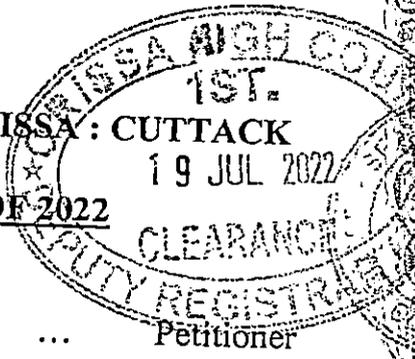


17

IN THE HIGH COURT OF ORISSA : CUTTACK

W.P.(C) NO.14706 OF 2022



GITA ROUT ... Petitioner

-Versus-

STATE OF ODISHA & OTHERS ... Opp. Parties

AFFIDAVIT ON BEHALF OF OPPOSITE PARTIES No.1 TO 3 IN COMPLIANCE OF ORDER DATED 05.07.2022

I, Shri Bikash Ranjan Dash, aged about 56 years, S/o-Late Krushna Chandra Dash, working as Conservator of Forest(Wildlife) in the Office of PCCF(Wildlife), Odisha, Bhubaneswar, Dist.-Khruda, do hereby solemnly affirm and state as follows:

Bikash Ranjan Dash

1. That I am working as above and have been duly authorized by the Opposite Parties No.1 to 3 to file the present affidavit on behalf of the Opposite Parties No.1 to 3.
2. That the Petitioner herein has sought directions of this Hon'ble Court with regard to protection of elephants in the State. This Hon'ble Court vide order dated 05.07.2022 had directed the Opposite Parties to file affidavit in the said



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regard. The relevant part of the order dated 05.07.2022 is extracted herein below:

“xxx

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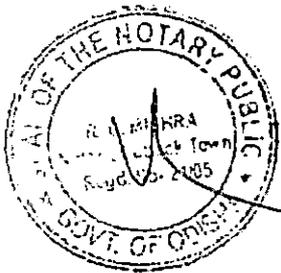
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4. The Court Directs the Opposite Parties to state on affidavit what steps have been taken to strictly enforce the provisions of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 and fix responsibility on the officials entrusted with the enforcement of the said Act, for such incidents of illegal poaching. The affidavit will also state what corrective mechanisms have been put place to counter the challenge posed by illegal poaching.”

Dr. Mahesh Chandra Nayak

3. That the instant affidavit is being filed in compliance of the order dated 05.07.2022. It is submitted that the State of Odisha is fully committed to protect the lives of the elephants inhabiting in the State and have taken serious and stringent steps towards it.

ENFORCEMENT OF THE PROVISIONS OF WILDLIFE (PROTECTION) ACT, 1962

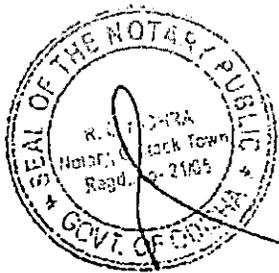


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4. That as per the provisions of the Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972, the biodiversity rich areas of the State have been declared as Protected Areas. There are 19 Wildlife Sanctuaries covering 10.37% of forest area in the State which is 5.36% of the State's geographical area. One National Park has been notified under provision of Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 at Bhitarkanika and another National Park is proposed at Similipal. Further, there are two Tiger Reserves, one Biosphere Reserve and three Elephant Reserves. It is submitted that State of Odisha is part of east-central landscape of elephant distribution comprising of Chhatisgarh, Jharkhand, south Bengal and Odisha.

Dr. M. K. Mishra

5. That the last census of elephants in the State was undertaken in 2017. As per the census records, 1976 elephants were found to be sheltered in the State which is spread across the length and breadth the of the State except certain divisions of southern and coastal Odisha. The State Government has notified three Elephant Reserves (ERs) viz. Mayurbhanj ER, Mahanadi ER and Sambalpur ER for better management of wild elephants. Within the three notified Elephant Reserves, an estimated



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969 elephants reside, i.e. about 50% of Odisha elephants have secure habitat in the ERs, with a total area of 8509 sq km. There are seven Wildlife Sanctuaries located within these three ERs (including Similipal National Park). Out of total geographical area of 8509 sq. km of ERs, 4597.71 sq km (i.e 54%) area is under Protected Area network as Sanctuary and National Park.

Dr. Indira Devi

6. That in the scenario of fast-growing developmental projects, fragmented forests need linking through management of corridors. The State has identified fourteen corridors in 2011, which were used by elephants to move safely between different habitats. These corridors are under constant review in view of changed movement patterns. The list of Elephant corridors identified in the State are annexed hereto and marked as Annexure-A/1.

7. That about 128 dedicated elephant protection squads having 5 members drawn from local youth in each squad have been deployed in vulnerable locations of elephant movements in the State to track the movement of elephant herds on daily basis. Apart from this, 215 wildlife/ anti-poaching squad of 10 members each have also been engaged at vulnerable



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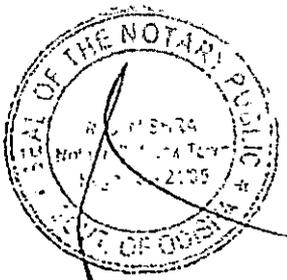


places for protection of wildlife including elephants.

8. Further, Wildlife Cell has been constituted in the office of Additional Director General of Police, Criminal Investigation Department, Crime Branch of Odisha Police to take up investigation and to file complaint under Section 55 of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972. Relevant notification is attached as Annexure-B/1.

Dr. Indrajit Mishra

9. That the vulnerable locations for elephant poaching have been identified and protection squads have been permanently deployed with provisions of protection infrastructure including camp sheds, watch towers etc. About 43 watch towers have been constructed during last 3 years at vulnerable locations for monitoring of wildlife movement and tracking movement of poachers by protection squad. Some of the locations of watch towers are Bhejia in Dhenkanal Division in the border area with Athgarh Division, 3 locations in Athmallik Division at Patala, Maimura and in Nuagaon-Barunei corridor, 3 nos at trijunction point of Balasore Wildlife, Keonjhar wildlife and Baripada Division in Hadgarh-Kuldiha corridor at Badbil under Balasore Wildlife and Raighati



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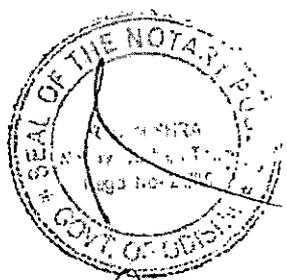
under Keonjhar Wildlife Division, bordering area of Bonai and Deogarh Division at Patharpunji, at Tal and Rahan in Tal-Kholgarh corridor of Rairakhol Division.

10. That trap cameras and drones are being used to monitor the movement of elephants and other wild animals. They are also helpful in detecting movement of suspected poachers. At present more than 2400 trap camers and 48 drones are in use in the field for monitoring of wild animal movement.

11. That for monitoring and tracking of elephant herds a mobile based App has been developed with the technological help of ORSAC. It is being used by the field staff throughout the elephant movement areas. The data captured is seen and analyzed at division level control rooms and state Wildlife Headquarters

12. That to counter the threat of elephant deaths due to electrocution through illegal hooking and accidental contact with hanging live wires or tilted poles etc. 3814.95 Km stretches of transmission lines have been identified to be passing through vulnerable stretches of elephant movement area in the forest. The work of insulating these open wires by putting

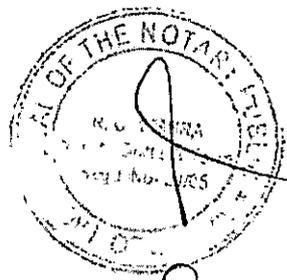
Dr. Mahesh Chandra Nayak



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insulated cables in those stretches has been taken up by Department of Energy, Government of Odisha. Similarly, for strengthening of electrical infrastructure in vulnerable stretches of elephant movement, 13,606 points have been identified for rectification of sagging points, tilted poles, fixing of interposing poles. The Department of Energy has allocated Rs. 520.24 Crore to their field officials (DISCOMs) for the above works. In addition to this, joint patrolling under electric lines with staff of DISCOMS is done in vulnerable areas to detect illegal hooking. Tripping data is obtained from DISCOMs in vulnerable areas and is analyzed to assess attempts for illegal hooking and regular co-ordination with DISCOMs is maintained through telephone, WhatsApp groups and co-ordination meetings. A research project has also been given to IIT Bhubaneswar to develop a contactless electric current detector. This is necessitated by the fact that during night hours, sometimes the protection staff come in contact with live wires thus posing a threat to their lives. Since 2020-21, 218 cases of illegal hooking have been detected with seizure of huge quantities of live wires and other

Dipak Ranjan Panda



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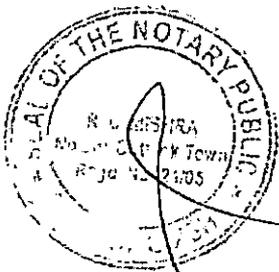
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accessories 267 persons have been arrested and cases under Wildlife (Protection) Act have been booked against them. Out of the above cases, 135 cases do not relate to any incidence of electrocution and prior detection have thwarted the attempts of offenders of electrocution of animals.

