Green Norms

Why in news?

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India’s mining major Vedanta has requested the Union mines ministry to arrange relaxation from the environmental condition that makes it mandatory to use “dismantallable” drilling machine in the forest area of its gold mine.

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How is the non-coal auction done?

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- Under the old mining law, the state governments only had the powers to grant the mining lease to any company **as per their discretion**.
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- As per the new mining law — Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Amendment Act, 2015 — which came into effect from January 2015, **the non-coal mines have to be auctioned by the respective state governments**.
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- The first ever non-coal auction in the country began in December, 2015.
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- The Union mines ministry has been calling the meeting of post-auction mining clearances and approvals faciltator (PAMCAF).
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- A total of 17 mines, including the Baghmara gold block, has been auctioned till date.
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- JSW group — whose firm JSW Steel is the largest steel company in the country — won five iron ore mines in Karnataka in October only. Karantaka has auctioned total seven iron ore mines till date.
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- In March, Essar Steel won the Ghoraburhani-Sagasahi iron ore block in Sundargarh district of Odisha.
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What is a composite license?

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- The composite licence i.e. prospecting licence–cum–mining lease is given for an area where there is inadequate evidence of mineral contents. While prospecting licence is granted for exploring, locating and proving mineral deposits, the mining lease is required finally to extract minerals.
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What is a “dismantallabe” machine?

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“Dismantallable” drilling machine can be disassembled easily once the drilling working is done. Therefore, it can be carried without doing any damage to the forest area. This environmental condition has been put by the forest department of Chhattisgarh government.

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Why such a condition was put forth?

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- Baghmara gold mine has approximately 2,700 kg of gold metal, is spread across 608 hectares in Balodabazar district of Chhattisgarh.
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- Vedanta won the composite license for **Baghmara gold mine** in the non-coal auction this February.
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- According to the company, around **90% of the auctioned area is forest land**.
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- As per the orders of state forest departments, the use of dismantallable drilling machine is necessary in order **to protect forest resources from adverse effects of carrying whole drilling machine**.
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Why the company opposes it?

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In the third post-auction mining clearances and approvals faciltator (PAMCAF) meeting, the Vedanta representative said that “dismantallable drilling machine consume a lot of time and labour and delays the whole process of prospecting.”

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Source: The Indian Express

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