

F. No. FP/JH/RAIL/47332/2020
Government of India
Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change
(Forest Conservation Division)

Indira Paryavaran Bhawan,
Aliganj, Jor Bag Road,
New Delhi- 110003.
Dated:30-04-2026

To

The Principal Secretary (Forests),
Government of Jharkhand,
Ranchi.

Subject: Proposal for seeking prior approval of the Central Government under Section 2 (1) (ii) of the Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam, 1980 for non-forestry use of 121.29 ha forest land (Protected Forest and GMJJ land) for construction of Magadh Railway Siding in favour of M/S Central Coalfields Limited in Chatra South and Latehar Forest Divisions in the State of Jharkhand (Online proposal No. FP/JH/RAIL/47332/2020)– regarding.

Sir/Madam,

I am directed to refer to the State Government letter No. Van Bhumi-03/2026-329/V.P. dated 06.02.2026 on above mentioned subject seeking prior approval of the Central Government under Section 2 (1) (ii) of the Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam, 1980 and to say that after examination of the proposal, the following shortcomings has been observed:

1. As per the Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Amendment Rules, 2026, a field inspection is required to be conducted for all proposals involving more than forty hectares of forest land by the Conservator of Forests, Chief Conservator of Forests, or Regional Chief Conservator of Forests in charge of the concerned forest circle. While the site inspection report for the CF, Medininagar Circle has been submitted, the corresponding site inspection report for the Chatra Circle has not been provided along with the proposal and is therefore required to be submitted.
2. The State Government has reported that the proposal involves a violation. However, a detailed violation report clearly specifying the nature, extent, and date of the violation, along with the details of the persons responsible and the action taken against the concerned officials responsible for violation has not been uploaded on the Parivesh portal. The same is required to be submitted.
3. The Divisional Forest Officers (DFO), Chatra South and Latehar, have indicated in Part-II that a forest offence has been registered against the officials responsible for the violation. The State Government is required to

submit the current status of the cases.

4. Further, since the user agency is a Central PSU, the State Government shall also indicate whether any action has been initiated against the officers responsible for the violation under Sections 3A/3B of the Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam, 1980.
5. DFO, Latehar Forest Division and Chatra South Forest Division have mentioned in their Site Inspection Reports are as under. Comments of the State Government in this regard are required to be submitted for the following observations:
 - i. Since the construction of the proposed project may result in certain streams being partially or entirely affected, potentially impacting the fragile ecosystem and leading to water stress, a comprehensive Catchment Area Treatment Plan, if prepared, is required to be submitted.
 - ii. The area proposed for diversion is prone to soil erosion, and the construction of the MRS is likely to further increase its vulnerability to erosion and land degradation. Accordingly, a comprehensive Soil and Moisture Conservation Plan should be prepared and submitted.
 - iii. The proposed area constitutes an important wildlife habitat and falls within a proposed migratory route of wild elephants. Accordingly, comments of the PCCF (Wildlife)/Chief Wildlife Warden (CWLW) on the likely impact of the project are required to be furnished.
 - iv. The proposed Magadh Railway Siding project is likely to result in increased habitat fragmentation and loss, which may escalate incidents of human–animal conflict in and around the area. In this context, a comprehensive biodiversity and ethnobotanical study should be undertaken through a specialized agency such as the Botanical Survey of India or the Zoological Survey of India. Based on the findings, a species-specific conservation plan, as required, is strongly recommended for implementation.
 - v. The DFO, Chatra South, has indicated in the site inspection report that the presence of Asian elephants has been recorded in nearby areas, along with a rise in human–animal conflict in the surrounding region. In view of this, preparation and implementation of a site-specific Wildlife Management Plan is recommended. Further, details of human–animal conflict cases in the concerned districts, including incidents involving human and elephant fatalities over the past five years, may be provided. Information on property loss and crop damage should also be submitted.
 - vi. The DFO, Chatra South, has also observed in the site inspection report that,

post-construction of the siding, a small patch of forest land with healthy Sal vegetation is likely to become constricted due to the construction of the bulb. Consequently, this area may become inaccessible to wildlife, thereby affecting habitat continuity. In this regard, provision of dedicated culverts of appropriate size is required to ensure maintenance of habitat contiguity and wildlife movement.

6. The DFO, Latehar, has stated in his site inspection report that the area proposed for diversion is an ecologically significant watershed, interlaced with numerous streams, rivulets, and nalas. In this regard, comments/No Objection Certificate (NoC) from the Water Resources Department are required to be submitted.
7. Since the proposal involves diversion of Jungle Jhari land, consent of the concerned agencies owning the said forest land are required to be submitted.
8. As per DSS analysis, following is observed:
 - i. A portion of the present forest diversion proposal overlaps with areas covered under a previously approved proposal for which Final (Stage-II) approval under the Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan Adhiniyam), 1980 was granted vide proposal no. FP/JH/TRANS/40694/2019 dated 23.08.2024. Additionally, part of the instant proposal also overlaps with another delisted proposal (FP/JH/ROAD/34218/2018) as per PARIVESH records. Accordingly, comments on the matter may be submitted by the State Government.
 - ii. As per Google imagery, the proposed forest land also appears to include patches of agricultural land and settlements. Accordingly, comments on the matter may be submitted by the State Government.
 - iii. Compensatory Afforestation (CA) has been proposed over 243.85 ha of degraded forest land, out of which 51.97 ha falls under MDF. Accordingly, comments on the matter may be submitted by the State Government.
 - iv. As per Google imagery, the proposed Compensatory Afforestation sites over degraded forest land appears to have encroachments and built-up areas. In this regard, comments of the State Government are required to be submitted, along with verification of the site conditions.

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

Yours faithfully

Encl: DSS report

Sd/-
(S. Sundar)

Assistant Inspector General of Forests

Copy to:

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