

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

Original Application No. 23/2025

News Item titled "Haryana's 60.48% groundwater over exploited Kurukshetra worst Jhajjar best says report" appearing in The Tribune dated 08.01.2025

Date of hearing: 23.01.2025

**CORAM: HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE PRAKASH SHRIVASTAVA, CHAIRPERSON
HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE SUDHIR AGARWAL, JUDICIAL MEMBER
HON'BLE DR. A. SENTHIL VEL, EXPERT MEMBER**

Applicant: None
Respondent: None

ORDER

1. This Original Application is registered *suo-motu* on the basis of the news item titled "Haryana's 60.48% groundwater over exploited Kurukshetra worst Jhajjar best says report" appearing in The Tribune dated 08.01.2025

2. The matter relates to the alarming levels of groundwater exploitation in Haryana. As per the article, the state is extracting 136% of its annual replenishable groundwater, placing it among the regions where extraction surpasses natural recharge rates.

3. The news item states that as per a report by the Central Ground Water Board (CGWB), 60.48% of Haryana's groundwater blocks are over-exploited, while only 28.4% (12,269.36 sq. km) is categorised as safe. Additionally, 11.12% of the area is classified as critical or semi-critical. Kurukshetra district is the most affected, with an extraction rate of 228.42%, indicating that groundwater is being withdrawn at more than twice the rate of its natural recharge. Faridabad and Gurugram, the

state's most populated districts, show alarming extraction rates of 180.89% and 212.77%, respectively. In contrast, Jhajjar district has the lowest extraction rate at 51.01%, suggesting a more sustainable usage pattern.

4. Moreover, the news item asserted that following the monsoon season, groundwater extraction increases significantly, causing a decline in water tables. The CGWB's assessment underscores the critical need for sustainable water management practices in Haryana to address the over-exploitation of groundwater resources and ensure long-term water security for the state's agricultural, industrial, and domestic needs.

5. The news item indicates a violation of the provisions of the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974 and the Environment Protection Act, 1986.

6. The news item raises substantial issues regarding compliance with environmental norms and implementation of the provisions of scheduled enactment.

7. 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.

8. Hence, we implead following as respondents in this matter:

- (i) Respondent no.1- Haryana State Pollution Control Board (HSPCB), through its Member Secretary C-11, Sector-6, Panchkula, Haryana – 134109;

- (ii) Respondent no.2-Member Secretary, Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), Address: Parivesh Bhawan, East Arjun Nagar, Delhi – 110032;
- (iii) Respondent no.3-Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, through its Regional Office, (Haryana), Integrated Regional Office, Bays No. 24-25, Sector 31 A, Dakshin Marg, Chandigarh – 160030;
- (iv) Central Ground Water Board (CGWB), through its Chairman Bhujal Bhawan, NH-IV, Faridabad, Haryana – 121001.

9. Issue notice to the above respondents for filing their response/reply by way of affidavit before the Tribunal at least one week before the next hearing date. 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.

10. List on 06.05.2025.

Prakash Shrivastava, CP

Sudhir Agarwal, JM

Dr. A. Senthil Vel, EM

January 23, 2025
Original Application No. 23/2025
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