

Government of Maharashtra

By Speed Post

No. FLD-2022/C.R.272/F-10
Revenue and Forest Department,
Mantralaya, Mumbai- 400 032.
Date: 16/05/2023

To,
The Secretary,
Ministry of Environment, Forests & Climate Change,
Government of India,
New Delhi.

Sub.:- Forest Land-Chandrapur

Diversion of 63.540 ha. Forest land under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 for development of Green Field Airport at village Vihirgaon and Murti, Taluka Rajura of District Chandrapur in the State of Maharashtra.

Ref: 1. Your Office Letter No. 8-29/2022/FC, Dt.20.03.2023
2. APCCF & Nodal Officer Letter No. Desk-17/Nodal/Chandrapur/ID-12781 /415/23-24, Dt.11.05.2023

MoEF&CC, Government of India has sought additional information with respect to proposal for diversion of 63.540 ha. Forest land under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 for development of Green Field Airport at village Vihirgaon and Murti, Taluka Rajura of District Chandrapur.

2. Additional Principal Chief Conservator of Forests & Nodal Officer, Maharashtra State, Nagpur has submitted compliance report to the Government of Maharashtra vide letter under reference no.2, Compliance Report submitted by the APCCF & Nodal Officer is self-explanatory and attached herewith. It is requested that the compliance report may kindly be taken into consideration and accordingly the proposal for diversion of 63.54 ha, may be approved at the earliest possible.



(Ganesh Jadhao)

Under Secretary to
the Government of Maharashtra
Under Secretary
Revenue and Forests Department
Hutatma Rajguru Chowk
Madam Cama Road, Mantralaya
Mumbai 400 032

Encl: As above.

Copy to:

1. Additional Principal Chief Conservator of Forests and Nodal Officer, Nagpur.
2. Chief Conservator of Forests (T), Chandrapur.
3. Deputy Conservator of Forests, Central Chanda, Chandrapur.



सत्यमेव जयते
महाराष्ट्र शासन

Office of The Principal Chief Conservator of Forest, (HoFF) Maharashtra State,
Ramgiri Road, Civil Lines, Nagpur 440 001.

The Additional Principal Chief Conservator of Forests And Nodal Officer, Maharashtra State,
Ramgiri Road, Civil Lines, Nagpur 440 001.

0712-2556916

Email: apccfnodal@mahaforest@gov.in

Speed Post/Email

No. Desk-17/Nodal/Chandrapur/ID-12781/415 /23-24
Nagpur - 440 001 Dated 11 / 05/2023.

To,
Principal Secretary (Forests),
Revenue and Forests Department,
Mantralaya Mumbai-32.

Sub: Diversion of 63.540 ha Forest land for development of Green Field
Airport at village Vihirgaon and Murti, Taluka.Rajura of District
Chandrapur in the State of Maharashtra. (FP/MH/Road/42471/2019).

Ref: 1. Govt. of India letter no.F.No.8-29/2022-FC, dtd.20.03.2023.
2. The Chief Conservator of Forests (T) Chandrapur letter no. Desk-3(1)/Land/
Sr.No.479/23-24/140, dtd.03.05.2023.

Govt. of India vide letter under reference 1 had raised 2 queries on the proposal mentioned
under subject above. They are as follows;

- The State Govt. instead of making an assessment of financial benefits that would be generated from the proposed Greenfield Airport has made the same submission as it was already placed before the FAC. Therefore, the State Govt. needs to examine the financial viability of the project and submit a detailed analysis /report as per the decision of the FAC.
- The State Govt. has not given the detail of any new site on the Non-Forest land which has been explored keeping in view the non-site specific nature of the project. Further presentation from the DGCA and MADC will also be required to be made before the FAC one the complete information is submitted by the State Govt. and the proposal is listed in the agenda items to be considered by the FAC.

The User Agency has submitted point wise reply to Deputy Conservator of Forests (T) Central Chanda regarding the queries raised by Govt. of India Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change and the same has been forwarded by Chief Conservator of Forests (T) Chandrapur vide letter under reference 2 to this office for onward submission.

Compliance of the queries is submitted as follows;

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1) *The State Government instead of making an assessment of financial benefits that would be generated from the proposed Greenfield Airport has made the same submission as it was already placed before the FAC. Therefore, the State Government needs to examine the financial viability of the project and submit a detailed analysis/report as per the decision of the FAC.*

➤ CHANDRAPUR DISTRICT - PRESENT AND FUTURE ECONOMIC POTENTIAL

Chandrapur district is the most resource-rich district of Maharashtra in terms of Minerals, Forest, Water resources and Agricultural potential. It is the second highest state revenue generating district, after Nagpur, in the Vidarbha region. Chandrapur District has the largest mining and the second largest industrial investment, after Nagpur, in the Vidarbha region. Moreover, Chandrapur district has historical, religious sites and social work establishments of national importance.

