Item No. 5 Court No. 1

BEFORE THE NATIONAL GREEN TRIBUNAL
PRINCIPAL BENCH, NEW DELHI

Original Application No. 419/2025

News Item titled "Groundwater not glacier melt keeps Ganga flowing in summer: IIT-Roorkee study" appearing in India Today dated 01.08.2025

Date of hearing: 20.08.2025

CORAM: HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE PRAKASH SHRIVASTAVA, CHAIRPERSON
HON'BLE DR. A. SENTHIL VEL, EXPERT MEMBER
HON'BLE DR. PRASHANT GARGAVA, EXPERT MEMBER

ORDER

1. This original application is registered *suo-motu* on the basis of the news item titled "Groundwater not glacier melt keeps Ganga flowing in summer: IIT-Roorkee study" appearing in India Today dated 01.08.2025.

2. The matter relates to a study by IIT-Roorkee which finds that groundwater, and not glacier melt, is the main source maintaining the summer flow of the Ganga River, especially beyond the Himalayan foothills and up to Patna. The study is based on isotope analysis of the Ganga and its tributaries. It states that glacier melt contributes very little to the river's flow beyond the hilly regions, while groundwater discharge increases the river's volume by almost 120 percent in the plains. The article mentions that about 58 percent of the river's water is lost to evaporation during summer. The article suggests that programs like Namami Gange and Jal Shakti Abhiyan should focus on recharging groundwater, managing aquifer use, restoring wetlands, and reviving tributaries to ensure a steady flow in the river.

3. The above matter indicates violation of the Environment Protection Act, 1986.

4. The news item raises substantial issues relating to compliance of the environmental norms and implementation of the provisions of scheduled enactment.

5. 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*.

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

i. Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Through Joint Secretary

Indira Paryavaran Bhawan Jorbagh Road New Delhi – 110 003 – 110 003 India

ii. Department of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation, Through Secretary,

Department of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation Room No. 401B, Shram Shakti Bhawan

iii. National Mission for Clean Ganga, Through it's Director General

1st Floor, Major Dhyan Chand National Stadium India Gate, New Delhi – 110002

iv. Ministry of Central Ground Water Board, Through it's Chairman

Central Ground Water Board, Bhujal Bhawan, NH -IV, Faridabad, 121001

7. Issue notice to the above respondents for filing their response/reply by way of affidavit at least one week before the next date of hearing. If any

respondent directly files the reply without routing it through his advocate then the said respondent will remain virtually present to assist the Tribunal.

8. List on 10.11.2025.

Prakash Shrivastava, CP

Dr. A. Senthil Vel, EM

Dr. Prashant Gargava, EM

August 20, 2025
O.A. No. 419/2025
HB