



No lessons learnt

Posted at: 27/12/2018

No lessons learnt-The Meghalaya mining disaster exposes a series of administrative lapses

- The disaster that struck a coal mine at Ksan in Meghalaya's Jaintia Hills district on December 13, trapping at least 13 workers, is a shocking reminder that a fast-growing economy such as India continues to allow Dickensian mining practices.
- India being home to some of the worst mine disasters, such as Chasnala near Dhanbad in 1975 in which more than 370 people were killed, the full spectrum of mining activity should be tightly regulated.
- Yet, the Ksan mine, referred to as a rat hole, was allowed to function in violation of not just safety norms but a complete prohibition issued by the National Green Tribunal.
- Unscientific mining in unscrupulous manner led to a collapse of the chamber and deadly flooding followed.
- Official inquiries into flooding disasters at approved mines, including Chasnala, have shown serious shortcomings in safety management.
- There is little evidence to show that pre-mining surveys and safety protocols are incorporating such advice.
- The case of illegal mines falls in a different category.
- Unapproved work, which appears to have led to the Meghalaya accident, cannot continue, and employment should be provided to those who are displaced.
- Illegal mining has been highlighted by activists, but they have become targets of violence by those operating the mines.

The Hindu