13. That 188 elephant crossing points (93 numbers on National Highways and 95 numbers on State highways) have been identified on highways. 370 numbers of signages have been installed on crossing points along the highways. Further, provision of 49 numbers of underpasses have been made on 5 new and expansion projects of National Highways in 11 Forest Divisions for facilitating smooth crossing of the highways by elephants. Out of these, 11 underpasses have been completed and 15 are under construction. Besides this, during crossing of elephants on these roads, staff of Forest Department facilitate their passage by stopping the traffic whenever required. It is submitted that since 2020, there has been no elephant deaths due to road accidents in the State.

Dr. J. K. Srinivasan

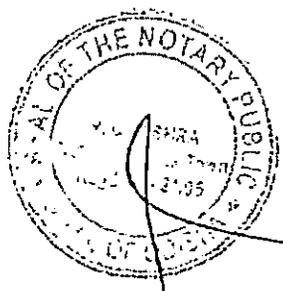
14. In order to protect the elephants from deaths due to railway accidents, railway authorities have been requested for provision of overpass



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and underpass required for movement of elephants in upcoming projects as well as in existing railway lines at identified points. Pursuant to this, 35 locations have been identified along railway tracks for construction of animal underpasses/ overpasses along with 12 locations for level crossings in new and expansion projects in 9 Forest Divisions. 372 locations have been identified for fixing of fluorescent signage along the railway tracks to alert the loco pilot on elephant crossing locations and till date 111 nos. of signage have been installed. Besides this, patrolling is done along the railway tracks and railway authorities are alerted to stop the train or control the speed if elephant herds are noticed near the railway track. For this purpose, regular communication through telephone, WhatsApp group, wireless is made. Three dedicated control rooms which are manned by Forest staff are established at Khurda Road, Sambalpur and Bandhamunda (Rourkela) Railway junctions. Any emergency message is passed on through these control rooms to railway control rooms. A control room is planned at Danguaposi near Keonjhar Division to cover some uncovered stretches of railway line of South Eastern Railways. Some

Dr. Indu Rajan

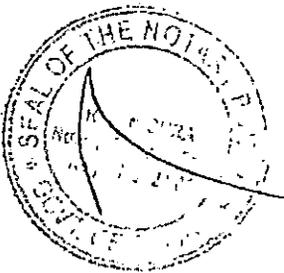


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technological interventions under development by IIT Delhi, Centurion University and an NGO are also under examination for assessing practical utility. Solar fencing has been installed along railway line at vulnerable locations to check crossing of railway line by elephants in Rourkela Division and is under consideration in Khurda Division. Watch tower is being constructed along vulnerable areas of railway line in Bamra Division and is also planned for Jharsuguda Division. Recently an SMS alert system has also been started to alert DFO, ACF and Range Officers about presence of elephants near railway tracks. In case, through monitoring App, elephants are detected in the 5 km vicinity of railway track then automatically an SMS is triggered to alert the forest officials. Regular co-ordination meetings at various levels are also done.

Dr. J. K. Singh

15. That during the last 5 years from 2017 to 2022, 14 cases of poaching of wild elephants have been reported to the authorities, out of which 4 cases relate to death of female elephants and 10 cases are killing of male elephants. In this regard, 30 persons involved in the poaching have been arrested and forwarded to the court of law. Further, 11 cases have been booked

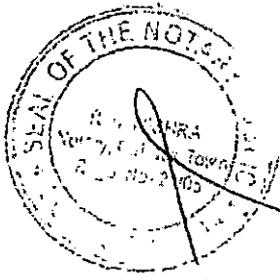


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under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 out of which 5 cases are under trial in courts and 9 cases are under investigation. The authorities have recovered 17 nos of tusks relating to 9 cases.

16. That with regard to the allegations made by the Petitioner regarding negligence of forest officials in treating one elephant injured due to firing, it is submitted that, the said injured elephant was detected by forest staff of Narsinghpur West Range of Athgarh Forest Division on 6th June 2022 and treatment was immediately taken up on that day by local Block Veterinary Officer (BVO). Veterinary Doctor of Satkosia Wildlife Division was also deputed on the same day to the spot for treatment of ailing elephant. On 7th June, Hon'ble MLA, Badamba posted about the incident on social media, which was duly replied to by the authorities. So, it is not a fact that treatment started after intervention of Hon'ble M.L.A., Badamba. A team of experts from Nandankanan were also deputed to help in treatment. Veterinary Doctors from OUAT, Bhubaneswar were also requisitioned and they visited the elephant on 9th June, 2022 to supervise the treatment and advise in the

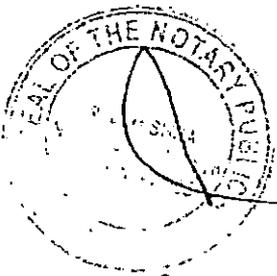
Dr. Indu Ranjan Panda



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matter. The injury of the elephant was caused by small pellet bullets shot by country made gun. As per investigation of DFO Athagarh, the elephant was fired upon with a pellet gun to drive it away from the cashew field of the accused persons. Despite sincere efforts of the veterinary doctors, the elephant succumbed to the injuries at about 11.20 AM on 14.06.2022. A inter-Divisional team headed by DFO, Athgarh Division including Asst Conservator of Forests of Athagarh, Dhenkanal and Satkosia Wildlife Divisions have been constituted by Regional Chief Conservator of Forests, Angul circle vide his Office Order No. 166 dtd.10.06.2022 for investigation into the case of firing and subsequent death of the elephant. As per the investigation report, 10 persons have been suspected to be involved in the firing out of which 5 persons have been arrested and the country made gun has been seized. Further efforts are on with the help of local police to apprehend the other accused. A copy of the detailed report of DFO Athagarh is annexed hereto and marked as Annexure-C/1.

Dr. M. Ranjan Das



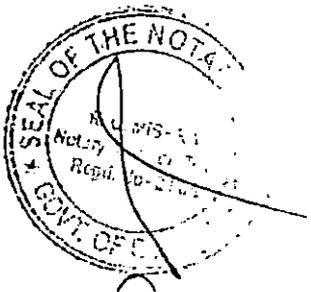
17. That on 30.05.2022 one sick male elephant had been detected in Padiabahal Range of Sambalpur Division. With the help of

veterinary experts from OUAT, the elephant was treated by local veterinary Doctor as well as Veterinary doctor from Satkosia Wildlife Division. While under treatment the elephant died on 21.06.2022. After post mortem, one bullet and a bamboo stick was recovered from its body. On investigation one accused has been arrested and search is going on for arrest of others involved in the case.

Dr. M. G. Panigrahi

18. That on 7th July, 2022 carcass of one male elephant was detected in Ghumsur North Division and on investigation, two tusks of the elephant were recovered and one accused arrested in the case.

19. That in Athagarh Division, 5 cases of elephant deaths in Badamba Range were detected and body parts of elephants recovered where it appears the elephant deaths have been suppressed by the staff. To probe the cases of recovery of body parts of elephants in Athgarh Forest Division a Special Investigation Team (SIT) under the supervision of Chief Conservator of Forests, State Wildlife Headquarters and under Chairmanship of Regional Chief Conservator of Forests, Angul, including Conservator of Forests from State Wildlife Headquarters and one officer from

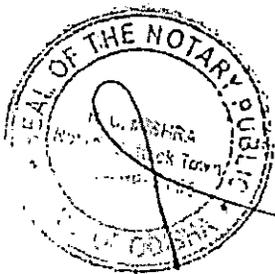


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Special Task force (STF), Crime Branch of Odisha Police have been constituted by Government vide No. 10637 Dtd.16.06.2022. Order Copy is attached as Annexure-D/1. A status report on the cases and investigation is attached as Annexure-E/1. Apart from the above, the SIT is also investigating the case of recovery of body parts on elephant on 24th July, 2022 in Satkosia Wildlife Division. Cases under the Wildlife(Protection) Act has also been booked against one Range Officer, One Forester and three elephant squad members in Satkosia Wildlife Division.

