

Agenda No. 3

F. No. 8-17/2013-FC

Sub: Diversion of 172.856 ha of forest land for construction of New (BG) line between Agartala to Sabroom under Udaipur and Bagafa Forest Division and Trishna Wild life Sanctuary.

The proposed diversion of **172.856 ha** of forest land for construction of New (BG) line between Agartala to Sabroom under Udaipur and Bagafa Forest Division and Trishna Wild life Sanctuary by the North East Frontier Railway, Ministry of Railway, was submitted to Government of India by Government of Tripura vide letter dated F.6-96/FC/For-2013/1053-59 dated 12th February, 2013. The project description shows that the length of the proposed railway line is 111.8 km which passes through Udaipur and Bagafa Forest Division and Trishna Wild life Sanctuary.

The PCCF, Tripura vide letter dated 16.06.2014 (p. 148/c) has requested as follows:-

“In the meantime, we will request you to process the clearance for the area outside the National Park and Sanctuary. We would like to undertake that the work will not be started in and around 2.00 km of the wildlife area without the approval of the National Board for Wildlife. Since it is a national project the Railway is pressing hard for clearance, I would, therefore, request you please consider the case and start processing the forestry clearance for the area outside the Wildlife Sanctuary.”

Earlier, it was considered in the FAC in its meeting held on 09th & 10th May, 2013, wherein, the FAC recommended as follows:-

“The Committee noted that the proposal envisage construction of a new BG line between Agartala to Sabroom under Udaipur and Bagafa Forest Division and Trishna Wild life Sanctuary by the North East Frontier Railway, Ministry of Railway having a length of 111.8 kms connecting ten main urban areas of Tripura. It is a strategic project connecting Agartala to the border town of Sabroom and as stated by the project proponent, this has been declared as “National Project”.

The Committee further noted that the density class of the forests has been mentioned as 0.1 to 0.3. 5823 trees have been enumerated to be affected/

felled during the execution of the project. It does not form part of any protected area. No rare or endangered species of flora and fauna has been reported in the area. The present proposal does not form part of any National Park, Wildlife Sanctuary, Biosphere Reserve, Tiger Reserve or Elephant Corridor. However, the present alignment of the proposed line passes through Trishna Wildlife Sanctuary for which separate proposal will be submitted. It was also noted that the area is vulnerable to erosion. The Committee observed that the user agency has evaluated all possible alignments for minimum diversion of forest land.

The Committee also noted that as per site inspection report conducted by the Regional Office, the proposed built in area in this project is more than 20000 sq meter. Hence it will require environmental clearance and approval of the Standing Committee of the National Board for Wildlife and Hon'ble Supreme Court. The Committee observed that these approvals have not been taken so far.

After detailed discussion, the Committee recommended that the State Government shall be requested to first obtain approval of the Standing Committee of National Board for Wildlife and Hon'ble Supreme Court and thereafter a complete proposal for diversion of forest land may be placed before FAC.”

Proposal falling inside Trishna Wildlife Sanctuary, Tripura for diversion of 9.94 ha of forest land for construction of New Railway Line broad gauge between Agartala to Sabroom, Tripura was considered by the Standing Committee of NBWL in its 30th meeting held on 4th September, 2013. The Committee noted that Trishna Sanctuary has more primates than any other Protected Area in the country. After thorough discussion on the proposal, the Committee recommended a site visit of the area may be conducted by Dr. M.K. Ranjitsinh and Dr. A.J.T. Johnsingh and submit a report. After receipt of the site inspection report, the proposal will again be considered by the Standing Committee of the NBWL.

The said inspection has been by the Members of the Experts Committee and report has been submitted and it will be considered by the Standing Committee of National Board for Wildlife.

In the meantime, if agreed, proposal may be considered on the basis of its merits and progress made in regard to the approval by the Standing Committee of National Board for Wildlife.

The agenda note including Fact Sheet considered by the Forest Advisory Committee on 09th & 10th May, 2013 is as below:-

The proposed diversion of **172.856 ha** of forest land for construction of New (BG) line between Agartala to Sabroom under Udaipur and Bagafa Forest Division and Trishna Wild life Sanctuary by the North East Frontier Railway, Ministry of Railway, was submitted to Government of India by Government of Tripura vide letter dated F.6-96/FC/For-2013/1053-59 dated 12th February, 2013. The project description shows that the length of the proposed railway line is 111.8 km which passes through Udaipur and Bagafa Forest Division and Trishna Wild life Sanctuary.

