Power firm pulls plug on some ECL mines

OUR BUREAU

Calcutta, Dec. 19: A private power producer has partially cut supply to Eastern Coalfields Ltd (ECL) following a dispute over bank guarantees, leading to the closure of nine mines in the Asansol-Durgapur belt that churn out around 3,000 tonnes of coal a day.

Power department sources said supply to homes would not be affected for at least a month because of the cold weather that usually pulls down demand.

DPSC, a power producer controlled by Srei Infrastructure, pulled the plug after the coal company stopped supplying the fuel on November 21. Nine of ECL’s 100 mines have been affected.

ECL, being the coal supply citing alleged failure by DPSC to deposit a bank guarantee of Rs 4 crore for the coal. However, DPSC officials today said the power supply was cut after ECL refused to pay Rs 63 crore in bank guarantees for the electricity. ECL supplies 13,365 tonnes of coal to DPSC a month. DPSC supplies 90MW of ECL’s power requirement of 110MW.

“Under the electricity act, all bulk power purchasers need to deposit a security in the form of a bank guarantee. We have been asking ECL for the past few months to keep a bank guarantee of Rs 63 crore (equivalent to three months’ average electricity bill) with us but it has not paid any heed. As a token measure, we snapped power to 25 of the 127 ECL installations (on Saturday),” a DPSC official said.

ECL has threatened to move Calcutta High Court, where DPSC had filed a petition against the coal company on September 29 alleging failure to pay the Rs 63 crore.

DPSC chief executive Jyotirmoy Bhownick said ECL had already encashed the Rs 4-crore bank guarantee on the ground of non-payment of “disputed dues” of Rs 19 crore. “ECL had been demanding another bank guarantee of Rs 4 crore, although we were picking up coal three times a month through spot purchases. Three weeks ago, ECL stopped supplying coal to us for non-payment of the guarantee,” he said.

Bhownick said that two months ago, DPSC had sent a “de-installation notice” to ECL so that “no miner gets trapped inside any underground mine”. “If ECL deposits the bank guarantee, we’ll restore the connection,” he added.

The DPSC officials said the company’s 30MW plant in Asansol’s Chinsurah had become idle after ECL stopped coal supply. DPSC operates the plant under a lease from ECL. The coal company now wants to invite open tenders for the plant.

Niladri Roy, the technical secretary to the chairman-cum-managing director of ECL, said: “The power disruption has affected operations in eight to nine mines. It has also affected the supply of electricity to the quarters of employees of six closed mines.”

The power department sources said supply would not be affected much. “A drop, however little, in coal supply affects power supply badly in summer because then we struggle to meet peak demand despite running in full capacity. As the demand (including areas served by CESC) is 20 per cent less now than the peak demand in summer, we will be able to manage with little or no power cuts,” an official said.

ECL, according to the power department officials, supplies three to four rakes to the West Bengal Power Development Corporation Ltd (WPPLDC) which needs 15 rakes daily. They said the shutdown of the mine ECL mines could reduce the coal supply to the WPPLDC by a rake or two. “That would amount to 7 to 13 per cent of the WPPLDC’s need. At the most, that would require a temporary shutdown of one unit of 210MW, out of its total generation capacity of over 3,700MW,” an official said.

Pointing out that the state can tap a hydel plant and other sources, the official added: “There is hardly any chance of power cuts even if the dispute continues for another month.”
निर्यात पर रोक लगाने से खनन मंत्रालय का इनकार

नई दिल्ली (प्रेंट)। खनन मंत्रालय ने रोक अपरक और सैनिकों अपरक के निर्यात पर रोक लगाने की जाती शहर समिति की सिफारिशों की खारिज कर दिया है। खनन मंत्रालय का कहना है कि खंडीनों का निर्यात समिति नौतों के तहत हो रहा है और यह मामला अब वाणिज्य मंत्रालय के वित्त में दिखा गया है।

शैव अपरक के सिफारिश के लिए निर्यात और सैनिकों अपरक निर्यात की जांच के लिए जांच एम.बी. शाह की अध्यक्षता में एक आयोजन आयोजित किया गया था। समिति ने इस अपरक के अर्थों में इसका इंतजार कर रहा था कि शहर समिति को रोकने की वजह की अनुमति देता है और बंगाली दूरी के लिए यह दर्ज नहीं किया जा सकता है। इस अपरक के तहत होने वाले निर्यात को रोकने की वजह के लिए यह अनुमति देता है।

