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4 killed in Chhattisgarh mine explosion

Aman Sethi



A worker injured during a blast at a coal mine owned by Public Sector South Eastern Coal Fields Limited (SECL) being treated at a hospital in Koriya district of Chhattisgarh on Thursday.

Photo: PTI

32 miners injured; 6 technicians still trapped in the mine

Four miners were killed and 28 injured in a massive blast in the Anjan Hills coalmine in Chhattisgarh's Koriya district on Thursday.

Six members of a technical team were still trapped in the mine, and rescue workers were unable to make contact with them. The mine, operated by South Eastern Coalfields Limited, an undertaking of the Coal Authority of India, is located 50 km from Chirmirri, district headquarters.

"Of the 28 injured, 14 are being treated in the district hospital at Chirmirri, while 14 have been shifted to the Apollo Hospital at Bilaspur," Collector Alok Awasthi said. "S.K. Goswami, deputy general manager, operations, was among the dead."

While the exact cause of the explosion, which occurred at about 11.30 a.m., is yet to be ascertained, Mr. Awasthi told *The Hindu* that it happened probably when carbon monoxide gas leaked into a mine shaft and caught fire under high pressure and temperature that prevailed in the mine.

The leak and the rise in temperature were detected on Wednesday, and there was no mining operation on Thursday. In the morning, a rescue team and a technical team entered the mine for a safety check.

However, they were trapped in the explosion that spewed scalding fumes to the surface.

"Thirty-two miners standing at the mouth of the mine were injured," Mr. Awasthi said, "While two died in the hospital in Chirmirri, two died en route to Bilaspur."

Rescue teams were waiting for conditions in the mine to stabilise before launching a search for survivors.

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