

PROCEEDING OF THE NINTH SITTING OF THE OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE
HELD ON 09th JULY, 2025

QUORUM

1. Dr. Amandeep Garg, IAS, Addl., Secretary-cum-Chairman,
Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change,
New Delhi.
2. Shri R. S. Gill, IFS, Member,
PCCF and HoFF, Department of Forest & Environment, Government of Meghalaya &
Chairman, Technical Committee.
3. Ms. Imtiena Ao, IFS, Member Secretary,
Deputy Director General of Forest (C) MoEF & CC, RO Shillong.
4. Shri B. S. Sohliya, IAS, Member,
Secretary to the Government of Meghalaya,
Mining & Geology Department.
5. Smti. Idashisha Nongrang, IPS, Member,
DGP, Meghalaya Police.
6. Shri Sibhi Chakravarthy Sadhu, IAS, Member,
Secretary to the Government of Meghalaya,
Forest & Environment Department.
7. Shri Inderpal Singh IFS (Retd.), Member,
Chairman of the EAC (Coal Mining),
MoEF & CC, New Delhi.
8. Prof. S. C Bhowmik, Member,
Indian School of Mines/IIT, Dhanbad.
9. Shri R. Nainamalai, IFS, Member,
Chairman Meghalaya State Pollution Control Board
10. Shri Shantanu Dutta, Member,
Regional Director, CPCB, Regional Directorate North East, Shillong
11. Shri A. K. Mishra, Member,
Director, Directorate General of Mines Safety
12. Shri P.M. Scott, Member,
Chief Engineer, Central Water Commission, Government of India
13. Shri Tapan Chakraborty, Member,
Central Ground Water Board
14. Shri S. C Shankar, Member,
General Manager, Coal India Ltd., Kolkata

**IN THE MATTER OF:
THREAT TO LIFE ARISING OUT OF COAL MINING IN SOUTH GARO
HILLS DISTRICT**

-Vs-

**THE STATE OF MEGHALAYA & ORS.
AND OTHER CONNECTED MATTERS.**

PRESENT

1. Shri Amandeep Garg, IAS,
Additional Secretary-cum-Chairman,
Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, New Delhi.
2. Shri R. S. Gill, IFS,
PCCF and HoFF,
Department of Forest & Environment, Government of Meghalaya
& Chairman, Technical Committee
Email id: rsgillceo@gmail.com pccfmegh@gmail.com
3. Shri B. S. Sohliya, IAS,
Secretary, Government of Meghalaya,
Mining & Geology Department.
Email id: mining.geology@gmail.com
4. Ms. Imtiena Ao, IFS, DDGF(C) & Member Secretary,
Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change,
Regional Office Shillong.
Email id: moefro.shillong@gov.in.
7. Shri B. Wahlang, IFS, CCF (SF), Member Secretary, Technical Committee
Government of Meghalaya, Dept. of Forest and Environment,
Sylvan House, Shillong-793001,
Email id: pccfmegh@gmail.com.
8. Shri G. W. Lyngdoh, MPS,
AIGP (L&O), Meghalaya Police,
Office of the Director General of Police, Meghalaya
Email i.d: igplo-mlp@gov.in
9. Shri Sundar Ramanathan, Sc 'F',
Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change,
New Delhi.
10. Dr. Rajesh Prasad Rastogi,
IA Division (Coal Mining & Thermal Sector),
Scientist 'D',
MoEF & CC, New Delhi.
11. Shri Naba Bhattacharjee,
Technical Adviser (Environment, Natural resources etc),
Govt. of Meghalaya.

12. Shri Shantanu Dutta, Central Pollution Control Board,
Regional Directorate North East, Shillong
Email id: mkc.cpb@nic.in.
13. Shri A.K Mishra, Director (Mining),
Director General of Mines Safety,
Guwahati Region, Assam.
14. Shri M. Somorjit Singh, Sci/Engr 'SF',
North Eastern Space Application Centre,
Department of Space, Government of India
Email id: m.somorjit@nesac@gov.in.
15. Dr. H. Tynsong, Scientist 'E',
Ministry of Environment Forest & Climate Change,
Email id: moefro.shillong@gov.in.
16. Shri M.S. Saravana Kumar,
Superintending Engineer,
Central Water Commission.
17. Shri Pankaj P. Momin,
OSD,
North Eastern Coal Fields,
Coal India Ltd.
Guwahati, Assam.
18. Shri P. Ch. Marak,
Mining Engineer,
Directorate of Mineral Resources, Meghalaya.
19. Shri Y. F. Laloo,
Environmental Engineer,
MSPCB,

**RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS AND DECISIONS FROM THE NINTH SITTING OF
THE OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE**

Dr. Amandeep Garg, Additional Secretary of the Ministry of Environment, Forest, and Climate Change, New Delhi, and Chairman of the Oversight Committee, presided over the Ninth Sitting. He commenced the meeting by extending his greetings and welcoming the attendees. Following this, he invited all members and officials to introduce themselves briefly.

The following agenda items were discussed in the meeting:

AGENDA No. 1:	Proposal by the State Government for Amendment of the Revised Comprehensive Plan
AGENDA No. 2:	Proposals recommended by the Technical Committee in its 23 rd , 24 th , 25 th & 26 th Sitting.
AGENDA No.3:	Review of decisions taken in the 8 th Sitting of the Oversight Committee.
AGENDA No.4:	Any other issue with permission from the Chair.

AGENDA NO. 1

**PROPOSAL BY THE STATE GOVERNMENT FOR AMENDMENT OF THE REVISED
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN (AMENDED) 2022**

The Mining & Geology in consultation with Coal India Limited had prepared the first Comprehensive Plan on 12.03.2020 based on the direction of the Hon'ble NGT for disposal of the remaining extracted coal in the state of Meghalaya after the banned on rat hole coal mining by the Hon'ble NGT in the year 2014. The said Comprehensive Plan was submitted by the then NGT Committee headed by Justice B.D. Agarwal to the Hon'ble NGT for approval. However the Hon'ble NGT found that some of the provisions is contrary to Hon'ble Supreme Court's Judgment and as a result directed the then NGT Committee to revise the Comprehensive Plan which was subsequently left to the Oversight Committee after its constitution. Thereafter, the Oversight Committee in its 4th sitting accorded approval to the Revised Comprehensive Plan (Amended) 2022. The Hon'ble High Court of Meghalaya in its Order dated 13.03.2025 in PIL No. 02/2022 in the matter of *In RE Suo Motu Illegal Mining of Coal In the State of Meghalaya Vs State of Meghalaya* has directed:

"On the comprehensive Plan for re-auction of re-assessed/re verified coal, it is expressed that the State respondents, are bound by the terms and conditions of the concluded auctions and therefore, any change in the terms and conditions after the auction, to the prejudice of successful bidders, would entail other consequences and legal actions. It has also been submitted made that any change in the auction process or plan will have to be approved by the NGT (Oversight Committee)." "This Court expects that on this aspect, the State respondents in conjunction with the Coal India Limited should approach the aforesaid Committee for amendment of the clauses, or to initiate changes as proposed

in the report to eliminate the problem of non-payment/non-lifting of coal. A clause may be inserted in future auction notice, mandating herein that if full payment is not made in 120 days, or if the entire coal is not lifted within 120 days of full payment, the bid would be cancelled with forfeiture of EMD, and the coal to be put for re-auction."

The Oversight Committee received a communication from the Department of Mining & Geology, Government of Meghalaya, in compliance with the Hon'ble High Court's Order dated 13.03.2025, requesting an amendment to the Revised Comprehensive Plan (Amended), 2022.

During the meeting, the Secretary of Mining & Geology apprised the Committee that the coal auction process is currently underway. However, in the previous meeting held on 30.06.2025, chaired by Justice (Retd.) B. P. Katakey, it was decided that the ongoing auction process for inventoried coal should be temporarily suspended. The process would resume only after the Oversight Committee grants approval for the inclusion of a proposed additional clause in the Revised Comprehensive Plan (Amended), 2022.

The Committee expressed concern that the successful bidders under the ongoing auction process may not be agreeable to the new clause being proposed. Therefore, the Committee recommended that the Mining & Geology Department obtain a written undertaking from all successful bidders, confirming their agreement with the newly proposed clause, prior to resuming the auction process.

After further deliberation, the Committee approved the proposal of the Mining & Geology Department, Government of Meghalaya, to insert an Additional Clause in the relevant Section of the Revised Comprehensive Plan (Amended), 2022, subject to an undertaking from all successful bidders agreeing to the new Clause.

AGENDA No: 2

2. A. PROPOSALS RECOMMENDED BY THE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE TO BE FUNDED FROM RS. 100 CRORES DEPOSITED WITH CPCB:

Shri B. Wahlang, Chief Conservator of Forests and Member Secretary of the Technical Committee presented a series of proposals for funding under the ₹100 Crore Corpus deposited with the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), focusing on the Upgradation and expansion of forest nurseries across various districts in Meghalaya. The proposals included the Upgradation and expansion of the Range Office Forest Nursery at Sohra under the Social Forestry Range, submitted by the Divisional Forest Officer (DFO), Social Forestry Division, East Khasi Hills, Shillong. Another key proposal was for the creation of a High-Tech Nursery at Sohpiam, submitted by the DFO, Social Forestry Division & Territorial, West and South West Khasi Hills, Nongstoin. A similar proposal for

establishing a Hi-Tech Nursery at Umtyra Village was submitted by the DFO, Social Forestry Division, Jaintia Hills, Jowai.

Further, a proposal was placed for the development of a Central Nursery and the Upgradation of existing nurseries, submitted by the DFO, Social Forestry Division, East and North Garo Hills, Williamnagar. Additionally, a project proposal for a Centralized Nursery was submitted by the DFO, Social Forestry Division, South Garo Hills, Baghmara. Other submissions included general nursery development proposals by the DFOs of West & South West Khasi Hills, Nongstoin; East Khasi Hills, Shillong; and South Garo Hills, Baghmara. Specific proposals focusing on nursery bed development included the creation and maintenance of 1000 Polypot nursery beds by the DFO, Jaintia Hills, Jowai, and 100 Polypot nursery beds by the DFO, West Garo Hills, Tura. Summary of proposals is given in Table 1.

Table 1. Name of the proposal, submitting agency, Summary/ Abstract of Item of Works and amount in Indian Rupees (INR)

Sl No.	Name of the proposal and submitting agency	Summary/ Abstract of Item of Works	Amount in INR
2 A (i)	Upgradation & Expansion of Range Office Forest Nursery at Sohra Social Forestry Range Submitted by the Divisional Forest Officer, Social Forestry Division, East Khasi Hills, Shillong.	Land Development for placing the nursery beds.	Rs. 17,02,400/-
		Infrastructure for Hi-Tech Nursery	Rs. 1,18,34,260/-
		Water supply and Electricity connection	Rs. 32,70,000/-
		Equipment	Rs. 1,00,000/-
		Renovation of existing infrastructure	Rs. 12,00,000/-
		Signboards	Rs. 40,000/-
		Sub-total	Rs. 1,81,16,660/-
2 A (ii)	Proposal for creation of High-Tech Nursery at Sohpien submitted by Divisional Forest Officer, Social Forestry Division & Territorial, West & South West Khasi Hills, Nongstoin.	Construction of GI Chain Link Fencing	Rs. 42,71,940/-
		Land Levelling for Agro Net Shade	Rs. 5,46,900/-
		Agro Shade Net House	Rs. 17,71,600/-
		Land Levelling Mist Chamber (200 M2)	Rs. 3,15,990/-
		Mist Chamber	Rs. 25,57,200/-
		Land Levelling for Seed Germination Chamber (300 M2)	Rs. 7,40,030/-
		Seed Germination Chamber	Rs. 29,78,000/-
		Land Levelling for Poly House with FAN PAD (750 M2)	Rs. 6,68,970/-
		Poly House (750 M2)	Rs. 57,57,000/-
		Land Levelling for Semi High Tech Poly House	Rs. 4,16,980/-
		Semi High Tech Poly House	Rs. 4,91,650/-
		Sub-total	Rs. 2,41,01,800/-
2 A (iii)	Establishment of Hi-tech Nursery at Umtyra Village submitted by Divisional Forest Officer, Social Forestry Division, Jaintia Hills, Jowai.	Construction of Centralized Nursery at Umtyra Village (First Year Creation and Maintenance)	Rs. 83,93,400/-
		Second Year Maintenance	Rs. 7,51,644/-
		Third Year Maintenance	Rs. 4,38,000/-
		Fourth Year Maintenance	Rs. 3,78,000/-
		Fifth Year Maintenance	Rs. 4,38,000/-
		Sub-total	Rs.

			1,03,99,044/-
2	Development of Central Nursery/ Upgradation of existing nurseries submitted by Divisional Forest Officer, Social Forestry Division, East & North Garo Hills, Williamnagar.	Creation and Maintenance of Nursery for Upgradation of existing nurseries.	Rs. 24,23,400/-
A(iv)		Construction of Poly House to produce quality planting material at Williamnagar Range, Bajengdoba Range, Kharkutta & Cheranggre Beat @ 1,00,000/- each	Rs. 4,00,000/-
		Poly House Accessories for functioning of Green Poly House at 4 Places @75,000/- each	Rs. 3,00,000/-
		Construction of Water Reservoir for constant supply of water to Poly House 4 nos. @5,14,000/- each	Rs. 20,56,000/-
		Upgradation of existing nurseries by way of installing Off Grid Solar Powered 2HP Pump Powered 4 Unit set up @ 2,00,000/- each set up.	Rs. 8,00,000/-
		Sub-total	Rs. 59,79,400/-
2 A(v)	Project Proposal for Centralized Nursery submitted by Divisional Forest Officer, Social Forestry Division, South Garo Hills, Baghmara.	First Year Maintenance of 100 beds of Centralized Nursery at Baghmara	Rs. 19,84,500/-
		Second Year Maintenance.	Rs. 5,06,625/-
		Overhead Water Storage at Nursery site	Rs. 7,55,100/-
		Water Pipe connection to the Centralized Nursery	Rs. 7,13,500/-
		Construction of boundary with iron angle post and gate	A. Rs. 5,09,100/- B. Rs. 5,09,100/- C. Rs. 2,01,270/-
		Construction of Green House with GI Pipe, Shade Net etc.	Rs. 21,24,000/-
		Solar Water Pump	Rs. 1,39,000/-
		Land Development	Rs. 1,10,000/-
		Temporary Camp Hut and Storage of materials	Rs. 3,50,000/-
		Sub-total	Rs. 79,02,195/-
2A (vi)	Proposals submitted by Divisional Forest Officer, Social Forestry Division, West & South West Khasi Hills, Nongstoin.	Creation & Maintenance of 8 Ha Plantation at Maweit.	Rs. 28,53,858/-
		Creation and maintenance of 12 polypot nursery beds for creation of 8 Ha Plantation at Maweit.	Rs. 2,23,650/-
		2 nd year maintenance of plantation at Sohmyntang – 20 Ha.	Rs. 7,44,762/-
		3 rd year maintenance of plantation at Nongdaju and Pyndenshallang Kharmein. (41Ha+40Ha)–81 Ha & Umwein – 10 ha.	Rs.29,08,200/- Rs.3,59,037/-
		Sub-total	Rs. 70,89,507/-
2A (vii)	Proposals submitted by Divisional Forest Officer, Social Forestry Division, East Khasi Hills, Shillong.	First Year Creation and Second Maintenance of 210 beds poly pot nursery for public distribution (Sohlwai nursery 30, Central Nursery of Polo Hills 30, 4 th Mile Nursery 30, Mawlynnu Nursery 30, Wahlyngkhat 30, Central Nursery of Polo Hills 30 and MCCL Ngam-U-Lah nursery 30)	Rs. 36,43,763/-
		First Year creation and Second Year Maintenance of 54 beds poly pot nursery for 40 Ha plantation of coal mine affected area at Lum	Rs. 9,36,968/-

	Lawbah, Mawkisyiem, Sohra (MCCL Ngam-U-Lah Forest Nursery)	
	Preliminary/Advance work for creation of 40 hectare plantation in coal mine affected area (Lumlawbah, Mawkisyiem, Sohra) by conventional method and its First Year Creation, Second Year Maintenance, Third Year Maintenance, Forth Year Maintenance, Fifth Year Maintenance	Rs. 1,78,48,530/-
	First Year Creation and Second Year Maintenance of 50 beds poly pot nursery for 34 Ha plantation of coal mine affected area (MCCL Ngam-U-Lah Forest Nursery).	Rs. 8,67,563/-
	Preliminary/Advance work for creation of 34 hectare plantation in coal mine affected area (Mawmluh Village, Sohra) by conventional method and its First Year Creation, Second Year Maintenance, Third Year Maintenance, Forth Year Maintenance, Fifth Year Maintenance.	Rs. 1,65,49,376/-
Sub-total		Rs. 3,98,46,200/-
2 A(viii)	Creation and maintenance of 1000 Polypot nursery beds submitted by the Divisional Forest Officer, Social Forestry Division, Jaintia Hills, Jowai.	Creation and First Year Maintenance
		Second Year Maintenance.
		Rs. 1,27,79,500/-
		Rs. 6,70,400/-
Sub-total		Rs. 1,34,49,000/-
2 A (ix)	Creation and maintenance of 100 Polypot nursery beds submitted by the Divisional Forest Officer, Social Forestry Division, West Garo Hills, Tura.	Creation and First Year Maintenance
		Second Year Maintenance.
		Total
		Total amount for 100 beds
		Rs. 13,302.3/-
		Rs. 2,335.2/-
		Rs. 15,637.5
		Rs. 15,637.5 X 100
Sub-total		Rs. 15,63,750/-
2 A(x)	Proposals submitted by the Divisional Forest Officer, Social Forestry Division, South Garo Hills, Baghmara.	Preliminary/Advance Works
		First Year Creation and Maintenance
		Second Year Maintenance
		Third Year Maintenance
		Fourth Year Maintenance
		Fifth Year Maintenance
		Rs. 7,02,891/-
		Rs. 4,63,932/-
		Rs. 2,62,080/-
		Rs. 2,55,360/-
		Rs. 2,48,640/-
		Rs. 1,72,200/-
Sub-total		Rs. 21,05,103/-
2 A (xi)	Proposals submitted by the Divisional Forest Officer, Social Forestry Division, South Garo Hills, Baghmara.	3 rd Year Maintenance of Plantation at:-
		Nengbretgittim – 89 Ha
		Darang Akep – 39 Ha
		Nongalbibra – 57.48 Ha
		Creation & Maintenance of 200 beds Polypot Nursery
		Rs. 26,92,838/-
		Rs. 11,03,558/-
		Rs. 17,13,939/-
		Rs. 27,70,400/-
Sub-total		Rs. 82,80,735/-
Grand Total { 2 A (i) + (2 A (ii)) + (2 A (iii)) + (2 A (iv)) + (2 A (v)) + (2 A (vi)) + (2 A (vii)) + (2 A (viii)) + (2 A (ix)) + (2 A (x)) + (2 A (xi)) }		Rs. 13,88,33,394/-

