The hidden agenda behind issuance of mining licences

There are two serious problems with Section 13(1) of the Mining Act. The first says that the state government will issue a notification inviting applications for prospecting licences (PLs). This leaves discretion in the hands of the state government with regard to timing of the concession. The Meta Data, or summary of preliminary exploration carried out by GSI, is there in the public domain. The prospector’s decision to invest will depend largely on his analysis of this data.

Obviously, he cannot purchase the entire report which can cost crores of rupees until he actually gets the PL. He will have to apply on the basis of the Meta Data information available to all. When the basic data is already available in the public domain at all times where is the need to issue a notification inviting applications? The first in-time is the only legal exercise and it is an international best practice. A prospector in Australia or Canada has risk funds available for investing, will not wait for our notification even if he is willing to invest on the basis of our Meta Data. In 2003, Ivvahoe, the world known Canadian Junior, was invited by the Mongolian Government to look for gold in the Gobi desert. Within three years they found a huge gold vein half a mile underground as Oyu Tolgoi. The resulting mine is now the mainstay of that country’s economy and is described by格拉德格·德威德 in an article in the Fortune as its “economic silver bullet”. Robert Friedland, chairman of Ivvahoe, also known as “Toxic Bob”, brought to Oyu Tolgoi the new UDI 5000, the biggest mining drill in the world, flown by the biggest plane in the world, a Russian Antonov, (which) reached nearly two miles into the earth’s crust where it pulled up core samples of 2.73% copper and 0.17 grams per tonne of gold.

The drama of transparency.

The second proviso under Section 13(1) (b) exempts bulk shipments from the scheme of competitive bidding for prospecting licences. This is a mysterious proviso. Why exempt only bulk? If there is any case at all for competitive bidding for prospecting in the MMDR minerals it is for the bulk. The bulks comprise iron ore, bauxite, limestone and dimension stone and their associates like manganese and chrome. These are close to the surface and the mining is open cast and not underground. The prospecting is relatively simple and the dividing line between preliminary and detailed exploration is thin. The preliminary exploration data is usually enough to determine the characteristics of the ore body and detailed exploration is mainly for ore body delineation, so the investment is neither risky nor substantial. Both the provisos are not also very great. This is the reason why exploration in India by Geological Survey of India (GSI) and Mineral Exploration Corporation Limited (MECL) has been able to act as a back door for iron ore miners to escape the auction route for mining leases under Section 13(1) by allowing them PLs through the first in-time route and then accessing mining leases through the seamless facility. Of course, it is a different matter that Section 13(4), the so-called auction, itself appears an exercise of pulling the wool over the eyes of the law makers. It pretends to follow the Hoda report but in fact turns it on its head.

The reasons for introducing the new instrument of large area prospecting licence (LAPL) are dealt with extensively in paras 1.41, 1.42 and 1.45 of the Hoda report. It holds the main reasons is to enable prospecting work to be done over a larger area on an exclusive basis by those who are willing to take higher risk, sign a long term mining agreement and pay a high royalty to the government. The applicant for the lease should be granted on the basis of competitive offers from among those who satisfy a list of seven eligibility conditions. The main advantage is that the bidding miners would be operating in a free market they would throw up a bid based on the value of their prospectus rather than a single extract as a commercial operation. Thus, an auction would enable the government to garner that part of the value of the mineral as reflected in the market price which is over and above the miner’s legitimate profit due to the demand driven nature of the market price. Let us see what this does to hematite iron ore vis-a-vis other minerals. In the case of other minerals the margin between extraction cost and market prices being considerable the auction would enable the government to get the true price of its minerals after accounting for the cost of extraction and what the miner considers to be his legitimate profit. On the other hand, in the case of iron ore, the margin between extraction cost and market price being mind boggling the auction would mop up for the government the hitherto huge rentier incomes earned by the lessees, both standalone and captive. A number of advantages would follow: not least among them being the end of illegal mining and the need to tax windfall profits or impose export duties.

Since the Hoda report has been accepted by government it was expected that the steel and iron ore industry would reflect this thinking. In fact, Section 13(4) introduces a peculiar twist to the auction which does away with the need to tax windfall profits or impose export duties.

