



Minutes of the Meeting chaired by Secretary, Environment Department on 18.08.2023 to discuss the compliance to the order of Hon'ble National Green Tribunal in OA 147/2022 related to pollution issues of Ashtamudi and Vembanad lakes.

The meeting commenced at 4.00 pm with the Secretary in chair. Secretary Tourism , Joint Director, office of the principal Director Local Self Government Department, District Collectors of Alappuzha, Thrissur, Kottayam, kollam and Ernakulam, Managing Director, Kerala Water Authority, Director Suchithwamission, Secretary Municipal Corporation Kollam, Thrissur, Ernakulam, Member Secretary State Wetland Authority, Member Secretary, Kerala State Pollution Control Board, Additional Secretaries of both Environment and Local Self Government Departments, Secretaries of Local bodies concerned and other officials were present.

The Member Secretary made presentation about Order dated 22.03.2023 of National Green Tribunal in OA 147/2022. As per the NGT Order, the State is to pay compensation of Rs.10 Crores on Polluter Pays Principle to be deposited in ringfenced account to be operated under the authority of the Chief Secretary, Kerala within one month. The above amount of Rs.10 Crores is to be utilized for conservation/restoration measures by preparing an action plan to be preferably executed within six months. The progress report is to be filed before the Hon'ble NGT by six months.

Progress of action taken.

(a) Opening up of treasury Account.

The Joint Director, Urban Directorate informed that based on the above order, action is progressing. The Secretary, Environment Department enquired about the status of opening the account and expressed displeasure for not complying with the judgement of the Tribunal and the delay committed by the responsible department for not following up the matter with section of finance department concerned. Additional Secretary, LSGD replied that the file related

to the account opening is now with finance department. Secretary, Environment Department directed to open the account within one week.

(b) Measures taken to abate Pollution

The Secretary, Environment Department asked about the details of fine imposed on various local bodies and also enquired whether they identified any polluters. The Joint Director, Urban Directorate replied that fine is imposed in local bodies against illegal dumping in public places and water bodies, illegal outlets, and on single use plastic ban. The Member Secretary, KSPCB added that notices were issued by calculating environmental compensation based on NGT guideline to 8 urban local bodies under Solid Waste Management Rules and also under Water (Prevention) and Control of Pollution Act. Kochi Corporation, Kalamassery Municipality and Aluva Municipality obtained stay from the court against the notice issued. Though notice was issued to Alappuzha municipality, Cherthala municipality, Thrippunithura municipality, Thrikkakara municipality, response is not satisfactory. She also added a notice was issued to Kollam Corporation related to Ashtamudi Lake pollution. The fine thus imposed will refund to the local bodies itself for the pollution prevention.

Secretary, Environment Department enquired reasons for not paying compensation by the local bodies and also about obtained stay against notice issued. The Secretary, Kollam Corporation replied that Ashtamudi Lake is polluted by different streams and rivers flowing through nearby local bodies, not only polluted from the corporation area. She quoted that they are taking preventive measures to control lake pollution by installing camera surveillance and regular inspection of night squad in this area. The Member Secretary added that the area of pollution comes under the Kollam Corporation, as PCB had conducted inspections in the lake stretch and Manichithodu. The entire stretch of the Manichithodu is lying in Kollam Corporation and the septage is directly discharged into the stream by unauthorised ones. Corporation has been addressed by the Board to stop the discharge of septage in Manichithodu.

Secretary Environment reminded that the show cause notice issued by Kerala State pollution Control Board towards right direction since the local bodies are not taking effective steps to check contamination of water bodies through different ways.

(c) Progress of construction of waste treatment plants.

MS, KSPCB also said that a STP of capacity 12MLD is under construction at Kollam Corporation, around 84% is completed. The Secretary, Kollam Corporation said that a startup is ready to install sewer network and the file is submitted for approval at the Finance Department.

Member Secretary addressed the issues like lack of STP at Ernakulam railway station, issues in house boats and peeling sheds and added that notice were issued against them. The Managing Director, KWA said that only some works are pending in case of STP at Kollam Corporation and added that the work is to be expected on November 2023. She suggested that penalty may be imposed on those who did not managing the sewage properly.

Decisions taken in the meeting:

1. To open an account as ordered by NGT.

(Action-Local Self Government Department, Finance Department, Environment Department).

2. LSGIs need to inform within one week the reasons for not remitting fee as EC by KSPCB.

(Action -Principal Director Local Self Government Department)

3. The Principal Director Local Self Government Department ,Member Secretary SWAK,Member Secretary Kerala State Pollution Control Board and Joint Director Local Self Government Department (SWAGG) shall finalize action plan within 2 weeks.

(Action -Principal Director Local Self Government Department, Member Secretary, SWAK, Member Secretary Kerala State Pollution Control Board and Local Self Government Department).

4. The presentation for the upcoming meeting will focus on the progress of the actions and need more clarity.

(Action -Member Secretary Kerala State Pollution Control Board)

The meeting came to a close by 5.25PM.

**DR RATHAN U KELKAR I A S
SECRETARY**

O/O SECRETARY ENVIRONMENT