

IN THE HIGH COURT OF ANDHRA PRADESH AT AMARAVATI

THURSDAY ,THE SECOND DAY OF APRIL

TWO THOUSAND AND TWENTY SIX

:PRESENT:

THE HONOURABLE SRI JUSTICE D RAMESH



WRIT PETITION NO: 8694, 2357 and 3596 of 2026 and 29747 of 2025

WRIT PETITION NO: 8694 OF 2026

Between:

N Rama Chandra Rao, S/o Suryanarayana, Aged about 42 years, Deputy Conservator of Forests working as District Forest Officer, Kakinada, Address O/o the District Forest Officer, Madhav Nagar, Collector Bungalow Backside Kakinada, East Godavari District - 533003.

Petitioner/s

AND

1. The Union of India, Rep., by its Secretary, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Indira Paryavaran Bhawan Jorbagh Road, New Delhi-110003.
2. Union Public Service Commission, Rep., by its Secretary, Dholpur House, Shahjahan Road, New Delhi - 110069.
3. The State of Andhra Pradesh, Rep., by its Chief Secretary, Secretariat, GAD Velagapudi, Amaravati, Guntur District-522238.

4. The State of Andhra Pradesh, Rep., by its Principal Secretary, Department of Environment and Forests, Secretariat, Velagapudi, Amaravati, Guntur District - 522238.
5. The Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (PCCF) and Head of Forest Force, Aranya Bhavan, PVS Land Mark, Opposite to IHC Corporate, Mangalagiri, Guntur District, Andhra Pradesh - 522503.

Respondents

Petition under Article 226 of the Constitution of India praying that in the circumstances stated in the affidavit filed therewith, the High Court may be pleased to issue an appropriate writ, order or direction, more particularly one in the nature of Writ of Mandamus declaring the 5th Respondent's proceedings in Rc.No.EFS02-11026/3/2024-ADMIN SEC PCCF- Admn-1, dated 25.03.2026 requesting to prepare the select list proposals for the years 2020-2023 as arbitrary, illegal, null and void and against the norms of public policy and principles of natural justice and violative of Articles 14 and 16 of the Constitution of India and to set aside the same and to issue a consequential direction directing the respondent authorities not to consider the promotions of State Forest Service (SFS) Officers to India Forest Service (IFS) Cadre for the select list years 2020, 2021, 2022 and 2023 in pursuance of the 5th Respondent's proceedings dated 25.03.2026 and set aside the same

IA NO: 1 OF 2026

Petition under Section 151 CPC praying that in the circumstances stated in the affidavit filed in support of the petition, the High Court may be pleased to grant stay of all further proceedings in pursuance of the proceedings in Rc.No.EFS02-11026/3/2024- ADMIN SEC PCCF-Admn-1, dated 25.03.2026 issued by the 5th Respondent, pending disposal of the above Writ Petition.

WRIT PETITION NO: 2357 OF 2026

Between:

K Rajasekar Rao, S/o. K Daniel (late) Aged about 55 years, working as Divisional Forest Officer, Social Forestry Division, Ongole Prakasham District

Petitioner

AND

1. THE UNION OF INDIA, Represented by its Secretary, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change Indira Pariyavaran Bhavan, Jorbagh Road, New Delhi - 110003.
2. Union Public Service Commission, Represented by its Secretary, Dholpur House, Shahjahan Road New Delhi- 110069.
3. The State of Andhra Pradesh, Represented by its Chief Secretary, Andhra Pradesh Secretariat, Amaravathi, Velgapudi, Guntur.
4. The State of Andhra Pradesh, Represented by Principal Secretary to Government Environment, Forest, Science and Technology, Velagpudi, Amaravathi, Guntur.
5. The Principal Chief Conservator of Forest, Head of Forest Force, Aranya Bhavan, EVC Landmark, Opposite to IHC Corporate, Mangalagiri Guntur District, Andhra Pradesh.
6. P. Maruthi Prasada Rao, S/o P. Hanumantha Rao, Aged about 46 years, Occ Sub Divisional Forest Officer, Macherla, Palnadu District - 522426.
7. Pushpa Sowjanya Jasti, W/o Satheesh Chandra B, aged about 44 years, Occ presently working as Divisional Manager, AP Forest Development Corporation, Eluru. R/o Flat No.115, RK Sai Siddartha

Apartments, Gorantla, Guntur District - 522034. Respondent Nos.6 and 7 impleaded as per Court Order dated 02.04.2026 vide IA.No.4 of 2026 in WP.No.2357 of 2026.

