Jairam unlikely gainer from Adarsh housing scam

Decision To Resort To Green Laws And Cancel Occupancy Certificate Has Increased MoEF’s Political Clout

Nitin Sethi | TNN

New Delhi: The collateral benefit of the Adarsh Housing Society scam has come to the ministry of environment and forests (MoEF). The Maharashtra government’s face-saver — the ministry’s Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) — to cancel the occupancy certificate for Adarsh Cooperative Housing Society has only increased the political heat that had already grown after Jairam Ramesh delivered political dividends for Congress scion Rahul Gandhi out of the high-profile Vedanta mining case.

The ministry’s increasing clout became evident recently when his belligerent colleague and civil aviation minister Praful Patel was forced to take a step back from his loud advocacy and meet the ministry’s demand of scaling down the Navi Mumbai airport plans.

Ramesh’s ability, so far, to deftly pick up the right cases and give them the measured dose of public profile have come in handy as much as the powerful laws the ministry always fathered but never unleashed with such political clout.

The coupling of green concerns, which were earlier primarily seen as a middle class advocacy and tigerwallah’s breast-beating, with land rights and livelihoods in the UPA-I regime have given a greater leverage to the denizens of Paryavaran Bhavan. This was evident in the Vedanta case, where the minister banned mining at Niyangiri citing livelihood concerns of a ‘primitive tribal group’ besides the violations of the green laws.

While more systematic changes are in the offing in the green ministry with the new green judicial system being set up as the National Green Tribunal, Ramesh, meanwhile, has stoked controversies and come out stronger even when he climbed down, as in the case of coal no-go areas. After taking a strong position to disallow coal excavation in the rich forest area, the government scaled down his proposal in order to ensure a more successful Coal India Limited IPO.

His most difficult call, though, has come with Posco. A committee set up by him to review the steel giant’s Rs 50,000 crore integrated steel plant in Orissa, unexpectedly delivered a strong and majority verdict declaring the Korean company’s plans as a violation of the green laws.

On one hand, his colleagues, the steel and commerce ministers, have voiced opposition to green-locking the largest foreign direct investment (FDI) project in India — echoing concerns raised by the Prime Minister’s Office earlier.

On the other, the ministry has to contend with the no-holds-barred majority report of the Meena Gupta committee that says the project is in violation of UPA’s flagship Forest Rights Act, and of the two laws that came in Indira Gandhi’s regimes — the Environment Protection Act and the Forest Conservation Act.

The Mumbai scandal has dropped as a pleasant surprise and distraction into Jairam Ramesh’s lap as his ability to play high stakes with several green cards up his sleeves gets tested with Posco before Prime Minister Manmohan Singh leaves for the G-20 meet in South Korea in the second week of November.
हनुमानगढ़ में होगी पोटाश की खोज

