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# Geonesis

(A GEMCO KATI INITIATIVE)

Indian Mining & Exploration Updates

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## Whose minerals are they anyway ?

# Whose minerals are they anyway?

- Over the past few months, the government of India has been focusing on the mining sector to revive the country's economy but it is feared that it could mean a troubled time ahead for communities involved and environment.

- However, the major question is whether such a push is in line with the National Mineral Policy 2019 of India which talks about the concept of inter-generational equity as far as mineral wealth is concerned.

The organisations involved with the communities that are impacted by the mining believe that protection and welfare of tribal people and poor are rarely the focus area of mining plans which are heavily focused on higher revenues.

To tackle the already slowing economy, whose condition further deteriorated after COVID-19 pandemic, the Indian government is pushing for more mining. But is this push for more revenue in line with the principles in India's mining policy that talk about sustainable mining and minerals being a part of shared inheritance with future generations?

Over the past few months, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and various other ministers in his government have emphasised that the push for mining including coal will result in additional investments and revenue worth hundreds of billions of rupees. The government has already unveiled more reforms in the mining sector.

Meanwhile, communities that are already struggling with land conflicts, pollution issues (water, air and soil), health impacts, continue suffering even as new areas that will be opened for mining come with a potential threat to the local ecology, including biodiversity, forests and the communities.

Odisha-based tribal rights leader Deme Oram said that communities whose areas have been destroyed due to the greed of mining companies and the state authorities are helpless. "There are many Supreme Court orders which state that mining in scheduled areas (as per the Indian constitution), should be done through cooperatives that have tribal communities as members. But it is rarely done and such orders are openly violated by states to favour corporates and money bags," Oram told Mongabay-India. He is the member of Mines, Mineral and People (MMP), an alliance spread across 18 states with more than 100 grassroots groups and about 20 diverse support organisations.

The concept of minerals being part of the shared inheritance is mentioned in the Indian government's National Mineral Policy 2019. It noted that "natural resources, including minerals, are a shared inheritance where the State is a trustee on behalf of the people and therefore it is imperative that allocation of mineral resources is done in a fair and transparent manner to ensure equitable distribution of mineral wealth to sub-serve the common good."

The policy had stressed that mining needs to be carried out in an environmentally sustainable manner keeping stakeholders' participation, and devolution of benefits to the mining-affected persons with the overall objective of maintaining a high level of trust between all stakeholders.

But the on ground situation shows that rarely happens as conflicts related to land, health and ecology in the mining sector are found in

Continued on Page 2...

abundance. Once the mining starts, the life of the communities in and around mining areas takes a turn for the worse and even when the mining is over its after-effects have shown to continue to impact people. Increasingly, the concept of just transition is being discussed which deals with the discussion around sustainable mining and the impact of operational mines on people and ecology.

"Even if tribal communities form a cooperative, or they get together and start mining there is no one who will buy products from them and let them flourish. Moreover, when mining is done by corporates the poor people are exploited and the local ecology (air, water and soil) is completely destroyed. People are left to suffer and they have nowhere to go. The state authorities whose prime responsibility is to protect the rights of people are working for corporates. Even the District Mineral Foundation funds, whose control should have been with communities, is being used by authorities for work like roads etc which should have been done for those people irrespective of the DMF," said Oram, who focuses on land rights of the tribal people and governance in Fifth Schedule areas. Fifth Schedule areas are tribal-dominated areas identified under the Indian Constitution where special care is taken for rights and welfare of tribal communities.

For instance, he said, around 20 years ago, when sponge iron plants started in Odisha, people were told that it would bring development. "The only thing those plants have done is to destroy the lives of people and air, water and soil. In such a scenario, communities have no place to think about who owns the mineral wealth and how that should be preserved for future generations. They are busy saving their present and trying to earn their livelihood," said Oram.

**Is sustainable mining the keyword?**

India's National Mineral Policy 2019 had also emphasised that mining operations shall not ordinarily be taken up in identified ecologically fragile and biologically rich areas. It had noted that the government shall identify such areas that are critically fragile in terms of ecology and declare as 'in-violate areas' or 'no-go areas' out of bounds for mining and with a view to reducing pollution, carbon footprint and operational costs, use of renewable sources of energy at mining sites will be encouraged through appropriate incentives.

It had even suggested an inter-ministerial mechanism to decide the limits on the extent of mining activities that should be permitted including a detailed study for assessing the ceiling of annual excavation of minerals, considering the availability of mineral resources, the carrying capacity of the region, and the macro-environmental impact on the region while also "keeping in mind the principles of sustainable development and intergenerational equity and all other relevant factors."

Rahul Basu, who is the research director at Goa Foundation, a Goa-based environmental group, said that it is important for governments to recognise that since natural resources, including minerals, are common wealth held in trust, not proprietary assets of the government in power, all the duties of a trustee apply to the government, including the duty to protect the corpus of the trust, prevent theft, loss or waste, and a duty to treat beneficiaries equally.

On the government's efforts to boost the mining sector, Basu said it is "absurd to think increasing mining will lead to an economic revival."

"Average daily employment in non-fuel major mineral mines is only around 100,000, around 0.25 percent of India's workforce. And mining is steadily getting more mechanised. Further, if we see minerals as inherited wealth, surely it is better to purchase the minerals we need from others and keep our own minerals safely for our future generation," Basu told Mongabay-India.

He explained that for most minerals, the existing mines in the country have sufficient reserves to supply industry and thus it would be preferable from community rights and environmental standpoint to expand existing mines rather than open new mines.

"However, the government seems focused on giving away large tracts for new extraction projects at exactly the worst time to be selling wealth. Even with the existing mines, there are many violations of community rights and environmental laws. For example, all mines in Goa were found to be violating one or more law. Why is it that the Indian mining industry is simply unwilling to follow the law? It would be better for the government to first do an intensive study of all existing mines to see if they are following the law, especially in connection with community rights and the environment," argued Basu.

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He further remarked that in cases where any violations are found, the local communities should be properly compensated, the environmental damage restored, the offending lessees blacklisted, and the leases auctioned off.

But what irks the communities is that the promised development due to mining rarely reaches them.

Sanjay Namdeo, who is the head of the Communist Party of India (CPI) in the Singrauli district, stressed mineral-rich Singrauli area, which is dominated by tribal people, was a land of abundant water, forests and agriculture but has now been ravaged due to human greed.

"The experience of extensive mining in this region over the past few decades has shown everything that is bad with the mining industry. Ideally, the communities should have full right over the water, forests and land as they nurture it over the years. But governments fail to do so. For example, in Singrauli, the government failed to ensure that people get the benefit. Instead, it is the industrialists who get all the benefits. Secondly, mining should have improved the lives of people involved or impacted by the mining sector including those whose livelihoods were based on the land where mining is taking place. But this never happened and instead, their lives have been completely destroyed. The mining profits should have been shared with the communities but that never happens," Namdeo told Mongabay-India.

**Minerals are a shared inheritance**

Mining is an important sector in India's economy and results in raw material for many other industries in the country. Right now, India now produces 95 minerals and is among the top producers of coal and iron ore globally. There are thousands of mining leases across the country. Over the past few months, the central government has been focusing on pushing the mining sector to boost the economy. For instance, it first allowed commercial coal mining to increase coal production and then, in August 2020, proposed reforms in the mining sector.

But the question is whether such reforms will be able to improve the lives of the communities involved.

SaswatiSwetlena of the Mineral Inheritors Rights Association (MIRA), a network of civil society groups, said mineral resources are a shared inheritance and are best safeguarded by the local communities for the future generations.

"The local communities particularly, women, must be recognised as the custodians of all forms of natural resources and its governance as their fundamental right to ensure environmental justice. In the name of ease of business and public purpose, the state has been violating every legal provision meant to protect the rights of the communities. How does any mineral extraction make sense when it evicts and dispossesses millions from their life and livelihoods for the benefit of a few corporates? Is the state trust-worthy?" Swetlena questioned.

Rahul Basu of Goa Foundation said we need to ensure our children and future generations inherit at least as much as we did and we must ensure we capture the full value of our mineral wealth, save the entire proceeds for future generations, and distribute the income from the new investments equally to all as a citizens dividend, a right of ownership.

