

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

Indira Paryavaran Bhawan,
Aliganj, Jor Bag Road,
New Delhi - 110003.

Dated:14-01-2025

To
The Addl. Chief Secretary (Forests),
Government of Odisha,
Bhubaneswar

Sub: Proposal for seeking prior approval of the Central Government under Section 2 (1) (ii) of the Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam, 1980 for diversion of 227.62 Ha of Forest land within Mining Lease area over 323.92 Ha of Basundhara (West) Extension Open Cast Coal Block of Mahalaxmi Area of M/s Mahanadi Coal Field Limited in Sundargarh Forest Division of Sundargarh District (Proposal No. FP/OR/MIN/20559/2016) –reg.

Madam/Sir,

I am directed to refer to the State Government of Odisha's letter No. FE-DIV-FLD-0086-2024-25365/FE&CC dated 17.12.2024 on the above subject seeking prior approval of the Central Government in accordance with Section 2 (i) (ii) of the Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam, 1980 and to say that after examination of the proposal the following has been observed:

1. An area of 16.439 ha of forest land has been proposed for infrastructure which is for non-site-specific activities. The State Govt. shall explore and shift the non-site specific activities on non-forest land and submit comments in this regards.
2. The proposal was accepted by the Nodal Officer in 2018 and now after lapsing of almost of 6 years it has been submitted to the Ministry for approval. The reasons with cogent and valid justification for submitting the proposal with such extraordinary delay shall be submitted.
3. As per the guidelines issued by the Ministry vide letter No. Fc-11/118/2021-FC dated 25.01.2024 the State Govt. shall complete the procedures laid down in the Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam, 1980, the minutes of the meeting of Project Steering Committee (PSC), shall be attached with part-IV of forms and processing of proposals, through Conservator of Forests, for completing the procedural/technical purposes". The compliance in this regards is required.
4. The State Government has not uploaded CB analysis as per the guidelines and in prescribed format on Parivesh portal. The same needs to be uploaded on Parivesh portal.
5. The evacuation/transportation plan of the coal, along with provision of electricity transmission and water distribution shall be provided. If any additional forest area is required for the same then a comprehensive proposal

shall be submitted.

6. Analysis of the area proposed for diversion and area proposed for CA area using DSS revealed the following:
 - i. After the analysis of the KML file of the proposed forest land it has been observed that non-forestry work, solid structures, road and cultivation land is visible in the proposed forest patches. In this regard the comments of the State Government shall be provided along with action report as applicable.
 - ii. It has been observed that Basundhara River flows along the eastern boundary of Basundhara (West) Extension mining lease and proposed patch no. A, B falls within its 100m buffer. In this regard the no objection from concerned State Department (irrigation/water resources) shall be provided.
 - iii. The land proposed for diversion is 227.62 ha however, as per DSS analysis the area is found 239.409 ha. Therefore, there is a discrepancy of 14.731 ha observed in the KML file of proposed forest patches. The State Govt. shall examine and submit the correct area details and correct KML file of the lease area.
 - iv. Component wise KML file of Basundhara (West) Extension OCP is not available on Parivesh portal. The State Govt. shall submit KML files on Parivesh portal.
 - v. With regard to the proposed CA land it has been observed that cultivation land, unmetalled road, man-made water body and some solid structures are visible. The State Government shall offer comments.

In view of above, the State Government is requested to furnish information/documents, as indicated above for further consideration of the proposal in the Ministry.

Yours faithfully,

(Dr. Dheeraj Mittal)

Assistant Inspector General of Forests

Copy to:

1. PCCF (HoFF), Department of Forests, Government of Odisha, Bhubaneswar.
2. Dy. DGF (Central), Regional Office of the MoEF&CC at Bhubaneswar.
3. Nodal Officer (FCA), Department of Forests, Government of Odisha, Bhubaneswar.
4. User Agency
5. Monitoring Cell, FC Division, MoEF&CC, New Delhi for uploading on PARIVESH portal.