

THE MINISTER OF MINES (SHRI B.K. HANDIQUE): (a) and (b) The Government has approved the National Mineral Policy, 2008 on 13.3.2008. The new Mineral Policy was tabled in Rajya Sabha on 20.3.2008 and in the Lok Sabha on 16.4.2008. Para 7.11 of the National Mineral Policy, 2008, States that *“Appropriate compensation will form an important aspect of the Sustainable Development Framework. As far as indigenous (tribal) populations are concerned, the Framework shall incorporate models of stakeholder interest for them in mining operations, especially in situations where the weaker sections like the local tribal populations are likely to be deprived of their means of livelihood as a result of mining interventions....a mechanism will be evolved which will actually improve the living standards of the affected populations and ensure for them a sustainable income above the poverty line”*. Based on the Mineral Policy, the Government has prepared a new draft Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 2010, which proposes to give legislative effect to the principles in mineral policy by sharing of profits with persons affected by mining related operations. Such principles do not exist in National Mineral Policy 1993 or in the existing Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957.

(c) to (e) Matters relating to displacements and rehabilitation are primarily addressed by the State Resettlement and Rehabilitation Policy, and the Central Government does not make assessment of the vulnerability of population to displacement.

Election Commission's response to paid news

*99. SHRIMATI SHOBHANA BHARTIA: Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Election Commission (EC) has recently rejected the view of the Press Council of India on paid news;

(b) if so, the details of the recommendations made by the Press Council of India on paid news;

(c) whether the incidents of paid news, particularly at the time of elections, increase and it becomes difficult for the Commission to take action at once; and

(d) if so, the details of the further steps Government proposes to take in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI M. VEERAPPA MOILY): (a) It is not correct to say that the Election Commission of India has recently rejected the views of the Press Council of India on paid news.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) The Election Commission has been receiving general complaints regarding alleged paid news during elections. The cases of paid news where specific evidence is available are very few.

(d) The Election Commission has issued instructions to observe maximum vigilance in respect of paid news during elections by making use of existing provisions of law and formed district level committees after notification of election to monitor each advertisement and news report released in print media and electronic media. The Election Commission has also requested the Press council of India to nominate senior journalist/citizens to the district level committee for determining paid news during elections.

Action plan on cleaning Ganga

†*100. SHRI JAI PRAKASH: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has received any report/suggestion in response to its request made to the IIT scientists for submitting an action plan to the National Ganga River Basin Authority for cleaning of river Ganga;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps being taken by Government to implement the same?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) and (b) A Memorandum of Agreement has been signed by the Central Government on 6.7.2010 with a consortium of seven Indian Institutes of Technology for preparation of a comprehensive River Basin Management Plan for Ganga. The Plan would identify projects to be undertaken, policy interventions required and non-project investments. It would also provide a road map for control and prevention of pollution into the river and its tributaries along with financial resources required for a time bound action programme. The preparation of the Plan is scheduled to be completed in a period of 18 months.

(c) Does not arise in view of above.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

Survey to explore existing coal reserves in NER

621. SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA: Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has made any survey to explore the existing coal reserves in North Eastern Region;

(b) if so, the details thereof, State-wise;

(c) the details of coal proposed to be mined by the Coal India Limited (CIL) particularly in Assam;

(d) whether any environmental degradation has been reported during opencast mining in various regions in Assam;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.