

F.No.3-ASB/126/2022/GHY
Government of India
Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change
(Forest Conservation Division)

Indira Paryavaran Bhawan,
Aliganj, Jorbagh Road,
New Delhi- 110003
Dated:24-07-2025

To,

The Special Chief Secretary (Forests),
Department of Forest and Environment,
Government of Assam,
Dispur.

Subject: Proposal for seeking prior approval of the Central Government under section 2 (1) (ii) of the Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam, 1980 in favour of Oil & Natural Gas Corporation Ltd., Jorhat for diversion of 2.2091 ha of forest land for drilling of exploratory location ELAJ in Doyang Reserved Forest under Golaghat Division, Assam (Online Proposal No. FP/AS/MIN/139315/2021).

Sir,

I am directed to refer to Government of Assam letter No. FRS. 87/2022/61 dated 11.07.2022 on the above mentioned subject, seeking prior approval of Central Government under Section 2 (1) (ii) of the Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam, 1980. After careful consideration of the proposal by the Advisory Committee (AC) constituted by the Central Government under Section- 3 of the said Act, 'in-principle'/Stage-I approval to the proposal was granted vide this Ministry's letter of even number dated 12.02.2024 subject to fulfillment of certain conditions prescribed therein. The State Government has furnished compliance report in respect of the conditions stipulated in the in-principle approval and has requested the Central Government to grant final approval.

2. In this connection, I am directed to say that on the basis of the compliance report furnished by the Government of Assam letter No. 294880/2025/239 dated 10.06.2025 and letter No. 294880/2025/251 dated 11.07.2025 which was uploaded on PARIVESH portal on 14.07.2025, final approval/Stage - II of the Central Government is hereby granted under Section 2 (1) (ii) of the Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam, 1980 for non-forestry use of 2.2091 ha. of forest land for exploratory location ELAJ in Doyang Reserved Forest in favour of Oil & Natural Gas Corporation Ltd. in Jorhat district in the State of Assam subject to fulfillment of the following conditions:-

- i. Legal status of the forest land shall remain unchanged;
- ii. The State Government shall ensure that Compensatory Afforestation over 2.2091 ha non-forest land in District- Sonitpur identified inside compensatory afforestation land bank of 830 ha. of evicted non-forest land adjacent to Burahchapory Wildlife Sanctuary under Nagaon Wildlife Division, Nagaon which was approved by Advisory Committee in its meeting held on 23.09.2024 is initiated within two years from the date of issue of Stage- II

approval and maintained thereafter as per approved plan by the State Forest Department at the cost of the User Agency. Further, as far as possible, a mixture of local indigenous species shall be planted and monoculture of any species may be avoided;

- iii. The non-forest land transferred and mutated in favour of State Forest Department shall be notified by the State Government as PF under Section-29 of Indian Forest Act, 1927 or under relevant Section(s) of local Forest Act before handing over the forestland to the User Agency. The Nodal Officer shall upload a copy of original notification declaring non-forest land under Section- 29 of Indian Forest Act, 1927 on PARIVESH portal for information and record of Central Government;
- iv. ***The State Government shall ensure that Human Elephant/wildlife Conflict mitigation and elephant centric wildlife conservation plan to mitigate the Human Elephant/wildlife Conflict and precautionary measures to ensure free movement of the wildlife in the landscape is implemented at the cost of the User Agency which is deposited into CAMPA account;***
- v. ***The State Govt. shall ensure that under no circumstances, implementation of such mitigating measures envisaged in Human Elephant/wildlife Conflict mitigation and elephant centric wildlife conservation plan is delayed beyond a period of 2 years to ensure commencement of rejuvenation of ecosystem services lost from the forest area allowed for non-forestry use of forest land at the earliest possible time;***
- vi. ***The State Govt. shall ensure that plan to be approved by Chief Wildlife Warden, Govt. of Assam along with detail cost is implemented;***
- vii. The State Government has realized the NPV of the forest area diverted under this proposal from the User Agency, as per the orders dated 28.03.2008, 24.04.2008 and 09.05.2008 passed by the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India in Writ Petition (Civil) No. 202/1995 and the guidelines given under para 3 of the Chapter- 3 of the Consolidate Guidelines and Clarifications issued under the Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam, 1980 and Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Rules, 2023 published by the Ministry on 29.12.2023, 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;
- viii. 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 as per the sub-rule (7) of Rule 11 of the Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Rules, 2023;
- ix. The State Government shall ensure that User Agency seeks permission of concerned Divisional Forest Officer before entering into the forest area and borehole shall be dug with prior permission of the concerned Divisional Forest Officer and also furnish detailed report thereof on completion of the project;

