

year 2010-11, it has reported 6476 cases of illegal mining. Details of iron ore produced illegally in Karnataka are not maintained centrally.

(c) and (d) As per the directions dated 29th July 2011 of Apex Court, mining operations and transportation in Bellary district were suspended till further orders. On 5th August 2011, the Apex Court permitted two mines of NMDC in the Bellary district to produce iron ore to the extent of one million tonnes per month commencing from 6th August 2011 till further orders. Further *vide* directions dated 26th August 2011, mining activities in districts of Tumkur and Chitradurga in Karnataka have also been suspended by the Supreme Court.

(e) and (f) As per available information, mining operations have been restrained in 142 mines by Court directions on account of environmental hazard in the State of Karnataka, and 40,000 (estimated) workers have been affected.

Operating cost of aluminium producers

2871. SHRI Y.S. CHOWDARY: Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

- (a) the details of operating cost of each Aluminium producing company during the last three years;
- (b) whether it is a fact that the operating cost have risen during the last one year;
- (c) if so, the reasons therefor; and
- (d) the steps taken/being taken by Government to reduce the operating cost?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF MINES (SHRI DINSHA J. PATEL): (a) The primary producers of aluminium in the country viz. National Aluminium Company Limited (NALCO), HINDALCO Industries, Bharat Aluminium Company Limited (BALCO) and Vedanta Aluminium Limited have declined to provide information regarding their operating cost on account of commercial confidentiality.

(b) Yes, Sir. The primary producers have informed that their operating costs have risen during the last one year.

- (c) The increase in the operating cost during the last one year is mainly due to the following:
- (i) Increase in prices of major raw materials and energy inputs viz. Calcined Petroleum Coke, Coal Tar Pitch, Aluminium Flouride, Caustic soda, Fuel oil, etc.

- (ii) Increase in transportation costs.
- (iii) Increase in the price of coal by the Coal Companies.
- (iv) Increase in employee remuneration and benefits due to high inflation rate and increased cost of living/ pay revision, etc.

(d) The primary producers endeavour to reduce their operating cost through a slew of measures like reducing power consumption by adopting energy conservation methods, modernization of equipments, increase in current efficiency, reducing fallen anodes in smelter, improving productivity of workers, etc. As energy cost is substantial in aluminium smelting, all the primary producers of aluminium have been brought under the ambit of a new initiative launched by the Government of India for energy conservation and assigned a target to reduce specific energy consumption from its base line value within a defined period *i.e.* 2010-11 to 2013-14, to be monitored by the Bureau of Energy Efficiency (Ministry of Power). Besides, the Government also reviews from time to time the rates of various duties including import duty on raw materials required for production of aluminium, reduction in transmission loss, allocation of coal blocks and/or linkage coal to the extent possible, with the objective of reducing the overall operating cost of primary aluminium producers.

Problems of coal and minerals

†2872. SHRI PRABHAT JHA: Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that there is no forum for better co-ordination between the Central and State Governments for resolving problems relating coal and minerals;
- (b) if so, the reasons therefor;
- (c) if not, the details thereof;
- (d) whether it is a fact that a proposal of Madhya Pradesh Government for fixing royalty on coal is under consideration of the Central Government; and
- (e) if so, by when a decision is likely to be taken on this proposal?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF MINES (SHRI DINSHA J. PATEL): (a) to (c) In respect of non-coal minerals, the Government had set up a Central Coordination-cum-Empowered Committee (CCEC) on 4.3.2009, which has been reconstituted on 20.10.2011. The Terms of Reference of the CCEC shall be as follows:

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.