

Item No. 03

**BEFORE THE NATIONAL GREEN TRIBUNAL
PRINCIPAL BENCH, NEW DELHI
(VACATION BENCH)**

Original Application No. 295/2025

In Re: News Item titled "Nayar river is vanishing - a yatra reveals conservation goes beyond science and policy" appearing in 'The Down To Earth' dated 03.06.2025.

Date of hearing: 05.06.2025

**CORAM: HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE ARUN KUMAR TYAGI, JUDICIAL MEMBER
HON'BLE DR. A. SENTHIL VEL, EXPERT MEMBER**

Applicant: Suo motu.

Respondents: None for the respondents.

ORDER

1. This original application is registered *suo-motu* based on the news item titled "Nayar river is vanishing - a yatra reveals conservation goes beyond science and policy" appearing in 'The Down To Earth' dated 03.06.2025.

2. The news item relates to the degradation of the Nayar River ecosystem in Uttarakhand. As per the article, a comprehensive Nayar River Yatra was conducted from April 21 to 28, 2025, tracing the river from its source to its confluence. This journey explored the river through ecological, philosophical, environmental, social, economic, and cultural perspectives. The article highlights that Doodhatoli, rising between 2,000 and 2,400 metres across the Chamoli, Pauri, and Almora districts, as the "Pamir of Uttarakhand" due to its rich ecology and strategic significance. Doodhatoli is the source of five non-glacial rivers, including the Eastern and Western Nayar, which begin as numerous rivulets nourished by alpine meadows, forests, farmland, and traditional water systems such as chal-khals and

khals. These two streams meet near Bhanghat to form the Nayar River, which eventually joins the Ganga at Vyasghat. The article mentions the river is a vital lifeline, sustaining the region's biodiversity, agricultural practices, cultural heritage, and rural livelihoods. However, the article points out that the Nayar River faces a severe and complex crisis. A 2017-18 report by India's Department of Science and Technology on Himalayan water sources revealed that nearly half of the region's perennial water sources have either dried up or experienced a significant decline in flow. As per the article, the decline of the Nayar River is attributed to multiple factors:

- Weakened community-forest relationships
- Neglect of traditional water management systems like khals and chals
- Abandonment of farmland
- Top-down government planning models driven by contracts rather than community engagement

Programs such as Har Ghar Nal and Har Ghar Jal focus on extracting water from distant sources but neglect the restoration of local traditional water systems. Currently, over 50 pumping stations operate within the Nayar basin, drawing water but returning only pollution. Additionally, climate change, reduced groundwater recharge, and unchecked urbanisation are accelerating the river's decline. The disappearance of aquatic species like the golden mahseer serves as a stark indicator of the river's deteriorating health. To address these challenges, the article recommends:

- Afforestation with native species
- Revival of seasonal, regulated grazing practices

- Protection and restoration of traditional water sources
- Implementation of integrated river basin management

3. The matter above seems to attract the provisions of the Biodiversity Act 2002, Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974 and Environment (Protection) Act, 1986.

4. The power of the Tribunal to take up the matter *suo-motu* has been recognized by the Hon'ble Supreme Court in the matter of "*Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai vs. Ankita Sinha &Ors.*" reported in 2021 SCC Online SC 897.

5. Hence, we implead the following as respondents in the matter:

- i. Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB),

Through its Member Secretary,

Parivesh Bhawan, East Arjun Nagar, Delhi-110032.

Phone: +91-11-43102030.

Email: mscb.cpcb@nic.in.

- ii. Uttarakhand Pollution Control Board,

Through its Member Secretary,

Gaura Devi Bhawan, 46 B IT Park, Sahastradhara,

Dehradun, Uttarakhand, 248001.

Phone: 0135-2658086.

Email: msukpcb@yahoo.com.

- iii. Uttarakhand Biodiversity Board,

Through it's Chairperson,

423, Indira Nagar Colony, (Near Malik Chowk) Dehradun, Uttarakhand, India-248006.

Phone: 01352769886.

Email: sbuttarakhand@gmail.com.

- iv. G.B. Pant National Institute of Himalayan Environment (GBPNIHE),

Through its Director Kosi-Katarmal,

Almora-263 643, Uttarakhand, India.

Phone: +91-5962-241015 (Office), 241034 (Residence).

Email: psdir@gbpihed.nic.in.

- v. Ministry of Jal Shakti,
Department of Water Resources, River Development & Ganga
Rejuvenation,
Through its Secretary,
Shram Shakti Bhawan, Rafi Marg, New Delhi-11000.
Phone: 011-23710305, 011-23715919.
Email: secy-mowr@nic.in.
- vi. Uttarakhand Forest Department,
Through its Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (PCCF),
85, Rajpur Road, Dehradun, Uttarakhand, India.
Phone: 0135-2741462 (Office).
Email: itgc-forest-uk@nic.in.
- vii. ICAR-Directorate of Coldwater Fisheries Research (DCFR),
Through its Director.
Anusandhan Bhawan, Industrial Area, Bhimtal - 263136,
Uttarakhand, India.
Phone: +91-5942-247280.

6. Let notices be issued to the respondents for filing their response/reply by way of affidavit at least one week before the next date of hearing.

7. List on 06.08.2025 for further consideration.

Arun Kumar Tyagi, JM

Dr. A. Senthil Vel, EM

June 05th, 2025
Original Application No. 295/2025
AB