

**BEFORE THE HON'BLE NATIONAL GREEN  
TRIBUNAL, WESTERN ZONE BENCH, PUNE**

APPEAL U/S. 16 (H) R/W S. 20 OF NGT ACT, 2010,  
RULE NO. 24 OF NGT (P & P) RULES, 2011

**APPEAL NO. 140 OF 2024 (WZ)**

Tanaji Balasaheb Gambhire ... Applicant

VERSUS

Union of India & Ors. ... Respondents

**AFFIDAVIT IN REPLY BY RESPONDENT NO. 9  
(DUVILLE ESTATES PVT LTD)**

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Date : **02/01/2026**

Place : **Pune**

Filed by :

**Advocate Raghunath Bhalchandra Mahabal**

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**ABBREVIATIONS**

Short	Full-form
CAC	Consent Appraisal Committee
CC	Consent Committee
CI	Capital Investment
COLLY	Collectively
CPCB	Central Pollution Control Board
EFCCD-GoM	Environment and Climate Change Department, Government of Maharashtra
EC	Environmental Clearance
EC	'Environmental Clearance'
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
FSI	Floor Space Index
MOEF&CC MoEFCC	Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change
MoM	Minutes of Meeting
NGT	Hon'ble National Green Tribunal
NOC	No Objection Certificate
PP	Project Proponent
RTI	Right to Information
SEAC	State Expert Appraisal Committee
SEIAA	State Environmental Impact Assessment Authority
TBUA	'total covered built-up construction area including FSI and non-FSI'



## DIARY OF EVENTS

Date (y-m-d)	Event
2023/04/28	Application filed by PP for proposed expansion of residential and commercial Project 'Riverdale' for Terms of Reference (TOR).
2023/05/25	171st Meeting of SEAC-III was held when deliberations took place in respect of the proposed expansion of the Project on all the issues relating to environment, including air, water, land, soil, ecology, biodiversity and social aspects were examined and SEAC-III apprised the proposal as per Circular issued by SEIAA dated 22.08.2022 and issued Terms of Reference for undertaking EIA and preparation of Environment Management Plan (EMP). The SEAC-III Committee decided to recommend the proposal to SEIAA for grant of TOR.
2023/07/10	262nd Meeting of SEIAA was held when the SEIAA considered the SEAC-III 171st Meeting Minutes for grant of TOR under violation category and after deliberations SEIAA decided to grant TOR as per the recommendation of SEAC-III.
2023/08/07	Letter was addressed by SEIAA to PP setting out the Terms of Reference as approved at the 262nd Meeting of SEIAA.
2023/08/17	Application for Environment Clearance was filed by Project Proponent enclosing a detailed EIA Report dated 17.08.2023 and Declaration dated 16.08.2023 by experts contributing the EIA Report.
2023/10/12	182nd SEAC- III meeting was held when the proposal of the PP based on the TOR and the EIA Report and the environment damage assessment, remediation cost



Date (y-m-d)	Event
	estimation, penalty calculation as per OM 2021 provided in the EIA Report was examined and after deliberations, the SEAC- III committee decided to recommend the proposal for Environment Clearance to SEIAA.
2023/12/14	272nd SEIAA meeting was held when the proposal of the PP based on the TOR and the EIA Report and the environment damage assessment, remediation cost estimation, penalty calculation as per OM 2021 provided in the EIA Report was examined along with the recommendations of SEAC-III and after deliberations decided to grant the Environment Clearance
2024/02/09	Environment Clearance was issued by SEIAA
2024/05/07	Appeal refiled with application for condonation of delay



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NATIONAL GREEN TRIBUNAL,  
WESTERN ZONE BENCH, PUNE**

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**APPEAL NO. 140 OF 2024 (WZ)**

Tanaji Balasaheb Gambhire ... Applicant

VERSUS

Union of India & Ors. ... Respondents

**AFFIDAVIT IN REPLY ON BEHALF OF  
RESPONDENT NO. 9**

1. I, Amit Soni, Adult of Mumbai, Indian Inhabitant, having my office at Darabshaw House, Shoorji Vallabhdas Road, Ballard Estate, Mumbai- 400 001 Authorised Representative of the Respondent No. 9- PP, do hereby swear and state as under:-
2. I am acquainted with the facts and circumstances of the present case. By an Order dated 13<sup>th</sup> August, 2025 (annexed hereto and marked as '**EXHIBIT - R1**') passed by this Hon'ble Tribunal, I. A. No. 204 of 2024 was allowed and the Appellant's delay in filing the captioned Appeal was condoned. In Paragraphs 16 and 17 of the said Order, this Hon'ble Tribunal has recorded and directed as under:

*16. We may make it clear that as regards the ground amongst the grounds raised in these appeals, with respect to the Environmental Clearance having been issued post expiry of the*



*term of SEIAA is already decided by us. Hence the said ground is not pressed by the Appellant.*

*17. With respect to Office Memorandum (O.M.) dated 07.07.2021, issued by the MoEF&CC, the Hon'ble Supreme Court has already held that the said O.M. cannot be made applicable as far as ex-post facto EC is concerned. Therefore, the appellant submits that he is assailing only the procedure which is alleged to have not been followed by the SEIAA while granting ex post facto EC and to that extent only, the present appeals are now to be considered by this Tribunal. Therefore, the respondents may file their reply-affidavit keeping these points in view.*

- 3.** I am accordingly filing the present Affidavit in Reply as per the directions of the Hon'ble NGT, by limiting the reply to only deal with the allegation made by the Appellant on 13<sup>th</sup> August, 2025, that SEIAA has not followed the procedure while granting the EC to the PP.
- 4.** At the outset, the PP denies each and every statement, averment, allegation, contention and/or submission contained in the said Appeal which is contrary to and/or inconsistent with what is stated herein and the applications filed by the PP, EIA Report and the EC granted in favour of the PP. Nothing contained in the said Appeal should be deemed to have been admitted for want of specific denials unless the same has been specifically admitted by the PP.
- 5.** At the further outset, the PP states that the entire Appeal has been filed on the basis of allegations and contentions which are unfounded, unsubstantiated and speculative in



nature. Only broad and generic allegations have been made by the Appellant, especially in respect of the process and procedure followed by the PP and the information and contents provided in the EIA Report as per the TOR issued by SEIAA, without providing any evidence/proof and/or documents whatsoever. The Appeal is only filled with bald allegations and unsubstantiated contentions are raised for creating prejudice against the PP and unnecessary doubts on the sanctity and integrity of the members of SEIAA and SEAC-III.

6. It is submitted that the PP has followed the entire procedure leading upto the grant of the EC as per the EIA Notification of 2006, which has been duly examined by SEAC-III and SEIAA and after due deliberations the EC for expansion (under violation category) was granted to the PP as per the office Memorandum dated 7<sup>th</sup> July, 2021 issued by MOEF&CC (2021 OM). A copy of the 2021 OM dated 7<sup>th</sup> July, 2021 is annexed and marked as "**Exhibit- R4**"
  
7. It is pertinent to note that the Hon'ble Supreme Court in the matter of Vanshakti Vs. UOI (AIR 2025 SC 2843) has restrained the Central Government from issuing circulars /orders /Oms /notifications providing for grant of ex post facto EC in any form or manner for regularizing the acts done in contravention of the EIA notification. It has also been held that the 2017 notification (MOEF&CC had issued a notification number S.O. 804(E), dated the 14th March, 2017) and 2021 OM (MOEF & CC Office Memorandum dated 7<sup>th</sup> July, 2021) as well as circulars/orders/OMs/notifications issued for giving effect to these notifications are illegal and are struck



down. However, in the operative part of the said judgement at paragraph 36 (C) the Hon'ble Supreme Court has clarified that the ECs already granted till date under the 2017 notification and the 2021 OM shall however remain unaffected. In view of the above judgments of the Hon'ble Supreme Court the EC dated 9<sup>th</sup> February, 2024 granted to the PP in respect of the residential project being undertaken by the PP granted under the 2021 OM remains valid and subsisting. A copy of the judgement of the Hon'ble Supreme Court in Vanshakti Vs. UOI (AIR 2025 SC 2843), is annexed and marked as "**Exhibit- R5**".

8. Since, the main two issues raised by the Appellant to set aside the EC viz; (i) SEIAA was not in operation on the date of grant of impugned EC and; (ii) that the EC granted is an ex-post facto EC under the 2021 OM which has been struck off by the Hon'ble Supreme Court, do not survive in view of the order dated 13<sup>th</sup> August, 2013 of the Hon'ble NGT and the judgement of the Hon'ble Supreme Court dated 16.05.2025. It is only as an afterthought to unnecessarily protract the pending Appeal, the Appellant has raised the allegations of SEIAA allegedly not following procedure. There is no substance in this allegation.
9. Considering that the Appellant has only assailed the procedure which has been followed by SEIAA for granting the EC, before dealing with the said allegation, it is important to understand the procedure laid down in the Office Memorandum dated 7<sup>th</sup> July, 2021 bearing F. No. 22-21/2020-I.A.III:
  - a. The MOEF&CC had issued a notification number S.O.



804(E), dated the 14<sup>th</sup> March, 2017 detailing the process for grant of Terms of Reference and Environment Clearance in respect of projects or activities which have started the work on site and/or expanded the production beyond the limit of Prior EC or changed the product mix without obtaining Prior EC under the EIA Notification, 2006. The said notification was applicable for six months from the date of publication and further based on court direction from 14.03.2018 to 13.04.2018.

b. Pursuant thereto, the Hon'ble NGT in the O.A. 34/2020 WZ in the matter filed by the Appellant had directed for proper SOPs to be laid down grant of EC in such cases (which was subject matter of the said Application) so as to address the gaps in binding law and practice being currently followed. Accordingly, the MOEF & CC, Impact Assessment Division on 7<sup>th</sup> July, 2021 issued an Office Memorandum ("**OM 2021**"), providing SOP for identification and handling of violation cases under EIA Notification 2006 in compliance of order of Hon'ble NGT in OA No.34 of 2020.

c. Clause 11 of the said OM 2021 provides the SOP for dealing with the violation cases. Step 3 provides for the 'Appraisal under EIA Notification, 2006'. Paragraph 'B' of Step 3 provides that, if it is viewed that the project activity is otherwise permissible Terms of Reference shall be issued with directions to complete the impact assessment studies and submit Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIA Report) and Environmental Management Plan (EMP) in a time bound manner. It further provides that such



- cases of violation shall be subject to appropriate- a) damage assessment; b) remedial plan and; c) community augmentation plan by the Expert Appraisal Committee of Centre/State, as the case may be.
- d.** It further provides that upon submission of the EIA and EMP Report, the project shall be appraised by State Level Expert Appraisal Committees as if it was a new proposal. If on examination of the EIA and EMP Report, the project is considered permissible as per the Regulations the requisite environmental clearance shall be issued which shall be effective from the date of issue.
- e.** It is further provided that PP will be required to submit bank guarantee equivalent to the amount of remediation plan. The bank guarantee shall be deposited prior to the grant of environmental clearance and will be released after successful implementation of the remediation plan.
- f.** Clause 12 (b) of the OM 2021 provides for the quantum of penalty payable for violation cases and application for expansion of projects.
- 10.** The relevant facts which are necessary for adjudication of the allegations made by the Appellant are as follows:
- a.** In view of the SOPs provided in the OM 2021, the PP made an application for grant of Terms of Reference (TOR) on 28<sup>th</sup> April, 2023 (*Pages 262- 282 of the Appeal*). The said application for TOR was evaluated first by SEAC-III at the 171<sup>st</sup> SEAC-III meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> May, 2023 (*Pages 286- 307 of the Appeal*)



whereby after due deliberation as per OM 2021, SEAC-III decided to issue TOR for undertaking EIA and preparation of EMP and decided to recommend the proposal to SEIAA for grant of the said TOR.

b. At the 262<sup>nd</sup> SEIAA meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> July, 2023 (*Pages 308- 326 of the Appeal*), the TOR proposed by SEAC-III were duly considered by SEIAA and after due deliberation SEIAA decided to grant the TOR as per the recommendation of SEAC-III. In view of the said Terms of Reference the PP received a letter from SEIAA dated 7<sup>th</sup> August 2023 (*Pages 327- 348 of the Appeal*) setting out TOR of the said project as per the details of the project.

c. In terms of the said TOR the PP through its environment consultant and the experts contributing to the EIA prepared the EIA Report dated 16<sup>th</sup> August, 2023 (*Pages 395- 1344 of the Appeal*) which includes, the EMP, damage assessment, remediation plan and the calculation of the penalty payable for the violation. On 17<sup>th</sup> August, 2023, the PP filed an application for grant of Environment Clearance (*Pages 350- 374 of the Appeal*). The minutes of the 171<sup>st</sup> SEAC -III meeting and minutes of 262<sup>nd</sup> SEIAA meeting along with the EIA Report and all other necessary documents/annexure were also submitted along with the Application.

d. At the 182<sup>nd</sup> SEAC-III meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> October, 2023 application for expansion of the project was appraised by the SEAC-III and after consideration of the EIA Report and the assessment of the environment damage, remediation cost and the



penalty payable as per the OM 2021, SEAC-III decided to recommend the proposal for environment clearance to SEIAA. Minutes of the 182<sup>nd</sup> meeting of SEAC-III held on 10<sup>th</sup> 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> October, 2023 is annexed at *pages 1345- 1365 of the Appeal.*

**e.** At the 272<sup>nd</sup> SEIAA meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> December, 2023. The proposal of the project for expansion of the PP was considered after deliberations and thoroughly examining the environment damage, remediation costs, penalty calculation and the recommendation of SEAC-III directed the PP to submit a bank guarantee of Rs.22,12,00,000/- and submission of penalty of Rs.4,45,03,099/- and granted the environment clearance for the project of the PP. Minutes of the 272<sup>nd</sup> meeting of SEIAA held on 14<sup>th</sup> December, 2023 is annexed at *page 1366-1385 of the Appeal.*

**f.** The bank guarantee for Rs. 22,12,00,000/- has been submitted and the penalty of Rs. 4,45,03,099/- has been paid and the same has been recorded in the EC dated 09.02.2024 granted by SEIAA.

**11.** In this background, it is amply clear that the PP has followed the complete procedure as per the 2006 EIA Notification read with the SOPs laid down in the 2021 OM to first procure the grant of TOR and only thereafter the PP was granted the EC. Therefore, it is most humbly submitted that the allegations made by the appellant, are completely baseless, false, frivolous and without any merit.

**12.** Shockingly, the Appellant has apparently with a view to cause prejudice against the PP in paragraph 4.24 of the memo of appeal, falsely contended that no EIA Report



- has been submitted by the PP for grant of EC, whereas, the said EIA Report running into 100s of pages has been submitted by the PP and the same has also been annexed to the Appeal starting from page 395 of the Appeal.
- 13.** So far as the said issue now raised by the Appellant viz SEIAA allegedly not following the procedure as per the OM 2021, is concerned, the Appellant has in the Appeal made bald and unsubstantiated allegations and raised frivolous contentions, like the EIA Report is misleading, there is no detailed chapter on Damage Assessment, there is no EIA Report giving details of Construction of Project, Building Material used & required, Commissioning of Project, Assessment of Damages, Calculation of Cost of remediation plan, allocation of amount for remedial measures etc. The Appellant clearly has taken no efforts to study the EIA Report and merely made the above false allegations without any application of mind.
- 14.** The Appellant has raised baseless doubts on the source of the data of the above details reflected in the Minutes and alleged that there is lots of contradiction in the data submitted to SEIAA and SEAC-III, without providing any details of such alleged contradiction, whatsoever.
- 15.** The allegation that no EIA Report has been filed by the PP is belied by the Appellant's own action. It is pertinent to note that the EIA Report has been prepared on the basis of the TOR issued by SEIAA with the help of independent experts as mentioned at pages 396 to 398 of the Appeal. The report contains baseline data, project description, assessment of impacts, preparation of



Environment Management Plan and disaster management plan, damage assessment etc. The report is divided into 11 chapters providing the objectives and methodology for EIA, description of location, approachability, amenities, layout and utilities of the project, baseline environmental status for micro climate, air quality, noise, traffic, water quality, soil quality, flora, fauna and social-economic status, possible sources of pollution and environmental impacts of project during construction and use phases, post project environmental monitoring programme, risk associated with proposed construction, approach to risk management, carbon footprint analysis and traffic study, damage assessment and remediation plan, calculation of cost of remediation and penalty, benefits from the proposed project and the Environmental Management Plan. The EIA Report is also supported by various Annexures, permissions, certificates, plans etc. in respect of the said Project. Therefore, it is most humbly submitted that complete disclosures as required for proper assessment of the impact of the project on the environment has been provided by the PP and the same has been examined by the team of experts who have contributed on the said EIA Report.

16. All the above details, data, assessments, information, documents and disclosures provided in the EIA report have been conveniently ignored by the Appellant and instead of providing the detailed explanation, specific instances and evidence of alleged misleading facts, false information, wrong calculations, contradicting data etc., the Appellant has made bald and frivolous allegations, without any application of mind, and approached the Hon'ble NGT, with a *malafide* intent to cause undue



hardships to the PP and the allottees of the PP. Absolutely no details of the lacuna in the data, information, assessments etc. or non-compliance of any procedures/requirements followed by SEIA while granting the EC in terms of 2021 OM have been even explained by the Appellant.

**17.** The Appellant has also failed to appreciate the fact that the PP has not only followed proper process, but has also submitted the bank guarantee of Rs.22,12,00,000/- and paid a penalty of Rs.4,45,03,099/-. PP will also be taking remedial measures for the good of the environment as per the remedial plan. For the violations, the PP has sufficiently been penalized as per the Polluters Pay Principle.

**18.** The Appellant has made uncorroborated and baseless allegations like (i) non-application of mind by SEAC-III and SEIAA; (ii) abuse of process of law by members of SEIAA and SEAC-III in collusion with the PP; and (iii) the information submitted by the PP is false baseless, misleading which has led to wrong, false, baseless, unscientific appraisal & assessment of the proposal, which are completely unfounded, false and without any substantive evidence. It is pertinent to note that unreasonable doubts have been raised by the Appellant on the sanctity and integrity of the members of SEAC-III and SEIAA without providing any evidence and details as to the correct information what the PP ought to have been provided or the correct manner of assessment/evaluation, that the SEAC-III or SEIAA ought to have undertaken for the grant of EC.



19. In view of the above, the PP most humbly submits that the PP has complied with the entire procedure and the regulatory requirements as per the EIA Notification of 2006 and the 2021 OM. The Appellant has not presented any substantive evidence/ proof/ material to support the allegation assailed on 13<sup>th</sup> August, 2025 in the present Appeal. Therefore, this Hon'ble Tribunal is most humbly requested to dismiss the present Appeal with exemplary costs.

Place : Pune  
Date : **02/01/2026**

  
**Respondent No. 9**  
**Duville Estate Pvt Ltd**



**VERIFICATION AND AFFIDAVIT**

I, Amit Soni, aged about 35 years, the Authorised Representative of Respondent No. 9, do hereby swear and state that I have verified the facts mentioned hereinabove and the same are true and correct to the best of my personal knowledge. I have not suppressed any relevant material facts known to me. I have made the submissions based on legal advice.



**Amit Soni**  
**DEPONENT**  
**Respondent No. 9**

Place : Mumbai  
Date : **02/01/2026**

Identified by:



Advocate : Raghunath Mahabal  
Reg. No. : MAH/349/2012



**BEFORE ME**



**PALLAVI MARATHE**  
**ADVOCATE AND NOTARY**  
B/3, Sunder Sadan, 63  
Wadhwa Patel Road,  
Opp. Robert Money School  
Mumbai - 400 004



Sr. No. 68 Reg. No. 33  
Page No. 37 Dt. 2/1/2026


**CERTIFIED TRUE COPY OF THE RESOLUTION NO. 7/2024-25 PASSED BY CIRCULATION BY THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF DUVILLE ESTATES PRIVATE LIMITED ON SEPTEMBER 26, 2024**

**TO AUTHORISE MR. AMIT SONI, COMPANY SECRETARY TO SIGN THE AFFIDAVITS, WRITTEN STATEMENTS, APPEALS, APPLICATION TO BE FILED WITH ANY COURT, TRIBUNAL OR ANY OTHER JUDICIAL / QUASI JUDICIAL AUTHORITY, ON BEHALF OF THE COMPANY**

“**RESOLVED THAT** Mr. Amit Soni, Company Secretary of the Company, be and is hereby authorised, on behalf of the Company, to appoint Advocates/Counsels to represent the Company before any Court, Tribunal or other Judicial or Quasi-judicial Authority AND to sign, swear, declare, affirm, verify, re-verify and file all petitions, appeals, complaints, written statements, replies, counter claims, set-offs, affidavits, affidavit of evidence, applications in the proceedings before the such Court, Tribunal or any other Judicial or Quasi-judicial Authority;

**RESOLVED FURTHER THAT** any Director of the Company and the Company Secretary be and are hereby authorised to give effect to this resolution and to issue certified true copy of this resolution to concerned Authority or person(s).”

For Duville Estates Private Limited

  
Tushad B. Dubash  
Director  
DIN: 00287547



**Duville Estates Pvt. Ltd.**

Registered Office : 81, Sopan Baug, Ghorpadi, Pune – 411 001 | Administration Office : Darabshaw House, Ballard Estate, Mumbai 400 001  
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Item No.2.99 to 2.105

(Pune Bench)

**BEFORE THE NATIONAL GREEN TRIBUNAL  
WESTERN ZONE BENCH, PUNE**

[THROUGH PHYSICAL HEARING (WITH HYBRID OPTION)]

**(I.As. From Batch at Item Nos.2.99 to 2.105)**

**IA NOS.194/2024, 197/2024, 198/2024, 199/2024, 203/2024,  
205/2024 AND 204/2024 IN APPEAL NOS.132/2024, 134/2024,  
135/2024, 136/2024, 137/2024, 138/2024, 140/2024,  
RESPECTIVELY**

**WITH**

**APPEAL NOS.132/2024, 134/2024, 135/2024, 136/2024, 137/2024,  
138/2024 AND 140/2024**

Tanaji B. Gambhire

... **Applicant/  
Appellant**

**Versus**

Union of India &amp; Ors.

... **Respondents**

Date of hearing : 13.08.2025

**CORAM: HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE DINESH KUMAR SINGH, JUDICIAL MEMBER  
HON'BLE DR. VIJAY KULKARNI, EXPERT MEMBER**

Applicant/ : Applicant/Appellant in person present along with  
Appellant Mr. Vijay Mhaske, Advocate in all these matters

Respondents : Mr. Pushkal Mishra, Advocate for R-1/MoEF&CC in all I.As.  
Mr. Aniruddha Kulkarni, Standing Advocate along with  
Mr. Savyasachi Bharadwaj, Advocate for R-2/SEIAA and  
R-3/SEAC, in all I.As.  
Ms. Manasi Joshi, Advocate along with Ms. Pooja Natu,  
Advocate for R-7/MPCB  
Mr. Rahul Garg, Advocate along with Mr. Shubham Rathod,  
Advocate for R-8/PMC  
Mr. Sachin Rajapurkar, Advocate for R-9/PP in I.A. No.194/2024  
Mr. Saket Mone, Advocate along with Ms. Anchita Nair,  
Advocate for R-9/PP in I.A. Nos.197/2024 and 198/2024  
Mr. R.B. Mahabal, Advocate for R-9/PP in I.A. No.204/2024  
Mr. Omkar Wangikar, Advocate for R-9/PP in I.A.No.203/2024

**ORDER**

1. In all these I.As. and Appeals, the Registry has wrongly shown the name of Mr. Nitin Lonkar, as learned counsel for the applicant/appellant in

**T.C**



the cause-list. In fact, the applicant/appellant Mr. Tanaji B. Gambhire has appeared in person in all these matters.

**I.As.** :

2. In all these appeals, the above numbered Interlocutory Applications (I.A.s) have been filed for condoning the delay caused in filing these Appeals.

3. Mr. Sachin Rajapurkar, learned counsel has appeared for respondent No.9 – Project Proponent in I.A. No.194/2024 in Appeal No.132/2024, learned counsel Mr. Saket Mone has appeared for respondent No.9 – Project Proponent in I.A. No.197/2024 in Appeal No.134/2024 and I.A. No.198/2024 in Appeal No.135/2024, learned counsel Mr. R.B. Mahabal has appeared for respondent No.9 – Project Proponent I.A. No.140/2024 in Appeal No.204/2024 while learned counsel Mr. Omkar Wangikar has appeared for respondent No.9 – Project Proponent in I.A. No.203/2024 in Appeal No.137/2024. In rest of the I.As. and Appeals, none has appeared for respondent No.9 – Project Proponent.

