

**BEFORE THE HON'BLE NATIONAL GREEN TRIBUNAL**  
**PRINCIPAL BENCH, NEW DELHI**  
**Original Application No. 1340 OF 2024**

**In the matter of:**

News Item titled "Revealed: Real reason behind high pollution in Delhi and its not stubble burning or vehicles the main culprit is ....." appearing in India Today dated 19.11.2024

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**N.D.H.O.: 19.3.2025**

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**ADV. ANUJ BHANDARI**

On behalf of Central Pollution Control Board  
i-34,LGF, Jangpura Ext. New Delhi-14

Email: [anujbhandari123@gmail.com](mailto:anujbhandari123@gmail.com)

9873722187

Date: 18.03.2025

Place: Delhi

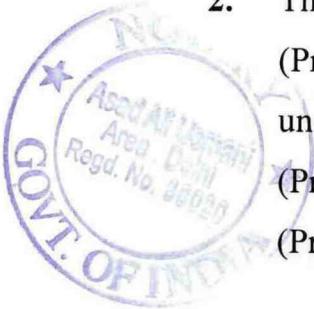
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**In the matter of:**

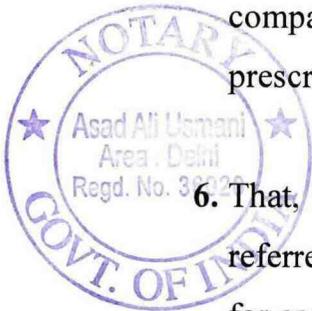
News Item titled "Revealed: Real reason behind high pollution in Delhi and its not stubble burning or vehicles the main culprit is ....." appearing in India Today dated 19.11.2024

**REPLY ON BEHALF OF RESPONDENT NO. 2,  
CENTRAL POLLUTION CONTROL BOARD ("CPCB")**

1. That Hon'ble NGT vide Order dated 27.11.2024 and Notice dated 12.12.2024 impleaded the Central Pollution Control Board (hereinafter referred as CPCB) as Respondent no. 02 in the instant matter. Thereby, the reply is made in succeeding paragraphs.
2. That, CPCB is a statutory Board constituted under Section 3 of The Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974. It performs the functions under The Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974, The Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981, and The Environment (Protection) Act, 1986.
3. That, the above referred news item relates to Delhi's persistent air pollution crisis, with the Air Quality Index (AQI) in the capital reaching an alarming 488, falling under the "Severe Plus" category. As per the article, a recent study by the Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air (CREA) has revealed that the thermal power plants in **Delhi-NCR** produce 16 times more pollution (in terms of **SO<sub>2</sub> emission**) than the pollution caused by stubble burning (SO<sub>2</sub> emission).



4. That, there are 4 coal based independent thermal power plants located in **Delhi-NCR** comprising of 14 units with combined total installed capacity 5,350 MW, as under:
- i. Mahatma Gandhi TPS, Jhajjar, Haryana (2×660 MW),
  - ii. Indira Gandhi TPS, Jhajjar, Haryana (3×500 MW),
  - iii. Panipat TPS, Panipat, Haryana (1×210 MW + 2×250 MW),  
and
  - iv. Dadri TPS, Gautambudhh Nagar, Uttar Pradesh (4×210 MW + 2×490 MW).
5. The parameter SO<sub>2</sub> is being monitored in 29 cities across Delhi-NCR. Annual average concentration data of SO<sub>2</sub> parameter monitored at these cities from 2021 to 2023 (three years) is attached at Annexure-I. The data reveals that the annual average concentration of SO<sub>2</sub> ranged from 5 µg/m<sup>3</sup> to 39 µg/m<sup>3</sup>, as compared to the annual average concentration limit (i.e. 50.0 µg/m<sup>3</sup>) prescribed in National Ambient Air Quality Standards -2009.
6. That, the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (hereinafter referred as MoEF&CC), Govt. of India, has notified new emission standards for coal or lignite based thermal power plants vide notification no. S.O. 3305 (E) on 07.12.2015. The notification dated 07.12.2015 has been amended vide notifications dated 31.03.2021, 05.09.2022, and 30.12.2024, prescribing category-wise (Category A, B, and C) extended time limits for implementation of the new emission standards by coal or lignite based thermal power plants based on their location. The time limits for compliance of the new emission standards for Category A, B, and C plants as per the above-referred amendment notifications are as below (copy of the above-referred notifications are attached at **Annexure-I**):