(Rupees Thirteen Crores Eighty Eight Lakhs Thirty Three Thousand Three Hundred Ninety Four)

The Member Secretary of the Technical Committee informed the Committee that all the proposals listed under items 2 A(i) to 2 A(xi) had been thoroughly deliberated with the concerned Divisional Forest Officers (DFOs) during the 23rd, 24th, 25th, and 26th meetings of the Technical Committee. He clarified that these proposals specifically relate to areas adversely impacted by coal mining activities and, do not fall under the ambit of the CAMPA Scheme. He further explained that the proposed interventions are aimed at supporting large-scale environmental restoration efforts in these degraded areas. By strengthening nursery infrastructure, creation of Hi-tech Nurseries and enhancing the capacity for quality sapling production, these proposals will ensure a consistent and sufficient supply of planting material for afforestation and ecological rehabilitation in coal-affected areas. Moreover, he emphasized that the nature and scope of these proposals are in line with the approved "Action Plan for Restoration of Environment in Areas Affected by Coal Mining in Meghalaya," and are integral to achieving its objectives. The proposals have been prepared in accordance with the standard cost norms adopted by the State Forest Department, Govt., of Meghalaya.

In the 8th Sitting of the Oversight Committee held on 25.01.2025, the Committee directed the Technical Committee to forward the approved proposals for funding under the Rs. 100 Crores deposited with CPCB for final approval.

After further deliberation on the proposals and being satisfied with the justification provided by the Technical Committee, the Committee approved all proposals listed under items 2 A (i) to 2 A (xi), amounting altogether to Rs. 13,88,33,394/-, to be funded from the Rs. 100 Crores deposited with CPCB; subject to the following conditions:

- i. *A Quarterly Progress Report must be submitted to the Technical Committee, which shall review the report and provide appropriate recommendations to the Oversight Committee.*
- ii. *The Technical Committee, in coordination with the State Forest Department (SFD), shall conduct a joint inspection of all project sites at least once a year.*
- iii. *The implementation and progress of the project (s) shall be subject to periodic and random monitoring by the State Level Monitoring Committee (SLMC).*
- iv. *Any additional conditions that may be prescribed by the Oversight Committee, as and when deemed necessary in the future.*

2 A (xii). PROPOSAL FOR PROCUREMENT OF INSTRUMENTS/EQUIPMENT FOR STRENGTHENING OF THE CENTRAL LABORATORY OF THE MEGHALAYA STATE POLLUTION CONTROL BOARD, SHILLONG AMOUNTING TO RS. 3,64,00,000/-.

Shri B. Wahlang, Chief Conservator of Forests and Member Secretary of the Technical Committee, then presented before the Committee a proposal submitted by the Meghalaya State

Pollution Control Board (MSPCB) seeking financial assistance of Rs. 3,64,00,000/- for the procurement of instruments and equipment intended to strengthen the Board's Central Laboratory.

He informed the Committee that the original proposal had first been taken up for discussion during the 23rd Sitting of the Technical Committee. The initial submission from MSPCB included not only the procurement of laboratory equipment but also proposed the construction of infrastructure buildings at Tura, Khliehriat, and Byrnihat to support the functioning of the Board. However, upon deliberation, the Committee found that the infrastructure component of the proposal was not in alignment with the Action Plan approved by the National Green Tribunal (NGT) and, as such, did not meet the stipulated funding criteria. Consequently, the Committee advised the MSPCB to revise their proposal by excluding the infrastructure component and limiting the scope to the procurement of laboratory equipment alone. Acting on the Committee's recommendation, MSPCB subsequently submitted a revised proposal focusing solely on the strengthening of laboratory facilities, which was placed for consideration during the 24th Sitting of the Technical Committee. The details of the revised proposal, including the list of equipment and estimated costs, are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Summary of proposed equipment submitted by MSPCB

SI No.	Summary/ Abstract of Equipment	Amount in INR	Justification
1.	Ion Specific Meter 2 Nos. @6,00,000/- each	Rs. 12,00,000/-	Additionally required for installing in the Drinking Water Laboratory which is created recently.
2.	pH meter 2 Nos. @ 50,000/- each.	Rs. 1,00,000/-	
3.	Conductivity meter 2 Nos.@ 80,000/- each.	Rs. 1,60,000/-	
4.	Turbidity meter 2 Nos.@ 80,000/- each.	Rs. 1,60,000/-	
5.	Flame photometer	Rs. 8,00,000/-	Additional unit is required and replacement of the existing one.
6.	Water purification system	Rs. 7,50,000/-	The existing one is more than 10 years old; hence it is proposed to procure new set of the same.
7.	Water distillation assembly 2Nos. @60,000/- each	Rs. 1,20,000/-	At present, the board is having only two unit and the distilled water collected is inadequate to carry out the analysis, hence it is proposed to procure additional unit.
8.	Filtration assembly with vacuum pump.	Rs. 1,00,000/-	As the existing one is in constant use, hence it is therefore proposed to procure additional unit as standby.
9.	UV visible spectrophotometer	Rs. 12,00,000/-	As work load is increasing, an additional spectrophotometer is required separately for water & air analysis.
10.	Hot Air Oven 2 Nos @ 50,000/- each	Rs. 1,00,000/-	Laboratory which is created recently hence additional unit is required.
11.	Bacteriological incubator	Rs. 90,000/-	
12.	Hot plate 2 Nos. @40,000/- each.	Rs. 80,000/-	

13.	COD Digester	Rs. 3,20,000/-	
14.	Portable Multiparameter Water Analysis Kit 3 Nos. @6,50,000/- each	Rs. 19,50,000/-	For simultaneous measurements of pH, Conductivity, Dissolved Oxygen, Temperature in water samples.
15.	X Ray Fluorescence Spectrophotometer	Rs.45,00,000/-	Instrument used for routine, relatively non-destructive chemical analysis of rocks, minerals, sediments and fluids in environmental samples.
16.	Atomic absorption Spectrophotometer	Rs. 70,00,000/-	At present, the Board has one AAS which is running for about 16 years and spare parts are no longer available as the model obsolete. Hence, it needs to be replaced at the earliest.
17.	Respirable Dust Sampler 15 Nos. @ 3,30,000/- each.	Rs. 49,50,000/-	As the Board intends to set up new Ambient Air Quality Stations at Industrial and Mining areas of the State, hence samplers are to be installed at proposed sites.
18.	Fine Particulate Sampler 15 Nos. @2,70,000/- each.	Rs. 40,50,000/-	
19.	Filter Paper PM 2.5 PTFE 25 Nos.@ 21,000/- each.	Rs. 5,25,000/-	
20.	Filter Paper PM 10 25 Nos.@ 36,000/- each.	Rs. 9,00,000/-	Filter papers which are consumables are required for air quality monitoring in numerous locations throughout the State.
21.	Filter Paper EPM 2000 10 Nos. @ 75,000/- each.	Rs. 7,50,000/-	
22.	Portable Meteorological Sensors for measurement WS, WD, Temp, Humidity & Rain Gauge 8 Nos. @30,000/-.	Rs. 2,40,000/-	As the Board intends to set up new ambient air quality stations at industrial and mining areas, hence Meteorological sensors are to be installed at proposed sites.
23.	Sound Level Meter 12 Nos. @ 1,60,000/- each.	Rs. 19,20,000/-	Required for monitoring of noise level at the Ambient Air Quality Monitoring Stations located all over the State.
24.	Flue Analyzer 2 Nos. @12,50,000/- each.	Rs. 25,00,000/-	Additional analysers are required as the analysers available with the Board is inadequate for industrial monitoring throughout the State.
25.	Stack Monitoring Kit 2 Nos. @1,00,000/- each.	Rs. 2,00,000/-	
26.	CO Analyzer 1 No.	Rs.2,00,000/-	
27.	Benzene Analyzer 1 No.	Rs. 5,00,000/-	
28.	Chemicals	Rs. 5,00,000/-	As the Board intends to set up new Ambient air quality stations at industrial and mining areas these miscellaneous items are required.
29.	Glass Ware	Rs.2,75,000/-	
30.	Wooden Stool 10 Nos. @3000/- each	Rs. 30,000/-	
31.	Extension Board 20 Nos. @4000/- each.	Rs. 80,000/-	
32.	Filter Paper 50 Nos. @ 3000/- each.	Rs. 1,50,000/-	
Total		Rs. 3,64,00,000/-	

(Rupees Three Crores Sixty Four Lakhs)

Dr. George H. Chyrmang, Member Secretary of MSPCB, informed that the Central Laboratory of MSPCB, established in 1988, is recognized by the Government of Meghalaya as the

"State Water and Air Laboratory." It serves not only the Board but also departments like Public Health Engineering, Water Resources, and the general public. The laboratory is equipped with advanced instruments such as AAS, ICP, specific ion analyzers, UV-Visible spectrophotometers, along with standard equipment. It handles routine analyses and supports research activities. To enhance its efficiency and capabilities, the Board proposes to procure additional instruments at an estimated cost of Rs. 364.0 lakhs.

Dr. Shantanu Dutta, Regional Director of the Regional Directorate (North East), Shillong, informed the Committee that, as per the approved "Action Plan for Restoration of Environment in Areas Affected by Coal Mining in Meghalaya," several activities are to be jointly monitored by the CPCB and MSPCB. He emphasized that strengthening the MSPCB laboratory is essential to effectively fulfil these responsibilities.

The Committee reviewed the NGT-approved "Action Plan for Restoration of Environment in Areas Affected by Coal Mining in Meghalaya" and noted that several components; specifically Para B.1 (Coal dumps of cement factories and their captive power plants), B.3 (Dumps of seized coal), B.4 (Dumps of illegally extracted coal), B.6 (Rat-hole coal mine openings), B.7 (Coal mine shafts located in river/stream beds), C (Restoration of water quality in rivers/streams affected by acid mine drainage), and D (Provision of safe drinking water in affected areas); are to be monitored jointly by the MSPCB and CPCB. The Committee was also of the view that once scientific mining resumes in Meghalaya, independent monitoring by agencies such as the MSPCB and CPCB will be necessary to verify the reports submitted by mine owners, even though coal mines with Environmental Clearances are already subject to air and water quality monitoring conditions.

After further deliberation, the Committee approved the proposal for strengthening the MSPCB's Central Laboratory at a cost of Rs. 364.0 lakhs to be funded from the Rs. 100 Crores deposited with CPCB; subject to the following conditions:

- i. The MSPCB shall procure the equipment listed in Table 2 through the Government e-Marketplace (GeM). If procurement through GeM is not feasible, the Board must strictly adhere to the State Expenditure Rules.*
- ii. The laboratory equipment will be primarily utilized for monitoring activities specified in the approved Action Plan for Restoration of the Environment in Coal Mining-Affected Areas of Meghalaya.*
- iii. The Technical Committee, in coordination with the State Level Monitoring Committee (SLMC), shall conduct random inspections to monitor the progress and functioning of the laboratory.*

2. B. PROPOSALS RECOMMENDED BY THE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE TO BE FUNDED FROM THE GENERAL MEPR FUND:

2 B (i): PROPOSAL FOR AERIAL SURVEY FOR VOLUMETRIC ASSESSMENT OF PHYSICALLY VERIFIED COAL STOCKS IN EAST JAINTIA HILLS SUBMITTED BY M/S GARUDA UAV SOFT SOLUTIONS PVT LTD.

Shri B. Wahlang, Chief Conservator of Forests and Member Secretary of the Technical Committee, apprised the Committee that during a meeting chaired by Hon'ble Justice (Retd.) B. P. Katakey on 05.11.2024, it was recommended that conducting an aerial drone survey was of critical importance to ascertain the presence of coal located outside the designated Coal India Limited (CIL) depots. This recommendation stemmed from the fact that all inventoried coal stocks had already been transported to the CIL depots. Any coal discovered beyond these designated storage points may be presumed to have been illegally mined, and such coal is liable for seizure under the provisions of the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957. Furthermore, it was highlighted that the proceeds from the auction of such seized coal would accrue entirely to the State Government.

In this context, the Committee was informed about the current proposal titled "*Aerial Survey for Volumetric Assessment of Physically Verified Coal Stocks in East Jaintia Hills*", which was submitted by the Department of Mining & Geology. The implementation of this project has been entrusted to M/s Garuda UAV Soft Solutions Pvt. Ltd. The agency has already undertaken a preliminary analysis of the coordinates and locations provided by the State Government. Based on this analysis, a survey area has been delineated, incorporating a buffer zone of 100 to 200 metres from the supplied coordinates to ensure comprehensive coverage. The detailed breakdown of the proposed survey area is provided in Table 3.

Table 3. Total Survey Area and cost per Sq. Km

Total Survey Area	9.416 Sq.Km
Rate as per previous WO	INR 80,000/- per Sq. Km
Total amount excluding GST	INR. 75,3280/-
Total amount including GST	INR. 8,88,870/-

The Member Secretary of the Technical Committee informed the Committee that the proposal, to be executed by M/s Garuda UAV Soft Solutions Pvt., Ltd., had been recommended during the 24th Sitting of the Technical Committee. This recommendation was based on the notable success of a previous project undertaken by the same agency, which not only provided detailed volumetric assessments and findings but also contributed significantly to enhancing revenue collection for the State.

The Committee further noted that a similar proposal by M/s Garuda UAV Soft Solutions Pvt. Ltd. had earlier been approved by the Oversight Committee in its. That particular project involved conducting an aerial drone survey across mining areas of the State, excluding zones already surveyed

for the re-inventorisation of seized coal. The approved survey covered an area of 769.7 square kilometres, with a financial outlay of ₹ 7,26,59,680.

In response to a query regarding the outcomes of that study approved in the 7th Sitting of the Committee, the Secretary of the Geology and Mining Department, Government of Meghalaya, confirmed that the project had been highly successful. It had generated crucial and reliable data, particularly in relation to the availability and distribution of extracted coal, which could be effectively validated through the survey findings.

The Committee acknowledged the importance of adopting advanced surveying methods such as drone-based aerial assessments to ensure accurate and transparent measurement of coal stock volumes, which is crucial for effective monitoring and regulatory compliance.

After thorough deliberations, the Committee resolved to grant approval for the implementation of the project titled *"Aerial Survey for Volumetric Assessment of Physically Verified Coal Stocks in East Jaintia Hills."* The total cost of the project is ₹ 8,88,870/- to be paid from the general MEPR Fund.

2 B (ii): PROPOSAL ON 'COMMUNITY LIVELIHOOD IMPROVEMENT PROJECT' SUBMITTED BY THE CHAIRMAN, BLOCK RESOURCE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE, TLUH, EAST JAINTIA HILLS DISTRICT

The Member Secretary of the Technical Committee informed the Committee that the proposal was submitted by the Block Resource Management Committee (BRMC), which is an initiative under the Meghalaya Rural Development Society-International Fund for Agricultural Development (MRDS-IFAD) through the Livelihood Improvement Project for the Himalayas. The primary objective of the proposal is to enhance livelihood opportunities and promote community development in the targeted areas. The project is designed to be implemented in six (6) distinct phases over a span of two years, with a total financial outlay of ₹1,22,34,000/-. It aims to directly benefit ten (10) villages located in the East Jaintia Hills District of Meghalaya—five (5) villages under the Saipung Community and Rural Development (C&RD) Block and five (5) villages under the Khliehriat C&RD Block.

An overview of the project's intervention strategies is presented in Table 4, while a detailed breakdown of the proposed activities along with their corresponding financial estimates is provided in Table 5.

