Mining: CEC probe against JSW, Adani

statesman news service

NEW DELHI, 18 NOV: The Supreme Court today asked its expert committee to examine the alleged illegalities committed by other major companies involved in mining activities in Bellary district of Karnataka and neighbouring Andhra Pradesh which have been indicted in the Lokayukta report.

An NGO, Samaj Parivartana Samudaya, has sought the extension of the CBI probe to cover the two other major companies of M/S Adani Enterprises and M/S Jindal Steel (JSW) that have been strongly indicted in the Lokayukta report for illegal mining of iron and ore.

However, a special forest Bench headed by Chief Justice Mr Justice SH Kapadia said it cannot straight away accept the plea of extending the CBI probe on the basis of the Lokayukta report and would ask the apex court appointed Central Empowered Committee (CEC) and Attorney-General Mr GE Vahanvati to look into the issue. “We will ask the CSE and the Attorney-General to look into it,” the Bench, also comprising Mr Justice Aftab Alam and Mr Justice Swatanter Kumar, said.

“We are equally concerned about the issue but it has to be done within a proper legal framework. We want to go in a particular and systematic manner,” the Bench said, while posting the matter for 20 January.

The apex court had on 23 September directed a CBI probe against two companies — Associated Mining Co (AMC) and Deccan Mining Syndicate — for alleged illegal mining of iron and ore.

Advocate Mr Prashant Bhushan, appearing for the NGO, said the Lokayukta report had made detailed and specific charges of serious illegalities against Adani Enterprises and JSW.

“The illegacies of these two companies are not only linked with the persons and matters that are the subject matter of current CBI investigations but also involve top public servants and public representatives,” he said.

The NGO referred to the Lokayukta report to allege that powerful corporate entities such as Adani Enterprises are involved in the “theft” of 5.5 lakhs tons of iron ore from Belikere port. It said the Lokayukta report has documented in detail the bribes paid regularly by Adani Enterprises to various officials of the port and the police department. The NGO charged serious illegalities have been detailed against JSW and its front company South West Mining Company (SWMC). It also alleged JSW has been indicted by the Lokayukta for making illegal payments of Rs 30 crores to close relatives of the then Karnataka chief minister Mr BS Yeddyurappa. The NGO has also sought a direction for Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh to demarcate the inter-state boundary in a time-bound manner as the report categorically recommended that all mining operations, including transportation of already mined material, should remain suspended till the inter-state boundary between the two states is formally determined and physically laid on the ground. The NGO also sought suspension of six mining leases of Bellary Reserve Forest in Anantpur district of Andhra Pradesh as was recommended in the report of the CEC on 7 January, 2011. The AMC is owned by BJP leader and former Karnataka tourism minister Mr G Janardhana Reddy and his wife, while DMS was owned by another mining baron Mr SM Jain. Both the companies, according to the report of the apex court-appointed CEC, were involved in illegal mining in the lease area of 10.12 hectares at Jaisingapur village and there were irregularities in renewal of lease.
Chhattisgarh to use GPS technology to curb illegal mining

RAipur, November 18
Chhattisgarh will be using Global Positioning System (GPS) to curb illegal mining in the state, official sources said today.

Chief Minister Raman Singh has asked officials to use GPS and other modern technologies to track and stop illegal mining, they said.

GPS is a space-based navigation satellite system that provides location and time information in all weather. GPS satellites are used for navigational, surveying, mapping, routing, charting and time distribution purposes. Singh has said that mineral-rich Chhattisgarh should emerge as a model state in curbing the menace by deploying sophisticated gadgetry, the officials maintained. — PTI
Mining: AP top official grilled

Y Srilakshmi, a 1988 batch IAS officer, was put through an elaborate round of questioning by the CBI for her role in illegal mining case.

Srilakshmi was handling public health and family welfare till recently and was the industries secretary handling mining as well earlier. It was during her stint in the state’s industries ministry that she had allegedly benefited Reddy and his company Obulapuram Mining Company by passing certain favouring illegal mining.

According to the investigators, Srilaksuni allowed the illegal mining to happen either through an act of commission or omission.
खाद्य प्रसांकरण व खानन में सहयोग पर बनी सहमति

राजस्थान प्रदेश के लिए, ब्रिटिश कोलोनियल युग की शुरुआत से मुझे ब्रिटिश कोलोनियल युग के प्रथम सदस्य हुआ, जो एक उच्च स्तरीय सशक्तिकरण का नेतृत्व कर रहा है, के साथ हुआ था। हालांकि, नेहरू ने एक कार्यक्रम गठित करने का प्रयास किया लेकिन सभी कार्यक्रम ने स्थिरता का लिया गया।

सुजी कनार के मुख्यमंत्री हुआ तथा कुछ उद्योगों को स्वीकार करते हिरीमण में सहमति हुई। (प्रस.

