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National Green Tribunal Calls for Immediate Action on Solid and Liquid Waste Management for Country's Environmental Protection

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New Delhi: In a recent hearing, the National Green Tribunal (NGT) highlighted the urgent need for addressing the gaps in solid and liquid waste generation and treatment to protect the environment. The NGT Principal Bench, headed by Justice Adarsh Kumar Goel, Chairperson, acknowledged that despite the existence of statutory rules and policies such as Swachh Bharat, the ground-level action has been inadequate. This negligence has led to mountains of garbage emitting harmful gases, causing diseases, deaths, and depleting valuable public resources.

The Tribunal emphasised that enacting laws and court/tribunal directions alone are insufficient without effective governance. It stressed the importance of high priority to waste management and the need for a change in mindset,

urging the administration to involve people in decision-making processes.

Furthermore, the NGT emphasized the criticality of preventing sewage discharge into sources of drinking water. Failure to do so is considered an offense under criminal law and the Water Act, 1974. Discharging sewage into drains, rivers, and water bodies leads to water scarcity, environmental degradation, and public health risks. The Supreme Court has been monitoring the pollution of Ganga and Yamuna for several decades, and the NGT has been overseeing the implementation of its orders since February 2017.

The NGT also expressed concern over compliance gaps in addressing water pollution in rivers, lakes, coastal areas, and other water bodies. It stressed the importance of swift action using appropriate technology to ensure that no sewage contaminates drinking water. Delays in remedial action are unjustifiable, given the adverse impact on biodiversity and the citizens' right to

access clean drinking water.

The NGT reiterated that the steps for remedial action have been mentioned in detail in its orders for all states and are available on the Tribunal's website. It highlighted the significance of meaningful implementation of citizens' right to a clean environment, which is an integral part of the right to life and a crucial aspect of sustainable development.

Apart from the responsibilities of the concerned states and union territories (UTs) under the Solid Waste Management Rules, 2016, the NGT pointed out that central ministries such as MoEF&CC, Urban Affairs, Rural Development, Chemicals and Fertilizers, and Agriculture also have a role to play in waste treatment plans. Similarly, ministries like Jal Shakti, MoEF&CC, and Urban Development have responsibilities in liquid waste management. The NGT called for these ministries to fulfil their statutory obligations and monitor

compliance by states and UTs.

In an effort to hold polluters accountable, the NGT determined compensation on the "Polluter Pays" Principle, with ₹2 crore per MLD (Million Litres per Day) for liquid waste gaps and Rs. 300 per MT (Metric Ton) for legacy waste gaps. A total of Rs. 79,234.36 crore has been collected from 36 states and UTs.

The concept of environmental compensation aims to remediate past failures, ensure accountability, and restore citizens' right to a clean environment and public health. It is hoped that the proper implementation of these measures will contribute to achieving sustainable development goals and preventing climate change.

According to the NGT, the estimated solid waste generation stands at 170,228.45 TPD (Tons Per Day), out of which 113,397.05 TPD is processed through methods like composting. The unprocessed waste amounts to 55,884.32 TPD, contributing to the already ▶Pg 3

Union Ministry amends EIA Notification, Pump Storage Projects need Prior EC

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New Delhi: The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has amended the EIA Notification 2006 pertaining to River Valley Projects. The amendment notified vide G.S.R. bearing S.O. 2226(E), states that Pump Storage Projects are considered in the category of hydropower Projects, for the purpose of Environmental Clearance (EC).

With this amendment, under the Schedule of the EIA Notification 2006, which lists the projects and activities requiring prior EC, at 1 (c) the term River Valley Projects shall now be replaced with River Valley and hydro-electric Projects (RVHEPs).

These are categorised into: -

- (a) RVHEPs without Pump Storage Projects;
- (b) RVHEPs with Pump Storage Projects;
- (c) standalone Pump Storage Projects."