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Coal gasification call draws Birla, Essar, Adani, Lanco

Eight bidders in fray, most of them with foreign partners; evaluation of technical bids currently on, to be followed by financial bids

Promit Mukherjee

Aditya Birla Group, Essar Oil, Adani Enterprises and Lanco Infratech are among the big names vying for Coal India's underground coal gasification project, bids for which were opened on Wednesday.

According to a source in the Central Mine Planning and Design Institute Ltd (CMPDIL), a subsidiary of Coal India and the nodal agency conducting the bidding process for the project, as many as eight companies have put in bids.

"The major ones are the Aditya Birla Group, Essar Oil, Adani Enterprises and Lanco Infratech's mining arm," the source said, adding that most of the players have bid with foreign partners.

While Adani Enterprises has tied up with Australia's Carbon Energy, Essar Oil has roped in Clean Global Energy, another Australian company.

The other four companies which have submitted bids are Nagpur-based Abhijeet Group, coal washing company Aryan Coal, mining contractor Sainik Mining and Australia-based Global UCG.

Coal India had sought expression of interest for the project from technically and financially qualified players in November 2008 and issued tenders for the same in December 2010. The last date for submission of tenders was postponed twice in the last one month at the bidders' request.

"Being a new technology, companies had requested us to extend the bidding date from February 10 to February 28 and later to March 16," the source said, adding that the companies needed more time to tie up with partners who had the technical expertise.

According to the tender document, Coal India had invited bids for two blocks — the Thesgora C block, located in the Pench-Kanhan coalfield in Chhindwara district of Madhya Pradesh, which comes under the command area of Western Coalfields Ltd, and the Kaltha block, under Central Coalfields Ltd's command area, which is located in the Ramgarh coalfield in Ramgarh district of Jharkhand.

The company is looking for private players with sound technical and financial strength to develop the blocks and produce gas from them for a period of 25 years. While the first two years would comprise exploration and preparing a mining plan, the next three years are assigned to run the blocks and produce gas from them on a pilot basis.

"It is difficult to say how much time it will take to announce the final winner as currently the technical evaluation of bids are going on. After that, financial bids will be invited and then the tender committee will send its recommendations to Coal India to take a final call," B Dayal, public relations officer, CMPDIL said.

The companies will be solely responsible for producing the gas and transporting them to the desired players.

According to the World Coal Association, underground coal gasification is a method of converting unworked coal into a combustible gas, which can be used for industrial heating, power generation or manufacture of hydrogen, synthetic natural gas (syngas) or diesel fuel.

The process involves drilling two wells into the coal. The coal at the base of the first well is then heated to temperatures that would normally cause the coal to burn. However, through careful regulation of the oxidant flow, the coal does not burn but rather separates into the syngas. The syngas is then drawn out of the second well.
सुप्रीम कोर्ट ने हरियाणा में खानन पर रोक जारी रखी

सुप्रीम कोर्ट ने हरियाणा में खानन पर रोक जारी रखी है। सुप्रीम कोर्ट ने पंजाब एवं हरियाणा हाई कोर्ट के उस आदेश पर रोक रखी है कि यदि खानन होता है तो 3 माह के लिए खानन होने वाले के समय में ज्वालामुखी स्थल पर खानन का अवसर नहीं होगा। यह आदेश ने ज्वालामुखी स्थल में खानन का अवसर नहीं दिया है ताकि ऐसे ही स्थलों पर खानन के बजाय अन्य उपाय लिए जा सकें।

उत्तर ग्रामीण न्यायालय ने आदेश पर रोक रखी है कि यदि खानन होता है तो 31 जुलाई 2011 तक सूचनाओं की सूचना दी जायेगी। आदेश ने उन्हें उपरोक्त आदेश को पंजाब एवं हरियाणा हाई कोर्ट से पुष्टि सम्बन्धी सूचना दी जायेगी।
खानन का कार्य शुरू होगा

नर्मदा प्रमुख ने खानन और प्रोग्रेस में खानन का कार्य शुरू किया। इसके लिए नर्मदा की हुई सिखाए गए। नर्मदा अभियान को खानन के लिए एक नाव उपयोग करते हुये वह नये रिक्त नीतीश करके नए और नवीनताकार वाहनों का लोकार्थ करता है। नर्मदा की बंद नवीनताकार और नवीनतावादी नेता वाले जगती पर उत्साहित रहता है।
बास्तिवकता भारत में खनन कानूनों को दূरस्त करने का समय

