

GOVERNMENT OF NCT OF DELHI
DEPARTMENT OF FORESTS & WILDLIFE
2ND FLOOR, A-BLOCK, VIKAS BHAWAN, I.P. ESTATE, NEW DELHI-02

F. No.11(26)/PA/DCF/95/Vol. X/Part 6/ 4144-46

Date: 18/9/23

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF RIDGE MANAGEMENT BOARD HELD ON 24.08.2023 AT 3:00 PM UNDER THE CHAIRMANSHIP OF CHIEF SECRETARY, DELHI & CHAIRMAN, RMB

The meeting of Ridge Management Board was held on 24.08.2023 at 3:00PM under the chairmanship of Chief Secretary cum Chairman RMB. The list of attendees is attached.

At the outset, PCCF & Member Secretary, RMB welcomed all the Board Members. Thereafter each agenda was discussed by the Board and decisions were taken as listed below:

1. Agenda Item 1: Construction of New Lab complex by IUAC

The Board was briefed that a proposal has been submitted by Inter-University Accelerator Centre (IUAC) for construction of a new lab complex involving 2 facilities namely Geo-Chronology Facility of Ministry of Earth Science and Electron Beam Irradiation Facility of ISRO.

The current proposal is for seeking permission for use of 0.29 ha geo-morphological ridge area involving felling/ transplantation of 39 trees for construction of the above two lab facilities as detailed below:

1.	Geo-Chronology Facility of Ministry of Earth Science	1295 sqm (0.13 ha)	20 trees
2.	Electron Beam Irradiation Facility of ISRO	1610 sqm (0.16 ha)	19 trees

It was also informed that the Central Empowered Committee (CEC) while considering the previous matters pertaining to construction in JNU campus had reiterated that the Environment Task Force of JNU should

demarcate the 369 acres of green area within their campus and submit the same to the Forest Department.

The RMB in its meeting held on 05.03.2021 had deferred this project with the following directions:

"The Board decided that Ministry of Education (earlier MHRD) and JNU should take up the matter for demarcation of the Green Area and ensure that the demarcation should be completed within a period of one month and the Board should be informed of the same. Accordingly, the agenda was deferred."

Thereafter, the Ministry of Education was requested to take up the matter with JNU and ensure completion of the demarcation vide letter dated 07.04.2021. JNU vide letter dated 16.07.2021 has informed that 369 acres of land in the campus is being maintained as green cover area as per the directions of CEC and the demarcation of the same is under process.

In view of the submissions of JNU, IUAC has requested that their project may be treated as an independent entity and permission be granted as the project is of national importance.

In this regard it was stated a similar case for construction new buildings by IIMC on 16.2 acres of land allotted to them inside JNU campus was recommended by the Board in its meeting held on 09.05.2018 after the request of User Agency to consider their case as a stand alone case without linking it with the demarcation of 369 acres of green area inside JNU campus.

In view of the above facts, the Board decided to recommended the proposal for consideration of Central Empowered Committee subject to the following conditions:

- I. The User Agency shall deposit 5% of the project cost proportionate to the area falling within Ridge area to RMB fund on the lines of conditions imposed by Hon'ble Supreme Court of India in WP (C) 202/1995 titled T. N. Godavarman Thirumulpad Vs Union of India & Ors. for management of the ridge.
- II. The User Agency shall obtain prior permission for felling/ transplantation of 39 trees as per provisions under Delhi Preservation of Trees Act, 1994.



2. Agenda Item 2: Construction of New Office Building by the Asian Development Bank, India Resident Mission, 5 Rizal Marg, Chanakyapuri, New Delhi.

The proposal received from Asian Development Bank (ADB) for construction of a new office building at 5 Rizal Marg, Chanakyapuri was placed before the Board. The proposed area for construction is a parcel of land measuring 857 sqm allotted by L&DO in 2019 to ADB for expansion of their already existing office space.

The proposed project area is falling within the geo-morphological ridge and involves felling/ transplantation of 07 nos. of trees. The User Agency has identified land at Kalkaji for compensatory plantation of 70 nos. of trees and land at Ghadoli for transplantation of 7 nos. of trees.

As the area required for construction of the office building is bare minimum & as the User Agency has already identified land for compensatory plantation and transplantation, the Board decided to recommend the proposal for consideration of Central Empowered Committee subject to the following conditions:

- I. The User Agency shall deposit 5% of the project cost proportionate to the area falling within Ridge area to RMB fund on the lines of conditions imposed by Hon'ble Supreme Court of India in WP (C) 202/1995 titled T. N. Godavarman Thirumulpad Vs Union of India & Ors. for management of the ridge.
- II. The User Agency shall obtain necessary permission for felling/ transplantation of 07 trees as per provisions under Delhi Preservation of Trees Act, 1994.