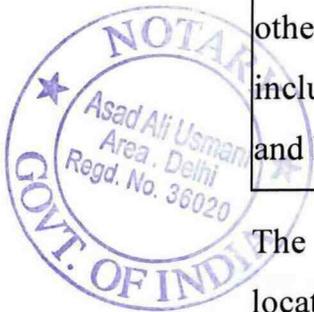


Category	Timelines for compliance of emission standards	
	Other than SO <sub>2</sub> emission parameter (PM, NO <sub>x</sub> , Hg) (as per Notification dated 30.03.2021)	SO <sub>2</sub> parameter (as per Notification dated 30.12.2024)
<b>Category A</b> (Plants within 10 km radius of NCR or cities having million plus population)	Up to 31.12.2022	Up to 31.12.2027
<b>Category B</b> (Plants within 10 km radius of non-attainment cities or critically polluted areas)	Up to 31.12.2023	Up to 31.12.2028
<b>Category C</b> (Plants other than those included in Category A and B)	Up to 31.12.2024	Up to 31.12.2029

The above referred 4 coal based thermal power plants, which are located within 10 km radius of Delhi-NCR, come under Category A.

#### 7. Status of compliance of the coal based thermal power plants located in Delhi-NCR

- That, all the 14 units of these 4 coal based thermal power plants located within 10 km radius of Delhi-NCR have reported compliance with the applicable new emission standards (i.e. for emission parameters other than SO<sub>2</sub>) for which the prescribed time limit was up to December 31, 2022.



- That, to comply with the new emission standards of SO<sub>2</sub> parameter by the prescribed time limit i.e. up to December 31, 2027, 10 out of the 14 units have installed SO<sub>2</sub> control measures (wet/dry FGD), 1 unit has reported that the implementation of SO<sub>2</sub> control measures (wet FGD) will be completed tentatively by April 2025, and the remaining 3 units (of Panipat TPS, Haryana) are under process of implementation of FGD.
- That, CPCB, vide letters dated 30.09.2022, 20.01.2023, 15.05.2023, has requested Haryana SPCB and Uttar Pradesh SPCB to check and ensure compliance of the applicable new emission standards by the coal based thermal power plants in Delhi-NCR.

8. That the above statements are true and correct to my knowledge and belief and based on information derived from official records which I believe to be correct.

9. That in view of above, it is respectfully prayed that this Answering Respondent No. 2 will abide any order(s)/direction(s) passed by this Hon'ble Tribunal.



(Nazimuddin)  
Scientist 'F'

Central Pollution Control Board



**BEFORE THE HON'BLE NATIONAL GREEN TRIBUNAL  
PRINCIPAL BENCH, NEW DELHI  
Original Application No. 1340 OF 2024**

**In the matter of:**

News Item titled "Revealed: Real reason behind high pollution in Delhi and its not stubble burning or vehicles the main culprit is ....." appearing in India Today dated 19.11.2024

**AFFIDAVIT**

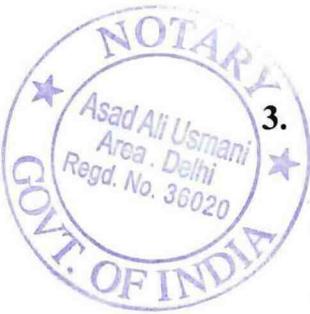
I, **Nazimuddin**, working as Scientist 'F' in Central Pollution Control Board, Parivesh Bhawan, East Arjun Nagar, Delhi, the Respondent No. 2 in the above matter, do hereby solemnly affirm, declare on oath and state as under: -

1. That I, the deponent herein is well conversant with the facts and circumstances of the present case on the basis of the information derived from the official records, and hence, I am competent to verify, sign and swear this affidavit on behalf of the Respondent CPCB.
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 correct on the basis of the record maintained during ordinary course of business of CPCB and available records and documents and the contents of the same are read over and explained to me and are not repeated herein for the sake of brevity.



