

BEFORE THE NATIONAL GREEN TRIBUNAL
PRINCIPAL BENCH, NEW DELHI
ORIGINAL APPLICATION NO. 951 OF 2024

IN THE MATTER OF:

Rajpal Singh

...Applicant

Versus

ELDICO Company & Ors.

...Respondent(s)

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NDOH : 20.02.2026

Respondent No.6

 Through

(Shaurya Sahay)

Advocate for the Respondent No.6,
A-11, LGF, Lajpat Nagar-III,
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Dated: 14.02.2026
New Delhi

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BEFORE THE NATIONAL GREEN TRIBUNAL
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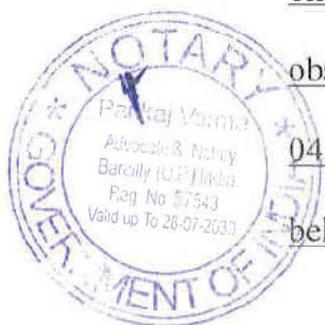
ELDICO Company & Ors.

...Respondent(s)

REPLY ON BEHALF OF THE RESPONDENT NO. 6
BAREILLY DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY, IN
COMPLIANCE WITH THE ORDER DATED 04.12.2025
PASSED BY THIS HON'BLE TRIBUNAL

1. It is respectfully submitted that the present reply is being filed on behalf of the answering respondent pursuant to the observations of this Hon'ble Tribunal in its order dated 04.12.2025, the relevant portion of which is set out herein below for ease of reference:

3. Mr Avinash Singh, District Magistrate, Bareilly, has appeared virtually and has submitted that verification at the ground level about the water body has been done, and the water body exists in Gata No. 508. He has informed that the entire land surrounding this water body has been purchased by the project proponent, and the agriculturists owning the said land have executed the sale deeds in favour of the project proponent.



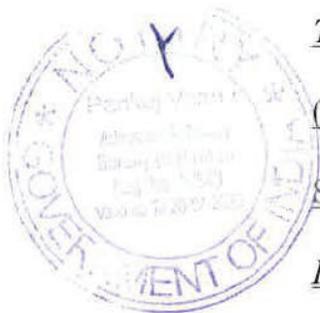

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4. Mr. Manikandan A., Vice Chairman, Bareilly Development Authority, appearing along with District Magistrate, Bareilly, has disclosed that the structures are being constructed within 75 meters of the periphery of the water body. He submits that the plan has been sanctioned as per the bylaws and that the order of the Hon'ble Supreme Court in the matter of Mantri Techzone Pvt. Ltd. vs. Forward Foundation & Ors. was not circulated to the authorities. He is directed to examine the effect, if any, of the judgment of the Hon'ble Supreme Court in the matter of Mantri Techzone Pvt. Ltd. vs. Forward Foundation & Ors. on the proposed construction

2. That, therefore, the present response is being filed, setting out the true and correct facts about the case, *inter-alia* on the sanction of the plans, the applicability or otherwise of the decision of the Hon'ble Supreme Court in the matter of *Mantri Techzone Pvt. Ltd. vs. Forward Foundation & Ors.* reported in (2019) 18 SCC 494. A true copy of the judgment of the Hon'ble Supreme Court in *Mantri Techzone Pvt. Ltd. vs. Forward Foundation & Ors.* reported in (2019) 18 SCC 494, is annexed herewith and marked as ANNEXURE R6/1 [Page No. 19 to 83]

3. That, at the outset, the answering respondent denies all claims, contentions, allegations, and averments against the answering respondent, i.e. Bareilly Development Authority ('BDA'), in the referred OA contrary to anything stated or submitted in this reply. Nothing in the OA may be deemed to have been accepted

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or admitted by the answering Respondent for want of a specific denial or on the ground of non-traverse, save any averment which has been expressly admitted hereinafter.

FACTS

4. The Bareilly Development Authority was established on 19th April 1977 under the Uttar Pradesh Urban Planning & Development Act 1973. Under the statutory scheme, BDA is the principal agency tasked with promoting planned, sustainable urban development in Bareilly, including master plan preparation and implementation, infrastructure projects, housing schemes, and environmental conservation. In the discharge of its duties, the BDA takes up the infrastructural and basic amenity development for Bareilly, besides environmental conservation and development of rural areas around the mother city.

5. The principal allegation in the subject proceedings pertains to Gata No. 508 in Village Bilwa, Pargana, Tehsil and District Bareilly. The plea of the applicant is that the land bearing Gata No. 508, area 0.1260 hectare, Khata No. 00309 (1428-1433F) category 6-1, is recorded as a lake (Jheel). The further assertion is that Gata No. 508/0.126 hectare (water body) is surrounded


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by the Gata Nos. 500, 503, 507 and 509, which were purchased by the Respondent No.1 (hereinafter, 'project proponent').

6. The further assertion is that the project proponent has constructed a temporary wall surrounding its land. Therefore, the water body is now enclosed within the temporary wall constructed by the project proponent. The applicant asserts that the project proponent allegedly got the maps sanctioned by eliminating the lake from the plans and by misleading the officials and employees, and through collusion. Further, the project proponent, after getting the map approved by the BDA, is eliminating the existence of the government-owned lake, registering itself with UP RERA Lucknow, and then constructing and selling plots on the lake's land.



7. The assertions of collusion and alleged misconduct on the part of the answering respondent are categorically and unequivocally denied. The true and correct facts of the case, as borne out from the records, are as under:

- 7.1. The present set of applications (OA Nos. 745/2024, 951/2024, 542/2025) are pending before this Hon'ble Tribunal, concerning alleged adverse impact on a water body recorded as "Jheel" situated in Gata No. 508, Village Bilwa, Pargana/Tehsil/District Bareilly, due to construction activities of Eldico group entities (project proponent).

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7.2. The core grievance is that the project proponent's township development abutting Gata No. 508 is affecting the water body and its catchment area.

7.3. It is submitted that the BDA approved a "Revised Residential Layout Plan" on 24.05.2019 for a group housing/township scheme.

7.4. The approved scheme area comprised the following Khasra numbers: - Village Bilwa: 476p, 477p, 501p, 502, 503p, 504, 505, 506, 507, 509, 512p, 513p - Village Dohna Pritam Rai: part of 438, part of 439, 440, 441 - Village Piperia (Ghanghora): 898

7.5. It is submitted that Gata No. 508, area 0.1260 ha, is recorded as "Jheel (lake)" in revenue records and is located just adjacent to the boundary of the sanctioned layout of the Eldico township, but was not included in the approved map.

7.6. It is further submitted that the surrounding agricultural Gatas 500, 503, 507 and 509 (recorded as Bhumidhar land) have been purchased by the project proponent, and these four Gatas encircle Gata 508 on all sides.

7.7. The project proponent has constructed a *temporary boundary wall* around its purchased land; as a result, the Jheel in Gata 508 also lies within this *temporary compound*




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wall, though the water body itself remains vacant and at its location as per spot measurement.

7.8. It is further submitted that there is no recorded Chak road or path leading to Gata 508 in the revenue maps; no access route to the Jheel is shown in the revenue records.

7.9. Most pertinently, it is relevant to point out that the sanction of plans submitted by the project proponent was done on 24.05.2019. At that time, the operative planning document was the Bareilly Master Plan 2021, which required that natural water bodies/tanks/ ponds in the urban area be identified and protected in the Master Plan, with no other use permitted. **However, the plan did not prescribe a fixed buffer distance (in meters) around such water bodies.** A true copy of the relevant portion of the Bareilly Master Plan 2021 is annexed herewith and marked as **ANNEXURE R6/2 [Page No. 84 to 86]**



7.10. Therefore, it is the respectful submission of the answering respondent that the assertion that the BDA has violated any provision of the applicable rules, in force at the time of grant of sanction, is *per se* misconceived and contrary to the record.

7.11. It is submitted that only subsequently, the Bareilly Master Plan 2031, effective from 16.03.2024, introduced a new

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provision providing a 15-metre green belt around revenue ponds for their protection.

7.12. The BDA submits that, as on 24.05.2019, there was no explicit green-belt distance requirement around ponds under Master Plan 2021; the specific 15 m green-belt norm came only with Master Plan 2031, which, in any event, did not apply to the subject case.

7.13. In spot and record inspection on 10.09.2024 by SDM, Sadar, with ADM, BDA officials and members nominated by this Hon'ble Tribunal, it was again confirmed that:

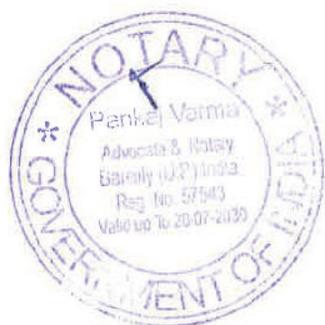
- a) The Joint Committee was informed by the Revenue Department, Bareilly, that Gata No. 508 of Khatauni account No. 00309 of Village Bilwa, having an area of 0.126 hectares, is recorded as a jheel (lake) in the current revenue records. It was further informed and observed that Gata No. 508 (0.1260 hectare J/zee/lake) is situated just near the boundary of the current sanctioned/approved map of the Eldeco township.
- b) The Gata no. 508 is surrounded by Eldeco's purchased Gatas 500, 503, 507, 509;
- c) No Chak road/path to the Jheel exists in maps or revenue records.




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- d) The company's temporary boundary wall encloses the Jheel area.
- e) On measurement, the Jheel area remains intact and vacant.
- f) The proposed project site is located at village Khasra Nos. 476P, 477P, 501P, 502, 503P, 504, 505, 506, 507, 509, 512P and 513P of Village Bilwa; Khasra Nos. part of 438, part of 439, 440 and 441 of Village Dohna Pritam Rai; and Khasra No. 898 of Village Piperia (Ghanghora), District Bareilly, Uttar Pradesh.
- g) As per statutory requirements, the project proponent has obtained necessary permissions from the competent authorities, namely Environmental Clearance from SEIAA, Uttar Pradesh, and Consent to Establish (CTE) and Consent to Operate (CTO) from the Uttar Pradesh Pollution Control Board (UPPCB).
- h) The representative of the U.P. State Wetland Authority informed the Joint Committee that the water body is very small and is not listed in the schedule of wetlands of District Bareilly.
- a) The allegation that the Jheel's existence has been eliminated and its land converted into residential plots for sale is "wholly baseless";



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- b) Additional land purchased by the developer near the approved layout will be developed only after obtaining separate layout approval.

A true copy of the Joint Committee report dated 10.09.2024 is enclosed herewith and marked as **ANNEXURE R6/3**

[Page No. 87 to 91]

7.14. It is submitted that thereafter, this Hon'ble Tribunal constituted a Joint Committee including District and Technical Officers, which inspected Gata 508 on 22.03.2025 and reported that:

- a) The catchment area is surrounded by private agricultural land.
- b) Construction of a passage (access) to the Jheel has commenced and is expected to be completed within about three months by the company constructing it.
- c) Recent photographs were taken and annexed.

7.15. That this Hon'ble Tribunal, while referring to the SDM's spot inspection report, recorded that the catchment area of the water body has not been left free, and observed that obstruction of the catchment would cause the water body to dry up; hence, the catchment must be kept free from construction.



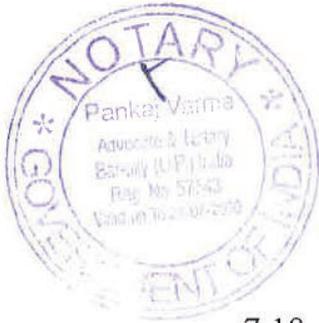

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7.16. That this Hon'ble Tribunal, in its order dated 30.10.2025, took note of the Joint Committee report and SDM's report; and taking note of the decision in *Mantri Techzone Pvt. Ltd. v. Forward Foundation & Ors.*, Civil Appeal No. 5016 of 2016, observed that the Hon'ble Supreme Court order "needs to be complied with" and directed the District Magistrate to ensure no illegal construction in the catchment area of the water body.

7.17. That thereafter, at the 04.12.2025 hearing, the District Magistrate confirmed that ground verification shows the water body exists in Gata 508 and that the entire land surrounding the water body has been purchased by the project proponent via registered sale deeds.

