



BEFORE THE NATIONAL GREEN TRIBUNAL
WESTERN ZONE BENCH, PUNE
APPEAL NO. 146 OF 2024 (WZ)

FEDERATION OF RAINBOW WARRIORS ...APPELLANTS

VERSUS

UNION OF INDIA & ORS

...RESPONDENTS

AFFIDAVIT IN REPLY ON BEHALF OF RESPONDENT NO. 4

I, Mr. Praveen Kumar Raghav, Chief Wild Life Warden for State of Goa, major of age, having office at Van Bhawan, Altinho, do hereby on solemn affirmation state and submit on oath as under:

1. I say that I am holding the post of Chief Wild Life Warden for State of Goa. I say that I am filing the present affidavit based on the records available with my office and that I am competent to depose in this case.

2. At the very outset, Respondent No 4 ("Answering Respondent") denies all the averments, allegations and contentions raised by the Appellant *in toto*, save and what are matter(s) of record. Nothing stated in the present appeal shall be

deemed to be admitted by the Answering Respondent unless specifically admitted hereinafter.

3. I say that I am filing the present Affidavit-in-Reply for the purpose bringing certain facts on record before this Hon'ble Tribunal and opposing the reliefs sought by the Appellant. Nothing in the aforementioned Appeal filed by the Appellant may be deemed to have been admitted for mere want of specific denial. Nothing may be deemed to have been admitted for want of *traverse seriatim*.

4. I say that the reliefs sought in the instant Appeal are unfounded, baseless and the same are liable to be rejected at the very outset by this Hon'ble Tribunal.

5. I say that the Appellant has challenged the Environmental Clearance dated 23.01.2024 ("EC") issued by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change ("MoEF & CC") for mining of Iron Ore (3.0 MTPA) in the mine lease area of 478.5206 hectares at Bicholim Mineral Block No. I, located at Bicholim Taluka of North Goa, Goa.



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6. I say that one of the grounds on which the Appellant has challenged the EC is that no Wildlife Conservation Plan was approved by the Chief Wildlife Warden for the proposed project in light of the fact that 29 Schedule 1 species as per the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972 were recorded as being present within 10 km of the project site.

7. I say that the above ground as canvassed by the Appellant in the present appeal is devoid of merit.

8. I say that Respondent No 7 i.e., the Project Proponent was required to submit a conservation plan by virtue of Terms of Reference ("TOR"). The Standard Terms of Reference clause 4.2 prescribed as under:

4.2 A detailed biological study of the study area [core zone and buffer zone] shall be carried out. Details of flora and fauna, endangered, endemic and RET Species duly authenticated, separately for core and buffer zone should be furnished based on such primary field survey, clearly indicating the Schedule of the fauna present. PP shall submit list of Schedule-1 species present in core and buffer zone duly authenticated by CWLW. In case of any Scheduled-I fauna found in the study area, the necessary



[Handwritten signature]

plan along with budgetary provisions for their conservation should be prepared in consultation with State Forest/Wildlife Department and details furnished, Necessary allocation of funds for implementing the same should be made as part of the project cost. Proof of its submission of conservation plan to the CWLW needs to be submitted.



9. I say that the TOR required the Project Proponent to submit a Conservation Plan to the Chief Wild Life Warden ("CWLW") and provide proof of submission to the EAC. I say that the TORs do not contemplate prior approval of the Conservation Plan before issuance of EC.
10. I say that the primary objective of a Wildlife Conservation Plan w.r.t to mining project is to assess the current status of flora and fauna within the project area and a 10-kilometre buffer zone, identify potential impacts of the project on wildlife and environment, and formulate mitigation measures to prevent habitat degradation and protect wildlife, including rescue and rehabilitation, by providing suitable ameliorated habitat for animal under dispersal due to project especially Schedule-I species.



11. I say that Respondent No. 7 submitted the conservation plan on 19.06.2023. I say that the conservation plan submitted by Respondent No 7 provides a report on the potential impacts of the project on soil, vegetation, water cycles, and wildlife populations, along with mitigation techniques for identified impacts within the project area and buffer zone. I say that the plan includes maps, appendices, and other relevant documents detailing the project's location relative to protected areas.

