

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1971
TO BE ANSWERED ON 08.08.2024

Environmental impacts of decommissioning and reusing coal mines and thermal power plants

1971. SHRI BABUBHAI JESANGBHAI DESAI:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE be pleased to state:

- (a) the details of how Government is addressing the environmental impacts of decommissioning and reusing coal mines and thermal power plants, particularly in terms of land rehabilitation and pollution control; and
- (b) the details of how Government is collaborating with environmental think tanks, such as, iFOREST, to ensure a smooth and equitable energy transition in Maharashtra and Gujarat

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE
(SHRI KIRTI VARDHAN SINGH)

(a) & (b) The environmental impacts of decommissioning / closure of a coal mine is addressed by the mine owner as per the approved Final Mine Closure Plan (MCP) from Coal Comptroller Organization (CCO). The air, water and soil quality of the surrounding region of the decommissioned / closed / discontinued mine is monitored and the mine owner is to ensure that the closure plan should include control of the pollution from the concerned mine. After the closure of the coal mine, the reclaimed land is leased out for various repurposing activities as per policy guidelines of Ministry of Coal. For decommissioning of Thermal Power Plants (TPPs), the project proponents are required to follow various rules and regulations, guidelines such as Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1976; Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981; Hazardous Waste Management Rules, 2016; Solid Waste Management Rules, 2016 and E-waste Management Rules, 2022. The decision to decommission a TPP is taken by power generating companies based on their own techno-economic & commercial considerations and environmental reasons. The power generating companies or concerned State Governments generally take the decision on repurposing of the project land while decommissioning a TPP depending on the local requirements, future projects etc. taking into consideration the minimum environmental impacts of decommissioning and reusing the land for installation of a new TPP or any other project. In case the project proponent decides to go for installation of a new project, including a new TPP, necessary clearances and permissions shall be obtained as per the extant rules/regulations/notifications from the Competent Authorities. The Central Electricity Authority has issued an advisory to all the Thermal Power Utilities not to retire or repurpose their coal-based power stations (units having capacity of more than 200 MW) before 2030 and to ensure the availability of thermal units after carrying out Renovation and Modernization (R&M) activities, if required, considering the expected energy demand scenario and availability of capacity in future.
