



(108)

**IN THE HIGH COURT OF PUNJAB AND HARYANA AT
CHANDIGARH**

CWP-PIL-194-2024 (O&M)

Date of decision:- 10.01.2025

Court on its own motion

...Petitioner(s)

Versus

State of Punjab and others

...Respondent(s)

CORAM: **HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE SHEEL NAGU, CHIEF JUSTICE**
HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE SUDHIR SINGH

Present:- Mr. Anurag Chopra, Additional Advocate General, Punjab.
 Mr. Deepak Balyan, Additional Advocate General, Haryana.
 Mr. J.S. Chandail, Additional Standing Counsel, UT Chandigarh,
 with Mr. Navneet Shrivastava, Deputy Conservator of Forests,
 Chandigarh (through video conferencing).

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SHEEL NAGU, C.J. (ORAL)

1. This Court had taken cognizance of the issue of depleting green cover in the States of Punjab and Haryana as well as Union Territory, Chandigarh based upon a judicial order dated 29.08.2024 passed by the learned Single Judge of this Court in CRM-M-35735-2024 titled ***Hardeep Kumar Ranga Vs State of Punjab and another***, where it was, *inter-alia*, stated thus:-

“6. This Court is of the considered opinion that in such cases and for the good of larger public, the parties can be burdened with nominal costs to plant trees bearing in mind the rising pollution levels, diminishing forest cover and notable changes in the climate, which require us to be more conscious of our environment and take active steps to mitigate the damage. It is often said that the best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago, and the next best time is now. Planting of more trees would not only provide fresh clean air but also assist in preventing soil erosion and providing a habitat to pollinators like bees, birds etc. The entire exercise would be beneficial to us as well as our future generations.

7. As such, the Principal Secretaries, Department of Forests, Punjab and Haryana as well as the Chief Conservator of Forests, Union Territory, Chandigarh are requested to send their suggestions on or before the next date of hearing for the purpose of devising a mechanism in order to streamline the tree plantation process and

ensuring that the litigants are not put to any inconvenience on account of a convoluted and cumbersome procedure.”

2. On the last occasion i.e. 28.10.2024, Mr. Salil Sabhlok, learned Senior Deputy Advocate, Punjab, informed that corpus of Rs. 10 lacs for “Nyay Vans” Scheme has been created for facilitating green cover within the State of Punjab.
3. Today, the State of Haryana has also produced a notification dated 19.07.2024 notifying “Van Mitra Scheme” which is said to be an initiative of the Government of Haryana to encourage community participation in tree plantation activities on non-forest lands.
4. We record our appreciation for the efforts taken by the States of Punjab and Haryana in this regard.
5. As regards the U.T. Administration, Mr. J.S. Chandail, learned Additional Standing Counsel, U.T., Chandigarh as well as Mr. Navneet Shrivastava, Deputy Conservator of Forests, Chandigarh, who is appearing through virtual mode, has informed that 51 per cent of the area of Chandigarh is under green cover and 2.98 lac saplings have been planted in the last financial year and the Chandigarh Administration is sensitive about maintaining and increasing the green cover of the Heritage City.
6. From the aforesaid, we are satisfied that efforts are being made by the States of Punjab and Haryana as well as U.T., Chandigarh to ensure maintenance and increase in green cover. We are hopeful that such efforts would continue to be made by the States of Punjab and Haryana as well as U.T., Chandigarh in future as well.
7. The petition, accordingly, stands disposed of.

(SHEEL NAGU)
CHIEF JUSTICE

(SUDHIR SINGH)
JUDGE

10.01.2025
Amodh Sharma

Whether speaking/reasoned	Yes/No
Whether reportable	Yes/No