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  5. SC notice to govt over contempt plea

## SC notice to govt over contempt plea

[Himanshu Kaushik](#) | tnn | Nov 15, 2017, 06:35 IST



AHMEDABAD: The [Supreme court](#) acting on a contempt petition filed by [wildlife activists](#) from Madhya Pradesh has issued notices to the [government of India](#) and [Gujarat government](#). The petitioner, Ajay Dubey has challenged the non-implementation of the apex court order of April 2013, directing [translocation of lions to Kuno Palpur](#) in Madhya Pradesh from Sasan Gir in Gujarat, and has sought action against the Union government and state government of Gujarat.

"We welcome the court's decision. Translocation of lions is not only important for the environment but also for the poor people in Sheopur. They will get a new source of livelihood," said Dubey after the notices were issued.

The petition was taken up for hearing in October and was listed on Tuesday. "We argued in the court today, and the court after hearing the counsel issued notices to the Gujarat government and the government of India. The notice is returnable in four days. The hearing will now take place in January," said Varun K Chopra, the advocate appearing for the petitioners in the Supreme Court.



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Madhya Pradesh's hopes of getting Asiatic lions to its land had faded after Narendra Modi, the proud custodian of Gir lions, moved from Gandhinagar to Delhi. But in another blow to MP's hopes, two Gujarat-based NGOs, too, had filed separate petitions challenging translocation of lions to Kuno.

Dubey has highlighted the wilful non-compliance of the apex court order of April 15, 2013. The said order directed the respondents to constitute an expert committee to oversee and ensure re-introduction of Asiatic lions from Gir forest to Kuno Palpur. The respondents have not taken any action to implement the directions of the court and have instead raised technical objections challenging the very rationale of the directions, the petitioner submitted.

The petitioner submitted that Gujarat has in the expert committee meeting raised a contention that prey density at Kuno is not adequate. The Supreme Court in its order has stated that several prey density surveys have been conducted by various experts, WII and the government of Madhya Pradesh, including in 2004-2005, 2008 and 2012 surveys and the prey density was higher than the existing prey base in Gir.

The government of Gujarat in a letter to the expert committee has contended that the presence of tigers in the occupied area at Kuno is one of the major obstacles for the translocation project. However according to Dr Asad Rehmani of Bombay Natural History Society, sporadic presence of tigers in Kuno is in no case detrimental to reintroduction of lions, the petitioner has submitted before the apex court.

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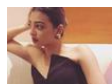
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