

**BEFORE THE HON'BLE NATIONAL GREEN TRIBUNAL
SOUTHERN ZONE BENCH, CHENNAI ORIGINAL APPLICATION
NO.14 OF 2024(SZ)
[Earlier Original Application No. 685 of 2023 (PB)]**

IN THE MATTER OF:

Tribunal on its own motion SUO MOTU on News item appearing in One India dated 25.10.2023 titled "Vegetables Across Bengaluru Contaminated with Heavy Metals, Warns Study"

Versus

CPCB through its Member Secretary & Others... **RESPONDENTS**

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12/9/2025
DEPONENT

**Place: BENGALURU
Date:12.09.2025**



COUNSEL FOR RESPONDENT NO. 1

J. Chandra Babu
REGIONAL DIRECTOR
CENTRAL POLLUTION CONTROL BOARD
REGIONAL DIRECTORATE - BENGALURU
(MIN.OF ENV,FOREST & CC, GOVT OF INDIA)
BENGALURU - 560 079. MOB: 9868278903

REVATHI MANIVANNAN



**BEFORE THE HON'BLE NATIONAL GREEN TRIBUNAL SOUTHERN
ZONE BENCH, CHENNAI
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**STATUS REPORT ON BEHALF OF THE RESPONDENT NO. 1: CENTRAL
POLLUTION CONTROL BOARD (CPCB)**

1. That, Hon'ble National Green Tribunal at Southern Zonal Bench, Chennai (hereinafter referred as, 'NGT (SZ)') vide order dated 22.04.2025 in the instant case has sought compliance report from Answering Respondent No.1 i.e., Central Pollution Control Board (hereinafter referred as, 'CPCB') over the instant matter. Accordingly, the status report in the matter is hereby produced in succeeding paragraphs.
2. That, CPCB is a statutory Board constituted under Section 3 of The Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974. It performs the functions under The Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974, The Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981 and The Environment (Protection) Act, 1986
3. That, Hon'ble National Green Tribunal at Principal Bench, (hereinafter called as, 'NGT (PB)') had suo motu registered Original Application No. 685/2023 (PB) on the basis of news item published in 'One India' on




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25.10.2023, titled 'Vegetables Across Bengaluru Contaminated with Heavy Metals, Warns Study'. The news item referred to the study carried out by researchers from Environmental Management and Policy Research Institute (EMPRI), wherein 400 samples of 10 different vegetables were analyzed and reported to have levels of alleged contamination by heavy metals exceeding the permissible limits set by the Food and Agricultural Organization (hereinafter referred as, 'FAO'). As per the news article, vegetables cultivated with wastewater showed presence of heavy metals. It has also been reported in the aforesaid study that the concentration of Iron and Cadmium in coriander and spinach, and Nickel in vegetables exceeded the permissible limits set by FAO.

4. That, in the aforesaid matter, the Hon'ble NGT (PB) vide order dated 21.11.2023 impleaded the following organizations as respondents;

- a. CPCB through its Member Secretary.
- b. Karnataka State Pollution Control Board (hereinafter referred as, 'KSPCB') through its Member Secretary
- c. Environmental Management and Policy Research Institute (hereinafter referred as, 'EMPRI') through its Director General.

5. That, Hon'ble NGT (PB) vide order dated 21.11.2023 gave directions to the Answering Respondent herein and the same is reproduced as below:

"to ascertain the correct ground situation and also duly examine the report of EMPRI and submit the factual status as also factual action taken report before the Southern Zone Bench of the Tribunal. Let the samples of vegetables be collected and analyzed for the individual heavy metals and pesticides parameter in the Central Laboratory of CPCB, Delhi as per standard methods and let their report be furnished....."

That, it is humbly submitted that OA No. 685/2023(PB) was




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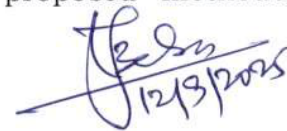
subsequently then transferred to the NGT Southern Zone Bench, Chennai and the aforesaid matter was renumbered as OA No. 14 of 2024(SZ).

