



OFFICE OF THE PRINCIPAL CHIEF CONSERVATOR OF FORESTS, ODISHA,  
BHUBANESWAR

Letter No. 2110  
Dated, Bhubaneswar, the

/9F (Irrg)-398 /2019  
February, 2021

To

The Additional Chief Secretary to Government,  
Forest & Environment Department,  
Government of Odisha

**Sub: Proposal for diversion of 26.444 ha of forest land for construction of Khairibhandan Barrage Project at Anlabeni in Jashipur Block of Karanjia Forest Division under Mayurbhanj District-Constitution of Expert Committee as per observation of Govt. of India, MoEF & CC, IRO, Bhubaneswar**

Madam,

In inviting reference to Government in F&E Department letter No.10F(Cons)91/2020-19998/F&E dated 10.12.2020 on the captioned subject, it is to inform that the Field Director, STR-Cum-RCCF Baripada Circle has submitted the comments/ views of members of the committee after their site inspection, pertaining to the above project vide his memo No.64 dated 08.01.2021 (copy enclosed). The detail comments regarding diversion of 26.444 ha of forest land for construction of Khairibhandan Barrage Project of Dr. Anup Kumar Nayak, IFS (Retd.) Member of the Expert Committee and Shri Amitav Brahma, IFS (CF, Nodal) Member & others have furnished their views on 23.12.2020 and 06.01.2021 respectively are furnished below. Sri S.N. Patro, one of the members expressed his inability to attend the assignment on his health issues.

**Observation submitted by Dr. Anup Kumar Nayak:**

**Observation-1: Construction of the barrage will create danger for eco-tourism centre & crocodile breeding centre. Footprints of Lord Rama will be submerged.**

**Comments:** Barrage length-171.5m  
Pond level-394 m  
Eco-tourism centre level- 398.3 m  
Temple level-399 m

Since, both Ramatirtha centre and temple are at a higher level than the highest pond level, apparently, there is no threat. However, the approach road leading to the barrage need to be constructed in consultation with Irrigation Department and RCCF Baripada in a manner, which would facilitate the activities of the eco-tourism centre rather than obstructing it. Shifting of footprints and sitting place of Lord Rama without losing their significance is feasible.

**Observation-2 : Due to construction of the barrage, the shiva temple and the scenic beauty will be lost forever.**

**Comments:** Back waters of the barrage will provide an excellent opportunity to develop eco-tourism activity, if properly planned and executed will be an added attraction to the existing eco-tourism centre at Ramatirtha. Crocodile breeding centre, medicinal garden, Interpretation centre,



picnic spots, Shiva temple, boating facility in the impounding water etc can make the place more attractive than what it is today. It appears the barrage will straight open into the temple, which may make entry into the temple from the existing end a little difficult. This needs to be taken care of by the Irrigation Department.

**Observation-3: Construction of a road over the barrage will make a thoroughfare.**

**Comments:** This can easily be taken care of by placing an access control system along the approach road to the barrage which can be jointly operated by both DowR and Forest Department. So the concerns that Ramatirtha ecotourism centre will lose revenue with unhindered entry of visitors is not well-founded.

**Observation-4: Pondage of water will not be sufficient to irrigate such huge command area proposed. Anlabani Irrigation Project is already existing.**

**Comments:** The State president of All india Majdoor Sangathan Mr Raghunath Das and Ex-MLA of local area Mr Sambhunath Naik were present at the time of field visit. Both of them spoke strongly in favour of the project, which will benefit huge numbers of farmers in this backward district. Irrigation officials present, vouched for the technical feasibility of the project. We accept their point of view.

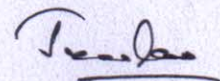
**Observation-5: Deo Medium Irrigation Project is already under construction. Hence another new irrigation project in the same area will only increase man-animal conflict.**

**Comments:** These are two different Irrigation Projects with no overlapping command area. Hence, the existence of Deo Irrigation project has no relevance to the commission of the proposed Irrigation Project. However, the command area of proposed irrigation project harbour a small population of elephants historically, which keep on moving in and out to Jharkhand. These elephants often raid paddy crops leading to conflict. During the last 6 years since 2014-15, as many as 233 number of such cases have been reported in and around the command area involving about 50 acres of paddy crop and very small area of other cash crops. Thus at present, the quantum of conflict is moderately high, which can be taken care of by deploying adequate Anti-Depredation Squad for driving away the elephants and disbursing quickly the compassionate amount towards crop damage etc. However, for long term solution of the problem, certain measures need to be taken up early which are deliberated in the following paragraph.

**Observation-6 & 7: Construction of such huge canal system (10m width) will obstruct migratory elephants from Jharkhand.**

**Comments:** Concerns are genuine. Network of canals will obstruct smooth movement of elephant herds in the command area. However mitigation measures as prescribed in guidelines issued by NTCA/WII will be able to take care of that concern and facilitate easy movement of elephants across the canals. The exact locations of such crossing points need to be provided by RCCF, Baripada. The ideal case would be the network of underground pipes instead of canals, which will be a win-win situation for both. However, the feasibility of such adventure may be studied before implementation.

It is suggested that the existing elephant corridor between Dobhaobhin and Badampahar, although away from the command area of the project, needs to be strengthened in terms of fodder





quality and forest quality. This corridor is degraded due to excessive biotic Interference like collection of NTFP by locals and grazing by huge number of cattle Activities like stall feeding of cattle and incentives to local villagers for not letting their cattle go inside as well as non-collection of NTFP from the corridor area, needs to be taken up seriously for which the user agency may be asked to provide funds.

