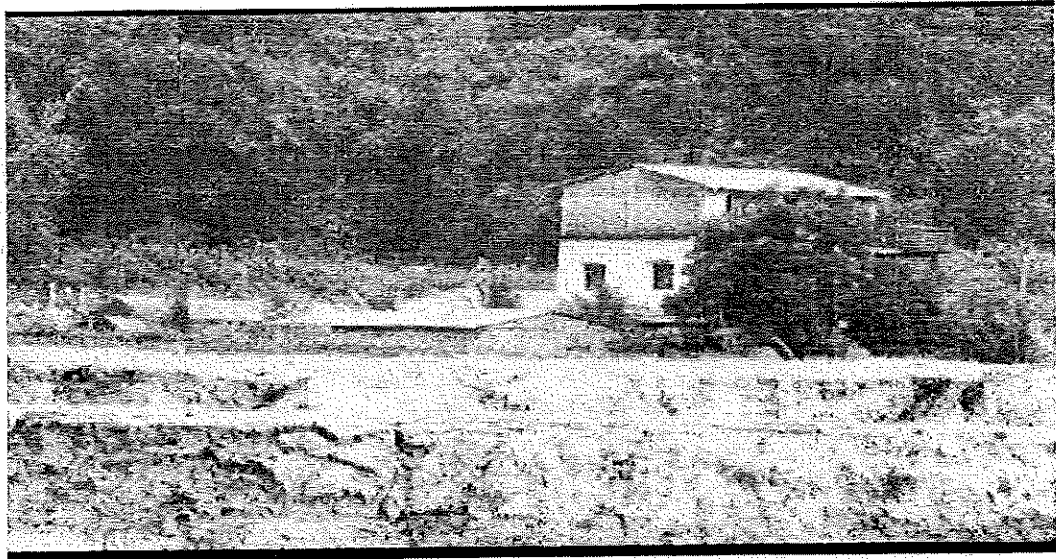
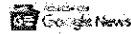




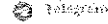
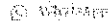
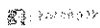
Home / Politics

Odisha: Land Jihad in Malkangiri District – Islam Nagar built on 100 acres of forest land in Motu Area

Dr Samanwaja Nanda | Sep 30, 2024, 05:39 pm IST | In Politics, Bharat, Odisha



Islam Nagar built by occupying forest land in Motu area of Malkangiri



BHUBANESHWAR: A shocking incident has emerged in Malkangiri district of Odisha, involving the alleged encroachment of approximately 100 acres of forest land in the Motu area. Islam Nagar has been constructed on this encroached land, raising suspicions of complicity among local authorities. This incident occurred during the previous BJD government's tenure, prompting concerns about possible collusion and misuse of power.

Islam Nagar has been illegally established on forest land just 2-3 km from National Highway 326, surrounded by dense forests along the Soberi riverbank. The construction process involved building a mud road, and erecting wire fencing.





Board regarding construction of road in this area built illegally under Mahatma Gandhi NREGA scheme

A road was constructed to access the area using government funds allocated under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MNREGA) scheme, with over ₹9 lakh spent on its construction. The project began on April 25, 2022, and a signboard on-site reveals alarming details about this illicit endeavor. This situation raises serious questions regarding the misuse of government resources and potential collusion between officials and encroachers. While the MNREGA scheme aims to provide employment and infrastructure in rural areas, in this case, it appears to have been exploited for illegal purposes.

The construction of buildings and roads has involved the appropriation of forest land, and large ponds have been excavated through various initiatives funded by the state government's fisheries and agriculture department.

In Islam Nagar, not only have substantial buildings been erected, but warehouses have also been constructed. Furthermore, large transformers have been installed by the electricity department, and JCB machines and tractors are frequently seen parked in the vicinity. Lift irrigation projects have also been implemented here, funded under the irrigation department's scheme.

This construction work has been financed through multiple government programs, raising concerns that the entire initiative may have been orchestrated with the complicity of the administration.