12. I say that the Dy Conservator of Forest, Wildlife and Eco Tourism provided Respondent No. 7 with the "Authentication list of Schedule I species in study area of Block – 1 Bicholim Mineral Block as per the Wildlife (Protection) Amendment Act 2022 *vide* letter dated 27.11.2023. I say that according to this list, 29 Schedule-I species were identified within 10 km of the study area. Annexed hereto is a copy of the letter dated 27.11.2023 from the Dy Conservator of Forest, Wildlife and Eco Tourism to Respondent No. 7 marked as "Annexure A".

13. I say that pursuant receiving the letter dated 27.11.2023 providing the authenticated list of Schedule I species as per the

Wildlife (Protection) Amendment Act 2022, Respondent No. 7 submitted a revised proposal of conservation plan on 30.11.2023, by which Respondent No. 7 allocated an additional financial budget of 60 lakhs.

Annexed hereto is a copy of the letter dated 30.11.2023 marked as "Annexure B".



14. I say that the revised Conservation Plan submitted by Respondent No. 7 is under scrutiny. I say that the same was conveyed to Respondent No 7 *vide* letter dated 08.11.2024.

Annexed hereto is a copy of the letter dated 08.11.2024 marked as "Annexure C".

15. I say that the present appeal bears no merit and is liable to be dismissed.

16. I say that what has been stated in Paras 1 to 15 are true to my own knowledge and/or are based on documents/records available with the Respondent and the contents of the same are true and correct and nothing material has been concealed herein.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized, cursive name.

Solemnly Affirm on Oath

Place: Panaji, Goa.

Date: 25/03/2025



Identified by:

[Signature]
DEPONENT



Solemnly affirmed before me by
Shri / Smt. Praveen Kumar Raghav

who has been identified by
Identified Card
whom I personally know

Reg. No. 1905/2025 Dated 25/03/2025

[Signature]
SAYED ABBAS
Advocate & Notary
Tiswadi Taluka
Panaji, Goa 403001
Reg. No. 231/2010



GOVERNMENT OF GOA
OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY CONSERVATOR OF FORESTS
WILDLIFE & ECOTOURISM (NORTH) DIVISION
1ST LIFT, 4TH FLOOR, JUNTA HOUSE,
PANAJI - 403 001 (GOA)

Phone: 0832-2229701/ Fax: 0832- 2422864

E mail: dcfwnorth-forest.goa@nic.in

No. 1-576-WL&ET(N)/2023-2024/3312

Dated: - 27/11/2023

Agrahayana 06, 1945

To,
The Head Environment,
Vedanta Limited,
Sesa Ghor, 20 EDC Complex,
Patto, Panjim-Goa.

**Sub: Authentication list of the Schedule I species in study area of
Block - 1 Bicholim Mineral Block of Vedanta Ltd. at Bicholim
- reg...**

**Ref: 1. Your letter dated 21.11.2023.
2. Email dated 27.11.2023.**

Sir,

With reference to your letter dated 21.11.2023 and mail dated 27.11.2023, please find enclosed here with the Authentication list of the Schedule I species in study area of Block - 1 Bicholim Mineral Block of Vedanta Ltd. at Bicholim as per the Amended Gazette Notification of Wildlife (Protection) Amendment Act, 2022.

This is for information please.

Yours faithfully,

(Anand S. Jadhav, IFS)
Dy. Conservator of Forests
Wildlife & Eco-Tourism(N)
Panaji - Goa.

**AUTHENTICATED LIST OF FLORA AND FAUNA IN CORE AND BUFFER
ZONE OF BLOCK I BICHOLIM MINERAL BLOCK OF VEDANTA LIMITED,
BICHOLIM TALUKA, NORTH GOA**

List of Scheduled I Wildlife species around 10 kms radius of Block-I Bicholim Mineral Block

