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Minutes of the 4<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the State Level Task Force for prevention of illegal mining held on 13.11.2009 at 4.30 p.m. in the Conference Room attached to the Chief Minister's Office (CMO), Writers' Buildings, Kolkata – 700 001

In chair : Shri Asok Mohan Chakrabarti, IAS, Chief Secretary, Government of West Bengal.

In attendance : List of participants marked Annex-A enclosed.

Initiating the discussion Principal Secretary, Commerce & Industries Department underlined the need of taking effective steps by all concerned to curb illegal mining in different districts. He also stressed that the District Level Task Force should meet at regular intervals so that the civil administration in league with the Eastern Coalfield Ltd. Authorities could evolve comprehensive action plan against those involved in illegal mining activities and transportation of illegally mined minerals, more particularly, coal.

The decisions taken in the meetings dated 23.03.2006, 26.12.2007 and 08.09.2008 and action thereon including the deficiencies on the part of district administration and ECL Authorities were placed before the House by the Joint Secretary (Mines), Commerce & Industries Department as advised by the Chair for appraisal of the House. The reports placed by the Joint Secretary (Mines) have been shown in the Annexe-I, II & III.

After detailed discussion on the report placed by the Joint Secretary (Mines), Chief Secretary advised all concerned to take effective steps on the decisions already taken and report development to the Government in the Commerce & Industries Department immediately.

Agenda Item No. 2

Substitution of the MMDR Act, 1957 by a new Act (MMSDR) Act, 2009 now being finalized by the Government of India vis-à-vis State Government's views.

Principal Secretary, Commerce & Industries Department, spoke in detail on the various provisions of the proposed MMSDR Act, 2009 and the State Government's suggestion thereon with particular emphasis on the powers and authority of the District Magistrate and Collector with regard to seizure of illegally mined minerals including coal and the tools/equipments/vehicles transporting such illegally mined minerals on the model of powers given to the District Magistrate and Collector under the Essential Commodities Act, (EC Act.). He hoped that the Central Government would accept State Government's suggestions in this regard.

Agenda Item No. 3

Use of Satellite imagery for checking illegal mining etc.

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Joint Secretary (Mines) apprised the House that in the meeting taken by the Secretary, Ministry of Mines, Government of India, on 3<sup>rd</sup> August, 2009, a decision has been taken for using the facilities of remote sensing organization in each State to generate imagery of the mining areas for monitoring illegal mining. He reported that Commerce & Industries Department had already sought the views of the Director of Mines & Minerals (D.M.M.) and Chief Mining Officer, Asansol, West Bengal in this regard. After the views are received, appropriate action will be taken.

Principal Secretary, Commerce & Industries Department, advised the Director of Mines & Minerals to take up the matter with the Science & Technology Department of this Government and explore if the activities relating to illegal mining at the micro level could be effectively countered through use of satellite imagery and work out specific action plan in this regard taking the help of all concerned.

The other issues communicated by the Ministry of Mines, Government of India as per decisions taken in the meeting chaired by Secretary, Mines on 03.08.2009, were also discussed. The suggestions of Mines Ministry are as follows :

- a. Setting up of a Control Room in Headquarters to receive complaints of illegal mining, with dedicated telephone lines to register and monitor the complaints.
- b. Financial incentive scheme to the informer on illegal mining.
- c. Registration of all traders of minerals, who can be monitored and their trading activities audited.
- d. Every month focus on one area / district and conduct multidisciplinary inspections, especially big players.
- e. Outsourcing of inspection and auditing accounts to mining engineers / geologist / accountants in other Government Departments, in order to involve outsiders in the work.
- f. Organizing "Pakhwada" at local level to create awareness. In this aspect IBM has been asked to issue guidelines / directions to the State Governments.
- g. Cancellation of leases of such persons who are involved in illegal mining.
- h. Use of Home Guards, Territorial Army and Ex-Serviceman for assisting inspections.
- i. Bar-coding of transport permits.



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The Chair advised that the District Level Task Force and the Director of Mines & Minerals should discuss and deliberate on the suggestions and keep the Commerce & Industries Department, Government of West Bengal, posted with action taken in this regard.

Miscellaneous

After discussion on the relevant issues on the problem of illegal mining the following decisions were taken :

1. ECL will identify the illegal coal patches and the coal blocks which are commercially non-viable and send a consolidated list of such identified patches and blocks to the Commerce & Industries Department within a fortnight.
2. Illegally mined coal being seized should be sold out to the Public Sector Companies / Private Sector Companies with valid license etc. who are consumers of coal on proper prioritisation at the ECL fixed price subject to Court's Order in this behalf so that the coal, though mined illegally but seized by the authorities in specific cases, is used for productive purpose.

There being no further items in the agenda to discuss the meeting ended with thanks to all.

  
26/11/09

[Asok Mohan Chakrabarti]  
Chief Secretary to the  
Government of West Bengal