

S U P R E M E C O U R T O F I N D I A
R E C O R D O F P R O C E E D I N G S

Writ Petition(s)(Civil) No(s). 304/2018

ANAND ARYA

Petitioner(s)

VERSUS

UNION OF INDIA

Respondent(s)

IA No. 296851/2026 - APPROPRIATE ORDERS/DIRECTIONS
IA No. 313025/2025 - EXEMPTION FROM FILING O.T.
IA No. 251460/2025 - EXEMPTION FROM FILING O.T.
IA No. 296545/2026 - EXEMPTION FROM FILING O.T.
IA No. 284725/2026 - EXEMPTION FROM FILING O.T.
IA No. 174480/2026 - EXEMPTION FROM FILING O.T.
IA No. 267329/2026 - INTERVENTION APPLICATION
IA No. 296849/2026 - INTERVENTION/IMPLEADMENT
IA No. 90290/2026 - INTERVENTION/IMPLEADMENT
IA No. 90474/2026 - MODIFICATION OF COURT ORDER

WITH

W.P.(C) No. 230/2001 (PIL-W)

IA No. 203781/2023 - APPROPRIATE ORDERS/DIRECTIONS
IA No. 103345/2025 - APPROPRIATE ORDERS/DIRECTIONS
IA No. 30683/2025 - APPROPRIATE ORDERS/DIRECTIONS
IA No. 30673/2025 - APPROPRIATE ORDERS/DIRECTIONS
IA No. 30632/2025 - APPROPRIATE ORDERS/DIRECTIONS
IA No. 296906/2026 - APPROPRIATE ORDERS/DIRECTIONS
IA No. 290367/2026 - APPROPRIATE ORDERS/DIRECTIONS
IA No. 103382/2025 - APPROPRIATE ORDERS/DIRECTIONS
IA No. 94662/2018 - CLARIFICATION/DIRECTION
IA No. 28355/2018 - CLARIFICATION/DIRECTION
IA No. 15/2012 - DIRECTION
IA No. 16/2014 - DIRECTIONS
IA No. 36593/2024 - EXEMPTION FROM FILING O.T.
IA No. 14/2012 - INTERVENTION APPLICATION
IA No. 203779/2023 - INTERVENTION APPLICATION
IA No. 230542/2024 - INTERVENTION APPLICATION
IA No. 17/2017 - INTERVENTION APPLICATION
IA No. 49144/2024 - INTERVENTION APPLICATION
IA No. 289692/2026 - INTERVENTION APPLICATION
IA No. 36592/2024 - INTERVENTION APPLICATION
IA No. 144946/2018 - MODIFICATION OF COURT ORDER
IA No. 110421/2026 - PERMISSION TO APPEAR AND ARGUE IN PERSON

Signature Not Verified


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RASHI WUPA
Date: 2026.10.16
13:09:15
Reason:

W.P.(C) No. 302/2020 (PIL-W)

FOR impleading party ON IA 172736/2024

FOR INTERVENTION/IMPLEADMENT ON IA 172736/2024

FOR APPROPRIATE ORDERS/DIRECTIONS ON IA 172737/2024

IA No. 172737/2024 - APPROPRIATE ORDERS/DIRECTIONS
IA No. 172736/2024 - INTERVENTION/IMPLEADMENT

Date : 12-10-2026 These matters were called on for hearing today.

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HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE VIPUL M. PANCHOLI

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**UPON hearing the counsel the Court made the following
O R D E R**

1. We have perused the compliance affidavit of the State of Karnataka and it is indicated in Paragraph No.8 to the following effect :

“8. Presently, in continuation of the averments made in the above affidavit, the requisite information has been received from the Department of Survey, Settlement and Land Records GoK, on 25.09.2026 through e-mail. The details furnished by the said Department are reproduced below for kind consideration of the Hon’ble Court.”