Sl. No.	Common Name	Scientific name	Family	IUCN / WPA schedule
MAMMALS				
1	Common leopard	<i>Panthera pardus</i>	<i>Felidae</i>	I
2	Indian grey mongoose	<i>Urva edwardsii</i>	<i>Herpestidae</i>	LC/I
3	Indian porcupine	<i>Hystrix indica</i>	<i>Hystricidae</i>	LC/I
4	Small Indian civet	<i>Viverricula indica</i>	<i>Viverridae</i>	LC/I
5	Bonnet macaque	<i>Macaca radiate</i>	<i>Cercopithecidae</i>	VU/I
BIRDS				
6	White-bellied Sea-Eagle	<i>Haliaeetus leucogaster</i>	<i>Accipitridae</i>	R/I
7	Indian Peafowl	<i>Pavo cristatus</i>	<i>Phasianidae</i>	VU / I
8	Brahminy Kite	<i>Haliastur indus</i>	<i>Accipitridae</i>	LC / I
9	Indian Vulture	<i>Gyps indicus</i>	<i>Accipitridae</i>	LC / I
10	Crested Serpent Eagle	<i>Spilornis cheela</i>	<i>Accipitridae</i>	LC / I
11	Crested Goshawk	<i>Accipiter trivirgatus</i>	<i>Accipitridae</i>	LC / I
12	Shikra	<i>Accipiter badius</i>	<i>Accipitridae</i>	LC / I
13	Grey Jungle fowl	<i>Gallus sonneratii</i>	<i>Phasianidae</i>	LC / I
14	Nilgiri Wood Pigeon	<i>Columba elphinstonii</i>	<i>Columbidae</i>	LC / I
15	Brown Wood Owl	<i>Strix leptogrammica</i>	<i>Strigidae</i>	LC / I
16	Crested Tree-swift	<i>Hemiprocne coronata</i>	<i>Hemiprocniidae</i>	LC / I
17	Small Minivet	<i>Pericrocotus cinnamomeus</i>	<i>Campephagidae</i>	LC / I
18	Common Hill-Myna	<i>Gracula religiosa</i>	<i>Sturnidae</i>	LC / I
19	Cinnamon Bittern	<i>Ixobrychus cinnamomeus</i>	<i>Ardeidae</i>	LC/I
20	Cotton Pygmy Goose	<i>Nettapus coromandelianus</i>	<i>Anatidae</i>	LC/I
21	Western Marsh Harrier	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>	<i>Accipitridae</i>	R/I
22	Besra	<i>Accipiter virgatus</i>	<i>Accipitridae</i>	R/I
23	Spot-bellied Eagle-Owl	<i>Bubo nipalensis</i>	<i>Strigidae</i>	LC / I
24	Brown Wood Owl	<i>Strix leptogrammica</i>	<i>Strigidae</i>	LC / I
REPTILES				
25	Cobra	<i>Genus Naja</i>	<i>Elapidae</i>	LC / I
26	Russell's Viper	<i>Daboia russelii</i>	<i>Viperidae</i>	LC/I
27	Bengal monitor	<i>Varanus bengalensis</i>	<i>Varanidae</i>	VU/I
28	Checkered Keelback	<i>Fowlea piscator</i>	<i>Colubridae</i>	LC/I
29	Indian rat Snake	<i>Ptyas mucosa</i>	<i>Colubridae</i>	LC/I

* Note: As per Amended Gazette Notification of Wildlife (Protection) Amendment Act 2022


**Dy. Conservator of Forests
Wildlife & Eco-Tourism (North)
Panaji-Goa**



ANNEXURE - B

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To
The Chief Wildlife Warden
Goa Forest Department,
Van Bhavan, Altinho, Panaji,
Goa

Dated: 30/11/2023

Sub: Approval of Wild Life Conservation Plan w.r.t Block I- Bicholim Mineral Block

Respected Sir,

We had submitted the Wild Life Conservation Plan for your approval vide our letter dated 19/06/2023. We would like to state that we have reviewed the list of Schedule 1 species within the study area w.r.t the latest Wild Life (Protection) Amendment Act 2022 along with the Wild Life North Division. The list of Schedule 1 species as authenticated by Wild Life division is attached herewith as Annexure 1.

We are also submitting the revised proposal for Wild Life Conservation Plan with a financial budget of Rs 60 Lakhs for approval. The details of the same is attached herewith as Annexure 2.

We request you to kindly approve the Wild Life Conservation Plan w.r.t Block I Bicholim Mineral Block .

