

Bill No. XVIII of 2024

THE WATER (PREVENTION AND CONTROL OF
POLLUTION) AMENDMENT BILL, 2024

A

BILL

further to amend the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974.

6 of 1974.

WHEREAS in pursuance of clause (1) of article 252 of the Constitution, the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974 had been passed by Parliament;

AND WHEREAS it is considered necessary to make certain amendments thereto for decriminalising and rationalising minor offences to further enhance trust-based governance for ease of living and doing business;

AND WHEREAS in pursuance of clause (1) of article 252 of the Constitution read with clause (2) thereof, resolutions have been passed by the Legislative Assemblies of the States of Himachal Pradesh and Rajasthan to the effect that the said Act should be amended by an Act of Parliament for the purposes hereinafter appearing.

BE it enacted by Parliament in the Seventy-fifth Year of the Republic of India as follows:—

1. (1) This Act may be called the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Amendment Act, 2024.

Short title,
application and
commencement.

(2) It applies, in the first instance, to the whole of the States of Himachal Pradesh and Rajasthan and the Union territories; and it shall apply to such other State which adopts this Act by resolution passed in that behalf under clause (1) of article 252 of the Constitution read with clause (2) thereof.

(3) It shall come into force, at once in the States of Himachal Pradesh and Rajasthan and the Union territories, and in any other State which adopts this Act under clause (1) of article 252 of the Constitution read with clause (2) thereof on the date of such adoption.

Amendment of section 4.

2. In section 4 of the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974 (hereinafter referred to as the principal Act), in sub-section (2), in clause (a), after the words "State Government", the words "in such manner as may be prescribed by the Central Government" shall be inserted.

6 of 1974.

Amendment of section 5.

3. In section 5 of the principal Act, in sub-section (9), after the word "prescribed", the words "by the Central Government" shall be inserted.

Amendment of section 25.

4. In section 25 of the principal Act, in sub-section (1), for the proviso, the following proviso shall be substituted, namely:—

"Provided that the Central Government may in consultation with the Central Board, by notification in the Official Gazette, exempt certain categories of industrial plants from the provisions of this sub-section."

Insertion of new section 27A.

5. After section 27 of the principal Act, the following section shall be inserted, namely:—

Power to issue guidelines.

"27A. (1) Notwithstanding anything in this Act, the Central Government in consultation with the Central Board, may, by notification in the Official Gazette, issue guidelines on the matters relating to the grant, refusal or cancellation of consent by any State Board for establishment of any industry, operation or process, or treatment and disposal system or to bringing into use of a new or altered outlet including the mechanism for time-bound disposal of the application made under section 25 or period of validity of such consent.

(2) Every State Board, in discharge of its functions for the purposes of grant, refusal or cancellation of consent under section 25 or section 27 shall act in accordance with the guidelines issued under sub-section (1)."

Substitution of new sections 41 and 41A for section 41.

6. For section 41 of the principal Act, the following sections shall be substituted, namely:—

Failure to comply with provisions of section 20 or directions issued thereunder.

"41. (1) Whoever contravenes or does not comply with the directions given under sub-section (2) or sub-section (3) of section 20, within such time as may be specified in the direction, shall, in respect of each such contravention or non-compliance, be liable to pay a penalty which shall not be less than ten thousand rupees, but which may extend to fifteen lakh rupees.

(2) Where any person continues contravention or non-compliance under sub-section (1), he shall be liable to pay an additional penalty of ten thousand rupees every day during which such contravention continues.

