

## NGT seeks response on destruction of mangrove cover

The National Green Tribunal has granted a week's time to the Deendayal Port Trust to respond to a plea alleging destruction of mangrove cover along coastal Gujarat.

A Bench headed by NGT acting chairperson Jawad Rahim, in its order dated May 10, said, "We permit respondent number 6 (Deendayal Port Trust) to file reply and produce such documents as they feel would support their contentions, within one week from now."

The Tribunal's directions came while hearing a plea moved by the Kutch Camel Breeders' Association that had alleged that mangroves were being cleared in a "rampant" manner by the authorities in violation of the provisions mentioned in the Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) Notification of 2011.

Earlier, the Bench had issued notices to the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change, the Gujarat State Coastal Zone Management Authority (GCZMA) and the State Forest department.

Seeking directions to authorities to "immediately stop the ongoing destruction", the plea had alleged that the Forest department had failed to take preventive measures in checking the "indiscriminate destruction".

"Incessant destruction activities have severely diminished the cover of sparse mangroves found at the said site, as well as destroyed the habitat of the indigenous Kharai camels, in addition to disrupting livelihoods of villagers dependent on these mangroves" read the plea.

END

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