Thanking you

Your faithfully

For Vedanta Limited

Jagdish Ravindranath Desai
Head Environment
Authorised Signatory

Signed
20/11/23
Office of the
Pr. Chief Conservator of Forests
Altinho, Panaji - Goa 403 001

VEDANTA LIMITED

Sesa Goa Iron Ore: Sesa Chlor, 20 EDC Complex, Patto, Panjim, Goa - 403 001, India
T: +91 9832 2460600 | Website: www.vedantaindianore.com

Registered Office: Vedanta Limited, 1st Floor, 'C' wing, Unit 103, Corporate Avenue, Atul Projects, Chokhala, Andheri (East), Mumbai 400093, Maharashtra, India.
CIN: L13209MH1965PLC291394



GOVERNMENT OF GOA
OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY CONSERVATOR OF FORESTS
WILDLIFE & ECOTOURISM (NORTH) DIVISION
1ST LIFT, 4TH FLOOR, JUNTA HOUSE,
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Phone: 0832-2229701/ Fax: 0832- 2422864

E mail: dcfwlnorth-forest.gon@nic.in

No. 1-576-WL&ET(N)/2023-2024/3312

Dated: - 27/11/2023

Agrahayana 06 , 1945

To,
The Head Environment,
Vedanta Limited,
Sesa Ghor, 20 EDC Complex,
Patto, Panjim-Goa.

Sub: Authentication list of the Schedule I species in study area of Block - 1 Bicholim Mineral Block of Vedanta Ltd. at Bicholim - reg...

**Ref: 1. Your letter dated 21.11.2023.
2. Email dated 27.11.2023.**

Sir,

With reference to your letter dated 21.11.2023 and mail dated 27.11.2023, please find enclosed here with the Authentication list of the Schedule I species in study area of Block - 1 Bicholim Mineral Block of Vedanta Ltd. at Bicholim as per the Amended Gazette Notification of Wildlife (Protection) Amendment Act, 2022.

This is for information please.

Yours faithfully,

(Anand S. Jadhav, IFS)
Dy. Conservator of Forests
Wildlife & Eco-Tourism(N)
Panaji - Goa.

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ZONE OF BLOCK I BICHOLIM MINERAL BLOCK OF VEDANTA LIMITED,
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29	Indian rat Snake	<i>Ptyas mucosa</i>	<i>Colubridae</i>	LC/I

* Note: As per Amended Gazette Notification of Wildlife (Protection) Amendment Act 2022


 Dy. Conservator of Forests
 Wildlife & Eco-Tourism (North)
 Panaji-Goa



sesa goa

Sr.No	Plan of Operations	1 st year	2 nd year	3 rd year	4 th year	5 th year
1	Enrichment of forest areas with suitable Indigenous species for wild life habitat improvement	12	12	12	12	12
2	Creation/ maintenance of habitat for herbivores/ avion fauna					
3	Managerial interventions for facilitating water availability to the wild life in forest areas/ Improvement of soil and water regime of forest areas					
4	Financial support to the department for conducting awareness campaigns for various stakeholders					
5	Financial support to the department for celebrating events like Wildlife week and sponsoring the prizes for the competitions					
6	Financial support for Use modern equipment's such as Camera Traps for ensuring presence and movement of wild animals in the vicinity of the mine lease area as well as in study area					
		12	12	12	12	12
	Total	60 lakhs				

VEDANTA LIMITED

Sesa Goa Iron Ore: Sesa Ghor, 20 EDC Complex, Patto, Panjim, Goa - 403 001, India
T +91 0832 2460600 | Website: www.sesagoaonironore.com

Registered Office: Vedanta Limited, 1st Floor, 'C' wing, Unit 103, Corporate Avenue, Atul Projects, Chakola, Andheri (East), Mumbai 400093, Maharashtra, India
CIN: L13209MH1965PLC291394

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ANNEXURE - C

GOVERNMENT OF GOA
Office of the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests
Goa Van Bhawan, Forest Department
Altinho, Panaji-Goa, 403001

No. CWLW-81-Mining-Oper-FD-2023-24/ 3325

Dated: 08/11/2024.

To
Jagdish Ravingranath Desai
Head Environment Sesa Goa.
Vedanta Limited,
Sesa Goa Iron Ore,
EDC Complex,
Patto-Panaji-Goa

Sub: Wildlife Conservation Plan w.r.t Block I-Bicholim Mineral Block
reg...
Ref: Your Letter No. vide dated. 04/10/2024.

Sir,

With reference to your letter under reference, the Wildlife Conservation Plan submitted by your organization for Block-I Bicholim Mineral Block above is currently under scrutiny of the department.

This is for your kind information.

Yours Sincerely



(Damodar Salelkar)
Asst. Conservator of Forests
(CWLW)

O.C.

Copy to

1. Dy. Conservator of Forests (North), for information.

“Swachh Bharat, Swachh Goa”