



**OFFICE OF THE
REGIONAL CHIEF CONSERVATOR OF FORESTS, ROURKELA CIRCLE,
AT/P.O. PANPOSH, ROURKELA-769 004.**

Memo No. **6110** /3F(Misc)-873/2024

Date: **02.12.2024**

To

The Principal Chief Conservator of Forests
(Forest Diversion & Nodal Officer, FC Act),
O/o the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests,
Odisha, Bhubaneswar.

Sub: Proposal for seeking prior approval of the Central Government under Section 2 of the Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhniyam, 1980 for non-forestry use of 134.69 ha of forest land for Expansion of Kulda Open cast Coal Mining Project of Basundhara Area of Mahanadi Coalfields Limited in Sundargarh district of Sundargarh Forest Division.

Ref: 1. Letter No. 8-7/2024-FC Dated 07.11.2024 of MoEF & CC, GoI
2. Memo No.21868/FE & CC Dtd.12.11.2024 of OSD-cum-Spl. Secretary to Govt, FE & CC Deptt.
3. Your Memo No.22718 dt. 12.11.2024
4. Memo No.6513 Dtd.22.11.2024 of the DFO, Sundargarh Division.
5. This office Memo No.5971 Dtd.27.11.2024.
6. . Memo No.6723 Dtd.30.11.2024 of the DFO, Sundargarh Division.

With reference to the aforementioned Memos on the captioned subject, the DFO, Sundargarh Division vide his Memo No.6512 Dtd.22.11.2024 addressed to this office and copy thereof endorsed to you in the next Memo of even date has submitted the point wise compliance with the observations made vide Letter No. 8-7/2024-FC Dated 07.11.2024 of MoEF & CC, Govt. of India. On scrutiny of the aforesaid compliance, clarification on certain points/information were sought from the DFO Sundargarh Division vide this office Memo No.5970 Dtd.27.11.2024 with copy to you in the next Memo of even date. In pursuance of the same, the DFO, Sundargarh Division vide his Memo No.6722 Dtd.30.11.2024 with copy to you in the next Memo of even date has submitted his compliance report which may kindly be perused.

The point wise compliance submitted by the DFO, Sundargarh Division is as follows:-

- i. **As per the proposal the lease area is mentioned as 921.35 ha however, as per DSS analysis the area of Kulda OCP lease (including additional area) is found 831.885 ha. The state shall examine and submit the correct area details and correct KML file of the lease area is required to be submitted.**

As reported by the DFO, Sundargarh Division, in compliance to the above, the User Agency has intimated that, as per approved Mining Plan and EC, Kulda OCP was being operated within a mining lease area of 634.205 Ha. The current expansion is for an additional lease area of 295.62 Ha making it a total of 929.825 Ha. However, as an area of 8.52 Ha of forest land was re-diverted for Basundhara Washery, the total lease area was revised to 921.305 Ha. The layout plan showing the Present area of Kulda and the expansion area is being attached herewith as **Annexure "A"**.

To comply the observation, the User Agency has prepared and submitted a KML file to reflect the lease boundary of 921 ha, which is attached in CD Form.

