

**BEFORE THE HON'BLE NATIONAL GREEN TRIBUNAL SOUTHERN ZONE  
BENCH AT CHENNAI**

**OA No 256 OF 2024**

**IN THE MATTER OF:**

**NEWS ITEM TITLED RAPID URBANIZATION TAKES TOLL ON MANGROVE IN  
VIAG APPEARING IN THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS DATED 25 06 2024**

..... Applicant

Vs

**MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE THROUGH ITS  
REGIONAL OFFICE & OTHERS**

.... Respondents

**REPORT FILED BY THE APCZMA – R5**

**DATE - 20.11.2024**



**M/s MADHURI DONTI REDDY  
ADVOCATE**

**STANDING COUNSEL FOR GOVERNMENT OF ANDHRA PRADESH  
A.P. POLLUTION CONTROL BOARD**

#26, S2, Royal Castle, Gill Nagar Extension, Choolaimedu, Chennai – 600 094.

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

**Original Application No.256 of 2024 (SZ)**

Earlier O.A. No.881 of 2024(PB)

Andhra Pradesh Coastal Zone Management Authority

... Respondent

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**It is certified that all the documents contained in the above annexure are true copies.**

Date: 19.11.2024

**Report on the Hon'ble NGT order dated 24.09.2024 in Original Application No.256 of 2024 (SZ) (Earlier O.A. No.881 of 2024 (PB)) with reference to the News Item titled "Rapid urbanization takes toll on Mangroves in Vizag" appeared in The New Indian Express, dated: 25-06-2024**

1. It is to submit that the Hon'ble NGT, Principal Bench, New Delhi vide order dated 23.07.2024 a *suo-motu* was registered on the basis of the news item titled "Rapid urbanisation takes toll on Mangroves in Vizag" appeared in The New Indian Express dated 25.06.2024. APCZMA is 5<sup>th</sup> Respondent.
2. In the Hon'ble NGT order dated 23.07.2024, it was stated that "*Let notice be issued to the Respondents for filing their response before the appropriate bench of the Tribunal. Since the matter relates to the Southern Zonal Bench, Chennai, therefore, OA is transferred to the Southern Zonal Bench for appropriate further action. Office is directed to transfer the original record of the OA to Southern Zonal Bench, Chennai. List before Southern Zonal Bench at Chennai on 23.09.2024*". Copy of the order dated 23.07.2024 is submitted as **Annexure-A**.
3. In compliance to the Hon'ble NGT order dated 23.07.2024 in OA No. 881 of 2024, the District Forest Officer (DFO), Visakhapatnam, vide letter dated 02.08.2024 requested the Collector & District Magistrate, Visakhapatnam *to issue proceedings for formation of a committee to look into the matter and submit a detailed report along with action taken to the District Collector, Visakhapatnam for filing remarks before the National Green Tribunal.*" Copy of the letter dated 02.08.2024 is submitted as **Annexure-B**.

4. It is submitted that, the Collector & District Magistrate, Visakhapatnam in compliance to the DFO letter dated 02.08.2024, constituted a committee with the following vide proceedings dated 14.08.2024:

- i. District Forest Officer, Forest Department, Visakhapatnam,
- ii. Revenue Divisional Officer, Visakhapatnam,
- iii. Municipal Commissioner, Greater Visakhapatnam Municipal Corporation, Visakhapatnam,
- iv. VC & MD, Visakhapatnam Metropolitan Region Development Authority, Visakhapatnam,
- v. Joint Director, Fisheries Department, Visakhapatnam,
- vi. Superintending Engineer, Department of Irrigation, Visakhapatnam,
- vii. Environmental Engineer, Regional Office, A.P. Pollution Control Board, Visakhapatnam.