Sl. No.	Description	Number of Wetlands
1.	Total Wetlands in Karnataka (MoEFCC data)	14, 936
2.	Wetlands ground-truthed	14, 355
3.	Wetlands surveyed with boundary demarcation data available	14, 355

2. The mode, manner and method in which the said ground truthing has been done as well as procedure adopted along with supporting documents in respect of the ground truthing carried out together the manner in which demarcation has been made is not accompanying the compliance affidavit dated 25.09.2026. Hence, we direct the State of Karnataka to place on record all these documents within four (4) weeks from today.

3. This Court by order dated 07.10.2025 had clearly observed that the ‘ground truthing and demarcation’ of wetland boundaries is to be undertaken by each of the State/Union Territories wetland authorities in coordination with the concerned nodal department as provided under the Wetlands (Conservation and Management) Rules, 2017 (Rules, 2017). This Court also reiterated that the said exercise which is being carried out, shall be in compliance with Rule 7(1)(a) of the Rules, 2017. The compliance affidavits do not indicate as to whether the exercise which has been undertaken is in compliance with Rule 7(1)(a) of the Rules, 2017.

4. It would be profitable to note that State of Tamil Nadu seems to have undertaken the aforesaid exercise and the systematic manner in which the said exercise has been undertaken, has been narrated in the note supplied to this Court today by Shri Shekhar Naphade, learned Senior Counsel, during the course of his arguments/submissions. For the purpose of convenience we set out the same hereinbelow:

“A. TIME TAKEN PER WATERBODY-SHAPEFILE

4. At the outset the State of Tamil Nadu submits that it respects and abides by the orders of this Hon'ble Court and apologises for the non-completion of the entire boundary demarcation process as directed. It is submitted that this failure is inadvertent and despite the *bona fide* best efforts to complete the task. With 28,898 waterbodies/shapefiles to complete, the State of Tamil Nadu has the largest task to execute.

5. The exercise requires substantial human resources, logistical arrangements and financial expenditure, with coordinated action by the Revenue, Forest, Rural Development and Water Resources Departments. The time taken to complete each step of the process per waterbody/shapefile ranges from a minimum of 1-2 days to 10-15 days depending upon the area, location of the waterbody and other factors. The State of Tamil Nadu is committed to completing the task in an expedient manner.

B. TRANSLATION OF SATELLITE IMAGES INTO ISRO SHAPEFILES

6. Pursuant to the Orders of this Hon'ble Court, the MoEF & CC communicated the shapefiles of the National Wetland Inventory

Assessment (NWIA) 2011 and the National Wetlands Decadal Change Atlas (NWDCA) 2021, prepared by ISRO's Space Application Centre (SAC), Ahmedabad. The shapefiles corresponding to 28,898 waterbodies in Tamil Nadu were extracted therefrom, making this the largest such exercise among all the States in the country.

7. Methodology for generation of shapefiles: ISRO's LISS-III sensor captures the Earth's surface as a grid of 23.5m × 23.5m pixels. Since water absorbs nearly all Near-Infrared and Shortwave-Infrared (SWIR) radiation while land and vegetation reflect it, ISRO computes the Modified Normalized Difference Water Index (MNDWI) for every pixel, classifies each pixel as "Water" or "Non-Water", and traces the outer edges of contiguous water pixels into vector polygons packaged as ESRI Shapefiles. These polygons thus represent only the water-spread visible at the moment of the satellite pass.

8. Such shapefiles, by themselves, cannot establish precise cadastral or legal boundaries on the ground, because:

- (i) LISS-III maps operate at a 1:50,000 scale where 1 mm equals 50 meters on the ground;
- (ii) Mosaicking of 365 orbital scenes causes systematic spatial shifts of 20-100m, documented across 7 districts (Kanniyakumari, Tenkasi, Tirunelveli, Thoothukudi, Nilgiris, Virudhunagar, Coimbatore) (**Annexure R-21 in Compliance Affidavit dated 26.09.2026 @pg. 106**); and
- (iii) Satellites measure instantaneous water reflectance and cannot see survey numbers, FMB sketches, A-Registers or Patta titles. The polygons must therefore be superimposed on village cadastral maps and verified against revenue records before boundaries can be physically demarcated.

