8-27/2023-FC

I/57366/2023

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

Indira Paryavaran Bhawan,
Jor Bagh Road, Aliganj,
New Delhi-110003
Dated: November, 2023

To,

Additional Chief Secretary (Forests),
Government of West Bengal,
Aranya Bhawan, Block LA-10A,
Sector-III, Salt Lake,
Kolkata- 700106

Subject: Proposal for diversion of 338.74 ha of forest land for Coal Mining in Barjora North Coal Mine Block in favour of West Bengal Power Development Corporation Limited, Bankura District, West Bengal (Online Proposal No.FP/WB/MIN/43000/2019)- regarding.

Madam/Sir,

I am directed to refer to the Government of West Bengal's above subject proposal as uploaded on PARIVESH portal vide proposal No. FP/WB/MIN/43000/2019 on 17.10.2023 for seeking prior approval under Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980.After preliminary scrutiny of the proposal, the following observations are made:

i. The area proposed for diversion is having very dense forest(VDF) over some portion which is inviolate as per DSS analysis. Further, apprehensions have also been raised by the State Nodal Officer regarding the detrimental impact the mining in this area is likely to cause. The proposal has not been recommended by the State Nodal Officer. In such circumstances the State shall given a detailed justification as to why the use of the proposed forest area for mining can not be avoided. State may explore mining in other areas before proposing mining in a biodiversity rich area.

ii. The State needs to examine as to how the other requirements like transportation, electricity etc would be met. The detail of additional forest land required for the same(if any) shall be intimated.

iii. The cost benefit analysis has been calculated on old rates of NPV. Therefore, the same may be re-calculated on revised/existing rates and furnished on prescribed format as per the Handbook of guidelines dated 28.03.2019.

iv. The instant proposal has been recommended by the State Government with a condition of the implementation of Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Plan and Comprehensive Soil Moisture Conservation Plan to mitigate the negative effect on eco-system. But none of the plan/scheme has been uploaded on PARIVESH. Therefore, the plans duly approved by the competent authority towards instant proposal may be uploaded on PARIVESH.

v. DSS analysis (**copy enclosed**) revealed that some area between the two forest patches has not been included in the present diversion proposal. Therefore, the KML file of proposed forest diversion needs to be revisited.In case the same is correct, the justification for leaving the area in between the two patches needs submission.

vi. A detailed breakup of the Components proposed to be undertaken in the forest land and

       non-forest land has not been mentioned in the online Part-I. Therefore, the same needs to be updated online and the components wise KML file shall be submitted.

vii. Satellite imagery shows that the plantation work has been carried out by the State Forest Department in Village Ghutgaria, Survey No 2689 which is proposed for diversion. This needs clarification.

viii. Satellite imagery shows that a Nala flows through the proposed forest land for diversion. Therefore, comments of the State Govt in this regard shall be submitted.

ix. DSS analysis of proposed CA sites(Copy enclosed) revealed the following shortcomings and therefore the CA areas shall be revisited and submitted in accordance with the guidelines issued by this Ministry:

   a. No. of patches proposed for CA are 53 patches and there are several CA patches which are having an area of less than 5 ha.

   b. Mining activity is visible in the proposed CA patches located in Village Saharjora Plot No 150 & 3138 under Bankura District.

   c. One CA patch namely Village Singhghagra-773 located under Purulia District is falling in the forest land.

viii. There is slight variation in proposed CA area (340.36 ha.) and suitability certificates (341.443 ha.) furnished by the State.It shall be ensured that the site suitability certificates are correctly given for the proposed CA areas.

ix. Satellite imagery shows that the Mining activity is going on in adjacent to the forest land proposed for diversion. Historical imagery indicates that the mine is working before the year 2014. As per the DSS, the present mine is working on the Non-Forest land. In this regard, State Govt. may clarify as to whether it is part of the same mining lease or it is a separate mining lease.The detail of approvals shall also be provided.

x. Moreover, it has been mentioned that the erstwhile user agency had also carried out some work in the mining lease. A detailed report in this regard along with the time period of mining and requisite approvals shall be submitted.

xi. In the component wise break-up, an area of 14.17 ha. (other use), 11.18 (infrastructure area) and 37.63 ha (undisturbed area) forest land have been proposed and no breakup for the same has been given. Therefore, the details of each component involved in the said area with justification may be provided.

xii. The detailed component wise break-up of forest land and non-forest land involved in instant lease is not available on PARIVESH. Therefore, the same may be uploaded.

xiii. A chronology of the mining lease both on forest and non-forest land along with the detail of requisite permissions along with documentary evidences shall be submitted.