लेकिन इस समाचार में मामला की रचना अंश है। खंडीन मंत्रालय ने यह मामला अब वाणिज्य मंत्रालय के वित्त में दिखा दिया है। मामला का कहना है कि अपरक खनन के लिए निर्यात की जिम्मेदार नहीं है और यह भारत के अधिकार में आ सकता है। अपरक खनन राज्य सरकारों के बीच पर अधिकार तब तक की वजह से हो रहा है।

अस्तित्व शह ने अपनी पहली अंखिका रिपोर्ट में कहा कि अपरक निर्यात के लिए केवल 92 घंटों में ही खनन की जांच की जाने की जरूरत नहीं है। इसके अलावा खनन 85% है।
लीगेसी के बोर्ड में शामिल हुए एनएमडीसी अधिकारी

पूरे रूप में इसके अधिकारियों को बोर्ड में शामिल किया गया है। इन तीनों अधिकारियों को बोर्ड में शामिल करने का फैसला लीगेसी के निदेशकों को अनुमोदित आय समिति में किया गया। जानकारी के पुत्री, राम लोभ से अनुच्छेद जन अन्य दो अधिकारियों को लीगेसी नोड में शामिल किया गया है, जो कि नहीं तरीका नए नए और एक-लघुमात्र से। यह दोनों ही एनएमडीसी में व्यापक है।
Mines Ministry rejects Shah panel’s suggestion of banning iron ore exports

The Ministry of Mines has rejected the Justice Shah Commission’s suggestion of banning exports of iron ore and manganese ore to check illegal mining, saying that the export of minerals is guided by policy and has referred the matter to the Commerce Ministry.

The Ministry’s suggestion, though does not come as a surprise, considering the fact that it has all along stated that iron ore exports are a major source of revenue for mining companies. In fact, this policy of the Mining Ministry has often put it at loggerheads with the Steel Ministry, which has always advocated hiking the export duty on iron ore, as it does not want any shortage of the raw material for domestic steel makers in the long run.

Justice MB Shah Commission of enquiry, which went into illegal mining of iron ore and manganese ore, has advocated ban on export of these minerals running into billions of rupees and warned that such activities could influence state policies besides promoting illegal mining. These recommendations form a part of the Commission’s interim report, which was laid in Parliament by Mines Minister Dhusla Patel on Tuesday. The final report of the three-member panel, which is currently touring various states of the country (mainly mineral-rich states where mining activities are rampant), is expected to come by May 2012.

The Ministry of Mines, while referring the issue to the Department of Commerce has differed with the Commission view and said exports cannot be held as the reason for illegal mining, rather it is “lack of governance” at state Government levels which has largely contributed to illegal mining.
PRESS INFORMATION BUREAU
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

NEW DELHI: The Bellary-based Bharat Mines & Minerals (BMM) has chalked out plans to set up a greenfield steel manufacturing plant at Firepot in Karnataka at an estimated investment of around ₹6,700 crore. The plant is expected to have an annual steel manufacturing capacity of around 2.2 million tonnes.

“We have achieved financial closure for the project,” said Dinesh Singh, managing director BMM. “The total investment of ₹6,700 crore in the project is being funded through a mix of debt and internal accruals.” Singh added that a consortium of fourteen banks led by the State Bank of India has extended a loan of ₹4,200 crore to the company for this project. Other banks in the consortium include Canara Bank and Punjab National Bank.

The greenfield steel-manufacturing unit would be spread across 3500 acres and the plant is expected to be fully functional by 2014. Greenfield projects refer to entirely new projects.

Singh added that BMM expects to garner revenue of around ₹2,000 crore during the current financial year and expects the company’s revenue to increase by 25% over the next couple of years.

The company already owns and operates a pelletisation plant, beneficiation plant, sponge iron plant, induction furnace and a steel rolling mill. BMM is also diversifying into cement production and its cement manufacturing plant is set to come up at Anantapur in Andhra Pradesh.
With Mining in the Pits, Growth to Take a Big Knock

Sector with 14% share of IIP will slow down growth & affect power sector investments

An unprecedented crackdown on corruption in India’s mining industry, led by the Supreme Court and state-level agencies such as Karnataka’s Lokayukta, coupled with rigorous enforcement of environmental norms is resulting in collateral damage to the economy with plunging mining output leading to a fall in industrial production and GDP growth.

