

**IN THE SUPREME COURT OF INDIA
INHERENT/CIVIL APPELLATE JURISDICTION**

SUO MOTO WRIT PETITION (CIVIL) NO(S). 8 OF 2025

**IN RE: 2 MILLION LIVES AT RISK,
CONTAMINATION IN JOJARI RIVER,
RAJASTHAN**

WITH

CIVIL APPEAL NO(S). 5517-5519 OF 2022

CIVIL APPEAL NO(S). 8748 OF 2022

CIVIL APPEAL NO(S). 9057-9058 OF 2022

CIVIL APPEAL NO(S). 9010-9011 OF 2022

O R D E R

1. A detailed order was passed by this Court on 7th August, 2026 considering the developments which had taken place in the intervening period after the initiation of the instant *Suo Moto* Writ Petition *vide* order dated 16th September, 2025. Upon consideration of the entirety of facts and material placed on record and being of the view that the issues involved were grave which could not be effectively addressed through isolated or fragmented departmental interventions, this Court issued a slew

of directions with a view to securing an integrated, coordinated and time-bound response. The relevant extract from the order dated 7th August, 2026 is reproduced hereinbelow: -

“33. In view of the foregoing discussion, the material placed on record, the successive reports submitted by the Committee and the SIT, the compliance reports filed by the State of Rajasthan, and the submissions advanced on behalf of the respective parties, we are of the considered opinion that certain further directions have become imperative to ensure effective implementation of the measures already initiated, secure institutional coordination amongst the concerned authorities, and facilitate the long-term restoration and protection of the riverine ecosystem and the environment in the State of Rajasthan. Accordingly, we issue the following directions:

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- A.** The State of Rajasthan shall, within a period of seven days, constitute an “Integrated Coordination Group” headed by the Chief Secretary who shall be at liberty to include in the said group senior officers of the concerned Departments of the State Government, including the Departments of Environment, Forest, Water Resources, Industries, Urban Development, Revenue, Local Self Government, Agriculture, the RSPCB and such other statutory authorities and experts as may be considered necessary, so as to ensure effective inter-departmental coordination and implementation of the directions issued by this Court.
 - B.** The Integrated Coordination Group shall hold detailed consultative deliberations with the Committee on the issues highlighted in the present order, the previous orders passed by this Court, the recommendations made by the Committee from time to time, and such other ancillary or connected issues as may arise during the course of such deliberations, with a view to evolving an integrated, coordinated and time-bound framework for implementation of the measures contemplated herein.
 - C.** Upon completion of the aforesaid deliberative exercise, the Integrated Coordination Group, in consultation with the Committee, shall prepare a

Comprehensive Resolution Plan for prevention of environmental degradation, pollution abatement, ecological restoration, conservation of riverine ecosystems, protection of groundwater resources, preservation of biodiversity and strengthening of the institutional framework governing river basin management. The Resolution Plan shall identify the action points, the authority responsible for implementation, the implementation framework, measurable milestones and definite timelines for completion of each component.

- D.** The Integrated Coordination Group shall function under the overall supervision and chairmanship of the Chief Secretary, Government of Rajasthan, who shall periodically review the implementation of the Resolution Plan and ensure effective inter-departmental coordination.
- E.** The CETPs, industrial units through their recognised associations, trade bodies, and any other stakeholder having a direct interest in the issues arising in the present proceedings shall be at liberty to submit representations before the Integrated Coordination Group as well as the Committee. Any such representation/s shall be considered on its own merits and in accordance with law, keeping in view the larger objective of environmental protection and sustainable development. However, there shall be no requirement to provide oral audience in the exercise to be conducted by the Integrated Coordination Group.
- F.** The Integrated Coordination Group, after holding due consultations with the Committee, shall formulate and place before this Court, within a period of three weeks from the date of its constitution, a Comprehensive Resolution Plan, containing clearly identified action points, implementation timelines, monitoring mechanisms and the responsibilities of the concerned Departments and statutory authorities.
- G.** The State of Rajasthan shall constitute an independent and adequately empowered River Commission/River Rejuvenation Authority for the State of Rajasthan, with a mandate to oversee the conservation, rejuvenation and integrated management of rivers, river basins and catchment

