

**File No.: 8-11/2024-FC**

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

Indira Paryavaran Bhawan,  
Jor Bag Road, Aliganj  
New Delhi - 110003.  
**Dated:16-08-2024**

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 266.847 ha of Forest land (including 6.776 ha earmarked for Safety Zone) within Rantha Iron Ore Mines under Lahunipara Tahasil and Barsuan Range of Bonai Forest Division of Sundargarh District within Mining Lease area of 268.84 ha in respect of Odisha Mining Corporation Limited under Section-2 (1) (ii) of Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam, 1980 (Proposal No. FP/OR/MIN/33970/2018) –reg.**

Madam/Sir,

I am directed to refer to the State Government of Odisha's letter No. FE-DIV-FLD-0047-2024-10808/FE&CC dated 24.06.2024 on the above subject seeking prior approval of the Central Government in accordance with Section 2 (1) (ii) of the Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam, 1980 and to say that after examination of the proposal the following shortcoming has been observed in the instant proposal:

- i. As per DSS the area falls in high conservation zone in the both the decision rules, and in such condition. The justification for proposing this area for diversion shall be provided.
- ii. The DFO in his SIR has mentioned that 02 numbers of perennial nallas originate inside the mining lease. These perennial nallas are the source of water for Khandadhar Nallah as well as Khandadhar waterfall. Further,

Khandadhar Nallah provides much needed water to nearby Wildlife, downstream villagers for cultivation and other livelihood opportunities including tourism activities. It has also been mentioned that the area is highly vulnerable to erosion, and his recommendation is conditional mentioning therein that a detailed study may be conducted for mining and its impact on hydrology and erosion. The State shall submit a detailed study report in this regard.

- iii. It has also been mentioned in the recommendations of the DFO that the proposal may be considered only after detailed study of mining impact and assessment of the proposed project on Forest, Wildlife and People of the area. The State shall do the needful and submit the detailed study report.
- iv. The concerned CF in his SIR has recommended that the proposal for diversion of 266.847 ha. of forest land including 6.776 ha. of forest land earmarked for Safety Zone land coming under Sarkunda PRF, Khandadhar RF and Khandadhar PRF in respect of Rantha Iron Ore Mines of M/s Odisha Mining Corporation Ltd. OMC Ltd. in Sundargarh District of Odisha may be considered for its approval under Section 2(ii) of Forest Conservation Act, 1980 after taking into account the origin of Khandadhar Nala and protection of its catchments. The State shall do the needful and submit a detailed report in this regard.
- v. It has been observed that the forest land involved for Conveyor Corridor by OMC involving an area of 1.993 ha has already been got approved vide another proposal, whereas the same is also part of the instant project. The state shall submit the details of the proposal along with the justification for submitting the proposals in piecemeal.
- vi. An area of 53.343 ha of forest land has been proposed for OB dump and 33.586 ha of forest land has been proposed for infrastructure and ancillary services, both of which are non-site specific activities. The state shall explore and shift the non-site specific activities on NFL.
- vii. KML file of the total lease area i.e. 408.8731 and separate KML file of the area surrendered i.e. 139.992 ha shall be uploaded /provided by the State Govt.
- viii. The State Govt. shall clarify whether the area surrendered is still in possession with the SFD or otherwise.
- ix. The CA scheme has been revised and uploaded in the PARIVESH portal however, the State Government has mentioned the total financial outlay as

per the old wage rate in their forwarding letter. This needs examination at the State level.

- x. An area of 6.587 ha has been proposed for diversion of Nallah. The status of feasibility reports for said diversion along with comments of Water Resource Department on the feasibility of said proposed diversion needs to be furnished by the State.
- xi. As per the information uploaded in Part-II of the PARIVESH portal the number of trees has been mentioned as 17016 whereas the number has been mentioned as 85829 in the site inspection report of DCF/CF. There is a need to check and correct the details.
- xii. The forest area proposed for diversion is in Eco-class-I with a density of 0.75 as reported by the DFO in his SIR. The State Government shall therefore revisit and ensure the adequacy of sampling done and the correctness of the total number of trees involved.
- xiii. Cost benefit Ratio has been estimated as 1:576.39 which appears to be exorbitantly high. The state shall re-examine the matter and ensure to submit the correct CB analysis as per the guidelines and on prescribed format. The same needs to be uploaded on Parivesh portal.
- xiv. Since the area has elephant movement therefore the cases of the Human Elephant conflicts in the area including the deaths of humans and elephants in last five years shall be provided. Loss of property and crop damage and compensation given and pending should also be provided. The state shall also submit the comments of CWLW in this regard.
- xv. As proposed by the State Government a detailed study may be conducted for mining impact and assessment of the proposed project on Forest, Wildlife and People of the area. Considering the rainfall, soil type, topography and the proposed land use, the area is highly vulnerable to soil erosion. The detailed study may be submitted by the State Govt.
- xvi. As reported, 2 (two) small camps with hutments are found in the area proposed for diversion. State Government shall furnish their comments in this regard.
- xvii. Analysis of the area proposed for diversion and area proposed for CA area using DSS analysis revealed the following:
  - a. Google imagery shows the presence the existing road, solid structures such as settlement and dense vegetation in the proposed forest area.

- b. Component wise KML file of proposed area is not available on PARIVESH. The same may be uploaded.
  - c. Out of six CA sites proposed in Tarapadar village, 5 CA sites are having area less than 5 hectare. There is a need to change as per the extant guideline of the Ministry in this regard.
  - d. Cultivation land is visible in some parts of the CA site proposed in Pami village. In this regard the comments of the State Govt. may be asked.
- xviii. The State Govt. shall examine the proposal keeping in view the provisions of Para 7.8(i) of the Consolidated guidelines dated 29.12.2023 and submit a detailed report justifying the necessity of opening new mining lease. Further the state shall also ensure that the proposal includes all activities as per the clause 7.8 (f) of the consolidated Guidelines issued on 29.12.2023 by the Ministry.
- xix. The State shall submit a detailed report elaborating as to how the requirement of electricity and water will be met. The detail of forest land involved in the same shall also be submitted. Further, the detailed mineral evacuation plan and the requirement of additional forest land (if any) shall also be clearly brought out.
- xx. The State Government shall submit the detailed status of surrendered area and shall also clarify whether any work has been done in the said area?
- xxi. As per the Para 7.8 (i) (e) of the consolidated guidelines dated 29.12.2023, the present status of compliance of the conditions of all previous FC approvals duly certified by the concerned Regional Officer of the MoEF&CC shall be submitted.

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

Yours faithfully,

**Sd/-**

**(Suneet Bhardwaj)**

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.