

I/5392/2021

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

Indira Paryavaran Bhawan,
Jorbagh Road, Aliganj,
New Delhi - 110003.

Dated: 13th August, 2021

To,

The Principal Secretary (Forests),
Government of Chhattisgarh,
Raipur.

Sub: Proposal seeking prior approval of the Central Government under Section -2 (ii) of the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 for non-forestry use of 238.373 ha of forest land in favour of M/s South Eastern Coalfields Limited for Baroud Expansion Open cast Coal Mining proect (3 MT) in Raigarh District of Chhattisgarh.

Sir,

I am directed to refer to the Government of Chhattisgarh's letter No. 5-33/2005/10-2 dated 3.12.2019 on the above subject seeking prior approval of the Central Government under Section 2 of the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 and letter no. 5-33/2005/10-2 dated 5.04.2021 forwarding additional information as sought by the Ministry vide its letter of even number dated 23.12.2019 and to say that the proposal has been examined by the Forest Advisory Committee constituted by the Central Government under Section - 3 of the aforesaid Act. A copy of the minutes of the meeting of the FAC may kindly be accessed at <https://parivesh.nic.in/>. FAC after thorough deliberation and discussion with Nodal officer Chhattisgarh, Regional officer IRO Raipur and representative of user agency desired following information from the State:

- i. Details of wildlife (not just large wild animals) in the area, the possible impact of mining on the same and suggested mitigation measures have not been provided in detail in absence of which it is difficult to take an informed decision. The IRO has reported movement of elephants in the area. In particular, State Government to provide information if any particular area/ animal corridor needs to be excluded from the proposed area for mining.
- ii. Total project area as per report submitted by the regional office is 1159.943 ha and forest area in it is ascertained that the forest area within the project area is around 381.273 ha (238.373 ha requested for diversion and 123.899 and 19.001 ha has already been diverted). The Status of NPV deposited by the user agency for the entire forest land within the project area need to be clarified.
- iii. It has been suggested by IRO that the buffer area of at least 100 meters specifically on places where lease boundary is contiguous with River bank should be kept unextracted for maintain hydrology of Kurket River. On the other hand, State Government / User Agency has proposed to keep a buffer of only 60 meters. Keeping in view, large impact of such a difference in opinion from the angles of viability of mining vs. ecology, it would be prudent to take a decision after having expert opinion in the matter by a reputed institute.
- iv. From the Google Earth imagery, it appeared that in and around the existing mining area (adjoining the proposed area), no major tree plantation or re-

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grassing work has been done. The FAC recalled the direction of the Hon'ble Supreme Court on mandatory re-grassing of mined out areas for wildlife. Information to be provided by State Government as to forest regeneration/ tree planting/ re-grassing measures taken by User Agency in the area.

- v. State government shall ensure in due course that CA scheme includes native species and especially such species that are rare or are under IUCN Red List.

In view of above, the State Government is requested to furnish information on points number 1-4 as indicated above for further consideration of the proposal in the Ministry.

Yours faithfully,

Sd/-

(Charan Jeet Singh)

Scientist 'D'

Copy to:

1. PCCF (HoFF), State Forest Department, Government of Chhattisgarh, Raipur
2. Addl. PCCF & Nodal Officer (FCA), O/o PCCF, Government of Chhattisgarh, Raipur
3. The Regional Officer (Central), Integrated Regional Office of MoEF&CC at Raipur.
4. User Agency
5. Monitoring Cell, FC Division, MoEF&CC, New Delhi
6. Guard File