

BEFORE THE HONOURABLE NATIONAL GREEN TRIBUNAL
PRINCIPAL BENCH AT NEW DELHI

O.A No.475/2024

IN THE MATTER OF: -

News item titled "*Mountains of plastic are choking the Himalayan States*" appearing in The Hindu dated 04.03.2024

RESPONSE BY WAY OF AFFIDAVIT FOR AND ON BEHALF OF UNION
TERRITORY OF LADAKH—RESPONDENT NO.--6

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Dated:
New Delhi.

**RAJ KUMAR, ANKIT CHOUDHARY, SUMIT
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INDIA NON JUDICIAL

THE ADMINISTRATION OF
UNION TERRITORY OF LADAKH



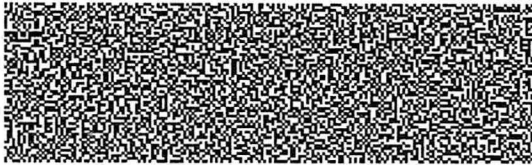
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**BEFORE THE HONOURABLE NATIONAL GREEN TRIBUNAL
PRINCIPAL BENCH AT NEW DELHI**

O A No.475/2024

IN THE MATTER OF: -

News item titled "*Mountains of plastic are choking the Himalayan States*" appearing in The Hindu dated 04.03.2024

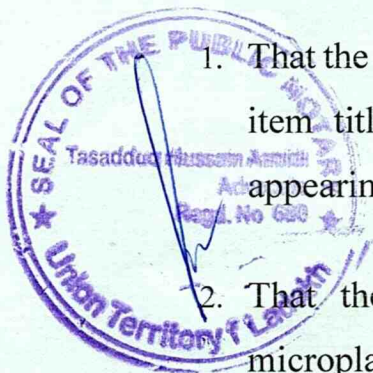
RESPONSE BY WAY OF AFFIDAVIT FOR AND ON BEHALF OF UNION
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HON'BLE SIR,

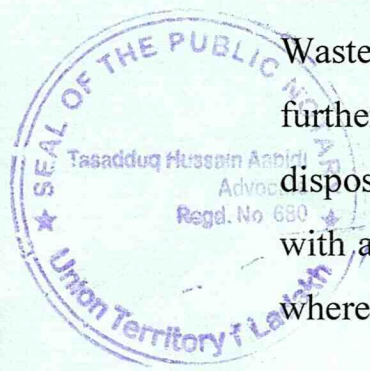
I, B.M Sharma, IFS, working as Member Secretary, Ladakh Pollution Control Committee, UT of Ladakh, having office at Civil Secretariat, Leh-Ladakh, do hereby solemnly affirm and state in my official capacity as under: -

1. That the afore mentioned matter relates to *Suo-motu* cognizance of the news item titled "*Mountains of plastic are choking the Himalayan States*" appearing in 'The Hindu' dated 04.03.2024.

2. That the news item relates to the deposition and accumulation of microplastic in the Himalayan Mountains, rivers, lakes and streams. That as per news article, these microplastics can be trapped in glaciers for a long time and released into rivers during snow melting. The article states that unscientific plastic disposal is causing soil and water pollution in the Indian Himalayan Region and impacting its biodiversity, which is having an adverse impact on the fresh water sources as the communities of downstream depends on that water source. That as per the news item, rapid and unplanned urbanization and changing production and consumption patterns are allegedly responsible for the plastic waste crisis in the Indian Himalayan Region. The article further states that a quantum jump in tourist footfall is another reason for exacerbation of the problem. As per the Himalayan Cleanup waste audit in 2022, 92.7% of trash was plastic with 72% of waste being non-recyclable plastic. The news item states that India has one of the highest mismanaged waste index (MWI), at 98.55%, in the world India is at 4th position. MWI is the gap in waste management capacity and plastic consumption. It further claims that India is merely recycling 12% of its plastic waste (through mechanical recycling).



