

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 107
TO BE ANSWERED ON 01.12.2025

Prevention of Illegal Mining to maintain Ecosystem

107. SHRI SANJAY UTTAMRAO DESHMUKH:

SHRI OMPRAKASH BHUPALSINH ALIAS PAVAN RAJENIMBALKAR:

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

- (a) whether illegal mining in various States of the country is causing huge damage to ecosystem that affecting vegetation, flora, fauna and ground water levels;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether the Government has taken special steps to check illegal mining and to revive and maintain environmental balance and if so, the details thereof;
- (d) the details of illegal mining cases reported during the last five years and the current year, State/UT-wise and district-wise, particularly in Maharashtra;
- (e) whether the Government proposes to implement new scheme or policy for ecological conservation, take strict measures against illegal mining and raising awareness among the local community; and
- (f) if so, the details thereof along with the likely time frame in this regard?

ANSWER

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

(a) to (f) The illegal mining is defined in Mineral Concession rules 2016 notified under MMDR Act, 1957 by Ministry of Mines. As per Section 23C of the Mines & Minerals (Development & Regulation) (MMDR) Act, 1957, the State Governments are empowered to frame rules to prevent illegal mining, transportation, and storage of minerals and matters connected therewith. Therefore, the control of illegal mining is primary responsibility of the concerned State Government. All major mining states have framed rules under section 23C of MMDR Act, 1957 to curb illegal mining. Further, States have also set up Task Forces, specially constituted to control illegal mining and review the action taken by member departments for checking the illegal mining activities.

The MMDR Act, 1957 was amended through the MMDR Amendment Act, 2015, which came into effect from 12th January, 2015, wherein Section 30B and 30C read with section 21 and 23C, inter-alia, provides stringent punitive provisions for combating illegal mining. Illegal mining has been made punishable with imprisonment for a term, which may extend to five years and with fine, which may extend to five lakh rupees per hectare of the area. Provisions have been made for setting up of Special Courts for the purpose of providing speedy trial of offences relating to illegal mining. 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 and surveillance of area up to 500 m outside the lease boundary. The triggers generated are sent to State Governments for verification and further action.

The Ministry of Mines has 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..

Further, MoEFCC has taken several steps to ensure adherence to the environmental safeguards due to mining of minerals. These include, inter-alia, mandating the requirement of prior environmental clearance under the provisions of Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) Notification, 2006, as amended from time to time with general and specific conditions forming part of prior Environmental Clearance.

Beside above, the MoEF&CC is actively implementing several schemes for the conservation and restoration. These include the National Mission for a Green India (GIM) under the National Action Plan on Climate Change, which aims at afforestation and ecosystem restoration across forest and non-forest landscapes. The Nagar Van Yojana (NVY) focuses on creating green spaces in urban areas to protect forests from degradation and encroachment. The "School Nursery Yojana" engages students in environmental conservation by fostering an appreciation for plant biodiversity. Additionally, the Government has launched the "Mangrove Initiative for Shoreline Habitats & Tangible Incomes" (MISHTI) to restore mangrove ecosystems along India's coastlines. Under the "Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam" campaign, States and Union Territories have undertaken plantation activities to enhance greenery. Furthermore, funds under the Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority (CAMPA) are utilized for forest and wildlife conservation efforts, including afforestation initiatives. These measures collectively contribute to environmental sustainability and biodiversity conservation.

As per the information received from Maharashtra State Directorate of Geology & Mining (DGM), in the State of Maharashtra, the Mining Surveillance System (MSS) is an automated

platform developed by the Ministry of Mines (MoM) with technical support from BISAG-N, which generates triggers purely on the basis of satellite imagery and remote-sensing analysis to curb illegal Mining activity. State DGM has further informed that in exercise of the powers conferred by the section 23(c) of Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act 1957, Government of Maharashtra made the rules to regulate the possession, storage, trading and transport of major minerals and minerals products and to check the evasion of royalty or seigniorage fee, stopping illegal mining and transport in the State as ***Maharashtra Mineral (Prevention of illegal Mining, Transportation and Storage Rules) Rules, 2001***, which came into force on 16 June 2001. State Government of Maharashtra is actively moving ahead with new rules and programmes for ecological conservation, stricter action on illegal mining (especially sand), and community-level awareness. Several concrete policies/steps were announced or published through 2024–2025 and are being implemented/rolled out through 2025–26. Further State Government of Maharashtra has formulated a Sand Policy 2025 dated 08.04.2025 which promotes manufactured sand (M-Sand) to reduce river sand mining, defines permissions/uses at gram-panchayat level, and includes measures to regularise and monitor sand extraction. The Sand Policy provisions, district ordinances (e.g., June 2025), forest department SOPs and the 10-crore plantation campaign items were issued in 2025 and many actions (crackdowns, licence changes) have been occurring throughout 2025.

As per the information provided by Maharashtra State DGM, total 43,966 cases related to illegal mining for minor mineral were reported and 5896 FIRs were lodged in the State of Maharashtra from the year 2019-20 to 2023-24. The statement showing the year wise minor mineral cases, FIR and fine imposed for illegal mining from the year 2019-20 to 2023-24 in the State of Maharashtra is given at **Annexure 1**.

Annexure 1

The statement showing the year wise minor mineral cases and fine imposed for illegal mining from the year 2019-20 to 2023-24 in the State of Maharashtra (as per State DGM Maharashtra)

S.No	Year	Cases	Amount in lacs	FIR
1	2019-20	10363	9332.19	988
2	2020-21	10845	10119.90	1149
3	2021-22	8031	18892.20	2490
4	2022-23	5902	8170.91	470
5	2023-24	8825	11643.97	799
