

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF COAL**

**RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 51
ANSWERED ON- 20.07.2026**

**THE SAFETY OF COAL MINES AND THE ISSUE OF ILLEGAL MINING IN
JHARKHAND**

51 # SHRI ADITYA PRASAD:

Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government is aware that due to lack of safety standards and illegal mining in coal mines in Jharkhand accidents and loss of human lives are occurring continuously;
- (b) if so, the details of coal mine accidents, fatalities and injured workers in Jharkhand during the last three years;
- (c) the steps taken by Government to address problems such as illegal mining, underground fires, gas leakage and land subsidence; and
- (d) whether Government is formulating any new action plan for the provision of modern safety equipment, monitoring systems and regularisation of contract workers in mining areas?

ANSWER

**MINISTER OF STATE FOR COAL & MINES
(SHRI SATISH CHANDRA DUBEY)**

(a): In the State of Jharkhand, Coal India Limited (CIL) operates through its three subsidiary Coal Companies i.e. Eastern Coalfields Limited (ECL), Bharat Coking Coal Limited (BCCL) & Central Coalfields Limited (CCL). The coal company ensures compliance with the provisions of the statute, the directives/guidelines issued by the Government and the Directorate General of Mines Safety (DGMS) for safe mining operations. Comprehensive safety measures, regular inspections, and continuous monitoring are undertaken to maintain safety standards in all its mines.

Illegal mining of coal occurs predominantly in abandoned mine workings, shallow outcrops, subsidence zones and remote areas situated outside regular operational control. However, some unfortunate mine accidents have occurred. Few cases of illegal mining have been reported in leasehold areas of CCL, and one incident involving loss of human life has been reported. There is no report of loss of human lives due to illegal mining in BCCL Command area. In all such cases, appropriate remedial and preventive measures have been taken by coal companies with the objective of further strengthening safety and achieving the goal of zero accidents.

Occasional reports of illegal mining and coal pilferage beyond the leasehold areas of ECL mines have been received, which are duly reported to and taken up with the Local Police and District Administration for necessary action.

Further, the responsibility for preventing, investigating, and taking legal action against illegal mining activities, as well as addressing casualties arising therefrom, rests exclusively with the Law Enforcement Authorities of the respective district and State, who possess the statutory mandate and jurisdiction in this regard.

(b): Details of accidents occurred in coal mines of Jharkhand State during the last three years:

Year	No of fatal accidents	Fatalities	No of serious accidents	Seriously injured
2023	11	12	16	18
2024	03	03	06	07
2025	15	22	12	16

(c): Since law and order is a State subject, the prevention of such unscientific mining and coal theft rests primarily with State/District administration. Further, most of the powers to curb illegal mining or theft contained in the MMDR Act, 1957 are conferred on the officers of the State Governments concerned. However, the following steps are taken by the government to address problems such as illegal mining, underground fires, gas leakage and land subsidence:

Illegal Mining

1. The government launched a citizen-based reporting system for illegal mining and coal theft as a mobile app, namely "Khanan Prahari" and one web app, Coal Mine Surveillance and Management System (CMSMS) in 2018 for reporting unauthorised coal mining activities so that suitable action on it can be taken.
2. To facilitate swift and effective enforcement against illegal mining and theft of coal, the Ministry of Coal has issued notifications on 21.11.2025 & 01.07.2026 under Section 21 (4) (to seize tools, equipment, vehicles, or any other things used to commit or facilitate the illegal activity), under Section 22 (Cognizance of offences) & Section 24 (Power of entry and inspection) and under 23B (Power of search) of the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957. Through these notifications, designated executives of Coal India Limited (CIL) and its subsidiaries, as well as officers of the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) have been empowered to seize illegally mined minerals, file complaints before competent courts, conduct searches, and exercise powers of entry and inspection for effective enforcement against illegal mining and coal theft.
3. CIL and its subsidiaries, in coordination with the State Police and CISF security units, have deployed a multi-layered mechanism involving physical security, technological surveillance, intelligence gathering and enforcement actions to curb illegal activities. Raids are conducted by security personnel of CIL as well as joint raids with the law-and-order authorities of the concerned State Government. The Management of subsidiary companies lodges FIR with local Police Station to take necessary action against reported illegal mining. State/District administration take further action against the lodged FIR.
4. A Drone-based Surveillance System has recently been introduced by coal companies for enhanced monitoring of illegal mining sites. This system helps identify locations of illegal mining, whether within the command area or in adjoining areas. Upon detection, raids are conducted by the Security team in coordination with the district police force to prevent illegal coal mining or theft of coal.

