



No.5-ORB540/2022-BHU

20th February, 2024

To

The Addl. Chief Secretary,
Forest, Environment & CC Deptt.,
Government of Odisha,
Bhubaneswar – 751 001

Sub:- Diversion of 0.051 ha of forest land involved in Safety Zone area for construction of approach road for transportation of Iron Ore from Khandabandh Iron & Manganese Mines in Keonjhar Forest Division by M/s Tata Steel Ltd.

Sir,

I am directed to refer to State Govt. letter No.FE-DIV-FLD-0094-2022-21480/FE&CC dated 02.12.2022 and PCCF & HoFF, Odisha's letter No.292/9F (Road)-81/2022 dated 06.01.2023, wherein prior approval of the Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change for diversion 0.051 ha of forest land involved in Safety Zone area for construction of approach road for transportation of Iron Ore from Khandabandh Iron & Manganese Mines in Keonjhar Forest Division by M/s Tata Steel Ltd., was sought in accordance with Section-2 of the Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam, 1980. After due consideration of the proposal by the Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change and as per the provision made in letter No.FC-11/162/2020-FC dated 23.08.2021 of MoEF&CC, Govt. of India, the Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change, *the in-principle* approval for diversion of the said forest land was accorded by Ministry vide this office letter of even number dated 31.01.2023, subject to fulfillment of certain conditions. The Nodal Officer (FCA) of the State Government has furnished the compliance report in respect of the conditions stipulated in the in-principle approval and has requested to grant final approval of the proposal.

2. In this connection, I am directed to say that on the basis of the compliance report furnished by the PCCF & Nodal Officer (FCA), Odisha vide their letter No.17300/9F (Road)-81/2022 dated 25.08.2023, No.1567/9F (Road)-81/2022 dated 29.01.2024 and uploading of the compliance report in *Parivesh* web portal on 16.02.2024, *Stage-II/final* approval of the Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change is hereby granted under Section 2 of the Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam, 1980 for diversion of 0.051 ha of forest land involved in Safety Zone area for construction of approach road for transportation of Iron Ore from Khandabandh Iron & Manganese Mines in Keonjhar Forest Division by M/s Tata Steel Ltd., subject to the fulfillment of the following conditions:-

A: Conditions which need to be complied prior to handing over of forest land.

- i) The State Govt. shall ensure the compliance on FRA, 2006 as per Forest (Conservation) Rules and guidelines issued from time to time.
- ii) The State Govt. shall ensure that the user agency shall obtain the Environment Clearance as per the provisions of the Environmental (Protection) Act, 1986, if required.
- iii) The State Govt. shall ensure that NPV of the above proposal has been realized from user agency as per Ministry's direction from time to time.
- iv) The State Govt. shall ensure that the KML files of the area to be diverted shall be uploaded on the e-Green watch portal with all requisite details before handing over of the diverted forest land to the user agency.
- v) The State Govt. shall ensure that the boundary of the diverted forest land shall be demarcated on ground at the project cost, by erecting four feet high reinforced cement concrete pillars, each inscribed with its serial number, distance from pillar to pillar and GPS co-ordinates.

B: Conditions which need to be complied after handing over of forest land to the user agency.