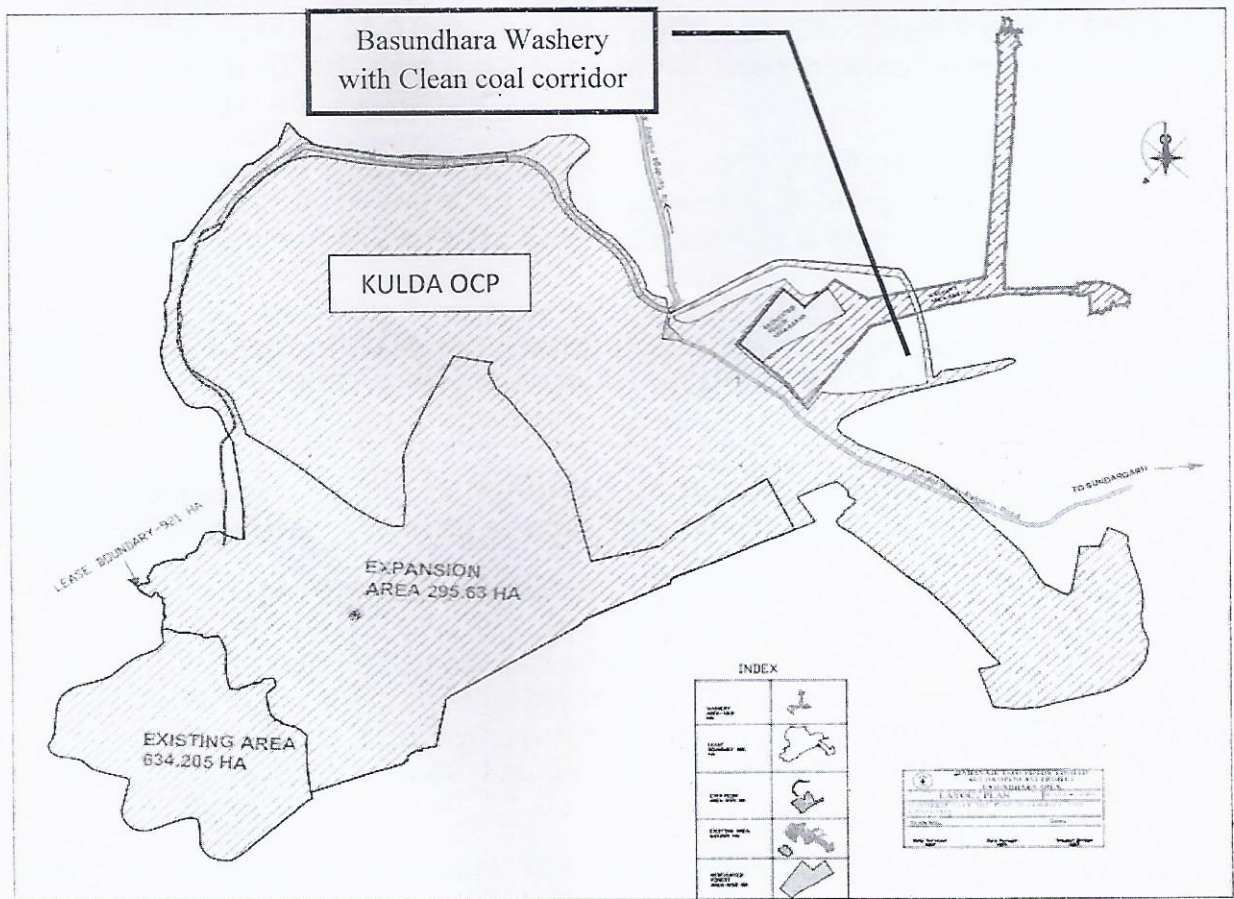
Further, the DFO, Sundargarh Division vide his Memo No. 6722 Dtd 30.11.2024 has stated that, as per DSS analysis report, an area 10 Ha of water bodies was not included earlier and it is clarified that an area of 929 ha is comprised of 4 Ha as MDF, 678 Ha as Non-Forest, 132 Ha as open forest, 105 Ha as scrub and 10 Ha Water Bodies. The KML file of 921 Ha & DSS analysis photocopy are attached in **Annexure-A-I**.

- ii. **After the examination of the reply of point (iii) (a) of the Ministry's observation dated 11.06.2024 it has been observed that the Ministry has accorded earlier approval vide letter dated 08.08.2007 for diversion of 227.86 ha. (as against initially proposed 280.86 ha) for Kulda OCP. Later the Ministry has accorded 29.41 ha of forest land (20.89 ha fresh area and 8.52 ha of land for re- diversion out of already diverted forest area of 227.89 ha for Kulda OCP of MCL) for construction of Basundhara Coal Washery (10 MTY).**

In this regard as per the record available with the Ministry, the total forest area of Kudla OCP will be $(227.89 - 8.52 = 219.37 + 134.69$ ha for current proposal and $20.89 + 8.52$ ha for washery) which comes out to be 383.47. However, the State Govt. has informed that the total forest area is 354.06 ha. This needs clarification.

As reported by the DFO, Sundargarh Division, in compliance to the above, the User Agency has intimated that, the proposed Basundhara washery is a standalone project which will be constructed near mine entry of Kulda OCP in the northern side. It is also proposed to install 3 nos. Rapid loading systems by constructing Silos for fast evacuation of coal at Barpali Bulb. The washed coal shall be carried by the series of conveyors from the proposed washery to feed into the Silo located approximately 2.0 km from the washery site. The location of silo is proposed on the MGR loop connecting the railway line from Jharsuguda to Sardega near Barapali yard.

A map showing the location of Basundhara Washery with respect to Kulda OCP is as shown below: -



The Washery project with Clean coal corridor and Reject Storage site is planned to be set up in an area of 43.9 Ha, the details of which are as shown in the table below:

Sl. No	Description of structure	Total Land (ha)	Type of land (ha)		
			Forest	Govt	Tenancy
1	Washery	19.32	18.07	0.54	0.71
2	Reject Storage Site	2.71	--	1.53	1.18
3	Reject conveying corridor	0.85	0.53	0.32	--
4	Clean coal Conv. corridor	21.02	10.81	1.94	8.27
	Total	43.90	29.41	4.33	10.16

Further, the User Agency has intimated that, out of the 29.41 ha of forest land involved in the washery project, 8.52 Ha has already been diverted for infrastructure of Kulda OCP vide FC no. 8-176/1997-FC dated 8th August, 2007 which has been re-diverted for Basundhara Washery. Rest of the land i.e. 20.89 Ha Forest land and 14.49 Ha Non Forest land does not fall in Kulda Project and is separate.

