

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
DEPARTMENT OF ATOMIC ENERGY
LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1531
TO BE ANSWERED ON 30.11.2011

MINING OF MONAZITE

1531. SHRI KODIKKUNNIL SURESH:
SHRI D.B. CHANDRE GOWDA:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

- (a) the quantum of monazite being exported to other countries;
- (b) whether some of our beaches from where sand is exported to other countries contain monazite and thorium;
- (c) if so, the details thereof;
- (d) whether the companies which have been given the contract for mining beach sand do not have the technical know-how to separate thorium from monazite;
- (e) if so, the details thereof;
- (f) whether the companies mining beach sand have violated the norms of Atomic Energy Regulatory Board (AERB) in regard to setting up of mineral separations plants; and
- (g) if so, the details thereof and the corrective steps taken/proposed to be taken by the Government in this regard?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES & PENSIONS
AND PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE (SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY)

- (a) Monazite is being exported only by Indian Rare Earth Limited (IREL), a public sector undertaking under the Department of Atomic Energy. The quantum of monazite exported by IREL in the last three years are given below:

Year	Quantity (tonnes)
2010-11	5
2009-10	2
2008-09	5

...2

- (b) Beach sands contain heavy minerals such as ilmenite, rutile, leucoxene, garnet, sillimanite, zircon and monazite (which is radioactive and a source of thorium). Ilmenite, rutile, leucoxene, garnet, sillimanite and zircon are separated from beach sands and these individual heavy minerals free of monazite are being exported. As per the latest notification of Department of Atomic Energy vide ref. S.O.61(E) dated January 20, 2006, these heavy minerals are delisted from the prescribed substances list and hence for the handling of these minerals licence from Department of Atomic Energy under the Atomic Energy (Working of the Mines, Minerals and Handling of Prescribed Substance) Rules, 1984 is not required. However, licence under the Atomic Energy Act is still required for handling / export of monazite and Thorium, which are prescribed substances. This Department has not given any licences for export of beach sand as such.
- (c) Answered in (b) above.
- (d) Consequent to de-listing of ilmenite, Rutile, Zircon etc. from the list of prescribed substances, no licences or permission are required from DAE for these substances. However, under the guidelines framed by the Atomic Energy Regulatory Board (AERB) individual processors of beach sand have to separate and safely keep the monazite content of such sand. No individual or entity is permitted to process monazite in any manner without a licence from DAE. Further no licences have been given to any private party to process monazite and separate thorium.
- (e) Same as (d) above
- (f) No, Sir.
- (g) Not applicable.