Dr. Subhojit Ranjan Dey

20. That with regard to fixing responsibility on the officials entrusted with the enforcement of the Act, it is submitted that since 2017-18, departmental action has been taken against 3 DFO, 9 Range Officers, 15 Foresters and 14 Forest Guards for dereliction in duty. Further, 2 Forest Guards and 3 elephant trackers have been arrested and cases under the Wildlife (Protection) Act have been booked against them. They have been forwarded to the Court of law. The aforementioned SIT is also probing the dereliction in duty and/or involvement of officials in poaching of elephants and



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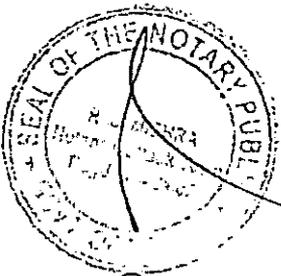
suppression of facts in the cases of recovery of body parts of elephants in Athgarh Division.

PREVENTIVE AND COUNTER MEASURES TAKEN AGAINST ILLEGAL ELEPHANT POACHING AND PROTECTION OF ELEPHANTS

Dr. Subhash Chandra Mishra

21. That as regards corrective mechanisms to counter the challenges posed by illegal poaching the following steps have been taken by the State Government:

- i. **Expansion of Elephant Reserves-** It is proposed to expand area of Mahanadi Elephant reserve to 2181.521 sq km (from existing 1038.30 sq km) by adding 1143.221 sq km. The said proposal is based on the expert study report of Asian Nature Conservation Foundation titled as "Elephant Carrying Capacity of Odisha's Forests" proposal for expansion of Sambalpur and Mahanadi Elephant Reserves. Similarly, it is proposed to expand area of Sambalpur Elephant Reserve from existing 426.91 sq km to 1797.048 sq km by adding 1370.138 sq km area. Such expansion is aimed at bringing 75 % of population of elephants under the Elephant Reserve sphere. This will also reduce the



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distance between nearest boundaries of the two Elephant Reserves from about 65 km to about 15 km. This will further ensure frequent movement between two elephant reserves ensuring genetic exchange for long term survival of the elephant population in the state. This proposal has been submitted to Forest, Environment and Climate Change Department vide Letter No 573 Dated 20.01.2021 and is under consideration of the government.

Dr. Indrajit Das

- ii. A State level Policy and Programme for Comprehensive Wildlife Management in Odisha, titled Odisha State Comprehensive Wildlife Management Guidance (OSCOW-MAG), has been prepared by Wildlife Trust of India in 2021. The document includes wildlife management guidance at Division, Circle and State level. In addition, the document also include Standard Operating Procedures for dealing with wildlife emergencies in Odisha.
- iii. Pursuant to the order of the Hon'ble National Green Tribunal in OA No. 2/2019(EZ) which was affirmed by the Hon'ble Apex Court in Civil Appeal Diary No. 19961/2020, Hadgarh - Kuldiha elephant Corridor is being declared as a Conservation Reserve to safeguard the Elephant Corridor from nearby mining areas.



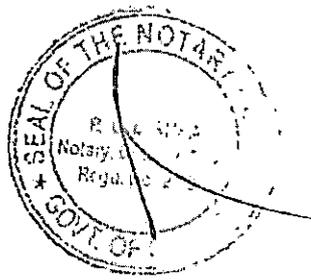
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For this purpose, proposal has been submitted to Forest, Environment and Climate Change Department vide Letter no. 1055 dated 03.02.2022 and the same is under active consideration of the Government.

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iv. In order to counter the hindrance caused to the movement of elephants in the Nugaon-Barunei corridor due to the Manjore Canal Network in Athamalik Forest Division, an overpass on the canal is being constructed for which an amount of Rs.81, 30, 000 and Rs 71, 27, 000 has been placed with Water Resources Department through DFO Athamalik This work is slated to be completed by 31st August, 2022.

v. Interstate Movement- In the identified corridors currently, there are only 4 interstate corridors and these are only in one part of the State ie. Mayurbhanj and Keonjhar area only. It is submitted that there may be several movement paths between Jharkhand-Odisha and Chhatisgarh Odisha and expert studies inter alia by Palei et. al in 2019 has also shown many such areas which facilitate interstate movement. Therefore, to secure all the movement paths between different adjoining states, proposals for study on the ground were invited from Bombay Natural History society (BNHS) &



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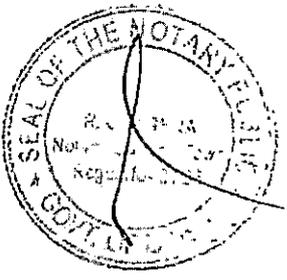
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area of 40 ha within a year. Similarly, many a times some calves are abandoned by the herds. A transit center has been made at Kapilash for upkeep of such calves.

- ix. A MoU has been signed with the Indian Institute of Science for radio-collaring of 7 elephants including 3 errant animals. The remaining 4 elephants will also be radio collared for studying impact of Badampahar mining on dispersal of Similipal elephants.
- x. Treatment of sick or injured elephants is an important concern and assumes urgency in some cases. In addition to Government Veterinary Officers in Nandankanan, Simlipal and Satkosia, two Mobile Veterinary Service units have been established in Simlipal and Keonjhar. Further Veterinary Officers have been engaged in Kapilash and Sundergarh. A Veterinary Officer shall soon be placed in Sambalpur and the recruitment process is underway. In 2021, two sick elephants were successfully treated and released to wild in Angul and Khordha Division. Similarly, one errant elephant from Cuttack Division was captured and subsequently released to the wild in 2021. In 2020, an errant elephant had been

Dr. Jyoti Rajendra Dahiya



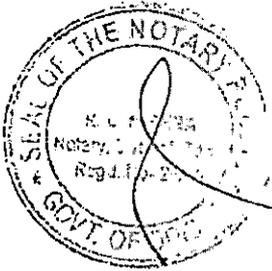
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captured in Angul and kept in rescue centers at Kapilash.

- xi. In the last two years i.e since 2020, 3 elephant calves and one sub-adult elephant separated from herds have been rescued and rehabilitated at rescue facilities at Nandankanan and Kapilash.
- xii. Regular training on wildlife crime and intelligence are conducted for field staff through State Police Organization. In 2022, 200 staff members and officers in the rank of Asst. Conservator of Forests, Range Officer and Forester were trained.
- xiii. To facilitate the veterinarians and field staff of Forest Department on collection of samples from carcasses of wild animals, its proper preservation and thereafter dispatch to laboratories for necessary examination, two state level and 30 district level training programs have been organized in association with F& ARD Department and Animal Disease Research Institute, Phulnakhara. This training has been imparted to 399 veterinarians and 240 Forest Department staff during 2021-22.
- xiv. Participation of local communities is extremely crucial in protection of elephants and handling

Dr. Subhakar Singh



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of Man-Elephant Conflict. Hence to involve local people, a scheme of engagement of village level volunteers called "Gajasathi" which engages 5 volunteers per village has been launched in 2021 wherein 2785 volunteers were engaged in 557 most vulnerable villages of 9 Forest Divisions in 2021 and 2022 to alert the forest staff and villagers on elephant movement. These selected Gajasathis are given short training and are provided with lights and megaphone etc. Alongwith this they are provided Rs 1000/month incentive to each volunteer.

Dr. Lalit Kumar Singh

xv. In order to safeguard the interests of the farmers, 148 mechanical paddy harvesters have been provided to villagers in most conflict prone villages in Athmalik and Baripada Division for early harvesting of paddy in the field before crop raiding. Similarly, 15 mini rice mills have been provided in identified villages in Athmalik Division to facilitate early milling of paddy and storage to protect from raiding elephants.

xvi. Grain Bins made of tin for storage purpose are being introduced in villages to protect stored paddy from potential destruction by the elephants.



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- xvii. Specialized vehicle "Gaja" with all modern amenities to tackle man-elephant conflict situation has been introduced in Keonjhar and Dhenkanal Division.
- xviii. To safeguard the migratory routes of elephants, various habitat enrichment activities are being undertaken. During the last 3 years, 402 waterbodies have been created and 426 old waterbodies have been renovated to augment water requirement of wild animals. Fruit bearing and fodder species have been planted in over 85 hectare of habitat areas. Further, 3.70 lakh bamboo seed balls have been planted in elephant habitat areas for augmentation of fodder availability of elephants. To supplement the food requirement of elephants and other herbivores, meadows to the extent of 1938 hectare have been developed in last 5 years.
- xix. The problem of forest fire is being addressed through a number of activities such as engagement of fire watchers. In addition to this, daily surveillance through FSI satellite data on fire incidence enables immediate action to extinguish reported fire points, creation and maintenance of external and internal fire line, involvement of local communities etc. Due to intensive mitigation measures, fire incidences

Dr. Subhash Chandra Mishra



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were substantially reduced from 6255 fire points in 2021 to 1741 fire points in 2022 in protected areas.