areas, including the scientific determination and demarcation of the High Flood Line, protection of riverine ecosystems and coordinated river basin governance throughout the State. The said Commission/Authority shall for the present function under the chairmanship of the Chief Secretary, Government of Rajasthan, who shall be at liberty to associate such officers, domain experts, technical institutions and other stakeholders as may be considered necessary for the effective discharge of its functions. The constitution, organisational framework, modalities, scope, powers, functions and implementation mechanism of the said Commission/Authority shall be placed before this Court by the next date of hearing.

- H.** The Special Investigation Team shall intensify the investigation process in all pending criminal cases with due diligence and carry the same to its logical conclusion. The investigation shall comprehensively examine the role of all persons, including public servants, industrial units, office-bearers of CETPs and any other persons against whom credible material emerges during the course of investigation, without fear or favour, and appropriate action shall be taken strictly in accordance with law.
- I.** Insofar as the representations submitted by the White Category Industries pursuant to Direction A contained in this Court's order dated 21st July, 2026 are concerned, the Committee shall, after considering the inspection reports and the material placed before it, pass appropriate orders on the pending representations, as expeditiously as possible and preferably within a period of seven days from the date of this order.
- J.** The State of Rajasthan shall establish an Integrated Public Reporting and Environmental Grievance Redressal Mechanism to facilitate timely reporting of environmental violations and allied illegal activities affecting the riverine ecosystem. The mechanism shall provide for a QR Code-based digital platform, with QR Codes prominently displayed on the website of RSPCB as well as at the industrial areas, CETPs, Government offices, Gram Panchayat offices, Forest Check Posts, municipal offices and such other conspicuous locations as may be identified by the Integrated

Coordination Group. The platform shall enable any person having credible information to report instances of illegal discharge of industrial effluents, unauthorised operation of industrial units, illegal extraction of groundwater, encroachments upon riverbeds, illegal dumping of hazardous waste, destruction of wildlife habitats and any other environmental violations by uploading photographs, videos, geo-tagged information or such other electronic material as may be necessary. The mechanism shall provide for confidential reporting, generate a unique complaint registration number for every complaint received, ensure immediate electronic transmission of the complaint to the jurisdictional authorities concerned, including the RSPCB, District Administration, Police, Forest Department and such other authorities as may be necessary for prompt action, and facilitate digital monitoring of the action taken thereon. The State Government shall also examine the feasibility of instituting an appropriate incentive scheme for rewarding credible information leading to the detection of serious environmental violations, while ensuring adequate confidentiality and protection of the identity of informants.

- K.** The Committee shall continue to monitor the implementation of the directions issued by this Court and the progress made by the State Government and the Integrated Coordination Group, and shall be at liberty to issue such recommendations and advisories as may be necessary for effective implementation of the mandate issued by this Court.
- L.** All Departments of the State Government, statutory authorities, local bodies, public authorities, the Rajasthan State Pollution Control Board, RIICO, CETP Trusts and all other agencies concerned shall continue to extend full cooperation to the Committee, the Integrated Coordination Group and the SIT, and shall make available all records, technical data and other information as may be required for effective implementation of the directions issued by this Court.
- M.** The Chief Secretary, Government of Rajasthan, shall continue to personally monitor compliance with the directions issued by this Court and shall ensure that all Departments and statutory authorities act in close coordination so that the objectives sought to be

achieved by the present proceedings are implemented in a timely and effective manner.

- N.** We are constrained to observe that the report submitted by the State Government is totally silent regarding the action taken, if any, against the responsible officers of the RSPCB. The details of the action taken/proposed to be taken shall be placed before the Committee within the next three days.”

2. Pursuant to the aforesaid directions, the High-Level Ecosystem Oversight Committee¹, has forwarded a note, in particular, seeking some clarifications regarding the observations made and the directions contained in paragraph 20 of the order dated 7th August, 2026. For ready reference, paragraph 20 of the said order is reproduced hereinbelow: -

“20. Having emphasized the necessity of an integrated institutional mechanism for effective implementation of the measures directed by this Court, we now proceed to identify certain critical issues which, in our considered opinion, require immediate and time-bound remedial intervention. Foremost amongst them is the protection and restoration of the Jojari-Bandi-Luni river ecosystem. The reports of the Committee, demonstrates that effective rejuvenation of the Jojari-Bandi-Luni river system cannot be achieved unless the river corridor is scientifically identified, mapped and protected. The absence of a scientifically determined High Flood Line and corresponding ecological buffer zones has facilitated indiscriminate industrial development, encroachments upon the riverbed and floodplains and consequent degradation of the river ecosystem. We are, therefore, of the considered view that the State must undertake a comprehensive scientific exercise for determination and demarcation of the High Flood Line and the requisite

¹ Hereinafter, being referred to as the “Committee”.

ecological buffer zone qua all the river systems in the State in consultation with the Committee and such expert institutions as may be considered appropriate. Until the completion of the aforesaid exercise, no fresh permissions facilitating industrial, commercial or residential development within the identified river corridors shall be granted by any Department, statutory authority or local body of the State of Rajasthan.”

3. The Committee has drawn the attention of this Court to the recommendations contained in its Second Status Report dated 12th July, 2026, wherein, it had recommended that pending final technical determination and demarcation of the riverbed, flood plains, High Flood Line and final river buffer zones, a suitable area extending up to 500 metres on both sides of the riverbanks be provisionally reserved and protected as an interim safeguard. The Committee has further recommended that the first 100 metres from the High Flood Line, as finally or provisionally identified, be kept free from construction and preferably utilised for dense tree plantation/forest development; that no activity having the potential to cause pollution, dumping or contamination be permitted up to 300 metres; and that no Red Category, hazardous, obnoxious or other highly polluting industry or activity be permitted within 500 metres on either side of the riverbanks.

4. The Committee has now suggested appropriate clarification/modification of paragraph 20 of the order dated 7th August, 2026 by prescribing a measurable interim protection zone, until the High Flood Line, river corridors and buffer zones are finally identified and demarcated. It has been pointed out by the Committee that until and unless the requisite ecological buffer zones are determined and demarcated within the identified river corridors, any steps for development, including fresh allotments, constructions, change of land use and creation of third-party rights, ought to be restrained so as to preserve the riverine areas in their existing state and ensure that no irreversible changes take place in the areas which may subsequently fall within the protected zones.

5. The aforesaid concerns of the Committee were conveyed to Shri S.V. Raju, learned Additional Solicitor General and Shri Shiv Mangal Sharma, learned Additional Advocate General appearing for the State of Rajasthan as well as the senior officers of the State of Rajasthan including the Chief Secretary, Chairperson of the Rajasthan State Pollution Control Board, etc., who were appearing virtually.

6. Shri S.V. Raju pointed out that the Ministry of Jal Shakti, through the Central Water Commission, New Delhi, has issued Technical Guidelines on Flood Plain Zoning, which contain specific provisions governing activities within floodplain areas pending their identification and demarcation. Learned counsel drew our attention to paragraph 7.1.4(4) of the said Guidelines, which provides that, until the identification and demarcation of the floodplain is completed, no further activity shall be permitted within 100 metres from the edge of the river, designated as the “No Development/Construction Zone”. The Guidelines further contemplate that, where a State Government or Union Territory has already notified a No Development/Construction Zone which is inconsistent with the aforesaid prescription, the concerned State Government or Union Territory shall be encouraged to progressively move towards the said norm in a phased manner. It was further pointed out that the Guidelines permit appropriate relaxation of the aforesaid restriction for construction of railway lines, bridges, essential infrastructure construction or public service, etc., wherever considered necessary. Learned counsel

submitted that the aforesaid prescription contained in the Guidelines may appropriately be taken into consideration while determining the extent of any provisional and measurable protection to be prescribed by this Court pending completion of the exercise of identification and demarcation of the floodplain by the concerned authorities of the State of Rajasthan.

