

**IN THE HON'BLE NATIONAL GREEN TRIBUNAL, SOUTHERN ZONE
BENCH, CHENNAI**

ORIGINAL APPLICATION NO. 162 of 2023

IN THE MATTER OF: -

Tribunal on its own motion – SUO MOTU Based on the News item in
The Hindu E – paper, web edition dated 24.09 .2023, “ Kole utetlands
of Kerala face threat of alien plants”

Versus

The Principal Secretary to Govt. of Kerala, Dept. of Environment,
Thiruvananthapuram and 6 Ors.

.... Respondents

COUNTER AFFIDAVIT FILED BY THE RESPONDENT NO .3



Filed by:
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**BEFORE THE HON'BLE NATIONAL GREEN TRIBUNAL,
SOUTHERN ZONE, CHENNAI**

Original Application. No. 162 OF 2023 (SZ)

IN THE MATTER OF:

Tribunal on its own motion – SUO MOTU

Based on the News item in The Hindu E – paper, web edition dated 24.09.2023, “*Kole wetlands of Kerala face threat of alien plants*”

And

The Principal Secretary to Govt. of Kerala,
Dept. of Environment,
Thiruvananthapuram and 6 Ors.

... Respondents

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DATE: 13 .03.2026

PLACE: Chennai

DRAWN AND FILED BY

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Counsel for Respondent No.3

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And

The Principal Secretary to Govt. of Kerala,
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Thiruvananthapuram and 6 Ors.

... Respondents

COUNTER AFFIDAVIT FILED BY THE 3rd RESPONDENT
(NATIONAL BIODIVERSITY AUTHORITY)

MOST RESPECTFULLY SHOWETH:

I, Dr. B. Balaji, son of G. Badrinarayanan, aged 52 years, Occupation: Government service residing at Chennai, do hereby solemnly affirm and sincerely state as follows:

1. I am serving as the Member Secretary of the National Biodiversity Authority (NBA), the 3rd Respondent herein, having office at 5th Floor, TICEL Bio Park, CSIR Road, Taramani, Chennai – 600 113, Tamil Nadu and as such, well acquainted with the facts of the case, borne out of records. I am duly authorized to sign, verify and file this Counter Affidavit and, as such, competent to defend this case on behalf of the 3rd Respondent.



2. That the Original Application has been taken *suo motu* by this Hon'ble Tribunal on 18.10.2023 based on a news item published in "The Hindu" dated 24.09.2023 under the caption "Kole wetlands of Kerala face threat of alien plants". This issue of Kole wetlands, an internationally important Ramsar site of high value biodiversity, which has been facing the threat of alien invasive species. *Cabomba furcata*, popularly called as Pink Bloom due to its massive flowering, has been a new threat to the kole fields, in addition to water hyacinth and *Salvinia molesta*. Many parts of the water canals, crisscrossing the vast kole fields, have turned pink now.
3. It is submitted that on 04.11.2025, this Hon'ble Tribunal directed the 3rd Respondent (NBA) to clarify whether any Guidelines are in place for the eradication of invasive species across the country. This would also be an appropriate opportunity for the NBA to take stock of the invasive species in each State and to devise suitable management strategies. Such measures should encompass the management of alien and invasive species in agricultural, forest, and marine ecosystems. Conducting a comprehensive study and formulating appropriate guidelines in this regard would also greatly help in mitigating the adverse impact of invasive alien species on biodiversity. Accordingly, the NBA is directed to put the ball in motion by initiating a comprehensive study on the subject. Thereafter, the matter was posted to 21.01.2026.
4. It is submitted that on 21.01.2026, in compliance of the directions given by this Hon'ble Tribunal, it was submitted on behalf of the 3rd Respondent that, in terms of the previous order of this Tribunal regarding the Guidelines for eradication of invasive species across the country, the matter has been taken up by the NBA for initiating the process to frame the Guidelines. Further, the Counsel submitted to this Hon'ble Tribunal, a copy of the Office Memorandum (OM) dated 20.01.2026 issued by the NBA for the constitution of the Expert



Committee to frame the Guidelines. The copy of the (OM) and the EC meeting invitation dated 03.02.2026 is submitted as **Annexure – 1**.

5. In this regard, the NBA, in compliance of this Hon'ble Tribunal directions, had constituted an Expert Committee under Section 13 of the Biological Diversity Act, 2002 (As amended by the BD (Amendment) Act, 2023). The Terms of Reference (ToR) for the Committee is as per the order of the Hon'ble Tribunal and the tenure of the Expert Committee for submitting the final report is fixed as two years. Further, the Guidelines for the Expert Committee have been issued, which are attached to the said Office Memorandum. The Expert Committee consists of representatives of the line Ministries, India's Premier Research Institutions, Scientific Institutions (ICAR-NBFGR, ZSI, BSI, IUCN, WII, NIOT, FSI, CMLRE, CMFRI, ICAR-NBAIR, ICAR-DWR), National Repositories besides representatives/officers from the MoEFCC and NBA. The Expert Committee will examine the issue in detail and come up with a Comprehensive Guidelines, in mitigating the adverse impact of invasive alien species on the environment within 2 years. Thereafter, the Hon'ble Tribunal had adjourned the matter to 25.03.2026.
6. Further to the Office Memorandum, the Expert Committee on invasive alien species had convened its first meeting on 12.02.2026 to discuss the set agenda. The copy of the proceedings of the meeting is submitted as **Annexure – 2**. In the said meeting, the Terms of Reference of the Committee were reiterated, including identification and prioritisation of invasive alien species posing significant threats to biodiversity, agriculture, aquaculture, and ecosystem services; documentation of impacts and knowledge gaps; and development of national-level guidelines for prevention, control, eradication, and management.