3. Agenda Item 3: Permission for use of 17.75 acres ridge/ ridge-like area (Geo-morphological ridge) for construction of Central Armed Police Forces Institute of Medical Sciences (CAPFIMS) in Maidangarhi.

The Board was informed that the original proposal of CAPFIMS for use of 33.65 acres (13.62 ha) outside ridge area out of total project area of 51.40 (20.80 ha) acres was approved by RMB in its meeting held on 06.06.2016 subject to the condition that the proposal shall be implemented only over 33.65 acres after excluding notified ridge/ ridge like area



admeasuring 17.75 acres and which area of 17.75 acres will not be used in any manner for the purpose of the project. The same was also approved by the Central Empowered Committee (CEC). Since the area falls within the Eco-sensitive zone of the Asola-Bhatti Wildlife Sanctuary the clearance from the Standing Committee of the National Board for Wildlife, Ministry of Environment, Forests & Climate Change was also obtained by the User Agency.

The Ministry of Home Affairs has now informed that due to the exclusion of this 17.75 acres from the entire project area, several components (Type- II, III, VII & VIII quarters) envisaged at the time of initial layout plan had to be surrendered. These components are highly essential for the ancillary staff for hospital services to function and due to non-availability of residential quarters the services could be severely affected. Therefore, the User Agency has requested that permission may be granted for use of 17.75 acres falling in ridge/ ridge-like area (geo-morphological ridge).

Keeping in view the fact that the medical facility is being developed for the armed forces and the quarters essential for the working staff, the Board decided to recommend the proposal for consideration of Central Empowered Committee subject to the following conditions:

- I. The User Agency shall deposit 5% of the project cost proportionate to the area falling within Ridge area to RMB fund on the lines of conditions imposed by Hon'ble Supreme Court of India in WP (C) 202/1995 titled T. N. Godavarman Thirumulpad Vs Union of India & Ors. for management of the ridge.
- II. The User Agency shall obtain prior permission under Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 for use of area falling within the ridge area.

4. Agenda Item 4: Grant of permission for construction of Admin Block of IGNOU campus at Maidangarhi.

The proposal has received from Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) for construction of an admin block of IGNOU campus at Maidangarhi was placed before the Board. It was informed that the admin block will include Administration Division, Finance and Accounts Division, Research unit,



Campus placement Cell, Planning and Development, Public Information unit etc. and the proposed building will be having ground + five storied structure.

The User Agency is seeking permission for construction of the admin block over an area of 0.27 ha which is falling within Reserve Forest Khasra No. 690/574 Maidangarhi/ Ridge like area (Geo-morphological Ridge). There are 40 nos. of trees standing at the project site out of which 32 trees are proposed for felling & 08 trees are proposed for transplantation.

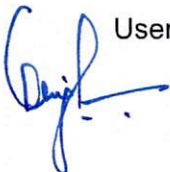
As the execution of the project is being for an educational institution which is in larger public interest, the Board decided to recommend the proposal for consideration of Central Empowered Committee subject to the following conditions:

- I. The User Agency shall deposit 5% of the project cost proportionate to the area falling within Ridge area to RMB fund on the lines of conditions imposed by Hon'ble Supreme Court of India in WP (C) 202/1995 titled T. N. Godavarman Thirumulpad Vs Union of India & Ors. for management of the ridge.
- II. The User Agency shall obtain necessary permission under Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 for use of area falling within the ridge area.

5. Agenda Item 5: Grant of Permission under Ridge Management Board for use of area falling under Southern/ Morphological Ridge for the diversion of traffic for construction of Neb Sarai Metro Station of Phase-IV MRTS project.

The Board was informed that a proposal has been received from Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) seeking permission for temporary use of area falling under Southern/ Morphological Ridge for a period of 02 years for diversion of traffic at Neb Sarai Metro Station being constructed under Phase-IV MRTS project.

The RMB through Central Empowered Committee and Hon'ble Supreme Court in the year 2021 accorded permission for use of Forest area falling within the alignment of Aerocity-Tughlakabad Phase-IV corridor of the MRTS. The statutory clearance under FCA, 1980 was also obtained by the User Agency before commencement of work.



It has now been informed that to take up the construction activities of the proposed Neb Sarai station of this corridor, DMRC had diverted the incoming traffic from IGNOU university/ Maidan Garhi towards MB road via internal roads by repairing the diversion roads and taking other measures. However, these internal diversion roads are not effective to cater the existing volume of traffic leading to a stand still traffic situation for many hours every day which is causing problems for the general public. In such a scenario, the construction activities of the station are getting hampered.

