

**BEFORE THE NATIONAL GREEN TRIBUNAL
PRINCIPAL BENCH, NEW DELHI**

Original Application No. 425/2023

IN THE MATTER OF:

Deepika Khari.

...Applicant

Versus

State of Uttarakhand & Ors.

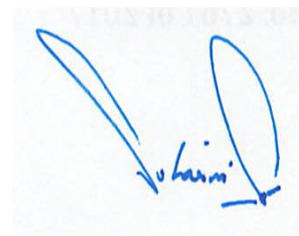
...Respondent(s)

N.D.O.H. – 05.05.2025

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THROUGH



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New Delhi
Date: 02.05.2025

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IN THE HON'BLE NATIONAL GREEN TRIBUNAL, PRINCIPAL
BENCH, NEW DELHI

IN
ORIGINAL APPLICATION No. 425/2023

IN THE MATTER OF :

Deepika KhariApplicant

Versus

State of Uttarakhand
&Ors.Respondent(s)

**AFFIDAVIT ON BEHALF OF RESPONDENT NO. 1, MINISTRY OF
ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE, NEW DELHI**

1. I, Sanjay Kumar Chauhan, S/o Shri A.S.Chauhan, aged about 41 years working as the Assistant Inspector General of Forests (Forest Protection Division) in the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (hereinafter referred to as MoEF&CC) at New Delhi do hereby solemnly affirm and say on oath that, I am competent and authorised to swear this affidavit for and on behalf of the Respondent No.-1.
2. I am duly authorised and competent to swear this affidavit and as such conversant with the facts of the present case.
3. That the present Original Application is pending adjudication before this Hon'ble Tribunal and now listed for hearing on 05.05.2025.
4. The Hon'ble Tribunal was pleased to pass the order dated 17.02.2025, the relevant para read as:



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“..... 14. We direct the Director General of Forest (DGF), Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC), Government of India to convene meetings with the concerned PCCFs of States/UTs, the Director General, Forest Survey of India (FSI), Dehradun, Uttarakhand, the Director, Indian Institute of Forest Management (IIFM), Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh and deliberate on the issue of forest fires both controlled and man- made, which results in huge loss of biodiversity and adversely impacts the environment and formulate guidelines for the prevention and control of forest fire incidents.. ”

List for further consideration on 05.05.2025...”

5. It is submitted that in compliance of above order, the Director General of Forest and Special Secretary (DGF&SS), MoEF&CC has convened the meeting with the concerned PCCFs of States/UTs, the Director General, Forest Survey of India (FSI), Dehradun, Uttarakhand, the Director, Indian Institute of Forest Management (IIFM), Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh, Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education (ICFRE) and Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) to deliberate on the issue of forest fires both controlled and man- made. A true copy of the minutes of the meeting are annexed at **Annexure –R/1**.
6. That in the meeting the matter was discussed in detail to know about the practices being followed all over the country in mitigation and management of forest fire. Subsequently all the



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states/institutions were requested to provide detailed information of control burning activities and other preventive measures followed by them, based on the working plans and other scientific management practices. DGF&SS also requested the research institutes such as IIFM, FSI, and ICFRE to share scientific studies carried out on prevention and post-control burning and the available research papers on controlled burning, providing scientifically validated methods for prevention and control of fire.

(संजय कुमार चौहान/Sanjay Kumar Chauhan)
 सहायक वन प्रशासक, राष्ट्रीय प्राधिकरण
 Asstt. Inspector General of Forest, National Authority
 पर्यावरण, वन एवं जलवायु परिवर्तन मंत्रालय
 M/o Environment, Forest and Climate Change
 भारत सरकार, नई दिल्ली
 Govt. of India, New Delhi

7. It is further submitted that fire season is currently going and information w.r.t. the matter of forest fires both controlled and man-made has been received from some of the State/UTs, which is being examined and compiled. Besides, literature survey is also being carried out. That it is most respectfully submitted that in order to ensure full compliance with the order dated 17.02.025 of this Hon'ble Tribunal, the Ministry most respectfully seeks 8 weeks further time for literature survey, data compilation, consolidation of data received from the States/UTs and submission of a report.

