

I/371801/2024

No. D.VI-218(M)/\_\_\_\_\_  
Himachal Pradesh Forest Department.

From: CF Bilaspur.

To: Nodal Officer -cum-APCCF (FCA)  
O/o Pr.CCF (HoFF)HP, Shimla.

**Subject:- Diversion of 0.02885 ha. of forest land for the c/o Press Club Building at Changer Sector within the jurisdiction of Bilaspur Forest Division, in Distt. Bilaspur, HP.**

Sir,

Kindly refer to GoI online EDS dated 09.02.2024 on the subject cited above.

In this connection DFO Bilaspur has intimated that as per User Agency, the area proposed for diversion for the Press Club Bilaspur is very less(0.02885 ha.) and its strategic location in the town makes it an ideal place for collecting, analyzing and distributing news not only within district but also, beyond to the entire State and the country.

The land proposed for diversion is located at the District Headquarter, Bilaspur within the premises of the Mini Secretariat Complex where all important government offices exist and where Media fraternity finds it effective to gather information as well as disseminate critical development and other news to all parts of the district beyond.

We also explore other alternatives as suggested by the REC. It is also submitted that the land adjoining to the proposed diversion land for the Press Club has already been either diverted or under the ownership of governments. User Agency has also intimated to the DFO that due to the issuance of the Forest Department Notification of 1952, all other wasteland other than private land has been declared as protected forests. This has literally led to no-availability of any land that can be used for construction of the Press Club. In fact, the submergence of the old Bilaspur town for Bhakra Dam Hydel Power Project led to several problems including non-availability of land for settlement due to the said 1952 notification. As per user agency they have contacted different government offices for availability of land and they could not find any suitable and appropriate location to construct the Press Club.

It is also mention here that Deputy Commissioner Bilaspur has already been issued a certificate of Non-availability of Non Forest Land vide his office letter No.BS-ADRA-2(12)/12-III-57147 dated 7<sup>th</sup> December, 2019. User Agency has also assured that they will try to protect maximum trees(4 trees-mainly broadleaf) and will save these trees by minimizing as little damage or removal by tailoring the construction design accordingly. The land to be diverted is very small and User Agency assured to plant 10 times more trees for each tree that needs to be felled under the supervision of the local Deputy Conservator of Forests, Bilaspur. Though, the User Agency will not fell all 4 trees and will try to save as many as they can. The User Agency has also pointed out that the Press played an important role in the improvement of tree cover in Bilaspur and over the years, the tree cover in Bilaspur has increased rather than declined as per the report of Forest Survey of India.

The Press is the fourth pillar of democracy and needs a suitable place and facilities to perform its duties. The Press Club has promoted forest protection and conservation through organizing seminars, conferences and participating in tree planting campaigns in Bilaspur, whose population is about 4 lakh people and constitute a major district of Himachal Pradesh. The Press Club Bilaspur has more than two dozens of daily, weekly, fortnightly vernacular and other language papers along with digital and electronic media to spread the critical information around the area to protect democracy, save environment, spread information about the welfare and developmental schemes of the district, State and National Governments and highlight the pitfalls in the working of the government to provide checks and balances to protect the democratic norms of the country as enshrined in the Constitution of India.

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It is therefore, again requested that 0.02885 ha. of forest land may be diverted in favour of District Public Relations Officer, District Bilaspur for construction of Press Club Building in the interest of the larger public.

Conservator of Forests,  
Bilaspur Forest Circle,  
Bilaspur (HP).

Endst. No. D-VI-218(M)/\_\_\_\_\_

dated Bilaspur the\_\_\_\_\_

Copy is forwarded to DFO Bilaspur w.r.t. his office memo. No. 13666 dated 18.03.2024 for information.