

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

Original Application No. 243/2025

News Item titled "Explainer Why Malwa is facing polluted water crisis appearing in The Tribune dated 29.04.2025"

Date of hearing: 16.05.2025

**CORAM: HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE PRAKASH SHRIVASTAVA, CHAIRPERSON  
HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE ARUN KUMAR TYAGI, JUDICIAL MEMBER  
HON'BLE DR. AFROZ AHMAD, EXPERT MEMBER**

Respondents: None Present

**ORDER**

1. This original application is registered *suo-moto* based on the news item titled "Explainer Why Malwa is facing polluted water crisis " appearing in The Tribune dated 29.04.2025.
2. The news item relates to the serious water pollution problem in the Malwa region of Punjab, particularly in canals across Ferozepur, Faridkot, Muktsar, and Fazilka districts in the southwestern part of the State, due to the inflow of contaminated water. As mentioned in the news item, the situation has arisen because polluted water is flowing into the Sirhind Feeder Canal from the Harike Barrage.
3. The news item states that the Sutlej River is being polluted by the Buddha Nullah, which flows through the industrial town of Ludhiana and carries untreated wastewater. It is also mentioned in the news item that the reduced water level in the Beas River is considered a major reason why pollutants are more concentrated.
4. According to the news item, the contaminated canal water is being used for both human consumption and irrigation. Furthermore, the news item highlights concerns that the polluted water could lead to stunted crop

growth and reduced yields.

5. The news item also notes a heightened risk of skin and gastrointestinal diseases. It points out that the Malwa belt is already known as the 'cancer belt'. As per the news item, in response to the crisis, the Punjab Pollution Control Board, the Water Supply and Sanitation Department, the Water Supply and Sewerage Board, and the Water Resources Department have begun water quality testing by collecting samples.

6. The news item raises substantial issues relating to compliance of provisions of Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974 and Environment Protection Act, 1986.

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 the following as respondents in the matter:

- (i) Respondent no.1- Member Secretary, Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), Parivesh Bhawan, East Arjun Nagar, Delhi-110032;
- (ii) Respondent no.2- Member Secretary, Punjab Pollution Control Board (PPCB), Head Office, Vatavaran Bhawan, Punjab Pollution Control Board, Nabha Road, Patiala;
- (iii) Respondent no.3- Principal Secretary, Department of Water Supply and Sanitation, Water Supply Complex, Phase-2, Sector 54, SAS Nagar (Mohali)-160055;

9. Let notice be issued to the respondents for filing their response/reply

by way of affidavit before Tribunal at least one week before the next date of hearing. If any respondent directly files the reply without routing it through their advocate, then the said respondent will remain virtually present to assist the Tribunal.

10. List on 18.09.2025.

Prakash Shrivastava, CP

Arun Kumar Tyagi, JM

Dr. Afroz Ahmad, EM

May 16, 2025  
Original Application No. 243/2025  
JG.