

Minutes of the 1st Meeting of the State Level Task Force on illegal mining held in the Conference Room -II of C.M.Sectt on 23.6.2006 under the Chairmanship of Chief Secretary, Government of West Bengal

List of Participants enclosed.

Principal Secretary, Commerce & Industries Department initiated the discussion briefly describing the background of formation of the Task Force and its role.

After introduction of the participants Chief Secretary asked for reports from the District Magistrates.

District Magistrate, Bankura submitted a written report on illegal mining of coal concerning his district. He further reported that coal bearing area of the District is approximately 82 sq. km. spread over Saltora, Mejia and Barjora blocks. About 5000 men are dependent on illegal mining of coal being carried out mainly in Kalikapur and Bankulia mouzas. On request from Chief Secretary, he narrated the modus operandi of illegal mining of coal. According to him, the exposed coal in left out/ abandoned mines are being mined illegally by local inhabitants and the work extends at first vertically and then laterally. Such illegally mined coal are sold at the rate of Rs.120/- per quintal. The transporters get about Rs.350/- per trip. Extraction of coal are carried out all through day and night whereas the transportation is done mostly during night.

According to D.M., Bankura stated that deterrent and preventive actions are being regularly taken by the District Authorities. 81 trucks and 1262 MT coal have been seized, 88 persons were arrested and 38 specific cases have been started in 2005. Upto June, 2006, 15 trucks and 219 MT coal have been seized, 21 persons arrested and 11 specific cases have been started.

District Magistrate, Purulia reported that illegal mining of coal is mostly concentrated in Para block involving about 2500 men. According to him, the scale of illegal mining operation is not much in Purulia district though establishment of Sponge Iron factories is aggravating the problem nowadays.

District Magistrate, Birbhum submitted a written document on illegal mining of coal in respect of the district. He stated that coal is available in Khoirasole block. Illegal mining is going on in Gangaramchak and Bhadulia blocks though the work is not much organized in those regions. According to him, 428 MT of coal have been seized from those areas in this year. West Bengal Power Development Corporation, however, has been allotted the said blocks by the

Ministry of Coal and commencement of mining work by them may minimize the illegal mining problem there.

S.P., Burdwan submitted a written document on illegal mining of coal in Burdwan district. He then briefly described the actions being taken by them to combat the menace of illegal mining in Burdwan district. He submitted a report describing details of number of cases started, trucks seized quantum of coal seized, persons arrested and number of rat-holes dozed from the year 2000 to 2006 (upto May). According to the said report maximum activities were observed in the year 2001 and then in the year 2005. In 2005, 568 specific cases were started, 17,395 MT coal and 1262 vehicles were seized, 1401 persons arrested and 2893 rat-holes dozed. In 2006, upto May, 114 specific cases have been started, 5104 MT coal and 513 vehicles seized, 348 persons arrested and 1136 rat-holes dozed. He stated that police has targeted bigger mafias instead of small, poor miscreants and has increased seizures recently. He requested provisions of more Constable to strengthen the task force already created to tackle illegal mining and transportation of coal.

District Magistrate, Burdwan suggested for setting up of Fast Track Courts to deal with cases related to illegal mining of coal. He stated that he drew the attention of the Hon'ble Chief Justice, Calcutta High Court during one of his visits at Burdwan and according to D.M., Burdwan, the Hon'ble Chief Justice was in favour of the proposal. He requested the State Government to take up the matter with the concerned authority. He also suggested empowerment of district authorities to confiscate trucks carrying illegally mined materials by suitable amendments of Mines & Minerals (Development & Regulation) Act.

Chief Secretary then requested the Chairman-cum-Managing Director of ECL to express his views in the matter.

CMD, ECL submitted a written report on illegal mining of coal within ECL areas. According to CMD, ECL the problem is a serious one and is mostly socio-economic. He said that in order to commence mining operation in larger areas, some of which are presently being utilized for illegal mining, proposals for acquisition of land had been sent to the State Government and those are pending. Chief Secretary asked for a list of such proposals. CMD, ECL has also stated that list of blocks which they intend to surrender in favour of the State Government have already been sent to the State Government. Chief Secretary requested CMD, ECL to send such a list with necessary details and maps so that the matter can be taken up with the Ministry of Coal to enable West Bengal Mineral Development Corporation to take up mining work there. Principal Secretary, C & I Department requested CMD, ECL to send a list of blocks within their leasehold areas in which ECL finds it difficult to carry out mining operation due to economic reasons.

