

File No.: 8-07/2024-FC (E- 237166)
Government of India
Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change
(Forest Conservation Division)

Indira Paryavaran Bhawan
Aliganj, Jor Bagh Road
New Delhi- 110003
Dated: 27-05-2026

To

The Principal Secretary (Forests)
Government of Odisha
Bhubaneswar.

Sub.: Proposal for seeking prior approval of the Central Government under Section 2 of the Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam, 1980 for non-forestry use of 134.69 ha of forest land for Expansion of Kulda Open Cast Coal Mining Project of Basundhara Area of Mahanandi Coalfields Limited in Sundargarh District under Sundargarh Forest Division (Proposal No. FP/OR/MIN/50293/2020)- reg.

Madam/Sir,

I am directed to refer to the Government of Odisha's letter dated 25.04.2024 on the above mentioned subject, seeking prior approval of the Central Government under Section 2 (1) (ii) of the Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam, 1980. The proposal was accorded '*In-Principle*' (Stage-I) approval by the Central Government vide letter dated 10.07.2025. The Government of Odisha has reported/submitted the compliance report vide letters dated 18.05.2026 to the conditions stipulated in the '*In-Principle*' approval and requested for grant of final approval.

2. In this connection, I am directed to say that on the basis of the compliance report furnished by the Government of Odisha vide letter dated 18.05.2026, Stage-II/Final approval of the Central Government is hereby granted under Section 2 (1) (ii) of the Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam, 1980 for diversion of 134.69 ha of forest land for Expansion of Kulda Open Cast Coal Mining Project of Basundhara Area of Mahanandi Coalfields Limited in Sundargarh District under Sundargarh Forest Division subject to fulfilment of the following conditions:

- i. Legal status of the diverted forest land shall remain unchanged;
- ii. The compensatory afforestation over degraded forest land i.e. 280.9 ha, shall be raised by the State Forest Department at the project cost and the afforestation works shall start within two years from the date of grant of final approval;
- iii. The user agency shall pay the additional amount of NPV, if so determined, as per the final decision of the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India;
- iv. The user agency shall implement the schedule for surrender of the mined out and reclaimed forest land in accordance with existing mine plan;
- v. The wildlife plan as approved, shall be implemented for conservation and mitigation of impact on wildlife in consultation with CWLW;
- vi. The KML files of diverted area, the CA areas, the proposed SMC treatment area and the WLMP area shall be uploaded on the e-Green watch portal along with GPS Ids and all other requisite details before handover the land to the User Agency;

- vii. The following activities, as per approved plan/ schemes, shall be undertaken in the lease area by the User Agency under the supervision of the State Forest Department;
 - a. Mitigative measures to minimize soil erosion and choking of stream shall be implemented within a period of three years with effect from the issue of Stage-II clearance in accordance with the approved Plan in consultation with the State Forest Department;
 - b. Planting of adequate drought hardy plant species and sowing of seeds, in the appropriate area within the mining lease to arrest soil erosion in accordance with the approved scheme;
 - c. Construction of check dams, retention /toe walls to arrest sliding down of the excavated material along the contour in accordance with the approved scheme;
 - d. Stabilize the overburden dumps by appropriate grading/benching, in accordance with the approved scheme, so as to ensure that angles of repose at any given place is less than 28° ; and
- viii. Safety Zone Management: Following activities, at project cost, shall be undertaken by the user agency for the management of safety zone as per relevant guidelines issued by the Ministry's guidelines:
 - a. User agency shall ensure demarcation of safety zone (7.5-meter strip all along the inner boundary of the mining lease area), and its fencing, protection and regeneration by erecting adequate number of 6 feet high RCC boundary pillars inscribed with DGPS coordinates with barbed wire fencing and deploying adequate number of watchers under the supervision of the State Forest Department;
 - b. Boundary of the safety zone of the mining lease, adjacent to habitation/roads, should be properly fenced by the user agency;
 - c. Safety zone shall be maintained as green belt around mining lease and to ensure dense canopy in the area, regeneration shall be taken up in this area by the user agency at project cost under the supervision of the State Forest Department;
 - d. The State Government and the user agency shall ensure that safety zone is maintained as per the prescribed norms;
- ix. No damage shall be caused to the top-soil and the user agency will follow the top soil management plan;
- x. The User agency either himself or through the State Forest Department shall undertake gap planting and soil & moisture conservation activities as per the approved scheme to restock and rejuvenate the degraded open forests (having crown density less than 0.40), if any, located in the area within 100 meter from outer perimeter of the mining lease;
- xi. The User Agency shall regularly undertake desilting of these village tanks and other water bodies as per the approved scheme to mitigate the impact of siltation of such tanks/water bodies;
- xii. The cost of felling of trees shall be deposited by the User Agency with the State Forest Department;
- xiii. Trees should be felled in phased manner as per the requirement in the approved Mining Plan with prior permission of concerned DFO;
- xiv. The user agency shall explore the possibility of translocation of maximum number of trees identified to be felled 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;
- xv. The site-specific Wildlife Management Plan shall be implemented by the State Government in consultation with the PCCF (Wildlife) for the protection

