

Vigilance on social media

554. SHRI DHARMAPURI SRINIVAS: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government is planning to control the social media, as it is posing a serious threat to the society, if so, the details thereof; and

(b) whether to keep an eye on the social media Government has come up with a controlling tool which allows thorough investigation on the use of Facebook, Twitter, e-mail accounts of the members and if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (COL. RAJYAVARDHAN SINGH RATHORE): (a) and (b) There is no proposal in the Ministry to control Social Media. However, the Ministry proposes to set up a Social Media Hub to facilitate information flow regarding its policies and programmes through social media platforms *i.e.* Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Youtube etc. There is no proposal to invade an individual's right to privacy.

Action plan for auction of non-captive mines

555. SHRI ANAND SHARMA: Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that despite Government reminders, the States have not submitted their action plans to Centre for auctioning leases of three hundred and forty-eight non-captive mines;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor and the list of States which are required to submit the action plans;

(c) whether Government proposes to set a new schedule for the States for submission of the action plans; and

(d) if so, the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF MINES (SHRI HARIBHAI PARTHIBHAI CHAUDHARY): (a) and (b) The Central Government has received the action plan for auction of non-captive mines expiring in 2020 under Section 8(A)(6) of the MMDR Amendment Act, 2015 from State Governments of Andhra Pradesh, Goa, Gujarat, Haryana, Karnataka, Odisha and Rajasthan. For the remaining States *viz.* Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra, the status of preparedness for auction of mining leases expiring in 2020 has been received from Indian Bureau of Mines based on discussions of the State Level Committees which was constituted to finalize the exploration plans for the leases expiring in 2020.

(c) and (d) The Ministry of Mines has amended the Mineral Conservation and Development Rules in March, 2018 making it mandatory for the lease holders of these expiring leases to carry out G2 level exploration over the entire mineralised area by 1st April, 2019. In case the lease holder fails to perform his duties, the State Government may take such action for enforcing compliance under the Statute.

Illegal mining in the country

556. SHRI ANIL DESAI: Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that illegal mining of sands is being done from river belts in various States by the Sand Mafia, if so, the details of the estimated loss thereof;

(b) if so, the punitive action taken by Government to prevent such loss taking into account the environment loss and revenue loss due to illegal mining of sands; and

(c) whether any guidelines have been issued to States to control the mine mafia?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF MINES (SHRI HARIBHAI PARTHIBHAI CHAUDHARY): (a) to (c) Sand is a minor mineral, as defined under Section 3(e) of the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957 (MMDR Act). Section 15 of the MMDR Act completely devolves upon the State Governments for making rules for regulation of the grant of quarry leases, mining leases or other mineral concessions in respect of minor minerals and for purposes connected therewith.

Further, as per Section 23C of MMDR Act, 1957, State Governments have complete powers to make rules for prevention of illegal mining and for purposes connected therewith. Therefore, issue of the illegal mining of sand are completely within the domain of the respective State Governments, and the data is not maintained at the Centre.

There have been various issues across the country in the mining activities related to sand *i.e.* environmental degradation, non-availability of sand, high sand prices, illegalities in sand mining, etc. To address this issue, a Committee chaired by the Union Secretary, Ministry of Mines also comprising of officials of State Governments had been constituted to study the existing system of sand mining in various States and to submit a report. A 'Sand Mining Framework' has been prepared and circulated to the States. The 'Sand Mining Framework' is a compilation of best practices and is suggestive in nature for consideration of adoption by States while framing their rules and administrative setup, as per their objectives, endowments and State deployment of resources.