

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
COAL
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:947
ANSWERED ON:03.03.2010
ILLEGAL MINING IN ASANSOL AREA
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Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

- (a) whether attention of the Government has been drawn to the on-going-large-scale illegal mining in Asansol-Raniganj- Jharia coal belt areas;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor;
- (c) whether the Government has taken any preventive steps to stop illegal mining with the help from the State Government;
- (d) if so, the details thereof; and
- (e) if not, the reasons therefor ?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE (IC) IN THE MINISTRY OF COAL AND MINISTER OF STATE (IC) IN THE MINISTRY OF STATISTICS & PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRI SRIPRAKASH JAISWAL)

(a)& (b) : Yes, Sir. As per the information received from Coal India Ltd. (CIL), the details of illegal coal mining in Asansol-Raniganj- Jharia coal belt are as under:

- i) The areas of illegal coal mining activities within the leasehold of Eastern Coalfields Ltd. (ECL), but where the surface rights belong to others, are Sripur area, Sodepur area, Salanpur area, Satgram area, Kenda area, Kunustoria area, Bankola area and Kajora area.
- ii) In Jharia coal belt, areas of illegal mining activities are Barora, Govindpur, Katras, Sijua, Kusunda, Kustore, Bastacolla, Lodna, E.J. area, W.J. area and C.V. area.

The following reasons are attributable to the menace of illegal coal mining:

- a) Socio-Economic—unemployment, poverty;
- b) Administrative—innumerable small pockets spread over vast coalfield area;
- c) Geological – easy access to coal with very low cover;
- d) Economic – demand from end-users, willing to pay good price;
- e) Legal action against offenders-time consuming; and
- f) Landlessness/marginal land holding.

(c)& (d): Since, law and order is a State subject, primarily it is the responsibility of State/District administration to take necessary deterrent action to stop/curb illegal mining. Coal India Ltd. (CIL) and its subsidiaries are also associated closely with the concerned State and District authorities to deal with this menace. Following measures have been taken by the Government with the help from coal PSUs. to prevent illegal coal mining :-

- (i) Rat holes created by illegal mining are being dozed off and filled up with stone and debris wherever possible.
- (ii) Trenches have been dug to isolate the illegal mining sites.
- (iii) Concrete walls have been erected on the mouth of the abandoned mines to prevent access and illegal activities in these areas.
- (iv) Fencing of illegal mining sites and displaying of sign boards mentioning "Dangerous and Prohibited Place".
- (v) Dumping of overburden is being done on the outcrop zones.
- (vi) Erection of barbed-wire/wall fencing around pithead depots, static security manning including deployment of armed guards during the night hours.
- (vii) Sealing of illegal mining spots is resorted to.

(viii) Stringent action is taken against transport vehicles caught in the act of theft or pilferage.

(ix) Training of existing security personnel, refresher training of CISF personnel and basic training to new recruits in security discipline are arranged for strengthening the security set up.

(x) Engaging of lady security guard for preventing women and children indulging in theft/pilferage of coal, strengthening of the security discipline by reassessing the requirement of security personnel, horizontal movement of executives with aptitude for security work and inducting qualified security personnel at junior, middle and senior levels.

(xi) Ministry of Coal has been urging from time to time the Coal Producing States to check illegal mining. The State Governments were also advised to instruct their State law enforcing authorities to take stringent action under the provisions of the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation Act, 1957) curbing illegal activities.

(xii) The Ministry of Coal wrote to the Chief Secretaries of the coal producing States on 18.12.2001 requesting them to put in place effective mechanism to check illegal mining. The States were also asked to give appropriate direction to the concerned authorities to take effective steps to check such illegal activities at places where large scale illegal mining was believed to be taken place. The State Governments were also advised to consider framing of suitable Rules, if not already done, under the provisions of the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957 to strengthen the hands of District authorities in curbing such illegal activities.

(xiii) Based on the decisions taken in the meeting held on 17.05.2005 between Secretary (Coal) and Chief Secretary (Jharkhand), Central Coalfields Ltd. (CCL) and Bharat Coking Coal Ltd. (BCCL) have taken up action to check illegal mining. Joint action for prevention of illegal mining has been initiated by the management of coal companies and Divisional Commissioners, District Administration, Government of Jharkhand has constituted State as well as District level Task Forces for this purpose.

(xiv) Minister of State (I/C) for Coal also had meetings with the Chief Minister, West Bengal on 24.06.2009 and with His Excellency, the Governor of Jharkhand on 26.05.2009 to request the concerned State Government to check/curb the illegal mining activities under their respective States.

(xv) In September 2009, Ministry of Coal again requested Chief Secretaries of coal bearing States to instruct their State law enforcing authorities to take stringent action under the provisions of the MMDR Act, 1957 to check illegal mining activities.

(e) : Does not arise in view of reply given to parts (c) &(d) above.