Yours faithfully,

Encl. DSS report.

Signed by
Suneet Bhardwaj
Date: 10-11-2023 10:31:33

Sd/-
(Suneet Bhardwaj)
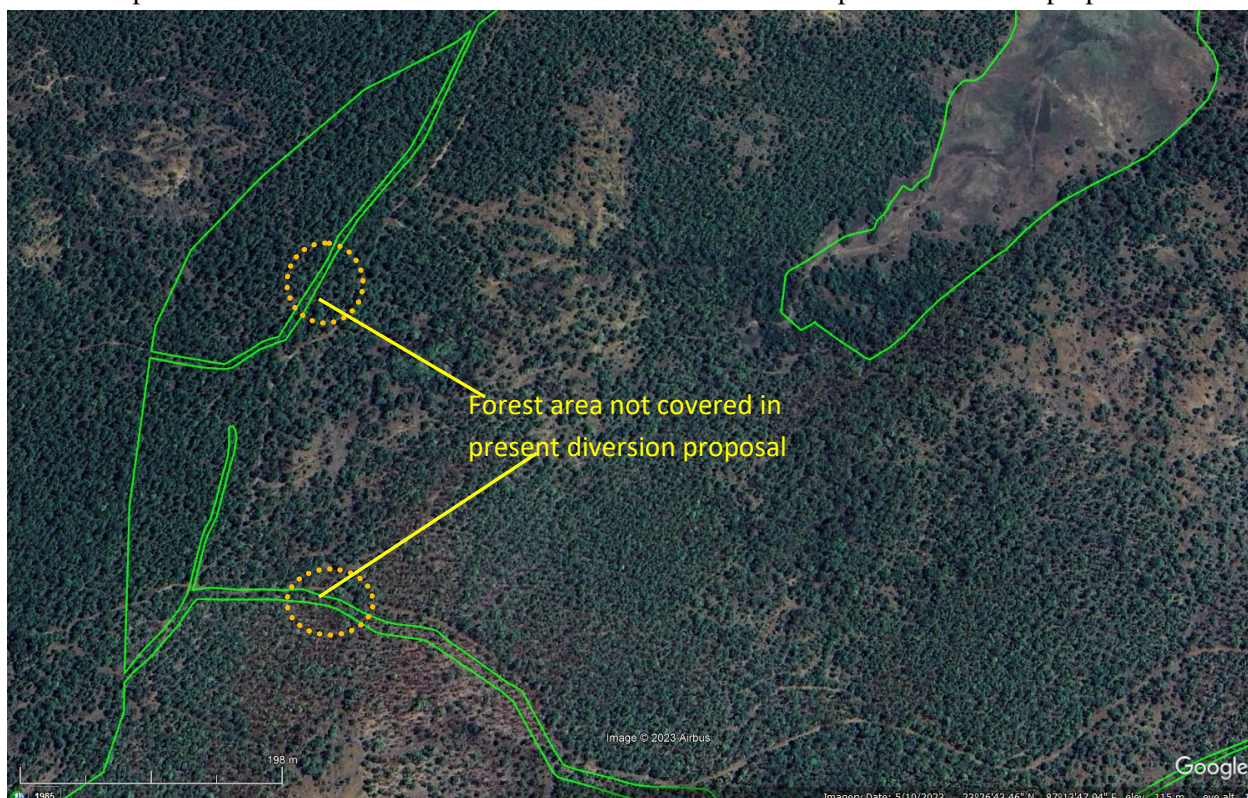Assistant Inspector General of Forests

Copy to:

