

REJOINDER PRESS RELEASE FOR NEWS ITEM
PUBLISHED IN THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS

This press release is with reference to a news item under the caption "Spike in blackbuck deaths in Raj Bhavan, 20 in 5 months", published on the front page of Chennai Edition of The New Indian Express dated 20.4.2022, which is blatantly, false, highly mischievous, contains unverified facts and statements bringing disrepute to the institution of Raj Bhavan.

2. It is ascertained from the Forest Department that the deaths of animals including Blackbucks happen in usual course and is far lesser number than the number published in your news article. The alleged claim of death of 20 Blackbucks in 5 months in Raj Bhavan campus is absolutely FALSE and baseless.

3. The News item alleges that native grass in the Star Garden has been replaced by Mexican grass causing starvation and death among blackbucks. It is blatantly FALSE. No Change whatsoever has been made in the Star Garden. It Remains undisturbed usual grazing ground for animals including deers.

4. The "Main Lawn," in which The Open Theatre Stage is located is the venue for all the public functions of Raj Bhavan including "At Home Reception", "Swearing-in-Ceremonies" "Pongal Reception" etc. This lawn is renovated from time to time by the Department of Horticulture. The recent renovation was in November 2021. This lawn is NOT a grazing ground for animals.

5. Publication of a photo of the Main lawn in the News Article is a matter of serious security concern. It is a high-security area. Unauthorized taking and publishing its photographs has serious security and legal implications. I urge you to share the details of the person who took this photos.

6. You may be aware that the Forest Department, Government of Tamil Nadu is the custodian of Wildlife and has responsibility for conservation, maintenance and welfare of wild animals in Guindy National Park including Raj Bhavan premises. For the said purpose, they have their office in Guindy National Park. However, no report/advisory has been received from the Forest Department on any death of wild animal including deer in the Raj Bhavan premises.

7. It would have been proper and consistent with responsible journalism if the comments of the competent authority of the Raj Bhavan Secretariat were taken before publishing this blatantly false and highly mischievous report intended just to malign the reputation of Raj Bhavan.

8. In view of the above, I urge you to publish the facts and also an apology in this regard.

Raj Bhavan, Chennai-22

Date : 28.04.2022

Sd/-

Addl. Director (PR)