

NMDC keen to augment mineral production in Odisha

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State-run NMDC Ltd has offered to augment mineral production in Odisha, which is likely to be hit by shortage of iron ore due to closure of mines.

N Baijendra Kumar, CMD of NMDC, has written to the Odisha government in this regard, official sources said. A delegation from the company had also recently met Odisha Chief Secretary A P Padhi to discuss the matter.

"NMDC is interested to operate three mining leases of OMDC (Orissa Minerals Development Company Ltd) in case Odisha government allots in favour of NMDC," an official said, adding that the Ministry of Steel had already requested the state government to consider the operation of OMDC leases by NMDC.

Operations have been suspended at a number of mines, where leaseholders failed to meet a deadline on 31 December, fixed by the Supreme Court, for paying penalties in connection with alleged illegal mining.

In another proposal, NMDC said it has asked the Odisha government to allot new leases under the government dispensation route, in which the company would conduct exploration work and develop them into operating mines.

NMDC has also shown interest to put up a pellet and beneficiation plant in the state for which allocation of low grade iron ore deposits are sought. This would maximise the utilisation and conservation of iron ore, it said.

According to industry sources, nearly 20 million ton of iron ore production has been affected since the closure of mines from January 1.