BEFORE THE NATIONAL GREEN TRIBUNAL

PRINCIPAL BENCH, NEW DELHI

ORIGINAL APPLICATION NO. 200 of 2014

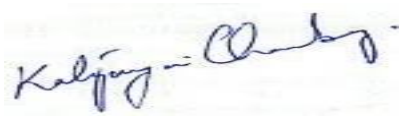
(C.W.P. No. 3727 of 1985)

IN THE MATTER OF

M.C. Mehta vs. Union of India & ors.

SUBMISSION ON AFFIDAVITS/ COMPLIANCE REPORTS FILED BY THE STATE OF UTTARAKHAND AND THE CPCB

Dated 12.03.26



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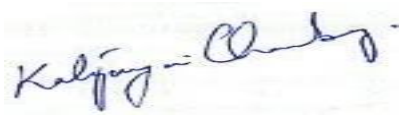

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OBSERVATION NOTE FOR COMPLIANCE AFFIDAVIT FILED ON BHEALF OF JOINT SECRETARY, UTTARAKHAND

(12 January 2026)

1. It is submitted that (Page 45111) a total of *70 STPs* in the State, of which *66 are operational* while 4 are non-operational. The data further reveals that 65 STPs are complying with the norms prescribed by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC), whereas only 44 STPs are complying with the stricter standards mandated by the Hon'ble National Green Tribunal (NGT). Admittedly, CPCB monitors 53 STPs in the State, and has reported that only 09 comply with MOEF standards of discharge and 02 STPs comply with Hon'ble Tribunal's norms.
2. As recorded (at Page 45127), the data relating to the ***functionality of STPs*** reveals a highly concerning trend, wherein the operational performance of certain treatment plants drops to nearly *zero* during specific months of the year. For instance, the 1 MLD STP located at Badrinath reportedly remained non-functional during the period from December 2024 to April 2025. At the same time, there ae STPs that perform *more that 100 %* of their capacity like- Kirtinagar (114.36%), Sarai Haridwar (114.15%), Jagjeetpur Haridwar (113.92%) and Motiwala-1 STP (100.94 %).
3. It is further recorded (at Page 45118) that information relating to household sewer connections and stormwater drains indicates that, in many areas, there is effectively "*no sewage network tapped,"* and only open drains or nalas have been intercepted and diverted.
4. It is further submitted that out of the 69 operational STPs, only 41 STPs are connected to Online Continuous Effluent Monitoring Systems (OCEMS). The absence of OCEMS connectivity for a significant number of treatment plants raises serious regulatory concerns, as it limits the ability of authorities to continuously monitor effluent quality and detect violations in real time, thereby weakening enforcement of environmental standards.
5. The record further indicates that 33 additional STPs are currently under construction, with a combined proposed treatment capacity of approximately 172.172 MLD. The State must provide timeline for operation and STPs alongwith their connection to sewer networks.
6. Information placed on record (at Page 45125) indicates that a ***total of 170 drains*** have been identified in the State, out of which *155 drains* have reportedly been tapped, intercepted, and diverted to STPs.

7. However, water quality monitoring data reveals alarmingly high levels of Faecal Coliform contamination in several districts**,** including Udham Singh Nagar**,** Srinagar**,** Rudraprayag**,** Karnaprayag, and Badrinath. (ref. pg. 45121)
8. Furthermore, the table fails to provide Faecal Coliform data for Uttarkashi, which reflects a lack of complete transparency and comprehensive environmental monitoring.
9. Absence of Zonal Master Plan for Bhagirathi Eco-Sensitive Zone- It is further submitted that, as per ***Office Memorandum No. X-3-2017-15 (41)/2013*** dated 17 January 2018, issued by the Government of Uttarakhand, a Drafting Committee was constituted to prepare a Zonal Master Plan for the Bhagirathi River Eco-Sensitive Zone.
10. Carrying capacity for Bhagirathi ESZ- UKPCB has designated/ assigned the work to Wildlife Institute of India. However, there is not timeline for its completion and publication.
11. Status of 968 Glacial reserves across 4 major Gangaji sub- basin (combined area of 2857 km^2) and their rate of recession:

Glacier basins	Number of Glaciers	Rate of recession
Yamuna	52	
Bhagirathi Overall glacier loss in this Basin is 3.3%.	238	**Gangotri glacier**: since 1935, this glacier has exhibited episodic and non- linear retreat, with cumulative recession of 1,727 +- 51 m at an average rate of 19.8 +- 0.2 m a^{-1} during 1935-2022. The pronounced retreat occurred during 2017-2022, when retreat accelerated to 33.8 +- 6.7 m a^{-1}. **Dokriani Glacier**- has been retreating at rates of approx. 15-20 m yr^{-1}.
Alaknanda Overall glacier loss in this basin is 5.7%.	407	**Chorabari Glacier**- retreated about 9-11 m yr^{-1} between 2003 to 2016.
Kaliganga	271	

It is respectfully submitted that scientific observations concerning glaciers feeding the upper reaches of the Ganga River reveal a consistent and alarming pattern of glacial recession, which has direct implications for *river hydrology, ecological balance, and long-term water security*.

