

CHAPTER-3**THE SITE AND SURROUNDINGS****3.1 LOCATION OF SITE**

The shale mine area falls under Shella village and lies on the western side of the Umium River, about 2 km NW of village Shella Bazar. The location map of mine area is shown in Exhibit-3.1.

The details of the land contained within the mine area are stated below :

District & State	P.S/Taluka	Proposed Mine Area	Nearest village and crow fly distance
East Khasi Hills, Meghalaya	Shella P.S.	4.90 Hectares	Phlangkaruh (about 1 km to the south) Shella Bazar (about 2 km to the south east) Pyrkan village (about 1.5 km to the south-southeast)

The Shella area is located in a remote part of Meghalaya State in India, away from urban and industrial centers, in the southern face of Khasi Hills. To the south of the mine area there lies the international border between India and Bangladesh which runs in an east-west direction in general.

The topography of the region is marked by rugged hilly terrain rising from the low altitudes of the plains on the south and upto 700 m above mean sea level northwards.

The general elevation of the area ranges between 75 m Reduced Level (RL) and 147 m RL. To the north, the land rises abruptly to the higher altitudes of the plateau whilst to the south, the land slopes gently to the plains of Bangladesh. To the east, the land slopes gently forming a gorge through which the river Umium flows. To the west, the land rolls with hills of different elevations.

A vicinity map of the area is presented in Exhibit-3.2.

3.2 ACCESSIBILITY

The details of the accessibility of the areas are as follows :

Road

The mine area lies on the western side of the Umium river valley, about 2 km NW of village Shella Bazar and is approachable from Shillong (109 km), the capital of Meghalaya, via Mawsynram & Nongtraï villages by a tracked road. It is also accessible from Shillong (96 km) by a tracked road via Cherrapunji upto village Shella Bazaar. However, there is no access road/bridge across the Umium river to connect the two villages Shella Bazar in the east and Pyrkan Shella in west of the river. During the dry season, a temporary bamboo bridge is constructed by the village people providing access by foot across the river. But in the rainy season, one has to cross the river by boat.

Rail

The nearest Rail-head is at Guwahati, about 200 km away towards the North of the area.

Air

The nearest airports are in Upper Shillong (110 km away) and Guwahati (200 km away). However, no regular flights are scheduled to Shillong. Recently, the Government of Meghalaya has opened helicopter service for public between Guwahati and Shillong.