"At present, governments wrongly treat royalties as revenue, not a capital receipt, and merrily spend it, cheating our children and future generations of their rightful inheritance. There are a number of other inheritances that are depleted by mining, including the environment, the social fabric of the local community, the employment and incomes associated and the right to use the ore for useful things. Each of these inheritances is also subject to the inter-generational equity principle, and mining must be planned in such a way to ensure we avoid, restore or offset any damage to these inheritances, and if that is not possible, capture the full value and save it for future generations. This is only ethical, moral, fair, just and right," Basu remarked.

# Covid hits mines revival, auction in State

While the Odisha Government is preparing a roadmap for revival of non-working mines to spur the mining activities, the Covid-19 is coming as a stumbling block in this regard.

Revival of non-working mines and expeditious auction of the mineral blocks will augment the production of minerals and also increase the revenue of the State Government by way of auction premium and royalty, but the process is experiencing hurdles during the pandemic.

While almost all revenue generating sectors failed to generate revenue in the ongoing crisis, the mineral sector stood by the State in good stead and has been able to generate resources to support the developmental funding, officials admit. Collection up to August 31, from mineral sector was Rs 5,074.25 crore, which was 13.44 per cent more than the corresponding period of August 2019, which was Rs 4,473 crore. Mainly one-time collection from mining leases renewal provided much needed fiscal space to meet the Covid-19 related expenditure on public health, livelihood generation, social security net and internal security, officials admit.

So the Department of Steel and Mines is actively engaged in preparing a road map for revival of non working mines, officials say. While the Government of India is harping on revival of non working mines across the country and advised the State Governments to work on this line, the Odisha Government is initiating appropriate action for activation of these resources.

The Odisha Government has been successful in going for auction of 22 mineral blocks and, now, the stress is on revival of non working mineral blocks in the State. The Ministry of Mines has charted out a design for revival of non working mines and listed out the unutilised resources. After revival of these non working mines, the process will start for auctioning of these natural resources, so that there will be proper utilisation of the resources. The mineral blocks, where exploration has been completed, are to be listed for auction and those mineral blocks, which are under exploration, the process will be expedited, so as to complete it as soon as possible, said sources.

The Ministry of Mines is also providing inputs to the State Government for preparing the road map and accordingly the action plan is being prepared by the Department of Steel and Mines, officials say.

Though the process has been activated, the Covid-19 has posed a serious problem in this regard, officials admit. While Covid-19 has presented an adverse situation, the authorities are reluctant to go ahead with auction process as condition is not favorable. Accordingly, Minister Steel and Mines had requested to defer auction of coal blocks by three months. Out of the 41 coal blocks, nine are listed from Odisha for auction.

# BIDDING PATTERN FOR COMMERCIAL COAL BLOCK AUCTIONS : Abhinav Sengupta

Ministry of Coal (MoC) had recently conducted the first ever commercial coal block auctions. There were total 38 blocks offered spanning around 5 states Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Maharashtra & Jharkhand. In total 278 tenders were purchased by the bidders and finally 42 companies had participated in 23 coal blocks submitting 76 bids. Out of these 23 coal blocks 4 blocks had received 1 bid each and were stand cancelled for forward auctioning, therefore forward auctioning will be conducted for 19 coal blocks. Below are the few observations from the bids submitted

1.Only 23blocks out of 38 has witnessed participation i.e. (~60% success factor) with average no. of bids in participated coal blocks is ~3.30

(approximately).2.Chhattisgarh has seen the tepid response with only

2 blocks out of 7 got bids while Maharashtra's 2 blocks got 100% response.

3.Bidders spanning across sectors like Mining, Steel, Power, Sponge Iron, Cement, Real estate, Metals, Chemicals,

MDO players, Logistics companies and traders have participated in the 1sttranche of commercial coal auctions.4. Only 50% of partially explored coal blocks has got responses namely Urma Pahritola (Jharkhand) & Bandha (Madhya Pradesh).

5.Approx. 71% of bidders has shown interest towards OC blocks while 21% has shown towards UG blocks and remaining 8% towards OC& UG Blocks

| No | Coal Blocks | Capacity (MTPA) | Stripping Ratio | Grade | Mine Type | Exploration Status | State | No. of Bidders |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Brahmadia | 0.15 | 10.63 | S-I | OC | Fully Explored | Jharkhand | 6 |
| 2 | Chakla | 5.3 | 4.46 | G11 | OC | Fully Explored | Jharkhand | 3 |
| 3 & 4 | Chendipada & Chendipada II | 40 | 2.06 | G10 | OC | Fully Explored | Odisha | 1 |
| 5 | Chitarpur | 3.45 | 2.42 | G13 | OC & UG | Fully Explored | Jharkhand | 0 |
| 6 | Choritand Tiliaya | 0.78 | 9.78 | W-V | OC | Fully Explored | Jharkhand | 0 |
| 7 | Gare-Palma-IV/1 | 6 | 3.4 | G12 | OC | Fully Explored | Chhattisgarh | 3 |
| 8 | Gare-Palma-IV/7 | 1.2 | 3.36 | G11 | OC | Fully Explored | Chhattisgarh | 8 |
| 9 | Gondulpara | 4 | 1.77 | G10 | OC | Fully Explored | Jharkhand | 4 |
| 10 & 11 | Gotitoria (East) & Gotitoria (West) | 0.3 | 8 | G8 | OC | Fully Explored | Madhya Pradesh | 8 |
| 12 & 13 | Machhakata & Mahanadi | 30 | 2.44 | G11 | OC | Fully Explored | Odisha | 0 |
| 14 | Marki Barka | 1 | UG | G8 | UG | Fully Explored | Madhya Pradesh | 0 |
| 15 | Marki Mangli II | 0.3 | 7.4 | G8 | OC | Fully Explored | Maharashtra | 3 |
| 16 | North Dadu | 8.15 | 3.39 | G12 | OC | Fully Explored | Jharkhand | 0 |
| 17 | Radhikapur (East) | 5 | 3.61 | G13 | OC | Fully Explored | Odisha | 4 |
| 18 | Radhikapur (West) | 6 | 4.19 | G13 | OC & UG | Fully Explored | Odisha | 4 |
| 19 | Rajhara North | 0.75 | 2.56 | G8 | OC | Fully Explored | Jharkhand | 4 |
| 20 | Seregarha | 4 | 2.97 | G13 | OC | Fully Explored | Jharkhand | 1 |
| 21 | Saharpur East | 0.7 | UG | G8 | UG | Fully Explored | Madhya Pradesh | 4 |
| 22 | Saharpur West | 0.6 | UG | G7 | UG | Fully Explored | Madhya Pradesh | 4 |
| 23 | Shankarpur Bhatgaon II Extn. | 2 | 16.76 | G6 | OC & UG | Fully Explored | Chhattisgarh | 0 |
| 24 | Sondhia | 1 | 13.79 | G10 | OC & UG | Fully Explored | Chhattisgarh | 0 |
| 25 | Takli-Jena-Bellora(North) & TakliJena-Bellora (South) | 1.5 | NA | G8 | OC & UG | Fully Explored | Maharashtra | 2 |
| 26 | Thesgora-B/ Rudrapuri | 1 | UG | G9 | UG | Fully Explored | Madhya Pradesh | 0 |
| 27 | Urtan North | 0.6 | UG | W-IV | UG | Fully Explored | Madhya Pradesh | 3 |
| 28 | Urma Paharitola | 10 | NA | G10 | OC | Partially Explored | Jharkhand | 6 |
| 29 | Bandha | 5 | UG | G7 | UG | Partially Explored | Madhya Pradesh | 3 |
| 30 | Brahmanbil & Kardabahal | 25 | NA | G12 | OC | Fully Explored | Odisha | 0 |
| 31 | Dhirauli | 3 | NA | G8 | OC | Fully Explored | Madhya Pradesh | 2 |
| 32 | Dolesara | 1.74 | NA | G12 | OC | Fully Explored | Chhattisgarh | 0 |
| 33 | Jarekela | NA | 2.68 | G11 | OC | Partially Explored | Chhattisgarh | 0 |
| 34 | Jharpalam Tangarghat | NA | NA | G11 | OC | Partially Explored | Chhattisgarh | 0 |
| 35 | Kuraloi (A) North | 8 | NA | G13 | OC | Fully Explored | Odisha | 1 |
| 36 | Marwatola Sector-VI & Sector-VII | 4 | NA | G9 | OC | Fully Explored | Madhya Pradesh | 0 |
| 37 | Phuljhari (East & West) | 10 | 7.32 | G13 | OC | Fully Explored | Odisha | 0 |
| 38 | Urtan | 0.65 | UG | W-III | UG | Fully Explored | Madhya Pradesh | 2 |

