

BEFORE THE NATIONAL GREEN TRIBUNAL
WESTERN ZONE BENCH, PUNE

ORIGINAL APPLICATION NO. 64 OF 2024 WZ
(EARLIER ORIGINAL APPLICATION NO. 173 OF 2024(PB))

ALONGWITH

ORIGINAL APPLICATION NO. 23 OF 2024 WZ
(EARLIER LETTER PETITION NO. 2 OF 2024(WZ))

NEWS ITEM TITLED "TREES FELLED FOR ECO-PARK LEAVE BEHIND BARREN
LAND" APPEARING IN THE TIMES OF INDIA DATED 12.01.2024

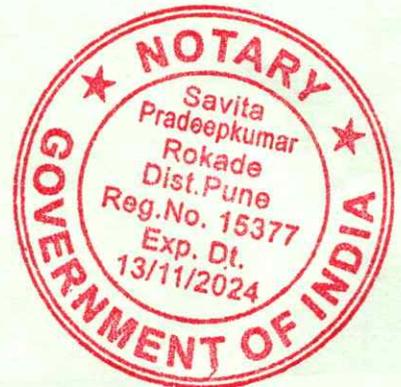
1. Principal Chief Conservator of Forest.
2. District Collector Pune. - Respondents

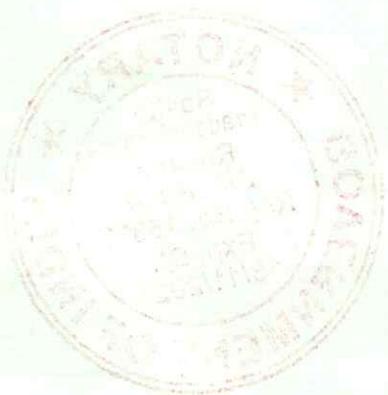
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Adv. Swati B. Vaidya- Pandit







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12.01.2024**

1. Principal Chief Conservator of Forest.

2. District Collector Pune.

- Respondents

Affidavit in Reply on the behalf of Respondents Nos. 2.

I, Dr. Suhas Krishna Diwase, age 56 years, working as District Collector, Pune, hereby solemnly affirms as Respondent Nos.2 as under:-

1.0. It is submitted that this Original Application is registered on the basis of the news item titled "**TREES FELLED FOR ECO-PARK LEAVE BEHIND BARREN LAND**" published in the Times of India, dated 12th January, 2024. The news item relates to alleged cutting of trees for development of an Eco-tourism on Reserved Forest land in Wanowrie, Maharashtra. As per the news item, Maharashtra Eco-tourism Development Board is constructing an Eco-tourism park on the reserved forest land in Wanowrie, behind Ruby Hall Clinic and the said park will be spread over 4 acres, but as per the allegations of residents, Board had felled about 100 Gliricidia trees for constructing the park. The residents also alleged that the Forest

Department has rampantly cut most trees in the vicinity over 10 days. The news item raises substantial issue relating to compliance of environmental norms; hence this Hon'ble Tribunal impleaded the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (Head of Forest Force) Maharashtra and District Collector, Pune as party Respondents in this case.

2.0. It is submitted that, earlier the present matters were heard at the Principal Bench of this Hon'ble Tribunal at New Delhi. Since the matters relate to the Western Zonal Bench, Pune hence both the OA are transferred to Western Zonal Bench, Pune for appropriate further action.

3.0. I say that, the said news item relates to alleged cutting of trees for development of eco-tourism carried out by the forest department on the reserve forest land in Wanowrie, Dist. Pune. It is submitted that; the said area falls under the Forest Department i.e. Respondent No.1.

4.0. I say that, the Government of Maharashtra, Tourism and Cultural Work Department passed a resolution on 28.11.2023 thereby sanctioned grant of funds of Rs. 60.00 Lacks for the purpose of carrying out development works in Reserve Forest at Survey No. 49 from the village Wanowrie, Dist. Pune along with certain terms and conditions. The Government had appointed Collector Pune as a Controlling Officer to distribute the Sanctioned funds to the concerned department. It is submitted that, the Deputy Conservator of Forest, Pune is implementing agency for the said project. The said Fund is withdrawn from the treasury as per the directions given in the said Govt resolution, however the same has not been yet distributed to the Forest Department.

6.0. I say that, as stated in the above-mentioned paras, the site in question falls under the forest department. On the scheduled date i.e. 18.04.2024 nobody has been appeared from the side of Respondent No.2, the Hon'ble Tribunal issued show cause to me and directed as why none has been authorized to appear from the side of Respondent No.2 nor has any reply Affidavit been ensured to have been filed in the

Original Application. It is humbly submitted that, due to the work load of Lok Sabha General Election-2024, all officers and staff are engaged in election work and hence, the reply remained to be filed on behalf of Respondent No.2. I apologize for the delay in filing Affidavit in reply. Hence it is requested to set aside the show cause and the Affidavit may taken on record.

7.0. I say that, as explained in foregoing paragraphs, it is humbly prayed that necessary order may be passed.

VERIFICATION

I, Dr. Suhas Krishna Diwase, age 56 years, working as Collector Pune, hereby solemnly affirm on behalf of the State of Maharashtra Forest Department do hereby solemnly declares that what is stated in aforesaid paragraphs is true and correct to my knowledge and I believe the same to be true and correct.

Solemnly affirmed at-)

This 7th day of May 2024)

(Dr. Suhas Krishna Diwase)

DEPONENT

Identify the Deponent

(Adv.S.B. Vaidya- Pandit)



08 MAY 2024

Noted and Registered at Serial Number
Reg. No.:- 2951/2024
Book No.:- 02



BEFORE ME

S.P. Rokade
Savita Pradeepkumar Rokade
ADVOCATE & NOTARY
GOVT. OF INDIA