Table 4. Abstract of the Project's Intervention

NAME OF INTERVENTION	Community Livelihood Improvement Project-Clip
DISTRICT NAME/STATE	East Jaintia Hills/Meghalaya
INTERVENTION AREAS	Mining Affected Villages Under Saipung & Khliehriat Block

NO. OF TARGET VILLAGES	10 (ten) Villages 5 (five) Saipung C&RD Block 5 (five) Khliehriat C&RD Block
TARGET GROUP	200 Beneficiaries
PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION TENURE	2 Years
TOTAL PROJECT COST	Rs. 1,22,34,000.00

Table 5. Summary of Project's Activities and Expenditure

Table 5. Summary of Project's Activities and Expenditure				
Sl No.	Year of Implementation	Project Component		Projected Expenditure
1.	1 st Year	Project Phase-I	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Community Participatory,• Project Awareness,• Formation Process,• Village Social Agreement	50,000.00
2.		Project Phase-II	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Group Facilitation• Village baseline & PRA.• Entry Point Activity	20,000.00
3.		Project Phase-III	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Training in Module I, II & III.• Group Training to Master Trainers	10,000.00
4.	2 nd Year	Project Phase-IV	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Livelihoods Enhancement & Community Development• Skill Training Through Intensive Intervention Models	10,000.00
5.		Project Phase-V	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Intervention Assessment• Refresher Trainings• Micro-Plan Development	87,66,000.00
6.		Project Phase-VI	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Monitoring & Evaluation by Third Party• Project Documentation	2,00,000
Sub-total				90,56,000.00
7.	Administrative Personal Cost		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Project Manager• Project Coordinator• Project Monitoring Assistant• Project Management Assistant• Accountant & Administration• Office Assistant	28,08,000
8.	Administrative Operations & Maintenance Coast		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Computers & Laptops• Printer/Scanner• Projector Screen• Projector• Stationary Items	3,70,000
GRAND TOTAL				1,22,34,000

(Rupees One Crore Twenty Two Lakhs Thirty Four Thousand)

The project is designed to facilitate both batch-wise classroom training and hands-on, on-site learning through collaboration with partner institutions. Its primary objective is to build and enhance the capacities of participants in two key areas; Integrated Farming Systems, which promote sustainable agricultural practices, and Cane & Bamboo Crafts, aimed at developing traditional skills and promoting livelihood opportunities through value-added handicrafts.

In accordance with the recommendations made by the Technical Committee during its 24th meeting held on 11.04.2025, and in compliance with the directions issued by the Hon'ble High Court of Meghalaya vide its Order dated 07.02.2023 in Public Interest Litigation (PIL) No. 02 of 2022; pertaining to the provision of alternative livelihood opportunities for communities affected by coal mining, the Committee accorded its approval to the proposed project, subject to the following conditions:

- i. The implementing agency shall be required to submit detailed quarterly progress reports to the Technical Committee. These reports will be reviewed by the Committee to assess the project's implementation status and to provide necessary observations and recommendations to the Oversight Committee for further action or guidance.*
- ii. The implementation and progress of the project will be subject to periodic and random monitoring by the State Level Monitoring Committee (SLMC), along with monitoring by the Directorate of Mineral Resources and the State Forest Department, to ensure compliance with the approved objectives and timelines.*

2 B (iii) PROPOSAL FOR CONSTRUCTION OF (i) NEW POND AND (ii) BIO-FLOC FISH FARMING SUBMITTED BY FISHERY DEPARTMENT, SOUTH GARO HILLS, BAGHMARA

The Member Secretary of the Technical Committee apprised the Committee that the Department of Fisheries, South Garo Hills, Baghmara, has submitted two distinct project proposals for consideration and funding support. These include (i) Construction of New Fish Ponds, and (ii) Bio-Floc Fish Farming.

2 B (iii) (a). Construction of New Fish Ponds: The total estimated cost for the Construction of New Ponds project stands at Rs. 81,84,000/-. A consolidated summary detailing the project titles, proposed areas, specific locations, and per hectare cost estimates for the Construction of New Ponds has been compiled and presented in Table 6. Furthermore, a comprehensive breakdown of the proposed activities along with the corresponding expenditure details for the pond construction project is outlined in Table 7.

Table 6: Summary of project name, area, projects location, cost/1ha for construction of new ponds

1.	Title	Construction of New Pond
2.	Implementing Agency	Office of the Superintendent of Fisheries, South Garo Hills, Baghmara, Government of Meghalaya
3.	No. of unit/area	6.6 ha

4.	Unit Cost @ 1 ha	B. Capital Cost: Rs 8.4 L C. Input Cost: Rs. 4 L D. Total: Rs 12.4
5.	Total Project Cost (Rs. In Lakh)	12.4 L x 6.6 ha = 81.84 L
6.	Project Duration	One year from the sanction of the project FY: 2024-25
7.	Project location	Rongsa A'we, Nengkulgittim, Garegittim, Jongsingittim, Nengbrekgittim, Era aning, Pattalgittim, Nengjagittim, Jadigittim, Bandri Maidugittim, Agreng, Darang Dajugittim, Rongding A'we, Changalgittim, Dobakil A'wemonggittim, Dobakol Nengjagittim.

Table 7: Summary of Project's Activities and Expenditure for construction of new ponds

Item	Specification	Value in INR
Area of the Pond (m2)	10,000	--
Depth of the Pond (m)	1.5	--
Volume of the Pond (m3)	1500	--
Total wage cost for excavation with A C Pipes (Rs.)		8,40,000
A. Capital Expenditure		8,40,000
Lime 1000 kg @Rs. 20/-	1000 x 20	20,000
Dung 10000 kg @Rs. 1/-	10000 x 1	10,000
Advance Carpfingerlings (No.)>50 gm size	8000 x 12	96,000
Formulated Fish Feed @Rs.50/kg	3500 x 50	175,000
Health Care	L/S	30,000
Machineries and Fishing equipment	L/S	50,000
Sign Board		5000
Miscellaneous		14,000
B. Recurring Expenditure		4,00,000
Total Cost (A+B) per ha		12,40,000
Total Area	6.6 ha	
Total Cost x Total Area		81,84,000/-

(Rupees Eighty One Lakhs Eighty Four Thousand)

1. Objectives Of New Fish Ponds:

- Water Conservation:** To enhance water retention and recharge groundwater levels through the creation of ponds, ensuring a sustainable water supply for agricultural and domestic use in regions impacted by coal mining.
- Livelihood Improvement:** To provide alternate and sustainable livelihoods for local communities through activities like fish farming, agriculture and allied practices supported by the newly constructed ponds.
- Biodiversity Conservation:** To support the preservation and enhancement of local biodiversity by creating aquatic habitats that foster diverse plant and animal life.

- iv. **Sustainable Development:** To promote sustainable land use and water management practices that contribute to the long-term socio-economic development of coal-mine affected regions.
- v. **Environmental Restoration:** To rehabilitate and restore the ecological balance in coal-mine affected areas of South Garo Hills district of Meghalaya by constructing new ponds, which will help in mitigate soil erosion, controlling pollution, and improving the overall environmental quality.

2. Project Formulation for Construction Of New Fish Ponds:

1. **Project Sites:** Project Sites has been selected for suitable fish culture by departmental field officers, Fisheries Demonstrator/Programme Managers/Multiple Service Providers etc. in cluster approach.
2. **Selected Beneficiaries:** The selected beneficiaries are approved by the Deputy Commissioner, South Garo Hills.
3. **Capacity Building and Implementation:** Upon approval of beneficiaries, training will be provided on scientific fish culture at different fisheries training centre located in the district.
4. **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Monitoring and evaluation will be conducted right from the beginning till harvesting by departmental field officials i.e. Fisheries Demonstrator/Programme Managers/Multiple Service Providers etc for successful implementation of the project.

3. **Anticipated Impact of Constructing New Ponds:** The introduction of the *New Pond Construction* initiative in coal mine-affected regions of Meghalaya is poised to deliver significant environmental, economic, and social benefits. This intervention is designed to mitigate the adverse effects of mining while promoting sustainable development. The key anticipated impacts are outlined below:

i. **Environmental Impacts:** The construction of ponds will facilitate the restoration of land degraded by coal mining. By reducing soil erosion, stabilizing loose terrain, and supporting natural re-vegetation, the initiative will enhance ecological recovery. Ponds will act as natural filtration systems, trapping sediments and pollutants from mining runoff. This will lead to cleaner surface and groundwater, contributing to better water quality in the region.

ii. **Economic Impacts:** New ponds will enable fish farming, irrigation, and other water-based livelihoods, creating alternative income sources for communities traditionally dependent on coal mining. With a reliable water supply for irrigation, farmers will be able to cultivate crops throughout the year, enhancing food security and agricultural output. By fostering fisheries and agriculture, the project offers viable economic alternatives to coal extraction, encouraging a shift towards more sustainable livelihoods.

iii. **Social Impacts:** Engaging local communities in the planning, construction, and upkeep of ponds will build a sense of ownership, enhance social cohesion, and promote self-reliance. The ponds will provide a dependable source of water, especially in areas where mining has depleted natural water reserves. This will improve water availability for domestic use, livestock, and agriculture during dry seasons.

Overall, the New Pond Construction scheme is a multifaceted solution aimed at ecological restoration, economic diversification, and community resilience in coal-mine impacted regions.

2 B (iii) (b). Establishment Of Small Ras/Bio-flock: The total estimated cost for the establishment of Small Ras/Bio-flock project stands at Rs. 7.5 Lakhs. A consolidated summary detailing the project titles, proposed areas, specific locations, and per hectare cost estimates for the establishment of Small Ras/Bio-flock has been compiled and presented in Table 8. Furthermore, a comprehensive breakdown of the proposed activities along with the corresponding expenditure details for the establishment of Small Ras/Bio-flock is outlined in Table 9.

Table 8: Summary detailing the project titles, proposed areas, specific locations, and per hectare cost estimates for the establishment of Small Ras/Bio-flock

IMPLEMENTING AGENCY	Beneficiaries through the Office of the Superintendent of Fisheries, South Garo Hills, Baghmara, Govt. of Meghalaya.
NAME OF PROJECT	ESTABLISHMENT OF SMALL RAS/BIOFLOCK AT COAL MINE AFFECTED AREAS
PROJECT DURATION	6 Months
PROJECT LOCATION (Village, Block, Taluk, District)	Dobakol Nengjagittim, Nongal Bibra, Siju C&RD Block.
Unit Cost @ 1ha	A. Capital Cost: Rs 6.00 L B. Input Cost: Rs.1.5 L C. Total: Rs 7.5
No. of Unit/area	20 units 75 m3 (100 tanks)
TOTAL PROJECT COST	7,50,000/-

Table 9: Summary of Project's activities and expenditure

S.No.	Component	Nos.	Cost (Rs.)	Total (Rs. in lakhs)
Capital cost				
1	Setup of Tarpaulin/Fibre tanks (15,000 litres capacity)	5	35,000	1.75
2	Shed material and accessories fixing charges.	150 m2	1,20,000	1.20
3	Water supply borewell (3HP)	1	1,00,000	1.00
4	PVC pipe fittings for air, water flow.	LS	75,000	0.75
5	Nets and accessories	5	3,000	0.15
6	One blower (1HP), Air stones and other accessories	1	30,000	0.3
7	Electrification	LS	10,000	0.1
8	Power generator (2 KVA)	1	45,000	0.45
9	Weighing balance	1	5,000	0.1
10	Miscellaneous expenses			0.2

			Total	6.00
Input cost for one crop				
11.	Seed cost (including transport cost)	4/- each fingerling	7,500 @1,500 per tank	0.3
12.	Feed (including transport cost)	3500 kg	35/-	1.0
13.	Probiotics, molasses and raw salt, etc.	LS	5,000/- per tank	0.1
14.	Test kits (water quality and bio-floc quantity)	LS	10,000	0.05
15.	Power charges (20 units per 180 days @ 4/- per unit)	LS	15,000	0.05
	Total cost per one crop			1.5
			Grand Total	7.5

1. BENEFITS OF BIO-FLOC CULTURE SYSTEM:

- Eco-friendly culture system
- Reduces Environmental Impact
- Improves land and water use efficiency
- Limited or zero water exchange
- Higher productivity (enhances survival rate, growth performance, feed conversion in the culture systems of fish)
- Reduces water pollution and the risk of introduction and spread of pathogens
- Cost-effective feed production.

2. OBJECTIVES:

- To promote high yielding intensive fish farming in small area sing BFT.
- To encourage farmers and unemployed youth from coal-mine affected areas into income earning through small scale through BFT.

3. PROJECT FORMULATION:

- a. Organization and Management:
 - Project will be implemented by the beneficiary under the technical support of Central/State training institutes.
 - Financial assistance in the form of subsidy will be obtained from Government.
- b. Mode of beneficiary selection:
 - Beneficiary selection is done through recommendation of Department of Fisheries respective district.
- c. Risk assessment (Bio-security & Environmental Concern)
 - The project will create no hazards to both human and environment at any cost.

4. Expected Outcome:

- Employment generation amongst unemployed youths,
- Annual income generation of around Rs. 10.8 lakh/year/5 tanks and Rs. 0.9 lakhs/month

The Member Secretary, Technical Committee informed the Committee that the project for the construction of new ponds and Bio-floc projects has been approved in the 24th Sitting of the Technical

Committee. The initiative is aimed at mitigating the adverse environmental and socio-economic impacts of coal mining in the affected areas.

The construction of new ponds is envisioned not only to restore ecological balance and improve water conservation but also to create sustainable alternative livelihoods for local communities. These ponds will serve multiple purposes, including irrigation, fisheries, and integrated aquaculture practices.

To maximize the utility and sustainability of the initiative, Bio-floc Technology (BFT) will be adopted in selected ponds. BFT is an environmentally friendly aquaculture technique that utilizes *in situ* microbial processes to convert organic waste into a protein-rich natural feed, while simultaneously treating the water. This method relies on flocculation; a process by which aggregates of living and dead organic matter, bacteria, phytoplankton, and other microorganisms are formed within the pond system. These flocs serve as a continuous source of nutrition for the cultured species, significantly reducing the need for external feed and improving water quality.

After further deliberations on the proposals, and based on the Technical Committee's recommendations as well as the Hon'ble High Court of Meghalaya's Order dated 07.02.2023 in PIL No. 02/2022 for providing alternate livelihood to coal mine affected areas, the Committee approves both the proposals submitted by Fisheries Department, South Garo Hills, Baghmara namely (i) Construction of New Fish Ponds amounting to Rs 81,84,000/-, and (ii) Bio-Floc Fish Farming amounting to Rs 7,50,000/- subject to the following conditions:

- i. The implementing agency shall be required to submit detailed quarterly progress reports to the Technical Committee. These reports will be reviewed by the Committee to assess the project's implementation status and to provide necessary observations and recommendations to the Oversight Committee for further action or guidance.*
- ii. The implementation and progress of the project will be subject to periodic and random monitoring by the State Level Monitoring Committee (SLMC), along with monitoring by the Directorate of Mineral Resources and the State Forest Department, to ensure compliance with the approved objectives and timelines.*

2 B (iv) PROPOSAL FOR REJUVENATION OF SPRING, ROOF TOP RAIN WATER HARVESTING, OPEN LIME CHANNEL SUBMITTED BY THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, WATER RESOURCE, EAST JAINTIA HILLS DISTRICT, KHLIEHRIAT AMOUNTING TO RS. 2,01,22,030/-

The Member Secretary of the Technical Committee apprised the committee that the Executive Engineer, Water Resource, East Jaintia Hills District, Khliehriat has submitted the proposal for rejuvenation of spring, roof top rain water harvesting, open lime channel amounting to Rs. 2,01,22,030/-. A consolidated summary detailing the Implementing Agency name of project, project duration, project location, number of Beneficiaries etc., been compiled and presented in Table 10. Furthermore, a comprehensive breakdown of the proposed activities along with the corresponding expenditure details is outlined in Table 11.