Source: MSTC-e Commerce State

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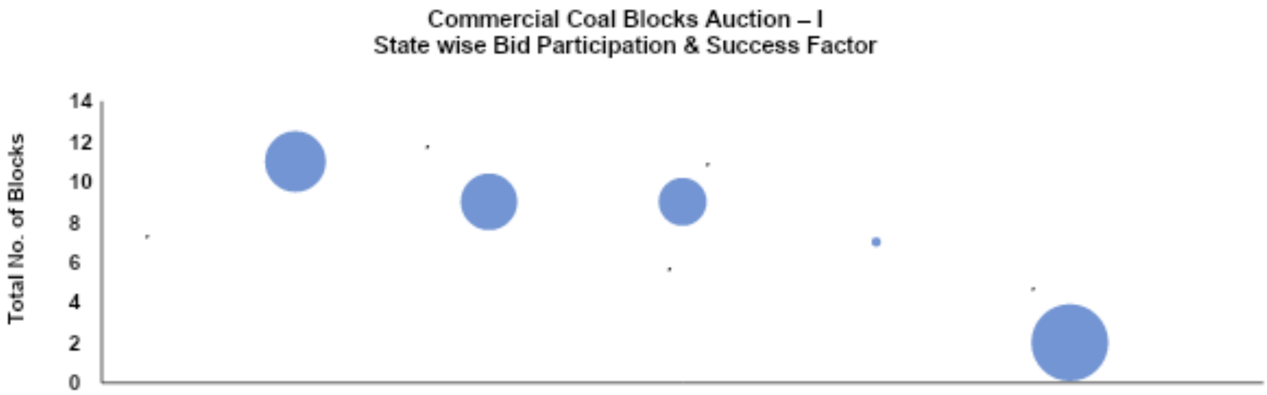
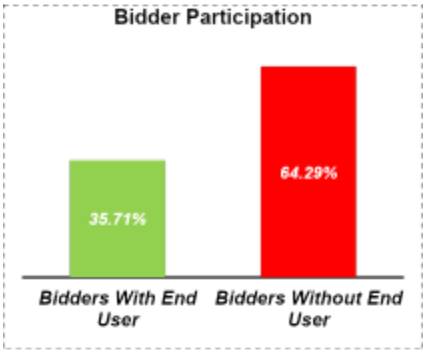
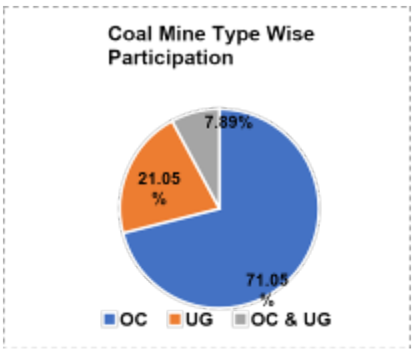
State wise Bidding Pattern Analysis

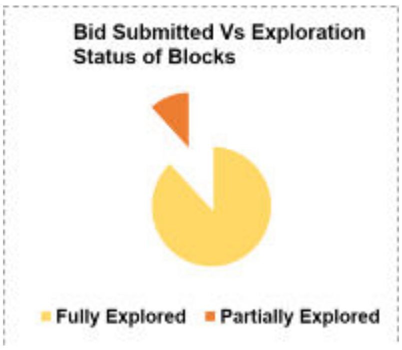
| State | Total Blocks | Participation (in Blocks) | Non-Participants (In Blocks) | Success (%) | No. of Bids | Avg. Bids | Partially Explored Blocks | No. of UG Blocks offered |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Madhya Pradesh | 11 | 8 | 3 | 72.73% | 26 | 3.25 | 1 | 7 |
| Jharkhand | 9 | 6 | 3 | 66.67% | 24 | 4 | 1 | 0 |
| Odisha | 9 | 5 | 4 | 55.56% | 10 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| Chhattisgarh | 7 | 2 | 5 | 28.57% | 11 | 5.5 | 2 | 0 |
| Maharashtra | 2 | 2 | 0 | 100.00% | 5 | 2.5 | 0 | 0 |
| **Total** | **38** | **23** | **15** | **60.53%** | **76** | **3.3** | **4** | **7** |




***Commercial Coal Block Auction Success – State Wise Comparison Chart***

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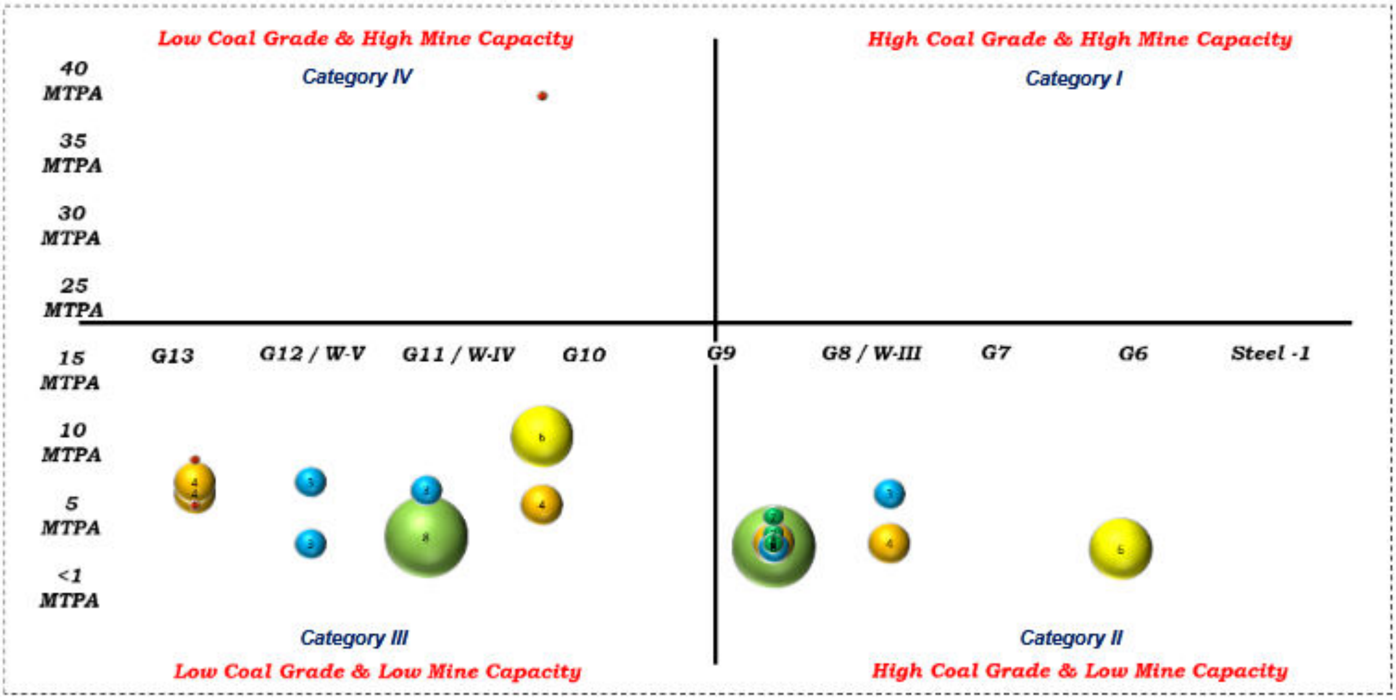
Commercial Coal Block Bidding Matrix & Its Analysis




The Commercial Coal Block Bidding Matrix is categorical representation of coal blocks offered for under three axis i.e. mine production capacity (Y axis) & notified grade of the coal blocks (X axis) and number of bidders participated (Z axis i.e. width of the bubble). The matrix gives the clear-cut picture of the market trend where the maximum interest is lying and thus the competition. The following observations are there:

1.Category I: High Coal Grade & High Production Capacity:

a. No coal blocks were offered under this category

2.Category II: High Coal Grade & Low Production Capacity:

a. 15 Coal blocks were offered under this category

b. 11 Coal blocks out of 15 have received participation

c. 50% of coal blocks are below (<1 MTPA Capacity) & total 6 UG blocks were offered

d. Banda in Madhya Pradesh is the only partially explored coal block and received 3 bids

e. Total 38 bids out if 76 (i.e. 50% of bidding) happened under this category

3.Category III: Low Coal Grade & High Production Capacity:

a. 18 Coal blocks were offered under this category

b. Only 44% of blocks witnessed successfully bidding i.e. 8 out of 18 (exclusive of 2 blocks which received 1 bid each)

c. Only 37 bids out of 76 fallen under category (48%)

d. Urma Paharitola is the only partially explored block received 6 bids (out of 3 partially explored blocks offered under this category)

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4.Category IV: Low Coal Grade & High Production Capacity:

a. Only 5 Coal blocks falls under this category.

b. Only 2 Coal blocks i.e. jointly as 1 coal block (Chendipada & Chendipada II) has received only 1 bid and gets cancelled ultimately

c. All the Coal blocks were fully explored and auction success % remains 0% (zero) under this category5.

