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Mandatory Re-grassing After Mining: SC

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Why in News

Recently, the **Supreme Court of India** ordered the government to **include re-grassing of mined areas** as a mandatory condition in every mining lease, environmental clearance and mining.

It also held that mining leaseholders should take responsibility for re-grassing mined areas so that biodiversity can flourish in such areas.

Key Points from the Order

- The SC ordered the government to **file a report in three weeks after taking appropriate actions** and directed it to devise methods to ensure compliance by mining leaseholders.
- The **cost of re-grassing** the mined area and wherever damage was caused, would be entirely **borne by the licence holder**.
- **Mine closure plan** imposes conditions on the licence holder to restore biodiversity. The mandatory re-grassing would be in addition to these conditions.
- The apex court held that mined areas result in the complete elimination of grass and denies fodder to herbivores.

Re-grassing of such mined areas is the only solution so that grass and other vegetation, including trees, can grow in the mining area for the benefits of animals and the land is restored to a condition which is fit for the growth of fodder, flora, fauna, etc.

Environmental Issues Caused by Mining

- Erosion.
- Formation of sinkholes.
- Loss of biodiversity.

- Contamination of soil, groundwater and surface water by chemicals from mining processes.

Mine Closure Plan

It involves effective planning of the after-mining landscape of a mine after its operating life has ended. These activities include **Water Quality Management, Air Quality Management, Waste Management, Top Soil Management, Disaster Management and Risk Assessment, Safety and Security etc.**

Source: TH