8. Pokala Bhagavan Narayana Kumar, S/o Venkata Narasimha Rao, Aged about 46 Years, Working as Assistant Conservator of Forest, Government of Andhra Pradesh, (Now on deputation in APCRDA), R/o Tadepally, Guntur District. Respondent No.8 impleaded as per Court Order dated 02.04.2026 vide IA.No.5 of 2026 in WP.No.2357 of 2026.

Respondents

Petition under Article 226 of the Constitution of India praying that in the circumstances stated in the affidavit filed therewith, the High Court may be pleased to issue a Writ of Mandamus declaring the orders passed by the Respondent No.1 Union of India in Orders No. 17013/19/2022-IFS.II, dated 16.09.2025 in not giving concurrence to the minutes of the Selection Committee SCM dated 18.05.2025 for effecting promotion to the post of IFS from State Forest Service under IFS Promotion Regulations 1966 as illegal, arbitrary, violates Article 14, 16 and 21 of the Constitution of India and contrary to the judgment rendered by the Honble Supreme Court of India in SLPC No. 1253 of 2024 dated 22.08.2025 particularly last two paragraphs and contrary to the principle of prospective application of law laid down by the Honble Supreme Court of India 1993 Volume 4 SCC 727 CB and contrary to law laid down by the Honble Supreme Court of India 1996 Volume 6 SCC 721 SC, 1993 Supplementary SCC 575 and 1996 Volume 11 SCC 342 and consequentially declare that the petitioner is entitled for promotion from State Forest Service as per the recommendations of the minutes of Selection Committee for the select year 2021 with all consequentially attendant benefits

IA NO: 3 OF 2026

Petition under Section 151 CPC praying that in the circumstances stated in the affidavit filed in support of the petition, the High

Court may be pleased may be pleased to issue a direction directing the 1st Respondent to consider the representation of the petitioner dated 02.01.2025, notwithstanding the impugned orders No. 17013/19/2022-IFS.II dated 16.09.2025, passed by the Respondent No.1 for consideration of his case for the promotion to the post of IFS as per the Selection Committee Minutes dated 18.08.2025, pending disposal of the Writ Petition and pass any other order or Orders as this Hon'ble Court may deem fit and proper in the facts and circumstances of the case, Pending disposal of WP 2357 of 2026, on the file of the High Court.

IA NO: 2 OF 2026

Petition under Section 151 CPC praying that in the circumstances stated in the affidavit filed in support of the petition, the High Court may be pleased to issue a direction directing the Respondents to forthwith, consider the case of the Petitioner for promotion to IFS from State Forest Service, as per the minutes of selection committee dated 18.08.2025, for the select year 2021 notwithstanding the impugned orders No. 17013/19/2022-IFS.II dated 16.09.2025, passed by the Respondent No. 1, pending disposal of the Writ Petition and pass any other order or Orders as this Hon'ble Court may deem fit and proper in the facts and circumstances of the case, Pending disposal of WP 2357 of 2026, on the file of the High Court.

IA NO: 1 OF 2026

Petition under Section 151 CPC praying that in the circumstances stated in the affidavit filed in support of the petition, the High Court may be pleased to suspend the operation of the orders passed by the Respondent No.1 in Order No. 17013/19/2022-IFS.II, dated 16.09.2025, pending disposal of the Writ Petition and pass any other order or Orders as this Hon'ble Court may deem fit and proper in the facts and circumstances of the case., Pending disposal of WP 2357 of 2026, on the file of the High Court.

IA NO: 6 OF 2026

Petition under Section 151 CPC praying that in the circumstances stated in the affidavit filed in support of the petition, the High Court may be pleased to issue an Interim Direction staying all further Proceedings in respect of the Proceedings of the 5 Respondent issued in Rc.No.EFS02-11026/3/2024-ADMN SEC PCCF- Admn-1, dated 25.03.2026, pending disposal of the Writ Petition

WRIT PETITION NO: 3596 OF 2026

Between:

1. Thumati Nagamaneswari, W/o V. Sreenivasulu (Late), Aged about 52 years, District Forest Officer, Nandyal District, O/o District Forest Officer, Near Noonepalli Bus Stop, Nandyal, Kumool District - 518 501.
2. Mangamma Gudupuru, D/o Sriramulu Gudupuru (Late), Aged about 42 years. Working as Curator, IGZP, Visakhapatnam, O/o Curator, Indira Gandhi Zoological Park, Visakhapatnam -530 001.