4. From the side of respondent No.1 – MoEF&CC, learned counsel Mr. Pushkal Mishra has appeared in all these matters.

5. From the side of respondent No.2/SEIAA and respondent No.3/SEAC, learned standing counsel Mr. Aniruddha Kulkarni has appeared in all these matters, from the side of respondent No.7/MPCB, learned counsel Ms. Manasi Joshi has appeared in all these matters and from the side of respondent No.8 – PMC, learned counsel Mr. Rahul Garg has appeared in all these matters.

6. None of the respondents have filed their objection against the present delay condonation applications (I.A.s), except respondent No.9 – Project Proponent in respective I.As. i.e. I.A. No.194/2024 in Appeal No.132/2024 (in which learned counsel Mr. Sachin Rajapurkar has appeared for respondent No.9), I.A. Nos.197/2024 in Appeal No.134/2024 and I.A.

No.198/2024 in Appeal No.135/2024 (in which learned counsel Mr. Saket Mone has appeared for respondent No.9 – Project Proponent) and in I.A. No.204/2024 in Appeal 140/2024 (in which learned counsel Mr. R.B. Mahabal has appeared for respondent No.9 – Project Proponent).

7. Learned counsel Mr. Sachin Rajapurkar, appearing for respondent No.9 – Project Proponent in I.A. No.194/2024 has appeared and states that he has filed reply dated 20.08.2024 stating therein that the ground mentioned for delay by the applicant/appellant is stated to be that he tried to file these appeals from 06.03.2024 to 09.03.2024, but due to technical problem with NGT Website, he could not upload/e-file the same successfully. Thereafter, he uploaded only the impugned Environmental Clearance purposefully and made payment just to generate the Diary Number. The appellant was not ready with entire compilation of the appeals. Further it is submitted by him that the applicant/appellant had filed bunch of 105 appeals requiring large number of documents to be uploaded. It is further mentioned that because of his personal health issue, the delay has occurred in filing the appeals in time. It is urged by learned counsel Mr. Rajapurkar that there is no documentary evidence produced on record in support of applicant's illness. Therefore, according to him, there is no justification to be considered for allowing these delay condonation applications.

8. In response to the above submissions made on behalf of respondent No.9, the applicant, who has appeared in person, submits that because of he having apprehension from his rivals, he could not and cannot disclose his illness in public. Therefore, he has brought his medical file with him for its perusal by this Tribunal. He submits that he is suffering from acute diabetes, because of which his eyesight had also got damaged at one point of time.

9. Mr. R.B. Mahabal, learned counsel representing respondent No.9 – Project Proponent in I.A. No.204 in Appeal No.140/2024 has appeared and states that affidavit-in-reply dated 04.12.2024 has been filed by them in which it is stated that the appeal was e-filed on 09.03.2024 in order to generate the Diary Number. The appellant had purposefully filed the appeal to procure the Diary Number by merely uploading the Environmental Clearance. The Registry had raised objection on 13.03.2024 regarding the appeal being defective and directed the applicant to remove the defects within seven days. The appellant failed to comply with the said direction. As a result, on 29.04.2024, the appeal, diary number of which was 2704138001722024, was listed for consideration by this Tribunal. It was observed in the order dated 29.04.2024 passed by this Tribunal that the applicant/appellant had filed only copy of the Environmental Clearance and did not file proper memo of appeal, only to claim the period of limitation by getting a diary number, instead of actually filing the case. Further it is also stated that perjury is also committed by the appellant as no medical evidence has been adduced from his side to prove that he was sick. In fact, on the dates when he was stated to be ill, he had also appeared before this Tribunal on several dates. Therefore, the statement to the effect that he was sick should be taken to be a false statement before this Tribunal.

10. In reply to above submissions, from the side of the applicant, he has already given explanation and we have already considered the objection from the side of respondent No.9 in Appeal No.132/2024, as original medical file of applicant's illness has been placed before us.

11. With regard to allegation that to get Diary Number generated in order to avoid delay condonation application to be moved, it is submitted by the applicant that he had filed a large number of appeals with which he could not cope up, particularly in view of his poor health condition.

12. Mr. Saket Mone, learned counsel representing respondent No.9 – Project Proponent in I.A. No.197/2024 in Appeal No.134/2024 and I.A. No.198/2024 in Appeal No.135/2024 has appeared and states that he is opposing delay condonation applications, but he leaves it to this Tribunal to pass appropriate order taking their reply into consideration. He submits that the applications for condonation of delay lack material particulars. Therefore, the same should be rejected.

13. As stated above, rest of the respondents, who have appeared through their respective counsel, have not filed objection to the present delay condonation applications.

14. After having heard the applicant/appellant, who has appeared in person and the learned counsel for the Project Proponent in respective cases and after perusal of the record, including the reply-affidavits of respondent No.9 – Project Proponent in respective applications, we are of the view that a large number of appeals approximately more than 105 have been filed on one and the same date by the appellant, which definitely would have taken long time for preparation of the documents, which appears to have resulted in delay in filing the present appeals. However, the period of delay caused in filing the appeals is in our discretion i.e. 30 days plus 60 days. As regards medical condition of the applicant/appellant, we are convinced that he was suffering from health problem because of which he might have difficulty to produce all the documents in time and file the appeals within the prescribed period of limitation. He was not sitting idle during this delayed period. We, therefore, deem it appropriate to condone the delay and accordingly condone the delay in all these applications. All the present Interlocutory Applications are allowed and disposed of.

**APPEALS :**

15. In all these appeals, the Environmental Clearance issued by the SEIAA has been assailed, which is ex post facto, on various grounds. Hence, considering the grounds raised in the memo of appeals, we admit all these appeals and direct the respondents to file their respective reply-affidavits within four weeks.

16. We may make it clear that as regards the ground amongst the grounds raised in these appeals, with respect to the Environmental Clearance having been issued post expiry of the term of SEIAA is already decided by us. Hence, the said ground is not pressed by the appellant.

17. With respect to Office Memorandum (O.M.) dated 07.07.2021, issued by the MoEF&CC, the Hon'ble Supreme Court has already held that the said O.M. cannot be made applicable as far as ex-post facto EC is concerned. Therefore, the appellant submits that he is assailing only the procedure which is alleged to have not been followed by the SEIAA while granting ex post facto EC and to that extent only, the present appeals are now to be considered by this Tribunal. Therefore, the respondents may file their reply-affidavit keeping these points in view.

18. Put up all these appeals for next consideration on 23.09.2025.

**Dinesh Kumar Singh, JM**

**Dr. Vijay Kulkarni, EM**

August 13, 2025  
IA No.194/2024+OTHERS (WZ)  
npj

(Published in the Gazette of India, Extraordinary, Part-II, and Section 3, Sub-section (ii)  
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS

New Delhi 14<sup>th</sup> September, 2006

**Notification**

S.O. 1533 Whereas, a draft notification **under sub-rule (3) of Rule 5 of the Environment (Protection) Rules, 1986 for imposing** certain restrictions and prohibitions on new projects or activities, or on the expansion or modernization of existing projects or activities based on their potential environmental impacts as indicated in the Schedule to the notification, being undertaken in any part of India<sup>1</sup>, unless prior environmental clearance has been accorded in accordance with the objectives of National Environment Policy **as approved by the Union Cabinet on 18<sup>th</sup> May, 2006** and the procedure specified in the notification, by the Central Government or the State or Union territory Level Environment Impact Assessment Authority (SEIAA), to be constituted by the Central Government in consultation with the State Government or the Union territory Administration concerned under sub-section (3) of section 3 of the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 for the purpose of this notification, was published in the Gazette of India ,Extraordinary, Part II, section 3, sub-section (ii) vide number S.O. 1324 (E) dated the 15<sup>th</sup> September ,2005 inviting objections and suggestions from all persons likely to be affected thereby within a period of sixty days from the date on which copies of Gazette containing the said notification were made available to the public;

And whereas, copies of the said notification were made available to the public on 15<sup>th</sup> September, 2005;

And whereas, all objections and suggestions received in response to the above mentioned draft notification have been duly considered by the Central Government;

Now, therefore, in exercise of the powers conferred by sub-section (1) and clause (v) of sub-section (2) of section 3 of the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986, read with clause (d) of sub-rule (3) of rule 5 of the Environment (Protection) Rules, 1986 and in supersession of the notification number S.O. 60 (E) dated the 27<sup>th</sup> January, 1994, except in respect of things done or omitted to be done before such supersession, the Central Government hereby directs that on and from the date of its publication the required construction of new projects or activities or the expansion or modernization of existing projects or activities listed in the Schedule to this notification entailing capacity addition with change in process and or technology shall be undertaken in any part of India only after the prior environmental clearance from the Central Government or as the case may be, by the State Level Environment Impact Assessment Authority, duly constituted by the Central Government under sub-section (3) of section 3 of the said Act, in accordance with the procedure specified hereinafter in this notification.

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<sup>1</sup>Includes the territorial waters

**2. Requirements of prior Environmental Clearance (EC):-** The following projects or activities shall require prior environmental clearance from the concerned regulatory authority, which shall hereinafter referred to be as the Central Government in the Ministry of Environment and Forests for matters falling under Category 'A' in the Schedule and at State level the State Environment Impact Assessment Authority (SEIAA) for matters falling under Category 'B' in the said Schedule, before any construction work, or preparation of land by the project management except for securing the land, is started on the project or activity:

- (i) All new projects or activities listed in the Schedule to this notification;
- (ii) Expansion and modernization of existing projects or activities listed in the Schedule to this notification with addition of capacity beyond the limits specified for the concerned sector, that is, projects or activities which cross the threshold limits given in the Schedule, after expansion or modernization;
- (iii) Any change in product - mix in an existing manufacturing unit included in Schedule beyond the specified range.

**3. State Level Environment Impact Assessment Authority:-** (1) A State Level Environment Impact Assessment Authority hereinafter referred to as the SEIAA shall be constituted by the Central Government under sub-section (3) of section 3 of the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 comprising of three Members including a Chairman and a Member – Secretary to be nominated by the State Government or the Union territory Administration concerned.

- (2) The Member-Secretary shall be a serving officer of the concerned State Government or Union territory administration familiar with environmental laws.
- (3) The other two Members shall be either a professional or expert fulfilling the eligibility criteria given in Appendix VI to this notification.
- (4) One of the specified Members in sub-paragraph (3) above who is an expert in the Environmental Impact Assessment process shall be the Chairman of the SEIAA.
- (5) The State Government or Union territory Administration shall forward the names of the Members and the Chairman referred in sub- paragraph 3 to 4 above to the Central Government and the Central Government shall constitute the SEIAA as an authority for the purposes of this notification within thirty days of the date of receipt of the names.
- (6) The non-official Member and the Chairman shall have a fixed term of three years (from the date of the publication of the notification by the Central Government constituting the authority).
- (7) All decisions of the SEIAA shall be unanimous and taken in a meeting.

**4. Categorization of projects and activities:-**

- (i) All projects and activities are broadly categorized in to two categories - Category A and Category B, based on the spatial extent of potential impacts and potential impacts on human health and natural and man made resources.

(ii) All projects or activities included as Category 'A' in the Schedule, including expansion and modernization of existing projects or activities and change in product mix, shall require prior environmental clearance from the Central Government in the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) on the recommendations of an Expert Appraisal Committee (EAC) to be constituted by the Central Government for the purposes of this notification;

(iii) All projects or activities included as Category 'B' in the Schedule, including expansion and modernization of existing projects or activities as specified in sub paragraph (ii) of paragraph 2, or change in product mix as specified in sub paragraph (iii) of paragraph 2, but excluding those which fulfill the General Conditions (GC) stipulated in the Schedule, *will* require prior environmental clearance from the State/Union territory Environment Impact Assessment Authority (SEIAA). The SEIAA shall base its decision on the recommendations of a State or Union territory level Expert Appraisal Committee (SEAC) as to be constituted for in this notification. In the absence of a duly constituted SEIAA or SEAC, a Category 'B' project shall be treated as a Category 'A' project;

## **5. Screening, Scoping and Appraisal Committees:-**

The same Expert Appraisal Committees (EACs) at the Central Government and SEACs (hereinafter referred to as the (EAC) and (SEAC) at the State or the Union territory level shall screen, scope and appraise projects or activities in Category 'A' and Category 'B' respectively. EAC and SEAC's shall meet at least once every month.

(a) The composition of the EAC shall be as given in Appendix VI. The SEAC at the State or the Union territory level shall be constituted by the Central Government in consultation with the concerned State Government or the Union territory Administration with identical composition;

(b) The Central Government may, with the prior concurrence of the concerned State Governments or the Union territory Administrations, constitutes one SEAC for more than one State or Union territory for reasons of administrative convenience and cost;

(c) The EAC and SEAC shall be reconstituted after every three years;

(d) The authorised members of the EAC and SEAC, concerned, may inspect any site(s) connected with the project or activity in respect of which the prior environmental clearance is sought, for the purposes of screening or scoping or appraisal, with prior notice of at least seven days to the applicant, who shall provide necessary facilities for the inspection;

(e) The EAC and SEACs shall function on the principle of collective responsibility. The Chairperson shall endeavour to reach a consensus in each case, and if consensus cannot be reached, the view of the majority shall prevail.

## **6. Application for Prior Environmental Clearance (EC):-**

An application seeking prior environmental clearance in all cases shall be made in the prescribed Form 1 annexed herewith and Supplementary Form 1A, if applicable, as given in Appendix II, after the identification of prospective site(s) for the project and/or activities to which the application relates, before commencing any construction activity, or preparation of land, at the site by the applicant. The applicant shall furnish, along with the application, a copy of the pre-feasibility project report except that, in case of construction projects or activities (item 8 of the Schedule) in addition to Form 1 and the Supplementary Form 1A, a copy of the conceptual plan shall be provided, instead of the pre-feasibility report.

## **7. Stages in the Prior Environmental Clearance (EC) Process for New Projects:-**

7(i) The environmental clearance process for new projects will comprise of a maximum of four stages, all of which may not apply to particular cases as set forth below in this notification. These four stages in sequential order are:-

- Stage (1) Screening (Only for Category 'B' projects and activities)
- Stage (2) Scoping
- Stage (3) Public Consultation
- Stage (4) Appraisal

### **I. Stage (1) - Screening:**

In case of Category 'B' projects or activities, this stage will entail the scrutiny of an application seeking prior environmental clearance made in Form 1 by the concerned State level Expert Appraisal Committee (SEAC) for determining whether or not the project or activity requires further environmental studies for preparation of an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) for its appraisal prior to the grant of environmental clearance depending up on the nature and location specificity of the project . The projects requiring an Environmental Impact Assessment report shall be termed Category 'B1' and remaining projects shall be termed Category 'B2' and will not require an Environment Impact Assessment report. For categorization of projects into B1 or B2 except item 8 (b), the Ministry of Environment and Forests shall issue appropriate guidelines from time to time.

### **II. Stage (2) - Scoping:**

(i) "Scoping": refers to the process by which the Expert Appraisal Committee in the case of Category 'A' projects or activities, and State level Expert Appraisal Committee in the case of Category 'B1' projects or activities, including applications for expansion and/or modernization and/or change in product mix of existing projects or activities, determine detailed and comprehensive Terms Of Reference (TOR) addressing all relevant environmental concerns for the preparation of an Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) Report in respect of the project or activity for which prior environmental clearance is sought. The Expert Appraisal Committee or State level Expert Appraisal Committee concerned shall determine the Terms of Reference on the basis of the information furnished in the prescribed application Form1/Form 1A including Terms of Reference proposed by the applicant, a site visit by a sub- group of Expert Appraisal Committee or State level Expert Appraisal Committee concerned only if considered necessary by the Expert Appraisal Committee or State Level Expert Appraisal Committee concerned, Terms of Reference suggested by the applicant if furnished and other information that may be available with the Expert Appraisal Committee or State Level Expert Appraisal Committee concerned. All projects and activities listed as Category 'B' in Item 8 of the Schedule (Construction/Township/Commercial Complexes /Housing) shall not require Scoping and will be appraised on the basis of Form 1/ Form 1A and the conceptual plan.

(ii) The Terms of Reference (TOR) shall be conveyed to the applicant by the Expert Appraisal Committee or State Level Expert Appraisal Committee as concerned within sixty days of the receipt of Form 1. In the case of Category A Hydroelectric projects Item 1(c) (i) of the Schedule the Terms of Reference shall be conveyed along with the clearance for pre-construction activities .If the Terms of Reference are not finalized and conveyed to the applicant within sixty days of the receipt of Form 1, the Terms of Reference suggested by the applicant shall be deemed as the final Terms of Reference approved for the EIA studies. The approved Terms of

Reference shall be displayed on the website of the Ministry of Environment and Forests and the concerned State Level Environment Impact Assessment Authority.

(iii) Applications for prior environmental clearance may be rejected by the regulatory authority concerned on the recommendation of the EAC or SEAC concerned at this stage itself. In case of such rejection, the decision together with reasons for the same shall be communicated to the applicant in writing within sixty days of the receipt of the application.

### III. Stage (3) - Public Consultation:

(i) "Public Consultation" refers to the process by which the concerns of local affected persons and others who have plausible stake in the environmental impacts of the project or activity are ascertained with a view to taking into account all the material concerns in the project or activity design as appropriate. All Category 'A' and Category B1 projects or activities shall undertake Public Consultation, except the following:-

- (a) modernization of irrigation projects (item 1(c) (ii) of the Schedule).
- (b) all projects or activities located within industrial estates or parks (item 7(c) of the Schedule) approved by the concerned authorities, and which are not disallowed in such approvals.
- (c) expansion of Roads and Highways (item 7 (f) of the Schedule) which do not involve any further acquisition of land.
- (d) all Building /Construction projects/Area Development projects and Townships (item 8).
- (e) all Category 'B2' projects and activities.
- (f) all projects or activities concerning national defence and security or involving other strategic considerations as determined by the Central Government.

(ii) The Public Consultation shall ordinarily have two components comprising of:-

(a) a public hearing at the site or in its close proximity- district wise, to be carried out in the manner prescribed in Appendix IV, for ascertaining concerns of local affected persons;

(b) obtain responses in writing from other concerned persons having a plausible stake in the environmental aspects of the project or activity.

(iii) the public hearing at, or in close proximity to, the site(s) in all cases shall be conducted by the State Pollution Control Board (SPCB) or the Union territory Pollution Control Committee (UTPCC) concerned in the specified manner and forward the proceedings to the regulatory authority concerned within 45(forty five ) of a request to the effect from the applicant.

(iv) in case the State Pollution Control Board or the Union territory Pollution Control Committee concerned does not undertake and complete the public hearing within the specified period, and/or does not convey the proceedings of the public hearing within the prescribed period

directly to the regulatory authority concerned as above, the regulatory authority shall engage another public agency or authority which is not subordinate to the regulatory authority, to complete the process within a further period of forty five days,.

(v) If the public agency or authority nominated under the sub paragraph (iii) above reports to the regulatory authority concerned that owing to the local situation, it is not possible to conduct the public hearing in a manner which will enable the views of the concerned local persons to be freely expressed, it shall report the facts in detail to the concerned regulatory authority, which may, after due consideration of the report and other reliable information that it may have, decide that the public consultation in the case need not include the public hearing.

(vi) For obtaining responses in writing from other concerned persons having a plausible stake in the environmental aspects of the project or activity, the concerned regulatory authority and the State Pollution Control Board (SPCB) or the Union territory Pollution Control Committee (UTPCC) shall invite responses from such concerned persons by placing on their website the Summary EIA report prepared in the format given in Appendix IIIA by the applicant along with a copy of the application in the prescribed form , within seven days of the receipt of a written request for arranging the public hearing . Confidential information including non-disclosable or legally privileged information involving Intellectual Property Right, source specified in the application shall not be placed on the web site. The regulatory authority concerned may also use other appropriate media for ensuring wide publicity about the project or activity. The regulatory authority shall, however, make available on a written request from any concerned person the Draft EIA report for inspection at a notified place during normal office hours till the date of the public hearing. All the responses received as part of this public consultation process shall be forwarded to the applicant through the quickest available means.

(vii) After completion of the public consultation, the applicant shall address all the material environmental concerns expressed during this process, and make appropriate changes in the draft EIA and EMP. The final EIA report, so prepared, shall be submitted by the applicant to the concerned regulatory authority for appraisal. The applicant may alternatively submit a supplementary report to draft EIA and EMP addressing all the concerns expressed during the public consultation.

#### **IV. Stage (4) - Appraisal:**

(i) Appraisal means the detailed scrutiny by the Expert Appraisal Committee or State Level Expert Appraisal Committee of the application and other documents like the Final EIA report, outcome of the public consultations including public hearing proceedings, submitted by the applicant to the regulatory authority concerned for grant of environmental clearance. This appraisal shall be made by Expert Appraisal Committee or State Level Expert Appraisal Committee concerned in a transparent manner in a proceeding to which the applicant shall be invited for furnishing necessary clarifications in person or through an authorized representative. On conclusion of this proceeding, the Expert Appraisal Committee or State Level Expert Appraisal Committee concerned shall make categorical recommendations to the regulatory authority concerned either for grant of prior environmental clearance on stipulated terms and conditions, or rejection of the application for prior environmental clearance, together with reasons for the same.

(ii) The appraisal of all projects or activities which are not required to undergo public consultation, or submit an Environment Impact Assessment report, shall be carried out on the basis of the prescribed application Form 1 and Form 1A as applicable, any other relevant

validated information available and the site visit wherever the same is considered as necessary by the Expert Appraisal Committee or State Level Expert Appraisal Committee concerned.

(iii) The appraisal of an application shall be completed by the Expert Appraisal Committee or State Level Expert Appraisal Committee concerned within sixty days of the receipt of the final Environment Impact Assessment report and other documents or the receipt of Form 1 and Form 1 A, where public consultation is not necessary and the recommendations of the Expert Appraisal Committee or State Level Expert Appraisal Committee shall be placed before the competent authority for a final decision within the next fifteen days. The prescribed procedure for appraisal is given in Appendix V ;

## **7(ii). Prior Environmental Clearance (EC) process for Expansion or Modernization or Change of product mix in existing projects:**

All applications seeking prior environmental clearance for expansion with increase in the production capacity beyond the capacity for which prior environmental clearance has been granted under this notification or with increase in either lease area or production capacity in the case of mining projects or for the modernization of an existing unit with increase in the total production capacity beyond the threshold limit prescribed in the Schedule to this notification through change in process and or technology or involving a change in the product –mix shall be made in Form I and they shall be considered by the concerned Expert Appraisal Committee or State Level Expert Appraisal Committee within sixty days, who will decide on the due diligence necessary including preparation of EIA and public consultations and the application shall be appraised accordingly for grant of environmental clearance.

## **8. Grant or Rejection of Prior Environmental Clearance (EC):**

(i) The regulatory authority shall consider the recommendations of the EAC or SEAC concerned and convey its decision to the applicant within forty five days of the receipt of the recommendations of the Expert Appraisal Committee or State Level Expert Appraisal Committee concerned or in other words within one hundred and five days of the receipt of the final Environment Impact Assessment Report, and where Environment Impact Assessment is not required, within one hundred and five days of the receipt of the complete application with requisite documents, except as provided below.

(ii) The regulatory authority shall normally accept the recommendations of the Expert Appraisal Committee or State Level Expert Appraisal Committee concerned. In cases where it disagrees with the recommendations of the Expert Appraisal Committee or State Level Expert Appraisal Committee concerned, the regulatory authority shall request reconsideration by the Expert Appraisal Committee or State Level Expert Appraisal Committee concerned within forty five days of the receipt of the recommendations of the Expert Appraisal Committee or State Level Expert Appraisal Committee concerned while stating the reasons for the disagreement. An intimation of this decision shall be simultaneously conveyed to the applicant. The Expert Appraisal Committee or State Level Expert Appraisal Committee concerned, in turn, shall consider the observations of the regulatory authority and furnish its views on the same within a further period of sixty days. The decision of the regulatory authority after considering the views of the Expert Appraisal Committee or State Level Expert Appraisal Committee concerned shall be final and conveyed to the applicant by the regulatory authority concerned within the next thirty days.

