

LABOUR MINISTRY SIGNS MoU WITH SIMTARS, AUSTRALIA FOR COOPERATION IN OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY

Directorate General of Mines Safety (DGMS) and Safety in Mines, Testing and Research Station (SIMTARS) propose to explore opportunities including the feasibility of technical knowledge sharing in the area of occupational safety, health and welfare of persons engaged in mining operations and also training of key persons or members of core group from the Inspectorate, Mining Industry and Academia for formulating the process of systematic implementation and monitoring of the concept of risk based safety management system through this Memorandum of Understanding (MoU).

The MoU has been signed today between Shri Utpal Saha, Director General Mines Safety on behalf of Ministry of Labour and Employment and Shri Gitesh Agrawal, Queensland Trade and Investment Commissioner on behalf of SIMTARS, Queensland Government, Australia in presence of Shri Heeralal Samaria, Secretary, Ministry of Labour and Employment. Shri Samaria said that new technologies are required for safety of mine workers because now availability of minerals is becoming difficult and miners have to go deeper. He congratulated both the parties and expressed hope that this MoU will help to avoid loss of precious lives of mine workers.

SIMTARS is considered to be a premier training and research institution under the Government of Queensland, Australia and is comprised of professionals from various disciplines of occupational safety, health and environment. SIMTARS is known to have exclusive expertise in Mines Safety Management Systems. While DGMS gains through knowledge sharing, training of officials for skill up-gradation and exposure to international best practices; SIMTARS shall gain through knowledge sharing, experiences gained by its personnel in India and imparting training to persons engaged in mining industry.

DGMS, the regulatory body under the Government of India, administers Occupational Safety and Health legislations with the vision to achieve nationally acceptable and internationally competitive standards of health, safety and welfare for workers employed in Indian mines. Consequently, the rate of mining accident in India dropped steadily over the years. However, the rate of decline has almost flattened since quite some time. It was realised that change in the regulatory regime might be useful for reducing this rate further down towards zero. It has been observed that the rates of mining accident in Australia are among the lowest and operating procedures adopted in their mines are among the best in the world. Australia has pioneered in conceptualising and implementing risk based Safety Management Plans for the mining sector using the technique of hazard identification and risk assessment. Other countries like, USA, South Africa, Germany and Russia followed the system thereafter.