

**BEFORE THE 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 5TH RESPONDENT

DATE - 30.01.2025



**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.

Mobile: 98407 98460 / 63831 21322,

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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

INDEX

S. No.	Particulars	Page No.
1	Report on the Hon'ble NGT order dated 26.11.2024 in Original Application No.256 of 2024 (SZ) (Earlier O.A. No.881 of 2024 (PB))	1 - 3
2	Annexure-1 – APCZMA letter dated 23.08.2024.	4 - 5
3	Annexure-2 – Hon'ble NGT order dated 26.11.2024.	6 - 7
4	Annexure-3 – The Collector & District Magistrate, Visakhapatnam proceedings dated 20.01.2025	8 - 11
5	Annexure-4 – The Visakhapatnam Port Authority letter dated 22.01.2025.	12

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

Date: 30.01.2025

Report on the Hon'ble NGT order dated 26.11.2024 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 earlier a Suo-Motu case was filed in Hon'ble NGT, Principal Bench, New Delhi with O.A. No. 881 of 2024 to the news item titled "Rapid urbanisation takes toll on Mangroves in Vizag" appeared in The New Indian Express dated 25.06.2024. APCZMA is 5th Respondent.
2. Andhra Pradesh Coastal Zone Management Authority (APCZMA) vide letter dated 23.08.2024, requested the Collector & District Magistrate, Visakhapatnam District to examine the matter and furnish the report as directed by the Hon'ble NGT. The copy of the APCZMA letter dated 23.08.2024 is submitted as **Annexure-1**.
3. Later, 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.
4. A report was already filed by Andhra Pradesh Coastal Zone Management Authority (APCZMA) on 19.11.2024.
5. The Hon'ble NGT heard the matter on 26.11.2024 and issued the following directions:

"1. As the Chairperson, Vishakhapatnam Port Authority, Port Area, Vishakhapatnam – 530 035 is a necessary party to this proceeding, we Suo Motu implead them as additional Respondent No.7.

2. Let the notice be issued to the newly added Respondent No.7 through the Tribunal. The Registry is directed to carry out the amendment in the cause title.

3. The Joint Committee, PCCF, District Collector – Vishakhapatnam and also the Andhra Pradesh SCZMA have filed their respective reports.

4. None of the reports have specified the extent of damage caused to the mangroves. However, the PCCF and the Joint Committee have given the remedial measures. Let an additional report be filed regarding the damage caused to the mangroves due to urbanization and its specific extent, restoration and remediation measures and also the cost involved for the same. The report may also furnish the action to be taken in this regard indicating the timeline.

5. Post the matter on 31.01.2025.”

The copy of the Hon'ble NGT order dated 26.11.2024 is submitted as **Annexure-2.**

6. In compliance with the Hon'ble NGT order dated 26.11.2024, the Collector & District Magistrate, Visakhapatnam District had issued proceedings dated 20.01.2025 to the Chairman, Visakhapatnam Port Authority (VPA) to conduct study on the damage caused to the mangroves due to urbanizations and its specific extent and Assessment of the budget estimation for restoration and remediation measures of mangroves along with the preparation of action plan of action to be taken duly indicating the timeline. Copy of the proceedings dated 20.01.2025 is submitted as **Annexure-3.**

7. As per above proceedings of the Collector & District Magistrate, Visakhapatnam District, the Chief Engineer, VPA vide letter dated 22.01.2025 requested the following Agencies/ Organizations:

- i. Center for Earth Science Studies, Thiruvananthapuram
- ii. Institute of Remote Sensing, Anna University, Chennai
- iii. National Centre for Sustainable Coastal Management (NCSCM), Chennai
- iv. Institute of Environmental Studies and Wetland Management, Kolkata
- v. National Institute of Oceanography (NIO), Goa
- vi. National institute of Ocean Technology (NIOT), Chennai

The Chief Engineer, VPA requested above Agencies/ Organizations to submit their Terms of Reference (ToR) on the following:

- i. To study the damage caused to the mangroves due to urbanization in and around port area.
- ii. Assessment of the budget estimation for restoration and remediation measures of Mangroves along with the preparation of action plan of action to be taken duly indicating the timelines and submit Fortnight Progress Report for a period of 1 (one) year.

The copy of above letter dated 22.01.2025 is submitted as **Annexure-4**.


30/1/25
+ Member Secretary
APCZMA



**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.

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 5th 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.09:

**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 **SUO MOTU** 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**".

And

MoEF & CC,
Through its Regional Office,
Andhra Pradesh and Ors.



...Applicant(s)

...Respondent(s)

Date of hearing: 26.11.2024.

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. As the Chairperson, Vishakhapatnam Port Authority, Port Area, Vishakhapatnam – 530 035 is a necessary party to this proceeding, we Suo Motu implead them as additional Respondent No.7.

