

Site Inspection Report of Magadh Railway Siding

Central Coalfield Limited

FCA proposal No: FP/JH/RAIL/47332/2020

- Date of Site Inspection: 23/07/2024
- Total project area: 251.51 Ha (Latehar FD- 234.5 Ha, Chatra South FD- 17.01 Ha)
- Non-Forest area: 130.22 Ha (Latehar FD- 130.22 Ha, Chatra South FD- 0 Ha)
- Proposed Forest area for diversion: 121.29 Ha (Latehar FD- 104.28 Ha, Chatra South FD- 17.01 Ha)
- Forest area proposed in Latehar Forest Division: 104.28 Ha (Notified Forest- 71.17 Ha, Deemed Forest (GMJJ) – 33.11 Ha)

Details of area proposed for diversion:

The site inspection has been done by the undersigned along with Range Forest Officer, Forester Incharge and Forest guards of Balumath Range and representatives of Central Coalfield Ltd. (Mr. Nripendra Nath- General Manager, Mr. Sadala Satyanarayan-Project Officer, Mr. Manish Sinha- Deputy Manager (Mining), Mr. Mrigank Shekhar- Asst. Manager (Env.), Mr. S.M. Bhaskar- S.O. (Civil), Mr. Amarjeet Kumar-MT (Env.)).

In Latehar district revisional survey completed and published in the year 2005. The Dy. Commissioner (District Administration) has made available land records (i.e, plot no., nature of land, ownership etc.) of land proposed for diversion on the basis of revisional survey published after 25th October 1980 in prescribed proforma as per direction issued vide letter no. 4715 dated 27.11.2018 of department of Forest Environment & Climate Change, Government of Jharkhand and submitted a certificate that if any discrepancies will be found later on the User Agency will take all the necessary steps as per provision of Forest Conservation Act 1980. Thus in the land schedule notified protected forest taken as cadastral survey records & G.M. Jungle Jhari land (Deemed Forest) taken as revisional survey records published in 2005.

The land proposed for diversion by the User Agency is as follows:

Location	Plot No. (Notified PF: CS plots, GMJJ: RS plots)	Notified forest Area (in Ha) as per CS Map	Deemed Forest (GMJJ) Area (in Ha) as per RS Map	Total Forest Area (in Ha)	Legal Status (PF/RF)
Ara	NF: CS plots-174, 228, 199, 196, 198, 1549, 1550, 197, 25, 2, 665 GMJJ: RS plots-321P, 443, 327, 324P, 440P, 1983P	28.05	13.40	41.45	PF
Chamatu	NF: CS plots-358, 1249, 1372, 1373 GMJJ: RS plots-442P	15.62	1.27	16.89	PF
Chetar	NF: CS plots-2, 388 GMJJ: RS plots-562P, 566P	8.86	5.17	14.03	PF
Seregara	NF: CS plots-365, 377, 362, 358, 378	17.02	-	17.02	PF
Phulbasia	NF: CS plots-1203 GMJJ: RS plots-1566P, 1609, 1600, 1626P, 1674, 1676, 1678, 1680P, 1751P, 1741P, 1668P	0.08	13.27	13.35	PF
Chedra/ Charra	NF: CS plots-716 GMJJ: RS plots-	1.54	-	1.54	PF
Total Area:				104.28	

CCL has planned for construction of Magadh Railway Siding (MRS) in Magadh-Sanghmitra Area (M-S Area) to dispatch coal to different power plants from Magadh OCP by introduction of Rapid Loading System (RLS) through SILO loading arrangement. Take-off point of siding line is at 480 m away from Bukru station towards Shivpur on Tori-Shivpur section of Dhanbad Division of East Central railway. Location of the CHP has been planned near coal mining project to reduce feed distance of transport of coal to minimum possible extent to minimise dust generation due to coal transport. This alignment is proposed for minimum route length with least involvement of forest land avoiding high density forest patches has been planned. Mega coal projects of CCL (Magadh OCP) is operating in the nearby area which is going to be expanded in the near future. Therefore it is very important to consider the complete landscape and cumulative impact of this project along with the operational and upcoming mining projects in the nearby areas.



Fig-01: Location of Coal Blocks near the Magadh Railway Siding project



Fig-02: Location MRS Project on Toposheet (showing forest and water bodies in the area)

Approximate distance from nearby National Park, Sanctuaries and ESZ are: Palamu WLS at 46 km, Betla NP at 61 km, Lawalong WLS at 23 km and Mahuadanr Wolf Sanctuary at 79 km, ESZ of PWLS-BNP-MWS-PTR at 43 km, ESZ of Lawalong WS at 17 km. No portion of the applied area

falls under any National Park, Wild Life Sanctuary, Tiger Reserve or notified Eco-Sensitive Zone (ESZ) of any National park /wild life Sanctuary.