Under the Schedule, row No. 1(c), at column 5, which specifies conditions

(if any), the notification mandates insertion of the followings: -

Under the Schedule, row No. 1(c), at column 5, which specifies conditions (if any), the notification mandates insertion of the followings: -

"(iv) Pump Storage Projects including off-stream closed loop shall be appraised based on specific Terms of Reference issued by the Central Government for Pump Storage Projects. The Pump Storage Projects which meet all the criteria specified below shall be appraised as B2 category irrespective of power generation capacity: -

- (a) Projects which do not attract Forest Clearance and/or Wild Life Clearance,
- (b) Projects wherein no new Reservoir is created
- (c) The Projects wherein there is no increase in capacity of the existing reservoir and in the submergence area of the reservoir."

NALCO Withdraws EC Transfer Application ▶Pg 8

EAC Ind-2 Recommends EC Amendment in Chemplast Sanmar's PVC Paste Resin Plant ▶Pg 8



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Column

*With valuable inputs from Climate Trends
and Dr. Sasmita Mishra, New Jersey, USA*

treatment. It is crucial to protect the environment, soil productivity, ensure clean drinking water, and secure the rights of citizens while working towards sustainable development.

Urban Climate Film Festival Promotes Climate Awareness in Urban Settlements

The first-ever Urban Climate Film Festival, aimed at raising awareness about climate change's impact on urban areas, will take place in New Town, Kolkata from June 3rd to 5th, 2023.

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New Delhi: The inaugural Urban Climate Film Festival, organised by the National Institute of Urban Affairs through the CITIIS program, is set to captivate audiences with its selection of 16 films from 12 countries. Taking place in New Town, Kolkata, the festival aims to shed light on the environmental, social, and economic consequences of climate change on urban settlements.

The festival, launched in New Delhi earlier this year, received an overwhelming response, with 150 films submitted from 20 countries. A jury of esteemed members, including Dr. Surbhi Dahiya, Dr. Pranab Patar, and Mr. Sabyesachi Bharti, evaluated the submissions to curate the final selection.

With screenings scheduled throughout the event, attendees will have the opportunity to engage in Q&A sessions with the filmmakers, facilitating meaningful conversations about building climate-resilient cities. The festival encourages public participation and aims to inspire citizens to adopt environmentally responsible behaviours aligned with the U20 priority areas and the LiFE Mission, as advocated by the Hon. Prime Minister.

The festival's closing ceremony on June 5th, coinciding with World Environment Day, will be graced by notable figures including Mr. Didier Talpain, Consul General of France in Kolkata, and Mr. Debashis Sen, Managing Director of the West Bengal Housing Infrastructure Development Corporation.

Entry to the Urban Climate Film Festival is free and open to all. Further details, including the screening schedule and registration, can be found on the official website: <https://citiis.niua.in/event/urbanclim atefilmfestival>.

After successful runs in Delhi and Mumbai, where engaging films and insightful discussions captivated audiences, the festival looks forward to leaving an indelible impact on the attendees in Kolkata.

CITIIS provides financial and technical assistance to the selected cities. This assistance focuses on strengthening institutions by committing resources to systematic planning (maturation phase) before implementation, by developing results-based monitoring frameworks and by adopting technology for program monitoring.

The Film Festival is being organised under U20 with support from the Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs (MoHUA), French Development Agency (AFD) and European Union.

NCSCM promotes sea turtle conservation on the eve of World Turtle Day 2023

On World Turtle Day, NCSCM partners with sea turtle hatchery and Tamil Nadu Forest Dept to sensitise about the importance of sea turtle conservation and educate coastal communities.

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New Delhi: The National Centre for Sustainable Coastal Management (NCSCM) joined forces with the sea turtle hatchery in Besant Nagar, under the Tamil Nadu Forest Department, to mark World Turtle Day with a focused effort to mobilize the Lifestyle for Environment (LiFE) movement. The initiative aimed to spread awareness among coastal fishermen and the local community about the urgent need for sea turtle conservation.

