

Indian Mining Exchange

News Bulletin, 10th October 2011

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<http://www.business-standard.com/india/news/essel-mining-bags-outsourcing-contractmcl-mine/451451/>

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<http://www.downtoearth.org.in/content/green-energy-takes-toll-green-cover>

Land

National panel will seek to check diversion of tribal lands

TNN | Oct 6, 2011, 12.32AM IST

NEW DELHI: The [National Council for Land Reforms](#) will meet on October 28 to give a thrust to moves to check the diversion of land in tribal areas to private companies, and launch schemes to ensure that every landless person has at least the land to build a house.

The council, chaired by the prime minister, will take a close look at consolidating the laws governing land records and benami transactions to plug violation of ceiling laws.

A key agenda drawn by rural development minister Jairam Ramesh will be to nudge the states to abide by the Supreme Court's Samata judgment of July 1997 banning transfer of land and mining leases to non-tribals in Schedule V areas: an issue which has huge implications for industries in tribal pockets. Sources said the Centre was likely to insist on implementation of the judgment in "letter and spirit".

The council was formed in October 2008 in the wake of a "jal, jungle, zameen" march to the Capital by tribals and others protesting against the usurpation of their land and other resources by outsiders. That the body which comprises 10 chief ministers has finally been activated has to do with the recognition of land as the source of problems plaguing the hinterland and alienation of tribal land due to usurpation by powerful individuals and industrialists, all contributing to the growing menace of naxalism.

The sudden interest in land may be academic, it being a state subject and an intractable political and social issue. However, the council may help renew the focus on land management, especially among tribals. The coming meeting may look to bring about convergence between Centre and states to ensure that policy guidelines do not fall prey to jurisdictional issues.

The Centre will also launch central schemes for homestead rights for homeless rural poor, survey of bhoodan lands, reconciliation of forest and revenue land records, establishment of land tribunals for fast disposal of appeals, survey of common property resources in villages and survey and settlement operations in tribal sub-plan areas.

It will also seek recognition of gram sabhas as competent authority for transfer of tribal land by sale or lease, and for restoration of alienated tribal lands and for maintenance of land records. Another demand for withdrawal of encroachment cases and minor forest offences may be raised.

Along with the council, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, eager to buy peace with protestors in the run-up to Lok Sabha polls, had also formed a committee to go into the issues of "state agrarian relations and unfinished task in land reforms".

Coming on the back of the urgency across political spectrum to amend the 1894 Land Acquisition Act, the initiative of the rural development ministry is interesting. While the new bill, now with Parliament's standing committee, seeks to ensure better price for farm land, it has drawn criticism from activists who see it as facilitating the sale of land when it should have discouraged it. The focus on land management and tribal land through the brainstorming in the national council will seek to right the perspective.

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/National-panel-will-look-to-check-diversion-of-tribal-lands/articleshow/10249673.cms>

Land for landed

N.C. SAXENA

Frontline, October 08-21, 2011

The 12th Plan Approach Paper looks upon land more as raw material for mining and industrialisation than as a source of livelihood for the poor.

DESPITE a fast economic growth, more than 60 per cent of the population of India is still dependent on land. The 12th Plan Approach Paper, however, looks upon land not as a source of livelihood for the poor but as raw material for mining and industrialisation. Para 5.24 of the Approach Paper reads as follows: "Rapid growth is only possible if some land which is currently used for agricultural purposes, or if preferably degraded forest land, can be made available for building much-needed infrastructure, establishing new industrial units, undertaking mining and accommodating the inevitable expansion of urban settlements. The questions that arise are how is the land that is needed for these activities to be obtained."

Further, the Approach Paper would like to deprive marginal farmers of their land, facilitate its transfer to farmers owning large holdings, and reduce marginal landowners to the status of agricultural labour. It advocates legislation to "permit leasing of land where small

farmers, who would otherwise be unviable, are able to lease out their lands to others able to bring in the other inputs needed. The small or marginal landowner may even be employed on the land by the new tenant farmer” (para 7.35). Lastly, the Approach Paper is silent on the gross violation of the Forest Rights Act by State governments, which have ignored recognising the community rights of forest-dwellers over forests, as mandated by the FRA.

TWELFTH PLAN: Different Voices

Manish Kunjam president Adivasi Mahasabha and CPI leader.



Our organisation and I engaged with the consultative process knowing fully well that the net result would not be one that signifies any course correction or even a productive

orientation. When the government’s primary agenda remains related to neoliberalism and promotion of corporate giants and their colossal projects, how can planning alone

become people-oriented? Still, we participated in the process because we saw it as yet another opportunity to highlight the plight of the tribal people and other poor and downtrodden sections. Some of the members of the Planning Commission heard our presentations with concern and some others continued to harp on the 8 to 9 per cent GDP [growth]. Even as we heard it, we knew that nothing major would come out of this exercise. We are not surprised.