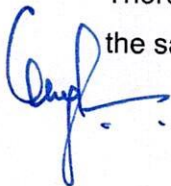
In view of the above facts, DMRC is seeking permission for temporary diversion of traffic through an alternate route involving forest areas in order to ease the traffic situation so that construction activities can be undertaken. The details of forest area involved in the project is as detailed below:

	Type of Forest area	Area	No. of trees involved
1.	Reserved Forest	0.46 ha	55
2.	Morphological Ridge area	0.16 ha	

After due deliberations, the Board deferred the agenda with the observations that a field visit may be undertaken by the Board members to ascertain the situation on ground as opening of the road through forest area for a period of two years will lead to irreparable damage to existing flora and fauna. In the meanwhile, DMRC may also look for other alternatives including deployment of additional marshals for effective traffic management.

6. Agenda Item 6: Strengthening & Capacity building for protection of the Ridge area & RMB cell.

The Board was informed that there is requirement of additional human resource to ensure smooth functioning and streamlining of the RMB cell. Therefore, the Department has proposed to engage manpower services for the same as detailed below:



	Name of the items	Specifications	Nos.	Remarks
1.	Project Associate, RMB	Post Graduate with 0-2 years of full time work experience in a Govt. Department. OR B.Tech/ BE/ B Arch Degree with 0-2 years of full time work experience in a Govt. Department.	01	1. Engagement is being proposed for strengthening of RMB cell. 2. Engagement through ICSIL and Remuneration shall be as per approval of RMB vide minutes of meeting held on 31.12.2021.
2.	Project Associate (Legal)	LLB with 0-2 years of full time work experience	03	1. Engagement of 03 Legal associates is for handling cases pertaining to Wildlife section and 01 for handling court cases pertaining to Ridge area. 2. Engagement through ICSIL and Remuneration shall be as per approval of RMB vide minutes of meeting held on 31.12.2021.
3.	Data Entry Operators	As per ICSIL norms	02	

The Board approved the above proposal of the Department along with financial authorization for carrying out the above expenditure from the RMB fund.

7. Agenda Item 7: Financial approval for carrying out comprehensive study regarding the biodiversity of Asola Bhatti Wildlife Sanctuary (ABWS) and preparation of management plan of Asola Bhatti Wildlife Sanctuary.

It was informed that in an earlier meeting of RMB held on 28.06.2022, the Board had desired that the Forest Department may write to Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun for conducting a comprehensive study of biodiversity of Asola Bhatti Wildlife Sanctuary as well as the preparation of

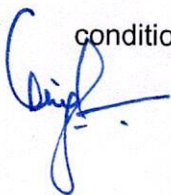
management plan for the sanctuary. Accordingly, WII has submitted a proposal for an amount of Rs.91,88,500/- with the following study objectives:

- A. Baseline information on soil and groundwater properties and biodiversity assessment.
- B. Delineation of mined out pits of ABWS with geophysical (Land Use and Land Cover), biological attributes maps of different floral, faunal and social components and identification of critical habitats based on biodiversity values.
- C. Identify and evaluate the potential socio-economic changes on the life quality (economy) and cultural impacts of nearby villages by maintaining the ecological integrity of ecosystem to ensure the wise use of common ecological goods and services.
- D. Assessing probable effects due to dumping of inert material as well as feral animals on flora and fauna of Asola-Bhatti WS.
- E. Promote sustainable ecotourism in the Sanctuary.
- F. Developing Integrated Management Plan for the holistic preservation of the Aravalli Ridge ecosystem, while maintaining the corridor connectivity with neighboring states' PAs in the Aravalli zone.

The payment schedule for the project shall be as below:

Deliverable	Timeline	Release of funds (approx.)	Amount (in Rs.) (Rounded off)
Submission of proposal	0 month	50%	45,94,250/-
Interim Report	12 months	30%	27,56,550/-
Final Management Plan	18 months	20%	18,37,700/-

The above proposal was approved by the Board subject to the following conditions:



- I. WII may be asked to look into the possibility of decreasing the timeline for conducting the said studies and submission of the final management plan.
- II. The project may be revised to include the comprehensive study of biodiversity of the entire ridge of NCT of Delhi.

8. Agenda Item 8: Streamlining of accounting procedure for the management of funds received in Ridge Management Board Fund Account.