World Turtle Day serves as a reminder of the numerous challenges faced by turtles worldwide, including pollution, habitat destruction, climate change, predation of hatchlings, and illegal wildlife trade. To combat these threats, NCSCM organised various events and activities to educate the public and emphasise the critical importance of sea turtle conservation and the protection of their nesting sites.

With over 300 turtle species on the planet, many are endangered due to human activities. Turtles play vital roles in their respective ecosystems, and their preservation is crucial for maintaining ecological balance. Turtles spend the majority of their lives in the sea, with a lifespan of approximately 80 years, while the

Tortoises predominantly inhabit land and can survive up to 300 years.

During the World Turtle Day events, NCSCM scientists sensitised the fishing community about the importance of avoiding trawler boats near turtle nesting sites to prevent accidental entanglement and injury. They also encouraged the use of Turtle Excluder Devices (TEDs) to exclude turtles from fishing nets and the retrieval of ghost nets. Additionally, public awareness campaigns and educational programs were conducted to engage local communities, fishermen, students, and tourists. These initiatives aimed to highlight the ecological significance of turtles, their conservation status, and the importance of responsible behaviour, such as avoiding the use of bright flashlights during the breeding season to protect baby turtles from predation.

Marine litter, particularly plastic pollution, poses a significant threat to turtle populations as turtles often mistake plastic bags and debris for food, leading to severe health issues and even death. To address this issue, beach clean-up initiatives near turtle nesting sites were promoted to protect them from harmful pollution. Tamil Nadu, with its extensive coastline along the Bay of Bengal, plays a vital role in sea turtle conservation.

Organic Nanotubes Revolutionise Light-Harvesting for Solar Cells and More

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New Delhi: Researchers have made an exciting discovery inspired by how plants capture sunlight for energy. They have developed a new method using tiny tubes called nanotubes to harvest artificial light. These nanotubes can be used in solar cells, optical sensors, and even materials that emit different colours of light.

In nature, plants and bacteria use a process called photosynthesis to convert sunlight into energy. They have special molecules that act like antennas, capturing the light and transferring the energy efficiently. The researchers wanted to mimic this process using nanotubes made from a fluorescent molecule and a biopolymer called heparin.

When these nanotubes were formed in the presence of heparin, they emitted a bright greenish-yellow light. Just like the antennas in plants, these nanotubes were highly efficient at transferring

energy. They could transfer energy to other dyes, changing the colour of the emitted light.

The researchers also discovered that these nanotubes could be used as thermometers, measuring temperature based on changes in their emitted light. This finding could have practical applications in temperature sensing.

The researchers used various techniques like microscopy and simulations to study the formation and behaviour of the nanotubes. Their study, published in the journal *Chemical Science*, sheds light on how to harness artificial light and opens up possibilities for future energy conversion and storage applications.

The research may foster innovative ways. By harnessing organic nanotubes, it opens new possibilities for solar cells, photocatalysis, optical sensors, and tunable multi-color light emitting materials, contributing to sustainable and environmentally friendly technologies.

Disaster Risk Financing: Investing in Safety, Health, and Sustainability

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New Delhi: The second meeting of the Disaster Risk Reduction Working Group (DRRWG) commenced in Mumbai, focusing on the importance of financing disaster risk reduction as an investment in the future. Dr. Bharati Pravin Pawar, Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare, highlighted the need for collaboration between governments, international organisations, and the private sector to mobilise funding for disaster risk reduction. She emphasised that investing in disaster risk reduction is not only a moral responsibility but also an economic necessity.

Dr. Pawar discussed India's use of technology and innovation, including advanced forecasting systems and remote sensing technologies, to improve disaster management. The meeting also explored a roadmap for disaster risk reduction, aiming to mainstream it in policies and shift the paradigm from disaster response

to risk reduction. A photo exhibition on a "Safer Mumbai, Future Ready Mumbai" was also inaugurated during the G20 Meeting.

