

**BEFORE THE HON'BLE NATIONAL GREEN TRIBUNAL, NEW DELHI
(PRINCIPAL BENCH)**

Original Application No. 553 of 2024

In the matter of

News item titled "From Ropar to Hoshiarpur via HP: 30-km detour as illegal mining damages bridge" appearing in The Indian Express dated 10.04.2024.

Reply of Punjab Pollution Control Board through Er. Birdevinder Singh, Environmental Engineer, Regional Office, Ropar.

Respectfully showeth

- 1) That Briefly submitted that the matter relates to the closure of a bridge on the Swan-river, connecting Nangal with Garhshankar due to indiscriminate sand mining causing residents of at-least 200 villages in Ropar, District Rupnagar (Punjab) to take a detour of 30 km. The Original Application has been registered by the Hon'ble National Green Tribunal in exercise of suo-motu powers on the basis of the news item appeared in The Indian Express dated 10.04.2024 titled "From Ropar to Hoshiarpur via HP: 30-km detour as illegal mining damages bridge".

It is alleged in the article that it has been three months since the bridge was closed, leaving no choice with people living in these villages and Nangal town in Ropar but to cross over to Himachal Pradesh and pay an entry fee, while travelling an extra 30 km, to reach Garhshankar in Hoshiarpur district.

- 2) That after consideration of the matter, the Hon'ble National Green Tribunal by passing an order dated 20.05.2024 has impleaded the Punjab Pollution Control Board; Central Pollution Control Board; Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Regional Office, Chandigarh; Deputy Commissioner, Rupnagar as respondents in the case with direction to file their response.



Vide the said order dated 20.05.2024, the Member Secretary, Central Pollution Control Board (respondent no.2) was directed to get the sport inspection done and ascertain the extent of illegal mining in the area concerned and to submit report before the Tribunal.

- 3) That in order to make compliance of the order dated 20.05.2024 of the Hon'ble National Green Tribunal, the Punjab Pollution Control Board has enquired into the matter and it is observed that during the floods of July, 2023, the piers of bridge situated in Village Algaran has got damaged. In order to access the damage and the requirement of repair/desilting works to be carried out, the Government of Punjab, Department of Water Resources has constituted a committee of officers in the month of February, 2024 to submit report.
- 4) That further it is submitted that in compliance of the order dated 20.05.2024 passed by the Hon'ble National Green Tribunal, the Deputy Commissioner, Rupnagar vide office order dated 25.06.2024 has constituted a committee of the following officers to conduct site visit and to submit report accordingly.

S.No.	Name of the Officials / Members	Designated
1	Additional Deputy Commissioner (G), Rupnagar	Chairman
2	Superintendent of Police (D), Rupnagar	Member
3	District Revenue Officer, Rupnagar	Member
4	Divisional Forest Officer, Rupnagar	Member
5	District Development and Panchayat Officer, Rupnagar	Member
6	Executive Engineer, Drainage-cum-Mining Division, Sri Anandpur Sahib	Member
7	Environmental Engineer, Punjab Pollution Control Board, Regional Office, Rupnagar	Convener

A copy of office order dated 25.06.2024 passed by the office of Deputy Commissioner Rupnagar is enclosed as **Annexure-A**.

