

NGT wants all brick kilns in NCR inspected

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GHAZIABAD: The National Green Tribunal (NGT) on Wednesday issued notices to Union environment ministry and the governments of the states of Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Rajasthan and Delhi over illegal operation of brick kilns in these four states.

The tribunal also directed the state pollution control board of each of the four states to inspect all brickfields mentioned in the petition and examine if they are complying with the environmental norms.

The petitioner, Shailesh Singh, a Delhi-based environmentalist, has listed seven districts of Uttar Pradesh, including Ghaziabad and Gautam Budh Nagar, Baghpat, Meerut, Hapur and Muzaffarnagar, 13 districts of Haryana, including Gurgaon, and two districts (Alwar and Bharatpur) of Rajasthan,

besides Delhi in the petition.

"In the event of them being non-compliant, the state PCBs shall initiate appropriate action against them in accordance with law. Report of compliance shall be filed on the next date of hearing, March 6," the NGT order said.

Singh alleged that brick kilns in these four states have been operating without complying with the pollution norms, causing immense air and water pollution and also without obtaining necessary clearances from the authorities concerned.

Giving reference of a 2017 Central Pollution Control Board report, Singh said of 2,125 brick kilns in seven districts of Uttar Pradesh located in the National Capital Region, some 1,728 are operating illegally. Likewise, of 172 brick kilns in Alwar, 109 are

running without permission, while in Bharatpur 13 of 110 do not have approval. In Gurgaon, three of 11 are running without approval.

"Smoke emitting from brick kilns not only affects the locals residing nearby but also has an adverse impact on workers who are employed there. They are often found working in despicable condition, and they are overexploited and there is no compliance of provisions of the law concerning women employees.

"Moreover, brick kilns have been issued a direction to install zig-zag chimneys in order to reduce air pollution but the industries have completely failed to comply with such directions," he said.