- xx. In the last 3 years, elephant proof trench/ solar fence measuring 202.283 Km has been installed in problematic areas of elephant movement to guide the movement towards forest.
- xxi. Since open wells located on elephant movement areas pose a potential threat to the elephants and other wild animals as there is possibility of accidental falling into the wells, the authorities have barricaded 3444 such open wells till date.
- xxii. Around 1248 solar street lights have been installed in last 3 years in most conflict prone villages having elephant movement in identified Divisions.
- xxiii. To address the issue of delay in payment of compassionate amount due to wild animal depredation, a software 'Anukampa' has been developed in association with Space Application Centre (ORSAC), Bhubaneswar for facilitating expeditious digital settlement of compassionate grant of wildlife depredation victims. The portal is being used for applying, receiving, processing and settling of

Dr. Subhanjan Panda

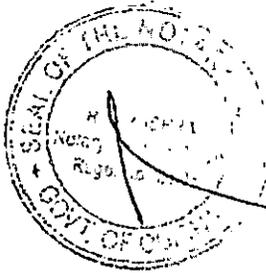


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Compassionate grant in lieu of loss sustained to life and property of the citizens of Odisha due to all forms of wildlife depredation including death/injury to human beings, cattle deaths, crop damage or house damage. The compassionate grants are paid as per the rates fixed in Rule-45, Wildlife (Protection) (Orissa) Rules, 1974 amended from time to time. The portal has been integrated with Finance Department payment portal for direct transfer of money to the beneficiaries. Till date, about 29,000 applications have been processed through "Anukampa" App.

Dr. Mohit Anand

- xxiv. To monitor and manage inter-State movement of elephants, coordination meetings and information sharing with Forest Officials of West Bengal, Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh is being done regularly.
- xxv. To tackle the issue of illegal poaching, the Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB) under the Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change, Government of India is also assisting the state authorities in intelligence collection on wildlife crime, detection of cases and capacity building of field functionaries of State Forest Department as well as other stakeholder organizations.

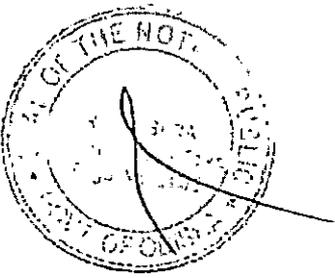


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xxvi. **Prevention of death due to diseases:** Elephant death due to diseases is an emerging challenge in recent years. Several steps have been initiated to control disease related death of elephants. Since 2021, all water bodies in and around protected areas and elephant movement areas have been disinfected to reduce incidence of water borne disease in wild animals thereby minimizing morbidity and mortality. This is a continuous process to be done twice every year. Preventive vaccination of cattle of the fringe villages of elephant movement areas is being undertaken regularly to prevent spread of disease from domestic cattle to wild animals. Disease surveillance data in domestic animals is being obtained regularly from Animal Disease Research Centre. It is submitted that outbreak of Hemorrhagic Septicemia disease among elephants in Karlapat sanctuary in February 2021 was controlled successfully due to these pre-emptive measures.

Dr. M. S. Venkatesh

xxvii. Committees under the Chairmanship of PCCF (Wildlife) & Chief Wildlife Warden have been constituted for the 8 Forest Circles to monitor the movement pattern and to take required steps to safeguard the small and scattered population



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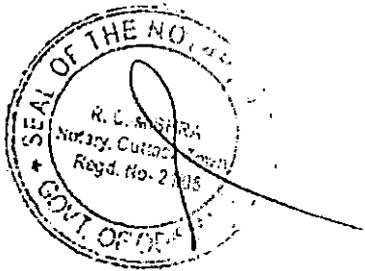
of elephants which do not have connectivity with viable habitats.

xxviii. To prevent human animal conflict, the State Government has revised the guidelines for families opting to voluntarily relocate from core areas in the interest of wildlife. This has led to freeing important elephant movement areas from anthropogenic pressures. In last 3 years 684 families of 7 villages in 4 protected areas have been successfully relocated voluntarily to outside.

Prithvi Ranjan Patra

xxix. Centre for Wildlife Health established by Forest Department in Odisha University of Agriculture and Technology has been strengthened to diagnose varieties of diseases and sex determination through DNA analysis in case of recovery of body parts of elephants.

22. That it is submitted that all out efforts are being done with involvement of all stakeholders to curb the incidents of poaching of wild elephants of the State. The State Government is constantly reviewing the movements and behavior of the elephants and taking proactive steps to ensure elephants are saved from poachers and other accidents.



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23. That the Opposite Parties craves leave of this Hon'ble Court to make further submissions and file further affidavits, in the interest of justice and effective adjudication by this Hon'ble Court.

24. That the facts stated above are true to the best of my knowledge, belief and based on available records.

Identified by:

Pradeep Kumar Jena

Asst. A.G's Office 16/7/2022

Milind Ranjan Mishra
DEPONENT
(PCCF. odisha)

Place: Cuttack

Date: 16.07.22

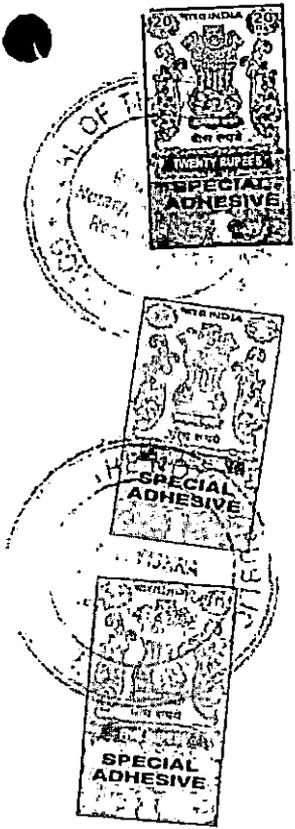
Certified that Cartridge papers are not available

[Signature]

ADDL STANDING COUNSEL

Solemnly affirmed on oath by the Deponent at Cuttack on 16/7/22 being identified by being identified by Advocate office/Notary Person. The facts stated above are true to the best of my knowledge.

RAMA CHANDRA MISHRA, PCCF
CUTTACK TOWN, Regd. No. 21/05



List of Elephant Corridors identified in Odisha in 2011

Sl. No.	Name of the Corridor	Extends over District	Name of the Forest Division	Length of the Corridor (km)	Width of the Corridor (km)	Total Area (sq.km)
1	Badampahar (Mayurbhanj) Dhobdhobin (Jharkhand) (Interstate)	Mayurbhanj	Karanja Rairangpur	16	0.5-1.5	24.3
2	Badampahar (Mayurbhanj) Karida (Jharkhand) (Interstate)	Mayurbhanj	Rairangpur	43	0.2-2.6	26.09
3	West Bengal-Deuli-Suliapada (Passage) (Interstate)	Mayurbhanj, Balasore; (West Bengal)	Baripada	72	0.1-0.7	39.5
4	Simlipal-Hadgarh-Kuldiha INTER-DISTRICT	Mayurbhanj, Keonjhar, Balasore	Baripada, Balasore (WL) Keonjhar (WL)	41.7	0.7-3.5	91.39
5	Telkoi-Pailahra INTER-DISTRICT	Keonjhar, Angul	Keonjhar, Deogarh	30.4	0.2-0.6	13.24
6	Karo (Keonjhar)- Karampada (Saranda, Jharkhand) (Interstate)	Keonjhar, (Jharkhand)	Keonjhar	15	0.3-2.3	17.3
7	Maulabhnja-Jiridamali- Anantpur INTER-DISTRICT	Dhenkanal	Dhenkanal	6.5	0.25-0.28	1.55
8	Kahneijena-Anantpur INTER-DISTRICT	Angul, Dhenkanal	Angul, Dhenkanal	6.6	0.4-1.1	5.22
9	Buguda-Central RF INTER-DISTRICT	Nayagarh	Nayagarh	2.6	0.8-0.6	0.76
10	Nuagaon-Baruni INTER-DISTRICT	Angul	Athamallik	4.5	0.4-4.6	20.7
11	Tal-Kholgarh INTER-DISTRICT	Sambalpur	Rairakhol	6.3	0.5-0.08	4.56
12	Barpahad-Tarva- Kantamal INTER-DISTRICT	Subarnapur, Boudh	Subarnapur, Boudh	24.2	0.38-1.5	21.7
13	Kotgarh-Chandrapur INTER-DISTRICT	Kandhmal, Rayagada	Balliguda, Rayagada	77	2.0-22.4	575.4
14	Karlapat-Urladani INTER-DISTRICT	Kalahandi, Rayagada	Kalahandi North and South, Rayagada	75	0.2-0.5	28.9
	TOTAL			421		870.6