2. Let the notice be issued to the newly added Respondent No.7 through the Tribunal. The Registry is directed to carry out the amendment in the cause title.

3. The Joint Committee, PCCF, District Collector – Vishakhapatnam and also the Andhra Pradesh SCZMA have filed their respective reports.

4. None of the reports have specified the extent of damage caused to the mangroves. However, the PCCF and the Joint Committee have given the remedial measures. Let an additional report be filed regarding the damage caused to the mangroves due to urbanization and its specific extent, restoration and remediation measures and also the cost involved for the same. The report may also furnish the action to be taken in this regard indicating the timeline.

5. Post the matter on **31.01.2025**.

Sd/-

Smt. Justice Pushpa Sathyanarayana, JM

Sd/-

Dr. Satyagopal Korlapati, EM

GOVERNMENT OF ANDHRA PRADESH

Re.No.2024/APCZMA/VSP, Dt: /01/2025.

From:
The Collector & District Magistrate,
Visakhapatnam District

To:
The Chairman,
M/s. Visakhapatnam Port Authority,
Visakhapatnam.

Sir,

Sub: Visakhapatnam District – CRZ Notification 2011 – the Hon'ble NGT, Principal Beach, New Delhi vide Order dated 23.07.2024 in Original Application No. 881 of 2024 on the News Item titled "Rapid urbanization takes toll on Mangroves in Vizag" which appeared in The New Indian Express dated 25.06.2024 – Requested to carryout study on “damage caused to the mangroves due to urbanization and its specific extent” and “Assessment of the budget estimation for restoration and remediation measures of Mangroves along with the preparation of action plan of action to be taken duly indicating the timeline” – Reg.

Ref: The Hon'ble NGT Order dated 26.11.2024 in Original Application No.256 of 2024 (SZ) [Earlier O.A. No.881 of 2024(PB)].

It is to submit that the Hon'ble NGT, Principal Beach, New Delhi registered *suo-motu case* based on the News Item titled "**Rapid urbanization takes toll on Mangroves in Vizag**" which appeared in **The New Indian Express dated 25.06.2024**.

The APCZMA addressed a letter on 23.08.2024 to the Collector & District Magistrate (Chairman of DLC), Visakhapatnam District requested to examine the matter and to furnish the report along with co-ordinates of mangroves patches in the Visakhapatnam District.

The Hon'ble NGT, impleaded following respondents in this matter and requested the southern zone bench for appropriate further action and transferred the OA to southern zone bench, Chennai. Copy of the Hon'ble NGT order dated 23.07.2024 in O.A. No. 881 of 2024 (PB) is enclosed as **Annexure-I**.

- (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, Maharanieta, Visakhapatnam-530002

Accordingly, the Collector & District Magistrate, Visakhapatnam district vide proceedings dated 14.08.2024 has constituted a committee with a direction to submit detailed report duly mentioning remedial measures/plan of action on the following so as to submit the 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.

The District Forest Officer, IFS requested the committee members vide letter Rc. No. 822/2024-S2 dated 19.08.2024, to attend the joint survey on 23.08.2024 to visit 04 locations viz., 1. Visakhapatnam Port Trust 2. Mulakuddu village, Bheemunipatnam Mandal 3. Meghadrigedda drain flowing into Bay of Bengal and 4. Naval Dockyard bridge to areas like Sheelanagar and Gnanapuram to submit detail report to the Collector & District Magistrate.

As per the proceedings, the committee members along with the VPA representatives inspected the Meghadrigedda drain on 23.08.2024 and Gosthani river mouth near Bheemili on 24.08.2024. The Joint Committee submitted the report on 23.11.2024. Copy of the Joint Committee report is herewith enclosed as **Annexure-II**.

Further, the Joint Committee suggested the following suggestions and conclusions and to direct the relevant authorities for timely implementation:

Suggestions:

- The practices above mentioned would help rejuvenate the mangroves within VPA limits by providing protection against adverse impacts of tropical cyclones and associated wave surges.
- Will improve the quality of mangroves and enhances the greenery and biodiversity that also supports the marine ecosystem.
- Safeguard the last surviving mangrove patch of the city and provide potential habitats for winter migrants and various endangered bird species.
- Necessary actions would help display commitment of VPA authorities towards sustainable development and strengthen fight against climate change.
- 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 needs to be included in FSI report.

Conclusion:

The committee strongly recommends immediate action to address the degradation of mangrove ecosystems in Visakhapatnam. The proposed measures, if implemented effectively, will not only restore the mangroves but also safeguard the region against future environmental challenges. VPA shall ensure that there is no violation of the provisions of the Environment

(Protection) Act, 1986, CRZ Rules 1991 and Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980.