As per the details provided by the State Government, the details are as below in the Factsheet:

FACT SHEET

1.	Name of the proposal	Diversion of 172.856 ha of forest land for construction of New (BG) line between Agartala to Sabroom under Udaipur and Bagafa Forest Division and Trishna Wild life Sanctuary.		
2.	Location: (i) State (ii) District	Tripura Udaipur, Agartala		
3.	Particulars of Forests: (i) Name of forest division (ii) Forest area involved	Udaipur and Bagafa Forest Division and Trishna Wild life Sanctuary		
		Division	Length of Line Mt	Forest Land (in Ha.)
		Udaipur	6128	33.603
				Staus Ha.) RF

		<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Bagafa</td> <td>17666</td> <td>124.936</td> <td>RF/PF</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Trishna WLS</td> <td>2755</td> <td>14.314</td> <td>RF</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>102.736</td> <td>24.438</td> <td>127.174</td> </tr> </table>	Bagafa	17666	124.936	RF/PF	Trishna WLS	2755	14.314	RF		102.736	24.438	127.174			
Bagafa	17666	124.936	RF/PF														
Trishna WLS	2755	14.314	RF														
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	(iii) Legal Status/Sy. No.	Reserve Forest and Protected Forest															
	(iv) Map	On scale of 1:50000 (enclosed pg. 8-11/c.)															
4.	(i) Vegetation	Mixed species like Shorea Robusta, Tectona Grandis, Albizia Lebbeck, artocarpus spp															
	(ii) Density	Dipterocarpus Gmelina arborea etc(P-).															
	(iii) Tree enumeration	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Forest Div</th> <th>Below 60 cm</th> <th>Above 60 cm</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Udaipur</td> <td>679</td> <td>3459</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Bagafa</td> <td>241</td> <td>840</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Trishna WLS</td> <td>267</td> <td>437</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>1187</td> <td>4736</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Forest Div	Below 60 cm	Above 60 cm	Udaipur	679	3459	Bagafa	241	840	Trishna WLS	267	437	Total	1187	4736
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5.	Vulnerability of the forest area to erosion.	It is not highly susceptible.															
6.	Whether forms part of National Park, Wildlife sanctuary, Biosphere Reserve, tiger reserve, Elephant Corridor, etc.	Not in this proposal, but passes through Trishna Wild Life Sanctuary for which separate proposal will be submitted.															
7.	Whether any rare/endangered unique species of flora and fauna found in the area. If so, details thereof.	No															

8.	Whether any protected archaeological/heritage site/ defence establishment or any other important monument is located in the area.	No																				
9.	Whether any work in violation of the Act has been carried out.	No																				
10.	Compensatory Afforestation	<p>Double degraded forest land.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>District</th> <th>Forest Div</th> <th>Range</th> <th>Area in Ha</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Gomati</td> <td>Udaipur</td> <td>Udaipur</td> <td>67.206</td> </tr> <tr> <td>South</td> <td>Bagafa and Trishna</td> <td>Abhoya</td> <td>186.24 28.634</td> </tr> <tr> <td>West</td> <td>Teliamura</td> <td>Champaknagar</td> <td>71.50</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>353.58</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Total Cost of CA is Rs 3,86,58,316/-. Map on Toposheet has been submitted.</p> <p>It is suitable for plantation and management point of view.</p> <p>It is free from encroachments/other incumbencies.</p>	District	Forest Div	Range	Area in Ha	Gomati	Udaipur	Udaipur	67.206	South	Bagafa and Trishna	Abhoya	186.24 28.634	West	Teliamura	Champaknagar	71.50	Total			353.58
District	Forest Div	Range	Area in Ha																			
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Total			353.58																			
11.	Net Present Value	Undertaking has been given (p-54/c).																				
12.	NOC from concerned Gram Panchayat	NOC has been obtained.																				
13.	Rehabilitation of oustees	No Displacement																				

	Employment generated	Substantial employment in the surrounding area
14.	Cost benefit analysis	7.624
	Environment Clearance	Environment clearance required as the built up area is more than 20000 sq mt
15.	Certificate for minimum Forest land	Enclosed (p-/c)
16.	Undertaking for abiding by the conditions and compensation by the Government of India	Enclosed at p-/c
17.	District profile	
	(i) Geographical area of the district	603.17 sq. km
	(ii) Forest area in the district	321.72 sq. Km.
	(iii) Forest area diverted since 1980	164.837 ha, 6 cases.
	(iv) CA done since 1980	
	(a) Forest land including penal compensatory afforestation	303.40 ha 0.99 ha
	(b) Non-forest land	
	(v) Progress of compensatory afforestation as on 29.1.2013:	
	(a) Forest land	303.40 ha
	(b) Non-forest land	0.99 ha.