चित्रों में ब्रिटिश कोलोनियल युग की प्रथम सदस्य सुजे कनार का नेतृत्व हिरीमण के मुख्यमंत्री भूलंड सिंह हुआ। पत्रिका)
No ban on ore export: official

PANAJI: A senior official of the Union Ministry of Steel told a worried mining industry that the government did not intend to slap a ban on iron ore exports, but warned that growth could take a hit with stiff global competition and prevailing market forces.

"There is no government policy as of now to ban iron ore trade, but it may happen automatically in view of market dynamics across the world," A S Firoz, chief economist, Economic Research Unit, Union Ministry of Steel said.

"Iron ore export, which is currently pegged at 120 million tonnes, may decline to 30-40 million tonnes by 2016, and I foresee total export volume going down at this point," Firoz told mining representatives at the International Iron Ore and Steel Making Raw Materials Conference here.

The steel and raw material industry was passing through a tough phase because of the economic crisis in the US and Europe. The Chinese economy would also come under pressure, bringing down the demand for iron ore and hitting growth of the steel industry, the economist said.

Even if there is a demand for iron ore, its exports would be unviable in view of the unsustainable infrastructural costs, Firoz explained. "Even if the price is $100 per tonne, most of the mining companies would be able to achieve only a breakeven, and this is not a great sign for the Indian iron ore industry. The current road and railway freight charges would further worsen the situation," he observed.

He said Indian exports will come under significant competition from Australia and Brazil while China will not remain dependent on one country.

The one silver lining for the iron ore industry, however, could be spurt in demand for the domestic steel industry.
Miners fear drop in iron ore exports

PANAJI: Iron ore producers, who have been hit by the restrictions on mining in Karnataka and the recent developments in Goa over illegal mining, fear exports will drop by 30 per cent in 2011-12, falling below 70 million tonnes.

India exported 98 million tonnes in the last year.

Nearly 32 million tonnes of iron ore was shipped out from the country from April to September 2011.

The Goa Mineral Ore Exporters Association (GMOEA) said exports from Goa have dropped by 15 per cent and could touch 20 per cent by November end.

At an international conference here with Chinese buyers present, iron ore producers lashed out at the government for its soft approach and poor infrastructure delivery and at the domestic steel industry, accusing it of “lobbying” against ore exports.

“Indian steel mills are pocketing huge discounts but not passing this to the public. It is the exporters who lose,” said Sesa Goa’s vice president A N Joshi.

He claimed MMTC was losing $2 billion annually by supplying 90 per cent of its high grade ore to domestic steel mills at a huge discount.

DH News Service
Panel told to probe charges against Adani, JSW Steel

Indu Bhan
New Delhi, Nov 18

The Supreme Court on Friday directed the Central Empowered Committee (CEC) to investigate the role of JSW Steel in illegal mining in Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka. The court also asked the panel appointed by it to probe the allegations of illegal export of ore from these states by Adani Enterprises. A three-judge committee headed by Chief Justice SH Kapadia gave the CBI time till January 15 to submit its report.

While citing the July 27 report by the then Lokayukta Justice of the state, Santosh Hegde, the court had denied the allegations.

It said that the CBI investigation to uncover the offences of illegal mining, corruption and other illegalities allegedly committed by Adani Enterprises had denoted in detail the regular bribes paid by the firm to officials and the police to get undue favours.

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Aluminium prices to remain stable, says industry body

Our Bureau
Hyderabad, Nov. 18
Aluminium prices are expected to remain stable at current levels without any steep increases in the coming months, according to the Aluminium Association of India (AAI).

Prices are expected to hover between $2,200 and $2,500 in the coming months.

The AAI, which is hosting the three-day International Conference on Aluminium in Hyderabad from December 6, has estimated that the domestic aluminium sector will see an investment of Rs 120,000 crore till 2015, as aluminium manufacturers go in for expansion of capacity.

Aluminium production is expected to go up from the current 1.8 million tonnes to 5 mt by 2017 and 10 mt by 2020.

SURPLUS
AAI however feels that India may face an aluminium surplus by 2012, a subject that will be discussed at the international conference.