1. The Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (HoFF), Government of West Bengal, Kolkata.

2. The Deputy Director General of Forest (Central), Regional Office, Bhubaneswar.

3. The Sub- Office of MoEF&CC, Kolkata

4. The Nodal Officer (FCA), O/o the PCCF (HoFF), Government of West Bengal, Kolkata.

5. User Agency.

6. Monitoring Cell of FC Division, MoEF&CC, New Delhi.

Proposal: Diversion of 338.74 Ha. Forest land for Barjora North Coal Mine Project (Online No. FP/WB/MIN/43000/2019)

Summary of DSS Analysis Report:

I.   **In Case of Land proposed for Diversion:**

1. Proposed forest area for diversion falls under Bankura district of West Bengal State.
2. Calculated area of Shape file/ KML file of Forest land proposed for diversion is found 338.591 Ha (software calculated). However, it is learnt that the user agency has left some area between the two forest patches and the same has not been taken into account in the present diversion proposal.
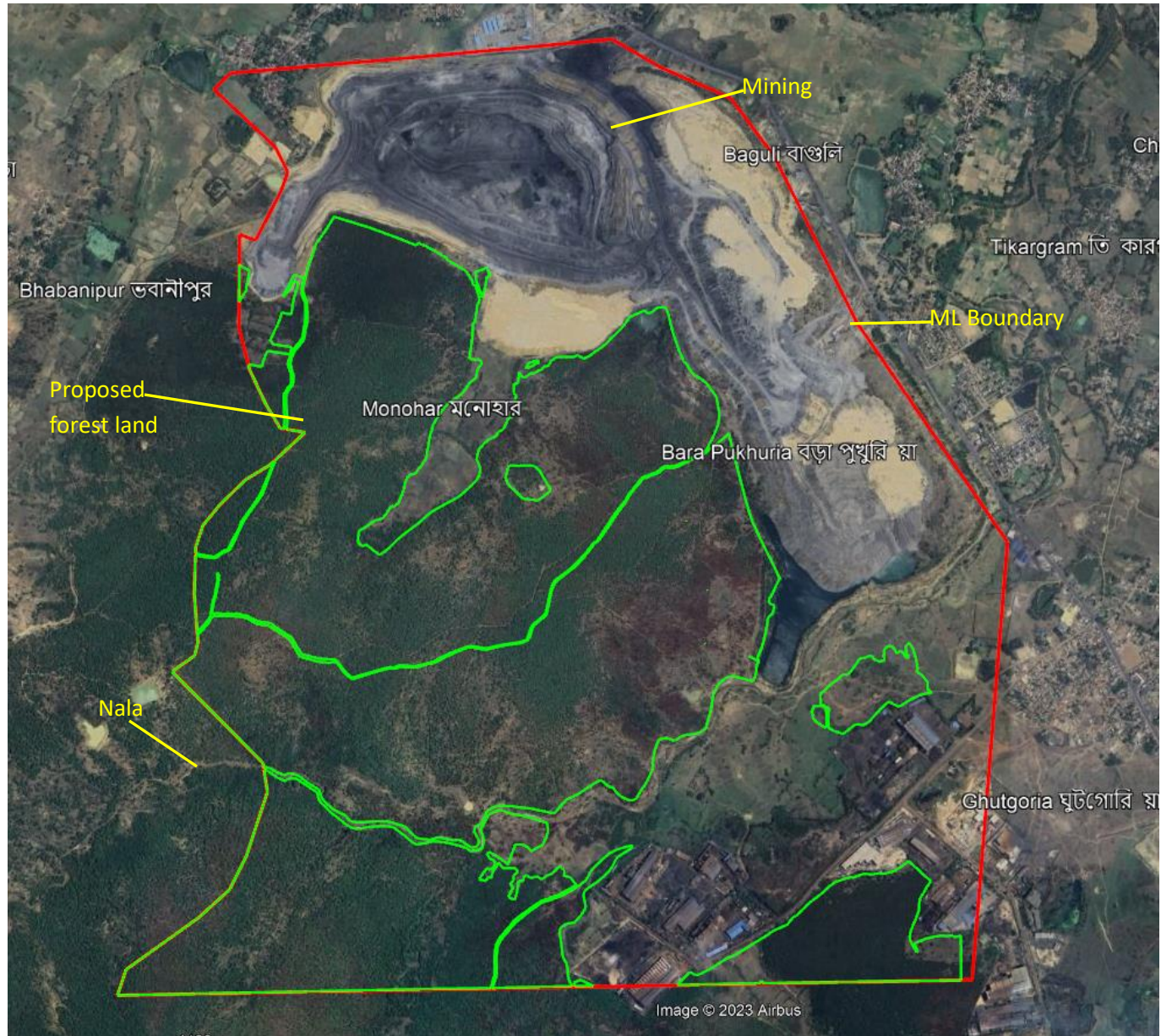

