

**Press Release**

**"ARIKOMBAN" update on the wild elephant in Theni District**

The Hon'ble High Court of Kerala, in a writ petition, had passed an order for capture and relocation of "Arikomban", a tusker aged 35 years. The tusker was translocated by the Kerala Forest Department in the Periyar Tiger Reserve on 29<sup>th</sup> April 2023 on the interstate border of Kerala and Tamil Nadu.

The State Government is taking co-ordinated steps in handling the situation arising out of the movement of the wild elephant "Arikomban" in Cumbum town and adjoint areas. The Government has constituted a committee headed by the Field Director and Chief Conservator of Forests, SMTR comprising of Deputy Director, Megamalai Division; District Forest Officer, Theni and Deputy Director, Srivilliputhur Division; Assistant Conservator of Forests, Megamalai Division and Assistant Conservator of Forests, Forest Protection Squad, Madurai to translocate the elephant deep inside the forests. A team of Veterinarians supported by 16 elephant trackers from Mudumalai and Anamalai Tiger Reserves including local elephant trackers of Srivilliputhur Megamalai Tiger Reserve are monitoring the movement of the elephant. The elephant is also tracked through radio collar.

Three Kumki elephants viz., 'Suyambu' and 'Muthu' from Topslip Elephant camp and 'Udhayan' from Mudumalai elephant camps are on the spot to support the operation.

The Field Director, SMTR has formed four core teams to operate on two shifts to monitor the elephant movement. Separate teams for logistics, Kumki handling, resource mobilization and other requirements are formed to operate round the clock. An exclusive team is monitoring the safe passage of elephant with the TamilNadu Electricity Board to prevent electrocution. A central control room has been set up at Cumbum Forest Range Office campus to ensure overall coordination. A total of 160 forest personnel from Theni district and 31 forest personnel from Srivilliputhur Division, ATR, MTR, Hosur and Coimbatore are deployed on ground. The law and order is maintained through proclamation of section 144 in Cumbum Municipality area. District Collector, Theni is closely monitoring the situation. Despite complex situation, all efforts are being taken to ensure safety of the public while ensuring the safety of the elephant as well.

Additional Chief Secretary,  
Environment, Climate Change & Forest Department

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