यह एक ऐसा तत्काल है कि राज्य सरकारों को खनन तथ्यात्मक रूप से करने के लिए निर्देशित अनुमति प्रदान करने का अधिकार है। उसके लिए यह तरीक़ा राज्य सरकारों को खनन का समय तय करना भी अधिकतम है। रेप की खुद के प्रकार में इसे या उसके युगों का काम जो तत्वावधानिक करते हैं, उन्हें इस संदर्भ में अधिकतम तय करना है।

यह खनन वन्यजीव रत्न पर रहस्यमय संरचना में भी नहीं बदलता है। उपरोक्त कानून का केंद्र रहने का काम आपस और उसके नियुक्त करने का अधिकार है। यह राज्य सरकार के नीतिविविधता के हीरों का सितारा नहीं है। यह राज्य सरकार के नीतिविविधता के हीरों का सितारा नहीं है। यह राज्य सरकार के नीतिविविधता के हीरों का सितारा नहीं है।

यह यहाँ की बात नहीं है कि जनता का वन्यजीव रत्न पर रहस्यमय संरचना में भी नहीं बदलता है। उपरोक्त कानून का केंद्र रहने का काम आपस और उसके नियुक्त करने का अधिकार है। यह राज्य सरकार के नीतिविविधता के हीरों का सितारा नहीं है। 

सन्तान सिद्धि
ओयमडीसी खिड़कियों की दौड़ में 11 कंपनियां

शेयर बाज़ार की सबसे आधिक भाव वाली कंपनी ऑयमडीसी मिलिन्स डेक्लाप्लेट कारपोरेटेंशन (ओयमडीसी) के युद्ध में विभिन्न कोलड-खाड़ा खिड़की और टुंडसाइड आयाम बाज़ार के छेड़के के लिए कुल 11 कंपनियों ने स्थान दिखाया है। 14 मार्च तक निविड़ दर्शन की अधिकता तकनीय तक इन कंपनियों के बीते सिर्फ है। निविड़ में सेवा गोला सबसे अग्रणी मानी जा रही है।

इस कार्यालय में ऑयमडीसी के एक अधिकारी ने बताया कि 14 मार्च तक निविड़ की अधिकता तकनीय तक एवं तक कुल 11 कंपनियों ने इस खिड़की के निविड़ में स्थान दिखाया है। जिसमें चौथा रूप से अन्तिम अंगज काली सेवा गोला, उड़ीसा मिलिन्स, ऐम्बिड बैंकटर्केन, ग्राफ वेबस्थ कॉर्पोरेशन, गॉल्फ अर्थव्यवस्था इंजीनियरिंग, आयोजन ले तथा फार्म की स्वतंत्र संयोगिता उड़ीसा नैनिंग एंड मिलिन्स, हैदराबाद की स्थापना बाह्य इंजीनियरिंग, यूएम को इंडिया तारीखा अर्थव्यवस्था आदि है।

इस अधिकारी ने कहा कि अभी यह निविड़ इस साल के अंत में बीड के पास जा सकता और राहुल देशमुख बोले कि अभी तक यह बाज़ार में इसका भाव खालिया जा रहा है। उन्होंने बताया कि इस निविड़ का पूरा काम मैकैनिकल हिम्मेड की दिशा गया है जो केदार बिल्डर की सहायता कंपनी है।

इस कार्यालय में बीड के भीतर कंपनी के एक अधिकारी ने बताया कि अभी तक इन निविड़ को सुनहरी सीलिंग फ्रेम ने शुरू हुई है और अब इसके अंगज के बाद के पास स्थान जाएगा, जहां इस पर अधिक निविड़ होगा। फ़ोटो- खिड़की की यह खिड़की की बुलंद सीलिंग बाह्य 255 वोटेंडेस तक है और वह यह अधिक के पास कंपनी को यह तीन बार सबसे बड़ी खिड़की है। कंपनी के निविड़ कार्यालय के मुख्याध्यापक तिम चेवर पांव गोला के लिए दिया जाएगा और पहले साल में 13 लाख टन की खिड़की को ग्राहक का है। हालांकि यह बड़ा 18 लाख टन और तीन साल में 25 लाख टन तथा 30 लाख टन हो जाएगा। बाज़ार के आयएर का भी माना गया है कि इस कार्य की अनुमानित वैलू 150 करोड़ रुपये होगी।