3. It is also learnt that the component wise KML file of proposed forest land has not been uploaded on PARIVESH.
4. As per the DSS, there is no wildlife sanctuary, national park, Tiger reserve and Tiger corridor are located within 10 Km distance from the proposed forest land for diversion. However, the State Govt. in Part-II form reported the presence of Asian Elephant, Golden Jackal, Bengal Fox, Indian crested Porcupine in the proposed forest land for diversion.
5. Google imagery shows that the plantation work has been carried out by the State Forest Department in Village Ghutgaria, Survey No 2689 which is proposed for diversion.
6. Google imagery shows that a Nala flows through the proposed forest land for diversion.
7. Google imagery shows that the Mining activity is going on in adjacent to the forest land proposed for diversion. Historical data of google imagery suggest that the mine is working before the year 2014. As per the DSS, the present mine is working on the Non-Forest land.
8. The user agency has uploaded the KML file of Mining lease boundary and its total area is found 683.040 ha.
9. The instant proposal falls under Inviolate Zone or In High Conservation value as per the DSS Rule-I due to the presence of Very Dense Forest (VDF) within the proposed forest land for diversion. However, the proposed forest land falls in Not-Inviolate or Not-In high conservation zone (NHCV) category as per the DSS Rule-2 because out of total 11 grids of 1x1 sq km size

covering the entire proposed land, none of the grids are having average score above 70. **Thus, the final result is Inviolate.**

10. **Forest Cover in the instant project:** Out of total 338 Ha (DSS calculated) forest area of instant project, 45 ha of land is characterized with Very Dense Forest, 107 ha of land is having Moderately Dense Forest, 57 ha is Open forest and 129 ha is Non-Forest/ Non-wooded in terms of forest classes (as per the ISFR 2021) based on the interpretation of satellite data period 2019.

11. **Forest Types details:** 5A/C3 Southern Dry Mixed Deciduous Forest, 5B/C1 b Dry Plains Sal Forest: 213 ha and Non-Forest: 126 ha.

Google imagery showing the proposed forest land for diversion

II. In Case of Compensatory Afforestation Land:

1. The State Govt. has proposed Compensatory afforestation (CA) over the Non-forest land in 53 patches located under the Bankura, Medinipur, Birbhum, Alipurduar, Purulia & Jalpaiguri Districts of West Bengal State.

2. Mining activity is visible in the proposed CA patches located in Village Saharjora Plot No 150 & 3138 under Bankura District.

3. One CA patch namely Village Singhghagra-773 located under Purulia District is falling in the forest land.

4. It is learnt that, out of 53 patches proposed over the Non-forest land by the State Govt for CA, many CA patches are having an area less than 5 ha. Therefore, the State Govt. may be requested to revisit the proposed CA sites. The details of 53 CA patches are as under;

