



Minutes of the meeting chaired by the Chief Secretary on 03/02/2023 in the matter of abatement of pollution in Ashtamudi & Vembanad -Kol Wetlands as per National Green Tribunal order in O.A.147 of 2022 .

The meeting commenced at 12:00 noon with Chief Secretary presiding. Principal Secretary, LSGD, Secretary, Water Resources Department, Managing Director, Kerala Water Authority, Directors of Panchayats, Urban Affairs, Inland Navigation & Tourism Departments, Commissioner, Land Revenue, District Collectors of Kollam, Kottayam & Thrissur, Deputy Collectors of Ernakulam & Alappuzha, CEO, Kerala Maritime Board, Chairman & Member Secretary, Kerala State Pollution Control Board, Secretaries of Kochi & Kollam Corporations and other officers concerned were present.

In the Order dated 06/01/2023 the Hon'ble National Green Tribunal has granted 2 months time to the State for filing a meaningful and effective action taken report showing compliance of Tribunal's order dated 23.08.2022 and the steps taken at the ground level to curb the continued damage caused to the Astamudi & Vembanad lakes (Ramsar sites of international importance) and to come up with a restoration plan by the Monitoring Committee constituted by the Tribunal.

Chief Secretary reiterated the order dated 01.12.2022 of the Hon'ble NGT in O.A 606/2018 (PZ), wherein the Tribunal have refrained from imposing environmental compensation on the State on the basis of the commitments made by the State for bridging the gap in both solid & liquid waste management. The State is committed to implement the same and is also required to file 6 monthly reports before the Tribunal, the first report being due by the end of May, 2023. For filing the report the State has to achieve tangible results in waste management sector in a very short period.

Following decisions/suggestions were made after detailed discussions & deliberations:

1. Activities to be taken in Mission mode to bridge the gaps :

As the activities required to be taken up in bridging the gap in the waste (both liquid & solid) management sectors are very challenging in nature, Chief Secretary insisted that all Departments & authorities concerned shall take up the matter in a mission mode. Principal Secretary, LSGD informed that the State is committed to complete 10 treatment plants by May 2023 and another 40 numbers by the end of December 2023. Chief Secretary directed that if consent of any related Department is not forthcoming for implementing projects the same shall be brought to the notice of higher authorities. The issues may be taken up at the cabinet level also to resolve the impasse, as the projects on waste management are of utmost importance.

(Action :Local Self Government/ Water Resources Departments , Kerala Water Authority).

2. STP at Elamkulam

MS, KSPCB informed that about 88 polluting sources were identified during KSPCB's inspection. Out of this, 50 units have no STPs and no consent from the Board. Many point sources are having land constraints in providing STPs. MS requested that, as it may take about 1 year to lay the sewer network as informed by KWA during the meeting, to utilize the entire 5 MLD capacity of the plant (now established) at Elamkulam it may be practical to transport the wastewater (sewage & sullage) from the pollution sources now identified to the plant through the tankers for minimizing the pollution load as a temporary measure until the construction of sewer network is completed and further plants being established by KWA. The NGT has asked the State Government to intervene and to find a solution for such issues, wherein establishments were constructed long back and have no STPs, vide order dated 02.01.2023 in O.A. No. 27 of 2021(SZ). The Chief Secretary directed the MD, KWA to consider the matter.

(Action: Kerala State Pollution Control Board,Kerala Water Authority, Water Resources/ Local Self Government /Environment Departments ,Secretary Kochi Corporation).

3. CSTP of GCDA at Kaloor:

MS, KSPCB informed that the unit with plant capacity (750 KLD) is under

utilised (only 30 KLDs utilized). Kochi Corporation and GCDA were instructed to fully utilize the plant by collecting wastewater through tankers from polluting sources. Now GCDA has entered into MOUs with agencies to utilise the balance capacity. Chief Secretary enquired whether GCDA can provide sewerage network to the existing plant for complete utilisation of the STP. Kochi Corporation & GCDA may look into that aspect as well.