Speaking at the inaugural programme, Dr. Pawar urged that financing disaster risk reduction is an investment in our future. It is an investment in the safety, health and well-being of our communities, the sustainability of our economies, and the preservation of our environment. She said that governments, international organisations and the private sector need to collaborate and explore new ways to mobilise funding.

Dr. Bharati Pravin Pawar further stated that the world has been lagging in achieving the disaster risk reduction targets laid down in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The global economic growth has been commendable in the last 2-3 decades, but funding for reducing the associated disaster risks has been inadequate, she said.

Many dignitaries were present on the occasion.

Delhi Government's "City of Lakes" Project Transforming National Capital

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New Delhi: The Delhi government is making significant strides in transforming Delhi into a "City of Lakes." A key initiative is the conversion of Delhi's lakes into captivating tourist destinations, promoting environmental conservation and water resource management. Currently, the Delhi Jal Board, led by Chief Minister Shri Arvind Kejriwal, is constructing an artificial lake within the Haidarpur Water Treatment Plant (WTP) complex, which is set to revolutionize water conservation efforts in the city.

This artificial lake, covering a 2.2-acre plot within the Haidarpur WTP complex, aims to store clean water sourced from various units of the plant. With a depth of 6 meters and a storage capacity of approximately 53,000 cubic meters (equivalent to 1.1 million gallons), it will prevent wastage of pristine water through drains. The lake will enable a daily recharge of around 8 million liters of water, making a significant contribution to Delhi's water sustainability. The project's estimated cost is approximately 6 crore rupees, and it is expected to be completed within six months.

The Haidarpur WTP, spread across 100 acres, currently produces nearly 240 million gallons per day (MGD) of drinking water, exceeding its capacity of 216 MGD. Excess water is sometimes released into the

supplementary drain due to technical issues. To combat this wastage, the Delhi government is constructing an artificial lake within the WTP premises. The lake will receive excess water, preventing its flow into the drains during pipe bursts, repair works, or pump house-related issues. By creating this storage facility, the water can be stored and used for recharging the groundwater, reducing dependence on drains. Additionally, the lake will improve the water quality of the existing tube wells in Haidarpur, benefiting the surrounding area.

Apart from water conservation, the artificial lake will provide a habitat for various species of trees, plants, and birds, contributing to the overall improvement of the environment. It will also help lower temperatures during the summer, offering respite to both residents and tourists. The Delhi government plans to open the lake to the public upon completion, providing a serene recreational space amidst the city's hustle and bustle. Additionally, the government intends to construct artificial lakes in other WTPs across Delhi to further conserve water and address water scarcity concerns.

The Delhi government's commitment to transforming Delhi into a "City of Lakes" extends beyond water conservation. These lakes will serve as carbon sinks, mitigate the effects of climate change, and promote biodiversity. The lakes will play a vital role in Delhi's sustainable water management efforts.

Delhi Government Challenges National Green Tribunal's Order in Supreme Court

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New Delhi: The Delhi Government has filed a petition in the Supreme Court to challenge the decision of the National Green Tribunal (NGT) regarding the appointment of the Lieutenant Governor (LG) as the Chairman of the High-Level Committee on Yamuna. The Delhi Government argues that the NGT's order violates the Constitutional scheme of governance in Delhi, as well as the 2018 and 2023 orders of the Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court.

The NGT, through its order on January 9, 2023, established a committee comprising various authorities in Delhi to address the issue of Yamuna River pollution, with the LG as its Chairman. The committee includes representatives from the Delhi Government, the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, the National Mission for Clean Ganga, and the Central Pollution Control Board.

While the Delhi Government acknowledges the need for interdepartmental coordination to tackle Yamuna's pollution and implement remedial measures, it strongly objects to the executive powers granted to the LG through the NGT's order. According to the Delhi Government, these powers encroach upon areas that are exclusively under the competence of the elected government of Delhi.

