

"Carry on efforts, miracles do happen", SC on Meghalya Mine collapse rescue operation

January 11, 2019:

On Friday, the Supreme Court has asked the Centre and the Meghalaya Govt. to take help of experts and continue efforts to rescue the 15 miners trapped in a coal mine in Meghalaya's East Jaintia Hills since Dec 13 last year.

"Carry on with your rescue efforts, what if all or at least some are still alive? Miracles do happen," a bench headed by Justice AK Sikri said, reports ANI

The judges also asked what the government was doing about persons operating illegal mines and the officials who allowed them to go on.

At least 200 rescuers from the Navy, NDRF, the Odisha Fire Service, State Disaster Response Fund, states Fire service and others from CIL and KBL are involved in the multi-agency rescue operations.

They are trying to drain out water from the flooded mine, but Navy divers on Thursday found no change in the water level in the rat-hole mine to resume search operation, officials said.

Rescuers using pumps from Coal India Ltd, Kirloskar Brothers Ltd and the Odisha Fire Service have managed to pump out 2.1 crore litres of water from the mines, including the main shaft and the abandoned ones in the nearby which might be interconnected to it, till Thursday, they said.

But, still there has been no significant drop in the water level in these mines, leaving rescuers clueless where and how to look for the diggers, they said.

The accident has brought into focus the presence of illegal coal mining using unsafe and unscientific rat-hole methods despite the National Green Tribunal ban since 2014.

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