

BEFORE THE HON'BLE NATIONAL GREEN TRIBUNAL  
PUNE (WZ) BENCH, PUNE

ORIGINAL APPLICATION NO.16 OF 2025 (WZ)

IN THE MATTER OF:

Kanaiyalal Vijayshankar Rajgor

.....Applicant

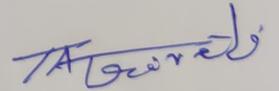
Versus

Union of India & Ors.

.....Respondents

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Filed For and on behalf of  
GUJARAT POLLUTION CONTROL BOARD



(T.A. Trivedi)

Regional Officer

Place: Palanpur

Date: 27/06/25

**BEFORE THE NATIONAL GREEN TRIBUNAL  
WESTERN ZONE BENCH, PUNE**

[Through Physical Hearing (with Hybrid Option)]

**ORIGINAL APPLICATION NO.16 OF 2025 (WZ)**

Kanaiyalal Vijayshankar Rajgor

... **Applicant**

**Versus**

Union of India & Ors.

... **Respondents**

Date of Hearing : 05.02.2025

**CORAM : HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE DINESH KUMAR SINGH, JUDICIAL MEMBER  
HON'BLE DR. VIJAY KULKARNI, EXPERT MEMBER**

Applicant : Mr. Deepak Dhingra, Advocate

**ORDER**

1. This Original Application has been filed with the prayers that a direction may be issued to all five respondents (Government Authorities) to take action to remove all illegal encroachments in the Great Rann of Kachchh (GRK) and Little Rann of Kachchh (LRK), where illegal pits have been dug and restore the area so that natural water of river Luni flows uninterrupted.
2. The applicant is claiming to be an environmentalist, who resides in the area where this activity of digging the pits is going on. It is stated that illegal salt pits and bore wells have been dug approximately 200 feet deep in the GRK, particularly within the riverbed of Luni river. These encroachers are dealing in the business of extraction of salt and in the process, they have obstructed the river's natural flow by constructing mud embankments. These barriers are as high as 15 feet to prevent water from reaching the LRK, which is home to the critically endangered Wild Life Sanctuary. It is also stated that similar encroachments were done in the past in the year 2014, which prompted the applicant to file an application before the Collector and pursuant to that, these encroachments had been removed, but they have again started encroaching illegally in GRK. The river Luni enters the GRK

area, which forms part of Banaskantha and Patan districts of Gujarat. Prior to the encroachment, in the desert areas of Banas Kantha and Patan districts there was a natural flowing water stream known as VOKADA, which flowed from East to West. These streams have now been obstructed by these encroachers. The water of river Luni serves as primary water source for Sighada and Chhansara Dams in Patan District, which is vital for the wildlife and farmers living in that region, situated in GRK and LRK.

3. When we enquired from the learned counsel for the applicant as to where is the proof of pits having been dug and encroachment done by the persons, he drew our attention to page 40 of the paper-book, which is a satellite imagery, which shows points 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 and also discloses the location of Sidhada Dam and Chanasra Dam and by black colour pits are indicated therein, which are obstructing the flow of water of river Luni. Learned counsel states that the applicant is not able to find out the names of these encroachers. Therefore, it would be appropriate that the Government Authorities should be directed to conduct a survey and find out as to who are the persons conducting these activities, resulting into damage to the natural flow of the river.

4. We find that the substantial question pertaining to environment is made out in the present case. Therefore, we admit this Original Application and direct the Registry to issue notice to the respondents, returnable within four weeks.

5. We deem it appropriate to constitute a Joint Committee comprising one member each of the Gujarat Pollution Control Board (GPCB), District Collector, Kuchchh and Central Ground Water Authority/Board and the GPCB shall be the nodal agency of the said Committee, with a direction to visit the site in question and find out as to who are these persons who are allegedly doing illegal digging of pits and creating obstruction in natural flow of river Luni. While visiting the site in question, the Joint Committee shall issue a notice to the applicant, directing him to accompany them during the visit on the date and time to be fixed by the Committee, for indicating the

place/s where these activity is going on. The Committee's report shall be submitted to this Tribunal by the GPCB being nodal agency of the Committee, within a period of one month, by e-mail at [ngt-pune@gov.in](mailto:ngt-pune@gov.in) preferably in the form of searchable PDF/OCR Support PDF and not in the form of Image PDF.

