

BEFORE THE NATIONAL GREEN TRIBUNAL**PRINCIPAL BENCH, NEW DELHI****ORIGINAL APPLICATION NO. 1235 OF 2024****IN THE MATTER OF:-**

NEWS ITEM TITLED "NHAI HAS MADE HIGHWAY AT PROTECTED POND SITE IN DELHI ACTIVISTS" APPEARING IN THE TIMES OF INDIA DATED 30.09.2024"

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THROUGH RESPONDENT:


Ms. Jyoti Mendiratta
(Counsel for the Respondent)
H-34, (Lower Ground Floor),
Jangpura Extension
New Delhi-110014

Dated: 11.02.2026
NEW DELHI

BEFORE THE NATIONAL GREEN TRIBUNAL
PRINCIPAL BENCH, NEW DELHI
ORIGINAL APPLICATION NO. 1235 OF 2024

IN THE MATTER OF:-

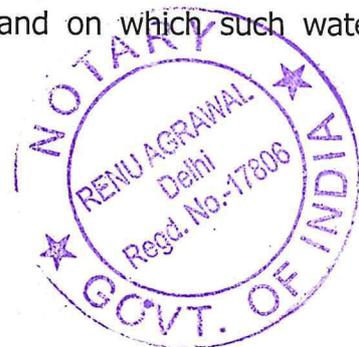
NEWS ITEM TITLED "NHAI HAS MADE HIGHWAY AT PROTECTED POND SITE IN DELHI ACTIVISTS" APPEARING IN THE TIMES OF INDIA DATED 30.09.2024"

REPLY ON BEHALF OF RESPONDENT NO. 4 IN COMPLIANCE WITH ORDER DATED 18.11.2025 PASSED IN THE CAPTIONED ORIGINAL APPLICATION.

MOST RESPECTFULLY SHOWETH:-

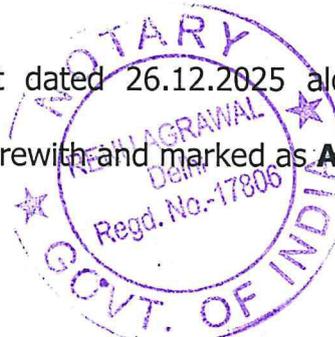
I, Shyam Sunder Kandpal, aged 57 years, working as Member Secretary, Wetland Authority, Delhi, Department of Environment, Govt. of NCT of Delhi, having office at I.P. Estate, New Delhi-110002, do hereby solemnly affirm and state as follows:-

1. That the present matter is pertaining to alleged illegal construction of a highway by the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) that encroaches upon a protected pond in southwest district of Delhi. As per the news item, NHAI built the Urban Extension Road-II over the pond in Goyla Khurd village, which was among the list of over 1,000 ponds to be protected.
2. That water bodies are spread over the entire area of Delhi. These water bodies are under the management and control of different authorities which have ownership of the land on which such water bodies exist.



3. That site inspection of water body, Khasra No. 9/29(10-09) has been conducted by Court Commissioners (Water Bodies), Delhi High Court on 26.12.2025 wherein following directions were given to concerned authorities i.e. DDA, Revenue Department and NHAI:-
- a) The land in question was taken over by NHAI for construction of a flyover.
 - b) The flyover has since been constructed and the purpose of land acquisition has been fulfilled.
 - c) NHAI has informed the District Magistrate (South West) regarding taking back the land from NHAI.
 - d) As reported by NHAI, no response has been received from the office of the District Magistrate (South West).
 - e) The District Magistrate (South West) is to coordinate with the Gram Sabha/DDA for taking over the land in question and for development of the water body.
 - f) The concerned authorities are directed to submit an action plan within one month of taking over the land.
 - g) It has also been reported that sewage water from the neighboring village is flowing into the water body. Immediate steps are required to stop the inflow of sewage into the water body.
 - h) An action taken report/interim report along with the plan is to be submitted on 30.01.2026 at 3:00 PM at Chamber No. 404, Lawyers Chambers, Delhi High Court, New Delhi.

Copy of inspection report dated 26.12.2025 alongwith Geo-tagged photographs is annexed herewith and marked as **ANNEXURE-A**.



4. That Hon'ble NGT vide order dated 01.06.2020 in Original Application No. 325/2015 titled as "Lt. Col. Sarvadaman Singh Oberoi Vs. Union of India & Ors" observed that :-

Para: 6 "There can be no dispute that the water bodies play significant role in recharge of ground water, preventing soil erosion, harnessing rain water and maintaining micro-climate in the area. Need for conservation and protection of water bodies is thus obvious. This requires involvement not only at the level of the State but also at the level of the community for which State needs to take initiative. The threat caused to the water bodies is by dumping of waste, discharge of effluents and encroachments. The steps required for restoration will include preparation and implementation of catchment area treatment plans, setting up of green belt and wherever viable setting up of bio-diversity parks around the water bodies, cleaning up of the garbage/debris and demarcation by the Revenue Department on identification survey and demarcation. Each water body is required to be given a geo referenced-UID and an action plan is required for restoration and protection of each of the water bodies. In this view of the matter, need for conservation and protection of water bodies is not confined to the State of Haryana alone but extends to the whole country".

Para: 7 "The Hon'ble Supreme Court in Hinch Lal Tiwari vs. Kamala Devi & Ors. (2001) 6 SCC 496 observed: "It is important to notice that the material resources of the community like forests, tanks, ponds, hillock, mountain etc. are nature's bounty. They maintain delicate ecological balance. They need to be protected for a proper and healthy environment which enables people to enjoy a quality life which is the



essence of the guaranteed right under Article 21 of the Constitution. The Government, including the Revenue Authorities i.e. Respondents 11 to 13, having noticed that a pond is falling in disuse, should have bestowed their attention to develop the same which would, on one hand, have prevented ecological disaster and on the other provided better environment for the benefit of the public at large. Such vigil is the best protection against knavish attempts to seek allotment in non-abadi sites."