5	<p>41A. (1) Whoever contravenes or does not comply with any order or direction issued under clause (c) of sub-section (1) of section 32 or any direction issued by a court under sub-section (2) of section 33 or any direction issued under section 33A, shall, in respect of each such contravention or non-compliance, be liable to pay the penalty which shall not be less than ten thousand rupees, but which may extend to fifteen lakh rupees.</p>	<p>Failure to comply with provisions of section 32, or directions issued under section 33 or section 33A.</p>
10	<p>(2) Where any person continues contravention or non-compliance under sub-section (1), he shall be liable to pay an additional penalty of ten thousand rupees every day during which such contravention continues.”.</p>	
	<p>7. In section 42 of the principal Act,—</p>	<p>Amendment of section 42.</p>
	<p>(a) in sub-section (1), for the long line, the following long line shall be substituted, namely:—</p>	
15	<p>“shall be liable to pay penalty which shall not be less than ten thousand rupees, but which may extend to fifteen lakh rupees.”;</p>	
	<p>(b) for sub-section (2), the following sub-section shall be substituted, namely:—</p>	
20	<p>“(2) Where any person continues contravention or non-compliance under sub-section (1), he shall be liable to pay an additional penalty of ten thousand rupees every day during which such contravention continues.”.</p>	
	<p>8. For sections 43 and 44 of the principal Act, the following sections shall be substituted, namely:—</p>	<p>Substitution of new sections for sections 43 and 44.</p>
25	<p>“43. Whoever contravenes the provisions of section 24, shall be liable to pay the penalty which shall not be less than ten thousand rupees, but which may extend to fifteen lakh rupees and where such contravention continues, he shall be liable to pay an additional penalty of ten thousand rupees every day during which such contravention continues.</p>	<p>Penalty for contravention of provisions of section 24.</p>
30	<p>44. Where for the purpose of grant of a consent in pursuance of the provisions of section 25 or section 26, the use of a meter or gauge or other measure or monitoring device is required and such device is used for the purposes of those provisions, any person who knowingly or wilfully alters or interferes with that device so as to prevent it from monitoring or measuring correctly shall be liable to pay penalty which shall not be less than ten thousand rupees, but which may extend to fifteen lakh rupees.”.</p>	<p>Penalty for contravention of section 25 or section 26.</p>
35	<p>9. Section 45 of the principal Act shall be omitted.</p>	<p>Omission of section 45.</p>
	<p>10. For section 45A of the principal Act, the following sections shall be substituted, namely:—</p>	<p>Substitution of new sections 45A to 45E for section 45A.</p>
40	<p>‘45A. If any person contravenes any of the provisions of this Act or any order or direction issued thereunder, for which no penalty has been provided for in this Act, shall be liable to pay the penalty which shall not be less than ten thousand rupees, but which may extend to fifteen lakh rupees, and where such contravention continues, he shall be liable to pay an additional penalty which may extend to ten thousand rupees for every day during which such contravention continues.</p>	<p>Penalty for contravention of certain provisions of Act.</p>
45	<p>45B. (1) The Central Government, for the purposes of determining the penalties under the provisions of this Act shall appoint an officer not below the rank of Joint Secretary to the Government of India or a Secretary to the</p>	<p>Adjudicating officer.</p>

State Government to be the adjudicating officer, to hold an inquiry and to impose the penalty in the manner, as may be prescribed:

Provided that the Central Government may appoint as many adjudicating officers as may be required.

(2) The adjudicating officer may summon and enforce the attendance of any person acquainted with the facts and circumstances of the case to give evidence or to produce any document, which in the opinion of the adjudicating officer, may be useful for or relevant to the subject-matter of the inquiry and if, on such inquiry, he is satisfied that the person concerned has contravened the provisions of this Act, he may determine such penalty as he thinks fit under the provisions of this Act:

Provided that no such penalty shall be imposed without giving the person concerned an opportunity of being heard in the matter.

(3) The amount of penalty imposed under the provisions of sections 41, 41A, 42, 43, 44, 45A and 48, shall be in addition to the liability to pay relief or compensation under section 15 read with section 17 of the National Green Tribunal Act, 2010. 19 of 2010.

Appeal.

45C. (1) Any person aggrieved by the order passed by the adjudicating officer under section 45B may prefer an appeal to the National Green Tribunal established under section 3 of the National Green Tribunal Act, 2010. 20 19 of 2010.

(2) Every appeal under sub-section (1) shall be filed within sixty days from the date on which the copy of the order made by the adjudicating officer is received by the aggrieved person.

