

CBI inspects Gali mines in K'taka

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, OCT. 14

CBI inspected the mining companies in Bellary and Sandur in Karnataka and also carried out searches at the Kumaraswamy Mines of the National Mineral Development Corporation, in connection with two cases related to the Associated Mining Company of Gali Janardhan Reddy and Deccan Mining Syndicate.

Teams from the CBI, lead by joint director V. V. Lakshminarayana, visited the office of the Deccan Mining Syndicate at Sandur, the Associated Mining Company and Kumaraswamy Mines.

AMC, owned by Gali Lakshmi Aruna, had allegedly exported large quantities of iron ore illegally procured from mines

The CBI teams were on a familiarisation exercise of the mines while collecting topographical details of the area. The main allegation against the accused is that the Associate Mining Company, owned by Gali Lakshmi Aruna, had

exported large quantities of iron ore illegally procured from the mines.

CBI sleuths questioned the representatives of these mining companies. A case is booked against DMS on the charges of massive illegal mining carried out in the mines owned by the NMDC.

It is also claimed that the Karnataka government took no steps to curb the illegal mining. Even the NMDC complaint lodged with the Sandur police inspector in August 2009 was not investigated.

The Supreme Court's Central Empowered Committee also noted the massive illegal mining activities.

DRAFT MINING BILL

MINISTRY PLANS TO SUBMIT SUGGESTIONS

MANISH ANAND
NEW DELHI, OCT. 15

Even though the Cabinet has approved the draft Mining Bill, Union tribal affairs minister V. Kishore Chandra Deo is of the view that unless land rights of tribals in the forest areas are recognised not much benefits from mining activities in the forested areas will go to the affected people.

Sources in the tribal affairs ministry said that they will submit recommendations to the standing committee for possible amendment in the draft Mines Bill to protect the interests of the tribals who are affected by the mining activities in the forest areas. The draft Mining Bill approved by the Cabinet is likely to be tabled in Parliament in the Winter Session after which the legislative proposal would be referred to the concerned standing committee.

Meanwhile, Mr Deo said that the state governments giving approval for mining in the forest areas should be held accountable for any irregularities. Mr Deo also said that the issues of land entitlement and mining activities in the forested areas are central to the spread of left wing extremism. He said unless land rights of the tribals in the forested areas are recognised it would be difficult to give them benefits under the rehabilitation package.

एनडीसी की बैठक में हो सकता है मुख्यमंत्रियों का हल्ला बोल

शिशिर सोनी. नई दिल्ली

खनिज संपदा से हो रहे मुनाफे में अब खनिज प्रधान राज्य भी बेहतर हिस्सेदारी चाहते हैं। राज्य सरकारों का मानना है कि राष्ट्रीय संपत्ति के रूप में खनिजों का खनन तो राज्यों से होता है, लेकिन असली लाभ संबंधित निजी या सार्वजनिक कंपनियों की जेब में जाता है। लाभ का बड़ा हिस्सा केंद्र सरकार के खजाने में चला जाता है। ज्यादातर खनिज प्रधान राज्यों में चूंकि गैर-कांग्रेसी सरकार है इसीलिए कई बार इसे सियासत से भी जोड़कर देखा जाता है। खनिज प्रधान छत्तीसगढ़, ओडीशा और झारखंड सहित ऐसे ही कुछ राज्यों के मुख्यमंत्री ने आगामी 22 अक्टूबर को प्रधानमंत्री की अध्यक्षता में प्रस्तावित राष्ट्रीय विकास परिषद (एनडीसी) की बैठक में मामला उठाने का निर्णय किया है। बैठक का एजेंडा मूल रूप से 12वीं पंचवर्षीय योजना के आकार-प्रकार पर मुख्यमंत्रियों से चर्चा करना रहेगा। दैनिक भास्कर से बातचीत करते हुए छत्तीसगढ़ के एक वरिष्ठ अधिकारी ने इसकी पुष्टि करते हुए कहा, 'खनिज प्रधान राज्यों के साथ बातचीत तो हुई है लेकिन अंतिम निर्णय मुख्यमंत्री डा. रमन सिंह को ही करना है।' इससे पहले भी कोयला प्रधान राज्यों के साथ मिलकर रमन सिंह ने प्रधानमंत्री से बातचीत कर रायल्टी का रेट नए सिरे से तय करने में सफलता पाई थी। यही कारण है कि इस बार अन्य खनिज संपदा पर भी राज्य अपनी बेहतर हिस्सेदारी को समय की मांग करार दे रहे

