

IN THE HIGH COURT OF KARNATAKA AT BENGALURU

WRIT PETITION NO. 2938 OF 2026 (SUO MOTU PIL)

IN RE: ILLEGAL SAND MINING ACROSS THE RIVERS IN KARNATAKA.

29.01.2026

(VIDEO CONFERENCING /PHYSICAL HEARING)

BETWEEN:

Suo motu

...PETITIONER

AND:

1. State of Karnataka
through the Secretary
Department of Home Affairs
Government of Karnataka, Bengaluru.
2. State of Karnataka
through the Secretary
Department of Mines and Geology
Government of Karnataka, Bengaluru.
3. State of Karnataka
through the Secretary
Department of Forest and Ecology
Government of Karnataka, Bengaluru.

...RESPONDENTS

CORAM: HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE D K SINGH
and
HON'BLE MS. JUSTICE TARA VITASTA GANJU

ORAL ORDER

(PER: HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE D K SINGH)

1. There are several news reports in print and electronic media in National and Local daily newspapers dated 28.01.2026



quoting "illegal sand mining involves influential people across political parties in the State of Karnataka". The Hon'ble Home Minister, State of Karnataka, in the Assembly, has stated that many big and influential people from across political parties are involved in illegal sand mining, but he expresses his helplessness in curbing the menace. His statement is quoted as under:

"Illegal sand mining is a big racket. I am not giving any explanation or naming anyone, as it is a little embarrassing. I have given only a restricted answer, but it involves many influential people. I will call a meeting to discuss the issue."

2. The reports also mention that bids have been called for extracting sand, but bids have not been opened yet. Many big sharks are involved in this big money-spinning racket who do not want the extraction legalised. If the contracts for sand mining are awarded, the money would go to the exchequer and mafias would lose their illegal earnings.

3. It is further reported that sand is mined from the Krishna River basin continuously at night. Farmers complain that because of sand mining, dust settles on their crops and damages it. The

Special Task Force has only remained for name sake. There have been several deaths caused by the vehicles involved in the illegal sand mining in absence of CCTV cameras and check posts to monitor the movement of vehicles in areas of sand mining. A woman Legislature from Raichur District has complained about the threat to her life from the sand mafias for raising the issue of illegal sand mining in her area.

4. If the Home Minister of the State feels helpless in taking action to curb the illegal sand mining by mafias, there cannot be any hope that the said illegal activity of sand mining in the State can be curbed by the State machinery. It is a serious issue and it requires a Court monitored investigation by a Central Agency or a Specially Constituted Investigating Agency or a Special Investigation Team (SIT).

5. Mr. Mohammad Jaffar Shah, learned Additional Government Advocate accepts notice on behalf of the respondents.

6. The respondents are directed to file their response within three weeks.

7. Post this *suo motu* petition after registering it, before Hon'ble the Chief Justice for assigning the case before appropriate Bench.

sd/-

(D K SINGH)
JUDGE

Sd/-

(TARA VITASTA GANJU)
JUDGE

RKA