7.18. It is further submitted that during the hearing dated 04.12.2025, BDA stated that structures are being constructed within 75 m of the periphery of the water body and that the plan was sanctioned "as per the bylaws". Finally, it was also stated that the *Mantri Techzone* order had not been circulated to the Authority at the time of sanction.

7.19. It is in this background that the Hon'ble Tribunal has directed the examination of the effect, if any, of the Mantri Techzone judgment on the proposed construction.




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In re: Applicability of Mantri Tech Zone (supra)

8. It is respectfully submitted that the applicability of the case of *Mantri Tech Zone (supra)* has been examined by the answering respondent and it is the position of the answering respondent that the decision has no application to the facts of the present case for the reasons set out hereinafter.
9. It is submitted that in *Mantri Techzone* and connected appeals, the Hon'ble Supreme Court considered challenges under Section 22 of the NGT Act to orders dated 07.05.2015 and 04.05.2016 passed by this Hon'ble Tribunal relating to projects near Bellandur and Agara Lakes, Bengaluru.
10. In its order dated 04.05.2016, this Hon'ble Tribunal had fixed buffer zones of 75 m around lakes, and 50/35/25 m from primary/secondary/tertiary Rajkulewas, respectively, declaring these as no-construction zones and had also directed these distances to be applied by authorities to all water bodies/lakes in Bengaluru and to be incorporated in ECs and permissions.
11. In the final judgment dated 05.03.2019 passed by the Hon'ble Supreme Court, the appeals of project proponents (respondents 9 & 10 before NGT) were dismissed, and the Hon'ble Tribunal's order, including buffer requirements, was sustained as against them.




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12. All other appeals, including that of the State of Karnataka and other non-party developers, were allowed, and the General condition/direction No. (1) of the NGT's 04.05.2016 order (the 75 m / 50 / 35 / 25 m buffer regime) was set aside "except the direction issued against respondent Nos. 9 and 10."

13. The Hon'ble Supreme Court also held that the buffer distances fixed by NGT in the Mantri case were, though within its jurisdiction, their generalised application was curtailed by allowing the appeals of parties other than respondents 9 & 10.

14. Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that the decision of *Mantri Tech Zone (supra)* was not one of universal application.

It was a direction specific to the parties therein.

15. The 75-metre norm originated in the Hon'ble NGT's order dated 04.05.2016 in O.A. No. 222/2014 as a case-specific prescription for lakes and Rajkulewas in Bengaluru, in that local context. On appeal, the Hon'ble Supreme Court expressly confined the continued operation of that direction to respondents 9 and 10 (the two Bengaluru project proponents), while setting aside direction/condition No. (1) of the 04.05.2016 order "except the direction issued against respondent Nos. 9 and 10."

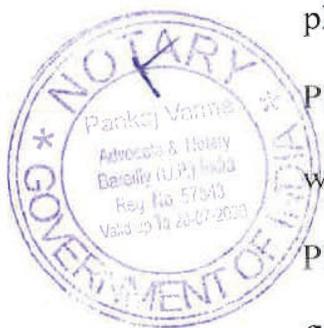
16. The Court thus reaffirmed that the enlarged 75-metre/50-metre/35-metre/25-metre buffer was not a pan-

India or even pan-Karnataka legislative norm, but a consequence of the particular violations in that case, binding only on those parties.

17. Therefore, the submission of the applicant, treating that fact-specific outcome as a universally applicable standard for every waterbody, including Gata No. 508 at Bareilly, stretches *Mantri Techzone* beyond its ratio and ignores the Hon'ble Supreme Court's clear limitation of the operative buffer directions.

18. The Bareilly Development Authority's sanction of the layout on 24.05.2019 conformed with the then-applicable statutory planning regime. At that time, the operative Bareilly Master Plan 2021 required that natural waterbodies, tanks and ponds within the urban area be identified and protected in the Master Plan and not put to any other use, but it did not prescribe any fixed buffer distance in metres around such waterbodies. A quantified setback emerged only later, when Bareilly Master Plan 2031 (effective 16.03.2024) was introduced, under Chapter 12 "Blue Infrastructure", a 15-metre green belt around revenue ponds for their protection.

19. It is further submitted that as on 24.05.2019, no explicit green-belt distance was mandated around ponds under Master Plan 2021, and that the 15-metre belt is a new provision that



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post-dates the sanction granted to the Eldico scheme. As per the record, the approved layout excludes Gata No. 508 (Jheel), which remains recorded as a waterbody in revenue entries and lies adjacent to, but outside, the sanctioned plan area.

20. Therefore, it is the respectful submission of the answering respondent that whatever was done by the State authorities and the BDA at the time of approving the plan have been strictly in accordance with the law and planning norms then in force. The latter-articulated 15-metre green-belt in the 2031 Master Plan, and the 75-metre buffer standard applied in Mantri TechZone for specific Bengaluru projects. In the respectful understanding of the BDA, the decision in *Mantri (supra)* cannot be applied retrospectively to a 2019 sanction that complied with the Master Plan 2021 and the applicable clearances.



21. It is further respectfully submitted that there is thus no demonstrable illegality or procedural impropriety in the actions of the BDA. Respectfully, there is no indication that the Hon'ble Supreme Court was issuing any pan-India or even pan-Karnataka buffer standard in exercise of Article 142; it was deciding appeals under Section 22 of the NGT Act in specific cases.

22. It is therefore submitted in view of what has been set out hereinabove that the averments made in the letter petition


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alleging sanction of the map in collusion with Eldico Company by eliminating the existence of the government-owned lake and then constructing and selling plots on the lake's land by the applicant are wrong, incorrect and erroneous.

23. That, in light of the above submissions, this Answering Respondent No. 6, i.e., BDA, undertakes that it shall abide by any order(s) or direction(s) passed by this Hon'ble Tribunal in the present Original Application.

24. That the present reply is being submitted for the kind perusal of this Hon'ble Tribunal. It is prayed that the same be taken on record.

Respondent No.6

Shaurya
through

(Shaurya Sahay)

Advocate for the Respondent No.6,
A-11, LGF, Lajpat Nagar-III,
New Delhi- 110024

Dated:14.02.2026
New Delhi

Mobile No. 9711021959

E-mail: shaurya@shauryasahay.com

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BEFORE THE NATIONAL GREEN TRIBUNAL
PRINCIPAL BENCH, NEW DELHI

ORIGINAL APPLICATION NO. 951 OF 2024

IN THE MATTER OF:

Rajpal Singh

...Applicant

Versus

ELDICO Company & Ors.

...Respondent(s)

AFFIDAVIT

I, Manikandan A , working as vice Chairman in Bareilly Development Authority, Sector 2, Ramganga Nagar Awasiya Yojna, Near Ramayan Vitika, Dohra Road, Bareilly - 243006, the Respondent No. 6 in the above matter, do hereby solemnly affirm, declare on oath and state as under:

1. That I, the deponent herein am an authorized representative to represent the Respondent BDA in the present case, and as such, I am well conversant with the facts and circumstances of the present case based on the information derived from the official records, and hence, I am competent and authorized to verify, sign and swear this affidavit on behalf of the Respondent BDA.
2. That the accompanying reply may be read part and parcel of the present affidavit, as I am competent to swear this affidavit.
3. That the accompanying reply has been drafted and filed under my instructions and authority, the contents thereof are true and

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correct based on the record maintained during the ordinary course of business of the answering respondent and available records and documents.

4. That the annexures to the reply are true copies of their respective originals.
5. That no part of the reply is false and nothing material has been concealed therefrom.



VERIFICATION

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Verified at _____ on this day of _____ 2026 that the contents of the above reply are correct and true based on the records of the case as maintained in the day-to-day affairs of the BDA, which I verily believe to be true. Nothing has been concealed therefrom or misstated.

Certified that Shri Manikandan
who is identified by Shri Mahindra
sworn & affirmed the contents of the affidavit
in my presence at Bareilly dated 13/2/26 and
further understood the contents.

Pankaj Varma

(Pankaj Varma)
Advocate & Notary Bareilly
(U.P.) India

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UNIQUE IDENTIFICATION AUTHORITY OF INDIA

முகவரி:

தந்தை / தாய் பெயர்:

ஆலமுகம், எண் 608 / 3,

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GOVERNMENT OF INDIA



மணிகண்டன் ஆ

Manikandan A

பிறந்த நாள் / DOB : 24/10/1987

ஆண் / MALE

XXXX XXXX 6945



ஆதார் - சாதாரண மனிதனின் அதிகாரம்

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REPORTABLE

ANNEXURE-R6/1

**IN THE SUPREME COURT OF INDIA
CIVIL APPELLATE JURISDICTION
CIVIL APPEAL NO. 5016 OF 2016**

MANTRI TECHZONE PVT. LTD.**... APPELLANTS****VERSUS****FORWARD FOUNDATION AND ORS.****... RESPONDENTS****WITH****CIVIL APPEAL NOS.8002-8003 OF 2016****CIVIL APPEAL NO.12326 OF 2016****CIVIL APPEAL NO.9227 OF 2016****CIVIL APPEAL NO.1343 OF 2017****CIVIL APPEAL NO.10995 OF 2016****CIVIL APPEAL NO.10993 OF 2016****CIVIL APPEAL NO.10994 OF 2016****CIVIL APPEAL NO.2246 OF 2018****CIVIL APPEAL NO.10992 OF 2016****CIVIL APPEAL NO.12157 OF 2016****CIVIL APPEAL NO.12152 OF 2016****CIVIL APPEAL NO.12156 OF 2016****CIVIL APPEAL NO.12158 OF 2016****CIVIL APPEAL NO.12160 OF 2016****CIVIL APPEAL NO.12159 OF 2016**

CIVIL APPEAL NOS.4923-4924 OF 2017**CIVIL APPEAL NO.14966 OF 2017****J U D G M E N T****S.ABDUL NAZEER, J.**

1. These appeals have been preferred under Section 22 of the National Green Tribunal Act, 2010 (for brevity 'NGT Act') challenging the judgment and order dated 07.05.2015 and 04.05.2016 respectively passed by the Principal Bench of the National Green Tribunal, New Delhi (for short 'the Tribunal').

2. The appellants in Civil Appeal Nos. 5016 of 2016 and 8002-8003 of 2016 are respondent Nos. 9 and 10 in the Original Application No. 222 of 2014 (hereinafter referred to as 'the respondent Nos. 9 and 10'). The said Application was filed by respondent Nos.1 to 3 herein (hereinafter referred to as 'the applicants'). Respondent Nos. 4 to 7 in these appeals are the State of Karnataka and other authorities. They were arrayed as respondent Nos. 1 to 4 in the application. Respondent Nos. 12 and

13 herein were subsequently impleaded in the application (for short 'the impleaded respondents').

3. The State of Karnataka has filed Civil Appeal Nos. 4923-4924 of 2017, challenging the general condition and direction No.(1) contained in the order of the Tribunal dated 04.05.2016. The other appeals have been filed by different entities, who were not parties before the Tribunal challenging the order of the Tribunal dated 04.05.2016 insofar as it directs a buffer/green zone of 75 meters in respect of lakes, 50 meters in respect of primary Rajakaluves, 35 meters in case of secondary Rajakaluves and 25 meters in case of tertiary Rajakaluves with retrospective effect. According to them, they are adversely affected by the aforesaid condition in the impugned order.

4. The applicants filed O.A. No.222 of 2014 by contending that ecologically sensitive land was allotted by the Karnataka Industrial Area Development Board (for short 'the KIADB') to respondent Nos. 9 and 10 vide Notifications dated 23.04.2004 and 07.05.2004 respectively for setting up of Software Technology Park, Commercial and Residential complex, hotel and Multi Level Car Parks. The Master Plan formulated by the Bangalore Development Authority

(for short the 'BDA'), identifies the allotted land as 'Residential Sensitive', though the same land was identified in the Draft Master Plan as 'Protected Zone'. It was further contended that the Revenue Map in respect of properties as referred in the Land Lease Agreements has multiple Rajakaluves (Storm Water Drains). The development projects in question sit right on the catchment and wetland area which feeds the Rajakaluves, which in turn drains rain water into Bellandur Lake. The project will thus encroach two Rajakaluves of 1.38 acres and 1.23 acres each.