The site has been inspected by the Regional Office, shilling on 10th and 11th April, 2013 by the Conservator of Forests, Regional Office, Shillong. The details are as below:-

1. Legal status of the forest land proposed for diversion.

- Udaipur Forest Division: Reserve Forest (RF)
- Bagafa Forest Division: Reserve Forest (RF) / Protected Forest / Proposed RF
- Trishna Wildlife Sanctuary: Reserve Forest (RF)

2. Item wise break-up details of the forest land proposed for diversion

Sl. No.	Name of Division	Area	Length in meter
1.	Udaipur	33.603	6128
2.	Bagafa	124.936	17666
3.	Trishna WLS	14.314	2755
	Total	172.856	26549

Out of 172.856 ha, an area of 130.299 ha is required for New Single Line Railway Track and the balance 42.567 ha is required for construction of Station yard, Station Building, Staff Quarters, etc, as given in Annexure-XII of the proposal submitted.

3. Whether proposal involves any construction of buildings (including residential) or not. If yes, details thereof.

As per the proposal submitted, an area of 42.567 ha is required for construction of Station yards, Station building, Staff quarters and other Services building etc.

4. Total cost of the project at present rates

The total cost of the project is approximately Rs. 1141.76 crores.

5. Wildlife –

Whether forest area proposed for diversion is important from wildlife point of view or not.

The area proposed for the railway line is not significantly important from Wildlife point of view. The area does not form a part of National Park/Sanctuary or Biosphere Reserve. However, an area of 14.317 ha falls under the administrative area of Wildlife warden/DFO, Trishna Wildlife Sanctuary, which is not a part of the Wildlife Sanctuary.

6. Vegetation

Total number of trees to be felled.

Enumeration of trees has been done within 36 meters (18 + 18) right of way for the formation width in respect of forest land, whereas in respect of private land the ROW is 60 meters. However the ROW for Station yards is 45 meters.

Udaipur Forest Division

Total number of trees to be felled (below 60 CM girth)	Total number of trees to be felled (above 60 CM girth)	Grand total (Trees to be felled)
679 NOS	3459 NOS	4138 NOS

(Enumeration details is provided in the proposal)

Bagafa Forest Division:

Total number of trees to be felled (below 60 CM girth)	Total number of trees to be felled (above 60 CM girth)	Grand total (Trees to be felled)
241 NOS	840 NOS	1081 NOS

(Enumeration details is provided in the proposal)

Trishna Wildlife Sanctuary

Total number of trees to be felled (below 60 CM girth)	Total number of trees to be felled (above 60 CM girth)	Grand total (Trees to be felled)
267 NOS	170 NOS	437 NOS

(Enumeration details is provided in the proposal)

Effect of removal of trees on the general ecosystem in the area.

As the proposed railway line involves clearing of 36 width in the forest area for a long stretch therefore significance adverse effect on the general forest eco system is anticipated.

Important species: There are some timber yielding species like Shorea robusta, Tectona grandis, Albizzia lebbeck, Artocarpus Chaplasi, Artocarpus heterophyllus, Dipterocarpus gmelina arborea, Hevea brasiliensis (rubber plant) etc., within the enumerated area.

7. Background note on the proposal.

As given in the introduction above.

8. Compensatory afforestation:

The following degraded forest land have been identified by the State Government for taking up compensatory afforestation over double the area proposed to be diverted in both the division

District	Forest Division	Range	Area in ha
Gomati	Udaipur	Udaipur	67.206
South &	Bagafa&Trishna	Abhoya	186.24 28.634
West	Teliamura	Champaknagar	71.50
			353.58

Whether land for compensatory afforestation is suitable from plantation and management point of view or not.

Physical verification of the proposed CA site under Teliamura Forest Division was undertaken. The GPS co-ordinates of the area matched with those given in the proposal and the area is found to be suitable for taking up CA.

Whether land for compensatory afforestation is free from encroachments / other incumbencies.

As reported by the State Government the land is free from encroachment and encumbrances.

Whether land for compensatory afforestation is important from Religious/Archaeological point of view.

The land identified is reported to have no significance from religious and archaeological point of view.

Land identified for compensatory afforestation is in how many patches, whether patches are compact or not.

The proposed CA area located in different patches under different division as given in the proposal.

Map with details.

Submitted in SOI toposheet along with the proposal.

Total financial outlay.

Rs. 3,86,58,316/-

9. Whether proposal involves violation of Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 or not. If yes, a detailed report on violation including action taken against the concerned officials.

No violation of FC Act 1980 is reported by State Government nor observed during the course of inspection.

10. Whether proposal involves rehabilitation of displaced persons. If yes, whether rehabilitation plan has been prepared by the State Government or not.

No rehabilitation is involved in respect of forest land in this proposal.

11. Reclamation plan:

Not required.

12.Detail on catchment and command area under the project. Catchment area treatment plan to prevent siltation of reservoir.

Not applicable.