S.No.	Village & Survey No	District	Area (ha)
1	Belashola KML - 777	Bankura	0.506
2	Chakrabad KML-403		0.538
3	Dadhimukha KML - 1418		5.870
4	Deucha KML-261		0.349
5	Gosaindihi KML-38		4.701
6	Kadamberia KML - 871		5.261
7	Paharbera KML-118		22.337
8	Saharjora KML-65		0.830
9	Saharjora KML-150		7.203
10	Saharjora KML-45		1.133
11	Saharjora KML-38		1.449
12	Saharjora KML-3125		2.429
13	Saharjora KML-3117		3.789
14	Saharjora KML-3138		6.605
15	Saharjora KML-3142		1.356
16	Saharjora KML-3144		1.000
17	Saharjora KML-3119		0.668
18	Shitla KML-591P1		5.601
19	Shitla KML-591P2		7.568
20	Unara KML-1044P		5.694
21	Paschim Midnapur Kotalkuli KML-3	Paschim Midnapur	9.149
22	Paschim Midnapur Kotalkuli KML-6		0.830
23	Paschim Midnapur Kotalkuli KML-7		0.452
24	Paschim Midnapur Kotalkuli KML-8		0.968
25	Paschim Midnapur Kotalkuli KML-9		0.779
26	Paschim Midnapur Kotalkuli KML-10		2.089
27	Paschim Midnapur Kotalkuli KML-11		1.335
28	Hirapur 785	Birbhum	0.874
29	Hirapur 784		1.000
30	Hirapur 758		0.405
31	Hirapur 741		0.044
32	Hirapur 742		0.664
33	Hirapur 569		2.130
34	Madhya Haldibari KML	Alipurduar	16.183
35	Hinjori-543	Purulia	5.000
36	Palanja-2433		8.155
37	Singhghagra-773		7.692
38	Ulubera-3		24.370
39	Ulubera-4		4.050
40	PASCHIM TOTGAON-10	Jalpaiguri	3.738
41	PASCHIM TOTGAON-18		4.834

42	PASCHIM TOTGAON-22	3.590
43	PASCHIM TOTGAON-38	0.944
44	PASCHIM TOTGAON-35	4.628
45	PASCHIM TOTGAON-37	1.484
46	PASCHIM TOTGAON-36	3.268
47	PASCHIM TOTGAON Plot No. 34	8.308
48	PURBBA TOTGAON KML-CA 1	8.136
49	PURBBA TOTGAON KML-CA 2	80.015
50	PURBBA TOTGAON KML-CA 3	48.740
51	PURBBA TOTGAON KML-CA 4	0.103
52	PURBBA TOTGAON KML-CA 5	0.097
53	PURBBA TOTGAON KMLCA 6	0.566
Total		**339.508**

5. In terms of standards followed in ISFR 2021 (interpretation of satellite data period 2019) regarding density classes is given below:

S. no	District	Village	Khasra	State Govt Area (in ha.)	Software Area (Ha)	DSS Area (Ha)	VDF	MDF	OF	NF
1	Bankura	Gosaindihi, Paharbera, Dadhimukha, Unara, Saharjora, Shitla, Deucha, Chakarabad, Belashola and Kadambe	38, 118, 1418, 1044, 38, 45, 65, 150, 3117, 3119, 3125, 3138, 3142, 3144, 591, 261, 424, 777 and 871	85.19	84.886	85	0	2	8	75
2	Medinipur	Kotalkuli	3,6,7,8,9,10 and 11	15.17	15.602	15	0	0	10	5
3	Birbhum	Hirapur	569, 741, 742, 758, 784 and 785	5.12	5.117	5	0	0	0	5
4	Alipurduar	Madhya Haldibari	1906,1907, 1571,1572 and 1903	16.19	16.183	17	0	0	1	16
5	Purulia	Hinjuri, Singhagara, Palanja and Uluberia	543,773,2433, 3 and 4	49.26	49.267	49	0	0	0	49
6	Jalpaiguri	Purbba Totagaon and Paschim Totagaon	24,58,59,60, 64,65,66,67, 68,10,18,22, 34, 35,36,37 and 38	169.43	168.453	169	0	0	21	148
			Total	**340.36**	**339.508**	**340**	**0**	**2**	**40**	**298**

6. **Forest Cover in CA land**: Out of total 340 ha (DSS Calculated) Non-forest land proposed for CA, 2 ha of land is characterized with Moderately Dense Forest, 40 ha is Open forest and 298 ha. of land as Non Forest (land devoid of tree cover) in terms of forest classes (as per the ISFR 2021) based on the interpretation of satellite data period 2019.

