



**IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT BOMBAY,
NAGPUR BENCH, AT NAGPUR.**

SUO MOTU PUBLIC INTEREST LITIGATION NO.24 OF 2026

Court's on its own motion

vs.

The State of Maharashtra, Thr. Chief Secretary, Mumbai and ors.

Office Notes, Office Memoranda of Coram,
appearances, Court's orders of directions
and Registrar's orders

Court's or Judge's orders

Shri N. S. Rao, Assistant Government Pleader for respondents/State.

CORAM : ANIL S. KILOR AND RAJ D. WAKODE, JJ.

DATED : 7th May, 2026

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News articles published in Marathi daily newspaper Maharashtra Times so also in English daily newspapers Times of India and The Hitavada highlight an issue concerning grave environmental concern and public interest relating to the disappearance and rapid degradation of several lakes within the city of Nagpur.

2. The city of Nagpur has long been identified with a network of natural and man-made water bodies that played an essential ecological role in maintaining environmental balance, supporting biodiversity, recharging groundwater and regulating the city's micro climate. These lakes also functioned as natural flood buffers and provided vital open ecological spaces within the rapidly urbanizing city. However, recent developments indicate that this important ecological heritage is under severe threat. Media reports based upon information obtained under the Right to Information Act from the Public Health Engineering Department of the Nagpur Municipal Corporation reveal a deeply concerning situation. The RTI, filed by social activist Abhay Kolarkar, discloses that two lakes in the city, namely Sanjay Gandhi Lake and Dobi Lake, have effectively disappeared from the official inventory of

Nagpur's water bodies. The records indicate that these lakes have either merged or deteriorated to such an extent that they are no longer recognized as separate lakes in the municipal records. According to the official information provided by the civic authorities, only eleven lakes are presently recorded as surviving within the city limits. These include Ambazari Lake, Futala Lake, Sonegaon Lake, Pandharabodi Lake, Police Line Takli Lake, Binaki Mangalwari Lake, Naik Lake, Gorewada Lake, Sakkardara Lake, Lendi Talao and Gandhisagar Lake. Alarmingly, the civic body has further acknowledged that only five of these lakes, namely Gorewada, Ambazari, Sonegaon, Sakkardara and Gandhisagar, are currently under the jurisdiction of the Nagpur Municipal Corporation, while the remaining lakes are controlled by various other governmental agencies. Urban planners and environmental experts have pointed out that such fragmented ownership and administrative control over lakes has resulted in a lack of accountability and coordinated conservation efforts, thereby accelerating their deterioration. Where the material on record indicates degradation of a lake or water body affecting access to clean water or environmental quality, the issue assumes a constitutional dimension under Article 21. The Supreme Court in *Subhash Kumar v. State of Bihar*, (1991) 1 SCC 598, has held that the right to life includes the right to enjoy pollution-free water and air. Impairment of water bodies would therefore fall within the ambit of writ jurisdiction.

Further, in *Indian Council for Enviro-Legal Action v. Union of India*, (1996) 3 SCC 212, environmental degradation affecting water sources has been treated as having direct consequences on public health and survival, thereby justifying intervention by constitutional courts.

3. Thus, the above referred news articles have raised a serious issue pertaining to the lakes in the city and in view of the same, we

treat the news articles as Suo Motu Public Interest Litigation.

However, in order to give an opportunity to the concerned Authorities i.e. the District Collector, Nagpur and the Municipal Commissioner, Nagpur Municipal Corporation, we, instead of issuing notice to the respondents, dispose of the present SMPIL with following directions :

- (a) The District Collector, Nagpur and the Municipal Commissioner, Nagpur Municipal Corporation are directed to look into the aforesaid issue and conduct the necessary enquiry in order to take the steps essential for conserving the lakes in the city.
- (b) The aforesaid Authorities are further directed to submit action taken report within a period of four months from today to the Registrar (Judicial) of this Court.

4. SMPIL is disposed of accordingly.

(Raj D. Wakode, J.)

(Anil S. Kilor, J.)