

PIB



Friday, 27 August 2010

MUMBAI THIRUVANANTHAPURAM KOLKATA HYDERABAD CHENNAI BANGALORE AIZAWL

Thursday, August 26, 2010

Ministry of Tribal Affairs

SETTLE RIGHTS OF TRIBALS FIRST - BHURIA

16:41 IST

Shri Kanti Lal Bhuria, the Minister of Tribal Affairs has taken a serious note of the complaints received in the Ministry that some Scheduled Tribe persons living in National Parks and Sanctuaries are being forced to leave these areas without their rights getting settled. The Minister has written to the Chief Ministers of Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand in this regard. Besides, with timely coordination with the Ministry of Environment and Forests, the instructions were issued to all State Forest Departments to faithfully implement the provisions of the Forest Rights Act before taking any decision to evict the Scheduled Tribes living in these areas.

In his letter, Shri Bhuria has communicated to State governments that as per the information available with the Ministry, critical wildlife habitats in the National Parks and Sanctuaries are yet to be determined and notified under Section 2(b) of the Act, and, therefore, no action has been taken by State / UT Governments for the recognition and vesting of rights of forest dwelling Scheduled Tribes and other traditional forest dwellers occupying forest land in the National Parks and Sanctuaries. In fact, the rights need to be recognized first in the National Parks and Sanctuaries before undertaking any exercise for resettlement. No eviction and re-settlement is permissible till all the formalities are completed. And this should be done keeping in view the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006 that envisages the recognition and vesting of forest rights in forest dwelling Scheduled Tribes and other traditional forest dwellers over forest land in the National Parks and Sanctuaries also.

Consequently Ministry of Environment and Forests has also requested all the State governments to ensure that before taking any decision on displacement of Scheduled Tribes from National Parks and Sanctuaries, the provisions of the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006 should be duly complied with. This is also required to evaluate the compensation to be paid to tribals through award of collector. A copy of letter by Ministry of Environment & Forests, addressed to the Principal Chief Conservators of Forests, Department of Forests of all States / UTs issued in this regard, was also enclosed to concerned State governments.

SB/AP