

industrial growth in the country and at the same time improving the life of people living in the mining areas, which are generally located in the backward and tribal regions of the country. Small and isolated deposits of minerals are scattered all over the country. The National Mineral Policy recognizes the need to promote small scale mining of small deposits in a scientific and efficient manner while safeguarding vital environmental and ecological imperatives. The Policy provides for tightening of regulation so as to control and prevent the growth of illegal mining. Where small deposits are not susceptible to viable mining the Policy advocated a cluster approach by granting the deposits together as a single lease within a geographically defined boundary. The new National Mineral Policy has been tabled in the parliament and is available on website of Ministry of Mines (<http://mines.nic.in>).

Based on the policy guidelines enunciated in the new mineral policy and consultations with a task force consisting of representatives with Governments of chief mineral producing States, the Government has initiated action for changing the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957 to give effect to the provisions of the National Mineral Policy.

Repealing of MMDR Act

3259. SHRIMATI SYEDA ANWARA TAIMUR:
SHRI VIJAY JAWAHARLAL DARDA:

Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal to amend or repeal the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957, which remained ineffective in fully exploring vast reserves of coal in the country; and

(b) if so, whether coal and lime-stone in Meghalaya and mica in Central India worth over Rs. 1200 crore annually would be regulated so that they conform to health and environmental standards?

THE MINISTER OF MINES (SHRI B.K. HANDIQUE): (a) and (b) The existing Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957 (MMDR Act) is not ineffective, and as per available information till 1.4.2008, 264535 million tones of coal resources have been identified. However, the Government has prepared a draft Mines and Minerals (Scientific Development and Regulation) Act, for scientific development of mines and minerals of the country including coal and lime stone in Meghalaya and mica in Central India, which has been circulated to all State Governments and put up on the website of the Ministry (<http://www.mines.gov.in>).

Royalty on iron-ore

3260. PROF. ALKA BALRAM KSHATRIYA:
DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:

Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state: