

**BEFORE THE NATIONAL GREEN TRIBUNAL WESTERN
ZONE BENCH, PUNE
ORIGINAL APPLICATION NO 37 OF 2025**

Pushkar Kulkarni)...Applicant

Versus

Pune Municipal Corporation and Ors)...Respondents

INDEX

SR NO	PARTICULARS	PAGE NOS
1	Affidavit in Rejoinder of the Applicant	676-683
2	Annexure A-1 - Copies of the news articles recording the corrupt and criminal actions of two GSDA officers	684
3	Annexure A-2- Copies of the news articles recording the corrupt and criminal actions of two GSDA officers	685-686
4	Annexure A-3 - Copies of news articles recording the issuance of building permissions by the PMRDA on the basis of reports of the GSDA	687-689

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AFFIDAVIT IN REJOINDER OF THE APPLICANT

I, Pushkar Kulkarni, Indian Adult residing at D-901, Kapil Aasamant, Sr No. 124/3+4, Shivshakti Chowk, Pashan Sus Road, Pune - 411021, the Applicant

No. 1 herein do hereby solemnly affirm and declare as under:-

1. I say that I have read the contents of the Affidavit of the Respondent No. 5 dated 18.06.2026 and am familiar with its contents. I say that I am filing the present reply as a limited response to the said affidavit, and more particularly to the Standard Operating Procedure ("SoP") for Regulation, Monitoring and Enforcement of Groundwater Extraction in Pune District annexed to the said Affidavit.
2. At the outset, I say that the SoP is a well-thought out and detailed document for the regulation and monitoring of groundwater extraction and I am grateful for the sincere efforts of the Respondent no. 5 Collector on this issue.
3. I say that the SoP proposed by the Respondent No. 5, particularly the phase 1 mapping and surveying proposed in Chapter/Pillar 1 of the SoP must be undertaken forthwith in the light of the severe water shortage being faced in Pune district.



4. I say that my limited suggestions of improvements to be made to the said SoP is that the procedure laid out at Clause 3.3 of the SoP in relation to Citizen Grievance Mechanism and Whistleblower Protection would be more effective and robust if the following information that is required to be submitted to the Central Ground Water Board as per Guideline No. 4.1, 4.3, 6,7, 9 and 17 of the *Guidelines to Regulate and Control Groundwater Extraction in India* be made accessible to the public on the website of the Respondent No. 9 Central Ground Water Board. The information that the Applicant suggests be noted on the said website is:

- a. Name and contact details of the landowner/occupant/society/company/user
- b. Water quality test report done within the last 30 days as per IS 10500-2012 standard test parameters from a NABL-certified lab.
- c. Address and GPS location not only of bulk water suppliers, but also of all other ground water extraction sites
- d. And additionally, the specific use for which purpose the water is being extracted;
- e. The particulars, including the validity period of an NoC issued to any eligible groundwater extractor.
- f. All planning authorities including the PMC,PCMC, PMRDA as well as government agencies such as the GSDA must also provide groundwater survey reports, water supply undertakings from developers, and building permissions granted have to be published immediately by concerned departments and authorities.



5. I say that the provision of such information on the website of the Respondent No. 9 would enable the public to track and monitor the sources of groundwater extraction forming a part of their lives, particularly when it applies to their housing societies, and take steps to ensure that defaulting extractors, who are falling behind on water quality testing or are over-extracting ground water are unable to continue to do so unchecked.
6. It is further submitted that the configuration of the website of the Respondent no. 9 to display all such data can easily be incorporated in an MIS, when formulated, by the CGWB. It is pertinent to note that the requirement to have an MIS system for compliance monitoring is a requirement under Guideline No. 10(a) of the *Guidelines to Regulate and Control Groundwater Extraction in India*. Vide an RTI reply dated 6.05.2026 received by the Applicant, the CGWA has confirmed that no MIS system currently exists for compliance monitoring. A copy of the RTI reply dated 6.05.2026 has been annexed hereto and marked as **Annexure A-1**.
7. It is pertinent to note, the Respondent No.5, in the process of preparing the present SOP had convened two meetings till date with all the concerned departments, agencies, planning authorities as well as myself. In spite of these meetings and the requests of the Respondent No.5, many of the concerned agencies and line departments have not yet provided the necessary data to the Respondent no. 5 nor have they published the same on their respective websites. This was specifically mentioned in the



meeting held at the Respondent No. 5 on the 14th of May 2026. I therefore say it is necessary for appropriate directions for information and data sharing to be passed by this Hon'ble Tribunal.

8. I further state that it is necessary for the SoP of the Respondent No. 5 and the District Groundwater Helpline, online complaint portal and whatsapp business number should be heavily publicised so that effective participation of the public can play a role in compliance monitoring. I further say that dissemination of information regarding the grievance redressal mechanism and the mandatory 72 hour investigation window is required to be heavily publicised in light of recent news about disturbing incidents of corruption recorded amongst officers of the GSDA in Pune city. Copies of the news articles recording the corrupt and criminal actions of two GSDA officers who were caught accepting bribes to prepare a favourable groundwater survey report for a Builder have been annexed hereto and marked as **Annexure A-2**.

9. It is submitted that geologists from Respondent No.8 The Groundwater Survey and Development Agency have been carrying out surveys upon receiving applications from real estate developers and giving out geological/groundwater survey reports to said developers that are further used to obtain building permissions for residential and commercial projects, especially in the limits of Respondent No. 3 Pune Metropolitan Regional Development Authority. The PMRDA has no authority to grant building permissions based on such survey reports as there is no enabling provision in law that permits such an assessment or acceptance thereof which can make flat purchasers and the public



believe that groundwater will be a reliable and safe source of water to the extent that 135 litres per capita per day will be available for such projects for an estimated life of the building which can be approximately 50 years. Copies of news articles recording the issuance of building permissions by the PMRDA on the basis of reports of the GSDA have been annexed hereto and marked as Annexure A-3.

10. It is pertinent to note that a project with 50 apartments housing 5 persons per apartment entitled to 135 litres per capita per day as per urban area guidelines would require 1,23,18,750 litres annually. Similarly, a project with 500 apartments housing 5 persons per apartment entitled to 135 litres per capita per day as per urban area guidelines would require 3,37,500 litres per day and 12,31,87,500 litres annually.
11. The survey reports of GSDA or any other agency in India cannot guarantee the requisite volume and BIS10500 (drinking water standards) quality standards of water for building permissions to be granted. It is submitted that the effective monitoring of groundwater for such projects must be done as per the true letter and spirit of the *Guidelines to Regulate and Control Groundwater Extraction in India*, which envisages an NoC that is intended to be monitored overtime, and tracking both the levels of groundwater available from any fixed extraction point and the quality of the said ground water. It is pertinent to note that the GSDA is not vested with powers that permits the circumvention of the NoC process to be monitored by the Respondent No. 9 CGWB under the *Guidelines to Regulate and Control Groundwater Extraction in India*. In fact, the Respondent No. 8 was established under the Project Agreement between the



International Development Association and Government of Maharashtra which required that the State shall establish the Groundwater Agency, especially for the development of minor irrigation schemes based on groundwater. As per the agreement, the State Government established the GSDA during the year 1972. It is accordingly submitted that the GSDA should only be permitted to undertake necessary surveying and mapping of groundwater extraction sources such as borewells and digwells, but should not be in a position to facilitate the circumvention of the *Guidelines to Regulate and Control Groundwater Extraction in India* by directly certifying to planning authorities a one-time guarantee of the availability of groundwater for an unlimited future use.

12. Building permissions granted by PMRDA in their jurisdiction based on groundwater surveys has led to significant groundwater exploitation resulting in a crisis for the rural populace that relies heavily on groundwater for domestic use and agriculture. Rural and periurban areas around the cities of Pune, Pimpri, and Chinchwad fall under PMRDA. These areas have considerable forest cover. Large-scale extraction of groundwater for residential and commercial activities is severely impacting this green cover and base flows of rivers.
13. Projects in PMRDA limits that have materialized based on such survey reports of GSDA are unable to meet their daily water demands from groundwater sources developed within their land and have to rely heavily on private tanker suppliers whose source and quality of water is unknown and unregulated. It is common knowledge that these private bulk water tankers supply groundwater extracted from dug wells and borewells which



remain unmonitored and unregulated by the authorities. This is in direct violation of the relevant groundwater laws of the state and country.