- and conservation of wildlife of the area;
- xvi. The State Government shall complete settlement of rights, in term of the Scheduled Tribes and Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006, if any, on the forest land to be diverted and submit the documentary evidence, in accordance with the Rule 11 (7) of the Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Rules, 2023;The User Agency shall undertake mining in a phased manner after taking due care for reclamation of the mined over area;
 - xvii. The concurrent reclamation plan as per the approved mining plan shall be executed by the User Agency from the very first year, and an annual report on implementation thereof shall be submitted to the Nodal Officer, in the concerned State Government and the concerned Regional Office of the Ministry. If it is found from the annual report that the activities indicated in the concurrent reclamation plan are not being executed by the User Agency, the Nodal Officer or the concern Addl. Principle Chief Conservator of Forests (Central) may direct that the mining activities shall remain suspended till such time, such reclamation activities area satisfactorily executed;
 - xviii. The User Agency shall comply with the Hon'ble Supreme Court order on re-grassing, and re-grass the mining area and any other areas which may have been disturbed due to mining to restore them to a condition which is fit for growth of fodder, flora, fauna, etc. in a timely manner;
 - xix. Period of diversion of the said forest land under this approval shall be for a period co-terminus with the period of the mining lease proposed to be granted under the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957, as amended time to time and the Rules framed there-under;
 - xx. The User Agency shall obtain the Environment Clearance as per the provisions of the Environmental (Protection) Act, 1986, if required;
 - xxi. No labour camp shall be established on the forest land and the User Agency shall provide fuels preferably alternate fuels to the labourers and the staff working at the site so as to avoid any damage and pressure on the nearby forest areas;
 - xxii. The boundary of the diverted forest land, mining lease and safety zone, as applicable, 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 coordinates;
 - xxiii. The layout plan of the proposal shall not be changed without the prior approval of the Central Government and the forest land shall not be used for any purpose other than that specified in the proposal except the change in land use allowed on the forest land vide Ministry's guideline dated 26.12.2024;
 - xxiv. The forest land proposed to be diverted shall under no circumstances be transferred to any other agency, department or person without prior approval of the Central Government;
 - xxv. No damage to the flora and fauna of the adjoining area shall be caused;
 - xxvi. The User Agency shall submit the annual self -compliance report in respect of the above stated conditions to the State Government, concerned Regional Office and to this Ministry by the end of March every year regularly;
 - xxvii. Any other condition that the concerned Regional Office of this Ministry may stipulate with the approval of competent authority in the interest of conservation, protection and development of forests & wildlife;
 - xxviii. The user agency shall comply all the provisions of the all Acts, Rules, Regulations, Guidelines, Hon'ble Court Order (s) and NGT Order (s) pertaining to this project, if any, for the time being in force, as applicable to the project.
 - xxix. 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 clarifications issued under Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam, 1980 as issued by this Ministry on dated 29.12.2023;

- xxx. The State Government shall complete settlement of rights, in terms of the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006, if any, on the forest land to be diverted and submit the documentary evidence as prescribed by this Ministry in its letter No. 11-9/1998-FC (pt.) dated 03.08.2009, in support thereof;
- xxxi. The State Government after receiving the 'Final Approval' of the Central Government under subsection (1) of Section 2 of the Adhiniyam, and after fulfillment and compliance of the provisions of the all other acts and rules made thereunder, as applicable including ensuring of settlement of rights under the Scheduled Tribes or Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act. 2006 (2 of 2007), shall issue order for diversion.

Yours sincerely,

Sd/-
(Deepika Chaudhary)
Deputy Inspector General of Forests

Copy to:-

1. PCCF (HoFF), Department of Forest, Government of Odisha, Bhubaneswar.
2. DDGF (Central), MoEF&CC's Regional Office, at Bhubaneswar.
3. APCCF-cum-Nodal Officer, Government of Odisha, Bhubaneswar.
4. User Agency.
5. Monitoring Cell, FC Division, MoEF&CC, New Delhi for uploading.