(Action: **Secretary Kochi Corporation, GCDA, KSPCB**)

4. Registration of tankers and online tracking system:

Kochi Corporation shall take urgent steps to register all unregistered wastewater tankers plying in the area and to implement online tracking system.

(Action: **Kochi Corporation, LSGD**)

5. STP proposals of KMRL:

DPRs prepared by KMRL duly vetted by CUBE- IIT Chennai for four STPs [(A). Muttar- 16.5 MLD- ₹ 324.28 Cr. (B). Perandoor- 19 MLD- ₹ 232.68 Cr. (C). Vennala- 24 MLD- ₹ 499.26 Cr. (D). Elamkulam- 17.5 MLD- ₹ 367.63 Cr.] were forwarded to the Ministry of Jal Shakti for funding under NRCP scheme. Chief Secretary directed the Secretary, Water Resources Department to immediately follow up the matter with Ministry of Jal Shakti.

(Action: **Water Resources Department/, KMRL**)

6. Proposed STPs at Kochi:

Secretary, Kochi Corporation informed that work was awarded under AMRUT scheme for an STP at Edakochi (Division- 16). Public protest was there against the project. Mayor intervened and its now decided to move forward with the project. The proposed STP at Division 1-4 under Cochin Smart City was dropped due to the public protest. The proposed 2 MLD STP is now to be implemented for 1 MLD capacity as sanction for only 1 MLD was issued by Suchitwa Mission. Chief Secretary directed the Departments/Authorities to expedite the procedures and complete the projects at the earliest.

(Action: **Local Self Government Department, AMRUT, Suchitwa Mission, DC, Ernakulam, Secretary Kochi Corporation**).

7. Pollution issues at Ernakulam South Railway and Loco sheds:

KSPCB reported that Railways were instructed to provide STP/ ETP and also to

facilitate proper disposal of waste containing oil from loco shed.

(Action: KSPCB, Manager Southern Railway)

8. Waste management issues of houseboats:

KSPCB conveyed that 865 houseboats have board's consent. Presently only some quantity of wastewater is taken to CSTP of 90 KLD maintained by DTTC at Kumarakam, Kottayam. District Officer, KSPCB Kottayam informed that as per inspections done, it is seen that only a few houseboats are utilizing the CSTP plant. Chief Secretary directed the port authority to check the logbook details and ascertain the number of houseboats registered, quantity of waste generated and quantity of waste disposed at CSTP. The Maritime Board, Ports Department and KSPCB shall continuously inspect the waste management of houseboats on a routine basis. DTTC, Port Department and District Collectors concerned shall get the details of houseboats (numbers, registered, unregistered, consented, not consented), details of waste generated & disposed and the gist of data entered in the logbook and issue necessary directions as per the findings to bring the violators to book and to prevent further pollution of the waterways. CSTP at Alappuzha is to be made operational at the earliest. Action in this regard is to be expedited. DC, Alappuzha shall follow up the matter.

(Action: Ports Department, CEO , Kerala Maritime Board , DTTC Kottayam, KSPCB, District Collectors of Alappuzha, Kottayam, Ernakulam, Thrissur and Kollam).

9. FSTP at Cherthala :

Director, Urban Affairs conveyed that the FSTP project at Cherthala can be expected to take off by next week. Case against the project is pending before the Water Appellate Authority. **(Action: DUA, LSGD)**

10. CETP Aroor:

Industries Directorate reported that stay continues in WPC. Action shall be taken immediately to get the stay vacated. Chief Secretary directed that such issues may be brought to the notice of NGT. **(Action: Industries Department Director, Directorate of Industries).**

11. STP at Kottayam:

Principal Secretary, LSGD informed that there is a proposal for an STP at Kottayam Medical College with almost three times the capacity of that required by the KMC. The facility may be helpful in catering to the needs of nearby local bodies as well and so LSGD has addressed Medical Education in this regard as

the land is with DME. Chief Secretary directed the concerned approve the request at the earliest.