Petitioner

AND

1. The Union of India, Rep. by its Secretary, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate change, Indira Paryavaran Bhawan, 6th floor Jorbhag Road, Ali Ganj, New Delhi-110003.
2. . Union Public Service Commission, Rep. by its Secretary, Dholpur House, Shah Jahn Road, New Delhi - 110001
3. The State of Andhra Pradesh, Rep. By its Chief Secretary, General Administration, Secretariat, Velagapudi, Amaravati, Guntur- 522238

4. The State of Andhra Pradesh, Rep. by its Prl. Secretary to Department of Environment and Forest Secretariat, Velagapupdi, Amaravati, Guntur 522238
5. The Prl. Chief Conservator of Forest (PCCF), Head of Forest Force, Aranya Bhawan, PVS Land mark, Opp IHC Corporate, Mangalagiri, Guntur District, AP- 522503.
6. P. Maruthi Prasada Rao, S/o P. Hanumantha Rao, Aged about 46 years, Occ Sub Divisional Forest Officer, Macherla, Palnadu District - 522426.
7. Pushpa Sowjanya Jasti, W/o Satheesh Chandra B, aged about 44 years, Occ presently working as Divisional Manager, AP Forest Development Corporation, Eluru. R/o Flat No.115, RK Sai Siddartha Apartments, Gorantla, Guntur District - 522034.

(Respondent Nos.6 and 7 impleaded as per Court Order dated 02.04.2026 vide IA.No.3 of 2026 in WP.No.3596 of 2026).

8. Pokala Bhagavan Narayana Kumar, S/o Venkata Narasimha Rao, Aged about 46 Years, Working as Assistant Conservator of Forest, Government of Andhra Pradesh, (Now on deputation in APCRDA), R/o Tadepally, Guntur District.

(Respondent No.8 impleaded as per Court Order dated 02.04.2026 vide IA.No.4 of 2026 in WP.No.3596 of 2026.)

Respondents

Petition under Article 226 of the Constitution of India praying that in the circumstances stated in the affidavit filed therewith, the High Court may be pleased to issue a writ or direction more particularly one in the nature of writ of mandamus declaring the impugned letters of the 1st respondent dated 28.11.2025 and to UPSC dated 16.09.2025 in not giving concurrence to the

merits of the selection committee SCM, dated 18.05.2025 for effecting promotion to the post of IFS from State Forest Service under IFS promotion Regulations, 1966 as illegal, arbitrary, without jurisdiction and violative of Articles 14, 16 and 21 of Constitution of India and contrary to the judgment rendered by the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India in SLP(civil) No. 1253 of 2024 dated, 22.08.2025 and contrary to the principles of prospective application of law laid down by the Supreme Court of India in 1966 volume II SCC 342 and set aside the same and consequently direct the respondents to act upon forthwith and give effect to the selection committee meeting held on 18.08.2025 for selections list of 2020 to 2023

IA NO: 2 OF 2026

Petition under Section 151 CPC praying that in the circumstances stated in the affidavit filed in support of the petition, the High Court may be pleased to direct the respondents to consider the case of the petitioners for promotion to IFS from State Forest Service forthwith as per the minutes of the Selection Committee dated 18.08.2025 notwithstanding the impugned orders no. 17013 719/ 2022-IFS -II, dated 16.09.2025 passed by the 1st respondent pending disposal of the writ petition

IA NO: 1 OF 2026

Petition under Section 151 CPC praying that in the circumstances stated in the affidavit filed in support of the petition, the High Court may be pleased to suspend the orders dt.16\09\2025 and 28\11\2025 no. 17013 719/ 2022-IFS -II, issued by the 1st respondent.

WRIT PETITION NO: 29747 OF 2025

Between:

1. N Rama Chandra Rao, S/o. Suryanarayana, Age 41, Deputy Conservator of Forests working as District Forest Officer, Kakinada,

Address O/o. District Forest Officer, Madhav Nagar, Collector bungalow backside, Kakinada 533003.