7. Having regard to the serious extent of ecological degradation and the widespread destruction of the Jojari-Bandi-Luni river ecosystem, which has been noticed and highlighted by this Court in its preceding orders passed since September, 2025, we are of the considered view that it is necessary to put in place an interim, definite and measurable area of protection so as to adequately safeguard the riverine ecosystem during the pendency of the scientific exercise for determination and demarcation of the High Flood Line and the requisite ecological buffer zones. Hence, we hereby direct that no construction or development activity of any nature whatsoever shall be permitted within a distance of 100 metres from the edge of the river, in accordance with the aforesaid Guidelines. Furthermore, since the High Flood Line is yet to be

scientifically determined and demarcated, we consider it necessary, as an additional interim safeguard, to direct that no hazardous industry or activity having the potential to cause pollution, contamination or other damage to the riverine ecosystem shall be permitted within a distance of 500 metres on either side of the existing flood line, wherever such flood line has been identified, or the present flow path of the river, until completion of the scientific exercise for determination and demarcation of the High Flood Line and the requisite ecological buffer zones.

8. The aforesaid buffer zone is being prescribed as a provisional measure to ensure that, pending completion of the scientific exercise for determination and demarcation of the High Flood Line, the area in question is not compromised by any construction or development activity, change of land use, allotment or creation of third-party rights, or by any other activity which may prejudice the protection and restoration of the riverine ecosystem. The observations and directions contained in paragraph 20 of the order dated 7th August, 2026 shall stand modified/amended to the aforesaid extent.

9. Another matter of concern which has been brought to the notice of the Court relates to the effective and smooth functioning of the Committee. This Court has been apprised that, consequent upon the constitution of the Integrated Coordination Group, there is a substantial overlap in the composition of the Committee and the Integrated Coordination Group, with several of the same senior functionaries being members of both bodies.

10. We make it clear and emphasize that the Integrated Coordination Group has been formed by way of an internal arrangement for smooth and seamless conduct of the requisite exercise within the Government departments and, in no manner, impinges upon the domain of the Committee. However, as several members of the Committee and the Integrated Coordination Group are common, such overlap in their composition may give rise to practical difficulties in the independent and effective discharge of the respective functions entrusted to the two bodies and, therefore, calls for appropriate clarification and delineation of their respective roles.

11. We, therefore, provide that as and when considered necessary, the Hon'ble Chairperson of the

Committee in his individual capacity will be empowered to pass suitable directions, orders and instructions, as may be imperative or expedient in the prevailing circumstances, to the State Government, its Departments, local bodies, statutory authorities and other agencies concerned, for ensuring the effective, expeditious and coordinated implementation of the directions issued by this Court and the mandate entrusted to the Committee. We further provide that the earlier directions given by this Court, empowering the Committee to take necessary actions and pass the requisite orders, shall continue to operate in their letter and spirit.

12. We reiterate that the constitution, powers, functions, Terms of Reference and all responsibilities entrusted to the Committee *vide* order dated 21st November, 2025 and subsequent orders shall continue in full force and effect until completion of the river restoration and rejuvenation process. The Committee shall continue to exercise its fact-finding, monitoring, decision-making and implementation functions, including calling for records, obtaining technical assistance, issuing consequential directions and overseeing compliance by all

concerned authorities. All subsequent directions of this Court shall operate cumulatively and in continuation of the earlier framework and shall not be construed as superseding, diluting or restricting the powers or mandate of the Committee.

