
Environment ministry revokes clearance to iron ore project in Goa

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PTI reported that the Indian environment ministry has revoked the clearance granted to an iron ore project at village Pirla in South Goa which it found to be based on wrong information.

The withdrawal came a month after the National Environment Appellate Authority rejected the nod given by the ministry to private firm Careamol Iron Ore Limited. The NEAA order said that the project proponent had submitted false data and concealed data in respect of distance of river, archaeological sites from the project site, forest cover in proposed mining lease area in its Environment Impact Report.

The appeal against Mr Jaisinh Maganlal owned mining project was filed by Mr Gomantak Shetkari Sanhatana through Supreme Court lawyer Mr Ritwick Dutta.

Mr Dutta said that the mining project was granted environmental clearance in September 2007 by the environment ministry even though the project proponent had given wrong information.

He claimed that the company misleads the government by declaring in its EIA that the river Kushawati is at a distance of 2.6 kilometers of the project site whereas actually it is at a distance of only 50 meters. Similarly, the EIA document was made available only in English and the public hearing venue was nearly 40 kilometers away from the project site. There is also an archaeological monument within a distance of 500 meters which was never disclosed to the NEAA.

The NEAA had directed the Environment Ministry to place the project before the Standing Committee of the National Board for Wildlife as it is located within ten km of Cotigaon and Netraval wildlife sanctuary a fact allegedly hidden by the firm.

After conducting a site visit on July 15th and 16th to ascertain the site's distance from the river as well meeting the affected people, the NEAA rejected the environmental nod given to it.

Environment Ministry in its order said that in compliance of the tribunal's order and taking note of the fact that the project proponent have concealed factual information which are essential for appraisal of the project proposal in terms of environmental integrity the clearance is revoked,".

(Sourced from Press Trust of India)

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