The suspension of mining activity by the Supreme Court across large parts of Karnataka, after a committee appointed by the court detected widespread damage to the environment, combined with restrictions on ore exports in many states was reflected in a 7.2% decline in mining output in October this year.

Production of minerals declined at an annual rate of 2.2% during April-October 2011 before the sharp October fall.

“At least 10% of GDP is expected to witness significant slowing down due to the mining bans and delays owing to an array of environmental clearances,” said Jayant Kaur, economist, HDFC Bank.

Mining and quarrying activities account for 14% share of the index of industrial production while industry contributes around a quarter of the aggregate GDP.

Analysts say stepped-up scrutiny of the mining sector, which accounts for 5% of the $1.4 trillion economy, is evolving into an economy-wide crisis as the increased uncertainty is discouraging investment in sectors such as steel and power.

The crackdown on illegal practices in the mining industry has been welcomed by many and has come to be generally associated with the nationwide campaign against corruption headed by activists such as Anna Hazare.

In Karnataka, Gali Janardhan Reddy, mining baron-turned-politician, was arrested in September and charged with illegal mining after he was indicted by Karnataka’s Lokayukta.

Blow for R-Power on Sasan Coal

The power ministry has recommended cancellation of permission to Reliance Power to use surplus coal from mines attached to the 4,000 mw ultra mega power project at Sasan in MP at another group plant in the state.
Mining Slowdown Affecting Finances

>>From Page 1

In the same month, the Supreme Court suspended mining in Bellary, Chitradurga and Tumkur districts, though the ban has since been modified. Karnataka accounts for 18%, or 40 mt, of the national output.

But the clean-up has come for a price. In the September quarter, GDP growth fell to 6.9%, the slowest in two years, and the trend could worsen judging by the October IIP figures.

"The courts must take a more holistic approach towards the problem and balance ecological factors with developmental factors," said a senior counsel who is closely associated with the mining case in Karnataka.

Declining mining activity is also beginning to impact state finances. The Karnataka government has already reported a ₹ 400-crore shortfall in non-tax revenues during fiscal 2011-12 due to a ban on mining activities.

Some government officials maintain that the impact on user industries can be minimised if export of iron ore is discontinued.

"If the exports are redirected to address domestic demand, the spillover effect on iron ore users can be minimised. In the absence of the cascading effects, the total impact will not exceed 1.5-2% of the GDP," said Pranab Sen, senior advisor, Planning Commission.

COAL HIT BY TOUGHER NORMS

The fall in the output of another key industrial input, coal, is the result of tougher enforcement of environmental norms during former environment minister Jairam Ramesh’s tenure.

A report authored by Knushik Das and Talibur Baig of Deutsche Bank claims coal demand will exceed supply by 2012-13, severely impacting the power sector. “Owing to ongoing and likely persisting coal shortage, India’s power demand-supply gap may not be bridged even in FY16,” they said.

“Coal India is only supplying 50-55% of the requirement. So, money that the power guys will make won’t even be enough to service their debt,” said Debasish Mishra, senior director, Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu.

According to Deloitte’s estimates, a third of total mining area available to Coal India, the monopoly producer of coal, is subject to restrictions. CIL missed its April-September production target by about 20 mt as production stagnated because of difficulty in getting environmental clearances.
Noble Group (ASX: NO1) manages the global supply chain of agricultural and energy products, metals and minerals. Noble operates from over 120 offices in 48 countries, employing approximately 10,000 people. Noble manages a diversified portfolio of essential raw materials, integrating the sourcing, marketing, processing, financing and transportation. Noble owns and manages an array of strategic assets, sourcing from low-cost producers such as Brazil, Argentina, Australia and Indonesia and supplying to high-growth demand markets including China, India & the Middle East. Today Noble has interests in grain crushing facilities, coal and iron ore mines, fuel terminals and storage facilities, sugar and ethanol plants, ports, refineries and other key infrastructure.

Agriculture
This business unit, accounting for the majority of the group's revenues, operates from a global network of over 120 offices in 48 countries, employing approximately 10,000 people. Noble is a leading player in high-growth market segments, such as the Americas and the Ukraine, emerging markets with high demand growth. Noble’s business model is built on a network of integrated trading and storage facilities across key agricultural products, including oil seeds, palm oil, sugar, coffee, tobacco and cotton, and the company is well positioned to capitalize on this growth.