जिले के पांच क्षेत्रों का चयन कर सयुक्त उपक्रम बनाने का काम शुरू

राजस्थान सरकार हनुमानगढ़ ज़िले में पोटाश की खोज और उपक्रम करने का प्रयास कर रही है। इसके लिए जिले के पांच क्षेत्रों का चयन कर सयुक्त उपक्रम बनाने का काम शुरू हो गया है। भारतीय खनिज विभाग में सबसे ज्यादा पोटाश आवश्यकताओं का वाला देश है, जबकि राजस्थान में 350 किलोमीटर क्षेत्र में पोटाश के भंडार मौजूद होने का अनुमान है। पोटाश के लिए आवश्यक पदार्थों का निर्माण और उपक्रम करने के लिए जिले के पांच क्षेत्रों का चयन कर रही है। इसके लिए जिले के पांच क्षेत्रों का चयन कर सयुक्त उपक्रम बनाने का काम शुरू हो गया है। भारतीय खनिज विभाग में सबसे ज्यादा पोटाश आवश्यकताओं का वाला देश है, जबकि राजस्थान में 350 किलोमीटर क्षेत्र में पोटाश के भंडार मौजूद होने का अनुमान है। पोटाश के लिए आवश्यक पदार्थों का निर्माण और उपक्रम करने के लिए जिले के पांच क्षेत्रों का चयन कर रही है। इसके लिए जिले के पांच क्षेत्रों का चयन कर सयुक्त उपक्रम बनाने का काम शुरू हो गया है। भारतीय खनिज विभाग में सबसे ज्यादा पोटाश आवश्यकताओं का वाला देश है, जबकि राजस्थान में 350 किलोमीटर क्षेत्र में पोटाश के भंडार मौजूद होने का अनुमान है। पोटाश के लिए आवश्यक पदार्थों का निर्माण और उपक्रम करने के लिए जिले के पांच क्षेत्रों का चयन कर रही है। इसके लिए जिले के पांच क्षेत्रों का चयन कर सयुक्त उपक्रम बनाने का काम शुरू हो गया है। भारतीय खनिज विभाग में सबसे ज्यादा पोटाश आवश्यकताओं का वाला देश है, जबकि राजस्थान में 350 किलोमीटर क्षेत्र में पोटाश के भंडार मौजूद होने का अनुमान है। पोटाश के लिए आवश्यक पदार्थों का निर्माण और उपक्रम करने के लिए जिले के पांच क्षेत्रों का चयन कर रही है। इसके लिए जिले के पांच क्षेत्रों का चयन कर सयुक्त उपक्रम बनाने का काम शुरू हो गया है। भारतीय खनिज विभाग में सबसे ज्यादा पोटाश आवश्यकताओं का वाला देश है, जबकि राजस्थान में 350 किलोमीटर क्षेत्र में पोटाश के भंडार मौजूद होने का अनुमान है। पोटाश के लिए आवश्यक पदार्थों का निर्माण और उपक्रम करने के लिए जिले के पांच क्षेत्रों का चयन कर रही है। इसके लिए जिले के पांच क्षेत्रों का चयन कर सयुक्त उपक्रम बनाने का काम शुरू हो गया है। भारतीय खनिज विभाग में सबसे ज्यादा पोटाश आवश्यकताओं का वाला देश है, जबकि राजस्थान में 350 किलोमीटर क्षेत्र में पोटाश के भंडार मौजूद होने का अनुमान है। पोटाश के लिए आवश्यक पदार्थों का निर्माण और उपक्रम करने के लिए जिले के पांच क्षेत्रों का चयन कर रही है। इसके लिए जिले के पांच क्षेत्रों का चयन कर सयुक्त उपक्रम बनाने का काम शुरू हो गया है।
Mafia-menace in industrial belt: Mamata

Dipankar Bose

ANDAL (Burdwan), 30 OCT: Tactically referring to chief minister Mr Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee’s acceptance of a cheque from history sheeter Kaley Singh during a recent CPI-M rally in Burdwan, Railway Minister and Trinamul Congress supreme, Miss Mamata Banerjee, today sent a stern message to CPI-M that hooliganism, mafia menace and rampant illegal mining, ensuring ample electioneering money, will not brighten prospects of the industries in the Durgapur-Asansol-Andal industrial belt.

Miss Banerjee was addressing a rally near Andal station in Burdwan district, while signalling the commencement of work in Bengal Wagon Industry in Kulti and augmentation in electric locomotives manufacturing capacity of Chittaranjan Locomotive Works (CLW).

She also denounced the administration for failing to check illegal mining by the mafia and said lack of employment opportunities in the area force people to resort to illegal livelihoods.

The minister claimed that the new wagon factory was an initiative of the Steel Ministry and the Railways to address the issue, keeping in mind the industrial belt’s potential for economic growth.

Miss Banerjee called on all unions irrespective of party affiliations to assist in developing an industrial hub encompassing coal, railways and CLW.
Nalco net up

National Aluminium Co (Nalco), the country’s second-biggest producer of the metal, posted a 41 per cent increase in second-quarter profit, aided by higher prices and production of the metal. Net income climbed to ₹224 crore from ₹159 crore a year earlier, the Bhubaneswar-based company said in a statement. Sales rose 21 per cent to ₹1,450 crore.

BLOOMBERG
Court summons Balco promoter

Oct. 30: A local court in Korba in Chhattisgarh on Saturday issued summons to promoter of Bharat Aluminium Company (Balco) Limited to appear before it on November nine in connection with the alleged illegal construction of chimney for the power project of the plant.