14. I accordingly say that the SoP proposed by the Respondent No. 5 must be made binding and enforceable in law, either through an order of this Hon'ble Court or through an executive fiat such as a circular issued by the Respondent no. 5 or a Government Resolution. It is only if this SoP is made binding and enforceable that the issues regarding illegal and unregulated groundwater extraction, including what has been described above within PMRDA limits can be curtailed.
15. It is further necessary that the Respondent No. 8 be directed by this Hon'ble Tribunal not to undertake any ad-hoc Groundwater Surveys and provide certification to projects about the availability of groundwater for any commercial project. The extraction of groundwater must be done in strict compliance with the *Guidelines to Regulate and Control Groundwater Extraction in India* and the SoP prepared by the District Collector.
16. Lastly, it is suggested by the Applicant that the enforcement mechanism suggested in Chapter III/Pillar Three of the SoP will be strengthened and more effective if there is a District Level Groundwater Management Committee, headed by the District Collector, with representation of each of the Municipal Councils and Corporations within the district as well as the Respondent No. 8 GSDA and the Respondent No. 9 CGWB. This Committee should meet at a regular interval of at least once a quarter to oversee the implementation of the present SoP.



17.I am grateful for the intervention of this Hon'ble Tribunal as well as the cooperation of the Respondent Authorities in addressing the grievances raised in this Original Application.



Solemnly affirmed at Pune)

On this ___ day of June 2026)

APPLICANT NO.1

Pushkar Kulkarni

Identified by Me

RONITA BHATTACHARYA BECTOR,

Advocates for the Applicant

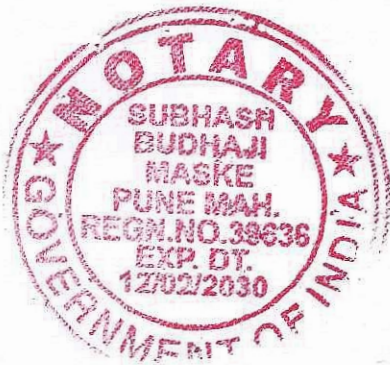
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BEFORE ME



BEFORE ME

SUBHASH B. MASKE
ADVOCATE & NOTARY
GOVT. OF INDIA
PUNE MAHARASHTRA

20 JUN 2026





सं- 17-21/RTI/CGWA/Maharashtra/2026-27-

56

दिनांक: 06 MAY 2026

सेवा मे,

Shri Pushkar Kulkarni,
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Pune, Maharashtra -411021
Email:- pvk927@gmail.com

विषय: सूचना का अधिकार अधिनियम, 2005 के आवेदन-पत्र के संबंध में।

Sir,

This is with reference to your RTI application registration number CGWBD/R/E/26/00158 dated 15.04.2026 received by CPIO, Central Ground Water Authority, New Delhi on 23.04.2026. Point-wise reply to information sought, pertains to CGWA is as under:-

Point No.	Information sought under RTI	Reply
1.	Details of the Management Information System (MIS) system issued under Guideline No. 10 of Central Groundwater Authority Guidelines to Regulate and Control Groundwater Extraction in India (with immediate effect) for the State of Maharashtra	Compliance monitoring is regularly being done by the CGWA at the time of renewal of NOC application, random site inspection and regular interaction with the State/UT ground water authorities.
2.	Provide the URL of this MIS system accessible to the general public.	The Management Information System (MIS) is yet to become operational.

If the reply to the RTI queries is not satisfactory, then appeal against the reply may be made to the first appellate authority within 30 days from the date of receipt reply as per provision at section 19 of the RTI Act 2005, whose details are as under;

Dr. P.K. Naik,
Regional Director & First Appellate Authority,
Central Ground Water Board, Bhujal Bhawan,
NH-IV, Faridabad (Haryana)-121001.

भवदीय,
(विनोद कुमार ढौंडियाल)
06/05/2026

प्रशासक एवं केन्द्रीय जन सूचना अधिकारी

2 city geologists held in ₹2.5L bribery case

Shrinivas Deshpande

shrinivas.deshpande@htlive.com

PUNE: The Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) arrested two officials of the Groundwater Survey and Development Agency (GSDA) - one a senior geologist - in a bribery case on Friday. The ACB laid a trap and took the officials into custody from the GSDA office in Shivajinagar.

The ACB identified the accused as Diwakar Namdev Dhote, 53, a senior geologist (Class 1) residing in Jadhawadi, Chikhali, and Priyanka Sandipan Ghule, 39, a junior geologist (Class 2) residing in Jadhawadi, Moshi. They allegedly demanded a bribe of ₹2.50 lakh from the complainant to provide a groundwater survey report required for the building construction completion certificate.

ACB sources said the complainant, a city-based builder, approached the PMRDA for a building construction completion certificate. PMRDA officials

asked him to submit a groundwater survey report first.

The complainant applied for the report at the GSDA office in Shivajinagar, where Ghule allegedly demanded ₹2.5 lakh for her senior, Dhote. The complainant then approached the ACB Pune and filed a complaint on April 22.