Energy
Noble's flagship division is its energy business, with a strong presence in the global coal and power markets. Noble’s focus on high-quality coal and power-from-gas projects sets it apart from its peers.

Metals, Minerals and Ore
As one of the world’s top suppliers, Noble has operations spanning the globe, from the United States, China, Australia to Europe. The company is well positioned to take advantage of the global demand for high-quality coal and other mineral products, with its strategic locations and strong relationships with key customers and suppliers.
GNMRL : A Confident and Steady Stride to a Determined Objective

ARUN KUMAR JAGATRAMKA, CMD, GUJARAT NRE MINERAL RESOURCES LIMITED, DISCOURSES THE FUTURE PROSPECT OF THE COMPANY IN A FREEWHEELING CHAT WITH ADITI GUHA

What is the present business of Gujarat NRE Mineral Resources Ltd (GNMRL)?

Gujarat NRE mineral Resources Ltd (GNMRL) is the flagship entity of the Gujarat NRE group. GNMRL is a core investment company having in its care controlling stake in several distinct entities with substantial assets in the group companies.

What are the prospects of GNMRL?

The company is unique since it is focused on the three prime sectors of energy critical to India's economic growth, namely coking coal, oil & gas and substantial investments in each of these sectors. Coking coal is in severe short supply worldwide, more so in India. India's steel production is expected to reach 100 MTPA by 2030. For every tonne of steel made through the blast furnace route requires one tonne of coking coal. This would result in an annual demand of around 140 MTPA of coking coal by 2030. Supply is unable to keep pace with the insatiable hunger of coking coal that is only going to become more severe in days to come. We at GJMRL are privileged and proud to own this prized possession of prime-quality hard coking coal in Australia. (GNCL), the Australian coking coal mining arm of Gujarat NRE group has JORC reserves of 125.4 Mt and reserves of 62 Mt of prime-quality hard coking coal. We are also privileged to own coking coal plants at Khambhat and Bhachau in the State of Gujarat and in Nashik in the State of Maharashtra to produce sinter from coking coal and we also own a steel unit at Bhachau in the State of Gujarat through GJRCL, the largest independent steel company in India. In the oil & gas front, various studies and analysis ventured by the company has indicated prospects and leads with huge upside potential which would be confirmed through further exploration programs. At present, environmental surveys and cultural clearances are taking place to pave the way for an aggressive exploration program of 400 km 3D seismic data acquisition. This would be followed further by processing and interpretation of the acquired data and drilling of well.

What is the value of this company to the share holders?

GNMRL owns controlling stake in Gujarat NRE Coke Ltd (GNCL), the largest independent coal producer in India, with nearly 36% holding. This enables GJMRL to turn to hold controlling stake in Gujarat NRE Coking Coal Ltd (GNCCCL), the Australian subsidiary of GNCL, which is listed on the Australian Securities Exchange (ASX) and owns and operates two coking coal mines in Australia of high quality premium-hard coking coal resources of over 1.5 billion tonnes. GJMRL, through its Australian-owned subsidiary Gujarat NRE Oil (GNO) has 99% stake in two onshore exploration blocks namely EP112 and EP113 covering an area of 10,000 sq. km in the highly prospective onshore Bundelkhand Basin, Western Australia. We have the distinction of being the largest petroleum exploration block owner among Indian companies venturing in Australia. GNMRL share holders hence enjoys the value of the lucrative coking coal and coking coal assets through substantial holding in Gujarat NRE group as well as in the oil and gas prospect of the Australian business.

What benefits has the company offered to its shareholders till now?

GJMRL, the controlling investment company of the group and gets direct benefit of the capital appreciation as well as regular dividends in the financial years 2007-08 (39.35%), 2008-09 (23.49%) and 2009-10 (15.8%). The company has also made three rights issues in the year 2006, 2008 and 2010 all of which has received respectable response from the investors illustrating the immense confidence and strong support of our investors in the Group. The notable effort of the management of the company to give to the shareholders the maximum benefit is exemplified in the declaration of bonus shares in the ratio of 1:1 in the year 2008 and another similar issue in the ratio of 1:1 in the year 2011, whereas the promoters of the company in order to make the shareholder the real bene-

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What is the current investment plans of the company?

