

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

Indira Paryavaran Bhawan
Aliganj, Jorbagh Road
New Delhi- 110003
Dated:14-08-2024

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 for non-forestry use of 230.780 ha. of forest land (63.930 ha. Protected Forest & 166.850 ha. Revenue Forest land) for Coal mining in Bhatgaon Underground Mine of SECL, Bhatgaon Area in Surajpur District in the State of Chhattisgarh (Online Proposal No. FP/CG/MIN/39553/2019)– regarding.

Sir,

I am directed to refer to the State Government of Chhattisgarh letter No. 5-56/2023/10-2 dated 16.07.2024 on the above subject seeking prior approval of the Central Government under section 2 (1) (ii) of the Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam, 1980 and to say that after examination of proposal the following shortcoming is observed:

- i. The Ministry vide its letter no. 8-55/2016-FC dated 04.07.2017 has granted Stage-II approval for diversion of 75.055 ha ha of forest land for Bhatgaon mining project in favour of M/s SECL. In this regard, the State Govt. is requested to submit the status of compliance of conditions stipulated in Stage-II approval to this Ministry.
- ii. There is a reference to three proposals submitted in the past for the project. The total area of all these proposals comes out to be 460.489 ha which implies that more forest land is involved in the mining lease area. The state shall therefore give the detail of total lease area/project along with quantum of total forest and non-forest land involved. The detail of the forest area for which approval has already been accorded and the forest area for which it is yet to be obtained shall be submitted, along with the KML files of the corresponding area.
- iii. User Agency has mentioned in Part- I that mining plan has been approved in year 1979.However, copy of approved mining plan has not been submitted along with the proposal. Further, the validity of the mining plan approved 45 years ago for fresh mining in the area may be examined. The State/UA shall ensure that the proposed landuse in the diversion proposal is commensurate with the mining plan. A comparative analysis of the component wise area proposed for diversion and the component wise breakup as per mining plan shall be submitted.

- iv. Keeping in view the provisions contained in para 7.8 (a) of the consolidated guidelines the state has to ensure that the requisite details including subsidence prediction report are there in the mining plan and the related documents. A brief note in this regard shall be submitted.
- v. As per the information uploaded in Part-I on the PARIVESH portal, the number of families displaced due to the project is reported as Nil, However, in the physical copy of the proposal as submitted by the user agency, it has reported that 653 families have to be displaced due to this project in Surajpur district. Copy of R&R plan has also been submitted. Further, CCF, Surguja has mentioned in his site report that 999 persons have been displaced and project affected persons have been given land employment and compensation and an approved package for rehabilitation. Clarification in this regard needs to be submitted.
- vi. Satellite imagery shows road, solid structures such as settlement, cultivation land etc. is visible on the surface of Bhatgaon Under Ground lease area. The state shall examine and submit a detailed report on the same and action taken in this regard.
- vii. As per DSS analysis, the proposed forest area falls in High Conservation Value (HCV) Zone as per Decision Rule 1 (due to presence of protected area). The proposed area is within 1 km radius of the Tamor Pingla WLS. However, the state has not given any such information. The state shall examine the same and submit the justification in this regard.
- viii. Keeping in view the Tamor Pingla Wildlife Sanctuary the state shall submit the comments from PCCF (WL)/CWLW and also intimate the status of recommendation of SCNBWL.
- ix. In accordance to para 7.8 (b) of Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam, 1980 the user agency shall submit an undertaking stating that under no circumstances the underground mining operations will be converted to opencast mining operations on the said forest land at a later date.

In view of the above, the State Government is requested to submit the information/documents, as indicated above, for further consideration of the proposal in the Ministry.

Yours faithfully

Sd/-

(Suneet Bhardwaj)

Assistant Inspector General of Forests

Copy to:

1. The PCCF (HoFF), Government of Chhattisgarh, Raipur.
2. The Dy. DGF (Central), Regional Office, Nagpur.
3. The Nodal Officer (FCA), Government of Chhattisgarh, Raipur.
4. Sub-office, MoEF&CC, Raipur.
5. User Agency.
6. Monitoring Cell, FC Division, MoEF & CC, New Delhi for uploading

