

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

Original Application No. 248/2022

News Item published in The Hindu dated 27 March 2022 titled "Digging up the Chambal"

Date of hearing: 27.05.2025

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

Respondents: Ms. Rukhmini Bobde, Mr. Amlaan Kumar & Mr. Vinayak Aren, Advs. for the State of Madhya Pradesh  
Mr. Bhanwar Pal Singh Jadon, Mr. Harsh Vardhan Singh Rajawat, Ms. Gargi Chaturvedi & Ms. Anjali Sharma, Advs. for the State of UP  
Mr. Mukesh Verma & Ms. Vatsala Tripathi, Advs. for the Mining Department, State of UP (Through VC)  
Mr. Paritosh Anil, Adv. for MoEF & CC (Through VC)  
Ms. Prachi Mishra, Adv. for the State of Rajasthan (Through VC)  
Mr. Raghav Sharma, Adv. for MP PCB (Through VC)  
Mr. Amit Shukla, Adv. for UPPCB (Through VC)

**ORDER**

1. At this stage, the Tribunal is considering the issue of illegal sand mining in the State of Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh near National Chambal Wildlife Sanctuary. In compliance of the previous order fresh affidavit dated 23.05.2025 has been filed by the DFO, Morena, State of MP. Learned counsel appearing for the State of MP referring to the Notification dated 03.02.2025 published in the Madhya Pradesh Gazette dated 07.02.2025 (page 1661) has submitted that earlier Notification dated 31.01.2023 excluding the partial revenue area of the sanctuary has now been cancelled by the Notification dated 03.02.2025.

2. In the current affidavit of the State of MP has disclosed the following steps which are stated to have been taken to curb the illegal mining :-

- “(i) To prevent illegal sand mining and transportation Sanctuary, forest staff carry out regular and sustained patrols to prevent illegal sand mining and transportation within the National Chambal Sanctuary. Vehicles engaged in illegal mining activities are confiscated, and after following due legal procedures, cases of forest offences are formally registered against the violators.
- (ii) As part of efforts to prevent illegal sand mining and transportation within the National Chambal Sanctuary, trenches are excavated near riverbanks to act as road barriers, thereby enabling effective control over unlawful sand extraction activities.
- (iii) To devise effective strategies for controlling illegal sand mining and transportation in the National Chambal Sanctuary, district-level, division-level, and state-level meetings are held under the chairmanship of the District Magistrate.
- (iv) CCTV cameras have been installed at the Gharial Centre in Deori and the forest produce inspection checkpoint at Morena depot to monitor illegal sand mining and transportation within the National Chambal Sanctuary.
- (v) For ensuring the protection and conservation of aquatic wildlife within the National Chambal Sanctuary, forest staff conduct regular patrolling along the Chambal River using motorized boats.
- (vi) In order to conserve aquatic wildlife, nests of gharials are identified along riverbank areas and transferred to the Deori Reintroduction. Centre for hatching under the National Chambal Sanctuary. Once the hatchlings grow to a length of 120 cm, they are released into their natural habitat through the "Grow and Release" programme. ensuring their survival and integration into the wild.”

3. A perusal of the above affidavit reveals that the information disclosed is vague. The Affidavit states that in respect of illegal sand mining ‘Forest Offence’ has been registered. Secretary, Environment, State of MP is required to file an affidavit disclosing the provision under which the forest offence has been registered for illegal sand mining. In the affidavit number of cases concerning illegal sand mining that are registered in Deori, Ambah and Sabalgarh have been disclosed. But it has not been disclosed as to in how many cases conviction has taken place.

4. That apart, the disclosure made in paragraph 5 (ix) is not specific and lacks adequate details; therefore the Secretary, Environment in his affidavit is required to disclose the following: -

1. In the last one year, how many CCTV cameras have been installed and working at Gharial Centre in Deori and forest produce inspection check point at Morena Depot and using these CCTV cameras, how many cases of illegal mining have been detected and where the recordings of these CCTV cameras have been stored.

2. How many drones have been deployed in the control and prevention of illegal sand mining and transportation within the National Chambal Sanctuary within last one year and how many cases of illegal sand mining have been detected by use of drones the manner in which the drone recording is saved and the manner in which the immediate action on detection of the sand mining through the drone is taken.

5. Let the affidavit keeping in view the observations made above be filed by the Secretary, Environment, State of MP within six weeks.

6. List on 01.09.2025.

Prakash Shrivastava, CP

Sudhir Agarwal, JM

Dr. A. Senthil Vel, EM

May 27, 2025  
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