

# DEMOLISH WALL ON ELEPHANT CORRIDOR: SUPREME COURT TELLS ASSAM'S NUMALIGARH REFINERY

Relevant for: Environment | Topic: Biodiversity, Ecology, and Wildlife Related Issues

Photo: Twitter/@NRL\_MoPNG

The Supreme Court on Friday dismissed an appeal filed by Numaligarh Refinery Ltd. (NRL) and ordered demolition of a 2.2-km boundary wall erected on an elephant migration corridor in eastern Assam's Golaghat district.

Environmentalists had objected to the wall the refinery had erected in 2011 for a proposed township in – as the National Green Tribunal (NGT) had observed later – a part of the Deopahar Reserve Forest.

The refinery received flak from wildlife activists when a seven-year-old male elephant died of haemorrhage in May 2015 after trying to force its way through the wall. Videos also captured herds trying to cross the high boundary wall with barbed wire in vain. In August 2016, the NGT ordered NRL to demolish the wall within a month, but only a 289-metre stretch was demolished.

Dismissing the NRL's appeal in the apex court, Justice D.Y. Chandrachud said there cannot be any township as elephants have the first right on forest. "Elephants do not go to office in a designated route. We cannot encroach upon the elephant's area," he observed.

"I hope NRL will take the Supreme Court ruling seriously and demolish the entire boundary. As it is, the wall and the refinery township violates the no-development zone around Kaziranga National Park declared by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change in 1996," green activist Rohit Choudhury told *The Hindu*.

Uttarakhand High Court dismissed a case filed by Baba Ramdev's Divya Pharmacy that pleaded against sharing revenues from indigenous biological resources with local communities

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