Press Release

Chhattisgarh can repurpose nearly 6,000 hectares of closed coal mine land for green investments by 2035: iFOREST

Districts like Surajpur, Korba and Manendragarh-Chirmiri-Bharatpur can be key areas for green investments, with maximum land availability

- Nearly 6,000 ha of closed coal mine land can be repurposed by 2035; 2,999 ha are already available.
- The first state-level assessment covers 46 mines (9 opencast, 37 underground) that are closed, discontinued or projected to close by 2035.
- Surajpur, Korba and Manendragarh-Chirmiri-Bharatpur account for over three-quarters of the identified land.
- iFOREST calls for a nodal authority to coordinate mine land repurposing and facilitate investments.

Raipur, 19 November 2026: Chhattisgarh has the potential to repurpose nearly 6,000 hectares (ha) of closed coal mine land for renewable energy, green industries and other productive uses by 2035, according to a new report released today by the International Forum for Environment, Sustainability and Technology (iFOREST). About half of this land (2,999 hectares) is already available from mines that have been closed or discontinued.

The report, ***Repurposing Coal Mining Land in Chhattisgarh: Opportunities for Catalysing Low-Carbon Development***, was released at a state-level meeting in Raipur, along with a second report, ***Redeveloping Closed Coal Mine Land: A Community-Centric Framework for Mine Repurposing***.

Chhattisgarh is one of the top states in India in terms of land repurposing potential. Of the 147 priority mines identified by the Ministry of Coal in September 2025 for closure and repurposing planning over the next five years, 31 are in Chhattisgarh. This accounts for about 21% of the national list, making Chhattisgarh second only to Madhya Pradesh. These mines are all operated by South Eastern Coalfields Limited (SECL), one of the largest subsidiaries of Coal India Limited.

"**Repurposing coal mining land, once the mines are closed, is a major opportunity to create new economic and employment opportunities in these areas. These include both green industries and locally available agriculture- and forest-resource-based activities. The land can also be used to develop renewable energy infrastructure, which can help meet clean energy targets and improve clean energy access. Most importantly, all of this can generate new local employment and support economic growth," said Dr. Srestha Banerjee, Director, Just Transition and Climate Change, iFOREST.**

“SECL has already started to take measures. mine land is a public asset. Therefore mine repurposing should benefit local communities. We have come up with mechanism to generate employment through repurposing. Upto 10 crore projects should generate min 50 employment, 10-20 cr, min 100 direct employment, and so on. We are also focussing on skilling of local communities” said Piyush Kishore, General Manager, Mine Closure and Repurposing Department, SECL.

Repurposing mining land is also important to protect Chhattisgarh’s forest land and ecologically sensitive areas. Reusing closed mine land can reduce pressure on agricultural, forest and tribal land and limit new land diversion. Also, mining areas already have good road and rail connectivity and energy infrastructure, which creates a favourable environment for new investments.

The iFOREST study identifies two potential Economic Development Nodes in the Chirmiri and Bishrampur areas. These clusters bring together neighbouring mines covering 3,568 ha, which can be planned collectively to improve investment viability and reduce project costs.

Key recommendations for the State Government and SECL:

- iFOREST recommends that SECL prepare an inventory of closed mines and those expected to close over the next 5–10 years.
- SECL and the State Government should jointly undertake spatial planning of mine clusters with continuous or strategically connected land parcels.
- It also calls for the Chhattisgarh Government to establish a nodal authority to coordinate mine land repurposing and facilitate investments.
- District Mineral Foundation funds can be used for skilling local people and supporting local livelihoods, aligning with repurposing measures. Chhattisgarh has cumulative accruals of over Rs. 16,000 crore in DMF funds, of which 45% comes from coal mining. These funds are critical to supporting local employability through investments in skilling and technical education.

iFOREST is also working in key coal mining districts of Chhattisgarh to identify local needs and opportunities that can inform mine repurposing plans. The Ministry of Coal’s Coal Mine Closure Guidelines emphasise the need to take local perspectives into account while developing repurposing plans. The community-centric framework proposed by iFOREST provides a practical template for doing this.

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