13. The Chief Secretary, State of Rajasthan shall ensure that progress and compliance report, indicating the work assigned, milestones achieved, action remaining, timelines, impediments and measures proposed through Resolution Plan are provided to the Committee for effective monitoring of the progress of work, fortnightly. The Committee shall be at liberty to call for such further information or reports at shorter intervals wherever circumstances so require and issue necessary instructions.

14. This Court is further of the considered view that the issues which have emerged during the course of these proceedings also warrant a deeper examination from the standpoint of environmental law, institutional governance and the rights of the affected population. To facilitate a comprehensive legal and institutional assessment of the measures required for the protection, preservation and restoration of the

riverine ecosystem, we consider it appropriate to involve the National Law University, Jodhpur in the present proceedings. The complexity and interdisciplinary nature of the issues involved require, in addition to the scientific and administrative inputs already being considered by the Court, a focused examination of the applicable environmental laws, regulatory frameworks and institutional mechanisms governing riverine protection, land use, pollution control, ecological restoration and sustainable development. Such an exercise must also take into account the social consequences of environmental degradation, particularly its impact upon the rights, livelihood, health and well-being of the communities and populations dependent upon the affected riverine ecosystem.

15. The National Law University, Jodhpur shall initiate a project to examine the aforesaid issues from the perspective of environmental law and policy, including the existing statutory and regulatory framework, the adequacy of the mechanisms presently in place, areas requiring strengthening or reform, and the legal and institutional measures that may be adopted for securing effective and sustainable

protection of the riverine ecosystem. The project shall also examine the rights and interests of the persons and communities affected by environmental degradation, including the consequences for livelihood, access to clean water and a healthy environment, public health and other associated social and economic concerns. The exercise shall take into consideration the directions issued by this Court from time to time and the recommendations of the Committee, so as to assist the Court in evolving a coherent, legally sustainable and socially responsive framework for long-term environmental governance, ecological restoration and protection of the affected population.

16. Accordingly, we request the Vice-Chancellor, National Law University, Jodhpur, to constitute a Project Committee, comprising of an appropriate faculty member as its Coordinator and such students of the University as may be considered suitable, for undertaking the aforesaid exercise. The project may be labelled as **“Jojari-Bandi-Luni River Ecosystem: A Study on Environmental Law, Restoration and Community Rights”**. The Project Committee shall function under the guidance and supervision of the

Committee and shall coordinate with the Committee in relation to the scope, methodology and progress of the exercise. The Project Coordinator or any student duly authorised by the Project Committee shall, as and when considered necessary, be permitted to make appropriate submissions or presentations before the Committee as well as this Court in relation to the project.

17. The Principal Secretary, Department of Finance, Government of Rajasthan, shall ensure that a sum of Rs.50,00,000/- (Rupees Fifty Lakhs only) is provided to the National Law University, Jodhpur, towards the expenses and resources required for undertaking the aforesaid project. The above amount which may be released in tranches shall be utilised by the University exclusively for the purposes of the project and for meeting the expenses incidental thereto. The Project Committee shall place its report and recommendations before the Committee, which shall appropriately consider the same and issue necessary directions as and when required.

18. After the order had been reserved, Shri S.V. Raju, learned Additional Solicitor General, and Shri Shiv Mangal Sharma, learned Additional Advocate

General made a mention regarding a note received from the Committee pointing out that a note has been received from the Rajasthan State Pollution Control Board² setting out a proposal for treatment and disposal of the accumulated wastewater at HRTS, Ambey Valley. The RSPCB in its note has proposed that the accumulated wastewater be conveyed back to the Common Effluent Treatment Plant, Balotra, through a temporary dedicated pipeline for treatment, which would generate RO permeate and RO reject. It has further proposed that the RO permeate, to the extent possible, be supplied for reuse to the Zero Liquid Discharge/own-ETP textile units and that only the remaining quantity, which cannot reasonably be so utilised, may be considered for one-time discharge into the river, subject to requisite testing and compliance with the prescribed standards.