The ACB Pune confirmed that Ghule had sent the complainant to Dhote for negotiations and the deal was finally settled at ₹2 lakh.

On Friday, a team of ACB personnel lay in wait at the GSDA Shivajinagar office and caught Ghule red-handed while accepting the bribe. Following this, both Ghule and Dhote were taken into custody.

A case was registered at Shivajinagar police station under relevant sections of the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988, and the investigation is ongoing. "The action is part of the ongoing efforts to curb corruption in government departments," an ACB officer said.

MAGZTER

2 geologists arrested in graft case

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Pune: The State Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB), Pune, on Friday arrested a senior geologist, Diwakar Dhote, and junior geologist Priyanka Ghule of the Groundwater Survey Development Agency for allegedly accepting a Rs 2 lakh bribe from a builder to issue a groundwater survey report for his project.

Acting on a complaint, a trap was laid at the Shivajinagar office by inspector Suhad Hattekar, during which Ghule was caught accepting the amount on behalf of Dhote in a successful trap operation. The builder had sought a completion certificate from PMRDA, which required the report. Officials said Ghule initially demanded Rs 2.5 lakh, later settled at Rs 2 lakh. Both were arrested.

Expedite process to push permissions, Misal tells PMRDA

Nisha.Nambiar
@timesofindia.com

Pune: Urban development minister **Madhuri Misal** on Wednesday told Pune Metropolitan Region Development Authority (PMRDA) to fast-track preparation of a structural plan and bring it into force within the next 12-18 months to resolve delays in development permissions following the cancellation of the authority's draft development plan (DP).



The directive was issued during a review meeting held at PMRDA's Akurdi headquarters. Misal said the transfer of five approved town planning schemes to PMC was under way. She said state govt would expedite approvals for the remaining 15 proposed schemes. Highlighting their importance, she said the future of PMRDA's proposed inner ring road depended heavily on

these schemes, urging officials to prioritise them.

The minister also directed officials to speed up the formation of a special purpose vehicle for the proposed twin-tunnel project. She further called for a joint meeting between PMRDA and PMC to ensure coordinated planning of the High Capacity Mass Transit Route, the regional ring road and the twin-tunnel project.

She also urged PMRDA to take the initiative in developing an international-standard convention centre without waiting for state funding, saying the project could generate revenue while boosting regional development. To provide interim relief to citizens until the structural plan is finalised, the minister told PMRDA to examine the possibility of granting certain building permissions based on proposed road-planning zones.

RTO CRACKDOWN | 673 tankers found without valid fitness certificates

688

Unfit water tankers ply freely, sparking safety fears in Pune

Ankit Shukla

PUNE

Reckless driving by water tanker drivers and their high-handedness at key locations have left residents frustrated. Due to dependence on private water tankers in the absence of Pune Municipal Corporation's (PMC) water supply, many operators are violating traffic and Regional Transport Office (RTO) norms.

According to the information received, a recent fatal accident on the Bibwewadi-Kondhwa road, where a speeding tanker claimed the life of a hotel businessman, has raised alarm. In the wake of the incident, Pune RTO data revealed that as many as 673 tankers are operating on city roads without valid fitness certificates.

As per the RTO records, out of 2,094 water tankers, around 391 are unfit, while among 2,292 goods transport tankers,



282 have expired fitness certificates. This brings the total number of technically unfit tankers to 673 out of 4,386 registered vehicles, raising serious concerns about public safety.

With the onset of summer, Pune witnesses a surge in tanker movement due to increased water demand.

However, many vehicles operate without mandatory inspections, posing a significant risk to commuters.

Residents highlighted reckless driving and rule violations by tanker operators. Sandesh Borate, a resident of Kondhwa, said drivers often indulge in rash driving to make more trips and allegedly

New tanker drivers must undergo a fitness test every two years for the first eight years, and annually thereafter

— **Swapnil Bhosale,**
Deputy RTO

threaten those who complain. He added that areas like Kondhwa Budruk, Yewalewadi and Handewadi are heavily dependent on tanker supply.

Ganesh Bhonde from Lullanagar said Gangadham Chowk has become a major tanker movement point, with several accidents reported. Nayan Kharabe from Undri noted that drivers frequently jump signals and violate lane rules, especially near Raheja Circle.

Following repeated complaints, RTO officials have launched a special inspection

drive. Checks include tyres, brakes, lights, engine performance and PUC compliance, along with verification of documents and illegal modifications.