The proposed location of Greenfield Airport at Murti Village falls almost in the center of existing and near future economic activities of a large proportion. Maps showing the location of Greenfield Airport and the existing and proposed/upcoming economic activities around it in 75 kms radial aerial distance, as detailed below will highlight the emergence of large economic potential around the proposed Greenfield Airport location.

1. MINERALS, MINING AND MINERAL BASED INDUSTRIES :

Map A & B showing mining areas of Coal , Limestone, Iron Ore, Copper and Gold and Industries based on Minerals.- 75 kms Radius area from Greenfield Airport Chandrapur.

- Proposed Greenfield Airport Murti Vihirgaon, Chandrapur.
(Please refer to the attached Map A)
- I WCL Coal mines
- II Chandrapur Super Thermal Power station- largest power station in Maharashtra.
- II(A) Coal based power stations of GMR group and Dhadiwal group
- II(B)
- III Five existing cement plants belonging to Birla group, Adani group and Dalmia group, - with a combined capacity of over 15 million MT- largest concentration of cement plants in Maharashtra.
- III(A) Proposed cement plants in Jiwati and Aheri Talukas of Chandrapur & Gadchiroli respectively.
- IV SAIL Ferro Alloys plant near Chandrapur- largest in the Country.
- V Llyods Metals, Ghuggus - Steel Plant
(Please refer to the attached Map B)
- VI Ballarpur Paper Mills - one of the largest and oldest bamboo/wood based paper mill in India.
- VI(A) Ballarpur Paper Mills unit 2 at Ashti.
- VII Surjagarh Iron ore mine- largest operating Iron ore mine in Maharashtra. (10 million MT)
- VIII Llyods Metals - under construction integrated steel plant at Konsari near Ashti.
- VIII Llyods Metals - Unit II
- (B)
- IX Ordnance Factory, Chanda- Ministry of Defence.
- X Power Grid Corporation-National Power interconnecting station Bhadrawati.
- XI Copper mines allocated to Vedanta group for exploration near Gondpipri.
- XII Sirpur Paper Mills ltd (J.K. group) and Orient Cement Ltd. (Birla group) - in Telangana State.
- XIII Coal, Bed Methane Gas blocks explored by Director General of Hydro carbons, Government of India and are being offered shortly for commercial exploitation.

2. FOREST & FOREST BASED ECONOMIC & TOURISM LOCATIONS SURROUNDING GREENFIELD AIRPORT :

Map C showing Forests & Forest based economic and tourism places (Wildlife Sanctuary, Tiger Reserve) - 75 kms Radius area from Greenfield Airport Chandrapur.

Chandrapur and adjoining Gadchiroli district have the largest teak forest of Maharashtra and has one of the largest world famous CP teak wood depots in India since British time. Almost 50% of Maharashtra's wood and forest produce revenue comes from these two districts.

Moreover, the most sought after Tiger reserve by Indians and international tourists- Tadoba Andhari Tiger Reserve (TATR) near Chandrapur attracts more tourists than all the tourist visiting Tiger reserves of Maharashtra put together. The Map below depicts the location of forest related sites of economic importance, near the proposed Greenfield Airport.