The committee was directed to submit detailed report duly mentioning remedial measures/ plan of action on the following so as to submit a report to the Hon'ble NGT:

- i. Assessing the impact on the Mangrove stretches in Visakhapatnam due to rapid urbanization / industrialization as alleged in the news article, especially in the following areas a) Meghadrigedda drain & b) Gosthani river mouth near Bheemili.
- ii. Suggesting remedial measures / plan of action to revive the coastal mangroves in the identified stretches.

Copy of the Collector & District Magistrate, Visakhapatnam proceedings dated 14.08.2024 is submitted as **Annexure-C**.

5. In this regard, Andhra Pradesh Coastal Zone Management Authority (APCZMA) vide letter dated 23.08.2024, requested the Collector & District Magistrate, Visakhapatnam to examine the matter and furnish the report as

directed by the Hon'ble NGT along with co-ordinates for onward filing of report in the Hon'ble NGT. Copy of the APCZMA letter dated 23.08.2024 is submitted as **Annexure-D**.

6. It is submitted that, the above Suo Motu (OA No. 881 of 2024 (PB)) case has been transferred to Southern Bench and renumbered as Original Application No. 256 of 2024 (SZ) vide order dated 24.09.2024. Copy of the order dated 24.09.2024 is submitted as **Annexure-E**.

7. The Hon'ble NGT vide order dated 24.09.2024 issued the following directions:

*"i. The above case has been Suo Motu registered by the Principal Bench of the National Green Tribunal, New Delhi as Original Application No.881 of 2024(PB) based on the news item published in 'The New Indian Express' dated 25.06.2024 titled "Rapid urbanisation takes toll on Mangroves in Vizag" which has been transferred to this Bench and renumbered as Original Application No.256 of 2024(SZ).*

*ii. Let notice be issued to the respondents through the Tribunal.*

*iii. The learned counsel Mr. Madhuri Donti Reddy accepts notice on behalf of Respondents. No. 2, 3, 5 and 6.*

*iv. The learned counsels appearing for the appropriate authorities are directed to take the papers from the Registry and file a report before the next date of hearing.*

*Let the matter be listed on 26.11.2024."*

The report from committee constituted by the Collector & District Magistrate, Visakhapatnam District vide proceedings dated 14.08.2024 is awaited. After receipt of the report of the committee, the APCZMA will take appropriate action.

  
Member Secretary  
APCZMA

Item No. 06

Court No. 1

**BEFORE THE NATIONAL GREEN TRIBUNAL  
PRINCIPAL BENCH, NEW DELHI**

Original Application No. 881/2024

News Item titled "Rapid urbanisation takes toll on Mangroves in Vizag" appearing in The New Indian Express dated 25.06.2024

Date of hearing: 23.07.2024

**CORAM: HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE PRAKASH SHRIVASTAVA, CHAIRPERSON  
HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE ARUN KUMAR TYAGI, JUDICIAL MEMBER  
HON'BLE DR. A. SENTHIL VEL, EXPERT MEMBER**

**ORDER**

1. This Original Application is registered *suo-motu* on the basis of the news item titled "Rapid urbanisation takes toll on Mangroves in Vizag" appearing in The New Indian Express dated 25.06.2024.
2. The matter relates to significant reduction in the Mangrove stretches in Vishakhapatnam in Andhra Pradesh due to rapid urbanization and industrialization. As per the article, these vital ecosystems have been reduced to a few small patches and are now threatened by ongoing development. The article highlights that this loss is concerning given the crucial role mangroves play in protecting shorelines from erosion and providing habitat for diverse wildlife.
3. The article alleges that historically extensive, these mangroves now exist in small, endangered patches. The Meghadri Gedda, a rain-fed drain flowing into the Bay of Bengal near Visakhapatnam harbour which once supported a vibrant mangrove ecosystem, has been particularly affected, with construction debris posing a significant threat. Furthermore, it is stated that in the 1990s, mangroves stretched from the Naval Dockyard Bridge to areas like Sheela Nagar and Gnanapuram, reaching heights up to 5 metres. However, due to construction and infrastructure development, their size has drastically reduced. By 2008, their height had diminished to 3 metres, and the canopy also shrank.

