He said, although mining lease is necessary, but “small scale mining” is permitted under the customary practices of the indigenous people. “The Centre does not wish to interfere in small scale coal mining, though it had offered assistance to help the miners to carry out scientific mining,” Lanong said.
Nalco expects 6.3 mt bauxite output in 2011-12

Mumbai, March 16

National Aluminium Co Ltd expects production of bauxite to rise to 6.3 million tonnes from its mines and refineries in Orissa during 2011-12, the company said in a statement. It expects production of 2.1 million tonnes of alumina in the fiscal from its Damanjodi refinery. Metal production from the company's smelter at Angul, in Orissa, has been projected at 0.46 million tonnes.

Nalco, which is India's third-largest producer of aluminium, will fall about 100,000 tonnes short of its production target of 1.68 million tonnes of alumina in the 2010-11 fiscal year, its Finance Director had said last month. — Reuters
Pact with Saskatchewan to develop mineral resources

Our Bureau
New Delhi, March 15

India and the Province of Saskatchewan, Canada, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Tuesday to establish a cooperation programme in the field of geology and mineral resources.

The MoU aims at establishing a basis for development of geological and mineral resources, to promote investment in mining and related activities such as mineral exploration and development, to encourage and foster mining investment, transfers of technology and joint ventures in India and Saskatchewan.

Saskatchewan is known world over as an important producer of minerals including potash, uranium, oil and gas, diamonds, etc and is an important trade partner of India. The areas of mutual interest identified are technologies, services and supplies related to prospecting, exploration, mining and beneficiation of mineral resources, training and human resources development in geosciences as well as minerals and metals sector, promotion of investment including fertiliser minerals, uranium, diamonds, among others.
Gold stages rebound

Bloomberg  
March 16

Gold gained in London as some investors bought the metal after its drop to the lowest level in almost a month and as violence in Bahrain and the aftermath of Japan's earthquake spurred demand for a protection of wealth.

Immediate-delivery bullion rose $6.13, or 0.4 per cent, to $1,401.82 an ounce at 11:40 a.m. in London. Prices dropped 2.2 per cent on Tuesday and touched $1,381.22, the lowest level since Feb. 17. Gold for April delivery was 0.7 per cent higher at $1,402.10 an ounce on the COMEX in New York. Bullion fell to $1,398.30 an ounce in the morning fixing in London.

SILVER GAINS
Silver for immediate delivery gained 0.6 per cent to $34.455 an ounce after plunging 4.7 per cent on Tuesday, the most Dec. 7.

Palladium was up 1.6 per cent at $715.50 an ounce. Platinum gained 0.9 per cent to $1,717.85 an ounce.

Bullion rates
Mumbai: Silver spuri (999 fineness): Rs 33,075; standard gold (99.5 Purity): Rs 20,590; Pure gold (99.9 purity): Rs 20,690.
Copper rises on demand speculation

Bloomberg
March 16

Copper rose to a one-week high in New York on speculation that industrial metals' demand will increase.

Copper for May delivery added to $4,248 a pound at 8:35 a.m. on the COMEX. Copper for three-month delivery climbed to $9,334 a tonne on the LME. Aluminium for three-month delivery on the LME rose to $2,507 a tonne, zinc gained to $2,325 and lead added to $2,559. Nickel climbed to $25,394, and tin advanced to $29,050 a tonne.
NGOs lash out at GoM on coal mining

Sujay Mehdudia

NEW DELHI: A number of non-governmental organisations (NGOs), including Greenpeace, on Wednesday lashed out at the Pranab Mukherjee-headed Group of Ministers (GoM) on coal mining for working in an “undemocratic manner” and sought greater transparency and openness in its functioning.

“We are demanding that the process be opened up and made transparent. There has to be proper consultation with the stakeholders and issue experts,” Ashish Fernandes of Greenpeace India said in a statement here. “Nobody knows what is going on; what they are deciding. There has been absolutely no process of consultation either with communities. Even The Ministry of ‘Tribal Affairs is not part of the GoM, which is completely undemocratic,” he said.

Issues overlooked

Mr. Fernandes complained that a mere 12-member panel was deciding the fate of forest area spanning over 6,000 sq km. “The GoM in secrecy is actually deciding on something that has a huge implication for the country. The committee has overlooked several issues,” he said.

Coming down heavily on the Coal Ministry, he said the tall claims of afforestation and plantations were not possible as afforestation could never replace a natural forest.

Wildlife Protection Society executive director Belinda Wright also expressed concern over the impact of mining on wildlife corridors, particularly on elephants and tigers. “The no-go issue has completely ignored the issue of impact on wildlife areas. I have seen first-hand what mining can do to wildlife corridors around the Tadoba and Panna Tiger Reserves. Many of the areas being deliberated on by the GoM are important wildlife habitats, but biodiversity considerations are being ignored,” she said.

‘Web of secrecy’

Ritwick Dutta, environmental lawyer, Lawyers Initiative for Forests and Environment, said: “There is a web of secrecy surrounding the mechanisations of the GoM. Its very mandate is suspicious to say the least and appears to be first step to weaken environmental safeguards of the country.”

Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, last month approved the formation of the GoM. This came in the backdrop of ever-widening demand-supply gap in coal which is likely to touch 142 million tonnes next fiscal and classification of 203 coal blocks by the Environment Ministry as no-go zones.
Cong Raises Karnataka Illegal Mining Issue in LS

Sanjay Nirupam dares BJP to initiate action against ministers involved in illegal mining

The BJP MPs were up on their feet protesting against a state issue being raised by the Congress MP. Congress MPs retaliated by raising slogans of, “Chor machaye shor.” Nirupam, however, was unfazed and continued. He said that despite reports by a central empowered committee and Lokayukta no action was taken against illegal mining. “Lokayukta pointed out that 60 mines were being illegally mined... The report mentions one company. Do you want to know who owns it? I am not mentioning the name but it is a Karnataka minister. In 2003, he filed an income tax return for ₹2 lakh and today he has ₹3,000 crore. Even Mumbai corporate houses don’t have such high turnovers,” Nirupam said.

The Congress MP also attacked the leader of opposition Sushma Swaraj openly and said that Karnataka ministers involved in illegal mining had her blessings. Holding a photograph of Swaraj blessing the ministers, he said, “Sushma ji is called tai or amma. Look at this, she is giving them blessings.”

He demanded that BJP take action against the ministers. “You people see a scam in everything. Even in 8 by 8 khokas you see a scam. But not in this... If you believe in transparency, don’t just raise 3G. Take up the issue of illegal mining here,” he said.

Nirupam said, “The two ministers have said openly that they would continue this loot in the state till their Didi (sister) becomes the Prime Minister. Both of them have not appeared before the court despite issuance of nine non-bailable warrants against them.”

Earlier, the issue was raised by former Prime Minister H D Deve Gowda during Zero Hour amidst strong protests by BJP. Gowda alleged that an educational trust floated by the family of the Karnataka CM got donations worth ₹27 crore from various companies whose paid up capital was only ₹1 lakh. Suggesting that a quid-pro-quo was involved in the matter, Gowda claimed he had all the documents to prove the charges. Yeddyurappa, in collusion with the local officials, was involved in the irregularities, Gowda, who was supported by SP BJD and the Left, alleged. BJP members stormed into the well of the House forcing a brief adjournment.
Mining Sector on Hiring Spree

M V RAMSURYA & RAKHI MAZUMDAR
MUMBAI | KOLKATA

Entry of new companies and a strong growth pattern in the mining industry have led to a sharp rise in total recruitments in the sector. While most of the recruitments are mainly to take care of expansion programmes by companies such as SAIL, Tata Steel, Essar group and others, the need to own and manage mines to securitise cost structures, is a leading cause for the hiring spree that will rise by 25% in five years, say executives. A recent Confederation of Indian Industry report estimates that the total employment in mining, which is now at 9 lakh people, will go up to 1.1 million people by 2017 and to 1.2 million people by 2025. Coal and lignite will continue to be the largest employers; currently coal accounts for more than 75% of the total employment. Senior Nalco officials say, “The number of people wanting to employ professionals is rising,” says Arvind Malhotra, group human resources president at the Essar Group. “At the same time, there is also a strong focus on retention and engagement of existing employees so that there is no talent flight.”

The Essar Group, which owns mines in the US, has just recruited about 400 graduate engineers. Another metal major, state-owned Nalco, is also going through one of its biggest recruitment drives. The company has picked up some 110 graduate engineers and management trainees. “The induction process is currently going on and these recruits will be absorbed as junior managers,” said a senior Nalco official. “This year we made one of the biggest recruitments mainly to meet our needs in expansion of smelting and mining capacities. Compared to this, last year we were focused mainly on rightsizing and adjusting our people resources in line with our needs,” the official added.

Every year, scores of companies enter the mining industry attracted by robust margins and strong growth potential. In 2009, Jindal Photofilms, one of the largest makers of photographic and allied products, entered coal mining to support its plans for a power plant. The next year, Indiabulls formed a joint venture for coal and iron ore mining. In the same year, BK Birla group company Kesoram Industries sought shareholder approval for major plans in mining. Hyderabad-based GVK Power recently formed a joint venture with Malaysia’s Leighton International to enter mine operating and development business, as a prelude to a joint bid for the Gare Pelma II coal block contract in Chhattisgarh. These companies will put pressure on retaining staff in existing metal companies as the new firms in their speed to establish presence will try to rope in skilled professionals from other firms. “Mining engineering will have a demand-supply gap of about 3,000 people in the short term,” says the CII report. “Over the longer term the gap will go up to 8,500 people.”
खनन लाइसेंस बांटने में जलदबाजी कर्मचारी: भाजपा

लोकसभा में बजट अनुमोदन मामलों पर बहस के दौरान भाजपा ने खनन क्षेत्र में गढ़वाली का आरोप लगाया है। इसके बाद भाजपा मनमोहन सिंह को भी कहा कि बजट में खनन करने का प्रस्ताव किया। भाजपा ने संसद में कहा कि दस्तावेज 2009 में चुनाव के बाद 2006 से 2008 के बीच खनन की अधिकता इलाज करने का दौरा होगा। भाजपा ने बताया कि उस समय खनन संबंधी प्रश्नों का अधिक ध्यान देनी चाहिए।

अभी पढ़ने के दौरान भाजपा ने बताया कि खनन करने का प्रस्ताव खनन संबंधी कर्मचारी को भी बात कहा।

प्रियविषय के हंगाम भाजपा ने कहा कि इसके बाद भाजपा ने दो बार खनन का दावा किया। 

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