As regards the Land Acquisition & Rehabilitation and Resettlement Bill (which was already in the public domain when the Approach Paper was being finalised), one would have expected the Planning Commission to support strongly its main clauses – informed consent of 80 per cent of the farmers, a minimum compensation of four times the registered price, and 20 per cent share in future escalation in land prices – but unfortunately all it says is “the method of fixing the price at which land will be acquired needs to be carefully studied to ensure that it is fair to those whose land is acquired while also not being unrealistically high” (para 5.30). The Approach Paper would also like the requirement of land for industry and private companies to be specifically included in the definition of public purpose (para 5.31). Whose interests are being advocated here is thus clear.

Small is big

The Planning Commission's aversion to small and marginal farmers and its efforts to reduce them to the status of landless labourers by increasing inequality in the area of operational holdings should be examined seriously, as this recommendation is not only anti-poor but also anti-productivity. Research done on size-productivity relationship since the 1960s has made it clear that in agriculture, given the same resource facilities, soil content and climate, a small farmer produces more per acre than a large farmer. In a recent article (Economic & Political Weekly, June 25, 2011), agricultural economists, on the basis of recent National Sample Survey data, have held that small holdings in Indian agriculture still exhibit a higher productivity than large holdings. Industry operates under conditions of increasing returns to scale whereas agriculture has so far operated under diminishing returns to scale.

TWELFTH PLAN: Different Voices

Professor Anup Dash Professor in Sociology, Utkal University, Bhubaneswar.



Our development planning should now move beyond GDP, be based on a deeper understanding of the goals of development with an awareness of the broader objectives and with greater sensitivity to the complexities and multidimensionality of the development process. We ought to shift our emphasis to "Green Growth for Inclusive Development", which means setting our investment priorities right. We ought to put a

substantial part of our GDP in social investments, bring a social purpose to our GDP. There is a huge need to build up the social economy as an answer to the problems created by the neoliberal GDP-centric growth. Also, it is important to focus more on our infrastructures and on making our governance system work for the people. This means to invest more and more to promote social innovations to complement the technological innovations and to address development problems better.

Thus, both output and employment per unit of capital invested increase in agriculture with the decline in the size of its operation. Various theories about disappearing advantages of marginal and small farmers and efficiency gains of large farmers with economic development are not found to be operating in India.

Small farmers have better access to labour as they exploit their own family labour, whereas large farmers have better access to capital and have to hire labour from the market. These differences result in small farmers committing more labour to production than large farmers and large farmers substituting machines and capital for labour. Thus, a small farmer may get an extra unit of output by using home-produced mulch and organic manure and the large farmer may depend on chemical fertilizer bought from the market. In fact, capital intensity is increasing for all categories of farmers, but at a faster pace in Green Revolution areas and for large farmers.

Both market and technological forces act in favour of concentration of land in fewer hands, and unless the government comes out with a programme to halt this trend, growth with the existing levels of asset inequalities will lead to further impoverishment of the rural poor. This phenomenon of reverse tenancy has gathered strength in recent years and has contributed to the steady increase in the concentration of operational holdings. Rather than express concern at this trend and provide credit, inputs and markets to small farmers and supplement their incomes with off-farm employment opportunities within the countryside, the Planning Commission wishes to act in favour of big operational holdings and make them even bigger.

Neglect of women farmers

Another glaring omission in the Approach Paper is the total neglect of problems faced by women farmers. Despite their increasing contribution to agriculture due to male migration, they lack control over productive assets (land, livestock, fisheries, technologies, credit, finance, markets and so on), face biases as a result of socio-cultural practices and experience gender differentials in agricultural wages. Some of these problems will get

sorted out if women's rights over land are recognised in revenue records as per the Hindu Succession Act, 2005, (unfortunately the implementation of this Act has been ignored by State governments). The Act brings all agricultural land on a par with other property and makes land inheritance rights legally equal for Hindu women and men across States, overriding any inconsistent State laws. Endowing women with land empowers them economically and strengthens their ability to challenge social and political gender inequities. The Planning Commission should prevail upon the administrative Ministry to launch a campaign to correct revenue records and ensure that women's land ownership rights are properly recorded by the States. Concurrent evaluation by the Commission will help this process.

MANY LAPSES

Para 11.16 of the Approach Paper calls for speedy implementation of the FRA, but does not analyse why in the four years since its enactment the Act has failed to satisfy forest-dwellers' aspirations and provide them community rights as well as security of tenure over individual plots. A recent government committee chaired by this writer found many lapses that explained tribal frustration with the implementation of the Act. For instance, the area in which tribal people have been settled is much less than what is required for them to carry on their occupation, and the boundaries of the settled area have not been demarcated. In almost no instance have district officials proactively provided maps, documents and evidence to village committees, though this is required under the FRA.