The under-construction chimney collapsed on November 23, 2009 leading to death of 40 labourers.

Additional district judge, Korba, M.D. Jagaldar issued notices under Section 447 (punishment for trespassing) of Indian Penal Code (IPC) to the Balco promoter and other officials concerned after the local administration described the construction of the ill-fated chimney as "illegal", according to government pleader in the case J.N. Chandra.

According to Mr J.N. Chandra, the court had earlier directed the local administration to clarify the status of the land on which the chimney was being constructed.

Following this, the local tehsildar submitted before the court that the chimney was being erected on the government land.

The mishap occurred, when the chimney was being erected for the proposed 1,200 MW thermal power plant of Balco in Korba, by a Chinese company SEPCO.
Gold rally hinges on US 2nd quantitative easing

GOLD OUTLOOK

B G SHIRSAT

Gold for December delivery recovered 2.62 per cent last week to settle at $1,359.80 an ounce on Friday. Gold futures rose on speculation that the US Federal Reserve will increase debt purchases, thus weakening the dollar and boosting the metal’s appeal as an alternative investment.

Gold is up 3.7 per cent this month, while the dollar has lost 1.9 per cent against a basket of six major currencies on bets that policy makers, meeting on November 2-3, will announce another round of so-called quantitative easing (QE2) to bolster the economy.

The market picture for the last two trading sessions (Thursday & Friday) hints at a price level of $1,372.50 for the gold December futures based on time-priced opportunities (TPOs). Some volume-based resistance is expected to come around $1,361.50. On the weekly market picture chart, gold is expected to get support around $1,318.50.

The December futures closed at the highest level on Friday with 25 per cent volume changing hands above the value area. The undercurrent was significantly bullish on Friday with 70 per cent volume staying above the day’s high. The 21-day moving average (DMA) data indicates resistance for gold at $1,379 and strong support at $1,325. Options traders bought $1,350 put options, paying a $30-premium on expectation of a significant rally in gold after the US Fed's meeting. Traders also sold $1,350 put options on expectation of a limited downside from the current level.

On the Multi Commodity Exchange, gold futures for December delivery are expected to move up to around ₹20,000 per 10 grams with strong volume-based support at ₹18,250.

Going ahead, gold may fluctuate in a narrow range till the outcome of the US Federal Reserve policy makers’ meet on November 2 is not known. “The market is anticipating and pricing in another round of easing,” said Frank McGhee, the head dealer at Integrated Brokerage Services in Chicago. “What stops the rally is if the US Fed just talks. There has to be some tangible evidence the US Fed is in the market buying back bonds to underpin the rally.”

Gold prices could still rally if insufficient quantitative easing measures simply introduced new downside risks to US growth.
China to keep supplying its rare-earth metals

BLOOMBERG
Hanoï/Bangkok, 30 October

China pledged to supply Japan and other countries with rare-earth metals, sales of which were reportedly disrupted last month during a territorial dispute that soured relations between Asia's two largest economies.

Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao made the vow during a bilateral meeting with counterparts from Japan and South Korea, Kim Hee Jung, a spokeswoman for South Korean President Lee Myung Bak, told reporters today in Hanoi. All three are attending meetings in Vietnam hosted by the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

Wen said "China will continue to supply rare earths to the international community," Kim told reporters after the meeting. Wen said "China will work with major buyers in expanding the source of rare earths and developing alternative minerals," according to Kim.

The vow comes as Japan surveys its companies to see if China has resumed shipments of rare earth minerals, which are used in hybrid cars, batteries and missiles. China yesterday ended an unannounced embargo on exports of rare earths to the US, Europe and Japan, New York Times reported, citing four industry officials it didn't identify.

"As of yesterday, there is no information about new cargo movements," Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshito Sengoku told reporters in Tokyo. "The Japanese government intends to use every opportunity to ask China to improve the situation regarding export restrictions."

Cut-off denied

China had blocked exports to Japan since September 21, and to the US and Europe on October 18, The New York Times said. China's customs bureau today denied cutting off outbound shipments of rare earths, a group of 17 chemically similar metallic elements including cerium and europium.