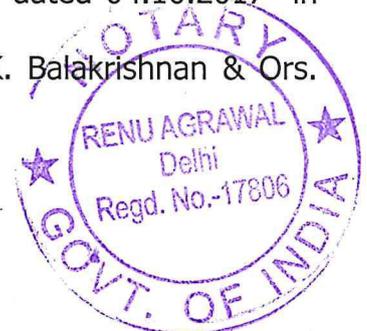
Copy of order dated 01.06.2020 is annexed herewith and marked as **ANNEXURE-B.**

5. That Hon'ble Supreme Court of India vide order dated 19.08.2025 in Writ Petition (Civil) No. 304/2018 titled as "Anand Arya Vs. Union of India" observed that :-

Para: 8 *"wetlands which are less than 2.25 Hectares are required to be identified as prescribed under the extant Rules and the affidavits of the State Governments of Wetland Authorities shall also dwelve upon as to the manner and method in which steps have bee taken or being taken to protect these wetlands which are less than 2.25 Hectares which according to the statistics is around 5,55,557 as mentioned in the Wetland Atlas".*

Copy of order dated 19.08.2025 is annexed herewith and marked as **ANNEXURE-C.**

6. That Hon'ble Supreme Court of India vide order dated 04.10.2017 in Writ Petition (Civil) No. 230/2001 titled as "M.K. Balakrishnan & Ors. Vs. Union of India & Ors" directed that :-



"We make it clear and reiterate that in terms of our order dated 8th February, 2017, 2,01,503 wetlands that have been mapped by the Union of India should continue to remain protected on the same principles as were formulated in Rule 4 of the Wetlands (Conservation and Management) Rules, 2010".

Copy of order dated 04.10.2017 is annexed herewith and marked as **ANNEXURE-D.**

7. That, as per records, Khasra No. 9//29(10-9), Village Goyla Khurd is a listed water body under the Wetland Authority of Delhi. Being an ecologically significant asset, the water body must be safeguarded from encroachment, pollution, and any form of degradation. The land-owning agency is responsible for taking immediate measures for its protection, restoration, and planned development, including prevention of sewage inflow, demarcation of boundaries, and ecological improvement, so as to ensure long-term conservation and sustainable management of the water body.
8. It is humbly submitted that the Respondents have the highest respect and regard for the orders and majesty of this Hon'ble Court. The present status report along with its annexures is being placed before this Hon'ble Court for its consideration.



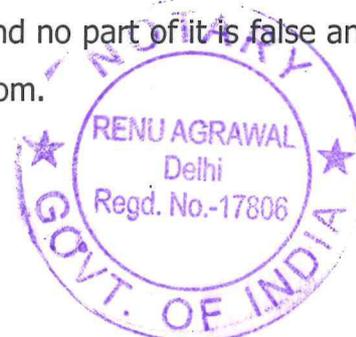
DEPONENT

VERIFICATION:

Verified at New Delhi on this the 11th day of February, 2026 that the contents of the above status report are true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief and no part of it is false and nothing material has been concealed therefrom.

Member Secretary
(Wetland Authority)
Department of Environment
Govt. of NCT of Delhi
C-1/11, Sheela, Delhi Secretariat
I.P. Estate, New Delhi-02

ATTESTED
NOTARY PUBLIC
DELHI (INDIA)




DEPONENT

11 FEB 2026

559 Vivek Kumar Tandon

ADVOCATE

Enrolment No.: D/436/1988

Former Addl. Standing Counsel (Civil), GNCTD

Former Senior Panel Counsel, Government of India

MINUTES OF MEETING OF INSPECTION OF SOUTH WEST DISTRICT HELD ON 26.12.2025 BY THE COMMITTEE APPOINTED BY THE HON'BLE HIGH COURT DELHI

1. Najafgarh

(a) Khasra No. 16//11/1min (07-05), 16(08-16), 19(04-03) Total Area (20-00)

Part of area is being used and maintained/developed as Water Body as balance part (major portion) has been allotted to DTC. Further, part of area earmarked as Water Body is under encroachment.

The portion constructed as Water Body is well maintained water body. It is reported that during monsoon water level reaches around 10 ft. and is perforated under the ground. It is further reported that harvesting system is also in place. However, the same being not seen/identified on the spot. It may be looked in to and proper harvesting system be maintained.

A portion of Boundary wall has fallen down during rainy season, it has been assured that the same shall be constructed as soon as the budget is received.

As regards area handed over to DDA, it is reported that DTC Terminal is not in use by DTC, for the last more than 2½ years.

None from DDA is present.

Since the land is not in use of DTC, so the very purpose for which it was given is over/of no use and it can be reverted back to the land-owning agencies and further either DDA/MCD/IFCD should focus on construction of water body. This place/area above area where Water Body Exists can be

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added with the existing Water Body to make a bigger water body.



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2. Chhawla

(a) Khasra No. 192(5-15)

From the surroundings, the place/site appears to be a water body and after urbanization it is gone to DDA. A mandir also exists around the Water Body. DDA is directed to maintain it as a water body and submit a plan of its development. ATR be submitted on 16.01.2026 at 3.00 P.M. Chamber No. 404, Lawyers Chambers, Delhi High Court, New Delhi.



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(b) Khasra No. 96 (16-06)

The water body is full of sewerage and bad smell is also very hard. Discussion with Delhi Jal Board and DDA also was held at site and it is found that no sewer line exists in the village because of which the sewage is flowing into this water body.

It is stated by Delhi Jal Board officials that STP installed at site is defunct from June, 2025 for want of budget. It was further stated by DJB that the water body is proposed to be returned back to DDA, by DJB.

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(c) Khasra No. 196/1(19-15)

The condition of water body is pathetic full of sewerage and dirty water with garbage surrounding the body.

Discussion with Delhi Jal Board and DDA also was held at site and it is found that no sewer line exists in the village because of which the sewerage is flowing into this water body.

It is stated by Delhi Jal Board officials that this STP is defunct from 2025 for want of budget. The water body is proposed to be returned back to DDA, by DJB. Action Plan be submitted on 16.01.2026 at 3:00 PM Noon at Chamber No. 404, Lawyers Chambers, Delhi High Court, New Delhi.

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(d) Khasra No. 199 (14-17)

This is banjar land and before taking any action DDA is requested to clean the same. Further proposed action plan be also submitted on 16.01.2026 at 3:00 PM Noon at Chamber No. 404, Lawyers Chambers, Delhi High Court, New Delhi.



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(e) Khasra No. 200 (04-03)

An open land of which is in possession of DDA, can be very well developed as a water body. Proper action plan be submitted on 16.01.2026 at 3.00 P.M. Chamber No. 404, Lawyers Chambers, Delhi High Court, New Delhi.

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(f) Khasra No. 215 (16-8)

The condition of water body is pathetic full of sewerage and dirty water with garbage surrounding the body.

Discussion with Delhi Jal Board and DDA also was held at site and it is found that no sewer line exists in the village because of which the sewerage is flowing into this water body.

It is stated by Delhi Jal Board officials that this STP is defunct from 2025 for want of budget. The water body is proposed to be returned back to DDA, by DJB. Action Plan be submitted on 16.01.2026 at 3:00 PM Noon at Chamber No. 404, Lawyers Chambers, Delhi High Court, New Delhi.



