



## Office of the Conservator of Forests, Territorial Circle, Hazaribagh

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### Site Inspection Report of Conservator of Forests, Territorial Circle, Hazaribagh

Site Inspection date :- 18/09/2023

#### Name of Proposal - Gondalpara Coal Mining Project 219.80 Ha of Hazaribagh West Forest Division

The current proposal for diversion involves 219.80 Ha of forest land, of which 210.68 ha. is Protected Forest, and the remaining 9.12 ha. is GM Jungle Jhari, designated under the Forest (Conservation) Act of 1980. The compact forest proposed for diversion spans across four Protected Forests (PFs): Balodar PF, Gali PF, Gondalpara PF, and Hahe PF

The inspection was conducted on 18<sup>th</sup> September 2023, in the presence of the Divisional Forest Officer of Hazaribagh West Forest Division and other officials from Adani Enterprises. The project site, adjoining area Badam and Moitra Coal blocks, is situated on the western side of the blocks, both of which are in an advanced stage of development. The southern boundary of the coal block is covered by the Badam Open-cast Mine and forest land, while the Moitra Coal block lies on the western side of the northern boundary.

The proposed area constitutes a Tropical Deciduous Forest consisting of Sakhua, Aasan, Bahera, Bhelba, Khair, Kendu, Mahua, Palas, etc. According to tree enumeration, a total of 32,328 trees are present in the proposed forest land for diversion (219.80 Ha). The average canopy density as reported by DFO Hazaribag West in the proposed forest land for diversion is 0.7, classified as Eco Class III.

The proposed area is also rich in wildlife and movement of elephants has been observed in the proposed area and its vicinity. To mitigate the negative impact of mining on residents and migrating wildlife, it is imperative to develop and effectively implement a Site-specific Wildlife Management Plan.

The Badmahi river runs along the northern boundary of the project site, necessitating careful preservation of the streams originating within this forest area. To shield the river from the adverse effects of mining, a buffer zone in the form of green belts should be established along the riverbanks to protect its ecology. This forest patch is part of a continuous stretch of forest, integral to the catchment area of the Badmahi river. The areas with gentle slopes are highly susceptible to erosion. Therefore, a site-specific catchment area treatment plan should be devised and implemented for soil and moisture conservation to safeguard the water regime and river ecology.

Measures to minimize the negative impact of mining should be rigorously adopted, ensuring minimal disruption to the continuity of forest patches:-

1. The methodology and execution of coal mining at the site should be phased and sequenced to optimize the active working area
2. Technologies and processes causing minimal adverse environmental and ecosystem impacts must be employed for coal extraction, evacuation, handling, and transportation.
3. A buffer zone with green belts along the Badmahi riverbanks should be developed to protect the river's ecology.
4. The watershed and catchment of the Badmahi river within a 10 Km radius or more of the Project Area should undergo appropriate treatment to compensate for the loss of catchment due to mining in the lease site, through the preparation and implementation of a catchment area treatment plan.
5. A Site-specific Wildlife Management Plan must be prepared and effectively implemented to mitigate the negative impact of mining on residents and migrating wildlife.
6. Commencement of the implementation of Wildlife Management Plan and Catchment Area Treatment Plan should precede land breaking in the project area or be carried out simultaneously, considering past records.
7. The Mining Plan should include progressive reclamation and eco-restoration of areas taken up in different phases, ensuring that a substantial portion is rehabilitated into the best feasible end state by the end of the mining life.
8. One percent of the profit should be deposited into the account of Divisional Forest Officer, Hazaribagh West to support biodiversity conservation and ecological restoration works in the future in this area, as well as to enhance surveillance and monitoring against illicit activities, including forest fire prevention and control, within the forest hinterlands of the project area.

This project is very site-specific in nature and also in public interest. Therefore after careful consideration of all the aforementioned facts, it is recommended that the proposal be forwarded to the Government of India.

  
(Saroj Bhai Patel, IFS)  
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