

NGT urges action against buyers, traders of illegally mined sand in Bhopal: The Economic Times

National Green Tribunal (NGT), central bench on Monday directed Alirajpur district collector and SP to book people -- buying or trading illegally mined sand under the section liable for possessing a property transferred by theft. The sand is illegally mined from catchment and submergence areas of Sardar Sarovar project (SSP) in Alirajpur district.

Justice Dalip Singh and expert member SS Garbyal were hearing the petition filed by Narmada Bachao Andolan (NBA) activist Medha Patekar. The case, which is to be heard for three more days in a row, will be dedicated to one district each of Dhar, Khargone and Barwani. On Day 1, there were replies from Alirajpur SP and collector and covered commissioner's report.

The bench stated nothing is going to change unless there is action against transporters. Builders should be charged under Section 410 of IPC which reads "Property, the possession whereof has been transferred by theft, or by extortion, or by robbery, and proper, which has been criminally misappropriated . Book those people who are promoting this activity of illegal mining." Both senior officers were asked to take preventive measures and report about patrolling activities.

During the hearing, Patekar protested areas having checkpoint are far away from the mining area and illegal miners can easily escape from the area. The four check-posts mentioned by collector Verma included Nandpur, Ambua, Sondwa and Jobat. "There is no point in making these checkpoints, they are not going to help curb illegal practice in any way. It takes 2 hours to reach these places and truckers or carriers can easily find the way to escape in between," Patekar said.

The collector told they would soon hand over revenue land in area to forest department, which would take it up for dense forestation on it.

Demarcate mining areas: During hearing of the case, it was found in commissioner's report that there has been no demarcation of areas, which have been approved for mining by MP SEIAA (Madhya Pradesh State Environment Impact Assessment Authority). The officer from mining department said it has been geotagged. There was demarcation, but pillars were lifted, stolen or broken. According to report from Alirajpur administration, 212 hectare land has been given for mining with environmental clearance. Sanctioned area for mining by government is 240 hectares.

In-stream mining major concern: Along with illegal mining and heavy trucks moving

on banks of river, in-stream mining also emerged as an area of concern. Collector and SP were asked to monitor this by making flying squads.