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3. Jhatikra

(a) Khasra No. 84(19-04)

Though coronation plant and Delhi Jal Board pump was constructed, however, the same has never been come to motion/operation. An area is claimed to be of abadi deh and rasta has been sought, however, on account of stay the boundary wall has not constructed in that portion. Copy of the litigation be provided on 16.01.2026 at 3:00 PM Noon at Chamber No. 404, Lawyers Chambers, Delhi High Court, New Delhi.

It is proposed that in order to save further encroachment the area be barbed wire till the litigation is pending.

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Former Senior Panel Counsel, Government of India

4. Goyla Khurd

(a) Khasra No. 9/29(10-09)NHAI

The area in question was taken by NHAI for construction of the flyover. The flyover has been constructed and the purpose of taking of the land is fulfilled.

NHAI has already informed District Magistrate (South West) for taking back the land from NHAI, however, no response has been received from the office of District Magistrate (South West), as reported by NHAI.

District Magistrate (South West) to coordinate with Gram Sabha/DDA for taking over the land in question and develop the water body. Action plan be submitted by the concerned authorities within one month of taking over the land. It is also reported that sewage water is flowing in to this water body from the neighboring village which should be stopped immediately. Action taken report/interim report be submitted with plan on 30.01.2026 at 3:00 PM Noon at Chamber No. 404, Lawyers Chambers, Delhi High Court, New Delhi.

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5. Tajpur Khurd

(a) Khasra No. 33(18-16), 34(0-15) Total Area (19-11)

The dirty water and sewerage is flowing into the water body. Delhi Jal Board's pump is working. Further, at various places boundary wall is broken giving way for encroachment. DDA should immediately construct the boundary wall to protect the land. Since, DJB is desirous of handing over/returning the water body in this village and has proposed to hand over the possession back to DDA, as such, DDA is requested to prepare the action plan and submit the same as early as possible.

Action taken report be submitted with plan on 16.01.2026 at 3:00 PM Noon at Chamber No. 404, Lawyers Chambers, Delhi High Court, New Delhi.



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Note: Authorities are requested to submit compliance of the directions of Court Committee, within the stipulated time, as pointed in this minutes.

(Arvind Sah)
Court Commissioner

(Vivek Kumar Tandon)
Court Commissioner

Item No. 03

Court No. 1

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

(By Video Conferencing)

M.A. No. 26/2019

IN

Original Application No. 325/2015
I.A. No. 700/2019 & MA. No. 252/2019

(With Report dated 22.05.2020)

Lt. Col. Sarvadaman Singh Oberoi

Applicant(s)

Versus

Union of India & Ors.

Respondent(s)

Date of hearing: 01.06.2020

CORAM:

**HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE ADARSH KUMAR GOEL, CHAIRPERSON
HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE SHEO KUMAR SINGH, JUDICIAL MEMBER
HON'BLE DR. NAGIN NANDA, EXPERT MEMBER**

For Respondent(s):

Mr. Rajkumar, Advocate for CPCB
Mr. Shuvodeep Roy, Advocate for State of Assam

ORDER

1. This order is being passed in continuation of order dated 25.02.2020. The issue for consideration in the original application was identification, protection and restoration of water bodies in the State of Haryana. However, in the light of proceedings which took place, the scope of the application was extended to the entire country, in the interest of protection of environment.
2. The matter was last considered on 25.02.2020 in the light of the status report handed over during the hearing in pursuance of

earlier directions vide order dated 10.05.2019. Order dated 10.05.2019 *inter-alia* is as follows:-

- “2. This application was filed on 14.08.2015 before this Tribunal in the context of Gurgaon District and as per status report as on 09.03.2017 filed before this Tribunal on behalf of State of Haryana referred to in the order dated 20.07.2018, there are 1216 water bodies in the State of Haryana which are larger than 2.25 Ha and 123 water bodies which are in possession of the State in Gurgaon District while the total number of the water bodies are 641 (later corrected as 647) in Gurgaon District. The Tribunal directed that for 123 water bodies which are in possession of the State, steps be taken for their proper maintenance and restoration. **An exercise be undertaken in the entire State of Haryana to identify water bodies. On such identification, water bodies be assigned Unique Identification (UID) number and steps be taken for restoration.** Report was sought within six months.
3. Status report has been filed vide email dated 25.04.2019 by the Haryana Pond and Waste Water Management Authority (HPWWMA) stating that HPWWMA has been established under a State Act called the HPWWMA Act, 2018 notified on 23.10.2018 for development and protection of ponds and matters connected therewith. Pond has been defined as a tank or lake or any other inland water body having an area of 0.5 acre or more. The authority is to undertake survey and take steps for restoration of water bodies, PDMS (Pond Data management System) has been developed which can be accessed through “<http://hpwwma.org>”: DPMOs (District Pond Management Officers) are appointed for each District. As per PDMS data, 16306 ponds fall under the Panchayats and 265 ponds fall under the Urban Local Bodies. The same have been given UID numbers and work of development will be undertaken by DPD (Development and Panchayat Department). The work for connecting the ponds with the nearby canal network will be executed by the IWRD (Irrigation and water Resources Department). 200 most problematic and overflowing ponds will be addressed during 2019-20. 193 model ponds which are overlapping with the said 200 ponds will be developed in first phase for which a plan has been prepared.
4. The Gurgaon Metropolitan Development Authority (GMDA) has also given a report to the effect that water bodies in the District are owned by 20 different entities. Work of restoration of 123 water bodies was taken up which has been widened to improve 647 water bodies. In all 826 water bodies, as found as per record, the task involves identification and verification of data, review and categorization of water bodies, assigning UID numbers, preparation of maps and analysis of information in regard to size, restoration potential, etc. **20%**

of the water bodies are at risk due to discharge of untreated sewage, industrial effluents or waste water.