कंपनी के एक अधिकारी के मुख्याध्यापक अपने वित्तीय कार्य कार्य का 2011-12 में यह खिड़की सुनहरा हो जाएगी और इससे कंपनी की नकदी की अधिक भी शुरू हो जाएगी। जिससे पहले साल में कंपनी के 300 करोड़ रुपये के धार्मिक हैं।

टूर्सल सेवा गोला निजी क्षेत्र की देश की अभी आयुक्त और निर्माण में से एक है और वह 2800 करोड़ रुपये के वित्तार को धारण कर रही है। इससे कंपनी 2012 में 750 करोड़ रुपये और वित्तीय कार्य का 2013 में 2000 करोड़ रुपये खर्च करेगी। सेवा गोला का फॉलो-अप युद्ध में चाहते पहले से हैं और बाज़ार के आयएर को उपनिवेश है कि इस साल के छेड़के में वह सबसे अग्रणी निविड़ कंपनी है।
We need regulations and guaranteed implementation

SUNITA Narain, well-known environmentalist and director-general of the Centre for Science and Environment, has carved a niche for herself by persistently drawing attention to issues of environmental neglect that have recently been highlighted by violations of coastal zone regulations by the Lavasa project in Pune and the Adarsh Housing Society scam in Mumbai. Winner of the Padma Shri and the Stockholm Water Prize, she has been striving to bring about reform in environmental policies. As a member of the Environment Pollution (Prevention and Control) Authority for the National Capital Region — a statutory body set up under the Environment Protection Act with a mandate from the Supreme Court — she monitors and implements strategies for reducing pollution in Delhi and other cities across India. In an interview with ABHIJEEET ANAND, she spoke about a range of issues. Excerpts:

The tussle between environment concerns and development is an old one. But the industrial lobby appears to be getting stronger. How can a balance be struck between the two?

We need development. We need industry. But we also need to preserve our environment and our resources for future generations. A balance, therefore, is needed. What we need, perhaps, are stronger regulations. And we need to ensure implementation of those regulations.

Isn't the “no-go” policy farcical since the government clears most mining projects, the exceptions being few and far between?
The “no-go” policy is just an idea at the moment. The very fact that projects are being allowed in forested areas in an ad hoc manner points to the fact that no such policy actually exists or is being followed.

What implications can the violation of coastal zone regulations have on the environment?
Very severe implications. Coasts have extremely fragile bio-diversity and ecosystems and any disturbance can upset their delicate balance. This can impact millions of livelihoods that depend on coastal resources and expose coastal territories to the vagaries of nature and climate change.

Many Acts meant to preserve the environment and passed by the Centre are not implemented in letter and spirit by the states. What can be done?
As I said before, we need regulations and we need to ensure they are implemented. Both the Centre and state governments need to work together on this.

There was a lot of confusion over whether bamboo is a tree or grass. Finally, it was settled that it is grass — non-timber forest produce. Are there other areas on which there is a similar lack of clarity?

Biologically, bamboo is categorised as a grass. The Supreme Court has accepted this definition as well. The Forest Rights Act has defined it as minor forest produce. This is for the first time we have a definition of minor forest produce. I think there should not be any lack of clarity on this now. In the context of forests and their resources, we don’t think there is any other area where there is such a similar lack of clarity. But I must say that forest laws across the country still need to be reconciled with relatively new and progressive laws like the Forest Act and the Panchayats (Extension to the Scheduled Areas) Act that also deal with local forest resources.

Is there an inherent conflict among all the legislation enacted for the preservation of the environment, forests and wildlife?
Multiple Acts naturally overlap — for instance, some provisions in the Water, Air and Environment Protection Acts may get repeated in either or all of them. But we don’t think there are inherent conflicts.

What is the basis of the Comprehensive Environment Pollution Index created by the Union environment ministry to measure overall pollution intensity in an area? Is it dependable?
The index has its problems. It does not look at resource scarcity and has missed out on many areas, such as mining towns and centres. Moreover, we do not agree with the way the index is withdrawing names from the list on the basis of action plans; the basis for removing names should be much stronger.