 Conservator of Forests
 O/o the PCCF (WL) & CWLW
 Odisha, Bhubaneswar

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Annexure-B/1

WCC

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The Odisha Gazette

EXTRAORDINARY
PUBLISHED BY AUTHORITY

No. 1485 CUTTACK, MONDAY, OCTOBER 26, 2015/KARTIKA 4, 1937

FOREST & ENVIRONMENT DEPARTMENT

ORDER

The 16th October 2015

No. 18141—FE-WL-WLF-0061/2014-F&E.—Government after careful consideration have been pleased to constitute a "Wildlife Crime Cell" which will function in the office of the Additional Director General of Police, Criminal Investigation Department, Crime Branch, Odisha, Cuttack to take up investigation and to file complaint under Notification under Section 55 of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972. The Cell shall have Statewide jurisdiction and empowered to perform the following functions :—

- (a) Collect and collate intelligence related to Wildlife Crime Activities and to disseminate the same to field units for enforcement action.
- (b) Establishment Wildlife Crime Databank
- (c) Prevent, investigate and prosecute organized Wildlife Crime cases having wider ramifications.
- (d) Act as nodal point for Wildlife Crime Control Bureau, MoEF & CC, GoI on Wildlife Crime related issues.
- (e) Co-ordinate inter-agency Wildlife Crime Enforcement actions in the State/UT
- (f) Advise the State Government on issues relating to Wildlife Crime and related laws.

The Wildlife Crime Cell is created in CID Crime Branch consisting of a dedicated team of four to six Officers with an Additional SP/Dy. SP as In-charge and two Inspectors as Investigators with two SI/ASI as assisting staff diverted from existing strength of CID/CB, one ACF from Forest & Environment Department and one Forest Ranger from Forest & Environment Department on deputation basis.

By order of the Governor

U. N. BEHERA

Additional Chief Secretary to Government

Printed and published by the Director, Directorate of Printing, Stationery and Publication, Odisha, Cuttack-10
Ex. Gaz. 979—173+300

Conservator of Forests
O/o the PCCF (WL) & CWLW
Odisha, Bhubaneswar

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Annexure-C/1

**OFFICE OF THE DIVISIONAL FOREST OFFICER,
ATHGARH FOREST DIVISION, ATHGARH.**

Memo No. 3111

Date- 13-07-2022

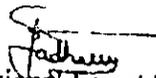
To

**The Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (Wildlife),
& Chief Wildlife Warden, Odisha, Bhubaneswar.**

Sub: -

Updated Status Report on Death of Injured Tusker in Narsinghpur West Range of Athgarh Division.

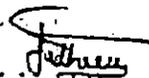
With reference to the subject cited above, the updated status report on death of injured tusker in Kaliapada PF of Kholo beat area, Jayapur Section of Narsinghpur West Range is sent herewith for favour of your kind information and necessary action.


Divisional Forest Officer,
Athgarh Division.

Memo No. - 3112

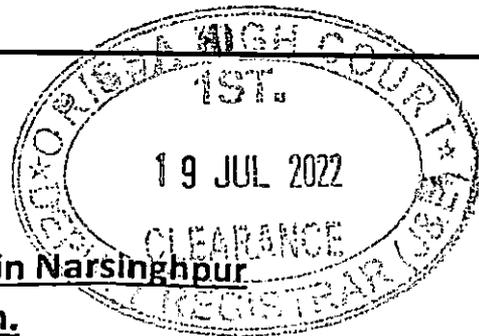
Date. 13-07-2022

Copy along with the copy of its enclosure forwarded to the Regional Chief Conservator of Forests, Angul, Circle Angul for favour of kind information and necessary action.


Divisional Forest Officer,
Athgarh Division.


Conservator of Forests
C/o the PCCF (WL) & CWLW
Odisha, Bhubaneswar

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Updated Status Report on Death of Injured Tusker in Narsinghpur
West Range of Athgarh Forest Division.

On dt.06.06.2022 at around 8.30 am while patrolling in Kaliapada PF of Kholo Beat area of Jayapur Section of Narsinghpur west Range of Athgarh Forest Division, the staff of the Range found one injured sub-adult male elephant (tusker) moving slowly in the Beat area. The age of the elephant is approximately 10-12 years. The BVO, Narsinghpur was immediately requisitioned for the assessment of health & further treatment of the elephant. The injury of the elephant appeared because of use of small pallet bullets shot by local made gun. Injuries could be seen on the right leg, right ear point & trunk of the elephant. Veterinary doctors from Nandankanan, OUAT, Bhubaneswar & Satkosia WL Division tried their best to recover the elephant from the injuries. However, on dt- 14.06.2022 at about 11.20 AM while undergoing treatment in presence of BVO, Narsinghpur the elephant succumbed to the injuries.

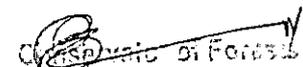
One UD case No 9NW of 2022-23 converted to OR Case No 2NW of 2022-23 has been registered in Narsinghpur West Range in above Case.

During the investigation of the case, it was found that the elephant was fired upon with the use of small pallet bullets shot by local made gun near Nuagarh RF, Compt No 1, inside a Cashew Field belonging to one Sri. Prabhakar Mishra. However, the cashew trees were auctioned and allotted to one Prakash Dash (Prakash Baba) of Village Atanda in Narsinghpur Tahsil. In this case so far 5 nos of accused persons have been arrested so far. As per their statement,

- A. The incident happened in the last week of May. One evening, the above-mentioned injured elephant (tusker) entered in to the said cashew field. However, while driving out the elephant, he was fired upon by Prakash Dash and his associates with the help of local made pallet gun due to which the elephant suffered grievous injuries to which he succumbed later on.
- B. After getting the information from the arrested persons, the residence of Prakash Dash and his associates were raided. During this, one local made pallet gun was seized from the house of Suryamani Nayak, At-Ramachandrapur, PS-Narsinghpur, Dist-Cuttack.
- C. These arrested persons have also admitted that they are regularly involved in the poaching of smaller wild animals in the Nuagarh RF area in Narsinghpur East Range.

Total 10 persons have been found to be involved in the above-mentioned case. Out of them, following accused namely,

1. Suryamani Nayak, Age-42 years. S/o-Late Bansidhara Nayak, At-Ramachandrapur, PS-Narsinghpur Dist-Cuttack
2. Gangadhara Nayak, Age-62 years. S/o-Late Bula Nayak, At-Nuabhuin, PS-Narsinghpur Dist-Cuttack.
3. Dibakar Sahoo, Age-35 years. S/o-Bhagaban Sahoo, At-Anantaprasad, PS-Narsinghpur Dist-Cuttack.


Officer in Charge
Of the PCRF (WL) & CWL
Odisha, Bhubaneswar

4. Jalindara Nayak, Age- 28 years, S/o- late Ghanshyam Nayak, At-
Anantaprasad, PS-Narsinghpur, Dist-Cuttack.

5. Budhimana Rout, Age- 53 years, S/o- late Mangulu Rout, At-Kathakhunta,
PS-Narsinghpur, Dist-Cuttack

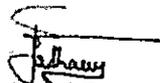
have been arrested and forwarded to the Court of Law. Further, efforts are on to arrest
the rest 5 nos of accused.

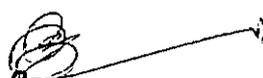
In the above cases help of Cuttack District Police is being taken to track the mobile nos
of the accused persons. So far 7 nos of mobile no are being tracked to get their current
locations. Also, the help of police is also taken while arresting the accused persons in various
parts of Badamba and Narsinghpur areas.