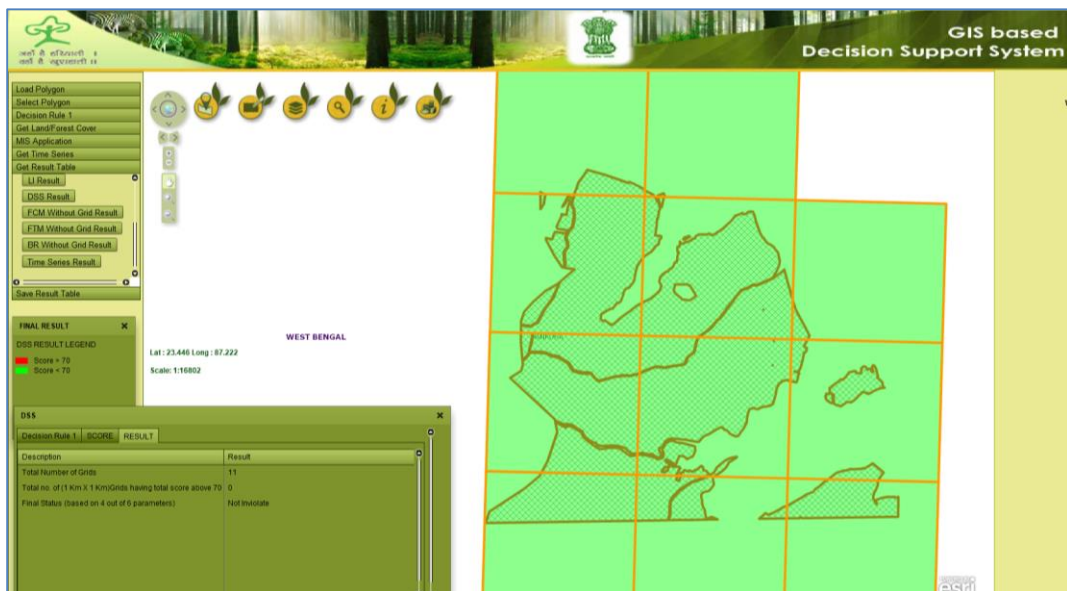**Decision Support System (DSS):**

Decision Rule no. 1:

Whether forms part of:
- I. Hydrological Layer:
  - a. Major River: **N/A**
  - b. Wetland (Area more than 10 ha.): N/A
  - c. Water bodies (irrigation/Hydropower/water storage): N/A
- II. Very Dense Forest patch (>1 sq km): N/A
- III. Remnant Forest Type: N/A
- IV. Protected area/Tiger Reserves/Tiger corridors: N/A
- V. Wild life Species: **Sloth Bear and Dhole**

Decision Rule no.2:

Without 50% Rule:

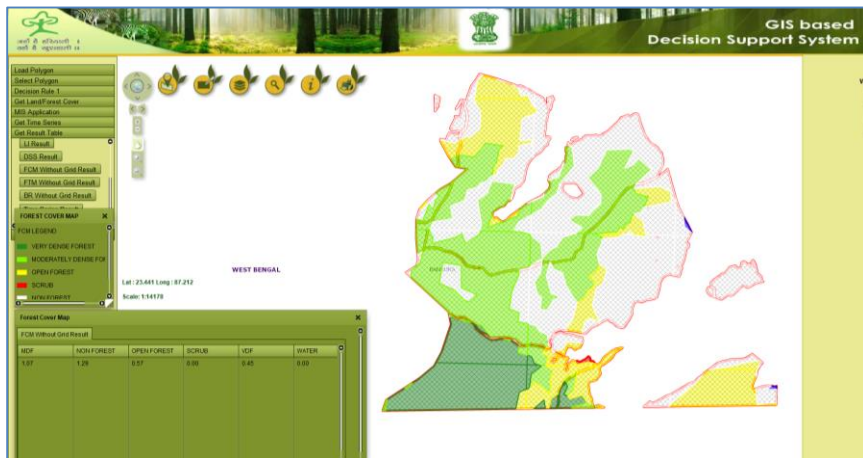| GRIDID	SCOREFCM	SCOREFTM	SCOREBR	SCORELANDSCAPE	AGGREGATESCORE
1706562	2.98	0	0	16.58	4.89
1708727	2.25	0	0	20.69	5.74
1708728	0	0	0	20.89	5.22
1706563	0	0	0	17.03	4.26
1708726	20.66	0	0	19.48	10.04
1710893	6.58	0	0	23.09	7.42
1710894	0.59	0	0	22.72	5.83
1710892	0.39	0	0	23.63	6.01
1713059	1.16	0	0	26.45	6.9
1713060	12.41	0	0	24.43	9.21
1713061	18.39	0	0	22.9	10.32

