



W.P.No.15120 of 2019

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT MADRAS

DATED : 03.07.2026

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CORAM :

THE HONOURABLE MR. JUSTICE N. SATHISH KUMAR

AND

THE HONOURABLE MR. JUSTICE D.BHARATHA CHAKRAVARTHY

W.P.No.15120 of 2019

and

W.M.P.No.15112 of 2019

W.P.No.15120 of 2019

G.Subramania Koushik

... Petitioner (s)

Vs.

1. The Principal Secretary to Government of Tamil Nadu,
Environment and Forest Department,
Secretariat,
Fort St. George,
Chennai - 600 009 and 31 others

... Respondent(s)

W.M.P.No.15112 of 2019

G.Subramania Koushik

... Petitioner (s)

Vs

- 1.The Principal Secretary to Government of Tamil Nadu,
Environment and Forest Department,
Secretariat, Fort St. George,
Chennai 600 009 and 30 others

... Respondent(s)



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For Petitioner :

Mr.T.V.Suresh Kumar
M/s. Genicon & Associates;
Mr.R.Krishnaswamy in W.M.P.No.2806 of 2026

For Respondent(s):

Mr.P.V.Balasubramaniam,
Additional Advocate General,
assisted by Mr.K.Surendar,
Government Pleader and
Mr.G.Abraham Prabhu, Government Counsel
for RR1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14 and 30
Mrs.A.Sri Jeyanthi for R4
Mr.R.Srinivas,
Senior Counsel for Mr.K.Madhan for R12
Mr.V.Chandrasekaran, Senior Panel Counsel
for RR15, 28, 29, 32
Mr.B.N.Suchindran,
Standing Counsel for TNPCB for R16
Mr.Madhan Babu for R17
Mr.R.S.Diwaagar, M/s.Vivrti Law for R18 and R20
Mr.G.Kalyan Jhabakh
for M/s.Surana and Surana for R19
Mr.G.Prabhu for R21
Mr.R.Sathish Kumar for R22
Ms.Vanitha Bharghava for R23
Mr.Thriyambak J. Kannan for R24
Mr.Vinod Kumar for M/s.J.Sagav Associates for R25
Mr.Arun C.Mohan for R26
Mr.S.Arunkumar for R27
R31 - Mr.S.Muralidharan (P-I-P)
Mr.K.Sathishkumar,
Standing Counsel for TASMACH
Mr.P.T.Ramkumar, Standing Counsel for Railways



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Amici Curiae

1. Mr.C.Mohan, Advocate
2. Mr.T.Mohan, Senior Advocate
3. Mr.M.Santhanaraman, Advocate
4. Mr.Rahul Balaji, Advocate

ORDER

Uncontrolled Jeep Safari in Mudumalai Buffer Zone :

With reference to the uncontrolled private Jeep Safari in Mudumalai Buffer Zone and the surrounding areas in the various roads relating to the Mudumalai Tiger Reserve is concerned, today, a status report is filed by the learned Additional Advocate General.

2.It is stated that the details are placed before the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) and vide proceedings dated 28.07.2025, it was placed for its approval. Thereafter, suggestions were received on 18.03.2026 and the revised draft Tiger Conservation Plan (TCP) has been submitted on 11.06.2026. It is further submitted that, post approval of the TCP by NTCA, the provisions of TCP related to regularisation of Jeep Safari operations will be implemented in the Buffer Zone of Mudumalai Tiger Reserve in consonance with the guidelines of the NTCA as well the Hon'ble Court directions. The same is in procedure as per the Statute and let the same be carried on.

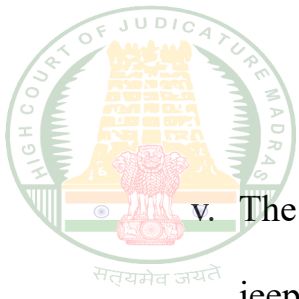


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3. However, considering the several videos that show the violations, whereby, these Jeep drivers, even in the middle of the night, chase the animals and also considering the repeated instances of misbehaviour and interference with the wild animals, particularly, when these Jeeps had been repeatedly honking and chasing the elephants and the entire thing is played as if it is a sport, the matter is of deep concern and anguish for the Court. The wildlife has to be preserved and protected and it is their own habitat. In view thereof, we are constrained to issue the following directions to be followed, pending the approval of the TCP by NTCA and adopting the same :

- i. Check posts must be established on the roads leading to Moyar, Chemmanatham, Singara and Bokkapuram for effective regulation and monitoring of vehicular movement.
- ii. The jeeps operated by local residents and members of tribal communities shall be preferred and registered with the Forest Department, and only such registered vehicles shall be permitted to transport tourists on the said roads.
- iii. The jeeps operating in this areas shall have all statutory compliances under Motor Vehicles Act, including emission test certificate.
- iv. The Forest Department shall assess the carrying capacity of each road and determine the maximum number of safari trips that may be permitted per day and such limits shall be strictly enforced.



