

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

Protection of the natural environment is accorded high priority in India. The Government of India has appointed a senior and respected politician, Mr. Kamal Nath, as Minister of Environment and Forests. The policies and legislation of the environment ministry have a direct impact on Indian industry, and on the policies of government industrial development ministries, including the Ministry of Mines.

India's environmental priorities are spelled out in the 1993 Environment Action Programme, India. The eight specified priority areas are:

- "a) conservation and sustainable utilization of biodiversity in selected ecosystems:
- b) afforestation, waste lands development, and conservation of soil and moisture and ensuring that water sources are not polluted:
- c) control of industrial and related pollution with an accent on the reduction and/or management of wastes, particularly hazardous wastes:
- d) improving access to clean technologies:
- e) tackling urban environmental issues:
- f) strengthening scientific understanding of environmental issues: and
- g) an alternative energy plan."

Environmental Management

There are five pieces of legislation with direct relevance to the environmental management of mining operations. They are:

- 1) Mineral Conservation and Development Rules. 1988
- 2) Environment (Protection) Act, 1986
- 3) Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act. 1974
- 4) Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act. 1974: and
- 5) Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980