Is there a need to amend the Forest Rights Act?
I don’t think we need to amend the Forest Rights Act. It has come into existence after a long struggle and has been drafted taking into consideration substantial inputs from various groups. What we need to do now is to clarify the Act’s provisions and bring in uniform understanding/interpretation across the country. States need to be on the same plane of understanding of the Act’s provisions. As I said earlier, the Central government must, for example, clarify to the states that bamboo is now minor forest produce as defined by the Act.

What can be done by the government to ensure there is transparency in the grant of land titles to claimants under the Forest Rights Act?
Elaborate procedures have been laid out under the Act. If you adhere to these in letter and spirit, there will be transparency. The current problem is that lots of claims under the Act are being rejected without any reasons being given. Worse, there has been no consistent and comprehensive popularisation of the Act at the village level. So people are also not fully aware of their rights. This aspect of such a critical law must be strengthened.
No Captive Coal

The government must overhaul its policy to create a functioning coal market.

The coal ministry wants to take back 31 coal blocks allotted to companies for captive mining, which have been lying idle for more than three to four years. Instead, the government should overhaul the moth-eaten policy that governs the coal sector. Today, only state-owned giant Coal India Ltd (CIL) is allowed to mine and sell coal in the market; a smaller state-owned entity, Neyveli Lignite, which mines lignite for power generation, is allowed to sell extra output to small industries. Other companies, including large private players like Tata Steel, JSW, JSPL, Reliance Power and Hindalco and state-owned utility NTPC, are allotted coal mines, but for captive use. This means they can mine coal and use it to generate electricity or make steel, aluminium or cement. This policy of allotting coal mines for captive use must go. First, steel or cement makers are interested in coal only as an input, not as a final product. They, therefore, have no incentive to mine coal economically or in a sustainable way, or to research and invest in modern mining technologies. Specialised mining companies, on the other hand, have every incentive to bring technology and economies of scale into their mining operations, since for them, coal is the final tradable output.

The second problem with granting mines for captive use is inefficient utilisation of an essential fuel. If a steelmaker, say, has access to coal assets that are disproportionately larger than its requirements, it will simply dig up what it needs and keep the rest underground, even when coal prices soar. It would be much better if companies with their own mines have the option of trading the coal as well as using it for their own needs. This will balance, through the price mechanism and trade, supply and demand for coal and lead to a market that is far more efficient than today’s. So, the government has to do two things: take away captive mines from producers of metals, power, cement and so on and auction them to specialised miners. And give the miners the right to trade coal in an open market in competition with CIL and Neyveli. For this, of course, the government has to first scrap the Coal Nationalisation Act.
'Illegal' Goa mining firm gets green award!

Sesa Goa Limited (SGL), India's biggest producer and exporter of iron ore, has been given a major green award a day after the Goa Government said the company was indulging in illegal mining in the State's forests.

According to SGL's official Press statement, the ICC Sustainability Vision Award "acknowledged Sesa Goa's leadership role in implementing the best practices in environmental aspects and creating a sustainable development model for the society at large as a responsible mining company. Eleven of India's best companies participated in the award category, with Sesa and ITC emerging joint winners in the category."

The statement quoted company's managing director PK Mukherjee as saying, "This award brings additional responsibility for us to face the challenge of sustainable reduction of environmental footprint of mining while ensuring development of the community in which we operate in more holistic and exemplary way and most importantly, with more passion."

On Thursday, Forest Minister Filipe Neri Rodrigues had told the State Legislative Assembly that SGL and two other mining companies acquired by SGL in 2009 were indulging in illegal mining in forest areas.

Three separate complaints were filed against the officials of one of the two firms and SGL for illegal mining.

In two other instances, the Forest Department also warned the officials of the firm against using the forest land for transportation of ore and ferrying of trucks in designated forest areas, the reply stated.

With almost none of the permission granting departments keeping a check on mining unless a complaint is filed, the issue has turned big here with civil society groups and the Opposition in the House repeatedly voicing their concerns.

Earlier this month, a group of villagers laid siege to the office of the director of mines, holding him hostage until he revoked the clearance granted to a mine and pledged to withdraw the lease.