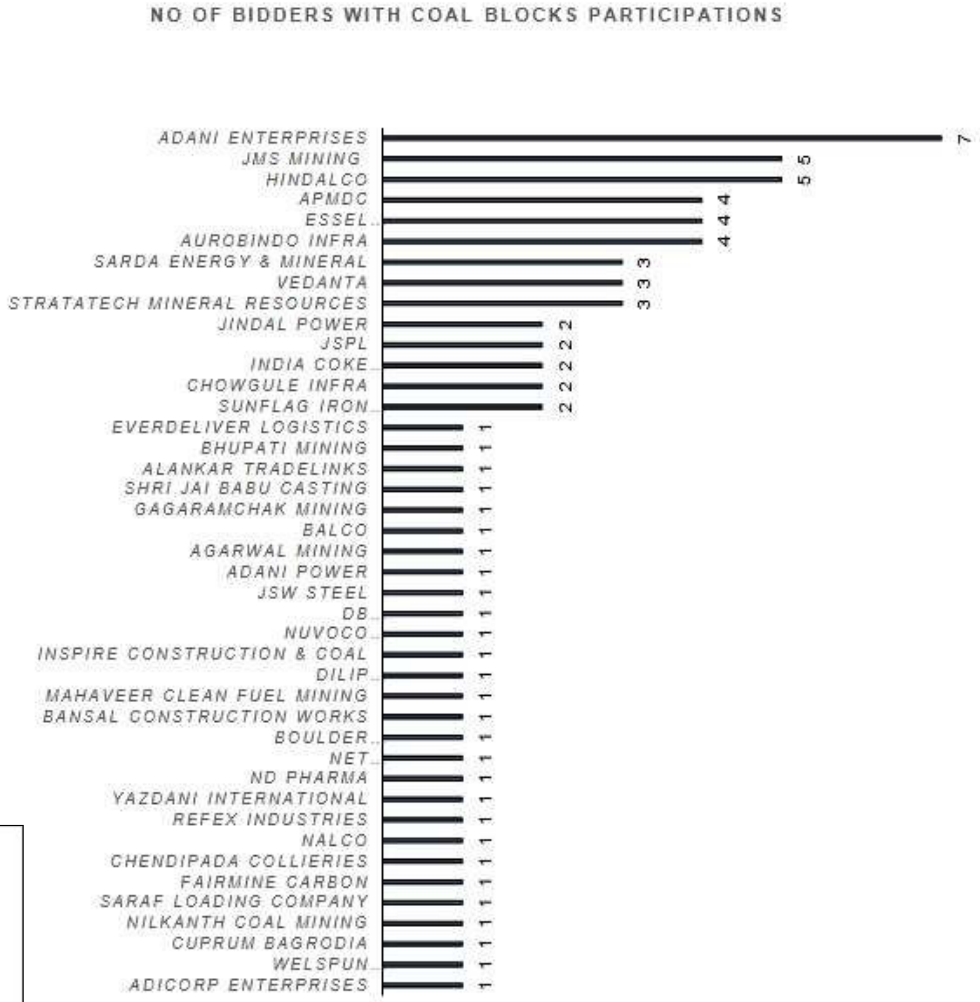
Summarization

a. 98% of the bidding happened in coal blocks with lower capacity i.e. <= 10 MTPA

b. 50% of the bidders had preferred low mine capacity block with relatively higher grade

c. 48% of the bidders had preferred low mine capacity block with lower grade

d. 45% of bidders has preferred mine with less than or equal to 1 MTPA capacity




Source: MSTC e Commerce Technical Bid Opening on 30.09.2020

Disclaimer: The views expressed by author are personal

## ABOUT AUTHOR

### Abhinav Sengupta

Abhinav Sengupta is an MBA in Energy & Infrastructure & B.Tech in mining engineering having over 9 years of experience in Coal, Power& Infrastructure Sector has acquired strong industry exposure in areas of Strategic/Risk Advisory, Due-Diligence, Financial Appraisal, Feasibility Studies, Business Process Consulting and Strategic Procurement. He is currently working with PwC India in their advisory division of Mining & Metals

# CURRENT ISSUES RELATED TO MINING & ENVIRONMENT

**Akshaydeep Mathur – Secretary General, Federation of Mining Associations of Rajasthan JAIPUR**

Twin Objectives of Environmental Safeguard and Economic Development are enshrined within the ambit of the Environmental Clearance process under the EIA Notification 2020. The Mining Fraternity is hopeful that months of rigorous deliberations will result in a Positive, Progressive and Practically Holistic document.

A Simplified Automated EC process is the need of the hour, if the Government wishes to bring Investment into Mining, Generate Employment and halt the flight of Capital and Trained Manpower to foreign lands.

India as a Developing Nation cannot afford to copy or Ape the West and it is imperative to Leap Frog in the Art of Environmental Management and it is suggested that Authentic Data and Scientific Analysis should replace the false Fear and Green hysteria and focus be shifted to real issues and Compliance of ECnorms

The Real Environmental Issues Plaguing our Country originate from use of Chemical Fertilizers - Pesticides in Agriculture, Hazardous Waste Disposal, Urbanisation Vehicular Pollution, Air Quality, City Noise Levels, Cleanliness, Congestion further aggravated by depleting Forest cover and Global Warming.

Today the Environmental concern is interwoven within the Social Matrix as over one billion people of this country need sanitation, primary health care, security, electricity, roads, rails, metro, housing, basic infra, education and are stricken with poverty, hunger, employment and one sole objective cannot be viewed in the isolation of other obligation and needs of the growing society aspiring for higher living standard.

In the past six years 40% of the MSME Mining Leases have closed down due to complex tangle of EC , CTOs, Court judgements, tangle of Eco-sensitive zones and special areas and the future of the mining industry delicately hangs upon the choices of the decision maker.

The seminar is dedicated to Environment concerns for Mining, so a quick overview of Mining Industry in India shall be helpful in drawing conclusions based on authentic Data Base and scientific manner.

Entire Mining Leases put together, occupy Less than 0.2% of the Geographical Area of our Country which an Area around 6000sqkms. The Land dedicated to Mining of all Major and Minerals is less than the Land Area of Tokyo or Shanghai or New York Metro or even Chicago. That is theoretically the total leases of India can be fitted into a hole having a Radius of 42Kms.

70% MSME Leases i.e. 60,000 Mining Leases Occupy only 20% Land= 1200sqkms 30% Big Leases i.e. 1130 Mining Leases occupy 90% of Land == 4,800sqkms

**THINKING POINTS:**

- INDIA TO HAVE 15 BILLION MTONS PER ANNUMMATERIALCONSUMPTION BY 2030 i.e. 15MT/H
- MINERAL & METAL CONSUMPTION CURRENTLY 3 BILLION MTONS WILL SURPASS BIOMASS
- INDIA NET IMPORTER – DEFICIT OF 100 BILLION USD-Total – Imports 350 Billion USD – Exports250
- NET IMPORTER OF CRITICALMINERALS
- GOLD – COPPER – NICKEL—COBALT—ATOMICMINERALS
- PETROLEUM PRODUCTS – FERTILIZERS -POTASH
- ENTIRE MINING IN THE COUNTRY TAKES PLACE IN LESS THAN 1% GEOGRAPHICAL AREA OF INDIA.
- MINING IS NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR 99% OF POLLUTION OR ENVIRONMENTAL DAMAGE IN THECOUNTRY.
- ALL MINERALS ARE INERT & ENVIRONMENT FRIENDLY INTEGRAL BUILDING BLOCKS OFCIVILIZATIONS
- NO EMISSION OF SOX NOX CO HAZARDOUS WASTE FROMMINING
- MINED OUT AREA WILL BE RECLAMED & RESTORED FOR USE OF OUR FUTURE GENERATIONS.
- MINING IS A NON-POLLUTING RESPONSIBLEINDUSTRY
- SCHEDULE 4 MINERALS + COAL LIGNITE ACCOUNT FOR 90% PRODUCTION BY TONNAGE AND REST ALL MAJOR MINERALS COMBINED ACCOUNT FOR 10% TONNAGE OF MINERAL PRODUCED IN INDIA---

**HENCE POLICY SHOULD BE CHANGED**

These MSME MINES should be put under a compliance Regime a half yearly monitoring report called "PARYAVARAN SARAL" and only the larger mines be subject to EC process.