The User Agency has submitted the layout plan showing Kulda OCP and Basundhara Washery which is attached in **Annexure "A"**.

The User Agency has submitted, the EC for Basundhara Washery vide No. J-11015/435/2013-IA-II (M) dated 31.10.2019 detailing the land usage at section 3 (xii), which is attached in **Annexure "B"**.

Hence, the User Agency has intimated that, the total forest area involved in Kulda Project will be (Kulda OCP-227.89Ha-Basundhara Washery re-diversion-8.52Ha+Kuda Expansion-134.69Ha) **354.06 Ha** only.

- iii. **Further, the details of 20.89 ha has not been provided by the State Govt. The KML file of 20.89 and 8.52 ha and CA area against the said proposal is also required to be submitted.**

The User Agency has intimated that, the KML of 29.41 Ha forest land including 20.89 Fresh forest land and 8.52 Ha re-diversion is being attached herewith in CD form. The DGPS plans of 29.41 Ha forest land, which is attached in **Annexure "C"**.

An area of **29.41Ha** (Revenue Forest-19.52Ha + Reserve Forest-1.37 Ha = 20.89Ha + 8.52 Ha of Revenue Forest) =29.41Ha of forest land has been approved Stage-I Forest Clearance vide order No.8-176/1997-FC (Vol) dt.11.03.2019 of MoEF & CC, GoI. The copy of Stage-I approval order is attached in **Annexure-"C-I"**.

- iv. **Further, a report on the compliance of the conditions stipulated in all the past approvals is required to submit after verification from RO.**

As reported by the DFO, Sundargarh Division, the field verification has been conducted by him on 25.07.2024 and compliance of conditions of MoEF & CC for 227.89Ha of Kulda OCP has been submitted vide his Office Memo No.3986 dt.26.07.2024, the copy of monitoring report is attached in **Annexure-"D"**.

Further, the report of RO which already contains the compliances of FC obtained for Kulda OCP vide FC No. 8-176/1997-FC dated 8th August, 2007 is attached in **Annexure "D-1"**.

- v. **After the analysis of the KML file of the proposed forest land it has been observed that habitation, cultivation land, mined out area and road is visible in the proposed revenue forest patches. In this regard the comments of the State Government shall be provided along with action report as applicable.**

As reported by the DFO, Sundargarh Division, in compliance to the above, it is acknowledge that habitation & cultivated land are visible within the proposed revenue forest patches. Further, it is to highlight that several land claims have been settled under the **Forest Rights Act, 2006 (FRA)** in the villages of **Siarmal** and **Tumlia** coming under this expansion project as per FRA Certificate issued by the Collector, Sundargarh with the list of Title holders vide letter No.5418 dt.21.06.2021 is being attached in **Annexure-"E"**.

It is also to state that no mining has been done in the expansion area of Kulda OCP. The roads visible within the proposed forest patches have been constructed for **internal use** related to forest conservation and management activities of Lalma Reserve Forest. These Kachha roads are not intended for public access, commercial use, or any form of development but were created to facilitate the **maintenance, protection, and monitoring** of the forest. The primary purpose of these roads is to ensure the **effective management of the forest ecosystem**, such as for activities related to **fire control, anti-poaching patrols, and wildlife monitoring**.

- vi. **KML file of earlier diverted 227.89 ha forest land and safety zone is required to be submitted.**

As reported by the DFO, Sundargarh Division, in compliance to the above, the User Agency has intimated that, the forest diversion of 227.89 Ha has been applied in the year 1996 and Stage-I approval has been obtained for 50.72 Ha in the year 2001 and for balance 177.17 Ha in the year 2002. Stage-II FC has been obtained in the year 2007. No DGPS Survey was carried out at that time and all the approvals have been done by the government as per plans submitted in hard copies. Further, the User Agency has prepared & submitted the KML of Forest patches & showing Safety Zone, which is attached in **CD form**.

vii. Revenue Forest patch nos. 2264, 2235, 2233, 2217 and 2188 are falling outside the lease boundary and their total area is found 1.671 ha. This needs clarification and corrective action is to be taken accordingly.

As reported by the DFO, Sundargarh Division, in compliance to the above, the User Agency has intimated that, the DGPS survey of Tumulia Village had to be re conducted due to mismatch with land schedule. Accordingly some of the additional plots which are located near the boundary of Kulda and Garjanbahal, which were earlier left out of the lease boundary over Revenue Forest patch nos. **2264, 2235, 2233, 2217 and 2188= 5 Plots relating to Kulda Expansion Project of MCL.** The revised KML file submitted by the User Agency showing the lease boundary of 295.62Ha is attached in CD form and as map in **Annexure-F**.

viii. As per the analysis on DSS, the area proposed for CA namely Patch 2 (56.5 ha) and Patch 3 (131.545 ha) is having density more than 0.4. Out of 56.5 ha area, 51.0 ha in Patch 2 and out of 131.545 ha, 65.0 ha area in patch 3 (total 116 ha) is found as MDF. Therefore the revised CA area is required to be submitted with all requisite details for plantations.

