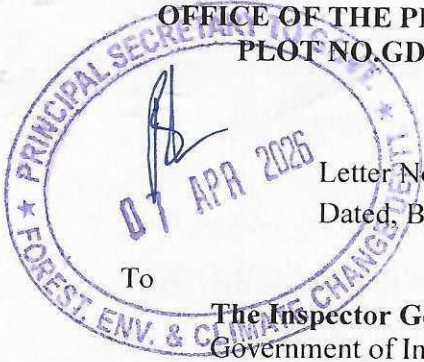




9158/FE/26
9/4/2026

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

E-mail:- nodal.pccfodisha@gmail.com



Letter No.

/9F (MG)-29/2025

Dated, Bhubaneswar, the

April, 2026

To

The Inspector General of Forests (FC)
Government of India,
Ministry of Environment, Forests & Climate Change (F.C. Division)
Indira Paryavaran Bhawan, Aliganj, Jor Bagh Road
New Delhi-110003

Sub: Proposal for seeking prior approval of Central Government under Section-2(1)(ii) of Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam, 1980 for diversion of 12.565 ha of forest land including safety zone of (1.020 ha) within the mining lease area of 18.00 ha in respect of Bhanjapali Iron Ore Mines under Bonai Forest Division of Sundargarh District by Sri J. N. Patnaik (Proposal No.FP/OR/MIN/27247/2017)-reg.

Ref: Letter dated 17.03.2026 of the Deputy Inspector General of Forests, Govt. of India, MoEF& CC, (FC Division), New Delhi.

Sir,

In inviting a reference to the above mentioned subject, this is to inform that Government of India, Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change, MoEF& CC (FC Division), New Delhi have raised EDS dated 17.03.2026 for necessary compliance in respect of diversion of 12.565 ha of forest land including safety zone of (1.020 ha) within the mining lease area of 18.00 ha in respect of Bhanjapali Iron Ore Mines under Bonai Forest Division of Sundargarh District by Sri J. N. Patnaik. The point wise compliance submitted by the Project Proponent is as follows:-

EDS No.(1):- The State Government submitted that the User Agency has carried out works over 0.5951 ha within the PRF area without prior approval of the Government of India, MoEF&CC. Additionally, 0.078 ha of DLC forest land within the safety zone and 0.214 ha of forest land outside the mining lease area, contiguous to the said safety zone in the DLC area, have been broken up. However, as per satellite imagery, the entire area proposed for diversion has already been broken up by the User Agency. Accordingly, the State Government shall ascertain the exact/correct details of the violation/broken up area involved in the subject proposal along with the detailed Action Taken Report.

Compliance: In compliance to the above, the UA has submitted that at the time of execution of the lease on 21.04.1997, the entire leased area of 18.00 ha was recorded as non-forest land. The mining operation in said area allowed by the DFO, Bonai vide letter no:- 3996 dated :- 03.07.97 and 3305 dated:- 06.06.98 respectively which are enclosed as **Annexure-I & II**.

SO(Div.)
K.P.
10/04/2026

The broken-up area was jointly verified by the Senior Surveyor, DDM, Koira and the Forest Range Officer, Koira on dated 22.06.98 in the report say that the total area 12.565 Ha. was broken up pertaining to plot no-1(P) & 54(P), which is enclosed as **Annexure-II**.

It is further intimated that since the mining lease was valid, mining operations continued on the broken-up land from the year 1998 without interruption until instructions were issued by the DFO, Bonai Forest Division vide Letter No. 4999 dated 01.11.2007, directing stoppage of mining activities on the grounds that the broken-up areas in Plot Nos. 1(P) and 54(P) had been categorized as DLC forest land and that prior approval under the Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam, 1980 was required to resume mining operations. The copy of the DFO, Bonai Forest Division is enclosed as **Annexure-IV**.

Subsequently, mining operations over the declared DLC area were re-commenced from 19.01.2008 pursuant to the orders of the Hon'ble Civil Judge, Junior Division, Bonai and Hon'ble High Court of Odisha, Cuttack, which is enclosed as **Annexure-V Series**.

The Supreme Court of India WPC No.114/2014 Judgment dated 02.08.2017 in page no-96 of 114 in point no-186(5) said that any Iron Ore extracted contrary to EIA 1994 or EIA 2006 would constitute illegal or unlawful mining (interpreted by UA) and compensation at 100% of the price of the mineral should be recovered from 2000-2001 onwards in terms of Section 21 (5) of the MMDR Act, if the extracted mineral has been disposed of. In addition, any rent, royalty or tax for the period that such mining activity was carried out outside mining lease area should be recovered, and page no-97 of 114 in point no-186(8) say that any mining activity carried on after 7th January, 1998 without an FC, amounts to illegal or unlawful mining in terms of the provisions of Section 21(5) of MMDR Act attracting 100% recovery of the price of the extracted mineral that disposed of. **(copy enclosed as Annexure-VI)**

The mining operations were again suspended with effect from 13.08.2010 by the direction of the DDM, Koira Circle vide Memo No. 20264/Mines dated 13.08.2010, due to non-maintenance of valid Environmental Clearance as mandated under the EIA Notification, 2006 which is enclosed as **Annexure-VII**. The EC was granted on dated:- 14.05.2015. The User Agency submitted the forest clearance proposal on dated :- 08.08.2017.

