

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

Indira Paryavaran Bhawan,
Jor Bagh Road, Aliganj
New Delhi: 110003,
Dated: 30-09-2024

To,

The Principal Secretary (Forests),

Government of Chhattisgarh,
Raipur,

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 South Eastern Coalfields Limited (SECL) for diversion of 174.925 ha (Originally proposed area 206.638 ha.) of forest land for Deepika Expansion Open Cast Mining Project in Korba District, in the State of Chhattisgarh (Online Proposal No. FP/CG/MIN/1452/2006)- regarding.

Sir/ Madam,

I am directed to refer to the Government of Chhattisgarh letter No. F 5-40/2005/10-2 dated 18.07.2024 forwarding additional information as sought vide Ministry's letter dated 08.01.2024 on the above-mentioned subject seeking prior approval of Central Government under Section 2 (1) (ii) of the Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam, 1980. In this regard, it is informed that the matter was considered by the Advisory Committee (AC) in its meeting held on 27.08.2024. The detailed minutes of the said AC meeting are uploaded at parivesh.nic.in.

Keeping in view the facts of the proposal and the recommendations of the Advisory Committee, approval is hereby accorded for reduction in area proposed for diversion in Stage-I approval from 206.638 ha to 174.925 ha and to allow the corresponding change in CA areas and quantum of CA area proposed subject to the following conditions:

- i. The State Government shall ensure that CA and Penal CA will be carried over (105 ha+ 347 ha) DFL identified in Mahasamund Forest Division and Surajpur Forest Division.
- ii. The User Agency shall return/surrender/handover the forest area where mining has already been done and the land is not being used for mining or any other purpose to the State Government. A plan in this regard shall be submitted.
- iii. The proposed land is in possession of the User Agency and some area was broken without approval, which was considered while according Stage-I approval and penal CA was imposed. However, keeping in view the fact that the mining has been done without approval and the broken up area is in continuous possession of user agency without Stage-II approval wherein certain infrastructure has also been built, therefore the penalty for violation shall be equal to the NPV of forest land per hectare for each year of violation

from the date of actual diversion as reported by the inspecting officer with maximum up to five (5) times the NPV plus 12 percent simple interest from the date of raising of such demand till the deposit is made.

- iv. Keeping in view the fact that the area proposed for diversion is within the possession of User Agency without a valid approval and the orders of Hon'ble Supreme Court for the mines pertaining to SECL, the Regional Office shall separately examine the matter and initiate action u/s 3A/3B, if applicable.
- v. The State Government shall ensure that corrective measures for the maintenance of safety zone, top soil management and other issues raised by Regional Office are taken by the user agency within a period of three months from the issue of Stage-II approval.

In view of the above, the State Government is requested to comply with the conditions as above and furnish the compliance report of conditions of the Stage-1 approval for further necessary action in the matter.

Yours faithfully,

Sd-

(Suneet Bhardwaj)

Assistant Inspector General of Forests

Copy to: -

1. The PCCF (HoFF), Government of Chhattisgarh, Raipur.
2. The DDGF (Central), Regional Office, Nagpur **to take necessary action as mentioned above.**
3. The Nodal officer, Government of Chhattisgarh, Raipur.
4. The User Agency.
5. Monitoring Cell, FC Division, MoEF & CC, New Delhi for uploading.