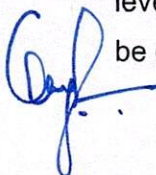
The proposal of the Department for streamlining the accounting procedure for RMB fund accounts including works like maintaining of books of accounts i.e. Cash Book, Bill register, Expenditure Control Register, Receipt Register, Sanction Register, Asset register etc and Financial Statement with significant accounting policies, reconciliation of bank account and Scrutiny of Tax ledger and other activities/ functions to be performed for smooth management of account was placed before the Board.

After due deliberations, the Board has desired that an audit of the RMB fund account may be conducted by hiring the services of a CAG empanelled audit agency.

9. Agenda Item 9: Pay upgradation of Animal Handlers engaged through ICSIL under RMB.

The Board was informed that the MTS (Animal Handlers) engaged through ICSIL under RMB as per approval in meeting dated 05.03.2021 are being paid remuneration as per the approved rates of the labour department, GNCTD for the unskilled category. These animal handlers have been carrying out successful animal rescue operations throughout NCT of Delhi as per the complaints received from citizens/ organisations which has also brought down the response time to 1 hour.

As catching animals from conflict zones requires good animal behavioural knowledge, catching expertise and experience in releasing the rescued animals back in the wild, for these types of rescue operations, high level of skills are an essential thing and therefore, the animal handlers should be categorized as Skilled labour.



Hence, the Department proposed that the remuneration/ wages of animal handlers engaged under Ridge Management Board may be revised from Unskilled category to Skilled category as per rates notified by the Labour Department, Govt. of NCT of Delhi.

Acknowledging the above facts and applauding the efforts of the Department, the Board approved the proposal of the Department for up-gradation of remuneration of animal handlers to skilled category as per the rates notified by the Labour Department.

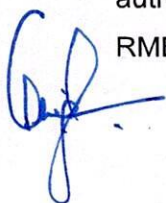
10. Agenda Item 10: Amendment in hiring of 06 nos. Thar vehicles under Capacity building for newly recruited frontline forestry staff (Agenda Item 8) approved in RMB meeting on 25.11.2022.

The Board was informed that RMB in its meeting held on 25.11.2022 had approved hiring of 06 nos. Thar vehicles for field duties. However, due to failure in enlisting interested parties through tender floated on 04.11.2022 for hiring of 06 nos. Thar vehicles, decision was taken to hire Bolero (5 door model) in place of Thar (3 door model) as it was found more suitable for carrying people and equipment due to higher vehicle space besides being cheaper.

Accordingly tenders were floated again to hire 06 nos. bolero on 05.04.2023 but no vendor qualified the tender within the financial limit of the Finance Department for this purpose. In addition, vehicles were available only for a restricted timing and not as per the requirement of round the clock/short-notice duties for the Department. In the meantime, all 04 newly recruited RFOs have joined the Department after completing their training along with one Wildlife Inspector and one existing RFO.

Hence, the Department is seeking permission for purchasing 06 nos. Bolero vehicles instead of hiring to ensure deployment of vehicles for longer duty hours as the vehicles are to be allocated to Range Forest Officers with a designated team of Forest Guards for round the clock field duties.

In view of the submissions of the Department, the Board approved the proposal for purchase of 06 nos. Bolero vehicles as detailed below along with authorization of Forest Department for carrying out the below expenditure from RMB fund :



	Item & specifications	Unit	Rate (in Rs.)	Total expenditure (in Rs.)
1	Bolero Neo N10 including accessories as per requirement.	06	14,50,000/-	87,00,000/-

11. Agenda Item 11: Ratification of signatories for operation of account of Ridge Management Board Fund.

The Ridge Management Board Fund Savings Account bearing Account no. 30612453873 was opened with the State Bank of India, I.P. Estate Branch, New Delhi under the Department of Forest & Wildlife, GNCTD on 17.12.2008. The Board was informed that there is an ongoing CBI case with regard to misappropriation of RMB funds amounting to Rs. 223 crores.

Thereafter, the State Bank of India was informed that the operation of the RMB fund account will be jointly managed by the Pr. Chief Conservator of Forests & Member Secretary RMB and the second senior most officer of the Forest Department i.e. the Addl. Pr. Chief Conservator of Forests/ Chief Wildlife Warden & Member RMB.

The Board agreed to and ratified the above signatories for operating the RMB fund account.