(Action: LSGD, Health & Family Welfare Department, DC KTM)

12. Biomining at Kottayam Municipality:

District Collector informed that the biomining activity at Kottayam Municipality was halted long ago due to public protest. Chief Secretary directed the Departments/Authorities concerned to restart the biomining activities to ensure compliance to the Rules. DC shall look into the same and monitor progress. **(Action: LSGD, DUA, KSPCB, DC Kottayam, Kottayam Municipality).**

13. STP at Kureeppuzha:

KSPCB reported that 76 % of the STP work has been completed. The work related to the sewer network is still pending. MD, KWA informed that tender procedures have been initiated and even after splitting the sewer network project works, bidders have not shown interest. The Chief Secretary suggested to revise the rates after proper scrutiny. If new rate policies are required that may be taken up at appropriate levels with adequate details showcasing genuine reasoning. **(Action: KWA, WRD).**

14. Cleaning of canals and closing of illegal outlets to the canal:

The Progress made by Kochi Corporation in cleaning canals was noted. Chief Secretary directed that the LSGIs shall conduct regular monitoring of canals. The illegal outlets shall be closed. Legal actions against the perpetrators shall be initiated including levying of fine. **(Action: LSGD, LSGIs).**

15. Solid Waste Management data collection & Notice and fine collected by local bodies:

The details of notices issued and fine collected by the local bodies adjacent to the Vembanad and Ashtamudi wetlands were presented. It is seen that many local bodies have not entered data in the spreadsheet provided for data collection on waste management. Chief Secretary directed Directors of Panchayats and Urban Affairs to follow up and ensure that the data provided by the LSGIs via google sheets/ spreadsheets are genuine. DDPs & Secretaries of LSGIs shall be instructed to look into this matter. **(Action: LSGD, DUA, Directorate of Panchayats, DDPs, LSGIs).**

16. Environmental Compensation notice/direction issued by the Board:

KSPCB reported the details of Environmental Compensation notice/direction

issued to the LSGIs as ordered by the NGT for violation of the Solid Waste Management Rules. It was noted that many of the notices were stayed by the Hon'ble High Court in WPCs filed by LSGIs. Chief Secretary expressed dissatisfaction over filing WPCs by a Government Department/Authority against another Department/Authority without trying to resolve the disputes, if any, through the committee of Secretaries of Government as instructed in State Government Orders already in force. The State Government have issued orders constituting dispute resolution committee for settlement of disputes between various Departments/PSUs/Corporations/Local Self Government Institutions. This was intended to avoid unnecessary litigation and to save time and effort in that regard and also to prevent revenue loss to government exchequer. Therefore, the cost of litigation may be recovered from the officers responsible for such frivolous litigation.

(Action: LSGD, DUA, LSGIs, KSPCB)

17. Awareness programs:

The concerned Departments/Authorities concerned to conduct awareness programs/ workshops/ seminars/ presentations/ group discussions/quiz programs etc for the students at schools in the State on the importance of conservation of nature, handling of various types of wastes, legal forums/framework/ authorities related to environmental management (their roles & responsibilities), complaint redressal mechanisms, the role and duties of individuals in waste management etc. The fundamental duty of the citizen to protect the environment shall be highlighted. The field visit to the waste management facilities from schools shall also be considered/encouraged. The service of subject experts can be availed for the above activities. Sensitising the public and children in the sensitive areas wherein protests against setting up of waste management projects have erupted may be helpful in conveying the message on good initiatives in waste management.

(Action: LSGD, GED, LSGIs, Suchitwa Mission, KSPCB)

18. Filing report before the Tribunal:

The Environment Department may file a detailed action taken report as instructed vide order dated 06/01/2023 of NGT in OA No. 147/2022 (PZ). The Monitoring Committee may meet as required and shall review the actions and shall come up with necessary restoration plan.

(Action: Environment(A) Department).

Meeting came to a close by 01:00 PM

DR V P JOY
CHIEF SECRETARY
O/O CHIEF SECRETARY