5. *Learned counsel for the applicant submits that not even a single water body has so far been taken up for restoration inspite of the exercise undertaken for identification of the water bodies. The steps for preventing dumping of solid waste or discharging of effluents are urgently required. The State of Haryana may take necessary steps in terms of the status report referred to in para 3 & 4 above as well as in the light of general directions which we propose to issue to all the States/UTs.*

6. ***There can be no dispute that the water bodies play significant role in recharge of ground water, preventing soil erosion, harnessing rain water and maintaining micro-climate in the area. Need for conservation and protection of water bodies is thus obvious. This requires involvement not only at the level of the State but also at the level of the community for which State needs to take initiative. The threat caused to the water bodies is by dumping of waste, discharge of effluents and encroachments. The steps required for restoration will include preparation and implementation of catchment area treatment plans, setting up of green belt and wherever viable setting up of bio-diversity parks around the water bodies, cleaning up of the garbage/debris and demarcation by the Revenue Department on identification survey and demarcation. Each water body is required to be given a geo-referenced-UID and an action plan is required for restoration and protection of each of the water bodies. In this view of the matter, need for conservation and protection of water bodies is not confined to the State of Haryana alone but extends to the whole country.***

7. ***The Hon'ble Supreme Court in Hinch Lal Tiwari v. Kamala Devi & Ors. (2001) 6 SCC 496 observed:***

“It is important to notice that the material resources of the community like forests, tanks, ponds, hillock, mountain etc. are nature's bounty. They maintain delicate ecological balance. They need to be protected for a proper and healthy environment which enables people to enjoy a quality life which is the essence of the guaranteed right under Article 21 of the Constitution. The Government, including the Revenue Authorities i.e. Respondents 11 to 13, having noticed that a pond is falling in disuse, should have bestowed their attention to develop the same which would, on one hand, have prevented ecological disaster and on the other provided better environment for the benefit of the public at large. Such vigil is

the best protection against knavish attempts to seek allotment in non-abadi sites.”

8. *The above observations advance the Public Trust Doctrine which is based on the principle that certain resources like air, water and forests have such great importance to the people as a whole that the same cannot be subject of private ownership. The same are gift of the nature and should be made freely available to the people. The Doctrine requires the State to protect such resources and not to permit them to be used for private or commercial purposes.¹ This concept is applicable to wetlands and all water bodies which is essential for protection of the environment. If the ponds and other such water bodies are not protected and conserved, this will in turn affect recharge of ground water, rain water harnessing and soil preservation.*
9. *Ground water conservation remains a challenge. This led the Hon’ble Supreme Court to direct constitution of the Central Ground Water Authority (CGWA) vide order reported in M.C Mehta v. Union of India & Ors, (1997) 11 SCC 312. The data compiled by the said authority shows that there are over exploited, critical and semi critical areas (OCS). The ground water is on the decline in the said areas. In this regard, it may be noted that vide order dated 11.07.2018 in W.P.C No. 4677/1985, M.C. Mehta v. Union of India and Ors., the Hon’ble Supreme Court noted the report of the Niti Ayog on “Composite Water Management Index”, June 2018, in which it is stated, inter alia:*
- “In fact by 2020, 21 major cities, including Delhi, Bangalore and Hyderabad will be expected to reach zero groundwater levels, affecting access for 100 million people”.*
10. *The Tribunal has, vide order dated 07.05.2019 in O.A No. 176/2015, Shailesh Singh Vs. Hotel Holiday Regency, Moradabad & Ors., directed the CGWA to prepare a policy for conservation of groundwater with a robust institutional mechanism for surveillance and monitoring with a view to enhance access to ground water for drinking purposes in OCS areas by way of appropriate replenishment practices which can be properly accounted and measured as well as to sustain the flood plains of rivers in terms of e-flows, augmentation of subterranean flows and preservation of other water bodies. The Tribunal also considered the matter in the context of Delhi, vide order dated 30.08.2018 in Original Application No. 496 of 2016, Tribunal on its own Motion Vs. Govt. of NCT of Delhi & Ors., and appointed a Committee headed by the former Judge of Delhi High Court to oversee the steps for conservation of ground water in Delhi. We also note the guidelines for National Lake Conservation Plan prepared by MoEF&CC in May 2008 as well as National Plan for Conservation of Aquatic Ecosystem (NPCA) prepared by*

¹ (1997) 1 SCC 388, M.C. Mehta vs Kamal Nath & Ors

MoEF&CC in November, 2016. Irrespective of the subject being covered by a particular State statute, **the protection of water bodies is an essential need for protection of environment as held in Hinch Lal Tiwari (Supra). Such requirement is covered by the 'Precautionary' principle as well as the 'Sustainable Development' principle which are required to be enforced by this Tribunal under Section 20 of the NGT Act, 2010.** The HPWWMA Act, 2018 covers only ponds having area of more than 0.5 acres. Thus ponds of lesser area have been left out of regulation under the said Act. This aspect needs to be addressed to the extent the same remains un-addressed not only in Haryana but throughout India to the extent the existing statutory framework or guidelines do not cover comprehensively the subject of restoration of all the water bodies. The definition of water body in the Haryana Act is as follows:

“the 'pond' means a tank or lake or any other inland water body having an area of 0.5 acre or more, whether it contains water or not, and mentioned in revenue records as talab, johar, tank or by any other name and includes green belt and the peripheral catchments areas, main feeder inlet and other inlets, bunds, weirs, sluices etc but does not include wet lands as notified by the Government from time to time.”

11. *The above definition shows that only ponds of area of more than 0.5 acres are sought to be restored under the statutory provisions of the said Act. While in terms of the orders of the Hon'ble Supreme Court in Hinch Lal Tiwari (Supra) even ponds of lesser area will be covered for being protected and restored. This is also imperative in terms of the concern raised in the order of Hon'ble Supreme Court dated 11.07.2018 in W.P.C Nos. 4677/1985, M.C. Mehta vs. Union of India &Ors. for conservation of ground water. If all water bodies including ponds of lesser area than 0.5 acre are not covered, this will affect the environment including recharge of ground water, harnessing of rain water, prevention of soil erosion and maintaining the micro climate. We may, however, clarify that focus may be on ponds, etc. recorded in the revenue record.*
12. **We may note that there are 351 polluted river stretches in India identified as such by the CPCB which need remediation. The matter is being considered by this Tribunal in Original Application No.673/2018, News item published in "The Hindu" authored by Shri Jacob Koshy titled "More river stretches are now critically polluted : CPCB. In O.A. No. 148/2016, Mahesh Chandra Saxena Vs. South Delhi Municipal Corporation &Ors., vide order dated 10.05.2019, it was observed that reuse of treated sewage water as well as restoration of water bodies are connected to ground water conservation, which in turn is connected to remedying the pollution of polluted river stretches.**

13. **Thus to give effect to ‘Precautionary’ principle and ‘Sustainable Development’ principle, we direct all the States and UTs to review the existing framework of restoration all the water bodies by preparing an appropriate action plan. Such action plans may be prepared within three months and a report furnished to the CPCB. The CPCB may examine all such plans and furnish its comments to this Tribunal within two months thereafter. The Chief Secretaries of all the States/UTs in the course of undertaking monitoring exercise in pursuance of the order of this Tribunal in O.A No. 606/2018, Compliance of MSW Rules, 2016, may also include restoration of water bodies as one of the items as the same is also incidental to waste management which are covered by orders in O.A No. 606/2018, Compliance of MSW Rules, 2016.**

14. *The CPCB may prepare and place on its website guidelines in the matter of restoration of water bodies in the light of above order within one month.”*