Subsequently, as per the demand notice dated:- 02.09.2017, the Deputy Director of Mines, Koira vide letter no. 5076 raised a demand of Rs.123, 87,49,199/- towards the price and Notional value of 13,14,301 MT of Iron Ore produced without EC during 2000-01 to 2010-11 the demand was based on the recommendation of the Central Empowered Committee (CEC) pursuant to the interim order dated:- 16.05.2014 of the Hon'ble Supreme Court in WP (C) No. 114/2014 (Common cause vs. Union of India).The mines restarted after deposit of the above amount. The copy of the letter of DDM, Koira is enclosed as **Annexure-VIII**.

The Deputy Director Mines Koira Circle vide order no.3515 dated 26.07.2018 recorded that the lessee has deposited the above demand towards compensation under Section 21(5). **(copy enclosed as Annexure-IX)**

In view of the above and as per the order dated 24.07.2018 of Hon'ble supreme Court of India in the matter of IA No.86784/2018 in WP(C) No.114/2014 communicated to the Director of Mines and accordingly the lessee was allowed to resume mining operation. **(copy enclosed as Annexure-X).**

Subsequently, during Joint Inspection it was found that the mining operation over an area of 0.595 Ha declared as PRF, has been done in violation as intimated on dated 01/05/2023 to the user agency by forest dept. On this violation a case is booked vide No. 2025-26 against mines manager Sudhkar Sahoo by the Range officer, Koira. Secondly, an area of 0.078 ha. is broken along the safety zone DLC area and this crossed over the lease boundary wherein an area of 0.214 ha outside the lease was broken. The area belongs to Revenue department as per their ROR. Action on this violation has already been taken by the Collector, Sundargarh through concerned Tehsildar, Koira. An encroachment case was booked and Fine of Rs. 3,50,000/- was imposed. The user agency has deposited the same and eviction has been passed by Tahsildar, Koira vide No.943 dated 23/09/2015 **(copy enclosed as Annexure-XI)**. Hence, the total area of violation may be considered as 0.887 Ha (0.595+ 0.078+ 0.214).

EDS No.(2):- Numerous important wildlife species have been reported in the surrounding forest area including Tiger, Elephant, Sloth Bear, etc. The User Agency has applied to the PCCF (WL), Odisha, seeking views on the likely impact of the project on the occasional movement of elephants in the nearby lease area. Accordingly, the State Government shall furnish the comments of the PCCF (WL)/CWLW in this regard.

Compliance: In compliance to the above, the PCCF (WL) & CWLW, Odisha vide letter no. 12909 dated 03.12.2025 requested the DFO, Bonai for providing his views along with KML file of the project area. Accordingly, the DFO, Bonai vide his memo no. 2776 on dated 20.03.2026 submitted the report (copy enclosed as **Annexure-XII**). Both these reports envisage that the project area is coming within Koira Range of Bonai Forest Division and regular movement of elephant is reported in this Range. Elephant movement is also observed in the project impact area and incidents of human- elephant conflict in the form of elephant death as well as human death have also been reported. The proposed project may impact the elephant movement in the area with possible increase in human-wildlife conflict.

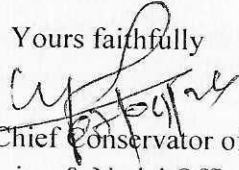
In this respect, a Site Specific Wildlife Conservation Plan is proposed to be prepared for the area to suggest measures to check likely impact of the project on the elephants and their habitat.

The PCCF (WL) & CWLW, Odisha has recommended the project from wildlife point of view, subject to the condition that the Project Proponent will adhere to the mitigative measures that are to be imposed by the DFO, Bonai Forest Division for better management of wildlife in the area. The copy of the PCCF (WL) & CWLW, Odisha is enclosed as **Annexure-XIII**.

In view of the above, the compliance to the observations of Government of India, MoEF & CC(FC Division), New Delhi dated 17.03.2026 is sent herewith for favour of kind information and necessary action.

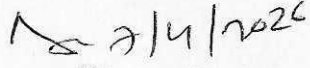
Encl:- Compliance in one set

Yours faithfully


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

Memo No. /Dt.

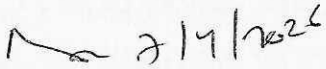
Copy forwarded to the Dy. Director General of Forests (Central), MoEF& CC, Regional Office, Bhubaneswar for favour of kind information and necessary action with reference to letter dated 17.03.2026 of the Deputy Inspector General of Forests, Govt. of India, MoEF& CC, (FC Division), New Delhi.


Chief Conservator of Forests (Nodal)

Memo No. 7212 /Dt. 07.04.2026

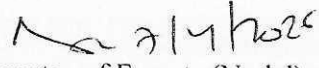
Copy alongwith the compliance report forwarded to the Principal Secretary to Government, Forest, Environment and Climate Change Department, Odisha, Bhubaneswar for favour of kind information and necessary action with reference to letter dated 17.03.2026 of the Deputy Inspector General of Forests, Govt. of India, MoEF& CC, (FC Division), New Delhi.

Encl: Compliance in one set


Chief Conservator of Forests (Nodal)

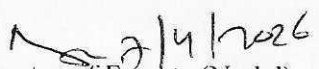
Memo No. /Dt.

Copy forwarded to the Regional Chief Conservator of Forests, Rourkela Circle for information and necessary action.


Chief Conservator of Forests (Nodal)

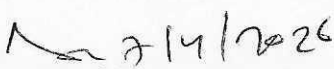
Memo No. /Dt.

Copy forwarded to the Divisional Forest Officer, Bonai Forest Division for information and necessary action.


Chief Conservator of Forests (Nodal)

Memo No. /Dt.

Copy forwarded to Sri J.N. Patnaik, Mine Owner, Bonaikela, Joda, Dist-Keonjhar-758038 for information.


Chief Conservator of Forests (Nodal)