5. The Satellite Digital Images of the area from the year 2000 to 2012 show encroachment upon these Rajakaluves, as well as the manner in which they are covered by the construction. The State Level Expert Appraisal Committee (for short 'SEAC'), which was to assist the State Level Environment Impact Assessment Authority (for short 'SEIAA'), held its meetings on various dates to examine the project. It had required the appellant No.9 to submit a revised NOC from the Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (for short 'BWSSB') for the project in question. It was also observed that the project lies between the Bellandur Lake and the Agara Lake. Respondent No.9 was also directed to take protective

measures to spare the buffer zone around Rajakaluves and also to commit that no construction would be carried out in the buffer zone. In the meeting of 11.11.2011, it was recorded that the project proposes car parking facility for 14,438 cars in that environmentally sensitive area.

6. It was alleged that NOC was issued covering an area of 17,404 sq. mtrs. whereas the built up area, as noted by SEAC, is 13,50,454.98 sq. mtrs. Respondent No.9 obtained NOC from BWSSB by concealing material facts and by misrepresenting that NOC is required only for residential units which form a very minuscule part of the total project. Respondent No.9 had approached the Karnataka State Pollution Control Board (for short 'the KSPCB') for obtaining clearance, which was granted on 04.09.2012 subject to the fulfillment of the conditions stated in the consent order which included leaving the buffer zone all along the valley and towards the lake. It is further contended that the grant of consent by the KSPCB to respondent No.9 also contained a condition with regard to obtaining Environmental Clearance from the Competent Authority and no construction was to commence until such clearance was granted.

7. Applicants further contended that respondent No.9 violated the conditions and commenced construction of the project. There was also violation of the stipulations stated in the approval of SEAC in relation to buffer zone and construction over Rajakaluves. The construction had been commenced over the ecologically sensitive area of the lake catchment area and valley, with utter disregard to the statutory compliances. Referring to these blatant irregularities, the applicant submitted that the conversion of land from 'Protected Zone' to 'Residential Sensitive Area' is violative of the law. The project is right in the midst of a fragile wetland area which ought not to have been disturbed by the development activity. The fragile environment of the catchment area has been exposed to grave and irreparable damage. It has severely disturbed and damaged the Rajakaluves. Respondent Nos. 9 and 10 started to level the land by filling it with debris, thus causing damage to the drains. The conditions with regard to no-disturbance to the Storm Water Drains, natural valleys and buffer area in and around the Rajakaluves have been violated. It has in turn, affected the ground water table and bore wells which are the only source of water for thousands of households. Fishing and agriculture which depends

on Bellandur Lake are also severely affected. The construction over the wetland between the two lakes is in violation of Wetlands (Conservation of Management) Rules, 2010 (for short 'Rules of 2010').

8. It was submitted that SEIAA in its meeting dated 29.09.2012, decided to close the file pertaining to respondent No. 10 due to non-submission of requisite information and the application thereof was rejected in November, 2012. Despite the rejection, respondent No.10 commenced construction on the project in full swing.

9. The applicants also relied upon the findings of the Joint Legislative Committee, constituted under the Chairmanship of Shri A.T. Ramaswamy in the month of July 2005, which stated that there were 262 water bodies in the Bangalore city in 1961 which drastically came down because of trespass and encroachments. It was also affirmed that about 840 kms. of Rajakaluves have been encroached upon in several places and have become sewage channels. The applicants also relied on the Report of the Committee under the Chairmanship of Hon'ble Mr. Justice N.K. Patil suggesting immediate remedial action in order to remove encroachments on the lake area and the Rajakaluves and

preservation of the lakes in and around Bangalore city. It was further contended that other Expert Committees, including Lakshman Rau Expert Committee had also submitted proposals for preservation, restoration or otherwise of the existing tanks in Bangalore Metropolitan Area which recommended to maintain good water surface in Bellandur tank and to ensure that the water in the tank is not polluted. The Central Government in August 2013 had issued an advisory on conservation and restoration of water bodies in the urban areas. The applicants claim to have obtained monitoring report of the project by respondent No.5, Ministry of Environment and Forests, through RTI on 21.08.2013. The report dated 14.08.2013 revealed that the project proponents are in clear breach of their undertaking to carry out all precautionary measures to ensure that the Bellandur lake is not affected by the construction and operational phase of the project. This approach is particularly with regard to the major alteration in natural sloping pattern of the project site and natural hydrology of the area.

10. The Lake Development Authority (for short 'the LDA'), after inspection in the catchment area of the Bellandur Lake submitted its report dated 12.06.2013 which confirms that the project will

have disastrous impact, including deleterious effect on the Bellandur Lake. This report was brought to the notice of KIADB. The LDA has also opined that the land should be classified and maintained as sensitive area. The KIADB called upon respondent No. 9 to comply with the rules of Ecology and Environment Department and to obtain necessary approval from KSPCB and LDA. Despite all this, respondent Nos. 9 and 10 have continued with their illegal constructions and have caused damage to the ecology and the environment by irreparably jeopardizing the ecological balance in this sensitive area. The applicants rely upon the Revised Master Plan, 2013 issued by BDA which specifically provides that 30 meters buffer zone is to be created around the lakes and 50 meters buffer zone to be created on either side of the Rajakaluves. It was also pleaded that respondent No. 9 had obtained the NOC from BWSSB only with regard to residential units and not for the entire project and that the Environmental Clearance obtained by respondent No.9 is based upon the partial NOC issued by BWSSB which itself is a misrepresentation. It was contended that the projects are bound to create water scarcity as the requirement of the project of respondent No. 9 alone is

approximately 4.5 million liters per day, i.e. 135 million liters per month, which is more than what the BWSSB supplies to the entire Agaram Ward. The construction of respective projects by respondent Nos.9 and 10 respectively, besides having commenced without permission from the authorities and being in violation of the conditions imposed for grant of permission/consent, is bound to damage the environment, resulting in change in the topography of the area, posing potential threat of extinction of the Bellandur lake, causing traffic congestion, shortening and wiping out the wetlands, extinction of Rajakaluves and causing serious and potential threat of flooding and massive scarcity of water in the city of Bangalore, particularly the areas located near the water bodies.

11. Respondent No.9 in its objections contended that it was incorporated with the objective of establishing an Information Technology Park and R & D Centre with facilities such as residential complexes, parks, education centres and other allied infrastructure within a single compound. It had submitted the proposal to establish such Information Technology Park and other facilities to the State Government and requested for allotment of land for the project. Its proposal was considered in 78th High Level

Committee meeting held on 21.06.2000 and after examining the proposal, it was approved by the Government on 06.07.2000. Before the State High Level Committee, it had informed that its requirement was 110 acres of land, 25 MW of power from the Karnataka Power Transmission Corporation Limited (for short the 'KPTCL'), and four lakh litres of water per day from BWSSB. The lands for the project were initially notified vide Notification dated 10.02.2004. Subsequently, the lands were allotted vide letter dated 28.06.2007 for which Lease-cum-Sale Agreement was signed on 30.06.2007. Considering the overall development of the State of Bangalore, this respondent proposed a Mixed Use Development Project consisting of an Information Technology Park, residential apartments, retail, hotel and office buildings with a total built up area of 13,50,454.98 sq mtrs. The Project was conceived as a zero waste discharge project. The project is located one and a half kms. away from the southern-side of the Bellandur Lake. Towards the North, adjacent to the Project, lies vast stretches of lands belonging to the Defence and towards the East, lies the Project of respondent No. 10 and another developer is also developing a project on the

western side. It has obtained sanction plan on 04.07.2007 which was renewed from time to time.

12. Respondent No. 9 claims that it has obtained NOC from Airport Authority of India on 09.04.2010. Bharat Sanchar Nigam Ltd, vide its communication dated 16.04.2010, granted clearance for the project construction. BWSSB, vide its communication dated 26.04.2011 issued NOC for portion of the proposed construction to be built. The Bangalore Electricity Supply Company Ltd. also granted NOC for arranging power supply to the proposed residential and commercial building in its favour. Environmental Clearance was granted by SEIAA vide communication dated 17.04.2012. The Director General of Police has issued NOC and KSPCB vide order dated 04.09.2012 accorded its consent for construction of the said project subject to the conditions stated therein. It was further stated that after grant of the Environmental Clearance on 17.09.2012, the same was published in the leading newspapers "Kannada Prabha" and "The Indian Express" on 12.03.2012 and 14.03.2014 respectively.

13. It submitted a modified the building plan which was approved by KIADB vide its letter dated 30.08.2012, which was valid up to

10.08.2014. It started the construction of the project in November 2012, taking all precautions as per terms and conditions of the orders issued by the competent authorities. It was also submitted that it has raised the constructions in accordance with the plans and conditions of the Environmental Clearance and consent orders and that it has not violated any of the conditions and has not caused any adverse impact on the ecology and environment of the area. It has denied the contention that its construction activity has blocked the Rajakaluves and has adversely affected the lake. It has already spent a sum of Rs 306.73 crores on the project towards procurement of men and materials, machinery, infrastructure, medical and sanitary facilities, etc. and that it has availed financial assistance from various banks and financial institutions towards the construction and execution of the project and that various contracts have been signed with the third parties. It is specifically pleaded that the petition is barred by time and suffers from defects and laches.

14. Respondent No.10 pleaded that the applicants raised multifarious proceedings against it which is an abuse of the process of law and *mala fide*. It had submitted a revised proposal in respect

of its project in question and to obtain fresh clearance on 31.08.2007 with an investment of Rs. 179.22 crores. The State High Level Committee had cleared the project which was communicated to it on 25.01.2008. Its properties are located in between Bellandur Lake and Agara Lake but there are no primary storm water drains and secondary storm water drains that exist in its properties. It has clearances from various authorities, including Environmental Clearance and consent for establishment.

15. KIADB stated that after possession of the land was handed over to respondent Nos. 9 and 10, one year time was granted for the implementation of the project which was extended from time to time. The building drawings were approved on 04.07.2007, and the modified building drawings were approved on 26.04.2011 and 30.08.2012 with specific conditions. In its meeting held on 16.07.2013, it was resolved to inform respondent No. 9 to fully comply with the Ecology and Environment Rules and to obtain approvals from the LDA and KSPCB. LDA vide its letter dated 24.09.2013, had informed KIADB that the construction activity in the catchment area in the Bellandur Lake could drastically impact the Lake with deleterious effects and asked it to stop construction

activity of respondent Nos. 9 and 10. However, the validity of the building drawings was again extended up to 10.08.2014. The Lokayukta on 17.12.2013 had written a letter in respect of complaint filed by the South East Forum for Sustainable Development where it had been averred that the decision had been taken by the Board on 21.12.2013 to keep in abeyance the approval accorded and even the re-validations of plans. This was also informed to respondent No.9. The Board took a decision which was communicated to respondent No.9 on 02.01.2014, wherein it asked the respondent No.9 to stop all construction activities on the allotted lands. The said communication was challenged by respondent No. 9 and on the stop-work notice, stay was granted by the High Court of Karnataka. The stop-work notice dated 23.12.2013 issued by Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (for short 'BBMP') was also stayed vide order dated 21.01.2014. The proposal submitted by respondent Nos. 9 and 10 had been approved by the State Government. The land allotted to respondent Nos. 9 and 10 does not consist of any Rajakaluves.

16. The LDA took a stand that it was not at all aware of the project initiated by KIADB. It came to know about the entire project only

when certain newspaper reports surfaced during the month of June, 2013 and till that time it was in the dark. After the complaints, it inspected the Bellandur Lake and the Agara Lake on 12.06.2013 and prepared an inspection report. In the report, it was noticed that large scale construction activities were going on in the catchment area of Bellandur Lake and that there was a change in the land use, which in turn has directly affected the catchment of Bellandur Lake. The wetland area of Agara Lake had also shrunk, which originally formed the irrigation area for the adjoining agricultural lands. Therefore, it had questioned the decision of KIADB vide letter dated 06.07.2013 and even requested it to stop the construction activity and to re-classify the land as non-SEZ area. It was thereafter on 31.08.2013, that respondent No. 9 wrote a letter for according approval for the proposed development projects. However, vide its letter dated 23.09.2013, LDA informed KIADB that it had no authority to grant or deny construction projects, but it also communicated its objections to KIADB mentioning that construction activity would be in contravention of the directions of the Supreme Court. Despite these warnings, KIADB granted approval to the extension of the building drawings of

the project in favour of the project proponents with certain conditions, like ensuring that all natural valleys, valley zone, irrigation tanks and existing roads leading to villages in the said land should not be disturbed. Further, the natural sloping pattern of the project site was not to be altered and the lakes and other water bodies within and/or at the vicinity of the project area should be protected and conserved. Despite the objections, the plans were approved and approvals were extended from time to time. It has taken a categorical stand that the projects as approved by the KIADB would have adverse impact on Bellandur and Agara Lakes.