China has been reviewing export licenses and other paperwork for rare-earth shipments, according to a statement read by an official in the bureau's news office who declined to be identified. China in July said it was cutting export quotas for rare earths by 72 per cent for the second half of the year.

Japan urged China today to maintain exports of rare earths at the same level as last year, Japanese Foreign Ministry Spokesman Satoru Sato told reporters in Hanoi. China controls more than 90 per cent of world supply, leading Japan, the US and Germany to seek new supplies.

"Vietnam is one of the potential producers of rare earths, so we are interested in talking with Vietnam together with other potential suppliers in order to diversify our source of supply of rare earth minerals," Sato said.

Environmental damage

Prices of rare earths have climbed as much as sevenfold in the past six months. Greenwood, Colorado-based MolyCorp Inc. and Sydney-based Lynas Corp plan to open rare-earth mines in the US and Australia in the next two years.
Gold long-term outlook

Gold is currently in the third leg of the long-term bull market that commenced in 2001. First target for this wave is at $1,867 and the second at $2,587.

The demand for gold typically witnesses a spike around Diwali in India. Many Indian consider it auspicious to buy the yellow metal around this festival as gold is the symbol of Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth. But the gold-buying fervour this year is damped by the spiralling prices and the question that everyone is asking is — when will the correction in gold prices occur? Technical charts can provide the signposts that can help gauge the trajectory in gold prices.

HISTORY
Gold was ruling below $50 per ounce for most part prior to 1970. The steep rally in gold began in 1970 that finally ended in a frenzy in January 1980 triggered by geopolitical tensions caused by Iran and Russia and run-away inflation in most countries. Gold prices reached the peak of $872 per ounce then.

There was a resounding crash from those levels and the metal fell to $250 per ounce by 1985. It spent the next two decades moving between $250 and $450. A fresh bull market began from April 2001 low of $254 and the upper boundary of its long-term range was finally breached in 2005.

LONG-TERM VIEW
One leg of this bull market ended at $1,030 in March 2008 when most assets witnessed a melt-down follow-

waves is extending. The most obvious count is that the fifth wave of this five-wave move is currently unfolding from the July low of $1,157.

Immediate targets as per this count are $1,366 and $1,458. Once this five-wave move completes, there can be a correction to $1,150 or $1,000.

Correction that halts at the first target will result in the metal moving in the zone between $1,150 and $1,450 for few months before it can head higher. It is hard to envisage the metal moving below $1,000 just yet.

SHORT-TERM OUTLOOK
Gold is in a short-term correction since the October 14 peak of $1,387. This correction is halting at the first support zone between $1,318 and $1,300. If the metal manages to hold above this zone in the next few weeks, there can be a year-end rally to $1,443, $1,552 or $1,695 before it reverses lower.

Supports below $1,300 are at $1,272 and then $1,245. Investors need to begin worrying only if the metal closes below $1,245.

INFLATION ADJUSTED CHART
According to inflation adjusted chart of gold, current price of gold is $614 per ounce. This price is 23 per cent below the 1980 peak of $800 (inflation adjusted peak). In other words, gold prices have to rise to at least $1,700 to attain its inflation adjusted peak. — Lokeshwarri S.K.
Two killed in coal mine mishap

BETUL: Two miners were killed and another seriously injured on Saturday in a mishap at the Western Coalfields Limited's mine in Chhattarpur district, officials said. The mishap occurred at the W-4 line of mine No. 2 which was recently opened. A heavy stone fell on the miners following which one Rajendra Mandal was killed on the spot while Nandlal and Ramswaroop were seriously injured, the officials said.
Graphite India
Q2 net dips 28%

Our Bureau
Kolkata, Oct. 30

Graphite India reported a 28 per cent fall in net profit at Rs 49.2 crore during the quarter to September 30, 2010, against the comparable quarter last fiscal.