These figures collectively demonstrate a systemic and region-wide phenomenon of glacial shrinkage in the upper Himalayan watershed. The degradation of glacier mass is also associated with the formation and expansion of glacial lakes, which significantly increases the risk of *Glacial Lake Outburst Floods (GLOFs).* Such events (For instance, the unfortunate floods at Kedarnath and Dharali) have the potential to cause catastrophic downstream flooding, infrastructure damage, and loss of life, particularly in ecologically fragile Himalayan regions such as Uttarakhand.

The failure to implement comprehensive environmental safeguards in these high-altitude ecosystems may amount to a breach of the State's constitutional obligation to protect and improve the environment.

In view of the *precautionary principle* and the constitutional obligations imposed upon the State to safeguard the environment, the existing scientific evidence warrants the immediate undertaking of a comprehensive assessment of the *carrying capacity of the region*. It is further submitted that such assessment must be followed by the expeditious preparation and formal notification of the *Zonal Master Plan* within a time-bound framework, so as to ensure regulated development and the effective protection of the ecologically sensitive area. (in line with the Bhagirathi Eco Sensitive Zone Notification, 2012)

OBSERVATION NOTE FOR COMPLIANCE REPORT ON BEHALF OF CPCB

(dated 06.01.2026)

1. It is submitted that the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), has identified and monitored a total of ***200 drains*** discharging into the river system. The aggregate flow from the 200 monitored drains is reported to be approximately ***1891.342 Million Litres per Day*** (MLD).
2. Out of these, *193 drains* are carrying untreated or partially treated domestic sewage**,** while *7 drains* discharge mixed waste comprising both domestic sewage and industrial effluents**.** However, *70 drains* remain entirely untapped, resulting in the direct discharge of untreated sewage and wastewater into the river.
3. As recorded (at Page 44518), *5 untapped drains* (nalas) have been reported to exhibit alarmingly high levels of Faecal Coliform and Total Coliform bacteria. These indicators signify severe faecal contamination, typically arising from the direct discharge of untreated human sewage into water bodies.
4. It is further submitted that, as recorded (at Page 44519), the drains under reference are reported to contain ***heavy metals (Ice factory nala, kashipur), pesticides (Rambha river at Rishikesh and Rawli rao drain at Haridwar),*** and instances of broken or defective tapping infrastructure, which results in the continued discharge of untreated or inadequately treated wastewater into the receiving water bodies.
5. Moreover, *photographic evidence* placed on record (at Page 44539) depicts several of the said drains in a highly polluted condition, visibly choked with accumulated solid waste, plastic debris, and other refuse. Solid waste disposal along drains is also noted in Badrinath at two locations in Harshil and Uttarkashi (44514). Similar illegal solid waste disposal has been recorded at (pg. 44519-20) and solid, animal dung and ash has been noted (at pg. 44538)
6. It is pertinent to note that a drain named "Manav kalyan Ashram" at Badrinath has concerningly high BOD/COD/ FC and TC. (kindly ref. pg. 44514)
7. **Rivers reported as drains in UK:**

River's name	**Pg. no**
Rambha river	44503
Bindal Rao River (partially tapped to 68 MLD STP pg. 44529)	44507
Rispana River	44508

Kalyani River	44509
Girdhari drain (choti dhela- pls check)	44509
Khara srot drain/ salt source drain (monsoon drain)	44502
Doon valley drain/ Dulhani nadi (stagnant & covered with soild waste pg.44529)	44520