6. A copy of this order shall be served upon all the members of the Joint Committee by the GPCB for compliance as above.

7. The applicant is directed to provide copies of the Original Application and annexures thereto to the respondents, within a week.

8. The applicant is also directed to take necessary steps for service of notice upon the respondents by both ways and also through available e-mail.

9. Put up this matter for next consideration on 28.03.2025.

**Dinesh Kumar Singh, JM**

**Dr. Vijay Kulkarni, EM**

February 05, 2025  
ORIGINAL APPLICATION NO.16/2025 (WZ)  
npj

Item No.6

(Pune Bench)

**BEFORE THE NATIONAL GREEN TRIBUNAL  
WESTERN ZONE BENCH, PUNE**

[THROUGH PHYSICAL HEARING (WITH HYBRID OPTION)]

**ORIGINAL APPLICATION NO.16 OF 2025 (WZ)  
(Earlier Dy. No. 2704105009092024)**

Kanaiyalal Vijayshankar Rajgor

.....Applicant

**Versus**

Union of India &amp; Ors.

....Respondents

Date of hearing: 24.04.2025

**CORAM: HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE DINESH KUMAR SINGH, JUDICIAL MEMBER  
HON'BLE DR. VIJAY KULKARNI, EXPERT MEMBER**

Applicant : Mr. Aastik Dhingra, Advocate  
Respondents : Ms. Manvi Damle, Advocate h/f  
Mr. Maulik Nanavati, Advocate for R-4/GPCB

**ORDER**

1. From the side of applicant, learned counsel Mr. Aastik Dhingra has appeared, who has filed service affidavit, as per which service of notice upon all the respondents is found to be sufficient

2. From the side of Respondent No.4- GPCB, learned counsel Ms. Manvi Damle, holding brief of learned counsel Mr. Maulik Nanavati, has appeared before us, who has got the matter preponed today for a direction to be issued to the effect that the Joint Committee, which had been constituted by the previous order of this Tribunal, must include the District Collector, Patan and District Collector, Banaskantha, request of which was made by her through e-mail dated 22.04.2025 and a copy of the same is said to have been served upon learned counsel for the applicant, who has no objection for the same. We accordingly modify our

order dated 05.02.2025, by which we had constituted a Joint Committee and now direct addition of these two District Collectors that they shall be the members of the Joint Committee from now onwards and report shall be submitted before the next date of hearing.

3. Put up this matter for further consideration on 04.07.2025.

**Dinesh Kumar Singh, JM**

**Dr. Vijay Kulkarni, EM**

April 24, 2025

ORIGINAL APPLICATION NO.16 OF 2025 (WZ)

(Earlier Dy. No. 2704105009092024)

P.Kr

## District Banaskantha.

Joint Committee Site Inspection Report of Illegal Encroachments in the Great Rann of Kachchh (GRK) and Little Rann of Kachchh (LRK), where illegal pits have been dug and restore the area so that natural water of river Luni flows uninterrupted in District Banaskantha vide dated 14.05.2025.

Site Inspection Report of Illegal Encroachments In the Great Rann of Kachchh (GRK) and Little Rann of Kachchh (LRK), pursuant to the Hon'ble NGT orders dated 05.02.2025 & 24.04.2025 in District Banaskantha

- The matter pertains to Original Application No. 16/2025 (WZ), filed by Shri Kanaiyalal Vijayshankar Rajgor Vs Union of India & others before the Hon'ble NGT Western Zone Bench, Pune, concerning illegal encroachments in the Great Rann of Kachchh (GRK) and Little Rann of Kachchh (LRK), where pits have been dug illegally. The plea seeks restoration of the area to ensure the natural flow of the Luni River remains uninterrupted.