Table 10: Summary detailing the Implementing Agency name of project, project duration, project location, number of Beneficiaries

Implementing Agency	Executive Engineer, Water Resource, East Jaintia Hills District, Khliehriat.
Name Of Project	Construction of Protection & Rejuvenation Of Spring, Roof Top Rain Water Harvesting & Open Lime Channel (OLC) Under East Jaintia Hills District.
Project Duration	12 months (2 working seasons)
Project Location (Village, Block, Taluk, District)	Khliehriat, Wapung, Lumshnong & Saipung C & RD Blocks.
No. Of Beneficiaries	358 Households + 7 Govt institution
Scheduled Of Rate	Rates of estimate are based as per MPWD (Building) Schedules of Rates for the year 2021-22, as per MPWD (Road & Bridges) Schedules of Rates for the year 2020-21 & As per MPWD, Schedule Of Rates for Water Works for the year 2021-22.
Total Project Cost	Rs. 2,01,22,030.00

Table 11: Summary of Project's Activities and Expenditure

Abstract of Cost for construction of Protection & Rejuvenation of Spring, Roof top Rain Water Harvesting & Open Lime Channels (OLC) under East Jaintia Hills District.			
Sl No	Name of Work	Block	Amount (Rs)
A	Protection & Rejuvenation of Spring		
1	Protection & Rejuvenation of Lumsiehdieng Spring at Iapmala Village	Khliehriat C & RD Block	6,49,330.00
2	Protection & Rejuvenation of Chohryntin Spring at Khliehmyntriang Village		6,62,060.00
3	Protection & Rejuvenation of Khlobor Spring at Jalyiah Village		7,43,430.00
4	Protection & Rejuvenation of Synrang Iajaw Spring at Sohkyphor Village		7,73,100.00
5	Protection & Rejuvenation of Amkidai Spring at Ratacherra Village	Lumshnong C&RD Block	12,14,520.00
6	Protection & Rejuvenation of Amrang Spring at Huroi Village		8,99,770.00
7.	Protection & Rejuvenation of Rasong Heh Spring at Samasi Village	Saipung C & RD Block	9,09,200.00
8.	Protection & Rejuvenation of Urshuni Spring at Bri Sumer Village		8,06,700.00
9.	Protection & Rejuvenation of Umjan Spring at Mulait Bri Sumer Village		8,45,969.00
10.	Protection & Rejuvenation of Um Jingtep Spring at Krem Myrsiang Village		7,45,760.00
11.	Protection & Rejuvenation of Knia Krong Spring at Lelad Village		11,36,920.00

12.	Protection & Rejuvenation of Um Wahkseh Spring at Lumthari Village		11,59,690.00
Total (A)			1,05,46,449.00
B. Roof Top Rain Water Harvesting			
1.	Roof Top Rain Water Harvesting at the office of the General Manager District Commerce & Industries Centre, Khliehriat	Wapung C&RD Block	8,71,000.00
2.	Roof Top Rain Water Harvesting at the office of the Sub-Divisional School Education Officer, Khliehriat		8,15,900.00
3.	Roof Top Rain Water Harvesting at the office of the District Animal Husbandary & Veterinary Officer, Khliehriat		7,87,300.00
4.	Roof Top Rain Water Harvesting at the office of the One Stop Centre, Khliehriat		7,94,200.00
5.	Roof Top Rain Water Harvesting at Govt. Lower Primary School, Daistong	Saipung C&RD Block	1320000.00
6.	Roof Top Rain Water Harvesting at Health Wellness Centre, Daistong		15,75,000.00
7.	Roof Top Rain Water Harvesting at Govt. Lower Primary School, Larket		15,00,500.00
Total (B)			76,63,900.00
C. Treatment of AMD using OLC			
1.	Treatment of AMD using Open Lime Channel (OLC) at Liar Umkseh Stream	Saipung C & RD Block	9,55,840.00
2.	Construction and maintenance for treatment of AMD using Open Lime Channel (OLC) at Sahdakha Stream	Wapung C & RD Block	9,55,840.00
Total (C)			19,11,680.00
Grand Total (A) + (B) + (C)			2,01,22,029.00

(Rupees Two Crores One Lakh Twenty Two Thousand Twenty Nine)

The Member Secretary of the Technical Committee informed the Committee that the proposal had been recommended during its 25th Sitting, recognizing it as a crucial livelihood intervention aligned with the approved Action Plan. The project is specifically designed to address the pressing daily needs of local communities residing in coal mine-affected areas, particularly in relation to water scarcity for irrigation, drinking, and bathing purposes. It aims to alleviate the daily hardships faced by numerous households due to the lack of access to clean and reliable water sources.

The Member Secretary further elaborated on the rationale behind the project's approval. A major factor influencing this decision is the acute shortage of potable water in East Jaintia Hills District. Most of the natural water bodies viz., rivers and streams have been severely contaminated due to Acid Mine Drainage (AMD) resulting from unregulated coal mining activities, as well as limestone extraction. The situation is further worsened by the presence of large number of cement factories and coke plants, which contribute significantly to the pollution of water sources. Additionally, widespread deforestation in the region has diminished both the quality and availability of clean and safe water.

In response to these challenges, the proposal includes three major components: (i) Protection and Rejuvenation of Springs, (ii) Roof Top Rainwater Harvesting, and (iii) Open Lime Channel (OLC) interventions. These initiatives are intended to directly benefit approximately 300 households in coal mine-affected areas.

1. **Protection and Rejuvenation of Springs:** This component focuses on reinforcing and upgrading existing spring structures that have traditionally been developed and maintained by local communities. Proposed improvements include the construction of RCC (Reinforced Cement Concrete) walls, stone masonry barriers, brick-walled spring sheds with slab roofing, and the installation of pipelines to channel spring water to a concrete washing platform.
2. **Roof Top Rainwater Harvesting:** This segment involves the installation of systems to capture and store rainwater from household rooftops. It includes laying pipelines from roofs to underground RCC water storage tanks, installation of water filtration units, Syntex tanks, and the construction of an RCC pump house equipped with pumps to distribute the collected water efficiently.
3. **Open Lime Channel (OLC):** The OLC activity entails a systematic process of channel cleaning and neutralizing acidic water through the use of limestone. The work includes dredging and levelling the channel, procurement and manual breaking of limestone into smaller pieces, laying and armouring the channel with the stones, constructing diversion structures and dams, and regular maintenance such as cleaning and armouring before and after the monsoon seasons.

Through the implementation of these targeted interventions, the project seeks to ensure sustainable access to clean water while also contributing to the livelihood enhancement and well-being of the affected communities in East Jaintia Hills District.

After further deliberations on the proposals, and based on the Technical Committee's recommendations as well as the Hon'ble High Court of Meghalaya's Order dated 07.02.2023 in PIL No. 02/2022 for providing alternate livelihood to coal mine affected areas, the Committee approves the proposal submitted by the Executive Engineer, Water Resource, East Jaintia Hills District, Khliehriat amounting to Rs 2,01,22,029/-, subject to the following conditions:

- i. *The implementing agency shall be required to submit detailed quarterly progress reports to the Technical Committee. These reports will be reviewed by the Committee to assess the project's implementation status and to provide necessary observations and recommendations to the Oversight Committee for further action or guidance.*
- ii. *The implementation and progress of the project will be subject to periodic and random monitoring by the State Level Monitoring Committee (SLMC), along with monitoring by the Directorate of Mineral Resources and the State Forest Department, to ensure compliance with the approved objectives and timelines.*

2 B (v) RESTORATION AND RECLAMATION OF MINING AFFECTED LAND (COAL SECTOR) IN MEGHALAYA FOR PILOT PROJECTS IN SUTNGA AREA, EAST JAINTIA HILLS DISTRICT AND AGRENGGITTIM AREA, SOUTH GARO HILLS DISTRICT AMOUNTING TO RS. 35,40,000/-.

During its Seventh Sitting, the Committee was informed that the State Government had entrusted the Central Mine Planning & Design Institute Limited (CMPDIL), a Government of India enterprise, with the responsibility of preparing a Detailed Project Report (DPR) for the restoration and reclamation of mining-affected land in Meghalaya. The DPR will focus on pilot projects in the Sutnga area of East Jaintia Hills District and the Agrenggittim area in South Garo Hills District. Subsequently, in its Eighth Sitting, the Committee was apprised by the Department of Mining & Geology that the DPR is expected to be completed by February, 2025 and will be submitted to the Technical Committee for review. Upon approval, it will be forwarded to the Oversight Committee.

The Oversight Committee had earlier expressed concern and dissatisfaction over the State Government's prolonged delay in initiating concrete measures to close abandoned coal mine shafts. During the Eighth Sitting, the Chairman of the Oversight Committee shared his observations from a site visit conducted on 24.01.2025 to East Jaintia Hills District, highlighting the presence of numerous abandoned coal mine shafts that continue to pose serious threats to both human and animal life.

During the meeting, the Member Secretary of the Technical Committee informed that the project titled "*Restoration and Reclamation of Mining-Affected Land (Coal Sector) in Meghalaya*"; covering pilot projects in the Sutnga area of East Jaintia Hills District and the Agrenggittim area of South Garo Hills District, with an estimated cost of ₹35,40,000; was recommended by the Committee during its 25th Sitting held on 11.06.2025.

Following this, Shri Nababrata Bhattacharjee, Technical Advisor (Environment, etc.) to the Government of Meghalaya and Coordinator of the Mining Area Reclamation Project, was invited to give a brief presentation on the initiative.

Shri Bhattacharjee provided a brief overview of the State Government's ongoing efforts and current status regarding the Mine Closure Project in Meghalaya. The Technical Advisor began by referencing the directives of the Hon'ble National Green Tribunal (NGT), which mandated that the Meghalaya Environment Protection and Restoration Fund (MEPRF) be utilized not only for environmental reclamation and restoration works but also specifically for mine closure initiatives. In line with the NGT-approved Action Plan, Mine Closure Projects have been identified as a key priority.

Additionally, he informed that the Hon'ble High Court of Meghalaya recently issued directives for the closure of all underground "rat-hole" coal mines and emphasized the urgent need to restore coal mining-affected lands across the state.

Furthermore he informed that the initiative formally commenced with a meeting held on 22.05.2023, chaired by the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Meghalaya and attended by representatives from the Central Mine Planning & Design Institute Limited (CMPDIL). Following negotiations, CMPDIL proposed a consultancy fee of 6.5% of the total DPR cost. In accordance with the agreement, CMPDIL submitted two Preliminary Project Reports (PPRs), also referred to as Concept Reports, for review and suggestions by the concerned Departments; namely, the Mining & Geology Department (for coal-related projects) and the Forests & Environment Department (for non-coal projects). These reports pertain to pilot projects located in the Sutnga area of East Jaintia Hills District and the Agrenggittim area of South Garo Hills District. Following this CMPDIL subsequently raised an invoice of ₹35,40,000 (including GST) for the preparation and submission of the PPRs for both pilot projects. This amount is urgently required to support the continued development and finalization of the Concept and Feasibility Reports. The Technical Committee, in its 25th Sitting held on 11.06.2025, recommended an initial payment of ₹30,00,000 plus GST. The remaining amount will be disbursed upon submission of the final Detailed Project Report (DPR).

The Oversight Committee took note of letter No. MG.61/2018/948 dated 06.06.2024, issued by the Mining & Geology Department to CMPDIL and Meghalaya Industrial Development Corporation (MIDC), which conveyed the State Government's approval for the consultancy fees to be paid to CMPDIL and MIDC as follows:

For **CMPDIL**, the consultancy fee is fixed at 6.5% of the total cost of the Detailed Project Report (DPR), as approved by the Government of Meghalaya. This rate applies to both Coal and Non-Coal sector projects. Notably, this revised rate is exclusive of suitable accommodation, which is to be provided by the Government of Meghalaya for the CMPDIL team, both in Shillong and at the respective district headquarters.

Scope of Work for CMPDIL:

A. Submission of DPR: (i) Consultancy charges shall cover services listed under Item SI-1.0, Stage-I (i and ii), which include the preparation and submission of the Preliminary Project Report (PPR). (ii) Further consultancy charges shall apply for services under Item SI-1.0, Stage-I (iii), covering the preparation and submission of the DPR following the acceptance of the PPR, including any amendments, alterations, or additions suggested by the concerned departments i.e., the Mining & Geology Department for coal projects and the Forest & Environment Department for non-coal projects.

B. Supervision and Monitoring: (i) Under Item SI-1.0, Stage-II, consultancy charges shall also include project monitoring, encompassing all costs related to the engagement of external experts or

consultancy firms. The following tasks are excluded from CMPDIL's scope of work and will be undertaken by the concerned departments of the Government of Meghalaya:

- Geophysical and geospatial surveys
- Seismic surveys
- Soil analysis
- Water quality monitoring
- Topographical survey and mapping

For MIDC, the consultancy fee is fixed at 1.5% of the total cost of the DPR or the value of the contract, as approved by the Government of Meghalaya. This rate also applies to both Coal and Non-Coal sector projects.

Scope of Work for MIDC:

C. Preparation of financial documents and tendering: MIDC, designated as the Project Implementation Unit (PIU), will be responsible for the entire process of preparing financial documents, carrying out the tendering process, and allotting work. This includes implementing the recommended technologies and processes outlined by CMPDIL in the DPR.

The Committee expressed serious concern over the fact that no prior approval had been obtained before proceeding with and finalizing the agreement, especially since it involves the sanctioning of funds from the Meghalaya Environment Protection and Restoration Fund (MEPRF). The Committee directed the Regional Office to conduct a thorough and comprehensive consultation with all relevant stakeholders. Based on the outcome of these consultations, the Regional Office is to formulate appropriate recommendations and submit them to the Oversight Committee for further consideration and necessary action.

In compliance with the directive issued by the Oversight Committee, the Regional Office, MoEF&CC, Shillong convened a meeting on 16th July, 2025 with all relevant stakeholders to discuss the issues pertaining to the proposal. Following thorough deliberations, the meeting resolved to return the proposal; submitted by CMPDIL to the Technical Committee for re-evaluation. Minutes of meeting convened by Regional Office, MoEF & CC, Shillong is enclosed as Annexure-I.

2 B (vi) APPRAISAL OF PROPOSAL REGARDING SURVEY & OTHER WORKS FOR MINE CLOSURE AND RECLAMATION OF ABANDONED COAL MINING AREAS IN THE STATE AMOUNTING TO RS. 4,02,32,371.00/-.

The Member Secretary of the Technical Committee informed that the project titled "*Appraisal of Proposal Regarding Survey and Other Works for Mine Closure and Reclamation of Abandoned Coal Mining Areas in the State*", amounting to Rs. 4,02,32,371.00, was recommended by the Committee during its 26th Sitting held on 07.07.2025.

Shri Nababrata Bhattacharjee, Technical Advisor (Environment, etc.) to the Government of Meghalaya and Coordinator of the Mining Area Reclamation Project, continued the presentation. He highlighted that the Central Mine Planning & Design Institute Limited (CMPDIL) had subsequently

requested a comprehensive study to be conducted by the State Government. The scope of the study included collection and analysis of mining data, geological, geophysical, and geospatial surveys, seismic studies, soil analysis, water quality monitoring, and topographical mapping, among others.

Accordingly, the State Government appointed the Meghalaya Industrial Development Corporation (MIDC), a Government of Meghalaya undertaking, as the Project Implementation Unit (PIU) to carry out the detailed study on its behalf. Following the specifications and parameters laid out by CMPDIL, MIDC floated a national-level tender, through which M/s Garuda UAV was shortlisted and engaged to execute the study. After a six-month study period, the vendor submitted its final report to CMPDIL along with an invoice of Rs. 4,02,32,371.00, covering the expenses incurred in conducting the study.

During the 26th Sitting, members of the Technical Committee raised concerns regarding the necessity of such an extensive study. In response, representatives from CMPDIL clarified that the study was crucial to ascertain the extent of underground rat-hole mining, levels of degradation, the presence of coal seams, and to provide accurate geophysical and geospatial data—all of which are essential for preparing the final Detailed Project Report (DPR).

The Technical Committee expressed satisfaction with CMPDIL's clarifications and agreed that the study should serve as a foundational reference or guideline for all future mine closure interventions. Consequently, the Technical Committee recommended the vendor's invoice for consideration by the Oversight Committee, with the observation that the study's findings should form a pivotal basis for policy and project planning.

During the discussion, members of Oversight Committee also enquired whether the expenditure of Rs. 30,00,000/- (plus GST) for CMPDIL's Preliminary Project Report (PPR) preparation and Rs. 4,02,32,371.00 for MIDC's detailed study had received prior approval from the Oversight Committee. It was noted with concern that these activities appear to have been undertaken by the Directorate of Mining & Geology at the State Government level without the requisite sanction from the Oversight Committee.

The Committee directed the Regional Office to conduct a thorough and comprehensive consultation with all relevant stakeholders. Based on the outcome of these consultations, the Regional Office is to formulate appropriate recommendations and submit them to the Oversight Committee for further consideration and necessary action.

In compliance with the directive issued by the Oversight Committee, the Regional Office, MoEF&CC, Shillong convened a meeting on 16th July, 2025 with all relevant stakeholders to discuss the issues pertaining to the proposal. Following thorough deliberations, the meeting resolved to return the proposal; submitted by MIDC to the Technical Committee for re-evaluation. Minutes of meeting convened by Regional Office, MoEF & CC, Shillong is enclosed as Annexure-1.

2. C. CLARIFICATION BY TECHNICAL COMMITTEE ON PREVIOUS PROPOSALS RETURNED BY THE OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE IN ITS 8TH SITTING

During the Seventh Sitting, the Committee returned two proposals to the Technical Committee for reassessment due to discrepancies in the total project cost as outlined in the DPR, and the presence of specific conditions that were not reflected in the Minutes. The Technical Committee was directed to review and clarify these issues. Details of the proposals are provided in Table 12:

Table 12. Name of project and Implementing Agency

Sl. No.	Name Of Project	Submitting Agency
1.	Conservation project of Law Adong near Shadshrieh Falls, Sohra to promote Eco-Tourism	Forest & Environment Department, Government of Meghalaya
2.	Setting up of a Barsha Pump, a water wheel propelled pump that utilizes the energy of flowing rivers and canals to pump water without requiring any fuel or electricity to irrigate a total of 8 ha farmland.	Deputy Commissioner, East Jaintia Hills, Khliehriat.

In its 24th meeting, the Technical Committee clarified that the recommendation for the project titled, "*Conservation Project of Law Adong near Shadshrieh Falls, Sohra to Promote Eco-Tourism*", submitted by the Forest & Environment Department, Government of Meghalaya, is limited to the construction of the entrance footpath at a cost of ₹51,60,000/-. This amount excludes 5% for contingencies and 10% for design consultancy and supervision.

Additionally, the Committee clarified that the total approved cost for the project titled, "*Setting up of a Barsha Pump—a water wheel-propelled device that utilizes the energy of flowing rivers and canals to pump water without the need for fuel or electricity, to irrigate a total of 8 hectares of farmland*", submitted by the Deputy Commissioner, East Jaintia Hills, Khliehriat, is ₹18,50,000/-.

The Committee accepted the clarifications provided by the Technical Committee for both proposals and accordingly approved the projects:

(i) "Conservation project of Law Adong near Shadshrieh Falls, Sohra to promote Eco-Tourism submitted by the Forest & Environment Department, Government of Meghalaya, at a total cost of ₹51,60,000/-.

(ii) "Setting up of a Barsha Pump, a water wheel propelled pump that utilizes the energy of flowing rivers and canals to pump water without requiring any fuel or electricity to irrigate a total of 8 ha farmland submitted by the Deputy Commissioner, East Jaintia Hills, Khliehriat, at a total cost of ₹18,50,000/-.