3. On consideration of the status report filed before the Tribunal on

25.02.2020. The Tribunal observed:-

“3. In pursuance of the above, the learned counsel for the CPCB has handed over a status report during the course of hearing to the effect that indicative guidelines for restoration of water bodies have been uploaded on the website of the CPCB on 18.06.2019 but most the States have not submitted their action plans. Out of 435 locations monitored, 357 locations were not complying with the primary water quality criteria for bathing. CPCB constituted an expert committee vide order dated 28.08.2019 under the Chairmanship of MS, CPCB comprising, representatives of MoEF&CC, MoJS, MoHUA, IIT Delhi, officials of CPCB and DH-WQM-I as member convener. First meeting of the expert Committee was held on 16.09.2019. The Tribunal has suggested following actions:

S.No.	Activity proposed	Organization Responsible
1.	Identification and Geo-Tagging of Ponds or Lakes in the Country	NRSA, State Space Application Centre and Concerned State Departments
2.	Assessment of Water Quality of Ponds or lakes.	Through Laboratories approved under E(P) Act, 1986 by the Concerned State Department/ULBs/State Environment Dept./SPCB/PCC.
3.	Prioritization of Ponds or Lakes for restoration in consultation with the respective SPCB.	State Environment Dept./SPCB/PCC.
4.	Preparation and submission of	State Environment Dept./SPCB/PCC.

	<i>action plans for restoration of prioritized Ponds or Lakes to CPCB for random scrutiny of proposed action plans.</i>	
5.	<i>Execution of approved action plans.</i>	<i>State Environment Dept./SPCB/PCC under the overall supervision of Principal Secretary, Environment Department.</i>

The CPCB conducted a workshop on the subject on 30.01.2020.

4. *Learned counsel for the CPCB states that further progress in the matter is being monitored and a status report will be filed before the next date. It is stated that only 14 States/UTs have furnished information which is not complete while 22 States/UTs have not furnished any information.*

5. ***Having regard to the significance of the issue and unsatisfactory response of the States as shown above, we direct that the information may be furnished by all the States/UTs by March 31, 2020 positively to the CPCB failing which the States will be liable to pay compensation at the rate of Rs. 1 lakh per month till information is furnished. Payment of compensation will be the responsibility of the Chief Secretaries of the respective States/UTs. Since we are informed that plans for restoration furnished by some of the States run even upto ten years, we direct that the action plans should provide for commencement of the work by 01.04.2020 and conclusion by 31.03.2021. The CPCB will be at liberty to issue appropriate directions to all the States/UTs by for compliance. The Ministry of Jal Shakti is also at liberty to take further remedial action in the matter.***

6. *A copy of this order be sent to the CPCB and Chief Secretaries of all the States/UTs and Ministry of Jal Shakti by email for compliance.”*

4. Accordingly, CPCB has filed its further response on 22.05.2020 seeking further time on account of Covid-19 Pandemic. The State of Assam has also filed an application seeking further time by the States in furnishing information in terms of the paragraph 5 of the order dated 25.02.2020 quoted above. The Report dated 22.05.2020 inter-alia states as follows:-

“2.2 Response received from State/UTs:

After the latest NGT order dated 25.02.2020, CPCB has circulated a detailed format seeking information on no. of identified water bodies, location details, water quality status, compliance status w.r.t. designated best use, identified water bodies which require restoration, prioritization of water bodies requiring restoration, detailed action plans for restoration of identified polluted water bodies in light of the indicative guidelines circulated by CPCB to all the States/UTs.

Till 21.05.2020, 20 States (viz. Arunachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Odisha, Punjab, Sikkim, Telangana, Tripura) and 03 UTs (viz., Delhi, Puducherry and Lakshadweep) have responded out of which only 09 States viz., Bihar, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Kerala, Maharashtra, Meghalaya, Odisha and Tripura and 02 UTs viz., Puducherry and Lakshadweep have provided information as per the format circulated by CPCB. State-wise status of information received by CPCB as on 21.05.2020 is detailed in the table below:

Sl. No.	Name of the State/UT	Date of receipt of response from the States/UTs subsequent to the order dated 25.02.2020 and a format circulated by CPCB vide letter dated 06.03.2020	Whether received information is as per the format circulated by CPCB (Yes/No)	Remarks
1.	Arunachal Pradesh	21.05.2020	No	
2.	Bihar	15.05.2020	Yes	
3.	Delhi	14.03.2020 and 27.03.2020	No	Sought time for submission of information
4.	Goa	06.05.2020	No	Information 'Nil'
5.	Gujarat	19.03.2020 and 11.05.2020	No	Sought information from the concerned departments

				<i>in the State</i>
6.	<i>Haryana</i>	<i>20.05.2020</i>	<i>Yes</i>	
7.	<i>Himachal Pradesh</i>	<i>20.03.2020, 27.04.2020 and 20.05.2020</i>	<i>Yes</i>	
8.	<i>Jammu & Kashmir</i>	<i>20.05.2020</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Sought time for submission of information</i>
9.	<i>Jharkhand</i>	<i>19.05.2020</i>	<i>Yes</i>	
10.	<i>Karnataka</i>	<i>11.05.2020</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Karnataka SPCB vide letter dated 16.03.2020 submitted information submitted by BWS & SB, Cauvery Niravari Nigama</i>
11.	<i>Kerala</i>	<i>19.05.2020</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Kerala SPCB vide letter dated 17.03.2020 submitted information as per guidelines of CPCB</i>
12.	<i>Lakshadweep</i>	<i>21.03.2020</i>	<i>Yes</i>	
13.	<i>Madhya Pradesh</i>	<i>06.05.2020</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Sought time for submission of information</i>
14.	<i>Maharashtra</i>	<i>31.03.2020</i>	<i>Yes</i>	
15.	<i>Manipur</i>	<i>30.03.2020</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Sought time for submission of information</i>
16.	<i>Meghalaya</i>	<i>18.05.2020</i>	<i>Yes</i>	

17.	Mizoram	22.05.2020	No	
18.	Odisha	14.05.2020	Yes	
19.	Punjab	31.03.2020 and 06.04.2020	No	Sought time for submission of information
20.	Puducherry	21.05.2020	Yes	
21.	Sikkim	23.04.2020	No	But provided on-going activities with regard to wetlands
22.	Telangana	23.03.2020	No	
23.	Tripura	27.03.2020	Yes	”

5. Having regard to the fact situation noted above, we extend the time for the States to complete action in terms of order dated 25.02.2020 till 31.07.2020. The CPCB may thereafter file its report by 31.10.2020 by e-mail at judicial-ngt@gov.in preferably in the form of searchable PDF/ OCR Support PDF and not in the form of Image PDF.

