

BEFORE THE NATIONAL GREEN TRIBUNAL
SOUTHERN ZONE, CHENNAI
ORIGINAL APPLICATION NO.149 OF 2024

IN THE MATTER OF:P

Suo Motu Based On The News Item
Appearing In 'The Times Of India'
Dated 04.02.2024 Titled, "Land Grab In
Telangana Forests Shrinks Space For Big Cats".

VS

Principal Chief Conservator Of Forest (Hoff)
Telangana Forest Department, Aranya Bhavan,
Saifabad, Hyderabad, Telangana And Ors.

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Counsel For The Respondents - R1, R2& R3
Mrs H.Yasmeen Ali

PLACE: CHENNAI

DATE: 31.08.2024

BEFORE THE HON'BLE NATIONAL GREEN TRIBUNAL
(SOUTHERN ZONE) AT CHENNAI

ORIGINAL APPLICATION NO. 149 OF 2024 (SZ)

IN THE MATTER OF

Tribunal on its own motion -Suo Motu
based on the news item published in
Time of India, dated: 04.02.2024 Titled,
"Land Grab in Telangana shrink spaces for big cats".
..... Applicant

Versus

1. Principal Chief Conservator of Forests
Head of Forests Force,
Hyderabad, Telangana.
 2. Chief Wildlife Warden, Telangana.
 3. District Collector & Magistrate, Adilabad
- Respondents

**REPLY FILED BY THE BEHALF OF THE 1 TO 3
RESPONDENTS**

It is submitted that this reply was filed by Sri Shantharam
I.F.S., Conservator of Forests and Field Director, Kawal Tiger
Reserve, Mancherla for and on behalf of all the above (3)
respondents.

This application O.A.No. 243/2024 has been registered in
Suo Motu on the Newspaper clipping titled "Land Grab in
Telangana shrink spaces for big cats" sighted in the Times of
India Dt. 04.02.2024 by the Deputy Registrar, National Green
Tribunal, Principal Bench, New Delhi.

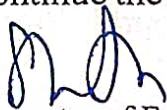

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Field Director, Kawal Tiger Reserve,
Mancherla

It is submitted that, the Hon'ble National Green Tribunal, Principal Bench, New Delhi vide order dated 15.03.2024 directed to file an affidavit with regard to allegations made in the Newspaper clipping and also informed that this matter relates to the Southern Zonal Bench, Chennai, therefore, OA is transferred to the Southern zonal Bench for further action and requested to transfer the original record of the OA to Southern Zonal Bench, Chennai.

In compliance to the orders dated 15.03.2024, I am respectfully submitting the reply:

- 1. It was alleged in the Newspaper that, there are no Tigers found in the Kawal Tiger reserve.**

As per the report of National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) in the document titled "Status of Tigers, Co-Predators and Prey in India 2022", Tiger population in Kawal Tiger reserve is locally extirpated and currently no tiger presence was reported. However, four adults and three cubs were photo-captured in the Kawal Corridor (in Kaghaznagar Division) within the greater Kawal landscape which can act as a source for recovery. The department has put lots of efforts into habitat management and a prey recovery program is underway. Further to continue the efforts

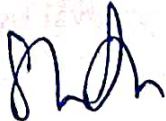

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Field Director Project Tiger,
Kawal Tiger Reserve Circle, Manjeri

of the department in creating inviolate spaces to the majestic voluntary relocation of villages of two villages namely Rampur and Maisampet from the core area of Kawal Tiger reserve is under process and most of the work like construction of houses, community facilities, agriculture land development etc., are near in completion in the alternate site for relocation.

2. **It was alleged that encroachment by tribals for podu cultivation have made forest corridor highly fragmented.**

The encroachments by the tribals have been regularized as per the guidelines laid down in the RoFR Act 2006 by the Tribal Welfare Department which is the Nodal agency as per RoFR Act duly examining the eligibility as per Act & rules.

The total forest area in all the (4) districts falling in the Kawal Tiger Reserve Circle is 5407.63 Sq. Km of which 892.23 Sq. Km is **Core** area, 1123.3 Sq. Km is **Buffer** area and 1218.45 Sq. Km is **Corridor**. The Tile deeds awarded to tribals under the RoFR Act 2005 in four Districts under RoFR Act as per information furnished by Commissioner, Tribal Welfare are as under.



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 Field Director Project Tiger,
 Kawal Tiger Reserve Circle, Mancherla

S.No.	Name of the District	No. of Claims	Extent in Acres
1	KB Asifabad	26348	85003
2	Mancherial	3474	7552
3	Nirmal	10796	31367
4	Adilabad	26642	91667
	TOTAL	67260	215589

3. Construction of National Highways and other roads through forests have contributed to Tiger habitat deterioration

There is 63.16 Kms of National Highways, 276.15 Kms R&B Roads and 801.44 Kms of PR Roads passing through entire Kawal Tiger Reserve. The major National Highway passing through the Kawal Tiger Reserve is NH 363 i.e., Mancherial Chandrapur Road. To facilitate movement of wildlife, the National Board for Wildlife has imposed condition for construction of eco-bridge for the road sanctioned in these areas and an underpass on recommendation of the Chief Wildlife Warden and Expert Committee. The User Agency has started constructing Eco-bridge (1st of its kind in Telangana) and Underpass at strategic locations identified for wildlife movement.