17. On the basis of the pleadings of the parties, the Tribunal framed the following questions for consideration and determination:

1. Whether the application filed by the applicants and supported by respondent Nos. 11 and 12, is barred by time and thus, not maintainable?
2. Whether the petition as framed and reliefs claimed therein, disclose a cause of action over which this Tribunal has jurisdiction to entertain and decide the application under the provisions of the NGT Act, 2010?
3. Whether the present application is barred by the principle of *res judicata* and/or constructive *res judicata*?

4. Whether the application filed by the applicants should not be entertained or it is not maintainable before the Tribunal, in view of the pendency of the Writ Petitions 36567-74 of 2013, before the Hon'ble High Court of Karnataka? and
5. What relief, if any, are the applicants entitled to? Should or not the Tribunal, in the interest of environment and ecology issue any directions and if so, to what effect?

18. The Tribunal by its order dated 07.05.2015 at Annexure A-2, disposed of the applications with the following directions:

- 1) We decline to pass any direction or order to stop further progress and/or demolition of the project or any part thereof at this stage. However, we constitute the following Committee to inspect the projects in question and submit a report to the Tribunal *inter alia* but specifically on the issues stated hereinafter:
 - a) Advisor in the Ministry of Environment and Forest dealing with the subject of wetlands.
 - b) CEO of the Lake Development Authority, Karnataka State.
 - c) Chief Town Planner of BBMP, Bangalore.
 - d) Chairman of SEAC which recommended the grant of Environmental Clearance to the projects in question.

- e) Sr. Scientist (Ecology) from the Indian Institute of Sciences, Bangalore.
 - f) Dr. Siddharth Kaul, former Advisor to MoEF.
 - g) A Senior Officer from the National Institute of Hydrology, Roorkee.
- 2) Member Secretary of the Karnataka State Pollution Control Board shall act as the Convener of the Committee and would submit the final report to the Tribunal.
- 3) The Committee shall inspect not only the sites where the projects in question are located but even other areas of Bangalore which the Committee in its wisdom may consider appropriate, in order to examine the interconnectivity of lakes and impact of such activities upon the water bodies with particular reference to lakes.
- 4) The Committee shall submit whether the projects in question have encroached upon or are constructed on the wetlands and Rajakaluves. If so, are there any adverse environmental and ecological impact of these projects on the lake, particularly Bellandur Lake and Agara Lake, as well the Rajakaluves. The report should specify, if any Rajakaluves have been covered by the construction activities of respondent Nos. 9 and 10 or by any of the projects in the area in question.
- 5) Committee should submit in its report, if these projects have any adverse impacts upon the surrounding

ecology and environment, with particular reference to lakes and wetlands. If yes, then whether any part of the project is required to be demolished. If so, details thereof along with reasons.

6) The Committee shall substantially notice if any of the conditions of the Environmental Clearance order in each case of respondent Nos. 9 and 10 have been violated. If so, to what extent and suggest remedial measures in that behalf to restore the ecology of the area.

7) The Committee would also recommend what should be the buffer zone around the lake(s) and interconnecting passages and wetlands. The Committee shall also report, whether activities of multipurpose projects which have serious repercussions on traffic, air pollution, environment and allied subjects should be permitted any further or not, particularly, in wetlands and catchment areas of water bodies.

8) Recommendations should be made with regard to the steps and measures that should be taken for restoration of lakes, particularly in the city of Bangalore.

9) The Committee shall also find out that whether the construction of the projects is in accordance with the sanctioned drawings and bye-laws in accordance with the letters dated 4th July, 2007 and 22nd April, 2008 respectively. Further, the Committee would also report whether both respondent Nos. 9 and 10 have installed

ETP/STP and have taken full measures for recycling of used water for washing and flushing, etc. in terms of letters dated 11th October, 2013 and 3rd January, 2013, issued by the Karnataka Industrial Area Development Board to respondent Nos. 9 and 10 respectively.

10) In the event, the Committee is of the opinion that the adverse impacts noticed are redeemable, then what directions need to be issued in that behalf and the cost involved for achieving the said conservation and restoration of lakes and water bodies.

11) Till the submission of the report by the Committee and directions passed by the Tribunal in that regard, both respondent Nos. 9 and 10 are hereby restrained from creating any 3rd party interests or part with the possession of the property in question or any part thereof, in favour of any person.

12) The Committee shall submit its report to MoEF and to this Tribunal as expeditiously as possible and in any case not later than three months from today. During that period we restrain MoEF, SEIAA and/or any public authority from sanctioning any construction project on the wetlands and catchment areas of the water bodies in the city of Bangalore.

13) The Committee shall report if the project proponents are proposing to discharge their trade or domestic

effluents into the lake or any of the water bodies in and around of the area in question.

14) For the reasons stated in the judgment, respondent No. 9 is liable and shall pay a sum of Rs. 117.35 crores, while respondent No. 10 shall pay a sum of Rs. 22.5 crores respectively being 5 per cent of the project value, within two weeks from today. The said amount would be paid to the KSPCB, which shall maintain a separate account for the same and would spend this amount for environmental and ecological restoration, restitution and other measures to be taken to rectify the damage resulting from default and non-compliance to law by the Project Proponent in that area, after taking approval of the Tribunal.

15) We make it clear that the said respondents would not be entitled to pass on the amount in terms of direction 14, on to the purchasers because this liability accrues as a result of their own intentional defaults, disobedience of law in force and carrying on project activities and construction illegally and unauthorizedly.

19. Feeling aggrieved by the said order, respondent Nos. 9 and 10 filed Civil Appeal Nos. 4829 and 4823 of 2015 before this Court. This Court by its Order dated 20th May, 2015 passed the following order:

"One of the main contentions raised by the Appellants in these Appeals is that though the Tribunal had heard the matter only on preliminary issues and no arguments on merit were advanced, final judgment decides the merits of the disputes as well and above all a penalty of Rs.117.35 crores against the original Respondent No.9 (the Appellant in C.A. No. 4832 of 2015) and Rs. 22.5 crores against Original Respondent No. 10 (the appellant in C.A. No. 4829/2015) is imposed.

On the aforesaid averment, we feel that it would be more appropriate for the appellant to file an application before the Tribunal with the prayer to recall the order on merits and decide the matter afresh after hearing the counsel for the parties, as the Tribunal knows better as to what transpired at the time of hearing.

With the aforesaid liberty granted to the petitioners, the appeals are disposed of. Certain preliminary issues are decided against the appellants which are also the subject matter of challenge. However, it is not necessary to deal with the same this stage. We make it clear that in case the said application is decided against the appellants or if

ultimately on merits, it would be open to the appellants to challenge those orders by filing the appeal and in that appeal all the issues which are decided in the impugned judgment can also be raised.

The counsel for the appellants state that they would file the requisite application within one week. Till the said application is decided by the Tribunal, there shall be stay of the direction pertaining the payment of aforesaid penalty. Mr. Raj Panjwani points out that the Tribunal has allowed the appellants to proceed with the construction only on the payment of the aforesaid fine/penalty. We leave it to the Tribunal to pass whatever orders it deems fit in this behalf, after hearing the parties."

20. In relation to Issue No.5, an opportunity of hearing was granted to the respondents. The Tribunal passed order dated 06.04.2016 on these applications as under:

"M.A. No. 603 of 2015 and M.A. No. 596 of 2015"

These Applications have been filed on behalf of the Respondent 9 & 10 respectively. It is not necessary for us to refer to any details

in view of the directions that we propose to issue in this case.

Without prejudice to the rights and contentions of the parties and subject to just exception we would hear the parties in terms of the order of the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India primarily on the question of imposition of Environmental Compensation and merits attached in relation thereto. Parties are given liberty to address their submissions on that behalf.

With the above directions the M.A. No. 603 of 2015 and M.A. No. 596 of 2015 stand disposed of without any order as to cost."

21. It is evident from the above orders that the Tribunal had granted opportunity to the parties to address it "limited question", as aforementioned. The Tribunal after hearing the parties passed an order dated 04.05.2016 as under:

“General Conditions or directions:

1. In view of our discussion in the main Judgment, we are of the considered view that the fixation of distance from water bodies (lakes and Rajkalewas) suffers from the inbuilt

contradiction, legal infirmity and is without any scientific justification. The RMP – 2015 provides 50m from middle of the Rajkalewas as buffer zone in the case of primary Rajkalewas, 25m in the case of secondary Rajkulewas and 15m in the tertiary Rajkulewas in contradiction to the 30m in the case of lake which is certainly much bigger water body and its utility as a water body/wetland is well known certainly part of wet land. Thus, we direct that the distance in the case of Respondents Nos. 9 and 10 from Rajkulewas, Waterbodies and wetlands shall be maintained as below:-

- (i) In the case of Lakes, 75m from the periphery of water body to be maintained as green belt and buffer zone for all the existing water bodies i.e. lakes/wetlands.
- (ii) 50m from the edge of the primary Rajkulewas.
- (iii) 35m from the edges in the case of secondary Rajkulewas
- (iv) 25m from the edges in the case of tertiary Rajkulewas

This buffer/green zone would be treated as no construction zone for all intent and

purposes. This is absolutely essential for the purposes of sustainable development particularly keeping in mind the ecology and environment of the areas in question.

All the offending constructions raised by Respondents Nos. 9 and 10 of any kind including boundary wall shall be demolished which falls within such areas. Wherever necessary dredging operations are required, the same should be carried out to restore the original capacity of the water spread area and/or wetlands. Not only the existing construction would be removed but also none of these Respondents - Project Proponent would be permitted to raise any construction in this zone.

All authorities particularly Lake development Authority shall carry out this operation in respect of all the water bodies/lakes of Bangalore.

2. The capacity of the existing STPs to treat sewage is 729 MLD, whereas another 500 MLD sewage is proposed to be treated in 10 upcoming STPs. In this context, all the STPs operating in the area whether Government or

privately owned, should meet the revised standards notified by CPCB/MoEF.

3. Bangalore city receives treated potable water of 1360 MLD from river Cauvery whereas the requirement is for another 750 MLD and the entire area falls in critical zone in terms of ground water exploitation. Information reveals that only one million litre per month of STP treated water is used by builders for construction purposes. For this reason, the BWSSB issues partial NOC to various residential and commercial projects in respect of supply of potable water. In this context, following directions need to be issued:

- i. At the time of grant of EC, the water requirement for the construction phase and operation phase should be considered separately. Due consideration should also be given for identification of source of supply of water and this should be a pre-requisite for grant of EC.
- ii. All the project proponents should necessarily use only treated sewage water for construction purpose and

this should be reflected in EC as a condition for construction phase.

- iii. Wherever the quality of treated sewage water does not conform to the quality needed for construction, necessary upgradation in STP should be undertaken immediately.

Specific Conditions/ Directions for Respondent 9;

In addition to the above directions which should be equally part of EC condition in respect of respondents nos. 9 & 10, following specific conditions shall apply to respondent no. 9:

- i. Reclaimed area of the lake to the extent of 3 acres 10 guntas in survey No. 43 should be restored to its original condition at the cost of project proponent. The possession of this area should be restored by Respondent No. 9 to the concerned Authorities immediately. In addition, a buffer zone of 75 m should be provided between the lake and the project area and this should be maintained as green area.

- ii. In the remaining area, where primary Rajkalewa is abutting the project area, 50 m buffer zone on the side of the project area from the edge of the rajkalewa should be maintained as green belt.
- iii. Several irrigation canals or tertiary rajkalewas taking off from the Agara tank were passing through the area of respondent No. 9, and serve the dual purpose of irrigating paddy fields and disposal of surface run off (storm water drains) during rainy season. However on account of the activities of the project, these drains have been totally obliterated. For the purpose of proper disposal of storm runoff from the entire area falling between the Agara lake and the Belandur Lake, respondent No. 9 must provide required number of storm water drains based on proper hydrological study. These storm drains should have a buffer zone of 15 m on either bank maintained as green belt.