12. Agenda Item 12: Unauthorized transaction of funds to the tune of Rs. 223 crores from Ridge Management Board Fund.

The members of the Board were informed that as per previous practice, the RMB had invested an amount of Rs.223 crores in the form of FDRs in the Bank of Baroda, Deshbandhu Road, Paharganj on the basis of their selection through tender process. Thereafter, a team of officials from CBI visited this Department on 19.04.2021 and informed that the amount deposited by the department for FDRs appears to have been transferred to some account of DUSIB. Subsequently an FIR RC2182022A0011 was registered by the CBI in this matter and under investigation by the CBI.

The Board was also informed that the Department has been making continuous efforts to recoup the amount of Rs.223 crores from the Bank of Baroda and has taken up the matter at the level of the Ministry of Finance also. However, the efforts have not been fruitful and the Bank has taken the

stand that the said public money can not be returned to the custodian department as the matter is under investigation of CBI.

In view of the above facts, the Board desired that the Department should approach the Ministry of Finance, bank concerned, CBI & Hon'ble Court for getting back the public money as the same is locked up which is hindering the progress of various environmental projects/schemes for which the money is deposited.

13. Construction of approach roads from main Chattarpur Road to SAARC University, CAPFIMS and other establishments at Maidangarhi, Sahurpur & Satbari.

The Board was informed that Delhi Development Authority (DDA) has submitted a proposal seeking permission for construction of approach roads (approx. 10.525 km) from main Chattarpur Road to SAARC University, CAPFIMS and other establishments at Maidangarhi, Sahurpur & Satbari etc. Several large scale residential and institutional projects like SAARC university, Housing for CBI, Unified Complex of NIC, CSF housing complex, Campus of IIFT, Delhi Police Housing, Residential Buildings for NIA and CAPFIMS are being executed in this area and there is lack of proper accessibility which is a major drawback.

At present, approval is being sought for construction of 30 meters ROW Gaushala Road from Chattarpur Road to SAARC university (1.070 km) and 24 meters ROW road from SAARC university to CAPFIMS (1.650 km). The entire alignment of the road is over an area of 8.7 ha as detailed below:


Area under	Area (in ha.)	Remarks	No. of trees involved
Southern Ridge	3.6	The entire area is part of Eco-Sensitive Zone of Asola Bhatti Wildlife Sanctuary	587
Morphological Ridge	1		
Other land (Non Forest land)	4		363
Total	8.6		950

As provision of an access road is basic necessity for these important institutions and is in larger public interest, the Board decided to recommend

the proposal for consideration of Central Empowered Committee subject to the following conditions:


- I. The User Agency shall deposit 5% of the project cost proportionate to the area falling within Ridge area to RMB fund on the lines of conditions imposed by Hon'ble Supreme Court of India in WP (C) 202/1995 titled T. N. Godavarman Thirumulpad Vs Union of India & Ors. for management of the ridge.
- II. The User Agency shall obtain prior permission under Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 for use of area falling within the ridge area.
- III. If required, necessary approval from the National Board for Wildlife shall be sought by the User Agency.
- IV. The User Agency shall obtain necessary permission for felling/transplantation of 07 trees as per provisions under Delhi (Preservation) of Trees Act, 1994.

The meeting ended with a vote of thanks to the chair.


(C.D. Singh) 18/09/2023
PCCF & Member Secretary
Ridge Management Board

Distribution:

1. All RMB members.
2. All representatives of User agencies as per list of participants.
3. Member Secretary, Central Empowered Committee for kind information.


(C.D. Singh) 18/09/2023
PCCF & Member Secretary
Ridge Management Board

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DEPARTMENT OF FORESTS & WILDLIFE
A-BLOCK, 2ND FLOOR, VIKAS BHAWAN, IP ESTATE, NEW DELHI 110002**

ATTENDANCE SHEET

Meeting of the Ridge Management Board

Venue: Conference Room of Chief Secretary, GNCTD

Date: 24.08.2023

Time: 3:00 PM

S.No.	Name/Dept.& Designation	Contact No.	E mail id	Signature
	CS			
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	Suneesh Buxy CWLW&APCCF	9868948253	suneesh.buxye gov.in	su
	Saurabh Sharma, CF	9311810076	cf.gnctd@gov.in	su
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	ABHINAV KUMAR DCF NO.	8974131911	dcfha.gnctd@gov.in	Abhinav
	Mandeep Mehta	9891403624	mandeep.mehta@ gov.in	Mandeep
	Dr. D.S. Rajesh. Commandant (Head) CAPFMS/NERA.	9717590226	capfms@gmail.com	Dr. D.S. Rajesh

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S.No.	Name/Dept.& Designation	Contact No.	E mail id	Signature
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	Kamal Singh Malena CE/DBA	9205133783		

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S.No.	Name/Dept.& Designation	Contact No.	E mail id	Signature
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