7. While the committee has initiated the work, the scientific nature of the mandate includes extended data-collection and requires a more extended period for rigorous analysis. Specifically, the work involves review of inputs from various stakeholders across the country, which is essential to ensure the evidentiary value of our conclusions.

The following are some of the important works that will be undertaken by the Expert Committee:

- a. High-risk species will be prioritised based on ecological, economic, and livelihood impacts, and national and international management interventions will be synthesised to prepare Guidelines.
 - b. It was further decided that ZSI and BSI, along with WII and CMFRI will update the existing lists of faunal and floral invasive species within two months to support preparation of the consolidated national list.
 - c. Institutional responsibilities will be distributed across ecosystem domains, and thematic working groups will be established.
 - d. Sub-committees will be formed for different ecosystems/taxonomical groups and for the prioritisation framework to improve coordination and accelerate progress.
 - e. Coordination with MoEFCC and stakeholders was agreed to ensure the implementation of policy frameworks.
8. It is submitted that to maintain a highest standards of accuracy and to provide a comprehensive, legally and scientifically sound assessment before framing the Guidelines on Invasive Alien Species, we respectfully request two years' time as mentioned above to submit the final report.



In light of the above, it is prayed that this Hon'ble Court may be pleased to take this Counter Affidavit on record and pass such further orders as this Hon'ble Court may deem fit and proper in the interest of justice.



DEPONENT

VERIFICATION

Verified that the statements made above in Paras 1 to 8 are true to my knowledge and belief. No part of it is false and nothing material has been concealed therefrom.

Verified at Chennai on the 13 day of March 2026.



DEPONENT

Respondent No. 3

Through:

(COUNSEL)

Place: Chennai

Dated: 13.03.2026

डॉ. ब. बालाजी, भा.व.से. / Dr. B. Balaji, IFS
सदस्य सचिव / Member Secretary
राष्ट्रीय जैव विविधता प्राधिकरण
National Biodiversity Authority
भारत सरकार / Government of India
5वां तल, टाइसल बायो पार्क / 5th Floor, TICEL Bio Park,
सीएसआईआर रोड / CSIR Road
तारमणि, चेन्नई - 600 113 / Taramani, Chennai - 600 113



राष्ट्रीय जैव विविधता प्राधिकरण National Biodiversity Authority

(An Autonomous and Statutory Body of Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Government of India)



डॉ. ब. बालाजी, भा.व.से.
सदस्य सचिव

Dr. B. Balaji, IFS
Member Secretary

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5th Floor, TICEL Bio Park, CSIR Road,
Taramani, Chennai - 600 113, Tamil Nadu, India.

F.No. 23/14/CBD CELL/2025-26/2690

Dated 20.01.2026

OFFICE MEMORANDUM

Sub: Constitution of an Expert Committee on Invasive Alien Species (IAS) in pursuance of the directions of the Hon'ble NGT and the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) – reg.

In a *suo motu* proceeding, the Hon'ble National Green Tribunal (NGT), Southern Zone, Chennai, in O.A. No. 162/2023 (SZ), while examining the significant ecological risks posed by invasive alien plant species, issued its orders on 4 November 2025. In pursuance of the said directions, the National Biodiversity Authority (NBA) has been directed to initiate the process by undertaking a comprehensive study on the subject.

In this regard, the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC), vide its letter dated 4 December 2025 bearing D.O. No. C-12017/3/2023-CS-III-Part(4), has also advised the NBA to constitute an Expert Committee to address issues relating to invasive alien species.

Accordingly, and in exercise of the powers conferred under Section 13(2) of the Biological Diversity Act, 2002, as amended in 2023, the National Biodiversity Authority (NBA) shall constitute an Expert Committee on Invasive Alien Species (IAS).

The Committee shall be mandated to prepare and review the national consolidated list of invasive alien species and to prioritise those species that pose significant risks to ecology, biodiversity, food security, and human and wildlife health. The Committee shall also identify knowledge gaps in the management of invasive alien species and recommend holistic programmes for data generation, research, and coordinated action.

The composition of the EC is as given below: -

Chair	
Mr. Dhananjai Mohan, IFS, Retd. PCCF and HoFF, Uttarakhand.	
Co-Chair	
Prof. (Dr.) A. Biju Kumar, Vice Chancellor, Kerala University of Fisheries and Ocean Studies (KUFOS), Panangad, Kochi, Kerala, India.	
Members	
1.	The Joint Secretary, Ministry of Earth Sciences, Government of India, Prithvi Bhawan, opposite India Habitat Centre, Lodhi Road, New Delhi 110003.