- x. The State Government shall ensure that proper plugging of borehole is made after exploration activities are complete to the satisfaction of the concerned Divisional Forest Officer;
- xi. The State Government shall ensure that no tree felling is undertaken for exploration activities. Project activities shall be restricted to clearing of bushes and lopping of tree branches if any for the purpose of site preparation;
- xii. The User Agency shall be responsible for any loss to the flora and fauna in the surrounding. Any damage done in this regard shall be compensated by the User Agency from the project cost as per assessment of the concerned Divisional Forest Officer;
- xiii. The State Government shall ensure that no new road is constructed by the User Agency for transporting prospecting tools and machines. The User Agency may use the existing forest road/path with prior information to the concerned Divisional Forest Officer. The area used for path during the prospecting work shall be restored to its original status of forest after completion of prospecting work;
- xiv. The State Government shall ensure that no other construction activities is done by the User Agency on forest land. Existing path and roads only will be used by the User Agency for the purpose of prospecting activities and drilling of bore holes will be limited to 01 no. with diameter of 17^{1/2}" within forest land will be dug. No other physical breaking of forest land is allowed;
- xv. Any change in the diameter of borehole and number of bore holes will be reported to the concerned Regional Office in advance for consideration and recommendations to the Central Government;
- xvi. The State Government shall ensure that adequate measures is taken by the User Agency to ensure that prospecting activities do not harm the wildlife in the area. Any damage done in this context, shall be compensated by the user agency as per assessment, by the concerned Divisional Forest Officer;
- xvii. The State Government shall ensure that no labour camp shall be established on the forest land and no work shall be allowed after sunset;
- xviii. In case of violations of conditions by the User Agency, the permission for prospecting of minerals shall be suspended by the concerned Divisional Forest Officer. Further it shall be enquired by the Nodal Officer (FCA) of the State Government and report to be submitted to the concerned Regional Office for appropriate action;
- xix. The State Government shall ensure that samples collected during the prospecting shall be used purely for investigation purposes and shall in no case be used for trade or commerce purpose;
- xx. To minimize disturbance to the wildlife, User Agency shall take all possible measures to minimize noise during prospecting operations and halt the prospecting activities during night and during such periods in the day as may be advised by the concerned Chief Wildlife Warden, concerned State Forest Department;

- xxi. This permission shall, in no way, confer any rights to the project proponents or any other agency for grant of approval under Section 2 (1) (ii) of the Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam, 1980 for diversion of forest land for any other non-forestry use of the said forest land;
- xxii. Trees should be felled in phased manner as per the requirement in the approved Mining Plan with prior permission of concerned DFO;
- xxiii. Period of diversion of the said forest land under this approval shall be for a period co-terminus with the period of the prospecting licence or mining lease proposed to be granted under the Oilfields (Regulation and Development) Act, 1948, as amended and the Rules framed there-under;
- xxiv. The User Agency shall obtain the Environment Clearance as per the provisions of the Environmental (Protection) Act, 1986, if required;
- xxv. The State Government shall ensure that 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;
- xxvi. The State Government shall ensure that layout plan of the project 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;
- xxvii. The State Government shall ensure that 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;
- xxviii. The State Government shall ensure that boundary of the diverted forest land shall be demarcated on the ground at the project cost, by erecting four feet high reinforced cement concrete pillars, each inscribed with its serial number, forward and back bearing and distance from pillar to pillar;
- xxix. Safety zone of the area, being diverted, shall be maintained in accordance with the relevant guidelines issued by the MoEF&CC in this regard;
- xxx. 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;
- xxxi. The State Government shall ensure that User Agency shall comply all the provisions of 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;
- xxxii. 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 Chapter 1 of the consolidated guidelines and clarifications issued under Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam, 1980 and Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Rules, 2023 as issued by this Ministry's letter dated 29.12.2023;
- xxxiii. The State Government and user agency shall ensure compliance to all conditions stipulated in the 'in-principle' approval letter dated 24.09.2024 for which undertakings have been obtained from the user agency and also the

provisions of the all Acts, Rules, Regulations and Guidelines, relevant Hon'ble Court Order (S) and NGT Order (S), if any, or the time being in force, including compliance of the Schedule Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forests Rights) Act, 2006, before handing over the forest land to the user agency; and

- xxxiv. The monitoring report by the Regional Offices or State Government and annual self compliance report by the user agency shall be uploaded on e-portal (<https://parivesh.nic.in/>) regularly.

Yours faithfully,

Sd/-
(Charan Jeet Singh)
Scientist 'E'

Copy to:

1. The Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (HoFF), Government of Assam, Dispur.
2. The DDGF (Central), Regional Office, Shillong of MoEF&CC.
3. The APCCF-cum-Nodal Officer (FCA), Government of Assam, Dispur.
4. User Agency.
5. Monitoring Cell, FC Division, MoEF& CC, New Delhi for uploading.