(iii) In the event that the decision of the regulatory authority is not communicated to the applicant within the period specified in sub-paragraphs (i) or (ii) above, as applicable, the

applicant may proceed as if the environment clearance sought for has been granted or denied by the regulatory authority in terms of the final recommendations of the Expert Appraisal Committee or State Level Expert Appraisal Committee concerned.

(iv) On expiry of the period specified for decision by the regulatory authority under paragraph (i) and (ii) above, as applicable, the decision of the regulatory authority, and the final recommendations of the Expert Appraisal Committee or State Level Expert Appraisal Committee concerned shall be public documents.

(v) Clearances from other regulatory bodies or authorities shall not be required prior to receipt of applications for prior environmental clearance of projects or activities, or screening, or scoping, or appraisal, or decision by the regulatory authority concerned, unless any of these is sequentially dependent on such clearance either due to a requirement of law, or for necessary technical reasons.

(vi) Deliberate concealment and/or submission of false or misleading information or data which is material to screening or scoping or appraisal or decision on the application shall make the application liable for rejection, and cancellation of prior environmental clearance granted on that basis. Rejection of an application or cancellation of a prior environmental clearance already granted, on such ground, shall be decided by the regulatory authority, after giving a personal hearing to the applicant, and following the principles of natural justice.

## **9. Validity of Environmental Clearance (EC):**

The “Validity of Environmental Clearance” is meant the period from which a prior environmental clearance is granted by the regulatory authority, or may be presumed by the applicant to have been granted under sub paragraph (iv) of paragraph 7 above, to the start of production operations by the project or activity, or completion of all construction operations in case of construction projects (item 8 of the Schedule), to which the application for prior environmental clearance refers. The prior environmental clearance granted for a project or activity shall be valid for a period of ten years in the case of River Valley projects (item 1(c) of the Schedule), project life as estimated by Expert Appraisal Committee or State Level Expert Appraisal Committee subject to a maximum of thirty years for mining projects and five years in the case of all other projects and activities. However, in the case of Area Development projects and Townships [item 8(b)], the validity period shall be limited only to such activities as may be the responsibility of the applicant as a developer. This period of validity may be extended by the regulatory authority concerned by a maximum period of five years provided an application is made to the regulatory authority by the applicant within the validity period, together with an updated Form 1, and Supplementary Form 1A, for Construction projects or activities (item 8 of the Schedule). In this regard the regulatory authority may also consult the Expert Appraisal Committee or State Level Expert Appraisal Committee as the case may be.

## **10. Post Environmental Clearance Monitoring:**

(i) It shall be mandatory for the project management to submit half-yearly compliance reports in respect of the stipulated prior environmental clearance terms and conditions in hard and soft copies to the regulatory authority concerned, on 1<sup>st</sup> June and 1<sup>st</sup> December of each calendar year.

(ii) All such compliance reports submitted by the project management shall be public documents. Copies of the same shall be given to any person on application to the concerned regulatory authority. The latest such compliance report shall also be displayed on the web site of the concerned regulatory authority.

## **11. Transferability of Environmental Clearance (EC):**

A prior environmental clearance granted for a specific project or activity to an applicant may be transferred during its validity to another legal person entitled to undertake the project or activity on application by the transferor, or by the transferee with a written “no objection” by the transferor, to, and by the regulatory authority concerned, on the same terms and conditions under which the prior environmental clearance was initially granted, and for the same validity period. No reference to the Expert Appraisal Committee or State Level Expert Appraisal Committee concerned is necessary in such cases.

## **12. Operation of EIA Notification, 1994, till disposal of pending cases:**

From the date of final publication of this notification the Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) notification number S.O.60 (E) dated 27<sup>th</sup> January, 1994 is hereby superseded, except in suppression of the things done or omitted to be done before such suppression to the extent that in case of all or some types of applications made for prior environmental clearance and pending on the date of final publication of this notification, the Central Government may relax any one or all provisions of this notification except the list of the projects or activities requiring prior environmental clearance in Schedule I , or continue operation of some or all provisions of the said notification, for a period not exceeding one year from the date of issue of this notification.

[No. J-11013/56/2004-IA-II (I)]

(R.CHANDRAMOHAN)

**JOINT SECRETARY TO THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA**

## SCHEDULE

(See paragraph 2 and 7)

### LIST OF PROJECTS OR ACTIVITIES REQUIRING PRIOR ENVIRONMENTAL CLEARANCE

Project or Activity		Category with threshold limit		Conditions if any
		A	B	
<b>1</b>		<b>Mining, extraction of natural resources and power generation (for a specified production capacity)</b>		
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
<b>1(a)</b>	Mining of minerals	≥ 50 ha. of mining lease area  Asbestos mining irrespective of mining area	<50 ha ≥ 5 ha .of mining lease area.	General Condition shall apply <u>Note</u> Mineral prospecting (not involving drilling) are exempted provided the concession areas have got previous clearance for physical survey
<b>1(b)</b>	Offshore and onshore oil and gas exploration, development & production	All projects		<u>Note</u> Exploration Surveys (not involving drilling) are exempted provided the concession areas have got previous clearance for physical survey
<b>1(c)</b>	River Valley projects	(i) ≥ 50 MW hydroelectric power generation; (ii) ≥ 10,000 ha. of culturable command area	(i) < 50 MW ≥ 25 MW hydroelectric power generation; (ii) < 10,000 ha. of culturable command area	General Condition shall apply
<b>1(d)</b>	Thermal Power Plants	≥ 500 MW (coal/lignite/naptha & gas based); ≥ 50 MW (Pet coke diesel and all other fuels -)	< 500 MW (coal/lignite/naptha & gas based); <50 MW ≥ 5MW (Pet coke ,diesel and all other fuels )	General Condition shall apply

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(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
<b>1(e)</b>	Nuclear power projects and processing of nuclear fuel	All projects	-	
<b>2</b>		<b>Primary Processing</b>		
<b>2(a)</b>	Coal washeries	≥ 1 million ton/annum throughput of coal	<1million ton/annum throughput of coal	General Condition shall apply  (If located within mining area the proposal shall be appraised together with the mining proposal)
<b>2 (b)</b>	Mineral beneficiation	≥ 0.1million ton/annum mineral throughput	< 0.1million ton/annum mineral throughput	General Condition shall apply  (Mining proposal with Mineral beneficiation shall be appraised together for grant of clearance)

<b>3</b>				
<b>Materials Production</b>				
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
<b>3(a)</b>	Metallurgical industries (ferrous & non ferrous)	a) Primary metallurgical industry All projects  b) Sponge iron manufacturing $\geq 200$ TPD  c) Secondary metallurgical processing industry  All toxic and heavy metal producing units $\geq 20,000$ tonnes /annum  -	Sponge iron manufacturing <200TPD  Secondary metallurgical processing industry  i.) All toxic and heavy metal producing units <20,000 tonnes /annum  ii.) All other non-toxic secondary metallurgical processing industries  >5000 tonnes/annum	General Condition shall apply for Sponge iron manufacturing
<b>3(b)</b>	Cement plants	$\geq 1.0$ million tonnes/annum production capacity	<1.0 million tonnes/annum production capacity. All Stand alone grinding units	General Condition shall apply

<b>4</b>		<b>Materials Processing</b>		
<b>(1)</b>	<b>(2)</b>	<b>(3)</b>	<b>(4)</b>	<b>(5)</b>
<b>4(a)</b>	Petroleum refining industry	All projects	-	-
<b>4(b)</b>	Coke oven plants	≥2,50,000 tonnes/annum -	<2,50,000 & ≥25,000 tonnes/annum	-
<b>4(c)</b>	Asbestos milling and asbestos based products	All projects	-	-
<b>4(d)</b>	Chlor-alkali industry	≥300 TPD production capacity or a unit located out side the notified industrial area/estate	<300 TPD production capacity and located within a notified industrial area/estate	Specific Condition shall apply  No new Mercury Cell based plants will be permitted and existing units converting to membrane cell technology are exempted from this Notification
<b>4(e)</b>	Soda ash Industry	All projects	-	-
<b>4(f)</b>	Leather/skin/hide processing industry	New projects outside the industrial area or expansion of existing units out side the industrial area	All new or expansion of projects located within a notified industrial area/estate	Specific condition shall apply
<b>5</b>		<b>Manufacturing/Fabrication</b>		
<b>5(a)</b>	Chemical fertilizers	All projects	-	-
<b>5(b)</b>	Pesticides industry and pesticide specific intermediates (excluding formulations)	All units producing technical grade pesticides	-	-

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(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
<b>5(c)</b>	Petro-chemical complexes (industries based on processing of petroleum fractions & natural gas and/or reforming to aromatics)	All projects -	-	-
<b>5(d)</b>	Manmade fibres manufacturing	Rayon	Others	General Condition shall apply
<b>5(e)</b>	Petrochemical based processing (processes other than cracking & reformation and not covered under the complexes)	Located out side the notified industrial area/ estate -	Located in a notified industrial area/ estate	Specific Condition shall apply
<b>5(f)</b>	Synthetic organic chemicals industry (dyes & dye intermediates; bulk drugs and intermediates excluding drug formulations; synthetic rubbers; basic organic chemicals, other synthetic organic chemicals and chemical intermediates)	Located out side the notified industrial area/ estate	Located in a notified industrial area/ estate	Specific Condition shall apply
<b>5(g)</b>	Distilleries	(i)All Molasses based distilleries  (ii) All Cane juice/ non-molasses based distilleries $\geq 30$ KLD	All Cane juice/non-molasses based distilleries - <30 KLD	General Condition shall apply
<b>5(h)</b>	Integrated paint industry	-	All projects	General Condition shall apply

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
<b>5(i)</b>	Pulp & paper industry excluding manufacturing of paper from waste paper and manufacture of paper from ready pulp with out bleaching	Pulp manufacturing and  Pulp& Paper manufacturing industry -	Paper manufacturing industry without pulp manufacturing	General Condition shall apply
<b>5(j)</b>	Sugar Industry	- -	≥ 5000 tcd cane crushing capacity	General Condition shall apply
<b>5(k)</b>	Induction/arc furnaces/cupola furnaces 5TPH or more	- -	All projects	General Condition shall apply
<b>6</b>		<b>Service Sectors</b>		
<b>6(a)</b>	Oil & gas transportation pipe line (crude and refinery/ petrochemical products), passing through national parks /sanctuaries/coral reefs /ecologically sensitive areas including LNG Terminal	All projects -		-

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
<b>6(b)</b>	Isolated storage & handling of hazardous chemicals (As per threshold planning quantity indicated in column 3 of schedule 2 & 3 of MSIHC Rules 1989 amended 2000)	-	All projects	General Condition shall apply
<b>7</b>		<b>Physical Infrastructure including Environmental Services</b>		
<b>7(a)</b>	Air ports	All projects	-	-
<b>7(b)</b>	All ship breaking yards including ship breaking units	All projects	-	-
<b>7(c)</b>	Industrial estates/ parks/ complexes/ areas, export processing Zones (EPZs), Special Economic Zones (SEZs), Biotech Parks, Leather Complexes.	<p>If at least one industry in the proposed industrial estate falls under the Category A, entire industrial area shall be treated as Category A, irrespective of the area.</p> <p>Industrial estates with area greater than 500 ha. and housing at least one Category B industry.</p>	<p>-Industrial estates housing at least one Category B industry and area &lt;500 ha.</p> <p>Industrial estates of area &gt; 500 ha. and not housing any industry belonging to Category A or B.</p>	<p>Special condition shall apply</p> <p>Note: Industrial Estate of area below 500 ha. and not housing any industry of category A or B does not require clearance.</p>
<b>7(d)</b>	Common hazardous waste treatment, storage and disposal facilities (TSDFs)	All integrated facilities having incineration & landfill or incineration alone	All facilities having land fill only	General Condition shall apply

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
<b>7(e)</b>	Ports, Harbours	≥ 5 million TPA of cargo handling capacity (excluding fishing harbours)	< 5 million TPA of cargo handling capacity and/or ports/ harbours ≥10,000 TPA of fish handling capacity	General Condition shall apply
<b>7(f)</b>	Highways	<p>i) New National High ways; and</p> <p>ii) Expansion of National High ways greater than 30 KM, involving additional right of way greater than 20m involving land acquisition and passing through more than one State.</p>	<p>i) New State High ways; and</p> <p>ii) Expansion of National / State Highways greater than 30 km involving additional right of way greater than 20m involving land acquisition.</p>	General Condition shall apply
<b>7(g)</b>	Aerial ropeways		All projects	General Condition shall apply
<b>7(h)</b>	Common Effluent Treatment Plants (CETPs)		All projects	General Condition shall apply
<b>7(i)</b>	Common Municipal Solid Waste Management Facility (CMSWMF)		All projects	General Condition shall apply

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(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
<b>8</b>		<b>Building /Construction projects/Area Development projects and Townships</b>		
<b>8(a)</b>	Building and Construction projects		≥20000 sq.mtrs and <1,50,000 sq.mtrs. of built-up area#	#(built up area for covered construction; in the case of facilities open to the sky, it will be the activity area )
<b>8(b)</b>	Townships and Area Development projects.		Covering an area ≥ 50 ha and or built up area ≥1,50,000 sq .mtrs ++	++All projects under Item 8(b) shall be appraised as Category B1

**Note:-**

**General Condition (GC):**

Any project or activity specified in Category 'B' will be treated as Category A, if located in whole or in part within 10 km from the boundary of: (i) Protected Areas notified under the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972, (ii) Critically Polluted areas as notified by the Central Pollution Control Board from time to time, (iii) Notified Eco-sensitive areas, (iv) inter-State boundaries and international boundaries.

**Specific Condition (SC):**

If any Industrial Estate/Complex / Export processing Zones /Special Economic Zones/Biotech Parks / Leather Complex with homogeneous type of industries such as Items 4(d), 4(f), 5(e), 5(f), or those Industrial estates with pre –defined set of activities (not necessarily homogeneous, obtains prior environmental clearance, individual industries including proposed industrial housing within such estates /complexes will not be required to take prior environmental clearance, so long as the Terms and Conditions for the industrial estate/complex are complied with (Such estates/complexes must have a clearly identified management with the legal responsibility of ensuring adherence to the Terms and Conditions of prior environmental clearance, who may be held responsible for violation of the same throughout the life of the complex/estate).

## APPENDIX I

(See paragraph – 6)

### FORM 1

#### (I) Basic Information

Name of the Project:

Location / site alternatives under consideration:

Size of the Project: \*

Expected cost of the project:

Contact Information:

Screening Category:

- *Capacity corresponding to sectoral activity (such as production capacity for manufacturing, mining lease area and production capacity for mineral production, area for mineral exploration, length for linear transport infrastructure, generation capacity for power generation etc.,)*

#### (II) Activity

1. **Construction, operation or decommissioning of the Project involving actions, which will cause physical changes in the locality (topography, land use, changes in water bodies, etc.)**

S.No.	Information/Checklist confirmation	Yes/No	Details thereof (with approximate quantities /rates, wherever possible) with source of information data
1.1	Permanent or temporary change in land use, land cover or topography including increase in intensity of land use (with respect to local land use plan)		
1.2	Clearance of existing land, vegetation and buildings?		
1.3	Creation of new land uses?		
1.4	Pre-construction investigations e.g. bore houses, soil testing?		
1.5	Construction works?		

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1.6	Demolition works?		
1.7	Temporary sites used for construction works or housing of construction workers?		
1.8	Above ground buildings, structures or earthworks including linear structures, cut and fill or excavations		
1.9	Underground works including mining or tunneling?		
1.10	Reclamation works?		
1.11	Dredging?		
1.12	Offshore structures?		
1.13	Production and manufacturing processes?		
1.14	Facilities for storage of goods or materials?		
1.15	Facilities for treatment or disposal of solid waste or liquid effluents?		
1.16	Facilities for long term housing of operational workers?		
1.17	New road, rail or sea traffic during construction or operation?		
1.18	New road, rail, air waterborne or other transport infrastructure including new or altered routes and stations, ports, airports etc?		
1.19	Closure or diversion of existing transport routes or infrastructure leading to changes in traffic movements?		
1.20	New or diverted transmission lines or pipelines?		
1.21	Impoundment, damming, culverting, realignment or other changes to the hydrology of watercourses or aquifers?		
1.22	Stream crossings?		
1.23	Abstraction or transfers of water form ground or surface waters?		
1.24	Changes in water bodies or the land surface affecting drainage or run-off?		

1.25	Transport of personnel or materials for construction, operation or decommissioning?		
1.26	Long-term dismantling or decommissioning or restoration works?		
1.27	Ongoing activity during decommissioning which could have an impact on the environment?		
1.28	Influx of people to an area in either temporarily or permanently?		
1.29	Introduction of alien species?		
1.30	Loss of native species or genetic diversity?		
1.31	Any other actions?		

**2. Use of Natural resources for construction or operation of the Project (such as land, water, materials or energy, especially any resources which are non-renewable or in short supply):**

S.No.	Information/checklist confirmation	Yes/No	Details thereof (with approximate quantities /rates, wherever possible) with source of information data
2.1	Land especially undeveloped or agricultural land (ha)		
2.2	Water (expected source & competing users) unit: KLD		
2.3	Minerals (MT)		
2.4	Construction material – stone, aggregates, and / soil (expected source – MT)		
2.5	Forests and timber (source – MT)		
2.6	Energy including electricity and fuels (source, competing users) Unit: fuel (MT), energy (MW)		
2.7	Any other natural resources (use appropriate standard units)		

**3. Use, storage, transport, handling or production of substances or materials, which could be harmful to human health or the environment or raise concerns about actual or perceived risks to human health.**

S.No.	Information/Checklist confirmation	Yes/No	Details thereof (with approximate quantities/rates, wherever possible) with source of information data
3.1	Use of substances or materials, which are hazardous (as per MSIHC rules) to human health or the environment (flora, fauna, and water supplies)		
3.2	Changes in occurrence of disease or affect disease vectors (e.g. insect or water borne diseases)		
3.3	Affect the welfare of people e.g. by changing living conditions?		
3.4	Vulnerable groups of people who could be affected by the project e.g. hospital patients, children, the elderly etc.,		
3.5	Any other causes		

**4. Production of solid wastes during construction or operation or decommissioning (MT/month)**

S.No.	Information/Checklist confirmation	Yes/No	Details thereof (with approximate quantities/rates, wherever possible) with source of information data
4.1	Spoil, overburden or mine wastes		
4.2	Municipal waste (domestic and or commercial wastes)		
4.3	Hazardous wastes (as per Hazardous Waste Management Rules)		

4.4	Other industrial process wastes		
4.5	Surplus product		
4.6	Sewage sludge or other sludge from effluent treatment		
4.7	Construction or demolition wastes		
4.8	Redundant machinery or equipment		
4.9	Contaminated soils or other materials		
4.10	Agricultural wastes		
4.11	Other solid wastes		

**5. Release of pollutants or any hazardous, toxic or noxious substances to air (Kg/hr)**

S.No.	Information/Checklist confirmation	Yes/No	Details thereof (with approximate quantities/rates, wherever possible) with source of information data
5.1	Emissions from combustion of fossil fuels from stationary or mobile sources		
5.2	Emissions from production processes		
5.3	Emissions from materials handling including storage or transport		
5.4	Emissions from construction activities including plant and equipment		
5.5	Dust or odours from handling of materials including construction materials, sewage and waste		

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5.6	Emissions from incineration of waste		
5.7	Emissions from burning of waste in open air (e.g. slash materials, construction debris)		
5.8	Emissions from any other sources		

## 6. Generation of Noise and Vibration, and Emissions of Light and Heat:

S.No.	Information/Checklist confirmation	Yes/No	Details thereof (with approximate quantities/rates, wherever possible) with source of information data with source of information data
6.1	From operation of equipment e.g. engines, ventilation plant, crushers		
6.2	From industrial or similar processes		
6.3	From construction or demolition		
6.4	From blasting or piling		
6.5	From construction or operational traffic		
6.6	From lighting or cooling systems		
6.7	From any other sources		

**7. Risks of contamination of land or water from releases of pollutants into the ground or into sewers, surface waters, groundwater, coastal waters or the sea:**

S.No.	Information/Checklist confirmation	Yes/No	Details thereof (with approximate quantities/rates, wherever possible) with source of information data
7.1	From handling, storage, use or spillage of hazardous materials		
7.2	From discharge of sewage or other effluents to water or the land (expected mode and place of discharge)		
7.3	By deposition of pollutants emitted to air into the land or into water		
7.4	From any other sources		
7.5	Is there a risk of long term build up of pollutants in the environment from these sources?		

**8. Risk of accidents during construction or operation of the Project, which could affect human health or the environment**

S.No.	Information/Checklist confirmation	Yes/No	Details thereof (with approximate quantities/rates, wherever possible) with source of information data
8.1	From explosions, spillages, fires etc from storage, handling, use or production of hazardous substances		
8.2	From any other causes		
8.3	Could the project be affected by natural disasters causing environmental damage (e.g. floods, earthquakes, landslides, cloudburst etc)?		

**9. Factors which should be considered (such as consequential development) which could lead to environmental effects or the potential for cumulative impacts with other existing or planned activities in the locality**

S. No.	Information/Checklist confirmation	Yes/No	Details thereof (with approximate quantities/rates, wherever possible) with source of information data
9.1	<p>Lead to development of supporting. lities, ancillary development or development stimulated by the project which could have impact on the environment e.g.:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supporting infrastructure (roads, power supply, waste or waste water treatment, etc.)</li> <li>• housing development</li> <li>• extractive industries</li> <li>• supply industries</li> <li>• other</li> </ul>		
9.2	Lead to after-use of the site, which could have an impact on the environment		
9.3	Set a precedent for later developments		
9.4	Have cumulative effects due to proximity to other existing or planned projects with similar effects		

**(III) Environmental Sensitivity**

S.No.	Areas	Name/ Identity	Aerial distance (within 15 km.) Proposed project location boundary
1	Areas protected under international conventions, national or local legislation for their ecological, landscape, cultural or other related value		

2	Areas which are important or sensitive for ecological reasons - Wetlands, watercourses or other water bodies, coastal zone, biospheres, mountains, forests		
3	Areas used by protected, important or sensitive species of flora or fauna for breeding, nesting, foraging, resting, over wintering, migration		
4	Inland, coastal, marine or underground waters		
5	State, National boundaries		
6	Routes or facilities used by the public for access to recreation or other tourist, pilgrim areas		
7	Defence installations		
8	Densely populated or built-up area		
9	Areas occupied by sensitive man-made land uses ( <i>hospitals, schools, places of worship, community facilities</i> )		
10	Areas containing important, high quality or scarce resources ( <i>ground water resources, surface resources, forestry, agriculture, fisheries, tourism, minerals</i> )		
11	Areas already subjected to pollution or environmental damage. ( <i>those where existing legal environmental standards are exceeded</i> )		
12	Areas susceptible to natural hazard which could cause the project to present environmental problems ( <i>earthquakes, subsidence, landslides, erosion, flooding or extreme or adverse climatic conditions</i> )		

**(IV). Proposed Terms of Reference for EIA studies**

## APPENDIX II

(See paragraph 6)

**FORM-1 A (only for construction projects listed under item 8 of the Schedule)**

### **CHECK LIST OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS**

**(Project proponents are required to provide full information and wherever necessary attach explanatory notes with the Form and submit along with proposed environmental management plan & monitoring programme)**

#### **1. LAND ENVIRONMENT**

**(Attach panoramic view of the project site and the vicinity)**

1.1. Will the existing landuse get significantly altered from the project that is not consistent with the surroundings? (Proposed landuse must conform to the approved Master Plan / Development Plan of the area. Change of landuse if any and the statutory approval from the competent authority be submitted). Attach Maps of (i) site location, (ii) surrounding features of the proposed site (within 500 meters) and (iii) the site (indicating levels & contours) to appropriate scales. If not available attach only conceptual plans.

1.2. List out all the major project requirements in terms of the land area, built up area, water consumption, power requirement, connectivity, community facilities, parking needs etc.

1.3. What are the likely impacts of the proposed activity on the existing facilities adjacent to the proposed site? (Such as open spaces, community facilities, details of the existing landuse, disturbance to the local ecology).

1.4. Will there be any significant land disturbance resulting in erosion, subsidence & instability? (Details of soil type, slope analysis, vulnerability to subsidence, seismicity etc may be given).