The Hon`ble NGT, South Bench, Chennai in vide Order dated 26.11.2024 in Original Application No.256 of 2024 (SZ) [Earlier O.A. No.881 of 2024(PB)] issued the following orders:

“

1. As the Chairperson, Vishakhapatnam Port Authority, Port Area, Vishakhapatnam – 530 035 is a necessary party to this proceeding, we Suo Motu implead them as additional Respondent No.7.
2. Let the notice be issued to the newly added Respondent No.7 through the Tribunal. The Registry is directed to carry out the amendment in the cause title.
3. The Joint Committee, PCCF, District Collector – Vishakhapatnam and also the Andhra Pradesh SCZMA have filed their respective reports.
4. None of the reports have specified the extent of damage caused to the mangroves. However, the PCCF and the Joint Committee have given the remedial measures. Let an additional report be filed regarding the damage caused to the mangroves due to urbanization and its specific extent, restoration and remediation measures and also the cost involved for the same. The report may also furnish the action to be taken in this regard indicating the timeline.
5. Post the matter on 31.01.2025.”

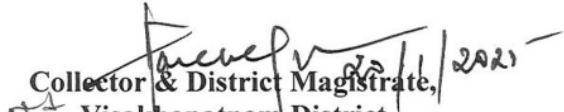
The copy of the Hon`ble NGT Order dated 26.11.2024 in Original Application No.256 of 2024 (SZ) [Earlier O.A. No.881 of 2024(PB) is enclosed as Annexure-III.

In this regard the Chairperson, Vishakhapatnam Port Authority, Port Area, Vishakhapatnam is requested to carryout study for the following:

- a. Damage caused to the mangroves due to urbanization and its specific extent
- b. Assessment of the budget estimation for restoration and remediation measures of Mangroves along with the preparation of action plan of action to be taken duly indicating the timeline by the following organisation/institutes authorised by MoEF&CC, vide OM dated 08.08.2019 (i to vii) and other reputed organizations(viii to x), as the most of the Mangroves areas exists in VPA area and also necessary party in the present matter.
 - i. Space Application Centre, Ahmedabad.
 - ii. Centre for Earth Sciences Studies, Thiruvanthapuram
 - iii. Institute of Remote Sensing, Anna University, Chennai.
 - iv. National Centre for Sustainable Coastal Management (NCSCM), Chennai
 - v. Institute of Environmental Studies and Wetland Management, Kolkata
 - vi. National Institute of Oceanography (NIO), Goa
 - vii. National Institute of Ocean Technology (NIOT), Chennai.
 - viii. M.S Swaminatham Research Foundation, Chennai
 - ix. East Godavari Estuarine Ecosystem, East Godavari district

x. Salim Ali Centre for Ornithology and Natural History, Coimbatore

Further it is to inform that the Chairperson, Vishakhapatnam Port Authority, Port Area, Vishakhapatnam shall submit Fortnight Progress report regarding study report on "damage caused to the mangroves due to urbanization and its specific extent" for onward submission to the Hon`ble NGT.


Collector & District Magistrate,
Visakhapatnam District

VISAKHAPATNAM PORT AUTHORITY
CIVIL ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT

No. IENG/Env.Cell/ Mangrove/2025
Date: 22.01.2025

To

1. Center for Earth Sciences Studies, Thiruvananthapuram
2. Institute of Remote Sensing, Anna University, Chennai
3. National Centre for Sustainable Coastal Management (NCSCM), Chennai
4. Institute of Environmental Studies and Wetland Management, Kolkata
5. National Institute of Oceanography (NIO), Goa
6. National Institute of Ocean Technology (NIOT), Chennai

Sir,

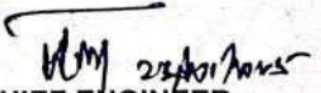
Sub: VPA project study - Damage caused to the mangroves due to urbanization and its specific extent and Assessment of the budget estimation for restoration and remediation measures of Mangroves along with the preparation of action plan of action to be taken duly indicating the timeline – ToR (Terms of Reference) – Request – Reg.

Visakhapatnam Port Authority has proposed to conduct a study on Mangroves in and around the port area. In this regard, it is requested to submit your Terms of Reference (ToR) for the following:

1. To study the damage caused to the mangroves due to urbanization in and around port area.
2. Assessment of the budget estimation for restoration and remediation measures of Mangroves along with the preparation of action plan of action to be taken duly indicating the timelines and submit Fortnight Progress Report for a period of 1 (one) year.

Therefore, it is requested to submit Terms of Reference (ToR) by 07.02.2025, for any clarification Sri. S. Balamurali, Executive Engineer (Env. Cell) – 94945 48275, e-mail: vptenvironmentcell@gmail.com may be contacted.

Yours Sincerely,


CHIEF ENGINEER