Only a few States have been able to use spatial and remote-sensing technology to demarcate boundaries and measure the areas of plots for individual forest rights because of the lack of capacity building in the application of this technology. The biggest problem is the many cases of faulty rejection. In an overwhelming number of cases, the rejections have not been communicated to the claimants and their right to appeal has not been explained to them and its exercise facilitated.

There have been process failures too. Meetings of the gram sabha have been called at the panchayat level and not at the village level as prescribed in the Act. All State governments should recognise the gram sabha at the individual settlement (hamlet or revenue village) level, or PESA (Panchayat Extension to Scheduled Areas) gram sabha where applicable, to enable much more effective processing of the FRA.

TWELFTH PLAN: Different Voices

R. Sreedhar Chairperson, Mines, Minerals and People.



The Approach Paper has scraps of what different Ministries want and has been bound together to express the need for high growth rate. The preparation of the Twelfth Plan reminds me of the character of the famous play of the same name by Vijay Tendulkar, Sakharam Binder, the protagonist

who kept all discarded women and behaved with them like a tyrant.

Then, the rights of other traditional forest-dwellers have been ignored in most States. In 11 States the implementation process has not yet started. This includes the north-eastern States except Assam and Tripura, Bihar, Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh and Goa. In Tamil Nadu, because of restrictive orders by the High Court on a petition, progress has been slow. Some States (such as Jharkhand) have lagged behind in getting a plausible number of claims and in processing the claims received.

CFR PROCESS SLOW

The progress in the implementation of community forest rights (CFR) under the FRA is abysmally slow. In all States, the CFR process has not even got off the ground owing to lack of awareness among communities, civil society organisations or the relevant officials. The main reason is the hostility of forest officials, who see a dilution of their empire if community rights are granted to forest-dwellers.

Moreover, State governments have not publicised the CFR provisions adequately or even internalised their importance themselves. Given the serious inadequacies in the implementation of CFR at all levels, there is need for a second-phase implementation of the FRA in all States with a primary focus on CFR. What is most intriguing is the suggestion in para 5.51 of the Approach Paper that forest gatherers should not be given the benefit of the minimum support price (MSP), which is now available only in agriculture to certain surplus States, and not even to paddy farmers in States like Bihar and Uttar Pradesh.

While acknowledging that what “the primary tribal collectors of NTFPs [Non-Timber Forest Products] get today is a very small fraction of the potential value embedded in NTFPs”, the Commission thinks that providing a high price for forest produce will not be in the interest of legal traders, who would be forced to pay a higher price to the gatherers.

The Approach Paper advocates more training of government personnel so as to improve their accountability. It appears that members and senior staff of the Commission also need to attend sensitisation courses on what kind of policies the poor need and how to ensure their delivery.

Dr N.C. Saxena is a member of the National Advisory Council. He has worked as Secretary, Planning Commission (1999-2002) and Secretary, Rural Development (1997-99), and as head of the National Academy of Administration, Mussoorie (1993-97).

<http://www.frontline.in/stories/20111021282102100.htm>

Noida farmers buy tickets for F1 race, will take protests to tracks

Ashish Sinha, Timsy Jaipuria

Posted: Friday, Oct 07, 2011 at 0505 hrs IST

New Delhi: Not content with protests and demand for higher compensation for their lands, over dozen villages around the Buddh International Circuit in Greater Noida have devised an innovative way to get adequate media attention.

Around 1,000-plus villagers from the affected villages in and around the race tracks have bought F1 race tickets, worth R30-35 lakh, from the money they got from the Yamuna Expressway Industrial Development Authority (YEIDA) three years ago. According to villagers, they will attend the race and lodge their protests from “within” the venue.

From October 23, the villagers have already lined up a spate of protests outside the F1 tracks, demanding a resolution to their grievances. The F1 race has also managed to unite all factions of the farmers, including the Zila Kisan Mahasangh, Anti-Hi-tech City Sangh, Kisan Sabha and the Kisan Sangharsh Samiti.

F1 Airtel Indian Grand Prix (October 28-30) has attracted top brands and corporate honchos who have booked special spectator boxes to watch the event. Sources say over Rs. 1,000 crore is riding on India’s first Formula 1 race. While advertisers are shelling out 30% of this amount, the rest will come from the sale of tickets. Most top advertisers are supporting the three-day event. These include Airtel, Vodafone, Hero MotoCorp, Mahindra, Renault, UB Group, Red Bull and Mercedes.

