

GOVERNMENT OF KERALA

Abstract

Reserve Forests – Encroachments – Kothamangalam Range – Malayattur Division –
Removal and adoption of measures to prevent further encroachments – ordered.

AGRICULTURE (FOREST GENERAL) DEPARTMENT

G.O.Rt.572/79/AD.

Dated, Trivandrum, 1-3-1979.

ORDER

In the wake of reports regarding large scale encroachments into and destruction of reserve forests in Kothamangalam Range, Malayattur Division, the Additional Secretary to Government, Agriculture (Forest and Minor Irrigation) Department accompanied by local Police, Forest and Revenue Officers inspected the areas affected by encroachments at Mundamudi, Neikuthanal, Kambakakkanam and Thommankuthu (Thodupuzha Taluk) and furnished a report to Government. Government has examined the report and are pleased to issue the following orders.

1(a) Forest protection camps should be immediately established at Mundanmudi and Valpara with the same strength as in Thommankuthu. The staff in these camps should be provided with sufficient, camp equipments, and wireless sets. Arrangements should also be made for supply of provisions, cooking vessels, petromax light and for the grant of an allowance to engage a cook. The staff should be responsible for checking further encroachments or re-entry of evictees and consequent destruction of forest wealth.

(b) The Reserve Inspector in charge of Forest Protection force and Range Officer, Kothamangalam should frequently visit these camps and the forest area to ensure that encroachments do not take place.

2. All encroachments including those effected prior to the year 1977 should be evicted and pre 1977 encroachers settled in a compact area. They will not however be eligible for any compensation.

3. A church has recently been put in the encroached area at Mundanmudi. The age of occupation as could be judged from the felled trees and improvement should be less than six months. This should be evicted without wounding any religious feelings.

4. About 400 cases of felling of trees have been reported. Expeditious disposal of these cases should be made. A special Magistrate's Court will therefore be established at Thodupuzha, with an Asst. Public Prosecutor one Range Officer, and two Foresters to Assist him. The Court will initially be established for a period of six months.

5. The road leading to this area should be improved to facilitate easy access to inspecting officers so that effective supervision can be ensured.

6. Immediate arrangements for survey and demarcation of the area should be undertaken.

7. The policemen in the Forest Protection Force are aggrieved about the undue delay in disbursement of their salary and allowances. The existing procedural formalities may therefore be simplified. The Chief Conservator of Forests should ensure that they get their salary and allowances promptly on first working day of every month.

8. The absence of any encroachment or destruction of even the undergrowth in the Thodupuzha Range in striking contrast to their conditions on the other side of Kaliyar River, reflects on the efficiency of the Range Officers who has been able to maintain the area free of any encroachment. His good work shall be recognized suitably, by the Chief Conservator of Forests.

9. The Officers and subordinates of the Forest Department who are responsible for the above encroachments should be identified and disciplinary action initiated against them by the Chief Conservator of Forests. In the meanwhile their names should be reported to Government within a fortnight.

10. The Chief Conservator of Forests is requested to take immediate steps to implement the above decision, except items (4) and report the result to Government within a month.

By order of the Governor

K.V.VIDYADHARAN,
Additional Secretary.

To

The Chief Conservator of Forests.

/True Copy/

For Chief Conservator of Forests.

JR/