

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF INDIA

(CIVIL APPELLATE JURISDICTION)

**CONTEMPT PETITION (CIVIL) DIARY NO. 36812 OF 2024.
IN**

WRIT PETITION (CIVIL) NO. 1040 OF 2019

IN THE MATTER OF:-

ANUJ NAKADE

...PETITIONER

VERSUS

DR. POONAM M ALAKONDAIAH & Ors.

....RESPONDENTS

**REPLY ON BEHALF OF THE
RESPONDENT NO. 31
STATE OF UTTARAKHAND**

**PAPERBOOK
(FOR INDEX KINDLY SEE INSIDE)**

ADVOCATE FOR RESPONDENT NO. 31 : AKSHAT KUMAR

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF INDIA
CIVIL ORIGINAL JURISDICTION
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INDEX

Sr. No.	Particulars	Page No.
1.	Reply on behalf of Respondent No. 31 State of Uttarakhand.	1 - 9



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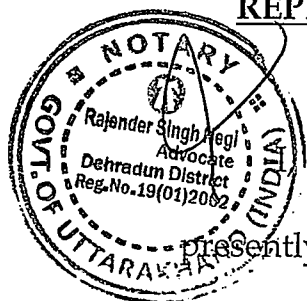
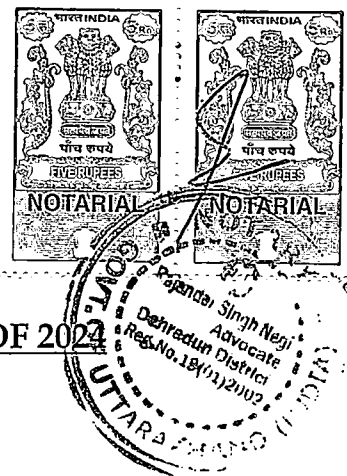
REPLY ON BEHALF OF THE RESPONDENT NO. 31 STATE OF
UTTARAKHAND

Radha Raturi w/o of shri Anil Raturi, aged about 60 years,

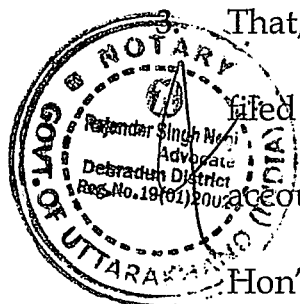
presently posted as Chief Secretary, Government of Uttarakhand, do
hereby solemnly affirm and state as under:

1. That in my official capacity stated above, I am fully acquainted with the facts and circumstances of the case. I am authorized by the respondent State of Uttarakhand to file this affidavit/reply on their behalf and, therefore, I am competent to swear this Affidavit.
2. That the present reply is being filed on behalf of the Respondent No. 31/State of Uttarakhand in the above captioned Contempt Petition.

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The present Contempt Petition has been filed by the Petitioner in W.P. (C) No. 1040 of 2019, *Pravasi Legal Cell Vs Union of India* wherein vide order/judgement dated 20.03.2023 this Hon'ble Court had directed all the State Governments/Union Territories to set up and operationalize online web portals so that information sought under the Right to Information Act 2005 is made available in respect of all public authorities falling within its jurisdiction and it was directed to complete this exercise within a period of three months from the date of the order.



That, it is stated that the above captioned Contempt petition has been filed before this Hon'ble Court, seeking action to ensure accountability and enforcement of the order as passed by this Hon'ble Court in W.P. (C) No. 1040 of 2019.

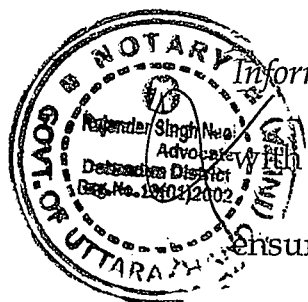
4. At the very outset, it is most humbly and respectfully submitted that the Answering Respondent holds this Hon'ble Court in the highest esteem and has deep and unwavering respect for its authority. The Answering Respondent has taken every necessary step to ensure full compliance with the directives, orders, and instructions issued by this Hon'ble Court.