Further following four (4) roads of Roads and Building Dept falling in KB Asifabad Districts have been recently accorded approval by the Nation Board for Wildlife subject to completion


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 Field Director Project Tiger,
 Kawal Tiger Reserve Circle, Mancherial

of underpass as recommended by NTCA. In addition to various wildlife mitigation measures like installation of chain link fencing on either side of the underpass, installation of speed control devices and caution boards have been recommended for each road which are to be completed while taking after road works by user agency for these roads.

S. No.	Name of the Road	Area (in Ha)	PA Name	Amount for WL Mitigation Measure in Lakhs	No. of under passes included	Estimated amount for Under Passes Rs. In Lakhs.
1	Kamana to Serkepalli – KB-Asifabad	0.521	Corridor of KTR	71.00	2 Underpasses	460.00
2	Raghavapur to Govenā – KB-Asifabad	1.744	Buffer area of KTR	48.00	6 Underpasses	1380.00
3	BT Road from Sirpur (U) to Devudupalli - KB-Asifabad	0.327	Buffer area of KTR	48.00	1 Underpasses	1.62
4	Dampur to Kereguda - KB-Asifabad	3.5481	Buffer area of KTR	64.00	14 Underpasses	3220.00


Similarly, following 10 roads pertaining to the Panchayat Raj Dept, falling in Left Wing Extremism effected districts which also include K.B Asifabad also have been approved by NBWL recently subject to fulfilment of mandatory conditions of construction of underpasses as part of animal passage plan as well



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as the required wildlife mitigation measures including habitat management, grassland management, Construction of solar bore well with percolation tanks, awareness generation activities, monitoring wildlife etc. to ensure protection and conservation of wildlife.

S. No.	Name of the Road	Area (in Ha)	PA Name	Amount for WL Mitigation Measure in Lakhs	No. of under passes included	Estimated amount for Under Passes Rs. In Lakhs.
1	Muthunur to fakeernaik Tanda (Chimmangudi)	0.2293	KTR	20.00		22.00
2	R & B oad to Kosagattu	0.3893	Core of KTR	26.00	2 Underpasses	436.00
3	R/F Ervachinthal to Dathojipet	1.3574	Buffer area of KTR	16.50	6 Underpasses	1247.00
4	R & B Road to Allampally	5.1285	Core of KTR	80.00	23 Underpasses	7380.00
5	ZP Road 9/400 km to Naguguda	2.206	Buffer area of KTR	38.00	7 Underpasses	1473.00
6	Karji to Motlaguda	2.7052	Corridor of KTR	105.00	24 Underpasses	5025.00
7	BT road from ZP road 27/9 to Gundala via Doddiguda	2.942	Buffer area of KTR	38.00	5 Underpasses	1063.00
8	Rasimatla to Korikal	4.2063	Buffer area of KTR	46.00	12 Underpasses	2506.00
9	PWD road to Alliguda voa Pothiraj Temple	0.969	Corridor of KTR	38.00	4 Underpasses	938.00
10	Bejjur to Somini	2.337	Corridor of KTR	50.00	8 Underpasses	1690.00


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4. It was alleged that, the NTCA has highlighted the significance of Sirpur Kaghanagar an active corridor suggesting the need to designate as Protected Area.

Considering the suggestion of NTCA and to provide better protection to existing Tiger population in corridor area, the 7th State Board for Wildlife (SBWL) meeting held on 06.02.2024 has recommended the proposal for notifying the corridor area of Kawal Tiger Reserve as Conservation Reserve over an area of 1492.88 Sq. Km. Accordingly the process of notifying the Conservation Reserve has been initiated.

5. **The corridor connecting faces threats from mining and expansion of roads and rail network.**

Areas like Adilabad, Chennur, and Kaghaznagar which are falling in the corridor does not have mining activities. However, mining activities are present in Asifabad, Bellampally and Mancherial Divisions. All the proposals for mining are accompanied with Wildlife mitigative measures and are grounded only after receipt of Stage – II clearance from Government of India.


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Kawal Tiger Reserve Circle, Mancherial

The major National Highway passing through the Kawal Tiger reserve is NH 363 i.e., Mancherial Chandrapur Road. To facilitate movement of wild life the National Board for Wildlife has imposed condition for construction of eco-bridge and an underpass on recommendation of the Chief Wildlife Warden an Expert Committee. The User Agency has started constructing Eco-bridge (1st of its kind in Telangana) and underpass at strategic locations identified for wildlife movement. The major railway line passing is connecting the capital of India with capitals of various States.