4. The article further alleges that the mangrove patch near the Gosthani river mouth in Bheemili is also diminished and awaits replantation approval. A 2023 study by the Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education-Coastal Ecosystem Centre (ICFRE-CEC) identified approximately 220 hectares of mangrove patches in the Visakhapatnam district, but these were not included in the Forest Survey of India report. It is stated that the decline in mangrove habitats has also impacted bird species. Near-threatened species like the Eurasian curlew, Oriental darter, and black-headed ibis have seen significant declines. The fishing community, which relies on the mangrove ecosystem for fish production is also facing economic and livelihood challenges.

5. The above news item indicates violation of the provisions of The Environment (Protection) Act, 1986, CRZ Rules 1991 and Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980.

6. The news item raises substantial issue relating to compliance of the environmental norms and implementation of the provisions of scheduled enactment.

7. Power of the Tribunal to take up the matter *suo-motu* has been recognized by the Hon'ble Supreme Court in the matter of "*Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai vs. Ankita Sinha & Ors.*" reported in 2021 SCC Online SC 897.

8. Hence, we implead following as respondents in this matter:

- (i) Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change, Through its Regional Office, Integrated Regional Office (Vijayawada), Vijayawada Green House Complex, Gopalareddy Road, Vijayawada, Andhra Pradesh 520010

- (ii) Principal Chief Conservator of Forest, Andhra Pradesh, Aranya Bhavan, P.V.S.Land Mark, Near APIIC Towers, Mangalagiri, Guntur District, Andhra Pradesh 522503
- (iii) Chief Wildlife Warden, Andhra Pradesh, Aranya Bhawan, K.M. Munshi Road, Nagarampalem, Guntur, Andhra Pradesh 522004
- (iv) National Coastal Zone Management Authority, Through its Chairperson, Indira Paryavaran Bhawan, Jorbagh Road, New Delhi - 110 003
- (v) Andhra Pradesh Coastal Zone Management Authority, Through its Chairman, D.No. 33-26-14 D/2, Near Sunrise Hospital, Chalamavari Street, Kasturibaipet, Vijayawada - 520010
- (vi) District Magistrate, Visakhapatnam, National Informatics Centre, Collectorate, Maharanipecta, Visakhapatnam-530002

9. Let notice be issued to the above Respondents for filing their response before the appropriate bench of the Tribunal.

10. Since the matter relates to the Southern Zonal Bench, Chennai, therefore, OA is transferred to the Southern Zonal Bench for appropriate further action. Office is directed to transfer the original record of the OA to Southern Zonal Bench, Chennai.

11. List before Southern Zonal Bench at Chennai on 23.09.2024.

Prakash Shrivastava, CP

Arun Kumar Tyagi, JM

Dr. A. Senthil Vel, EM

July 23, 2024  
Original Application No. 881/2024  
AS.

**GOVERNMENT OF ANDHRA PRADESH  
FOREST DEPARTMENT**

Rc.no.822/2024/S2  
Dated: 02-08-2024

Office of the District Forest Officer,  
Visakhapatnam

From:  
Sri Anant Shankar, IFS  
District Forest Officer,  
Visakhapatnam

To:  
The Collector & District Magistrate,  
Visakhapatnam

Sir,

Sub: National Green Tribunal- Order passed in Original Application No. 881/2024- Suo motu news item published in New Indian Express dated 25.06.2024 titled "Rapid urbanisation takes toll on Mangroves in Vizag"- communicated to DFO Visakhapatnam-request for formation of a committee with line departments concerned to look into the matter- Reg.

- Ref: 1. Order dated 23/07/2024 passed in O.A. No. 881/2024 communicated by District Collector, Visakhapatnam dated 01-08-2024.
2. Prl.CCF, A.P. Mangalagiri Ref.no.21/92/2024/WL-1, dt.07.08.2024.

