

Illegal mining in Meghalaya

2800. SHRI MAHESH PODDAR: Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that mining continues unabated in Meghalaya's East Jaintia Hills district, despite the orders of National Green Tribunal (NGT) banning it; and

(b) details of steps taken by Government to halt illegal mining in Meghalaya's East Jaintia Hills?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF MINES (SHRI HARIBHAI PARTHIBHAI CHAUDHARY): (a) and (b) National Green Tribunal (NGT) vide Order dated 17.04.2014 in OA No. 73/2014 had banned rat hole coal mining in Meghalaya. NGT vide order dated 29.09.2015 directed Ministry of Coal to examine the draft guidelines framed by Government of Meghalaya.

NGT *vide* order dated 31.08.2018 directed that the orders of ban of rat hole mining will continue, subject to further orders of the Hon'ble Supreme Court. Ban of transportation of the already mined material will also continue. Further NGT constituted an independent Committee for restoration of the environment and rehabilitation of the victims.

The final order of NGT has been challenged in the Hon'ble Supreme Court by Government of Meghalaya. Supreme Court *vides* order dated 04.12.2018 has allowed transportation of 176655 metric tonnes of coal up to 31.01.2019 and listed the matter on 15.01.2019.

As such, as of now, neither there is any exemption nor Government of Meghalaya or any other party has sought any approval for carrying out coal mining operations in their State.

Effective functioning of Panchayats

2801. SHRI HARNATH SINGH YADAV: Will the Minister of PANCHAYATI RAJ be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is contemplating to bring rural staff and important local officials such as teachers, doctors, anganwadi workers, agricultural assistants, veterinary doctors, linemen of electricity and telephones departments dealing with the villagers, under the monitoring of Gram Sabha Scheme to ensure effective functioning of Panchayats;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps taken by Government to provide funds to the Panchayati Raj Institutions, to improve their functioning and development of their workers in order to empower the Panchayats?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI PARSHOTTAM RUPALA): (a) and (b) 'Panchayats' being in the realm of 'Local Government' is a State subject mandated at Part IX and List II (State List) of Seventh Schedule (Article 246) of the Constitution of India. As per Article 243G of the Constitution, Panchayats have been mandated for preparation of plans for economic development and social justice. Accordingly the Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP) is envisaged as a participatory and structured exercise involving convergence with the line departments related to 29 subjects listed in the Eleventh Schedule of the Constitution. The Government launched People's Plan Campaign 'Sabki Yojana Sabka Vikas' from 2nd October, 2018 to enable the Gram Panchayats to prepare comprehensive GPDP for the year 2019-20 in an evidence based and structured manner. Special Gram Sabha meetings are held, where frontline officials of all line Departments are involved in formulation of realistic and meaningful GPDPs for the year 2019-20. Many States have posted line department officials under Panchayat. However, no specific proposal is under consideration of the Ministry of Panchayati Raj (MoPR) for bringing rural staff and important local officials under the monitoring of Gram Sabha.

(c) Under Fourteenth Finance Commission (FFC) for the award period 2015-20, grants to the tune of ₹ 2,00,292.20 crore for the period from 2015 to 2020 have been allocated to Gram Panchayats constituted under Part IX of the Constitution, amounting to an assistance of ₹ 488 per capita per annum at an aggregate level for 26 States for delivering basic services (such as water supply, sanitation, sewerage, solid waste management, storm water drainage, maintenance of community assets, roads, footpath, street light, burial and cremation grounds etc), technical and administrative support towards operations and maintenance, creation of reliable data base of local bodies' receipts & expenditure through audited accounts and for improvement of own source revenue of the Gram Panchayats.

The Ministry of Panchayati Raj (MoPR) implemented the Rajiv Gandhi Panchayat Sashaktikaran Abhiyaan (RGPSA) during the year 2012-13 upto 2015-16 and Capacity Building-Panchayat Sashaktikaran Abhiyan (CB-PSA) during 2016-17 and 2017-18 for strengthening of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) across the country and to address

the critical gaps that constrain the functioning of Panchayats through promotion of devolution of powers, facilitating democratic decision making through People's participations, accountability in Panchayats, strengthening the institutional structure for knowledge creation and capacity building of Panchayats etc. Under these schemes, funds had been released to States/UTs towards activities approved thereby resulting in strengthening of PRIs.

Further, Government on 21.04.2018 approved the restructured Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS) of Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan (RGSA) w.e.f. the Financial Year 2018-19 with the primary aim of strengthening Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRI's) for achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's) with main thrust on convergence with Mission Antyodaya and emphasis on strengthening PRIs in the 117 Aspirational districts. The scheme provides for financial support to States towards strengthening of Panchayats for different activities to improve their functioning and for capacity building of Panchayat Elected Representatives and functionaries to empower the Panchayats, viz. capacity building and training, training infrastructure, human resource for training, technical support to Panchayats, e-enablement, Information Education and Communication (IEC) and Project Management Unit (PMU) etc. as included in their respective Annual Action Plan (AAP).

Funds under BRGF to Odisha

2802. SHRI NARENDRA KUMAR SWAIN: Will the Minister of PANCHAYATI RAJ be pleased to state:

- (a) the names of the districts included by Government under the Backward Regions Grant Fund (BRGF) in Odisha by the Central Government;
- (b) the amount of funds allocated to State Government under BRGF;
- (c) whether Government proposes to amend the instructions for inclusion of backward regions of Odisha; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI PARSHOTTAM RUPALA): (a) Twenty districts of Odisha were included under the District component of Backward Regions Grant Fund (BRGF) programme. The names of these districts are given in Statement (*See* below).