- iv. The cumulative quantity of earth excavated for the construction of project is around 4 lakhs cubic meters in the depth range of 0 to 9 meters. This has created huge hillock like structure obstructing the natural flow pattern of surface runoff from Agara Lake side to Balendur Lake side or primary Rajkalewas. For this purpose, during construction phase garland drain should be constructed around the existing dumping site for safe disposal of runoff to the Rajkalewas. For the disposal of excavated material, a proper muck disposal plan duly approved by SIEAA shall be prepared. In any case the plan should ensure that no muck/sediment flows into Rajkalewas and/or Belandur lake.
- v. The Kharab land identified by Revenue Dept. admeasuring 1 acre 2 guntas should be demarcated and maintained separately as green belt.

- vi. The entire green belt created under the directions of this Tribunal should not to be considered as part of green belt of the project as part of EC condition and will be over and above the green belt as indicated in the EC.
- vii. In view of the heavy traffic load in the adjoining Sarjapur road, a proper study on the basis of traffic density, foot falls expected, etc., a proper plan needs to be prepared and the concept of service road exclusively for the project needs to be worked out and additional parking space created within the project area and incorporated as a part of the overall project layout, within a period of 3 months.

10. Though, at the time of hearing prior to passing the Judgment, we had heard the parties on all aspects but still we have provided re-hearing to the parties on all issues with emphasis on imposition of environmental compensation including the quantum. Upon hearing, we are of the considered view that

environmental compensation imposed upon Respondent No. 9 calls for no variation and the Respondent No. 9 should be called upon to pay the said amount of Rs. 117.35 Crores determined under the Judgment prior to commencement of any project activity at the site. Respondent No. 10 has not commenced any actual construction activity but has carried out various preparatory steps including excavation and deposition of huge earth by creating a hillock at the premises in question and a site office.

Thus, considering cumulative effect on environment and ecology due to various breaches in that behalf by Respondent No. 10 and the fact that the remedial measures can more effectively be taken by the Respondent No.10, we reduce environmental compensation payable by Respondent No. 10 to Rs. 13.5 crores (3% of the stated project cost instead of 5% as imposed in the original judgment).

General Directions:

1. We direct SEIAA, Karnataka to issue amended order granting Environmental Clearance within four weeks from today incorporating all the conditions stated in this

judgement and such other conditions as it may deem appropriate in light of this judgment and Inspection Note of the Expert Members. The Project Proponents would be permitted to commence activity only after issuance of amended Environmental Clearance order.

2. SEIAA Karnataka and MoEF shall ensure regular supervision and monitoring of the project and during the construction and even upon completion to ensure that activity is carried out strictly in accordance with the conditions of the order granting Environmental Clearance, this Judgment, Notification of 2006 and other laws in force.

3. The distances in respect of buffer zone specified in this judgment shall be made applicable to all the projects and all the Authorities concerned are directed to incorporate such conditions in the projects to whom Environmental Clearance and other permissions are now granted not only around Belandur Lake, Rajkulewas, Agara Lake, but also all other Lakes/wetlands in the city of Bengaluru.

4. We hereby direct the State of Karnataka to submit a proposal to the MoEF for

demarcating wetlands in terms of Wetland Rules 2010 as revised from time to time. Such proposal shall be submitted by the State within four weeks from today and the MoEF shall consider the same in accordance with law and grant its approval or otherwise within four weeks thereafter. After such approval is granted by MoEF, the State would issue notification notifying such areas immediately thereafter in accordance with Rules and law.

5. Both the Respondents Nos. 9 and 10 shall ensure that debris or any construction material that has been dumped into the Rajkulewas, or on their Banks and on the buffer zone of wetlands should be removed within four weeks from today. In the event they fail to do so, the same shall be removed by the Lake Development Authority along with the State Administration and recover charges thereof from the said Respondents.

6. There is a serious discrepancy even in regard to the measurement of land as far as Respondent No. 9 is concerned. Admittedly the Respondent has been allotted and is in possession of land admeasuring 63.94 acres, though Environmental Clearance has been

granted for 2,92,636.03 Sq. Meters which is equivalent to 72.22 acres. For this reason alone, Environmental Clearance cannot be given effect to. While issuing the amended Environmental Clearance, SEIAA Karnataka shall take into consideration all these aspects and, if necessary, would require Respondent No. 9 to submit a fresh layout plan and the entire project may be revised in accordance with law.

7. Both the Respondents (Project Proponents) shall submit an appropriate plan in view of the conditions imposed in this judgment and the amended Environmental Clearance that would be issued.

8. The amount of environmental compensation will be deposited prior to issuance of amended Environmental Clearance.

With the above directions, the Original Application No. 222 of 2014 and Misc. Applications Nos. 596/2016 and 603/2016 are finally disposed of while leaving the parties to bear their own costs."

22. Appearing for the appellants in C.A. No.5016 of 2016, Shri Mukul Rohatgi, learned senior counsel, has submitted that the

State Government in exercise of the power conferred under the Karnataka Industrial Areas Development Act (for short 'KIAD Act') declared the land in question as an industrial area. Thereafter, the land in question has been acquired by the State Government in the year 2004. Following the acquisition, on 28.06.2007, the land was allotted to the appellant by the KIADB. The SEIAA granted environmental clearance which was followed by public notice concerning clearance on 14.03.2012. Neither the allotment of land nor the environmental clearance was challenged before the Tribunal. Thus, none of the statutory decisions or processes, are the cause of action for the purpose of the application. The averments made in the original application does not satisfy or meet the requirements of Section 14(1) and (3) of the NGT Act and the original application does not spell out the cause of action relevant for the purpose of said provision. Since the statutory processes and clearances could not have been challenged for being hit by Section 14(3), the construction activities which were the alleged cause of action could not have been challenged. Therefore, the Tribunal ought to have held that the application was not maintainable.

23. Further the application is barred by limitation. Though environmental clearance was granted on 17.02.2012 and it was published in two leading newspapers on 12.03.2012 and 14.03.2012, modified plan was approved by the KIADB on 30.08.2012, the application ought to have been filed within six months from the date on which cause of action for the dispute first arose in terms of Section 14 of the NGT Act. The present application has been filed in March, 2014 which was much beyond the prescribed period of limitation. No application seeking condonation of delay has been filed accompanying the application. Hence, the Tribunal ought to have dismissed the application on the ground that as it is barred by time.

24. It was also argued that buffer zone laid down by the NGT is substantially higher as compared to buffer zone which is required to be maintained as per the Revised Master Plan, 2015 issued on 22.06.2007. This is contrary to the Karnataka Town and Country Planning Act, 1961 (for short 'the Planning Act').

25. Shri Neeraj Kishan Kaul and Shri R.Venkataramani, learned senior counsel appearing for the appellants, in this case have also made similar submissions. It was argued that the direction

imposing penalty/compensation is illegal on the ground that the applicants did not allege that the construction work of the project has caused environmental wrong. No wrong or injury either to Bellandur lake water body or to Bellandur lake area, has been alleged and established. As such, there is no question of any enquiry relating to imposition of penalty or any compensation.

26. Shri Maninder Singh, learned senior counsel appearing for the appellants, in C.A. Nos.5016 and 10995 of 2016, while supporting the submissions made by Shri Rohatgi, has submitted that the appellant has obtained sanction and approvals for the project from the competent authorities. It could not start construction despite grant of all the permissions, including environmental clearance as early as possible i.e. 30.09.2013. Hence, imposing penalty/compensation is entirely unsustainable.

27. Learned Advocate General, Shri Udaya Holla, appearing for the appellant-State of Karnataka in C.A.Nos.4923-4924 of 2017, has submitted that the State of Karnataka is also aggrieved by the order of the NGT to the extent of setting aside the buffer zone in respect of water bodies and drains specified in the Revised Master Plan, 2015, and enlargement of the buffer zone in respect of lakes and

Rajakaluves. It is also aggrieved by the order of the NGT directing the authorities to demolish all the offending constructions raised/built in the buffer zone, which will result in demolition of 95% of the buildings in Bengaluru. It is submitted that the Revised Master Plan is statutory in nature and NGT has no power, competence or jurisdiction to consider the validity or *vires* of any statutory provision/regulation. Therefore, the order of the NGT to that extent is liable to be set aside.

28. Learned senior counsel appearing for the appellants in other cases, have also supported the arguments of the learned Advocate General. It was contended that the Revised Master Plan provides for a 30 meters buffer zone around the lakes and a buffer zone of 50 meters, 25 meters and 15 meters from the primary, secondary and tertiary drains, respectively to be measured from the centre of the drain. Vide the impugned judgment, the NGT has revised these buffer zones and has directed that the buffer zone be maintained for 75 meters around the lake and 50, 35 and 25 meters respectively from the primary, secondary and tertiary drain, respectively. Variation of buffer zone, as directed by the NGT is without any legal and scientific basis and has the effect of amending the Revised

Master Plan, 2015, without there being any challenge to the same or any relief sought with respect to the said Revised Master Plan.

29. On the other hand, Shri Sajan Poovayya, learned senior counsel, appearing for the applicants, has fairly submitted that the applications were filed only against the appellants in C.A Nos. 5016 of 2016 and 8002-8003 of 2016 (respondent Nos. 9 & 10). He has no objection to set aside the order in so far as the appellants in other appeals including the State of Karnataka are concerned. He has also no objection to set aside the general conditions and directions of the NGT in paragraph (1) of the order dated 04.05.2016 except the directions issued against respondent Nos. 9 and 10. In view of the above, it is not necessary to examine the contentions of the learned Advocate General in Civil Appeal Nos. 4923-4924 of 2017. It is also not necessary to consider the contentions urged in the other civil appeals except the appeals filed by respondents Nos. 9 and 10.

30. Shri Poovayya has strongly opposed the submissions made by the learned senior counsel appearing for the appellants in C.A. No. 5016 of 2016 and C.A. Nos. 8002-8003 of 2016. It is submitted that the Tribunal is a specialized body for effective and expeditious

disposal of cases relating to environmental protection and conservation of forests and other natural resources including enforcement of any legal right relating to environment. The jurisdiction of the Tribunal is provided under Sections 14, 15 and 16 of the NGT Act. Section 14 provides for the jurisdiction over all civil cases where a substantial question relating to environment is involved. However, such question should arise out of implementation of the enactments specified in Schedule I. The Tribunal has the jurisdiction under Section 15(1)(a) of the NGT Act to provide relief and compensation to the victims of pollution and other environmental damage arising under the enactments specified in Schedule I. Under Sections 15(1)(b) and 15(1)(c), the Tribunal can provide for restitution of property damaged and for restitution of the environment for such area or areas, as the Tribunal may think fit. Sections 15(1)(b) and 15(1)(c) have not been made relatable to enactment specified in Schedule I of the Act. Section 15(1)(c) is an entire island of power and jurisdiction read with Section 21 of the Act. He submits that whenever ecology is being compromised and jeopardized, the Tribunal can apply Section 20 for taking restorative measures in the interest of environment. The

limitation provided in Section 14 is period of six months from the date on which cause of action first arose whereas in Section 15 it is five years. Therefore, the petition is not barred by time.

31. He has further submitted that the provisions of Section 33 shall have the effect notwithstanding anything inconsistent contained in any other law for the time being in force. This gives the Tribunal overriding powers over anything inconsistently contained in KIAD Act, Planning Act, Revised Master Plan of Bangalore, 2015 and Karnataka Municipal Corporation Act, 1976 (for short 'KMC Act'). Therefore, the Tribunal while providing for restoration of environment in an area can specify buffer zone around specific lakes and water bodies in contravention with zoning regulation.

32. Regarding limitation, he has submitted that the application filed by respondents 1 to 3 was not an application simplicitor under Section 14 of the Act. It was an application where a specific prayer has been made with reference to Lake Development Authority's report dated 12.06.2013 and the Ministry of Environment Forest and Climate Change Monitoring Committee report dated 14.08.2013 for restoration of ecologically sensitive land and for

maintaining sensitive area in its natural condition so that ecological balance of the area is not disturbed. Therefore, the petition was under Section 15 of the Act and it can be filed within five years from the date on which the cause for such compensation or relief first arose.