8. Brief on the status of Drains and STPs monitored by CPCB is mentioned hereunder:

Status of drains Post monsoon 2024	**Status of drains Pre monsoon 2025**	**Status of STPs (April- July 2025)**
1. Completely tapped drains- 122 2. Partially tapped drains- 8 3. Untapped drains- 70	1. Completely tapped drains- 114 2. Partially tapped drains- 13	1. Total STPs- 53 2. Operational- 51 STPs 3. Designed capacity- 332.81 MLD 4. Utilised capacity- 252.26 MLD 5. Non- complying MOEF- 42 6. Non complying NGT- 49 7. STP below capacity- 31 8. STP over capacity- 04 9. STP at Gangotri- non compliant (pg. 44575) 10. FC at Uttarkashi is alarmingly high (pg 44573)
Such discharge constitutes a continuing violation of environmental norms and statutory obligations relating to water pollution control, and significantly contributes to the deterioration of river water quality. • Information of 200 drains is provided (pg. 44521) noting their tapping status to STPs.	Pre-Monsoon 2025 data reveals a regression in the tapping status of drains. The number of completely tapped drains has reduced to 114, while partially tapped drains have increased to 13.	The failure of such a significant number of STPs to meet environmental norms raises serious concerns regarding operational efficiency, regulatory oversight, and the effectiveness of wastewater treatment systems, thereby exacerbating pollution levels in the receiving rivers. • Information regarding STP's is provided at pg. no. 44566 (Annexure VI) • List of non complying STPs and it's operators is provided on pg. 44596

9. In light of the issues observed and in the interest of protection and restoration of the riverine ecosystem, it is most respectfully prayed that Hon'ble Tribunal may consider the following submissions:

A. Operational Efficiency of STPs: The State of Uttarakhand shall undertake immediate technical audits of all Sewage Treatment Plants (STPs) exhibiting irregular or zero operational performance and ensure their continuous and efficient functioning in compliance with the discharge standards prescribed by the Hon'ble Tribunal.

B. Compliance with NGT Standards: All operational STPs shall be upgraded, where necessary, to ensure strict compliance with the effluent standards mandated by the Hon'ble National Green Tribunal within a time-bound framework.

C. Activation of Non-Operational STPs: The four non-operational STPs shall be made functional forthwith, and the State shall place on record a definitive timeline for their restoration and operationalisation.

D. OCEMS Connectivity: Online Continuous Effluent Monitoring Systems (OCEMS) shall be installed and made operational in all STPs to ensure real-time monitoring of effluent discharge and regulatory compliance.

E. Completion of STPs Under Construction: The State shall furnish a clear and time-bound completion schedule for the 33 STPs presently under construction, along with details regarding their integration with sewer networks and expected treatment capacity.

F. Sewerage Network Expansion: The State authorities shall ensure the expansion and proper connectivity of household sewer networks so that sewage is conveyed to STPs rather than being discharged through open drains or nalas.

G. Tapping of Remaining Sewerage Drains: All remaining untapped sewerage drains discharging untreated sewage into the river system shall be intercepted, diverted, and connected to appropriate treatment facilities on a priority basis.

H. Declaration of Rivers: All the rivers/ streams/ storms drains that have been declared as drains (for sewerage purposes) must be restored to their original nature and nomenclature.

I. Restoration of Polluted Drains: Immediate remedial measures shall be undertaken for drains exhibiting high levels of faecal coliform, heavy metals, and pesticides, including repair of defective tapping infrastructure and prevention of untreated discharges.

J. Solid Waste Management Along Drains: Strict enforcement measures shall be implemented to prevent dumping of municipal solid waste, plastic debris, animal waste, and other refuse along drains and riverbanks, including regular desilting and cleaning operations.

K. Water Quality Monitoring and Transparency: Comprehensive and consistent water quality monitoring shall be conducted across all districts, including those where data is presently absent, and such data shall be periodically placed in the public domain.

L. Bhagirathi Eco-Sensitive Zone Planning: The State shall expedite the preparation and notification of the Zonal Master Plan for the Bhagirathi Eco-Sensitive Zone in accordance with the relevant notification, within a fixed and clearly defined timeline.

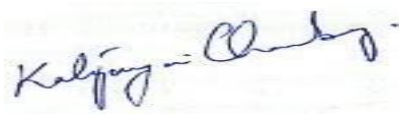
M. Carrying Capacity Assessment: The carrying capacity study assigned to the Wildlife Institute of India shall be completed and published within a stipulated timeframe, and its recommendations shall be incorporated into regulatory planning for the region.

N. Glacial Monitoring and Risk Mitigation: A comprehensive scientific monitoring mechanism shall be established for glaciers and glacial lakes in the upper Ganga basin, including early warning systems and disaster-risk mitigation measures to address potential Glacial Lake Outburst Floods (GLOFs).

In view of the facts and circumstances set forth hereinabove, I most respectfully pray that urgent and appropriate relief be granted in the present matter.

AND FOR THIS ACT OF KINDNESS, THE ADVOCATE AS IN DUTY BOUND SHALL EVER BE GRATEFUL.

Dated 12.03.26



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