2.	The Joint Secretary (Fisheries) , Department of Fisheries, Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying, Krishi Bhawan, New Delhi- 110001.
3.	The Joint Secretary (IC, Credit, Seeds) , Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare, Krishi Bhawan, Dr. Rajendra Prasad Road, New Delhi
4.	The Inspector General of Forest , Wild Life Division, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change. Indira Paryavaran Bhawan, Jorbagh Road. New Delhi – 110 003. or his representative
5.	Scientist 'G'/Advisor , National Focal Point to CBD, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change. Indira Paryavaran Bhawan, Jorbagh Road. New Delhi – 110 003
6.	The Director and Scientist -G , Zoological Survey of India, Prani Vigyan Bhawan, M-Block, New Alipore, Kolkata-700053 or his representative.
7.	The Director , Botanical Survey of India, CGO Complex, 3rd MSO Building, Block F (5th and 6th Floor), DF Block, Sector I, Salt Lake City, Kolkata - 700 064 or his representative.
8.	The Director , National Bureau of Agricultural Insect Resources, (NBAIR), P. Bag No:2491, H.A. Farm Post, Bellary Road, Bengaluru - 560 024, Karnataka, or his representative.
9.	The Director , ICAR-National Bureau of Plant Genetic Resources, Pusa Campus, New Delhi – 110012, or his representative.
10.	The Director , ICAR-National Bureau of Fish Genetic Resources (ICAR-NBFGR), Canal Ring Road, P.O. Dilkusha, Lucknow or his representative.
11.	The Director , Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute, Ernakulam North P.O., Kochi-682 018 or his representative.
12.	The Deputy Director General. Natural Resource Management, Division of Natural Resource Management, Krishi Anusandhan Bhawan-II, New Delhi - 110 012 or his representative.
13.	The Director General , Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education (ICFRE), P.O. New Forest, Dehra Dun - 248 006. or his representative
14.	The Director General , Forest Survey of India, Kaulagarh Road, P.O -IPE Dehradun, 248195, Uttarakhand. or his representative.
15.	The Director , Wildlife Institute of India, Post Box #18, Chandrabani, Dehradun 248001 Uttarakhand. or his representative.
16.	The Director , Centre for Marine Living Resources and Ecology (CMLRE) Atal Bhavan, Ministry of Earth Sciences, Government of India, LNG Road, Puthuvypin South, Ochanthuruthu PO, Kochi-682508 or his representative.
17.	The Director , ICAR - Directorate of Weed Research, Jabalpur, 482004, MP. or his representative.
18.	The Member Secretary , National Tiger Conservation Authority, (NTCA), B-1 Wing, 7th Floor, Pt. Deendayal Antyodaya Bhawan, CGO Complex, New Delhi-110 003. or his representative.
19.	PCCF (HoFF) Tamil Nadu, Office of Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (Head of Forest Force), Forest Headquarters building, Guindy-Velachery Main Road, Near Kannikapuram Checkpost, Guindy, Chennai 600032. or his representative.
20.	PCCF (HoFF) Odisha, Aranyabhawan Plot No 2/12, Chandrasekharpur, Bhubaneswar 751023. or his representative.
21.	PCCF & Chief Wildlife Warden, Govt. of Maharashtra, Van Bhawan Civil Lines, Ramgiri Road Nagpur-440001. or his representative.
22.	Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, Wildlife & Chief Wildlife Warden, Assam, Aranya Bhawan, Panjabari, Guwahati-781037. or his representative.
23.	Country Representative , IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature), India Country Office, H-4, 2nd Floor, Green Park Extension, New Delhi – 110016.

24.	Dr. Ankila Hiremath , Pr. Coordinator, Collaborations in Forest Ecology and Conservation, National Center for Biological Sciences, Bangalore and Adjunct Senior Fellow, SMS Foundation Centre for Biodiversity and Conservation, Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment (ATREE), Bangalore.
25.	Dr Prince Prakash Jebakumar J , Scientist E, Ocean Health Division, National Institute of Ocean Technology, Ma Po Si Nagar, Pallikaranai, Chennai, Tamil Nadu 600100.
26.	Dr. Farindra Tiwari , Professor (Assistant) P. G. Department of Zoology, Mahatma Gandhi P G College, Gorakhpur, 273001 UP.
27.	Dr. Achyut Kumar Banerjee , Assistant Professor, School of Arts and Sciences Azim Premji University Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh, India.

Convener cum Coordinator
Dr. S. Sandilyan , Scientific Consultant, NBA, Chennai.
Focal Point
Dr. B. Balaji , IFS., Member Secretary, National Biodiversity Authority, Chennai

The **Terms of Reference (ToR)** of the Committee are as follows:

- a. To revise, update, and consolidate the State-wise lists, and based thereon prepare a national list of Invasive Alien Species.
- b. To identify and prioritise invasive alien plant and animal species posing significant threats to national biodiversity, food security, agriculture, and aquaculture.
- c. To recommend suitable management strategies and ecological restoration measures for priority invasive alien species, with particular emphasis on the conservation of indigenous biodiversity across agricultural, forest, marine, and other key ecosystems, and to formulate comprehensive national-level guidelines, including for the eradication, control, and management of such species.
- d. To document, evaluate, and recommend best practices for the prevention, control, and management of priority invasive alien species, and to facilitate their national-level dissemination and adoption.

The Tenure of the Committee shall be two years from issuance of the Order

The guidelines for the Expert Committee be as referred to in Annexure - I.



(B. Balaji)
Member Secretary, NBA

GUIDELINES

The following guidelines are issued for the proper conduct of the meeting to achieve the expected outcomes.