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| Proposed Categorization for MSME & Large Mining leases | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **S. No.** | **EIA Category** | **MICRO** | **SMALL** | **MEDIUM** | **LARGE** | **GLOBAL** |
| I | **Projects** | **B3** | **B2** | **B1** | **A2** | **A1** |
| II | EC Compliance | EC-SARAL (one a year ) | EC-SARAL (Twice a year ) | EC | EC | EC |
| III | EC Granting Authority | Scrutiny and Monitoring by SPCB | | SEIAA | SEIAA | MOEF-CC |
| IV | Public Hearing | Not Applicable | | Exemption | Applicable | Applicable |
| V | Mining Lease Area | 0-5 Ha | <5-50 Ha | <50-100 Ha | <100-200 Ha | Above 200 Ha |
| VI | Annual Excavation | 0-50,000 T | 50,000- 2 Lakh T | 2 lakh- 5 lakh T | 5 Lakh - 1 MT | Above 1 MT |
| VII | Investment | Rs 1 Crore | 1Crore- 10Crore | 10Crore- 20Crore | 20Crore- 50Crore | Above 50 Crore |
| VIII | Annual Turn-over | 5 Crore | 5Crore- 50Crore | 50Crore- 100Crore | 100 Crore - 200 Crore | Above 200 Crore |

Presented to Ministry of Environment and Forest for inclusion in upcoming EC Regime.

- Creation of separate category for tiny mines B-3, having lease area of less than 5 hectares and annual production of less than Fifty Thousand Tons. These Micro Leases be subject to only annual Compliance mode and Cluster approach may be dropped.
- Reclassifying mines in category B-2 as- mines having lease area of 5 hectares to 50/ hectares with annual production of less than Two Lakh M Tons in Six monthly Compliance report. Drop cluster approach forB-2
- Reclassifying mines in category B-1 as leases of less than 100 hectares and having annual production capacity of more than Two Lakh M Tons but less than Half milliontons.
- Drop cluster approach as each lease in this category is seeking an EC.
- Reclassifying mines in category –A2 as –mines having lease area up to 200 hectare but production capacity of upto than half million tons EC from SEIAA but NoPH
- A1 having lease area plus of 200 hectare with production plus of One million Tons – EC from MOEF-CC with PH. This shall speed up the process & reduce burden of Clearances.

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- Request submitted to The Ministry of Mines, New Delhi to support the stand of MSME MINES as shown in the table above since this change in the EIA Notification 2020 will definitely increase employment, increase revenue for the State Exchequer, reduce Imports and increase Mineral Production and Exports.

**ABOUT AUTHOR**

Mr Akshaydeep Mathur

Mr Akshaydeep Mathur is Secretary General of the Federation of Mining Associations of Rajasthan, 15th year elect and Chief Secretary High Power Committee on Mining &Environment.

# Mining operations set for revamp

- The MDO contract is awarded mostly on the basis of quoted mining cost per tonne, to the lowest bidder
- The Prime Minister's Office (PMO) has written to NITI Aayog, asking it to consult with industry to create a new legal framework and policy regime for private mine operators

The government wants to overhaul the working of private mine developers and operators (MDOs) ahead of the first coal mining auctions with private company participation next month and wider plans for a massive increase in coal production.

The Prime Minister's Office (PMO) has written to NITI Aayog, asking it to consult with industry to create a new legal framework and policy regime for private mine operators.

MDOs play a vital role in the operation of coal mines, but there are two challenges: they are illegal, and they are mostly selected for their ability to do the job at a low cost rather than for bringing in the technical expertise needed to scale up coal mining.

The government's move comes amid plans by Coal India, the world's largest coal miner, to produce 1 billion tonnes a year by 2024.

In a letter to the NITI Aayog, the PMO said, "There are differing legal positions, practices and approaches and a lack of consistency and transparency" in how MDOs are currently engaged in mining coal and major minerals.

"The appointment of MDOs before allotment of the mineral block appears inappropriate and this may not be allowed in future," the PMO said. It asked NITI Aayog to frame guidelines for the selection and appointment of MDOs in consultation with secretaries from the Union ministries of mines, coal, steel and finance. Mint has seen a copy of the letter.

In the mining industry, a mine owner often contracts the work of mine development to a third-party MDO, especially in coal. The MDO oversees the whole range of activity, from mine design, planning and construction and rehabilitation of local populations to overburden removal, mining and processing and delivery of the mineral.

The MDO contract is awarded mostly on the basis of quoted mining cost per tonne, to the lowest bidder.

So far, coal mine ownership has been restricted to PSUs like Coal India and NTPC or state, who have been the largest employers of MDOs. But with commercial coal mining slated to begin in October, the MDO industry is expected to expand.

However, outsourcing mining activity is illegal under the Contract Labour Act and Mines and Minerals Act. PSUs and state governments have so far escaped a legal tangle with approval from the ministry of coal.

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Pankaj Satija, chief - regulatory affairs, Tata Steel, said. “A mine owner uses an MDO in India primarily to cut costs and improve efficiency. This, however, is in contrast to the global practice of appointing MDOs to bring in expertise and drive adoption of technical best practices."

“Many public sector companies like NTPC, Coal India and, of late, NMDC as well as state government PSUs have gone ahead and engaged MDOs in the mines allotted to them without prior approval from the Central Contract Labour Advisory Board," R.K. Sharma, secretary general, Federation of Indian Mineral Industries, told Mint.

“One can understand engaging MDOs in the case of NTPC and such PSUs because the lease period for coal mining was for captive use, but in the case of Coal India and NMDC and other standalone mining companies, it is puzzling since they are mining companies. With a view to have synergy in the regulatory framework, it is imperative that there is compatibility in different laws for the engagement of MDOs in the case of coal and major minerals."

Satija recommends clearing the legal inconsistencies and creating a framework that insists on ethical practices and improves safety, while employing the best talent and technology.

With power generation heavily dependent on coal, the need to keep production numbers growing means that MDOs will become significant players in the mineral industry, a senior executive at an MDO said on condition of anonymity.

“Coal India wants to produce 1 billion tonnes every year by 2024. With their own capacities stretched, they need MDOs to produce at least 150-200 million tonnes yearly, that’s why even they are coming out with tenders now to engage MDOs. But these contracts are skewed heavily in favour of state agencies and differ from state to state with MDOs made to absorb many of the risks and penalties and deal with payment delays, making it difficult and expensive for us to get bank financing.

“I think what the PMO also wants to do is create standard contracts on engaging MDOs where it is clear who bears which risk, who is responsible for land acquisition, relief and rehabilitation, etc."

Large MDOs today include BGR Mining and Infra Ltd, Adani Enterprises, Thriveni Earthmovers, DilipBuildcon, Sainik Mining and Allied Services, Sical Logistics, Monte Carlo and Ambey Mining.

The NDA government is keen to step up India’s coal production. Despite having the world’s fourth largest coal reserves, India imports around 235 million tonnes (mt) of coal a year. The government estimates that of this, at least 135 mt can be substituted by mining more locally. The Centre had set a mining target of 1.5 billion tonnes of coal by 2020, which was missed.

In May, along with opening up commercial coal mining, promoting coal gasification and auctioning 50 new coal and 500 mineral blocks as part of the covid-19 reforms package, the government also promised an investment of Rs50,000 crore to create transportation infrastructure for evacuating 1 billion tonnes of coal from Coal India Ltd’s mines.

