

**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 Nodal Officer(FCA),**  
Department of Forests  
Government of Jharkhand,  
Ranchi.

**Subject: Proposal for diversion of 247.50 ha of forest land out of total lease area of 1936.06 ha in favour of M/s Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL) for iron ore mining in Kiriburu- Meghahatuburu group of Iron Ore mines located in District West Singhbhum (Jharkhand) - regarding.**

Madam/Sir,

I am directed to enclosed herewith a copy of representation dated 03.05.2024 (**Copy enclosed**) as received from the user agency i.e. Steel Authority of India Limited on above subject requesting for consideration for diversion of 247.50 ha of forest land for iron ore mining in Kiriburu- Meghahatuburu Iron Ore mines.

In this regard, it is requested to furnish the comments on said representation of user agency for further needful action in the matter.

Yours sincerely,

Signed by

Suneet Bhardwaj

Date: 27-05-2024 17:11:08

Sd/-

(Suneet Bhardwaj)

**Assistant Inspector General of Forests**

**Copy to:**

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



Ref. No. SAIL/DTPRM/26/02

3<sup>rd</sup> May 2024

To,

**Inspector General of Forest,**  
Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change  
3<sup>rd</sup> Floor Prithvi Block,  
Indira Paryavaran Bhawan,  
Jor Bagh Road, Aliganj,  
New Delhi-110003

**Sub – Request for consideration of FC proposal for diversion of 247.50 ha of forest land falling under South-Central Blocks of Kiriburu-Meghahatuburu Iron Ore Mines of SAIL.**

Respected Sir,

I would like to express our gratitude for giving us the opportunity to meet you on April 29, 2024, and to emphasize the importance of obtaining Forest Clearance (FC) for 247.50 hectares within the amalgamated mining lease of Kiriburu-Meghahatuburu Mines of SAIL.

SAIL has undertaken expansion drive and is proceeding with another phase of expansion in alignment with the National Steel Policy (NSP) 2017. With a view to enhance the capacity of mines, SAIL has planned to develop Kiriburu-Meghahatuburu Iron Ore Mines to 16 MTPA and obtained Environment Clearance for the same but its expansion is held up due to delay in grant of the Stage-II FC for 247.50 ha of Forest land in the existing mining lease. In this context, I would like to submit the following facts for your kind consideration.

1. The two iron ore mines i.e. Kiriburu and Meghahatuburu have been developed under three mining leases namely Lease-I (1936.06 ha), Lease-II (879.439 ha) & Lease-III (82 ha). Presently, all the three mining leases have been amalgamated into single mining lease by the Govt. of Jharkhand covering lease area of 2897.499 ha.
2. The existing mining & associated infrastructure of these mines are spread over 726.09 ha (only 25% of ML area) for which Stage-II FC's have been granted. Out of 726.09 ha, about 213.20 ha is covered under mining excavations and waste dumps. The remaining area i.e. 512.89 ha is being used for mining allied activities like Processing Plants, Ore handling Plant, Railway siding, Mineral Storage, Township, Tailing ponds etc., which are permanent in nature & will be in use till the life of the mines. It is pertinent to mention that post promulgation of the FC Act in 1980 only 37.90 ha of forest land in the amalgamated lease has been diverted for non-forest purpose so far; rest 688.19 ha of forest land was diverted before 1980.
3. SAIL has planned to develop the virgin blocks i.e. South Block & Central Block in the amalgamated lease by replacing the operating blocks (North Block and Meghahatuburu block) while continuing to use all the mining allied facilities. Accordingly, SAIL has applied for diversion of additional forest land over 247.50 ha primarily for mineral excavation.

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14 (FC/RIP)  
986/MBY  
02/5/24

