

S U P R E M E C O U R T O F I N D I A
R E C O R D O F P R O C E E D I N G S

SUO MOTO WRIT PETITION (CIVIL) No.2/2026

IN RE: ILLEGAL SAND MINING IN THE NATIONAL CHAMBAL SANCTUARY
AND THREAT TO ENDANGERED AQUATIC WILDLIFE

Date : 20-03-2026 This petition was called on for hearing today.

CORAM :

HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE VIKRAM NATH
HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE SANDEEP MEHTA

For Petitioner(s) : By Courts Motion

For Respondent(s) : Mr. Shiv Mangal Sharma, Addl. Adv. Gen.
Mr. Saurabh Rajpal, Adv.
Ms. Nidhi Jaswal, AOR

The Court made the following
O R D E R

1. The instant *suo moto* writ petition came to be registered based on certain news reports pertaining to rampant illegal mining from the sand banks of Chambal River thereby destroying the habitats of the protected species of Gharial as has been recorded in the proceedings dated 13th March, 2026. The news reports give a vivid description of the destruction of the habitat of various aquatic animals in addition to that of Gharials.

2. The news reports also refer to the de-notification of 732 hectares from the National Chambal Gharial Sanctuary by the State of Rajasthan as part of the so-called boundary rationalisation exercise.

3. While detailed consideration of these and related issues would be made after receiving the response from the various State Governments and the Departments, for the present, we may observe that every act of destruction of wildlife habitat in a protected area would attract offences and penalties under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972; the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986; the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980; the Biological Diversity Act, 2002; the Indian Forest Act, 1927 and other applicable statutes as well as rules framed thereunder.

4. The officials of the departments concerned, i.e., forest, mining, and water resources as well as the police authorities of the States of Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh, by their lethargy and inaction, would be liable to be held vicariously liable for aiding and abetting the

destruction of these precious habitats by allowing illegal sand mining to continue.

5. We shall issue suitable exhaustive directions in this regard once the response of all the departments and the State Governments are received on record.

6. The Registry is directed to implead and issue notice to the following: -

- (i) States of Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh through their Principal Secretaries;
- (ii) Director Generals of Police of States of Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh;
- (iii) Principal Secretaries of the Departments of Mining and Geology of the States of Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh;
- (iv) Principal Secretaries of the Departments of Forests of States of Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh;
- (v) Principal Secretaries of the Departments of Water Resources of the States of Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh; and
- (vi) Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC), Union of India through its

Secretary.

7. We appoint Shri Nikhil Goel, Senior Advocate and Ms. Rupali Samuel, Advocate-on-Record, as *Amicus Curiae* to assist the Court in this matter.

8. Let notice of these proceedings be also issued to Central Empowered Committee (CEC), constituted by this Court [now working under a Statute, namely, Environment (Protection) Act, 1986].

9. Name of Ms. Samuel be reflected in the cause list henceforth.

10. Copy of this order shall be sent to all the afore-stated impleaded parties as well as to the Central Empowered Committee (CEC).

11. List again on 2nd April, 2026.

(NEETU KHAJURIA)
ASSISTANT REGISTRAR-CUM-PS

(RANJANA SHAILEY)
ASSISTANT REGISTRAR