The company intends to further strengthen its presence in coal & coking coal sector, apart from other sectors, through investments in the Gujarat NRE group. Gujarat NRE group is embarking upon expansion and modernization of the ongoing plants and would require considerable investments of about $1.10 billion with substantial investments planned for enhancing production at Australian mines and for domestic operations. We have always believed to make investments unbiased by the market conditions and risks and understand that this is probably the right time to open our arms to further our expansion plans. We have successfully obtained Consent to Establish from the appropriate government authorities and are having substantial requisite infrastructures including land and manpower and we fully geared up for the full fledged implementation of our expansion plans. The said investments will enable the group to increase our presence and take advantages of the opportunities in the existing business.

What next...Anything exciting in the offing?

Looking at the current market scenario and before we go for listing, GNMRL is planning to propose another investment opportunity to its existing shareholders, to utilize an opportunity to benefit from the current low valuations before we go to the wider section of investors.
Indal Steel and Power Limited (JSPL) is one of India's major steel producers with a significant presence in sectors like steel, mining, power generation and infrastructure. With an annual turnover of over $2.9 billion, JSPL is a part of the over $15 billion diversified OP Jindal Group. In the recent past, JSPL has expanded its steel, power and mining businesses to various parts of the world particularly in Asia, Africa and South America.

The company produces economical and efficient steel and power. From the widest flat products to a whole range of long products, JSPL sports a product portfolio that caters to major infrastructure and housing projects in the country. It also has the distinction of producing the world’s longest 121 metre rails and large size parallel flange beams, high strength angle irons for transmission towers and high strength earthquake resistant construction rebars.

The company is equally concerned about the environment and is committed towards restoring nature’s balance by maintaining a clean and green environment. JSPL has taken many initiatives in this direction like planting of large number of trees, using environment-friendly technologies, setting up of an environmental laboratory etc.

JSPL’s CSR policy aims at bringing about a radical transformation in the quality of life of the people living in and around the operation areas of the company through positive intervention in social upliftment programmes. Its key areas of focus are health, education, women empowerment, livelihood, livestock care, drinking water and sanitation, youth and sports, population stabilisation and infrastructure development.
Ministry Raps Odisha for Failure to Check Illegal Mining

MEERA MOHANTY
NEW DELHI

The mines ministry has ticked off Odisha for its failure to check mining irregularities, saying it should share the blame for illegal mining. The ministry’s surprise initiative, which came a day after an internal probe panel wrapped up its tour of the state as part a countrywide exercise to investigate illegal iron ore mining, was in response to Odisha’s complaint about a ministry agency, the Indian Bureau of Mines, two months ago.

In a letter to the state chief secretary on Tuesday, mines secretary Vishwakati Trivedi reminded the state government that “the powers to (monitor and) restrict mineral movement lie exclusively with the state government as they are the sole statutory authority to collect royalty and authorise movements”.

During its four-day visit, the commission, headed by former justice M B Shah, had raised concerns on the Indian Bureau of Mines’ failure to check lessees that mined more than their approved level of output. Odisha, which contributes nearly a third of India’s iron ore output, is home to mines of Tata Steel, Birla’s Essel mining, Rungta, KJS Ahiwalla, Sarda Mines and Orissa Mining Corporation. In October, state mines secretary Manoj Ahuja had written to the then Union secretary of mines, Vijay Kumar, asking him to look into the responsibility of the Indian Bureau of Mines for ensuring that lessees work within their mining plans.

In his reply, the incumbent secretary pointed out that while the bureau of mines supervised plans under the Mineral Conservation and Development Rules 1988, the state directorate of mining and geology was responsible for inspection of transit permits and volume and quality of mined ore that it collects royalty on. “In principle, the objective of endorsing this information is not merely to enable state governments to be informed but also facilitate the state governments as the owners of the minerals to exercise an efficient control in minerals despatch through correlating mining plan or violation details with proper accounting of minerals produced and dispatched on transit permit after collecting royalty dues,” Trivedi said.
Optimal Use of Mineral Windfalls

India should not fritter away PSU profits from the commodity boom in funding budget deficits

Swaminathan Ankleśaria Aiyar

Slow tax revenue and rising government spending on food security and universal health threaten to send the fiscal deficit skyrocketing next year. To check this, many experts want to raid the surpluses of public sector undertakings (PSUs). These surpluses have ballooned thanks to a global commodity boom hugely benefiting mineral-producing PSUs, such as ONGC, Coal India, NMDC and Oil India.

These profits are unearned windfalls. They should not be frittered away in current government spending. Part of the windfall should be conserved for future generations, in the manner than Norway, Chile, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia have done through sovereign wealth funds.

