

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

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Indira Paryavaran Bhawan,  
Aliganj, Jor Bagh Road,  
New Delhi: 110003

Dated: 17<sup>th</sup> January, 2025

To

The Addl. Chief Secretaries of Forests/Principal Secretary (Forests),  
All States Governments and Union territory Administrations

**Sub: Streamlining the approval process with regards to forest area involved in the safety zone of the mining leases and its maintenance - reg.**

Madam/Sir,

I am directed to refer to the above subject and to inform that a meeting between the Ministry of Mines and Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change was held on 6.01.2025 regarding various issues related to the grant of Forest Clearance pertaining to mining sector including coal mining. The issue related to streamlining of the maintenance of safety zone in the mining leases was also deliberated in the meeting. Based on the deliberations held in the said meeting, the Central Government, in accordance with the provisions of section 3C of the Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam, 1980, hereby issues the following clarifications:

- i. There may be existing mining leases, where diversion of forest land was approved before 27.05.2015 and approval under section 2(2)(iii) of the Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam, 1980 has been granted by the State Government in accordance with para 7.3(iv) of Handbook of erstwhile Guidelines and the clarifications issued by the Ministry on 28.03.2024 and requisite compensatory levies i.e. CA and NPV have already been realized from the User Agency in respect of the forest area included in the safety zone. In such cases, the approval for diversion of safety zone proposal under section 2 (2)(ii) of the Adhiniyam for safety zone shall not be required provided the safety zone is being maintained by the User Agency in such leases for the sole purposes of safety zone as per standard norms. However, in case the forest land falling under the safety zone is sought to be used for a purpose other than that under the safety zone, diversion of forest land shall have to be carried out following due procedure and as per extant provisions in this regard.
- ii. As per provisions of para 7.9 (iv) and (v) of the Consolidated Guidelines issued under the Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam, 1980, the proposals pertaining to diversion of forest land forming part of safety zone in respect of mining leases, including existing leases which were not granted general approval by the State, as mentioned under para (i) above, were required to obtain due approval for diversion of forest land till 30.09.2024. Such proposals, *wherein the CA and NPV have already been deposited by the User Agency till 30.09.2024*, are hereby granted further extension of time till 30.09.2026 to obtain the requisite approval of the Central Government under section 2 (2) (ii) or section 2 (2) (iii) of the Van (Sanraskshan Evam

Samvardhan) Adhiniyam, 1980. The User Agencies shall ensure that approval of diversion of forest land forming part of safety zone is obtained within the time limit specified as above in case the same has not been obtained till date.

- iii. The State Governments/UT Administration shall ensure that prior approval of the Central Government is obtained following due process as laid down under section 2(2)(ii) of the Van (Sanraskshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam, 1980 in such cases where the safety zone involved in the mining leases, as specified under paras (i) and (ii) above is subsequently proposed to be utilised for mining activities by the User Agency.
- iv. It is to further clarify that the safety zone of 7.5 meter wide peripheral strip is to be maintained along the inner boundary of the approved mining plan of an opencast mining lease. No safety zone is required to be maintained in respect of underground mining lease where no disturbances is proposed to be caused to the surface flora and fauna. Further, in respect of mining leases with mixed operations i.e. both opencast as well underground, the safety zone is required to be maintained in the portion of mining plan included in the mining leases involving opencast mining operations and not in the portion of mining lease used for underground mining operations.

In view of the above, the State Government and Union territory Administrations are requested to take into consideration the clarifications/guidelines mentioned hereinabove while considering the proposals submitted under section 2 of the Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam, 1980.

This issues with the approval of the Competent Authority.

Yours faithfully,

**(Charan Jeet Singh)**  
Scientist 'E'

Copy to:

1. Secretary, Ministry of Mines /Coal /Steel/ Power/ Railways/ MoRT&H/ Defence/MHA
2. Secretary, Ministry of Defence, Government of India
3. Principal Chief Conservator of Forests & HoFF, All States Governments and Union territory Administrations
4. Dy Director General of Forests (Central) All Regional Offices of the MoEF&CC
5. Nodal Officers, dealing with the matters related to the Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam, 1980, All States Governments and Union territory Administrations
6. Head, NIC, MoEFCC for aligning the PARIVESH 2.0 as per above