

No.FCA/ 7895/RK /
H.P. Forest Department.

Dated D/Shala, the/ 14-03-2023 /

From: D.F.O. Dharamshala.

To: C.C.F. (T) Dharamshala.

Subject : Proposal for seeking prior approval of the Central Government under Section 2 of Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 for non-forestry use of 64.2016 ha (Originally proposed 75.3931 ha.) of forest land for Construction of North Campus Central University, Dharamshala, District Kangra State Himachal Pradesh (Online Proposal No. FP/HP/Others/39044/2019).

Memo;

Kindly refer to the observations raised by Assistant Inspector General of Forests, Government of India, MoEFCC, FC Division, Indira Paryavaran Bhawan, Jor Bagh Road, Aliganj, New Delhi-110003 vide letter No. File No. 8-17/2020-FC dated 22.02.2023, on the subject cited above.

In this regard the point wise reply to the Observations are as under :-


| Sr. No. | Observation | Reply |
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| 1. | The construction of the Central University is a non-site specific activity and the State Govt. has not submitted any valid justification as to how use of forest land in instant case in unavoidable | As submitted by the User Agency, the land at Dharamshala was selected by the Central Site Selection Committee constituted by the Ministry of Education after visiting various sites offered by the State Government. The Committee had explored numerous alternatives during its visits including exploring possibility of Non-Forest Land for establishment of the University. However, since 66% of the Geographical Area of Himachal Pradesh is covered under Forest Land and only around 10% is categorized as Agriculture land/under cultivation, hence this severely limits the options with regard to provision of non-forest land for various developmental projects in the State. The maximum possible Non Forest land available at a particular location (25.9937 Ha) has already been transferred to the University for construction of its North Campus which is contiguous to the proposed 65 Ha forest land at Jadranga! (Dharamshala). Moreover, in order to develop a premier institute of Higher Education with a vision of achieving excellence in shortest possible time, the location where institution is being established plays a vital and crucial role. Availability of basic infrastructure and transport facilities near the establishment/Institute is a fundamental necessity to attract talented and accomplished faculty and the best students during the establishment years. Central Universities are |

being developed with a vision for providing quality education and promoting research among the students for the next 100 years or more and hence should not be seen as just another infrastructure project. Also, Dharamshala town, being a place of prominence is known both within the country and is also on the world tourist map. It is a hub of varied kinds of academic, political, industrial, sports and, administrative activities and programmes of State/National/International Level/repute like; The Global Investor Meet-2019, All India Chief Secretaries' Conclave-2022, G20 Summit Scheduled in April, 2023 etc. Besides this, Dharamshala HPCA Cricket Stadium has hosted various International Cricket Matches and also houses the Sports Training Centre of Sports Authority of India (SAI). It is being developed as a "Smart City" by the Union Ministry of Urban Development, Govt. of India under the National Smart Cities Mission. It is the Winter Capital of the State of Himachal Pradesh and also the Headquarter of District Kangra. Other than having the best advantage of Dharamshala being connected to the busiest Airport of the State (Kangra/Gaggal Airport), the town is also well connected with rail and road which not only facilitates the induction of high quality faculty staff and students but will also enable frequent visits of expert guest faculty and industrialists. Availability of established infrastructure facilities in terms of Schooling, Higher Education, Housing and Healthcare nearby the town further supplements this appeal. Thus, an internationally visible profile provides a symbolic value to draw in both National and International Faculty and Students. The location of Headquarters of Central Tibetan Administration as well as Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies in Dharamshala provide an edge for establishing this University at Dharamshala for pursuing its Academic Endeavors. This will not only facilitate collaborative studies in the areas of Tibetan Culture and Buddhist Studies but will also be helpful in initiating academic and research programmes of multidisciplinary nature as has been emphasized in National Education Policy-2020. In view of the aforesaid submissions, it is crystal clear that given the advantage of locating the University in Dharamshala, there is every likelihood of failure of achieving the objectives envisaged for establishing the University, if a location other than Dharamshala is chosen for North Campus of Central University of Himachal Pradesh. The Central Site Selection Committee of

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| | | MHRD in 2016 was also of the same opinion and has strongly recommended the same in this regard. |
| 2. | As per the report of the site selection committee constituted by Govt. of India (MHRD), the reason for rejection of one of the sites on non-forest land was the cost of acquisition of non-forest land, which indicates that the proposed use of forest land is not unavoidable. | As submitted by the User Agency, the case of acquisition of land from HPKV Palampur was attempted but was rejected by the HPKV authorities as the land had already been utilized by that University for other purposes. Also the proposal of 200 Acres of land with Housing Board was rejected by the State Government at that time and the said land has already been allotted for some other projects and committed for alternate purposes of significance and hence it is not possible to spare that land because of Govt. obligations/legal ramifications. Also, the University requires a large area of upto 100 Ha (90.1353 Ha as per Master Plan submitted). Hence, maximum possible available Non-Forest land (25.9937 Ha) at this particular location i.e. Dharamshala, has already been transferred to the University which is contiguous to the proposed forest land of 64.2016 Ha categorised as UPF (Undemarcated Protected Forest). Further, as per Certificate Furnished by District Collector, Kangra, there is no suitable non-forest land and private land available in Tehsil Dharamshala which could serve the purpose for Construction of North Campus of CUHP at Dharamshala (Copy of Certificate has been uploaded against Additional Information Detail in Online Part I). It is also apprised that as per the revised proposal, the number of trees has also been reduced from 27135 to 7124 only due to the reduction in area out of which only 2991 trees will be felled and 4133 trees will remain standing. |
| 3. | Use of the fragile Himalayan strata receiving sufficiently high rainfall for the construction of the University is required to be avoided under normal circumstances | As submitted by the User Agency, with regard to Dharamshala receiving heavy rainfall, a thorough investigation by the Geological Survey of India has been got carried out at the said site. The GSI after conducting various Geological, Hydrological, Seismic and Meteorological investigations/assessments had recommended the suitable patches for construction thereat. The patches not suitable for construction were deleted and have not been considered in the current proposal. Further majority of land (about 89.5%) of the proposed land falls under slope angle of 0° -35° and only 2.12 % of the land has slope greater than 4°. Even so the University will adopt suitable and adequate Soil Stabilization measures alongwith proper drainage structures, any other remedial measures to provide additional stability to steep slopes. Also the proposed land is underlain by |

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| | | Lower Shivalik Sandstone and Dagshai/Kasauli group of rocks which are resistant to soil erosion with very few meters of alluvial cover (boulders/cobbles) (Copy of GSI report has already been uploaded Against Additional Information Detail in Online Part I). Moreover, it is proposed that Rainfall water will be harvested for use within the campus itself, to recharge the Ground Water level and also to cater partially to the University Water requirements. |
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It is therefore, requested that the necessary approval for the diversion of 64.2016 Ha. of forest land for the construction of above mentioned project may kindly be obtained from the Govt. of India under Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 and conveyed to this office.


Divisional Forest Officer,
Dharamshala Forest Division,
Dharamshala.