1.5. Will the proposal involve alteration of natural drainage systems? (Give details on a contour map showing the natural drainage near the proposed project site)

1.6. What are the quantities of earthwork involved in the construction activity-cutting, filling, reclamation etc. (Give details of the quantities of earthwork involved, transport of fill materials from outside the site etc.)

1.7. Give details regarding water supply, waste handling etc during the construction period.

1.8. Will the low lying areas & wetlands get altered? (Provide details of how low lying and wetlands are getting modified from the proposed activity)

1.9. Whether construction debris & waste during construction cause health hazard? (Give quantities of various types of wastes generated during construction including the construction labour and the means of disposal)

#### **2. WATER ENVIRONMENT**

2.1. Give the total quantity of water requirement for the proposed project with the breakup of requirements for various uses. How will the water requirement met? State the sources & quantities and furnish a water balance statement.

- 2.2. What is the capacity (dependable flow or yield) of the proposed source of water?
- 2.3. What is the quality of water required, in case, the supply is not from a municipal source? (Provide physical, chemical, biological characteristics with class of water quality)
- 2.4. How much of the water requirement can be met from the recycling of treated wastewater? (Give the details of quantities, sources and usage)
- 2.5. Will there be diversion of water from other users? (Please assess the impacts of the project on other existing uses and quantities of consumption)
- 2.6. What is the incremental pollution load from wastewater generated from the proposed activity? (Give details of the quantities and composition of wastewater generated from the proposed activity)
- 2.7. Give details of the water requirements met from water harvesting? Furnish details of the facilities created.
- 2.8. What would be the impact of the land use changes occurring due to the proposed project on the runoff characteristics (quantitative as well as qualitative) of the area in the post construction phase on a long term basis? Would it aggravate the problems of flooding or water logging in any way?
- 2.9. What are the impacts of the proposal on the ground water? (Will there be tapping of ground water; give the details of ground water table, recharging capacity, and approvals obtained from competent authority, if any)
- 2.10. What precautions/measures are taken to prevent the run-off from construction activities polluting land & aquifers? (Give details of quantities and the measures taken to avoid the adverse impacts)
- 2.11. How is the storm water from within the site managed?(State the provisions made to avoid flooding of the area, details of the drainage facilities provided along with a site layout indication contour levels)
- 2.12. Will the deployment of construction labourers particularly in the peak period lead to unsanitary conditions around the project site (Justify with proper explanation)
- 2.13. What on-site facilities are provided for the collection, treatment & safe disposal of sewage? (Give details of the quantities of wastewater generation, treatment capacities with technology & facilities for recycling and disposal)
- 2.14. Give details of dual plumbing system if treated waste used is used for flushing of toilets or any other use.

### **3. VEGETATION**

- 3.1. Is there any threat of the project to the biodiversity? (Give a description of the local ecosystem with it's unique features, if any)

3.2. Will the construction involve extensive clearing or modification of vegetation? (Provide a detailed account of the trees & vegetation affected by the project)

3.3. What are the measures proposed to be taken to minimize the likely impacts on important site features (Give details of proposal for tree plantation, landscaping, creation of water bodies etc along with a layout plan to an appropriate scale)

## **4. FAUNA**

4.1. Is there likely to be any displacement of fauna- both terrestrial and aquatic or creation of barriers for their movement? Provide the details.

4.2. Any direct or indirect impacts on the avifauna of the area? Provide details.

4.3. Prescribe measures such as corridors, fish ladders etc to mitigate adverse impacts on fauna

## **5. AIR ENVIRONMENT**

5.1. Will the project increase atmospheric concentration of gases & result in heat islands? (Give details of background air quality levels with predicted values based on dispersion models taking into account the increased traffic generation as a result of the proposed constructions)

5.2. What are the impacts on generation of dust, smoke, odorous fumes or other hazardous gases? Give details in relation to all the meteorological parameters.

5.3. Will the proposal create shortage of parking space for vehicles? Furnish details of the present level of transport infrastructure and measures proposed for improvement including the traffic management at the entry & exit to the project site.

5.4. Provide details of the movement patterns with internal roads, bicycle tracks, pedestrian pathways, footpaths etc., with areas under each category.

5.5. Will there be significant increase in traffic noise & vibrations? Give details of the sources and the measures proposed for mitigation of the above.

5.6. What will be the impact of DG sets & other equipment on noise levels & vibration in & ambient air quality around the project site? Provide details.

## **6. AESTHETICS**

6.1. Will the proposed constructions in any way result in the obstruction of a view, scenic amenity or landscapes? Are these considerations taken into account by the proponents?

6.2. Will there be any adverse impacts from new constructions on the existing structures? What are the considerations taken into account?

6.3. Whether there are any local considerations of urban form & urban design influencing the design criteria? They may be explicitly spelt out.

6.4. Are there any anthropological or archaeological sites or artefacts nearby? State if any other significant features in the vicinity of the proposed site have been considered.

## **7. SOCIO-ECONOMIC ASPECTS**

7.1. Will the proposal result in any changes to the demographic structure of local population? Provide the details.

7.2. Give details of the existing social infrastructure around the proposed project.

7.3. Will the project cause adverse effects on local communities, disturbance to sacred sites or other cultural values? What are the safeguards proposed?

## **8. BUILDING MATERIALS**

8.1. May involve the use of building materials with high-embodied energy. Are the construction materials produced with energy efficient processes? (Give details of energy conservation measures in the selection of building materials and their energy efficiency)

8.2. Transport and handling of materials during construction may result in pollution, noise & public nuisance. What measures are taken to minimize the impacts?

8.3. Are recycled materials used in roads and structures? State the extent of savings achieved?

8.4. Give details of the methods of collection, segregation & disposal of the garbage generated during the operation phases of the project.

## **9. ENERGY CONSERVATION**

9.1. Give details of the power requirements, source of supply, backup source etc. What is the energy consumption assumed per square foot of built-up area? How have you tried to minimize energy consumption?

9.2. What type of, and capacity of, power back-up to you plan to provide?

9.3. What are the characteristics of the glass you plan to use? Provide specifications of its characteristics related to both short wave and long wave radiation?

9.4. What passive solar architectural features are being used in the building? Illustrate the applications made in the proposed project.

9.5. Does the layout of streets & buildings maximise the potential for solar energy devices? Have you considered the use of street lighting, emergency lighting and solar hot water systems for use in the building complex? Substantiate with details.

9.6. Is shading effectively used to reduce cooling/heating loads? What principles have been used to maximize the shading of Walls on the East and the West and the Roof? How much energy saving has been effected?

9.7. Do the structures use energy-efficient space conditioning, lighting and mechanical systems? Provide technical details. Provide details of the transformers and motor efficiencies, lighting intensity and air-conditioning load assumptions? Are you using CFC and HCFC free chillers? Provide specifications.

9.8. What are the likely effects of the building activity in altering the micro-climates? Provide a self assessment on the likely impacts of the proposed construction on creation of heat island & inversion effects?

9.9. What are the thermal characteristics of the building envelope? (a) roof; (b) external walls; and (c) fenestration? Give details of the material used and the U-values or the R values of the individual components.

9.10. What precautions & safety measures are proposed against fire hazards? Furnish details of emergency plans.

9.11. If you are using glass as wall material provides details and specifications including emissivity and thermal characteristics.

9.12. What is the rate of air infiltration into the building? Provide details of how you are mitigating the effects of infiltration.

9.13. To what extent the non-conventional energy technologies are utilised in the overall energy consumption? Provide details of the renewable energy technologies used.

## **10. Environment Management Plan**

The Environment Management Plan would consist of all mitigation measures for each item wise activity to be undertaken during the construction, operation and the entire life cycle to minimize adverse environmental impacts as a result of the activities of the project. It would also delineate the environmental monitoring plan for compliance of various environmental regulations. It will state the steps to be taken in case of emergency such as accidents at the site including fire.

## APPENDIX III

(See paragraph 7

### GENERIC STRUCTURE OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESMENT DOCUMENT

S.NO	EIA STRUCTURE	CONTENTS
1.	Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Purpose of the report</li> <li>• Identification of project &amp; project proponent</li> <li>• Brief description of nature, size, location of the project and its importance to the country, region</li> <li>• Scope of the study – details of regulatory scoping carried out (As per Terms of Reference)</li> </ul>
2.	Project Description	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Condensed description of those aspects of the project (based on project feasibility study), likely to cause environmental effects. Details should be provided to give clear picture of the following:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Type of project</li> <li>• Need for the project</li> <li>• Location (maps showing general location, specific location, project boundary &amp; project site layout)</li> <li>• Size or magnitude of operation (incl. Associated activities required by or for the project)</li> <li>• Proposed schedule for approval and implementation</li> <li>• Technology and process description</li> <li>• Project description. Including drawings showing project layout, components of project etc. Schematic representations of the feasibility drawings which give information important for EIA purpose</li> <li>• Description of mitigation measures incorporated into the project to meet environmental standards, environmental operating conditions, or other EIA requirements (as required by the scope)</li> <li>• Assessment of New &amp; untested technology for the risk of technological failure</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

3.	Description of the Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Study area, period, components &amp; methodology</li> <li>• Establishment of baseline for valued environmental components, as identified in the scope</li> <li>• Base maps of all environmental components</li> </ul>
4.	Anticipated Environmental Impacts & Mitigation Measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Details of Investigated Environmental impacts due to project location, possible accidents, project design, project construction, regular operations, final decommissioning or rehabilitation of a completed project</li> <li>• Measures for minimizing and / or offsetting adverse impacts identified</li> <li>• Irreversible and Irretrievable commitments of environmental components</li> <li>• Assessment of significance of impacts (Criteria for determining significance, Assigning significance)</li> <li>• Mitigation measures</li> </ul>
5.	Analysis of Alternatives (Technology & Site)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In case, the scoping exercise results in need for alternatives:</li> <li>• Description of each alternative</li> <li>• Summary of adverse impacts of each alternative</li> <li>• Mitigation measures proposed for each alternative and</li> <li>• Selection of alternative</li> </ul>
6.	Environmental Monitoring Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Technical aspects of monitoring the effectiveness of mitigation measures (incl. Measurement methodologies, frequency, location, data analysis, reporting schedules, emergency procedures, detailed budget &amp; procurement schedules)</li> </ul>
7.	Additional Studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public Consultation</li> <li>• Risk assessment</li> <li>• Social Impact Assessment. R&amp;R Action Plans</li> </ul>
8.	Project Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improvements in the physical infrastructure</li> <li>• Improvements in the social infrastructure</li> <li>• Employment potential –skilled; semi-skilled and unskilled</li> <li>• Other tangible benefits</li> </ul>

9.	Environmental Cost Benefit Analysis	If recommended at the Scoping stage
10.	EMP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Description of the administrative aspects of ensuring that mitigative measures are implemented and their effectiveness monitored, after approval of the EIA</li> </ul>
11	Summary & Conclusion (This will constitute the summary of the EIA Report )	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overall justification for implementation of the project</li> <li>• Explanation of how, adverse effects have been mitigated</li> </ul>
12.	Disclosure of Consultants engaged	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The names of the Consultants engaged with their brief resume and nature of Consultancy rendered</li> </ul>

**APPENDIX III A**  
**(See paragraph 7)**

**CONTENTS OF SUMMARY ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

The Summary EIA shall be a summary of the full EIA Report condensed to ten A-4 size pages at the maximum. It should necessarily cover in brief the following Chapters of the full EIA Report: -

1. Project Description
2. Description of the Environment
3. Anticipated Environmental impacts and mitigation measures
4. Environmental Monitoring Programme
5. Additional Studies
6. Project Benefits
7. Environment Management Plan

## APPENDIX IV

(See paragraph 7)

### PROCEDURE FOR CONDUCT OF PUBLIC HEARING

1.0 The Public Hearing shall be arranged in a systematic, time bound and transparent manner ensuring widest possible public participation at the project site(s) or in its close proximity District -wise, by the concerned State Pollution Control Board (SPCB) or the Union Territory Pollution Control Committee (UTPCC).

#### 2.0 The Process:

2.1 The Applicant shall make a request through a simple letter to the Member Secretary of the SPCB or Union Territory Pollution Control Committee, in whose jurisdiction the project is located, to arrange the public hearing within the prescribed statutory period. In case the project site is extending beyond a State or Union Territory, the public hearing is mandated in each State or Union Territory in which the project is sited and the Applicant shall make separate requests to each concerned SPCB or UTPCC for holding the public hearing as per this procedure.

2.2 The Applicant shall enclose with the letter of request, at least 10 hard copies and an equivalent number of soft (electronic) copies of the draft EIA Report with the generic structure given in Appendix III including the Summary Environment Impact Assessment report in English and in the local language, prepared strictly in accordance with the Terms of Reference communicated after Scoping (Stage-2). Simultaneously the applicant shall arrange to forward copies, one hard and one soft, of the above draft EIA Report along with the Summary EIA report to the Ministry of Environment and Forests and to the following authorities or offices, within whose jurisdiction the project will be located:

- (a) District Magistrate/s
- (b) Zila Parishad or Municipal Corporation
- (c) District Industries Office
- (d) Concerned Regional Office of the Ministry of Environment and Forests

2.3 On receiving the draft Environmental Impact Assessment report, the above-mentioned authorities except the MoEF, shall arrange to widely publicize it within their respective jurisdictions requesting the interested persons to send their comments to the concerned regulatory authorities. They shall also make available the draft EIA Report for inspection electronically or otherwise to the public during normal office hours till the Public Hearing is over. The Ministry of Environment and Forests shall promptly display the Summary of the draft Environmental Impact Assessment report on its website, and also make the full draft EIA available for reference at a notified place during normal office hours in the Ministry at Delhi.

2.4 The SPCB or UTPCC concerned shall also make similar arrangements for giving publicity about the project within the State/Union Territory and make available the Summary of the draft Environmental Impact Assessment report (Appendix III A) for inspection in select offices or public libraries or panchayats etc. They shall also additionally

make available a copy of the draft Environmental Impact Assessment report to the above five authorities/offices viz, Ministry of Environment and Forests, District Magistrate etc.

### **3.0 Notice of Public Hearing:**

3.1 The Member-Secretary of the concerned SPCB or UTPCC shall finalize the date, time and exact venue for the conduct of public hearing within 7(seven) days of the date of receipt of the draft Environmental Impact Assessment report from the project proponent, and advertise the same in one major National Daily and one Regional vernacular Daily. A minimum notice period of 30(thirty) days shall be provided to the public for furnishing their responses;

3.2 The advertisement shall also inform the public about the places or offices where the public could access the draft Environmental Impact Assessment report and the Summary Environmental Impact Assessment report before the public hearing.

3.3 No postponement of the date, time, venue of the public hearing shall be undertaken, unless some untoward emergency situation occurs and only on the recommendation of the concerned District Magistrate the postponement shall be notified to the public through the same National and Regional vernacular dailies and also prominently displayed at all the identified offices by the concerned SPCB or Union Territory Pollution Control Committee;

3.4 In the above exceptional circumstances fresh date, time and venue for the public consultation shall be decided by the Member –Secretary of the concerned SPCB or UTPCC only in consultation with the District Magistrate and notified afresh as per procedure under 3.1 above.

### **4.0 The Panel**

4.1 The District Magistrate or his or her representative not below the rank of an Additional District Magistrate assisted by a representative of SPCB or UTPCC, shall supervise and preside over the entire public hearing process.

### **5.0 Videography**

5.1 The SPCB or UTPCC shall arrange to video film the entire proceedings. A copy of the videotape or a CD shall be enclosed with the public hearing proceedings while forwarding it to the Regulatory Authority concerned.

### **6.0 Proceedings**

6.1 The attendance of all those who are present at the venue shall be noted and annexed with the final proceedings.

6.2 There shall be no quorum required for attendance for starting the proceedings.

6.3 A representative of the applicant shall initiate the proceedings with a presentation on the project and the Summary EIA report.

6.4 Every person present at the venue shall be granted the opportunity to seek information or clarifications on the project from the Applicant. The summary of the public

hearing proceedings accurately reflecting all the views and concerns expressed shall be recorded by the representative of the SPCB or UTPCC and read over to the audience at the end of the proceedings explaining the contents in the vernacular language and the agreed minutes shall be signed by the District Magistrate or his or her representative on the same day and forwarded to the SPCB/UTPCC concerned.

6.5 A Statement of the issues raised by the public and the comments of the Applicant shall also be prepared in the local language and in English and annexed to the proceedings:-

6.6 The proceedings of the public hearing shall be conspicuously displayed at the office of the Panchyats within whose jurisdiction the project is located, office of the concerned Zila Parishad, District Magistrate ,and the SPCB or UTPCC . The SPCB or UTPCC shall also display the proceedings on its website for general information. Comments, if any, on the proceedings which may be sent directly to the concerned regulatory authorities and the Applicant concerned.

## 7.0 **Time period for completion of public hearing**

7.1 The public hearing shall be completed within a period of 45 (forty five) days from date of receipt of the request letter from the Applicant. Therefore the SPCB or UTPCC concerned shall sent the public hearing proceedings to the concerned regulatory authority within 8(eight) days of the completion of the public hearing .The applicant may also directly forward a copy of the approved public hearing proceedings to the regulatory authority concerned along with the final Environmental Impact Assessment report or supplementary report to the draft EIA report prepared after the public hearing and public consultations.

7.2 If the SPCB or UTPCC fails to hold the public hearing within the stipulated 45(forty five) days, the Central Government in Ministry of Environment and Forests for Category 'A' project or activity and the State Government or Union Territory Administration for Category 'B' project or activity at the request of the SEIAA, shall engage any other agency or authority to complete the process, as per procedure laid down in this notification.

## APPENDIX –V (See paragraph 7)

### PROCEDURE PRESCRIBED FOR APPRAISAL

1. The applicant shall apply to the concerned regulatory authority through a simple communication enclosing the following documents where public consultations are mandatory: -

- Final Environment Impact Assessment Report [20(twenty) hard copies and 1 (one) soft copy)]
- A copy of the video tape or CD of the public hearing proceedings
- A copy of final layout plan (20 copies)
- A copy of the project feasibility report (1 copy)

2. The Final EIA Report and the other relevant documents submitted by the applicant shall be scrutinized in office within 30 days from the date of its receipt by the concerned Regulatory Authority strictly with reference to the TOR and the inadequacies noted shall be communicated electronically or otherwise in a single set to the Members of the EAC /SEAC enclosing a copy each of the Final EIA Report including the public hearing proceedings and other public responses received along with a copy of Form -1or Form 1A and scheduled date of the EAC /SEAC meeting for considering the proposal .

3. Where a public consultation is not mandatory and therefore a formal EIA study is not required, the appraisal shall be made on the basis of the prescribed application Form 1 and a pre-feasibility report in the case of all projects and activities other than Item 8 of the Schedule .In the case of Item 8 of the Schedule, considering its unique project cycle , the EAC or SEAC concerned shall appraise all Category B projects or activities on the basis of Form 1, Form 1A and the conceptual plan and stipulate the conditions for environmental clearance . As and when the applicant submits the approved scheme /building plans complying with the stipulated environmental clearance conditions with all other necessary statutory approvals, the EAC /SEAC shall recommend the grant of environmental clearance to the competent authority.

4. Every application shall be placed before the EAC /SEAC and its appraisal completed within 60 days of its receipt with requisite documents / details in the prescribed manner.

5. The applicant shall be informed at least 15 (fifteen) days prior to the scheduled date of the EAC /SEAC meeting for considering the project proposal.

6. The minutes of the EAC /SEAC meeting shall be finalised within 5 working days of the meeting and displayed on the website of the concerned regulatory authority. In case the project or activity is recommended for grant of EC, then the minutes shall clearly list out the specific environmental safeguards and conditions. In case the recommendations are for rejection, the reasons for the same shall also be explicitly stated.

## APPENDIX VI

(See paragraph 5)

### COMPOSITION OF THE SECTOR/ PROJECT SPECIFIC EXPERT APPRAISAL COMMITTEE (EAC) FOR CATEGORY A PROJECTS AND THE STATE/UT LEVEL EXPERT APPRAISAL COMMITTEES (SEACs) FOR CATEGORY B PROJECTS TO BE CONSTITUTED BY THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT`

1. The Expert Appraisal Committees (EAC(s) and the State/UT Level Expert Appraisal Committees (SEACs) shall consist of only professionals and experts fulfilling the following eligibility criteria:

**Professional:** The person should have at least (i) 5 years of formal University training in the concerned discipline leading to a MA/MSc Degree, or (ii) in case of Engineering /Technology/Architecture disciplines, 4 years formal training in a professional training course together with prescribed practical training in the field leading to a B.Tech/B.E./B.Arch. Degree, or (iii) Other professional degree (e.g. Law) involving a total of 5 years of formal University training and prescribed practical training, or (iv) Prescribed apprenticeship/article ship and pass examinations conducted by the concerned professional association (e.g. Chartered Accountancy ),or (v) a University degree , followed by 2 years of formal training in a University or Service Academy (e.g. MBA/IAS/IFS). In selecting the individual professionals, experience gained by them in their respective fields will be taken note of.

**Expert:** A professional fulfilling the above eligibility criteria with at least 15 years of relevant experience in the field, or with an advanced degree (e.g. Ph.D.) in a concerned field and at least 10 years of relevant experience.

**Age:** Below 70 years. However, in the event of the non-availability of /paucity of experts in a given field, the maximum age of a member of the Expert Appraisal Committee may be allowed up to 75 years

2. The Members of the EAC shall be Experts with the requisite expertise and experience in the following fields /disciplines. In the event that persons fulfilling the criteria of “Experts” are not available, Professionals in the same field with sufficient experience may be considered:

- **Environment Quality Experts:** Experts in measurement/monitoring, analysis and interpretation of data in relation to environmental quality
- **Sectoral Experts in Project Management:** Experts in Project Management or Management of Process/Operations/Facilities in the relevant sectors.
- **Environmental Impact Assessment Process Experts:** Experts in conducting and carrying out Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) and preparation of Environmental Management Plans (EMPs) and other Management plans and who have wide expertise and knowledge of predictive techniques and tools used in the EIA process
- **Risk Assessment Experts**
- **Life Science Experts in floral and faunal management**
- **Forestry and Wildlife Experts**

- **Environmental Economics Expert with experience in project appraisal**

3. The Membership of the EAC shall not exceed 15 (fifteen) regular Members. However the Chairperson may co-opt an expert as a Member in a relevant field for a particular meeting of the Committee.

4. The Chairperson shall be an outstanding and experienced environmental policy expert or expert in management or public administration with wide experience in the relevant development sector.

5. The Chairperson shall nominate one of the Members as the Vice Chairperson who shall preside over the EAC in the absence of the Chairman /Chairperson.

6. A representative of the Ministry of Environment and Forests shall assist the Committee as its Secretary.

7. The maximum tenure of a Member, including Chairperson, shall be for 2 (two) terms of 3 (three) years each.

8. The Chairman / Members may not be removed prior to expiry of the tenure without cause and proper enquiry.

**An Approach for Assessment for Environmental Damage And Estimation of Remediation Costs For Building Construction Projects initiated without obtaining mandatory Environmental clearance (Violation Cases)**

1. Ministry of Environment and Forest (MoEFCC) has issued a notification on procedure to be adopted for dealing with the EC violation cases on 14.3.2017<sup>1</sup> and also, gave 6-month amnesty window for such proponents who have violated the EC regulations. These violations are primarily related to initiating the project work or carrying out the project activities without obtaining the mandatory EC. Special EAC was also notified to deal with violations cases at the central level. Subsequently, on 8.3.2018<sup>2</sup>, MoEFCC issued another notification which delegated the powers to deal with such 'violation cases' to the concerned SEIAA and further provided an additional amnesty window of one month for such project proponents to apply for grant of EC.
  
