

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

Indira Paryavaran Bhawan,  
Aliganj, Jor Bag Road,  
New Delhi - 110003.

**Dated: December, 2022**

To

The Addl. Chief Secretary (Forests),  
Government of Odisha,  
Bhubaneswar

**Sub: Proposal for non-forestry use of 303.066 ha of forest land located in the mining lease Bamebari Iron & Manganese Mines having total area of 454.00 ha in favour of M/s Tata Steel Ltd. in District Keonjhar (Odisha)-reg.**

Sir,

I am directed to refer to the State Government of Odisha's letter No. FE-DIV-0091-2022-20413/FE&CC dated 18.11.2022, seeking prior approval of the Central Government under section 2 of the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 and to say that examination of said proposal in the Ministry revealed the following:

- i. KML file depicting component wise breakup of forest land and the entire lease area has not been provided. The same needs to be provided by the State.
- ii. As per the DSS analysis, a water stream is passing through the southern part of the proposed 254.00 ha of land identified for CA and an old plantation is visible and water body also present in the identified area. The State Government may therefore again examine the suitability of degraded forest land for raising CA.
- iii. Details of the notifications of RF and revenue/relevant records of the recorded forest (Revenue Forest/DLC Forest/Sabik Forest) involved in the proposals to be provided by the State government.
- iv. A site specific Wildlife Management Plan for the area has been approved by the PCCF (Wildlife) on 1.09.2015 with financial outlay of Rs. 635.91 lakh. Detail of updated status of implementation of provisions provided in the site specific Wildlife Management Plan along with year wise details of expenditure incurred on the implementation of provision of the Wildlife Management Plan may be informed by the State.
- v. Copy of the ORSAC, 1999 and comments of the CWLW about the sensitivity of the area in terms of Elephant habitats, corridors and human-elephant conflicts in the area and his recommendations for the proposal.
- vi. As the movement of elephants has been reported in the area, the clear recommendation of Chief Wildlife Warden and PCCF (WL) may be furnished by the State.
- vii. Proposal has been submitted for 303.066 ha while the area as per DGPS survey is 293.629 ha i.e. there is difference of 9.437 ha. The State Government may, therefore, specifically indicate the area to be considered for diversion by the Central Government.

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- viii. Proposal for notification of the land has been submitted on 30.06.2004. Updated status of CA raised in lieu of diversion of 145.329 ha of forest land needs to be informed by the State along with updated progress of notification of non-forest land as PF/RF needs to be informed by the State.
- ix. DFO Keonjhar vide his letter no. 8205 dated 17.11.2021 requested the Collector, Keonjhar to take action as per the prevailing Acts and rules for DLC and Revenue forest land against the violation committed by the user agency in the forest land. Updated status of legal actions taken by the District Collector, Keonjhar may be intimated by the State and justification for delays, if any, may also be furnished.
- x. So far, the user agency has reclaimed an area of 14.70 ha by undertaking back-filling. The State Government may inform if the back-filling is in conformity with the schedule provided in the approved Mining Plan and, gaps if any, may be intimated by the State.
- xi. Purpose wise breakup of forest land reveals that an area of 24.522 ha is under Township/colony. A confirmation needs to be furnished by the State Government if the said area is already under use or it has been or part thereof is proposed afresh for such facilities. The State Government may also submit its comments on the optimization of land requirement for various components such as construction of buildings, OB dumping, mineral storage area, etc. and possibility to shift the same to non-forest area.
- xii. Land use proposed in the Progressive Mine Closure Plan indicate an area of 232.167 ha to be remaining untouched on 31.03.2025 while no such area is mentioned in the land use submitted along with the proposal. Discrepancies were also observed in other land uses for instance land uses like storage of topsoil is not included in the proposal. The State Government may, therefore, comments on the variation in the land uses proposed in the extant proposal and Progressive Mine Closure Plan and area involved thereof.
- xiii. The second renewal term of mining leases in 1982 over an area of 1150.55 ha, including 950.069 ha, was without the prior approval of the Central Government. As per fact contained in the then inspection report of the Regional Officer, the State Government has recommend raising of penal compensatory afforestation in lieu of area used in the violation of FC Act, 1980. Status of the same may be intimated by the State.
- xiv. An area of 4.764 ha has been earmarked for safety zone. KML file of the area earmarked for safety zone may be furnished by the State. As the lease is an existing lease, status of maintenance of the same may be informed by the State along with status of afforestation undertaken in the past in lieu of diversion of forest land may be informed by the State.
- xv. Present status of 145.329 ha of forest land vis-à-vis land use proposed in the current Mining Plan. Whether the approval granted in 2007 and conditions prescribed therein are compatible with the land use proposed in the updated Mining Plan.
- xvi. Details of the operational and abandoned mines in the landscape and also in Keonjhar Forest Division.

In view of the above, I am directed to request the State Government to submit the information/comments/documents, as indicated above, to this Ministry for further necessary action in the matter.

Yours faithfully,  
sd/-

(Charan Jeet Singh)  
Scientist 'D'

Copy to:-

- i. PCCF, Government of Odisha, Bhubaneswar.
- ii. Regional Officer (Central), Integrated Regional Office of the MoEF&CC  
at  
Bhubaneswar
- iii. Nodal Officer (FCA), O/o PCCF , Government of Odisha, Bhubaneswar
- iv. Monitoring Cell of FC Divisions, MoEF&CC, New Delhi
- v. User agency
- vi. Guard file