- The petitioner has submitted to the Hon'ble NGT that illegal salt pits and bore wells-approximately 200 feet deep-have been dug in the GRK, particularly within the Luni riverbed. The encroachers involved in salt extraction activities have obstructed the river's natural flow by constructing mud embankments as high as 15 feet, deliberately preventing water from reaching the LRK, which houses a critically endangered Wildlife Sanctuary. The petitioner also brought to the Hon'ble NGT's notice that similar encroachments had been removed in 2014; however, illegal activities have since resumed. The Luni River enters the GRK, covering parts of Banaskantha and Patan districts of Gujarat. Before these encroachments, the desert areas of Banaskantha and Patan were traversed by a natural stream known as Vokada, flowing from East to West. These natural streams have now been blocked due to encroachment. The water from the Luni River is a crucial source for the Sighada and Chhansara Dams in Patan District, which are essential for both wildlife and agriculture in the GRK and LRK regions.

- The Hon'ble NGT Western Zone Bench, Pune, constituted a Joint Committee comprising representatives from the Gujarat Pollution Control Board (GPCB), District Collector - Patan, District Collector - Banaskantha, and the Central Ground Water Authority/Board. The GPCB was designated as the nodal agency per the orders dated 05.02.2025 & 24.04.2025. In accordance with its role, GPCB forwarded copies of the Hon'ble NGT's order to all committee members.

- Pursuant to the Hon'ble NGT's order, a joint committee meeting was convened on 06.05.2025 at the office of the District Collector, Banaskantha, to deliberate on the matter and finalize the date for site inspection. It was unanimously decided to conduct the inspection on 14.05.2025. The Hon'ble NGT had directed the Joint Committee to notify the petitioner and ensure his presence at the site during inspection, to help identify the exact locations of the alleged activities. Accordingly, GPCB informed Shri Kanaiyalal Vijayshankar Rajgor, the petitioner, via email and telephone about the site visit. The petitioner consented to the proposed date and time.

- On 14.05.2025, officials from GPCB, the Sub-Divisional Magistrate (SDM) and his team (representing the District Collector - Banaskantha), a representative from CGWA, and the petitioner, Shri Kanaiyalal Vijayshankar Rajgor, visited the identified site in compliance with the Hon'ble NGT's directive.

- The committee, along with the petitioner, first arrived at the location indicated (Lat: 24.009184°N, Long: 71.279041°E) in Village Boru, Taluka Vav, District Banaskantha.

- As concluded by the Sub-Divisional Magistrate of Sulgam, the land in question is unsurveyed and barren, with no salt pan leases granted. No formal survey has been conducted by the competent authority for this particular land area.

- The activities carried out by these encroachers involve the following steps: first, borewell water is extracted into salt pans and allowed to evaporate under sunlight. As the water evaporates, salinity increases until salt crystallizes and forms a surface crust. This salt is then collected and transported to manufacturers for further processing.

- During the inspection, a large number of salt pans were identified at the site. It was confirmed that illegal salt pits, bunds, and bore wells had been excavated by the encroachers. They had obstructed the river's

natural flow by constructing mud embankments ranging from 4 to 15 feet in height, depending on the requirement. The exact depth of the bore wells could not be ascertained. A large number of vehicles such as dumpers and JCBs were observed at the site, and loading/unloading of salt was actively underway.

- The representative from CGWA confirmed that no "No Objection Certificate" had been obtained for groundwater extraction.
- According to the Regional Officer, salt pan manufacturing falls under the 'white' industrial category as defined by the Central Pollution Control Board; hence, CTE/CTO (Consent to Establish/Operate) are not required from the Pollution Control Board.
- It was observed that the Luni River is seasonal, and the inspection coincided with the peak of summer, during which the riverbed was completely dry. Consequently, the committee could not identify the exact width or span of the riverbed.
- The Joint Committee could not access the full extent of the area due to slippery and inaccessible terrain. The site had no grid electricity connection; the operators were generating electricity through solar panels.
- Following the directives of the District Collector - Banaskantha, the SDM of Suigam undertook prompt measures to remove the said encroachments, bunds, and salt pans. The SDM submitted a detailed report of the operation to the District Collector. The report includes the following actions:
  - On 12/06/2025, the removal of salt pits and bore wells in the desert region of Boru village commenced using 3 JCBs and 3 loader machines under the supervision of the Mamlatdar - Suigam and his team.