1. The Expert Committee is constituted primarily to review and advise Government of India on matters related to the national consolidated list of Invasive Alien Species, impact assessment reports, and other relevant materials, including brochures, hand-outs, booklets, research papers, and review articles, as well as on current management and policy-related issues.
2. The Chair of the EC is authorised to decide the mode of the meeting to be convened, either physical or through virtual mode or Hybrid mode.
3. The Chair of the Committee, in consultation with the Member Secretary, NBA can (1) invite additional experts in the subject matter, if required, to the meeting of EC as special invitees, (2) to hold or conduct a meeting in any part of India, if it is deemed fit, to expedite the task assigned in consultation with NBA.
4. The Chairman and members are requested to kindly make it convenient to attend the meeting at the fixed venue and time. The NBA will arrange transport from the Airport / Railway station/bus stand to and from the venue of the meeting.
5. In respect of the travel cost, the fares by Air (economy class) / train (AC I class / AC II tier), incurred by the Chairman, Co-chair and the non-official members / special invitees shall be reimbursed on production of the tickets and boarding pass along with bills in the prescribed format provided by NBA. The lodging and boarding will be provided by the NBA. The AC taxi fare will be reimbursed as and when the bill is produced with the TA Bill. Alternatively, road mileage will be paid based on the declaration of Kms.
6. In respect of official members, the travel cost (Air fare & road journey) to reach Chennai & back shall be borne by their parent organizations. However, if official members give a declaration that their parent organisation is not providing travel costs, then the NBA shall reimburse the travel costs after getting approval from the Competent Authority. The local lodging & boarding logistics, i.e., transport cost at Chennai, will be borne by NBA.
7. As per the directions issued by the Ministry of Finance vide O.M. no. No. 19024/03/2021-E. IV, dated 16.06.2022, the Members are required to purchase the ticket from three authorised travel agents viz. M/s. Balmer Lawrie & Company Limited (BLCL), M/s. Ashok Travels & Tours (ATT) and Indian Railways Catering and Tourism Corporation Ltd. (IRCTC) only. The tickets booked other than these authorised agencies will not be reimbursed. The submission of a boarding pass shall be mandatory for reimbursement by the NBA.
8. The Chair, Co-Chair are entitled for Rs.6000/per day of sitting fee and all non-official members of the EC are entitled for Rs.4000/per day of sitting.

9. The Chairman and members may preferably arrive at the city of venue one day in advance before the scheduled date of meeting.
10. The committee is requested to submit the proceedings/summary of discussions to the NBA duly authenticated by all the members. In order to finalise and submit proceedings/summary of the meeting on the same day, outstation members are requested to plan their return journey on the next day of the meeting. If required, the Chair, Co-chair and a few selected members at the discretion of the Chairman, EC may stay for one more day and leave on the next day AN (Three nights), after finalising the draft proceedings of the meeting.
11. This may please be coordinated by the coordinator in consultation with the Chair and Co-Chair of the EC. Under exceptional circumstances, the Chairman, EC may get the summary/ proceedings/ minutes finalised at later dates and send the document to NBA duly authenticated by all members (through e-mail) who were present in the meeting. In such case, a lump sum of Rs.3000/- will be paid to the Chairman to meet the postal expenses, mobile, internet charges and cost of secretarial assistance at his place of stay on request. For payment of a lump sum, a self-declaration to the effect that the expenditure has actually been incurred for the above purpose has to be furnished by the Chairman.
12. In the absence of Chairman, the Co-Chair will conduct the proceedings of the meeting.
13. The committee is requested to go through the subject area and refer to BD Act 2002 as amended in 2023, Biological Diversity Rules, 2024 and ABS Regulations, 2025, and other relevant laws, scientific articles, and books and browse the internet to facilitate lively and useful discussion on the subject. All members are requested to go through the previous Report submitted by the EC.
14. The Chairman and members may exchange notes and views through the Internet on the subject area to be discussed during the meeting.
15. Given the sensitivity and nature of deliberations of the Committee, members are requested not to engage in any bilateral discussion with non-members regarding the subject matter. However, they can collect information from non-members working in similar autonomous and statutory bodies that may be useful for the expert committee.
16. The Member Secretary, NBA, after obtaining prior permission from the Chairperson, NBA, is authorised to invite, as and when required, any other experts/ professionals to the meetings of the expert committee as special invitees.
17. The Chair and Co-chair are authorised to conduct meetings anywhere in India in consultation with the Member Secretary, NBA.
18. The Chairperson of the Expert Committee is vested with powers to constitute sub-committees to contribute/ draft interim reports and review specific chapters of the final report. The coordinator shall assist the Chair and Co-chair in coordination and organising work of sub-committees. Those who write chapters or contribute actively to compiling information will be paid a workday allowance by the NBA on the recommendation of the Chair of EC. However, the NBA will pay the amount as per its discretion. This is in addition to sitting fees.

19. The coordinator will convene the meetings after consulting the Focal point in NBA. If required, he can visit anywhere in India with the prior approval of the Chairman of NBA.
20. The coordinator may submit a summary of the proceedings of every meeting after getting the approval of the Chair, Co-chair and all Members through email. He will coordinate with the entire group/ sub-committees and see that the final report is submitted within time. If required, the coordinator may travel separately to any city to meet the Chair of EC, Co-chair of EC, to plan the meetings after obtaining approval from the Chairman, NBA.
21. Since it is not possible to take all members of the committee to interact with Senior officers/ Chief Secretaries of States/ UTs, the Chair of the EC, in consultation with the Co-chair and Member Secretary, shall decide the composition of the delegation. Alternatively, the Chair, Co-chair, Member Secretary, & Convener may form a delegation of three and interact with officials of states and UTs and other stakeholders like SBBs, private individuals, communities/ NGOs/ Autonomous councils/ Panchayat Raj functionaries/ Associations, etc. The Member Secretary NBA may join the delegation if possible.
22. The Chairman of NBA reserves the right to dissolve the Working Group/ change the composition of the Expert Committee without assigning any reason.
23. The Chairman, NBA, reserves the right to disband the committee without assigning any reason.

This is issued with the approval of the Competent Authority.



