

**F. No. 8-37/2018-FC**  
Government of India  
Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change  
(FC Division)

Indira Paryavaran Bhawan,  
Aliganj, Jor Bag Road,  
New Delhi - 110003.  
**Dated: 8<sup>th</sup> November, 2019**

**To,**

The Principal Secretary (Forests),  
Government of Karnataka,  
Bangalore

**Sub: Proposal for prospecting of Minerals (exploration) over an extent of 325.74 ha of forest land in erstwhile 'C' category mining lease (ML No. 2010) of RMML, NEB Range, Sandur Taluk in Ballari District by Minerals Exploration Corporation Limited (MECL), Nagpur.**

Sir,

I am directed to refer to the State Government's letter No. FEE 21 FFM 2018 dated 21.04.2018 submitting the above subject proposal for seeking prior approval of the Central Government under Section-2 of the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 and to say that the said proposal has been examined by the Forest Advisory Committee constituted by the Central Government under Section-3 of the aforesaid Act. After careful consideration of the proposal by the Forest Advisory Committee (FAC), **In-principle** approval for said proposal was granted vide this Ministry's letter of even number dated **22.06.2018** subject to fulfilment of certain conditions. The State Government has furnished compliance report in respect of the conditions stipulated in the 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 State Government of Karnataka vide their letter No. FEE 21 FFM 2018 dated 24.07.2019, **Stage-II/Final** approval of the Central Government is hereby granted under Section-2 of the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 for according permission for use of 325.74 ha of forest land in erstwhile 'C' category mining lease (ML No. 2010) of RMML, NEB Range, Sandur Taluk in Ballari District by Minerals Exploration Corporation Limited (MECL, Nagpur for undertaking exploratory drilling of 33 no. of boreholes in 325.74 ha of forest land by Minerals Exploration Corporation Limited (MECL), Nagpur for prospecting of minerals subject to following conditions:

- (i) The User Agency shall be allowed exploratory drilling of a maximum number of 33 boreholes in 325.74 ha. of forest land.
- (ii) State Govt. shall ensure that State Forest Department shall carry out plantation as per approved plan for planting of 20 tall trees per bore hole on abandoned bore hole area and degraded forest land in a contiguous patch from the funds provided by the user agency, and maintained thereafter as per prescription of working plan.
- (iii) The prior approval of Govt. of India under Section 2 of FC Act for prospecting in this forest area is only for resource assessment and mapping and does not confer in any manner any right to the State Government to divert such forest land under Section 2(ii) of Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 for mining purpose in future in favour of this user agency or any other mining company on the plea that forest clearance for prospecting has been granted.
- (iv) State Govt. shall ensure that User agency shall seek permission of concerned Divisional Forest Officer before entering into the forest area and borehole shall be dug with prior permission of the concerned Divisional Forest Officer and also furnish detailed report thereof on completion of the project.
- (v) State Govt. shall ensure that proper plugging of borehole shall be made after exploration activities are complete to the satisfaction of the concerned Divisional Forest Officer.
- (vi) State Govt. shall ensure that no tree felling shall be undertaken for exploration activities. Project activities shall be restricted to clearing of bushes and lopping of tree branches if any for the purpose of site preparation.
- (vii) The user agency shall be responsible for any loss to the flora and fauna in the surrounding. Any damage done in this regard shall be compensated by the user agency from the project cost as per assessment of the concerned Divisional Forest Officer.

  
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- (viii) No new additional road shall be constructed by the user agency for transporting prospecting tools and machines. The user agency may use the existing forest road/ path with prior information to the concerned Divisional Forest Officer. The area used for path during the prospecting work shall be restored to its original status of forest after completion of prospecting work.
- (ix) User agency shall follow the forest transit regulations while transporting the forest produce (excavated sample material) from the site
- (x) No construction activities shall be done by the user agency on forest land and exploration inside forestland shall be limited to the period from sunrise to sunset only.
- (xi) State Govt. shall ensure that user agency shall not sublease the exploration work.
- (xii) User Agency shall provide a list of authorised officials/ workers engaged in exploration to the forest department before commencing the work and also provide the Identity Cards/ Documents to each such official/ worker, to be produced when demanded by the forest department.
- (xiii) Any change in number of bore holes will be reported to the concerned Regional Office in advance for consideration and recommendations to the Central Government.
- (xiv) No labour camp shall be established on the forest land and no work shall be allowed after sunset.
- (xv) Initially the permission for prospecting will be granted for two years from the date of issue of this approval which can be extended for one more year with convincing justification from the State Government for extension.
- (xvi) In case of violations of conditions by the user agency, the permission for prospecting of minerals shall be suspended by the concerned Divisional Forest Officer. Further it shall be enquired by the Nodal Officer (FCA) of the State Government and report to be submitted to the concerned Regional Office for appropriate action.
- (xvii) The samples collected during the prospecting shall be used purely for investigation purposes and shall in no case be used for trade or commerce purpose.
- (xviii) User agency shall be liable for any violations under Karnataka Forests Act, 1963 and Rules, 1969 in addition to other relevant laws in and around the forest area concerned.
- (xix) The user agency and the State Government shall ensure the compliance of the provisions regarding drilling in the forest land as prescribed in para 6.8 of Chapter 6 of the Handbook of comprehensive guidelines of Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 as issued by this Ministry's letter No. 5-2/2017-FC dated 28.03.2019.
- (xx) Violation of any of these conditions will amount to violation of Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 and action would be taken as prescribed in para 1.21 of Chapter 1 of the Handbook of comprehensive guidelines of Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 as issued by this Ministry's letter No. 5-2/2017-FC dated 28.03.2019.
- (xxi) The State Government and user agency shall comply the provisions of the all Acts, Rules, Regulations, guidelines, NGT order & Hon'ble Court Order (s) pertaining to this project, if any, for the time being in force, as applicable to the project.
- (xxii) State Govt. has deemed to have certified all the undertakings given by User Agency.

Yours faithfully,



(Brijendra Swaroop)

Dy. Inspector General of Forest-cum-  
Dy. CEO, CAMPA

**Copy to:**

1. The Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, Government of Karnataka, Bangalore.
2. The Dy. Director General (Central), Regional Office, Bangalore.
3. The Nodal Officer (FCA), Forest Department, Government of Karnataka, Bangalore.
4. User Agency
5. Monitoring Cell of FC Division, MoEF & CC, New Delhi.
6. Guard File.