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It is to bring to the kind attention of Collector and District Magistrate, Visakhapatnam vide reference 1<sup>st</sup> cited communicated the order dated 23/07/2024 of the Hon'ble National Green Tribunal (NGT) passed in O.A.No. 881/2024. This order of the Hon'ble NGT is based on the news item titled "Rapid urbanisation takes toll on Mangroves in Vizag" which appeared in the New Indian Express dated 25-06-2024.

It is to inform here that this order of the Hon'ble NGT mentions as follows:

- i. Significant reduction in the Mangrove stretches in Visakhapatnam due to rapid urbanisation and industrialisation.
- ii. The Meghadri gedda drain flowing into Bay of Bengal once supported a vibrant mangrove ecosystem has been particularly affected with construction debris posing a significant threat.
- iii. Drastic reduction in mangroves from the Naval Dockyard Bridge to areas like Sheela Nagar and Gnanapuram.

- iv. Article alleges that the mangrove patch near the Gosthani river mouth in Bheemli is also diminished and awaits replantation approval. A 2023 study by the ICFRE-CEC identified 220 hectares of mangrove patches in the Visakhapatnam district, but these were not included in the Forest Survey of India report.
- v. The above news item indicates violation of the EPA 1986, CRZ Rules 1991 and the FCA 1980 and raises substantial issue relating to compliance of the environmental norms and implementation of scheduled enactment.

It is to inform that the Hon'ble NGT has taken suo motu cognisance of this issue and issued notices to different respondents for filing their response.

I wish to bring <sup>to</sup> the kind attention of the District Collector, Visakhapatnam here that the allegations and news provided in the said article and as mentioned in order issued in the O.A.No. 881/2024 by the Hon'ble NGT are serious in nature and it would be prudent to form a committee with representatives from departments concerned like Pollution Control Board, Revenue Department, GVMC, Forest, APCZMA and others as per the Collector's discretion so as to ascertain the allegations made in the newspaper article, verify the status of lands involved as per records and report on the violations made under different acts and rules as mentioned by the Hon'ble NGT in the said order. The areas mentioned in this order of the Hon'ble NGT are not under the control of the Forest department and are restricted/limited access areas with Visakhapatnam Port Authority, Naval Dockyard, HPCL and others.

Therefore, in view of the above, it is requested to the District Collector, Visakhapatnam to issue proceedings for formation of a committee to look into the matter and submit a detailed report along with action taken to the District Collector, Visakhapatnam for filing remarks before the National Green Tribunal.

This is submitted for favour of kind information and request for necessary action.

Yours faithfully,

  
(Anant Shankar)  
District Forest Officer  
Visakhapatnam

Proceedings No. Committee/OA.No.881 of 2024 dated 05.05.2023

Present: M.N.Harendhira Prasad IAS  
Collector & District Magistrate, Visakhapatnam

**Sub:** National Green Tribunal Original No. 881/2024 Suo motu news item published in The New Indian Express dated 25.06.2024 titled "Rapid urbanisation takes toll on Mangroves in Vizag" - Committee constituted - Reg.,

**Ref:** 1. The Hon'ble NGT Order dated 23.07.2024 in OA No. 881/2024.  
2. Rc No. 822/2024/S2 dated 02.08.2024 of the District Forest Officer, Visakhapatnam.

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The National Green Tribunal, New Delhi has registered a *suo-motu case* on the basis of the news item titled "Rapid urbanization takes toll on Mangroves in Vizag" which appeared in The New Indian Express dated 25.06.2024.

The matter relates to significant reduction in the Mangrove stretches in Vishakhapatnam in Andhra Pradesh due to rapid urbanization and industrialization. As per the article, these vital ecosystems have been reduced to a few small patches and are now threatened by ongoing development. The article highlights the crucial role mangroves play in protecting shorelines from erosion and providing habitat for diverse wildlife.

