



WILDLIFE FIRST

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Urgent News Release

Permission for Luxury Tourism within Kudremukh National Park will amount to gross contempt of Supreme Court Judgments.

Wildlife First which petitioned the Supreme Court leading to the closure of mining in Kudremukh strongly opposes the attempts of KIOCL to start luxury tourism within the limits of the Kudremukh National Park as reported in the media today. After causing severe devastation to the Kudremukh National Park, the company is now pushing for permission to start commercial luxury tourism within the limits of the National Park. In utter disregard for law and orders of the Supreme Court the company is planning to construct an 18 hole golf course, a helipad and facilities for adventure sports, water sports etc.

The Luxury tourism proposal of KIOCL cannot be considered and is liable to be rejected based on the following facts:

1: Fundamentally, KIOCL is not even in legal possession of the area where they are trying to start tourism. The mining lease over an area of 4605 ha granted to KIOCL demised on **24th July, 1999**. This mining lease **was never renewed**. However, they were permitted by the Supreme Court (IA 670/2001 in WP 202/1995) to continue only upto **31st December, 2005** and that too, only in the already broken up area of 1452 hectares.

2. After 31st December, 2005, KIOCL exhausted all rights even over the 1452 ha of public lands. 14 years after their lease lapsed and Eight years after the time period granted by the Supreme Court ended, they are still in possession of the said area within the Kudremukh National Park without any lease. Therefore, their proposal to start luxury tourism using such public lands over which they have no right whatsoever is *ab-initio void*.

3: The land use in the said area has already been changed from mining to National Park on the Orders of the Supreme Court and the final notification has been issued on 09-01-2007 including the lapsed mining lease area where tourism is now being proposed. The area where buildings etc. are located is fully surrounded by the National Park and thus deemed to be an Ecologically Sensitive Zone based on Orders of the Supreme Court dated 04-12-2006 in WP 460/2004.

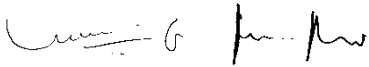
4. On 15-12-2006, in IA 1458 in WP 202/1995 the Supreme Court rejected the plea of KIOCL to carry out "eco-tourism" and directed that the area must be ecologically restored by an independent expert agency under the paradigm of '*no or minimal disturbance to the unbroken area*'. Based on these Supreme Court Judgments, there is no scope to consider the tourism proposal of KIOCL.

5: The Kudremukh National Park has been blasted and ravaged by mining of low-grade iron ore for almost 30 years. The Report of the CAG and the Public Accounts Committee of the Karnataka Legislature has clearly concluded that KIOCL has caused an environmental loss amounting to **139.15 crores**. Ten years after the CAG report, this amount is yet to be recovered.

6: Due to large scale devastation caused by mining for 30 years, the Kudremukh area now needs complete rest and requires urgent ecological restoration in the larger interest of securing the Bhadra River waters for lakhs of farmers. Therefore, it must not be subjected to any further pressures under the pretext of luxury “eco-tourism”, “mine tourism” and such other commercial tourism activity which are completely against the law and Orders of the Supreme Court.

Wildlife First has been relentlessly following up this matter and once again urges the Government to not only reject the tourism proposal of KIOCL but also immediately recover the 1452 ha of the lapsed mining lease area as failure to do so will amount to gross contempt of several Judgments of the Supreme Court.

For Wildlife First



K.M.Chinnappa / Praveen Bhargav
Trustees