

## **Regarding need to set up a Special Investigation Team to investigate into illegal mining operations in Assam-Laid**

**SHRI GAURAV GOGOI (JORHAT):** On January 6, 2025, 10 coal mine workers were trapped in an illegal rat-hole coal mine in the Dima Hasao district of Assam after water inundated the mine, causing a collapse and flooding the narrow tunnels. Four bodies have been recovered since then in the rescue operations. Illegal rat-hole mining in Assam has persisted despite being banned by the National Green Tribunal in 2014. The 2021 Justice Katakey report highlighted that inadequate law enforcement, corruption, and lack of accountability enable illegal mining activities in Assam. Despite Government awareness, local authorities' complicity and failure to take action have led to numerous fatal accidents and ongoing environmental damage. Moreover, Karbi Anglong and Tinsukia continue to see rampant mining. Despite the gravity of the situation, no Minister or Government official has been found guilty of dereliction of duty. The Union Government must form a Special Investigation Team (SIT) to thoroughly investigate the illegal operation of mines, the failure to enforce mining bans, compliance with safety conditions, and the complicity of local authorities.