

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

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No. 10285-19F(MG)-27/2022
Dated, Bhubaneswar the 29 May, 2023

From

Sri Susanta Nanda, IFS
Principal Chief Conservator of Forests
(Forest Diversion & Nodal Officer, FC Act)
O/o the PCCF & HoFF, Odisha, Bhubaneswar

To

The Assistant Inspector General of Forests
Government of India
Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change
(Forest Conservation Division), Indira Paryavaran Bhawan
Jor Bag Road, Aliganj, New delhi-110003

Sub: Proposal for seeking prior approval of the Central Government under Section-2 (ii) of the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 in favour of M/s Bhusan Power & Steel Limited for non-forestry use of 112.621 ha of Forest land (including 1.808 ha earmarked for Safety Zone) in village Baldihi under Koira Tahasil and Koira Range of Bonai Forest Division of Sundargarh District within the block area of 139.223 ha in respect of Netrabandha Pahar Iron Ore Block in Odisha State (Online Proposal No.FP/OR/MIN/26965/2017)

Ref: Letter No.8-31/2022-FC dated 20.04.2023 of Asst. Inspector General of Forests, GoI, MoEF & CC, New Delhi

Sir,

In inviting reference to the Government of India, Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change, New Delhi vide letter cited above on the captioned subject, the compliance to the observation on four (4) points are furnished as follows:

Observation-(i): The Sub-committee in its report has mentioned that any additional mining lease in the area shall impact the movement of elephants not only in the Sundargarh District but also in adjoin states of Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh. Further, considering the present situation of mining in the area and rise in human elephant conflict the committee is of the opinion that the possibility of mitigating the impact is not foreseen. Mitigation measures have been suggested to reduce the impact of ongoing of mining activities. Further, it has been mentioned that if these mitigation measures are implemented, in future, the government may consider for additional mining lease after due evaluation. The State Government shall give justification for the instant proposal in view of above.

BSD-cam-SS(20)

The Site-Specific Wildlife Conservation Plan (SSWLCP) has been prepared for the instant proposal as per approved guidelines of State Government prescribed specific intervention for protection of Forest & Wildlife by the PCCF (WL) & CWLW, Odisha, Bhubaneswar and approved vide letter No.757 dated 19.01.2023. The plan has been prepared by giving more emphasis on mitigation measure and its implementation in the field. It includes Wildlife Habitat Management, Plantation for natural Eco-System Management, Mitigation of Human Elephant Conflicts, enhancement of rainwater infiltration and recharge, warning and wading system, IEC activities for educating community, Monitoring and Evaluation, Public Awareness, Community participation (by enriching VSS), Eco-Development Activities, Immunization of domestic livestock and surveillance of health of Wildlife in the zone of impact around 10 Kms radial distance of the project site. Besides, the Project Proponent has also been mandated under the said plan to carryout fire prevention measures, Public Awareness and mitigation of Human Elephant Interface in the project area. Since, the project area is a region of mines, wherein 69 Industrial Units are working and wherein, the existing Environmental conditions do not cause much harm to the biotic community, it may be expected that with the effecting implementation of suggested mitigation measures. The Site-Specific Wildlife Conservation Plan is enclosed as **Annexure-A**.

Observation-(ii): State Government shall submit a point wise reply/ comments/ justification on the mitigation measures suggested and issued raises in the report of the sub-committee as above.

The mitigation measures as per SSWLCP address the importance of the project on wildlife including Elephants in and around the project area. The Comprehensive Action Plan (CAP) for conservation of Elephant and mitigation of Human-Elephant Conflicts in Odisha prepared in consultation with experts, field level functionaries and NGOs as per direction of the Hon'ble High Court of Orissa in Writ Petition (C) PIL No.14706/2022 has already been approved by the High Power Committee (HPC) under the Chairmanship of Chief Secretary Odisha. Action points under 10 pillar strategy have been envisaged in the CAP with short term, medium term and long term mitigative measures. The action plan will act as a perspective plan for Elephant Management in the State in the years to come.

The recommendation as per final report of the study conducted by CSIR- NEERI on carrying capacity vis-à-vis pollution in these area and the Suggested Ore Transportation Mode (SOTM) will be implemented. This is likely to facilitate un-hindered movement of Elephants.

Further, the SSWLCP will give importance to mitigate threats to the wildlife by observing the following points:

- a) To conserve available population of wildlife in general and the Pachyderm in particular in the natural habitat.
- b) Conservation, Protection and Improvement of the flora and fauna in an around the project area.
- c) To conserve the natural Bio-diversity, aesthetic and geo morphological value of the area with appropriate management of site, Habitat and Land Scape.
- d) To reduce the dependency of local people on the forest issues and viable alternates by undertaking Eco-Development programme.
- e) To reduce man-animal conflict by ensuing contiguity of Habitat in the Buffer Zone by improving forest cover in long term basis.

Observation-(iii): The State Govt. shall compile the detail of all the functional/ non-functional and other mines under various stages of approval and their possible impact on the larger landscape.

In this context, the Director of Mines, Odisha after examining the proposal submitted by the field officials, has submitted a report which is enclosed as **Annexure-B**. As such the land pertaining to any of the non-functional mining leases does not have any scope of being surrender because of reasons mentioned therein by Director of Mines, Government of Odisha. The present status of the leases is enclosed herewith in above annexure for reference.

Observation-(iv): The State Government has submitted that to address the issue of interstate movement of elephants in the larger landscape comprising of Odisha, Jharkhand, Chhatisgarh and South Western part of West Bengal; MoEF & CC (Project Elephant Division) may assign reputed organization/ Institution to prepare Comprehensive Elephant Management Plan for the said Region. Keeping in view the Ministry shall seek the comments of the Project Elephant Division on the instant proposal.

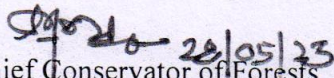
This observation is not related to State Government.

The Government of India, Ministry of Forest, Environment & Climate Change may seek the comments of the Project Elephant Division on the instant proposal.

In view of the above, the it is requested that the proposal for seeking prior approval under Section-2 (ii) of the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 in favour of M/s Bhusan Power and Steel Ltd. for non-forestry use of 112.621 ha of forest land (including 1.808 ha of SZ) in village Baldihi of Bonai Forest Division of Sundargarh District may kindly be considered.

Encl: -As above

Yours faithfully


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

Memo No. 10286 /Dt. 29.05.2023

Copy along with enclosures forwarded to the Deputy Director General of Forests (C), Government of India, MoEF & CC, IRO, A/3 Chandrasekharpur, Bhubaneswar for favour of kind information and necessary action with reference to Letter No.8-03/2022-FC dated 20.04.2023 of Assistant Inspector General of Forests (C), GoI, MoEF & CC (FC Division) New Delhi.

Encl: -As above

Spd-29/05/23
Principal Chief Conservator of Forests
Forest Diversion & Nodal Officer, FC Act

Memo No. 10287 /Dt. 29.05.2023

Copy along with enclosures forwarded to the Additional Chief Secretary to Government, Forest, Environment & Climate Change Department, Odisha, Bhubaneswar for information and necessary action with reference to Letter No.8-03/2022-FC dated 20.04.2023 of Assistant Inspector General of Forests (C), GoI, MoEF & CC (FC Division) New Delhi.

Encl: -As above

Spd-29/05/23
Principal Chief Conservator of Forests
Forest Diversion & Nodal Officer, FC Act