

News ID-IPR/Forest-Env & CC (Eng)/515/12-09-2025

## Coordination Meeting Held to Address Bottlenecks in Forest Clearance Process

Bhubaneswar: 12/09/2025

A high-level coordination meeting was convened today to review and resolve bottlenecks in the processing of forest clearance proposals, paving the way for faster decision-making on key development projects while ensuring due safeguards for conservation.

The meeting brought together senior officials from the Forest, Environment and Climate Change Department namely Sri K.Murugesan, Addl. PCCF (nodal), Sri A. K. Kar, CCF (Nodal), Sri Lingaraj Ota, OSD cum special Secretary, Director, Geological Survey of India Sri J.P. Mahakud, Chief Engineer, Construction, South Eastern Railway, Sri Veerendra Singh, Regional Officer, National Highway Authority Of India as well as representatives of project proponents. Chaired by the Additional Chief Secretary, Forest, Environment & Climate Change, Shri Satyabrata Sahu, the session focused on strengthening inter-departmental coordination, streamlining procedures, and ensuring timely compliance with statutory norms.

Additional Chief Secretary, Forest, Environment and Climate Change and Home Depts. directed Regional Chief Conservator of Forests, Divisional Forest Officers and field-level officers to proactively identify and communicate potential hurdles at an early stage so that projects are not held up unnecessarily. Stress was also laid on balancing developmental imperatives with ecological priorities, with a clear message that conservation norms would not be compromised and development process would not be stalled.

ACS Sri Sahu discussed major issues that often delay clearance, including settlement of rights under the Forest Rights Act, compensatory afforestation requirements, and accurate demarcation of forest land. Emphasis was laid on adopting technology-driven solutions such as GIS-based mapping, digital monitoring of proposals, and time-bound inter-departmental consultations.

ACS Sri Sahu said that on 12<sup>th</sup> of every month, high level meeting would be held under his chairmanship on pending projects under PMG Pragati (Project Monitoring Group) to settle forest issues. The meeting decided to hold such coordination exercises regularly by ACS Sri Sahu and Chief Secretary Sri Manoj Ahuja to track progress and address emerging issues. It was resolved that dedicated nodal officers would process forest diversion proposals expeditiously.

By ensuring faster and more transparent clearances, the government aims to provide a boost to infrastructure and industrial projects, while safeguarding the interests of local communities and maintaining ecological balance, ACS Sri Sahu expressed.

Status of 7 nos. of exploratory Drilling Projects of Geological Survey of India were discussed in detail at the Coordination Meeting. These were : Proposal for exploratory drilling for copper-Nickel and associated precious metal mineralisation in Dudhiasol West Block under Similipal North Forest Division, Proposal for exploratory drilling for copper and associated precious metal mineralisation in Kesharpur South Block under Similipal North Forest Division, Proposal for exploratory drilling for Titanium and Vanadiferous Magnetite mineralisation in Kumardubi –Block under Similipal North Forest Division, Proposal for exploratory drilling for Manganese and Iron ore in Rudkella Block under Keonjhar Forest Division, Proposal for exploratory drilling for Manganese and iron ore in Kundrupani Block under Keonjhar Forest Division, Proposal for exploratory drilling for Iron ore in Kasia West

Block under Keonjhar Forest Division, Proposal for exploratory drilling for nickel and associated metals in Kansa-Kumardah Sector, Sukinda Valley under Cuttack Forest Division.

Status of two railway projects of South Eastern Railway were also discussed. These were - Proposal for diversion of 12.708 ha of forest land for construction of double Railway Line Flyover connecting MCL Railway Siding to Jharsuguda Passenger Yard and Dhutra Yard under Jharsuguda Forest Division by South Eastern Railway, Jharsuguda, Jharsuguda-Barpali-Sardega Ph-II Works-Rail Connectivity for Coal Loading Bulb at Barpalli.

ACS Sri Sahu asked DFOs to address Forest clearance issues for construction of Capital region ring road from Rameswar to Govindpur and from Govindpur to Tangi and Ashdyke project under Neyvelli Lignite corporation (NLC).

RCCFs, Rourkela, Angul and Sambalpur and DFOs of Rourkela, Rairangpur, Baripada, Cuttack, Sundargarh, Jharsuguda, Keonjhar and Bonai forest divisions joined the co-ordination meetings virtually and interacted with ACS Sri Sahu regarding settlement of forest issues.



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