

I/6886/2021

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

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

Dated: 29th December, 2021

To

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

Sub: Proposal for non-forestry use of 417.073 ha & Re-diversion (Change of Land use) of 171.774 ha forest land in favour of M/s Mahanadi Coalfields Limited for Integrated Lakhanpur-Belpahar-Lilari Opencast Coal Mining Project in district Jharsuguda (Odisha)- reg.

Madam/Sir,

I am directed to refer to State Government of Odisha's letter No. FE-DIV-FLD-0142-2021-20500/ FE&CC dated 24.11.2021 on the above subject seeking prior approval of the Central Government in accordance with Section-2 of the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 and to say that examination of said proposal in the Ministry revealed the following:

- i. There seem to be ambiguity in the total project area and mining lease area as indicated in the tabular and textual detail of the State Governemnt's forwarding letter. Therefore, to have better comprehension, an area change matrix, indicating the exact total approved lease/project area in the past area being proposed for Integrated project may be provided by the State including the breakup of forest land.
- ii. Existing land use of 541.622 ha, diverted in the past, may be indicated by the State. In case the area has already been decoaled, status of its reclamation and handing over back to the Forest Department may be intimated by the State.
- iii. Status of compliance of conditions stipulated in the approval granted in the past over an area of 541.622 ha may be intimated by the State.
- iv. Proposal also involves re-diversion of 171.774 ha from the already diverted area of 541.622 ha where 26,265 trees will be felled. The State Government may therefore intimate the status of payment of NPV in respect of 171.774 ha of forest land proposed for re-diversion by the user agency.
- v. An area of 22.323 ha of safety zone has been earmarked out of 417.073 ha proposed for diversion. Status of entire safety zone maintained in respect of 541.622 ha and its present status and afforestation, if any raised in lieu of 1.5 times the area of safety zone needs to be intimated by the State.
- vi. Cost benefit ratio of 1:103 estimated for the project seems to be exorbitantly high. Examination of the same revealed that attributes of cost and benefits estimate revealed that cost parameters have been estimated for area of 417 ha only while estimation of some of benefits parameters has been accounted for the entire project area which seems to be not an ideal situation of comparing benefits and cost to estimate the CB ratio. Estimation of various parameters may accordingly be revisited by the State.
- vii. As the proposed mine involves considerable high capacity of 40 MTPA which

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may increase the pollution as well as biotic pressure on the surrounding resources, therefore, evacuation plan of coal from the mine head to CHP and further transportation from the CHP to end users may be intimated by the State.

In view of the above, I am directed to request the State Government to submit the information, as indicated above, to this Ministry for further necessary action in the matter. Besides this, the user agency may also be directed to make a presentation before the IGF(FC), preferably through VC, on the proposed projects clarifying the details of total and forest area involved, status of approvals obtained in the past, and other like details for better comprehension of proposal.

Yours faithfully,
sd/-
(Charan Jeet Singh)
Scientist 'D'

Copy to:-

1. Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, Government of Odisha, Bhubaneswar.
2. Regional Officer (Central), Integrated Regional Office of the MoEF&CC at Bhubaneswar
3. Nodal Officer (FCA), Government of Odisha, Bhubaneswar.
4. Monitoring Cell of FC Divisions, MoEF&CC, New Delhi.
5. Guard file.