

Jharkhand uranium mines closure causes nuclear fuel loss - DAE



The closure of operations at two uranium mines in Jharkhand since September 2014 has so far led to a loss of over 19 tonnes of nuclear fuel, having a potential to produce about 860 million units of electricity according to a senior DAE (Department of Atomic Energy) official.

The uranium ore extraction from Jaduguda and Bhatin mines, operated by the Uranium Corporation of India, a PSU under the Department of Atomic Energy, has been suspended since September 2014.

The official said, "The temporary shutdown of the two mines led to a loss of production of additional mined uranium

equivalent to about 19.1 tonne, having the potential to produce about INR 86 crore units of electricity."

At a time when India is trying to ramp up its uranium import, its own domestic production of the yellow cake has declined by 10% to 15% after operations in the country's oldest and richest uranium mines in Jaduguda and Bhatin were shut down.

Jaduguda mine, one of the deepest underground mines in the country, had run uninterrupted since 1968. It has a depth of nearly 3000 feet and had been daily producing 700 tonne of ore. UCIL was mining 150 tonne of ore from Bhatin daily.

MOIL reduces manganese ore prices

MOIL Ltd recently slashed prices of various grades of manganese ore by 5-7.5 per cent for the January-March quarter. In a BSE filing, country's largest manganese producer, which was formerly known as Manganese Ore (India) Ltd, said it has reduced the price of all ferro grades of ore by five per cent over the previous quarter.

"The prices of manganese ore have been reduced by 7.5 per cent on the previous quarter price," it said. MOIL Ltd also said the existing price of the electrolytic manganese di-oxide was also reduced by five per cent. The company revises prices of manganese ore on quarterly basis. Government has already started the process of appointing merchant bankers for the disinvestment of MOIL's 10 per cent stake through an offer for sale which could fetch around Rs 500 crore to the exchequer.

It holds 71.57 per cent in the Miniratna PSU which is the largest producer of high grade manganese ore -- an essential input for steel making.



Sohar Aluminium revamps 1.2km potline



Sohar Aluminium completed a major revamp of its 1.2 kilometers long potline in November, which forms the centerpiece of the USD 2.4 billion smelter project, marking the culmination of a multimillion dollar initiative that is already contributing to productivity optimisation, energy efficiency and

enhanced safety.

The overhaul represents the first significant upgrade of the country's largest industrial project since it came on stream in June 2008. As a result, all 360 cells the individual production generation units that make up the giant potline have now been replaced in a move that effectively revitalises smelting operations at Sohar Aluminium and delivers all round benefits.

Mr. Serge Gosselin, chief operations officer at Sohar Aluminium said, "Pots typically have a six year life span and must be replaced in order to sustain and improve productivity and safety. However, as the 360 pots at Sohar Aluminium's plant form the backbone of the company's production, replacing them in one go will necessitate a complete shutdown of operations for the duration of the revamp."

Mr. Hamed Al Jabri, reduction services manager said that "Our team came up with a programme to change them gradually. The programme began in January 2012 with replacements initially taking place at the rate of four pots per months and then ramping up to 19 pot changes in a month. November 23 marks the completion of the change out of the last pot. Hundreds of contractors and employees were involved in the project."