6. That, pursuant to the Hon'ble NGT (PB) order dated 21.11.2023, the Answering Respondent herein i.e., CPCB (Respondent No.1) submitted a status report dated 19.03.2024 before Hon'ble NGT (SZ) on the action taken, wherein the actions initiated by CPCB including comments based on the examination of study report of EMPRI and proposing the methodology for ascertaining the ground reality based on discussions held during the meeting on 26.12.2023 with officials of EMPRI, KSPCB, Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (hereinafter referred as, 'FSSAI') and CPCB Delhi were submitted. In view of the requirement of a comprehensive study to ascertain the correct ground situation with regard to heavy metals and pesticides in vegetables, a committee comprising members from the following organizations was constituted by CPCB:

- a. CPCB, Regional Director, Bengaluru.
- b. Member of KSPCB.
- c. Member of Central Licensing Authority, FSSAI, Chennai.
- d. Member of Indian Institute of Soil Science, Bhopal.
- e. Member of University of Agricultural Sciences, Bengaluru.

7. That, the matter was subsequently heard on 15.10.2024 by Hon'ble NGT (SZ) and Hon'ble NGT (SZ) Chennai vide order dated 15.10.2024 sought Report from CPCB before the next date of hearing. In pursuant to the Hon'ble NGT (SZ) order dated 15.10.2024, CPCB filed a detailed Status Report dated 17.02.2025 regarding the actions initiated by CPCB and sought time of four months for completion and submission of the comprehensive study report as per the proposed methodology to





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ascertain the ground situation of contamination of vegetables with heavy metals and pesticides in and around Bengaluru. Accordingly, an additional time of four months was granted by Hon'ble NGT (SZ) vide order dated 18.02.2025.

8. That, pursuant to the said Hon'ble NGT (SZ) Chennai Order, the Committee constituted by CPCB carried out sampling of vegetables from the selected locations from the study areas viz., agricultural fields in Nelamangala, Kolar, Chikkaballapura and few vegetable markets in Bengaluru during February 27-28, 2025 and total of 75 vegetable samples were collected. During field survey, the Joint Committee collected 22 nos. of vegetable samples directly from agricultural fields (i.e., 8 from Nelamangala region, 10 from Kolar region, and 4 from Chikkaballapura region). Further, 53 nos. of vegetables were also collected from local markets including HOPCOMS in Bengaluru, Agricultural Produce Market Committee (APMC) in Nelamangala, and APMC in Kolar [i.e., Nelamangala (Shivaganga Market) - 20 samples; Bengaluru (Rajajinagara Retail Market) - 13 samples; Kolar (APMC Market) - 17 samples; Bengaluru (HOPCOMS) - 3 samples]. The collected vegetable samples were categorized into following families: Brassica (04 nos.), Bulb (05 nos.), Fruiting vegetables (20 nos.), Cucurbits (18 nos.), Leafy vegetables (03 nos.), Legumes (08 nos.), and Root & Tuber vegetables (17 nos.).
9. That, during 12th to 13th March, 2025 a team comprising of Joint Committee members from CPCB and University of Agricultural Sciences (UAS), Bengaluru along with officials of Karnataka State Pollution Control Board (KSPCB) revisited the agricultural fields identified during the field survey conducted during 27-28th February, 2025 and collected 26 nos. of soil samples from agricultural fields at 13 nos. of different locations at




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two different depths (~15 cm and ~30 cm below the surface level), 07 nos. of groundwater samples used in the agricultural fields, and 01 no. of treated wastewater sample (i.e., secondary treated sewage from STPs in Bellandur & Varthur, Bengaluru is pumped to Lakshmisagara lake in Narsapura Kolar which will then flow into drain network recharging the ground water aquifers) was collected at the entry point of Koramangala-Challaghatta Valley (KC Valley) tank filling project near Uddappanahalli, which enters the Lakshmisagara lake for groundwater recharge.

10. That, the collected vegetable samples were analyzed for heavy metals and pesticides through FSSAI approved laboratory viz., M/s. Shiva Analytical (India) Private Limited, Bengaluru whereas the surface and ground water samples were analyzed for general parameters by CPCB, Regional Director, Bengaluru and heavy metals as well as pesticides in soils were analyzed at Central Environmental Laboratory-1, KSPCB, Bengaluru.
11. That, the Joint Committee held multiple meetings to deliberate on the findings. The records of meeting in brief is as follows:

- a. Meeting dated 13.05.2025: Discussion on analysis results of vegetable samples, soil samples, and groundwater/treated wastewater samples collected from different agricultural fields and vegetable markets. The analysis results were circulated among committee members seeking inferences from respective committee members vide emails dated 17.04.2025, 29.04.2025, and 05.05.2025.




