



### A. ENVIRONMENT CLEARANCE

■ Presently, there are 574 coal mines in India with about 2.1 lakh hectare (ha) mine lease area and the present coal production is of the order of 550 million tonnes.

■ In the last five years, during the 11<sup>th</sup> five year plan (FYP) period (till August 2011), 181 coal mines (including projects that applied for capacity expansion) were given environment clearance (EC) by Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) (*see Table 1: Coal mining and environment clearance during 11<sup>th</sup> FYP*). The combined production capacity of these 181 coal mines is at least 583 million tonnes per annum (MTPA). In 2010, India produced 537 million tonnes of coal. So, during the last five years, MoEF has granted EC to double the coal production capacity in the country.

**Table 1: Coal mining and environment clearance during 11<sup>th</sup> FYP\***

State	Number of mines granted EC	Capacity (in MTPA)
Andhra Pradesh	29	48.46
Assam	1	0.15
Chhattisgarh	21	102.88
Gujarat	1	0.30
Jharkhand	32	140.33
Maharashtra	32	43.14
Madhya Pradesh	35	134.95
Odisha	13	93.69
Rajasthan	4	5.50
Uttar Pradesh	1	4.00
West Bengal	12	9.87
<b>Total</b>	<b>181</b>	<b>583.26</b>

\*2007 – August 2011

■ The mine lease area of these 181 projects is about 154,000 ha. This is about the same as the total mine lease area with public sector coal mining companies pre-2007. Public sector coal mining companies produce about 90 per cent coal of the country. Thus, during the 11<sup>th</sup> FYP alone, the mine leases for coal and coal production capacity have been more or less doubled.

### B. FOREST CLEARANCE

■ From 2007 to August 2011, 113 coal mining projects have been granted forest clearance (FC) (*see Table 2: Coal mining and forest clearance during 11<sup>th</sup> FYP*). This includes 67 projects which received final forest clearance and 46 projects which received in-principle forest clearance. About 26,000 ha of forestland has been diverted for coal mining since 2007. During the 10<sup>th</sup> FYP the total forestland diverted for all mining projects was about 29,000 ha. So, the forestland diverted for coal mining alone during 11<sup>th</sup> FYP is equivalent to forestland diverted for all mining projects in 10<sup>th</sup> FYP.

**Table 2: Coal mining and forest clearance during 11<sup>th</sup> FYP**

State	Number of projects granted in-principle clearance	Number of projects granted final clearance	Total number of projects	Forestland diverted (in ha)
Andhra Pradesh	6	14	20	4909
Chhattisgarh	15	9	24	8927
Jharkhand	14	27	41	7058
Madhya Pradesh	6	10	16	3295
Maharashtra	2	1	3	323
Odisha	2	6	8	1248
West Bengal	1		1	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>25764</b>

■ The pace of environment and forest clearances granted to coal mining projects during 11<sup>th</sup> FYP has been tremendous. It is contrary to industry's perception about MoEF not granting clearances to projects. In fact, MoEF is granting clearances to projects without considering the cumulative impact of these projects on environment, forests and wildlife. This is becoming quite evident in places like Bellary, Korba, Angul-Talcher, Ib Valley, Singrauli, Chandrapur, etc.

### C. ENVIRONMENT CLEARANCE GRANTED WITHOUT CONSIDERING CUMULATIVE IMPACT

■ All coal mining areas have very high levels of pollution and most coal mining companies have very poor environment management record. It is precisely because of this that most coal mining districts were declared as critically polluted areas (CPAs) by MoEF in 2010.

■ The monitoring of coal mines by State Pollution Control Boards and the Central Pollution Control Board shows that one-third of the operating coal mines are violating environmental norms. The performance of coal mining companies in mine closure is also very poor. There are at least 240 abandoned coal mines where no reclamation has taken place.

■ The problem is that a large proportion of the new coal mining and thermal power projects are also coming up in the same CPAs (*see Table 3: Projects granted environment clearance during 11<sup>th</sup> FYP in critically polluted coalfields*). Since no cumulative assessment was done before granting EC or FC, most of these areas are likely to remain critically polluted.

**Table 3: Projects granted environment clearance during 11<sup>th</sup> FYP in critically polluted coalfields**

District	Coal mining capacity (in MTPA)	Coal-based thermal power capacity (in MW)
Korba	77.64 +	4220
Angul-Talcher	72.17 +	5734
Hazaribagh-Chatra	97 (20% of India's current production)	4135
Singrauli	48.375 +	10080
Chandrapur	25.576 +	7260
Raigarh	19.2 +	4200
Jharsuguda	16.5 +	5095

#### **D. IS THERE A NEED FOR MORE COAL MINES?**

- It is important to ascertain the kind of coal reserves with each company and their present capacity utilisation.
- Coal India Limited (CIL) which produces over 90 per cent of India's coal today, has under its control over 200,000 ha of mine lease area which includes 55,000 ha of forest area. The estimated coal reserves with CIL are 64 billion tonnes but it is currently producing only around 500 million tonnes.
- The question needs to be asked: who is responsible for the shortage of coal in the country when CIL is already sitting on reserves, which it is not mining? It would seem that this process is being done to facilitate the entry of private companies to get access to captive coal-mines. But even these private companies seem to sit on reserves once they obtain it.
- Many private companies have got coal mines in the last few years and many of them have not yet started production. For instance, captive coal linkage was granted to a number of companies in the Rampia coal block in January 2008. Till December 2010, almost after three years of having got the captive coal linkage, these companies had not developed the coal block. The Ministry of Coal issued a warning to them in July 2011 to develop the block immediately to avoid proceedings or even de-allocation of the block. This is not a one off case.
- In November 2003, coal linkage from the Bhandak (West) coal block in Wardha Valley coalfield (Maharashtra) was granted for captive power plant of a private company. Even after repeated show cause notices and warnings from the ministry when the company did not develop the coal block, the ministry ordered de-allocation in July, 2011. Similarly, in February 2007 captive coal linkage was granted from the Warora (North) coal block to a private company. The same was de-allocated in May, 2011 due to the lack of seriousness in developing the coal block on part of the company.
- This clearly points to the need for a mine-wise analysis of actual/planned potential production in order to devise a strategy to achieve potential production.