# Centre asks Odisha to stop Thakurani mine operations by Sarada

The EAC is of the view that mining operation by Sarada Mines is case of violation and it should not be allowed to operate.

BHUBANESWAR: The Centre has asked the State Government to stop mining operation at the Thakurani iron ore block in Keonjhar district by Sarada Mines Private Limited (SMPL) and initiate action against the lease-holder for violation of Environment Protection Act, 1986.

Writing to the Forest and Environment department, the MoEF&CC advised not to give consent to operate the mines till the project is granted environmental clearance by the State Pollution Control Board.The Ministry has further directed to take action under sections 15/19 of the EPA, 1986 against SMPL for carrying out mining operation without environment clearance (EC) and production of minerals in excess of the EC capacity.

“In cases of violation, action will be taken against the project proponent by the respective State or State Pollution Control Board under the provisions of section 19 of the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 and further, no consent to operate or occupancy certificate will be issued till the project is granted the environmental clearance,” the Expert Appraisal Committee (EAC) of the Ministry noted in its May 29 meeting.

The EAC is of the view that mining operation by Sarada Mines is case of violation and it should not be allowed to operate.The Supreme Court had in January given a relief to SMPL by allowing it to resume mining operations at Thakurani iron--ore mines provided it paid

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around `933 crore towards environmental compensation to the State Government and gave an undertaking to comply with all the rules, regulations and other mandatory provisions for carrying out mining operations.

The matter was examined by the MoEF&CC after receiving complaints from different quarters and representation made by lease holder. The Ministry referred the matter to Ministry of Law which said that the EC granted to Sarada Mines in 2008 had lost validity in 2013-14.

"Resumption of mining operation is contrary to the law and direction of the Supreme Court on January 15, 2020," the Law Ministry said asking MoEF&CC to take appropriate action.TheThakurani mines of SMPL was a supplier of iron ore to Naveen Jindal-led Jindal Steel and Power Ltd (JSPL) plant. The Centre's order for closure of Thakurani Mines will seriously impact JSPL and could further aggravate the shortage of ore that secondary suppliers have been complaining about.

# Why is State DRAGGING FEET on mining RECOVERIES?

While the Goa government in association with the mining companies has been running from pillar to post to restart mining to kick-off the State's economy, what is surprising is that the State has thousands of crores of dues pending from the mining companies, which it has made no effort or little effort to recover. SURAJ NANDREKAR digs into the new episode of over Rs 466 crore dues, which are pending from eight mining companies, who had exported ore from rejected dumps without paying royalty

It was first said the illegal mining in Goa was worth Rs 35,000 crore as per the Justice MB Shah report.

Then the chartered accountants found that Rs 3,400 crore was to be recovered from mining companies for illegal ore extraction and export; and the Supreme Court asked the State to immediately act and recover the amount.

But now it has come to the fore that eight companies owe the State a minimum of Rs 466 crore as 'Recovery of Sale Value' of 73.4 million tonnes of ore allegedly illegally dispatched under Section 9(2) of MMDR Act, 1957 r/w Section 21(5) of the Act &/or Rule 64/C of the MC Rules 1960 from T.C. nos. 41/55, 45/54, 7/58, 34/55, 28/52, 4/55, 60/52 and T.C. No. 86/53.

Former Director Mines and Geology Prasanna Acharya had in his note on 15.01.2019 said that on 06/10/2010, Directors/partners of the erstwhile leaseholders had admitted that they have dispatched mineral allegedly from rejection dumps without payment of royalty.

"Most of these letters are inwarded in this office on 20/10/2010, while other doesn't bear the entry number. By these letters, the department is also informed about delayed payment of royalty on such mineral allegedly recovered from dump reserves with interest on D.M.T basis and also requested to take said communication assessment, on record for completing assessment," the note said.

He pointed out that the Rule 64A of MC Rules 1960 empowers the State Government to charge interest at the rate of 24% per annum at simple interest from the 60th day from the date fixed by the Government from payment of royalty, etc.

The operating part of Goa Foundation judgment passed by Supreme Court of India on 07/02/2018 expects the State to expedite recovery of the amount due from erstwhile lease holders to the State Government unless there are very good reasons for rejecting them, he said.

He also pointed out that the Apex Court in Goa Foundation judgment dated 21/04/2014 held that whenever there is a conflict between the MMDR Act and the MC Rules 1960, the provisions of the Act shall prevail over the Rules.

"Sub-Section(2) of Section 9 of the MMDR Act, 1957 mandates payment of royalty in respect of any mineral removed or consumed by lease holders from the lease area at the rate specified. Rule 64/C of the MC Rules, 1960 requires payment of royalty on dumps tailings or rejects stored outside the lease held area only when such tailings or rejects are used for sale or consumption on later date," he had noted.

As such, the former director had noted that the date specified for payment of royalty under Rule 64 of Mineral Concession Rules 1960 has to be before or at the time of removal or consumption of mineral from the lease hold area, held area or tailing or rejects stored outside lease, as the case may be before or up to its removal for sale or consumption.

"Any dispatch without payment of royalty after the first day of the subsequent month from the date of dispatch whether bonafidely done or otherwise, should invariably be treated as illegal dispatch entitling State Government to recover the sale value of mineral in exercise of power under Section 21(5) of the MMDR Act 1957," he had said.

Further, he said that in the instant cases, a large quantity of 7.34016 million tonnes of ore, was dispatched without payment of royalty, neither at the time of dispatch nor on the first day of subsequent month.

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"As such, the said dispatch has to be considered as illegal dispatch. Hence, said dispatch without payment of royalty would attract the provision of Section 21(5) of MMDR Act 1957 by way of recovery of sale value of mineral and not the payment of royalty with interest as attempted in the instant cases," he said.

ACHARYA's recommendations…

a) Treat dispatch of 73.4 WMT from leases mentioned to be illegally dispatched and in violation of provisions of Section 9 read with Section 21(5) of MMDR Act and Rule 64/C of MC Rules 1960 in case the alleged dispatched as claimed by leaseholder is from dump tailings or rejects.

b) For the purpose of recovery of interest under Rule 64(A) to declare date of receipt of order to be the date fixed by the State Government.

c) Authorized the undersigned to seek recovery of mineral value from the erstwhile lease holders and/or the persons responsible for such illegal dispatch.

"Submitted for urgent approval as crores of rupees could be recovered from such illegal dispatches," he had said.

Nelita Olga Fernandes e D'Silvam, Assistant Geologist, in her note on 24/06/2020 too said that the ore was illegally exported.

"It is revealed that the erstwhile lease holders have paid royalty and the interest applicable on a quantity of 73,40,136 WMT for the period 2007-2008, 2008-2009 & 2009-10. The said quantity was later reported to be disposed of. It is also reported that the parties have not disclosed the said quantities in their monthly returns, however have requested this Department to take the said communication on record for completing assessment," she said.

The Geologist noted that the as per section 9 of MMDR Act 1957, the holder of a mining lease is required to pay royalty in respect of any mineral removed or consumed by him (at page 45/C). Rule 64 states that in case, such dumped tailing or rejects are used for sale or consumption on any later date after the date of such dumping, then such tailing or rejects shall be liable for payment of royalty.

"As per the communication, royalty shall be due on every first day of the month and any delay in the payment of royalty would entail a liability on the lease boulder to pay simple interest @24% p.a. from the 60 day in terms of rule 64 Aol MCR. 1960. Since in the instant case, the quantity of 73,40,136 WMT, of ore, was dispatched without the payment of royalty, neither at the time of dispatch nor on the first day of subsequent month and subsequently notices were issued to the lease holders as mentioned.

As such, it is required to place on record the details regarding notices issued and any other relevant documents relied upon, available in the respective lease files (1C.Nos,86/53, 60/52. 4/55, 28/52. 34/55, 7/58, 45/54, 41/55) or any relevant records available with the concerned dealing hand in order to proceed further," the geologist added.

CM's remark…

Despite all these notices, Chief Minister PramodSawant on his noting dated 24/06/19 only said "May discuss".

Thereafter, the recovery file has been moving around without any result. Goa Foundation says State ignored every illegality Goa Foundation, in its petition has said that rapacious and rampant exploitation of the State's natural resources is the hallmark of iron ore mining sector - coupled with a total lack of concern for the environment and the health and well-being of the denizens in the vicinity of the mines.

