

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF COAL

**RAJYA SABHA**  
**UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 210**  
ANSWERED ON 02.02.2026

EXTRACTION IN HIGH COAL RESERVE DISTRICTS

210 SHRI SUBHASISH KHUNTIA:

Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the country has crossed one billion tonne coal production and moving towards a target of 1.5 billion tonnes by 2029–30, if so, the measures taken or proposed to ensure environmentally sustainable coal extraction in high coal-reserve districts, so as to prevent adverse impacts on forests, land, water resources and habitations;

(b) the steps being undertaken to safeguard the livelihoods, health and rehabilitation of local and tribal communities affected by large-scale mining expansion; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

**ANSWER**

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

(a): Yes, coal production in the country has crossed one billion tonne in financial year 2025-26 is moving towards a target of 1.5 billion tonnes by 2029–30. To ensure environmentally sustainable coal extraction, all new and expansion coal mining projects are undertaken only after obtaining prior Environmental Clearance, based on a comprehensive Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) that evaluates potential impacts on air, water, land, forests, biodiversity and habitations. EIA is accompanied by an Environmental Management Plan (EMP) that prescribes mitigation and management measures for environmental protection.

EMPs are implemented across coal mines and include measures such as scientific mine planning, phased mining, concurrent reclamation of mined-out areas, backfilling of mine voids, and ecological restoration as per approved mine closure plans. Measures like afforestation, green belt development, plantation using preserved top soil, and, where feasible, tree translocation are undertaken to compensate for loss of flora and to protect forest and land resources.

Diversion of forest land is regulated under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 and the Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam, 2023, which mandate prior approval of the Central Government. Grant of Forest Clearance involves two-stage mechanism and scrutiny at State and Central levels apart from mandatory compliance with compensatory afforestation,

payment of Net Present Value and other statutory levies to ensure minimum diversion of forest land and adequate compensation through afforestation and ecological restoration.

To control air pollution, multiple dust suppression and emission control measures are implemented, such as deployment of surface miners with dust control systems, fixed and mobile water sprinkling arrangements, fog cannons, wind barriers around coal stockyards, mechanized vehicle washing systems, and regular road cleaning and maintenance. Continuous Ambient Air Quality Monitoring Stations are installed for real-time monitoring,

Water resource protection measures include provision of garland drains and settling pits for management of surface runoff, reuse of collected mine and rainwater for dust suppression, washing and plantation.

Further, the Government has notified the Environment Audit Rules, 2025 under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986, to strengthen the environmental compliance framework for projects operating under various environmental laws, including coal mining projects. This mechanism supplements the existing monitoring undertaken by the Central and State Pollution Control Boards and provides for issuance of guidelines, directions, and oversight by a Steering Committee chaired by MoEF&CC.

(b) and (c): The Government, through coal companies, undertakes a range of measures to safeguard the livelihoods, health and rehabilitation of local and tribal communities affected by mining activities.

Land acquisition for coal mining projects is carried out in accordance with applicable laws, and compensation, rehabilitation and resettlement benefits are provided to project-affected families as per the prescribed norms. Possession of land is taken only after payment of all legitimate dues, and after basic infrastructure and civic amenities are developed at resettlement sites to ensure continuity of living standards.

In respect of tribal communities, relocation is carried out by resettling tribal families as cohesive units, with additional support provided to offset the loss of customary rights and traditional livelihood sources. Relevant State-specific guidelines on tribal rehabilitation are also adhered to, though the modalities of implementation may vary across companies.

To safeguard health, companies maintain a comprehensive medical and occupational health framework for its workforce and surrounding communities. Preventive and curative healthcare services, including occupational health surveillance, are provided and community health outreach programmes are conducted in villages around mining areas.

In addition, coal companies accord priority to project-affected areas and nearby habitations under its Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives that focus on healthcare, education, skill development, rural infrastructure and environmental sustainability.

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