

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

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**Indira Paryavaran Bhawan,**  
Jor Bag Road, Aliganj,  
New Delhi – 110003  
**Dated: As per E-sign**

To,

**The Principal Secretary (Forests),**  
Government of Maharashtra,  
Mumbai.

**Subject: Proposal for prior approval under section 2 (1) (iii) of Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam, 1980 for 153.09 ha forest land for Iron Ore mining at village Surjagad Wooria Hill Bhamragad, Tahsil Etapali, Dist. Gadchiroli in Maharashtra State in favour of M/s Gopani Iron & Power (India) Pvt. Ltd - regarding.**

Madam/Sir,

I am directed to refer the Government of Maharashtra letter No. FLD-36A16/CR-402/F-10 on the above cited subject. In this regard, the following shortcomings have been observed in the information submitted by the State Govt.:

- i. It has been informed that as per the submission of the user agency LOI (Letter of Intent) is valid on area of 153.09 ha. by letter dated 19.12.2023 whereas the Ministry vide its letter dated 29.10.2024 specifically requested the Govt. of Maharashtra to examine the matter and furnish their comments keeping in view of the Section 10-A(2)(c) of the amended provision of the MMDR Act, 2015 which says that "*where the Central Government has communicated previous approval as required under sub-section (1) of section 5 for grant of a mining lease, or if a letter of intent (by whatever name called) has been issued by the State Government to grant a mining lease, before the commencement of the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Amendment Act, 2015, the mining lease shall be granted subject to fulfilment of the conditions of the previous approval or of the letter of intent within a period of two years from the date of commencement of the said Act*" and the cut-off date set for the LOI issued in the instant project as per Section 10-A(2)(c) of the amended provision of the MMDR Act, 2015 was 11.01.2017 which has not been submitted and same needs submission.
- ii. It has been mentioned that the forest diversion proposal may be considered for an area of 145.231 ha forest land as 7.859 ha forest land was diverted to different agencies whereas originally the LOI was issued for an 153.09 ha forest land. However, copy of LOI for reduced 145.231 ha forest land has not been submitted by the State Government.

- iii. The instant proposal under section 2 (1) (iii) is for the area situated adjacent to the 374.90 ha approved forest land for mining in favour of M/s Lloyds Metals and Engineers Limited. Further it has been reported by the State Government that in-principle approval has been granted by the Regional Office for the diversion of 9.847 ha of forest land (out of 19.227 ha proposed for diversion) for ancillary activities to said approved 374.90 ha, which has been stated to not form part of the tiger corridor, out of the total 19.227 ha proposed for diversion. Therefore, it needs clarification as to how the instant proposed area of 145.31 ha forest land under section 2 (1) (iii) of Van Adhiniyam, 1980 is not falling under tiger corridor. The comments of the CWLW, Govt. of Maharashtra needs submission in this regard.
- iv. As per the DSS Cell of FC Division, the correct KML file of 145.231 ha forest land seeking approval under section 2 (1) (iii) of Van Adhiniyam, 1980 has not been submitted as the calculated KML file area of the forest land is found 144.666 ha instead of 145.231 ha. Therefore, the correct KML file of proposed forest area needs submission. Moreover as per DSS analysis, a gap has been noticed between the Gopani Iron ore mine and the Surjagad Mine of M/s Lloyds. This needs clarification.

Accordingly, it is requested to furnish the above mentioned information to this Ministry for further consideration of the proposal.

Yours sincerely,

Sd/-

(Suneet Bhardwaj)

**Assistant Inspector General of Forests**

**Copy to:**

1. The PCCF (HoFF), Department of Forest, Government of Maharashtra, Nagpur;
2. The Dy. DGF (Central), Regional Office, MoEF&CC, Nagpur;
3. The Nodal Officer, Department of Forest, Government of Maharashtra, Nagpur;
4. User Agency;
5. Monitoring Cell, FC Division, MoEF&CC, New Delhi for uploading on PARIVESH portal.