

BEFORE THE NATIONAL GREEN TRIBUNAL AT
PRINCIPAL BENCH, PUNE, MAHARASHTRA

(under Section 18 read with Section 14 and 15 of the National
Green Tribunal Act 2010)

ORIGINAL APPLICATION NO.: 210 OF 2024 (WZ)

IN THE MATTER OF:

SUNIL RAMCHANDRA SHINDE & ANR ... APPLICANTS

Versus

STATE OF MAHARASHTRA & ORS ... RESPONDENTS

AFFIDAVIT

I, Mr. Rahul Mahadeo Ingale, Age 39 years, Occupation:
Chief Officer, having address at Municipal Building, Matheran
Hill Station Municipal Council, Taluka Karjat, District Raigad, do
hereby state on oath and solemn affirmation as under :

- 1) I say that the Maharashtra Pollution Control Board has
submitted a final Environmental Monitoring Report, titled
as Environment Impact Assessment Report, for air, water
and soil in Matheran area due to presence of horse dung.
The same has been prepared by Dr. Sachin Pore, Civil

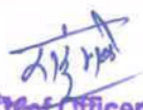

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Engineer and expert in Earthquake Engineering, affiliated to Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Technological University, Lonere. The said Report deals with the environmental impact arising out of the presence of horse dung and suggests various mitigation measures for addressing the environmental concerns in the Matheran area.

- 2) The Respondent No.5, 6 and 7 have filed their Reply Affidavit on 23rd March, 2026 and have raised objections to the same. The Counsel for the MPCB has requested permission to file Rejoinder Affidavit to the Reply Affidavit filed by the Respondent No.5 and 7, raising objections to the aforesaid Report. The present Affidavit is, therefore, being filed to place the stand of the Respondent No.3 on record with regard to the mitigation measures proposed in the said Report.
- 3) In the said Report, various measures are proposed to be adopted by the Respondent No.3, i.e., Matheran Hill Station Municipal Council. As per the order of this Tribunal dated 9th June, 2026, at the request of the Respondent No.3, the Hon'ble Tribunal has permitted the Respondent No.3 to file objections, regarding mitigation measures, proposed as per the Report of Dr. Sachin Pore. Therefore, this Respondent is placing on record the present Affidavit. The present Affidavit is restricted to the aspects pertaining to the


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proposed mitigation measures and the practical issues concerning their implementation.

- 4) I further say that, as per Notification S.O. No. 133(E) dated 4th February 2003, a Monitoring Committee has been established for the Hill Station of Matheran. The present Monitoring Committee is headed by Mr. K. P. Bakshi, Chairperson (Retd. IAS), along with its other members. The said Committee has been constituted for monitoring and supervising the implementation of the environmental safeguards and measures applicable to the Matheran Hill Station. Since Matheran Hill Station is one of the modern unique hill stations in the entire India where no ICE vehicles are permitted. In fact, since ages, the only mode of transport is the horses and hand-drawn carts. As the practice of hand-drawn carts is very inhuman, the Council had tried to initiate usage of battery-operated e-rickshaws. A proceeding was initiated before the Hon'ble Supreme Court in *In Re: T.N. Godavarman Thirumulpad vs. UOI & Ors.*, Writ Petition (C) No. 202 of 1995, I.A. Nos. 79569, 79576, 159670, and 159677 of 2019; I.A. Nos. 14261 and 14262 of 2021; I.A. Nos. 40599, 40624, and 220675 of 2023; and I.A. Nos. 111336 and 137276 of 2025, the Hon'ble Apex Court directed the Monitoring Committee to take a call with regard to permitting e-rickshaws and laying down paver blocks. Initially, the Hon'ble Supreme Court directed usage of battery-operated e-rickshaws on experimental basis, and,

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subsequently, by its final judgment, the same are being implemented. As on today, 26 e-rickshaws are currently operational in Matheran. However, till today, for the purpose of transportation, no such permission has been accorded by any authority or under the aegis of any Court orders. Considering the geographical, ecological and statutory restrictions applicable to the Matheran Eco-Sensitive Zone, the Council submits that as per ESZ notification, 2003 only ambulance and fire brigade is allowed to ply in the ESZ zone. All the other means of transport are not allowed.

- 5) As per the order of the Hon'ble Apex Court, the phased introduction of e-rickshaws in place of hand-pulled carts is underway. If this Hon'ble Tribunal permits the operation of electric cargo vehicles (E-Tempo) for the collection and transportation of equine waste, along with mechanized road sweeping vehicles for effective sanitation and waste management, the Council will be able to implement the equine waste management protocol more efficiently and scientifically. Further, the introduction of E-Tempo for transportation of goods and equine waste would substantially eliminate the need for ponies presently engaged in goods transportation, thereby reducing the overall equine population and the quantity of equine waste generated in Matheran. However, horses continue to remain one of the principal and indispensable modes of

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transportation for passengers in Matheran Hill Station. Therefore, any mitigation measures proposed are required to be practical, feasible, and capable of implementation without adversely affecting the passenger transportation system prevailing in the Hill Station.

Whatever has been stated hereinabove is true and correct to the best of my knowledge, belief and information and, in witness whereof, I have signed this at Karjat on this 13 th day of July, 2026.



[Signature]
Chief Officer
Matheran Hill Station Municipal Council

I know the Affiant

Advocate

ATTESTED BY ME
[Signature]
DIPALI R. SHINDE
Advocate & Notary
MAH 1533/2000 REG.NO.1142
Karjat - Raigad
13 JUL 2020

NOTED AT
Sr.No.36941
2026