2. The notification dated 14.3.2017 stipulated the procedure for consideration of such cases where construction of projects was carried out without obtaining EC, treating such cases as violation cases. The important provisions for considerations of such proposal in the said notification are as under;  
*(2) In case the projects or activities requiring prior environmental clearance under Environment Impact Assessment Notification, 2006 from the concerned Regulatory Authority are brought for environmental clearance after starting the construction work, or have undertaken expansion, modernization, and change in product- mix without prior environmental clearance, these projects shall be treated as cases of violations and in such cases, even Category B projects which are granted environmental clearance by the State Environment Impact Assessment Authority constituted under sub-section (3) Section 3 of the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 shall be appraised for grant of environmental clearance only by the Expert Appraisal Committee and environmental clearance will be granted at the Central level. (3) In cases of violation, action will be taken against the project proponent by the respective State or State Pollution Control Board under the provisions of section 19 of the*

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<sup>1</sup> MoEF notification SO 804 (E) Dated 14.3.2017

<sup>2</sup> MoEFCC notification SO 1030 (E) dated 8.3.2018

*Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 and further, no consent to operate or occupancy certificate will be issued till the project is granted the environmental clearance. (4) The cases of violation will be appraised by respective sector Expert Appraisal Committees constituted under subsection (3) of Section 3 of the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 with a view to assess that the project has been constructed at a site which under prevailing laws is permissible and expansion has been done which can be run sustainably under compliance of environmental norms with adequate environmental safeguards; and in case, where the finding of the Expert Appraisal Committee is negative, closure of the project will be recommended along with other actions under the law. (5) In case, where the findings of the Expert Appraisal Committee on point at sub-para (4) above are affirmative, the projects under this category will be prescribed the appropriate Terms of Reference for undertaking Environment Impact Assessment and preparation of Environment Management Plan. Further, the Expert Appraisal Committee will prescribe a specific Terms of Reference for the project on assessment of ecological damage, remediation plan and natural and community resource augmentation plan and it shall be prepared as an independent chapter in the environment impact assessment report by the accredited consultants. The collection and analysis of data for assessment of ecological damage, preparation of remediation plan and natural and community resource augmentation plan shall be done by an environmental laboratory duly notified under Environment (Protection) Act, 1986, or a environmental laboratory accredited by National Accreditation Board for Testing and Calibration Laboratories, or a laboratory of a Council of Scientific and Industrial Research institution working in the field of environment. (6) The Expert Appraisal Committee shall stipulate the implementation of Environmental Management Plan, comprising remediation plan and natural and community resource augmentation plan corresponding to the ecological damage assessed and economic benefit derived due to violation as a condition of environmental clearance.*

*(7) The project proponent will be required to submit a bank guarantee equivalent to the amount of remediation plan and Natural and Community Resource Augmentation Plan with the State Pollution Control Board and the quantification will be recommended by Expert Appraisal*

Committee and finalized by Regulatory Authority and the bank guarantee shall be deposited prior to the grant of environmental clearance and will be released after successful implementation of the remediation plan and Natural and Community Resource Augmentation Plan, and after the recommendation by regional office of the Ministry, Expert Appraisal Committee and approval of the Regulatory Authority.

Subsequently, vide notification dated 8.3.2018, such powers have also been delegated to concerned SEIAA.

3. Maharashtra Scenario: In Maharashtra, there are about 104 cases which have been submitted for grant of EC under this 'violation' notification. As per the information given by DoE, there are 91 cases related to building construction projects and 14 cases related to industry. However, this number is likely to increase substantially, as during evaluation of new EC cases, the SEAC generally finds non-compliance in the appraisal process.
4. Department of Environment (DoE) and SEIAA Maharashtra wanted to streamline the process of evaluation of the 'environmental damage assessment' for such violation cases to bring reasonable consistency and uniformity in approach and assessment while dealing with such cases. The assessment of environmental damage is no doubt a very specialised study and the parameters, approach, weightages, techniques are likely to vary significantly from project to project and also, from area to area. Still however, it would be necessary and prudent to develop some broad structure and framework for such environmental damage assessment which can be used by concerned SEAC for consistent and uniform methodology. The SEACs can obviously incorporate any new specific aspect of evaluation, based on project type, damages anticipated and sensitivity of project area by making special reference to such compelling factors to incorporate additional evaluation aspects. This report is outcome of such requirement of DoE and SEIAA Maharashtra.
5. As a part of preparation of Approach paper, a draft was widely circulated among the stakeholders including the NABET approved consultants and also, the associations of the project proponents. A consultative meeting

was also held in Pune on 21.12.2018 wherein inputs for stakeholders were also received.

6. The present approach paper deals only with Building construction project. However, the broad principles can be adopted with suitable modifications for the industrial projects. The subject of environmental damage assessment and also, restitution and restoration of environment is a very complex and multidisciplinary subject and the present approach paper is based on desktop studies to prepare some basic framework for assessment of the proposal received in order to ensure a broader consistency in appraisal for various SEAC. The framework is generic in nature and obviously, open for further updating with gain of knowledge and experience while dealing with subject, based on field level data and information.
7. Assessment of environmental damages and preparation of remediation plan are highly specialised subject and very much case specific. The methods and techniques to assess the damage would vary from project to project and also, has significant correlation with project site. Considering this, the scope of this approach paper has been limited to preparation of broad guidelines and framework to assess the damage, rather than detailing actual procedure and methodology. Considering the types of projects, the environmental damage assessment methodology can be conveniently grouped in three types of activities/process namely; a. building and construction activities b. infrastructure and mining and c. industries. The broader contours of environmental damage assessment of these three sectors would vary significantly in its content, scope of investigation and analytical processes to assess the damages. Considering the present scope of this report, the report only deals with damage assessment aspects of violation cases. In fact, most of the literature on environmental damage assessment is related to unauthorised effluent discharges, ecological damages, chemical accidents, ground water contamination, hazardous waste disposal etc. Though, there is also a serious and urgent need of developing India specific protocols for such environmental damage assessment as a part of enforcement strategy and interventions, the report does not deal with these aspects and the scope

strictly remains limited to damage assessment for violation cases as per MoEFCC notification dated 14.3.2018, with main focus on Building and construction projects as per the requirement of DoE and SEIAA.

8. Legal background: The "Polluter Pays" principle as interpreted by Supreme Court<sup>3,4</sup> means that the absolute liability for harm to the environment extends not only to compensate the victims of pollution but also the cost of restoring the environmental of the damaged environment is part of the process of "Sustainable Development" and as such polluter is liable to pay the cost to the individual sufferers as well as the cost of the reversing the damaged ecology The precautionary principle and the polluter pays principle have been accepted as part of the law of the land. It is thus settled by Supreme Court that one who pollutes the environmental must pay to reverse the damage caused by his acts. In *Vellore Citizens' Welfare Forum v. Union of India and Ors.: AIR1996SC2715*, the precautionary principles and polluter pays principle were held to be part of the environmental law of the country. It was held that the polluter pays principle means that the absolute liability for harm to the environment extends not only to compensate the victims of pollution but also the cost of restoring the environmental degradation. Remediation of the damaged environment is part of the process of sustainable development.
9. The use of liability assessment following instances of physical damage or pollution of environmental resources has long been a feature of national legislations. The restitution and restoration aspects have been part of Water (P&CP) Act, 1974, but unfortunately no specific guidelines or protocol have been established so far. There are also not much of established success stories of restitution which can provide some guidance. The National Green Tribunal Act, 2010 specifically provides provisions for restitution, restoration and compensation in case of environmental damages or incidences of environmental degradation, on strict liability basis. However, no technical guidelines or procedures are available for such environmental damage assessment or restoration or

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<sup>3</sup> Enviro-Legal Action vs. Union of India 1996 (2) JT 196

<sup>4</sup> (1997)1SCC388B . W.P.(C) No996: M.C. Mehta Vs Kamal Nath and ors.

compensation etc except one prepared for CPCB for liability assessment for HW disposal.<sup>5</sup> Still however, there are no published case studies regarding application of these guidelines.

10. For example, the US Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA) has provided for the clean-up of hazardous waste sites since 1980 and requires resource damage assessment for this and similar instances of environmental injury. In Europe, the Environmental Liability Directive (ELD 2004/35/EC) now applies a common approach to assessment which aims to prevent and remedy environmental damage by holding those responsible liable for remediation. However, while there are prescribed procedures for remediation, there remain the difficulty of how to achieve an equivalent level of habitat quality to that, which existed before an incident and how to account for interim losses, including losses to social wellbeing.
11. Damage as defined by the ELD presupposes that liability can be identified. Where this is possible, the ELD allows for three types of remediation:
  - a. Primary remediation to restore a damaged resource or impaired service to its baseline condition;
  - b. Complementary remediation when a site cannot be fully restored using primary remediation and which involves intervention or improvements to habitat at another site which is physically or geographically linked in terms of species/ habitats or human interactions;
  - c. Compensatory remediation in cases where there are interim losses before ecological functions can be fully restored or replaced.
12. Liability to the government for clean-up costs and natural resource damages under CERCLA is generally joint and several, unless the defendant can show that the harm is divisible or another reasonable basis for apportionment. However, in the present case, as there is only single project, there is no occasion to consider proportioning the liability. The entire liability (absolute) on the complementary basis stands against the

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<sup>5</sup> Guidelines on Implementing Liabilities for Environmental Damages due to Handling & Disposal of Hazardous Waste and Penalty, published by CPCB 2016.

project proponent, as the remediation and restoration of construction site is not envisaged.

13. A number of US courts have applied the "Gore factors," so named because they were part of a 1980 proposed amendment to CERCLA sponsored by then-Senator (now Vice President) Albert Gore (which was not ultimately enacted):
  - a. the ability of the parties to show that their contribution to a discharge, release or disposal of a hazardous waste can be distinguished;
  - b. the amount of the amount of hazardous waste involved; - the degree of toxicity of the hazardous waste involved;
  - c. the degree of involvement by the parties in the generation, transportation, treatment, storage, or disposal of the hazardous waste;
  - d. the degree of care exercised by the parties with respect to the hazardous waste; and
  - e. the degree of party cooperation with government officials.
  
14. Federal courts have also applied the following other equitable factors:
  - a. the relative fault of the parties in causing the release of the hazardous materials;
  - b. the knowledge and/or acquiescence of the parties in the contaminating activities;
  - c. the benefits received by the parties from the contaminating activities;
  - d. the relative clean-up costs incurred as a result of the released hazardous wastes;
  - e. the financial resources of the parties involved;
  - f. contracts between the parties bearing on the subject;
  - g. circumstances and conditions of property conveyance in cases involving successive owners; and
  - h. any traditional equitable defences as mitigating factors.
  
15. Role of Consultants: The PP and industries generally take advise of the NABET approved consultants for preparation of EIA report and also, for

completing EC procedure. These consultants are 'accredited' consultants duly recognised by NABET after careful evaluation of their capabilities and understanding of environmental law and regulations besides technical competence. In other words, these consultants have been given special recognition and also, the MoEFCC notification has especially mandated that all the EIAs and EC procedures needs to be done only through NABET approved consultants, carving out a niche business for these consultants. Such a recognition and special business opportunity will obviously entail with 'responsibility' cast upon these consultants to advise the project proponents on compliance, identify the non-compliance and also, bring it to notice of project proponents/regulators at the first instance while advising the project proponents to ensure timely compliance. It is therefore necessary that the role of such consultants, if they are associated with the project proponents during the occurrence of such violation or immediately thereafter, needs to be critically examined in order to ensure that these consultants perform their duty to ensure compliance in a more effective way. The proposed damage and liability assessment exercise needs to cover these aspects which will ensure that the non-compliances in future are brought to the notice of project proponents and regulator in time, for timely enforcement and compliance actions.

16. Considering the above discussions, it is proposed that in this phase of report, methodologies for damage assessment and liability evaluation are proposed for building and construction projects, with following considerations;
  - a. These methodologies are for the projects (construction and industries) which are in 'permissible' in the area where project is located and are included in 'regulated' activity as per EC regulations and associated notifications. The methodology cannot be and should not be applied for the projects in non-conforming zone.
  - b. These methodologies are evolved only to consider limited violation in terms for initiating the project activities without EC. They cannot and should not be applied in case of any case pollution or degradation incident for which separate methodologies need to be developed and adopted.

17. Damage Assessment and Remediation cost:

The notification of 14.3 2017 describes the rationale for assessment of environmental damage costs and remediation costs as under;

*“6. The Expert Appraisal Committee shall stipulate the implementation of Environmental Management Plan, comprising remediation plan and natural and community resource augmentation plan corresponding to the ecological damage assessed and economic benefit derived due to violation as a condition of environmental clearance.*

*7. The project proponent will be required to submit a bank guarantee equivalent to the amount of remediation plan and Natural and Community Resource Augmentation Plan with the State Pollution Control Board and the quantification will be recommended by Expert Appraisal Committee and finalized by Regulatory Authority and the bank guarantee shall be deposited prior to the grant of environmental clearance and will be released after successful implementation of the remediation plan and Natural and Community Resource Augmentation Plan, and after the recommendation by regional office of the Ministry, Expert Appraisal Committee and approval of the Regulatory Authority. ”*

16. Three aspects emerge from the above as under;

- a. The project proponent needs to develop remediation action plan commensurate with the environmental damage assessed and also, the economic benefit derived due to violation of EC.
- b. The PP also needs to develop natural and community Resource Augmentation plan (NCRAP) along with the cost. This is not linked with the environmental damage or economic benefits accrued from violation.
- c. Both the remediation and NCRAP needs to be implemented by PP independently which needs to be verified by regulatory authority. There is no time limit or verification methodology defined for such implementation. Still however, the time limit can always be

considered by authority as a part of EMP while approving the EMP and EC.

17. The literature and references available on environmental damages are mainly related to environmental degradation resulting from waste disposal or degradation of forest. The important aspects in the design of remediation program can be as under;
  - a. Damage assessment and significance;
    - i. Definition of the status of the resource prior to the incident causing damage; (Baseline)
    - ii. Assessment of the scale of damage; (Services and beneficial use of site)
    - iii. Impact assessment; (modeling) and;
    - iv. Determining whether damage is 'significant'. (Significance threshold and integrity of site)
  - b. Primary restoration options,
    - i. With an aim to restore the damaged resource and, if possible, return the resource to baseline (pre-incident) conditions
    - ii. Setting restoration targets;
    - iii. Identifying primary restoration options;
    - iv. Selecting primary restoration options; and
    - v. Estimating interim losses
  - c. Compensatory restoration options.
    - i. Setting the objectives for compensatory restoration options;
    - ii. Monetary compensation and/or resource compensation;
    - iii. Identifying the compensatory options; and
    - iv. Selecting the compensatory options.
  
18. Generally, the remediation and restoration need to be designed based on either of the three following approaches in order to design, select and determine the scale of the compensatory restitution and restoration options
  - a. **Service-to-service approach:** Accept a one-to-one trade-off between the services that are lost due to damage and the services that are created through compensatory restoration. Reasonable to make this

assumption if the replacement resources are of the same type, quality and of comparable value.

- b. **Value-to-value approach:** Used for scaling of Class II and II options, i.e. when the assumption of a one-to-one match between lost services and compensatory services is not necessarily valid. The approach estimates the economic value of interim losses and the economic value of the services generated by the compensatory restoration option.
- c. **Value-to-cost approach:** Within this approach, restoration is scaled by equating the cost of the restoration plan to the value (in monetary terms) of losses due to the injury. This approach is only suitable when damage is relatively minor.

The remediation plan also needs to be proactive on futuristic issues and need to consider following;

- should be the result of an evaluation process based on, but not limited to the following :
  - The cost to carry out the option;
  - Time it will it take for the restoration to be effective;
  - Extent to which each option is expected to return the damaged resource to its baseline;
- Likelihood of success of each option;
- The extent to which each option will prevent future damage (flowing from the initial incident), and avoid collateral damage as a result of implementing the option;
- The extent to which each option generates benefits for the damaged and/or other natural resources beyond returning the damaged resource to its baseline; and
- The effect of each alternative on public health and safety

19. The total environmental damage needs to be assessed based on the environmental restoration cost required considering the above-mentioned project related attributes and as per the settled legal principles, such assessment need to be based on 'absolute' liability principle.

The notification refers to covering mainly three aspects in overall damage assessment studies prior to consideration of such violation cases, namely;

- Opportunity cost: benefits accrued due to early implementation of project without obtaining the mandatory EC and shall also include Cost for deterrence (penalty) for violation of EC regulation which needs to consider factors like project proponents track record, factors contributing to environmental damage etc.
  - Environmental damage cost to be assessed based on the available data
  - Cost of remediation and restoration.
20. While working on these themes, it would be necessary to keep in mind that the entire exercise is being under the provisions of the EC regulation 2006, as amended and the Environmental protection Act. It is also necessary to note that there are hardly any scientific studies to assess the environmental damages in holistic manner and also, there are very few cases where environmental restoration and restitution has fully been achieved. However, they are related to remediated of contaminated sites and/or contaminated ground water. There are several cases where the SC, HCs and NGT have ordered remediation and restoration, but there are hardly any studies where both restitution/restoration and damage assessment has been carried out simultaneously. It would therefore be necessary to adopt an approach which may be advoc in nature but based on scientific approach. There could be uncertainty in damage assessment but as already held by judicial pronouncements, the uncertainly in environmental damage and restoration on a positive side, towards preserving environment (precautionary principle) is acceptable, while demonstrating the good efforts in assessing the same.
21. Economic Benefit Assessment: One of the important aspects of this notification is inclusion of concept of economic benefits accrued due to violation of EC regulations. Traditionally, this concept has always been integrated in effective enforcement of standards and regulations all over the world because any violation or relaxation in environmental regulations, would result into economic advantage, rather in many cases, environmental norms are violated to derive economic advantages and benefits. In order to ensure that the compliance is encouraged, it would

be in the best interest to develop some tools to incorporate financial disadvantage for the non-compliance.

22. Violators obtain an economic benefit from violating the law by delaying compliance, avoiding compliance or achieving an illegal competitive advantage. In delaying compliance, the violators eventually comply, but they use the money that should have been spent on compliance. The violators then use that money for profit-making investments. In a very simple sense, the violators “gain” the interest on the amount of money that should have been invested in pollution prevention and control measures. When an offender avoids compliance, it essentially does not incur the costs that would have been necessary to come into compliance. The third type of economic benefit is derived from an illegal competitive advantage. It is necessary to have reliable methods to calculate any significant economic benefit of non-compliance. The existence of a well-defined and substantiated methodology strengthens the enforcement agency’s position in case of eventual appeal of the assessment.

Though there are several references available for such assessment particularly by USEPA and also, several state environmental agencies besides OECD, One of the good case studies is prepared by OECD and is available at <http://www.oecd.org/env/outreach/46959936.pdf>.<sup>6</sup> The study illustrates a key principle that in order to deter future non-compliance, a fine should at a minimum eliminate any financial gain or benefit the operator has obtained as a result of his non-compliance. The “benefit component” of a fine corresponds to the delayed or avoided compliance costs or the illegal competitive advantage and puts the violator in a less favourable situation compared to those who comply with the requirements in a timely manner. The additional penalty amount, or the “gravity component”, should reflect the seriousness of the offence and the operator’s behaviour. USEPA has also elaborate case studies on such efforts and has also developed the penalty and financial models that can be used to analyze the financial aspects of enforcement actions. <https://www.epa.gov/enforcement/penalty-and-financial-models>. BEN (5.8.0) - Calculates a violator's economic benefit of noncompliance from delaying or avoiding pollution control expenditures. The model requires the date the violation occurred, the date of compliance, the costs of

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<sup>6</sup> REMOVING ECONOMIC BENEFITS OF ENVIRONMENTAL VIOLATIONS IN AZERBAIJAN: Case Study Report, By OCED

compliance and the year the costs were estimated, and the date the penalty will be paid. Still however, no much work has been done in Indian context on this principle of effective environmental governance, particularly enforcement.

All such economic benefit assessment needs to be carefully designed in case of construction projects as scope and extent of construction in such building cases are rather governed by local municipal rules particularly for built up area, FSI, requirement of open area, parking etc. In many cases, the municipal laws are amended and some modifications are made in available permissible limits for the above criteria. The general trend in building industry is to initiate the construction in anticipation of such amendments and modification. And therefore, in order to assess the economic benefits, it is proposed to consider the applicable laws on the date of violation, rather than while assessment of the damages and benefits accrued. The allowable built up, FSI, open space etc only shall be considered and any violation of these ground should also be assessed as economic benefits. Based on the actual data, three scenarios can be envisaged for violation of EC regulations by Building construction Industry;

- A. The construction work is fully/partly completed without EC and the flats/commercial area is already sold to third parties.
- B. The construction work is started and some amount has been received from third party, but now the work is stopped.
- C. The construction work is started but no amount has been received from any third party.

23. One such approach adopted by Indiana government <sup>7</sup> elaborately discuss the matrix of calculations for the penalties for environmental violations. Though, presently, this approach paper does not deal with penalties, but the process and structured approach adopted therein, can suitably be adopted in the present study.

Violators Track record: As referred in above references, the violators track record and also, action subsequent to noticing the violations play an important role in formulation of environmental restoration and

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<sup>7</sup> INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT NONRULE POLICY DOCUMENT, [https://www.in.gov/idem/ctap/files/nrpd\\_enf-002.pdf](https://www.in.gov/idem/ctap/files/nrpd_enf-002.pdf)

restitution program. Hon'ble Supreme Court in CIVIL APPEAL NO. 10854 OF 2016 decided on 10<sup>th</sup> August 2018 has elaborately considered such aspects and it is necessary to adopt the same approach while dealing with the EC violators.<sup>8</sup>

- 24. Proposed Framework:** Considering the discussions above, following broad approach and framework is suggested to derive the environmental damage cost which needs to be considered while appraising the remediation plan and the costs associated with such proposed remediation costs. Moreover, such cost needs to be appropriately accounted for the opportunity costs which *inter alia* should include the factors related to environmental track record of the project proponents. The proposed framework is suggestive in nature and is an attempt to develop a framework for such assessment in future, based on scientific evidence. Moreover, this framework is essentially for cases of violation of EC regulations in terms on obtaining the EC by construction projects and is not aimed to be used as enforcement tool in case of violation of EC conditions and/or incidences of pollution of environmental degradation. Still however, the SEAC can expand the scope of such assessment and costing with reference to any specific incidence on case to case basis, particularly where construction is carried out at industrial sites and/or there are complaints of pollution due to construction which will further strengthen such appraisal process. It is necessary to collect some specific information from the project proponents to assess such cost of remediation and also, opportunity cost. Therefore, a set of information is proposed to be called from PP as under. Some of the information could be repetitive but it would be worth to have all such relevant information at a place to understand the process.

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<sup>8</sup> [https://www.sci.gov.in/supremecourt/2016/37233/37233\\_2016\\_Judgement\\_10-Aug-2018.pdf](https://www.sci.gov.in/supremecourt/2016/37233/37233_2016_Judgement_10-Aug-2018.pdf)

**25. Information Required:**

A. Project details;

1	Name and address of Project	
2	Name of Directors	
3	Total construction completed (built-up area as per EC notification):	
4	Total construction proposed, built-up area as per EC notification	
5	Whether the project has any EC; if yes, give details including approved built up area	
6	Total cost of the project and total cost of the project already executed? Also, give total cost of the project constructed without EC.	
7	Date of commencement of project	
8	Date of violation of EC regulation (please justify with documentary evidence)	
9	Date of first submission of information of such violation to the SEIAA or SEAC, if self-notified, along with stoppage of construction work	
	1. No. of days of violation (9-8)	
10	Name and address of Environmental consultant, with date of engagement of such consultant	
11	Any other case of EC violation is reported or pending or decided earlier for projects where any of	

	the directors are involved? If yes, give details	
12	Any court case related to EC violation pending or decided against any of the directors including High Court, NGT and sessions court?	

