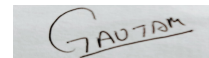


BEFORE THE HON'BLE NATIONAL GREEN TRIBUNAL**PRINCIPAL BANCH, NEW DELHI****ORIGINAL APPLICATION NO. 360/2024****IN THE MATTER OF:**

NEWS ITEM TITLED "FELLING OF 234 TREES ON CENTURYOLD COLLEGE CAMPUS DISTRESSES MANY IN KASHMIR" APPEARING IN THE HINDU DATED 22.03.2024

INDEX

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THROUGH COUNSEL

(GAUTAM SINGH)

FOR THE UT OF J&K

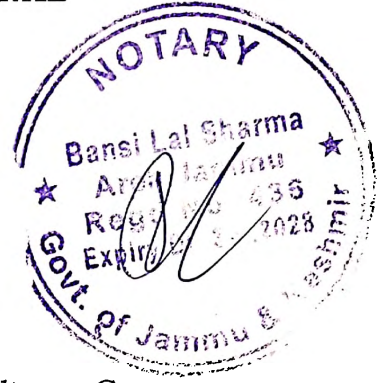
Chamber No. 71 Supreme Court Of India

Contact Number - 9970179706

Email: gautamsinghh.ind@gmail.com**FILED ON: 15.04.2026****PLACE - NEW DELHI**

IN THE HON'BLE NATIONAL GREEN TRIBUNAL
PRINCIPAL BENCH AT NEW DELHI

O.A. No:360 / 2024



IN THE MATTER OF:

News Item titled "Felling of 234 trees on Century Old College Campus distresses many in Kashmir" appearing in News Paper the Hindu dated: 22-03-2024.


SUBMISSION OF DETAILED REPORT ALONG AFFIDAVIT ON BEHALF OF FOREST DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION J&K (RESPONDENT NO.7)

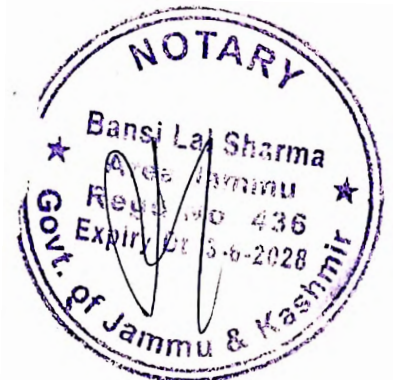
I, **Suneesh Buxy**, S/o Late Sarveshwar Buxy, Male, Age 53 years, **Managing Director, Forest Development Corporation J&K** having office at Forest complex Gladni Jammu do hereby solemnly affirm and respectfully state as follows:

1. That I am the Respondent No.7 herein and am well acquainted with the facts and circumstances of the present matter.
2. That I am on authorised on behalf of the respondent in the aforementioned O.A and as such I am well conversant with the facts and circumstances of the case, as such competent to swear this affidavit.


Managing Director
J&K Forest Development
Corporation Limited
Jammu/Srinagar

3. At the very outset answering respondent denies all the averments in the Petition except which has expressly been admitted hereinafter.
4. That at the very outset the answering respondent deny each and every averment made in the Article published which has been the basis of the present O.A is contrary to, and/ or is inconsistent with what is stated in the present reply affidavit, as if the same were specifically, traversed and denied herein. Nothing contained therein should be deemed to have been admitted unless the same is expressly admitted herein.
5. That the answering respondent most humbly submits that the answering respondent was approached by Principal, Amar Singh college only to facilitate for auction of the standing Popular trees in the premises of college and in this respect FDCL constitutes auction committee of four members headed by General Manger Extraction South circle. The open auction was conducted of Papular trees of college and bidders participated and accordingly highest bidder was declared by the committee rest of the work was conducted by College authorities means cutting, felling permission etc however it's Sale proceeds deposited in favour of govt as revenue through answering respondent.


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6. That as per the information provided by college, it was informed that during 2014 floods in Kashmir the institution remained immersed in water for a long duration of time. The deluge not only damaged the infrastructure but also weekend the trees severally.
7. That the trees started uprooting in minor windstorms and causing damage to the surrounding structures and began to pose grave safety concern for the students, visitors and staff. Several grievances regarding safety and health concerns were received by the college administration during this period and are well documented in the college records. These complaints underscored the urgent need for then administration to address the safety challenges posed by the poplar trees.
8. That the matter was taken up with Social Forestry Department in 2018-19 by then college authorities and the trees were numbered by the concerned department and put to auction by the J&K State Forest Corporation vide an Open Auction Notice No. 499-510/CGM/N/SFC/S, Dated: 29/05/2019.

9. That the notice was issued by General Manager South, J&K Forest Corporation sought bids for the cutting of 202 poplar trees within the campus. The notice listed 15 locations for auction and Amar Singh College figured as 10th location in said open auction bid list. The bidding process was hampered due to lockdown and

Subsequent restrictions during Covid-19 Pandemic. With the
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 Jammu/Srinagar

postponement of the process, the aged and weakened trees within the Amar Singh College campus continued to pose grave safety threats.

