

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

**Original Application No.281 of 2024  
[Earlier O.a.1166 of 2024- NGT (PB)]**

Tribunal on its own motion SUO MOTU matter in respect of news item appearing in The Deccan Herald dated 30.08.2024 titled "Retired DCF penalized for illegal felling of 800 trees in Madikeri forest"

... .. Applicant

---Versus---

Principal Chief Conservator of Forest,  
Karnataka and others

..... Respondents

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Dated at Chennai on this the 27<sup>th</sup> day of October, 2025.

  
Counsel for respondent-2

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Annexure-I



भारतसरकार  
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

पर्यावरण, वन एवं जलवायुपरिवर्तन मंत्रालय  
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST &  
CLIMATE CHANGE, REGIONAL OFFICE

Kendriya Sadan, IV Floor, E & F Wings, 17<sup>th</sup> Main  
Road, II Block, Koramangala, Bengaluru - 560  
034, Tel.No.080-25635912, E-Mail: ros.z.bng-  
mef@nic.in



**Most Urgent**  
**By-Email/ By Post**  
F. No. F(C)/12.7/738/NGT/KAR/  
Dated 27<sup>th</sup> September 2024

To

The Principal Chief Conservator of Forests & HoFF  
Forest Department, Karnataka,  
Aranya Bhawan, 18th Cross,  
Malleshwaram,  
Bangalore - 560 003.

Sub: O A No. 1166 of 2024 news item titled "Retired DCF penalized for illegal felling of 800 trees in Madikeri Forest" appearing in the Deccan Herald dated 30.08.2024.-reg.

Sir,

I am directed to forward a copy of O.A No. 1166 of 2024 on the above-mentioned subject. In this regard it is informed that the Hon'ble NGT (PB) initiated SUO MOTO proceedings based on a news item titled "**Retired DCF penalized for illegal felling of 800 trees in Madikeri Forest**" appearing in the Deccan Herald dated 30.08.2024.

In view of the above, it is requested that the factual report on the issues raised in the OA along with the legal status of the land in question may kindly be furnished to this office expeditiously. This may kindly be treated as most urgent.

Yours faithfully,

Encl: As above.

Signed by Praneetha Paul

Date: 30-09-2024 15:58:48 (Praneetha Paul)  
Dy. Inspector General of Forests (C)

Copy:

1. The Additional Chief Secretary to Government of Karnataka, Forest, Ecology and Environment Department, M.S Building, Dr. Ambedkar Veedhi, Bengaluru-56001.
2. The Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (FC) & Nodal Officer (FCA), Forest Department, Karnataka, Aranya Bhawan, 18th Cross, Malleshwaram, Bengaluru - 560 003.
3. The Inspector General of Forests, ROHQ division, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Indira Paryavarn Bhavan, Jor Bagh Road, Aliganj, New Delhi

IN THE HON'BLE NATIONAL GREEN TRIBUNAL (SZ), CHENNAI

IN

ORIGINAL APPLICATION NO. 281 OF 2024 (SZ)

IN THE MATTER OF:

Tribunal on its own motion SUO MOTU based on the news item published in Deccan Herald dated 30.08.2024 titled "Retired DCF penalized for illegal felling of 800 trees in Madikeri Forest"

REPLY AFFIDAVIT ON BEHALF OF MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST & CLIMATE CHANGE, REGIONAL OFFICE, BENGALURU i.e. RESPONDENT NO. 2

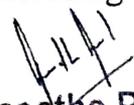
I, Praneetha Paul, Daughter of C. Itty Paul, aged about 49 years, currently working as Deputy Inspector General of Forest (Central) in the Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change, Regional Office, Bengaluru, (herein after referred as MoEF&CC) do hereby solemnly affirm and state on oath as follows:

1. That, I have read and understood the contents of the present Affidavit, the contents thereof are true, and no part of it is false, and nothing material has been concealed therefrom.

  
**Praneetha Paul**  
Dy. Inspector General of Forest (C)  
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST & CLIMATE CHANGE  
Integrated Regional Office, Kendriya Sadan  
14th Floor, E&F Wings, Bengaluru - 560 034.