- Proposed Greenfield Airport Murti Vihirgaon, Chandrapur.
(Please refer to the attached Map C)
- I **Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve** : It is the oldest and largest National Park of Maharashtra and one of the most famous tourist attractions located in Chandrapur district is the Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve. TATR is one of India's preeminent reserves. Its tropical dry deciduous forest ecosystem harbours at least 80 tigers, and there are over 200 tigers in the larger landscape. This is known to be the fastest-growing tiger population in the country. Tadoba also supports several other carnivore species, including the Leopard and Dhole, with the Sambar, Chital, Wild Pig and Gaur, being the most common prey species. There will be an increase in the number of tourists and travellers visiting TATR. This will directly contribute to improving this underdeveloped region's economic situation.
- II **Kanhalgaon Wildlife Sanctuary** : Kanhalgaon Wildlife Sanctuary is located near Kothari village in Chandrapur district.
- III **Chaprala Wildlife Sanctuary** : The Chaprala Wildlife Sanctuary is located near Ashti village in the Gadchiroli district. The Sanctuary is located on the bank of Confluence of Wardha and Wainganga rivers.
- IV **Kaleswaram Shiva Temple** : Kaleswaram Shiva Temple on the confluence of Godavari and Pranhita river and site of Kaleswaram lift irrigation project - largest in the world & a major tourist attraction.
- V **Tipeshwar Wildlife Sanctuary** : Tipeshwar wildlife sanctuary is situated in Yavatmal area that is an isolated national park in Maharashtra. The Tipeshwar Wildlife Sanctuary provides every visitor a tremendous opportunity every visitor to travel around a wide range of wildlife species.
- VI **Kawal Tiger Reserve in Telengana State** : Kawal Tiger Reserve is a nature preserve located at Jannaram mandal of Mancherial District in the Telangana state of India.
- VII **Indravati National Park** : Indravati National Park is a national park located in Bijapur district of Chhattisgarh state in India. The park derives its name from the Indravati river, which flows from east to west and forms the northern boundary of the reserve with the Indian state of Maharashtra.

3. HISTORICAL, RELIGIOUS & SOCIAL WORK ESTABLISHMENTS OF NATIONAL IMPORTANCE SURROUNDING PROPOSED GREENFIELD AIRPORT

Map D showing Historical and Religious places - 75kms Radius area from Greenfield Airport Chandrapur.

- Proposed Greenfield Airport Murti Vihirgaon, Chandrapur.
(Please refer to the attached Map D)

- I 12th Century Shwetamber Jain temple at Bhadrawati : One of the India's most important Jain temples.
- II Adandwan Ashram, Warora : Founded by Late Shri. Padmavibhushan Baba Amte, Magsaysay Award winner- is the nationally & internationally most acclaimed Leprosy Cure and Rehabilitation Centre.
- III Ballalpur Fort, Chandrapur Fort, Manikgarh Fort : Ballalpur Fort has a pond with miraculous waters, it is believed, heals boils and tumors. It is named as Ankaleshwar Tirth. Chandrapur fort is the oldest place in Chandrapur city. This fort is situated on the convergence of the Irai and Zarpat rivers and is one of the ancient forts built by Gond King & is must to be visited in this region. Manikgad is a mountain fortress and temple in Gherakilla on Manikgad Fort is a popular hiking spot. Built by tribal Naga kings in the 9th century, the Manikgad hill fort stands at the height of 507 metres above sea-level. It is strongly fortified with walls and bastions.
- IV Mahakali Mandir: The city of Chandrapur has ancient temples of the goddess Mahakali and of Anchaleshwar, a Shiva temple. A diety of Chandrapur is Mahakali Mandir, one of the most visited places in Chandrapur.
- V Hemalkasa Ashram : Another social establishment by Late Shri. Baba Amte, is nationally important Leprosy Cure and Rehabilitation Centre Bhamaragad. Situated in thick forest of Central India, is a place visited by thousands of tourists every year not only from all over the country but from all over the world.
- VI SEARCH : A world famous establishment founded by Dr. Abhay Bang and Dr. Rani Bang honoured by "TIME" magazine as a " Global Health Heroes" - for setting up a unique health system for the tribals in the most remote part of central India. Large number of National and International visitors comes to see the unique health system of "SEARCH" which is being practiced in many developing countries all over the world.
- VII Vijasan Hills/ Caves : Vijasan Caves are a place of religious importance and these caves are 2000-year old Buddhist Caves at Vijasan well known as Vijasan Tekdi at Bhadrawati city, visited by national and international Buddhist travellers.
- VIII Markandeshwar Shiva Temple : Ancient Shiva Temple on the bank of the river Wainganga near Chamorshi is most worshiped Shiva temple in Vidarbha region.

FINANCIAL VIABILITY:

The present air traffic load of Chandrapur (Morwa) will be diverted to GAVM due to its longer Airstrip & landing safety aspects.

The proposed GAVM airport will act as a catalyst for opening up this backward but minerally and resource rich region. for all round industrial and socio-economic development.

The location of GAVM falling near to the existing and near future upcoming industrial & mining activities will certainly offer large air traffic in the region.

Moreover, the GAVM will greatly compliment the efforts of Ministry of Civil Aviation and the "UDAN POLICY" announced by Honourable Prime Minister for connecting remote and backward region with main cities to ensure speedy development of backward regions.