Farmer leader Virender Dhada told FE the land acquired was for setting up industries and the villagers were paid compensation accordingly. “Instead of selling the land to industries, the authority later sold it off to Jaypee Group which built the Buddh International Circuit, a commercial venture. Farmers should get appropriate compensation and a minimum of 7% aabadi land near their villages along with some other basic requirements,” said Dhada.

Another leader, who is the sanchalak (coordinator) of the Kisan Sangharsh Samiti, said: “We are going to stage a silent protest from October 23-28. If the authority fails to fulfill our demands by October 28, we will continue the protest and may also disturb the race. “Some farmers said they had bought tickets in bulk costing Rs. 3,000-6,000. Some of the villages which fall in the vicinity of the F1 track are Jaganpur, Atta Gurjam, Gunpura, Atta Fatehpur, Derikhuban, Auranpur, Munj Kheda, Dankaur, Silarpur and Sukan Nagar. Another farmer leader said the villagers would meet at Atta Fatehpur on October 23 after which they would stage a dharna near the track.

YEIDA CEO Pandhari Yadav told FE: “We’ve given compensation to the farmers. Yes, there are reports of their protest but the authority cannot keep on listening to their demands even after two-three years of land acquisition. We are in talks and since the matter is sub judice we cannot say anything.”

<http://www.financialexpress.com/news/g-noida-farmers-buy-tickets-for-f1-race-will-take-protests-to-tracks/856916/0>

Energy and Mining Abroad

Stop Subsidizing Fossil Fuels, IEA Tells Governments

10/07/2011 10:25 AM, SustainableBusiness.com News

If the status quo continues, global subsidies for fossil fuel consumption will reach \$660 billion in 2020 - 0.7% of global gross domestic product, says the International Energy Agency (IEA).

In 2010, governments and taxpayers spent \$409 billion propping up production and consumption of fossil fuels, up from \$312 billion in 2009 - the year when G-20 Leaders agreed to phase them out, saying they "encourage wasteful consumption, reduce our energy security, impede investment in clean energy sources and undermine efforts to deal with the threat of climate change."

Eliminating fossil fuel consumption subsidies by 2020 would reduce the world's energy demand 4% and considerably reduce the growth of carbon emissions growth, says the IEA.

The largest subsidies go to oil (\$193 billion in 2010), followed by \$91 billion for natural gas. The two countries with the biggest subsidies are Iran and Saudi Arabia.

If those subsidies were to end, IEA says, national revenues would actually increase in contrast to what governments claim: that subsidies alleviate energy poverty and promote economic development.

The reality is quite different: they create wasteful use of energy, contribute to price volatility by blurring market signals, encourage fuel smuggling, and lower the competitiveness of renewables and energy efficient technologies, says Maria van der Hoeven, IEA Executive Director and Secretary-General for the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

To track government policies supporting fossil fuels, OECD compiled for the first time an Inventory of Estimated Budgetary Support and Tax Expenditures for Fossil Fuels. The findings of the Inventory include:

- Germany's historically generous subsidies for hard-coal mining fell from EUR 4.9 billion in 1999 to EUR 2.1 billion in 2009, and should be phased-out entirely by 2018
- France gradually phased out support for the coal industry: dropping from over EUR 1 billion in 1990 to EUR 92 million in 2007, before it ended it through a range of measures that addressed the social costs associated with mine closures
- Mexico spent \$629 million in 2009 to subsidize energy consumption, which will decrease as the new national energy strategy is put in place and the government better targets subsidies directly to low income households, rather than for energy use
- The US supported energy producers with \$5 billion in 2009. The 2012 federal budget proposes eliminating a broad group of subsidies - thereby increasing government revenues by over \$3.6 billion.

In other words, phasing out subsidies to fossil fuels, if well-executed, can generate

important economic, energy security and environmental benefits.

"As nations look for policy responses to the worst economic crisis of our lifetimes, phasing out subsidies is an obvious way to help governments meet their economic, environmental and social goals," says Angel Gurría, OECD Secretary General.

In April, [IEA issued a report](#) urging governments around the world to do away with hundreds of billions in subsidies for fossil fuels.

<http://www.sustainablebusiness.com/index.cfm/go/news.display/id/23000>

Find Jobs in Australia's New Mining Website

By Esther Thomas | October 6, 2011 2:22 PM EST

A website targeting to attract workers to Australia's mining industry has been launched as the promise of making at least 750,000 new jobs in the next 20 years will follow Australia's metals and minerals boom.

The website <http://www.miningoilandgasjobs.com/> was activated by employer lobby group Australian Mines and Metals Association (AMMA) to connect Australians with job opportunities parallel to the industry's the mining boom.

Incidentally, Australian Prime Minister Julia Gillard in today's jobs forum in Canberra said Government will not solve the current skills shortage problem in the mining industry with immigration solutions, not until Australians are willing to be trained and relocated to supply the employment demand in the metals and minerals sector.