8. It is humbly submitted that there is no deliberate delay or willful disobedience for non-filing of the report in time and the Ministry prays that this Hon'ble Court may give 8 weeks more time in the interest of justice considering the facts and circumstances in the present case.



DEPONENT

(संजय कुमार चौहान/Sanjay Kumar Chauhan)
 सहायक वन प्रशासक, राष्ट्रीय प्राधिकरण
 Asstt. Inspector General of Forest, National Authority
 पर्यावरण, वन एवं जलवायु परिवर्तन मंत्रालय
 M/o Environment, Forest and Climate Change
 भारत सरकार, नई दिल्ली
 Govt. of India, New Delhi

VERIFICATION:



Verified at _____ on this **2 MAY 2025** day of _____, 2025 that the contents of the above affidavit are true and correct to my knowledge and are based on official records, no part of it is false and nothing material is concealed there from.

Surbhi
I Identified the deponent/ executant who has signed in my presence.

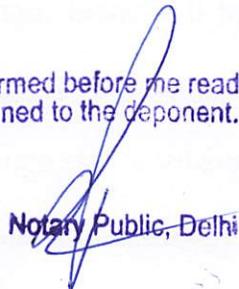


DEPONENT

(संजय कुमार चौहान/Sanjay Kumar Chauhan)
सहायक वन महानिरीक्षक, राष्ट्रीय प्राधिकरण
Asstt. Inspector General of Forest, National Authority
पर्यावरण, वन एवं जलवायु परिवर्तन मंत्रालय
M/o Environment, Forest and Climate Change
भारत सरकार, नई दिल्ली
Govt. of India, New Delhi



Solemnly affirmed before me read over & explained to the deponent.



Notary Public, Delhi

2 MAY 2025

(संजय कुमार चौहान/Sanjay Kumar Chauhan)
सहायक वन महानिरीक्षक, राष्ट्रीय प्राधिकरण
Asstt. Inspector General of Forest, National Authority
पर्यावरण, वन एवं जलवायु परिवर्तन मंत्रालय
M/o Environment, Forest and Climate Change
भारत सरकार, नई दिल्ली
Govt. of India, New Delhi

URGENT/ COURT MATTER

File No. FPD-08/47/2024
Government of India
Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change
Forest Protection Division

Indira Paryavaran Bhawan,
Jorbagh Road, Aliganj,
New Delhi – 110003.
Dated : 11th March, 2025

OFFICE MEMORANDUM

Sub: Minutes of the meeting held on 07th March, 2025 at 11: 00 AM in Krishna Conference Hall, 4th Floor, Jal Wing, Indira Paryavaran Bhawan, New Delhi under the Chairpersonship of Director General of Forests & Special Secretary, MoEF&CC

The undersigned is directed to enclose herewith the Minutes of the meeting held on 07th March, 2025 at 11: 00 AM in Krishna Conference Hall, 4th Floor, Jal Wing, Indira Paryavaran Bhawan, New Delhi under the Chairpersonship of Director General of Forests & Special Secretary, MoEF&CC in compliance of Order of Hon'ble NGT(PB) dated 17.02.2025 in Original Application No. 425/2023 titled as Deepika Khari Vs. State of Uttarakhand & Ors. filed before National Green Tribunal, NGT, (PB), New Delhi.

In this regard, it is requested to kindly provide the details as per decision taken in the meeting (through email-fpd-moefcc@gov.in) latest by 14th March 2025.

Encl: As above


(Sanjay Kumar Chauhan)

Assistant Inspector General of Forests (FPD)

Email: fpd-moefcc@gov.in

To,

1. The Principal Chief Conservator of Forests & HoFF all States/ UTs
2. Chairperson, Central pollution Control Board, New Delhi.
3. Director General, Indian Council of Forestry Research & Education, Dehradun
4. Director General, Forest Survey of India, Dehradun

5. Director, Indian Institute of Forest management, Bhopal

Copy to:

2. PPS to DGF&SS, MoEF&CC, New Delhi for information.
4. PPS to ADGF (FC), MoEF&CC, New Delhi for information.
5. PPS to IGF (FPD), MoEF&CC, New Delhi for information.
6. Guard File (Legal associate)