"Another issue that will be discussed is China exporting the metal to India at prices even lower than the LME prices. We will appeal to the Government to impose some safeguard duties to check the cheap Chinese imports," Mr K.S.S. Murthy, Honorary General-Secretary of the association told mediapersons here on Friday. He said the association was planning to bring out a prototype of an aluminium-intensive bus to encourage more aluminium consumption in the public transport system, as use of this metal would result in considerable fuel savings.

The conference will also discuss the need for India to ban export of bauxite for the benefit of the domestic industry. India has the fifth largest bauxite reserves in the world.

"During the conference, AAI will enter into a MoU with the Aluminium Association of America for better interaction between the two industries for technology transfer and marketing," Mr Murthy said.
Illegal mining: Apex court asks panel to probe allegations against Adani, JSW

Our Bureau

New Delhi, Nov. 18

The Supreme Court on Friday asked its expert panel, the Central Empowered Committee (CEC), to look into allegations of illegalities — including bribing Government officials — levelled against Adani Enterprises Ltd and O.P. Jindal Group's JSW Steel Ltd in the iron ore business.

JSW and Adani Enterprises had denied these allegations.

acting on a Public Interest Litigation filed by the NGO Sambhavna Sahayata, the apex court also asked the CEC to file a report by the next date of hearing slated for January 20.

In the submission made on behalf of the petitioners, advocate Mr Prashant Bhushan said, “There is a need to extend the CBI investigation to Adani Enterprises and Jindal Steel (JSW) that have been strongly indicted in the report of the Lokayukta.”

“The illegalities of these two companies (Adani and JSW) are not only linked with the persons and matters that are the subject matter of current CBI investigations (against Associated Mining Co or AMC and Deccan Mining Syndicate), but also involve top public servants and public representatives,” Mr Bhushan added.

The allegations against Adani Enterprises include theft of iron ore and bribing Government officials to get undue favour for illegal exports, Mr Bhushan said citing the Lokayukta report.

He added that “JSW and its front company South West Mining Company” is facing allegations of illegalities including receiving illegally obtained ore supplied by AMC, causing loss to the State exchequer by overloading of illegal ore and making illegal payments to the close relatives of the then Chief Minister Mr B.S. Yeddyurappa.

Meanwhile, the apex court also asked the CBI to complete its investigation by January 20 into the alleged illegal mining in Karnataka. It also asked the Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education to conduct a macro-level study on the mining areas in Karnataka.
China signs contract for Indian Ocean mining rights

Ananth Krishnan

BEIJING: China on Friday signed a long-awaited contract, which has drawn much attention in Indian strategic circles, under which China Ocean Mineral Resources Research and Development Association (COMRA) will get exclusive rights to explore 10,000 square-km of seabed in the southwest Indian Ocean in an area off the coast of Africa, State media reported.

Under the deal with the International Seabed Authority (ISA), COMRA can explore polymetallic sulphide ore deposit in the region over the next 15 years.

COMRA will have to give up 75 per cent of the region within 10 years, following which it will have pre-emptive rights to mine the remaining area, according to the State-run Xinhua news agency. The deal also requires China to fulfil certain environmental obligations and monitoring.

In India, the deal has drawn attention on account of a Chinese firm gaining access to the Indian Ocean, with reports saying the Directorate of Naval Intelligence had expressed concern that COMRA's access could have strategic implications for India's security.

Analysts in India have also seen the deal as a reflection of India's own failure to be more proactive in better utilising mining exploration rights in the Indian Ocean, thereby giving space for other countries.

Chinese officials and analysts, however, say Indian concerns are misplaced. They say China has only been given permission for exploratory activities, and in a region closer to the African coast.

"China – like any country – was well within its rights to apply to the ISA for access to the region, officials said. "According to the U.N. Convention on the Law of the Sea, international seabed areas and their resources are the commonly inherited property of mankind," Foreign Ministry spokesperson Ma Zhaoxu said at a briefing in August, following the ISA's granting of permission to COMRA on July 19. COMRA had filed the application with the ISA in May 2010.

Friday's contract is the second such deal China has signed for deep-sea mining, against the backdrop of increasing Chinese demand for mineral resources and recent technological advancements in Beijing's deep-sea exploration and submersible development programs. China has also obtained rights to explore a 75,000-square-km area in the northeast Pacific Ocean, according to Xinhua.

"[The activities] will be conducive to improving scientific knowledge of deep sea resources and effectively protecting the seabed environment", Mr. Ma, Foreign Ministry spokesperson, said.