As reported by the DFO, Sundargarh Division, the instant project needs a diversion of 134.69 Ha and accordingly needed 270Ha of degraded Reserve forest land as CA. However, for this project a total of 305.59 Ha has been identified for CA. Out of 305.59Ha an effective area of 286.96 Ha has been considered for CA plantation.

The details of which are as follows:

Sl. No	Details of CA Land	Allotted area(Ha)	Effective area (Ha)	ANR (Plantation/Ha)
1	Pandripani RF	64.10	56.30	600
2	Sidarmunda RF	53.56	53.56	400
3	Punjipahad RF	131.54	121.00	600
4	Panikholia RF	56.39	56.10	400
5	Total:-	305.59Ha	286.96Ha	

The DSS Analysis of the allotted CA lands when it was finalised in the year 2022-2023:-

Sl. No	Name of notified land for earlier allotted CA	DSS analysis					Google verification
		MDF	Non-Forest	Open Forest	Water	Scrub	
1	Pandripani RF	0	9	55	0	0	1-House
2	Sidarmunda RF	0	1	52	0	0	
3	Punjipahad RF	0	6	125	0	0	
4	Panikholia RF	0	1	56	0	0	
Total:-		0	17	288	0	0	
Non-Forest-17Ha + Open Forest-288=305Ha available & effective area-286.96Ha, as per DSS figure for the year, 2022-2023.							

Accordingly, the scheme has been prepared considering the density of the patches @ 400 / 600 ANR Plantation per/Ha which has been assessed jointly by the Forest Official of Gopalpur Range and User Agency and found to be feasible and suitable for taking up CA @600/Ha & @400/Ha at that time.

The DSS analysis report is enclosed herewith vide Annexure-G.

ix. After the analysis of the KML file of the proposed CA land it has been observed that road is passing through patch No. 3 & 4. Further, encroachment in the form of cultivation land, habitation, man-made water body is visible in patch no.1 and plantation in patch no.3 (during year 2022). In this regard the comments of the State Government shall be provided (DSS report is enclosed for reference).

As reported by the DFO, Sundargarh Division, a total of 305.59 Ha has been identified for CA for this project. The road, water body, cultivation land and plantation etc have been taken into consideration and an effective area of 286.96 Ha have been considered for plantation. The road visible in patch 3 & 4 is the road existing since many years, which was not taken up in total CA area.

The cultivated lands & water body are a part of FRA patta applied at FRC level but not yet finalised. However, these are also excluded from total CA area:

As per DSS current analysis report an area of 135.88Ha of land is suitable for plantation, out of 286.96Ha of identified CA land. The current DSS analysis report is enclosed herewith vide **Annexure-H**.

Further, the DFO, Sundargarh Division vide his Memo No. 6722 Dtd 30.11.2024 has reported that, the CA land patches selected were checked on FSI-DSS portal during 2022-2023 and all the patches were under Open Forest Category(Canopy density <0.4). The DSS analysis report generated during that time is attached herewith for kind perusal. So, in order to conform this by grounding truthing, a density study has been carried out by the Range Officer, Gopalpur along with MCL authorities in areas showing MDF, as per DSS analysis at 7 Nos of sample plots of 20m x 20m in Punjipahad RF & 10 nos of sample plots of 20m x 20m in Panikholia RF and the joint field verification report along with photographs are enclosed herewith.

Therefore, as stated by the DFO, Sundargarh Division, the density study proves that, the identified Compensatory Afforestation land in Punjipahad RF & Panikholia RF @600 plants/Ha & @400 plants/Ha respectively are suitable for raising CA, against the already approved Compensatory Afforestation Scheme vide Memo No.7714 Dtd.08.04.2024 with a financial outlay of Rs.9,02,61,000/- in respect of the above Compensatory Afforestation.

Therefore, the point wise EDS reply along with all related documents submitted by the DFO, Sundargarh Division are enclosed herewith for favour of your kind information & necessary action.

Encl: As above.


Regional Chief Conservator of Forests,
Rourkela Circle

Memo No. 6111 Date: 02-12-2024
Copy forwarded to the Divisional Forest Officer, Sundargarh Division for information and necessary action with reference to his Memo No.6512 Dtd.22.11.2024 & Memo No.6722 Dtd.30.11.2024.


Regional Chief Conservator of Forests,
Rourkela Circle