For both the projects, the Committee imposed the following conditions:

- The implementing agency must strictly follow the terms of reference outlined in the DPR,
- The implementing agency is required to submit quarterly progress reports to the Technical Committee, which will review the reports and provide feedback to the Oversight Committee and

- iii. The project's progress will be subject to random monitoring by the State Level Monitoring Committee (SLMC), Directorate of Mineral Resources, and State Forest Department.
- iv. Conditions highlighted in the Minutes of the Technical Committee shall also be followed strictly by the implementing Department.

AGENDA NO.3: REVIEW OF THE DECISIONS TAKEN IN THE 8TH SITTING
HELD ON 25.01.2025

3. (i). REPORT ON THE DEATH OF THE TWO LABOURERS FROM THE STATE OF ASSAM: During the last Sitting, the Committee directed the Meghalaya Police to submit a report on the outcome of the re-investigation of Shallah Police Station Case No. 01(02)2022, registered under Sections 188/34 of the IPC and Section 21(1) of the MMDR Act.

In the meeting, the Meghalaya Police informed the Committee that the case has been re-assigned to SI B. P. Talang and that the investigation is currently in progress.

Accordingly, the Committee reiterated its instruction for the Meghalaya Police to submit the final report on the outcome of the re-investigation of Shallah PS Case No. 01(02)2022 before the next Sitting.

3. (ii). REPORT ON ILLEGAL TRANSPORTATION/EXTRACTION OF COAL W.E.F Jan, 2025 TO MAY, 2025: In its Eighth Sitting held on 25.01.2025, the Committee directed the Meghalaya Police to continue enforcement actions; such as patrolling, making arrests, registering FIRs, filing charge sheets, and seizing vehicles, to address violations of the Hon'ble Supreme Court and NGT orders concerning illegal rat-hole mining in the state.

The Meghalaya Police have been submitting regular monthly reports to the Oversight Committee. A summary of these reports covering the period from January 2025 to May 2025 is presented in Table 13.

Table 13. Abstract of report submitted by the Meghalaya Police w.e.f Jan, 2025 to May, 2025

Sl No.	Month	Cases Registered on illegal extraction of coal	Cases Registered on illegal transportation of coal	No. of persons convicted	No. of persons acquitted
1.	Jan, 2025	NIL	NIL	NIL	NIL
2.	Feb, 2025	NIL	NIL	NIL	NIL
3.	March, 2025	NIL	1	NIL	NIL
4.	April, 2025	1	NIL	NIL	NIL
5.	May, 2025	3	NIL	NIL	NIL
Total		4	1	0	0

- i. *The Committee reiterates its last directions to the Meghalaya Police as under:*
 - i. *Continued surveillance and monitoring to detect illegal mining activities in vulnerable areas.*
 - ii. *Regular patrolling by the police in mining zones to deter illegal mining activities and enforce legal restrictions.*
 - iii. *Immediate actions to arrest those involved in illegal mining and ensure they face legal consequences, including the filing of FIRs (First Information Reports) and charge sheets against offenders.*
 - iv. *Seizing mining equipment and coal being illegally extracted or transported, as part of efforts to stop the illegal supply chain.*
 - v. *Ensuring that cases of illegal mining are followed through the legal system, with actions leading to prosecution and closure of illegal operations.*
 - vi. *The Meghalaya Police will continue the submission of a monthly report to the Oversight Committee.*
 - vii. *The outcome of public complaints pending with the concerned District Administration should be submitted to the Committee before its next sitting.*

3. (iii). ALTERNATE MINING METHOD TO RAT-HOLE MINING IN THE STATE OF MEGHALAYA: In the Eighth Sitting of the Committee held on 25.02.2025, the Mining & Geology Department, Government of Meghalaya, has informed the Committee that the process of scientific coal mining in the state is going to be started soon. It was reported that three Environmental Clearances have been granted by the State Environmental Impact Assessment Authority, Meghalaya, while several coal blocks are still awaiting public hearings to be completed. The details of the coal blocks that have already received Environmental Clearance is given in Table 14.

Table 14: Details of the Coal Blocks granted Environmental Clearance by SEIAA

Sl No.	Name of Project	Location	EC No. and date
1.	Nehlang Lyngdoh Coal Block	East Jaintia Hills District	EC23B0101ML5538234N, dated 14.12.2024
2.	Saryngkham A Coal Mine	East Jaintia Hills District	EC24B0101ML5549782N, dated 14.12.2024
3.	Pyndengshahlang Coal Block	West Khasi Hills District	EC24B0101ML5921331N, dated 14.12.2024.

Accordingly, the Committee reiterates its earlier direction and urged the Government of Meghalaya to update the Committee on the number of coal blocks that has been granted permission (EC/FC) for scientific mining. The Government shall also remain vigilant and prevent any vested interests from continuing with the illegal rat-hole mining under the pretext of scientific coal mining and report such cases to the Committee.

3. (iv). SETTING UP OF SPECIAL TASK FORCE (STF) IN EAST JAINTIA HILLS DISTRICT OF MEGHALAYA: During its Eighth Sitting held on 25.01.2025, the Committee directed the Meghalaya Police to immediately submit a factual report regarding allegations of illegal coal smuggling to Bangladesh. The Meghalaya Police were also instructed to ensure that quarterly reports from the Special Task Force (STF) are regularly submitted to the Oversight Committee.

In response, the Meghalaya Police submitted a report stating that all coal exports to Bangladesh have been verified and is in compliance with applicable legal procedures. Regarding the STF's report, a NIL report was submitted as of 04.02.2025.

A representative of the Meghalaya Police requested that, going forward, the STF, which is headed by the Deputy Commissioner, submit its reports directly to the Oversight Committee instead of routing them through the Meghalaya Police.

The Committee accepted this request. Accordingly, STF reports, headed by the Deputy Commissioner, will henceforth be submitted directly to the Oversight Committee.

3 (v). MONITORING OF RESTORATION STATUS IN DEGRADED AREAS OF MEGHALAYA WITH SYNERGIC USE OF DRONE DATA AND GIS SUBMITTED BY NESAC: During its Sixth Sitting, the Committee approved a project titled "Monitoring the Restoration Status of Degraded Areas in Meghalaya Using Drone and GIS Technology", with a total budget of ₹36,15,145.50. The project is funded from the unutilized balance of a previous NESAC project, which was supported by the Meghalaya Environment Protection and Restoration Fund (MEPRF).

In the Eighth Sitting, Shri Somorjit, Scientist-F from NESAC, informed the Committee that 14 out of 15 drone surveys have been completed. The final survey, which is located along the Bangladesh border, is pending due to required approvals and will be carried out once clearance is obtained. The first report was scheduled for submission by February, 2025.

In the meeting, Shri Somorjit informed that an Interim Report has been prepared and shared with the Technical Committee. Given that the project spans four years, it was recommended that Interim Reports be submitted annually. The First Interim Report has already been circulated to the Divisional Forest Officers (DFOs) of five districts. However, some minor revisions are needed, after which the revised report will be re-circulated to all DFOs, as well as the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (PCCF) & Head of Forest Force (HoFF), and the Oversight Committee.

The Committee accepted Shri Somorjit suggestion that an Interim Report be submitted annually to the Technical Committee, the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (PCCF) & Head of Forest Force (HoFF), and the Oversight Committee. The Technical Committee will review the report and make the necessary recommendations to the Oversight Committee.

3. (vi). PILOT PROJECT BY M/S ION EXCHANGE: During the Eighth Sitting, the Department of Mining & Geology reported that the work order for the pilot project had been issued on 18th December 2024, and a contract agreement was signed with M/s Ion Exchange. It was also informed that 50% of the project cost had already been released to the implementing agency. However, no project status reports were available at the time of the sitting. As a result, the Committee instructed the Department to ensure that M/s Ion Exchange immediately begins implementation and submits regular progress updates.

Subsequently, the Department informed the Committee that work on the project had already commenced and that the first progress report would be submitted by August, 2025.

Accordingly, the Committee directed the Department of Mining & Geology to submit the project progress report by August 2025.

3. (vii). INSTALLATION AND PRESENT STATUS OF INTEGRATED CHECKGATES:

During the Seventh Sitting, the Committee was informed by the Mining & Geology Department that 10 check gates are now fully operational and have been taken over by the Department. However, construction of the remaining 8 check gates has not commenced due to the reluctance of landowners to transfer their land to the Government.

In the Eighth Sitting, the Committee recommended that the Secretary of the Mining & Geology Department explore the possibility of establishing check gates at existing forest check gate locations managed by the State Forest Department. The Secretary was also advised to convene a meeting with the Chief Minister, Chief Secretary, and the Forest Department to discuss this matter.

During the meeting, the Mining & Geology Department reported that a recent joint inspection was carried out to identify suitable land for the remaining Checkgates. However, the inspection did not yield any positive results. The Department has since requested the concerned Deputy Commissioners to assist in identifying suitable land for the Checkgates where land acquisition issues persist.

The Committee therefore directs the Mining & Geology Department to pursue the matter with the concerned Deputy Commissioners on a priority basis and to report the progress before the next sitting.

3. (viii). PROPOSAL FOR DEPLOYMENT OF HOME GUARD VOLUNTEERS TO SAFEGUARD THE CHECKGATES SUBMITTED BY MINING & GEOLOGY DEPARTMENT, GOVERNMENT OF MEGHALAYA:

In the Eighth Sitting, the Committee reaffirmed its earlier directives, underscoring the importance of deploying Home Guard Volunteers at all operational check gates, in accordance with the prevailing Wage Norms issued by the Government of Meghalaya. This deployment is to be carried out for a period of three years, covering the Financial Years 2023–24 to 2025–26. The Committee also reiterated that revenue generated from these check gates should be prioritized for essential expenditures, including electricity bills, operational and maintenance costs, and the remuneration of the Home Guard Volunteers.

During the meeting, the Mining & Geology Department reported that Home Guards were initially deployed at only two operational Checkgates. However, with the increase in the number of functional Checkgates, the Department has written to the Director of Home Guards, Meghalaya, requesting the deployment of personnel at the remaining locations.

Accordingly, the Committee directs the Mining & Geology Department to submit a detailed report on the matter without delay.

3. (ix). PROPOSAL FOR PROCUREMENT AND INSTALLATION OF DIESEL GENERATOR SETS AT CHECKGATES SUBMITTED BY DIRECTOR OF DIRECTORATE OF MINERAL RESOURCES: During the Eighth Sitting, the Secretary of the Mining & Geology Department informed the Committee that the supply of diesel generator sets (Gen sets) to the operational Checkgates is in its final stages and is expected to be completed by February, 2025. The Committee therefore directed the Department to provide an update on the installation of the generator sets before its next sitting.

During the meeting, the Department further informed the Committee that it is currently awaiting the Completion Certificate from the Public Works Department, Meghalaya. Once the certificate is received, the diesel generators will be installed at all operational Checkgates without delay.

Accordingly, the Committee reiterates its directive for the Mining & Geology Department to submit an update on the installation status of the generator sets before the next sitting.

3.(x). IMPLEMENTATION OF GPS TRACKING SYSTEM FOR TRUCK/VEHICLES TRANSPORTING COAL: During its Eighth Sitting, the Committee was informed by the Meghalaya State Pollution Control Board (MSPCB) that the State Government had constituted a Coal Audit Committee. This Committee is responsible for auditing all coal entering the approved Coke Plants in the state. The Secretary of the Mining & Geology Department further informed the Committee that the new Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for coal imported from outside the state includes a provision for installing GPS tracking systems on trucks transporting coal and other minerals.

The Committee, therefore, instructed the MSPCB to submit a report on the findings of the Coal Audit Committee with respect to all coal entering the approved Coke Plants in Meghalaya. It also directed the Mining & Geology Department to provide a report on the implementation status of the new SOP before the next Sitting.

During the meeting, it was brought to the Committee's notice that the MSPCB, through letters dated 18.02.2025 and 19.06.2025, had reminded the Mining & Geology Department to submit the Coal Audit Committee's findings. However, no report had been received. The Secretary, Mining & Geology, informed the Committee that several meetings had been held with the Coal Audit Committee, and the Department had requested all challans for coal entering the Coke Plants. These challans are currently being examined, and a report will be submitted shortly.

Accordingly, the Committee directs the Mining & Geology Department to submit the report without further delay.

3. (xi). PILOT PROJECTS FOR INSTALLATION OF INFORMATION BOARD IN EAST JAINTIA HILLS: During its Eighth Sitting, the Committee was informed by the Mining & Geology Department that a supply order had been issued and 50 locations in East Jaintia Hills had been identified for the installation of Information Boards. The Committee had accordingly directed the Department to immediately submit the proposal for the Information Boards to the Technical Committee.

During the meeting, the Department further informed the Committee that although a tender had been floated and a vendor selected, certain issues arose with the selected vendor. As a result, the Department is in the process of re-floating the tender.

Accordingly, the Committee directs the Mining & Geology Department to submit a report on the matter before its next Sitting.

3. (xii). TRANSFER OF VEHICLE AND OTHER ASSETS PURCHASED UNDER MEPRE: During its Eighth Sitting, the Committee expressed concern that the issue remains ongoing with no significant progress made by the State Government. The Committee also noted that adequate Rules and Laws already exist to address the illegal occupation or retention of government property, and these should be enforced. Accordingly, the Committee directed the Mining & Geology Department to act in accordance with the relevant Rules and Acts, and to update the Committee on the final outcome.

During the meeting, the Mining & Geology Department was again instructed to submit a report on the final outcome of the matter.

3. (xiii). PREVENTION OF HUMAN AND ANIMAL DEATHS BY ACCIDENTAL FALLING IN COAL MINE SHAFTS: During its Eighth Sitting, the Committee was informed by the Mining & Geology Department that the Detailed Project Report (DPR) is expected to be completed by February 2025. The Committee strongly urged the State Government to take swift and decisive action to immediately implement the fencing and closure of abandoned coal mine shafts without further delay. It also directed the State Government to present a detailed report on the actions taken in this regard at the next Sitting.

During the meeting, it was noted that the issue is linked to proposals submitted by the Central Mine Planning & Design Institute Limited (CMPDIL) and the Meghalaya Industrial Development Corporation (MIDC). Accordingly, it was decided that the matter will be addressed in conjunction with these two proposals.

3. (xiv). SETTING UP OF VIDEOCONFERENCING AND PURCHASE OF COMPUTER FOR OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE: During its Eighth Sitting, the Committee noted that the proposal is in line with the directions issued during the Sixth Sitting of the Oversight Committee held

on 16th and 31st October 2023, as well as the Review Meeting on 4th December 2023. Accordingly, the Committee approved the proposal as recommended by the Technical Committee.

The Mining & Geology Department informed the Committee that the tender has been floated on the GeM portal, and the VC equipment will be installed at the Regional Office once the vendor is selected.

The Committee, however, expressed concern over the delay and directed the Mining & Geology Department to expedite the process, which has been pending for a very long time. The timely installation of the equipment is essential for the smooth conduct of the Oversight Committee's virtual meetings.

3. (xv). PROPOSAL FOR SETTING UP AND STRENGTHENING OF DRONE CONTROL ROOM FOR NEWLY CREATED DISTRICT OF EASTERN WEST KHASI HILLS, MAIRANG SUBMITTED BY POLICE DEPARTMENT, GOVERNMENT OF MEGHALAYA: During its Eighth Sitting, the Committee directed the Meghalaya Police to coordinate with the Member Secretary of the Technical Committee and submit a report demonstrating the effectiveness of the existing 11 Drone Control Rooms.

During the meeting, it was informed that the Meghalaya Police had submitted the efficacy report of the Drone Control Units to the Technical Committee on 04.03.2025. However, the Technical Committee has yet to take a decision on the report. The Meghalaya Police also informed the Committee that the initial proposal for setting up the Drone Control Room, amounting to ₹45.27 lakhs, was approved by the Oversight Committee during its Third Sitting held on 30.03.2022. Subsequently, the Police Department submitted an additional proposal citing a shortfall of ₹1,40,740 in the original budget. This shortfall was approved by the Oversight Committee during its Sixth Sitting held on 16th and 31st October 2023.

However, the Meghalaya Police reported that the approved shortfall amount has not yet been released by the Mining & Geology Department. Taking note of this delay, the Committee expressed its strong displeasure over the failure of the Mining & Geology Department to release the sanctioned additional funds, even after more than a year.

The Committee therefore reiterates its earlier direction from the Eighth Sitting, instructing the Mining & Geology Department and the Directorate of Mineral Resources to ensure that all approved funds are released to the implementing agency within two weeks of receiving the Minutes of the Oversight Committee.

Additionally, the Committee directs the Technical Committee to expedite its comments and recommendations on the Efficacy Report submitted by the Meghalaya Police before the next Sitting.

3. (xvi) (a). PROPOSAL FOR 2ND YEAR MAINTENANCE OF PLANTATIONS CREATED IN COAL MINING AFFECTED LANDS UNDER MEPRF DURING 2022-23 SUBMITTED BY DFO CUM MEMBER SECRETARY DISTRICT LEVEL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEES IN 396.24 HA AMOUNTING TO RS. 1,25,91,336.5.

3. (xvi) (b). PROPOSAL FOR FENCING PLANTATIONS 25 HA (2022-23) AT MAWDNGONG, KHLIEHSHNONG SOHRA AS SUBMITTED BY THE DIVISIONAL FOREST OFFICERS, SOCIAL FORESTRY DIVISION, EAST KHASI HILLS, SHILLONG:

During its Eighth Sitting, the Committee instructed the Member Secretary of the Technical Committee to submit the pending report from the Divisional Forest Officer (Territorial), Jowai. Additionally, the Forest Department was requested to provide an update on the response from the Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education (ICFRE) regarding the independent monitoring of plantation sites.