19. The RSPCB has placed before the Committee the analytical results of the RO permeate based on samples collected on six occasions between December, 2025 and May, 2026. The results recorded

² For short, "RSPCB".

in the said analysis were assessed with reference to the permissible parameters for tertiary-treated effluent under the applicable notification dated 9th September, 2024 of the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change. The results placed before the Committee indicate that the RO permeate has consistently remained within the parameters considered compliant by the RSPCB and has been found to be substantially better than the prescribed quality of tertiary-treated effluent. On the basis of the aforesaid assessment, the RSPCB proposed a one-time, controlled mechanism for discharge of the RO permeate generated exclusively from treatment of the presently accumulated wastewater, so as to facilitate the time-bound treatment and removal of the accumulated wastewater and consequential restoration of the HRTS site.

20. The Committee, while considering the aforesaid proposal, has recommended that any such discharge should remain strictly confined to the RO permeate generated from treatment of the presently accumulated wastewater and should be undertaken under the direct supervision and monitoring of the RSPCB. The Committee has further stipulated

safeguards including daily sampling and analysis before discharge; maintenance of day-wise records of the quantity treated, permeate generated, quantity reused and quantity discharged; immediate stoppage of discharge upon any deviation from the prescribed standards or any indication of adverse environmental impact; separate handling of RO reject/concentrate through the approved Zero Liquid Discharge/scientific disposal mechanism, and shall, under no circumstances, be discharged into the river; and weekly reporting of the treatment, discharge and monitoring data to the Committee. The Committee has also specifically recommended that no such discharge should be permitted if it results in, or carries any risk of, deterioration of the river, groundwater or the surrounding environment.

21. Having considered the material on record, the note of the RSPCB, we accept the aforesaid recommendations of the Committee and permit the release of the RO permeate generated from the treatment of the accumulated wastewater in the above terms and subject to the safeguards stipulated by the Committee. All possible efforts shall, however, be made to ensure that the maximum quantity of the

RO permeate is reused by the Zero Liquid Discharge/own-ETP textile units, and only such quantity as cannot reasonably be so reused shall be considered for discharge into the river. The discharge shall remain confined exclusively to the RO permeate generated from treatment of the presently accumulated wastewater and shall be undertaken under the direct supervision and monitoring of RSPCB. Daily sampling and analysis shall be carried out through the RSPCB/authorised laboratory and discharge shall take place only upon confirmation that the prescribed standards are complied with.

22. The RSPCB shall maintain a complete and verifiable record of the treatment of the accumulated wastewater, including the quantity treated, RO permeate and RO reject generated, quantity thereof reused and quantity discharged, duly supported by calibrated flow-meter data and the results of the requisite analysis. Such data, together with the details of the monitoring undertaken, shall be furnished to the Committee on a weekly basis until the entire accumulated wastewater is treated and disposed of. The RO reject/concentrate shall be separately handled through the approved Zero Liquid

Discharge/scientific disposal mechanism and shall under no circumstances be discharged into the river. The permission granted herein shall be strictly confined to the presently accumulated wastewater as a one-time measure and shall not be construed as permitting any regular or continuing discharge into the river, and no discharge shall be permitted if it results in, or carries any risk of, deterioration of the river, groundwater or the surrounding environment.

23. The Registry shall forward a copy of this order to Hon'ble Mr. Justice Sangeet Lodha, Judge (Retd.), High Court of Judicature for Rajasthan on his email address: j.sangeetlodha@gmail.com, as well as to Mr. Shiv Mangal Sharma, learned Additional Advocate General for the State of Rajasthan and Vice-Chancellor, National Law University, Jodhpur for information and necessary compliance.

24. List the matters again on 22nd September, 2026 as part-heard.

.....**J.**
(VIKRAM NATH)

.....**J.**
(SANDEEP MEHTA)

NEW DELHI;
AUGUST 24, 2026.