हैं। इस बार रमन सिंह का बैठक में शिरकत करना ही मुश्किल लग रहा है। 21 और 22 तारीख को भाजपा के वरिष्ठ नेता लालकृष्ण आडवाणी की रथयात्रा रायपुर और सरायपल्ली से होकर ओडीशा में प्रवेश करेगी। ज्यादा उम्मीद है कि रमन सिंह इस दरम्यान आडवाणी के साथ ही छग में रहेंगे। खनन में राजस्व हिस्सेदारी की महीन समझ रखने वाले झारखंड के एक वरिष्ठ अधिकारी ने दैनिक भास्कर से बातचीत में बतौर उदाहरण बताया, 'केंद्र सरकार के सार्वजनिक निकाय ने इस वर्ष 9 हजार 700 करोड़ रुपए का मुनाफा कमाने में सफलता पाई। उसमें से केंद्र सरकार के हिस्से में 5 हजार करोड़ रुपए गए जबकि राज्य के पास केवल 930 करोड़ रुपए की ही हिस्सेदारी आई। बाकी बची रकम कंपनी के खाते में गई।'

Mining policy fails to achieve its goal

Prices of minor minerals, including sand and gravel, continue to be high

RUCHIKA M KHANNA/TNS

CHANDIGARH, OCTOBER 15

Punjab's new mining policy, meant to bring down the prices of sand and gravel, has no takers. Three months after the policy coming into effect, officials of Punjab's Mining Department and various district administrations are busy passing the buck to the other for its implementation.

As a result, the policy has failed in its primary objective — that of ensuring that the prices of minor minerals, extracted from Punjab's riverbeds, are brought down.

Rather, the prices of sand and gravel have shot up by almost Rs 400-Rs 500 per 100 cubic feet since the new policy came into force. This, even

as the state government itself bore a loss in revenue by organising a controlled auction of quarries this year.

So even as the state has borne the losses and the common man has to shell out more to buy this construction material, the only people happy about this policy are the mining contractors, mainly top politicians of the state. Not only did they get the legal quarries for much less as compared to last year, they are selling the extracted minerals for a much higher price. This year, all 246 quarries have been auctioned for Rs 8.23 crore (and in case a quarry is located on panchayat land, the panchayat gets some funds for development).

Comparatively, the state



Sand, gravel prices have shot up by Rs 400-500/100 cubic ft

earned Rs 38.50 crore through allowing mining on lease between July 2010 and January 2011. During this period (March-June 2011), the mines could not be auctioned because of legal hassles and quarries were given on lease to contractors by enhancing the lease amount by 10 per cent.

Interestingly, the reason why the state government decided to have a controlled auction of these quarries this year was to ensure that the common man gets the construction material at a reasonable price.

In fact, the new policy laid down the price at which these minor minerals would be sold

in various parts of each district and that sale points in each district notify these government rates for the sale of sand and gravel.

However, inquiries made by The Tribune reveal that in almost all 20 districts these sale points have not been created and the construction material continues to be sold at much higher rates than notified under the mining policy. For example, in Ludhiana, the mining policy lays down that sand can be sold at Rs 750 per 100 cubic feet and gravel at Rs 2,000 per 100 cubic feet. However, sand is available to consumers at Rs 1,030 per 100 cubic feet and gravel at Rs 2,500 per cubic feet. Similarly, in Ropar, the policy lays that sand and gravel be sold

for Rs 560 per 100 cubic feet. But consumers in Ropar are getting sand at Rs 1,900 and gravel at Rs 2,400 per 100 cubic feet. Till May this year, the rate of sand and gravel in Ropar was Rs 1,700-Rs 1,800 per 100 cubic feet.

When contacted, Tikshan Sud, Industries Minister, said the district administration should be responsible for effective implementation of the new mining policy and should ensure that the consumers get the sand and gravel at the prices notified in the policy. "But we are not aware that the construction material is available at such high rates, as nobody has come and complained to us. We will now get this thing checked in all districts," he said.

