

COURT CHIDES POACHER SANSAR CHAND FOR BEING GREEDY, RESERVES ORDER ON ACQUITTAL PLEA

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Even human skin will be traded some day: SC

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The Supreme Court gave a dressing down to notorious poacher Sansar Chand for killing tigers, leopards and other endangered species and said the day was not far when human skin would also be traded.

Chand had sought acquittal in a case relating to trade in animal skin and body parts. "A day would come soon when human skin will be traded for commercial purposes. You are selling the skin of tigers and leopards. Tomorrow, you would sell even human skin," an anguished bench of justices Markandey Katju and TS Thakur said while reserving the judgment



on Monday.

In a strong indictment of Chand's poaching activities, the court said, "The population of tigers and leopards was declining because you [Sansar Chand] are trading in skins of tigers and leopards.

There is no tiger left in Sariska [tiger reserve]."

The judges rejected the contention of counsel for the petitioner, Siddhartha Luthra, that his client was not involved in poaching. Luthra had said that if his

Tigers in peril

Habitat loss was earlier thought to be biggest threat to tigers. But it has now been found that the trade in tiger bones, destined for use in Chinese medicine, is a bigger threat. Investigations have shown that the profits from wildlife trade are being used to fund insurgency. A tiger can be killed for as little as just over a dollar. Of the 41 tiger deaths in 2010, 24 were felled by poachers.

client was involved in poaching, how was possible that poaching was going on even after his arrest.

Unimpressed by the plea, the court said, "You are all interested in money. You want only money. Everything in

the country is commercial." The judges hinted that poachers will be shown no mercy and warned that if they're not stopped, no tigers and leopards would be left in the country.

On July 5, the judges had sought Rajasthan government's response to Chand's plea for parole. He is serving a five-year jail term for smuggling leopard skins in 2003. The poacher has been convicted for smuggling claws, skin, teeth and other animal parts out of Bhilwara in 2003.

According to official investigations, Chand is responsible for the death of at least 10 tigers in Sariska in 2005. He has been acquitted by a court in two cases related to wildlife crime for want of evidence.