

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

Indira Paryavaran Bhawan,
Jor Bag Road, Aliganj
New Delhi - 110003.
Dated: 30-07-2025

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 non-forestry use of 42.608 ha of forest land (16.658 ha in Keonjhar Forest Division and 25.950 ha in Bonai Forest Division) within Kalmang West (Northern Part) Iron Ore Block in Keonjhar and Sundargarh District of Odisha, allotted to M/s Tata Steel BSL Limited (Formerly known as Bhusan Steel Ltd) (Online proposal no. FP/OR/MIN/49169/2020)

Madam/Sir,

I am directed to refer to the Government of Odisha's letter No. FE-DIV-FLD-0048-2022-10644 dated 17.06.2022, and additional information submitted vide No. 22410/ 9F (MG) –66/2021 dated 03.11.2022, vide letter No. 4255/9F (MG) – 51/2021 dated 03.03.2023, vide letter No. 15271/ 9F (MG) –66/2021 dated 28.07.2023 and vide letter No. 9F (MG)- 12/2023 dated 21.11.2023 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 . After careful examination of the proposal by the Forest Advisory Committee, constituted under Section-3 of the said Act, 'in-principle' approval to the proposal under the Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam, 1980 was granted vide this Ministry's letter of even number dated 22.12.2023 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.

In this connection, I am directed to say that on the basis of the compliance report furnished by the State Government vide letter No. no. 18578/ 9F (MG) – 66/2021 dated 12.09.2024, letter no. 24851/ 9F (MG) –380/2019 dated 09.12.2024 and subsequent letter no. 25269/ 9F (MG) –66/2021 dated 13.12.2024, and letter dated 06.06.2025, 'final' approval of Central Government under Section 2 (1) (ii) of the Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam, 1980 is hereby granted for non-forestry use of 42.608 ha of forest land (16.658 ha in Keonjhar Forest Division and 25.950 ha in Bonai Forest Division) within Kalmang West (Northern Part) Block for Iron Ore Mines in Keonjhar and Sundargarh District of Odisha, allotted to M/s Tata Steel BSL Limited (Formerly known as Bhusan Steel Ltd), subject to fulfilment

of the following conditions:

1. Legal status of the diverted forest land shall remain unchanged;
2. The State Government shall ensure that Compensatory afforestation over the non-forest land equal in extent to the forest land being diverted which has also been notified as PF namely 'Jaldihi Protected Forest' under Section-33 of the Odisha Forest Act, 1972 vide notification No.FE-DIV-FLD-0048-2022 (10F (Cons)23/2022) 16879/FE&CC dated 03.09.2024 shall start within three years from the date of final approval and maintained thereafter in accordance with the approved Plan in consultation with the State Forest Department;
3. The State Government shall ensure that the additional compensatory afforestation for balanced seedling which can not be accommodated in the identified non-forest, shall be raised land over an area of 44.002 ha. of degraded Forest land namely Balabhadrapur RF at the project cost under the supervisions of the State Forest Department and afforestation will be done within three years from the date of final approval and maintained thereafter in accordance with the approved Plan in consultation with the State Forest Department;
4. The State Government shall ensure that the afforestation on degraded forest land to be selected elsewhere, measuring one and a half times the area under safety zone, shall also be done at the project cost under the supervisions of the State Forest Department and afforestation will be done within two years from the date of final approval and maintained thereafter in accordance with the approved Plan in consultation with the State Forest Department;
5. The compensatory afforestation, including the soil and moisture conservation activities, shall be undertaken by the State Forest Department in accordance with the CA scheme approved by the competent authority of the State from the funds deposited by the user agency for the purpose. Afforestation of indigenous species should be undertaken and the afforestation will be maintained for 10 years;
6. The user agency either himself or through the State Forest Department shall implement gap planting and soil & moisture conservation activities 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 as per the approved scheme and funds already deposited by the UA in this regard;
7. 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;
8. Compensatory levies, if any, realized in future under the extant project, shall be transferred/ deposited, through e-payment module on PARIVESH portal

(<https://parivesh.nic.in/>), into the account of CAMPA of the State concerned, managed by the National Authority (CAMPA);