2. .K.Vinod Kumar, S/o. K. Subbaiah, Age 45, Deputy Conservator of Forests, working as District Forest Officer, Prakasam, Address O/o. District Forest Officer, Sankshema complex, Bhagyanagar, South bye pass Road, Ongole 523001. 3.
3. D.Phani Kumar Naidu,, S/o D Sankar Naidu, Age 37, Deputy Conservator of Forests, working as Deputy Conservator of Forests, TTD, Hare Rama Hare Krishna Road, Tirupati 517501.

Petitioner

AND

1. The Government of India, Rep. by its Secretary, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Indira Paryavaran Bhawan, Jorbagh Road, New Delhi-110003 2.
2. Union Public Service Commission, Rep. by its Secretary, Dholpur House, Shahjahan Road, New Delhi-110069. 3
3. The State of Andhra Pradesh, . Rep. by its Chief Secretary, Secretariat, Velagapudi, Amaravati, Guntur-522238, Andhra Pradesh. 4.
4. The State of Andhra Pradesh, Rep. by its Principal Secretary to Department of Environment Forests, Secretariat, Velagapudi, Amaravati, Guntur-522238, Andhra Pradesh. S.
5. The Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (PCCF) Head of Forest Force, Aranya Bhavan, PVS Land mark. Opposite to IHC Corporate, Mangalagiri, Guntur District, Andhra Pradesh-522503.
6. P. Maruthi Prasada Rao,, S/o P. Hanumantha Rao, Aged about 46 years, Occ Sub Divisional Forest Officer, Macherla, Palnadu District.

7. Pushpa Sowjanya Jasti,, W/o Satheesh Chandra B, aged about 44 years, Occ presently working as Divisional Manager, AP Forest Development Corporation, Eluru. R/o Flat No.115, RK Sai Siddartha Apartments, Gorantla, Guntur District.

(Respondent Nos.6 and 7 impleaded as per Court Order dated 02.04.2026 vide IA.No.2 of 2025 in WP.No.29747 of 2025).

Respondents

Petition under Article 226 of the Constitution of India praying that in the circumstances stated in the affidavit filed therewith, the High Court may be pleased Writ, Order or Direction more particularly in the nature of Mandamus, declaring the action of the Respondent1 for issuing the Order No.17013/19/2022-IFS-II dt.16.09.2025 stalling the 2020-2023 selection/recruitment process, for appointment to the Indian Forest Service as arbitrary, illegal, unconstitutional and violative of Articles 14 and 16 of the Constitution of India. (ii) to declare the proceedings of 2nd respondent Vide F.No.10/1/2024-AIS dt. 09-12-2025 is illegal and contravention of judgment of Honble Supreme court dt. 22-08-2025 made in SLP c No. 1253 of 2024 and consequently Direct the Respondents to forthwith resume and complete the recruitment/selection process for the years 2020-2023 by setting aside the order no. 17013/19/2022IFSII dt. 16-09-2025 and proceedings vide F.No. 10/1/2024 dt. 09-12-2025 and Pass such other order or orders as this Honble Court may deem fit and proper in the interests of justice.

Main Prayer amended/substituted as per Court Order dated 02.04.2026 vide IA No.1 of 2026 in WP No.29747 of 2025.

IA NO: 2 OF 2026

Petition 16(A) of Writ Rule, praying that in the circumstances stated in the affidavit filed in support of the petition, the High Court may be

pleased to implead the petitioner proposed respondents No.8 as Respondents No.8 in WP No 29747 of 2025 and to miscellaneous Petitions/ Interlocutory Applications,

IA NO: 1 OF 2025

Petition under Section 151 CPC praying that in the circumstances stated in the affidavit filed in support of the petition, the High Court may be pleased to Suspend the Order No.17013/19/2022-IFS-II dt. 16.09.2025 issued by Respondent No.1 pending disposal of the above writ petition.

The petition coming on for hearing, upon perusing the Petition and the affidavit filed in support thereof and upon hearing the arguments of Sri VENKAT SAILENDRA G Advocate for the Petitioner(s), and the Court made the following.

COMMON ORDER

The writ petitions are filed assailing the communication of the 1st respondent dated 16.09.2025, wherein the 1st respondent in concurrence with the recommendations made by the selection committee on 18.08.2025 directed respondent Nos.3 to 5 to review and send a fresh selection committee list for the years 2020 to 2023.