(3) The National Green Tribunal may, after giving the parties to the appeal an opportunity of being heard, pass such order as it thinks fit, confirming, modifying or setting aside the order appealed against. 25

(4) Where an appeal is preferred against any order of the adjudicating officer under sub-section (1), such appeal shall not be entertained by the Tribunal unless such person has deposited with the Tribunal ten per cent. of the amount of the penalty imposed by the adjudicating officer. 30

Penalty amount to be credited to Environmental Protection Fund.

45D. Where an adjudicating officer imposes penalty or additional penalty, as the case may be, under the provisions of this Act, the amount of such penalty shall be credited to the Environmental Protection Fund established under section 16 of the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986. 35 29 of 1986.

Offences for failure to comply with provisions of section 25 or 26 and for failure to pay penalty.

45E. (1) Whoever fails to comply with the provisions of section 25 or section 26, in respect of each such failure, shall be punishable with imprisonment for a term which shall not be less than one year and six months but which may extend to six years and with fine, and in case the failure continues, with an additional fine which may extend to fifty thousand rupees for every day during which such failure continues after the conviction for the first such failure. 40

(2) If the failure referred to in sub-section (1) continues beyond a period of one year after the date of conviction, the offender shall be punishable with imprisonment for a term which shall not be less than two years but which may extend to seven years and with fine. 45

(3) Where any person fails to pay the penalty or the additional penalty, as the case may be, imposed under the provisions of this Act within ninety days of such imposition, he shall be punishable with imprisonment for a term which may extend to three years, or with fine which may extend to twice the amount of the penalty or additional penalty so imposed or with both. 50

5 (4) Where any offence under sub-section (1) or sub-section (2) or sub-section (3) has been committed by a company, every person who, at the time the offence was committed, was directly in charge of, and was responsible to, the company for the conduct of the business of the company, as well as the company, shall be deemed to be guilty of such offence and he shall be liable to be proceeded against and punished accordingly:

10 Provided that nothing in this sub-section shall render any such person liable to any punishment provided in sub-section (1) or sub-section (2) or sub-section (3), if he proves that the offence was committed without his knowledge or that he exercised all due diligence to prevent the commission of such offence.

15 (5) Notwithstanding anything in sub-section (4), where an offence has been committed by a company and it is proved that the offence has been committed with the consent or connivance of, or is attributable to any neglect on the part of, any director, manager, secretary or other officer of the company, such director, manager, secretary or other officer shall also have deemed to be guilty of that offence and shall be liable to be proceeded against and punished accordingly.

20 *Explanation.*—For the purposes of this section,—

(a) “company” includes body corporate, firm, trust, society and any other association of individuals;

25 (b) “director”, includes director of the company, partner of the firm, members of the society or trust or member of any association of individuals, as the case may be.’

11. Section 47 of the principal Act shall be omitted.

12. For section 48 of the principal Act, the following section shall be substituted, namely:—

30 “48. (1) Where contravention of any provision of this Act has been committed by any Department of the Central Government or State Government, the Head of the Department shall be liable to pay the penalty equal to one month of his basic salary:

35 Provided that such Head of the Department shall not be liable for such contravention, if he proves that the contravention was committed without his knowledge or instructions or that he exercised all due diligence to prevent such contravention.

40 (2) Where any contravention under sub-section (1) is attributable to any neglect on the part of, any officer, other than the Head of the Department, such officer shall be liable to pay the penalty equal to one month of his basic salary:

Provided that such officer shall not be liable for the contravention, if he proves that he exercised all due diligence to avoid such contravention.”

13. In section 49 of the principal Act, in sub-section (1), after clause (a), the following clause shall be inserted, namely:—

45 “(aa) the adjudicating officer or any officer authorised by him in this behalf; or”.

Omission of section 47.

Substitution of new section for section 48.

Penalty for contravention by Government Department.

Amendment of section 49.

Amendment of
section 63.

14. In section 63 of the principal Act, in sub-section (2),—

(i) after clause (a), the following clause shall be inserted, namely:—

“(aa) the manner of nomination of the chairman of the State Board and the terms and conditions of service of the chairman of the State Board under clause (a) of sub-section (2) of section 4 and under sub-section (9) of section 5;”;

(ii) after clause (m), the following clause shall be inserted, namely:—

“(ma) the manner of holding inquiry and imposing penalties by the adjudicating officer under section 45B;”.

