

GOVERNMENT OF ANDHRA PRADESH

ABSTRACT

Forest Protection - Red Sanders Anti - Smuggling Task Force (RSASTF) - Created - Jurisdiction and functions - Orders - Issued.

ENVIRONMENT, FORESTS, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (Section.II) DEPARTMENT

G.O.MS.No. 103

Dated.29-12-2014

Read the following:

1. G.O. Ms. No.217, Finance (HR.I) Department dt:25-11-2014.
2. From the PCCF Rc.No.1193/2014/HR.I,Dt:4-9-2014.
3. DG of Police A.P. letter No.28/Plg-4/2014,Dt:16-9-2014.

ORDER:-

Whereas, Red Sanders (*Pterocarpus Santalinus*) is endemic to the forests of Seshachalam, Veligonda, Lankamala and Palakonda Hill Range of Andhra Pradesh and distributed in the districts of Kadapa, Chittoor, Nellore, Prakasam, and Kurnool over an area of 4.67 lakh ha. There is tremendous pressure of smuggling on Red Sanders forests due to its demand in the international market. There is rampant smuggling and felling of Red Sanders trees in the districts of Chittoor, Kadapa, Nellore and Kurnool in spite of various steps taken by the Forest and Police Departments. The Red Sanders logs are being cut by wood cutters employed by organized gangs of smugglers. After the logs are cut, smugglers are transporting the Red Sanders wood to various storage points and they are further being moved clandestinely out of the country. The wood has great demand in South East Asia, China and Japan.

2. And Whereas, Home Department in the reference 5th read above has informed that in the recent past, several violent incidents have occurred, where the Forest officials intercepting the wood cutters of illicit transportation were physically assaulted, killing two Forest personnel in one incident. Hence, the need for Red Sanders Anti - Smuggling Task Force for effective control for protection of Red Sanders forests.

3. Accordingly, in order to ensure effective protection of the Red Sanders forests, the Government after careful examination of the matter, issued orders vide reference 1st read above creating a Joint Task Force called Red Sanders Anti - Smuggling Task Force (RSASTF), with 463 personnel.

4. The Red Sanders Anti - Smuggling Task Force shall start functioning with immediate effect. The Jurisdiction and functions of the RSASTF are as follows:-

(a) Jurisdiction/Duties: The Red Sanders Anti - Smuggling Task Force (RSASTF) shall have jurisdiction throughout the state of Andhra Pradesh for enforcement and investigation of all matters involving illegal activities pertaining to Red Sanders within the State of Andhra Pradesh. The Task Force shall also investigate other important cases having a bearing on Red Sanders directly or indirectly. It will ensure better Red Sanders protection in A.P. It will investigate and curb Red Sanders smuggling mafia operating from outside Andhra Pradesh.

(b) Functioning: The Red Sanders Anti - Smuggling Task Force (RSASTF) shall exercise its powers as a Police Station as defined in Criminal Procedure Code and enforce the relevant provisions of Indian Penal Code, Criminal Procedure Code, Andhra Pradesh Forest Act 1967, Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972 and such other Acts and Rules as applicable relating to matters involving in Protection of Red Sanders.

(c) Head Quarters: The Red Sanders Anti - Smuggling Task Force (RSASTF) shall have its head quarters at Tirupathi. The necessary assistance for establishment of Task Force Head Quarters shall be extended by the Forest Department.

(d) Man power: A total of 463 posts were sanctioned in the G.O.Ms.No.217, Finance (HR.I) Department dt: 25-11-2014. The force is meant for investigation of cases commando operations, intelligence unit, administrative wing and documentation unit.

(Contd-2)

- (e) **Equipment:** The necessary arms and ammunition and other equipment for commando operations shall be provided by the Police Department.
- (f) **Commando & Control:** The Red Sanders Anti - Smuggling Task Force (RSASTF) shall function under the administrative control of the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (Head of Forest Force) and under the operational control of Direct General of police and functions under the supervision of Inspector of General of police, Rayalaseema Region for operations and other related matters who will inturn report to the Director General of police, Andhra Pradesh .Hyderabad.

The police personnel and Forest personnel who are working in the Task Force shall work under over all supervision of the Head of Task Force who will be in the rank of Deputy Inspector General of police.

The Head of Task Force may requisition additional forces from the local police / Forest units and laise with local police and forest units on continuous basis.

- (g) **Documentation:** The Task Force shall maintain documentation and database in all the matters relating to Red Sanders Anti - Smuggling enforcement.
- (h) **Co- ordination:** The Task Force shall Co - ordinate with all police and Forest units, Central agencies and other State agencies in the matters relating to protection of Red Sanders Forest. The unit officers of police, Forest and other departments of State Government shall extend their co - operation to the Task Force when request is made to them by the Task Force for smooth functioning.
- (i) **Deputation:** The organization would be manned purely by personnel on deputation, depending on the willingness and suitability to be decided by the Heads of Police Force and Forest Force jointly. The Head of Police Department (HoPD) and Head of Forest Force (HoFF) will apportion the above sanctioned strength amongst various lending units for deputation to RSASTF under their control on the basis of need and administrative convenience. The average tenure for deputation would be two years which can be extended only with the approval of Principal Chief Conservator of Forests and Direct General of Police, Andhra Pradesh, as the case may be.

5. The Director General of Police, Andhra Pradesh (HoPD) and the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (HoFF) are requested to take necessary action accordingly.

6. This order issues with the concurrence of the Finance Department vide their U.O. No. 2487/ PFS/14, dated. 29-12-2014.

(BY ORDER AND IN THE NAME OF THE GOVERNOR OF ANDHRA PRADESH)

S.P. SINGH

PRINCIPAL SECRETARY TO GOVERNMENT

To

The Director General of Police, Andhra Pradesh, Hyderabad.

The Principal Chief Conservator of Forests(HoFF), Andhra Pradesh. Hyderabad.

Collectors and District Magistrate of all Districts of Andhra Pradesh.

Copy to:

The Principal Secretary to Government, Home Department,

The Principal Finance Secretary, Finance Department.

The Principal Finance Secretary, Finance (R & E) Department

The Director Treasuries and Accounts, Andhra Pradesh. Hyderabad

The Pay and Accounts Officer, Hyderabad.

The Accountant General (A&E) Andhra Pradesh, Hyderabad

P.S to M (FES&T & Co- operation)

P.S to Chief Secretary to Government.

SF/S.C

// FORWARDED :: BY ORDER //

SECTION OFFICER.