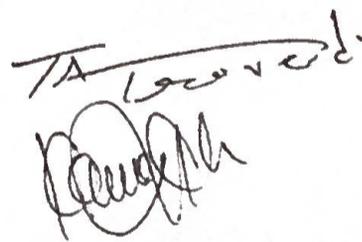
- On 12/06/2025, approximately 3 sq. km of encroachments were cleared in the desert area of Boru village (coordinates: Latitude 24.032567084563233, Longitude 71.29379281478892).
- On 13/06/2025, an additional 4 sq. km of encroachments were removed from the same village area (coordinates: Latitude 24.033574597817967, Longitude 71.29379281478892).
- On 14/06/2025, about 7 sq. km of encroachments were cleared (coordinates: Latitude 24.087204864811866, Longitude 71.2470235940049).
- However, on the night of 14/06/2025, heavy rainfall occurred in the said area, necessitating a temporary halt to the encroachment removal operation. The terrain became highly slippery and inaccessible due to the rain, compounded by the absence of proper road connectivity and geographic constraints. Access roads to the desert region of Boru village were blocked, making further activity unfeasible.
- As reported by the SDM - Suigam, the encroachment removal drive will resume in campaign mode as soon as weather and terrain conditions permit, and will continue until all remaining illegal structures are removed.

Date: 14/05/2025

Regional Officer - Gujarat Pollution Control Board

Representative - Central Ground Water Authority

District Collector & Magistrate - Banaskantha



## District Patan.

Joint Committee Site Inspection Report of Illegal Encroachments in the Great Rann of Kachchh (GRK) and Little Rann of Kachchh (LRK), where illegal pits have been dug and restore the area so that natural water of river Luni flows uninterrupted in District Patan vide dated 14.05.2025.

Site Inspection Report of Illegal Encroachments in the Great Rann of Kachchh (GRK) and Little Rann of Kachchh (LRK), with respect to the Hon'ble NGT order dated 05.02.2025 & 24.04.2025 in District Patan.

1. The matter of Original Application No. 16/2025 (WZ), filed by registered from Shri Kanaiyalal Vijayshankar Rajgor Vs Union of India & others before the Hon'ble NGT Western Zone Bench, Pune concerning illegal encroachments in the Great Rann of Kachchh (GRK) and Little Rann of Kachchh (LRK), where illegal pits have been dug illegally. The plea seeks restoration of the area to ensure the natural flow of the Luni River remains uninterrupted.
2. *"The petitioner has submitted to the Hon'ble NGT that illegal salt pits and bore wells approximately 200 feet deep have been dug in the GRK, particularly within the Luni riverbed. The encroachers involve in the salt extraction have obstructed the river's natural flow by constructing mud embankments as high as 15 feet, deliberating preventing water from reaching the LRK, which houses critically endangered Wild Life Sanctuary. The petitioner also bought to the Hon'ble NGT notice that similar encroachments had been removed in 2014; however illegal activity have since resumed. The Luni river enters the GRK area, covering parts of Banaskantha and Patan districts of Gujarat. Before this encroachment, the desert areas of Banaskantha and Patan traversed by a natural stream known as Vokada, flowing from East to West. These natural streams have now been blocked due to encroachment. The water from the Luni river is a crucial source for serves as primary water source for Sighada and Chhansara Dams in Patan District, which is vital for the wildlife and farmers living in that region, situated in GRK and LRK".*

