

**Fwd: Formal Complaint Regarding Gross Violations within the Core and Buffer Zones of the Santiniketan UNESCO World Heritage Site; Unique identifier - 1375**

1 message

National Green Tribunal, Eastern Zone Bench, Kolkata <ngtjudicial-kolkata@gov.in>  
To: pngngtkolkata <pngngtkolkata@gmail.com>

Tue, Jan 28, 2025 at 12:57 PM

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Regards/सादर

Judicial Section न्यायिक अनुभाग,  
National Green Tribunal / राष्ट्रीय हरित अधिकरण,  
Eastern Zone Bench / पूर्वी क्षेत्रीय न्यायपीठ,  
New Town, Kolkata / न्यू टाउन, कोलकाता - 700161  
Ph./संपर्क - 033-2324 0089  
Email: ngtjudicial-kolkata@gov.in

===== Forwarded message =====

From: Deepto Ghosh <registrarngt-kolkata@gov.in>  
To: "National Green Tribunal, Eastern Zone Bench, Kolkata"<ngtjudicial-kolkata@gov.in>  
Date: Wed, 22 Jan 2025 14:31:10 +0530  
Subject: Fwd: Formal Complaint Regarding Gross Violations within the Core and Buffer Zones of the Santiniketan UNESCO World Heritage Site; Unique identifier - 1375

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From: Asim Kumar Banerjee <asimkumarbanerjee9@gmail.com>  
To: <wh-info@unesco.org>, <publicgrievance-ngt@gov.in>, <registrarngt-kolkata@gov.in>  
Date: Wed, 22 Jan 2025 10:51:05 +0530  
Subject: Formal Complaint Regarding Gross Violations within the Core and Buffer Zones of the Santiniketan UNESCO World Heritage Site; Unique identifier - 1375

===== Forwarded message =====

From  
Asim Kumar Banerjee  
Madhu Malati, 45 Quarters  
Santiniketan – 731235  
Bolpur,  
West Bengal, India  
22/01/2025

To  
The Director  
UNESCO World Heritage Centre  
7, Place de Fontenoy  
75352 Paris 07 SP  
France  
email: wh-info@unesco.org

To:  
Sh. Deepto Ghosh  
Registrar  
National Green Tribunal (NGT) Eastern Zone Bench, Kolkata  
Finance Centre, 3rd Floor, Block III B, New Town, Kolkata - 700157  
registrarngt-kolkata@gov.in

Subject: Formal Complaint Regarding Gross Violations within the Core and Buffer Zones of the Santiniketan UNESCO World Heritage Site (UNESCO Unique identifier -1375)

Respected Sir/Madam,

I am writing to formally bring to your kind and urgent attention several gross and critical violations and activities that are compromising the integrity and sanctity of the Santiniketan UNESCO World Heritage Site in West Bengal, India. As a resident and steward of this culturally significant area, I and many other long-time residents are deeply concerned about the ongoing degradation and its impact on the heritage site's Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) and environmental equilibrium.

## Violations Observed

### 1. Unregulated Parking and Landscape Damage

Uncontrolled and widespread public and tourist parking within the core and buffer zones is causing significant harm to the sensitive landscape and disrupting the cultural and aesthetic essence of Santiniketan.

### 2. Escalating Pollution

- **Air, Water, and Land Pollution:** Unchecked vehicular emissions (from large diesel run tourist buses, vans, cars and even trucks), plastic and Styrofoam littering, and contamination of local water bodies are severely impacting ecological balance. The accumulation of plastic waste along roadsides, water bodies such as the Khoai river, and the irrigation canal is particularly alarming, undermining both the environment and the visual charm of this heritage area.

### 3. Poor Sanitation and Open Defecation

- Unauthorized temporary latrines in tourist parking areas are inadequately maintained, leading to unsanitary conditions. Open defecation by tourists, exacerbated by the unregulated influx of buses, vans, and cars, has resulted in persistent foul odors and environmental degradation.
- A specific area of concern is the orchard grounds near 'Binay Bhavan' (Department of Education) and the 'Centre for Yogic Art and Science,' where an ancient mango orchard is being systematically degraded to accommodate a large public parking facility.

### 4. Illegal Landfills

- Significant water bodies, such as the twin water bodies near Kalisayer, are being filled illegally to create parking spaces and for other commercial purposes. These actions are not only environmentally destructive but also contravene regulations, especially in this water-deficit region.

### 5. Disturbances Due to Picnics and Loudspeakers

- Large gatherings, open kitchens, and the use of loudspeakers within the core and buffer zones disrupt the tranquility and historical significance of the site.

### 6. Traffic Congestion

- Unregulated vehicular traffic within the buffer zones causes frequent congestion, environmental harm, and safety concerns for both visitors and residents.

### 7. Allegations of Corruption

- It is alleged by many long term residents that Vishva-Bharati authorities may be involved in irregularities while allotting public parking spaces during major festivals (Pous Mela, Vasanta Utsav) and weekends, further contributing to the site's degradation. Corruption charges against Vishwabharati authorities and kickbacks received by officials from allotment of tourist parking lots are rampant.

## Recent Media Reports

Bengali media outlets have highlighted the rapid and severe environmental and cultural degradation within the core and buffer zones of Santiniketan and have also alluded to wide-spread corruption within Vishwabharati regarding allocation of land for tourist parking. These reports underscore the urgency of immediate action to address these violations.

## Requests for Immediate Action

In light of these serious issues, I urge UNESCO and India's National Green Tribunal (Eastern Bench) to kindly and urgently:

- Direct the Vishva-Bharati authorities to immediately halt the allocation of large open grounds anywhere within the core and buffer zones for public / tourist parking and instead collaborate with Bolpur Municipal Corporation to establish parking facilities outside the protected zones.
- Conduct an investigation into these violations in collaboration with local and national authorities, particularly on land degradation and filling up of old and critical waterbodies to make way for tourist parking lots.
- Enforce strict adherence to heritage protection regulations to preserve the site's integrity, and regulate influx of tourists, while making modern facilities available for them outside core and buffer heritage zones.

- Promote sustainable management practices to ensure the long-term preservation of Santiniketan's cultural and environmental heritage.

I am willing to provide additional evidence, including photographs and media reports, to substantiate these claims.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter. I look forward to your response and decisive action to safeguard the Santiniketan UNESCO World Heritage Site.

**I also kindly request that my identity be kept strictly confidential, as I fear serious retribution from individuals with vested financial interests in these issues.**

Yours sincerely,

**Asim Kumar Banerjee**  
**Santiniketan**