

NCST seek details of aid to Kusumbi tribals

TNN | Apr 11, 2023, 04.08 AM IST

Chandrapur: The National Commission for Scheduled Tribe (NCST) has directed the district collector to provide details of compensation paid to tribals of Kusubi village against their land for providing mining lease to Manikgarh Cement and also, documents related to the revenue generated by the plant since 1979 within 15 days. The issue came to light in the last week of February after NCST had ordered the arrest of Chandrapur's district collector Vinay Gawda GC for skipping its hearing in person. The arrest warrant was, however, later cancelled after the collector explained his stand in writing to the commission.

The issue is related to the complaint filed by human rights campaigner Vinod Khobragade with NSCT alleging that the government had acquired the 63.62 hectares of land belonging to tribals from Kusumbi village in Jiwti taluka and had handed it over along with additional government land for limestone mining to Manikgarh Cement (now Ultratech Cement) without the consent of the land owners of the village.

A hearing before the NCST in Delhi was held on March 1. NCST heard the argument of petitioner Vinod Khobragade and the explanation given by district collector Gawda.

Based on the facts learnt during the hearing, the commission issued a fresh letter with nine queries and asked the collector to provide details and related documents within 15 days of receipt of the letter. The commission has maintained that it can visit Chandrapur if necessary after scrutinizing the documents. The commission has made nine demands to the district collector in the letter, copy of which is with TOI.

Collector Gawda has been asked to provide a copy of the lease agreement and the subsequent renewal document, all the documents pertaining to communication with the tribals and petitioners and documents pertaining to the partition of Rajura and Jiwti teshils.

The commission has also sought clarification as to why the tehsil was not changed after the partition in renewal documents. It has also sought the details of revenue generated by the company's cement plant since 1979 and also the copy of memorandum of understanding between the company and tribal people. Copies of the environmental impact assessment report since the setup of the Manikghar plant and also a copy of the order of National Company Law Tribunal Mumbai in case no.4236/2019 has been sought. The commission has also asked for details of compensation paid from 1979 till now with regard to the lease dead and subsequent renewals.