

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
COAL
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2909

ANSWERED ON:27.08.2013

ACCIDENTS IN COAL MINES

Ajmal Shri Badruddin

Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is aware about the deaths of miners in the coal mines of Assam and Meghalaya, especially in South Garo Hills due to negligence of the mine owners;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether coal mine accidents are common in the mountainous State because of unscientific mining known as 'rat hole mining' and if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether the Government is aware that no basic facilities such as safety measures, medical assistance, compensation to accident victims are available for the miners in these mines;

(e) If so, whether the Government will take action against the mine owners and ensure the safety and security of the coal miners of Assam and Meghalaya as well as provide basic facilities; and

(f) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE FOR COAL (SHRI PRATIK PRAKASHBAPU PATIL)

(a)&(b): Government is aware about the reported accidents in South Garo Hills district of Meghalaya. There were news in local newspapers that on 06.07.2012 at Nengkol, in Rongsa Awe of Nangalbibra, South Garo Hills District, Meghalaya, an accident occurred due to flooding in a coal mine in which 15 persons were apprehended to have been killed.

The following authorities/agencies conducted search and rescue operations including investigations into the accident:

1. National Disaster Response Force;
2. State Police Personnel;
3. State Officials of the Directorate of Mineral Resources;
4. Team of officials of the Directorate General of Mines Safety, Guwahati Region;
5. Officials of the State Labour Department.

A Magisterial enquiry was also conducted by the 1st Class Magistrate, South Garo Hills District, Meghalaya. According to the reports, there was no report of missing labourers filed with the police and during search and rescue operations, they did not find any victims alive or dead inside the mine. Further, Government of Meghalaya, have not received any claim for compensation. The number of fatal accidents in Assam and Meghalaya during the last three years, as per records with Directorate General of Mines Safety (DGMS), is given below:

Year	Assam	Meghalaya
2010	1	0
2011	2	0
2012	1	0

(c)to(f): Issue of applicability of laws relating to regulation of mining activities was examined in the context of special status under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution of India as claimed by Govt. of Meghalaya. The comments in this regard were sought from the Ministry of Home Affairs, State Government of Meghalaya and Department of Legal Affairs, Ministry of Law and Justice. The Ministry of Home Affairs has informed that no such notification has been issued by the President of India for non-application of the Mines Act, 1952 and the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986 in the State of Meghalaya. However, this was to be confirmed by the State Govt. of Meghalaya and Ministry of Law and Justice. The replies of State Govt. of Meghalaya and Ministry of Law and Justice has not been received.