

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:18-10-2024**

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 renewal of diversion of 33.84 ha broken up forest land (out of total 424.429 ha. Of forest land in lease area) in respect of Deepika Expansion open cast mining Project in favour of M/s SECL in Korba District of Chhattisgarh- regarding.**

Sir/ Madam,

I am directed to refer to the Government of Chhattisgarh letter No. F 5-45/2006/10-2 dated 22.07.2024 forwarding additional information as sought vide Ministry's letter dated 16.01.2024 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](http://parivesh.nic.in).

Keeping in view the facts of the proposal, the recommendations of the Advisory Committee and the approval of the competent authority, the approval is hereby accorded for the change in Compensatory Afforestation(CA) area and submission of the compliance report of the Stage-1 approval subject to the following conditions:

- i. The State Government shall ensure that CA will be carried over 33.84 ha reclaimed non-forest land. The non-forest land identified to carry out CA shall be notified as RF/PF under Section 4 or Section 29 of the Indian Forest Act, 1927, or under the relevant section of the State Forest Act before the Stage-II/ Final approval.
- ii. Un-metalled road in the southern part of the proposed CA and reclaimed area is visible. In this regard, the State Govt. shall ensure that the area is handed over free of all encumbrances by the user agency and the roads/paths being used by the user agency in this area shall be closed.
- iii. 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.
- iv. Since the mining has been continued without obtaining the Stage-II approval and the broken up area is in continuous possession of user agency 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.

- v. 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.
- vi. 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.
- vii. Mining or any other non-forestry use of the forest land under diversion to be stopped till final approval, unless it is specifically allowed by any court order issued in the past.

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 **for necessary action.**
3. The Nodal officer, Government of Chhattisgarh, Raipur.
4. The User Agency.
5. Monitoring Cell, FC Division, MoEF & CC, New Delhi for uploading.