

Environmental Justice Forum, Hyderabad

**FORMAL OBJECTION to Foundation Stone Laying for BPCL
GREENFIELD REFINERY, NELLORE, ANDHRA PRADESH**

Date: 10th June 2026

To

The Member Secretary,
Expert Appraisal Committee (Industrial Projects – 2)
IA Division,
Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change
Indira Paryavaran Bhawan, Jor Bagh Road
New Delhi – 110 003

Subject: Objection to the proposed laying of the foundation stone for the 9 MMTPA Greenfield Refinery and Petrochemical Complex of M/s Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL) at Chevuru Village, Gudlur Mandal, SPSR Nellore District, Andhra Pradesh, in the absence of prior Environmental Clearance — reg.

Reference:

1. EIA Notification, 2006 (S.O. 1533(E) dated 14.09.2006), as amended
2. MoEFCC Letter No. IA-J-11011/271/2025-IA-II, TOR Identification No. TO26A1201AP5101317A, dated 13 March 2026 (Amended Terms of Reference issued to M/s BPCL)
3. News reports dated 24th May 2026 (Times of India), and 2nd June 2026 (The New Indian Express) regarding the imminent laying of the foundation stone in July 2026 for the proposed BPCL refinery and petrochemical complex in Andhra Pradesh

Sir/Madam,

I/We write to register a strong and urgent objection to the reported plan to lay the foundation stone for the above-mentioned project before the completion of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process and the grant of Environmental Clearance (EC) by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.

1. Legal bar under the EIA Notification, 2006

The proposed 9 MMTPA Greenfield Refinery and Petrochemical Complex is a Category A project under Item 5(a) (Petroleum refining industry) of Schedule I to the EIA Notification, 2006. Under Clause 6 of the said

Notification, no construction work, preliminary preparation to carry out the building or construction work, or any work relating to setting up of project or activity must **be undertaken until the Environmental Clearance has been granted**. The laying of a foundation stone constitutes commencement of site preparation and/or construction activity and is squarely covered by this prohibition.

2. The project is still at the Terms of Reference stage

According to MoEFCC's own records, the Ministry issued only an **Amended Terms of Reference** (vide File No. IA-J-11011/271/2025-IA-II, dated 13 March 2026) to M/s BPCL. Terms of Reference represent merely the first stage of the EIA process; they only prescribe the scope of the studies to be conducted for the EIA report. At present:

- There is no application for EC pending with EAC (IP2)
- The Expert Appraisal Committee has not appraised the project;
- Environmental Clearance has not been granted by the Ministry.

To proceed with any construction or site activity, including the ceremonial but legally significant act of laying a foundation stone, at this stage is therefore a **direct and wilful violation of the EIA Notification, 2006**.

3. Serious concerns remain regarding the EIA process itself

It is also on record that independent experts and civil society organisations have raised substantial concerns about the adequacy of the Amended Terms of Reference issued in March 2026, particularly regarding gaps related to Major Accident Hazard (MAH) installations, consequence analysis, coastal zone impacts, and cumulative impacts on the ecologically sensitive areas in SPSR Nellore District. These concerns have not been addressed. Any administrative or symbolic act that signals irreversible commitment to the project before these issues are examined and resolved ***undermines the integrity of the EIA process***.

4. Precedent and the "fait accompli" problem

Foundation stone-laying ceremonies, particularly those involving high-ranking political figures, create facts on the ground and exert significant political and administrative pressure to approve projects regardless of the outcome of environmental appraisal. The Supreme Court of India and various High Courts have consistently held that the EIA process must be a genuine appraisal and not a post-facto formality. Permitting such ceremonies before clearance corrupts the appraisal process and ***defeats the purpose of the EIA Notification***.

5. Prayer

In light of the above, I/We respectfully request the Ministry to:

(a) **Issue an immediate advisory or directive** to M/s BPCL and the Government of Andhra Pradesh reiterating that no construction activity, including laying of a foundation stone, may be undertaken for the proposed project ***until Environmental Clearance is duly granted***;

(b) **Take note of this objection on record** in the files of the EIA appraisal process for the project (File No. IA-J-11011/271/2025-IA-II);

(c) **Ensure that any action in violation of the EIA Notification 2006 is treated as a ground for initiating action** under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986.

We also request that a **copy of this letter** be forwarded to the Chairperson, Expert Appraisal Committee (Industrial Projects-2), for information.

We are committed to the lawful and transparent conduct of the environmental appraisal process for a project of this magnitude, which will have lasting consequences for the ecology, livelihoods, and public health of the people of SPSR Nellore District and the surrounding coastal region.

Encl: Press reports of proposed foundation stone laying for the project:

- 1) <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/vijayawada/foundation-stone-for-bpcls-rs-1-lakh-crore-greenfield-refinery-likely-in-july/articleshow/131295456.cms>
- 2) <https://www.newindianexpress.com/states/andhra-pradesh/2026/Jun/02/foundation-stone-to-be-laid-for-bpcl-refinery-in-andhra-soon>

Yours faithfully,

On behalf of Environmental Justice Forum, Hyderabad, signatories:

G. Kondala Rao	Environmental Justice Forum (EJF), Hyderabad
Kazipeta Purushottam	United Forum for Environmental Protection
Sanghamitra Malik	Apna Watan
P. Shankar	Dalit bahun Front (DBF)
Narayana Rao P	Environmental justice forum
Dattupanth	Rtd. PHMED
Nirmala Sambamoorthy	Ascent Consultants

Janardhan Reddy G	Independent
Dr Vijayakumar kunchu	EJF
Prasad Jaladi	Suraksha
Varada Charyulu n. Ch	Civilian
Dr P Srinivas Rao	Environment Justice Forum
Dr Indukuri Satyanarayana Raju	Irrigation Dept.
Kalapala Babu Rao	Human Rights Forum
Sravya	Not working
Sambamoorthy	Environmental Justice Forum
Chaitanya Krishna	Graitec
Thalanki venkata Sai Kalyani	St. Martin's Engineering College

Copy to:

1. The Chairperson, Expert Appraisal Committee (Industrial Projects-2), MoEFCC, New Delhi
2. The Chief Secretary, Government of Andhra Pradesh, Amaravati
3. The District Collector, SPSR Nellore District, Nellore
4. The Chairman & Managing Director, BPCL, Mumbai (for information)