6. However, we wish to add a further direction having bearing on the subject. We have already noted the significance of protection and restoration of water bodies for the environment. The protection of water bodies not only add to availability of water for different purposes, it also contributes to recharge of ground and maintaining e-flow in the rivers, is congenial to micro climate in sub-watersheds as well as enhancing the natural aesthetics. While the rain water harvesting is certainly important, harvesting surplus water during excessive rains from any areas of catchment needs to be optimized by enhancing the capacity of the existing

ponds/water bodies, creation of water harvesting structures in the sub-watersheds to the extent possible, apart from setting up of additional water bodies/water harvesting structures wherever viable, utilizing available funds including under MGNREGA and involving the community at large at every level. Gram Panchayats can certainly play a significant role in the matter. Once adequate capacity enhancement of waterbodies takes place, excess flood/rain water can be channelized by using appropriate water harvesting techniques. This action needs to be coordinated by the District Magistrates in coordination with the Department of Irrigation and Flood Control or other concerned Departments such as Department of Rural Development/Urban Development/Local Bodies/Forests/Revenue etc. The District Magistrate may as far as possible hold a meeting of all the stakeholders for the purpose as per the District Environment Plan or Watershed Plan within one month from today. The District Magistrates may also ensure that as far as possible atleast one pond/water body must be restored in every village, apart from creation of any new pond/water body.

7. Action taken in this regard may be compiled at State level and reports furnished to the Chief Secretaries of the States by the concerned District Magistrates. Consolidated report of the State may thereafter be forwarded to the CPCB preferably by 31.08.2020 and CPCB may cover this aspect also in its meeting.

A copy of this order be sent to CPCB, Chief Secretaries, State PCBs/ PCCs of all States/UTs for being forwarded to all the District Magistrates and other concerned Departments and further

action in above terms. The District Magistrates may thereupon forward this order to all the levels of Panchayati Raj in their respective Districts.

The Chief Secretaries may also forward this order to their respective Extension/ Public Relation Departments for awareness and publicity.

A copy of this order be forwarded to the Ministry of Jal Shakti for appropriate action at their level by e-mail.

List for further consideration on 18.11.2020



Adarsh Kumar Goel, CP

Sheo Kumar Singh, JM

Dr. Nagin Nanda, EM

June 1, 2020
O. A. No. 325/2015
A

ITEM NO.34

587
COURT NO.15

SECTION PIL-W

S U P R E M E C O U R T O F I N D I A
R E C O R D O F P R O C E E D I N G S

Writ Petition (Civil) No.304/2018

ANAND ARYA

Petitioner(s)

VERSUS

UNION OF INDIA

Respondent(s)

IA No. 131361/2018 - INTERVENTION APPLICATION

WITH

W.P.(C) No. 230/2001 (PIL-W)

I.A.NO.203606/2022 IN W.P.(C)NO.230/2001

IA No. 203606/2022 - INTERVENTION APPLICATION

W.P.(C) No. 302/2020 (PIL-W)

IA No. 172737/2024 - APPROPRIATE ORDERS/DIRECTIONS

IA No. 172736/2024 - INTERVENTION/IMPLEADMENT

Date : 19-08-2025 These matters were called on for hearing today.

CORAM : HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE ARAVIND KUMAR
HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE N.V. ANJARIA

For Petitioner(s) : Mr. Shishir Pinaki, AOR

Mr. Jayant Bhushan, Sr. Adv.
Mr. Rohit Kumar Singh, AOR
Mr. Amartya Bhushan, Adv.
Ms. Rajlakshmi Singh, Adv.
Ms. Vidushi Srivastava, Adv.
Ms. Rambha Singh, Adv.Ms. Anitha Shenoy, Sr. Adv.
Ms. Shibani Ghosh, AOR
Ms. Sadhana Madhavan, Adv.
Ms. Kavana Rao, Adv.Mr. Shovan Mishra, AOR
Bipasa Tripathy, Adv.
Shlok Luthra, Adv.For Respondent(s) : Mr. Anil Shrivastav, AOR
Mr. Ashok Kumar Singh, AOR
Mr. Kunal Verma, AOR

Ms. Aishwarya Bhati, A.S.G.

Signature Not Verified
Digitally signed by
SNEHA DAS
Date: 2025.08.22
17:07:34 IST
Reason: 

Ms. Swarupma Chaturvedi, Sr. Adv.
 Mr. Gurmeet Singh Makker, AOR
 Mr. Bhuvan Mishra, Adv.
 Ms. Sunita Sharma, Adv.
 Mr. Aman Sharma, Adv.
 Mr. Pratyush Srivastava, Adv.
 Mr. Rohan Gupta, Adv.

Mr. P. V. Yogeswaran, AOR
 Ms. Sumita Hazarika, AOR

Ms. Aakanksha Tiwari, Adv.
 Mrs. Priyanka Dwivedi, Adv.
 Mrs. Monika, Adv.
 Ms. Nazish Fatima, Adv.
 Mahipal Singh, Adv.
 Ravinder Pal Singh, Adv.
 Dilip Kumar, Adv.
 Mr. Supriya, Adv.
 Kanchan Kumari, Adv.
 Javed Raza, Adv.
 Mr. Shiv Sagar Tiwari, AOR

Mr. Manish Kumar, AOR
 Mr. Divyansh Mishra, Adv.

Mr. Milind Kumar, AOR

Mr. Guntur Pramod Kumar, AOR
 Ms. Purna Singh, Adv.
 Mr. Dhruv Yadav, Adv.

Mr. Shuvodeep Roy, AOR

Ms. Eliza Barr, Adv.
 Ms. Disha Singh, AOR

Mrs. Aishwarya Bhati, A.S.G.
 Mrs. Swarupama Chaturvedi, Sr. Adv.
 Mrs. Ruchi Kohli, Sr. Adv.
 Mr. Mukesh Kumar Maroria, AOR
 Mr. Sunita Sharma, Adv.
 Mr. Pratyush Srivastav, Adv.

Ms. Swati Ghildiyal, AOR

Ms. Supriya Juneja, AOR

Mr. Alok Sangwan, Sr. A.A.G.
 Mr. Akshay Amritanshu, AOR
 Mr. Sumit Kumar Sharma, Adv.
 Mr. Rajat Sangwan, Adv.

Mr. Shikhar Narwal, Adv.
 Ms. Drishti Rawal, Adv.
 Ms. Drishti Saraf, Adv.
 Mr. Mayur Goyal, Adv.

