

Government of India
Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change
(Forest Conservation Division)

Indira Paryavaran Bhawan,
Aliganj, Jor Bag Road,
New Delhi - 110003.
Dated: 29th March, 2023

To

The Addl. Chief Secretary (Forests),
Government of Odisha,
Bhubaneswar

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 Rungta Mines Ltd. for non-forestry use of 156.978 ha of forest land (147.803 ha in Bonai Forest Division & 9.175 ha in Keonjhar Forest Division) for Iron Ore Mining and ancillary activities with in Jumka Pathiriposhi Pahar Iron Ore Block under Forest Division and District Sundergarh and Keonjhar of Odisha State-reg. (Online proposal No. FP/OR/MIN/150048/2021)

Madam/Sir,

I am directed to refer to the State Government of Odisha's letter 10F (Cons)-12/2023 dated 03.03.2023 on above subject, seeking prior approval of the Central Government under section 2 of the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 and to say that examination of said proposal revealed the following shortcomings:

- i. The non-site specific activities like Dumping, infrastructure, mineral stack yard and ore processing etc. have been proposed on Forest land, which needs justification. The State may explore the possibility to adjust such components on Non-forest land.
- ii. The area falls in Habitat Zone-2 as per the 'Remote sensing application for characterization of elephant habitat and corridor in Odisha and part of Bihar. The recommendations in the study for the area or the zone shall be submitted. Further, the HEC data of last 5 years in the both the divisions shall be provided. The details of other mines and mine voids or abandoned mines in the divisions especially in the vicinity of the proposed mine shall also be provided.
- iii. Elephant Movement is reported in the area proposed for diversion. Therefore, comments of PCCF (Wildlife) and CWLW, Odisha needs to be provided by the State Government.
- iv. As per DSS the area falls in high conservation zone in the both the decision rules, and in such condition, the comments of the State and justification may be provided.
- v. Observation based on high resolution satellite imagery indicates the felling of trees in the proposed forest area April, 2020 onwards. The same requires verification and clarification.
- vi. The KML file of the proposed area indicating the land use plan/component wise breakup/ mineralized and non-mineralized zonation shall be submitted

- vii. The Lol has been issued for 50 years whereas the mining plan has been approved for 5 years only. The mining plan submitted is just a conceptual mining plan wherein the Progressive mine closure plan mentions activities for five years only and most of the columns are either nil or NA. The justification for not preparing a mining plan for the entire life of the mine shall be submitted. The mine closure plan indicating the land surrender schedule along with the progressive mine closure is also required to be submitted.
- viii. The copy of the mining plan is not clear, therefore a Legible copy of approved mining plan along with the mine transportation plan, mine progress plan and mine closure plan shall be provided.
- ix. KML file of 183.722 ha identified for planting the balance seedlings and the details of the area identified for CA in lieu of safety zone may be uploaded online.
- x. Forwarding letter of the State Government shall be uploaded online.
- xi. The forest area proposed for diversion is in Eco-class-1 with a density of 0.6. The State government therefore revisit and clarify the details of the sampling done regarding assessing the total number of trees.
- xii. The details as to how the requirement of water, electricity and road will be met in the instant case shall be submitted as both rail and road heads seem far from the proposed area.
- xiii. The state shall re-examine whether the area proposed for the overburden dump is sufficient or not?
- xiv. A copy of the regional wildlife plan and the basis of calculation of the money proposed to be demanded from the User agency in this regard shall be submitted.

In view of the above, the State Government is requested to submit the information/documents, as indicated above, to this Ministry for further consideration of the proposal.

Yours faithfully,

Sd/-

(Suneet Bhardwaj)

Assistant Inspector General of Forests

Copy to:

1. PCCF (HoFF), Government of Odisha, Bhubaneswar.
2. DDGF (Central), Integrated Regional Office of the MoEF&CC at Bhubaneswar.
3. APCCF cum Nodal Officer (FCA), Government of Odisha, Bhubaneswar.
4. User Agency
5. Monitoring Cell of FC Divisions, MoEF&CC, New Delhi.