- i) Legal status of the diverted forest land shall remain unchanged.
- ii) The State Govt. shall ensure that the State Forest Department shall carry out plantation of 240 trees towards compensatory afforestation in Belda RF under Keonjhar Forest Division within two years from the date of Stage-II Clearance as per approved plan/scheme and maintained thereafter by the State Forest Department, at the cost of user agency. The species to be planted under the CA scheme shall be of native species of the area. At least 18 month old seedlings should be planted. Intensive monitoring of the plantation needs to be done and documented using Geo tagging so that the increase of canopy density and survival and growth of plantation can be evaluated at regular intervals.
- iii) The State Govt. shall ensure that the user agency shall certify that they have critically examined the mineral extraction pathways and have found them to be adequate, and that no new extraction path outside mining area shall be proposed in the next five years.
- iv) State Govt. and user agency shall ensure that as far as possible, existing roads/rails/belts should be strengthened to minimize forest/tree cover loss.
- v) In case of later stage supplementary proposal for extraction path (linear projects such as road/rail/belt project), the State Govt. shall ensure that cogent and convincing reasons/justifications of not including such linear infrastructure at the inception stage are provided by the State Govt.
- vi) The State Govt./user agency shall ensure that dispensation considered by the Ministry is not misused in any way and likely tendencies to detach linear projects from main proposal of mining should not be encouraged. To the extent possible, linear infrastructure such as roads/railways/conveyor belts, etc. ancillary to mining should be included in the main proposal and under inevitable circumstances only, such proposals submitted by the user agency should be considered as standalone project.
- vii) The State Govt. shall ensure that the user agency shall use fly ash for the road construction and for filling up of void created due to soil borrows which will be followed by compaction and spreading of top soil over it as per Fly Ash Notification No. S.O. 254 (E) dated 25.01.2016.
- viii) The State Govt. shall ensure that the user agency shall submit an undertaking to ensure that flanks of roads should be filled by transported soil and not with soil dug from the side of the roads.
- ix) The State Govt. shall ensure that the user agency shall explore the possibility of successful transplantation of maximum number of trees identified to be felled and shall be planted alongside the road and shall ensure that any tree felling shall be done only when it is unavoidable and that too under strict supervision of the State Forest Department.
- x) The State Govt. shall ensure that no labour camp shall be established on the forest land and the user agency shall provide fuels preferably alternate fuels to the labourers and staff working at the site so as to avoid any damage and pressure on the nearby forest areas.
- xi) The State Govt. and user agency shall ensure that no additional or new path will be constructed inside the forest area for any activity related to the project work.
- xii) The State Govt. and user agency shall ensure that while executing works, the user agency shall not fell any tree or damage forest growth in the surrounding forest area in any manner.
- xiii) The State Govt. shall ensure that the period of diversion under this approval shall be co-terminus with the period of lease granted in favour of user agency or the project life, whichever is less.
- xiv) The State Govt. and user agency shall ensure that earth or any material shall neither be brought from nor the debris resulting during construction be disposed of in the adjoining forest area by the user agency.
- xv) The State Govt. and user agency shall ensure that the layout plan of the proposal shall not be changed without prior approval of the Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change.

- xvi) The State Govt. shall ensure that the forest land shall not be used for any purpose other than that specified in the proposal and under no circumstances be transferred to any other user agency, department or person without prior approval of the Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change.
- xvii) The State Govt. shall ensure that no damage to the flora and fauna of the adjoining area shall be caused.
- xviii) The State Govt. shall ensure that the concerned DFO will monitor and take necessary mitigative measures to ensure that there is no adverse impact on the forests in surrounding area.
- xix) The State Govt. shall ensure that the user agency shall submit annual self monitoring report on compliance of stipulated conditions to the Nodal Officer (FCA) of the State and Regional Office of this Ministry by the end of March every year regularly.
- xx) The State Govt. shall ensure that any other conditions that the Ministry of Environment, Forests & Climate Change may impose from time to time in the interest of afforestation, conservation and management of flora and fauna in the area, which shall be complied by the user agency.
- xxi) The State Govt. and user agency shall ensure compliance to provisions of the all Acts, Rules, Regulations, Guidelines, NGT Order (s) & Hon'ble Court Order (s) pertaining to this project, if any, for the time being in force, as applicable to the project.
- xxii) Violation of any of these conditions will amount to violation of Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam, 1980 and action would be taken as prescribed in Para 1.16 of Consolidated Guidelines and Clarification issued under Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam, 1980 and Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Rules, 2023 vide Ministry's letter dated 29.12.2023.

Yours faithfully,

Padma Mahanti

(Dr. Padma Mahanti)

Dy. Inspector General of Forests (C)

Copy to:-

1. The Inspector General of Forests (ROHQ), Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change, Indira Paryavaran Bhawan, Jor Bagh Road, Aliganj, New Delhi – 110003.
2. The PCCF & Nodal Officer (FCA), Forest Department, Govt. of Odisha, Aranya Bhawan, Chandrasekharapur, Bhubaneswar.
3. M/s Tata Steel Ltd., Khandabandh Iron & Manganese Mines, PO/PS: Joda, Dist: Keonjhar-758034, Odisha.

Dy. Inspector General of Forests (C)