Sri Gudapati Venkateswara Rao, Sri N.Subba Rao, learned Senior Counsels and Sri P.V.Ramana, learned counsel appearing on behalf of the petitioners submitted that the impugned communication is contrary to the regulations. The 1st respondent has no power to return the entire panel. They have also relied on the judgment passed by the Hon'ble Apex Court in P.Maruthi Prasada Rao v. The State of Andhra Pradesh (2025 INSC 1019), more particularly paragraph No.21, wherein it was held that Forest Range Officers are also eligible for empanelment and only direction given for filling up vacancies in the IFOS was to initiate the

process afresh. But, surprisingly, the 1st respondent in the impugned communication has not considered the selection committee panel which was already sent on 18.08.2025. If at all as directed by the Hon'ble Apex Court, if any fresh panels are prepared, the State should also consider claims of the Forest Range Officers. Hence, the impugned communication is contrary to the directions issued by the Hon'ble Apex Court and also to Regulation 10 of the Indian Forest Service (Appointment by Promotion) Regulations, 1966.

Per contra, learned counsels appearing on behalf of impleaded respondent Nos.6 to 8 submitted that impleaded respondent Nos.6 to 8 have been contesting the matter since 2013. However, their claims were negated by the Tribunal in the earlier litigation. But, by virtue of the interim orders granted by the Hon'ble Apex Court, they are entitled for inclusion of their posts from 2020 panel onwards. Further, they have also raised an objection with regard to the maintainability of the writ petitions. It is contended that if the petitioners have any grievance, they ought to have approached the Central Administrative Tribunal and they are not entitled to file the writ petitions straightaway in the High Court, which is contrary to the principles laid down in *L.Chandra Kumar v. Union of India* ((1997) 3 SCC 261).

Sri T.Niranjan, learned Central Government Standing Counsel for Union of India appearing for the 1st respondent, requested time to file counter.

Learned counsel for the petitioners submitted that by virtue of the impugned communication, now the State is preparing fresh panels.

Considering the said submissions and as the 1st respondent has not yet filed any counter, there shall be a direction to the respondents to maintain status quo for a period of four (4) weeks.

List the matters after three (3) weeks for filing counter.

//TRUE COPY//

SD/- K.SRINIVASA RAJU
ASSISTANT REGISTRAR

SECTION OFFICER

To,

1. The Secretary , Union of India, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate change, Indira Paryavaran Bhawan, 6th floor Jorbhag Road, Ali Ganj, New Delhi-110003.
2. The Secretary, Union Public Service Commission, Dholpur House, Shah Jahn Road, New Delhi - 110001
3. The Chief Secretary State of Andhra Pradesh, General Administration, Secretariat, Velagapudi, Amaravati, Guntur- 522238
4. The Prl. Secretary to Department of Environment and Forest Secretariat ,State of Andhra Pradesh, Velagapupdi, Amaravati, Guntur 522238
5. The Prl. Chief Conservator of Forest (PCCF), Head of Forest Force, Aranya Bhawan, PVS Land mark, Opp IHC Corporate, Mangalagiri, Guntur District, AP- 522503.
6. P. Maruthi Prasada Rao, S/o P. Hanumantha Rao, Aged about 46 years, Occ Sub Divisional Forest Officer, Macherla, Palnadu District - 522426.
7. Pushpa Sowjanya Jasti, W/o Satheesh Chandra B, aged about 44 years, Occ presently working as Divisional Manager, AP Forest Development Corporation, Eluru. R/o Flat No.115, RK Sai Siddartha Apartments, Gorantla, Guntur District - 522034. Respondent Nos.6 and 7 impleaded as per Court Order dated 02.04.2026 vide IA.No.3 of 2026 in WP.No.3596 of 2026.
8. Pokala Bhagavan Narayana Kumar, S/o Venkata Narasimha Rao, Aged about 46 Years, Working as Assistant Conservator of Forest,

Government of Andhra Pradesh, (Now on deputation in APCRDA), R/o
Tadepally, Guntur District. Respondent No.8 impleaded as per Court
Order dated 02.04.2026 vide IA.No.4 of 2026 in WP.No.3596 of 2026.
(1-8 by RPAD)

9. One CC to SRI. VENKAT SAILENDRA G Advocate [OPUC]

10. One spare copy

HIGH COURT

DR, J

DATED:02/04/2026

LIST THE MATTER AFTER THREE WEEKS

ORDER



WRIT PETITION NO: 8694, 2357 and 3596 of 2026 and 29747 of 2025

DIRECTION