(B. Balaji)

Member Secretary, NBA

To

1. **Mr. Dhananjai Mohan**, IFS, Retd. PCCF and HoFF, Uttarakhand. Mobile No: . Email: ghananjaim@gmail.com.
2. **Prof. (Dr.) A. Biju Kumar**, Vice Chancellor, Kerala University of Fisheries and Ocean Studies (KUFOS), Panangad, Kochi, Kerala, India. Mobile No:9447216157. Email: bijupuzhayoram@gmail.com
3. **The Joint Secretary, Ministry of Earth Sciences**, Government of India, Prithvi Bhawan, opposite India Habitat Centre, Lodhi Road, New Delhi 110003 . Mobile No: Email: js@moes.gov.in
4. **The Joint Secretary (Fisheries)**, Department of Fisheries, Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying, Krishi Bhawan, New Delhi- 110001. Mobile No: . Email: secy-fisheries@nic.in
5. **The Joint Secretary (IC, Credit, Seeds)**, Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare, Krishi Bhawan, Dr. Rajendra Prasad Road, New Delhi. Mobile No: . Email: aksahu@ias.nic.in
6. **The Inspector General of Forest**, Wild Life Division, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate

- Change. Indira Paryavaran Bhawan, Jorbagh Road. New Delhi – 110 003. igfwl-mef@nic.in.
7. **Mr. Raghu Kumar Kodali**, Scientist 'G'/Advisor, National Focal Point to CBD, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change. Indira Paryavaran Bhawan, Jorbagh Road. New Delhi – 110 003 Mobile No:7995653080. Email: kodali.rk@gov.in
 8. **The Director and Scientist** -G, Zoological Survey of India, Prani Vigyan Bhawan, M-Block, New Alipore, Kolkata-700053 Mobile No:Email: dhriti.banerjee-zsi.gov.in
 9. **The Director**, Botanical Survey of India, CGO Complex, 3rd MSO Building, Block F (5th and 6th Floor), DF Block, Sector I, Salt Lake City, Kolkata - 700 064 Mobile No: . Email: hq@bsi.gov.in
 10. **The Director**, National Bureau of Agricultural Insect Resources, (NBAIR), P. Bag No:2491, H.A. Farm Post, Bellary Road, Bengaluru - 560 024, Karnataka, Mobile No: . Email: director.nbair@icar.gov.in
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 15. **The Director General**, Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education (ICFRE), P.O. New Forest, Dehra Dun - 248 006. Mobile No: . Email: dg@icfre.org
 16. **The Director General**, Forest Survey of India, Kaulagarh Road, P.O -IPE Dehradun, 248195, Uttarakhand. dgfsi@fsi.nic.in
 17. **The Director**, Wildlife Institute of India, Post Box #18, Chandrabani, Dehradun 248001 Uttarakhand. Mobile No: . Email: dwii@wii.gov.in
 18. **The Director**, Centre for Marine Living Resources and Ecology (CMLRE) Atal Bhavan, Ministry of Earth Sciences, Government of India, LNG Road, Puthuvypin South, Ochanthuruthu PO, Kochi-682508. Mobile No: . Email: director@cmlre.gov.in
 19. **The Director**, ICAR - Directorate of Weed Research, Jabalpur, 482004, MP. Mobile No: . Email: director.weed@icar.gov.in
 20. **The Member Secretary**, National Tiger Conservation Authority, (NTCA), B-1 Wing, 7th Floor, Pt. Deendayal Antyodaya Bhawan, CGO Complex, New Delhi-110 003. Mobile No: . Email: ms-ntca@nic.in
 21. **PCCF (HoFF)** Tamil Nadu, Office of Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (Head of Forest Force), Forest Headquarters building, Guindy-Velachery Main Road, Near Kannikapuram Checkpost, Guindy, Chennai 600032. Mobile No: . Email: tnforest@nic.in
 22. **PCCF (HoFF)** Odisha, Aranyabhawan Plot No 2/12, Chandrasekharpur, Bhubaneswar 751023. Mobile No: . Email: pccf.hoff@odisha.gov.in
 23. **PCCF & Chief Wildlife Warden**, Govt. of Maharashtra, Van Bhawan Civil Lines, Ramgiri Road Nagpur-440001. Mobile No: . Email: pccfwlmgp@mahaforest.gov.in
 24. **Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, Wildlife & Chief Wildlife Warden**, Assam, Aranya Bhawan,

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- 25. Country Representative**, IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature), India Country Office, H-4, 2nd Floor, Green Park Extension, New Delhi – 110016. Mobile No: . Email: yash.bhatnagar@iucn.org
- 26. Dr. Ankila Hiremath**, Pr. Coordinator, Collaborations in Forest Ecology and Conservation, National Center for Biological Sciences, Bangalore and Adjunct Senior Fellow, SMS Foundation Centre for Biodiversity and Conservation, Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment (ATREE), Bangalore. Mobile No:9871130722. Email: hiremath@ncbs.res.in
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- 29. Dr. Achyut Kumar Banerjee**, Assistant Professor, School of Arts and Sciences Azim Premji University Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh, India. Mobile No:9830062865. Email: achyut.banerjee@apu.edu.in
- 30. Dr. S. Sandilyan**, Scientific Consultant, NBA, Chennai.

Copy to:

1. Administrative officer/ Accounts Officer/ Technical Officer (BS)/ Technical Officer (IPR) / Advisor (Law), NBA.
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राष्ट्रीय जैव विविधता प्राधिकरण
National Biodiversity Authority

(An Autonomous and Statutory Body of Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Government of India)



डॉ. ब. बालाजी, भा.व.से.
सदस्य सचिव

Dr. B. Balaji, IFS
Member Secretary

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5th Floor, TICEL Bio Park, CSIR Road,
Taramani, Chennai - 600 113, Tamil Nadu, India.

F.No.23/14/CBD Cell/2025-26

Dated 3rd February, 2026.

Sir/Madam,

Sub: Invitation to the First Meeting of the Expert Committee on Invasive Alien Species (IAS) scheduled to be held on 12 February 2026 at 11:00a.m. (Virtual) mode – reg.

