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Gram sabha nod must for mining proposals

Nitin Sethi, TNN 4 August 2009, 02:23am IST

NEW DELHI: In a giant leap towards making the Forest Rights Act effective, the environment ministry has informed states that it would not approve any forest clearance proposals till the consent of the gram sabhas has been sought for the projects.

The move, bound to come as a shocker to the infrastructure project proponents, especially the mining lobby, would ensure that the provisions of the Forest Rights Act are not ignored while handing over forest lands to developers.

The Forest Rights Act, the implementation of which is in the hands of the tribal affairs ministry, is meant to hand back traditional rights of the forest-dwellers in a time-bound fashion. It also demands that forest lands cannot be diverted without first settling the individual and community rights of the tribals and others dependent.

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