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2. That, the issue raised in the present application is based on the news item published in Deccan Herald dated 30.08.2024 titled "Retired DCF penalized for illegal felling of 800 trees in Madikeri Forest."
3. That at the outset, it is humbly submitted that the MoEF&CC deals with policy and regulatory issues at a broader level. The role of the MoEF&CC is to frame policy, provide directions and guidance in an advisory capacity, as well as to provide necessary approvals under the provisions of the relevant Central Acts so far as the protection and conservation of forest, wildlife and other environmental resources are concerned.
4. That the 'land' is a subject matter of the State Government. The forest areas and the legal boundaries thereof are determined and maintained by the concerned State Government. That being the repository of land records, the State Government has the primary responsibility to determine the status of any parcel of land, giving due regard to gazette notifications, provisions under State and Central Acts, and concerned judgments and directions of the Hon'ble Supreme Court.
5. It is submitted that the felling of trees on non-forest land is regulated by the respective State Government /UT Administration as per the provisions of various State Acts and Rules made thereunder. Many States have specific Tree Preservation Acts / Tree Felling Acts including

  
**Praneetha Paul**

Dy. Inspector General of Forest(C)  
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST & CLIMATE CHANGE  
Integrated Regional Office, Kandriya Sadan  
IVth Floor, E&F Wings, Bengaluru - 560 034.

guidelines for regulating the felling of trees on revenue lands and penal provisions for the violations. The implementation of these rules is supervised by designated authorities in the State Government whose permission is necessary for the felling of reserved trees in Non- Forest Land, under such rules.

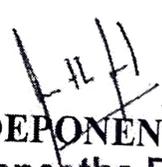
6. That, prior approval of the Central Government under Section 2 of the "Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam", 1980, [earlier known as the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980] (hereinafter referred to as "Van Adhiniyam, 1980") is required for carrying out any non-forest activity on forest land. Any contravention of the above provision would amount to a violation of the Act, 1980 and attract the penal provisions in it.
7. To ascertain the correct position/veracity of the issues raised through the news article, the answering respondent vide letter dated 30.09.2024 followed by reminders dated 19.12.2024, 14.02.2025, 28.04.2025 and 01.08.2025 sought a factual report from the State Forest Department of Karnataka in the matter and the same is awaited. A copy of Letter dated 30.09.2024 addressed to the State Government is enclosed as **Annexure-I**.
8. That, the answering respondent reserves the right to file additional information before the Hon'ble Tribunal, if required till Pendente-lite.

**Praneetha Paul**

Dy.inspector General of Forest(C)  
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST & CLIMATE CHANGE  
Integrated Regional Office, Kendriya Sadan  
IVth Floor, E&F Wings, Bengaluru - 560 034.

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9. That, in view of the afore-mentioned facts and circumstances, this Hon'ble Tribunal may kindly be pleased to pass appropriate order(s)/directions as the Hon'ble Tribunal may deem fit and proper in the interest of justice.

  
**DEPONENT**  
**Praneetha Paul**

Dy. Inspector General of Forest(C)  
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST & CLIMATE CHANGE  
Integrated Regional Office, Kendriya Sadan  
IVth Floor, E&F Wings, Bengaluru - 560 034.

### Verification

Verified at Bengaluru on this 22<sup>nd</sup> Day of October 2025, that the contents of this affidavit are true and correct to my knowledge based on the official record maintained in the daily course of its business, no part of this affidavit is false and nothing material has been concealed therefrom.

  
**DEPONENT**  
**Praneetha Paul**

Dy. Inspector General of Forest(C)  
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST & CLIMATE CHANGE  
Integrated Regional Office, Kendriya Sadan  
IVth Floor, E&F Wings, Bengaluru - 560 034

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Tribunal on its own motion SUO  
MOTU matter in respect of news  
item appearing in The Deccan  
Herald dated 21.08.2024 titled  
“4228 acres of forest diverted  
for mining in Karnataka in 15  
years”

... Applicant

---Versus---

Central Pollution Control Board  
represented by its Member Secretary,  
New Delhi and others

... Respondents

**Reply filed by MOEF & CC (R2)**

**Mrs.Kavitha.P, Ms.1031(a)/2001**

Counsel for Respondent No.2