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5. Lion translocation: Contempt petition filed in SC

*Golden* of the Day

## Lion translocation: Contempt petition filed in SC

[Himanshu Kaushik](#) | tnn | Updated: Oct 5, 2017, 12:44 IST



AHMEDABAD: Ajay Dubey, a wildlife activists from [Madhya Pradesh](#), has filed a contempt petition in the [Supreme Court](#) demanding action against the government of India and the Gujarat government for not implementing the apex court order of April 2013 directing translocation of lions to [Kuno Palpur](#) from Sasan Gir.

The petition was taken up for hearing on Wednesday. "We had mentioned in the court today, and the court after hearing the counsel has decided to hold a detailed hearing on the petition in November. The apex court has thus listed the matter in November," said Varun K Chopra, advocate appearing for the petitioners in the Supreme Court.



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The petitioner 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 the government of Gujarat through principal chief conservator of forests (Wildlife) & chief wildlife warden raised several contentions that were already dealt by the apex court in its April 2013 order. The petitioner submitted that Gujarat has contended that for translocation of lions to take place it must first be proved that Kuno is a suitable habitat in accordance with the IUCN guidelines. The petitioner submitted that a survey conducted by the Research Advisory Committee of Wildlife institute of India in 1995, Kuno Wildlife was found to be the most suitable site for reintroduction in establishing a free ranging population of Asiatic lions.

The petitioner submitted that Gujarat has in the letter 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 density was more 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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