

N.F.Railway



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NO: DHR/ED/CCMP/03/19

dated 07-03-2019.

To,
The Executive Director Heritage
Ministry of Railways
Rail Bhawan
New Delhi

Subject : - State of conservation of the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway(DHR),India.
Ref. No. :- 2018/Heritage/DHR, Dated-05.03.2019

In reference to the above Referred L/no., factual position with respect to the current status of conservation of Darjeeling Himalayan Railway(DHR) is as under-

1. Indians Railways is committed for the preservation of the Universal Outstanding Value (OUV) of the DHR.

A FIT (Fund-In-Trust) agreement between UNESCO and Indian Railways to facilitate the preparation of Comprehensive Conservation Management Plan (CCMP) had been signed on 20.01.2017 and the preparation of Comprehensive Conservation Management Plan (CCMP) by the UNESCO is under progress.

CCMP will cover standard guideline for the maintenance and conservation of the assets of the DHR through establishment of an adapted management plan, also it will clarify the buffer zone along the length of the Railway Line and the stations of DHR.

The timeline for the final submission of the CCMP report had been 20.01.2019 but due to some reasons UNESCO had requested to extend the validity of the project to 30th September 2019 and Ministry of Railways agreed for the extension of validity of current Fund-In-Trust (FIT) agreement vide L.No. 2010/Heritage/DHR/FIT dated: 08.11.2018 to 30.09.2019 in accordance with Article VI 2 and 3 of the FIT, to finalize the CCMP and organize the 20th anniversary of DHR World Heritage Site Celebration. Following adaptation of the CCMP, Conservation and maintenance of Rolling stock, Station buildings and other heritage assets of DHR will be recalibrated as per CCMP guidelines.

As per request from UNESCO for a moratorium of work to DHR properties during the project period Via Ref no:- 7515/CLT/2016/MC dated 07.06.2016 all the demolition, renovation or restoration work in DHR has been postponed till the final submission of the CCMP and only repairs for functionality of Railway and regular maintenance has been carried out in DHR which is as per the agreed points in Moratorium document between UNESCO and N.F.Railway without affecting Heritage character of DHR.

The proposal of restoration work of the burnt stations Gayabari and Sonada (which had been burned during the agitation period of 2017) has been initiated now after getting the draft "Built Heritage (Architectural) conservation manual" in Nov-2018.



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2. Several actions has been taken by the DHR for stopping illegal encroachment near the Railway track or DHR property since the inscription of the DHR as a World Heritage Site in 1999. Any kind of illegal construction or encroachment in the DHR area has been quickly brought into the notice of the district administration and RPF for enforcing stoppage of such kind of intrusion.

Recently one complaint had been lodged by N.F.Rly. to the D.M./Darjeeling vide memo. No. W/Misc./DEN-III/18, dated 04.09.2018 alleging encroaching upon railway land due to the construction of public toilet at Motor stand, Kurseong by Kurseong Municipality and in this connection two meetings have been held on 18.09.2018 & 25.09.2018 at SDO office chamber, Kurseong & one inspection has been carried out at the disputed site. Further work has also been stopped there, as per the order of DM/Darjeeling until its clearance.

In this regard The PCE/MLG/N.F.Rly. has a correspondence of letter with The Chief Secretary of Govt. of W.B. via. letter no. W/212/KIR/Pt.-X/W-4(Land), dated 12.02.2019 seeking every assistance from the State Authority to perform a successful eviction of the encroachments in the section.

Correspondence of letters had also been done by DRM/KIR to Home Secretary of Gov. of W.B. via L.no. Z/DHR/1/K, dated 17.07.2017 for providing protection for the valuable assets of DHR and forces deployment in emergency

3. A meeting had been organized by UNESCO on 25th and 26th of February 2019 at Darjeeling with the all stakeholders of the DHR regarding buffer zone finalization. The matter of unauthorized encroachment and illegal construction of building within DHR buffer zone had been discussed and all the stake holders agreed for necessary assistance.
4. Public awareness and participation programmes are organized regularly time to time by DHR in association with the UNESCO and NGO's for the involvement of the local community in monitoring and supporting DHR and to develop a sense of shared heritage in the community.


(M.K. Narzary)
DIR/DHR/NFR

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