Minutes of the Meeting Regarding the Hon'ble NGT (PB) Order Dated 17.02.2025 in Original Application No. 425/2023, Titled Deepika Khari vs. State of Uttarakhand & Ors., Held on 7th March 2025 at 11:00 AM (Hybrid Mode)

1. A meeting was held on 7th March 2025 at 11:00 AM in hybrid mode, chaired by the Director General of Forests and Special Secretary (DGF&SS) of the Ministry of Environment, Forest, and Climate Change (MoEFCC). The meeting was convened to deliberate on the directions issued by the Hon'ble National Green Tribunal (PB) in its order dated 17th February 2025, in Original Application No. 425/2023, titled *Deepika Khari vs. State of Uttarakhand & Ors.* The meeting was attended by officers from the Ministry of Environment, Forest, and Climate Change, as well as representatives from various institutions, including the Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education (ICFRE), Forest Survey of India (FSI), Indian Institute of Forest Management (IIFM), and the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), in addition to officials from State and Union Territory Forest Departments. The list of participants is **Annexed**.
2. At the outset, the DGF&SS welcomed all participants. With the Chair's permission, the Inspector General of Forests (Forest Protection Division) delivered a detailed presentation, outlining the directions given in the Hon'ble NGT order.
3. The DGF&SS then asked the ICFRE to provide insights into the works done by the institution regarding prevention and management of the forest fires, particularly under the *National Collaborative Scheme on Forest Fire Management*. The DGF&SS also requested IIFM, Bhopal, to report on the efficacy and mitigation efforts concerning fire prevention measures. Both institutions provided relevant updates on their respective work.
4. Thereafter, the operative parts of the directions of Hon'ble Tribunal, particularly as contained in Para 7, 13 & 14 were discussed.

The DGF&SS requested the states to provide their comments and inputs on Paragraph 7 (i) and (ii) of the Hon'ble Tribunal order, urging them to share their views on how to address the issues observed by Hon'ble NGT in the order and take appropriate action in line with the directives. The details of the comments provided by the States/UTs are as under:

- (i) The representative from the Uttarakhand Forest Department (PCCF & HoFF) drew attention to Paragraph 9 of the court order and explained that, in addition to control burning, the State also undertakes soil and moisture conservation works, collects dry chir pine leaves for briquette formation (locally known as *perul*), and maintains fire lines in accordance with the working plan. However., control burning,

which is a long-standing traditional practice, is carried out before the forest fire season to serve as an effective firebreak.

(ii) The representative from Gujarat highlighted the implementation of three types of controlled burning in the State, including demarcated fire patta and marked fire lines in plantations. The State has also installed fire watchtowers for early fire detection and conducts soil and moisture conservation works alongside the maintenance of existing fire lines.

(iii) The Chhattisgarh representative shared that the state's control burning strategy includes awareness programs and mock drills to enhance preparedness. They maintain 3-meter-wide fire lines and estimate the forest fire fuel load.

(iii) PCCF & HoFF Bihar informed that for eradication of the invasive species/weeds, the state has prepared a project for converting them into briquette to use them as an alternative fuel source through Eco-Development Committees (EDCs) and Joint Forest Management Committees (JFMCs). The State also maintains fire lines and records controlled burning activities for reference.

(iv) The Madhya Pradesh representative reported that the State has strengthened 15,000 committees dedicated to forest fire management, with specialized teams to activate these committees. The State primarily relies on controlled burning for fire prevention and has reduced the response time to forest fires to 2.5 hours. Watchtowers are strategically positioned for fire detection, and fire lines are maintained in accordance with the working plan.

(v) The Director IIFM, Bhopal, mentioned that numerous research papers on controlled burning are available, providing scientifically validated methods. IIFM will compile and submit this data to the MoEFCC.

(vi) The PCCF&HoFF, Meghalaya emphasized the effects of shifting cultivation, fire line maintenance and soil and moisture conservation (SMC) works in the State's fire prevention strategy.

(vii) Andhra Pradesh highlighted the challenge posed by dry deciduous forests and the accumulation of leaf litter, noting that Lantana contributes to fire risks. The State relies on control burning and the maintenance of fire lines to mitigate these risks.