10. That over the last few years, the campus witnessed several instances where trees got uprooted, highlighting the persistent danger they posed to the safety and well-being of the college community. The community members living in the vicinity of college complained several times about the potential threat caused by these aged trees and represented their grievances before the district administration.

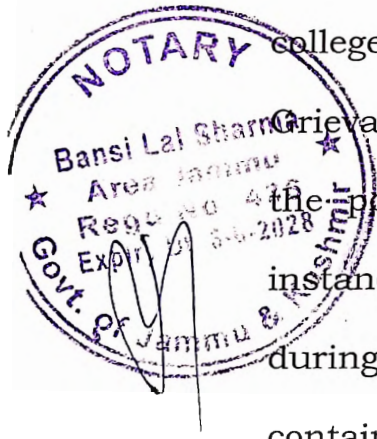
11. That the college also received the communication from Nodal officer Grievance cell under the reference no: DCS/SDM/GRIEV/19/1259-62, dated: 10-05-2019, asking the

college administration to take cognizance of a grievance on LG Grievance portal regarding the health-related problems caused by the poplar seeds from the poplars. Also, there were specific instances within the college where the big trees fell in the campus during wind storms, fortunately after office hours, which contained the extent of damage.

12. That typically, a poplar tree has a life span of around 50 years the poplars on the avenue had already crossed the 60 years as the trees were planted in 1965. These factors forced the institution to

take this extraordinary measure. However, it is pertinent to

[Signature]
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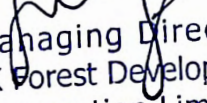


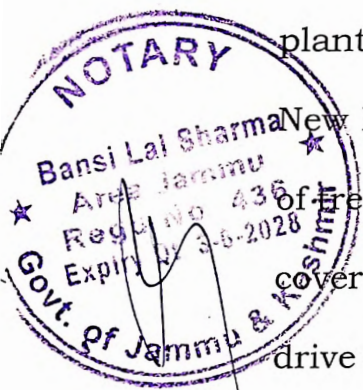
mention that the second line of plants had already been planted in time from the main gate to the Heritage Building in tree guards installed by social forestry department in 2018-19.

13. That the initiative was taken to compensate for the felled trees; indicative of imminent cutting of poplars on the avenue during the period they were put to auction by Forest Development Corporation in 2019. We deeply appreciate the concerns expressed by civil society regarding the campus. We want to reassure everyone that we are fully committed to creating a green, sustainable, and safe environment for our students. The safety and well-being of our students, faculty, and visitors are our top priorities. Amar Singh College is renowned for its rich trees and plantations across its campus. Particularly, the area around the New Block to the Geology department consists of a rich diversity of trees and plants. In line with our commitment to increase green cover in campus we have already notified a massive plantation drive of 500 conifer and other trees in the month of April.

14. That the college is establishing a micro forest-clusters, within its campus to serve as vital lungs, & contributing to improved air quality and environmental health on campus. Since student safety is of paramount importance, the difficult decision to remove these aged trees was made. This action not only safeguards the

students but also protects property around the campus. It is


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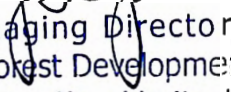


imperative to emphasize that the Amar Singh College administration remains deeply committed to ensuring the safety and well-being of its students, faculty, and visitors. We appreciate the understanding and cooperation of all stakeholders during this process.

15. That we are committed to preserve the legacy of Amar Singh College and substantial measures in that direction have been undertaken. The construction of a see-through gate is underway to offer public the unobstructed view of the heritage building, along with this enhancement we are integrating a modern state of the art fountain to augment aesthetic appeal of the institution to create a welcoming atmosphere for visitors. We earnestly request everyone to please rest your faith in our efforts, that remain devoted to the betterment of this institution. We realize that change may often seem awkward or intimidating but we must also acknowledge that those who look only to the past are certain to miss the future.

16. That the trees in question—Poplar (*Populus*), Willow (*Salix*), and Robinia (*Robinia pseudoacacia*)—are classified as "decontrolled species" under the Government Order S.O. 82 dated 02-03-2020 (No. FST/Land/55/2019). This statutory order explicitly exempts these non-coniferous species from mandatory Forest Department

permissions for felling and transportation when grown on non-


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Jammu/Srinagar

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forest land, thereby establishing clear legal authority for the college's action.

17. That the Professional assessments revealed that most trees had developed central hollowness, structural weakness, and advanced decay, conditions that posed imminent and grave threats to life and property within a densely populated educational institution.

18. That the felling was conducted under the direct supervision of the J&K Forest Development Corporation, ensuring professional standards, safety protocols, and complete documentation. Out of 234 trees: 205 were systematically felled, 10 had fallen naturally due to windstorms, and 19 remain under continuous monitoring.


Functions. The copy of said letter is annexed herewith and marked

as **(Annexure G)**.