"We don't want to leave a kid in Kwinana in Western Australia on the unemployment queue without skills while the people who operate big mines in the north-west of the state say can you import a plumber or a cook or an electrician for me," ABC news quoted Ms. Gillard as telling to Radio National.

I want that kid to get that opportunity."

Workers, if careful with their hard-earned money, can get rich working for the mines. A skilled boilermaker can earn more than \$300,000 a year, while 18-year-old driving trucks can earn \$150,000 a year.

AMMA said the website <http://www.miningoilandgasjobs.com/> was developed following a report from the National Resource Sector Employment Taskforce (NRSET) that underlined how the skills shortage will greatly affect the mining sector unless government and industry groups combine forces to address the problem. The employer group quoted a report from

the ANZ Bank-Port Jackson Partners that said at least 750,000 jobs are secured in the next 20 years following Australia's metals and minerals boom.

AMMA said employers had started posting job vacancies in the site. Previously employed workers who lost their jobs in other sectors are the ones most actively perusing the site, AMMA added.

<http://www.miningoilandgasjobs.com/> provides information about employment, career planning, migration, and training and development in the resources sector.

Coal, Lignite and Thermal Power

Knock on wood

Chetan Chauhan, Hindustan Times

New Delhi, October 08, 2011

For the past two years, the environment and coal ministries have been at loggerheads about how much more of our forests can be sacrificed to mining. It began more than two years ago, with former environment minister Jairam Ramesh declaring "dense" areas of forests "no-go" for mining, ie where mining would be banned. Until then, his ministry had been clearing each project on merit. Ever since Ramesh announced the new policy, the coal ministry has been trying to dilute it.

Late last month, a group of ministers that the prime minister set up to play arbiter, scrapped Ramesh's policy. It said that mining should be banned only in "pristine" forests that the Forest Survey of India-FSI for short-should identify. A pristine forest is one rich in biodiversity and cannot be easily rejuvenated by humans. Until then, the environment ministry will clear individual projects on merit, like earlier.

Officials at FSI declined to say when it would complete this identification exercise. But whatever the definition, dense or pristine, environmentalists say the government should place our forests in a larger socio-economic context. Many forests are hotbeds of Maoist violence and house the country's most deprived communities. "The assessment has to be made in the larger political sense," said Kanchi Kohli of the non-profit group Kalpavriksh. "[It should include] the impact of mining on local ecosystems, communities and wildlife."

Some evidence of this is already available from two forested regions that have seen the most intense mining activity.

(With inputs from Shalini Singh)

<http://www.hindustantimes.com/Knock-on-wood/Article1-755093.aspx>

Essel Mining bags outsourcing contract of MCL mine

BS Reporter / Kolkata/ Angul October 05, 2011, 0:54 IST

The operations of Bhubaneswari open cast mine under the command area of Mahanadi Coalfields Limited (MCL), a subsidiary of Coal India Ltd (CIL), has been outsourced to Essel Mining, an Aditya Birla group firm.

It is for this first time in the history of CIL that operations of a coal mine has been fully outsourced to a private firm even though the ownership remains with MCL. The Bhubaneswari open cast mine has a capacity of 20 million tonnes per annum.

According to a government decision, three coal mines in MCL have been offered for outsourcing- Bhubaneswari and Kaniha, both in Talcher coalfields and Kulda mines under Basundhara coalfield in Sundergarh district.

While full outsourcing activities have begun in Bhubaneswari, other two mines are still to adopt the same though contracts have been awarded, according to an MCL official.

Essel Mining, which has been awarded the contract for 15 years for the Bhubaneswari mines, performed the ground breaking ceremony at a site near Jilinda village in the presence of MCL chairman and managing director (CMD) A N Sahay.

However, the ground breaking ceremony was disrupted by affected villagers who held demonstrations at the site. Later, they were pacified after the MCL CMD assured to look into their demands relating to rehabilitation.

All works related to the Bhubaneswari mines including production, removal of over burden and street lighting will be done by Essel Mining. The private company has been given a target to produce eight million tonnes in the first year.

<http://www.business-standard.com/india/news/essel-mining-bags-outsourcing-contractmcl-mine/451451/>

Bauxite, Alumina and Aluminium

Save Jagannath rally from November 10

Orissa | Posted on Oct 09, 2011 at 11:59am IST

Express News Service, The New Indian Express

BHUBANESWAR: The Vedanta Viswavidyalay Virodhi Sangharsa Samiti, spearheading a public movement against 'illegal' acquisition of Jagannath Temple land, on Saturday announced to launch 'Save Jagannath' movement in the State from November 10. The objective of the movement is to collect 8.63 crore, the amount deposited by Anil Agarwal Foundation with the Government towards the cost of 1,300 acre of Jagannath Temple land for the proposed Vedanta university, to save the land from sale, said convener of the Samiti Umaballav Rath. The movement in the form of a rally will start from Beladala and cover the

entire State. During the journey, the Samiti will appeal the people to donate as per their ability to save the Temple land. The Samiti has requested the public to make their donation either in cheque or draft. Small donations will be collected in 'hundi'.