(viii) Telangana's representative informed that the fire line creation, maintenance of existing fire lines, and fire watchtowers are part of the State's fire management strategy. JFMCs play a key role, with fire risk zonation layering based on Digital Elevation Models (DEM).

(ix) Karnataka's representative provided an update on the recent forest fire in Mysuru, noting that the State experiences primarily ground and surface fires. Fire and Emergency Services were involved in containing the recent fire. The State uses control burning methods such as fire line creation, prescribed burning, early detection through watchtowers and satellite alerts, and community involvement through training programs.

(x) Odisha's representative highlighted the installation of AI-based cameras in the Simlipal Tiger Reserve for fire detection and monitoring. The State has also organized several meetings to discuss fire management strategies, including Sal leaf briquette production.

(xi) Jharkhand's representative shared that the State uses control burning methods, including the creation and maintenance of fire lines.

(xii) Himachal Pradesh's representative stated that their focus is mainly on managing fuel. The State uses the MGNREGA scheme to disrupt fuel continuity and conducts mock drills to improve fire preparedness. Sensors have also been installed in watchtowers for early detection.

(xiii) The Uttar Pradesh representative explained that control burning and maintenance of existing fire lines are conducted as per the working plan in territorial divisions and management plans in Tiger Reserves and Wildlife Sanctuaries.

(xiv) The representative from CPCB informed the meeting that the CPCB is seeking information from all States and UTs, including FSI, in relation to Paragraph 13 of the court order.

6. The DGF&SS proposed the development of a standardized proforma to document the control burning activities and other preventive measures taken by States and UTs. He also requested the Forest Survey of India (FSI) to provide inputs on controlled burning and encouraged the states to share relevant studies in this regard. Additionally, the fire alert system would be reviewed for necessary improvements. The DGF&SS, further requested research institutes such as IIFM, FSI, and ICFRE to share scientific studies on prevention and post-control burning measures in the field and the efficacy of these methods.

7. After deliberation the following action points have emerged:

i. The States/UTs shall submit the details as per proforma attached at **Annexure 2. (Action: All States/UTs)**

ii. IIFM Bhopal will compile the available research papers on controlled burning,

providing scientifically validated methods for prevention and control of fire. In this regard an abstract may also be submitted. (Action: Director, IIFM, Bhopal)

iii. ICFRE and FSI shall share scientific studies on prevention and post-control burning measures in the field and the efficacy of these methods. (Action: DG, ICFRE, DG FSI)

iv. CPCB shall share the detail on the para 13 of the court order. Action: CPCB)

The detail may be provided latest by 14th March 2025

The meeting concluded with a vote of thanks to all participants.

ANNEXURE-1

List of the Officers present in the Meeting held on 07.03.2025 at 11:00 P.M. under the Chairpersonship of DGF&SS, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change

Ministry of Environment Forest and Climate Change			
S.No.	Name	Designation	Organization
1	Shri Sushil Kumar Awasthi	DGF&SS	MoEFCC, New Delhi
2	Shri A. K Mohanty	ADG (FC)	MoEFCC, New Delhi
3	Shri K B Singh	Inspector General Forest, FPD	MoEFCC, New Delhi
4	Shri Sanjay Kumar Chauhan	Assistant Inspector General Forest (FPD)	MoEFCC, New Delhi
5	Ms. Bhavna Sharma	Technical Assistant	Disaster Management Control Room, MoEFCC
6	Ms. Swati Bhatti	Research Associate	Forest Protection Division, MoEFCC
7	Shri Ravi Kumar	Legal associate	Forest Protection Division, MoEFCC
8	Shri Ajay	Office Assistant	Forest Protection Division, MoEFCC

Participants from Organizations of MoEFCC

S.No.	Name	Designation	Organization
			Indian Institute of Forest

9	Dr K. Ravichandran	Director	Management, Bhopal
10	Smt. Meera Iyer	Joint Director	Forest Survey of India, Dehradun
11	Dr. Yogesh	Professor	Indian Institute of Forest Management, Bhopal
12	Dr. Anvita Pandey	Professor	Indian Institute of Forest Management, Bhopal
13	Dr. Praveen	Scientist	ICFRE
14	Dr Sharandeep Singh	Scientist	Central Pollution Control Board