19. That, recognizing environmental responsibilities, the college administration has undertaken massive compensatory plantation of over 500 coniferous saplings in active collaboration with the J&K Forest Department.

20. That as on date over 400 saplings currently surviving and flourishing, demonstrating genuine commitment to ecological restoration.

21. That the replacement plantation focuses on coniferous species that are more structurally stable, longer-lived, and


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Jammu/Srinagar

environmentally beneficial compared to the removed fast-growing deciduous species that had become hazardous.


22. That it is most humbly and respectfully submitted that Jammu and Kashmir Forest Act, 1930 is not applicable to non-forest institutional land and

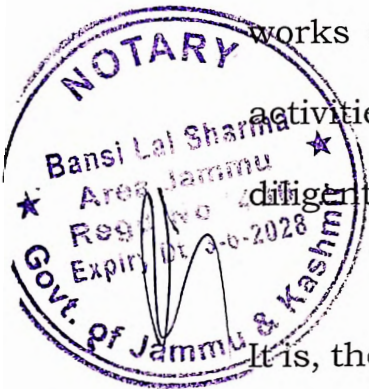
23. Furthermore, the answering Respondent acknowledges and affirms its statutory duty to undertake all necessary measures and steps to ensure strict compliance with the Environmental Clearance conditions and to diligently advance the development

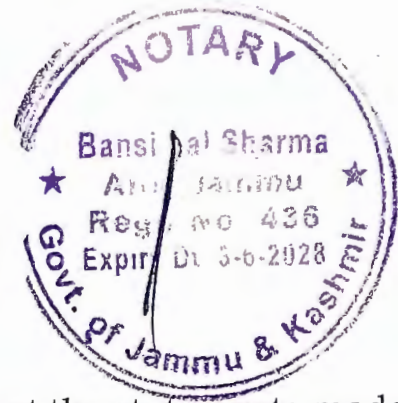
works as envisaged under the Clearance. Upon resumption of activities, the Respondent has demonstrated bona fide and diligent efforts towards full compliance and implementation.

Prayer:

It is, therefore, most respectfully prayed that this Hon'ble Tribunal may be pleased to dispose of the present O.A and pass such other order(s) as may be deemed fit in the interest of justice.


 Managing Director
 J&K Forest Development
 Corporation Limited
 Answering Respondent
 Jammu/Srinagar





VERIFICATION

I, the deponent above named, do hereby verify that the statements made in this affidavit are true and correct to my knowledge and belief and that no part of it is false and nothing material has been concealed therefrom.

Verified at Srinagar on this the 14th day of April, 2026.

*Identified by,
Shahi Aghal
Block Manager
J&K Forest Corporation
15/04/2026*

DEPONENT
[Signature]
Managing Director
J&K Forest Development
Corporation Limited
Jammu/Srinagar

Solemnly affirmed before me
[Signature]
NOTARY PUBLIC
JAMMU
15/4/2026



सत्यमेव जयते

INDIA NON JUDICIAL

Government of Jammu and Kashmir

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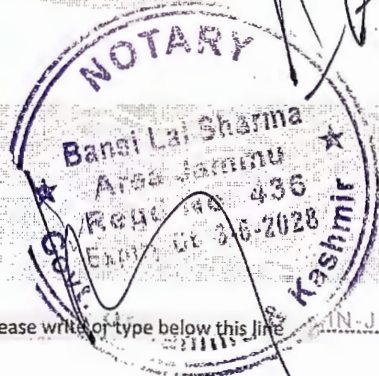
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Certificate No. : IN-JK19696593764480Y
Certificate Issued Date : 15-Apr-2026 09:39 AM
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Unique Doc. Reference : SUBIN-JKJK1251300422300431714465Y
Purchased by : SUNEESH BUXY
Description of Document : Article 37 Notarial Act
Property Description : Not Applicable
Consideration Price (Rs.) : 0
 (Zero)
First Party : SUNEESH BUXY
Second Party : Not Applicable
Stamp Duty Paid By : SUNEESH BUXY
Stamp Duty Amount(Rs.) : 10
 (Ten only)



₹10



Please write or type below this line IN-JK19696593764480Y

The Principal,
Amar Singh College Srinagar .

No: HED-PLNG/113/2023-03

Dated: 28-12-2023

Subject: Permission for auctioning of Poplar/Willow/Robinia and other trees
in and around the campus posing threat to life and property;
auctioning through J&K Forest Development Corporation.

Sir,

Kindly refer your letter No. ASC/Edu/23/1793 dated 02-11-2023 regarding
the subject cited above. In this connection, I am directed to convey the
authorization of the competent authority to go ahead with the e-auction of the
trees on as is where is basis after fulfilling the required codal formalities.

Yours faithfully

Arshad
28/12/2023
Assistant Director Planning
Higher Education Department

Copy to the:

Private Secretary to Principal Secretary to Government, Higher Education
Department for information of the Principal Secretary.

Muhammad

[Signature]
Managing Director
J&K Forest Development
Corporation Limited
Jammu/Srinagar