

BEFORE THE NATIONAL GREEN TRIBUNAL

SOUTHERN ZONE, CHENNAI

Original Application No. 121 of 2024 (SZ)

In the matter of:

Suo Moto matter in respect of news item
appearing in The Times of India dated 11.01.2024
titled "Landgrabbers take over Cooum".

Versus

Tamil Nadu Coastal Zone Management/Regulation Authority,
Through its Member Secretary, Chennai and Ors.. ...Respondent(s)

**REPORT FILED BY 4TH RESPONDENT-
THE CHENNAI RIVERS RESTORATION TRUST.**

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Through

Dr. D. Shanmuganathan

Standing Counsel for Government of Tamil Nadu

National Green Tribunal

Southern Zone, Chennai

DATE: 21.11.2025

**BEFORE THE NATIONAL GREEN TRIBUNAL
SOUTHERN ZONE, CHENNAI**

Original Application No. 121 of 2024 (SZ)
In earlier OA No. 172 of 2024 (PB)

News item titled "Land grabbers
Take over Cooum" appearing in The Times
of India dated 11.01.2024.

-Vs-

Tamil Nadu Coastal Zone Management/
Regulation Authority,
Rep. by its Member Secretary and others

...Respondents

**REPLY AFFIDAVIT FILED ON BEHALF OF THE FOURTH RESPONDENT –
CHENNAI RIVERS RESTORATION TRUST**

I, Tmt. P. Janaki Raveendran, W/o. S. Raveendran, aged about 53 years, having office at No.6/103, Dr. D.G.S. Dinakaran Salai, Raja Annamalai Puram, Chennai – 600 028, do hereby solemnly affirm and sincerely state as follows:

1. I am the Project Director, Chennai Rivers Restoration Trust and I am filing this reply affidavit on behalf of the 4th respondent viz. Chennai Rivers Restoration Trust (CRRT) and as such I am well acquainted with the facts of the case from the records available in our office and I am authorized to file this reply affidavit on behalf of the 4th respondent.

2. It is respectfully submitted that on 27.02.2024, the Hon'ble Tribunal has taken up a SUO MOTU based on the article "Land grabbers take over Cooum" published in the daily "The Times of India" dated 11.01.2024. The Hon'ble Tribunal has impleaded the following respondents:

- i) Tamil Nadu Coastal Zone Management/Regulation Authority through its Member Secretary,
- ii) Collector/District Magistrate, Chennai
- iii) Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board through its Member Secretary
- iv) Chennai Rivers Restoration Trust through Chief Secretary, Government of Tamil Nadu
- v) Water Resources Department through Secretary, Government of Tamil Nadu

and directed to file their response at least one week before the date of next hearing i.e. 07.07.2025 before the concerned Bench and transferred the case to the Hon'ble NGT(SZ), Chennai.

3. It is respectfully submitted that the article relates to alleged (relates to the allegation of) taking over in the stretch of river Cooum in Chennai, Tamil Nadu by the land grabbers. The article discloses that the land grabbers have been dumping loads of sand and debris and levelling a vast area, entering more than 10 feet into the riverbed near Koyambedu. It alleges that, though this is happening in public view but no official has visited the spot or taken any preventive action. It also alleges that the land grabbers have even dumped sand inside the riverbed itself and brought in earthmovers to level the ground. It discloses that the Tamil Nadu District Municipalities Building Rules, 1972, mandate buffer zones of 15 metres from the margin of the waterways but the land grabbers are violating it.

4. It is respectfully, submitted that the Integrated Cooum River Eco-Restoration Project is being implemented by the Government of Tamil Nadu under the aegis of the Chennai Rivers Restoration Trust (CRRT) through various line department, viz., Water Resources Department (WRD), Greater Chennai Corporation (GCC), Chennai Metropolitan Water Supply & Sewerage Board (CMWSSB), Directorate of Municipal Administration and Commissionerate of Rural Development & Panchayat Raj, Some of the works have been completed and balance works are under progress by respective line department and CRRT is the Nodal Agency for the above works.

5. Further, it is respectfully submitted that the subject dealt in the case is pertaining to Water Resources Department (WRD). It is learnt and submitted that the WRD has issued necessary permission to **National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) for the execution of Chennai Port - Maduravoyal Elevated Road Project** on the stretch of Cooum River. The NHAI has utilised certain areas of Cooum River for providing the above said facilities.

6. It is also respectfully submitted that **the Chief Secretary to Government has issued instructions to NHAI & WRD regarding Chennai Port - Maduravoyal Elevated Road Project, during the review meetings held on 24.12.2024, 14.03.2025 and 14.05.2025 as below:**

i) In the light of the ongoing Chennai Port - Maduravoyal Elevated Road Project by NHAI along the Cooum River, the Joint Coordination Committee formed by the Principal Secretary, MA&WS Department, Secretary, Highways & Minor Ports Department with officials from Water Resources Department (WRD), National Highways Authority of India (NHAI), State Highways Department and Greater Chennai Corporation (GCC) should continue to meet regularly to ensure seamless flow of water in Cooum river while executing the works by NHAI.

ii) While executing the works for Chennai Port - Maduravoyal Elevated Road Project, NHAI to ensure that necessary measures and Flood Mitigation Plan are in place to ensure the seamless water flow in the river during monsoon season.

iii) With regard to the request of NHAI for dismantling the compound wall along the Cooum River for facilitating the construction of entry & exist ramps for the NHAI Project, Respective agency (i.e. GCC) may provide permission after the Monsoon (i.e. January, 2025).

7. It is respectfully submitted that implementation of Chennai Port - Maduravoyal Elevated Road Project does not fall under the purview of the Chennai Rivers Restoration Trust. The above project of NHAI is being executed as per the NOC given by the land owning department i.e., Water Resources Department (WRD).

In the above circumstances and facts, it is humbly prayed that this Hon'ble National Green Tribunal may be pleased to pass further order or other orders as this Hon'ble Tribunal may deem fit and necessary in the circumstances of the case and thus render justice.


**Project Director,
CRRT.**

DATE 28.09.2025