- B. What can be the attributes for environmental damages: The PP and consultant needs to describe the details of each attributes in qualitative and quantitative manner; for example;
1. Air pollution: construction dust, noise, demolition dust
  2. Water: incremental sewage increase, extra water pumped from foundations
  3. Soil: excess foundation excavation, excess ground foot print
  4. Noise: extra time required for construction,
  5. Loss of vegetation: additional trees cut ( type, age and number of trees with its significance)
  6. Transport and material handling
- C. Description of activities contributing to the environmental damage and degradation;

A.	<b>Demolition, site preparation</b>	
1	Whether any demolition work was carried out prior to EC? If yes what is date of commencement of demolition and also date of completion of demolition?	
2	Whether such demolition or site had some asbestos, industrial waste or contaminated soil or hazardous waste etc and if yes, how these types of waste have been segregated and disposed?	
3	If the project is located on any industrial site, whether any due diligence or environmental	

	status of site was assessed? If yes, give details	
4	State the quantity of demolition waste disposed from the site, including quantity and disposal location along with location map and photographs	
5	Any air quality (including noise) monitoring done during demolition work? If yes, results	
6	Whether building plan and layout approved and permission from local authorities is taken to commence the work prior to demolition work	
7		
<b>B.</b>	<b>Construction stage</b>	
1	Date of commencement of construction and completion of construction, if any	
2	Whether the construction carried out is strictly as per the sanction plan given by concerned local authority? If yes, please provide such certification	
3	In the additional construction, how much construction material including, sand, bricks, cement etc was required to be transported? No. of trucks and its average haulage?	
4	How many labours were engaged in construction, average per day?	
5	Whether, the additional construction work, over and above valid EC, if so available, has any additional ground foot print? If yes please state, ground foot print in sqm as per EC approved	

	layout and current proposed layout?	
6	Whether the expansion was carried out simultaneously with EC approved work? If not give details of time frame? If yes, please give incremental additional time required for construction of additional area	
7	Is there any change in foundation design, i.e. depth of foundation, basement etc. that were done due to additional area?  If yes, what is the additional soil quantity excavated for such incremental foundation depth? Where it is disposed?	
8	What is the quantity of top soil removed and how it is managed?	
9	Also, if water is encountered at such foundation depth, what is the volume of water pumped for such additional depth of excavation?	
10	How much additional water was required for curing and construction purpose? Source of water?	
11	Rain Water harvesting details	
12	Solar light, water heating details	
13	Use of fly ash bricks ensured? Details thereof	
14	Whether any noise or air pollution control measures taken, if so what are they?	
15	Whether any air quality and noise level monitoring done	

	during construction stage, if yes attach results	
16	Whether any third-party rights are created on the construction without EC?	
17	Whether any of the construction without EC has already been occupied?  If yes, number of families given such occupation.  Also give total commercial area being used presently. Also state type of commercial activity i.e. offices, shops, hotels, restaurants etc.	
18	How many flats sold which are in the area of EC violation and total sale value of such flats	
19	How much commercial area sold which is in area of EC violation and total sale value of such commercial area.	
C	<b>Commissioning of project</b>	
1	Date of when the project was made operational either by giving possession of residential or commercial areas of the project?	
2	How many families are staying in project?	
3	What is total water supply to project, source and quality	
4	Total sewage generation m <sup>3</sup> /day	
5	STP details,	
6	Treated wastewater disposal	
7	Any DG sets, are they complying the norms	

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26. The notification provides for *“The Expert Appraisal Committee shall stipulate the implementation of Environmental Management Plan, comprising remediation plan and natural and community resource augmentation plan corresponding to the ecological damage assessed and economic benefit derived due to violation as a condition of environmental clearance.”*. It can be seen from the provision that EMP is required to have two components i.e. 1. Remediation plan and 2. Natural and community resource augmentation plan. They are required to be corresponding to the ecological damage assessed and economical profit derived due to the violation.

Considering the broad conspectus and the need to evaluate the ecological assessment which will vary from project to project, site to site and also, will be subject of very detailed relative assessment. In absence of standard protocol and guidelines for such ecological damage assessment, it is proposed to adopt an advoc approach only for construction projects within the parameters specified by the notification. It is proposed to have broadly two components i.e. environmental damages and secondly economic benefits derived. The economic benefits derived can suitably take into account the construction stage besides the role and environmental performance record of the project proponent.

And therefore, the EMP and natural resource augmentation plan shall not only cover the ecological damages but also, the track record of project proponents as an attribute of the economic benefits derived. As regards the ecological damages, a protocol which is rather based on basic environmental impacts like soil disposal, noise, air pollution, water pollution etc has been prepared by Gujarat SEAC, which is further modified to incorporate additional factors. The protocol format presented below is required to be prepared and certified by approved environmental consultants who are required to submit an undertaking certifying correctness of the data presented.

### Format of Assessment of Environmental Damages

Attributes	Scope of saving on account of environmental protection measures	EMP cost	
		Recurring cost, per day (Rs.)	Non-recurring cost (Rs.)
<b>Air Pollution</b>	Water requirement for sprinkling (KL/day): Cost of 1 KL water (Rs):		
<b>Water Pollution</b>	A. Cost of water requirement: a). Construction phase: b). Operation phase:  B. Cost of sewage treatment, reuse & disposal: a). Construction phase: b). Operation phase:  C. Quantity of water pumped out during excavation and a lumpsum cost of Rs. 50 per cum for such unauthorized water extraction and disposal  D. cost of construction & maintenance of recharge well:		
<b>Soil environment</b>	In case of demolition has carried out, the cost of demolition waste management plan needs to be discussed and finalized as non- recurring cost.		
	In case there is some hazardous waste like asbestos or the site is located on industrial area where hazardous chemical or waste was handled, the cost based on due diligence of the project site, as given by consultants. (the report must include soil analysis, water analysis, MPCB consent copies, manifest of HW if any). This requires critical examination from SPCB.		

	Cost of preservation of top soil & excavated earth to be considered. [Area (m <sup>2</sup> )xdepth (m)x sp. Gravity (kg/m <sup>3</sup> )x cost per ton (Rs.)]		
<b>Noise and Vibration</b>	For damage due to noise pollution & vibration, the cost of barricades around the project site should be considered. [perimeter (m) x height of the barricade(m) x cost of the sheet)		
<b>Green Belt</b>	In case of any tree cutting without EC cost of Rs. 10000/- per tree apart from any statutory action for such tree cutting if any,  Cost of planting & maintaining trees (Number of trees as per the bye-laws)  Cost of compensatory tree plantation (5 trees for each tree cut)		
<b>RH/OHS</b>	Cost of workers benefit to be considered in view of Building and Other Construction Workers' Welfare Cess Act, 1996		
	A. cost of health checkup of workers: B. cost of safety measures including PPEs:		
<b>Total</b>			

27. The economic benefits derived can be either on both costs saved towards not taking appropriate environmental protection measures and also, the benefits derived by going ahead with project to gain commercial gains. This aspect has also been considered by Gujarat SEAC, by apportioning 10% amount of profit which is considered to be 20% construction costs including the land value. All the standard literature including regulatory guidelines referred above incorporate such commercial economic benefits accrued from early going ahead by starting and commissioning project without obtaining EC. It is therefore necessary to incorporate such

consideration in assessing the economic benefits which can be deterrent factor in future cases. At the same time, it is necessary that there should be a consideration for such cases where the project proponent has applied for EC but for some reason or other the EC is not considered and granted without assigning any reason beyond a reasonable time frame. There could be different scenarios for such economic benefit assessment;

- The construction (residential/commercial) under violation, where the construction is stopped after some time:
- The construction (residential/commercial) under violation and where the full construction area is occupied by the third party:
- The construction area (residential/commercial) under violation where the partial construction is occupied by the third party

There could be different ways to assess the Economic benefit derived, considering various aspects like stage of construction, Ready reckoner cost, project cost, cost of the construction under violation, status of violation and also, track record of environmental compliance of the project proponent. However, the notification neither refer to any method or technique to assess the economic benefits nor provide any specific method for assessing environmental damage. There are no standard guidelines available on assessing the economic benefits proportioning above mentioned attributes. And hence, in absence of uniform and objective methodology on pan India basis, it would be prudent to adopt simplistic and uniform approach for such assessments. This will primarily avoid subjectivity and reliance on unverified and uncertain data. Another aspect which is relevant here is that the present proposals are submitted under the amnesty scheme and hence, a specific view needs to be taken while appraising the projects to avoid further complications and uncertainty. However, there is an urgent need to evolve specific guidelines and methodology for assessment of economic benefits accrued due to environmental no-compliance.

Detailed deliberations on these aspects have been held and it is noted that the economic benefit can best be realistically assessed in terms of the % of total project cost. Considering the present practice in states like Gujarat and also, Tamil Nadu etc, and keeping high cost of property in the state, it is proposed to consider 1% of project cost, including land, as

declared by the project proponent before SEAC, as the economic benefit accrued due to non-compliance, subject to maximum amount of Rs. 10 Cr. Such an approach seems more rational, consistent and objective without any subjectivity, in the absence of any specific guidelines or methods given in the notification or any specific guidance from MoEFCC on these issues. Such an approach is also consistent with the spirit of notification. It would be important to note that such methodology is not universal and is only applicable for the building and construction projects, and will be applicable till a scientific methodology is evolved at national level or any specific guidelines are issued by MoEFCC. However, it is imperative and necessary to ensure that these additional costs are required to be borne by Project proponent and cannot be and shall not be passed on to the consumers. In fact, the customers are entitled to seek any other legal remedy for any compensation etc as per prevailing laws.

28. In addition to above environmental damage costs, it is necessary to incorporate certain consideration for the environmental track record of the project proponent as a part of economic benefits accrued by the proponents and it is proposed that for each of earlier or similar other EC violation in other projects being developed by project proponents shall be accounted for Rs. 10,00,000/- (Rs. Ten lakhs) in the community action plan. This consideration directly stems from Gore's correction referred earlier. This will surely bring the frequent and habitual defaulters on a common platform which is a significant step for future compliance enforcement. The regular defaulters will find such a criterion as a 'reputation risk' which itself will trigger the compliance in future. The final amount towards remediation, and natural and community resource augmentation action plan can be summation of these aspects or the amount equivalent to the CER amount as per the MOEF&CC's office Memorandum No: F NO 22-65/2017-IA-III dated 01/05/2018, whichever is higher.

29. **Calculation of Cost of remediation plan and natural & community resource augmentation plan**

Sr	Description	Details	Amount
A	Assessment of Environment Damages		
1	Total of recurring cost	Cost arrived from above table per day X number of days in violation	
2	Non-recurring cost	Cost as arrived from above table	
	Sub Total (1+2 above)	(Subject to minimum Rs. 1 crore)	
B.	Economic benefits accrued due to violation		
1.	Economic benefits	1% of Total Project cost including land, as declared by PP before SEAC, subject to maximum Rs. 10 Cr.	
2.	Track Record of Project proponent	Incremental cost of Rs. 10 lakhs for each EC violation by PP observed at any other projects in last 3 years	
C.	Cost of remediation plan and natural & community resource augmentation plan	Sum of A and B above or amount equivalent to the CER amount as per the MOEF&CC's office Memorandum No: F NO 22-65/2017-IA-III dated 01/05/2018, whichever is higher.	

30. It is manifest from the language of the notification that the spirit of notification is twofold; firstly, there needs to a deterrent action against EC violation and secondly, there needs to be sufficient environmental restoration and restitution of the presumed environmental damages which generally occur in the surrounding due to construction projects. In the present case, most of the construction projects are located in urban areas of Mumbai and Pune and hence, in order to ensure that the local community really gets benefitted by such planned environmental restoration program, it is proposed that such environmental restoration/restitution shall preferably be carried out in the surrounding of the project location.
31. Another important aspect of the notification is that the PP needs to give a bank guarantee of equivalent amount and such bank guarantee will be returned on verification of implementation of such EMP by regional office of Ministry, and further recommended by SEAC and only thereafter, SEIAA can take a decision on return of BG. The notification contemplates inclusion of such action plan as part of EMP. However, it is required to note that the proposed remediation and community restoration program will have to be carried out ex-situ i.e. not at construction site as there would not be appropriate place to carry out remediation or restoration, and moreover, most of the environmental damage would have been in the surrounding area like; in terms of air pollution or noise pollution or the soil disposal related issues. And as such, the project proponent will not have administrative control or mechanism to carry out such complementary remedial actions in the areas which are not under his control. One of the options is conducting such activities similar to CSR. Be that as it may, it is an admitted fact that there is a significant gap in such verification of compliance through environmental regulatory authority and therefore it would be difficult for SEAC and SEIAA to take a decision in this regard.
32. In order to simplify the entire process, it is proposed that the estimated EMP cost can be attributed to overall environmental development works in a fixed appropriate percentage which will avoid ambiguity and inconsistency. Though such a scheme of restoration may not be ideal scenario for any environmental restoration program, but as in the present case, we are strictly dealing with ex-situ restoration or rather environmental improvement program, such a practice can be most appropriate and effective. However, such practice cannot be adopted for

any future on-site restoration/restitution and is not a substitute 'pay and pollute' formulae for well established legal principle of 'polluter pays'.

33. The actual cost of remediation proposed at site can be given separately, duly certified by the environmental consultant which can be considered by SEAC and SEIAA before considering the amount which can be reduced from the cost arrived at above. However, such remediation is not expected to cover mandatory requirements of compliance or EMP, and needs to cover only exclusive efforts of environmental damage remediation.
34. Based on discussions with stakeholders, following areas have been identified for resource allocation through such EMP cost, which are subject to final decision, for both activities and allocation, by SEIAA and Govt of Maharashtra;

Sr. No	Description of Activity	% allocation	Implementing agency	Remarks
1	Afforestation (can include plantation, garden development)	25	Social forestry and Local body	The afforestation can be either through social forestry or the Local body. Preferably within 50 km from project site
2	Water conservation program (Jalyukt shivar, etc)	25		Preferably within 50 km radius of project site
3	Urban environment and sanitation (can include swatccha Bharat, playground development, urban ground-water recharge schemes etc)	20	Local body	
4	Sewerage lines and STP, solid waste management,	20	Local body	

5	Urban pollution initiatives	air/noise control	10	Local body	
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35. Implementation strategy: The notification envisages the project proponents to carry out the remedial works. As discussed above the project proponent would not be in a position to carry out such remedial works on his own. And therefore, in order to effectively implement the restoration program, it was proposed that the PP can deposit such costs with District collector or Municipal Commissioner, who can spend such amount on identified projects and certify the work completion and/or utilisation of amount. However, such a proposal could not get concurrence from MoEFCC as the proposal is '*stricto sensu*' not as per the notification, which envisages submission of bank guarantee by PP and also, carrying the works directly.

Still however, as it is finally SEAC and SEIAA, who need to verify and accept the completion of restoration program, it is necessary to streamline such process of environment restoration in order to have an objective and consistent approach for such post-implementation assessment. It is therefore proposed that the concerned Municipal commissioner (in case of Municipal corporation areas) or the District Collector (for remaining areas) where the project is located shall identify suitable projects as per broad guidelines presented in above table within 5 km from the project site, in consultation with MPCB officials, if necessary, and the project proponent can either carry out such work on his own or can contribute to civic or government funds for such ongoing projects. The PP will need to submit the equivalent BG independently as per provisions of notifications. The Municipal Commissioner or the District Collector can take any other specific project related to environmental restoration in consultation with MPCB. They are further required to take review of implementation of such projects on monthly basis and, on the utilisation of the funds contributed by PP, a utilisation certificate need to be issued for the purpose. Such a certificate can be the basis of verification by Regional office MOEFCC and SEAC for further approval of SEIAA. It is expected that such contribution would be effectively utilised within maximum 2 years.

F. No. 22-21/2020-IA.III

Government of India

Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change

Impact Assessment Division

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Date: 7<sup>th</sup> July, 2021

**Office Memorandum**

**Subject: Standard Operating Procedure (SoP) for Identification and handling of violation cases under EIA Notification 2006 in compliance to order of Hon'ble National Green Tribunal in O.A. No.34/2020 WZ - Regarding.**

The Ministry had issued a notification number S.O.804(E), dated the 14<sup>th</sup> March, 2017 detailing the process for grant of Terms of Reference and Environmental Clearance in respect of projects or activities which have started the work on site and/or expanded the production beyond the limit of Prior EC or changed the product mix without obtaining Prior EC under the EIA Notification, 2006.

2. This Notification was applicable for six months from the date of publication i.e. 14.03.2017 to 13.09.2017 and further based on court direction from 14.03.2018 to 13.04.2018.

3. Hon'ble NGT in Original Application No. 287 of 2020 in the matter of Dastak N.G.O. Vs Synochem Organics Pvt. Ltd. &Ors. and in applications pertaining to same subject matter in Original Application No. 298 of 2020 in Vineet Nagar Vs. Central Ground Water Authority &Ors., vide order dated 03.06.2021 held that "(...) **for past violations, the concerned authorities are free to take appropriate action in accordance with polluter pays principle, following due process**".

4. Further, the Hon'ble National Green Tribunal in O.A No. 34/2020 WZ in the matter of Tanaji B. Gambhire vs. Chief Secretary, Government of Maharashtra and ors., vide order dated 24.05.2021 has directed that "**...a proper SoP be laid down for grant of EC in such cases so as to address the gaps in binding law and practice being currently followed. The MoEF may also consider circulating such SoP to all SEIAAs in the country**".

5. Therefore, in compliance to the directions of the Hon'ble NGT a Standard Operating Procedure (SoP) for dealing with violation cases is required to be drawn. The Ministry is also seized of different categories of 'violation' cases which have been

pending for want of an approved structural/procedural framework based on 'Polluter Pays Principle' and 'Principle of Proportionality'. It is undoubtedly important that action under statutory provisions is taken against the defaulters/violators and a decision on the closure of the project or activity or otherwise is taken expeditiously.

6. In the light of the above directions of the Hon'ble Tribunal and the issues involved, the matter has accordingly been examined in detail in the Ministry. A detailed SoP has accordingly been framed and is outlined herein. The SoP is also guided by the observations / decisions of the Hon'ble Courts wherein principles of proportionality and polluters pay have been outlined.

**7. Relevant Court Cases on the issue:** It is noted that while deciding issues related to violations of the Environment Protection Act, 1986 on account of running the project/activity without prior environmental clearance or in excess of capacity allowed in such clearances, **the Hon'ble courts have, *inter-alia*, deliberated on various facets involving 'violation' cases and have enunciated principles of 'Proportionality' and 'Polluter Pays' in various decisions viz. Industrial Council for Enviro-Legal Action Vs Union of India (the Bichhri village industrial pollution case) (1996 SCC [3] 212); Alembic Pharmaceuticals Ltd. Vs Rohit Prajapati & Ors. (C.A. No. 1526 of 2016, order dated 1.4.2020) and Hindustan Copper Limited Vs Union of India in (W.P. (C) No. 2364 of 2014, order dated 28.11.2014).** The salient extracts of the judgements are as under:

**Issue 1: Proposal for grant of Environmental Clearance in violation cases – to be considered on merits:**

**i. Hon'ble High Court of Jharkhand in the matter of Hindustan Copper Limited Vs Union of India in W.P. (C) No. 2364 of 2014, vide order dated 28.11.2014**

*Held: "(...) action for alleged violation would be an independent and separate proceeding and therefore, consideration of proposal for environment clearance cannot await initiation of action against the project proponent."*

*"(...) the proposal of the petitioner company for **environmental clearance must be examined on its merits, independent of any proposed action for the alleged violation of the environmental laws.**"*

**ii. Hon'ble Madras High Court in the matter of Puducherry Environment Protection Association Vs The Union of India in W.P. No. 11189 of 2017, vide order dated 13.10.2017**

*Held "27. The question is whether an establishment contributing to the economy of the country and providing livelihood to hundreds of people should be closed down only because of failure to obtain prior environmental clearance, even though the establishment may not otherwise be violating*

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pollution laws or the pollution, if any, can conveniently and effectively be checked. **The answer necessarily has to be in the negative.**"

"29. It is reiterated that protection of environment and prevention of environmental pollution and degradation are non-negotiable. At the same time, the Court cannot altogether ignore the economy of the Nation and the need to protect the livelihood of hundreds of employees employed in projects, which as stated above, otherwise comply with or can be made to comply with norms."

**Issue 2: Environmental Clearance – Prospective & not ex-post facto:**

**Hon'ble Supreme Court in the matter of Common Cause Vs Union of India in W.P. (C) No. 114 of 2014, vide order dated 2.8.2017**

*Held: "(...) an EC will come into force **not earlier than the date of its grant.**"*

**Issue 3: 'Principles of Proportionality' – to be applied:**

**Hon'ble Supreme Court in the matter of Alembic Pharmaceuticals Ltd. Vs Rohit Prajapati & Ors. in C.A. No. 1526 of 2016, vide order dated 1.4.2020**

*Held: "(...) **this Court must take a balanced approach** which holds the industries to account for having operated without environmental clearances in the past without ordering a closure of operations. The directions of the NGT for the revocation of the ECs and for closure of the units do not accord **with the principle of proportionality**"*

**Issue 4: 'Polluter pays' principle &  
&**

**Issue 5: Costs for remedial measures** implicit in Sections 3 & 5 of Environment (Protection) Act, 1986.

**Hon'ble Supreme Court in the matter of Indian Council for Enviro- Legal Action Vs Union of India (the Bichhri village industrial pollution case) in (1996 SCC [3] 212)**

**Held:**

a) The Central Government is empowered to take all measures and issue all such directions as are called for the above purpose. The said powers will **include giving directions ...** and also the power to **impose the cost of remedial measures** on the offending industry and utilize the amount so recovered for carrying out remedial measures.....

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b) **Levy of costs required for carrying out remedial measures is implicit in Sections 3 and 5** which are couched in very wide and expansive language. Sections 3 and 5 of the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986, apart from other provisions of Water and Air Acts, empower the Government to make all such directions and take all such measures as are necessary or expedient for protecting and promoting the 'environment', which expression has been defined in very wide and expansive terms in Section 2 (a) of the Environment (Protection) Act. This power includes the power to prohibit an activity, close an industry, direct to carry out remedial measures, and wherever necessary impose the cost of remedial measures upon the offending industry.

c) The question of liability of the respondents to defray the costs of remedial measures can also be looked into from accepted universally sound principle, viz., the "**Polluter Pays**" Principle. "The polluter pays principle demands that the financial costs of preventing or remedying damage caused by pollution should lie with the undertakings which cause the pollution, or produce the goods which cause the pollution".

## **8. Legal provisions:**

i. The Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 mandates the Central Government to take all measures as it deems necessary or expedient for the purpose of protecting and improving the quality of the environment and preventing, controlling and abating environmental pollution (reference sub-section (1) of Section 3 of Environment (Protection) Act, 1986). Further, clause (xiv) of sub-section (2) of Section 3 of the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 specifies that the measures stipulated under sub-section (1) of Section 3 of the Environment (Protection) Act 1986 includes 'such other matters as the Central Government deems necessary or expedient for the purpose of securing effective implementation of the provisions of this Act'.

ii. Further, notwithstanding anything contained in any other law but subject to the provisions of the Environment Protection Act, 1986, Section 5 of the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986, provides that the Central Government may, in the exercise of powers and performance of Central Government functions under the said Act, issue directions in writing to any person, officer or any authority and such person, officer or authority shall be bound to comply with such directions.

## **9. Definition of Violation and Non-compliance:**

The Standard Operating Procedure (SoP) considers 'Violation' & 'Non-compliance' from the following perspective:

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i. "Violation" means cases where projects have either started the construction work or installation or excavation, whichever is earlier, on site or have expanded the production capacity and / or project area beyond the limit specified in the Environmental Clearance (Prior-EC) without obtaining Prior-EC or change of scope without prior approval from the Ministry.

ii. "Non-compliance" means non-compliance of terms and conditions prescribed by the Regulatory Authority in the Prior Environment Clearance accorded to the project.

**10. Standard Operating Procedure – Guiding Principles:**

i. Without prejudice to any other consequences, **action has to be initiated under section 15 read with section 19** of The Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 **against all violations.**

ii. Projects not allowable/permissible, for grant of EC, as per extant regulations: **To be demolished.**

iii. Projects allowable/permissible, if prior EC had been taken as per extant regulations: **To be closed until EC is granted (if no prior EC has been taken) or to revert to permitted production level (in case prior EC has been granted).**

iv. **Polluter pays:** Violators to pay for violation period - proportionate to the scale of project and extent of commercial transaction.

v. Setting up a mechanism for reporting of violation to the regulatory authority(ies).

**11. SOP for dealing with the violation cases:**

**Step 1: Closure or Revision**

Sl no.	Status of EC	Actions
1	If no prior EC has been taken	Order to <b>close</b> its operation
2.	If prior EC is available for existing/old unit	Order to <b>revert the activity/production to permissible limits.</b>
3.	If prior EC was not required for earlier production level but is now required	<b>Restrict the activity/production</b> to the extent to which prior EC was not required.

**Step 2: Action under Environment (Projection) Act, 1986**

Action under section 15 read with section 19 of the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 shall be initiated against the violators.

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### **Step: 3: Appraisal under EIA Notification, 2006**

The permissibility of the project shall be examined from the perspective of whether such activity/project was at all eligible for the grant of prior EC.

#### **A. If not permissible:**

i. The project shall be **ordered for the demolition/closure after issuing show cause notice and providing an opportunity of hearing.**

*Ex. If a red industry is functioning in a CRZ-I area which means that the activity was, in the first place, not permitted at the time of commencement of project. Therefore, the activity is not permissible and therefore it shall be **closed & demolished.***

ii. Respective regulatory authorities shall issue directions under section 5 of the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 for such closure & demolition of the project/activity.

