

(a) whether it is a fact that the mushrooming of mobile towers in cities and towns and in the periphery of villages has resulted in the decrease in the number of bird species;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the details of the report of Dr. Asad Rahmani Expert Committee formed in 2010 to look into the effect of mobile towers on birds?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN): (a) to (c) The Ministry of Environment and Forests had constituted an 'Expert Committee to study the possible impacts of communication towers on wildlife including Birds and Bees' on 30th August, 2010 under the Chairmanship of Dr. Asad Rahmani, Director, Bombay Natural History Society. The report of the expert Committee submitted to the Ministry in September, 2011 confirms the adverse effects of electromagnetic radiations (EMR) from mobile phones and communication towers on the health of human beings. However, it also points out that exact co-relation between radiation of communication towers and health of wildlife is so far not established. The report also states that although existing literature depicts adverse effects of electromagnetic radiations (EMR) on the biological systems of living beings, more research is required to assess the true impact of EMR on free-living floral and faunal species, including birds and bees in the country.

Environmental clearance of mines in Odisha

3104. SHRI RAMA CHANDRA KHUNTIA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state whether it is a fact that environment clearance for the Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL) mines, Thakurani area Mines of Odisha Mineral Development Corporation (OMDC) and Bisra Lime Stone Quarry in Odisha are pending with the Ministry as a result of which many public sector mines have stopped their operations and thousands of poor workers have lost their jobs?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN): The proposals for environmental clearance are considered and processed in line with the provisions under the Environment Impact Assessment notification, 2006 issued under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986. The Ministry of Environment and Forests has granted

environmental clearance to several mining projects of Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL), viz., Gua Iron Ore mine of West Singhbhum, Jharkhand; Rowghat Iron Ore Mine, Chhattisgarh; Bolani Iron Ore Mine, Odisha; Taldih-Barsua Iron Ore Mine, Odisha; Manoharpur Iron Ore Mine, West Singhbhum, Jharkhand etc. With regard to Thakurani mining project of Odisha Mineral Development Corporation (OMDC), additional information has been sought. As far as Bisra Lime Stone Quarry proposal is concerned, the same was placed in the Expert Appraisal Committee meeting held during April 16-18, 2013.

Access and benefit sharing arrangements under Bio-diversity Act, 2002

3105. SHRI N.K. SINGH:

DR. JANARDHAN WAGHMARE:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

- (a) the details of the access and benefits sharing arrangements under the Bio-diversity Act, 2002;
- (b) whether the access and benefit sharing arrangements will be modified in light of the ratification of the Nagoya Protocol; and
- (c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN): (a) As per the access and benefit sharing arrangements provided under the Biological Diversity Act, 2002 and Rules 2004, any foreign individual, institution or company desiring access to biological resources occurring in India or knowledge associated thereto for research, commercial utilisation or biosurvey and bioutilisation is required to seek prior approval of the National Biodiversity Authority (NBA). When granting approvals, NBA enters into benefit sharing agreement with the applicant imposing conditions which secure equitable sharing of benefits arising out of the use of biological resources and associated knowledge. These benefits may either be monetary or non-monetary in nature. Further, NBA approval is also required before seeking any intellectual property rights based on biological resource and associated knowledge obtained from India.

(b) and (c) The access and benefit sharing arrangements provided for in the Biological Diversity Act are broadly in compliance with the provisions of the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing, and would not require any amendment.