

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

Indira Paryavaran Bhawan
Jor Bag Road, Aliganj
New Delhi - 110003.

Dated: April, 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 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).

Madam/Sir,

I am directed to refer to the Government of Odisha's letter No. FE-DIV-FLD-0088-2022-19934/FE&CC dated 09.11.2022 and vide letter No. No. 2680/9F (MG)-27/2022 dated 10.02.2023 on above subject, seeking prior approval of the Central Government under section 2 (ii) of the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 and to say that after examination of said proposal in the Advisory Committee meeting held on 24.03.2023, the Ministry desired to submit the following information for further action of the proposal:

- 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 Sundergarh 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 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 Govt. shall give justification for the instant proposal in view of above.
- ii. State Government shall submit a pointwise reply/comments/justification on the mitigation measures suggested and issues raised in the report of the sub-committee as above.
- 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.
- iv. The State Government has submitted that to address the issue of interstate movement of elephants in the larger landscape comprising of Odisha, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh 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 this in view the Ministry shall seek the comments of the Project Elephant Division on the instant proposal.

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. PCCF cum Nodal Officer (FCA), Government of Odisha, Bhubaneswar.
4. Inspector General of Forests, Project Elephant, MoEF&CC, New Delhi- **with a request to provide the comments on the Advisory Committee observation no. (iv).**
5. User Agency
6. Monitoring Cell of FC Divisions, MoEF&CC, New Delhi.