Amendment of
section 64.

15. In section 64 of the principal Act, in sub-section (2), in clause (e), for the words, brackets and figures “the chairman and the member-secretary of the State Board under sub-section (9) of section 5 and”, the words “the member-secretary of the State Board” shall be substituted.

STATEMENT OF OBJECTS AND REASONS

The Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974 was enacted under article 252 of the Constitution to provide for the prevention and control of water pollution and the maintaining and restoring of wholesomeness of water, for the establishment, with a view to carrying out the purposes aforesaid, of Boards for the prevention and control of water pollution, for conferring on and assigning to such Boards powers and functions relating thereto and for matters connected therewith. As required by the provisions of article 252 of the Constitution, the Legislative Assemblies of States of Himachal Pradesh and Rajasthan have passed Resolution for amending the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974 as proposed in the present Bill.

2. The corner stone of democratic governance lies in the Government trusting its own people and institutions. A web of outdated rules and regulations causes trust deficit. It has been the endeavour of the Government to achieve the principle of “Minimum Government Maximum Governance”. The said Act, *inter alia*, prescribes various penal provisions for non-compliance or contravention of the provisions thereof punishable with imprisonments. The imprisonment provisions for minor violations which are simple infringements not leading to any injury to humans or damage to the environment many a times cause harassment to business and citizen and is not in consonance with the spirit of Ease of Living and Ease of Doing Business.

3. The Bill proposes for rationalising criminal provisions and ensuring that citizens, business and the companies operate without fear of imprisonment for minor, technical or procedural defaults. Also the nature of penal consequence of an offence committed must be commensurate with the seriousness of offence. This Bill seeks to establish a balance between the severity of the offence and the gravity of the punishment provided in this regard.

4. The Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Amendment Bill, 2024, *inter alia*, seeks to provide—

(a) the manner of nomination of the chairman of the State Pollution Control Board is to be prescribed by the Central Government;

(b) that the Central Government may exempt certain categories of industrial plants from the application of section 25 relating to restriction on new outlets and new discharges;

(c) that the Central Government may issue guidelines on the matters relating to the grant, refusal or cancellation of consent by any State Board for establishment of any industry, operation or process, or treatment and disposal system or bringing into use of new or altered outlets, etc.;

(d) for decriminalising of minor offences and replacing it with monetary penalty in case of continuation of contravention;

(e) the manner of adjudication of penalties by the adjudicating officer who shall be an officer of not less than the rank of Joint Secretary to the Government of India or Secretary to the State Government;

(f) punishment for failure to comply with the provisions of section 25 relating to restrictions on new outlets and new discharges and section 26 relating to existing discharge of sewage or trade effluent, etc.;

(g) the amount of penalty imposed is to be credited to the Environmental Protection Fund established under section 16 of the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986.

5. The Bill seeks to achieve the above objectives.

NEW DELHI;

BHUPENDER YADAV.

The 31st January, 2024.

FINANCIAL MEMORANDUM

The Bill, if enacted, would not involve any financial expenditure either recurring or non-recurring from the Consolidated Fund of India.

MEMORANDUM REGARDING DELEGATED LEGISLATION

Clause 2 of the Bill seeks to amend section 4 to confer power upon the Central Government to make rules to provide for manner of nomination of chairman of State Pollution Control Board.

Clause 3 of the Bill seeks to amend section 5 to confer power upon the Central Government to make rules to provide the other terms and conditions of service of the chairman.

Clause 10 of the Bill, *inter alia*, seeks to insert section 45B which confers power upon the Central Government to make rules to provide for the manner to hold an inquiry and to impose penalty by the adjudicating officer for the purpose of the Bill.

The rules made by the Central Government shall be laid, as soon as they are made, before each House of Parliament.

The matters in respect of which such rules may be made are matters of procedures and administrative details and it is not practicable to provide for them in the Bill itself. The delegation of legislative power is, therefore, of a normal character.