C. MARKING OF BOUNDARIES FROM ISRO SHAPEFILES

9. To convert satellite shapefiles into legal boundaries, the State executes a 4-stage workflow:

- **Stage 1 (Mobile GIS Ground Truthing):** Teams use centroid coordinates to visit sites with ArcGIS Survey123 app, uploading geotagged GPS photos (**Compliance Affidavit dated 26.09.2026 @ pgs. 101-103**);
- **Stage 2 (Digital Boundary Delineation):** GIS experts superimpose satellite polygons on village cadastral maps (TNeGA/TNGIS) within a 300m buffer zone;
- **Stage 3 (Revenue Record Reconciliation):** Tahsildars examine cadastral maps, FMB sketches, A-Register extracts, Adangal, and Patta titles, fixing the wetland boundary as the outer envelope of maximum normal monsoon inundation (15+ days submerged);
- **Stage 4 (Survey & Pillar Installation):** Surveyors deploy Differential GPS (DGPS) equipment or any available survey method to extract

coordinates and erect boundary stones/pillars (at corners, bends, 50-200m intervals), logging entries in Boundary Stone Register. **(Compliance Affidavit dated 26.09.2026 @ pgs. 104, 110-176).**

STAGE 1 COMPLIANCE

10. Field officers visit the coordinates provided by the ISRO SAC shapefiles using the 'ArcGIS Survey 123' mobile app developed by NCSCM, verify the existence of the waterbody and upload geotagged photographs **(Annexure R-20 in Compliance Affidavit @ pgs. 101-103)**. The ground truthing is **100% complete** for all 28,898 waterbodies/shapefiles.

STAGE 2 COMPLIANCE

11. GIS specialists at TNSWA and Tamil Nadu e-Governance Agency (TNeGA) superimpose the ISRO SAC shapefiles onto digitised village cadastral maps and extract all revenue survey numbers within a 300-metre envelope of each polygon. This step is mandatory to correct the resolution, spatial-shift and seasonal reflectance inaccuracies inherent in satellite data. It has been COMPLETED in **26/38** Districts (15,029 waterbodies authenticated) and is actively being done in the remaining **12/38** Districts (13,869 waterbodies).

STAGE 3 COMPLIANCE

12. Stages 3 and 4 are carried out through a four-tier set up: the TNSWA (chaired by the Hon'ble Forest Minister and vice-chaired by the Chief Secretary); its Member Secretary; District Level Wetlands Management Committees chaired by the District Collectors; and Joint Field Inspection Teams (Tahsildars, VAOs, Surveyors, BDOS, WRD Engineers). These officers hold ex-officio appointments while discharging their regular statutory duties (monsoon flood relief, disaster management, law and order, revenue collection, election duties), which imposes severe operational constraints that are being tackled by the officers.

13. The present status of Revenue survey number verification is :COMPLETED in **16/38** Districts (9,202 waterbodies authenticated) Active in **22/38** Districts (19,696 waterbodies)

STAGE 4 COMPLIANCE

14. Physical boundary demarcation entails field surveying (using DGPS wherever available) and installation of boundary stones/pillars at every corner, change of direction and road/canal crossing, at 100-200m intervals on straight stretches and 50-100m on curves **(Annexure R-18 in Compliance Affidavit @ pg. 81)**. Currently, **3,113** physical boundary stones/pillars have been erected, geotagged and authenticated on

ground (surging from 290 on 18.09.2026 and 2,614 on 26.09.2026).

15. The time required varies with the extent and perimeter of each waterbody, availability of revenue records, terrain, accessibility, vegetation and weather. Tamil Nadu has the largest number of wetlands in India, and complex historical revenue record matching and monsoon inundation further constrain surveying and pillar installation. Numbering, painting and logging of each stone/pillar in the Boundary Stone Register and preparation of KML files is planned across all districts.”