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b. Meeting dated 30.06.2025: Deliberation and finalization of the report with decisions on additional analysis requirements including requests for FSSAI approved laboratory to provide analysis reports with comparison of heavy metal concentrations against standard limits prescribed under FSSR, 2011.

c. Meeting dated 24.07.2025: Upon discussions on the analysis results and final inputs from joint committee members, the committee observed that the results of analysis of heavy metals/pesticide residues in vegetables, heavy metals in soil and groundwater/treated wastewater were inconclusive.

12. That, the Joint Committee decided to carry out re- assessment including:

- i.** Re-sampling of water, soil and vegetable samples from selected study areas as recommended by the committee.
- ii.** Re-analysis of all earlier soil samples collected by the committee from study areas by Regional Directorate, CPCB, Bengaluru laboratory.
- iii.** For carrying out Ambient air quality monitoring in selected study areas as recommended by the committee.

13. That, Hon'ble NGT(SZ) heard the matter on 25.07.2025 and the Answering Respondent herein requested 4-months extension for undertaking the aforesaid re-assessment of vegetables, soil and groundwater, as well as for carrying out ambient air quality monitoring. However, the Hon'ble Tribunal was pleased to post the matter for hearing next on 15.09.2025.



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14. That, pursuant to Hon'ble NGT order dated 25.07.2025, Joint Committee meeting was held on 30.07.2025. The field visit initially scheduled for 11th-14th August, 2025 could not be carried out due to heavy rains in the study areas. Subsequently, committee carried out field visit during 1st to 3rd September, 2025 and the aforesaid re-sampling of vegetables, soil, water samples from Chikkaballapura and Kolar areas on 01.09.2025 and the ambient air quality monitoring during 2nd and 3rd September, 2025.
15. That, the vegetables samples (collected on September 01, 2025) handed over to FSSAI approved laboratory viz., M/s. Shiva Analytical (India) Private Limited, Bengaluru for analysis, whereas soil, water, air, and manure samples collected during re-sampling (September 1 to 3, 2025) will be analyzed for relevant parameters at the laboratory of CPCB Regional Directorate, Bengaluru laboratory and the analysis are expected to be completed by October 15, 2025. The analysis results will be compiled, reviewed and inferences need to be drawn in comparison with the respective standards by the Joint Committee followed by comprehensive report preparation and its finalization. Thereby time up to November 2025 is required for submitting the comprehensive report before Hon'ble NGT SZ Chennai for consideration.
16. In view of above, it is humbly prayed that:

- i. That, the Hon'ble NGT may kindly grant time up to 30th November 2025 for completion of ongoing analysis and compilation for in-turn submission of final comprehensive report.
- ii. That, the Hon'ble Tribunal may be pleased to take the above status report and actions taken by CPCB on record in compliance with Hon'ble NGT orders.




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17. That, it is respectfully submitted that the Answering Respondent herein, shall abide by any order(s) or direction(s) passed by this Hon'ble Tribunal in the instant OA and render justice.


12/09/2025
DEPONENT



COUNSEL FOR RESPONDENT No. 1

J. Chandra Babu
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AFFIDAVIT

I, Jathikartha Chandra Babu, Son of (Late) Sh. J Balaramaiah, aged about 57 years, having office at the Regional Directorate - Bengaluru, Central Pollution Control Board, 1st and 2nd Floors, Nisarga Bhavan, A-Block, Thimmaiah Main Road, 7th D Cross, Shivanagar, Bengaluru, Karnataka - 560079, do hereby solemnly affirm, declare on oath and state as under:

1. That the accompanying status report may be read part and parcel of the present affidavit as I am competent to swear this affidavit.
2. That the accompanying status report has been drafted and filed under my instructions and authority, the contents thereof are true and correct on the basis of the record maintained during ordinary course of business of CPCB and available records and the contents of the same are read over and explained to me and are not repeated herein for the sake of brevity.


DEPONENT

VERIFICATION

I, Jathikartha Chandra Babu, working as Scientist 'E' and posted as Regional Director (Bengaluru), CPCB, the respondent herein do hereby verify that the contents of the above paragraphs are true and correct to the best of my knowledge, information and belief.

Verified at Bengaluru on this the Twelfth September, 2025.


DEPONENT



COUNSEL FOR RESPONDENT No. 1



J. Chandra Babu
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SUO Motu & Ors.

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RESPONDENT(S)

**STATUS REPORT ON BEHALF
OF THE RESPONDENT NO. 1:
CENTRAL POLLUTION CONTROL BOARD (CPCB)**

**ADVOCATE REVATHI MANIVANNAN
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Mob.7448350555**