ANNEXURE

EXTRACTS FROM THE WATER (PREVENTION AND CONTROL
OF POLLUTION) ACT, 1974

(6 OF 1974)

Constitution of State Board.	*	*	*	*	*
	4. (1)	*	*	*	*
	(2) A State Board shall consist of the following members, namely:—				
	(a) a chairman, being a person having special knowledge or practical experience in respect of matters relating to environmental protection or a person having knowledge and experience in administering institutions dealing with the matters aforesaid, to be nominated by the State Government:				
	Provided that the chairman may be either whole-time or part-time as the State Government may think fit;				
Terms and conditions of service of members.	*	*	*	*	*
	5. (1)	*	*	*	*
	(9) The other terms and conditions of service of the chairman shall be such as may be prescribed.				
Restrictions on new outlets and new discharges.	*	*	*	*	*
	25. (1) Subject to the provisions of this section, no person shall, without the previous consent of the State Board,—				
	(a) establish or take any steps to establish any industry, operation or process, or any treatment and disposal system or any extension or addition thereto, which is likely to discharge sewage or trade effluent into a stream or well or sewer or on land (such discharge being hereafter in this section referred to as discharge of sewage); or				
	(b) bring into use any new or altered outlet for the discharge of sewage; or				
	(c) begin to make any new discharge of sewage:				
	Provided that a person in the process of taking any steps to establish any industry, operation or process immediately before the commencement of the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Amendment Act, 1988, for which no consent was necessary prior to such commencement, may continue to do so for a period of three months from such commencement or, if he has made an application for such consent, within the said period of three months, till the disposal of such application.				

53 of 1988.

CHAPTER VII

PENALTIES AND PROCEDURE

Failure to comply with directions under sub-section (2) or sub-section (3) of section 20, or orders issued under clause (c) of sub-section (1) of section 32 or directions issued under subsection (2) of section 33 or section 33A.	*	*	*	*	*
	41. (1) Whoever fails to comply with the direction given under sub-section (2) or sub-section (3) of section 20 within such time as may be specified in the direction shall, on conviction, be punishable with imprisonment for a term which may extend to three months or with fine which may extend to ten thousand rupees or with both and in case the failure continues, with an additional fine which may extend to five thousand rupees for every day during which such failure continues after the conviction for the first such failure.				
	(2) Whoever fails to comply with any order issued under clause (c) of sub-section (1) of section 32 or any direction issued by a court under sub-section (2) of section 33 or any direction issued under section 33A shall, in respect of each such failure and on conviction, be punishable with imprisonment for a term				

which shall not be less than one year and six months but which may extend to six years and with fine, and in case the failure continues, with an additional fine which may extend to five thousand rupees for every day during which such failure continues after the conviction for the first such failure.

(3) If the failure referred to in sub-section (2) continues beyond a period of one year after the date of conviction, the offender shall, on conviction, be punishable with imprisonment for a term which shall not be less than two years but which may extend to seven years and with fine.

42. (1) Whoever—

Penalty for certain acts.

(a) destroys, pulls down, removes, injures or defaces any pillar, post or stake fixed in the ground or any notice or other matter put up, inscribed or placed, by or under the authority of the Board, or

(b) obstructs any person acting under the orders or directions of the Board from exercising his powers and performing his functions under this Act, or

(c) damages any works or property belonging to the Board, or

(d) fails to furnish to any officer or other employee of the Board any information required by him for the purpose of this Act, or

(e) fails to intimate the occurrence of any accident or other unforeseen act or event under section 31 to the Board and other authorities or agencies as required by that section, or

(f) in giving any information which he is required to give under this Act, knowingly or wilfully makes a statement which is false in any material particular, or

(g) for the purpose of obtaining any consent under section 25 or section 26, knowingly or wilfully makes a statement which is false in any material particular,

shall be punishable with imprisonment for a term which may extend to three months or with fine which may extend to ten thousand rupees or with both.

(2) Where for the grant of a consent in pursuance of the provisions of section 25 or section 26 the use of meter or gauge or other measure or monitoring device is required and such device is used for the purposes of those provisions, any person who knowingly or wilfully alters or interferes with that device so as to prevent it from monitoring or measuring correctly shall be punishable with imprisonment for a term which may extend to three months or with fine which may extend to ten thousand rupees or with both.

