

SITE INSPECTION REPORT IN RESPECT OF DIVERSION 594.618 HA OF FOREST LAND IN CONNECTION WITH CONSTRUCTION OF KHURDA-BOLANGIR NEW BG RAIL LINK PROJECT FROM 112 KM. TO 180 KM UNDER NAYAGARH & BOUDH FOREST DIVISION BY EAST COAST RAILWAY.

The site inspection of the above project was carried out by the undersigned on 13.09.2022 along with DFOs of Nayagarh and Boudh Forest Division and representatives from East Coast Railway.

The total length of proposed new BG Rail link is 68 Km, out of which 31.3 Km i.e. from 112 Km to 143.3 Km falls under Nayagarh Forest Division and 36.7 Km i.e. from 143.3 to 180 Km under Boudh Forest Division. The present proposal involves construction of Tunnels in the Nayagarh Forest Division as well as in Boudh Forest Division. The total forest area proposed to be diverted is 594.618 Ha. The Division wise details of forest land involved in this project is as follows:

Sl. No.	Division	Forest land (ha)						Total
		RF	PRF	Revenue Forest	DLC Forest	Deemed Forest	Sabik Forest	
1	Nayagarh	8.397	47.890	169.766	2.100	-	64.136	292.289
2	Boudh	92.826	-	7.418	38.522	109.876	53.657	302.239
3	Grand Total (ha)	101.223	47.89	177.184	40.652	109.876	117.793	594.618

The proposed forest land is mostly very dense forest dominated by Sal and its associates. The DFO, Boudh has reported the density of vegetation as 0.4 to 0.7 and the DFO, Nayagarh has reported the density of vegetation as 0.7. Total 1,03,374 trees will be felled in the diversion of forest land.

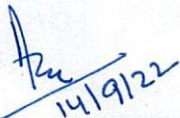
As reported by the DFO, Nayagarh Forest Division the proposed area does not form part of any National Park/Wildlife Sanctuary/Biosphere Reserve/Tiger Reserve. But the surrounding area of the project comprises of good wildlife habitat and there is also an elephant corridor namely Buguda Cololy which is bisected by the proposed railway line. So appropriate overpass is critical for unhindered movement of wild elephant. Also the proposed rail line is passing just parallel to Eco-Sensitive Zone of Baisipali (WL) Sanctuary. Further, as reported by DFO, Boudh the proposed rail line is passing through the elephant corridor in the proposed Mahanadi Elephant Reserve.

The RCCF, Bhubaneswar has submitted the Site Specific Wildlife Conservation Plan to PCCF (WL) & CWLW, Odisha on 12.08.2022. The CWLW has not yet approved the plan.

During site inspection it was observed that the proposed railway line is passing from Buguda to Banigochha (about 15 Km). In this stretch in certain places the proposed railway line is less than 1 Km from the boundary of the Baisipali Wildlife Sanctuary.

Recommendation:

1. As the proposed railway line is in the elephant impact zone and elephant corridor, so elephant overpasses and underpasses at appropriate position as identified by the local Divisional Forest Officer should be constructed.
2. Fencing of the railway line towards the sanctuary side should be done so that elephant will not enter the track and will use the under passes and overpasses.
3. The speed of the train should be less than 20 Km per hour in the stretch so that the train can be stopped without harm to elephants.
4. The Forest Department/Railway Authority should regularly inform each other regarding the movement of elephant.
5. The Railway line should be constructed keeping in view of the Hon'ble Supreme Court order dated 03.06.2022 in I.A. No.1000 of 2003.
6. A Comprehensive Wildlife Management Plan should be prepared addressing all the issues raised during the site inspection not only for elephant but also for all the wildlife found in the locality.


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