

Government of India
Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change
(Forest Conservation Division)

Indira Paryavaran Bhawan,
Jor Bagh Road, Aliganj,
New Delhi: 1100 03,

Dated: December, 2023

To

The Additional Secretary to Government,
EFS&T Department,
Government of Telangana,
Hyderabad.

Sub: Proposal for seeking prior approval of the Central Government under Section 2 (1) (ii) of the Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam, 1980 in favour of M/s Singareni Collieries Company Limited for non-forestry use of 162.45 ha of forest land in Indaram RF, Mancherial Range of Mancherial Forest Division in Mancherial District for grant of Mining Lease for Srirampur Open Cast-II Expansion Project in Jaipur Mandal, Mancherial District, Srirampur Area Mancherial District. (Online Proposal No. FP/TG/MIN/29918/2017). -reg.

Madam/Sir,

I am directed to refer to the Government of Telangana's letter No. 460/For.I (1)/2019 dated 13.02.2019 on the above mentioned subject, wherein prior approval of the Central Government for diversion of 162.45 ha of forest land in Indaram RF, Mancherial Range of Mancherial Forest Division in Mancherial District for grant of Mining Lease for Srirampur Open Cast-II Expansion Project in Jaipur Mandal, Mancherial District in favour of M/s Singareni Collieries Company Limited, Srirampur Area Mancherial District, was sought in accordance with Section-2 (ii) of the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980. After careful consideration of the proposal by the Forest Advisory Committee constituted under Section-3 of the said Act, '*in-principle*' /*Stage-I* approval for diversion of the said forest land was accorded by the Ministry vide its letter of even number dated 12.03.2021 subject to fulfillment of certain conditions. The State Government has furnished compliance report in respect of the conditions stipulated in the Stage-I approval and has requested the Central Government to grant final approval.

2. In this connection, I am directed to say that on the basis of the compliance report furnished by the Government of Telangana vide their letter No.460/For.I (1)/2019 dated 16.08.2022, dated 01.02.2023 vide letter dated 14.03.2023 and vide letter No. 460/For.I (1)/2019 dated 21.10.2023, *Final/Stage -II* approval of the Central Government is hereby granted under Section-2 (ii) of the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 for diversion of 162.45 ha of forest land in Indaram RF, Mancherial Range of Mancherial Forest Division in Mancherial District for grant of Mining Lease for Srirampur Open Cast-II Expansion Project in Jaipur Mandal, Mancherial District in favour of M/s Singareni Collieries Company Limited, Srirampur Area Mancherial District, subject to the fulfillment of following conditions: -

- i. Legal status of the diverted forest land shall remain unchanged;

- ii. The Forest land will be handed over only after required non-forest land for the project is handed over by the user agency if any;
- iii. The Compensatory afforestation shall be taken up by the Forest Department over 324.9 ha. degraded forest land (Compartment no./ Khasra No.691,693,69,687,688,689,690, Adilabad District) at the cost of the User Agency. As far as practicable a mixture of local indigenous species will be planted and monoculture of a species has to be avoided. In case it is not possible to plant required number of saplings in the area identified for CA, the balance saplings will be planted in any other forests as per prescriptions of approved working plan with provision for ten years on subsequent maintenance;
- iv. The user agency shall pay the additional amount of NPV, if so determined, as per the final decision of the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India and transfer the same to the National Authority CAMPA under intimation to this Ministry;
- v. *The validity of FC approval shall be up to 27.6.2030;*
- vi. *From the analysis of the area through DSS it is observed that a river exists on the southern boundary of Srirampur mining lease area that flows through/alongside large forest area on the downstream at some distance of these leases. Therefore, it is essential to protect the water source for the sustainability of flora and fauna there. The State Government shall ensure that a detailed plan (comprising of vegetative and SMC protection barriers, and duly approved by the competent authority in the forest department) as submitted by expert agency to protect the riverbank so that debris, etc. from mines doesn't block or reduce water flow in the river and cause adverse impact on the flora and fauna in the downstream forested area will be implemented. The State Government shall also ensure that the plan shall be implemented within 3 years of handing over of proposed forest land to the User Agency;*
- vii. *The area has several coal mines in the vicinity which together had/have been affecting the natural forest cover in this locality in a significant manner, and, therefore, CA over lands other than notified forest would have been ideal scenario. Therefore, keeping in view the goal of harmonious perusal of conservation and development, it was agreed to accept the proposal of Compensatory Afforestation on double the degraded notified forest area under forest department on the condition that in addition to the proposed CA, non-forest area equivalent in size to the diverted forest area shall be made available and mutated in favour of State Forest Department out of the area available immediately after the closure and rehabilitation of mines of M/S SCCL from 2027-28 (or, earlier) onwards as submitted by M/S SCCL vide their letter no.CMD/PS/H/129 dated 29.09.2020. A Board resolution in this regard as submitted by the User Agency to the State Forest Department, and the State Forest Department will accordingly ensure the compliance of this condition in a timely manner. The land so mutated shall be notified under the relevant sections of the Forest Act as a Reserve Forest. After handing over, the State Forest Department shall protect the so transferred land and may develop it further at own cost for bringing the area under sustainable forest management. The copy of transfer and mutation of said non-forest land in the name of State Forest Department and a copy of the notification shall be*

submitted to the Ministry.