The money, to be collected, will be deposited in the account of Jagannath Temple Trust, Rath said.

<http://ibnlive.in.com/news/save-jagannath--rally-from-november-10/191434-60-117.html>

Vanthada bauxite mining issue crops up again

October 9, 2011, By DC Correspondent

The villagers are ready to launch a fresh agitation against mining by Maheswari Minerals Limited that came armed with a court order and started mining in Survey No. 166 of the Eastern Ghats near Vanthada village on the auspicious day of Vijaya Dasami.

The villagers are ready to launch a fresh agitation against mining by Maheswari Minerals Limited that came armed with a court order and started mining in Survey No. 166 of the Eastern Ghats near Vanthada village on the auspicious day of Vijaya Dasami.

The residents of the nearby villages of Vanthada, Pedamallapuram, Avarthi, Velangi, Chintalluru and others expressed their concern over the mining. They demanded the government to order a CBI inquiry along the lines of the one against mining tycoon Gali Janardhana Reddy, into the mining activity of the aforementioned company that resumed mining after a year.

According to sources, the company secured permission to excavate bauxite and laterite from the Eastern Ghats in the year 2003.

After the villagers agitated against the mining, a survey was conducted in August 2010, by a three-member committee comprising the then joint collector, Mr Kona Sashidhar, the joint director, mines, Mr Rasheed and the district forest officer, Mr C. Raghavaiah who reported irregularities involving 10 lakh tonnes of ore.

Even after the district collector took action against two tahsildars, a retired tahsildar and a revenue inspector based on the committee's report and even advised the government to cancel the mining license of the company, they managed to secure permission from the High Court.

Even then, allegations against the then social welfare minister, Mr Pilli Subashchandra Bose and the then zilla parishad chairman, Mr Venugopala Krishna, close aides of the Kadapa MP, Mr Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy.

"The government turned a blind eye though the officials clearly favoured the company and not the villagers," said the Eastern Ghats Protection Committee Convenor, K. Rajendra.

The residents of 10 villages nearby Vanthada hills submitted a report to the district collector, Mr M. Ravi Chandra, stating that officials are silent even though the company has encroached 3 km of forest land and mining it illegally.

They warned that they will resume their agitation to stop mining activities in Eastern Ghats.

Iron Ore, Iron and Steel

Sical Logistics and MMTC Ennore Port iron ore JV seeking other cargo - Report

Steel Trade Today - Sunday, Oct 09, 2011

A JV between Sical Logistics Limited and MMTC Limited, which built India's biggest iron ore loading terminal with an investment of INR 500 crore at union government controlled Ennore port in Tamil Nadu, is seeking to handle other cargo.

It has applied for the port's permission to do so after a Supreme Court ban on mining of the key steel making commodity in Karnataka's Bellary Hospet region caused exports to dry up, rendering the facility non-functional.

The iron ore terminal at Ennore Port, with an annual capacity of 12 million tonnes, was inaugurated in January by shipping minister G.K. Vasan, but is yet to start commercial operations. The terminal is totally dependent on the commodity originating from the Bellary Hospet belt for operations.

Mr PK Das, a chief general manager at state run commodity trader MMTC, said that "We are looking at alternatives including handling other commodities such as coal and cars for the time being till export of iron ore resumes."

Sical Iron Ore Terminals Limited is a JV firm formed by Sical Logistics Limited and MMTC Limited to develop and operate the new terminal for 30 years. Sical Logistics has a 74% stake while the rest is held by MMTC.

Mr Das said that "We are in discussions with Ennore port regarding this emphasizing that the venture was looking at handling other cargo only as an interim measure to keep the terminal running. We are not able to commission the terminal because of the ban on mining and export of iron ore."

According to the shareholder agreement between Sical and MMTC, apart from holding a 26% stake in the JV terminal operating company, MMTC has also committed to support the new terminal as a customer by shipping at least 3 million tonnes of iron ore a year through the Ennore facility.