The National Biodiversity Authority is pleased to invite you to participate in the first meeting of the Expert Committee on Invasive Alien Species (IAS), scheduled to be held on **12 February 2026 at 11:00 a.m. onwards in virtual mode.**

The detailed agenda and background note are attached herewith for your kind reference. The meeting link is as follows.

https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-join/19%3ameeting_YmQ4OTczMmUtMGE5Mi00NTQzLTliYjEtOWRmNjJjODBiMjFi%40thread.v2/0?context=%7b%22id%22%3a%22da3302b3-07c2-45d4-8605-af3981c1c682%22%2c%22oid%22%3a%22dd74eccb-815f-4d6a-905b-878ed80b1d54%22%7d

You are requested to kindly confirm your participation in the above-mentioned meeting via email or WhatsApp to **Dr. S. Sandilyan, Scientific Consultant, NBA, at 98424 82180.**

Yours sincerely,


(B. Balaji) 3/2/26

To

1. **Dr. Dhananjai Mohan**, IFS, Retd. PCCF and HoFF, Uttarakhand. Email: dhananjaim@gmail.com. (Chair)
2. **Prof. (Dr.) A. Biju Kumar**, Vice Chancellor, Kerala University of Fisheries and Ocean Studies (KUFOS), Panangad, Kochi, Kerala, India. Email: bijupuzhayoram@gmail.com (Co- Chair).
3. **The Joint Secretary, Ministry of Earth Sciences**, Government of India, Prithvi Bhawan, Opposite India Habitat Centre, Lodhi Road, New Delhi 110003. Email: js@moes.gov.in

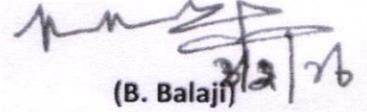
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4. **The Joint Secretary (Fisheries)**, Department of Fisheries, Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying, Krishi Bhawan, New Delhi- 110001. Email: secy-fisheries@nic.in
5. **The Joint Secretary (IC, Credit, Seeds)**, Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare, Krishi Bhawan, Dr. Rajendra Prasad Road, New Delhi. Email: aksahu@ias.nic.in
6. **The Inspector General of Forest**, Wild Life Division, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change. Indira Paryavaran Bhawan, Jorbagh Road. New Delhi – 110 003. Email: igfwl-mef@nic.in.
7. **Mr. Raghu Kumar Kodali**, Scientist 'G'/Advisor, National Focal Point to CBD, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change. Indira Paryavaran Bhawan, Jorbagh Road. New Delhi – 110 003. Email: kodali.rk@gov.in
8. **The Director and Scientist -G**, Zoological Survey of India, Prani Vigyan Bhawan, M-Block, New Alipore, Kolkata-700053 Email: dhriti.banerjee-zsi.gov.in
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10. **The Director**, National Bureau of Agricultural Insect Resources, (NBAIR), P. Bag No:2491, H.A. Farm Post, Bellary Road, Bengaluru - 560 024, Karnataka, Email: director.nbair@icar.gov.in
11. **The Director**, ICAR-National Bureau of Plant Genetic Resources, Pusa Campus, New Delhi – 110012, Mobile No: . Email: director.nbpr@nic.in
12. **The Director**, ICAR-National Bureau of Fish Genetic Resources (ICAR-NBFGR), Canal Ring Road, P.O. Dilkusha, Lucknow. Email: director.nbfgr@icar.org.in
13. **The Director**, Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute, Ernakulam North P.O., Kochi-682 018. Email: director.cmfri@icar.org.in
14. **The Deputy Director General**. Natural Resource Management, Division of Natural Resource Management, Krishi Anusandhan Bhawan-II, New Delhi - 110 012. Email: ddg.nrm@icar.gov.in
15. **The Director General**, Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education (ICFRE), P.O. New Forest, Dehra Dun - 248 006. Email: dg@icfre.org
16. **The Director General**, Forest Survey of India, Kaulagarh Road, P.O -IPE Dehradun, 248195, Uttarakhand. Email: dgfsi@fsi.nic.in
17. **The Director**, Wildlife Institute of India, Post Box #18, Chandrabani, Dehradun 248001, Uttarakhand. Mobile No: . Email: dwii@wii.gov.in
18. **The Director**, Centre for Marine Living Resources and Ecology (CMLRE), Atal Bhavan, Ministry of Earth Sciences, Government of India, LNG Road, Puthuvypin South, Ochanthuruthu PO, Kochi-682508. Email: director@cmlre.gov.in
19. **The Director**, ICAR - Directorate of Weed Research, Jabalpur, 482004, MP. Email:director.weed@icar.gov.in
20. **The Member Secretary**, National Tiger Conservation Authority, (NTCA), B-1 Wing, 7th Floor, Pt. Deendayal Antyodaya Bhawan, CGO Complex, New Delhi-110 003. Email: msntca@nic.in
21. **PCCF (HoFF) Tamil Nadu**, Office of Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (Head of Forest Force), Forest Headquarters building, Guindy-Velachery Main Road, Near Kannikapuram Check post, Guindy, Chennai 600032. Email: tnforest@nic.in
22. **PCCF (HoFF) Odisha**, Aranyabhawan Plot No 2/12, Chandrasekharapur, Bhubaneswar 751023. Email: pccf.hoff@odisha.gov.in
23. **PCCF & Chief Wildlife Warden**, Govt. of Maharashtra, Van Bhawan Civil Lines, Ramgiri Road Nagpur-440001. Email: pccfwlmgp@mahaforest.gov.in
24. **Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, Wildlife & Chief Wildlife Warden**, Assam, Aranya Bhawan, 8 Panjabari, Guwahati-781037.. Email: vinaygupta6900@gmail.com
25. **Country Representative**, IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature), India Country Office, H-4, 2nd Floor, Green Park Extension, New Delhi – 110016. Email: yash.bhatnagar@iucn.org
26. **Dr. Ankila Hiremath**, Pr. Coordinator, Collaborations in Forest Ecology and Conservation, National Center for Biological Sciences, Bangalore and Adjunct Senior Fellow, SMS Foundation Centre for Biodiversity and Conservation, Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment (ATREE), Bangalore. Email: hiremath@ncbs.res.in

