

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: June, 2024

To
The Additional Chief Secretary (Forests)
Forest, Ecology & Environment Department,
Government of Karnataka,
Bengaluru

Sub: Proposal for seeking prior approval of the Central Government under Section 2 (1) of the Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam, 1980 for diversion of 28.299 ha. (26.699 ha. for mining and 1.60 ha. for approach road) for iron ore mining purpose in favour of the successful bidder i.e. M/s MSPL Ltd., (M.L. No. 2559) in Bellary District of Karnataka State (Online Proposal No. FP/KA/MIN/31348/2018)

Madam/Sir

I am directed to refer to the Government of Karnataka letter No. No. FEE 25 FFM 2019 dated 17.05.2024 wherein the additional information submitted in the response of the Ministry's RO Bengaluru letter dated 01.06.2023. After the examination of reply of the State Government, it has been observed that the following information/ documents is still required for further action in the matter:

- i. Regarding the action taken against the Range Forest Officer, Sandur who had issued NOC that land is not a forest land, State Authorities had earlier reported that PCCF (HoFF) as the Disciplinary Authority vide proceedings dated 30/01.2013 had ordered Compulsory retirement and recovery of ₹231.79 lakhs along with 8% interest from the Officer concerned. It was also mentioned that the officer concerned had appealed to the Appellate Authority i.e. Principal Secretary to Government of Karnataka. In this regard, the present status shall be submitted by the State Govt.
- ii. Present status of the court case filed in JMFC Court, Sandur vide Criminal Case (CC) No. 296/2021 Dt. 05.08.2021 shall be submitted by the State Govt.
- iii. Regarding civil liabilities from the erstwhile lessee (M/s. Karthikeya Manganese & Iron Ore Pvt. Ltd.), the State Govt. has reported that the UA has not paid ₹81,14,55,517 towards NPV and losses occurred due to mining activity on forest and environment not yet recovered. In this regard, the comments of the State Government shall be submitted.
- iv. As the proposed area falls near the Archaeological Site namely Karthikeya & Parvathi temple and as per the report of ASI vide letter dated 28.12.2020 no mining shall be allowed beyond 600 meter as all four sides. Accordingly, the State Government has recommended that FC proposal may be processed for

the extent of 28.299 ha. i.e., 1.60 ha. for approach road and 26.699 ha. (i.e. 18.989 ha. for mining purpose + 7.71 ha. area, which falls within 600 meters from the Karthikeya & Parvathi temple, which needs to be declared as “**No mining zone area**”). In this regard, revised land use change in the approved mining plan is required. The same be submitted by the State Govt.

- v. The LOI issued by the Department of Mines and Geology, GoK vide letter dated 02.01.2018 in favour of M/s MSPL was valid for 3 years from the date of issue of the letter. In this regard, it has been observed that the validity of the Lol has expired on 01.01.2021. The latest status of extension of Lol shall be submitted by the State Govt.

Accordingly, the State Govt. is requested to submit the above information/documents as above at the earliest for further perusal in the Ministry.

Yours faithfully,

(Dr. Dheeraj Mittal)

Assistant Inspector General of Forests

Copy to:

1. PCCF (HoFF), Government of Karnataka, Bengaluru.
2. DDGF (C), MoEF&CC's Regional Office at Bengaluru.
3. APCCF cum Nodal Officer (VSESA), 1980, Forest Department, Government of Karnataka, Bengaluru.
4. User Agency.
5. Monitoring Cell, FC Division, MoEF&CC, New Delhi.