

Specific Recommendations

**Barjora North Coal Mine of The West Bengal Power Development Corporation Limited
(WBPDCL) – 338.74 Ha
Proposal No. FP/WB/MIN/43000/2019**

The proposed Barjora North Coal Mine Project is situated in one of the rich biodiversity areas of Bankura North Division. It's a single patch of approximately 2900 hectares of forest out of which the proposed forest area of size 338.74 hectares lies at the north western edge of the forest patch. The landscape is significant in terms of ecological functions being an important habitat for the Asian Elephants.

The proposed project is spread over 683.04 Ha out of which 338.74 Ha falls under forest area in 4 Mouzas namely Manohar, Saharjora, Ghutguria and Barapukhuria.

The area is rich in biodiversity with the presence of Sal and associates. Enumeration exercise brought out a total of 67755 trees in the proposed forest area. Besides the trees, the area is rich in shrubs and climbers which are also utilized by the Asian Elephants.

There is an existing open cast mine at the northern edge of the proposed site. In view of employment generation and energy security, the project assumes significance. However, the project will also have a detrimental impact on the ecology. In order to balance the trade off between energy security and ecological security, safeguard measures need to be in place to ensure that both interests are secured in a sustainable manner. Hence the proposal submitted by the West Bengal Power Development Corporation Limited for the diversion of 338.74 Ha of forest land under Forest Conservation Act, 1980 may be **recommended** in the larger public interest with the following conditions:

1. Since the proposed area is part of the adjoining forest area, a 100 m strip of bio fencing with high density plantation needs to be taken up to ensure that the impact of open cast mining on adjoining forest is minimized.
2. The advent of open cast mining would involve breaking up of land and removal of topsoil which might increase the vulnerability of the forest patch to soil erosion. Hence a Comprehensive Soil and Moisture Conservation Plan should be prepared and implemented to ensure that the damage to remaining habitat is minimized.
3. The proposed area is rich in terms of biodiversity especially floral diversity. The area is rich in trees, shrubs and climbers. An effort must be made to preserve the germplasm of the proposed site by developing similar micro habitats in other forest areas of South Bengal. The same may be incorporated in a Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Plan.
4. Advent of open cast mining will affect the existing habitat of elephants – through reduction of habitat size and consequent disturbance to adjoining forest due to mining activity. Hence adequate measures are required in a Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Plan in order to safeguard the remaining habitat in Barjora, to develop similar habitats in South Bengal and to take measures to mitigate Human-Elephant Conflict.

5. Since the area is densely populated, adequate protection measures need to be in place to minimize Human-Elephant Conflict throughout the route of Elephants. These measures can be Elephant Proof Trenches, Energized Fencing, Watchtowers, Engagement of Rapid Response Teams, Elephant Trackers, Vehicles for quick response etc. The same should be incorporated in a Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Plan.
6. Livelihoods invariably get affected in Elephant affected villages- through crop & hut damage and restriction on movement. Livelihood security measures need to be in place in the form of compensation, crop support, solar lights, watchtowers and engagement of villagers as watchers. The same should be incorporated in a Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Plan.



Divisional Forest Officer,
Bankura (North) Division.