During the meeting, it was informed that the pending report from the DFO (T), Jowai has since been received. Regarding ICFRE's response, Shri B. Wahlang, Chief Conservator of Forests (Social Forestry) and Member Secretary of the Technical Committee, informed the Committee that the Department had written to ICFRE, Dehradun on four occasions but received no response. As a result, the Department approached the Rain Forest Research Institute (RFRI), Jorhat, which has expressed its willingness to undertake the monitoring of plantations carried out in 2022-2023. RFRI requested details of all relevant plantation sites, which have been provided by the Forest Department. The Institute is expected to submit its monitoring proposal to the Technical Committee shortly.

Accordingly, the Committee directs the Technical Committee to expedite its recommendation for the monitoring proposal to be carried out by RFRI, Jorhat.

3. (xvii). DISCUSSION ON THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROJECT PHYCO-REMEDIATION TECHNOLOGY IMPLEMENTED BY M/S TRINITY INTERNATIONAL:

During the Seventh Sitting, it was reported that the implementing agency, M/s Trinity International, had submitted an appeal requesting a 12-month extension of the project. The appeal cited that regular algal dosing could not be carried out due to a lack of funds, and that Cyclone Remal had caused extensive damage, washing away much of the project infrastructure. The Member Secretary of the Technical Committee informed the Committee that the Technical Committee had agreed to grant the extension without any additional funding, and the Oversight Committee concurred with this recommendation.

In the Eighth Sitting, the Chairman informed the Committee that during his site visit to East Jaintia Hills on 24.01.2025, he observed that all project sites managed by M/s Trinity International appeared non-functional and severely damaged. The Member Secretary of the Oversight Committee clarified that the primary cause of the project's non-functionality was the damage sustained during Cyclone Remal. It was further informed that a detailed report of the damages and losses incurred by

M/s Trinity International had been submitted by the Mining & Geology Department via letter dated 09.12.2024 for the Oversight Committee's consideration.

Subsequently, the Oversight Committee, through its letter dated 10.12.2024, advised the State Government to refer to the Contract Agreement signed between the Mining & Geology Department and the agency. As per Paragraph 8 of the Terms and Conditions, the contract includes a Force Majeure clause, which covers:

- i. Acts of God/Nature (e.g., earthquakes, flooding, incessant rain, fire, landslides, wild animals, etc.)
- ii. Wars, pandemics, or local disturbances caused by unlawful elements
- iii. Central or State Government regulations adversely affecting operations
- iv. Unavailability of suitable land necessitating design or location changes of algal ponds without affecting deliverables

Note: The agreement provides that any losses incurred due to these conditions may be invoiced by the agency and reimbursed by the employer.

In view of the above, the Committee had agreed that the Force Majeure claim of ₹2,99,08,347.26 should be paid from the interest component of the Meghalaya Environment Protection and Restoration (MEPR) Fund. It was also agreed that the Monitoring Committee—comprising representatives from the Meghalaya State Pollution Control Board and the Central Pollution Control Board—would continue to oversee the project's implementation and submit regular updates to the Technical Committee.

During the current meeting, the Mining & Geology Department informed the Committee that the sanctioned Force Majeure claim of ₹2,99,08,347.26 had been released to the implementing agency. A monitoring report was also received, outlining the following updates:

1. Damaged sites have been repaired.
2. Nutrient supply has been restored.
3. Algal inoculum has been regrown.
4. Algal dosing activities have resumed.
5. Heavy rains in East Jaintia Hills during May 2025 caused additional damage, and repair work is currently underway.

Following these deliberations, the Committee directs the Monitoring Committee (MSPCB and CPCB) to regularly assess the project's progress and submit periodic reports to the Technical Committee for review and technical feedback.

3. (xviii). STATUS OF THE FIR FILED ON THE 21ST OCTOBER, 2022 DURING THE SITE VISIT OF THE ADDL. SECRETARY, MOEF & CC CUM CHAIRMAN OF THE OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE TO TYRKAP DEPOT NO. 4 AT DEINSHYNRUM: During the Seventh Sitting, the Meghalaya Police submitted a status report regarding the FIR filed on 21.10.2022, stating that clarifications had been sought from the Jaintia Hills Autonomous District Council (JHADC) to verify the actual landowner.

In the Eighth Sitting, the Meghalaya Police informed the Committee that the investigation had been completed, and a charge sheet had been filed against one accused individual. The case was Charge Sheeted vide C.S. No. 36/24 dated 10.12.2024 under Sections 188 and 379 of the IPC read with Section 21(1) of the MMDR Act. The Committee accordingly instructed the Meghalaya Police to provide regular updates on the progress of the case.

During the current meeting, it was reported that the Meghalaya Police had submitted a follow-up report stating that the Court of the Judicial Magistrate First Class, East Jaintia Hills, had transferred the case to the Court of the Special Judge (MMDR) vide Order dated 20.02.2025. The matter is now listed for appearance on 20.03.2025. The Meghalaya Police further assured the Committee that additional updates will be submitted before its next Sitting.

Accordingly, the Committee directs the Meghalaya Police to continue submitting progress reports on the matter prior to the next Sitting.

3. (xix) DISCUSSION ON THE TERMS OF REFERENCE (TOR) FOR UTILIZING THE AMOUNT OF RS. 100 CRORES DEPOSITED WITH CPCB: During its Eighth Sitting, the Committee directed the Technical Committee to forward the approved proposals for funding under the Rs. 100 Crore deposited with the CPCB for final approval. The CPCB was also instructed to formulate comprehensive guidelines for the restoration of the environment in coal mining areas of Meghalaya, and to explore technological options in consultation with reputed national and international expert agencies. The CPCB is required to submit an Action Taken Report (ATR) on the above directives within a period of three months.

During the meeting, Shri Shantanu Dutta, Regional Director, CPCB, informed the Committee that a letter dated 31.03.2022 was earlier issued by the Member Secretary, CPCB, to the Additional Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, Government of Meghalaya. The letter clarified that the Rs. 100 Crore deposited could only be used for environmental restoration in Meghalaya, as outlined in the Action Plan finalized by the NGT-appointed Committee and approved by the NGT in its Fourth Interim Report. It further stated that any request for utilization of this fund must be submitted to CPCB with the prior approval of the Oversight Committee.

He also apprised the Committee that the CPCB had already developed comprehensive guidelines for the utilization of Environmental Compensation (EC) funds received as a result of court directives and penalties imposed on violating industries. These guidelines, he suggested, could also be applied to the utilization of the Rs. 100 Crore fund.

After reviewing the submitted guidelines, the Committee directed the Technical Committee to ensure that all proposals recommended under the Rs. 100 Crore fund are aligned with both the NGT-approved Action Plan and the CPCB's Comprehensive Guidelines for the Utilization of Environmental Compensation Funds.

3. (xx). PROPOSAL FOR AERIAL DRONE SURVEY IN MINING AREAS OF THE STATE OTHER THAN AREA SURVEYED FOR RE-INVENTORISATION OF SEIZED COAL SUBMITTED BY MINING & GEOLOGY DEPARTMENT TO BE IMPLEMENTED BY M/S GARUDA UAV SOFT SOLUTION PVT., LTD.: During its Seventh Sitting, the Committee approved the proposal submitted by the Mining & Geology Department for conducting an Aerial Drone Survey in mining areas of the State, excluding those already covered under the re-inventorisation of seized coal. The project is to be implemented by M/s Garuda UAV Soft Solution Pvt. Ltd.

In the Eighth Sitting, the Secretary, Mining & Geology, informed the Committee that the Work Order had been issued to the implementing agency. The Committee accordingly directed both the Department and M/s Garuda UAV Soft Solution Pvt. Ltd. to submit a progress report on the project before its next sitting.

During the meeting, the Mining & Geology Department informed the Committee that the final project report has been received and will be shared shortly.

The Committee therefore directs the Mining & Geology Department to formally submit the complete project report within two weeks.

3. (xxi). PROPOSAL FOR SHIFTING OF PLANTATION BY MODIFIED AKIRA MIYAWAKI METHOD OF PLANTATION TO NEW LOCATIONS SUBMITTED BY FOREST DEPARTMENT, GOVERNMENT OF MEGHALAYA: In its Seventh Sitting, the Oversight Committee approved the proposal submitted by the Forest Department, Government of Meghalaya, for the relocation of plantations using the modified Akira Miyawaki method to new sites.

During the Eighth Sitting, the Member Secretary of the Technical Committee informed the Committee that the relocation of a 2-hectare plantation at Khliehshnong, Sohra, has been completed. A detailed report on the same has been submitted by the Divisional Forest Officer, East Khasi Hills (Social Forestry) Division, Shillong, who also serves as the Member Secretary of the District Environment Level Committee (DELC). As for the 2-hectare plantation at Sakhain Village, work is scheduled to commence shortly and is expected to be completed with the onset of the next monsoon.

The Member Secretary of the Technical Committee further informed the Committee that a comprehensive report on the overall progress will be submitted soon.

The Committee, therefore, directs the Member Secretary of the Technical Committee to provide an updated report before the next sitting.

3. (xxii) (a). REHABILITATION OF COMMUNITIES IN COAL MINING AREAS THROUGH AROMATIC PLANT CULTIVATION SUBMITTED BY INSTITUTE OF NATURAL RESOURCES, MEGHALAYA.

3. (xxii) (c) PROPOSAL FOR ORGANIC MODEL FARM SUBMITTED BY DISTRICT HORTICULTURE OFFICER, EAST JAINTIA HILLS DISTRICT, KHLIEHRIAT.

3. (xxii)(c). PROPOSAL FOR ALTERNATIVE ECO-FRIENDLY LIVELIHOOD TO THE PEOPLE OF MINE-AFFECTED AREAS (INCLUDES SOCIAL INTERVENTION PROGRAMME, TRAINING INTERVENTION PROGRAMME AND DISTRIBUTION OF TOOLKITS) SUBMITTED BY DIRECTOR OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRIES, GOVT. OF MEGHALAYA.

In its Seventh Sitting, the Oversight Committee had approved three alternate livelihood proposals to be implemented by the respective agencies. However, the Mining & Geology Department had not submitted any report regarding the issuance of work orders or the status of payments.

During the Eighth Sitting, the Committee instructed the Mining & Geology Department to submit the sanction orders and payment details for the three approved proposals to both the Oversight Committee and the Technical Committee.

It was subsequently informed that the payment details have been provided by the Mining & Geology Department. However, the progress report on the implementation of the projects is still awaited. The Committee reminded the Department that, as part of the approval conditions, the implementing agencies were required to submit quarterly progress reports to the Technical Committee, which would then review the reports and provide feedback to the Oversight Committee.

Accordingly, the Committee directs the Mining & Geology Department to coordinate with the implementing agencies and ensure that the progress report is submitted to the Technical Committee. The Technical Committee shall thereafter furnish its feedback to the Oversight Committee before the next sitting.

3. (xxiii). STATUS ON THE AUCTION OF EXTRACTED COAL: During its Eighth Sitting, the Committee observed that the State Government had initially reported 31 lakh metric tonnes (MT) of coal in the affidavit filed before the Hon'ble Supreme Court. The Committee sought clarification from the Mining & Geology Department on the quantity of coal yet to be auctioned.

In response, the Secretary, Mining & Geology, informed that following the drone survey conducted as per the direction of the One-Man Committee headed by Justice (Retd.) B.P. Katakey, the revised quantity of extracted coal was assessed at 18.18 lakh MT. Out of this, a total of 18.99 lakh MT has already been put up for auction, with approximately 2.15 lakh MT still remaining.

It was further informed that the most recent auction was conducted in September, during which 82 MT of coal was put up for auction. However, only 40 MT was sold, with just half of it being successfully procured.

The Mining & Geology Department had earlier submitted the status of coal auctions conducted by Coal India Limited (CIL) from 06.03.2021 to 24.09.2024. The Committee had directed the Department to continue providing regular updates on the auction of extracted coal.

The details of coal auctions submitted by the Department during the Eighth Sitting is given in Table 15:

Table 15: Status of coal auction submitted in the 8th Sitting.

Date of Auction	Quantity put up for auction (MT)	Quantity sold (MT)	Quantity paid (MT)
06.03.2021	53888	0	0
29.04.2021	91651.945	34870	34870
17.05.2021	55154.09	43960	35060
04.08.2022	60872.495	56652	17280
14.03.2023	442800.775	338490	255800
03.11.2023	592646.345	588956	234949
24.09.2024	519406	361726	44140
24.09.2024 (Re-auction)	82690	40830	0
Total	18,99,110 MT	14,65,484 MT	6,22,099 MT

During the meeting, the Mining & Geology had submitted an updated status on the auction of coal by Coal India Limited (CIL) with the latest coal auction being held on 17.04.2025. A detail of the same is given in Table 16:

Table 16: Status of coal auction submitted in the present Sitting.

Date of Auction	Quantity put up for auction (MT)	Quantity sold (MT)	Quantity paid (MT)
06.03.2021	53888	0	0
29.04.2021	91651.945	34870	34870
17.05.2021	55154.09	43960	35060
04.08.2022	60872.495	56652	17280
14.03.2023	442800.775	338490	255800
03.11.2023	592646.345	588956	266009
24.09.2024	519406	361726	44140
24.09.2024 (Re-auction)	82690	40830	225258
17.04.2025	213567.99	3563	0
Total	21126.77 MT	14,69,047 MT	8,34,277 MT

The Committee noted with concern the sharp and unexpected decline in the quantity of coal sold during the auction held on 17.04.2025, wherein 2,13,567.99 MT was put up for sale, but only 3,563 MT was actually sold. The Committee was further informed that the Hon'ble High Court, in its Order dated 02.06.2025, had also taken cognizance of this alarming development. In the said Order, the Hon'ble Court requested the One-Man Committee to examine the matter and suggest alternative methods that may prove more effective and reliable in facilitating the expeditious auction of the substantial quantity of coal still lying in the Coal India Limited (CIL) designated depots.

Accordingly, the Committee directs the Mining & Geology Department to continue providing timely updates on the status of inventoried coal auctions.

3. (xxiv). REQUEST FOR EXTENSION OF TENURE OF THE PROJECT TITLED "RESTORATION OF DEGRADED COAL MINED LAND OF MEGHALAYA THROUGH SOIL AMENDMENT AND MICROBIAL TECHNOLOGY FOR ACCELERATED SUCCESSION": During the Eighth Sitting, it was reported that soil parameters had improved more than threefold over a period of three years following plantation activities. Initially, 5,000 seed balls were sown, but most seedlings failed to survive. In the subsequent year, larger seed balls were used, resulting in improved seedling survival. Consequently, RFRI requested a six-month extension to facilitate further progress.

The Technical Committee, in its 22nd Sitting, recommended granting the extension without any additional funding, and the Oversight Committee, in its Eighth Sitting, approved the one-time six-month extension as requested by RFRI.

However, since no final report has been received from RFRI, the Committee directs the Department of Mining & Geology to coordinate with RFRI and ensure submission of the project's final report before the next Sitting.

3. (xxv). REQUEST FOR ALLOTMENT OF FUND FOR PLANTATION WATCHER OF 2 HA (MODIFIED AKIRA MIYAWAKI METHOD) PLANTATION UNDER MEPRF AT THANGSHUN, KHLIEHSHNONG, SOHRA.

In the Eighth Sitting, it was informed that the Technical Committee had recommended the proposal, as it forms part of the previously approved Plantation Project sanctioned in 2023–24 for the creation of a 2-hectare plantation using the Modified Akira Miyawaki Method under MEPRF at Khliehshnong, Sohra. The Divisional Forest Officer, Social Forestry Division, East Khasi Hills, Shillong, has now proposed the allocation of funds for engaging a plantation watcher to provide fire protection in the area, which is prone to wildfires. The Committee noted that the proposal is an extension of the earlier approved plantation project and accordingly approved the request.

However, as no progress report has been received from the Forest Department, the Committee requests the Member Secretary, Technical Committee, to submit the progress report before its next Sitting.

3. (xxvi). PROPOSAL FOR 3RD YEAR MAINTENANCE OF PLANTATION UNDER MEGHALAYA ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION AND RESTORATION FUND (MEPRF).

The Oversight Committee, in its 4th Sitting, had approved the plantations established on coal mining-affected lands under MEPRF during 2022–23, as submitted by the DFO and Member Secretary of the District Level Executive Committees. Subsequently, the 2nd Year Maintenance was approved in the Committee's 6th Sitting, followed by approval of the 3rd Year Maintenance Proposal during its 8th Sitting.

However, since no further report has been received from the Forest Department, the Committee requests the Member Secretary, Technical Committee, to submit the progress report before the next Sitting.

3. (xxvii).STATE LEVEL MONITORING COMMITTEE: The Committee, after a series of meetings, finalized and approved the members of the State Level Monitoring Committee (SLMC), which was subsequently notified by the Government of Meghalaya vide Notification No. MG.81/2021/459, dated 21.05.2024. The SLMC is primarily responsible for overseeing and reviewing the progress of various projects approved by the Oversight Committee under the MEPRF. In the Eighth Sitting, the Committee emphasized the need for an active official from the relevant State Department to serve as Member Secretary to ensure the effective functioning of the SLMC. Accordingly, the Secretary of the Mining & Geology Department was directed to appoint an officer to this role within a week.

During the current meeting, the Committee reiterated that the immediate operationalization of the SLMC is crucial for monitoring MEPRF projects. As most SLMC members are retired government officials, it is imperative that an active official from the concerned department be designated as Member Secretary to facilitate coordination and ensure the Committee's effectiveness.