27. **Dr Prince Prakash Jebakumar J**, Scientist E, Ocean Health Division, National Institute of Ocean Technology, Ma Po Si Nagar, Pallikaranai, Chennai, Tamil Nadu 600100. Email: prince.niot@gov.in
28. **Dr. Farindra Tiwari**, Professor (Assistant) P. G. Department of Zoology, Mahatma Gandhi P G College, Gorakhpur, 273001 UP. Email: drfarindra_mggg@rediffmail.com
29. **Dr. Achyut Kumar Banerjee**, Assistant Professor, School of Arts and Sciences Azim Premji University Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh, India. Email: achyut.banerjee@apu.edu.in



(B. Balaji)

Member Secretary



**PROCEEDINGS OF FIRST MEETING OF THE EXPERT COMMITTEE ON
INVASIVE ALIEN SPECIES (IAS)**

Venue: NBA, Chennai	Date: 12/02/2026	Time: 11 am 1:30 pm
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The first meeting of the Expert Committee on Invasive Alien Species (IAS) was convened by the National Biodiversity Authority (NBA) on 12 February 2026 from 11:00 hrs onwards through virtual mode. The meeting was chaired by Dr. Dhananjai Mohan, IFS (Retd.), Chairperson of the Expert Committee, and co-chaired by Dr. Biju Kumar. Senior officials and experts representing national research institutions, universities, and relevant ministries participated in the deliberations as members of the committee. The list of participants is provided in the Annexure.

The meeting commenced with the welcome address by the Member Secretary, National Biodiversity Authority. He highlighted the increasing threats posed by invasive alien species across terrestrial, freshwater, and marine ecosystems in India and underscored the need for coordinated scientific and policy responses at the national level. Referring to global assessments, it was noted that more than 37,000 alien species have been introduced worldwide, of which approximately 3,500 are considered highly harmful. India is affected by several globally recognised invasive alien species, including *Parthenium hysterophorus*, *Lantana camara*, *Chromolaena odorata*, *Eichhornia crassipes*, *Salvinia molesta*, and *Prosopis juliflora*, which have significantly altered natural ecosystems, agricultural systems, and water bodies.

The Member Secretary also provided the background to the constitution of the Expert Committee, referring to recent directions of the National Green Tribunal (NGT) concerning invasive species impacts on wetlands and associated ecosystems. The NGT had emphasised the need for a consolidated national list of invasive alien species, prioritisation of high-risk species, identification of knowledge gaps, and formulation of coordinated research and management programmes. The Expert Committee has been constituted to provide evidence-based and implementable recommendations in this regard.

The Terms of Reference of the Committee were reiterated, including identification and prioritisation of invasive alien species posing significant threats to biodiversity, agriculture,

aquaculture, and ecosystem services; documentation of impacts and knowledge gaps; and development of national-level guidelines for prevention, control, eradication, and management.

In his opening remarks, the Chairperson, NBA underscored that invasive alien species are among the major drivers of biodiversity loss globally and contribute significantly to ecosystem degradation and species extinctions. He emphasised that eradication of established invasive species is often impractical and highlighted the importance of prevention, containment, and adaptive management approaches. The Chairperson referred to earlier work by the Wildlife Institute of India and the Expert Committee on invasive species constituted by NBA in 2017, which identified more than 160 species and developed criteria for declaring invasive alien species. He noted that identifying and prioritising invasive alien species requires a systematic, cost-effective, and sustainable approach. It was also highlighted that the NGT has directed preparation of state-wise invasive alien species lists, which will be consolidated to form an official national list. He also clarified that the list, once prepared, would be submitted to the MoEFCC, which would determine the subsequent course of action.

The Co-Chair of the EC presented a policy note outlining the Committee's proposed actions and acknowledged the contributions of earlier stakeholders. He highlighted the need to identify pathways of introduction and spread of invasive alien species and addressed challenges related to their management. The absence of a unified national knowledge portal was identified as a key gap, limiting prioritisation, standardisation of methodologies, and integration with international platforms such as the IUCN Red List. He suggested strengthening resource mobilisation and ensuring alignment of the Committee's agenda with the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan and the Sustainable Development Goals.

The Chairman of the EC further noted that invasive species are widespread across multiple ecosystems, including terrestrial, agricultural, aquatic, and microbial environments. He suggested that effective management mechanisms may be adapted from successful national and international practices and emphasised the use of remote sensing and other emerging technologies for monitoring and management. The need for a centralised and accessible national information platform on invasive alien species was highlighted, along with the importance of interdisciplinary expert engagement and coordinated institutional and legal support across ministries.

A detailed presentation was made by Dr Sandilyan on the methodology adopted by the Centre for Biodiversity Policy and Law (CEBPOL) for preparing the consolidated invasive alien species list. An initial compilation of approximately 694 species was generated from scientific literature, reports, and expert consultations; however, several inconsistencies were identified, including citation errors, definitional ambiguities, taxonomic synonym duplication, and inadvertent inclusion of native species. To address these issues, CEBPOL developed a structured screening and validation framework.

