

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

LOKSABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION No. 4479
TO BE ANSWERED ON 19.07.2019

Illegal Coal Mining in Forest Areas in Assam

4479. SHRI PRADYUT BORDOLOI:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government is aware that seventeen reserved forests and one wildlife sanctuary in Tinsukia district of Upper Assam have been plundered by organized coal mafia by clearing the rainforests and indiscriminately practicing of 'Rat Hole Coal Mining';
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether the Government has taken initiatives to check such illegal coal mining in forest areas by help of technology; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE
(SHRI BABUL SUPRIYO)

(a)& (b) As per information received from State Government of Assam, Coal Mining has been going on by the Coal India Limited in Digboi Forest Division of Tinsukia District in Assam.

Illegal coal mining in the form of rat-hole mining has been taking place since long in some of the Reserve Forests (RFs) and Proposed Reserve Forests (PRFs) of Digboi Division. The RFs and PRFs in which such rat-hole mining has been noticed over a period of more than 10 years are as follows:

Sl No	Name of the Reserve Forests (RF)	Name of the Proposed Reserve Forests (PRF)
1	Namphai	Tipong
2	Tinkopani	Tirap
3	Tirap	Saleki
4	Tipong	
5	Lekhapani	

This situation aggravated by many factors such as extremely difficult terrain, inter-state border issues and hostile nature of offenders.

- (c) & (d) The following measures are taken up by the Assam Forest Department to prevent illegal Coal Mining:-
- i. Deployment of armed personnel of Assam Forest Protection Force in the affected Forest Divisions.
 - ii. Coordinated efforts involving the line departments of the Government and concerned agencies such as Police, Civil Administration etc.
 - iii. Monitoring and assessment of extent of illegalities with the use of Satellite Imageries.
 - iv. Making use of GIS System and recording the affected locations with GPS and plotting the same on digitized maps to assess the damage due to illegal mining in Reserved Forest areas.
 - v. Seizure of vehicles and Machineries and apprehending offenders indulged in illegal Coal Mining.