9. *The State Govt. shall ensure that the transportation of ore shall be carried out as per the recommendation in the report submitted by CSIR-NEERI.*
10. *The State Govt. shall ensure that the user agency shall follow the recommendations of the CSIR- NEERI guidelines and the suggested ore transportation mode SOTM3. Further, the State Govt. shall also ensure the implementation of transportation of iron ore through proposed slurry pipeline from source of ore to their Steel Plant located at Kalinganagar.*
11. *The State Govt. shall ensure that the oversight committee constituted vide letter no. 8-96/1996-FGC (Pt.-I) dated 29.12.2023 shall submit the monitoring report of the compliance of the conditions stipulated in this final approval every year end of the December.*
12. *The State Govt. shall ensure the implementation of already prepared Integrated Regional Wildlife Conservation Plan for 10 years covering the forest Division of Sundargarh, Jharsuguda and Keonjhar Districts at the cost of UA. The works shall be executed as per APO and the regional plan shall have site/species specific wildlife sub plans/prescriptions;*
13. ***The Biodiversity Conservation plan has been prepared by the IIFM Bhopal for entire landscape of Netrabandha Pahar. The State Govt. shall ensure that proportionate cost of implementation of the plan shall be deposited by the User Agency in CAMPA Account before handing over the forest land to the User Agency.***
14. *The State Govt. shall ensure that the conditions stipulated in EC shall be strictly implemented and monitored;*
15. *The State Govt. shall ensure that the Soil and moisture conservation measures shall be implemented in and around 10 KM radius of the mining lease areas at project cost;*
16. *As per the recommendation of the NEERI report the State Government shall explore the possibility for transportation of iron ore through conveyor belt and take a reasoned decision;*
17. *Following activities, as per approved plan / schemes, shall be implement 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 final approval 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°;
16. **Safety Zone Management:** Following activities, at project cost, shall be implement 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;
17. No damage shall be caused to the top-soil and the user agency will follow the top soil management plan;
18. The User Agency shall regularly undertake de-silting of village tanks and other water bodies, located within five km from the mine lease boundary, as per plan submitted along with the compliance of 'in-principle' approval, so as to mitigate the impact of project on such tanks/water bodies.
19. The cost of felling of trees shall be deposited by the User Agency with the State Forest Department;
20. The User Agency shall undertake that afforestation of the non-mineralized virgin forest land within the mining area shall be taken up at project cost;
21. 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;
22. The provisions of the approved Site-Specific Wildlife Management Plan shall be implemented by the State Forest Department from the cost realized from the user agency on pro rata basis;
23. The User Agency shall undertake mining in a phased manner after taking due care for reclamation of the mined over area. 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, Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980, 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;
24. 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;
 25. 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 and the Rules framed there-under;
 26. The User Agency shall obtain the Environment Clearance as per the provisions of the Environmental (Protection) Act, 1986, if required;
 27. 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;
 28. 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;
 29. The layout plan of the mining plan/ 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;
 30. 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;
 31. No damage to the flora and fauna of the adjoining area shall be caused;
 32. The State Govt. shall ensure that the that user agency and the State Forest Department shall create and maintain from funds to be provided by the user agency alternate habitat/ home for the avifauna, whose nesting trees are to be cleared in this project as per the plan duly approved by the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (Wildlife) and the Chief Wildlife Warden Odisha. Bird nests artificially made out of eco-friendly materials shall be used in the area, including forest area and human settlements, adjoining the forest area being diverted for the project;
 33. The State Govt. shall ensure that the user agency shall implement to take up works for construction and cleaning of garland drains, stabilizing retaining walls, proper terracing of OB dumps and checking gully formation resulting in soil erosion;
 34. The State Govt. shall ensure that the user agency shall maintain that plants which are having lowest translocation factor can be preferred under afforestation on the OB dumps and fruit trees to be avoided in planting during biological stabilization of OB dumps;
 35. The State Govt. shall implement R&R plan (if applicable) as the Rules and Regulations;
 36. The State Govt. shall ensure that the user agency shall made all possible efforts to prevention of fall of wild animals into mining pit by fencing the open pit area;
 37. 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;
38. The State Govt. shall ensure that the user agency shall maintain the angle of repose in OB dumps to be maintained to ensure stability and safety;
 39. The State Govt. shall ensure that the user agency shall maintain that vetiver grass can be planted at the lower reaches of the dump to bind the soil and prevent soil erosion giving better stability to the dump;
 40. 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;
 41. 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 on Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam, 198 as issued by this Ministry's letter dated 29.12.2023;
 42. 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;
 43. The State Government and user agency shall ensure compliance to all conditions stipulated in the '*in-principle*' approval letter dated 22.12.2023 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;
 44. The monitoring report shall be uploaded on **e-portal** (<https://parivesh.nic.in/>) regularly; and
 45. The State Government after receiving the 'Final' approval of the Central Government under sub-section (1) of section 2 of the Adhiniyam, and after fulfilment and compliance of the provisions of all other Acts and rules made thereunder, as applicable including ensuring settlement of rights under the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006 (2 of 2007), shall issue order for diversion.

Yours faithfully,

Sd/-

(Suneet Bhardwaj)

Assistant Inspector General of Forests

Copy to:

1. The PCCF (HoFF), Department of Forest, Government of Odisha, Bhubaneswar.
2. The DDGF (Central), Regional Office of MoEF&CC at Bhubaneswar.
3. The Nodal Officer (FCA), Department of Forest, Government of Odisha, Bhubaneswar.
4. User Agency

5. Monitoring Cell, FC Division, MoEF&CC, New Delhi for uploading on PARIVESH portal.