

BEFORE THE NATIONAL GREEN TRIBUNAL,
PRINCIPAL BENCH, NEW DELHI

IA NO.537 OF 2025

IN

ORIGINAL APPLICATION NO.779 OF 2024

IN THE MATTER OF:

Dinesh Gupta

...Applicant

Versus

State of Punjab & Ors.

...Respondents

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NDOH- 17.04.2026

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RESPONDENT NO.4**THROUGH****Madhu Sweta****Singhania & Partners LLP****Solicitors & Advocates****P-24, Green Park Extn.****New Delhi – 110016****Mob. 9871650888****Email: madhu@singhania.in****Place: New Delhi****Date: 12.02.2026**

BEFORE THE NATIONAL GREEN TRIBUNAL
PRINCIPAL BENCH, NEW DELHI

IA NO.537/2025
IN
ORIGINAL APPLICATION NO. 779 OF 2024

IN THE MATTER OF:

Dinesh Gupta

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State of Punjab & Ors.

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**REPLY ON BEHALF OF RESPONDENT NO.4/ NATIONAL HIGHWAYS
AUTHORITY OF INDIA (NHAI)**

MOST RESPECTFULLY SHOWETH:

1. The present reply is being filed by the Answering Respondent No. 4/NHAI pertaining to I.A. No. 537/2025 ("IA") in O.A. No. 779/2024 ("OA") filed by the Applicant in compliance with the Order dated 12.11.2025.
2. The Answering Respondent has filed a detailed reply to OA No.779/2024 and relies upon the submissions, documents and annexures filed along with the aforesaid reply. The submissions stated therein shall be read as part and parcel of the present reply and the same are not repeated herein to avoid prolixity.
3. The Applicant by way of the present IA has alleged as under-
 - a. Despite pendency of OA No.779/2024 and even after Order dated 14.10.2024, fresh incidents of illegal tree felling have occurred.
 - b. Approximately 45 fully grown trees, located in the Forest Area aged between 30 to 40 years and having a circumference of 3 to 4 feet were felled.
 - c. On 20.10.2024 and 21.10.2024, more than 50 additional trees were cut under the cover of darkness.

- d. Upon ground verification only 23 trees/plants are actually standing in the stretch.
4. It is pertinent to note that the Applicant has placed reliance upon the photographs and alleged incidents from 18.10.2024 to 21.10.2024 in this regard. The fact that the IA has been filed by the Applicant on 10.08.2025 almost after 10 months, proves that the same is clearly an afterthought.
5. It is submitted that the averments/allegations made by the Applicant in the present IA are completely baseless, without any substantiation. The submissions of the Answering Respondent to each of the allegations are as under-
- 5.1. **Despite pendency of OA No.779/2024 and even after Order dated 14.10.2024, fresh incidents of illegal tree felling have occurred**
- 5.1.1. It is submitted that the Applicant has specifically averred in the present Application that illegal trees have been felled by the Respondents despite pendency of the OA No.779 and the Order dated 14.10.2024.
- 5.1.2. The Hon'ble Tribunal vide Order dated 14.10.2024 issued Notice upon the Respondents and directed the Respondents to file their respective replies one week before the next date of hearing. The Hon'ble Tribunal further constituted a Joint Committee to ascertain the number of trees that have been felled, the person/agency responsible for the same, if any requisite permission was obtained and if any compensatory afforestation plantation have been taken/proposed. The Hon'ble Tribunal directed the Joint Committee to file its Report within a period of eight (8) weeks.
- 5.1.3. In compliance with the Order dated 14.10.2024 passed by the Hon'ble Tribunal, the Answering Respondent filed its Reply to the OA on 22.02.2025. Subsequently, the Joint Committee submitted its Enquiry Report dated 12.12.2024 and on 07.08.2025.