5. A perusal of the above steps taken, would indicate that it seems to be in a systematic and scientific manner the exercise of ground truthing has been undertaken. Hence, we direct all the States to undertake the same and similar exercise, if not already undertaken, which shall also be in compliance with Rule 7(1) of the Rules, 2017 indicated hereinabove, expeditiously and on a war footing basis. The water bodies being source of drinking water is precious and would encompass within the four corners of right to live, as guaranteed under the Constitution of India. This Court cannot remain as a mere spectator or be unmindful of the consequences flowing from water bodies remaining unprotected. In order to achieve this avowed object, we have issued directions to the States and Wetland Authorities to undertake the exercise of ground truthing (physically) and we reiterate the same and direct that all the States / Wetland Authorities should undertake the said exercise forthwith as undertaken by the State of Tamil Nadu, if not already undertaken, and file a compliance affidavit indicating thereunder the mode and method in which the exercise has been undertaken. The said affidavit by the respective States shall be filed within an outer limit of four weeks from today. Shri Naphade, learned Senior Counsel has vociferously contended that undertaking the exercise of ground truthing by the officials would be time-consuming exercise and has prayed for reasonable time of six to nine months being granted. This Court is fully conscious of the enormous physical work that would be involved, apart from coordination between departments. Yet, being alive to the situation, we deem it proper to grant four months' time to complete the said exercise.

6. We also hasten to add the exercise of ground truthing which has been referred to hereinabove relates to wetlands, would also include the other water bodies, viz., other than the wetlands. Same shall also be identified, specified, indicated and marked in the Report and we reiterate what has been indicated in Paragraph No.8 of our order dated 19.08.2025 and for immediate reference and for the convenience, the same is extracted hereinbelow :

“8. The statistics furnished today would also reflect that wetlands which are less than 2.25 Hectares are required to be identified as prescribed under the extant Rules and the affidavits of the State Governments of Wetland Authorities shall also dwell upon as to the manner and method in which steps have been taken or being taken to protect these wetlands which are less than 2.25 Hectares which according to the statistics is around 5,55,557 as mentioned in the Wetland Atlas.”

7. It would be of benefit to note that Rule 7(1)(a) of the Rules, 2017 (supra) clearly mandates that the concerned department of the State Government or Union Territory Administration shall within a period of one year from the date of publication of the Rules, prepare a brief document for each of the wetland identified for notification providing details envisaged under clause (a) to (g) of Rule 7(1) of the Rules, 2017 which has not been undertaken by the States. It is for this precise reason the directions and orders came to be passed on 11.12.2024, 19.08.2025, 07.10.2025, 28.10.2025 and 28.07.2026. Even after nine years from the date of publication of Rules, this exercise is not completed or concluded. As such, the directions have been issued and for appropriate further direction being issued in respect of each of the States, we call upon all the States to file the affidavit indicated hereinabove within an outer limit of four weeks from today indicating the status of ground truthing being done including other water bodies.

8. The affidavits directed to be filed by the States, shall be furnished to the Nodal Counsel for compiling the same and being filed.

IA No.103382/2025

1. This application is filed for appointment of a valuer to value the cost involved in restoring the Temple Tanks of India.

2. We have heard Mr. M K Balakrishnan, party appearing in person. It is his contention that there are more than 100 *kunds* (big tanks) in Vrindavan, out of which 80% are in dilapidated condition. Hence, it is contended that a direction be issued to the authorities to entrust the work of restoration of these temple tanks to the intervener, National NGO wedded to the protection of Indian Wetlands and therefore to appoint a valuer for valuing the cost involved in restoring these dilapidated kunds in perfect condition.

3. This Court while examining prayer sought for in IA No.76117/2025 by order dated 28.07.2026 had rejected the application qua a direction sought for to the Union of India to pay a sum of Rs.80 crores for undertaking the restoration of more than 100 kunds situated in Vrindavan. This Court also observed that the water bodies in the entire country having been identified by SAC Atlas vests with the wetland authority of the States and or different instrumentalities of the States and appropriate directions to the State and its instrumentalities, would be issued on receipt of the Report that has been called for. Hence, we have rejected the prayer sought for in IA 76117/2025.

4. In view of the same, question of appointing a valuer, at this stage, that too for ascertaining the condition of the tanks, does not arise. IA No.103382/2025 stands rejected.

List the matters on 16.11.2026.

(RASHI GUPTA)
AR-cum-PS

(AVGV RAMU)
COURT MASTER (NSH)