33. It was further submitted that right to appeal under Section 22 is not a vested right unless provided by statute. Exercise of Appellate Jurisdiction without the fulfillment of statutory mandate would be without jurisdiction. Section 22 of the Act provides for an appeal on the ground specified in Section 100 of the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908 (for short 'the CPC'). Under Section 100 of the CPC, an appeal can be filed only on the ground that the case involves a substantial question of law as may be framed by the Appellate Court. In the instant case, the appeal does not involve any substantial question of law hence it has to be dismissed *in limine*. He has taken us through various materials placed on record in order to substantiate that the direction passed and penalty imposed by the Tribunal upon to project proponents are sustainable. He prays for dismissal of the appeals.

34. We have carefully considered the submissions of the learned counsel of the parties and perused the materials placed on record.

35. Before considering the other contentions of the learned counsel for the parties, let us first consider the scope of enquiry in appeals filed under Section 22, which is as under:

"22. Appeal to Supreme Court.- Any person aggrieved by any award, decision or order of the tribunal, may, file an appeal to the Supreme Court, within ninety days from the date of communication of the award, decision or order of the Tribunal, to him, on any one or more of the grounds specified in section 100 of the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908 (5 of 1908):

Provided that the Supreme Court may, entertain any appeal after the expiry of ninety days, if it is satisfied that the appellant was prevented by sufficient cause from preferring the appeal."

36. It is settled that there is no vested right of appeal unless the statute so provides. Further, if a statute provides for a condition subject to which the appropriate Appellate Court can exercise jurisdiction, the Court is under an obligation to satisfy itself

whether the condition prescribed is fulfilled. Exercise of appellate jurisdiction without the fulfillment of statutory mandate would be without jurisdiction. Therefore, the right of appeal provided under Section 22 is to be read subject to the conditions provided therein.

37. Section 22 provides for an appeal to the Supreme Court on the grounds specified in Section 100 of the CPC. Under Section 100 CPC, an appeal can be filed only on the ground that the case involves a substantial question of law as may be framed by the Appellate Court. The scope of appeal under Section 22, therefore, is restricted to substantial question of law arising from the judgment of the Tribunal. The test to determine whether the question is substantial question of law or not was laid down by a Constitution Bench of this Court in **Sir Chunilal V. Mehta and Sons, Ltd. v. Century Spinning and Manufacturing**, 1962 Supp. (3) SCR 549.

This Court has laid down the test as under:

"The proper test for determining whether a question of law raised in the case is substantial would, in our opinion, be whether it is of general public importance or whether it directly and substantially affects the rights of the parties and if so whether it is either an open question in the sense that it is not finally settled by this Court or by the Privy Council or by the Federal Court or is not free from difficulty or calls for discussion of alternative

views. If the question is settled by the highest court or the general principles to be applied in determining the question are well settled and there is a mere question of applying those principles or that the plea raised is palpably absurd the question would not be a substantial question of law."

38. It is equally settled that merely because the remedy of appeal is provided against the decision of the Tribunal on a substantial question of law alone, that does not *ipso facto* permit the appellants to agitate their appeal to seek re-appreciation of the factual matrix of the entire matter. The appellants cannot seek to re-argue their entire case to seek wholesale re-appreciation of evidence and the factual matrix that has been considered by the Tribunal is *ex facie* impermissible under Section 22. There cannot be fresh appreciation or re-appreciation of facts and evidence in a statutory appeal under this provision.

39. The first question raised by the learned counsel is in relation to the maintainability of the application before the Tribunal.

40. The Tribunal has been established under a constitutional mandate provided in Schedule VII List I Entry 13 of the Constitution of India, to implement the decision taken at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. The

Tribunal is a specialized judicial body for effective and expeditious disposal of cases relating to environmental protection and conservation of forests and other natural resources including enforcement of any legal right relating to environment. The right to healthy environment has been construed as a part of the right to life under Article 21 by way of judicial pronouncements. Therefore, the Tribunal has special jurisdiction for enforcement of environmental rights.

41. The jurisdiction of the Tribunal is provided under Sections 14, 15 and 16 of the Act. Section 14 provides the jurisdiction over all civil cases where a substantial question relating to environment (including enforcement of any legal right relating to environment) is involved. However, such question should arise out of implementation of the enactments specified in Schedule I.

42. The Tribunal has also jurisdiction under Section 15(1)(a) of the Act to provide relief and compensation to the victims of pollution and other environmental damage arising under the enactments specified in Schedule I. Further, under Section 15(1)(b) and 15(1)(c) the Tribunal can provide for restitution of property damaged and for restitution of the environment for such area or areas as the

Tribunal may think fit. It is noteworthy that Section 15(1)(b) & (c) have not been made relatable to Schedule I enactments of the Act. Rightly so, this grants a glimpse into the wide range of powers that the Tribunal has been cloaked with respect to restoration of the environment.

43. Section 15(1)(c) of the Act is an entire island of power and jurisdiction read with Section 20 of the Act. The principles of sustainable development, precautionary principle and polluter pays, propounded by this Court by way of multiple judicial pronouncements, have now been embedded as a bedrock of environmental jurisprudence under the NGT Act. Therefore, wherever the environment and ecology are being compromised and jeopardized, the Tribunal can apply Section 20 for taking restorative measures in the interest of the environment.

44. The NGT Act being a beneficial legislation, the power bestowed upon the Tribunal would not be read narrowly. An interpretation which furthers the interests of environment must be given a broader reading. (See **Kishore Lal v. Chairman, Employees' State Insurance Corpn.** (2007) 4 SCC 579, para 17). The existence of the Tribunal without its broad restorative powers under Section 15(1)(c)

read with Section 20 of the Act, would render it ineffective and toothless, and shall betray the legislative intent in setting up a specialized Tribunal specifically to address environmental concerns. The Tribunal, specially constituted with Judicial Members as well as with Experts in the field of environment, has a legal obligation to provide for preventive and restorative measures in the interest of the environment.

45. Section 15 of the Act provides power & jurisdiction, independent of Section 14 thereof. Further, Section 14(3) juxtaposed with Section 15(3) of the Act, are separate provisions for filing distinct applications before the Tribunal with distinct periods of limitation, thereby amply demonstrating that jurisdiction of the Tribunal flows from these Sections (i.e. Sections 14 and 15 of the Act) independently. The limitation provided in Section 14 is a period of 6 months from the date on which the cause of action first arose and whereas in Section 15 it is 5 years. Therefore, the legislative intent is clear to keep Section 14 and 15 as self contained jurisdictions.

46. Further, Section 18 of the Act recognizes the right to file applications each under Sections 14 as well as 15. Therefore, it

cannot be argued that Section 14 provides jurisdiction to the Tribunal while Section 15 merely supplements the same with powers. As stated *supra*, the typical nature of the Tribunal, its breadth of powers as provided under the statutory provisions of the Act as well as the Scheduled enactments, cumulatively, leaves no manner of doubt that the only tenable interpretation to these provisions would be to read the provisions broadly in favour of cloaking the Tribunal with effective authority. An interpretation that is in favour of conferring jurisdiction should be preferred rather than one taking away jurisdiction.

47. Section 33 of the Act provides an overriding effect to the provisions of the Act over anything inconsistent contained in any other law or in any instrument having effect by virtue of law other than this Act. This gives the Tribunal overriding powers over anything inconsistent contained in the KIAD Act, Planning Act, Karnataka Municipal Corporations Act, 1976 (“KMC Act”); and the Revised Master Plan of Bengaluru, 2015 (“RMP”). A Central legislation enacted under Entry 13 of List I Schedule VII of the Constitution of India will have the overriding effect over State legislations. The corollary is that the Tribunal while providing for

restoration of environment in an area, can specify buffer zones around specific lakes & water bodies in contradiction with zoning regulations under these statutes or the RMP.

48. The second question raised by the appellants is that the petition is barred by time. According to appellants, environmental clearance was granted to the respondent No. 9 on 17.02.2012 for which notice was published in the leading newspaper on 12.03.2012 and 14.03.2012. Modified building plan was approved on 30.08.2012, which was followed up to 10.08.2014. Similar events had taken place in regard to the project of respondent No. 10 who had been granted environmental clearance on 30.09.2013. The application had to be filed within a period of six months from the date on which cause of action for such dispute has first arisen in terms of Section 14 of the NGT Act. Admittedly, the present application has been filed in March, 2014 and according to them, it is much beyond the prescribed period of limitation. Also, there is no application for condonation of delay accompanying the main application. Therefore, the Tribunal will not have jurisdiction to condone the delay.

49. The OA No. 222 of 2014 was not an application *simpliciter* under Section 14 of the Act. It was an application where a specific prayer has been made with reference to Lake Development Authority's ("LDA") Report dated 12.06.2013 and the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change ("MoEF") Monitoring Committee Report dated 14.08.2013 for restoration of ecologically sensitive land and for maintaining the sensitive in its natural condition so that the ecological balance of the area is not disturbed. It is clear from the documentary evidence supported by data, that the project proponents have committed breaches and the implementation of the project is bound to have serious adverse impact on the ecology, hydrology and the environment in the catchment area of Bellandur Lake. The environmental degradation as established from the documents would give rise to an independent cause of action. Therefore, this was a petition under Section 15 of the Act and thus it could be filed within 5 years from the date on which the cause for such compensation or relief first arose.

50. In fact, in the original application before the Tribunal there was no mention of the provision under which it was being filed. It is

well settled principle of law that non-mention of or erroneous mention of the provision of law would not be of any relevance, if the Court had the requisite jurisdiction to pass an order. It would be a mere irregularity and would not vitiate the application or the judicial order of the Tribunal.

51. Shri R. Venkataramani, learned senior counsel, appearing for the appellant in CA No.5016 of 2016 has submitted that the constructions had not commenced before the grant of environment clearance. The inspection report dated 11.01.2012 of the Chairman of the KSPCB observes that "no construction" had commenced on the date of inspection. This report cannot be overlooked on the basis of some dumping of debris which could not be attributed to the appellant. He has pointed out the report of the Committee appointed by the Tribunal in the month of August 2015, wherein it was stated that "it started construction after obtaining clearance". In this regard he has also taken us through various documents placed on record and submits that there is absolutely no justification in imposing monitoring penalty/compensation without assessment of impact.

52. The Tribunal has pointed out on the basis of the Committee report of August 2015, that the appellant had encroached 3 acres 10 guntas of Bellandur Lake and a boundary wall has been raised around the said land. The Tribunal has also found that the project proponents have violated the Master Plan. They have not obtained the mandatory clearance from the Sensitive Zone Committee constituted by the Government of Karnataka. It is also clear from the materials on record that there are several other violations by the project proponents. The Tribunal has discussed all these issues from para 52 onwards. It is also clear from the materials on record that there is a definite possibility of environment, ecology, lakes, and wetland being adversely affected by these projects. That is why, the Tribunal has observed as under:

"72. In light of the above scope of the project and records before the Tribunal and the defaults on the part of the Project Proponents, the cumulative adverse effects of the activities undertaken by the respondents before us can be summed up as under:

1) The construction of both the projects had started prior to the grant to Environmental Clearance.

- 2) The EIA Notification of 2006 requires that without grant of Environmental Clearance, no project can commence its activity. This restriction applies not only to operationalization of the project but even for the purposes of establishment.
- 3) Revenue Map images shows multiple Rajakaluves flowing through the project(s) in question. The images further show encroachment on Rajakaluves.
- 4) Digital images of the land available on Google satellite images showing encroachment on two major Rajakaluves.
- 5) Google Satellite images retrieved from Google archives clearly reflect two distinct features. Firstly, change in the wetland area between the period of 13th November, 2000 and 23rd November, 2010. Secondly, it reveals the excavation work carried out by Respondent Nos. 9 and 10 commenced prior to obtaining Environmental Clearance.
- 6) Restriction in regard to extraction of ground water was not strictly complied with as permission of Central Ground Water Authority was not obtained before construction.

7) The conditions with regard to the natural slopping pattern of the project site to remain unaltered and natural hydrology of the area to be maintained as it is, to ensure natural flow of storm water as well as in relation to Lakes and other water bodies within and/or at the vicinity of the project area to be protected and conserved: The inspection report by the MoEF clearly notes that condition nos. (xxxix) and (xl) in the Environmental Clearance of respondent no. 9 cannot be complied with as it will necessarily result in some alteration of the natural slopping pattern of the project site and the natural hydrology of the area. It noted that the project area is located in the catchment area of the Bellandur Lake and the project authorities have informed that they will take all precautionary measures to ensure that the lake will not be affected by project activities either during construction or operation phase."