According to data submitted in the monsoon session of the Assembly, last year ore worth ₹4,000 crore was illegally mined and exported out of Goa to countries like China, Japan and Romania.

Leader of Opposition Manohar Parrikar has claimed that nearly 18 per cent of the State's total 40 million mining output comprises illegally mined ore. He has also accused CM Digambar Kamat and several of his Cabinet Ministers of being hand in glove with illegal mining mafia.
Copper declines as stocks rise

Bloomberg
March 18

Copper fell in London, paring the biggest weekly gain in six weeks.

Copper for three-month delivery declined $90, or 0.9 per cent, to $9,475 a metric ton at 10:57 a.m. on the London Metal Exchange. Copper for May delivery on the COMEX in New York fell 0.7 per cent to $4.3115 a pound.

Lead for three-month delivery on the LME rose to $2,685 a tonne.

Aluminium rose 0.4 per cent to $2,533 a tonne.

Nickel climbed to $26,125 a tonne and tin increased to $29,575. Zinc gained 0.3 per cent to $2,340 a tonne.
Gold advances on investor demand

Gold climbed for a third day in New York as investors sought an alternative to currencies. The metal pared some gains as oil prices dropped after Libya announced a cease-fire.

Gold futures for April delivery rose $13.40, or 1 per cent, to $1,417.60 an ounce at 9 a.m. on the COMEX in New York. Prices earlier reached $1,424.10. The metal for immediate delivery in London was 1 per cent higher at $1,417.88.

Immediate-delivery bullion rose $10.36, or 0.7 per cent, to $1,414.08 an ounce at 9:02 a.m. in London. Prices are down 0.2 per cent this week.

SILVER, PALLADIUM GAIN
Silver for immediate delivery gained 1.5 per cent to $34.7875 an ounce, cutting its weekly loss to 3.1 per cent. It climbed to $36.7225 last week, the highest level since February 1980, the year in which the metal reached a record $50.35 in New York.

Palladium was up 1.3 per cent at $710.00 an ounce after falling to $688.25, the lowest level since Nov. 20. Prices are down 5.5 per cent this week.

Platinum rose 0.9 per cent to $1,715.25 an ounce.

Bullion rates

**Mumbai**: Silver spot (.999 fineness); Rs 33,530; standard gold (99.5 Purity); Rs 20,785; Pure gold (99.9 purity); Rs 20,885.
Aravalis under assault, kids lend a hand

Unlike Areas In Haryana Where SC Has Imposed A Ban, Plundering The Aravalis In Rajasthan Is Kidstuff, Literally

Tijara (Alwar): Contrary to the situation in parts of Haryana, where the Supreme Court has imposed a ban on mining, miners in neighbouring Rajasthan are taking full advantage of lack of an apex court order. The Aravallis are being mercilessly ravaged by miners, crusher owners and locals as greed gets the better of green concerns.

A visit to the sites reinforces the apprehension. Gaping red holes stare from behind mounds of glistening blue stone as workers — including miners — hammer away at the mountainside with a vengeance.

The SC has imposed a ban on mining in Faridabad, Mewat and Gurgaon. Rajasthan’s Lapliyan, separated from Haryana by the Aravalli, is the epitome of frenetic mining activities, thanks to the availability of the best quality of stones.

Interestingly, the sites are far less destructive in official mining areas like Hasnagpur and Neevli, where 15-16 leases have been given for a 10km x 10km area.

Tijara, which still has a semblance of greenery, could well turn into dustbin — akin to check-post Haryana — if the rampant mining isn’t curbed at the earliest.

The economies of Aravali’s rut in Tijara follows a crude but lucrative pattern. Three crushers are engaged in Hasnagpur. Crush- er owners source stones from their lease areas. Locals, who have been co-opted in dumping the Aravalli, are happy with the arrangement since they rake in a tidy sum as compared to farming.

When TOI visited the spot, Gauri Prasad, 15, was sitting at one of the sites. “I do go to school. I do this work only after noon when school gets over. It’s a holiday on Friday. That’s why I am here early,” he said.

Dr. Mohan Lal, the chief medical officer of the district in Alwar, said, “We received complaints about child labour in this area. We have started an investigation.”

