
Meeting held for parliamentary committee on ministry of coal

Tuesday, 18 Mar, 2008

It is reported that the meeting of Parliamentary Consultative Committee for the ministry of coal was held under the chairmanship of Dr Dasari Narayan Rao union minister of state for coal.

Mr Rao said that a number of measures have been taken by the coal companies to prevent illegal mining which include, apart from conducting raids and seizing illegally mined coal, fencing of unused work areas, filling up of rat holes, sealing of exposed coal by dumping of overburden material, digging trenches, creation of concrete walls, regular and surprise raids by CISF and the security personnel of the coal companies, collection of intelligence, installation of check posts, filling of FIRs in police stations and close liaison with the state government authorities. He added that "Ministry of coal has been pursuing this matter with the state governments concerned on regular basis. Illegal mining has serious consequences for the states in terms of loss of revenue, environmental hazards, law and order problems, unscientific exploitation and resultant wastage of a precious natural resources, safety hazards etc."

Mr Rao said that he has discussed the issue with the chief ministers of Jharkhand and West Bengal who agreed to look into the matter and to instruct the administrative machinery for taking effective steps. Besides this, the state governments have also initiated some concrete steps. Government of Jharkhand has constituted task forces at the state and district levels. In West Bengal also, task forces have been constituted at the state and district levels. Joint action for prevention of illegal mining has been initiated by the coal companies and district collectors.

He added that central government has constituted a committee to look into the various aspects of illegal mining of coal. The committee has representation from the states of West Bengal and Jharkhand at the level of minister in charge of mining and leaders of opposition in the legislative assemblies.

Some of the members suggested the formation of a special task force to check the menace. Others felt that illegal mining had been thriving with the connivance of police and some bureaucrats and suggested that stern action is warranted against those found involved in the mal-practice. Special central illegal vigilance team should be formed for surprise checks and raids on illegal mining. The members felt that social security issues involving miners need to be tackled on a priority basis.

For more news visit at www.steelguru.com