Local activist Diwakar Pal from the Vishva Hindu Parishad, along with BJP youth leader Manik Chakraborty and Hindu Jagran Manch activist Bhagirathi Dalei, have alleged that this act occurred during the tenure of the Biju Janata Dal government. They assert that Islam Nagar was established through the illegal seizure of forest land, with the government's knowledge and direct support.



The local tensioner classifies it as a protected forest, while the local forest department ranger categorizes it as a revenue forest, with each official shifting the responsibility for addressing the illegal occupation onto the other. In response, local residents are calling for action to be taken.

Topics: Islam Nagar, Land Jihad, Malkangiri District



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**BEFORE THE NATIONAL GREEN TRIBUNAL
PRINCIPAL BENCH, NEW DELHI**

Original Application No.1239/2024

News Item titled "Odisha Land Jihad in Malkangiri District Islam Nagar built on 100 acres of forest land in Motu Area" appearing in the Organiser dated 30.09.2024

Date of hearing: 21.10.2024

**CORAM: HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE PRAKASH SHRIVASTAVA, CHAIRPERSON
HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE ARUN KUMAR TYAGI, JUDICIAL MEMBER
HON'BLE DR. A. SENTHIL VEL, EXPERT MEMBER**

ORDER

1. This Original Application is registered *suo-motu* on the basis of the news item titled "Odisha Land Jihad in Malkangiri District Islam Nagar built on 100 acres of forest land in Motu Area" appearing in Organiser dated 30.09.2024.

2. The matter relates to the alleged encroachment of approximately 100 acres of forest land in the Motu area in Malkangiri district, Odisha to establish a settlement named Islam Nagar. As per the article, Islam Nagar has been built on forest land near National Highway 326, surrounded by dense forests along the Saberi riverbank.

3. The article alleges that the encroached land saw the construction of buildings, roads, and other infrastructure, including the building of a mud road and wire fencing. The construction was allegedly funded through various government schemes, including the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MNREGA), with over ₹9 lakh spent on road construction. Furthermore, it is alleged that large ponds

were excavated, warehouses built, and transformers installed, indicating extensive use of state resources.

4. The above news item indicates violation of the provisions of Forest Conservation Act, 1980 and Environment Protection Act, 1986.

5. The news item raises substantial issue relating to compliance of the environmental norms and implementation of the provisions of scheduled enactment.

6. Power of the Tribunal to take up the matter *suo-motu* has been recognized by the Hon'ble Supreme Court in the matter of "*Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai vs. Ankita Sinha & Ors.*" reported in 2021 SCC Online SC 897.

7. Hence, we implead the following as respondents in this matter:

i. Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (PCCF), Odisha

Aranya Bhawan, Plot No. 2/12, Chandrasekharpur,
Bhubaneswar, Odisha-751023

ii. Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (Regional Office, Bhubaneswar)

Integrated Regional Office, A/3, Chandrasekharpur,
Bhubaneswar, Odisha-751023.

iii. District Magistrate (DM), Malkangiri

Collectorate, At/Po/Dist-Malkangiri, Odisha-764045

8. Issue notice to the above respondents for filing their response/reply by way of affidavit before the Eastern Zonal Bench of the Tribunal at least one week before the next date of hearing. If any respondent directly files the reply without routing it through his Advocate then the said respondent will remain virtually present to assist the Tribunal.

9. Since the matter relates to the Eastern Zonal Bench, Kolkata, therefore, OA is transferred to the Eastern Zonal Bench for appropriate further action. Let the original record of this OA be transferred to the Eastern Zonal Bench, Kolkata.

10. List before Eastern Zonal Bench at Kolkata on 03.12.2024.

Prakash Shrivastava, CP

Arun Kumar Tyagi, JM

Dr. A. Senthil Vel, EM

October 21, 2024
O.A. 1239/2024
HB..