Drilling Regulation

Why in news?

\n\n

The standing committee of the National Board for Wildlife (NBWL) has cleared Phase III of the Dirok gas field development project of the Hindustan Oil Exploration Company Ltd (HOECL) in Tinsukia district of Assam.

\n\n

What the law says about oil extraction?

\n\n

\n
- In the Oilfield (Regulation and Development) Act, 1948, defines mining as any excavation for the purpose of searching for or obtaining mineral oils and includes an oil well".
\n
- The safety issues involved in oil extraction are regulated by the Director General of Mines Safety and the Oil Mines Regulations, 1984 made under the Mines Act, 1952.
\n

\n\n

What was the case?

\n\n

\n
- Hindustan Oil Exploration Company Ltd (HOECL) undertook the Phase III of the Dirok gas field development project of the in Tinsukia district of Assam.
\n
- Here two wells were drilled within 1 km of the Protected Area by the user agency.
\n
- But the permission given in 2015 was for drilling 1.5 km away from the Dehing Patkai wildlife sanctuary.
\n
- The NBWL ordered to plug wells within 1 km distance of the boundary of the

sanctuary permanently.
\n
- The HOECL requested the Environment ministry to review and remove the condition.
\n
- The ministry’s Legal Monitoring Cell provided an opinion that the 2006 Supreme Court judgment was not applicable in the case under reference as drilling for oil and gas wells is not covered under mining but under development and production.
\n

\n\n

What the NBWL concluded?

\n\n

\n
- After this legal note the Standing Committee of the NBWL came to the conclusion that oil drilling activity is a separate activity from mining as per EIA notification.
\n
- It agreed to the waiver of the condition of plugging permanently the wells located within 1 km distance from the boundary of the sanctuary
\n

\n\n

\n\n

Source: The Indian Express

\n