- 5.1.4. It is submitted that the trees which were allegedly felled have only been removed in the area vested in the Answering Respondent/ NHAI in the spirit of the MoU. Thus, the averment made by the Applicant is completely frivolous, baseless and is liable to be rejected.
- 5.2. Approximately 45 fully grown trees, located in the Forest Area aged between 30 to 40 years and having a circumference of 3 to 4 feet were felled
- 5.2.1. The Applicant has alleged that approximately 45 fully grown trees have been cut aged between 30 to 40 years, having a circumference of 3 to 4 feet. The Applicant has placed reliance upon photographs annexed at **Pg.31-50** of IA.
- 5.2.2. It is submitted that the photographs now being placed on record clearly depict that the trees were not 30 to 40 years old. The branches of trees as appearing in the photographs do not in any way prove that the same were old trees. Further, the location of such photographs only depicts “**NH 54**”.
- 5.2.3. It is pertinent to note that the Applicant in its OA has raised its grievance regarding the felling of illegal trees due to the vehicular underpass at km 43.5 on the NH 54 specifically in the area of Sohal Village, Tehsil and District Gurdaspur. However, the said allegation is bald as the Applicant has miserably failed to prove that there was any illegal felling of trees by the Respondents at the said chainage. No photograph or any proof has been filed or submitted on record before the Hon’ble Tribunal. It is reiterated that no tree has been felled by the Respondents at the said Chainage as also affirmed by the DFO in its response dated 07.11.2025 to the present IA stating that “*no such fresh incidents of illegal tree felling occurred after Order dated 14.10.2024*”. The DFO has also affirmed that “*the plants and trees which are allegedly to be removed are still standing and the plants and trees which have been removed by NHAI have been removed from their own land and not from the forest land as alleged*”. Thus, the present IA is nothing but completely an afterthought.

- 5.2.4. It is pertinent to note that the Applicant is trying to mislead this Hon'ble Tribunal by equating "plants" with "trees". The DFO in its Affidavit dated 07.11.2025 has also stated that "*the applicant is trying to create confusion by equating plants and trees, regarding the age of plants and trees, and area/land which allegedly was removed by NHAI, whereas the fact is that some of the and trees which allegedly to be removed are still standing.*" A perusal of the said affidavit makes it clear that the contention raised by the Applicant is incorrect and thus deserves to be rejected.
- 5.2.5. The Applicant has by way of the present Application placed photographs of some part of NH-54 which does not concern the said Chainage or the Sohal Village. Thus, the same is liable to be rejected outrightly.
- 5.3. **On 20.10.2024 and 21.10.2024, more than 50 additional trees were cut under the cover of darkness**
- 5.3.1. The Applicant has averred that more than 50 additional trees were cut under the cover of darkness on 20.10.2024 and 21.10.2024. The Applicant has further alleged that the stumps and felled logs were concealed by covering them with earth (*mitti*). The Applicant has placed its reliance upon photographs annexed at **Pg.55-58** of IA.
- 5.3.2. The Applicant averred that illegal trees were felled on 20.10.2024 and 21.10.2024 which is false as no place or any chainage has been mentioned by the Applicant. The reliance placed upon the photographs is also not tenable as the said photographs were taken after a month of the alleged incident and the present Application has been filed after 10 months before the Hon'ble Tribunal which clearly proves that the same is completely an afterthought.
- 5.4. **Upon ground verification only 23 trees/plants are actually standing in the stretch**

- 5.4.1. The Applicant has also alleged that “upon ground verification”, only 23 trees/plants are actually standing in the said stretch as of today.
- 5.4.2. A perusal of para 9, Pg.28 of the IA makes it abundantly clear that the said averment is also baseless and unsubstantiated. The Applicant has raised bald assertions only to mislead the Hon’ble Tribunal without mentioning the place, time or any report to prove its assertions. There is absolutely no proof regarding the “ground verification” being done by the Applicant.
- 5.4.3. Moreover, the DFO, Gurdaspur in its Affidavit, filed on 07.04.2025 has clearly stated that in the year 2020-2021 from km 42.960 – 44.100, 2023 plants were planted and 1651 plants were felled from the National Highway at **Pg.114** of Affidavit.
- 5.4.4. Even, the DFO, Gurdaspur vide its Affidavit submitted on 11.08.2025, mentioned the Chainage wise details of the plants/trees being planted and which are standing along with the photographs annexed at **Pg.120, and Pg.124-129** of Affidavit.
- 5.4.5. On 07.11.2025, the DFO in response to the present IA has also stated that “*no such fresh incidents of illegal tree felling occurred after Order dated 14.10.2024*”.
6. Thus, in view of the above submissions, the present IA is liable to be dismissed.

PARAWISE REPLY

1. Contents of para 1 which are matter of record need no reply.
2. Contents of para 2 are denied being wrong, misleading and without any substantiation. It is denied that any incidents of illegal tree cutting have occurred. The Applicant has only made bald assertions without there being any proof.