3. The Hon'ble NGT Western Zone Bench, Pune, constituted a Joint Committee comprising representatives from the Gujarat Pollution Control Board (GPCB), District Collector - Patan, District Collector - Banaskantha, and the Central Ground Water Authority/Board. The GPCB was designated as the nodal agency per the orders dated 05.02.2025 & 24.04.2025. In accordance with its role, GPCB forwarded copies of the Hon'ble NGT's order to all committee members.
4. Pursuant to the Hon'ble NGT's order, a joint committee meeting was convened on 06.05.2025 at the office of the District Collector, Banaskantha, to deliberate on the matter and finalize the date for site inspection. It was unanimously decided to conduct the inspection on 14.05.2025. The Hon'ble NGT had directed the Joint Committee to notify the petitioner and ensure his presence at the site during inspection, to help identify the exact locations of the alleged activities. Accordingly, GPCB informed Shri Kanaiyalal Vijayshankar Rajgor, the petitioner, via email and telephone about the site visit. The petitioner consented to the proposed date and time.
5. On 14.05.2025, officials from GPCB, the Sub-Divisional Magistrate (SDM) and his team (representing the District Collector - Banaskantha), a representative from CGWA, and the petitioner, Shri Kanaiyalal Vijayshankar Rajgor, visited the identified site in compliance with the Hon'ble NGT's directive.
6. The committee, along with the petitioner, first arrived at the location indicated (Latitude 23°41'07"N, Longitude-71°11'32"E & Latitude-23°40'57"N, Longitude-71°11'11"E), within the jurisdiction of satalpur taluka of patan district. As concluded by the revenue mamlatdar santalpur, these said land is unsurveyed and barren land. No formal survey has been conducted by the competent authority for this particular land area.
7. During site inspection, committee has observed that River Luni is seasonal river and these inspection were carried out on the peak of summer seasons, hence during site inspection river luni is found in dry condition. Thus, all joint committee members could not find out the exact span of riverbed. Committee has observed that at Latitude-23°40'57"N, Longitude-71°11'11"E, huge number

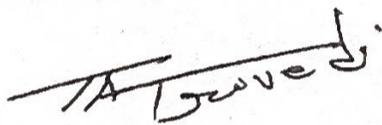
of salt pits/pan with having a borewell extraction facility are observed.

8. The detailed activity carried out by these encroachers for salt pans are as follows. In salt pans, water is extracted from bore wells, then it is left to evaporate under the sun. As the water evaporates, the salt content increases until the salt crystallizes and forms a crust on the surface of the pond. The salt is then collected and washed to remove any impurities. Once the salt is collected or extracted, it is taken to the salt manufacturers for further processing.
9. As concluded by representative of CGWA, "No Objectional Certificate" has not been obtained for the abstraction of ground water.
10. As concluded by regional officer, salt pan manufacturing activity falls under the white category, as industrial categories defines by the central pollution control board, Thus Consent/CTE/CTO are not required to obtain from the pollution board.
11. During inspection, large number of salt pans was found at said site (Latitude-23°40'57"N, Longitude-71°11'11"E & Latitude-23°59'00"N, Longitude-71°18'40"E). It was observed that the illegal salt pits and bore wells have been dug by encroachers. The depth was bore wells could not be found exactly. During inspection approx. @ 4 to 15 feet mud embankments/bunds were found, as per requirement. During inspection large no of vehicle like dumpers, JCB were found at site and loading unloading activates of Salt were going on.
12. The joint committee member could not reach the whole area due the land was found slippery and unapproachable. As notice by the committee members, that at said site there were no any electricity connection given, they were generating their own electricity by using Solar Panels. Photographs during inspection are as following.
13. In view of the vast area, unsurveyed land, large number of salt pans, geographical unevenness of the area and as concluded by Mamlatdar Santalpur, parcel of the land is under the jurisdiction of the Forest Department or the Dhangadra Region/Gudkhar Sanctuary & parcel of the land falls under the revenue department santalapur.
14. The Sighada and Chhansara dams of the patan district are located into the

upward direction & as per site inspection, site shows by the petitioner, where encroachment/salt pan activity were found at the downward direction (i.e Longitude. 23°40'57"N, Latitude - 71°11'22"E).

15. It was observed that River Luni is seasonal river and these inspection were carried out on the peak of summer seasons, hence during site inspection river luni is found in dry condition. Thus, all joint committee members could not find out the exact span of riverbed. However looking to the salt pan areas (i.e Latitude 23°41'07"N, Longitude-71°11'32"E & Latitude-23°40'57"N, Longitude-71°11'11"E), some part of the salt pan & handling activity may be conducted in the river bed of luni river.
16. Currently, this area is not approachable due to monsoon season, however as soon as area become accessible, after conducting proper survey, any obstruction to the Luni River will be removed promptly.

Date. 14/05/2025



Regional Officer

Gujarat Pollution Control Board



Representative of

Central Ground Water Authority



District Collector & Magistrate

Patan