Swapnil Bhosale, Deputy RTO, emphasised that road safety is the administration's top priority. As per regulations, new tanker drivers must undergo a fitness test every two years for the first eight years, and annually thereafter. Mechanical failures, particularly brake failure or loss of steering control in older tankers, are among the leading causes of serious accidents.

Despite repeated appeals, many tanker operators have failed to comply. The RTO has now warned of strict action against violators, including penalties and legal consequences, as special enforcement teams are set to be deployed across Pune to ensure compliance and safeguard citizens.

Builder hands over flats sans OC

Sewage from Choviswadi project diverted into civic playground, spreading stench and health hazards

Vikas Shinde

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A shocking case of blatant violation of building norms has surfaced in Choviswadi, Chikhali, where a developer handed over possession of flats without securing the mandatory Occupancy Certificate. Worse, instead of arranging drainage facilities within the project premises, the builder diverted sewage into a municipal playground reserved for sports. This has led to foul odour in the locality and raised serious health concerns.

The incident involves Vaishnavi Promoters and Developers' 'Shubh Shagun' housing project. According to civic officials, the builder was required to provide proper drainage facilities within the project site. However, sewage was illegally channelled into a tank located on land reserved by the Pimpri-Chinchwad Municipal Corporation for a playground. This misuse of public property has drawn sharp criticism and prompted the civic construction and drainage departments to issue a notice to the developer, seeking an explanation.

Residents have complained of stench and unhygienic conditions, accusing the builder of endangering public health. Officials confirmed that no scientific arrangement for sewage disposal was in place, and the diversion into municipal land amounted to misuse of government property. The civic body has taken serious note of the violation and initiated action against the developer.

No completion certificate

According to UDCPR rules, once a building is completed, it is mandatory to obtain a Completion Certificate and an Occupancy Certificate from the municipal corporation. However, Vaishnavi Promoters have violated these rules



The site in Choviswadi where the rules have been violated

and have not yet obtained the Occupancy Certificate. Despite this, they have handed over possession of flats to buyers, and residents have already started living there. Granting possession and starting use without the required certificate is a serious violation of UDCPR regulations.

Civic officials inspect site

After receiving complaints, officials from the drainage and construction departments of Pimpri-Chinchwad Municipal Corporation inspected the site. The drainage department's notice stated that public health has been endangered and that reserved land has been misused. If the illegal sewage line is not removed immediately, strict action will follow. The construction department has also issued a show-cause notice to the builder for allowing the use of flats without an Occupancy Certificate, indicating penal action.

Public anger

Due to the builder's actions, the municipal playground area has been polluted. By handing over flats without proper drainage facilities, residents are likely to face difficulties in future. Locals have demanded that the administration should not stop at issuing notices but take immediate action to disconnect the illegal drainage connection.

"Due to sewage from the drainage line of the 'Shubh Shagun' building on Dattnagar Road, farmers nearby are suffering. The builder has carried out TDR of the playground reserved land, which is now recorded in the name of the municipal corporation. Yet he has built an unauthorised drainage tank there. This sewage has created a public health issue. Possession of flats has also been given without a completion certificate. Strict action must be taken against the builder," said Balasaheb Molak, a social worker.



The sewage water has been let off into the adjoining civic plot

“ Possession of flats must be given only after obtaining the completion certificate. Without transferring MHADA flats, you have handed over possession and started use, which is a serious violation of the conditions. Permission was granted with the condition that no sale should take place until the 18-metre DP road is completed. This condition has also been violated. Hence, a show-cause notice has been issued.

— Sunil Bhagwani, Deputy City Engineer, Construction Department, PCMC

Encroachment on municipal land

To dispose of sewage from the project, the builder ignored the approved plan. Instead of constructing a drainage tank on his own plot, he built it on adjoining municipal reserved land. Such unauthorised construction on government land is a serious offence, creating public health and environmental problems.

PCMC in action mode

For handing over possession without an Occupancy Certificate and constructing an unauthorised drainage tank on civic land, the construction and drainage departments have served a strongly worded notice to

the builder. The notice orders the removal of the drainage safety tank built on municipal land, submission of a written explanation, and clarification on why possession was given in violation of building rules.

"Possession of flats must be given only after obtaining the completion certificate. Without transferring MHADA flats, you have handed over possession and started use, which is a serious violation of the conditions. Permission was granted with the condition that no sale should take place until the 18-metre DP road is completed. This condition has also been violated. Hence, a show-cause notice has been issued," said Sunil Bhagwani, Deputy City Engineer, Construction Department, PCMC.