It is also suggested that crop pattern around the migration path of elephants within the command area need to be decided in consultation with Agriculture Department so that growing paddy cultivation does not become a point of increasing conflict with elephants. Similarly, all the areas within the command area need not be cultivated for paddy alone as it is one of the major attraction for elephants.

Apart from above, sufficient fund need to be made available with RCCF Baripada for deployment of additional Anti-Depredation Squads, quick payment of Compassionate amounts and trying Innovating methods of detecting the presence of elephants using modern technique and for taking confident building measures among the villagers.

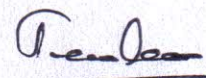
***Observation-8: Some good patches of Sal forests at Khudarbidingha RF and a good plantation at Bhramarposi RF will be diverted***

**Comments:** Forest area involved in these RFs are 1.738 ha and 301 ha respectively. That too both these areas are outside the protected areas and ESZ area of Similipal Sanctuary. The FC Act and Rules have enough provisions to compensate for such diverted forest area. Therefore, the concerns are not genuine.

Thus, we find the project proposal is feasible subject to adequate safeguards as mentioned in the above paragraphs.

**Observation submitted by other members of the committee:**

- a. The representatives of Project Proponent on the day of site inspection on 06.01.2021 stated that they are planning to shift location of the barrage axis by 45-48 mtrs upstream of the river to avoid the threat of causing damage to Shiva temple, Hanuman statue on one side of Khairibhandan River and Medicinal garden on the other side while constructing the approach roads to link the operating platform of the barrage from both ends.
- b. Further, they revealed before the committee that it is being planned by WR Dept. to go for UGPL (Underground Pipeline) system, in place of open canal system to avoid land acquisition problem.
- c. The committee inspected the tentative revised location of the axis of the barrage and found that the approach roads to be constructed to the platform of the barrage on its axis from the right bank may not cause any damage to the existing temple and Hanuman statue, but on the left bank it may land very close to the existing structure of Ramatirtha crocodile project in particular close to the existing Breeding pools.
- d. Further, it was elaborated by Directors of Planning ( the representatives of the Project Proponent) that if the barrage axis is shifted up-stream by 45-48 mtrs , the-end sill of the proposed barrage (ie. the apron along river bed downstream from the base of the barrage-axis)





will terminate just before the original location of barrage axis , which is very close to the footprint of Lord Ram on the rock. But, for clear passage of designed flood, DoWR shall safely extract and preserve the stone bearing the foot signs of manly venerated footprints of Lord Rama to a shrine on a river bank for the devotees to see and worship. This shall provide better and all weather access to the footprints preferably for elderly people. On this issue, Sub-Collector, Panchpir , the representative of Collector, Mayurbhanj ,stated that in that case the WR Dept. will have to follow the statutory procedural requirement of consulting the local people and get their consent to avoid future unpleasant situation

Under these circumstances narrated above it is inferred by the members of the committee after inspection of the site on 06.1.2020 that that,

- a. If the provision of UGPL system is implemented in place of open canal system proposed earlier both on left and right canal systems, then the issue of movement of migratory elephants across the canal system as observed by Dy. IGF Central will be addressed.
- b. Regarding other issues like impact of the proposed Irrigation Project to existing Siva temple, Hanuman statue and threat to the Ramathirtha Ecotourism complex more or less can be avoided by proposed shift of barrage axis up-stream as mentioned above, however the exact extent of impact of the Project can only be assessed after the change of location of axis is finalized and the location of approach roads to the platform from both sides is decided and the records, Plans, Maps, Sketches of the axis and alignment of roads are produced by the User agency with changed location of the barrage axis. Further under this scenario user agency will have to furnish all the relevant documents projecting the change of their project plan to DFO Karanjia, for its further processing. Both the Director of Planning, WR Dept have given their consent for the furnishing the said documents.
- c. Further, the members reported that, after change of location of the barrage axis upstream by 48 mtrs, the existing structures i.e. the pump house of the Ramathirtha Ecotourism complex will be inundated. In that case WR Dept will have to take up the suggestions made by Dr. Anup Nayak, IFS Retd, Ex- MS NTCA, by the WR Dept at project cost along with the mitigating and up gradation measures like bank beautification, up gradation of Crocodile Breeding pools, picnic spots and modernization of Interpretation centre at the Ramthirtha Ecotourism complex,

This is submitted for kind information of Government.

**Encl: As above**

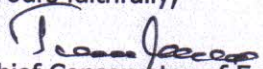
Memo No.


2111

/Dt.

Copy forwarded to the Regional Chief Conservator of forest, Bhubaneswar Circle for information and necessary action with reference to his memo No.4844 dt.30.12.2020.

Yours faithfully,


  
Principal Chief Conservator of Forests  
Forest Diversion & Nodal Officer, F.C. Act

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




Memo No. 2112 /Dt. 02-02-2021

Copy forwarded to the Divisional Forest Officer, Mangrove (WL) Division, Rajnagar for information and necessary action with reference to Memo No.4845 dt.30.12.2020 of RCCF Bhubaneswar Circle to his address.

  
Principal Chief Conservator of Forests  
Forest Diversion & Nodal Officer, FC Act  
01/2021

Memo No. 2113 Dt. 02-02-2021

Copy forwarded to the Chief General Manager (Land) IDCO, IDCO Tower, Bhubaneswar for information and necessary action.

  
Principal Chief Conservator of Forests  
Forest Diversion & Nodal Officer, FC Act  
01/2021