

PACT WITH ISRO TO TRACK ILLEGAL MINING SOON

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Bhubaneswar: The Centre has finalised its plans to track illegal mining in the country using space technology and satellite imagery in partnership with Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO).

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Indian Bureau of Mines (IBM) and ISRO will be signed soon for tracking major minerals and illegal mining as well, Union Mines Secretary Balvinder Kumar told reporters here on Thursday.

This requires States to utilise remote sensing technology to take satellite images of their mines and update them on a regular basis every 15-30 days

that will help authorities ascertain the extent of mining operations and check illegal extraction of minerals, he said.

Kumar, who accompanied Union Steel and Mines Minister Narendra Singh Tomar, spoke to reporters on the sidelines of the inauguration of new office building of IBM here.

Earlier, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had asked various Ministries including Mines and Urban Development to collaborate with ISRO to provide better and efficient services to citizens.

A senior IBM official said the draft MoU for tracking major minerals has been finalised.

Meanwhile, the Mines Ministry has asked the States to analyse the feasibility of adopting this system to monitor illegal mining within their boundaries, the sources added.

The Integrated Mines and Mineral Management System (i3MS) software developed by Odisha Government for tracking mineral production, dispatch and value accrual on real time basis has proved to be huge success.

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The on-line tracking software system has customised all relevant Central and State mining rules. Information regarding all stakeholders, dealers and

departments concerned have been brought on this portal.

The i3MS software is unique in many aspects as it is integrated with the Regional Transport Office, Indian Railways, Commercial Tax, Ports and Treasury.

The IT model (i3MS) was highly appreciated in the Central Coordination and Empowered Committee meeting held on December 15, 2015 at Delhi.

The Centre has advised other States to follow this model, sources in the Steel and Mines Department said.