

Government of India
Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change
(Forest Conservation Division)

Indira Paryavaran Bhawan

Aliganj, Jorbagh Road

New Delhi -110003.

Dated: ^{Nov} 20 October, 2020

To,

The Dy. Director General (Central),

Integrated Regional Office,

Bhubaneswar.

Sub: Diversion of 68.00 ha of forest land (49.34 ha of non-forest land recorded as 'Forest' as on 25th October 1980 and 18.660 ha of non-forest land having enough forest growth to be considered as 'forest' in line with the orders dated 12.12.1996 of Hon'ble Supreme Court of WP(C) No. 202/1995) in respect of Unchabali (Mahaparbat) Iron Ore Mines of M/s OMC Ltd including 11.240 ha of forest land located in the safety zone in village Unchabali and Balda under Barbil Tahasil within the jurisdiction of Keonjhar Forest division in Keonjhar district, Odisha:reg.

Sir,

I am directed to inform that in-principle approval for the above subject proposal was granted by this Ministry's letter of even no. dated 16.11.2018 subject to certain conditions prescribed therein. The State Govt. has submitted the compliance report on the conditions stipulated in Stage-I/in-principle approval for seeking Stage-II approval for instant proposal

2. On perusal of compliance report it is observed that the State Government has not submitted complete compliance of condition no(iii) of Stage I approval. The condition reads

File No.8-21/2018FC


as "State Government shall initiate action as per the provisions of MoEF & CC letter No. 11-42/2017-FC dated 29.01.2018. The action taken report shall be submitted to MoEF & CC prior to Stage-II approval.". State Government has informed that no violation has been committed by the user agency under FC Act so no action is required to be initiated against any officials/user agency as desired by FAC. To sort out this deadlock, a video conference was held with the Nodal Officer, Odisha and the representatives of user agency and IGF on 13.10.2020.

3. It was informed that the lease over 68.00 ha was executed in 2008, considering the entire area as non-forest land. At present the total area is unbroken and no mining activity has been carried out over the said land. It was in year 2015 when the Sabik land record issue was raised and clarified by MoEF&CC and only after that the area of 18.66 ha was identified to as forest as it had enough forest growth to be considered as deemed forest. The user agency and State Government also clarified that the time series images on google for the year 2010 clearly reveals that the area of 18.66 ha was degraded in the year 2010. As reported by the Nodal Officer and user agency there is no change in land use since 2008. It was again reiterated and clarified in VC by the State Govt. that there is no violation of any provisions of FCA 1980.

4. After thorough deliberation, it is decided that Integrated Regional Office may carry out site Inspection of the area and submit the present status report so that final decision on Stage-II approval for the proposal could be taken on merit.

In view of above, the Integrated Regional Office, Bhubaneswar may visit the site and submit detailed report in the matter for further consideration of the proposal in the Ministry.

Yours faithfully,


2.11.2020
(Sandeep Sharma)

Assistant Inspector General of Forests (FC)

Copy to:

1. The Addl. Chief Secretary(Forests), Government of Odisha, Bhubaneswar.
2. The Nodal Officer (FCA), Government of Odisha, Bhubaneswar.
3. User Agency.
4. Monitoring Cell of FC Division, MoEF & CC, New Delhi.