

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF MINES
RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION No. 922
ANSWERED ON 28.07.2025

LACK OF CLEAR OUTCOMES IN ILLEGAL MINING INVESTIGATIONS

922. SHRI JAGGESH:

Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that the investigation into illegal mining across several States has been widely criticised for its sluggish pace and lack of decisive outcomes;
- (b) whether the State of Karnataka is considered a hotspot for illegal mining, particularly in the districts of Ballari, Tumakuru, and Chitradurga;
- (c) the estimated financial loss to Government due to illegal mining in recent years, State-wise;
- (d) whether the use of GPS and drone surveillance, stringent enforcement actions, and digitised tracking of mineral transport are expected to curb illegal mining; and
- (e) if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

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

(a) No such information is available. It is submitted that the Section 23C of the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) (MMDR) Act, 1957 empowers the State Government to frame rules to prevent illegal mining, transportation and storage of minerals and for purposes connected therewith. Therefore, the control of illegal mining, transportation and storage of minerals and purposes connected therewith is the primary responsibility of the State Government. The Central Government supports and augments these efforts through policy initiatives from time to time. Accordingly, the MMDR Act, 1957 was amended through the MMDR (Amendment) Act, 2015, wherein Section 30B and 30C read with Section 21 and 23C, *inter-alia*, provide stringent punitive provisions for illegal mining, transportation and storage. All major mining states have framed rules under section 23C of the MMDR Act, 1957.

(b) The Government of Karnataka has submitted that due to the intervention of the Hon'ble Supreme Court in WP No. 562/2009 filed by Samaj Parivartana Samudaya, the mining activities have been streamlined in Karnataka. The resumption of mining activities and such other activities are closely monitored by the Monitoring Committee constituted by the Hon'ble Supreme Court in the said order.

(c) No such information is available with the Government in view of (a) above.

(d) & (e) Some of the steps taken by the Central Government for the prevention and control of illegal mining in the country are as under:

(i) The Ministry of Mines has launched the Mining Surveillance System (MSS) in October 2016 through IBM. The MSS system detects likely incidences of illegal mining using space technology. The triggers generated are sent to State Governments for verification and further action.

(ii) The Ministry of Mines also issued guidelines on 03.10.2023 to major mineral rich States for prevention of misclassification of grades of iron ore and other minerals by using technology. The State Governments were requested to implement the said guidelines by suitably incorporating the same in the rules framed by the State Governments under Section 23C of the MMDR Act, 1957. The said guidelines envisage the use of technologies like GPS, RFID, Geo-fencing, block chain technology for tracking of minerals during complete value chain including self-declaration of grades, tracking of transport vehicles, automation of invoice reconciliation etc.