नाल्को करेगी दो लाख 70 हजार टन एल्यूमीनियम का निर्यात

भुवनेश्वर। सार्वजनिक क्षेत्र की नेशनल एल्यूमीनियम कंपनी लिमिटेड नाल्को ने दो लाख 70 हजार टन एल्यूमीनियम निर्यात करने के एक करार पर हस्ताक्षर किए हैं। नाल्को के सूत्रों ने बताया कि यह करार लंदन की एक कंपनी के साथ किया गया है। नाल्को ने कंपनी के नाम का खुलासा नहीं किया है। कंपनी के अनुसार इस एल्यूमीनियम की आपूर्ति दिसंबर 2011 और जनवरी 2012 में करनी होगी।

Cradle of illegal mining

With political and bureaucratic patronage, it has cost Karnataka an estimated 16,000 crores...

MURALIDHARA KHAJANE

The CEC has dealt with a number of cases involving illegal mining in Orissa, Haryana, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh. In many of these cases the extent of illegal mining was found to be quite extensive. However all these cases pale into insignificance when compared with the illegal mining on a colossal scale that has taken place in Karnataka, particularly in Bellary, and that too with the

active connivance of the concerned departments and also public representatives."

These observations of the Central Empowered Committee (CEC) set up by the Supreme Court sums up the extent of illegal mining in the iron ore-rich areas of Karnataka — particularly within the Bellary, Hospet and Sandur (BHS) region — and its penetration into state politics.

The story of illegal mining in Karna-

taka and Andhra Pradesh is now well-documented, although the process of prosecution of the accused is moving at a snail's pace. The mining rush and unbridled extraction of ore began in 2004 when global iron ore prices soared, driven by demand from China.

Huge loss

The CEC report notes that rampant illegal iron ore mining with political and bureaucratic patronage since 2003 in Karnataka has cheated the exchequer of Rs.16,085 crores and pushed the state perilously close to exhausting its mineral reserves.

The range of documented illegalities is broad. Every single mine in the state operated in breach of the Forest Conservation Act, says a report handed over by the Amicus Curiae A.N.D. Rao to the Supreme Court. The quantum of iron ore illegally exported is

2,98,60,647 tonnes, valued at Rs. 12,228-crore — an amount larger than the combined budget allocation for the development schemes of several states.

The violations, on both the Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh side of the border, included the notorious mechanisms of transferring leases through raising contracts, illegal grant of transport permits, excavating outside the leased areas, granting of stockyard licenses, damaging water bodies and polluting the environment: the list is endless.

An area of 2,800 acres of forest land in Karnataka was ruined by illegal mining according to the Karnataka Lokayukta report. Of the 266 iron ore mines, more than half are located in forest areas, according to the CEC. The total iron ore reserves in Karnataka are

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Cradle of illegal mining

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estimated to be 1,148 million tonnes according to Indian Bureau of Mines.

While the Supreme Court suspended the operation of all mines (both legal and illegal) in Bellary, Chitradurga and Tumkur districts based on the recommendations of CEC, the final report of the Lokayukta caused an unprecedented political upheaval in the state, with the Chief Minister, B.S. Yeddyurappa, the first Chief Minister in the country to be indicted in a Lokayukta investigation, being forced to step down.

Acting too late?

G. Janardhana Reddy, whose wealth and political clout created what Karnataka Lokayukta referred to as "the Republic of Bellary", was arrested by Central Bureau of Investigation in connection with alleged illegal mining corruption and destruction of forest wealth in Andhra Pradesh. The arrest is the result of cases registered by the K. Rosaiah government in Andhra Pradesh in December 2009.

Chhattisgarh, the state with the second largest mineral wealth, recorded over 7,000 cases of illegal mining by the end of 2009, and cases were filed against 2203 persons. Indeed, the growth of the Maoist movement is attributed to long-standing official inaction against illegal mining companies. The Chhattisgarh government has collected over Rs.2 crore in fines in some 3,000 cases of illegal mining and transportation in the last two years.



MINDLESS DESTRUCTION...
PHOTO: M. AHIRAJ

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**EVERY SINGLE MINE IN
THE STATE OPERATED
IN BREACH OF THE
FOREST CONSERVATION
ACT, SAYS A REPORT...**