Mr. Vishwanathan Iyer, Adv.
 Mrs. Shimpy Sharma, Adv.
 Ms. Pooja Sharma, Adv.
 Mr. Sandeep Jindal, AOR

Mr. Parth Awasthi, Adv.
 Mr. Pashupathi Nath Razdan, AOR

Mr. Muhammad Ali Khan, A.A.G.
 Mr. Sanchit Garga, AOR
 Mr. Shashwat Jaiswal, Adv.
 Mr. Kunal Rana, Adv.
 Mr. Bhanu Pratap Singh, Adv.

Mr. Nishe Rajen Shonker, AOR
 Mrs. Anu K Joy, Adv.
 Mr. Alim Anvar, Adv.
 Mr. Santhosh K, Adv.
 Mrs. Devika A.L., Adv.

Mr. Sunny Choudhary, AOR

Mr. Adarsh Dubey, Adv.
 Mr. Siddharth Dharmadhikari, Adv.
 Mr. Aaditya Aniruddha Pande, AOR
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 Ms. Rajkumari Divyasana, Adv.
 Ms. Anupama Ngangom, Adv.

Mr. Avijit Mani Tripathi, AOR
 Mr. T.K. Nayak, Adv.

Mr. Anando Mukherjee, AOR

Ms. K. Enatoli Sema, AOR
 Mr. Amit Kumar Singh, Adv.
 Ms. Chubalemla Chang, Adv.
 Mr. Prang Newmai, Adv.
 Ms. Yanmi Phazng, Adv.

Mr. Gaurav Khanna, AOR
 Ms. Natasha Sahrawat, Adv.
 Mr. Gautam Barnwal, Adv.
 Mr. Rudraksh Pandey, Adv.

Ms. Deepali Bhanot, Adv.

Mr. Siddhant Sharma, AOR

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Mr. Amogh Bansal, Adv.

Ms. Nidhi Jaswal, AOR

Mr. Sameer Abhyankar, AOR

Ms. Yashika Sharma, Adv.

Mr. Aryan Srivastava, Adv.

Mr. R. Ayyam Perumal, AOR

Ms. Purnima Krishna, AOR

Mr. M.F. Philip, Adv.

Mr. Karamveer Singh Yadav, Adv.

Mr. Tugin M. Babichen, Adv.

Mr. Sudeep Kumar, AOR

Ms. Garima Prashad, Sr. A.A.G.

Mr. Sudeep Kumar, Adv.

Mr. Abhishek Saket, Adv.

Ms. Manisha, Adv.

Ms. Rupali, Adv.

Mr. Kunal Mimani, AOR

Mr. Prashant Alai, Adv.

Mr. K.M Nataraj, A.S.G.

Ms. Aishwarya Bhati, A.S.G.

Ms. Swarupama Chaturvedi, Sr. Adv.

Mr. Ashok Kumar Panda, Adv.

Ms. Ruchi Kohli, Adv.

Ms. Sunita Sharma, Adv.

Mr. Gautam Kumar, Adv.

Mr. N Visakamurthy, aor, Adv.

Mr. Varun Chugh, Adv.

Mr. Krishna Kant Dubey, Adv.

Mr. Bhuvan Kapoor, Adv.

Mr. Neeraj Kumar Sharma, Adv.

Ms. Indira Bhakar, Adv.

Neeraj Kumar Sharma, Adv.

Diksha Verma, Adv.

Mr. Shreekant Neelappa Terdal, AOR

Mr. Aravindh S., AOR

Ms. Anika Bansal, Adv.

Ms. Ishita Bist, Adv.

Ms. Suveni Bhagat , AOR

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Mr. Rishi Sehgal, AOR
Mr. Akash Vashishtha, Adv.

Mr. Sravan Kumar Karanam, AOR
Mr. Kumar Abhishek, Adv.
Mr. Kumar Nikhil, Adv.
Mr. P. Venkatraju, Adv.

Mr. Sanjai Kumar Pathak, AOR
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Mr. Arvind Kumar Tripathi, Adv.
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Mr. Karun Sharma, Adv.
Ms. Rajkumari Divyasana, Adv.
Ms. Anupama Ngangom, Adv.

Ms. Srishti Agnihotri, AOR
Mr. D.P. Singh, Adv.

Mr. Shishir Pinaki, AOR

Mr. Abhimanyu Singh, GA
Mr. Sarad Kr. Singhania, AOR
Ms. Rashmi Singhania, Adv.

UPON hearing the counsel the Court made the following
O R D E R

1. This Court by order dated 11.12.2024 had taken note of the fact that prior to 2017, the figures given by ISRO regarding the number of wetlands in India having an area of more than 2.25 Hectares was 2,01,503 and the latest ISRO data of the year 2021 reflected the figure having increased to 2,31,195. Hence, this Court was of the view that said figures will have to be checked at the ground level. The manner, method and mode in which this evaluation has to be undertaken has been traced to the Wetlands (Conservation of Management) Rules, 2017 namely identification of

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such wetlands, which is described as 'Ground truthing'. This exercise ought to be undertaken by the respective States, same have been neglected by most of the States, except the State of Punjab to some extent and nothing have been done in that regard. Hence, Court vide order dated 11.12.2024 directed each of the State / Union Territory Wetland Authorities to complete ground truthing as well as demarcation of wetland boundaries of each of the wetland which have been identified by Space Application Center Atlas (SAC Atlas), 2021. A specific direction was issued by this Court that above said task was required to be expeditiously completed and at any rate within a period of three months from the date of the order.

2. Ms. Aishwarya Bhati, learned Additional Solicitor General assured that Union of India had undertaken the task of monitoring with each of the State and a detailed affidavit was agreed to be filed before the next date. Accordingly, an affidavit has been filed on 24.03.2025 and today, a brief note has also been furnished enclosing therewith a chart, which reflects the ground truthing and boundary demarcation undertaking by respective State Wetland Authorities. The comparative statement *via-a-vis* with reference to the ground truthing carried out as on 22.03.2025 and 21.07.2025 as well as the boundary demarcation carried out by the authorities would reflect the sorry state of affairs.

3. Mr. Jayant Bhushan, learned Senior Counsel appearing for the petitioner(s) would draw the attention of the Court that seven States namely, Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Arunachal Pradesh, Dadra Nagar Haveli & Daman and Diu, Haryana, Goa, Jharkhand, Puducherry, Sikkim, Karnataka and Ladakh have achieved less than 50% and the

States of Delhi, Haryana and Himachal Pradesh have achieved less than 40%. This would clearly indicate that the respective States Wetland Authorities seem to be moving at a snail's pace and the direction issued by this Court has not yielded positive results.