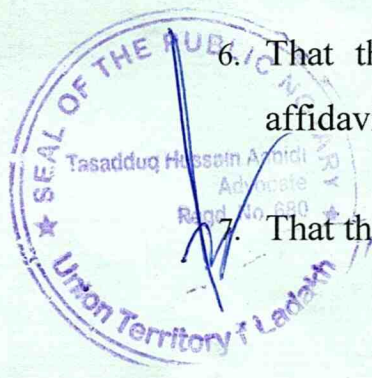
3. That in UT Ladakh, significant steps have been taken by administration to address solid waste management issues including plastic waste. It is further submitted that in urban areas, including Leh and Kargil cities, the solid waste including plastic waste is managed by the respective Municipal Committees. In rural areas, the Project Tsangda initiated by the Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council (LAHDC) in association with the Department of Rural Development, has been actively managing solid/plastic waste. The project aims to collect plastic waste from every rural area/household and bring it to designated processing facilities. Both the Municipal Committees and Project Tsangda are tasked with the collection, segregation, and disposal of solid/plastic waste as per the Solid Waste Management Rules, 2016 and amendments made thereof. It is further submitted that efforts have been made to ensure the scientific disposal of plastic waste as per the Plastic Waste Management Rules-2016, with a focus on reducing plastic waste pollution and promoting recycling wherever possible.
4. That initially, the collected plastic waste was being sent to recycling units outside UT of Ladakh. However, this year, a Plastic recycling unit has been established i.e., M/s Ladakh Recycling Solution at Nimoo Thang-Leh with total capacity of 2 TPD to treat and recycle the plastic waste for the manufacturing of plastic tiles and plastic furniture. The unit holder has already been supplied with 21.65 Tonnes of plastic waste by the Municipal Committee Leh ending August-2024. This development is a significant step toward ensuring that plastic waste is managed more sustainably within the region, reducing transportation costs and promoting the circular economy. Despite the challenging terrain and logistical issues, both the Municipal Committees and the Project Tsangda are making their best efforts to support the environmental sustainability of Ladakh and prevent further damage to fragile ecosystem of this region.
5. That moreover, to foster sustainability and reduce the environmental footprint of plastic waste in the region, the Women Alliance of Ladakh (WAL), a prominent local Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) played a pioneering role in self-imposing ban on plastic carry bags in 1998 before the notification of Plastic Waste Management Rules in 2016. The UT of



Ladakh also imposed ban on Single Use Plastic (SUP) w.e.f. August-2021 with the amendments made in the Plastic Waste Management Rules-2016 which is strictly enforced. It is further submitted that the region has also adopted innovative methods such as using plastic waste in road construction, and about 05 tonnes of plastic wastes have been used in road construction by the Border Roads Organization (BRO) after signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Administration of Union Territory of Ladakh and Project Himank Border Roads Organization (BRO) on 01-03-2023.

6. That the answering respondent crave leave to file further additional affidavit for further information, in future.

7. That the under signed is bound by the orders of the Hon'ble Tribunal.




DEPONENT

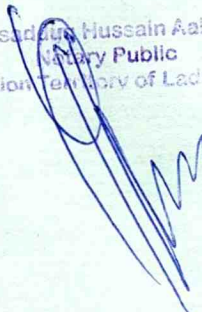
VERIFICATION: -

Verified at Leh on the 14th day of Oct-2024, that the contents of the above affidavit are true and correct on the basis of the record maintained by the Ladakh Pollution Control Committee, UT of Ladakh in its day-to-day affairs and the nothing material has been concealed therefrom or mis-stated.


DEPONENT

Certified that Smriti B.H. Sharma
S/o, D/o, W/o
for Member Secretary LCC
and witnessed by Shanika Wangden
on 14/10/2024
I administered oath to Smriti B.H. Sharma
swore/solemnly affirmed that the contents
of this affidavit & hence adopted

Tasadduq Hussain Aabidi
Advocate Public
Union Territory of Ladakh


14/10/2024