Material Evidences collected-

1. Statement of Bibhu Ranjan Rai, Dy. RO, Ex- I/C Narsinghpur East Range
2. Statement of Baman Charan Rout, Forester, Nuagarh Section, Narsinghpur East
Range
3. Statement of Madhusudan Pradhan, FG, Panchhagocchia Beat, Narsinghpur East
Range
4. Statement of Barendra Kumar Behera, Forester, Jaypore Section, Narsinghpur East
Range
5. Statement of Nilamadhab Dalel, FG, Kholo beat
6. Statement of Biswajit Prusty, Forester, Deobhuin Section
7. Statement of Bimal Nayak, Elephant Tracker, Narsinghpur West Range
8. Statement of Laxmidhar Singh, Elephant Tracker, Narsinghpur West Range
9. Statement of Biranchi Dehury, Elephant Tracker, Narsinghpur West Range
10. Statement of Manoj Kumar Nayak, Elephant Tracker, Narsinghpur West Range
11. Statement of Prafulla Maharana, Elephant Tracker, Narsinghpur East Range
12. Statement of Prakash Sahoo, Elephant Tracker, Narsinghpur East Range.
13. Country made pallet gun seized from the house of Suryamani Nayak, S/o-Late
Bansidhara Nayak, At-Ramachandrapur, PS-Narsinghpur, Dist-Cuttack.

This is for your information and necessary action.


Divisional Forest Officer
Athgarh Division


Conservator of Forests
O/o the PCCF (WL) & CWLW
Odisha, Bhubaneswar

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Annexure-D/1 (3)

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA

FOREST, ENVIRONMENT & CLIMATE CHANGE DEPARTMENT

.....

OFFICE ORDER

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H/E

No. FE-WL-WLF-0023-2022 - 10637 /FE &CC., Dated. 5-06-2022

The Special Task Force, Crime Branch, Bhubaneswar on 02-06-2022 and 03-06-2022 has excavated skull and skeleton of two elephants on two different sites, one over revenue land of Bhaluabereni Village adjacent to Talachndragiri RF and the other over private land of Mahatbandha Village near Chandragiri RF coming under Janipadar Beat in Gopapur Section of Badamba Range of Athagarh Forest Division. The recovery of skull and skeleton of two elephants inside a single Beat area of one Section in Badamba Range indicates that there is serious lapse by the departmental staff and has given rise to allegations of their connivance and willful concealment of facts.

In this regard, a Special Investigation Team (SIT) is hereby constituted to investigate into the cases with the following members.

- 1 Regional Chief Conservator of Forests, Angul Circle ----- Chairman
- 2 Conservator of Forest (ET), ----- Member

O/o the PCCF (Wildlife) & Chief Wildlife Warden,
Odisha, Bhubaneswar

- 3. An officer of the STF, Crime Branch ----- Member

not below the rank of Dy. SP

The SIT will have the following terms of reference:

- 1 The team will carry out a thorough and comprehensive investigation into the instant two cases keeping in view various angles such as alleged connivance of staff, criminal negligence and willful concealment of facts.
- 2. The SIT will ascertain whether there are more such occurrences in the Division.
- 3. They will go into details of forward and backward linkages and examine the possibilities of involvement of inter-state organized wildlife crime syndicates in these cases.
- 4. They can co-opt any expert/scientific member in the committee.
- 5. The Committee shall submit the report within one month from date of issue of this order.

The SIT will function under overall supervision of CCF (Wildlife) O/o the PCCF (Wildlife) & Chief Wildlife Warden, Odisha, Bhubaneswar

By order of the Governor
M. L. B. 16/06/22
OSD-cum-Special Secretary to Government

(Signature)
Conservator of Forests
O/o the PCCF (WL) & CWLW
Odisha, Bhubaneswar



2

✓ Memo No. 10638 /FE&CC, Dated. 16-06-2022.

Copy submitted to PS to Hon'ble Chief Minister, Odisha for kind information of Hon'ble Chief Minister.

[Signature]
OSD-cum-Special Secretary to Government

Memo No. 10639 /FE&CC, Dated. 16-06-2022

Copy submitted to PS to Hon'ble Minister, Forest, Environment & Climate Change for kind information of Hon'ble Minister.

[Signature]
OSD-cum-Special Secretary to Government

Memo No. 10640 /FE&CC, Dated. 16-06-2022

Copy forwarded to OSD to Chief Secretary for kind information of Chief Secretary.

[Signature]
OSD-cum-Special Secretary to Government

✓ Memo No. 10641 /FE&CC, Dated. 16-06-2022

Copy forwarded to PCCF (Wildlife) & Chief Wildlife Warden, Odisha, Bhubaneswar for kind information and necessary action.

[Signature]
OSD-cum-Special Secretary to Government

e-Mail: adgpcidcb.orpol@nic.in

Memo No. 10642 /FE&CC, Dated. 16-06-2022

Copy forwarded to the Addl. DG, CID, Crime Branch, Odisha, Cuttack for kind information and necessary action

He is requested to kindly nominate an officer of the STF, Crime Branch not below the rank of Dy. SP as Member of the Special Investigation Team (SIT).

[Signature]
OSD-cum-Special Secretary to Government

Memo No. 10643 /FE&CC, Dated. 16-06-2022

Copy forwarded to RCCF, Angul Circle-cum-Field Director, Satakosia Tiger Reserve/ CCF (Wildlife), O/o the PCCF (Wildlife) & Chief Wildlife Warden, Odisha, Bhubaneswar/ CF (ET) O/o the PCCF (Wildlife) & Chief Wildlife Warden, Odisha, Bhubaneswar/ DFO, Athagarh Forest Division for information and necessary action

[Signature]
OSD-cum-Special Secretary to Government

[Signature]
Conservator of Forests
O/o the PCCF (WL) & CWLW
Odisha, Bhubaneswar

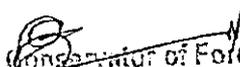
Action Taken Report on recovery of skeletal remains of elephants from two Ranges of Athgarh Division.

It is to inform you that so far 5 (Five) no of cases have been detected in Athgarh Division in which skeletal remains of five elephants have been excavated from different parts of two Ranges- Narsinghpur West Range (1 case) and Badamba Range (4 cases) of Athgarh Division. The details are as follows,

Case No 1- On dt 08.02.2022 the STF (Wildlife wing) along with Forest Dept staff excavated a site inside the Balikiary RF (Compt. No 11) of Barsingha Beat of Barsingha section of Narsinghpur West Range, wherein they recovered the body parts of a male elephant whose tusks were missing. After a thorough enquiry by ACF (Enf), Athgarh Division, it was found that the Forest Guard of the Barsingha Beat had admitted the fact of elephant death in the same area in the month of April, 2020 and its subsequent burial by them on the instructions of the Range Officer Sri. Ashok Kumar Behera. On date 15.02.2022, two nos of tusks were also recovered from the same Barsingha Beat area (hidden near a pond), allegedly belonging to the same dead elephant. Thus, the Forest Guard, Forester and Range Officer (Narsinghpur West at that time) are suspended on the charges of suppression of facts from higher authorities and dereliction in duty.

Material Evidences collected-

1. Two nos of tusks recovered on date 15.02.2022 Barsingha Beat of Narsinghpur West Range.
2. Statement of Shubhendra Kumar Bchera, Forester, Barsingha Section
3. Statement of Sunayak Mazhi, FG, Barsingha Beat, Narsinghpur West Range
4. Statement of Ashok Kumar Behera, Ex-Range Officer, Narsinghpur West Range.
5. Statement of Hadibandhu Singh, Protection Squad, Narsinghpur West Range
6. Statement of Gadadhar Nayak, FG, Mitikapur Beat, Narsinghpur West Range
7. Statement of Laxmidhar Mahalik, Elephant tracker, Narsinghpur West Range
8. Statement of Bibekanand Jani, Forester, i/c Guptamanik Beat, Narsinghpur West Range.
9. Statement of Panchanan Dehury. Protection Squad, Narsinghpur West Range


Conservator of Forests
O/o the PCCF (WL) & CWLW
Odisha, Bhubaneswar

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10. Statement of Sasadeb Pradhan, Ex-Elephant tracker, Narsinghpur West Range
11. Statement of Nakula Dehury, Protection Squad, Narsinghpur West Range
12. Statement of Biranchi Dehury, Elephant tracker, Narsinghpur West Range
13. Statement of Ajay Pradhan, local villager, Narsinghpur West Range
14. Statement of Sarat Khatua, Elephant tracker, Narsinghpur West Range
15. Statement of Ramchandra Nayak, Forester, Divisional Mobile Unit.
16. Samples collected from bone marrow, ribs, putrefied skin and muscles etc and sent to Centre for wildlife studies, OUAT, Bhubaneswar.