#### **B. If permissible:**

i. As per extant regulations at the time of scoping, if it is viewed that the project activity is otherwise permissible, Terms of Reference (TOR) shall be issued with directions to complete the impact assessment studies & submit Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) report & Environmental Management Plan (EMP) in a time bound manner.

ii. Such cases of violation shall be subject to appropriate

(a) Damage Assessment

(b) Remedial Plan and

(c) Community Augmentation Plan by the Central level Sectoral Expert Appraisal Committees or State/Union Territory Level Expert Appraisal Committees, as the case may be.

iii. The Competent Authority shall issue directions to the project proponent, under section 5 of the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 on case to case basis mandating payment of such amount (as may be determined based on Polluters Pay principle) and undertaking activities relating to Remedial Plan and Community Augmentation Plan (to restore environmental damage caused including its social aspects).

iv. Upon submission of the EIA & EMP report, the project shall be appraised by the Central Sectoral Expert Appraisal Committees or the State/Union Territory Level Expert Appraisal Committees, as the case may be, as if it was a new proposal. If, on examination of the EIA/EMP report, the project is considered permissible for operation as per extant regulations, the requisite Environmental Clearance shall be issued **which shall be effective from the date of issue.**

v. However, during appraisal after examination if it is found that even though the project may **be permissible but not environmentally sustainable in its present**

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**form/configuration/features** then the project shall be directed to be **modified so that the project would be environmentally sustainable.**

vi. If, however, it is not considered appropriate to issue EC, the project shall be directed to be **demolished/ closed. If such proposal is a case of expansion, the project shall be directed to revert back to the extent of activity for which EC had been granted earlier or to revert back to the extent of activity for which EC was not required (as the case may be).**

vii. Central Sectoral Expert Appraisal Committees or the State/Union Territory Level Expert Appraisal Committees, as the case may be, may insist upon public hearing to be conducted for such categories of projects for which the EIA Notification 2006, as amended from time to time, requires the public hearing to be conducted.

viii. The project proponent will be required to **submit a bank guarantee equivalent to the amount of Remediation Plan and Natural & Community Resource Augmentation Plan with Central / the State Pollution Control Board (depending on whether it is appraised at Ministry or by SEIAA).** The quantification of such liability will be recommended by Expert Appraisal Committee and finalized by Regulatory Authority. The bank guarantee shall be deposited prior to the grant of environmental clearance and **will be released after successful implementation of the Remediation plan and Natural & Community Resource Augmentation Plan.**

**Note** - The activities, as per above clauses, shall be undertaken simultaneously wherever feasible. Environmental Clearance, if granted, to such projects or activities, after due appraisal of EIA/EMP report, **shall be effective only from the date of issuance of such clearance** and shall be subject to compliance of obligations towards Damage Assessment, Remedial Plan & Community Augmentation Plan, etc. finalized in each case.

## **12. Penalty provisions for Violation cases and applications:**

### **a. For new projects:**

- i. **Where operation has not commenced:** 1% of the total project cost incurred up to the date of filing of application along with EIA/EMP report; [Ex: Rs.1 lakh for project cost of Rs.1 Cr]
- ii. **Where operations have commenced without EC:** 1% of the total project cost incurred up to the date of filing of application along with EIA/EMP report **PLUS** 0.25% of the total turnover during the period of violation. [Ex: For Rs.100 Cr project cost and Rs.100 Cr total turnover, the penalty shall be Rs.1 Cr + Rs. 0.25 Cr = Rs.1.25 Cr]

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**b. For expansion projects:**

- i. **Where operation/production with expanded capacity has not commenced:**  
1% of the project cost, attributable to the expansion, incurred up to the date of filing of application along with EIA/EMP report.
- ii. **Where operation/ production with expanded capacity have commenced:**  
1% of the project cost (attributable to the expansion activity) incurred upto the date of filing of application along with EIA/EMP report PLUS 0.25% of the total turnover (attributable to the expanded activity/capacity) involved during the period of violation.

12.1. Without prejudice to obligation as per (a) & (b) above, where the project or activity is considered for appraisal as above & the project proponent fails to provide required information or requisite documents or complete the requisite study for the purpose of EIA/EMP reports or does not furnish such reports within such period, as specified by the appraisal committee, without reasonable cause, it shall be inferred that the project proponent is not serious enough and the project or activity shall be directed to be demolished / closed.

12.2. The percentage rates, as above, shall be halved if the project proponent *suo-moto* reports such violations without such violations coming to the knowledge of the Government either on inquiry or complaint.

12.3. The penalty, as above, shall be in addition to liability for carrying out various remedial measures which shall be worked out based on the damage assessment for quantifying the environmental damage caused due to unauthorized project activity [as per Step 3 enumerated above].

**13. Identification of Violation cases:**

With a view to protecting the environment and to expeditiously bring violators into a regulatory regime so as to prevent & control environment damage caused by such violation & to determine whether operation of such projects is permissible and to take action stipulated under Section 15 of the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 for contravention of the provisions of the said Act, Rules, orders and directions, it is expedient to also identify the cases of violation, examine and appraise such projects so as to refrain them from causing further environmental damage and also to compensate for causing damage to the environment. Therefore, in exercise of the powers conferred under Section 5 of the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986, the Central Government hereby directs that:-

- i. State Pollution Control Boards & Union Territory Pollution Control Committees, before grant or renewal of Consents under Water(Prevention & Control of Pollution) Act, 1974 & Air (Prevention& Control of Pollution) Act, 1981, shall ensure that the project proponents applies for or possess valid Prior



Environmental Clearance in terms of extant EIA Notification and shall not grant or renew CTO (Consent to Operate) unless Environment Clearance (if applicable) has been obtained.

- ii. The Central Pollution Control Board, all State Pollution Control Boards and all Union Territory Pollution Control Committees shall identify cases of violation under their respective jurisdiction, report such cases to the Ministry or State/Union Territory Level Environmental Impact Assessment Authority, as the case may be and also revoke CTO, if granted to the unit after giving an opportunity of being heard.
- iii. The Central Pollution Control Board, all State Pollution Control Boards and all Union Territory Pollution Control Committees shall expeditiously examine the references, received from public and other bodies, relating to violations and take necessary steps as per (ii) above.

14. This is issued with the approval of the Competent Authority.

  
(Dr. Sujit Kumar Bajpayee)  
Joint Secretary (IA)

To

1. Chairperson/Member Secretary of Central Pollution Control Board
2. Chairperson/Member Secretaries of all the SEIAAs/SEACs
3. Chairman/Members of all the Expert Appraisal Committees
4. Chairman/Members of all the State Pollution Control Boards and Union Territory Pollution Control Committees

Copy for information:

1. PS to Hon'ble Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change
2. PS to Hon'ble MoS for Environment, Forest and Climate Change
3. PPS to Secretary(EF&CC)
4. PPS to AS(RS) / AS (RA)/ AS (UD)/ JS(JT) / JS (MP)/ JS (NPG)
5. All the officers of IA Division
6. Website of MoEF&CC/PARIVESH/Guard file

Copy (by email) also forwarded to the Registrar, NGT, in compliance to instruction given in O.A No. 34/2020 WZ in the matter of Tanaji B. Gambhire vs. Chief Secretary, Government of Maharashtra and ors.(order dated 24.05.2021).



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**Ax. R5**

2025 INSC 718

**REPORTABLE**

**IN THE SUPREME COURT OF INDIA  
CIVIL ORIGINAL JURISDICTION**

**WRIT PETITION (C) NO.1394 OF 2023**

**VANASHAKTI**

**...PETITIONER**

**Vs.**

**UNION OF INDIA**

**...RESPONDENT**

**WITH**

**WRIT PETITION (C) NO.118 OF 2019**

**WRIT PETITION (C) NO.115 OF 2024**

**AND**

**CIVIL APPEAL NO.381-382 OF 2025**

**J U D G M E N T**

**ABHAY S. OKA, J.**

1. Part IV-A of the Constitution of India containing fundamental duties as set out in Article 51A was incorporated in the Constitution by the 42<sup>nd</sup> Amendment Act with effect from 3<sup>rd</sup> January 1977. Clause (g) of Article 51A provides that it shall be the duty of every citizen of India to protect and improve the natural environment including forests, lakes, rivers and wildlife, and to have compassion for living creatures. This Court in several decisions has held that the right to live in a

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pollution free atmosphere is a part of the fundamental right guaranteed under Article 21 of the Constitution of India.

**2.** The world changed rapidly after World War II. From the late 1960s and early 1970s, slowly there was a realisation about the drastic consequences of the destruction of environment and pollution of various kinds. In June 1972, at Stockholm, the United Nations Conference on Human Environment was held. In the said conference, several decisions were taken by the world community to protect the environment.

**3.** In our country, it took fourteen years thereafter for the legislature to come out with a law for protection and improvement of the environment. The Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 (for short, 'the 1986 Act') was brought into force with effect from 19<sup>th</sup> November 1986. As can be noticed from several orders of this Court and the High Courts, the progress of implementation of the 1986 Act has been very slow.

**4.** The 1970s and 1980s saw growth of industrialisation in our country. The activities such as mining, gas exploration, thermal power plants, petroleum refining industries, various other industries, building and construction projects, such as, highways started growing.

**5.** Again, it took twenty years after the 1986 Act came into force to exercise the power under sub-section (1) and clause (v) of sub-section (2) of Section 3 of the 1986 Act read with clause (d) of sub-rule (3) of Rule 5 of the Environment (Protection) Rules, 1986 (for short, '1986 Rules') for coming out with the Environment Impact Assessment Notification, 2006 (for short, 'the EIA notification'). The EIA notification was issued on 14th September 2006. It provided that the projects or activities mentioned in clause (2) thereof shall require prior Environmental Clearance (for short, 'the EC') from the concerned regulatory authority. The concerned regulatory authority in the Central Government is the Ministry of Environment Forests and Climate Change (for short, 'the MoEFCC') for matters falling under Category 'A' in the Schedule, and at the State level, the State Environment Impact Assessment Authority (for short, 'the SEIAA') for the matters falling in Category 'B'. In the Schedule, Categories 'A' and 'B' were incorporated setting out industries and other development work. The entire controversy in this group of petitions is about ex post facto grant of EC.

**6.** On 14th March 2017, a notification was issued by the MoEFCC. The said notification is hereafter referred to as 'the 2017 notification'. The said notification was made applicable to the projects or activities that have

started the work on site, expanded the production beyond the limit of the EC, or changed the production mix without obtaining EC. The 2017 notification provided that in case of such works, ex post facto EC can be granted. It provided that the projects or activities which are in violation of the EIA notification as on 14th March 2017 were eligible to apply under the 2017 notification for ex post facto EC within a period of six months from 14th March 2017.

**7.** The National Green Tribunal (for short, 'the NGT') vide order dated 24th May 2021 directed the MoEFCC to prepare a Standard Operating Procedure (for short, 'the SOP') for grant of EC in the cases of violation so as to address the gap in the binding law and practice being currently followed. In purported compliance with the said direction, Office Memorandum dated 7th July 2021 (for short, 'the 2021 OM') was issued.

**8.** In the meanwhile, the 2017 notification was challenged by way of a writ petition before the High Court of Madras in the case of Puducherry Environment Protection Association v. Union of India<sup>1</sup>, which was decided by order dated 13th October 2017. During the course of hearing of the case before the Madras High Court, when it was pointed out that the outer limit for making applications for grant of ex post facto EC have

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<sup>1</sup> 2017 SCC OnLine Mad 7056

been repeatedly extended, the Union of India gave a categorical undertaking that the 2017 notification was only a one-time measure. By recording the said submission made on behalf of the Union of India that the 2017 notification was certainly and clearly only a one time measure, the High Court disposed of the petition. Later on, by order dated 14th March 2018 passed by the High Court of Madras in another case, the time period under the 2017 notification for submission of proposals by project proponents was extended by a further period of thirty days.

**9.** In Writ Petition (C) No.1394 of 2023, the first prayer is for quashing the 2021 OM on the ground that it was arbitrary, illegal and ultra vires the provisions of the 1986 Act. The second prayer is for issuing a writ of mandamus directing the MoEFCC and SEIAA/SEACs not to process and entertain any application for ex-post facto EC after 13th May 2018. As stated earlier, the time granted under the 2017 notification to apply was lastly extended till 13th April 2018.

**10.** In Writ Petition (C) No.118 of 2019, the challenge is to the 2017 notification issued by the MoEFCC. A prayer was made seeking directions to the respondents to produce a list of real estate projects and project proponents who have undertaken real estate development

projects without obtaining EC under the 2006 notification.

**11.** In Writ Petition (C) No.115 of 2024, the challenge is to the 2017 notification and the 2021 OM. A prayer for writ of prohibition is made for restraining the MoEFCC from issuing any notification or office memorandum permitting ex-post facto EC.

**12.** The High Court of Madras by judgment and order dated 30th August 2024 quashed the 2021 OM and another OM dated 19th February 2021. The challenge in Civil Appeal No.381-382 of 2025 is to this decision of the High Court of Madras. In the judgment and order dated 30th August 2024, the Madras High Court declared that its order will operate only prospectively and applications under consideration will remain unaffected. The challenge in this appeal is only to the extent of giving prospective effect to the impugned judgment.

## **THE EIA NOTIFICATION**

**13.** Firstly, we come to the EIA notification. It has been issued in exercise of powers under sub-Section (1) and clause (v) of sub-Section (2) of Section 3 of the 1986 Act read with clause (d) of sub-Rule (3) of Rule 5 of the 1986 Rules. Section 3 of the 1986 Act reads thus:

“3. Power of Central Government to take measures to protect and improve environment.—(1) Subject to the provisions

of this Act, **the Central Government shall have the power to take all such measures as it deems necessary or expedient for the purpose of protecting and improving the quality of the environment and preventing, controlling and abating environmental pollution.**

(2) In particular, and without prejudice to the generality of the provisions of subsection (1), such measures may include measures with respect to all or any of the following matters, namely:—

(i) co-ordination of actions by the State Governments, officers and other authorities

—

(a) under this Act, or the rules made thereunder; or

(b) under any other law for the time being in force which is relatable to the objects of this Act;

(ii) planning and execution of a nation-wide programme for the prevention, control and abatement of environmental pollution;

(iii) laying down standards for the quality of environment in its various aspects;

(iv) laying down standards for emission or discharge of environmental pollutants from various sources whatsoever:

Provided that different standards for emission or discharge may be laid down under this clause from different sources having regard to the quality or composition of the emission or discharge of

environmental pollutants from such sources;

**(v) restriction of areas in which any industries, operations or processes or class of industries, operations or processes shall not be carried out or shall be carried out subject to certain safeguards;**

(vi) laying down procedures and safeguards for the prevention of accidents which may cause environmental pollution and remedial measures for such accidents;

(vii) laying down procedures and safeguards for the handling of hazardous substances;

(viii) examination of such manufacturing processes, materials and substances as are likely to cause environmental pollution;

(ix) carrying out and sponsoring investigations and research relating to problems of environmental pollution;

(x) inspection of any premises, plant, equipment, machinery, manufacturing or other processes, materials or substances and giving, by order, of such directions to such authorities, officers or persons as it may consider necessary to take steps for the prevention, control and abatement of environmental pollution;

(xi) establishment or recognition of environmental laboratories and institutes to carry out the functions entrusted to such environmental laboratories and institutes under this Act;

(xii) collection and dissemination of information in respect of matters relating to environmental pollution;

(xiii) preparation of manuals, codes or guides relating to the prevention control and abatement of environmental pollution;

(xiv) such other matters as the Central Government deems necessary or expedient for the purpose of securing the effective implementation of the provisions of this Act.

(3) The Central Government may, if it considers it necessary or expedient so to do for the purposes of this Act, by order, published in the Official Gazette, constitute an authority or authorities by such name or names as may be specified in the order for the purpose of exercising and performing such of the powers and functions (including the power to issue directions under Section 5) of the Central Government under this Act and for taking measures with respect to such of the matters referred to in subsection (2) as may be mentioned in the order and subject to the supervision and control of the Central Government and the provisions of such order, such authority or authorities may exercise the powers or perform the functions or take the measures so mentioned in the order as if such authority or authorities had been empowered by this Act to exercise those powers or perform those functions or take such measures.”

(emphasis added)

**13.1** Sub-section (1) of Section 3 sums up the very object of the 1986 Act. Therefore, the EIA notification has been issued not only for the purposes of protecting and improving the quality of the environment but also for preventing and abating environmental pollution. Sub-section (1) of Section 3 confers general power of taking measures on the Central Government. Sub-section (2) confers specific power for taking measures in the matters set out in clauses (i) to (ix) thereof. Clause (v) of sub-section (2) of Section 3 empowers the Central Government to take measures for putting restrictions of areas in which any industries, operations or processes shall not be carried out or shall be carried out subject to safeguards.

**14.** Rule 5 of the 1986 Rules reads thus:

**“5. Prohibition and restriction on the location of industries and the carrying on of processes and operations in different areas.—**(1) The Central Government may take into consideration the following factors while prohibiting or restricting the location of industries and carrying on of processes and operations in different areas:

(i) Standards for quality of environment in its various aspects laid down for an area.

(ii) The maximum allowable limits of concentration of various environmental pollutants (including noise) for an area.

(iii) The likely emission or discharge of environmental pollutants from an industry, process or operation proposed to be prohibited or restricted.

(iv) The topographic and climatic features of an area.

(v) The biological diversity of the area which, in the opinion of the Central Government needs to be preserved.

(vi) Environmentally compatible land use.

(vii) Net adverse environmental impact likely to be caused by an industry, process or operation proposed to be prohibited or restricted.

(viii) Proximity to a protected area under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958 or a sanctuary, National Park, game reserve or closed area notified as such under the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 or places protected under any treaty, agreement or convention with any other country or countries or in pursuance of any decision made in any international conference, association or other body.

(ix) Proximity to human settlements.

(x) Any other factor as may be considered by the Central Government to be relevant to the protection of the environment in an area.

(2) While prohibiting or restricting the location of industries and carrying on of processes and operations in an area, the

Central Government shall follow the procedure hereinafter laid down.

(3) (a) Whenever it appears to the Central Government that it is expedient to impose prohibition or restrictions on the location of an industry or the carrying on of processes and operations in an area, it may, by notification in the Official Gazette and in such other manner as the Central Government may deem necessary from time to time, give notice of its intention to do so.

(b) Every notification under clause (a) shall give a brief description of the area, the industries, operations, processes in that area about which such notification pertains and also specify the reasons for the imposition of prohibition or restrictions on the location of the industries and carrying on of processes or operations in that area.

(c) Any person interested in filing an objection against the imposition of prohibition or restrictions on carrying on of processes or operations as notified under clause (a) may do so in writing to the Central Government within sixty days from the date of publication in the notification in the Official Gazette.

(d) The Central Government shall within a period of one hundred and twenty days from the date of publication of the notification in the Official Gazette consider all the objections received against such notification and may [within [seven hundred and twenty-five days [,and in respect of the States of Assam, Meghalaya, Arunachal

Pradesh, Mizoram, Manipur, Nagaland, Tripura, Sikkim and Jammu and Kashmir in exceptional circumstance and for sufficient reasons within a further period of one hundred and eighty days,]) from such date of publication] impose prohibition or restrictions on location of such industries and the carrying on of any process or operation in an area:

[Provided that on account of COVID-19 pandemic, for the purpose of this clause, the period of validity of the notification expiring in the financial year 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 shall be extended up to [30th June, 2022] or six months from the end of the month when the relevant notification would have expired without any extension, whichever is later.]

[(4) Notwithstanding anything contained in sub-rule (3), whenever it appears to the Central Government that it is in public interest to do so, it may dispense with the requirement of notice under clause (a) of sub-rule (3).]”

**14.1** For issuing the EIA notification, power has been exercised under clause (d) of sub-rule (3) of Rule 5 which empowers the Central Government to impose prohibition or restrictions on location of such industries and the carrying on any process or operation in an area. There is a power to impose complete prohibition on carrying on any process or operation in an area. Clause (2) of the EIA notification reads thus:

**“2. Requirements of prior Environmental Clearance (EC):-** The following projects or activities shall require prior environmental clearance from the concerned regulatory authority, which shall hereinafter referred to be as the Central Government in the Ministry of Environment and Forests for matters falling under Category 'A' in the Schedule and at State level the State Environment Impact Assessment Authority (SEIAA) for matters falling under Category 'B' in the said Schedule and at District level, the District Environment Impact Assessment Authority (DEIAA) for matters falling under Category 'B2' for mining minerals in the said Schedule, before any construction work, or preparation of land by the project management except for securing the land, is started on the project or activity:

- (i) All new projects or activities listed in the Schedule to this notification;
- (ii) Expansion, modernization or any change in the product mix or raw material mix in existing projects or activities listed in the Schedule to this notification with addition of capacity beyond the limits specified for the concerned sector in the said Schedule, subject to conditions and procedure provided in the sub-paragraph (ii) of paragraph 7.”

**14.2** Therefore, without prior EC, construction of new projects or activities, expansion or modernisation of existing projects or activities listed in the Schedule entailing capacity addition with change in process or

technology, cannot be undertaken. Entire procedure for grant of prior EC is laid down in the EIA notification.

## **LEGALITY OF THE 2017 NOTIFICATION**

**15.** The 2017 notification refers to the OMs dated 12<sup>th</sup> December 2012 and 27<sup>th</sup> June 2013 by which a process was sought to be established for grant of EC in the cases of violation of the EIA notification. It also refers to the judgment of the High Court of Jharkhand holding these two OMs as illegal. The same OMs were also quashed by the NGT as mentioned in the said notification. There are three recitals in the said notification which are relevant. Recital Nos.9 to 11 read thus:

**“9.** And whereas, the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change and State Environment Impact Assessment Authorities have been receiving certain proposals under the Environment Impact Assessment Notification, 2006 for grant of Terms of References and Environmental Clearance for projects which have started the work on site, expanded the production beyond the limit of environmental clearance or changed the product mix without obtaining prior environmental clearance;

**10. Whereas, the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change deems it necessary for the purpose of protecting and improving**

**the quality of the environment and abating environmental pollution that all entities not complying with environmental regulation under Environment Impact Assessment Notification, 2006 be brought under compliance with in the environmental laws in expedient manner;**

11. And whereas, the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change deems it necessary to bring such projects and activities in compliance with the environmental laws at the earliest point of time, rather than leaving them unregulated and unchecked, which will be more damaging to the environment and in furtherance of this objective, the Government of India deems it essential to establish a process for appraisal of such cases of violation for prescribing adequate environmental safeguards to entities and the process should be such that it deters violation of provisions of Environment Impact Assessment Notification, 2006 and the pecuniary benefit of violation and damage to environment is adequately compensated for;”

15.1 Thus, what was sought to be done was to protect the project proponents who committed gross illegality by commencing construction or commencing operation or process without obtaining prior EC as provided in the

EIA notification. The 2017 notification was a one-time measure. Moreover, this Court in the case of **Common Cause v Union of India & Ors.**<sup>2</sup>, held in no uncertain terms that the concept of *ex post facto* or retrospective EC is completely alien to environmental jurisprudence including the EIA notification. The decision in the case of **Common Cause**<sup>2</sup> was delivered on 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2017. Notwithstanding the clear declaration of law which was made on 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2017, the Central Government did not withdraw the 2017 notification.

**16.** We may note here that this is not the first time that the concept of prior EC was brought into force. For this purpose, useful reference can be made to a decision of this Court in the case of **Alembic Pharmaceuticals v. Rohit Prajapati**<sup>3</sup>. It records that there was a notification of 27<sup>th</sup> January 1994 mandating prior EC for setting up and expansion of industrial projects falling within thirty categories. The issue before this Court was about the legality and validity of the circular dated 14<sup>th</sup> May 2002, which permitted obtaining of *ex post facto* EC. This Court specifically dealt with the challenge to the circular dated 14<sup>th</sup> May 2002. In paragraph 12, this Court noted the issue to be decided:

“**12.** The issue to be adjudicated is whether in view of the requirement of a prior EC

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<sup>2</sup> 2017 (9) SCC 499

<sup>3</sup> 2020 (17) SCC 157

under the EIA Notification of 1994, a provision for an ex post facto EC to industrial units could be validly made by means of the Circular dated 14-5-2002.”