The Delhi Govt contends that the LG, as per the administrative structure in Delhi and Article 239AA of the Constitution, serves as a nominal figurehead, except in matters pertaining to land, public order, and police. The government asserts that granting executive powers to an authority lacking constitutional mandate undermines the elected government's jurisdiction. It highlights the well-established constitutional principle that the powers vested in a nominal and unelected head of state should only be exercised under the "aid and advice" of the Council of Ministers. The Supreme Court, in its 2018 judgement in the case of State (NCT of Delhi) v. Union of India, established that the elected government of Delhi possesses exclusive executive powers over all subjects, except "public order," "police," and "land."

In its petition, the Delhi Govt also argues that the NGT's proposed remedial measures require budgetary allocations approved by the legislative assembly. As such, the role of the elected government becomes crucial in overseeing these measures. The Delhi Govt affirms its commitment to addressing the pollution in Yamuna and allocating requisite funds. However, it believes that the current scheme outlined in the NGT's order sidelines the elected and accountable government of Delhi. Consequently, the Delhi Govt has requested the Supreme Court to set aside the NGT order.

Transport Minister calls for continued collaboration to shape Delhi's EV policy

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New Delhi: Delhi's Transport Minister, Kailash Gahlot, addressed the Delhi Electric Vehicle (EV) Policy 2.0 stakeholder consultation, highlighting the success of the policy and its contribution to promoting electric mobility. Over 1.20 lakh electric vehicles have been sold in Delhi since its launch in August 2020, with electric two-wheelers accounting for almost 50% of sales. The policy's success can be attributed to the "3i model" of Inclusion, incentivization, and Innovation. Stakeholder roundtables ensured practicality and wider acceptance of the policy. Substantial subsidies were provided, including Rs 1.5 lakhs for electric cars and Rs 30,000 for E-rickshaws, along with tax waivers. Delhi became the first state to offer incentives for E-cycles, introduced a low-cost EV tariff, and launched the "One Delhi" app for locating charging stations.

Ambitious plans include expanding the fleet of electric buses from 400 to 1,900 by 2023 and targeting 8,280 e-buses by 2025. The government aims to achieve a 25% share of electric vehicles by 2024. Future plans focus on building a robust charging infrastructure network, deploying 18,000 charging points by 2025, and conducting awareness campaigns. Last-mile connectivity options like e-autos and metro feeder e-buses are being pursued. Kailash Gahlot emphasized the need for stakeholder collaboration and commended the organizers for facilitating the consultation.

Notably, in December 2022, electric vehicles accounted for 16.8% of the total vehicles sold in Delhi.

The Delhi government's mission is to achieve a 25% share of electric vehicles by 2024. As the conclusion of the Delhi EV policy of 2020 approaches in August 2023, Kailash Gahlot called for the continued guidance and collaboration of stakeholders.

Delhi Govt. Implements Measures to Combat Industrial Pollution

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New Delhi: Environment Minister Gopal Rai conducted a review meeting at the Delhi Secretariat to address industrial pollution. Various government officers attended the meeting, including representatives from DPCC, Environment Department, DSIIDC, Revenue, MCD, and DDA. Post-meeting, Gopal Rai announced the formation of 33 teams from DPCC and DSIIDC for continuous inspections of industrial units in Delhi. Additionally, 141 patrolling teams comprising 472 personnel will monitor industrial waste dumping during the day, while 108 patrolling teams with 397 personnel will handle night-time surveillance. Furthermore, 1721 registered industrial units in Delhi have been converted to PNG (Piped Natural Gas).

Gopal Rai highlighted the Chief Minister's summer action plan, consisting of 14 focus points, aimed

at combating pollution during the summer season. The plan includes measures to monitor industrial pollution and waste management. The Industrial Pollution Campaign involves the deployment of patrolling teams and continuous inspections by DPCC and DSIIDC. The teams will closely monitor industrial units, take immediate action to reduce pollution, and submit periodic reports to the Environment Department. Strict actions will be taken against any violations of environmental regulations by industrial units.