Case No 2- On dt 02.06.2022 the STF (Wildlife Wing) along with Forest Dept staff excavated the skeletal remains of one dead elephant from a Revenuc land adjoining Bhulubareni village in Janipadar Beat of Gopapur section of Badamba Range. The skeletal remains belong to a Male (Tusker) elephant. Also, on inspection of bones it was found that the tusks of the elephant are missing. As per opinion of the BVO, the age of tusker must be around 20 years (from the teeth structure).

One UD case No 6B of 2022-23 converted to OR Case NO 13B of 2022-23 has been registered in Badamba Range in the above case.

Case No 3- Again on dt 03.06.2022 the STF along with Forest Department staff of had excavated another skeletal remains of a dead elephant from a private land area near the Mahatabbandha village of same Janipadar Beat of Gopapur Section of Badamba Range. It belongs to a female elephant. On inspection of the teeth structure, the age of the elephant must be around 9 to 10 years old (from the teeth structure).

One UD case No 7B of 2022-23 converted to OR Case No 14B of 2022-23 has been registered in Badamba Range in the above case.

In the course of investigation, the 3 nos of Elephant Trackers and the Forest Guard (names given further) have accepted their involvement in the disposal of the elephant carcasses in both the cases. As per their statement,

- A. The poaching of one male elephant had happened near Bhulubareni village in Janipadar Beat of Gopapur Section of Badamba Range in the month of Nov/Dec, 2021. After getting the information from local villagers, the Elephant Trackers and Forest Guard reached the spot and found that one male elephant has been killed by poachers and the tusks of the elephant were missing. This


Conservator of Forests
O/o the PCCF (WL) & CWLW
Odisha, Bhubaneswar

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information was given to Pradip Parida, Forester, Gopapur Section and Manoj Das, Forester, I/C Badamba Range. However, the elephant was buried secretly without informing any higher officers (DFO/ACFs) of Athgarh Forest Division during night time as per the directions given by Manoj Das, Forester, I/C Badamba Range and Pradip Parida, Forester, Gopapur Section in presence of all the above-mentioned persons with the help of local villagers of Bhulubareni.

- B. In the month of December/January, 2021 one female elephant died due to electrocution in a private land near the paddy field in village Mahatabbandha in Janipadar Beat of Gopapur Section of Badamba Range. After getting the information from the local villagers at about 2.30 pm in the afternoon, the Elephant Trackers along with Forest Guard went to the spot. This information was immediately given to Pradip Parida, Forester, Gopapur Section and Manoj Das, Forester, I/C Badamba Range. As per the instructions received from them, these Elephant Trackers and Forest Guard covered the elephant with the help of straw. Later on in the night, the elephant was buried in the presence of Pradip Parida, Forester, Gopapur Section, Manoj Das, Forester, I/C Badamba Range, Narendra Dchury, Forest Guard, Janipadar Beat, Elephant Watchers and local villagers. In this case also no information was given to the higher officers (DFO/ACFs) of Athgarh Forest Division.

In relation to these above two cases of recovery of body parts of elephants in the Janipadar Beat of Badamba Range, total 7 nos of accused persons namely,

1. Ashok Kumar Behera (Elephant Tracker) Age-42 years, S/o-Ramachandra Behera, At-Malatipur, PS-Badamba, Dist-Cuttack.
2. Braja Behera (Elephant Tracker) Age- 47 years, S/o-Narahari Behera, At-Kharod, PS-Badamba, Dist-Cuttack.
3. Biranchi Behera (Elephant Tracker) Age-43 years, S/o-Sudam Behera, At-Kharod, PS- Badamba.
4. Akula Behera, Age-52years, S/o-Jugala Behera, At-Kharod, PS-Badamba.
5. Arjuna Behera, Age- 40 years, S/o-Krushna Behera, At-Kharod, PS-Badamba.
6. Abhay Nayak, Age- 46 years, S/o-Jaya Krushna Nayak, At-Khairpanga, PO-Gopapur, PS-Badamba. (Involved in June 3rd case)


Conservator of Forests
O/o the PCCF (WL) & CWLW
Cuttack, Bhubaneswar

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7. Narendra Dehury, Ex- Forest Guard, Janipadar Beat, Athgarh Division.

have been arrested & forwarded to the court of law and further investigation is still going on to arrest absconding accused persons.

In addition, 5 nos of staff namely,

1. Sri. Suresh Kumar Sarangi, Range Office, Badamba Range
2. Sri. Manoj Das, Forester, Mania bandha Section, Badamba Range
3. Sri. Pradip Parida, Forester, Gopapur Section, Badamba Range
4. Sri. Narendra Dehuri, Forest Guard, Janipadar Beat, Badamba Range
5. Sri. Tanmaya Behera, Forest Guard, Chhanchunia Beat, Badamba Range

have been suspended for lapses found in duty on their part and departmental action has been started against them.

Also, the JFMC, Badamba has been requested to issue a Non Bailable Warrant against Pradip Parida, Forester, Gopapur Section and Manoj Das, Forester, I/C Badamba Range vide Letter No 2585, Dt 19.06.2022. In addition to this, the draft Departmental Proceedings against Sri. Suresh Kumar Sarangi, Range Office, Manoj Das, Forester, Maniabandha Section, Pradip Parida, Forester, Gopapur Section, Badamba Range have already been submitted to the O/o RCCF, Angul. The process for Premature Retirement of Sri. Suresh Kumar Sarangi, Range Office, Badamba Range have been initiated and the letter to that effect has been submitted to the O/o RCCF, Angul.

Material Evidences collected-

1. Statement of Ashok Kumar Behera, Elephant Tracker
2. Statement of Braja Behera, Elephant Tracker
3. Statement of Biranchi Behera, Elephant Tracker
4. Statement of Suresh Kumar Sarangi, Range Office, Badamba Range.
5. Statement of Manoj Das, Forester, Mania bandha Section, Badamba Range.
6. Statement of Pradip Parida, Forester, Gopapur Section, Badamba Range.
7. Statement of Narendra Dehuri, Forest Guard, Janipadar Beat, Badamba Range.


Conservator of Forests
O/o the PCCF (WL) & CWLW
Odisha, Bhubaneswar

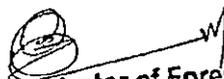
- 29/5

8. Statement of Tanmaya Behera, Forest Guard, Chhanchunia Beat, Badamba Range.
9. Statement of Panchanan Swain, Lincman, TPCODL, Village-Godibandh, PS-Narsingpur.
10. Statement of Saroj Mohanty, Ex Dy. RO I/C Badamba Range.
11. Statement of Akula Behera, S/o-Jugala Behera, At-Kharod, PS-Badamba.
12. Statement of Arjuna Behera, S/o-Krushna Behera, At-Kharod, PS-Badamba.
13. Statement of Abhay Nayak, S/o-Jaya Krushna Nayak, At-Khairpanga, PO-Gopapur, PS-Badamba.
14. Statement of Prabhat Kumar Pradhan, Ex- Forest Guard Janipadar Beat, Badamba Range
15. Statement of Sibanand Baral, Elephant tracker, Chhanchunia Beat, Badamba Range
16. Statement of Kailash Jena, Elephant tracker, Gopapur Beat, Badamba Range
17. Statement of Sabita Rout, Forester, Badamba Section
18. Samples collected from bone marrow, dung, putrefied skin and muscles etc and sent to Centre for wildlife studies, OUAT, Bhubaneswar.

Case NO 4- On dt.14.06.2022 after getting information during the investigation of the cases of recovery of two skeletons from Janipadar Beat of Gopapur Section of Badamba Range by STF, one place in Talachandragiri RF, Compt. No- I, near Bagalapatha in Janipadar Beat of Gopapur section of Badamba Range was excavated by DFO Athgarh and staff of the Division. From the spot, the body parts of a dead male elephant have been recovered (i.e., Skull, bones etc.). During the inspection of bones, it was found that the tusks of the elephant are missing. As per opinion of the VAS, Maniabandha & VAS, Satakosia Wildlife Division, the age of the tusker must be around 25+ years (from the teeth structure).

One UD case No 8B of 2022-23 converted to OR Case NO 15B has been registered in Badamba range in above Case.

In the course of investigation, the 3 nos of Elephant Trackers and the Forest Guard (names given further) were found involved in the disposal of the elephant carcasses in both the cases. As per statement given by the Elephant Trackers,


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A. This case belongs to December/January, 2019. While patrolling inside the Tal Chandragiri RF, Compt. No- I in Janipadar Beat during day time the Prabhat Kumar Pradhan, (Forest Guard, Janipadar Beat at that time) and Biranchi Behera (Elephant Tracker) found slightly decayed dead body of a male elephant. On careful observation they found that the tusks of the male elephant are missing. After seeing this, they came back to the Dabakhola Camp in the same Beat. On the next day, the Forest Guard took three laborers from nursery along with three Elephant Trackers with him and again went to the same spot. On reaching the spot, they have buried the elephant carcass in to the ground with the help of pickaxe and spade and came back.

