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HC nod to allow forest rights to tribals in Orissa

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Cuttack, Aug 12 (PTI) The Orissa Government's bid to stop Naxals from wooing tribals got a boost when the High Court today allowed it to distribute forest rights and forest lands to the traditional dwellers of forests. Subject to certain conditions, the HC vacated an interim stay imposed by it about a year ago on implementation of Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006. "With the vacation of the stay, the state government can now go ahead with its proposal to distribute record of rights (pattas) to the forest dwellers which would go a long way in tackling the Naxal menace in the state," said state Advocate General Ashok Mohanty. Following enactment of the Act, the state government had identified over 30,000 forest dwellers, out of which 20,000 alone belong to the districts of Kalahandi, Koraput and Kandhamal, to get occupational rights of the forests in which they have been staying for generations. But the state government's plan suffered a jolt in July, 2008 when the HC slapped a stay on the operation of the Act, while adjudicating over a PIL filed by Society of Retired Forest Officers" of Orissa.

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