It is stated that 1721 registered industrial units have transitioned to PNG, contributing to cleaner energy usage. Non-compliant units will face appropriate repercussions from relevant authorities. Instructions have been issued to DPCC, including the preparation of an Industrial Waste Management Plan, proper disposal of industrial waste, and ensuring that industries operate using approved fuels.

Environmental Clearances

EAC Raises Concerns Over Forest Clearance and Water Management in Coal Mining Projects; NALCO Withdraws EC Transfer Application

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New Delhi: The 44th meeting of the Re-constitution of Expert Appraisal Committee (EAC) of the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) for Environmental Appraisal of Coal Mining Projects was held on 9th May 2023. 3 out of 13 Members were absent from the meeting. G. P. Kundargi is the EAC Chairman and Lalit Bokolia, Director, MoEF&CC is Member Secretary.

The proposal is for Environmental Clearance (EC) for Sahapur West UG Coal Mine of 0.6 MTPA (Peak production) in an area of 594.401 Ha of Sarda Energy and Minerals Limited at village Khamariya Khurd, Kushmaha Khurd, Shahpur, Tehsil Pali of District Umariya and village Khamhariya Kala, Kathotiya, Tehsil Suhagpur, District Shahdol, Madhya Pradesh was recommended for grant of EC.

Mahanadi Coalfields Ltd. (MCL) has sought EC for expansion of Balaram OCP, formerly known as Kalinga OCP, from 8.0 MTPA to 15.0 MTPA. The mine lease area will increase from

1309 Ha to 2574.00 Ha, including an additional land of 1265 Ha. The expansion will take place in various villages in Tehsil Talehar Sadar, District Angul, Odisha.

During discussions, the EAC highlighted several concerns. The project requires forest clearance for an additional forest area of 193.845 Ha. Issues related to water management were also raised, with acidic mine water being allowed to drain into the sump, resulting in pollution. The existing Effluent Treatment Plant (ETP) was found to be non-functional and not adequately maintained, and plans for its expansion were not in place. The committee stressed the need for an expanded and properly designed ETP to reduce groundwater extraction.

Furthermore, the absence of garland drains around the overburden area led to seepage of mine water. The committee instructed the project proponent to construct the garland drains within six months. In light of water and wastewater management concerns, the committee requested the submission of a water balance plan considering the recycling of treated

ETP water for the proposed expansion. The transportation of coal through a mechanized system was also raised, with the committee urging the submission of a revised plan allocating 80% of coal transportation through rail and only 20% through road.

The responses of MCL to Additional Data Sheet (ADS) points and compliance with Environmental Clearance (EC) conditions were deemed unsatisfactory by the committee. Additionally, MCL has been asked to submit a Wildlife Conservation Plan for the Kahnejena - Anantapur Elephant corridor, located 8.04 km from the mine lease area.

National Aluminium Company Ltd. (NALCO) has encountered obstacles in the transfer of the Environmental Clearance (EC) for the Utkal-E Coal Block project in Angul, Odisha. The project, with a mine lease area of 729.48 ha, is located in villages Nandichhod (Gopiballvpur), Gopinath Jungle, Kosala, Korada, Kundajhari Jungle, and Durgapur Jungle, Tehsil Chhendipeda.

The EAC highlighted that NALCO needs to obtain Forest Clearance (FC)

for the entire land falling within the project area, as per the judgment of the Supreme Court dated 6th July 2011. However, NALCO has obtained FC for only 156.1779 ha out of the total forest land of 228.14 ha. In light of the Supreme Court judgment, the committee asked NALCO to submit either a revised mine plan excluding the area for which Stage-I FC has not been granted (71.9621 ha) or obtain FC for the remaining forest land (15.3321 ha) involved in the mine lease area.

In a recent development, NALCO informed the EAC that they will withdraw the application for the transfer of EC for the Utkal-E project due to the involvement of pending FC for the forest area of 15.3321 ha, which would take considerable time. They have requested the MoEF&CC to withdraw the current application for EC transfer and allow them to submit a fresh application for the merger of EC for Utkal D and Utkal E.

