

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF COAL

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 48
TO BE ANSWERED ON 25.11.2024

Monitoring of pollution levels in Odisha's Coal Mining Regions

48 Shri Debashish Samantaray:

Will the Minister of **COAL** be pleased to state:

- (a) the steps taken to monitor quality of air, water, and soil in the coal mining regions of Odisha, and the frequency of environmental audits;
- (b) the mechanisms in place to publicly report pollution levels in these areas and inform local communities of the findings; and
- (c) any real-time monitoring system being considered for Odisha's major coal mining areas to better manage and respond to pollution concerns?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF COAL AND MINES
(SHRI G. KISHAN REDDY)

(a) Under the Ministry of Coal, Mahanadi Coalfields Limited (MCL), a subsidiary of Coal India Limited and NLC India Limited (NLCIL), are involved in coal mining operations in the State of Odisha. In the coal mining areas of Odisha under Mahanadi Coalfields Limited (MCL), regular monitoring of various environmental parameters such as air, water, noise, and soil is carried out at different locations across each mine, with varying frequencies. As per the conditions outlined in the Consent to Operate (CTO) for each mine, an environmental audit is conducted annually and the environmental statement is submitted to the State Pollution Control Board (SPCB) in Bhubaneswar by September 30th of each year.

In the Talabira II & III OCP mines of NLCIL located in Odisha, a monitoring agency has been engaged by NLCIL to conduct regular assessments of air quality, water quality, and noise levels in both the core and buffer zones of the mine lease.

With regard to commercial mines auctioned by Nominated Authority (NA), Ministry of Coal, including mines in the State of Odisha, it is mandated by clause 11.5 of the Coal Block Development and Production signed between the successful bidder and the Nominated Authority to implement mechanized systems for coal extraction, transportation, and evacuation, in line with modern and widely accepted technologies. Furthermore, the successful bidder is obligated to minimize the carbon footprint of mining operations, take measures to reduce environmental pollution, and foster sustainability, following recognized industry best practices.

(b) The mechanism for publicly reporting pollution levels includes making monitoring reports for air, water, and noise levels at MCL mines available on the official MCL website. Additionally, display boards have been installed at the mine premises for public access to this information.

Similarly, NLCIL has installed LED display boards at the mine gate, where environmental data regarding air quality, noise levels, and water quality monitoring are also made available to the public.

(c) MCL and NLCIL have installed Continuous Ambient Air Quality Monitoring Stations (CAAQMS) in and around the mines in Odisha. The data from these CAAQMS are transmitted to the Odisha State Pollution Control Board (OSPCB) in Bhubaneswar to enhance the management and response to pollution-related issues.
