

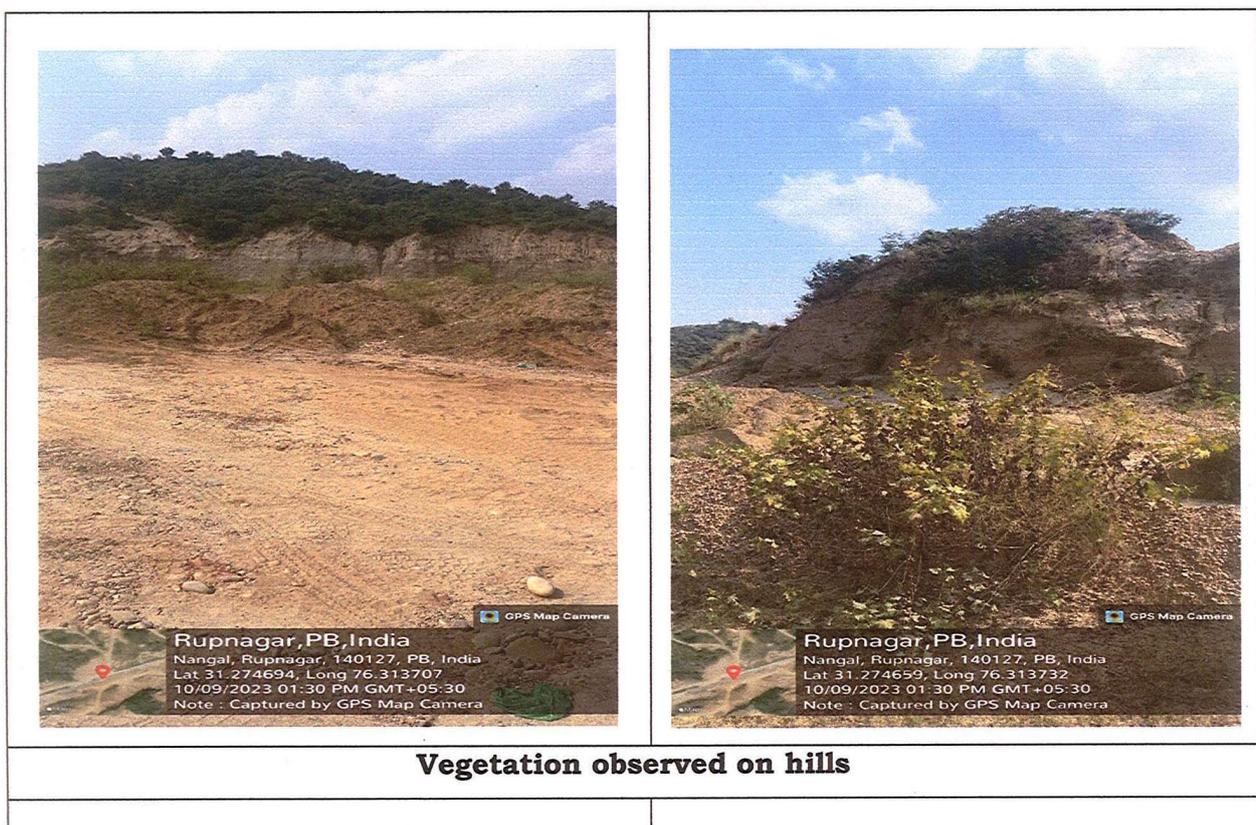
Subject: Short Reply on behalf of Punjab Pollution Control Board in Original Application No. 624/2023 regarding Notice of Hearing in Suo Motu matter in re: News item published in The Tribune dated 28.09.2023 entitled "Hills 'vanish' as illegal mining rampant in beet area".