APART FROM THE ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES MENTIONED ABOVE, CHANDRAPUR DISTRICT IS MAJOR PRODUCER & EXPORTER OF RICE, SOYABEAN AND COTTON. MOREOVER CHANDRAPUR IS BLESSED WITH THOUSANDS OF IRRIGATION LAKES, HAS MAJOR RIVERS LIKE WAINGANGA, PAINGANGA AND WARDHA FLOWING THROUGH IT WHICH HAS MADE CHANDRAPUR DISTRICT A MAJOR FISH PRODUCING DISTRICT.

➤ **NEAREST ROAD, RAILWAYS & AIRPORTS ARE AS UNDER:**

● **ROAD**

Greenfield Airport is connected by all weather road to Rajura- Chandrapur State highway. Chandrapur city (District place with Municipal Corporation) - 40 kms.

● **RAILWAYS**

1. Ballapur Junction (In South Central railway zone) - 17 kms from Greenfield Airport.
2. Chandrapur Railway Station (In Central railway zone on Delhi-Chennai Grant Trunk rail route)- 40 kms from Greenfield Airport.
3. Chanda Fort Chandrapur (In South Eastern Central railway zone connecting Chandrapur to Raipur) - 30 kms from Greenfield Airport.

● **AIRPORTS (Approx. Distance from Greenfield Airport)**

1. Nagpur Airport - 86 Nautical Miles (NM) (159.272 KM)
2. Raipur Airport- 154 NM (285.208 KM)
3. Small Airports : Amravati Airport- 117 NM (216.684 KM)
4. Gondia Airport- 118 NM (218.536 KM)

2) The State Government has not given the detail of any new site on the Non-forest land which has been explored keeping in view the non -site specific nature of the project. Further presentation from the DGCA and MADC will also be required to be made before the FAC once the complete information is submitted by the State Government and the proposal is listed in the agenda items to be considered by the FAC.

➤ Existing Morwa Airport (Airstrip) is 39 km away from the proposed Murti Airport. However the scope of extension / development of Morwa Airport (Airstrip) is limited due to the following facts.

- a. The strip of the existing Morwa Airport (Airstrip) is 953 m X 30 m on which any small charter can land & takeoff. Due to the small airstrip, extension / development of Morwa Airport (Airstrip) is limited. The total area is only 37 Ha.
- b. Only chartered flights / small aircraft of limited capacity can be handled through this Airport. The newly proposed Greenfield Airport will facilitate movement of bigger aircraft, including ATR-72 & Airbus A320 (2nd phase) chartered flights & cargo flights.
- c. Heighted chimneys of Dhariwal Power Plant are obstacles to landing and take off (height 274 m, 3-4 km away Morwa Airport (Airstrip)).
- d. No adjoining Government and private land is available for expansion.
- e. The nearby area is all covered with Extra and ultra high tension power lines connecting Chandrapur Super Thermal Power Station to various areas of Maharashtra and connecting Power Grid Corporation, national interconnecting station at Bhadrawati.
- f. All sides of Morwa Airport (Airstrip) are surrounded by boundaries of residential and industrial areas.
- g. The land required for the airport should be at least 5 km in length in the East-West direction and about 600 m wide for airport purpose and additional land for the terminal and other facilities. The total land required is around 700 acre.

And explained above, physical obstructions all around Morwa location and non availability of sufficient land area adjoining to Morwa makes Morwa unsuitable for expansion. Thus, to cater to the future needs of air transportation, Greenfield Airport is proposed near Rajura town. Before selecting the site, following alternate locations were surveyed and studied by MADC but except Murti other sites are not suitable for an airport.

A. Village - Mouza Sushi Daabgaon and Kelzar, Taluka - Mul, District - Chandrapur - Site visit date - 30/09/2013.

MADC team surveyed the site on 30/09/2013 and total land 388.62 ha was proposed for Greenfield Airport but the land of Kelzar, as per revenue records, belongs to the Samudayak Society & Ambedkar Society and Sushi Daabgaon land belongs to the forest department and also has nuisance of Naxalities. The forest area required in this site was more than 100 ha.

B. Village - Visapur, Taluka - Ballarpur, District - Chandrapur - Site visit date - 18/07/2009.

Surrounded by the chimney of Ballarsha paper mill, Telephone antennas, High tension electric towers, and difference in level with surrounding area, obstructions in approach & inner horizontal surface. Most of the area is reserved and protected forest.