5. The Secretary, Department of Home, Government of Jharkhand, vide letter No. 6/Nigarani 7-701/2003/6087, Ranchi dated 4 August 2004, constituted a Monitoring Committee and Task Force at both the State Headquarters level and the Divisional level.
6. The Task Force reviews the implementation of measures undertaken with the active involvement of Project/Area Management.
7. Continuous liaison and interaction are maintained by officials of the Project, Area and Headquarters of coal companies with the State authorities.
8. Monthly review meetings are conducted by the State Administration regarding the prevention of illegal mining and theft of coal. The Deputy Commissioner/Commissioner and Police officials, along with Area GMs and Security Officers, attend these meetings.
9. Frequent surprise checks and raids are conducted periodically by the Security team in coordination with the district police force.
10. 24×7 patrolling and constant vigilance are maintained by security personnel to detect and prevent incidents of illegal coal mining and theft of coal.
11. IT-based initiatives, such as RFID, GPS, CCTV cameras and electronically operated boom barriers, have been installed in CCL command areas (including coal stocks, check posts, weighbridges, railway sidings, etc.) for monitoring and prevention of coal theft.
12. Check posts have been established at vulnerable locations.
13. Coal companies have deployed four types of security agencies for watch and ward duties in its command areas:- Departmental Security, CISF, SISF & Jharkhand Home Guards.
14. FIRs are lodged by coal companies in cases of coal theft or illegal mining and such illegal rat-hole mines are dozed off in the presence of State officials.
15. Trenches are dug around the periphery of mining areas to prevent unauthorised entry of vehicles and personnel into the mines.
16. A Centralised Integrated Command & Control Centre (ICCC) and Quick Response Team have been established to monitor illegal activities and take necessary action.
17. Coal stocks and railway sidings are protected with concertina fencing to prevent coal theft.
18. Announcements are regularly made in nearby villages to create awareness among the local population about the legal implications of illegal coal mining and to request them not to engage in any such unlawful activities.
19. Letters are periodically issued to public representatives such as Mukhiyas, Sarpanches, etc., with copies endorsed to the concerned Thana In-charges and Circle Officers, requesting them to sensitise local residents, restrict unauthorised entry into mine premises and discourage any involvement in illegal mining activities.

Underground fires, gas leakage and land subsidence-

1. Ensuring proper ventilation.
2. Adoption of the panel system working.
3. Provision of gas detecting apparatus.
4. Sealing off of worked out / depillared panels.
5. Monitoring the mine environment continuously by the Environment Tele-Monitoring System (ETMS).

6. Regular monitoring of mine atmosphere through periodic gas sampling and analysis, including monitoring of carbon monoxide and other indicators of spontaneous heating for early detection of fire.
7. Regular inspection and maintenance of ventilation and isolation stoppings, regulators, doors and air crossings to maintain the designed ventilation network.
8. Stone dusting.
9. Removal of spalled fallen coal regularly from workings, which are not sealed-off.
10. Regular inspection of old workings.
11. Periodic inspection and monitoring of subsidence-prone areas, scientific extraction methods, controlled depillaring and implementation of surface protection measures in accordance with approved mining plans.
12. Filling and stabilisation of abandoned mine voids and surface cracks.

(d): The Central Government has enacted the Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions code (OSH&WC) Code, 2020, which has come in force on 21.11.2025. It regulates working conditions and workplace environments to safeguard the health, safety, and well-being of workers, including mine workers, and covers both regular and contract workers. Directorate General of Mines Safety (DGMS) under the Ministry of Labour and Employment has been entrusted the task of inspecting mines to ensure the compliance of the provisions of OSH&WC Code, 2020 for enhancing the safety of mine workers including those in the State of Jharkhand. DGMS has taken various step to reduce the fatalities in mines and enforce the safety of workers engaged therein, which inter-alia include conducting regular enquiries into the accident and dangerous occurrence to ascertain cause and circumstances, regular inspection of mines, development of standard protocols, holding conferences on safety in mines, observance of safety weeks, campaigns, awareness, etc. DGMS thoroughly examines all new technologies deployed in mines to ensure their safety, adequacy and effective implementation, thereby enhancing overall mine safety standards.

Coal companies have taken several initiatives to strengthen mine safety through the induction of modern safety equipment and advanced monitoring systems, including:

1. Deployment of modern safety equipment such as portable multi-gas detectors, Self-Contained Self-Rescuers (SCSR), proximity warning devices, collision avoidance systems, fatigue sensors and smart Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).
2. Expansion of real-time monitoring systems, including gas monitoring in underground mines, slope stability monitoring in opencast mines, CCTV surveillance, drone-based mine surveys, digital communication systems and Integrated Command & Control Centres (ICCC).
3. Strengthening predictive safety through adoption of digital technologies, data analytics and AI-based monitoring for identification of potential hazards.
4. Installation and up-gradation of environmental monitoring systems, including Continuous Ambient Air Quality Monitoring Systems (CAAQMS).

5. Periodic safety audits, inspections, mock drills and review of Safety Management Plans (SMPs), Principal Hazard Management Plans (PHMPs) and Emergency Response and Evacuation Plans (EREPs).
6. Capacity building of employees and contract workers through vocational training, refresher training, safety awareness programmes and competency-based skill development.
7. Ensuring provision and effective use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), periodic medical examinations and welfare amenities for contract workers engaged in mining operations.
8. Strengthening contractor safety management through strict compliance with contractual safety provisions, regular performance reviews and enhanced supervision at workplaces.
9. Procurement and deployment of Multi-Gas Detectors (MGDs), Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA), Self-Contained Self-Rescuers (SCSR), Noise Dosimeters, Personal Dust Samplers (PDS), Vibrometers, Electronic Tele-Monitoring Systems (ETMS),
10. Adoption of AI-based safety Analytics report based on the inspection report of Pit safety committee, ISO inspection reports, DGMS inspection reports, etc as a strategic mine safety initiative for indicating mine-wise safety risk indices, immediate action matrix, priority hazard list, pending contraventions and early warning alert.

There is no provision in Coal India Limited or in the statute for the regularisation of Contractual workers.