The Sical MMTC partnership won the contract in a public tender in 2006 by agreeing to share 52% of annual revenue with the port. Sical MMTC is contractually bound to pay INR 2.5 crore to Ennore port as revenue share in the first year of operations with this rising 5% every year thereafter. Sical Logistics is now 57.08% owned by Tanglin Retail Realty Developments Pvt Limited.

http://www.steelguru.com/indian_news/Sical_Logistics_and_MMTC_Ennore_Port_iron_ore_JV_seeking_other_cargo_Report/228928.html

Wind Power

Green energy takes toll on green cover

Down to Earth, Author(s): M Suchitra, **Issue:** Oct 3, 2011

A forest generated by residents in Andhra Pradesh's Anantapur district is being destroyed to set up windmills

For two decades people from eight villages in Kalpavalli region in Andhra Pradesh's Anantapur district laboured hard to turn a vast expanse of wasteland into a forest. But the effort seems to have gone waste as the green cover is being ruthlessly destroyed to set up wind farms. Enercon Wind Farms (Madhya Pradesh) Pvt Ltd, a group company of Enercon (India) Ltd, a subsidiary of the German company Enercon GmbH, is setting up a 20 MW wind energy project in the area.

Over 20 years ago, Kalpavalli region used to resemble a desert. Hilly terrains, dried streams and tanks and hard surface bereft of top soil marked the landscape. Then came the turnaround. A voluntary organisation and village residents brought to life a thriving wilderness on 2,833 hectares (ha) of land in Kalpavalli, marked as revenue wasteland. At present Kalpavalli has 264 floral species and 105 fauna species. Wild boars, black bucks, foxes and porcupines can be found in the forests. Kalpavalli also provides livelihood to about 400 families (see 'People earn a living from forests').

People earn a living from forests

240 families earns Rs 18,000 each in four months by making and selling brooms which are made from grass

160 families selling date palm fruits earn Rs 16,000 each in three months

Kalpavalli provides around 4,000 cart loads of fodder grass every year. About 40,000 sheep graze here

Kalpavalli falls within Chennekkothappalli, Roddam and Ramgiri mandals of Anantapur, the second-most drought-affected district in the country (Jaisalmer in Rajasthan tops the list of such districts). The eco-restoration programme of this wasteland was started in 1992 as a common

property development programme of Timbaktu Collective, a voluntary organisation based in the remote Chennekkothappalli (C K Palli) village, about 20 km from Kalpavalli. The villagers jointly protected the regenerated forests, and in 2008 they registered the Kalapavalli Mutually Aided Tree Growers' Society with a membership of 1,969. The efforts were headed by Bablu Ganguly and Mary Vattamattam, a couple working on developing alternative models of sustainable development since 1990 (see 'Agro-forest nurtured for 20 years').

Windmill intervention

The face of Kalpavalli has completely changed in the past one year after Enercon's entry. The company has permission to install 48 windmills, and the state government has allotted 28 hectares (ha) of land at a cost Rs 25,000 an acre (0.4 ha). Apart from the allotted land, the company has used 79.3 ha of land for road construction.

The company got permission from the district administration to set up the windmills after the Non-conventional Energy Development Corporation of Andhra Pradesh (NEDCAP) sanctioned the project in 2004. According to the company wind monitoring studies have been undertaken by the NEDCAP, and Ministry of Non-conventional Energy sources notified the location "as a proven windy site to encourage investment in the private sector".



Roads cutting

through pastureland have been developed without district authority's permission

The result has been devastating. Almost all the hillocks in Kalpavalli are bearing the brunt of wind energy production. Vegetation cover has been removed and hilltops are being cut for windmill installation. Deep cuts of about 3 to 4 metre have been made on the slopes to develop roads, but without any retaining walls which may lead to massive soil erosion. The company has so far developed 40 km of road, ranging 10m to 50m in width. The deep cuts have heavily damaged pasture routes, making it impossible for cattle to climb up the hills.

“We have not given permission to the company for construction of roads,” says Anitha Ramachandran, joint collector of Anantapur district who is in-charge of land allotment in the district. Despite being asked to submit a request for permission, the company has not done it so far, she says.

Enercon started its installation works after entering an agreement with the Kalpavalli Mutually Aided Tree Growers Society. The company had agreed to pay Rs 20 lakh and has paid only Rs 12 lakh so far as compensation to the society. As per rule, when forestland is diverted for other purposes, Rs 15 lakh should be paid for every 0.4 ha, points out the state biodiversity board chairperson, R Hampaiah.



Forest cleared for

installing a windmill

“It’s true that this was revenue wasteland. But it has been regenerated and has a forest which is common property,” he says.

The company has bought 1.6 ha for the village community for building a school. “Apart from this, the company has paid off villagers and local politicians, causing a deep divide and mutual distrust in the community,” alleges Gopal. There was strong resistance among people initially, but now everybody keeps quiet because of the money involved, he says. A

few thousand rupees is a huge amount for the marginalised farmers who are in acute distress. Enercon declined to comment on the adverse impact of its project.

