

Supreme Court Orders Relocation of Stray Dogs from Public Premises

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Stray Dogs Latest News

- The Supreme Court has directed authorities to **remove stray dogs from public spaces** such as schools, hospitals, railway stations, and bus stands, and relocate them to shelters after sterilisation.
- A Bench of Justices Vikram Nath, Sandeep Mehta, and NV Anjaria ordered that dogs should not be released back into the areas they were taken from.
- Citing a recent attack on a foreign national in Bengaluru, the Court noted that stray dog incidents threaten public safety, discourage tourism, and tarnish India's global image.

Animal Birth Control (ABC) Rules, 2023

- The Central Government notified the Animal Birth Control Rules, 2023 under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960, replacing the earlier ABC (Dog) Rules, 2001.

- These Rules incorporate the directions of the Supreme Court in *Animal Welfare Board of India vs. People for Elimination of Stray Troubles*, which clearly stated that relocation of dogs is not permitted.

Role of Local Bodies

- Implementation of the ABC programme for sterilisation and immunisation of stray dogs is the responsibility of municipal bodies, corporations, and panchayats.
- They must ensure humane treatment and avoid cruelty during the process.
- Effective implementation will help reduce stray dog population and address animal welfare concerns.

Joint Implementation with Anti-Rabies Programme

- Municipal authorities are required to conduct the ABC and Anti-Rabies programmes jointly.
- The Rules provide clear guidelines for managing human-dog conflicts without resorting to relocation of dogs from their areas.

Role of Recognised Organisations

- The ABC programme must be carried out only by organisations recognised by the Animal Welfare Board of India (AWBI) for this specific purpose.
- A list of approved organisations is to be published and regularly updated on the AWBI website.
- Unrecognised entities are not permitted to conduct ABC operations.

Central and State Coordination

- The Central Government has issued directives to all State Chief Secretaries and Principal Secretaries of Animal Husbandry and Urban Development Departments to ensure uniform implementation.
- Local bodies are instructed to strictly follow the Rules and implement them in letter and spirit.

Supreme Court's Comprehensive Order on Stray Animal Menace

- **Removal of Stray Dogs from Public Institutions**
 - The Court directed that all stray dogs be removed from educational institutions, hospitals, railway stations, and similar public premises.
 - They must be relocated to designated shelters after sterilisation and vaccination, and not released back to the same areas.
- **Mandatory Anti-Rabies Measures**
 - All government and private hospitals are required to maintain **adequate stocks of anti-rabies vaccines and immunoglobulin** at all times to ensure immediate treatment for bite victims.
- **Awareness in Educational Institutions**
 - The Ministry of Education must instruct schools and colleges to conduct awareness sessions for students and staff on safe behaviour around animals, first-aid for bites, and immediate reporting procedures.
- **Appointment of Nodal Officers**

- Each institution covered under the order must designate a nodal officer to ensure cleanliness, prevent stray dog entry, and maintain hygiene within the premises.
- **Securing Institutional Premises**
 - Administrative heads of institutions must ensure adequate fencing, boundary walls, and gates to prevent the entry of stray dogs and other animals into their premises.
- **Removal of Cattle from Highways**
 - Authorities have been ordered to clear all stray cattle and animals from state and national highways, as well as expressways, and relocate them to designated shelters.
- **Dedicated Highway Patrol and Helplines**
 - Governments must form dedicated patrol teams or use existing road-safety units for continuous monitoring.
 - Helpline numbers should be prominently displayed along highways and expressways to allow commuters to report stray animals or related accidents.

Earlier Supreme Court Directions on Stray Dog Management

- Earlier (August 11, 2025), the Apex Court had ordered Delhi-NCR authorities to pick up all stray dogs and place them in shelters without releasing them back.
- This was a clear departure from the prevailing **Animal Birth Control Rules, 2023**, (ABC Rules) that lay down a 'capture-sterilise-vaccinate-return' policy.
- The Bench justified this on grounds of public safety, especially for children and the elderly, and directed creation of large-capacity shelters. It also warned that obstruction by individuals or organisations would invite strict action.

August 22 Order: Shift to Regulated Management

- Later, a three-judge Bench modified the earlier directive, reinstating the ABC Rules.
- It ruled that **dogs must be sterilised, dewormed, vaccinated, and released back into their areas**—except for those infected or suspected of rabies, or showing aggressive behaviour, which should be kept in separate shelters.
- **Ban on Street Feeding** – The same Bench prohibited feeding stray dogs in public spaces. Feeding is to be done only in designated areas identified by municipal authorities, in line with the ABC Rules and RWA consultations.
- **Expansion to Pan-India Scope** – The Court extended the applicability of its directions from Delhi-NCR to all states and Union Territories, taking over similar matters pending before High Courts to ensure uniform enforcement nationwide.
- **Continuation of Key August 11 Directives** – The requirement for creating dog shelters remains in force, especially for aggressive and rabid dogs.

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