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5. The *Online Right to Information (RTI) Portal* in the State of Uttarakhand is functioning smoothly and efficiently, in compliance with the directives issued by the Hon'ble Court. The State Government, through concerted efforts and technical collaboration with the National Informatics Centre (NIC), has ensured that the portal operates seamlessly, providing citizens with a reliable digital platform to file RTI applications, submit appeals, and track the status of their requests.

6. It is submitted that the National Informatics Centre (NIC) has successfully designed, developed and launched the *Online Right to Information (RTI) Portal* for the State of Uttarakhand in accordance with the Guidelines for Indian Government Websites (GIGW) 3.0, ensuring that it meets the highest standards of usability, accessibility, and security. The GIGW 3.0 guidelines, developed by the National Informatics Centre (NIC) and Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), set a comprehensive framework for designing and managing government websites to ensure they serve citizens effectively, particularly in the digital age.

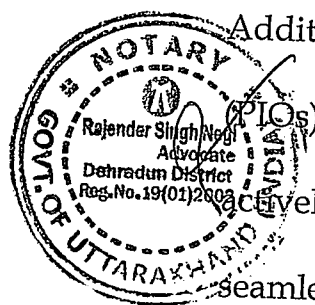
7. This portal, now operational, can be accessed by the public at the following web address: <https://rtionline.uk.gov.in>. The State of Uttarakhand, through this initiative, has provided a streamlined



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digital platform that empowers citizens to file RTI requests in a convenient and efficient manner. This step marks a significant move towards fostering greater transparency, enhancing public access to government-held information, and promoting accountability.

8. It is pertinent to mention here that the portal is not only designed to accept RTI applications but also enables citizens to deposit the necessary application fees and submit first and second appeals or complaints online. Currently, the portal links 249 public authorities across 105 departments of the Uttarakhand Government.



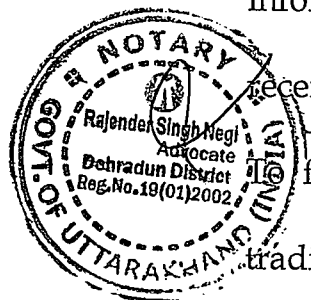
Additionally, IDs for a total of 4,150 Public Information Officers (PIOs) have been created on this platform. The State Government is actively working to ensure that all departments and offices are seamlessly integrated into this digital platform. This integration aims to provide a centralized, user-friendly system that further strengthens digital governance in the state.

9. The code for the RTI Online Portal, originally developed by the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT), Government of India, in collaboration with the NIC, has been adapted and implemented for the State of Uttarakhand. This has been accomplished through joint efforts between the NIC at the national and state levels. The state's online RTI portal has been modeled on the system already

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operational within the DoPT. This ensures a standardized and efficient mechanism for managing RTI applications within the state.

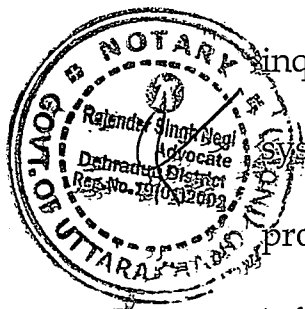
10. Any citizen of India can access the Uttarakhand RTI portal to request information from any public authority office within the state. The portal offers a variety of payment options for depositing the application fees and any additional fees, including net banking, debit/credit cards, UPI, e-challan, and RTGS, allowing users to select the method most convenient for them. Additionally, the portal provides a facility to track the current status and history of information requests or appeals under the RTI Act. Citizens also receive SMS alerts regarding the status of their requests or appeals. To further improve user accessibility, the portal has replaced the traditional CAPTCHA verification with a sound-based option, making it more user-friendly for individuals with visual impairments. A list of all public authorities is displayed on the portal's home page, organized by department, making it easier for citizens to identify the correct authority when filing an RTI request. Detailed instructions on how to use the portal are also provided to guide users through the process.



11. It is further submitted that should any user experience difficulties while navigating or operating the Online Right to Information (RTI)

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Portal, assistance is readily available. Individuals seeking support can contact the designated helpline at +91-135-2662021. This helpline has been set up and is fully operational. The helpline is accessible during regular working hours on working days, ensuring that timely help is provided to those in need of guidance. In addition to the telephonic support, users can also reach out for assistance via email by contacting the portal's support team at rtionline-helpdesk@uk.gov.in. Whether through phone or email, the government has ensured that multiple channels of communication are available to address any concerns, technical issues, or general inquiries related to the portal's usage. This comprehensive support system reflects the government's commitment to making the RTI process user-friendly and ensuring that citizens can access public information with minimal hassle.