DESCRIPTION	RESULT
Total Number of Grids	11
Total no. of (1 Km X 1 Km)Grids having total score above 70	0
Final Status (based on 4 out of 6 parameters)	Not-Inviolate

Final Result: Inviolate (Based on Decision Rule 1 due to presence of Very Dense Forest
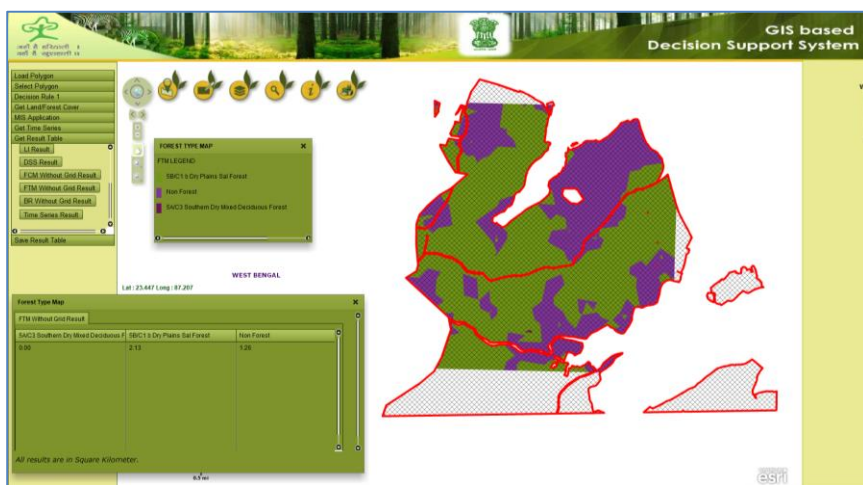
Forest Cover Map:

In terms of standards followed in ISFR 2021 (interpretation of satellite data period 2019) regarding density classes:
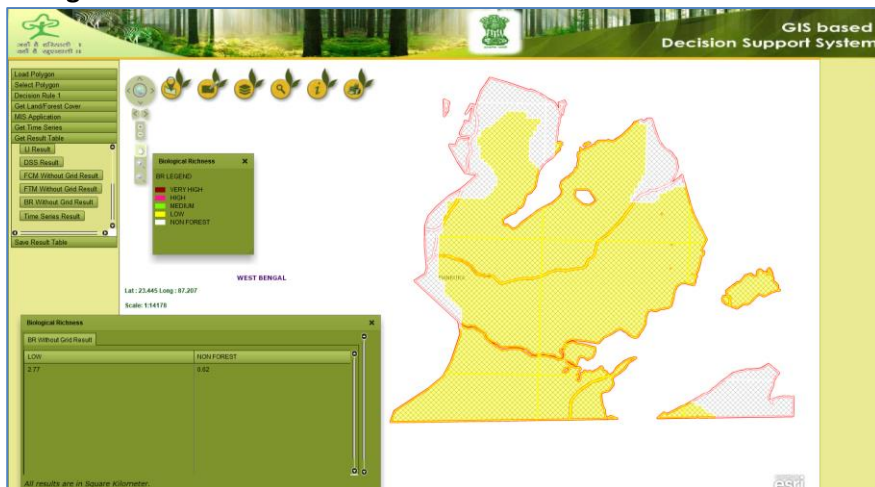
   I.   Very Dense Forest (Canopy density 70% & above): 45 ha.
  II.   Moderately dense Forest (canopy density 40-70%): 107 ha.
 III.   Open Forest (canopy density 10-40%): 57 ha.
 IV.   Non-forest: 129 Ha

Forest Type Map: 5A/C3 Southern Dry Mixed Deciduous Forest, 5B/C1 b Dry Plains Sal Forest: 213 ha and Non-Forest: 126 ha.

Biological Richness: Low: 277 ha and Non-Forest: 62 ha

Submitted please.

Prashant Tiwari
Senior Technical Associate,
DSS Cell (FC)
26.10.2023