

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF COAL

**RAJYA SABHA**  
**STARRED QUESTION NO.\*249**  
TO BE ANSWERED ON 24.03.2025

**Ban imposed on rat-hole mining by NGT**

**\*249. # Shri Sanjay Singh:**

Will the Minister of **COAL** be pleased to state:

- (a) the steps taken by Government to prevent illegal mining following the ban imposed on rat-hole mining by the National Green Tribunal (NGT) in 2014;
- (b) the details of the number of deaths caused due to illegal rat-hole mining in the country during the last three years, State-wise;
- (c) the details of specific action taken and arrests made to contain illegal mining in abandoned coal mines; and
- (d) the mechanisms in place for monitoring and detecting illegal mining activities in abandoned coal mines?

**ANSWER**

**MINISTER OF COAL AND MINES**  
**(SHRI G. KISHAN REDDY)**

(a) to (d): A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

\*\*\*\*\*

**STATEMENT IN REPLY TO THE RAJYA SABHA STARRED QUESTION No. 249 TO BE ANSWERED ON 24.3.2025 RAISED BY SHRI SANJAY SINGH, HON'BLE MP, "REGARDING BAN IMPOSED ON RAT-HOLE MINING BY NGT".**

(a) During 2014, the National Green Tribunal (NGT) had banned coal mining in the State of Meghalaya and subsequently the matter had reached the Hon'ble Supreme Court. Hon'ble Supreme Court directed that in the hill districts of Meghalaya, most of the lands are either privately or community owned in which the State does not claim any right. The private owners of the land as well as community owners have both surface rights as well as sub-soil rights. The private/community owner of the land is also the owner of the mineral, who shall grant lease for mining of coal as per provisions of Chapter V of the Mineral Concession Rules (MCR), 1960 after obtaining previous approval of the Central Government through the State Government.

Hon'ble Supreme Court clarified that there can be no objection if the mining is carried out with an approved mining plan under the regulation and control of the State of Meghalaya by a mining lease holder as per the provisions of the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) (MMDR) Act, 1957 and MCR, 1960.

Consequently, Government of Meghalaya, in consultation with the Ministry of Coal, notified a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) on 05.03.2021 for grant of Prospecting License and/or Mining Lease for coal in the State of Meghalaya.

As per information received from the Government of Assam, after the tragic mining accident of 06/01/2025 at the 19 No. block of Assam Quarry, at Umrangso, Dima Hasao district, an Inquiry Commission headed by Justice Anima Hazarika, former Judge of Gauhati High Court, has been constituted by the Government of Assam to investigate the incident and fix responsibility on concerned officers, individuals, mining companies and institutions. A Special Investigation Team (SIT) has been constituted by the Director General of Police, Assam to enquire into the entire incident. Further, a multiagency team comprising Executive Magistrates, Police Officials and Assam Mineral Development Corporation (AMDC) officials has been formed to identify and ensure that all such illegal mines are closed, sealed and dismantled. Accordingly, the team has been working relentlessly and so far, a total of 245 numbers of illegal rat hole mines have been identified and sealed.

(b) The details of the number of deaths caused due to illegal rat-hole mining in the country are not maintained by the Union Government as Illegal mining is a law and order issue entrusted to the State Governments concerned. However, the Union Government issues advisories to the State Governments time to time to check illegal mining.

(c) and (d): The following steps have been taken by Coal India Limited (CIL) to check illegal mining of coal from abandoned coal mines in their areas:

- i. Concrete walls have been erected on the mouth of the abandoned mines to prevent access and illegal activities in these areas.
- ii. Surprise raids/checks are being conducted jointly by security personnel and law and order authorities of the concerned State Government.

- iii. Dumping of the overburden is being done on the outcrop zones.
- iv. Installation of check-posts at vulnerable points.
- v. Training of existing security/CISF personnel, refresher training and basic training of new recruits in security discipline for strengthening the security setup.
- vi. Maintaining close liaison with the State and district authorities.
- vii. Committee/task force has been constituted at different levels (block level, sub-divisional level, district level, state level) in some subsidiaries of CIL to monitor different aspects of illegal mining.
- viii. Some of the subsidiaries have deployed modern technologies and systems including the Integrated Command and Control Centers (ICCC) and use of drones for monitoring.

In addition, the Government of India has launched a mobile app, namely, “Khanan Prahari” and a web app Coal Mine Surveillance and Management System (CMSMS) for reporting of unauthorized coal mining activities by the public so that monitoring and taking suitable action on it can be done by the concerned authority.

\*\*\*\*