GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF COAL

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 3391
ANSWERED ON 23.03.2026

PLANNED COAL EXPANSION AND ITS ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

3391. SHRI. MALLIKARJUN KHARGE:

Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state

(a) whether Government is confident that its current plans for coal exploration, production and usage are consistent with India's climate goals (including its nationally determined contribution and net-zero by 2070 target);
(b) whether Government has commissioned any recent assessment to evaluate the climate risk posed by planned coal expansion by Government such as an increase in methane emissions; and
(c) the measures being taken to mitigate emissions from coal mines?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE FOR COAL AND MINES

(SHRI SATISH CHANDRA DUBEY)

(a): Yes Sir. India's coal exploration, production and usage plans are pursued while keeping in view the country's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and the net-zero emissions target by 2070. Coal will continue to have a significant share in India's energy mix to ensure a reliable and affordable energy supply.

(b): The methane emissions from coal mines released during the extraction, processing, storage and distribution of coal are estimated under the subcategory 'fugitive emissions from solid fuels (above-ground and below-ground mining)' under the energy sector. Though there is no mechanism in place in the coal sector for monitoring and regulating fugitive methane emissions, Ministry of Environment Forest & Climate Change (MoEF&CC) reports emission assessment to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

(c): Coal companies have adopted a multi-pronged strategy to mitigate emissions and reduce environmental impacts arising from coal mining operations. Key measures include:

i. **Adoption of Cleaner Coal Logistics:** Implementation of First Mile Connectivity (FMC) projects, including mechanised coal handling plants, covered conveyor systems, and silo-based loading, to reduce dust and particulate emissions during transportation.
ii. **Promotion of Energy Efficiency:** Deployment of energy-efficient equipment, regular maintenance of heavy machinery, and adoption of digital mine management systems to optimise fuel use and reduce emissions.

iii. **Shift towards Sustainable Mining Practices:** Increased emphasis on underground mining, where feasible, to reduce surface disturbance, along with scientific mine planning and progressive mine closure practices.

iv. **Dust and Emission Control Measures:** Black-topping and regular maintenance of haul roads, installation of water sprinkling systems, and use of dust suppression technologies to control fugitive emissions.

v. **Afforestation and Ecological Restoration:** Large-scale plantation, green belt development, and bio-reclamation of mined-out areas to enhance carbon sequestration and restore ecological balance.

vi. **Land Reclamation and Community Use:** Development of Eco-Parks, mine tourism sites, and other community-oriented green spaces on reclaimed land.

vii. **Cleaner Energy Transition Initiatives:** Adoption of electric vehicles (EVs), solar power generation, and other renewable energy projects within mining areas to reduce dependence on fossil fuels.

In addition, all new and expansion mining projects are subject to prior Environmental Clearance, which includes preparation and implementation of detailed Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA) and Environmental Management Plans (EMP). These frameworks ensure systematic mitigation of environmental impacts and compliance with statutory environmental standards throughout the lifecycle of mining operations.

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