This is despite 16 per cent growth in gross revenue at Rs 339 crore. It implemented, according to a company release, a VRS programme at its Bangalore facility, which was expected to result in an ongoing cost savings of approximately Rs 6 crore annually:

One-time VRS cost was Rs 12.7 crore during the quarter. During the second quarter, the company converted FCCBs into equity shares of Rs 2 each at a premium of Rs 53.31 per share.
Court summons for Balco owners

Supriya Sharma | TNN

Raipur: There is more trouble for the beleaguered Vedanta group. A court in Chhattisgarh’s Korba district issued summons to the ‘owner of Bharat Aluminium Company Limited (Balco) and others’ on charges of criminal trespass in the case involving the death of 41 workers last year.

“The order does not mention the owner’s name since the company’s ownership deed was not available to the court, but it is well known that the owner of Balco is Anil Agarwal, the London-based chairman of Vedanta group,” said J N Chandra, deputy director prosecution, representing Chhattisgarh government. But other legal experts suggested the ownership could be vested in the board of directors and not the chairman alone. Vedanta group’s Sterlite Industries controls majority stake in Balco, while the minority stake is held by the government of India. Either way, lawyers said the order by additional district and sessions judge M D Jagdalla was significant since it shifted liability from paid employees of the owner of the company. On September 23, last year, 41 workers had been killed when an under-construction chimney collapsed at the site of the company’s upcoming thermal power plant.
In 2008, Chavan had okayed lease of 442-acre forest tract for mining

Bharati Dubey & Hemali Chhipa | PTI

Mumbai: An RTI response dated October 2008 may spell more trouble for the beleaguered Ashok Chavan, who resigned from his chief ministership on Saturday following the Adarsh Housing Society scam. According to the information, Chavan, as industries and mining minister in 2008, facilitated the lease of 442 acres reserved as forest land to the sons of two ministers and a political party worker.

Documents with this paper reveal that Atul Thakare, son of MPCC president Manikrao Thakare, was given over 262 acres while Pravin, son of Yavatmal MLA Vamanrao Kasawar, was given 105 acres. Another 70 acres were cleared for Latif Udeen Khan, a party worker.

The green stretch of government land in Dongargaon, worth approximately Rs 86 crore, is still reserved as forest land, but shockingly, the mining application moved to the ministry of environment & forests (which has yet to be cleared) claims the land is barren and not reserved.

Said Vilas Wankhede, the RTI applicant, "The Yavatmal mining officer forwarded this report claiming the land was barren to the Industries department in April 2008. The government took over this piece of land in 1954 when the Land Ceiling Act came into being. In fact, those records show that this land is reserved as forest land."

Despite this, tenders were invited by the mining department in 2008, and 85 companies, including Ambuja Cement, Murai Industries and M/S Uttam Galwa, applied for the mining rights. However, in his letter (a copy of which is with the TOI), Chavan said he had cleared the proposal to lease the land to his son. "We agreed to pay royalty to the government from the limestone and dolomite that we would mine. We are waiting for the central government’s approval," he added. Chavan did not reply to TOI's messages.

The green stretch of government land in Dongargaon, worth approx Rs 88 crore, is still reserved as forest land, but shockingly, the mining application claims the land is barren and not reserved.

Ashok Chavan with MPCC president Manikrao Thakare, whose son Atul was given 262 acres of the controversial land in Mumbai.
सूत में ही रा समूहों
पर छापेमारी
अहमदाबाद, आयकर विभाग ने सूत में शिकार को जीन हीरा समूहके 11 पत्रियों पर छापेमारी की और 50 करोड़ रुपए की अभोजन आय का खुलासा करने का दावा किया। पुलिस आयकर विभाग की एक टीम ने खुले में दूसरी स्टूडियो और वाहिल जेजरा हिंडेकेट के गाहियों पर छापेमारी की जिसमें सूत के आयकर विभाग के करीब 50 जर्नलिस्टों ने सहयोग किया।
आयकर विभाग के एक अधिकारी ने कहा, 'छापेमारी के दौरान पुलिस विभाग स्टूडियो में आयकर विभाग के सम्बन्ध 50 करोड़ की अभोजन आय का खुलासा किया।' उन्होंने कहा, 'अन्य दो समूहों से वर्तमान आप चोरों के मामले में जड़ी सजा में दर्शायें जाएंगे होते.'