

- (b) if so, the details thereof; and
- (c) whether Government is planning to allow the import of sand for construction?

THE MINISTER OF MINES (SHRI PRALHAD JOSHI): (a) and (b) Section 23C of the Mines and Minerals (Development & Regulation) (MMDR) Act, 1957, empowers the State Governments to make rules for preventing illegal mining, transportation and storage of minerals and for the purposes connected therewith. Sand is a minor mineral under Section 3(e) of the MMDR Act. For minor minerals, all policy and legislation for grant of mineral concessions, regulation and administration is covered in the jurisdiction of the State Governments under the MMDR Act and the Rules framed thereunder.

(c) As per the ITC (HS) Scheduled (Import Policy), 2017, notified by Directorate General of Foreign Trade, import policy of natural sands all kinds is free. Therefore, the question of allowing / granting permission for import of sand for construction does not arise.

Auction of iron ore mines and the extension of lease

2479. SHRI VIVEK K. TANKHA: Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government is planning to extend the mining leases of Iron ore lease holders (private merchant miners), which are due to lapse in March, 2020;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and if not, whether any steps have been taken to expedite the auction of Iron ore blocks which are due to lapse in March, 2020; and
- (c) if so, details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF MINES (SHRI PRALHAD JOSHI): (a) No, Sir. The mines expiring in March, 2020 are to be reallocated through auction.

(b) and (c) To expedite the auction of mines including Iron ore mines, which are due to expire in March, 2020, General Exploration (G2) over the entire mineralised area under the mining lease has been completed in working mines. The modality for seamless grant of fresh Environment Clearance and Forest Clearance has also been worked out in consultation with Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.

Scrambling for auction of mines

2480. SHRI T. RATHINAVEL: Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that Government had asked the States involved in mining to prepare the roadmap for a transition;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;