- viii. Following non-forest land, after its technical and biological reclamation shall be transferred and mutated in favour of the State Forest Department, Telangana as per the details furnished in the undertaking given by the User Agency:

S. No.	Name of the project-NFL identified	Name of the District	Area (ha)	Proposed year for mutation
1	Srirampur Opencast –II expansion project in Mancherial district of Telangana State	Mancherial (Singapur & Thaflapalli Villages of Naspur Mandal)	162.45	2027-28

- ix. *Compliance of the condition no. 2 (viii) above, shall be intimated by the User Agency to the Ministry and its sub-office Hyderabad under the Regional Office Chennai and in the event of non-compliance, the Stage-II approval shall be revoked by the Central Government;*
- x. *As reported by DFO, Mancherial Division and endorsed by State Government, the User Agency (M/SSCCL) is having two operational open cast mining projects, namely SRP-1 and RKP OC, 4 underground mines and soon to be operational Indram OC mines. The two operational mines and the Indaram OC will produce about 829 million tons and about 382 million tons of overburden respectively within their lifetime. It is, therefore, crucial to undertake overburden restoration/ stabilization as the mining progresses as per high scientific to minimize further damage to flora, fauna, soil and hydrology of the adjoining area due to such huge overburden accumulation. As this is a new area of technical expertise, the User Agency has accepted to create adequate capacity in the State Forest Department so that the Eco-restoration of the overburden and the mined out area could be monitored effectively, and for this purpose to expose a team of at least 10 forest officers to global best practice being implemented in coal mines of Australia / New Zealand, etc. at User Agency cost. The recommendation of State Government as reported in the proposal and conveyed by PCCF (HoFF), Telangana and agreed by the representative of User Agency in the compliance of this condition that the visit as approved by the State Government and the admissible expenditure as per norms on this account is reimbursed by the User Agency to the Forest Department;*
- xi. *The State Government shall ensure that in addition to CA, restoration of degraded notified forests in an area equivalent to the diverted forest area as undertaken at the cost of the User Agency in between Mancherial and Jaipur, as is being done elsewhere in Telangana State. The restoration work shall start within 6 months of handing over of proposed forest land to the User Agency;*
- x. *The State govt. shall ensure that in the future forest diversion proposals in the coal mining projects of the User Agency (those which have not been forwarded to the Central Government by the State Governments as yet) shall have CA undertaken on areas outside notified forests. CA on degraded*

notified forests in these cases shall be considered only in exceptional circumstances when:-

- a. *State Government has issued a certificate that degraded forest land (double in extent) outside notified forest boundary is not available for CA purpose, and*
- b. *The Nodal Officer has certified that no afforestation/plantation has been taken up under any plan/programme/scheme in the degraded forest area proposed for CA in the last ten years;*
- xi. ***The State Government shall ensure that M/s SCCL may engage one Scientific Officer or Technical Officer qualified in the field of Forestry / WL/ Agriculture to monitor the impact of mining on the adjoining forest areas with special emphasis on the conservation of flora and WL in the area;***
- xii. ***The State Government shall ensure that a committee under the Chairmanship of Chief Wildlife Warden may be constituted to review the impact of the mining on the flora and fauna in the region based on the data generated from the continuous/long term monitoring as per condition no. (xi) above, and suggest appropriate mitigation measures to be taken. Expenditure on such monitoring and mitigation measures may be borne by the user agency till the life of the mine in the region;***
- xiii. ***The user agency shall take necessary steps for the stability of the overburden dumps site which is prone to gully formation and soil erosion including required additional afforestation and SMC measures;***
- xiv. The cost of felling of trees shall be deposited by the user agency with the State Forest Department;
- xv. The land identified for the purpose of CA shall be clearly depicted on a Survey of India topo sheet of 1:50,000 scale;
- xvi. The User Agency shall comply with the Hon'ble Supreme Court order and re-grass the mining area and any other areas which may have been disturbed due to mining to restore them to a condition which is fit for growth of fodder, flora, fauna, etc.in a timely manner;
- xvii. Following activities, as per approved plan / schemes, shall be undertaken in the lease area by the User Agency under the supervision of the State Forest Department. Approved scheme/plan shall be submitted to the Ministry along with compliance of Stage-I approval:
 - a. Mitigative measures to minimize soil erosion and choking of stream shall be implemented within a period of three year with effect from the issue of Stage-II clearance in accordance with the approved Plan in consultation with the State Forest Department.
 - b. Planting of adequate drought hardy plant species and sowing of seeds, in the appropriate area within the mining lease to arrest soil erosion in accordance with the approved scheme;
 - c. Construction of check dams, retention /toe walls to arrest sliding down of the excavated material along the contour in accordance with the

approved scheme;