53. In paragraph 81, the Tribunal has observed as under:

"81.Another very important aspect which cannot be overlooked by the Tribunal is with regard to the respondent nos. 9 & 10 carrying on their project activity

fully knowing that they were incapable of or it was not possible for them to comply with condition no. xxxix and xl (or alike conditions) in the order granting the Environmental Clearance. This has even been noticed by the MoEF in its monitoring report dated 14th August, 2013. These respondents never applied for variation or amendment of these conditions and continued with their construction activities. This renders these respondents entirely liable for environmental and ecological damage and the restoration and restitution thereof."

54. In our view, the findings arrived at by the Tribunal are not only based on the documents that were available on record but also on the pleadings that were made by the parties buttressed by the Committee's report and the inspection note of the Expert Members. Therefore, the directions passed and the penalty imposed by the Tribunal on both project proponents are valid and sustainable and do not suffer from any perversity.

55. We are also of the view that it is impermissible for the appellants to seek a factual review through the methodology of re-

appreciation of factual matrix by this Court under Section 22 of the NGT Act.

56. Shri R.Venkataramani, learned senior counsel has also raised a subsidiary issue relating to *res judicata*. According to him, respondent Nos. 12 and 13 filed Writ Petition Nos.3656-57/2013 seeking similar reliefs in a representative capacity. The issues raised therein are same as those canvassed in the application before the Tribunal. The reliefs sought for are essentially the same. Hence, the applications are barred by the principle of *res judicata*.

57. The Tribunal has answered this issue in paragraphs 47 to 51 of the order. There was no dispute in so far as filing of the writ petitions is concerned. However, the parties are not common nor the issues in application and the writ petitions are directly and substantially the same. After examination of the pleadings, the Tribunal has recorded a finding of fact that there is no commonality of a cause of action or likelihood of a conflict between the judgments. The prayers and the geneses of the respective proceedings are entirely distinct and different in their scope and relief. The issues before the Tribunal would essentially relate to environment ecology and its restoration while the proceedings

before the High Court relate to entirely different issues with acquisition of land, its allotment and transfer to the third party. These issues in both the proceedings are neither substantial nor materially identical.

58. After elaborately considering this question, the Tribunal has concluded as under:

"51.....For these reasons, we find no merit in this contention of respondent Nos. 9 and 10. The purpose of the doctrine of res judicata is to provide finality and conclusiveness to the judicial decisions as well as to avoid multiplicity of litigation. In the present case, the question of re-agitating the issues or agitating similar issues in two different proceedings does not arise. The ambit and scope of jurisdiction is clearly decipherable. The jurisdictions of the Hon'ble High Court of Karnataka and this Tribunal are operating in distinct fields and have no commonality in so far as the issues which are raised directly and substantially in these petitions, as well as the reliefs that have been prayed for before the Hon'ble High Court and the Tribunal are concerned.

There is no commonality in parties before the Tribunal and the High Court. The 'cause of action' in both proceedings is different and distinct. The matters substantially and materially in issue in one proceedings are not the same in the other proceeding. There is hardly any likelihood of conflicting judgments being pronounced by the Tribunal on the one hand and the High Court on the other. Therefore, we are of the considered view that the present applications are neither hit by the principles of *res judicata* nor constructive *res judicata*. We also hold that culmination of proceedings before the Tribunal into a final judgment would not offend the principle of 'judicial propriety', because of the Writ Petitions pending before the Hon'ble High Court of Karnataka."

59. We do not find any error in the aforesaid conclusion of the Tribunal. We are of the view that the Tribunal was justified in holding that the objections taken by the respondent Nos. 9 and 10 do not satisfy the basic ingredients to attract the application of *res judicata* or *constructive res judicata*.

60. The State of Karnataka is aggrieved by the following offending portion of the order dated 04.05.2016:

"1. In view of our discussion in the main Judgment, we are of the considered view that the fixation of distance from water bodies (lakes and Rajkalewas) suffers from the inbuilt contradiction, legal infirmity and is without any scientific justification. The RMP – 2015 provides 50m from middle of the Rajkalewas as buffer zone in the case of primary Rajkalewas, 25m in the case of secondary Rajkulewas and 15m in the tertiary Rajkulewas in contradiction to the 30m in the case of lake which is certainly much bigger water body and its utility as a water body/wetland is well known certainly part of wet land. Thus, we direct that the distance in the case of Respondents Nos. 9 and 10 from Rajkulewas, Waterbodies and wetlands shall be maintained as below:-

(i) In the case of Lakes, 75m from the periphery of water body to be maintained as green belt and buffer zone for all the existing water bodies i.e. lakes/wetlands.

(ii) 50m from the edge of the primary Rajkulewas.

(iii) 35m from the edges in the case of secondary Rajkulewas

(iv) 25m from the edges in the case of tertiary Rajkulewas

This buffer/green zone would be treated as no construction zone for all intent and purposes. This is absolutely essential for the purposes of sustainable development particularly keeping in mind the ecology and environment of the areas in question.

All the offending constructions raised by Respondents Nos. 9 and 10 of any kind including boundary wall shall be demolished which falls within such areas. Wherever necessary dredging operations are required, the same should be carried out to restore the original capacity of the water spread area and/or wetlands. Not only the existing construction would be removed but also none of these Respondents - Project Proponent would be permitted to raise any construction in this zone.

All authorities particularly Lake development Authority shall carry out this

operation in respect of all the water bodies/
lakes of Bangalore."

61. We have already noticed that Shri Poovayya has no objection to set aside the aforesaid impugned portion of the order in so far as the appellants in all the appeals except the appeals filed by respondent Nos.9 and 10. The aforesaid portion of the order contains not only general directions but also certain directions against respondent Nos. 9 and 10. Therefore, only that portion of the order which does not pertain to respondent Nos. 9 and 10 needs to be quashed.

62. In the light of the above discussion, we pass the following order:

- i) Civil Appeal No. 5016 of 2016 and Civil Appeal Nos. 8002-8003 of 2016 filed by the appellants/respondent nos. 9 and 10 are hereby dismissed. The impugned judgment and order in so far as appellants/respondent Nos. 9 and 10 are concerned is sustained.
- ii) All the other appeals are hereby allowed and the direction/condition No. (1) in the order

dated 4.5.2016 is hereby set aside except the direction issued against respondent Nos. 9 and 10.

63. There will be no order as to costs.

.....**J.**
(A.K. SIKRI)

.....**J.**
(S. ABDUL NAZEER)

.....**J.**
(M.R. SHAH)

New Delhi;
March 5, 2019.

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ANNEXURE-R6/2

बरेली महायोजना 2001 - 2021



सम्भागीय नियोजन खण्ड, बरेली
नगर एवं ग्राम नियोजन विभाग, उ०प्र०
एवं बरेली विकास प्राधिकरण, बरेली।

टैंक, ट्यूबवैल, हैण्डपम्प आदि से की जाती है तथा 15 प्रतिशत जनसंख्या अपने निजी साधनों जैसे हैण्ड पम्प एवं जैट पम्प आदि पर निर्भर है। नगर में 40 नलकूपों द्वारा 110 मिलियन लीटर जलापूर्ति की जाती है। बरेली नगर निगम में पानी का मानक 175 लीटर प्रति व्यक्ति प्रतिदिन है। यहाँ कुल मॉग 140 मिलियन लीटर प्रतिदिन है। नगर में 560 सार्वजनिक स्टैंड पोस्ट लगे हुए हैं, 19 उच्च जलाशय हैं जिनकी कुल भण्डारण क्षमता 20065 किलो लीटर है। नगर में 54652 जल संयोजक हैं। 1444 पब्लिक हैण्ड पम्प हैं तथा 9 टैंकर उपलब्ध हैं। नगर निगम के सभी जल स्रोतों से 143 मिलियन लीटर प्रतिदिन जलापूर्ति की जाती है। भविष्य में मानकों के आधार पर जलापूर्ति हेतु यदि कोई योजना विकसित की जाती है तो उसका समायोजन महायोजना में किया जायेगा।

नीति-निर्धारण :

- 1- ग्राउण्ड वाटर के संरक्षण तथा रिचार्जिंग हेतु वाटर हार्वेस्टिंग की उचित पद्धतियों को अपनाया जाये।
- 2- नगर में बढ़ती हुयी अनियमित ट्यूब वैल निर्माणों को रेगुलेट किया जाये जिसके लिए सुझाव यह है कि ट्यूबवैल निर्माण हेतु लाइसेन्स की प्रक्रिया अपनायी जाये। जिससे कि उनके निर्माण पर नियन्त्रण हो सके। चूँकि उनके अनियंत्रित निर्माण से ग्राउण्ड वाटर पर सबसे अधिक प्रभाव पड़ा है
- 3- पानी के ट्रान्समिशन एवं डिस्ट्रीब्यूशन के दौरान पानी के वेस्टेज को कम करने के लिए पाइपों के नेटवर्क में सुधार लाया जाये तथा लीकेज व जंग लगे हुए पाइपों को चिन्हित कर बदला जाये

5.1.15 ओवर हैड ब्रिज/ब्रिज :

बरेली नगर में हार्टमैन क्रॉसिंग नैनीताल मार्ग पर ओवर हैड ब्रिज निर्माणाधीन है तथा महायोजना 2021 में निम्नलिखित ओवर हैड ब्रिज एवं चौड़ीकरण को प्रस्तावित किया गया है।

- 1- कुदेशिया रेलवे क्रॉसिंग का चौड़ीकरण।
- 2- आई0वी0आर0 आई0रेलवे कासिंग।
- 3- लाल फाटक रेलवे कासिंग।
- 4- बदर्यू रोड पर ग्राम करेली रेलवे कासिंग।
- 5- फतेहगंज पश्चिमी नेशनल हाइवे, काठगोदाम रोड एवं पीलीभीत रोड (बड़े बाईपास पर) बरेली महायोजना-2021 में नगर में बहने वाली नदी के ऊपर ब्रिज बनाने एवं मार्ग के चौड़ीकरण का प्रस्ताव दिया गया है। जोकि निम्न है।
- 1- शाहजहाँपुर मार्ग पर नकटिया नदी पर मार्ग को चौड़ा करने का प्रस्ताव।
- 2- बीसलपुर मार्ग, विश्वविद्यालय मार्ग एवं एकिजक्यूटिव मार्ग पर नकटिया नदी के ऊपर पुल बनाने का प्रस्ताव।
- 3- मुरादाबाद मार्ग पर शंखा नदी के ऊपर मार्ग के चौड़ीकरण का प्रस्ताव।

5.1.16 वाटर हार्वेस्टिंग :

जीवन में पर्यावरण के अस्तित्व के लिये जल एक अनिवार्य प्राकृतिक संसाधन है परन्तु ग्राउण्ड वाटर स्रोत के अनियोजित ढंग से अत्यधिक मात्रा में दोहन के कारण ग्राउण्ड वाटर स्तर तेजी से नीचे गिर रहा है तथा शहरों की बढ़ती आबादी को समुचित पेयजल की व्यवस्था प्रदान करना

भविष्य में कठिन साबित हो रहा है। ऐसी स्थिति में यदि पेयजल के उपयोग एवं ग्राउण्ड वाटर के स्रोतों के संरक्षण, मितव्ययता, जल प्रयोग तथा रिचार्जिंग में समुचित जल प्रबन्धन द्वारा संतुलन स्थापित नहीं किया गया तो निकट भविष्य में पेय जल का भारी संकट पैदा हो सकता है। इस ओर शासन द्वारा भी ध्यान आकर्षित किया गया है तथा समुचित व्यवस्था हेतु प्राविधान करने के निर्देश दिये गये हैं।

नीति निर्धारण :