4. Stage-I FC for 247.50 ha was granted by MoEF on 18.10.2010 subject to compliance of conditions. Compliance report of the Stage-I FC was forwarded by the Jharkhand State Government to MoEFCC on 19.03.2013 and further on 04.02.2014. Consequently, FAC meeting held on 29.04.2014 (1<sup>st</sup> FAC Meeting) and thereafter vide letter dated 07.05.2014, MoEFCC raised further queries on the proposal.
5. Since then, four additional FACs have taken place, and the State Government has provided eight responses to the distinct inquiries posed by both the FAC and FC division of the MoEFCC on every occasion. The average duration for the State government to respond to these inquiries exceeds nine months. Consequently, the grant of stage-II FC for South-Central blocks is still pending.
6. The latest FAC consideration of aforesaid FC proposal was on 12.06.2023. After examination of the proposal, FAC decided to defer the proposal and vide letter dated 28.06.2023 sought additional information regarding Site Specific Management Plan, Approval of Integrated Wildlife Management Plan, Submission of compliance report of previous approvals granted for the lease by the Ministry & examination by RO, MoEFCC, Ranchi.
7. Post submission of the compliance report by the Jharkhand State Govt. to the queries mentioned in the letter dtd 28.06.2023 to MoEFCC on 07.03.2024 and by the RO, MoEFCC, Ranchi on 01.04.2024, FC proposal was examined by the FC division. After examination, MoEFCC vide letter dated 24.04.2024 and 26.04.2024 has again asked Jharkhand State Government to (i) clarify on the amount deposited by the user agency of Rs. 1453.842 lakhs against the total financial outlay of Rs. 5996.224 Lakhs. (ii) To provide a copy of IWMP duly approved by the Chief Wildlife Warden. (iii) Further, Regional Office, Ranchi has been asked to specify whether the compliance of the condition stipulated in previous approvals is satisfactory or otherwise.
8. In this regard, as per the queries specified in letter dated 26<sup>th</sup> April, 2024 and further to our discussion on 29<sup>th</sup> April, 2024 in your office, the following is being submitted:
  - i. Regarding the query related to Site-Specific Wildlife and Biodiversity Conservation Plan (SSWBCP), it has been understood that the primary responsibility for implementing the activities approved in the SSWBCP lies with SAIL. In this regard, SAIL has already paid Rs. 1453.842 lakhs out of the total financial outlay of Rs. 5996.224 Lakhs. Furthermore, SAIL commits to engage technical agencies with the necessary expertise to ensure the successful implementation of these activities in consultation with the State Forest Department. Reviewing the SSWBCP (as instructed in paragraph 3(i) of the letter dated April 26, 2024) by the State Government at this point will require considerable time, thus leading to project delays.
  - ii. Regarding the second query on submission of approved Integrated Wildlife Management Plan (IWMP), it is to submit that the total project cost is Rs. 1087.27 Crores and SAIL has already paid its proportion of amount of Rs. 21.75 Crores approximately to the CAMPA account towards implementation of IWMP in pursuance to the MoEFCC's FC Guideline vide FC-11/43/2021-FC dated 07.06.2022 (i.e. 2% of total project cost towards the cost of implementation of the IWMP in cases where it is not possible for the State to submit the compliance due to delay in preparation of such plan). The details and receipts regarding the

same are also submitted by State Government in the latest compliance to MoEFCC.

- iii. Regarding the query concerning the review of compliance reports for previous approvals by the RO, Ranchi, we kindly request that the RO, MoEFCC, Ranchi may be advised to submit their report within 15 days. This timeline will enable the proposal to be considered during the upcoming FAC meeting for appraisal.
9. Over the years, iron ore reserves in the two operating mining blocks are fast depleting and blast furnace grade of ore are nearing exhaustion. Currently on account of these, Meghahatuburu mines which has completed its expansion of associated facilities with an investment of about Rs.300 crore is not able to supply iron ore steel plants both quantitative as well as qualitative wise. In absence of development of new pit at central block, currently, Meghahatuburu mines is supplying iron ore @2.50 MTPA(ROM) against its potential of 8.5 MTPA(ROM) and on quality front it is supplying a total gangue of about 9-10 in iron ore fines against the target of 4. With available reserves in the ongoing mining pit, Meghahatuburu mine may sustain its production for about 2 years only. Therefore, development of these two virgin blocks i.e. South & Central Blocks are imperative to sustain current production levels in terms of quantity and quality as well as enhance production to expanded capacity levels of 16 MTPA(ROM).

Considering the aforementioned facts, we kindly request your intervention for the consideration and granting of Stage-II FC for the diversion of 247.50 hectares of forest land under Kiriburu-Meghahatuburu Iron Ore Mines. This action is crucial to ensure a sustained quantity and quality of iron ore for the SAIL Steel Plants for their current requirement and ongoing expansion plan.

Thanking you

*With warm regards,*

Yours faithfully,

*Arvind Kumar Singh*

(Arvind Kumar Singh)

Copy To:

1. Chairman SAIL
2. Shri Abhijit Narendra, Joint Secretary to the Government of India, Steel

अरविन्द कुमार सिंह / ARVIND KUMAR SINGH  
निदेशक (तकनीकी, परियोजनाये एवं रॉ मैटेरियल्स)  
Director (Technical, Projects and Raw Materials)  
स्टील अथॉरिटी ऑफ इण्डिया लिमिटेड  
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