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Title: Issue relating to the dumping of the Coal slosh resulting death of 11 persons in Sundargarh district.

SHRI BHARTRUHARI MAHTAB (CUTTACK): Madam, Speaker, I am indeed indebted to you because today when we started the proceedings of this House, you were kind enough to raise the issue relating to the dumping of the coal slosh on at least 11 persons who died miserably in the district of Sundargarh. At least 11 persons have been killed, these have been identified because their bodies have been recovered. Scores of other people who went beneath the coal and slash in the Mahanadi Coal field area in the Kulda open cast coal mine of Mahanadi Coalfield area is yet to be recovered...(*Interruptions*).

This incident occurred when a portion of the overburden caved in on a large group of villagers which was collecting coal pieces from near the base. ...(*Interruptions*) Police say that there is little chance of any survival. District administration has no information about the number of villagers trapped. The Chief Minister has ordered an inquiry by the Revenue Divisional Commissioner. The Mahanadi Coalfields Limited has not taken any precautionary measure to prevent people from getting close to the overburden site. By a mere warning, MCL cannot shrug off its responsibility. Removing the top soil which is mixed with coal is stored near the mine site. No plantation on the overburden is done to stabilise the loose soil.

It is a known fact that, due to illegal smuggling of coal by a few coal mafias of the area, this tragedy has occurred. Smugglers are employing locals to collect coal by luring them with hefty money. Though these illegal practices have been going on, the MCL authorities are hand-in-glove with them and they are also silent about it. The Chief Minister of Odisha has announced Rs. 2 lakh of *ex-gratia* per victim and MCL has provided very little amount.

Therefore, I would demand before this House that MCL or Coal India should provide adequate compensation of at least Rs. 10 lakhs to the victims of the families and at the same time, I would also say that accountability must be fixed. ...(*Interruptions*) The officers who are responsible for this tragedy should also be prosecuted.

I hope the Government of India will take stringent action against those officers who have made this tragedy happen. This is a man-made tragedy and the persons who are responsible for this tragedy should be made accountable and prosecuted under a criminal charge.

MADAM SPEAKER:

Shri Shivkumar Udasi and

Dr. Prasanna Kumar Patasani may be allowed to associate with the matter raised by Shri B. Mahtab.

श्री सतपाल महाराज - अनुपस्थित।

श्री रेवती रमण सिंह।