T V Mohandas Pai and Gautam Seshadri wrote an article in The Hindu calling for a massive special dividend to be paid by PSUs (Why Bother? Reward Yourself, ET, Dec 16). They said that the four big mineral producers plus BHEL could easily pay special dividends totalling Rs5,000 crore. This would not jeopardise their future investment plans.

Others have suggested two variations on this theme. One is a buyback of shares by PSUs. The second is for PSUs to use their surpluses to buy out minor stakes of the government in other PSUs. Both schemes would transfer PSU surpluses to the budget.

However, raiding surpluses is just one more way of selling family silver to meet current budgetary expenses. This is not a way of balancing the home and spending. Such one-off sales can be justified in difficult times, yet need to be recognised as ways of temporarily funding the deficit rather than reducing the deficit. Treating asset sales as revenue is an accounting trick to persuade wary observers of the soundness of a sinking budgetary ship.

The public sector is no panacea of efficiency in India. The overwhelming bulk of state government PSUs are sick or closed. Central PSUs have done far better, but they too typically withered when faced with private sector competition. The Cement Corporation cannot compete with private cement companies, Hindustan Paper Corporation cannot compete with private paper companies, BSNL and MTNL cannot compete with private telecom players.

How then have some PSUs generated massive profits? On paper, the surpluses are overwhelming:

Windfalls from a global commodity boom. The price of oil, for instance, has risen from $18 a barrel in the late 1990s to over $100 a barrel today. Coal and iron ore prices have risen almost as fast.

Many experts advise the government to use revenue from such surpluses in periodic commodity booms to set aside a fund. This fund would be used only in the next commodity slump. This plan could also be used to restructure deleveraged PSUs to make them competitive.

Before 1991, price controls kept domestic mineral prices below international rates, and public sector profits were modest. But the freeing of price controls, plus the global boom, has produced a windfall. The recent depreciation of the rupee by 20% will boost the windfall further: The big four mineral-tracting PSUs have cash in hand of Rs15,000 crore. This does reflect any great efficiency on their part. On most global production criteria, these are not highly productive companies. Output per man-shift in coal, for instance, is far below levels in China or Australia. The ONGC has a very poor record in production, and some fields that it surrendered to private sector players have subsequently done much better.

How should the massive mineral windfalls be utilised? Remember, the mineral windfalls are surpluses. They cannot be used to fund new projects. The government needs to save money for use at a time when mineral wealth would have been largely exhausted. Many Gulf countries, Norway and Chile (the world’s biggest copper exporter) earmarked part of their windfalls for sovereign wealth funds.

In India, companies like ONGC, OIL and Coal India have started investing in mineral blocks abroad, and this is a useful form of saving windfalls abroad. But this does not flow from any overarching strategy: each company has done what it felt like. No doubt the companies need flexibility on this score. Yet, given the size of the surpluses, we need to start a debate on how to use mineral windfalls.

Clearly, a large part of the windfall must be used for current infrastructure and social spending. But not all of it. Already a significant chunk of mineral windfalls are transferred to central and state governments through royalties and taxes. The latest move to raid PSU surpluses for budget support will transfer still more to current spending.

There must be limits to this. This column has no space to enumerate all the possible principles. Its aim is simply to highlight the size and nature of the mineral windfall, and start a debate on what proportion should be saved for future generations.
Copper improves on upbeat German data

Reuters

London, Dec. 20
Copper rose on Tuesday after better-than-expected German business sentiment eased some concerns about the health of Europe's largest economy, with a weak dollar helping cement gains for metals. Three-month copper on the London Metal Exchange (LME) rose to $7,358 a tonne at 10:56 GMT, up from a close of $7,260 on Monday, although trading volumes have been tapering off ahead of the year-end holiday season.

A rebound in the euro against the dollar also helped boost copper's gains.

ALUMINIUM STOCKS RISE

Aluminium stocks in LME-registered warehouses rose by 49,775 to a new record 4,922,800 tonnes, data showed. Some 28,875 tonnes flowed into warehouses in Drott.

Aluminium rose to $1,991.25 a tonne from a close of $1,963 a tonne on Monday. Zine, used in galvanising, climbed to $1,800 from a close of $1,838, while tin edged up to $18,800 from $18,695. Tin prices are down more than 20 per cent so far this year, the biggest year-to-date percentage decline in the base metals complex.