4. In that view of the matter, we direct these States to expedite the ground truthing and boundary demarcation expeditiously and at any rate within an outer limit of two months from today, failing which, the Secretaries of the concerned States of the Department of Environment and Ecology will have to personally remain present before this Court on next date of hearing. It is also made clear that inaction on the part of these State Wetland Authorities would compel this Court to pass coercive orders against such of those States which has failed to comply with the direction issued earlier as well as the direction issued by this order.

5. In the light of the wetlands having been identified, it is incumbent upon the State Wetland Authorities to publish the same in the respective State Governments' website indicating such of those Wetland which have been identified together with the areas, where ground truthing and demarcation of boundaries have been undertaken by distinctly and separately indicating the same, which exercise shall be undertaken before next date of hearing.

6. Let the affidavit of compliance be filed immediately after such an exercise being undertaken and at any rate before the next date of hearing.

7. Union of India shall coordinate with the State Level Wetland Authorities and expedite the issuance of notifications for which the draft notifications are already in place which would reflect

the pro-active action undertaken by such authorities and a meeting in this regard shall be conveyed by Union of India of all the State Level Wetland Authorities and make them aware of the situation and expedite the works which are required to be undertaken by them.

8. The statistics furnished today would also reflect that wetlands which are less than 2.25 Hectares are required to be identified as prescribed under the extant Rules and the affidavits of the State Governments of Wetland Authorities shall also dwelve upon as to the manner and method in which steps have been taken or being taken to protect these wetlands which are less than 2.25 Hectares which according to the statistics is around 5,55,557 as mentioned in the Wetland Atlas.

9. List on 07.10.2025.

IA No.203606/2022 in W.P. (C) No.230/2001:

Issue notice to the respondents in W.P. (C) No.230/2001, returnable on 07.10.2025. The petitioner(s) shall furnish requisite number of copies in the Registry for issuance of notice.

(NEHA GUPTA)
SENIOR PERSONAL ASSISTANT

(AVGV RAMU)
COURT MASTER (NSH)

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ITEM NO.4

COURT NO.3

SECTION PIL-W

S U P R E M E C O U R T O F I N D I A
R E C O R D O F P R O C E E D I N G S

Writ Petition(s) (Civil) No(s). 230/2001

M.K. BALAKRISHNAN & ORS.

Petitioner(s)

VERSUS

UNION OF INDIA & ORS.

Respondent(s)

Date : 04-10-2017 This petition was called on for hearing today.

CORAM :

HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE MADAN B. LOKUR
HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE S. ABDUL NAZEER
HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE DEEPAK GUPTA

For Petitioner(s) Mr. Gopal Sankaranarayanan, Adv.
Mr. Shrutanjaya Bhardwaj, Adv.
Ms. Veera Mahuli, Adv.
Mr. Naresh Kumar, AOR

For Respondent(s)/
applicant(s)
UOI/Delhi

Mr. A.N.S. Nadkarni, ASG
Mr. A.K. Panda, Sr. Adv.
Mr. Wasim A. Qadri, Adv.
Mr. Ajay Kumar Singh, Adv.
Ms. Binu Tamta, Adv.
Mrs. Sunita Sharma, Adv.
Mr. Sanjai Kumar Pathak, Adv.
Mr. Shalinder Saini, Adv.
Mr. G.S. Makker, Adv.
Mr. B.V. Balram Das, Adv.
Mr. S.A. Siddiqui, Adv.
Mr. Satya Siddiqui, Adv.
Mr. Zaki Kazmi, Adv.

Intervenor

Mr. Jayant Bhushan, Sr. Adv.
Mr. Ketan Paul, Adv.
Ms. Reeja Varghese, Adv.
Mr. Chirayu Jain, Adv.

UPON hearing the counsel the Court made the following
O R D E R

We have heard learned counsel for the petitioner and the learned Additional Solicitor General.

We have been informed that the Wetland Rules have since been notified and they are now called the Wetlands (Conservation and Management) Rules, 2017. These Rules have come into force on the date of publication in the official gazette, that is, 26th September, 2017.

Learned counsel for the parties say that they have very serious objections to some of these Rules. It is submitted that it appears that the Central Government has abdicated its responsibility under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 and instead of delegating its powers, it has abdicated its power in favour of the State Governments. We have also been informed that the Central Wetlands Regulatory Authority has since been disbanded and the State Wetlands Authority and the National Wetlands Committee have been constituted under Rules 5 and 6 of the new Rules.

With regard to the expenditure on Ramsar Convention sites, we have been informed by learned Additional Solicitor General that the audited accounts have so far been received from the States of West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh and Odisha. Audited accounts have not been received from any other State with regard to the Ramsar

Convention sites.

We have also been informed that apart from Ramsar Convention sites, further funds have been given to the States and the Union Territories for conservation of wetlands. No audited accounts have been received in regard to these funds disbursed as well as their expenditure by the State Governments and the Union Territories.

With regard to the brief documents required to be furnished under the old Rules, it appears that only ten States and one Union Territory have responded. It appears that there is now no necessity of brief documents under the new Rules. We make it clear that this does not mean that the earlier brief documents already submitted can be discarded completely. The contents of these brief documents will still be followed as far as the implementation of the Wetlands (Conservation and Management) Rules, 2017 is concerned.

Finally, with regard to the satellite images, we are told that the Space Application Centre would require between 12 to 18 months to make an inventory of 1,75,740 wetlands as they exist today. We make no comment on this but request learned Additional Solicitor General to re-check with the Space Application Centre since the wetlands are diminishing in our country at a very fast rate. It is very likely that many more will disappear by the time the task is completed by the Space Application

Centre.

We make it clear and reiterate that in terms of our order dated 8th February, 2017, 2,01,503 wetlands that have been mapped by the Union of India should continue to remain protected on the same principles as were formulated in Rule 4 of the Wetlands (Conservation and Management) Rules, 2010.

Learned counsel for the parties may file their objections to the new Rules within a period of two weeks. We direct that only one set of objections should be filed and both learned counsel should sit together and arrive at some consensus on the objections.

We further direct the State Governments that have not complied with earlier orders or directions given by the Central Government should do so within a period of four weeks from today failing which we will be constrained to require the presence of the Chief Secretaries of the State Governments in addition to imposition of heavy costs keeping in mind the necessity of conserving whatever water bodies are left in the country.

List the matter for further directions and for hearing on the objections to the new Rules on 9th November, 2017.

We would require the presence of a senior officer of the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change, Government of India to be present in Court on the next date of hearing so that any questions that may be raised

can be answered immediately. Needless to say, the senior officer who should be present in Court should be well-versed with the subject. The files on the basis of which the new Rules have been framed may also be kept ready for perusal when the matter is taken up.

(SANJAY KUMAR-I)
AR-CUM-PS

(KAILASH CHANDER)
COURT MASTER