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TABO MONASTERY

The Institute of Studies in Buddhist Philosophy and Tribal Cultural Society, Tabo

Dated 10th June 2025

To,
The Director General
Archaeological Survey of India (ASI)
24, Tilak Marg,
Bhagwan Das Lane, New Delhi – 110001
India

Subject: Urgent Request to Undertake Suitable Preventive Measures to Safeguard the Tabo Monastery from Cloudburst-related Disasters as recently reported in the region

Respected Sir/Madam,

I am writing to bring to your urgent attention the increasing environmental threats facing the ancient Tabo Monastery in the Spiti Valley of Himachal Pradesh, particularly in light of recent cloudburst events in the Pin Valley and nearby Shichling area. **(please refer to the enclosed Annexure I, II and III for media reports)**

As you know, the Tabo Monastery, established in 996 AD, is a monument of immense national and global heritage significance, currently under the **Archaeological Survey of India's (ASI) protection**. Revered for its exquisite mud-brick architecture, ancient murals, and religious manuscripts, it is rightly called the "Ajanta of the Himalayas." However, its location in a geologically sensitive and climatically volatile region makes it increasingly susceptible to natural calamities.

In recent months, there have been multiple instances of cloudbursts and associated flash floods in the Pin Valley and Shichling area, approximately 30 km from the monastery. These incidents have caused localized damage, erosion, and disruptions to access routes. These events highlight the growing threat posed by erratic weather patterns, intensified by climate change. Given the fragile nature of this 1,000-year-old structure and the increasing frequency of such events, immediate preventive and adaptive interventions are crucial.

Therefore, it is strongly felt that preventive, **temporary protective roofing** across the monument and **improved drainage infrastructure** are immediately required to avert any potential calamity during the upcoming monsoon season. These measures would suitably protect the monument from any damage, divert rainwater and prevent waterlogging and seepage, especially around the mural-rich interiors of the monument.



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With its immense cultural, spiritual, and historical value, Tabo Monastery **deserves proactive protection. Failure to act swiftly may lead to an irreversible loss of heritage.** I sincerely hope that the ASI will consider this an urgent conservation priority and work with the monastic leadership to deploy such a plan ahead of the season.

We are ready to initiate these and other suitable protective measures at the earliest. Tabo Monastery is fully willing to collaborate with the ASI to ensure these measures align with the prescribed protection and conservation guidelines.

Long-Term Permanent Measures

Furthermore, as long-term "permanent measures," I humbly urge the Archaeological Survey of India to also prioritize the following:

1. **Comprehensive Structural Assessment and Reinforcement** of the Tabo Monastery's heritage structure, with attention to traditional materials and methods for preservation.
2. **Permanent Protective Roofing across the monument** and suitable reinforcement to avert damage for cloud burst incidents
3. **Installation of Early Warning and Weather Monitoring Systems** tailored specifically for the Tabomonastery region to better anticipate and respond to cloudburst threats.
4. **Collaboration with Local Authorities and Monastic Leadership** to frame a localized **Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR)** plan.
5. **Capacity Building and Training** for community members and monks in emergency preparedness and basic conservation methods.

I look forward to your prompt response according the necessary temporary approvals, which the monastery shall undertake and shall commit to it jointly under the expert supervision of ASI's regional and concerned authorities

Thank you for your attention and commitment to preserving India's treasured heritage.



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The Institute of Studies in Buddhist Philosophy and Tribal Cultural Society, Tabo

Yours Sincerely,

Sonam
HEAD LAMA
TABO MONASTERY
SPITI (H.P.)

Tabo Monastery VPO Tabo

CC:

1. Regional ACI Office, Shimla
2. Regional ACI Office, Mandi

Enclosures:

Annexure I :

Cloud Burst Pin Valley Spiti - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DVvLmTak8mA>

Annexure II:

Severe Flood Damage, Spiti Valley In Ruin -

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZK1vpSAWO7Y>

Annexure III:

- i) <https://hindi.news18.com/news/himachal-pradesh/shimla-after-shimla-kullu-mandi-now-cloud-burst-in-spiti-pin-valley-women-died-car-swept-away-8546047.html>
- ii) <https://www.indiatvnews.com/news/india/himachal-floods-two-bridges-washed-away-in-cloudburst-in-lahaul-and-spiti-watch-2024-08-04-945204>
- iii) <https://sandrp.in/2024/12/14/himachal-pradesh-cloudburst-incidents-in-sw-monsoon-2024/>
- iv) <https://www.hindustantimes.com/cities/chandigarh-news/bridge-washed-away-roads-closed-as-rains-continue-to-lash-lahaulspiti-101722797466205.html>