Battery material lead rose to $1,960 from $1,937, while stainless-steel ingredient nickel climbed to $18,655 from $18,380.
Tension over bauxite mining

Our Bureau
Visakhapatnam, Dec. 20

The 48-hour bandh in the agency area (tribal tracts in the eastern ghats) of Visakhapatnam district against the visit of a four-member expert committee from the Ministry of Environment and Forests to the proposed bauxite mining areas, was total on Tuesday.

Even bicycles were not allowed on the roads at Chintapalli.

The committee, sent with the mandate to examine the pros and cons of bauxite mining, had to stay back in a hotel here. At the hotel also, there were protests.

Trees were cut and placed across the Araku ghat road at Sivalingapuram and near Dumbriguda.

A large number of people from 33 villages gathered at Jerrela to confront the committee, if it reached the spot.
Subbarami Reddy meets Prime Minister

Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI: Former Union Minister and Rajya Sabha member from Andhra Pradesh, T. Subbarami Reddy, met Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh here on Tuesday and sought allotment of iron ore mines exclusively for the Visakhapatnam Steel Plant from the Mines Ministry and the need for allowing international flights from Visakhapatnam airport which would be useful to people of the north coastal Andhra Pradesh.

Besides, he pitched for irrigation projects like Polavaram, Pranahita and Chevella be declared as national projects.

Dr. Reddy, who is also Chairman of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Science and Technology and Environment and Forests, said that the committee had successfully persuaded all the major industries in Visakhapatnam to take up massive plantation of 40 lakh trees to make the city greener.
Global problems, high interest rates pulling down growth: Finmin

Attributing the slowdown to the Reserve Bank's tight monetary policy and global problems, the government on Tuesday informed Parliament that economic growth in 2011-12 will moderate to 7.5%, from 8.5% in the previous fiscal. “The slower-than-expected growth this year could be attributed to global slowdown, which has resulted in slowing down of growth rate in many countries, including India, as well as in tight monetary policy to control inflation,” minister of state for finance Namo Narain Meena said in a written reply in the Rajya Sabha. “While the economy is expected to slow down in the current year from the levels achieved in 2010-11, India is still among the global frontrunners in terms of growth of gross domestic product (GDP),” Meena said.
Green clearances may be withdrawn for delayed projects: MoEF

Kirtika Suneja

New Delhi, Dec 20: With India Inc and various government departments blaming the ministry of environment and forests (MoEF) for delaying clearances for developmental projects, the ministry has said that the delay is not on its part but on the part of the industry in starting and completing the projects on time.

The ministry has now decided that it will withdraw environmental and forest clearances to the projects that do not commence work within five years of being accorded the approvals.

"We have cleared nearly 2 lakh mega watts (mw) of power generation capacity in five years, more than what the 12th and 13th Plans had envisaged. The industry has not utilised much of this and hence, we are thinking of withdrawing the clearances to projects that haven’t taken off," said a senior environment ministry official.

The ministry has cleared 1.66 million hectare of forest area in the last five years compared with 4.5 million hectare cleared in a span of 10 years before the Forest Conservation Act came into force.

The move assumes significance in the wake of the fact that the planning commission had warned that delayed forest clearance for captive mines could adversely affect development and financing of a large number of power projects.

In a report sent to the Prime Minister, planning commission member (energy) BK Chaturvedi had recommended simultaneous processing for environment and forest clearances to avoid delays.

Monitoring Authority (Nama) is being set up with the intention of carrying out appraisals and monitoring compliance conditions on an ongoing basis, as currently the ministry performs the appraisal and approval of only new projects.

Interestingly, the government’s position is corroborated by the Centre for Science and Environment (CSE) which says that in past five years, till August 2011, the environment ministry had granted environmental clearance for an astounding 210,000 mw of thermal power capacity, in other words, 60,000 mw more than what has been proposed till 2017. However, the capacity actually added is a mere 32,394 mw.

"The process of forest and environment clearances is not working as the ministry is giving too many
खनन अधिकारियों

स्थानीय (बखरी)। लेकर अधिकृत ने मोहिन्द्रेंद्र ने बाबू बिन्दु विधानसभा के विकास अंतर्गत के निर्माणिक ने सुप्रीमो, यूनियन, विद्युत और बायोविद्युत के खनन
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हो रहे है यह नहीं, वन और पर्यावरण संरक्षण की अवधि नहीं है या नहीं। 27 तक रिपोर्ट भेजने गई है।