**DEPONENT**

**नाज़िमउद्दीन / Nazimuddin**  
वैज्ञानिक 'एफ' / Scientist 'F'  
**केंद्रीय प्रदूषण नियंत्रण बोर्ड**  
**Central Pollution Control Board**  
(पर्यावरण, वन एवं जलवायु परिवर्तन मंत्रालय, भारत सरकार)  
(Mo Environment, Forest And Climate Change, Govt. of India)  
परिवेश भवन, पूर्वी अर्जुन नगर, दिल्ली-110032  
Parivesh Bhawan, East Arjun Nagar, Delhi-110032

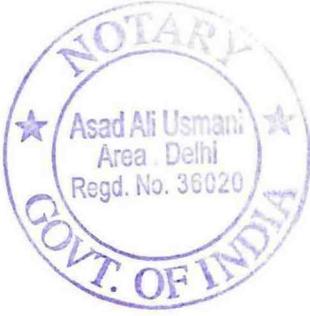


## VERIFICATION

Verified at Delhi on this day of ~~1~~ 8 MAR 2025 that the contents of the above reply are correct and true on the basis of the records of the case as mentioned in the day-to-day affairs of the CPCB. Nothing has been concealed therefrom or mis- stated.

*Log*

**DEPONENT**



ATTESTED  
*A. A. Usmani*  
NOTARY PUBLIC DELHI (INDIA)

1 8 MAR 2025

नाज़िम उद्दौल / Nazimuddin  
वैज्ञानिक 'एफ' / Scientist 'F'  
केंद्रीय प्रदूषण नियंत्रण बोर्ड  
Central Pollution Control Board  
(पर्यावरण, वन एवं जलवायु परिवर्तन मंत्रालय, भारत सरकार)  
(M/o Environment, Forest And Climate Change, Govt. of India)  
परिवेश भवन, पूर्वी अर्जुन नगर, दिल्ली-110032  
Parivesh Bhawan, East Arjun Nagar, Delhi-110032

## Annexure-I

Annual Average Concentration ( $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ ) of  $\text{SO}_2$  in Delhi-NCR (2021-2023)

Sl. No.	State / Union Territory	City	SO2 Annual average ( $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ )		
			2021	2022	2023
1	Delhi (UT)	Delhi	10	9	8
2	Haryana	Bahadurgarh	13	11	9
3	Haryana	Ballabgarh	9	20	11
4	Haryana	Bhiwani	13	15	11
5	Haryana	Charkhi Dadri	5	7	9
6	Haryana	Dharuhera	18	10	7
7	Haryana	Faridabad	10	15	15
8	Haryana	Gurgaon	6	7	12
9	Haryana	Jind	10	8	8
10	Haryana	Karnal	26	11	22
11	Haryana	Mandikhera	15	13	19
12	Haryana	Manesar	8	13	10
13	Haryana	Narnaul	7	5	13
14	Haryana	Palwal	10	5	9
15	Haryana	Panipat	39	23	11
16	Haryana	Rohtak	10	15	9
17	Haryana	Sonipat	9	12	17
18	Rajasthan	Alwar	12	13	15
19	Rajasthan	Bharatpur	10	7	8
20	Rajasthan	Bhiwadi	24	18	14
21	Uttar Pradesh	Baghpat	13	21	19
22	Uttar Pradesh	Bulandshahr	15	14	15
23	Uttar Pradesh	Ghaziabad	16	16	14
24	Uttar Pradesh	Greater Noida	12	17	13
25	Uttar Pradesh	Hapur	13	12	23
26	Uttar Pradesh	Khurja	22	20	36
27	Uttar Pradesh	Meerut	15	15	11
28	Uttar Pradesh	Muzaffarnagar	19	15	16
29	Uttar Pradesh	Noida	13	17	16

Item No. 03

Court No. 1

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

Original Application No. 1340/2024

News Item titled “Revealed: Real reason behind high pollution in Delhi and its not stubble burning or vehicles the main culprit is .....” appearing in India Today dated 19.11.2024

Date of hearing: 27.11.2024

**CORAM: HON’BLE MR. JUSTICE PRAKASH SHRIVASTAVA, CHAIRPERSON  
HON’BLE MR. JUSTICE ARUN KUMAR TYAGI, JUDICIAL MEMBER  
HON’BLE DR. A. SENTHIL VEL, EXPERT MEMBER**

**ORDER**

1. This original application is registered *suo-motu* on the basis of the news item titled “Revealed: Real reason behind high pollution in Delhi and its not stubble burning or vehicles the main culprit is .....” appearing in India Today dated 19.11.2024.

