

File No.:FC-8/103/2005-FC  
Government of India  
Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change  
(FC Division)


Agni Wing, 4th Floor,  
Indira Paryavaran Bhawan,  
Jor Bagh Road, Aliganj  
New Delhi – 110003  
Dated: 23<sup>rd</sup> September, 2025

**OFFICE MEMORANDUM**

**Subject: Minutes of the meeting held on 12.09.2025 at 12.15 PM under the Chairmanship of Shri Santosh Tiwari, Additional Director General of Forests (FC) to discuss issues related to proposals of M/s South Eastern Coalfields Limited (SECL) for non-forestry use of 461.80 ha and 419.340 ha of forest land for Rajgamar Colliery under ground coal mining project in Korba District, Chhattisgarh and other related proposals of SECL in the State of Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh- regarding**

Please find enclosed herewith a copy of approved minutes of the meeting held on 12.09.2025 at 12.15 PM under the Chairmanship of Shri Santosh Tiwari, Additional Director General of Forests (FC) with regard to the subject cited above for further necessary action.

**Encl./As above**

  
**(Suneet Bhardwaj)**

Assistant Inspector General of Forests

To

- i. The Nodal Officer (FCA), Government of Chhattisgarh, Raipur.
- ii. The Nodal Officer (FCA), Government of Madhya Pradesh, Bhopal.
- ii. The User Agency

Copy to:

- (i) Sr. PPS to ADGF (FC)
- (ii) Sr. PPS to IGF (FC)
- (iii) Monitoring Cell, FC Division for uploading on PARIVESH.

**Minutes of the meeting held on 12.09.2025 at 12.15 PM under the Chairmanship of Additional Director General of Forests (FC) to discuss issues related to proposals of M/s South Eastern Coalfields Limited (SECL) for non-forestry use of 461.80 ha and 419.340 ha of forest land for Rajgamar Colliery under ground coal mining project in Korba District, Chhattisgarh and other related proposals of SECL in the States of Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh-regarding.**

A meeting was held on 12.09.2025 at 12.15 PM in Indira Paryavaran Bhawan ,New Delhi under the Chairmanship of Shri Santosh Tiwari, Additional Director General of Forests (FC) to discuss issues related to proposals of M/s South Eastern Coalfields Limited (SECL) for non-forestry use of 461.80 ha and 419.340 ha of forest land for Rajgamar Colliery under ground coal mining project in Korba District, Chhattisgarh and other related proposals of SECL in the States of Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh. The list of participants is in the Annexure.

ADGF (FC) welcomed all the participants and thereafter AIGF (FC) gave a brief background of the meeting. The Nodal Officers, FCA Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh and the User Agency gave the details of the various proposals of SECL wherein the Stage-1 approvals have been issued more than five years ago, the mines continued working thereafter and the proposals are still pending for issuance of Stage-II approvals.

The following was observed during the meeting:-

(i) There are 11 proposals related to State of Chhattisgarh and 2 proposals related to State of Madhya Pradesh for coal mining of SECL. The representatives of the user agency informed that at present, out of 11 mines in Chhattisgarh 3 mines are working and out of 2 mines in Madhya Pradesh, 1 mine is working (Rajnagar). The user agency further informed that in case of closed mines only the area acquired for surface infrastructure is under use at present. It was further informed that all these mines have been started before 1980 i.e. before the commencement of Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam, 1980.

(ii) These mines (except one mines Churcha UG in Chhattisgarh and one mine Jamua Kotma in Madhya Pradesh) are covered under the order of Hon'ble Supreme Court wherein SECL had filed an affidavit in the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India in IA No. 1441 in WP (C) 202 of 1995 praying for exemption from payment of NPV for Underground mining as the forest has not been disturbed or lost due to Underground mining operations and also in IA No. 1634 in WP (C) 202 of 1995 praying for exemption from payment of Cost of Penal Compensatory Afforestation. After hearing, Hon'ble Supreme Court had passed interim orders on various occasions in the above IAs, directing SECL to deposit Rs. 50 Crores and Rs.300 Crores towards NPV and Cost of Penal Compensatory Afforestation and mining operations were permitted to continue by the Hon'ble Court. Accordingly, SECL has deposited Rs. 350 Crores (Rs. 50 Crores on 28.12.2005, Rs. 100 Crores on 12.9.2006 and Rs. 200 Crores on 2.11.2006 with CEC, New Delhi, as per the direction of Hon'ble Supreme Court of India.

(iii) The Stage-1 approval in these cases was accorded between 2006 to 2011 and the complete compliance of the conditions of Stage-I approval is awaited from the State Government. The compliance is mainly pending due to change in rates of NPV, change in CA/Penal CA land, non-verification of funds deposited in Adhoc CAMPA accounts etc.

(iv) The areas were broken/put to non-forestry use by the User Agency before 1980. However, mining continued after issuance of Stage-1 approval without obtaining Stage-II/Final approval by the User Agency. In this regard, a request has been received from the Additional Secretary Ministry of Coal vide his DO letter dated 05th June 2025 wherein it is requested to consider the grant of Stage-II approval to the remaining proposals of SECL without levy of penal NPV.

(v) The user agency submitted that the mines have started operations before the commencement of the Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhinyam, 1980, and surface infrastructure is also in place prior to 1980. At the time of Stage-1 approvals the Ministry has imposed the conditions for penal CA wherever applicable and no additional forest land has been used or broken up by the user agency. Moreover, the mining operations were permitted to continue by the Hon'ble Supreme Court with the deposition of NPV amount. Accordingly, SECL has deposited Rs. 350 Crores (Rs. 50 Crores on 28.12.2005, Rs. 100 Crores on 12.9.2006 and Rs. 200 Crores on 2.11.2006 with CEC, New Delhi, as per the direction of Hon'ble Supreme Court of India.

(vi) The User Agency further submitted that the areas for coal mining are acquired under CBA,1957 wherein there is no involvement of any lease renewal. Therefore, keeping in view the fact that the areas have been put to non-forestry use prior to 1980, the penal NPV should not be imposed.

**Decision:** After thorough discussion with the Nodal Officers, Government of Chhattisgarh and Govt. of Madhya Pradesh and CMD SECL, it was decided that the State Govt. of Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh shall examine the submissions made by the user agency and give their specific recommendations in this regard.

The states shall also verify and provide the complete details including the status of compliance of conditions of Stage-1 approval in each proposal, the details of NPV payment made, the change in the areas proposed for CA/Penal CA if any, the detail of the area under mining and surface infrastructure and their present status, the extent of forest land under non-forestry use at the time of Stage-1 approval and the area used thereafter.

The meeting ended with a vote of thanks to the Chair.

## **Annexure**

The list of participants is as under:-

### **MoEFCC:**

- (i) Sh. Suneet Bhardwaj, AIGF, FC Division, MoEF&CC, New Delhi.
- (ii) Sh. Vinod Kumar, Assistant Commissioner (Forestry), FC Division.
- (iii) Sh Ritesh Yadav, TO (Forestry), FC Division

### **States/User Agency:**

- (i) Sh. Sunil Mishra, Nodal Officer (FCA), Chhattisgarh Forest Department.
- (ii) Sh. H.S. Mohanta, Nodal Officer (FCA), Madhya Pradesh
- (iii) Shri Harish Duhan, CMD, South Eastern Coalfield Limited (SECL), Bilaspur.
- (ii) Shri B.K. Jena, GM, South Eastern Coalfield Limited (SECL), Bilaspur.

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