



DPK

**PRESS NOTE**

**REPORTS ON ENVIRONMENTAL CLEARANCE BEING GRANTED TO VEDANTA AT NIYAMGIRI INCORRECT**

2<sup>nd</sup> July 2011:

There have been reports in a particular English daily on the subject of environmental clearance being granted to M/s Vedanta Aluminium Limited. The Environmental Clearance in that area which was considered in the Ministry of Environment and Forests in fact pertains to the Lanjigarh Bauxite Mining Project, located *inter alia* in Niyamgiri Reserve Forest covering two districts Raigarha and Kalahandi of Odisha, belonging to M/s Orissa Mining Corporation Ltd.

The Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) wishes to state that the reports do not paint a true and accurate portrayal of events.

*Firstly*, it must be understood that the issue of Environmental Clearance to Lanjigarh Project has become practically redundant. Considering the fact that the MoEF has outright rejected the request for Forest Clearance, the question of granting environmental clearance on the land does not arise. In fact the Order passed by the MoEF expressly states that the Environmental Clearance has become “inoperable” **There is no change in this status quo**. It continues to remain inoperable.

*Secondly*, In pursuance to the direction of the erstwhile quasi-judicial body known as the National Environment Appellate Authority (NEAA), the matter was referred to the Expert Appraisal Committee(EAC) for non-Coal Mining Projects by the Ministry. The five members Sub-Committee was constituted by the EAC and not by the Ministry. The Sub-Committee thus reported back to the EAC itself.

*Thirdly*, What the EAC has done is to submit its recommendation to the Ministry. At present the Ministry is in the process of examining these recommendations and will submit its stand/ decision to the Hon’ble National Green Tribunal, before whom the case is now to be heard.

*Fourthly*, it must be categorically understood, that the MoEF relies on the recommendations and advice of the Expert Appraisal Committee **but it is not bound by these**. It has been erroneously stated in these reports that the MoEF does not have the power to overrule the EAC. **This is factually incorrect**.

The final decision continues to vest with the MoEF.