2. The matter relates Delhi’s persistent air pollution crisis, with the Air Quality Index (AQI) in the capital reaching an alarming 488, falling under the ‘severe plus’ category. As per the article, a recent study by the Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air (CREA) has revealed that thermal power plants in the region are responsible for emitting 16 times more air pollution than the pollution caused by stubble burning.

3. The news item highlights that the study estimates that coal-fired thermal power plants in the NCR released a staggering 281 kilotons of sulfur dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>) annually. In comparison, crop burning, which is often cited as a major source of pollution, emitted 17.8 kilotons of SO<sub>2</sub> from the burning of 8.9 million tons of stubble. Furthermore, the weather conditions in Delhi are exacerbating the pollution crisis. Calm winds and

dropping temperatures have hindered the dispersal of pollutants, trapping dust, smoke, and other harmful particles in the air. These conditions, often referred to as "cold air traps," cause pollutants like stubble smoke to linger over Delhi and surrounding areas, significantly worsening air quality.

4. The above matter indicates violation of the Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981 and the Environment Protection Act, 1986.

5. The news item raises substantial issues relating to compliance with the environmental norms and implementation of the provisions of scheduled enactment.

6. The power of the Tribunal to take up the matter *suo-motu* has been recognized by the Hon'ble Supreme Court in the matter of "*Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai vs. Ankita Sinha & Ors.*" reported in 2021 SCC Online SC 897.

7. Hence, we implead the following as respondents in the matter:

**i. Member Secretary, Delhi Pollution Control Committee (DPCC)**

3rd Floor, ISBT Building, Kashmere Gate,  
Delhi-110006

**ii. Member Secretary, Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB)**

Parivesh Bhawan, East Arjun Nagar,  
Delhi-110032

**iii. Member Secretary, Punjab State Pollution Control Board**

Head Office, Vatavaran Bhawan, Punjab Pollution Control Board, Nabha Road, Patiala – 147 201

**iv. Uttar Pradesh Pollution Control Board**

Building No. TC-12V, Vibhuti Khand, Gomti Nagar, Lucknow  
– 226010

**v. Rajasthan Pollution Control Board**

4, Jhalana Institutional Area, Jhalana Doongri, Jaipur – 302  
004, Rajasthan, India

**vi. Haryana State Pollution Control Board**

C-11, Sector – 6, Panchkula – 134 109,  
Haryana, India

**vii. Director, Commission for Air Quality Management in  
National Capital Region**

17<sup>th</sup> floor, STC Building, Jawahar Vyapar Bhawan, Tolstoy  
Road, HC Mathur Lane, New Delhi- 110001

**ii. Secretary, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate  
Change**

Indira Paryavaran Bhawan Jorbagh Road,  
New Delhi – 110 003.

8. Issue notice to the above respondents for filing their response/reply by way of affidavit at least one week before the next date of hearing. If any respondent directly files the reply without routing it through his advocate then the said respondent will remain virtually present to assist the Tribunal.

9. List on 19.03.2025.

Prakash Shrivastava, CP

Arun Kumar Tyagi, JM

Dr. A. Senthil Vel, EM

November 27, 2024  
Original Application No. 1340/2024  
A..



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**News Item titled “Revealed: Real reason behind high pollution in Delhi and its not stubble burning or vehicles the main culprit is .....” appearing in India Today dated 19.11.2024 O.A. 1340/2024**

1 message

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**dhanenjy Pandey** <dpandey8376@gmail.com>

Tue, Mar 18, 2025 at 2:17 PM

To: member-secretary@rpcb.nic.in, mscb.cpcb@nic.in, dpcc.delhi@nic.in, msppcb@gmail.com, feedback@uppcb.com

Reply on behalf of Respondent No. CPCB. Advance copy supply to the other side Respondents Advs. this case. File attached herewith.

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 **REPLY 1340.pdf**  
2023K