



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

Memo No. **1192** /3F(Misc)-873/2025

Date: **12.03.2025**

To

The Additional 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 06.01.2025 of MoEF & CC, GoI
2. Your Memo No.1270 dt. 17.01.2025
3. Memo No.1264 Dtd.06.03.2025 of the DFO, Sundargarh Division.

With reference to the aforementioned Memos on the captioned subject, the DFO, Sundargarh Division vide his Memo No.1263 Dtd.06.03.2024 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 06.03.2025 of MoEF & CC, Govt. of India which may kindly be perused.

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

- i. ***The area proposed for CA on DFL is having MDF over 116 ha as per DSS analysis. Further, as informed by the state the area involves road, cultivated land and claims under FRA, 2006, which indicate that the area proposed for CA is neither completely suitable for plantation, nor it is free from encumbrances. The State Govt. shall therefore exclude the area which is not suitable for CA and provide alternate DFL twice in extent to the area proposed for diversion which is suitable for raising plantation and is free from all encumbrances. All requisite details with respect to the revised CA area shall be provided.***

In compliance with the above, the DFO, Sundargarh Division has reported that since the earlier proposed area of CA in degraded forest land was having MDF over 116 ha as per DSS Analysis, alternate degraded forest areas for Compensatory Afforestation have been identified at the following locations as per the table given below:

Sl. No.	Description	Range	Area
01.	Sikajore - A - RF	Lephripada	74.5 Ha
02.	Sikajore - PRF	Lephripada	40 Ha
03.	Tangarpali - DPF	Ujalpur	14 Ha
		Total	128.5 Ha

The corresponding DSS Analysis reports are attached herewith as **Annexure 'A'** series . The corresponding KML files are also being attached herewith in soft copy form in a pen drive.

- ii. ***State shall provide the status of the compliance of the conditions stipulated in the approval dated 11.03.2019 (for 29.41 ha) for Basundhara washery. The status of violations (if any) in the said project shall also be submitted.***

As reported by the DFO, Sundargarh Division, in compliance with the above, the user agency has stated that the Stage-I FC for Basundhara Washery was obtained on 11.03.2019 & EC was obtained on 31.10.2019. However, as per guidelines from MoC & decision taken in MCL Board, the plan for establishing the washery was dropped in 2020 for the following reasons which are quoted as follows:

Quote-

As per the gazette notification issued by MoEF & CC vide dated 21.05.2020, use of washed coal having ash percent less than 34% is not mandatory and power plants can use coal without stipulations as regards ash content or distance. During audit of Annual Accounts 2019- 20 while going through the "Capital Work in Progress", CAG opined that in light of the recent notification of MoEF & CC, setting up of coal washery seems not beneficial for MCL. Thereafter, two meetings were held with the coal consumers and no firm commitment was made by the consumers for taking washed coal. The matter was also discussed in a meeting chaired by the Secretary, MOC and he gave option to MCL to drop these non-coking coal washeries if they are unable to find consumers.

-Unquote

However, as per recent decision taken by MCL considering the present market scenario and the requirement of washed coal, a coal washery is again planned to be set up in the same location of appropriate capacity using the same 43.90 Ha land (forest land of 29.41 Ha) for which Stage-I Forest Clearance has been obtained in March 2019 and accordingly the proposal is being further processed for obtaining stage-II forest clearance.

Initially, the compliance of Stage-I conditions of Basundhara Washery had been submitted to the centre vide letter no. 18864/9F (Misc)-6/2016 dated 1st November 2019 through PCCF(FD & No, FC Act) Bhubaneswar, copy of which is attached herewith as **Annexure 'A'**.

Further, the short comings in respect of Stage-I compliance which were pointed out by MoEF & CC vide letter no. 8-176/1997 FC(Vol) dated 12th December 2019 (**Copy enclosed as Annexure 'B'**) containing 5 points is still pending to be complied. The same will be submitted after approval of Site Specific Wildlife Conservation Plan by PCCF & Chief Wildlife Warden, Bhubaneswar and deposition of the requisite fund in respect of the same in CAMPA account.

- iii. ***The Regional Office shall provide the detailed site inspection report of the CA area with clear recommendations. The Regional office shall also give its comments on the status of the compliance of the conditions stipulated in the approval dated 11.03.2019 (for 29.41 ha) for Basundhara washery and violations (if any) in the said project.***

As reported by the DFO, Sundargarh Division, the Site Inspection Report (SIR) from the Integrated Regional Office, Bhubaneswar, will be submitted as per the requirements. This will include their observations and recommendations.

- iv. **The State has informed that the DFO, Sundargarh Division vide his Memo No. 6722 Dtd 30.11.2024 has stated that as per DSS analysis, an area of 10 Ha of water bodies was not included earlier and it is clarified that an area of 929.825 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 possible impact of mining over 10 ha water bodies needs to be examined and state shall provide the justification along with proposed mitigation measures if any for the inclusion of 10 ha water bodies in the project.**

As reported by the DFO, Sundargarh Division, the user agency has clarified that the 10 Ha of water bodies identified in the project area are already existing within the boundaries of the current mining lease of 634.205 Ha. These water bodies are in the form of mine sumps, which have been established as part of the ongoing mining operations. These sumps serve an important purpose for the industrial use of the mine, specifically for water storage and management in the mining process.

Therefore, the 10 Ha of water bodies do not represent any new area that has been added to the mining lease, but are part of the already existing infrastructure that is being utilized for operational purposes. The water bodies have been managed in accordance with the statutory requirements related to the mining operation, and there are no additional impacts anticipated due to their inclusion in the overall area.

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

Encl: As above.


**Regional Chief Conservator of Forests,
Rourkela Circle**

Memo No. 1193

Date: 12.03.2025

Copy forwarded to the Divisional Forest Officer, Sundargarh Division for information and necessary action with reference to his Memo No.1263 Dtd.06.03.2025.


**Regional Chief Conservator of Forests,
Rourkela Circle**