

STATE FOREST HEADQUATERS  
OFFICE OF THE PRINCIPAL CHIEF CONSERVATOR OF FORESTS & HOFF  
PLOT NO.GD-2/12, ARANYA BHAWAN, CHANDRASEKHARPUR  
BHUBANESWAR-751023

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No.

/9F (MG) -66/2021

Dated, Bhubaneswar the

July, 2023

From

Sri Susanta Nanda, IFS  
Principal Chief Conservator of Forests  
(Forest Diversion & Nodal Officer, FC Act)  
O/o the PCCF & HoFF, Odisha, Bhubaneswar

To

The Assistant Inspector General of Forests  
Government of India  
Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change  
(Forest Conservation Division), Indira Paryavaran Bhawan  
Jor Bag Road, Aliganj, New delhi-110003

Sub: Proposal for seeking prior approval of the Central Government under Section-2 (ii) of the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 for non-forestry use of 42.608 ha of Forest land (16.658 ha in Keonjhar 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 Ltd. formerly known as Bhusan Steel Ltd. (Online Proposal No.FP/OR/MIN/49169/2010)

Ref: Letter No.8-13/2022-FC dated 10.05.2023 of Asst. Inspector General of Forests, GoI, MoEF & CC, New Delhi

Sir,

In inviting reference to the Government of India, Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change, New Delhi vide letter cited above on the captioned subject, the compliance to the observation on four (4) points are furnished as follows:

***Observation-(i):*** The Sub-committee in its report has mentioned that any additional mining lease in the area shall impact the movement of elephants not only in the Sundargarh District but also in adjoin states of Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh. Further, considering the present situation of mining in the area and rise in human elephant conflict the committee is of the opinion that the possibility of mitigating the impact is not foreseen. Mitigation measures have been suggested to reduce the impact of ongoing of mining activities. Further, it has been mentioned that if these mitigation measures are implemented, in future, the government may consider for additional mining lease after due evaluation. The State Government shall give justification for the instant proposal in view of above.

As reported by the RCCF, Rourkela Circle, foreseeing the possible impact of mining on wildlife of the instant proposal, a mitigation plan in terms of the Site Specific Wildlife Conservation Plan (SSWLCP) has been prepared as per approved guideline of State Government incorporating the interventions of Bonai and Keonjhar Division as the project area spreads to both the Divisions. On receipt of the said SSWLCP from Bonai Division, it has been submitted to the PCCF (WL) & CWLW, Odisha vide Memo No.2105 dt.4.7.2023 for necessary approval.

The aforesaid SSWLCP focuses on Wildlife Habitat Management, Protection & Enforcement Activities, Wildlife Monitoring, Human Elephant Conflict Mitigation and Public awareness and livelihood Generation activities through Community mobilization in zone of impact around 10 KMs of radial distances of the project site.

The DFO, Keonjhar has focused on monitoring and evaluation, use of technology for Elephant monitoring, Gaja Bandhu Scheme (Public Volunteer) and recruitment of front line human resources in the form of elephant squads.

The User Agency has been mandated to implement mitigation measures in core area focusing on fire watcher, provision of fire blowers and fire fighting squad, awareness promotion regarding wildlife protection, provision of installation and maintenance of high mast solar light system, provision of distribution of small paddy reaper machine to the household, provision of distribution of Grain bins, provision of Jana Surakhya Gaja Rakhya in 5 villages, infrastructure support etc.

As reported by both the DFOs of Bonai & Keonjhar Division, all these mitigation measures will create a win-win situation for sustainable mining and wildlife conservation. Moreover, many other mitigation measures in the same impact area derived from adjoining mines are already being implemented which will complement mitigation measures suggested in the instant plan.

The Site-Specific Wildlife Conservation Plan duly prepared by the Divisional Forest Officer, Bonai Division is enclosed as **Annexure-A**.

***Observation-(ii): State Government shall submit a point wise reply/ comments/ justification on the mitigation measures suggested and issued raises in the report of the sub-committee as above.***

As reported by the RCCF, Rourkela Circle, the mitigation measures as per SSWLCP would address the impact of the project on wildlife including elephants in and around the project area. The Comprehensive Action Plan (CAP) for conservation of Elephant and mitigation of Human-Elephant Conflicts in Odisha prepared in consultation with experts, field level functionaries and NGOs as per direction of the Hon'ble High Court of Orissa in Writ

Petition © PIL No.14706/2022 has already been approved by the High Power Committee (HPC) under the Chairmanship of the Chief Secretary, Odisha. Action points under 10 pillar strategy have been envisaged in the CAP with short terms, medium term and long term mitigative measures. The action plan will act as a perspective plan for Elephant Management in the State in the years to come.