CMD, ECL was requested by Principal Secretary, Commerce & Industries Department to arrange for supply of coal to Sponge Iron factories. CMD, ECL informed the House that they are having about 5 million tonne of surplus coal which may be linked to Sponge Iron industries if they obtain linkage from the Ministry of Coal. Principal Secretary, C & I Department expressed that procedure for allotting linkages to consumers should be left with ECL and the State Government. Authority of Ministry of Coal in this regard is not only delaying the process but also hampering the flexibility of operation. CMD, ECL expressed his inability to cut short the procedure.

D.M., Burdwan requested CMD, ECL to hand over possession of surface lands of collieries which have been abandoned or which are not going to be mined in the near future so that such lands can be utilized for horticulture, agriculture or even pisciculture through Panchayat Samities. CMD, ECL informed the House that tenders have already been invited for GIS mapping of the entire Raniganj coalfield and the mapping work is expected to start soon. Such maps would not only depict surface features but also underground positions, thus enabling authorities to know the status of a particular area from safety point of view.

Deputy Controller of Mines, Indian Bureau of Mines who represented Regional Controller of Mines stated that IBM is not concerned with coal mining activities and, therefore, their participation in this Committee which is for coal only would be of not much use. He requested the State Government to form such Committee for non-coal minerals. Principal Secretary, C & I Department stated that in view of meager occurrence of non-coal minerals in the State, such Committee would be extravagant.

Chief Secretary summed up the deliberations in the following manner:—

- (1) List of consumers who want coal linkages should be prepared by the C & I Department and then Ministries of Steel and Coal should be approached for speedy allotment.
- (2) ECL should furnish the list of pending proposals for acquisition of land to the C & I Department for taking up the matter with L & LR Department.
- (3) ECL should identify the blocks which are not economically viable for them for carrying out mining operation so that steps may be taken to enable West Bengal Mineral Development & Trading Corporation Ltd to take up mining in those places.

- (4) Initiatives should be taken by C & I Department for setting up Fast Track Courts to deal with cases related to illegal mining of coal.
- (5) Possibility of empowering district authorities to confiscate vehicles carrying illegally mined materials are to be explored and amendment to the provisions of MMDR Act should be suggested.
- (6) Proposal of Police Directorate to recruit constables to strengthen Task Forces at the district level to be examined and decided upon quickly.
- (7) Notification No. 359/A-CI/O/Coal/05/M1 dated 31.10.2005 forming State Level and District Level Task Force should be suitably amended and reconstituted. Formation of District Level Task Forces for Purulia, Bankura and Birbhum districts should be done immediately.

3d/
Chief Secretary
&

Chairman, State Level Task Force

No: 260(5)-C1/0/Coal/031/05/M1

Dt: 14.07.06

Copy forwarded for information and necessary action to :—

1. Addl. Chief Secretary to the Government of West Bengal.
2. Principal Secretary to the Govt. of West Bengal, Commerce & Industries Depatt.
3. Director General of Police, West Bengal.
4. Chairman cum Managing Director, Eastern Coalfields Ltd.
- ✓ 5. Director of Mines & Minerals, West Bengal.
6. Regional Manager, Indian Bureau of Mines.
7. District Magistrate, Bankura.
8. District Magistrate, Burdwan.
9. District Magistrate, Birbhum.
10. District Magistrate, Purulia.
11. Superintendent of Police, Bankura.
12. Superintendent of Police, Burdwan.
13. Superintendent of Police, Birbhum.
14. Superintendent of Police, Purulia.
15. Personal Secy. to Chief Secretary to the Govt. of West Bengal & Chairman.

Joint Secretary
&

Convenor, State Level Task Force.

1st Meeting of State Level Task Force to check on illegal mining

**Venue : Conference Room of Chief Minister's Secretariat at Writers Buildings,
Kolkata**

Date : 23.6.2006 : Time: 11.30 A.M.

Sl. No.	Members Present	Signature
1.	Chief Secretary to the Government of West Bengal & Chairman	
2.	Addl. Chief Secretary to the Govt. of West Bengal	
3.	Principal Secretary to the Govt. of West Bengal; Commerce & Industries Department	
4.	Director General of Police, West Bengal	
5.	Chairman-cum-Managing Director, Eastern Coalfields Ltd.	
6.	Joint Secretary to the Commerce & Industries Deptt.	
7.	Director of Mines & Minerals	
8.	Regional Manager, Indian Bureau of Mines	
9.	District Magistrate, Bankura	
10.	District Magistrate, Burdwan	
11.	District Magistrate, Birbhum	
12.	District Magistrate, Purulia	
13.	Superintendent of Police, Bankura	
14.	Superintendent of Police, Burdwan	
15.	Superintendent of Police, Birbhum	
16.	Superintendent of Police, Purulia	