- d. Stabilize the overburden dumps by appropriate grading/benching, in accordance with the approved scheme, so as to ensure that angles of repose at any given place is less than 28^0 ; and
 - e. No damage shall be caused to the top-soil and the user agency will follow the top soil management plan;
- xiv. **Safety Zone Management:** Following activities, at project cost, shall be undertaken by the user agency for the management of safety zone as per relevant guidelines issued by the Ministry's guidelines:
- a. User agency shall ensure demarcation of safety zone (7.5-meter strip all along the inner boundary of the mining lease area), and its fencing, protection and regeneration by erecting adequate number of 6 feet high RCC boundary pillars inscribed with DGPS coordinates with barbed wire fencing within three years and maintained thereafter as per the approved working plan of the State Govt.;
 - b. Boundary of the safety zone of the mining lease, adjacent to habitation/roads, should be properly fenced by the user agency;
 - c. Safety zone shall be maintained as green belt around mining lease and to ensure dense canopy in the area, regeneration shall be taken up in this area by the user agency at project cost under the supervision of the State Forest Department;
 - d. Afforestation on degraded forest land to be selected elsewhere, measuring one and a half times the area under safety zone, shall also be done at the project cost under the supervisions of the State Forest Department. The degraded forest land (DFL) so selected will be informed to the MoEF&CC with shape files before Stage-II approval and afforestation will be done within three years from the date of Stage-II clearance and maintained thereafter in accordance with the approved Plan in consultation with the State Forest Department; and
 - e. The State Government and the user agency shall ensure that safety zone is maintained as per the prescribed norms;
- xv. The State Govt. shall ensure the complete compliance on FRA, 2006; It should also be ensured that the FRA certificate issued by District collector is complete with letter number, date, name, signature and official seal, as required in the certificate;
- xvi. The State Govt. shall ensure that the boundary of the diverted forest land, shall be demarcated on ground at the project cost, by erecting four feet high reinforced cement concrete pillars, each inscribed with its serial number, distance from pillar to pillar and GPS co-ordinates, as per the directions of the concerned Divisional Forest Officer;
- xvii. The User Agency shall obtain the Environment Clearance as per the provisions of the Environmental (Protection) Act, 1986, if required;
- xviii. The State Govt. shall ensure that the forest land shall not be used for any purpose other than that specified in the proposal and under no circumstances be transferred to any other agency, department or person without obtaining

prior approval of the Central Government;

- xix. The User Agency shall restrict the felling of trees to minimum numbers in the diverted forest land and trees shall be felled under strict supervision of the State Forest Department;
- xx. The layout plan of the proposal shall not be changed without prior approval of Central Government;
- xxi. No labour camps shall be set up inside the forest area. Labour management plan should be implement with emphasis that no labour camp be set up in the close vicinity of the eco-fragile and sensitive areas;
- xxii. The Sufficient firewood, preferably the alternate fuel, shall be provided by the User Agency to the labourer after purchasing the same from the State Forest Department or the Forest Development Corporation or any other legal source of alternate fuel;
- xxiii. No additional or new path will be constructed inside the forest area for transportation of construction materials for execution of the project work;
- xxiv. No damage to the flora and fauna of the area shall be caused;
- xxv. The concerned Divisional Forest Officer, will monitor and take necessary mitigative measures to ensure that there is no adverse impact on the forests in the surrounding area;
- xxvi. The forest land proposed to be diverted shall under no circumstances be transferred to any other agencies, department or person without prior approval of Govt. of India;
- xxvii. The State Govt. shall ensure that the Compliance report of this approval is uploaded on e-portal (<https://parivesh.nic.in/>);
- xxviii. The Violation of any of these conditions will amount to violation of Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 and action would be taken as per the para 1.21 of comprehensive guidelines issued vide this Ministry F. No.5-2/2017-FC dated 28th March, 2019;
- xxix. Any other condition that the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change may stipulate from time to time in the interest of conservation, protection and development of forests & wildlife shall be carried with by the State Government and user agency; and
- xxx. The State Government and user agency shall ensure compliance to all conditions stipulated in the Stage-I approval letter dated 12.03.2021 for which undertakings have been obtained from the user agency and also the provisions of the all Acts, Rules, Regulations and Guidelines, relevant Hon'ble Court Order (S) and NGT Order (S), if any, pertaining to this project for the time being in force, as applicable to the project.
- xxxi. The User Agency shall submit the annual self -compliance report in respect of the above stated conditions to the State Government, concerned Regional Office and to this Ministry by the end of March every year regularly;

Yours faithfully,

(Dr. Dheeraj Mittal)

Assistant Inspector General of Forests

Copy to: -

1. The Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (HoFF), Government of Telangana, Hyderabad.
2. The Nodal Officer, (FCA), Department of Forest, Government of Telangana, Hyderabad.
3. DDGF (Central), Regional Office, Chennai of MoEF&CC.
4. IGF (Central), Sub-Office, Hyderabad.
5. User Agency.
6. Monitoring Cell, FC Division, MoEF & CC, New Delhi, for uploading.