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PR. SECRETARY (MINES)

D.O. No.01/899/11-MINES/ 2781

11TH JANUARY, 2012

Please refer to your D.O. Letter No. 8(3)/2011-MV dated 25/10/2011. In connection with the above, it is informed that during 2010-2011 a total of 90 mines were in operation in the State of Goa although many more had Environmental Clearances and other required consents and permissions. For the 2nd renewal period, so far only one mining lease has been renewed. However as soon as revised rates of Stamp Duty are declared which you may appreciate would earn substantial revenue to the Government, remaining mining leases would be renewed and lease deeds executed.

As regards excess production that may have resulted into undue environmental impacts on regional level, the Goa State Pollution Control Board is being asked to take up their study. Also, MOEF has asked the Indian School of Mines, Dhanbad to carry out Regional Environmental Impact Assessment (REIA) study in mining areas in Goa. The Ministry may be requested to ask the said school of mines to consider these aspects while conducting the REIA study.

As regards dump handlings, the Directorate has issued Circular dated 23/09/2011 asking the lease-holders to desist from handling of dumps. However, MOEF has issued ECs to some mines for dump handling but during 2011-12 no production from dump handling has been reported. Government has decided that dump handling will not be allowed, unless a proper policy is put in place to regulate the same which will also include environmentally related regulations. It has further been decided to identify all dumps, link them to leases, assess the quantum of ore that may be extracted for the purpose of export through an expert agency and this exercise is under way.

In this connection it is informed that the Ld. Advocate General of the State of Goa has opined as regards the dumps that no environmental clearance is required to be obtained for the removal of mineral ore dumps. He further states that it is necessary to obtain environmental clearance for carrying on mining operations and for beneficiation of minerals. He further opines that the removal of the said mineral ore dumps, whether by the State Government itself or, under its directions by the mining lessee who had dumped the material earlier, does not in any event requires environmental clearance under the provisions of the Environment Protection Act.

As regards the movement of ore from the mines towards the Ports, an electronic system called as Radio Frequency Identification system is in process of being introduced. This issue has also been raised by the Goa Foundation in the PIL WP No.34/2011 and the Hon'ble High Court has asked that the system should be in place before 01/03/2012. This IT Applications system to monitor the movement of ore from the mine through many transit points up to export point will eliminate any doubts in regard to illegally mined ore being exported. It may not be out of place to mention that during the meeting held between the Regional Controller of Mines , IBM, Margao & Director of Mines & Geology it was revealed that the Monthly Returns filed with IBM and the copy enclosed to Directorate of Mines & Geology do not contain the same details resulting into conflicting figures of production. It is felt that the lease holders are to be admonished and reminded that the monthly returns filed before the Directorate of Mines & Geology is a copy of returns filed with IBM and the contents must be the same. Any additional data that the lessee desires to submit should be enclosed with the MR and the same should be endorsed to all concerned as an additional note.

As far as the amendment dated 09/02/2011 to Rule 45 of the MCDR, 1988, it may be stated that the State has enacted the Goa (Prevention Illegal Mining, Transportation and Storage of Minerals). Rules, 2004 by virtue of which all the owners, traders, exporters and end users have to register with the State Directorate before doing any trade in minerals. The amendment to Rule 45 of the MCDR, 1988 is being implemented by the Indian Bureau of Mines.

The data on dumps was called by the Directorate of Mines & Geology by a public announcement in local newspapers and the sites mentioned in the replies would be visited for confirmation and further decision on case to case basis would be taken once the Dumps Policy is put in place.

As you are aware, the only means of reaching the Port/Ship is by river barge, monitoring of ore transported by barge would be taken up as part of extension of RFID Monitoring.

The State Government has been making concerted efforts in combating illegal mining and various measures have been taken up. A State Level Coordination cum Empowered Committee has been formed under the Chairmanship of the Chief Secretary and so far four meetings have been held. Besides, the Task Forces at the two District levels and at the State Level Monitoring Committee have been formed to combat any illegal activity.

As regards ECs, it may be stated that MOEF had granted them under its EIA Notification, 1994 and subsequently under EIA Notification, 2006. These ECs have been granted without first ascertaining whether such mining leases are subsisting or otherwise. The upper limit of production approved by IBM and that stipulated in the ECs are found not to match in some cases in which case what should be the criteria to be adopted by the State Government.

Yours

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