Considering the NALCO's revised strategy, the EAC has recommended to MoEF&CC to return the instant application for EC transfer. The project's future course of action will depend on fresh application.

Why MoEF&CC Experts not ask for the latest CEPI data?

EAC Industry-2 Recommends EC Amendment in Chemplast Sanmar's PVC Paste Resin Plant accounting November 2021 Data CEPI Score

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New Delhi: A meeting of the Expert Appraisal Committee (EAC) for Environmental Appraisal of Industry 2 Sector Projects, under the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC), took place on 16th May 2023. The committee, chaired by S. C. Mann, and with Dr. A. N. Singh, as the Member Secretary, discussed a single application regarding an amendment in the Environmental Clearance (EC) granted to Chemplast Sanmar Limited.

Chemplast Sanmar Limited had submitted a proposal for the amendment of the EC granted by the Ministry on November 16, 2021. The amendment specifically pertains to the Poly Vinyl Chloride (PVC) Paste Resin Plant, with a capacity of 70,000 TPA, located in Cuddalore, Tamil Nadu.

The proposed amendment focuses on four conditions, three of which relate to the greenbelt and the fourth concerning the Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ). The available land area for the project is 60,157 square meters (SQM), and the industry plans to develop a greenbelt covering 33%

(19,866 SQM) of the total project area. The land area has increased from 48,543 SQM, resulting in an increase in the greenbelt area from 16,428 SQM to 19,866 SQM.

The company informed the EAC that there was a shortage of land for the proposed expansion after conducting detailed engineering. According to the existing EC, the industry is required to develop 40% of the area as a greenbelt due to the project's location in a severely polluted area. To address the land shortage, the company proposed excluding the Non-Development Zone (NDZ) land falling within CRZ-III from the existing plot, and requested a reduction in the greenbelt area from 40% to 33%. They cited a letter dated 22nd September 2021, from the Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board (TNPCB) to SIPCOT, which stated a Comprehensive Environmental Pollution Index (CEPI) score of 55.25 and 31.12 for the years 2019 and 2020, respectively, indicating that SIPCOT, Cuddalore, is no longer a severely polluted area. Furthermore, the industry acquired an additional contiguous area of 18,818 sq. m (4.65 acres) from its sister company, Chemplast Cuddalore Vinyls Ltd., to compensate for the shortage of land.

Previously, the EAC had directed that the greenbelt should be increased to 40% and that compliance with EC conditions should be submitted through third-party audits annually, given the project's location in a severely polluted area. However, the industry now seeks an amendment to reduce the greenbelt area from 40% to 33%, citing the communication received from TNPCB regarding the reduced pollution levels in the industrial cluster. The proposed greenbelt will be 5-10 meters wide and developed along the plant periphery, accommodating three rows of trees.

Regarding the EC condition stating that no activity shall be undertaken in the CRZ-III (NDZ) area without prior permission from the Competent Authority, the industry stated that the CRZ-III (NDZ) area will be removed from the project site to ensure there is no CRZ area within the proposed site. They also submitted a revised proposed layout.

The EAC found the justifications provided by the industry for the sought amendments satisfactory and recommended the amendment in the EC, including the inclusion of 4.65 acres (18,818 square meters) of contiguous land from the sister

company, Chemplast Cuddalore Vinyls Ltd., and the exclusion of 7,204 square meters (NDZ of CRZ III) from the project site. The EAC recommended the amendments. However, it has asked the company to obtain an amendment EC issued by SEIAA Tamil Nadu on 19th November 2019 for the reduction in the total plot area of 7.2 acres.

The company has been asked to raise awareness among the people working within the project area, as well as in the surrounding area, about the ban on Single Use Plastic, as per the notification published by MoEF&CC on 12th August 2021. A report, along with photographs showcasing the measures taken, shall be included in the six-monthly compliance report submitted to the concerned authority. All other terms and conditions of the EC dated 16 November 2021, remain unchanged.

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