Site visit:-

User Agency has already cleared and broke 31.68 Ha of Protected Forest land on which embankment was made. Forest offences were registered for the forest offences done on forest land under The Indian Forest Act, 1927.

Referred points are detailed as below –

- *Whether any protected archaeological/heritage site/defence establishment or any other important monument is located in the area. If so, the details there of with NOC from competent authority, if required. – No.*
- *Whether the requirement of forest land as proposed by the user agency in col. 2 of Part-I is unavoidable and barest minimum for the project. If no, recommended area item-wise with details alternatives examined. – Yes.*
- *Whether forms part of National Park, Wildlife Sanctuary, Eco Sensitive Zone (ESZ), Biosphere Reserve, Tiger Reserve, Elephant Corridor, etc. (If so, the details of the area and comments of the Chief Wildlife Warden to be annexed) – No.*
- *Whether any rare/endangered/unique species of flora and fauna found in the area - if so details thereof – Yes. Elephas Maximus indicus (Elephant).*
- *Whether any work in violation of the Act has been carried out (Yes/No). If yes, details of the same including period of work done, action taken on erring officials, whether work is violation is still in progress. – Yes. Area already worked upon 31.68 Ha. in Notified Forest during the year 2019, 2020 & 2023. Cases have been registered under IFA, 1927 against the erring officials (i) Avnish Kumar, Project Officer (P.O.), CCL Magadh Project Tandwa, Chatra, (ii) Jaynarayan Lakda, Siding Incharge, CCL Magadh Project Tandwa, Chatra, (iii) Pradeep Upadhayay, Transporter, CCL Magadh Project Tandwa, Chatra, (iv) Mujamil Hussain, Transporter, CCL Magadh Project Tandwa, Chatra, (v) Mr Somen Kumar Dey, Dy General Manager, M/s RITES Ltd, (vi) Mr M M Akbari, then Sr Dy General Manager, M/s RITES Ltd (vii) Mr Krishna Yadav, Site Engineer, M/s RITES Ltd, (viii) Mr Vaibhav Jain, Director, M/s Royal-ITL (JV), (ix) Mr Niranjana Kumar, Site In-Charge, M/s Royal-ITL (JV)). During site inspection it has been found that there is also violation on G.M.J.J. land (Deemed Forest) consisting an area approximately 9.62 ha. Deputy Commissioner, Latehar has been requested to take action for the violation on GMJJ land (Deemed Forest). **Currently work in violation is not in progress.***


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Divisional Forest Officer
Latehar Forest Division



Fig 3: Satellite imagery of area already cleared and worked upon by the User Agency (Project boundary – Black line, Forest area proposed for diversion- Green colour, Broken forest land- Red colour).

The proposed area for Magadh Railway Siding project is situated in the villages of Ara, Chamatu, Chetar, Seregara, Phulbasia and Chedra/Charra of Latehar Forest Division. It is a part of significant landscape in terms of ecological and hydrological functions, and important habitat of wildlife and comes under the proposed migratory route of wild elephant. Besides, it is an ecologically significant watershed that is interlaced with numerous streams, rivulets and nalas. Thus, the landscape is important from the Water Security perspective as well.

The proposed site has patches of Tropical Dry Deciduous forest with average vegetative density of *0.3 to 0.4* and *Eco class III*. The area is dominated by *Shorea robusta* (Sal) and its associate species. Some of the tree species recorded are *Shorea robusta*, *Diospyros melanoxylon* roxb, *Lagerstroemia parviflora*, *Buchanania lanzan*, *Madhuca latifolia*, *Butea monosperma*, *Terminalia tomentosa*, *Semecarpus anacardium*, *Bauhinia vareigata*, *Senegalia catechu*, *Azadirachta indica*, *Anogeissus latifolia*, *Syzygium cumini*, *Carissa carandas*, *Aegle marmelos*, *Symplocos racemosa*, *Terminalia bellirica*, *Ziziphus mauritiana*, *Ficus benghalensis*, *Pongamia pinnata* etc. Also a very good Sal regeneration was found in the area. Many of these species also contribute to forest based livelihood activities from NTFP collection and its value addition as well as Lac cultivation for indigenous communities.

