

Government of Odisha
Forest, Environment & Climate Change Department

NOTIFICATION

Bhubaneswar, dated the 20 March, 2023

FE-ENV1-ENV-0011-2023/ 5199 /FE&CC, Gandhamardan hill located under both Bolangir and Bargarh Forest Divisions is considered as the treasure trove of medicinal plants and an ayurvedic paradise of Odisha. This ecologically fragile ecosystem is rich in floral and faunal diversity having diverse socio-economic, ecological and biological significance for the people of Odisha.

The floral diversity of the hill comprises of 1055 plant species that include 849 angiosperms, 56 Pteridophytes, 40 Bryophytes, 45 Lichens and 02 Gymnosperms and 63 species of Macrofungi. The faunal diversity comprises of 500 species of animals that include 43 Mammals, 161 Birds, 44 Reptiles, 16 Amphibians, 118 Butterflies, 27 Dragonflies and 7 Damselflies and 83 species of Spiders. One angiosperm: *Ficus conccina* var. *dasycarpa* and one spider: *Peucetia harishankarensis* are endemic to this hill. Brief information on Biodiversity of Mahendragiri hill is given in Annexure I.

Two historical monuments such as Nrusinghanath Temple located on the Northern slope and Harishankar Temple located on the Southern slope of the foot hills of Gandhamardan have immense cultural significance. These two hill shrines are the two major pilgrimage sites of Odisha. In his chronicles Hiuen Tsang had described this hill shrine as a Buddhist heritage site named Parimalagiri.

At present the rich biological resources of this cultural landscape are under pressure due to various anthropogenic and climatic factors and the traditional ecological knowledge associated with the bioresources of the hill are declining. The long-term protection, conservation and management of biological resources of the Gandhamardan hill is of utmost significance for the state.

Whereas it is provided under Section 37 of the Biological Diversity Act, 2002 that the State Government may in consultation with the local bodies, notify in the Official Gazette, areas of biodiversity importance as Biodiversity Heritage Sites under this Act.

Whereas the Rule 20 (2) of the Odisha Biological Diversity Rules, 2012 mandates the State Biodiversity Board to frame guidelines on the selection, management and other aspects of Biodiversity Heritage Sites. In pursuance of these provisions the Odisha Biodiversity Board has notified the guidelines which has already been approved by the Government of Odisha in Forest and Environment Department vide letter no. 23339 /F&E dated 26-12-2015. As per the guidelines well defined areas that are "Unique, ecologically fragile ecosystems-terrestrial, coastal and inland waters and marine having rich biodiversity comprising of any one or more of the following components: richness of wild as well as domesticated species or intra-specific categories, high endemism, presence of rare and threatened species, keystone species, species of evolutionary significance, wild ancestors of domestic/cultivated species or their varieties, past pre-eminence of biological components represented by fossil beds and having significant cultural, ethical or aesthetic values and are important for the maintenance of cultural diversity, with or without a long history of human association with them" can be declared as Biodiversity Heritage Sites (BHS) in the State.

Whereas proposals from Biodiversity Management Committee of Nandupala and Telenpali of Bolangir district and Bartunda and Mithapali of Bargarh district, Niranjan Bishi, MP of Bolangir, DFO, Bolangir and Bargarh and one NGO named District Forestry



Federation working in Bolangir and Bargarh districts have been received for declaring Gandhamardan Hill as Biodiversity Heritage Site in prescribed proforma of BHS guidelines issued by Government of Odisha. The proposal submitted by the BMC of Nandupala has been approved in Gramsabha held on 07-10-2021 for declaring Gandhamardan as BHS.

Whereas following the guidelines of BHS, Odisha Biodiversity Board has published the preliminary information on Gandhamardan as the proposed BHS in a local Odia newspaper 'The Sakala' (published on 12-11-2021, 10-12-2022) and in one English Newspaper "The New Indian Express" (published on 09 -12-2022).

Whereas the Odisha Biodiversity Board has processed the same as per above guidelines and recommended the proposal for declaring Gandhamardan as a Biodiversity Heritage Site. Now, therefore, Government have been pleased to declare an area of 18,963.898 ha of Gandhamardan hill (Gandhamardan Reserve Forest) between Bargarh (12431.8 ha) and Bolangir (6532.098 ha) districts of Odisha under both Bolangir and Bargarh Forest Divisions as the 'Biodiversity Heritage Site of Odisha (as per the Map in Annexure- II and Boundary description in Annexure- III), as per section 37 of Biodiversity Act and Rule 20(2) of Odisha Biodiversity Rules, 2012 and as per the criteria of the Guidelines issued by this Department letter No. 23339 dated 26-12-2015.

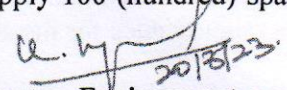
By Order of Governor



Additional Chief Secretary
FE & CC Department

Memo No. 5200 Date. 20.03.23

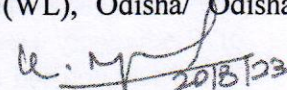
Copy along with soft copy of the Notification forwarded to the Director, Printing Stationary & Publications, Odisha Govt. Press, Madhupatna, Cuttack-10 for publication of the Notification in an extraordinary issue of Odisha Gazette and supply 100 (hundred) spare copies to the FE & CC Department for circulation.



Director, Environment-cum-
Special Secretary to Govt.

Memo No. 5201 Date. 20.03.23

Copy forwarded to the PCCF, Odisha/ PCCF(KL)/ PCCF(WL), Odisha/ Odisha Biodiversity Board for information and necessary action.



Director, Environment-cum-
Special Secretary to Govt.

Memo No. 5202 Date 20.03.23

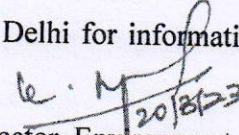
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Director, Environment-cum-
Special Secretary to Govt.

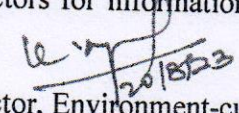
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20/3/23
Director, Environment-cum-
Special Secretary to Govt.

Memo No. 5204 Date 20.03.23

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20/3/23
Director, Environment-cum-
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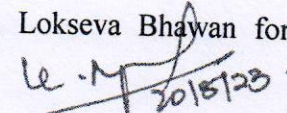
Memo No. 5205 Date 20.03.23

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20/3/23
Director, Environment-cum-
Special Secretary to Govt.

Memo No. 5206 Date 20.03.23

Copy forwarded to the Head, State Portal IT Department, Lokseva Bhawan for information & necessary action.


20/3/23
Director, Environment-cum-
Special Secretary to Govt.