While the company is moving ahead with its project, the society maintains that it has been grossly misinformed before signing the agreement. “They (Enercon) said they would use only the existing paths and would take only a little space for installing the windmills,” says Roddam Pothenna, director of Kalpavalli Society and a watchman of the windmill company. “If we had known this much damage would happen, we would not have signed the agreement.” The company pays him Rs 3,000 as salary.

Many villagers like B Ramachandra of Shapuram village, who is a member of the society and also working as a watchman of the company, says it’s really painful to watch the forest which people painstakingly regenerated and protected getting destroyed. “The company has cut a large-number of trees,” he says. Mushtikovila tank has already got silted, say villagers. They are scared to resist. “Windmill people threaten us and tell us if we go near the work site, they would call the police,” says B Nagamani of Shapuram.



2,933	ha
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wasteland was covered with forest under the eco-restoration programme

Apart from damaging the grasslands, catchment area of streams and vegetation, the windmills may cause water conflicts in the region. For base construction of one windmill, one tanker (5,000 litres) of water is needed, and for base curing about one tanker every day for 25 days. Enercon is taking water from the village wells by paying just Rs 80 a tanker.

While Enercon is setting up windmills within Kalpavalli, two other companies, Samiran Jaipur Wind Farms, an associated company of Suzlon Energy Limited, and Helios Infratech have started their on project outside Kalpavalli. Together, they will set up 168 windmills.

As the biodiversity board chairperson Hampiah points out, if the villagers are genuinely concerned about their common land getting degraded once again, they can form biodiversity management committees and give submission to the board against the destruction in Kalpavalli. Or they can move court.

The large-scale destruction has dismayed Mary and Bablu who started the eco-regeneration programme. They are critical of the district administration's role which has been implementing water and soil conservation efforts in the water-starved district under NREGA and at the same time allowing the model project to be destroyed in the name of non-conventional energy. "There's absolutely no perspective or coordination between different wings of the government. The terms and conditions of the land allotment says the government will take back the land if it feels land is needed for any other important purpose or for mining activities," says Ganguly.

Agro-forest nurtured for 20 years

The wasteland regeneration project in Kalpavalli began with an experiment on a 13 ha plot of barren land that Mary and Bablu bought along with their friend John D'Souza in C K Palli. They named the place Timbaktu.

"For us, it has never been an experiment. It was our life and breath," recalls Bablu. The idea was to create an agro-forest habitat in a desert-like region. Over the decades, Anantapur has been experiencing desertification due to soil erosion, sand-casting, mono-cropping, use of synthetic chemicals, deforestation and excess use of ground water. "We wanted to find solutions to the degradation of environment and lives of people living around," says Mary. So the couple settled down in C K Palli to understand the geology and topography of the area.

In the process they came to know that Anantapur had a rich tradition of rain water harvesting—tanks and kuntas—and irrigation systems. It had a rich biodiversity and forest cover. The system was lost due to lack of ownership, destruction of the forests, wrong agricultural practices and a growing dependence on the government as the provider of all facilities. The Timbaktu team directed their efforts towards collecting locally available seeds, harvesting water, conserving soil and planting indigenous varieties of trees. Then they protected the land from cattle.

The outcome was beyond their imagination. Within two years the soil sprang to life. Then slowly a forest emerged with 400 varieties of trees, shrubs and creepers.

“Villages in Anantapur have thousands of acres (one acre equals 0.4 ha) of revenue wasteland. We decided to extend the Timbaktu experiment to this land,” says Mary. The initiative was started on 50 ha of wasteland in Mushtikovila village in C K Palli mandal. The concept was to promote eco-restoration through natural regeneration. “It took over a year to convince the villagers the need for water harvesting and soil conservation in revenue wasteland in their village,” recalls Gopal K, a resident of Mustikovila and a Timbaktu team member.

The villagers were mobilised. A Vana Samrakshana Samithy (forest protection committee) was formed, fire-break lines were made, seeds were collected and stored, rock-fill dams, farm ponds and mud *bunds* were made to recharge groundwater and to prevent soil erosion. The shepherds were made a part of the process and grazing was controlled. The local bodha grass seeds were propagated and the hay from this used as fodder.

Over the next seven years, seven more villages joined in and over 2,800 ha of contiguous revenue wasteland was protected and regenerated into a forest. In 15 years, hills turned green, valleys became dense and about 250 water bodies and streams have regained life. The Kogira stream became perennial. Mushtikovila tank, which is spread over 162 ha and was the main source of irrigation in the area, once again had water. “We even started cultivating 162 ha of paddy fields,” says Boddemgari Siddappa, former sarpanch of the village.

“The focus was on joint community ownership of forest and forest produce,” says Bablu. During 2008-2011, Rs 3.5 crore has been spent in Kalpavalli under National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS) and Rs 4.12 crore under Food for Work programme.

<http://www.downtoearth.org.in/content/green-energy-takes-toll-green-cover>