6. **2634 claims under have been settled in Asifabad and issued title deeds over an areas of 85003 acres of forest lands. The Telangana Government before elections have accepted 1525 claims in Asifabad and issued deeds over 44750 acres.**

As per Forest Rights Act the Tribal department is the Nodal Agency for processing and accepting the claims and as per information furnished by Commissioner, Tribal Welfare, the following individual Forest Rights Claims / Title deeds have been awarded in 4 Districts falling under KTR.

S.No.	Name of the District	No. of Claims	Extent in Acres
1	KB Asifabad	26348	85003
2	Mancherial	3474	7552
3	Nirmal	10796	31367
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	TOTAL	67260	215589


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7. Absence of Special Tiger Protection Force in Amrabad and Kawal Tiger Reserves urging the State Government to deploy the force immediately.

Proposals or constitution of Special Tiger protection force or Amrabad and Kawal Tiger Reserves with one company of STPF consisting of three platoons with 111 personnel headed by Forest Range Officer for each Tiger Reserve with an estimated cost of Rs.520.00 Lakhs per Tiger Reserve with Central and State Government sharing basis was submitted to the Government. The Government is being addressed in the matter.

8. Villagers are reluctant to have Tigers around the areas abutting forests due to lack of compensation for human deaths, injuries and cattle kills.

The Government of Telangana has issued G.O.Ms. No.114, Dt.19.12.2023 enhancing the compensation rates as under

Human Death	Not exceeding Rs.10.000 Lakhs
Human Injury (Simple Injury)	Actual cost of treatment not exceeding Rs.1.000 Lakh & Rs.10000/- ex-gratia towards immediate relief.
Human Injury (Grievous Injury)	Actual cost of treatment not exceeding Rs.3.000 Lakhs & Rs.1.000 Lakh ex-gratia for permanent incapacitation.
Cattle Kill	Market price as assesse not exceeding Rs.50,000/- per kill.
Agriculture Crop loss	Rs.7500/- per acre.


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The department is taking all required steps for timely release of compensation by addressing to the government whenever required. The Government of Telangana has released an amount of Rs.40.00 Lakhs for payment of compensation in case of human wildlife conflict issues in the month of January, 2024.


Other Protection measures being taken up by the KTR Management are as follows.

- Illegal forest felling has been stopped by taking all preventive measures. Executive staff along with Base Camp Watchers are deployed to control illegal felling. 42 Base camps are located inside the Kawal tiger Reserve Circle with 5 Members per base camp for effective protection of Forests and Wildlife.
- **Awareness meetings** on Wildlife protection, Fire protection, Encroachment controlling and other extension activities have been conducted in forest fringe villages from the budgetary provisions of different schemes like CAMPA, TKHH, BIOSOT, FFPMS, CSSPT etc.,
- Retrieval activities of illegal encroached forest areas have been taken up actively and replanted by forest species. The details of retrieved land details and plantations taken up (Since 2018) are as follows.


Conservator of Forests & Wildlife
FWD/KTR/Mancherial,
Kawal Tiger Reserve Circle, Mancherial

Sl. No.	District	Division	Area retrieved (in Ha)	Plantation raised (in Ha)	No. of plants planted
1	2	3	4	5	6
1	Mancherial	Jannaram	0.00	0.00	0
1		Mancherial	0.00	0.00	0
2		Chennur	100.00	100.00	111100
3		Bellampally	0.00	0.00	0
4			100.00	100.00	111100
5	KB Asifabad	Asifabad	0.00	0.00	0
6		Kaghaznagar	675.00	675.00	749925
			675.00	675.00	749925
7	Nirmal (P)	Khanapur	64.00	64.00	71000
8	Adilabad (P)	Utnoor	97.50	54.00	51106
			936.50	893.00	983131

- 126 Tiger Trackers, 19 Anti – Poaching Trackers, 2 Waterhole surveillance watchers and 215 Base camp Watchers are on roll for better wildlife protection.
- Special program on “**Catch the Trap**” i.e., Anti-Poaching Drive has been conducted in order to Preventive action to safeguard the Wildlife from poaching by way of using various traps, snares as per the instructions of the PCCF WL & CWLW TS Hyderabad Circular No.01/2023 (WILD LIFE) Rc.No.680/2015/WL-3, Dt.25.11.2023. So far 174.25 KGs of iron trap material (snares, bending wire etc.) has been seized in Kawal Tiger Reserve. The above drive is going on in entire Kawal Tiger Reserve.


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 Field Director, Project Tiger,
 Kawal Tiger Reserve Circle, Mancherial

VERIFICATION

I, Sri S.Shantharam, IFS., S/o Subbaiah, aged 44 years do hereby solemnly affirm and verify that the contents of the above reply are true and correct to my knowledge. No part of it is false and nothing material has been concealed there from.

Verified on this day of 25th April 2024 at Mancherial.



RESPONDENT
Conservator of Forests &
Field Director Project Tiger,
Kawal Tiger Reserve Circle, Mancherial