The Hon'ble NGT in its Order dated 23.07.2024 in OA No. 881/2024 implead (vi) District Magistrate, Visakhapatnam, for filing response before the appropriate bench of the Tribunal in this matter.

In this regard, a Committee is hereby constituted with the following members:

1.	District Forest Officer, Forest Department, Visakhapatnam	Chairman
2.	Revenue Divisional Officer, Visakhapatnam	Member
3.	Municipal Commissioner, Greater Visakhapatnam Municipal Corporation, Visakhapatnam	Member
4.	VC & MD, Visakhapatnam Metropolitan Region Development Authority, Visakhapatnam	Member
5.	Joint Director, Fisheries Department, Visakhapatnam	Member
6.	Superintending Engineer, Department of Irrigation, Visakhapatnam.	Member
7.	Environmental Engineer, Regional Office, A.P. Pollution Control Board, Visakhapatnam	Member

The committee is directed to submit detailed report duly mentioning remedial measures/plan of action on the following so as to submit a report to the Hon'ble NGT:

- i. Assessing the impact on the Mangrove stretches in Visakhapatnam due to rapid urbanization / industrialization as alleged in the news article, especially in the following areas a) Meghadrigedda drain & b) Gosthani river mouth near Bheemili.
- ii. Suggesting remedial measures / plan of action to revive the coastal mangroves in the identified stretches.

**Collector & District Magistrate,  
Visakhapatnam District**



**Andhra Pradesh Coastal Zone Management  
Authority  
Ministry of Environment Forests & Climate  
Change  
Government of India**



Paryavaran Bhavan, APIIC Colony Road, Gurunanak  
Colony, Autonagar, Vijayawada-520007

**Letter No. OA No. 881 of 2024 /APCZMA/Legal/2024-**

**Date: 23/08/2024**

**To  
The Collector & District Magistrate,  
Chairman of District Level Committee (DLC),  
Visakhapatnam District.**

**Sir,**

**Sub:** APCZMA - Legal - OA No. 881 of 2024 in Hon'ble NGT, Principal Bench, New Delhi - News Item titled "Rapid Urbanisation takes toll on Mangroves in Vizag" appeared in The New Indian Express dated 25.06.2024 - Reg.

**Ref:** Hon'ble NGT order dated 23.07.2024 in OA No. 881 of 2024.

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It is to inform that a case was filed in Hon'ble NGT, Principal Bench, New Delhi in OA No. 881 of 2024 regarding News Item titled "Rapid Urbanisation takes toll on Mangroves in Vizag" appeared in The New Indian Express dated 25.06.2024. An order dated 23.07.2024 was issued by Hon'ble NGT. APCZMA is the 5<sup>th</sup> respondent.

The Hon'ble NGT, Principal Bench, New Delhi transferred the matter to Southern Bench, Chennai.

The Paras "2, 3 and 4" of Hon'ble NGT order dated 23.07.2024 in OA No. 881 of 2024 are read as following:

*"2. The matter relates to significant reduction in the Mangrove stretches in Visakhapatnam in Andhra Pradesh due to rapid urbanization and industrialization. As per the article, these vital ecosystems have been reduced to a few small patches and are now threatened by ongoing development. The article highlights that this loss is concerning given the crucial role mangroves play in protecting shorelines from erosion and providing habitat for diverse wildlife.*

*3. The article alleges that historically extensive, these mangroves now exist in small, endangered patches. The Meghadri Gedda, a rain-fed drain flowing into the Bay of Bengal near Visakhapatnam harbour which once supported a vibrant mangrove ecosystem, has been particularly affected, with construction debris posing a significant threat. Furthermore, it is stated that in the 1990s, mangroves stretched from the Naval Dockyard Bridge to areas like Sheela Nagar and Gnanapuram, reaching heights up to 5 meters. However, due to construction and infrastructure development, their size has drastically reduced. By 2008, their height had diminished to 3 meters, and the canopy also shrank.*