Since the nomination of the SLMC Member Secretary does not require formal notification by the State Government, the Mining & Geology Department recommended the nomination of the Director, Directorate of Mineral Resources as the Member Secretary of the SLMC.

The Committee approved the appointment of the Director, Directorate of Mineral Resources, as the Member Secretary of the SLMC. The Committee further directed the Member Secretary to convene a meeting of the SLMC without delay.

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

Sd/-
DDGF(C) MoEF& CC,
RO Shillong & Member Secretary, Oversight Committee

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING TO DISCUSS THE PROJECTS SUBMITTED BY
CENTRAL MINES PLANNING DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE LIMITED (CMPDIL)
AND MEGHALAYA INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION (MIDC)
HELD ON 16th JULY, 2025**

In the Ninth Sitting of the Oversight Committee, two invoices related to ongoing proposals were presented for consideration:

1. "Restoration and Reclamation of Mining-Affected Land (Coal Sector) in Meghalaya" – Pilot Projects in the Sutaga area, East Jaintia Hills District, and the Agrenggittim area, South Garo Hills District, submitted by CMPDIL, with a total invoice amount of ₹35,40,000/-, and
2. "Appraisal of Proposal Regarding Survey and Other Works for Mine Closure and Reclamation of Abandoned Coal Mining Areas in the State", submitted by MIDC, amounting to ₹4,02,32,371.00/-.

During the said sitting, the Oversight Committee raised concerns regarding whether prior approval had been granted for the activities undertaken under these proposals. Specifically, CMPDIL's preparation of the Preliminary Project Report (PPR) amounting to ₹30,00,000/- (excluding GST), and MIDC's detailed study costing ₹4,02,32,371.00/-, appeared to have been initiated by the Mining & Geology Department at the State Government level without the requisite sanction from the Oversight Committee.

In light of these observations, the Oversight Committee directed the Member Secretary, Oversight Committee to convene a meeting with all relevant stakeholders to clarify the scope of mine closure projects falling under the Committee's mandate and to ensure alignment with the MEPRF utilization guidelines.

Pursuant to this directive, a meeting was held on 16th July, 2025 at the Conference Hall of the Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change, Regional Office, Shillong. The meeting was chaired by Ms. Intienla Ao, Deputy Director General of Forests (C) and Member Secretary of the Oversight Committee, who welcomed all attending officials. The list of officials present is detailed in Table 1 as under:

Table 1: Name of Official and Designation/Department

Sl No.	Name of Official	Designation/Department
1.	Ms. Intienla Ao, IFS	Deputy Director General of Forests (C), MoEF & CC, RO, Shillong
2.	Shri R. S. Gill, IFS	PCCF & HoFF and Chairman Technical Committee, Environment & Forest Department.
3.	Shri B. Wahlang, IFS	Chief Conservator of Forests (SF & Env.) cum Member Secretary, Technical Committee, Environment & Forest Department.
4.	Shri M. B. Tongper, MCS	Joint Secretary, Mining & Geology, Department and Director, Directorate of Mineral Resources.
5.	Shri Naba Bhattacharjee	Chairman, State Expert Appraisal Committee and Technical Advisor (Env.) to the Govt. of Meghalaya.
6.	Dr. H. Tynsong	Scientist 'E', MoEF & CC, RO, Shillong
7.	Shri Gary R. Majaw	Legal Assistant, MoEF & CC, RO, Shillong

8.	Shri Abhishek Kumar Singh	Sr. Manager (Env.), CMPDIL, HQ, Ranchi
9.	Shri Dr. Seelam Naresh Kumar	Sr. Manager (Geo.), CMPDIL, HQ, Ranchi
10.	Shri Pramod Kumar	General Manager (UMD), CMPDIL, HQ, Ranchi
11.	Shri Keriang Malngiang	Technical Officer, MIDC, Shillong
12.	Shri S. Kharjana	DGM (Tech.) MIDC, Shillong

1. DISCUSSION ON PROJECT AND INVOICE SUBMITTED BY CMPDIL:

Ms. Intienla Ao, then requested the officials from CMPDIL to deliver a chronological presentation of the project, covering all its key aspects.

The CMPDIL officials informed the Committee that CMPDIL, a subsidiary of Coal India Ltd. and a Public Sector Undertaking under the Government of India had constituted a high-level team at the request of the Government of Meghalaya. The team was tasked with examining the implementation of coal mine closure and the restoration of coal mine-affected lands in Meghalaya, and to recommend necessary measures for undertaking the work on a priority basis, as directed by the Hon'ble National Green Tribunal (NGT). The officials of CMPDIL conducted an initial visit to Meghalaya from 17th to 20th December 2023.

During their visit, the team inspected two pilot project sites identified by the Director of Mineral Resources, Government of Meghalaya—namely, the abandoned coal mine areas in Sutnga (East Jaintia Hills) and Arenggitim (South Garo Hills). Closure and restoration works are proposed to be carried out at both locations. Following the field visit, CMPDIL submitted the Preliminary Project Reports (PPRs) for both sites, which were duly accepted by the Government of Meghalaya.

As per CMPDIL's proposal, an initial payment of ₹30,00,000 (plus GST) was earmarked, and an Invoice was raised accordingly. CMPDIL submitted the invoice for ₹35,40,000 (inclusive of GST), via Proforma Invoice No. 6170173252 dated 23.07.2024, and forwarded through letter No. CMPD/BD/E-1165353/1-2287 dated 29.07.2024. This amount pertains to the preparation of the PPRs for both pilot projects.

Subsequently, in its 25th Sitting held on 11th June, 2025, the Technical Committee recommended the release of the initial payment of ₹30,00,000 plus GST. The balance amount would be disbursed upon submission of the final Detailed Project Report (DPR).

During the 9th Sitting of the Oversight Committee held on 16th July 2025, clarification was sought regarding the justification for the invoiced amount. In response, CMPDIL, through letter No. CMPD/BDD/E-1165353 dated 22nd July, 2025, clarified that the invoice amount of ₹30,00,000 (excluding GST) constituted the initial payment to formalize the contract between the service provider and the Government. The project follows a Project Consultancy Model (PCM), with the consultancy fee fixed at 6.5% of the total project cost for the restoration and reclamation of mining-affected lands. This fee percentage was mutually agreed upon in previous meetings between the Government of

Meghalaya and CMPDIL. The total consultancy cost will be reflected in the DPR and subsequently tendered. The initial payment will be adjusted against the total consultancy fee payable under the approved 6.5% rate. The same was also reflected in CMPDIL's earlier consultancy fee proposal, vide letter No. 2024/E-1165353/1190000578/1-20210 dated 1st April 2024.

CMPDIL then proceeded to present the methodology for coal mine closure specific to the sites in South Garo Hills and East Jaintia Hills, as outlined in Table.2 below:

Table.2: Methodology for coal mine closure

Site	District	Terrain Type	Lithology	Key Hazards	Restoration Focus
Agrenggittim (coal)	South Garo Hills	Dissected plateaus	Sandstone, fireclay, shale	Ground instability, subsidence	Subsurface strengthening, surface control
Sutnga, (coal)	East Jaintia Hills	Plateau with karst terrain	Fossiliferous limestone, shale	Sinkholes, water logging	Backfilling voids, subsurface stabilization

CMPDIL then highlighted the Schedule of Payment for the overall activities of the project in Table 3 as under:

Table.3: Payment Schedule for the overall activities of the project

Sl. No.	Payment Schedule	Amount	Observation
1	Initial payment	Rs. 30 lakhs	After Award of work order
2	Draft PPR	75% of payment on schedule of charge.	On submission of draft PPR
3	Final PPR	25% of payment on schedule of charges.	After provisionally accepted by Nodal Officer nominated by GoM
4	Draft DPR including detailed cost estimate	75% of payment on schedule of charges.	On submission of draft DPR
5	Final DPR	25% of payment on schedule of charge.	After provisionally accepted by nodal officer nominated by GoM
6	Subsequent R/A Bills in every two months towards SQC	As per percentage given at Sl. 3	After award of work by GoM for execution

Note: In final bill, initial payment made in Sl 1 will be adjusted

CMPDIL, through its letter No. CMPDI/BDD/E-1165353 dated 22nd July 2025, has also provided a detailed technical justification underscoring the necessity of undertaking the aforementioned studies and analyses (items i-iv) detailed in Table.4 below:

Table 4: Technical Justification undertaking the studies and analyses

Sl No.	Field Surveys	Justification
i.	Aerial Topographical Survey Data	<p><u>Technologies:</u> Aerial LIDAR, UAV-based photogrammetric. Digital Terrain Modeling (DTM)</p> <p><u>Purpose in DPR:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generation of high-resolution elevation models (DEM/DSM/DTM) • Delineation of mine voids, embankments, dumps, and depressions

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slope analysis and hydrological modeling • Inventory of built-up and natural features within the project area • Identification of assets requiring preservation or relocation • Optimization of infrastructure for future community use <p><u>Output Utilization:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning of backfilling operations and stabilization works • Watershed design and surface runoff modeling • Cost estimation for earthwork and grading • Base for developing green zone layout and fencing plans • Mapping of community interface points and access corridors • Compliance with environmental and cultural heritage safeguards
ii	Geotechnical Investigation Data	<p><u>Data Captured:</u> Borehole logs, soil classification, rock strength, water table depth</p> <p><u>Purpose in DPR:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment of terrain stability for construction and vegetation • Design of slope reinforcement and retaining structures • Classification of strata for reclamation layering • Safety factor calculations for reclaimed slopes • Compatibility checks for plantation soil profiles • Suitability evaluation for reuse of overburden materials. • Planning for safe and stable land form
iii.	Geophysical Investigation	<p>Mine Layout and Underground Workings</p> <p><u>Data Captured:</u> 2D Electrical Resistivity Tomography (ERT) data</p> <p><u>Purpose in DPR:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structural mapping of voids, underground workings, fractures. Identification of and water saturated zones • Hazard zoning for potential subsidence. • Determination of filling requirements and sealing locations <p><u>Output Utilization:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identified location of sub-surface voids indicating mine workings. However, later extension of mine voids could not be delineated. 3D-ERT may provide lateral extent of voids that will aid in void filling strategy with rough estimation of volumetric calculations. • Delineated different lithological layers such as silty clay with sand and gravel, (2) transitional weathered rock, and (3) competent bedrock, up to the depth of 50m.
iv	Chemical Analysis – Soil & Water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Closure planning requires an accurate picture of current site conditions to assess whether any degradation has occurred during mining operations and to plan appropriate remediation measures. • Critical for determining potential risks to human health, flora, fauna, and groundwater resources, and to guide safe reuse of land and water. • Ensures that post-mining land use planning is compatible with environmental and health safety standards. • Demonstrating chemical safety through certified field data helps mitigate future liabilities, grievances, and legal risks. • Recommendations for repurposing of mined out land is dependent on the baseline data w.r.t. environmental parameters.

The member present held a brief discussion with officials from CMPDIL regarding the proposed methodology and the type of data intended to be collected for the preparation of the Detailed

Project Report (DPR). However, the CMPDIL officials were unable to clearly articulate or convey the relevance and practical utility of the data to be collected.

It was observed that the proposed methodology does not appear to require advanced technological expertise, as its implementation—such as mine closure through subsurface strengthening, surface control, backfilling of voids, and subsurface stabilization, could be undertaken by any non-specialist (local contractor), even without a detailed study of mine depths.

The members also expressed concern regarding the high value of the invoices submitted. Consequently, reference was made to the budgetary allocation for the activity concerning the closure of rat-hole coal mine openings/coal shafts, as outlined in the approved Action Plan as detailed in Table 5 below:

Table 5: Budgetary Allocation for closure of rat-hole coal mine openings/coal shafts, as outlined in the approved Action Plan

Sl. No	Activity	Implementing Agency(ies)	Financial Targets (Rs. In lakhs) for		
			Respective Mine Owners	State Govt. from MEPRF	Total
B.6	Rat hole coal mine openings				
B6.1	Closure of opening of mines where coal reserve has already been exhausted by:-	Reserve mine owners, Mining & Geology department, MSPCB and CPCB			
B.6.1.1	Controlled blasting or		40.00	40.00	80.00
B.6.1.2	Refilling debris/overburden		200.00	200.00	400.00
Sub-Total for 'B.6'			240	240	480
B.7	Coal mine shafts located in river/stream bed				
B.7.1	Closure of such mine shafts by :-	Respective mine owners, Mining & Geology dept., MSPCB and CPCB			
B.7.1.1	Controlled blasting or		400	400	800
B.7.1.2	Refilling debris/overburden		200	200	400
Sub-Total for 'B.7'			600	600	1200

Based on the above table, it was concluded that the respective mine owners are unlikely to contribute towards the budget required for mine closure. Therefore, the total estimated cost is projected to be approximately ₹840 lakhs.

2. DISCUSSION ON PROJECT AND INVOICE SUBMITTED BY MIDC:

Ms. Imtiena Ao then invited officials from the Meghalaya Industrial Development Corporation (MIDC) to deliver a presentation on the activities undertaken by the Corporation.

The MIDC officials informed the Committee that, vide letter No. MG.61/2018/971 dated 25th July 2024, the State Government appointed MIDC—a Government of Meghalaya undertaking—as the

Project Implementation Unit (PIU) to conduct a detailed study on its behalf. In accordance with the specifications and parameters provided by CMPDIL, MIDC issued a national-level tender, through which M/s Garuda UAV was shortlisted and subsequently engaged to carry out the study.

Following a six-month study period, the vendor submitted its final report to CMPDIL, along with an invoice amounting to ₹4,02,32,371.00, covering the costs incurred for studies conducted in both the coal and non-coal sectors. MIDC then presented a detailed cost bifurcation of the project activities for both the coal and non-coal sectors, as outlined in Table 6 below:

Table 6: Cost Bifurcation of the project activities for both the coal and non-coal sectors.

Area Type	Area (ha)	% of Total	Cost (INR)	Key Focus
Coal (MEPRF)	80.27	65.84%	Rs 2,61,00,865	Void backfilling slope stabilization AMD mitigation.
Forest (MMMRF)	41.66	34.16%	Rs. 1,35,36,941	Soil rehab. water protection, agro-forestry
Total	121.93	100%	Rs. 3,96,37,806 (Incl. GST)	

DETAILED TECHNICAL STUDY FOR PREPARATION OF FINAL DETAIL PROJECT REPORT (DPR):

Upon its appointment as the Project Management Consultant (PMC) and following the preparation of the Preliminary Project Report (PPR), CMPDI recommended that the following specialized studies be undertaken by the Government of Meghalaya, as they fall beyond CMPDI's technical expertise and defined scope of work:

- i. Geophysical and Geospatial Surveys, including Electrical Resistivity Tomography (ERT)
- ii. Chemical Analysis of Soil and Water
- iii. Geotechnical Investigations
- iv. Aerial Topographical Survey and Mapping

Accordingly, the Mining and Geology Department, Government of Meghalaya, vide letter No. MG.61/2018/971 dated 25th July 2024, directed MIDC—the designated Project Implementation Unit (PIU)—to initiate and complete the process of selecting a qualified vendor for these works. MIDC was instructed to adhere to all applicable financial norms and tendering procedures. The complete documentation of the procurement process has since been submitted by MIDC. It is important to note that the invoice amount was subsequently revised to ₹2.61 Crores, as the cost associated with the non-coal pilot project study is to be borne from the Meghalaya Mineral Management and Regulation Fund (MMMRF), rather than the Meghalaya Environment Protection and Restoration Fund (MEPRF).

Following the completion of the work in March, 2025, MIDC's invoice was reviewed and recommended for approval by the Technical Committee during its 26th meeting held on 7th July

2025. Officials from CMPDI and MIDC were present at the meeting as special invitees to justify the necessity and relevance of the studies undertaken. It was clarified that only the portion of the study pertaining to the two coal project sites is eligible for funding under MEPRF.

MIDC subsequently proceeded to elaborate on the specific components of the work undertaken as part of the project. Each component was presented in detail, outlining the scope, methodology, and objectives of the activities carried out. The key work components highlighted were as follows:

1. Geophysical Survey (Electrical Resistivity Tomography - ERT): Electrical Resistivity Tomography (ERT) was employed as a key non-invasive method to investigate subsurface conditions across the four study locations. In East Jaintia Hills and parts of South Garo Hills, the ERT survey revealed clear zones of high resistivity, indicative of air-filled voids and fractured rock, and low resistivity zones pointing to water-saturated strata, clay pockets, or weak, weathered material. These profiles were instrumental in locating cavity zones, faulted ground, and potential areas of collapse, which pose long-term threats to reclaimed land use. The results of the ERT survey allowed precise identification of subsurface anomalies and helped prioritize zones requiring backfilling, slope stabilization, or drainage realignment. It provided critical insight into the structural integrity of near-surface zones and supported decisions regarding site-specific remediation planning.

2. Topographical Survey: The topographical survey was carried out using UAV-based LiDAR technology, supported by RTK-enabled GNSS systems to establish accurate ground control points (GCPs). The survey provided high-resolution elevation data and 1-meter contour maps, which enabled precise mapping of existing terrain features across all four study sites. It helped in identifying key surface structures such as drainage channels, depressions, eroded slopes, reclaimed mine pits, and abandoned mining voids. The topographical outputs were crucial in understanding the present-day morphology of the terrain and in highlighting areas with visible signs of degradation and instability. These results formed the basis for further geological and environmental interpretation, including slope-related risk categorization and identification of disrupted natural drainage paths that require restoration.