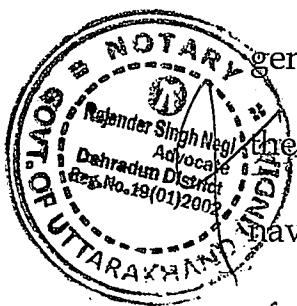


12. The Uttarakhand Government is committed to maximizing the benefits of the RTI portal for its citizens. In the second phase of development, feedback and suggestions from users are being considered to enhance the portal further. Currently, work is underway to implement features such as a single-page interface for submitting suggestions, complaints, request letters, and first appeals. The portal will also include success stories related to RTI

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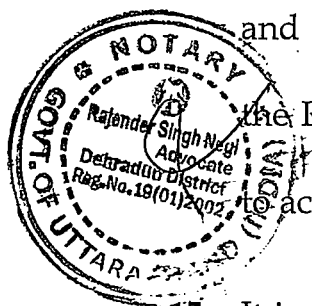
applications, offering citizens insights into the effectiveness of the system. As of now, information requests and first appeals are routed through the nodal departments to the relevant Public Information Officers or Departmental Appellate Officers online. Efforts are being made to streamline this process by enabling the direct forwarding of requests and appeals to the concerned officers, thereby improving efficiency and responsiveness.

13. Continuous efforts are being undertaken to enhance the accessibility and usability of the *Online Right to Information (RTI) Portal* for the general public. The government remains committed to improving the portal's functionality to ensure that it is user-friendly and easily navigable for citizens from diverse backgrounds and varying levels of digital literacy. These improvement efforts focus on refining the portal's interface, making it more intuitive and easier to use. Processes are being streamlined to simplify the steps required for filing RTI requests and accessing relevant information. Moreover, the platform is incorporating new features to accommodate the diverse needs of users, ensuring that individuals with different abilities, including those with disabilities, can interact with the portal without difficulty.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Ne".

14. The Government's initiatives to continuously upgrade the portal are driven by a vision of digital inclusivity. By making the RTI portal accessible to a wider audience, the Government is ensuring that all citizens, regardless of their technical proficiency or socio-economic status, can exercise their right to information. This approach not only promotes transparency but also strengthens public engagement in governance processes, making it easier for individuals to hold authorities accountable. These ongoing enhancements to the portal reflect a broader commitment to building a transparent, inclusive, and participatory governance framework in the state, ensuring that the RTI mechanism remains a vital and effective tool for all citizens to access governmental information.



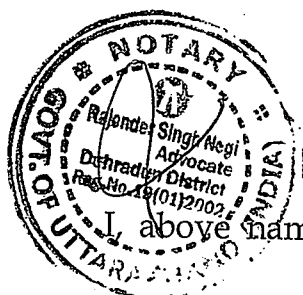
15. It is respectfully submitted that the Answering Respondent is bound by duty and obligation to this Hon'ble Court and holds its authority in the highest regard. It is submitted that there has been no deliberate or intentional disobedience of any directives or instructions issued by this Hon'ble Court. The Answering Respondent has made every possible effort to act in good faith and in accordance with the rulings of this Court.

16. That, the Answering Respondent is filing this reply, with further liberty in making such other further submissions as may be required

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in the facts of the case subsequently or as may be directed by this Hon'ble court.

17. That the facts stated herein above are true to my knowledge as derived from the records of the case and no part of it is false and no material facts have been concealed therefrom.



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DEPONENT

Verification

I above named deponent do hereby verify that the facts stated in the above affidavit are true to my knowledge. No part of the same is false and nothing material has been concealed therefrom.

Verified at Dehradun on this 28 Day of October, 2024

SEN-6724/24
This affidavit is sworn before me by
Shri. *Rajender Singh Negi*
who is identified by Shri. *Sunabh Kumar*
at Dehradun on.....

He
DEPONENT

Rajender Singh Negi
(Rajender Singh Negi)
Advocate & Notary, Dehradun