43. Whoever contravenes the provisions of section 24 shall be punishable with imprisonment for a term which shall not be less than one year and six months but which may extend to six years and with fine.

Penalty for contravention of provisions of section 24.

44. Whoever contravenes the provisions of section 25 or section 26 shall be punishable with imprisonment for a term which shall not be less than one year and six months but which may extend to six years and with fine.

Penalty for contravention of section 25 or section 26.

45. If any person who has been convicted of any offence under section 24 or section 25 or section 26 is again found guilty of an offence involving a contravention of the same provision, he shall, on the second and on every subsequent conviction, be punishable with imprisonment for a term which shall not be less than two years but which may extend to seven years and with fine:

Enhanced penalty after previous conviction.

Provided that for the purpose of this section no cognizance shall be taken of any conviction made more than two years before the commission of the offence which is being punished.

Penalty for contravention of certain provisions of the Act.

45A. Whoever contravenes any of the provisions of this Act or fails to comply with any order or direction given under this Act, for which no penalty has been elsewhere provided in this Act, shall be punishable with imprisonment which may extend to three months or with fine which may extend to ten thousand rupees or with both, and in the case of a continuing contravention or failure, with an additional fine which may extend to five thousand rupees for every day during which such contravention or failure continues after conviction for the first such contravention or failure.

* * * * *

Offences by companies.

47. (1) Where an offence under this Act has been committed by a company, every person who at the time the offence was committed was in charge of, and was responsible to the company for the conduct of, the business of the company, as well as the company, shall be deemed to be guilty of the offence and shall be liable to be proceeded against and punished accordingly:

Provided that nothing contained in this sub-section shall render any such person liable to any punishment provided in this Act if he proves that the offence was committed without his knowledge or that he exercised all due diligence to prevent the commission of such offence.

(2) Notwithstanding anything contained in sub-section (1), where, an offence under this Act has been committed by a company and it is proved that the offence has been committed with the consent or connivance of, or is attributable to any neglect on the part of, any director, manager, secretary or other officer of the company, such director, manager, secretary or other officer shall also be deemed to be guilty of that offence and shall be liable to be proceeded against and punished accordingly.

Explanation.—For the purposes of this section,—

(a) “company” means any body corporate, and includes a firm or other association of individuals; and

(b) “director” in relation to a firm means a partner in the firm.

Offences by Government Departments.

48. Where an offence under this Act has been committed by any Department of Government, the Head of the Department shall be deemed to be guilty of the offence and shall be liable to be proceeded against and punished accordingly:

Provided that nothing contained in this section shall render such Head of the Department liable to any punishment if he proves that the offence was committed without his knowledge or that he exercised all due diligence to prevent the commission of such offence.

Cognizance of offences.

49. (1) No court shall take cognizance of any offence under this Act except on a complaint made by—

(a) a Board or any officer authorised in this behalf by it; or

(b) any person who has given notice of not less than sixty days, in the manner prescribed, of the alleged offence and of his intention to make a complaint, to the Board or officer authorised as aforesaid,

and no court inferior to that of a Metropolitan Magistrate or a Judicial Magistrate of the first class shall try any offence punishable under this Act.

* * * * *

Power of Central Government to make rules.

63. (1) * * * * *

(2) In particular, and without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing power, such rules may provide for all or any of the following matters, namely:—

(a) the terms and conditions of service of the members (other than the chairman and member-secretary) of the Central Board under sub-section (8) of section 5;

* * * * *

64. (1) * * * *

Power of State Government to make rules.

(2) In particular, and without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing power, such rules may provide for all or any of the following matters, namely:—

* * * * *

(e) the terms and conditions of service of the chairman and the member-secretary of the State Board under sub-section (9) of section 5 and under sub-section (1) of section 12;

* * * * *

RAJYA SABHA

A
BILL

further to amend the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974.

*(Shri Bhupender Yadav, Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change
and Labour & Employment)*