13.Cost benefit ratio.

Cost benefit ratio as provided by User Agency in the proposal are as under:

Cost Benefit Ratio = Rs. 3,92,44.00 lakh/Rs. 5147.97 lakh = 7.624 benefit

14.Recommendations of the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests/State Government.

The recommendation of the State Government on the proposal is given in the forwarding letter of the submitted proposal.

15.Recommendations of Regional Chief Conservator of Forests along with detailed reasons.

As given in the forwarding letter.

16. Regional Chief Conservation of Forests shall give detailed comments on whether there are any alternatives routes/alignment for locating the project on the non-forest land.

As given in the forwarding letter.

17. Utility of the project.

Agartala-Sabroom, New Railway Line Project (Total Length – 111.8 km) will provides rail connectivity between the cities of West Tripura, Shipahijalla, Gomati& South Tripura Districts of Tripura State. The alignment of railway track between Agartala-Sabroom is passing through ten important cities/area of Tripura district namely Sekercot, Bishalgarh, Bishramganj, Udaipur, Garjee, Santir Bazar, Belonia, Julaibari& Manu Bazar. Moreover, the proposed railway line shall also be strategic line, which will provide rail connectivity up to Bangladesh International Border (i.e. up to Sabroom). Further, Survey has been sanctioned to explore the possibility for the connection of proposed Belonia Railway Station to Belonia/Feni Station in Bangladesh, which will provides rail

connectivity for Tripura, other North Eastern States and rest part of India to Chittagong, Port of Bangladesh. This International rail link will boost the Socio-Economic development of entire North Eastern Region of India.

Numbers of Scheduled cast / Scheduled Tribes to be benefited by the project.

The whole ST/SC population of the State of Tripura will be benefitted directly or indirectly by the project.

18. Whether land being diverted has any socio-cultural/religious value.

The land being diverted is reported to have no socio-cultural/religious value.

Whether any scared grove or very old growth trees/forests exists in the areas proposed for diversion.

No such sacred grove or very old growth trees/forests were reported.

Whether the land under diversion forms part of any unique eco-system.

No unique eco-system is reported to exist in the land being diverted for the instant proposal.

19. Situation w.r.t. any P.A.

The proposed Railway Line passes at approximately 9 to 9.4 km from Trishna Wildlife Sanctuary. It may be mentioned that the instant proposal involve certain area which are under the administrative jurisdiction of wild-life warden, Trishna Wildlife Sanctuary, but are outside the territory of the Wildlife Sanctuary. However, as it is within 10 km of Wildlife Sanctuary, the State Government shall have to obtain the approval of standing committee of National Board of Wildlife as per Ministry's letter F. No. 5-3/2007-FC(Pt.) dated 19tgh August, 2010.

20. Any other information relating to the project:

- 1) During the course of the inspection sample checking of certain points were carried out at the following areas:-

- (i) ParatiaDakshin (Mouza-Chandrapur) and Garjeecherra, under (Udaipur Forest Division)
 - (ii) Pasachin Manu under (Bagafa Forest Division) and
 - (iii) KolabariaMouza under (Jurisdiction of Trishna Wildlife Sanctuary) and the GPS Co-ordinates checked in the field matched with those given in the proposals.
- 2) In the sample area checked, it is also observed that total enumeration of trees for the whole right of way has been carried out and marked in the field with paint marks.
 - 3) Alternative routes have been explored by the User Agency while connecting the target important cities by Railway Line so as to minimize the involvement of forest land for the purpose. The reasons for rejection of alternative routines are annexed with the proposal at Part-I (iv). However, the alternate routes are not depicted on the maps submitted.
 - 4) The user agency informed that another two proposals consisting of smaller areas along the same route are under preparation which shall be submitted in due course.
 - 5) The built-up area proposed for other infrastructure related to the project is more than 20,000 sq. meters, hence it attracts provisions of EIA notification 2006 for Environmental Clearance.

Recommendation of the Regional APCCF(C):

Government of India has declared Agartala-Sabroom New Railway Project as a national project on the basis of persistent demand from the public representative as well as State Government of Tripura for extending the rail network beyond Agartala.

However, as it is within 10 km of the Wildlife Sanctuary, the State Government shall have to obtain the approval of Standing Committee of National Board of Wildlife as per Ministry's letter F No 5- 3/2007- FC (pt) dated 19th August, 2010. The Built up area proposed for other infrastructure related to the project is more than 20000 sq meters, hence it attracts provisions of EIA Notification 2006 for Environmental Clearance.

APCCF(C) recommended the proposal as the project is of national importance.

In view of the above facts, the proposal may be submitted to the FAC for its consideration and taking further view on the matter.

(B.K. Singh)
Director (FC)

IGF(FC)