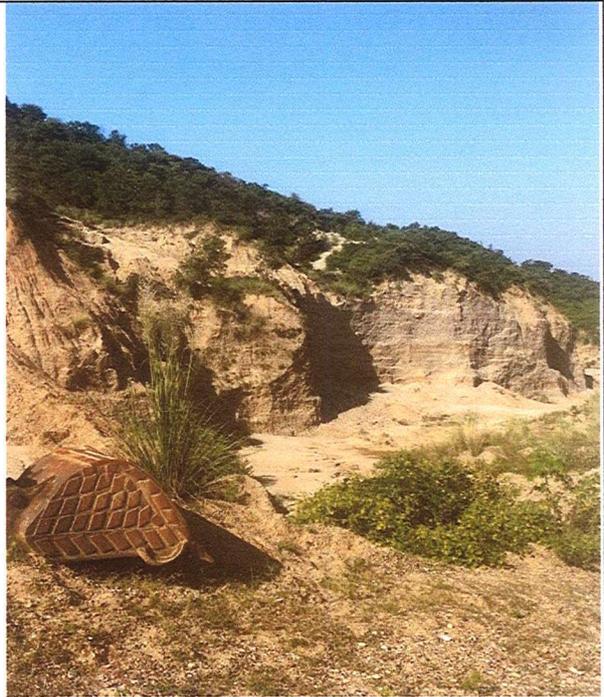
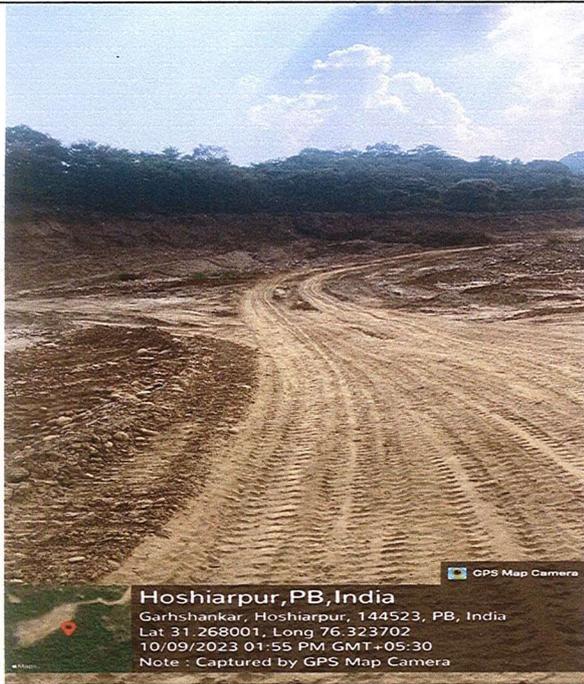
The Hon'ble Tribunal was pleased to take Suo Motu cognizance of the News item published in the Tribune dated 28.09.2023 titled "Hills 'vanish' as illegal mining rampant in beet area" regarding illegal rampant mining in beet area of Garhshankar and certain villages of Rupnagar District. The News article speaks about the illegal mining activities going on in the area without any check. It claims that Stone crusher operators in villages of Kalewal-Beet, Khuralgarh Sahib and Garhi-mansowal along with Mahindpur, KheraKalmot, Bhangla, Haripur, Plata and Spalwan of Rupnagar district, have ravaged the green cover due to illegal mining. Prima-Facie, it is clear that the matter relates to the Department of Mines & Geology, Punjab.

On receipt of notice from Hon'ble NGT, the team comprising of Sh. Vinay Atwal, Additional Director, MoEFCC and the Environmental Engineers and Assistant Environmental Engineers of Regional Office Rupnagar and Hoshiarpur alongwith Officers of District Administration of Rupnagar and Hoshiarpur i.e. SDMs, Range Officer, DSP, XEN Mining, SDO Mining met at the area under complaint. The District Administration Officers of both the Districts have concluded that the area under complaint falls in the jurisdiction of District Rupnagar. Thereafter, the area under complaint was visited by the team comprising of Sh. Vinay Atwal, Additional Director, MoEFCC and the Regional Officers Rupnagar of PPCB alongwith concerned Revenue, Police and Mining Officers of the District.

During visit, it was observed that there were traces of fresh as well as old mining. The XEN Mining, Rupnagar informed that the FIRs have been registered against the violators including transporters, machine operators and they have also confiscated the machinery. It was also observed that the area is having natural drains/trenches for rainwater. The erosion of hills due to the natural flow of rain water had happened in the recent floods during the monsoons. However, alongwith the signs of mining vegetation was also observed on certain hills.

The pictures taken during the visit are appended here under:





Signs of Mining



Signs of Mining

Visiting Team

Considering the facts reported above and disclosed by XEN Mining, Rupnagar, it is prayed that the Department of Mines and Geology may be asked to submit status report in the matter and take appropriate action against the defaulters.

Date. 13-10-2023

Environmental Engineer
On behalf of Member Secretary
Punjab Pollution Control Board.