The framework involved verification of biogeographic origin, assessment of establishment status, evaluation of invasiveness attributes, documented ecological and economic impacts, and

analysis of spatial spread patterns. Only species meeting all criteria were retained, resulting in refinement of the list to 170 scientifically documented invasive alien species. Data gaps were noted for aquatic plants, island ecosystems, and certain taxonomic groups. The draft list was placed in the public domain through the NBA website, and stakeholder inputs were incorporated in the finalisation process.

During deliberations, members discussed the dynamic nature of biological invasions and the need to periodically revise the consolidated list. Experts provided case-specific inputs, including the severe invasion of *Mytilopsis strigata* in Pulicat Lake and Ennore Creek, which has affected fisheries and livelihoods, and the widespread impacts of the Giant African Snail (*Achatina fulica*). Members emphasised the importance of awareness and education, suggesting the incorporation of concepts on invasive alien species into school and higher education curricula.

The Committee highlighted the importance of incorporating recent peer-reviewed scientific literature and local-scale studies into the national database and suggested formation of thematic working groups to coordinate information gathering. Experiences in management of invasive weeds and other taxa were emphasised as critical inputs for developing national guidelines. Representatives from ZSI and BSI informed the Committee of existing inventories and modelling exercises that could serve as baseline inputs, while ICAR institutions highlighted the importance of addressing invasive agricultural pests in the context of biosecurity and productivity.

The Committee discussed institutional coordination, noting that marine and inland water invasive species information could be collated by CMFRI and CMLRE, agricultural invasive species by ICAR institutions, and terrestrial wildlife and forestry invasive species by WII, ICFRE, and related agencies. It was clarified that the consolidated list prepared by NBA/CEBPOL is advisory in nature, and MoEFCC would undertake formal declaration of invasive alien species through inter-ministerial consultations.

The Chairperson reiterated that the Committee's mandate includes synthesis of management interventions and international best practices, development of prioritisation frameworks and risk assessment approaches, and formulation of ecosystem-specific management guidelines. He emphasised that the Committee's outputs should be evidence-based, implementable, and aligned with national biodiversity and environmental policy frameworks.

In concluding remarks, the Chairperson highlighted the importance of institutional collaboration across the agriculture, forestry, fisheries, and biodiversity sectors and expressed confidence that coordinated expert contributions would enable timely and robust outcomes. The Chairperson also highlighted, as an initial step, that the Committee should prepare a tentative list. Further Subcommittee will be formed soon to work in specific areas which can speed up the process. The meeting concluded with a vote of thanks delivered by Dr Sandilyan.

Summary of Key Decisions

The Committee agreed that preparation of a national consolidated list of invasive alien species is a priority mandate in response to NGT directions. The methodological framework developed by CEBPOL was adopted as the scientific basis for screening and validation. It was further decided that ZSI and BSI, along with WII and CMFRI will update the existing lists of faunal and floral invasive species within two months to support preparation of the consolidated national list.

High-risk species will be prioritised based on ecological, economic, and livelihood impacts, and national and international management interventions will be synthesised to produce guidelines. Members will also begin work on mandates of the TORs (c) and (d) based on the existing list, which will be circulated through the WhatsApp group and email for reference and inputs.

Institutional responsibilities will be distributed across ecosystem domains, and thematic working groups will be established. Sub-committees will be formed for different ecosystems/taxonomical groups and for the prioritisation framework to improve coordination and accelerate progress. Awareness and education measures will be promoted, and the list will be periodically revised. Coordination with MoEFCC and stakeholders was agreed to ensure the implementation of policy frameworks.

Annexure

Participants:

1. Shri Virendra Tiwari, IFS(Retd) Chairman, NBA
2. Dr. Dhananjai Mohan, IFS (Retd.) Chair
3. Prof. (Dr.) A. Biju Kumar Co-Chair
4. Shri Raghu Kumar Kodali, Scientist 'G'/Advisor, MoEFCC
5. Ajeet Kumar Sahu, (IC, Credit, Seeds), Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare
6. Dr. B. Balaji IFS Member Secretary, NBA
7. Dr. Kathula Chandraborty, Director ICAR-NBFGR
8. Dr. Dhriti Banerjee, Director ZSI
9. Dr. Raghunathan, Additional Director / Scientist F, ZSI
10. Dr C.S. Purohit, BSI, Jodhpur Botanical Survey India
11. Bhatnagar Yashveer, IUCN
12. Dr. Archana Anokhe, ICAR-DWR, Jabalpur
13. Dr. Amit Kumar, WII
14. Dr. Dharmendra Dingh, DDE, Plant Quarantine
15. Prince Prakash Jebakumar, NIOT
16. Shivani Dogra, Joint Director, Forest Survey India
17. Dr A. Rajasekaran, ICFRE-IFGTB Coimbatore
18. Dr. Mahesh Kumar, CMLRE
19. Dr. K S Shobana, ICAR-CMFRI
20. S.N Sushil, ICAR- NBAIR, Bangalore
21. Rakesh CCF, TN Representative, PCCF,
22. Bharat Singh Hada IFS, MS- Maharashtra
23. Dr. Achyut Kumar Bannerjee, Azim Premji University Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh,
24. Dr. Ankila Hiremath, ATREE, Bangalore
25. Dr. Farindra Tiwari, Mahatma Gandhi P G College, Gorakhpur
26. Dr. S. Sandiliyan, CBD CELL, NBA
27. Dr. Raghuram, Technical Officer Benefit Sharing, NBA
28. Mr. Chittrarasu, Legal Section, NBA
29. Ms. Rambha Chaudhary, Technical Officer (IPR), NBA
30. Ms. Sri Raksha P, Intern, NBA