Participating Officers from States/UTs			
S.No.	Name	Designation	States/UTs
15	Dr. Dhananjai Mohan	PCCF & HoFF	Uttarakhand
16	Shri R S Gill	PCCF & HoFF	Meghalaya
17	Shri Prabhat Kumar Gupta	PCCF & HoFF	Bihar
18	Shri K Khan	APCCF	Punjab
19	Shri S.S. Kandpal	APCCF	Delhi
20	Shri C. K Sonwane	APCCF	Gujarat
21	Shri Ratnakar Jauhari	APCCF	Telangana
22	Shri T Rabikumar	APCCF	Jammu and Kashmir
23	Ms. Vanashree Vipin Singh	APCCF	Karnataka
24	Shri R. Amarjeet	APCCF	Manipur
25	Shri Pinaki Prasad Singh	Nodal Officer Forest Fire	Uttar Pradesh
26	Smt. Shalini Raina	CCF FP&FC	Chhattisgarh
27	Shri Nishant Verma	CF, Nodal Officer Forest Fire	Uttarakhand
28	Ms. Vasvi Tyagi	CCF	Haryana
29	Shri C.K. Naidu	CF, Nodal Officer Forest Fire	Jharkhand
30	Shri Kartik	CF	Odisha
31	Shri Nishant Mandothra	CF, Nodal Officer Forest Fire	Himachal Pradesh
32	Shri M.Vi.G Kannan	DCF	Goa
33	Shri Jitendra Kumar	DCF Nodal Officer Forest Fire	Assam

Annexure- 2

Control Burning Practices and Alternative Forest Fire Prevention Methods

(Details sought in response of the NGT order dated 17.02.2025 in OA No. 425/2023)

Name of the State/UT:

(The response on each heading should be concise and not more than 200 words)

1. Controlled Burning Practices:

i. Is controlled fire the only method adopted for preventing/controlling forest fires?

◦ *Response:*

(Provide details on whether controlled burning is the sole or primary method being used for forest fire prevention & control.)

◦

ii. Are there alternative methods?

◦ *Response:*

(List the alternative techniques being utilized. The percentage of area covered under control burning and other alternative methods may be provided)

◦

iii. Is there any scientific study or data supporting the efficacy of controlled burning?

◦ *Response:*

(Provide details of relevant scientific studies, research papers, or case studies demonstrating the effectiveness of controlled burning in preventing forest fires.)

◦

iv. Has the Ministry of Environment, Forest, and Climate Change (MoEFCC) approved the method as a remedial measure for preventing forest fires?

◦ *Response:*

(State whether the MoEFCC has given formal approval for controlled burning as part of its fire prevention strategy.)

◦

v. Please provide relevant studies, data, or feedback.

◦ *Response:*

(Attach or summarize studies, reports, or field data that validate the use of controlled burning or other measures.)

2. Additional Measures Undertaken (as per Paragraph 7 of the NGT Order):

- **Details of additional methods or preventive strategies:**

- *Response:*

(Provide a description of other forest fire prevention measures such as soil and moisture conservation, fire line maintenance, community awareness programs, etc.)

-

- **Inputs on alternative fire prevention strategies specific to your region:**

- *Response:*

(Detail strategies that are particularly suited to your local region, considering topography, climate, and local flora.)

3. Steps Taken for Formulating Guidelines on Forest Fire Prevention and Control:

- **Infrastructure:**

- *Response:*

(List available or planned infrastructure such as fire towers, early warning systems, equipment, or communication networks to prevent and control forest fires.)

-

- **Institutional Arrangements:**

- *Response:*

(Describe institutional coordination between local, state, and national agencies in managing forest fires.)

-

- **Budgetary Provisions:**

- *Response:*

(Detail budget allocations for forest fire prevention, training, infrastructure, and fire control operations.)

4. Feedback and Recommendations:

- *Response:*

(Provide additional observations, challenges, or recommendations regarding forest fire prevention methods in your region.)