Fauna present in and around the proposed area are *Elephas Maximus indicus* (Elephant), *Hyaenidae* (Hyena), *Herpestidae* (Mongoose), *Felis chaus* (Wild cat), *Canis aureus* (Jackal), *Sus scrofa* (Wild boar), *Presbytis entellus* (Common Langur), *Muntiacus Muntjak* (Barking deer), *Herpestes javanicus* (Newla) etc. Presence of invertebrates, avifauna and herpetofauna in and around the proposed forest area indicates species richness and biodiversity.

Herds of elephant's roam in and around the proposed area for diversion. Incidents of Human-Animal conflicts are likely to get increased with more fragmentation and loss of habitat due to this project of Magadh Railway Siding in and around the area. Therefore, it is very much required to prepare and implement (collectively by forest department and User Agency in cooperation with locals) a plan for conservation and management of wildlife and thereby to minimise losses due to such future incidents of conflict in and around the area. Also, for detailed list of rare/endangered/unique species of flora and fauna, a comprehensive biodiversity and ethno botanical study by specialised agency (like Botanical Survey of India/Zoological Survey of India etc) and thereafter implementation of species-specific conservation plan, as required, is strongly recommended.

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Also, consideration in regard of *Water Security* of the area is needed in regard of water regime of the whole catchment area because after construction of the proposed project few streams will get compromised in entirety or partially and entire fragile ecosystem can get affected by water crisis a few years down the line. The area proposed for diversion is prone to soil erosion. After the construction of MRS this entire area will be further vulnerable to soil erosion and degradation. Therefore, a Comprehensive Soil and Moisture Conservation Plan should be prepared and implemented treating the entire landscape to ensure that the detrimental impact of the project on the adjacent vast expanse of forest shall be minimised.

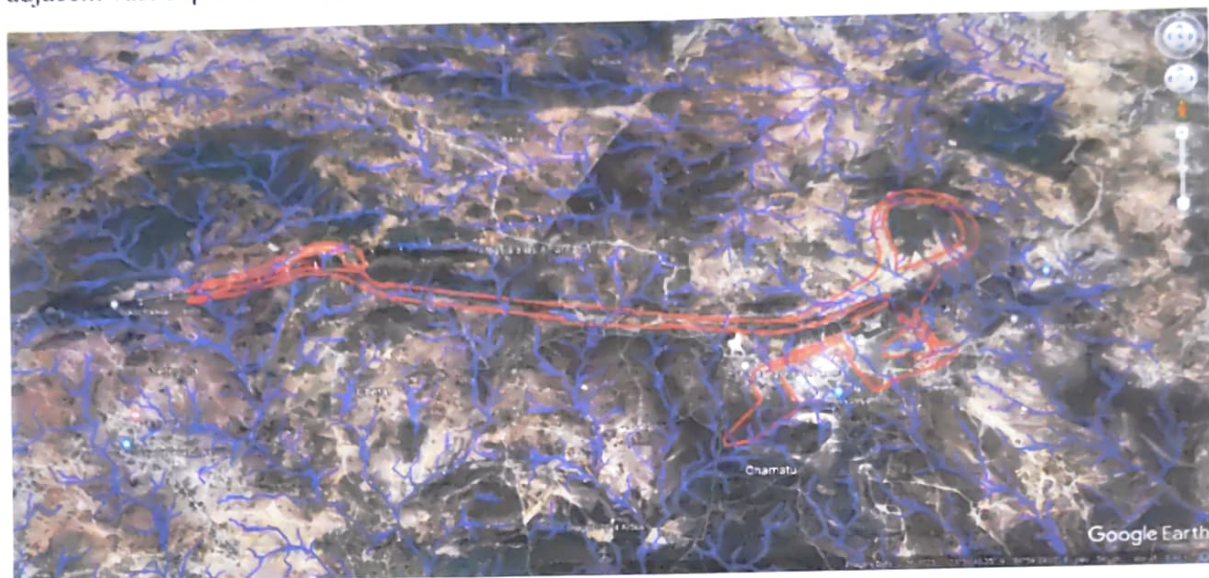


Fig-04: Rivers/streams in and around the MRS project area.

According to tree enumeration a total of 16211 trees will be removed from the forest area. It is therefore very important to mitigate the impact of not only the removal of trees and change in land use over such a vast area but also the resultant change in complete landscape and loss of biodiversity from the area.

The proposed project of Magadh Railway Siding is recommended, provided the above concerns get adequately addressed, keeping in mind the larger public interest and energy security.

Divisional Forest Officer
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