C. Village - Kothari, Palasgaon, A/modi, Taluka - Ballarpur, District - Chandrapur - Site visit date - 18/07/2009.

Surrounded by Antenna (Telecom etc), Low elevation causes floods due to the nearby Nullah & River, major state road passes through the area, approach on the Eastern side has obstruction, hills on the outer horizontal surface. The forest area in this site was quite high.

D. Village - Vihirgaon/Murli, Taluka - Rajura, District - Chandrapur - Site visit date - 10/06/2017.

After being surveyed by the MADC team, no major obstacles like high tension line chimneys, Hills, where not found nearby area, also Government Revenue land was easily available for handover and minimum forest land was required in this alternative, as compared to other three options. Due to this reasons, this site was finalized for the Greenfield Airport project by MADC.

> EXPECTED SOCIO-ECONOMIC BENEFIT DUE TO GAVM GREENFIELD AIRPORT:

- Looking at the existing and near future economic activities as elaborated above in mining, mineral based industries, forests and forest based economic activities (mainly TATR) ; religious, historical and social establishments of national repute Chandrapur district offers a techno-commercially viable airport like the Greenfield Airport planned at Vihirgaon Murli location.
- Chandrapur & Gadchiroli district have huge mega industries, mines, coal based industries, cement factories, one of the biggest iron ore mine of India and Tiger Reserve (TATR) along with three biggest Wildlife Sanctuaries nearby. There is already huge traffic pressure on Chandrapur- Nagpur highway and also on Nagpur Airport. The upcoming airport will improve the connectivity right up to and into the region of all the activities explained above, thereby facilitating easy accessibility in this remote region.
- Effective handling of Naxalite insurgency activity in parts of Chandrapur, Gadchiroli & bordering areas of Chattisgarh and Telangana State. Presently the state face logistics problem for handling it from Nagpur Airport which is over 175 kms from active Naxal zone. Greenfield Airport being very near (about to 40 kms) to insurgency activity zone offers quick response time and better logistic during

combat and medical emergencies. A large Defence establishment and a Sainik School nearby ; both managed by Ministry of Defence will also be greatly benefited.

- Effective curbing of insurgency will ensure confidence building amongst the industrial houses to set up large mineral based industries in mineral rich area surrounding Greenfield Airport location on one hand and will ensure enhanced commercial viability of Greenfield Airport on the other. It will be win-win situation for upcoming and planned industries and also for Greenfield Airport. Jagdalpur Airport is classic example of helping in opening of mineral rich Bastar region for industrialization on one hand and in effectively helping to curb insurgency activities on the other. Exactly similar will be role of proposed Greenfield Airport.
- The proposed Greenfield Airport will generate spin-off economic activities in surrounding region in the form of transport, tourism, hotels, ware housing, Sundry services etc. generating indirect employment of over 6000, besides direct employment of over 600 at the Airport.
- Greenfield Airport at the proposed location, being in the centre of existing and proposed economic activities will act as a catalyst in accelerating industrial investment activities thereby boosting the socio-economic index of one of the lowest HDI (Human Development Index) regions of Chandrapur and Gadchiroli districts. The state also will earn revenue due to enhanced industrial activities.
- The proposed Greenfield Airport lies in one of the most socio-economically backward area in Maharashtra and will compliment well, in the efforts of Government of India's "UDAN POLICY" announced by Honourable the Prime Minister to connect almost all the remote backward regions of the country with main cities.
- In India, DGCA is the regulatory Authority for Civil Aviation. As per norms, minimum distance between two nearby Airports should be minimum 150 kms. The distance between Nagpur Airport and the proposed Greenfield Airport is 180+ kms. Also, proposed airport falls in the under developed part of the Vidarbha region. Nagpur Airport caters to Central India and it's probably the busiest airport in Central India. The proposed Greenfield Airport will ease the pressure of air traffic on Nagpur Airport and also provide an alternate option for travellers.

This office agrees with the point wise detailed reply submitted by the User Agency and it is requested that the same may please be forwarded to Govt. of India for in-principle approval of the proposal.

Encl: As above

 11/5/23.

(Naresh Zurmure)
Addl. Principal Chief Conservator of Forests And Nodal Officer
Maharashtra State, Nagpur

Copy forwarded to Maharashtra Airport Development Company Ltd; Central Facility Building, B-Wing(North), 1st floor, MIHAN SEZ, Khapri (Rly), Nagpur 441 108 along with the copy of letter under reference for further necessary action.

Copy forwarded to Chief Conservator of Forests (T) Chandrapur for information.