- 1- नगरीय क्षेत्र में पड़ने वाले प्राकृतिक जलाशयों, तालाबों अथवा पोखरों को महायोजना में चिन्हित कर संरक्षित किया जाये जिसमें किसी अन्य प्रकार का उपयोग अनुमन्य न किया जाये।
- 2- जहाँ तक हो सके ऐसे प्राकृतिक जलाशय एवं तालाब अथवा पोखर के आसपास की भूमि को मनोरंजन की दृष्टि से विकसित किया जाये जिससे कि नगर की जनता को दोहरे लाभ प्राप्त हो सकें।
- 3- 20 एकड़ से अधिक विभिन्न योजनाओं के ले आउट प्लान में पार्क एवं खुले क्षेत्रों के अन्तर्गत कुल योजना क्षेत्र का लगभग 5 प्रतिशत भूमि जलाशय के रूप में विकसित की जाये। ऐसे जलाशय का न्यूनतम क्षेत्रफल एक एकड़ तथा गहराई 6 मीटर रखी जाये।
- 4- 20 एकड़ से कम क्षेत्रफल की योजनाओं में उपरोक्तानुसार जलाशय अथवा पार्क / ग्रीन बैल्ट के अनुसार निर्धारित मानक के अनुसार एक कोने में रिचार्ज वैल/रिचार्ज टैंक बनाया जाये।
- 5- नयी योजना बनाने से पूर्व क्षेत्र का ज्यूलोजिकल/हाइड्रोजूलोजिकल सर्वेक्षण कराया जाये ताकि ग्राउण्ड वाटर रिचार्जिंग हेतु स्थानीय आवश्यकतानुसार उपरोक्त पद्धति को अपनाया जा सके।
- 6- पार्कों में पक्का निर्माण (पक्के पेवमेन्ट सहित) 5 प्रतिशत से अधिक न किया जाये तथा फुटपाथ व टैक्स यथा सम्भव पर्मीएवल एवं सेमी पर्मीएवल परफोरेटेड ब्लाक के प्रयोग से ही बनाया जाये।
- 7- सड़कों/पार्कों तथा खुले स्थानों में वृक्षारोपण हेतु पौधों की प्रजातियों का चयन किया जाये, जिसको जल की न्यूनतम आवश्यकता हो जिससे वे ग्रीष्मऋतु में भी हरे-भरे रह सकें।
- 8- जहाँ तक सम्भव हो सके सड़कों के किनारे ब्रिक ओनएज/लूज स्टोन पेवमेन्ट का प्राविधान किया जाये ताकि ग्राउण्ड वाटर की रिचार्जिंग हो सके।
- 9- 1000 वर्गमीटर एवं इससे अधिक क्षेत्रफल के समस्त उपयोगों के भूखण्डों एवं गुप हाउसिंग योजनाओं में छतों एवं खुले स्थानों से प्राप्त होने वाली बरसाती जल को परकोलेशन पिट्स के माध्यम से ग्राउण्ड वाटर चार्जिंग के लिये अनिवार्य किया जाये। उपरोक्त व्यवस्था भविष्य में निर्मित होने वाले शासकीय भवनों के लिए भी अनिवार्य किया जाये तथा पूर्व निर्मित शासकीय भवनों में रूफ टोप रेन वाटर हार्वेस्टिंग एवं रिचार्ज प्रणाली को अपनाया जाये।
- 10- नगर के प्रमुख नालों के दोनों ओर 15-15 मीटर भूमि हरित पट्टिका के रूप में वृक्षारोपण से सुरक्षित की जाये तथा नगर में बागों के स्वरूप को यथावत संरक्षित रखा जाये एवं किसी भी प्रकार का निर्माण अनुमन्य नहीं किया जाये।

**JOINT COMMITTEE INSPECTION REPORT IN THE COMPLIANCE OF
ORDER PASSED BY HON'BLE NGT IN O.A. NO. 951 OF 2024 TITLED
"RAJPAL SINGH Vs ELDECO COMPANY& ORS"**

In compliance of order dated 31.07.2024 passed by Hon'ble NGT New Delhi in O.A. No. 951 of 2024 "RAJPAL SINGH Vs ELDECO COMPANY& ORS. of Bareilly Joint Committee was formed as follows-

1. *Representative of Member Secretary CPCB,*
2. *Representative of RO MoEF&CC Lucknow,*
3. *Representative of Member Secretary, U.P. State Wetland Authority*
4. *Representative of DM, Bareilly (Nodal agency)*

In compliance of the above Hon'ble NGT orders, the following officers has participated in the Joint Committee visit held on 10-09-2024:

1. Shri Arvind Kumar, Scientist 'C', Representative of Member Secretary CPCB,
2. Dr. R. B. Lal, Scientist 'F', Representative of RO MoEF&CC Lucknow.
3. Representative of Member Secretary, U.P State Wetland Authority.
4. Shri S.B. Singh, ADM (F/R) Representative of DM, Bareilly (Nodal agency).

Background:

The instant Original Application has been registered on the basis of letter petition, the plea of the applicant is that at village Bilwa Pargana, Tehsil and District Bareilly land of Gata No. 508, Area 0.1260 hc, Khata No. 00309, shrenee - 6-1 is registered as pond (Jheel) but on that water body Eldeco City in collusion with the Bareilly Development Authority is cutting the plots and selling it.

It is a further alleged that Eldeco City has captured the water body and has constructed boundary wall surrounding the water body affecting its very existence. It is also alleged that the map has been got sanctioned by Eldeco Company in respect of the land surrounding the water body. In support of the allegation the applicant has filed a Joint Report of the Revenue Authorities stating that the above water body is inside the boundary wall of residential colony being developed by Eldeco Company.

Direction of Hon'ble Tribunal:

The Hon'ble NGT, vide order dated 31.07.2024 has directed and the relevant para read as follows:

..... "4. O.A. raises substantial issue relating to compliance of the environmental norms.

5. Hence we implead the following respondents in the matter.

i. Member Secretary, UPPCB.

ii. District Magistrate, Bareilly.

iii. RO, MoEF & CC Lucknow.

iv. Eldico Company, through its administrative head Eldico City Near Toll Plaza, Nanital Road, Bareilly

v. U.P State Wetland Authority through its Member Secretary.

vi. Bareilly Development Authority.

6. Issue notice to the respondents. Applicant is directed to serve the respondents and file affidavit of service at least one week before the next date of hearing.

7. Having regard to the nature of allegation in the O.A, we deem it proper to constitute A Joint Committee comprising of representative of Member Secretary CPCB, RO MoEF& CC Lucknow, Member Secretary, U.P State Wetland Authority and DM, Bareilly who will act as the nodal agency.

8. The Joint Committee will visit the site and ascertain the correct status of the water body in question and the encroachment if any on that water body and ascertain truthfulness of allegations made in the original application. The Joint Committee will submit the report at least one week before the next date of hearing.

9. List on 11.11.2024."

Details of the Project:

- The proposed project site is located at village khasra nos.- 476p,477p,501p,502,503p, 504,505,506,507,509,512p & 513p of Village Bilwa, khasra nos.- part of 438, part of 439,440 & 441 of Village Dohna Pritam Rai and khasra no.- 898 of Village Piperia (Ghanghora), Bareilly, Uttar Pradesh.

- The project has accorded the Environmental Clearance (EC) from the State Environment Impact Assessment Authority (SEIAA), Uttar Pradesh on 30th September, 2019 [Proposal No. SIA/UP/MIS/108331/2019]. The copy of Environmental Clearance (EC) is annexed herewith at **Annexure-1**.
- The EC was granted to M/s Eldeco Infrabuild Ltd. for “Residential Township” at Bilwa, Dohna Pritam Rai and Piperia (Ghanghora) District Bareilly. Total plot area and built-up area of the project is 1,44,128.27sq.m. and 1,46,543.91 sq.m. respectively. Total residential Units are 977 nos. Total EWS & LIG Units are 196 nos.
- UPPCB has issued the CTE to the unit vide letter no. 69454/UPPCB/Bareilly (UPPCBRO)/ CTE//Bareilly/2019, dated 22-02-2020 which is valid from 22-02-2020 to 28-02-2025 under the provisions of the Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981 and the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974. The copy of CTE is annexed herewith as **Annexure-2**.
- UPPCB has issued CTO to the unit vide letter no. 186414/UPPCB/ Bareilly (UPPCBRO)/ CTO/both/Bareilly/2023, dated 28-07-2023 valid from 28-07-2023 to 31-12-2025 under the provisions of the Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981 and the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974. The copy of CTO is annexed herewith as **Annexure-3**.

Site Inspection & Observation :-

- Joint Committee informed by the Revenue Department Bareilly, that Gata number 508 of Khatauni account number 00309 of village Bilwa having area 0.126 hectares is mentioned as Jheel (lake) in the current revenue records. It is also informed and observed that Gata number 508/0.1260 hectare Jheel (lake) is situated just near boundary of current sanctioned/approved map of Eldeco township.

- Joint Committee is also informed by the Revenue Department that all land surrounding the aforesaid lake/jheel/pond is private land which is also acquired by Eldeco. Gata number of surrounding land is as follows 500, 503, 507 and 509 {which is mentioned in the revenue records in the name of Category-1 (a) Transferable Land ownership}.
- Joint Committee informed by the Bareilly Development Authority (BDA), that the aforesaid pond i.e. Gata No. 508 is not included in the current approved map by the Authority. The land of Gata No. 508 is not a part of the approved map of current developing Eldeco township. Copy of approved map and letter is annexed as Annexure -4.
- The Joint Committee observed that area of Gata number 508/0.1260 hectare Jheel (lake) is fully covered by boundary's, partly by permanent brick boundary and partly by temporary boundary wall made by the Eldeco Company. As per Revenue Department representative total area of the Gata number 508/0.1260 hectare Jheel (lake) is approx.. 0.1260 Hectare. It is also informed by the Revenue Department that there is a no route/chak road to reach Gata number 508/0.1260 hectare Jheel (lake).
- The measurement done on the spot revealed that the area of the lake was left in place and was vacant on the spot. The Joint Committee also observed that the depth of the pond is very less or shallow depth approx. 1 to 3 feet. Copy of Revenue Department reports and land details are annexed as Annexure-5.
- Joint Committee is also informed by the representative of U.P. State Wetland Authority that the water body is very small which is not listed in schedule of wetland of District Bareilly Copy of letter in this regard is annexed as Annexure -6.

- During visit it is also observed that some part of construction and demolition waste of Eldeco company was dumped in the pond Gata No. 508. Photographs in this regard is attached herewith as Annexure - 7.

Arvind Kumar
20/09/24

(Arvind Kumar)
Scientist 'C',
CPCB RD Lucknow



(Dr. R. B. Lal)
Scientist F, RO
MoEFCC,
Lucknow



Representative of
U.P. State Wetland
Authority

S.B. Singh
20/09/24

(S.B. Singh)
ADM (F/R),
Bareilly

IN THE MATTER OF:

SIYARAM MANDAL.

...APPLICANT

VERSUS

ELDICO COMPANY & ORS.

...RESPONDENT

VAKALATNAMA

I/We, Under Signed Plaintiff(s), Petitioner(s), Appellant(s), Defendant(s), Respondent(s), Opposite Party in the above petition/Reference/Appeal do hereby appoint and Retain **Mr Shaurya Sahay** Advocate of the Supreme Court of India, to act and appear for me/us in the above matter and on my/our behalf to conduct and prosecute (or defend) or Compromise the same and appear in all proceedings that may be taken in respect of any application connected with the same or any decree or order passed therein, including proceedings that may be taken in respect of any application connected with the same or any decree or order passed therein, including proceedings in taxation and applications for review to file and obtain return of documents and deposit and receive money on my/our behalf in the said matter and to represent me/us and to take all necessary steps on my/our behalf in the above matter, I/we agree to ratify all acts done by the aforesaid Advocate in pursuance of this authority.

Dated this the 02 day of February 2026

Accepted:

Signed & Certified

Identified By: -

Signature(s) below:

Shaurya Sahay
Shaurya Sahay
Counsels for Respondent
Office: A-11, Lajpat Nagar-3
Delhi 110024
Mobile No. 9711021959
Email: shaurya@shauryasahay.com

[Signature]
Decree Holder(s) /Plaintiff(s)/ Petitioner(s)/ Applicant(s)/
Defendant(s)/Respondent(s) /Opposite Party/ Caveator(s)

वन्दिता श्रीवास्तवा

तयिब

बरेली विकास प्राधिकरण
बरेली

Behalf of Respondent No. 6 in O.A. No.951 of
2024 (Bareilly Development Authority)



MEMO OF APPEARANCE

To,
The Registrar
National Green Tribunal
New Delhi

Sir,
Please enter an appearance for the above-named Plaintiff(s), Petitioner(s),
Appellant(s), Defendant(s), Respondent(s), and Opposite Party- in the above-
mentioned petition case- appeal matter.

Dated: 02 / 02 / 2026

Yours Sincerely,



Shaurya Sahay
Mobile No. 9711021959