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- 5) That it is pertinent to mention here that a team comprising of Sh. Jagdish Prasad Meena, Scientist 'D' and Sh. Pankaj Saini, Office Assistant (Scientific) from Central Pollution Control Board, Regional Directorate, Chandigarh was deployed by the Central Pollution Control Board for site inspection on July 02, 2024, to make compliance of the order dated 20.05.2024 passed by the Hon'ble National Green Tribunal wherein it was observed that the news item indicates violation of the Sand Mining Guidelines, 2016 and the provisions of Environment (Protection) Act, 1986.
- 6) That the spot inspection was carried out on 02.07.2024 jointly by the team of Central Pollution Control Board and the Committee constituted by District Administration. The Central Pollution Control Board team was accompanied by the Committee constituted by Deputy Commissioner, Rupnagar under the Chairmanship of ADC (Rupnagar) comprising the Officials from Punjab Pollution Control Board, Regional Office, Rupnagar, Drainage cum Mining Division, District Development and Panchayat Officer, Rupnagar, Divisional Forest officer and Superintendent of Police (D) Rupnagar.
- 7) That it is relevant to mention here that the Environmental Engineer, Punjab Pollution Control Board, Regional Office, Rupnagar was the member of the Joint team constituted by the District Administration which has accompanied the team of officers constituted by the Central Pollution Control Board. Hence, the Punjab Pollution Control Board is in agreement with the report prepared and submitted by the Central Pollution Control Board to the Hon'ble National Green Tribunal. The conclusion of the report is mentioned herein below:
- a) No mining activity was observed within 500–1,000 meters of the bridge, nor were any deep craters found on the riverbed or its banks during site visit.
 - b) The report from the Department of Drainage, Mining and Geology, Sri Anandpur Sahib, reveals that eight FIRs were lodged between the year 2015 and 2020 for illegal mining within 500 meters upstream and downstream of the bridge, wherein 11 tippers and 6 excavators were confiscated. Therefore, the possibility of illegal mining activities in the past



- occurring near the bridge may not be ruled out.
- c) The Enforcement & Monitoring Guidelines for Sand Mining (EMGSM), 2020 may be rigorously enforced by the Department of Mining and Geology.
 - d) Strict monitoring may be conducted by involving the Police, Forest, and Transportation departments.
 - e) The parking of sand-transporting vehicles within quarry or depot sites during night or odd hours may be restricted.
 - f) On the basis of the report submitted by the Central Pollution Control Board team it is suggested that the Department of Water Resources may refer to "National Framework for Sediment Management, October, 2022" published by the Ministry of Jal Shakti, Government of India, for managing the sediments giving due consideration to environment and ecology.
- 8) That the reply of the Punjab Pollution Control Board is hereby submitted in compliance to order dated 20.05.2024 for kind consideration of the Hon'ble Tribunal.

Submitted by



(Birdevinder Singh)

**Environmental Engineer,
Punjab Pollution Control Board,
Regional Office, Rupnagar**

Date: 24.8.2024

Place: Ropar

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Office of Deputy Commissioner, Rupnagar

(D.R.A Branch)

Office Order :-

As per the directive from the Honorable National Green Tribunal, New Delhi in Original Application No. 553/2024 dated 20-05-2024, a committee is being formed to conduct a site visit. The details of the committee members are as follows:

Sr.no	Name of the Officials/Members	Designated
1	Additional Deputy Commissioner (G), Rupnagar	Chairman
2	Superintendent of Police (D), Rupnagar	Member
3	District Revenue Officer, Rupnagar	Member
4	Divisional Forest Officer, Rupnagar.	Member
5	District Development & Panchayat Officer, Rupnagar	Member
6	Executive Engineer, Drainage-Cum-Mining Division, Sri Anandpur Sahib	Member
7	Environmental Engineer, PPCB, Regional Office Rupnagar	Convener

The Environmental Engineer P.P.C.B. Rupnagar is directed to coordinate with all members mentioned in the letter, including site inspection on 02-07-2024 at 10:30 AM and submit a joint report by 04 -07-2024 at 11:00 AM in any case.

For Deputy Commissioner, Rupnagar.

Endorsement no 4514-20 A.D.R.A-3

Dated 25/06/2024

A copy to:-

1. Additional Deputy Commissioner (G), Rupnagar.
2. Superintendent of Police (D), Rupnagar
3. Executive Engineer, Drainage-Cum-Mining Division, Sri Anandpur Sahib.
4. District Revenue Officer, Rupnagar.
5. Divisional Forest Officer, Rupnagar.
6. District Development & Panchayat Officer, Rupnagar.
7. Environmental Engineer, PPCB, Regional Office Rupnagar

ਪੰਜਾਬ ਪ੍ਰਦੂਸ਼ਣ ਕੰਟਰੋਲ ਬੋਰਡ, ਖੇਤਰੀ ਦਫਤਰ, ਰੂਪਨਗਰ
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BE (charajit)
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pls.

For Deputy Commissioner, Rupnagar.

ਵਾਤਾਵਰਣ ਇੰਜੀਨੀਅਰ
ਭਾਈਰੀ ਨੰ: 1352 ਮਿਤੀ: 28/06/24