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v. The Forest Department is directed to deploy patrol vehicles to ensure that jeep operators and tourists do not disturb, harass or otherwise cause nuisance to wildlife.

vi. Jeep safari operations on the aforesaid roads shall not be permitted before 6.00 a.m. and beyond 5.30 p.m.

vii. The Forest Department is permitted to impose such further conditions and restrictions as may be considered necessary for the protection of wildlife and their habitats.

4. Let the above directions be followed and implemented by the respondents, pending the final approval and regulations to be framed by them.

5. Call on 31.07.2026.

Uphill movement on Kalhatti Ghat Road :

6. As far as the ban on the uphill movement of the tourist vehicles on the Kalhatti Ghat Road is concerned, it is seen from the memo filed by the learned *Amici Curiae* and the various news reports that were filed that, there was a free movement of wildlife improving the overall conditions along the Ghat Road. As a matter of fact, though it was allowed for the season in May, the learned *Amici Curiae* would plead that the said order should be extended throughout the year.

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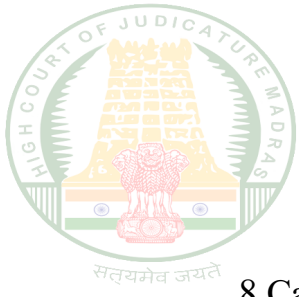


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The reasons are that the road is in between the crucial elephant migratory corridor.

The uphill movement of vehicles poses risk to both the animals and the persons stationed there. It is further stated that, all along during the season, when it is stopped, the wildlife has started moving. Now, once again, letting the vehicles from 21.06.2026 will further hamper and result in further man-animal conflict. In this regard, even the respondents have stated that they have viewed frequent movement of elephants and they are also planning for establishing a permanent check post.

7. With reference to this subject, let a status report be filed with reference to the observance that is made by the Forest Department during the ban period and also with reference to the necessity or otherwise of letting in traffic in the Kalhatti Ghat Road, when during the season the tourist vehicles had managed without traffic by using the other roads itself. Thereafter, this Court will consider and examine the issue and pass appropriate orders, especially considering implementing the ban of tourist vehicles in the Kalhatti Ghat Road throughout the year.



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8.Call on 31.07.2026. Meanwhile, the uphill movement of the tourist vehicles shall remain suspended. This ban will not apply to the local vehicles and local residents.

[N.S.K.J.,] [D.B.C.J.,]
03.07.2026

mkn

To

1. The Principal Secretary to Government of Tamil Nadu,
Environment and Forest Department,
Secretariat,
Fort St. George,
Chennai - 600 009.
2. The District Collector,
The Nilgiris District,
Collectorate,
Ooty – 643 001.
3. The Commissioner,
Udhagamandalam Municipality,
Ooty,
The Nilgiris District.
4. The Commissioner,
Coonoor Municipality,
Coonoor,
The Nilgiris District.
5. The Commissioner,
Gudalur Municipality,
Gudalur,
The Nilgiris District.



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6. The Commissioner,
Kotagiri Town Panchayath,
Kotagiri,
The Nilgiris District.
7. The Field Director,
Mudumalai Tiger Reserve,
Mount Stuart Hill,
Ooty, The Nilgiris.
8. The District Forest Officer
The Nilgiris District,
Mount Stuart Hill,
Ooty – 643 001.
9. The Commissioner,
Kodaikanal Municipality,
Kodaikanal,
Dindigul District.
10. The Principal Secretary to Government,
Transports Department,
Secretariat,
Fort St. George,
Chennai – 600 009.
11. The Transport Commissioner,
Government of Tamil Nadu,
Commissionerate of Transport and Road Safety,
Ezhilagam, PWD Estate,
Chepauk, Triplicane, Chennai – 600 005.
12. The Principal Secretary,
Department of Municipal Administration,
Urban and Water Supply, Government of Tamil Nadu,
Secretariat, Fort St. George,
Chennai – 600 009.



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13. The Additional Chief Secretary,
Department of Tourism,
Culture and Religious Endowments Department,
Government of Tamil Nadu, Secretariat,
Fort St. George, Chennai – 600 009.
14. The Secretary to the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways,
Transport Bhawan, No.1, Parliament Street, New Delhi – 110 001.
15. Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board,
Represented by its Chairman,
No.76, Mount Salai, Guindy, Chennai – 600 032.
16. The Tamil Nadu Co-operative Milk Producers
Federation Limited, (AAVIN),
AAVIN ILLAM, TCMPF Ltd.,
3A, Pasumpon Muthuramalingar Salai,
Nandanam, Chennai – 600 035.
17. The Secretary to Government,
Ministry of Health and Family Welfare,
Government of India, Nirman Bhawan, New Delhi – 110 003.
18. The Secretary to Government,
Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change,
Government of India,
Indira Paryavaran
Bhawan, Jorbagh Road, New Delhi – 110 003.
19. The Secretary to Government,
Health and Family Welfare Department,
Government of Tamil Nadu, Fort St. George,
Chennai – 600 009.
20. The Chairperson,
Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI)
3rd and 4th Floor, FDA Bhawan,
Kotla Road near Bal Bhawan,
New Delhi – 110 002.



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N. SATHISH KUMAR. J.

AND

D. BHARATHA CHAKRAVARTHY. J.

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