

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE PUBLIC HEARING FOR THE PROPOSED EXPANSION OF SONEPUR BAZARI COMBINED O.C.P. AT SONEPUR BAZARI AREA, DIST.-BURDWAN, WEST BENGAL PROPOSED BY M/s. EASTERN COALFIELDS LIMITED HELD ON 14.09.2007 AT PANDABESWAR PANCHAYAT SAMITY OFFICE HALL, DIST.- BURDWAN, WEST BENGAL.**

M/s. Eastern Coalfields Limited submitted an application to West Bengal Pollution Control Board (WBPCB) for conducting Public Hearing for the proposed expansion of Sonepur Bazari Combined O.C.P. at Sonepur Bazari Area, Dist.-Burdwan, West Bengal. As per the EIA notification S.O. 1533 dated 14<sup>th</sup> September, 2006 of the MoEF, Govt. of India, Environmental Clearance of the said project is required to be obtained from the MoEF, Govt. of India after conducting Public Hearing.

Accordingly, WBPCB after observing all formalities, held a public hearing on 14<sup>th</sup> September, 2007 at 11.00 Hrs. at Pandabeswar Panchayat Samity Office Hall, Dist.-Burdwan, West Bengal. The panel members were present in the Hearing. A considerable gathering was also present in the Hearing. List of the panel members and the others present in the public hearing are enclosed.

The Hearing started with a welcome note from Ms. S. Mahapatra, IAS, Additional District Magistrate (ADM), Asansol, Dist.-Burdwan who presided over the Hearing. Dr. T. K. Gupta, Senior Environmental Engineer & Incharge – Consent Cell, WBPCB explained about the provisions of the above stated MoEF notification. The ADM then requested the Project Proponent to explain the details about the proposed expansion project for discussion among the panel members and others present in the Hearing.

The Project Proponent then explained about the project by Power Point presentation emphasizing on the likely environmental impacts arising out of the same as well as the proposed pollution abatement measures to be taken by them.

During discussion, the panel members and the others present in the Public Hearing made queries / suggestions with respect to the proposed project which are noted below:

Mrs. Sikha Mondal, Savapati, Pandabeswar Panchayat Samity welcomed the expansion proposal of Sonepur Bazari Combined OCP, an unit of ECL. However, she requested the Project Proponent (PP) should strictly adhere to the commitment made towards the environmental management and R&R issues. She has further expressed that the ECL authority take all measures in consultation with local Panchayat Samity and District Administration.

Sri Dilip Banerjee, Senior Citizen and local resident, observed that the ECL authorities, while implementing such project, should look in to the following issues:

- Utilization of available coal seam as far as in scientifically possible manner.
- Proper reclamation during and after completion of mining.
- Arrangements of adequate water sprinkling during movement of trucks.

- Arrangements for adequate potable water, better sanitation and child education both for permanent and contract employees.
- Utilization of best available techniques to minimize vibration and sound during blasting operation.
- Provision of alternative roads need to be considered before taking up the diversion project of NH-60.
- Production and transportation of coal should be synchronized to minimize the environmental degradation.

He has also mentioned that ECL authorities should maintain cordial and harmonious relationship with the local people for long term benefit for both the parties. ECL authorities should extend their support for organizing cultural programs involving local people for better harmony. However he welcomed such expansion project to cope up with the present energy demand.

Sri Kishore Kumar Singh, Karmadhakshya, Pandabeswar Panchayat Samity welcomed such project. However he has requested that the ECL authority should look into the security aspect of the locality and implementation of R&R program as per the Government norms.

Sri Kishore Chakraborty and Sri Pabitra Nandi mentioned that the ECL authority should take adequate measures for control of air pollution, water pollution and scientific management of overburdens and reclamation.

Sri Biswajit Chatterjee, Karmadhakshya, Banabhumi, Pandabeswar Panchayat Samity, welcomed such project; however he has expressed his concern about the environmental management programme of ECL. He has requested the project authorities to give more attention on better environmental management, particularly on scientific afforestation programme.

Sri P. K. Roy, Senior Environment Officer, Dept. of Environment, Govt. of West Bengal has expressed his concern about the management of overburden. He has requested the project authority to take some specific programmes in an environmental friendly manner for utilization of the overburden.

On behalf of the project proponent Sri Alak Chatterjee, General Manager (Civil & Environment) and Sri C. B. Sood, CGM (Sonapur Bazar OCP) have appreciated the concern expressed by the different participants and welcomed the suggestions. They have assured that they will obtain necessary clearance from the concerned authorities regarding realignment of NH-60, realignment of Tumni Nullah and abstraction of ground water. In fact it was mentioned that the revised alignment of NH 60 has been submitted to the appropriate State Govt. Authorities for its implementation. They have also categorically expressed that they will consider R&R program as per Govt. norms.

Further they have mentioned that the other issues raised by the various participants will be addressed adequately before finalizing the Environmental Management Plan. They have assured that all kind of modern mining technology will be adopted in the proposed expansion project for better environmental management.

The Additional District Magistrate, Asansol emphasized that all possible measures should be ensured by the project proponent towards mitigation of all environmental hazards and various points raised by the public present in the Hearing in a specific time frame. She also requested all concerned should monitor closely the commitment made by the project authorities for the proposed expansion project of Sonepur Bazari Combined OCP. In general the public present in the Hearing welcomed the project, incorporating the issues mentioned above by the Project Proponent.

Sd/-  
Dr. T. K. Gupta  
Senior Environmental Engineer &  
Incharge - Consent Cell, WBPCB

Sd/-  
Ms. S. Mahapatra, IAS  
Additional District Magistrate  
Asansol, Dist.-Burdwan