4. The article further alleges that the mangroves patch near the Gosthani river mouth in Bheemili is also diminished and awaits re-plantation approval. A 2023 study by the Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education-Coastal Ecosystem Centre (ICFRE-CEC) identified approximately 220 hectares of mangroves patches in the Visakhapatnam district, but these were not included in the Forest Survey of India report. It is stated that the decline in mangrove habitats has also impacted bird species. Near-threatened species like the Eurasian curlew, Oriental darter, and black-headed ibis have seen significant decline. The fishing community, which relies on the mangrove ecosystem for fish production is also facing economic and livelihood challenges.”

A copy of the Hon'ble NGT order dated 23.07.2024 is enclosed for information.

The matter is listed on 23.09.2024 before Southern Zonal Bench at Chennai.

In this regard, you are requested to examine the matter and furnish the report as directed by the Hon'ble NGT along with co-ordinates of mangroves patches in the Visakhapatnam district for onward filing of report in the Hon'ble NGT. In case there are any violations observed, it is requested to take immediate action as per the Memo dt 05.12.2023 issued by the EFS&T Dept, Government of Andhra Pradesh.

Yours faithfully,

Encl: As above

**B SREEDHAR IAS, MS(BS), O/o**  
**MEMBER SECRETARY-APPCB**  
**Member Secretary**  
**APCZMA**

Cc: the EE, RO: Visakhapatnam for information and necessary action.

Item No.05:

BEFORE THE NATIONAL GREEN TRIBUNAL  
SOUTHERN ZONE, CHENNAI

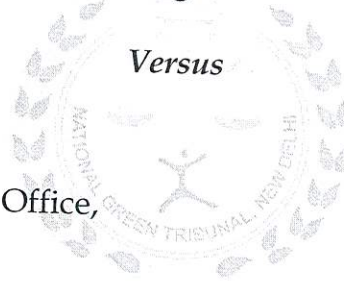
(Through Video Conference)

Original Application No.256 of 2024 (SZ)

Earlier O.A. No.881 of 2024(PB)

IN THE MATTER OF:

Tribunal on its own motion SUOMOTU  
based on the News item published in The  
New Indian Express, dated: 25-06-2024,  
under the caption "**Rapid urbanisation  
takes toll on Mangroves in Vizag**".



...Applicant(s)

MOEF & CC,  
Through its Regional Office,  
AP and Ors.

...Respondent(s)

Date of hearing: 24.09.2024.

CORAM:

HON'BLE Smt. JUSTICE PUSHPA SATHYANARAYANA, JUDICIAL MEMBER

HON'BLE Dr. SATYAGOPAL KORLAPATI, EXPERT MEMBER

For Applicant(s): Suo Motu.

For Respondent(s): Mrs. Madhuri Donti Reddy for R2, R3 & R5 & R6.

ORDER

1. The above case has been Suo Motu registered by the Principal Bench of the National Green Tribunal, New Delhi as Original Application No.881 of 2024(PB) based on the news item published in '*The New Indian Express*' dated 25.06.2024 titled "**Rapid urbanisation takes toll on Mangroves in Vizag**" which has been transferred to this Bench and renumbered as Original Application No.256 of 2024(SZ).

2. Let notice be issued to the respondents through the Tribunal.

3. The learned counsel Mr. Madhuri Donti Reddy accepts notice on behalf of Respondents. No.2,3, 5 and 6.

4. The learned counsels appearing for the appropriate authorities are directed to take the papers from the Registry and file a report before the next date of hearing.

Let the matter be listed on **26.11.2024**

Sd/-

Smt. Justice Pushpa Sathyanarayana, JM

Sd/-

Dr. Satyagopal Korlapati, EM

O.A. No.256/2024(SZ)  
24<sup>th</sup> September, 2024. AD.