The recommendation as per final report of the study conducted by CSIR-NEERI on carrying capacity vis-à-vis pollution in these area and the Suggested Ore Transportation Mode (SOTM) will be implemented. This is likely to facilitate un-hindered movement of Elephants.

Further, the SSWLCP gives importance to mitigate threats to the wildlife by focusing on the following points.

- a) To conserve available population of wildlife in general and the Pachyderm in particular in the natural habitat.
- b) Conservation, Protection and Improvement of the flora and fauna in an around the project area.
- c) To conserve the natural Bio-diversity, aesthetic and geo morphological value of the area with appropriate management of Site, Habitat and Land scape.
- d) To reduce the dependency of local people on the forest issues and viable alternates by undertaking Eco-Development programme.
- e) To reduce man-animal conflict by ensuring contiguity of Habitat in the Buffer Zone by improving forest cover in long term basis.

***Observation-(iii): The State Govt. shall compile the detail of all the functional/ non-functional and other mines under various stages of approval and their possible impact on the larger landscape.***

In this context, the Director of Mines, Odisha after examining the proposal submitted by the field officials, has submitted a report which is enclosed as **Annexure-B**. As such the land pertaining to any of the non-functional mining leases does not have any scope of being surrender because of reasons mentioned therein by Director of Mines, Government of Odisha. The present status of the leases is enclosed herewith in above annexure for reference.

***Observation-(iv): The State Government has submitted that to address the issue of interstate movement of elephants in the larger landscape comprising of Odisha, Jharkhand, Chhatisgarh and South Western part of West Bengal; MoEF & CC (Project Elephant Division) may assign reputed organization/ Institution to prepare Comprehensive Elephant Management Plan for the said Region. Keeping this in view the Ministry shall seek the comments of the Project Elephant Division on the instant proposal.***

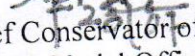
**This observation is not related to State Government.**

The Government of India, Ministry of Forest, Environment & Climate Change may seek the comments of the Project Elephant Division on the instant proposal.


In view of the above, it is requested that the proposal for seeking prior approval under Section-2 (ii) of the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 in favour of M/s TATA Steel BSL for non-forestry use of 42.608 ha of Forest land (16.658 ha in Keonjhar 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 may kindly be considered.

Encl: -As above


Yours faithfully

  
Principal Chief Conservator of Forests  
Forest Diversion & Nodal Officer, FC Act

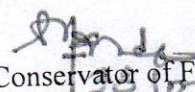
Memo No. /Dt.  
Copy along with enclosures forwarded to the Deputy Director General of Forests (C), Government of India, MoEF & CC, IRO, A/3 Chandrasekharpur, Bhubaneswar for favour of kind information and necessary action with reference to Letter No.8-13/2022-FC dated 10.05.2023 of Asst. Inspector General of Forests, GoI, MoEF & CC, New Delhi.  
Encl: -As above

  
Principal Chief Conservator of Forests  
Forest Diversion & Nodal Officer, FC Act


Memo No. 15273 /Dt. 28 07 2023  
Copy along with enclosures forwarded to the Additional Chief Secretary to Government, Forest, Environment & Climate Change Department, Odisha, Bhubaneswar for information and necessary action with reference to Letter No.8-13/2022-FC dated 10.05.2023 of Asst. Inspector General of Forests, GoI, MoEF & CC, New Delhi.  
Encl: -As above

  
Principal Chief Conservator of Forests  
Forest Diversion & Nodal Officer, FC Act

Memo No. /Dt.  
Copy forwarded to the Regional Chief Conservator of Forests, Rourkela Circle for information and necessary action with reference to his Memo No.2376 dated 26.07.2023.

  
Principal Chief Conservator of Forests  
Forest Diversion & Nodal Officer, FC Act

Memo No. /Dt.  
Copy forwarded to the Divisional Forest Officer, Bonai and Keonjhar Forest Division for information and necessary action with reference to Memo No.2377 dated 26.07.2023 of RCCF, Rourkela Circle.

  
Principal Chief Conservator of Forests  
Forest Diversion & Nodal Officer, FC Act

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