



STATE FOREST HEADQUARTERS, ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE PRINCIPAL CHIEF CONSERVATOR OF FORESTS & HOFF
PLOT NO.GD-2/12, ARANYA BHAWAN, CHANDRASEKHARPUR
BHUBANESWAR – 751023
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No. 24486 /9F(Rly.)-413/2021
Dated, Bhubaneswar, the 03 December, 2022

To

The Deputy Inspector General of Forests (Central)
Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change
Government of India, Integrated Regional Office
Bhubaneswar

Sub: Diversion of 594.618 ha of forest land for construction of Khordha Road – Bolangir New B.G. Railway link project from Km. 112 to Km. 180 by East Coast Railways – regarding.

Ref: Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Government of India, Integrated Regional Officer, Bhubaneswar Letter F.No.5-ORA528/2022-BHU dated 01.12.2022.

Madam,

In inviting reference to the above cited letter on the aforementioned subject, a copy of the order issued by the PCCF & HoFF, Odisha on dated 23.11.2022 as per Hon'ble Supreme Court order dated 03.06.2022 is enclosed herewith for favour of kind information and necessary action.

Yours faithfully,

Encl: As above.


Conservator of Forests (Nodal)

Memo No. 24487 /Dt. 03.12.2022

Copy along with copy of the order issued by the PCCF & HoFF, Odisha forwarded to the P.S. to Addl. Chief Secretary to Government, Forest, Environment & Climate Change Department, Odisha, Bhubaneswar for kind information of Addl. Chief Secretary to Govt., FE&CC Department.


Conservator of Forests (Nodal)

o/c



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E-mail:- nodal.pccfhoff@odisha.gov.in

UoI No. 112 / 9F (Rly) 413/2021
Dated Bhubaneswar the 23rd November, 2022

ORDER

Sub:- Diversion of 594.618 ha (292.289 ha in Nayagarh Forest Division and 302.239 ha in Boudh Forest Division) of forest land in connection with Khurda-Bolangir New BG Rail Link Project 112 Km to 180 Km under Nayagarh and Boudh Forest Division by East Coast Railway- regarding.

Whereas, the Indian Railway have taken up the project of construction of New BG line having an approx. length of 289 Km from Khurda to Bolangir to connect the unconnected hinter land of Odisha with major cities and in the instant case diversion of 594.618 ha of forest land (112 Km to 180 Km) under Nayagarh and Boudh Forest Division is under consideration.

And whereas, in the REC meeting held on 15.09.2022, the proposal was discussed and was deferred due to the observation that the proposed railway line is very close to the boundary of Baisipali Wildlife Sanctuary and mentioned that as per Hon'ble Supreme Court of India under in IA No.1000 of 2003 dated 03.06.2022 the Railway authority should realign the above stretch keeping in view the minimum distance 1 Km from the boundary of Sanctuary.

And whereas, the project proponent expressed their difficulties and represented that the said alignment was finalized with State Govt. during 2018 with much deliberation keeping in view of Brutanga river, sanctuary and forest areas. Ruling gradient has also been finalized. Providing steeper gradient will lead to terrain problem. Private land coming in the stretch has already also been acquired and payment has already been made by project proponent. Station yard has also been proposed between NH-57 and Brutanga river for easier accessibility for the public. Thus, the railway authority expressed that realignment of the railway line is technically not feasible.

And whereas, the Chief Engineer (Con-1), East Coast Railway, Bhubaneswar vide his Letter dtd.27.09.2022 has intimated that Khurda Road- Bolangir New BG Rail Link Project was sanctioned in 1994-95 is being implemented in phases and the work is already in progress. After completion of the project inclusive of stretch of railway line under reference, it will connect the coastal Odisha with Western Odisha leading to commercial and cultural integration of both parts. Moreover, it will reduce the distance to New Delhi, Mumbai and Western India by 140 Km from Bhubaneswar and Puri, the State Capital and cultural capital of Odisha respectively.

And whereas, Govt. of India, MoEF, Easter Regional Office vide Letter dtd.21.01.2008 had conveyed its approval under Section 2 of the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 for diversion of 9.095 ha for construction of New BG Rail Link from Khurda Road to Bolangir (from Km 0.00 to Km 36.0). The MoEF & CC, ERO had also accorded final approval for diversion of 59.717 ha of forest land for construction in Phase-II from Km. 36 to 112 Km. Further, Stage-II approval for diversion of 13.22 ha of forest land in Phase-IV from Km 180 to 238 Km has been accorded by MoEF & CC, IRO vide letter dtd. 18.11.2022 and Stage-I/in-principal approval for diversion of further 69.77 ha of forest land in phase-V from Km 238 to 289 Km has also been accorded by MoEF & CC, ERO vide letter dtd.20.08.2019. Accordingly, the working permission has also been obtained by the Railways and the work is in progress from Km. 180 to Km 289 as well.

And whereas, that the present railway alignment has been finalized taking in to consideration the boundary of Sanctuary on one side and Brutanga Irrigation Reservoir and Brutanga river on other side.

And whereas, the Chief Engineer (Con-I), East Coast Railway has expressed that, further change in alignment of the Railway line in between Buguda -Baniguchha section is not technically feasible. Moreover, shifting of Railway alignment towards the south side of the Baisipalli Sanctuary zone will enter inside the Brutanga Irrigation Reservoir.

And whereas, the activity has already been undertaken in the extended buffer zone (ESZ) of the Wildlife Sanctuary i.e. 10 Km, in Phase-II project from 107.4 Km to 112 Km and the non-forest land and Private land involved in the project (112 Km to 143 Km) has been handed over to the UA prior to the date of order of Hon'ble Supreme Court of India i.e. 03.06.2022 and it does not come within the ambit of prohibited activities as per the 9th February 2011 guidelines it may continue.

Now therefore, the PCCF & HoFF do here by orders as below.

"Since, this project is an ongoing project, and construction of Railway line is not one of the prohibited activities, as per the 9 Feb, 2011 Guidelines, this phase of the Railway line project i.e. 112 Km to 180 Km stretch, is permitted, as per Para 44(e) of the Judgement of Hon'ble Supreme Court of India dated 03.06 2022, subject to obtaining FC clearance, as it involves forest land."

The DFO, Nayagarh & Boudh may be requested to furnish compliance to the observation of REC dated 15.09.2022 for complying to GoI, MoEF & CC, IRO, Bhubaneswar for further action.


Principal Chief Conservator of Forests & HoFF
Odisha