"The sole motive of mining lease holders seems to be to make profits (no matter how) and the attitude seems to be that if the rule of law is required to be put on the backburner, so be it. Unfortunately, the State is unable to firmly stop violations of the law and other illegalities, perhaps with a view to maximize revenue, but without appreciating the long term impact of this indifference. Another excuse generally put forth by the State is that of development, conveniently forgetting that development must be sustainable and equitable development and not otherwise," the petition says.

GF petition adds that laxity and sheer apathy to the rule of law gives mining lease holders a field day, being the primary beneficiaries, with the State being left with some crumbs in the form of royalty.

"For the State to generate adequate revenue through the mining sector and yet have sustainable and equitable development, the implementation machinery needs a tremendous amount of strengthening while the law enforcement machinery needs strict vigilance," it says.

It further added that 'unless the two marry, people will continue to be mute witnesses to the plunder of our natural resources and left wondering how to retrieve an irretrievable situation'.

"The State (government) ignored the fact that every single mining lease holder had committed some illegality or the other in varying degrees. To identify these illegalities (although they had already been identified by the Justice Shah Commission and by the EAC), a Special Investigation Team had been set up as also a team of Chartered Accountants. Instead of waiting for a report from any one of these teams, the State acted in

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violation of the Grant of Mining Leases Policy and renewed the mining leases. Why was the report from the 'Special Investigation Team' not awaited or called for and examined?" the petition questioned.

## JSW flouts MCR; Govt suffers Rs 1,155-cr loss

The State Government incurred a loss of about Rs 1,154.68 crore for violation of the Mineral Concession Rules (MCR) the JSW Limited, which bagged four iron ore mines with high premium in the recent auction.

The JSW has violated Rule 12A(1) of MCR, 2016 read with Schedule D of MDPA in ensuring minimum 80% dispatch of the average of the annual production of two immediately preceding years on pro-rata basis from the auctioned mines.

Till September 2021, the JSW failed to dispatch 30, 84,090.91 MT iron ore as per agreement for which the Government lost huge amount of revenue. The Mines Director slapped show cause notice to the JSW on Friday for violation of the MCR rule. The Director earlier had written to the JSW to take steps to ensure strict adherence to the above mentioned provision and maintain the prescribed production and dispatch; otherwise it would be liable for action in accordance with the rules. However, the JSW continued violating rules without any corrective measures. In its show-cause notice, the Director Mines mentioned that, in Narayanposh iron ore mine, the JSW has dispatched only 2,45,829.58 MT iron ore which is 4,81,853 MT iron ore and 388. 47MT Manganese ore short of the prescribed target of dispatch and, thus, JSW violated Rule 12A(1) of MCR read with Para 8.1and schedule "D" of the MDPA. In Ganua block, the JSW has dispatched only 34,683.17 MT which is 78,419 .83 MTs short of the prescribed target of dispatch. In case of Nuagaonblock , the company dispatched only 2,56,718.98 MT which is 7,53,081 .02 MT short of the prescribed target of dispatch In Jajang block, it dispatched 3,07,173.48 MT which is 17,70,736 .08 MT short of the prescribed target of dispatch.

Thus till September 21, the JSW Ltd' total dispatch shortfall was 30, 84,090.91 MT. Calculating at conservative prices 62-65%Fe grade iron ore at Rs 3,286 per tonne for lumps.

## Ban iron ore exports: Industry associations in letter to PMO

The industry faced a unique paradox during the Covid-19 pandemic lockdown. From April to September, even as domestic production of iron ore slumped, exports have jumped, leading to shortage of raw material for local steel producers and putting livelihoods in jeopardy.

Multiple industry associations have written to PK Sinha, principal advisor to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, to ban exports of iron ore to make up of the shortage of the important raw material for steel-making in the domestic market.

The shortage has especially pinched the secondary steel makers, who don't have captive mines sourcing to their units, unlike the primary producers.

Associations, including Indian Chamber of Commerce (ICC) and All India Induction Furnaces Association (AIIFA), wrote to Sinha on September 25, highlighting the spurt in exports during the lockdown and after, from April to September.

They pointed out that domestic production of iron ore has slumped, not just leading to shortage of the raw material but also bumping up its price.

Steel makers are forced to increase prices, passing on the hike in cost of production to customers, who are at a loss. Only China and the commercial miners are gaining," said a senior executive from the steel industry.

The numbers

About half of India's annual steel output is produced by secondary steel producers. Unlike primary producers such as Tata Steel and JSW Steel, these units are much smaller in scale. They cannot compete against their larger peers when iron ore mines are auctioned.

Prime Minister's Office. Over 80 percent Many of these secondary producers have sponge iron plants that need a constant supply of iron ore. Sponge iron is an intermediate product used in steel making.

"India had already started stepping up its iron ore exports since last year to

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bridge the global supply gap, as flows from the world's two biggest producers – Brazil and Australia – were on a decline," AIIFA said in its letter to the of the exports were to China.

The industry faced a unique paradox during the Covid-19 pandemic lockdown. Even as domestic iron ore production slumped by half to 47 million in tons in the April to September period, exports jumped by 63 percent to 22 million tons over the same time.

The industry associations said that many secondary units have been forced to shut shop, especially in Odisha and Chhattisgarh, which together have nearly 140 sponge iron units. Others are operating at half their capacity.

# RICH GYPSUM RESOURCES IN NAGAUR AND BIKANER DISTRICTS WESTERN RAJASTHAN : By Shri V. P. Laul


**ABSTRACT**

Gypsum is a very important mineral and is required by different industries like fertiliser, cement and also for plaster of Paris manufacturing etc. Rajasthan is a major producer of Gypsum. In Western Rajasthan gypsum deposits mainly occur in Quaternary sediments known as Gypsite (Quaternary gypsum) and Gypsum deposits of MarwarSupergroup (Cambrian). Gypsite deposits occur in different districts of Western Rajasthan but rich deposits occur in Bikaner district. Cambrian Gypsum deposit of Nagaur district occurs at depth of 30 m or more and possibly forms the major deposit in Western Rajasthan.


**INTRODUCTION**

Gypsum is a very important mineral for fertiliser and cement industry. Western Rajasthan is meeting major demand of the country mainly from surface and near surface Quaternary gypsum or gypsite deposits because they are economically workable than gypsum deposits of MarwarSupergroup( Cambrian) occurring at depth of 30 m and more.

**DISTRIBUTION AND RESOURCES**

In Western Rajasthan Quaternary gypsum occurrences and deposits are mainly located in Nagaur, Bikaner, Jalore , Shri Ganganagar, Hanumangarh, Jaisalmer and Barmer districts.

The popular names prevalent in literature for Quaternary gypsum or gypsite are Phalsund Formation for Phalsundgypsite deposit of Jaisalmer district and Uttarlai Formation for salt, gypsum bearing clay, gypsite and associated sediments, Barmer district.In 2004 DrWadhawan introduced term Jamsar Formation for older playa deposits of gypsite and associated sediments and Lunkaransar Formation for younger saline playa deposits around the Lunkaransar saline playa/ lake area, Bikaner district.

Out of 71 leases of gypsum mainly gypsite, maximum 37 leases are in Bikaner district followed by 16 leases inHanumangarh , 11 leases in Shri Ganganagar, 3 leases in Jaisalmer, 2 leases in Nagaur and 2 leases in Barmer districts respectively. Keeping in view number of mining leases, known and unknown occurrences of Quaternary gypsum, different districts of Western Rajasthan may contain expected geological resources as given :Bikaner- 110 to 115 million tonnes ( MT) , Hanumangarh- 50 MT, Sri Ganganagar- 30 to 35 MT, Jaisalmer- 25 to 30 MT, Nagaur - 4 to 5 MT, Barmer- 5 MT .The deposits of Jaisalmer are thick so expected resources are comparatively more.

Cambrian gypsum deposits of Nagaur district have been explored and 930 milliontonnes of reserves have been estimated. All known resources of Quaternary gypsum spread over different districts of Western Rajasthan may not exceed 20% of known resources of Cambrian gypsum resources occurring in Nagaur district. At present perhaps entire production of gypsum is from Quaternary gypsum because of economical mineability of surface and near surface deposits.

**PROSPECTIVE AREAS FOR LOCATING GYPSUM DEPOSITS**

**Quaternary Gypsum Deposits**

These surface and near surface deposits are economically Quarried. The following districts are important for locating mineable deposits

Bikaner district : The gypsum deposits occur in about 60% of the district area. The district still holds promise for locating more deposits particularly in the northwestern part of the district. The areas of highly saline groundwater are more promising as compared to other areas.