3. Geotechnical Investigation: Geotechnical investigation was conducted to calculate the strength of ground/bearing capacity and additionally to complement the geophysical findings. Detailed geotechnical investigations were carried out through Exploratory drilling, collection and testing of soil/rock samples to know the strength of ground, and bearing capacity. Conducted tests are Standard Penetration Test, Grain Size Analysis, Atterberg's Limit, Natural Moisture Content, Bulk and Dry Density, Specific Gravity, Direct Shere Test, Consolidation Test, Hardness of Rocks, Modulus of Elasticity, Plate Load test.

These tests helped determine key engineering parameters such as soil strength, density, bearing capacity, permeability, and compaction levels. In areas such as West Garo Hills and East

Khasi Hills, where reclaimed mine areas showed variable terrain deformation, the borehole data confirmed the presence of loose to medium-dense soils, underlain by weak weathered rock or fractured shale. Such findings are crucial for engineering the stability of backfilled areas, retaining walls, and earthen slopes, particularly in regions identified as unstable from ERT surveys. Additionally, they informed the design of surface regrading plans, allowing the recontouring of unstable terrain to stable slope angles based on soil shear strength.

4. Soil Analysis (at part of Chemical Analysis): Soil samples were collected and analysed for their physical and chemical properties including pH, electrical conductivity, organic carbon, and macronutrients such as nitrogen (N), phosphorus (P), and potassium (K). These assessments were necessary to evaluate the soil fertility and biological viability of the reclaimed sites. In several areas, particularly in East Jaintia Hills, the results indicated low organic matter, poor nutrient content, and acidic pH, confirming that topsoil degradation had occurred due to mining and weathering. This justified the inclusion of soil conditioning strategies, such as the addition of compost, green manure, or biofertilizers, as part of the ecological restoration framework. It also helped in species selection for revegetation, ensuring that only resilient, site-specific species with minimal nutrient demands would be introduced in the first phase.

5. Water Quality Assessment (at part of Chemical Analysis): Water samples from streams, surface runoff channels, and former mining pits were collected and analysed for hydro chemical parameters such as pH, BOD, COD, turbidity, and heavy metal concentration. The findings confirmed site-specific contamination, particularly elevated levels of iron, manganese, and sulphates in East Jaintia Hills, which are characteristic of acid mine drainage. Understanding water quality also supported the planning of safe agricultural reuse and groundwater recharge interventions, helping mitigate long-term ecological impacts.

6. Geological and Geospatial Survey: The purpose is to identify rock types in the project area, fault lines, lithology, and spatial distribution of geological features which is essential for evaluating subsurface stability, mineral potential, and environmental risks. Geospatial data aids in precise location-based assessments and change detection over time.

The total project cost is about ₹3.96 Crores. Out of this, around ₹2.61 Crores (66%) is for work in coal-affected areas, and ₹1.35 Crores (34%) is for non-coal areas. The work was divided into five stages. Most of the money was spent in Stage 2 and Stage 3, which involved aerial surveys, mapping, and data processing; these alone took up nearly 60% of the total cost. A detail of Cost Bifurcation between Coal and non-coal is given in Table 7.

Table 7. Cost Bifurcation between Coal and non-coal

Stage	Activities Covered	Invoice Amount	Coal Share (₹) 65.84% of total	Non-Coal Share (₹) 34.16% of total
Stage 1	Mobilization, team deployment, UAV logistics, equipment calibration, area perraissions	₹79,27,561	₹52,20,172	₹27,07,389
Stage 2	Aerial LiDAR (A1), Photogrammetry (A2), GCP Survey (A3), Water & Soil Sampling (A4, A5)	₹1,18,91,342	₹78,30,260	₹40,61,082
Stage 3	DEM/DTM Processing (A6), GIS Feature Extraction (A7), 3D Mine Layout (A8)	₹1,18,91,342	₹78,30,260	₹40,61,082
Stage 4	DPR Integration (A9), Project Reporting (A10)	₹59,45,671	₹39,15,130	₹20,30,541
Stage 5	Final Report Submission, Stakeholder feedback incorporation	₹19,81,890	₹13,05,043	₹6,76,847
Total		₹3,96,37,806	₹2,61,00,865	₹1,35,36,941

During the 26th Sitting of the Technical Committee, members of the Technical Committee, representatives from CMPDIL clarified that the study carried out by MIDC was crucial to ascertain the extent of underground rat-hole mining, levels of degradation, the presence of coal seams, and to provide accurate geophysical and geospatial data—all of which are essential for preparing the final Detailed Project Report (DPR). During the said 26th Sitting, the Technical Committee expressed satisfaction with CMPDIL's clarifications and agreed that the study should serve as a foundational reference or guideline for all future mine closure interventions. Consequently, the Technical Committee recommended the vendor's invoice for consideration by the Oversight Committee, with the observation that the study's findings should form a pivotal basis for policy and project planning.

Officials present in the meeting strongly felt that the cost of coal-related works in the project; ₹2.61 Crore out of the total ₹3.96 Crore is notably high. A major portion of the coal-related cost is concentrated in Stage 2 (technical surveys) and Stage 3 (data processing), each costing over ₹78 lakh. These involve high-cost activities like Aerial LiDAR, photogrammetry, and 3D mine modelling, which require specialized drones, advanced sensors, and skilled operators. Additionally, ground control point surveys and environmental sampling (soil, water) are field-intensive, requiring extensive manpower and lab analysis. However, it is felt in the meeting that the cost appears inflated due to the identical amounts listed for Stage 2 and Stage 3, despite the latter involving primarily desktop-based GIS processing. This raises red flags about duplication or lack of cost rationalization. Also, the uniform 65.84% coal allocation across all stages may not reflect actual work differentiation.

since certain tasks like water analysis or stakeholder consultation may not be coal-specific. In short, the meeting felt that while the high cost reflects technical complexity and field challenges, there's evidence suggesting possible overestimation, and a need for finer cost segregation for greater transparency and efficiency.

3. JUSTIFICATION FOR NOT OBTAINING PRIOR APPROVAL FROM THE OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

Ms. Imtiena Ao subsequently invited Shri Naba Bhattacharjee, Technical Advisor (Environment) to the Government of Meghalaya, to present a detailed account explaining the rationale behind the Government's decision to proceed with the agreement, award of contract, and subsequent request for *ex-post facto* approval for both invoices submitted by CMPDIL and MIDC.

In response, Shri Naba Bhattacharjee stated that the lapse in securing prior approval had been deliberated upon with departmental officials. It was observed that the deviation from established procedures was not deliberate but rather the result of an oversight—largely attributed to the frequent transfer and replacement of the Director and Secretary of the Department of Mining and Geology, often due to superannuation and administrative reshuffling. He further highlighted that the urgency imposed by judicial directives to prioritize the closure of coal mines and the restoration of mining-affected areas significantly contributed to the procedural oversight.

Shri Bhattacharjee referred to a series of Interim Reports submitted by Justice (Retd.) B.P. Katakey to the High Court of Meghalaya, which underscored the pressing need for the closure and restoration of thousands of abandoned and operational coal mine openings, particularly in East Jaintia Hills. These open and unsealed mine shafts pose grave threats to both human and animal life, while also contributing to ongoing environmental degradation, notably through acid mine drainage. The reports consistently call upon the State Government to accelerate the mine closure process by finalizing Detailed Project Reports (DPRs), engaging appropriate vendors, and initiating restoration efforts on a priority basis to curb illegal mining and mitigate environmental harm. A detailed account of these Interim Reports is presented in Table 8.

Table 8. Interim reports submitted by Justice (Retd) B. P Katakey

Sl. No	Reports of Justice (Retd) B. P Katakey	Date of Submission to the Hon'ble High Court of Meghalaya	Abstract
1.	Seventeenth Interim Report	22/09/2023	Para-12.4: closure of both abandoned and active mines, restoration of water quality in the river and the streams affected by AMD and reclamation of areas affected by the coal mining activities, apart from others. Such Action Plan tough is required to be

			implemented; the same so far has not been implemented. The Oversight Committee though has made attempts to implement the Action Plan. It bears very little success so far.
2.	Eighteenth Interim Report	14/11/2023	Para-4.2: There being 1000 of pits of the coal mines, which are unprotected and uncovered and causing acid mine drainage thereby polluting the surrounding areas as well as the waters in the rivers and streams, the State Govt. is advised to close all the mine expeditiously for which the necessary help from the CMPDIL may also be taken, as proposed. Implementation of the action plan for mine closure is advised to be taken up on priority basis.
3.	Twentieth Interim Report	07/02/2024	Para-1: draft conceptual report has been submitted by CMPDIL to the State Govt. Report is under consideration. Mine openings of not only the abandoned mines but also of all active mines need to be closed down urgently so as to avoid loss of human life and also of livestock apart from continued release of Acid Mine Drainage (AMD). It is also recommended that since the closure of mine is a time consuming process, all the mine openings need to be immediately fenced so as to avoid loss of human life as well as the life of life stock.
4.	Twenty First Interim Report	12/03/2024	Para-J,K: closure of the mine pits being very slow, the Single Member Committee recommends time bound implementation of the project of closure of mine pits which causes danger not only to the livestock but also to the villagers as those are available all over the mining areas of the aforementioned 4 districts and are not fenced. The Single Member Committee recommends taking urgent steps for restoration of the damages caused to the environment by coal mining activities for which adequate fund is available in MEPRE.
5.	Twenty Second Interim Report	29/04/2024	Para-F: Not a single abandoned mine so far has been closed as the process of closure is still in the initial stage i.e. the preparation of DPR by the CMPDIL. It is on record that in East Jaintia Hills alone, there are about 26,000 rat-hole mine openings which need to be closed down because of the ban on the rat-hole coal mining, to avoid the risk of loss of human life as well as livestock. Till such closure, such openings may be fenced so that nobody can go near the mine pits.

			The project for closure of abandoned mines needs to be implemented urgently and the Mining & Geology needs to take urgent steps for preparation of DPR for that purpose.
6.	Twenty Fourth Interim Report	14/08/2024	Para-L: The coal mine openings which are in thousands having not been sealed, those have not only endangered the human life but also the lives of the livestock. The Committee, therefore, advised the Govt. of Meghalaya to take up the issue relating to the closure of mine openings on urgent basis and also to furnish the required information to CMPDIL within a fortnight. The Govt. has also been advised to take appropriate decision relating to the finalization of vendors for undertaking different jobs like survey, analysis etc. Unless the mine openings are closed and/or for the time being fenced, the restoration of mining effected areas is not possible and hence there is absolutely no restoration of mining effected areas till date.
7.	Twenty Sixth Interim Report	29/11/2024	Para-5: The Committee having regards to the importance of sealing of the mine openings, which is required to prevent further illegal coal mining activities including mining and transportation, recommends completion of the entire process on war footing and on a phased manner, there being thousands of mine openings, either abandoned or active or which can be activated within a very short time. In East Jaintia Hills District itself there are more than 22000 mine openings as found by the North Eastern Science Application Centre (NESAC), in respect of which the Committee has already submitted an interim report before this Hon'ble Court. The process of actual sealing of the mine openings may take a very long time if such process is not started immediately.
8.	Twenty Seventh Interim Report	07/02/2025	Para-9: To take up the matter relating to closure of existing coal mine openings and implementation of project of restoration of mining effected areas in the State on war footing, so as to ensure stoppage of illegal mining activities as well to ensure stoppage of acid mined drainage (AMD) from the mine openings which continue to pollute the environment as well as the nearby rivers and the streams and also to rule out the possibility of further extraction of coal from the existing mine pits.

Shri Bhattacharjee further referred to several Orders issued by the Hon'ble High Court of Meghalaya, which were based on the Interim Reports submitted by Justice (Retd.) B.P. Katakey. The closure of coal mines in Meghalaya continues to be a critical issue, as reflected in the proceedings of PIL No. 02/2022. In its Order dated 16.12.2024, the Court observed that although the Central Mine Planning & Design Institute Limited (CMPDIL) had been entrusted with surveying abandoned coal mines at pilot sites in Sutnga and Agremgittim, no specific timeline had been provided for completing the Detailed Project Reports (DPRs), which are essential for implementing closure measures. Subsequently, in the Order dated 13.03.2025, the Court expressed serious concern over the lack of progress—mine shafts remained open and restoration work had yet to begin, despite the engagement of technical agencies. The Meghalaya Industrial Development Corporation (MIDC), designated as the Project Implementation Unit, also faced delays in execution. The Court reiterated the urgent need for immediate and decisive action to curb illegal mining. A detailed summary of these High Court Orders is provided in Table 9.

Table 9. Order/Direction of Hon'ble High Court of Meghalaya

Sl. No	Dates of Order/Direction of Hon'ble High Court of Meghalaya	Case Details	Abstract
1.	16.12.2024	PIL NO. 02/2022	Para-3: With regard to the closure of openings of abandoned coal mines, it is reported that the work has been assigned to the Central Mine Planning & Design Institute Limited (CMPDIL) and an area in Sutnga, East Jaintia Hills District and in Agremgittim, South Garo Hills District has been identified as Pilot Projects. It is further seen from the report that once the survey and analysis work is completed, then based on the data computed from the surveys, the same will be provided to the CMPDIL for finalization of the Detailed Project Report (DPR) for recommendations with regard to specific technical measures required for mine closure and allied activities. Here too, for the said process of the two Pilot Projects and for the estimated time that they may require, no information has been given. Since the same is a matter of concern, it is expected that the State respondent take up the matter on a priority basis, especially in view of the winter season, where illegal mining activities might take place and the abandoned coal mines reactivated.
2.	13.03.2025	PIL NO. 02/2022	Para-7: On the aspect of closure of abandoned coal mine shafts, setting up of Integrated Check-Gates and providing of alternate employment, there seems to be

			no progress, apart from the update that the Central Mine Planning Design Institute Limited (CMPDIL), has been approached to extend technical support to conduct survey analysis, and the designation of the Meghalaya Industrial Development Corporation as the Project Implementation Unit for mine reclamation project, but that the Detailed Project Report (DPR) is still awaited. Similarly, with regard to the setting up of the Integrated Smart Check-Gates, the same seems to be a non-starter with the same reasons being given for non-implementation, as also the steps for providing alternate livelihood and employment.
3.	02.06.2025	PIL NO. 02/2022	Para-16: Apart from the other Heads, such as status of implementation of the programme for alternative livelihood and status of closure of coal mines; the proposal pending before the Oversight Committee constituted by the NGT, has received attention and a very pertinent issue has been raised, which the Committee feels requires to be considered by the Oversight Committee i.e. the proposal which has been forwarded to the Member Secretary in pursuance to the order dated 13.03.2025, passed by this Court for amendment of the Revised Comprehensive Plan, 2022, in the matter of forfeiture of the entire bid amount deposited in the event of failure of the successful auction purchaser to deposit the entire bid value, or to lift the auctioned purchased coal within the time limit, as well as to put up the coal for re-auction. As observed above, the said proposal is still pending consideration. The above noted issue has also been flagged by the CIL in its affidavit dated 29.05.2025.

The meeting was of the opinion that the explanation provided by the Technical Advisor (Environment) to the Government of Meghalaya was acceptable, particularly in light of the directions issued by the judiciary.

After detailed discussions, the meeting resolved to return both proposals; submitted by CMPDIL and MIDC; to the Technical Committee for prompt re-examination, taking into account the recommendations of Justice (Retd.) B.P. Karakey as well as the relevant Orders passed by the Hon'ble High Court of Meghalaya, and attention to the following points:

1. In its 26th Sitting, the Technical Committee recommended a payment of ₹4,02,32,371.00 for the project submitted by MIDC. However, the report submitted by MIDC during the meeting indicates a total project budget of only ₹2,61,00,865.00, reflecting a significant discrepancy.
2. The invoice raised by CMPDIL for preparation of the Preliminary Project Report amounts to ₹35,40,000/-, while MIDC has raised an invoice of ₹2,61,00,865/- for the preparation of the Detailed Project Report (DPR). Officials present in the meeting strongly felt that the cost of coal-related works in the project; ₹2.61 Crore out of the total ₹3.96 Crore is notably high especially when considered against the total approved budget of approximately ₹840 lakhs under the Mine Closure Action Plan—assuming that mine owners will not contribute the mandated 50%.
3. Ground control point surveys and environmental sampling (soil, water) are field-intensive, requiring extensive manpower and lab analysis. However, it is felt in the meeting that the cost appears inflated due to the identical amounts listed for Stage 2 and Stage 3, despite the latter involving primarily desktop-based GIS processing. This raises red flags about duplication or lack of cost rationalization.
4. Also, the uniform 65.84% coal allocation across all stages may not reflect actual work differentiation, since certain tasks like water analysis or stakeholder consultation may not be coal-specific.
5. Officials from CMPDIL were unable to clearly articulate the relevance and practical application of the data proposed to be collected under the project.
6. It was further observed that the proposed methodology does not appear to demand advanced technological expertise. Processes such as subsurface strengthening, surface control, backfilling of voids, and stabilization of underground strata could potentially be carried out by any non-specialist (local contractor) without the need for an in-depth technical study of mine depths.
7. Coal-related work accounts for nearly two-thirds of the total project cost (66% for work in coal areas and 34% for non-coal areas).
8. In short, the meeting felt that while the high cost reflects technical complexity and field challenges, there's evidence suggesting possible overestimation and a need for finer cost segregation for greater transparency and efficiency and submits report in the next sitting of the Oversight Committee.

S/d
(Ms. Imtiena Ao)
Deputy Director General of Forests (C)
And Member Secretary, Oversight Committee