**16.1** Thereafter, this Court considered Section 3(1) of the 1986 Act. In paragraph 21 this Court held thus:

“**21.** The omission in the appeal to make any attempt to sustain the Circular dated 14-5-2002 with reference to the provisions of Section 3 of the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 is significant. For an action of the Central Government to be treated as a measure referable to Section 3 it must satisfy the statutory requirement of being necessary or expedient “for the purpose of protecting and improving the quality of the environment and preventing, controlling and abating environment pollution”. The Circular dated 14-5-2002 in fact does quite the contrary. It purported to allow an extension of time for industrial units to comply with the requirement of an EC. The EIA Notification dated 27-1-1994 mandated that an EC has to be obtained before embarking on a new project or expanding or modernising an existing one. The EIA Notification of 1994 has been issued under the provisions of the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 and the Environment Protection Rules, 1986, with the object of imposing restrictions and prohibitions on setting up of new projects or expansion or modernisation of existing project. The measures are based on the precautionary principle and aim to protect the interests of

the environment. The Circular dated 14-5-2002 allowed defaulting industrial units which had commenced activities without an EC to cure the default by an ex post facto clearance. Being an administrative decision, it is beyond the scope of Section 3 and cannot be said to be a measure for the purpose of protecting and improving the quality of the environment. The circular notes that there were defaulting units which had failed to comply with the requirement of obtaining an EC as mandated. The circular provided for an extension of time and inexplicably introduced the notion of an ex post facto clearance. In effect, it impacted the obligation of the industrial units to be in compliance with the law. **The concept of ex post facto clearance is fundamentally at odds with the EIA Notification dated 27-1-1994. The EIA Notification of 1994 contained a stipulation that any expansion or modernisation of an activity or setting up of a new project listed in Schedule I “shall not be undertaken in any part of India unless it has been accorded environmental clearance”. The language of the notification is as clear as it can be to indicate that the requirement is of a prior EC. A mandatory provision requires complete compliance. The words “shall not be undertaken” read in conjunction with the expression “unless” can only have one meaning : before undertaking a new project or expanding or modernising an existing one, an EC must be obtained.** When the EIA Notification of 1994 mandates a prior EC, it

proscribes a post activity approval or an ex post facto permission. What is sought to be achieved by the administrative Circular dated 14-5-2002 is contrary to the statutory Notification dated 27-1-1994. The Circular dated 14-5-2002 does not stipulate how the detrimental effects on the environment would be taken care of if the project proponent is granted an ex post facto EC. The EIA Notification of 1994 mandates a prior environmental clearance. The circular substantially amends or alters the application of the EIA Notification of 1994. The mandate of not commencing a new project or expanding or modernising an existing one unless an environmental clearance has been obtained stands diluted and is rendered ineffective by the issuance of the administrative Circular dated 14-5-2002. This discussion leads us to the conclusion that the administrative circular is not a measure protected by Section 3. Hence there was no jurisdictional bar on NGT to enquire into its legitimacy or vires. Moreover, the administrative circular is contrary to the EIA Notification 1994 which has a statutory character. The circular is unsustainable in law.”

(emphasis added)

**16.2** Ultimately, in paragraph 23, this Court held thus:

**The concept of an ex post facto EC is in derogation of the fundamental principles of environmental jurisprudence and is an anathema to the EIA Notification dated 27-1-1994. It is, as the judgment**

**in Common Cause [Common Cause v. Union of India, (2017) 9 SCC 499] holds, detrimental to the environment and could lead to irreparable degradation. The reason why a retrospective EC or an ex post facto clearance is alien to environmental jurisprudence is that before the issuance of an EC, the statutory notification warrants a careful application of mind, besides a study into the likely consequences of a proposed activity on the environment. An EC can be issued only after various stages of the decision-making process have been completed. Requirements such as conducting a public hearing, screening, scoping and appraisal are components of the decision-making process which ensure that the likely impacts of the industrial activity or the expansion of an existing industrial activity are considered in the decision-making calculus. Allowing for an ex post facto clearance would essentially condone the operation of industrial activities without the grant of an EC. In the absence of an EC, there would be no conditions that would safeguard the environment. Moreover, if the EC was to be ultimately refused, irreparable harm would have been caused to the environment. In either view of the matter, environment law cannot countenance the notion of an ex post facto clearance. This would be contrary to both the precautionary principle as well as the need for sustainable development.”**

(emphasis added)

**16.3** In fact, as noted in paragraph 22.1, the word ‘prior’ was not used in the EIA notification dated 27<sup>th</sup> January 1994. However, the words ‘shall not be undertaken’ were used. In the 2006 EIA notification, the word ‘prior’ appears at multiple places.

**17.** The issue of *ex post facto* EC was dealt with in the case of **Common Cause**<sup>2</sup>, In paragraph 108, a submission was recorded that the possibility of getting *ex post facto* EC was a signal to the mining leaseholders that obtaining an EC was not mandatory or that if it was not obtained, the default was retrospectively condonable. In paragraph 125, this Court held thus:

**“125.** We are not in agreement with the learned counsel for the mining leaseholders. **There is no doubt that the grant of an EC cannot be taken as a mechanical exercise. It can only be granted after due diligence and reasonable care since damage to the environment can have a long-term impact. EIA 1994 is therefore very clear that if expansion or modernisation of any mining activity exceeds the existing pollution load, a prior EC is necessary and as already held by this Court in *M.C. Mehta* [*M.C. Mehta v. Union of India*, (2004) 12 SCC 118] even for the renewal of a mining lease where there is no expansion or modernisation of any activity, a prior EC is necessary. Such importance having been given to an EC, the grant of an *ex post facto***

**environmental clearance would be detrimental to the environment and could lead to irreparable degradation of the environment. The concept of an ex post facto or a retrospective EC is completely alien to environmental jurisprudence including EIA 1994 and EIA 2006.** We make it clear that an EC will come into force not earlier than the date of its grant.”

(emphasis added)

**18.** Therefore, there is already a concluded finding of this Court that the concept of *ex post facto* or retrospective EC is completely alien to environmental jurisprudence and the EIA notification. This view was reiterated by this Court in the case of ***Electrosteel Steels Ltd. v. Union of India and Ors.***<sup>4</sup>. In paragraph 72, this Court held thus:

**“72. There can be no doubt that the need to comply with the requirement to obtain environment clearance is non-negotiable.** A project can be set up or allowed to expand subject to compliance of the requisite norms. Environmental clearance is granted on condition of the suitability of the site to set up the project from the environmental angle, and existence of necessary infrastructural facilities and equipment for compliance of environmental norms. To protect future generations, it is imperative that pollution laws be strictly enforced. Under no circumstances, can industries which pollute

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<sup>4</sup> (2023) 6 SCC 615

be allowed to operate unchecked and degrade the environment.”

(emphasis added)

**18.1** In this case, as well as in the case of ***Alembic Pharmaceuticals***<sup>3</sup>, this Court exercised its jurisdiction under Article 142 of the Constitution and permitted *ex post facto* EC in particular cases considering the peculiar factual situation.

**19.** It is in this context that the legality and validity of the 2017 notification will have to be tested. Interestingly, in paragraph 10 of the notification, it is recorded that the MoEFCC deems it necessary for the purpose of protecting and improving the quality of environment and abating environmental pollution that all the entities not complying with the environmental regulation under EIA notification be brought under compliance within the environmental laws in an expeditious manner. The object of protecting and improving the environment and preventing and abating environmental pollution was achieved by the EIA notification. The object of the 2017 notification appears to be to protect the industries and entities which violated the EIA notification. In fact, paragraph 14 of the 2017 notification is material which reads thus:

“**14.** The projects or activities which are in violation as on date of this notification only will be eligible to apply for environmental

clearance under this notification and the project proponents can apply for environmental clearance under this notification only within six months from the date of this notification.”

**20.** Moreover, the 2017 notification is completely in violation of the law laid down by this court in the case of ***Common Cause***<sup>2</sup> and ***Alembic Pharmaceuticals***<sup>3</sup>. From the recitals of the 2017 notification, it is apparent that it was a one-time measure to protect those who were in violation as on the date of the 2017 notification. In view of the settled law, even a ‘one-time measure’ or ‘one-time relaxation’ was illegal. The 2021 OM encourages the entities who contributed to pollution by not obtaining prior EC. Whenever EC is granted, it is always conditional. Certain conditions are imposed to abate or reduce the pollution. Such one-time measures add to air and/or water pollution. Such measures infringe the right to live in a pollution free environment guaranteed by Article 21. Thus, the 2017 notification was completely illegal.

**21.** The Division bench of Madras High Court by judgment dated 13<sup>th</sup> October 2017, in the case of ***Puducherry Environment Protection Association***<sup>1</sup> dealt with the issue regarding the legality of the 2017 notification which was subject matter of challenge in a Public Interest Litigation. A very specific submission was

made before the Madras High Court on behalf of the Central Government by the learned Additional Solicitor General, which is recorded in paragraph 4(i) of the judgment. Relevant portion of paragraph 4(i) reads thus:

“4(i) With regard to precautionary principle, faced with the situation that ex post facto clearance and regularization dates have been repeatedly extended time and again by series of notifications, **learned Additional Solicitor General at the bar, on instructions, submits that this impugned notification shall clearly and certainly be only a one time measure. We record this submission also.**

.....”

(emphasis added)

**21.1** This statement was treated as an undertaking of the Central Government, which is clear from paragraph 4(n) of the said judgment:

“4(n) We are convinced that paragraphs 3,4 and 5 of the impugned notification alluded to supra coupled with the two undertakings made on instructions by learned Additional Solicitor General that (a) public hearing can be read into paragraph 5 of the impugned notification and **(b) this shall certainly and clearly be a one time measure, this writ petition can be closed and disposed of recording the above submissions. We do so.**”

(emphasis added)

**21.2** It is in view of this undertaking that the High Court did not interfere. The Central Government is bound by this undertaking. It is the duty of the Central Government to comply with the undertaking in its true letter and spirit.

**22.** The period provided in the 2017 notification to apply for *ex-post facto* EC ended on 13<sup>th</sup> September 2017. In the case of ***Appaswamy Real Estates Limited v. Puducherry Environment Protection Association***<sup>5</sup>, the request of the MoEFCC for extending the time provided in the 2017 notification was accepted. As a result, the OM dated 16<sup>th</sup> March 2018 was issued which permitted the project proponents to apply under the 2017 notification within thirty days from the date of the High Court order. What is pertinent to note is that notwithstanding the grant of extension of time to apply, there was no modification made to paragraph 14 of the 2017 notification which clarified that it is applicable only to those projects and activities which were in violation on the date of the said notification. Therefore, any project or activity or process which required EC under the EIA notification commenced after 14<sup>th</sup> March 2017 was not protected by the 2017 notification.

**23.** Apart from the fact that the very concept of grant of *ex-post facto* EC is illegal, it is not possible to understand

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<sup>5</sup> 2018 SCC OnLine Mad 1283

why the Central Government made efforts to protect those who committed illegality by not obtaining prior EC in terms of the EIA notification. As the EIA notification was eleven years old when the 2017 notification was issued, there was no equity in favour of those who committed such gross illegality of not obtaining prior EC. The persons who acted without prior EC were not illiterate persons. They were companies, real estate developers, public sector undertakings, mining industries, etc. They were the persons who knowingly committed illegality. We, therefore, make it clear that hereafter, the Central Government shall not come out with a new version of the 2017 notification which provides for the grant of *ex-post facto* EC in any manner.

## **LEGALITY AND VALIDITY OF THE 2021 OM**

### **SUBMISSIONS**

**24.** The learned senior counsel appearing for the Petitioner submitted that post a series of judgments of this Court in ***Alembic***<sup>3</sup> and ***Common Cause***<sup>2</sup>, it is not permissible to grant *ex post facto* EC. He further submits that the 2021 OM is in violation of the 1986 Act and the EIA notification. He submits that EC must be prior and cannot be granted *ex post facto*. While the 2021 OM does not expressly extend the timeline under the 2017 notification or mention *ex post facto*, the 2021 OM and its

application has effectively allowed grant of *ex post facto* EC.

**25.** The main submission of the learned Additional Solicitor General is that the 2021 OM does not seek to grant *ex-post facto* EC. It is only an SOP. The learned ASG invited our attention to the contents of the SOP. Her submission is that it provides for the demolition of projects not allowable or permissible for want of EC. It also provides for the closure of projects allowable/permissible, if prior EC has not been taken as per the EIA notification. She submitted that even if EC is granted, it will be effective from the date of the issue, and therefore, it is not *ex post facto*. She submitted that before such EC is granted, the project proponent will have to pay certain amounts as provided therein based on Polluter Pays Principle. Moreover, the project proponents will have to undertake activities relating to remedial plan and community accommodation plan. She also pointed out that the projects which are not allowable or permissible, shall be demolished. She also pointed out provisions regarding penalty, project proponents furnishing bank guarantee, etc. Thus, in short, her submission is that the object of the 2021 OM is to protect those projects and industries which could have been granted an EC under EIA notification before the date of commencement of activities, but proceeded to commence

activities without EC. Her submission is that this measure has been taken to ensure that the huge spending on constructions is not lost and wasted.

## **OUR VIEW**

**26.** The basic submission by learned ASG is based on a premise that what is provided under the 2021 OM is not grant of *ex-post facto* EC. The relevant part of the 2021 OM is in paragraph 10 and 11, which read thus:

### **“10. Standard Operating Procedure-Guiding Principles:**

i. Without prejudice to any other consequences, **action has to be initiated under section 15 read with section 19** of The Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 **against all violations.**

ii. Projects not allowable/permissible, for grant of EC, as per extant regulations: **To be demolished.**

iii. Projects allowable/permissible, if prior EC had been taken as per extant regulations: **To be closed until EC is granted (if no prior EC has been taken) or to revert to permitted production level (in case prior EC has been granted).**

iv. **Polluter pays:** Violators to pay for violation period proportionate to the scale of project and extent of commercial transaction.

v. Setting up a mechanism for reporting of violation to the regulatory authority(ies).

### **11. SOP for dealing with the violation cases:**

## Step 1: Closure or Revision

Sl no.	Status of EC	Actions
1	If no prior EC has been taken	Order to close its operation
2	If prior EC is available for existing/old unit	Order to revert the activity /production to permissible limits.
3	If prior EC was not required for earlier production level but is now required	Restrict the activity /production to the extent to which prior EC was not required

## Step 2: Action under Environment (Protection) Act, 1986

Action under section 15 read with section 19 of the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 shall be initiated against the violators.

## Step: 3: Appraisal under EIA Notification, 2006

The permissibility of the project shall be examined from the perspective of whether such activity/project was at all eligible for the grant of prior EC.

### A. If not permissible:

i. The project shall be **ordered for the demolition/closure after issuing show cause notice and providing an opportunity of hearing.**

*Ex. If a red industry is functioning in a CRZ-I area which means that the activity was, in the first place, not permitted at the time of*

*commencement of project. Therefore, the activity is not permissible and therefore it shall be **closed & demolished**.*

ii. Respective regulatory authorities shall issue directions under section 5 of the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 for such closure & demolition of the project/activity.

## **B. If permissible:**

i. As per extant regulations at the time of scoping, if it is viewed that the project activity is otherwise permissible, Terms of Reference (TOR) shall be issued with directions to complete the impact assessment studies & submit Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) report & Environmental Management Plan (EMP) in a time bound manner.

ii. Such cases of violation shall be subject to appropriate

(a) Damage Assessment

(b) Remedial Plan and

(c) Community Augmentation Plan by the Central Level Sectoral Expert Appraisal Committees or State/Union Territory Level Expert Appraisal Committees, as the case may be.

iii. The Competent Authority shall issue directions to the project proponent, under section 5 of the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 on case to case basis mandating payment of such amount (as may be determined based on Polluter Pays principle) and undertaking activities relating to Remedial Plan and Community Augmentation Plan (to restore environmental damage caused including its social aspects).

iv. Upon submission of the EIA & EMP report, the project shall be appraised by the Central Sectoral Expert Appraisal Committees or the State/Union Territory Level Expert Appraisal Committees, as the case may be, as if it was a new proposal. If, on examination of the EIA/EMP report, the project is considered permissible for operation as per extant regulations, the requisite Environmental Clearance shall be issued **which shall be effective from the date of issue.**

v. However, during appraisal after examination if it is found that even though the project may **be permissible but not environmentally sustainable in its present form/configuration/features** then the project shall be directed to be **modified so that the project would be environmentally sustainable.**

vi. If, however, it is not considered appropriate to issue EC, the project shall be directed to be **demolished/ closed. If such proposal is a case of expansion, the project shall be directed to revert back to the extent of activity for which EC had been granted earlier or to revert back to the extent of activity for which EC was not required (as the case may be).**

vii. Central Sectoral Expert Appraisal Committees or the State/Union Territory Level Expert Appraisal Committees, as the case may be, may insist upon public hearing to be conducted for such categories of projects for which the EIA Notification 2006, as amended from time to time, requires the public hearing to be conducted.

viii. The project proponent will be required to **submit a bank guarantee equivalent to the**

**amount of Remediation Plan and Natural & Community Resource Augmentation Plan with Central / the State Pollution Control Board (depending on whether it is appraised at Ministry or by SEIAA). The quantification of such liability will be recommended by Expert Appraisal Committee and finalized by Regulatory Authority. The bank guarantee shall be deposited prior to the grant of environmental clearance and **will be released after successful implementation of the Remediation Plan and Natural & Community Resource Augmentation Plan.**”**

**27.** In short, it provides for grant of EC to category of ‘allowable/permissible’ projects. We must remember that the 2021 OM is applicable even to the completed projects. The 2021 OM says that grant of EC to such projects shall be effective from the date of issue. If the project proponent goes ahead with construction which requires EC under the EIA notification, it will amount to violation of the provisions of 1986 Act and 1986 Rules. It will attract penalty under Section 15 of the 1986 Act. Perusal of the provisions of Section 15 shows that even if the penalty is paid by the project proponent, it will not regularise the project. Therefore, even after the payment of penalty, if the project is under construction, the same has to be stopped and demolished and even if operation has already commenced, the same has to be stopped and demolished. Therefore, the construction work has to be demolished.

**28.** Now, we will consider what is the meaning of “*ex post facto*”. Various dictionary meanings can be summarised as under:

- a)** Having retrospective effect or force;
- b)** From a thing done afterwards;
- c)** Retroactive or affecting something that has already happened.

**29.** Now, we will take a case of *ex post facto* EC provided under the 2017 notification. The effect of grant of *ex post facto* clearance is that if without obtaining EC, construction is in progress, the same is allowed to continue. If the construction is complete and operation and processes are going on, the same can go on after *ex post facto* EC is granted. Effect of grant of EC under clause (11) of 2021 OM will be grant of permission to complete the construction of the project, though construction had commenced without prior EC. Where the construction is already complete which is being used for processes etc., by grant of EC, the process/activities can continue. Thus, in effect, the EC granted under clause (11) of 2021 OM regularises something which was illegal with retrospective effect. In effect, the EC granted under clause (11) of 2021 OM will regularise the illegality done by commencing the construction or commencing the project without prior EC. Therefore, in substance, what is provided is grant of *ex post facto* EC. In other

words what is granted is EC with retrospective effect as it regularises illegality committed earlier. The grant of EC under the 2021 OM, no doubt, is subject to making payment of compensation determined based on Polluter Pays Principle and undertaking activities relating to remedial plan. Once there is a violation of the EIA notification, the project proponent has to compensate following the Polluter Pays Principle. Even if, EC is not granted to him he has to pay for remedial plan to remedy the damage done to the environment. He has to also pay the penalty under Section 15 of the 1986 Act. Therefore, what is done by the 2021 OM is something which was completely prohibited by this Court in the cases of **Common Cause<sup>2</sup>** and **Alembic Pharmaceuticals<sup>3</sup>**. It is an attempt to bring in an *ex-post facto* or retrospective regime by craftily drafting the SOP. The grant of EC under the 2021 OM in substance and in effect amounts to *ex post facto* grant of EC. The Court must come down very heavily on the attempt of the Central Government to do something which is completely prohibited under the law. Cleverly, the words *ex post facto* have not been used, but without using those words, there is a provision to effectively grant *ex post facto* EC. The 2021 OM has been issued in violation of the decisions of this Court in the cases of **Common Cause<sup>2</sup>** and **Alembic Pharmaceuticals<sup>3</sup>**. Therefore, we have no manner of

doubt that the 2021 OM which permits grant of EC is completely arbitrary and illegal. Moreover, the 2021 OM does not refer to exercise of any power under the 1986 Act or the 1986 Rules.

**30.** There is one more aspect which is required to be noted. As per paragraph 14 of the 2017 notification, provision for grant of *ex post facto* EC was made only in relation to projects or activities which were in violation as of 14<sup>th</sup> March 2017. Therefore, grant of *ex post facto* clearance was not permitted under 2017 notification for the projects and activities which were commenced or continued after 14<sup>th</sup> March 2017. The window which was initially for a period of six months was eventually extended till completion of 30 days from 14<sup>th</sup> March 2018. Therefore, the 2021 OM is brought in to do something which was not permissible under the 2017 notification, the law laid down by this Court, and the solemn undertaking given by the Central Government to the Madras High Court. We must deprecate such effort on the part of the Central Government.

**31.** The EIA notification is of 14<sup>th</sup> September 2006. When the 2021 OM was issued, it was nearly 15 years old. Therefore, all project proponents were fully aware of the stringent requirements under the EIA notification. The 2021 OM seeks to protect the violations of the EIA notification which have taken place or continue to take

place 15 years after the EIA notification came into force. Thus, the 2021 OM seeks to protect violators who have acted with full knowledge of consequences of violating the EIA notification. Those who violate the law regarding obtaining prior EC are not only committing gross illegality, but they are acting against the society at large. The violation of the condition of obtaining prior EC must be dealt with heavy hands. In environmental matters, the Courts must take a very strict view of the violations of the laws relating to the environment. It is the duty of the Constitutional Courts to do so.

**32.** Under Article 21 of the Constitution of India, the right to live in a pollution free environment is guaranteed. In fact, the 1986 Act has been enacted to give effect to this fundamental right. In 1977, fundamental duties of all citizens were incorporated in the Constitution which enjoined every citizen of India to protect and improve the environment as provided in clause (g) of Article 51A. Therefore, even the Central Government has a duty to protect and improve the natural environment.

**33.** Today, in the year 2025, we have been experiencing the drastic consequences of large-scale destruction of environment on human lives in the capital city of our country and in many other cities. At least for a span of two months every year, the residents of Delhi suffocate due to air pollution. The AQI level is either dangerous or

very dangerous. They suffer in their health. The other leading cities are not far behind. The air and water pollution in the cities is ever increasing. Therefore, coming out with measures such as the 2021 OM is violative of fundamental rights of all persons guaranteed under Article 21 to live in a pollution free environment. It also infringes the right to health guaranteed under Article 21 of the Constitution.

**34.** The 2021 OM talks about the concept of development. Can there be development at the cost of environment? Conservation of environment and its improvement is an essential part of the concept of development. Therefore, going out of the way by issuing such OMs to protect those who have caused harm to the environment has to be deprecated by the Courts which are under a constitutional and statutory mandate to uphold the fundamental right under Article 21 and to protect the environment. In fact, the Courts should come down heavily on such attempts. As stated earlier, the 2021 OM deals with project proponents who were fully aware of the EIA notification and who have taken conscious risk to flout the EIA notification and go ahead with the construction/continuation/expansion of projects. They have shown scant respect to the law and their duty to protect the environment. Apart from violation of Article 21, such action is completely arbitrary

which is violative of Article 14 of the Constitution of India besides being violative of the 1986 Act and the EIA notification.

**35.** We are, however, conscious of the fact that *ex post facto* EC may have been granted in certain cases both under the 2017 notification and the 2021 OM. ECs already granted under 2017 notification and the 2021 OM, at this stage, should not be disturbed.

**36.** Hence, we pass the following order:

- a) We hold that the 2017 notification and the 2021 OM as well as all circulars/orders/OMs/notifications issued for giving effect to these notifications are illegal and are hereby struck down;
- b) We restrain the Central Government from issuing circulars/orders/OMs/notifications providing for grant of *ex post facto* EC in any form or manner or for regularising the acts done in contravention of the EIA notification;
- c) We clarify that the ECs already granted till date under the 2017 notification and the 2021 OM shall, however, remain unaffected.

**37.** The writ petitions and civil appeals are accordingly allowed on the above terms.

.....J.  
(Abhay S. Oka)

.....J.  
(Ujjal Bhuyan)

**New Delhi;  
May 16, 2025**

**T.C**