Sri Ganganagar and Hanumangarh districts: In these districts Ghaggar flood plains, some buried river channel along with local drainage appear to have played a role in localisation of gypsum deposits. Studies of Palaeo-drainage may help in locating gypsum deposits in these districts

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Jaisalmer district: Gypsum deposits in and around Nachna village appear to be near Nachna Basement high which possibly has some bearing on the localisation of these deposits and occurrences.

Mohangarh gypsum deposit and clusters of small deposits around it are located along some well identified Paleochannel (Paleo- tributary?) possibly of ancient Saraswati. The study of this paleo-tributary may help in prospecting for gypsum along the course of this Channel. Other districts may not contain much resources and do not require much attention for prospecting for gypsum.

**Cambrian gypsum deposits**

Cambrian gypsum deposits occur at depth of 30 m or more. Cambrian gypsum has been well explored in Nagaur district and reserves of 930 million tonnes have been estimated and a detailed account of Nagaur gypsum has been given in GSI Bulletin Sr.A Economic Geology, No. 24, 1965 by Roy Chowdhury et. al.

During the course of potash investigation well defined zones of Bilara Carbonate Group,Sulphate zone and HanseranEvaporiteGroup ofMarwarSuper group (Cambrian) have been delineated.In general Sulphate zone considered to be rich in gypsum resources is disposed between Bilara Carbonate Group in the south and HanseranEvaporite Group in the north ( Figure 1)

Figure 1:Subsurface disposition of transitional sulphate zone between Bilara Group in south and Hanseranevaporites in north, Nagaur- Ganganagar basin western Rajasthan ( Kumar Virendra, 2019)

Keeping in view the increasing future demand, planning in advance is required to carry out exploration to locate economically mineable deposits particularly when Quaternary gypsum resources are fast depleting.DMG, FCI and RSMM should take lead in such type of exploration.

The map showing sub- surface disposition of sulphate zone may be very helpful in exploration of Cambrian gypsum deposits. The sulphate zone may be projected on the surface which may be of great help in borehole location for gypsum exploration. Nagaur district, parts of Bikaner district followed by some parts of Churu district may be important for exploration of Cambrian gypsum.

**CONCLUSIONS**

It may be concluded that Bikaner district is most prospective for prospecting and locating Quaternary gypsum deposits and Nagaur , Bikaner districts together for locating mineable Cambrian gypsum deposits.

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# After 16 years, mineral exploration starts at the Kolar Gold

The Union Minister said the exploration started after his meeting last month with Karnataka Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa on August 28

Mineral ExplorationCorporation Limited (MECL) started exploration of the Kolar Gold Fields (KGF) on Monday, said Union Minister for Coal and Mines Pralhad Joshi.

"Happy to convey that exploratory drilling at Betrayaswamy block of Kolar Gold Fields commenced today, " the Union Minister tweeted.

Sharing photographs on Twitter on the commencement of the activities, Joshi said the mining would help resolve Bharat Gold Mines Limited (BGML) issue over exploration in KGF that has been pending for the last 16 years.

The Union Minister said the exploration started after his meeting last month with Karnataka Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa on August 28.

He said he had directed MECL to carry out immediate exploration in the mining lease area of BGML after the meeting.

In the meeting, Yediyurappa and Joshi decided that either the high-value minerals at BGML are explored or handed over to the Industries Department to set up an industrial cluster to start large-scale economic activities there.

# Seeking hurried views on mining reforms, Govt of India 'evades' giving basic data

India's well-known NGO network, mines, minerals and People (mm&P), in a protest letter sent on September 3 to Dr VeenaKumari Dermal, director, Ministry of Mines, Government of India, has said that not only was the time given for comments on the proposed reforms in the mining sector, just 10 days, highly insufficient, even minimum data on the mining sector was provided in order to give meaningful inputs in the official notification. The data, the letter signed by Rebbapragada Ravi, mm&P chairperson, and Ashok Shrimali, mm&P secretary general says, should have included status of employment in mining of major minerals; status of exploration; status of mineral inventory; current status of grant of major mineral leases, exploration status, approved production levels, actual production of minerals and actual employment from such leases; list of all captive mines and of illegal mining cases.

We refer to your notice dated August 24, 2020 wherein you have sought comments on substantial matters of reform of mineral laws, rules and regulations within a period of 10 days, i.e., September 3, 2020. We are writing to register our protest at this radically short time provided for consultation on matters dealing with the shared inheritance of mineral wealth of the states of India. For even a local level public consultation, 30 days is provided. Here we have matters impacting the nation as a whole as well as center-state relations with only 10 days provided. his is not even enough time to seek information under the Right to Information (RTI) Act to evaluate the proposals meaningfully. We suggest that this vio-lates the Pre-Legislative Consultation Policy (PLCP) of the Government of India, especially point 2 of the decisions taken in the meeting of the Committee of Secretaries held on January 10, 2014. Your notice proposes the following changes in existing regulations and norms:

- Changing norms for exploration for auction and seamless transition from exploration to production: (a) Auction of G-4 blocks for seamless exploration and prospecting; (b) private entities in exploration work (regional exploration); (c) private exploration funded by National Mineral Exploration Trust (NMET); (d) resolving legacy issues u/S 10A(2)(b) and 10A(2)(c), reimburse exploration costs under NMET; (e) removing
- distinction between captive and non-captive mines; (f) all future blocks not earmarked; (g) removing first right of refusal for captive miners; (h) raising limit of 25% of production for merchant use to 50%; (i) creation of a National Mineral Index; (j) clarify definition of illegal mining – u/S 21(4), 21(5) and to be prospective; (k) rationalize stamp duty.
- Focus District Mineral Foundation (DMF) on creating tangible assets, as per Parliamentary Standing Committee – amendment to Section 9B.
- Bring unused blocks into production to generate employment – time limit to achieve production, both for private and public sector.

Make NMET truly autonomous; entities notified u/S 4(1) eligible for NMET. In order for a meaningful analysis, the wording of the proposed changes to the laws / rules / regulations ought to have been provided. We would further like to point out that Section 4(1)(c) of the RTI Act, 2005 provides that "Every Public

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Authority shall publish all relevant facts while formulating policies or announcing decisions which affect public." At a minimum, the following data should be provided for aiding meaningful inputs from the public and organisations like ours with a record of more than two decades in mining issues:

1. Status of employment in mining of major minerals, both by lease as well as over time.
2. Status of exploration: A detailed status of exploration at various levels, including classification of blocks into G1, G2, etc.
3. Status of mineral inventory: A detailed mineral inventory must be published giving each ore body location and other details. Where these are within existing mining leases, this information should also be provided.
4. Current status of grant of major mineral leases, exploration status, approved production levels, actual production of minerals and actual employment from such leases.
5. A list of all "potential leases" that are "blocked in legacy cases" under Sections 10A(2)(b) and 10A(2)(c), exploration status, reserves, lessees and the litigation and status thereof.
5. List of all captive mines with full details that would be impacted by changes to the limits of production that can be sold. It is also important to provide a list of all non-captive mines since those will also be impacted by this change.
6. A list of illegal mining cases over the last decade that would fall under the two categories, ie, illegal mining done outside leasehold areas and mining in violation of various clearances and approvals inside a mining area.
8. Stamp duty laws of various states, amounts collected by way of stamp duty, and the extent of change in state revenue from the proposed change.
9. On the DMF, the relevant section from the Parliamentary Committee should have been made available, along with analysis to what extent DMF monies have been used for tangible assets versus other uses. There should have also been some analysis why an amendment is required instead of a notification under Section 20A of the existing Pradhan Mantri Khanij Kshetra-Kalyan Yojana (PMKKKY).
8. A list of unused blocks along with the name of allottee and the time that it has been unused would be necessary to comment on the recommendations.
9. A list of the entities notified under Section 4(1) of the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) (MMDR) Act should have been made available. It is not clear if it is intended that any entity with a mineral lease would be eligible for using NMET funds, or just the entities named in the second proviso.

All the source data, calculations and conclusions should be made available to the public prior to asking for comments. And finally, since most of the minerals are in areas most in need of employment generation, it would have been appropriate to have the notice available in languages spoken in those areas, at a minimum, the official languages of the affected states.