B. However, in this case it is not clear whether the Forester and other higher officers were informed about this poaching case or not by the Forest Guard as he has not has not confessed it so far.

In this case, the following staff and watcher's involvement has been found when the carcass was buried and disposed without informing the higher authorities at the time when incident occurred,

1. Ashok Kumar Behera (Elephant Tracker) Age-42 years, S/o-Ramachandra Behera, At-Malatipur, PS-Badamba, Dist-Cuttack.
2. Biranchi Behera (Elephant Tracker) Age-43 years, S/o-Sudam Behera, At-Kharod, PS- Badamba.
3. Prabhat Kumar Pradhan, Age-39 years, Ex- Forest Guard Janipadar Beat, Gopapur Section, Badamba Range.

They have been forwarded to the Court of Law. Also, involvement of 4 more people has been found to be involved in disposing the carcass after the poaching incident. Investigation is on to arrest the remaining accused persons.

In relation to this case Prabhat Kumar Pradhan, Age-39 years, Ex- Forest Guard, Janipadar Beat, Gopapur Section, Badamba Range has been suspended for lapses in duty found on his part.

In a further development, during investigation, evidences have been found about the involvement of a notorious poacher syndicate operating in Narsinghpur and Badamba area led


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by one Babuli Mahalik in the above-mentioned poaching case. The efforts are going on to arrest the members of the syndicate.

Material Evidences collected-

1. Statement of Ashok Kumar Behera, Elephant Tracker
2. Statement of Braja Behera, Elephant Tracker
3. Statement of Biranchi Behera, Elephant Tracker
4. Statement of Prabhat Kumar Pradhan, Ex- Forest Guard Janipadar Beat, Badamba Range.
5. Statement of Saroj Mohanty, Ex Dy. RO I/C Badamba Range.
6. Interrogation statement video of Dharmaraj Naik from case 7NE of 2020-21.
7. Samples collected from bone marrow, putrefied skin and muscles, ribs etc and sent to Centre for wildlife studies, OUAT, Bhubaneswar.

Case No-5- On dt. 27.06.2022 after getting information during the investigation of the cases of recovery of three skeletons from Janipadar Beat of Gopapur Section of Badamba Range by STF, one place in Mandapa RF, near village Kusapal in Kusapal Beat of Gopapur section of Badamba Range was excavated by DFO Athgarh and staff of the Division in presence of all the members of Special Investigation Team (SIT). From the spot, the body parts of a dead elephant have been recovered (i.e., Skull, bones etc.). During the inspection of bones, it was found that the bones are in a decomposed state. Hence it is difficult to ascertain the sex of the elephant. However, no tusks or tusses were recovered from the site. As per the opinion of the Expert members of the SIT the age of the elephant must be around 40+ years (From the teeth structure).

One UD case No 10B of 2022-23 has been registered in Badamba range in above Case.

In the course of investigation, the 4 nos of Elephant Trackers (names given further) who were involved in the disposal of the elephant carcasses in the case. As per statement given by the Elephant Trackers,


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A. The elephant had died probably in the month of Nov/Dec of 2018. The Kailash Jena, Elephant Tracker had received the information regarding death of one elephant in Mandap RF of Kusapal Beat at around 1 PM in the afternoon. This information was immediately given to Akhya Pradhan, Forester Gopapur Section (At the time of incident) and Sushant Chandra Lenka, FG, Gopapur Beat (At the time of incident). After getting the information Akhya Pradhan, Sushant Chandra Lenka proceeded to the spot.

After coming back from the spot, they both took along Elephant Trackers namely,

1. Kailash Jena alias Ganesh, Elephant Trackers, Badamba Sadar Section, Village- Khairpanga, PS – Badamba
2. Nidhi Sahoo, Elephant Tracker, Gopapur Beat, Village- Dalcimaru, PS- Badamba
3. Chandrashekhar Mohanty, Elephant Tracker, Gopapur Beat, Village- Malati, PS- Badamba

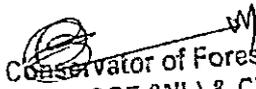
On reaching the spot at around 7 PM in the evening, they saw that elephant trackers namely,

1. Braja Behera (Elephant Tracker) Age- 47 years, S/o-Narahari Behera, At-Kharod, PS-Badamba, Dist-Cuttack.
2. Biranchi Behera (Elephant Tracker) Age-43 years, S/o-Sudam Behera, At-Kharod, PS- Badamba.
3. Pravat Kumar Pradhan, Ex- FG I/C Kusapal Beat, Badamba Range

were already present on the spot.

B. The elephant carcass was already in putrefied condition with maggot growth. Also, they could not identify the sex of the elephant. However, it was an adult elephant carcass. After this, these eight people buried the elephant carcass in to the ground with the help of pickaxe and spade and came back at around 4 AM in the morning.

C. However, in this case it is not clear whether the Range Officer and other higher officers were informed about this elephant death case or not by the Forester as he is no more (succumbed to covid in April 2021).


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- D. Also, the Sushant Chandra Lenka, FG, Gopapur Beat (At the time of incident), now Forester is undergoing training in the Training Institute, Champua. One Summon Letter has been sent to him through Director, Training Institute Champua for attending the enquiry before the undersigned.
- E. Also, Summon Letter has been sent to Sri. Gobind Chandra Rath, Ex- Range Officer, Badamba Range (at the time of incident), now serving in Cuttack Division through DFO, Cuttack Forest Division.

In this case, the following accused persons have already been forwarded to the Court of Law in the cases of recovery of elephant skeletons from Janipadar Beat on 2nd, 3rd & 14th June 2022,

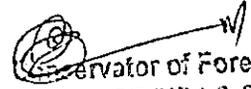
1. Braja Behera (Elephant Tracker) Age- 47 years, S/o-Narahari Behera, At-Kharod, PS-Badamba, Dist-Cuttack.
2. Biranchi Behera (Elephant Tracker) Age-43 years, S/o-Sudam Behera, At-Kharod, PS- Badamba.
3. Prabhat Kumar Pradhan, Age-39 years, Ex- Forest Guard Janipadar Beat, Gopapur Section, Badamba Range

Also, involvement of 3 more people has been found to be involved in disposing the carcass after the poaching incident. Investigation is on to arrest the remaining accused persons.

In relation to this case Prabhat Kumar Pradhan, Age-39 years, Ex- Forest Guard, Janipadar Beat, Gopapur Section, Badamba Range has already been suspended for lapses in duty found on his part.

Material Evidences collected-

1. Statement of Braja Behera, Elephant Tracker, Badamba Range.
2. Statement of Biranchi Behera, Elephant Tracker, Badamba Range.
3. Statement of Prabhat Kumar Pradhan, Ex- Forest Guard Janipadar Beat, Badamba Range.
4. Statement of Kailash Jena, Elephant tracker, Gopapur Beat, Badamba Range
5. Statement of Nidhi Sahoo, Ex-Elephant tracker, Gopapur Beat, Badamba Range


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6. Bone samples collected like hip bones, vertebra, ribs, lower mandible femur etc and sent to Centre for wildlife studies, OUAT, Bhubaneswar.

Constitution of Special Investigation Team (SIT)

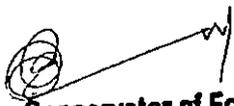
To probe the cases of recovery of body parts of elephants in Athgarh Forest Division a Special Investigation Team (SIT) under the supervision of Chief Conservator of Forests, State Wildlife Headquarters and under Chairmanship of Regional Chief Conservator of Forests, Angul, including Conservator of Forests from State Wildlife Headquarters and one officer from Special Task force (STF) of Odisha Police have been constituted by Government vide No. 10637 Dtd.16.06.2022.

On 27.06.2022 the SIT along with two expert members from OUAT and centurion University had made a field visit and body parts of one elephant was recovered in Kusapal Beat of Badamba Range of Athgarh Division by the SIT and Forest Staff during the visit. The team also visited the 4 spots of recovery of body part in Athgarh Division.

On 08.07.2022, the SIT have interrogated three incumbent DFOs of Athgarh Division regarding death of wild elephants in Athgarh Division.

One habitual poacher involved in elephant poaching in Athgarh, Boudh and Nayagarh Division area have been arrested by Forest staff of Athgarh Division.

Further investigation by the SIT is continuing.


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