The child labourers are paid Rs 1,000 per day. The work is done in small clusters of five to six people.

Child labour is common in this area. The children are kept away from school and, in some cases, are even kept away from home.

“Child labour is common here. The children are kept away from school and, in some cases, are even kept away from home,” said Mohan Lal.

TOI lensman manhandled

Tijara (Alwar): A TOI photographer was attacked on Friday by miners in Lapliyan while showing pictures of illegal mining activities. Four miners — two of whom had been photographed leading henchmen onto a tractor — manhandled the photographer, accusing him of taking pictures of women. They tried to grab his camera but were held back by a tractor driver. The local police registered a case.

Alwar SP Mahesh Goyal said three men were held for the attack.
Rio Tinto ups holding in Riversdale

Reuters
Sydney, March 18
Rio Tinto has received acceptances for 33.04 per cent of shares in its $3.9 billion take-over target Riversdale, the global miner said on Friday, after raising its offer for the Mozambique-focused coal miner last week. The offer is conditional on Rio Tinto reaching 50.1 per cent control by March 23.
A boom town silenced

Then and now: In bustling times, the KIOCL plant. Now, giant shovels that can scoop around 30 tonnes of ore lying idle at the plant in Chilmagalur district. — R. Eswaran/AJ. Vinayak

The story begins with the establishment of KIOCL three decades ago. The company made an investment of around Rs 550 crore in Kudremukh for the mining site, beneficiation plant and township. The beneficiation plant had an annual capacity of 7.8 million tonnes, a 67-km long slurry pipeline to pellet plant in Mangalore. (Prior to 2006, the concentrate produced at the beneficiation plant mined there was sent to Mangalore through this pipeline by using gravitational force.) The KIOCL Ltd stopped mining activity at Kudremukh from December 31, 2005, following a Supreme Court directive given in response to environmental concerns. A biodiversity hotspot, the mining area falls under the Kudremukh National Park, and other than forest activity, mining is no longer allowed here.

But environmental reasons apart, many of the staff members, whom this reporter spoke to got emotional when they spoke about the town. “I have witnessed the rise of the town. What is the situation now, you have seen for yourself,” says Mr Rajan, an employee of the company. He is talking to a group of journalists from Mangalore that is in Kudremukh on a trip organised by the Karnataka Information Department. The stoppage of mining at this township has had a cascading effect on several activities. Dr Umadevi, Chief Medical Officer at the 50-bed hospital in the township, once handled many a medical emergency, including babies delivered through the Caesarian section. But she is not so busy these days. The same is true of bus-stands, banks and educational institutions from where the buzz has gone.

One of the three banks has already shifted its branch, the number of buses plying in the town has come down, affecting connectivity to cities such as Bangalore and Mysore. The Kendriya Vidyalaya still offers education up to Std X, but the pre-university college has shifted its base to another town.

Mr V. Bobraj Jeyaharan, General Manager, KIOCL Ltd, says the staff strength has come down from 1,260 on January 1, 2006, to 537, and this includes the security and hospital staff.

While 536 people opted for VRS, 379 were deployed to other locations of the company.

Though the plant is closed, around Rs 4 crore has to be spent every month for maintenance of machinery, plant, and the township.

Mr Ramappa, an employee accompanying us, points to the smooth, wide road going to Mangalore, and says: “This road was laid for transporting giant dumpers, shovels and other machinery to the plant.”

Will the town witness the lost glory again, is the question lingering in the minds of people still remaining in the town.
Sterlite Copper wins RBNQ trophy for 2010

Sterlite Copper has bagged the prestigious Indian Merchants Chambers (IMC) Ramkrishna Bajaj National Quality (RBNQ) "Performance Excellence Trophy 2010 under manufacturing category. The award was presented by Maharashtra governor K Shankaranarayanan, at a ceremony held on Wednesday in Mumbai, a release said.
Ministry mulls new no-go formula for coal mine areas

Kirtika Suneja

New Delhi, Mar 18: Even as the controversy over ‘go’ and ‘no-go’ areas continues, the environment ministry is looking for a fresh exercise to strictly demarcate some of the areas as no-go for coal mining.