3. Contents of para 3 which are matter of record need no reply. The remaining averments are denied as false and untenable.
- 4-5. Contents of paras 4 to 5 are denied being wrong, incorrect, misleading and without any substantiation. In response to the paras under reply, the Answering Respondent craves leave of the Hon'ble Tribunal to refer and rely upon the submissions made hereinabove which are not repeated for the sake of brevity.
- 6-8. Contents of paras 6 to 8 which are matter of record need no reply. The remaining averments are denied as false and untenable.
- 9-11. Contents of paras 9 to 11 are denied being wrong, incorrect, baseless and without any substantiation. It is denied that there are only 23 trees remaining in the concerned area. It is denied that as per official communications of the Forest Department there are 40 trees standing in the concerned area. In response to the paras under reply, the Answering Respondent craves leave of the Hon'ble Tribunal to refer and rely upon the submissions made hereinabove which are not repeated for the sake of brevity.
12. Contents of para 12 are denied being bald, baseless, misleading. It is denied that the Answering Respondent and the Forest Department are in collusion with each other. The said averment is completely baseless and without there being any iota of proof.
13. Contents of para 13 are denied being bald, baseless, misleading. It is submitted that the Applicant has harped upon alleged 23 trees being standing as on today without there being any proof. The said averment has been made based out of the Applicant's own ground verification. No proof of any verification has been submitted. The said averment is completely a bald statement.

14. Contents of para 14 are denied being wrong, incorrect, misleading without any substantiation. It is denied that there has been any illegal felling of trees. The said allegation is bald and baseless and is categorically denied.

PRAYER

Under the aforesaid circumstances, it is most respectfully prayed that this Hon'ble Tribunal may graciously be pleased to:

- a. Dismiss the present interim application filed by the Applicant in favour of the Answering Respondent; and/or
- b. Pass such order or further order(s) as this Hon'ble Tribunal may be deem fit, proper and just under the circumstances of the present case.

THROUGH

Dated: 05.02.2026
Place: New Delhi


परियोजना निदेशक / Project Director
भारतीय राष्ट्रीय राजमार्ग प्राधिकरण
National Highways Authority of India
परियोजना कार्यान्वयन इकाई, अमृतसर
P111-AMRITSAR
RESPONDENT NO.4

Singhania & Partners LLP
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New Delhi-110016

BEFORE THE NATIONAL GREEN TRIBUNAL
PRINCIPAL BENCH, NEW DELHI

IA NO.537/2025

IN

ORIGINAL APPLICATION NO. 779 OF 2024

IN THE MATTER OF:

Dinesh Gupta

...Applicant

Versus

State of Punjab & Ors.

...Respondents

AFFIDAVIT

I, Gajender Singh S/o Sh. Randhir Singh aged about 37 years, working as Project Director at National Highways Authority of India, PIU- Amritsar, having office at E-09, Dream City, Manawala, Amritsar, 143115, do hereby on solemn affirmation state and submit as under:

1. I say that I am the authorized representative of the Respondent No.4 abovenamed and as such am conversant with the facts and circumstances of the present reply. I have been duly authorized by the Respondent No.4 to initiate and pursue the present proceedings for and on behalf of the Respondent No.4 and hence, I am competent to swear the present affidavit on the basis of the records being maintained by the Respondent No.4 in the ordinary course of its business.
2. I say that the accompanying reply to the interim application has been drafted by my counsel on my instructions and I have read and understood the contents of the same. The contents of the reply are true and correct, which are reiterated herein and are not being repeated for the sake of brevity.





परियोजना निदेशक, Project Director
भारतीय राष्ट्रीय राजमार्ग प्राधिकरण
National Highways Authority of India
परियोजना कार्यान्वयन इकाई अमृतसर
PIU-Amritsar

DEPONENT

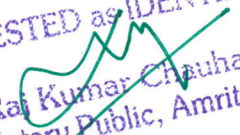
VERIFICATION:

Verified at Amritsar on this 6th day of February 2026 that the contents of the above affidavit are true and correct to the best of my knowledge. No part of it is wrong and nothing material has concealed there from.


परियोजना निदेशक / Project Director
भारतीय राष्ट्रीय राजमार्ग प्राधिकरण
National Highway Authority of India
परियोजना कार्यान्वयन इकाई अमृतसर
PIU-Amritsar

DEPONENT



ATTESTED as IDENTIFIED

Raj Kumar Chauhan
Notary Public, Amritsar

06 FEB 2026

Ayush Kumar

From: Ayush Kumar
Sent: 12 February 2026 16:07
To: 'lenitpharmaceuticals@gmail.com'; 'cs@punjab.gov.in'; 'pccfcomplex@gmail.com'; 'dfogurdaspur@gmail.com'
Subject: In the matter of OA 779 of 2024 titled Dinesh Gupta Vs State of Punjab and Ors filed before the Hon'ble National Green Tribunal, Principal Bench at New Delhi
Attachments: Reply dt 12.02.2026.pdf

Dear Sir/Ma'am,

Please find attached herewith the reply being filed on behalf of NHA/Respondent No.4 in the subject matter for your reference.

Kindly accept the same as advance service.

Best Regards,

Ayush Kumar | Associate



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