The new formula will be presented at the second meeting of the group of ministers (GoM) looking into the matter. The ministry will strictly demarcate the areas where coal mining can’t be done and hence, companies will not have to chase the mines in such areas. The categorisation of forestland as ‘go’ and ‘no-go’ is limited to coal blocks that have implications on thermal power projects.

Earlier, the ministry of environment and forests (MoEF) and the coal ministry had jointly undertaken an exercise to overlay the forest cover map on boundaries of nine coalfields in the country and identified various coal blocks as category A (no-go areas) and category B (go areas). As per the exercise, 449 coal blocks covering about 3.8 lakh hectares were categorised as category B of the total number of 622 coal blocks covering about 6.48 lakh hectares.

“The coal ministry wants go, no-go to be abandoned. We can’t compromise beyond a point. One option is that we go back to the old system or the other is to have another exercise for the no-go areas,” said environment minister Jairam Ramesh.

Ramesh’s ministry will make a presentation on the new exercise on March 25 when the GoM meets again. There are nine thermal power projects located in the ‘no-go’ coal mining areas which are yet to get the clearance. Of these, two are located in Singarauki in Madhya Pradesh, four in the Hasdeo Arand coalfield in Chattisgarh and three in the North Karanpura coalfields in Jharkhand.

The present criteria used for characterising ‘A’ and ‘B’ is based on the gross forest cover (GFC) and weighted forest cover (WFC). Under GFC, the forest is defined as crop having density more than 10% and anything below this is scrub, which is not included in the forest cover. Any proposed coal block having 30% or more area under forest cover is placed under non-available category or category A or ‘no-go’. On the other hand, WFC gives appropriate weightage to different qualities of forest.
कोडवर्ड को लेकर पसोपेश में सीबीआई

भारतीय सुप्रीम कोर्ट के एमडी की समाप्ति कुर्क्य करने की हो रही है तयारी

प्रमुख समाचारिक

बनको सीएमडी सिरवां कांड मामले में निर्धारित रानन्द सिंह भाटिया, जीएल बजर रूपान्तरित एमडी सीबीआई के बीच मोबाइल पर कोडवर्ड में होने वाली बहादुरी सीबीआई अधिकारियों को प्रस्तुत पेश में उत्तर देने हैं। अधिकारी सबसे बड़ी बड़ी गार्ड जिसका पर निर्देशन कांड के हैं। हालांकि बड़ी है कि भाटिया पूरे के एमडी की कार्यक्षेत्र में लेने के लिए सीबीआई उसकी समीक्षा की कुछ करने का मन बना चुका है।

सीबीआई युवा ने राजनाल सिंह भाटिया के पास दो मोबाइल जैसा निर्देशन कर दिया था और बजर ने एक मोबाइल नतीजे के अधिकारकर्ता बयान की थी। दो पूरी तरह सही पता की जाती है की भाटिया पूरे के प्रस्तुत पेशकश में सीबीआई एल सीबीआई के अन्य अधिकारियों को बने पता चला है। जब भी भाटिया सीबीआई के बीच बातचीत होती थी उनके कोडवर्ड का इस्तेमाल किया जाता था। कोडवर्ड की बातों को जानने के लिए रानन्द सिंह बजर ने अपने पुलिस को भेजा जाता है, लेकिन इस पर दोनों ने ही सहभागिता नहीं करते।

भाटिया का कहना है कि सीबीआई युवा के एमडी बी एल सीबीआई और उनके सहयोगी नगरीय सिंह को देखते हुए हैं कि जब भाटिया को बात करने की करवाया जा रहा है। दोनों ने बीमारी का बातचीत बनाया था, लेकिन अपनी में भी नहीं मिले। इसलिए, यह साभार है कि दोनों सिरवां बने ने के लिए प्रकट नहीं है। फिर भी जब बने होते हैं तो जब से सीबीआई ने नये सीएमडी बीएस अवलोकन के बाद के बाद हुई तत्कालिन सिंह को निर्देशन किया गया। नतीजे में नयी सीबीआई की रुपरेखा होगा, विदेश विभाग ने रूपरेखा टन के लिए सिरवां नेता की बोल बूढ़े व एक लखवंट दौड़ायी रूपरेखा बनाया था इसलिए सीबीआई की रुपरेखा देड करोड़ बनी थी।